

The Spiritual Diary
of
Raphael
Cardinal Merry del Val

Compiled and Edited by
Rev. Francis J. Weber



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Foreword

RAPHAEL CARDINAL MERRY DEL VAL was among the most outstanding prelates of our century. Appointed Papal Secretary of State and elevated to cardinalatial dignity at the tender age of thirty-eight, he performed his delicate duties with such distinction as to merit from Pope Saint Pius X the remark "I pray the Lord, if it pleases Him to leave me here below, will accord me the grace to have him always near."

One of his biographers has noted that "only the accident of noble birth prevented Cardinal Merry del Val from being a humble pastor in England." When he asked Pius X for the "small petition" of being allowed to return to his homeland as a simple country pastor, the pontiff retorted by giving him the all-embracing mission of ministering to the whole world, where "we shall labor and suffer together for the love of Mother Church."

The cardinal's years of exile in Rome were spiritually profitable, as can be seen from the fact that his cause for beatification was opened on February 26, 1953. Five years ago this editor visited Nicola Cardinal Canali, secretary and companion of Merry del Val, to discuss the feasibility of publishing a small volume devoted exclusively to the spiritual dicta of his long-time mentor. His Eminence graciously endorsed the project and made available

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FOREWORD

many hitherto unpublished transcripts containing observations on various aspects of ascetical theology.

The rendering of these documents into acceptable English has been a long and time-consuming effort. And in that regard we are especially indebted to Sister Mary Gilda, M.P.F., for her criticism of the text as well as her innumerable suggestions for enriching the quality of the entries.

REV. FRANCIS J. WEBER

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The Blessed Sacrament

Be devoted to the Blessed Sacrament in order to obtain final perseverance. Before you retire, go to Our Lord and tell Him your failings, beg Him to help and pardon you. Our Lord loves us; He thinks of us unceasingly; His gaze follows us every instant of the day.

Our best Communions are not those which give us great consolation but those in which we approach Him with humility, contrition and trust.

Let us live from one Communion to the next, accepting and offering to God the trials and contradictions which come our way. Then, and only then, will we communicate well.

During the day, let us often make spiritual communions to preserve the presence of Our Lord within us.

Never omit Communion because of discouragement. It is one of the wiles of the demon to make us exaggerate our faults, thus hindering us from going to Our Lord.

Make your Communions, your prayers, your actions, with a spirit of reparation for the offenses made to the Heart of Jesus!

When you receive Holy Communion, think of the greatness of Almighty God's benefits. Our Lord gives Himself to each one of us as if only **He** and we were in the world.

The best preparation for Communion is the faithful fulfillment of our duties, accepting and offering to the Lord the troubles and opposition that come our way, with the intention of making all these acts of ours serve as a preparation for Holy Communion.

Let us live every day with the very life of Christ and ask Him to come to us on the last day of our life, to give Himself to us for the last time in Holy Viaticum, so that, holding us safely in His hands, **He** may lead us to the heavenly home of happiness and love.

The Blessed Mother and the Saints

After already having given us everything, Jesus gave us His mother. He offers in the intercession of Mary a means for gaining new graces. Let us always have recourse to her with confidence; let us ask her for the grace to be faithful until death.

The greater your devotion to the Blessed Virgin, the closer will you be to Our Lord.

When we feel weary of life and all its problems, let us pick up the rosary and meditate upon the Joyful Mysteries, considering the family life of Jesus and how **He** lived it. When all we seem to want is pleasures, let us recite the rosary and meditate upon the Sorrowful Mysteries. When we feel we have become overly attached to the things of the world, let us recite the rosary and meditate upon the Glorious Mysteries.

Learn from Mary to exercise charity toward your neighbor with love and forgetfulness. Sacrifice your inclinations to necessity.

Do not look upon consolations as a goal in themselves but accept them as a means granted by God to strengthen us. Do not let crosses become an obstacle to progress, but sanctify them through resignation and offer them up to the Lord. Let us ask the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Martyrs, to help us. She it was who spoke the first *fiat* to all suffering and sorrow.

Remember the virtues which the Blessed Virgin practiced, guarding in her heart the words of Our Lord. Ask her for the grace to know how to preserve religiously in your heart the words of God.

As the Blessed Virgin brought Our Lord to John the Baptist, strive to bring Jesus to those with whom you come in contact. Seek to make Him known and loved. Do not be discouraged if you feel unworthy. God sometimes uses the most vile and humble means to accomplish His work. We must annihilate ourselves before Him, but we must, nevertheless, realize what He asks of us and dispose ourselves to its accomplishment.

Learn to place your hope in heaven. Pray to the Blessed Mother for the graces of a confident heart, lest you become discouraged and crushed by the sufferings of daily life.

