

LETTERS OF MARY POTTER TO MONSIGNOR VIRTUE

November 1874-May 1876

(From photographs of the originals in the Archives of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide)

These letters provide a unique insight into the spiritual journey Mary Potter underwent in the years following her return from the Mercy Convent in Brighton. They were written in response to instructions given her in the confessional, and are therefore a one-way conversation of the dialogue between Virtue as confessor and Potter as penitent. As Mary's spiritual life altered, and with it her concepts of herself, the world she lived in and the meaning of the spiritual life, conflict erupted between Virtue and herself. The sub-text to that conflict, I believe, was the growing sense of independence that Mary Potter was experiencing as a direct result of her religious experiences.

No. 1

Perfect Thou my going in Thy paths, that my footsteps be not moved.

Rev. and Dear Father in J. & M.,

Having to tell you what I am afraid will trouble you, will you say a little prayer before you read this.

Last Friday whilst making a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, Our dear Lord gave me a great grace, which led me to believe He would have the Precious Blood specially honoured. Upon leaving the Church I felt inclined to say "Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth", (for the grace had come and gone leaving not much recollection of it, but only an impression on my mind). I said the words and then came to me, Honour My Precious Blood, and then, Offer My Precious Blood.

Shall I tell you what I see in the future? The Precious Blood raised for adoration and God's people gazing upon and worshipping the Blood that was shed for them on Calvary, the Price of their salvation. God's time has come for this honour to be paid to what He loves with such inexpressible love, and what He has loved so from eternity, when It existed only in His Divine Mind. I would like to say, if it were not disobedient, this devotion will rise in the Sanctuary of the Heart of Mary and spread throughout the Church. Great will be the rejoicing of the Saints in Heaven, great glory will they receive, great joy will be given to the angels, who will, through it, rejoice over more sinners doing penance, wonderful help will It be in this time of need to the Church and immense relief and succour the suffering souls in Purgatory.

This will be, my Father, God repeated to me “You may believe it,” for I hesitated to believe though I was made so intensely happy. I did not know I might believe for fear of being disobedient, but twice after Holy Communion God has said (and today so impressively) “You may believe it;” and now I see you have not told me not to listen to Almighty God, and when you said I must not think I had had a revelation, that did not refer to the future, and I think too you believe me and I shall be glad when you tell me so.

I told Almighty God this morning I loved better to hear Him speak through you. I think perhaps why the grace I spoke about came without my recollecting distinctly, was because I might have struggled against it and resisted it. My recollection is of being penetrated, suffused with the Precious Blood and Our dear Lord speaking to me and telling me He had given me His Treasure, His Life, and I came away with the thought of the Precious Blood raised as the Blessed Sacrament is at Benediction and beside It. Will not this indeed represent Calvary?

Our Lady’s suffering Heart is already impetrating grace. God seems to tell me it is already before Him and within myself. I sometimes say to Our Lady “Accipio te in mea anima, praebe mihi cor tuum O Maria”, and “I have given it to you” seems answered. After finishing the whole Rosary the other day Mary my Mother, the Mother of my Jesus (it is Jesus within me loves Mary so much) said, “I have given you your heart’s desire.” I did not know what it referred to. Now I think it referred to the Precious Blood, which for so long a time I have wished to look upon, I think for years.

It makes me so very happy, the thought of Our Lady’s Heart being within me, and such comfort to think that by it I can always please Jesus; myself was something so nasty for Him to be with, but with the Heart of Mary I now love Him and keep Him and ever offer that Mother’s Heart before Almighty God, pleading for her children and loving others, and seem to feel myself some of the pain that Mary felt which the love of others causes, but how good God is. Does He not show His predilection for this devotion to the dying by opening thus His Treasures – Mary, Mary suffering, Mary on Calvary where she was far dearer to Him than at any other time of her life she had yet been, and that other Treasure, His Most Precious Blood. What will God not do for souls for whom that Mother’s sorrowful Heart pleads, and pleads by the Precious Blood, infinitely Precious to God it is, and that Mother’s Heart from which it sprang, has a right over it. If she offers it, what graces will not God bestow? May God hasten this time, the time when the Precious Blood that was shed for the Redemption of souls may be perpetually honoured and set before Him by Mary in her children.

I must bring up myself to ask you if you could think of any penance for me, I would be very grateful. The little bit of God’s creation that I am, I would like to set truthfully, so that when I am, so to speak, losing my own identity in Jesus and Mary as I do, (when I say Pater Noster, I mean Father of Jesus, Father of Mary) yet still I am in His sight what I should be, something that has sinned, that can bring forth sin and should therefore do penance. To be united to the Most Holy Trinity in an unspeakable way and to feel your whole being joined in wonderful union with the All Holy God and feel how it is His Will you should be one with Him, and to know

likewise that you have sinned and can sin, brings a feeling that cannot be spoken. I feel pain to be now a pleasure. I am not so much speaking of that as humiliation. Will you think of this dear Father, and will you pray that I may use as God wishes the graces He gives me. They are given for the sake of Mary. He presented my birth with His blessings in the Confirmation of my mother and for the sake of Mary will he exalt me though I never wanted it and do not like to say it, but I must. I wanted to be something to whom He showed great mercy, greater than he showed to the dying thief. (He had never received His God in Holy Communion and then sent him away. That is what is so terrible.) I wanted in eternity to be one to whom God showed His mercy. May God grant this and the answer is coming now – He will.

I beg your blessing and am your grateful child in Jesus and Mary,

Mary, S.M.

I would be glad if at any time you could tell me anything concerning St. Catherine V.M. On her feast Our Blessed Lord made known to me at Holy Communion to take her for a Patron. I did not know who it was and did not recollect till I was keeping my hour of guard. I think she must be a martyr because you had red vestments. I honour St. Cecilia as my Patron, being born on her Feast and having taken her name in Confirmation, but I would like to do what I believe Our Blessed Lord wishes me. I hope you will excuse my troubling you so much. I write because I think I ought. I do not like this coming forward, but still less should I like not to let you know what it is right you should know and what God wishes you to know.

No. 2

Rev. and dear Father in J.C.,

As I am continually hindered going to you on Saturdays, will you tell me these two things. When you spoke to me of your great disapproval of “True Devotion” saying it was almost condemned by the Church etc., am I to understand that as a prohibition to my either practising or propagating it? Of course, if I were obedient as I would wish to be I need not ask the question. Your disapproval would be sufficient, but I must remind you that years ago I asked your leave and showed you the book, and having waited a month and prayed earnestly, you gave me leave without a word, saying, “it was a devotion approved of by the Church.”

You made me very unhappy and I do think you might look through the book again, for I feel quite sure you have not read it through. Will you please do that, because how can I be easy when I know you have not read the book, but have a dislike to the name slave. If you had read the book you would have seen it meant no more than what children are to their parents whilst they are minors. It means that though you may come of age and have liberty to dispose of your property etc. as you please, you tell your parents you leave it still at their disposal. If there were any word to express that instead of slave it would, of course, do as well. The word slave is not a nice-sounding word, but what objection can you have to the devotion which leads you to try to live in as close union with Our Lady as Our Lord did, when their lives were one

and He was yet unborn. The devotion which leads you to be united to Our Lord as Our Lady ever was in soul, though their bodily lives separated?

The second thing I want to know is about the obedience you put me under, under mortal sin. I suffered so much when I laid for about a month in the fear of being out of God's grace, not knowing whether my prayers and sufferings could help others too, that I want to know whether, that I want to know whether if I were to say to myself, "It is the Will of God I should do as I am told at present, but hereafter I shall be told differently." Would that be disobedience? I could at all times say as though you told me to call white, black. It appears to me white, but I will say it is black if I am told, but to force myself to think what something superior to myself seems to force me not to think, I do not know what to do. I know this, that when I do think it is all delusion, that thought comes as others, such as scruples etc. and cause disquietude, whereas the other thoughts bring peace.

A train of thought can come so quickly. I was afraid of committing mortal sin this afternoon and did not know how to distract myself. All at once I thought, the Church, the Spouse of Our Lord represents His Life. Communities arose representing His Hidden life; witness those of Egypt and others, then followed more active Orders, the Preachers devoted to acts of charity etc., representing Our Lord's Public Life, then followed Orders devoted to the Blessed Sacrament. In our own times there has arisen the Order (I copy from a French Book) "Ayant pour but de se consacrer au salut des mourants de chaque jour, en l'honneur et en union du Coeur Sacre de Jesus agonisant au jardin des Olives." What followed Gethsemane?

Oh Father, if you knew how difficult it is to put away the thought – Calvary will be next- but I will put it away as long as I am told and I do not think I ever disobeyed in will, it was my understanding. You may remember I told you I thought the addition of the Heart of Mary was an after thought to the Con. of the Agonizing Heart. It was so by the Patriarch of Jerusalem (I copy from his Decree) "C'est pourquoi en vertu du present decret, nous reunissons ces deux confreries en une seule, sous le titre du Tres-Saint Coeur du Notre Seigneur Jesus Christ agonisant dans le jardin des Olives et de la transfixion de la bienheureuse Vierge Marie et avec les statuts que nous dresserons." Is it not natural that the thought should come to me. There is a community representing one part of the Confraternity, a purely contemplative community, imitating Our Lord's Agony in the Garden, (so to speak a purely contemplative mystery). The other part of the Con. is the transfixion of Our Blessed Lady. Why should that not be represented?

