

*I humbly and modestly take on
this reading of the Bible,
in the desire to read it
from beginning to end
only **considering God**,
to understand him better,
love him and serve him.*

Charles de Foucauld

ASH WEDNESDAY

Charles de Foucauld wrote this reflection on Ash Wednesday¹.

My Lord Jesus, this is the last night which you will stay in Nazareth before your baptism, the last night of your hidden life, the last night of this first part of your life, of your silent and soft obscurity in Nazareth... One more night to spend in prayer with the Holy Virgin as you have passed so many and then it will be over forever... You are going to pass more nights in prayer, nights in prayer with your mother, but never in this obscurity in this retreat, alone in this place and also with your soul, unknown to all apart from her, forgotten by all apart from her... God`s will may be done...whatever it may be, it is good...It is the good that will come from these pains, the glory of God; so he may be served, so you may be loved, you have to make yourself be known... and since you have been created as a human, oh my Lord, you have to suffer, as it is a universal law since Adam that men cannot create anything good in this world if they do not pay for it with their pain, “by the sweat of their brow”... Tomorrow morning, you are going to leave this market town which has kept, hidden, owned you for thirty years... What burden on your mother`s heart, who sees the future and shivers, the career that opens up before you; still, she is full of resignation: she adores, accepts, loves God`s will. But although she wants all that God wants with all her heart, even your pain, how she also feels them with all her heart... And you, my God, you are going to leave sad and happy at the same time, happy to give this complete sacrifice to God,

¹ C. DE FOUCAULD, *Considérations sur les fêtes de l`année*, Nouvelle Cité, Paris 1987, 142-143.

happy to give Him such glory, happy to be so good to humankind: “you are in such a rush to be baptised in this baptism of your blood”. You desire “with such great desire” to be at your last Supper... You are still sad about your mother`s sadness... sad as well about this sadness which often covers your face during your days as a mortal, about the thought of the large number of souls who your sacrifice will not save, about this large number of children which are lost forever and about the sea of sins and pain which flood the world... finally, you are sad about this sadness which the most perfect human nature feels leaving, always leaving, for such a big change in life, the places where the peaceful and happy days among loving beings flowed. You have frequented these places so often, as a child, young man, man, with Mary and Joseph! How would they not be precious to your tender heart! You have prayed there so many times, regarded your father, and seen the open heaven... How would the memory of this heavenly sweetness that is related to this corner of the earth touch you?... My Lord Jesus, let me pass this last night among you and your mother and in doing that, let me console you as well as possible, I ask you from the bottom of my heart, in you, through you and for you.

Amen.

Oh beloved Mother, lay my prayer on the sacred Heart of Jesus.

Gospel of Jesus Christ according to saint Matthew (6,1-6.16-18)

Comment of Charles de Foucauld²

I do not say to you³ “never do your good works in front of humans”, this would not be possible, and I have also told you on the contrary that your good deeds must shine in front of the people and make them praise God; what I tell you is to never do your good deeds “to be praised by the people”, with the intention to be seen, admired, honoured by the people. If you do well with the intention of being praised for it by the people, this glorification is going to be thanked for and “you are not going to receive thanks from your Father who is in the heavens”. ...”If you give donations, do not shout it over the roofs”, do not tell those who do not absolutely have to know, do not do it in public if you can do it discretely, neither openly if you can do it secretly; do not only not tell others about it but also try to forget it yourself; once it is done, do not remember it anymore and that “your left hand does not know what your right hand does”, that your donation may be a secret for the others and that you may forget it completely yourself. You do not do it for the people, nor for yourself, it is only for God: “You are a chaste virgin, engaged to only one husband, me”; given that I know these acts and that I remember them, for I am the only one you do them for, the only one you live for, the only one you love, that is enough: you are neither your own spouse nor of another creature. You do not do anything for yourself or for

² Commentaire à Mt 6,1-4, en C. DE FOUCAULD, *Commentaire de Saint Matthieu. Lecture Commentée de l'Évangile*, Nouvelle Cité, Paris 1989, 265-267.

³ Dans ce commentaire, Charles de Foucauld fait parler Jésus à la première personne.

them: nobody has to know what my spouse does apart from me... Like a “chaste virgin, only engaged to me”, act in secret, only for me, do good for me only, without trying to make them known by anybody else and even trying to make them unknown to all and forgotten by yourself. I see in secret, I your spouse and I will reward my spouse for what she has done for me, in this life out of my grace, in the other out of glory. ... The same applies to the prayer: “When you pray, do not look for a place that is clearly visible in order to make the people know that you are praying and that you make others praise you”. I do not tell you to not pray in the churches, far from there, I am there at the bottom of the tabernacle that you come and keep me company so you come and enjoy yourself there at your Spouse`s feet, in order to possess this indescribable happiness to be able to be at my feet like my mother, St. Joseph, Magdalene, you enjoy it for hours, yes, oh, yes, come to the feet of my tabernacle but always only come there for me, never come there “to be praised by the people”. When you are there, place yourself in a small corner hidden to everyone rather than out in the open, so if it is possible, nobody may know that you are there, apart from me (apart from the case when it is my clear and open will that you may be seen); when you are not in front of my tabernacle, rather chose the most secret place at the bottom of your cell in order to pray to me, with the door closed firmly, the most secluded place, the one where the people will know less that you lay down your soul at my feet... Finally so that my will allows you to do otherwise, always chose secret and mystery for praying to me and to do good deeds, so, if it is possible, I, for whom only you should it “chaste virgin who is engaged to me, like to your unique spouse”, chaste virgin who only loves me, only live for me, only act for me, chaste virgin who does not have eyes for any other creature who does not worry about any other creature

and whose deeds are all only for me, me your Spouse, I see
you in the secret and this is enough for you.

1ST SUNDAY OF LENT

Gospel of Jesus Christ according to saint Lucas (4,1-13)

Comment of Charles de Foucauld⁴

Fast and temptation of Our Lord in the desert.

