

heart; this is enough to give us the vital union with Him. "He who abides in love abides in God and God in him" — John 4,16.

The Holy Spirit does not ask for either doctrine or ability, nor languages or anything else but the heart. "My son, give me your heart" — Prov 23,26.

### **Loving In The Midst Of Crosses**

The Apostles considered suffering for the love of Jesus an exquisite privilege and rejoiced; you too must arrive at rejoicing when you suffer. Love that does not suffer is not strong, nor generous and if it deserves something it deserves very little. Tranquil and cheerful love is beautiful but does not have the radiance of patient love. Who can prefer the love of a mother at the cot of a happy son to that disconsolate and anxious love by the bedside of suffering?

Jesus was inebriated at the thought of suffering for us and therefore he exclaimed almost ecstatically: "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how distressed I am until it is accomplished!"

Yes, one can ask God for tribulations but first one must beg him for the grace which consoles. But anyway, I think, it is useless, since they are prepared and enforced. Crosses are like hair. The moment you cut it, it grows again. The saying of Saint Francis de Sales is very wise: "Don't ask for anything and don't refuse anything." That is, one must be ready and well disposed to undergo the trials that always return and that when one disappears, it is only to make way for another.

### **Temperance In Love**

Love is not taught. It is a truth known to all and that you do not ignore. Therefore, you do not ask to be taught to love, but to feel love and enjoy it. If you were really satisfied to just love, you could be rewarded because you love already. And does not the desire to love pertain to love? Whoever desires to love what they don't love?

The secret of enjoying love , consists in being content to love it when one can and not to permit desire for it to disturb your tranquility. Is it therefore wrong to desire it? No, because as I said before it is an indication of love, but it is not possible to taste the good we have by seeking for what we do not have and that God does not give.

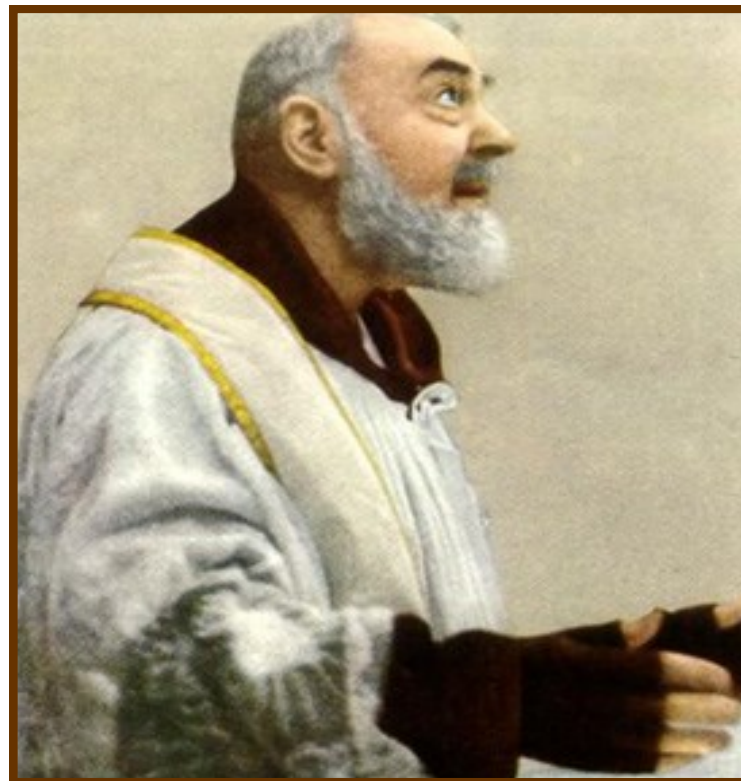
Just as you are content to grow in height imperceptibly each day, so it is with love. Would it be right to be afflicted because our Lord does not let you grow one inch or more every day? Temperance in this also is beneficial.