I cannot but feel I have had a call from God to devote myself to help save souls in their last hour and though I would go to the Order thus devoted, if I were told, my own attraction would be to assist in person at the death of others as Our Lady on Calvary, (the three kinds of death were there). I would like to imitate Mary in everything and it seems to me, if there were one thing more than another that induced her to leave her retirement, after the death of Jesus, it was to assist again at the death of Jesus in the person of His members. It must have been an attraction to her dear Mother Heart to help those who were dying because they were her children and because she saw Jesus in them.

The following prayer I began to read and then would not finish. It seemed so like my thought for the benefit of the dying that I was afraid of being disobedient. I copy it now:

“Je vous honore O Vierge Sainte, au pied de la croix, et vous prie tres humblement d’assister a mon agonie et a ma mort comme vous avez assiste a celle de votre cher Fils. Je vous revere O Mere de mon Dieu, comme la Dispensatrice du sang precieux de votre cher Fils. Je vous conjure par votre maternite divine de m’en appliquer les merites a l’heure de ma morte et d’offrir au Pere eternel les souffrances de ce cher Fils ses humiliations et sa mort adorable pour satisfaire a sa justice divine en echange des peines et de la mort eternelle, que j’ai meritee par mes crimes.”

This prayer is recited by the associates of a Confraternity (I copy) “Sous le meme titre (Notre Dame des Agonisants) fut autorisee et enrichiee d’indulgences par le Saint Pere.”

If you saw the books I now have and the accounts of the devotion to assist the dying, the perpetual intercession, confraternities etc. all rising or having a fresh impulse at the present time you could not but acknowledge (as I was so ignorant of it all) that when I said it was God’s desire, the wish of His Heart, it was but the truth, whether it was made known to me by His Holy Spirit or otherwise. You will tell me what you think regarding my vocation and decide likewise, because as regards leaving my mother, she has now someone who I know will always look to her and make her happy. You said to me not long since, “if I had a vocation I must follow it.” The words of dear Dr. Grant in a letter to my mother too seem to show I should have, if necessary to leave my mother alone. “Do not be afraid of being alone, if she is called, as you always said when she was little that you hoped to be ready for this sacrifice.”

As regards myself I am quite willing to do whatever I am told. I would go to any order however strict, the more enclosed from the world the better, for with the exception of watching those dying I do not want to have anything to do with the world. I should like to be present at the death of others. There is something so beautiful about death, but of course it is not what we like, but what is God’s Will, but I could pray for them. They are so near their eternity, and God wants them to reflect His Mercy forever. I do wish I knew God’s Will about many things. I interrupt praying and may displease God by it. You know you told me to employ myself actively and I began to do it, but you see I was hindered and obliged to be alone, and keep quiet. Since you told me, I do not pray as I used during the day, except sometimes for awhile, and then I have broken off. I will listen to no interior voice, though something most certainly came true that seemed said during my illness, though most positively I would not give way to anything out of the ordinary way, with the help of God’s grace. I could show you that by something I did that might seem irreverent, but I thought it best.

I have taken up your time enough, but you have devoted yourself to saving souls and will spare a little time to help one of the souls for whom Our Lord shed His Precious Blood. It is in that Precious Blood I am respectfully and gratefully yours,

Mary.

Your telling me “to put it all away, nothing will come of that” has made it so difficult to think as you wished. You seemed to think if I was wrong in one thing I must be wrong in all, for I know so well that even Saints who worked miracles have been deceived by the devil and their own imagination. I have read it and Fr. Maher told me so. It does likewise seem to me that an Order devoted or with the spirit of Calvary, is peculiarly applicable to these times. Is not the Church being now mystically crucified with her Lord?

No. 3

My Mother Mary, help me to show the Father whom you sent to me, what you have done in me.

If you would give me leave, Rev. and dear Father, I would be glad to make a vow of obedience to you, at any rate for one year. Our Blessed Lord is making known to me what He would have to do and I have asked Him that it may be under obedience. I make my examen ever since you told me upon the Will of God. I want to thank you for that and for all your direction. I am very grateful to you. From not speaking to you enough or rather, when I do, not making myself understood, I may have seemed obstinate.

I must now explain. As regards the wish to be with God, which I believe Almighty God Himself put in my heart, I understood from you it was delusion. Years before, Fr. Burke had said to me “It is not selfish to wish to be with Christ,” and as regards wishing to die, he told me he had wished for it since a boy, and likewise there were the words “Deus siti sitiri” so often in my mind, that you will see it was not only my own thought. Almighty God showed me that you had led me as He wished, in a meditation, when I offered myself to live as Our Blessed Lord did. He left the happiness of Heaven to save souls. I have felt it so strongly ever since, that if I had the choice (which I would rather not have upon anything) I would choose to live in imitation of Our Blessed Lord and save souls, and ever since then, my thoughts are constantly in the Passion. I am so very glad to have sufferings. I am constantly looking for mortifications, not having leave for great. I feel I must be very careful for I am more tempted now, but by despising them, and offering in a general way all temptations for the conversion of sinners, and constantly making a spiritual Communion and remembering what I have been told, they go away.

I do not forget my whole life should be spent in doing penance for my own sins. As I have told you, I should not like to think there was anyone worse than myself in the world. God gives me great graces and at the same time shows me myself, so that I should not attribute anything to myself. I think when God shows Himself to any soul in a certain way it must be, so to speak, crushed and prostrate with the sight of itself in the light of God, and must hunger as I do, to manifest exteriorly its interior contempt and hatred for itself. It would be a relief to me to punish myself or to be punished. There would be something truthful about it. This is my habitual feeling with a constant sorrow, a deep deep sorrow for my sins. I rely more upon these two graces than all the spiritual consolations God gives me, which however are so great that if I

had not given myself with all that God gives me, to Our Blessed Lady I could ask them not to be given me, for I could not contain them. It is through Mary all comes to me. I was named after her alone. I was given to her by Dr. Grant's wish; later on I had your permission (for which I pray God reward you) to give myself to her for time and eternity. Since then what my Mother has given me could not be told. But I must say this, that the answers to prayer and what I have only wished are more like what are read in the lives of the Saints. If others consecrated themselves in the same way they would find the same. I must say that for her honour.

Since Rosary Sunday I have been drawn so strongly to pray for the dying, that I believe it to be a work appointed for me, so much so that (unless I was told) I could not enter a Convent unless they were directed to that purpose, perpetual prayer for the Dying. It is not changeableness. It would be perpetual adoration, and besides that was chosen for me. It would explain much to me. I have been led in a peculiar way to think of death and the dying and used to think it was meant for myself, particularly as I had prayed to know what to meditate upon. The prayer that would rise up to be with God, when he showed Himself to me so to be desired, is now a prayer for others who may lose Him for ever. In the same degree I felt it. Before I knew you, for months together, I was tempted to despair. I went to bed at night and rose in the morning with a dull dead weight upon me, that I was not in God's grace, and though I loved Him so much, if I died I should not be with Him. Obedience would have sent it away, but it was evidently God's Will, for I was told "No one knew whether they were worthy of love or hatred." God is good. At all times of the day and in the night too I am praying for souls in their agony. God seems pressing me to. The thought of Our Lord in His Agony comes before me and I must pray for the souls for whom He died. If it were not extravagant in me I could almost say, either blot me out of the book which Thou hast written but save them. As a rule I do not like analysing my prayers and could hardly put down except a feeling of utter unworthiness, dependence on Our Lady and Spiritual Communion. Often when any particular prayer is coming, I am afraid it may be delusion, and use the Name of Jesus and have a very great dislike to anything out of the ordinary way, I am speaking myself naturally. Not now. Let God do with me as best pleaseth Him.

What I tell you now I must. Friday evening I had said my rosary and, as you told me to give all to the Holy Souls, (though my heart was longing to do all I could for those in their agony, I always do gain Indulgences for the Holy Souls, I have been very earnest about that for years) I begged them to make it up as I must give up my own will to yours, when suddenly I felt the Presence of God. I was kneeling at my Altar where Our Blessed Lord had lately been and where I have a lamp burning before an image of the Sacred Heart. I know not what I did till I found the words rising up, "Who art Thou, Lord?" In my heart seemed to echo "The Blessed Trinity Who made thee, I have chosen thee that thou shouldst go and should bring forth fruit and that thy fruit should remain." "Why me?" rose up within me, and the same echo within, "The weak things of this earth I have chosen." I do not remember exactly what followed nor the answer which I made, "As Thou hast said to thy servant so be it done." I remember turning to Our Lady, making a Spiritual Communion, I was so afraid of being deluded. Remembering what I had heard that the devil could not come within the vista of a blessed candle, I lit a particular candle that had been given me. I know not how long I remained but I rose with a feeling of inexpressible peace. I went through the devotion of the Stations which I had been about commencing with an

indulgenced Crucifix, and at every Gloria Patri, I was bowing to the presence of God in my room with me.

