

Sister Mary Martha Chambon

Of the

Visitation Holy Mary of Chambery

And

THE HOLY WOUNDS OF OUR LORD

JESUS CHRIST

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From the Vatican, May 8, 1924:

Very Reverend Mother,

I have received the booklet "Sister Mary Martha Chambon" that you sent me to present in humble homage to the Holy Father.

I hasten to tell you that His Holiness testified much pleasure and is delighted with the little work.

The August Pontiff expressed the wish that the exemplary life and virtues of this religious and faithful servant of God be propagated as widely as possible in order to induce souls to advance in the way of perfection. He congratulates the writer and sends to her and her Sisters the Apostolic Benediction.

I gladly profit by this occasion, Reverend Mother, to thank you for the copy kindly sent to me and to present my sincere respects, remaining, Reverend Mother,

Your very devoted,

P. Cardinal GASPARRI.

Archbishop's Palace, Chambéry, July 9, 1924.

The brochure, "Sister Mary Martha and the Holy Wounds," has circulated throughout the religious world with a truly edifying success, and we rejoice that our Lord is thereby more loved and more fervently prayed to.

May the evils of our day find a remedy in the Wounds of our Savior!

It is a true joy to us that a humble flower of our Salesian parterre has thus contributed to embalm the wounds of the world by recourse to the divine Wounds of Jesus.

✠Dominique CASTELLAN,
Archbishop of Chambéry.

SISTER MARY MARTHA CHAMBON

of the

VISITATION HOLY MARY OF CHAMBÉRY

and

THE HOLY WOUNDS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH*

Françoise Chambon was the child of good Christian parents, her father was a farmer in the little village of Croix-Rouge, near Chambéry, where this favored child was born May 24, 1844, and was baptized on the same day in the parish Church of Saint-Pierre de Lemenc.

Our Lord was pleased to reveal himself very early to this innocent soul who was hardly nine years of age when her aunt having taken her to the adoration of the Cross on Good Friday, Christ our Lord manifested Himself to her, all wounded and covered with blood as on Calvary. "Oh, in what a pitiable condition He was!" she exclaimed in after years. This was the first revelation of the Passion of the

*This is simply a biographical sketch of Sr. M. Martha Chambon containing an *exposé* of her special devotion: the devotion to the Holy Wounds.

Savior, which was to hold such an important place in her future life.

At this period she was particularly favored by visits from the Infant Jesus who appeared to her visibly on the day of her First Communion, from which time until death she always beheld the Infant Jesus in the Sacred Host. He became the inseparable companion of her youth, accompanying her when she went to labor in the fields, conversing with her on the way—then leading her back to her humble home: "We were always together, . . . Oh, how happy I was, paradise was in my heart!" . . . she said, in recalling, towards the end of her life, these sweet and distant remembrances. Françoise never even thought of making any confidences of her life of familiarity with Jesus, contented with the enjoyment for herself she innocently believed that every one had a like privilege.

However, the purity and fervor of this child could not escape the notice of the worthy Curé of the parish, who admitted her frequently to the Holy Table. It was he who discovered in her a religious vocation and directed her to our Monastery.

FIRST YEARS IN RELIGION

When the Visitation Convent of Chambéry opened its doors to Françoise Chambon, she was eighteen years of age; two years later, on the feast of Our Lady of the Angels, August 2, 1864, Sister Mary Martha pronounced the holy vows in the rank of Domestic Sister.

There was nothing prepossessing in the exterior of this new spouse of Jesus Christ. The beauty of the King's

daughter was, and ever remained interior. God, who doubtless was reserving compensations, had in regard to natural gifts treated Sister Mary Martha with real parsimony. She was rustic in manner and speech; entirely illiterate;* of a mediocre intelligence, which was developed only under the divine influence; with an ardent and tenacious temperament, which caused her Sister companions to exclaim of her: "Oh, what a saint, a true saint, but what a trying saint!"

The "Saint" was well aware of this, and in a touching simplicity complained to Jesus of her many defects. "Your imperfections," He answered her, "are the greatest proof that all that takes place within you comes from God. I shall never take them away from you; they are the covering which hides My gifts. You desire to conceal yourself? I desire this more than you do!"

In contrast with this portrait a second one somewhat more attractive may be considered. Under this uncouth exterior the vigilance of Superiors was not long in suspecting, and then in recognizing a moral physiognomy already very beautiful, and which improved day by day under the action of the spirit of Jesus. Here should be noted traits stamped with infallible marks revealing the divine Artist, and revealing Him the more positively as the natural defects have not disappeared. In this intelligence otherwise so dim, what light, what a depth of vision! In this heart deprived of natural culture, what innocence, faith, piety, humility, what a thirst for sacrifice! It will be sufficient, for the pres-

*It is important to keep in view this complete ignorance of the Sister: it is amazing to find on one side so much "doctrinal exactitude and accuracy of expression" in one of so little cultivation; whilst on the other, allowance must be made "for crudeness in the details." (Appreciation of Rev. R. P. Mazoyer, S. J.).

ent purpose, to relate the testimony of her Superior, the Honored Mother T  r  se-Eug  nie Revel: "Obedience is everything for her. Candor, uprightness, the spirit of charity that animate her, her mortification, and above all, her sincere and profound humility appear to us the surest guarantees of the conduct of God over her soul. The more she receives, the greater her self-contempt, being habitually crushed by the fear of illusion. Docile to advice, the word of the priest and of the superior are powerful in preserving her peace of soul. Our greatest assurance is her passionate love for the hidden life; her dominant need of escaping all notice, and her terror lest what is taking place within her soul be perceived."



The first two years of our Sister's religious life passed almost normally. Aside from an uncommon gift of prayer, perpetual recollection, an always increasing hunger and thirst for God, there was nothing to forecast the extraordinary. But in September, 1866, our young Sister began to be favored with frequent visits from Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, the Souls in Purgatory and the Holy Angels. Above all, Jesus crucified offered her nearly every day the contemplation of His divine Wounds, sometimes resplendent and glorious, and again livid or bleeding, asking her to unite with the pains of His holy Passion.

VIGILS AND CORPORAL PENANCES

Superiors, yielding to certain signs of the will of heaven, — signs upon which we cannot dwell in this short notice — gradually decided, notwithstanding their apprehensions, to yield the Sister to the exigencies of Jesus crucified.

Sister Mary Martha was first of all invited to pass nights lying on the floor of her cell; then she was ordered to wear rough hair-cloth night and day. Soon a crown of sharp thorns was added — not permitting her to rest her head without severe pain.

At the end of eight months, in May, 1867, not satisfied with nights passed upon the ground, with the hair-cloth and the crown of thorns, Jesus required of Sister Mary Martha even the sacrifice of her sleep, in asking her to watch alone before the Most Blessed Sacrament, whilst all others in the Monastery slept.

Nature suffered — but is not this the usual price of divine favors? In the silence of the night our Lord revealed Himself to His servant in the most wonderful manner. Doubtless, He sometimes left her to struggle painfully during long hours against fatigue and sleep, but, more frequently He took possession of her immediately and she lapsed into an ecstatic condition. He confided to her His loving secrets, overwhelmed her with caresses and plunged her heart into His own. His hold on this very humble, simple, and docile soul daily increased.

THREE DAYS OF ECSTASY

In the month of September, 1867, Sister Mary Martha, as had been announced to her by the divine Master, fell into an incomprehensible state to which it would be difficult to give a name. She lay on her bed immovable, speechless, sightless, taking no nourishment whatever; her pulse, however, remained very regular and her complexion natural. This condition lasted during three days (September 26, 27, 28), in honor of the Most Holy Trinity, and were for the dear ecstatic, days of exceptional graces. A heavenly splendor illuminated the humble cell to which the Holy Trinity descended. God the Father, presented to her Jesus in a host, saying: "I give you Him, whom you have offered to Me so often," and He communicated her; then He unveiled to her the mysteries of Bethlehem and of the Cross, filling her soul with special lights on the Incarnation and Redemption. Drawing from Himself and bestowing upon her His Spirit as a fiery dart, He said: "Here are light, suffering, and love! Love will be for Me; for you light to discover My will; suffering, in fine, in order to suffer from moment to moment as I wish you should do." The last day, inviting her to contemplate the Cross of His Son in a ray of light descending from heaven towards her, the heavenly Father gave her, "a better understanding of the **Wounds of Jesus for her personal good;**" then, in another ray ascending from earth to heaven she saw clearly her "Mission" in regard to the **Holy Wounds of Jesus for all the world.**

JUDGMENT OF ECCLESIASTICAL SUPERIORS

The Superior and Mistress of Novices of a soul thus privileged could not assume responsibility for such an extraordinary way. They consulted the ecclesiastical Superiors, especially: Canon Mercier, Vicar General and Spiritual Father of the Community, a priest of superior judgment and great piety; Very Rev. P. Ambroise, Provincial of the Capuchins of Savoy, noted for his theology and philosophy; and Canon Bouvier, confessor of the Community, an ecclesiastic of superior learning and holiness.

