

*(From Mo. Marguerite Guillot Conferences to the Novices)*

## **THE NOVITIATE IS THE APPRENTICESHIP OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE – June 1870**

My good daughters, when we enter the Novitiate we come from the world and we are still impregnated with its spirit; we have its customs, its sentiments, its views. We have, it is true, good desires, goodwill to do well but that is not sufficient; we must be fashioned, formed and molded in every way. It is in the Novitiate that this work is done and that is why we call it the apprenticeship of the religious life, the time during which we study all its obligations.

What then, is the spirit you must acquire? A spirit of renunciation of the world first of all, for the spirit of the world cannot be allied with the spirit of our Lord. Therefore, if you wish to become Servants of the Blessed Sacrament, you must renounce the world and all that is of the world, - what it says, what it does, what it loves; you must rid yourselves of the worldliness in you, renounce your own judgment and will in order to be transformed into new beings.

You are well disposed, I believe, to profit from the precious time of the Novitiate. Some are at the beginning; others are going to leave it. Are these latter more advanced than the former? I hope so, but what I can affirm is this; you will advance only by striving unceasingly to acquire the spirit of self-denial, humility and obedience.

These are the three virtues then that you must practice in order to have the sentiments necessary to acquire the Eucharistic Spirit, the spirit of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Give yourselves entirely to our Lord from the very first day. Do not step back from the sacrifices that will present themselves; sacrifices are the proof and nourishment of love. Do not worry about the temptations that you will have to overcome.

The devil will try in every way to make you lose your vocation for he would like to deprive our Lord of His adorers and His Servants. Do not let yourselves be taken in by his wiles; you would regret it bitterly one day. It is he who makes you believe that the exact practice of the Rule is too difficult, that perpetual obedience is too painful; it is he who makes them appear very burdensome, but, with a little generosity you can repel all these thoughts and far from complaining about all that is asked of you, you will oblige yourselves courageously to observe the smallest rules and the slightest counsels that make up your novitiate training.

Obey very religiously your Mistress of Novices who labors to detach you from the spirit of the world, and practice with love all the virtues which will make you of you true religious and faithful Servants of the Blessed Sacrament.

In order to train you to have a religious bearing, your Mistress must teach you how to walk and talk, to keep your eyes lowered, not to cross your legs or your feet when you are seated, and to walk with poise, keeping your hands at the waist instead of circulating about with your arms dangling at your side, and to prevent you from running, for our Venerated Father would not have tolerated that.

There are many other things you must learn. I cannot tell you everything; your Mistress will teach them to you little by little. I only add that you must do everything with calmness, seriousness and dignity; that applies equally to the reading that you may have to do publicly. These readings are for the instruction and edification of your Sisters; read slowly and distinctly, then to be well understood so that the reading may be useful to all.

The Novitiate, as you can see, is the time of work and apprenticeship and consequently of continual immolation of your nature which your Mistress must re-form tirelessly. In order that she may succeed, you must surrender yourselves with docility to her guidance. You must renounce your own mind and will and be always grateful for her observations, persuaded that she acts only for your own good and that of the Congregation. If you do this, you will accept everything that she will say to you with love, and will practice renunciation out of love and in the joy of being at the service of our Lord.

That is why our Father wished, and he did not cease to remind us that we must practice renunciation through love and not through fear. That is what you will learn from the conferences and that we have from him.

Profit well, my good daughters, from the readings that are made of these conferences; they are a treasure that we possess, the grace of which we must never lose.

So now then, become religious, Servants of the Blessed Sacrament, following Mary whose life in the Cenacle we must reproduce. You are her children; ask her to bless you and help you to let yourselves be well formed.

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