

Following His Footsteps

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Notice: Following His Footsteps (*Siguiendo Sus Huellas*) was published in Spain in 1963. The complete text is available only in Spanish. Some chapters have been translated into English and are available here.

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Chapter 6. The Interior Life, the Kingdom of God, Temple of the Holy Spirit

Perhaps the experience of living has provided you with the knowledge that if it is joyful giving, it is even more joyful giving oneself.

When you truly begin to experience it, you will be more like God, and you will participate more in his paternity. The interior life is nothing else than the development of grace within us. This seed of divinity, of immortality, is nothing else than a participation in his life, a spark of his love, a free gift of himself.

It is given to us so that we may be a kingdom, an interior empire inside ourselves, with a throne, a scepter and a crown, a sanctuary of prayer and adoration, where he wants to be adored in spirit and in truth. Acknowledge your dignity: esteem and be grateful for his wonderful gift.

1. We should be intimately persuaded that just one interior soul, a soul that tends to perfection, gives more glory to God than millions of mediocre religious or Christians. *Dom Godfrey Belorgey*

2. In the saints, the Holy Ghost, together with the Father and with the Son, makes his dwelling in the most interior part of the soul, that is, he lives there, like God in his own temple. The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost come to us in the same degree that we go toward them. They come helping us; we go toward them listening to them. They come enlightening us; we approach with the desire to be enlightened. They come to us to enrich us; we travel to them with desires of receiving. *St. Augustine*

3. Let us realize that within ourselves is a palace of great wealth, all its building is of gold and

precious stones, as befits such a Lord, and you are made to form such a building (as in reality it is, for there is no building of such beauty as a soul that is clean and pure and filled with virtues, and the greater the virtues are, the more resplendent are the precious stones). And in this palace lives this great King, who is pleased to call himself your Father, and is on a throne of great value, which is your heart. *St. Teresa of Jesus*

4. My son, cast all your cares in your God, and try never to forget your interior. Be pure, and detach yourself from all occupations that are not necessary. Lift your thoughts to heaven, and fix them in God, and you will feel more enlightened, and you will know the sovereign Good. *Blessed Henry Suso*

5. "You are my tabernacle. I want to dwell in you," the divine Master confided to a privileged soul. And she answered: "If I were you, I would not choose myself." *Lucia Christina Beauchesne*

6. You should know that very often when I visit souls, I am rejected by them and treated like a stranger. But to those who love me, I not only come with effusion and tenderness, but I even remain in them and dwell in them, and in them I fix my secret dwelling. But no one notices it, except the small number of those who live solitary, removed from the things of the world and with their heart fixed in me, in order to know my desires and to follow them. *Blessed Henry Suso*

Chapter 7. Mortification, Suffering

If Christ was the "man of sorrows" by whose blood we have been washed and regenerated, what does this imply? How will he make us participants of the fruit of his blood, except by his sorrows? What will be the reason of our similarity with him, if not the stigmas and wounds of his passion, marked upon ourselves?... for there are no more secure and authentic signs of our predestination. The apostle tells us, that by many tribulations we should enter the kingdom. And it was announced that Christ would not take any other path: *Nonne oportebat Christum pati?* "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?" (Lk. 24, 26) If you do not attain to the understanding of this, your life will be an unsolved enigma, the life of Christ, madness, the life of God, a myth.

1. He who thinks that he suffers too much, is either lacking in humility, or in patience. *St. Paul of the Cross*

2. He who holds in little esteem bodily mortifications, with the excuse that the interior ones are more perfect, shows very clearly that he has neither interior or exterior mortification. *St. Vincent de Paul*

3. To suffer for God is to have in one's hands the purest and most precious gold, in order to purchase heaven: this is the portal by which one enters the temple of sanctity... if you do not enter this door, you will not attain it. *St. Francis de Sales*

4. To conquer oneself is better than raising the dead. *St. Ignatius of Loyola*

5. With the eyes of faith a faithful soul looks upon trials and sufferings, not as coming from creatures, but coming from the loving hands of the Lord. *St. Paul of the Cross*

6. To write books of piety, to compose the most sublime poetry, is not worth even the least act of

renunciation. *St. Therese of Lisieux*

7. Interior pains and trials are files or crucibles, that penetrate the depths of the soul, in order to remove all stains. *St. Joseph Calasanz*

