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Fr Barre's Writings

His Spiritual letters

Blessed Nicolas Barre was a French Jesuit priest who lived in the 17th century and is known for his spiritual writings. His letters, which were written to various individuals seeking spiritual guidance, offer profound insights into the spiritual life. Here are some excerpts from his [spiritual letters](#):

On the importance of prayer:

"[Prayer](#) is the key that unlocks the treasures of God's grace. It is the ladder by which we climb to heaven, the anchor that keeps us steadfast in the midst of life's storms. Without prayer, we are like ships without sails, at the mercy of every wind and wave. Let us therefore make prayer the foundation of our lives, the source of our strength and the centre of our being."

On the virtues of humility and obedience:

"[Humility and obedience](#) are the two wings that enable the soul to soar to the heights of holiness. [Humility](#) teaches us to know our own weakness and to rely on God's strength. [Obedience](#) teaches us to submit our will to God's will and to trust in his providence. Let us embrace these virtues with all our hearts and strive to live them out in our daily lives."

On the importance of detachment:

"[Detachment](#) is the key to spiritual freedom. It is the art of letting go of all that holds us back from God. We must detach ourselves from our possessions, our desires, and our own will, and entrust ourselves entirely to God. Only then can we experience the true joy and peace that comes from knowing and loving Him."

On the love of God:

"[The love of God](#) is the source and summit of the spiritual life. It is the fountain from which all grace flows and the goal towards which all our efforts must be directed. Let us love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and let us seek to love our neighbour as ourselves. In this way, we will fulfil the two greatest commandments and find true happiness in God."

Blessed Nicolas Barre's spiritual letters continue to inspire and guide many people on their spiritual journey.



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Another of his writings are Maxims for all Peoples

MAXIMS FOR ALL PEOPLE (MAP)

INTRODUCTION

The 'MAXIMS FOR ALL PEOPLE' are to be found within the context of a dossier entitled: 'Spiritual Maxims'. This dossier consists of seven chapters - the first of which is 'Maxims for all people'. The others include the Fundamental Maxims, the Particular Maxims etc. This dossier was put together by Servien de Montigny and published in 1694.

In the contents listed in the 1694 edition, the first chapter has a longer title: '[Maxims for a Christian way of life for all people who wish to reach perfection](#)'. It is intended for those who are about to begin to deepen their spiritual life as well as for those who are already on the way'. These maxims reflect N. Barré's thought and were either written by himself or by those who listened to his conferences or those to whom he gave direction or advice.

There are 235 maxims in the document which we refer to as 'Maxims for all people', MAP. Montigny has divided these into seven sections - maybe the number was chosen to symbolise perfection.

There is a certain evident progression e.g.

Section 1 (Max. 1-40)	gives advice for beginners
Section 2 (Max. 41-90)	refers to development in the life of faith and delusions to be avoided
Section 3 (Max. 91-130)	deals with the stages in the spiritual life
Section 4 (Max. 131-171)	the purification needed in the spiritual life and the way followed by Jesus
Section 5 (Max. 172-204)	personal prayer
Section 6 (Max. 205-224)	love for God and others
Section 7 (Max. 225-235)	adoration

There appears to be a pattern in each section, but not necessarily in the same order:

- * Maxims which describe the particular stage a person is at in the spiritual life
- * The obstacles encountered during this stage
- * The means which will enable the person to draw closer to God.



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We also find that these maxims reflect to some extent N. Barré's personal experience as a spiritual director. Very soon after his ordination; it became evident that he had a particular gift for spiritual direction.

Fr. Raffron records in a short life of N. Barré which we wrote: 'It became very clear to everyone that his gift lay in guiding people along the way that was appropriate for each one. Hence his superiors decided to exempt him from all other work so that he could devote his energies to spiritual direction.'

- His personal experience of the ways of God, the aspects of the mystery of God that attracted him most, areas of conversion, contemplative prayer. Biographers recount long periods of spiritual darkness which N. Barré experienced. Letter 54 also gives us some indications of this. Those who have touched a deep mystical life will understand better what these experiences must have been for N. Barré.

N. Barré's teaching is rooted in the Gospels and St. Paul's Letters. The appropriate references are given in the footnotes for the maxims. He also refers to St. Augustin, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Teresa of Avila and St. Francis de Sales. He appears to be quite immersed in the mysticism of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross. Nevertheless his own personal touch also comes through: no excesses, balance, the necessity of a spirit of faith, abandonment, disinterestedness and mission

Some themes to be found in these maxims:

Sanctification i.e. the deepening of one's spiritual life through:

- * everyday life, events and situations experienced, being faithful to one's duty, family, work.
- * following in the footsteps of Jesus in poverty, lowliness, humility...

God's greatness and our nothingness

A Christian who desires to grow in the love of God and neighbour should try to enter into the depths of God's greatness and become more aware of his/her nothingness without God - (CF MAP 211, 216). The development of one's real identity as a human being depends on the depth of one's relationship with the Lord. This gift, freely given, puts a lot more value on the human person.

Human reason and the wisdom of God

Human reason must include reflection, foresight and prudence regarding the choices to be made. It also needs the enlightenment of God's wisdom - the gift of the Spirit. Thus decisions made will be more in the realm of faith than of reason. These decisions often involve a certain element of risk for the sake of others and for God.



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The mystical life

Two quotations from 'Ways of attaining the highest state of perfection' illustrate N. Barré's experience of the mystical life:

* 'The kingdom of God is God within us, Jesus within us - God alone and Jesus alone, through self-emptying and dying to self;'

* 'We must therefore die to all and to self so as to belong only to God and already experience this happiness here on earth, which is to draw close to Jesus.'

The mystical life is therefore not fantasy (e.g. MAP 131). N. Barré says that a desire for virtue is not virtue and a desire for God is not God. It is true that certain abuses existed in the 17th century where the mystical life was sometimes confused with extraordinary 'spiritual' phenomena (CF MAP 149).

But when something which is good in itself is criticised, this does not either make it wrong or condemn it (MAP 149). In the experience of the mystical life, one does not get lost in God to the exclusion of one's neighbour. In the interaction of compassion and service we will discover the Spirit who is leading us.

The Incarnation

N. Barré invites us to live the Mystery of the Incarnation (MAP 69). The way to holiness lies in following in the footsteps of Jesus. We go to God through Jesus Christ (MAP 154). This way of lowliness and humility is the surest way. Jesus is the beginning and the end of everything. All power in heaven and on earth has been given to Him (MAP 167-170). There is a very close link between Jesus and humanity. To love Jesus is to love others - the least of whom is made in His image (MAP 209 + 223). This is the source of our mission. The ultimate aim of the Incarnation is the transformation of humanity - the spread of the Kingdom. 'We have to struggle for the establishment of His kingdom here on earth.' (MAP 59)

(May these Maxims help you in your journey towards sanctity)



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MAXIMS FOR ALL PEOPLE (MAP)

Section 1 (Maxims 1 - 40) gives advice for beginners

1. The first and most important task for Christians is to seek to control their passions (1) especially the most predominant one.
2. Frequent confession is one of the most outstanding of all heroic Christian exercises, since in every confession, the Christian conquers and overcomes self.
3. We should not be disheartened in the pursuit of virtues, even if we feel untouched during exercises of piety, including confession and communion.
4. In times of temptation, we should come before God with great humility and implore Him (2) to be with us in our helplessness.
5. When in difficulty, we should refer to our confessor, spiritual Director or some other wise and experienced person (3).
6. Whenever we decide to take our spiritual growth seriously, the enemies of salvation (4) redouble their efforts against us. They arouse and stimulate the passions, plotting our downfall with more determination than ever. It is then that we should increase our efforts and confidently appeal to the mercy of God for the strength to resist.
7. While fear of hell may be good, we normally make greater progress when we act out of love and gratitude for the gifts we have received from God.
8. A person who desires to belong to God should keep in mind the following three levels:
The higher: raising the mind frequently to God.
The lower: humbling oneself at the sight of one's sins
The middle: moderation and self-restraint in all that one does so as to be constantly alert to what must be avoided and to what must be put into practice continually.
9. God should frequently be the subject of our conversations if we want gradually to remove all empty thoughts from our minds. As St. Peter says: 'If you are a speaker, speak in words which seem to come from God.' (5)



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10. One of the surest ways to overcome the devil's assaults is never to omit our ordinary exercises of devotion. They are the barricades (6) that protect the city.

11. In moments of temptation, when we omit these exercises of piety, the devil's power against us increases and our strength diminishes, because God's grace is withdrawn from us according as we withdraw from Him.

12. Repentant sinners should keep the following in mind:

- a) They should regard themselves as undeserving people who have been fortunate enough to escape from the prisons of hell and return to this world to do penance (7)
- b) They should see themselves as exiled from heaven, cut off from spiritual consolation, condemned to atone for offences against the sovereign majesty of God and not daring to raise their eyes to heaven.
- c) They should consider their neighbour as destined to fill heavenly thrones in the company of the holy Angels and therefore, should consider themselves as their neighbours' servants, serving them with the sweat of their brow (8) and accepting the burden of their task (9) in a spirit of humility.

13. Three kinds of sinners could be represented for us by a mouse in three different situations:

- a) The mouse in its hole but eager to come out, is the image of a person who knows the danger of being exposed to occasions of sin but nevertheless is under the illusion that this particular situation will not be dangerous.
- b) The mouse under the cat's paw represents the person exposed to the danger of sin and already struggling with temptation.
- c) The mouse in the cat's mouth indicates the person who has already fallen into mortal sin.

14. Peace and joy for the Christian can only be found in victory over the world, the devil, etc. (In French the words for world - 'monde' - and devil - 'démon' - have the same letters with the syllables reversed).

15. God finds fault with your hearts of stone and of marble, 'this is an obstinate people' (10). St. Augustin says: 'take away from me my heart of stone' (11). Lord, soften my heart, break it, reduce it to dust, grind it (12). Then re-mould dust into a new stone; 'that rock is Christ' (13). Take away its natural hardness and give it instead a supernatural constancy in pursuing what is right.