How good you are, my God, to have suffered so many *pains*

⁵ for us and so many *humiliations*... During the Holy Quarantine, You have suffered for us of hunger, thirst, tiredness, weakness, You have suffered in Your soul thinking of the Holy Virgin who was deprived of Your presence, suffering, because she could not see You and thinking that You suffer, You have suffered from all the pains, from all the mistakes, from all the evils of people in the present and the future, because You love them... You have *lowered* yourself to permit the demon to tempt You, perhaps to touch You!... You did all of this for us, oh my Lord, first of all, undoubtedly, for God: in order to honour God with your obedience; but then for us, since it is out of love for us that God demands You, it is for our good that he demands it from You. It is an incredibly large sea, oh my Lord, that Your Quarantine... His teachings are unlimited. Since it is all a type of life that You present us there. It is one of three perfect, divine and also holy types of life that You practise and that you You present us with Your example: the life of Nazareth, the life in the desert, the public life... There, You teach us what life in the desert must be: A life of *loneliness, of contemplation, of repentance, of poverty*... You teach us, by leading this life for a certain time that it is a kind of

⁴ M/270, sur Lc 3,23-4,13, en C. DE FOUCAULD, *La Bonté de Dieu. Méditations sur les saints Evangiles (1)*, Nouvelle Cité, Montrouge 1996, 227-230.

⁵ The words that are in italics where underlined one time in the originals of Charles de Foucauld and the words in bold print were underlined twice.

holy, perfect, divine life that the souls that You call their lead in their whole life... And by only leading it for a certain time, you show us that, if certain souls, as a consequence of a special vocation, always have to lead it, the others, must, like You, lead it in a certain measure and during a certain time by doing retreats at certain important times in life, before these difficult acts or during a certain time they collect themselves in contemplation, solitude, repentance...

After that you teach us that *one goes to the desert to be tempted*, that one must not be astounded, nor scared, nor discouraged, if, when one leaves everything to follow You, if, when one searches retreat in solitude, one is more tempted than before: that is the rule and it is not surprising that the demon attacks even more a soul that he sees it more decided to serve God... On the other hand, these temptations and seeing our own imperfections appear much more clearly in the clarity of solitude, of meditation, of contemplation than they would do if our eyes would be blinded by a thousand earthly thoughts.

You give us the means, the methods to beat the temptations: *the faith* in god`s word, *the poverty of spirit* which sees his goods almost from the mud of the whole world, *humility* which does not want to tempt God and who stays in the last place *who does not want to do great things even if it was easy for him and that this would cause a change of the whole humankind if God does not command him His will concerning this topic by showing him clearly...* This final lesson is especially important, without a doubt one must do, just like Jesus will do it later, deeds on the outside but only if one is called there by God, when “the time has come”... *If you have not clearly received God`s mission, the way of honouring him is not to dare to do yourself the deeds that seem useful for His glory to us but to stay, like Jesus, in Nazareth, like Jesus, in the desert, in the last spot, until God`s hand itself takes us out of there if this pleases Him and until he gives us the precise mission to do this or that work...*

May we always have this example present in our eyes, this teaching of Jesus, this example of His obscurity in Nazareth and in the desert, this double period that was crowned and

summarized by this word: “It is not allowed to tempt God”... Now, it is to dare to take on a task whose accomplishment demands supernatural graces, without having received the mission of Him who is the only one to distribute these graces... Let us imitate Saint John who waited for 30 years in the desert for the mission from above; let us imitate Saint Paul who waited for years at the border in Arabia, then in Tarsus, for the hour to receive people who were representatives of God down here, for this mission to convert the good which had been announced to him so precisely by God; both were perfect, because, as the Holy Spirit says about Saint Paul, they were “faithful imitators of Jesus”... So let us mainly imitate Jesus who, Himself, waited for God for more than 30 years, the mission to preach the Gospel...

Whoever we may be, which desires we may have, what we perceive ourselves destined to do, let us remain where we are, limiting us to let a wise director get to know the state of our soul and let us live in that way, doing every day the most perfectly possible what we have to do, not becoming angry, not being concerned about the future, nor doing something else than the obligation of our state in the present moment; and for the rest let us abandon us to God; if he wants nothing else but us, He will always leave us in this way and we will remain our whole life in this state out of His will; if He wants something else from us, He will let us know it, He will call us in an authentic way, He will give us a clear mission if the moment will have come... “Let us not tempt God”... “How will they preach if they have not been sent?” Let us behave well to act in his mission... Let us always follow this path for which Jesus gives us here a basic concept and example.

2ND SUNDAY OF LENT

Gospel of Jesus Christ according to saint Lucas (9, 28b-36)

Comment of Charles de Foucauld⁶

“This is my beloved son: listen to him”

My Lord, Your goodness is encouraging You to do us good, to make us be a part of the abundance of Your holiness and of Your glory, to teach us to love You, to please You, to reach heaven. You can do this by instructing each one of us by Your grace, by sending us prophets, angels, by making them teach us in an infallible Church... And You have done it, You are doing it... This could have been enough for You but this has not been enough for You... Your divine charity wanted to do more: Love, You act according to the nature of Your being, through love and Your work is full of love until the end, without end: “In finem dilexit eos”⁷... Your love wanted to do more than all that for us, although this has already been a great favour; and Your Heart has decided and discovered to send us Your Beloved Son as a tutor and in doing this you have send us Yourself.

Let us listen to him...let us obey: He speaks to us through his mouth; let us realize His smallest views, His smallest advice, let us adapt with all our heart to all His words... He speaks to us through *His examples*: Let us adapt with all our heart to those examples who concern the kind of life that he calls us to... Let us sacrifice our desires, our perception of perfection to our spiritual leader, not in order to limit them but to regulate them, not to imitate Our Lord less but to imitate Him better. There are four major reasons for this:

⁶ M/329, sur Lc 9,27-35, en C. DE FOUCAULD, *La Bonté de Dieu. Méditations sur les saints Evangiles (1)*, Nouvelle Cité, Montrouge 1996, 306-308.

⁷ « He loved them until the end. »

1 The first aspect that we have to imitate Our Lord is that he has always created instants of His life among us, i.e.: *obey to His Father* and since the only means for us to surely do Gods will is to obey to our spiritual leader in everything about whom He said: “The one who listens to you listens to me.”

2. The words and the examples of Our Lord are known to us through the Holy Scriptures; so we do not have to interpret it ourselves without the guidance of an authentic delegate of the Church risking to be mistaken: “*Omnis interpretatio scripturae spiritu proprio non fit*”⁸.”

