

THE TENTH CONFERENCE

On the Subject of Heartfelt Love (On Cordiality)

Our Reverend Mother has asked about something which is very well expressed in our *Rule*. It concerns how the Sisters ought to love each other with a heartfelt love without, however, an excessive familiarity (n1). She wants to know, I am assured, what this heartfelt love is that is recommended to us in the *Rule*. Then, we will better understand it by addressing the second part of the question, which concerns how we ought to assess the external signs of our heartfelt friendships.

First of all, we must be a bit more specific about what is in fact laid down in our *Constitutions* in order to fulfill in a rather general way the desire of our Reverend Mother, i.e., (n2) what is this heartfelt love (v2) that the Sisters must have toward one another? To understand it better, we should know that heartfelt love is nothing other than the very basis of a true and sincere friendship. Such a friendship can only exist between two reasonable people who ground and nourish their friendship in the use of reason. Otherwise, it cannot be friendship but only love. Brute animals have love but they are not able to have friendship because they do not have human reason. They have love among themselves because of some natural attraction. Yes, they even have love for human persons, as experience shows every day. Various authors have written some marvelous things about it, e.g., they tell about a dolphin who loved a young child intensely. The dolphin had seen the child several times on the seashore. When the child died, the dolphin also died because of its grief (n3). However, we must not call it friendship because if it were to be so, a reciprocal movement of love would have to be found (v3) between the two who love each other as well as the reality that the friendship is grounded in the use of reason (v4). What I am pointing out to you is that only human persons form friendships, and if these friendships do not have a goal rooted in goodness or led by reason, they do not deserve the title friendship (v5). For example, at Mardi Gras (n4) you will find a group of young foolish people who will come together and swear a deep friendship for each other. They call each other brothers and sisters, they forget nothing that will make it known that they love each other deeply. However, this is not the reality, because the root of their friendship is nothing other than the plan they have made for doing many things that go against reason without which it is impossible to have true friendship.

Besides the use of reason, there must also be a certain attraction, whether of vocation or goal or state between those who form the friendship (v6). This is all the more true as experience teaches us. Have you noticed, I pray you, there is no friendship more real and solid than that between brothers and sisters (v7)? This is why the early Christians in the New Testament community were called Brothers and Sisters. This first fervor cooled in the Christian community. This is why religious orders were founded. Within them, it is mandated that all religious be called Brothers or Sisters as a sign of the sincere and heartfelt friendship that they undertake or ought to undertake. The love that fathers have for their children is not called friendship, nor that of children for their fathers, because there is no attraction; they are so different. The love of fathers is an authoritative and powerful love, while that of children for their fathers is one of respect and submission. But among brothers and sisters, the complementarity of their love, because of the complementarity of their state

The Tenth Conference

in life, seals a firm, strong and enduring friendship (v8). There is nothing comparable to it, for all other friendships are not between equals nor do they come forth naturally like those that married persons have together. These are made by written contracts and announced by notaries or even by simple promises. All these are not natural. Likewise, certain friendships that people in the world form with one another, whether from some specific interest or for a frivolous reason, are also the kinds of friendships most liable to fail and break down. But the friendship that exists between brothers and sisters is totally different. They develop naturally and are to be highly praised. Having said this, we will now address the subject of why religious are called Brother or Sister and, more specifically, do they have such a love that truly deserves to be called friendship among themselves. This is not friendship in the ordinary sense but a friendship that is heartfelt (v9).

