

Pniewy
St. Olaf

Holy Thursday
March 24, 1921

TESTAMENT

OF AN OLD VERY LOVING MOTHER

My Last Words To My Children

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THE REQUESTS OF AN OLD MOTHER

TO HER DEAREST CHILDREN

My dearest children, you know how much I love you and how greatly the good of your souls lies within my heart. I would like then to leave you the advice flowing from a mother's loving heart to help you persevere on the path which God Himself has indicated to us, to our Congregation, by circumstances.

Is it not a lack of humility on my part, that in writing my testament I am in some way imitating our Founding Mother, Saint Angela? I was afraid of this but my love for you surmounted this fear. The thought continuously recurs to me to leave you my advice and desires for you in a testament, so I undertake this in the name of God. For you, my children, these words of an old Mother, for whom you have a bit of love, will have significance - this I know. Perhaps they will assist many in doing good, and if even in one soul they ignite a spark of God's love, this will bring me happiness. In any case I am writing with the best intentions of the purest love for God and for you, my children, so I trust that God will accept my good intentions and will bless my work.

God be with you, my dearest children. I embrace each one of you and press each of you to my heart. I love each of you and beg the pardon of each of you for the pain, which perhaps through weakness of nature I might have

caused you; for the bad examples I have often set you; and for my behavior which might often have not been consistent with what I was telling you and with what I am now writing. I humbly beg you, forgive everything for that great mother's love which I have for you and which causes me, although very imperfect myself, to desire to see you saintly and perfect. Recompense the Lord with holiness and virtue for my lack of saintliness and virtue. My dearest children, you will thereby contribute to the glory of God and to a shortening of purgatory for your old Mother who would like to be delivered quickly unto the Lord Jesus.

Farewell, my children, I will not cease praying for you and will remain closely bound with each of you in the Heart of Jesus. Your old Mother will constantly pray for you; for you that we all together become united at the feet of Jesus and Mary in heaven; and for our Congregation that it be developed and work solely for the greater glory of God and for the good of souls.

Courage and trust, my dearest children! Although my body be already in the grave, I am with you in heart and soul; I love and bless you. Forward courageously on the path of virtue!

Sursum corda!
Trust!

The Heart of Jesus is with us; we are always united in the Heart of God!

First Request

MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS

My first and most earnest request to you, my children, is to love, love ever more dearly the Divine Heart of Jesus, and do it through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. God has used wretched me to call to life this new branch on the old Ursuline stem, this youngest, weakest branch, but which is the exclusive possession of the Sweetest Heart of Jesus. For this reason also, my children, our most essential task is to love this Divine Heart of Jesus with all our strength. Let us love this Divine Heart; let our life be one unceasing act of love toward the Sweetest Heart of Jesus. In order to be able to love, ask for this love. Let the following short prayer of indulgence (300 days) be a frequent and beloved act of love and faith: "Divine Heart of Jesus, we most fervently ask You, make us love You ever and ever more!" Beseech for yourselves and for your sisters this fervent, ardent love for the Sweetest Heart of Jesus. Let love for the Heart of God control your thoughts so that they are directed again and again to His Heart. Let this Divine Heart of Jesus be the dearest object of your thoughts. Let love for the Divine Heart create in your hearts an unwavering trust in the goodness of the Heart of Jesus, that certainty of trust, which with the total peace of deep conviction looks for everything from the Sweetest Heart of Jesus. Let happen what will, you always persist in the blessed trust that the Heart of Jesus will lead you along the good path even though that path be strewn with thorns. And

therefore never lose either the blessed peace of the soul reposing in the Heart of Jesus, or that unwavering trust that everything will be well, for the Heart of Jesus governs everything according to Its will. This trust, unwavering, childlike, and calm, is one of the greatest proofs of love, which we can give to Jesus. Trust, my children, trust, although life's horizons be black as night, trust! The Lord Jesus, His Heart has prevailed over the world and its poverty and misery. "Fear not, little flock, for it has pleased the Father to grant you the Kingdom." The Kingdom of God's Heart is your lot, and you should strive solely to extend this kingdom, this reign of the Heart of Jesus over souls. For the rest do not be concerned. The Heart of Jesus will give you everything, everything necessary for your salvation, and more than that you do not need! Grant us love, Lord, more and more love, and that for us is enough!

And in your desire truly to love this Heart of God so that your love is a solace for Him, love through the Immaculate Heart of the Most Holy Virgin, our bright Star of the Sea, who will lead us by Her radiant beams to the Divine Sun, to the Sweetest Heart of Jesus. When it becomes cold and dark in your hearts, look to our Star and cleave unto Her Immaculate Heart. Ask our Mother that with Her light She illuminate your darkness and that with Her warmth She lights up your hearts, so that you know how to love, ever and ever better, this Divine Heart of our Jesus!

And finally show your love for the Sweetest Heart through faithful, determined imitation of His virtues. In imitating the virtues of the Divine Heart, prove to be His true handmaidens loving Him above all things.

In the subsequent requests, my children, I want to

place before you the virtues of the Divine Heart, asking at the same time: "My children, imitate courageously the virtues of the Divine Heart of Jesus. Here lies your love, your life, your holiness, and your eternal glory!"

Second Request

HUMILITY

My dearest children look at the humility of the Divine Heart and imitate it. We are children of the Heart of Jesus, so we must follow this favourite virtue of the Divine Heart above all. We are the servants of the poor people, so we must become little, very little, in order to draw these people to us and thereby to God. Repeat every day not only with your lips, but with your whole heart and your whole desire: "Make us little." You should want to be little not only in feeling, for feeling often deceives us, but also in life and deed, for in the deed is truth. Wish to be humble and very, very little, for -remember this - humility is the root of all virtues. A virtue that does not grow from this root is not virtue, even though it passes for virtue in people's eyes.

Thus be convinced of your wretchedness, of your nothingness not only in feeling and word, but also in deed ... And so above all never take offense at anyone and at anything. A humble person cannot be offended because she believes that she deserves any contempt and any blame and in fact thinks that everyone treats her too kindly, so she is thankful for everything rather than taking offense. Be inoffensive, my children. Cast off as a temptation any thought that you are being wronged, slighted or disparaged, or that you are being forgotten - this is the prompting of Satan, who wants to take away the blessed peace which humble souls enjoy. And even if you are treated as badly as possible, then tell yourself that this is still too good, for you

were deserving of hell. Be thankful for everything and never, never, my dear children, fall prey to touchiness! Further - remember that the humble person gladly accepts every remark made to her. She does not argue even if the remark made to her is unjust. The humble person believes that others see her better than she does herself. She strives for one thing only, that is, to derive benefit from a remark made to her. The humble person speaks neither good nor bad of herself. Try to sink this "I" of yours in silence about yourselves. Struggle desperately against ambition for it is the downfall of the religious. With it are born those terrible sicknesses of the soul: hatred and envy, which destroy the inner life. Only one ambition may you have - and that is to be nothing, to pass through this world as if you were not here. Rejoice when the work of others meets with success, when they are more appreciated than you are, and when they are used for more important work and for higher offices than you. Persevere calmly in your own quiet corner. Remember what the Imitation of Christ says: "If you wish to know what gives great peace, desire to be unknown and regarded as nothing." Oh, what peace dwells in a humble heart! Beware of that conceit, which always wants to be right, and which always thrusts its opinion upon others. What will it harm you to yield to others, unless in yielding you expose yourself or others to sin? As only possible, gladly submit to the will of others. The Constitutions tell us to "Be submissive to one another"; and this is real humility. Wishing to be submissive to all is proof of true humility, which regards the self as the lowest and the least.

My children, never desire high offices. Accept them with humility if God summons you to them, but do not

desire them, and rejoice if others, younger, are summoned to them. Submit gladly to younger superiors, showing them the same respect you showed your superior when you were in the novitiate.

Dearest children, be humble. Do not seek praise and recognition. The less praise and recognition you receive from people, the greater glory God will surround you with in Heaven.