3 Once the meaning of the Holy Scriptures is known and interpreted according to the teachings of the Holy Church, we have to know which sentences and examples of Our Lord apply to us personally. Why ones apply to us entirely or only partly or which ones do not apply to us at all (for example: God does not order everyone to go and “preach”, in the literal sense of the word, although we all have to preach the example and all those who speak and act have to preach in a certain manner though all their words and actions.)

4 Once teachings of Our Lord have been understood well and once we know what he wants us to know the most, we still have to know how to fulfil this will of God. We have to know the practical means to conform to the words and examples of Our Lord like he wants it from us. What we can never know for sure if we do not consult the spiritual leader about whom he said: “The one who listens to you listens to me.” and by obeying to him who seeks in his name like we obey to God himself.

⁸ «No interpretation of the Writing can be done according to personal judgement. »

3RD SUNDAY OF LENT

Gospel of Jesus Christ according to saint Lucas (13,1-9)

Comment of Charles de Foucauld⁹

Parable of the fig tree that one will cut if it still does not carry fruit despite the care, time and patience with which one has looked after it.

How good you are, my God, to repeat for us time and time again in so many forms that our time is short, that it has been given to us in order to create good fruit (“The glory of my father is that you become my disciples and that you will bring fruit”), that we know neither the day nor the hour until which the divine gardener will wait, in which the Father of the family will return. In this hour the judge will call us to account; that we have to produce a lot of fruit, we to whom so much has been given, we who know the Master`s will, we who have heard and understood his voice... How good you are to call us to your love in so many ways and it is through this salutary fear that you keep inspiring us! For how much time God has been waiting for us! For how much time he has been taking care of our soul without it bringing fruit! *Let us hurry up, let us hurry up* to return what he has given to us, to do what he has taught us, to do his will that he has let us know...*Let us hurry up, let us hurry up* to bring this fruit of virtue, this fruit of the gospel, this fruit of fidelity, this fruit of pure love for those that God has been caring for so long so in vain, for our soul!

⁹ M/368, sur Lc 13,1-9, en C. DE FOUCAULD, *L'imitation du Bien-Aimé. Méditations sur les Saints Évangiles* (2), Nouvelle Cité, Montrouge 1997, 62.

4TH SUNDAY OF LENT

Gospel of Jesus Christ according to saint Lucas (15,1-3.11-32)

Comment of Charles de Foucauld¹⁰

“Approaching, he will fall around his neck and kiss him... Bring his first tunic and shoes and kill the fat calf.”

My God, how good you are! This is what you have done for me! Yes, as a young person, I have strayed from you, far away from your house, from your holy altars, from your Church, in a far-away land, the land of profane things, of creatures, of unfaithfulness, of indifference, of worldly passions... Oh! How painfully far away he is from this land! I have stayed there for a long time, 13 years, wasting my youth in sin and foolishness. Your first grace (not the first one of my life since they are uncountable at all the hours of my existence but in which I see the first beginning of my change) was to make me feel hunger, material and spiritual hunger; you have had the unlimited goodness to put me in material difficulties that have made me suffer and that made me find the thorns in this crazy life; you have made me feel spiritual hunger by making me feel the intimate desires of a better moral state, tasting virtues, the need for moral goodness; and then, when I came back to you, very timidly, carefully trying, addressing this strange prayer to you: “If you exist, make that I know you.” oh God of goodness that you have done to me ever since I was born and around me to lead to this moment with such tenderness, “approaching, you will fall around my neck and you will kiss me”, with which enthusiasm you have given me the tunic of innocence back... And you have also invited me to the divine banquet, quite different to the one of the father of the lost

¹⁰ M/382, sur Lc 15,11-32, en C. DE FOUCAULD, *L'imitation du Bien-Aimé*, 78-80.

child... How good he is, this father of the lost child! But how you are a thousand times gentler than he is! How you have done a thousand more things for me than he has done for his son! How good you are, my Lord and my God! Thank you, thank you, and thank you, without end!

The lost child which has not only been received with such great goodness, without punishment, without reprimand, without any memory of the past, but with kisses, the first tunic and the ring of a child of the house, not only received in this way, but also searched by this blessed Father and brought back by him from these faraway lands. What are my duties serving this Beloved Father? Firstly, to *love him*, then to *love him* and finally to *love him* even more, since love contains everything. Love contains *obedience*, *imitation* of everything that we see him do and that he permits us to imitate; love contains continuous *contemplation*; love contains regretting our mistakes; love contains *humility* in seeing the distance between our misery and his perfection; love contains the *duty to accomplish everything in his service* and according to his will; love contains the continuous dedication to *always be and do what is most agreeable to him*... And surely one of the things that is most agreeable to him that we are as tender as he has been to our younger brothers who are lost themselves that we look for them as he has looked for us, entering in his work by means of prayer and by all the other means in our power when he gives us the mission to do so... We should not only search, but in our prayers, as well as in our deeds following this aim we place *and almost unlimited duty, a duty which is even unlimited* as long as this is possible for humans, since we do not work for creatures but for God; it is in order to fulfil this work of change which is so agreeable to him that the heaven rejoices about it more than about the perseverance of 99 just people; it is in order to accomplish this work which is so agreeable to him that he says: "It is right to rejoice, since your brother was dead and now he lives again." It is in order to accomplish this work that is agreeable to him that he orders us to demand *not conditionally but formally* its success from

his Father by making us say: “Hallowed be thy name... Thy kingdom come... Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven...” And then, when our lost young brother returns home, he has to be received like our Father receives him, like our Father has received us, without referring to the past, without scolding, *without mistrust* in the future, by saying: “But I am sure that he will go to heaven” (this sentence which has done me so much good”), by showing him the same *trust*, the same affection, the same tenderness, the same *appreciation* as if he had never left the house with this *complete forgetting* of his mistakes that we need from God, with this feeling that his mistakes are not hidden, not covered but *radically destroyed* for us; that the one and only trace of the past that appears in us may be the deep and overflowing joy at the arrival which manifests itself by running to see him again, by falling around his neck, by giving him his first piece of clothing, the first seat, by killing the fat calf, by calling our friends to rejoice with us, by making this a day of joy on earth a there is “joy in the heavens”!

5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

Gospel of Jesus Christ according to saint John (8,1-11)

Comment of Charles de Foucauld¹¹

The adulterous woman.