But, you will say, what does heartfelt mean? It means that a friendship is grounded in the heart. We should know that love is rooted in the heart and that we can never love our neighbor too much or go beyond the limits of reason in this love as long as it is grounded in the heart. But with regard to the manifestations of this love we can very easily go wrong and go beyond by passing beyond the rules of reason. The glorious Saint Bernard says (n5) that the measure of loving God is to love God without measure and that in our love there must be no limits. Moreover, we must allow its branches to reach out as far as they can. Whatever is said about God ought to be understood likewise with reference to our neighbor, provided however, that the love of God always remains foremost and primary. Then, in second place, we must love our Sisters with our whole heart and not be satisfied with loving them as ourselves, which the commandments of God oblige us to do. For we must love them **more** than ourselves to fulfill the rule of evangelical perfection which demands it of us. Our Lord himself said, "Love one another as I have loved you" (n6). This commandment, "Love one another as I have loved you," must be considered again and again. What it means is more than yourselves. Just as Our Lord has always preferred us to himself, and does so as many times as we receive him in the Eucharist making himself our food, so he wants us to have such a love for one another that we prefer one another to ourselves. Just as he has done everything he could for us, except damning himself (for he could not and ought not do it, because he could not sin, and it is sin that leads us to damnation), so he desires and the rule of perfection demands that we should do all we can for one another except damning ourselves. In line with that, our friendship must be so strong, firm and wholesome that we should never refuse to do or to suffer anything for our neighbor and for our fellow Sisters.

This heartfelt love ought to be accompanied by two virtues: the first is called affability and the second is called cheerfulness. Affability is the virtue that spreads a certain loveableness over all the necessary and serious conversations that we have with one another. Cheerfulness is what makes us gracious and agreeable in our recreations and less serious conversations with our neighbor. All the virtues, as you know from previous conferences, have two opposites which are the extremes of the virtues (v10). For example, liberality has on the one side extravagance and on the other avarice and stinginess. Persons, when they give more than they ought to, fall into the vice of extravagance. However, if persons do not give what they are able to give, they become avaricious and stingy. The virtue of affability is likewise in between the two faults, i.e., a heavy disposition is an excessive seriousness (n7) on the one hand while on the other an excessive demonstration of affection and the

The Tenth Conference

use of expressions of flattery. For the virtue of affability finds its place between the extremes of making use of affectionate terms, sometimes according to the needs of those with whom one deals, preserving a gentle disposition when it is called for, according to the persons and affairs with which one is dealing (v11). I am saying that sometimes we ought to show signs of affection (I am saying it earnestly and I am not smiling) at certain times, like when a Sister is sick or depressed. That surely uplifts her spirits! It would certainly not be suitable to be caring for the sick and to be as serious as one would be elsewhere by showing no more affection than if the person were in full health. But we must not make use of these signs of affection too often or use honey-coated words, throwing whole handfuls of them to the first person we meet. Just as if we put too much sugar on some food, it would disgust us because it would be too sweet and distasteful. So in the same way, too frequent signs of affection would become unpleasant and would bear no fruit. We would not value them any longer, knowing that they were done through habit. The food on which too much salt is placed becomes distasteful because of its bitter taste, and so it is the same where too much sugar is used, because of its excessive sweetness. These same foods on which salt or sugar is placed in right amounts satisfy our tastebuds and our appetite. Signs of affection that are given in the proper measure and with discretion become rewarding and agreeable to the person who receives them.

The virtue of cheerfulness demands that we should contribute to holy, moderate joy and that during recreation we contribute to pleasant conversation, which can serve as a consolation at recreation for our neighbor. We must do this so as not to weary them with our sunken, knit brows and sad faces, or even while not refusing to recreate at the time set for recreation, behaving like those who will do nothing except in a prim and proper way. Some will only speak by carefully considering each word that they have to say to see if every word is well placed. If there is nothing to be corrected, they are still afraid that anything they would do or say might be exposed to correction. They make their examination constantly, not to know if they have offended God but to see if they have given occasion to anyone to hold them in lesser esteem. Oh! Certainly, this type of person becomes very disagreeable to those with whom they speak. Such a one fails very much in the practice of cheerfulness, which demands that we communicate frankly and graciously with our neighbor, offering what we can to what is asked of us, either for the profit or consolation of our neighbor.

