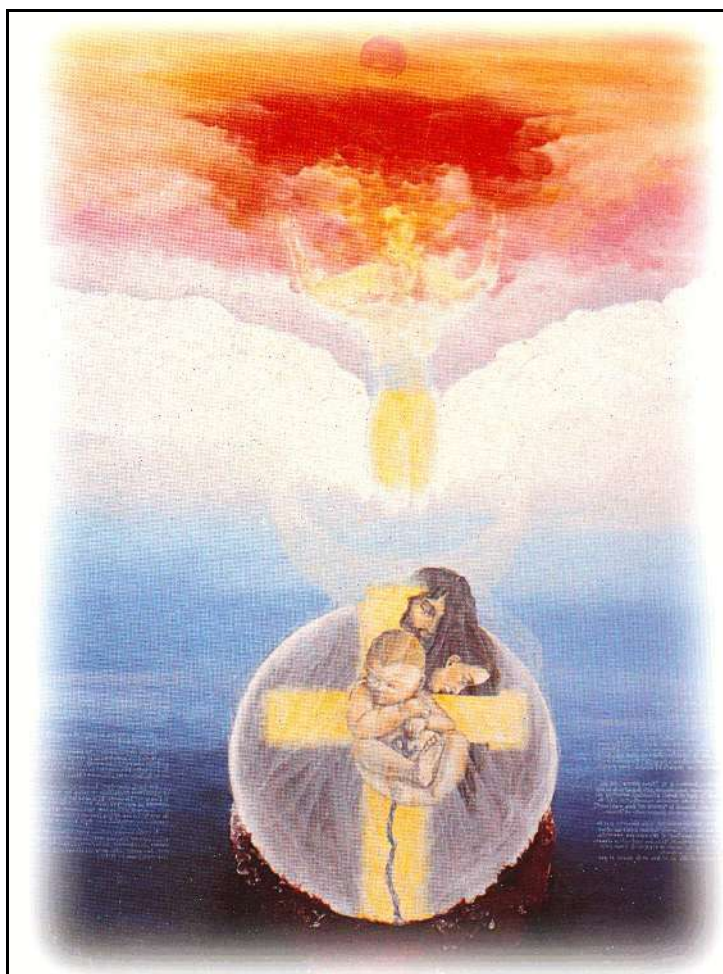




“I,” in Christ Arisen

MEANING OF THE COVER DRAWING

The drawing on the cover depicts the true path that leads to the purification and Realization of every one of us

as particles of the Human Nature, the “Total Man,” in both its Masculine and Feminine aspects.

The lower part represents man in his evolution in the womb of the Unconsciousness, in this world of Darkness, purifying himself through the cross of self-denial in order to fulfill the Will of God. As he dies to his “old man” – cutting the umbilical cord of his attachments to the world, to creatures, to self – man gives birth in himself to the new creature, the “New Man,” begotten by the Divine Mother, the Will-God.

The white cloud represents the state of consciousness of the “Nothingness,” a state of “unknowing” and helplessness through which man must necessarily pass in the process of surrendering himself totally to the All-God, his true Being; it is man’s purified state of self-emptiness that allows God to manifest Himself in him and through him.

The upper part, where we see the glorified figures of a man and a woman, represents the “New Man,” in the Unity of its Masculine and Feminine aspects. The First-fruits of the Realization of this “New Man” in its Masculine aspect is Jesus Christ Arisen, the Firstborn among the Dead, together with all those human beings prior to him who, like him, had identified themselves with the Divine Will. The Feminine aspect, which is in the process of coming to its Realization, comprises all those human beings who, after Jesus Christ, have died to their ego-centric self in order to fulfill the Divine Will. This is the Bride, the true Church. The “New Man” “in its totality is the state of the Human Nature identified with and divinized by the Activity of the Divine Nature in man – “the Christ.”

(from the back cover)

“I,”
in Christ
Arisen

introduced by
Francis Elmo

Santa Fe, New Mexico
1982

Soul of “good will”
to you
who are searching for happiness

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JOSEFINA'S ACCOUNT OF HER EXPERIENCE IN AVILA

«On the 10th of April, 1965, I was by the Lord's Will in Avila. On that night, the Saturday preceding Palm Sunday, I was very tired because of having made a long trip, and I went to bed early, before nine. At two o'clock in the morning I awoke flooded by the light of the Lord. In that light I had a clear understanding of the journey of the souls from the time of their arrival in this world, their thirst for happiness and the dangers to which they are exposing themselves seeking this happiness where it is not. Although it was a little cold and I was feeling lazy to get up to write what I had understood, I couldn't remain in bed and I had to get up to write. Between the understanding that I had had and my putting it into writing, almost two hours had elapsed, because the love of God flooded me even to the very pores of my body and my entire soul, and I could do nothing other than in each understanding to say a prayer of thanks and praise for His infinite goodness.

When I thought I had finished and was getting ready to go to sleep, I felt the presence of St. Theresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross; this was not a bodily presence that I was seeing with the eyes of my body; it was a spiritual presence but very real, and I was perceiving them with my soul, it if can be said this way. They told me – I believe it was St. John of the Cross: "It is God's Will that you write about what you have understood." Neither was this a voice that I was perceiving with my ears; it was rather an

understanding from within. I understood that he was referring to an explanation of the verses or stanzas that I had written under the light of the Lord, namely, that I should also write an explanation of them as I had understood them.»

INTRODUCTION

In our pilgrimage of return to God, we must follow a difficult and narrow way, one which gets even narrower as we approach the goal – “the yearned-for-One” – and many there are who fall by the wayside. Only someone who has really made this pilgrimage truly *knows* the way and can be a guide. But only a guide! For each one must take responsibility for making it a reality in his life.

The call, however, is universal. It is a beckoning and urging that springs from the depths of every man’s heart. It is a restlessness for God that cannot be pacified by the creaturely satisfactions of this world; it is a hunger that can only be satiated by the real Food, the Bread of Life, the Love and Will of the Divine Beloved. And how we hunger and we think there is no “food”! Or else we know not where or how to find this “manna” which will give us the true Life.

This book describes the experience of one who has made the pilgrimage in a mystical revelation, of one who has “seen” and who *knows* the way. We are invited to enter into this experience to discover some of the “markings” along the way, so as to be able to avoid some of the dangers and detours, to be warned of the many and varied temptations that the Tempter entices us with at different stages along the way. But another’s experience can only be an external guide; it is a “map” that we may use to check our experience along the way, to receive some guidance, helpful and at times necessary, in order to stay on the “straight and narrow way.”

But the real guide is the inner Guide. It is He we must

discover, for otherwise there is no beginning at all. So the first recognition is that we *need* a guide. Without this all is doomed to failure.

The Law provides us with the possibility of coming to this first recognition: we are *helpless* to free ourselves from the bondage of sin. We are not able to walk on our own, and in our blindness we will surely lose our way. So in humility we search for the guide. For some this is the *historical Jesus*, and their way is to strive to externally imitate His words and deeds. How commendable and yet how dangerous is this way! The result, so often, is either a caricature of the reality of Jesus or a tremendous discouragement, abandoning our desire to enter into communion with God, deeming it a futile hope, an unrealistic dream. But those who have had an *experience of the Spirit of the Risen Christ* know that the way is a going within, going within to surrender ourselves to this Spirit of Truth and Goodness, allowing Him to be the inner Guide who directs and empowers us from within, making a reality in us of what was realized in Jesus. He is the Guide, the “Vehicle” placed at our disposal for our journey back to the bosom of the Divine Beloved.

We are invited to surrender ourselves totally to His care and guidance, allowing Him to carry us wherever He wills, as a dry leaf blown around by the breath of His Life-giving Spirit. We plunge into Him, submerging ourselves in the Ocean of His love, letting go of our “footing” – our security and trust in ourselves and in our reason; we trust only in His guidance, keeping our eyes fixed on Him, thinking of nothing else. And He carries us through our “dark nights” of the soul, our “desert” experiences, our moments of thorns and aridities, and we keep trusting Him, knowing that He is purifying us, preparing

us to be one with the Bride who will be presented to the Bridegroom in the Wedding Feast of the “final times.”

This Guide reveals Himself to us through our *righteous conscience*, inspiring and empowering us to follow the Truth and the Good in every “moment-situation” of our lives. This righteous conscience is the echo of the Divine Nature within us, the true “voice” and “impulse” of the Holy Spirit, and it must be distinguished from the *pseudo-conscience*, the super-ego, the “false voices” assimilated and programmed into our minds, consciously and unconsciously, from our parents, society, and religious institutions with their interpretations of what is good and what is evil.

