

More Precious Than Gold

THE trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, will be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. - 1 Peter 1:7
“Gold is purified in the fire. So tribulation purifies and fortifies the soul.” “Gaze well and long on this Heart. It is the Crucible in which the most defiled are purified, and afterwards inflamed with love.”
---Words of Christ to Sister Josefa Menendez

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST promised that he would pour out his spirit upon men and women of all conditions. (Acts 2:17-18). The wisdom of God can do all things, and remaining itself the same, renews all things, and through nations conveys itself into holy souls, making them friends of God and prophets. (Wisdom 7:27). From 1921 till 1923, Christ revealed himself many times to Josefa Menendez, a sister at the convent of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, in Poitiers, France.

On January 25, 1921, He appeared to Sister Josefa during Mass, and she asked Him if she had wounded His Heart. "No," He answered tenderly. "Ponder this word: Gold is purified in the fire. So tribulation purifies and fortifies the soul, and the time of temptation is of great profit both to you and to souls."

The doctrine that He taught her is in conformity with the scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments. The Apostle Peter wrote: "The trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, will be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:7)

The prophet Zechariah declared: "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried." (Zech. 13:9) The prophet Malachi wrote: "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." (Mal. 3:3) The patriarch Job declared, when he was being purified, "He knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job 23:10) The Apostle Paul taught: "If any man build upon this

foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest." (1 Cor. 3:12)

In 1923 Christ appeared to Sister Josefa with his Heart visibly exposed and said to her: "Gaze well and long on this Heart. It is the *Crucible* in which the most defiled are purified, and afterwards inflamed with love." (Crucible: a furnace in which metals are melted, fused, and purified).

During the month of January 1921, a storm of doubt and obsessions had clouded Josefa's soul. She was afraid that she had offended Christ. After he appeared to her on Jan. 25 and told her that gold is purified in the fire, she confided to him her greatest anxiety, the fear that such struggles would end by putting her salvation in peril.

"Who could doubt of your salvation, Josefa, if you have been able to withstand such tribulations? I allow them for two ends," He said, "First, to convince you that when alone you are incapable of anything, (John 15:5), and that the graces I give you spring only from My goodness and the great love I bear you; and secondly, because I want to use your sufferings for the salvation of many souls.

"You will suffer to gain souls, because you are the chosen victim of My Heart, but you will come to no harm, for I will not allow it."

The next day, Jan. 26, he came during adoration, and made her listen to the beating of His Heart. Josefa asked Him never to allow her to cause any sorrow to His Heart. He said, "The soul that loves wants to suffer, for suffering increases love. Love and suffering unite a soul closely to God, and make her one with Him. Have no fear, I am strength itself. When the weight of the Cross seems more than you can bear, have recourse to My Heart."

Then He told her where to look for His Heart: "Do you not know where I am to be found, and in complete security? Accept the guidance you are given. My eyes are ever on you; fix yours on Me, and abandon yourself." (WDL 71) (Way of Divine Love, p. 71)

During Lent of 1921 He appeared many times. On the First Friday of February He appeared to her, and showing her His Heart all aglow, he said, "Every Friday I will make you share in the bitterness of My Heart, and you shall endure the torments of My Passion in a special way. In these days when hell opens to engulf so many, I want you to offer yourself as a victim, so as to save the greatest possible number of souls."

On Feb. 6 Our Lord appeared to her in the chapel. "What compassion I felt for Him," she wrote. His face, His arms, His breast were covered with dust, and blood flowed from His Heart, that was shining.

"It is the want of love that wounds Me thus," He said, "and the contempt of men, who run like madmen to perdition."

"Why then, Lord, is Your Heart so lovely and so glowing, in spite of the sins of men?"

"My Heart is never wounded, unless it be by My chosen souls."

