

FOUR RETREAT TALKS

Mother Marcelina Darowska
and her alumnae

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Vic. Gen.

A woman who brings up young generations in the Christian spirit becomes the mother of the future, because the children, the youth she shapes are the future of the world. History teaches that many a time her hands have held the fate of whole nations, and where good mothers, wives and citizens are, there is happiness.

Blessed Marcelina Darowska

On the 6th of October 1996 in St. Peter's Square, the Venerable Servant of God John Paul II said during the beatification ceremony of Marcelina Darowska: *She ascribed a particular role to a Christian woman in the life of society as “a wife, a mother and a citizen”. Assiduously, she cared about the development of God's Kingdom in the family, because only a family which “is founded on God” – as she used to say – could be the foundation of a new society. This new blessed one is an example of apostolic faith which creates new forms of the presence of the Church in the world, which shapes a society which is more just and human, which “lasts and bears fruit” in Christ.*

The whole life of blessed Marcelina Darowska (1827–1911) was lived in difficult times. In 1795, Poland was erased from the map of Europe as the result of the partition treaties signed by Prussia, Russia and Austria¹. Blessed Marcelina was born into a family of Polish landed gentry living in the Russian annexation, where monastic life hardly existed. Already during her early childhood, the Lord God had bestowed on her a sensitive nature, inclined to contemplation. This sensitivity helped her to interpret the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, which she always tried to obey. Also, she felt very keenly the needs of her motherland and the drama of each individual, especially the poorest. Love towards God and love towards her Motherland were intrinsically entwined in blessed Marcelina Darowska's life from early childhood.

Varied life experiences helped her to understand how important the role of the woman in the life of society and the family is. It is probably also these experiences which made her educational system so coherent and universal, facilitating the shaping of young women then and now. This system, founded on truth, possessed characteristic features.

¹ It regained its independence after 123 years, in 1918, following World War I.

"Four Retreat Talks" is a collection of retreat lectures given in 1904 during an alumnae meeting which was held to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Marcelina Darowska's private vows. In 1928, Father Józef Rokoszny wrote about these texts: *"Four Retreat Talks" are the deep, wise, well-considered remarks of a seventy-year-old female tutor, tested by experience and addressed to mothers and grandmothers, concerning Christian principles of life for Polish women.* Although Father Rokoszny addressed his words to Polish women, Marcelina Darowska's remarks are universally applicable to women all over the world.

Blessed Marcelina Darowska wanted her alumnae to develop deep religiousness and patriotism, which would lead them to faithfully perform the duties of the station, which they would come to enact in their lives. She wanted to shape thinking people, who would undertake their tasks consciously and with responsibility. She was convinced that the task of the Order is to prepare women for the family and the world. She used to repeat that a woman is not only wife, mother, and mistress of the house, but also a citizen of her motherland and this is why she needs to be aware that everything she does should serve her country. She used to say: *Poland will be there! But only when society is reborn. This is why we need the family to be founded on God.* She connected the rebirth of society with the shaping of wise women, because it is they who raise up future generations. In her educational system, she wisely realised the importance of developing the ideas of patriotism and national consciousness among simple people. Schools established by her were intended for daughters of the landed gentry, who in turn were supposed to work with the people in the future. Alongside these establishments, blessed Marcelina also organised elementary schools for peasant children from neighbouring villages, realising that nobody else would take care of them.

"Four Retreat Talks" also touches upon issues topical for a contemporary woman; a woman motivated in her various activities by the pursuit of happiness and a professional career. However, the more she seeks these, the deeper is her feeling of being lost and deviating from her life vocation. Blessed Marcelina Darowska shows the contemporary readers of these texts that happiness understood as comfort and pleasure simply does not exist. At the end of her life, she said: *I've always been happy: in the family, in my good and honest parents' house, and in married life, because I was loved very much, but I have been happiest in the Order, where the Lord Jesus has been everything to me.* Even though suffering accompanied her throughout her life, she was happy, because she knew she was accomplishing the task which Divine Providence had set her.

INTRODUCTION

”Who is like God?”

The world was in a bad way. In His omniscience, God had foreseen what was going to happen. Good – truth – virtues², less and less understood, were fading from hearts – threatened by extinction. Faith was waning – the power of the devil gaining ground. Under his influence, new waves of evil were flooding the world. The king of hell took hold of the evil in human nature – aroused it – hurled it in every direction to blind people's eyes, obscure their minds, blunt their consciences, stir senses, unsettle nerves, infuriate passions, intensify pride to rise up against faith, as though it were contrary to reason, elevating reason above faith. The Church came under attack as Christ's institution enshrining holy doctrine. God Himself – the Creator – the Life Giver was opposed when people were not able to bring Him down to their level, because with His laws He was binding nature's dissolute lawlessness. A monster was hatched, worse than all paganism: indifference to faith, to any confession of faith. Humankind found itself in a state of lawlessness, a reign without the Christian idea, conscience or honour; nations lacking a sense of national dignity, despicably, idolatrously paying homage to power; schools without God, preparing whole generations for misfortune, for shame, for condemnation!

God had foreseen all of this. Always merciful, He took pity on the world; desiring to rescue it, He built ministries of salvation. In this small corner of our country, He inspired a monastic Order with a new concept of education, nurturing the pure divine elements of faith, love and truth, to lay in young souls, as yet unspoiled, the strong foundations of an ark which could preserve the divine element in the nation, like an ark of the covenant between God and the nation –

Who is like God!!!..

Small, simple, as if Abraham's sons awoken from stone, our Order was established 50 years ago – and extended not strong, but very loving arms towards Polish children, embracing every little one entrusted to it. Each child grew up – protected from evil, straightened in the crooked, fortified in the good, beautified with God's love, virtues and knowledge. Having grown up, the little birds took flight around the world, sowing the good seed which had been deposited in them.

They were lost from sight. Only snippets of news about them reached us. These – with small exceptions, were good: they were living by God's law. Devoted daughters were alert to their parents' last hour in bringing a priest to reconcile them to God and so assure their secure eternal life.

² In interpreting the writings of Mother Marcelina, punctuation plays an important role. In this translation, numerous dashes have been retained, as well as sets of two, three, four, and even five dots. These communicate a whole range of emotions and leave us time for reflection (translators' note).

Faithful wives, holding on to God, shared both good and bad fortune with their husbands. Christian mothers led their children to God, teaching them to serve Him, love their neighbour, the poor and the humble, to respect God's gifts: the motherland and the mother tongue.

Who is like God in His works?

Today – these little birds scattered around the world, unknown to one another, separated by time and place, have gathered together in the old nest with good heart and gratitude. As if by a miracle, I can see you again in front of me as one family, united by the ties of common principle!

Who is like God in His power!

This is God's Order – established for you, my children, keep it in mind, protect it with the sanctity of your lives. It gave you everything it could; give it back to others with your life and example, starting from those nearest to you. This is your duty.

Already fragile with age, I am speaking to you from my heart, with my words; it is not with my lips that I speak. Accept this as my testament to you. The questions and comments, which you should feel free to express, may spark some clarification; useful, because it facilitates essential understanding in the general and principal issues which form a part of your lives. These talks are threads through which the cloth is weaved, the exchange of opinions creates the fabric – and both combine to form the necessary whole. Perhaps I will not tell you anything new, only remind you of what you heard from me years ago – perhaps it does no harm to refresh these things (despite the repetition in content) before these eyelids close, these lips become silent, and I rest in the grave for eternal resurrection, which, I trust, will unite us forever in Him, in whom we have been living.

Who is like God, one Father to us all?!

I am asking you, my beloved, for two days of inner reflection to enter your inner self, of looking in silence towards God, who is our judge, at yourselves, your position and task, aims and means of achieving them, at your obligations, the life through which we all pass, at death which awaits us – and in everything at the omnipresent God, as far as we can, at His gifts to us, internal and external, at the earth and at eternity. Our intention in our work is pure: we want to praise God, come closer to Him, serve Him better, make our lives more perfect, secure ourselves in His grace for the hour of our death. We are ready for the whole will of our God and Lord – in the faith that from His hand everything is good, even the hard things; with the love of a child for the best of Fathers.

Let us pray to our Most Holy Mother, who again, here in Her house, shelters us beneath Her wings, to intercede for us and receive grace from Her Son for this work and its fruit in our earthly pilgrimage and in the eternal motherland. – Amen.

Hail Mary...

I. ON OUR AIM AND TASK

CONTENT

God is our aim – the beginning and the end.

Christian women's task: work on extending God's Kingdom in the family.

Polish women's task: work on spiritual revival in the country.

My dears!

You are God's. God created you – purchased you with His Son's blood – destined you for Himself for eternity. So you are from God and for God.

Tell me: is it a joy for you to think: I am His?.. I belong to Him. He is going to protect me as His possession. He is my God?..

In Him there is the light of truth that protects, in Him wisdom that teaches, in Him love that brings joy. You know that nobody is able to replace Him in your lives: neither family, nor husband, nor children. Without Him, there is only emptiness. He alone is the load bearer and the good in every situation. Yes: we are God's, so we need to be His in our lives, just as we have our very origin in Him.

God is **Holy**. In human language there are no words to describe His Holiness.

God is perfectly **Beautiful**. All Beauty (and the world is replete with it) is not even a crumb, not the tiniest spark, not a pale ray, but a reflection only of His beauty.

Boundlessly **Good**. He lifts the earth's dust to Himself – gives His Son over to suffering and death for its sake – marks it for eternity in heaven with Himself. Is He not good?... Indeed, nothing but Good and Beauty, Truth and Wisdom, and Omnipotence, fatherly Providence, and Mercy, and Love: God is absolute **Love!** And love's attribute is to bring happiness. God wants a blissful eternity for us – this is the secret of our creation. This is what we are for.

My dears! We do not even understand eternity, because it is beyond us. We are so limited – we can see the limits of everything that surrounds us in the world – that we are unable to comprehend eternity. Now, it is for eternity that the **Eternal** God, having no beginning and no end, has promised us Himself – He gives us Himself. Everything which has a limit is not perfectly good, and God wants a perfect infinite good for us.

It is certain, my dears, that God is not what human understanding takes Him to be. Small, limited and weak as we are, He is so much higher than us that we cannot reach Him. He is infinitely

greater, more beautiful, more perfect than our understanding of Him. Our imagination (even if rooted in faith) is endlessly weak. Still, imagination from faith is, I might say, able to catch an idea of what He is really like.

Our Catholic faith is based on Christ, and Christ is **Infallible**, He “has seen everything”, because He is God and could confer only **Truth**. Hold on to Him, my children, and He will give us better and better knowledge of Himself. Getting to know Him better, we will love Him more and more. The better, the more virtuous, and the purer we are, the more clearly we see God.

Nothing can comprehend God, and yet God comprehends everything. Immeasurable – inconceivable – unequalled in His attributes – and still ours! The entire miracle consists in this – the Most Perfect, fully existent in Himself, wants us for Himself – us, small, ugly creatures, continually disgracing ourselves and falling away from Him.

This fatherhood in relation to all creatures, this particular care for each of them is a complete miracle, arousing admiration and worship.

God is **Life**.

God is the Life Giver in the ordering of nature and grace. Who was it that gave nature the power of renewal, to which people attribute the durability of the world?... The Lord God. Only an Omnipotent God is capable of such works.

There are people so dazzled with pride and so unable to grasp the basis of the existence of each thing that they attribute creation to themselves. Is there any life in their works?... Can movement, shape and colour, the fruit of their efforts and inventions, be called life?... The Uncreated God, the only Creator, is the one giver of life. In this, can no one imitate Him.

And life is – **bliss**. Look at everything which lives in nature – it breathes with happiness! A bird joyfully flutters its wings, sings, chirps merrily: it is alive and happy. A green branch, a flower – both have their lives – their freshness, emanating from them – their spiritual enjoyment of spring, cheering their observers. Everything is reflected in the environment: good and bad, joyful and sad...

The more so humans with their eternal soul, rich in the power of understanding, thought, love, for whom earth is only a path leading to the goal of eternal life with God. How can they not be happy with the gifts of God?... As long as they are innocent and faithful to the thoughts of God, people radiate with happiness.

You may say: And where are these happy people?... Wherever you look, there is suffering, trouble, discouragement, often a decline of the spirit, despair... even suicide... Suicide is mental insanity – an illness of the brain – or the devil's temptation, embraced on the grounds of little faith or no faith at all. This is an illness – or unfaithfulness.

People unfaithful to grace do not make use of life according to God's thoughts. This is their misfortune. Adversities, sent for our spiritual cleansing, as merits giving us the right to heaven, are

a means of achieving eternity. Try to understand, my dears, that they are not misfortunes. Misfortune is to lose God's grace, crash on the road to heaven, lose God for eternity!!

Suffering – undergoing trials in our earthly pilgrimage – is necessary for imperfect people: Christ the Lord, becoming a man, carried the cross, died on the cross and marked our way with the cross. A good Christian will never call himself miserable, as God is his father and Christ his brother, friend, guide, whom he can follow on the steepest, the thorniest path without falling into the depths of hell or dying for ever. All the bad is going to change into good for him, and he will achieve the blessed aim of heaven.

Thus **everything – everything – everything** if from God and of God – **is good**.

Do you understand, my beloved?

I have said: God is Holy – and the aim of humans is to unite with Him. This is why they should be **holy**. “All are called to be saints” (Rom. 1). Defiled with original sin, people are not holy. They have to come to holiness – they have to **work**.

Let us look, my dears, what has our work been like since our parting? The trace of God's hand more or less deeply engraved... is a proof that you have not diverged from the **Truth** or rejected grace. Surely, none of you have wanted to reject it entirely: each of you has wanted to live in grace... only perhaps you have not all travelled the path with equal intention... with equal perseverance

And now... My dear children, your journey needs to be forceful, persistent, magnanimous. In spiritual unity, set about your work.... to realise God's thought in each of you – to fulfill God's will.

And what is God's will for humans?.... My dears! People are from God. They bear the divine stamp. “And you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God,” says St. Paul. The beauty in people was not effaced, but deformed by the Primal Fall. The manhood of Christ the Lord has raised fallen human nature to connect with divinity. The Lord Jesus became our Saviour, He stood by our side as our Brother, He restored God's image in our souls with His Blood. With the grace of Redemption, the Holy Spirit recreated the new human against the background of a nature dwarfed by sin. Ever since every one grafted into Christ by baptism, every Christian, has had the specific task of protecting Christ's cause in their own and in others' souls, to extend **Christ's Kingdom** in their own circle according to their possibilities, to realise in and around themselves the thought of God the Creator in the world.

God's thought binds all creation into one, as if into one chain, its links being individual creatures, each with an individual ray of creative thought within itself. The unity of Idea (*Unitè d'Idée*) reigns sovereignly over the universe and makes it one immense creation, despite its infinite

diversity and variety of detail. – Nothing but perfect integrity and harmony in everything.

How Great and All-beautiful is our God! His Thought is one, like light, from which all colours refract and which enhances the characteristic reflection of each. We cannot see with our limited vision – we do not comprehend with our narrow minds, but when the physical bonds restraining us now fall away in eternity, we are going to see that there is nothing separated from the whole in creation, but everything is distinct and complete in itself.

