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Whispers from the wings
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A TRAPPIST

Gives



Whispers
from
The Wings

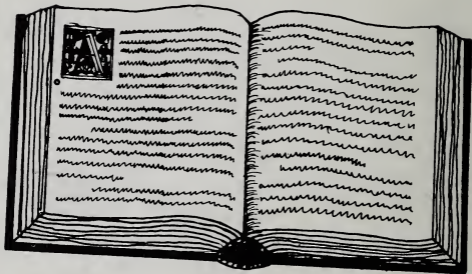
The title is rendered in a highly decorative, calligraphic font. The word 'Whispers' is at the top, followed by 'from' in a smaller, cursive script. Below that, 'The Wings' is written in a large, ornate font. The letters are embellished with intricate flourishes, including scrolls and leaf-like patterns. Two birds are depicted: one in the upper left corner, flying upwards, and another in the middle right, flying towards the right. The overall style is characteristic of early 20th-century book design.

A Sequel to

"Doubling for the Mother of God"

For Nuns Only

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A Trappist

Gives

**WHISPERS
FROM
THE WINGS**

A

Sequel to

**"DOUBLING FOR THE MOTHER
OF GOD"**

For Nuns Only

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by

THE ABBEY OF GETHSEMANI, INC.

TO

MOTHER MARY LOUISE

Mother General

of

The Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul

of

Halifax, N. S.

Praying That

All Her Daughters Satisfy

The Needs

of

JESUS CHRIST

FOREWORD

I never knew you were so many.

I never realized you were so kind.

I never appreciated your flaming zeal.

That, my dear Sisters, is my honest reaction to your reception of DOUBLING FOR THE MOTHER OF GOD. For edition followed edition in bewildering fashion; your compliments and comments flattered; and now you demand WHISPERS FROM THE WINGS. Indeed that *is* flaming zeal.

I conclude, then, that you now view your vocation as an "annunciation," in which you were told that you were to be the "Mother" to the Mystical Christ. That is excellent. It means that you look upon life for what it really is—The Great Drama of the Redeeming; upon the world as a stage; and upon yourself as a double for Mary Immaculate. Now that you find yourself in the center of the stage, you turn to me and ask for WHISPERS FROM THE WINGS.

I promised them, Sister, (you allowed me to address you all under that one title before, so I continue); I promised to be your prompter; and you have not allowed me to forget that promise. So listen well as I fulfill it! Here are my whispers

Feast of Mary's Purification
and Jesus' Presentation
February 2, 1942.

“Thank You!”

Yes, Sister, that is my first whisper. For as I stand in the wings and see you in the center of the stage essaying the rôle of Mystical Mother my heart leaps to my lips and I whisper, “Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!”

Do you ask, “Why?”—

If so, I answer by saying: Because of what you are doing to God! Because of what you mean to the Omnipotent One! Because of what you are being to Jesus Christ!

Ah, Sister, I have not forgotten the world from which I cloistered myself. No, indeed. And every now and then, from a line in this letter and a line in that, I get an upsettingly clear picture of what the peoples of that world are now doing to the God we love. So I say to you what I often say to Mary Immaculate. I say: “Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! for saying ‘Fiat’ to the Angel of the Annunciation and thus becoming Madonna to Jesus Christ.”

Do you see the perfect parallel, Sister? Two thousand years ago the Trinity looked down on lovelessness; today It looks down on hate. Two thousand years ago the people of the world (even the Chosen People) were cold and indifferent; today they are defiant. Two thousand years ago they did not care about the first coming of Christ; today they seem not to care even about His second coming. But now, as then, a “Fiat” saves the whole hideous situation; and now, as then, it is spoken by a woman whose name is “Mary.” Isn’t that your name, Sister?

Let me say here what I said at the outset of the first booklet—What looks like fancy

is sternest fact! The parallel is perfect. Mary, by becoming the Madonna, changed the Drama of Creation, which was lapsing into tragedy, into the Romance of the Redemption. Today, you, and all others like you who have become mystical Madonnas, save that Romance from becoming tragic. Indeed it is sternest fact!

Both Mary and you mean much to men, Sister; but I am fully convinced that you mean more to God. And that is the whole point of this booklet. God looked for a Madonna then; He looks for her "double" now. When He finds one, the work of the redemption can go on according to plan. If He lacks one—how can Christ live and die and thus satisfy? How can the Heart of God be comforted?

To understand that, Sister, we only have to look at one word in an early chapter of Genesis. It is one of the most startling words in all Scripture. It is the word "Poenituit"; and it is predicated of God! It means that God grieved, Sister! Think of it! The great heart of God ached! He suffered anguish! And why?—"Because He had created man!" Yes, that is the awful story of how the Drama of Creation was lapsing into tragedy. Love's labor seemed lost; for Love's lavishness was unappreciated.

You've read that Drama, Sister; you know how God said, "Fiat." "Fiat." "Fiat." "Fiat." and heaven, earth, water and light leaped into being. And you know why He said it; for you well know that the *motif* of the Drama of Creation is—Love! That is why we may say that the simplest, shortest and truest translation of those "Fiats" is: "I, the Eternal One, love, love, love!"

But what return did Love receive?—Lucifer and his legions rebelled. Eve listened to the serpent. And Adam took from the woman's hand the fruit that was forbidden. What a heart-break to God!

Then what happened?—Though Love promised a Redeemer, the beloved ones went out and lived not only as if there would be no Promised One, but as if there was no One who had promised! The world became so hideous that it had to be washed by a Deluge. Indeed God grieved. Then what?—Then Babel, Sodom and Gomorrhah! What a disappointment the race of men was proving to God. They would not allow His Drama of Love to be a drama of love. Despite Patriarch, Prophet and Promised Land, God's Chosen People sighed for the flesh-pots of Egypt and fashioned for themselves the golden calf. Then as we run down through the Judges and the Kings we find page after page in our family history blotted and besmirched with wanderings from God and revels in sin. Poor, poor God! what a return He received for His creation!

But then came Mary; and she said, "Fiat." That was enough. Love had found one who *did* love, and He was willing to forget four thousand years of lovelessness. He had found a heart that was empty enough of self and sin to form a hollow from which Creation's wondrous word might echo back; and tragedy was turned into Romance.

God's "Fiat" made light leap out of darkness, and the Drama of Creation was on; "Mary's 'Fiat'" made the Light of the world leap into darkness, and the Romance of Redemption began. Divinity took flesh in the dark womb of a little Jewish maid and the great heart of God was glad. That is why I

say "Thank you!" to Mary at every Angelus bell; not for what she means to me, but for what she meant to God!

Do you understand my first whisper, Sister? I say to you what I say to Mary, because you are the Immaculate One's double. You gladden a Heart that needs to be gladdened. You gladden a Heart that is mightily saddened. You gladden the Heart of God.

History does repeat itself, Sister; but always with greater emphasis. Two thousand years after the "Fiat" of Mary and two thousand years after the "Fiat" of Christ finds the world worse than it was four thousand years after the "Fiat" of God. God the Creator looked down on the men He had made and cried, "Poenitet me fecisse eos.—I am sorry that I made them." What a heart-breaking echo that is to His original "Fiat"! And today, God the Redeemer looks down on the race of men for whom He bled and what can He say but, "Quae utilitas in sanguine meo?—Has my Passion been in vain? I am the Vine but where are My branches? I am the Head but where are My members? I am the first-born but where are my brethren?"

And what answer comes back from Russia where millions shake brutal fists into the face of heaven, defying the God who loved them enough to breathe into their bodies His breath of life and stamp on their souls His own indelible image?

What answer comes back from a Germany that has taken Christ from the Cross, the symbol of love; and made of it a Swastika, which has given the world nothing but hate.

What answer comes back from a Mexico who some years ago set her people wandering as was Magdalene that first Easter morn

saying, "They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him;" a Mexico who, by her outrageous laws, had left about as much of Christ as the Apostles found that same Easter morn—"a winding sheet and some folded napkins"?

But why enumerate? What answer comes back from a world that is apostate; a world that is red with Communism, black with Fascism and brown with Naziism; a world encrimsoned with the blood of murdered millions and sooted with the heinous smokes of our suicidal wars? Poor, poor Jesus! No wonder He cries, "Quae utilitas in sanguine meo? Was I bled white in vain? I flung Myself on the wide-spread trellis of the Cross as a blood-soaked Vine that branches might bud and bear Me fruit; I dropped My thorn-helmeted head in death that all men might live as my members; in love's passionate prodigality I had My side spear-dug and My Heart opened that all men might find a home therein—but now? Quae utilitas?" Poor, poor Jesus!

But you have healed the Heart-break, Sister, by the use of one wondrous word. You have kept Romance from going into tragedy by saying what God said before the world was, what Mary said before Jesus became man, and what Christ said before the Mystical Body was born and Heaven was reopened. You have said, "Fiat;" and that is why I whisper, "Thank you! You mean much to the God I love."

Realize This

Burn that truth into the depths of your being, Sister. It is a truth, and you need it!

The religious life is hard. Whoever says differently is either a very young novice or a very inexperienced nun. We need something

to sustain us for "the road winds up hill all the way." We become lonely, love-hungry and lost. We don't understand others and they don't understand us. Why, we don't even understand ourselves. The struggle for perfection is endless and the garner of the years seems small; and this endlessness and the seeming emptiness saps the courage of the bravest and kills the daring of the bold. Our days grow grey, then blue and even black. The lights of our little world all go out! What are you to do then?—Sing "Magnificat" for you mean much to God!

Realize that, Sister! It means your sanctification. Ascetical writers have complicated the simplest thing in the world. Many have divorced the natural from the supernatural and instead of harmony give us discord. They forget that God the Creator and God the Redeemer are one and the same God; that what the Father made, the Son came to *re-make*, not to *un-make*; and that when Christ said, "Come, follow Me" He did not mean that you were to cease being a woman, but that you were to become a Madonna!