We have already touched on this virtue in another conference about modesty. This is why I am passing on, only saying that it is always very difficult to hit the bullseye of our target. It is certainly true that we all must have the intentions of piercing and hitting the center of a virtue which we ought to desire (v13) most dearly, be it humility, heartfelt love or others. But more especially, we must never lose courage when we do not attain the heart of the virtue nor must we be overwhelmed, provided that we hit the target, i.e., as close to the bullseye as we can. For the Saints themselves could not gain all the virtues perfectly. Only Our Lord and Our Lady were able to. The Saints practiced them very differently. What a difference, I pray you, there is between the spirit of Saint Augustine and Saint Jerome! It can be found in their writings. There is no one more gentle than Saint Augustine. His writings are gentleness and meekness itself (v14). On the contrary, Saint Jerome was very austere. It seems that he was very stern. You see him with his long beard, holding the stone with which he strikes his chest. In his writings he is almost always angry. Nevertheless, both were very virtuous. However, one exceeds in gentleness and the other in austerity (v15) of life; and both,

The Tenth Conference

although not equally gentle or austere, were great Saints (v16). Saint Paul and Saint John were great Saints but not equally gentle and meek, for the difference of their spirits is seen in their writings. Saint John shows only gentleness and meekness. He always calls those to whom he writes "my little children," because of the very tender love he had for them. Saint Paul loved them with a love which undoubtedly was not as attentive but which was, nevertheless, strong and solid. Thus, we see that we ought not be surprised if we are not equally gentle and meek as long as we love our neighbor with this love springing from the heart. We must love as fully as we can and as Our Lord has loved us, i.e., more than ourselves, preferring the neighbor to ourselves in all things (v17) and never refusing them anything that we can offer, with the exception of damning ourselves, as we have already said. However, we must try, insofar as we are able (v18), to make the external signs of our affection in line with what reason requires or allows with each person: to rejoice with those who rejoice and "weep with those who weep" (n9).

I say that we must show that we love our Sisters (and this is the second part of the question) without using any overly foolish familiarity. The *Rule* tells (n10) us this, but let us see what it means. Nothing less than holiness must appear in our familiarity and in our manifestations of friendship, as Saint Paul tells us in one of his letters: "Greet one another with a holy kiss" (n11). It was the custom to use kisses when friends met each other. Our Lord also used this form of greeting with the Apostles, as we see in the betrayal of Judas (v19). Judas used this pretense to hand Our Savior over saying: "The one whom I will kiss, he is the one. Take him" (n12). The holy religious of old, when they met said: "Thanks be to God" as proof of the great happiness they had on seeing one another as if they would say or wanted to say: "I thank God, my dear brother or sister, for the consolation that He gives me on seeing you." So, my dear Sisters, we must show that we love our Sisters and are pleased with them, provided that holiness always accompanies the signs of affections that we give them and that God would not only not be offended but he would be glorified and praised by them. The same Saint Paul who teaches us to express our affections in a holy way wants and teaches us to do it graciously, for he gives us the example: "Greet," he says writing to the Romans (n13), "such a one who knows that I deeply love him and such a one who ought to be assured that I love him like my brother, and especially his mother, who knows well that she is also mine" (v20).

You also ask, my dear Daughters, if you should be troubled about laughing in the choir or refectory when the others do so, because they say that you are too serious or because you fear to be lacking in heartfelt love if you don't do it. I reply that, with reference to the choir, you ought not contribute to the giddiness the others, who are prone to laugh, have there, for it is not the place. But in the refectory, when you notice that all are laughing, I would laugh with them; but if a dozen or so do not laugh, then I would not trouble myself about contributing to the giddiness of the others.