Ask the Immaculate Virgin to be the guardian of your conscience and to help you fulfill all your family duties.

Remain in thought at the foot of the cross. Ask Mary to teach you humility and love. Pray that she may unite your heart with the Heart of Jesus.

Petition Our Lady, the refuge of sinners, for the strength to bear your appointed tasks.

Think often of the Blessed Virgin at the foot of the cross. Unite your sufferings to hers, asking her to guard the purity of your heart.

Always be united to Mary. Unite your Communions to those of the Mother of Jesus; in your prayers, in your sacrifices, in your sufferings, in all your actions, keep united to her. Thus the acts of your spiritual life will be built on a solid foundation.

Pray to the Blessed Virgin to obtain the grace to prove your love toward Christ by the exact fulfillment of the duties of your state in life. Never allow yourself to be discouraged by the thought of your sufferings, or by the repugnance which you experience in accepting the trials He sends you. With fidelity, do your best in all your actions, having God alone as your goal.

Ask the Blessed Virgin to obtain for you an intimate knowledge of Our Lord, for it is through her that you are to go to Him. Learn to accept with love your daily crosses and contradictions, uniting these small trials to the sufferings of Christ.

* * *

The thought of the saints must encourage us to realize that they had to bear the same trials and difficulties we are now undergoing. They achieved their goal, and so can we, if we pray for the necessary graces.

Ask Saint Joseph to obtain for you the grace to keep Jesus in your heart. Seek his help, that he may guard you against every danger through love with which he protected the infancy of Jesus. Ask him to seek for you the grace of accomplishing perfectly all your duties as a Christian, your family duties and especially those toward the young.

Ask Saint Peter to keep alive in you the great gift of faith. We think too little of being grateful for this great gift, of which so many are deprived. Thank God for this immense goodness, and so that our external life may testify to our belief, let us not be ashamed to affirm aloud in every circumstance our faith and our religion.

Pray to Saint Mary Magdalen to obtain from Our Lord a great detachment from all that is not Himself, that your heart may be purified of every affection which does not lead to Him. Be generous in leaving all to follow Him.

Take Saint Mary Magdalen as your model; meditate on her confidence and on her courage in overcoming human respect and contempt in order to find her Saviour. Be sure that she will remove all obstacles that hinder your spiritual progress.

Zeal for Souls

Give me souls; take away all else. This is the desire of my whole life!

It is a glorious task to work with God for the salvation of souls.

Your spirit must be truly apostolic, for the most divine of divine things is to work for the salvation of souls.

I do not know what will happen to me or if I shall ever see realized my desire to work for the conversion of England. . . . But wherever I shall be, I hope to be able to do my duty for the greater glory of God.

Your rule must be subordinated to the unforeseen exigencies of your life. You must adapt your pious practices to the circumstances in which you live. Your type of life frequently will not have a great uniformity. But that which matters above all is a unity of principle.

Remember that circumstances not of your making are messengers of God. They come to tell you a thousand times a day the different ways of showing Him your love.

If, instead of prayer, you must do something which you would rather not do, do it for God. Ask Him to sanctify those things which are indifferent in themselves, and you will remain in peace and thereby prove yourself a good servant.

Understand and accept as an established principle that every indisposition or illness is for you an evident manifestation of God's will. It is better than any other direction, for it indicates the precise manner in which you must serve Him and love Him. When you are indisposed, every obligation, promise or accepted practice must be suspended. You must then not consider yourself obligated to do anything. Almighty God takes it directly upon Himself to indicate the work that He will deign to accept from you.

Omitting certain practices of piety, when this is useful to one's health, is more perfect than fulfilling them, because this is doing the will of God.

Virtue is always against the current. Remember that true success is not to be yours. Your recompense for the moment must be the knowledge that you are doing God's will.

You would do well to dedicate a little time to working with the poor, above all when you are with others. This will be a sustaining force and will help you avert many small faults.

Rule of Life

Adopt a rule of life, follow it, and you will find Jesus!

In order to please God and obtain graces, we must do our duties with our hearts immersed in love and completely abandoned to His will.

Do not readily make rash promises that you cannot keep, because the demon uses them as a means to make us lose our peace. Whatever comes from the evil one disturbs us and deprives us of peace.

Once we have made promises to Almighty God which we know are in accord with His will and therefore pleasing to Him, we must be faithful to them without hesitation even if an angel were to tell us otherwise.

Establish, as far as possible, a fixed and determined time for your spiritual exercises and do not change it at whim. Nevertheless, accept with patience circumstances over which you have no control and which interfere with your normal habits of piety.

Maintain a certain independence and never neglect your exercises of piety out of human respect.

