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“It is a time of hope, and I live off this treasure”

"It is a time of hope, and I live off this treasure. It is not just a phrase, Father," you tell me, "it is reality." Well then ..., bring the whole world, all the human values which attract you so very strongly - friendship, the arts, science, philosophy, theology, sport, nature, culture, souls - bring all of this within that hope: the hope of Christ. (Furrow, 293)

February 23

Wherever we may be, Our Lord urges us to be vigilant. His plea should lead us to hope more strongly in our desires for holiness and to translate them into deeds. 'Give me your heart, my son' [1], he seems to whisper in our ear. Stop building castles in the air. Make up your mind to open your soul to God, for only in Our Lord will you find a real basis for your hope and for doing good to others. If we don't fight against ourselves; if we don't rebuff once and for all the enemies lodged within our interior fortress — pride, envy, the concupiscence of the flesh and of the eyes, self-sufficiency, and the wild craving for licentiousness; if we abandon this inner struggle, our noblest ideals will wither 'like the bloom on the grass; and when the scorching sun comes up the grass

withers, and the bloom falls, and all its fair show dies away'. Then, all you need is a tiny crevice and discouragement and gloom will creep in, like encroaching poisonous weeds.

Jesus is not satisfied with a wavering assent. He expects, and has a right to expect, that we advance resolutely, unyielding in the face of difficulties. He demands that we take firm, specific steps; because, as a rule, general resolutions are just fallacious illusions, created to silence the divine call which sounds within our hearts. They produce a futile flame that neither burns nor gives warmth, but dies out as suddenly as it began.

You will convince me that you sincerely want to achieve your goals when I see you go forward unwaveringly. Do good and keep reviewing your basic attitudes to the jobs that occupy you each moment.

Practice the virtue of justice, right where you are, in your normal surroundings, even though you may end up exhausted. Foster happiness among those around you by cheerfully serving the people you work with and by striving to carry out your job as perfectly as you can, showing understanding, smiling, having a Christian approach to life. And do everything for God, thinking of his glory, with your sights set high and longing for the definitive homeland, because there is no other goal worthwhile. (Friends of God, 211)

[1] Prov 23:26