I would like to address briefly the subject of natural dislikes. We will not spend much time on it because we have already addressed the issue before. We should not be surprised if we do not laugh because of such good taste or if we find no point to it, any more than when we find it to be wrong. For on these two occasions, provided that we smile a little and do not have a sullen look when someone speaks to us, we ought to be satisfied. When our feelings are deeply moved it is very difficult to put on a happy face, at least with those toward whom we have some dislike or when something wrong makes us anxious. Moreover, even though we have spoken about this so many

The Tenth Conference

times, it is sufficient that we understand that we must follow the superior part of our spirit in the way of perfection and not trouble ourselves about the feelings of the inferior part. Otherwise, we will always be sad and disquieted in spirit and we will not advance very far. We must leave behind our grumbling and not follow the wishes of the inferior part. Reason must always be in control, and it wants us to overcome our feelings on every occasion so as to please God and observe this point of our *Rule*, which states that we must love with a heartfelt love.

You also want to know, my dear Daughters, if you dare show a sign of affection to a Sister whom you think to be more virtuous, and not to someone else. I am telling you that even though we are bound to love those who are virtuous more with a love of complacency, still we must not love them more with a love of benevolence and we must not show them more signs of friendship. There are two reasons for this: The first is that Our Lord did not do so. Indeed, it seems that he loved the imperfect more than the others, for he said that he had not come "for the just but for sinners" (n14). We must help and give signs of our friendship more especially to those who have need of us. It is precisely here that we show that we love through charity and not love those who give us more consolation than grief. In doing this, we must act in accord with what the needs of our neighbor demand. But outside of that, we must try to love all equally because Our Lord did not say, "Love those who are more virtuous," but simply, "Love one another as I have loved you" (n15) without excluding anyone, no matter how imperfect they may be.

The second reason why we must not give signs of friendship to some rather than others or allow ourselves to love them more is that we cannot judge those who are more perfect and those who are more virtuous. For exterior appearances are deceiving, and very often those who seem to be more virtuous (v21) are not so before God, who alone can know them as they are. It could be that a Sister whom you see stumbling very often and committing many faults will be more virtuous and more pleasing to God. This could stem from the greatness of the courage that she holds onto amidst her imperfections by not allowing herself to be troubled on seeing herself so subject to falling, or because of her humility, which she draws from them, and the love of her basic unworthiness. Another might have a dozen virtues, either natural or even acquired, and will strive and work less and, consequently, have less courage and humility than she who sees herself so subject to falling. Saint Peter was chosen by Our Lord to be the leader of the Apostles even though he was greatly subject to many imperfections suchwise that he even committed them (v22) at random, following his own feelings and affections (I am speaking before he received the Holy Spirit. I am not speaking about afterwards). But because, notwithstanding these faults, he always had great courage and was not overwhelmed by them, Our Lord made him his vicar (v23) and raised him above all the others so that no one who has reason can say that he did not deserve (v24) to be loved more than Saint John and the other Apostles, or that he was not very virtuous and pleasing to God.

We must then show the affection that we ought to have for our Sisters as equally (v25) as we possibly can, for both the first and second reasons that we have given. Everyone ought to know that we love them with this heartfelt love. Therefore, there is no need to use a lot of words to say that we love them dearly and that we feel inclined to love them in a special way, and I know not what, and so on. For if we feel inclined to love one Sister more than the others, the love that we show her is not more perfect but, perhaps, more subject to change at the least little thing that she does to us. If, in

The Tenth Conference

fact, it is true that we are inclined to love one more than the others, we ought not waste time thinking about it and, indeed, still less in telling her about it. For we must not love her because we feel inclined to, but we must love our neighbor either because she is virtuous or because of the hope that we have that she will be (v26).

Now, to show, in fact, that we love her dearly, we ought to obtain all the good we can for her both materially and spiritually, praying for her, serving her with heartfelt love when an occasion arises. Whenever a friendship is revealed in flowery words, it is not worth much and it is not to love as Our Lord has loved us. He was not content to assure us that he loved us but went far beyond, doing all that he did as proof of his love.