The examination was serious and complete. The three examiners agreed in affirming that the way of Sister Mary Martha bore the divine seal. They counselled to put all in writing; but, as prudent as enlightened, they judged that these facts should be kept under the veil of secrecy until "God Himself pleased to reveal them." For this reason the Community remained ignorant of the signal graces with which it was favored in the person of one of its members — and the least suited, from a human standpoint, to receive them.

Accepting as a sacred order the direction of ecclesiastical Superiors, our Honored Mother Térèse-Eugénie Revel began to record daily, with a scrupulous exactitude — even noting certain faults proceeding from ignorance or forgetfulness — the recitals of the humble Sister, whom our Lord had ordered to hide nothing from her Superior:

"We here certify in the presence of God and of our Holy Founders, through obedience and as exactly as possible, what we believe to have been sent to us from heaven through a loving predilection of the divine Heart of Jesus

for the happiness of our Community and the good of souls.”

“God seems to have chosen in our humble family the privileged soul whose mission it is to renew in our time, devotion to the Holy Wounds of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is our humble little domestic sister, **Sister Mary Martha Chambon**, whom the Savior has favored with His sensible presence. Each day He shows her His divine Wounds, in order that she may constantly employ their merits for the wants of Holy Church, the conversion of sinners, the necessities of our Institute, and above all — for the relief of the souls in Purgatory.”

“Jesus makes her the object of His love and the victim of His good pleasure, and we, filled with gratitude, constantly experience the efficacy of her prayers with the Heart of God.”

Such is the declaration which introduces the recital of the Honored Mother Tèrese-Eugénie, a worthy confidante of favors from on High. The following relation is borrowed from her notes.

THE “MISSION”

“One thing pains Me,” said the sweet Savior to His little servant, “it is that there are souls who consider the devotion to My Wounds strange, contemptible, something unsuitable — for this reason the devotion is neglected and forgotten. In heaven I have Saints who have had a great devotion to My Holy Wounds, but on earth there is now hardly any one who honors Me in this manner.” Is not this complaint only too well founded! In a world where “to enjoy” seems

the only preoccupation, how many, even among Christians, have lost the sense of sacrifice! Too few souls understand the Cross! Too few are attracted to meditate on the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, which St. Francis de Sales calls so justly "the true school of love, the sweetest and most urgent incentive to piety."

Jesus does not wish to leave unexploited this inexhaustible mine, where the fruits of His holy Wounds remain lost and neglected, and He will choose, according to His custom, the humblest of instruments to accomplish His work of love.

On October 2, 1867, Sister Mary Martha was present at a "reception to the holy habit," when suddenly the heavens opened and she beheld there the same ceremony in a splendor far other than that of earth. All the Visitation of heaven were present; the **First Mothers** turning towards her, as if to announce good news, said to her joyfully:

"The Eternal Father has given His Son to our holy Order in three ways:

First—Jesus Christ, His Cross and His Wounds — to this House more particularly.

Secondly—His Sacred Heart.

Thirdly—His Holy Infancy to be honored. You must have a childlike simplicity in your relations with Him."

This triple gift does not seem new. From the origin of the Institute we find in the life of Mother Anne Margaret Clément, contemporary of St. Jane de Chantal, these three devotions of which all the Religious formed by her bore the stamp. We love to think that perhaps it was this soul, equally favored, who with our **Holy Mother and Foundress** came to recall them to the chosen one of God.

Some days later, **Mother M. Pauline Deglapigny**, eighteen months deceased, appeared to her former daughter and confirmed this gift of the Holy Wounds: "**The Visitation had already great riches, but there were yet more.** Happy the day that I left the earth, because instead of having only the Sacred Heart of our Lord, **you have all of His Holy Humanity, that is, His Sacred Wounds.** I have asked this grace for you."

The Heart of Jesus! does not he who possesses It, possess **all of Jesus?** all the love of Jesus? Doubtless, but the holy Wounds are as a prolonged expression of this love — and how eloquent! So, Jesus wishes to be honored entirely, and that in adoring His wounded Heart His other Wounds should not be forgotten — all were opened by love. It is interesting to compare the gift of the suffering humanity of Jesus bestowed upon Sister Mary Martha, with the favor given at the same period to the **Ven. Mother M. de Sales Chappuis**: the gift of the holy Humanity of the Savior.

St. Francis de Sales, our Blessed Father, who very often visited his dear daughter to instruct her paternally, did not fail to strengthen her in the certitude of her "Mission." One day when they were conversing together, she said to him with her ordinary simplicity: "My Father, you know that our Sisters have hardly any confidence in my affirmations because I am so very imperfect." — "My daughter," answered the Saint, "The ways of God are not the ways of man, — the creature judges according to human views. God gives His graces to a poor soul who has nothing, in order that all may redound to His glory. You should be contented with your imperfections because they hide the

gifts of God. God has chosen you to complete the devotion to the Sacred Heart: the Heart was manifested to my daughter Margaret Mary and the holy Wounds to my little Mary Martha! It is a happiness for my fatherly heart that this honor may be rendered by you to Jesus crucified, it is the completion of the Redemption that Jesus has so much desired."

The most Holy Virgin came also on a feast of the Visitation, to confirm the young Sister in her way. Accompanied by the Holy Founders, and our Saint Sister Margaret Mary, she said: "I give my Treasure to the Visitation as I bore it to my cousin Elizabeth; your Holy Father has reproduced the labors, meekness and humility of my Son; your Holy Mother de Chantal, my generosity in surmounting all obstacles in order to be united to Jesus and accomplish His holy Will; your blessed Sister Margaret Mary has reproduced the Sacred Heart of my Son to give It to the world. And you, my daughter, are chosen to restrain the justice of God by appealing to the world to profit by the merits of the Passion and the holy Wounds of my only beloved Son, Jesus!"

And as Sister Mary Martha alluded to the difficulties that she would encounter: "My daughter," replied the Immaculate Virgin, "let not you nor your Mother be anxious, my Son controls all, as for you, do each day what Jesus wills."

The invitations and encouragements of the Holy Virgin continued to multiply in every direction: "If you wish for riches you must draw them from the holy Wounds of my Son — all the lights of the Holy Spirit proceed from the Wounds of Jesus, but you will receive these gifts in proportion to your humility — I am your Mother and I say to

you: Go, draw from the Wounds of my Son! Imbibe His blood to its exhaustion, this, however, will never happen. You must apply the Wounds of my Son to the wicked for their conversion."

After the interventions of the first Mothers, the Holy Founders and the Blessed Virgin, we cannot forget the action of **God the Father**, for whom our dear Sister always had the devotion and confidence of a child who was truly divinely spoiled. It was He who first instructed her regarding her future "mission." Now and then He recalled it to her: "My child, I give you My Son to aid you every day, in order that you may make reparation to My justice. You shall take constantly from the Wounds of Jesus wherewith to satisfy for the debts of sinners." When the Community was making processions for various needs, God the Father declared: "All that you give Me by this means is nothing." — "If it is nothing," replied the presumptuous child, "I offer Thee then, all that Thy Son has done and suffered for us." "Ah," answered the Eternal Father, "how excellent this is!"

On His part, our Lord, in order to fortify His servant renewed to her on several occasions, the assurance that she was very truly called to revive devotion to His redeeming Wounds: "I have chosen you to reveal the devotion to My Holy Passion in the unhappy times in which you live." Then, showing her His holy Wounds as a book in which He wishes to teach her to read, the good Master adds: "Take not your eyes from this book and your learning will exceed that of the greatest savants. Prayer to the holy Wounds includes everything."

Another time, during the month of June, whilst she was prostrate before the Most Blessed Sacrament, Our Lord,

opening His Sacred Heart as the source of all the other Wounds, still further insists: "I have chosen My faithful servant Margaret Mary to make My divine Heart known, and My little Mary Martha to insinuate devotion to My other Wounds. My Wounds will save you infallibly; they will save the world."