8. The trials and pains of the spirit are the first steps of that holy and exalted ladder, by which generous and magnanimous souls ascend to God. *St. Paul of the Cross*

9. Who will consider himself so pure, that there is no longer anything to be purged? When you think the pruning has been finished, new branches already start to grow. Therefore you will always find something that needs to be cleansed and purified in yourself. No matter how great is your progress, you are deceived if you think that all your vices are dead. *St. Bernard*

10. Therefore suffer manfully until death, and this will be for me a proof that you love me, and you should not turn back for any creature whatsoever, nor for any tribulation that you suffer; rather you should rejoice in them. *St. Catherine of Siena*

11. Be assured that all restlessness and inquietude comes from the enemy; cast him out with acts of confidence. *St. Paul of the Cross*

12. Cast out all pleasure and satisfaction of the senses; avoid all curiosity of hearing and of the eyes, and do what is repugnant for you, for my love will make it sweet and agreeable. Constantly deny your body all superfluous pleasure. Do not seek pleasure nor rest except in me. Suffer with meekness and humility the defects of others; love to be despised; combat all appetites, crush under foot and destroy your desires, for these are the lessons that are taught in the school of Wisdom, and they are read in the open book of my crucified body. *Blessed Henry Suso*

13. God wants penance to be used only as an instrument. I have seen many penitents that were neither patient nor obedient, because they tried to mortify the body but not the will; and this because of their indiscretion and doing penance according to their own will and not according to the guidance of another; indiscreetly they want to measure all bodies with the same measure. If someone tries to prevent them, they resist obstinately. And with this perverse will, when the time of trial arrives, of a temptation or an injury, they show that they are weaker than straw. For in their mortification they do not learn to bridle their passions. *St. Catherine of Siena*

14. In order to prove my love, I do not have any other way except throwing flowers, that is to say, not neglecting any small sacrifice, any look, any word, to take advantage of the smallest actions and to do them from love. I want to suffer for love, and even rejoice for love: thus I will scatter flowers. *Saint Therese of Lisieux*

15. Illnesses are the signs by which God indicates chosen souls. *St. Paul of the Cross*

16. In the crucible of sufferings is where there occurs the separation of the chaff from the wheat. He who lowers himself under the weight of the cross and resigns himself lovingly to the will of God, is good wheat for Heaven; and he who murmurs, becomes irritated and withdraws, therefore, from the good God, is chaff destined for the fire. *St. Augustine*

17. To enjoy excellent health and to possess sanctity, are not usually good companions. *St. Paul of the Cross*

18. It costs God, when he makes us drink in the fountain of tears, but he knows that it is the only

means of preparing us to know him as he knows himself, and to become divinized like him. *St. Therese of Lisieux*

19. He who is not apt in tolerating the loss of his honor and self-esteem, for the sake of Christ, such a one will not do anything of profit in the life of the spirit. *St. Philip Neri*

20. I would like to persuade those who are spiritual, how this path of God consists only in one necessary thing: which is to know how to deny oneself truly in the exterior and interior, surrendering one-self to suffering for Christ. His Majesty taught this truth to those two disciples, who asked a place at his right side and left side: he did not grant their request for such glory, but rather offered them the chalice that he was going to drink, as the most precious and secure thing upon this earth, than to rejoice. *St. John of the Cross*

21. Sorrow is the law of the spiritual world: the chosen souls avoid it much less than the others, they pay the ransom of others, sometimes at a very great price. Only later on will we know the work realized by our sorrows and sacrifices; they all go toward the Heart of God, and there are joined to the redemptive torrent, and are then shed upon souls in the form of graces. We can convert, sanctify, console, without going out of our house, or out of ourselves: united unceasingly to him who works in us, we offer and obtain without intermission, and he spreads our humble offerings: when we present to him the most interior tortures "the blood of our hearts" that make spiritual martyrs, we are very powerful with him. *Isabel Leseur*

22. It would be very pleasing to me if my friends judged me less cruel. They should have the delicacy of thinking that I do not use severity, except for their benefit and for their greater benefit. I do it through love, and if this were not necessary to cure them or in order to increase their eternal glory, I would not even let the slightest breeze bother them. --- *Our Lord to St. Gertrude*

23. Time is no more than a dream. God already sees us in the blessedness of heaven. Oh how much good this thought does to my soul! Then I understand why he allows us to suffer. --- *St. Therese of Lisieux*