“Go and sin no more.”

How good you are, my God! How good you are to this woman by saving her and changing her through your kindness! How good you are to the assistants and to future generations by giving them this lesson in compassion, kindness, humility (since it need humility to think of one`s own sins rather than judging your neighbour)!... How good you are to the assistants as well as future generations by increasing their *hope* in your compassion and their *love* in such a kind God through this act of divine kindness!

Let us not condemn but imitate Our Lord... When we have *the task* to judge, to condemn, let us do it in order to obey God with conscience, prudence and by praying to God that he may enlighten us, that he may not allow that we act badly and, if we do so, that we may correct, rectify it with humility and gentleness, by thinking of our own sins and by reminding us that the one who has sinned yesterday may have already become a saint through his interior dispositions or he may become one tomorrow. And we who seem righteous today may be guilty tomorrow. Apart from this case, “let us not judge”, “let us not condemn”, out of *obedience* to Our Lord, by *imitating* our Beloved “who has not come to judge but to save”; because we have neither knowledge nor mission to do so; because we must never be concerned with outer things, with creatures when we do not receive the order from

¹¹ M/459, sur Jn 8,2-11, en C. DE FOUCAULD, *L'imitation du Bien-Aimé*, 177-178.

God but we should always remain in solitude, silence, contemplation of divine beauty with only God in the universe when God does not throw us into outer works... Let us not abandon by judging our neighbour *the thought of God, the contemplation of the Beloved* to the thought of people, the consideration of creatures if we are not obliged to do so out of obedience to God.

PALM SUNDAY

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to saint Lucas (22,14-23,56)¹²

Comment of Charles de Foucauld¹³

“They made fun of him... They mocked him... Truly, I tell you: you will be with me in Paradise today.”

How good you are, my God! How you love us! You who suffers so much pain out of your love to us, for our sanctification, *to make us love you* by seeing your love and *to make us embrace the suffering* (which is necessary for us to detach ourselves from the creation and by doing this to help our soul get attached to only God... “which is necessary for us to keep the charity and the love to God” as saint Benedict says). That you give for example to let it from now on be desired by all the hearts which love you like an indispensable condition for your resemblance!... And how good you are that you forget yourself until the end, thinking of your torturers even when you are high up on the cross to pray for them and of your fellow sufferer to give him heaven and of your mother, of your disciples, of all the people!

Let us love Jesus who has loved us so much “who has loved us first”, he the loveable one who loves us, us miserable ones, more than any other human heart can love, more than we can understand. He who has proven his love to us by such heavenly delights and by suffering such excruciating pains. *Let us embrace the suffering*, receive the benediction out of love to Jesus in his example and by offering it to him, all the pain that will reach us: let us not be content with it; let us search the suffering to imitate

¹² Here, the short reading is reproduced.

¹³ M/423, sur Lc 23,35-43, en C. DE FOUCAULD, *La bonté de Dieu. Méditations sur les Saints Évangiles (1)*, Nouvelle Cité, Montrouge 1996, 137-138.

our Beloved, in order to follow him, to follow his destiny, *let us hurt ourselves voluntarily* in the greatest means possible, without any other measure than the obedience to our leader... *Let us forget ourselves* for Jesus by sacrificing all our lives to him... For all the people, his beloved children, by sacrificing our lives to them as he wants us to sacrifice ourselves by loving them “as he has loved them”, “like ourselves”, them and ourselves equally *looking only to Him!*

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Gospel of Jesus Christ according to John (13,1-15)

Comment of Charles de Foucauld¹⁴

“Having loved his own who were in the world, he will love them until the end.”

How good you are, my God, to continue your work of “lighting the fire of love to God on earth”, by telling us and by proving to us that God loves us... Nothing makes us love somebody more than knowing that we are loved by them... You make us love you by *telling* us (word of unspeakable gentleness) that you love us and by *proving* it to us through a miracle of love... You tell us, you *declare* us (soft declaration! How happy we are!) twice that you love us: “Having *loved* his own” you tell us the first time and you add: “He *loved* them to the utmost extremity”... An after this *double declaration of love*, our God proves to us the immensity of his love by *giving himself to us*. This gift is proof for loving completely, without reservation to the one to whom you give yourself completely and without reservation, whom you love with all your heart, with all your being, to whom you abandon, you give all your being. Oh my God, how immensely, infinitely, divinely loving you are! Sacred heart of Jesus, what a profound love you are! “Cor altum¹⁵” I adore you, I place myself in you, take me in. “*Let us love God*, since he has loved us first.” Let us finally give everything to him since he has not only *given*

¹⁴ M/479, sur Jn 13,1, en C. DE FOUCAULD, *L'imitation du Bien-Aimé*, 204-205.

¹⁵ Large heart.

himself once for us in the pains of the crucifixion but he gives himself *to us every day* in the embrace of an infinite love!... He gives himself to us entirely!... He gives us more than even God could give us: God himself cannot give us more than himself... and he gives us everything himself in the most intimate union, the most loving, the most desirable, in our body and our soul; he is at our mercy, abandons himself to us, entirely and with his divinity and with his human body and soul which he has taken to resemble us. He gives us everything and he gives us his body and soul in our body and soul, so we own him entirely in a perfect possession without measure or end.

Oh Heart of Jesus, enlighten me so I will receive you well when I receive you and so I shall always burn in the desire to receive you!

GOOD FRIDAY

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to saint John
(18,1-19,42)

Comment of Charles de Foucauld¹⁶

“I am thirsty.”

You are thirsty, my God!... Material thirst, since the fever tortures you. You have lost blood, you are suffering incredible pains, your throat is dry and so many other pains add to the one of your thirst... You have even more spiritual thirst; your heart is devoured by this thirst that has made you descend to earth, oh almighty God, by this thirst that has made you live here for 33 years and that has made you die at this Cross! By this thirst of our salvation, of our holiness that has made you become human, live and die... You have thirst for us, my God, thirst for our Good, thirst for our eternal Wellbeing, oh God of Kindness! It is this thirst that brings you here that has put you on this cross!... Oh Heart of Jesus, what an abundance of kindness, of love, it is the violence of your desires, of our eternal happiness that makes you fight so painfully in this moment on the cross and that will make you break through there!