16. A repentant sinner who is faithful and fervent, usually surpasses those who have not committed serious sin. Note that David was more remarkable for his repentance than for the glory of his former innocence (14). It was after he had sinned that he composed all those wonderful psalms and was completely taken over by the



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Spirit of God.

17. Those who come to know God later in life and begin to turn towards Him, should quicken their pace, knowing that they are advancing in age; 'exulting like a warrior to run the course' (15).

18. We should be humble and reticent, since we hardly ever receive the fullness of grace, due to the opposition and resistance within us.

19. To deprive oneself of all sympathetic help is an excellent way of destroying the evil tendencies within us and re-awakening the life of the spirit.

20. The greatest saints have often been attacked and tormented by temptations against faith (16).

21. It often helps our spiritual growth when we are deprived of our best friends (17) even those whom we regard as exemplary, whether the Lord takes them to Himself or whether they are away from us for a while.

22. Whatever may be the condition of our calling or the position in which we find ourselves, in town or in the country, we must fulfil the duties of our vocation in accordance with the Apostle's words: 'lead a life worthy of your vocation in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience' (18) and those other words: 'let us live good and religious lives... while we are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with... our great God and Saviour...' (19).

23. The genuine Christian does not look for any feelings of consolation, desiring only to please God. St. Edmund used to say that he would prefer to go to hell than commit a sin.

24. Happy are those who have come together in the same house to serve God. They will grow in perfection provided that each one works to the best of her ability and considers herself as the most worthless (20) and least of all

25. One of the greatest mistakes Christians can make, is to be more concerned about accumulating wealth in order to bring up their children rather than ensuring that they are well instructed in the Christian faith.

26. Fathers and mothers should be more concerned about giving good example (21) to their children and servants at home than doing many good works outside.



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27. Perfect freedom is the freedom of the children of God (22). It is acquired only by complete control of the passions. It is a foretaste of Paradise.

28. We must always fear straying from the true way that leads to eternal life, because of unexpected attacks by our enemies and our sinfulness of mind and heart.

29. God's greatest plans for a person are only accomplished through having to struggle with difficulties (23).

30. Troubles and difficulties, whether from within or outside a person, are crucifying (24) on a human level but are life giving for the spirit.

31. Christians should regard themselves as having more imperfections than all those they know and see around them. With this inner attitude they advance in perfection (25).

32. Because of original sin, people often run after what is useless, where the truth is not to be found. Before we can recapture the taste for worthwhile values, we must stop chasing false and empty pleasures.

33. A Jew serves God for material gain (26), a slave through fear of hell and a faithful servant in the hope of heaven. The son looks upon God as his Father, the bride sees Him as her bridegroom, the mother finds Him in her neighbour (27): seeking Him for Himself alone, out of pure love and in order to be transformed into His image.

The mature person sometimes sees God in Himself and sometimes in his/her neighbour, in the case of the latter, the love manifested will be that of a mother for her child, whether it be a case of seeing the neighbour in God or rather God in the neighbour. In the first instance the person turns directly to God out of pure love, forgetting self and being transformed into His image (28).

34. The person who is involved from morning till night in the living out of his or her calling rarely offends God.

35. To grow in perfection, we must be tireless in doing good to all and expect to be badly treated in return (29).

36. People whose words and actions appear to be shallow, show that inwardly they suffer from great emptiness and extreme poverty; just as the hollowness of a barrel is noticed by the empty sound it produces.



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37. The devil is damned without pardon, as we should be too, by our sins, if we did not have the hope of being pardoned.

38. Riches are among the greatest obstacles to salvation and perfection; it is as if they were in opposition to God: 'you cannot serve God and Mammon' (30). To be a follower of Jesus Christ you must be poor and naked like Him: 'naked in order to follow Him who was naked' (31). He said to the rich young man: 'there is still one thing you lack: go, sell all you possess. If you wish to be perfect, sell all you have ... and follow me' (32).

39. Having made an act of adoration, humility or love etc., we should reflect in utter simplicity that it is God who gave us this love, this adoration, etc., that it came from Him and that we are simply offering and returning to Him what He has been pleased to give us.

40. Having been exorcised (33), a devil said he had a little more than a glimpse of God. He added that he would be willing to suffer all the torments of hell alone to the end of time in order to have the same experience again. He was urged to describe this surpassing beauty of God. He laughed and said that it was indescribable and even inconceivable. Nevertheless, when he was compelled to say something, he replied: 'Imagine all the stars as bright as the sun at mid-day on the finest summer's day and the sun outshining them to the same degree that it normally does. Picture the splendour of all these illuminations together. Yet all of this comes no nearer to the beauty of God's light than the darkest night to that same summer's day'.

Section 2 (Maxims 41 - 90) refers to development in the life of faith and delusions to be avoided

41. We carry part of Esau and Jacob within us (34); i.e. corrupt nature and grace. We are children of Adam and of Jesus (35). While nature is part of our life, we must live according to grace - so there is a continual struggle until death. Only the one who has fought the good fight to the end will receive the crown (36).

42. No matter how much time is spent in prayer, people who are unduly attached (37) to their own judgements and attitudes do not become impregnated by the Spirit of God.

43. Whoever is not prepared to accept being humbled can never enter the state of contemplative prayer nor advance in the way of perfection.



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44. Personal prayer and self-denial always go hand in hand. Both are directed towards death to self and openheartedness towards one's neighbour. This is where God's Spirit leads and directs us. Anyone who does not follow this path is being deluded.

45. Extraordinary acts of grace should be seen as quite ordinary. Otherwise, misinterpretation and expectation will spoil everything, unless God acts to the contrary (38)

46. Our experience of the mystical life and the way in which we are influenced by it should be regulated and directed by faith and theology. Otherwise, there is danger of giving way to foolish flights of the imagination.

47 God often gives marvellous gifts of light and grace to the simple and unlearned if they are humble and lowly in their own eyes : 'He gives knowledge to the little ones.' (39).

48. People, even those with integrity, often turn to God in the same way as partisans (40) approach the king, that is, to see about their own business rather than his.

49. The four cardinal virtues should be present in all aspects of Christian living and even in the practice of the theological virtues. Without them there is total confusion. We need prudence, justice, courage and moderation in all things.

50. We must be careful about women's and girls' devotion. Their way to God through their natural instincts is by affection and love. Hence their devotion is weak and sometimes superficial. They want to be listened to and reassured in their difficulties, which reinforces their weakness unless they are firmly lifted out of it. When Jesus wishes to win them over to Him once and for all, He afflicts them with interior worries, temptations, scruples and other frightening difficulties. This is the only way they can be freed from the prison of self-love and from their human frailties (41).

51. Women and girls will never advance in virtue as long as they allow emotions to rule them and remain attached to their own views, following their natural instincts instead of living in pure faith and according to the truths they are taught. The Director can do them much harm by showing too much sympathy for their minor worries and will help them greatly by not tolerating these concerns. Those who cannot accept this approach are to be pitied (42).



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52. There is a type of prayer which does not involve activity, but not many are capable of it. Other ways must first be experienced (43). Women and girls are greatly attracted to it and adapt to it easily because of their slack and weak nature. They imagine they are doing very well and are convinced that they have reached a stage of contemplation which in fact they have not. In this state of illusion they become empty and dried up instead of being strengthened in prayer as they ought. Instead of benefiting, they regress and deteriorate from day to day. Hence their need for a skilled and firm Director as well as a spirit of docility, so as to be led and guided in the right direction.

53. Just as it is not possible to get wine from grapes, unless the latter are put in the wine-press, so a soul does not produce any worthwhile fruit until it has gone through the wine-press of temptation, persecution, suffering, affliction, etc... 'you will not be without persecution in this present time...' (Mk 10: 30).

54. A Christian's attitude in prayer before God, should be that of a dog waiting for bread (44) and whatever else it needs from its master.

55. We are just being like Egyptians (45) when we rely on God for temporal benefits only, believing that in this way we give Him great honour.

56. In order to grow in humility we should consider ourselves lucky if we do not succeed, even in the work given to us by God for His glory (46).

57. The just one of God is the one who relies solely on Providence and in all things complies with God's holy will as manifested in events of every kind: 'the just one lives by faith.' (47).

58. The soul is never more in control than when its enemy, the body, is subdued either by sickness, penance or the ups and downs of life... etc. (48).

59. Christians should greatly rejoice in the fact that Jesus Christ is risen; however, their main concern should be to continue to struggle for the establishment of His Kingdom here on earth (49).

60. We should not spend too much time focusing on ourselves. It is better to turn our eyes to God and place ourselves before Him like poor beggars awaiting the help of His generous mercy in the numerous difficulties we encounter. We should also turn to the Blessed Virgin, the Angels and Saints (50).



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61. The mature Christian should be like the weather-cock on the church belfry, which turns with every wind without leaving its position on the cross.

62. Sometimes a Christian who becomes aware of God in His glory, expresses joy openly. Otherwise, calm and composure should characterise the Christian, who, with this serenity, lives continually in the presence of God.

63. So as to be faithful to our calling in life, we should reflect on all the important areas of our life in a spirit of faith (51).

64. It is not sufficient to have renounced all one's possessions and to love one's family only in God and for

God, we must keep on following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ until we arrive at the elimination of all self-love and of the smallest inordinate passion.

65. If one is aware of having received more graces than others, one should feel encouraged to follow Jesus Christ more closely and to humble oneself all the more, since a great deal still remains to be done.

66. When God brings us together with one or more persons for some good work, we should not then leave them under the pretext of working elsewhere for the glory of God (52). It is much better to consider ourselves as the dregs of the wine (53) which are of little value, but nevertheless remain in the cask with the good wine.

