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DAY 24

Liturgical Darkness

Yesterday, we learned the secret to overcoming our blindness to our own personal sins, the secret to being little: the fire of God's love. We saw how that love humbles us, making us realize that we can't compete, that we can't love God as he loves us, that we can't be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect.

Alright, so we're weak, little, pitiful lovers. We're sinners who would "die of terror" if we fully realized our selfishness and sin. Well, thank God, it doesn't end there.

Once we're humbled, God lifts us up. Again, as St. Therese said to the Lord, "For me to love you as you love me, I would have to borrow your own love." And she knew she could! Indeed, she was absolutely confident that God would allow her to borrow his own divine love. For evidence of this, we need only look as far as the text of her Offering to Merciful Love:

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!...

[L]ook upon me only in the Face of Jesus and in His heart burning with Love ... [I]t is with confidence I ask you to come and take possession of my soul ... Remain in me as in a tabernacle ... All our justice is stained in Your eyes. I wish, then, to be clothed in Your own Justice and to receive from Your Love the eternal possession of Yourself ...

[Allow] the waves of infinite tenderness shut up within You to overflow into my soul.

Clearly, Therese is confident that God will let her "borrow" his own love so she can love him perfectly in return. She knows that he himself will be her "Sanctity" and that God the Father will look upon her "only in the Face of Jesus and in His heart burning with Love." She's confident that God's love will "take possession" of her and "remain" in her that she might be "clothed" in God's "own Justice" and filled with an "overflow" of the "infinite tenderness" of his love. She knows that "all our justice," that is, all our own efforts, are "stained" in God's eyes. So, her aim is to love God with his own perfect love.

But when will Therese get that love? When will she be able to love God perfectly with His own divine love? She believes it will be only at the moment of her death, when she hopes to be "a martyr" of God's Love. More specifically, she believes that her desires will be realized only in heaven: "What attracts me to the homeland

of heaven is the Lord's call, the hope of loving Him finally as I have so much desired to love Him." So, according to St. Thérèse, only in heaven will we love God with perfect love. Still, there's such a thing as heaven on earth. There's a time here on earth when we can love God perfectly with His own divine love: It's when we participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The Mass is, as it were, heaven on earth. It provides us the opportunity, in the veiled form of Sacrament, to love God as He loves us, to actually love him perfectly. Specifically, it happens during what I call the "supercharged" moment of the Mass.

That's the moment when the priest at the altar takes the Body and Blood of Christ into his hands and offers it up to God the Father with these words: "Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours forever and ever. Amen."

That moment is supercharged because, at the Mass, Jesus is giving himself Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity into our hands: literally, in the hands of the priest, and spiritually, in the hands of all the lay faithful who unite their own sacrifices to the offering of the priest at the altar. Then, together, each in his own way, we offer Jesus' infinite sacrifice of love to the Father and ourselves along with it. That's the moment when Jesus' sacrifice becomes our sacrifice, when Jesus' love becomes our love, when Jesus' offering of himself becomes our offering of ourselves. So, in that moment, we love God perfectly with His own divine love. More specifically, we love the Father with the perfect love of the Son, in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

But, again, that experience of heaven on earth is hidden under the veil of a Sacrament. In other words, it takes place through the darkness of liturgical worship, a worship that points to and makes manifest the divine worship of heaven through the poverty of signs and symbols wrought by human hands. And while the Mass truly does make present the sublime worship of heaven, our eyes remain blind to the myriad of angels praising the Lord, the countless throng of saints gathered around the altar, and the overwhelming glory of Our Savior giving himself over to our loving and merciful Father. And yet, through the Mass, we truly and fully participate in that mystery. Through the Mass, we perfectly love God with "borrowed," infinite love — the divine love of the Son for the Father.

Today's Prayer:

Come, Holy Spirit, fire of mercy.

Help me to participate fully, consciously, and actively in the "borrowed" divine love

of liturgical worship.

Volume 12

March 27, 1918

By living in the Divine Will, the soul finds everything in a Divine and infinite way. I was complaining to Jesus because I could not even listen to Holy Mass; and Jesus told me: “My daughter, am I not the essence of the Sacrifice? Now, since I am present in each Sacrifice, the soul who lives with Me and in my Will is sacrificed with Me—not only in one Mass, but in all the Masses. And since she lives in my Will, she remains consecrated with Me in all the Hosts.

