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DAY 20

The Offering (Part One)

For the last two days of this week, we'll reflect on the actual text of St. Therese's Offering to Merciful Love, which consists of 11 paragraphs.

The first paragraph, in which Therese describes the goal of her Offering, contains one of the best definitions of what it means to be a saint:

**(1)** "O My God! Most Blessed Trinity, I desire to Love You and make You Loved, to work for the glory of Holy Church by saving souls on earth and liberating those suffering in purgatory. I desire to accomplish Your will perfectly and to reach the degree of glory You have prepared for me in Your Kingdom. I desire, in a word, to be a saint, but I feel my helplessness and I beg You, O my God, to be Yourself my Sanctity!"

Notice how, having stated the goal (becoming a saint), Therese clearly realizes that she is "helpless" when it comes to attaining it. So, in a bold move, she chooses to rely on God's sanctity, a choice that carries into the next paragraph:

**(2)** "Since You loved me so much as to give me Your only Son as my Savior and my Spouse, the infinite treasures of His merits are mine. I offer them to You with gladness, begging You to look upon me only in the Face of Jesus and in His heart burning with Love."

Here, we see that Therese does not want to rely on her own merits but, rather, on those of Jesus. And then, in the next paragraph, she also throws in the merits of the saints, angels, and the Blessed Mother. (Why not?)

**(3)** "I offer You, too, all the merits of the saints (in heaven and on earth), their acts of Love, and those of the holy angels. Finally, I offer You, O Blessed Trinity, the Love and merits of the Blessed Virgin, my dear Mother. It is to her I abandon my offering, begging Her to present it to You, Her Divine Son, my Beloved Spouse, told us in the days of His mortal life: "Whatsoever you ask the Father in my name he will give it to you!" I am certain, then, that You will grant my desires; I know, O my God, that the more You want to give, the more You make us desire. I feel in my heart immense desires and it is with confidence I ask You to come and take possession of my soul. Ah! I cannot receive Holy Communion as often as I desire, but, Lord, are You not all-powerful? Remain in me as in a tabernacle and never separate Yourself from Your little victim."

Therese's boldness in relying on the merits not only of God but of the saints and angels reaches new heights after she reminds the Lord of his promise in Scripture to grant whatever we ask. I say "new heights," because she actually asks God to "take possession" of her soul and to sacramentally remain in her "as in a tabernacle." Can we even ask for that? Therese doesn't seem to have a problem with it. After all, isn't God "all-powerful"? And isn't he the one who inspired these desires in the first place?

In the next paragraph, Therese states yet another desire and another bold petition:

**(4)** "I want to console You for the ingratitude of the wicked, and I beg of You to take away my freedom to displease You. If through weakness I sometimes fall, may Your Divine Glance cleanse my soul immediately, consuming all my imperfections like the fire

that transforms everything into itself.”

The bold petition is remarkable: Therese asks the Lord not only to take away her freedom to sin but to cleanse her from the stain of any falls as they happen. (Can we ask for that? Apparently so.) Therese’s expressed desire is no less remarkable: She wants to “console” Jesus, a desire that she repeats later (see paragraph 6), a desire that’s a particularly important concept in her spirituality.

Actually, Therese’s desire to console Jesus responds to an objection some might have, namely, that the goal of the Offering is selfishly all about Therese’s own personal sanctity. Well, it’s not. Again, it’s about consoling Jesus. In other words, Therese wants to become a saint not to please herself but, rather, to please Jesus. Elsewhere in her writings, she makes this point clear:

“If the good God were to say to me: ‘If you die immediately, you will obtain great glory; if you die at the age of eighty, your glory will be far less, but it will please me much more,’ then I would not hesitate to answer: My God, I want to die at eighty for I am not seeking my own glory, but only to please You.”

Now, having made that clarification, I suggest we go back and reread just the first four paragraphs of the Offering itself, pondering them in our hearts for the remainder of today. Then, tomorrow, we’ll reflect on the rest of the Offering.

#### **Today’s Prayer:**

Come, Holy Spirit, fire of mercy.

Purify my intentions that I may do everything solely to please and glorify God.

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## **Volume 14**

July 10, 1922

To Live in the Divine Will is to Repeat the Real Life of Jesus, Not Only in the Soul But in the Body

As I continued in my usual state, I felt my beloved Jesus within me, but so real that this time I felt Him grip my heart tightly enough to make me suffer; then He clasped my neck in His arms in a suffocating embrace; next He sat upon my heart with an imperious and commanding air. I felt myself being annihilated and then coming back to new life at His command. But who can say what He did within me, and how it felt to me! It is better not to speak about it.

