



ALWAYS HAVE COMPASSION FOR THE WEAK AND PRAY FOR THEM.
IF YOU SPEAK TO THEM DO SO BY EXCUSING THEM.
THE MORE MERCIFUL YOU ARE WITH OTHERS,
THE MORE MERCIFUL WILL GOD BE WITH YOU;

PLEASE VISIT THE WEBSITE: www.pamphletstoinspire.com

Padre Pio and Spiritual Formation

Article 9

Scrupulousness In Confession



Padre Pio and Spiritual Formation

Padre Pio described his spiritual director, Padre Benedetto Nardella, as the man who "formed" him. Here are some of Padre Benedetto's teachings on the Christian life.

Article 9

Scrupulousness In Confession

Be careful but not meticulous, subdued but not scrupulous.

Believe me, daughter, God is not as you imagine Him, a cruel and implacable tax-collector. His judgment is more merciful than our self-judgment, because He sees our fragility and the extenuating circumstances of sin better than we do. Remember that Jesus excused his crucifiers, whereas twenty centuries later, we are severe with them and we are tempted to think that the reason for Jesus to excuse them was based on his mercy and not on the truth. David spoke very well when he said: "It is better to fall into the hands of God than in the hands of men." And I add: "In ours."

But what makes me think that you are subject to scruples? From your own words. "I am afraid that I am blinded by self-love, and I can never explain myself. I think that I confess temptations as temptations while I should frankly say I have sinned, even though I am not certain that I have. Nor is it enough that I add the general intention of pleading guilty as God knows me to be: my conscience then tells me I was not exact, and that I should have simply admitted that I had sinned, giving the exact number of times. Even though I have told the confessor of my doubts I am not tranquil because it seems to me that having been deceived by me at previous confessions he wants to continue thinking I am innocent and therefore his absolution is not valid.

"I have confessed three extra times to make reparation for the past and I think even this poor priest was mistaken, having told him the opinion of my usual Director. If I had kept silent about this, it would have been better."

"Certain of having confessed some sins in their essence, I then suspect that I have not told the circumstances that increase the malice, or to have not specified them all." For heaven's sake, daughter; be a bit more indulgent with yourself! Do you think that serving God consists of a continuous vortex of painful doubts, of being dragged through labyrinths and juniper woods? Is it possible that God demands so much from his creatures?

From now on be docile to your guide and let yourself be led like one who is blind. For malaria fevers we need quinine and for scruples we need obedience, but a firm and



**Compassion for the poor and suffering
has always been the most beautiful
sign of charity and
of the indwelling of God in a heart.**

Because we love ourselves we want well-being. We are sad in adversities, we ask help from others, gentleness, courtesy and respect. Why not make others happy and enjoy their happiness, feel sadness for their sufferings, be benignant, polite, respectful and affable? What difference of origin and destiny is there before God between our brothers and ourselves that we treat them so differently to the way we would wish to be treated?

If we are imperfect or guilty, we put up with ourselves gladly, we know how to find excuses and we do not want anyone to know or speak about our faults. We long for indulgence, forgiveness, for the generosity of those offended and the quick oblivion of the harm done. What power, then, do the blows, the weaknesses of others and the wrongs done to us (and which seem enormous obstacles) have to exempt us from brotherly love? What excuse will we give to Jesus for our hardness and the expectation of complete reparation? How true it is that our self-love will be the first and inexorable judge of our lack of brotherly love!



Padre Pio listening to Cleonice Morcaldi

resolute obedience. Say to yourself: whatever happens I will obey. God can never condemn one who is obedient.

You can use a note-book to record the days failings, but you must only keep note of the most important ones.

If you want to note down every thought, every interior movement, even if unexpected, every tendency, every fantasy and rebellion of the passions at their source, you will be irresolute and you will never find a confessor ready to listen to you. My daughter, be merciful with yourself and do not tyrannize yourself. Who forces and condemns you to such trifles? No-one.

Catholic doctrine teaches us that the sins that have to be confessed are only mortal sins that are certain. We can expose our doubts, whatever they may be, should we so wish, otherwise we are dispensed. As for venial sins, it is certain they are forgiven, even if there were thousands of them, through an act of love, or contrition, or a devout sign of the cross, etc. As if all the trifles you mentioned were necessary for an integral confession.

