

Blessed Justin Russolillo, S.D.V.

Works – Volume IV

Let us make man

Part 2

*Translated and published by
Fr. Louis Caputo, S.D.V.*



*Vocationist Editions
90 Brooklake Road
Florham Park, N.J. 07932
U.S.A.
Phone 973 966 6262*

Nihil Obstat
Very Rev. Antonio Rafael do Nascimento, S.D.V
Superior General
of the Society of Divine Vocations
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Florham Park, N.J. 07932
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INTRODUCTION

Faciamus Hominem - Let us make Man - are the creating words of God. They are the foundation basis and root of the Vocationist spirituality. In them we see the creation of man, his origin, dignity, greatness and goal. In them we also see our call to cooperate in God's creating work, by becoming part of this divine plural (Let us), in God's eternal present. Blessed Fr. Justin urges us: "Let us enter in this divine present, in this divine plural!" Doing so, the divine words become alive in us.

God is the first cause of all things and in making us in his "image and likeness" he makes us secondary causes of the conservation and development of our own being. Without quoting him directly, the entire book re-echoes St. Augustine's famous affirmation: "The God who created you without you, cannot save you without you".

Faciamus Hominem is a masterpiece of ascetical theology consisting of meditations, elevations, psychological, philosophical and theological reflections, insights, studies and prayers on the nature, potential and destiny of man. According to Blessed Father Justin Russolillo man can reach his ultimate goal, his total realization by constantly cooperating with God Trinity in making himself ever better and more perfect image and likeness of God. In scholastic philosophy we were taught that God is a simple being, because cannot be divided into parts. Man, on the other hand, is

considered a complex or composite human being, because he is made of various parts, organs and faculties.

This book, at different moments, considers man under many various aspects, like the animal, spiritual, theological, intellectual, moral, social, anthropological, ascetical and mystical. Keeping in mind the well-known principle that grace builds upon nature, Fr. Justin reveals to us an intrigued and marvelous interplay among our various faculties, their functions and missions.

Fr. Justin sees the human being as being created perfect at each and every stage of his life and yet always perfectible to a next, higher stage, from conception to death. He describes the growth process: *In our natural life and tendency – relatively to our needs of the moment – we always feel an attraction for more quantity-wise, and for better quality-wise. The soul feels and experiences the same attraction to more and better in spiritual matters. These attractions to more and better lead us to new achievements for the kingdom of God, in the on-going renewal of the old man till we become like Jesus; they keep us in a continuous ascension from virtue to virtue, till we reach the full possession of God.*

Something that is exactly as it has been, is not new. Something that leaves us exactly where we were is not ascension. Something that does not add anything to what we have or are, is not an achievement¹.

How charming, romantic and true is this passage from *Journey Toward the Espousal Union*: *Since then, every child that comes into this world, notwithstanding the charm and beauty of childhood, does not want to remain a child, but hastens to become an adolescent. Notwithstanding all the charm and beauty of adolescence, the teenager does not*

¹ Russolillo, *Journey toward the Espousal Union*, Vocationist Edition, Palisades Park, 2013, art 40.

want to remain a teenager, but hastens to become a young adult. And then, notwithstanding all the charm and beauty of the springtime of his life, the young adult is not satisfied with the flowers of spring; he longs for the fruit and makes the transition into full virility.

The charm and beauty of every age, in the life of man, consists precisely in this progressive blooming of childhood into teenager, into youth, into adulthood, in the perfect virility.

Likewise and simultaneously, a man is born as a son, but notwithstanding all the sweetness of the filial relationship, he does not want to be only a son, and he is not satisfied with the sole native family. He tends to develop other relationships, as friend, with an ever-growing number of people, and so he forms a larger family, and - at times it seems - a more sweet family of election. Notwithstanding all the sweetness of friendship, or better, because he is totally taken by the sweetness of friendship, he does not want to be only a friend, and he is no longer satisfied with the larger family of election, but he tends to the relationship of spouse with the person that seems to embody the ideal and the synthesis of all the goodness that humanity may offer. With this person, more friend than all other friends, he forms the family of his heart, where he can finally rest for all his life, in the sweet and strong exercise of the dominion of his conquering love².

Our human, spiritual, intellectual and social journey of life is synthesized in these four beautiful words of Blessed Justin: *Always more, always better, always forward, always upward*. While these words permeate many of the following pages they find their fulfillment in the last part of *Let Us Make Man*, precisely, in the levels of the spiritual ascension.

² Ibid. art 63.

Justinian "I"

"Grant me ...to know and sustain myself, with all my strength and senses, in every moment and circumstance, in the state and disposition of servant and disciple, son and friend, and above all, your soul spouse."³

"Deliver, O Jesus, your word to my senses, longings and sentiments, in all parts of my human body; to my memory, intellect and will, to all my poor soul, to my understanding, conscience and liberty, to all my poor human person"⁴.

We hear and repeat that, "Nature does not make a leap" and that "grace builds upon nature"; these truths are taken for granted by those who have the gift of understanding enlightened by faith. I cannot be a saint if I do not sanctify all of myself. I cannot just sanctify a part or parts of myself. In order to sanctify all of myself, I should, first know my "I", as it is seen in my perspective and in the perspective of God; this will be my starting point in order to develop, elevate and sanctify my "I" (*myself*). A perspective of myself outside of God cannot be complete, and therefore, it is not sufficient.

As a man of faith called to personal holiness and to become minister of sanctification for others, I cannot ignore anthropology and psychology if I want to realize in fullness the plan of God. Fr. Justin makes us pray to obtain *"The perfection of all the sciences that are considered auxiliary of theology, and to take advantage of every science as auxiliary to sacred theology, to grasp the theological aspect of all human knowledge, and to possess the theology of every science"⁵.*

³ Russolillo, Devotional, Vocationist Editions, Pozzuoli, 1949, p. 1396.

⁴ Ibid. p. 971.

⁵ Ibid. p. 468.

He makes us pray and invites us to know the theology also of anthropology and of psychology.

Only after grasping the theological value of every human knowledge, the Blessed founder of the Vocationists was able to write, *“As the unfathomable depths of the sea and the highest mountain summits can never eliminate the spherical shape of the earth, because its colossal size is such that it greatly surpasses them, so too, all the faults and mistakes of our neighbor can never eliminate his basic estimability and lovability, in the supernatural world, because he is much greater than his own evil⁶.”*

We should never forget that every one of us is a neighbor to others, and that what we say of our neighbor it is also said of my very “I”, and vice versa.

We learned in philosophy that God is a *simple* being in his essence; simple in the sense that he cannot be divided into parts. Man, on the contrary, is a *composite* being, consisting of parts. Man is subject to confusion, division and imbalance when the various parts are not in harmony with one another. In order to harmonize the various components of our “I”, it is necessary to know them, to control them and direct them to their ultimate end. Thus, we learn the theology of psychology and of anthropology.

“Created Trinity” in the Justinian psychology

In the human soul, Fr. Justin sees an imprint, though it may not be perfect, of the most Holy Trinity. He focuses on the soul of man trying to understand more deeply the Trinitarian mystery; he knows well that man, in his soul, is the image of God. God Trinity

⁶ Russolillo, Ascension, Vocationist Editions, Pozzuoli 1937, art. 543.

has imprinted in man his image. This created trinity in man consists of winged (flying) *children, winged youths, winged masters* and *the queen person*; they do not imply three lives but one, not three souls, but one, not three essences but a single essence. They are not three stages, three phases, three developments, three terms; they are distinct from one another and yet they form one unity (entity), they are one because they exist essentially in one spirit.

If one reflects upon his self he generates thoughts of himself; so from the one who generates and from the one who is generated proceeds the third term, which is love. Only knowing her self, the soul can love herself. One cannot love himself if he does not know his self. Love is a kind of embrace that unites the one generating with the one that is generated, the lover and the loved one.

Even though I am “the *image and likeness of God*”, there is always an infinite difference between God and I. Even if I were able to fully develop all of my faculties to the maximum, even if I were able to reach the highest peak of perfection, even though I am divine in the sense that I come from God and return to God, I remain always a poor creature, “*limited and successive*”.

Notwithstanding the abyss that separates me from God, it is equally true that my “I” remains a valid revelation of God Trinity; likewise the Trinity remains a valid and powerful revelation of my “I”. All that can be predicated of God, in an infinitely limited way, can also be predicated of my “I”, and vice versa, all the beautiful and good attributes predicated of my “I” can be predicated of God in a perfect and absolute way.

The human development

Man is born, grows, ages and dies. From childhood, he passes on to adolescence, youthfulness, and maturity. Man grows biologically and psychologically, intellectually and socially, morally

and spiritually, quantitatively and qualitatively. I often think that when the Lord tells us "If you *do not become like a child*," he is referring to this quality of growing, more evident in a child *than in an adult*. I really like to think that when the Lord tells me that I must become like a child, he tells me that I must grow.

The Lord presents to us the kingdom of heaven as one having many mansions; St. Therese of Avila speaks to us of an interior castle; St. John of the Cross, of the ascent to Mount Carmel; Fr. Justin speaks to us of the ascension and of the three levels of our faculties: children, youths and masters⁷.

Jean Pierre Deconchy (1934-2014) presents human development as successive evolutionary stages that unfold spirally around a perpendicular axis. Fr. Justin sees equally the progression of the soul in a spiral ascension, elevating herself towards God (perpendicular axis), going from God-the beginning towards God-the end; in an ever more increasing and enriching orbit, she goes from God to one's neighbor and from one's neighbor to God⁸.

Even if not in a strict theological sense, psychology sees man as one and three - an image of the Trinity. Freud (1856-1939) perceives first the human mind as being constituted by three structures (*Conscious, pre-conscious, and unconscious*) and later, he proposed that the unconscious was divided into three parts: Id, Ego, and Superego.

Since the 1940s has been developed, the psychology of the "I",

⁷ Cf. Russolillo, *Let us make Man*, Voc. Ed. Florham Park 2015, chapter XVI.

⁸ Cf. Russolillo, *Journey Toward the Espousal Union*, Vocationist Ed. Palisades Park, N.J. 2013, p. 19- 23.

which emphasizes the role of the “I” as mediator between the interior needs of the individual and the requests coming from external reality.

The Id indicates the psychological faculties hidden from the individual’s conscience; often the *Id* is called the *subconscious*. The “I” is the totality of all the faculties formed since birth; it controls the relationship with reality. As an integral part of the individual, the “I” is influenced by social factors and acts as mediator between unconscious desires and social expectations. The super-ego is the part of psyche that controls the instincts of the id in order to conform them to the expectations of the environment. The Super-ego develops itself through a gradual adoption of the values and moral norms of the parents and educators.⁹

Fr. Justin as educator, ascetic and mystic cannot ignore psychology; rather, he gives us his own trinitarian version of the individual’s psychology. The Vocationist spirituality is based on the triad: the Holy Church, the Holy Family and the Divine Trinity. Every component of this triad is again articulated into another triad: *Militant, Suffering and triumphant Church; Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph; Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit*. Likewise, the “I” of Fr. Justin is made up of one triad, namely, *winged children, winged youths and winged masters*. Every element of this triad is again expressed into another triad: the winged children are: *fantasy, sense and sentiment; winged youths are: memory, intellect and will, and winged masters are reason, conscience and liberty*. All these faculties are unified and harmonized by the winged sovereign queen: *the person*.

The adjective winged qualifies every element of the Justinian “I”. With this adjective, Fr. Justin indicates that all our psychologi-

⁹ Cf. Microsoft @ Encarta @ Enciclopedia Plus.

cal faculties, though they can be and must be controlled, easily escape, all have the capacity to fly, even the less noble ones.

Cognitive development

Jean Piaget (1896- 1980) presents the well-known theory of cognitive development in five stages (sensory, motor, symbolic, intuitive and logic) and in three periods: childhood (sensory, symbolic and motor); youth (intuitive) and adolescence (logic). The three stages of Fr. Justin, namely: children (*fantasy, sense and sentiments*), youths (*memory, intellect and will*) and masters (*reason, conscience and liberty*) are indeed very near to Piaget's three stages.

The memory recalls past experiences and thus it offers to the intellect the possibility to enlighten and theorize the same experiences, which, once perceived by the intellect as good, push first the will to desire them, and afterwards to actualize them. As the present is constructed on the shoulders of the past, so the intellect and will operate based on past experiences. In our case the will and intellect, our winged youths, operate on the basis of the fantasy, sentiments and sensorial experiences of the winged children. Philosophers and theologians have put always in discussions which of these two, the intellect or the will, is more important. These positions have given origin to two different schools of thought.

Fr. Justin, a good practical philosopher, though not entirely siding with one or the other school of thought, sustains the extraordinary importance of the intellect over the will. The will is a blind faculty; it needs to be enlightened by the intellect in order to do what is good. Without the light, which comes from the intellect, this mass of energy, which we call *will*, can be a power enormously disastrous. This is the reason why Fr. Justin insists so much on catechesis, on study, on spiritual reading and perpetual

formation. The reason leads into assimilation by transforming into action what it has perceived.

The three winged children

The three winged children, *fantasy, sense, and sentiments*, correspond in a certain sense to the *Id* or the *subconscious* as they lack consciousness and reason.

In life, these three faculties are not so controllable, they remain always pleasant, likeable, daring and full of life, but they are not always docile. Fr. Justin does not hesitate to define them “*my winged messengers, little servants and winged missionaries*”¹⁰.

Fantasy, “*the most daring of my children*”, is an interior construction created on the perception of the world. A child (or the non-child) realizing that he cannot participate to certain phenomena, acts and states of adult life, creates in himself an unrealistic and fantastic world where he sees himself as the main actor. The imagery is a real psychological need, an effective means to give life and progress to the emotional states of the soul. It is indeed a fundamental and indispensable element of the human psyche not only in a child but also in every age and state of life, which must be a continuous and progressive growth. In the preparation for Holy Communion for the month of June, Fr. Justin says, “*There is no peace in my fantasy, rather there is continuous war, and sometimes, it becomes so atrocious among my sentiments!*”

According to some authors, real life (I would rather say, the first expression of life) begins with the senses. The sense is that which perceives things as they are, through taste, hearing, sight,

¹⁰ Russolillo, *Let Us Make Man*, part II, Voc. Ed. Florham Park, 2016 art. 987.

smell, and touch. Senses are developed in the first years of existence, and all that is perceived through the senses, by emotional evaluation, originates sentiments of attraction and repulsion, likes and dislikes, love and hate. Melanie Klein (1882 –1960) is of the opinion that the child begins to develop his affectivity through skin contact with the mother, and with the taste of maternal milk. He begins to experience primary emotions and reactions to what is satisfying or unsatisfying, after which he gradually develops sentiments or conciliate reactions between what is perceived as good or bad.

It is said, and it's true, that in every youth there is a little child within, and in every adult, there is a little imprint of a child and of a youth; this is reaffirmed also by Fr. Justin, when he states that the element of superior form assimilates and possesses the qualities of the inferior ones. In this marvelous world of my "I", children, youths and masters do not come one after the other, like the stages of our life, but they live together in the same moment, sometime alternating, sometime contrasting one another or cooperating among themselves. Indeed, due to their characteristics, the winged children, in Fr. Justin, tell and discover the most daring and risky truths on matters like the almost impossibility of damnation for unbaptized children and adults, and on matters like the special planet, Eden or heaven for each soul.

How charming are these children and how easily can they be tamed when the Lord embraces them! Who would ever think of extending Jesus's embrace of the children to our most humble psychological faculties? While the sense is more bound to material things, the sentiment is more influenced by those around it; the fantasy easily detaches itself and flies uncontrollably from one world to another, from one heaven to another! Blessed be my children!

"On the body consecrated to him (the Lord) engraves the seal of mor-

tification, with a sign of cross on every sense and a crown of thorns on every sentiment, a garland of wings on the fantasy and a unique triple flame on the heart: alone inside, triple outside... his flame"¹¹.

The winged youths

A youth is always full of vigor, exuberance and inquisitive; he dreams to be able to change the world and to conquer it. Young people in practical and social life often experience conflicts with parents and authority, with regards to their natural needs to be able to affirm themselves, to venture, to experience and to experiment, while the parents need to protect, defend and to caution. The same thing really happens in the psychological and social life of every individual: *memory*, *intellect* and *will* are full of vigor, they feel the need to explode while the winged masters, *reason*, *conscience* and *liberty* seek to control, dominate, and supervise them (while on their part, the children try to distract and bother them). Often in practical life, with a sense of regret and complaint, we say. "Oh, if young people knew, and if old men could do!" In the psychological and spiritual life, it happens that we do possess simultaneously the freshness of the children, the vigor of youth and the wisdom of the old (masters).

The three winged youths are really three powerful faculties that can transform personal life and the world that revolves around them. The memory which Fr. Justin defines as "tenacious safety box", is that capacity which enables us to extend and live again the past, creating a *continuum* which then becomes the present. Without the memory, we would have a present in a *vacuum*, without support and continuity. In the psychological, intellectual and spiritual life, the memory or the recollection of positive past

¹¹ Ibid. art. 434

experiences creates in us confidence and hope. On the other hand, the memory or recollection of negative past experiences may generate distrust and discouragement. Memory can likewise generate a profound self-awareness and real conversion. Memory is selective in terms of facts, experiences and information acquired in the past; I can keep in this jewel box those things I like, and leave out those, which I don't like. It is not necessary nor does it help to remember all of the past!

The intellect is the ability to understand, analyze, reason out, to resolve, to evade or to confront problems in the course of one's life. With the intellect we move forward beyond what is seen; the intellect gives us the ability to abstract, to synthesize and to understand. The intellect is the light, which permits discernment. In the previously cited prayer, Fr. Justin continues. *"There is no peace in my intellect because it is focused on apparent truths and does not rise up and stay in the truth of the divine being; it lets itself be drawn by the will fascinated by transitory and false good."*

The will is the ability to desire, to plan and to actualize our future; it is energy, which enables us to overcome contrasting forces. We say that the will *is power*, for the reason that the will moves us to decide; from it come the determining tendencies which will be guided by the idea of the objective or goal to be achieved. The impulse of the will increases the energy or the performance level necessary for the completion of what one really wants.

The child says "I want," but he or she doesn't have the power to impose what he wants. The young person says the same thing, but he or she says it with more force and vigor, and with the ability to differentiate, distinguish, compete, and to rebel in order to reach his scope, or the state of being an adult.

"Before the truth, my intellect cannot remain indifferent or cold, but with the vehemence of love, it unites itself, in an embrace, with the truth!"

You are one, O infinite goodness of love, and in your presence, my will shall not remain indecisive and cold"¹².

*"What will ever be the power and the capability of the souls, in all the higher degrees of intellectual, volitional and operational life even in the natural life only? What ever higher ascensions in truth, in goodness and in reigning the world, will be its great and glorious possibilities?"*¹³.

Fr. Justin concludes the introduction of *Toward the Ultimate Goal* stressing the volitional force of the will, "*All that I can, I must do (homo potens), all that I must, I want to do, (homo volens), all that I want, shall be done (homo agens)*. Homo sapiens denotes the interaction among physical, psychological, social, spiritual and rational levels.

The Three winged masters

The three winged masters, *reason, conscience and liberty*, the supreme powers of the human being, examine critically the things that children and youth do; only in this way the individual can perform acts that are really *human acts*, that is, conscious, moral and responsible acts. The reason forms the conscience and in turn the conscience prepares the liberty to make its choices.

The reason is the faculty that allows man to discern what he knows, to distinguish the truth from what is not, to judge things as they are, to make a reasonable choice and act accordingly in conformity with its principles. In psychology, reason is often used to express the opposite pole of intuition, instinct or sentiments.

¹² Ibid. 275.

¹³ Ibid. II, 661.

Conscience is the affirmation of the “I”, the power of the I and on the “I”. The conscience is the ability to analyze the will; it is an upward movement, which puts into harmony the “I” with his actions.

Even from a superficial glimpse at **Faciamus Hominem**, it immediately appears clear that the highest gift and power given to us is our liberty. To this, in fact, Fr. Justin dedicates three chapters. Often, we see this liberty as a two-edged sword capable to be used for good as well as for evil; it can be used for our sanctification as well as for our damnation. Blessed Justin asks himself and even asks the Creator: from the moment that God knew that we could misuse this precious gift and that only this gift would enable us to offend and to reject our maker, then why did he give it to us? His marvelous answer is simple, beautiful and convincing. We are created in order to be a personal relationship of love with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is the relationship of love for which God calls us; the only relationship of love really worthy of the Holy Trinity is the relationship of spousal love. Love must always be free in order to be real love; however, the level of freedom varies from one relationship of love to another. For example, the love of a child toward his parents is a love that is spontaneous and free, but it is almost out of necessity of nature. A child doesn't have to make a choice to love his parents; he loves them and it's enough! The nuptial love however, for necessity, has to be totally and absolutely free. Without complete and absolute freedom, the very sacrament of marriage is void.

Once more, Fr. Justin adds, *“the liberty proper of the soul and of the human person – that is reasonable – is all ordered to the choice and selection, to the election and predilection between the objects of the intellect and of the will...Freedom is the gift and the perfection of our will”*¹⁴.

¹⁴ Ibid. II, art. 75 and 213.

“Only through her own liberty can the human soul be raised as distinct person to a certain equality with the Lord; and precisely through grace - participation of the divine nature – the soul is admitted to the equality with the divine nature, and through freedom, to the equality with the divine persons”¹⁵.

The winged sovereign queen

The winged sovereign queen, *the person*, is the unifying principle of all the various faculties, almost as the one person of Jesus is the unifying principle between the divine and the human nature. For Fr. Justin, man is essentially an image and likeness of God; *external irradiation of the internal divine glory, a gift of God to God!* Outside of God there is nothing, and there cannot be anything better than God’s image for every divine person.

Fr. Justin concludes his vision of the “I” affirming that the winged sovereign queen, that is *the person*, coordinates, harmonizes, dominates and controls the children, the youths and the masters. Only when all these faculties are unified and harmonized can we have a sound and balanced person. If the coordination of all the psychological powers is lacking, then we have an incomplete, unbalanced, confused and ineffective person. As all is reduced to unity in God so also in man; only when all human faculties are well harmonized, we have a well-balanced, functional, real human person.

¹⁵ Ubid. II, art. 73.

Conclusion

It seems that the first and highest commandment, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind," respects or follows this triple level of our faculties, seeing in the heart the three *children*, in the mind the *three* youth and in the soul the three *masters*.

In the preparation for Holy Communion, for the month of July, Fr. Justin summarizes his vision of the self, praying: "*O Jesus, may your word be in my senses, fantasy and sentiment, in all of my human body, in my memory, intellect and will, in all my poor human soul; in my reason, conscience and liberty, in all my poor humanity*".

As the body, composed of various members, remains one, as the mystical body being composed of many members and of many parts is one, so too does the "I" being composed of so many faculties must remain one.

That the *unum sint*, the prayer of Jesus that *all may be one*, may be seen in the world, in the Church, in the Congregation and in my "I"!

United in the service of the divine vocations and in prayer, let us walk speedily toward holiness!

Florham Park, N.J. January 18, 2017

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

CHAPTER 1

Freedom and its Consequences¹

*In this Chapter Blessed Justin continues to develop the theme of the soul-spouse of the Trinity. Here he presents this spousal relation as the “fourth divine relation, not ad intra, but ad extra of the divinity and of the Trinity”. “All sweet mystery to which I abandon myself, my cradle, my birth place, my harbor and my country ... mystery that I cannot investigate, nor analyze, because I cannot anatomize my own life.” Reading this chapter we may have the impression of being with the great singer of the Trinity, St. Gregory of Nazianzus,² who concludes the great poem of his life with this affirmation: “I shall be totally in God ... I direct my thoughts to the dwelling that knows no sunsets, to my beloved Trinity, my true light, whose only shadow darkens all other lights, now thrills me”. Some verses of T. S. Eliot³, author of the well known *Murder in the Cathedral*, reveal all their beauty and depth only if applied to the Trinity: “We should not stop in our exploration. The end of our exploration will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.”*

1. One day, in the blessed eternity, I shall know the number of the elect! Grant that I may be with them, my Savior Jesus, savior of your own graces, glorifier of your very ideas, rewarder of your very gifts. May my earthly exile end with the death of the saints and share their blessed destiny.
2. Neither I, nor anyone else will know the number of the

¹ This Chapter was written on Tuesday of Holy Week, April 5, 1944 in the Vocationist Residence of Mercato Cilento, Salerno.

² Gregory of Nazianzus, *Poemata de se ipso*, XI – P. G. 37, 1154, 1155.

³ T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*, “The Complete Poems and Plays” London 1969, p. 197.

damned, because in hell everything is confusion, perdition, darkness and death. No one can identify what cannot be seen in any way, because all is darkness and death. No one can know in the luminosity of the number what is all confusion of eternal perdition.

3. I am still on my pilgrim way of trials, in the tremendous possibility of losing myself for all eternity. I carry within me the ever alive and active will, gifted with freedom that I can always abuse against my Lord and reduce myself to be image, likeness and prey of the beast rather than being image, likeness and gift of the Most Holy Trinity.
4. O my Lord, my God and my all, in you are all reasons of the constitution of my being, of the formation of my life. Unveil to me, O Lord, the reasons of my freedom, how to prevent the possibility of abusing of it, and how to elevate myself in the perfection of freedom.
5. You made freedom; it is your gift as my all being. Your work is holy and your gift is salutary and sanctifying. Anyone who ruins himself with your gift will ruin himself through his own fault; I seem to hear the voice of hell confessing: You are just, Lord, and your judgment, your sentence and sanction is fair.
6. You are just, Lord, and infinitely correct is your judgment and your sanction. No one can ever fully comprehend with full truth – which is only the one that kindles love – your justice, judgment, condemnation and sanction, but in your very love.
7. Even your judgment is fire of your wounded and offended love, of your rejected and betrayed love, the very fire of hell, but you, my love, do not call to it, do not attract to it, do not push to it; you, my love, do not lead us to it, because you want for yourself, essentially, much more, much better.
8. Essentially, for yourself, you only want love, because you are infinite love; you want what is infinitely opposed to sin and betrayal; you want to be understood, embraced and corresponded so that you can bless, glorify and deify the soul faithful to you.

9. O love, mystery of unity of the divine nature! O love, mystery of the three divine persons! O love, mystery of the incarnation and passion of Jesus' life! O love, mystery of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus! O love mystery of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus! O love, mystery of the Mass and Communion in Jesus' Eucharist!
10. O love, mystery of the missions of Jesus and of the Holy Spirit! O love, mystery of the circuminsession⁴ of the three divine persons! O love, mystery of the divine coming and indwelling of the divine persons in the soul! O love, mystery of the divine union and relation of the soul with you!
11. O love, you are also my mystery to myself! You, O love, are the mystery of my creation, redemption, sanctification and glorification! You are also the mystery of the free will of every soul! You are the mystery of human freedom, freedom of the will and most of all freedom of heart!
12. You are my interior freedom that no human violence can reach and hinder, freedom to accept or reject, freedom to love or to hate, freedom to love on this or that level, in one way or another, up to this point or the other, with this or that measure, totally free.
13. O freedom of will, of heart and of love! O freedom of love, you are the mystery of love that I am; only you, divine love, can enlighten, teach and infuse in me that truth that can make me a flame of love, and establish me in you, divine truth.
14. The truth of God, the reality of his being and the perfections of his persons and operations, is infinite love. Only the one

⁴ Circumincession (later circuminsession) is a Latin-derived term for the same concept. It was first used as a term in Christian theology, by the Church Fathers. The noun first appears in the writings of Maximus Confessor (d. 662). It is used to signify the reciprocal existence in one another of the three persons of the Trinity, or, the circulation of divine life within the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

who establishes himself in love is in the truth. Only what love reveals to us is a ray of truth. Only what inflames us with love is the act of truth.

15. Now I think of the most mysterious effusions of the infinite, divine bounty, of the infinite divine love, and I keep asking heaven and earth: What are the supreme reasons, what are the supreme objectives of these divine infinite effusions of God's love to the souls?
16. They are really infinite in themselves, but they cannot be adequately and infinitely comprehended, received and corresponded; for this, they must have reasons, and final causes proportionately convenient to the divine wisdom, equally infinite; they must aim to an effect proportionate and convenient to the divine love.
17. What could be in the soul the effect convenient to the divine love, the effect proportionate to the divine love's effusions, the effect adequate to the work and (Oh! I would like to say, I was about to say) to the infinite effort of the incarnate divine love, made sacrifice and sacrament for the souls?
18. I adore you, O infinite effusions of divine love in creation. Who can understand you, receive you and correspond adequately to you, since you are infinite? I adore you, O infinite effusions of divine love in redemption. Who can understand, receive and reciprocate you adequately, since you are infinite?
19. O effusions of divine love in the invisible missions of the Word and of the Holy Spirit in the soul! Who understands, welcomes and reciprocates you, as you deserve and wish, O Father, when you send your Word to the soul ... O Father and Son ... when you send your Spirit, O Father God, when will you come to the soul?
20. O effusions of divine love in every new increase of grace infused in the soul! O divine effusions of divine grace deriving from the real, Eucharistic presence, from the perennial renewal of the sacrifice of the cross, from Holy Communion

with the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ, living and true!

21. O precious and endless resources and heaps of graces! O endless treasures of graces, oceans of graces, flood of graces! O heaven's heavens, paradise's paradises of graces communicated to every faithful soul, ... what is your divine reason?
22. 22. What is your divine motivation? I understand why the first person communicates by way of generation all his divine being to the second person. He is God the Father, and this is God the Son! Nothing less could be expected, nothing less could be enough to the first person, the Father, but the second person, the Son!
23. I understand through revelation and faith why together the first and second person communicate by way of active spiration⁵ all their divine being to the third person, the Holy Spirit! It is naturally necessary and necessarily natural in God that such should be the divine person-love, the Holy Spirit.
24. The fact that the three divine persons communicate so freely and generously such participation of their divine nature *ad extra*, and that they unite themselves in so many and varied ways to the soul, I do not understand without admitting that they want to make of the soul something really marvelous.
25. I understand it only thinking and admitting a fourth divine relation, not *ad intra* but *ad extra* of the divinity and Trinity; not necessary but free; not by nature but by grace; or even a true and proper relation, a fourth divine-human relationship with the human soul.
26. With humankind in general, and with each soul in particular.

⁵ *Spiration* is a theological term that indicates the action of breathing as a creative or life-giving function of God. The act by or manner in which the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, and the relation subsisting by virtue of this procession.

With the Holy Church in general, but for each soul in particular; it must be a relation with the human person, not with the nature like the divine relations, that are the three divine persons in the nature which is essentially one.

27. Shines forth in the light of truth of the divine love the supreme relation of the spouse God with the soul, wanted, elevated and made spouse of God. The supernatural nuptial relation fully justifies all the divine relations and effusions of love and the whole essential constitution of the human soul.
28. No other finality lesser than this supernatural nuptial relation can ever be convenient, adequate and proportionate reason of the divine revelations, communications and effusions to his creature in the supernatural order, and being more specific I would like to say: in the Eucharistic, mystic and Trinitarian order.
29. Not the simple salvation of the soul from the pains of hell, but only the eternal blessedness of the soul in paradise, not even the glorification of the Lord from the part of the human and angelic world, on earth and in heaven. For all this was sufficient much, much less to the usual divine munificence.
30. In each divine perfection (Oh! Infinity of perfections in the most perfect divine unity!), in every aspect of his divine perfections (Oh! Infinity of aspects of perfection in the infinite divine simplicity!) the Lord wants a soul spouse in the image and likeness of that special perfection.
31. In his image and likeness in that special perfection, in which he is the only God-spouse, the soul is the only spouse of God. Like the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and from the Son, yet they are not two principles, but one only principal of their Holy Spirit.
32. Likewise in that special divine perfection there are the three divine persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, God the spouse of the soul; they are not three spouses but one only spouse, one only nuptial relation between the Blessed Trinity and the

soul, and yet even in this the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are always distinct.

33. This nuptial relation proceeds from the Father, absolute principle of the divine being *ad extra* and *ad intra*, and through the Son ends with the soul spouse in the Holy Spirit: love, gift and kiss of the Father and the Son, thus each one of them is spouse of the human soul.
34. God the Father is the God spouse. God the Son is the God spouse. God the Holy Spirit is the God spouse: not three spouses but one spouse, just as one is God's nuptial relation with the human soul, even though at the root of this relation are distinct the three divine persons: The holy Trinity is the spouse.
35. The whole redeemed humanity, through the holy Church, in her chosen part, is the spouse of the Trinity. Every chosen soul is individually, personally and distinctly the spouse of the Trinity, the only spouse of God in that special divine perfection.
36. Unique spouse for the unity of the person, who in her life, intellect and will carries within her own self the image, the likeness and correspondence of the three divine persons; this is true within life itself, in the life out of the self in the world and in the life in God.
37. O unique human person in the triple capacity of life, intellect and will, really distinct! O unique human life in the triple sphere, in itself, out of its self and in God! O unique spouse of God, in the triple union and yet unique relation!
38. Spouse of God in life (grace), spouse of God in the intellect (truth), spouse of God in the will (love)! Spouse of the Trinity in the Father (with the life), spouse of the Trinity in the Son (with the intellect), spouse of the Trinity in the Holy Spirit (with the will), but one spouse.
39. Spouse of the Trinity in the Holy Spirit (in one's own life itself)! Spouse of God Trinity in the Word (in one's own life out-

side of the self)! Spouse of the Trinity in the Father (in one's life in God)! Not three spouses, but one bride of one bridegroom: the soul and God!

40. From all eternity God willed to love the soul, that soul! Every soul in her personal individuality, in her individual personality, that soul! So also with my soul! This is my mystery of love; this is the mystery of the divine love directly and personally for me.
41. This is the totally sweet mystery to which I refer and to which I abandon myself! This is the mystery my cradle, my home, my port, my country. This is the mystery I do not intend to investigate nor analyze, because I cannot anatomize my very life.
42. The Lord has loved me, and that is why he has chosen me from among the infinite possible beings to life, from among the innumerable living beings he has called me to faith; from among many faithful he has chosen me to this state of relation with the divine persons; he has made me the recipient of many other evident and hidden choices.
43. Every choice is a vocation, is a predilection that reveals his love, the mystery of his love for me. He had no need whatsoever to choose me, nor could I have any right to be chosen; there can be no other motivation but the mystery of his love.
44. Yes, I believe, I know, I am aware that each divine person willed me as image, likeness and gift of each divine person for the other; thus, their love for me is absolutely relative. Why did they want just me, my soul for such a sublime goal?
45. I would offend the divine wisdom if I were to think that he would do something just by chance; I would offend the divine highness by lowering it to the level of the human manner of acting in front of a variety of similar and identical objects, choosing capriciously, for no other reason but his need for that object.
46. I would offend the divine wisdom if I were to think that God

- could act haphazardly, without the divine reasons of his love; I would offend the divine sufficiency and beatitude if I were to suppose that he would determine a choice only for the need I might have of any being outside of his divine persons.
47. I would end up offending him if I were to try explaining his choice of me outside the mystery of his love for me; I would offend the divine truth of the divine love that has revealed: that he has loved me with an eternal love⁶, for this, and only for this he has attracted me to life and to himself.
 48. In my future life he saw numerous reasons capable more of alienating than attracting me, to hate rather than to love him, to lose rather than to save me, and that is why he has revealed to me that he has loved me with eternal love, and only for this he willed me and had mercy on me for what I had become only through my fault.
 49. In that absolutely relative love with which every divine person loves in me the image, likeness and gift of the other divine persons, I must discover, recognize and adore also the absolute relative love with which in this image, likeness and gift of the divine persons, they love this soul in particular.
 50. Somehow, it happens among men that the portrait of the friend is loved for the sake of the represented; it is also loved in itself, but always as a portrait, as that portrait. The portrait is also loved individually and particularly with the same and distinct, not different love with which we love the friend.
 51. As of any portrait I can have as many copies as I want, and choose randomly one, since they are similar and identical, God, likewise, may have chosen me, from among the many identical copies of me, in such a way that his choice does not necessarily reveal a particular love for me.
 52. This does not exclude the mystery of divine love for me;

⁶ Cf. Jer 31, 3

whichever copy of me he would have chosen makes no difference, because it was always me and only me that he chose, even if by stupid assumptions, I were to imagine to be present and living identically in so many duplications and copies of me.

53. These identical copies of the soul do not exist for God, who is one in himself, marks everything with the imprint of unity and does not repeat himself in his immediate works, amongst which there is the vocation to existence of every soul directly created and infused by him in the body, only out of his love.
54. The Father sees and loves himself as Father in the Son, and as he sees and loves the Son in himself Father; likewise, the Son in the Father, and in a like manner, Father and Son together in the Holy Spirit, and again, God the Holy Spirit in the Father and the Son; the same happens of me, with due proportion.
55. Each divine person sees and loves the other divine person in me, as image, likeness and gift of the other. Each divine person also sees and loves me as image, likeness and gift in the other. The whole Trinity, equally and distinctly, loves me with relatively absolute love.
56. God willed and made me in his image and likeness even in his way of loving me. He made me image and likeness of his divine and eternal love with which each divine person sees and loves himself in the other. Each divine person sees and loves the other beloved person, personification of love. They want me as their image and likeness also in their way of loving.
57. Each divine person loves, and is the very personification of love, and as such each person is totally in the other beloved person; even the other beloved person is the personification of love and is totally in the loving person, in the three divine personal relations of love and in their circuminsession.
58. Since he willed and loved me in my own self, and in a certain aspect, for my own self, (always as image, likeness and gift),

the divine love wants to find in me also the correspondence of a personal love, of a love exclusively all mine, of a love that is my all being, of a love that is my whole I.

59. To the absolutely relative love that each divine person has for me as image, likeness and gift responds and corresponds my being that as essential image, likeness and gift renders essentially and representatively the glory of love of each divine person for the other.
60. To the absolutely relative love that each divine person has for me, even in my self and for myself, as the distinct person that they willed in their image, likeness and gift of each divine person for the other, responds and corresponds a love all mine, personally mine.
61. This love is in itself image and likeness, as well as irradiation and grace of love of each divine person for the other, but it is also all mine, individually mine, personally mine, just as I am a distinct individual and person according to the divine will, creation and constitution.
62. So that this love may be mine must be free, constitutionally, individually and personally free; even in this image and likeness of the love with which God loves me, of the love that God himself is for me from all his eternity.
63. This is my freedom, essential attribute of my will in its way of loving, in its level of love in the nuptial order, or in the species of nuptial love intending specifically the supreme level of friendship's love, that is, love of election and predilection.
64. In the divine life ad intra I adore the divine person-love, the Holy Spirit! He is the love of the Father and of the Son! This love is necessary as it is necessary the divine being, as are necessary in the one divine being the three divine relations that constitute the three persons.
65. Once a child is born, he is naturally in a filial relationship; likewise once a parent generates a child, he is naturally in a parental relation of love, in the image and likeness of the love

ad intra of the divine life and being. Every human being naturally begins to exist in a filial relationship of love with his parents.

66. The love of the Trinity *ad extra* for his creatures is essentially free before creation; after creation this love becomes fundamentally, originally and initially necessary like fatherly love. The creator creates only out of love; it is impossible for him not to love his creatures that he himself created out of love.
67. With the elevation to the supernatural order, with the participation in his divine nature, above any capacity and exigency of the creature, more than love of creator and father, the divine love reveals itself as love of friendship, completely free, but that expects a similar correspondence of love from the loved soul.
68. The love of the creature elevated to the supernatural order is fundamentally, originally and initially love of servant and son, which is later elevated to love of friendship; in order to correspond to the infinite love it must be measureless and tends to the ultimate levels of friendship: spousal love.
69. The freedom of love in God and in man, the relationship of love, which is essentially free in the divine and human nature, in each human and divine person, is the espousal relation of the spouse-God with the soul-spouse.
70. This relationship requires likeness and equality in the two persons: ordered one to the other as passive principle ordained to the active principle; this likeness, equality and ordnance of the creature to the creator, of the soul to the Lord, reaches its peak and perfection in freedom.
71. In her own freedom the soul is like God because he is the first cause and the first principle of everything, especially of his own self, of his very being, of his perfections and of his divine relations-persons.
72. The soul, through her own freedom (and only through her own freedom) is distinct principle of her acts and states, of her

morally perfect or corrupt being, of her voluntary, not necessary relations with the creatures, with the neighbor and with the Lord.

73. In a similar way, only through her own freedom, the soul, as a distinct person, is elevated to a certain equality with Lord; precisely through grace, participation of divine nature, she is admitted to the equality with the divine nature and through her freedom is admitted to the equality with the divine persons.
74. Through and in her very freedom the soul and human person is ordained, oriented and propelled toward the spouse God in order to receive from him the conservation and the perfection of her being, indefinitely, eternally perfectible ... and the blessedness.
75. The freedom proper of the soul and human person – i. e. reasonable – is totally ordained to the choice and selection, the election and preference, among the objects of her intellect and will, of the ones that can perfect, satisfy and beatify her, that is: the infinite truth and goodness.
76. Human freedom, and only in and through it the human person, is not only totally ordained, oriented and propelled toward God, but is a living order, a living orientation, a living attraction to God, living capacity and desire, living passive principle toward the Lord God.
77. In her freedom the human person presents all the likeness, equality and order of passive principle, required by the spousal relation, in which this very freedom reveals and demonstrates that the human person has been desired and created by the infinite love of the divine Trinity.
78. The soul has been created free not only to enable her to apply herself with greater merit to what is true and good and thus render greater glory to her creator and Lord, but most of all, so that of her own will she may be the blessed and glorious term of this free, divine espousal relation.
79. The Lord foresaw and knew how much he would be offend-

ed by the abuses of human freedom, and yet he always willed and safeguarded it to signify, indicate and demonstrate that this human-divine nuptial relationship is the integral, adequate aim of his creating, salvific and sanctifying work.

80. Human freedom signifies, indicates and demonstrates that this divine-human nuptial relationship is all the glory of love that God expects from mankind; in it is condensed all the triumph of the kingdom of heaven divinely portrayed as the nuptial banquet that God the Father wants to celebrate for his Son.
81. Therefore the culture of freedom is required in order to take to ever-higher perfection the likeness, the ordinance of the human person to her Lord, and be able to establish, cultivate and live in an ever-higher level the divine-human nuptial relation.
82. This culture of freedom does not tend to the extinction of freedom, this would be the worst moral suicide; nor to the abnegation of freedom, this would be the worst illusion and trap in which may fall the human soul. The culture of human freedom tends to a greater likeness and equality for the divine union with the Lord.
83. The perennial increases of grace and the ongoing exercise of charity, elevating ever more the soul to the supernatural, and supernaturally perfecting the will, are the culture of human freedom that gives us the advantage of the endowment of grace and of its own exercise.

CHAPTER 2

Culture of Freedom

This chapter presents the exercises for the culture of human freedom, absolutely necessary to become soul spouse. Great emphasis is placed on the first two exercises, self-control and loving attention.

84. The exercises that more directly constitute the culture of freedom are those related to self control and to the loving attention¹, the abnegation out of love, the election of love, consecrations to love, ascensions of love² and inspirations of love³, well understood and better practiced.
85. Blessed be God! Man received at the very beginning from the Lord the order to fill the earth, to subdue all inferior creatures and dominate the forces of nature⁴ (only later he was given the order to serve God alone), consequently he must first of all dominate his very self.
86. Losing self-control is like living at the mercy of the inferior

¹ In paragraph 92, self control is defined as “minor attention”, and loving attention, in paragraph 99 is defined as “Major attention”.

² Even though the text does not describe the ascensions of love in this chapter, the last part of the book, from chapter 11 to the end presents the various levels of the scension. We consider every passage from one level to the next higher one as ascension of love.

³ The inspirations occupy a very important role in the spirituality of Fr. Justin; this why he dedicates two chapters to this topic.

⁴ Cf. Gn 1, 28.

and external forces of the universe. Losing self control constitutes a state and acts that resemble the state and the acts of drunkenness as far as shortcoming and guilt, as far as danger and degrading effects; any spiritual progress is impossible in such a state.

87. With the exception of natural sleep and spontaneous collapse, neither provoked by others nor induced by one's own self, the soul should not and must not abandon herself to any state of semi or complete consciousness that somehow renders self control difficult.
88. Once it has had enough warning, the soul cannot abandon herself to apathy and passivity, to torpor and languor, distraction, drowsiness and sluggishness, dizziness and confusion, anxiety and commotion, to hardening and fixation.
89. Each of these states, so imperfect and dangerous, is due to an overflowing of the external inferior influx over the internal, or to the influx of the senses over the superior faculties, or of the nervous system over others, or of one passion over another, and consequently to a loss of physical and moral equilibrium necessary to self control.
90. I need not mention the malefic influence of the enemy, exercised through worldly and human spirit, to the detriment of the soul, often provoked and deserved on account of faults of the soul, at times only venial faults, through which the soul comes within range of action of this infernal dog and monster, notwithstanding the fact that it is kept in chains.
91. Self-control requires a complete, explicit and direct awareness and knowledge of the present status and actual disposition of the action one is about to take, of the intention that motivates us, of the goal that attracts us, of the object to which we tend and the multiple and concomitant circumstances.
92. This awareness, that we could call minor attention, because it focuses on the self, in order to distinguish it from the major attention that concentrates entirely on the Lord, facilitates the second constitutive element of self-control. We may call this

awareness the attraction of the soul to the present, the concentration of the being on its present.

93. Self-control requires also the concentration of one's faculties on the present. The age quod agis – concentrate, do well what you are doing – makes possible that every important action turns out to be like the complete and perfect flower and fruit of one's natural, supernatural, internal and external, corporal and spiritual vitality, multiplying its energy, perfecting the faculties and increasing the merit.
94. Such a concentration is achieved by getting used to exclude any reflection on what I or others did, any daydreaming about what I and others may do, any thought of what others are doing, any unnecessary thought, word or action, any interruption not warranted by work or necessity, any deviation and preoccupation of the world's opinion.
95. Evidently, self-control is exercised for the good of the individual agent, so in addition to the awareness and complete concentration on the present, it requires that the person should be concerned only about the good of others without excluding one's own, and the common good that does not exclude the private.
96. True good of others and true common good never excludes one's own good and private good, if not in the same order of good, certainly in a superior order, and so the concern of one's superior advantage co-exists, as a general norm even in every heroic act of charity, without staining it of faulty egoism.
97. True self-control is always also good self-control; it applies only to what one wants to do, and is willing to do only what one can and must do; from among all these things focuses on what is truly beneficial, and from among what is useful and helpful to what is more advantageous.
98. Most advantageous are those things that are elevated and practiced in the supernatural, especially those that more directly and intensely glorify the Lord. Above all the Lord is

glorified by the love that wants to correspond and please him. In this consists the perfect self-control in the soul.

99. In addition to this true and good self-control, for the direct, intense and perfect culture of freedom is greatly needed the exercise of the attention that we call major attention to the Lord, which on account of its divine object is totally religious and must be all loving attention.
100. Blessed are you, O Lord! Why would you have infused in us holy faith if it were not to enlighten us in the supernatural journey, to reveal supernatural things, to enable us to see and contemplate, to love and practice, and above all, to see in the light of faith, with the vision of faith and with the loving attention of faith?
101. If I believe in your presence, how could I ever dispense myself from paying loving attention to you? If faith shows me a special presence of yours, how could I justify myself for not paying you special attention? I beg you, Lord, grant me in this loving attention the enjoyment of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
102. Grant, Lord that starting to practice this loving attention with desiring and praying for it, I might finally be able to open the eyes of the soul in the light of faith, to the vision of faith, and to willingly contemplate always your divine face with spiritual delight!
103. Grant that I may pay loving attention to the things of the supernatural world, to the interferences and harmonious dependences of the visible natural world with the invisible supernatural world, invisible and yet seen in the intimate, superior light of faith, supersensible and yet perceived through the superior sense of the divine gift...
104. Above all the objects of faith in the supernatural order, grant that I may pay attention directly to the divine persons, to the divine face of the divine persons, to the divine eyes of the face of God! Above any natural and supernatural event, I want to pay attention to the one who directs and rules every event.

105. Grant me, O divine love, grant to each and every one of us, O divine lover, to be capable and to know how to pay attention. Grant that I may always want and greatly enjoy paying attention to your omnipotence, to all things of this created world, even to the inferior inanimate creatures in time and space.
106. I want to be capable to pay even more attention to your special presence in the intelligent, reasonable and free creatures, souls and angels; to your special presence and action in the creation of each of the so many souls that you create every day, every hour; to your special presence in the vocation and direction of peoples and nations.
107. Grant that I may pay attention to your presence indwelling in the living souls, through your grace; to your special presence in every progress of the souls in your grace; to your special presence in the souls when they cooperate with you in other souls for the conquest, the conservation and the increases of grace and the increments of charity.
108. Blessed are you, Lord God Trinity! Blessed are you God Father, for our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit! Grant to each and every one of us to be capable and willing to pay ever more attention of love. Grant that we may be capable and willing to enjoy ever more our attention of love to our Jesus;
109. To his special presence as head of mankind throughout the entire world; to his special presence as head and center of the holy Church; to his even more special presence as head center of all religious families, most favored people within his great chosen people, his heart and apple of his divine eyes.
110. Grant to each and every one of us to be capable and willing to pay ever more attention of love to his special presence in searching out sinners, the lost sheep that he wants to find and bring back to the fold; to his special presence among the souls united in his name and for his kingdom; to his special

presence at the side of his martyrs, persecuted, processed and sacrificed out of love for him.