Patience and submission to His will and the use of the means He gives you to recuperate must be employed. This promptness in changing your normal mode of acting according to the indications of His divine will is an act of virtue and a proof that you prefer His will to yours.

Let us never act to please the world. May we have the courage to endure criticism and the disapproval of the world. Let us not have human respect, for if God is pleased, what else matters?

Good must not be done to win the esteem of the world. But neither must a good deed be omitted out of fear of being noticed. Act with simplicity and indifference, for God alone, under His gaze, without concern for anything else.

You must not refrain from performing a good deed for fear of thoughts of vain glory which might ensue. This is a temptation which must be resisted. At the beginning of your actions, make the intention of offering them to Our Lord and you will thus safeguard yourself against finishing for Satan an action begun for Jesus. The incipient intention is sufficient, unless a contrary intention follows to vitiate that which has already been offered to our Lord.

One must not adopt the norm of always choosing that which is most repugnant, for that which we dislike is not in itself important in the sight of God. What really matters is knowing where the will of God lies, His glory, our duty.

Between two duties and two rights, one must select that which is more conformable to the will of God.

Imitation of Christ

Imbue yourself with the thought of the sufferings of Jesus Christ. Make the effort to detach yourself from all that is passing, from vanities, from the things of the world, for all these attachments pass away so quickly. Place your hope, your thoughts and your heart in those things which are above this world.

Honor and admire the weakness of the Infant Jesus, who wanted to be little and weak for love of us. Accept your weakness and rest in the arms of Our Lady, rejoicing in your inability to act or to do what you personally may want. Even Our Lord was weak and glorified His Father with His weakness in the manger. Thus in union with Him you must accept the sacrifices imposed by your health. You must be as docile as a babe, remembering that He has said that those who are not as little children will not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

A passing thought cannot be a sin. When one fears sinning, he does not sin.

Everything should serve to increase our progress in the spiritual life. We have no time to lose; we must profit from each moment and from every action to better ourselves and to be more united with God. Ask the Blessed Virgin to obtain this grace for you.

Jesus loved poverty and obedience. Let us therefore make every effort to practice these virtues and to love them. He was humble, forgotten, unknown. For His sake accept peacefully being humiliated and forgotten. These are circumstances permitted by Almighty God that we may resemble Him; they are the steps which help us attain Him.

Ask for the grace of poverty of spirit and true humility. We must not esteem anything except that which draws us to Almighty God, because all the rest is as nothing and will pass in a single instant.

Consider that humility was the foundation of the Sacred Family. Through this virtue in your family relations, you will attain peace. Our Lord spent thirty years of His life teaching us the humble domestic virtues, to make us realize their importance and to merit the grace to imitate Him.

Practice humility, not by seeking opportunities for it, but by accepting the circumstances which come your way. Offer them to Our Lord. Submit your opinions to those of others. Accept difficulties and aridities in your practices of piety, humbly recognizing your nothingness.

Do not put unfavorable interpretation on isolated passages of Sacred Scripture. Conclude firmly in the certainty of God's goodness and mercy in all these things.

Always give God first place and be sure that our duty towards Him supersedes all else. Never hesitate when it comes to any duty to Him.

Do not do or omit anything because you may displease others or because you may be the occasion of criticism. Rather, perform your actions courageously and without weakness. Remember to meditate on the following words of Christ, "Adore the Lord your God and serve Him alone."

The Heart of Jesus must be your star, and only this will be your guide. Do not let yourself be led either by worldly preoccupations or by self-love but by the Heart of Jesus. Go to Him through obedience and humility and He will be your joy in this life and your recompense in eternity.

The name of Jesus must be your hope and your refuge in temptation, your help against the demon. Do not doubt Him, but love Him for the infinite love He bears you. This name is the expression of all Our Lord is for you, of all that you must be for Him.

Let us practice the presence of God by making a sanctuary in our heart where we can find Him; that He may be the companion of our life.

Let us keep in our room statues, the sight of which will recall for us the presence of God and give us help in temptations.

When passing a church, offer your heart to Our Lord in the tabernacle.

The Epiphany is the feast of those who seek God. One must ask to find Him by fidelity in corresponding with His grace.

Try to love without seeing. Often one loves because one sees but it is better to love without seeing.

The criterion for knowing a good spirit and good inspirations is obedience. When one seeks to evade submission and obedience to the Church and to his superiors, it is evident that a good spirit is lacking. We cannot be deceived in giving obedience to our legitimate superiors.

God has made us for Himself. We cannot evade Him. If we refuse to approach Him through love, we will fall at the feet of His justice.

When you are at the feet of Jesus, you will be close to His Heart.

