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DAY 16

What It Is

Yesterday, we learned that St. Therese's Little Way does not culminate in an offering to Divine Justice but, rather, in an offering to Divine Mercy. So, what is it? Therese herself tells us as she makes an ardent prayer to the Lord: "O my God! Will Your Justice alone find souls willing to immolate themselves as victims? Does not Your Merciful Love need them too? On every side this love is unknown, rejected; those hearts upon whom You would lavish it turn to creatures, seeking happiness from them with their miserable affection; they do this instead of throwing themselves into Your arms and of accepting Your infinite Love. O my God! Is Your disdained Love going to remain closed up within Your Heart? It seems to me that if You were to find souls offering themselves as victims of holocaust to Your Love, You would consume them rapidly; it seems to me, too, that You would be happy not to hold back the waves of infinite tenderness within You. If Your Justice loves to release itself, this Justice which extends only over the earth, how much more does Your Merciful Love desire to set souls on fire since Your Mercy reaches to the heavens. O my Jesus, let me be this happy victim; consume Your holocaust with the fire of your Divine Love!"

From this beautiful prayer, we begin to arrive at the essence of the Offering to Merciful Love. And the key lines that reveal its essence are actually two questions. The first one is this: "Does not Your Merciful Love need [victims] too?" The implied answer is yes. Jesus needs little souls to receive his Merciful Love. And that's the beauty of Therese's path. It's not a path on which Jesus gives grace and mercy because we deserve it but, rather, because he feels the need to give it.

Of course, we can walk the path of merit by focusing on what we "deserve." In other words, we can be anxious about our merits like the poor victim of justice, Sr. Marie of Jesus, who said from her deathbed, "I don't have enough merits, I must acquire more of them." Or we can travel the path of mercy by giving our attention to Jesus, who longs for souls into whom he can pour his Merciful Love.

One expert on Carmelite spirituality contrasted these two paths (that of merit and that of mercy) as follows: "[God] brings about [our sanctification] by the diffusion of grace which He gives according to our merits, or simply to satisfy the need of his mercy." I don't know about you, but I choose the latter path!

Okay, so here's the second key question in Therese's ardent prayer: "Is Your disdained Love going to remain closed up within Your Heart?" That is the million-dollar question! But it's not really a question for Jesus; it's a question for us. Actually, it's a question for you. (I've already shared what path I've chosen.) So, what about you? Are you going to have pity on Jesus? Are you going to console his Heart by letting him pour into your soul the love that others have rejected? If you say yes to this Offering, then it seems that Jesus would be "happy" not to "hold back" the waves of ... what? Infinite justice? Infinite harshness? No. Infinite tenderness. Now, who wouldn't want that?

Alright, but before you answer which path you'll choose — justice or mercy, harshness or tenderness — I'd like to bring in the testimony of another great saint of Divine Mercy. I do this because it may be hard to believe that Jesus actually "needs" us and that we

truly can give relief to his Sacred and Merciful Heart. To help us understand, listen to what the Lord himself said to St. Faustina about the rejected grace and mercy of his Heart:

“I desire to bestow My graces upon souls, but they do not want to accept them. You, at least, come to Me as often as possible and take these graces they do not want to accept. In this way you will console My Heart. Oh, how indifferent are souls to so much goodness, to so many proofs of love! My Heart drinks only of the ingratitude and forgetfulness of souls living in the world. They have time for everything, but they have no time to come to Me for graces.

“The flames of mercy are burning Me. I desire to pour them out upon human souls. Oh, what pain they cause Me when they do not want to accept them! 95 ... I am looking for souls who would like to receive My grace.”

So, do you want to “console” Jesus by receiving his grace? Will you accept the rejected mercy that burns his Heart? Will you be, as St. Therese put it, his “happy victim” by letting him pour into your soul his “waves of infinite tenderness?” Will you offer yourself as a victim soul to his Merciful Love?

Maybe you’re not quite ready. Maybe you’re saying to yourself, “That sounds wonderful, but what’s the catch?” In other words, “What’s it going to cost me?” Great question.