67. It is not so difficult to turn to God in mental prayer, since all that is necessary is to gently separate oneself from tangible, external things and raise one's heart to God. At the beginning, you should take a book, read a few lines and reflect on what you have read. If you find you cannot do this, turn to vocal prayer, which provides different possibilities. Dwelling on the literal meaning or on the mystical sense is another help to prayer.

68. You must never seek to encounter an eminent person, even if outstanding in integrity, except in a case of necessity and with the Director's consent (54).

69. What actually happened in the physical humanity of Jesus Christ in the Incarnation of the Word takes place morally and mystically in the human soul. In a sense then, God's being takes the place of the human being (55).



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70. A mature Christian should, like Jesus, be a 'worm', a 'lamb', a 'lion', : 'be crushed like a worm, be struck down and killed like a lamb and conquer like a lion' (56).

Like a 'worm', a Christian should be held in disrepute and scorned, trodden underfoot, squashed... silence, death.

Like a 'lamb' a Christian should be gentle and patient with all people amid all kinds of insults and abuse. Such goodwill wins people over to God encouraging kindness and honesty etc.

Like a 'lion', Jesus overturns the tables of the money changers in the temple; in the Garden of Olives, with a word He overwhelms the soldiers who are seeking to arrest Him (57). 'The lion of the tribe of Judah has triumphed' (58). In the same way, the Christian should display strength and courage, when there is question of defending God's interests. 'I must be busy with my Father's affairs.' (59). A soldier in the army must be at the disposal of the man who enlisted him (60).

71. Sometimes we must use human prudence as a stepladder which leads to Divine Prudence.

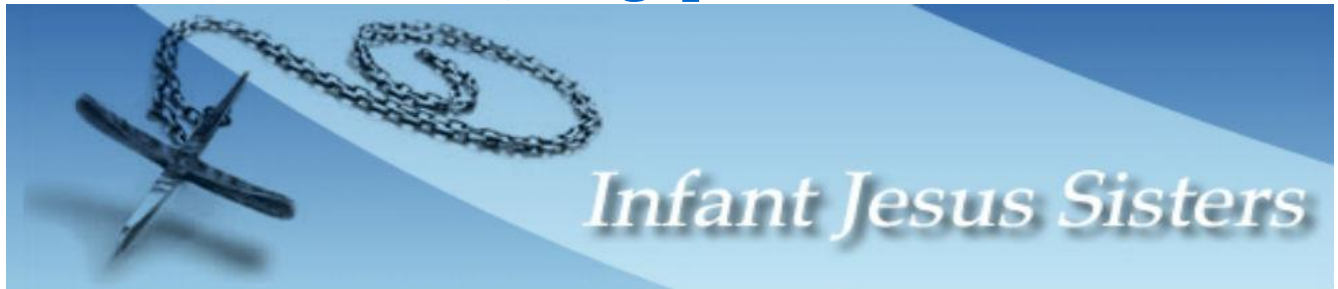
72. Those who want to experience the real life of Jesus are ever ready to forego their own way of looking at things as well as their personal opinion: 'I was like an animal towards you' (61). There is no I, no me - it is God in me; 'I am with you always.' (62)

73. Jesus has always come down from above: down from heaven, down from the mountain, down into the tomb, down to the underworld (63).

74. Our Lord is the only one who has been humble by nature (64). The Blessed Virgin was so by the power of grace (65).

75. God must be served for His own sake, not for ours. Most people think too much about their own spiritual growth. They want to know where they are going, what will become of them (66). They want to see if they are making progress. They are impatient to get on and worry about it and get caught up in self-love, anxiety, anger. This causes them to go back instead of forward. The remedy is to abandon oneself wholly and entirely to God, to His holy will and His eternal purposes (67).

76. It has been noted that the truths of the spiritual life make more of an impact on us when in manuscript form than in print - because the former is less common.



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77. God is life and life presupposes continuous movement. our heart beats unceasingly. 'My Father goes on working and so do I' (68). So it is that we die to ourselves more through powerlessness to act than for any other reason.

78. There are two kinds of inactivity. One is to let go of all activity. The other occurs when God takes over in the soul. The first is a means of arriving at the second, which is God's action in us. It is at that stage He leads us to what He wants. Sometimes we cannot prevent Him, but at other times we can - we must be alert to this.

79. As far as insults are concerned, it is best to act as if caught in a downpour. We look for shelter, stand under a tree, let the storm pass without saying anything. Then we resume our journey or our work, as if nothing had happened.

80. Knowledge is a great obstacle to sanctity in the Gospel sense. It is useful in so far as it enlightens us and enables us to recognise sin more easily and be led to find ways and means to avoid it (69). But, as the apostle says, 'knowledge can also feed self-importance and puff people up with pride' (70). Diseases of the soul are more difficult to cure than those of the body; for example, pride is more difficult to overcome than gluttony.

81. It is said of Our Lord that 'He did all things well.' (71). This means much more than 'He went about doing good.' (72). Thus to be lowly means more than 'to do lowly things'. In order to belong entirely to God, the latter condition is not enough. One must aim at the former as well. 'In matters relating to God adverbs are of greater significance than verbs.' (73).

82. Note the use of the three 'a's of the prophet Jeremiah in the French language: admirer, adoré, aimer (praise, adore, love) (74).

83. A high degree of perfection is granted only to very few.

a) Usually, all are not able for it.

b) It is a unique and special gift of God's mercy which we receive, not by our efforts or by merely willing it (75).

84. The Prophet says: 'All things are at your service' (76). The heavens, the earth, the elements, animals - all carry out fully what God wants, except the human heart. This 'rebel' withdraws and resists as much as it can. Nevertheless, God wants to reign in that heart. 'The Kingdom of God is within you' (77). What a wonderful thought! It is as if God is not fully God, nor is His Kingdom established except in so far as our heart belongs to Him (78).



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85. All secular philosophers describe virtue as an Amazonian (79) holding a shield in one hand and a sharp sword in the other; a fiery figure full of eagerness for action. Virtue is also represented as a Goddess sitting in a triumphal chariot with her hands full of palms and her head weighed down with crowns. The idea is that this Princess seeks brave men of great courage, who win rewards worthy of their valour having fought gallantly under her standards. It is only the infamous Epicureans (80) who enslaved themselves in pleasure as if it could lay hold of the strongest and most vigorous of the gods...

86. There is nothing more sublime or steadfast than virtue. 'Virtue is something sublime.' (81).

87. Virtue has a serene countenance with a serious and threatening smile (82).

88. Virtue always seeks the battlefield. Strength comes with effort.

89. Virtue always has a sword in hand. 'I have not come to bring peace but the sword.' (83).

90. Virtue is always active. It never rests. 'Virtue comes from effort.' Clement of Alexandria (84).

Section 3 (Maxims 91 - 130) deals with the stages in the spiritual life

91. God draws a person to Himself as follows:

- a) He reveals His beauty through the gift of faith and motivates to action.
- b) Through the gift of hope He purifies, thus strengthening the person in the struggle to become more worthy of God, especially in times of trial and suffering.
- c) Through the gift of charity, He takes possession of the soul and becomes its sole master.

At the first stage, effort is required to surrender oneself to God and to possess Him.

In the second stage, there is a lot of suffering.

In the third, God acts and takes possession of the soul.

The three stages could be summarised as follows:

the active stage, the suffering stage, the passive (85) stage.

Most people remain at the first stage. They try too hard, desiring to do something constantly and giving themselves without wanting to be taken over or even thinking of it.



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92. Paradise is situated on a mountain. 'Mount Zion where you dwell' (86). Everything there is magnificent: walls of pure gold, floors of jasper... 'Wonderful things are told of you, city of God' (87). The designer who omitted nothing in decorating and perfecting this rich palace, appears to have erred in one respect : he made the door very narrow, but no doubt he had his reasons. We must therefore bend low and squeeze through this door : 'strive to enter by the narrow door.†' (88). But moreover, the access road to the summit of this Holy Mountain is a difficult climb. 'The way is narrow and there are few who find it.' (89). A little love however will make everything easy. We have to enter the Kingdom of God through many tribulations... Yes, but 'Love endures everything...' (90).

93. Before the Fall the earthly Paradise could be compared to a pleasant road through a delightful garden leading to the heavenly Paradise. Since the disobedience of our first parents and their fall from the state of happiness, there is no longer a pleasant road leading to it. On the contrary, the only way is the giving up of earthly delights and pleasures. 'It is impossible to enter the Kingdom of God through paths of pleasure', according to St. Jerome (91) in his 33rd letter. In order to gain possession of the promised land, the Canaanites and the Amorites must be conquered (92).

94. Beware of talking like the lazy person who says: 'I have no courage to go out and work. 'There is a lion out there ready to devour me in the street' (93). 'What then, my soul! Do you allow yourself to be intimidated and deceived', says St. Jerome. Origen remarks that the cowardly are called unfaithful, because they take little trouble to ensure their salvation (94).

95. In order to be worthy to enter the promised land where joys abound, we must generously leave Egypt (95) and have no regrets for the loss of its meat and comforts. Love is expansive, but it leads to a narrow door (96).

96. To be well versed in the eternal truths and fail to put them into practice or live up to what one knows and sees is a source of great humiliation and confusion.

97. Sin is the beginning of hell (97); hell is the consummation of sin.

98. Living faith, hope and charity should be accompanied by a fear of the Lord. Without a reverent fear and trust, one can become the victim of illusions and presumption, of triviality and folly. It is said of the Messiah: 'The spirit of the fear of the Lord shall rest upon Him' (98).

99. In order to acquire a genuine fear of the Lord, we must often reflect on His greatness and majesty as well as on the other divine attributes (99) in particular and in general.



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100. A deep respect should characterise our relationship with God in prayer. 'Who will not fear you?' (100). Nevertheless, we sometimes partially forget who we are and who God is. If not, we would be crushed beneath the weight of overwhelming fear, which would prevent us from drawing near to God, no matter how much we would desire it.