This answer touched Josefa deeply, and unveiled to her the most intimate of His sorrows, and often He was to ask her to share it and console Him. But to-day she was made responsible to God's Justice for the flighty and guilty world. She spent before the Blessed Sacrament which was exposed, every minute of leisure left her by her work, and the thought of so many offenses against the Divine Majesty never left her mind. Jesus, who had laid this weight upon her, came, however, to uphold her courage, and on Feb. 8, in the chapel at dusk, she saw Him as if weighed down by a heavy burden.

"The sins committed are so many and so grave," He said, "that the wrath of My Father would overflow, were it not for the reparation and love of My consecrated brides. How many souls are lost!" (Matthew 7:13) "But one faithful soul can repair and obtain mercy for many ungrateful ones."

On March 16, 1923, Our Lord said to Josefa: "O My chosen followers, can you fathom the pain of My loving Heart when My own chosen ones deny Me? When the world revolts against Me, when so many souls pour scorn upon Me, ill-treat Me, seek My death, and then turning to My own, I find nothing but loneliness and desertion... What sorrow, what bitterness for My heart! (Ps. 69:21)

"To you as to Peter I say: Have you forgotten the proofs of love I have given you, the links that bind you to Me, the oft-repeated promises of fidelity given to Me, and of defending Me even to death itself?"

"If you are weak and afraid of yielding to human respect, have recourse to Me for strength to conquer yourselves. Do not trust yourself, but come to Me confidently, for I will sustain you.

"All of you who live in the world in the midst of perils and occasions of sin, be on your guard against danger, for would Peter have fallen, if resisting courageously, he had not yielded to vain curiosity?"

"All of you who labor in My harvest-field or in My vineyard, if at some time you feel yourselves drawn to work by the attraction of a merely human enjoyment, fly. But if obedience, zeal for My glory or the good of souls, imposes a duty on you, have no fear; I will defend you, and you will pass victoriously through the danger.

"While the soldiers were leading Me to prison, I saw Peter in the

crowd and I looked at him; turning, he looked at Me, and forthwith began to weep bitterly for his sin.

"It is thus that I look on guilty souls - but they? Do they look at Me? Do our eyes meet? Alas, how often I look in vain. That soul does not see Me, for he is blind! I urge him gently, but he does not respond. I call the sinner by name, but receive no answer. I send the trial that might awaken him, and still he slumbers.

"Beloved souls, unless your eyes are turned heavenward, you will in time become like animals that have no reason. Lift up your heads, gaze on your true fatherland which awaits you. Seek your God. You will find that He returns your earnest look, and in His glance are peace and life.

"Here we stop for to-day, Josefa; to-morrow we shall continue. Keep My Cross and comfort Me."



Useless to Seek Comfort in Creatures

ON March 12, 1923, Our Lord requested Josefa: "Kiss the ground. I am not attracted by your merits, but by My love for souls. I have come to reveal to you the feelings of My heart. I had chosen the three disciples that they might share My agony, pray with Me, and by their company afford Me some consolation. What were My feelings to find them asleep? O the pang of loneliness, and to have none to share in My sorrow. How often my Heart suffers this same grief; how often, hoping to find solace among the souls it loves, it finds them slumbering! (Ps. 69:20, Job 16:2)

"It is useless for me to attempt to awaken them, to make them leave themselves and their preoccupations, their vain and fruitless conversations; too often the reply that reaches Me in act if not in words amounts to: I cannot now, I am too busy, too tired, I need repose. Then gently insisting I say to this soul, Come for a little while. Come and pray with Me, I need you, do not be afraid of sacrificing your rest for Me: I will be your reward. And the same answer is repeated. Poor sleeping souls who cannot watch one hour with me.

"Beloved souls, learn from this how useless it is to seek comfort in creatures. How often you will receive only an increase of distress, because they are asleep, and respond neither to your hope nor love.

"I went back to My prayer, and again falling on My face I worshiped My Father and implored His help. I did not call Him 'My God' but 'My Father.' It is when harrowed with pain that you too must call God your Father. Beg for His help, expose your woes, your fears, your longings, and let your cry of anguish remind Him

that you are His child. Tell Him that your body is exhausted, your heart is sorrowful even unto death, that your soul is experiencing what seems a very sweat of blood. Pray with a child's confidence, and expect relief from your Father's Heart. He himself will comfort you, and give you the strength necessary to endure the tribulation or suffering, whether it be your own, or that of the souls confided to your care.