Desire my children, to be little, very little; the last place, after all, is the safest. Learn from the Heart of God, which is quiet and humble; be quiet not only internally, but also outwardly. Do not make noise. Talk quietly, walk quietly, and work quietly - a hubbub always, although involuntarily, results from the desire of announcing to all, "It's me." My children, I earnestly ask you to be silent and humble, and God will be with you. The Heart of God will surely bless your works, and holy love will unite you.

My children, be silent and humble - humility is the characteristic, the basic virtue of an Ursuline Sister of the Heart of Jesus. I implore you, my children, be humble!

Third Request

SISTERLY LOVE

Our Savior, after instituting the Blessed Sacrament, said to His Apostles, and thereby also to us: " I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." My children this is a pleading request of your old Mother. Frequently, frequently ponder these words, in order to live according to them and according to them to love one another. In so far as you are humble and quiet on the model of the Divine Heart, you will encounter no difficulty in fulfilling this commandment of Love. Look upon that wonderful model of love, which the Lord Jesus has given us. Just as He loved us, so you also love one another. Reflect on how the Lord Jesus loved us and on the qualities of His love for us which are kindness without limits and devotion unto the very death upon the cross.

Thus His kindness for the Apostles, for the throngs that surround Him, for children who desire His caresses, for sinners, for His executioners. With what kindness He speaks to them, tolerates their weaknesses, helps, supports, heals and forgives them. And we? Be good, my children, that is kind to everyone. Always meet cordially with a smile of love and a kind word on your lips. Rejoice if you can be of service to others, even if this creates work and discomfort for you. You do not know how much happiness you are giving to others, often by a smile of love or a word

of kindness. Do not judge others; and if you cannot defend the action, then never judge the intention, which God alone can judge. Look upon one another with the bright eye of love, then you will see your sisters in a good light. Remember two things: kindness knows how to thank heartily for even the slightest thing and kindness knows how to accept services, even unnecessary ones, heartily and with gratitude. Always live in harmony with everyone. God forbid, let there ever be a quarrel among you. Willingly yield to others so that harmony is preserved. Be even more than kind; be full of sacrifice for others, ready, like Jesus, to spill your blood for the good of others.

My children, Jesus sacrificed His life for us. Will we not be able to sacrifice our comfort, our pleasure and our fancies for Jesus in our sisters? Always first think of others that they be fine and comfortable, and only then think about you; or best of all, forget completely about yourself. Live as Jesus did, for the happiness of others, and encourage yourselves with the thought: "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for Me." So in living for the happiness of your sisters, you are living for the happiness and solace of our Jesus and His Agonizing Heart! Should not this thought encourage you to promise Jesus every morning at the foot of the Cross: "Agonizing Heart of Jesus, I want to console You by giving happiness to my sisters." And is it difficult to give happiness, to spread happiness around you? Oh, no! Just have tender love in your heart, a smile of love on your face, a word of love on your lips, and a readiness for even the slightest action of love in the rays of a holy joy of love, and you will become angels of happiness, beams of sunlight for your whole Congregation.

Live, my children, for the happiness of others, for the solace of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus. By quietly training yourself in sisterly love in this way, you will develop within yourself that force of love which will make you capable of heroic sacrifices, should our Lord Jesus require such of you. My dearest children love one another! Away with discord, with envy which is the mortal enemy of love, with egotism which remembers the self while forgetting about others, with ambition which makes an idol out of one's own "I", and down with the evil eye which sees evil in the other sisters instead of in one's self. Love one another, my children, so that in looking upon my beloved children from the other world, I would see them united in the purest love, forming one heart and one soul. This is the fervent request of your old Mother who loves you so much from the bottom of her heart.

Fourth Request

POVERTY

Remember, my children, that poverty is the security wall of the religious life and therefore you must love this poverty with your whole heart. Our Congregation is supposed to be at the service of the little and poor people, so we too in our whole life must be humble and poor. Do not strive to have your convents beautiful, spacious and comfortable - no, no. I beseech you, my children, just as during my life our lodgings were very poor, the life often uncomfortable, and the meals very simple, so continue to keep to this poverty following our Tradition. Let your desires always be directed towards poverty. Love our poor habits; do not be ashamed that they are often patched. As long as they are clean, that will be enough.

Do not desire exceptional things and rejoice that you can be satisfied with the life of your community. And even though someone will need exceptional things, let her regard them as penance and not become attached in heart to them. Let the motto of the poor servant of the poor be "clean and poor" and not "nice and comfortable".

With poverty of life and poverty of desire it will be easy for you to direct your whole heart to God who will become the sole treasure of an entirely poor soul. And if sometimes you experience the effects of poverty - whether they forget to give you what you asked for; whether you suffer a lack of something, or whether you receive worse than the others - do not complain, do not fall prey to ill

humour, do not permit yourself any envy whatsoever. Just rejoice that you are able to imitate, at least a little, poor Jesus on the Cross, deprived even of his clothes. The poorer we are, the better we will understand the words of poor Saint Francis of Assisi: "My God and my all." The less we need for ourselves, the more we will be able to do for the poor.

And work is closely tied to poverty. We are poor, so like the poor we have the duty of earning our bread and the bread for the children of our poor. Work, the heavy work of our poor, is our duty. Just as the poor man works in the sweat of his brow, even though his back hurts, his bones ache, and sleep overcomes him - he knows that he must work. Otherwise both he and his children will be left without bread. So we too must work. We have not come here to work easier than in the world, but to work more and harder, for in the world we worked for ourselves and here we are working for God, Who worked so much for us that He gave His life for us. Let us not be ashamed of working - there is no work, which would degrade a human being. Go to the work which obedience assigns to you without asking whether this work is important or less important, mean or great and glorious. Work for God, and always be ready for any work. God forbid, let there be found among us such a person who would become indignant that she was being charged with work, apparently to her thinking, base in nature! The lower the work in people's eyes, the more hidden, the less praise it brings, and the more labour and fatigue it entails, then the more dear it should be to you, if you have the spirit of poverty.

Work eagerly for God. Your work provides a living for our orphans. After all Our Lord said: "Whatever you did

for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for Me." Will not the thought that in working for our orphans' living we are working for Jesus Himself, be an incitement for you to ever more zealous work, to limitless dedication in your work?

My dearest children, I desire to see you in poverty and in work, even hard and arduous. Both those whom I know and myself have trained, and those whom I do not know because they have entered after my death, but whom I love as if I knew them, I ask and beseech: love poverty, desire poverty. I will pray from heaven that wealth, elegance, refinement, and comfort never creep into our convents, no, no! Be poor, be poor and remain poor, remembering that it is better to need less than to need more. My God and my all - this is our riches!

Fifth Request

OBEDIENCE

Just as humility is the root of all virtues, so obedience is the basis of all monastic virtues. If you want to be good and holy sisters, you must try to develop within yourselves perfect obedience. But obedience must be based on faith; otherwise it will never be perfect. You must strongly believe that God in the persons of the superiors is guiding our communities. Through the superiors God leads you, shows you the way, and reveals His will to you. The will of the superiors for subordinates is the will of God. So revere, love, obey, and respect God in the superiors. Let in all our convents, whether in mother house, central or branch houses, the superior be held in the greatest respect and love; and this is for God. My children, you have always had a great respect for your old Mother, and I have accepted these signs of your reverence, because I knew well that although nothing was due to me, you were rendering your honour to God in the person of your old Mother, and for God one can never do this too much. What you have rendered God in the person of your old Mother, render also to every superior of yours, because in them too you are rendering honour unto God. And the same belongs to God whether in your old Mother, a young superior or a local superior. Let our Congregation, whose most important virtue is to be humility, be distinguished by the respect and honour shown to the superiors. Do not think that age frees anyone from offering a sign of respect (...). Neither the age

of an older subordinate, nor that of a young superior frees one from this. It is the same God whether in a young or an old superior and we - whether young or old - must always (...) humble ourselves before the Lord (...) with the deepest humility. Certainly, let the older sisters shine by their example to the younger, teaching them by their behaviour how they should hold their superiors in great reverence, to honour God in them. And let the young superiors know that they ought to take care that the signs of respect accepted in our communities are rendered to God in their persons. They do not have the right out of false humility to free their subordinates without indispensable need from these signs of honour and respect, which belong to God the Most High, and not to a superior.