The next day, after Holy Communion, having said the Magnificat with Our Lady, offering Our Lord as I do as my worship to God, the words came again "I have chosen thee." On my return home I opened a book whilst breakfasting (alone) and read till something was said of Our Lady's patronage of the dying and then all my love for her or rather greater love than ever, came up within me and in the midst of my prayer an echo of her voice seemed to come to me, "It is my will that you should do this work," and again I think the word "I have chosen thee and my question "Why to me?" and the answer "the weak things of this world and the poor." I knelt and prayed I know not how long. I fully determined to speak to you, my Father, but it came into my mind to ask you if I might write it. It is evident I have little power to make myself understood, for on Saturday you seemed to think I was limiting God's \Mercy, whereas it is that very Mercy I believe He wishes to be exercised in these latter times as a last stretch of His Compassion, by raising up an Order in His Church devoted to the work of rescuing sinners (the souls whom He loves, for whom He died) at the very last hour.

It is some two or three years since the thought came to my mind how much such an Order was needed. You were away. There was a Mission going on, and I thought I will speak to one of the Fathers, but however I did not like to, and thought what good could I do and so did nothing, but now I think differently. I can pray. I want to pray under obedience. There may be such an Order raised up and I might join them. You may tell me I am deluding myself, but God is renewing every grace within me and giving me His peace that it seems can never be taken from me. I will try to put away whatever thoughts you tell me. Almighty God does not need me to do any work He wishes. I believe He is speaking to me and telling me it is the "desire and wish of His Heart" but His desire must likewise be that I act under obedience.

If you have the time would you please look through the manuscript I send you, and tell me next Saturday to write it under obedience, if you approve. Naturally, I can hardly put a letter together, but I think Our Lady helped me with it and I should do better under obedience. You said I could do it, if I liked.

No. 4

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, help me.

Rev. and dear Father,

Before I ask your advice as I think it necessary to do, I want to tell you how very sorry I am for being so obstinate last night about fasting and to ask you to forgive me, for it was very wrong. I know perfectly well that what you tell me is the Will of God I should do. I do not know what possessed me to speak in such a way, but I did not feel myself, when I went into the Confessional. I had been suffering a good deal, though of course that should not make any difference and does not usually.

You do not speak to me of what I have told you, but I must ask you to do so now. I feel that I am preparing for some great grace to be given me, the Holy Spirit, the Gift

of God. Other graces have come upon me without my foreknowledge. This seems a promise. Almighty God is drawing me closer and closer to Himself. At times I forget myself, but I likewise have had fear and awe piercing through me, when brought into such close union with the Ever Blessed Majesty of God and last Sunday when feeling in great pain, my utter sinfulness, and that I could not endure to be brought so near God, Who is All Holy, All Pure, I thought I would ask your leave to make a general confession of my whole life. I would be so glad to get the slightest stain of sin off my soul. I did not know if it was Almighty God's Will, but intended asking you and began looking back, until I recollected I must not without leave. One day I mentioned it in Holy Communion and the answer made me believe you would not let me, though I might ask you, and that Our Blessed Lord Himself had taken all my sins away. "I have cleansed thee from every stain; thou art pure in my sight.." It is this I ask your advice upon, for the words will come, though I have tried to say prayers, so as not to listen.

About 3 o'clock on Friday it seemed the Blood from the side of Our Lord came upon me, and it was repeated. The heavens are not pure in the sight of God, what can it mean? It does not make any difference in my opinion of myself because, of course, God's graces are not myself. They are simply, as it were, a borrowed garment. Perhaps it means being clothed with Our Blessed Lord's merits, Almighty God does not look upon me, but you will tell me.

There is another thing. Ought I to encourage an assurance of salvation? "I have blessed thee for evermore." When Our Lord seems to say concerning you, "I have blessed him for evermore" I fully believe it. I know you have suffered interiorly already, I felt it one evening very much, and that I could not pray for it to be taken away. If you would believe this, it might comfort you in suffering this Lent as I know you will. Perhaps I am told it, for I am shown what a fearful thing it is for a soul to lose the Good God forever. God is enclosing me to Himself and making me feel in a certain sense the happiness of heaven gives me such an intense pain, such an agonising prayer for those who are losing Him for ever, that God in His Wisdom may have seen fit to give me this assurance, but you will tell me.

Will you likewise tell me what you intend doing (if you think it well to tell me) about the new devotion which is to arise in the Church, this devotion to the Precious Blood. I know God designs to help His Church as He always has in the time of need. This is the help He now sends, and He will hasten the time at the pleading of the Heart of Mary. The saints who will arise from Calvary as they will (for who would remain on Calvary and not become a Saint and who could bind themselves to remain on Calvary all their lives without being called by God to great perfection) wonderfully sustain the Church and stand as it were at its very portals to arrest those who dying in sin would be cast out of it forever. It is years since I prayed for a Saint to be raised up in England. Thank God, there will be numbers, and Our Lady, who has brought so many blessings to France, will bring no less to England.

I think this year of Jubilee will bring forth something and feel such a desire that people would pray according to the wish of our Holy Father the Pope, and make the prescribed 15 visits. How can they do so unless the Churches are opened? How I wish the devotion could be done publicly for 15 days. I hope I am not taking a

position I should not, by saying this. I have not yet heard it given out and so do not think it is yet much known and of course Lent would be the best time.

Begging your forgiveness again for last night and telling you again that I do believe that what you tell me to do is what Our Blessed Lord wishes me to do. If it were not for that thought I might have continual troubles, but I have generally an answer to anything that might trouble me, in obedience, recollecting what I have been told. I do so wish I could do every action of the day under obedience. I will put down some of the devotions that I do so that you can tell me they are under obedience.

Please give your blessing (I know I have your prayers) to your grateful child in Jesus and Mary.

My principal devotions : The Stations, the entire Rosary, Our Lady's Office, keeping in union with Jesus and Mary between 12 and 3. I follow Our Blessed Lord's Words and should like to be alone, but of course, I do any duties that come in the time all the same. I take all the time I can to prayer which I prefer to reading. Am about to commence the "Precious Blood" which came some weeks ago, but do not feel to care to do so until I asked you. You told me it was good to read the lives of the Saints, but I have not got them.

No. 5

I will speak of Thy testimonies before Kings and will not be ashamed.

Rev. and dear Father in J. C.,

Hitherto I have written to you, having a difficulty in speaking, what it is my wish you should know. Now I write because I am told so to do. God has put His Holy Spirit upon me. The Holy Trinity overshadowed me and communicating to my understanding, darkly it is true, but still with a clearer knowledge than heretofore, how the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son is the Link of the Father and Son, the Breath of Life, that breath was breathed into me and I was told henceforth I must live by it. I am bound to God by His Holy Spirit, in some faint way resembling the Act of the Holy Ghost in the Godhead and may the Spirit of my God now guide me to show you as in the deepest humility I acknowledge my utter unworthiness to speak of this awful mystery. The Holy Ghost is the Indissoluble Bond, the Limit of the Godhead and we are filled with His Holy Spirit and bound, espoused to Him for evermore. The strong right arm of the Eternal Father hath upholden me. His Hand, that Hand that lavished blessings upon mankind, is put into my hand and speaking He has said, "Thou shalt dispense my gifts for thy name's sake." My Father, you will see wonderful things.

Last Friday, during the three hours, I seemed raised upon the Cross and Our Blessed Lord seemed to tell me He espoused me, but I took not much notice. Last night (Sunday) whilst going through the Stations |I was thinking of Jesus being nailed to the Cross, when the words came, "Thou shalt write to thy father what things I have done to thee." (I had had some thoughts how much I need to tell you of the above). I got

up and stood before the Crucifix where I have told you Almighty God brought me back to Himself. It is blessed by the Holy Father. And with the thought of Our Lord hanging upon the Cross I felt He was binding me to Himself, by a new title, as His Spouse. It is a title I know that many crave but I have had a repugnance to for myself and it has made me doubt my vocation for a religious life. I could be His slave, His child, the little thing He stooped to lift out of the dust, but not His spouse, and I prayed He would not do it and then He seemed to tell me it was the wish of Mary and when I thought of that Mother's Heart at the foot of the Cross, and likewise the thought that the nearer I was to Our Blessed Lord the more I could do for others, for His people and my people. It seems I must say His children and my children, for Our Lord seemed to say Mine and thine. I let the work of God be done in me and it has made a revolution in me. I would wish to do away and cast myself in the lowest place and be punished as I deserve, but I cannot go away from Jesus for He has bound me to Himself. My prayer finished in peace and thanksgiving, the sign of its being from God and now my Father hasten the time when I may be away from this world, where it is not God's will I should remain.