Christ would not destroy your nature; He would perfect it. Hence, when He selected you to be a nun it was not that you should become a nonentity, but that you should become yourself, your nobler self, your greater, grander, most womanly self! He did not dower you with tenderness and thoughtfulness and rich, warm, motherly love that you should bury them. Never! He wants you to double them. That is why He calls you to "mother" the Mystical Christ. The whimple and the veil make not a napkin to keep talents hid; they form a headdress to reveal the face of a real Madonna. The Angel of your "annunciation"

did not ask you to die, but to live; not to deny your womanliness, but to express it most nobly; not become an ascetic alone, but the Mystical Mother of God. And that is why he could say to you, "Blessed art thou amongst women!"

Simplify the spiritual life, Sister, by synthesizing it in this one idea; then make of this idea your ideal. You are doubling for the Mother of God, therefore, you mean much to Christ. That truth will make the sun shine through your blackest day; that realization will sustain you in dryness, dullness, drabness and desolation; that will buoy you up in what looks like dereliction.

Why have I seen sour-faced men in the robes of monks? Why have I met cranky old maids in the garb of nuns? Why?—Because they did not realize that they meant much to God! I have heard and read many reasons for the embittered, the disgruntled, the cynical and the soured in religion. There was some truth in every reason assigned; but there was not the real truth in all of them; for all together are inadequate. The real truth and the adequate explanation is that they have forgotten their dignity! Who could be dissatisfied in playing Mother to the Mystical Christ? Who could be unhappy in helping God? Who could be cynical while carrying on The Great Drama of the Redeeming? Who?—No one but the devil and those whom he has made unmindful of their rôles!

Now don't mistake me, Sister. My purpose is not to make you proud, but to make you truly humble; and when I say that, I mean that my purpose is to exalt you! For the only real exaltation on earth is the exaltation given by true humility; just as the only real degradation on earth comes from pride. Hu-

mility is truth, Sister; and it shows us the truth. It shows us what we are—members of a Body whose Head is God! And since the dignity of a body lies in its head, ours is a dignity divine! Pride is a lie, always a lie; whether it take the form of self-exaltation, or that worse form of self-depreciation. We are God's; and we were made to be like unto God!

Yes, the religious life is hard, very hard; but when we realize what we are and what we are doing, then it is very, very happy!

I Am Not Forgetting

No, I am not forgetting the ascetical writers who insist that "I am nothing." "I can do nothing." "I am worth nothing." But I am remembering my Catholic Philosophy and Theology; and I say that if these writers mean their dicta to be taken literally—and very many of them seem to mean them literally!—they are in error. Because Theology tells me that God created you and me; and God does not create "nothing"! Theology also tells me that Jesus Christ died for you and me; and again it is plain that Christ did not die for "nothings." Of course they say they are talking about me "of myself"; that can only mean me "apart from God." But then Catholic Philosophy tells me that they are talking about some blank that never did and never could exist! And to talk about such a nonentity obviously is the sheerest nonsense.

I think the point is clear to any, even those who haven't studied formal Philosophy; for "man apart from God" can only mean *un-created* man! Inane to talk about an uncreated creature, isn't it? Yet these writers want me

to take the predicates that belong to that un-created nothing and apply them to this created, individual, very alive something—me! Now, to me, that seems the clumsiest, queerest and crudest distortion of logic and language that can be imagined.

In short, Sister, there is no such being as “I, of myself”! There never was and there never will be a being “apart from God,” a being “of itself.” Why, Sister, before time began you had existence in the mind of the Sempiternal God; and when time is no more you will have existence with the same Sempiternal God if you are truly humble and ever mindful of your dignity.

We may be first cousins to nothing on our mother’s side, Sister; for we are children of Eve; but on our Father’s side what are we?—Children of God! We are not mere human beings, Sister. Never. We are divine-human beings! And since humility is truth, it is an exaltation. We are breaths of God in vessels of clay; but let us always remember we *are* breaths of God! Our bodies are dust, it is true; but as Raoul Plus, S.J. titles his latest book, so I say to you: “Dust, Remember Thou Art Splendor!”

That is true humility, Sister—remembering what we are. Sinners striving to be saints. Prodigals being hugged by our Father. Magdalenes at the feet of the Master. Members of a Body of which the Son of God is Head! That is humility as expounded by St. Thomas, St. Ignatius and St. Benedict. It is truth that makes us blush for what we have been, but not for what we are! It exalts! Yes, and it makes us exult.

St. Paul is often misquoted in this regard. “What have you that you have not received?”

he asks. Of course the answer is, "Nothing." But note well that in his next line he does *not* forbid us to glory in our gifts. Never! What he forbids is to "glory as if we had not received" those gifts from God. And everyone with any common sense will second his prohibition.

I grow angry at many ascetical writers and speakers on this question of humility, Sister. It is the most beautiful of the virtues, but they have succeeded in making it the most distorted, grotesque, repellant and detestable thing. Someone once remarked, "There must be something inherently rotten with Education itself when so many people have such wonderful children, yet all grown-ups are such duds." I understand him. And I think many you will understand me when I paraphrase him by saying: "There must be something fundamentally wrong in the teaching of Asceticism when postulants and novices are burning with so much wonderful good will, glowing with genuine enthusiasm and alive with soul-deep energy and zeal; yet old professed are so far from being anything like Mary or Christ."

Find me one passage in the New Testament where Jesus or Mary say of themselves: "I am nothing. I can do nothing. I am the last, lowest and least of all God's creatures," and I'll surrender. But until you do, I'll hold that we are to imitate the humility of Jesus and Mary and not that of these ascetical writers. We are to remember what we *are*, not what we *have been*. St. Paul spoke very wisely once in favor of a poor memory. He said, "I forget those things that are behind." Let us imitate him in that. Let us remember not what we have been, but what we are!—You are a double for the Mother of God, and because of that you mean much to Jesus Christ.

The Physical Christ needed Mary; the Mystical Christ needs you. If Mary had not said, "Fiat" how would we ever have heard of the Good Samaritan, the Good Shepherd and the Father of the Prodigal Son? If Mary had not said, "Fiat" how could Magdalene ever have washed His feet with her penitential tears? or the woman taken in adultery been saved from death? Yes, and if Mary had not said, "Fiat" how could little children ever have climbed upon His knees, twined His tresses on their tiny fingers, and had the hand of Omnipotence laid upon their heads? Indeed the Physical Jesus needed Mary; and in just the same way the Mystical Jesus needs you! For if Mystical Marys had not said, "Fiat" how could Jesus bring His parables to life and play the Good Shepherd, the Good Samaritan and the kind Father to our wayward, wounded, wilful race of prodigal *daughters*, as well as sons? If he is to pour oil and wine into gaping wounds there must be hospitals and homes with nursing nuns. If He is to carry back the sheep that were lost there must be sheepfolds with Good Shepherd nuns. If he is to say, and say again, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me" there must be asylums, academies and schools conducted by the nuns!

You saw in the first booklet what you mean to man. I told you there that the whole world was crying, "Mother! Mother! I want my Mother!" And I told you it was the cry of the child of God lost in the maze of the mad material world. You know that that was not fancy. I want you now to look at a sterner fact. I want you to see just what you mean to Christ.

Not so long ago Father Leen put out a little book titled "Christ Before Pilate." It was

true at the time; but it is not true now. No! His "Judgment" is over. He is now on the Cross. Hate is having its awful hour, and godlessness crucifies the Mystical Christ. But there stands by the Cross of the Mystical Jesus—the nuns!

Do you hear my first whisper, Sister? I say, "Thank you!" and I mean it from the bottom of my heart. You can translate it into: "Let me be mindful of my dignity. Jesus Christ, Head of the Body, true God and true man, needs ME in this awful hour." If that truth does not sustain you through every trial and temptation, what will?

"Be Confident!"

That is my second whisper and I make it almost a shout. I am prompting you in your first few lines; and if you fail to understand me, you have memorized the words without learning their meaning.

Mary's first line was: "How is this to be?" Yes I almost shout from the wings, "Be confident! Be utterly and unshakably confident," and claim that I am prompting you perfectly. Let me explain.

Why is the world filled with unfinished saints? Why are convents crowded with women who are good but not great, holy but not heroically so, of some spiritual stature but not giants? Why?—I say: False humility cloaking real discouragement.

I can well imagine many a nun closing that first booklet DOUBLING FOR THE MOTHER OF GOD and saying, "Beautiful! but not for me. The ideal is too lofty. Mary's purity and Mary's humility are admirable, but not imitable. At least not by me. And as for her

obedience—how can I, born and brought up in an atmosphere saturated and surcharged with unqualified independence; how can I, who have lived my formative years with people who always thought for themselves, spoke for themselves, acted for themselves; how can I, a child of this highly individualistic Twentieth Century bend my will and bow my intellect to the word and will of another without a moment's hesitation? How can I live like, and love like, and be like Mary? It is impossible! And God never asks the impossible. It is *not* for me."

If you haven't said that already, Sister; take care! The temptation will soon come. But recognize it for what it is. It is *not* humility. It is the devil. Yes, he would fill you with stage-fright and have you ruin your part. He knows what life is and he knows what you are. He fully realizes that life is The Great Drama of the Redeeming and that you have been selected to play the leading feminine rôle; so from the very outset he would fill you with a paralyzing stage-fright and thus bring you to a lowering of your ideal through discouragement.

He was a liar from the beginning, Sister; and leopards do not change their spots. He would have you strike an attitude of "humility" and say, "Life is The Great Drama of the Redeeming, but in it I'm too little to play the leading part. I'll be just a supernumerary. That's all little actresses can ever be."

Don't say, it, Sister; don't say it! For strange as it may seem there are no supernumeraries in this great Drama of love. No. Either you play the rôle of the Mother to the Mystical Body of Christ or you'll play the rôle of mother to the mystical body of antichrist. That's the startling truth that leaps at us from

the doctrine of our absolute solidarity in Jesus. "He who is not with Me is against Me." She who will not double for the Mother of God will double for the devil. Either you sow with Christ or you scatter. So don't let the devil deceive you. Learn your lines; not only the words but their meanings!