24. We never have so many motives for consolation as when we see we are loaded with pains and suffering, for these things are what make us similar to our Lord Jesus Christ. This similarity is the true and secure sign of our predestination. *St. Vincent de Paul*

25. If it is necessary, let us suffer without courage. Jesus also suffered with sadness. Would a soul suffer without sadness? And we would like to suffer generously, with joy? What an illusion! *St. Therese of Lisieux*

26. I do not understand well those who support their tribulation, lamenting and complaining always, because paternal chastisement and my correction proceed from a great love and are truly sweet and benign, in such a way that he should be considered happy from whom affliction is never absent, this his affliction does not proceed from my severity, but rather from the most tender and benign love I feel for him, and I want this to be understood about any cross and tribulation, whether sought spontaneously, or whether it comes from somewhere else, against the will of him who suffers it, for in this case one makes a virtue of necessity, Let him who bears this cross not flee from it against my disposition: let him direct his suffering to my eternal praise, with resignation and humble patience; and the more suffering is accompanied by greater love and a prompt will, so much the more is it noble and to me more agreeable. --- *Our Lord to Blessed Henry Suso*

27. As the ring is a sign of betrothal, thus adversity, both bodily and spiritual, supported patiently for the love of God, is the most secure pledge of divine election, and a kind of nuptials of the soul with God. -- *St. Gertrude*

28. I made an effort to smile at suffering, so that the good God, as if deceived by the expression of my face, did not even know I was suffering. -- *St. Therese of Lisieux*

29. If you have not yet suffered anything for God, neither have you begun to be his servant. The Apostle says clearly that "all those who wish to live piously in Christ will suffer persecution." *St. Augustine*

30. Be assured that I dwell in a pure soul, as in a paradise of delights, and therefore I cannot tolerate its putting its affection and trust in any thing of this world, nor that it be inclined to harmful pleasures; but I sow its path with thorns, and whether it wants it or not, I close off its paths with adversity, so that it will not escape my hands; I cover all its footsteps with affliction, so that it will not put the love of its heart in anything except in me. *Our Lord to Blessed Henry Suso*

31. I find only one joy: that of suffering for Jesus; and this joy that is not felt, is above every other joy. *St. Therese of Lisieux*

32. The tribulations of this life are most excellent gifts of God, and there is no other certain sign that one is among the predestined, than to suffer adversities with humility and with a resigned soul, for the love of God. *Venerable Blosius*

33. Love of sufferings and afflictions for the love of God is the highest point of charity, for in this there is nothing lovable, except the divine will. *St. Francis de Sales*

34. Oh, if it were possible to weigh in a balance both time and eternity! Truly, you would prefer to be burned a hundred years in an oven, rather than to see yourself deprived of the smallest reward reserved in heaven for the most insignificant tribulation, for suffering will one day end, and the recompense will endure forever. *Our Lord to Blessed Henry Suso*

35. Affliction and trials are despised by the world, but I hold them in great esteem: they placate my anger, they gain my grace and my friendship, they make men pleasing and amiable, making them conformable and similar to me. Earthly affliction turns a man into a heavenly being, and into my domestic; all this, certainly decreases the number of my friends, but it increases my grace, and it is a secure and most rapid way to go to heaven. *Our Lord to Blessed Henry Suso*

36. Affliction preserves one from great harm, it makes a man know himself, restrain himself, and keeps faithfulness toward one's neighbor; it keeps the soul in humility, it teaches patience, it diffuses chastity, and finally it prepares a crown of blessedness. -- *Our Lord to Blessed Henry Suso*

37. I am turned into a pincushion pierced with punctures. I can go on no longer. Truly the holes are small, but they pain me even more than large ones. The poor pin-cushion trembles and shakes, but I feel so happy to suffer all that Jesus permits. -- *St. Teresa of Jesus*

38. We instruct souls with words, but they are saved by suffering. -- *P. Chevrier*

39. He who is most advanced in the path of contemplation, is the most vexed and harassed by temptations. -- *St. Gregory the Great*

40. Let us fear to be deprived of our suffering, more than the miser of his treasures. -- *St. Paul of the Cross*

41. To suffer sweetly, to be silent with patience and to fulfill our duty faithfully, behold this is the science of the saints, which should constitute the study of our entire life. -- *St. Margaret Mary Alacoque*