My soul, already shattered and a prey to sadness, had to endure still more deadly grief, for crushed by the weight of the sins of men, and in return for so much suffering and love, I saw only outrages and ingratitude. The Blood now pouring from My body and which I was soon to shed from countless wounds, would be in vain for so many souls; many would be lost; (Mt. 7:13), a still greater number would sin against Me, and myriads would not so much as hear my name. I would pour out my blood for all, offer My merits to each soul, Blood of a God, infinite merits, yet to be in vain for how great a number!

Alas! At this moment I see how many will turn away from Me. Some will not listen to My call. Others will hear, but will not follow Me. Others will respond for a time with a certain amount of generosity to the call of My Heart, but then will gradually grow drowsy and one day will say to Me by their deeds: I have worked enough; I have been faithful to every detail of my duty. I have overcome nature. I am no longer a child; so many privations, so much vigilance are no longer necessary. I need no longer endure this restraint, etc.

Poor soul! is this how you begin to go to sleep? Soon I shall return, and as you are asleep, you will not hear Me. I shall offer you My grace, and you will not receive it. Is there any hope that later on you will be roused? Must one not fear that you will grow weak through lack of food and be unable to throw off your lethargy?

Beloved souls, know that death has stolen upon masses while they were thus sleeping soundly! Where and by what means have they been awakened?

I saw all this and felt it in My Heart. What should I do? Turn back, ask My Father to free Me from this torment? Show him the uselessness of My sacrifice for so many souls? No! Again I surrendered Myself to his holy will and accepted this chalice, to drink it to the dregs. (Ps. 75:8, 116:13, Lk. 22:42)

O souls that I love, I did it to teach you not to faint under your burdens. Never count them as useless, even if you are unable to reckon the result; submit your judgment, and leave the divine will free to do with you whatsoever it wills.

I Myself would neither go back nor escape, and knowing that My enemies would come and seize Me in that very garden, I stayed where I was.

To-morrow we shall continue, Josefa; be on the alert, that I may find you awake if I need you."

A full hour passed in silence in the cell where Josefa, still on her knees, had not stopped writing for a moment. At last she ended her task, and Jesus looked down at her and said: "Kiss My feet and remain in My peace. I am always with you, even when you do not see Me." (WDL 260)

On March 14, He resumed His narrative:

"After having been comforted by an angel sent by My Father, suddenly I saw Judas coming, one of the Twelve, and with him those who were come to take Me prisoner. They carried staves and stones, chains and ropes to seize and bind Me. I arose, and drawing near, I said to them: Whom seek ye? Then Judas, putting his hands upon My shoulders, gave Me a kiss. Ah! Judas, what are you doing? Why do you betray Me with a kiss?

To how many souls cannot I also say: What are you doing? What does this kiss mean?

.....O soul whom I love, why are you enslaved by passion?

Friend! whereto are you come? Judas, do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss, your Master and your Lord! He who loves you and is ready to forgive again, one of My Twelve! who sat at My table and whose feet I have washed?

How often must I speak thus to the souls I love most dearly?

I do not ask you to free yourself, for I know it is not always in your power, but what I do ask of you, is to keep up the struggle against your passions.

What are passing pleasures, if not the thirty pieces of silver for which Judas sold Me, and what did he gain? The loss of his soul.

How many have sold Me and will sell Me, for the low price of a passing pleasure? Alas, poor souls, whom seek ye? Is it I? This Jesus whom once you knew and loved.

Listen to My words: Watch and pray, fight your evil inclinations, and suffer them not to grow into confirmed habits.

The grass in meadowlands has to be mown every year, and in some cases even at every recurring season. The ground needs to be ploughed up, manured, and freed from weeds, and so must work be carried on in souls, and evil tendencies carefully corrected.

