

“Let us not turn away from our duty”

You became very serious when you heard me say: I accept death whenever God wants it, the way he wants it, where he wants it; and at the same time I think it is too easy to die early, because we should want to work many years for him, and because of him, in the service of others. (The Forge, 1039)

9 April

‘I will release you from captivity, wherever you may be.’ We shake off

slavery, through prayer: we know we are free, borne on the wings of a lover's nuptial song, a canticle of love, which makes us want never to be parted from God. It is a new mode of going about this earth, a mode that is divine, supernatural, marvellous. Remembering oft-repeated phrases of the Spanish Golden Age, we may like to taste for ourselves that truth: 'I am alive; or rather, not I; it is Christ that lives in me!'

One gladly accepts the need to work in this world and for many years, because Jesus has few friends here below. Let us not turn away from our duty to live our whole life — to the last drop — in the service of God and his Church. And all this, freely: *in libertatem gloriae filiorum Dei, qua libertate Christus nos liberavit*; with the freedom of the children of God which Jesus won for us by dying on the tree of the Cross.

It may be that, even from the beginning, dark clouds will appear and, at the same time, the enemies of our sanctification may employ techniques of psychological terrorism so vehement and well orchestrated — it is a real abuse of power — that they drag in their absurd direction even those who for a long time had behaved in a more reasonable and upright manner. Yet though their voices sound like cracked bells, that have not been cast from good metal and have a very different tone from the shepherd's whistle call, they so distort speech, which is one of the most precious talents ever bestowed on men by God, a most beautiful gift for the expression of deep thoughts of love and friendship towards the Lord and his creatures, that one comes to understand why St James says that the tongue is 'a whole world of malice'. So great is the harm it can do: lies, slander, dishonour, trickery,

insults, tortuous insinuations.
(Friends of God, 297-298)

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