101. People who often think of God feel that God is thinking of them. Thus, they become aware of God's love and are compelled to love Him (101). This mutual love is a source of intense joy and delight. They discover that God in His infinite goodness has taken the initiative: 'He first loved us' (102): 'I have loved you with an everlasting love.' (103).

102. God's eye is always on us. 'Jeremiah, what do you see? I see a branch of the Watchful Tree... You are right, I too watch over my people.' (104). What a strong incentive this is to a generous person! But even so, 'He dwells in me and I in Him' (105). God is in us, acting, ruling, doing everything - what love, what happiness!

103. The habit of thinking frequently about God uplifts the spirit. It enables a person to concentrate on his or her main aim in life and find the truth. What greater gift than truth could we desire? Thinking of the virtues or of other holy things does not produce the same result because they are only means to the truth - they are not the truth. Neither are they God who alone makes our happiness complete.

104. Moreover, by thinking frequently of God, one's desire for Him grows and as a result so does one's love. This effort brings with it a feeling of being enlightened and strengthened. One appears to be able to do things with greater ease and clarity, recognising that all this comes from God. 'Our sufficiency is from God.' (106).

105. Hypocrites are God's greatest enemies. They are difficult to convert, because they cut themselves off from the ordinary means of conversion (107). The Saints and the Angels pray for them in heaven; and we on earth are also expected to pray for them, earnestly and perseveringly.

106. We have no reason to glory in holiness, because it is something which belongs to God. 'I reveal my holiness in them...' (108) Holiness is like gold leaf covering wood... It is of the essence of God. But when communicated to us, it is superficial and has no more substance than the bark of a tree, because we are sinners cut off from God.



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107. a) Each one should think of oneself as the greatest sinner in the world, just as sick people believe their illness to be more unbearable than other people's; often indeed they consider other people's illness to be nothing when compared with their own.

b) We should try to convince ourselves that our neighbour's failings and sins are due to weakness and reaction to the unexpected, whereas ours come from unfaithfulness and ill will.

c) We would fall into a lot of erring ways if we were not given grace in proportion to our evil tendencies. And if the same grace were given to our neighbour, would not our neighbour, whose dispositions are better, benefit from it more?

108. In Scripture, God constantly reminds us that He is everything, that He can do all things, that He brings to completion all that He does. On the other hand, the human person who wishes to be something will be nothing, but will be something if willing to be nothing.

109. St. Paul says: 'In God we live, move and have our being.' (109). This life will be active, passive or fulfilled in God. The first life is active through fidelity, effort and co-operation with grace. The second is passive through our dependence on God and the impact of His love. Over and above all this the sense of fulfilment of the third lies in our total dying to self and living in and for God.

110. At ebb-tide, the waters of the River Seine rise and allow themselves to be diverted from their normal course by the immense build-up of sea water from the moment of initial contact. In the same way, when our will encounters the will of God, it ought to follow it without delay, turning aside from personal inclination, and submitting to the influence of grace. In making a habit of this practice, our will gradually gets absorbed into the will of God and eventually is happy to be immersed and totally given over to this will of God.

111. We should approach afflictions, inner and external trials and temptations, in the same way as we would approach a cannon. If one faces it, it kills: but if one lies on the ground, the cannon ball passes overhead without doing any harm apart from the shock and the noise (110).

112. We must beware of over-work in our day-to-day duties and of being continually busy, getting as much as possible done. This can be destructive and ineffective. St. Bernard, writing to Pope Eugene III (111), quoted Jethro's words to Moses: 'You will tire yourself out... the work is too heavy for you (112). The Pope asked: 'Must I give up Peter's Chair?' St. Bernard replied: 'I advise not that you give up your work but that you give yourself some respite from it from time to time.'



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113. The beauty of the world consists of many different kinds of beauty. If a tree wanted to glow with the brilliance of gold and if gold took on the green of the leaves, the flowers or the fruits of the tree, the whole of nature would be in disorder. So it is with the spiritual life: you must not try to follow the path that is right for another or lay claim to the same graces. This would lead to the ruination of everything, including oneself. It can be truly said of every saint: 'there truly has been no other person like this one.' (113).

114. A secret of the spiritual life is to expect only very ordinary fare for our spiritual food, being aware of our unworthiness and small capacity. This ordinary fare should be our way of life and also what we should expect from a director or anybody giving us advice.

115. Someone who normally dines frugally, when offered a good dish from the table of the rich, will accept and enjoy it, leaving aside the frugal portion, which would have been sufficient in any case. Similarly, when God gives some extraordinary light or favour, we should accept it gratefully from Him. Otherwise, we can and ought to be content with the nourishment we receive from our usual spiritual exercises.

116. If we are walking by night with the light of a small lantern and meet someone carrying a large torch, we take advantage of the torch while it lasts, but we do not extinguish our own lantern because we know we shall need it again once the torch-bearer has turned into another street. If God bestows some extraordinary grace on us at prayer, we must beware of saying: 'From now onwards, I shall have no need of meditation methods or books.' As soon as we meet the first difficulty, we shall have to turn to them again. (114).

117. The best form of prayer is that of pleading: 'the Spirit expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words' (115). 'I have seen the miserable state of my people... I mean to deliver them...' (116). 'You have heard, o Lord, the cry of my appeal' (117).

118. When we do not feel able to plead before God, we should recall the need to do so. When we are unable to adore and love, we should think of God as adorable and loveable. This makes up for everything and is just as advantageous to us (118).

119. St. John Chrysostom (119) says that God does not grant the petitions addressed to Him in the time of personal prayer, so that people may stay with Him and persevere longer in prayer, the latter is more important than the petition.



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120. Progress in the way of perfection (120) requires:

- a) Retreat and personal prayer
- b) The acceptance of humiliations and misunderstandings; 'It was good for me to have to suffer.' (121).
- c) To have someone who will continually remind us of our shortcomings. Jesus was constantly challenging St. Teresa.

121. The way to overcome vanity of mind is to become more integrated into the universality of the Church. A drop of vinegar loses its intrinsic nature when poured into a cask of wine.

122. If we receive insults, meet with humiliations or contempt through our own fault or otherwise, we can raise our heads and say: 'We deserve this.'. But if we do well and receive praise, we must bow our heads and remember that all is due to Jesus Christ.

123. St. Teresa complained to the Lord that the success and blessings granted her by God were leading her to vanity. He reminded her: 'Don't you want me to be praised? Do you want me to be deprived of what is due to me?'

124. As long as we are on earth, we have to put up with degradation and oppression. We must be continually sorry for our sins past, present and future, the sight of which should keep us in a continual state of fear and trembling. 'My sacrifice a contrite spirit - a humbled, contrite heart you will not spurn.' (122).

125. We should be constantly pleading before the Lord, since in spite of our desire to please God, we displease Him at every moment by our faults and imperfections: 'I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living' (123). But I am unhappy in the land of the dead, that is: in the present life. In spite of ourselves and of our best efforts, this present life cannot offer any alternative.

126. When we see somebody committing sin, we should not reprimand the person sharply, but gently ask : 'Friend, why are you offending God? Why do you want to damn yourself.' (124)

127. Pride and vanity are two different things. Pride is aimed at God Himself, through arrogance, haughtiness, self-sufficiency, inclining us to assert independence. Vanity is directed to others; seeking their approval and praise and wanting to be noticed.



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128. Our mind as well as our body can be cut off from God. The latter by reason of its natural heaviness gravitates towards the earth. Even in a sitting position or at rest, it inclines towards the centre of gravity below. Our mind shows an upward inclination - a desire for self-sufficiency - whether or not one is aware of it, the tendency is upwards towards superiority.

129. Mr. de Bernières (125), when writing about self-love, says he was aware of its urges and pricks. This contemptible spirit even slips into situations of grace. We must therefore be on our guard, even in moments of deep communion with the Lord, because we are always in danger of falling or of being lured away. 'My sin is always before me.' (126)

130. We should desire real dying to self since we are so cut off from God. As we cannot do this on our own, we must pray and really plead with God to help us grow in this desire.

Section 4 (Maxims 131 - 170) the purification needed in the spiritual life and the way followed by Jesus

131. A desire for virtue is not virtue, a desire for God is not God.

132. We have not reached holiness as long as we are aware of our neighbour's failings.

133. We should be interiorly convinced that we are a problem to everyone; that others are very charitable and patient with us; that they are constantly ready to forgive us; that they are more competent, virtuous and deserving of merit than us. This conviction should always be with us.

134. Temptations, trials and tribulations are like prisons where God keeps us until we become fully obedient, humble and at one with His will.

135. In order to make some progress in the spiritual life and overcome sinfulness, we can expect to go through the following :

- a) An experience of spiritual poverty - a dejected feeling (127)
- b) An experience of being rejected, even by those whom one would least expect it. (128)
- c) An experience of being tempted and tried by the evil spirit
- d) An experience of being abandoned by God.

These stages are often experienced separately. But when they all converge at the same time, it becomes a kind of Hell and a real Purgatory (129).



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136. When a particular saint appeals to us and in whom we have some confidence, this is already a sign that this saint, out of love and concern for us, intercedes for us with the Lord.

137. We must greatly honour the least of the Blessed in Heaven. The special honour paid to any one of them is of interest to all because for all of them, there is only one heart, one honour, one glory. Similarly to despise any one of them would affect all the others.

138. We show respect for the great Saints when we consider ourselves unworthy of honouring or invoking them.

139. Giving great honour to those whom God wishes to be honoured is to show honour and respect to God Himself.

140. In the natural order, all angels and human beings together cannot be compared to the smallest supernatural grace, because the latter is a participation in the very depths of God. Hence the smallest sin or any infidelity which renders this grace ineffective, cutting it off, even partially, deprives us totally of the benefit of this divine gift of grace.