What was Mary's answer to the Angel of her Annunciation? When Gabriel told her that she was to be the Mother of God did she look into herself and say, "Oh, no! I can't do that! I'm too small. I'm only a little girl. I'm just a simple Nazarene. Don't ask the impossible! I'll keep the Law. I'll love God as others do. But don't ask me to be His Mother. I'm only a tiny, tiny creature." Did she? Ah, no! She looked up and quietly asked, "How is this to be . . ."

Have you caught the full force of those words, Sister? Mary admits that it *is* to be; she only questions its mode. She does not say "This is not to be." What she implicitly says is, "I'll play the part; just tell me *how*." Do the same, Sister! That's what I mean by my whisper. Tell the devil that you *are* going to double for the Mother of God, and if he should tauntingly ask you, "How?" give him in substance the words Gabriel gave Mary, say, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon me and the Power of the Most High shall overshadow me. . . ." In other words, GOD is with you!

That is why I almost shout, "Be confident!" Because you are not alone! You can play this part and play it perfectly, else God be not God!

Look, Sister. Motherhood connotes a trinity, doesn't it? Then realize that you are never, never alone! And thrice a day as you hear the Angelus ring, let it remind you of my whisper: "Be confident! Be confident!"

Be confident! You *can* play this part!" Then as you say the prayer remember that what was true of Mary in the physical order will be true of you, in its own degree, in the mystical—"She conceived by the Holy Ghost." The same Holy Ghost will aid you. What confidence that should give you. *Omnipotence* is with you!

What is the greatest lack in the religious world, Sister? Is not courage and confidence? Of course, fundamentally, these two come down to Faith and Humility; but for the moment, let us stay on the surface and look at the flowers before we go down to the roots.

Isn't the whole situation summed up by saying: Our ideals paralyze? Yes, that is the word—they paralyze. Here I am a frail, faulty, ever failing creature, yet called upon to double for Jesus Christ. What an impossibility! And you?—with all your womanish weaknesses, with a mind that was darkened from the beginning, a will that ever wants to be wayward, a body that is instinct with rebellion and a soul that was wounded from the start, you are called upon to walk like, talk like, think like, act like, live like, BE like Mary the Immaculate Mother of God. No wonder you faint. No wonder the devil can fill you with stage-fright. The very ideal paralyzes.

Oh, we may make a start, it is true; and carry on for some little time. But the very length of the struggle wearies us. Every day we have to begin anew. The pressure is relentless. The price is staggeringly high. Complete success is ever wanting. So we give in! We lower our ideals for want of courage and confidence.

That, Sister, is the brief outline of the oft told tale of how countless saints get cracked

in the moulding, how countless souls are blighted before they bloom, how loves grow cold and lives become bleak, barren and boring. No courage. No confidence. No knowledge of God and His grace.

That is it, Sister—No knowledge of God and His grace. Look! God chose you to be a Mystical mother, didn't He? Don't you see then, that He has obligated Himself to help you play your part? God never does things by halves, Sister. He is not a Pharaoh who commands bricks to be made, then denies the straw with which to make them. No! Having chosen you to be Mystical Mother, He must furnish you the means. "*Nihil frustra dedit Deus,*" say the theologians; meaning, "God has a purpose in His every gift." He prepares no wedding for a bride without preparing a bridegroom. He did not send the "angel" of your "annunciation" without giving him the full message He gave Gabriel. Since you are to be a Mystical Mother *there will be the Holy Ghost!*

So to the discouraging devil who says, "You can't double for the Mother of God," speak a triumphant and defiant, "*POSSUMUS!*" meaning, "We can!" When he asks, "Why the plural?" say, "Because I am two! God is with me!"

A Practical Warning

But now a practical warning. You are a double for Mary Immaculate, but you are not Mary Immaculate! No, Sister, you are a Sister, you are a daughter of Eve, and you came into this world burdened with the "concupiscence of the eyes, concupiscence of the flesh, and the pride of life." You may be angelic, but you are not an angel. Therefore,

expect to feel impatient with this superior and that inferior; expect to feel the stirrings of resentment against this command and that suggestion; expect to feel the surges of pride, vanity and conceit rise within you; and don't be surprised to be made conscious of the fact that you have a body of flesh! You were not conceived immaculately and you have not been confirmed in grace. Neither your clothing nor profession won for you the preternatural gifts. Therefore, you're going to be tempted!

But let it also be said that you did not lay aside all common sense or all Catholic sense with your secular clothes! Being a woman, you can expect temptations to all the womanly vices; being human you will fall into imperfections, indeliberate and semideliberate venial sins; but that does not mean that you cannot double for the Mother of God. Never! Sanctity does not consist in freedom from temptations; else Jesus Christ is not a saint! He was tempted! Nor does it consist in freedom from imperfections or even from sin;—Peter denied Our Lord, the Apostles all fled, Mary Magdalene was a public sinner! Yet I say Mass in their honor every year.

In what does it consist, then?—*In repeatedly beginning over again!* In the spirit of "*Never-say-die!*" That is the common sense of sanctity. There is only one failure in the religious life, Sister—that of giving in! As long as we are ready to pick ourselves up after every fall, pick our cross up, and stagger on, we are making progress! Remember that in the spiritual life it is *not* the success that counts, but the *striving*. That is why we are not to worry about the *effects*; but we are to look to the *efforts*. For we are not vowed to the attainment of perfection; but we are vowed to the *striving* after it!

It is really heart-breaking to hear old religious grumble and say, "Oh, I get nothing out of meditation," or "I get nothing out of spiritual reading," or "I get nothing out of this devotion and that." What a horribly false concept of the spiritual life! The question is never, "What do I get out of it?" but always, "What do I put into it?" It is efforts that count, and only efforts; not effects! So as long as you can sincerely say, "I am trying," you are safe, you are saintly. And let me add that the more you put into things, the more you will get out of them!

Therefore, remember, Sister, shadows do not prove that the sun is set, but that it is shining; trial and tribulation do not mean that God has left you, but that He loves you; temptation is not a sign of failure, but of success. Lucifer does not tempt his own! Remember also that Our Lord *fell* on the way to Calvary. That is significant. So courage and confidence; on and up; you are not one but two!

It was one of your own who said something to the effect that if I can keep an ever ready "NUNC COEPI" on my lips and in my heart until the Compline bell rings for me to say, "NUNC DIMITTIS," all will be well. Indeed, all will be very, very well!

So say what Mary said when stage-fright tends to ruin your rôle. Say, "Ecce ancilla Domini."—Can you paraphrase that, Sister? Have you caught its full significance? It is a cry of confidence and perfect humility. It means: "Here I am, Lord. We two will make a success of this. Do with me what you will. I am the clay, You the Potter; fashion me to your own design." That is humility, Sister, true humility; for it is a recognition of God's

sovereignty and an admission of our own utter subjection to Him who is supreme.

With real humility always comes unfaltering confidence; for it gives us a realization that we are never alone; that our lives are a co-operative affair. We cannot do without God; and, due to His condescending decree, as things now stand, He cannot do without us! Isn't that enough to "screw your courage to the sticking point?"—God depends on you! Who is there, then, who would not laugh in the devil's face and say, "Ecce ancilla Domini. Possumus!"

That "Ecce" is very like your "Fiat"; for it is a word God has said and a word God loves. Through His Psalmist, Christ said, "Ecce venio" and the salvation of the world was a promise. Mary said, "Ecce ancilla" and the Savior of the world took flesh. Pilate said, "Ecce homo" and the Lamb of God was led to the slaughter. I say, "Ecce Agnus Dei" and commemorate Calvary. You say, "Ecce ancilla" and The Great Drama of the Redeeming goes on!

What an exaltation is yours! You have been made a co-redemptrix of the world. Accent that prefix, Sister; it is essential! God is with you in this wondrous work. You *can* do it—you *two*!

Theologians tell us, "*Faciendi quod in se est, Deus non denegat gratiam.*" Which can be freely translated as "God is faithful to the faithful," or "God greatly helps those who really help themselves!" That is the point, Sister. If we do our part, God will do His. He has never yet left any earnest soul in the lurch; and it is too late for Him to begin now. I think St. Ignatius has settled this whole puzzling question of our part and God's

part, by saying, "Work as if it all depended on you; pray as if it all depended on God." Which is only an amplification and clarification of St. Benedict's "Ora et labora"; and I can never stress that conjunction too much!

I do not know, nor do I claim to know, how much is man's part and how much is God's in a meritorious act. But I do know that man's part is essential! May it not be well illustrated by the consecration of the bread and wine in a Mass? It most certainly is God who works that miracle of transubstantiation; but it would never be worked at my Mass unless I pronounced the words and meant them! That's how essential I am to the Sacrifice. And your "Ecce," your "Fiat," your "Possumus," said and meant are just as essential to the miracle of transforming a woman from the world into a Madonna, a Mystical Mother of Christ.

You have said them, I know; and you meant them. But, because "some days must be dark and dreary," because you are still a woman in the flesh, because in the secret depths of every soul there lurks a trace of cowardice, and most especially because the devil *is not dead*, I whisper loudly, "Be confident! Be confident! You can play the part and play it perfectly; for God *is* God and you are not one but two!"

"Move Into The Light"

My next whisper is a stage direction, Sister. For just as an actress will lose the force of many of her lines and mar the perfection of her whole performance unless she avoids the deep shadows, so you will fail in your portrayal of the Mother of God unless you move

into the light. I go further and say you will not perform at all unless you live in the light; and I expect you to know that I am talking about the Light of Faith.

There is an antiphon in the Office of the Blessed Mother which I love, Sister. It runs "*Beata es Maria, quae credidisti...*" "Blessed art thou, Mary, because thou hast believed." I love it because it tells us so much of Mary's life and is so true to our life and way of living. You know, Sister, there are some people who write and talk as if Mary had the Beatific Vision all her days; they seem to make her actually omniscient. If these people are right, the Gospels, of course, are wrong. For as you remember from your third line Mary sought Jesus and finding Him, spoke a motherly rebuke. When He replied Mary did *not* understand. That is what St. Luke tells us: "And they (Mary and Joseph) *understood not* the word that He spoke unto them." So you can see why I am going to go on loving my antiphon; it is taken from the Gospel!