On Saturday evening when I got up and came down, having received in the evening the gift of the Holy Spirit I felt I ought to be away, and I felt too and know God has given me a great power of impetration. I must use it. There is a sense of responsibility in it. Souls are dying, souls made to the likeness of the Blessed Trinity are being lost. It seems as though they belonged to me and I could not bear they should be taken from me any more than a mother could bear her children to be torn from her. It would be terrible, realising in the way I do and in a way which I do not think I could bear unless God supported me. What a fearful thing it is for a soul to lose God for ever, if I could not help them, but I can by the help of God. Save me Mary, seems to be the cry, a poor soul would cry in its fearful danger of being lost (though there are so many do not know their danger), and I must use the means God has given me. You must understand I know full well this is simply my own imagination. The thought came in the following way. It is but a little incident, but many such make me think of greater things. A poor little dog was hiding away from being punished by its master, and to the amusement of those present, ran out from its hiding place across the room and straight onto my lap. I half-laughingly taking it up said, "Save me Mary," and prevented its being beaten.

It is but a poor comparison. Those whom you would help are made like to Jesus. It is God's Will they should be prayed for. To you Father, this work is entrusted. Tempted I know you will be this very Lent, but likewise you will be made happier than you ever were in your life. Jesus will treat you as His beloved disciple. He has destined you for a great work in His Church. "I know whom I have chosen", Our Lord said to me concerning you. He has fitted you for the work you have to do, though not fully yet. You have yet an entire consecration to Mary and then you will enter with zeal upon her work. You will take the heart of Mary, the most beautiful purely human creation that God has ever made or ever will make, to yourself and build a sanctuary in its honour. In your life there has been a type of what you will do in the future.

Forgive my freedom. It is Jesus tells me this. There is commencing a new era in the Church, and you have a great part to do in the work of God. The fruits of Our Lord's Passion will be wonderfully multiplied in the Saints who will glorify Him and more

than supply for those who have fallen from His Church. Our Holy Father already knows that the Maternal Sorrowing Heart of Mary will receive new honour. Happy and content and with wondrous thanksgiving he has rested upon that loving heart. Ready almost with Holy Simeon to sing his "Nunc Dimittis." Thanks be to God for having thus comforted and consoled our dear and holy Father.

Begging your blessing, your grateful child in Jesus and Mary,

Mary, S.J.M.

If you rightly understood the graces I tell you God has given me, you will wonder. They follow so quickly, they are so numerous. I must tell you what however, you will know hereafter by experience. Those who practise the "True Devotion" of de Montfort receive graces from God, on account of their being wholly given to Mary, that many Saints have, so to speak earned by years of labour. I hope you will believe this, or you will think differently of me to what is true. When this "devotion" becomes more known, which I pray God may be soon, how Saints will increase. It is not yet three years since I practised it and wondrous has been the change it has wrought in me.

No. 6

If I say nothing about what I first wrote to you, it is not because I do not think the same. Souls must be saved at their last hour. God designs they should be, but God has often more designs than one in His works, and I do see now a new era in the Church. The new devotion to the Precious Blood will induce God to pour forth His Holy Spirit in this time of need. Many things point to it. The devotion to the Holy Angels (& St. Michael) who had the Precious Blood when shed in their keeping; the institution of a new Feast in its honour, the Scapular of the Passion. I would like to mention one thing in connection with what I have written.

On the Friday evening God called me, I had just finished the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary (I was giving what I was doing in obedience to your wish, to give that month to the Holy Souls, though longing to do all I could for those in their agony). I was about commencing the Stations, and therefore my mind was more on the Passion of Our Lord than the Blessed Trinity. What I want to show you is that one part of what I have told you is consonant with the other, that if I am called to a work at all, it is a great one, as the vocation came from the Blessed Trinity Itself. "The Blessed Trinity Who made thee" were the words that echoed in my heart and can never be forgotten. In the history of creation, when God came to His greatest work there is a different expression used, the words "Let us.

I think you will see what I want to explain to you without my saying more, but if you do not understand, as very likely many things I write I express badly, please tell me some day to come to you, not in Confession, I think I could speak better when not in the Presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

No. 7

Thou shalt open my lips and my tongue shall set forth Thy Praise.

Rev. and dear Father in J. & M.,

It is the Will of Our Blessed Lord that I should tell you before you hear from Rome, that Our Holy Father has sent me his blessing. It is some days since I knew it. It is likewise the wish of Jesus that you say a Mass of Thanksgiving, for His Work is in a certain sense consummated. I am referring to the work to be accomplished in His Church. This morning at Holy Communion it was said, "Thou shalt honour My Holy Spirit." During my visit to the Blessed Sacrament Our Lord spoke to me of the worship of His Soul for the Holy Spirit, of the burning love of His Sacred Heart, "Thou shalt love the Holy Spirit with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, with thy whole being" and His Work is consummated, though not commenced on earth except within myself. ???

The Angels and Saints see that God's work is done and praise Him as the Angels praised Him when, whilst the earth was but chaos, they saw its creation in the Divine Mind. The Heart of Mary, the Precious Blood, the Holy Spirit, with such then shalt thou fight and conquer. Good God, with these do I present myself in prayer to God and the prayer I breathe to Him is His own Holy Spirit Whom He has sent to me, and I breathe back to Him, imaging thus the Procession of the Holy Ghost in the Blessed Trinity, and God supports me as I could not bear the pressure of the Divinity upon me. Loving are the Holy Angels to me. If I visibly saw them, not more sensibly could I know their ministries to me.

May I mention as regards our Holy Father that I have had a certain communication with him, I know not how, but Our Lord explained to me that He was in the heart of His Vicar and in mine. I had prayed for the blessing of the Pope, and "My Vicar has sent thee his blessing." The Pope likewise prayed for me, and I believe knows me as I know him. When you go to Rome, my Father, you can tell him, and likewise remind him of the love Our Lady showed him the 14th of February. It was in the afternoon here (Sunday).

I may tell you that my mother, who has lately become deaf to a painful degree, will have perfect hearing. God has chosen to make use of me instead of other means we tried. On Sunday morning I was rather sad, wondering she did not hear as Our Lord had promised, but she has to promise three things. "She must not interfere between thee and Me" was one. This was on Sunday morning. I did not know she had written to you, but it seems to have some connection does it not? How can I convince her? You know I suppose, that you are the only one I have told concerning what is going on within me. (My mother sees that I say more prayers, but she is very good to me in that respect, though I have an idea that following some impulse she has written to you, but I may be wrong on that matter). Without necessity it would be most painful to me to speak to anyone else, even the Spouses of Our Lord whom I love so much.

I pray to know what to write and the following came into my head. Some weeks ago a white bird, I do not know if it was a dove or a pigeon, came to the first landing

window. I looked at it and went upstairs to my own room, expecting to find it there, and it was at my own window. My mother and I looked at it, and I for a long time. I do not know how long it remained, for I could not wait when I had finished to look at a bird, though it was so beautifully white and pretty. I do not like mentioning what seems so trivial, but as I feel urged to, I must not let human respect hinder me.

I would be grateful to you if you would tell me when you say the Mass of Thanksgiving.

Your child in Jesus and Mary,

Mary, S.J.M.,

Please excuse this being so blotted, I will be more careful next time.

No. 8

Deus in adiutorium meus intende, Domine ad adjuvandum me festina

Rev. and dear Father in J. C.,

I wish to put before you as clearly as I can some thoughts that have come to me this week, to show you how I apply them to what I have told you and leave you, of course, to decide whether they are reasonable or not.

It seems to me that the Apostles who spoke to Our Lord face to face, misunderstood what He said and spread false reports, as for instance in the case of St. John. Likewise, that those to whom Our Lord makes revelations do not always understand them. I read this week of a holy man, who though he performed miracles and had the gift of prophecy, was all his life under a mistake regarding what Our Lord said to him when a young boy, that he should go to the Friars Minor, make a great journey and then come to Him. "The child in his simplicity," (the words in the book) fancied the first journey he made was the one Our Lord meant, and each journey he had to make would imagine it was to be his last, but he lived among the Franciscans to an advanced age and the revelation simply referred to the long journey of this life.

I have also had in my mind the remembrance that people who have had real visions have likewise had false ones that they have believed in, until undeceived by obedience. Unless Holy Church obliges me I will not even believe all visions reported in books. When I hear of Our Lady saying St. Joseph never doubted her, but thought himself unworthy to possess her, there is a distortion of Scripture that seems improbable. Likewise when I hear of one vision in which Our Lord appears with the Feet fastened by one nail, and in another with them uncrossed and fastened by two; of the stigmata of St. Francis in the right side, of St. Catherine of Siena in the left; when I hear of St. Thomas Aquinas even falling into error regarding Our Lady's Immaculate Conception, why should I wonder at my imagination having misled me.

