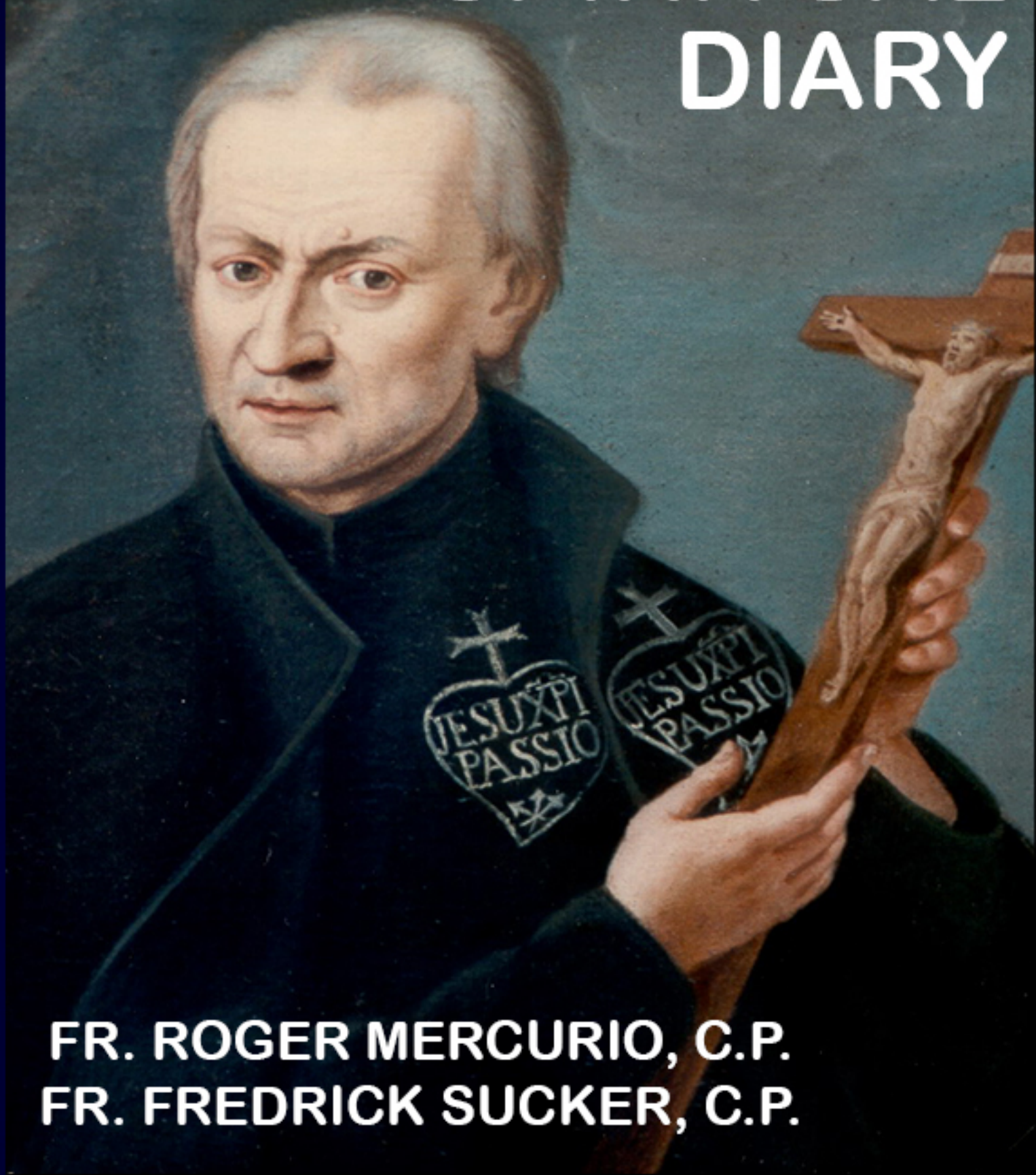


SPIRITUAL DIARY



FR. ROGER MERCURIO, C.P.
FR. FREDRICK SUCKER, C.P.

DIARY
of
ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS

DEDICATED
to
Very Reverend Fr. Herman Joseph, C.P.
Provincial of
Holy Cross Province

PREFACE

All Passionists are familiar with the growth of Paul Danei in the ways of God. After a boyhood and adolescence fervent in Virtue, he began to run with a giant's pace after his second "conversion" (c. 1713). We now see him at the age of twenty-six (1729). God has perfected His instrument and is now about to start him on his life-work. This mission to souls was founded on a love as strong as death and a prayer penetrating the heavens. To establish this foundation God called Paul apart to live alone with the Alone during a period of forty days. Though consolations abounded at times, suffering did more abound so that we may say we harvest in gladness from the Rule that which Paul sowed with tears. The sorrow that filled him on going forth from his father's house may be gathered from a letter written to a hesitating postulant:

