

in their devotion to the memory of their revered spiritual director, the translator offers her profound gratitude for their interest, their prayers, and their loan of a treasured photograph of Father Pichon as he appeared at the period of their first acquaintance. From Mother Agnes of Jesus, since deceased, came a precious note containing family data concerning the relations of the Father with her family.

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"The Lamb . . . is the Lord of lords, and King of kings, and they who are with him, called, and chosen, and faithful."

APOC. 17:14.

May Your Heart, O my Jesus, be the support of my helplessness, the strength of my weakness, and the joy of all my weariness.

ST. MARGARET MARY

1. *Hidden Treasure*

THE HIDDEN Treasure, to gain which we must sell all, sacrifice all, is the Heart of Jesus. It is He who does all. We cannot depend upon ourselves.

Whatever of truth or virtue is to be found in my words comes from the Sacred Heart. Whatever there be of dullness, banality, is the work of Father Pichon.¹

I desire that all those who follow this series of conferences endeavor to live this prayer: "To the greater glory of God, through aridity, tedium, distaste, bodily discomfort. Through rebellious movements of the memory, the intelligence, the emotions, I ask only for the greater glory of God, and not for the absence of distractions or of temptations. That I may experience no consolations, even that I may be wearied, means nothing to me provided that God be glorified. I shall concede that others may glorify Him to a greater degree than I, and I shall rejoice in their good qualities."

Oh, our crosses! If God lifted them from our shoulders, we should have to go upon our knees to beg them back.

Monsignor de Segur, member of an illustrious family, on the day of his ordination petitioned God that if he were ever to be advanced to honors in the Church, he would be

¹ Father Pichon always prefaced the opening conference in a series with this declaration.

sent a great trial to offset the honor. He was called to Rome to accept a post of distinction. Within the year he became totally blind. Thereafter, he always celebrated the date of the onset of his blindness by a solemn High Mass and a banquet to which he invited all the members of his family, asking them to rejoice with him.

"My dear Cecile," he wrote to a child who was praying for his recovery, "when one is raised to the cross with Christ, the safest way is not to descend, but to remain beside Him."

We never leave a series of conferences exactly as we enter upon them. If the word of God does not enlighten us, it leaves us more blinded. If it does not touch our hearts, it hardens them.

Doñoso Cortes once listened with respect and interest to the sermon of a simple country priest. A friend expressed astonishment. "At his side," replied Cortes, "I see Christ." So much the better if you can see Jesus at my side. I shall try to efface myself that He may speak to you.

We are egoists. We always seek our personal pleasures. St. Catherine of Siena reproached herself on her deathbed for having sought consolations in her thanksgivings. Failures, defections, have become more numerous. To be saved requires effort. Instead of praising, glorifying God, do I live a purely natural life that would be reprehensible in a pagan?

A visiting confessor startled Blessed Hyacinth Scotti by inquiring: "Do you imagine you are headed for heaven with that wholly natural behavior?" The question engendered a train of thought that ended in his conversion and, ultimately, in his beatification.

During these conferences, our particular examen must be upon the seemingly little things: punctuality, custody of the eyes, silence of the lips, of the imagination, of our memories, of the heart. Our basic meditations:

1. All things have been created that I may fulfill the individual design that God had in creating me.

2. All things have been created by God. They issued forth through His power, His wisdom, His love.

3. They were created as a remedy and an aid in order to help me attain my goal, and not to satisfy my curiosity or my whims.

SPIRITUAL READING

The Imitation of Christ: BOOK I, Chapter 20

BOOK II, Chapters 9, 10, 15

2. Recreation: Tool of Sanctity

A FAMOUS archbishop of Reims, deceased a few years ago, had a favorite prayer: "My Jesus, heart for Heart! Give me Your Heart to love, to savor. Behold my poor heart to nourish, to adorn with Your virtue."

Heart for Heart! Happy exchange! Our Lord is faithful; He asks but for that.

In one of the first general meetings of the Society of Jesus, this question was debated: would it be advantageous to suppress the recreations provided for by the Rule? Were not recreations lost time? It was brought out that during recreation it is easy to give way to sallies of self-love, to words that might prove painful to susceptible persons. Yet, all present unanimously voted that recreations be preserved. Certainly there are dangers to be avoided during recreation, but how many excellent occasions are presented for the practice of the virtues! It is an incomparable means of ad-