111. To his special presence near those who are in agony, in order to fight and win in them, with them and for them, the decisive battle of eternity and fix their eternal sentence according to their correspondence or betrayal to his love.
112. O divine Lord, grant that every soul may be capable and be aware, that every heart may be willing and enjoy ever more paying attention of love to your special presence in the true and real renewal of the sacrifice of the cross in the holy Mass; to that most special and real presence in the divine Eucharist, sacrament of the altar.
113. To your special presence in daily communicants while the species are present; to your special presence in the poor, the humble and the suffering; to your special presence in your legitimate representatives, the superior constituted in authority; to your special presence in your priests.
114. O special presence of Jesus present and operating in his priests in the exercise of their function and priestly power! To your special presence in your saints, in your heroes that freely and triumphantly make you live again in themselves, your personal epiphany and Eucharist, in honor and imitation of your incarnation.
115. May you be eternally and infinitely blessed, O Lord! Grant that we may always more and better be able and capable, willing and happy to pay the most intelligent and loving attention to your special presence in the magisterium of the Church, in her sacred pastors, and above all in your vicar, the holy Father.
116. To your special presence in the holy Scriptures, your minor epiphany and Eucharist; to your special presence in your commandments and precepts and in every law; to your presence in your counsels and inspirations, in your divine sacraments.
117. To your presence in every sacramental and ecclesiastical rite,

in every devotion and in every means of sanctification that only and always from you receive every supernatural power and efficacy and always bring us back to you and unite us with you in love.

118. May you be eternally and infinitely blessed! Who will ever know how to pay loving attention to all your special presence in the suffering Church, in the entrance of the souls in their purification, in their dwelling and in their progressive liberation? In the distribution of the prayers for the deceased and amnesties, in their definitive liberation, in their relationships with heaven and earth, in their entrance into paradise, to their place of glory?
119. In this divine presence of yours in purgatory, grant that we may see and honor the mystery of the descent of Jesus into limbo of holy fathers and innocents, soon after his death, so as to bring to the souls of the deceased the fruit and the triumph of his passion, example and teaching for our apostolate on earth.
120. May you be eternally and infinitely blessed, O Lord! Grant to all souls to know you always more and better and desire to pay the most loving attention to your special presence near those who are being tempted, for the duration of their temptation and when they begin to give in and in the very action in which they commit sin.
121. Grant to all souls to know you always more and better and desire to pay the most loving attention to your special presence, O my God, when you are expelled from the souls, your heaven, royal palace and throne; to your presence when you besiege them with love and knock at their heart to let you in; to your presence, my Lord, in the midst of sinners when they machinate against you, conspiring against you and postponing you to the tempter.
122. To your presence near the sinners when they start listening to you with good dispositions, and much more when they open themselves to receive your grace of penance and

of charity and they reconcile with you; to your very special presence when you enter again into their souls amongst the rejoicing of the angels in heaven⁵.

123. Grant that I may see and feel, honor and embrace in this presence of yours near the sinners all the mystery of the passion and death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, renewed in the reality of sins that crucify him again, not any less than in the reality of the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist on our altars.
124. May you be eternally and infinitely blessed, O Lord! Grant to all souls to know you always more and better and desire to pay the most loving attention to your special presence in the saints, object of your special complacencies and predilections for their free correspondence to your divine love...
125. To your special presence when you, on earth, call them and make them aware of your vocation to life, to faith and holiness to which they corresponded with their perfect conversion to you; to your special presence when you inspire and receive their consecrations...
126. To your special presence in the successive trials to which your love submits them and to the victories that your love grants them; to your special presence in their consolations and desolations, in their progressive spiritual ascensions and their conquests of souls and merits without end.
127. To your very special presence at their death, so precious in your presence; in their transit to heaven, so glorious in your presence; on their encounter with the other saints and angels, in their first and eternal embrace with you, in their perpetual mission in your Church and throughout the world.
128. O my Lord, grant that I may see and feel, honor and embrace in your saints Jesus living, working and triumphing in them, in their full correspondence, in their perfect imitation,

⁵ Cf. Lk 15,10

complacency and predilection of your favorite Son in whom alone you find your delight⁶.

129. O my Lord, grant that I may see and feel, honor and embrace in the lives and works of your saints, the life and the work of the Holy Spirit living and working in their lives to form them according to Jesus Christ in the bosom of the Church and of the Father, in the heart, on the arms and with the hands of the Virgin Mary.
130. May you be eternally and infinitely blessed, O Lord God Trinity! Grant to all souls to know you always more and better and desire to pay the most loving attention to your special presence in the angelic world, in the first creation of your sons of light and of love, of your court of love's glory...
131. To your special presence in the instantaneous test and battle, to which they were subjected before anybody else, in their victorious humility and fidelity and in their eternal confirmation in grace, paradisiac glory and blessedness...
132. To your special presence in their ministry to your innumerable kingdoms and in their celestial hierarchies, in their assistance to your glory and majesty, to your divine throne, in all the ordinary and extraordinary missions that you graciously assign to them.
133. O my Lord, grant that I may see, feel, contemplate and adore your divine perfections variously reflected in the angelic choirs and orders! Your divine operations variously accomplished by individual choirs of angels! Your divine persons so marvelously portrayed in each angelic choir!
134. May you be eternally and infinitely blessed, O Lord God Trinity, in your beautiful angels and saints! Grant to all souls to know you always more and better and desire to pay the most loving attention to your special presence in Saint Joseph, viceroy of heaven.

⁶ Cf. Mk 1, 11

135. In St. Joseph, and in all the princes of the angels and of the saints, to whom he appears to be placed in charge by you, since you yourself willed him in the plan of the divine incarnation of the Word in Mary by the work of the Holy Spirit, your representative, Father, near Jesus, in the holy Family.
136. Grant that I may see and feel, honor and embrace your most special and loving presence in your eternal election and predilection of St. Joseph; in his special sanctification in the virginal marriage with the Immaculate Virgin Mary, true mother of Jesus, true God and true man...
137. Your most special and loving presence in my St. Joseph, virgin foster father of Jesus, in the exercise of his fatherly authority within the holy Family, in his regal patronage of the holy Church, in his all special relationship with the three divine persons!
138. O my God and my all! I my adored Blessed Trinity! With intimate blessedness I adore your special presence in the Seven Sovereign Angelic Spirits, the perpetual, most living and most loved Assistants to the majesty and holiness, to the truth and charity, to the bounty and charity of your divine persons.
139. Grant that I may see and feel, honor and embrace your most special and loving presence in the princes of every angelic order and choir, in our particular and general Guardian Angel, in the holy Patriarchs, Prophets and Levites, in the holy Apostles, Fathers and Founders.
140. Your special presence in the holy Pontiffs, Doctors and Catechists, in the holy miracle workers, Missionaries and Educators, in stigmatized Saints, in the saints outstanding for their vows of perfection and of divine predilections.
141. O my Lord, I find in every category of saints, in each and every saint I catch a glimpse of your special presence and actions that fulfill in them their own specific sanctification, and of others through them, that makes them outstanding in

the sky of the holy Church; grant that to it may correspond a special loving attention from my part!

142. May you be eternally and infinitely blessed, O Lord! Grant to all souls to know you always more and better and desire to pay the most loving attention to your special presence and action of privilege in the most holy Virgin Mary, true mother of God, God Jesus, divine incarnate Word.
143. To that all special presence and action of privileges in the Immaculate Conception, in her fullness of grace and virtues, of gifts and fruits, of blessedness and works of the Holy Spirit, ever growing with all their efficacy in every instant of her life.
144. Grant to all souls to always more and better know and desire to pay the most loving attention to your special presence In the Annunciation and incarnation of the Word in her and her divine maternity by the work of the Holy Spirit; to your presence in her perfect union with Jesus, especially in his sacrifice, with her co-redeeming compassion and universal motherhood.
145. To your special presence at her transit from this world and blessed resurrection, at her glorious assumption into heaven and her crowning as queen of all your kingdom, in her everlasting function of mother of grace.
146. You are in Mary, in her universal mediation of all graces for every soul, in her perpetual visitation to all souls chosen as your precursors and apostles, in our extraordinary and permanent submission of life and sweetness, hope and salvation.
147. Grant that I may desire and know how to pay attention, admiration and adoration to your special presence in Mary, in her heart, in her canticle, in her perpetual renewal of her annunciation, compassion and glorification in the formation of every new elect ... every new Jesus, every other Jesus in his saints.
148. Blessed are you eternally and infinitely, Lord God Trinity!

Grant to each and every one of us to be capable and willing to pay loving and adoring attention to your divine presence and action in the supernatural foundation constitution of your holy Church, our mother and your kingdom;

149. To your special presence in the divine, distinctive, characteristic notes of unity and holiness, catholicity and apostolicity of your Church; to your special presence in her revelation, affirmation and conservation among the people and expansion: so supernaturally alive in the world!
150. To your special presence in the history of her persecutions and battles continuously suffered and overcome, in her infallible magisterium, in her holy directives to the nations and people, to the works and individuals, the only holy guidance.
151. To your special presence in the suffering Church of purgatory, in the Church of the angels and saints in heaven, and in their communion with you; in the mystical incorporation of every soul in Jesus Christ in his holy Church.
152. O Lord, grant that I may see, understand and feel, with all the splendors, depths, heights and dilatations of virtues, gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit, this mystical body, family and kingdom whose head is Jesus Christ, whose heart is the Holy Spirit, whose members we are.
153. May you be eternally and infinitely blessed, O Lord! O my Lord, one and triune God! Grant that we all may know and correspond to your supreme grace of contemplation and union, with which you elevate us to your most intimate vision and embrace in your own self.
154. Grant that we may expand and elevate to embrace your divine presence in all the work of your creation! O infinity, O immensity, O divine eternity! O divine truth, charity and sanctity! O mysterious sceneries of the divinity working *ad extra*...
155. In all the work of our sanctification; in all the work of your

glorification in the elect and of the elect in you! O infinity, immensity of the divine glory, love and will! O mysterious sceneries of the divinity working *ad extra!*

156. O my God, grant that we may elevate and expand, adore and embrace your presence, your actuality, O divine persons; your unity of divine nature your divine infinite perfections, and yet unique infinite perfection, your very divine nature.
157. Your presence, your actuality, O three divine persons, O my Trinity that I adore, in each perfection of yours, in all your divine perfections, unique, simple, pure divine act; your divine nature, indivisibly one and only.
158. Your presence, your actuality, O three divine persons, O my Trinity that I adore, in each one of your works, even *ad extra*, in your creation and redemption, in your sanctification and glorification, in your holy family, in your Church, one, holy catholic and apostolic...
159. In every saint and angel of yours, in St. Joseph and in Mary, in each one of your creatures, in the divine unity of each operation of yours *ad extra*, in the unity of creating and saving, sanctifying and glorifying principle, your unity, O my God, operating *ad extra* of your very life.
160. O my God and my all, who will grant me, or who can grant us, but you and you alone, the ability to pay loving attention to ever presence of yours? Elevate us, expand and establish us forever, O my God and my all, in the adoration and veneration of your vision, of you in your own self...
161. To the vivifying, beatifying and deifying vision, presence and attention of the presence of one divine person in the other in your supreme, infinite and eternal, immense and immutable, inaccessible and invisible, ineffable and incommunicable mystery of your processions in the divine Trinity...
162. In the eternal generation of the Word from the Father; in the eternal *spiration* of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the

Son; in the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and from the Son. I believe in you, I adore you, I love and long for ...

163. Your presence, O divine persons, in every mission of the Word from the Father; the visible mission in the world, the invisible missions in the souls; your presence, O divine persons, in every mission of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, the visible mission on Pentecost Sunday, the invisible mission in the grace ...
164. Your presence, O divine persons, one always in the other, distinct and yet indivisible from the other, in the divine circuminsession that I believe and adore, that I love and long for. May the union of every soul with you, O Blessed Trinity, be your honor and glorification of adoration.
165. For this divine union with you, O adorable Lord, grant me the gift and the spirit, the understanding and the sense, the experience and life of this loving attention to your presence in each actuality, manifestation and effect of it in an ever higher and more intimate level.
166. From every presence of yours, grant that it may arrive to me the warning and invitation: "*Magister adest et vocat te*⁷ – *the Teacher is here and calls you*". May every angel bring and repeat it until the soul in ecstasy of love prostrates herself before you, with all her being in flight and in song, in flames and tears of love to your divine persons.
167. "If you had been here!"⁸ And you are always present! If I had remained in your presence, no good would have died, all my good would have been maintained and grown, would have blossomed and fructified, and every other good would have been received and led me to perfect union and deification in you, O my God and my all!

⁷ Jn 11, 28.

⁸ Jn 11, 21.

168. Be eternally and infinitely blessed, O my God Trinity! Where do you want me to pay attention to your presence, from time to time? Finally, in your grace I have understood and determined to pay attention, to concentrate all my attention on you, my God and my all!
169. O my God and my all, I expect from you, or through your external representatives, my superiors, or through your internal representatives, my spiritual directors, or through authors of good books, that your providence may place in my hands, for my good ...
170. Or through the good exhortations and instructions that your providence allows to be given and received by me, or through external events that come to my knowledge, or through the duties that I must fulfill, moment by moment, in your glory, love and will ...
171. Or through internal attractions, enlightenments and motions coming from the angels, from my angel, coming from the good spirit, your Spirit, you call me to this or that mystery, to this or that supernatural appointment with you, present and working in me.
172. When with the mystic sense of your presence and action you should not completely absorb my being in you, I shall help and attempt, with your grace, to actualize, maintain and extend your presence with my little method of the loving attention.
173. I will focus on what you do, what you say, on your perfections and nature, on your person, and on all this as far as it concerns my self and your self, without any preoccupation and concern other than paying attention to you and staying with you.
174. As one who reverently but passionately attempts to look right in the face of the person who is present, because more than his works and gifts, he wants his words, and in his words he wants his feeling of love, he sees and wants his heart, and in his heart he wants his person.

175. Through your works I will seek and unite myself, at least with the desire of love, to your Spirit, and I will receive his fruits, gifts and beatitudes, in perfect human-divine works, and I shall receive him as my Spirit of love, as my very personal, living relation of love with you, Father and Son!
176. Through your words I will seek and unite myself to your Word-Son, at least with my desire of love, and I shall receive his teaching and divine-human example, imitation, instruction and cooperation. I shall receive him as my glory of love with which to please and glorify your entire divinity and Blessed Trinity.
177. Through your divine perfections I shall ascend and seek your nature and unity, and in it I shall contemplate your own Trinity in its font and principle, and I shall unite myself to you, Father, to you, divine will, and you yourself shall be my communion of love with the Son and the Holy Spirit.
178. Thus, I shall make experience and practice the loving attention, as the very first condition, way, level and form of receiving the divine good, of uniting myself to you, O my infinite good, because in order to give yourself to me, you expect that I pay attention to you.
179. Please, Lord, grant me ever more the sense and enjoyment of your presence, the fruit and the beatitude of your presence, in perennial, progressive augment of the virtue of faith and vision of faith, and in it the elevations of hope and the unity of charity. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

Abnegation¹

“Only the bride follows and must always follow the groom”. A necessary practice for the soul-spouse is self-abnegation. The disciple follows his teacher, the son follows his parents, but only the soul spouse becomes one with Jesus forever. Only bad use or abuse of one’s freedom can cause possible separations between bride and groom; to prevent this we practice abnegation, which more than in denying one’s family, home, country or a certain condition, consists in living here and now the spousal relation with the Lord. The formula of abnegation of one’s self is: You alone and forever, O my God and my all!

180. “He who wants to follow me, must deny his own self, embrace, raise and carry his cross and follow me.”² This you say to the souls, O my Lord Jesus Christ! In you, O Jesus, is the Holy Spirit who repeats the same invitation, and in you, O Jesus, O Holy Spirit is the divine Father himself that repeats it.
181. I ask myself: “Who wants to follow Jesus? Who wants to follow the Trinity?” I go among the souls seeking: “Who wants to after Jesus, who wants to follow the Trinity?” I keep repeating it to the crowds and to the communities, whispering it in the ears and to the heart of every person.
182. I say the same thing to my body and to its senses, fantasy

¹ In the manuscript the title is preceded by this note: “Continuation of the culture of freedom”.

² Cf. Mk 8, 34.

and sentiment: “Who wants to follow Jesus and the Blessed Trinity?” I say it to my spirit, to my memory, intellect and will: “Do you want to follow Jesus and the Blessed Trinity?” Why don’t you jump for joy? Why don’t you answer?

183. O my soul, O my life, O my freedom, O my personality, do you want to follow Jesus and the Blessed Trinity? They have understood that it is a question of following forever! It would have been different if it were question of a visit, even for three months, or a school, even of three years!³
184. Or do the conditions of self-denial and carrying the cross create an unpleasant impression? They would certainly create a negative impression in those who would not understand the value of following Jesus, the meaning of his invitation, of his proposal and offering: come after me.
185. It is a question of entering the nuptial relationship with the Lord God Trinity in Jesus and through Jesus, because only the bride follows and must always follow the groom, only the soul spouse always follows Jesus and is all union with him, more than following is a perfect adhesion, consummately perfect.
186. Even the disciple follows his teacher; likewise the son follows his father and mother. The disciple in due time will become head of school and will leave his teacher; the son becomes head of his own family and leaves his father and mother to cling to his wife and to his new home.
187. At Jesus’ school the course never ends, and the program is never exhausted; one never receives a title that in addition of habilitating him to a teaching mission that would separate him from the unique eternal school, from the only eternal teacher that wants us his eternal disciples.
188. The disciples, at times, are separated from their teacher, sent

³ Seems to be referring to the visit of Mary to St. Elizabeth and to the three years that the apostles spent with Jesus during his public life.

by the teacher himself to prepare souls and peoples to receive the teacher. To the disciples Jesus said: It is good for you that I go, that I deprive you of my presence, and, somehow, it is good that I leave you.⁴

189. Jesus' family is more than patriarchal whose head is always the first Father; Jesus is the head, but the patriarch also sends his children far away, he only keeps with him the favorite, first Joseph and then Benjamin; he does not willingly let them go away from him.⁵
190. The favorite is not allowed to leave! He is the spouse of the heart, he is the soul spouse that adheres to Jesus forever; he does not tolerate that the soul spouse is separated from him: those who reach this divine, supreme union are established and confirmed in an almost inseparable way from the Lord.
191. They sing with the Apostle: "Who can separate us from the love of Christ, from the love of God Trinity to whom we have been united in Jesus Christ? No power from hell, earth or sky can ever separate us from him; no suffering or human necessity will ever be able to break this divine bond."⁶
192. What no diabolic, human or angelic power could ever do, can be done by the freedom of the soul spouse of the most holy Trinity, since the Lord granted complete freedom to the soul spouse, because freedom is an essential element and condition for the divine nuptial relationship.
193. The supernatural culture of freedom is required to prevent this betrayal, this violence of dividing, with the agony of the soul spouse and with infinite offense to God, what is inseparable, the most intimate adhesion that forms the most harmonic unity...
194. The most harmonic and harmonious physical and moral,

⁴ Cf. Jn 16, 7.

⁵ Cf. Gn 37-45.

⁶ Cf. Rm 8, 35.

intellectual and ascetical, Eucharistic and seraphic, apostolic and mystic, human-divine and divine-human unity; the union of the soul with God, the union of the Lord, the bridegroom, with the soul spouse in the supernatural order.

195. Who can dethrone God from his throne of glory of love? Who will throw him out of his nuptial bed and palace of love in the soul? Those who dared to do it in the first rebellion with the first and most harmful sin lost the blessed eternity, and as its only effect got hell.
196. What they could not obtain in paradise's heaven, they can achieve in the soul's heaven through the alliance with human freedom concluded in the darkness of betrayal: thus, terribly takes place the infinite offense of the devil and of the sinner to the creator.
197. O malice of sin, O infamy of sin, O outrageous violence of the expulsion of the spouse God from the soul! O nameless and purposeless unhappiness of the soul, emptied of the Lord through her own fault, through her own free will, deprived of her God and her spouse!
198. The soul spouse who wants and must adhere to Jesus and follow him inseparably, indivisibly and indissolubly must deny herself, pick up, embrace, lift up and carry her own cross; only thus she can follow him inseparably, indivisibly and indissolubly.
199. She must deny herself because she becomes the bride of the Trinity in Jesus Christ. The Bride must leave her people and her country, the house of her father and mother;⁷ the very name received from the previous town and from her natural family, from her previous profession and condition.
200. Now she marries and receives the home and the condition of the groom. With him she forms a new condition and a new family; the groom is all, he is everything, he is the supreme

⁷ Cf. Gn 12, 1; Mt 19, 5.

and integral sufficiency and her fullness; he is her head and heart, and with him she forms a harmonious and harmonic unity.

201. If she were not to deny and leave all that binds her to any other town, family and person, condition and profession, that unity of marital relationship could not be formed in its great totality, and even though it could give the illusory impression of having been formed, soon it will crumble.⁸
202. All that the soul really possesses has it in her free will, acquires it with her free will, she receives and welcomes it from other, but always and only with her free will; all that the soul is summed up and culminates in her free will, in her freedom.
203. In this free will comes about the divine union; to the person's freedom is addressed the divine lover's word that says: "Deny yourself", so that the soul, human person, may be able to adhere to the divine persons, her only spouse, as her only God in Jesus Christ.
204. Leaving one's home, family, profession or condition is understandable! But how can we understand the abnegation and denial of one's self? How can we understand the separation from one's self and going out of one's self? What is the mystery and the mysterious action of this abnegation and denial of one's self?
205. It is not only: "leave your family, your town and country."⁹ It is not only: "forget your people, your house, your father."¹⁰ It cannot be referred to the exit of the soul from the body, which is common to the just, the sinners and the beasts.

⁸ Verses 199, 200 and 201 while reflecting biblical, liturgical and civil laws about sacramental marriage, lead us to better understand that human marriage is only a pallid image of the mystical marriage of the soul with God.

⁹ Cf. Gn 12, 1.

¹⁰ Ps 44, 11b.

206. Could it mean an absorption and annihilation of one's personality in the Lord as a fusion and assimilation in the Lord? This is error by excess; it would not be union but destruction. The bridegroom would have consumed a meal not his marriage!¹¹
207. My soul, do not end up understanding: "Deny yourself" as an allusion to all the practices of interior mortification, mortification of the egoism, of the worldly mentality, of the superfluity of the cognitions and affections, and any other interior mortification.
208. Think carefully that in each of these beautiful, elevated, necessary and indispensable interior mortifications, the soul is detached from her defects, her incrustations, her enemies, something strictly alien, not hers, nor from herself.
209. First she is invited, and then, after her consent, she is required to abnegate, deny herself if she wants to follow Jesus, that is, if she wants to adhere to Jesus and be united indissolubly and inseparably to him, that is, be the soul-spouse of God in Jesus Christ.
210. To deny or abnegate oneself means simply and exclusively to enter, to live and cultivate the nuptial love relationship with the Lord. To abnegate oneself consists in being a personal loving relation of love with the Lord, affectively, effectively and continually.
211. This perpetual transportation of the whole being, of all my person, of all my feeling and acting in ardor of love, in impetus of love, in joy of love, in direct and intense acts of love with the Lord, object of the relationship of love.
212. This and only this is the true and integral abnegation and self denial, negating to be the center of reference for one's

¹¹ In this verse Fr. Justin clearly highlights the difference between the false spiritualistic current of the "new Age" that does not see a clear distinction between creature and creator and the Catholic teaching.

own thoughts, affections and desires. This is possible only with our free will, this is feasible only by our own free will, this is the will's exercise.

213. This is simultaneously exercise and culture, elevation and exercise, perfecting and exercise of our freedom; it is dowry and perfection of our will, of our movement and transport toward the good, that is, toward God, infinite goodness in himself and for us.
214. As infinite good in himself, God offers, gives, and unites himself to us as our infinite good, in every relation with us and maximally in his supreme possible relation of infinite love with us, between God and his creature, between God and the human person: the nuptial relation.
215. O my sense, sentiment and fantasy let us go; let us go, O my memory intellect and will; let us go, O my life, freedom and person, O my body, spirit and soul, let us go to Jesus and let us incessantly live our Easter, passage to the Lord, in a perpetual ascension to the Lord!
216. So that this culture and exercise of the free will may be complete and integral, as required by the marital relationship, which is a relation of total transport toward the loved one, relation of union of the all being with the other loved being, with the exclusion of everybody else.
217. In the nuptial relation with the Lord that excludes even the self, so as to verify the self-control, it is necessary that the loved one, not only his work, doctrine and perfection, but all his very self, his person directly, be totally of the soul, so that she may say: *My all!*
218. You alone and forever, O my God and my All! It is a paraphrase of the term spouse, is the circumlocution of the term spouse; it is the definition, comprehension and extension of the term spouse, when the spouse is God! You alone and forever, O my God and my all!
219. You alone and forever, O my God and my all, as the adequate objects of my senses, fantasy and sentiment, memory, intel-

- lect and will, life, person, liberty and all. You alone, truth and bounty, love and infinite life, you alone and forever-adequate object of all my aspirations, faculties and potentiality.
220. You alone and forever, O my God and my all, as principle of attraction, principle of initiative, of inspiration and motor of every voluntary act and status, of every voluntary occupation and relation, of every fear and desire, of every joy and pain, of every hatred and love.
221. With decisive and perfect exclusion of any other principle outside of you, and especially if it comes from me, under the influence of others outside of you, because the true and entire abnegation and denial of myself, that you want and impose on the one who wants to really follow.
222. You alone and forever, O my God and my all, as exemplar principle of all that I must be, become and do in me, in the souls and in the world, with decisive and perfect exclusion of any other principle, even if it were to copy your own self, because a copy, ever of imperfect nature, cannot be the exemplar that you alone are.
223. In the copy there is always the element of humanity, the successive and limited, natural and sensible element; the element that is also in me, my own self. If I really want to follow you, my abnegation and self denial must be true and integral.¹²

¹² The manuscript of this work ends (verses 1424-26) synthesizing this original thought of Fr. Justin, that is the golden thread of the entire work: "He who understands that supernatural life is divine life in us and understands that every life, as every love, never says enough to its development, to flourish and fructify, because it would be his death, this one understands Christian asceticism.

He who lives this truth of ascension, lives in divine life, lives in charity, lives the reality and truth that life and love are one thing, living and tri-personal love-God, that does not cease to communicate himself through grace, and to unite himself in grace to the one who corresponds to it.

224. You alone and forever, O my God and my all, are the concomitant principle, because I cannot be nor operate by myself, there is no good for man being alone,¹³ but you who create out of nothingness, you who anticipate every healthy good, you alone continue to conserve every good for your creature.
225. Even in this you want a decisive and total exclusion of any other concomitance, except the one of your creature, outside of yours with the soul that follows you, and especially outside the idolatrous company of the self with the self in the unnatural doubling and pairing of those who want to act alone.
226. You alone and forever, O my God and my all, you are my habitat, my sphere, my heaven, my air and my light. I abnegate and reject the very imperfect habitat that I form for myself, the unhealthy atmosphere that my egoism expand around me, going out of the sphere of external influence and irradiation.¹⁴
227. If even in the natural order "in you we live, move and have our being"¹⁵ it must be much more so in the supernatural order; and in the supernatural order it must be much more so in the nuptial relation of love, which consists in living more in the one we love than in ourselves. In you, my God that I must and want to truly follow.
228. You alone and you forever, O my God and my all, are my

The very essence of Catholic Religion is this relation of love with the most high God Trinity; if it is relation, it is elevation and rapture of love; if it is relation with the most High God, it must be endless, unlimited, perpetual ascension".

¹³ Cf. Gn 2, 18a.

¹⁴ We can see in this verse the social structure of sin that affects not only the sinner but also our neighbors in particular and society in general.

¹⁵ Cf. Act. 17, 28.

only great way¹⁶ to go to your kingdom, to your royal palace, to the Father! To come to you in the Spirit, in the Father and in your own self. You are the only way, the only bridge over the abyss between humanity and divinity, only mediator even by nature between the Lord God and the soul ...

229. Denying and renouncing to any other false security, to any foolish illusion, to any sacrilegious presumption of mine to be able to go forward and elevate myself too you, through any other way other than you, through whom all that is good and worthy was done.
230. You alone and you forever, O my God and my all, you are the only great way and the only divine means suitable to go through it.¹⁷ Only through you, O Jesus, we have our ascension to heaven, our Access and presentation to the Father; without you we remain and sink lower and lower.
231. In your arms, in your heart, in your mind, everything and always through you! In your boat, with your net, in your word, for your blood! In your name, in your light, in your virtue, in your work I shall arrive at you and with you to the entire Trinity in the Father.
232. You alone and forever, O my God and my all, unique principle and unique end of everything, glory of love to you, glory of correspondence to your love, glory of love: flower and fruit of the creating virtue of your word, flower and fruit of the saving value of your blood, passion, death and Eucharist.
233. The glory of love, flower and fruit of the mission and effusion of the Holy Spirit, ultimate goal of the living and personal image and likeness of the divinity and Trinity, which is the human soul, meant to be this supreme relation of love with the divine persons in you and for you, O my Jesus.

¹⁶ Cf. Jn 14, 6.

¹⁷ Cf. Heb 10, 20

234. All this abnegation of one's self and all this denial of one's self, so intimate and deep, so extended and so high, so integral and absolute, so constant and perpetual, it cannot be accomplished with a simple renunciation and sacrifice, cannot be accomplish with a simple act of separation and abandonment, we can not do it quickly.
235. We cannot do it perfectly, with the perfection that Jesus intents and expects; we cannot do it only with the intent of doing our Christian duty, or health penance; it cannot be done only out of fear or of prudence, or for any other good intention and supernatural motivation; it can be accomplished only out of love, and a more than filial love.
236. It is really perfect as Jesus intents and wants it, when it is done permanently and ever more intensely and fully with nuptial love and motivated by nuptial love. The very nature of nuptial love requires it as a condition, aliment and increment.
237. The whole world effects and fosters in us egocentrism; the whole hell influences and sustains in us the darkest egoism. Our whole human spirit with all its energies and tremendous vitality forms it own cocoon of worm, hides, closes itself in, and does not want to come out.
238. The soul, person, freedom must, if she wants (and if she wants, she can accomplish it in the unfailing divine grace), lift high this cross of evangelical abnegation and self denial, embrace and carry it, until on it takes place the ultimate union.
239. The soul, person, freedom must embrace this cross of perennial effort and battle against every internal and external difficulty and opposition to the abnegation and self-denial; this cross of struggle and violence against every external and internal influence and bond that impedes abnegation and self-denial.
240. The soul, person, freedom must embrace this cross of her free will continually flattered, weakened and attracted

downward and backward while Jesus wants her forward and upward, always following him ascending to heaven, to the Father. She must elevate, embrace and carry victoriously this cross as her flame of love.

241. The soul must elevate, embrace and carry victoriously her cross until she has completely fulfilled her trial, achieved her victory and fruit, has reached the thalamus of the divine union, and made of it her altar and throne, as previously had done her spouse Jesus and continuously does with the cross of the sins of the whole world.
242. With perfect exercise of abnegation and on going self denial, always actually habitual, always habitually actual, the soul becomes immediately capable of following you the way you intent and want, O Lord God my Jesus, in the supernatural nuptial relation.
243. He, who does not renounce to everything he possesses, finds himself in the incapability of being his disciple.¹⁸ Likewise, he who is not capable of understanding and is not ready to separate himself from any human-natural affection, even licit and legitimate when it is required by your love, cannot be his disciple.
244. The one who has effectively made these renunciations and separations, is not yet your follower, but has placed himself happily in the supernatural condition of being your disciple. What else does he need, my Lord, to actually come after you, at least as your disciple?
245. He has acquired the proximate capacity to come after you; in order to enter the immediate capacity to follow you must abnegate and renounce to his self! Even doing so, he is not yet one who effectively follows you, but has only acquired the remote, proximate and immediate capacity to follow you!
246. One more thing is needed that the soul really wills it, her

¹⁸ Cf. Mk 10, 17-22.

free will practically, effectively and actually wants it. Even when all that is needed and desired is beautifully there, the human soul may not want it on account of the freedom God has given her.

247. O freedom, O liberty, divine gift, summit of the divine living, personal image and likeness that is my soul, Jesus is waiting for you, he wants you, and every delay on your part is an offence to his majesty, every sluggish or imperfect act of yours is an offence to the infinite merit that he is, the infinite merit that he is in himself.
248. I need to see you, Lord, in order to follow you. How can I follow one that I do not see? This is true, and that is why we are given faith, the vision of faith, and the exercise of the loving attention to his presence¹⁹ and with it comes the vision of faith of the Lord that I must follow, that calls and expects me.
249. Is it enough to see one in order to follow him? It is necessary to have the willingness to follow him, in order to actually follow him even after having seen him, and even seeing him always present ahead of you, at your side and in you²⁰, - don't you know it well, my soul, through your long experience? - You must want to see him. In order to see him you need God's grace!
250. The Lord offers it to you, to each and everyone! What will you do? What will they do? Now, one must again want to accept or refuse it. Everything is God's gift, but is also your work. Accept and pray always that every soul may accept, receive and use this gift, according to the divine mind.
251. I accept! I accept and come after you, my Lord. Take, Lord, *universam mean libertatem, all, all my freedom!* Because you

¹⁹ For the loving attention to the divine presence, see previous chapter.

²⁰ This verse seems to echo an Irish song, known as St. Patrick's pectoral: Christ beside me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ to my right, Christ to my left, Christ when I sleep, Christ when I get up".

have made me free, with all its consequences, ratify, with your possession and dominion, the use I make of my freedom, offering it to you, Lord, Trinity.

CHAPTER 4

Election¹

This fourth chapter deals with the central, fundamental and essential act of the culture of freedom: the virtuous habit of choosing, the exercise of choosing. This exercise of election – says Fr. Justin – is like a divine instinct, a blessed necessity that helps us to live in the supernatural almost connaturally.

The election is the first act of love that leads to friendship and to the supreme level of friendship, the nuptial love that always chooses its object. Fr. Justin uses the beautiful image of the election as the golden tread that connects all the pearls of the love's necklace ... if this tread breaks, all gets lost ... if the election ends ... the relationship is over.

First effect of the election will be an integral, ascensional purity;

Second effect of the election will be an integral, ascensional humility;

Third effect of the election will be an integral, ascensional charity. "I choose you, integral, ascensional charity, fire that transforms everything in its own alimenta-tion, fire that carries everything to heaven".

This will lead us to the assimilation with the Lord in the holy Church:

1. Militant Church = purity
2. Suffering Church = Humility
3. Triumphant Church = Charity

¹ In the manuscript, this heading of the chapter is followed by the following historical note: "Amen! Alleluia! J.M.J. Mercato Cilento, April 24, 1944. Commemoration of St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen. Continuation of the culture of freedom."

This will plunge us in the assimilation with the Lord in the holy Family.

1. *St. Joseph = purity*
2. *Mary = humility*
3. *Jesus = charity*

This will take us to the assimilation with the Lord in the great world of the Trinity.

1. *God Father = purity*
2. *God Son = humility*
3. *God Holy Spirit = Charity*

252. O My Lord how can I really prevent any possible abuse of my freedom? Truly, the person that does not hate her soul, will ruin and lose her for eternity. One cannot hate but what is truly evil, for being evil, and truly only any offence to the Lord is evil.
253. The offence to God is only possible, (and so many a times really committed in the human soul) precisely in her highest power, her most beautiful gift, her greatest asset, her most precious treasure, her supreme point ... it could be said divine.
254. Sin is possible, and actually is committed only in our freedom and by our human freedom, and on account of this horrible possibility of evil, of this tremendous reality of evil, truly freedom should be hated by its own self², regarded and treated as the worst enemy, and is treated with fear and mistrust.
255. I mean the soul in her freedom, or simply: freedom itself. There is no worst enemy to fear than one's own freedom, there is no worst enemy to fight than one's own freedom, there is no worst peril to be avoided than one's own liberty: "*ab homine iniquo et doloso libera me Domine - O Lord, deliver me from the unjust and deceitful man.*"³

²This hatred of one's own will must be seen in the light of Jn. 12, 25.

³Ps 43, 1b

256. O, how I would like to guarantee myself forever from this tremendous reality of evil! You want this for me much more than I, and for this you enwrap me totally in your grace, from every corner, in every possible way and my greater good.
257. O, if I could want to really correspond, that is, to receive your grace! O, if my will were always able to know and want to choose you, open itself to receive you with full consciousness and dominion of its freedom, I would have obtained this guarantee of paradise.
258. I see, my Lord, as you have steered the inferior beings, the living vegetables to their finality, and they all infallibly reach it with that level of organic life; the living sensitive beings also reach infallibly their finality with their perfect instinct. What do I need to reach infallibly my finality?
259. I also see, my Lord, or at least I catch a glimpse of how the angels, the saints and all the blessed comprehensors, after having overcome the trial and in the possession of the eternal reward, live and act accordingly in a supreme level of life, of activity and of freedom that seems to be, at the same time, a divine instinct and a blessed, holy and divine necessity.
260. O, truly in the supernatural order above all, O would need a divine instinct and a blessed, holy and divine necessity, because it is extremely important not to err in it, and in it I am horribly exposed to mistakes, and in it I have no capacity or exigency whatsoever.
261. You offer me this supreme level of life and action in a divine instinct and necessity, as a peak to be freely reached, as a reward to be freely merited, as a victory to be freely attained, and I am already open to receive the gift of grace ... I want it, Lord!
262. It is not only convenient, harmonious and wise, but it is also necessary that this supreme level of life and action, animated and directed by this divine instinct and necessity be wanted and received according to my nature of free person, so that it may be for me an elevation and not a degradation.

263. So that I may not stop, but keep going in becoming always more image and likeness of the three divine persons, in the participation of divine nature, and consequently in my freedom, their highest gift and likeness.
264. May this freedom of mine be elevated to the necessity of the divine being that is love, to the divine necessity of the divine life that is love, to the necessity of the divine perfections that are love, to the divine necessity of the divine persons who is love, to the divine necessity of the divine relation, that are love!
265. O divine necessity, you reveal yourself in the glory of your infinite freedom, of your infinite freedom of your creation and redemption of souls, of your sanctification and glorification of souls that you have freely chosen, loved and sought in the mystery of you election, love and will.
266. Since you have chosen, loved and sought them, you had to love them with intensity worthy of you; they are like you, your image and likeness in this very divine freedom and necessity to which you have called and accompanied them.
267. I am before the first step, the lowest level of the angelic ladder of the ascension toward the supreme perfection of my free will, of my voluntary freedom, which is the being animated by the divine instinct and necessity of divine love, i.e. of God Holy Spirit.
268. What is this first level and lowest step that the divine love offers me and that I can accept, if I want, and through your grace I want? It is the virtuous habit, are all the virtuous habits, which form like a second nature and incline us to act piously, almost as by instinct.
269. As a holy instinct convenient to my freedom, because it is freely acquired, because these virtuous habits freely wanted and molded in freedom, are worthy nourishment for freedom, adequate support and true perfection of freedom.
270. Among all virtuous habits, the most nourishing and perfecting of freedom, is the one directly connected with its essen-

tial fundamental and central act. I must hold in the highest esteem all virtuous habits, and I want that all my supernatural habits become virtuous habits.

271. I want that all virtuous habits of infused virtues, through constant and intense exercise, become virtuous, connatural habits that can help me to live in the supernatural, connaturally and in the most perfect, happy and meritorious manner.
272. Every infused virtue corresponds to one side of my multifaceted inner being, of my multifaceted life, relations and my freedom of will, with the respective virtuous habits, from every side, in every act and in every state will be nurtured, perfected and saved by its abnegations.
273. Among all virtuous habits, the one that interests me the most, that better corresponds to the central, fundamental and essential act of my freedom, coincides with the virtuous habit of the supreme virtue that is love, because it favors more than anything else the culture of my nuptial relation of love with the most holy Trinity.
274. The fundamental, central and essential act of my free will is the choice, the election that I can always make, when it is a question of living, moving and acting among all created relative good. Before the uncreated, absolute good I cannot choose, because he is only one!
275. O infinite good of truth, you are the only one! That is why before the truth, my intellect cannot remain indifferent or cold, but the vehemence of love embraces the truth and becomes one with it. O infinite good of love, you are the only one! Before you, my will cannot remain indifferent or cold.
276. With vehemence of love, my will embraces, possesses dedicates itself to correspond to you integrally. Among the created goods and the ways of wanting them, among the means to obtain them and the levels of adhesion to them, there is always a multiplicity and so the possibility to choose and elect, there is plenty of room for freedom.

277. There is an open field of options to want or not to want, to want this or that. Poor me!⁴ The divine good is infinite in itself, but the participations of the divine good in the souls are created good, they are limited, multiple and multiform, even among them there is a vast field of choices!
278. Poor me! I have so many reasons to fear that I may not be capable or willing to choose rightly! "*Ab homine iniquo et doloso eripe me, Domine - Deliver me from the unjust and deceitful man, O Lord.*"⁵ Deliver me, Lord, from this man, from my humanity, such a deceitful subject and object of deceptions!
279. The choice is the first act of love. Love that leads to friendship and to the supreme form of friendship, which is marital love, chooses its object, which will become the other component of its relationship; any other form of love, like filial or parental love, does not choose by itself its object.
280. This first act that constitutes, expresses and communicates love, this choice persists throughout the entire relation of love; it is the golden thread that keeps together all the pearls of the love's necklace; if this thread breaks, everything gets lost, the whole relation is changed ... it is finished!
281. The virtuous habit of choosing perfects freedom and love, especially marital love, even and above all in the supernatural order. The Lord, who wants this love and this relation, has placed in the infused charity the grace of this virtuous habit.
282. So that the soul may soon be oriented and placed in the path of this virtuous habit, the Lord has given us, as a logic instinct, the innate, or immediately acquired criterion of choosing the better one between two goods, so that it appears unreasonable to do or feel otherwise.
283. I want you, I want only you, I want you forever, O my adored and adorable Trinity, O my God and my all! For you

⁴ Hint of the inner dilemma of St. Paul in Rm 7,14-24.

⁵ Ps 43, 1b.

I want every good, everything, every creature, only and if it can help me to come to you, to offer myself to you and unite myself to you.

284. Outside of you, O my God and my all, everything is only a means to the end that is only you, O my God and my all. Among all means I must consider the greatest only the one that elevates, brings and unites me more to you; I must choose and use it above all other means.
285. I prefer the use of this mean without condemning or absolutely excluding the others, because being limited and mutable, successive and perfectible, what I preferred today as more useful to my goal, tomorrow may turn out to be an obstacle or impediment, thus becoming a lesser good, and consequently I must prefer and use another mean.
286. If these created goods, O my God and my all, participate more of you, like the gift of your grace, the religious exercises, the devotions, works of apostolate, your angels and saints, even while holding on something particular, I intent and long to embrace everything.
287. I intent to embrace with my desire everything, with the intention of glorifying you lovingly in all devotions and gifts of grace, with the glory that render to you all the angels and saints, Saint Joseph, and Mary most holy, even though moment by moment I can do only one thing, one thing at a time with direct and specialized action.
288. All that you are, all your divine perfections and operations, your divine persons and missions, your mysteries and revelations, all the times I want you, I want them too as I want you, because I want all of you, O my God and my all.
289. Give me everything, O my God and my all! In the mysteries of your incarnate, divine Word, of his divine-human life, I will see the supreme rule of my practical choice, among all the intentions and dispositions, among all acts and states, among all the dignities and missions.
290. Divine wisdom in person, Jesus Christ, became man to fa-

cilitate my choice. I choose and must always choose for the intentions and dispositions of Jesus, the acts and states of Jesus, the dignity and functions of Jesus, the mission and the missions of Jesus Christ.

291. The example of Jesus according to the Gospel of Holy Scripture, according to the gospel of the doctrine of the Church, according to the gospel of life, works and teachings of the saints will be my practical criterion to make my specific choices case by case in the events of my life in time and space.
292. According to this divine example and teaching, the soul shall choose, among material and temporal things related to wealth, honor, pleasures and all that concern her person, what is less valuable and less pleasant to the taste of her human spirit and the judgment of the world in her environment.
293. Among spiritual things for the divine service of love and for the divine apostolate of love, both relatively to herself and to the neighbor, the soul will always choose what, according to her knowledge, may be more and better according to the judgment of the Church and the interior taste of wisdom, gift of the Holy Spirit.
294. The fact of choosing the least and the worst among material and temporal things will be like a perpetual spiritualization, her integral and progressive purity, from the negative side, that is the progressive liberation from the material to which she will never be attached because she chooses the least and the worst; she cannot be overburdened by this because she chooses the less.
295. The fact of choosing always the more and the better among spiritual and superior things will promote her everlasting, progressive and integral purity; on the positive side, through the assimilation with the Lord, most pure spirit, most simple act and most perfect being, love attracts and unites the soul to him.

296. O integral and progressive purity first effect in the soul that gets closer and follows Jesus Christ with constant imitation! You are illumination and purification, liberation and elevation deriving from the divine presence and action upon those who choose Jesus in each of their intentions and dispositions in each act and state.
297. Others call you poverty, elsewhere you are called poverty because they see only your external apparel, your inferior element, your constant exercise! O poverty, you are the integral and progressive purity, which is so much above all earthly values, that would even want a name on this earth.
298. As far as I am concerned, following the example of the one who taking human nature did not want to be a human person, but remained only divine person in the divine and human nature, I must always choose the more perfect forms and more impregnated od abnegation of his personality.
299. In order to be ever more affirmation of the Trinity and of the divine person, while keeping always my distinct and real personality for all eternity, I must do of my person an ever more transparent veil that reveals and does not hide the divine person.
300. I want to be such an abnegation of myself, and such an affirmation of the Lord that will take me to be an imitation and likeness of the hypostatic union of Jesus Christ, man-God, or better, to be an adoring tribute of the hypostatic union, inaccessible and incommunicable in any asceticism and mysticism.
301. Practically in every internal and external faculty, I will choose obedience, even in the very exercise of authority that may be communicated or imposed upon me; I will choose for myself integrally perfect obedience of creature and servant, soldier and disciple, son and friend, lover and spouse.
302. In this supreme lowering, concealment and denial of my personality, I see shining forth the supreme elevation, mani-

festation and affirmation of the divine persons that find their great delight and effuse their highest predilections on the humble soul.

303. O integral and progressive humility, second effect in the soul that gets closer and follows Jesus with constant imitation! In you the soul becomes ever more image and likeness of the divine nature, perfections and operations, especially in the lowering, concealment and denial of her personality.
304. O humility, you are such a great and bright radiation of divine glory that you fascinate the soul to fear for her own self at the sound of your name; for this you name yourself "obedience" from your main flower and fruit, from the internal environment that you form through your exercise.
305. O integral and progressive humility and purity, I chose you, I will always choose you, I will highlight you in religious instruction to the souls, in the religious culture of works, in everything and in all my neighbors, because you are object of the same divine preferences and predilections in Jesus Christ our Lord.
306. With you, O humility and purity, with your light and strength you lead me to always choose in what concerns the Lord in himself, in his perfections and operations, in his laws and counsels, in his images and representatives, in the divine religion and liturgy, in all the mysteries of the incarnate Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, what more directly, intensely and explicitly makes me know the divine persons.
307. I will always choose what makes me honor and adore the divine persons, elevates and unites to his divine persons, all that is true charity, and within charity the most direct, intense and unifying acts and relative corresponding states.
308. I choose you, O integral and progressive charity, gift of all gifts and virtue of all virtues, fruit of all fruits, beatitude of all beatitudes, merit of all merits, glory of all glories, O divine charity of God and neighbor, through which the Lord directly attracts and unites the soul to himself.

309. I choose you, charity, fire that transforms everything in its own nutriment, except even the minimally sinful act, fire that transports everything to heaven where visibly tends as to its sphere, fire that knows the mystery of the divinity of which it is creature, irradiation and blessed communication to the souls who accept and follow him.
310. From among all the nutrients of charity, I choose those that mainly and more directly and intensely promote its increases, those that more participate of its very nature, those that in themselves are already effects of charity in its previous levels and elevate it to higher levels.
311. O love God, fill me abundantly with the most direct, intense and prolonged acts of admiration and adoration, of complacency and benevolence, of compassion and consolation, thanksgiving and desire, limitless and endless desires to see, listen, please, serve and possess you and belong to you.
312. O purity, humility and charity progressively integral and integrally progressive, I want to choose you always as culture and exercise in the practice of all virtues, in the fulfillment of all duties and in the observance of all rules, doing everything in your spirit, in your light and strength.
313. I choose and embrace you in the sky of the holy Church, in the great world of the Holy Family, in the great paradise of the Blessed Trinity! You, O purity, humility and charity, image and likeness of the triple holy Church, of the three persons of the Holy Family and of the Blessed Trinity.
314. O purity, holy militant Church! O humility suffering Church! O Charity holy triumphant Church! O purity, St. Joseph! O humility, Virgin Mary! O charity, my Jesus! O purity, God Father, O humility, God Son, O charity God Holy Spirit! I want you, I choose you, save my freedom!
315. In order to choose always you and adhere to you, I embrace the habit of acting always against my natural, inferior taste, against the desire of seeking natural, inferior satisfactions, ordinary cause of every aberration of freedom, of every cor-

ruption of the will, and of every deterioration of the human person.

316. I embrace, I return to embrace the formation and culture of the virtuous habit, the ascetic habit for excellence to act against my natural, inferior inclination, in all that depends on me and does not impede any duty.
317. I want to act against my natural inclination in all the natural, temporal world of acts and states concerning my body, my sense, fantasy and sentiment, to my activity and relations, to the fulfillment of all my duties in their natural, inferior aspect, to the use of any creature.
318. Act against one's own taste with things that are pleasing to our nature, preferring always some mortification; act against one's own taste with things that are of honor to us, preferring some humiliations; act against one's own taste when dealing about possessing something, and wholeheartedly embrace privations. Act against one's own taste when dealing about relaxation and inactivity, and turn totally to activity.
319. In the activity of all my being I will act against my own taste pushing myself forward and not backward, always upward and not downward, always to the more challenging and not to what is easier, always to the more perfect and not to what is mediocre, always with supernatural intentions and not for natural goals or motivations.
320. In all my activity I will act first and foremost for the comfort, advantage and pleasure of others rather than my own; first and foremost out of obedience, following the guidance and counsel of others rather than my own; first and foremost in silence, anonymity and sweetness rather than showing off.
321. Coherently with this habit of ascetic choice, among all the acts of the Incarnate Word, I choose as object of my special imitation and union the state of sacrifice and sacrament, the Eucharistic state, the habit of the Eucharistic choice, in com-

plete obedience and dependence from the authority of the Church in the priests and in the superiors.