This pseudo-conscience is frequently contaminated by the suggestions and impulses of the Tempter, “the spirit of evil,” who is trying to sidetrack us along the way. But our “good will,” our sincerity and righteousness in searching for the Truth and the Good, will keep us on the right path. Many may be our mistakes, or even our falls – it doesn’t matter! Our love for the Truth and the Good, or our love for God and our desire to do His Will, keeps us going in the right direction even though there may be some detours along the way. If we desire to love God and to do His Will from the depths of our hearts, He will surely bring us to Himself.

But the way of following one’s righteous conscience is a difficult way; it is the way of the cross, the way of *self-denial*, the *true baptism into Christ Crucified* so that we might be crucified and resurrected with Him. Here courage is required, as well as the willingness to die to our ego, to die to all that is not God’s Will; to allow the sword of Divine Justice to perform the radical surgery of cutting away all our ego-attachments to self and creatures, which

keep us in the slavery of “egolatry” and idolatry; this is the price we must pay, and we must pay it freely with love. This is the way of the death to the ego, that “creative suffering” which liberates us from the greater and more tenacious “destructive suffering” created by our ego-attachments to self and creatures, and this “creative suffering” is the death that releases in us the Divine Life.

But how easy it is to abandon the *way of conscience* to follow the other way, the *way of convenience*, the “easy way out,” the way suggested to us by the Tempter so that we might pursue our ego-desires or avoid our ego-fears; it is the way of compromise, of deceit, of inauthenticity, of selfishness for the sake of our security, our pleasure, our prestige, our power, our *convenience*!

The journey, however, is a long one; so easy to go astray, or simply to get discouraged and to abandon the pilgrimage as futile, or to get stuck somewhere not knowing how to continue on. Here is needed fidelity and perseverance to go all the way to God and not to be deluded that one has finally arrived in those moments of partial realization, those “Tabor experiences.” One wants so much to think that one has already arrived when the journey gets particularly arduous and the final climb to the ultimate peak seems so far beyond one’s capacity of endurance, and so few there are who seem to have made it to the top. But the crucifixion and death of the ego takes place only on the top of the hill – Calvary – and in no other place! And if we truly want to die to our ego, to go the whole way of the cross with Jesus, we must make it to the top so that we might be crucified, and from there we will truly “see” and experience the “Promised Land.”

FRANCIS ELMO

THE THIRTEEN STANZAS

I

*Soul of “good will,” you who go with groans
seeking through other ways
the happiness you have left in your Creator.
Why do you insist on “walking” on your own
without knowing the way and the dangers
you are going to encounter?
Blind you go, not knowing
that the infinite is your happiness,
that you are “nothing”
and on your own you cannot arrive!*

II

*God has a “Vehicle”
that is at your disposal,
which is the Spirit of Truth
and only he can take you.
He is infinite Ocean
whom you will never exhaust.*

III

*Let yourself be attracted, plunge into him,
let go of your footing,
love the good and the truth,
trust, and think of nothing else,
for he himself will lead you.
Faith, love, and trust – this will suffice.*

IV

*Don't try to know him by judging his ways,
because you will never succeed.
One day he will be as an impetuous wind
that will blow you around as a little dry leaf.*

V

*Another day, as divine Eagle
by your neck he will take you with his beak
and he will carry you through the desert
where no consolations you will be able to find
and many temptations will come to you.*

VI

*Heed not the "desert"
and in the temptations be faithful to your God.*

*Love and trust, even though you have falls.
Think of the One who carries you
and he himself will lift you up.
This is the way and through this way
you have to arrive.*

VII

*If inside the belly of a whale,
like Jonah, you sometimes feel,
doubt not that this also is he,
who submersed in the sea
carries you to shore, hidden in his bosom,
so that the wild beasts cannot touch you.*

VIII

*If one day you feel like a stone, hard and cold,
and you cannot love,
he is the Rock, and he carries you in his bosom
so that the tempest may not touch you;
keep on trusting, for this is the way
and through another you will never arrive.*

IX

*If you come to feel that your passions are burning
as a bonfire you cannot quench,*

*he is the fire that wants to purify you.
Unite yourself to the Immaculate Host,
offer yourself as victim that immolates itself
on the altar of sacrifice,
because you are drawing near to your Creator.
The purer your desire to offer yourself,
the sooner the holocaust will reach Him.
Doubt not that this is the way
and you are closer than you were yesterday.*

X

*If after suffering a little
you feel flooded by a sublime joy,
doubt not that he is your rest,
and he invites you to rest.
Love, rejoice,
but do not become attached to the joy
because you still have a long way to go
where thorns and aridities will not be lacking.*

XI

*Now your Guide begins to reveal himself;
he has given you a foretaste of his joy,
but your rest lies not in the "joy,"
but in the One to whom he leads you.*

*If you linger in the taste of the joy,
forget not that you will lose your “rest”;
he invites you to keep on going,
you are free to follow him or not.*

XII

*Toward the Cross he leads you
but you yourself have to choose it
for this Cross is “death” and “Life,”
Life of God, which with the death of the “I”
you will be acquiring.
If you decide to enter into the Cross,
“to die” you must decide as well
and this has to be done freely:
your life for His Life,
as He gave his life for you
to give you the Life.*

XIII

*If you choose the Cross,
let yourself be nailed to it:
“My food is to do the Will of Him who sent me.”
Do not go sampling other “food,”
for it alone is your strength
for accepting the “death”
that will give you a new life.*

*Then you will know the One who was your way,
because in Him you will be moved,
and you will live in perfect communion
with the Father and the Son
in their same Spirit,
that Vehicle
who was your Guide.*

I

*Soul of "good will," you who go with groans
seeking through other ways
the happiness you have left in your Creator.
Why do you insist on "walking" on your own
without knowing the way and the dangers
you are going to encounter?
Blind you go, not knowing
that the Infinite is your happiness,
that you are "nothing"
and on your own you cannot arrive!*

The soul lost her happiness when she lost the light, the sense of God and of her "nothingness." This is the unconsciousness affirmed by the original sin, the spirit of darkness which man accepted when he disobeyed his Creator, accepting the temptation: «*You will be like God, knowing good and evil*» (Gn 3,5). When we say «*soul of "good will," you who go with groans,*» we are referring to the human being, descendant of Adam, who carries in himself the Divine Nature in his fallen human nature, and this divine reality groans with cries of supplication because it tends towards the Being who is its Being, but the human being tends towards the *unconsciousness* of the "non-being," and in this way he drags along with him this Divine Reality which is substantially united to his human nature. This is why it is said «*seeking through other ways the happiness you have left in your Creator,*» because the human nature and the Divine Nature form an inseparable unity from the moment the Only Begotten, who is the

Divine Nature, took on the Human Nature in Adam, and the human being, due to original sin, ever since Adam, on obeying the creature and disobeying the Will of God, is naturally oriented to the human (the creature) and not to the Divine (the Creator), and on feeling within himself the “groans” of his Soul, he seeks happiness where it is not – in the human appetites – subjugating in this way his Divine Nature to the unconsciousness in which his human nature is submersed, under the domination of the tempter whom he obeyed.

Believing herself a knower of good and evil – a pride injected by the tempter – the soul seeks happiness where she thinks it can be found. The “enemy-tempter” insinuates, she accepts: happiness lies in love, in truth, in justice, in purity, in freedom, and so on. In her determination to be happy, she resolves to obtain at any cost that reality in which she hopes to find happiness. But when she believes that she possesses one of these “realities,” she realizes that she lacks another one in order to be happy. In this way she continues her frenzied race, running into ever greater difficulties, which at times lead her to despair.

She is led to despair because this is the objective of the “tempter” when suggesting, not a lie, but a part of the truth: happiness lies in love, in truth, in justice, in purity, or in freedom. The truth is that all these realities are in God and in Him lies the happiness.

The “spirit of evil” takes advantage of this search in order to feed her conceit and egotism – her pride! And man, instead of getting closer to his objective – the happiness which is in God – is moving away from God through sin. He pursues love and falls into lust, pursues truth and falls into anger, pursues justice and falls into cruelty, pursues purity and falls into scrupulosity and

puritanism, pursues freedom and falls into the slavery of his disordered passions.