But I must now say this: heartfelt love is joined to another virtue which is like a consequence of this love (v27), namely a childlike confidence. Children, when they have a beautiful feather or something else that they think is pretty, are not able to rest until they have met up with their little friends to show them their feather and make them a part of their joy. And just as they want them to share their grief when they have a little sore on the tip of their finger or when they have been stung by a bee, they never stop telling everyone they meet so that someone might feel sorry for them and soothe their little wound. Now I do not want to say that you must be exactly like these children, but I do say this: this confidence ought to make the Sisters not so stingy in sharing their little satisfactions and small consolations with their Sisters and with little fear that their imperfections will be brought up (v28). I do know that if someone has a great experience, say the prayer of quiet, there should not be any boasting about it. But with reference to our small consolations, our little satisfactions, I want you not to be so aloof and (v29) reserved. When the occasion presents itself, speak about them frankly and simply as one virtue among others, not in a spirit of boasting and self-satisfaction but in a spirit of childlike confidence. And with regard to our faults, I don't want you to take such trouble to hide them, for we are none the better for their not being outwardly visible. The Sisters will not believe that you have no imperfections by doing that, but these faults will become more dangerous and harmful than if they were out in the open and caused some confusion as happens with those who are more apt to allow them to appear externally. We should not, then, be surprised or discouraged that we commit some imperfections and faults in front of the Sisters; but on the contrary, we should be happy that we are known for what we are. I have committed a fault or done some silly thing. It is true, but it is in front of our Sisters, who love me dearly and, moreover, they are the ones who know very well how to deal with my fault. They have more compassion for me than indignation toward me. And so this confidence will greatly nourish heartfelt love and tranquility of our spirits, which are liable to be troubled when we are seen as weak in some way, no matter how small it might be, as if it was so great a thing for us to be seen as imperfect.

In conclusion of this conference on heartfelt love we must always remember that if we should fail in matters of gentleness through inadvertence, we must not be upset or judge that we are completely lacking in heartfelt love, for this is not so. An action done here and there does not make a person corrupt, especially when we have a firm purpose to amend, provided that we do not commit these faults frequently.

On the Spirit of Humility (v1, v2)

The Tenth Conference

What you are asking about now is a serious matter, my dear Daughters, to know how to do all things in a spirit of humility as our holy *Constitutions* prescribe us to do. But before I take that up, I must say something that will help you to understand it better.

There is a difference between pride, the habit of pride and the spirit of pride. If you commit an act of pride, that is pride; if you commit acts of pride continually and at every turn, that is the habit of pride; but if you take pleasure in these acts of pride and look for occasions to make them, that is the spirit of pride. On the other side, there is a difference between humility, the habit of humility and the spirit of humility. For humility is true humility when we do some act to humble ourselves; it is the habit of humility to do these acts continually and on every occasion which presents itself; but the spirit of humility is to take pleasure in humiliation, to look for self-abasement and humiliation in our every action, i.e., that is in everything we do or desire. Our principal goal should be to be humble and abase ourselves, and that we find real delight in looking for every opportunity for self-humiliation and loving the very thought of it. This is what it means to do all things in the spirit of humility and likewise when it is said to find humiliation and self-abasement in all things (v3).

You now ask if it is a failure in humility to laugh at the faults that the Sisters acknowledge, or the mistakes made by the Sister who reads at table. No, not at all, my dear Daughters! For laughter is a passion that arises without our consent and is not within our power to prevent, especially when we are moved to laughter on an unforeseen occasion. This is why Our Lord could not laugh, for nothing was unforeseen to him who knew all things before they happened; but yes, he could smile when he saw good things. Fools laugh all the time because things take them by surprise, since nothing is foreseen. But the wise are not so prone to laughter because they make more use of reflection, which helps them to foresee things that are likely to happen. That being so, it is not contrary to humility to laugh, provided however, that we do not go further, like keeping it in our mind or talking with someone else about the subject that caused us to laugh. We must not do that, especially when it deals with the imperfections of our neighbor. That would be quite inconsistent with the questions that you asked me, i.e., how ought one to form and preserve a good opinion about our neighbor, which can only be formed and preserved through a fidelity in observing her virtues and ignoring her imperfections. For, as long as we do not have responsibility for her, we must never turn our eyes or our consideration toward (v4) her virtues and imperfections. "Charity" says the Apostle, "flees evil" (17).