322. With this habit of ascetic and Eucharistic choice, I will set in that higher mystic election of purity, humility and charity. In it my freedom will be wholly of the holy Church, of the Holy Family, of the divine Trinity and will be directed only and exclusively to the divine glory, love and will.
323. O my divine Trinity, grant that I may soon become the full correspondence to your love that you desire; make of me that living and personal relation of love that you expect. Only in view of this relation and correspondence you have given me this tremendous and formidable gift of freedom.

CHAPTER 5

Consecration¹

All the exercises treated up to this point, self control, abnegation, loving attention to Jesus' presence are part of the culture of hemisphere of the will at whose center there is the freedom with its habit of choosing. It deals with the ascetic hemisphere of the human part that is not sufficient to guarantee from deteriorations, aberrations, corruptions and ruins of freedom.

In order to reach perfection we need to complete the culture of freedom with the hemisphere in which prevails the divine element ... more mystical and theological ... centering on the liturgy and the Eucharist. Fr. Justin says: "May my sphere find its equilibrium in its heaven and tread along its orbit in the harmony of the saints."

When the Lord is the driving force, he transfigures from conversation to conversation, from ascension to ascension, until such a perfection that may be called "deification;" One consecration would not be enough to such a transfiguration, a pathway or life of consecrations is needed. As in the universe is not enough the first creation, the continuous creation (which is the conservation of the being) is also needed; as the sacrifice of the cross has been perpetuated in the sacrificial state of the host in perpetual renewal and application of the work, so the soul spouse needs an indefinite series of consecrations, a state of consecration, a state of love "from the Christian to the perfect Christian and so on"

We should continuously renew the consecration of Baptism and Confirmation and glorify the consecration of the priesthood toward higher states of love, like the one of religious profession.

The consecrations that take place in the Eucharist and Penance are divinizing at every Mass and absolution in which we receive the consecrating blood. They are important consecrations made more by the Lord than by us; they are not made by a minister, but by the high priest himself.

¹ This heading in the manuscript is followed by this historical note: G.A.U.D.I.O. , April 30, 1944 – St. Catherine of Siena – Continuation of Culture of Freedom.

God desires that we renew often the act of perfect consecration, because if love is essentially the attraction of the soul to God in order to be possessed by him, it cannot be expressed and perfected better than through acts of consecration.

324. O holy habits of ascetical, mystic and Eucharistic election, you are totally and in everything habits of victory, habits of faith, because this is our victory over the world, our faith.² They are habits of hope, because this is our victory over time, our hope in the blessed eternity.
325. You are habits of love, because this is our victory over death, hell, over the negation of the life of love, which is sin, which is death and hell in itself and in its effects. This is the victory of love, stronger than death³ and hell.
326. Love fights and overpowers sin that is death and hell. O love, I consecrate myself to you! Eternal thanks of infinite love to you, O my Lord, O my God and my all; you have opened before me the royal pathway of the consecrations through the example of the saints, all your imitators.
327. Eternal thanks of infinite love for all the consecrations that you have granted me to make to you, that you have so graciously done in me, that you have inspired, prompted and accepted, and for those even more perfect that you make me foresee and to which you attract and accompany me.
328. All the possible exercises, levels and habits of self control, of loving abnegation and loving attention are the culture of one hemisphere of my will, whose center is freedom, with its habit of ascetic, Eucharistic and mystical choices.
329. This hemisphere, though totally irradiated by your divine grace, is mostly the human hemisphere, the ascetical hemisphere. All this is not sufficient to guarantee my will from every aberration of the will and consequent deterioration, corruption and ruin.

² Cf. 1 Jn 5, 4.

³ Sg 8, 6.

330. In order to complete the perfection of my human-divine, and natural-supernatural sphere, I need also the hemisphere in which prevails the divine element, the more mystical, theological, liturgical and Eucharistic hemisphere. The combination of these two hemispheres creates the equilibrium of my sphere and enables it to travel its orbit in the harmony of the saints.
331. In my first hemisphere I am preceded, accompanied and sustained, on every side and at all times, by the help of your grace, the gift of your grace, the supernatural influence of your grace. In the second hemisphere you yourselves, O divine persons come to me.
332. You, O divine person take a special possession of me, you dominate my faculties, you organize, govern and direct everything from within the substance of my soul, from the royal palace and throne of my will with the scepter of my freedom totally placed and maintained in your hands.
333. O my Lord, what keeps you from operating all this good in me, or who will communicate all this good to me? Blessed the soul you possess fully! How sublime is the life that you elevate, enrich and develop your presence and action!
334. Only you, who created us and know us well in our reality and in all our natural and supernatural possibilities, only omnipotence and wisdom of love, mercy and bounty of love, only you can and want to elevate the human soul, my soul ...
335. to that higher, harmonious development of all my faculties, to that greater tribute of glory to her Lord God, and to healthy benefit to every neighbor; for this reason you have created and conserved her according to the great ideal that you have planned from all eternity.
336. When you dominate and prevail in a soul you do not cease to attract her to ever more sublime elevations; you transfigure and transform her from conversion to conversion, from ascension to ascension, up to such a transformation that can only be called "deification".

337. Only then the soul becomes the living and personal image and likeness of you, that living personal relation of marital love that you had in your creating, salvific, sanctifying and glorifying mind from the beginning, in order to make her worthy of you and dear to you.
338. What are you waiting for, what is keeping you from doing also in me, in my all being, all this good that you yourself want for me, which was the very reason for creating and redeeming me. Isn't this the reason why you make me know and desire, seek and expect this good? "*Domine ad juvandum me festina - Lord, make haste to help me!*"⁴
339. You expect that I freely offer and consecrate myself to you; you want that I freely place myself under your full dominion, at your complete disposal. You want to see me freely seeking that you exercise all your rights over me and form me according to your complacency, and do of me according to the exigencies of your love.
340. O my Lord, my God and my all, aren't you my supreme, absolute Lord and master, with all possible and imaginable rights concentrated and based on your title of creation, redemption and sanctification... eternal, immutable and indisputable divine rights?
341. This is very true, and yet the Lord has granted you freedom, he made you free, and he, more than anyone else, recognizes and respects this condition of free being, this dignity and nobility of being free, with all its consequences even toward him.
342. You can do of yourself whatever you wish, you can give yourself and belong to whomever you wish, you can please whomever you want or even enjoy the illusion of not belonging to anyone, to do whatever you wish, even though this condition of independence is almost impossible for you,

⁴ Ps 40, 14b.

practically you would fall under the dominion of the devil and of pride.

343. O my Lord, my God and my all, to whom could I offer myself and belong, whom could I serve and please more than you? Why did I embrace christian and religious life, a life of observance of your laws, commandments and precepts, counsels and inspirations if not to be all yours, totally yours?
344. He respects your freedom in his freedom, to the point of not prescribing your integral and absolute donation, to the point of being satisfied, to admit in his heaven, even a very imperfect compliance, and almost incomplete, of his law and precepts without practice of his divine counsels.
345. He admits and respects, to some extent, that you belong to your own self; not only that you be always your own self, which will be forever, but also that you belong to yourself with the dominion of your freedom; he even suffers that you place some limits in following him, in his service and correspondence.
346. O my Lord, my God and my all, how badly I feel, how wrong it is that man may put limits in following, serving and corresponding to you ... that even in his religious practice he may try to make distinction between commands and counsels, between grievous and light offence, between salvation and sanctification of the soul!
347. That these distinctions may exist in the books, I understand it, that they may exist in the reality of life, I cannot understand it. Again I may understand that they exist in theory, but not in the practice of life! Yet I know that books serve for our teaching and the theories serve to shape the practice.
348. Why then I do not understand these distinctions in the practice of life? Am I mistaken? I my Lord, my God, establish me in truth, in the intellectual and moral, theoretical and practical, individual and social order; make and keep me solid in your thought and will. Keep me stable in you.
349. You are the truth! Your thought is truth, your will is truth!

How true it is that your thought is truth and that you will is truth, no less than your thought! Your will is your love!

350. Your love is truth and your truth is your charity, why it is hard for us to understand it in our daily living? Yes, your truth is your love, and your love is your truth! O simple, pure divine act, unity-God!
351. Theory is the intellect and the intellect is the truth; practice is the will and the will is love ... I can affirm this on the basis that the theory is on the part of the intellect and this is on the part of the truth; practice is based on the will and this on love.
352. Now, as in you truth is love, and as in you love is truth, so likewise in your living and personal image and likeness, that is the soul, we cannot and must not separate truth from love without falsifying and destroying both of them.
353. I can distinguish but not separate them, just as your divine persons, O my God, really distinct, but impossible to separate, otherwise they would no longer be God. God is only one in three persons, really distinct as relations, really one God as divine nature.⁵
354. Likewise, I cannot separate divine truth and love from divine life, from the divine being eternally existing by himself: life, truth, love, or even better, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, at whose image and likeness I was made, and must ever more become, above all in the supernatural order.
355. Truth and love may be distinguished but not separated from life; Life and love may be distinguished but not separated from truth; life and truth may be distinguished but not separated from love; love may be distinguished but not separated from life and truth, and vice versa in any way or combination.
356. When I use the names: life, truth and love, as personal names indicating Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I can and must really

⁵ Cf. Athanasian symbol, Devotional Ordinary, pag. 46.

distinguish one from the other, life, truth and love, but I cannot and must not divide them on account of their indivisible unity of nature.

357. Likewise in the practice of my concrete, real and supernatural daily life, I must never separate life from truth, never separate truth from love; never separate love from life, but embrace and regard life and truth in, with and out of love!
358. Love comes from the will, practice is the actualization of the will, and consequently the truth applied and practiced comes under the realm of the will, and does pass into love; our entire daily life is under the realm of the will. All my life must be lived in love.
359. If truth is not in the love it is a misunderstood or badly applied truth; if life is not in the truth it is an incomplete or badly lived life; in you, my God, everything is love, likewise everything must be love also in the soul, your personal living image and likeness.
360. Everything in you, O my God and my all, is charity: your nature and perfections, your divine persons and processions, your operations and missions, your truth and holiness, your person, O Father, your person, O Son, your person, O holy Spirit, everything is love!
361. In the soul everything must be charity and love, when it dominates as it should, when it prevails as it should prevail, when it commands as it should command this spirit of love, then in the reality of life we do not tolerate limits, we cannot say: up to a certain point!
362. When it is a question of an offense against the Lord there should be no discussion whether it is serious in order to avoid it, or if it is light in order to let it go, or if it is a minimal offense so that we can drink abundantly of it. The fear of displeasing the Lord, the Lord love, impels us to throw ourselves in the harms of death to impede any fault.
363. Before the will of God there is no question whether it is a command, a counsel, a complacence or a desire, whether it

issued with threats or promises; the desire of pleasing the beloved Lord, the Lord love, should enable us to happily face death in order to please him more, act by act.

364. You Lord, my God and my all, you endure that the soul follow you imperfectly, love you weakly; while you want that she love you with all her heart, with all her mind, with all her strength, you do not impose other obligation but that of love, nor other law but that of love.
365. Infinite and eternal thanks to you, O my Lord! You make us understand that as charity contains eminently all other virtues, laws, precepts and counsels, so the commandment of love contains eminently every other title of obligation.
366. The love you want from your creature, human soul (do you also want it from the angelic spirits?) the love of supernatural marital relation, demands essentially freedom, because that relation is essentially based on the most complete and full donation of one's self.⁶
367. Every commandment, law, precept and counsel always aims, wants, hints, attracts, starts and places on the path of this supernatural marital relationship. You expect it from those who understand and correspond to you as the feast and nuptial banquet.
368. More than the return of the prodigal son, with a more harmonious angelic concert, adorned with a more glorious mantle and a more precious ring, open to a more expansive embrace and to a more effusive kiss for a more divinely unifying state!⁷
369. O my God! O my God! O my God! With all the truth of your Word, with all the charity of your Holy Spirit, with all your life of love that reveals and communicates itself, O Father, I

⁶ Fr. Justin here continues and completes the theme of Chapter 3. True abnegation becomes complete, full and free oblation of the self.

⁷ Cf. Lk 15, 20-24.

offer myself to you integrally and absolutely, eternally and irrevocably to you, one and triune God.

370. I am very sorry for any reluctance and repugnance, every apprehension and cowardice, all limits and diabolic presence, every coldness and apathy, and every delay and slowdown; I intent to hate, fight and destroy all this with the same infinite hatred of your infinite love.
371. I consecrate myself to your love, victorious over any obstacle to your divine love, triumphing over all difficulties. I consecrate myself to your prevailing, dominating and predominant love; to your transforming, assimilating and divinely unifying love that leaves in me only the reality of the distinct human person ...
372. Your love elevates to the supernatural and divinizes in the divine grace, governs and directs all in every act and state with its wisdom, all the rest that is in me, all the rest that I am, and even my distinct human personality vivifying and animating everything with the Holy Spirit! Amen!
373. All this notwithstanding, you do not destroy my freedom, you do not deprive me of my freedom; the more you love and the more you are corresponded, the more you respect my freedom. You respect and want my freedom just as you respect and want the love of the soul, because the two go together.
374. They go together so as to be one essential to the other, one being the essence of the other, in that nuptial supernatural relationship, revealed and demonstrated by your way of wanting, receiving and treating your creature, human soul.
375. In the interim I find myself in the perpetual danger, too often experienced by ruinous experiences, of taking back what I had donated, and of falling in the aberrations of abuses of my freedom, that I thought guaranteed for ever through a perfect consecration.
376. The consecration is not sufficient, I need a pathway and a life of consecrations; since the first creation is not sufficient there is a need for the continued creation, which is the conserva-

tion; as you did not want to leave isolated your sacrifice of the cross.

377. You have perpetuated your sacrifice of the cross in the sacrificial and sacramental state of the host, as perpetual renewal and application of the redemption; likewise I must embrace an indefinite series of consecrations, a pathway and life of consecrations, in a state of consecration.
378. A state of consecration, a state of love, the most alive and active state, and at the same time the most perceptive and evolutionary, the most progressive and unifying state. A state that is essentially an alive, active, perceptive and evolutionary, the most progressive and unifying way, as Jesus himself is the way for excellence.⁸
379. The state of consecration, stemming from an act of consecration and flourishing perpetually with new acts of consecration, fructifying in perpetuity new states of consecrations, as so many stages and intermediate goals of the state of union and deification in eternity.
380. O my God and my all! I ratify and honor the consecration of baptism, which put me in a state of love, which is the *Christian*. I ratify and honor the dedication of confirmation that promoted me to a higher state of love, which is the *perfect Christian*.
381. I ratify and exult for the consecration of Holy Order that has elevated me to a higher state of grace that is the *catholic priesthood*. I ratify and extol the consecration of the religious profession that has elevated me to the sublime state of love that is the *nuptial relation* with you.
382. O my God and my all, accumulated, theologically speculated and capitalized grace of all consecrations and the state of consecration resulting from all these sacred states unceasingly lead me to more sublime states of consecration that more sanctify me and glorify you.

⁸ Cf Jn 14, 6.

383. In the previous consecrations you have been present and operating more directly through your gifts, including the most eminent ones that confer the indelible sacred characters, the indissoluble contracts and all virtues and gifts inseparable from grace.
384. Now, in the new and more sublime states of consecration you are more present in person, you operate more in person, you are more intimately connected with the soul and you lead her to a greater intimacy with you, and you participate more in the divine mysteries!
385. O consecration made more by the Lord than by the soul ... always with the help of your divine grace! O supreme and deifying consecration of divine absolution, communion and immolation in the sacrifice, in the Eucharist and Penance!
386. O consecrations made not by this or that sacred minister, but by the most high priest Jesus Christ himself; not through this or that consecrated element, but by the Holy Spirit through the very body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus.
387. O my Lord, grant that I may understand and be really aware, because until now I did not really understand and feel it, that every absolution, communion and every Mass celebrated or attended to, is not only the most high consecration, but is a consecration that generates a new and more sublime state of the highest consecration.
388. Every new absolution is an elevation to a higher sphere of fire, of hatred and fight against the morally evil. Every new holy Mass is an elevation to a higher sphere of fire of contrition and compassion, of cooperation and union with the universal redemption of the Savior.
389. Every new Eucharistic communion is an elevation to a higher sphere of divine fire and zeal for universal sanctification! O fire of hatred and of holy war, O fire of contrition and compassion, O fire of zeal and of heaven, come to me, in everything!
390. Come, O consecrating blood, O devouring fire! Come, O blood to consecrate the offering; come, O fire to take the ob-

lation consecrated in the blood! Come, O Spirit of love, O spirit of consecration, O Spirit of all the states of consecration, come to vivify me with all the acts of consecration!

391. Every moment I can re-take my freedom – and the Lord wants me to do it – because he desires that every moment I consecrate myself to him with the most appropriate act of love, which consists in giving one's self to him freely, after having chosen him from among thousands, after having preferred him from among the infinite, he the infinite good.
392. The very essence of love is the attention given to something good, the elevation to the good from among all others, and the transport of all one's being toward that good, in as much as he is not a created good that can be contained in me, but the uncreated good by which I must be contained, understood and possessed.
393. This repossessing of my freedom takes place before every new manifestation of the divine will of complacency ... This attention, admiration and election happens most of all before any new manifestation of the divine beauty, love and sweetness to my soul.
394. On these occasions I must be totally taken and expanded, all inflamed to offer myself in acts of consecrations, the most intense and filled of all my will and sentiment, so as to imitate and resemble the divine acts of the divine act of love that reveals, offers, bequeaths and unites himself to me.
395. It is equally true that the divine love precedes, with his acts of consecration to me, all acts of consecration that I can do to him, and that my every act of consecration to him is a hundredfold rewarded by his acts of consecration to me in a divine upward progression.
396. I will exercise myself in the practice of consecration, both as state and act, for the reasons that compel me to it: reasons of religion to render to the Lord the due adoration and of prudence to prevent the aberrations of freedom, and of other virtues animated by love.

397. Every virtue animated by love, and in proportion of the love that animates it, leads to the consecration, which the spirit, the act, and state proper of love for God, transport in God; from the presence or absence of these effects we can see the truthfulness or falsity of the Christian virtues.
398. I will train myself in the consecration, above all, to correspond to the divine persons that offer and bequeath, unite and consecrate themselves to me, and also in order to obtain a hundredfold from the divine persons the correspondence to their consecrations and missions to my poor and imperfect consecrations.
399. All titles justice and fidelity, piety and religion will enliven first one by one, and then all together combined in the pure and great title of the unique great pure love, my consecrations, the way, the state, and the apostolate of the way and the state of my consecrations!
400. Let us go, my soul, from the consecration of slave of love to the consecration of servant and disciple, of soldier and minister, of friend, son and lover, until he calls us to the consecration of spouse, which contains all the others and their respective states of love.
401. Let us go, my soul, to the consecration for every feast of our closer saints, for the solemnity of every mystery, for every service of ministry, for every mansion of magisterium, for every new phase of life and for every new burst of love you feel for the truth and beauty, for holiness and greatness, for charity and sweetness.
402. May be always in your presence, O my Lord, my God and my all, the consecration that I made of myself,⁹ as of a poor,

⁹ Evident reference to his consecration to the third level of charity, made the morning of his priestly ordination on September 20, 19913. The fact that every year on September 20, Fr. Justin in his Book of the Soul, remembers more his vow of charity than his priestly ordination indicates the extraordinary importance of this consecration in his life.

delirious, demented begging the charity of being kept, even with violence, from harming himself and others, as I want and I intend it always valid and present.

403. Pay no attention to the repugnance of my nature and to the rebellion of my sense, to the laments of my heart and the tensions of my human spirit! I dare to say, do not even pay attention to my prayer, should I ever ask to be subtracted to your divine dominion and lordship and go back at the mercy of myself.
404. Only your dominion will keep me safe from the attacks of the enemy and from the illusions of the human spirit, from the seductions of the infernal spirit! I will be safe! Only your dominion, Lord, will take me to holiness and union with you that both you and I want!
405. For this very reason you desire that I renew very often my perfect act of my perfect consecration, and you make me understand that love is the transport of the soul to you, to be possessed by you, she cannot express, practice and perfect herself better than with the acts of consecrations.
406. I will renew it, my Lord, after every voluntary fault, with which most unfortunately, I take back and waste what I had given to you. I shall renew it in order to offer myself to you again at any new revelation of your perfections, at every manifested desire of yours, at any vision of human love, of sins of others, of virtues in my neighbor, at every remembrance of death.
407. With greater reasons I shall renew it at every Mass, communion and absolution, Eucharistic benediction and meditation, at every peal of bells and liturgical celebration; every time that I will tell you: "My love, my love" or "O my God and my all" or "I want to please you". I want to find favor in your presence. Amen.

CHAPTER 6

Direction¹

“Only the consecration makes a saint; a non-consecrated saint is a contradiction.” A consecration that externally may appear perfect it is not perfect if its effects are not felt; it needs to be perfected in its substance.

If we do not understand the principle formulated by St. Augustine: Solo Deo frui, ceteris omnibus uti – We must enjoy only God and use all the rest”, various idolatries will crown the poor human heart.

As a consequence of the total consecration of ourselves to the Lord, in order to remain really faithful to the “I offer and consecrate all myself to you alone, to you forever” we need the help of spiritual direction.

This chapter ends with a very passionate, ardent plea for a spiritual director for himself and for every category of people and for each individual. The spiritual director is “The man of heaven, the living oracle of the Lord, the correspondent of the souls, the priest of the Most High, segregated from the world ... one integrally, exclusively, supremely of God and of souls”.

408. Finally I am yours, O Lord! Why do you delay in taking possession of me? Isn't my consecration perfect? Now, I do not see its effects. How slow I am in seeing the healthy effects of my consecration! How much longer must I await to feel its effects? Or, in what must I perfect my consecration?
409. O my soul, considering the external words and the spontaneous formula, your consecration is very perfect. Love does

¹ In the manuscript, this heading is followed by this note: J.M.J. - Gaudium - Mercato Cilento, May 10, 1944. We continue with the exercises about the Culture of Freedom.

not admit delays; the love of God is infinite and wants to possess you in love. The effects of the consecration must be imminent.

410. If these effects are slow in coming it means that something is missing in your consecration, somehow it is not completely true! Or you may be forgetting now, how much the Lord respects your freedom, up to the extreme consequences? It is evident that the gift of your own self has not been accepted!
411. You had given yourself freely to others; you must have given to someone else some rights over you, on your thoughts, on your heart, on your life or on your works; this right must not have been retracted, annulled as directly and intensely as it had been granted in your unfortunate passion.
412. You cannot and must not dispose of something that does not belong to you, if you first do not redeem, obtain it back and make it totally yours, so as to be really able to do with it whatever you want; the Lord will joyfully and willingly accept your gift, only when what you offer is totally yours.
413. Now, better than ever before, I understand the necessity and the glorious beauty of the detachment of mind, heart and life from that could displease the Lord, or detain the soul from going to the Lord, or in any shape and form represent a claim of human shared authority before the divine dominion.
414. How could you have been pleased, how could you have taken seriously the magnificent consecrations of the soul when it intended to remain united or attached to anything or person, and at the same time fly to you and be united with you, unceasingly attracted by the ineffable mystery of your love?
415. The souls get the illusion, and my soul had the illusion of being faithful and corresponding adequately to your love, because did not see anything illicit, did not intend anything illicit, and did not do anything illicit in those affections and relations with the creatures with whom was sweetly bound.
416. However, there must have been something illicit, since something did not please you, and there can never be something

licit that displeases you! The soul then did not understand with the mind its illicit element, and yet in the dark remorse of the heart perceived your displeasure.

417. This element of illicit was not only on the part of the irrational superfluity of the intensity of human affections, nor only on the part of the holy love of the self that was violated by exposing the soul to serious dangers and moral catastrophes on the road of decay from the achieved heights ...
418. It was not only on the part of the holy love for our neighbor, defrauded of so many benefits caused by the unjust and capricious concentration of affections on one person, while many, all were entitled to enjoy and be helped by it, you were blind and did not pay attention to it.
419. The element of illicit was precisely in the enjoyment of the heart in that creature; enjoyment to be enjoyed only in the achievement of the goal; enjoyment that one should have only in God, because only God is the goal! But you enjoyed it, even if only momentarily, in the creature that became your goal.
420. You made the creature, even if only momentarily, your goal, and consequently your god, your idol, and you were on the verge of falling or fell in a certain idolatry of the heart, for the sake of what seemed apparently wholesome enjoyment, and you, my poor soul, dwelt in it, not momentarily, but for long time.
421. *Solo Deo frui, ceteris omnibus uti!* Only in God we can enjoy, only God we can enjoy, only in God we can remain and establish our dwelling, because only God is our goal, the goal of our mind, heart and life, and must be the goal of all our way of life. All the rest are only resources to go to God.
422. All the rest are only tools to be used, through all the rest we only pass, all the rest must only be an aid to ascend to God, always to God and only in God! O innumerable forms of refined modern idolatries, profanations of the world and damnation of men.

423. O idolatry of art for art's sake; O idolatry of duty for duty's sake; O idolatry of the status of the status' sake; O idolatry of health for health's sake; O idolatry of friendship for friendship's sake; O idolatry of profession for profession's sake; O idolatry of family for family's sake; and all idolatry!
424. The human heart, for what little bit of satisfaction that it tastes, lets itself be dragged to these new idols put on by hell before the believers and consecrated people; the human hearth wants to bend the same Holy Church and God himself to worship them, when it prays to obtain, maintain and increase them ...
425. Without subordinating them to the knowledge, service and love of the Lord; without subordinating and ordaining every thing to the ascension of the soul to the divine union with the three adorable persons of the Trinity through the universal triumph of love, only goal of each and everyone!
426. This displeases the Lord, this displeased the Lord, because the divinity, being indivisibly one, cannot be attributed even minimally, intellectually or morally, theoretically or practically, emotionally or speculatively to a creature.
427. Likewise the soul, being incommunicably one, cannot be given to a creature not even for one atom or instant with that special love, with that special way of loving, with that special level of love that corresponds to her goal, that is to her God.²
428. The necessity of detachment, the glory of detachment, the

² Fr. Justin really loved the chosen ones of the divine vocations; even though his love is pure and holy, it becomes imperfect when, even for one instant, is directed to the human person considered independently from God. It is not difficult, nor rare that educators may momentarily focus and love the candidates in themselves and not for the Lord. Here, as in "Tears" (Spirit of Prayer, pages 223-27) and in "Spento Quel falso Sole" (Christmas Song, Opere vol. 8, p. 360), Fr. Justin confesses these distractions and regrets them.

freedom and glory of detachment not only for the morality required by flight from sin, but by the ascetical detachment required for the achievement of perfection, for the consummated union with the Lord.

429. When there is total and complete detachment the Lord finds perfect the consecration of the soul, receives and takes her as his own and disposes of her according to the desire of his love. Promptly, quickly and often immediately the soul feels the effects, through certain external voluntary or involuntary changes.
430. If these changes are involuntary for the nature, they are voluntary for the soul in the grace of love and in the spirit of the consecration; the first effect of taking possession of anything is the exclusion of everyone from one's own property, and then follows the transformation of everything according to one's own taste without regard for the taste of previous owners.
431. With coats of arms and seals the new owner of the building makes sure that everyone knows him, and that no one enters or uses it without license of the new master, who always puts in every license limits to affirm his full and absolute right to his property.
432. So the Lord puts its seal on the soul, and on any work that has truly given itself so as to belong to him, he adorns and ennobles with his divine-human emblem; he surrounds the soul with special protection that is his divine jealousy of love, which can be explained only by the supernatural bridal relationship.
433. The Lord gives the seal of approval of the Holy Church over every work that is consecrated. The Lord marks her with the seal of his sacred Family and impresses the seal of divine Trinity on every life that was consecrated, and on every consecrated soul.
434. On the body consecrated to him the Lord impresses the seal

of mortification, with a sign of the cross on every sense, with a crown of thorns on every sentiment, with a garland of wings on the fantasy and a single triple flame on the heart: unique inside, triple outside, and yet one flame!

435. And you, my winged youth: memory, what seal have you been marked with? The seal of the present through which I see all the past centuries in this day of mine, all mankind in this generation, all the vents in the happenings of this day, and all redemption and passion in this host that I offer!
436. And you, my winged youth intellect, what divine seal have you been marked with? The vision of faith in which is inflamed all my light of faith that before seemed a night and now is a day, so brightly shining that obfuscates every other light, every other distinct and inferior vision!
437. And you, my winged youth, will, what divine seal have you been marked with? A tree with twelve fruits near every spring with twelve rivers, and the divine torment of perfection, of divine union, of universal sanctification, of the world being all religious of God, all belonging to God, all people being a family of God!
438. O my winged lord: soul, what seal have you been marked with? A throne has been erected within you, on the throne the Spirit of God, in which breaths the love that is the Father, and the love that is the Son: Exult with all your heart, O my soul, *Rex Israel Dominus in medio tuo* – The king of Israel is in your midst!³
439. O my winged lord freedom, what divine seal have you been endowed with? I am sure that you have been sealed with a ring, a halo of holy thoughts, of intelligence and of holy angels that lead me necessarily to please the one who sits on his throne within me.
440. You, my winged Lord: person, what seal have you been

³ Cf. Zp 3,15b.

endowed with? A sweet transport, a vehement, circular, ascending spiral from one divine person to the other, a rapture that takes, absorbs, forms and transforms me completely in him. What could I say? It is all my essence and existence.

441. O my small people of winged children, youths and lords, look, look around, *Dominus in circuitu populi sui* – *The Lord surrounds his people*;⁴ all around you as a wall of defense, better, as a ring of love is the Lord God Trinity in his incarnate Word, crucified and sacrament.
442. The Lord has taken possession of his consecrated creature and now is intent in transforming her according to his divine taste, according to his divine thoughts and plans to make sure that she will be, and ever more become, a better, living, personal and supernatural image and likeness of his divine persons.
443. This is needed to make the soul worthy and appreciated in the nuptial relationship with the divine persons. This is the taste of the divine love, according to all the divine perfections of the divine being, not according to the values of man or of human nature, nor in the measure of human affection of souls.
444. This is the effect of many changes, so many transformations! So many external changes and interior transformations ordered to produce so many perfections and elevations to which the soul could never have aspired remaining in the same environment, in the same level, mentality and potentiality.
445. These transformations entail detachments, privations, solitude, isolation and all that may help the liberation, purification, concentration of the soul on the Lord God; transform so many good administrators, good functionaries, organizers and preachers, all necessary ministries for the

⁴ Cf. Zp 3, 17.

government of souls, but I do not see as many good spiritual directors!

452. O my Lord, arouse great spiritual directors for the nations! Grant, O Lord, that every state, every people, every nation may have its great Sanhedrin of great spiritual directors of souls, considered an ensemble of state, people, nation; and grant that they all may be united to your Vicar, the Pope.
453. May they reveal to the souls, state, people and nation their vocation, mission and mansion of state, people and nation, in the great kingdom of God on earth, in the immense kingdom of heaven in paradise, may they enthuse and electrify minds and hearts.
454. So that states, people and nations may follow the divine plan without any deviation, not only in the force of things or events as inferior creatures, but in force of the voluntary and generous comprehension, decision and cooperation of all minds and hearts.
455. Please, Lord, grant us these great spiritual directors for every diocese, at the service of the bishop; for every parish at the service of the pastor; for every community, at the service of the directors. This is a true spiritual service, according to your spirit and your heart, in the highest, most precious and necessary service!
456. Most of all, O Lord, grant a docile heart to every government, to every people, state, nation, diocese, parish, institution and organization to follow the divine guidance of your and our spiritual servant, and in it the voice of the Church and of your Vicar and of your Spirit.
457. Thus, with the help of a spiritual director, every soul will be conquered and preserved in your kingdom. May every work and human institution, every state and government, people and nation, live, prosper, bloom and fructify for the glory of your love, in the unique sheepfold and under the same shepherd.
458. May the universal theocracy that you willed and that people

rejected with their own damage and shame, and with offense and ingratitude to you, may it come back, remain and triumph; the theocracy implored by the teacher and savior,⁵ judge and pontiff, victim and king, God-Man Jesus Christ.

459. Father who art in heaven, your kingdom come! In the natural and supernatural order as well, in time and in eternity, in the external and interior world, in politics and finances, in the school and in the army, in the clergy and in the ecclesiastical world as well.
460. Because wherever there are souls that work and operate, that are responsible and dedicated, they must be yours and correspond to your love, they all must consecrate themselves to you and live their perfect consecration under your guidance.
461. Every soul should have a spiritual director according to your spirit, according your heart, and her patron saint and her angel as a her little father: eco and shadow of your magisterium and paternity, her pillar of cloud and flame in the journey throughout the desert to the promised heaven.⁶
462. O, the man of heaven, the man of the supernatural, the living oracle of the divinity, the correspondent of the angels, the confidant of the souls, the man exclusively, integrally and supremely of God and of the souls.
463. Give this man to even the smallest agglomerate of families; may he be the spiritual patriarch, the one who can place in their midst the host – the Emmanuel – and this host-Emmanuel may form an inseparable and indispensable family of heart, and court of glory of love.
464. O my beloved, I want to form a family of heart and a court of glory of love around every altar and every tabernacle, ciborium and host; I want to do this around you so that you

⁵ Cf. Mt 6, 8 and Lk 11, 2b.

⁶ Cf. Ex 14, 20-23

may not be only the perpetually sacrificed in the perpetual sacrifice, but the adored, the courted, the beloved.

465. My Lord, give me millions of consecrated people living in community, and billions of consecrated lay people in the world. Give me billions of Christian families that live like religious of God. Give me millions of religious houses for families, who have consecrated themselves to you inseparably, indispensably and universally.
466. Through these religious families of yours in every agglomerate of houses we want to lead each and all families of men, each and every parish and diocese, organizations and institutions, provinces and kingdoms, peoples and nations, the world and the universe to the perfect consecration.
467. Not only to the act of their consecration to you, O Lord, and your enthronization in their midst, but to the life of the perfect consecrated, of the saint and of the *assumpta*, individually and socially, in private and in common, so that all mankind may be in your Church, and may become ever more your mystical bride.
468. For all this, O my Lord, we need your priests, your saints; your priests that would make many, many saints, that can transform every faithful into a saint, that make all saints, that may arise, welcome, raise, instruct, train and form the elect of the divine vocations.
469. Your saints are those souls who consecrate themselves integrally to you alone and want to live in everything according to the complacencies of your spirit and the predilections of your heart. They are the souls consecrated solely to you out of pure love to the infinite love that you are, O Lord God.
470. Only the consecration makes saints: A saint not consecrated is a contradiction, as the belonging without belonging; being and not being; to want and not to want! Only the consecration makes the saints, because only the consecration is authentic and active, intense and perfect love.
471. A love that does not give itself entirely, for all possible title,

to the God whom it loves, is not true love of God; it is a contradiction like the belonging and not belonging, going and not going, transporting and not transporting; this is love for the creatures not for God.

472. I may love a creature; I may love a creature without wanting to belong to her by all possible title, without wanting to belong to her totally, without wanting to be possessed entirely: this spirit and exigency of love would be idolatry toward the creature.
473. It is idolatry because love has to propel, offer and abandon us only to God with this spirit.⁷ Only the love of God has these exigencies ... because only God's love is full, integral and perfect love, image and likeness of God's love for the souls and of the love among the three divine persons.
474. Love with this spirit and exigencies can also be found in the follies, excesses and in the aberrations of forms of nuptial love; this confirms that the love of souls for the Lord must be a nuptial love; it is essentially the love that reaches the espousal relationship in the supernatural order.
475. The true and full, perfect and integral consecration is observed and lived with generosity, fidelity and docility to the divine inspirations of every moment, concerning our being and operations, intentions and dispositions, occupations and relations, acts and states; otherwise it could not be true and could not subsist.
476. To the consecration of all our being corresponds the course of all our actions. Accepting the true and total consecration of the soul the Lord does not suppress our personality, will and freedom, nor does he ever intend to take the place of the personality, will and freedom of the soul.
477. The Lord sanctifies, vivifies, unifies and simplifies the personality, will and freedom of the soul to his image and like-

⁷ Cf. Is. 2, 17b-18.

ness; the Lord elevates to a superior sphere, enriches with superior energies, and makes more precious with superior gifts everything. The Lord exercises and reveals his taking possession and the exercise of his dominion only through his divine guidance.

478. To the consecration of the soul to the Lord corresponds his acceptance of the soul. This divine acceptance is manifested through the transformations and ways according to the divine enjoyment. The consecration to the Lord becomes manifest and develops through fidelity, generosity and docility to the divine inspirations.
479. The soul should never stop but constantly perfect the exercise of the culture of freedom as far as self control, loving attention, and above all the constant election of God in everything, above everything and everywhere; this election of God must be direct, intense and full of God, her God and her all. God alone in her all being and forever!
480. *"Dominus solus Dux eius fuit⁸ – Only God was her leader."* Only God is the director of the soul, of every soul and of the all Church, of all mankind, people by people, nation by nation; as he alone is the object of the consecration and the other party of the supernatural nuptial relation.
481. *"Dominus solus Dux – Lord is the only Leader"* This too is revelation of the adorable jealousy of the divine love for the soul.

⁸ In the manuscript this verse is preceded by the following note: Continuation of the Culture of Freedom – (J.M.J. Mercato Cilento, May 16, 1944 two days before the Ascension, Rogation's Day and liturgical anniversary of the superiority of Mary in the SDV). In addition to telling us the date and the place in which he wrote this part of Let Us Make Man he wants all of us to remember that on May 10, 1926 – Tuesday of the Rogation, while praying the Liturgy of the hours, in the garden of his parents' house he had that well known vision of the Blessed Trinity in which he was given the Blessed Mother as immediate superior of all the present and future Vocationist Fathers and Sisters and their residences.

He wants to be the only possessor of all her being, and consequently also her only director in all her actions, inspiring her, act by act, internally and externally, all her behavior.

482. This divine jealousy of the divine love for the soul is, in turn, another proof and confirmation, revelation and affirmation of the form of nuptial love that divine love cherishes for the soul; jealousy is almost exclusively part of nuptial love, while for the other forms of love it may be envy.
483. Blessed the man that, you my Lord, guide! What kind of lessons do you give to the soul that you instruct? What kind of flowers and fruits do you cultivate in the garden where you relax? What pillars do you erect in the sacred building that you construct as your royal palace and your temple?
484. Through which pathways, which heavens, under which stars do you lead the soul you direct? For what victories and conquests worthy of your power do you need this soul? What families and which peoples of saints will you form with your soul-spouse, and as such, also as mother in your Church?

CHAPTER 7

Inspirations

The function of the Holy Spirit is to inspire, remind, teach and sanctify us, he does this through the inspirations. Divine inspirations are for Blessed Fr. Justin the main object of the second exercise of human freedom, the loving attention to the divine presence, in and out of us. Divine inspirations are also preeminent in all other exercises: self-control, abnegation, election, consecration and divine guidance.

The greatest and sweetest marvels happen in the soul through the divine inspirations. Dilated, transported and sublimated by divine inspirations the soul goes upward from ascension to ascension, to ever-new horizons, new treasures.

Powerful affirmation for the author and great encouragement for us is the affirmation that: "Every obedience to the divine inspirations will always be a mortal blow to the chains and bonds of slavery created by the world, the devil and the flesh, with their illusions... it will always be a partial victory and liberation".

485. The greatest and sweetest marvels happen in the soul through the divine inspirations, the actual graces of illustration to the mind, of motion to the will, dilatation of the capacities, elevations of all our faculties, supernatural and perennial flowering and fructification of the inspired soul!
486. In the fidelity, generosity and docility to the divine inspiration there is the perfect exercise of self-control, of the loving attention to the Lord, of the virtuous abnegation, of the most perfect and joyful election, of the integral consecration and of divine guidance: of the all practical culture of human freedom.
487. I am really in control of myself and exercise this dominion of myself only when I can and want to dispose of myself, and I actually do it, for the greatest good known, willed and ex-

ecuted as such ... not as any good but as my relative greatest good.

488. Every time that I do not do, want or intend my greatest good, but some evil or a lesser good, which is always bad relatively to the previous level of the good possessed; in this case I do not act as a good master and do not exercise correctly dominion of myself.
489. If I do not act as a good master of myself, if I do not exercise properly self-control for my own good, I am not my true owner and dominator of myself, but my enemy is present, influencing and dominating in me for my ruin, with absolute or relative evil.
490. My enemy has really succeeded in being present, influent and dominating in me under the cover of my whim, of my ignorance and of my sluggishness, of my softness or hardness of my stubbornness or volubility leading me to abuse of my freedom by offending God and myself.
491. Even then it is I who acts, and even then I act freely! Yet I act against my own self, therefore I am not my true master and controller, I am a foolish, not true but false master, not true but bad master of my own self.
492. I am a true master of myself when I am intelligent and attentive, prudent and good master; I am such only when I do intend, want and do my greater good; this happens only when I accept with generosity, fidelity and docility the divine inspirations.
493. My greatest good, absolutely in himself and relatively to me, is only God; he is the greatest good and my greatest good. He attracts and calls me to himself; he participates to me his own self and gives himself ever more to me through the divine inspirations of every moment.
494. He alone is the supreme and best master, because he alone is my creator, he is the absolute good; only absolute good is the dominator of my will created to do good, and consequently he is also the dominator of my freedom, which is the

perfection of the will that seeks what is good in my upsurge toward the good.

495. Only uniting myself to the supreme master, to this absolute good and supreme master of my being – will and freedom – I am also master of myself and exercise true dominion over myself as secondary cause united to the first.
496. This happened only as a consequence of my dependency on his divine will and on account of my union with the divine will. The greatest and best dependency on the divine will is only and exclusively the docility, fidelity and generosity to all the divine inspirations, manifestations and communications of the divine will.
497. In this practice I find the best exercise and the best culture of my personal freedom concerning the true and only good self-control. Every other form of self-control is false, harmful and evil because comes from the enemy, who is falsehood and damnation.
498. From that most damning damnation can only come the most damning damage. From the living and personal falsehood cursed by the Lord, I cannot receive any right to this or that way of being and operating, nor any true exercise of self-control. Falsehood does not have any right and therefore cannot give any.
499. True self-control comes to me only from the one who has supreme and absolute dominion over me, from the one who created me because I did not create myself and therefore on my own I cannot be nor constitute myself master of my life, nor exercise dominion over my self.
500. O fidelity, generosity and docility of obedience of love to the inspiration of my supreme Lord, communication of the absolute good, manifestation of the essentially dominating will, I embrace you, I want to make you known and embraced as the unique perfect exercise of human freedom.
501. You, O divine inspirations, are the main object of the second exercise of the culture of human freedom, which is the lov-

ing attention to the divine presence in us and outside of us, in every creature and in the laws that govern all beings in their intimate constitution and in their mutual relations.

502. Loving attention to the divine presence especially in the supreme beings, both in the natural and supernatural order, and most of all in the Lord himself, in his works and perfections, persons and missions, his coming to the souls and to the world, in his love.
503. In this loving attention to the Lord, what should I concentrate upon, other than his inspirations? I want to make sure that I do not miss any of them; I want to accept, hold on and reciprocate each one of them with perfect correspondence, obedience and gratitude, as a fruit of the Holy Spirit.
504. This divine attention is awakened, fascinated and nourished by the frequency of the divine inspirations so variously wonderful and delightful, as seven worlds of light of various colors irradiating in the soul, as seven perennially pervasive fonts in the soul.
505. They irradiate from the gifts of the Holy Spirit that with the seven virtues oppose and overlap with grace to nature and its faculties, and dispose the soul to accept and follow the motions of the Holy Spirit as through a divine instinct, superior to reason and faith.
506. The inspirations about what to do and what to omit are not all the inspirations, but those regarding the gift of counsel, only one gift. From the other six gifts derive, or better are connected with them, derive six more species of different inspirations.
507. Every species of inspiration has its own particular suavity with which attracts the heart, has its particular light with which attracts the mind, has its own particular energy with which corroborates forces to spiritual ascensions and has its particular sanctification to be actualized in the soul.
508. The soul willingly applies her attention to the delightful variety, sharpens her focus to the marvelous variety; is carried

away by the grace of the Holy Spirit, is expanded by the consolation of the Holy Spirit and is sublimated by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit.

509. Thus expanded, transported and elevated, the soul raises from ascension to ascension; every ascension constitutes her in another heaven and shows her new horizons and new treasures, which with their variety and preciousness celestially nurture the loving attention.
510. O fidelity, generosity and docility of obedience of love to the divine inspirations, manifestations of divine beauty, communications of the divine sweetness, with a marvelous variety of consolations, I embrace you and want you to be embraced as exercise and nourishment of the interior attention to the perfect culture of freedom.
511. In you, O divine inspirations, in you, O divine Spirit, in the fidelity, generosity and docility of obedience of love, I find the perfect abnegation from my own self, universal and indispensable condition to follow the spouse God, culture and exercise of holy freedom that is found only in you, O holy Spirit!
512. My poor human spirit, in order to sustain itself in its foolish and presumptuous, unnatural and impossible independence, does not fear to ally and surrender itself as a slave to the hellish tyrant, the spirit of the world and of the flesh.
513. The world, the devil and the flesh give to the poor human spirit the illusion of finding its independence of will and freedom in its slavery to every other master, other than the true and only Lord. This very slavery ends up being confused and exchanged with the true freedom of the human will.
514. Every obedience is always a fatal blow to the chains and bonds of slavery of the human spirit; it is always a partial victory and liberation; it is always a division, separations and removal from the world, the devil and the flesh. Each obedience is a predomination of a superior will over the human will.

515. Every obedience is the prevailing of the divine will, represented and manifested by the Holy Spirit over the free human will, which freely submits, unites and conforms herself to the Holy Spirit. The human will loses itself in the divine will and through abnegation gets rid of its defects and shortcomings.
516. In its place the human will takes what is perfect from the Lord, sanctification and holiness, which is the very divine will; receiving the divine will in addition to holiness, we receive also the essential sublime freedom, thus verifying once more in our own self that where there is the Spirit of God, there is freedom.¹
517. Where there is the Spirit of God there is freedom. The Holy Spirit is the divine person to whom by attribution belong our will, love and freedom. He communicates himself to us through his holy inspirations, and so through the inspirations we receive also freedom, love for freedom and the divine will.
518. O holy abnegation of my own self in obedience that lets me enter into the divine will! While it may seem that I sacrifice freedom, in reality I acquire, exercise and cultivate the very freedom of God, participated and communicated to me through abnegation of the self in the obedience to God.
519. Every act of obedience to the inspirations is immediately rewarded with other inspirations, and so all the time. The inspirations do not give respite to those who correspond to them as an effect of the spirit of love with its infinite exigencies, uncontainable as uncontainable is the infinite, and yet contains everything.
520. To every act of self abnegation is linked and added another act of self denial, paralleling succession and overlapping of the corresponded inspirations: thus is formed the divine se-

¹ Cf. 2 Cor 3, 17.

ries, pathway and circulation of the rhapsodies in God, and this is the life of a living relation of love with the Lord.

521. Only this is true self denial, indispensable condition to follow Christ in his ascension to the Father, for my nuptial union with the Blessed Trinity in Jesus Christ carried in the circulation of divine life of love, that is the Spirit God-Love.
522. O fidelity, docility and generosity of loving obedience to the inspirations, manifestations of the triumphing divine will, communications of the triumphing divine freedom, I embrace you and I want to cooperate in making every soul to embrace you, as exercise and direct culture of divine freedom, elevation and sublimation of human freedom!
523. Absolutely there cannot be a better object of my election, in every act and state atom and instant, than what is suggested to me by the Lord God Trinity, in the Holy Spirit, through the divine inspirations, because he is the infinite wisdom of the infinite love in himself and for me.
524. I do not know the reasons of my life, the length and the end of my life. I do not know the intermediate and ultimate, immediate and long range goals of my life, and the most appropriate means to use in each circumstance. I am exposed to the most dangerous errors, for my self and others, when I act without counsel and consultation.
525. Who will counsel and direct me? I owe a huge debt to my Lord, infinite justice, and I want to pay it back on a daily rate. In his bountiful mercy the Lord has placed a satisfactory value in every virtuous action so that I may satisfy the many obligations I have with him.
526. What is the amount and the nature of what I owe to the Lord? I need to know both these things in order to satisfy the divine justice, because I cannot repay a debt with a quantity inferior to what is owed, or with a quality different from what is owed.
527. What is the amount and the nature of my debts? Will I find it in the ascetical, liturgical or canonical books? Up to this

point they do not say anything about personal questions. Should I ask my spiritual directors? They have no idea, but only very weak and uncertain conjectures.

