



For four weeks, we've been reflecting on what a consecration to Divine Mercy (St. Therese-style) is all about — and we've covered a lot of material. While our prayer program of daily pondering the text has helped us digest some of the information, we can still go deeper. To do this, we need what St. John Paul II calls Mary's "wise capacity for remembering and embracing in a single gaze of faith." We can develop this "wise capacity" by continuing what we've been doing all along, namely, pondering in our hearts (see Lk 2:19), but now with a more refined focus. To give us this more refined focus, for each week of the retreat, I've chosen three words that summarize a given week's teaching. So, over the next four days, we'll reflect on three words each day, pondering their meaning for our Divine Mercy consecration. I'm confident that if we dedicate ourselves to this more refined prayer pondering, we'll be able to embrace the truth of this consecration "in a single gaze of faith." Then, after these four days of review, we'll read a synthesis of what we've learned in a single formula of consecration that aims to capture the essence of Therese's Offering to Merciful Love.

## DAY 29

### What Is Trust?

Three words summarize what we learned about trust: (1) Distrust, (2) Blessing, and (3) Grace.

#### **Distrust**

Of course, distrust is the opposite of trust. So, what can it tell us about trust? Actually, a lot. I say that because the word "distrust" reminds us that we have a trust problem. It reminds us that trust does not come naturally to us. It reminds us of what went wrong and helps us recognize the path to making things right.

Recall that our trust problem began with the fall of Adam and Eve. More specifically, it began with a lie: Eve listened to the lie of the serpent, a lie that made God seem jealous, selfish, and conniving. In other words, it called into question God's goodness. Thus, Adam and Eve, and we ourselves, are "afraid of the God of whom [we] have conceived a distorted image."

The key to overcoming our trust problem has to do with "un-distorting" our image of God. It's to begin to recognize the truth of God's goodness. And when we clearly see that God is good, merciful, and trustworthy, we begin to trust him. Of course, as we've already learned, St. Therese helps us with this. She provides powerful

testimony to how good and truly merciful God is.

### **Blessing**

Recall that, according to St. John Paul II, “a kind of ‘key’ unlocks for us the innermost reality of Mary.” That key is the blessing of Elizabeth at the Annunciation: “Blessed is she who believed that what was spoken to her by the Lord would be fulfilled” (Lk 1:45). That blessing reveals the “innermost reality of Mary,” because Mary’s inner reality was a reality of faith (or trust). And the essence of faith is to believe God’s Word.

More specifically, it’s to believe that God is faithful to his promises, to believe that God is faithful even when it seems impossible. For instance, it’s to “hope against hope,” like Abraham did when he was called to sacrifice Isaac, believing in the impossible, namely, that God could even raise Isaac from the dead. It’s to “hope against hope,” like Mary did at the Cross, believing in the impossible, namely, that God could even raise Jesus from the dead. It’s to “hope against hope” in our daily lives, when all is darkness and we’re tempted to disbelieve in God’s loving presence in our lives, tempted to doubt that “all things work together for good to those who love God” (Rom 8:28). It’s to praise and thank God in all circumstances, because while we may not always understand his ways, “we know and believe the love God has for us” (1 Jn 4:16). And for such belief, for such hoping against hope in darkness, for such praising and thanking God in all circumstances, we, too, like Abraham and Mary, will be richly blessed.

### **Grace**

Mary is not only a perfect model of faith and trust for us, but she obtains for us the grace to believe and to trust in God. She does this through her powerful prayers for us, which are so effective because of the suffering she endured at the foot of the Cross.

There, Mary’s Immaculate Heart was pierced with a sword as she beheld the agony of her Son. And from her pierced Heart, we obtain the grace to have hearts that open up to receive the love and mercy pouring forth from the Sacred Heart of Jesus (see Lk 2:35). Of course, Mary’s Heart is not the source of grace and mercy, but the love of her Heart helps move us to open our hearts to receive God’s gifts. Thus, Mary is the New Eve who brings us to the New Adam on the new tree of life, the Cross, and encourages us not to eat forbidden fruit of disobedience and distrust but to drink from the blessed fountain of eternal life, the Fountain of Grace and Mercy.

We need Mary's help to obtain the gift of faith, that is, the grace to believe. Also, in a certain sense, even God needs her help. I say that because our "trust problem" primarily has to do with God. But Mary isn't God — she's our tender, loving mother.

And who could be afraid of such a mother? Thus, Mary is a kind of "secret weapon" for God, a way for his grace to enter hardened hearts, hearts that she then opens up to God.

**Today's Prayer:**

Spend the day pondering the meaning of trust as it is summarized in these three words: Distrust, Blessing, and Grace.

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**DISTRUST:**

**Volume 6**

March 23, 1905

Glory and satisfaction of Jesus.

As I was in my usual state, blessed Jesus came for a brief visit, and I said to Him: "Lord, is my state your glory?" And He answered: "My daughter, all my glory and all my satisfaction lies solely in this—that I want all of you more in Me. Then He added: Everything depends on the soul's distrust and fear of herself, and on her trust and confidence in God." And, having said this, He disappeared.

**Volume 9**

May 16, 1909

The sun is a symbol of grace.

While continuing in my usual state, hardly had blessed Jesus arrived when He said to me: "My daughter, grace is like the sun. It enters wherever it finds an empty space, be it a cave, a place underground, a crack, or a hole. As long as there is an empty space or any small opening, it enters and fills everything with light. Yet the light that a given space receives does not diminish the light received by other places. And if its light no longer illuminates, it is not because of a lack of sunlight, but because the sun no longer finds a place to diffuse its light. My grace is like this. More than the majestic sun, my grace envelopes all creatures with its beneficent influence. But it can only enter into empty hearts. And the more man's heart is empty, the more my grace makes light penetrate his heart.