On another occasion: "Your way," He said to her, "is to make Me known and loved by means of My holy Wounds, above all in the future". He asked her to offer His divine Wounds incessantly for the salvation of the world: "My daughter, the world will be more or less disturbed, according as you will have performed your task. You are chosen to offer satisfaction to My justice. Enclosed in your cloister you ought to live here below as they live in Heaven, to love Me, to pray to Me unceasingly in order to appease My vengeance, and renew devotion to My holy Wounds."

"I will that by this devotion not only the souls with whom you live may be saved, but still many others. Some day I will demand account of you whether you have drawn well from this treasure for all My creatures."

"Truly," He said to her later, "truly, My Spouse, I dwell in this place and in all your hearts. . . . I will there establish My reign and My peace. By My power I will destroy all obstacles, because I am the Master of hearts and I know all their miseries, you, My daughter, are the channel of My graces; know that a channel has nothing of itself, all passes through it; like a channel you must retain nothing, but tell all that I have communicated to you. I have chosen you to make known the merits of My Holy Passion for all, but I will that you remain hidden. It is my affair to manifest later, that it is by this means the world will be saved — and also by the hands of My Immaculate Mother!"

MOTIVES FOR DEVOTION TO THE HOLY WOUNDS

The God of Calvary in confiding this "Mission" to Sister Mary Martha was pleased to reveal to her ravished soul innumerable motives for invoking the divine Wounds, as also the benefits of this devotion. Each day and at each instant, in order to excite her to become an ardent apostle of the devotion, He unveiled to her the inappreciable treasures of these sources of life:

"No soul, after My holy Mother, has had, like you the grace of contemplating My holy Wounds day and night. My daughter, do you recognize the treasure of the world? the world does not wish to recognize it."

"I will that you should thus consider them in order to comprehend better what I have done in coming to suffer for you."

"My daughter, each time that you offer to My Father the merits of My divine Wounds, you gain an immense fortune. Like to one who should find a great treasure in the earth; but like you could not keep it, God takes it back and My divine Mother also, in order to restore it to you at the moment of death and to apply the merits to souls that need it, for you should make them all profit by the fortune of My holy Wounds."

"Do not remain poor, your Father is very rich. What are your riches? My holy Passion! Let him who is in need come with faith and confidence that he may constantly draw from the riches of My Passion, and from the cavities of My Wounds. This treasure is yours, all is there, all!" . . .

"One of My creatures betrayed Me and sold My Blood,

but it can be bought back, drop by drop. A single drop is sufficient to purify the earth — but it is not thought of, its value is not known.”

“The executioners did well in piercing My Side, My hands and My feet, since they thereby opened fountains whence will eternally flow the waters of My mercy. It is only sin, the cause of it that must be detested.”

“My Father is pleased with the offering of My sacred Wounds and the dolors of My divine Mother. To offer them to Him is to offer Him His glory, to offer heaven to heaven. Behold wherewith to pay for all debtors! For in offering to My Father the merit of My holy Wounds, you satisfy for the sins of men* ”

Jesus urges her, and urges us with her to come to this treasure

“You must confide everything to My divine Wounds and through their merits work for the salvation of souls.”

He asks her to do so with humility: “When My holy Wounds were made, vain men believed that these Wounds were at an end; but they will be eternal and they will be seen eternally by all My creatures. I tell you this that you may not look at them through routine, but venerate them with great humility.”

“Your life is not of this world; take away the Wounds of Jesus and you become terrestrial. You are too material to understand the whole extent of the graces bestowed through their merits. You do not sufficiently look at the sun in its fullness.

*All the above words were pronounced on different occasions, especially in 1868. Sometimes, Our Lord addresses Sister Mary Martha for herself, again through her, the Community and all the faithful.

“My Priests, themselves, are not assiduous enough in urging devotion to the Crucifix. I wish that they would honor Me perfectly. The harvest is great and abundant. You must humble yourself, bury yourself in your nothingness in order to gain souls without regarding what you have already done. Fear not to manifest My Wounds to souls — the way of My Wounds is such a simple and easy manner of going to heaven.”

He asks us to do this with the hearts of Seraphim. Calling her attention to a group of these angelic Spirits pressing around the altar during Holy Mass, He said to Sister Mary Martha: “They are contemplating the beauty, the sanctity of God! they admire, they adore — they cannot imitate. As to you, contemplate above all, the sufferings of Jesus in order to be conformed to Him. Let all come to My Wounds with burning and fervent hearts and make the aspirations with greater ardor in order to obtain the graces of conversion that you solicit.” He asks us to do so with a lively faith: “They are all as if just made, you must offer them as for the first time. In the contemplation of My Wounds is found everything for you and for others. I present them that you may enter therein.”

He asks us to do it with confidence: “Do not be disquieted by earthly things; My daughter, you will see in eternity what you will have gained by My Wounds.”

“The Wounds of My Sacred Feet are an ocean, bring all My creatures to Me there; these openings are large enough to harbor all.”

He asks us to do so in an apostolic spirit, without ever becoming weary. “Pray much that the knowledge of My holy Wounds may be diffused throughout the world.” (At

this moment before the eyes of the ecstatic, there darted forth from the Wounds of Jesus five luminous rays, five rays of glory that enveloped the globe.) "My holy Wounds sustain the world. Ask Me for fortitude in the love of My Wounds, for they are the source of all graces. Invoke them often... and induce others to do so... Frequently and repeatedly speak of them, in order to imprint the devotion in souls."

"A long time will be required for the establishment of this devotion, work at it courageously. All words said on the subject of My holy Wounds give Me pleasure, an intense pleasure! I keep count of them all. Even should there be some who will not come to My Wounds, you, My daughter, must make them enter therein."

Once when Sister Mary Martha was suffering a burning thirst, her good Master said to her: "My daughter, come to Me and I will give you water that will quench your thirst. In the Crucifix there is everything; there all souls may be satiated. My daughter, I wish you to draw from My Wounds for the humble. You have everything with My Wounds. From them proceed substantial works, not by enjoyment but by suffering."

"You are laborers who work in the field of the Lord; with My Wounds you will gain much and without trouble. Offer your actions with those of your Sisters in union with My holy Wounds; nothing can render them more meritorious, nor more agreeable in My eyes. They contain incomprehensible riches — even the least of them."

It is to be remarked that in the manifestations and confidences which have just been related, the divine Savior does not always present Himself to Sister Mary Martha with all

of His adorable Wounds. Sometimes He shows her only a single one. Thus, one day, after this urgent invitation: "You ought to apply yourself to assuage My anguish in contemplating My Wounds," He showed her His right Foot, saying: "How much you should respect this Wound, and, as a dove, hide yourself herein."

Again He showed her His left Hand, saying: "My daughter, take My merits from My left Hand for souls, that they may be at My right for eternity... Religious will be at My right Hand to judge the world, but, in advance I will ask them **an account of the souls that they ought to have saved.**"

THE CROWN OF THORNS

It is striking that Jesus demands for His august Head crowned with thorns a very special worship of veneration, reparation, and love. The Crown of Thorns was for Him a cause of particularly cruel suffering: "My Crown of Thorns caused Me more suffering than all My other Wounds," He confided to His spouse, "it was My most intense suffering after the Garden of Olives. To alleviate it observe your Rule well." The holy Crown is for the faithful soul a source of merit: "Behold," He said, "this Head which was pierced for love of you and by the merits of which you will some day be crowned. Happy the soul that will have contemplated it well, and still better will have practised what it suggests."

"Behold your way! Walk therein simply and you will walk assuredly."

“Souls that will have contemplated and honored My Crown of Thorns on earth, will be My crown of glory in heaven!”

“For the instant that you will have contemplated this Crown here below, I will crown you for eternity. The Crown of Thorns will merit for you a crown of glory.”

It is the choice gift that Jesus bestows upon His special friends: “I give My crown of thorns to My privileged ones; it belongs to My spouses and favored souls; it is the joy of the Blessed, but for My beloved ones on earth it is suffering.” (From the place of each thorn our Sister saw dart forth a ray of glory impossible to describe.)

“My true servants try to suffer as I did, but none can attain to the degree of anguish that I endured.” From these souls Jesus solicits a more tender compassion for His adorable Head. Let us hear the cry from His Heart that He addressed to Sister Mary Martha in expressing a suffering beyond the power of the poor Sister to describe: “Behold Him whom you seek, and the condition in which He is! Look... withdraw the thorns from My Head by offering to My Father the merit of My Wounds for sinners... Go, seek for souls!”

These appeals of the Savior always return as an echo of the eternal *sitio*, I thirst — of longing for the salvation of souls: “Go, seek for souls.”