The soul (human being) is blind under the shadow of her participation in the “spirit of darkness”; this is why she doesn’t “know” her Divine Reality, God, her Being, nor does she “recognize” her own helplessness, her “nothingness.”

And let no one believe that he is not blind and that he already “knows” just because he has, through his studies, a book-knowledge of God and of the soul. For the “knowledge” that opens the “eyes of the soul” and gives the light, enters not from “outside” but emerges from “within,” as a consequence of a righteous life, directed by one’s conscience, as will be explained further on.

The more certain the soul is of her knowledge, the denser is the darkness that covers her, the blinder she is.

To the extent that the human being is purifying himself from his egotism, he is “opening his eyes,” allowing the light to enter him, and he goes on realizing that he “knows” less and less and when he identifies with the light, he knows that he doesn’t “know,” he realizes he knows nothing, then he “knows” what he is: “nothing.”

And about this St. John of the Cross says:

*«He who truly gets there
all his trust in self collapses;
what he knew at first,
now appears very lowly;
and his knowledge grows so much,
that he is left knowing nothing,
having transcended all knowledge.»*

The soul of light (the human being enlightened by the Divine light) never makes a *definitive* judgment of good

and evil, or of the behavior of other souls, because she knows that only God sees the line that separates the good from the evil, and the human being is judged by Him according to his righteousness and intention. The most she can do is to form for herself a simple opinion in a general sense.

II

God has a "Vehicle"'
that is at your disposal,
which is the Spirit of Truth
and only he can take you.

He is infinite Ocean
whom you will never exhaust.

God has a "Vehicle" to lead the soul (human being) in her return to that lost happiness. This "Vehicle" is the participation in the Spirit of Truth, "spirit of light," the Good, which, together with that participation in the "spirit of error," "spirit of darkness," the Evil, we receive at birth, because of divine justice, after the original sin: «*You gave them your good spirit, to teach them...* » (Neh 9,20). Because of His infinite justice and goodness, since the human being is under the veils of the *unconsciousness*, God places in the soul this "Vehicle" at her disposal, which is the "spirit of light" that will lead her to Him, just as the "spirit of darkness" placed his own vehicle in her to attract her to himself through God's Permission, due to man's acceptance in Paradise. It depends on the soul's freedom as to whether she takes the one or the other vehicle.

He is infinite Ocean whom you will never exhaust; this "spirit of Light" acts in identification with the Holy Spirit, the very same spirit of Jesus – inexhaustible Ocean! This is why he can lead her to her Creator when the human being follows that impulse, "force" or "voice" of the "Good," which manifests itself by means of her con-

science:

«The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way for the Lord, make his paths straight” »

(Lk 3,4).

III

*Let yourself be attracted, plunge into him,
let go of your footing,
love the good and the truth,
trust, and think of nothing else,
for he himself will lead you.
Faith, love, and trust – this will suffice!*

The soul lets herself be attracted by the “spirit of the good” by obeying the voice of her conscience.

She plunges into him and lets go of her footing when she doesn’t reason things out seeking her “convenience,” but rather, loving the truth and the good, she follows the voice of her *conscience*, trusts it and thinks of nothing else. «... *Everything that is not according to conscience is a sin,*» says the letter to the Romans (Rom 14:23).

She doesn’t think about whether what she does will turn out good or bad, better or worse, or whether it will make her happy or make her suffer....

This and no other is the “*following*” that the Lord refers to; this is the one that gives the human soul the “light of life.”

And St. Theresa is right in what she says in these verses about the soul searching for God:

*«And if perchance you know not
where to find Me,
don’t go looking here and there,
but if you want to find Me,
you must search for Me within you.»*

IV

*Don't try to know him by judging his ways,
because you will never succeed.*

*One day he will be as an impetuous wind
that will blow you around as a little dry leaf.*

Let not the soul try to judge the ways of the “spirit” who moves her through her conscience, because she will never succeed.

If what she did impelled by the “voice” turns out to be bad—it doesn’t matter! The important thing must be her fidelity to the “Good” and the “Truth,” and this is how she saw it in that moment. Let her consider it as appropriate for her own good, and let her keep trusting the voice of her conscience. The contrary—to act out of “convenience”—is to leave the “Vehicle of good” to take the “vehicle of evil.”

One day he will be as an impetuous wind that will blow you around as a little dry leaf: that voice impels her to great endeavors, it doesn’t matter what they might be if for the soul it is the “voice of conscience,” the Good and the Truth. He has started blowing her around as a little dry leaf—let her allow herself to be carried! Today it tells her to go throughout the world getting to know many things—all over the world she goes. And I say “*over* the world she goes,” because being that she’s following the voice of her conscience, the “world” cannot touch her.

Tomorrow the “voice” impels her to great enterprises...or it tells her to make “little paper castles,” to lead and govern or to submit and obey, to remain in “seclu-

sion” or to “go for an outing”—let her do it all just as the “voice” says. But let the soul beware of getting attached to any of these things, leaving her “conscience” for the sake of the given thing. It is very dangerous to stop on the way and to allow the “Vehicle” to continue on. When she remains on foot, the other “vehicle” will take her through the way of evil.

Let the soul not forget that on her own she cannot move and that one of the two vehicles has to take her. It is like someone who is traveling in a plane that is taking her in one direction and on one of her stopovers she remains on land and misses her plane. She will have to take the other plane, and this one will take her in the opposite direction.

Let the soul not forget that she must act with a great deal of purity and righteousness. Let her not try to deceive her conscience, for she will only be deceiving herself. She will never be able to deceive the “voice” of the Spirit, and at the slightest attempt to deceive it, because of divine justice, the “other” vehicle will come, for this is the one who tells her that she can deceive her conscience, so that he might be the one to move her instead of the Spirit, taking her to “Evil” for having left the “good.”

As soon as the soul realizes that she is in error, because the “voice” tells her that what she is following is not the truth and the good, let her acknowledge her error and let her leave it to follow the truth and the good that the “voice” now reveals to her; no matter what it may cost her, let her be faithful to her “voice.” Consider St. Paul. What righteousness this man must have had in his persecution of the Christians, that the truth in person, Christ, goes out to meet him and takes him out of his error! Paul doesn’t think about the consequences that this change in direction could bring about for him; the important thing

for him is not the direction he is going in, but the “vehicle” that takes him, his *conscience*, and he follows it without hesitation. In the Acts of the Apostles he says in his defense before the Sanhedrin: *«My brothers, to this day I have conducted myself before God with a perfectly clear conscience »* (Acts 23,1).

And many examples like that of St. Paul may be cited from among the saints: we have Levi, the publican of the Gospel, whose “vehicle” takes him from tax collector to Apostle of the Lord, Matthew the Evangelist.

St. Augustine went around in circles many times in the same “vehicle” in order to arrive at the direction that would take him to his eternal happiness.

And I dare say that Magdalene was a sinner with righteousness of conscience. Those sins did not get to stain her heart, *«because she had loved much»*; love for her was the truth and the good. Otherwise Jesus would not have pronounced those words in her absolution: *«much has been forgiven her, because she has loved much»* (cf. Lk 7,47). If her love has been capable of “justifying” her sin, it is because in this love there has been a purity. This is why the true Love goes out to meet her, and she recognized Him and followed Him to the Cross forever, which is proof of the fact that she was using the “vehicle” of the good and not the other one, which would have taken her to the darkness and not to the Light.

I don’t mean to say that what Magdalene, Augustine or Paul did was “good,” but that for them it wasn’t wrong because they didn’t see “evil” in what they were doing. Neither do I mean to say that those things were suggested to them by the spirit of the good, but that many times, for the sake of divine justice, God *permits* the soul to listen to the voice of evil without her realizing that it is the “Evil,”

and she attributes it to the “Good.” This, of course, is very subtle and depends on the purity and righteousness of the soul, about which she will render an account to God.

Martha was seeing evil in her sister’s deeds; she did well to reproach her. St. Augustine’s mother was seeing that her son was following the way of error; she did well in showing him the way of truth as she was seeing it. The spirit of the good acts in each soul according to the designs of the Divine Will, designs that depend on the degree of evolution attained by each soul, and he directs them according to the mission they must fulfill in God’s plan. This is why I say that we cannot and must not judge his ways, but each soul must be faithful to her conscience, which is the good and the truth that she sees.