I do not wish you to misunderstand me. Only under obedience do I retract anything I have written to you. My imagination certainly deceived me regarding the meaning of

certain things I believed said to me, as I shall explain further on. It likewise seems to me that God gives a certain light to people, but their mind misapplies it. For instance, when the Bishop said I should not go to any convent in his Diocese, he was guided by God, but the reason in his own mind was wrong. When the Priest in my last Retreat told me I should not do for a community and that if I went I should come back, but that I should do for a hermit, if I could be one, he had some reason but not the right one. When by a very special light from God you told me not to think or pray to die (you told me God gave you that light) you of course, were guided by God to say so, but the conclusion you drew in your mind that my wish to be with God was a delusion, with all due respect, I think was not right.

I suffered great pain last Saturday in the thought I must be deceived. I had understood from Our Blessed Lord that I should be clothed in some way with His Passion and before the end of the week. I took it literally (as the boy I mentioned) and was quite sure it must mean the scapular of the Passion which I had never worn. When the Saturday came and you would not give it to me, I felt I must be deceived. Again as regards the blessing of the Pope, I may tell you I think a great deal of a blessing and should often like to ask you to give me one. It was the last action, I should think of Our Lord's for us as He ascended into Heaven. I certainly thought when it seemed said to me what I told you, that you must have written to the Pope and he sent me his blessing, but I think the following will explain that.

A newspaper was sent to me to my surprise. The person never sent me one before, and in it I read the following:

“Irregularities, Dispensations etc. are then treated of, special cases are provided for, practical charity is enjoined, the wicked and the apostate are called to repentance and submission, and the Holy Father bestows upon all who are within the Fold, the Apostolic Benediction.”

It was a little paper called the “Catholic Times,” you may not have seen it. I did not take much notice at first, I do not understand not taking things literally, but still afterwards it occurred to me, as we may say of Our Lord “He loved me and delivered Himself for me” why should I not take this as what Our Blessed Lord meant when, in answer to my prayer it seemed said to me what I wrote. Again I would not listen I think so far as to take much comfort from an interior voice telling me I was clothed interiorly with Our Lord's Passion, but I am sure I do not exaggerate when I say my soul has gone through a Crucifixion and have I not had a share in Our Lord's Passion? Was He not mocked as a fool and “Prophesy unto us,” was said. Did you not, my Father, intimate pretty clearly that you thought I was not in my right state of mind, and tell me not to take to prophesying? I knew well you thought more than you said, for I know you would dislike to give pain to anyone. Do you not think you gave me pain at the time. I had suffered so much from God Himself that I was deadened I think, to any other. I must tell you that it had been shown to me, after I had given you one of my later letters, that what occurred on Saturday would be. (I do not say the exact words.) My nature recoiled from the cross, then grace triumphed and I offered it willingly, then (and this shows how my imagination again deceived me,) feeling very happy I thought, Oh no, it would not be, Our Blessed Lord had taken the will for the deed, and forgot about it.

Now, you must not think my intellect is at all in the clouded state you must have considered it, for me to make such a mistake as you thought I had made regarding my mother's letter. I could take my oath of both of these facts. My mother knows I

asked her to promise those three things on the Sunday morning, though I did not like to say anything that might convince her I did know things supernaturally. I thought you might consider it had only come to my mind since you said what you did on Saturday (that it had been shown me before what you would consider about me.) As regards what was said concerning the Pope and myself, I have read devotion to the Holy Father comes direct from the Heart of Jesus. I love the Vicar of Our Lord better than anyone in the world, but besides that Our Lady has seemed to show me the Holy Father taking comfort from her Maternal heart in the same way that I do.

As regards what may seem extravagant to you when I spoke of the Blessed Trinity, is it not what goes on within the souls of all who are in a state of grace? Are not the Processes of the Holy Trinity imaged within their souls, though all do not realize it? Do not we pray by the Holy Spirit though all do not understand it? As regards my union with Our Lord upon the Cross, "With Christ I am nailed to the Cross" – "I live now not I, but Christ liveth in me." May I not say that? As regards the offering of the Precious Blood through the Mother's suffering Heart, I would ask anyone to test if there is a more efficacious prayer in this world, or one more calculated to draw God's Spirit upon us. Could delusion teach these things? Could delusion make you love others so much that you are almost sorry when you feel your suffering (suffering of soul, so far worse than suffering of body) going, feel almost sorry because your prayers, though more pleasing to yourself in happiness, are more efficacious when suffering. No, I have thought too the devil could make you think beautiful thoughts of God and love him. He once had those himself, but to wish to be humbled, to have deep sorrow and intense hatred of sin, to love Our Lady and turn to her, saying "Mother" with a portion, though but a small portion of Our Dear Lord's love for her, these things the devil cannot give. He never had them, he knows not what they are.

If there is any particular thing you cannot believe, would you tell me and not mind my feeling at all? I may not have expressed myself right, or could explain something you did not understand. I know it is considered this kind of life is exposed to more danger than the more ordinary one, and indeed it is. When I returned home Saturday evening, the tempter knew it was a good time to tempt me. My faith and confidence in God was assaulted, and I thought how well meaning people could be deceived, and compared myself to Angelique the Jansenist. Even the thought, could I be possessed came into my mind. Possessed people I thought, know things supernaturally. But those whom belong wholly to Our Lady have special help and I was enabled to say "Though He should slay me, yet will I trust in Him" and though the words of Our Lord's cry in His Dereliction were on my lips, likewise did I say, "And we indeed justly," and knew God had permitted all for my good. It was at the beginning of this week what I have told you, began to dawn upon me, the two mistakes I had made. I had thought God had sent the trial on account of some secret pride, but when I began to see Our Blessed Lord had likened me to Himself, I did not hurry to explain.

Now I want to say that I hope you will not think I have any thought but that you have acted exactly as was right. My imagination had misled me, I had thought wrong. You stopped me in time. If you allow me to notice anything of the kind in the future I shall be very careful to keep my own ideas out of the way. I suppose it must have been my own imagination that made me think of asking you on Saturday to show me some letter you had received and so what you did was applicable to my state of mind at the time. I would rather be partly in the wrong rather than you should not be right. If I were not afraid of making this letter too long, I would like to repeat to you the

different pieces of advice you have given me, but I may mention one – that opposition proved the work of God.

Please give me your blessing. I do hope you will never mind telling me of anything. I have thought before that you did not tell me of my faults or anything because you were kind, but I would rather you did.

Yours very respectfully and gratefully in J. & M.,
Mary, S.J.M.

No. 9

Ostende nobis, Domine, misericordiam Tuam, et salutare Tuum da nobis.

Rev. and dear Father in J.C.,

Having asked me of Friday how I had been going on, I ought to have answered you, but I did not think at the time what I had to say. Will you please take this instead? I must tell you then I am more and more convinced of the truth of what I told you, that God designs to do, I might say has done, a great work of Mercy in His Church. That there being no end to the inventions of His Love, now when the Church is beset with so many enemies, God desires to give it signal help and bids His Church bring forth her greatest treasure the “Precious Blood” and with That, and the Mother’s heart that furnished It, to fight against His enemies.

Heart of Mary, speak to my Father that he may believe this and rejoice that, as he believes Our Dear Lord spoke in vision to His servant and pointing to His Sacred Heart, told her of the love It felt for men, make him to know that now Our Lord will appear to the world, not in vision, but in His real sacramental Presence; pointing silently to the Precious Blood, manifest His love for men, by showing His Heart’s Treasure, His Life, His Love poured forth for love of them. Benediction as it is now is not sufficient for me; I must see and worship with special adoration the Instrument God’s Wisdom chose as the means of my salvation. God grant that may be soon, though good as God ever is to me in granting my desires, He has let me already see His Precious Blood. (My good Angel perhaps led me over Our Lady’s Altar at Portsea, where I find I can see the Precious Blood in the Chalice during Mass.) It is but one of many wishes that God grants me.

There is a great pleasure in giving. It must be a reflection of God’s pleasure in giving. Perhaps He puts desires in our minds that He may have the pleasure of granting them, but would He do that and leave you to be the sport of an evil spirit at the same time? If you saw one thing after another that God gives me, you would find it difficult to think that He would permit me to be so deluded as you have thought. I ought perhaps to speak more to you, but I do not like to. I do not like thinking of myself. I do not like to waste my thoughts any more than my words or actions. It is not that I do not want you to know all that God does to me. I have even thought that it was no sin to be pleased at praise. When I have seen the good done through my means and had praise that I knew was not flattery, I have looked up at Our Lady,

smiling and likewise amused, as I thought of my on insignificance and know so well it was her doing. It is that, that pleases me when I think that God has made use of such very poor means as myself to do His work. Without health or wealth, learning or anything of the kind, and yet God will make use of me to crush His enemies. He will do great things by my means and will deride His enemies. It is this pleases me greatly.