141. Many people are willing to serve God, but they are not ready to become God's instruments. They prefer to be in control. We should be ready to let go and abandon ourselves to the Lord if we wish to become what God wants us to become and reach our true goal (130).

142. Since every species is greater than any one of its members, so nature seeks the preservation of a species more than any particular part of it. Hence it is more difficult to remain chaste (131) than to abstain from food or drink. Chastity is much more sublime and is a greater and more admirable sacrifice made to God. 'It is not everyone who can accept what I have said...' (132).

143. We must always aim at the universal good of the Church before the good of the particular (133).

144. Many people, even those with a deep and living faith, can be very divisive when talking about the love of Jesus, which is one and indivisible. It is not right to have respect for the clergy and despise religious, or to esteem the religious and have little regard for the clergy (134). We must be catholic, united together in Jesus with all who, like us, belong to Him.



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145. There is a vast difference between really spiritual people who are in special communication with God and those who are merely knowledgeable. The former receives graces and lights under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the latter acquire intellectual knowledge. The former resembles a spring or a little fountain which yield better and more abundant water than one would expect. The learned are like a big pond with a copious volume of water, but which can be easily polluted without God's special grace. This water is muddy and stagnant, at best the sort found in a reservoir (135). It is said of those who really live out their spirituality: 'from their breasts shall flow fountains of living water' (136) and '... a spring inside, welling up to eternal life.' (137)

146. It is not necessary to say a lot about the great truths. Jesus didn't say a lot either. In very few words, He introduced the most sublime mysteries without further explanation. The wise according to the world and the flesh (138) rejected Him because of their purely human reasoning, but the genuinely faithful understood (139) and followed Him in Faith.

147. Let us follow and imitate our Lord in all things, including what has been said above. When He states that He is God, few understand or believe, and some contest what He says. Instead of disputing and holding to His point, He gives the impression of withdrawing by quoting a passage of Scripture: '...are you gods?' (140). One has to be prudent and take into consideration those listening and the way in which what one says will affect them.

Do not give dogs what is holy and do not throw pearls to swine.' (141).

148. If it happens that a mystical subject brought up in conversation is contradicted and not accepted, it is best to withdraw discreetly and keep a low profile as the well-known proverb suggests (142).

149. Mystical theology is at present under attack because it is not properly understood (143). In spite of that, it is better known than ever, even though it is sometimes misinterpreted and badly lived out. The abuse of something which is good in itself does not either make it wrong or condemn it.

150. If the Eternal Father draws us to Himself and allows us to experience His presence; if He enlightens us with the grace of a deeper knowledge of His Son, let us remain humble and even mystified that such enlightenment should break through our sinfulness. We should feel ashamed that such heavenly graces would be bestowed on someone so pitiable and with so many faults.

151. If God gives us a glimpse of His Heavenly Kingdom, showing us the Saints and the Angels, let us take care not to bring the Evil One along with us by allowing the spirit of pride, vanity and self-love to influence us.



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152. The more we enter into contemplation, the more we should stand in awe. 'Happy are those who fear the Lord' (144). Let us reflect on the wonders that God reveals to us and at the same time listen to what the Spirit of truth says: 'Take care, do not be over confident, be fearful, since a fall over the precipice and into the abyss is possible at any moment.'

153. When the Eternal Father draws somebody, He does so to Jesus rather than to Himself. Jesus communicates the same message when He says : 'No one can come to me, unless the Father draws him.' (145).

154. The Divinity is inaccessible and out of reach for us humans. 'God's home is in inaccessible light' (146). If we, who are nothing and insignificant, dared to go straight to God seeking to encounter the depths of God on our own, we would risk getting lost. Those who wish to probe the greatness of God will be overcome by His glory (147). We must go to Him through Jesus Christ. 'No one can come to the Father except through me.' (148) and 'I am the way...' (149).

155. A swallow entering a church, flies upwards towards the light and tries to get out by flapping against the window panes, but it only hurts itself instead of making its escape. Similarly, a human person, instead of staying close to the way of humility followed by Jesus, seeks to rise into higher ways in the hope of reaching God. Such a person, encountering the solidity of the heavenly bodies (150) is driven back down to earth because, being an earthly body, it is not possible to get through to the heights (151).

156. The rebellious Angel, wishing to climb to the heights, fell into the underworld. With a promise of power and of a superior position, this same Angel caused the downfall of the first human person born into the earthly paradise: 'You will be like gods' (152). Hence, we inherited the unfortunate attraction for all that is great and exalted and a repugnance for what is lowly. The remedy for this tendency is to be found in following the example of Jesus. It was here that St. Michael and his angels found their strength (153).

157. In following in the footsteps of Jesus we must firstly show regard for those who loved the ways of the humble. Secondly, we must respect these ways; thirdly, desire the; and fourthly, accept them when Providence sends them to us. Fifthly, we should look for them on our own; and sixthly, we should take pleasure in them and desire to follow them until death. That was all St. John of the Cross asked of the Lord: 'to be looked down upon and to suffer.' (154).



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158. One can enter into and identify with humiliation if initially it is desired and appreciated. But it is only Jesus who, by very special privilege, can enable us to have such a spiritual experience.

159. If we follow in the footsteps of Jesus we will become poor, dejected, worthless and contemptible in the eyes of the world. In letting go, accepting abuse, negative criticism, harassment and every form of misfortune on earth, we become like Jesus and thus draw closer to God by a way that is sure. We will then be enriched from His abundance (155).

160. When searching for high and extraordinary ways we succeed only in filling the imagination, while the heart remains empty. Presumptuous spirits always live on the edge of a dangerous precipice.

161. God's sublime ways: His greatness, power, strength and light do not belong to people on earth. Whoever tries to follow these ways, experiences delusion and gets lost. But the way we should follow is the way of Jesus, i.e. the path of lowliness, humility, rejection, gentleness, patience and suffering. This is the lot of the brothers and sisters of Jesus who are predestined (156).

162. We must therefore walk in the ways of Jesus, suffer and die like Him and for Him - 'He is the first-born of many...' (157). In this way, the Eternal Father will recognise us as 'images of His Son' (158). That is all that matters (159).

163. In the Old Testament, God is revealed as mighty, terrible, sovereign, thunderous. In the New Testament He is little, gentle, humbled, hidden, annihilated - Jesus, God man, man of sorrows, is put to death by humanity, dies on a cross for all, is buried and descends into hell (160).

164. It is nevertheless true that God sometimes introduces to greater heights those who follow the ways of Jesus faithfully. But we must beware of aspiring to these of ourselves or of desiring to reach them.

165. A proud, arrogant heart forces God to move upwards and away from it, while on the contrary, the more a humble heart lowers itself, the nearer God comes to it (161). 'He casts the mighty from their thrones and raises the lowly.' (162).

166. It was through His angels that God spoke to Moses, Abraham, etc., and it was through the prophets that He spoke to His people. But since the Incarnation, He has spoken to us through His Son. He therefore is the only one we should listen to and follow. 'This is my Son..., listen to Him.' (163).



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167. All power is given to Jesus. 'All power has been given to me' (164). The Eternal Father has appointed Him judge of the living and the dead. 'He is the one appointed by God as judge of the living...' (165). The Father judges no one; He has entrusted all judgement to the Son. (166). Hence everything has to be done through Him... '... all beings... should bend the knee at the name of Jesus ' (167).

168. This is the way of life that Jesus advises. He asks that we gather in His name. 'If two or three meet in my name, etc.' (168). He commands us to pray in His name: "Until now you have not asked for anything in my name.' (169). Furthermore, He says: 'I am the way, I am the door, etc.' (170).

169. The Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, addresses all its prayers to God 'through Jesus Christ Our Lord'. After the Resurrection, the Apostles performed all their miracles 'in the name of Jesus Christ' (171). The Martyrs suffered for Jesus. 'They were glad to have had the honour of suffering humiliation for the sake of the name of Jesus' (172). Confessors proclaimed the name of Jesus in order to be acknowledged by Jesus before His Father. 'Everyone who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father...' (173). Jesus is the spouse of the Virgins. 'They follow the Lamb.' (174).

170. To sum up, Jesus is the beginning and the end: 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.' (175). As a conclusion to all these principles, St. Paul says: 'If there are people who do not love the Lord Jesus, let them be cursed.' (176). He never ceases repeating the name of Jesus in his letters. After all this, whoever wants to stray, must take another route: 'Whoever enters by another way is a thief, etc.' (177).

Section 5 (Maxims 171 - 204) personal prayer

171. During prayer, be it mental or vocal, people are often disturbed by distractions, boredom, distaste. God does not provide any attraction or consolation. Then afterwards, when one least expects it, God comes to visit us, at what seems an inappropriate time, when our duties prevent us from enjoying it! (178) We are attracted to God and want to go back to prayer. But all becomes blank again and dryness takes over once more. Thus, God in His wisdom likes to treat us, '... at play everywhere in His world...' (179). We must get used to His way of acting.

172. Going to prayer without preparing a subject and emptying oneself in the hope that God will fill the void are both risky approaches. Few people succeed, although many try it believing it to be the best. It is safest to follow the advice of a wise person: 'Prepare yourself for prayer and do not be like someone tempting God'.



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173. There must always be something to occupy our mind in prayer. If God wants to use us in another way, He will do so with His own power and authority. He will take possession of the soul, raise it up and fill it as He pleases (180). He will take over the intellect and the heart. The soul can then do nothing else but follow this powerful attraction and obey God. And when the attraction fades, the original approach must always be resumed and the usual method taken up once more (181).

174. The soul that is attracted to the above method and to this simple 'emptying' process (182) should be aware that the mind needs to be nourished by study and frequent reading of Holy Scripture as well as good spiritual writings. Ideas gleaned in reading will provide nourishment for prayer and God will make use of it to instruct the soul and dwell within it.

175. Those who have an active mind and who are accustomed to make their own choices, find it difficult to give up this activity even when they are drawn to the other method, which is more sublime and profitable, because they are convinced that it is a waste of time and that they gain nothing from it. But they are mistaken. They need an experienced Director.