We must always interpret in the best possible light what we see our neighbor doing. With reference to a simple suspicion, we must keep our minds off it completely. With doubtful matters, we ought to persuade ourselves that what we have seen is not wrong but that it is our imperfection that causes us to think that way, so as to avoid rash judgments in every way possible (v5). Rash judgment is a very dangerous sin and we ought to detest it at all costs. The example of Saint Joseph is greatly admirable on this subject. He saw that Our Lady was pregnant and did not know how. Yet, he would not judge her for a moment but left the judgment to God. With reference to matters that are undoubtedly wrong, we must have compassion and humble ourselves for the faults of our Sisters as for our own and pray to God for their amendment with the same fervor that we would have for ourselves if we would be subject to the same fault.

The Tenth Conference

What else is there to say? You ask what we can do to acquire this spirit of humility that we have just spoken about. Alas! my dear Daughters, there is no other way than to consider the beauty of this virtue and its benefit in order to arouse our affections to its faithful practice on all occasions (v6). For there is no easier way to acquire it than there is for the other virtues which are acquired only through repeated acts. (v7)

Now, before we close, I must say that we ought not take the things we talk about in our simple discussion sessions as if they had the force of law and that we must never commit faults. For example, what we said recently about failing to eat the food that is given us in the same order that it is given us must not be understood so strictly; likewise, if we should be given beef broth as the first course and there is a Sister who does not like it hot, she could set it aside and come back to it when it cools down. Also, if someone did not like it cold, thinking that it would have a pasty taste, she could eat it hot. We must not complain about our Father by saying, he says this, he says that; for the poor Father did not say that you have to burn your tongue, and so you do not have to do it. We must go along simply. A Sister who could become sick ought not observe the rule of taking a portion without choice, but she ought to take what she can to have a good meal. Those who will do what we are talking about here or what we have spoken about before will be acting correctly; those who will not are not under the force of law.

Is it the same with regard to what I have said that we must give our love equally toward the Sisters so that we do not have a greater love for one more than the other? In other words, insofar as we are able, for it is not within our power to have a greater attentiveness in our loving those with whom we do not share some relationship, or some corresponding temperament than with those with whom we do share these things. The great Saint Bernard, writing on Psalm 132 (n18), "Behold How Good It Is," says to see "the Brothers living" together, for their communion resembles "the" precious "oil" that was poured "on the head" of their great father "Aaron," who had made it from all the sweet-smelling oils that he was able to find. It can also be interpreted this way: heartfelt love is what religious share together; this union that they have among themselves makes a precious oil which consists of the virtues of each one individually. For there is no one, no matter how weak she may be, who does not have some virtues that are like the fragrant oils. These virtues are united by a heartfelt love and make an oil so precious that it is unique in its good fragrance so that it can be poured out on the head of its Father who is Our Lord. He pours on the Sister before him a gentleness beyond compare and makes the Sisters who live in this very desirable union infinitely pleasing and worthy of their vocation.

Let All Be For the Praise and Glory of Jesus Christ, of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary and of the Glorious Saint Joseph!