528. The Holy Spirit knows it; through his divine inspirations, without too much effort on my part with useless and incorrect calculations, he leads me to satisfy the divine justice of the divine love with hourly rates, which are really minimum, easy and even enjoyable as all that comes from the Spirit of God comforter.
529. Which are the weak points of my character and temperament, of my culture and formation more liable to the illusions and seductions of temptations? Those I must fortify and watch if I want to prevent being victim of malicious deceptions of the world, of the devil and of the flesh.
530. I will not find them in ascetical books and I would waste my time asking the fathers and teacher of spiritual life. I can get from them excellent teachings that will make me fear more the traps of the enemy and desire to fortify myself on all sides and be well equipped in everything.
531. They, however, will not know; they will not be able to indicate the most vulnerable points that my all being presents to the enemy. The Holy Spirit knows it and with his inspirations leads me, even without my awareness, to fortify and equip myself where there is more need for the imminent battles.
532. Who can tell and reveal to me, moment by moment, what is the divine pleasure about my soul, if not the Holy Spirit? Only the spirit of a man knows what is in man, and only the Spirit of God knows what is in God.²
533. There is nothing more intimate in man and in God than the gratification and desire coming from the same nature. Only the divine inspiration can lead me to the knowledge of the

² Cf. 1Cor2,11.

desire and divine delight. Only the sanctifier and consoler Spirit can enable me to please the most holy Trinity as I want and must do in everything.

534. O fidelity, docility and generosity of loving obedience to the divine inspirations, revelations of the divine desire and delights for my soul, I turn to you for every choice in every act; I elect you as the most secure and chosen party of any relation, ideal culture of my human freedom.
535. The desire of knowing, moment by moment, what please the most the Lord who loves me, the willingness to hold on to what I know that pleases the Lord the most: perfect charity, perfect exercise and culture of charity, and then of the will and of human freedom.
536. Your attraction, O divine Spirit of love, calls us to the perfect consecration; your motion drives us on the pathway of the perfect consecration; your very presence is our highest and deepest consecration in the blood of Jesus and in the baptism of fire³ administered by the priest God-love!
537. All your attraction, that is the beginning of our perfect consecration, is constituted by the inspirations of each one of your gifts, fused together in the supernatural fondness for the divine things and in that supernatural gusto of divine things, alternatively sweet or bitter, strong or pungent, but always mysteriously suave.
538. All our motion, which is the vehicle in which we travel on the pathway of perfect consecration, is also constituted by your inspirations of each one of your gifts, fused together in that superior norm of behavior, which is in us the result of a divine, very secure and high instinct with which you guide us.
539. Your continuous inspirations ever more bring to completion, perfect and elevate in us the grace of perfect consecration operated by your presence and action in the soul that freely

³ Cf. Mk 1, 8; Lk 3, 16.

- listened to you, followed you and joined you in each action.
540. To whom do we entrust ourselves, but to your love, when we consecrate ourselves? What commitment we make when we consecrate ourselves, if not to do your loving will? Who else can reveal to us your loving delight if not your Spirit with his inspirations?
541. In the fidelity, docility and generosity of love to the divine inspirations, and only in them, there is the practice of every consecration of love to the Lord; without this fidelity, docility and generosity there are only illusions of religious piety, or, at the very best, only an initial, partial divine service.
542. Give me, Lord, this disposition of spirit, desirable more than any other, all flexibility and pliancy, all fidelity and generosity, all complacency and condescension to your divine dispositions in loving obedience to every internal or external manifestation of your divine will.
543. This is the only state that befits the consecrated, the elect and the saint. This is the only state to which flock the most perfect dispositions of the creature, of the servant and of the soldier, of the minister, of the son and of the friend, of the angel and of the spouse, and of every other relationship of love with you.
544. Every Divine inspiration that is well received, corresponded and executed is a new communication of the consecrating light and fire of the Holy Spirit in the soul; it calls for new effusion of divine light and fire, new baptism that consecrates the soul to the august Trinity, in fire and Holy Spirit.
545. Every Divine inspiration that is well received and corresponded is a new communion with the holiness of the will of the Trinity, a new progress in the ascension to the Trinity, a new touch to the formation of Jesus Christ in the soul, through which we become one object with Jesus of the divine complacencies.
546. O fidelity, docility and generosity of loving obedience to the divine inspirations, development of every grace of conse-

cration, correspondence to every grace of true and integral consecration, I embrace you forever as perfect culture and practice of my human freedom.

547. In you, O divine inspirations, I find the most intimate, great, beautiful, sweet and convincing proof of the divine bounty toward me, of divine providence for me, of divine love for me, of the acceptance and appreciation of my consecration from the part of my God and my all.
548. Free me, O Lord, from the evil spirit that tempts me to see and feel in the divine inspirations of every moment an ever new and burdensome imposition of the divine law, and ever new and more encumbrance of the yoke of divine law on the heart and mind of the human soul.
549. Your burden is really light and your yoke really suave;⁴ anything that could make it bitter and burdensome cannot come from your will: whoever would present it as bitter and burdensome does not come from your Spirit of truth and of love but from the enemy, spirit of hatred and lie.
550. If I receive and accept, correspond and mark your divine inspirations with the same spirit with which you give them to me and for the purpose you intend, I will enter ever more into the delight of the joy, peace and love of your providence and bounty, of your holiness and love, of your divine Trinity.
551. In your inspirations I adore the care and providence you, O creator God, have for all your creatures, governing and directing them all to their objective with infinite wisdom, bounty, justice, in a very special, personal, intimate and direct way to every soul.
552. In your inspiration I adore the divine nuptial love with which you love and long for every soul, up to the divine jealousy, you want to be her only perpetual director and inspiratory, just as you willed to be her only creator, savior and sanctifier.

⁴ Cf. Mt. 11, 29

553. With your divine inspiration you always lead the soul to more perfect liberation from any influx, claims and tyranny of other who would like to separate from your love; you take her to ever-higher level of purification, spiritualization and likeness with you, O most pure spirit.
554. With your inspiration you join the soul ever more intimately, extensively and deeply with the splendor of the truth, so that she may be en-mire beautiful in your face; and of the ardor of charity to make ever-more dear, sweet and praiseworthy in your presence.
555. With your inspiration you join the soul ever more with your divine works, and at the same time you make her more fruitful of holy works and more governess of your house, queen in your kingdom, and mother in your great family of chosen souls.
556. With your divine inspirations, in an ever higher and more perfect order, with an ever more intense and continuous rhythm, you reveal her that you have accepted her consecration and that you are pleased with her correspondence; you want to dispose of her always and ever more directly as she personally lets you possess her.
557. Fidelity, generosity and obedience to your inspirations point out the perfect consecration on the part of the soul, as the continuity, multiplicity and intensity of the same inspirations point out on your part, the acceptance and enjoyment of her consecration.
558. O fidelity, generosity and generosity of loving obedience to the divine inspirations, in you is all the triumph of divine love! Only following you, O divine inspirations, the soul celebrates her ascension, gloriously fulfills her ascension to the eternal triumph of the divine love in the Blessed Trinity.
559. You are the divine guidance for the soul to the divine love. You are the divine guidance through which he attracts, elevates and carries us to the one who says: "Come, follow me,

follow me as I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. Come, follow me as I go ahead of you”.

560. Divine guidance of the one who alone is the director of the soul, as he is the only creator, savior and sanctifier. The one who goes ahead of the soul because to him belongs every true initiative as he alone is the first cause and knows adequately the human soul.
561. You alone, Lord, know adequately the human soul and every other being in all its ideal as it is in your thought and in your will, in your glory and love, in all its heaven and sphere, in all its relations with the eternity, with creation, with your very self, O Lord, in your blessed Trinity.
562. Your angel, invisible minister, can only be a minister of your guidance, not the director! Your priest, visible minister, can be only a minister of your guidance, not the director, because, you, my God, are the director of every soul.
563. You go ahead of the soul and direct her; the angel goes side by side with the soul to prevent any deviation or distraction in other things. The priest goes after her to prevent that she may slow down, delay or interrupt following you. The angel, the priest and the soul must fix their gaze on you, unique divine director.
564. With your multiform inspirations you guide the soul through the heavens of your divine liturgy, renewing in her, in an intimate and personal way, all yours and hers, the revelation of all truths of faith, with superior intelligence and wisdom totally delicious and effective.
565. With your multiform inspirations you guide the soul through all the stages of human, Christian life, forming her according to the divine model, that is you, O Jesus, renewing in her your mysteries, reliving in her all your acts and states, fulfilling in her your divine functions.
566. With your multiform inspirations you guide the soul through all circumstances of life and relations with your holy triple

Church to the perfect observance of the commandments and counsels, to the perfect apostolate of every revealed truth, of every virtues mandated by you.

567. With your multiform inspirations you guide the soul through the practice of the divine sacraments and devotions, from one level to another, to the highest prayer of union with you; to the communion of ever-greater grace, to ever more abundant and effective, uplifting and prevailing infusions of virtues and gifts.
568. With your multiform inspirations you guide the soul through ever more perfect, extensive and intense practice of the works of mercy; and in them to every other holy work producing acts, true fruits of the Holy Spirit, and to the fruition of joys, true beatitudes of the Holy Spirit.
569. O my Lord, since in all this you want my cooperation, grant me an ever-fuller knowledge of all the effects of your grace; grant me ever more abundantly the gifts of the Spirit that dispose me to receive your superior guidance, animation and deification. Amen.

CHAPTER 8

Hymn to the inspirations¹

Blessed Fr. Justin gratefully acknowledges and thanks the Lord for the great benefits received by accepting the divine inspirations from his childhood. In this hymn he sings: "You have taken me by the hand since my early childhood; you have guided and carried me on a straight path to the altar of the Mother of Grace and through her to the altar of the Sacred Heart, and through him to the altar of the Trinity, from interior ascension to interior ascension ... to prepare me for the most sweet surprises in the day of eternity."

In this hymn we may discover all the spiritual teaching about the ways, the means and the agents through which divine inspirations come to us. "The wind blows where and when it wills."

As he does in many other places, in this hymn too Fr. Justin teaches us to submit our inspirations to the approval of the Church through the spiritual director and to entrust them to the Blessed Mother so that she may fructify them.

The last six verses of this hymn are a most beautiful prayer to the Virgin Mary, mediatrix, custodian and treasurer of all inspirations in our souls.

570. O tender and gentle voice of the word and thought of the divine love that comes to my heart more than to my mind!
O tender and gentle color of the ray of the splendor of divine love that makes my day in my heaven, my sphere and in my supernatural Eden.
571. O tender and gentle aroma of the fragrance of the perfume of divine love coming to me to reanimate me and to inebri-

¹ This hymn to the inspiration is connected to the previous chapter and brings to conclusion the theme of the culture of freedom, thus dividing the book practically in two parts clearly distinct.

ate me with fervor! Messages and inspirations of my Lord, you are as many angels coming to me and going back from me to the Lord, or are you in person, O my angel, talking to me?

572. It is you directly, you in person, O divine Spirit, present in me; it is in you that the Trinity dwells in me! It is you directly; you in person, O divine Word Jesus, present at my side! It is in you that the Trinity is always at my side! How blessed am I hearing from time to time the voice of the Father!
573. I hear the very voice of the Father, on high before me. At one time I thought, and I even promised it to the souls, that it could be possible to perceive by intuition, from the effects of the inspirations in the soul, which invisible divine person was affecting them.
574. I thought I would be able to perceive and discern, with a certain precision and relative certainty, if they were coming from an angelic or divine person; if they were coming from the angels be further able to discern whether they were coming from the guardian angel or from angels on extraordinary mission, or from angels belonging to one hierarchy or to a particular choir of angels.
575. In addition to a great purification and purity of spirit that may take the soul to a spiritual sensibility above the ordinary, in the inspirer principle is needed the willingness to reveal itself to the soul in order to be distinctly known through the intimate word and the intimate effects of the word.
576. O inspirations, where do you come from and from whom? You are thoughts and every thought comes from intelligence; and every intelligence belongs to a spiritual entity that wants to apply to me its enlightening action when it addresses to me its interior alive word.
577. I would love to see you; I really love to see you as you are present, enlighten and guide me when you talk; you reassure, inflame, elevate and carry me to superior horizons and spheres, to levels and forms of superior life.

578. You have taken me by the hand since my early childhood; you have guided and carried me on a straight path to the altar of the Mother of Grace and through her to the altar of the Sacred Heart, and through him to the altar of the Trinity, from one interior ascension to another.²
579. You have shown me the great kingdom of the Lord; you have taught me the science of the saints and have preserved me from the contamination of evil;³ you have endlessly enriched me with the treasures of the communion of the saints and you have prepared for me the sweetest surprises for the day of eternity.
580. "The wind blows where it pleases; you can hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." What is this wind that has a will to blow where it wills? All the currents of the air obey to a law of a will.
581. What is this wind that has within itself a will, and is in itself the supreme divine will? It is only you, O Holy Spirit God! O Holy Spirit of the Father and of the Son! It is you, O God Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit!
582. The wind does not blow where it pleases but the Spirit inspires where he pleases. I hear his voice but do not know where it comes from and where he goes. So I must think and know that every message and messenger, every inspiration and inspirer comes from God the Holy Spirit.
583. You do not know where it comes from, from which angelic

² How beautiful are these memories of intense spiritual life from his first childhood! Various people have witnessed some of these episodes (Cf. O. Anella, *Chamato per Chiamare*, Ed. Società Divine Vocazioni, Roma, 1997).

³ It is common belief that Fr. Justin has kept his baptismal innocence, even though in many places and in different ways he confesses to be a great sinner; many great saints have expressed similar feelings, as St. Theresa of Avila.

hierarchy, from which of the nine choirs of angels this inspirer, this inspiration has come to you, my soul. You do not know where it is going and to which angelic choir or hierarchy it is going back, nor do you know how many other souls it will inspire and move on its way back.

584. O inspirations! I greet you in your intimate relation with the ordinary and extraordinary mission of the angels, ministers of the Trinity among the souls, with the extraordinary mission of the seven spirits assisting at the throne of the Trinity, and of the princes of the angels.
585. O inspirations! I greet you in your intimate relation with the divine mission of the divine persons of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in the soul; in your intimate relation with the coming and indwelling in the soul of the first divine person, principle and font of the Blessed Trinity!
586. O inspirations! I greet you in your intimate relation with every beginning, development and crowning of every vocation and mission of souls in the Church and in the entire universe! All good is effect, flower and fruit of you, O divine inspirations, vocations and missions!
587. The divine light reaches me through you; your divine thought is made known to me through your messages. The Spirit of the Father and of the Son is before me, penetrates in me and transports me to God, from love to love, from heaven to heaven!
588. A voice cries! Voice of one who cries: "Prepare in the desert a way for the Lord."⁴ Finally the one you were waiting for, the one who had to come, he now must grow in your esteem, love and life and I must disappear;⁵ turn to him, unite yourselves to him alone and forever.
589. Voice of one crying in the night, at midnight, "behold, the

⁴ Is. 40, 3.

⁵ Jn 3, 30.

bridegroom is here,⁶ light your lamps, not to see the one who is coming, calling and waking you up, but light your lamps to go out, and joyfully welcome the bridegroom!

590. So do the angels precursors, the divine messengers, the angels of the inspirations! One, a thousand or myriads! It is not important to know or to see them! They are not the light, but witnesses, proclaimers of light, of love, of the groom and of the Spirit God!
591. Welcome the message, believe in the love, correspond to the loving God, reserve, as he wants, reserve for the day of eternity innumerable acquaintances, and countless gratitude when nothing can, in any way, deprive you of the great vision, embrace and union with your Lord!
592. You are in the Spirit of the Father when the soul is transported to the Son! You are in the Spirit of the Son when the soul is transported to the Father! You are in the Father and in the Son, one and only God and principle of everything, when the soul is transported to the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son.
593. Only God was their leader!⁷ God alone is your leader, even when he leads you through all his angels! To him alone all your soul, heart, mind and strength! Creator and savior, inspirer and consecrator, sanctifier and glorifier, he my only God and my all!
594. Only God was their leader! May the Lord alone be my guide as only Jesus is my life; as only Jesus is the essential personal truth, only his Spirit is my interior rule and my interior guide with his divine inspirations.
595. For this divine reason, in order not to be weakened in my freedom, in order not to decay from this divine altitude, in order not to profane this divine atmosphere, not to stain this

⁶ Mr. 25, 6

⁷ Reference to God guiding the people of Israel through the desert.

divine light, in order not to etiolate this divine sanctification of the inspirations ...

596. I entrust them to you, holy mother Church of Jesus Christ, because you alone have the charism of infallibility of the divine truth in your visible and invisible head, in Jesus and in his Vicar. The Holy Spirit that assists you always directs and palpitates in your heart.
595. For the greater good of the souls, your people and family, your members in the mystical body of Christ, your very self, O holy mother Church, unique mystical body of Jesus, to you I entrust all my inspiration so that you may reveal, authenticate and confirm them to me.
598. Only you, O mother Church, can safeguard my inspirations from any insinuation and falsification of the spirit of evil and of the world that dispute with the Spirit of the Lord the dominion and possession, the management and direction of my poor, weak and wretched human spirit.
599. Only you can safeguard, purify and strengthen with the truth, your head, with the charity, your heart, with the holiness, your life, this my poor human spirit, subject to ravings and illusions, hesitations and perversions also about the inspirations.
600. Only the public and private magisterium of the Church can guarantee for me the truthfulness, the authenticity and genuineness of the inspirations; but who can guarantee me proper acceptance and correspondence, the proper cooperation and valorization?
601. If I had only accepted all the inspirations that the Lord graciously pleased to visit me every day, accompany me at every step, and teach me every religious truth! If I had only corresponded properly, in what ineffable divine union would I already be!
602. O divine inspirations, divine talents that I have buried and rejected! O divine rings that I have broken losing entire series of graces that depended on their correspondence! O in-

spirations, divine germs of flowers of glory, of fruits of love, of ever-higher levels of life!

603. O divine germs of life that I thought to have sown to the wind and the wind took them far away from my sphere and lost for me! O germs of life that I thought to have sown into the fire and tuned into ashes and lost for me. O divine germs, to whom must I entrust you, where must I deposit you?
604. To you, promised land, virginal priestly soil, in which the Holy Spirit worked the incarnation! To you, in whom after the incarnation has been deposited every other germ of Holy Spirit, in which every other good of the Church has always been deposited and through you has produced its flower and its fruit.
605. To you, holy Virgin Mary, I will entrust each and every inspiration, so that I may properly accept and correspond to it through your grace, source of every grace and of all inspirations. O sovereign mediatrix of all graces and of all inspirations!
606. Mediatrix of every divine vocation and mission, divine mediatrix of every correspondence to vocations and missions, you are my holy land of promises and blessings; in you, I want to lay the foundation of all my spiritual building, in you I want to place all my spiritual people.
607. In you I want to deposit every germ of divine inspiration in order to be preserved and find the most favorable conditions to germinate, blossom and fructify! O Mother, obtain for me all the other inspirations and graces that would have been poured upon me, if I had always corresponded to the Lord!
608. O Mother, obtain, for me, the most perfect likeness and union with your immaculate heart, in each and every loving act and state of yours for God and neighbor in Jesus, especially in your perfect acceptance and conservation, meditation and enjoyment, application and practice of every divine word!
609. I want to honor you and have you honored as you are for

me: queen, mother and teacher of every vocation and of every divine mission to the souls, because you are the mediator, custodian and treasurer of each and every divine inspiration in our souls! Amen.

CHAPTER 9

Ascensional Journey

The simplicity of form, intertwined with personal memories and practical aspects of the mystical life, makes easily understandable the philosophical and theological theme of this chapter. Fr. Justin helps us to understand that the divine value and effectiveness of "Let us make man" will never end; the same is true of the perpetual ascension that carries the seal of eternity; it is not only the conservation of the present, but a continuous effusion of love both in giving and receiving.

Man would not be the image and likeness of the eternal, if after creation, he would have fixed, un-extendable limits, just like any other creature. Even vegetative and animal life tends to immortality and universality of dominion on this earth through its reproductively. The soul that cannot reproduce herself is characterized by the conquering and dominating ascension, proper of the forms of superior life.

This chapter ends with a very beautiful image of the "flowered bush", image of the Trinity... the Father is the stem, the Son is the Flower, and the Holy Spirit is the fruit; we can also say: the universe is the bush, mankind is the stem, and the Church is the flower. What about the fruit? "Every elect in whom the divine-human espousal relation germinates a double stem, blossoms a double flower, ripens a double fruit".

610. O my Lord, when will end the divine work that you started and revealed in those divine words: "Let us make man in our image and likeness"? Will that divine work also have its Sabbath in which the artisan completes and deliver it to his client and commissioner?
611. If it were a work commissioned by a client, if it were a work completed by a worker, architect, by a created, limited and successive artist, and were destined to another superior being, surely that job would have its completion date, and that worker would see the day of delivery and also his wages.

612. Likewise all the work of my all life will have its completion in time, its delivery at the door of eternity and its recompense on the day without sunset of eternity; but you, O Lord, to whom must you deliver your work, who should pay you, my Lord?
613. I know that you're your divine work, even thought present in your eternal mind and in your Word from all eternity, started in time in the first week of the created universe, in the last working day of the week of creation.
614. I see the beginning of this work but I do not see its end; I will never see its end! It is not a work commissioned by others or destined to others, because there is no one superior to you, you God, the only God and there is no other God before you.
615. Your work is not similar to any of the innumerable works of the countless created beings, secondary causes in the universe, living and active in time, inexorably measured and limited by time; your divine work will never end!
616. Your work started in time will not end in time, because it is an eternal manifestation of your divine love of one divine person to another divine person; it blossoms in time to flourish in eternity where it sets its roots and raises up to heaven, expands its flower and donate its fruit.
617. Your divine work of creating man is also in the image and likeness of your other divine operations ad intra: the eternal generation of the Son, the eternal *spiration* of the Holy Spirit, that explains why it rests, it is fulfilled and completed in eternity, in their image and likeness.
618. Re-echoes on your divine present "Let us make man in our own image and likeness" living, personal and free relation of love with you, in imitation and glory of love of the necessary, eternal, personal relations of love, that are the three divine persons.
619. Even this created and free relation of love with the adorable Trinity, this multiple and multifaceted relationship of love,

synthesized and culminating in the relationship of the soul spouse of God takes place now in eternity, in the image and likeness of the necessary divine relations of the Trinity.

620. Does this mark of eternity come only from the divine conservation that maintains man in the state of his first creation? Is this conservation the only and total effect of the divine work, completed in the first formation?
621. The conservation may properly be said "a continuous creation", but it is not an eternal forming and carrying on the work that supposedly had been completed already; the character of eternity comes from man's formation, not only from his conservation.
622. From this conservation derives the immortality of the soul; the perennial need of the soul to be united to her body; the continuous expectation of the body to be reunited with the soul, their effective reunion at the final resurrection and their eternal life in the everlasting sanction.
623. The character of eternity comes to him from the very formation, from the divine "Let us make man in our image and likeness" that, supposed the divine will of doing what it reveals, cannot have an end, and thus places the soul in a perennial ascension to the Lord!
624. I greet you, O divine ascension, in which the creating, saving, sanctifying and glorifying love places the human soul, my soul! O divine ascension you are in the very essence of the relation of the soul friend, lover and spouse of the adorable Trinity!
625. "Go and tell my brethren" says the risen Lord to a soul friend, lover and spouse, "that I am ascending to my God and your God, to my Father and your Father".¹ I have already told you: come after me; follow me; now I reveal you the direction, the way and the blessed end.

¹Jn 20, 17.

626. O my soul, and you too, my poor pages, go, carried on the wings of these pages, go to each and every soul and tell them that their relationship of friend, lover and spouse of the blessed Trinity is essentially divine ascension to the Lord.
627. If the divine work of man's formation had a term, if the divine operator ceased to elevate, enrich and sublimate the human soul, if the divine Lord ceased to reveal, effuse and communicate ever more and better, always more and better his good to the soul ...
628. He would not have really accomplished what his will reveals and expresses, that is, the image and likeness of the divine persons; the footprint, trace and sign of infinity, can be a thing created, restricted and limited on all sides, but not the image and likeness.
629. The living and personal image and likeness of the infinite may be limited in its principle in time, but must be infinite in its duration that tends to the eternity; it may be limited in the succession of its actualizations, but infinite in all the rest.
630. Unlimited in the dilatability of its boundaries, indefinitely ever more dilatable; unlimited in its intelligibility ever more illuminable, unlimited in its perfectibility ever more perfectible, unlimited in its ever more deifying capability of glorification.
631. This perpetual ascension, this perennial and evermore elevated and progressive, intimate and extensive, profound and intensive communion with the divine, infinite, inexhaustible and unfathomable, inaccessible and incommunicable good, truly makes the soul image and likeness of God!
632. Love never says "enough"! Never says *enough* to its effusions and communications of good to the beloved; never says *enough* to the correspondence and requital that expects from the beloved; this is always true both on the part of the lover and of the beloved.
633. The divine love creates the soul out of love and in order to be loved. It would not be love; it would cease to be love and

would not have love if he were to put an end to his effusions and communication of good to the soul he loves to the point of wanting her as his spouse.

634. "Love never says *enough*"! Why it never says enough? Let us not be satisfied only with knowing and feeling the exigency of love! Why love never says enough? Because love is the created communication of the very divinity, an irradiation of the blessed Trinity.
635. Who is the one who never says enough? Only the one who never runs out of the good he gives. Only the infinite is inexhaustible good. Only the infinite can give without ever saying enough. Only the one who gives without ever saying enough can demand a correspondence to his gift without ever saying enough.
636. O love, you alone are the greatest explanation and revelation of God and all his mysteries. You, O God, are the greatest explanation and revelation of love and all its mysteries. You, O love, are my God! You, my God, are all my love! You are all love!
637. For this reason, O divine Lord and love, after the creation of man you do not manifest the approval and complacency² with which you sealed and crowned all other creating beings of the world and every previous day of your work of creation.³
638. Every other created being from the from the star to flower, from the sky to the beast, is a good limited on every side, with limitations in its species that can never be torn and ex-

² Cfr. Gn 1. At the end of the first five days of creation, the Bible states: "And God saw that it was good"; this phrase is missing after the creation of man.

³ Reading Genesis, chapter one, we see that after the creation of the various elements of nature, at the end of each day, the Bible says "And God saw that it was good". This affirmation is missing after the creation of man, at that end of that sixth day!

ceeded; it is a small and great masterpiece fully finished, totally complete.

639. You keep looking at it, you are pleased with it, you bless it approving and declaring that it is well done, that it is a good sign of you, a sweet evidence of you, an evocative footprint of you and it will speak of your greatness, power, wisdom and providence more than of its own existence.
640. Of the man, that you placed as head of all previous creation, making of him a sovereign creature, of the man that you have elevated to the supernatural state making him sharer of your own divine nature, you do not express the same approval and complacency.
641. This lack of approval of man was not due to the fact that in your omniscience you foresaw his fall and rebellion. You deal with man in his present, not in your present, because the human masterpiece had only been started and immediately you continued to improve him, and he is not yet finalized.
642. He will never be finalized in the sense that he will never have a point of arrival as he had a starting point, precisely because you want and make him in your image and likeness. Man could not be your image and likeness if he were limited on every side without expandable boundaries, as any other created being.
643. Cannot be image and likeness of the eternal any being that has a beginning and an end in time; such a being could be a sign, a footprint and vestige, but not image and likeness; to be image and likeness of God, even though one can have a beginning in time, he cannot have an end.
644. Cannot be image and likeness of the infinite any being that has limitations, both in successive levels of good that he receives and in the overall number of levels of light that he must receive; such a being could be a sign, a footprint and vestige of the infinite good, not its image and likeness.

645. In order to be image and likeness of the infinite good, even though a creature might have limits in the individual successive levels of good that he receives, he must not have the same bounds in their overall amount, but must be eternally open to receive more and more of that good that is always expandable, because it is the only infinite.
646. Every gift of grace, every grace of gift is always a new level of supernatural life that you infuse in the soul, or a nourishment that you provide to her life, so that she might have a greater growth and might dispose herself to ever greater elevations, to which you foreordained her.
647. Every life, in its own species, incessantly tends to develop and grow indefinitely, always within the assigned limits and within the bounds designated by your creating wisdom, when is question of natural, vegetative and sensitive life.
648. Who will unveil and show me all the other forms and levels of life that the creator has spread throughout the universe? Who will unveil and show me all the other universes blossomed from the creating divine power besides this world in which I live and to which belongs my soul?
649. What do you pretend, O small, fragile plant producing butterfly flowers, you who in order to raise from the earth need to struggle, and yet keep going up and up, tenaciously clinging to the support?⁴ You too long for universality and for the immortality of a domain over all the earth.
650. O poor little plant that hardly live for one season⁵ and cannot boast of the durability of large vegetables, the resistance of the giant plants, how can you aspire to have an universal

⁴ This wonder and adoration for the beauty of creation, is extraordinary description under the eyes of Fr. Justin, who is writing all this in the spring of 1944 in Mercato Cilento, where there is a plethora of wild and magnificent vegetation; sylvan background denoting the mountainous and coastal zone of the Cilento.

domain on earth, to the immortality of a lasting domain over all the earth?

651. Oh, if at least, you could move with all your species, with each individual unit to conquer the earth! But you alone, individually alone, how can you present and affirm yourself with this unspoken, and yet visible, yearning for immortality and universality of domination over all the earth?
652. You rise; you climb through great efforts of assimilation of the elements that nurture your life, produce the papilionaceous flowers, inflate your pods, ripen your many seeds and after having let them fall and stored in the soil, you die.
653. You will be dead ... but only after having secured all your vitality, in so many seeds; after having secured your individuality in so many other plants that will come out of your seeds, because in yourself you contained, carried and developed your own vegetative species.
654. In a short time you will live again, no longer alone, but within a large family; not too far down the road you will be a vast plantation, and thereafter you shall cover entire regions with your green and embellish continents with your butterfly flowers until the earth will no longer be large enough to contain you.
655. The whole earth will no longer be large enough to contain all the production of this life, notwithstanding the fact that its life is so short, frail and minute: because it is life, and every life incessantly grows, regardless of its limitations and within the range assigned by the creator.
656. O my beautiful couple of pigeons⁶ that in your admirable fidelity rush about to produce and reproduce every month your little ugly pigeons that later become beautiful, what

⁶ In Pianura of Naples, from the balcony of his room on the third floor of the Vocationary, every day Fr. Justin used to feed the pigeons that faithfully kept visiting him.

do you expect for yourselves in this world? Be content with your birdseed, of your baths, your kisses and your rest⁷.

657. They too aspire to the immortality and universality of their domain over the entire world; they do not die without seeing every year flying around dozens of beautiful winged ... infallibly destined to do the same.
658. So we have an area, an entire region of earth and sky filled with flying wings that continuously develop, multiply and expand themselves tending to conquer the dominion of this earth, as if it were all theirs, if other causes and other lives would not impede it.
659. Thus life, every life incessantly tends to its development and growth, within its own limits and spheres, evidently points out that the ascension is an essential element, the most beautiful note, the most alive in the concept of life, in the reality of life⁸.
660. This ascension, that is the most beautiful and great aspect of life, event and effect of life, in the forms and levels of vegetative and animal life, takes place in the multiplication of the single entities that propagate the species, after having reached the extreme limits of development.
661. What will ever be the power and capacity of development of the souls, in all the superior level of intellectual, volitional and operative life? What are the great, glorious possibilities of endless ascensions in the truth, goodness and dominion of the universe?

⁷ As can be seen, flora and fauna feed the contemplation of the heart of the Blessed Justin. Numerous doves populated the bell tower of the monastery of Mercato Cilento, where he writes contemplating the nature that surrounds him. Innumerable pigeons did their nests in the bell tower of the old monastery of Mercato Cilento where he kept contemplating nature while writing these pages.

⁸ The ascension is not limited to the sole spiritual realm, but an intrinsic reality in the very essence of life.

662. Since the soul does not reproduce herself in the indefinite multiplication of herself in individuals of the same species, that constitutes the conquering and dominating ascension over the inferior levels of life, she must correspond in her intellectual, volitional and operative life ...
663. With an indefinite ascension toward the absolute truth, toward the absolute goodness and toward the endless activity of the act that constitutes the conquering and dominating ascension proper of the superior forms of life, totally directed to the supersensory world through the sensory world.
664. These are the conquests and dominions proper and worthy of the superior forms and levels of life, not in the visible earth, in the sensory world and in exterior forms, dominion open to conquests of the lives of the living inferior beings, all placed at the service of lives of superior living beings.
665. O my poor and dear brothers ... why do you lower, shrink, befuddle and make ugly the forms of superior life meant to make you great, remaining in the circle and in the way of the lower satisfactions of the achievements of vegetables, lowering and degrading yourselves below their level?⁹
666. Develop, reinvigorate properly the noble body to which the creator connects the human spirit, and multiplies it in the sanctity and unity of the unique Christian marriage, so as to offer worthy matter to the creator of souls, to the glory of his love.
667. Much more than the entire world of inferior beings, lives and relations, let the entire world and beings, the life and the corporeal relation of humans be totally and exclusively at the service of ascensions, achievements and dominions of our superior, intellectual, volitional and operating life.

⁹ This appeal to the human dignity seems to contain an implicit condemnation of the barbarity of the Second World War still raging as the author was writing this book.

668. Oh, what an argumentation and revelation of the unlimited ascensions of the soul is this irreproducibility of the soul, even only in the natural order! The soul does not reproduce her self. She does not reproduce herself because she is intrinsically immortal:
669. It has been said, on a different account, that many priests succeeded each other in the priesthood, even the high priests, because death did not let survive the antecessors; Jesus however, the risen crucified, remains forever, in his function of eternal priest.¹⁰
670. Jesus only has a Vicar on earth and an indefinite number of ministers determined by the need of the Church; he alone is the eternal high priest! He alone is the eternal victim and host! He alone is the eternal reconciler, mediator and savior for all souls.
671. The soul does not reproduce her self, so all the development and increment of her spiritual life is all in her self. She irradiates but does not pour her self into others; the whole vital ascension of the soul is upward, like the flame of fire, underneath and around her it is like water.
672. In this new, superior, extraterrestrial and supersensible world, from the very beginning of human nature, there is the elevation to the supernatural order, the communication of life to the soul, a life that is not only superior, but a participation of the divine life.
673. If divine life in itself does not admit the possibility of increments on account of its infinity, even in its smallest participations, presents itself with an extraordinary mystically ascensional vitality that clearly demonstrates God himself to be its origin, nature and destination.
674. Even the smallest actual grace, when well received, is always a communion with God, and naturally leads the soul to es-

¹⁰ Cf. Heb 7, 23-24

tablish herself in a higher union with God in habitual grace; in a similar way even the lowest level of habitual grace compels man to higher elevations.

675. It compels man to elevate himself to a superior level of divine friendship, and obtains from the Lord greater and superior infusions of habitual grace; thus every actual grace becomes habitual and they multiply themselves infinitely in the soul putting together their vital ascensional energies.
676. Actual and habitual graces place the soul that consents and corresponds to them into a state of marvelous attraction to the Lord, to the infinite, which will never end; it will intensify ever more proportionately to the increments of grace and to the soul's correspondence.
677. If every level of life, even the lowest and the most imperfect, even vegetal and animal life, is a perennial development, increment, expansion and multiplication, much more it is so our supernatural life, the supremely divine life.
678. Supernatural life is the only true life (... compared to it other forms of life may be lives only by analogy; compared to it, all other forms of life may appear as lazy and inert energies); Oh! What a marvelously progressive and ascensional life!
679. The Lord only out of love, and inseparably with love communicates this superior and supernatural life, because it is destined to become all nourishment, energy and flame of love. Supernatural life is in itself fire of love because it is participation of divine nature that is all fire of love.
680. O brother fire, you too with the vehemence of your flames burst toward the heights! You crawl around only to find nourishment to your flame! As soon as you find your nourishment you assimilate, transform and elevate it in flames tending toward the sky.
681. My winged child "fantasy" now presents to me a crater in the Flegrei area extinct for centuries, as it appeared at the time it was covered by a heavy blanket of snow, as it had

never happened before or after to this day;¹¹ but on the surrounding hills here and there ...

682. People could see high the flames of the St. Anthony's bonfire, because it was his feast day; they may have seemed as red roses over the great surrounding candor or as burning and glowing stars, at the first Vespers of the feast of St. Peter's Chair.¹²
683. May that candor be your aliment, O fervor, to rekindle as volcanoes of fire of glory of love the earth as at its beginning; to consume in burning fire of zeal for love all the evil of indifference and coldness, bitterness and ingratitude of human hearts to their God!
684. You too, my love, with your fire and symbol of fire, with the reality and force of your divine fire talk to me about increases and elevations, increments and endless ascensions ... as endless are you, O love, in your eternal divine principle: The eternal and adored Trinity!
685. Love is essentially attraction of the lover toward the loved one; of the loved one that becomes lover, and thus mutually and indefinitely in the incessant vehement motion of the love relationship formed and kindled between two hearts.

¹¹ This verse and the following are a very personal nostalgic remembrance: The ancient crater extinct approximately ten thousand years ago is the very place where he was born and lived, Pianura of Naples. "As it appeared at the time it was covered by a heavy blanket of snow, as it had never happened before or after to this day" is an explicit reference to the night of January 17, 1891; the night in which he was born. O. Anella in *Chiamato per Chiamare* says: The tradition handed down that in Pianura there had never been as much snow as in the night in which Fr. Justin was born".

¹² It was a local tradition in southern Italy, and especially in Pianura to celebrate the feast of St. Anthony Abbot (January 17) with bonfire, whose high flames enlightened the surrounding area. At the time of Fr. Justin's birth and of this writing, the feast of St. Peter's Chair was celebrated on the 18th of January.

686. If this attraction should cease or would not carry us to the lover, but fold on the same first term, the lover or vice versa, it would no longer be love or relationship of love, but would be like putting ashes on the fire, a little bit of mud on the flame.
687. If this attraction ceases, love ends! And you have nothing but a handful of ash of past memories where the fire used to be enkindled. If the attraction folds upon the lover rather than upon the beloved, the relationship of love ends ... and all you have is a handful of mud of sensuality where the fire used to burn brightly.
688. This essential, warm and delightful attraction turns, directs and enraptures the lover toward the beloved, and makes him to effectively, affectively and willingly give all that he has, all that he knows, all that he is to the beloved and vice versa.
689. Vice versa love expects and requires that the beloved may offer, with equal and greater impetus of love, all that he has, all that he is, all that he knows, all that he is in his very self; this is not so that he may repose in this gift, but only in order to make of it motivation, stimulus and reason to reciprocate it.
690. This, in order to reciprocate a hundredfold the gift of himself, in an alternating and upward oblation, in a reciprocal and progressive union, interpenetration and quasi animation, in a mutual, progressive and marvelous circulation, indwelling and communion of works, of life and of persons.
691. Relatively, initially and partially this is found in every true love and in every true love relation, but finds its peak in the nuptial relationship, in the relation of marital love, that is sovereignly the one between the Lord God and the soul in state of grace.
692. O my winged youth intellect do not ask me why ... Why all this effusion, why this progressive oblation of his own self, this progressive attraction and communication of himself to the creature on the part of the Lord God?
693. Did you not know yet the Love of God? Love between peo-

ple is ordained to a greater good; the Love of God cannot be ordained to any other good, but to God himself. The love of God ends in God himself, because only God is the ultimate goal, and God is love.¹³

694. Love is divine nature, takes and transports each divine person, starting with the Father, to give all himself to the other, mutually outpouring all himself upon the other, and be one totally in the other by way of circuminsession, in the divine unity of nature with distinction of the three persons of the Trinity.
695. The three divine person are taken and transported, in time and without time, to offer and donate themselves to the soul, in force of the love they are in themselves, for the very love that each divine person is for the other, and each person eternally wants this for the other and from the other.
696. In the divine life *ad intra* of the divine being each divine person is adequately received and reciprocated by the other, adequately loved and corresponded by the other, cannot be adequately corresponded by the soul, even if she were the most elevated, dilated, sublimated and deified soul of the entire universe.
697. The divine love remains in its nature and exigency of infinite good which is infinitely diffusive; the exigency of a proportionally ever greater correspondence and reciprocation can never be contained nor impeded, and much less suppressed and annulled.
698. No receptive limitation, no comprehensive insufficiency, no defective correspondence of the beloved soul can ever suppress or annul such exigency. The flooding, bitter waters of faults, the choking agonies of sins were unable to extinguish, restrain or weaken that divine love.
699. The divine love with infinity of intimate communications

¹³ Cf. Jn 3, 8.

will ever more reveal himself to his beloved creature; all eternity will not be enough to reveal exhaustively the infinity of God's love, because the soul cannot contain the infinite.

700. Notwithstanding her vast intellective and strong-willed, emotional and operative capacities, and their eternally greater expansions, the soul will never be able to contain the infinite. Why then the soul keeps opening, yearning for the infinite? Why she can be satisfied only in the infinite, while she can never totally comprehend it?
701. My soul, why do you seek the infinite that you cannot contain? Is it because the entire universe cannot fill up your immeasurable capacity? Do you expect and beg the Lord for another larger, more beautiful and noble created universe?
702. No created, finished and limited universe could ever satisfy you, because you really want only the infinite. You want the infinite itself in the divine nature, the infinite in person, in the Blessed Trinity; the infinite that is revealed and communicated to you through an eternal progression ... always more, always more!
703. The infinite attracts and transports you in itself through an infinitely and perennially greater correspondence: The Lord enriches and fills you with his very self that you can reciprocate it in effective love.
704. I see in this giving and being given, accomplished by the infinite love in the soul, a flash of eternal the generation and active *spiration!* I see in this everlasting yearning and expectation of correspondence and reciprocation from the part of the creature a flash of the eternal passive *spiration.*
705. This expectation and desire of correspondence and reciprocation from the part of the creature, that the divine love has and reveals, disposes and transports him to infuse more and more indefinitely and perennially his good through the ways of love in the manners of grace.
706. How could the soul ever correspond in love to her God if he had not infused it in her? How, or with what could the

soul ever reciprocate the gift and the gifts of her God if he himself does not reload her of his goods with which she can adequately reciprocate?

707. Not even the most elevated and perfect soul will ever be able to receive all the infinite good that is God, that God does, that God accomplishes in his infinite love ... because she remains forever limited, even if her boundaries were very extensively torn and dilated every instant.
708. The infinite love is not displeased on account of the limitations of his creature, when they are not voluntarily locked up by the creature, voluntarily restricted by laziness, or voluntarily opposed by refusal and ingratitude.
709. The infinite love remains always more charmed to give and to give of himself always more ... progressively more ... when those limits are dilated by the desire of the beloved creature, when they are overstretched by the vehemence of the creature's love, when they are torn by the tormenting need of love.
710. The desire of love, the need of love, the torment of love, the impetus and vehemence of love of the beloved creature are, for the divine love, powerful attractions to pour out and give himself personally; these are added to his own exigencies of nature of love, of relations of love.
711. For every thing, for each title and in every way, the divine love is perennially descending, offering and giving himself to the soul; the awareness of this places the soul that comprehends and corresponds in a perennial ascension to God, which consists in receiving, offering and uniting herself to God.
712. O my soul, you are so limited, always limited, why do you always seek the infinite? You, poor living nothingness, poor personal nothingness, why do you seek the all living, the all personal and are not satisfied and do not rest in anything else, or after momentary illusory satisfactions walk away nauseated?

713. Not being able to ever possess your loved and longed for all-living and all-personal, you do not cease to hurl yourself to him, to expand and embrace him; only this perennial ascending, dilating and replenishing yourself of him, only in this divine, progressive and embracing torment you find peace, joy and paradise.
714. You too, O my Lord, my God and my all! How is it that you, the infinite, the eternal, the immense, the all-spirit and act, want to love a creature that is lacking in everything? And you want her correspondence, you want to unite her to you and transform her in you!
715. Since the soul is not capable to adequately receive all the good that you desire to give and do give her; she cannot correspond to the love he has for you and is in himself, and yet you do not cease to attract her to you, to fill her of your own self and dilate her in you and to communicate yourself to her indefinitely and progressively always more.
716. Since you willed to establish *ad extra* of your own blessed Trinity a nuptial relation with the soul, you never cease and will never cease to fill her up of your good and your love in order to make her ever more worthy of you and make her capable to always better correspond to your love in this relation.
717. The soul, created specifically for this nuptial relation with you, feels consequently, the needs and consequences, the exigencies, the noble need and divine torment of nuptial love with the infinite; she ascends to it in a progressive ascension of elevations and expansions, of consecrations and communions.
718. O my love God, you are always in the state and act of spouse for the soul; likewise you want the soul to be always in the state and act of bride for her God. Since she is not capable of being such adequately, grant that she may become ever more and better capable of it ... indefinitely, eternally and ascensionally!

719. Who can ever imagine or dare to say that this relationship ends with the earthly life and is not extended and continues, elevates and intensifies for all eternity? It is repugnant, outside of God, to admit that something may exist without a beginning; it is not repugnant, however, to admit that something created by God may have no end.
720. We cannot think of a more appropriate, worthy and appreciated reward for the spiritual progress in time than a spiritual progress in eternity. We cannot think of a more appropriate, worthy and appreciated reward for the strenuous effort and elevation of fervor in time than a delightful elevation and glorious ascension of fervor in the eternity of paradise.
721. If love never says "enough" even in its imperfect forms and lower levels, how could it ever be contained, suspend the communications of its goods, the transfusions of its self when it will triumph in its higher levels, in its supreme and perfect forms of paradise?
722. Only what is defective, what is dangerous, what is probationary and similar primordial elements of our human condition will no longer exist in our status of glory. What is good will be revealed, expanded, elevated and exalted in the glory of the paradisiac blessedness.
723. O Jesus, man-God, I do not know how you will communicate yourself to the angels and saints in paradise; I am really convinced that you will communicate yourself to the angels in such a way that they will have nothing to envy to the saints, if you allow me to express myself so humanly.
724. I firmly believe that you will communicate yourself to the saints in such a way that they will not miss anything earthly, not even the Eucharistic Communion with which you communicated them on earth and you continue to communicate us on our pilgrim way, giving us all yourself in Holy Communion.
725. In every created life, is there anything more beautiful than

its own integral motion? What is the best beauty of motion if not its own development? Consequently ... cannot be lacking the progressive motion and the ascensional development of human life in the world where there is the triumph of supernatural life!

726. The progressive ascension of the soul in the possession and fruition of her God could cease only in the most absurd hypothesis that the soul entering the state of glory were to cease being limited and successive, or that God were to cease being the infinite and the immense!
727. I greet you and long for you, O ascension into heaven, ascension from heaven to heaven, from paradise to paradise, from glory to glory, from love to love in the love of the soul for God and of her correspondence without any impediment!
728. I greet you and long for you, even though I can hardly have only a glimpse of you, even though your ways and many other things are kept hidden to me in the natural and temporal order, just as I ignore the supreme reasons and the intimate ways of human life and its development.
729. With the most constant, high and intense spiritual progress in this life I want to dispose myself to the supreme forms of ascensions in truth and in charity, in activities and apostolates that you granted to the saints that more and better invested and multiplied the talents received at the departure of the Lord.¹⁴
730. If the Lord absolutely expects the investment and the profit of five, two or even one talent, will he not expect it also for the other talents that he has poured upon us as a reward for the fidelity demonstrated in the investment of the first? Much more so for these!
731. If those faithful servants were able and willed to invest and

¹⁴ Cf. Lk 19, 11-19.

multiply, with great laboriosity¹⁵ and generosity, the few talents entrusted to them by others, how much more would they be eager and willing to invest and fructify their own personal talents?

732. In the very nature of money, in the very nature of those talents there is the capacity and the need to be multiplied ... just as in the nature of life and of love there is the capacity and need to develop and expand with greater force and effectiveness proportionately to the height and perfection of their level ... as it is in paradise.
733. The highest level of life and of love is the spousal relation in which each one wants the other. It does not stop at any gift, at any communication, but directly, explicitly wants the person, most intensely the beloved person.
734. When will the soul possess the beloved person in such a way that she has nothing else to desire? When will the Lord find the soul so worthy and so dear that he has nothing else to communicate to her ... to desire in return and correspondence so as to possess her in peace?
735. Behold, he is eternally revealing himself and attracting her to himself, perennially filling and dilating her with his goods, continually giving himself to her, and wishing her to be as he is, possessing her as he gives himself to her. This is the essential perpetual nuptial ascension!
736. Essential ascension to the nuptial relation in the supernatural order: in the natural order love between creatures is always ordered to obtaining some other objective, hence it is always a means, and as such must be considered, felt and cultivated, lest we pervert it in idolatry.
737. Love in the natural order after reaching its goal, generating its first flower and producing its first fruit, at most it can con-

¹⁵ "Laboriosity" is a Justinian term meaning "laboriousness", in the sense of attitude and dedication to work constantly.

tinue to enable man to produce his flower and fruit and remain in his good, but cannot bring him any further, because the flower and the fruit his end-product.

738. In the supernatural order the love of God for man and of man for God is end in itself. Love is God himself, and our Lord and God is love in person; hence, charity is end itself.
739. Friendship with God is progressive end in itself; it grows in parallel with its elevation and establishment in the nuptial relation: This above all is the supreme love! This above all places the soul directly, explicitly and intensely in the presence of her God.
740. Nuptial love transports and catapults the soul to her God that is her goal, in all the senses and values of goal! O, end without end! Flower and fruit of this relation of love is the ulterior immersion in and ascension toward this end without end.
741. Oh! To possess ever more, to enjoy ever more this end without end, with indefinite and everlasting capacity of ascension, of perfection and of self-donation! This too is an end without end, image and likeness of the end without end for the divine bridegroom, the Lord God.
742. In this, for all eternity, will shine the beauty of the flower of the love of the soul for her God. From this shall spring forth for all eternity the sweetness of the love of God for the soul. In this shall consist the eternal ascension of the soul to ever-superior unions with the adorable Trinity.
743. If the fact that the divine love is end in itself excludes every subordination, does not exclude the relation, because being related to another by way of subordination is quite different than being related by way of relationship, as it happens among the divine persons.
744. No subordination, absolutely no subordination among the absolutely equal divine persons, essentially one only God! Yet, each divine person is intrinsically preordained to the

other person by way of relation in such a way that each person is totally that relation that constitutes each of the three distinct divine persons.