I greatly request one more thing of you, my dearest children: listen with honour, respect and love to the teachings of the superiors. Let no one think that they are not necessary to her and that she herself knows better how to behave (...) Remember; God speaks to you through the superiors. Obey with humility, believe that you need the superior's teachings and even if ten times you find nothing for yourself in the superior's words, then on the eleventh time through her words God will speak to your heart and will reveal to you the treasures of His Divine Heart, which you would not find by yourself.

In so far as your obedience springs from faith, it will not be difficult for you to fulfill the will of God as expressed in the Constitutions, the Tradition or in the will of the superiors. Love the will of God, then you will also love obedience, which is what makes it possible for you to continuously fulfill the will of God. What blessedness there is in this thought: "All day from morning to night, I know

exactly where the will of God lies for me and I can continuously be joined with this will of God." Love obedience - it will change your whole life into a burnt-offering of pure love of God. Do not desire to be numbered among those who love obedience to the extent that the will of the superiors agrees with their will, but who shirk obedience or grumble when the will of the superiors does not please them. No, no, always obey - whether the will of seniors is pleasing or displeasing to you - in this will you encounter the will of God, and let that be enough for you! Be ready for every beckon of the will of your superiors and always answer every order in this way: Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord, as God wills it!

Love sacred obedience, honour, respect and obey your superiors, and God will be with you, my dear children. I humbly beg you, fulfill this request of your old Mother because in her surely is the will of God! Obey in small things, obey in great things, and obey always and everywhere. The older you are, the more obedient be. Obey!

Sixth Request

PRAYER

We are to live not for this earth, but for heaven, and we do live for heaven, joined with God in prayer. Prayer after all is bridge linking temporality with eternity, the earth with heaven and man with God. And for this reason the life of a sister must be a life of prayer. Therefore above all with exact precision perform the spiritual exercises prescribed by our Constitutions. In so far as it is possible, do not excuse yourself from these exercises without absolute necessity. After all these are your obligations with respect to the Lord Most High. God forbid you neglect them, but perform them with the strictest conscientiousness. Whoever truly wants it, plans and anticipates possible problems will for the most part find time for such important obligations as our spiritual exercises are. These indeed will obtain for you God's grace and light and God's help; they will bring you God's blessing for your whole life. Without prayer there is no life for God, there is no service to God. So, my children perform the spiritual exercises with complete faithfulness regardless of whether you experience solace or aridity. Not for your comfort, but for the glory of God you are performing these exercises, valiantly struggling against absent-mindedness, coldness and laziness, which try under various guises to divert you from prayer. Pray day by day faithfully and courageously! The sister, who faithfully preserves silence, avoids curiosity and involvement in the matters of others,

seldom lacks time for her prayers. However even at that there may be some exceptional times; then, my children, always ask for permission to be excused from your exercises. If there is no time or the possibility of asking for permission, then later always give an account of yourself to your superiors. Do not under any consideration become accustomed to excuse yourself arbitrarily from obligatory exercises.

Christ our Lord said that it is necessary to pray always and never to cease, so do not be satisfied only with the spiritual exercises prescribed by the Constitutions. No, this is decidedly too little for the soul - strive for continuous union with God through frequent prayers for special intentions and frequent exclamatory prayers, directing your thought even amidst your works to God, to your Jesus, as a flower to the sun.

The soul's happiness is abidance in God and with God. Then everything earthly seems so trifling. And even among the cares, troubles, problems and suffering of this life, a ray from heaven, and a ray of peace, confidence and happiness always shines. Proceed continuously in this constant prayer without becoming discouraged that you do not succeed in it, as you would like. Try again and desire; once more try and God will kindly accept this effort, seemingly fruitless, yet done out of love.

Always pray with faith. Here is my advice, dear children! Do not begrudge the time at the beginning of every prayer for an act of profound, genuine faith. The more vividly we keep in mind the fact that God sees us, that we are in His presence, that we are praying at His feet, that we press ourselves to His Divine Heart, the easier and the better the prayer will go. Pray with limitless confidence but also with perseverance. God will certainly give what we

ask for, as far as it is for the good of our souls. But it is necessary to pray perseveringly, even for years on end, with certainty in the heart that our good Father in heaven will grant what we ask in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. If we had strong faith, we would indeed be able to move mountains!

Pray with fervent love, if not in feeling, then at least in will. Desire to love this great God, this good Father of yours; desire to love your Crucified Savior; desire to love this Holy Spirit, who sanctifies you; desire to love the thrice blessed Holy Trinity; desire to love Mary, your Mother. The less you feel the fire of love, then the more by perseverance, even in aridity, try to show God the love which you do not feel. Pray, my children, unceasingly, as our Lord Jesus instructs, through offering Lord God all your acts, through frequent exclamatory prayers, through as frequent as possible directing the soul's vision toward the Tabernacle and the Cross.

I particularly recommend one thing to you: diligently make use, despite natural laziness, of "lost" moments (...) While waiting or walking along the streets from one place to another, pray. These are moments when usually nothing profound is thought about, as thoughts whirl in a kaleidoscope and we worry about our cares or about unwise plans for the future. You will do much more by praying. (...) Let us pray my children. I cannot give you any better advice. Let your life become one continuous prayer and God will be with you. Through prayer you will find Him, Whom your soul cherishes. Hold Him through prayer and never let Him go!

Seventh Request

LOVE OF THE CRUCIFIED CHRIST

"But may I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

My dearest children, for a religious, devotion to Jesus Crucified should be the essence of her whole inner life, of the life of her soul. Remember that on the trunk of the holy cross have grown up all the devotions dearest to the human heart. Jesus Crucified earned for us by his Passion and Death the greatest of all graces - the grace of the Blessed Sacrament. After all the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is a bloodless renewal of the bloody sacrifice on the cross. On the cross He allowed His Heart to be pierced so that it become for us the refuge, protection and paradise of the soul, to be always for us an open source of grace and love. From the height of the cross Jesus gave us Mary as Mother and gave us to Mary as children. From the height of the cross graces descended upon the saints, which made them holy and which gave us in them powerful intercessors and marvelous representatives of virtue and sanctity. Everything good, noble and holy in the area of supernatural life descended to the world from the cross, because Christ earned everything for us by His Passion and Death upon the cross. And for that reason sisters should direct their eyes to the cross like a flower to the sun. In the cross is our salvation. In the cross is our hope. In the cross is love and happiness and our everything, because on the cross our

Jesus redeemed us by His Most Sacred Blood, opened the gates of heaven for us, and assured us eternal joy by His Passion. What love, what gratitude our Savior is due! The world thinks little about this gratitude and little about this love, because this love demands love for love and sacrifice for sacrifice. The cross seems to call upon us to feel obliged to console the Agonizing Heart of Jesus and to carry the cross with Him because the sorrow and tears of the cross cannot go hand in hand with the empty joys of the world. And for this reason some people, especially religious, take upon themselves the duty of loving Jesus Crucified in a more special way, of comforting Him with their love, remaining at His feet like Mary Magdalene, kissing His Most Sacred Wounds with the greatest tenderness. And by their holy vows they are nailed to the cross and obligate themselves to follow Jesus Crucified - the poor in the footsteps of the poor Jesus, the overworked following the overworked, those carrying their cross following the One carrying His, the crucified following the Crucified Christ. And therefore for the religious the cross is the whole happiness, the whole love; it is everything. She has abandoned the world and everything that the world can give. In exchange she has received the cross, which has everything that the soul can desire.

You'll replace for the heart homeland and
possessions.

You will show the heavens near at hand,
Both love and freedom, memories of the past,
And the future - all this is upon the cross.