Abraham, induced by the voice of evil—for God doesn’t test in this way—went to sacrifice his son Isaac, because for him it was a command of Yahweh, God. The “Evil One” suggests it to him with one purpose in mind: to exterminate him in whom God had made the promise to multiply Abraham’s generations and to create for Himself a people. Abraham responds by obeying God; his faith in the One he follows is above everything else. God *permits* the temptation because it was *necessary*, in His most perfect Justice, that he through whom the promise was to be fulfilled, *«you shall all the nations be blessed,»* be confirmed in faith by obedience, so that *«the blessing bestowed on Abraham might descend on the Gentiles.»* This was the door opened *by men* through which God’s Holy Spirit would introduce Himself; just as it was through the disobedience of Adam that the “curse,” the sin, descended on humanity, “the nations,” and the door was opened through which the “evil spirit” introduced himself into the immortal soul, the human nature. For this

reason, it is faith that opens the doors to the Holy Spirit in each particular soul, just as the faith of Abraham opened the door for all humanity, “the nations.”

And St. Paul says in his epistle to the Galatians: *«How did you receive the Spirit? Was it through observance of the law or through faith in what you heard?... Consider the case of Abraham: he “believed God, and it was credited to him as justice.” This means that those who are born of faith are sons of Abraham. Because Scripture saw in advance that GOD’S WAY OF JUSTIFYING THE GENTILES WOULD BE THROUGH FAITH, it foretold this good news to Abraham: “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” Thus it is that all who are born of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.*

All who depend on observance of the law, on the other hand are under a curse. It is written, “Cursed is he who does not abide by everything written in the book of the law and carry it out.” It should be obvious that no one is justified in God’s sight by the law, for “the just man shall live by faith.” But the law does not depend on faith. Its terms are: “WHOEVER DOES THESE THINGS SHALL LIVE BY THEM.”» (Gal 3,2-12).

St. Paul says in his epistle to the Romans: *«Israel who pursued the righteousness that is based on law did not succeed in fulfilling that law. Why? Because THEY DID NOT PURSUE IT THROUGH THE WAY OF FAITH, BUT AS IF IT WERE BASED ON WORKS » (Rom 9, 31-32).*

«Christ has delivered us from the power of the law’s curse by himself becoming a curse for us, as it is written: “Accursed is anyone who is hanged on a tree.” This has happened so that through Christ Jesus the blessing bestowed on Abraham might descend on the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, thereby making it possible for us to receive

the promised Spirit through faith » (Gal 3,13-14).

After this all comments are superfluous. St. Paul has spoken to us very clearly: it is faith that gives life to the works, and these works manifest the faith. Every work done under the impetus of faith will *certainly* reach God. But the works impelled by our knowledge can remain along the way or can end up in the granaries of the “enemy.” however good and “holy” they may seem to be. We will have many surprises on the day of judgment –of the “judgment” we have made of “good” and “evil.”

V

*Another day, as divine Eagle
by your neck he will take you with his beak
and he will carry you through the desert
where no consolations you will be able to find
and many temptations will come to you.*

As divine Eagle by your neck he will take you with his beak: because without realizing the when and how of it, the soul will find herself involved in situations that she did not choose. I say that *by your neck he will take you with his beak*, because it will be like a forced position in which the soul will find no rest or consolation, and it will be like the barren ground of the desert. Then all kinds of temptations will assail her, for the other “vehicle” takes advantage of the situation to see if the soul, leaving the “Eagle,” the voice of her conscience, in order to free herself from the forced position, falls into his open jaws, seeking her “convenience.”

Let the soul understand that she is in a time of testing, and her prompt release from that position depends on her patience, trust, and resignation. Let her recall David being persecuted by Saul: having acted righteously, David found himself in that kind of situation. And more than once he had within his reach his persecutor Saul, being able to kill him, thereby liberating himself from that situation; yet he remains faithful to his conscience, and the “Evil One,” who was hoping to profit from that persecution, finds himself frustrated, while David receives his reward from God (1 Sm 24; 26).

Joseph was sold by his own brothers, being hated by them for no reason. Yet nothing could make him deviate from his righteousness. All the attempts of the “enemy” are useless: faced with the temptation of Potiphar’s wife, Joseph, conscious of the situation, responds by remaining faithful to Him who is above everything and everyone: *«How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?»* (Gn 39,9). And when he reveals his identity to his brothers, before the fear of these who were expecting from him a “just vengeance,” he eases their fears, saying to them: *«But now do not be distressed, and do not reproach yourselves for having sold me here. It was really for the sake of saving lives that God sent me here ahead of you... God, therefore, sent me on ahead of you to ensure for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives in an extraordinary deliverance. So it was not really you but God who had me come here »* (Gn 45,5-8).

Joseph doesn’t detain himself on the “way” –the “means” that God used to get him there; he continues on steadfastly, nailed to the “Vehicle” that is taking him; he doesn’t heed the barrenness or the dangers he experienced in the “desert,” because remaining in his “Vehicle,” his righteous conscience, he has no reason to give them any importance. Neither does he judge the behavior of those who, carried away by their envy, sold him; that is their affair before God. He does what in conscience he believes he ought to do: to receive them and to protect them.

This is how souls arrive victoriously at the end of their race, and as a prize they receive a crown they did not covet and an eternal happiness they were not concerned about.

VI

*Heed not the “desert”
and in the temptations be faithful to your God.
Love and trust, even though you have falls.
Think of the One who carries you
and he himself will lift you up.
This is the way and through this way
you have to arrive.*

Heed not the “desert”: let the soul not analyze her situation trying to discover why and how it came to be this way. If she has been faithful to her conscience, she has nothing to fear.

And in the temptations be faithful to your God: let her be faithful to the voice of her conscience, trying to perceive it at each moment, and let her follow it, even though the situation worsens—as David did when pardoning the life of his persecutor Saul. The important thing for the soul must be her fidelity to the good and the truth, acting always according to “conscience,” never out of “convenience.” Let her understand that it is there, in the “convenience,” where lies the danger of deviating from the path that will take her to the true and only eternal happiness.

Love and trust, even though you have falls. Think of the One who carries you and he himself will lift you up: if in spite of her intention to follow the good according to her conscience, the passion of the moment makes her fall in the temptation— *no matter what her fall may be—in the*

very moment that she sees the evil, let her make amends for her fault with a deep heartfelt sorrow. Let her trust the voice of her conscience, loving only the truth and the good, for it will show her what she must do and it will lift her up.

No matter how hard it seems to the soul—that reparation demanded by her conscience, the spirit of the good—*let her obey immediately, without delay*; let not one moment go by. Let her not give darkness the time to invade her, because then she will not be able to see the “evil” and she will continue falling into it.

Once again, let her take David as an example: his sin of having taken the census of the people he was ruling «provokes the wrath of God,» and he doesn’t look to evade the reparation but rather assumes responsibility for it: «*It is I who have sinned; it is I, the shepherd, who have done wrong. But these are sheep; what have they done? Punish me and my kindred.*”...and he offered holocausts and peace offerings » (II Sm 24,17.25; I Chr 21, 17.26).

His other horrible sin could not have been worse (II Sm 11)! Nevertheless, it does not separate him from God, because in his humiliation he draws closer to Him:

*«Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness;
in the greatness of your compassion
wipe out my offense.*

*Thoroughly wash me from my guilt
and of my sin cleanse me.*

*For I acknowledge my offense,
and my sin is before me always....*

*Behold, you are pleased with sincerity of heart,
and in my inmost being you teach me wisdom.*

Cleanse me of sin with hyssop,

*that I may be purified; wash me,
and I shall be whiter than snow....
A clean heart create for me, O God,
and a steadfast spirit renew within me.
Cast me not out from your presence,
and your holy spirit take not from me»*

(Ps 51, 3-13).

All of Psalm 51 is a cry that arises out of the dust of the earth and reaches the abode and heart of the Almighty God, who gives “wings” to the “vile worm” so that he may soar up to Him, never to return to crawl in the mire of sin.

The centurion, as he appears in the Gospel, also acknowledges his sins, confessing to the Lord that he is not worthy that He should enter his house, but his faith exceeds his faults and he is granted what he requests (Mt. 8,5-13).