745. Divine love cannot remain with its flower and fruit, flower of divine life, fruit of divine life, since love is life itself in its supreme energy, efficiency and expansion, in each of its degrees and levels, and supremely so in the love of God, in the love that is God.
746. Which one is your flower of divine life, which one is your fruit of divine life, O divine love, you who are love in yourself and for yourself, you eternal and infinite life? I adore you in your beginning without beginning, O love God-Father! I adore you, in your end without end, O love, God Holy Spirit!
747. I divine stem, I adore you in your flower! I adore you in your flowered fruit, O divine stem! Tell me in your Word of the flower that you bring to the beloved souls! Grant me, in your Spirit, the flower and fruit that you bring to the loving soul! Place me in the light that reveals the flower and ripens the fruit.
748. O adore in the eternal processions of the divine persons the flower and fruit of divine love in its life *ad intra*. Now, I adore, in the divine work of creation and sanctification through the redemption, the flower and fruit of divine love in its life *ad extra*.
749. You yourself, O divine love of each divine person for the other are the principle, means and goal of creation, redemption and sanctification! The universe is the root, humanity is the stem, the Church is the flower and the elect are the fruit of the love *ad extra* of each divine person for the other.
750. O universe, root that must pass entirely into the stem of humanity! O humanity, stem that must become entirely flower in the Church! O flower Church, you must all remain and transform yourself in fruit in the elect, so that every soul may really be the elect-fruit *ad extra* of the Trinity.

751. You do the same in the soul, your spouse, O divine love! Likewise from the divine-human nuptial relation sprouts a double flower and ripens a double fruit in its life *ad intra* and *ad extra* so to speak.
752. In the external world, in the great human-Christian-religious family, and behold... the stem that germinates from the nuptial relation of the soul with the lord is a luminous stem, a solar star that irradiates a higher and sweeter knowledge of the Lord ... it is like the Good News of the gospel of divine love.
753. O Saints, elder brothers of the soul spouse, Thomas, Alphonsus, Henry, Raymond, Bernard, Richard, Theresa and John, Dionysius and Augustine,¹⁶ the great human-Christian-religious family has not yet received or fully understood the Gospel of divine love.

¹⁶ The big brothers of the soul-spouse, the great theologians that inspired Fr. Justin "spousal relation" are: St. Thomas Aquinas; St. Alphonsus A. de Liguori, Blessed Henry Suso, St. Raymond Penafort, (who asked St. Thomas to write the "Summa") St. Bernard of Clairveaux, St Richard of Chichester, St, Theresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, St. Dionysious the Areopagite and St. Augustine of Hippo.

CHAPTER 10

Levels of Ascension and their Elements

This chapter seems to present a new style in the teaching of Fr. Justin: the style of personal witness of his interior life, in a rather dramatic form. From his personal experience he finds the way of inviting everyone, even the worst sinner, to the nuptial banquet... to take the place of the soul spouse. There is no room for false humility! With the supernatural power of prayer, the soul can even participate in the creation of the soul "through the only open door of intercession! God really loves us and wants us all united with him in everything."

Fr. Justin starts witnessing to the divine fruitfulness and tenderness toward him to explain his vocations and to invite us to accept our vocation. "Since then sprang up that stem, all solar star of light ... of spiritual culture of love, of Gospel of divine union, a beacon of light in the night of profane love and is a sunrise even in the dull dawns of sacred love (but not triumphant yet) of Christians and religious".

Supreme exemplars of this supernatural nuptial relation are St. Joseph (nobody ever was nor will ever be united with the Blessed Trinity in the supernatural nuptial relationship like him) Mary and Jesus. Only through the major unions with Joseph, Mary and Jesus, the soul arrives at the divine union with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The chapter ends with the expression of burning desires: "Let the mind be dilated in the splendors of truth, let the heart be inflamed with the ardor of charity, let the life be elevated on the fervor of sanctity ... so that we may be found well disposed to the divine attractions to eternal ascensions so that in turn may enlighten and make fall in love all the souls, and with them go through all the levels of ascetical ascension, and with them, in the arms of the beloved go through the levels of the mystical ascension to the divine union".

754. O faithful servants of the nuptial banquet, the hall is still empty! Go back, go back again to call, to solicit and compel the souls to come to the wedding feast! Dress them with hu-

mility leading them to choose the last place, so that they may be prepared to ascend to the first places!

755. The invited guests of yesterday should become the spouse of tomorrow, each in her own order, heaven, world, and Eden. Go, good and faithful servants, and invite poor, handicapped, blind, lame, because all, without exception are sought by the love for the divine union!
756. The servants understood the divine plan, the divine desire; happily they went bringing the message of the divine love, the only love that can and must be proclaimed from the rooftops, trumpeted, sung and exalted with every solemnity and publicity to all people, to every soul, at all times and in every place.
757. The good servants found themselves in a very perplexed case. They could call the poor to the feast, they could carry the crippled, they could accompany the blind, and they could drag the lame to the wedding banquet. The thought and the desire of the Lord had been made known.
758. Now, (remember my soul...) now they are facing one, O my poor soul, one who was in himself a mound of all these miseries; he was jointly very poor, cripple, blind, deaf and mute.¹ How could he be presented into the banquet hall and to the Lord of love?
759. How could he be presented and be of glory for the banquet, and of delight for the Lord of love, of life, of joy, of beauty and infinite happiness? How could they present an individual so sickening, almost agonizing, without upsetting and nauseating the all feast?
760. They left him in his miseries and in his agonies! Only one

¹ If Fr. Justin says this of the condition of his soul, what should we say of ours? Great, indeed, is the humility of the saints, who see themselves as the greatest sinners!

servant, the most beloved of the master, in a very low voice and with some shame expressed the case, which occurred in their quest and how they felt that they should act. The Lord mysteriously smiled and in even a lower voice responded.

761. That master is truly a mystery of love! He was saying that he was explicitly expecting that person ... that was exactly the person he had in mind when he had mentioned the poor, the cripple, the blind and the lame; because that individual was all this more than all the others ... because he was the sum and the synthesis of all diseases of the others.
762. O! The poor servants did not yet understand because their spirit and their criteria were different from the spirit, criteria and ways of their master! They had been living with him a long time and they did not yet know in depth his heart,² they had not made theirs his thought and his love!
763. Whispering mysteriously in a very low voice, as by infusion of a new ray, he enlightened their mind with the truth that in miseries, unhappiness and suffering and any other pain, especially if deeply rooted, sunk, drowned ... especially if chronic, shines a sign of ordinary mystical vocation.
764. They are the ones who are called, chosen for divine union. Many are called, because those who suffer are many! All are called, because all suffer! *Omne caput languidum, omne cor morens* – *The all head is sick, the all heart is diseased*³. Oh, how many are those who suffer! Really each and every created soul, all suffer!
765. From among these many called, that are all men, very few are the elect! All men are called to the divine union, but few achieve it!⁴ Why? Because they do not find anybody that

² Cf. Jn 14, 9.

³ Is 1, 5b.

⁴ Cf. Mr 22,14; Lk 14, 15-24.

would make them understand and would compel them to correspond to that call.⁵

766. So that most unhappy and miserable soul was taken (and you, my soul, were thinking of dreaming!) and carried to the banquet hall! When she understood, she could not believe it! She became heavy, very heavy as to make it impossible to be carried fearing it would be an offense and insult.
767. Many are called; all are called to divine union; yet those who believe in the mystical vocation to divine union are few. They will not reach it because they do not believe in it. *Without faith it is impossible to please God.*
768. Without faith in divine love, in its attractions and predilections (or may I be allowed to say: *divine follies?*) it is not possible to please God; cannot be Godlike, cannot communicate with his thought and love, cannot become his image and likeness.
769. Without pleasing the Lord it is impossible to enter in his friendship, and much less in that supreme level of intimacy, which is the divine union of the nuptial relation, to which it is essential that ones pleases the other, in order for one to give himself totally to the other in love and vice versa.
770. Since then, I have learned another "Hail Mary" in the house of Zachariah, and I delight myself to multiply rosaries to the Blessed Mother, so that she may say to my soul: *Blessed are you who believed that the promise made you by the Lord has been fulfilled*⁶.
771. Those good servants, knowing now the thought and the desire of their master (they loved him very much and wanted to please him, give him honor with the pleasure of love) they

⁵ For a further development of Fr. Justin teaching on the vocation to Divine Union, see: G. Russolillo, *Evangelizzare la Divina Unione*, Editrice Vocazionista, Roma 1981.

⁶ Cf. Lk 1,45.

said so many beautiful and sweet things to that most unhappy and miserable soul that at the end she believed!

772. Oh! May be eternally blessed the moment in which I believed in the love of God! Blessed forever you, servants of God, who brought to me the good news of the love of God and induced me to accept it. O my good father Frederick William Faber, O my good mother Theresa of Avila, O my good sister Catherine Emmerick!⁷
773. When that most unhappy and miserable soul was at the thresholds of the royal palace ... all her malaise troubled her; when she arrived at the thresholds of the banquet hall ... she was appalled with shame, discouraged by confusion and in an excess and paroxysm of false humility, she doggedly and stubbornly threw herself on the ground.
774. Inside she trembled and cried, because she had believed in love, she had gotten a hint of that relation of love with God and was yearning for it! And yet she could not hide her infinite unworthiness, her infinite guilt and her infinite shame that shattered her faith in that love.
775. Of all the divine Gospel of love remained, resounded in that soul only the words: *Quomodo fiet istud – But how can this come*

⁷ Here Fr. Justin introduces us to his spiritual family; Fr. Frederick William Faber, whom he calls his father and whose style of writing he imitates; from him Fr. Justin learned how to immerse himself deeper into the spousal relation, the devotion to the Most Precious Blood, and whose books: *All for Jesus* and *At the Foot of the Cross*, were required reading for the Vocationist formation; St. Theresa of Avila that he calls his mother for her mysticism and for her books *The Interior Castle* and *The Way of Perfection*, from which he developed his teaching about the spiritual ascension and the universal call to divine union. Blessed Catherine Emmerick, mystic, Marian visionary ecstatic and stigmatist, is called his sister for her participation in the interior passion of Christ and for offering her life for vocations. It is believed that Fr. Justin might have had internal stigmata: this may help us to understand why every Lent was for Fr. Justin a real Calvary and every Holy week a real crucifixion!

*about?*⁸ At the same time the Lord saw her, and as in an impatient waiting of love, came to the thresholds of the hall, looked at her, spoke to her, lifted her and carried her in.

776. He himself carried her in, not among the invited guests to the banquet, not within the first seats, but to the empty seat next to him reserved to the queen of the banquet, the queen of his heart, the soul spouse. His look, word and contact had made her worthy of him.
777. Who among the many called, among all the called can ever refuse to become the elect out of false humility? (Many of the called ones, only on account of false humility, do not want, do not desire that ascension, elevation and relation of divine union.
778. If we do not want it freely, if we do not realize it willingly, with full will, it will be impossible to be admitted because to that relation is essential, both among men and with God, the full consent of the will in total freedom, because it must be fullness of love, totally and only love!
779. Who will ever back up from this divine perspective after even that most unhappy and miserable soul⁹ was so mercifully wanted, so mercifully admitted and confirmed?
780. In that moment germinated that stem¹⁰ that is all solar star of light, of spiritual culture of love, of gospel of divine union, as a beacon in the night of human love, and in the flat dawns of sacred love not yet triumphant of Christians and religious.

⁸ Lk 1, 34.

⁹ What a profound humility! Fr. Justin refers to himself as “That miserable soul”!

¹⁰ “That stem, that is all solar star of light, gospel of divine union, beacon and aster that will always produce flowers and rays of light, is the Society of Divine Vocations, fruit of the nuptial relation of Fr. Justin with the Blessed Trinity. “In that moment germinated that stem” confirms what the same Fr. Justin said in one occasion: “The Congregation [SDV] was born with me”.

781. That stem, that beacon and aster of splendor does not cease, nor shall ever cease to invite and call to the only harbor of the heart... to the divine union, to that capital of the divine palace, to the banquet hall, to the first seats, to the first seat in the relation of love with the Blessed Trinity.
782. On that luminous stem will always blossom flowers of light; every ray of light irradiating from that luminous stem seeks other souls and penetrates them in order to open the flower of light in their heart, purple, flaming, fragrant, intoxicating corolla.
783. Corolla of desires and spasms, outbursts and sighs for the divine union, of which have they glimpsed paradise, the flowers that interweave the ornament of the soul for the divine engagement, flowers that announce the supernatural spring of the nuptial love.
784. Will those corollas ever get rid of the petals in order to make possible the growth and maturation of the fruit? Or those flowers will wither and die without producing any fruit? That is the sort of every other corolla; this is the sad ending of many flowers even on the big fruit trees.
785. This is not the case of those corollas of flowers of divine love! They will remain as halo of the fruit¹¹ as it grows in beauty, fragrance, and nobility with the fruit that must always be connected with its flower! Flower that always produces its fruit in virtue of the divine love.
786. O fruits *ad extra* of the soul spouse of the Lord! You are the various, the many relations of love between the Lord and their God, you are above all relation of nuptial love special

¹¹ "The fruit as it grows in beauty, fragrance, and nobility with the fruit that must always be connected with its flower", can this be a prophetic vision of Fr. Justin and the Society of Divine Vocations, both destined to grow in beauty, fragrance and nobility, and always connected with each other? I see Justin as the flower and the Congregation as the fruit.

and unique of every soul with her Lord in that special aspect and order, sphere and world that is every soul in God.

787. The souls are the proper fruit *ad extra* of the divine, creating, elevating, saving, sanctifying and glorifying love. The Lord wanted her soul spouse sharing his divine activity in all that she could be associated in truth of God and of the soul.
788. Only the first causality of the first cause, on account of the nature and truth of God and of the soul, is incommunicable from God to the soul: the very creation of the soul because she is all causality of the first cause. The creation, among the works *ad extra*, is the one that more corresponds to the divine being as first principle.
789. Once the souls have come into being they are in the created order *ad extra* in which takes place the nuptial relation of the divine love with the soul, and in this, the divine love, only first principle and first cause, associates her to himself.
790. God is the only first principle and first cause of the elevation, and redemption, of sanctification and glorification of the souls; in these divine activities God wants to associate the soul spouse, giving her a real part in the elevation and redemption, sanctification and glorification of other souls.¹²
791. From the flower, first fruit of the plant, and from the fruit, supreme flower of the plant it is revealed and recognized the nature of the plant; likewise, from these flowers and fruits of relation of love between God and the soul, we see what is produced in the souls of our neighbors from the divine grace through the ministry of men.
792. It is revealed and made known the specific relation of love of this man, minister of grace, with God, author of grace. Not from any flower and fruit, but from the perfect flowers and

¹² This verse seems to be a practical application of St. Paul's "It makes me happy to be suffering for you now, and in my own body to make up all the hardships that still have to be undergone by Christ for the sake of his body, the Church" (Col 1, 24).

fruits, the supreme flowers and fruits, ultimate aim and ideal of the cooperator of God.

793. These supreme flowers and fruits, the ultimate aim and ideal of the soul cooperator of God, are the only holy army of the soldiers of God, the only divine service of Jesus' ministers, the only evangelical perfection of the of Christian ascetics.
794. They reveal a soul, great faithful of Jesus, great captain of Christ the King, great priest of Jesus high priest, great saint of Jesus teacher ... they however, do not reveal the soul elevated to the supernatural nuptial relation with the divine Trinity in Jesus Christ, divine Mediator.
795. Divine friendship, intimacy and familiarity, the divine engagement and mystical marriage reveal the soul spouse: supreme flower and fruit, ultimate goal of the cooperation of some souls (Oh... why it cannot yet be said of all souls?) with the divine love, God-spouse.
796. The soul spouse with the supernatural, immensely and gloriously mysterious power of prayer upon the heart of God, the heart of her spouse, dares to tend also to be part of the creation of the soul, through the only way open to her: the intercession.
797. The Lord really wants soul spouse united to him in everything! United always in the highest and most intimate way and level convenient to the highest and most intimate relation of love! So in the incarnation of the Word, exclusive work of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, true Mother of God.
798. We catch a glimpse of the merits of the saints of the Old Testament, of the Patriarch and Prophets, equal to the greatness of their faith and love, of the perfection and ardor of their desires, of the power and efficacy of their hope and prayer upon the heart of God.
799. Above all stands the prayer, the perfection and supreme merit of the holy virgin-spouse of the Immaculate Mary; in the order of intercessory causes his prayer had to be the

most effective, the most immediately united to that of Mary, Virgin Mother of God.

800. St. Joseph is the virgin father, not only because he was the foster father of Jesus, not only because he was the virgin spouse of the ever-virgin Mother of Jesus, but also because he stands between the Son of God and the Mother of God as the soul-spouse for excellence!
801. His supreme flower and fruit in the souls is this love and supernatural nuptial relation of the souls for Jesus, for the Holy Spirit, for the divine Father, for the Blessed Trinity... one and only God-spouse of the soul. St. Joseph is elevated and stands in a distinct, special order in this supreme, divine spousal relation.
802. All through his virgin spouse, Mary. She brought to him as a bridal dowry, she communicated to him the glory of her holiness, the sublimity of her happiness of love for Jesus ... as an irradiation of her very maternity of Jesus, making him soul spouse of God in the highest level.
803. St. Joseph reveals supremely the Mediatrix of all graces and the mother of divine love ... because in his relation of true spouse of Mary has discovered and reached the relation of soul spouse of God in truth and in reality mysteriously like his union with Mary.
804. Nobody ever was nor will ever be spouse of Mary like St. Joseph; nobody ever was nor will ever be like St. Joseph united with the divine Trinity in the supernatural spousal relation, which in him is an essential element of his own distinct heaven, world and paradise of the incarnation.
805. Distinct order of the incarnation of the Word! Supernatural nuptial order! Order culminating in Jesus. Order that irradiates in St. Joseph! Order to which belongs every other order of graces coming to us from Jesus through Mary with the cooperation of St. Joseph.
806. The Blessed Trinity celebrates the wedding feast in the second person that takes human nature, body and soul of per-

fect man in the hypostatic union: supreme and incommunicable exemplar, and yet, font and cause of any other divine union granted to the souls.

807. The Blessed Trinity celebrates the wedding feast with humanity in the first person that elevates the Immaculate Virgin Mary to himself, mysteriously uniting her to his relation of virgin Father of the Incarnate Word making her Virgin Mother of Jesus.
808. The Blessed Trinity celebrates the wedding feast with the soul in the third person, the Holy Spirit, who elevates St. Joseph to the most spiritual relation of soul, mind and heart as spouse of Mary in the sphere of the incarnation of the Word, all work of the Holy Spirit in the most pure Virgin Mary.
809. O Joseph! O Mary! O Jesus! Highest levels of the supernatural spousal relation of humanity with the divinity, you shine in the heaven of faith and grace as triple halo of the first mystery, with the last zone of light bordering our world of divine union!
810. This triple halo borders the world of divine union like the sky seems to touch the peaks of the mountains, to those who are in the valleys, while to those who are on the top of the mountains seems to touch the far away plains at the last curve of the horizon.
811. From you, Jesus, Mary and Joseph, flows to the soul the grace of divine union, because you are so high in order to expand your light and life upon a wider sphere, upon every sphere of souls ... and attract all souls to the supernatural espousal relation with the Blessed Trinity.
812. Supreme levels of the ascension of the soul to God! First levels for the bounty of God to the soul and last stage of elevation of the soul to God! Only through minor unions with the saints and the angels we arrive at the union with you, Joseph, Mary and Jesus.
813. Only through the major unions with Joseph, Mary and Jesus the soul arrives at the divine union with the Father, Son and

Holy Spirit through a mediated and immediate mysterious intimacy, depending on the mediation and above any mediation, as if it were an imitation.

814. Sometimes it is imitation of the union of St Joseph, sometimes of the union of Mary and at times of both of them and together with the divine Trinity! Always, however, with Jesus and for Jesus, always in Jesus and from Jesus, supreme revelation of the adorable and blessed Trinity.
815. In every stage of this ascension to the infinite, to the immense and to the divine, ascension to the blessed Trinity in the supernatural espousal relation, I see shining always more in the interior life, and supremely in the wholly interior life, a stem, a flower and fruit of the love between God and the soul.
816. To every stage of ascension corresponds a luminous, glorious increment of that stem, flower and fruit, in which I see the divine gift of the entire Trinity, operating in the soul as one only God that he is, and yet in the unity of nature and of divine work I see the distinction of persons.
817. I see in that stem the divine grace, and in it the created, shared communication of the divine nature to successive, progressive stages, and ever-more live ascensions; in them I see a special likeness, communion and cooperation with the Father: that is with the Trinity in the Father.
818. I see in that flower the divine virtues and in them the created, shared communication of the divine perfection to successive, progressive stages and ever more illuminating ascensions; in them I see a special likeness, communion and cooperation with the Son: that is, with the Trinity in the Son.
819. I see in that fruit the divine love, and in it the created, shared communication of the divine operations to successive, progressive stages and ever more operative ascensions; and in them I see a special likeness, communion and cooperation with the Holy Spirit: that is, with the Trinity in the Holy Spirit.

820. The soul, ever-more deified, is the plant, flower and fruit of the divine love of the divine persons *ad extra* that pour themselves ever more in the inner part of the soul, in the substance and power, in the states and acts of the soul made in the image and likeness of her Lord.
821. As goes the docility, fidelity and generosity of the soul in responding to the divine love, in the time of our mortal life, in the incipient and imperfect ascension toward the supernatural spousal relation with the Blessed Trinity and consequential deification of grace in our state of way and exile ...
822. So will later go her perfect ascension in the immortal life of the blessed eternity, in the deified glorification and in the glorified deification of her being living and personal image and likeness and gift of love of each divine person to the other, in the relation of supernatural nuptial relation.
823. Oh! How I wish to have a glimpse of this ascension into the glorious reality of paradise, and to enable my brothers in exile to see it too! This mysterious ascension in being and operating, in loving and enjoying, in blossoming and fructifying in the mutual union and possession of the soul with the divine persons.
824. O created things, O natural relations, O sensible realities with all the analogies with which you bloom in the ideal springs, in the mind enlightened by love, in the heart enlarged by love ...you cannot give the idea of the glorious ascension of the soul to the divine union of the blessed eternity!¹³
825. You show me various levels of purification and elevation, in the states and acts, but you cannot indicate the indefinite stages of spiritualization of the soul in her glorious state, in her ascension of the blessed eternity!

¹³ This verse is a beautiful contemplation of St. Paul's "What no eye has seen and no ear has heard, what the mind of man cannot visualise: all that God has prepared for those who love him" (1Co 2, 9).

826. You show me various levels of art in imitating nature and you can render always more expressive and alike an image of created, natural things; but you cannot give any indication of the glorious ascension of the soul to the blessed eternity in its likeness with the three divine persons.
827. You show me various levels of human friendship, various relationships of natural love ... but how one can become more spouse of the spouse ... how one can ascend indefinite levels in this nuptial relation, you cannot give us any hint because for you beyond the peaks there is only emptiness.
828. The Lord God is the infinite! The infinite loves and calls, attracts and unites to himself the soul with the most sweet strength and with the strongest sweetness of the exigency never satisfied and never satisfiable of love. The soul endlessly ascends to God in the blessed Trinity.
829. The soul thinks of, longs for and with her heart hastens the entrance in the blessed eternity of glorious ascension; to prepare herself and become worthy, with every talent within her grasp she prepares herself to the ascetical ascension of this life and to call and bring many, many souls also in order to multiply a hundredfold her own ascension.
830. The soul thinks of and longs for that successive and ascensional becoming soul spouse of the Lord in every mystery, in every state and act of the incarnate Word, in every perfection and operation of the incarnate Word, in every perfection and operation of the most blessed Trinity ... as so many eternal springs that bloom spontaneously and immortally in his paradisiac Eden...
831. As so many heavens that stand high and are peopled with stars in the interior world, as so many embraces of divine glory and happiness in the eternal blessedness, in so many days that spread in myriads of dawns and middays and many other fountains of oceanic rivers of joy in the blessed eternity.
832. The soul thinks of and longs for the divine good to which she

unites and will always more unite herself eternally, above and beyond any possible idea that may be offered by the element of quantity; quantity in the natural order sustains all other sensible accidents; likewise it enters in the way of imagining the supernatural, as element of every blessed ascension.

833. The soul elevates herself ever more and recollects herself looking and desiring the divine persons above any gift. *You, you, only you O Lord!* ... Because espousal love tends to the person, the espousal relation is with the person, and only the divine persons are the infinite that can be possessed and enjoyed always more.
834. Only possessing always more that infinite good, the souls obtain such new, great and sweet realities and is enabled to indefinitely give always more, and give herself endlessly more in the rapture of nuptial love, in the current of the spousal relation in which the whole person is offered.
835. Person to person, mind to mind, heart to heart, life to life! The human person to the divine persons, the divine person to the human person! O supreme venture! May my mind expand in the splendors of truth! May my heart be inflamed by the ardor of charity, May my life be elevated in the fervor of sanctity...
836. So that I may be found well disposed to the divine attraction for the everlasting ascensions. So that I may enlighten and charm all souls, and with them, I may travel in my life's time all the stages of the ascetical ascensions, and with them - in the arms of the beloved - I may travel all the stages of the mystical ascensions to the divine union!
837. "Keep the law," says the beloved. "I keep it already". "Accept the counsels!" - "Which ones?" - "leave everything and come with me, come and follow me!"¹⁴ - "Where will you take

¹⁴ Cf. Mk 10, 17 and Lk 18, 18 and following).

me?" – "Behold, I ascend to my Father and your Father!"¹⁵ –
"Leave everything and come after me: come with me! Amen!
Alleluia!"

¹⁵ Jn 20, 17b.

CHAPTER 11

The Levels of the Ascension

This chapter certainly offers us an impulse to ascend the mountain of the ascension. The angelic and demonic world, nature and super nature are involved in this process.

Starting from a very personal experience, an interior vision that took place in Altavilla Silentina, in which Blessed Justin saw angels and devils fighting for the dominion over the plane of Paestum, and remembering the vision of the night of St. Anthony the Abbot, the powerful impression of the volcanic area, the Solfatara of Pozzuoli, and the far away beloved island of Java in Indonesia, as a soul spouse, he tries to inculcate true hatred for evil. He wants to prepare us for the battle to definitely vanquish evil.

In the last two verses we find a very concrete conclusion, the pedagogy of the interior progressive purification, necessary to arrive at the first stage of the ascension: the faithful.

838. My soul, let us make the effort to go up! I really want to go up to heaven; I want to please my God! I want the perfect divine union with the three divine persons! From whom comes this light that invites me to ascend, this strength that pushes my slothful soul to go up?
839. Don't you see, my soul? How is it possible that you do not see the angel near you? Nature makes you gravitate always lower, with all its inclinations and deviations! Nature does not inspire nor pushes you to move upward. The enemy, on the other side, wants to attract and precipitate you in its abyss.
840. Only the angel invites and pushes you to ascend! O my angel, make me pure as you are pure, so that I may become like

you all intelligence of the Lord, all love and consequently all ascension to the Lord! My soul, let us then make the effort to leave the low planes and climb to the mountain, to heaven, to God!

841. Without the eyes of the body, that far away day, (was it on the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi?) you saw from the convent of Altavilla Silentina all mankind and all hell fight an unending battle in the plane of Persano and Paestum¹...
842. You saw, under the impetus and the cunning of countless unrestrained demons, souls falling by the thousands, succumbing to tens of thousands, so miserably, so terribly ... you felt, and after so many years you still feel horror and sadness in your lower nature.
843. Let us leave the plane, my soul! Let us climb to the mountain, to heaven, to God! Even on the mountains there is fighting, but not as fierce as on the plane! Even in heaven there is fighting, but only for lightning moments ... because immediately one enters the eternal paradisiac joy and peace of the Lord God!
844. Let us go out, today in spirit, tomorrow perfectly and completely, let us leave this world that under human feet is totally covered with invisible, terrible, imperceptible wireless network operated by satanic demons to make us falter and fall, according to the vision of Don Bosco.
845. Let us go out of this poor world that, above our heads, is totally wrapped within a satanic net; it does not let the souls

¹ The convent of St. Francis in Altavilla Silentina, presently novitiate house for the Vocationist Fathers, is situated on the hill of Altavilla that dominates the planes of the ancient Greek colony of Paestum and Persano and golf of Salerno. This vision that may have happened on October 4, 1932, induced Fr. Justin to accept the very difficult pastoral care of those planes: Martinella, Persano, Paestum, Cafasso, Licinella, Cerrelli and Albanella: Many good Vocationists dedicated their lives to evangelize and sanctify the poor peasants living in that area, at the time, infested by malaria.

(doves desiring to fly) break the meshes of the net, nor freely fly through the open sky to their nest and sphere, to their heaven and their God.

846. Those who with divine help succeed to escape from the net very often stumble in other armies of evil spirits wandering in the area that immediately wraps the earth ... with their diabolic ugly hands grab and whisk half dead under the net the doves that managed to escape.
847. According to this vision of the patriarch of the anchorites, Anthony Hermit, the greatest danger and the worst violence is to remain under the net of the world ... as a slothful slave unable to fly, without the constant effort to fly, which alone can enable us to escape the net and the diabolic traps placed between heaven and earth!
848. Let us leave the world, even if it requires effort and violence. Let us avoid the traps of the areas bordering the planes. My soul, let us elevate and climb to the mountain, heaven and God! In the lower spheres and in every sphere relatively inferior, there is pestilential atmosphere where every soul suffers and agonizes, struggles and then descends and lies.
849. Exactly as you saw that poor quadruped in the cave of the dog in Pozzuoli;² as you read to have happened to the Roman naturalist Pliny Senior during the eruption that buried Pompei. As sings that pictorial poet Aleardi of those going through the valley of death in the island of Java that you love.³

² Real, personal memories! Solfatara is a shallow volcanic crater at Pozzuoli, near Naples, part of the Campi Flegrei volcanic area. It is adormant volcano, which still emits jets of steam with sulfurous fumes and gas. There is a rather small cave in the Solfatara. When Fr. Justin went for the first time to visit this cave he saw the body of a donkey. Ancient chronicles report many stories of animals that died, asphyxiated by gas stationed a few centimeters from the ground.

³ This fascinating island of the Indonesian archipelago, is the world's most

850. Let us leave this world! Let us climb from the planes to the mountains, to heaven, to God, my soul! Those who remain in the plane adhere to the world and succumb to the enemy; they join the number of the temporary reprobates ... on the large and comfortable road that leads them to becoming eternal reprobates!
851. Those who fight, win and move upward are the temporary elect but well on the way, notwithstanding the fact that the road is narrow and arduous,⁴ to become the elect of eternity, they pass to the side of God, they are on the way to meet the winner that comes from heaven: Jesus Christ.
852. O my Lord God Trinity, grant to every creature, from the lowest to the supreme, a new permanent extraordinary mission; permanent and yet extraordinary mission to fight and triumph, to destroy every moral evil and to conquer every spiritual good.
853. May every creature of yours receive this extraordinary and permanent mission from all creatures, inferior, equal and superior; may every creature in turn exercise this mission toward every other creature, superior and above all equal and inferior.
854. O My Lord, even the elements of the inanimate world come up to fight for your kingdom! O my God, grant that even

populous island of Java contains more than half of the country's population. Much of Indonesian history took place on Java. It was the center of powerful Hindu-Buddhist empires, the Islamic sultanates, and the core of the colonial Dutch East Indies. Java was also the center of the Indonesian struggle for independence during the 1930s and 1940s. Java dominates Indonesia politically, economically and culturally. A chain of volcanic mountains forms an east west spine along the island. It must have fascinated Fr. Justin for its volcanic nature and for its rebirth and prosperity after many volcanic eruptions, very much like the Neapolitan area of Pompei, Ercolano and Pozzuoli.

⁴Cf. Mt 7, 13.

the angels may receive a new invitation and a new spirit of super evangelical, super seraphic and super apostolic zeal for your kingdom.

855. Grant, O Lord, that above all your Christians and Catholics, your ecclesiastical and consecrated people, your representative, parents and superiors, leaders and teachers, from the highest to the lowest ranks of authority, may receive and exercise this extraordinary and permanent mission.
856. May every creature be like an angel, messenger, apostle and ambassador to propagate your gospel of holiness, to bring all souls to the Catholic Church and continuously elevate them to the ascension of the elect to the divine union with your Trinity.
857. To the flood of cleansing water, to the flood⁵ of your lustral blood,⁶ may now follow the flood of spiritual fire,⁷ the flood of saints for a baptism of fire and of the Holy Spirit that may finally renew all souls, families, people, nations and introduce the kingdom of your love.
858. From every consecrated host, living in the silent, forgotten tabernacles or in the Christian, priestly and religious bosoms, may spill and pour a healthy volcanic lava ... as a pyre of purifying and enlightening flames... fire of true supernatural hatred for evil to destroy sin.
859. Without true hatred there will never be a true war, and without a true war there will never be a true victory over sin. We would continue to collapse in catastrophic illusions deriving from false successes of false victories as consequences of false battles ... effect of false hatred to evil.
860. False hatred is zero hatred, hatred without hatred, rather

⁵ Cf. Gn 6.

⁶ Cf. Mt 26, 28 and 27, 25.

⁷ The Holy Spirit coming down upon the Apostles on Pentecost Sunday. Cf. Ac. 2.

semblance of hatred that veils the complacency, the profound attachment to evil, not yet healed but not incurable inclination to moral evil, brooding, snaking and winning in those meanders of our false battles of hate ... with false victories.

861. Many, many Christians, good part of them (could it be the major part ... or most of them?) on account of this lack of true hatred for sin collapse in the moral lowland swamp and remain among the temporary reprobates for their entire life!
862. Could they pass among the eternal elect on the last day of a life spent among temporary reprobates? Certainly, they can become elect even at the very last moment of that last day... on that fatal moment from which depends all eternity (this we hope and invoke for all!)...
863. ...But to be reasonable, and even minimally and elementary just with our soul and with the Lord God... we must immediately and resolutely pass from reprobates to elect, from death to life, from lukewarmness to fervor.
864. We must live and move, act and climb with the elect of the Lord from one stage to a higher one until death, always looking forward to the end and effectively longing for the goal of divine union with the necessary, most useful, paradisiac and deifying correspondence to divine love of the Blessed Trinity.
865. How radiantly beautiful are the main steps of the spiritual ascension of the elect of the Most Holy Trinity! The steps of the: faithful, devout, pious, ascetic, religious, consecrated, perfect, saint, assumed in God. The nine major steps are like the nine heavens and after them there is: the divine Jerusalem!⁸
866. Oh! How high above the worldly lowland swamp is even

⁸Here we have the nine steps, or levels. of Fr. Justin's mystical ladder of the ascension; they are described at the end of this volume.

the first step of the simple, but true and integral, faithful! Truly, how heaven elevates above the earth, more than the majestic summits of the highest mountains, because it is truly the first heaven of the ascension to God!

867. As Tertullian said that the soul is naturally Christian, so likewise we can say that the Christian is naturally faithful. As man needs something really relevant to become really Christian, so it is needed something relevant for a Christian to become faithful.
868. The faithful! In the sense that we now give to this spiritual adjective totally impregnated with faith and theological love to indicate the first elevated step and heaven of the ascension of the elect to the blessed Trinity, non in the ordinary sense that coincides with the appellative: Christian.
869. The soul ascends to this first step when she is well determined in the will to do and suffer everything, even the loss of the whole world and life in order to avoid any mortal and venial sin, without making too much distinction between one and the other in the reality of life.
870. Without the will to do anything and to suffer anything, even death in order to avoid falling in mortal sin, the soul cannot enter nor conserve the state of grace, if she had it. In this case, strictly speaking, she is in the swamp ... but already belongs to hell.
871. Without the will to do anything and suffer anything, even death, in order not to fall in venial sins, especially if there is attachment to them, the soul is not properly in the swamp ... but she is already speedily walking on the road to hell in a precipitous descent.
872. The most necessary and effective way to avoid any mortal sin is the fight against venial sin. The most necessary and effective way to avoid any venial sin is the fight against any unnecessary thing in the external and internal world... because sin takes place only in unnecessary things.
873. The most necessary and effective way to preserve the life of

grace is the commitment to its increase. The soul that strives to avoid any serious and venial sin and to increase the grace through the sacraments and prayer ascends to the first level of the ascension.

CHAPTER 12

The Faithful

The ascension begins! Who is the protagonist? The Christian who is not satisfied of belonging only to the body of the Church through sacramental baptism, but with exercises, states and acts of purgative - or better, liberating – way makes it to the first level, or first heaven of supernatural life: The Faithful.

The specific commitment of the faithful is the avoidance of any mortal sin.

The specific sacrifice of the faithful is the avoidance of every venial sin.

The heroism proper of the faithful consists in avoiding any unnecessary thing.

Effort, sacrifice and heroism are the vital ascetical elements of the faithful, and they will lead him to the next higher step.

Living in the world we are wrapped in a triple shell of materiality, sensuality and worldliness.

With the exercise of listening or reading the word of God and with prayer that is the divine Word by us addressed and offered to the Father we can obtain everything. Winged children, youths and Lords are called to become missionaries of holiness in every corner of the world and at all times. Missionaries of the implementation of holiness that bring and drive all souls to the supreme heaven of divine union.

This beautiful chapter ends with the instruction about the ascetical effort on the part of the creature; this is the element that constitutes the elect. The divine espousal love of God enables us to overcome the imperfection of doing things only for fear of hell or for love of paradise.

874. The will determined to the true effort of freeing one's self from sin forever, whether it be mortal or venial, and of growing in grace forever, without end, with the constant use of the most effective instruments, is the active, personal and meritorious element of the ascension to the first step: The Faithful.

875. Behold the faithful! The Christian, who is satisfied of belong-

ing only to the body of the Church through a sacramental baptism and does not care about increasing the talent of the life of grace, and from one fall to another precipitates in the abyss, is in a situation worse than an unfaithful.

876. How did that soul¹ climb from the worldly swamp to the first step of the spiritual ascension? She received from God the grace of a vocation to a more worthy life, and the light, the strength and the impulse needed to climb to the first step.
877. This vocation with the corresponding light, strength and impulse originated from the faith in the Lord, being the existing and the eternal remunerator of goodness with paradise, and of evil with hell. Faith, vocation, light, strength and impulse are offered to each and every soul.
878. Each and every soul effectively receives these gifts, and is free to accept, correspond and actually climb, or to reject and remain in the swamp. Oh! That soul voluntarily accepted and corresponded to them, and now she already enjoys being in the new heaven.
879. The first heaven of supernatural life, the first major step to spiritual ascension, where prevail the effort for the liberation and purification from evil and its consequences – is all an exercise of states and acts of the purgative or, better, liberating way.
880. O Lord, God Trinity, your love has created these heavens and disposed these steps of the spiritual ascension. Your love calls and uplifts all souls; welcomes and leads those who correspond and disposes them to ever-major elevations toward the divine union.
881. O Lord, God Trinity, your love in every heaven and step offers a joyful welcoming to the faithful soul. This faithfulness of the soul to love is not only the first heaven and step, but

¹ "That soul" is Fr. Justin Soul. See verse 754 and following of this volume.

it is the permanent and fundamental condition for every elevation to superior heavens and steps.

882. Your love acclaims and celebrates the faithful soul at every correspondence and elevation. He finds his delight in her as in every day of creation, and he blesses her as at every species of new creatures called into existence by the creating and elevating love.
883. Your love, that always delights in the correspondence of the faithful soul to your grace, wants to reveal itself always more to her, in order to attract and unite her always more to you, my love and my God; to this end you purify and ennoble, put to the test and remunerate, dilate and inundate the soul always more with your love.
884. The Lord wants to glory himself in the soul and he wants to beatify her in himself. All this in an ever more abundant measure, elevated manner and with more powerful means. These divine measures, ways and means take the soul that corresponds to ever more elevated heavens and steps of the ascension.
885. These human and divine elements practically constitute these progressively greater heavens and steps of the supernatural ascension; they essentially consist in the ever-greater communication of the divine nature and union with the three divine persons in grace.
886. But the faithful soul does not immediately recognize, listen and understand you, O divine love! She is still a child and totally in a shell of materiality, sensitivity and self-latria ... even after having sincerely declared war against every grievous and venial fault.
887. Then the soul recognizes you, hears your voice and sees you as her supreme Lord, because you are her creator and redeemer, terrible and tremendous, inexorable and non-ap-pealable judge, and she trembles reflecting on the eternal sanctions, and at any cost she wants to avoid hell and the devil.

888. Thus, she is still in the domain of self-love, of the love of her eternal salvation, of the love of her own supernatural and immortal life! O my God, O my God, doesn't this reveal your love? Isn't this your love?
889. Only from you comes to the soul every good of natural and supernatural order; only from you comes to the soul every licit and correct love. The first love you communicate and effuse in the depth of the soul and will never abandon her for all eternity is the love for her own eternal salvation!
890. This love, through your successive graces, will become love for the savior; your first gift remains the love for her own salvation, because you have created for her own good, you want to sanctify and unite her to you for her own good, to communicate to her your good, O Lord!
891. You willed that soul to be the gift of love of one divine person to the other divine person. This is the greatest good you effuse outside of your life *ad intra*. The fact that you have chosen that soul to receive the greatest good reveals that you willed her greatest good.
892. The mysterious predilection with which you chose that soul, from among the infinite *possibles*, to make of her the gift of love of one divine person for the other reveals and demonstrates, in your first simultaneous intention, your love for the divine persons and for the created persons.
893. Your love for the soul could not exist without your love for the divine persons; just as the created persons could not exist if there were no divine persons. Supposed all to be supposed, to the one who understands, always appears the truth of your love!
894. The truth of your love, all reality and purity of love, totally tending to the good of the loved soul for her own self and for your own self! Loved simultaneously for her own self and for your own self. The fact that you love her for your own self is in itself the greatest good for the soul.

895. This beloved soul one day will understand it; she will be blissful and blissfully thankful to you, O adorable love! Now: from this first step and heaven she is unable to see in the deepness of eternity and immensity, of the truth of your love for her.
896. Oh, how I would like, in a stroke of wings, take you, O faithful, from heaven to heaven, up to the ones in which you will be all paradise, because totally deified by the triumph of love in all your being and operating! How does it happen, O my faithful that now you do not feel God within your own self, do not see God at your side, up on high and ahead of you?
897. As in your body there is your soul that vivifies it, so in your soul dwells God who gives supernatural life. You are, in your own self, heaven and paradise of God, palace and throne of God! The Most Holy Trinity dwells and lives in you, in the person of the Holy Spirit to make you worthy of him.
898. The Most Holy Trinity enwraps you even in your exterior world, in your being, life and action within you. She is in a special way at your side in the person of the Word, the incarnate Son, Jesus Christ who accompanies, teaches and guides you every day and in every act.
899. The Holy Spirit, from within your being, life and action enlightens, invigorates and impels you to understand the teachings of Jesus, enables you to apply them in various circumstances, to enjoy and willingly put them into practice and truly follow Jesus.
900. The entire Blessed Trinity fills your heaven with his divinity and light of perfection; shines before you and attracts you in the person of the divine Father. The Father sends and reveals Jesus; the Father and Jesus send you the Holy Spirit, and with them also the Father comes always to you.
901. How is it that you do not see and do not feel the company of these divine persons? Only, and often hardly, you get to

capture some divine Word, and consequently do not correspond perfectly to the divine love, do not reciprocate the divine gift, do not know it deeply, do not receive it properly.

902. You were born in a great casing of materiality; growing in age with the usual education, good but not perfect, it was added another great, huge package of sensibility, not to say of sensuality solidified by your habits.
903. Living in the world, even Christian-Catholic but imperfect in the practice of Christianity and Catholicism, was added another great, huge wrapper of worldliness, not to say of profanity solidified by the mentality of the environment, all mediocrity and vulgarity.
904. Oh, what a curious spectacle, if it were not so painful, this human ball in so many casings. The shell of materiality is welded with many metallic wires that put it in communication and at the disposal of demons of sloth and avarice, in the bondage of inertia, with habit, infernal law, of the minimum outlay and effort.
905. The shell of sensibility and sensuality is connected to so many worrisome wires that place it in communication and at the disposal of the demons of gluttony and luxury, in the tyranny of false needs of the inferior animal life, with the habit, infernal law, of maximum comfort and personal enjoyment.
906. The shell of worldliness and profanity is tied with so many electrical-hypnotic wires that place it in communication and at the disposal of the demons of pride, wrath and envy, in the despotism of wanting to give a good impression, of the good reputation and vainglory with the habit, infernal law, of maximum possession and personal glory.
907. Oh, how important it is to fight and rout all those demons and adversaries! Oh, how I wish to break and annul all those chains and every attachment! Oh, how I wish to pierce and drop these enclosures and barriers! What a great and noble

struggle, toil and difficulty for the entire life, my brother, Faithful,² my Lord and my friend!

908. You cannot do it alone, I know and you must know it too and always remember it with the divine word: *Without me you can do nothing*;³ neither little nor too much, neither too much nor little, you can do absolutely nothing without me ... says the Lord! The Lord God, Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, teacher and savior says it!
909. Also the Father has done all things through him, through his Word and Son;⁴ without the Word nothing has been done, nothing is done, and nothing will ever be done. For us, practically and ascetically this means that we cannot do anything without Jesus, the crucified and sacrament... in one word, without Jesus-Eucharist.
910. We can do nothing without listening, reading and meditating the word of God: that is, without preaching, regardless of its form. We can do nothing without mental and vocal prayer at the same time (so that it may be true, sincere and integral). We can do nothing without this triple usage of the divine word!
911. We need the Eucharist as sacrifice to apply to us the merits of the savior, unique author of grace. We need the Eucharist as sacrament to incorporate ourselves with Jesus our head, from whom comes the divine life of Jesus to the entire body of the Church and to every member or faithful.
912. The Holy mystery of preaching is the divine Word, received by the souls through faith, as pasture for the intellect and the religious culture. The holy mystery of oration is the divine

² In this case "Faithful" is the soul that has reached the first level of the spiritual ascension.

³ Jn 15, 5b.

⁴ Cf. Jn 1, 3.

Word we address and offer to the divine Trinity, especially in the person of the Father, in order to obtain everything.

913. *Omnia per ipsum! Omnia possum in eo! Omnibus omnia factus!* All things were done through him! In him I can do everything! I became all things to all men!⁵ The divine Trinity has reserved to operate directly and personally in the souls only every creation of life, infusion of life and increments of life in grace, with all its beauty of virtues and gifts, with all its sweetness of fruits and beatitudes of the Holy Spirit.
914. The other divine operations, aids and interventions, bestowals and favors generally are operated through his creatures, especially the most elect, like his angels; especially when there is need of fight against the devils and his minions (and this happens all the time!). God does not fight against his creatures.
915. God never fights personally against his creature, even if rebellious and damned ... but through Michael and his angels; through Mary Immaculate and her children; through the holy Church and her ministers; through each and every faithful servant and in exercise of faith.
916. O my brother of the first heaven, of the first step, do you see, do you feel the angel near you, the beautiful friend, the sweet friend, the Blessed Trinity has given to you for ever and to whom you too have been given rather than entrusted? You must also be for him a beautiful friend, a sweet friend!
917. Did you meet your angel? Did you become friend with your angel? I greet him at you side, together with you and my angel, this beautiful and sweet angel that you do not see but believe, that you do not hear and yet consent to him.
918. O my brother of the first heaven, of the first step, O really

⁵These are all recurring expressions in St. Paul's Letter. "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some". 1Co 9, 23.

faithful one, do you have near you the minister of the Most Holy Trinity, the servant of the saints, the missionary of your ascension to accompany you, to keep you faithful, docile and generous with Jesus, so that you may not deviate neither to the right nor to the left?⁶

919. Apply yourself entirely and concentrate on listening and following Jesus in his ascension to his God and your God, to his Father and your Father, so that his doctrine may become your doctrine, his life may be your life, his work may be your work, his ascension may be your ascension and he may really live in you!
920. Oh, how I would love to be your missionary of holiness! I would love to be your servant in your ascension, to bring to you the daily message of the divine love and repeat the invitation to the wedding banquet, implore you to come to the divine nuptials and dress you with the divine nuptial garments! Oh, if you would listen!
921. O my winged children (sense, fantasy and sentiment), why you always want to fly and pause by the door of every house of men, hidden in the green of fields and valleys, of hills and mountains, and desire to be welcome and remain for long visitations?
922. Is it the need of silence and oblivion, of peace and health that has placed and increased in you incomprehension and opposition, ingratitude and lack of correspondence, tiredness and injuries? The divine Lord and friend has always sympathized, consoled, embraced you to his heart and blessed you!
923. But you, from the houses spread throughout the fields, fly

⁶ The whole verse is not only a heartfelt recommendation to have a spiritual director, but gives the most extraordinary definition of this most precious person in the life of those who want to go up the ladder of the spiritual ascension: He is "the minister of the Most Holy Trinity, the servant of the saints, the missionary of your ascension".

with greater desire to towns and villages, and with even more intense desire to the cities and metropolis; all the brothers, winged youths and winged lords⁷ follow you with peculiar mysterious sighs for all the sons of men!

924. Slowly they go through the large maps, pause lovingly considering the many names, the name that indicates the dwellings of men, along rivers and seas, in serene and stormy areas, in frozen and hot regions, for the plans and the mountains, anywhere!
925. O my lords, youths and children, what do you ask from the sons of men? Why so much love, desire, sweetness and tenderness takes and leads you toward each and everyone of them even after years and years of incomprehension and opposition, ingratitude and lack of correspondence, of tiredness and wounds?
926. I start to become aware, I start to convince myself that you are in the heart of the divine Lord, and that in you lives the heart of the divine friend, who finds his delight with the sons of men,⁸ even though in them he always finds so much to suffer that he is reduced to a state of perennial sacrifice.
927. The divine love wants correspondence from every soul and with her divine instinct leads you to seek them out one by one... from the isolated little houses to the noisy cities, always one by one, because love is always particular, personal and individual, and especially divine love.
928. Above all divine love! As it is love above any other love, so it

⁷ The whole verse is not only a heartfelt recommandation to have a spiritual director, but gives the most extraordinary definition of this most precious person in the life of those who want to go up the ladder of the spiritual ascension: He is "the minister of the Most Holy Trinity, the servant of the saints, the missionary of your ascension".