So you are always to cling to the cross, only in the cross to seek happiness, relief and comfort in suffering, light in darkness, counsel in doubts, sympathy in failure, peace in

the storms of life, confidence in discouragement, and joy in death.

My children, love the Crucified Christ, love Him with your whole heart, cling to his feet, and abide by him in mind and heart. Frequently contemplate the Passion of our Lord; learn from Jesus Crucified how to love God, how to love people, how to be humble, obedient, and mortified, how to sacrifice yourself for others, and how to work for the glory of God and the salvation of the world. The best way of comforting Jesus on the cross and of showing Him love is to imitate the Divine virtues.

The more you strive to imitate Jesus Crucified, the closer you will be to the cross, and the more the Crucified One will become for you everything on this earth. Also contemplate the Passion of Jesus during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Gladly make the Stations of the Cross. Frequently kiss the cross with the greatest love, and you will quickly learn that in the cross is found the greatest happiness - the happiness of heaven among the sufferings of this earth.

In the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Rome, I found the words, which for me were often a consolation, light and comfort in later years and which I leave to you:

At the feet of Jesus
Thorns are roses,
Suffering - delight,
And death is joy.

Eighth Request

DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED MOTHER

In this testament of mine I want to devote a few pages to Our Lady, Blessed Mary, Our Mother and Queen. Love Mary fervently and as sincerely as good children. Love Our Mother, love Her! She has been given to us from God. Jesus on the cross in His testament left Mary to us. The last will of Jesus concerning us was that we be good children of Mary. So let us strive for this, let us pray for this, let us try for this with all our strength. For Mary is your Mother, so good and so merciful. She desires our salvation more than we do ourselves, so always resort to her with childlike confidence. Never permit discouragement and distrust to gain the upper hand in your heart, never! Be certain that Mary will rather miraculously come to you with help, than abandon you. Like children in their mother's embrace, you also rest at Mary's feet in peace despite the often-fierce storm.

Love that which is dear to Mary, so love the rosary. Recite the rosary not only in word, but also with your whole life, by bringing into life the virtues of Mary, which are presented to us in the mysteries. Let your saying of the rosary be a fervent act of love to Mary, an incitement to virtue, an examination of conscience as to the faithfulness of our imitation of Mary, and a request for holiness on the model of Mary's sanctity.

Always keep a rosary with you and do not ever leave it day or night. Let it be your true friend, a chain

binding your hearts to the heart of Our Mother in heaven. Let those words of Mary which are the motto of our Congregation be especially dear to you: "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be with me according to your word." Without doubt the greatest proof of our love for Mary is imitation of Her virtues. So like Mary, the blessed and immaculate, desire to be faithful handmaids of Our Lord, always ready to fulfill His will - whether this will is clear and pleasing for us or whether it brings the cross and suffering. The Will of God! Just as Mary always greeted every manifestation of the will of God with those words, which She said once, but repeated Her whole life in heart and deed, so you also, my children, in every circumstance of life always become, like Mary, quiet handmaids of the Lord. Always accept the will of God, whatever it might be, with a smile on your lips and with "fiat" and "Deo gratias" in your heart, even if there is a tear in your eye - like Mary!

And if the will of God weighs painfully upon you and your strength for quiet resignation is diminished, then turn the eyes of your soul to Mary, your most tender Mother, and ask Her: "Mother, teach us always to be quiet handmaids of the Lord desiring only that the will of the Lord, and not our own will, be done."

Love Mary, my children, love Her rosary and, believe me, the best devotion to Mary is to be, like Her, a quiet, faithful, humble handmaid of the Lord, repeating continually in heart and deed: "Here I am, let it be with me, as God wishes, as God wishes."

Ninth Request

SELF-DENIAL

My children, look often upon the Divine Heart of Jesus, pierced by a lance, bound round with thorns, and listen to the heart-rending lament of the agonizing Lord: "I sought someone who would comfort me, and I found no one." Look at this Heart, filled with contempt, scorn and suffering, and realize that a person loving the Divine Heart must understand self-denial and that which is inseparably linked with the spirit of mortification - love of the cross.

Do not think that I am demanding from you extraordinary mortification and penance. No, my children. I am opposed to all extremes in our vocation, but I urge you to that mortification which comes from our works and from our poverty. We encounter it at every step. It is necessary for the proper conducting of our activities, for faithful practice of sisterly love, monastic obedience, and for that magnanimous, I may say, mortification, which does not catch the eye, does not call attention to itself. For that reason it is safe, because it does not expose us to temptations of conceit and of elevating ourselves above others.

The religious life must be a life of self-denial. Life without mortification is not religious life. Our first mortification, my children, is the faithful fulfillment of our Constitutions. This is certainly a yoke for us, and so it is mortification. This personal vigilance itself not to transgress the regulations of the Constitutions is already an

unceasing self-denial. After all, the teachers of the inner life maintain that the life of a religious faithfully fulfilling the HolyRule is a life of martyrdom. So above all set about this mortification. Gladly take upon yourselves that mortification which every virtue demands. There is no virtue without self-denial. The great thinker and Catholic Madame Svetchine says that with respect to virtue, one which costs nothing is worth nothing. Mortification is a slow delivering of death to our human, flawed nature, that is to act against our own will, our own desires, and our own fancies, trampling upon our own "I feel like..." and "I do not feel like..." in order to do always what is more pleasing to God. Do not dabble in trifling, often childish mortification at the expense of true self-denial, which bears virtue. Of course, the least mortification done out of love for God is beneficial to your soul, as long as it does not divert you from the most necessary mortification - mortification to get virtue.

How many people amuse themselves with thinking up a petty mortification through which they feel somehow released from those which life, work and community life bring with them. And the latter is more important, although the former is good too. It is more important and safer because it does not incite to vanity. Therefore practise courageously this most important self-denial we encounter in the fulfillment of virtue. You need mortification to live always in harmony and unity with your sisters, to be accommodating and courteous, to pray attentively, to work diligently and perseveringly, and to preserve always a serenity of spirit. You do not need to search for these occasions; they will come by themselves provided that you take advantage of them.

The quiet, willing bearing of the small crosses that God sends down upon us is an important kind of mortification; this is love of the cross. Life brings with it from time to time a greater cross, and, day in and day out, small crosses like small pinpricks, which sometimes torment and disturb the soul very much. Accept, my children, with open arms these petty crosses. God sends them down upon us. They are from the Divine Will, so let us love them for they will lead us to God more certain and safer than the greatest consolations. And kneel down like St. Andrew before the great crosses, which fill life with pain and suffering, exclaiming: "Welcome, holy cross, my only hope, welcome!"

The best proof of love, which we can give to God, is bearing the cross willingly. There is no greater act of God's love than bearing the cross. How can one not love the cross, which permits us to say to God: "Lord, you see that I love you!" Love each cross, large or small, including the cross such as the death of your old Mother will perhaps be for you. Love your daily crosses. Each cross is a precious relic of the cross of Christ, so each cross should be pressed to the heart with love and should be born with holy joy. The crosses, which God sends us - whether large or small - are the best school of mortification. Willing, quiet, serene bearing of our crosses is the mortification most pleasing to God; we cannot devise better. So have courage in this, dear children. Always exclaim joyously: "Welcome, holy cross, my only hope!"

Tenth Request

FAITHFUL FULFILLMENT OF THE HOLY RULE

"Who lives according to the Rule, lives for God." By the Rule we understand both our Constitutions and our Tradition, because all this is only detailed execution of the spirit of the Holy Rule. Faithfulness to the Holy Rule is our simplest and surest path to sanctity. We cannot devise a better one for ourselves. The Holy Rule is our treasure, because it is the surest, clearest expression for us of the will of God. This is the will of God for us, and therefore it must be very dear to us. We do not have to take great pains to seek the will of God - we have it; we live in it, surrounded by it at every step. As a bird by air and a fish by water, we are surrounded by the will of God, expressed for us in the Holy Rule.