Let us love Jesus since Jesus has loved us so much! *Let us love Jesus* who has died under such pain for our redemption!... Let us sacrifice ourselves, because he has suffered so much so we redeem ourselves! What does it mean to redeem ourselves? *It means to love Jesus: the love to Jesus* entails all redemption, since it entails necessarily in his nature even the *obedience to*

¹⁶ M/517, sur Jn 19,28, en C. DE FOUCAULD, *L'imitation du Bien Aimé*, 278-279.

Jesus (which demands all the perfection from us: “Be perfect like your heavenly Father is perfect.”) and *the imitation of Jesus* (who is the holiness himself)... So let us love Jesus since he loves us so much, desires to be equally loved by us, and has paid for our love with his blood... (paying for our redemption with his blood is nothing else but paying for our love, that he desires it but he tells us: “What do I want if not that he is enlightened?...”)... Let us love Jesus who loves us, desires to be loved by us, has paid for our love with his life, tells us that he loves us, proves to us that he loves us through his death, orders us to love him (this is the “first commandment”), tells us that his only wish is that we love him (“What do I want if not...”). Finally, he is entirely loveable, infinitely perfect!... Let us love him by accomplishing works of love, by obeying him, imitating him, contemplating him, let us love him by uniting with him in the holy Eucharist, by making this biggest sacrifices for him, and since we are not perfectly united with him (whose only place is in heaven), by desiring him and sighing to be with him.

EASTER SATURDAY

Gospel of Jesus Christ according to saint Lucas (24,1-12)

Comment of Charles de Foucauld¹⁷

4 hours. Where are you going, Mary Magdalene, accompanied by holy women? Where are you going so quickly? You are going to the sepulchre... You are going to arrive there, the earth trembles, the sepulchre opens, an angel appears... Jesus is not there anymore, he has risen as he had said it... You are looking for the dead who is alive... Where are you running, Magdalene, where are you running so quickly: your other companions are taking another direction: Where are you going on your own?... The other holy women return to the houses of those where they have stayed the night with you. You, you are running to inform the apostles: "The sepulchre is empty and we do not know where the Lord's body is." After these words, Peter and John run to the sepulchre: They are running very quickly and you, faithful Magdalene, very faithful Magdalene, you are running with them... John arrives first, then Peter with you... Peter and John see the empty sepulchre, they cry at the resurrection and they return delighted about it... You, you are staying, faithful Magdalene, you are staying at the door to the sepulchre and you are crying... It rings five hours, you lean over to see the interior of the sepulchre, still crying: there you see two angels dressed in white: "Woman, they say, why are you crying? They have removed my Lord and I do not know where they have put him..." Magdalene, you do not

¹⁷ C. DE FOUCAULD, *Considérations sur les fêtes de l'année*, 329-331.

have a much knowledge as Peter and John: But it is not the knowledge that Jesus rewards, it is the love: you have more love... A shadow appears behind you at dawn: You turn around: This shadow is at some distance from the sepulchre at whose door you are, close to the house of the gardener. Maybe it is the gardener, you say: Would he not know what has become of my Lord`s body: “Woman, why are you crying? What are you looking for?” says the shadow to you at this moment... It is the gardener, you think, and you say: If it is you who has taken him! Master, tell me where you have put him and I will take him... At the same time you will approach this man... You have arrived two steps away from him: He opens his mouth once again: “Mary.” Oh, happy and very faithful Magdalene, you fall to his feet, ravished, “Rabboni”. “My Master” you say... It is your Master who has appeared to you, to you, the first, after his immaculate mother, oh Magdalene the sinner ... it is you whom he has loved more than any of his apostles, more than all the men after his mother: oh, the whole world is also going to call you overjoyed... Your Saviour is here, you are holding his feet between your hands: You are still crying, you are crying even more than before, very faithful Magdalene, but it is out of joy, out of happiness, out of a happiness that makes you feel like you are going to die... Your beloved Lord has risen, forever glorious, forever joyous! Oh Magdalene, your happiness is quiet now, you are kissing his feet: You do not have any more words but kisses and tears: Your beloved is forever and ever joyous... Cry, cry Magdalene: You cry, cry, cry of joy, you who has cried so much of pain and let me share your tears, me, your unworthy child and all the people, all the children of Jesus and consequently all your children...

EASTER SUNDAY

Gospel of Jesus Christ according to saint John (20,1-9)

Comment of Charles de Foucauld¹⁸

“Mary!... Rabboni!... Go to my brothers...”

My God how divinely gently you are!... How loving you are, how good you are!... Risen, you first appear twice to console the two souls who grieve your Passion and death the most: first your Mother, “to whom you appear first and with whom you stayed for a long time” as you have said to saint Theresa; then to Mary Magdalene... With which gentleness you appear to this dear saint, your “passionate admirer” as she is called! Which tenderness in this “Mary”!... With which voice this must have been said!... And then, my God, what divine tenderness for all of us, for all the people of all times in the words that you say: “Go and tell my brothers”! You call us all “your brothers”! How sweet this is and how good you are!

Let us be tender like Jesus, loving like him... Let us console the suffering like him and before that those that he himself has put closest to us in life, a mother, a dear soul; and those who need consolation the most, those who are closest to breaking under such strong pain... Let us console, let us console like him his brothers who are ours, let us console his members, the parts of his own body, these members about whom he has said: “Whatever you do one of the smallest, you do to me”... Let us be gentle comforters, loving friends to

¹⁸ M/521, sur Jn 19,38-20,18 en C. DE FOUCAULD, *L'imitation du Bien Aimé*, 283-285.

those who suffer, for all the people, especially for those he has made us responsible for but for everybody, since he has told us: “Whatever you do to one of the smallest, you will do for me”... As Jesus deigns to call us *his brothers*, let us truly present ourselves as *his brothers*, by *loving him*, by *keeping him company*, through a *continuous imitation and contemplation*, by *always trying to be agreeable to him* by *obeying him perfectly*, by *serving him*, by doing everything possible to help him (which means: to serve him as faithful instruments, because how can a person help God if they cannot do anything if not through him?) to complete his work on earth, i.e. *glorify God* (which is done by trying to *hallow oneself as much as possible and also all the other people* and therefore *one has to hallow oneself as much as possible* and hallowing oneself consists of *loving God as much as possible*... It all comes back to *loving God, loving God*: There, everything begins, everything ends, with this we have to begin and end ourselves. It is this love which has to fill the beginning, the middle and the end of all our moments, acts and of our lives... *Let us love Jesus perfectly* and we will be his *perfect brothers*, his true *brothers*... Love entails the accomplishment of all our tasks, of all the perfections: **let us love, let us love Jesus!**)

2ND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Gospel of Jesus Christ according to saint John (20,19-31)

Comment of Charles de Foucauld¹⁹

“Peace be with you... Peace be with you... As my Father has sent me, I sent you... Those whose sins you forgive shall be forgiven... Peace be with you... Luckily for those who believe without seeing!”