Mary did not see, she believed! When she bent over the Babe of Bethlehem do you think for a moment that her eyes pierced humanity and rested on divinity? When she bathed and clothed and fed her little Boy do you think that her eyes penetrated the body and rested on the Godhead? When she saw the sweat stand out on the young Carpenter's brow do you think that Mary was seeing the All pure Spirit? Yes, she was! As much as you and I, with our mortal eyes, penetrate the species of Bread and Wine and see the Body and Blood of Him who was her Boy! Of course not, Sister! Mary saw a Baby at Bethlehem, a Boy at Nazareth and a Blood-soaked Man on Calvary! but Mary believed! And when I whis-

per, "Move into the light," I am saying, "Be like Mary."

The religious life is a life of Faith, or it is utter folly. Oh, the superficial may say, "Not so. It is an easy life. Look at the security one has. No worries about rents, work or wages; no worry about clothing, food or bills; no worry about dentists, doctors or old age. One has all that any woman works for; and much more than many a woman gets. She has a roof over her head. There is always a meal for the table. She is always respectably clothed and has the homage of all who know her. And who dares deny it?"

I don't know what you would say to such a one, Sister. But I know what I would say. Looking at things materialistically, this one is right. We have all she says. We don't have to worry as many of our brothers and sisters do, and as some of our mothers and fathers did. We don't have to count our pennies so that we will have enough for the rent; nor wonder where the next meal is coming from. No. And there never was, and never will be, a Social Security Act or an Old Age Pension to provide for the down going years equal to our Religious profession. Materialistically speaking she is right; but life is not materialistic! And a woman has deeper longings than for a roof over her head, a meal on the table and a dress on her back; for she is a woman! That is, a being of body and soul with a deep, deep instinct for motherhood. Finally, security is not happiness; and happiness is what we all long for.

Oh, I know that there are some few who lead materialistic lives in convents; but they are not nuns! They are souls who do not live in the light. They are women of the world

garbed in the robes of religious. And in their heart of hearts they are far from happy. A prisoner sentenced for life has security; but who would call him a blessed being? Well, a religious who does not live by Faith, is a prisoner sentenced for life.

No, there is too much confinement physically, mentally and morally; too much restraint of liberty; too great a demand for control; too much repression of our ever assertive self required in religious life for anyone to be happy without living in the light. Then look at the emptiness of it all! If we are not working to build up the Mystical Body of Christ on earth and our own Eternal Mansions in Heaven, what in the name of reason are we doing? What can we show for the years?

What folly it would be, Sister, to lock yourself away, cut your hair, robe yourself in medieval garb and deny yourself all that is dearest and deepest to your womanly heart, unless you meant to be more than a person who was socially and economically secure. Oh, don't be a fool! Move out of the shadows. Be a Mystical Mary, and see all things and all persons in the light. Be a modern Madonna of radiant and radiating Faith!

Yes, I said *all things and all persons*. For I think that many of us save our Faith for meditation and the Mass. We actually try to live our religious lives by halves; and the results are pitiable. We see God in the Host and hold converse with Him in our prayer; but then turn around and see only women in our superiors, inferiors and equals, and only what is human in all other people. We see the hand of God in the happenings of History, but only the hand of man in the happenings of the

present moment. We see the divine in the sinners who have already been canonized, but only the human in the sinners by our side who are striving to be saints. We admit the virtue of those who are dead; grant the goodness and the godliness of our founders and foundresses, and the heroic holiness of their immediate companions; but what do we concede to those who are alive and who are carrying on the same work, urged on by the same love, and anxious for the same ends? What do we grant to our present superiors as they slave for the glory of God and the good of our own individual souls? What do we admit of the courage and the passionate love of those noble hearts that are throbbing beneath the cloaks of those beside us? Indeed we can all move out into the light! It will help us see things as they really are! God's chosen ones are at our elbow and we see only mortals whom we do not like. What a shame!

The spirit of Faith is not indigenous to our times, Sister. The Twentieth Century, and very especially the Twentieth Century in America, has not charged the atmosphere in which we move with ever ready belief. Far from it! In very truth the cast of mind given to the generations of the day is not the cast of credence. Unbelief is all around us. A certain cynicism and unwillingness to credit anything but what comes under the senses is the trend of the times. And, Sister, you and I were brought up in that atmosphere! We must remember that no one is immune to environment. We must also remember that in every act of Faith an exercise of the will is called for. So we must go to work!

Yes, I said, "work," Sister; for I want you to become an artist, and that calls for work.

How does one acquire the art of playing the piano? Isn't it a case of practise? And if one will become expert with the brush, must she not practise? How did you acquire your skill in teaching, nursing, talking, thinking, cooking, sewing, or whatever else you are adept at? Was it not practise! practise! practise! Well, the same holds true for Faith. If you would be a perfect double, if you would live in the light, if you would be a Madonna, you must practise Faith.

Yes, I said "practise Faith." You know, Sister, there are more fallacies flying around in the ascetic realm than there are dust-particles dancing in a sunbeam. I can almost hear many saying with that incredulous, and supposedly withering, lift of the voice, "Practise Faith?—Why, Faith is a gift!" And so it is. Just like life to a baby. But if we don't feed that baby we know what will happen to that gift of life! Faith is a gift like the power to think, the power to will, or the power to remember. But you know what happens to those powers if we do not exercise and develop them. Faith is a gift, but not a gift like a dead diamond (precious and priceless though it is!) but a gift more on the order of a rare and delicate plant that must be watered and watched and carefully cultivated. And just as a plant needs the energy of the sun if it is to live, so your Faith needs the energy of your constant exercise if it is not to die.

Do We Believe What We Profess To Believe?

Come, Sister, let us be practical. Do we believe what we profess to believe? We say the "Credo" but do we live it? Is there a dis-

crepancy between our Act of Faith and our Lives of Faith? Let us see. . . .

What does the doctrine of the Mystical Body say about your Sisters in religion?—All of them, both those in office and those not. Do you think of them, and speak of them, and act towards them as sacred individuals, members of that Body of which God is Head? Does the sparkle in every human eye say the same thing to you as does the flickering of the sanctuary lamp? Does it say, "Christ is here?" It should! Do you actually believe that you yourself are a member of that Body? Have you a vibrant conviction that whatever you do, be it good or bad, big or small, in public or in private, affects God who is your Head? Have you the persuasion in the very core of your being that your life and the way you live it means much to everyone who has been Baptized and even more to Him who instituted Baptism?

Does this consciousness of your incorporation in Christ affect your whole outlook on life and on all things in life? Is this doctrine just a lifeless bit of dogma or is it a dynamic driving force motivating your every action, permeating your every thought and dominating your whole existence? It is only by answering such questions honestly that you will ever be able to answer the above question adequately: Is there a discrepancy between what you actually believe and what you profess to believe?

Test yourself, Sister. As you stand in the class-room, the hospital, asylum, home or convent, is it humanity that you see before you and around you—just boys and girls, men and women, mere mortals—or do you look more deeply and see members of Christ? I know

that I am giving you a searching test, Sister; but I also know that very few of us realize that there is only ONE Christ—the WHOLE Christ! I want you to realize that we *don't* believe in real earnest what we profess to believe; and I want that realization to energize you and stimulate you to real action!

God gave us the gift of Faith; but that only gives us the 'posse,' as the theologians say. It gives us the power, the ability, the possibility; *we* have to reduce that possibility to actuality; *we* have to do the believing. God gave us the 'posse'; but what we want is the 'facile posse,' the ease, the agility, the expertness of the professional, the perfection of the artist. And the only way we will ever acquire it is by doing with the gift of Faith what we did with the power to walk. We learned to walk, Sister, by walking! We crept along on all fours at first, later when we stood up on our own two feet and essayed a few steps, we fell; but we kept on getting up and trying again. Today we can walk with ease and grace. Today we are stable on our feet. Why? Because we kept on trying! The application is obvious, Sister: Let us start creeping today, in this matter of Faith, creeping along on all fours; tomorrow we may be able to stand! Let us move out into the light and do away with the humiliating discrepancy that exists between our Act of Faith and our lives of Faith.

It Brings Peace

Acquire that art, Sister; and you have won peace! Yes, true and interminable peace. For that light makes all people lovable, life very livable, and all things bearable.

I have a passion for plain speaking and

utter honesty, Sister. Let us indulge it by saying that the second Commandment of the Law is the harder Commandment to fulfill. People are not lovable in themselves; yet we are commanded to love them as ourselves. Don't you see the impossibility? How can we love an inconsiderate, unappreciative, ever fault-finding superior? How can we love a disagreeable, destructively critical, small-minded and suspicious inferior? How can we love the envious, the jealous, the ever irritable? How the haughty or the hypocritical? How the smooth-tongued, ever-smiling, ambitious sycophant? How love the soured and shrivelled-souled? It can't be done! Such people are not only psychological incompatibilities, they are perpetual irritants. Looked at in the light of day, they are impossible. But there stands the second Commandment! What are we to do?—Turn on the light! The light of Faith!

Will that light change the people I have just described? Not a bit! They are all that I have called them, and most likely will remain the same; but we will have changed! We will see them differently. We will see them as members of the Body of Christ. We will remember that God made them and that God died for them. That will be enough. That will make them most lovable, even though they remain not the least bit likable!

As you see, Sister, this is not a process of going blind; it is simply the practice of opening our eyes! Anyone can see the faults and defects and glaring humanness in people; it takes doubles for Mary to see their divineness! But I must insist that it takes *practice!*

And as for *things*—How can we say, "Dominus est" when Injustice levels us to the dust?

How can we say, "It is the Lord" when Treachery and Deceit rob us of hard won honors? How can we say, "Fiat" when Failure dogs our every day and ruins our every effort? We won't; for we can't; unless we live in the Light! and see all things through His eyes!

Emile Mersch, S.J., who has written the classic on the Mystical Body, titling it, THE WHOLE CHRIST, says that we never read History aright unless we see in its very event a "coming of Christ." How true that is! And how it again shows us the discrepancy that exists between our actual belief and our profession. How many of us look at the big and the little events in our ordinary everyday lives as "comings of Christ?" How many? Yet we say we believe in Divine Providence! How many of us have vision keen enough to see in a reprimand or a removal, in a misunderstanding, a misinterpretation, or even a misrepresentation, a "coming of Christ"? When disappointment comes, and all our hopes are blighted and all our world goes black, do we see these as gifts held out to us by One whose palms are pierced?