What does it mean to be united with God? This properly means to be united with His will. Who is closely united with God? The one who at every step fulfills the will of God and whose will is most closely united with the will of God. And the Holy Rule will lead us most surely to this unity with the will of God, because it points out to us at every step where the will of God lies for us and because it gives us the possibility of fulfilling the will of God at every step.

Let us fervently love our Holy Rule, let us earnestly try to fulfill it, let us study it and let us contemplate it. The Holy Rule is our strength, our happiness, our guidepost to

heaven, and our light. It is the will of God clearly expressed for us. Do not let us waiver from faithful fulfillment of the Holy Rule. It sometimes constrains us; this is true. But it constrains the evil nature in us and keeps it within bounds, and this is good, although it is not pleasing to that nature. It frees us from the shackles of our earthly "I" in order to raise us up high on the wings of God's will - to God! So take upon yourselves courageously and willingly the yoke of the Holy Rule. After all for the person loving God this yoke is both sweet and light, because it is the sweetest, holiest and wisest will of God, our treasure and our all on this earth.

Eleventh Request

THE WILL OF GOD

We have nothing better on this earth than the Will of God. The Holy Rule is so dear to us, because at every step it presents to us the will of God for fulfillment. But the will of God is revealed to us in yet another way. In the Holy Rule God presents to us His will to be fulfilled through various circumstances of life beyond our control. He presents His will to us to be reconciled with it and to submit to it. It is then necessary for us, if we desire to be fully united with the will of God, not merely to fulfill it, but also to agree to it and submit to it. We have to accept beforehand everything that God decides about us, because what God sends will always be good for us. We should rest peacefully in the will of God by struggling against anxiety, worries and fear, which sometimes, especially in the presence of impending danger or suffering, attack us. Why should we be restless, why should we worry? It will be as God wills it and it will be good. "As God wills it." These words uttered with love are balm for the distressed soul. Utter them in times of worry and anxiety, utter them also when God sends a cross upon you. Oh, then do not only reconcile yourselves to the will of God, but also submit to it quietly, without complaint, with a smile on your lips and "Deo gratias" in your hearts. "As God wills it." This cross after all is the will of God, and the will of God is our greatest treasure on earth. It is the happiness of a soul who loves God. As God wills it! Love the will of God.

Courageously crack this hard and bitter husk of the kernel of paradise, which God presents to you. Inside you will find the sweet kernel of the will of God full of happiness.

My child, do you want to be closely united with God? Faithfully fulfill the will of God, lovingly reconcile yourself to the will of God, submit courageously and joyously to the will of God, and in this way you will reach the height of sanctity. Prayer, penance and love - in broad outline this is the religious life, so remember:

The best prayer - reconciliation with the will of God.

The best penance - quiet submission to the will of God.

The best love - faithful fulfillment of the will of God.

"As God wills it." With these words on your lips you will go through life calm in life's turmoil, sunny in the gloom of darkness, strong in the struggle, loving amidst hatred, holy amidst sins and divine, although on earth. As God wills it.

Twelfth Request

SERENITY OF SPIRIT

One of the great authors of books about the spiritual life writes that constant serenity is the greatest penance. This is true because it indeed requires much strength of will, mortification and conquering of the self, in order to be continuously serene, bright, sunny and at peace, in spite of difficulties, troubles, failures, anxieties, poor health and suffering. And, at the same time, this serenity of the soul, this happiness of the soul is the most effective aid in striving for self-discipline. It is for the soul what sunlight is for the earth. Just as flowers blossom and fruits ripen under the effect of the sun's rays, so also the wondrous flower of sanctity blossoms in the sunny soul, bearing the widest variety of fruits and virtues. The sun in the heavens and the sunny soul on earth - how much happiness they give the world, how much blessing they bring people, and how much solace for the heart! Perhaps the greatest act of love for one's neighbor is constant radiance of soul spreading its bright and warm rays everywhere. Such a sunny person passes quietly like a beam of sunlight. Perhaps she even regrets that she does not do good, but she does not know how much has been brought forth by the radiance of her bright smiling lips; into how many hearts she has poured the balm of consolation; how often she has warmed cold, indifferent hearts and how many clouds of distrust, even despair, she has scattered and how much happiness she has spread unknowingly about herself. She does not know of

this, but God knows and will count the happiness she gives others as merit. For she also needs much fortitude not to allow herself to be diverted from this bright serenity. It is not so easy to be "sunny" when anxiety plagues us, when people torment and irritate us, when an overload of work leaves us no moment of peace, when sickness undermines the strength of the body, and physical and mental pain plague us, and when we fall under the weight of the cross. That is not easy! Only the person in harmony with the will of God, seeking happiness in the will of God, in God's bright spheres, will be able in spite of everything to preserve within herself that holy serenity, that bright, sunny happiness of God.

My child, if you entered the convent to seek God, you must find happiness in the convent, for you have here the source of happiness. You have Jesus in the Tabernacle and Jesus in daily Eucharist. You are surrounded by the will of God. What more do you need to achieve happiness? And if you recognize and understand this happiness of religious life, you must be happy. This happiness of God, regardless of external circumstances, must shine outward and give out warmth - and through this you will become "sunny".

Love Jesus, love Him on the cross, and love Him in the Tabernacle, love Him in the will of God and you will always be happy. This happiness will make you a sun for others and even for Jesus, surrounded by indifference, coldness and darkness in the Tabernacle. Is this not a wonderful task?

Also remember this: the sunny person is by herself an apostle. She unknowingly evangelizes and leads people to God. She tells them without words, but by her own

bright smile, that it is good, very good to serve God and that to serve God is to find happiness and peace such as the world cannot give.

Oh Lord, let me be like a beam of sunlight, which spreads consolation and happiness everywhere, which everywhere proclaims Your glory and Your goodness, and which is just like Your smile, Eternal Lord!

So be sunny, bright and serene, my children. You will thereby delight the Heart of God and be a comfort to your superiors, your sisters, and all with whom you have dealings. What is most important, you will be willingly and cheerfully fulfilling the will of God, which is, in the words of St. Paul, your sanctification. "For the will of God is your sanctification." So always cheerfully, serenely, sunnily, and with confidence up to God in heaven!

Thirteenth Request

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Dearest children, the Blessed Sacrament is the sun of our life. It is our treasure, our happiness and our all on this earth. The will of God, the Blessed Sacrament, is the happiness of the soul of a religious. And when you faithfully fulfill the will of God, how sweet it is to rest at the feet of the Tabernacle! Jesus sees in you His will fulfilled and loves you for that. He will come to you and will dwell in a soul wholly united with the will of God. And such a soul can say: "I live, I - but not I, not my will, but the will of God, but Christ."

Love Jesus in the Tabernacle. Let your heart be ever vigilant there, even though your body is at work and you are busy. Jesus is there and we should love Him so eagerly and dearly. If we do not know how to love, then at least let us desire to love more and more! Let the Holy Communion be a sort of axis, a centre, around which your whole life is to revolve. The most important moment of the day is the moment of Holy Communion, the moment when your God the Lord comes to take possession of your poor heart. Let it open widely for the Great Lord, empty of all earthly feelings, reluctance, ambition, earthly cares and earthly thoughts. Let everything within you fall silent, let the Lord speak, let the Lord rule, let the Lord reign, let Him, Him alone, live within you. Cling to Jesus as Mary Magdalene did once to His feet. Forget about everything in the blessed moment of Jesus' presence and ask, ask fervently,

persistently - even obtrusively: "Jesus, give me ever more love!" For He said: "Ask and it will be given to you." (Mt. 7, 7). So ask, ask certain that Jesus will hear. In the course of the day let your heart time and again leave the place of work for the Tabernacle. Try! It is necessary to attain this habit. It can be attained!