42. I imagine that you are suffering so much, said a priest to Don Bosco. But you know better than anyone else, how much suffering sanctifies. And he answered with a smile: No, it is not suffering that sanctifies, but patience in suffering. *St. John Bosco*

43. The Son of God redeemed us by means of sufferings, and he wanted to teach us by this, that there is nothing more apt to glorify God and to sanctify your soul, than sufferings. Ah, yes, to suffer for the love of our God is the pathway of truth! *St. Teresa of Jesus*

44. The most secure sign of belonging to the number of the elect, is that, while we live a Christian life, we are tried at the same time with desolation, suffering and sorrows. *St. Aloysius Gonzaga*

45. An ounce of suffering is worth more than one hundred pounds of good works, but of those that proceed from our own will. *St. Francis de Sales*

46. If we knew the precious treasure that is hidden inside our sicknesses, we would receive them with the same joy that we receive great benefits, and we would endure them without making any complaints. *St. Vincent de Paul*

47. The true terrestrial paradise consists in suffering something for Jesus Christ. Ask this of all the saints, and they will tell you that they never enjoyed such a delicious banquet as when they suffered the greatest torments. *St. Louis Mary Grignon de Montfort*

48. If the Lord granted you the power to resurrect the dead, he would grant you less, than when he makes you suffer. For the gift of working miracles, you would remain his debtor, but when he makes you suffer, (if you suffer with patience), he becomes your debtor. And if you had no other reward except that of suffering for a God who loves you, would not this be a very great reward? He who loves understands what I say. *St. John of the Cross*

49. The greatest of all graces is that of being worthy to suffer for our Lord Jesus Christ. This is indeed a perfect crown, and a reward not inferior to the future reward. Without doubt, it is a greater grace to be enchained for Jesus Christ, than to be placed upon one of the twelve thrones; greater than being an apostle, doctor or evangelist. He who loves Jesus Christ understands what I say. When God gives someone the power of resurrecting the dead, he gives him a smaller grace than when he allows him to suffer, because by miracles I remain a debtor of God, but if I suffer with patience, Jesus Christ is converted into my debtor. *St. John Chrysostom*

50. Souls who are beloved of God are especially predestined to suffer, and this becomes so pleasing and agreeable that they would prefer to die, rather than not suffer, since for them, loving and suffering are the same. *St. Louise de Marillac*

51. Those who are not acquainted with God bear their trials with murmuring; the friends of God endure them with resignation, but those who are truly sons of God accept them with gratitude. *St. Bernard*

52. Adversities and tribulations of this life are very singular graces and highly to be desired; God reserves them for his dearest friends. *St. Joseph of Cupertino*

53. It is certain that if you abounded in consolation and spiritual sweetness, and through the abundance of heavenly dew you were melted in love and veneration, you would not merit as much as you would by tolerating dryness of soul, and this cross on which I now put you. Rather, in these intimate sorrows that penetrate you, not only do I love you cordially, but rather I will make you an heir of an unspeakable reward. *Our Lord to Blessed Henry Suso*

54. The world flees from afflictions and it despises the afflicted, and I bless them and crown them. These souls are my beloved, those most worthy of love, most conformable and most resembling my Divinity. *Our Lord to Blessed Henry Suso*

55. When Our Lord was on the cross, he was declared a King, even by his own enemies; and the souls who are on the cross are declared queens. Do you know why the angels envy us? Because we can suffer for Our Lord, and they have not suffered anything for him. St. Paul, who was carried up to the third heaven and was among the delights of Paradise, considered himself fortunate only in his illnesses and in the Cross of our Lord. *St. Francis de Sales*

56. Considered in themselves, tribulations frighten us, but considered in the will of God, they are lovable and delightful. Can we not offer prayer? And what better prayer than to look often at the crucifix and to offer him our troubles and sufferings, uniting the little we suffer, to the immensity of the pains that Jesus Christ suffered on the cross? *St. Francis de Sales*

Chapter 8. Crosses

By means of the cross, we have been rescued. Divine balance! Christ paid the debt, putting on one plate of the balance the weight of his blood. What a weight and what a price! Do not fear: the difference of the specific weight is infinite. At the present time, Jesus shares his victory by means of the pieces of his Holy Cross, that he grants to us. There has to be some contact, in order to inject spiritual vitamins and to regenerate our infected blood. – This contact is named: sorrow. Sorrow must lavish its "splinters," its precious relics, to chosen souls. Do not complain, if you receive more than you hoped for, because you are not even worthy of desiring what is given to you. Believe in love, receive the impact of Jesus, who in this way wants to communicate himself to you, until he can present you to the heavenly Father, as a genuine image of himself, like the holy shroud of the sepulchre, like the veil of Veronica.