“Behold your instruction: Sufferings for you; graces, which you should obtain for others. A single soul performing her actions in union with the merits of My holy Crown may gain more than the whole Community.”

To these painful appeals the Master adds encouragements that inflame hearts and induce them to accept every sacri-

face. In the month of October, 1867, He presented Himself to the astonished eyes of our young Sister, His crown irradiated with a sparkling glory: "My Crown of Thorns will illuminate Heaven and all the Blessed. There are on earth some privileged souls to whom I will show it, but the earth is too material to behold its glory, see how beautiful it is after having been so painful!"

The good Master goes still further; He associates her with His triumphs as with His sufferings. He gives her a glimpse of future glorification. Pressing upon her head, with sharp pains, His holy Crown, He said: "Take My Crown, and in this state My Blessed ones will contemplate you." Then addressing the Saints and pointing out His dear Victim: "Behold," said He, the Fruit of My Crown!"

The holy Crown is the happiness of the Just, whilst for the wicked it is an object of terror. Once this was offered to the contemplation of Sister Mary Martha by Him who loved to instruct her in unveiling to her the mysteries of the "Beyond."

Brilliantly illuminated with the splendor of this divine Crown there appeared before her eyes the tribunal of God's justice. Souls passed continually before the sovereign Judge. Those who had been faithful during life cast themselves into the arms of the Savior. Others, at the sight of the holy Crown, and remembering the love of our Lord that they had despised, precipitated themselves, terrified, into the eternal abyss...

So impressive was this vision, that the poor child in relating it, still trembled through fear and terror.

THE HEART OF JESUS

If the Savior thus discovered all the beauties and riches of His divine Wounds to the humble Sister, must He not also open to her the treasures of this great Wound of love?

"Behold the Source whence you should draw; it is rich above all for you!"... said He, in showing her His Wounds in a dazzling splendor, and that of His Sacred Heart shining among the others with an incomparable radiance: "Come even here into the Wound of My divine Side — it is the Wound of love whence issue very ardent flames."

Sometimes Jesus granted her for several successive days a vision of His most holy and glorious Humanity. He remained near His servant conversing familiarly with her as formerly with our Saint Sister Margaret Mary Alacoque. The latter "who never leaves the Heart of Jesus," said: "It was in this manner that Our Lord used to show Himself to me." Whilst the good Master reiterated His loving invitations: "Come then into My Heart, fear nothing . . . approach to draw charity therefrom, and pour it forth upon the world. You may appropriate My treasures."

One day He imparted to her His immense desire of bestowing the graces with which His Heart overflowed: "Take, because the measure is quite full. I can contain them no longer so great is My desire to impart them." Again, it is an invitation to utilize these treasures repeatedly and constantly: "Come and receive from the fullness of My Heart that desires to pour itself forth. I wish to bestow upon you from My abundance, because today I have received in My mercy souls saved by your prayers."

At each instant and under divers forms He appeals for a life of union with His Sacred Heart: "Keep very close to this Heart in order to take and distribute My Blood."

"If you wish to enter into the light of the Lord, you must conceal yourself in My divine Heart... If you wish to know the tenderness of the mercy of Him who loves you so ardently you must approach the opening of My Sacred Heart with respect and humility."

"Behold your center, none can prevent you from loving It — nor make you love It without your own consent. What creatures may say can never deprive you of your treasure, your love!... I will that you love Me without any human support."

Here, our Lord insists, urgently exhorting all His spouses: "I will that the religious soul be entirely detached, for in order to come to My Heart there must be not even a thread of attachment to earth; you must win possession of the Lord by a complete union, a heart to heart with Him — seeking His Heart within your own."

Then He reverts to Sister Mary Martha personally, but through His docile creature He aims at all the faithful, especially consecrated souls: "I need your heart to compensate Me and remain with Me... I will teach you how to love Me as you know not how to do so. The science of love is not learned in books, it is given only to the soul that refers all to the divine Crucified and speaks to Him heart to heart. You must be united to Me in all your actions." And our Lord gave her to understand the conditions and the wonderful fruits of an intimate union with His divine Heart: "The religious who does not lean upon the breast of her Spouse in her pains and labors loses her

time. When she commits faults she should draw close to My Heart with great confidence. In this burning furnace her infidelities disappear, love burns them, consumes them all! You must love Me and abandon all to Me. Repose upon the Heart of your Master as did St. John. You will procure Him a very great glory in loving Him thus."

Ah, how intensely Jesus desires our love! He begs for it! Appearing one day in all the glory of His resurrection, He said to His beloved one, with a deep sigh: "With this, My daughter, I beg like a pauper. I am a beggar for love! I call My children one by one... I look at them with pleasure when they come to Me... I await them!"

Truly appearing like a mendicant, He again repeated, full of sadness: "I beg for your love, but the greater number even among religious souls refuse Me this love. My daughter, love Me purely for Myself without considering chastisement or recompense." Indicating to her our Saint Sister Margaret Mary whose gaze was "devouring" the Heart of Jesus: "She has loved Me with this pure love and uniquely for Myself."

Sister Mary Martha endeavored to love with a similar love. Like a fiery furnace the Sacred Heart attracted her to It by unspeakable ardors.... She was impelled towards her Beloved in the transports of love that consumed her... but which at the same time, left in her soul a suavity all divine. Jesus said to her: "When I choose a heart to love Me and do My will, I enkindle therein the fire of My love. However, I do not keep up this fire without interruption lest self-love should profit and My graces be received through routine. I withdraw from time to time to leave the soul to its own weakness. Then it realizes that it is alone... it

commits faults; these faults keep it in humility. But I do not abandon for those faults the soul that I have chosen, I always esteem it, I am not so sensitive, I pardon and return."

"Each humiliation binds you more intimately to My Heart. I do not ask you for great things — I wish simply the love of your heart."

"Lean upon My Heart, you will discover all the goodness with which It is filled. Here you will learn meekness and humility. Come, My child, cast yourself therein. This union is not only for you, but it is for all the members of your Community. Tell the Superior to come and place in this opening all the actions of your Sisters, — even their recreations; they will be there as in a bank and well guarded."

Here is a touching incident among many others: — When Sister Mary Martha was giving her account this special evening, she interrupted herself to ask her Superior: "Mother, what is meant by a bank?" — a question of her candid ignorance. Then she continued to relate her message: "Your hearts must be united to Mine by humility and annihilation... Oh, My daughter, if you only knew how much My Heart suffers from the ingratitude of so many hearts!... Unite your prayers to those of My Sacred Heart."

It was still more particularly to souls charged with the conduct of others — Mistresses of Novices or Superiors — that the Heart of Jesus was opened with Its riches. "You will perform a great act of charity in offering My Wounds every day for all the Novice Mistresses of the Institute."

"Tell your Mistress to come and replenish her soul at the Source, and to-morrow, her heart will be full to pour My

graces upon you. It is for her to enkindle the fire of holy love in souls in speaking to them very often of the sufferings of My Heart. I will bestow upon souls the grace of understanding the maxims of My Sacred Heart. By fidelity and correspondence with grace all will attain to it at the hour of death."

"My daughter, your Superiors are the depositaries of My Heart. I put into their souls all graces and supports according to My Will. Tell your Mother to come and take from these Sources (His Heart and His Wounds) for your Sisters... She should depend upon My Sacred Heart and confide all to It without any human respect."

PROMISES OF OUR LORD

Our Lord not satisfied with confiding His holy Wounds to Sister Mary Martha, making known to her the urgent motives and the benefits of this devotion and at the same time the conditions that assure its success... also multiplied encouraging promises. These promises are so frequent and of such varied forms that we must limit the narration of them.

The devotion to the holy Wounds can never mislead:

"My daughter, never fear to have all confidence in My Wounds — you will never be deceived though things should appear impossible."

"I will grant all that is asked of Me through the invocation of My holy Wounds — You must spread the devotion. You will obtain all 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.” The holy Wounds sanctify and assure spiritual advancement:

“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 Sisters into My Sacred Wounds; there they will become perfected as gold in the furnace... you can always purify yourself in My Wounds.”

“My Wounds will repair yours... My Wounds will cover all your faults... Those who honor them will have a true knowledge of Jesus Christ. In meditating on them a new aliment of love will always be found.”

The holy Wounds are a source of merit:

“My daughter, plunge your actions into My Wounds and they will be of value. All your actions, even the least, steeped in My Blood, will acquire by this alone an infinite merit and will content My Heart... In offering them for the conversion of sinners, even though the sinners are not converted, you will have the same merit before God as if they were.”