How marvellous God is in relation to souls! Each is different – all are linked to one another, depend on Him and on their own free will. He has His own individual language to each. When souls appear before us, the individual work of grace in each can be seen.

God is not only God of all, our God, but He is my God, your God... The whole of nature listens to Him, each soul understands Him as long as it listens. There is God's thought over each of us, coming from His individual love towards each, but everyone has to pursue it in life adding his own free will.

The world of grace flings good and beauty at us. All kinds of gifts fall from heaven like spring rain: whether general or personal, natural or supernatural, protecting our earthly existence or enriching us for eternity, coming from our environment or from eternal light, straight from God or through His tools. All these are means leading to Him, facilitating aids. Do you think that God has bestowed these gifts on you thoughtlessly?... They are connected to your task. Do you feel that you understand the truth, the idea? This is a sign that you should follow them in your life and share with others. The limits of your horizon already outline God's thought for you.

Is your task as a graduate of this school higher?... No, my children, it is the same as every Christian's, according to everyone's path. However, your responsibility is greater, because the graces, aids and means you have received are bigger.

People often diminish their task.... They do not understand. They do not believe – they do not have any principles.... Without this – what can you grasp onto in life?... in order not to fall down, not to humiliate yourself, to respond rightly....

The Lord Jesus brought to us the most perfect **principles** for the whole world – holding on to them is our holy duty. Principles give conviction – they are confirmed by experience.

Are principles something inside me and from me? No, they are not. An inclination is inside me and from me, a principle is something I have accepted with conviction as the base of my entire life.

If I act against my principle, does it mean it did not or does not exist?... It may mean that you are unstable, unfaithful to the principle, but the principle did exist – you had it. In that case, is it not better not to have any principles at all?... No, my dears. Without principles one is unhappy, feels no support, as if at the edge of a precipice, on the road to ruin.

Duties are the external side of principles, their application and the expression of God's will towards us, according to our task. **Our task** is the part in God's cause on earth which has been allocated to us. Although it is individual for every soul, it also has a side connected to the whole of mankind, to the whole world. Not only your own individual good and happiness matter, but also your relation to society: so that you are not meaningless within it, not parasites, but co-workers.

Fulfilling your task, you will spread good and happiness, and surely you will become happier yourselves! The task makes many people's path easier to travel, so it brings happiness.... The path of life is thorny.... The sense of your task will double your strength, protect you from snagging yourselves on evil, of which the world is full. Such life in the world abounds with grace and happiness – but..... also with crosses to bear. Mutual help is essential to go through this valley, while continuing to praise God.

We have already seen that as Christians we have a task towards our own souls and those of our neighbours. As Poles – we have a task towards our country.

My dears! I expect a lot of you for this country. How much you could do, if you all truly loved the country, i.e. wisely and bravely in action! You should be the beginning of a new generation. If you arouse the spirit of faith and devotion in your husbands, if you raise sons faithful to the Motherland and daughters as brave Christian women – you will strengthen faith in a national future, you will develop national life and invisibly resurrect our Country. If you enlarge the number of righteous Christian families – new power will emerge for the country.

The present dwarfing of the world results from the decline of the family: its character is diminished – its spirit faded – it is incomprehensible and disrespected. It is your task to lift it to its rightful position. This is your ministry, my dears: You must live for God – for the rising up of Poland.

What was our Order established for?.. To raise you up to become such women. Praise be to God, and may this Poland worship Him with all her soul!

The leading thought of our education is to secure for God the souls He has created and redeemed with such love. Each of you, having passed through one of the schools of our Order, understands the spiritual life, understands a relationship with God, feels the need for God in her soul... so with each one of you – there is more and more of God in the country.

Let us desire God for the nation! If only one soul came closer to Him through our education, if this one soul from our land enlarged His glory, then it would give Him fruit for which it is worth investing one's whole life. This is a sweet struggle. But not only one soul should come.... So, nothing is lost..

The oppression in the country hurts terribly..... I wish it was always “persecution for righteousness' sake”... but there is so much moral descent and fault!.. Do not sin, my children, so as

not to bring God's anger anew upon this land of our Fathers' merits, but to plead divine mercy through your good lives!

The Polish woman may have an immense influence on society:

- by her perfect Christian life,
- by her dignity and nobleness,
- by her purity and delicacy,
- by her ability to arouse love for all that belongs to the Motherland: its language, arts, literature and tradition.

The woman acts through everything..... There are so many of you! Only take one another's hands and stand together strongly on the path shown to you. Make a plan for the future: What can you do? What should you do?.. How to get down to work?.. Then good will spread through our land, Polishness will thrive – and with it.. **Poland!**

In order to strengthen your task, it must be founded on the Church, the Polish woman needs to be supported by the Christian woman. Also, my dears, we have a task for the times in which we live, towards the generation we belong to, for the world.

The world does not appear black to me... that is, I also see beauty there. I believe that God has the power to bring about the victory of the good – the true progress of mankind out of today's chaos of ideas and social confusion. Nevertheless, one must admit that today's world is completely devoid of any firm ground, it is unsteady and thrashes about, getting lost in evil and misery. Truly has the hand of God become heavy upon it!

Our times are very difficult. Bad tendencies dominate – materialism floods all relations – suppresses even innate feelings. The drive to analyse everything leads people's minds into a maze, the distorted craving for knowledge arouses passions and bears chaos, human lawlessness rejects any power and cannot respect others' freedom: – it rebels... and creates a yoke for it's own neck!.. It is extinguishing Christ's light and plunging itself into darkness: black night in the world!

From time to time, **the Spirit of Poland**, founded in God, breaks through like lightning, because it can be said that in Poland we still somehow cling to God. There seems to be in us a kind of awakening, a turning towards good, towards religiousness. In Polish hearts, despite bad appearances, boasting, foolish bluffing – faith has not died out! Today, in the midst of the storm covering the entire world, it appears stronger.

This Poland – dejected, downtrodden, manhandled by all nations, against which everyone's hatred is united, like a particle of hell's hatred towards everything divine, they want to remove from the face of earth, they are hurling missiles at her from all sides.... Not only is she still alive, but she raises herself and grows... Not only does she fight her way through everything, but she distinguishes herself with superiority. God is reminding the world of Poland all the time. Poland stands under His

banner as a spiritual leader!.... They have to, albeit unwillingly, think and talk about her.... even.... admire her.

Is it not a miracle indeed? For these times God gives Poland what only He Himself is able to give: genius in every field. Poles distinguish themselves everywhere. – Look: Where are people more outstanding than in Poland?... Bishops more pious? Talents greater? Poets writers, artists better?... Are these all not signs that Poland is in the hands of God? That God wants to give her **Truth** from Himself and give Truth to the world through her?...

These are heralds of resurrection.... If of a political rising? I do not know... In any case: of a spiritual rising in the nation... of **rebirth**. It cannot be denied that today, when nations generally separate themselves from faith, Poland shines like a star in the position of defending the Truth, of the noble fight for the Idea³.

One is afraid of what is happening in the world... What cruelty! What lack of honesty in politics (and recent years prove this), what degeneration of moral virtues!.. I always recall Father Kajsiewicz's words, spoken shortly before his death: “If the world continues going along this path – the tradition of virtue will soon fade away.” With horror can we see this prophecy coming true. Torrents of human ingratitude flow against Christ the Lord and His work on earth. The mission of God's children among it all is getting even harder and more difficult... May we survive this life victoriously! May we finally get **there**...

My dearest children, when I think of the battle to which you are called – I am overwhelmed with unspeakable tenderness... When I look at little children, playing so freely today, I start thinking: What awaits them in the future? What are they moving towards?... To what fight.... what danger... what martyrdom of life?... My heart overflows with tears.... We need to foresee that evil is not going to stop... that even harder times may come.... You are a generation called to fight.... You need heroism indeed!

Here you are gathering again under the banner which you followed during your education. You are coming together here, in our Immaculate Mother's house, to look into yourselves.... to enter your own soul – challenge it – judge it... How did you spend all those years after leaving this establishment? Were you faithful to the principles, all of which come from the one principle of principles – from Faith? Has God come first for you in this longer or shorter period of life spent in the world? Were you able to be grateful?... Did you abide with Him in trials?...

My dears! Now, in this place of grace, in this chapel, where many of you received the Lord Jesus for the first time – stand before Him, recall His favours and give yourselves to Him anew, with the strong desire that His name be hallowed in you and through you – and that pagan idols

³ The Idea – as Mother Darowska understands it – is the point of reference – the thought – the principle governing somebody's life, synonymous with God (translators' note).

never come to live in the divine temple of your souls.

What “idols”? Vanity of the world, its greatness, lies and hypocrisy – earthly attachments – adherence to oneself and the pride of life in any form. Our “self” is the biggest obstacle, may our merciful and almighty Lord defeat in it us – so that God's Kingdom can come to us and we can be His faithful workers in this Kingdom of His.

Oh, Lord, Lord! Thy Kingdom come! Come to our country!.. Come to the whole world!

My dears! Your law for the whole of your life:

My Lord and my God.

He comes first –

Never without Him!

He is above everyone and everything to me.

I believe that if I am always faithful to Him – in any place, in any circumstances, in any situation I find myself: easy – difficult – terrible with no way out – full of keen emotions or in the trial of dryness: God will be faithful to me – God will stay with me – here – and in eternity.

In the temptations which shadow this truth I want to remain unshaken, Lord, I want to believe. – Increase my faith in the difficult hours of life! God will rescue you. You are not going to perish – for the sake of the Immaculate Mother, who is doubly your Mother, once you have found shelter under Her wings. Mary – receive us today in your heart and keep us faithful to your Son. Amen.

II. ON THE FIGHT AGAINST EVIL IN THE WORLD

CONTENT

The spirit of the age: Bluff – Modernism – Flirting – Lack of principles – Self-interest – Decline of will etc.

Temptations. The necessity of good resolutions and watching over oneself.

My dears! Not only did God set Himself as our goal, but He also marked out our way and gave us access to Himself. **This way is God's Will.** The Lord Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). Only following in His footsteps are we able to move forward in good and come to the place He has intended for us.

Everyone's path in this earthly pilgrimage is twofold: the external way of life and the internal one – inside one's soul. The external way depends on your calling. The internal way of the soul is the measure of God's grace (according to the Lord's thought) and the specific strength of one faculty, particularly influenced by God, which becomes the main source of the acts of the soul, their origin so to speak. Sometimes it is rational power – sometimes the power of the heart, sometimes will-power. Can you feel this distinctness of faculties in yourselves?.. I understand this, I feel that, I want this?

The ways of the heart are the richest in feelings and usually in an inner, affectionate relationship with God. Then, there are the ways of reason, not less strong, but more distanced. God's illumination works more calmly on our reason and becomes a link between the soul and God. Also, there are the ways of the will.. and of faith, each good in itself and having the right measure of grace.

God has to be sought with all these faculties. When He touches one area – His action is reflected in all. Real beauty and richness of soul consist in a harmony of the faculties, that is in their equal growth toward excellence.

Once in a while, a child appears, harmoniously gifted from birth: with a good heart, a clever head and strong will. However, this is very rare. Almost always there is a greater richness of one (any) faculty or a greater deficiency in one. For some, feelings are difficult, others find a firm act of will more difficult – for still others thinking is troublesome. Yet, to some degree, increased effort may bring a human being to harmony. This is the effort of education, but primarily of internal

work on oneself in collaboration with grace, which, being One, brings into harmony everything within which it works.

In the Blessed Virgin, “full of grace”, a perfect harmony of the faculties existed, because She is “perfectly beautiful”, therefore versatile, without the slightest shadow in Her Being.

In us, almost always one faculty dominates. And although each possesses its own beauty as a mark of God’s image in us, yet because of the sin, which deeply wounds our nature, each is the source of our innumerable falls.

Do souls living according to the heart not find faithfulness to grace easier than those directed mainly by reason?... The heart receives grace keenly and finds sacrifice easy. I have always thought that the Lord Jesus particularly loves souls possessing richness of heart, generous in relationship with Him and that He abundantly imparts Himself to them. However, also souls following the path of reason and will, when humble and pure, permeated with good, find it easier to remain faithful, as they are less changeable, more persistent by nature.

Is it not in the heart, though, where good inspirations emerge?... Yes, but through illumination they work on the reason, and the impetus of grace similarly impacts on the will.

What, though, if in my heart I have a feeling that I should act in a certain way, and reason opposes that?... Follow grace. Protect all your faculties from human nature. The heart – from impressions, reason – from calculation, the will – from “self”. When God wants an act opposing cold reason and contrary to will and He gives inspiration to the heart – do not hesitate, but hasten towards action. It is from the heart, under the influence of grace, that great deeds and heroic sacrifice flow.

The heart is a treasure indeed, but also no small danger: flighty in its character, it is sometimes violent in human impurities and can easily adhere to an unworthy object. Then one is within an inch of deviating from the path of God’s will, from shipwreck. Each of you who lives by the heart should commit it to God, and He will not allow it to thrust you into a heavy error, over a precipice.

Unfortunately, as with everything in this world and in contaminated humankind, the heart also has its negative sides. Its innate weakness is selfishness: the attraction of self seeking, looking for one’s own satisfaction, comfort, delight in everything and through everything. It steals into the noblest feelings, which are authorised by God’s will and venerated by duty.

One needs to be very alert to oneself and to make great efforts to purify the heart, so that all its feelings are directed towards God, seeking His will and glory, the good of the soul, disregarding ourselves or our human feelings for others.

Virgins, guard the internal purity of your soul, heart and thoughts more than the increase of your external charms, nurture God’s grace more than the impression you make on others. God’s

grace will make you kind-hearted, mild, polite, attentive to others, agreeable to all.

Wives, love your husbands' souls – take care of them, and the good of your home will thus be secured. Do not worry about their position in the world or worldly benefits, take care that their affairs are respectable and their character righteous, so that their good life leads them to a good death. This does not mean that you should neglect your husbands' earthly good or not pay wise and kind-hearted attention to the comforts, even pleasures, of their Christian life. A good wife is a ray of sunshine in her husband's soul, she brings not only serenity and light into it, but also happiness and joy.

Mothers, raise your children for God. God has given them to you, let it be you who lead them to God. Do not seek sainthood for them – seek principles, on which virtues can be firmly founded, desire merit and a happy eternity. However, do not forget about their daily bread, honest welfare, education and the good manners required in society, which give them the right to live in it and facilitate their life alongside others.

A violent disposition scattering passion on everything in and around oneself is particularly unsuitable for a woman, terrible for her relationships, dangerous to her duties and should be particularly restrained from youth. A desire to oppose this and awareness of oneself are essential. Humility and prayer are the means of salvation.

Mild, skittish, sentimental, sensuous or cold, indifferent dispositions are equally dangerous and faulty. When reason, good will and principles keep a tight rein on them, they should be brought to stability before they take root and pass from nature – their usual home – to the soul and become dangerous.