1. Tribulations are not a punishment to condemn us, but rather a medicine to heal us. --- *St. Augustine*

2. Afflictions, desolation, abandonment and other persecutions that you suffer from the demon or from creatures, are a magnificent "broom" that casts out of our soul the dust and mud of imperfections, and prepares us to fly quickly to holy perfection and union with God. --- *St. Paul of the Cross*

3. The cross is the way of life, the way of glory, and the way of the kingdom. --- *St. Bernard*

4. The battles of the demon, the anguish of creatures and the desolation of the spirit, are loving trials that the heavenly Spouse performs for the soul, to make us holy. --- *St. Paul of the Cross*

5. Life is a prolonged death. *St. Gregory*

6. Merit and perfection consist in carrying the cross that God wants, and not the one that we want. *St. Paul of the Cross*

7. To suffer and to keep silent: this is the short path, to be holy and perfect. *St. Paul of the Cross*
8. Illness is a magnificent school of mercy for those who attend the sick, and of loving resignation for those who endure it: for while some are at the foot of the Cross like the Virgin and St. John, the others are on the cross, like our Divine Master, whose passion they reproduce, in so far they can copy it in themselves *St. Francis de Sales*
9. Pains, sorrows and indisposition make us more beloved of God than all the other voluntary penances, because in them there is nothing of ourselves. *St. Paul of the Cross*
10. Upon this earth, God pays his servants with the same coin with which he paid the Saint of saints: Jesus Christ. *St. Paul of the Cross*
11. The more you progress in the service of God, the more you increase in suffering. Thus was the life of Jesus Christ, and thus is the life of his authentic servants. Embrace, therefore, the holy Cross with all your heart. *St. Paul of the Cross*
12. Many are the souls who receive me well when I visit them with consolation. Many receive me with pleasure in Communion. But there are few souls who receive me well when I visit them with my Cross. The soul that is stretched out upon the cross, and abandons herself upon it, this soul glorifies me: this soul consoles me. It is the soul that is nearest to me. *Our Lord to Sister Josefa Menendez*
13. When we are united to the wood of the holy Cross, we will not suffer shipwreck, but we will arrive safely to the port of salvation. --- *St. Paul of the Cross*
14. One of the most precious gifts that God grants to holy souls is sickness, because in that there are occasions of practicing many virtues. --- *St. Paul of the Cross*
15. In sickness, when the body is more mortified and cast down, the spirit is more apt to fly to God. --- *St. Paul of the Cross*
16. To take up one's cross is to support and receive patiently all the things that are suffered because of Me. --- *St. Augustine*
17. The religious life is a cross, and he who wants to live in it with perfection should be crucified. *St. Paul of the Cross*
18. Believe me, even if all hearts were united into one, in this life they could not enjoy the smallest reward that they will enjoy in the eternal and blessed fatherland of heaven, in recompense for the smallest cross that for my love they will have carried in this life. --- *Our Lord to Blessed Henry Suso*
19. Each sick person believes that his illness is the most grave, and the thirsty person believes that no one is more unfortunate than he is. If I had afflicted you in a different way, you would say the same thing that you say now. Rest, therefore in my arms, and resign yourself lovingly in me, in any adversity that I want you to suffer, without excluding any trial. --- *Our Lord to Blessed Henry Suso*
20. Jesus never told me that his friends would have nothing to suffer, because he wants them to possess their greatest happiness in tasting the bitterness of the Cross. *St. Margaret Mary Alacoque*