Almighty God permits secondary causes to operate. By these words we mean to say that He permits us to act according to our free will, that He rarely intervenes with miracles, permitting the natural laws ordered by Him to operate. But this does not hinder our believing that all comes from His Providence and that He continually watches over us and disposes all, at every moment for our welfare.

Abandonment

Once God's will is known to us, it becomes our path of duty and we should follow it steadfastly and with generosity of spirit.

Accept sufferings from the hands of Our Lord and see in the consolations He sends you the proof of His merciful tenderness.

It is up to us to accept with promptness and complete submission the dispositions of Providence, seeing in all things the will of God.

By your efforts to overcome your failings, purify your soul and remove the obstacles to greater graces and aids from Almighty God.

All for God! Let our work, our actions and our sufferings be for Him alone; let our soul and our body, now and ever, bow down in generous submission to His holy will.

When physical pain crushes you and makes you feel discouraged, do not forget that Our Lord Himself has suffered this pain, that He too has felt the weakness of nature in suffering.

Let us love the cross and learn to die on it.

Never allow your repugnance to disturb you. Did Our Lord in the garden rejoice at the thought of suffering? You must say, "I accept, O Lord, with Your grace, this suffering with perfect conformity to Your will."

Take day by day and hour by hour everything that the good God has in store for you and which you can offer as a sacrifice for sinners.

Our soul is the spouse of Christ crucified. It must learn how to suffer with Him. Offer Him your small thorns united to His crown, through the hands of the Blessed Virgin.

We can only see one page of the great book that God has written for us. He knows everything. He can do all things and He loves us.

It is only by seeking God in all things, even in those that in their nature are furthest from Him, that we can learn to live along with him.

On the cross which Christ presents to you each day, offer up your sacrifice with the certainty that it will draw you closer to the Divine Heart.

He who possesses the inestimable gift of Faith, and bows before the infallible teaching of the Church, can follow without danger the progress of human knowledge in all its venturesome scrutinites.

I recommend myself to Almighty God and I lovingly accept death when and how God shall will in expiation of my sins, and adoring His divine decree.

When we must bear some trial or suffering, if we were to think of the eternal suffering we really deserve we would see how small it really is. As a matter of fact the sacrifices of this life are nothing, since everything here passes away.

In the midst of consolations, let us not forget that future trials await us. Peace merely prepares us for the coming struggle.

How different my life has been from what I had hoped for! God's will be done!

Do well whatever you do; do it for God and for Him alone. Thus your life will be the first stanza of an everlasting canticle, the dawn of a happiness that will never have a sunset.

You would be wrong in thinking that abandonment is indifference to suffering. Where would the merit be if we were to feel nothing? As long as you are alive you must suffer pain and trials. To suffer is not to lack abandonment; it is sufficient that your will embrace the cross despite all its repugnances.

We must never expose ourselves to temptation, because alone we would not be able to resist. On the other hand, when God permits a trial we must not doubt His help for a single moment.

The spirit of poverty is the highest kind of humility, a spirit which leads to detachment from all things and above all from ourselves, our self-will, our inclinations and everything else, to cling to God alone. When we are poor in this sense we live by God, for God; and when we carry Him in our hearts we are at home everywhere.

A soul must not think that in practicing abandonment it is not necessary to pray for the graces needed: this would be quietism. Rather, the soul must seek these helps, remaining entirely subject to the whim of God.

Get accustomed to the fact that your soul is a battlefield where you must fight and conquer for the love of Our Lord.

Our ordinary, everyday life should supply our interior life with constant nourishment. External things and circumstances should never serve to break down but rather to build up the union of the soul with God and to act as so many opportunities for virtue rather than for weakness or imperfection.

Almighty God does not notice so much the number of our prayers. He hears us in an instant even if we are not able to pray for a long time.

Recite the "Our Father" slowly, realizing that you are fulfilling most perfectly the precept of praising God.

Pray slowly, but if you become aware of having said a prayer too fast or with distractions, or if you doubt whether you have even said the prayer, never begin again, but ask God for the grace to do better next time.

When we confidently ask for graces, we must not think that God ignores us if the temporal grace is not given. Our Lord sees what is good for our souls and He grants our requests always in view of eternal life.

Prayer Life

Almighty God gives us graces at the moment when we need them. We must never doubt that He will give us strength to accomplish what He asks of us.

Try to recollect yourself before beginning to pray. Do not be afraid of losing time because of this. If you have a short time at your disposal, it is better to shorten the prayer if that is necessary than to pray with distractions. It is not necessary to say many prayers but you must be completely recollected in the presence of God to pray effectively.