In the heart, egoism appears; the essence of coldness and selfishness – greedy and discontented, always insatiable, problematical for others, unhappy in itself, not knowing the noblest feelings and making others unhappy.

My dears: evil causes unhappiness – and is ugly in itself, repulsive to natures which are noble, not spoilt to the core. Were there no evil – there would be only love – and where active, divine love is – there is paradise! There would be mutual help among people, true brotherhood, and the world would become a place of happiness.

Today, there exists in people a certain disposition towards sadness: pessimism, even in the young. And do you know why?... Because they prematurely learn to know the evil of the world, which, purposely or thoughtlessly, is not hidden from them by their elders. Also, they see little good in the world to comfort and cheer them.

Why do older people now look more joyfully at the world than the young?..

The more mature are not so joyful either, they are in a hurry for the next world... but they have not yet lost their faith in good, having seen so much of it earlier... having experienced so many

beautiful feelings in themselves.... Also, earlier generations were stronger. Weakness is a feature of contemporary youth: weakness of spirit – weakness of the body.. – The previous generations are stronger, so their joy is greater.

My dears, we are imperfect, but we have always wanted to serve you with a sincere and faithful heart, and this we have done – God sees this – as far as we could. Now pass it on to others: be the strength of your homes, bring spirit and happiness into them.

I believe that when you are confirmed in virtue, you will find happiness for yourselves and others. I am not saying that you will then walk the path of life without pain. No – but you will have the strength to endure it peacefully, and grace will brighten up your inner self, not allowing black, gloomy sadness to enshroud it.

One need not be weighed down by adversities or become disheartened. God is above everything! Do not call material loss or disaster “misery”: they are but a lack of prosperity. Misery is moral fall – the loss of divine grace – a bad death. Everything else may turn into good and will turn into good surely when we are faithful, because it has been given for this purpose. Trust the fatherhood of God, His divine protection upon you! God never forsakes those who trust in Him.

Beware of **sin**. For sin is the one true **evil**. It may suit a corrupt nature, but is always adverse to the soul. Do you love beauty?.. Yes. So you are unable not to feel disgust towards sin, which is a monster most adverse to Beauty. Abide with God faithfully, and you will be permeated with real beauty. The evil, the ugly will not be able to attract you.

Now, it happens that an alluring picture of transgression is being painted. In these times, detecting in the poverty of human kind the need of an ideal, a need felt, but unreachable because of material deterioration, Satan is exerting himself to imitate the works of God. He fouls and poisons beauty and everything noble and higher, poetry and art, speciously influencing poets and artists. Seduced by illusion, they robe false ideals, passions and transgression in a beautiful and alluring form, which influences inexperienced youth, not firm in their principles, but always avid for novelty, leading them astray.

Imagination, the inherent wings of youth, together with the allure of fashion – lend charm to such novelty. To comfort us: both are of unendurable nature and will soon disperse like smoke, whereas truth and real beauty must sooner or later regain their place.

My dears, do not love evil in any form, because attachment to evil is worse than the very matter of sin itself, just as the Church teaches. Do not tolerate it for the sake of fashion in literature and art, though it be presented in the most alluring way.

You may say what I happen to hear often: that the artist cannot render anything he is not permeated with to the core. On the contrary: a real talent possesses the intuition of truth and is able to grasp the essence of evil truthfully and render it with power (to the measure of hatred towards

evil), but without personal fondness, to enhance good and beauty.

The love of beauty raises the soul and leads us to God. All beauty is real, when pure: there is no beauty in senses, sensations or materialism. It comes from the spirit: it either consists in spiritual beauty itself or in the reflection of spirit in material form. Where this reflection is absent, where a pure and higher thought is lacking – there is no real beauty, only its mocking, delusion or caricature.

I have mentioned fashion and I will reflect on it for a moment. What should fashion be in society?.. A beautiful form, accepted in society according to its classes and changing under the influence of circumstances and the aesthetic development of taste, industry and art. It should be a combination of human works and beauty, not a caprice of morbid imagination or despicable speculation.

Often, fashion is a rule of life. One has to read antireligious, immoral books, because they are in fashion (not to be regarded as a backward convent student). One has to wear immodest clothes because this is customary in fashionable society (so as not to look dowdy).

My dear children! Be thoroughly beautiful: internally and externally, in your souls, in education, in aesthetic arrangement, in your clothing and environment. Be beautiful with true beauty, which is noble, pure, simple and neat, without exaggeration or bluff. Adjust your expenses to your material position, to your family welfare. Do not be ashamed of thrift, economy or guarding your first and holy duties in the management of your expenses – of course without neglecting **hospitality**, which should embrace everyone equally in your homes: your superiors and subordinates, the rich and the poor, servants and your guests' carriages, without harming the needs and comforts of the household members. May they appreciate and seek you for your personal worth, not for the refinement of your exterior, your table and house fittings, but for the richness of your mind, the pure and wise principles visible in your speech, not for the wit of light conversation or fashionable salon flirting. God save you from that! Be reasonable as regards fashion, do not be its blind slaves; do not follow it, thus ignoring real beauty, modesty and your possessions.

A heart lowered in its flight by impurity loses its specific character and will not give out real love. Having heart – and having love – is not yet one and the same. A purely human heart is egoistic, even if full of feeling. Love turned outwards – away from self is beneficial in its nature – joined to God, helpful. From the soul it flows into the heart to make us love everyone – and so everything is good.

Let us now move on to the second faculty, which is reason, the king of human nature –

specific to humans only.

Reason is the main ally of truth, grace and light in a human being. Sometimes, however, it misinterprets this light, seeking it within itself, and then.... goes blind.... Today, more than ever, reason is imperiled by thousands of dangers from false theories which flood the world.

There is a kind of moral atmosphere in the world in every age, which permeates everything like air, penetrating the people of one generation through all their pores and colouring them from their youngest years with its characteristic features. Stay in a place permeated with any smell for a period of time, and you will carry this smell with you everywhere you go. For example, when you return indoors from the outside, you bring fresh air with you. Similarly, moral air permeates people with an atmosphere specific to the given age.

Today, too, the devil's power affects the world with peculiar force. The influences of this Evil Spirit penetrate the moral atmosphere of the age with superhuman strength, conferring their colour and character and spreading across the globe in an unrestrained current. We call it: **the spirit of the age.**

What are the main features of the spirit of the age today?..

1. Rejection of all authority.

2. False ideas of freedom and equality, disrespect for any authority.

3. The spirit of criticism – accompanied by the complete lack of the Idea. Today, there is little wisdom – and many who play at being wise.

4. A spirit of the age is the source of nihilism, atheism, all kinds of perversion and depravity – oppression of the Church – the persecution of its Guardians, clergy and congregations.

5. Analysing everything – and consequently getting lost in chaos – disintegrating the power of thought – nihilism. What is great – has one entity, and what is disintegrated into minute particles is of little importance. It brings confusion, deceives and distracts instead of clarifying.

6. Bluff in contradicting the truth. A kind of fanfare: the (uncommon!) “I” do not believe in everything the Church teaches and Christian doctrine invites us to believe; my higher mind accepts only what it confirms and recognises for itself. The common source of these features is multiplied **pride** – from it come lack of logic – incomprehension – insanity, which infinitely multiply under different names.

7. Curiosity about evil coming from the frantic desire for knowledge, which today encompasses all classes of society.

Perhaps you as well, my dears (or at least some of you) are not free from the reproach of having a curious craving for the new, regardless of whether it is necessary or ennobling for you?.. Or on the contrary?.. Perhaps you have dismissed what surrounded you? .. Your field of work, good in itself and coming from God's will?

You may say: does one not need to know evil to guard oneself against it?.. My dears: You have to know what is good and what is evil, but you do not need to seek acquaintance with evil, go into its details, because it stains... You will develop a familiarity with it, blunt and ruin yourself. You will lose your natural instinct to recognise it and judge it.

Now there is not only curiosity about knowledge, but also particular curiosity about mysteries. My dears, there is only one mystery worth immersing, engulfing oneself in: the Mystery of God! God is so clear and so inconceivable!.. Beyond any comprehension... so mysterious to us... Think about this mystery – engulf yourself in it – and it will raise you up – broaden your horizons and your whole being.

The knowledge of evil makes us unhappy, the knowledge of good brings happiness. This is because God's Beauty feeds the soul, reveals truth to our reason and throws upon it a shaft of light from the world beyond ours: Wisdom.

In eternity, where this Beauty will manifest itself completely – man will be absorbed in happiness.

Beware of the modernistic covetousness of knowledge, my children. Educate your mind, as far as you need it to fulfill your task, not for vain curiosity or to increase your pride.

8. One of the most disgusting features of the spirit of the age is **self-interest**. This is a most un-Polish feature – a sad purchase from our enemies. People stop understanding others' selflessness, because it is alien to them. A frantic desire for gain and speculation has overwhelmed them, reaching the point where it blurs the sense of honesty and honour. This is robbery of the national character.

Simultaneously, extravagance is growing, feeding pride and vanity. In men, pride dominates, in women – vanity. This causes a certain shallowness in the former; and, in the latter, the wish to draw attention – to appeal to others – to desire homage. This is where another feature, extremely common today, comes from:

9. **Flirting**. You can talk joyfully and wittily – not to dazzle, but to make others' time more pleasant, as you can do well not to be praised, but to help others. Be kind, hospitable in your homes, nice and polite, but not frivolous or light-hearted – do not flirt coquettishly, because this demeans you even in the eyes of those playing with you and flattering you.

You may say, “If we behave thus, we will isolate ourselves from the rest of the world?” Yes, indeed! Be the root of a new, reborn society, which should already exist, with the enormous number of our alumnae in the world. Believe me, my children, in general the people of the world (those who are not shallow or ultimately spoilt) most value a woman's innocence and her adherence

to principles. I could give you many examples of this.

You are telling me there is a precipice between the two worlds: this and the one out there. Unite them, my dear children. If God allows, you will be able to go through the world pure, faithful to God and to your duties. There will be more and more of you and good will slowly overwhelm evil. Our national tradition calls for it. Nowhere was a woman's position higher than in Poland. Women in the past, venerated by their husbands, were simply saintly! Perhaps less academically educated than today, but wise. Today the wise are so few.....

A woman's task is to prepare society by raising Christian children, the future of the world, by inculcating good and firm principles in them to make them people, that is, beings who think and work wisely and honestly, faithful sons and daughters of the Church and the Motherland.

A woman's task is to share the burden of the earthly pilgrimage with her husband, supporting him in the good and in the difficult, making his life easier, radiant with love, goodness, attention and care for each day, enlightening his life with peacefulness and happiness leading him to eternal happiness.

Her place is at home, whether under a thatched roof or in a palace. It is the place of a good spirit of the hearth, of an Angel. She spreads love around her – everyone offers her their respect and love. She despises nothing which constitutes family life, she makes everything nobler, higher, more beautiful.

Nowadays, the tasks of a woman, which set her path, are held in contempt... Women, following this opinion, do not want to be women, they insult themselves... cast stones at themselves... despise themselves, make themselves monstrosities – renouncing the attributes of their gender, breaking free from the laws of femininity...

Today, men are afraid of getting married – due to women's unspecified requirements, because women do not want to live for their husbands, for their family, but lay claim to some misunderstood and badly conceived, morbid independence. They strip themselves of beauty and charm, deprive their lives of significance for the world, of benefits for eternity....

Everything is beautiful according to its type, conferred by God's thought. The feminine type is marvellous in its delicacy and the power of spirit. However, when deprived of these attributes, which constitute its value and charm – it becomes a freak – a caricature. It is a harm women do to themselves, to the enormous detriment of humanity.

11. **Lack of principles** and of any deeper convictions. Principles form the basis of conscience. They are pure and safe, if taken from Christ's teaching. Conscience based on principles judges justly.

12. **Thoughtlessness**. In order to realise the Idea in the world, one needs God's special will and grace or, speaking more clearly, a special despatch from God. However, everyone should carry

the Idea. Love it without your “self”, pray for its realisation in the world, and you will participate in it, belong to the work of its realisation, although not as the main actor. If you have a true Ideal – you should realise it through everything.

What is the difference between Ideal and Idea?. Ideal is something.. in beauty uplifted to the climax (which is rare). Idea is the leading thought, which may also be idealised, that is uplifted to beauty, but should not be impassioned, because it could not be thus realised: it would be a utopia.

Well, speaking to you, my children, about Idea, I am not talking about something extraordinary, but about the simple Christian Idea. It is a duty for each of us. Nevertheless, an unconscious attachment to one’s own Idea may squeeze in. Then I would not suppose that anyone else’s idea could be higher, more useful than mine or that any other than mine could be good, I would nurture prejudice against any other ideas, despotically imposing mine upon everyone. This would be narrow-mindedness or pride. The touchstone for each Idea is its origin and character. Does it comply with Church doctrine?

The opposite end is thoughtlessness. The mind shifts on the surface of things without investigating anything, without a rational, scrutinising pause for thought. Today’s society is generally shallow – strangely superficial: it does not see causes and consequences, plays with thoughts without connection or logic, plays with things. From this comes a rush towards any and every modernistic trend, without recognising whether it is false or true.

Modernism is the plague of today’s reason. It does not have any power within itself to keep itself on track or protect what is always and unchangeably beautiful, but it lays claim to independence, blindly yielding to temporary trends and the innumerable influences of various spirits and characters. Whatever modernism takes as its motto, even for a short time – (the imaginary and false will not last), it is imitatively and slavishly pursued by crowds of weak or mediocre minds which try to be original, not noticing that they are embracing the opposite.

Decadency, impressionism, feminism.. a whole new dictionary.. Everything is small, freakish and strangely materialistic.... although accompanied by some spirituality... or rather an inclination to it... Perhaps this is a good sign? Heralding the need of this poor soul, enchained in the armour of a most material being?.. Today it looks morbid: hazy, false mysticism, based on impressions of senses and nerves.... What strange confusion!

My dears: Real progress in science or art has to be taken into account. Truth is the light which shines on any real progress. Do not withdraw, but differentiate wisely between what has a shoot of life... and what brings death... In one word: what flows from which spirit?...

One of the most difficult things in this world is uncertainty of the truth. In itself – before God – the truth is unchangeable, but may be misconstrued by us... One can never know for sure,

e.g. in history, in critical judgements, whether they praise or condemn someone fairly.. This matters – because people are judged – and people are souls!

Never can one be sure of oneself either. Today I keep close to God thanks to His grace, but will it be so tomorrow?... This is a continuous impulse to humiliate the pride of our reason.

Uncertainty of the truth – incompleteness of the truth has to exist on earth: because I am incomplete myself, a creature continuously completing itself.... It is important that there is no gliding over the truth, which later creates a complete foundation of untruth in our souls. Do not allow appearances of truth to get into your eyes, because a whole bulk of untruth will gather, which is able to shadow the sun. You need to seek the truth – desire it, pray for it to the One who is nothing but Truth. And God will not allow a soul of good will to enter into untruth and sink into it. Why, He Himself said, “Peace to people of good will”. Let us have it and be calm.

Let us now talk a little about Will.