Don't let me discourage you, Sister. For that would be doing the devil's work; and I don't want to do that! I have been bald, perhaps even a bit brutal in my bluntness, but until we are persuaded ('persuaded' I say, not 'convinced'; for I want action!) that we must creep on all fours in this matter of Faith, and keep on creeping until we are able to stand up and walk, I'm afraid the well founded lament of many an experienced Superior will grow louder. They say, "The Spirit of Faith is dying"; and they are talking about their own subjects!

It is for you and me to keep it alive. And oh! what a Model you have! Look at Mary's Faith. She brought forth a tiny Babe; and you know where! Yet she looked into human eyes and adored God. She had to hold that tiny Body close to her breast, hurry out across that sea of sand, called "the Wilderness of Shur," and ride into the exile of Egypt;—and it took more Faith to say "Dominus est" to that event than it took to look into eyes that had been lit from her own and say, "This is God!" Some thirty years later she had to scuff through blood-stained dust and follow a rabble up a skull-shaped hill to see her Boy nailed between two thieves;—and to repeat the "Fiat" of the Annunciation to the words of her Jesus as He made her Mother of the Mystical Body took the greatest Faith of all. How could she do it?—Only by looking at things in the Light!

Your Greatest Tribute

Sister, we are living only to give glory to God; and let me tell you that you can give Him no greater tribute than to look up when things are blackest and say, "I believe! I believe! I believe! Thou art my God." You cannot touch the Heart of Christ more tenderly or more deeply than by saying, "I believe!" when you do not and cannot understand. We are surrounded by the incomprehensible, Sister but we are also immersed in God. And what He longs for is a profession of belief.

Oh, how our Jesus loves Faith! Don't you remember His words to Thomas? Thomas saw and then adored; our Christ did not bless his adoration. No indeed. Instead He said that *we* were the blessed ones; we who do not see, and yet, believe! Read your Gos-

pels, Sister, and see how He was touched by every profession of real Faith. "If I can but touch the hem of His garments" said one; "Lord I am not worthy," said another, "Say but the word and my servant shall be healed." "Lord, if thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean," said a third. And all three called forth miracles. Why?—Because Faith is a tribute of trust! It shows that we believe, not in an argument, but in a Person! A Person we know and love.

Let it be said of her double, then, what we say of the Original: "Beata es, Maria, quae credidisti. . . ." Blessed art thou, Mary, *because thou hast believed. . . .* And let it be said especially when things are blackest. It can be done, Sister, if you will work. So start creeping today; tomorrow you may be able to walk! Move out into the light and you will save yourself much misery as you give God great glory!

In the first booklet we insisted most on what you mean to men; in this we are insisting more on what you mean to God. But I cannot drop this fundamental matter of Faith without telling you that by moving into the light you reflect, radiate and diffuse that light all about you, and thus help men.

The world today, Sister, has gone cynical on virtue. It does not believe it exists. And when we find corruption in every stratum of society, we can understand the cynicism. However, I have always thrilled to the hush, the awe and the reverential respect that comes over a group whenever two Sisters walk by. What a tribute. Your humble comportment is one sermon to which the cynical world gives ear. It sneers at the very idea of poverty, purity and humility until you walk by, then the sneer vanishes and silence speaks its tri-

bute to something it clearly recognizes but does not fully understand. The world admits that you are poor, pure and humble, Sister; and it is moved to soul-deep reverence by your very passing. It realizes that abnegation, discipline, self-control and self-denial are not vanished from the earth; and it is forced to admit that Jesus Christ did not die in vain.

Keep on preaching that sermon, Sister, for our sorry, sin-sodden world needs it. It needs the sight of the Madonna! The sight of one who is pure virgin and loving mother, of one who combines in her person the adorable chastity of a solitary star with the winning warmth of the earth's best flowers, blending what we admire with what we love, uniting what is of Heaven with what is of earth, giving us what the shepherds saw, the Magi revered and what Egypt, Nazareth and even the rough Roman soldiery respected—the Madonna—the pure, poor, sweet, lowly, lovely and lovable Mother of God. Give us that same sight, Sister, and show us that virtue is the crown of character, that humans are more than human, that they are partly divine. Prove with a proof irrefutable that Christ still lives and His Mystical Body grows. And thus give our blackly pessimistic world what it has not got, but what it badly needs;—give it HOPE! For Faith, you know, is “the substance of things to be hoped for.” Walk the earth, then, Sister, show us the Madonna and give us hope for heaven. For by showing yourself a Mother you show us the Son! And He is the One our sorry world needs to see.

“Don't Be So Self-Conscious!”

No, Sister, I am not repeating myself when I whisper, “Don't be so self-conscious.” I am

not now guarding you against shyness and stage-fright. That is finished. I am warning you against something worse—

One time I described a double as a person without a personality; an individual without individuality; an ego completely clouded so that the Star might shine. Most of you will catch my meaning immediately for most of you have some knowledge of the stage and screen. You know that a double can never think of self! She must study the Original assiduously, and reproduce her without a flaw. She must be so perfect in her portrayal that people seeing her will think they are looking at the Star. You see what that means, Sister; it means that everything that is distinctively you must be submerged; everything that specifies, differentiates and characterizes you as you must go; everything that is utterly personal, and peculiarly yours must be denied, so that Mary may be seen! In short, you must be unconscious of *self* if you would Mother the Mystical Christ.

At a rehearsal of Handel's masterpiece, that moving, majestic oratorio, "Messiah," a contralto soloist began the well known passage, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Her voice was rich, warm and true, her technique faultless, her range extensive and her timber good; but despite all these excellences, something was lacking.

She brought the solo to its dramatic close. The orchestra came to rest. And our contralto stood in the center of the stage sure of herself, satisfied with herself and very conscious of *self*. She looked toward the concert master confidently, expectantly, awaiting his praise. But instead, with face flushed with angry excitement, he rushed over to her and shaking a

finger accusingly in her face while lightning flashed from his eyes, he almost shrieked, "You don't know that your Redeemer liveth! You are not thinking of Him at all! You are thinking of self! Now do it all over again and tell me about your Redeemer; I don't want to hear about you."

The music began again. This time the soloist did not sing from her throat; but her heart and mind opened and found expression in song, telling the concert master and all who listened, in tones that were vibrant with faith and hope and triumph that "her Redeemer indeed was living!" When she finished this second time, she stood as if entranced; and the master held out both hands in tribute, and in a voice choked with emotion said, "You're a soloist when your're not self-conscious!"

Sister, I am somewhat slow in stating my precise point, for I am puzzled; and for long, long years have been puzzled by the frightening paradox of those who, with a generosity that appalls, will fling down their whole lives in one grand gesture of loyalty and love to God, then become so miserly and mean as to seek their tiny selves in trifles! An actress that does not forget herself ruins her acting; a double who seeks herself will not double long; then how can a nun claim to be a nun and yet be selfish?

They tell me that nothing is small in the religious life. I think they are totally wrong. I think everything is small. And if you ask me just what is the agony of life—not only of the religious life, but of all life—I would say: The crushing fact that nothing is big!

What do you or I do that is not trifling? What can we do that could ever justily be called 'big'? If you have never felt this small-

ness, Sister, then read History, both Ecclesiastical and Secular, and learn that of the billions on billions who have labored and loved and lived and died, who have sweated and strained and broken their very hearts in an effort to achieve immortality, there remain on the record of the professional historian a paltry 5000 names; and about these few only the professional knows or cares!

Of course we are small, and our whole world is small. What is this madness, then, that seizes us and fills us with ambitions to get ahead, stand high, be a favorite, gain recognition, win the approval of those in authority and the applause of those who are not? What is the fever that runs through our veins making us so sensitive to slight, so hungry for praise, so positively gluttonous for notice and appreciation? Why are we, who are consecrated to the glory of God, so anxious for self-aggrandizement? Why is it that we, who have tossed everything worth while aside, now stoop to pick up the worthless plaudits of this little group or that?

I tell you, Sister, it is a perplexing, paradoxical puzzle. To say that Adam lives in me and that Eve is not dead in you is humiliatingly true, but it is not a solution to the puzzle. For I want to know why they are not dead! Is it all a part of the fact that our Act of Faith differs from our life of Faith? Is it that we have memorized our lines without learning their meaning? Or is it that we do not live in the Light?

We must remember that the difference between the doubles on the stage or screen and ourselves is that we have signed a life's contract, while they only double in spots. Yes, we have obligated ourselves to double twenty-

four hours a day, seven day a week, fifty-two weeks a year, till death do us part! Or rather "till death do us *unite*" to the Ones for whom we double! Now, Sister, can you imagine Mary being Mother of Jesus for a few hours every day and then being her own selfish self the rest of the times? Can you picture her at any time doing anything but seeking the good of her Boy? Doesn't the very idea of Mary doing things just for Mary, of Mary thinking only of Mary, of Mary seeking her own comfort, convenience and self-advancement seem grotesque? Why, it grates on our very sensibilities and shocks our nerves. Well, you are her double! And the only big thing in your life is He who was her whole life!

To put the puzzle another way, let me ask you why it is that we who are capable of the big virtues seem utterly incapable of the little ones? Why is it that we who would die for a dogma, cannot keep our temper in a theological discussion? Why is it that you who astound the world with your initial sacrifices, cannot bear the slightest reflection on your capabilities? Why is that we who have given up self in the courageous prodigality of our religious professions, seek self in the little group in which we live and move? It is beyond me. Can you account for it?

I know that if we *live* the doctrine of the Mystical Body, this will not be! I know that if we become Christ-conscious and Mary-conscious we will cease being self-conscious. Look, Sister! You left home to become a saint; no other reason will justify your act. Now a saint is one who dies to self that Christ might live in him or her; a saint is one who thinks only of the Master and His interests, entirely forgetting self and all self-interests; a saint

is one who has fallen so deeply in love that life ceases to be something and becomes Some One! Are you achieving the end for which you left home?