By the grace of God I have promised not to begin any action without reminding myself that He is interested in it—that He works with me and gives me the means to do it—and not to end any action without this same thought—offering it to Him as something which is His.

Strive always to pray well. Do not forget that prayer is the base and the foundation of all our progress. In it rests the hope of correcting our faults and increasing our love for God.

Before meditation, never fail to place yourself in the presence of God.

When you reach the point in your spiritual life where there is no longer any enthusiasm or pleasure, that is when you start working solely for the Lord and when real merit begins.

Silence and recollection—these are a requisite for union with God.

Pray as you would speak to Our Lord were you to have the happy fortune of approaching Him here on earth.

Jesus looks at our hearts and knows how to evaluate our dispositions, just as He knows how to sympathize with our shortcomings, and He rewards our modest efforts of good will.

Our prayer must not be "If you love me, hear me." Rather, say, "Since you love me, hear me." Then leave all to the hands of God.

Pray for that peace which Christ has come to bring. This peace makes everything easy and enlarges our hearts with the charity of Christ.

Cultivate the spirit of prayer that rightly attracts you within the limits of your state in life. Harmonize with it a cheerful observance of every act and occupation of your outward life.

Ask two things of Almighty God: to learn Him in order to learn the treasures of His Heart; to learn yourself better in order to correct and remove from your soul all that displeases God.

As time goes on, Our Lord teaches us to serve Him better by breaking the bonds that unite us to this quickly fleeting life so as to prepare us for that which is happy and unending.

Be devoted to the Blessed Sacrament in order to obtain perseverance. Toward the end of each day, tell Our Lord your failings and place your hopes for the next day's activities in His Sacred Heart.

We are so tiny, so poor and erratic in all our efforts to serve Him, and He is so great, so loving and constant in His dealings with us, that He is constantly full of pity for us in our flounderings. We should fly to Him with childlike confidence, without a fear that He is ever disgusted with us.

Pray to the Holy Spirit that He may form in your heart a conformity to the Heart of Jesus.

Our lives must bear witness to our faith in Christ.

It is for us to reflect as in a mirror the light of Him who is the true light; but the mirror must be clean and pure.

It is up to us to turn our hearts into little cenacles. Then nothing will upset us. There may be things to worry us exteriorly but we can always find peace and recollection in the cenacle of our heart.

Practice mortification in charity, forcing yourself to be charitable in thought and work, making the intention of charity for love of God. Mortify your intelligence, sometimes depriving yourself of that which is a useless curiosity.

Kneel before Christ on Calvary. Look at what He has done for you and what you have done for Him. Then you will understand what should be your gratitude and love to Him.

Strive to mortify your will by anticipating the desires of others. Be good to your neighbor, not for human respect but to please Our Lord. Try to avoid justifying yourself and having the final word.

Our life must be a kind of constant death. For in the measure in which we die to the things of this world, to interior and exterior obstacles, in that degree may we be said to live, for we begin to possess something of the perfect life in eternity, God.

Strive to overcome sadness by practicing patience. Seek constantly the opportunity to mortify your desires, even those that are legitimate.

Offer your sacrifices upon the cross that our Lord is giving you today in perfect confidence that it will draw you closer to His divine Heart.

If we were not to feel joy or sorrow, what would there be to offer up? If He were to give us constant joy, then we could rejoice for His sake. When He withdraws it, let us rejoice again, even in sorrow, because we can make it a gift to Him, and a gift that costs something.

Carry the cross, do not drag it. Your cross is not a crucifix; Christ leaves it free for you; it is you who must be crucified.

Sacrifice and Penance

Pick up the crucifix and kiss it with real Faith, because Our Lord invites you to be crucified with Him. Let your will be subject to His and say over and over, "I desire what You desire, O Lord." Once you are resigned to His will, be calm and have no fear, for Our Lord certainly does not condemn tears or the cry of a suffering heart. He shed tears Himself and His Heart can appreciate the sorrow of your heart. Learn how to be patient and wait things out. He will make you see the inestimable value of this grief of yours that makes you like unto Him and is really a pledge of predestination.

Practice mortification in your Faith, submitting all your intelligence to revealed truths which often do not seem understandable. We must bend our will to Faith for the love of God.

Believe, pray and sacrifice yourself. Find God in the sanctifying commonplaces of everyday work.

Practice as much as possible interior mortification, which is the most necessary and without which the exterior is nothing.

To place sacred holocausts upon the altar of our conscience, is to praise and bless God all through the day.

Greatly embarrassed is the soul on the road of the divine union when it leans on its own understanding, sense, imagination, judgment, will or habits.

Ask Our Lord to give you the grace to overcome human respect. Act with simplicity, courage and uprightness, and do not trouble about anything else, save to do the will of God.