Will is our principal, fundamental, and at the same time executive faculty. Grace gives – stimulates. Will receives – answers and realises the good. Without will there would be no merit-giving act, no responsibility.

Good will is a power which, when based on God’s will, becomes a might defending the Truth. One’s own will, not directed towards God, seeking personal interest, comes from nature – evolves around nature, steals away God’s good for itself. Be careful, my dears, do not let personal will push away the will of grace and create stubbornness. Stubbornness consists in blind attachment to self, not to the good. May your will always be immersed in God’s will.

As we know, as a consequence of original sin our nature is rotten. If humans act imperfectly because of this defect, God waits patiently for their perfection, improvement or reparation of the evil. If they act out of ill will, that, is rebelling against God’s Will, they sin and offend God.

Will was created by God as free. The freedom of will consists in its ability to choose. There are uncountable influences which impact on us, and sometimes one does not act as one would want. It is the act of will that counts before God and according to it we will be judged. We have our free will to desire. Do you understand?... With our free will we cannot change the human being in us, demeaned and spoilt by the first parents’ fall, but with God’s grace we are able to overpower our weaknesses, combat and exterminate evil in us.

The thing which denies this is today’s **determinism**, in principle destroying free will. Do you not feel in yourself that you may want or not want?. This power of wanting and not wanting constitutes the essence of free will. It cannot rule over circumstances, but it may make use of them as we wish. You may desire good or evil.

Why can we realise many a thing without God, without asking Him at all? Just because of this freedom of will, which He does not withdraw, having once bestowed it on His creatures. He bestowed it for justice, so that the human could be judged fairly: fairly rewarded or fairly punished – and as part of the human’s similarity to God.

Following evil, the will declines in its strength for good – when it acts to the contrary, it intensifies its faithfulness to God’s Will. I obey God’s will, acting according to it, but I have my whole free will to do that. Do I not destroy it through this?.. No! I make it almighty, and I gain fruit for all eternity. If I live by senses, nerves, impressions, yielding to them – my will is going to diminish, because senses are influenced by everything, everything rules over nerves.

Nerves (the necessary warp of human physique), innocent in themselves, virulent towards humans, become a monster able to lead people to misery. Men used to take pride in “having no nerves”, such was their control over them. Today they see power in stretching these nerves to the highest degree of excitement, till they reach the point of nervous illness, insanity and madness!

Oh, where has this poor humankind got to?.. Lacking an awareness of its own humiliation!! This leads to a horrible moral illness, more and more frequent today: the **deterioration of will**. They say, “I cannot want.” Even in the case of children one can encounter this.

- I cannot mend my ways.
- Desire it, my child!
- What if I cannot desire!
- So desire to desire! Ask God, and He will support and strengthen your will!

This weakness, this blandness, vagueness of will is today common in the younger generation, and, at the same time, accompanied – from the other end – by rejection of any right and authority: **lawlessness**. How to reconcile this?..

Satan obviously attacked will, because it is the basis of people's life, their relation to God. Do you know by what means?.. He paralyses will. At first one gives him the right to oneself, yielding to bad inclinations aroused by him – to temptations. Later he, the master of sinners, gets hold of the will – the key to everything – makes it passive – annihilates it. In my first years as superior of the Order, I never came across this. And now?.. All the time... You need to pray, “Lord! I cannot desire – help me to desire! I submit my will to yours, make my desire stronger!”

Today there is a lot of fighting in the world, supposedly “for the sake of freedom...” and where is this freedom? One sees the most horrific slavery! They impose their own on others.. there is enormous lawlessness!

Satan acts deceitfully and impudently against the Kingdom of God designed for poor humankind. All these hypnotisms, suggestions restraining will, magnetism, spiritism and similar

powers active in the world are his tools. You may ask, “What are they exactly?”

Magnetism is simply the physical power hidden in us. If not used according to the permission of the Church, it becomes evil; Satan squeezes into it and uses it. In itself, however, magnetism is not from Satan, but our own: neither good nor bad, but neutral, one of the powers of nature which may either be used well or abused.

Spiritism is always connected with Satan. He knows many facets of the truth or guesses at them. This is why also in spiritistic delusion there may be some truth, mingled with lies and absurdities against the Church, therefore it is forbidden and sinful.

The power of Satan in the world is enormous and seems to be growing. Great is his sway – hence the enormous power of **temptation** against people. Nevertheless, remember, my dears: Satan does not have any power over our souls if they are pure – from God and in God.

Temptations come not only from Satan, but as you know, they attack us through the world and flesh. The temptations of the world are exactly all those false theories we talked about, these trends driven by Satan, these false appearances of beauty – these plagues of evil – depravation... mistaken delusive greatness, etc. The world grasped by the hand of Satan serves him as a tool. The temptations of the flesh are all the material and evil inclinations of our nature. For each of us, the most dangerous is that most specific to myself, my personal sphere of temptation. This you should particularly reject, protest against and be alert to in this way: “Lord, I do not want or accept this as mine, mercifully do not consider it mine!”

Do not assimilate temptation: it is not yours if you reject and hate it with your whole will, arming yourself with a resolution opposite to the temptation. One should not attend to temptations or think about them.

Unfortunately, despite all this, I cannot be sure that I will never fall into evil – and I should never say, on seeing evil in others, “I would never have done it!!” Only giving myself to God unrestrictedly, living with Him at every moment and watching over myself can I trust that He will not allow me to leave Him.

Work should not be partial, but total, without any concessions to nature. Whoever sits on two stools, will lead endlessly prolonged fights. Evil rejected firmly will retreat to its place in the corner, leaving us in peace. As good weather is even more pleasant after a storm, because the atmosphere is clear, so after a defeated temptation (whether from Satan’s attack or from our bad inclination), the peace is deeper in a soul more enriched with grace and confirmed in the virtue against which the temptation was aimed.

Most Holy, Immaculate Mother, surround our weakness with your protection like an armour against all evil, against all dangers, and lead us to the Kingdom of eternal truth and peace. Amen.

III. ON VIRTUES AND THE MEANS OF SPREADING GOOD

CONTENT

On influences. Means of good influence.

Virtues: Faith. Humility. Chastity. Thrift. Diligence. Dutifulness. Obedience.

My dears! It is insufficient not to do wrong – one needs to do right. We need to introduce good into ourselves and spread good.

Nobody lives without exerting influence on others. There is good or bad – positive or negative influence. It spreads from itself and depends on its source. Do not be passive or neutral – be clearly good, and sooner or later you will disseminate a good atmosphere around you. Your environment will become similar to you yourself.

Yet, one should neither talk nor even think about influence. It is beneficial only when unconscious. (Dreaming and talking about influence in the case of young people would be ridiculous or vain.) It is God who exerts influence through us when we are an adequate tool for Him. Do not think about attracting others, but live saintly lives, do good – and you will attract people. Passive, neutral people – freeze, extinguish good inclinations in others – devalue their contact with others. Be afraid of this.

Spiritual influence is the influence of grace. What matters today is not only retaining good in oneself, but protecting and realising it in one's environment.

Generally, no-one gives without taking. Here, in this place – children apparently only take. The things they take are either absorbed by them and stay and develop internally, or slide across the surface. Nevertheless, through and for them God gives to us.

What you took – you should give back to those given to you by God. “Who does not give back what he owes”, that is what he has received from others, robs his neighbour and himself of an act of love, of merit.

Everything in the world is common and mutual, there is an invisible thread binding all people. Even unconsciously, they take and give themselves to one another. The mistress of the house, the teacher working with children – both seem to give only, but they also receive a small part for themselves: to mention only God's grace for work according to their status – and experience. Humankind is a family according to God's thought.

Much depends on how we begin our work in the world: the first step will make the future easier or more difficult. Usually, influence starts early. Grace and its power sometimes become visible in individuals of school groups and move with them under the roofs of their homes.

Already this young lady, having just grown out of childhood, loved and obeyed among her school mates, appears in her parents' house – pure and gleaming, she lights and cheers everything up: nobody speaks a bad word in her presence, nobody acts badly – where she appears, there her virtue shines... Always good and humble, she stimulates love as a virtue, just as a flower brought from the garden, wherever it is put, it completely permeates the atmosphere with its smell.

What about the wife? Can she do a lot at home? A good deal indeed. The husband is the head – the wife the spirit. The husband can accept much from his wife.. but from a loving, mild and obedient wife, not a demanding one. The wife's demands excite in him the feeling that he is the master and his stimulated self-will resists. Let him love and feel loved – he will do everything to please the heart.

In a good marriage, a specific exchange of influence exists. Give what is good and take only the best. Love in a divine way, and you will be wise. Some of you may say, “Oh no! I am not going to accept my husband's influence!” This would be unwise to say. Accept – but with discernment. You need not always, necessarily, in everything be of his opinion, but you should be able to benefit from anything that is good.

Remember, my dears: in order to make your life good, **you** should be good yourselves. Desire to praise God in everything – and God will bless your whole life.

God may use people for His works, but those works are not our goal: **God is our goal** – and our whole good is **in Him!** His will is our way. The world neither knows, nor thinks about this. You, however, have grown up in this – so it should be familiar to you. As I trust – it is?! Indeed, each of you may say, “God, you are my goal! In the others you have given me – I am seeking you, in serving them – I love you, devoting myself to them – I want to lead them to you: to give you back – what you have given me.”

Can you have other goals beside this First Goal of life: God?.. The goal is One, my dears, but... it has different sides in application, so to speak, to our life and duties. For every day you can embrace an aspect of this goal and we may have smaller fragments of love within one, great, general love. You love God – and in God you love the whole of humankind – and within humankind you love your Motherland, parents, husband, home, children etc. Out of this love you want to make others happy. Pursuing this aim every day, according to the means given, you contribute to brightening the lives of those close to you. So there is One Goal and **One Love**. Within these – thousands of sides, paths and methods – all converging on one end.

Without this, there would be no happiness. Each object is so imperfect in itself that beside

sweetness it has a bitter taste. If you committed yourself unreservedly to one thing, it would not be able to give you everything, it would necessarily bring small troubles and difficulties which sometimes grow to the dimensions of disaster. This could irritate, discourage, drive you to despair.

On the contrary: if you take these loves and small goals as the means to One Goal and the Only Love – you will neither know disappointment nor lose heart. Adversities, whatever they might be, will shrink in your eyes to their proper dimensions, you will take them for what they are: means to an end, trials of love – and your soul will rise above them, remaining happy.

Some life conditions are facilitating, given for the development of good in us and for encouragement in work, others hamper – to increase merit – and thus, are equally beneficial. Conditions helping us towards good are rarer and rarer in the world – and those which hamper – more and more numerous – so many of them... But let us trust: God is with us when we aim at good. He is mightier than hell.

Sometimes hampering circumstances are safer than those pleasing our nature. Living among evil – you take care not to let yourself be caught and carried away by its current. When you walk the path of peace, even alongside respect and comfort – among family pleasures and material endeavours, and think about increasing wealth and securing it for your family, you may be absorbed by these trivia so that you will think about God only as far as He is necessary to you: that He gives rain or good weather – a good harvest, a favourable turn in your dealings etc. Such **utilitarianism** with God is destructive to the soul, destructive to higher love. My dears: even if your intentions are apparently the best: philanthropic, noble – when not based on God, if God is not their goal – they are nothing and will bring nothing!

Let us have a closer look at the **Truth** – at **virtues**.

Love flows from **faith**. **Faith** is also the foundation on which all your work has to stand to be effective. As a tree cannot grow without roots – so your acts would not develop beneficially without faith.

Faith unites with God. God gives wisdom. Faith gives strength. Without it you will not persevere or be steady in anything. Lack of faith will disable you. Base your whole being on this unyielding rock. It is faith only that takes us through life safely, safely conducts us to its end in eternity.

The greatest Good is **Faith**. Remember it until death, my children. It will give you peace – prudence – counsel in the dangers and difficulties of life; it will support you in misery and will not allow you to perish. We believe – we say and pass on to others that Truth resides in the teaching brought by **Christ** and left by Him **to the Church**.

When we look closely and conscientiously at the Lord Jesus' life, it is impossible not to see

in Him **Holiness** beyond any human measure. Can human greatness ever achieve these heights?... Never!! He was not a saint: He was **God!!** So **His** teaching is **divine, infallible**. Is there any other which could correspond so completely – so perfectly – to everyone, everyone in the world: each class, age, status? Which could give everyone everything as Christ's does?.. Which could be for everyone and above all?! For a peaceful, sound, undimmed, unprejudiced mind without Satan, failure to acknowledge that is impossible.

If thoughts of doubt come to you (which may happen, when one hears in the world so many insane opinions against faith), they should not be looked at or analysed, but immediately rejected, on the grounds that you have once seen this Truth and acknowledged it peacefully and reasonably. Otherwise Satan would make use of this contrary thought to confuse your mind – put out the light and shake you in the darkness. A moment of temptation is not appropriate for reflection and impartial judgement.

If you crushed the Truth confirmed by Christ's life and death, you would crush everything higher in yourself. Only corruption would remain, moral misery, whirl and chaos – earthly and eternal unhappiness. What should we think of those, apparently educated, who stop believing? Are they wise people?... Not even reasonable! They are poor! They stand as proof of stray thought and a skewed, morbid mind. –

Ask a mature elderly man, who has already thought widely and deeply, if he knows himself... He will answer that he does not understand many things in himself, much within him is a shrouded and impenetrable mystery. The more so we people..... cannot completely conceive God! He is not on our level, He is beyond us! He would be no God – or you would be a god yourself if you could understand Him completely.

They say that learning weakens faith. This may happen only to the ignorant and proud. The unlearned – are humble, those really and deeply learned are, if possible – even more humble. As regards those possessing incomplete, often skewed knowledge, it has turned their heads – and in their pride and conceit they attack everything saintly and wise. They contradict what they are unable to understand.

Pure and deep learning – does not draw us away from God; on the contrary: it leads us to Him. Take, for example, the history of the world: does it not enlighten the omnipotence of God's rule?... Read it reflectively, and you will soon notice His wisdom and love in leading nations – their happiness when they obeyed Him, misery – when they willfully strayed away from His thought. Natural science experimentally confirms revealed truths. Each branch of learning, if presented clearly and wisely, illuminates God. However, when grasped superficially, with prejudice and partiality – it merely confuses.

Satan serves such people ardently, so they cannot see the sun and play with oil lamps

instead, being lost in hypotheses and assumptions which are later overturned by their first successors, who create their own. A complete maze – chaos with no way out.

How to prove that this very faith of ours is true?.. ”Ye shall know the tree by its fruits” – a work by its results. Look at people who live faithfully by Christ’s teaching: they are respectable, helpful, good, and besides that, calm and happy; they do a lot of good and everyone feels good and happy around them. Now, look at those who have turned away from Christ: they are freaks, having no character – no particular wisdom – no virtue or peace.. Miserable!.. Most often they do not endure a harder trial of life – and finish by suicide...

Do you see? Continuously, a lack of happiness in the world is before our eyes... Where does it come from?... From dilemmas in the soul – in the conscience. From lack of virtue, which brings help and rescue – which holds – makes stronger, which raises up. Just look: where indigenous misery is – there will be departure from Christ’s teaching. You may say: Yet the good have a lot of – even, sometimes, the most miseries? Sufferings, my dears, not miseries. We already know they are something different.