NOTES

1. Improper.
2. The question.

The Tenth Conference

3. Pliny, *Natural History*, Book IX, Chapter VIII.
4. The three days that precede Ash Wednesday.
5. Saint Bernard, *On the Love of God*, (The Introduction).
6. Jn. 13:34; 15:12.
7. Too serious of one's bearing.
8. displeasing.
9. Rom. 12:15.
10. Chapter 22. cf, *Constitution XXII* (On Modesty), *Oeuvres XXV*, 80.
11. Rom. 16:16; I Cor. 16:20; II Cor. 13:12.
12. Matt. 26: 48-9.
13. Rom. 16:16.
14. Matt. 9:13.
15. Jn. 13:34.
16. Many.
17. I Cor. 13:5.
18. Ps. 132:1-2.

VARIANTS

1. E1629. *The Fourth Conference*.
E1933. *The Fourth Conference, On the Subject of Cordiality*.

The Tenth Conference

2. E1629. The beginning of the *Conference on Cordiality*, in which it is asked how the Sisters ought to love with a cordial love without an unbecoming familiarity. "In order to fulfill your request and to understand clearly of what cordial love consists."
3. E1629. "...a reciprocity of friendship be found..."
4. E1629. "of reason. Thus the greater numbers of friendships that human persons form not having..."
5. E1629. The text does not contain the remainder of this paragraph. The next paragraph begins, "Moreover besides this action of reason there must be..."
6. E1629. "...between those who contract friendship as experience clearly teaches us. Isn't it true that there is no friendship stronger or more real..."
7. E1629. The text then picks up with "...the love that fathers have for their children is called..."
8. E1629. Adds at this point: "This is why the early Christians of the primitive church were all called Brothers and as this first fervor began to grow cold within the Christian community, religious orders were instituted in which it was ordered that religious would be called Brothers and Sisters as a sign of the sincere and truly cordial friendship that they bear and ought to bear toward each other. And just as there is no friendship comparable to that of brothers, all other friendships..."
9. E1629. The text does not contain the following opening sentence and resumes with "...it means a friendship..."
10. E1629. "All the virtues, as you know, have two contrary vices which are the extremes of the virtues. The virtue of affability stands in the middle of two vices: gravity or too great a seriousness and an excessive demonstration." The text omits the example and has a condensed form of the sentence "...the virtue of affability..."
11. E1629. "I am saying that we ought to use signs of affection at certain times." The material in the parentheses and the examples are not part of the text. It resumes with, "It would not be suitable to be..."
12. E1629. The text omits the remainder of the paragraph.
13. E1629. "...we desire most ardently." The text then resumes with "...but we still must not lose courage."

The Tenth Conference

14. E1629. "...on the contrary Saint Jerome was extremely austere. To be convinced of this, look at him in his writings." The text resumes, "Nevertheless, both..."
15. E1629. "...but one had more gentleness, the other a much greater austerity..."
16. E1629. The text then skips down to: "Thus we see we must not..."
17. E1629. "...in all things in the order of holy charity and never refusing him anything that we can..."
18. E1629. "...insofar as we shall be able the exterior manifestations of our affections conformable to reason; to rejoice..."
19. E1629. The text does not contain the remainder of the sentence.
20. E1629. The text omits the next two paragraphs and begins. "It has been asked in relation to this subject whether one dares show a sign of affection for a Sister who is believed to be more virtuous..."
21. E1629. "...virtuous (as I have already spoken about elsewhere) are not..."
22. E1629. "...even after he had received the Holy Spirit; but because..."
23. E1629. "...he made him his Vicar and elevated him..."
24. E1629. "...did not deserve to be preferred and superior to Saint John or the other Apostles." The text then picks up with the next paragraph.
25. E1629. "...equally as we will be able to for the aforesaid reasons. And everyone ought to..."
26. E1629. Add: "...she will but principally because it is the will of God."
27. E1629. Addition: "...proof of his love, Saint Paul speaking to his dearest children says that I am completely ready to give my life for you and to spend myself so completely and unreservedly in order to show you how dearly and tenderly I love you. `Yes,' he wants to say, `I am ready to lay down my life for you or through you whatever you should want of me.' By this he teaches us that to spend oneself or even to lay down one's life for our neighbor is not so great a thing as to be ready to allow ourselves to be spent for others, either by them or for them. This is what he had learned from our gentle Savior on the Cross. It is to this most supreme degree of love of neighbor that