Not that I would have you think I ever wished to do anything great or out of the ordinary way. Far from that, I have had a great repugnance to it. From the first I remember thinking all I ever wanted to do was to lead a quiet hidden life, and likewise when the Novice Mistress was telling me her belief that I was fitted for a contemplative convent, I objected that I might have to have high states of prayer and I did not want to. Visions, ecstasies etc. I do not know how it is that I dislike their very name, but having a repugnance to anything I might now take almost as a sign that it was what I had to do. I had a great dislike to the thought of being a nun at all. Then when that was decided, I made a Novena as regards which Order I should go to, and reading a little book, there was a long account of the Order of Mercy, which I took a dislike to, and a short account of one devoted to honouring Our Lady and the conversion of sinners, such a strong light came to me that that was the one I must go to, that contrary to my usual custom of not troubling Priests out of time, I believe I went down to Portsea the same day to speak about it. That thought of being a Carmelite remained, though I joined the Sisters of Mercy, I did as I was told, but after Father Lambert decided I should go to the "Perpetual Adoration," I never allowed it to remain.

Again, if you knew the terrible thing I have thought if that anyone should ever have to oppose their director and I have thought if I ever had to, God must tell me so Himself, nothing short of that would induce me. It is very probably to punish some fault of mine that God has permitted it, though I pray Our Dear Lord may soon let it be all right again, and I do and think only what I am told, though I shall not be content until I hear from our Holy Father. I would say something more, if it would not be like prophesying, and I do not want to be more disobedient than I can help.

I must ask you again, when you think it well, to let me do some more penance. I do like to suffer and I do suffer, but what I ask you to let me do penance, for it is not for the little pain, for whatever it was, would be a trifle in comparison with what God sends. I like to acknowledge what I am in the sight of God and the Angels and Saints. It seems to me a truthful right and reasonable thing to do. I ought perhaps to mention that, though I have been made so happy by what I have told you, I do at times suffer in my soul very much. It is not the absence of God, for it seems to me if God were not present I could not suffer so much. It seems rather being so near God makes me suffer more, and I would rather it should be so, than always be in that state when nothing pains.

I will try, by the help of God, never to let others around me know it. I like to think Our Blessed Lord did not suffer as the martyrs did, and if there is one thing in Our Dear Lord's – I do not like to say character, but I know no other word to use – that makes me know and love Him better, it is that. Come, dear Lord now, and breathe forth Thy message into his heart, who is to execute it. Delay not, but speak and that shall be done which Thou hast commanded. Let what Thy love conceived in Heaven

be born on earth. Send forth Thy Spirit and our hearts shall be regenerated and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

I beg your blessing, dear Father in J. C. and am your grateful child,

Mary, S.J.M.

No. 10

J.M.J.

I am afraid of waiting to read this so please excuse.

Rev. and dear Father in J. C.,

Will you please give this letter as well as the others to the Jesuit Father you told me you would try and see in London. I would like him to read all I have written to you. If you were to tell him what you recollect I have said to you – I explain myself so badly – he might be misled.

For instance, you argued that it was a bad sign when I told you I had no peace when I obeyed you, I spoke too strongly. It grieves and distresses, I feel I am trying to convince myself of what is not true but the real (---?---) is the thought of my not knowing whether I have Our Dear Lord with me or am possessed by an evil spirit. I see plainly now that that thought must be a temptation. The devil probably seizes the time when you have been telling me to put away from me as delusions what I have told you, to renew the old temptation I have had since a little child – to think I am altogether in a wrong way. Almighty God's Spirit would not cause the anguish I had only last week, when I seemed to wrestle in very agony with the thought, how did I know I was not possessed by an evil spirit. I must not listen to the voice that had told me "I am with thee always." It might have been the devil speaking, and my pain seemed to reach a point that could go no further, and I cried, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me."

It seems hard to have to, as it were, tell Our Blessed Lord I may not listen to Him. I feel sure I could easier put away a vision (I should be inclined to doubt it) than the interior voice I speak of. I do not feel sure I am right in doing so; since the time you told me you had sought advice, I consider the matter left in other hands, but I will try and be obedient to you, though I think I only distress myself without being convinced, and if you allow me, should say exactly the same again.

God is present to me, not in His usual way. He has replenished me with His grace. He has filled me with His love. He has poured forth His Holy Spirit upon me and told me to live by It, and now I live no longer in myself, but He, my Lord and God, liveth in me. Loving Him I must love those whom He has made, not with my own poor heart but from the Heart of Jesus that poured forth Its priceless Treasure of Precious Blood to save them; from the Mother Heart of Mary that was pierced and broken for them. My own heart has seemed ready to break, but Our Lady helped me

so that I could ask Almighty God not to ease me, if my grief could help a soul in agony. Strange if the spirit of light and darkness could be in the same place at once. Strange if I have been deluded by an evil spirit that every grace has increased within me. Strange, that sorrowful as I have been made, I was never happier or more peaceful in my life. Strange that I should see more and more my own sinfulness and nothingness, and grieve over my sins, how much I could tell by the thought that came to me from something you had said.

A great load seemed lifted off my mind as it occurred to me, perhaps I had never committed a mortal sin. Oh, if I could but think that, but of course I would not allow it to remain. It would be a wondrous happiness, but however, as I believed God said some weeks ago to me, as I was before the Crucifix, "I will show forth My Mercy in thee, I will show My Mercy by thee." It was accompanied by the usual feelings of happiness and content, (as I have told you, the interior voice brings peace, when I do not believe, or rather doubtful I am distressed) so now my very sins in a certain way minister to God's Glory.

Why does God permit evil? There are things thought so difficult, and yet there seems an easy answer. Might we not say that one reason or give one explanation – how could the Divine Attribute of Mercy shine as it does, if evil had not been permitted. It is to that Divine Attribute of God that I devote my whole life, and what is the visible form – I mean the actions of Jesus represent the Blessed Trinity. How does God show His Mercy? Jesus with arms outstretched shedding His Blood, His Life. I had perhaps better say no more. If I do I may be disobedient and write again what I did before, regarding the Precious Blood, though you say there are reasons it could not be. Nothing is impossible to God is the thought in my mind.

Before finishing this I must excuse myself concerning what you said, my mind not being in conformity with the Church. It is not true. All my thoughts, my whole will is centred in the Church. If I could but shed my blood for it, but then with loathing comes the thought, it is but guilty blood. The devotions of the Church accord with the times, and now I must say it again, Jesus shows Himself in these perilous times as giving His greatest proof of love, shedding Blood. "Who can doubt Jesus when He bleeds." I must indeed be self-willed as you say, if my thoughts are not from God, but I could almost say to you what Balaam's ass said to him.

Forgive the trouble I have given you and pray for me. If there is any fault it is probably mine and I am being punished. I am afraid of being late for Mass.

Begging your blessing, I am Rev. and dear Father, in Jesus and Mary,

Mary, S.J.M.

No. 11

Jesus, speak Thou for me!

Reverend and dear Father in J.C.,

Much as I dislike troubling you so much, I think it better to write again. Our Blessed Lord will not let me think I am deluded, He will not indeed. You say to me, "Be obedient," but who am I to be obedient to? You yourself have put the decision as regards what I have told you into other hands, and I very much respect you for doing so (without any disrespect to you I consider it more the vocation of the Jesuits than it is yours. I know they make the discernment of spirits an especial study. You know some time back I consulted you on the advisability of writing to Fr. Lambert, but you did not advise it), and yet now you almost put me under obedience not to believe what I have told you.

Oh Father, if you would but leave me to think as I please until the answer comes. The struggle to do as you say produces such anguish and grief within me, that it seems as much as I can bear. It is not only after you have told me about being deluded and so on, but it is before. All day Monday how I suffered without any reason, and then on Tuesday you said what you did, and so it has been before. Our Blessed Lord cannot suffer anymore (thanks be to God) but it almost seems as though He suffered within me. I know not what to do. I know the danger of guiding oneself. I never wanted to do it, but yet I seem to have no one to guide me, for I cannot think, as you have consulted another, Almighty God will give you grace to decide it.

It gives me pain that I cannot think with you, even as regards my wish to look upon the Blessed Sacrament during Mass. It is very easy of course, to obey with my body, (I should not think of going again in the gallery unless you gave me leave) but I would like to be truly obedient, subject my mind as well as my body, but I cannot think there is any irreverence in my doing so, but I think Our Lord wished me to, and think as I will, I cannot think I am wrong or indulging in a fanciful devotion. At any rate, to show you I am not singular I have copied the enclosed from Fr. Faber. I hesitated for fear of being disrespectful, but the matter is too important, and I must be open.

You asked me what made me sure the Holy Father would speak differently to you; I answer you, I believe Our Lord has told me so, and likewise that one of His servants has written to the Pope for me. If I did not think so, I should have asked your leave again to write to the Holy Father myself. I would like you to look back at what I have written. You will see that I wrote plainly concerning the devotion, that I believed there would be to the Precious Blood in future times and that the devotion would rise in the sanctuary of the Maternal Heart of Mary. It seems reasonable enough to me that the Church should pay this honour to the Precious Blood that founded it, but if not, it would not be for me to say "how can these things be," but simply to mention what I believe God had revealed to me. You staggered me much when you mentioned the Puseyites, but if they have a rite of this kind, no wonder. The evil spirit suggests to them their ceremonies in mockery of ours; the same as he must have suggested to the heathens rites and ceremonies so much like what he knew

would be in the Christian religion, even if I may use the word, to demon sacraments. I believe that is a stumbling block to many, as he intended that it should be.