In heart and in soul you can visit the Blessed Sacrament although your body is far off at work. If only possible, visit the Blessed Sacrament once, twice, more often, depending on possibilities and in obedience. Go to Jesus, like a child to its mother, as a friend, troubled and tired, goes to a friend with whom he knows he will find comfort and help. Go and tell Jesus everything that you have in your heart. You do not see Him, but He is in the Tabernacle. You can believe in this more strongly than in your own existence. And when you kneel before the Tabernacle and you do not know what to think about, and your thoughts make no sense, then humble yourself before the Lord as lowly as possible. You are this grey, coarse scrap of cloth, capable of nothing. But set forth quietly and humbly your nothingness to the beams of love coming from the Tabernacle and as the sun the scrap of cloth, Jesus will make your poor soul white and beautiful.

Even though your faults strike terror into you,
Even though you feel faint in the service of Jesus,
Your Sun will save you. It will work for you,
If only you lie in the beams of sunlight!

So lie quietly in the beams of your Eucharistic Sun. Even though it seems to you that you are doing nothing, just wait and trust. Jesus himself is working in your soul; just do not flee from Him! And look, my child, when sometimes sadness, worry, and discouragement creep into

your soul about to weigh it down to earth, then especially go to the Tabernacle - there is your treasure. How can all these difficulties and troubles harm you. They cannot take Jesus away from you. And as long as you have Jesus, then with Him you have the happiness of heaven, the light of heaven and heaven itself. How everything earthly diminishes in the presence of this. And moreover, when you kneel at the Tabernacle, opening wide your heart to this longing for love, be certain that Jesus will accept this longing, even though you feel indifferent and cold. He will help you to attain the love you fervently desire and He will give you in exchange for your weak, imperfect love the whole immense love of His Divine Heart. You, small, wretched earth worm, imperfect and sinful, will become the object of love of your Jesus, your Redeemer, your God, and you will be able to say for certain: "Jesus loves me."

Oh, how good He is, our Jesus! Love Him in the sacrament of love. He is your treasure. Live for Him, work for Him, cling to Him in dark moments. Let Him be the source of your joy, your peace, and your happiness, both here through your whole life of a religious, and when you are there, in eternity.

Fourteenth Request

CONCENTRATION - SILENCE

My children, if you want to be close to God, close to your Jesus, you must practise concentration and keep silence, as faithfully as only possible in our occupations. Silence is the peace of the soul. In your occupations be silent as much as you can. Say what is necessary, but do not chatter without need. Value the great silence, this preparation for Holy Communion. Let this great silence be maintained as strictly as possible. And when it becomes necessary to speak, do so absolutely quietly not to disturb the concentration of the community so as not to distract them from thoughts of God.

When the day's work is ended, the bell rings for silence, the real life with God begins. Then, if possible, lift your heart to heaven and enter God's world. The Lord Jesus, the Blessed Mother, your Guardian Angel and so many souls who love you are waiting for you. Talk to the inhabitants of the celestial spheres, present your requests to them and thank them. Entrust your cares, fears and hopes to the loving Heart of Jesus and the Heart of Mary. Rejoice and breathe deeply of the breath of eternity, which will envelop you. It is good, even for a short time, to tear oneself from the world, oh it is very good! And in the course of the day, when external work swamps you, when you must talk much more than you would like, and it is difficult to be united with God, because you must think about the work entrusted to you, at those times try at least

from time to time to direct your heart to the Lord. Tell Him that you love Him and renew the good intention that everything whatsoever you do, you do only to endear yourself to your Jesus and that your whole life and all work is only for Jesus! Such a lifting up of the heart to God, if only from time to time, changes your work into prayer and your whole earthly life into supernatural life, into a life of God. Do not think that you will immediately attain this concentration and unity with God, oh no! This is a work for many years. Make up your mind in the morning that in the course of the day in certain circumstances, for example going from one place to another or from one work to another, you want to turn your heart to God. Check yourself in your examination of conscience whether you have fulfilled this resolution. And again make this resolution. Ask for the grace of this unity with God. Work without becoming discouraged even if you see no progress. And so slowly that you will not even notice, your soul will become more and more closely united with God and your life will become more and more concentrated in Christ.

Strive for this holy concentration, so avoid unnecessary chatting and unnecessary curiosity. Why should you know about everything? The less you know what is going on around you, the easier it will be for you to keep yourself in concentration. Further, do not interfere in the affairs of others; thereby you will avoid many disturbances and will be able to work peacefully and to pray... Happy the person that can lead such a life! To forget the world and above all yourself, to live quietly for Jesus Himself, with Him and in Him. You will attain this, this paradise on earth, by patiently and persistently practising silence and concentration.

Fifteenth Request

SINCERITY TOWARD SUPERIORS

Be certain, my children, that the more sincere you are toward your superiors, the safer the road along which you are travelling to virtue. The Church forbids superiors - and rightly - to intrude by force into the mysteries of the soul of the sisters entrusted to them. Neither by request, nor by threat, nor by persuasion should they demand from others disclosure to them of their conscience. But each sister has the full right to open up her soul to her superior and to let her know what is good in her and what is bad. Only through this can the superior guide her. For the soul this guidance is what support is for a weak young tree swaying from any breath of wind.

Sincerity is not only the virtue of the young, beginning the religious life; it is also the virtue of older sisters. In spiritual life we should be like children, and children need their mother's hand. Do not say: "I have a confessor, that is enough for me." Certainly a good confessor is a treasure for the soul, but I will tell you one thing: a confessor knows you only from the confessional and there is a question whether you present yourself to him in full truth. Not that you want to deceive him, no! But self-love blinds you. You do not know yourself well, whereas the superior knows you much better and sees your weak sides, which you do not see. She could caution you against many an evil, but cannot because you avoid her, do not trust her, and do not want her to "intrude" into your soul.

Believe me, my sisters, often a confessor considers as saintly, as a sacrifice of love, a person about whom a superior must unfortunately think otherwise. A confessor hears words; a superior sees deeds. Sincerity does not consist of having to talk with the superior every moment, to tell about your soul, and to occupy her with yourself. By no means! I call sincere a person who does nothing and says nothing that she would like to hide from her superior and always acts in such a way that the superior could know what she does, what she says, and even what she thinks. She never allows herself to be bound to anyone whatsoever in the promise that "I won't tell the superior anything about this." Never ever! A sister who seldom talks with her superiors about her soul can be very sincere toward them; and the one who torments the superior with little talks can be insincere because she talks about what she wants to say and hides that which it is unpleasant to reveal.

I advise you, my children, let the superior know the object of your main resolution. Not that she is to figure it out for you - that is your business - but you present it to her. Let her know what you are mainly working on. She can sometimes help you with it. Show her from time to time, at least once every three months, your particular examination. This is a great help for perseverance in work. Ask, at least sometimes, that she tell you everything bad that she sees in you and ask her to give you suggestions how to behave to correct it. Cling to your superior's hand. Look, she is that support which God Himself has given you for your soul. Do not ask whether she is old or young, or more or less likeable, but always remember that she is only the screen behind which is hidden the Lord and that through her He speaks to you, guides you and leads you.

Go then to her in childlike trust. Be sincere - this is the safest path. Be, as St. Berchmans says, "like transparent water for your superiors", and you will learn how much peace and happiness such sincerity gives you and how much it helps for victory. Sincerity is humility, and humility is the source of grace, peace and sanctity. From the first moment upon entering the convent until the last, even if you live a hundred years, be sincere like a child toward your superiors. Never let pride lead you away from this certain path!

Sixteenth Request

ZEAL FOR SAVING SOULS

An Ursuline of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus should listen attentively to the heart-breaking complaint emitted from the lips of our Lord in agony upon the cross: "I thirst." For this cry of pain is the moan of a Heart filled with pain at the sight of a small number of people making use of the graces which He, our Jesus, earned for us and for the whole human race by His Passion and Death. Jesus thirsts and this thirst is so terrible that He, who never complained of anything, cannot refrain from this plaint. He thirsts for souls which would love Him and upon which, in exchange for their love, He could pour the treasures of graces and lead them to eternal happiness, to heaven, where He wants to prepare a place for them.