How good you are, my God... How sweet it is to be around you... “Peace be with you... Peace be with you!” “How my father has sent me, I sent you.” How good you are and what a sweet favour which greater favour you can do us than giving us the same mission that you have had Yourself, the same end on earth that you have had! Calling us to imitate you so closely, to be similar to you, to relive your life, your work, to be your image! What could be sweeter to a loving heart than the invitation to imitate like this!... You give all the people the means to see their sins forgiven, extinguished and destroyed almost as they have had the bad luck to commit them. To be cleansed almost as soon as they have had the bad luck to stain themselves. To be in some way always pure in front of your eyes, always pure in the eyes of the Beloved. To always be agreeable to the eyes of their Spouse, always in his grace and to appear in grace and agreeable to his eyes in the hour of death and on judgement day! How divinely good you are and how lucky we are! Until the end, even after your resurrection you accomplish your work, you accomplish your aim, you work to reach “*your only*

¹⁹ M/521, sur Jn 19,38-20,18 en C. DE FOUCAULD, *L'imitation du Bien Aimé*, 283-285.

wish”, your *only desire*: to ignite the fire of *your love* in our heart that “you have come to earth”; to wish us peace, what is this if not to wish us to *love you*, since only this can give us *peace*?... To offer forgiveness of our sins, what is this if not to offer us the means to always be pure, or is it the same thing, holy and perfect, to be *lovers*, since all perfection and all holiness are in the *holy love*!... How good you are, my God, to always give us the sweetest thing in this life and in the other, to give us what makes all the happiness of the earth and heaven, *the love of God!*

“Peace be with you”, may this be the word that we say entering houses, approaching people, in the example of our Spouse... “Like my Father has sent me, I sent you”; our Spouse has given us the same mission which he has had himself: i.e. that we have to *imitate everything and continue his life*, accomplish his mission as he has accomplished it himself, to be *his image* in everything; this also means that our end on earth is the same as his: *hallow God by hallowing ourselves and the others*; this is done by *hallowing ourselves* first without thinking of our only personal sanctification first, because as we are no saints, we cannot do anything for the others and once we are saints we naturally and necessarily do them an incredibly good deed; hallowing oneself means *loving God perfectly*, a love that entails all perfection. *So let us love God* since this means accomplishing our end and the imitation of our Beloved Jesus!... Let us often come closer to us and as soon as we feel our troubled conscience, heavy of a considerable mistake, of the commandment which destroys the sins, makes us pure, makes us agreeable again in the eyes of our Spouse... Let us be deeply remorseful of our sins which make us displease him, offend him; our pain to displease him, to be disapproved, condemned by him, to have offended him, to have made his Heart sad, has to be even more bitter the more we love him. *The means of our remorse*

will be to love: one is feeling such a pain to have displeased, offended, made him sad, may it be so little, the beloved being, when one loves!... Let us believe without seeing: "The just lives with faith"... He loves "with faith" to a God whom he does not see and this love is his life... He obeys a man "with faith" who is fallible because of the infallibility of God: "Whoever listens to you listens to me", word which he does not hear but which he believes in "with faith". He imitates Jesus "with faith" whom he does not see, with "faith" in the holy books and in the Church... He contemplates a God "with faith" whom he does not see but he "has faith" in him... Let us live in faith, it is the life of the just, the supernatural life, this divine life. Peace be with you. You wish us love which only you can give us²⁰... Yes, let us love Jesus. Let us with for every soul to love Jesus. It is the "only thing necessary".

²⁰ One word is missing since the page was torn apart.

3RD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Gospel of Jesus Christ according to saint John (21,1-19)

Comment of Charles de Foucauld²¹

“Look after my sheep.”

How good you are, oh my God, oh good Shepherd, to let us mount to heaven as a shepherd to your sheep, an infallible shepherd in his definitions of faith, leading our soul infallibly to the meadows of truth, a shepherd that takes care of us, instructing us in your name!

Let us have great devotion for our holy father the Pope, a great respect for his orders, a great faith in his teachings, and a catholic faith in everything he defines *ex cathedra* like a dogma of faith... Let us pray a lot for him, let us love him very much, let us offer ourselves to God to be dedicated to his intentions in all our prayers, good deeds, services, insults and crosses of our life; let us apply our services, our communions to him and his intentions very often. May he be one of our most important devotions. Let us honour him, let us obey him, let us love him; let us support him, secure him, defend him with all our heart... Let us be his most gentle son ... So “everything we do to one of his smallest” we are doing to Jesus. How much more do we do to him what he has chosen, set in this world for us to represent him!

²¹ M/521, sur Jn 19,38-20,18 en C. DE FOUCAULD, *L'imitation du Bien Aimé*, 283-285.

4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Gospel of Jesus Christ according to saint John (10,27-30)

Comment of Charles de Foucauld²²

“He is possessed and he is babbling... Me and my Father, we are one... The Jews took the stones...”.

How good you are, my God! To which scorn, injuries and violence you expose yourself, in which horrible surrounding you put yourself out of your love to us!

Courage in Jesus` example! *Courage to say* everything we have to say, in private or in public in Jesus` example who, despite the menaces, violence, contradictions, an incited crowd and authorities who have decided to put him in prison, he talks, preaches loudly what he has to say, as long as he has to say it... *Courage to do* what we have to do, in private or in public, in Jesus` example who, despite the menaces, violence, injuries, plots of the Jews, comes to the middle, stays there as long as he has to stay there and he does whatever he has to do there. His only worry is to do and say what pleases God and he cares in no other way about what might happen to him (if he arrives there in incredible pain, it is only one more sacrifice offered to God, one more glory for God, one more joy for Jesus!).