21. My son, he who approaches me, approaches thorns. *Our Lord to St. Paul of the Cross*
22. To suffer with resignation has seemed to me the most worthy thing of being desired by men, and if envy were not an evil, the very angels would envy this privilege. *Ven. Anne Catherine Emmerich*
23. We complain about suffering, and we should rather have reasons for complaining of not suffering: for nothing makes us more similar to Jesus than carrying his Cross. *The Cure of Ars*
24. On your day I would like to remove all your pains, and take for myself all your sufferings. This is what I formerly asked of him whose heart beat in unison with mine. Then I understood that the best that he can give us is suffering, and that he only gives it to his most select friends. *St. Therese of Lisieux*
25. He who has not suffered for Jesus cannot be certain of loving Jesus. *Monsignor Gay*
26. There is nothing as glorious for a Christian as suffering for Christ. For him who truly loves God, the most disagreeable thing that can happen to him is not having occasions of suffering for Him. The greatest tribulation of the servant of God is not having one. *St. Philip Neri*
27. The Cross is the staff of our pilgrimage upon this earth. *St. Catherine of Siena*
28. There is no wood like that of the Cross, in order to enkindle in the soul the fire of love. *Elizabeth of the Holy Trinity*
29. May our Lord grant us the joy of sacrifice: He never gives us more precious signs of his love than when he gives sufferings, and he cannot arrive at the fulfillment of his designs except on this path, the only one that leads to Heaven. *The Cure of Ars*
30. By your own experience, you have seen that the trials that I send, when they are supported well, place those who suffer them closer to perfection and they lead more quickly to the union with God, than all other means, chosen by your own will. Why, then do you complain? Why do you not say: Do with me, most benign Father, what is most pleasing to you? *Our Lord to Blessed Henry Suso*
31. I desire to suffer with Jesus; do not speak to me of anything else; I want to be similar to Him, to suffer while I live and to live in order to suffer. *St. Gemma Galgani*
32. He began to declare the great treasure that Christian life and perfection has stored up in this mine, saying that trials suffered for God are a most certain pledge of eternal rest, and like a dowry of the espousal of the soul with Christ, the insignia of his lovers, and the privilege of his elect. *St. John of the Cross*
33. If you were the most wise astronomer of the world, if you could discourse and speak about God with the tongues of angels and of men, if, finally, you alone knew all the learned and wise men of the universe, all this would profit you less, than conformity with the divine will in all afflictions: because those sciences are common to the good and the wicked, but the latter alone is the patrimony of the elect. *Our Lord to Blessed Henry Suso*
34. Do not think that I have had fewer pains, as was my life last year; on the contrary, it has been a profound joy, it is truly delicious to be able to suffer for Him and to grow in his love. *Marie Antoinette de Geuser*
35. What use will it be, to have embraced an austere life, if we always look for relief from anything that might make us suffer? *St. Therese of Lisieux*

36. A life without a cross is a life without love, and a life without love is hell. *St. Margaret Mary Alacoque*

37. Affliction and trials are despised by the world, but I hold them in great esteem: they placate my anger, they obtain my grace and friendship, they make a man pleasing and amiable to me, they make him acceptable and similar to Me. Earthly affliction converts a man into a heavenly being and my servant. Truly, affliction decreases the number of my friends, but it increases my grace, and it is a secure and rapid way to go to Heaven. *Our Lord to Blessed Henry Suso*

38. What is it that most pleases Jesus? Suffering. The most sorrowful moments are always the most blessed. O Jesus, I accept as many pains and afflictions as you want to send me, for they will always be less than what I deserve. As a gift of your mercies, o my Jesus, I will accept the pains and afflictions that you lay upon me. O Jesus, if you wish, add even more: I will always kiss your hand. Behold, O Jesus, this sorrow shakes all the fibers of my heart, and it inspires in me the resolution of not offending you any more. *St. Gemma Galgani*

39. I love the flowers of the field, the little birds and every new suffering; it is a variation that pleases me, but what I love above everything else is Jesus Christ, our beloved Savior. *Theresa Neumann*

40. If you were flooded with spiritual consolations and you overflowed with love, you would not gain as much as suffering dryness and the trials that I send you. Live, therefore, in peace, with the certainty that you will not perish under the cross. It is easier for ten souls to fall into sin, who enjoy the delights of grace, than only one soul that is in affliction: the enemy has no power against those who sigh under the cross. Even if you were the first doctor of the world and the wisest theologian of my Church, and even if you could speak about God with the tongues of angels, you would be less holy to my eyes and less amiable, than a soul that is subject to my crosses. I grant my graces to the good and to the evil, but I reserve my crosses for my elect. Affliction separates a man from the world, and brings him near to God. The more his friends on earth abandon him, the more my grace is increased in him, and it raises him and makes him divine. From the Cross proceed humility, purity of conscience, fervor of spirit, peace, tranquility of soul, discretion, recollection, charity and all the benefits that this produces. Our Lord to Blessed Henry Suso