176. During prayer and as a preparation for prayer, it is good to let the mind dwell on the spirit and the virtues of Jesus, or the greatness of God, His attributes, etc. (183).

177. Each week or each day, one of God's attributes could be chosen or one of the principal virtues such as faith, hope, abandonment to God, fear of the Lord, obedience, love of God and neighbour, etc. (184).

178. God does not usually attract people to this higher form of prayer (185) before they have experienced difficulties, troubles, isolation, afflictions, temptations, etc. In brief, one has to wait patiently before reaching a state of passivity (186) and experiencing the fullness of love.

179. In true prayer, we do not know nor can we clearly understand what we are doing or what we are achieving.

180. Although the soul cannot be seen, we know nevertheless that it is there. God and His grace are not tangible realities, so both are often present and active in the soul without its explicit knowledge.

181. It is not enough to just speak about the things of God. We must do so with the mind of God and inspired by the Spirit of God. Otherwise, the spirit of vanity worms its way in and destroys everything. To avoid this



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misfortune, it is necessary before and after the talking, to remain recollected and in tune with the Spirit of God (187).

182. God endows some with only a little intelligence (188) but with much practical skill. Some understand more and do less; others understand less and do more, which is preferable by far.

183. Understanding the eternal truths is indeed a gift, but at the same time it is very humiliating and embarrassing not to be in the habit of putting them into practice.

184. The exterior, the interior, the intimate: the first applies to the outside and to external things. The second is in the imagination, the desires and capacities of the person. The third is in the depths of the soul, the mind, the will and the heart.

185. Everyone can see and know the exterior. The interior is seen and known to angels and evil spirits. The intimate is seen by and known to God alone.

186. The fact that a person accepts to undergo many trials on the road to perfection is no small matter. One must have recourse to incessant prayer and pleading before the lord in order to attain this goal. 'Even though the desire to do good is in me, I am not able to do it' (189).

187. Just as the body suspended in the air falls to the ground, so the soul inclines towards evil and falls quickly into hell through sinful deeds committed. It is our self-love which brings about this misfortune. Jeremiah tells us that the house of Israel is responsible for its own disaster (190).

188. Absolute self-love is hell. Absolute divine love is heaven. If we can let go of self-love there will not be any hell for us (191).

189. We must always remain in complete dependence on God and keep on working in fear and trembling so as to live according to the inner strength which impels us. '... let nobody take your prize away from you.' (192). '... work for your salvation in fear and trembling.' (193). 'Those who think they are standing firm should be careful lest they fall.' (194).

190. Let us imagine a great opening in the earth through which we can see the evil spirits, the damned, the eternal fires and hell itself. Imagine a person suspended in mid-air in the midst of the opening of this chasm –



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having nothing to hold on to and not able to grasp anything. Jesus alone is overhead holding the person by a hair, ever ready to let him/her fall should He so wish. How frightened we would be at the sight of such a spectacle! We are constantly exposed to such a state. 'The snares of death were before me.' (195).

191. Whenever we fail to be aware of our extreme dependence on Jesus during this earthly life, as depicted by the foregoing image, we are being drawn into this infernal pit where the evil spirits catch us by the feet and drag us downwards. Then we plead and cry out to Jesus asking Him to keep His grip on us. 'Let your hand of goodness and compassion keep hold of me.' (St. Augustine)

192. Those who find themselves in such a state of fear could be on the verge of despair. But they must raise their eyes and hands to Him who reigns over all, intensifying their cries for help and their trust in Him. They should go on struggling in spite of the discouragement and risks encountered.

193. People can also reach perfection by a more frightening but at the same time more admirable way. This happens when they are, as it were, at the bottom of the infernal abyss, on the point of being submerged and engulfed in it and Jesus invisibly supports them from below, thus saving them from the abyss.

194. Be steadfast in trusting God, but do not cease to be troubled. Hope without sorrow and repentance is not real. We have constant cause for distress in ourselves and in others.

195. God is never entirely satisfied with us, He always asks for more. Neither should we be satisfied with ourselves (196). We should think of ourselves as having done nothing.

196. The more we advance in the spiritual life the more we see what little progress we have made. Those who think they have reached a noteworthy degree of virtue and perfection are mistaken.

197. If we notice some good in ourselves or think we have progressed in virtue, we should consider this to be imaginary and basically nothing (197). Indeed, things do not work out as we think. Even if some good is achieved, all is God's work and comes from Him; it is not ours.

198. All graces, lights, inspirations, peace, consolation and tangible devotion should be regarded as figments of the imagination or at the very most as belonging to God, which He shares or withholds, gives or takes away, as He pleases.



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199. Preachers, Directors and Confessors can teach us very well the means to sanctification. but it is only God and Jesus who can give the grace to reach this sanctification (198). '... though the law was given by Moses, grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ.' (199).

200. Imagine a little dog in the wheel of a roasting-jack. He appears to be walking incessantly and to no purpose. He does not advance and yet he roasts the meat for his master's supper. People who are really humble should serve in the same way. They should devote themselves to what they are asked to do without questioning or wanting to see what advantage there would be for themselves or for others - their only desire being to do the Lord's will. Like the dog mentioned above, they should regard themselves merely as servants who have done their duty (200). 'What is your servant.., that you should show favour to a dead dog like me' (201). If this is one's attitude, the Master will throw a morsel or a bone, while he dines (202).

201. A master orders his servant to draw water from a well and pour it into a drum. The water escapes from the drum through a series of holes and flows into several canals. The master had set up these canals to water different parts of the garden, but the servant being unaware of this, grumbles against him and complains that this is a waste of effort and of time. But later, when the master leads him to the garden and shows him the well-filled reservoirs of water, he recognises his master's wisdom and resolves in future to carry out his orders without bothering about anything (203).

202. Should we not refrain from doing or saying whatever pertains to God's glory and our neighbour's salvation in order to conquer self-love and avoid vain complacency in ourselves or giving a high opinion of ourselves to others? Would this not hinder our spiritual growth? We cannot remain silent when evangelical truth and the salvation of the other are at stake or when the opportunity to speak presents itself. We must therefore feel free to speak, while being careful to identify and check any destructive vanity which could creep in.

203. Whenever we speak to someone following a period of personal prayer, we know from experience that our conversation is much more focused and meaningful and consequently less conceited. We will also be motivated by greater purity of intention. So if we are used to being recollected, humble and discerning whenever we do or say anything for the glory of God, we will do so with the proper dispositions. God will look after our sanctification while we commit ourselves to the faithful practice of charity in instructing and serving our neighbour (204).



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204. There are five types of devout persons:

- a) There are people of good will who dread mortal sin and faithfully keep the commandments of God, but do not set aside any time for exercises of piety or personal prayer. They recite vocal prayers every day and receive Holy Communion once a month.
- b) There are those who pray and often receive Holy Communion. They may feel drawn by special devotion to do so but it is the result of habit and routine. They make little or no effort to restrain their natural inclinations, to overcome their passions, to correct their faults and imperfections, which communicates a false notion of devotion and which is often criticised.
- c) There are the virtuous (205), who do not spare themselves in their war against vice, inordinate friendships, their aversions and anything that is contrary to holiness and integrity, remembering what is implied by the words: 'The Kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence and the violent are taking it by storm.' (206). Moreover, they pray, they receive Holy Communion frequently, give alms, fast, perform other good works and exercises of penance, etc...
- d) There are the contemplatives, who because of long years of fidelity in the practice of all the virtues and perseverance in prayer, are drawn to find their delight in God in countless ways that cannot be expressed. 'Friend, move up higher' (207).
- e) There are some, but only a minority, who have all the characteristics of the above but think they possess none of them. They withdraw and bury themselves in their unworthiness and despondency even though they are very close to God and in deep communion with Him. Without being aware of it they are in possession of a treasure. There are no means of assessing or describing what goes on in the depths of their being. Only those whose experience is similar can understand.

The first of the five types mentioned above live out their spiritual life by protection, the second out of virtue, the third by the inner strength they possess, the fourth are drawn by God and the fifth go through the valley of tears : 'they make their way from height to height, soon to be seen before God in Sion.' (208).

Some remarks and advice

A fairly common illusion is for those at the second stage mentioned above to imagine themselves in the fourth stage. They think they are very holy because of their fidelity to the exercises of devotion, although they have never taken the trouble to integrate their devotion with their life - always living the same kind of life and making no effort to surrender themselves. The solution to this problem is :

- a) To reflect deeply on the real meaning of genuine virtue and true devotion



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- b) To endeavour to enter the third stage and seek to acquire genuine virtue, however difficult the effort may be
- c) To persevere in the practice of personal prayer and frequent Holy Communion and to give equal importance to mortification and the practice of the most difficult virtues.

Some further advice

Our personal prayer will be more fruitful if we become well informed about all the virtues (209) so that we may become more familiar with them, really desire them and be led to put them into practice. Thus, we will be ready to enter the fourth stage whenever God chooses to give us a strong attraction for it. However, when the attraction diminishes or ceases we must go back to the third stage. Finally, we can be sure that growth in virtue will be the outcome of fidelity to personal prayer and to the sacraments of confession and communion. Jesus the ultimate Truth affirms: 'By their fruits you shall know them.' (210)

Section 6 (Maxims 205 - 223) love for God and others

205. Self-sacrificing and unpretentious people firmly believe themselves to be the most worthless and contemptible of all. Such people esteem the other to the extent that they despise themselves. Awareness of one's lowliness and weakness lead a person humbly to show great respect for the other.

206. Respecting one's neighbour out of love leads to holiness and can be very demanding. A person animated by such sublime feelings almost dies (211) on perceiving the countless wounds and infirmities, for the most part fatal, in the members of Christ's mystical Body.