Before you answer that question ask yourself how you use the events, the ordinary happenings, pleasant and unpleasant, expected and unexpected, exciting and unexciting, of your every day. What do you see in them? Is it an opportunity to become more and more like the Mother of God? If you say, "Yes" you have answered the original question affirmatively. If you cannot say "Yes," then let me tell you that unless you use these *little* things to sanctify your soul and glorify God, you will *never become big!*

Yes, Sister, I repeat: There are little things in the religious life; and it is only in them and through them and with them that we can achieve the only big thing in life—sanctity! And I must add with sadness that there are little persons and little poisons in the religious life. There are jealousies and angers and envies; there are tale-bearings, and criticisms and idle curiosities; there are the falsely ambitious, the social climbers and the sycophants; there are the dilettantes in asceticism, mysticism and love of God. But why go on? sum it all up by saying: There are the *self-conscious!*

Know well, Sister, that the self-conscious never become great actresses. Is the Great Drama of the Redeeming going to be ruined because of your self-consciousness? You are face to face with a sublime challenge, Sister; do not turn your back! God needs YOU! So let self die and be everlastingly buried.

Look again at your Model. Did she think of self when she hurried into the hill country,

despite the fact that she had just conceived God by God! Did she think of self when Elizabeth greeted her with "Blessed art thou amongst woman"? You know she didn't! The answer that leaped to her lips was, "*Magnificat anima mea Dominum.*" Did she think of self when she set out for Bethlehem despite the fact that the birth of Him who had created Bethlehem, Juda and all the world was only a matter of hours off? Did she think of self when she hurried into Egypt, flying from a petty king, even though the King of kings was in her arms? Did she think of self when she stood 'neath the Cross of Christ and became the co-redemptrix of the race of men and Mother of the Mystical Body? Did she ever think of self?

And now that she is in Heaven of whom does she think? Is it of self? No. Never! It is of you and me and all the other millions who are or should be His! Yes, of you and me; for we are her Christ! She thought only and always of her Christ while she was on earth; she thinks only and always of Him now that she is in Heaven; and since there is only One Christ—the Whole Christ—she, the Queen of Angels and Saints, is thinking of you and me! Sister, Sister, don't be self-conscious or you'll never be like Mary!

Mary's solo was the Magnificat. She sang it from the Annunciation to the Assumption; and she goes on singing it in Heaven. That is your solo, too, Sister. Magnify the Lord. Make Him great! Greatly known, greatly loved, greatly served! Sing that solo well! And let me echo the concert master of the "Messiah" by saying: "You'll be a great soloist if you're not self-conscious!"

“Your Gestures Must Be Generous!”

I think you will see that my whispers have had connection with the words that you were to learn. I whispered, “Thank you” for your “Fiat”; “Be confident” so that you can say, “Ecce ancilla”; “Move into the Light” and “Don’t be so self-conscious” to aid you with your “Magnificat.” And I could go on with other whispers to help you with your other lines, but Mary was more magnificent in her silence than she was in her speech; so I must help you reproduce that magnificence. I do so by whispering, “Your gestures must be generous”; and by that I mean you must sacrifice.

There is no silence in all the world like unto the silence of Mary on Calvary. Never was she more magnificent, never more the valiant woman, never more “Madonna mia” than when she was Mater Dolorosa. “A woman crushed in silence” became your Mother and mine that awful afternoon as she offered her heart as sheath for the seventh sword. In that third dread hour she ceased being just the Mother of “the Nazarene” and became the Mother of all men; for His death was our birth, and the corpse of the Physical Jesus was the cradle of the Mystical Christ. Mary was indeed “A Woman Wrapped in Silence” but a silence that was pregnant with salvation. She was not of the audience on Calvary. No! She was the co-redemptrix with her Christ. She was enacting the leading feminine rôle in the Drama of Redemption. Her gestures that day were not merely generous, they were generosity!

And that Drama, Sister, was the prelude to the one in which you act. The Great Drama of the Redeeming goes on because Christ, the Vine, engrafted us, the wild branches, in Him-

self when He so generously stretched Himself on Calvary's cross-beamed trellis. And it is the Whole Christ who now redeems! He, the Head by the merits of strict justice; we, the members, by the merits of His condescending Mercy. He has willed that we be His Body; and it was the Blood of His Body that originally saved the world; so it is the blood of His Mystical Body that goes on saving it! That is the truest of true theology, Sister, and it means that if the world is not saved, the fault will not lie with Jesus or His Mother; they played their parts to perfection. The fault will lie with you and me and all their doubles for not making our gestures generous; for not being willing to bleed!

Isn't it the paradox of paradoxes and the glory of all glories that "something is wanting to the Passion of Christ" who satisfied "super-abundantly"; and that we can "fill up what is wanting"? That's what your life means. That's what life is for. We are here to redeem the world. I, by doubling for Jesus, and you, by being like the Woman crushed in magnificent silence. In that sense, and in that sense alone, there is nothing small in the religious life. In that sense, and in that sense alone, we are great. In that sense, and in that sense alone, life is lovable! Generosity and Sacrifice are our body and soul. We died to the world to live to Christ; we now die as Christ that the world might live. What a romance, then, is The Great Drama of the Redeeming! Nothing but love, love, love! Love for God and love for our fellow man.

God is immutable, Sister; and here is your proof: The *motif* of Creation's Drama was love. The *motif* of the Drama of Redemption was the same. And the *motif* of The Great

Drama of the Redeeming is identical. It is LOVE!

And how are we to show that love?—As Mary did! As Jesus did! How are we to redeem the world?—As Mary did! As Jesus did! How are we to enact the Drama?—You by sheathing seven swords in your soul; I by having my heart lance-pierced. Jesus and Mary chose the sacrifice of suffering to redeem the world, Sister; we can choose no other.

Once again we have to face the humiliating paradox that we, who are capable of really great sacrifices—and have made them!—are seemingly incapable of the little ones. Is it not because we have failed to cultivate the *spirit of sacrifice*? How few of us have acquired a *readiness* to suffer! How very, very few have developed a Calvary keenness that makes of the myriad little irritations of the day drops of blood to fill the Chalice of Redemption to overflowing! Something is wanting to that Chalice, Sister. St. Paul tells us so. You must help to fill it. With what—big, dramatic sacrifices?—No! but with tiny drops of self-control; an impatient gesture checked, a cutting remark choked back, a word of criticism swallowed, a rising of envy quelled, a thought of pride, self-complacency or vanity smothered, a yielding to the ways and the wishes of another. These are the sacrifices that count; not because they are big, but precisely because they are *small*! Nothing but straws; but they show the way the wind is blowing, and they tell that the soul has conquered self and won the *spirit of sacrifice*! It is the spirit we lack, Sister, not the sacrifices!

Women are such wantons in the question of sacrifice they shame heroic men. So true is

that that if you ask me to sum up a mother in one word I would say, "Sacrifice." Mary has lately been called "The woman Wrapped in Silence," she could more justly be styled "The Lady Lost in Sacrifice." And if you are to double perfectly, you must be the same!

Ah, Sister, who can equal our initial sacrifices?—No one. Who can die and yet live?—No one but you and me and our partners in the Service of Love. That is what our entrance meant—a living death! That is what our professions meant. Unquestionably our initial sacrifices were complete. We gave up all; and gave it up willingly. We set out for religious life expecting hard things; and we found them! In the early days we greeted them with a smile; but what has come over us in these later years? Why is it that they can say: "Scratch a monk and you'll find a man; scratch him twice and you'll find a beast"? And why can it be perfectly paralleled with: "Scratch a nun and you'll find a female; scratch her twice and you'll find a feline?" Why are we so seemingly incapable of little sacrifices? Why do we so often forget our rôles and step out of character when touched? Where are our generous gestures—arms flung wide like Him who hung on the Cross or like her who received Him from that Cross?

There are our Models! And they teach us the startling truth that the world is saved by those who do nothing! What did Jesus do on Calvary?—Nothing but hang on a Cross and pray. And what did Mary do but simply stand beneath it? That is why we say that the world's salvation in this dark moment of history lies with Poor Clares and Discalced Carmelites more than with Dictators and

Presidents. That is why Mercy will be won for men by Little Sisters of the Poor and Sisters of Providence more than by bombs and battleships. That is why redemption will come through women garbed in white, black, brown and blue, rather than through men uniformed as soldiers, sailors or marines. The world will be saved today in just the same way that it was saved two thousand years ago—by those who do nothing but suffer and sacrifice.

Oh, Sister, what an opportunity is yours! You can be a Victim for a victimized world. You can be a woman by a blood-drenched Cross. You can be a Madonna to whom the agonizing Christ can say: "Woman, behold thy son." Christ needs you, Sister—the Whole Christ, God and man. *Hor He is on the Cross!* Won't you be His "Madonna mia"? Won't you cultivate the spirit of sacrifice? Won't you show the world a woman who bleeds? That is the kind of a woman Jesus needs—one who will be co-redemptrix; "et sine sanguinis effusione nulla fit remissio!"

What am I asking—that you go to martyrdom?—Yes, Sister, exactly! The martyrdom endured by Mary, the martyrdom of the "Ordinary Way." And that is my last whisper. I say:

"Carry Yourself Majestically!"

I whisper 'majestically' for Mary is a Queen. I say it also because the way you are to walk is *El Camino Real*—The King's Highway—trodden by Jesus, Mary and Joseph, The Royal Road of Nazareth. The Beaten Path of ordinary everyday routine! That is the one way to martyrdom for the vast majority of us who have said, "Voveo."

I return to an idea I touched in the early pages as I say that if you would be a real co-redemptrix, a true Madonna, a perfect double, you've got to be a saint. I know you realize this and I know you have already said, "*Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum*"—"My heart is ready, O Lord, my heart is ready. Yes, ready for the seven swords that won for Mary her diadem of Queen; ready to sheathe every blade You see fit to plunge into this breast of mine; ready to become Your co-redemptrix." But like most of us who have risen to the challenge, you want to know HOW! You want some one to show you the WAY. And I tell you that He and She have already shown it! Jesus said, "I am the WAY"; and where Jesus walked, Mary followed!