But how are these empty spaces formed? Humility is the hoe that digs and forms the void. Detachment from everything, as well as from oneself, is the empty space itself. The window that enables the light of grace to enter this void is trust in God and distrust in oneself. So, the more the soul trusts, the more she opens the door to make the light enter and to obtain greater graces. Peace is the guardian that increases and defends the light.”

## **Volume 17**

September 2, 1924

The Immense Harm that Distrust Does to the Soul. The Labors of Jesus.

I wept and said to Jesus:

"My Love and my Life, Jesus, I am so afraid that You will leave me! How will I go on without You? How will I be able to live? To what wretched a state will my poor little soul be reduced? What agonizing sorrow I feel at the mere thought that You might leave me! This sorrow wounds me deeply; it takes away my peace, and puts hell in my heart! Jesus, pity, compassion—have mercy on me, a small child! I do not have anyone else; if You leave me, everything will be finished for me!"

And Jesus spoke:

"My daughter, be calm; do not fear; your Jesus won't leave you. I am so jealous of your trust. I do not want you to distrust Me in the least. You see, I so love for souls to place complete trust in Me that I often I hide some of their faults and imperfections, or some of their lack of response to My Grace, so that they won't have any reason not to stay with Me with complete confidence. Because if confidence is lost, the soul remains as if divided from Me—completely withdrawn and enclosed within herself. She distances herself from Me and remains paralyzed in zeal for love; and in this way she becomes paralyzed in sacrificing herself for Me. O how much damage distrust does! It is like a spring freeze that cuts off the growth of the plants. And often, if the freeze is severe, it even deadens them. It is the same way with distrust; more than a freeze it stops the virtues from growing and freezes the most ardent love. O how often My plans and the greatest holiness become paralyzed for lack of confidence! That is why I tolerate all kinds of defects, except distrust—because it can do so much harm. And how could I leave you if I have worked so hard in your soul? Just look at how much work I have had to do!"

And while He said this, He showed me a sumptuous and immense palace, built by

Jesus' hands in the depths of my soul. And afterwards, He added:  
“My daughter, how can I leave you? Take a look at how many rooms there are— they are almost innumerable. How much knowledge—how many effects, values and merits in My Will have I made known to you? How many rooms have I formed within you so that I would have a place to put all those good things? Nothing remains for Me but to add a few different colors to paint other beautiful branches of My Supreme Will, to give more prominence and honor to My work. And do you think I could abandon so much of My work? No, it cost Me too much—My Will is committed. And where My Will exists, there is Life—Life that is not subject to death. Your fear is nothing more than a little distrust on your part; so, trust Me and we will be in accord; and I will be able to complete the work of My Will.

## **BLESSING:**

### **Volume 14**

March 13, 1922

The Great Blessings that flow from Listening to Truths.

I was outside of my body in a valley full of flowers where I saw my Confessor who had died on the tenth of March; and, as he used to do when he was down here, he said to me: "Tell me: What has Jesus said to you?"

I replied: "He has spoken to me interiorly, but He has not said anything verbally; and you know that I don't take into account some things that I hear interiorly."

He said: "I want to hear even what He said to you interiorly."

As if forced to reply, I answered: "He said to me: My daughter, I carry you in My arms. My arms will act as a small boat to help you navigate the unending sea of My Will. As you do your acts in My Will, you will later form the sails, the mast and the anchor, which will not only adorn your little boat but will also make it go faster. My love for a soul that lives in My Will is so great that I carry her in My arms without ever leaving her. But while He said this, I saw Jesus' arms in the form of a little boat in the midst of which I was sitting."

When my Confessor heard this, he said: "You must know that when Jesus speaks to you and reveals His truths, they are like rays of light raining down on you. Because you do not have His power, when you revealed them to me, you revealed them one drop at a time. Nevertheless, my soul was filled with these drops of light. And this light inspired me to want to hear other truths so that I could receive even more light—because these lights bear a celestial perfume, a divine

sensation. And if one feels this merely from hearing about them, what must he feel who puts them into practice? That is why I loved and longed so much to hear what Jesus said to you, and why I wanted to tell these things to others. It was because of the light and the fragrance that I experienced, which I wanted to share with others. If you only knew what a great blessing it has been for my soul to have heard the truths that Jesus told you! How my soul still drips light and exudes a celestial perfume which not only refreshes me but also illuminates me and those who are near me! And as you do your acts in the Divine Will, I participate in a special way because I feel the seed of the Most Holy Will that you planted in me." I said: "Let me see your soul, how does it drip light?"

Opening his side around his heart, he enabled me to see his soul, full of drops of light, which flowed together, separated, and then ran over each other ... it was beautiful to see. Then he continued: "Do you see how beautiful it is to hear these truths? Whoever does not listen to truths drips down such darkness that it inspires terror."

## **GRACE:**

### **Volume 11**

April 10, 1912

The souls who have more trust will shine more brightly in the crown of divine mercy.

As I continued in my usual state, blessed Jesus came to me and told me: "My daughter, the souls who will shine the most brilliantly, like bright gems in the crown of my divine mercy, are the souls who have more trust, because the more trusting they are, the more they make room for the attribute of my Mercy to pour all the Graces they desire into them. On the other hand, the soul who does not have real trust shuts these graces within Me, remaining poor and ill-equipped, while my Love remains pent up within Me and suffers greatly.

"In order not to suffer so much, and to be able to freely pour out my Love, I deal more with those souls who trust more than with other souls. With these souls I can pour out my Love, I can play, I can arrange loving tests, since I need not worry that they may feel ashamed or afraid; rather, they become even bolder and use everything I give them to love Me more. That is why trusting souls are the outpouring and delight of my Love—the most graceful and the richest."

