

“God loves the cheerful giver”

You are suffering! Listen: 'His' Heart is not smaller than ours.-- You are suffering? There is good in suffering. (The Way, 230)

March 27

I warn you that great penances are also compatible with great falls, which are brought about by pride. On the other hand, if you continually wish to please God in the little battles that go on inside you — a smile, for example, when you don't feel like smiling; and I assure you that a smile

is sometimes more difficult than an hour's worth of cilice — then there is little room left for pride, or for the ridiculous notion of thinking we are great heroes. Instead, we will see ourselves as a little child, who is hardly able to offer even the merest trifles to his father, but who then sees them received most joyfully.

So, does a Christian have to be mortified always? Yes, but for love. (...) Perhaps up to this moment we had not felt urged to follow so closely in the footsteps of Christ. Perhaps we did not realise that we could unite our little renunciations to his redeeming sacrifice: to make up for our own sins, for the sins of men of all ages, and for the evil work of Lucifer who continues to oppose God with his *non serviam!* (I will not serve) How can we dare to cry out without hypocrisy, 'Lord, I am hurt by the offences that wound your most loving Heart,' if we don't make

up our minds to deprive ourselves of this or that triviality, or to offer up some small sacrifice in praise of his Love? Penance, genuine reparation, sets us on the path of self-giving, of charity. We give ourselves to make reparation, and we live charity to help others, as Christ has helped us.

From now on, be in a hurry to fall in love. Love itself will prevent us from complaining and protesting. For we put up with setbacks often enough, but then we feel sorry for ourselves, so that not only do we waste God's grace, but we also tie his hands and make it harder for him to ask us for things in the future: *Hilarem enim datorem diligit Deus*. God loves the cheerful giver, the person who gives with the spontaneity of a loving heart, without all the fuss and bother of one who gives himself as if he were doing God a favour. (Friends of God, 139-140)

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