

(From Mo. Marguerite Guillot Conferences to the Novices)

ON SIMPLICITY – 1883

I have spoken to you about the vocation, my good daughters; I wish to add a word to this talk by saying that one of your virtues must be simplicity. Simplicity is the virtue of all the saints, but it was particularly that of our Father and it gave a special quality to all his other virtues so much so that there could be no doubt of the heroic virtues he practiced. We must imitate our Father; in all things we must act with so much simplicity and naturalness that we may always pass unnoticed even in our greatest acts of virtue.

Be simple, my dear daughters, in your exterior manner, in your prayer life, let nothing be affected, unnatural; be simple in your bearing, in your gestures; let nothing attract attention to yourself. Recall that our Venerated Father recommended that we hold ourselves erect – without swaying, without tilting our heads to the right or to the left, closing our eyes or lower them in prayer, following our attraction, but avoiding anything that would seem extraordinary; in word, to be always modestly modest, simple in everything.

Simplicity should be the foundation of your interior life as well as the form of your exterior life. Accept, like children, the states in which our Lord puts you; do not be like people who trouble themselves, get excited, worried when God withdraws His lights and consolations from them. Know how to renounce this sensible devotion, which often nourishes self-love. If you love our Lord for Himself alone, you will not lament if He withdraws these sensible favors from you and you will follow Him by sacrifice, and renunciation in the simplicity of your love. The only thing you must seek is the accomplishment of the Will of our Lord, not your own satisfaction or consolation.

Simplicity should also inspire your relations with your Sisters. You should be simple in your language and in your manners, without trying to display your talents, or cultural or financial status. You should be simple in your bearing, avoiding anything that would indicate pretension, or recall the manners of the world, because religious spirit and religious manners must replace all that is worldly.

Simplicity will lead you to act differently than in the world and will teach you how to submit docilely to all that you will be taught, for here you have to learn everything. What beautiful examples I could give you of the simplicity of our Father.

Finally, simplicity means that we should never act to please creatures or to win their affection, but only in view of doing the will of God, may you always have this intention, my dear daughters.

When I tell you to practice simplicity in all things, I mean the beautiful virtues so much recommended by our Father, but you understand very well that I am not referring to the way of acting which some persons take for simplicity and which is nothing else than free and easy behavior, rudeness and stupidity. On the contrary, true simplicity is always accompanied by sensitivity and by charity because it is striped of self-seeking, self-love and selfishness.