207. When our heart truly loves something, it only thinks of and breathes for the object of its love. It procures for the loved one every possible good, without setting any limits or calculating how much to give. There is joy over the loved one's success and sorrow over failures. In a word, one seems to live for the other alone and is ever ready to sacrifice one's life for the other. Let us examine ourselves and see whether we are animated by the same sentiments and motivated by the same incentives to please Jesus and His Church - His Mystical Body.

208. When we say we love Jesus, it would only be a pretence if we do not love all His people, including our neighbour, the least of whom is His image.



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209. Do we show compassion to our neighbour who may be in trouble? Are we keenly affected when we notice that among the members of Our Lord's Mystical Body some are either altogether lifeless and cut off from the Body, others are distorted and crippled and some afflicted with infectious and contagious '†diseases†' that can harm the rest? (212). The person who is imbued with real love is almost frightened to death at the sight of these situations: 'the sight of these renegades disgusts me, they do not observe your promise. (213).

210. If we take into account the infirmities and feebleness of those who are not actually ill, we must admit that from head to foot there is not a single part of Our Lord's Mystical Body in perfect health. A person who sees things in this way does not experience much consolation. 'Save us, Yahweh! There are no devout people left.' (214). Such a person is looking for someone who loves God perfectly. Not only is such a one not to be found, but scarcely anyone has found the way to this goal: 'I had hoped for sympathy, but in vain... (215).

211. What becomes of those who expect to find such true love? They pray, plead, fasts, give alms, do night vigils, labour very hard and earnestly strive to remedy such great evils. But in the end, seeing how little is achieved, such people suffer intolerably (216).

212. By a strange perversion of reasoning, we separate in our minds our own salvation from that of our neighbour. We rejoice and bless God when we believe we are on the way to salvation and not like such a one who has still some way to go. It is all right to rejoice in this way but we should not exclude sorrow and distress for those who are not reaching salvation.

213. If I really loved my neighbour, sadness at seeing another perish would lessen my own joy at finding myself on the way to salvation.

214. No part of the human body is at peace as long as another part suffers? A fairly sharp prick is felt throughout and distorts any other sensations of pleasure. The pain experienced by one is felt by all the others; the heart feels the pain of all the other parts.

215. Do we love our neighbour as ourselves? Let us see as we reflect on the signs of this love. Do we feel sadness and distress when we hear that the salvation of the other is in danger? Do we rejoice at the success of our neighbour's work for God and at the abundance of grace lavished by Jesus? Do we give as much thought to our neighbour's good as we do to our own? Do we do for the other what we do for ourselves?

216. A self-sacrificing person concentrates more effort on the other than on self.



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217. Jesus, the head of the Mystical Body, suffered a continuous inner torment, much worse than his physical sufferings (217), at the sight of the ravages of sin in us, His members. 'My sin is always before me' (218). He bore the weight of the sins of others.

218. In imitation of the Saviour of the world, we must spare no effort to save our neighbour from sin. To this end we must be prepared to give up our time, our own interests, possessions and our lives, like St. Paul who said: 'I will be glad to spend all I have, and myself as well, in order to help you.' (219).

219. Spiritual needs are of much more importance than corporal ones (220). No matter how great bodily woes may be, nature comes up with a thousand means of relieving them. How crafty beggars can be in coming by a penny! On the other hand, nearly all poor people die of spiritual starvation. They worry little about famine in the soul. They are condemned without giving it a thought. Hence spiritual alms-giving is preferable and much more beneficial than corporal alms-giving.

220. How blind are most of those who ask for, as well as those who give, corporal alms. The poor beggar does everything possible to save his body from death but he does very little to preserve his soul from eternal death. The person who gives the alms is unaffected by the loss of the same poor beggar's soul. God desires that we practice charity and says: 'Happy are those who are concerned for the poor'. (221). Let us take care how this charity and concern are applied.

221. Teaching or getting others to teach the way of salvation to those who are poor, sinners or children, is certainly more worthwhile than clothing and feeding the body (222).

222. In the Old Law, limiting oneself to the giving of corporal alms could be excused, as nearly everything consisted in the literal fulfilment of externals. But in the New Law, corporal alms should be seen, if possible, as a more effective way of giving spiritual alms. Material aid is given to the body with a view to gently reaching their spiritual needs.

223. One of the proofs given in the Gospel that Jesus is the Messiah is: 'the Good News is proclaimed to the poor' (223). The Saviour gave very little material aid, as in the multiplication of the loaves. Even then this aid was intended to confirm the spiritual alms He had given in instructing the people who followed Him. When He performed a miracle to heal the body, His concern was the healing of the soul.



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Section 7 (Maxims 224 - 235) adoration

224. Deep adoration before God's majesty is excellent. In this attitude, people see themselves as subordinate to every creature. 'For the sake of the Lord, accept the authority of every social institution (224). Such people take the place due to them because of their sin; below that of the evil spirits themselves, because they sinned less (225).

225. Not knowing whether we will dwell eternally in hell with the evil spirits, we sink into the depths and allow ourselves to be absorbed (226) in Jesus, who having borne our sins is below us (227). Thus we become completely reduced to nothing and in this state of communion with God our adoration becomes that of Jesus; and proceeding from Him and acting through Him, it draws all the virtues into the soul without any thought or effort on our part.

226. This divine adoration (228) imperceptibly engenders love of God and neighbour. This love becomes profound, perfect and boundless, free from vain complacency and self-love.

227. This adoring love, outstanding loving adoration, is more pleasing to God than anything. This respectful love is infinitely better in itself than love arising from the senses or the affections.

228. When children are grown-up, they no longer want to play the games they played as little children or to amuse themselves with their father and mother whom they now treat with more respect and reserve. The father's approach also changes: he gives toys to the little ones and confides more significant work and responsibility to the older ones (229).

229. God must not be treated with too much familiarity e.g. seeking to cling to Him like children, seeking to satisfy their likes and comforts in all they do for Him. It is more fitting to lower oneself in one's own and in His eyes, humble and steadfast in the awareness of one's nothingness - keeping to one's place (230). If in His excessive goodness, He anticipates our needs, gives us some proof of His mercy by a special favour or communication, which the Spouse in the Song of Songs calls a kiss from God's mouth (231), we welcome His favours while at the same time immersing ourselves in the depth of our misery and emptiness.

230. It is not possible to express the extent of perfection and virtue achieved by this adoration. This is what enables us to become true worshippers of the Father (232). Besides, we reflect the continual respectful adoration given by the Saints in heaven in their 'holy, holy, holy' (233) or 'praise and glory to Our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb' (234).



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231. It is noteworthy that in the Book of Revelation, there is much emphasis on this deeply respectful adoration and little mention of love. This is therefore the proper attitude of the creature in the presence of the Creator and God. 'They prostrated themselves before Him to worship the One who lives forever and ever... they prostrated themselves to worship... they prostrated themselves before the throne...' (235).

232. Theologians hold that the primary aim of the Incarnation of the Word is that God should be adored with infinite adoration by a God who became a human being.

233. Jesus Christ said to the Samaritan woman: 'the hour will come - in fact it is here already - when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth...' (236). This is His desire.

234. Worshipping God in this way disposes us in a very profound way to be aware of His presence, to be discerning and humble in all our actions and to be patient in the midst of disappointments and difficulties. In this way, we show respect for the sovereign Majesty before whom we remain in a continual spirit of humility.

235. We arrive at this state by the gift of deep communion offered us by the Lord; by the fidelity with which we respond to this; by reflecting on it attentively and filling our minds with it; by pondering on our nothingness without God (237) and on the greatness and majesty of God. Finally, we will arrive at this state by asking unceasingly for it, even though we regard ourselves unworthy of ever obtaining such a favour.

NOTES

1. Eph. 4 : 31; Gal. 5 : 24
2. Rom. 8 : 19-22; 26
3. Lay people also gave spiritual direction e.g. Gaston de Renty, the father of a family, was spiritual director of the Carmelites of Beaume.
4. e.g. the devil, as in MAP 10, 11, 14; the world as in MAP 14; the passions as in MAP 27; riches as in MAP 38
5. I Pet. 4 : 11
6. The cities of the time were surrounded by ramparts as a protection against attack
7. N. Barré uses this imagery to illustrate that whoever experiences conversion also experiences a new beginning but should continue to be aware of his or her unworthiness.
8. Gen. 3 : 19
9. PM 36



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10. Ez. 2 : 4
11. Ez. 11 : 19
12. Jer. 23 : 9; Ps 51 : 19
13. I Cor. 10 : 4
14. Not having sinned greviously
15. Ps 19 : 6
16. In writing about N. Barré, Raffron and Thuillier refer to his doubts and struggles in his life of faith.
17. L. 60
18. Eph. 4 : 1-2
19. Tit. 2 : 12-13
20. The word used in French refers to the residue which forms after the wine has fermented and which should be thrown out. cf PM 8
21. They should regard it as their duty and it should spring from an interior motivation
22. Rom. 8 : 16-17; 1 Cor. 3 : 1...
23. FM 12
24. This refers to human nature wounded by sin.
25. The continual struggle to follow in the footsteps of Jesus out of love
26. There are many examples in the O.T. where the promise or hope of material rewards encourages the people to be faithful.
27. S.R. 1 : 9-16; 8 : 1, 7
28. MAP 69
29. PM 27 (v)
30. Mt. 6 : 24
31. R.E. 1, 2; FM 4, 11
32. Mt. 19 : 21
33. There are many accounts of possession by the devil and exorcism in 17th century French history, where Satan's presence is evident in the person possessed.
34. Gen. 27
35. Rom. 5 : 12
36. 2 Tim. 4 : 7-8
37. Those who do not have the spirit of detachment and inner freedom advocated by N. Barré
38. MD 33, 54
39. Ps 72 : 2 Wis. 10 : 21; Mt 11 : 21; MD 54
40. Those who fuss around the King and seek their own personal favours