Stripped of all allegory, what does that mean?—It means Sister, that sanctity does NOT consist in the extraordinary! It means that if you and I earnestly strive to keep our Rule, make a real effort to be unflinchingly loyal to our Constitution, faithful to the customs of the house and obedient to our Superiors, we have arrived! It means that sanctity lies in sweeping floors, washing dishes, making beds, answering bells for this, that and the other duty of the day, in living the humdrum, unexciting, uninviting, dull, drab, dreading routine of everyday religious life!

I never tire on this theme, Sister. I've put it in books and booklets, in sermons, conferences and conversations; and I would that I could enlist a whole army of preachers to say nothing but: "*Sanctity for the ordinary run of mortals lies in the ordinary!*"

Why is it so necessary to shout this?—Because our libraries are filled with "Lives of

Saints" by hagiographers who shout the opposite. May God be merciful to such authors! They have done the devil's work by discouraging hordes of wholesome people; they have led countless souls into illusion.

Look at the Gospels. There we have "Lives of Saints" written by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, He who is Substantial Sanctity! What does He tell us of Jesus, Mary and Joseph at Nazareth? Why, their lives were so ordinary that Joseph was known as "the village carpenter," Jesus as "the carpenter's son" and Mary as "Mother of Jesus."

What a revelation that is! The three most saintly souls in all God's great creation led *normal, human* lives! What a comfort and an inspiration! For almost two decades now we have heard very much about "the little way" of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus. Many have written and spoken on it as if it were a new revelation. It is not. It could not be. Theresa came nineteen hundred years too late to give us that. "The little way for little souls" was walked first by the little Child whom little Theresa loved. It was Jesus Christ and His Mother Mary along with that giant of genuine holiness, the good and gentle St. Joseph, who made the revelation that you and I must win our sanctity not by *heroics*, but by being heroic enough to be ordinary always and in all ways. It is *not* ecstasies, private revelation and miracles; not by being lifted off the ground in prayer, but by praying and working with your two feet on the ground with your heart and mind with Christ—the Whole Christ, Head and members—that you will become "Madonna mia," a saint!

Go in spirit to Nazareth and stand by Miriam's Well; it is there this moment. The

same to which she came twice a day to fetch water for "the carpenter and his son." Stand there and see her come through the mists of twenty centuries and learn the way to be a co-redemptrix!

The Madonna of art is one thing; the Mother in real life quite another. Our Mary carried water, washed, mended, got meals, swept floors, tidied rooms, made beds, cleaned house just as your mother did and mine. She lived the ordinary life of ordinary mortals and she lived it in an ordinary way. That is the lesson of Nazareth. It clearly states that the only rungs for a Jacob's ladder are formed from the duties of one's state in life!

Grace means sanctity, Sister; and very particularly the "grace of state"; the grace given you this day, this hour, this moment for your particular task. Father Caussade, S.J., coined a significant phrase in that golden little book of his on Abandonment. When he speaks of "The Sacrament of the present moment" he is speaking of richest reality. When he exhorts you to receive it fruitfully, he is giving you the truest secret to sanctity. Cooperation with the grace of state given us from moment to moment in our ordinary lives means our own sanctification and the salvation of the world. And if anyone doubt it, let him or her read the Gospels!

When Jesus began to work wonders and to preach, what did the Nazarenes say? They looked at one another in puzzlement and asked, "How came this man by his wisdom and miracles? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary?" Catch the full force of those questions, Sister. Remember Nazareth was a small town. Everybody knew everybody else and everybody else's business!

Yet, after approximately a quarter of a century of this shoulder to shoulder and eye to eye living, Jesus and Mary appeared so ordinary because of their ordinary lives, that their townfolk were puzzled by Jesus' learning. Our Christ spent twenty to thirty years teaching us how to live. He gave eighteen hours to His Passion and Death! Hear the voices from Miriam's Well, Sister; they say: "We are the WAY—the Royal Way—the way of ordinary routine!"

Not In The Extraordinary

Tread the Beaten Path, Sister, with courage, confidence and consistency. Do your ordinary every day duties with Faith, fidelity and fortitude. Look not for, and aspire not to, the extraordinary.

I am not denying that some saints had the extraordinary. No. But I am insisting that sanctity is NOT in the extraordinary. Francis of Assisi without the stigmata would still be *St. Francis of Assisi*; Bernard of Clairvaux without his ecstasies, miracles and divine visitations would still be *St. Bernard of Clairvaux*. These gifts are not absolute signs of sanctity. Indeed no! Judas most likely worked miracles. Mary Immaculate did not. Look, Sister, I don't think there is any question as to the reality of the apparitions of Our Lady at La Salette. I think it is true that Melaine and Maximin saw Mary Immaculate and heard her speak. What a gift! But you can be sure that there will be no Postulator for the cause of poor Maximin; nor will any Devil's Advocate ever have to work against the cause of Melaine. No. The gifts and sanctity *are* separable. The extraordinary may be supernatural; it may also be, and often has

been, preternatural!—the work of the devil. Simon Magus did some marvelous things, you must remember; but he'll never be canonized!

Ah, who can tell the number of those who have been deceived or discouraged by this killing fallacy? Say what we will, we ourselves are not great saints today because we have lacked a certain courage; and this lack was caused by a loose grip on the fundamental principles concerning sanctity. There is many a broken heart beneath a religious habit today because people have not realized that sanctity does not consist in flawlessness, faultlessness, or even sinlessness; and secondly, that sanctity is not a mushroom growth!

Take *faultlessness*:—Sister, don't you know the lives of the two great pillars of the Church, Saints Peter and Paul? Were they faultless? The blustering, blundering, bragging Peter faultless?—Why he denied Our Lord! The fire-eating, St. Paul without a fault?—Read his own confessions in his epistles. Why he was a sinner—just as from 98 to 99½% of all the saints in Heaven today! People looking for human beings without faults are looking for shadows without light, hills without valleys, smoke without fire. They are looking for the impossible! They expect to find virtue where there has been no trial or temptation. If sanctity consisted in absolute sinlessness, there would be only one human person in Heaven today—she for whom you double; for she alone was conceived immaculate.

As for *growth*:—As I said before we are vowed not to sanctity, but to the *striving* for sanctity. Hence, there is never any one moment in our lives, no, not even the last, wherein we are bound to have arrived! to have attained perfection! to have acquired absolute

holiness! But we must also remember that there is never a moment, no, not even our last, in which we are not bound to *strive* for sanctity. That only means, Sister, that we must put forth an honest effort persistently and consistently. That only means that sanctity is a growth, but a gradual one! "*Natura non fit per saltus,*" say the philosophers; and ascetical writers should add: "Neque supernatura!" Nature does not do things by leaps and bounds—neither does supernature! Sanctity is *not* an overnight growth; there is nothing of the toadstool about it, but there is much of the oak.

In one of her most charming and most consoling letters, Mother Janet Stuart wrote: "Don't be impatient with self! One is so tempted in the beginning to want to be a saint *all at once!* and to scold one's soul for not being saintly. It would be just as sensible to overwhelm a baby with reproaches for not being a six-footer. He will be six foot high, if one gives him time. But it takes one-third of his life to do it; and if the growth is hurried it is spoiled." You understand that language, Sister. It is the language of a very saintly soul on sanctity! Apply it to yourself.

What then, would I have you, the co-redemptrix in The Great Drama of the Redeeming, hold regarding sanctity?—What St. Augustine held! namely, that "sanctity consists in hatred of sin, humbling oneself after a fall, and hope in the Omnipotence of God." Hold on to that trinity, Sister; live it, and all will be well. Hold further that sanctity is a *character*, the resultant of long years of patient striving, of persistent effort along definite lines. It is a *life* dominated by *principle*. Then in action I would have you blot out the mistakes of the

morning by a valiant woman's effort this afternoon; and then tonight, when you kneel, say in all sincerity: "God, my love, I slipped here and there today, but tomorrow, with Your help, I'll begin again and strive to do better." Do that day in and day out, and I'll find you in the long Day of Eternity up close to the throne of her for whom you doubled and close to Him with whom you played co-redemptrix.

Sister dear, you'll find faults in every examen of conscience; but that does not mean that you are not growing in sanctity. No! Sanctity is perfectly compatible with faults and failings. Our greatest saints were not flawless. Some of them went to confession twice a day and gave their confessors sufficient matter for absolution! They humbled themselves after the falls, they hated themselves for them, but then picked themselves up and started on again. That's how they became saints! And that is exactly what you and I must do if we want to arrive.

And for your own consolation I would have you remember that some of the saints battled one fault all their life and yet, took it to the grave with them. It is my own humble conviction that each of us has one particular fault which breaks our heart as we strive all our lives to overcome it; and yet, I am sure it will rear its hydra-head even as we die. But that means nothing except that God is kind! We need humility! And we have to hold tenaciously to the hand of Christ! Perfection is compatible with faults, failings, and even with an occasional serious sin as the lives of Peter, Paul, Thomas, Augustine, Magdalene and a whole host of others tell you. The only thing it is incompatible with is being *listless!* or *apathetic!* or *giving up!*

There is your doctrine as briefly as I dare put it, Sister. Know well that we have a passion for sanctity. Our souls long to burst forth in bud, flower and fruit of beautiful virtue, to become holy; to become God-like. But remember that passion *is* like a seed. Now a seed is most anxious to break forth, to shoot up into stem, flower and fruit; but it is weighed down beneath heavy soil and ponderous rocks. It can only *work* itself out *gradually*. So, too, our sanctity—it will be the flower of a very, very gradual growth, the fruit of long years of *patient* and *persistent effort* along the *beaten path of ordinary duty!* Walk that path majestically, Sister; for Christ needs a Madonna.

To end this whisper let me make two consoling and very profound remarks: "A life's work is done *only* in a life's time! So, be patient." And secondly, "*Squandering* yourself on God and your neighbor is an excellent way to prepare for death!"

