



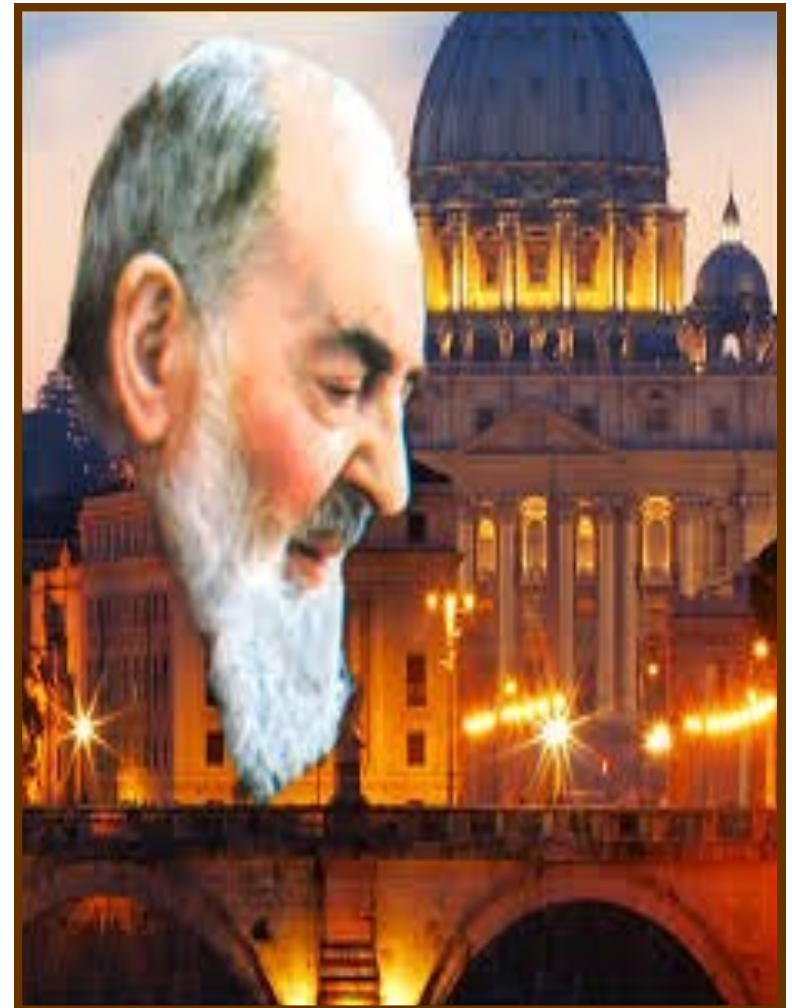
Rejoice at the thought that on the day of revelation
you will understand how good God is in all his ways.

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Padre Pio and Spiritual Formation

Article 6

Contemplation Of God



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 6

Contemplation Of God

Think of God as more gentle than all gentleness, more good than all goodness, more merciful than all mercy, more loving than all love and you will understand Him in the most suitable way and be most pleasing to Him.

If with charity in your heart you also wish to awaken your admiration, think of Him as strong, wise, beautiful, holy and pure more than can be imagined. With just a gesture He made from nothing immense armies of Angels, most noble creatures, shining with genius, admirably powerful, fascinating in their gentleness and dignity; that is a sample for you of his wisdom and virtue.