Had Judas not acted out of “convenience,” he never would have ended up the way he did. For the sin out of “convenience” in a person who has already received the “light” leads to despair; in him there is no room for trust. Whom is he going to trust if he acted impelled by his egotism, moved by the spirit of evil? His feet were planted in the “I” (ego), the “body of sin” (Rom 6,6). It can be said that the “voice” of evil is the “I” (ego); every time we act out of our own convenience, we are embarked in the “vehicle” of evil, which leads us to ourselves so that we might lose sight of the other “Vehicle,” the conscience, which takes us to God. And in the moment that the soul recognizes the evil, she finds herself alone in the sea of despair and is left with no other alternative but to remain in the Evil. This is the eternal despair of the condemned soul.

And she herself started it all by believing herself capable of walking on her own, capable of knowing “good” and “evil.” Pride and egotism were her poison. The “tempter” receives the fruit of that temptation: «You will be like God, knowing good and evil» (Gn 3,5). The soul received the seed and cooperated in its growth, she herself becoming the fruit of the tree she cared for, and she falls into the hands of him who planted it: Satan.

No one consciously chooses evil as such; when one consents to it, it is because it represents a personal convenience—even though to all appearances it may not seem as if one has acted out of egotism. In every “convenience” there is nailed the banner of the “I” (ego), and this is very subtle in some cases. Whoever believes himself capable of distinguishing what is “most convenient,” is he not coming from his own knowledge, from a trust in himself?

And here it is fitting to ask, as the disciples asked Jesus: «Who, then, can be saved?...» «THIS IS A HARD SAYING. » «For man, it is impossible; but for God all things are possible » (Mt 19,25-26; Jn 6,60).

To the one who decides for the “Vehicle” of the good, God will give him the grace so that he may remain in it.

«This is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith » (1 Jn 5,4).

VII

*If inside the belly of a whale,
like Jonah, you sometimes feel,
doubt not that this also is he,
who submersed in the sea
carries you to shore, hidden in his bosom,
so that the wild beasts cannot touch you.*

If inside the belly of a whale, like Jonah, you sometimes feel: the soul feels herself oppressed from all sides, from within and from without—all is darkness. It seems that her conscience doesn't know how to direct her any longer, because she doesn't see that it is leading her anywhere and it only tells her that she must wait. And it seems to the soul that she can no longer endure such a life. She desires death and to her conscience this desire seems wrong, but she, the soul, cannot desire anything else, because for her this kind of life is no life at all and neither is it death. It is a horrible never-ending agony. And in her sorrow this song springs from her lips:

*«This kind of life is no life,
it is agony! My body walks, my face laughs,
but this soul of mine is pining away.»*

Oh, if the soul only knew the good that she will derive from this critical moment, she would see in her agony the dawn of her desired happiness! But she can see nothing, because in a hidden manner, she is carried by that spirit, who is her “light,” so that the dangers of life may not be able to attract her and he may carry her to the “land” of

purification. For she is still on the path of preparation.

The saintly Job, going through this path, left us a great example in these verses:

*«Perish the day on which I was born,
the night when they said, “The child is a boy!”
May that day be darkness:
let not God above call for it,
nor light shine upon it» (Jb 3,3-4).*

This is how Job was lamenting during his days of testing. And later on, when at last he came to “see,” speaking with Yahweh, he said:

*«I know that you can do all things,
and that no purpose of yours can be hindered.
I have dealt with great things
that I do not understand;
things too wonderful for me,
which I cannot know.
I had heard of you by word of mouth,
but now my eye has seen you.
Therefore I disown what I have said,
and repent in dust and ashes» (Jb 42,2-6)*

And St. Theresa of Jesus, like all the saints, going through the same path, says:

*«Bring to an end, O Lord,
such a long agony;
come to the aid of thy servant
who longs for you.
Break these shackles
and I will be happy!
Anxious to see you
I want to die.
But no, beloved Master,*

*it is just that I suffer,
that I atone for my mistakes,
my countless faults...»*

This is how the souls feel and express themselves who have some knowledge of God, and I say “some knowledge,” because the true “knowing” comes only after the purification of the soul (human nature), when she enters into the Crucified; because what she is going through now is only a “preparation” for entering into Him and for being purified. This could be called purification of the senses or obscurity of the senses, because it is as if the good spirit, who directs the soul, hides himself and he takes away from her all light or enjoyment of the senses to train or prepare her to go deeper “within” where she will be purified so that he may direct her from her “innermost center,” because up to now he has directed her from the zone of the senses.

The duration of this darkness depends on the soul’s fidelity, a darkness which can last a very long time if the soul insists on “seeing” and on “walking,” when she should let herself be carried “blindly,” even though it seems as if no one is carrying her. If she is patient and submits herself to the action of the Invisible One, it is in this very obscure faith that she profits the most, and she can very quickly come out to the light.

It’s like someone who, going through a very dark tunnel where she doesn’t see the entrance or the exit, becomes desperate and starts going around in circles. In her desperation she can remain there, and she can even be driven to insanity since, wanting to move on her own, the “Vehicle” of the good who carries her cannot move her, and for the sake of justice, because of the soul’s free will, the other “vehicle”—the one of evil – distracts her, spinning her

around in circles so that she won't be able to come out of there and, in her despair, he can take possession of her totally.

Oh, how much patience, trust, and surrender is needed in this critical moment! And how quickly the souls come out of it who come to understand this and surrender themselves with blind faith to the "Invisible One" who leads them.

Many souls go through this darkness without being aware of it, being involved in the world, without any knowledge of God, being led by their righteousness of conscience. But after they know something about God and His saints, they set out to imitate these saints, and what they do is to leave the "Vehicle," leaving the Saint to make themselves "saints." And they take the other "vehicle" who carries them in the direction of themselves, for they have acted out of convenience," even though it be a holy convenience: a desire "to make themselves holy." How much time is lost on leaving the ONLY ONE who can make them holy!

Oh, how many souls – the vast majority – fall into this error! Purgatory is full of them and how many have arrived even to hell!

Oh soul, you who want to become holy, don't think about your own holiness but about the Saint of saints! Lose yourself in Him, sending your "I" (ego) to hell, for your "I" (ego) is your worst enemy. A thought, a look in that direction ought to be the greatest sin that you must avoid. Make war on your "I" (ego) in order that "you" may live! Because the true I of your soul always tends to God alone, of whom she is image and likeness.

VIII

*If one day you feel like a stone, hard and cold,
and you cannot love,
he is the Rock, and he carries you in his bosom
so that the tempest may not touch you;
keep on trusting, for this is the way
and through another you will never arrive.*

It seems to the soul that the past sufferings have hardened her heart. She feels like a stone, hard and cold – nothing moves her to compassion. Neither do the beautiful things of life inspire in her a sense of wonder as they once did.

The fact is that the spirit of light who leads her prepares her heart so that God may rest in it; this is why he takes away from her those very sentiments that he himself gave her. He is the Rock of her protection, who, by making her undergo many dangers, frees her from becoming attached to a false love, which would leave her in the creatures without reaching the Creator.

Let the soul not lose her trust because she is coming to the end of her “preparation,” and her Guide makes her ready to present her to the Crucified in whom she will be purified.

This is as far as the soul can get who has not renounced herself, that is to say, her “ego”; therefore she has not received the baptism of the Spirit, because she has not taken the leap to the renunciation, the self-denial, making the “baptism of penance” a reality in herself, baptism

which is “precursor” of the baptism of the Spirit. Because, as we have said before, the spirit who moves her acts from the zone of the senses, purifying them. The baptism of penance, baptism of water, was proclaimed by John the Baptist, the precursor of Jesus. The baptism of the Spirit was what the apostles received at Pentecost.

And I say that this is as far as the soul can get who has not received the baptism – the self-denial – because for the total purification of the soul the “grace of Redemption” is needed, so that the Holy Spirit can take her to her “innermost center,” her Divine Nature, and from there purify her with the fire of His Spirit. The cooperation of the soul consists in letting herself be guided freely by the spirit of light, the good, obeying His “voice”; in this way she opens the doors to the Holy Spirit, who having come to act within her through this baptism of self-denial, is able to purify her from within, because she receives her inspirations from the dwelling place of the Holy Trinity, her Divine Nature, and not from the zone of the senses, her human nature, and in this way the spirit of darkness goes on losing his action over her.