²² M/521, sur Jn 19,38-20,18 en C. DE FOUCAULD, *L'imitation du Bien Aimé*, 283-285.

5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Gospel of Jesus Christ according to saint John (13,31-33a.34-35)

Comment of Charles de Foucauld²³

“I give you a new commandment: to love each other, as I have loved you; to love each other like this. This is how you will recognize my disciples if you love each other.”

How good you are, my God, the more your end comes near, the more tender you are!... It seems that in these last moments you want the whole world to come to you, not only through the supreme sacrifice of your cross, not only through the supreme gift of the holy Eucharist but through the supreme tenderness of your last words: “My little children” – *filioli* – “my friends”... “The disciple that Jesus loved” posed on his heart. What a scene of unlimited tenderness before an hour filled with the horrors of Gethsemane!... More often than not you have “enlightened on earth” with your heart that you will leave the fire of *God’s love and of the love of the next*. It is what this last discourse refers to like all the others... You bring us to *your love* by the *gift* of yourself that you come to give us in the holy Eucharist and through the unlimited *tenderness* of your last encounters and through the call for *obedience* to God so many more times in the encounter after the last supper and through the *imitation* that he also contains and through the call for the *sacrifice* that you make for us, by showing us that you especially honour your father and that we will also honour God: “Now the Son of

²³ M/521, sur Jn 19,38-20,18 en C. DE FOUCAULD, *L’imitation du Bien Aimé*, 283-285.

the Man is honoured and God is honoured in him”, he cries the moment that Judas leaves to betray him... You give us your *love of the neighbour and through your example*, you who shows us that you love the people so much that you give and deliver to every single one very precisely to receive them in their bodies, your entire body and soul... and *through your words*, you who keeps repeating to us in this last encounter “Love each other... Love each other how I have loved you... until you give your love for your neighbour, like I will do it myself... This is how one will recognize my disciples.” You do not only repeat us these words but you say it with a solemnity that you will give to nobody else: “Look, I give you a new commandment.” It is like the distinctive commandment of the New Testament that you establish in this special night: “This is how one will recognize that you are my disciples.” It is like your testament, it is your supreme recommendation: it is a new commandment, not new to the core but new through the *pleading* that you recommend it with, new through the *width* that you give him: “love the people like you have loved them”, new through the *importance* that you give him: “This is how one will recognize that you are my disciples”, new through the solemnity with which you establish it, making it your *supreme testament*, the expression of your *last recommendation* in this dark night.

Let us love God who loves us until he *gives himself, confides, delivers himself, and abandons himself to us* completely by giving us his body and soul to own them entirely, unite them in our body and soul, to have a perfect possession in us... Who loves us until he even spills his love for us in Gethsemane, on the painful path, in the courtroom, on the cross and *suffering so much in his soul and body*... Who loves us until he tells us and *declares it to us* in the words of an unlimited gentleness... Who loves us until he forgets himself, even in these supreme

hours and dedicates them entirely to the sanctification and consolation of our souls... *Let us love our neighbour, since God loves him so much* that he tells us that it is through the love that we will have for him that one will recognize that we are his disciples... Let us love him *by obeying* to the solemn and necessary commandment that he makes for us... Let us love him since it is the *supreme testament*, the supreme recommendation that our Beloved makes for us the day before his death... Let us love him since ever person is *the beloved child of God to whom God offers himself* in the holy Communion, *to whom he offers himself* in heaven, by calling him *for whom God spills his blood* on the cross. *God says about him that "everything you do for him, you do for himself"* Mt 25) that he is a "part of his body" and therefore something in himself.

6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Gospel of Jesus Christ according to saint John (14,23-29)

Comment of Charles de Foucauld²⁴

“I leave you my peace... So your heart may not be troubled and fearful.”

My God, how good you are! What do you leave us? What is this supreme gift? *Peace!*... You are the *God of peace*, the prophets had announced it... When you appear among your disciples, you tell them: “*Peace* be with you”; when you die, you say: “I leave you **peace, my peace**, not the one that the world gives”... So how is this peace different from the peace that the world gives? *This peace*, the one that *your love* gives, *the peace of the world*, it is the peace in freedom of suffering, without animosity, persecution, tribulation; *your peace* is indifference to suffering, animosity, persecution, tribulations, to all the evils, it is the profound and ample peace that the soul feels which loves you within all these evils: “drunk on your love, it feels neither inner nor outer cross, like the person drunk on wine does not feel the blows” says saint Bonaventure. “Not living anymore in itself but having all his live in you his Beloved”, as saint John of the Cross says, it does not feel the blows that reach it and feel delight in the immense peace in which you reign... You who “has come bringing the fire on earth” and whose *only desire* it was to see it light up, “What do I want if not that it lights up?” your supreme gift, it is the fire itself and its consequences, it is

²⁴ M/521, sur Jn 19,38-20,18 en C. DE FOUCAULD, *L'imitation du Bien Aimé*, 283-285.

the love of God and the supreme peace which this love produces. The peace that is superior to all suffering, not the peace without war but the peace despite war, during war, beyond war, the peace of the soul that has its entire life in heaven as *love*. And rejoicing like this, *the peace* of heaven despite everything that can happen on earth around it and against it.

Let us enter in *peace* in entering in *the love of God*: they are both inseparably united. Peace is the *consequence* and the *sign* of the *heavenly love*. Let us look for them, desire them both, peace in the face of love and love in the face of God... “Let us not live anymore in us, but only in our Beloved » and so nothing that reaches us will be felt by us and everything that is shared by our Beloved will be ours: we will not feel any one of the tribulations on earth, because we do not live in us and the happiness of which our Beloved gains forever will leave us in peace, in an unchangeable satisfaction... When we love God like this, not living in ourselves but in him, *our heart will not be troubled anymore and will not fear*, since we will not take care anymore of ourselves but of him only: may the tribulations rain over us, that it is important to us that he is happy!...

