

“We are to be pious, then, as pious as children”

Just now, Jesus, when I was considering my wretchedness, I said to you: allow yourself to be taken in by this son of yours, just like those good fathers, full of kindness, who put into the hands of their little child the presents they want to receive from them - knowing perfectly well that little children have nothing of their own. And what joy father and son have together, even though they are both in on the secret. (The Forge, 195)

A life of prayer and penance, together with an awareness of our divine filiation, transforms us into Christians whose piety is truly deep. We become little children at the feet of God. Piety is the virtue of children. And if the child is to take refuge in the arms of his father, he must be, and know that he is, small, needy. I have often meditated on this life of spiritual childhood, which is not incompatible with fortitude, because it demands a strong will, proven maturity, an open and firm character.

We are to be pious, then, as pious as children, but not ignorant. Insofar as possible, each of us should study the faith seriously, rigorously — all of which means theology. Ours should

be the piety of children and the sure doctrine of theologians.

Our desire to advance in theological knowledge, in sound, firm *christian doctrine* is sparked, above all, by the will to know and love God. It likewise stems from the concern of a faithful soul to attain the deepest meaning of the world, seen as coming from the hands of God. Every now and then, monotonously sounding like a broken record, some people try to resurrect a supposed incompatibility between faith and science, between human knowledge and divine revelation. But such incompatibility could only arise — and then only apparently — from a misunderstanding of the elements of the problem.

If the world has come from God, if he has created man in his image and likeness [1] and given him a spark of divine light, the task of our intellect

should be to uncover the divine meaning imbedded in all things by their nature, even if this can be attained only by dint of hard work. And with the light of faith, we also can perceive their supernatural purpose, resulting from the elevation of the natural order to the higher order of grace. We can never be afraid of developing human knowledge, because all intellectual effort, if it is serious, is aimed at truth. And Christ has said, "I am the truth" [2]. (Christ is passing by, 10)

[1] Gen 1:26

[2] John 14:6: *Ego sum veritas*