We see, then, that in order for the soul to enter into the purification that will give her a “new life,” she needs the grace merited by Christ: denial of the purely human sentiments. This is a consequence of her Divine Nature, for this “new life” is precisely the life of grace, that which will reveal to her that image and likeness of God with which she was created. But this purification does not take place if the soul does not cooperate with the grace received, communicating with the Life. This communication with the Divine Life will be increasing in the measure of her response. This is why the soul who has made a practice of following the “voice” of the spirit of light, her

righteous conscience, cooperates without being aware of it with the grace promised her in sacramental baptism, image of the true “baptism” that consists in the denying of oneself. Before the coming of Christ, the souls (human beings) could get only as far as the purification of the senses; this would be the perfect state of those faithful souls of the Old Testament who, in their righteous conscience, followed the Spirit of Jesus. And those who were so disposed were the ones who recognized the Son of God, as St. John says:

*«He was in the world,
and through him the world was made,
yet the world did not know who he was.
To his own he came,
yet his own did not accept him.
Any who did accept him
he empowered to become children of God»*
(Jn 1,10-12).

«He was in the world,» because the WORD of God, the Only Begotten, from whom proceeds the Spirit of the “Good,” has always been in the world, enlightening all the souls, *«and through him the world was made.»* *«You were patient with them for many years, BEARING WITNESS AGAINST THEM THROUGH YOUR SPIRIT, by means of your prophets; still they would not listen. Thus you delivered them over into the power of the peoples of the lands [the “peoples of the lands” represented the angels of the Permission of God]. Yet in your great mercy you did not completely destroy them and you did not forsake them, for you are a kind and merciful God »* (Neh 9,30-31).

«To his own he came»: the WORD, the Only Begotten, came in the person of Jesus to his “own,” because He was in everyone, but those who did not follow their “voice,”

that is to say, did not act with righteousness of conscience, were oriented to their “ego,” their convenience, full of darkness and they *«did not accept him.»* *«Any who did accept him,»* those who renouncing their “ego,” acting according to their conscience, belonged to the light, and *«he empowered to become children of God»* – here we see God’s most perfect justice with respect to the soul’s free choice – and to these Jesus says: *«I will ask the Father and he will give you another Paraclete – to be with you always: the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, since it neither sees him nor recognizes him; but you can recognize him because he remains with you and will be within you»* (Jn 14,16-17).

Jesus promises them a greater participation in the spirit of the Good, the Holy Spirit, whom the apostles received on Pentecost day, because having been faithful to their “voice,” they opened the doors to Him.

«Truly I say to you, that you who have followed me, in the REGENERATION when the Son of man will sit on his glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel» (Mt 19,28).

For this reason also the Holy Spirit sent Peter to the house of the centurion Cornelius, because Cornelius was acting with righteousness of conscience, and after the Gospel was preached to him, he received the Holy Spirit and was baptized: *«Peter proceeded to address them in these words: “I begin to see how true it is that God shows no partiality. Rather, the man of any nation who fears God and acts uprightly is acceptable to him”»* (Acts 10,34).

But many souls who are simply baptized sacramentally stop here at this stage of the purification of the senses or do not even arrive at this stage because taking the way of

“convenience,” they do not remain in the “Vehicle” of the good, even though at times they may take it; or they stop at this stage because, leaving the “Vehicle,” the Rock, they do not arrive at the purification in Jesus Christ Crucified, but only remain with the “vision” of Jesus the Teacher. They make themselves teachers and doctors; they consider themselves capable of reforming the world and of converting the nations, of evangelizing, of opening the eyes of the blind, healing the lepers, resurrecting the dead, and so on. They give praise to Jesus as the people did on that first Palm Sunday, making Him king of the “world” in which they live. With their lips they acclaim Him and in their hearts they prepare to betray Him. And in their prayers, lacking the Spirit of Jesus, the “Vehicle” they have left, they ask God for the other “vehicle,” because in their hearts they have turned back to the point of their departure:

«And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, saying to Aaron, “Make for us gods to go before us; as for this Moses who led us out from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.”»

And St. Stephen continues his speech in the Acts of the Apostles, saying: *«And they made a calf in those days, and offered a sacrifice to the idol and rejoiced in the works of their hands. But God turned and gave them over to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets:*

“Did you offer to me slain beasts and sacrifices, forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? And you took up the tent of Moloch, and the star of the god Rephan, the figures which you made to worship; and I will remove you beyond Babylon”» (Acts 7,39-43).

The soul, fleeing from the purification in Jesus Christ

Crucified, remains in what she perceives through the senses – the things of this “world.” Because the apostolic life of Jesus was “shown” to her, she remains in that “contemplation” and believes she is with Jesus. *«The Son of man is going his way [out of the “world,” denying Himself] appointed for him in the Scriptures»* (Mt 26,24). But she, the soul, has remained in herself, the “world.” And she does not come to know God and to adore Him in spirit and in truth. Then she makes for herself images of the God that she has imagined according to the “world” in which she lives, as well as images of all the saints and angels: *«But God turned and gave them over to worship the host of heaven»*; the *«host of heaven»* are the angels of the Permission, who rule the world.

Having been delivered over by God *«to worship the host of heaven,»* the soul also receives from them the knowledge of the Law of God, *«through the ministry of angels,»* as St. Paul says (Gal 3,19; Acts 7,53). And she does not identify herself with the Spirit of God who, by purifying her, would enable her to receive the things of God in all their purity, making them her life. And inasmuch as she is not a “living” temple of God, even though God dwells in her, she is then a “dead” temple of the living God, because having the Life in her, she does not communicate with the Life. And she makes for herself material temples of earth and sand, brick and stones in order to adore her “gods.”

And St. Stephen says: *«Yet the Most High does not dwell in buildings made by human hands, for as the prophet says:*

*“The heavens are my throne,
the earth is my footstool;
What kind of house can you build me?
asks the Lord.*

*What is my resting-place to be like?
Did not my hand make all these things?"»*
(Acts 7,48-50)

The soul created by God in His "image and likeness" is the house He wants, and the pure heart for His «*resting-place.*» Until God can "rest" in our hearts, we will not enter into «*His rest.*» And it is St. Paul who urgently invites us to this "rest" in his letter to the Hebrews:

«It is we who have believed who enter into that rest, just as God said:

"Thus I swore in my anger. They shall never enter into my rest." Yet God's work was finished when he created the world, for in reference to the seventh day Scripture somewhere says, "And God rested from all his work on the seventh day," and again, in the place we have referred to, God says, "They shall never enter into my rest." Therefore, since it remains for some to enter, and those to whom it was first announced did not because of unbelief, God once more set a day, "today," when long afterward he spoke through David the words we have quoted:

*"TODAY, IF YOU SHOULD HEAR HIS VOICE,
HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS."*

Now if Joshua had led them into the place of rest, God would not have spoken afterward of another day. Therefore a sabbath rest still remains for the people of God And he who enters into God's rest, rests from his own work as God did from his. Let us strive to enter into that rest, so that no one may fall, in imitation of the example of Israel's unbelief.

Indeed, God's word is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword. It penetrates and divides soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the reflections and

thoughts of the heart. Nothing is concealed from him; all lies bare and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must render an account» (Heb 4,3-13).

But the soul who does not act with righteousness of conscience feels imprisoned by a false fear of God. And fleeing from that *«two-edged sword that penetrates and divides soul and spirit,»* which is the voice of her conscience, she also in her heart tells other men what the rebellious people told Moses: *«You speak to us, and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we shall die» (Ex 20,19).*

Because of not having followed her conscience, she fears it and tries to drown out her “voice” with other voices from the outside. And she ends up asking for someone to lead and govern her, as the Hebrew people asked for a king to govern them and God gave them Saul who enslaved them.

In this way also the soul receives what she deserves for having rejected the “voice” of the spirit of the Good, her conscience, and she becomes a slave of the opinions of other men.

«But their request for a king to govern them displeased Samuel, and he prayed to the Lord. The Lord answered Samuel, “Listen to the people and all that they are saying; they have not rejected you, it is I whom they have rejected, I whom they will not have to be their king. They are now doing to you just what they have done to me since I brought them up from Egypt: they have forsaken me and worshipped other gods. Hear what they have to say now, but give them a solemn warning and tell them what sort of king will govern them”» (I Sm 8,6-9).

And the Lord says through the mouth of the prophet

Isaiah:

«I was ready to respond to those who asked me not, to be found by those who sought me not. I said: Here I am! Here I am!

To a nation that did not call upon my name. I have stretched out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, Who walk in evil paths and follow their own thoughts...» (Is. 65,1-2). I do not say that the soul ought not consult about her doubts of conscience with those whom she believes can help to orient her, but this must be done within her righteous conscience. The same “voice” will guide her to whomever she should consult. And after having consulted, she must assume responsibility for the advice she has accepted.