My children let the sacred fire of love for souls glimmer unceasingly in your hearts. To save souls, to lead souls to Jesus, and to let them discover the infinite goodness of the Heart of Jesus - this is the ideal for which we are to dedicate ourselves. And since a saintly priest can do the most for the souls, then pray for priests, that the Lord send workers to His vineyard. Do not spare sacrifices of your own will, your ambition and laziness for this intention. Do not spare sacrifices for our future priests. How many graces a quiet person, hidden from the world, devoted to work in the background that dedicates herself and quietly bears the crosses of life, can obtain for the priests. By means of all this: work, fatigue, dedication and

sacrifice, she calls upon the Lord for graces for priestly souls. Sometime at the Final Judgement you will see the fruits of this quiet work for souls, work unknown to the world, this sacrifice of one's own "I" for bringing graces and holiness to priestly souls. Look my children; this is a wonderful ideal! And when we have before us a great ideal, then work is easier, and then we are more willing to do that before which nature shrinks.

When I visited the Holy Father, Pius XI, for the first time, when he was still the Apostolic Nuntio in Warsaw, he pointed out to me that Our Lord Jesus does not instruct us to pray for anything so emphatically, as for good priests. When I knelt for the first time at the grave of the Holy Father, Pius X, the Father of our Congregation, an unknown French woman brought me a prayer for priests, which we also recite every day. Are these not clear indications for us of the will of God? Does not the Lord Jesus announce His Sacred Will to us through His deputies in order that we pray in a very special way for priests? So courageously, my dearest children, courageously to the task! You should be that burnt offering, which burns quietly, but unceasingly whether at work, at prayer or in suffering to entreat graces for priestly souls. Each cross will become lighter, each pain less, each sacrifice sweeter, if it is illuminated by the thought: "Jesus, accept this as an imploring sacrifice appealing to Heaven for good and holy priests."

Honor priests; never speak ill of them, even when they act badly, unless perhaps true need requires you to do this. Among yourselves speak neither about priests nor about confessors, but commend them to the Lord Jesus ever more fervently. Earnestly ask God's pardon for scandals

caused, unfortunately, sometimes by priests. Try to console the Heart of the Agonizing Jesus, who most painfully feels the wounds caused Him by those whom He has elevated to the dignity of the royal priesthood.

My sisters, my children, do not bury yourselves in your own, often imaginary sufferings, in your usually tiny crosses, which self-love magnifies so that they obscure your view of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus immersed in sorrow over the unfaithfulness of His servants. The most Divine of Divine things is to collaborate in the redemption of souls. But it seems to me that an even more Divine thing is to collaborate in the consecration of priestly souls and in the increase of priestly callings. So undertake this very important task, with love and dedication. Do not stop in this work; do not get discouraged that maybe you will never see the fruits of this work here in the world - all the better. Let the Lord Jesus Himself gather the fruits of your dedication. Then in eternity, you, my poor sister, who considered yourself to be a useless servant of the Lord, will see the fruits of your labour, for which your Jesus will repay you with love. You will rejoice at the sight of the souls for whom by your work, sacrifice and devotion you have entreated grace and light forever more faithful fulfillment of the holy priestly duties.

Seventeenth Request

LOVE AND RESPECT FOR ALL RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS

Religious congregations are often accused of arguing among themselves. This shocks lay persons and casts a bad light upon them. It is not my concern here to reflect upon the reason for these misunderstandings. It often happens that on both sides with good will there is too great zeal, which fears the shadow cast, as it seems to it, upon its operations and work. And it is forgotten that so much work for God is necessary in light of the immense work against Him that a hundred times as many congregations could work without mutual interference.

My children, I would like you to have open hearts for every religious congregation. For in every one there are persons dedicated to God giving themselves up in prayer, sacrifice and work for God. How can one not love them? How can one not honour them? Let the shadow of jealousy at the sight of the success of another congregation be distant from you. Their success is the success of God's work. Do we not want this? We desire success in our works because we do it for Jesus. So we want success in our works because these are the works of Jesus. In the same way we must desire the success of Jesus' works in other congregations as well. We are to love and honour Jesus in the sisters of our Congregation. They are closest to us - it is true - but to the extent that the Lord Jesus draws us close to sisters of other congregations, then we are to love and

honour Jesus equally in them. Finally remember well: humility is to be the fundamental virtue of our Congregation. Our Congregation is intended for the small and the poor; our habit is poor and simple. Our Constitutions place upon us the obligation of giving priority to religious veils, so we want to be regarded as the lowest, the last, and the weakest of all congregations. This is precisely what is good for such little souls as we are. Let us not be envious of others that God entrusts to them more important and greater works. Let us humble ourselves in our great wretchedness and rejoice that the Lord Jesus can make use of us at least for low, small works. We do not deserve even that. The last place is the safest for us. Let us persist in it out of love and in love, my dearest children.

Never speak ill of another congregation, rather if it is possible, hide their weak sides. Say only whatever good is possible to say about them. Support them; help them if they need it and, if you can, sacrifice yourselves for them. What you do for those who are dedicated to the Lord Jesus, who belong to Jesus, you do for Jesus Himself.

Most of all love your Congregation because Jesus has intended it just for you. It should be your family. In it you are to be sanctified. It is to show you the path to Heaven. Through you, through its poverty and work, the Congregation wants to lead you to holy humility. Love it as a good child loves the best mother, but do not let it interfere with earnestly loving other religious orders. Our Congregation is our mother. Other congregations and orders are our brothers and sisters, our siblings. Good children, wanting to gladden their best mother, love one another and live in harmony and love. So, we too, in our desire to be a comfort for our mother, our Congregation

should live in love and harmony with our siblings, with our brothers and sisters, with other orders and congregations. Let us rejoice in their success, their holiness and their glory. Let us sorrow at their sadness, let us support and help them where we can. This will bring to us the blessing and grace of God. This will be proof for us that we seek not ourselves but the glory of God, the benefit of the Holy Church and the redemption of souls.

Eighteenth Request

PERSEVERANCE TO THE END

"He who has persevered to the end will be saved," says the Lord Jesus. This is the most important thing in inner life: perseverance. Many begin very zealously and earnestly; they strive for the highest ideals. But when they are not immediately successful, they become discouraged and abandon their work apparently under the pretext that they will not achieve anything and that it is not worth the effort. Poor souls! Laziness and pride give them these reasons for giving up. This is a convenient excuse for indulging oneself.

Remember my children, that our life is a struggle, a struggle to the very death. Even if a soldier is forced at the beginning to retreat, even if he has fought to all appearances in vain, if he overcomes his enemy at the last moment and inflicts death upon him, then he has triumphed and is worthy of glory and distinctions. We can never say that it is not worth struggling. Struggle and persistence in struggle - this is what is pleasing to God. It would not be difficult to become a saint, if every brief effort immediately yielded ultimate victory. Sometimes the Lord God is pleased by just that perseverance, which does not shrink from a lengthy battle and which every day anew begins and calmly and confidently waits until God gives the victory. So believe me, humility could be exposed to great temptations, if we attained virtue in this way, almost without labour, speedily and without struggle. I admit that

it is difficult to want to do good continuously and to fall into the same errors. But believe too that God often finds greater delight in persistent struggle, even if laborious, than in easy, momentary victory.

So be persevering, my children, persevering in your resolutions, persevering in virtue, persevering in spiritual exercises, and persevering in small sacrifices. St. Berchmans was asked how to please the Blessed Mother. To this he answered: "By even the smallest practice of virtue or piety, but carried out with perseverance." How many times it happens that a person in moments of zeal makes the best resolutions, carries them out for a few days, then the ardor cools, the resolutions are forgotten and in two or three weeks everything passes into oblivion. Or she has resolved to practise some virtue, for example frequent good intentions. She tries for several days, is not successful, sees no progress and abandons everything. "I won't be able to anyway; it's not worth taking the trouble." It is worth my child, it is worth it! It is precisely the struggle without consolation and without the desired result that is pleasing to the Heart of Jesus. The longer you ask, in the greater measure will you receive.