Could it be that those faithful to Christ do not follow His path through life?.. Could it be that they do not suffer, when He let Himself be stretched out on the cross for us?.. “Follow me!”... But even under His cross there is peace and happiness in their souls. This is the mystery of **our Faith** – the mystery of **Christ’s** love, the fruit of His teaching.

Our religion comes directly from our **Lord Christ**. If an honest man does not tell lies and keeps his word – could the Holiest God lie?!... The Catholic Church has never changed Christ’s teaching, so our Religion alone **is pure and holy – divine!**

The unity of the Catholic Church is one more proof of its origin. **The truth is one**. It may only be found in **the Catholic Church**, uniform in her principles.

In truth humans have the light to know themselves: to see that in themselves they are nothing, that everything good in them comes from God, and they may spoil and lose it. As a result, **humility** (the consequence of light), which is the ground for faith, is not difficult for them.

Humility is justice, honesty. – A human enlightened by true faith cannot exist without humility – without love for it. Our religion creates all virtues – teaches all – but without humility there would be none. Humility is the first fruit of our religion – it was the first act in the work of redemption: Incarnation, this act of noblest humility.

Humility is a virtue for all – because we are all the same dust, all contaminated by the same sin, all corrupt in our nature. The higher our position on earth (when our responsibility is greater and the evil in us might be more dangerous), the deeper should our humility be.

The woman, this creature weaker by the law of nature – without humility could have no

influence either in the family, where father and then husband are the leading and holding power, or in society – where she out of God’s will occupies the second place. Without humility – she would not be with God, she would not have His blessing to accomplish her task. They can accept a remark or advice from a humble person, from a conceited one – never!

Humility makes way for influence – breeds meekness. “Blessed are the meek”, says the Lord Jesus, “for they shall inherit the earth” (for themselves and for others). How? Real humility has a meek, mild, attractive face, and by giving kind-hearted understanding to others... wins their trust.

Giving us knowledge of ourselves – humility brings knowledge of people: their hearts – souls – nature; by getting closer to God it stimulates our love for them. In order to act – we have to know – and love. Then we have the power for any sacrifice to win the highest good for them: closeness to God!

Humility broadens the horizon of Truth – it is rational. Pride – conceitedness – narrow the mind, because they look from only one point of view. They are fatal both for our soul and our service in God’s cause, whereas the feeling that I am God’s, commanding us to respect ourselves, is valuable.

Respect yourself – that is protect the dignity of your soul which bears God’s image, which was redeemed by Christ’s Blood – that is protect it from stain. There is Christian, feminine, virginal, Polish dignity. Do not let yourself engage in anything contrary to Christ’s teaching – to the Church, anything offending feminine prestige or virginal purity. Guard them in yourself – in your family; – watch over both family and Polish respectability; value the national language – customs and traditions, as long as they are beautiful and honest – and you will retain Christian, feminine, virginal, national dignity.

You may ask: how can I be humble in the world?... Is it possible?... Yes, my dears. You cannot externalise humility to a great extent, because this could present you in a false light in relation to others. That is, you need not be humble externally – grovel before others. However, you will not harm your dignity if you are humble, broken inside – if you do not seek the first place and renown for self, or emphasise in yourself features valued by people; – if you go as if unnoticed, avoiding praise and flattery, without attracting others’ eyes to yourself.. They will respect such a woman twice as much behind her back, and – out of respect for her – will become silent in her presence. It is best when a young woman, who has not yet had the time to distinguish herself by her deeds, is not spoken of at all.

How to take insult?... Sometimes it is desirable to pass it by without even looking. Sometimes you can draw back – and avoid it. You may need to give others to understand with dignity that you notice – and forgive...

If someone has an image of us which is too good, is it our duty to correct it? No. Our duty is to deserve this good image. My dears, be right in your relationship with God, and your life will run straight – everything will turn to good. Has someone a bad image of one of you, do not think with resentment that their opinion is too bad – but rather that you are even worse than they think you to be, and you will not lose peace.

My dears! Humility is something so respectable, so worthy, that it will always serve you and never betray you or let you down. There can be a snare in everything, even love. For example, you think that you love somebody beautifully – in God, and in fact you love for yourself – in a human way, and so on. Humility, however, is a faithful friend who always tells you the truth and never lies. Humility lays a background and character of truth for the whole soul – securing it for everything that life can bring. The one who is humble, has **God's Spirit** – that is: a **Pure Spirit**.

Our sceptre – as women – is **Purity**, the result of all virtues – their fragrance. May women stand in a divine, pure way, and they will return to the position determined for them in God's thought, which they once had in our country. Why are they disregarded today; a toy in men's hands?.. Because they have relinquished this sceptre from their hands: the sceptre of authority given by virtue.

A pure heart is strength, zest and fire in all righteous feelings. The virtue of purity has a particular appeal. It reflects itself with a certain charm, inconceivable on the outside, in behaviour, in the way of speaking. Its reflection is mildness – delicacy – virginity of the female gender, I may say, which is possible in every state and age and which rubs off any trace of roughness which is so contrary to our character. Unfortunately, perhaps there is nothing so fading in today's world as the virtue of purity: its sense is diminishing. One can see a complete misunderstanding of its inviolability!

Purity (simple and unassuming) used to be a speciality of Polish women. Father Kajsiewicz, living abroad and knowing a great many women of various nationalities, spoke from experience that Polish women distinguished themselves with purity, and Polish virgins were real angels. Today... the trace of this is fading away and in our Poland it is similar to the rest of the world... Still, in our convents here, under the Immaculate's protection and grace, this virtue is found so easily, so easily its resonance is aroused in the souls of girls entrusted to us!

My children! May this virtue make its home in you, may it spread from you to others – and through you be fully reborn in our whole country! May the Queen of this land not disown our country, but find Herself at home in Poland – in an atmosphere of purity adequate for Her. Purity is the star of the Immaculate Conception's crown, and you are Her daughters!... Become like your Mother for the new era of our society – for the Kingdom of God in Mary's Kingdom!

Then dignity in behaviour will appear, accompanied by pleasant friendly freedom and joy.

You will arouse in men sincere reverence towards you; none will dare to come to you with an ambiguous word or take liberties with you improperly.

The influence of such a mother, wife and sister, like a good seed under the dew and sun – will realise a harvest... Also men will convert – see the light – change... This depends on us... **Not** equality with men – not emancipation – but **this** is our task! Purity may exist in our behaviour, in our actions – when it is in our interior – in our faculties.

Purity of intentions – this is something I trust you all carry in your wills, my dears. But your will may be turned towards God, and your “self” in nature, as yet unconquered, may squeeze into your affairs. Look: These good deeds of yours, were they from the very impulse of your heart, without a thought of God?... I am not saying that from pride, vanity, for human praise, conducted intentionally with your eyes on yourself – from this, I hope, your upbringing itself will guard you; but were they not for your own comfort? Because doing well, listening to expressions of gratitude, respect, blessings is so pleasant?!

How can we make our deeds pure?.. By living only for God’s praise, for our neighbour’s good? Cling to God. He will pour His demands into you, change your heart according to His will. Reject all impediments without hesitation – and like fog at sunrise, they will disperse and your deeds will be pure.

Employing bad means towards a good aim works against the purity of the soul, for example, exerting influence by hitting someone’s weak point or self-love – receiving a favour, even for someone else, by flattery etc. It is not suitable to flirt with danger, to risk bad appearances – for example to live in a close, confidential friendship with a married man, even for a good purpose. Do not give people a basis for slander. Respect your honest family name – this is your duty.

A Christian woman should not only watch over the purity of her intentions, words and actions, but also – of her thoughts, imagination and feelings. As you know, a bad thought is not a sin if it is not voluntary – as long as we have not contributed to it with an unhelpful book, bad conversations or relationships.... Something from the outside may awake a bad impression through no fault of ours. However, when at once rejected, it will not cast a shadow on our purity. It is fatal and so common today to seek impressions – to be curious about the unknown. It harms this angelic virtue. A married woman, a widow or a virgin should protect it respectably and reasonably. She should not allow herself any indecent or Church-banned reading. –

May your judgements also comply with Divine Law and Church doctrine. Do not cast a stone at those who have gone astray – but do not justify evil. Tolerating it and allowing it to coexist with us – not only blunts us towards evil – but also calls us to account for it.

Pure reason grasps the truth straightforwardly. Reason not seeking the truth is neither strong nor pure. My dears: only God encompasses everything. If we cling to God, He enlightens us

with His grace according to our needs, so that the truth will always strike us, in every thing.

Further, my dears, we need to protect **purity of the heart** most carefully: to watch over our feelings, that there be a spirit of God in them – not of our nature. Do not think that this means to reject and trample human feelings. No! On the contrary: we have to develop all beautiful feelings in our hearts, but we have to watch over the spirit of these feelings, so that they do not idolatrously overpower the soul, but enrich it with a new ray of light.

This will not make you less welcome in the world. People will evaluate you – unconsciously and even instinctively, they will cling to you more, because God's grace has a hidden charm in itself which attracts. A coquettish woman will be surrounded, but a pure, angelic one will be valued – and she will arouse real feeling. A man may get down to his knees for a moment before a salon doll – later he will laugh at her. Before a morally beautiful wife a husband will not only bend his head... in his spirit he will spend all his life at her feet.

Let us be kind in relationships with people, hospitable in our homes, but aware of coquetry, which casts false glitter, and not bright light on your being. Let us look at the divine law – at our past customs in Poland: principles which protected women and did not allow any appearance of evil.

My dears! To be of **pure spirit** is not to live by the spirit of the world – this world which Jesus excluded from His last prayer: “I pray not for the world”! It is to live in God's way: to encompass with deeds of love the whole of humankind, according to the possibilities God gives us, to despise none – not to be occupied with self – to fulfill in a saintly way the duties of our station.

Did the Lord Jesus reject people living in the world?.. No! He died for them – he loved people, but condemned what rules the world: the spirit of vanity, pride, earthly praise – which is rejected by God.

If you all took one another by the hand – it is impossible that no reaction would be felt – no change in the world, or at least a feeling that there is something higher than flirting and materialism! That depends on you. At first you might be lonely, but slowly the truth will break through – it will bear witness to itself – gain recognition, and later... a following.

Good and evil are both contagious. For our alumnae I don't want homage from the world, but reverence towards their virtues and purity. A woman of pure spirit, strong with God's grace – will transform a man – and change the world: not only its appearance – but its foundation. Oh Lord, may we live to see it!

You may ask, my dears: what to do, when circumstances are very difficult?... When you desire God and want to live by His laws, but you cannot avoid bad company?... – Will the One to whom you are giving yourself not protect you from damage?... Certainly, evil will only arouse your greater repulsion and you will move even further away from it. Cling to God and never voluntarily

remain in dangerous circumstances.

Innocent entertainment is not a sin, especially for the young, not burdened with duties, as long as one does not spend the whole of life entertaining oneself.... My dear children, I wish you could enjoy yourselves in salons – and care for your household, but always remembering about God. In this way, there would be both benefit and edification from everything.

The purity of the soul will reflect itself both in the entire exterior of a woman and in her home. A prominent weakness in us, Poles (apart from discord... resulting not from lack of love but from the obstinate pursuit of our own will) – is **untidiness**. We need to counteract this negative side of our national nature. May our homes be distinguished by their order, systematic design and by transparent purity, external and moral.

Love your family home, protect its beauty like a temple. Is it not true?... There is no flower as beautiful as one from our fields... nowhere does the sun shine so beautifully as that which sheds golden light upon our crops and embraces our houses – nowhere do nightingales sing so beautifully as in the gardens and forests in which our youth was spent, the most beautiful days of our life... In this is an incomparable charm – poetry – a song of youth, whose echo sounds throughout our life, in our soul, even in one turned towards other worlds.

Our home is not only four walls, it includes people, souls: family – household members – peasants – servants... Open your hand to everyone – open your heart – give friendly help – love! Act – as far as you are able – well, give as much as you can afford, and you will have treasure in God's grace which shall never leave us, your homes will become beautiful, because God, Who is everlasting Good and Beauty, will rule over them.

I cannot separate beauty from good: the former is a reflection of the latter. The person of the woman should be aesthetic as well. Pretension and surrounding oneself with luxury is one thing; – maintaining cleanliness, nobleness and good taste in everything is another. The latter create beauty and give dignity to women; they are accessible to all – even those not affluent. Take from fashion what is pretty and noble. From ugly fashion take only inasmuch you really need not to offend by distinction.

A great attribute of a woman is **thrift, economy**. What is thrift? It is the ability to manage the household so that everything goes well, smoothly, peacefully, in perfect order, making good use of everything, wasting nothing, oppressing nobody – this closely relates to the happiness of the home. Sometimes, the impracticability of the mistress of the house makes expenses enormous, and there is no comfort or affluence.

Do you like housekeeping, my dears?... not necessarily be “a keen housekeeper”, but one should regard it as a duty not to neglect this sphere of life. For a young married woman, managing

her household for the first year is like being in a forest. Later – if reasonable and eager – she will cope well.

The mistress of the house should diligently pay attention to adequate payment for servants. Why do servants not only disapprove of their masters, but also envy and hate them?.. Because they can see luxury in their masters' homes – and privation and misery in their own!

Today, in general, one can observe a great disposition towards the neglect of expenses. The material side has developed inexorably and because of this, we let ourselves be drawn into **squandering**. Let us limit our expenses – let us not waste our family's possessions to please our pampered nature – our untamed fancies.

It happens that husbands wanting their wives to have an excellent social position, require exquisite clothing for them. May women try to stop them with reason: will I be valued more highly for my beautiful dress or expensive jewels?... Respect earned in this way would be impermanent and without value.

Sometimes squandering leads to **meanness**. Squandering is frivolous – meanness low. Both are dangerous, but meanness is worse, more repulsive: this is moral and material egoism... The former leads to the latter.

I hate debts, because contracting them recklessly usually leads to dishonesty. However, I think that helping your neighbour in true need draws God's mercy both to the giver and receiver and will never have a bad outcome. Do not refuse mercy when God demands it from you in presenting a real need. Then give trustfully, even your own piece of bread, taking it from your mouth.

May your good deeds not encompass either vanity nor speculation – and may a loan, as a debt of conscience – the holiest duty, be always paid back exactly, without deduction or contrivance.

May the wife always watch over her husband's conscience – may she be his partner – not his accomplice in evil. May she guard his soul, honour, possessions and the land entrusted to his hands, because the Lord, the Giver of all gifts, will call to account for them all.

Poverty which is not one's own fault – especially for those unaccustomed to it, is full of merit. Yet, it is an uneasy trial – a trial of faith – nobleness – even honesty – combined with great difficulties and dangers – and it is not acceptable to expose one's family recklessly to it. Recklessness is so often a flaw of our nation!...

The virtue of poverty – the wise adaptation to every situation – consists in not spending on oneself beyond necessity and means, not wasting or squandering, but saving, accompanied by Christian detachment from earthly vanities, not chaining oneself to anything created, sharing willingly with the needy.