Never act with a view to please the world. Let us have the strength to bear criticism and the disapproval of the world; let us have no human respect. Provided that God is pleased, what does the rest matter?

Success is a danger to most souls; few are able to bear its weight; it is a great danger for you. Your earnest yearning for success in spiritual matters should go no further than trying all day and every day to do your best in God's eyes. When you have done that, you have already achieved success.

Humiliations, if properly and cheerfully accepted, engender a more real humility than many other experiences and efforts can produce.

It is humility that transforms us and makes us divine, and more than anything else brings us near to God. The humble soul seeks Christ alone.

My dear friend, has not isolation, pain or sorrow caused you to concentrate your thoughts too much upon yourself and to judge too much by the standard of feelings? Are you not frequently inclined to narrow God down to your own perceptions and sentiments instead of trying to get out of yourself towards Him?

Every day give first place in your heart to the Lord. Never act with a view to please the world; let us have no human respect. Provided God is pleased, what does the rest matter?

Humility

The first and most important teaching of Christ is humility: humility of spirit, of will and of heart. We must exert ourselves in imitating the humility of the Heart of Jesus, His union with the Father. Seek to be abandoned like Him to the will of God, in little and in great things, in the trials of every day and in the contradictions and difficulties of life.

In doing good, never seek applause from the world or approbation from men, but solely and exclusively act for God.

O blessed obscurity that has been the source of so much light!

It is not good to become dejected at the sight of your faults and frailties. The consciousness of our sins and the sight of our shortcomings is a grace of the Lord that saves us from many illusions.

There is always danger for our eternal salvation when we give orders. But the contrary is true when we obey. It is very difficult for us to withstand the assaults of pride when we impose our will on others. Let us, therefore, learn to fear rather than desire honors or superiority, for these things are nothing but a long and painful martyrdom. A true priest puts up with them but he most certainly does not seek them.

Some outward successes may come your way but what really counts is working solely for God, His glory and the salvation of souls.

Confidence

Superstition is contrary to Faith. We must remove fears of this nature because it is not admissible that God should permit important events to depend on futile or equivalent matters. God sometimes allows superstitious persons to suffer, thus punishing them for having so believed. Do not allow yourself to be guided by these thoughts.

You can hope to obtain the grace you seek and desire, though it is not possible to raise the veil of eternity and of God's designs. Do not become perturbed because of the fear of not seeking this grace well enough.

Too much Faith cannot harm, for it is through Faith that one attains heaven.

Faith is the gift of God. One must seek it through prayer and be grateful for this grace, which is not given to all. When one has the happiness of Faith, he must be full of compassion for those who do not have the same light—to be patient with them and to pity their state. In our faith we must submit our intelligence, for if everything were always evident as it is in heaven, we would have no merit in believing.

It is not possible to sin against Faith without an act of the will. Place your will at the foot of the Throne of God and give Him the homage of your Faith. Faith resides in the acquiescence of our will to what we believe.

We must be disposed to believe that which escapes the narrow limits of our intelligence. Recognize your limitation.

The secret of sanctity is to see God in all things; our Faith must be based on love and on confidence in God.

Let us often reflect that there is not a single instant of the day or a circumstance of our life which is not permitted or willed by God.

Let yourself be led gently day by day, by the grace which Almighty God gives you.

May all circumstances, foreseen and unforeseen, pleasant or distasteful, which overtake you unexpectedly, serve as a means of virtue and draw you closer to God.

Guard against presumption while at the same time being confident that God's grace is always sufficient.

Do not have an exaggerated fear of sins against humility. Do not pay attention to them but rather recognize that through the grace of God and with His help you have the strength to do all things. Without it you are hopeless.

We are never in greater danger than when we think there is no reason to fear sin.

When you become aware of having committed a fault, hasten to perform an act of the contrary virtue.

Virtue does not consist in sentiments but in interior mortification and in the victories attained in faithfully performing our duty in order to do the will of God. Make this the basis and foundation of all your efforts.

Ask the grace to comprehend God's goodness and His love for you.

Do not fear temptations, because they reanimate and revivify our love for Our Lord through the efforts we make to resist and overcome them, through the grace which God does not deny us, if we ask for it.

Reflect that graces represent a responsibility that demands a correspondence on your part.

Do not try to do over and above what your capabilities are but rather make an effort always to work harder than prescribed.

Endeavor to become indifferent, not insensible. We must be detached from our own will by conforming to that of God.

Only by knowing God and loving Him can we learn how to love others and do them good.

Strive to be patient in your actions, for then it will be easier to practice patience in your sentiments, thus suppressing even the first movements of spiritual unrest.

When you hear someone speaking uncharitably, keep silent and bury what you have heard in the tomb of your heart.