41. You cannot form an idea of how happy I am. In spite of your sorrows? Because of them. *Eva Lavalliere*

42. As the usurer does not lose any occasion of making a small sum of money, I also will not consent that the smallest movement of your little finger, done in my name, remains without fruit, and without its concurring to my greater glory and your eternal salvation. *Our Lord to St. Gertrude*

Chapter 22. The Last Things: Death and Judgment, Hell and Glory

THE Last Things are a lesson of great transcendence. They produce genuine and authentic results. There is nothing more certain than death, nor anything more terrible, if we look at it only with the eyes of the flesh: It is a tortuous and insoluble enigma for a man who is occupied only with the affairs of this world.

Death is a hidden secret, because life is an unintelligible hieroglyph, and its wonderful meaning only appears when it is seen from another angle. When it is seen with the looking-glass of faith,

everything comes out clear and consoling.

Death is a latch that opens the eternal doors for us, after an anguished exile.

The judgment: the rectification of many misunderstandings, in most cases favorable for us.

The thought of gehenna is the best corrector of our conscience, and the only restraint for our disordered appetites.

Glory, Heaven, is the fatherland where our heavenly Father awaits us. After having endured the disillusionment of this life, comes the great adventure of the revelation of his grandeur and love. What a marvelous surprise awaits us! Behind the lattice of the last things... to see the countenance of our Father for the first time, and forever.

1. O death! I do not know who should fear you, for in you is life. But who will not fear you, having spent part of it in not loving God? -- St. Teresa of Jesus

2. When one is going to die, it is the remembrance of the little things that one has done only for God, and of which he was the only witness, that produces pleasure. -- Marie Antoinette de Geuser

3. What will I fear? Death? You already know that Christ is my life, and death a gain. Exile? But all the earth is of the Lord. The loss of my goods? We brought nothing to this world, and we will take nothing from it. I despise fears, I laugh at possessions, I neither fear poverty nor desire riches, nor does death frighten me, and if I want to live, it is for the good of your souls. -- St. John Chrysostom

4. But what gives me most peace now (at the hour of death), is the fact that I have battled and suffered to do the will of God, and to die faithful. -- Sister Josefa Menendez

5. When we die we make restitution: we return to the earth what the earth has given us... a little dust: that is what we will become. Is there any reason to be proud of ourselves? -- The Cure of Ars

6. How will he die in the Lord the religious who in life did not work for the Lord? -- St. Joseph Calasanctius

7. Souls do not know how much Jesus loves them! The more they have lived in the obscurity of faith, so much the more does Jesus reward them at the hour of death. -- Sister Josefa Menendez

8. I affirm, because much experience has taught me, that of a hundred thousand souls that lived continually evil lives, there is scarcely one who might obtain mercy from God at the last hour. -- St. Jerome

9. Do not delay in being converted to the Lord, for his wrath will come quickly. Are you afraid of dying an evil death, but not of living an evil life? Stop living an evil life, and you will not fear to die an evil death. -- St. Augustine

10. I wish I had a voice of thunder, so that I could be heard in the whole world. I would speak to all those who inhabit it, and in effect, I feel moved to say it to them. Oh unfortunate mortals, why do you permit yourselves to be tyrannized by the world? Why do you not reflect upon the anguish that you will find at your death? Why do you not gaze into the future, while there is still time? -- St. Catherine of Genoa

11. Man can resist fire, the waves, iron and even the power of kings: but death will come, and

who can resist it? -- St. Augustine

12. Know, my father, that my soul was found in an unknown world, and there I saw and understood the glory of the just and the chastisement of sinners, but, I repeat, memory fails me, and words are incapable of expressing these things. Never-theless, I will tell you, what I can: I am certain I have seen the divine essence: and for this very reason I suffer so much in seeing myself chained to my body. I saw the torments of Hell and Purgatory; there is no word that can express them. If poor human beings only had the slightest idea of them, they would prefer death a thousand times before enduring the least of them for one day. When my soul contemplates these things, my heavenly Bridegroom, whom I believed I would possess forever, told me: You now see what glory they lose and what punishments they suffer, all those who offend me. Return, then, to the world, and show them their aberration, and the danger that they risk. – St. Catherine of Siena