IX

*If you come to feel that your passions are burning
as a bonfire you cannot quench,
he is the fire that wants to purify you.
Unite yourself to the Immaculate Host,
offer yourself as victim that immolates itself
on the altar of sacrifice,
because you are drawing near to your Creator.
The purer your desire to offer yourself,
the sooner the holocaust will reach Him.
Doubt not that this is the way
and you are closer than you were yesterday.*

If the soul has faithfully followed the voice of her conscience and has not acted out of “convenience,” the same spirit of light and good, who has directed her by means of her conscience, takes her to the Crucified. And even though she may not consciously know Christ, yet when she feels her passions burning, which entice her to sin, with the sole sincere desire of being faithful to her conscience, following the good, the grace of baptism is put into action – self-denial – and she is united to the Immaculate Host, and the Son of God begins to offer to the Father her “sacrifice” united to His Sacrifice. Then those words of Jesus begin to be realized: «*No one comes to the Father but through me*» (Jn 14,6).

It is Christ, in Christ in whom the soul prepares herself to receive the Consoler, a greater participation in the Holy

Spirit, who will begin to purify her in order to present her to the Father. And it is the Father who introduces her into the Cross of the Redeemer, and with Christ and in Christ she is redeemed, liberated from herself, which is the same as to put to “death” the “old man,” body of sin, so that the “new man,” may be born, “clothed” in grace, in the Body of Christ. At the same time the soul cooperates by attracting other souls to the Redemption: as she is “stripping” herself of the “old man,” she is at the same time “clothing” herself in Christ, which is like saying that she is passing from “death” to Life, and this Life is communicated to other members of the Mystical Body.

The purer the *desire* to remain faithful to her conscience, sacrificing the appetites of her disordered passions, the sooner these passions will be set in order and the soul purified.

If the preaching of the Gospel has not yet “reached” this soul, even though she is baptized, she lacks the intellectual knowledge of it. but possesses it spiritually. Any contact with the Gospel from the outside will inflame her heart, for on “hearing” Christ preached, she recognizes in Him the One who has guided her by means of her conscience.

This soul is closer to God than any theologian who has had a knowledge of the Gospel from the outside and has not penetrated within it because in his life he has not followed the “voice” of his conscience, the spirit of Jesus – even though he may practice the “faith,” receive the sacraments and believe himself to be deeply united to the Lord.

This is what Jesus was referring to when He told the Pharisees: *«If you were blind, there would be no sin in that. “But we see,” you say, and your sin remains»* (Jn

9,41). Because, although having been instructed in the Law, they did not fulfill it, for they did not allow themselves to be led by the Spirit, who would have taken them to its fulfillment, and at the coming of the Son of God, they remained hardened.

The Law was given to them so that they might know the sin and, by recognizing themselves as sinners and as helpless to come out of it, they might humble themselves, but they did the contrary. God was not asking them to do what they could not do. We can see in the Old Testament God's leniency with men in their excesses of the flesh because they were powerless to purify themselves, to redeem themselves from their disordered appetites. God asked of them only *humility*: that recognizing themselves as powerless to save themselves, they might recognize in Christ the Savior. But their pride hardened their hearts and closed their eyes: *«You shall indeed hear but never understand, and you shall indeed see but never perceive. For this people's heart has become hardened, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn for me to heal them»* (Mt 13,14-15). Because, as the Lord also said: *«People who are in good health do not need a doctor; sick people do.... I have come to call, not the self-righteous, but sinners»* (Mt 9,12-13).

This is an example and a call to salvation for the soul who finds herself overwhelmed by the burden of her disordered passions of the flesh and who feels helpless to fight against them and to dominate them.

When St. Paul was praying to the Lord to free him from the thorn of the flesh, the Lord answered him: *«My grace is sufficient for you»* (II Cor 12,9).

They, our Old Testament brothers, did not have the

Redemption of Christ. The “flesh” had not been purified; this is why their sins of the flesh did not have for them the consequences that these sins have for us.

After the Son of God “absorbed” our “flesh” in order to purify it, the Christian soul can do all things in Him who strengthens her.

X

*If after suffering a little
you feel flooded by a sublime joy,
doubt not that he is your rest,
and he invites you to rest.
Love, rejoice,
but do not become attached to the joy
because you still have a long way to go
where thorns and aridities will not be lacking.*

After a little suffering, which is the beginning of the purification, the “old man” was “presented” to the soul so that by knowing it, she may cooperate in its death; and through the channels opened upon contact with the Crucified, the spirit of light introduces itself as a sedative that flows through her still-bleeding wounds, and the soul feels herself flooded by a sublime joy. Her heart inflamed with love impels her into the arms of the Son of God, and in Him she forgets her past sorrows. God has dawned in her heart. The soul is shown the image of the “new creature”: Christ Arisen.

It is something similar to what happened to the Apostles: after having suffered because of the death of their Master, on seeing Him arisen, they are filled with joy and they forget their past suffering.

They, the apostles, were mourning the “old man” that was crucified, for they had not yet “opened their eyes” and they could not sense the things of God but only those of the flesh. This is why they were sad but when they were

“shown” the “new creature,” the “new man” – Christ Arisen – their sadness and sorrow were turned to joy. But it wasn’t until they received the Holy Spirit that they “opened their eyes” and their fear disappeared.

So, then, after having been shown the “old man,” the soul is shown the “new man” so that she may cooperate with joy in the “crucifixion and death” of the “old man”; *«...you are sad for a time, but I shall see you again; then your hearts will rejoice with a joy no one can take from you»* (Jn 16,22). This is what Jesus said to his apostles when He announced to them His Passion and Death. So too does He speak to the soul when He announces to her the “passion and death” of the “old man,” her “I” (ego).

The soul should take advantage of this joy to prepare herself by prayer, as the apostles did, to receive the Holy Spirit. It is the moment in which the soul ought to unite herself intimately with Christ, remaining in silence and prayer, accompanied by the Mother whom Christ Himself gave her, so that together They might prepare her to receive the Holy Spirit, and having received Him, nothing and no one will be able to take away her joy and gladness.

Many souls, on being given a foretaste of the joy that comes from the presence of the glorified Jesus – as Peter, James and John saw Him in His Transfiguration on Mount Tabor – believe themselves already in the condition of being able to preach and teach like one who has had a life-transforming experience, because they believe that they already possess Christ. And that “joy” and “gladness” of the initial impulses pass away very quickly, and they keep on deceiving themselves, believing that they live in the Cross of Christ when they no longer see the glorified Jesus, and what they are into is a cross fabricated by themselves because they did not know enough to recollect

themselves in the Cenacle and await the Holy Spirit who would teach them everything. *«Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and so your joy will be complete»* (Jn 16,24).

The soul ought not become attached to the “joy” but rather take advantage of the invitation that Spirit has offered her on presenting to her the Risen Jesus so that she might rest in His heart, uniting herself more deeply with Him through love, asking the Father in His name to send the Holy Spirit, the Consoler, so that He may *«teach her everything»* and direct her in this new path: *«But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you»* (Jn 14,26).

It is the moment in which the soul ought to make her confession of faith as Peter did: *«“Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you”»* (Jn 21,15).

Not once, but three times Peter was questioned about the same thing. And to the third question, he answers: *«Lord, you know everything. You know well that I love you»* (Jn 21,17).

The soul knows that she must be sincere, that she cannot deceive God, because He *«knows everything.»* *«“As a young man you fastened your belt and went about as you pleased; but when you are older you will stretch out your hands, and another will tie you fast and carry you off against you will” (What He said indicated the sort of death by which Peter was to glorify God.)»* (Jn 21,18-19). Just as Peter did, she will confirm by her deeds the love that she has confessed: renunciation of her own will to fulfill the Will of God. *«There is no greater love than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends»* (Jn 15,13).

Everyone who does not decide to put to death the “I” (ego), the “old man,” does not even love his own soul because he subjects it to an eternal slavery. He does not fulfill the first commandment: *You shall love the Lord your God above all things and your neighbor as yourself* (cf. Lk 10,27).

He loves all things more than God and he enslaves his neighbor as himself; as he enslaves his own soul, so he enslaves the soul of his neighbor, by giving predominance to his “old man.” And they also make themselves slaves to one another: this is the slavery to the “spirit of the world” that we are accustomed to call “societal duties” or “social obligations,” and the like.