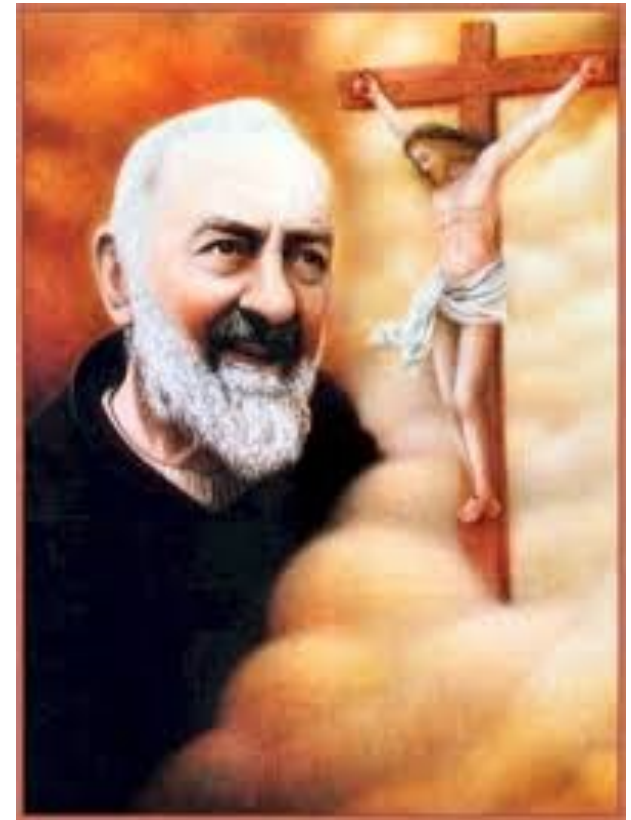
Oh, how amiable and great is our God! How small we are when we consider Him to be a little superior to us in benignity, generosity, patience, and glory. Enlarge, enlarge your concept of Him in your intelligence and arouse the sentiments of love and adoration in your heart.

Perpetual Union With God

If you ask me how much time you must spend in vocal prayers, and in meditation, I reply that I leave it to your discretion, considering your family circumstances, personal requirements, etc., etc. But if you want to know how long you must remain in prayer or union with God, I exhort you with Saint Paul of the Cross (founder of the Passionists 1694-1775) to remain so for twenty four hours a day. You must always do everything looking at Him with interior affection so as to please Him: in your work, arranging your affairs, eating, sleeping, during recreation, keeping your attention fixed lovingly on the One who loves you and looks at you with perpetual love. Return often in his presence with simple loving words from the heart and keeping Him in your memory.

I know that it is impossible for you at the stage of love you have reached to keep a constant attention like souls that have exercised a great deal and are advanced; but you can easily harbour the interior desire and wish to succeed doing what you can for the time being.

However, never do anything with violence or torturing yourself, but always gently and with patience.



**BE MY HELP OH GOD, DO NOT ABANDON OR DESPISE ME,
OH MY GOD AND MY GOOD.**



To suffer humiliation is painful, but you may be sure that Divine Mercy will turn it into your consolation.

Complete Abandonment To Providence

You ask me what Saint de Chantal asked Saint Francis de Sales. She too wanted to know if her soul abandoned in God's hands could repose completely, leaving to Him the care of what concerned her interiorly as well as exteriorly, and placing all her trust in his Providence and will in such a way as to remain without a care and without having to choose and without the desire for anything outside of what our Lord worked in her and for her, having cast away every impediment or resistance.

How can you doubt? What can be more advantageous than this abandonment — what activity more fertile than this calm? God is father and mother and I don't know if a child can do better than to go gently into the arms of its mother without thinking or agitation.

There is no saint who has not cultivated complete self-abandonment to God and in this way reached sanctity, and the unchanging calm through the various and sometimes most painful events and contradictions of life. Therefore there is no instructor leading souls to a great love of God who does not teach and recommend self-abandonment.

And who can think, arrange and provide better than infinite Wisdom and Charity?

Oh! Almighty Love, may everyone embrace You casting out all anxiety and personal prudence.

Abandonment And Darkness

You want to know why the *Dominus tecum* remains a mystery to you. It is very simple to understand when you know that the *Dominus tecum* was not enough for Mary either when she was searching for her lost Son. His reply: "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" — Lk 2,49 — I assure you that no words, even if Jesus came to speak to you personally, as He did to Mary Magdalene near the Holy Sepulchre, would get you out of your anxious state until God the Father permits it. And the Father is charity and does everything out of charity even when it may seem rigour to the soul. Who could imagine that the Father looked with immense love at his Son hanging on the cross, when even He seemed to unite Himself to his crucifiers in judging that He had been abandoned by his Father?