Idleness leads to sinful poverty. Oh, my dears, guard against it as against a fire, beware of

idleness, so common today in that sphere of society affluent for generations! From idleness come coldness of heart, insensitivity to others' troubles, egoism – materialism, boredom and bad humour... The bad humour of the mistress of the house is a plague for the household, a scourge for husband and servants. A woman should always be serene and bright, like a ray of sunshine which cheers everything up.

Is it good not to waste even a moment – to live being continuously busy, as if in a hurry?... It is good, my dears, not to waste time, to use every moment peacefully, but a hectic rush in a continuous hurry brings more harm than good: it will alarm – cause mistakes – make one tired – finally discourage. There should be **moderation** always, in everything, and there will be peace and freedom, the blessing of work with fruit.

I confess: I do not like inaction for myself, I am always busy also externally. Nevertheless, I need to encompass in my thinking everything I have done into a whole – put it before me – make myself aware of everything – think a shorter or longer while about it – assess it.

Do likewise, my dears. In your mind, analyse the tasks which are your duties, so that everything has its order: in the first place put those which are more urgent, more important, then those less important, so that nothing is forgotten. Entrust them to your guardian angel, so that He helps you to conduct everything. At a suitable moment, consider not only the details (whether they have diverged from the aim), but also the whole scope of your acts (to judge if they have led you to the aim), to complete or correct them.

Thrift and diligence go together with **a sense of duty**. A sense of duty and its love are of immense importance: they keep us on the road of God's will for us – on the righteous road and do not allow us to go astray. A sense of duty is an aspect of **obedience**, obedience to the Church and her superiors, to the law, to our task, position etc.

There are dispositions so self-willed and capricious that the very fact that something is “required” makes an indifferent thing repulsive. This is illogical: all of us, whether we want it or not, always have to obey, that is we continuously surrender to somebody or something, a power, a law over us. First of all, by an indispensable necessity, we surrender to the laws of physics. You surrender to your body. Is it hungry?... You have to feed it. Does it want to sleep? – You have to get rest. Does it feel cold?... You will cover it. In brief, you have to surrender to its thousands of influences and needs.

The more so, moral law. All people, whether they want to or not, have to surrender to the reign of Providence in what comes to them without their control, which they cannot prevent in their lives whether it touches great or small things. They have to subordinate to other people – authority set over themselves – and duties. There would be no good person, and even less, a good Christian,

without obedience, without a sense of duty.

Do not be afraid, my dears, of **the duties of your station** designed for you by God's will – the grace of this position, this calling will give you the strength and means for performing them. Should your nature revolt against them – go through nature, rise above it without looking back. If you have no strength for it – your guardian angel will carry you through.

Support your husbands in their duties – inculcate duties into your children from infancy. A sense of duty opposes our Polish character. A Pole may throw himself heroically at a sacrifice, but pulling the plough of duty persistently is contrary to his vivid independent nature. Let us inculcate this virtue into our children with all the more care, let us root it all the more deeply. Upbringing, imprinting a certain truth changes our very nature with the help of God's grace.

I have met people who say, "I could like this and that, but because it is my duty – I feel disgust towards it." However, I know others who say, "this would be hard for me, but since this is my duty, it becomes pleasant."

Into your duty, into each action of yours, you need to put your heart and give from your heart, act from the heart. Doing good to others, we should not let them feel that we are doing it out of duty, for duty. Do you understand?...

Do not disregard the small duties of life, because you will not be worthy of God's confidently entrusting you with more important ones. Be exact in all you do – and your duties will fill your life serenely, adding happiness to it.

In everyday life, my children, you who are younger, live in your parents' homes according to your mothers', your parents' will. Do not judge them, but respect them – since you have them from God. Disrespect would irritate, and irritation would alienate. You would feel cold and bad towards others, and so would others feel with you. The fire which can and should brighten up family life would go out.

In the world of today, there is no respect towards elders – which earlier generations grew up with. Because the **faith** of earlier generations is lacking! When one stops venerating the saintly, then due respect for people also diminishes. One thing remains: veneration for "self".

Is **obedience** to a husband difficult?.. Sometimes. You may say, "God's will is holy to me: I see or believe it is wise, perfect in itself, beautiful, but my husband, is he always infallible, better able to manage affairs than I?.." I will answer: Obedience to your husband is God's law – in it is safety and grace. Live with your husband in such unity of soul that there exists one will between you; – then obedience is easy.

Does obedience weaken the will? No. It strengthens it, it is a constant training of the will, preparing it for more important conquests of self. When nature is conquered, the will takes the role of a foundation within us – and "on this bedrock" God will build His temple.

Nevertheless, may your obedience be wise. If for example your husband, under the influence of emotion, issues wrong or harmful instructions – do not contradict him at the first moment. Listen peacefully – but do not carry out his will. Later, when he calms down, say gently, “I did not do this, because I knew you would regret it.”

Obedience should not be passive. Children bound to blind obedience until they are older, in later life will follow paths dictated by circumstance, not being able to keep to the good by themselves. Obey wisely and require wise obedience: with understanding, based on conviction. Bring up according to pure, noble principles – and when those younger than you, children or subordinates recognize good – they will love and realise it willingly.

Finally, there is internal obedience to good inspirations. I am talking about an inner conviction of God’s requirement: “do” or “don’t do”, which may relate to small things, for example “die to self” – “don’t say that” – “hide your good deed” etc, or to important matters, on which our salvation depends.

You have to be alert to such warnings. Without this, a relationship to the Lord Jesus will not last – the Lord will leave us. On the contrary: when a flexible and obedient soul lives in response to God’s demands – the conscience becomes more delicate – the heart more noble, and God rules in us with His Spirit, and through us at home, in our family.

My dears! The position of a **Christian woman** in God’s world is most beautiful and ideal. Each work of God is beautiful. **Family**, this cradle of humankind, for which Christ gave His life, is most of all a Divine Work – it is pure beauty, if not spoilt by us. Purify the family – establish it according to God’s thought, and it will be a paradise! A family house founded on this thought is an oasis in the world – **it is the Kingdom of God!**

My dears! Is not the Ideal of a woman in the world beautiful?.. Do we have to seek something else, to reach, against God’s will, for something supposedly higher? This would be a misunderstanding of this ideal and a destroying of self in pride. Be aware of this, my dears! And you will surely realise it, if you truly and faithfully **stand with God**, which I want for you with all my heart and soul.

Lord, let us understand your thought and your will, let them be our concern, let us live by them! Be in the midst of us in our homes to be glorified there, to lead us from there to you.

Mary, Our Mother, make our homes like yours – in Nazareth! Amen.

IV. ON SUFFERING AND LOVE

CONTENT

Sinful, human and holy **suffering**.

Means of sanctifying the suffering: **loving God's will**.

Family **love** – love towards the Motherland – love towards the Church.

Prayer.

My dears! From my entire life experience I have formed the conviction that:

The only weapon against difficulties, the only means of realising good is **Love**.

What is love? It is something which one cannot define with one word, but by which one can live. Something which fulfills the soul, which gives it life and which has a strength for unbending sacrifice.

We can feel it – pour it into our actions, but we cannot define it. Love is a power within us which moves us towards action. But for love to be true – it has to undergo a trial. Gold is tested in fire, love is tested in **suffering**.

It has to be so, my dears: the path of this earthly pilgrimage cannot be covered with flowers only... He who does not know suffering is a child... he cannot be said to know life, because life on this earth is struggle – pain! Whoever wants to learn to **love** – should learn to **suffer** well. What matters, my children, is to be able to distinguish between bad and good pain, so that all your suffering will be a cross which raises up, not a thorn fruitlessly wounding, which strikes out – knocks down.

There are different types of suffering. There is sinful suffering, for example rebellion – torments of pride, tortures of envy, pinpricks of self-love, irritations, taking offence, sentimentalising over oneself, etc. The world abounds with these and they are very severe pains and hurts, spoiling the soul and poisoning life. Their sources: nature, concentration on self, and sometimes imagination.

There are imaginary crosses, as one preacher aptly called them, “fabricated”... the more nagging because they are unaccompanied by grace, as real crosses are. A human among them is by himself – without God – tossing about – tormenting himself and others. As long as we fight with

these sufferings and reject them (draining the murky spring from which they flow), they may also become payment and purification.

There is another suffering, real and deserving of respect, although purely human in itself. It encompasses a whole range of human, earthly attributes: diseases, disasters, failures, suffering due to circumstances, disappointments of any kind, also from people: whether from their ill-will or even involuntarily, but by mistake, even out of good intentions which have been misunderstood, or from character discrepancy, finally: from severe losses, the death of one's nearest, inner trials etc.

Such suffering is neither holy nor sinful: it may be sanctified by a good reception and give us more merit, or turn into fault, if a soul turns it against God and in rebellion complains, grumbles, crashes under its blow, instead of humbly accepting God's will.

Oh, how sorry, how very sorry I feel for these poor people, who suffer here, in this life, but fruitlessly.... and what is more, with their misuse of suffering, they prepare for themselves eternal torment!... However, the Lord Jesus, this lover of humankind, is immensely understanding towards human pain, provided it is pain and not impudent rebellion.

Finally, there is holy suffering, for example over offence to God, over the perdition of souls, persecution of the Church, disasters in the country, in the world. Here, a person suffers from pure love towards God. Such pain is at the same time a blessing, sweetness and happiness, although it pierces to the depths. From this wound balm drips...

My dearest children, believe me: happiest is the one who can best endure the adversities of life, who can suffer. **Patience** is a thoroughly Christian virtue – and I would say: a feminine virtue. At every step, a woman has to endure something in family life, even she who is generally happy. Endure calmly and serenely – so that nobody can guess you are enduring. The mistress of the house – the wife – the mother – cannot show it. Perhaps something tears you to pieces from all sides: here you are managing a difficulty – there you are enduring pain... You have sighed heavily from the bottom of your heart – maybe even stifled a moan of pain?.. Still you have a smile for everyone, so as not to accuse anyone or make them sad. You will not dismiss a child impatiently because something is bothering you, you will not scold your servant – you will not change your steady serenity towards anyone. Your pain is between you and God..

You would gain nothing with roughness – only harm and discourage others. Your power is in **peace**. Of course, I do not mean that you should play-act. No, but I want you to love, and you will stand by others' needs. **Kindness** of heart will give you the **mildness** and **calmness** which comfort and conquer. I do not wish for you the stoical, cold patience from the very strength of self-control, but that from God, from grace, which directs us towards others and teaches to forget ourselves for them. Do you understand?..

My dearest children! One thing always arouses my admiration, growing as the scale of the

world's villainy increases: God's patience! This is the most wonderful of His attributes: always inexhaustible, shaken by nothing! How could we not want to imitate it, at least from a distance?...

Oh, that people in the world would know life with God, that they would have a feeling of this communion with Him; – of the truth that God is with them, that He **is here**, shares their troubles, allows only as many as would be for their good – despair would vanish from the world, the layer of sadness, covering even children today, would disappear.

Without suffering, my dears, one cannot complete this pilgrimage – it is, as I have said so many times already – essential for purification, for merit, for getting closer to the Lord Jesus. Even easy ways have to lead us through crosses. If God loves a soul particularly, He will be more generous with the crosses, which unite us to Him the most. However, for us nothing should matter, neither the quality of the crosses nor the degree of perfection, but one thing only: **faithfulness** to grace, whatever its size or character. **Faithfulness** consists in persistently responding to grace.

There is one secret which makes suffering easier... a tested one... Thank God for everything His Hand gives to us. Under a heavy cross, cry with the faith of will, if not of feeling, "I believe, Lord, that it is good, because it comes from you – thank you!" I guarantee that it will raise, strengthen, comfort you. Submitting to pain weakly only increases the burden. Heroic **gratitude** brings love into the heart – love gives strength for everything, gives bliss!... Without love it is difficult – heavy – and sinful. With love, our relationship with God is transformed – there is virtue and merit.

Someone asked, "Can one have happiness in suffering, but not for God? A kind of delight in the fact of being unhappy?" Yes, but it is morbid. It is an emotional analysis of oneself, similar to rational analysis, detailing impressions and sensations with soft and ignoble selfishness. Is it bad to take pity on oneself? It is a weakness which kills the power of the spirit and makes pain more difficult to endure.

Do not disregard, my dears, small sufferings and everyday distresses. Do not say, "What does God get from this?" A lot, because for Him your heart matters, your will and your merit. It is not great deeds in themselves which constitute the value of being, but a great spirit, which is ready for everything for God, which can sacrifice itself for His love, even unto swords and fire at His call.

A great spirit is great love. Great love will come to us from **living by God's will** – through everything, small and big, uniting us with God. To embrace and internalise God's will to the exclusion of all other wills surely means to come to the true and great love of God. Take it, dearest children, as a task of your life, that after completing this pilgrimage it could be said about each of you, "She went through life doing God's will."

If the day of the hardest trial comes upon you: black night, darkness, storms of passion and internal temptation, if abandonment and despair enshrine your soul and you see no rescue – then

thanking God, embrace Christ's cross like a sinking person, with the remainder of your strength tie yourself to it, with your last effort tighten your arms around it and do not let it go – although the whole might of hell wants to pull it away... And the Lord Jesus will conquer everything... carry you through everything.. and give Himself to you for eternity.

I believe, as much as I believe in the Gospel, that a faithful soul from which God demands martyrdom always has the grace for it.

My dears!

Love gives happiness. In moments of tender comfort it radiates to the outside with joy, in moments of trial it clings to faith and will – it gives serenity. Love is confirmed by action, as I have said, and expressed through **prayer**.

All our relations with God and people should be love. There is family love. There is social love. Love towards the Motherland. Love towards the Church and the whole of humankind. And above all – the Only one – the source of each and every – the life-giving **divine love**. Only this love can make you thoroughly happy. But may there be, you ask, another love, love apart from God? Yes. There can be a whole temptation in love. Satan creeps in everywhere, so he may creep into the heart as well and suggest sinful love. Such love should not be known by any good soul. For the honest, there is only divine love or love from God. Outside God it would be poisonous, so it should not exist.

How should we know whether love is from God? There are certain hints. For example, a young girl falls in love with someone who does not think about her. This cannot be from God, because there will be bad results: unhappiness, fatal dreaminess – idleness, which in the end will waste her life and break it. Secondly, you should consider the object of your feeling. A man without honour or faith cannot come to us from God's hand. A feeling aroused in the heart by such a one should be pulled up firmly, without hesitation.

Also earthly love may be from God. Such love is of a pure, bright, joyful character. Nevertheless, if you put your whole heart into it – and do not base it on God – you will face disappointment. Purely human love brings a lot of suffering. When you love for yourself, you suffer; when you love without God – you sin. Such love is torment and throws us over a precipice.

How to establish love from God in yourself? Live with God – take the object of love from His Hand. God unites souls. This is why human relations are sanctified: family relations, sacramental unions, friendship, etc. All should be respected.