XI

*Now your Guide begins to reveal himself;
he has given you a foretaste of his joy,
but your rest lies not in the "joy,"
but in the One to whom he leads you.
If you linger in the taste of the joy,
forget not that you will lose your "rest";
he invites you to keep on going,
you are free to follow him or not.*

As the soul unites herself to the Son through prayer which is the communication with His Spirit, the Spirit begins to manifest himself to her in a clearer way, and the soul begins to discover his action, awakening in her a true eagerness to be even more faithful to the "voice" that she was perceiving in her conscience. Now she realizes that this "voice" is the voice of the One who was "shown" to her, Jesus, and she knows where he is taking her, because she begins to recognize her Creator, and she comes to know that only in Him lies her rest.

The Spirit makes known to her the ALL and her "nothingness": the soul begins to discover her faults and sins with greater clarity, to acknowledge her powerlessness and the All-Powerfulness of God. She also realizes that the way to get to Him is not as easy as she had thought at the beginning of the joy, and that she will have to renounce many things in order to see born in her the "new creature."

Now the soul must *consciously* cooperate with the grace

that she received in the baptism of penance so that Christ may increase in her: «*He must increase, while I must decrease*» (Jn 3,30).

This is the most important moment in the spiritual life, and many souls come to a standstill here, not entering into the Cross where they would find their redemption: liberation from the “I” (ego), the death of the “old man,” and the resurrection of Christ, the “new man.”

They deceive themselves in believing that they have “tasted” the Cross of Christ in their past sufferings, when they have not yet even looked at it. And they want to live with the Risen Christ without having entered into the Cross of the Crucified.

Vain illusion! If they do not enter into the Cross in this life, they will have to enter into it in the other: through “purgatory” (state of purification) if they are in the state of salvation and it is not that they have *consciously* rejected the Redeemer, the Cross; or through hell (state of hardening), forever, if they have *consciously* chosen the “spirit of the world,” rejecting the Spirit of Jesus, which entails the Cross and the sacrifice of oneself!

This is the Gethsemane of the soul: she rejects the chalice or she accepts it. This is the same as rejecting or accepting her own redemption. For the soul is not redeemed of her sins until she *actually* participates in the Life of the Redeemer.

Jesus Christ redeemed us all, yes, because He paid to the Divine Justice the price of our ransom; we were slaves of the Evil One, and through Christ we have been liberated. With baptism we receive the grace to be cleansed from the effects of our slavery. But being free, we can once again fall into sin; these are our personal sins, those which are

forgiven us by means of the Sacraments, but we will not be purified of them until we make this change of heart a reality, that is, acknowledging our sins and resolving to change our life, we identify ourselves with Christ, our “new life.”

Our personal redemption lies open in Christ; this is the «narrow gate» through which the souls must *freely* enter if they want to enjoy the Kingdom of God. There is no other entrance. Just as Christ, the *light* of the world, the spirit of light we receive at birth, is our *way*, He is also the *gate* to get to the Father. Jesus Himself said it: *«I am the light of the world. No follower of mine shall ever walk in darkness; no, he shall possess the light of life»* (Jn 8,12). *«I am the way, and the truth, and the life»* (Jn 14,6). *«I am the Good Shepherds»* (Jn 10,11). *«I am the gate; if any one enters by me, he will be saved»* (Jn 10,9). *«Enter through the narrow gate. The gate that leads to damnation is wide, the way is clear, and many choose to travel it. But how narrow is the gate that leads to life, how rough the way, and how few there are who find it!»* (Mt 7,13-14).

And the Lord also says: *«No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him»* (Jn 6,44).

It is the Father who «draws» the soul so that she may enter into the Redeemer and be redeemed. He invites her, presenting to her the “chalice” of His Justice: the soul is free to accept it, as Jesus did, submitting herself to the Will of the Father, or to reject it, remaining in her own will, which would be to reject the Spirit of Jesus in order to choose the “spirit of the world.” It is to situate oneself openly in the “enemy’s” territory – a most dangerous situation! Only God knows the degree of responsibility the soul has in this choice and on it depends her salvation,

passing through purgatory, or her condemnation, *remaining* in hell.

Oh, if souls would only take these things seriously, how much suffering they would avoid for themselves! We contemplate the Redemption but we do not decide to “*enter*” into the Redeemer.

«IF WE HAVE DIED WITH CHRIST, we believe that we are also to live with him. We know that Christ, once raised from the dead, will never die again; death has no more power over him. His death was death to sin, once and for all; his life is life for God. In the same way, you must consider yourselves dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus (Rom 6,8-11). «For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God» (Col 3,3).

This is what it means to “*enter*” into the Redeemer: to be dead to our own will and our life to be «hidden» with Christ in the Will of the Father, consuming with gladness the chalice of His Justice.

St. Paul says in the Acts of the Apostles: *«But now, as you see, I am on my way to Jerusalem, compelled by the Spirit and not knowing what will happen to me there – except that the Holy Spirit has been warning me from city to city that chains and hardships await me. I put no value on my life if only I can finish my race and complete the service to which I have been assigned by the Lord Jesus, bearing witness to the gospel of God’s grace» (Acts 20,22-24).*

XII

*Toward the Cross he leads you
but you yourself have to choose it
for this Cross is “death” and “Life,”
Life of God, which, with the death of the “I,”
you will be acquiring.
If you decide to enter into the Cross,
“to die” you must decide as well
and this has to be done freely:
your life for His Life,
as He gave his life for you
to give you the Life.*

If the soul accepts the chalice and decides for the Will of God, renouncing her own will: «*Not my will but Thy Will be done*» (Lk 22:42), the Spirit leads her toward the Cross that the Divine Justice disposes.

The weight of this cross depends on the docility of the soul. The more she rebels, the heavier it will be and her “agony” will be prolonged. She, the soul, must be like a sheep that lets herself be led to the slaughter without opening her mouth, imitating her Master and Lord.

After accepting the chalice, she will undertake the way to Calvary; she will be delivered into the hands of her “executioners,” those who will put to death the “old man”; she with Jesus will travel the way of the Will of the Father and with Him all will be easy and even delightful.

She finds herself under the sword of the Divine Justice

with all her goods: honor, fame, reputation, affections, comforts, material possessions, etc., and even her very life.

It begins with the failure of her public life. Everything turns against her... but she is happy, very happy, because she has left all those things behind upon fixing her gaze on God alone, and she would not exchange a single thread of her hair for all the treasures, affections, and kingdoms of this world.

God's Justice has begun to act, and it will not stop until it has conformed her to the Son: «*Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!*» (Lk 23:46). The soul surrenders her spirit to the Father to live only by the Holy Spirit.

XIII

*If you choose the Cross,
let yourself be nailed to it:
“My food is to do the Will of Him who sent me.”
Do not go sampling other “food,”
for it alone is your strength for accepting the “death”
that will give you a new life.
Then you will know the One who was your way,
because in Him you will be moved,
and you will live in perfect communion
with the Father and the Son
in their same Spirit,
that Vehicle who was your Guide.*

If the soul lets herself be nailed to the Cross of the Will of God, renouncing her own will *at each moment*, she will feel a great strength and even joy in the suffering.

In the measure of her fidelity, she will *actually* go on dying to every one of her desires, and she will feel that indescribable joy of a true freedom of spirit.

Nothing in this world will now be able to separate her from her Creator. Her union with Jesus Christ Crucified is so intimate and real that she shares in His very sentiments and desires: «*My food is to do the Will of Him who sent me*» (Jn 4:34). For her there is no other food; only the Will of God satiates her “hunger” for happiness. Even in her body she feels the sufferings of the Passion of Christ, and she lives His agony for the sake of the salvation of souls. This is for her the best gift and her strength, which

will enable her to say with Christ: *«All is accomplished»* (Jn 19:30). Because Christ will accomplish in her the mission that was entrusted to Him by the Father.

Oh, if all the souls would only realize this and would *truly* surrender themselves, accepting the chalice that the Father's Justice disposes, heaven would already be on earth because heaven is God and He would be living in all the souls!

Thy Kingdom come, O Lord!

*«Give thanks to the Lord,
acclaim his name;
among the nations make known his deeds,
proclaim how exalted is his name.
Sing praise to the Lord for his glorious achievement;
let this be known throughout all the earth.
Shout with exultation, O city of Zion,
for great in your midst
is the Holy One of Israel!»*

(Is. 12:4-6)