"O, if you knew the struggles I had to endure before I embraced my present sort of life! The devil filled me with terror, I was moved with compassion for my parents whom I would leave in extreme penury and whose every worldly hope rested on me; I experienced interior desolations, melancholy, fears; it seemed to me as though I would not succeed in keeping up this sort of life; the devil proposed to my mind that I was deluded, that I could serve God some other way, that this was not the kind of life for me and other apprehensions which I pass over in silence. To top my unhappiness, all devotion had vanished. I felt dry, I was tempted all sorts of ways. Just to hear the ringing of bells filled me with horror. Everybody seemed happy except me. I could never finish explaining these struggles. They assailed me more strongly when I was about to take the habit and abandon my poor home..." Letter #248.

After being clothed in the holy habit of the Passion, Paul retired to the Church of St. Charles in Castellazo, where he occupied a dark, narrow room attached to the sacristy. His food was bread and water; he took his rest on vine- trimmings heaped together in an old lime box.

Such is the setting of the writing of our Holy Rule; such, the scene of the soul drama recorded in the diary.

HISTORY OF THE DIARY

Our Holy Founder gave it to his Bishop, Msgr. Gattinara, at the end of his retreat. Msgr. Gattinara gave the manuscript to Canon Paul Sardi, an early companion of St. Paul. After the latter's death, the Postulator General asked Sardi for it. The document was sent to Rome, but was lost in the poor postal service of those days. Fortunately, Sardi had made a copy of it, which he swore under oath to conform to the original. In 1867 the diary was published in the work *Lettre Scelte di S. Paolo della Croce*, but it attracted no attention. In 1920, on the occasion of its second centenary, it was printed in the *Bollettino* with Fr. Stanislao's commentary. Fr. Arinteror, O.P., saw a copy of it and published it in "La Vida sobrenatural" of which he was director. He also printed the commentary. The diary was published a third time in the first volume of *Lettro di San Paolo della Croce*. Fr. Guibert, S.J., Professor of Ascetical and Mystical Theology at the Gregorian University, translated the diary into French for the benefit of the readers of the "Revue d'Ascetique et de Mystique".

The present translation was made from a French version which was compared with the Italian. The aim of the present translation is to provide as near an approach to an exact text as may be obtained in English. We have followed the Italian idiom as closely as possible; the punctuation is our own however. [2020 edition: the translators were Passionists Frs. Fred Sucher and Roger Mercurio during their student life in the 1940s. Punctuation has been updated.]

The letter (S) after the notes indicates the reference was suggested by Fr Stanislao's commentary. The letter (G) indicates Pere Gaetan's *Oraison et Ascension Mystique de S. Paul de la Croix*.

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DIARY OF ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS

Written during his Retreat in the cell attached to the Church of St. Charles
in Castellazzo, from November 23, 1720 to January 1, 1721.

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Thanks be to God and to Mary, Ever a Virgin.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER TWENTY-THIRD: The first day of my retreat at St. Charles. I, though unworthy of it,⁽¹⁾ received Holy Communion; I was neither particularly recollected,⁽²⁾ nor distracted. The rest of the day I was interiorly afflicted with a sadness of a peculiar kind, which is not like that which is experienced in the sorrows of the world, but is a certain interior suffering in mind and heart to which there is added covert temptations which are hardly known as such, and, because of this, greatly afflict the soul; one does not know, so to speak, where one is, so much the more since there is then no sensible sign of prayer; I know well that God makes me understand that they purify the soul;⁽³⁾ I know that by the mercy of our dear God I desire to experience nothing else, nor to taste any consolation, but I desire only to be crucified with Jesus.

(1) “feci indegnamente la santa Comunione” literally means “I went to Holy Communion unworthily”. The sense may be inferred from the fact that our Holy Founder uses it only when he is afflicted by dryness and distraction. On such days he feels his unworthiness more (e.g., Nov. 24th, 26th, 29th) and even blames himself.

(2) For meaning of term “recollected” see P. Gaetan’s analysis of diary in appendix.
Tauler: “Ad hunc verum Dei amorem duplici via pervenitur: prior est delectatio affluentis gratiae Dei; hic iucundum est homini in bonis desudare exercitiis; altera via resignationis et crucis seu afflictionis; hic omnis homo spirituali gaudio privatur. Hinc porro spiritualis nascitur istorum martyrum fortitudo; estque haec via ariditatis et siccitatis.” (In serm. Sanct. martyr.). (S)

(3) St. Paul of the Cross: “The blessed God intends by these sufferings to purify you as gold in the fire; when this trial is over, your spirit will go on the wings of faith and love, and will fly to the height of holy contemplation.” Letter #939.