A child's love to Parents is holy and should be lifelong. What is more, life should intensify it, as experience teaches us to value the parental heart more. The place of parents under a roof which they have relinquished to their children – for their benefit – should always be first; their

presence should always be regarded by children as a divine blessing. A child should respect and care for its parents to the end of their life and in the hour of their death.

Amongst all human unions on earth, the holiest is the sacramental union: **marriage**. There is no greater enemy of happiness than egoism. It sometimes has the appearance of legitimacy: “I am seeking the happiness which is my right, which belongs to me.” But these appearances are false: you are killing your happiness. Only giving happiness can you find it. Whoever does not know this, does not know happiness.

What is it to love? It is to forget about oneself for the sake of others. Nothing exterminates our “self” and selfishness from our lives as well as the duties of a wife and mother. A nun devotes herself to God, to humankind – a wife and mother, to family. She thinks only about her own – she only seeks their good, happiness, pleasure.

They call a good wife one who is submissive and mild, who thinks about her husband’s comfort and does not forbid him pleasures, one who is faithful to her marriage vows. But few women think about their husbands’ salvation, about their souls, about their eternity, although this is the wife's holiest duty, the main task of her life! Her salvation is so closely connected with his!

Indulging your husband, making his life easier and sweeter, without harming holier spiritual duties, is not only allowed, but necessary. You may also try to be attractive to him, provided that is, that to him alone. A wife should be steadfast in her principles – flexible, kind-hearted and farsighted in her external relation to her husband.

Are you allowed to seek your husband's attachment? – This is not only allowed, but essential. Attachment to you will prevent him from leaving the good path, make his life sweeter and his duty light. The husband's attachment is the work of the woman. In her hands is the happiness of the home.

I once watched a married couple matched by true, sincere love. After a few years of happy married life, a coquettish and beautiful woman, surrounded with an array of charms, led the husband from the way of duty and shook his feeling. The wife remained faithful. With great pain, but a peaceful face, with loving and Christian understanding, she looked at the erring of her husband, without changing her behaviour towards him. And she endured everything – she won with love and prayer. The husband came back – with a double attachment, because he had doubled his respect for her. It hardly ever happens that a wise and saintly wife does not convert the most unfaithful husband.

You vow unconditionally (be the husband good or bad), you should keep the vows unconditionally. You have to love your husband's soul, you have to contradict any evil in him without neglecting it, although it may not affect you.

True good and beauty is only there where virtue – where God is.

Never should a wife utter a word to her husband's disadvantage. Such is our weakness that the best of wives may surrender to an internal stir of impatience, outrage, sometimes even complain.. but let nobody know this! Even your own mother: not everyone possesses the wisdom to reassure and give good advice, and everyone's life will be poisoned!..

Never reproach your husband, remind him of earlier mistakes, rebuke him; – never return to the harm he did to you in the past, to wounds inflicted. Never should a husband detect in his wife any disrespect towards himself, even communicated not verbally, but with a facial expression,. This removes trust from the heart – estranges – antagonises – harms you both.

One should always seek agreement, otherwise – God forbid – each of you could start thinking and living separately, without sharing or mutual trust. A wife who listens wisely will always maintain perfect agreement, she will know when she should listen, what she should wait for, what she should influence, and will always create unity. A woman who loves will endure everything, will withstand everything and with God's grace will always win.

From marital love, **parental love** flows. Is not **Motherhood** the most self-sacrificing of all human loves, and perhaps the strongest?.. It is holy.

The first principle of upbringing is to bring children to know God – inculcate faith into them from the cradle. It is not enough to bring children up in the fear of God: this will not sanctify, cheer, make life easier, because it is cold in itself and turned towards ourselves. You need to arouse their love for God, and you will make them noble, you will set them on the path of happiness. It is a false principle to use God as a threat all the time. If the Lord Jesus could suffer everything for us, let His Mother endure such torture – also today He will do everything to our good... because He loves us! Why should children not know and remember this?.. It will warm their hearts and make everything easier for them. “God is love.” In relation to every creature of His, He is nothing but love. I know God in this way – I cannot present Him otherwise – I am not able to.

Do not let your children, my dears, out of your hands, do not entrust them completely to nurses or teachers. May your families be a continuation of your life in spirit and truth, a reflection of your soul. If mothers love wisely, in a divine way, they will lay the foundation of a more perfect generation. Why are there so few vocations to the priesthood now?.. Because there are so few religious families and so little supernatural life in family nests. The Lord's field is vast – the harvest could be plentiful.. but there are few labourers.

Children should be guided with example and influence, not tamed by force; altered, not restrained. Do not refuse them what can reasonably be allowed. However, do not spoil them with luxury, do not accustom them to comfort, to fulfilling their nervous fantasies, to pleasing their senses, but toughen their noble will, train them to suffice themselves, prepare for exact, persistent, useful work – in our persecuted country it is the parents' special duty.

Parents' leniency, soft goodness is sinful and harmful for children. True goodness wants good for these beings, entrusted to us by God's will. Fortitude is their treasure for the whole of their life. You should develop your children's understanding and form their character with wise obedience, which explains and roots truth in them. Sow a good seed... What the mother plants – does not perish. Unfortunately, mothers often bring their children up so that they do not plant anything. What a serious responsibility! Motherhood is might. Principles inculcated by the mother's hand are, as it were, immortal. They may be shaken – but are hardly ever effaced completely. – They come to the mind even in the hour of death.

My dears! The relation to children is of primary and immense importance among a woman's duties. But her family is not limited to them. She has other children as well: household members, servants and poorer people.

First of all you should necessarily influence their religious development. This is the basis for all good. You should think about their eternal good. Teach poor children the catechism under the direction of a priest. Provide good, moral, religious books, organize common reading under good leadership (at least from time to time).

During Lent, before confession, read the examination of conscience seriously and slowly, clearly explaining sins in relation to life, according to the commandments. Not entering anyone's conscience – but generally enlightening it, warming the heart, arousing good resolutions for the future – preparing for the Sacraments.

Love for peasants goes together with **love for the land** and love for the national **Idea**. **Love towards the Motherland**, which St. Thomas of Aquinas includes with the 4th commandment, is for us, Poles, a two-fold duty, because it encompasses commitment to the holy faith.

So far, our position has not improved, but it is getting even more difficult.. Persevering at the post requires even greater sacrifice... I do not mean fanatical, fervent, mad patriotism – with unnecessary demonstrations. These draw persecution – persecution ruins the country – ruin leads to destruction.

We have to protect and defend everything which is national (przeniesienie): faith – language, customs, past history. Neglecting them ruins the country, like throwing a stone at one's own, at the holiest, like dealing a death blow to our mother! Because our Motherland is a Mother to us!

Today, some fashionable households ridicule celebrating Easter or the old-Polish Christmas Eve. These festivals embraced a whole culture! To celebrate them, whole families gathered together – our great-grandfathers' principles were renewed, relationships among the young grew closer – today family solidarity is diminishing. Religious festivals united relatives and friends, the manor house and the village, the lord and the peasant. Tables were laid for the servants, for the poor. The

lord shared a blessed egg at Easter, a consecrated wafer on Christmas Eve. This “sharing of Angels' Bread” is not without meaning. This is the bread of love, reminding us of the Lord Christ. He, the “Bread of Life” who came to feed us, share Himself with us, unite us in brotherhood to which we are called in eternity, without any difference of social class.

Each of our national customs has a thought behind it, its mystery of Christian beauty. Their guard tower should be the mistress of the house – the woman – the Polish woman.

My dearest children! We believe in the rebirth of Poland! Who will deny this vitality; seemingly immortal in the face of persecution from three mighty enemies able to destroy the most resilient of nations!.. Was Poland not to be rebuilt, our Order would not have come into existence, aroused by Divine Providence: if God wanted it to work for the life of the country, He must want the country to live!

We were established not with our own thought or power, but with God's grace according to God's thought. We bring up Polish Christian women, we will live to see a perfectly Christian Poland. – (I am not talking about myself, but about the Order... Perhaps not about you, but about your children..)

We teach you to love everything divine and Polish. My dear children, will you always **love** together with us?... This love towards the Motherland, in order to be invincible, should be based on **love for the Church.**

The Church gives us laws from our Lord Christ – the Church surrounds us with the most loving, careful, indeed motherly protection. The teaching of the Church is our foundation when they remove the earth from beneath our feet, it is food for those made hungry by oppression – the power of the helpless. In every situation, for every day of your life, seek there light and strength – forgiveness and love. Love to all – love to survive everything!

These words of mine in retreat talks for you are only a weak addition – in the **teaching of the Church** is the wholeness to which you should always turn. In the word of the Church is the Truth, in submitting to the Shepherds and rules of the Church is our security. Let us be faithful to her.

Catholic love is not cold, colourless cosmopolitanism, effacing God's thought in nations. It is **Christ's** love, giving everything to everyone, embracing the universe. It gives us an open heart for our brothers all around the world. It soothes sorrows – brings forgiveness – introduces peace to the soul – raises above the earthly – brings people closer. At the foot of the altar, there is no division between classes: there is only one dignity, the dignity of the human soul, created in the image of God, redeemed with Christ's Blood – destined for God.

What does it mean to love everyone? This is to embrace, with our heart and good deeds, everyone God's Hand brings near us. Such love – I would say – is God in the heart. To love

everyone with general love is to give everyone what they need from us.

Apart from this there are – as we have seen – holy ties of particular love, according to what God has decided by His law. When we do someone good, we already love him. Do you know that generally the ones who give always love more than those who receive?..

– Is it good to need from others as little as possible?. It is good when it comes from delicacy, not from pride. Desire, my dear, to give as much as possible. Take only what is essential if God sends you help through someone. Taking, hide it neither from yourselves nor from others. Do not retreat from gratitude – do not be ashamed of it, because there would be pride in it.

Gratitude is a good feeling. It leads to love and unites us with God. Gratitude is the justice of the heart and is called man's scale: the higher he is, the more able to experience this feeling. Ingratitude is low – ignoble. We are so unthankful in relation to God!

Being able to do good is sweet. With all our weaknesses, we, Poles, are known for our great hearts: generous, noble, capable of heroic sacrifice, sparkling with the richness of feelings. Mercy is the need of the Polish heart.

In order to make your alms valuable, remember, my dears, that three conditions have to be fulfilled: it must be founded in love, performed with gentleness and offered to God.

One of you asked me whether it was good to establish charitable (przeniesienie) societies. I would answer: it is very good, as the strength is in community – in unity. What an individual cannot do even with the greatest will, can be done by a few or more with the joint power of their commitment, time, wealth. Nevertheless, such charitable societies, like everything else in the world, have their dangerous sides as well:

- publicity – highlighting our good deeds, recognition among people, the fame of charity, hence food for self-love, etc.
- easy neglect of one's family, house and duties
- numerous relationships and meetings may develop agility, talkativeness, hectic activity – unfortunately, sometimes they give rise to judgement, slander and gossip. Then they would demean, not elevate.

Take care in this area.

Tell me, my children, do you love people? Sometimes one can hear that they are more easily loved from the convent – from afar – than looked at closely in the world?.. We do not have to love people only according to their personal value, but because God loves them, because the Lord Jesus died for them... Without this... love would be difficult indeed... The world is so spoilt today – gone astray from God's will. Excluding that part of humankind, faithful and suffering persecution, often known only to God in the heroism of virtue – people at large are so disgraceful in their lawlessness – uncontrollable greed – cruelty contradicting even human nature – atheism worse than

paganism, because existing among Christians, animal-like indecency and the decline of conscience and honour – that naturally one could turn away in disgust...

However, the Lord Jesus suffered torment and death for them as well – He had them on His mind on the cross likewise – He opened His Heart to them, too... How can we not pity them – how can we not ask for divine mercy for them, pray day and night!!..

Miserable is this humankind, the most miserable in its ugliness! My dears: when you see a beggar in misery, somebody suffering, unhappy, do you not pity them? Do you not want to help them, bring them relief?.. **Pity** and **compassion** are pearls from the sea of love. And what are all miseries in comparison with the danger of eternal death?.. How could we not take pity – how could we not love those greatest of beggars – the beggars of the spirit, sinners? How can we not love humankind under such a threat?

Their unhappiness is not without the influence of Satan.... If they became disentangled from his snare (everything with them is so tangled!), if they could see the light.... they would become better than we are! One would want so much to cast them all at God's feet!... There they would find safety, happiness and salvation!

“Thy Kingdom come”. For nineteen centuries, the Church has been praying for this. The Lord Jesus said this prayer first. After Him, the Church has repeated it throughout the ages. How could it not come true?.. Let us also pray with Him – with one heart, one soul, all of us!

Prayer – like the breath of the soul, as essential in relation to God as air to the lungs. My dears! May each of you keep your relationship with God, inculcated in her childhood in God's house. I desire it fervently.

My biggest comfort is that all of you have received the truth: you have faith, hope, you desire love.. With this, one can swim through the sea, even though rough with heavy storms. I can see – this truth – clearly, brightly? It is easy and blissful. Can I not see it? I believe it. Whether I can see it or not, I know that God **is here** – is here **for me!** I trust!! Seeing makes it easier, but does not constitute the essence of things. When it is dark – I call Him, “Lord of mercy! Come into my darkness!” When I feel indifferent (przeniesienie) – I do not become discouraged, but humble myself.

Is it difficult for you to pray? Say traditional prayers, pray from a book, but do not escape from prayer, do not turn away from the Lord Jesus. He is there – trust Him. Sometimes when you are unable to utter words of prayer, at least kneel down at His feet.

The prayer of love which is vivid, moving and lifts the heart comes from grace. This is a direct activity which flies like an arrow and lifts itself to God. Sometimes the merit is bigger (according to love) when remembering what you have received from Him before, faithfully,

disregarding changes – you cling to God and work on your prayer. As long as its fruit is an honest deed.

My dearest children! Our whole life should prepare us for this unity with God which will be our heaven in eternity. Not only religious orders will have a share in it. Your eternity will depend on what you gain here in your relation to the Lord.

They say sometimes in the world that we want to draw you – our students – to the convent. Never ever! To God's service – wherever He may put you – yes, indeed, – but this is something different. Of course, when the Lord Jesus gives you a vocation, I cannot reject you. But it matters to me immensely that He has His own in the world as well. Without that, His Kingdom would not spread! We want God to be praised **everywhere** – not only in convents and monasteries. Do you understand, my dears?

Does our external environment influence our affectionate relationship with God?... No, it does not. However, it influences a good relationship very much. By affectionate relationship I mean when without my own work I feel God in my soul. This cannot be given by anyone, not by man himself. This comes from grace.

“And why (you are asking) is it easier for us in the convent?” – Because the Lord Jesus wants to convince you that He is here for you in a special way – He wants to give of Himself and prove that what you received here was from Him... Here is the house of grace for your soul, the Lord Jesus Himself led you here. What for? Because He wanted to have you as His own in the world, so that you can spread His Kingdom there as well. Look now: have you faithfully stored this treasure of relationship with Him in your soul?... The Lord Jesus is stricter towards those who have taken... have had it... and have walked away!