The Tenth Conference

men and women religious and those consecrated to the service of God are called. For it is not enough to assist our neighbor with our temporal goods, 'It is not even enough,' Saint Bernard tells us, 'to make ourselves suffer for this love.' We must go further, allowing ourselves to be used for the neighbor through most holy obedience and by him if our neighbor desires it without even resisting it. For when we spend ourselves either by our own will or choice, it always gives great satisfaction to our self-love, but to allow ourselves to be used in things that the neighbor desires and we do not, i.e., we do not choose it, this is where we taste the highest degree of self-denial, for instance when we would like to preach and are sent to serve the sick; when we would like to pray for our neighbor and are sent to serve the neighbor. What others make us do is incomparably better (I mean that which is not contrary to God and does not offend him) than what we do or choose to do on our own part. Let us then love one another in fact and make use of this motive which is so powerful to arouse us to such a holy love which Our Lord poured forth even to the last drop of his blood upon the earth, as it were, to make a sacred mortar from which he would cement, unite, conjoin and bring together all the stones of his Church which are all the faithful so that this communion would be so strong that division would never be found. So much did he fear that divisions would cause external damnation.

"Putting up with the imperfections of our neighbor is one of the chief marks of this love. Our Lord has shown us this on the Cross. His heart was full of gentleness for us and he loved us so dearly; for us, I repeat, and for those who caused his death and who thereby were involved in this most horrendous sin that a human person could commit. For the sin that the Jews committed was so monstrous in its wickedness. Yet our gentle Savior had thoughts of love for them, giving us an example beyond all that we could ever have imagined since he made excuses for those who crucified and mocked him in their wholly barbarous frenzy. He looked for motives whereby his Father might forgive them in the very act of sin and injury. Oh! how miserable are we people of the world! For we hardly ever forget an injury that someone has done to us even long after we have received it. But the person who 'welcomes' his neighbor with gentle blessings will be the most perfect imitator of Our Lord.

"We must, moreover, say that heartfelt love is joined to a virtue which is, as it were, a result of this love, i.e., as childlike confidence."

This passage, in which Saint Paul speaks about the person who imitates Our Lord, is taken from the Sermon for the Third Sunday of Lent and the Sermon for Holy Thursday (*Oeuvres X*, 276-7; *IX*, 272).

28. E1629. "I am not saying that if someone has an extraordinary gift from God, that someone has to tell the whole world about it, no."
29. E1629. The word "fastidious" is not present in the text.

The Tenth Conference

On the Spirit of Humility

1. E1629. We add this, title included, as was done in the edition of 1933 in order to show the change of subject found in the following passages.
2. E1629. "Second question: How is one to do everything in the spirit of humility as the *Constitutions* prescribe? To better understand this, we ought to know that there is a difference between..."
The first paragraph is missing from the 1629 manuscript.
3. E1629. "It is a good practice of humility not to examine the actions of others except to find their virtues but never to discover their imperfections." The text then picks up with the last sentence of the same paragraph.
4. E1629. "...consideration. We must always interpret whatever we see our neighbor do in the best manner possible." The text picks up in the next paragraph, "With doubtful matters..."
5. E1629. The example of Saint Joseph and Mary is not present in the text. It picks up with, "With matters that are undoubtedly wrong..."
6. E1629. "But what can we do, you say, to acquire this spirit of humility that we have spoken about? There is no other way to acquire it..."
7. E1629. *The Fourth Conference* ends with, "Humility makes us abandon ourselves in all things which are not necessary for our advancement in grace, such as to speak well, gracefulness of manners, a great talent for business matters, a capable mind, eloquence and so on; for in all these external matters, we ought to desire that others should do better than we do."