The fourth degree of divine love according to saint Bonaventure (Fire of love) is the “*spiritual drunkenness*. Since this drunkenness consists of how one *loves God with such a great love* that one does not only despise the earthly consolation but that one still does find the charms with the apostle through the love of God only in the pains, the shame and the torments; how one sees a person in drunkenness be deprived without shame and support the blows without pain... The fifth degree is the *security* is born out of drunkenness. Of what the soul suffers in this degree voluntarily of God, everything, all the damage and

all the shame, it *bans the fear* and feels such a great hope for the saviour of God that it thinks that nothing could separate it from him... The sixth (and last) degree is the *true and full tranquillity* in which the soul tastes such a profound peace that it seems asleep... Because who could worry a soul that no desire worries and that no fear moves. The *supreme peace* is in this soul.”

ASCENSION DAY

Gospel of Jesus Christ according to saint Lucas (24,46-53)

Comment of Charles de Foucauld²⁵

“Stay in the town until you will have the virtue from above... And by blessing them he raised to heaven.”

How good you are, my God! Your last act in this earth was a benediction! Your first act after your incarnation was the sanctification of saint John, your last is the benediction of your Church... You end like you have started through an act of kindness, of love... You have come to earth out of love, oh God who is charity! You have come there to teach love, to “light the fire” there, the fire of love to God and thy neighbour! Everything you have done, said to the people, you have done and said out of love! You have loved the people until the end, until you have given yourself for them on the cross, until you give yourself to them not only once at the last supper but all the time, everywhere to all those who would like to receive you! You leave the earth by giving it a last benediction... Yes, you have to leave it like that: it is the departure that suits you, oh Beloved Jesus, oh God of love! “*Let us stay in the town until you will have the virtue from above*”, let us stay at the place, in the situation where God has left us, until he gives us, by giving us the complete mission to take care of another, to do something else, the same grace to do so... *Let us hallow*, following Jesus` example, let us hallow all the people as he did who are all his children; even the worst are his members, objects of love and respect; let us always hallow them ; let us never talk bad about them... Let us hallow them all every day by praying every day for all.

²⁵ M/427, sur Lc 24,48-53 en C. DE FOUCAULD, *La bonté de Dieu*, 142-143.

WHITSUN

Gospel of Jesus Christ according to saint John (14,15-16.23b-26)

Comment of Charles de Foucauld²⁶

2 o' clock in the morning. Thank you, my Lord Jesus, thank you to our Lady of Eternal Saviour, thank you saint Magdalene, thank you, my holy guardian angel for having woken me up and made me get up to hold on to you in prayer to Jesus' feet... Let me rest with you this whole night, this whole day, my whole life. Oh my mothers, oh my good angel, let me always share, always your contemplation, adoration, love!... Let me always fulfil Jesus' divine will with you and therefore honour him as much as possible in every instant. This is the second night he spends in heaven. How happy he is! Thank you, thank you, my Lord of your happiness. Oh! What joy to think that in this moment you are in heaven! Thank you my God to make me feel it!... Let me always feel it, always, since this means be being joyful on earth in your eyes. But you tell me, oh my mothers, to wait among you, and that therefore, to live your life and honour Jesus, I need something, something that only God can give; to always do what Jesus wants, to love Him, imitate Him, obey Him and to therefore honour Him: always, we need his Spirit, his Own Spirit, this spirit through which he knew the things and truly saw them. This spirit through which he loved what has to be loved, how one has to love, this spirit with which he accomplished with such a perfect courage what he had to accomplish... "Follow me" Jesus has told us

²⁶ C. DE FOUCAULD, *Considérations sur les fêtes de l'année*, 412-414.

and from now on, it is our life on earth: *imitate Him, imitate Him, by loving Him and by obeying Him...* But in order to imitate him we need his spirit, his spirit which is going to let us get to know what he thought, loved, did... This spirit, his spirit has to animate us, *inspire his thoughts*, his views, *inspire his love*, his charity... for God and the people, *his courage inspires* us to accomplish what he has accomplished what he wants to continue to accomplish in us... Oh! My Lord Jesus, send us your Spirit, send It to all the people who are your children, to all the people for whom you are dead, to all those whom you love, to all, since you want that everyone *follows* you, *imitates* you by *loving* you, *obeying* you. Send it especially to those that you have placed the closest to me on earth, to all those for whom I shall pray especially. Send It to me, my God, that animated by this spirit that animates you yourself, filled with *your light*, knowing you clearly, seeing your thoughts closely, your will, full of this *love* with which you have loved God and the people in God's view, full of this *courage* that has made you embrace everything that was the most perfect and to accomplish it completely despite the suffering of nature and the persecutions of the people and of hell, I *imitate* you, oh my God, I also *love* you with the greatest love and I *obey* you by also accomplishing myself the most perfect in everything, according to your word "be perfect like your Father is perfect"... Oh! My God! Give your spirit to all of us, to me, your unworthy child who hold my eyes raised to you between the holy Virgin and the holy Magdalene, to those whom you have given to me in particular, to all the people, your children and my brothers. Give us your spirit, oh beloved Jesus, so we *shall think all your thoughts* animated by Him. Give us your spirit, oh Jesus, so our hearts will be united in yours animated by Him and that we *shall love God and the people like your heart loves them*. Give us your spirit, oh Jesus, so we can *accomplish your works* full

of your force; that we *shall do in everything the most perfect like you have done*, that we *shall obey your Father in everything like you*. Oh Jesus, give us your spirit, so he *shall animate us as he has animated you* and so he shall make us *think his thoughts, love like you have loved, act how you have acted* and in doing this *imitating, loving, obeying you perfectly*, oh beloved Jesus.

Amen, amen, amen!

INDEX

ASH WEDNESDAY

Mt 6,1-6.16-18

1ST SUNDAY OF LENT

Lc 4,1-13

2ND SUNDAY OF LENT

Lc 9,28b-36

3RD SUNDAY OF LENT

Lc 13,1-9

4TH SUNDAY OF LENT

Lc 15,1-3.11-32

5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

Jn 8,1-11

PALM SUNDAY

Lc 22,14-23,56

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Jn 13,1-15

GOOD FRIDAY

Jn 18,1-19,42

EASTER SATURDAY

Lc 24,1-12

EASTER SUNDAY

Jn 20,1-9

2ND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Jn 20,19-31

3RD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Jn 21,1-19

4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Jn 10,27-30

5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Jn 13,31-33a.34-35

6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Jn 14,23-29

ASCENSION DAY

Lc 24,46-53

WHITSUN

Jn 14,15-16.23b-26