⁸To better understand this verse we should replace the pronoun "you" with "winged children, winged youth, winged lords" that form the antropology of Blessed Justin, as previously mentioned.

is above all totally particular, individual and personal; in this is revealed once again, in another manner as nuptial love: because any other form of love can be directed to embrace many:

929. Many, or at least, more friends; many, or at least, more children; and so benefactors and superiors and two parents. Marital love is directed to only one person, to whom we say: "to you alone, to you forever" (O, you alone and forever, my God and my all!).
930. This divine marital love is the one that has attracted the soul from the quagmire of mundane lowlands, and has elevated her to the first heaven and first step of the ascension, and has made of her his faithful! In order to triumph in her as true marital love and in the real supernatural nuptial relation.
931. For this, her triumph is celebrated in other heavens, much, much more elevated. To those highest heavens we arrive through all the intermediate heavens of the ascension! In order to attract and guide the soul on this ascensional ladder, the divine love wants also your little humble ministry.
932. O my winged lords, youths and children! A divine instinct compels you to get closer, with pious sweetness and tenderness, echo of the tenderness of the creator and savior for the beloved soul, ... it compels you to every soul for the message, the culture and ascension of divine love.
933. Go, little servants of the saints, to every soul, because every soul is also a saint in the making. Go, little missionaries of the ascension to holiness, attract, push and carry every soul, heaven by heaven, step by step, to the supreme step and heaven of divine union.
934. You cannot do otherwise because Jesus possesses you! You do not know how to do other things because Jesus possesses you! You do not want to know and do anything else, even if for you there is not the hundredfold of the good you offer to the souls, because you want to please the divine Trinity.
935. Go then, go also with the invisible angels, to every soul that

the Lord allows you to encounter; lift her from the lowlands to the heaven and to the heavens of the ascension; accompany her from heaven to heaven to the divine union, going continuously up and down this mystical ladder of Jacob, ascending to God and descending to the souls.

936. Only who is outside on the plain and above the inferior step can lift a soul to his own level and step; this is done with great effort; likewise one must be *faithful* to lift a sinner; you must be at least *devout* to be able to help the *faithful*, and at least *ascetic* to help the *devout*.
937. One must be at least *religious* to be useful to the *ascetic*, at least *consecrated* to be helpful to the *religious*, at least *saint* to benefit the *consecrated*, at least *assumed* to benefit the *saint*; in order to benefit others, one needs to attract, to push and carry every soul at least to the immediate superior step and heaven.⁹
938. Go the, go with the angels, with the mission ... not of separating the good from the bad, the elect from the reprobates while waiting the descent of the judge from heaven and of his unappealable judgment... or of presenting the soul to her judge at the end of her life.¹⁰
939. Go, with the mission of the Incarnate Word and of the Holy Spirit, to prevent the just from becoming reprobates and to transform the bad and the reprobates into just, to bring the just to become ever more elect of the Lord till the highest heavens of the spiritual ascension.
940. Go with the angels to incessantly enlighten the souls about

⁹ It is a wise and practical pedagogical observation and observation based on the old philosophical saying: *Nemo dat quid non habet* – nobody can give what he does not have. That thought of Bl. Justin goes further: everyone must give or share what he has. Talking about teaching catechism he used to say: everybody must teach what he knows! If one only knows how to say the Our Father, he should teach others how to say it!

¹⁰ Cf. Mt 13, 36-43.

the necessity of divine grace for every good and for every ascension in goodness; the indispensability of properly receiving and corresponding to the grace for every good and for every ascension in goodness ... and thus please the love God and be united with the Lord God love!

941. To properly welcome and correspond to grace is indispensably necessary the personal, ascetical effort, since it is a good superior to any capacity and exigency of nature; only forcing the nature to dilate, elevate and to apply itself, and only allowing oneself to be worked, carried and transformed grace can be received and corresponded.
942. In the part of nature the ascetical effort is the element that constitutes the elect, and lack of the ascetical effort is the element that constitutes the reprobate. The ascetical effort constitutes the spiritual ascension; the lack of ascetical effort constitutes decay, precipice and spiritual catastrophe.
943. The ever more lasting, direct, intense, generous, loving and pure ascetical effort constitutes, on the part of nature, the main distinctive of the highest levels, in the most sublime heavens of the spiritual ascension.
944. What we call ascetical effort is not a physical effort, even though it always implies a certain serious application, labor and tension of the corporal nature, on account of the union between body and soul; however, it is not this physical element that constitutes the ascetic effort.
945. The ascetical effort is constituted by the will that directs, applies and tends to acquire, receive and enjoy a superior good, as is the supernatural good of grace and in grace; and since this tendency and delight of the will toward goodness is love, the ascetical effort is love.
946. The ascetical effort is essentially exercise of love, and consequently transport of the soul toward the greater good to conquer and receive it, own and keep it, increase, enjoy and spread it more and better according to the exigencies of love in the soul, a reflection of the divine exigencies.

947. Only love constitutes the ascension of the soul. From the part of God love creates and calls, attracts and offers, unites and transforms. From the part of the soul love responds and follows, receives and reciprocates, espouses and invites, abandons and unites the soul with her beloved God and her all.
948. Only love climbs to heaven, ascends to God! Go, go with the angels throughout the whole world, soul by soul, taking advantage of every relation and of every encounter to approach to open our arms to them, to open their heart, enlighten them with a smile and perfume them with the aroma of God's presence...
949. ... The presence of God Trinity living in you and operating through you; of Jesus' presence from whose name, blood and heart always emanates love... marital love, because he is the divinity married with humanity in order to attract every soul to these divine nuptials.
950. The bride is not a nature but a person! The human nature taken by the divine Word is not the spouse of God. God the Father did not want to celebrate the wedding of his Son with the human nature that is why only one divine person became man.
951. And yet every divine person, one only God is the spouse of the soul-spouse, unique and triple spouse! The human nature taken in the incarnation of the Word is like the wedding dress of the spouse, as for us the participation in the divine nature through grace, is the wedding dress of the bride.
952. Much more, the taking of human nature by the second divine person, the Incarnate Word Jesus Christ, is the solemn official proposal of the divine nuptial love of the three divine persons to every soul. It is the divine dowry of sanctity and nobility, of wealth and glory, of sweetness and royalty...
953. ... That the divine nuptial love of the three divine persons offers to every soul, to make and find her worthy of the divine union. All this is done and given by the divine Trinity

through the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, through his Eucharistic sacrifice and sacrament, to each soul!

954. All grace of all the life of Jesus, our head, is grace of love, supernatural nuptial relation and life with the Trinity. This supreme good is communicated in the Eucharist, and therefore only the divine Eucharist will sanctify and transform the whole world ...
955. ... Espousing to the Blessed Trinity all souls, one by one! This is the true life and the true food of life, the new alliance of life and the divine relation of life, the eternal happiness and glory of life that we can find, receive, increase and enjoy only in the Eucharist!
956. Go, go with the angels to every faithful! You will find him already in an elevated level of goodness that is the first heaven of holiness: The victorious fight against every mortal and venial sin, all internal and external unnecessary things ... a holiness prevalently "negative" ...
957. Oh, how many virtuous acts of every kind and merit contribute to the permanent victorious fight against every mortal and venial sin and against internal and external unnecessary things! That notwithstanding, this will never be enough to the love that never says *enough* ... to the love of God who wants the infinite!
958. Not even among men, the simple fact of not offending seriously or venially can constitute a relation of friendship, but only a dutiful love common among human beings. I can never pretend that one may love me as a friend simply because I have never offended him grievously or venially.
959. If in order to prevent a grievous or venial offence to another, either from my part or on the part of others, I were to generously accept the suffering of any damage and loss, any pain and death, I would certainly be for him not only a friend but a hero of friend.
960. With the Lord God things are different! Every soul must, habitually and actually, always be willing and ready to suffer

any damage, pain and death to avoid in herself and in her neighbor any grievous and venial offence to the Lord God, precisely because he is the Lord God.

961. Even if I were to die with the merit of all martyrs, for this reason I would have to say: "I am a useless servant!" I have only done what I was expected to do for my Lord God, whose creature, subject and servant I am.
962. Even he were nothing for me and I had no obligations to him, I should always be willing and ready to do any thing and suffer any thing, every damage, pain and death to prevent even the minimum offence both on my part and on the part of others, because he is the God that is.
963. Practically and concretely this implies in the Christian a true heroism of charity; in itself and by itself this would only be the simple duty of every intelligent being, creature of God, of every subject and servant of God, without any pretension to be considered as a friend and lover, only for this.
964. The simple faithful has established himself in this necessary disposition and state of negative holiness, for reasons and sentiments of his duties as creature, subject and servant of God, and much more for reasons of healthy love for himself more than for God, that is, in order to avoid hell and merit paradise.
965. Oh! Even this is glory of love for the Lord: the willingness to save one's soul! Even this, deep down, is love of God! Love of God, however, not in himself and for himself, but in us and us. This is why it must be much further purified and elevated to become pure love of God.
966. Since in the , love of God is still very imperfect, also the love of neighbor and of one's self is imperfect, consequently the whole internal world of intensions and dispositions, of states and acts, of passions and emotions, of relations and attribution is a heap of imperfections.
967. No virtue and no duty is perfectly fulfilled and practiced! It is a world almost still in a semi chaotic state, a world still

in formations: Scary deserts and depressions, storms and frightening winters, infernal battles and satanic sieges, pernicious desolation and losses.

968. How difficult it is and how much effort is required to remain without mortal sins, to fight against venial sins and to get rid of all internal and external unnecessary things! If he remains faithful in this dutiful and necessary good will of negative holiness, he shall triumph and ascend higher!
969. His efforts are weak and discontinuous! He is much exposed, inclined and tempted to fall. He falls and gets up again! Oh, he gets up immediately. Recommend it to the faithful sternly and dreadfully not to delay his conversion, turn again to the Lord and to restart his right path of Christian-faithful conduct.
970. The enemies will easily induce them to repeat sinful and grievous acts... given the easiness presented by penance and by the sacrament of reconciliation of accusing one or many sins! Oh! But what a great difference between one mortal sin and many mortal sins!
971. What a difference both in time and in eternity! What a difference in the disastrous effects for the soul and for the neighbor! What a difference for the neighbors that are present, nearby or absent, faraway, future that the Lord usually entrusts to the faithful soul!
972. Behold, he has arisen again and reconfirms his willingness not to fall again in mortal sins. How difficult it is and what efforts are needed to continuously fight against venial sins and form the atmospheric dust in all environments, in any environment, of the poor human world!
973. Even while avoiding many of those that displease the neighbor, compromise the world, the ones that ruin your life, that break your stillness, those that disgust nature, ... and even more those that follow and accommodate to the temperament and personal character of each ...
974. The faithful does not succeed to avoid those sins that please

the senses, the world and the heart; these cause the failures, bad habit and the attachment to sins; these sinners want to justify themselves at any cost and create the illusion of hiding their faults to themselves and excusing them before God!

975. These voluntary defects, loved, to which we are attached and attracted by sentimentality and sensuality, vainglory and ambition, worldliness and profanity place the faithful who are attached to them in the state of tepidity, true, wide, downhill and steep path that easily leads to eternal damnation in hell.¹¹
976. It is not exactly mortal sin the road to hell. Mortal sin is the tumbling into the abyss ... it is the ultimate tragic catastrophe. The habitual venial sin, loved and defended, and consequently obstinate, is the road to hell ... or rather to mortal sin, which brings to hell even the soul that seemed so determined not to fall in it.
977. He wants to save his soul: this aim is his light and strength, which will convince and bring him to fight against every venial sin in order not to fall into mortal sins and lose the soul that he wants to save at any rate! But, how difficult and arduous it seems to always win in this struggle against every venial sin!
978. How difficult and arduous it is to go down every day to battle... to endure the whole day in battle against his own and other people's sin, in himself and in the family, in the environment and relationships, in the entire world of human society to whom this battle seems totally useless, because it retains impossible to win.
979. Difficult, arduous and bordering on the impossible, because he wants to remain entangled and shackled, gagged and chained, as drowning in a world of useless things, internal and external that he loves and the world considers positive-

¹¹ Cf. Mt 7, 13.

ly, and they are field and matter, occasions and incentives to endless venial sins.

980. Oh, if he would decidedly apply himself to get rid of them! O if he effectively would remain untied and totally free, his victory would be assured! Only in what is useless happens sin, first venial and then mortal. In what is necessary there is no room for sin! Sin takes place only in superfluous things, first as venial and then as mortal sin.
981. Avoid every mortal sin: this is the effort proper of the faithful. Avoid every venial sin: this is the sacrifice proper of the faithful, Avoid any unnecessary thing: this is the heroism of the faithful. This effort, sacrifice and heroism is the ascetical vital element of the faithful that will take him to the superior step and heaven.
982. The fight and the constant victory over mortal sin is liberation from the tyranny of the devil. The fight and the constant victory over venial sin is liberation from the tyranny of one's own flesh. The fight and the constant victory over unnecessary things is liberation from the tyranny of the world.
983. When the soul is free, she feels a sweet and thriving attraction to the higher goods; she feels more vehemently and longingly her capacity for higher goods; she foreknows that her best good is in heaven and not in this world, in grace not in nature, in the Lord and not in the creature.
984. She senses that her better good comes from heaven, from the Lord God! Indistinctly and confusedly, but also strongly she adverts a thought, a desire and an input to climb up higher; on account of the heavy repugnance and resistance of her nature she senses, at first, an acrid, annoying attractiveness ...
985. Later she starts to feel, at the same time, a stronger and sweeter attractiveness to a love that she does not yet know experientially: it is the love of God that incessantly calls, attracts, elevates and transports, captures and unites to himself

the souls that respond. The *faithful* is one who has started to respond to his God.

986. He has only started, has just begun to correspond to love, in a rather imperfect form of considering and intending as his ultimate goal, the salvation of his soul! Oh, if the ultimate goal were to shine before him in all its light! Then it would transfuse in him all its love and the forces of love!
987. See, look, O my winged messengers, O little winged servants and missionaries, how the simple faithful knows the Lord our God almost exclusively as his supreme possessor and eternal judge, to whose authority he submits and whose judgment he fears.
988. He does not cultivate any other relation with him, with his supreme lord and judge; no other relation beyond that of subject and dependent. In this relation prevails the sense and motivation of fear of eternal punishment and divine wrath, with no nobler sense of generosity and of love.
989. The soul of the faithful remain enwrapped in its casing of worldliness and profanity, masked not eliminated by the pride of a sense of duty, whose satisfaction often nurtures hidden pride, under the pretext of human dignity, distinct civilization and personal decorum.
990. The soul of the faithful continues to remain all tethered in its wrapper of sensitivity and sensuality, with continuous research, never attenuated by the satisfaction of the heart in the creatures, by the satisfaction of the senses, even in all things, otherwise, licit.
991. The soul of the faithful remains still heavy, numb, asleep in her casing of materiality and temporality, in her intentions and trends, in her applications and preferences, in her operations and enchantments over secondary purposes and inferior goods.
992. The weakness of the faithful, cause of every other evil, consists in the fact that while he is resolved to achieve eternal salvation of his soul as his goal, he comprehends it only as

if it were connected to the end of his life, consequently far removed in the future and as such has little influence on the present.

993. The faithful wants the salvation with an intention that rarely is virtual, few times actual, generally it is only habitual and often only interpretative; consequently even the use of the means is infrequent and not totally voluntary; even the selection of the means is hardly wise, planned and organized.
994. The faithful is still totally enchanted and absorbed by the intensions of temporal, mundane and material goals; he is totally taken by the tenets of the world and of the heart, occupied and preoccupied to find and use means over means with the intent of achieving them anyway and at any rate.
995. Only when he is violently cut off from time, from the world and from material life by the thought of death, judgment and hell the faithful turns to his real goal and to the good means apt to achieve it and renews the pursuit to the ascetical effort of good will!
996. We must find the way to render more present and more intimately alive, more strongly effective, in every faithful as well as in every man, the thought and the emotion of death, judgment, hell and paradise so that they may truly convert and truly apply themselves to their eternal goal!
997. Above all we should help him understand that the eternal salvation of the soul is the end result of the whole life; help him understand that it is the supreme concern, not only of the last day but of every day and of every hour, of every work and relation, of every state and act... to be only reasonable.
998. The use of some means, like a passing prayer or penance, or some occasional and external good deeds, is not enough to achieve such a goal. It is necessary to fill all time with life, prayer, good works and penance in order to achieve this goal.

999. Make sure that the goal shines in a greater light! Because the goal is the Lord God! The Lord God is not only the supreme owner and eternal judge! We must help this good faithful to understand that God is the good king and the best father, who loves and wants our correspondence in love.
1000. The faithful will not understand nor feel completely this good news! He will listen and will be convinced in his own way, he will be more inclined and later even more decided to save his soul day after day.
1001. That more luminous knowledge of the Lord produces in the faithful soul, a more direct and intense longing for the practical goal of his life: to save his soul. It produces an increase in God's love in a form and level still initial and imperfect of love for his own soul that he wants to save.
1002. Still initial love and yet ascending, still imperfect and yet already progressing! Oh, the immense difference between understanding and intending the goal of the salvation of the soul as remote... like that... and understanding it as near and immediate... as the present day!
1003. That more luminous knowledge of the Lord produces in the faithful such an increase of will power that he is no longer satisfied with what he has done up to now for his eternal salvation; he is all ready and resolved to greater and continues efforts to achieve his moral good.
1004. That light and that strength sweetly pervade the soul, as any living thing that develops and grows, as any irradiation of the divine love which is vivifying life per essence; the soul is totally enlightened, with new vigor, transported to a better life.
1005. All is renewed and elevated in his interior, slowly and yet rapidly, as the seemingly slowness of the real velocity of the worlds in space; and the soul in reality is already in another level of spiritual life: the ascension to another world and heaven has occurred.

CHAPTER 13

Passage from Faithful to Devout

This chapter is like a bridge between the previous chapter and the next, the passage from the first step of the ladder of the ascension to the second. It emphasizes the importance and effectiveness of the ascetical effort needed to achieve a profound purification of the soul.

The apostolic-pedagogic effort of the “winged children” of the ever more generous soul is completed with the seraphic effort of the angels and saints, Mary and Joseph for the 9 stages of purification that constitute the purgative labor, gradual means and ways that hasten and make happy the passage from one step to the higher one.

Blessed Justin envisions thus nine levels of purification, one for each step of the ascension:

1. *From mortal sin and its occasions;*
2. *From venial sin and its false justifications;*
3. *From any internal and external useless thing;*
4. *From the casing of materiality and vulgarity;*
5. *From the casing of sensibility and sensuality;*
6. *From the casing of worldliness and profanity;*
7. *From moral evil in the past;*
8. *From moral evil in the present;*
9. *From moral evil in the future.*

The sovereign means and the most connected to the divine action of this purifying function are prayer and Eucharist.

This short chapter ends with the beautiful intuition and the consoling realization that the work of purification is impregnated by a “divine pleasure of mind, heart and life”.

The calling to holiness is therefore a calling to happiness, contradicting the old medieval saying “one cannot live in love without pains”. Blessed Justin says: “If all is love in the most Holy Trinity, all is happiness. Spiritual life is nothing but Joy!

The Lord is glorified in our Joy. Only the saints, the happiest beings on earth, can glorify the Lord appropriately."

1006. That soul that had passed from the quagmire of mundane lowlands to the world and heaven of the faithful soul is now in the world and heaven of the Devout soul, in the most beautiful and appropriate value of the sacred term, that is, readiness of love and loving faith to do spiritual good.
1007. O, I wish it were so easy to reach this second level of ascension, as it is easy to describe it as already achieved! Except extraordinary, mysterious interventions of internal and external happenings, of graces of exception and privilege, normally and commonly is not accomplished easily.
1008. O my little servants and winged missionaries, your patient and constant, cordial, intimate and supernatural apostolic-pedagogic effort is needed to make always more known our love, the love God Jesus, the love Trinity to the faithful soul.
1009. Your effort is needed in order to obtain from the faithful soul her ascetical effort, ever more generous and constant, ever more programmed and organized, for her fight against evil and the enemies, for her initial liberation from the casing of internal and external impediments and for the continuity in focusing on the goal.
1010. Your apostolic effort and her ascetical effort must be in honor, imitation and union of the seraphic effort of the angels and of her angel, of the saints and of her saints, and above all of Saint Joseph and Mary who want her in their holy Family.
1011. This triple, apostolic, ascetical and seraphic effort should correspond to the sweet and firm operation, hidden and yet manifested in so many different ways by the grace of divine, saving and sanctifying love in its missions and indwelling in the soul, in the Church and in the whole world.
1012. Make the effort, O my dear ones, to help every faithful soul to go fully and completely through all that grade, so that

she might soon happily pass to the next grade ... and purified and freed from evil and well trained and coached in the perennial struggle against evil.

1013. Also your work must be well planned and organized because our saving and sanctifying God, who does everything through his grace, has arranged to always follow in his action a gradual development, especially in view of your human cooperation, willed by the Lord.
1014. The entire itinerary of this first heaven of the faithful must be followed through the various levels of initial and active purification of the soul on hold; preparation and anticipation of necessary active purifications, because the action proper of the creature is to prepare and purify the self.
1015. The whole preparation consists in a purification; and preparation occupies mainly the entire first level and heaven of the soul that has become virtuous and permanent habit of fight and spiritualization; this purification follows the soul always and everywhere in her ever-new and more sublime habitations in the Lord.
1016. Purification in this first heaven consists directly in fighting, overpowering and trouncing sin, in every level and form; every root of sin to be eradicated, every effect to be repaired, every danger to be avoided, so that the purification from moral evil may truly be total.
1017. The itinerary through nine minor steps of this first major heaven or level of the spiritual ascension distinctly means to indicate the ensemble of the purgative work more than the distinction and sequence of the ascetical work, ever more complete, intense and direct.
1018. More than nine levels, they are nine means or progressive ways of exercises of purification; they complete, guarantee and perfect one another, and all together create in the soul the habit of the full, intense and direct spiritual fight, which will later follow in every other heaven of the ascension.
1019. So, the first level or way is the purification from every mor-

tal sin and its occasions; the second is the purification from every venial sin and its false justifications; the third is the purification from any useless external and internal thing and its various innumerable and tyrannical excuses.

1020. The fourth level or way is principle of purifications and liberation from the casing of materiality and vulgarity, through a very frequent acceptance of death. The fifth level or way is principle of purifications and liberation from the casing of sensibility and sensuality through dependence and obedience.
1021. The sixth level or way is principle of purifications and liberation from the casing of worldliness and profanity through laboriousness and poverty, ... divine penalties providentially revealed and imposed by the Lord, in the Eden, not so much to satisfy justice as to heal injuries caused in the order and makeup of the soul.
1022. The seventh focuses specifically upon the purification and reparation of the moral evil committed in the past, and it consists in the very frequent use of the sacrament of penance. The eighth focuses specifically upon the purification of the moral evil in the present; it consists in the suffering of all penitential contrarities of human life.
1023. The ninth focuses especially upon the purification or preservation from future moral evil; it consists in the voluntary penitential treatment and regimen. The sovereign means of ascetical cooperation, in this great purifying function, the closest and most connected with the divine action are prayer and Eucharist.
1024. How will you induce the faithful to exercise himself with generosity, or at least with good will, in these purifications that require so many renunciations and battles? O, that you may encounter innumerable, well disposed souls for whom it may be enough to know what is better to be enthusiastically conquered by it and pursue it!
1025. With this very noble, happy and desirable disposition, you

must lead and stabilize every soul as first flower and fruit of the word of God communicated to them in the exhortation or instruction of preaching and transfuse it in them from the fullness of the heart and of the spirit.

1026. The fullness of the Heart of Jesus and of the Holy Spirit must always triumph in you. You must always remain Jesus' docile, humble and most loving instruments. This very noble, happy and desirable disposition enables you to know what is more perfect and embrace it fervently and enthusiastically.
1027. It will be the first flower and fruit of their communication with the Lord in prayer and especially in the Eucharist: The presence of this disposition reveals the good use of Holy Communion and of prayer; its absence, to the contrary, accuses the abuse or bad use of prayer and of Holy Communion.
1028. How can we induce the faithful and ordinary souls to the abundant practice of prayer, to the frequent use of divine communion, and later to the mystical nuptials obtained with prayer and Communion, to all the practices of purification required by the first level and heaven of the spiritual ascension?
1029. What and all that is done in fear is done with some violence. What is violent cannot last too long. We must persevere, however, in the profound and ardent exercises of purification throughout the entire ascension of the soul to all the heavens and levels, in every level of heavens.
1030. O my dear little winged servants and missionaries of the ascensions of the soul, show, offer the divine delight hidden in the bark of the ascetical practices, in each one and in all of them, without any exception! They are all flowers and fruits of the Holy Spirit, containing sweetness, consolation and divine bliss!
1031. The simple motivation of offering a divine pleasure to the love and loving God in our correspondence to him should

be enough to enthuse the souls to do the most perfect in everything! Usually, ordinarily the souls do not reach the highest peaks, in a blink of an eye.

1032. Angels fly, men walk and even while climbing they walk; that is why they need steps, and every ascension is progressive, unless they are carried on the wings of the angels or on the arms of the Blessed Mother as her child, or on the arms of Jesus like the lost sheep is carried on the arms of the shepherd.
1033. O my dear little winged servants, offer to every faithful the divine delight of the mind, of the heart and of life that the Lord offers them in each one of his words, precepts and counsels, because everything is divine gospel, everything is uplifting good news!
1034. Even the Old Testament is divine Gospel, because Jesus willed and rendered it so. He declares and proclaims that he does not want to abolish but confirm and perfect the law, that is, the entire divine scripture. The Gospel is consolation and paradise because it is the good news of God revealed to man.
1035. If this divine delight of mind, heart and life were not to be found in the divine word, precept and counsel, it would be like locked up in the bark. Break the bark; bypass the surface of the appearances; cross the dark tunnel... until you find the divine fruit, the divine heaven.¹
1036. If it were nowhere to be found, it would not be divine Gospel! It wouldn't be your Gospel, the Gospel of that soul, the Gospel of those particular circumstances! "My burden is

¹ In this verse, Fr. Justin explains mysticism through the image of the almond, sweet fruit, which is reached only after piercing the hard shell that encloses it. This was very understandable image to his contemporaries and countrymen where abounded almond trees. More than once Fr. Justin is moved at the sight of a flower of the almond tree; in the area of Naples the almond tree is the first plant that blooms in spring.

light, my yoke is suave" says the Lord Jesus with his heart on his lips!

1037. If that burden were heavy and if that yoke were hard to carry, it couldn't be Jesus' burden, Jesus' yoke! Unless human ballast is accumulated over it, unless the worldly spirit is riding upon it... unless, somehow, the overpowering evil infernal spirit is gripping it.
1038. Do not say that duty is hard... now that to love God with all your heart, mind and strength is your duty! To love not any good but the infinite good... to love and possess not just any person but the three divine persons! Paradise of paradises!
1039. Do not say that: "without suffering one does not live in love!"² Because love in itself, by itself and for itself, is the supreme enjoyment of the human spirit, in each one of his energy and capacity ... when directed to his proper goal that is God. When love is true, complete and holy, it rejoices even while suffering!
1040. "Let us sing the joy, brothers, let us sing the Joy! Whoever redeems himself from sloth, discovers joy everywhere. Look that branch, it appears dead, yet a gem gleams on top".³ Long ago you memorized this beautiful song of an excellent poetess, whose teacher was a true priest poet.

²In the Middle Ages it was common among Christians the principle that "*non vivitur in amore sine dolore - without suffering one does not live in love!*" In this verse, Fr. Justin takes his distance from this teaching emphasizing that love is first of all joy - GAUDIUM.

³ We do not know, who this poetess may be. We know that Fr. Justin had sincere admiration for Giacomo Zanella (1820-1888) great Italian poet and outstanding priest, this unknown poetess may be one of his students. Someone has speculated that it could be some poetic soul directed by the same Fr. Justin, however, it seems unlikely that Fr. Justin would present himself as "true poet and priest poet", even though in the introduction to Spirit of Prayer he says that he was born a poet and that his writings resound of the poetic rhythm to which he was unable to subtract himself.

1041. If everything is love in the relation with the Blessed Trinity, everything is joy... the spiritual life! If spiritual life is all joy, all people will love, envy, long for it and embrace it. Go, little missionaries of the Gospel of love, O little evangelists of the joy of love, go to all souls!
1042. Do not be afraid, they have opened the eyes of the mind to the beauty of truth, have opened the heart of the will to the sweetness of charity; Do not be afraid to propose and impose, to ask and demand the most perfect and sublime in the field of God's love, of his adoration and court of love!
1043. For too long harm has been done to the souls ... to be content with too little, to propose to them ideals of mediocrity, not to believe them capable of generous efforts of sublime ascensions! The soul is made to correspond to God's love, which is infinite. God is glorified properly only by the saints.
1044. Saints are not an exception, but exemplar and first fruits. O my little missionaries of sanctity carry with you these three beautiful stars:⁴ The soul is made to correspond to the infinite. She has the capacity and the duty to do it.
1045. God is glorified properly only by the saints. The portion of God's heritage is the whole, and only the saint gives all to God and is all of God. If it may seem that God is happy with little... it is only because later on that "little" will be instrumental in getting much, and God through that "much" will get the whole!
1046. The person, who would intend to stop at "the little" without going for the "much", or remaining in the "much" without going for the "whole", kills the life, which is essentially motion of rising development! It destroys the love that never says enough in the transport toward the possession of the beloved, and in gifting his self to God.

⁴ The three stars of wisdom are: a) The soul is made to correspond to the infinite; b) she has the capacity to correspond to the infinite, and c) she has the duty to correspond to the infinite.

1047. Such a person offends God and makes himself unhappy... it is a damnable and damned suicide of the spirit and of love! Only the saints glorify the Lord appropriately, and therefore, they are not exceptional beings, but the only normal being of humanity created for the glory of divine love
1048. They are a taste and first fruits of all the abundant harvest that human nature, cultivated by the grace of the Savior, will offer to its creator through the correspondence of human love to divine love: The Spirit love, God Holy Spirit of the Father and of the Son, our origin and ultimate goal.
1049. O my little winged missionaries, you must make a saint of every faithful, leading him gradually to correspond to the Lord up to the divine union, according to the grace of every human state and of every human person, without discouragements and without presumption, trusting in the Lord.
1050. Therefore make shine ever more before each soul her goal, which is the same God in his eternal principle that is his infinite love; in her everlasting term which is the perfect correspondence of the soul to God's infinite love in the supernatural nuptial relation.
1051. To this gospel of divine love, the love already infused in the soul, and at least initially already seconded, will revive in its spirit of joy the delectable pleasure of being loved by God, and in his spirit of generosity, the delectable pleasure of God's love.
1052. This spirit of joy and generosity of love compels and carries the soul to an effort of correspondence to the Lord, to an impetus of elevation to the Lord; they open her to an embrace and an effusion of kisses to the Lord God Trinity.
1053. With this answer of the creature to this inspiration, attraction and vocation of the divine love... it has completed the happy passage of the faithful soul to another level and heaven of the spiritual ascension, and with her, of all her world and heaven into the new world and new heaven.

CHAPTER 14

The Devout

We do not notice the moment in which the passage to the second heaven of ascension takes place, as we do not become aware, moment by moment of the physical growth of the body, of the enkindling of the light of reason, the circulation of the blood, our falling asleep etc. And yet we should never cease to prepare with public and private, solemn and devotional acts, the spiritual progress that constitutes the joy of the angels, the feast of glory and of love of God Trinity.

“Unhappy the heart that does not intend, comprehend, and feel that is being loved by the one who asks to be loved ... did not receive as yet the divine epiphany of the commandment of love” says Blessed Justin; commandment written in various colors:

- Red ... of the fire, of the blood, of the martyr, of the Precious Blood, of Pentecost of the Holy Spirit;

- Violet ... of the vigil, of Advent and of Lent;

- White... of every virgin, of the angel, of the Blessed Mother, of Paradise, of the Lamb, of the first mystery;

- Green ... that enwraps every other color of flowers, the festival green of the Sunday as background and frame of the feast of natural and supernatural colors.

This chapter gives a special emphasis on the grace of perfection that, after baptism, is given to us through the sacrament of Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation. This grace does suppress but elevates nature making us further aware that the Lord loves us, and confirming us in “holy fear” leads us to love divine justice, that is, divine love with all its laws, precepts, counsels and inspirations, with all its exigencies and preferences, predilections and sanctions without which God would not be the infinite love that he is, would not be our paradise.

“Fear of God, fullness of Jesus’ heart, fullness of Jesus for the soul! Not fear of hell, of falling in sin, not fear of detriment to grace or diminution of glory, but fear of losing the sense of divine in the creature”.

The holy fear originates penance in all its forms: work, discomfort, physical pains, human relations, discrepancies between, matter and spirit, submission to human wills, conversion, compassion for the neighbor, acceptance of death, contrition of sins, sacrament of reconciliation.

This chapter ends with beautiful and concrete exhortations-observations on prayer that, later on, Blessed Justin synthesized thus in the introduction to the devotional: "Saint Alphonsus proves to us that he who prays certainly saves himself, and he who does not pray certainly damns himself. St. Augustine teaches us that only the one who knows how to pray well knows how to live well".

1054. My dear, little servants of the saints, youthful missionaries of the ascension, lords lovers of the Blessed Trinity, you would like to become aware sensibly, or at least intensely, of the passage of the soul from the heaven of the faithful to that of the devout; and the soul of the elect that climbs to the higher level desires this more than you.
1055. You would like to see this blessed passage happening on this or that day, chosen from among the most solemn days of the liturgical calendar! You would love this to happen in connection with this or that other act of consecration, with quasi-extraordinary or internal happenings and phenomena.
1056. You did not sense the physical growth of your body, and yet it did really occur. You, likewise, did not become aware on the enkindling of the light of reason in you, and you do not become aware of your falling asleep, of the circulation of the blood and of so many other vital operations within your own self.
1057. Likewise you do not become aware of the passage to the second heaven of the ascension, because the reality of the life that goes on, moves and develops, flourishes and fructifies, participates of the mysteriousness of its divine author. More than in their own selves, God and life are known by their effects.
1058. Do not cease, my dear ones, to prepare and carry on solemn, public and private, liturgical and devotional acts, that are so effective in promoting spiritual progress and ascension of the soul; do not lose heart, however, if the results do not seem immediate and adequate, they may be greater than your desires!

1059. Oh, if you could see (but you will see them) how the angels celebrate the progress and the ascensions of the souls, much more than the return of the prodigal son to the father's house, much more than the conversion of the sinner! Oh, how joyfully and triumphantly the angels welcome the faithful in the heaven of the devout, happy to carry him to ever higher heavens!
1060. O Lord God Trinity, your love welcomes to the feast of glory and of love the soul that has been faithful and has followed you in the first levels and ways of initial correspondence that has offered you a pleasant exchange with her first efforts and successes in the fight against sin.
1061. It is the triumph of the divine love in the faithful soul... feeling a greater, higher and stronger desire of one's own salvation and of the celestial paradise; yearning for this salvation not only as a faraway, distant good, not only at the end of our earthly life...
1062. ... But as the good of every day and of every hour, as the good of every act and state, as it truly is! Love that brings the beloved closer to the lover, had enabled me to consider present ... has made present what was considered as a faraway, distant good, remote in the future.
1063. Love reveals more than any other light the reality of people and things; it reveals... has already revealed as being present the good that through the triple human casing, through the multiple snares of illusion of the enemy, seemed faraway.
1064. Every day must be saved, every hour must be saved; every state must be a state of salvation, every act must be for salvation, because the whole man must go to eternity saved. Every day and hour, every act and state form the entire man, as well as his faculties, organs and parts.
1065. Thus starts the intelligence of comprehension and extension of the great commandment of love with all the heart,

with all the mind, with all the strength of mind and heart, with all his time, states and acts.

1066. Starts to discern these divine characters of the great law of life, of the great law of love! If every Christian and Israelite faithful must carry this law engraved upon his heart, he must engrave this law on the threshold of his house and on the doorpost.
1067. This is done so that one can always have it present when entering and when exiting. If he looks down, he will read it on threshold and if he looks up, he will read it on the doorpost. He must carry it tied to the hand to keep it in mind while working.
1068. He must carry it pending before his eyes to see it always and also in order to see all things and people in the light of this law of love, for that purpose and with these tints. We should see nothing but the love and its law. He will so have his heart overflowing and thus will be able to talk of it continuously to everyone.
1069. Talking about the law of love we will never exhaust the matter, we will see it grow, we will feel it grow within us as a divine deluge, so that all interior faculties will be taken and occupied with the meditation and contemplation of love, whether we sit or walk, whether we sleep or stay awake.
1070. This happens much more mysteriously and infinitely in the Lord God, love per essence, the very personification of love in the three divine persons! Ultimately, the law is the very divine nature, hence the three divine persons living in that unity of nature.
1071. O divine law of charity, you are always in the heart of God, because you are the heart of God, you are the personification of God the Father, principle of the Trinity, font of the divinity! May it be also always in my heart! Be you my heart and my whole being!
1072. O law of charity, you are always pending before the eyes of God, because you are the vision of the eye of the divine

mind through which he knows and sees everything in your light, you are the divine Word, you are Jesus in whom everything is seen and willed by God... you are all he sees and wills,

1073. O law of charity, you are always in the hand of God because you are all the action of God ad extra, expression of the divine act ad intra; you are all that God does in creation, redemption and sanctification. You are the Holy Spirit, hand and finger of the Lord God!
1074. You, O law of love are all the reason of divine life in his eternal rest of infinite act, in his work, in his time, as creator, savior and sanctifier. You are all the reason of every mission of divine person in the world, in the souls, in every ascension and admission of souls into heaven.
1075. Be also all my thinking and seeing, all my feeling and operating, all reason of every intention and disposition, of every state and act, so that I too may be all love in my being and action ... as the good Lord whose image and likeness I must be ever more.
1076. The Lord has written the law of love in every level and heaven of the ascension of the soul, on every threshold and doorpost of every entrance to his heavens and paradises, so that the soul may hear everywhere and from all corners the song of love, *in the commandment of absolute love as God, infinite as God!*
1077. I could call unhappy, I could say unhappy the heart that does not intend, comprehend and feel that he is loved by the one who asks to be loved, who commands us to love him. Unhappy the one who did not yet receive the divine epiphany of the commandment of charity!
1078. He did not understand, did not comprehend that the commandment of love is a marvelous revelation of the Lord God to the mind and heart of the faithful soul, is a declaration and proposal of the divine love to every faithful soul, but also very personally and individually to each faithful.

1079. He did not read those sacred words in the luminous colors of the rainbow, with the special tune and sense given to the words of love by the red of the fire, of the blood, of the martyr, of the precious blood and of the red of Pentecost of the Holy Spirit!
1080. The violet of the vigil , of advent and of lent! The white of the virgin, of the angel, of the Blessed Mother, the white of paradise and of the Lamb, its light, and the white of the first mystery!
1081. The blue of the sky and of sea with all its adjustments to the light, with all its reflexes of sunrises and dawns, middays, sunsets and full moons. The green in all stages of vegetative life, the bright green of the first level of life of all those who live on our planet.
1082. The green upon which blossom all the various colors of the flowers; the green that enwraps, nurtures and crowns every color of flowers; the festive Sunday green as background and frame of the entire feast of natural and supernatural colors of the divine-human love of the first commandment.
1083. Truly unhappy... who does not understand and comprehend... does not feel the commandment of love throughout the universe of all beings, from the atoms to the worlds of light, in all the happenings of the hour, of the days and of the centuries, in the economy and grace and of the divine graces lavished upon us.
1084. The devout only understands, comprehends and feels the love of God in the form of good love of self, of the personal salvation of his soul ... he cannot yet read the alphabet of the simple reality of colors, sounds and tastes of things and happenings in creation.
1085. You, my little servants of the saints and missionaries of holiness, become quickly catechists of charity, evangelists of divine union, sowing promptly in the soul the seed that later, in the more favorable climate of higher heavens, to which the devout is heading, will produce its flower and fruit.

1086. As in the grace of the light of faith he welcomes, with firm determination of the intellect, all the revealed truths, nevertheless the ones that more affect, deeply touch and move him to improve his conduct are the existence of the Lord God, Jesus and the eternal divine sanctions.
1087. So, in the grace of the warmth of charity and of the urge of hope, he accepts with firm adhesion of the will all the divine law. The commandments that more affect, deeply touch and move him are the negative ones, of the flight, hatred, fight and reparation for sins with penance.
1088. Confirm and establish the devout in this, Lord ... Perfect him elevating his penance to exercise of the first level of love, the flight from the world to culture of the first level of divine union, and the hatred and fight against sin as a practice of divine imitation and cooperation.
1089. Imitation and cooperation with Jesus savior of souls and repairer of sins; imitation and cooperation with the infinite holiness of the adorable Trinity in his infinite hatred against every offense to the divine will and nature in his blessed and sacred laws.
1090. Imitation and cooperation with Jesus in the correspondence and valorization of the militant grace of perfection, grace of perennial fight and inevitable and incessant victories over sin, grace poured out in him in the noble sacrament of confirmation, which must have been received, before his first ascension...
1091. We can always count on this grace because it is specifically connected to the gifts, fruits and beatitudes of the Holy Spirit. Everything has been abundantly granted in the form of talents to be invested, energies to be valorized, faculties to be exercised and powers to be implemented.
1092. If this grace and character are grace and character of perfection, talents, faculties, powers and energy of perfection, they must be above all grace and character of charity, talent

and faculty of love, power and energy of love, because perfection is all in charity.

1093. The grace of Confirmation confers in a special way the Holy Spirit, cause and operator of our sanctification. The Holy Spirit previously conferred to the soul in the sacrament of Baptism, is already indwelling in the soul; with him and in him ... the whole Trinity is present in the soul...
1094. ... So that the soul may understand and feel that she is totally ordained and consecrated to the sanctification as Jesus himself, from the very first admission in the life of grace, in the mystical body of Jesus, in the Kingdom of heaven, which is the church, in that first sanctification of consecration.
1095. This grace continues to grow with the addition of the grace of the other sacraments, especially of Confirmation, sacrament of holiness and of the Holy Spirit; it reaches its peak with the divine Eucharist, real communions with the author of grace and of charity.
1096. Let us look up high, as high as the most high Lord. Let us move out into the deep of the infinite, divine perfections. Let us take the souls to conquer not any objective, but to conquer a kingdom, not a kingdom fraction of the small planet earth, but the kingdom of God, the ascension of divine union.
1097. Let us not be satisfied with the *little more* we do; *this little more* serves only to train us to much more... to what is always much bigger. Let us be satisfied with the little part we accomplish, but only to entice us to offer all to the Lord. Let us not seat and remain on any step of the holy ladder of the ascension!
1098. Let us not place any limitations to the love of God because we must correspond to the infinite love. Let us not admit any human impossibility when it is a question of reaching the highest perfections, because the divine grace is given us and it renders us almost all-powerful. We do not admit that anyone is denied access to the sublime realities.

1099. The eye cannot be denied to see; the heart cannot be denied to love; no organ can be denied to fulfill its function because by nature is compelled to it. Man is created and formed expressly for the things of God, for the love of God, for eternal life of union with God.
1100. Let us develop and exercise the logic of nature, the sense of the true, extraordinary humanity, the nobility of reasonableness and coherence between decisions and convictions, because the progress in natural reasonableness and in every human perfection helps immensely the spiritual progress in grace.
1101. We are always being taught that grace does not suppress but elevates nature. It would be much better if grace finds nature already elevated! It would elevate nature much more quickly and sublimely to the highest peak. Our nature has been created expressly to serve grace, to adapt and follow grace.
1102. God himself is the creator and lifter of nature, with extreme sweetness and strength he disposes all things for the salvation of the souls, in his love and for their union with him in love, in his divine order, and in their supernatural state and order.
1103. You, my little servants of the saints and missionaries of holiness, make the devout understand that God loves him! How sweet is your vocation, how glorious is your mission of bringing the proposal of divine love to the souls! To form them to the intimacy of love and establish them in the supreme relation of love with their Lord!
1104. Make him feel that the Lord loves him! Confirm him, yes, confirm him ever more in the holy fear of the eternal sanctions! Make the soul find everywhere a reminder of the eternal sanctions.
1105. May every wall of schools or offices, of roads and squares, of rooms and halls be like a big page that carries, in big characters, sharp colors, bright luminosity and piercing sounds,

the terrible truths of the eternal sanctions! Oh, how I wish that all the tools of modern advertising could be placed at the service of the gospel!

1106. Oh, how I wish that day and night would remind and proclaim to every man through all the senses the vanity of all the things that are not means to his goal, the value of the things of the soul, the significance of God's things, the unique importance of the things of eternity! O my little servants and missionaries, do all this!
1107. Confirm the devout in this holy fear, and elevate it to sacred terror that crucifies him in his senses and sentiments, to the cross of corporal mortification, of flight from the world, of the renunciation to pleasures, honors, wealth and detachment of heart.
1108. Crucify the devout on the cross of abnegation and hatred of self (Oh, how much the devout, indeed every soul, needs always and everywhere all these acts, this state of penance!), turn him to the root of every evil, of every danger, of every threat, that is only sin.
1109. In the hatred, pain and fight against sin, enlighten and direct his attention to the center... the essence, basis and root of every sin, which is the searching for one's satisfaction outside of God, or, in other words, the egotism of the human spirit in its exigencies and manifestations of vainglory, sensuality and sloth...
1110. ... And of every other fundamental, radical and capital vice, anyway you wish to list or call them for a clearer intelligence of their nature, malice and presence, action and influence on the individual, social and domestic life, in order to plan the best organized, effective and exterminating fight.
1111. The cause of every temporal and eternal evil must be clearly individualized, brightly manifested in the fullness of truth, in the evidence of the reality of what is sin and the one who commits it, and not the divine justice that condemns and fights, hits and destroys it.

1112. O divine justice! Men look with trust to divine mercy... with sympathy, your divine bounty... with sweet communication of joy and peace, the divine love, but they consider you, divine justice, with distrust, fear and terror, bitterness and ill-concealed hostility!
1113. Oh, divine justice! Men look at you as if you were the tyrant, as if you were the enemy, as if you were the cause of death, the cause of hell, the cause of the devil and of every temporal and eternal evil... O divine justice, our salvation, our love God!
1114. O divine Justice, you are rightly a divine attribute ... reasonably, legitimately, theologically distinct in the divine sanctity, in the divine reality... as the mercy, bounty, omnipotence wisdom and every other divine perfection.
1115. He who would dedicate himself to get to know and honor you apart, as really distinct and separate from the other divine attributes, with your own exclusive exigencies, could not know and honor you worthily, even worse, would not know you at all!
1116. We must not separate what God has joined together¹, even though the two are clearly and really distinct. Much more we cannot separate those things that not only have been joined by God, but also are one in the divine reality... or better they are the divine unity.
1117. Divine justice is all one thing with the divine truth and holiness, so much so that several times it is called with the same name of truth and holiness (could it be, O my Lord, to lessen the fear of the feeble, ignorant, tempted and deluded human children?).
1118. O divine justice, you are one with the divine bounty and mercy, love and beauty, sweetness and omnipotence, wisdom and any other divine perfection of the divine being

¹ Cf. Mt 19, 6b.

and the divine nature ... of the divine being that is love...
of the divine nature that is love.

1119. So you are not only all mercy, bounty and sweetness, you are the very divine love, O my divine justice... you are misunderstood as love, unrequited as love, betrayed as love, slandered as love, crucified as love.
1120. You, O divine justice, have given us Jesus as our savior, the Holy Spirit as our sanctifier, because the divine exigencies of divine love must be satisfied! With the threat of hell you restrain us from offending him and with the promise of paradise you attract us to please him.
1121. As far as precipitating the souls into hell, I will never say that you precipitate them; as far as casting them out and cursing them, I will never blame you, even though I listen, adore, preach, exalt the divine sentence of final judgment.
1122. I will never blame you for that; I cannot suffer, allow or permit that you be considered as its author. My soul suffers this as a piercing in the heart and makes herself shield and spear of wisdom; "Think of the Lord in goodness"... think well, think correctly of the Lord.
1123. So here is, my winged children, the mother² who has told you: "Do not touch that fruit that is poisoned, do not eat it otherwise you will die".³ You, insolent and arrogant, disobeying, you have eaten it. The mother emits a terrible cry of pain: "O my sons, now you will die!"
1124. Or, you my winged children, you go to school and the entire year laze around, throughout the whole year you are the desperation of the teacher to whom you pay no attention and never do your homework... you remain in your ignorance, and ... at the final exam you fail poorly.

² Beautiful this attribute of "mother" referred to God! Certainly at Fr. Justin's time it was not common to call God "mother". We had to wait for John Paul I to hear a pope talk about God as mother.

³ Cf. Gn 3, 3.