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Now to summarize and concretize and bring all this into the realm of everyday tangibility, I bluntly say:

**"MAKE THE MASS YOUR LIFE;
AND YOUR LIFE A MASS!"**

Mary was most Madonna when she was Mater Dolorosa. It was at the First Mass of Her Boy that she became the Mother of the Mystical Body and climaxed Her work as co-redemptrix. And I dare say that it was on Calvary that she meant most to Christ. In that awful moment when

"She heard Him sob
In jagged pain, as if He had lost His soul

And cried in anguish from the rims of hell,"
in that dark hour crowded and crushed full
with agony, when He

"Was hanging stripped and bleeding and
alone," He looked down and found beneath His
Cross His Mother—"Madonna mia"! Ah, what
a consolation!

"Beyond the thieves, the crowd, the hill, beyond
The bite of thorns and past the stretched,
consuming

Burn of nails, beyond the laboring
And swell of breath, the heat, the sweat, the
stench,

Beyond the shattering and reel of pain,
John says He found her; that He strained
in sight

And saw her there."

Indeed I do say that Mary meant most to
Christ on Calvary; for it was through her, in
that gathered gloom, that He closed the Drama
of Redemption and opened The Great Drama
of the Redeeming—"Woman, behold thy son"
was climax to His Physical life and inception
of His Mystical. That is why I think that of
all the hallowed spots of earth that Mary and
Jesus love, none can compare with Golgotha's
skull-shaped mound; for there was marked
the end and the beginning of all that matters—
there Mass, which shall be said unendingly,
was first completed!

Yes, what Jesus and Mary love most in all
creation is—the Mass. Her "Fiat" to the
Angel of the Annunciation and His "Fiat"
just before Gethsemani's Angel of Consolation
made possible Calvary's consecration and the
separation of Body and Blood. And today, at
every mystical mactation, at every symbolic
separation of that same Body and Blood, at
the double consecration of every Mass, Mother

must look at Son, and Son at Mother and say: "It is the Mass that matters!"

Sister, have you ever realized that it is the Mass that matters? Look! You and I were born to know, love and serve God, weren't we? But we can never love one we do not know, nor can we unselfishly serve one we do not love. Therefore, in all practicality, the three-fold end of our existence comes down to the first. It is *knowledge* of God that we want—love and service necessarily follow; for to know God is to love Him, and to love Him is to serve!

But how are we to acquire this knowledge?—Only by a prayerful study of the character of Jesus Christ; for He is the clearest manifestation of God to man! I say "prayerful study" and I think you know what I mean—a study made in the Light of Faith, a light that enables us to pierce to the heart of this marvel and mystery of God—the character of Jesus Christ. That is why your meditation is so all important!

But the character of Christ has very many facets; it can bewilder one. Hence, the only sensible, scientific study is made by looking for the pivotal-point of Christ's whole being; by looking for the dominant trait in His character; by searching for the ruling passion of His life. And that is easily found. It is *Humility*—the acknowledgment of creatureship, the surrender of His own will to the Will of the Heavenly Father. That surrender was made manifest in His perfect *Obedience*—"I came to do the will of him who sent me" and "I do always the things that please him." And the most eloquent expression He ever made of His Obedience was *His Passion*.

There is your pivotal-point, Sister; and I might say the crystallization of Christ's character—*humility expressed in obedience*. There too, you have the pivotal-point and the crystallization of Mary's life and character—*humility expressed in an ever ready, "Fiat"—perfect obedience*. And there you have the depths, the heart and soul of your religious life—*humility expressed in perfect obedience*. That's what your Rule means. That's what your Constitutions say. That's what you really promised by your vows. Hence, the focal point of all your study is the Humility, the Obedience, and the Passion of Jesus Christ.

That is why I make bold enough to say: The Mass should be your life; and your life should be a Mass; for just as His humility was made articulate in obedience, and the most eloquent expression of that obedience is found in the Sacrifice of the Cross, so your humility and mine, your obedience and mine will find their most eloquent expression in the Sacrifice of the Mass. For the Mass is the White Christ, His bloodless Passion, the white heart-break of a Host. It is the Mystical Body's *most eloquent action*. It is the heart and soul of all Christian life. That is why the Mass must be your very life, Sister. Offer every Mass with the priest just as Mary offered the First Mass with Her Christ. Be the Madonna during that moving mystery; for in that miracle of miracles and marvel of all marvels you *must* play your part.

But I need not tell you how to participate in the Holy Sacrifice; you know that. But what you may not realize is why you must make that Sacrifice your life. Fundamentally, Sister, it is because we are creatures. Look at me. What are my prayers, my penances,

my sacrifices as an individual worth to Almighty God?—They are of such infinitesimal value as to be practically worthless. I, as an individual, what am I?—A microcosm, yes. But the accent is on the ‘micro.’ I am so small, so utterly insignificant as to be practically non-existent. And the same is true for any other creature!

No, Sister, your prayers and sacrifices, as an individual are next to worthless. Infinitesimal *is* the word. Ah, but when you join them to the Individual of all individuals, when you join them to the prayer and Sacrifice of Christ, then they become *infinite*!

You see, we are all parts of the Mystical Body. Hence, every one of our efforts or endeavors is only a *part-effort* and a *part-endeavor*. And parts, as parts, are pretty useless things! It is only when they are fitted into the whole that they are practical and produce results. Now what is true of any machine is even more true of that marvel we know as the Mystical Body. By myself I am infinitesimal; and so are you. But when joined to Christ we become infinite and all our actions taken on an infinite value. Why?—Because “*Actiones sunt suppositorum*”—The actions belong to the Person! And we have lost our personalities when we merged ourselves in Christ. Our actions, prayers, sacrifices, penances are no longer ours; they are those of our Head. For we do everything “*per Ipsum, et cum Ipso, et in Ipso!*”

That is why we must make the Mass our life, Sister; and that is also why we must make our lives a Mass. Bring all your sacrifices to the one great Sacrifice; come with all your crosses to the one great Cross; go through your Gethsemanies, stagger and stum-

ble up to the one only Golgotha, and there merge all that you are and all that you have in the One Great Redeemer, and thus help save the world! That's what Mary did. That's what you must do.

Do you ask, "How?"

I answer by saying: Make your life what the Mass is—A Drama of Three Great Acts!

In the Mass the first great act is the *Offer-tory*—and you must be on the paten with the bread, you must be in the chalice with the wine! Symbolically, of course, but truly. We are the wheat of Christ. We are His grapes. He Himself has said so. But wheat becomes bread only on the condition that it go through the Calvary of a mill; and grapes become wine only on the condition that they pass through the Gethsemani of a wine-press. Hence, Sister, you must suffer! You become worthy of the paten and the golden cup, you become worthy to be co-victim with Christ only on the condition that you "Move out into the Light," "Make your gestures generous," "Be less self-conscious," and "Walk majestically"; only on the condition that you grind down all selfishness and crush out all pride, only on the condition that you make valiant, even violent, efforts, that you strain and suffer and strive, and then, in all humility, bring yourself and all the fruits of your endeavors to the altar, to be sanctified unto God! There is the secret, Sister. Make everything you do part of the Sacrifice; connect everything you undergo with the Offertory of the Mass. Remember there is no moment of the day or night in which you cannot unite your offering with an actual Offertory of a White Calvary. In some part of the world a priest is lifting a white Host and offering a ruby cup. Join him!

The second great act in the Drama of Golgotha Prolonged is the *Consecration*—and that must be the essential act of your life! An act that goes on “from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same.” An act that is a total surrender, a complete incorporation, a real transubstantiation of self into a co-redemptrix. It is an act in which you ask God to take you with all your womanly weaknesses, all your good points and all your bad, all your head-aches and heart-aches and back-aches, all your smiles and sorrows and tears, all your toils and successes, your triumphs and defeats, your miseries and glories, which you have placed on the paten and in the chalice’s cup, all that you have offered in the symbols of bread and wine, to take your very self and *transubstantiate* you into a Madonna, a co-victim with Christ, a co-redemptrix of the world.

That is why you live, Sister.—To be *transubstantiated!* So every day, and many times a day, hold yourself out on a mystical paten, lift yourself up to the Merciful God and speak those meaningful words of Consecration; say, “This is my body. This is my blood. Take it. Take it and all that goes with it. Take it; for it is Yours. Take it and *transubstantiate* me! Transubstantiate me so that, like the bread and wine, I may no longer live unto myself, but only unto Thee; and like the bread and wine nothing will remain of me but the accidents or species. Let these remain, Lord, for they mean little—but the substance *change!* Transform it so that it will be no longer mine, but Thine. Transform it so that nothing remain but the appearance, let the substance me YOU!

Such an Oblation and Consecration will bring you to the third great act of the Mass,

and the crowning act of your life. They will bring you to *Holy Communion!* Communion—when two become One; when creature is lost in the Creator; when Victor and vanquished are merged; when the God-centered, God-surrendered, God-saturated soul tastes love's satiety, in a unity not of the flesh but of the spirit! That's why we are living, Sister; to be lost in God! To be merged into Jesus Christ! And oh! how He longs for you.—Don't keep Him waiting.

Make your life a Mass after that manner, Sister, and I promise that it will end as did the First Mass. Not with, *Ite, missa est;*” but with, “It is consummated!” Do it and Jesus will greet you with the words He undoubtedly spoke to the one on whom you model. Unquestionably, on the day of the Assumption, Jesus said what any real child would say; He said, “*Madonna mia!*”

Earn that greeting, Sister, by living these whispers.

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I closed the first booklet by asking you to “Use Doors.” It was a practical suggestion. You were to ask yourself: “Am I a Gate to Heaven for all with whom I come in contact?”—I now advise the same: “USE DOORS” but ask yourself: “Am I being a Gateway of Grace to the whole Mystical Body?” That is your rôle!

May I now ask a favor? I belong to the Mystical Body, too, Sister. I have a part in The Great Drama of the Redeeming. But I, like you, am human; too human, when I should be divine. So be a Madonna to me and win from the Gateway of all Grace, Our Mother Mary, the power to live to the hilt all that I have whispered to you. Please!

BOOKS AND BOOKLETS

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