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41. Maxims 50, 51 and 52 do not speak very positively about women's spiritual life. During the 17th century women were considered to be inferior and capable of living only a relationship of dependence. It was difficult to envisage any woman exercising a role in society that wasn't linked with a man or protected by law in some way, e.g. enclosure in the convents. Being victims of such repression in society, women often experienced psychological difficulties, e.g. inferiority complex, anxiety, seeking compensations in various areas, misunderstanding of the mystical life. Hence women tended to get caught up in an emotional type of spirituality, e.g. Quietism or Illuminism. We also know that a number of women overcame these difficulties and made quite an impact in 17th century French society. In choosing a group of women to carry out the instruction and education of youth, N. Barré showed the confidence which he had in them. He refused to have them enclosed and could be considered as one of those who favoured the liberation of women.
42. MD 28, 30, 31, 32, 33 refer to people who should be making progress in the spiritual life. cf also MD 26, 29
43. Here reference is being made to a spiritual journey. MD 46
44. Mk 7 : 27-29; 2 Sam. 7 : 21
45. cf Nb 14 : 4. When faced with difficulties the Hebrew people are tempted to return to Egypt, i.e. choosing material security rather than freedom. There are many examples in the history of Israel of a desire to seek an easier life and material grandeur. Until the time of the exile, they were seeking support from Egypt. MAP 33-38
46. It is not a question of seeking failure, but accepting it in a spirit of humility. MD 6, 20; PM 7
47. Rom. 1 : 17; Hab. 2 : 4
48. This refers to faith rather than feeling. There is an echo here of the Minim spirituality of penance as a means to conversion. Prudence should not be excluded here. MD 36
49. PM 3, 16; MI 3
50. PM 4, 5
51. MAP 46; MD 40
52. PM 1, 2, 3, 4; S.R. 1 : 5
53. MAP 24
54. MD 46, 54 Relationships in the worldly sense are to be avoided. We should check our motivation in visiting people, lest it be simply to be flattered by them.
55. MAP 33; R.R. 9
56. Ps. 88 : 16; Rev. 5 : 6, 12; Rev. 13 : 18; PM 8
57. cf Mk 11 : 15-19; Lk 19 : 45-48; Jn 2 : 14-16; Jn 18 : 6
58. Rev. 5 : 5; 17 : 4
59. Lk 2 : 49



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60. 2 Tim. 2 : 3
61. Hos 73 : 22-23
62. Jn 8 : 29; 16 : 32; Mt. 28 : 20
63. N. Barré is referring here to the kenosis of Christ - Phil. 2 : 6-9
64. Jesus, the Son, was totally dependent on His Father. Mt 11 : 26-27; Jn 7 : 16 etc.
65. Lk 1 : 47-49, 51
66. PM 5, 31
67. FM 4
68. Jn 5 : 17
69. MD 18
70. 1 Cor. 8 : 1
71. Mk. 7 : 37
72. Acts 10 : 38
73. It is not what we do but how we do it.
74. Jer. 1 : 6. In the Vulgate translation : 'Ah, ah, ah,; Lord God...'
75. Jn 1 : 13; Rom. 9 : 15-16
76. Gen. 9 : 2; Est. 4 : 17
77. Lk. 17 : 21
78. MD 13
79. Amazonians : Mythical personages, female warriors, originating from Asia Minor.
80. Epicureans : followers of the Greek philosopher Epicurus, 4th century B.C. He taught that happiness is the highest good in life. His followers were not held in high repute for this reason.
81. Virtue is an inner force driving us to become fully integrated persons - to become fully ourselves in accordance with God's plan for us.
82. Here images are evoked from classical poetry and sculpture.
83. Mt. 10 : 34
84. A third century Doctor of the Church
85. Allowing oneself to be taken over by God
86. Ps 74 : 2; Joel 4 : 21
87. Ps 87 : 3
88. Mt 7 : 13-14; Lk 13 : 24
89. Mt 11 : 12
90. 1 Cor. 13 : 7
91. A third century Greek doctor of the Church



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92. In the O.T. the Canaanites and Amorites were enemies of the people of God
93. Prov.. 22 : 13
94. Origen is comenting on Rev. 21 : 8
95. Ex. 3 : 17
96. Lk. 13 : 24; Mt. 7 : 13
97. Total and absolute turning away from God.
98. Is. 11 : 2
99. A theological term which refers to the qualities of God which Revelation uncovers for us.
100. Rev. 15 : 4; Jer. 10 : 7
101. S.R. 1 : 5
102. 1 Jn. 4 : 19
103. Jer. 31 : 3
104. Jer. 1 : 11
105. Jn 15 : 4-7
106. 2 Cor. 12 : 9; Ps. 135 : 25
107. Prayer, sacraments and duties of state
108. Ezek. 39 : 27
109. Acts 17 : 28
110. MAP 79
111. This Pope was a former monk of Clairvaux
112. Ex. 18 : 18
113. Dt. 34 : 10; 1 Macc. 9 : 29; MD 41; PM 5, 21
114. MAP 172, 173
115. Rom. 8 : 26; PM 21
116. Ex. 3 : 7
117. Ps 114 : 1
118. MD 52
119. Fourth century Greek Father of the Church
120. following in the footsteps of Jesus out of love
121. Ps 118 : 71
122. Ps 51 : 19-20
123. Ps 27 : 13
124. MD 8



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125. Mr. de Bernières (1602-1659) was a layman who was very committed to the spiritual life. He was a spiritual director for the Company of the Blessed Sacrament.

126. Ps 51 : 5

127. Ps 40 : 17; PM 23

128. MAP 122; MD 21

129. L. 54 which describes N. Barré's experience of this

130. PM 31

131. The urge to preserve the race is stronger than the urge to preserve oneself.

132 Mt. 19 : 11

133. S.R. 3 : 7

134. F.M. 5

135. M.D. 18

136. Jn 7 : 38

137. Jn 4 : 14

138. Jn 6 : 63; Rom. 8 : 5-6

139. Acts 4; M.D. 54

140. Ps 82 : 6

141. Mt. 7 : 6

142. MAP 79

143. There were many abuses on the part of theologians and directors due to lack of understanding of the mystical e.g. Quietism

144. Ps 111 : 1

145. Jn 6 : 65

146. 1 Tim. 6 : 16

147. Sir. 3 : 21

148. Jn 14 : 6

149. Jn 14 : 6

150. This is linked with the ancient view of the universe as envisaged by Ptolemy

151. MD 54; FM 10

152. Gen. 3 : 5

153. MD 54; FM 10, 11; T.S. 18

154. FM 10; S.R. 9 : 2

155. FM 10, 11 PM 1, 10, 27 (v)

156 Rom. 8 : 29-30; Eph. 1 : 5-11 God desires all people to be saved, but having created us with free will,



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He leaves us the choice to respond. - MD 10, 11, 54

157. Rom 8 : 29

158. Rom. 8 : 29; Col. 1 : 15-18

159. FM 11; PM 27 (v), 35, 36

160. MAP 73

161. Prov. 15 : 162.

162. Lk 1 : 52

163. Lk. 9 : 35

164. Mt. 28 : 18

165. Acts 10 : 42

166. Jn 5 : 22

167. Phil. 2 : 10

168. Mt. 18. 20

169. Jn 16 / 24

170. Jn 14 : 6; 10 : 9

171. Acts 3 : 6

172. Acts 5 : 41

173. Mt 10 : 32

174. Rev. 14 : 4

175. Rev. 1 : 8

176. 1 Cor. 16 : 22

177. Jn 10 : 1

178. PM. 33

179. Prov. 8 : 31

180. Spiritual Canticle 38

181. MAP. 116, 116

182. i.e. completely open to the action of the Holy Spirit

183. MAP. 99

184. L. 25 which describes the spirital clock.

185. MAP 174 where one is completely open to the action of the Holy Spirit

186. Allowing God to act

187. MAP 151

188. This refers to an understanding of the things of God which is a gift of the Spirit

189. Rom. 7 : 18



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190. Jer. 11 : 17; 38 : 4; 40 : 3

191. MAP 97

192. Rev. 3 : 11

193. Phil. 2 : 12

194. 1 Cor. 10 : 12

195. Ps 18 : 5

196. MD 27

197. Rom. 7 : 18

198. MD 2; PM 6

199. Jn 1 : 17

200. Lk. 17 : 10

201. 2 Sam. 9 : 8

202. Mt. 15 : 26-27

203. L. 49

204. PM 11, 12

205. Those whose whole lives are deeply committed to God

206. Mt 11 : 12

207. Lk. 14 : 10

208. Ps 83 : 7-8

209. The theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity.

The cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, courage and moderation.

The moral virtues - all those that express love of neighbour in some way.

210. Mt. 7 : 20

211. Mt. 26 : 36-46 Mk. 14 : 32-42 Lk. 22 : 40-46

212. Is. 1 : 5-6; Ps 38 : 48

213. Ps 118 : 158; Ps 118 : 136

214. Ps 11 : 1; Jer. 8 : 18

215. Ps 69 : 20

216. MD 15

217. Ps 37. 17

218. Ps 50 : 5

219. 2 Cor. 12 : 15 PM 7

220. MAP 25

221. Ps 41 : 1



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222. PM. 13, 1

223. Is. 61 : 1 Lk. 7 : 22

224. 1 Pet. 2 : 13

225. Similar ideas are to be found in 'Reflections and Recommendations'

226. A mystical expression of abandonment. L. 14

227. MAP 193

228. Jesus adoring in us

229. MD 29, 30, 54

230. Lk. 14 : 7-11

231. Sg. 1 : 1

232. Jn 4 : 23

233. Is. 6 : 3

234. Rev. 7 : 10, 12

235. Rev. 4 : 10; 5 : 14; 7 : 11

236. Jn 4 : 23

237. Without God we are nothing, if we turn away from Him in our nothingness we risk getting lost.

Whatever happens, be at peace and trust in God!

Believe that God truly loves you!

God bless you