The holy Wounds are a balm and a solace in suffering:

“When you have some trouble, something to suffer — quickly place it in My Wounds and the pain will be alleviated.”

“This aspiration must often be repeated near the sick: **My Jesus, pardon and mercy through the merits of Thy holy Wounds!** This prayer will solace soul and body.”

The holy Wounds have a marvelous efficacy for the conversion of sinners: One day Sister Mary Martha seized with anguish at the thought of the crimes of the world exclaimed:

“My Jesus, take care of Thy children, do not consider their sins!”

The divine Master in answer taught her the aspiration that we already know: “My Jesus, pardon and mercy through the merits of Thy holy Wounds!” then He added: “Many will experience the efficacy of this aspiration.” “I desire,” continued the Savior, “that Priests give it often to their penitents in the holy Tribunal.”

“A sinner who will say the following prayer: **Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Wounds of our Lord Jesus Christ to heal those of our souls, will obtain conversion.**”

The Holy Wounds save the world and assure a good death: “My holy Wounds will infallibly save you... they will save the world. One must die with the lips upon these sacred apertures. There will be no death for the soul that expires in My Wounds, they give true life.”

The sacred Wounds are all powerful with God:

“Of yourself you are nothing, but your soul united to My Wounds becomes powerful; it can even do several things at once: merit and obtain help in all needs without particularizing.” Placing His adorable Hand on the head of the dear privileged one, the Savior added: “Now, you have My power. It is always to those like you who have nothing, that I am pleased to give most grace. My power is in My Wounds; with them you will become powerful... Yes, you can obtain all, you are all powerful. You have in some manner more power than I; you can disarm My justice, for although everything comes from Me I wish to be invoked, I wish all to have recourse to Me.”

The holy Wounds will be, in particular, the safe-guard of the Community.

"The political situation was daily becoming more critical," relates our Mother, "in October, 1873, we had made a novena to the holy Wounds of Jesus. Our Lord immediately testified His joy to the Confidante of His Heart. Then He addressed to her these consoling words: 'I love your Community so greatly, no evil will ever befall it'."

"Let not your Mother be troubled at the news of the times, for often reports from without are false. My word alone is true! I tell you there is nothing to fear... If you cease praying, you need fear... The Chaplet of Mercy is a counterpoise to My justice, it restrains My vengeance."

Finally, ratifying anew the gift of His Wounds to the Community, our Lord said to her: "Behold your treasure!... The treasure of the holy Wounds encloses crowns that you may take and give to others in offering these Wounds to My Father to heal those of all souls. Some day these souls for whom by your prayers you have obtained a holy death, will turn towards you to thank you... All men will appear before Me on the judgment day and I will then designate My favored spouses who will have purified the world by My holy Wounds... A day will come when you shall see these great things."...

"My daughter, this is said to humble you not to inflate you with pride... Know well that it is not for you, but for Me, in order that you may lead souls to Me."...

* * *

Among the promises of our Lord Jesus Christ, two should be especially signalized; those concerning the Church, and those relating to the Souls in Purgatory.

THE HOLY WOUNDS AND THE CHURCH

Our Lord often renewed to Sister Mary Martha the promise of the triumph of the Holy Church through the power of His Wounds and of the Immaculate Virgin:

“My daughter, perform your charge well, which is to offer My divine Wounds to My Eternal Father, because from them must come the triumph of the Church, which will come to pass through My Immaculate Mother.”

But from the beginning our Lord anticipated every illusion and ambiguity. There could be no question of the material, visible triumph which was the dream of some. Never will the waves flow with perfect docility about the barque of Peter; one may sometimes tremble at the fury of their agitation... To struggle, always to struggle, is a law of the life of the Church: “They do not know what is demanded in asking its triumph... My Church will never triumph visibly.”

However, through all the struggles and anguish there is accomplished in the Church, and by the Church, the work of our Lord Jesus Christ: the salvation of the world. — The work of our Lord Jesus Christ is accomplished all the better, as prayer — which has its place in the divine plan, more urgently implores the help of heaven. And surely heaven is specially moved when invoked in the name of the redeeming Wounds. Jesus frequently insists: **“The invocations of the holy Wounds will obtain an incessant victory for the Church.”**

“You must incessantly draw from these Sources for the triumph of My Church.”

"My good Master, it is a long time since you told me to do this... and the triumph comes not!" she exclaimed in her usual simplicity. "My daughter," answered our benign Savior, "you should be well satisfied that there is not more chastisement, — you restrain My arm. I promise to give the triumph, but little by little."

And the **Holy Founder** came to complete the lesson of the Master: "Even though our Lord promises the triumph through Mary Immaculate, you must not relax in prayer and the offering of the holy Wounds."

At the period of a great persecution of the Church, Sister Mary Martha often asked Jesus to cover the Sovereign Pontiff with the protection of His holy Wounds. This prayer was very pleasing to our Lord. He caused our Sister to see that grace superabounded over the Holy Father Pius IX, and that the prayers of the Community had greatly contributed to it: "A special grace was imparted to him from My Wounds."

Towards the end of 1867, our Lord revealed to her that "His Holiness would have still more to suffer, he would have no more peace, but, thanks to prayer, he would be maintained in the Holy See in tribulation." It is plain that our Lord wishes no illusion. However, this does not prevent Him from requiring constant prayers:

"I wish the Community to be the support of the Holy See by prayer and above all by the invocation of My holy Wounds. — You will thus oppose a barrier to its enemies."

Nor from expressing His satisfaction for the prayers offered: "I am contented with the prayers of the Community for the support of the Church. You will have an extra degree of glory for having been good soldiers of the Holy

Father. You will always have occasion to be so, and you must pray much for the Holy Church."

Nor from giving assurance of a protection against which nothing could prevail:

"Whilst guarded by My Wounds there is nothing to be feared either for yourself or the Church. Should this benefit fail you would then understand what you possess."

THE HOLY WOUNDS AND THE SOULS IN PURGATORY

"The benefit of the holy Wounds causes graces to descend from heaven and the Souls in Purgatory to ascend there."

"Every time that you look at the divine Crucified with a pure heart you will obtain deliverance for five Souls from Purgatory; one at each Source."

"If your heart is very pure and well detached you will also obtain the same favor at each Station in making the Way of the Cross, through the merits of each of My Wounds."

"When you offer My holy Wounds for sinners you must not forget to do so for the Souls in Purgatory, as there are but few who think of their relief."

"The holy Wounds are the treasure of treasures for the Souls in Purgatory."

One Sunday in Lent the Sister's suffering state not permitting her to assist at the sermon, her Beloved came to her and said: "I am going to give you an occupation: offer your

sufferings in union with My divine sufferings, for the Souls in Purgatory."

The Sister began to make this offering, and at each repetition she saw a soul ascend to heaven. She was at the twentieth, when the Eternal Father said to her: "I give you My Son's power, provided, you offer your heart united to His." She endeavored to do so and at each act of offering and union, — according to her expression — she saw a flight of souls ascend to heaven "like a flight of birds."

Souls delivered by her sometimes came to express their gratitude saying: "May the feast that saved us — the feast of the holy Wounds — never pass. Before coming to the enjoyment of God, we did not know the efficacy of this devotion. In offering the holy Wounds of our Lord to His Father a second Redemption is procured."

Among these souls some are particularly near the heart of a religious — the souls of her own Sisters. Sister Mary Martha prayed and suffered for them very specially, the Blessed Virgin expressed her satisfaction: "The Souls of your Sisters in Purgatory are my daughters, I take great pleasure in hearing you pray for their deliverance... I suffer much to see them in this fire... Nearly all of them go there... I am Queen and I wish those souls to reign with me. In spite of all our power, my Son and I cannot deliver them; they must expiate. But you can so easily relieve them and open heaven to them in offering the holy Wounds for their souls to God the Father." Our Lord said to her: "Offer them for all their faults against the Rule."

One of her deceased Sisters appeared to her glorified, shortly after death and said to her: "I used to think that

I performed my actions purely for God, but when they were shown to me, I saw they were full of natural motives. The confidence that I had in the Holy Wounds of our Lord saved me. Oh, how good it is to die, in passing through the Wounds of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

THE HOLY WOUNDS AND HEAVEN

As a crowning of these magnificent promises our Lord finally showed in His Wounds "a pledge of our future glory," and He gave Sister Mary Martha a glimpse of the happiness that the contemplation of them will procure in heaven:

"Those who pray with humility and who meditate on My Passion, will one day participate in the glory of My divine Wounds, their members will receive from them a resplendent beauty and glory."

"The more you will have contemplated My painful Wounds on this earth, the higher will be your contemplation of them glorious in heaven."