1125. Will you accuse the examiners of failing you, while only you, totally and exclusively you are the cause and author of your failure? Will you accuse the mother of your death because you have eaten the poisonous and forbidden fruit against her will?
1126. Likewise, of the devil and of hell, of every condemnation of the particular and universal judgment... the total and exclusive cause is only moral evil; only man, with the free abuse of his free will, is the author of moral evil.
1127. The Lord God, in his divinity, does not want to pronounce any sentence of condemnation, because he wants to reveal and proclaim that only man is the cause of every evil of temporal or eternal punishment, in no way it can be attributed to God.
1128. God has reserved every judgment, every final sentence to the Son of man, precisely as Son of man, so his judgment and sentence is the external and objective expression of the condemnation that the culprit has already pronounced... and he confirms it eternally in his own self and by himself.
1129. From the part of the Lord, hell itself is a merciful act of love, because it refrains the world from sin. The effective eternal damnation, with the eternity of the pains of the senses and punishment.
1130. Please, love justice! Not only you, who govern the nations must love justice to avoid doing wrong and to do good to everyone, but all of you, brothers of humankind and of the universe, love justice, first of all in order to do no wrong to God, and to procure greater good to yourselves.
1131. Love divine justice! Love the divine love with all its laws and precepts, counsels and inspirations, with all its exigencies and preferences, predilections and sanctions without which he would not be the infinite love that he is; he would not be our paradise and the God of our heart.
1132. Elevate the fear of God, so that it may really be the beginning of wisdom, beginning of Christian perfection, begin-

ning of divine union, beginning not only as disposition and introduction, but as perennial nourishment of its eternal increment throughout all the levels of the spiritual ascension.

1133. Elevate the fear of God from its forms and levels, from its servile manifestations and effects to the reverential, filial and super-nuptial manifestations and effects ... so as to be in everything and for everything the gift of the Holy Spirit that filled the heart, spirit and human nature of Jesus Christ.
1134. Supreme flower blossomed from the stem of the Virgin Mary, immaculate stem; sprout of Jesse's root⁴... on whose flower Jesus descends and rests with the plenitude of the gifts of the Spirit, and from among them in special, the fear of the Lord fills him super-abundantly.
1135. Fear of the Lord, fullness of the heart of Jesus, fullness of the soul of Jesus" Certainly not fear of hell, certainly not fear of falling in sin, not fear of harm to grace and lessening of glory, but fear of the Lord in the sense of the divine in the creature.
1136. Fear of God, sense of the infinite from the part of the finite, sense of the eternal from the part of he who lives in time. Fear of God, sense of the glory and of the will of God in the soul that wants to correspond fully... that longs to correspond worthily to the infinite!
1137. Fear of God, torment and elation of the heart that wants to correspond adequately to the infinite love and never, never arrives and always, forever tends to it. O fear of God, be in me as you were in the heart and soul of Jesus; be so also in the soul of everyone of my brothers.
1138. O my little missionary servants, to this you must lead every devout; to this supreme perfection of the fear of God ... starting from the lowest levels of the fear of damnation and the fear of sin, true and real cause of hell.

⁴ Cf. Is 11, 1.

1139. Starting from the lowest levels of love of God that is affirmed and exercised as love of one's salvation, but with the considerable progress of considering it not only at the end of our mortal life, but day by day, hour by hour, not only the last or the in-between, but including also the next.
1140. O my little missionary servants, cultivate, intensify and elevate this love to one's salvation, with all the strength of the natural and supernatural logic of reason and faith, up to the point of wanting to be saved as saint, longing for the love of holiness, yearning for the real possession of the divine persons.
1141. Spur them to the possession of the divine persons in divine union because only God is the salvation of the soul, and only in holiness the soul disposes herself to receive the Lord! Only letting God possess us we possess God. Only in the pure love the soul is totally possessed by God.
1142. Bring and elevate, exercise and establish the soul in the pure love, without reversing on herself, without mixture of personal interest so as to be truly in the pure love... truly totally, integrally a living pure love of the divine persons.
1143. To this you must tend; you will certainly arrive at this starting from the good foundation of the holy fear, beginning of wisdom⁵, even in the sense of contemplation, even in the sense of pure love and of the mystical divine union; the holy fear is always the beginning of multiform wisdom.
1144. In all this second heaven of the devout soul, you get a glimpse of nine levels of holy fear, ascending to the supreme level of the superior fear, whose peak you will reach, whose fruit you will bear, whose beatitude you will enjoy and whose work of mercy will be fulfilled in the higher heavens.
1145. Now, my little servants missionaries, sweetly and strongly

⁵ Pr 1, 7.

- lead, exercise and perfect the soul in every degree of holy fear of sin, committed or only possible, grave or light; oh, even if only venial, even just possible, is the only evil that must be feared in each punishment - effect of it ... it alone!
1146. It alone is the true object of each inferior fear, in each of the nine levels of inferior fear; it alone is the evil-sin and consequently the true evil, evil-egoism, evil rebellious "I", evil indolent "I", evil negligent "I", evil intolerant "I".
1147. Evil grumbler "I", evil self-loving "I", evil self-centered "I", evil self seeking \neg "I", only responsible of every evil-sin, of every personal evil-sin, hence only direct object of every holy inferior fear, in every other evil of punishment and privation of good.
1148. Holy fear of sin and consequently of my egoistical I ... in the fear of death, all effect of sin, all revelation of the very existence of sin; much worst than death, since compared with sin death is a preferable and desirable good: first level.
1149. Holy fear of sin and consequently of my egoistical I, in the fear of hell... is also all effect of sin, all revolution of the disgraceful, painful and poisonous essence of sin! The possibility of damnation is the very possibility of sin always incumbent upon man.
1150. Hideous possibility of sinning and damning one's self! The soul that comprehends, feels and hears you, does not have peace without holding on all possible means to preserve herself from precipitating into hell by preserving one's self from falling into sin: second level of holy fear.
1151. Holy fear of sin and hence of the egoistical I... in the just fear of the devil, homicide adversary of man from the beginning of his fall from heaven. To remain in his possession in an eternal outburst of his cruelty of hatred... hell of every hell! But there is still something worse!
1152. To become sharer of his malice; to become not only damned, but devil, to have a heart-devil, to have an intellect-devil, a

will-devil, a life-devil, to be a person-devil ... hell of every hell! But there is still something worse!

1153. Worse than every death, worse than every hell, worse than every devil is to be in sin: it is the essence of sin, being-privation of God, being opposition to God ... which constitutes the evil of every death, of every hell, of every devil! Third level of holy fear.
1154. Holy fear of sin, hence of the egoistical I, of the fear of purgatory in this life, and much more in the other, even though it is a temporary torment, it is worse than any torture of the flesh and of the spirit of which we can think in this world. Fourth level of holy fear.
1155. Holy fear of sin, hence of the egoistical I, in the fear of the loss even of one minimum grade of glory in paradise, incomprehensible with the acquisition and possession of every natural good and of the whole world: Fifth level of the holy fear.
1156. Holy fear of sin, hence of the egoistical I, in the fear of the loss even of one minimum grade of natural and supernatural perfection, whose consequence would be to render less glory to God Trinity throughout eternity, irredeemably. Oh, sadness! Sixth level of holy fear.
1157. Holy fear of sin, hence of the egoistical I, in the fear of the loss even of one minimum grade of grace, that would have been granted to us, had we always corresponded to it ... with all the possible subsequent damage increasing and spiritual profits decreasing: seventh level of holy fear.
1158. Holy fear of sin, hence of the egoistical I, in the fear of the loss even of one minimum right, opening or pretext that always gives to the devil... to extend his very maleficent influence over the soul, every voluntary imperfection of ours, even if imperceptible... even only as a cause. Eighth level of holy fear.
1159. Holy fear of sin, hence of the egoistical I, in the fear of the

minimum advantage of the spirit of the world and of the human spirit to the detriment of the soul. Fear of every increase of human miseries, of weakening of the will and fogging of the intelligence: first effect and then in turn cause of faults: ninth level of holy fear.

1160. And much more... later. Holy fear of sin, hence of the egoistical I, in the fear of any minimum offence to his divine majesty; in this consideration even the very minimum offence is always more grievous of all material and temporal evils, and even of only external evils... if there were faultless ones.
1161. Holy fear of sin, hence of the egoistical I, in the fear of our part of causality in the passion of Jesus, in the agony of the heart, of his multiform death to which his love subjected him, for the adequate reparation of every minimum human fault, of every offence to the most holy Trinity.
1162. Holy fear of sin, hence of the egoistical I, in the fear of the resurrection of the flesh as a reprobate, of the separation from the elect and of the curse of Christ judge on the day of universal judgment ... for the eternal disgust caused to the Lord, who loved me, rather than for my own damnation.
1163. Holy fear of sin, hence of the egoistical I, in the fear of presenting myself as a reprobate to Jesus Christ, my judge, on the day of separation of soul and body; fear of rejection in the particular judgment for having frustrated in me the work of redemption of Jesus, who loved me, rather than for my own damnation.
1164. Holy fear of sin, hence of the egoistical I, in the fear of the disapproval and malediction of my Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph; disapproval and malediction of the Father and of the Holy Spirit in that of the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, my judge!
1165. Holy fear of sin, hence of the egoistical I, in the fear of the disapproval and malediction of the angels! Oh, disgust and

rejection of my angel, of the angels of my neighbors, of the princes of the celestial choirs and of the seven angels assisting at the throne of the Blessed Trinity.

1166. Holy fear of sin, hence of the egoistical I, in the fear of the disapproval and malediction of the saints! Of my beloved saints whose works I have studied without assimilating them, whose lives I have read without reproducing them in me, whose examples I have seen but never imitated.
1167. Holy fear of sin, hence of the egoistical I, in the fear of the disapproval and malediction of all my neighbors already in eternal life and of the souls that would have been saved and saints if I had conformed myself in everything to the thought, desire and plan of the heart of my God!
1168. Holy fear of sin, hence of the egoistical I, in the fear of the disapproval and malediction of all my neighbors living with me in this world... and even after my departure from this world: for the evil caused, for all the aborted good, for all and each of my moral miseries, even only as culpable cause.
1169. Let us put together all these reasons of fear concentrating them, with all the others deriving from them, on the one and only cause of every evil of guilt and sin, which is my own I, in the abuses of his freedom.
1170. Without this grievous holy fear, most grievous fear of sin and of the abusive "I", how could it be possible to have a real hatred for sin... true and profound hatred of the self? Without it there is no serious and tough fight against evil, and consequently there is no true and great victory of good.
1171. Since the evil of guilt, or sin, has been committed, from all those reasons of holy fear springs out our sorrow for sin, the holy hatred of the egoistical I that has committed it through his own fault, and the willingness to repair for past sins, the eradication of present sins and preservation from future sins.
1172. For reparation, eradication and preservation from sin of guilt we need the properly understood and properly prac-

ticed evangelical penance, specifically sorrow and relative resolution to exclude sin and pay any debt due on account of divine sanctions against it.

1173. Do not postpone the practice-sanction of sin, penance- solution of debt to the future, in time and in eternity... instead embrace it intensely and integrally now, in order to eliminate any shadow between the soul and the Lord. Any unpaid debt is a shadow that impedes friendship between creditor and debtor.
1174. Exercising the office of debt collectors make of divine justice, proclaimers of the divine sanctity and evangelists of penance, O my little missionaries, apply yourselves mainly to demonstrate this holy integral penance ... in its light so beautiful and sweet, in its joy so high and deep as something divine as it really is.
1175. Every gloomy and black, sad and ugly, vile and infamous element is only in sin as culpability and offense against the Lord; all that repairs and eradicates this evil of culpability, that protects and immunizes from this guilt ... is beautiful and happy, sweet and invigorating as any victory and glory.
1176. Do penance! Go around crying: "Repent" and immediately and indivisibly add: "Because the reign of God is near" and in those who do penance. Within this kingdom is our terrestrial paradise, novitiate and prelude – more than advance deposit – of the celestial paradise.
1177. Never separate what God has joined, if you do not want to carry on the role and homicidal interest of the enemy-devil. Do not kill penance by separating it from the kingdom of heaven brought closer to us and made ours by penance accepted and embraced. The kingdom of heaven becomes more ours, and better enjoyed in proportion to our penance.
1178. By dividing and separating we kill; by bringing closer and uniting we give life. Penance without the kingdom of God

is something dead and as such inspirer of all repugnancies. Death inspires horror and terror to our poor human nature already too ill.

1179. Penance and kingdom of heaven are as close and enjoyed as penance is generous, profound, and extended; penance is something alive and nurtures itself with the kingdom of heaven, paradise, the Lord Jesus, God Trinity! Come, divine penance, divine sorrow and repentance of sin.
1180. Sin is ugly, sad and horrible death, like devil and hell itself. You, sister penance, you destroy sin, you are beautiful and sweet, you desire life, paradise and Jesus! Come in all your ways; come in all your degrees! I embrace you and I want you as I want salvation.
1181. You are like the clothe of the Lord Jesus; it is enough to touch it and out of it springs up health and joy for any illness⁶; you are like the humanity of Jesus in the hypostatic union with the divine Word, who is the only savior and salvation, only teacher and wisdom...
1182. I must embrace this humanity in Jesus in order to find my salvation and unite myself to my savior, to have his wisdom and be united with my teacher, the Son of God the Father and of the Virgin Mary, God spouse of the soul. That humanity is totally crucified and immaculate, is all penance and passion!
1183. Now I seek you, penance and passion, as the Eucharistic sacramental species, under which I adore and receive only the real presence of my Lord Jesus. Likewise now you, O penance and passion, are for me, ascetically, the encounter and communion with Jesus.
1184. From the mouth of the divine wisdom I come to know the most common, universal and effective forms of penance for personal sanctification, as reparation for past sins, eradica-

⁶ Cf, lk 8, 14.

tion of present sins, preservation from future sins, satisfaction of debts and spiritualization of man.

1185. From the divine Word of the divine mouth! And the mouth talks from the abundance of the heart⁷. Divine heart overflows only with love... Only words of love, exigencies of love, veils of love bearing treasures of love... are all divine penances from Scriptures.
1186. Penance of intense, hard work, both manual and intellectual, and in both of them spiritual work, to procure what is necessary, convenient and useful to the life of the body and of the spirit... in one's individual, familiar and social works and those of others, working up to squeeze the sweat.
1187. Up to squeezing the sweat of the face, due not to the summer heat, nor to friction of nearby limbs; sweat due to constant and hard activities, as effect of real efforts, outbursts of human faculties, and not as result of dilettantism and recreational sports.
1188. First penance from which nobody can ever be dispensed, even though one might have his bread assured, or exceptional talent and ease of getting around with little effort. Penance is essential to the health of the body and of the soul, first divinely instituted penance.
1189. Second penance consists in hardships and multiform physical pains from the great physical world, from all physical laws, from the external environment and, much more, from the small world of matter, and more precisely of each one of us ... precisely the human body itself with its needs and pains.
1190. Briers and thorns budding everywhere, coming down from all of the surrounding atmosphere, from all atmospheres above; at the extreme end of each torn and around each brier we see a gleaming gem, a flower blooming, ripened fruit because it drank a little bit of blood.

⁷ Mt 15, 18.

1191. A drop of blood, healthy, alive, warm with love of the Lord, flowing with the divine blood in the Christian that lives in the supernatural; then everything is vivifying and conducting to eternal life; terrestrial and celestial paradise smile again to the penitent!
1192. Third penance: Briers and thorns in the whole moral world of men ... our brothers! Discomforts and pains from all relationships necessary for human sociability, incomprehension and humiliations, injustices and persecutions, ingratitude and betrayals, lack of correspondence and rebellions and... a world of similar sourness.
1193. In all truth... all creatures have received a divine mission to help us in our purification, illumination and supernatural perfection; in our present state of decayed nature only pains from the creatures and joy from the creator bring us efficiently to them.
1194. So the whole web of human relationships seems to please and attract us, in reality, they push and shove us upward, almost out of desperation. Only in the Lord we find what we seek, and only in his union we are, do, enjoy and give what we must be and do, enjoy and donate.
1195. Fourth penance: Briers and thorns in our individual, personal, corporal and spiritual world coming from the fact that we are limited and successive, from the dissension between matter and spirit, from our fickleness of humors and dispositions, from our changeability of desires and intentions.
1196. Briers and thorns in providing and serving so many physical necessities of nourishment and rest, moral needs of instruction, social necessities of convenience and of works... without failing neither by excess nor by defect, neither by sloth nor by precipitation, neither intentionally nor dispositionally.
1197. Their harmonious result is the stem of life, flower of science, fruit of works and value of merit sowed in labor, watered

with tears, nurtured with blood... but only for the short winter in time... toward the eternal spring of immortal youth.

1198. Fifth penance: To be under the power of man! Oh, how sweet and glorious it is to obey the Lord! It is truly enjoyment of the great kingdom! Oh, how sad and dark it is to be subject to a man, especially when the veil of authority representative of God becomes so dense with thickness and knots that hardly allows the transparency of the Lord!
1199. Obedience to the laws, endless laws upon laws! Natural and positive laws, civil and penal laws, national and international laws, ecclesiastical and constitutional laws, liturgical and hierarchical laws. Oh sublime exercise of freedom assured by obedience... but appearing as a universal slavery!
1200. Poor the man that is not animated by the spirit of faith that sees God in every authority. Poor the man that is not animated by the spirit of love that pleases God in every act of obedience, and that does not navigate in the freedom of the interior unity! How can he ever live morally well in the seemingly slavery of all laws?
1201. Sixth penance: The yoke of the Lord Jesus! His divine gospel of perennial change of mentality in view of the ongoing ascension to an ever more perfect state! Gospel of the flight from the world, gospel of detachment from any property... the gospel of hatred and abnegation of self.
1202. The gospel of perpetual watchfulness and prayer, of perennial effort and fight, labor and conquest; the unacknowledged gospel of loving my neighbor not so much as my own self, but as Jesus himself has loved him to the point of pouring his blood and his life for him!
1203. Let no one render or think heavy the burden Jesus has revealed as being light. Let no one think or make harsh and sad the yoke Jesus revealed as being soave. Let everyone know, taste and announce that it is truly light and soave... but only if we carry it with him, espoused to him.

1204. Seventh penance: The sweet, the most sweet among all penances... divine compassion. Compassion to the point of really suffering with our neighbor all that he suffers in the body, in the heart, at all time... even what is not and cannot be measured by human standards and measures, in purgatory.
1205. Compassion is penance only in the effort needed to pay kind and loving attention to the actual sufferings of our nearby neighbor; for those far away in time and space, compassion is a penance only in the effort of making them present to our kind and loving attention in order to help them.
1206. O sweet and holy craving compassion for our militant brothers on earth, in so many torments of the flesh, of the heart and of the soul! Pining compassion for the dead longing for the paradise of the divine face! O compassion with our Sorrowful Mother and our suffering Jesus, crucified by us!
1207. Eighth penance: shadow of sadness over any light of this temporal world, trace of bitterness in every joy of our temporal life! Demonic nightmare at night in every day of man. Death sentence to anyone guilty of original sin, aggravated by present personal sins.
1208. Do not escape from this penance, since you cannot escape this penalty. Drink this bitter chalice, drop by drop, every day, renewing the full acceptance of death at every sip, in every imminent or passed danger, at the end of every day and of every enterprise...
1209. Do the same at every physical or moral suffering that can be harbinger of death! Likewise renew the acceptance of death at any thunderstorm and contagion. At the last moment we will discover that we have already emptied the chalice, drop by drop, sip by sip, and there will be nothing more to suffer, but only to fall asleep and go.
1210. Ninth penance, the most indispensably necessary, precious, consoling, reassuring and uplifting: contrition of sins. The

one that is properly said penitence; it operates true conversion and divine reconciliation, the one preached by John and by Jesus.

1211. The one that has been elevated to be the matter of the sacrament penance as the main act of the penitent! The one that must be practiced constantly also about the sins that have been properly confessed and forgiven. The one to be extended to all the sins of the world out of human solidarity and divine compassion.
1212. Penitence of true contrition that does not stop at imperfect motivations, but ascends to the supreme motivation of the pure love of God, so that this penance may become all form and exercise of perfect charity, with all the value and enjoyment of perfect love, in its most practical manifestation and form.
1213. The reality of this penance of contrition sweetens the expiatory penances, nurtures the penances that prevent sin, warms the heart constantly and strongly impels the soul to ensure by any means her preservation from sin ... to rise to the higher sphere, where ordinarily sin does not arrive.
1214. This good will of guaranteeing the preservation from any fault, of purification from any fault, of definite elevation above the sphere contaminated by sin disposes the soul to the comprehension of the truth: "He who prays will certainly save himself; he who does not pray will certainly damn himself"⁸, and so on.
1215. So on and on progressively and proportionately. He, who prays more, saves himself with more merit. He, who prays even more and better, had truly learned how to live in the supernatural of the Christian. He, who prays even much more and better saves himself as a true great saint.

⁸ Maxim of St. Alphonsus De Liguori.

1216. O my little missionaries do not cease to comment, propagate and inculcate this principle that has been doctrinally taught, apostolically propagated and with great zeal inculcated by our St. Alphonsus. Do likewise with the other principle of St. Augustine: “only the person who knows how to pray well, knows how to live well”... this too is an ascensional principle.
1217. Prayer is one of the very first graces; all the others can be obtained only through prayer. It is true that man can do nothing worthy of eternal life without prayer; it is equally true that he can do everything through prayer.
1218. Once the soul is convinced, permeated and animated by this light in her behavior, she has already greatly advanced... she has already ascended to another spiritual heaven (that of the third level of the spiritual ascension, in which the *faithful* and the *devout* start to be and become always more *pious* soul).
1219. O my little missionaries prepare soon your great directory of vocal and mental prayer, and keep updating always more with your experiences and enriching it always more with the experiences of the saints, and, what is more important, transmit it to the souls entrusted to you.
1220. Transmit it totally in its knowledge and its practice, and later also in the apostolate to all souls entrusted to you, from the child in kindergarten to the university student, from the little apprentice worker to the director of great works, from the seminarian and postulant to the priest and perpetually professed.
1221. Convince the souls that the first and main quality of prayer is to be very plentiful. It must be so much in quantity as to implement: “Pray without interruption”⁹ and “Pray with-

⁹ Cf. 1Th 5, 17.

out ever getting tired¹⁰. Praying a lot, one also learns how to pray well, better and always in greater fervor.

1222. Every vocal prayer must also be mental prayer in order to be true and complete. Likewise every mental prayer must also be vocal to be true and complete, effort, labor and spur of mind and heart toward the Lord, in order to reach and possess him.
1223. The distinction between vocal and mental prayer consists in this: vocal prayer is uttered through pre-existing formulas; mental prayer uses improvised formulas; but as far as elevation of mind and heart both must be the same.
1224. As it is convenient, or better, necessary, that community prayer should be uttered through pre-existing formulas, so it is convenient and necessary that mental prayers be expressed through improvised words. The elevation and devotion essential to every prayer, in mental prayer precedes and in vocal prayer follows the words.
1225. While it is very opportune to allocate a period of time to be spent in prayer... it is improper to determine the prayers to be made during that determined period of time, because to pray well the soul should be free from any external preoccupation and most of all from haste.
1226. Again: As it is not proper to reduce all prayer to petition of graces and favors, so, on the other end, it is convenient that, at least equally, prayer should be praise and thanksgiving, reparation and oblation and, especially, loving entertainment, friends' dialogue, lovers' appointment.
1227. We all must acquire the virtuous habit of prayer above any other virtuous habit, because in turn it will enable us to acquire and increase... nourish and perfect any other virtuous habit, provided it is such as to be truly spirit of grace and prayer, animator of the entire Christian life.

¹⁰ Cf. Lk 18, 1.

1228. This most desirable virtuous habit of prayer must be essentially habit and spirit of elevation of the mind and heart from all things to the souls; and from all souls to the Lord God Trinity, without ever stopping at any intermediate step between one's self and God.
1229. As it is necessary the common and remote preparation of the environment and of the person, with the elimination of any unnecessary thing, so it is also necessary the private and immediate preparation of the environment and of the person with the elimination of any unnecessary self-centered act, in order to spur oneself directly and intensely to God.
1230. It greatly helps the preparation, the execution and perfection of prayer, doing it in company with the angels, fixing our gaze on the face of the one we talk to... with the intention of offering as ours (as really is through his grace) his Word and his Spirit as our word and heart.
1231. Prayer must be totally uttered in certitude of faith and firmness of hope that the inspirer of every prayer always answers it. It will always be answered, not always the way we intend it, but always in a way worthy of the one who loves us infinitely.
1232. Prayer must be totally uttered in certitude of faith and firmness of hope that in itself is apostolic seraphic action accomplished to always meet the greatest pleasure of the one who is love, the friend and infinite lover, who finds his delight in listening to the soul.
1233. O prayer! O prayers! Wings of every spiritual ascension, weapons of every spiritual battle, instrument of every spiritual work, human exercise of divine omnipotence in your spirit, we ascend to the third spiritual heaven, and... this spirit will never abandon us.

CHAPTER 15

The Pious

Holy Fear and Penance catapult the soul to the third heaven, where the soul is raptured in the spirit of love of gratitude, filial, nuptial and motherly love. Immersed in an avalanche of memories, Blessed Justin talks of the tenderness that invades the inferior part of his being, that is, his body, sense, fantasy, and sentiment (the winged children). Those who are familiar with this type of experiences may recognize in them what the Charismatic Renewal calls: Effusion of the Spirit, or Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

In his poetical vein Fr. Justin writes: "The rivers of the Lord's sweetness begin to furrow terrestrial areas of the soul ... and those are covered by flowers, sweet and most sweet feelings, at times intense and fiery enough to break and pierce the natural sensitivity with tears that become flood and inner craving". (It may be appropriate here to remember that often in his writings and exhortations Fr. Justin urges his disciples to pray for the gift of tears).

In this chapter Fr. Justin also writes about precious and necessary consolations and various devotions, related to each other as the flowers to the fruit: "Often with the fruit will remain also the flower, beauty married to sweetness! With the duty will remain the pleasure... and they will take each other to ever-greater divine progression".

Various devotions are compared to flowerbeds.

- a. *Flowerbed of the devotion to Baby Jesus, to the divine Infant, to the ineffable Name;*
- b. *Flowerbed-Paradise of the devotion to Jesus adolescent, to Jesus's youth, to the Sacred Heart... to the beautiful eyes, face, voice; devotion to the House of Nazareth (that triggered the remembrance of the laying of the first stone of our Mother house).*
- c. *Flowerbed, celestial paradise of the devotion to the public life of Jesus, to the divine mission of the Word, to the direct divine words from: "Let there be light" of Genesis to: "Amen, here I come" of Revelation. Devotion to the precious blood, to the agonizing Jesus, to the Crucified Jesus.*

This chapter ends leading us to the devotion to the Blessed Mother, the angels, archangels and all the saints that Fr. Justin calls: "Flowerbeds or panoramas of religious piety, solar worlds, heavens of heavens, cities of stars".

The author invites us to join him in longing for and ascending to the "higher charismas, immense and flaming desires... real torment in the great holy souls, in the pure hearts who feel attracted insensitively or violently, or even gradually to a higher practice, the superior light of the heavens of the devotions in the superior strength of the Saints and of the Mother"... to the heaven of the "ascetic".

1234. Over the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem I shall pour out a spirit of grace and prayer, and they will look to me. They will mourn for the one they have pierced as though for an only child, and weep for him as people weep for a first-born child.¹
1235. With the spirit of holy fear and penance, grace advances the faithful, who corresponds, to the second heaven of spiritual ascension, and every soul that progresses remains always more animated, more filled and is ever-more pushed forward by this spirit of holy fear and penance.
1236. This life in the spirit of holy fear and penance disposes the soul to receive the spirit of piety and prayer; this spirit elevates her to the third heaven of ascension and pushes her, through all its levels, always upward and always forward, strongly and sweetly.
1237. Spirit of grace, that is, of love and gratitude, of tender filial, nuptial and motherly love that, at first indistinct, manifests itself in warm compassion, vehement motherly affection toward the one God, in the supreme revelation of his saving love: his passion and death.
1238. The spirit of piety places in the soul a flood of tenderness of love on her relationship with her God and her neighbor; this tenderness spreads through the first part of her being

¹ Zc 12, 10-11.

that we call "inferior", i.e. in the body ... in her sense, fantasy and sentiment.

1239. The rivers of the Lord's sweetness begin to furrow terrestrial areas of the soul ... and are covered by flowers, sweet and most sweet feelings, at times intense and fiery to the point of breaking and piercing the natural sensitivity with tears that become flood and inner craving.
1240. The soul begins to enjoy spiritual consolations: in the sense of the Lord's love, in the sense of the Lord's fear, in the sense of the angels' presence... of the Blessed Mother's presence... of the presence of the holy souls of purgatory... of the presence of the saints... of Jesus Christ's presence.
1241. More or less unaware of the supernatural origin of these consolations more or less incognizant of the greater or lesser part played in them by the external environment, the internal temperament and all other physical and moral circumstances in which the soul finds herself.
1242. Spiritual consolations, at times, they may give place to illusions, faults and dangers if the soul does not fight always and generously the habit of turning upon herself and presuming or confiding only upon herself.
1243. The most common, if not always the most grievous danger is this: that the soul, enjoying spiritual consolations, may think, believe and convince herself that she may always enjoy them at her whim, at her disposal... and with this conviction makes her projects, programs and spiritual architectures.
1244. In the grace of spiritual consolations the soul easily can and must make her projects and programs of progresses and ascensions, however, she must never consider these consolations as her construction's material, as means and tools of her spiritual work.
1245. In reality they are not continually and habitually totally in her hands and at her service; they are available only by way of discontinuous acts, only in the Lord's hands and accord-

ing to ways, designs and immediate finalities that often escape the knowledge of the soul.

1246. Notwithstanding the real dangers and seemingly inconveniences... these spiritual consolations are precious! They are not delicious but precious! O my little missionaries, you should never place them in a false light, neither by defect nor by excess, nor by contempt nor by gluttony.
1247. How precious they are! They are precious and necessary as the flower is for the future fruit, as every pleasure is connected with the duty to which it is connected!² It is true that the flowers fall so that the fruit may come to maturity; it is also true that the pleasure passes and the hard and austere duty remains!
1248. It is sufficient that the soul does not attach herself to those flowers and those pleasures; it is enough that the soul does not cut, harvest and enjoy them without their fruit, without those duties; it is enough that the soul does not stop at them, but that she continues to aim at the fruit and duty.
1249. This is said and done simply by tending directly to Jesus, looking continually to Jesus; as much as it is possible for the soul to be directly and continually serious, firm, decided and resolute; without limping and without voluptuous lingering on the self.
1250. Thus every illusion is dissipated, all attacks foiled, dangers averted, every inconvenience avoided; what remains for the soul is all the good of the spiritual consolations, often

² In the book *Rimanete nel Mio Amore*, Edited by O. Anella, Edizioni Vocazioniste, Roma, on page 183 we find this same principle enunciated by Fr. Justin during a course of spiritual exercises preached by Fr. Justin: "The soul does not have to feel bad if some really beautiful spiritual experiences pass away. Even if they pass, the effects not fade away, and in the soul remains eternally the fruit! ... We do not feel bad, for example, that all the flowers of cherry trees have fallen, because with their fall came off the cherries, that everyone of us certainly prefers to the flowers."

precious and necessary and, after a while, almost continuous.

1251. Often, with the fruit will remain also the flower, beauty married to sweetness! With the duty will remain the pleasure; one will produce the other, always greater in proportion and divine progression harmonized together... as in the terrestrial paradise... as in the state of original holiness.
1252. Go, O my little missionaries, follow closely these souls that grace elevated to the heaven of Christian piety; make sure that they understand and correspond to the attraction of christian devotions that, as so many zones flowered with lights and colors, fragrances and harmonies, open up before them.
1253. Introduce them, lead them by the hand to Christian devotions, but do not give into the temptation to easily make the choice or take the initiative for them, as far as precedence and preference among so many devotions; this must be left completely to the grace of the one who created the souls... he alone understands them... he alone treats them with great reverence.
1254. Make sure that they do not cease, better, make sure that they intensify and elevate the exercise of the holy fear and holy penance of the previous heaven, because in it there is the ascetical nourishment, the connatural preparation and the human cooperation of the spiritual consolations.
1255. The holy fear and penance should be exercised for their direct objectives, that is, for their proper and immediate effects, nevertheless, in the interior life, they are like winter for spring, its necessary preparation.
1256. Much more, they are the necessary light to the vision of the devotions, the necessary school for the science of devotions, the necessary purification for the understanding and enjoyment of the devotions, the necessary atmosphere and climate for the blossoming and fructification of devotions.
1257. Above all they are the necessary humility for the elevation

to the nobility and richness of devotions and, in turn, they are a fruit, and not the last of the same devotions from which they receive increment and elevation... as new splendors of beauty flashing in them from the supernatural truth.

1258. O garden of the devotion to the Baby Jesus, to the divine Infant Jesus with its mysterious flowerbeds for the light of the divinity united to humanity in the person of the Word-God, who is the Son of God the Father and the son of man because really son of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God...
1259. ... With its liturgical, sweet and touching celebrations of advent, of the holy night, of the star that calls and leads some kings that come from far away with gifts... of the multiple epiphany to mankind and to the Church, to every soul and to every friend of the Lord!
1260. These celebrations are not simple commemorations of the past, they are above all happenings and realizations in the divine present and in the human present, in a perennial and ascensional originality of states, acts, merits and joys of advents, Christmases, and divine epiphanies.
1261. O divine ingenuities that come down to the soul from eternity in its day, from the immensity of its place, from the infinity within its boundaries elevate the soul from her boundary to the infinity, from her place to the immensity, from her time to eternity; the divine and the human marry each other.
1262. Throughout all this variety and immensity of good donated to the soul, re-acquired for the soul, spreads out the glorious harmony of Jesus' name; it resounds from the ineffable name of God, with human melodies... and sings the work of salvation, the divine authority and the mission of the Word.
1263. In the words of the angelic annunciation, in the name of the divine child, in the manger his crib, in the star, in the gifts and everywhere you can see the cross, dripping blood

and a burning heart! Everything is revelation, effusion and communication of love!

1264. Spread throughout this terrestrial garden-paradise of the devotion to Baby Jesus and divine child; spread throughout this aerial garden-paradise of the devotion to the divine name... in the holy name of Jesus; spread throughout this celestial garden-paradise of the devotion to the divine Word.
1265. The first floor of this garden-paradise is for you, O my winged children; the second floor of this garden-paradise is for you, O my winged youths; the third floor is for you, my winged lords. Since they are all one garden-paradise you can freely pass from one to the other.
1266. Make sure to go all together and sing with the choirs of angels, O my nine singers, embrace the baby, carry heartily the child with the Virgin Mother, worship the holy name and the divine Word with perfect, integral and intense adoration.
1267. O my winged children, give your tenderness of sentiment, your beauty of fantasy and the sweetness of each sense to the winged youths; and you, my winged youths, do not ever leave these children alone... to indulge in their pleasures, even if they are all spiritual, so that they may not decay from the supernatural order.
1268. O three winged lords, uplift powerfully the winged children and youths to the reality of the absolute dependence of the universal belonging to the divinity, through the vision of the divine Trinity in all the mysteries of Jesus and the integral obedience to the glory, love and will of the Trinity.
1269. Oh, if you all knew to what extent the divine love wills your relation and your adoration of the divine Baby, of the divine Infant, of the Son of God and of Man, of the essentially Son-Jesus, essentially son in human and divine nature!
1270. Oh, if you all knew to what extent the Virgin Mary wills to unite you to herself in her relationship with Jesus! To what

extent God the Father wills to unite you to himself in his love for Jesus! To what extent the Holy Spirit wills to form Jesus in you, and through you, in all souls!

1271. Onward! This first garden-paradise of the devotion to Baby Jesus, to the infant Jesus and to his Holy Name opens up to you as something alive and leads you, living being, to the other garden-paradise of the devotion to Jesus adolescent, to Jesus' youth and his sacred Heart.
1272. In the divine harmony, a triple-unique garden-paradise, terrestrial, aerial and celestial, for the triple-unique interior world of spiritual powers to exercise one by one and all together, in the devotional adoration of the divine adolescence, youth and Sacred Heart.
1273. Devotion to the human-divine beauty and sweetness of Jesus that blossoms in the marvelous adolescence and totally flourishes in that wonderful youth... while his human-divine heart every day feels more intense and burning, vehement and consuming the divine torment of his love.
1274. In his divine torment of human-divine love directed to every soul, one by one, as to an only friend longed for in order to love him and be loved by him in return; already blazes real mysterious flame, already wounded-torn-bloody-agonizing of life-giving death and death giving life.
1275. I cannot hold on the devotion to the adolescent and young Jesus, nor on the virginal and motherly affections of Mary for him, on the virginal and fatherly affections of Saint Joseph for him... I cannot hold on his delight in the Holy Family.
1276. You do not want it, O my Jesus! You yourself (more than Herod's persecution) take your infancy and childhood to blossom into adolescence far from your holy land... in exile... seeking the one you love and with whom you feel the security of his love (Joseph and Mary are always with you).
1277. You subtract yourself to the infinitely loved Mary and Joseph and take your adolescence to spread the dawn of your

marvelous wisdom, in a corner of the temple, searching a school, a friendly disciple for whom you make a river of your luminous word spring up forever and ever...

1278. ...To reveal and confide to him that you are the eternal Word of the love eternally gushing from the Father; eternally flowing in the Spirit that now is eager to throw himself in the heart of the friend-disciple, in order to make him a lake of life, peace and sweetness, a sea as a mirror and spouse of heaven.
1279. You do not find the friend and return to your house of Mary and Joseph, always yours; you... their house and rest, you, without whom they could neither live nor die; they could only live with death in their heart, death of the immortal spirit of their heart, all vital love for you, O Jesus!
1280. Later on, you again leave the house and take your marvelous youth to flourish in solitude, in the desert of the world, and later in the greater solitude and worse desert of the crowd... always looking to find the one you have been searching for, you wanted a date of love for the proposal of love.
1281. O my winged children, my winged youths and winged lord, have you heard of the devotion to the beauty, sweetness and love of Jesus adolescent and young adult at Nazareth, in the temple, in the desert? On the banks of the Jordan at the end of his hidden life that now becomes public?
1282. Have you seen that beauty, have you savored that sweetness? Have you seen and felt that loving heart in those beautiful eyes, on that beautiful face... in that voice... in that gesture and in that step? Have you heard his conversations? Did his song penetrate your heart to intoxicate and pierce it?
1283. Did you hear the voice of the Father revealing all his delight in him? He attracts, thrusts and concentrates all our delights in him. So that upon him may rest the human spirit as well as the Holy Spirit, dove of passionate and immaculate love.

1284. Devotion to spiritual progress in truth and beauty, in charity and sweetness, in every virtue and heroism, in every grace and charisma, under the motherly care of Mary and Joseph, in the temple and in the family, in exile and in the homeland, in school and in society, in the desert and among friends!
1285. In everything a heart secretly wounded and inflamed that thinks, prepares and hastens the wonders of its effusions and immolations. To the heart that corresponds to him, he offers a nuptial wedding banquet, ascensional and eternal, and does not cease to call: "Come, follow me, unite yourself to me".
1286. "Come, my dove, let me see your face, let me hear your voice"³. Resounds in the divine heart the Song of Songs and reaches the divine Dove that descends upon him, reaches his human dove and longs to press her to his heart that loves her amazingly.
1287. O my children, youths and lords, you have followed him timidly, moved by the voice of John, holy fear; the voice of John, holy penance; the voice of John, purifying humility, Now, in turn, you must be the precursors and evangelists to all souls and espouse them all only to Jesus.
1288. Where do you live, Lord Jesus? The city frightens me, the little rural, mountainous villages attract me. Even the little towns I despise and as I go, with a strange desire I look at the little houses scattered throughout valleys and hills... isolated and hidden, and yet, it is repugnant for me to enter and stay there.
1289. I advance dissatisfied and always yearning for a house! I see rural houses spread through valleys and hills and my heart jumps toward them... O dwellings of men... and I

³ Sg 2, 14

would love to surround them with more and more houses and make a town; I would love to transform every town in a big township, and transform every township into a big city.

1290. How strange is this? Repugnance and attraction for the same things? Oh ... but not for all, but only for the things of man! Who is in you, my winged children, my winged youths, who stirs and pushes, shrinks and expands, saddens and makes you happy at the sight of the man's house?
1291. Why so much joy when you see the construction of new houses? Why do you have such a desire to dwell in every human habitation as brothers of everybody, mother of everybody and sons of all? I feel that among you there is Jesus, and his heart is in us and likewise is also his spirit that lives and works, exults and transforms everybody and everything.
1292. He enjoys being with men; his love always attracts him to their homes and often they shut the door in his face; often, after having welcome him, they throw him out again; often they become lairs of his enemies, and he, nevertheless, feels eternal desire and attraction to them.
1293. Eternal desire and attraction to the house in which to live the divine-human intimacy with the souls; that is why he too has a home where to welcome his friends, where his children may grow, where he can invite the spouse of God... a house where his mother waits for him and consoles him.
1294. O house of Nazareth, living glory of love of Virgin Mother, of virgin father, of Jesus Man-God! Living, growing and multiplying yourself in all the houses of prayer of the world, in all religious houses of the Church, in all houses of true science, in all the houses of the elect souls!
1295. O house of Nazareth, nest of the divine love, of the Holy Family made of the supreme relations of love of Son of God, Mother of God, Spouse of God... to which each and every

soul is called. The elect are exulted in the blood, in the heart and in the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

1296. I am writing on the day in which the angels carried you to this Italy of Jesus Christ!⁴ Today is the day in which we laid the first stone of the first Vocationary, of the Vocationary mother, new house of Nazareth of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, new cenacle of apostles and evangelists (history of the foundation of the Vocationary Deus Caritas of Pianura...).
1297. In the hermitage of the Transfiguration of Camaldoli of Naples, during the night, the hermits, our beloved friends sang the Litanies of the Blessed Mother, as they used to do on this night every year on the eve of this date from Pianura a charitable donation was sent to the shrine of Loreto by telegraph.
1298. A very small and mystical donation of twelve lire, in honor of the twelve apostles of Jesus, of the twelve stars that crown the Immaculate... to implore Mary's blessing on her new house and family of Joseph, Jesus and the apostles, of all the Saints and of the entire triple Church.
1299. At the time, the miraculous arm of the Jesuit apostle Francis Xavier, in the glory of many wonders, was travelling throughout Italy, and from far away he certainly blessed the first stone of the Vocationary, because we very ardently yearned for its presence, but were unable to do so on account of our poverty.
1300. The children and our young students, the Sisters and the faithful friends of the Vocationary circled the round shaped field, repeating in a loud voice: "Ave Maria, Ave Maria". That field was bought and donated by the humble virgin,

⁴ Here we have an additional and last confirmation of the date of this writing, December 10, 1994, and also a confirmation of the date in which was laid the first stone of the first Vocationary, mother house of the Vocationist fathers.

Sister Clara Loffredo... with money obtained by selling all her properties and donated to the poor of Jesus Christ.

1301. The first stone was wrapped in the rosary beads of the little vigilant-supervisors of the Vocationary, already effective as institute, but not yet existing as building. At the time the little prefects (=supervisors) used to wear a rosary with a crucifix, as an external sign of their authority.
1302. The corner stone was blessed according to the ritual and placed and cemented without the rosary beads, as a seed that later on the generosity of baroness Maria Marucco, duchess Teresa Di Miranda, bishop Umberto Fiodo, and Sister Clara Loffredo and Giovannina brought to its first completion⁵...
1303. ... Without mentioning the small and large contributions, collected from the humble, poor Vocationist Sisters; without mentioning the work so happily supported in the days and hours of vacation by many young people of the same religious family that built the new house of Nazareth for Jesus (end of the story...).
1304. But, where are you going, my little winged children? Only the spirit of sensible grateful affection to the many benefactors can justify this long parenthesis. In them we eternally bless the dispenser of graces, St. Joseph, the Mediatrix of graces, Mary, the author of each and every grace, Jesus.
1305. From the new houses of Nazareth Jesus goes out to call souls and brings them to the holy family, to the arms of St. Joseph, to the heart of his Virgin Mother, to the bosom

⁵For a sense of gratitude Fr. Justin remembers the first and most generous benefactors: in addition to the wealthy Neapolitan noblewomen, baroness Maria Marucco, duchess Teresa Di Miranda and Sister Clara Loffredo mentioned in most biographies of Bl. Justin, here he adds Umberto Fiodo, bishop of Bovino from 1910 to 1923, and his own sister Giovannina, the future Mother Giovanna.

of God the Father, in his Holy Spirit of piety, of grace and prayer, in the relationships of divine union.

1306. From his house of Nazareth (Oh... also from the new houses of Nazareth) Jesus continues to go out, even today. He goes through roads, villages, towns and cities, peoples and nations... to spread his word, and around him, teacher and Messiah... the flows of his words of life make the other gardens flourish.
1307. Another big, great and immense garden-paradise of intelligent and loving devotion to Jesus, the young God Messiah, the young God teacher... to the divine words of life, and to his works of vocation and formation of peoples to holiness, vocation and formation of the elect to the priestly apostolate!
1308. In this great devotion to the public life of Jesus, my little missionaries, you will find yourselves in the terrestrial paradise of the itineraries and preaching of Jesus; in the aerial garden paradise of vocations and divine formation of souls, families and peoples to the holiness of the gospel of divine sanctity.
1309. You will see and visit the garden-paradise of the divine mission of the Word from God the Father, from whom he is eternally generated, and by whom alone he is sent; resonances, in time, of the divine words of the eternal Word, of infinite love and wisdom of eternal love!
1310. Follow Jesus! Let us follow Jesus! Let everyone follow Jesus... socially and individually, in his public and private life, in the exterior and interior life! This divine invitation is addressed to peoples and to individuals and it contains the vocation and mission of individual nations and individual persons.
1311. Directly and immediately it reveals that the best correspondence to the vocation and the greatest fulfillment of one's mission is all in the imitation, continuation and reproduc-

tion of the life and work of Jesus, in the Spirit of Jesus, in the heart of Jesus: "Follow me"

1312. It is directly and immediately addressed to the elect to become his disciples and apostles, in every time and nation; likewise, it is directly and immediately focused upon his itineraries in his town, among his special people, in his particular field and later to the whole world, to all peoples, in every field of human-divine action!
1313. Follow me! All the human-divine action takes place in a perpetual going and going... in a continuous changing of situations. It is a perennial ascension and ascension to the heavens' heaven. It is a perennial perfecting of assimilating sanctification of the Holy of holies.
1314. Follow me with true devotion! Let us follow him with integral devotion to the divine itineraries through the divine ways, the divine spiral circulation... as the starry world in space, as the angels, messengers of his love, as disciples become apostles of his gospel, and as eternal missionaries of Jesus.
1315. He has just come, descended and incarnate among us... and immediately starts his journey back to the Father; all his itinerary, all our following him is revealed in those words - glorious message: "I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God"⁶.
1316. Parts, stations and stages of this divine itinerary are: 1) his going to the temple, itineraries of prayer and public worship; 2) his going into exile, the itinerary of flight and fight against evil; 3) the going to his house and his cities, itinerary of universal obedience;
1317. 4) His going to the desert and to the Jordan, itineraries of humiliation and penance; 5) his – day and night time - going to mountains and gardens, itineraries of contemplation

⁶ Jn 20, 17b.

- and private adoration; 6) his going to so many bloody Calvaries, itineraries of law and sacrifice, so multiform and full!
1318. 7) His going to so many glorious Tabor, itineraries of transfigurations and glorifications ending in the glorious state, in the final ascension to the right of the Father, in the final, integral and universal triumph of his work, of his doctrine, of his spirit, of his heart.
1319. In everything and through everything, always and everywhere, his uninterrupted going after sinners, as lost sheep, to track and regain, convert and re-consecrate, re-possess and bring back in his arms, in his heart, to the house and to the bosom of the Father.
1320. His going, his continuous going personally to inspire, seek and call the elect of divine vocations... in whom he could transfuse all himself with divine formation, in order to be able to live in them and work throughout the centuries among all people with his Church, his mystical body, his mystical life.
1321. For the one and the other⁷, these two supreme finalities, between one and the other the two main finalities... this explains his repeatedly going to the crowds of sick needing healing, of ignorant needing instruction, of hungry needing to be fed, of lost needing guidance and paternal government.
1322. His constant going even to the houses of the dead, to the tombs of those who were buried to resuscitate, to console and to revivify. His repeated going also to wedding banquets to bless, sanctify and sacramentalize all human life in the family, its font.
1323. His going and returning to Bethany houses of his heart in order to institute and form contemplative, active and mixed

⁷“For the one and the other”, *the one* refers to the sinners and *the other* to the elect. In verse 1319 Jesus goes after the sinners, the lost sheep, and in verse 1320 he goes out to seek and call the elect.

religious life; his going to the tribunals of men to give witness to truth and charity and form in perpetuity the holiness of divine martyrdom.

1324. Oh... see, my little missionaries, and make the souls see, feel, enjoy and re-experience... how all these itineraries of Jesus are perennially renewed in all his comings to earth and his returns to heaven, all his going to heaven and returns to the earth of the innumerable present-day Eucharistic itineraries.
1325. Oh... Eucharistic itineraries from heaven to earth for every soul! From earth to heaven for every soul! At the voice of the priest as once at voice of the angel! In the hands of the priest as once in the arms of Mary! From heaven to earth to communicate the divine persons and nature to the souls, in their mediator Jesus!
1326. From heaven to earth in order to always more elevate the souls! Oh... always more to the divine perfections and operations, to the divine union with the divine persons in their mediator Jesus. Always more, from any state, order, or heaven where they have already been elevated... the voice and the word of the incarnate Son elevates them up higher.
1327. O divine words of the Son of God the Father! Elevate me to your garden-paradise, whose flowerbeds are all the starry cities, all the constellations of starry cities, all plagues of the universe and all churches of the saints, O churches of the angels of the unique holy Church of the Holy one!
1328. Oh... most high and sublime devotion to the divine words! Oh... holy and divine devotion to the words of the Blessed Trinity! Hail, O entire universe, misunderstood book you give me the possibility to read the divine creating and systematizing words! Hail, O entire Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testament, divine book misunderstood!
1329. Misunderstood divine book... worthy of true veneration, lamps, flowers, incense, processions and any other liturgy! Book that offers me the possibility of reading the divine cre-

ating and redeeming words! Hail, Virgin Mary, Mother of God, unappreciated book, you offer me the divine Word, become mine in his incarnation in you.