Do not imagine that it is always a serious fault that leads to the worst sins. The greatest faults are often the result of neglect of little things: a small satisfaction indulged in, a moment of weakness yielded to, a consent to do a thing in itself lawful but immortalized, a pleasure not sinful, but ill-advised here and now. All these things recur unheeded, and little by little the soul is blinded, grace loses its power, passion increases and finally triumphs.

Alas! how infinitely sorrowful for the Heart of God, whose love is boundless, to see so many insensibly approaching nearer and nearer the abyss.

That will suffice for to-day, Josefa. Do not forget that My Heart is drawn here not by your merits, but by your misery and the compassion I feel for you."

Late next night, Josefa awoke at the call of her Master. He brought her His Cross, as had been agreed, and only said: "Take My Cross and be afraid of nothing. Never will it be beyond your strength to bear, for I have measured and weighed it in the balance of love. Ah! do you know the depth of My love for you and for souls? It is for them that I use you, for little as you are, and worthless, yet I make use of your littleness, by keeping it united to My merits and close to My Heart.

Keep my Cross, and suffer for souls, and for love of Me! (WDL 264)



This nightly endurance of pain, so dear to the Heart of Jesus, continued till dawn. He was thus preparing her for the tryst He had not failed to keep for many days.

No sooner had Josefa reached her cell on the morning of Thursday, 15 March, the Feast of the Five Wounds, than He joined her. Standing before the table in front of which she knelt after having renewed her vows, He said as usual: "Kiss the ground and humble yourself, Josefa."

By this act she each time offered herself once more to do His will.

"I have told you, Josefa, how those who offend Me gravely deliver Me over to My enemies to put Me to death, or rather they make themselves My enemies, and the arms they use against Me are their sins.

But it is not always a question of grave lapses. There are souls and even highly favored ones, that are false to Me by habitual faults, by evil tendencies acquiesced in, concessions to immortalized nature, failings against charity, obedience, silence, etc. And if sin and ingratitude from worldlings are hard for My Heart, how much more grievous when inflicted by those I dearly love. If the kiss of Judas caused Me so much grief, this was because he was one of the Twelve, and from him I expected more love, more consolation,

more sympathy!

O chosen souls, marked out by Me for My home of rest, the garden of My delights, (Song 5:1) from you also I expect more tenderness, consideration and attentions prompted by love, than from others who are not so closely united to Me.

You can be a healing balm to My wounds, you can cleanse My defiled and disfigured countenance; you can help Me to enlighten blind souls who in the darkness of night seize Me to bind Me and lead Me to death.

Leave Me not alone; awake and pray with Me; behold the enemy is at hand.

When the soldiers came forward to seize Me, I said to them: It is I. Such, too, is the word I utter when a soul is about to yield to temptation: It is I. You come to betray Me and to deliver Me up; no matter, come, for I am your Father, and if you consent, then it will not be you that bind Me with chains of sin, but I that shall bind you with chains of love!

Come, it is I who love you, it is I who have poured out all My Blood for you. I pity your weakness, I long to open My arms and clasp you in Love's embrace!

Come, My chosen one, come My priest. I am infinite mercy. Do not fear that I shall punish you. I shall not repulse you, but shall open My heart to you and love you with even greater tenderness. I shall wash away your sins in the Blood of My wounds. (Rev. 1:5). All heaven will rejoice and wonder at your regained beauty, and My Heart will find rest in yours.

Alas, how sick at heart I am, when after words so tender, there still remain some who would bind Me and lead Me to My death.

After he had given Me the traitor's kiss, Judas left the garden, and realizing the gravity of his crime, gave way to despair. Who can measure My sorrow at the sight of My apostle casting himself into hell!

The hour had come, so yielding to the soldiery I meekly gave Myself up as a lamb into their hands. At once they dragged Me to the house of Caiphas, where they heaped insults and mockery on Me, and where one of the soldiers struck Me a blow in the face.