"The soul who during life has honored and studied 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."

It occurred to Sister Mary Martha one day when offering the holy Wounds, that she was losing her time. Our Lord reproved her:

"Is it that My Blessed in heaven do nothing for Me

because they are always repeating the same thing?... They love and adore Me, they contemplate My Wounds and thank Me... and their joy is always full and entire" At that moment the happy Sister received the favor of beholding the Holy Virgin and the Saints contemplating the Wounds of Jesus.

"If I and the Saints are in heaven," said the good Mother to her, "we are here through the merits of the divine Wounds of My dear Son."

"In exploiting these holy Wounds you will also become great."

Our Lord resumed: "My daughter, where are My Saints produced if not in My Wounds? All My Saints are the effects of My Wounds. My Wounds are for My glory and yours — eternally."

"It is within My Wounds, in the effulgence of these five suns that My Spouses will one day reign. The Blessed who have contemplated them for ages are not satiated.....they will contemplate them forever, and will forever enjoy. Oh, how insignificant is the earth in comparison with such a great good!"

Very often a glimpse of heaven is given to this dear soul whilst she hears the voice of God the Father: "See, My daughter, all this is the result of the sufferings of My Son... All is shown to you, that with more confidence and joy you may offer the holy Wounds of Jesus."

THE DEMANDS OF OUR LORD

In exchange for so many exceptional graces Jesus asked of the Community only two practices, of which we shall say but a word in passing: **The Holy Hour and the Rosary of the Holy Wounds.**

At the time of the cholera, which in 1867 claimed so many victims in the region of Chambéry, our Lord expressed the desire that on every Friday the Holy Hour should be made by five Sisters each of whom should be charged with honoring one of His Wounds.*

The Most Holy Virgin joined her request to the demand of her divine Son, by these words indicating a painful regret: "There is no religious House on earth where the holy Wounds of Jesus are honored particularly on Friday evening... During this hour you must contemplate these holy apertures and bury yourself therein."

The Blessed Virgin teaches the happy privileged Sister how this pious exercise should be performed. Appearing as Our Lady of the Seven Dolors holding her Son in her arms:

My daughter," she said to her, "the first time that I contemplated the Wounds of My dear Son was when His most holy Body was placed in my arms. I meditated upon His sorrows and endeavored to draw them into my heart..... I considered His divine Feet, one, then the other... thence I went to His Heart where I beheld the great Wound, the most painful for my motherly heart... I contemplated the left Hand then the right, and afterwards the Crown of

*For Sister Mary Martha the Wounds of the Feet formed one wound; the bleeding Head crowned with thorns was the fifth.

Thorns. All these Wounds pierced my heart. Behold my Passion! Seven swords are in my heart, and it is through my heart, that the Sacred Wounds of my divine Son must be honored."...

It was at about the same time (1867-1868) that, according to His will manifested by our Lord, superiors established the daily recitation of the "**Rosary of the Holy Wounds.**"*

From the beginning this Rosary was recited as follows:

On the cross and on the first three beads the beautiful prayer inspired to a priest at Rome:

"O Jesus, divine Redeemer, be merciful to us and to the whole world.—Amen."

"Strong God, holy God, immortal God, have mercy on us and on the whole world.—Amen."

"Grace and mercy, oh, my Jesus, during present dangers; cover us with Thy precious Blood.—Amen."

"Eternal Father, grant us mercy through the Blood of Jesus Christ, Thy only Son; grant us mercy, we beseech Thee.—Amen, Amen, Amen."

On the small beads:

"My Jesus, pardon and mercy.—R. By the merits of Thy holy Wounds." 300 days indulgence, *toties quoties*.

On the large beads:

"Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Wounds of our Lord Jesus Christ.—R. To heal those of our souls." 300 days indulgence, *toties quoties*.

These last two invocations were those indicated by our Lord Himself and to which He made such magnificent promises.

*For present needs without engagement for the future.

The indulgences were first for the Institute of the Visitation only — but they have been extended to all the faithful to perpetuity, in virtue of an Indult of the Sacred Penitentiary (January 16, 1924).

It was not without difficulty that Superiors succeeded in introducing the recitation of the Rosary of the Holy Wounds; as at Paray, through an extreme zeal for the Rule, more than one objection was made. Our Mothers, as well as our poor Sister, suffered. But our Lord encouraged them: "My daughter, God's graces are not given without some difficulty in accomplishing My will... My Wounds belong to you; the demon has lost the merit of them, therefore, he is enraged against you. But the more opposition and obstacles you meet, the more abundant My grace. Fear nothing, pass over all obstacles; this is true love... He who sustains you cannot be moved, and I will always be your defender... but this suffering is necessary."

God the Father holding a key in His hand seemed to threaten in a severe manner: "If you fail to do what I wish, I will close the Sources and give them to others."

With a firmness full of patience and humility, our Mothers Thérèse Eugénie and Marie Alexis succeeded in obtaining the acceptance of this little practise. Jesus manifestly sustained them.

A Sister whose superior intelligence and solid judgment were of authority in the Monastery, was strongly opposed to the new devotion. One day, the humble Sister approached her charged with a mission from the Master; repeating to her, an absolutely secret matter that had passed between her and God in the interior of her soul and which

had never been confided to any one... and which Sister Mary Martha could know from God alone...

Before such a proof the Sister submitted loyally, and to repair her past opposition did her utmost to propagate the devotion.

"Devotion to My holy Wounds is the remedy for these iniquitous times," assured the Savior. "I Myself will it — and your aspirations must be made with great fervor."

This progress enraged the demon who vented his wrath upon our Sister whom he began to deride: "What are you doing there? You are losing your time. Others say beautiful prayers from the books, but you are always repeating the same thing."

But Jesus drove the demon away: "My daughter, I see all, I count all. Tell your Mother that I keep account of each of her aspirations, she must do all in her power to maintain the Chaplet of Mercy, I am happy to see you honor My holy Wounds. I can now dispense more plentifully the fruits of My redemption, and you who know My will, must be doubly fervent... You will lose much if you relax in devotion to My Wounds."

"As there is an army drawn up for evil, there is also one drawn up for Me. With this prayer, you are more powerful than an army against My enemies. All of you are very fortunate to whom I have taught the prayer that disarms Me: **"My Jesus, pardon and mercy, by the merits of Thy holy Wounds."** The graces that you receive by these invocations are most ardent graces..... They come from heaven; they must return to heaven..."

"Tell your Superior that she will always be heard in any

necessity whatever, when she prays to Me through My holy Wounds in causing the **Rosary of Mercy** to be said."

"Your Monasteries attract graces from God upon the dioceses in which they are ; when you offer My holy Wounds to My Father, I look upon you as extending your hands to heaven for graces... In truth, this prayer is not of earth, it is from heaven. It can obtain all things. You must tell this to your Mother; remind her to write it for the future, in order that you may have special recourse to it."

The recommendations of our Lord have not been in vain. The custom of a daily recourse to "this prayer from heaven" has been maintained. When difficulties and serious needs occur or dangers threaten, the invocations are more numerous and fervent... and after an experience of fifty years the Community can declare that it could always rejoice at the result of its confidence. Not that trials were spared nor that death failed in its visits... far from this! but trials were always sweetened by much consolation and the deaths were holy and peaceful in the shadow of the sacred Wounds.

SINNERS

Although the Community yielded to the demands of our Lord on these two points, Jesus did not cease His appeals. He even became more insistent in presenting His Wounds as sources of grace for sinners and as eloquent lessons for religious souls: "It is a long time," — it is Jesus who speaks, — "since I desired to see you distribute the fruits of My Redemption. You are now doing what I wish for

the salvation of the world. At each word that you pronounce of the Chaplet of Mercy, I allow a drop of My Blood to fall upon the soul of a sinner."

"Men trample My Blood under foot, I will that you, My Spouses, should love Me and work for My love."

"If you do not profit by all the riches with which My Wounds are filled for you, you will be very guilty....."

"I will reject souls that do not venerate My holy Wounds, but who on the contrary deride them."

"Sinners despise the Crucifix: I keep My patience, but a day will come when I shall be avenged."

"My Spouse, come to Me with your heart very empty because I have wherewith to fill it — come to the conquest of souls!" And showing her a number of sinners in the world, He said: "I show them to you that you may lose no time."