If you never go out of my Will, I will let you go anywhere you want to be. Besides, You and I will enjoy such a constant current of communication between us that you will not do one act without Me, and I will not do one act without you. That is why, when you need something, you should enter into my Will, and there you will find whatever you want already prepared for you—as many Masses, as many Communions, and as much love as you want. In my Will nothing is lacking. Indeed, in my Will you will find everything in a divine and infinite way.

May 28, 1920

Acts done in the Divine Will enter into the sphere of Eternity, and always run ahead of all human acts.

I was offering myself in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with Jesus, so that I too might receive his consecration with Him. And, moving in my interior, He said to me: “My daughter, enter into my Will, so that you may find yourself in all of the Hosts—not only those of the present, but those of the future also. In this way you will receive, with Me, as many consecrations as I receive. In each Host I place one Life of Mine, and I want to receive another one in exchange. But how many refuse to give it to Me! Others receive Me, and I give Myself to them, but they do not give themselves to Me—and my Love remains suffering, suffocated, frustrated and unrequited. That is why I want you to come into my Will to receive all the consecrations that I receive, and I will find your life in exchange, in each Host—not only for as long as you remain on earth—but also when you are in Heaven. Indeed—since you have been consecrated in advance while living in my Will on earth—just as I will receive consecrations until the end of time, so you, too,

will receive them—and I will find the exchange of your life until the last day.” Then He added: “The acts done in my Will are those which always surpass all others, enjoying supremacy over all. Since they are done in my Will, they enter into the sphere of Eternity, and taking the first places, they leave all human acts behind, always running ahead. Whether they are performed before or after makes no difference. Nor does it matter whether the acts are small or great, performed in one era or in another. It is enough that they be done in my Will for them to be always among the first—and to run ahead of all human acts. They are similar to oil that is mixed with other food—maybe even with things of greater value, even gold, or silver, or foods of great substance—they all remain below, while the oil floats on top of them. It never lowers itself or sinks beneath their level. With its little mirror of light, it seems to be saying: ‘I am here to excel all. I do not join together with other things, nor do I mix with them.’ In the same way, because the acts done in my Volition are performed in my Will, they become light—but a light which is bound to, and identified with, the eternal Light. These acts do not mix with human acts; rather, they have the power to change human acts into Divine. That is why they outstrip all other acts, and emerge as the first among all.

Volume 18

6th February, 1926

The Divine Will reigning in the Soul Lifts Her Up Above All and Restores Her to Her Beginning; and the Soul Loves All Things with God’s Love and Becomes the Queen and Owner of All Creation.

I was fusing myself in the Holy Divine Will in my usual way by taking the Eternal "I love You" of my sweet Jesus and making it mine. And I went around all Creation and sealed each thing with my "I love You," so that everyone and everything would hold a single note, a single sound, a single harmony: an "I love You, I love You, I love You," for me and for everyone, towards my Creator who has loved me so much.

Now while I did that, my beloved Jesus came out from within me, held me close to His Heart, and said to me, full of tenderness:

“My daughter, how beautiful is the ‘I love You’ of one who lives in My Will! I feel the echo of My ‘I love you’ in her will and in all created things; and so I feel repaid by the soul’s love for all that I have done. And, then, to love means to possess what is loved, or to want to possess the thing loved. That is why you love all

Creation because it is Mine, and I let you love it because I want to make it yours. Your repeated 'I love You'—spoken by you to Me over every created thing—is the way to obtain the right of possessing them.

When they feel themselves being loved, the whole Creation and all that it contains recognizes Its Owner, the Divine Will; that is why they make merry and feel your 'I love You' repeated over them. Love makes one recognize what is one's own. And created things give themselves only to those by whom they are loved; and My Will reigning in the soul confirms that what is Mine is hers. Now, when two persons share something together, they need to be in perfect accord; one cannot act without the other; and this is why their inseparable union is necessary—and continual communication about what to do with what they possess. O how My Will reigning in the soul lifts her above all things! And as she loves with God's love, she knows how to love all things with His own Love, and she comes to be the Owner and the Queen of all Creation.