We’ll answer it tomorrow.

Today’s Prayer:

Come, Holy Spirit, fire of mercy.

Prepare my heart to receive waves of infinite tenderness from the Heart of Jesus.

Volume One

O my All! My beautiful Jesus! If You communicate so much peace to us in the moments when You show Yourself to us in this life—so that one can suffer the most painful martyrdoms and the most humiliating pains with perfect tranquility (although with a mixture of peace and sorrow)—what will it be like in Paradise? O how beautiful are his most pure eyes, sparkling with light—a light unlike the light of the sun that harms our eyes if we look at it. One can easily gaze on the light of Jesus, and by just looking at the interior of His sky-blue pupils—O how many things one can learn! His eyes are so beautiful that a single one of His looks suffices to draw me out of myself—to run after Him over mountain paths, over the earth and through the heavens. One single glance suffices to transform me in Him, and to make me feel a divine power flow into me. And who can describe the beauty of His adorable face? His white complexion looks like snow, colored with the hue of the most beautiful roses. His ruddy face reveals the greatness of His personality. His majestic divine eyes inspire fear and reverence—but at the same time inspire such trust that I have never found anyone who could inspire the tiniest part of the confidence that my dear Jesus gives—not my parents, nor my confessors, nor my sisters. O yes! That Holy Face is so majestic but also so lovable—and its loveliness so attractive—that the soul has not the slightest doubt of being welcomed by Jesus, no matter how ugly and sinful she may know herself to be. His beautiful nose comes to a fine point—beautifully proportioned to His Holy Face. His

gracious mouth is small but extremely beautiful. His thin reddish lips when He speaks express an ineffable graciousness. His sweet voice sounds gentle and harmonious. When He speaks, such a fragrance flows from His mouth that it seems as if nothing like it exists on earth. It is a voice so penetrating that it reaches everywhere. It descends from one's ears into the heart. And O how many emotions it inspires! I do not know how anyone can describe it completely. Jesus' voice is so pleasant that one word from that voice conveys more happiness than all the world's pleasures. The voice of my Jesus exudes power. His word takes effect the moment He speaks—achieving whatever He says. O how beautiful is His mouth—full of grace in speaking; revealing his even, white teeth—while his love breathes forth flames of love that pierce, inflame, and consume men's hearts! Beautiful also are His hands—soft, white, and delicate; their fingers perfectly crafted—as He moves them with captivating command.

How beautiful You are, All Beautiful, sweet Jesus! All that I have said about your beauty is nothing—rather it seems like nonsense. But what can I do? Forgive me: Obedience demands it. On my own, I would not have dared to say one word—knowing my weakness.

Volume 14

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Love Makes One Die and be Reborn Continually.

As I continued in my usual state, my ever beloved Jesus came and said to me: “My daughter, my love for creatures made me die at every instant. The nature of true love is to die and come back to life continually for the beloved. The love of wanting the person for oneself makes one feel death. It produces one of the most prolonged and painful martyrdoms. But the same love, stronger still than death, gives one life in the same instant it brings death. Why does it do this? It is to give life to the beloved and so to form one single life with her. The flames of love have the power to consume one life and fuse it into another. This is exactly the virtue of My Love: to make Me die and from My immolation to form seeds to plant in the hearts of creatures, enabling Me to rise within them and to form with them one single life with Me.

“Now you too can die—who knows how many times—for love of Me ... perhaps in every instant. But in reality, every time you want to see Me but you can't, your will feels My absence as death. When you don't see Me your will dies at not being able to find the life it is seeking. But after your will has been consumed in that act of death, I am born anew in you and you in Me; and you find the life you desired ... only to die again, and again come to life in Me. Thus, if you desire Me, your unsatisfied desire experiences death; but when I reappear it finds new life again. So also your love, your intelligence, and your heart can be in a continual act of dying and returning to life for Me. If I did it for you, it is only fitting that you do it for Me.”