Filial love or fear is not a defect of confidence. The comparison of the child is excellent. When something frightens a child, he runs to his mother and hides in her arms. Fear will draw the child even closer. That is our example with Almighty God.

Entrust yourself to the tenderness of God. He is ever faithful and will never let Himself be outdone in generosity. He loves you with a love whose tenderness you can never comprehend fully.

Be confident that if God gives or takes away, His actions are always motivated by His love for us.

Do not fear the dispositions of Providence in your regard but always welcome them with love and confidence.

The most terrible offense that we can give to the Sacred Heart is to doubt His forgiveness.

Do not let yourself be discouraged by failures. If something does not succeed, it is God's will. Never doubt.

Do not fear that Our Lord will tire of you. But always draw closer to Him in the love of the cross.

Union With God

Offer yourself to Almighty God in union with the Holy Virgin, and through her hands let His will be accomplished.

The gift of yourself is what you must aim for. This gift of self consists in accepting Our Lord as absolute Master in everything. You must submit yourself unreservedly to His will over your person and over all that affects you in soul or body, in the present and in the future. It is necessary that you be nothing but a servant, a member and an instrument. Let all your gifts, virtues, works, actions and sufferings be done for Him alone.

Let yourself be led gently day by day by Almighty God, with confidence in His mercy and love for you.

It is not through a detailed self-examination that you will attain knowledge of self, but only through the grace of Our Lord. If you ask Him for it, He will give it to you.

Strive to be well united to Our Lord during the day. Offer through Him and with Him your prayers, your actions, your sacrifices. Thus you will sanctify your actions and render them more acceptable to God.

It is necessary for the exterior life to contribute to the interior life. We must act in such a way that the eternal circumstances may help to augment our union with God and not dissipate it.

God will never let Himself be outdone in generosity. He plans for us according to His great mercy. He knows our weaknesses and how to pity them.

Prostrate yourself at the feet of Our Lord with humility and love, showing Him your weaknesses, your poverty, your nothingness.

Let us never become agitated and disturbed when the hand of God seems to disappear, when like the Magi we lose sight of the star. Courageously we must follow the road pointed out. We will find Jesus through obedience faithfully practiced.

Avoid confusion, it is the devil's weapon to overcome us. Keep your thoughts on the Heart of Jesus. Always be closely united to Our Lord, forgetting yourself and your fears. Entrust yourself to Him and always keep close to Him, with confidence in His love.

Reflect on all the good thoughts Christ sends you; every inspiration, every prayer and act of love is a grace which comes from God Himself. How grateful we should be! These are the merits of His passion.

Open your heart to hope and above all do this when you feel impelled by contrary sentiments.

The more we advance in age, the more does Our Lord detach us from this earth, breaking the ties which attract us to this passing and ephemeral life.

Prayers

O merciful Lord, You are never weary of speaking to my poor heart; grant me the grace that, if today I hear Your voice, my heart may not be hardened.

At Your feet, O my Jesus, I prostrate myself and I offer You the recompense of my contrite heart, which is humbled in its nothingness and in Your holy presence. I adore You in the sacrament of Your love, the ineffable Eucharist. I desire to receive You into the poor dwelling that my heart offers You. While waiting for You and the happiness of sacramental Communion, I wish to possess You in spirit. Come to me, O my Jesus, since I, for my part, am coming to You! May Your love embrace my whole being. I believe in You, I hope in You, I love You.

Lord, I am nothing, but in that nothingness I adore You!

O my soul, love the God that loves you from all eternity!

O dearly beloved word of God, teach me to be generous, to serve You as You deserve, to give without counting the cost, to fight without fretting at my wounds, to labor without seeking repose, to be prodigal without looking for any reward save that of knowing that I do Your holy will.

I offer myself up constantly, ready and willing to suffer much for the love of Christ and for the Church, even to the point of dying for Jesus, who died for love of me.

Reveal Your heart to me, O Jesus, and show me its attractions. Unite me to it forever. Grant that all my aspirations and all the beats of my heart, which cease not even while I sleep, may be a testimonial to You of my love and may say: Lord, I am all Yours; the pledge of allegiance to You rests ever in my heart and will never cease to be there. Accept the slight amount of good that I do and be graciously pleased to repair all my wrongdoings, so that I may be able to bless You for all eternity. Amen.

I detest and weep for my past sins and negligences, which like a vast mountain keep rising before me. I weep for the sins and iniquities of the whole world, for the sacrileges and indifferences that we have shown You in the holy sacrament of Your love. I desire to live spiritually with You in the tabernacle, to visit You, worship You, and receive You spiritually wherever You are present under the sacramental veil, and there live and die at the foot of Your throne.