The first buffet: Mark My words, Josefa, do you think it gave Me more pain than the scourges of the flagellation? Doubtless no, but I saw in this first blow the first mortal sin of many souls who until then had lived in My grace. And after the first, how many more, and how great the number of souls who would follow that example and fall into the same danger, perhaps into a like misfortune: death in mortal sin.

To-morrow we shall continue; meanwhile, Josefa, spend the day

in reparation and prayer, that many souls may realize where their dangerous path is leading them." (John 12:35). (WDL 266)

Three Recommendations

ON Oct. 15, 1923, in the silence of the retreat which had been going on, our Lord came to continue giving the Message which had been so painfully interrupted.

"Do not imagine that I am going to speak to you of anything but My Cross. By it I saved the world; by it I will bring the world back to the truths of the Faith and to the Way of Love.

I will manifest My will to you: I saved the world from the Cross, that is to say, through suffering. You know that sin is an infinite offense and needs infinite reparation. That is why I ask you to offer up your sufferings and labors in union with the infinite merits of My Heart. You know that My Heart is yours. Take It, therefore, and repair by It. Instil love and trust into the souls that come in contact with you. Bathe them in love, bathe them in confidence in the goodness and mercy of My Heart. Whenever you can, speak of me and make me known; tell them always not to fear, for I am a God of love.

I recommend three practices very specially to you:

First: The practice of the Holy Hour, because it is one of the ways by which an infinite reparation can be offered up to God the Father, through the mediation of Jesus Christ His Divine Son.

Second: the devotion of the five *Paters* [Our Fathers] in honour of My wounds, since through them the world was saved.

Third: Constant union, or rather daily offering of the merits of My Heart, because by so doing you will give to all your actions an infinite value.

Unceasingly use My Life, My Blood, My Heart. Confide constantly and without any fear in this Heart: this secret is known to few; I want you to know it and to profit by it." (See booklet *A Cup of Cold Water*)

Then after a few definite requests addressed to the Society, Our Lord added: "Rest in My peace. I love you, I guide you, I defend you, so never have any doubts of My loving kindness." (WDL 405).



On Friday, Sept. 8, 1922, towards evening He came "as a poor man hungry and begging" she wrote, thus accurately describing the atmosphere of sad appeal that seemed to envelop His whole person.

"O slake My thirst to be loved by souls, especially to be loved by those I have chosen. That soul is oblivious of My love," He went on,

alluding to the unfaithful priest. "It is his ingratitude that puts Me into this state."

"Then," wrote Josefa, "I begged Him to accept all the little acts done here, the sufferings of the house, and above all the very real desire we all have to comfort and please Him. I asked Him to purify and transform these very little things, and give them some value in His sight.

"I do not look at the act itself, I look at the intention," He replied. "The smallest act, if done out of love, acquires such merit that it gives Me immense consolation. I want only love, I ask for nothing else." (WDL 193)



On June 11, 1923, Our Lord said to Josefa: "How often in the course of the ages have I, in one way or another, made known my love for men: I have shown them how ardently I desire their salvation. I have revealed My Heart to them. This devotion has been as light cast over the whole earth, and to-day it is a powerful means of gaining souls, and so of extending My kingdom.

Now, I want something more, for if I long for love in response to My own, this is not the only return I desire from souls: I want them all to have confidence in My mercy, to expect all from My clemency, and never to doubt My readiness to forgive.

I am God, but a God of love! I am a Father, but a Father full of compassion and never harsh. My Heart is infinitely holy but also infinitely wise, and knowing human frailty and infirmity, stoops to poor sinners with infinite mercy.

I love those who after a first fall come to Me for pardon. I love them still more when they beg pardon for their second sin, and should this happen again, I do not say a million times but a million million times, I still love them and pardon them, and I will wash in My Blood their last as fully as their first sin.

Never shall I weary of repentant sinners, nor cease from hoping for their return, and the greater their distress, the greater My welcome. Does not a father love a sick child with special affection? Are not his care and solicitude greater? So is the tenderness and compassion of My Heart more abundant for sinners than for the just.