I direct your attention to one thing especially, dear child, to the lack of perseverance in our requests, particularly concerning gifts for the soul. We need so many graces to achieve holiness, but do we ask for even one constantly and persistently? It often happens that we ask according to our momentary disposition, now for the spirit of prayer, now for the love of God, now for faith - according to our fancy. Then again we do not ask at all for gifts for the soul. We have earthly matters that are of more immediate concern to us. Oh, if we would only develop for

ourselves the clear opinion that we particularly need one or another virtue, that we will specially strive for it, and that we will specially pray for it. If we persisted in this striving and in this prayer, certainly God would give, in very generous measure, what we asked for. But we do not have this perseverance and for this reason we do not receive what we are asking for.

Be persevering my children! Perseverance will for certain bring you victory. Never yield to discouragement. It does not matter whether you fall every day or a hundred times, as long as you get up a hundred times and go on eagerly and confidently. Every day begin anew. It is not necessary for you to see your progress. As long as you know that you have good will, let that be enough for you!

Onward to Heaven with good will, confidence and perseverance! With perseverance you will win the Heart of God for certain!

MY LAST WORDS TO MY DEAR CHILDREN

My dear children, this work - my requests to you - is finished. I would like to ask you again, my children, to strive above all for holiness. This is the purpose of your entering the convent; this is the will of God - your holiness. Be holy and the blessing of God will rest upon our Congregation. Be holy and you will draw souls to God without difficulty. Be holy and God's happiness will abide in you. Be holy and you will be a comfort for the Heart of the Agonizing Jesus. Be holy! Oh, with what joy I will look down from Heaven upon my children earnestly striving for perfection! Strive above all "for the Kingdom of God and His justice."

And once more I implore you, my children, to live in unity and harmony and in heartfelt love, becoming like the first Christians one heart and one soul. Where there is no unity and harmony, there cannot be the blessing of God, there sanctity is out of the question.

Be humble, and you will be able to preserve this holy love, this unity and harmony of God. It is better to yield, better let your best opinion yield to the less appropriate opinion of others, as long as sisterly love is not adversely affected. If you want your work to develop, live in love and harmony. If you want to be holy, live in love and harmony. If you want to draw souls to God, live in love and harmony. Nothing speaks to human hearts on behalf of the congregation so much as the sight of the religious joined in bonds of heartfelt sisterly love. Try to make it so that your sisters find it good to be with you. Gladly carry

out their will, as far as this is in accord with your duties! Gladly sacrifice your own pleasure and God and His blessing will be with you.

I think that I would cry in Heaven if I had to see my children divided into factions fighting and quarreling with one another. Better let our Congregation cease to exist than to be split or divided. God forbid!

And now I bid farewell to you again, my children. I ask you, if you love me, show your love, respect and obedience to the sister who will be elected (provided that death finds me in the position of superior general) my successor. Always, always try to make the life of your superior easier, not more difficult. I ask you for this very earnestly.

God be with you. Pray for my wretched, sinful soul. Do not forget the old Mother, who always will love you, will pray for you, and will bless her children. In the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit! Amen.

October 28, 1924 St. Olaf

SAINT URSULA LEDOCHOWSKA

BIOGRAPHY

Julia Ursula Ledóchowska, foundress of the Congregation of Ursuline Sisters of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus, was born on April 17, 1865 in Loosdorf, Austria. Her uncle, Cardinal Mieczyslaw Ledóchowski, was Prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, her brother Włodzimierz - the Superior General of Jesuit order. Her sister Maria Teresa, foundress of the Missionary Congregation of St. Peter Claver, was beatified in 1975. Julia's father, Antoni, son of a participant of the 1830 uprising in Poland, was forced to emigrate from the country. Her mother Josephine, of Swiss origin, cooperated with her husband in bringing up the children in a spirit of belonging to the Polish nation. In 1883 the Ledochowski family returned to Poland and settled in Lipnica Murowana near Bochnia. Three years later, in 1886, Julia entered the convent of the Ursuline Sisters in Cracow. In 1889 she took her vows, adopting the name Ursula. She began work as tutor and teacher in the high school run by the sisters. In 1904 she became the Superior of the Cracow convent. In this period she founded the first residence in the country for female students. In 1907, accompanied by some sisters, and with a special blessing of Pius X, she went to Petersburg, answering the appeal of the Polish people there. She worked as an educator and teacher among young women at St. Catherine's Polish high school. Her apostolic and ecumenical work embraced also the Russian intelligentsia.

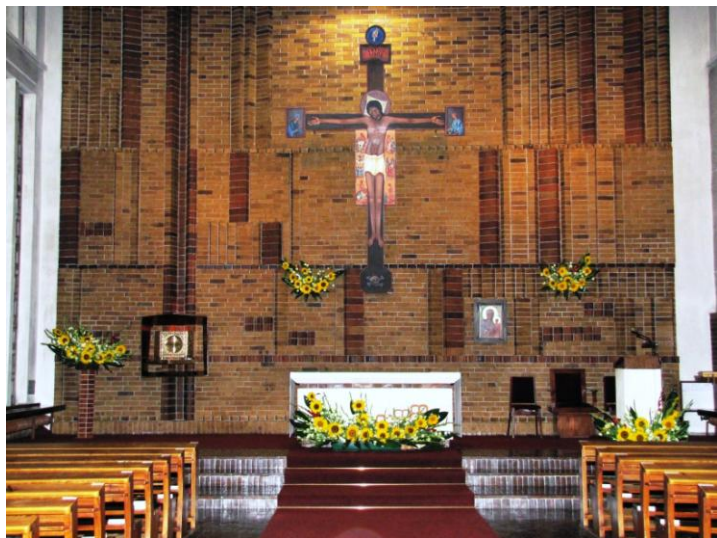
In 1908 Mother Ursula received the permission to establish in Petersburg an autonomous convent of the Ursulines and became its first superior. In 1910 she founded a boarding school for the Polish girls at Merentahti on the Bay of Finland. Merentahti (the Star of the Sea) soon became the centre of the social and spiritual assistance to the Finnish people. In 1914, exiled from Russia, Mother Ursula made her way to Sweden. She took part, with fervor and new initiatives, in the life of the local society and in the activity of the Catholic Church. She also organized a Language Institute. She worked in support of her homeland giving, in different Scandinavian countries, lectures about Poland - its culture, its history and Polish nation's right to independence. In 1917, Mother Ursula transferred her community to Denmark where she took care of Polish war orphans. In 1920, together with a group of sisters and orphans, she returned to Poland and settled in Pniewy near Poznan (today the motherhouse of the Congregation). In the same year Mother Ursula received the approval of the Holy See to transfer the statute of the autonomous house from Petersburg to Pniewy and transform the convent into the Congregation of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus, called "grey Ursulines", as well as to adapt the Constitutions to the new conditions of life and work. The Constitutions of the Congregation were approved in 1923. The Congregation took an active part in the rebuilding of the country and was developing dynamically. In the period between the Wars, lasting twenty years, the number of convents of the order grew to 35 in Poland, Italy and France. The number of its members reached about 800. The care and work of the sisters was extended to meet a wide range of social and religious needs: schools, educational

institutions, residences for students, community centres, nursery schools, religion classes, the Eucharistic Crusade, the Sodality of Our Lady, the publication of religious magazines, a community apostolate in the suburbs of large towns, in factories and in the slum areas.

Mother Ursula died in Rome on May 29, 1939 in the opinion of sanctity. John Paul II beatified her in 1983 in Poznan, on the occasion of His pilgrimage to Poland. The Pope canonized her in Rome in 2003. After Mother Ursula's death the Congregation spread into various countries and continents. Now, approximately 1.000 sisters work in: Poland, Italy, France, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Finland, Germany, Tanzania, Belarus, Ukraine, the Philippines and Bolivia.



The sarcophagus of Saint Ursula in Pniewy, Poland



Motherhouse of the Ursuline Sisters in Pniewy, Poland Chapel.

