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“Knowing how to overcome yourself every single day”

To do great mortifications some days, and nothing on others, is not the spirit of penance. The spirit of penance means knowing how to overcome yourself every single day, offering up both great and small things for love, without being noticed. (The Forge, 784)

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However, a powerful enemy is lying in wait for us, an enemy which counters our desire to incarnate Christ's doctrine in our lives. This enemy is pride, which grows if we do not reach out for the helping and merciful hand of God after each failure and defeat. In that case the soul remains in the shadows, in an unhappy darkness, and thinks it is lost. Its imagination creates all sorts of obstacles which have no basis in fact, which would disappear if it just looked at them with a little humility. Prompted by pride and a wild imagination, the soul sometimes creates painful calvaries for itself. But Christ is not on these calvaries, for joy and peace always accompany our Lord even when the soul is nervous and surrounded by darkness.

There is another hypocritical enemy of our sanctification: the idea that this interior struggle has to be

against extraordinary obstacles,
against fire-belching dragons. This is
another sign of pride. We are ready
to fight, but we want to do it noisily,
with the clamour of trumpets and the
waving of standards.

We must convince ourselves that the
worst enemy of a rock is not a
pickaxe or any other such
implement, no matter how sharp it
is. No, its worst enemy is the
constant flow of water which drop by
drop enters the crevices until it ruins
the rock's structure. (Christ is passing
by, 77)