It is an old truth, but the drama is always new and the Father always sees the souls perpetuated in his Son on the gibbet, and always the souls cry: "Why have You abandoned me?" — Mk 15,34 — forgetting that after the crown of thorns the glorious crown follows.

And you will forget the Father's prize, continuing to bewail his abandonment all the time you are predestined to be on the cross, which will be more or less long, but always in proportion to the strength you will be given to moan and lament the dreaded abandonment.

It is the cross, and the cross has to come before joy. But how is it possible, you will say, that such thick darkness comes from God?

Think daughter, amongst soldiers there are those destined to the dugouts of the front line of battle almost from the beginning of the hostilities, while others have never known them; and yet there is only one Supreme Commander. Everyone here below is in the army and we all have different tasks: on you falls the advanced post, reserved to brave men. Do you mind?

But the first are always the first and you would do well to thank God who has chosen you and given you the courage.

Self-Knowledge

You can write to me and you must, as there is no penance or sacrifice more beautiful and pleasing than obedience.

As for replying, I will not follow your or my judgment but our Lord's that is as pleasant as it is supreme.

The terrifying knowledge of yourself consoles me because it is the truth, but you must not stop at that. Just as the architect builds in height according to the depth of the foundation, so must the spirit use the knowledge of its own misery to raise itself and trust in the sublime mercy of the pious Excellence.

You know that gold is purified with fire and that love is a flame: do you then want to fully rehabilitate and beautify yourself? Love. An act of love and devotion is worth more than a hundred fasts and disciplines.

Humility, Trust, Manifestations Of Extraordinary Phenomena

Humility is beautiful, but gentle trust is beautiful also. Shy modesty is pleasing but not as much though as abandonment in the One who commands us to hope and who opens his arms and Heart to us removing the screen of the garment and the sacred enclosure of the ribs.

Having up to now remained silent and mistrusting the unusual phenomena in yourself was beneficial for you to protect yourself from vainglory. In such matters reserve is a test of the goodness of the origin. But now that the proof has been given you must speak. I have ordered you to do so and you are safe from any trace of vainglory and

deception.

Indeed there could be deception in remaining silent, as Satan loves to set his traps in closed souls. Or he will at least provoke you to extreme diffidence and halt your progress wanted by God when He gave you his favors.

A Death Blow

Resign yourself to this death blow, and be at peace. Many are the troubles of the just man, but out of them all the Lord delivers him — Psalm 33, 20. You think yourself abandoned, but in reality you are not, because it is not easy that a God called Charity abandons a soul made in his image and redeemed at the price of so much suffering and blood.

Oh, how true it is that all things work together unto good for the predestined — Rom 8, 28. To suffer humiliation is painful, but you may be sure that divine Mercy will turn it to your consolation. And no matter what terrible accident may overtake you, so long as you want to belong to God, it will contribute to carrying out the desire of perfection. Therefore be calm. Or rather rejoice at the thought that on the day of revelation you will understand how good God is in all his ways.

Patience With Oneself, Corporal Mortifications

Only you fear yourself, I and the others do not; but believe me if the guides do not fear there is nothing to fear. Be determined to subdue your irascibility and be, as the Apostle says, patient, kind, bearing with all things — I Cor 13, 4 — full of mercy also towards yourself who is the closest to yourself. Considering your good health and strength I permit you to do some discipline during the week and to add a little bit of mortification in eating on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. I do not mean downright fasting but to leave off eating a few mouthfuls that at the end of the meal satisfies sensuality without being necessary for the health. Seven hours of sleep are enough. Any more inclines one to looseness. On the whole only the amount that God wants will be beneficial to you.

Ask our Lord to save you from the grip of the dog and from the lion's mouth — Psalm 21, 21-22, as the Prophet prays and add: "Be my help Oh God, do not abandon or despise me, Oh my God and my Good."