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## **Padre Pio and Spiritual Formation**

Article 5

### **The Great Love Of God**



***"I will not be satisfied Oh Lord,  
until I feel myself united to You with all my heart.  
I want, Almighty God,  
to look at You and love You in the same way  
as You look at me and love me.  
To whom else could I give my affection  
when you have given me yours  
with your most gentle eyes always fixed on me?"  
(Let this aspiration be your favorite)***

# 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 5

### The Great Love Of God

Think that the most effective means of keeping a confident heart and to compel it to abandon itself always without reluctance in our beloved Savior, even after a fall, is to reflect on the following: Even though Jesus knows the state of our hearts, He commands us to love our enemies and to do good to those who harm us. Now, if He commands us to do this, we who are so evil, how can we suppose that He does not continue to love us when we are so unfaithful or when we even become his enemies through sin?

How can we suspect that He does not want to receive us with infinite affection when we throw ourselves at his feet. Oh, my God! We think that by mistrusting You we respect your holiness without realizing that by doing this we hurt your infinite tenderness.

#### Desire For Sanctity

It is one thing to say "I am a saint" and another to say "I want to become a saint." You can tell everyone that you want to become a saint without fear of pride because, after all, holiness is nothing else but divine love and the love of God is a sacred, absolute and essential duty ordered to everyone and required from all. Where is pride when protesting to observe a principal and elementary duty? Humility consists in being persuaded that one does not have this love to an eminent degree or even sufficiently, but humility does not prevent one from aspiring to it.

If someone said to you: "I do not love God as I should, nor do I want to love Him" what impression would you have? But it is the same thing if someone who knows he is not a saint says "and I do not wish to become one."

Therefore you can be convinced that it is not scandalous but edifying to express a desire for sanctity and charity assuming, of course, through divine grace.

#### Short Prayers And Aspirations

The best short prayers and aspirations are those that raise the heart and urge it to union. You can use the ones that are in fashion, but for those with strong sentiments it is best to use spontaneous prayers that come from the heart.

I think that the most suitable one for you is this: "My God, I am yours, all yours through creation and redemption, and this is how I consider myself and wish to be."

Then let this aspiration be your favorite: "I will not be satisfied Oh Lord, until I feel myself united to You with all my heart. I want, Almighty God, to look at You and love You in the same way as You look at me and love me. To whom else could I give my affection when you have given me yours with your most gentle eyes always fixed on me?"

I will not tell you how many times to repeat this but the more you say it the more good it does you. The Saints had this language in their hearts perpetually.

#### Always Start From God

You mustn't stop at wondering if your heart is worthy of God. The biggest obstacle to devotion is to begin always with ourselves wanting to find something that gives us confidence; whereas there is no other foundation for hope than divine Goodness. And is virtue not a gift of his? And is corresponding to grace not another grace.

Oh, place yourself before Him enlivened by the vision of his love. Consider his patience, tenderness and compassion, and while He looks at you with eyes more gentle than a father or mother, tell Him you want to stay near Him and united to Him without the discourtesy of being diffident. You must reflect on yourself briefly, after having been moved to tears for love of Him.

#### Panegyric Of The "Heartop"

You are quite right. That's how it is. The first requisite, the first quality, *sine qua non* to become a saint is the heart. Everything is good and useful but the heart is indispensable. With the heart science is beneficial, prudence helps, good sense provides, zeal comforts and strength takes the lead, without it science is vain, prudence is cunning, good sense is diplomacy, zeal is impetuosity and strength is violence. In the army they look for broad chests to form picked troops; to form the elect, generosity of heart is necessary.

Influence, efficacy and success with hearts is reserved to hearts. Beginning by Jesus whose heart melted with love, all the saints were men of heart who gave themselves for others. Our sublime triumph comes from no other source. Our religion is victorious principally for this.

Not for nothing Saint John defined God: Love — John 4,16. He almost wants to tell us that before anything else and above all we must have a