This is what I wish all to know. I will teach sinners that the mercy of My Heart is inexhaustible. Let the callous and indifferent know that My Heart is a fire which will enkindle them, (Heb. 12:29; Deut. 4:24) because I love them. To devout and saintly souls I would be the Way, that making great strides in perfection, they may safely reach the harbor of eternal beatitude. It is so easy to trust

completely in My Heart!" June 1923. WDL 353



On Feb. 19, 1923, Our Lord said to Josefa: "It was My intention, also, to show souls that I never refuse grace even to those who are guilty of grave sin; nor do I separate them from the good whom I love with predilection. I keep them all in My Heart, that all may receive the help required by their state of soul.

But how great was My sorrow to see in the person of My unhappy disciple Judas the throng of those who, though often gathered at My feet and washed with My Blood, would yet hasten to their eternal perdition.

I would have these to understand that it is not the fact of being in sin that ought to keep them from Me. They must never think that there is no remedy for them, nor that they have forfeited for ever the love that once was theirs. No, poor souls, the God who has shed all His Blood for you, has no such feelings for you!

Come all of you to Me, and fear not, for I love you all. I will wash you in my blood (Rev. 1:5) and you shall be made whiter than snow. (Ps. 51:7; Is. 1:18) All your offenses will be submerged in the waters in which I Myself shall wash you, nor shall anything whatsoever be able to tear from My Heart Its love for you." (WDL 243)

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The Twelve Great Promises of Our Lord to St. Margaret Mary For Those Devoted to His Sacred Heart

1. I will give them all the graces necessary for their state of life.
2. I will establish peace in their families.
3. I will console them in all their troubles.
4. They shall find in My Heart an assured refuge during life and especially at the hour of death.
5. I will pour abundant blessings on all their undertakings.
6. Sinners shall find in My Heart the source of an infinite ocean of mercy.
7. Tepid souls shall become fervent.
8. Fervent souls shall speedily rise to great perfection.
9. I will bless the homes in which an image of My Heart shall be exposed and honored.
10. I will give to priests the power of touching the most hardened hearts.
11. Those who propagate this devotion shall have their names written in My Heart, never to be effaced.

12. The all-powerful love of My Heart will grant to all those who shall receive Communion on the first Friday of nine consecutive months the grace of final repentance; they shall not die under My displeasure, nor without receiving their Sacraments; My Heart shall be their assured refuge at that last hour.

Holy Hour of Reparation

OUR Lord instructed St. Margaret Mary: "You shall arise between eleven o'clock and the midnight hour, and remain prostrate with Me during the space of an hour, and so appease the divine anger by imploring mercy for sinners. Thus shall you assuage in some sort the bitterness I felt at that time because of the abandonment by My Apostles... for not having been able to watch with Me for the space of one hour." (Mt. 26:40)



Promises of Our Lord for Those Who Practice the Devotion to the Holy Wounds

1. At each word that you pronounce of the Chaplet of the Holy Wounds, I allow a drop of My Blood to fall upon the soul of a sinner.
2. I will grant all that is asked of Me through the invocation of My Holy Wounds. You will obtain everything, because it is through the merit of My Blood, which is of infinite price. With My Wounds and My Divine Heart, everything can be obtained.
3. From My Wounds proceed fruits of sanctity. As gold purified in the crucible becomes more beautiful, so you must put your soul and those of your companions into My sacred Wounds; there they will become perfected as gold in the furnace. You can always purify yourself in My Wounds.
4. The soul who during life has honored the Wounds of our Lord Jesus Christ and has offered them to the Eternal Father for the souls in Purgatory, will be accompanied at the moment of death by the Holy Virgin and the angels, and Our Lord on the Cross, all brilliant in glory, will receive her and crown her.
5. The invocation of the Holy Wounds will obtain an incessant victory for the Church.

More Precious Than Gold: Part 2

In June, 1923, Our Lord said: "I tell you once more that grace will accompany My words and those who make them known. Truth will triumph, and peace will reign over souls and the world, and My kingdom will come!" To be continued