I must ask forgiveness for this letter, if there is anything not respectful in it. You are so good and kind, and if you were not, you are a priest and yet I presume to give my opinion in opposition to yours. May Almighty God soon make known the truth. Whether deluded or not, I say from the heart, He has permitted it for my good. I beg your blessing and am, dear Father,

Respectfully and gratefully yours in Jesus and Mary,

Mary, S.J.M.

Please excuse this, I am afraid of being late for Mass.

“She (St. Gertrude) was divinely instructed that as often as man gazes with desire and devotion on the Host where the Body of Christ lies hid sacramentally, so often does he increase his merit in Heaven; and that in the future Vision of God to all eternity, there shall be to him so many special and congruous joys as the times that on earth he gazed with desire and devotion on the Body of Our Lord, or when he so much as desired to do so and was reasonably hindered from doing it. Hence, Lancisius gives it as one of his special devotions for the octave of Corpus Christi, to try to hear Mass where you can see the Host lying on the corporal or, if this is impossible, to look intently at It in the monstrance. So necessary in Christian things is familiarity in order to reverence.”

(All for Jesus.)

It may be years since I read this. It says even more than I recollected.

No. 12

J.M.J.

Rev. and dear Father in J.C.,

In thinking over what passed last night and endeavouring to do what you told me, I think it well to ask you this one thing. Will you tell the Jesuit Father what you said to me some time since that I was at liberty to seek other advice, that I suggested you should do so and then you told me you had. Under these circumstances I want to know if I am bound to obey you, or whether I may not leave it as a matter that is not decided. In fact, where is the use of troubling anyone else if the matter is decided. Do you not see the difficulties you place me in. I cannot look forward to the decision without disobeying you. Oh Father, how can you expect me to say what a Jesuit Father does not even say, that I am deluded by an evil spirit. The Jesuits are “they who have light.” If one after all these months has not yet discovered the “cloven foot,” why am I obliged to say that I am deceived by a spirit of darkness?

I am in no hurry to have the matter decided, but if I can have no answer from the Father you mention I would ask to be allowed to leave the matter an open question, or at any rate, will you ask if I may say so. You argued, because I feel disturbed in

doing what you say, it is a bad sign, but I think if God's Spirit is speaking to me and guiding me, how can I be otherwise than distressed in resisting it. As regards what you say concerning my wish to make a vow of obedience, I never said or thought God told me. It was simply like many other wishes, such as a desire to do nothing but lead the life of a penitent all my life etc. When you said not, I had not the slightest doubt but that it was not God's Will. I may repeat that the doubts that rise in my mind about being deluded, come with the uncomfortable feeling the scruples etc the devil rouses brings, while the thoughts make me very peaceful and happy.

Please excuse this, I am waiting to play High Mass. Knew you were going away today.

Yours very respectfully in J.C.,

Mary, S.J.M.

No. 13

Rev. and dear Father in J.C.,

I must write to tell you what I feel, that is, very sorry for all the trouble I have given you. I did feel sorry when I thought I was right, so I must be more so now. Will you likewise tell the Jesuit Father how sorry I am for taking up his time. I do ask you both to forgive me. If I could do something to make up for the trouble I have given, I should be so glad. I want to ask you likewise if you do not think (after all that) my spiritual life must want a thorough looking into, and that it would be well for me to make a Retreat (under any Priest you named) who would take the trouble, and have it thoroughly set in order. At present I do not know whether I am not committing sacrilege in going to Holy Communion, though I must go whilst you allow me, I love Our Blessed Lord too much to stay away.

I love God better than I ever did and can say before Holy Communion what I could not feel before, that I could consent to receive my eternal condemnation if the Divine Compassion, in not disdain to come to me, might thereby shine with greater splendour. (You know it is in the prayers of St. Gertrude you told me to get.) Our Lord said no one who felt that, could ever receive Him with irreverence, so I hope I may not. Still, if you think it well to have a thorough examination of my state before God, in quiet and under an experienced Director, will you please tell me. I do not like it. That is the worst sign I find in myself, my dislike of talking of myself, but still I should be glad because I do not know how I can go on, as at present, mind or body must give way. How can I bear it, loving God as I do, and yet not to know Him from an evil spirit.

I must know distinctly what I may believe and what I may not, of my spiritual state. As you have told me I am bound under pain of mortal sin; by God's grace I will be obedient, though I do not think anything else could have made me resist what seemed the Presence of God within me. As I may not seek God within me, as I have done, for fear of being disobedient, I say to myself, God is everywhere and I can serve Him

in others, and He does give me the grace to love others still more, since I am in such sorrow myself so that I pray and do hope that the prayer of a suffering heart to save a soul would do good. But that is another trouble. I do not feel so sure of my prayers now. I could go so confidently before, but when you tell me what you did about Fr. Lambert's direction, and that I have been all these years under delusion, it must make me lose confidence, in fact if it is true, I must indeed be possessed and need exorcising. I do not know that you intend me to believe that.

It is a painful thought for another reason, because if an experienced priest like Fr. Lambert, selected as he must have been by his superiors to give Retreats and be extraordinary Director of a Convent; if he could advise so badly upon an important matter, which would and has influenced me to this day, I might well say – who am I to trust to? Thought I have made the resolution with God's help to be obedient to whoever I am under, and with out reasoning. I have thought a confessor almost as infallible as the Pope, though I was warned once, that I would be directed wrong I did not believe it.

Now I will try and be simply obedient without thinking, for there will be no sin on my part in doing so, and sin is the one thing I hate and dread, but I have been terribly near to it.

Out of evil we can draw good however, for I must ever have more pity for those who fall. If those who have fallen from the faith have been tempted as I have, they do need praying for, and I can understand now how people who have great graces can grow careless. I had been wondering lately at a particular case. You may think I ought to have known by my fall, but without making any excuse, for I should very likely have done the same, however well instructed I had been, but I must say I did not know my religion, for I never remember a single instruction at school or at home upon my religion. My mother naturally thought all that was necessary was done at school, but going to Catechism at the Church once a week or fortnight, was all the instruction, and until twenty years old I was ignorant of most necessary things.

I want to ask you if I obliged to think what I have written to you must necessarily be the work of an evil spirit or if I may not consider it the effects of an over excited imagination, that God permitted it for my good to destroy some secret pride or self-love. That seems the most reasonable thought, for would an evil spirit have left worse signs. I can see I must have a deal of obstinacy and self will that I am not aware of, I cannot see any other sin arising from it. I did not think any more myself than I do at the present time. I wrote and thought it all because I believed it to be God's Will. When I think it was permitted by God for my good, I am grateful to Him and thankful for the humiliation and that by it, I could draw nearer to Him and my suffering be pleasing to Him and do good to others. The thought that my mind must be in a weak state would be a slight matter. It would be an infirmity I could offer as a penance which I justly deserve. I pray God now to take away my intellect, if I should use it badly. I cannot say I feel my mind is at all weakened. It seems rather to have opened and that is not alone my own thought.

I want to ask you if you wish me to put aside practices that have arisen during this time of delusion. For instance, after Corpus Christi, I longed more than ever to go to Holy Communion, to do an act of devotion I thought God had showed me He wished.

It was to make special reparation to the Precious Blood I then contained within me. To bow down, as the Angels did and adore as they did whenever they saw It shed during the Passion of Our Lord, and I would think how the Mother Heart of Our Lady sickened at the sight of what she so worshipped and knew to be so adorable, treated with such indignity, and I would offer It to the Eternal Father, and show reverence I paid and how I wished to make up in some way for the outrages offered upon this earth to the Precious Blood that God the Father so dearly loves.

It touched me to think as I did then (not now) that God had shown me to honour the Precious Blood, first for the good of souls, and then desired that special honour should be paid and reparation made by this world for the outrages offered upon it to the Price of its salvation. It seemed so like God to put as it were our good first, and what was due to Himself afterwards. I know very well that God's Glory is the first object in all things, and that it is essential to God to seek Himself, so to speak, first, but I only say so it seemed.

I beg your blessing and your prayers. Do you not think I ought to have some severe penance for all this; will you not impose some upon me?

Your grateful and unworthy child in J. & M.,

Mary, S.J.M.

No. 14

Rev. and dear Father in J.C.,

I must trouble you again though sorry to do so. You have caused me by what you said yesterday so much more grief. If I do not own it is all delusion, I commit a mortal sin of pride as well as disobedience, and try as I will, it seems more difficult than ever to say it is all delusion though I could easily think I had misunderstood many things, or be deceived in some, or mixed my own ideas with thoughts that if I were allowed, I should say came from God.

It is not that I do not wish to be obedient. I do try to think I am altogether deluded though I feel I am deliberately doing what the devil wishes by doing so, that I am resisting God's Spirit. Try as I will I do not convince my self. I hope you will not think me disrespectful if I ask you to send the last letter I wrote to you and this note to Father Maher. You are a Priest, I know, the same as he is, but I do think God gives special lights to those who love secluded from the world, and that it is more the vocation of a Jesuit to give advice upon such a matter as this, and that it is but using ordinary worldly prudence to seek it. I have written twice myself, perhaps Fr. Maher would answer if you wrote.