Change my heart, O Jesus, who did empty Yourself for love of me! Make known to my spirit how excellent were Your sacred humiliations. Let me begin this day illumined by Your divine light, to do away with that portion of the natural man that still lives undiminished in me. This is the chief source of my misery, this the barrier that I constantly oppose to Your love.

I am ready, O my God, to accept with complete indifference, from Your hands and in the way that may be most pleasing to You, health or sickness, riches or poverty, honor or dishonor, a long life or a short one, friendship or hatred, always choosing only that which is in keeping with Your glory. And if You are so good as to call me to imitate You more closely and intimately in poverty, in shame and in suffering, here I am, ready and willing.

Dearest Jesus, teach me to be patient, when all the day long my heart is troubled by little but annoying crosses.

I desire to live with You spiritually in the tabernacle, there to wait on You, adore and receive You wherever You abide in the blessed Sacrament, so as to live and die at Your feet.

Teach me to be silent, O good Jesus, when I am sorrowful and afflicted, because by hiding my suffering in You, I may love my cross still more.

O my sweet Jesus, my joy, my hope, my all, open Your Sacred Heart to me and reveal to me its allurements. Unite me to it forever. Grant that all the aspirations and all the movements of my heart, which cease not even during sleep, may be a proof of my love for You; and may they say to You, "Yes, Lord; I am all Yours."

Give me patience, O dear Jesus, when my heart is tired of those wearisome crosses, which are like welcome friends that crush my pride.

My God, my Father, and my All, my first beginning and last and only end, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I, the most abject, the most miserable and sinful among Your creatures, prostrate before Your great throne, adoring and magnifying You with all the powers of my soul.

I am on this earth solely to serve You and to save my soul. Anything else, big or small, within or without me, must disappear and be nonexistent in my eyes the moment it ceases to be for me that for which You created it, that is, a means to my great end.

Jesus, my hope, fame in this world must have no part of me; I shall seek, like You, a crown of thorns to love Your most Sacred Heart.

Cut away here, O my Jesus; burn and destroy here all there is in me that is not Yours.

My God, my Father and my All, I desire and formally resolve today to use all created things in such a way only so far as they help me to attain my end. Grant that my intellect, my memory and my free will may be Yours forever. I consecrate every beat of my heart, every breath, every word and every movement of my soul and body to You, my God, with the sole desire of singing, with every faculty I have, a long hymn of praise to You, a hymn of expiation for my sins and of thanksgiving for Your graces and benefits.

O Jesus! meek and humble of heart, have mercy on me.

O Jesus, deliver me—

From the desire of being esteemed,
 From the desire of being loved,
 From the desire of being sought after,
 From the desire of being honored,
 From the desire of being praised,
 From the desire of being preferred to others,
 From the desire of being consulted,
 From the desire of being approved.

O Jesus, save me—

From the fear of being humbled,
 From the fear of being despised,
 From the fear of being rebuffed,
 From the fear of being calumniated,
 From the fear of being forgotten,
 From the fear of being ridiculed,
 From the fear of being injured,
 From the fear of being suspected.

O Jesus, grant me the grace to wish—

That others may be loved more than I,
 That others may increase in the opinion of the world and I diminish,

That others may be employed and I set aside,
 That others may be praised and I overlooked,

That others may be preferred before me in everything,

That others may be more holy than I, provided that I am as holy as I can be.

O Lord, You who were reduced to nothing for love of me, reveal to my spirit the excellence of Your holy humiliations. Enlighten me, that I may begin this day to destroy that portion of the old man which is wholly alive in me, the source of my miseries, the standing obstacle which I oppose to Your love. Help me to understand that I am my own enemy when I seek peace in myself and outside of You. Amen.

P R A Y E R

*To Obtain the Glorification on Earth
of the Servant of God*

Raphael Cardinal Merry del Val

MOST HOLY Redeemer and Lord, Jesus Christ who didst institute the Sacred Hierarchy for the welfare of the Christian people, and who didst vouchsafe to endow Thy servant Cardinal Merry del Val with choicest gifts so that from the height of his dignity should shine the priestly virtues of charity, of zeal for the salvation of souls and of Christian mortification, we beseech Thee, if it be in conformity with Thy Holy Will, that Thou wouldst glorify him by granting through his intercession those favors which we fervently implore of Thy most Sacred Heart, to Thy glory and to the glory of the Mother of Sorrows, whom he so tenderly loved and honored on earth.

[For copies of this prayer, apply to the Rev. Postulatore, Rettore del P. Collegio Spagnolo, Via S. Apollinare, 8, Rome. All notices of graces and favors received should be sent to the same address.]