Then, as I continued to feel His Real Presence within me, He said:

“My daughter, rise up, rise up more, more ... until you arrive at the Bosom of the Divinity. Your life will be in the midst of the Divine Persons. Behold: To make you achieve this I have formed My Life in you, and I have enclosed My Eternal Volition in whatever you do so that it flows in everything in a wonderful and surprising manner. My Will is acting in you in one continual and actual act. Because I have formed My Life in you, and My Will is acting in you and in your acts, your will has been absorbed and transfused into Mine, so that My Will has a life on earth.

Now you must lift yourself up and with you take My Life, My Will, so that My Will on earth and My Will in Heaven can fuse together. There, in the Bosom of the Divinity, you will live for some time, where your will shall act with Mine to enlarge your will as much as is possible in a creature. Then you will go down again to earth, taking with you the

Power and prodigies of My Will. Their presence in you will shake creatures and open their eyes; and many will come to know the meaning of living in My Will: To live in the likeness of their Creator.

This will be the beginning of the coming of My Reign upon the earth and of the ultimate fulfillment of My Will.

Do you believe it is a small thing to live in My Will? It has no equal, nor is there any sanctity that compares with it. It is Real Life, not an illusion, not a figment of one's imagination. This Life of Mine lives not only in the soul, but also in the body. Do you know how this Life of Mine is formed? My Eternal Will becomes the Will of the soul and then My palpitations, beating within her heart, conceive My Life. The soul's love, her sorrows, and all her acts done in My Will form My Humanity. These make Me grow so much within the soul that I cannot remain hidden, and the soul cannot help but feel My presence. Don't you feel Me alive within you?

That is why I have told you there is nothing even remotely resembling the sanctity of living in My Will. All other sanctities will be as small lights, but this new sanctity will be a great sun transfused into its Creator.

## **Volume 24**

July 23, 1928

Jesus: "Now if you knew how contented We are when We see Our little daughter soar above in Our Will to bring Us the heavens, stars, sun, and everything else—to require Us with the same gifts that We gave to her, We feel Our own glory, love, and the repetition of Our works. And, knowing that if she had the power to make them she would make them for Us, so as always to excel in Our love for one who lives in Our Fiat, We give her the merit as if she had made the heavens, the Sun, the sea, and the wind—in short, everything—for love of Us. We requite her as if she were maintaining the whole Creation to give Us glory and to tell Us that she loves Us. My Will loves the soul who lives in It so much, that there is nothing that My Will has done or that It can do in which It does not say to the soul: 'Let Us do this together'; so as to be able to say: 'What I have done for love of her, she has done for love of Me.'"

## **Volume 14**

April 6, 1922

Luisa said: "My Love, in Your Will what is Yours is mine; the sun is mine; all created things are mine. I give them back to You in reciprocity so that the sun, in each particle of light and heat, will say to You that I love You, I adore You, I bless You; and I intercede on behalf of all mankind. The stars are mine; and in each sparkle of every star I seal my 'I love You,' immense and infinite, on behalf of all. The plants, the flowers, water, fire, air ... are mine and I give them to You in reciprocity so that they all might say to You on behalf of all mankind: 'I love You with that Eternal Love with which You created us!' O if I tried to fully express my love for You it would take far too long!" Then Jesus, moving within me, said: "My daughter, how beautiful are the prayers and acts done in My Will! How the creature is transformed into the very Creator God and gives God reciprocity and satisfaction for all that He has given to mankind! I created

everything for man and gave it all to him. In My Will the creature is lifted up to its Creator and finds Him in the act by which God created all things to give them, as a gift, to mankind. The creature, in turn, overcome by the multiplicity of so many gifts, and lacking the creative power to create as many things as it has received, offers these same things back to God in an act of loving reciprocity.

Sun, stars, flowers, water, fire, air ... I have given them all to express My Love. Recognizing this, you have accepted them, and, putting My Love into action, have given them back to Me in reciprocity. The sun which belongs to you, you gave reciprocally to Me. The stars, flowers, water ... I gave them to you, and you reciprocated by giving them back to Me. Thus the music of My Love has resounded anew in all created things. With a unanimous voice they have given Me the love that I poured forth upon all Creation.

In My Will the soul ascends to the level of its Creator, giving and receiving in the Creator's own Will. O what a competition takes place between the Creator and the creature! If all creatures could but see this, they would be awestruck as, within My Will, the soul becomes a little god, **but only by virtue of the power of My Will.**