1330. Hail, holy mother Catholic Church, teaching post of the teacher and his vicar, divine infallible magisterium, you repeat and translate, comment and apply the divine words entrusted to you by God the Father of the Word! By the very God the Word, your author, by the Virgin Mary his mother in the incarnation and in the gospel.
1331. I tend my ear, stare my gaze and in them the whole soul becomes hearing, seeing and sensing in order to read, listen, feel in my whole soul the divine word that is every flower! That divine word that is every star! That divine word that is every angel, every saint and every soul!
1332. Every divine word is truly... divine creation of a world of life, vocation of souls, formation of saints, revelations of heavens, redemption of worlds, sanctification of peoples, generations of marvels of natural and supernatural life worthy of the Lord God.
1333. Only God comprehends them comprehensively and extensively, in all their height and depth, greatness and wealth, because only God is the Word-God, only God is God the Father of God-Son, only God is the Spirit-God of the Father and of the Son.
1334. O souls, let us all join together to the divine delights in the Word-Son incarnate! Let us honor him above all listening and learning, practicing and teaching, preaching and living his words revealed to us and reaching us through various ways from the holy chair of Peter.
1335. "Listen to him"⁸ God the Father, tells us; "do all he tells you to do," tells us the Virgin Mother"⁹ "Magdalene has chosen

⁸ Mt 17, 5; Mk 9, 7 and Lk 9, 35.

⁹ Jn 2, 5.

the better part, dedicating herself to listening to me"¹⁰ says the divine Word! Every wise soul should answer: "I will be listening to all you will tell me within".

1336. I will be listening to every divine word, meditating on it in my heart, in honor, union and imitation of the immaculate heart of Mary that kept all the words of the Son meditating upon them with love. I too, I too want to embrace this most important exercise of love for Jesus, the veneration for his word.
1337. Veneration of sacred study, contemplative meditation, exhorting teaching, evangelical preaching, above all upon the divine direct words¹¹ contained in sacred scripture from "Let there be light"¹² to "amen, I come soon"¹³ of Revelation, pausing more on those contained in the four gospels.
1338. I want to see in every word a revelation of the divine love, a vocation and attraction of divine love, a communion with the sanctity of divine love, an apostolic-seraphic formation

¹⁰ Cf. Lk 10, 42. Fr. Justin here identifies Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus as the *Magdalene*, according to the interpretation of Gregory the Great and followed for many centuries.

¹¹ Fr. Justin had a special veneration for the "direct Words of God" both of the Old and New Testament. He reported them all in the Devotional (the book of prayer of the Vocationists) spread for the twelve months of the year, to be used for the daily meditation. In a meditation preached at the Vocationary, at the beginning of 1955, Fr. Justin told us that in 1936 he had the inspiration to print a bible with all the direct words of God, marked in red; he said that he postponed the implementation of this inspiration on account of his ill health, and that when he went to the bookstore to buy some books to be given as Christmas presents, he found a brand new edition of the Bible "exactly as I had envisioned it", adding a painful comment: "God had inspired me to do it, I did not do it and he passed the same inspiration to someone else who accepted and implemented it!"

¹² Gn 1, 3.

¹³ Rv 22, 20.

opening the soul to accept it fully, without losing a crumb of this divine banquet of the word!

1339. Go, go my little missionaries, as good servants of the gospel to call, beseech, compel, drag and carry every soul to this banquet of the divine words, which alone can properly prepare the banquet of the host and get us ready to the eternal nuptial banquet of divine union.
1340. Spread and cultivate in the souls the devotion to the divine direct words, the devotion to the divine words to the extreme, whereby every divine word becomes like an immaculate conception of every created intelligence, and through it, the divine Word becomes incarnate again and lives in every soul... in the life of every human soul.
1341. The mission of the Word from the Father to humankind, to every soul, and the invisible, innumerable missions of the divine Word from the Father to each soul... may they obtain their supreme goal of sanctification: to form in every soul a son of God, in imitation, union and honor of Jesus Christ.
1342. Simultaneously unite every soul, elevate every soul to this supreme level of union with God the Father in his loving delight for the Son, and in a quasi-motherly relation with Jesus, in imitation, union and honor of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God.
1343. Cooperate and minister to the life of Jesus in the souls, to the life of the souls in Jesus through the divine word transmitted and taught, preached and dispensed as food of eternal life to all souls, for the conversion and perfection, sanctification and deification of which they are capable.
1344. So, the devotion to the divine words climaxes in the eternal generation of the Word in the Father and from the Father, to the visible and invisible divine mission of the Word from the Father to humankind, in the Church, in holy deeds, in the souls, in the Eucharist, in the grace and in the inspirations.
1345. Endeavor, my little missionaries and servants, to fill Zion

and the world with divine ineffable words, from every teaching post and book, using all means of propaganda and publicity, comment and apostolate, so that everything, even externally and materially, may resound and echo the divine words.

1346. Only thus the world will be filled with the flowing and vivifying science of the Lord and of divine glory, that is, the Word of the Father, of the triumph of the divine love, that is, the Spirit... Spirit that comes only through the divine declaration of the Word of the Father, because he proceeds and receives all from the Father and from the Son.
1347. O my Lord! Grant that may happen and be realized in every soul, dedicated to reading, listening, meditating or preaching the divine word, what happened while St. Peter was talking to the gentiles of good will around the centurion Cornelius of the Italian legion in Caesarea, in the Acts of the Apostles¹⁴.
1348. While St. Peter was preaching the divine word to those souls so well disposed, so desirous of listening and finding in it the salvation, the Holy Spirit descended visibly upon them, effusing upon them the gifts and charisms, starting in them his own work, the divine formation on the model of Jesus.
1349. The divine formation of Jesus in each one of them. So we enter in the circulation of the divine action, of the divine life, of the divine union... while the Father initially forwards his Word in the divine announcement, which enlightens us with the light of faith, and will always lighten up when he finds it already sprung.
1350. When the divine word is well received follows in the soul a new coming of the Holy Spirit; starts and perfectly develops the formation of Jesus... and Jesus, living again in the

¹⁴ Cf. Ac 10, 14.

soul, leads her through all the acts and states of his mysteries in the assumed humanity... up to partial ascensions to the Father.

1351. From the Father, the soul receives and draws, in a new way and more abundant measure, the good of the divine Word his Son, in the divine words, so on and on in the marvelous procession and perennial circulation of divine life, ascending as a spiral up to eternal life. O devotion to the divine words and missions be blessed!
1352. The pious exercise of the three hours of the agony of our Lord, sanctified and solemnized by preaching and compassionate meditation on the seven last words,¹⁵ spread a lot of light on the inspiration of the devotion to the divine words and mission, be blessed!
1353. Why shouldn't we extend to every direct word of the Lord all the devotional study and all the religious veneration given to the seven words uttered from the teaching post of the cross? All the others are equally worthy of all the devotional study, religious veneration, ascetical teaching and mystical enjoyment!
1354. The study of the dogmas, through their revealed formulas and those established by the infallible magisterium of Peter, the Vicar of Jesus, gave a glimpse of so many universes and heavens of new worlds, not so much to be discovered but rather be conquered, in the field of the Christian-catholic asceticism and mysticism.
1355. Oh, if we would study and teach every direct and indirect, implicit or explicit divine word, with the in depth study,

¹⁵ It was customary to do a devotional exercise called "Prayers on the Seven Last Words (G. Russolillo, *Devozionale Ordinario*, Libreria Editrice Vocazionista, Napoli 1949, p.349-52). Traditionally the Seven last Words of Jesus on the Cross were the theme of the great sermon of the three hours of agony preached on Good Friday.

deepening, evisceration and analysis , synthesis and applications of all possible meanings, as we do when we want to prove a dogmatic text!

1356. Oh, let us go my little missionary servants of the gospel, let us undertake this study and teaching, this meditation and preaching, this prayer and application of each and all direct and indirect, implicit and explicit, divine words and we shall have the integral, perfect and total asceticism and mysticism.
1357. Let us dig endless furrows in this desert, stony, desolate soil that turns wild over and over again, with each new generation and each relapse and slacking of souls. Let us open furrows and throw the seeds of God's word! So we want the Father, Lord and Master of the vineyard!
1358. "The word that goes from my mouth, will not return to me unfulfilled"¹⁶ says the Lord! I see sprouting, out of those furrows, in virtue of those seeds, a stem that keeps rising up and up! Every created stem reaches its height, produces a flower at its top, in the end offers its fruit and rests...
1359. ... That stem keeps growing and growing, all around offers its flowers and fruits, in a perennial spring and summer; but its supreme top rises over and over again like rays of light, from germs of light (because the Word is the uncreated light and every external word is a created world of light).
1360. The stem keeps growing higher and higher and offers its supreme flower to God the Father and lays the supreme fruit of the Holy Spirit and of Mary and the Catholic Church, in the bosom of the Father. Thus and only thus for all eternity it returns to the Father his word, just like Jesus, incarnate Word, ascends to the Father.
1361. Digging these furrows is not sufficient to reach that goal! Sowing the divine seeds is not enough to reach that goal. It

¹⁶ Is. 55, 11a.

is necessary to water them continuously, because the soil is the desert, rocky and arid... There is no lymph and water of life worthy of that divine seed but the blood of Jesus!

1362. Through the divine words we go to the saving and fertilizing blood that sprinkles divine life in the souls. In the blood... we find the devotion to the suffering Jesus, crucified and agonizing, dead and pierced at the side and at the heart... also after his death in order to give all his blood!
1363. I greet you from faraway in yourselves and nearby in your followers, O saints of the cross and passion, of the death and blood of Jesus; O preachers and evangelists of the divine sacrifice, of the price of our redemption; O missionaries of the sacrament of reconciliation and ministers of the fruit of salvation.
1364. O Alphonsus Liguori, Gaspar Del Bufalo, O Paul of the Cross, O Francis of Assisi! O, all you holy martyrs and stigmatized, images united also sensibly with Jesus Crucified... I greet and bless you in the name of all souls, of all the Church on earth and in purgatory.
1365. I greet you and bless you, in the name and for the Blessed Trinity, with the entire Church of heaven, of the saints and of the angels, of the heart of Mary and Jesus, because you have immersed yourselves so deeply in the passion of Jesus and have worked so zealously to make it known to the souls enabling them to correspond to the divine love.
1366. Missionaries that show, rise up and wield the divine crucified ... like angels sent to bring the souls in the earthly paradise of the Lord's passion and death in the new world (Oh, always new and increasingly high and holy in the human eyes) the mystery of the divine incarnation.
1367. They gather around this divine symbol the souls spread throughout all the roads of the exile, after the expulsion from the terrestrial paradise; the souls scared and dismayed by interior remorse, by the terrors of the flaming swords of the angels of justice... chained in the serpent's coils.

1368. By virtue of the crucifix they unfasten and free, pacify and attract the souls... and introduce them into the paradise that is kept open by the sacred wounds; along the rivers of vivid purple of the divine blood they lead them to the tree of life, the cross, to seize the fruit of life, Jesus!
1369. O terrestrial paradise of the sorrowful mysteries, mysterious physical and moral pains of the passionate and crucified humanity of Jesus from the first instant of the incarnation, because always in state of victim and in act of sacrifice, under the action of the eternal priest, love.
1370. O aerial paradise of perennial effusions of blood forming a new flood of salvation, emanating from the springs of divine love gushing with eternal life, with the vehemence of the Holy Spirit, on the perpetual reality of the sacred wounds open and flowing even in the glorious state... at the tight hand of the Father.
1371. O celestial paradise of the ineffable divine attractions, revealed to us as infallibly triumphant gathering in the divine arms, in the divine heart, all the souls and the whole world after the exaltation of the cross! "When I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all people to myself¹⁷".
1372. What can you ever do, O my children, youths and lords to take the souls to the true, high and profound devotion to the passion? Only compassion is the true, high and profound devotion to the passion. Only Mary, the Sorrowful Mother, the desolate, the pierced by the seven swords... is the devotee of the crucifix.
1373. Yes, keep repeating the story of Jesus, the trial, the tremendous passion, after having studied, meditated on each detail, let it vibrate all the strings of the human sentiment and focusing especially on the perpetual actuality of the divine sacrifice.

¹⁷ Jn 12, 32.

1374. The state of sacrifice in which Jesus is present among us in the mystery of the Eucharist reveals also that the divine passion is not only an historical reality of the past, but under another aspect, is something happening in our present.
1375. Jesus is the center of history and of mankind. That center is equally present to every point of the circumference, when from it we go directly to center. Likewise from every point of space and from every moment of time we reach directly to Jesus.
1376. We reach him through a ray, which is a dart that wounds him with love or pain, depending on whether it is a virtuous or mischievous act! Even an act that seems indifferent towards Jesus hurts him ... for it is a fault being indifferent towards Jesus ... even in a single act.
1377. So, he is always *vulneratum nostrum* – our wounded one! We are no strangers to his suffering! As he suffers for us, he is more united to us than any mother and son, friend and spouse. He suffers ...a perpetual passion.
1378. He suffers things mysteriously painful under every aspect, so painful that only God-made-man is capable of suffering them: on account of the pains in themselves, and of the persons that cause them, on account of the intensity with which he suffers them, on account of the nature and person that suffers and of the love with which he suffers.
1379. O demonstration and major revelation of the divinity of Jesus that the faithful souls receive from the mystery of pain more than from the teachings and miracles of Jesus! Envisioning the passion, the souls remain more ardently permeated of adoration, contemplation and of heaven!
1380. Yes, keep narrating, my little missionaries, the story, the trial, the death of the Lord; you may succeed in indicating a door of the Eden, and maybe even to open and introduce souls in it... many more, better qualified and much needed!
1381. Only the Holy Spirit, through whom Jesus offered and of-

fers himself in perpetuity in the sacrifice of his passion, can operate in the souls, in the hearts, in the perfect Christian-religious life, the perfect compassion for Jesus crucified!

1382. Every compassion, even only natural, human and sensible, is always good towards Jesus; it is always much better than that diabolic prodigy, that is the indifference, coldness and callousness, carelessness, and the strangeness of souls towards Jesus crucified.
1383. ... True, high and profound compassion is the one that operates in the loving creature, out of love, the same pains, and prompts the one who loves to love them; not so much on account of heartfelt virtue of justice that makes that soul feel more deserving of the pains due to sin.
1384. Not so much for the desire of perfection that leads to the imitation of Jesus crucified, but for the potency of love; more specifically, not for the force of the love that wants to reciprocate what the beloved has given and done for the lover, but only on account of the pure power of the pure love.
1385. The pure dynamism of pure love assimilates the lovers in everything: in the physical and in the moral, in mind and heart, in the interior and exterior, in the goal and in motivations, in works and circumstances, in intentions and dispositions. The pure assimilating power of the triumphing pure love!
1386. Only the saints gifted with stigmata, through the pure assimilating power of the triumphing pure love, I see the perfect compassion of the soul to the passion of Jesus. This stigmatization happens also in the soul of the simple devout, initially imperfectly and yet strongly.
1387. It happens strongly, and maybe very intensely, in the crucifixion of the flesh and its concupiscence with the darts of the holy fear of God, of Christian penance and evangelical watchfulness... always as a gift of the Holy Spirit: the blessed fear of the Lord!

1388. It happens in the heart, vividly and sweetly, with the dart of holy piety, gift of the Holy Spirit of love, with which it wounds and pierces, with supernatural tenderness, the souls that already on the way of purification and somehow spiritualized, winners at least over the zest of selfishness.
1389. It happens, vividly and most highly, with the darts of holy intellect of the Spirit of love with which he wounds and pierces orders, lower casings, the acquired knowledge, to lighten us with flashes of light from above, at times suddenly (or always?).
1390. It happens very vividly and perfectly, constantly and ascensionally throughout the entire supernatural life of the soul entirely faithful, devout and pious; with the unique and sevenfold dart of the Spirit of love, unique of wisdom, and sevenfold of all the other gifts eminently comprised in it.
1391. With it the soul is held in affectionate friendship with Jesus, hugs him tenderly, adheres to him faithfully, in him starts to pass and transform herself in flavors and first fruits at first fleeting and then frequent, nuptial union ... so she can say in truth, "My Jesus!"
1392. As the soul finds Jesus, above all, present in the Eucharist, where he offers himself to the Trinity as a sacrifice and to the souls as sacrament, where he is, above all, incarnate and crucified Word... in a like manner the soul is totally transported to compassion, abnegation and immolations, spiritual stigmatization and communion with God and neighbor.
1393. Likewise, the devotion to Jesus in his sorrowful mysteries prevails, supervises and always predominates. Takes precedence over all other devotions, oversees all directions, predominates over all attractions, fusing together the sacred heart, the precious blood, the most holy sacrament... to form "My Jesus".
1394. From this unique-triple devotion (to the heart, the blood and the host), in so many ways marked by unity and trinity (the heart, principle and font, reveals to me God the Father

in Jesus, the blood, tremendous voice, reminds me of the Word; the host, sublime communication, reminds me of the Spirit of love in Jesus) ...

1395. From this unique-triple devotion (to the heart, the blood and the host), the soul is suavely guided to delight, feed and raise herself to the other flowerbeds of the garden of the most holy Trinity in the Holy Catholic Church...all blossomed from the heart of Jesus...nurtured by the blood of Jesus...
1396. All living in Jesus-Host, and from them all brought back to Jesus... to deepen the great devotion to Jesus, in the knowledge of the mystery of Jesus, in treasuring the divine price of the blood, in the correspondence to the sacred heart, in the communion with the divine sacrament, and through it, to the divine union with the most holy Trinity.
1397. Cultivate, expressly, all these spiritual flowerbeds in every parish, in every community, in every zone, O little servants and missionaries of true spirituality; cultivate them within the climate and season of the liturgical cycles, of devotional months, of my nine Lents and seven ascetical Pentecost.¹⁸
1398. Introduce the souls to them keeping in mind their particular needs and spiritual tastes, and allow everyone to remain in

¹⁸ Blessed Justin asks us the sanctify the precious gift of time considering it under different aspects, and so we have: Natural-Astronomical Year, Personal-Familial Year, Liturgical-Ecclesiastical Year, Ascetical-Common Year, Mystical-Ordinary Year, The apostolic. Private Year. The ascetical Year is divided in seven Pentecosts (seven periods of fifty days) and nine Lents (nine periods of forty days), indicating that basically our year is a continuous Pentecost and a continuous Lent. (See: G. Russolillo, *Ascension*, Vocazionist Editions, Newark, 1947, p. 27-77). Later on with the composition of the Devotional, Fr. Justin tried to simplify things with the introduction of the devotional months and considering a particular aspect of Lent and Pentecost every month (See: G. Russolillo, *Devozionale*, Editrice Vocazionista, Pozzuoli 1949).

them comfortably, without ever forcing them to pass from one devotion to another, unless the Holy Spirit leads them with his intimate voices and senses.

1399. You must get them used and compel ... if they were not very docile, generous and faithful; you must force them and get them used to see Jesus in everything and everywhere! The fruit of his blood, the throb of his heart, the life communicated in the host, in everything and everywhere "My Jesus" of all.
1400. O beautiful flowerbeds on Marian devotions, understood and enjoyed, practiced and lived, propagated and cultivated in the souls! Devotion to the Immaculate, to the consecrated, to the deified Mary, in every state, always ascensionally! Devotion to the Name of Mary, to the heart of Mary, to the words of Mary!
1401. Devotion to baby Mary, Mary young girl, Mary adolescent! Mary spouse, Mary of the Annunciation, Mary Desolate, Mary of Consolation, Mary of the Assumption and Mary Crowned. Mary of the Visitation and of exile, of the compassion and transit, of Sorrows and Joys, Mary searching and finding Jesus!
1402. Devotion to Mary Virgin and Mother, with Jesus in Nazareth and following Jesus in the public life, center of the pious women and of the apostles, queen and teacher of the saints and angels, mediatrix of all graces, foundress of all works, help of all souls, Mother of the Church.
1403. Devotion to Mary, Our Lady of good studies, of good counsel, of the spiritual ascension to the holy mountains of the Lord. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, of the most precious blood of Jesus, of the most holy Sacrament, of the divine vocations, of the divine consecration, of the divine union.
1404. O beautiful flowerbeds and panoramas of religious piety! O solar worlds, O heavens of heavens, O city of stars of catholic devotion! The centuries are not long enough to go

through you all! Only in eternity we will be inundated of your joys and your fruits of the life of the most precious blood of Jesus!

1405. So also: The devotions to the saints and, above all others, unified with the devotion to the Blessed Mother, the devotion to the virgin spouse of Mary, the virgin father of Jesus, the first minister of paradise, and patron of the universal Church, Saint Joseph.
1406. Devotions to angels and archangels, Principalities and powers, virtues and dominions, thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim, distinguishing in them, the princes, the last and the in-between and the ones who care the most for us... for the mysterious predilections and sympathy radiating from the divine love.
1407. Above all: The angels of the souls and human communities, the guardian angel and the angel consoler of Jesus, the other angels servants of Jesus, the angels singers of Jesus, the seven angelic princes standing by the throne of the adorable Trinity and the angels of the Holy Family.
1408. ... The guardian angels of those who precipitated into damnation, the guardian angels of the saints and of the works from which we benefited the most. Likewise: The devotions to the Patriarchs and prophets, apostles and evangelists, the holy fathers and missionaries, the holy doctors and ecclesiastical writers...
1409. To the saints penitent and martyrs, founders and propagators of institutes and religious works, virgins and confessors, holy pontiffs and priests, princes and superiors, patrons and proprietors general and particular: all together and each one in particular... especially the more representative of each category.
1410. Every devotion, properly understood and practiced, nurtures and elevates christian piety. Every saint that is honored loves, keeps loving and communicates his good. His

good is the pure love of the Lord, and from this the pious is led to see and honor Jesus in everything and in everyone and to be more united with him.

1411. Above all, the Virgin Mary brings him closer to Jesus! Everyone can experience her in each devotion as mother of divine love, that is, of Jesus... mother of the pure love for Jesus. The "pious" experiences the benefit of the saints and of Mary by way of emulation of their holiness.
1412. Emulation of higher charismas, with desires, at times, immense and burning, true holy torment for great souls, for pure hearts, who are insensibly... violently and gradually brought to establish themselves in a truly superior practice of Christianity.
1413. In the higher light of the heavens of devotions, in the greater power of the saints and of the mother, in the stimulus and attraction of holiness... they pass to another heaven, they find themselves living in another spirit, they see shining before them a brighter ideal of holy life of love for the Blessed Trinity.

CHAPTER 16

The Ascetic

This fragment of chapter 16 starts with a very appropriate quotation of the French essayist Leon Bloy. The first part of "Let us Make Man" (verse 1712) ends with the queen person saying to her winged child, "sense": "Be always a little ascetic. I order it to you, because the divine love that wants to live also in human nature has made of you the matter of the sacrifice, and he wants to find it always in you. There is no other glory greater than that in you and for you, but in love¹".

With the theme of "the Ascetic" abruptly and incomplete ends this work; in the manuscript follow 35 pages in blank and not numbered! The last date marked in this work is December 10, 1944, soon after Fr. Justin went from Mercato Cilento back to Pianura of Naples. Undoubtedly the abrupt end is due to the author's return to his Mother House and his parish.

In this last fragment Blessed Justin specifies that: "There is but one joy, to become a saint" and that "holiness consists in being ever more of God, eternally, infinitely, immensely more". The journey of "the ascetic" consists in avoiding the theoretical and practical error of placing some limits to all this! He ends saying that the essence of the Catholic religion is "perpetual ascension". The ascetic is the one who consecrates himself to eliminate every impediment to the ascensional divine love.

1414. "There is but one sadness: not to be saints" says so beautifully that convert². While we are still on this earth (only for this the Lord keeps us still here) until the last moment is better to say: "There is but one joy, to become saints".

¹ Russolillo, *Let us Make Man*, vol. III part 1, Vocationist Editions, Florham Park 2016, p. 308.

² Léon Bloy (July 11, 1846 – November 3, 1917), was a French novelist, essayist, pamphleteer, and poet.

1415. Then we enter totally in the communion of the saints; then we receive in its fullness the treasure of the merits of the saints; only then, the heroisms of the saints known and foreseen in their lives and works will triumph in us: when the emulation becomes a burning flame.
1416. A burning flame which tends to the heaven of the Holy of holies, intending to go beyond every created sanctity in order to arrive at the uncreated holiness, through our mediator, Jesus Christ, the incarnate God, among the seraphic songs adoring holiness.
1417. "Holy, holy, holy, endless and unlimited, the Lord God one and triune." He wills the soul to be a saint in his own image and likeness, and then holier, eternally holier, endlessly more saint... that is, more of God in love.
1418. Eternally more his, infinitely more his, immensely, immutably more his, according to the exigency of his love, of the love that he is, because holiness consists in being totally of God, the very essence and the essential exigency of love.
1419. "The ascetic" is the one who applies and consecrates himself entirely to eliminate every impediment to the triumph of divine love, to break any casing, to slash any limitation in order to fully realize his own self in states and acts of pure love.
1420. In states and acts of pure love ever more high and profound, ever more intense and direct, ever more explicit and synthetic, ever more universal and more perfect... without ever saying "enough", with no other exemplar but Jesus, no other aim but God alone!
1421. When we aim at forms of high perfection... even highest, we must understand that ultimately they are only intermediary steps through which we ascend to ever higher forms, we think of them as a plateau where to pause and rest...
1422. It would be an error for us to aim at types of perfection in this or that saint, even in the saint founders of religious institutes, in the observance of approved rules, even in the

most charismatic saints that ever existed without thinking that we must go beyond to reach Jesus and the Blessed Trinity.

1423. In some (or many?) it is an error, first practical and later theoretical about the nature of the spiritual ascension, that is asceticism, and influences from the first steps and progresses... a limited and narrow-minded spirit that falsifies the whole inner life.
1424. He who understands that supernatural life is divine life in us and understands that every life, as every love, never says enough to its development, to flourish and fructify, because it would be his death, this one understands Christian asceticism.
1425. He who lives this truth of ascension, lives in divine life, lives in charity, lives the reality and truth that life and love are one thing, living and tri-personal love-God, that does not cease to communicate himself through grace, and to unite himself in grace to the one who corresponds.
1426. The very essence of Catholic Religion is this relation of love with the most high God Trinity; if it is relation, it is elevation and rapture of love; if it is relation with the most High God, it must be endless, unlimited, perpetual ascension³.

³ Here ends the manuscript, evidently incomplete. It is clear that he intended to continue the work to complete the levels of the spiritual ascension. We continue the book with an appendix to complete the nine level of the ascension.

APPENDIX

The Levels of Spiritual Ascension

*The manuscript of **Let Us Make Man** remains abruptly interrupted and incomplete at the beginning of the fourth level of the ascension: "The Ascetic". At the end of the manuscript remain thirty-five blank pages; this fact may indicate the intention of the author to continue, and excludes the possibility of a continuation on a new notebook.*

This interruption may help us to meditate on the reality that the work of "faciamus hominem - Let us make man" will never be totally completed. Our ascetical work of continuously perfecting that "image and likeness of God", or our spiritual ascension, has a starting point but no set point of arrival.

Accompanying us on our ascension, Blessed Justin keeps reminding us that we are "limited and successive" and to prevent our discouragement he points out that the progress must be somehow measurable or quantified; the nine levels (called also steps and heavens) of the spiritual ascension help us to be aware of where we stand on this ladder, how far we have advanced and how far we still have to go.

*In order not to deprive completely the lector of a guide on this spiritual ascension, we deem it convenient to add to **Let Us Make Man**, the nine levels of the ascension as presented by Blessed Justin in the booklet "Società dell'Unione Divine - Society of Divine Union (S.U.D.)", pages 89-106. This booklet was written as a spiritual guide for those who consecrate themselves to the Lord living in the world, for the members of our secular institute, the oblates, affiliated, associated, groups of prayer and friends who want to live the Vocationist spirituality and that form the large Vocationist family.*

The following articles, written for lay people are more simple and direct than the ones found in this book. It seems that Fr. Justin is really making an extraordinary effort to come down from the high elevations, contemplations and mysticism of the previous pages. Let us follow Blessed Justin so that he may lead and bring us "to an always higher moral-spiritual level in the divine work of universal sanctification".

Faithful

1427. We must absolutely avoid giving to any sphere, member or work of the Society of Divine Union any image or sense of static; to the contrary, we must infuse, nurture and exercise in each sphere the development of life, of which the Lord has given us the spirit, with all the exigencies of activities, progress and production of fruits of penance and apostolate.
1428. This life, on account of its essential element of human freedom, necessary to the relationship of love, in which the Blessed Trinity has placed us, does not always follow the way that is Jesus, with the same enthusiasm and direction, with the same means in each individual person, however it has a common basis in the nature of love, in the gospel, in the Church, not to mention other elements.
1429. It is possible and helpful to indicate the main levels of the ascension of every soul to the divine union with Jesus, for Jesus and in Jesus, unique mediator between the divinity and humanity, as a guide to all our friends of God, religious of God, friends of God, because they all must go through them, and always help and induce many souls to go through them.
1430. The first level is that of the simple faithful in the state of grace. At this level, the living son of the one, holy and apostolic Church of our Lord Jesus must, first of all, be attracted and be willing to carry the whole world in general with prayer. The whole world, soul by soul must be brought to the divine union with the apostolate of the word of God in all its forms. The spiritual apostolate, the progress and production must begin at this first level if we do not want to inflict death penalty to the grace and to the soul of the Church in the non-practicing faithful.
1431. The faithful must be guided to take interest and be permeated of the supernatural order and world, of the life of gra-

ce and glory, and since ordinarily he is not sensible to the love of God, he must be helped, with the fear of the eternal sanctions, to hate sin and to detach himself from the world, to think of his salvation and to accumulate capitals for eternity, and so be determined never to lose grace and apply himself to grow in grace.

1432. He must be fervently guided to acquire the virtuous habits of morning, noon and evening prayer; to think often of the last things; to religious instructions in forms and levels appropriate to his needs, always continuous and progressive; objects of his devotions are the skull and crossbones, his shield the holy medal, his book the crucifix, and his weapon the holy rosary, all things that will be with him forever, but that must be practiced always more and better.
1433. The ordinary Christian is called and must be "faithful", because he lives in the world of faith, according to the rule of faith, for the purpose of faith and is motivated by faith. He is called and must be faithful to all that concerns love, because he starts to know and love his soul and all souls for the love of God. Concretely the characteristic of this first level of the ascension is the fidelity to the divine commandments.
1434. His love is more effective than affective and in its initial stage is interested and calculating; it is a love of creature, of dependent, of faithful servant, but must be quickly elevated to be pure love of God and for God alone; everyone who has received the infusion of the theological virtues is capable of this. The Love received does not tolerate measure, nor fair means, skips steps and soars to the heights.
1435. If by chance the faithful has not been confirmed yet, he should quickly be led to the sacrament of Confirmation – sacrament of perfection – whose supernatural energies, if well corresponded and exercised, will soon bring him to superior spiritual levels through the victorious fight against the three enemies, world, devil and flesh, and the consequent spiritualization in which consists Christian asceticism.

1436. The faithful must be brotherly encouraged and assisted in the fight against human respect, and in his opposition to the environment always saturated with the spirit of the world; very patiently he must be enlightened in his multiple practical doubts, instructed in his multiple mental errors and forgiven in his multiple failures. The best way to help the faithful is to make him fall in love with the higher levels of christian life and propel him to where the interior work of grace leads him.

Devout

1437. Divine grace, at every level of the ascension, offers the gifts of the Holy Spirit, without which there is no sanctification. The Holy Spirit works at each level especially as gift of counsel; in the first three levels to the counsel are also added the fear and fortitude, to the following three levels are added piety and science, and to the last three, intellect and wisdom; in the last three levels all the gifts of the Holy Spirit are in full efficiency.

1438. Likewise, in the soul that truly ascends to divine union, through the levels of the spiritual ascension, we notice the productivity of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, modest, continence and chastity in the first three levels; of meekness, longanimity and fidelity in the following three levels; of patience, benignity and goodness in the last three levels, not exclusively but primarily, at first as first fruits, and then more frequently, abundantly. At every level, progressively are present and active also the fruits of the Holy Spirit of charity, joy and peace.

1439. The passage from one level to another, ordinarily, is not instantaneous, but insensibly progressive as every development of life. It must not be forced, because in the supernatural order, more than elsewhere, life consists in love,

and everything must be done out of love. Only in the separation from sin, even if only venial, and from the near occasions of mortal sin, we need violence even unto death. In everything else good seriously applied is sufficient.

1440. The faithful progressing in goodness arrives at a point where he is dominated by holy fear, even though still imperfect, consequently he wants to avoid the evil of culpability and punishment; he also wants to effectively immunize himself from any fault, and in the best hypothesis wants to assure his continuous growth of grace and merits, and of his beatitude and of God's glory in heaven. This leads the devout to intensify his practice of the sacraments.
1441. The distinctive character of the devout is this intensified practice of the church, of the divine sacrifice, of the sacrament of penance (even without necessary matter) and of the divine Eucharist, received often and then very frequently and daily, so that the Eucharist becomes a heartfelt need for the life of the soul. In all this the devout tends to assure the element of quantity and there is no need to consider it wrong or to blame him of exaggeration.
1442. While encouraging the maximum frequency to the fonts of grace, suavely and strongly, the devout needs to expand and deepen his religious instruction about these divine realities and to improve his preparation and thanksgiving, in order to receive always greater benefits, and in everything always tend more to the Lord than to one's personal benefit, and then subordinate this holy interest to the divine pleasure.
1443. Since goodness starts to affirm itself and flows always more abundantly in the devout, he starts to experience strong stimuli of zeal to communicate his good to everyone. At the beginning this zeal is expressed through bitter and dangerous forms for others, and much more often for the self; it comes out in form of criticism of others, murmuring about superiors, outrage over the dependents; these things are

dangerous because they impair charity and justice while apparently seem holy.

1444. The devout should not be immersed in the apostolate of the word, except teaching catechism to the little ones. He should dedicate himself only to the apostolate of prayer, sacrifice, good example: if he is not in the third level, he cannot help those of the first level to ascend to the second level. The one who is not stable in the fourth level cannot help those of the second to climb to the third. The one who is not on the fifth level cannot help those of the third to climb to the fourth, and so on...
1445. The greater danger from which the devout must be safeguarded, if it is not possible to preserve them completely, is human respect before the more or less malevolent oppositions of those who would like to have everything in the most perfect form from the beginning; with their lack of sympathy put the devout under too much stress, and ultimately may cause violent temptations in the form of brutal assaults or exhausting sieges.
1446. At this stage the devout must be initiated to the first form of methodic mental prayer, that is, the daily general and particular examination of conscience, not directly meant as preparation to confession. It should be considered as the particular judgment of Jesus to the soul. The examination of conscience must be divided in two parts: what God has given to the soul, followed by acts of reparation and intercession, and what the soul has given to God, followed by acts of adoration and thanksgiving. The examination of conscience is concluded with self imposed voluntary, generous sanctions.

Pious

1447. The constant and fervent participation in the divine sacrifice and sacrament of the Eucharist quickly fills the soul with

the gift and spirit of piety, divine tenderness of love, at first in a minimum level and afterwards always more intensely for Jesus in the various mysteries of the redemption, made accessible by sacred liturgy, for the blessed Virgin Mary, his and our mother, for his angels and saints, and only later for our neighbor.

1448. The devout starts to be a pious soul, when with his interior outlook, starts to be introduced and penetrates deeply and intimately in the great catholic devotions, to the infancy and adolescence of Jesus, to his hidden and public life, his sorrowful and glorious life, in his Eucharistic life and in the mystical body, to his words and examples, to his dignity and functions, to his name, to his blood and to his heart.
1449. In this immense paradise [of devotions] none should impose upon the pious soul his personal spiritual preferences. Everyone should respect his own attraction, effect of one's grace of prayer. The pious should be preserved from excessive focus only on one aspect of one only mystery. The soul should be trained to consider every devotion from every side and also in relation with the other Christian mysteries, and above all in the reality of the divine presence in the sacramental Eucharistic state.
1450. The pious soul must be safeguarded from the great danger of stopping at the externals of spiritual things, and of giving too much importance to their emotions, which form a misconception of spiritual life. The pious should be led and made to will and cultivate in everything and above everything true friendship with Jesus, in order to please him, and the great practice of christian insurance, that is: Avoid all external and internal superfluities, and especially reflexed acts not strictly necessary.
1451. At this stage the soul can and must be introduced to the second methodic practice of mental prayer, that is, meditated spiritual reading and meditated utterance of vocal prayers. Both of them are done purposely, at a set time and place,

as a spiritual lesson imparted by the divine interior teacher God the Holy Spirit, upon the divine words, the examples of Jesus and upon the lives of the saints. This second practice of mental prayer has to be added to the first without excluding or substituting it.

1452. This kind of meditation upon spiritual readings and formulas of vocal prayer, generally is a reflection on one's own behavior; this is also a prolonged and deepened examination of conscience; so, one starts to unify the mental exercise of the purgative way (the examination is a particular judgment) with the illuminative way (meditated reading is also interior school of the divine master).
1453. More or less immediate, by sure effect of the purgative and illuminative mental prayer, and of the examples of the Lord and his saints is a clearer and deeper knowledge of one's past faults and present spiritual miseries and a suave ardor, at times also sweetly violent, of self purification and progress in perfection; at this point the pious starts to feel the need of true and proper spiritual direction.
1454. The pious soul, on account of greater light on her faults and her cravings for purification, may become victim of scruples, and only obedience to the spiritual director may preserve or free her; she can likewise become indiscrete and conceited, may give into excesses and deviate in her race for perfection. Only fidelity to a director may guide to true spiritual progresses. On the other hand, without the intention to reach perfection, at all costs, there is no real career of spiritual profession, and therefore there is no real need of spiritual direction.
1455. Enriched by these new elements, the soul has already become what must be called, as in the first centuries of Christianity, "ascetic": A soul in which the ideal and desire of perfection really predominates and stimulates and forces her, not from time to time, but constantly, not at random,

but with well set direction, using the most effective means to achieve it, according to the state of life of the individual.

1456. In this incipient state of ascetic, the soul must be pushed and get used, even though generally she feels the need of it by herself, to segregate herself from the worldly environment with the ordinary practice of reconciliation, and with the extraordinary practice of retreat, more or less frequent, more or less prolonged, according to one's social state. At this stage the soul starts to enjoy the parochial and liturgical life and she becomes capable of apostolate.

Ascetic and Religious

1457. It seems that a serious, if not the worst, danger from which the ascetic must be safeguarded is the predominance of the sentiment in those who are more emotional, and of the obstinacy in one's judgment, in the more volitional. He should be able to use all the treasures of the heart, but should not place it in the position of commander. He should be firm in his resolutions, but attached only to the divine thought and desire. He should concentrate on Jesus all the human affections of which is capable, and attach himself to the divine will with all possible strength of adhesion and cohesion.

1458. The ascetic has a special grace for this. If the faithful, devout and pious can be considered as the crowds that follow Jesus with humility and devotion, the ascetic (and much more the religious and the consecrated) stand out like the seventy-two disciples that adhere more to Jesus and from time to time they are given initial opportunities of ministry, as precursors. Those amongst them who reach the state of perfect, heroes and saints are equivalent to the apostles of Jesus; the last three levels lead us to think of the most intimate and favorite apostles.

1459. Being closer to Jesus, the life of the ascetic becomes full

of the banquet of the word of God, of which he becomes always more avid, and so, the spiritual reading takes more of his time. This facilitates a more prolonged and profound application to discursive prayer, both in the purgative and illuminative stage. From meditated readings of the lives of saints, the ascetic remains inflamed of emulation and drawn to imitation. In the short run, the saints introduce him in intimacy with Jesus.

1460. Since in the first three levels, (faithful, devout and pious) the soul is inclined to consider God as creator and Supreme Lord, in his attributes, and more specifically divine justice, she is strongly affected by the salutary influence of divine sanctions, first as a deterrent from evil, then as incentive to acquire merits and resources for eternity, as it is necessary for anyone who wants to save himself: before anything else, believe that God exists, lives and remunerates.
1461. By detaching herself from the world and elevating herself in God the soul is vested and enraptured by the splendor of his holiness and its first effect is the desire of prayer and penance to the point of becoming a torment. As she progresses she becomes more pure of heart and starts to see God as looking at the face of Jesus; consequently she starts to feel the beginning of personal love of God-Jesus more alive (both in its active and passive form) and is moved to offer herself to him more directly and to follow him with more intense love. Thus the ascetic becomes religious.
1462. In the prayer of the "religious" the purgative part gets shorter and takes less time, but at the same time it becomes more vigorous and profound. The illuminative part is prolonged, inflamed and shines much more, because the teacher is near. Now the unitive way begins to appear and be affirmed, in various ways, generally with affectionate, tender and sweet dialogues, with ardent entertainments on the divine words, listened, read or flashed within, which have struck and often hurt the mind and heart.

1463. The religious has found the way to animate all his occupations with the thought and love of Jesus, more than with the sole intention of his glory, love and will; he channels everything to nourish the love of God and often gets to free himself totally of any other occupation that is not directly religious, that is, willed by the will of God. At this stage he passes amongst the servants of Jesus' family, amongst the servants at the banquet of the Gospel, among the assistants and ministrants of God.
1464. He is distinguished by the observance of the evangelical counsels, embraced and permanently professed, usually, with the bond of holy vows of perfection, both in the world and in religious institutes. With them he reaches a certain fullness of spiritual life and spirituality and he starts to feel not only the duty, but also the need to communicate it to other souls; so he starts holy works that often he cannot complete alone and feels need to work with others.
1465. The main danger for the religious consist in letting himself to be dragged, in the exercise of zeal, by natural activity to conquer souls and believe that it is enough to make much noise, to amass many means, and always to come up with new things; these are all good things but meanwhile he neglects the care of his personal progress in the love of God, directly and intensively cultivated. If this, instead, proceeds normally, he is truly the religious of Jesus.
1466. This personal love of God, directly and intensely cultivated, compels him to offer himself always more to God, in all possible ways, for all possible titles, with every bond in a loving torment that makes him insatiable of giving and offering himself, to be taken and possessed by God, so as to advance joyfully in the pathway of progressive consecrations. This is really the supernatural ascension that in short time leads the religious to be the perfect integral "consecrated" of God.

Consecrated and Perfect

1467. The soul that has generously placed herself on the pathway of consecrations, must be accompanied with a lot of prudence, in such a way as to nourish her fervor and preserve her from the excesses of presumption, discouragement, and, much more, by lightly making commitments with the Lord and then not remaining faithful. This seems to be the greatest danger to which the consecrated is exposed: To take lightly the intentions, promises, or spiritual contracts and even the holy vows.
1468. Every consecration should be like an ever-higher mountain-top to be conquered and exceeded. Every consecration must be the answer to a vocation felt inside, correspondence to an inner attraction and not an external imposition: Every consecration should be like a minor, private, religious profession, always preceded by the novitiate of a long preparation and right training to guarantee fidelity and constancy.
1469. Every consecration must culminate in some practical commitment corresponding to some duties of one's state. Without positive commitments, there is no real consecration, nor true oblation, which is the substance of every consecration. No soul should be allowed to make another consecration, if she has not first given extensive evidence of seriousness, diligence and fervor in keeping the commitments undertaken in previous consecrations.
1470. All this applies not only to private, personal consecrations, but also to the communitarians, of families, associations, parishes, dioceses and nations to which every consecrated shall feel the need of cooperating to the diffusivity of the good that is in him. The certainty of the one hundredfold commitment of love that the Lord places in the sanctification of his consecrated will always be an effective motivation for the apostolate of consecrations.
1471. The spirit of correspondence to love with which the Lord

has given and continues to give himself to his creature is what triumphs in the consecrated when he goes through all the pathway of the consecrations; characteristic of this level is this exigency of love that never says "enough" in giving and offering oneself; he wants to go beyond the observance of the commandments and of the counsels to prove himself always more and always better to his beloved God.

1472. The consecrated must be helped and spurred to detach himself from everything and everybody in order to be able to effectively give to God a heart and a life of which he can fully dispose, because none else can claim any right, and so complete self-abnegation, from all forms of egoism, even from the attachment to one's perfection and supernatural merit, which must always grow but does not need self centered acts, nor excessive concern, which becomes an impediment.
1473. While at the beginning of the way of partial consecrations he was aiming to offer himself to the Lord with commitments of progressing in this or that good deed, in this or that greater perfection, this or that particular imitation of the lives of the saints or the like, now he aims to give all himself in a way and level always more integral and intense, with total consecrations that bring him not so much to new and more religious acts but to an authentic and truly more religious state.
1474. The consecrated therefore must tend to the pure love of God. He should go to the Lord theologically; he should hasten the triumph of God's love in all his being and operating; he should expect (and almost holily pretend) to actually be taken at his word in every perfect consecration, and thus be totally in the dominion of his Spirit. Slowly he begins to experience that it is not he who lives, but is Jesus that lives in him. He elevates all the melody of his life to the level of "the perfect" attributing everything to grace and charity.

1475. "Perfect" because the soul, according to all her freedom, has entirely given herself to the Lord with the intentions of pure love, and in the dispositions of pure love. She does not cease to confirm and re-invigorate herself in this state with the exercise of imitation of the divine master, produced by the assimilating force of love. This direct imitation of Jesus, originating from love, is the characteristic note of the perfect.
1476. In this level one must, above all, avoid the illusion of not needing the exercises of the purgative way, the ascetical precautions to safeguard the heart, the mortifications of the senses, the contrition for spiritual miseries of the past, religious instruction for a progressive spiritual formation, the fight against unnecessary things, abstention from any unnecessary self centered act. To the contrary, all this must be continued and perfected, keeping in mind, however, that everything goes ever more toward a process of simplification and unification.

Hero and Saint

1477. In the "perfect" everything goes always more toward simplification and unification in the goal of divine union with the Lord, known and seen in a brighter and sweeter light, through an idea that becomes constant and triumphant, and that expresses, in a different way from soul to soul, the special level of incorporation in Christ, the special correspondence to divine love, and the special relation with the divine persons, willed in every soul.
1478. Joy follows every perfect act. At this level in which the soul, in the imitation of Jesus, reaches a certain perfection in the observance of the evangelical counsel, starts also to enjoy the evangelical beatitudes, and particularly of the one that corresponds more to the idea of the goal as it predominates

in him. Dilated by this happiness he runs with greater upsurge in the way of the Lord and opens himself much more to the sanctifying action of grace and thus is unknowingly elevated to the level of christian "hero".

1479. At this level it is more evident the action of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The characteristic note of the christian hero is the fidelity, docility and generosity of loving obedience to the divine inspirations flowing in the soul, in proportion of the union with Jesus Christ. Not only the inspirations of the gift of counsel about what must or must not be done moment by moment in order to please the Lord more, but also the consoling and sanctifying inspirations of every other gift.
1480. Especially the inspirations of the one of the seven gifts that corresponds more to the idea of the goal that dominates in him. In this the christian hero can also find the main danger of this level, and that is to think that everything going through his mind is divine inspiration. From this follows the real need of simple and humble obedience to the directives of the public and private representatives of the Church, for the discernment of the spirits, of which the hero cannot be sure in his own case.
1481. Fidelity, docility and generosity of loving obedience to the divine inspiration enable the Christian hero to live and operate at the height of virtues, sublimity of merits and great productiveness of apostolate. With or without specific vow the Christian hero does in everything what is more perfect, what pleases God the most, following the motions of his Holy Spirit. The Lord finds his delight in him and celebrates the triumph of his love.
1482. On this path the Christian hero very soon becomes a true saint of God. His obedience to the inspirations, his fidelity to the grace and his correspondence to the love of God make all his life a garden of God in which the Holy Spirit produces his twelve fruits; he becomes the royal palace of

God in which the Trinity is pleased to dwell; he becomes a heaven from which the Lord illumines so many souls and attracts them to his heart.

1483. From the previous levels, at times starting with the “consecrated” and even the “religious” the Lord elevates his servant and friend, to forms of prayer in which the divine presence is felt and enjoyed in various ways, that gradually become more intimate, profound and continuous; now in level of “saint” this divine presence is so triumphant in the soul that even those who get close to her feel it with effects of edification, consolation and illumination.
1484. The characteristic note of the saint is the full flowering and production of the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. With it we intend the fullness of supernatural life overflowing to the neighbors and to all the Church through his apostolate. We cannot follow any higher the ascension of the “saint” to other levels of spiritual life, because the divine action, not finding in him any obstacle but only perfect correspondance, pulls him, so to speak, into the divine mystery.
1485. He is totally absorbed in the Lord, however, on account of his freedom, there may be always in man the more and the less in the correspondance to the love; he may, or may not be, among the favorites of the divine Trinity; he may, or may not be elevated to a certain mysterious deification. The “saint” remains a human creature, and, only through grace on earth, and through glory in eternity, is granted to be united to his Lord God.
1486. In the interior life, every soul that really wants to correspond to the divine love can climb through all the levels of the ascension. Likewise, an entire community of faithful, as a religious institute, a Christian parish, by the action of grace and the cooperation of the ministers of grace, the priests, and of the servants of grace, the saints, can be guided and brought to an ever higher moral-spiritual level in the divine work of universal sanctification.

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Stampa
Valsele Tipografica srl
83040 materdomini (av)
Tel. 0827 58100
e-mail: valsele@netlab.it