It is good for humility, for contrition and for general perfection to confess doubtful mortal sins and venial sins we are certain of, but we are not obliged to and therefore you can see for yourself if your scruples are not excessive. Less anguish and more enthusiasm.

Bitterness In The Heart And Slandering With The Tongue

I cannot understand how it is possible to be bitter and slander people and at the same time really want to love Jesus. Jesus is good and holy and says nothing of the defects and sins of humanity or yours and if He obliges you to speak of them He places a seal on the lips of the one who listens in his Name. Is this not so? And is it not so that He makes miracles to prove the glory of the elect and never to prove the damnation of the reprobate? Imitate him.

Leaving aside the sin against charity, I cannot understand the point of slander. It harms our neighbor and does not correct him, and it is a waste of time; that's all there is to it! If instead of slandering we prayed, what a gain! And instead of thinking of the sins of others we thought of our own, what an advantage!

You have so much to do to become perfect and you waste your time reflecting on the imperfections of others?

As soon as you realize that your tongue has got going, ask yourself: but why am I slandering?

What Slander Is Not

Even if repeating what is already known is not detraction or slander, I nevertheless advise you to abstain from it.

Always have compassion for the weak and pray for them. If you speak of them do so by excusing them. The more merciful you are with others, the more merciful will God be with you.

Slander A Moral Theft

Good. You could not have been better punished, because you should not receive God -Charity in your mouth when you have used it for slandering.

Do you want to understand the ugliness of this vice? Listen, then. If you were asked to steal something, would you not be shocked? Now slander is stealing your neighbors good name, which is more valuable than money or anything else that belongs to him; and why not avoid doing this? Even if the sins are true, you must keep quiet about them as you keep quiet and want others to keep quiet about your own. Is this not an elementary duty of justice?

When you hear slander, pray for the person slandered so God forgives and helps him and so that you are saved from those defects and worse ones.

Bad And Good

Saint Francis de Sales has a motto that all pious souls should know and never forget: "Every time I have judged a person badly I have been sorry and every time I have judged a person well I have always been glad."

To judge a person badly is therefore always wrong or always causes one to repent because it is extremely difficult for man, as he is, to have the necessary discretion to be able to distinguish the action of that person, the fact of the intention, to be able to determine the spontaneity, the will from the character, the malice from the circumstances, the violence of the temptation, the instinct, etc.

Therefore, the judgment is usually excessive and offends the eminent virtue of charity.

When instead we judge a person well, even if mistakenly so, there is no need to be sorry, because we are safe from the excesses mentioned and we have exercised charity.

If the Holy Spirit, my daughter, threatens a severe judgment to the judges who have to judge, will He then be indulgent with those who are not called to judge? — Psalm 81, 2.

Think about this and seriously.

Compassion For The Poor And Suffering

Compassion for the poor and suffering has always been the most beautiful sign of charity and of the indwelling of God in a heart.

All the Saints have started with compassion for the poor.

Those who are not intimately moved by the sight of the poor and unfortunate, do not love God, or love Him but little. Mercy cannot have a heart that is closed and a tight fist. Divine love is irreconcilable with indifference to his living and suffering images. Whoever rejoices before the Lamb in the Blessed Sacrament and passes a poor wretch with indifference who stretches out his hand for alms in the precincts of the temple would be a rich man, as hard as the one in the Gospel.

Therefore I am very pleased with your deep compassion for the afflictions of humanity and the intention of doing everything you can to help them. I especially recommend to you abandoned orphans, shameful poverty and solitary invalids. All worthy of maternal love and solicitude.

Be spiritual, my daughter, that is, full of faith and you will perceive Jesus through deformities and rags.

Charity For Sinners

Just as you worship and kiss a Crucifix that is in bad condition through age and negligence, so did the Saints love their imperfect brethren.

"The carved image of Jesus is always worthy of our affectionate veneration, even if disfigured," says St Francis de Sales; and souls, living images of God, always deserve our love, even if deformed with weakness and sin. Indeed, just as the ruin of a most beautiful icon increases the sentiment of compassion, so does veneration for the reality represented increase through sorrow for the damage suffered. And so must our compassion increase for the misfortune of our neighbor who has lost his original beauty through moral damage.

The more perfect you are, the more you will love the imperfect. God most perfect loved his crucifiers.

To Love Our Neighbor As Ourselves

Jesus commanded us to love our neighbor as our self, and in a short sermon He condensed with admirable depth all the qualities of real love and all the answers to the difficulties in practicing it.