During the month of the Precious Blood the vision of Jesus Crucified became habitually constant to Sister Mary Martha:

"My daughter, I have suffered as much for a single soul as for all together... The Redemption has been abundant." The Redeeming Blood flowed in waves from the adorable Wounds and Jesus lovingly murmured: "It is the Blood of your Spouse... of your Father... It is for your souls that it has been shed. I am the only one who can shed this divine Blood!... My daughter, I am your Spouse. I am all yours for souls" ...

Sometimes she beheld the irritated justice of God ready to weigh down upon the world: "Do not pray to Me, I wish to punish," said the Christ in His indignation. "A second Redemption would be necessary to regenerate the world."

The Eternal Father intervened declaring: "I cannot give My Son a second time."

But our Sister understood that by the reiterated offering of the holy Wounds we could work this redemption.

In proportion to her offerings she saw the divine anger change into "a shower of graces that spread abroad upon the world."

"My daughter," the Lord Jesus said at another time, "you must carry off the palm of victory; it proceeds from My holy Passion... on Calvary the victory appeared impossible, but it was thence that My triumph burst forth. My constant desire is that men profit by My Redemption, — but faithful or not, — all must redound to My glory." Our Lord terrified her in a vision of His justice excited by the sins of men... Then in a transport, humbling herself profoundly, she exclaimed: "My God, regard not our misery but Thy mercy!" And she began to appease the Savior by multiplied invocations to the holy Wounds. "Often offer them to Me to gain sinners," encouraged the good Master, "for I hunger for souls."

THE HOLY WOUNDS AND RELIGIOUS

"Those in the House of God must live united to My Wounds," said the Savior. "Your vows proceed from My Wounds."

One day when Sister Mary Martha was making the Way of the Cross, Jesus gave her to understand at the tenth Station the merit of her despoilment in regard to the vow of poverty, asking her to offer the holy Wounds — "for those

of His spouses who need despoilment, that they may know how to clothe Him by a more exact practise of the vow of poverty." Then at the Crucifixion He added: — "that being vowed to Him we ought to be nailed to the Cross with Him... when we follow our own will we declare ourselves enemies of the Cross. You must allow yourself to be governed by your Superior, as I extending My Hands allowed Myself to be attached to the Cross." Again He asked her to pray "for those who would wish to detach themselves from the Cross, by failing in obedience."....

"My daughter," He said to her, "consider My Crown and you will behold mortification: — My stretched out Hands and you will learn obedience; — you will understand poverty in seeing Me all naked on the Cross; — purity in Him who is all pure and who loves you as a Spouse."...

He taught her that Religious are so many souls vowed to suffering: "I would wish to see all My Spouses like Me fastened to the Cross. Must not the beloved resemble her Spouse?" said He whom the holy Lover of the Canticles describes thus: "My Beloved is white and ruddy."

"I will give you daily sufferings," He promises her, "that you may have the more frequent recourse to My divine Wounds."

"I wish you to be crucified with Me and in many ways... In measure as you will say: 'Yes,' I will crucify you the more."

"My daughter, look at My Crown; I did not complain that it made Me suffer too much — I accepted it from My Father for you. See My Hands, I did not say, I will not yield them, the suffering is too great—and the same of My Feet."

Then Jesus showed His servant His sacred Flesh torn in shreds: "Your Spouse is covered with Wounds, I wish you to be the same. Contemplate Me on the Cross. I considered neither the executioners nor their outrages — I referred all to My Father. Thus must you fulfill your duty in doing what I wish without looking to any creature, and be as I was, continually submissive to My Father."

Another day, appearing to her on the Cross, all emaciated, "nothing but skin and bone," this tender Master exclaimed: "Behold, My daughter, what those whom I have chosen must endure if they would attain to glory! My Mother passed through this way of suffering, it is very rough for those who go by force and without love; but sweet and consoling is the way for souls who bear their Cross with generosity. The spouses of Jesus Christ must suffer... I have no longer any but My spouses to compensate Me."

Jesus, on another occasion said: "My daughter, you must love the Crucifix much, and crucify yourself for the love of Jesus, that you may be able to die like Jesus and rise to life as He did... I now renew the graces of My Passion... it is for you to spread the benefit of it over the whole world."



SISTER MARY MARTHA'S RESPONSE TO THE DESIRES OF JESUS

Touched to the depths of her being by such revelations our dear Sister became totally absorbed. She was seized with such a love for the adorable Wounds that she was consumed with the desire of honoring them. Her most ardent wish was to arouse in the world the sentiments of love and gratitude, which they should inspire, ready to sacrifice her life for the extension of a worship which she longed to see intense and unlimited.

If however, her ardor relented or the invocations came less frequently to her lips, Jesus immediately presented Himself to her in the pitiable state to which our iniquities have reduced Him, showing her His Wounds and lovingly reprimanding her: "They always behold you even when you forget them — you, who should ever bear them in mind... It ought to be sufficient that I have shown them to you so often—but, no, I must always revive your fervor!"

And again: "It was I who willed the inventions of the torturers to make Me suffer. I endured them through love for you and to satisfy My Father — all was done by My will... Now, My daughter, I will make you suffer also, because I will it. I desire and I will you to indemnify Me for the outrages I receive.... I wish you to be a **ready victim**; I will be your Sacrificer. Lift up your heart and cast it into My Wounds!"

Showing Himself to her, one day, as in a picture: "You must copy Me," He supplicated, with an accent of unspeakable tenderness and ardent desire, — "You must copy

Me. Painters produce pictures that are often unlike the original, but here it is I who am the Artist and who will make My image in you if you will attend to Me."

Reverting to this invitation on another occasion, our divine Savior taught her: "My daughter, when an artist wishes to paint a picture he first prepares the canvas that is to receive his brush." "Good Master, I do not understand what that means?" she exclaimed in her extreme ignorance. And Jesus explained that her soul was this blank canvas: "My daughter, prepare yourself to receive all the brush strokes that I may wish to give you."

Later, He asked her: "My daughter, do you wish to be crucified with Me, or would you rather be glorified?" "Ah, my good Jesus, I should love rather to be crucified. I would wish to suffer for Thee as Thou hast suffered for me." "You should suffer for Me as I have suffered for you in doing all your actions to please Me and in refusing Me no sacrifice."...

At these words a great fear came upon her and she began to enumerate her many defects as an obstacle to the graces of God. "Your defects," replied her tender Master, will all appear on the day of judgment, but for your glory and Mine.... I accept all your actions and sufferings for sinners and for the souls in Purgatory, but you must remain close to My Heart and to My Wounds, being one with Me... You must not leave My Heart, for I could no longer communicate Myself to you."

"Good Master, teach me the Catechism," she asked, with her candor and childlike simplicity.

"Come into your dwelling, My spouse," answered Jesus in showing her His Wounds; "come into your dwelling,

there you will find all... I will be your teacher and I will instruct you to immolate yourself for Me and for the neighbor."

"Behold your book — the Crucifix!... All true science is in the study of My Wounds. No other book will be needed. Here is where My Saints read and will read eternally; to it alone should you be attached, it is the only science to which you should apply."

"When you have recourse to My Wounds," our Lord confided to her, "you solace the divine Crucified;" and turning towards our Holy Founder, present at this conversation: "Behold your daughter," said He, "one of yours who extracts My Blood from the sacred cavities to give it to souls and appease My justice."

Our Sister, devoured as she was by the love of God, profited by this moment to ask our Blessed Father to obtain that she might soon enter the heavenly court to enjoy the sovereign Good. He thus answered her supplication: "My daughter, you must fulfil your task; no one can enter heaven before accomplishing his work here below. Should you do so you would wish to return to earth to finish your work for the glory of the divine Master and to appease the irritated justice of God... I rejoice in the glory that you also give me, in invoking the holy Wounds."

Thus was Sister Mary Martha incessantly sustained and encouraged in her "task" according to the expression constantly on her lips. This task, as we have seen was, in the first place continually to make known and offer the merits of the holy Wounds of our Lord Jesus Christ for the needs of the Church militant and of the Church suffering;

and afterwards, to endeavor, to renew this salutary devotion throughout the whole world.

The first duty regarded her personally — our Lord had bound her to it by solemn promises already remote and written down by the Superior

“I, Sister Mary Martha Chambon, promise to our Lord Jesus Christ to offer myself every morning to God the Father in union with the divine Wounds of Jesus Crucified, for the salvation of the whole world and for the good and perfection of my Community. I will adore Him in all hearts that receive Him in the Holy Eucharist... I will thank Him that He is pleased to enter so many hearts that are so little prepared... I promise our Lord to offer every ten minutes, with the help of His grace and in a spirit of penance, the divine Wounds of His sacred Body to the Eternal Father... to unite all my actions to His holy Wounds according to the intention of His adorable Heart, for the triumph of Holy Church, for sinners and the Souls in Purgatory, for all the needs of my Community, of the Novitiate and School and in expiation for all the faults committed therein.... All through love, without obligation of sin.”