13. St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzis wished the novices who were subject to her, to offer to God even the least and most insignificant actions, and she promised them that if they were exact in this, they would arrive in Heaven without passing through Purgatory. -- St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzis

14. Jesus, Jesus, have mercy on me while it is the time of mercy: do not condemn me at the time of judgment. -- St. Anselm

15. It is preferable to suffer all possible torments until the end of the world, rather than one day in Purgatory. -- St. Cyril of Alexandria

16. The least burn of the fire of Purgatory is more cruel than all the evils of this life. -- St. Thomas Aquinas

17. The torments of Purgatory are greater than those suffered by criminals, and those suffered by the holy martyrs. -- St. Bede the Venerable

18. Between the natural fire of this world and that of Purgatory, there is as great a difference as that between real fire and an image or painting of fire. -- St. Bernard

19. Although this fire is for the salvation of those who endure it, nevertheless I am sure that for them it will be more terrible than all the torments a man could suffer in this world. -- St. Augustine

20. I would willingly accept the fire of Purgatory until the Last Judgment, provided I could save just one soul. What does the prolongation of my pains matter to me, if with them I can rescue only one soul, or rather many, for the greater glory of God? -- St. Teresa of Jesus

21. The soul that is shut up in those lower places is seized with such a vivid desire of being united to God, that its desire forms its Purgatory; for it is not the place that purifies the soul, but rather the pain produced by the impediment, that detains its instinct of being united to God. -- St. Catherine of Genoa

22. It is true that there (in Purgatory) the torments are so great that the most terrible pains of this life cannot be compared to them; but the interior satisfaction is also so great, that there is no prosperity or happiness in this world that can equal them. -- St. Francis de Sales

23. I observed that God is infinitely good, as he is infinitely great, purifying man in the fires of Purgatory: there he consumes and annihilates everything that man is according to nature, to transform him into himself and divinize him in a certain measure. -- St. Catherine of Genoa

24. Hell is a consequence of God's goodness. The condemned souls will say: Oh, if God had not loved us so much, we would suffer less; hell would be bearable. But to have been so loved. What pain! -- The Cure of Ars

26. No one who has Hell before his eyes will fall into it: and on the contrary, no one who despises it will escape it. -- St. John Chrysostom

27. Eternal fire makes me shudder: I tremble with fear: I would like to give you security, if I had it for myself. Truly, anyone who cannot be awakened by thunder of such magnitude, is not sleeping, but spiritually dead. -- St. Augustine

28. It is easy to pass from the cell to Heaven: when one dies in the cloister, he has the sweet assurance of being saved, because it is difficult to persevere until death, unless one is predestined for Heaven. -- St. Bernard

29. Religious life is the gate of Paradise, in such a way that to be consecrated to God here below, is equivalent to being chosen to be the companion of the blessed in heaven. -- St. Lawrence Justinian

30. Paradise is peace without perturbation that surpasses every sense, blessed repose, that confounds all intelligence. There all the saints are absorbed in the torrent of divine pleasure, they are submerged in delights, and are sweetly dissolved in God, for the Lord has granted them forever and ever the intuitive contemplation of his most sweet face. -- Venerable Louis Blossius

31. I am certain the thrones of the seraphim that remained empty by the defection of Satan's companions, will be filled by religious. -- St. Alphonsus de Liguori

32. Paradise is the glorious reign of Heaven; there it is where resides the great recompense, that the eye of man has not seen, nor his ear heard, nor his intellect ever suspected. It is the dwelling of eternal joy, of complete and eternal exultation. It is there where resounds the canticle of jubilee, and the sweet singing of the Alleluia. It is there where is forever heard the ineffable melody of the canticles and of the instruments, and where the feast of eternity is celebrated. It is there where all the saints praise God without fatigue for the ages of the ages. It is there where abound all riches and all delights. -- Venerable Louis Blossius

33. In Heaven, I think it will be my mission to bring souls to a greater recollection and interior reflection, so that they may go out of themselves and become united to God, with simplicity and loving abandonment. -- Sister Elizabeth of the Holy Trinity

34. Paradise is the promised land, the region of immortality and of infinite clarity. There exists the fountain of life and of everlasting light. There God himself, who is the uncreated splendor infinitely serene and delectable, lovingly illumines the saints. It is there where he lovingly draws to himself their affection and love, where he satiates them all with blessedness and happiness, filling them with himself, and being all in all. -- Venerable Louis Blossius

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