Enter your soul: perhaps the Lord Jesus is sorry that He has already had a close relationship with you, and you have sacrificed Him for the world – for creatures... as if neglecting Him? Was it not for the Lord Jesus' goodness – there would be no way out of such harm – but He.. is nothing but love! Always ready to help the soul and receive it whenever it comes to Him repentantly – humbly.

Falls from a broken nature, not from ill-will, many a time teach us and turn things to our good. Finally, even if – God forbid – we fall into grave unfaithfulness, with such a God – All-Fatherly, there is no destruction without ill-will.. Only bad children feel bad in the house of the best Father.

Thus, although you might slip – even fall down – mud-splattered – alone... and weak... lean on Him – and He will not move away.. but support and save you. With remorse and readiness for repentance, you can never trust too much, as long as it is trust in God – and not self-confidence.

The most important thing is the desire for God, the desire to praise Him – do His Will – a

steady desire not to deviate from His divine law, but to take life as **God's service** and become familiar with God as the first, the best **Friend**.

May your prayer not be formal – may it be communication with the Father, pouring out your troubles and opening your heart before Him, even though He is God. God will never let the soul down! Sometimes you come to prayer so miserable – helpless and unstable.. and you go out like a different person: refreshed – with new strength. Be free with God, as if in a Mother's arms.

Sometimes there is prayer without words: my soul, without me, so to speak, communicates with The Unconceivable and Present, with its speech expressing itself before Him – I only feel God and give myself to Him. This is a good – a true prayer as well.

Say prayers, my dears, if possible, with your husband. Hasten to the Holy Mass and Sacraments with love. Do not forget about your servants in this.

My God! The Most Holy Sacrament, this is the only real treasure on this earth! Do you remember, my dears, that you have the Lord Jesus, this treasure of treasures, perhaps in the same village... next to your house? Do you know this is the greatest good?.. All works of art – marbles and gold are nothing in comparison with this Miracle which puts heaven and earth together on the altar. “It is the central point of a parish.”

I beg you, reflect on this: “The Lord Jesus is with us – **He** – Our God, in His Sacramental Presence is among us”. This is the grace of all graces!!

Remember, my dears, about your **churches**. Help them in poverty – contribute to their cleanliness out of your love for their Resident! What if the church is far away?... Look for the Lord Jesus wherever you can – do not become unaccustomed to Him. Neither you, nor your families, nor your servants.

Receiving Holy Communion, ask the Most Holy Mother that She may receive the Lord Jesus in your heart – ask Her to treat and honour Him, to pour into your heart a drop of Her love, dearest to Him. Are you distracted?.. Offer your ugliness to the Lord Jesus – lament before Him about yourself – He will pity you and help with His grace.

You often complain, my dears, about the difficulty of concentrating among the conditions of life pulling you in all directions. I understand this, but perhaps you are a little mistaken in demanding this concentration?.. Nobody is able to think continuously about God, taking His Being as the only subject of reflection and action. God – our Lord and Father has placed many duties upon you, called you to various works, in which, according to His will, your task consists. He has entrusted to you His cause in the world, in which is the whole of His thought and pleasure – and you should turn your whole attention towards it in order to do His will. You must not fulfill it mechanically, thoughtlessly, because you would **not** truly fulfill it. You will maintain your focus if you do everything entrusted to you or coming to you from God's will seriously, with God,

remembering about His presence, with the intention to praise and honour Him, to fulfill your duties according to divine laws and your conscience.

Thoughts which invade your prayer – if futile, coming unexpectedly – should be rejected as a temptation, without looking backwards... When they come from your activities and duties – turn them into prayer – entrusting them to God, and so evil will turn into good. Should you feel internal distraction – the cooling of your soul – hasten to the Sacraments.

Confession is such a blessing! This condemning and humiliating oneself for the love of the truth – this forgiveness of God through the priest's word! Blessed be God in His gifts enshrined for us in the Church!

Do not neglect daily self-examination: it is, as I call it, the guard rail which will not let you stray off the good path. Every evening have a look at your entire past day: How did you fulfill your duties? Did you not neglect anything? Did you not harm or wound anyone? Did you give others all you could and should have given for their happiness, for their good? Did you relate all this to God? What were you like in relation to Him? Did you not harm Him in others with your bad example?..

Humble yourself – apologise to the Lord who died for you, and fall asleep reconciled with Him. Entrust Him the next day, remembering what you should change – what you should remove (from yourself, from your shortcomings, from your behaviour), how you should serve and help others.

In prayer, one always needs to ask God for earthly things conditionally, as long as they are concordant with His will and pleasure... To gain something from God with our importunity, pulling something out of Him against His intention, is not always safe. Sometimes, temporarily, God cedes His will before human will... but one does not go down well with it, and eternity shall prove it... God respects human free will so much that He may even yield to our importunate request! When I want to break free from His fatherly arms, He will let me go.. but to my greater misery! Finish each such prayer with: “Lord, but be Thy will done, not mine! Be it not as I want it, but as you do! Act against my request – as long as you are praised!” God will count it to you and reward it in any way He likes, with a surplus of His blessing, in which all good is included.

We have to finish.

My dear, dearest children! Do you feel our love towards you?

Remember that, ready to make all possible sacrifices, we wanted only good for you – that is **God** in this life and for eternity! This is my – our – only wish in relation to you. God can see... this is true!

Has all this come from us?.. No. It is the **Lord Jesus** who gives it to us out of His love towards you. From Him our relationship is received, in Him it will become eternal. I entrust you to

Him, my dears, my beloved, entrust you through the Hands of the Immaculate Mother, Our Mother and Lady, the Queen of Heaven and the Queen of Poland! God be with you in life – in the hour of your death and for the whole of eternity! Let us love Him with all the strength of our hearts and souls as our Father, Lord, King, Brother, Bridegroom and Friend... as Good beyond all goods, as the Only One – as our Everything!

By a strange dispensation of Divine Providence, the first young shoot of our Congregation was established in Rome, in May, the month of Mary, in 1854, a few months before the eternally remembered Pius IX declared the dogma of the Immaculate Conception; and it was established under this call. Today, by the dispensation of Pius X, the Holy Church celebrates the 50th anniversary of this holy day: and you, our dearest children, have come here also to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of our Order. May this congress of yours honour our Immaculately Conceived Mother and Queen, be the tribute of your love to Her – may it give you Her help and blessing for further life.

Now, little birds, spread your wings in flight over the wide field of work: go back to your nests, scattered around the entire land of Poland! Scatter the good seed which you have gathered. We embrace all of you with one love – in the same way, may brotherly love unite your hearts without any difference of district, family or position, in concord and unity, in the service and praise of our one Mother: Immaculate Mary in heaven and the Motherland on earth: “One Lord, one faith, one baptism” – **one Poland** for us!

God bless you with the abundance of His blessing.

Most Holy Mother, our Immaculate Mother! Plead for us for the fulfillment of this on earth and in heaven, to the greater glory of Your Son, One God in the Holy Trinity. Amen.

MARCELINA DAROWSKA NÉE KOTOWICZ

Mother Marcelina of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
1827–1911

I've always been happy: in the family, in the home of my good honest parents, and in married life, because I was loved very much, but I have been happiest in the Order, where the Lord Jesus has been everything to me.

The happy life of Blessed Marcelina Darowska née Kotowicz was both usual and unusual at the same time. Born on January 16th 1827 in Szulaki (which, after the partition of Poland, was located in the Russian annexation), she was the fifth child of Maksymilia née Jastrzębska and Jan Kotowicz. It was a family of landed gentry with very lively traditions of patriotism. Already in her early childhood, God had gifted her with a sensitive nature, inclined to contemplation. She understood, at an early age, the value of a life devoted solely to God's service, although she knew little about its forms, having been born in the Russian annexation, where monastic life hardly existed. Most monasteries had been abolished there and the few which remained, whose members were not allowed to carry out any charity work, were doomed to die out. Her desire may have seemed unfeasible in the difficult times when Poland was erased from the map of Europe. However, there is nothing impossible for God and He leads souls devoted to Him along the paths which are surest. The only thing He requires is trust in Him and this Marcelina Darowska never lacked. She knew that God's ways, although sometimes difficult and incomprehensible for the human, are most secure and always lead to the goal.

Her sensitive nature responded to every inspiration of the Holy Spirit and always sought to obey Him. She also had a keen awareness of the needs of her motherland and the drama of each individual, especially the very poorest. Love towards God and love towards her Motherland were intrinsically entwined in Blessed Marcelina's life from her early childhood. As a 5-year-old girl, she heard that a plea directed towards God on the last day of the year is always granted if steadily accompanied by prayer for this intention, and she asked to be useful for Poland. The child's prayer was granted and God gradually prepared Blessed Marcelina Darowska for the tasks she was to undertake as the founder of a monastic order designated to shape women to be good wives, mothers and citizens.

However, before she took on this role, she was herself to experience all those roles which comprise a woman's lot. In her long life, she was daughter, wife, mother, widow and – finally – nun, the founder of a monastic order and tutor of many generations of sisters and students. She

committed herself absolutely to each of these life roles. At first, in her family house, she helped her father manage the estate. She did not tolerate any strictness, and more so – any injustice in relation to peasants. Jan Kotowicz, clearly having a soft spot for his daughter, always respected her opinion. She helped the sick and the poor in her neighbourhood, her sensitive nature being unable to pass indifferently alongside any misery, in particular the suffering of those most defenceless inhabitants of the country.

Although the desire for a monastic life had never left her, Marcelina's beloved father was unable to understand it. When he fell seriously ill, his daughter promised to fulfill his wish and get married. Although Jan Kotowicz soon recovered, she felt bound to her word, and, at the age of 22, married Karol Darowski, to whom she gave not only her hand, but also her heart. She resolved to sanctify this union by living in God and for God. In her married life, she helped her husband control his often impetuous character. She also influenced the way he managed the estate, but not seeking to question his competence, as she had not questioned her father's before. She was clearly aware that, being a woman, she created the atmosphere of the home and influenced the way other people, especially peasants, were treated. She cared about warm and heartfelt family relations, but, when the need arose, she was able to defend her daughter's claim to her part of the inheritance.

Marcelina's happy marriage did not last long, only about three years; it ended suddenly with Karol Darowski's unexpected death while away on a journey. The young widow was left with two children: a son, Józef, who died a few months later, and a daughter – Karolina.

After these traumatic experiences, Marcelina Darowska's health broke down, which forced her to seek treatment in Heidelberg. Thence she went to Paris, following an invitation from her family, and met Father Aleksander Jełowicki, who directed her to Rome. In 1854, while there, she met Father Hieronim Kajsiwicz, a Resurrectionist. It was he who introduced her to Józefa Karska. Both women were united by a common vision – the order of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. After Józefa's death, Marcelina took charge of the newly established monastic congregation. Three years later, she relocated the order to the territory of Poland, where in Jazłowiec, Galicia, she opened an educational establishment for girls. Soon it became a centre of Polish culture and patriotism, radiating broadly throughout the whole country, and later enhanced by subsequent foundations in Jarosław, Niżniów, Nowy Sącz, Słonim and Szymanów.

By God's will, the life of Blessed Marcelina Darowska ranged between extreme experiences. Her portion was the great happiness of a daughter, wife, mother, and later mother superior seeing the dynamic development of her order, but also deep suffering at the coffin of her husband, and later her first-born son. Extremes related to her internal life as well. Whether experiencing states of mystical rapture during her prayers, or going through times of spiritual

aridity, she always believed they were God's work resulting from His great Love towards His creation. She went through life along a path of total trust, passing on this deep faith to others – the sisters, the schoolgirls, and each of us.

Varied life experiences helped her to understand how important the role of the woman in the life of society and the family is. It is probably also these experiences which made her educational system so coherent and universal, applicable to the shaping of her students and whole generations of sisters. This system, founded on truth, had its characteristic features. Blessed Marcelina Darowska wanted her alumnae to develop deep religiousness and patriotism, which would lead them to faithfully do the duties of the station which they would come to perform during their lives. She wanted to shape thinking people, who would undertake their tasks consciously and with responsibility. She was convinced that the task of the Order was to prepare women for the family and the world. She used to repeat that a woman is not only wife, mother, and mistress of the house, but also a citizen of her motherland, and this is why she needs to be aware that everything she does should serve her country. She used to say: *Poland will be there! But only when society is reborn. This is why we need the family to be founded on God.* She connected the rebirth of society with the shaping of wise women, because it is they who raise up future generations. With her educational system, she wisely developed the ideas of patriotism and national consciousness among simple people. The schools established by her were first intended for daughters of the landed gentry (who in turn were supposed to work with the people in the future), and later, as social circumstances changed, also for girls coming from working class and intelligentsia families. Alongside these establishments, Blessed Marcelina organised elementary schools for peasant children from neighbouring villages, realising that nobody else would take care of them.

On the 50th anniversary of Marcelina Darowska's private vows, on December 23rd 1904, the Nobel prize winning Polish novelist, Henryk Sienkiewicz, wrote to her: *Honourable Lady! Before eternity calls us to account for the affairs of our lives, already here, on earth, we are judged by people, our environment, society. That your sowing, Most Reverend Mother, was God's, this is confirmed by these voices of veneration and gratitude flowing to you in the jubilee year from all corners of our ragged land. The voices are followed by the hearts of Polish children and women. You have taught them to love God and their motherland, to venerate everything which is great, noble and unhappy, so the great and unhappy nation has valued and venerated you. Let also my head bend before your achievement and pay you well-deserved homage for this work, so long and so significant for our society, so blessed in its results. Glory be to your sensible work, and reverence to your merit and goodness!*

Marcelina Darowska died in Jazłowiec, on January 5th, 1911.

The Venerable Servant of God John Paul II declared her Blessed on October 6th 1996

during a Holy Mass celebrated in St. Peter's Square in Rome. In his homily, he said: *Today, the Church rejoices, elevating to the glory of the altars Blessed Marcelina Darowska, the Co-Founder of the Order of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Throughout her entire life, Blessed Marcelina stood with God incessantly through prayer and the faithful following of Jesus Christ, who “loved man unto the end” (cf. J 13,1)*

“To spread God's Kingdom in human souls and to introduce it into the world” – this was the programme of her apostolic activity, born in the silence of her praying heart. She wanted to do everything to make truth, love and good win in people's lives and change the face of her beloved nation. She conducted the strenuous work of building Christ's Kingdom magnanimously, together with the community of her sisters, paying particular attention to the religious formation of the younger generation, especially girls, to the development of religious instruction and pastoral educational work. She ascribed to the Christian woman as “wife, mother and citizen” a particular role in the life of society. Assiduously, she cared for the development of God's Kingdom in the family, because only a family which “is founded on God” – as she used to say – could create the foundation of a new society. This new Blessed one is an example of apostolic faith which creates new forms of the presence of the Church in the world, which shapes a society which is more just and human, which “lasts and bears fruit” in Christ.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface

INTRODUCTION

- I. ON OUR AIM AND TASK
- II. ON THE FIGHT AGAINST EVIL IN THE WORLD
- III. ON VIRTUES AND THE MEANS OF SPREADING GOOD
- IV. ON SUFFERING AND LOVE

Biographical note about Mother Marcelina Darowska