The invocation: **“Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Wounds of Our Lord Jesus Christ to heal those of our souls,”** is the formula of the offering...

Sister Mary Martha had promised the offering for every ten minutes, but there was hardly a moment in the day in which she did not renew it, adding the second invocation: **“My Jesus, pardon and mercy by the merits of Thy holy Wounds.”**

The existence of our Sister thus became an uninterrupted prayer. Union with God, a recollected silence could be

read upon her countenance. Seeing her one was struck by her eyes nearly always closed, her lips murmuring unceasing prayers. In the choir, above all, she was truly absorbed in Him who deigned to manifest Himself to the eyes of her soul, as Father and Friend.

* * *

As to the second part of the "task," that of reawakening in souls devotion to the holy Wounds, this did not depend uniquely upon the heroic generosity of Sister Mary Martha... Our Lord enlightened her upon its extent and difficulties: "Your way is to make Me known and loved by means of My holy Wounds, above all in the future. A long time will be required to establish this devotion."

The veil of the future seemed to be partially raised before Sister Mary Martha in a sort of vision, the obscurity of which is greatly deplored by our honored Mother Therese Eugénie Revel, who writes:

"We know nothing of the object and signification of this vision. Without seeking an interpretation which could not be satisfactory we simply relate facts as known. Sister Mary Martha had, with the concurrence of her Superiors, introduced the devotion to the holy Wounds into the Community; this was a first step; numerous Monasteries have followed this example and adopted the devotion — this is a second. The concession of 300 days indulgence in favor of the whole Order of the Visitation — a third step.

And now the fourth, is most favorably announced for there are secure grounds for hope, that, — the publication

of the graces granted to our Sister; the salutary influence of the words of Jesus concerning His holy and loving Passion; the zeal of so many devoted religious; the extension of the indulgences to all the faithful; and the very special encouragements received will all contribute to attract souls to have recourse with increased avidity to the infinite treasures of the Passion of the Savior.

LAST YEARS AND DEATH OF SISTER MARY MARTHA

The object of this notice is simply to give a sketch of the divine plan in the life of Sister Mary Martha, in explaining her mission, her "task" of depositary and apostle of the Sacred Wounds, but this is only one phase of her interior life. We have yet to speak of the Holy Infant Jesus and of the intimate and gracious communications which existed between this "Child-soul," so pure and simple, and the celestial Friend of the little and virgins; of the love of her heart — despoiled of every other love — for Jesus in the Holy Eucharist; and to show how this constant and close union with Jesus Crucified and Jesus-Infant bore her naturally, as if by instinct, to the great and solid devotions; for example, her devotion to the Most Holy Trinity with the extraordinary happenings (we dare not say miraculous) which were more than once the recompense; her tender devotion toward Mary whom in every sense of the expression she took for her Mother, and who proved herself a true Mother, coming to complete the lessons of Jesus, and when necessary to impose a maternal correction upon her

child. There also remain her mortifications to be enumerated and her ecstasies described.

All these things will be related in detail in the "Life" of Sister Mary Martha now in preparation and to be printed for circulation—if God so wills.



Graces and divine communications truly filled all the hours of this exceptional life until the death of our honored Mother Thérèse Eugénie Revel, December 30, 1887.

Long before this, Jesus, showing Sister Mary Martha the two Mothers who had the secret of all her graces, put this question to her: "Are you willing to make the sacrifice of them to Me?" And this soul, disengaged from all that was not Jesus, had acquiesced—with the reserve however, that henceforth nothing should appear of the favors with which He gratified her . . . that everything should remain entirely hidden between God and her soul.

Jesus promised and kept His word. After the death of our good Mother Thérèse Eugénie He covered, with an always more impenetrable veil, her whom He had resolved to keep concealed unto the end.

God permitted, by a concourse of circumstances too long to relate, that the succeeding Superiors had only a very vague knowledge of the graces received, the records of the Sister's recitals having been placed in other hands as long as she lived.

During the last twenty years of her life there was no exterior manifestation of these marvellous graces—nothing.

except the long hours during which Sister Mary Martha remained before the Most Blessed Sacrament immovable, insensible, as in ecstasy, and no one dared interrogate her regarding what passed during these blessed moments between her ravished soul and the divine Guest of the Tabernacle.

This continuous repetition of prayers, labor and mortification, this silence and absolute self-effacement seem to us a proof the more—and not the less convincing—of the truth of the unheard of graces with which she was favored. A soul of suspected, or even ordinary humility, would have tried to attract attention, would have perhaps gloried in the work that Jesus was operating within her and by her—Sister Mary Martha, never! . . . She buried herself with delight in the shadow of the common and hidden life. . . . But as the grain of mustard seed cast into the earth, the devotion to the holy Wounds germinated in hearts.



During the last Christmas night that our Sister passed on earth, Jesus—we love to believe it—had warned her of her near departure from this world, and at the same time of the sufferings that He would still require of her.

A Sister near her during the Midnight Mass, heard her exclaim with anguish: "O my Jesus, not **that!** . . . all, yes, all, but not **that!** . . . "That" must have been a distressing, painful sickness—above all an interior abandonment, the absence of her Beloved! She, habituated to His dear presence, to His daily conversation, could not without heartrending anguish, accept the privation.

From this day a profound sadness was imprinted upon her countenance. Attacked by a severe cold to which grave complications were soon added, she received with joy the Extreme Unction on February 13, 1907.

The ascent of a painful Calvary remained for her. Five weeks of supreme purification, during which her Savior identified her more than ever with the moral and physical agonies of His Passion. He had warned her in advance: **“The sickness which will cause your death will emanate from My Wounds.”**

We felt that there was something mysterious in this last combat of nature. . . .

March 21, after a night of acute suffering, there ensued a great calm, an intense silence. The Community surrounded the dying Sister, reciting by thousands of times the invocations to the holy Wounds.

Finally, at 8 o'clock in the evening, at the first Vespers of her Dolors, Mary came to claim the child whom she had taught to love Jesus! And the Beloved received forever into the Wound of His Sacred Heart, the Spouse whom He had made here below His chosen Victim, His Confidante, and the Apostle of His holy Wounds.

Dieu soit béni!





When in the latter part of 1923 this sketch of Sister Mary Martha Chambon was issued, not foreseeing that it would go beyond the Monasteries of the Visitation, it was thought that a few hundred copies would suffice.

But now, without counting the various translations, nearly ten thousand copies have been dispersed in six months, the increasing demands requiring a fourth French edition.

For this diffusion as rapid as unforeseen, we thank God! It is a proof to us that our Lord has blessed a work undertaken solely for the glory of His Holy Wounds and that the brochure—in attracting attention to the Sources of Salvation—will afford consolation to many hearts. From all directions testimonials of gratitude come to us: from pious souls whose fervor is increased by devotion to the Holy Wounds; from those in anguish who eagerly receive from the lips of Jesus the word that consoles and vivifies; from Holy Priests, telling their joy in beholding the faithful turn toward Him, who, "exalted upon the Cross, draws all to Himself!"



A consoling incident has been related to us: it is the fulfillment of the promises of our Lord Jesus Christ in favor of sinners: "At each word of the Chaplet of Mercy that you pronounce, I allow a drop of My Blood to fall upon the soul of a sinner."

Many letters received tell of graces obtained. . . . We choose among the number the following witnessed by the Sister Assistant of the Religious Auxiliatrices of Chambéry.

M. N—— had become seriously ill with no one to attend to him. At the request of charitable neighbors the Sister Auxiliatrice came to his assistance. The poor man had not practised his religion for many years and had positively refused to make his confession to the priest who visited him, or to see him again.

After three days of intense suffering, during which the good Sister in her ministrations to him constantly repeated in a low voice the invocations to the Holy Wounds: **“My Jesus, pardon and mercy, through the merits of Thy Holy Wounds,”** etc., at the urgent request of the Religious, the man's son again called the priest. Without the least hesitation he was accepted and from that moment there was a complete transformation in the patient. When in great pain, through force of habit, impious words escaped him, with a touching good will he would exclaim: **“I ought not to say that—‘My Jesus, pardon and mercy!’”** . . . He said to the Sister: **“Pray for me, I have much to expiate!”** Death found him thus well disposed—a death that opened heaven. **“There will be no death for the soul that will expire in My Wounds: They give true life!”**

D. S. B.

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