Do please dear Father, do this. He might give me some advice as he did when I saw him myself. I felt he understood so well. I am so weary. It has almost seemed to me that the souls in hell could not suffer more than I do at times, and I do want some advice. I am hindered going to you to Confession, and yet I should not feel it right to

ask advice of anyone except Fr. Maher whom you have consulted. If he thinks there would be no harm in my leaving that matter quietly, saying, "If it is Almighty God's will, it will be," I can go peacefully and happily, but when I try to force myself to believe it is all the work of the devil, I seem to be resisting God and it is something terrible.

I hope you will forgive me troubling you so much.
Begging your blessing, I am dear and Rev. Father, respectfully yours in J. & M.,

Mary, S.J.M.

No. 15

I should be glad to have some rule by which to know evil influence from good. I may be sending away what God does not wish me to, and I cannot ask you about everything. For instance on Friday night, when I came. (You know I told you I felt like an evil spirit from hell might feel if brought into the Presence of God and His Angels and Saints, only I might almost say I felt more, for a lost soul could not love God, and I did and felt I would be glad to forget). When I was better Our Blessed Lord seemed to come to me as though I had just made a fervent communion, but I was afraid to yield to it. I must say that though I suffer, it seems at times, as far as I can bear, I am not left without consolation, in fact I cannot say I was miserable, nor would I exchange the present time for any other of my life, for it is a great happiness to be allowed to love God and to know that He is happy.

It is a happiness to love others and to know there are so many holy priests and others serving God, whatever I may be myself. It is a very great happiness to do good to others, but I have been troubled that perhaps my prayers might be no more good than the prayer of Dives (to Abraham) when he was in hell. As though in confirmation of that thought, the very morning I was thinking of it and other things and, sorrowful altogether, someone whom I had seen at Holy Communion not many hours before got into a passion with me, told me I might be losing my own soul whilst I was trying to save others, that they hated to see me come near them, that I made them commit sins upon sins. It seemed so true and I said they could not say anything worse of me than I deserved.

What you know of my Father, is not the only trouble I have to bear, but it is God giving me my prayer; I have asked Him to break my heart but to save others, He will give me grace to bear it, and I do not give way selfishly to grief, if you understand, make others uncomfortable, make myself ill by not eating which I could have felt inclined to do. I thought that would be going against God's Will. I have tried more earnestly to do my duties.

Your grateful child,

Mary

No. 16

It was very kind of you dear Father, to speak to me last night. I felt very grateful to you and you did me good. If you had told me before to take the present state as a trial from God, I might have looked at the matter differently and not have thought at one time that I was in a state of mortal sin and another that I must be possessed. God permitted it otherwise, that I should suffer more, though I believe it is meant not only as a trial but to destroy some self-love or something within me, that is not as He wishes.

As regards my being tempted now, it is no wonder that my old thought that I was altogether in a wrong (I remember when little, being troubled with the thought I had received Confirmation unworthily) should return, and instead of sending it away I should encourage it. Usually in when tempted, it has not much more power than a temptation would have, as a rule, during the time of Communion. (When speaking of temptations you must understand there is one I have never had, for I have not the slightest idea what it means.) Many things that might cause disquietude came, but Our Blessed Lord I have thought, was with me and with Him to help me I could do anything. It is to that union and recollection, that I believe, came the peace and happiness of my spiritual life. It seemed from what you said I must not trust to that, and I tried to send it away. It seemed easier to believe and do what you wished if I thought myself in a wrong way altogether, so when thoughts came to me that I was, am in sin and so on, I deliberately consented to them.

I intended to give you this letter this morning but was hindered in the rain. I went to Portsea when it cleared up, and I must say that I think going to Holy Communion makes it more difficult to obey you, though what I should become without It I know not. You cannot think how I am struggling to obey you, and how it seems almost impossible I can struggle on like this for much longer. Oh Father, you have a kind heart, will you not pray for me, for it seems that I must soon give way, think contrary to what you allow me to think, and as you say, commit mortal sin. I say "I believe what my Director says" but my mind seems belying it, and the anguish, the fear caused that I shall commit a mortal sin is so terrible that I feel my reason must give way under it, as I have known physical pain in the same excess to produce insensibility.

What am I to do? If prayer and going to the Sacraments will not (help), what will? I think you could. I do not think Priests know their own power. Surely if, when you hold Our Blessed Lord in your hands tomorrow, you tell Him He must make me alright again, He will. It is not as though I did not wish to do right. I feel sure, with the help of God, I could do any act you told me gladly (except being married) but to do anything is so different from trying to convince yourself of something as wrong, when you are feeling urged to believe and almost convinced that it is right. I do not pray very much generally, but I have been praying, ever since you told me, for a docile heart. I have such faith in any prayer I am told to make by my confessor, I am making my particular examination upon it too. God grant it to me, and reward you too, for the trouble you have taken about me. You have been very patient; of course I can see you are displeased and no wonder.

You must not think I am always in the state I have said, for notwithstanding that my heart seems breaking, there is a certain peace within me, which seems to come from the Presence of Our Lord, helping me to suffer what I otherwise could not. It is very strange, but all this must turn for my good in the end. I cannot but trust to God's goodness that it will

No. 17

Rev. and dear Father in J. & M.,

So that there should be no mistake, I write to tell you that it was no priest of this place at whose advice I again asked you for my letters, which I repeat I believe were not meant for you. They were written to a spiritual Father appointed me by God, such as you were not to be, it is evident by your present removal. I have not mentioned your name and should carefully avoid doing so. You could if you liked, erase your name from those letters so that all compromise would be avoided. If it is not Almighty God's Will they should be destroyed, you will not destroy them, and in the latter case, please, put this last one with the, so that it may be known what I should wish to be known, that you were the good kind Director to me and that I have much for which to be grateful to you. Many times your words have been guarded in a way you may be hardly yourself aware of. For instance, when at the commencement you said "opposition proved the work of God," instancing the two devotions of the Blessed Sacrament and Sacred Heart.

In fact, I can hardly believe but that at one time you partly gave credence to what I told you. I believe myself to be wrong in one thing and that is for not using my own reason, which should have told me that when you showed yourself totally opposed to my spiritual life, by being opposed to "True Devotion" upon which it is formed, you could not possibly be a guide to me, but I had such faith that what was said to me in confession was Our Lord speaking.

As regards "True Devotion" which seems to me you condemned unread, I can but say, twice you have resisted it; if a third time the book itself or any work upon that sublime devotion comes your way, do please read it, so that you may not miss what would increase your happiness and therefore God's glory for all eternity. I ask you earnestly to do this and will send you a little work upon it which may soon be published. It may soon be under the auspices of a holy religious Priest, the one to whom I intended showing those letters and asking him if he advised their being sent to Fr. de Bray, telling him likewise that the first letter upon the matter had been written and sent to that holy and saintly man, and that my impression is that the rest should have followed.

However this priest who is so kindly interesting himself on my behalf has advised me to write out the substance of the letters (in case of your refusal) asking God to assist me. I may tell you he considers them of some importance (if I tell you what he thinks, it is not for myself, but I would like you to know (the) truth and even do something in this work, for some day you will be so sorry.) When I was in London a friend particularly wished me to see a Priest whom she said was a Saint and a Director out of a thousand. I refused, you know I have a great dislike to talking of myself.

She said, "I have spoken about you, and told him, you would not speak to him." "Bring her to me," he replied, "I will read her, I do not want her to speak." Thinking it better to give up my own will, I went.

I knew at once I was in the presence of someone very holy, to whom I could speak anything, and who understood me. I now have many letters from him. In the first comes the following words, "I feel strongly convinced that Almighty God is calling you to do a great work and supply a great need. As a missionary Priest (he is a Religious also) I only wish I had some such helps in attending the death bed etc." He has promised help in every way. Only last Monday his Mass was offered and numbers of his penitents communicated for my intention. On Tuesday 210 men recited the Rosary. May God bless him as I pray. I cannot be grateful enough, though of course it is done for Our Lord.

Asking you again to forgive anything that has been wrong in me, whilst I was with you and the trouble I have caused. This will be my last letter, I think, I shall trouble you with, at any rate for a long time. If you ever wish to make up for what you did not of course intend, but which nevertheless, it seems to me, I may say without exaggeration, broke my heart, when what you said to my chiming in with my own besetting temptation to despair, made me think and feel almost as though I were already in hell. If it will not be wrong to say it to you, I would say, if ever you have to say such things to anyone else, mollify it, encourage them at the same time, for it is dangerous. If you do not befriend me now living, I ask you befriend mine when I am dead. I trust in your charity that you will pray for me and begging likewise your blessing.

I am, Rev. and dear Father, yours respectfully and truly in J.C.,

Mary, S.J.M.