“The martyrdom of interior suffering which you endure is a treasure which overflows from the font of holy love, and is a supernatural grace which the blessed God grants you; it seems to me that I understand it without being able to explain myself, and I take pleasure at this, for the things of God are inexplicable.

“Such a martyrdom produces in the soul two wonderful effects: one is to purify the soul from every stain of imperfection, as the fire of Purgatory; and so it is also called purifying suffering. The second effect is to enrich the soul with virtue.” (Letter #1638).

St. John of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul*, I, ch. I (S.) Eccli. II, 5. (S)

SUNDAY, THE TWENTY-FOURTH: I unworthily made holy prayer; I had no particular elevation but I remained at it with my habitual interior peace, that is to say, with pure

and loving attention to God, in general, which is infused in my soul;⁽¹⁾ then I, though unworthy of It, communicated and remained recollected for some time and ended so.

(1) St. Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, lib.VI, ch. ix, p. 257. (S)

MONDAY, THE TWENTY-FIFTH: During the course of my prayer, I was without feeling and even distracted; during Holy Communion, at the beginning, I was recollected and afterwards that ceased. Most of the fervor that I felt - and even with some tears - was during the night while praying the Lord in behalf of Holy Church and for sinners so that He might be appeased in regard to this impending chastisement which I deserve for my sins, and other prayers which I do not write down here. The rest of the day I was full of affliction and melancholy, and even tempted with compassion toward my family; to see the people, to hear them walking by, to hear the music, and the bell made me weary;⁽¹⁾ to sum up, I thought I had a heart that was buried, without any feeling at prayer.⁽²⁾ And withal to seek to be relieved did not come to my thoughts, and in my soul I was pleased to have them; but this contentment is not felt, for at this time there is pain, and that singular; but it is a certain contentment in that the most Holy Will of our dear God is being done, and this contentment lies buried as under cinders in the deepest recess of the soul; I know it is difficult to express myself for it is difficult for one who has not experienced it to understand it.

(1) Cfr. L. I, 410, quoted in the introduction.

(2) St. John of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul*, bk. II, ch. 4, #1, 2, pp. 404-405. (S)

Bona, Card.: *#De Discretione Spiritum*, ch. XIII. (S)

Tauler: "When the Heavenly Father decides to adorn a soul with high gifts, and to transform it in a sublime manner, He usually does not raise it sweetly, but plunges it into an ocean of bitterness; He submerges it in the water and drowns it, in the way that He treated the holy prophet Jonas." *Institutiones* c. XI. (S)

TUESDAY, THE TWENTY-SIXTH: I made my prayer unworthily during the night⁽¹⁾ and was dry save at the beginning, when I was in some interior sweetness, very light and delicate; I then made my Holy Communion and was particularly elevated in God with a very high sweetness and a certain warmth of heart,⁽²⁾ which the stomach also experienced, and which I felt to be supernatural, which put me in great consolation. I know that I also held some colloquies on the Passion of my dear Jesus; when I speak to Him of His torments, for example, I say to Him: "Oh, my Good! when You were scourged, what were the sentiments of Your Sacred Heart? My dear Spouse, how much the view of my sins and my ingratitude afflicted You! Ah, my Love, why is it that I do not die for You? Why is it that I do not become all torments?"

Then I feel that at times the soul can speak no further and rests so in God with His sufferings infused in the soul;⁽³⁾ and at times it seems that the heart melts away.⁽⁴⁾

The rest of the day, and especially in the evening, I was particularly afflicted and melancholy in the manner described above,⁽⁵⁾ and because this melancholy does not take away peace of heart, one feels great affliction as neither spiritual consolations nor

any other come any longer - and it seems that they were never present;⁽⁶⁾ I know that I say to my Jesus that His crosses are the joy of my heart.

- (1) "Fervor insomines jubet ire noctes, Raptus ad astra..." (Hymn for 1st Vesp, Feast of St. Paul of the Cross).
- (2) St. Teresa, *Interior Castle* - V. Ch. XI, ch. II. (S)
St. Teresa, *Way of Perfection*, ch. XXXIII, p. 181. (S)
St. Teresa, "Second Letter to Fr. Roderigo Alvarez. (S)
- (3) cf. Dec. 6th, 28th, and esp. 8th note n. (3)
- (4) P. Gaetan regards as probably ecstatic prayer vd. appendix.
- (5) cf. Nov. 23rd.
- (6) cf. "Contentment" of Nov. 25th.

WEDNESDAY, THE TWENTY-SEVENTH: I was at my prayer during the night; at the beginning, I was very recollected, and that lasted some little while; then I experienced some unquiet of mind and some temptations which lasted a short time. My Holy Communion was with a very high sweetness and elevation in God,⁽¹⁾ mingled with tears and then there came into my memory that I had heard people say that would not withstand this destitution; at this instant, joy and desire of sufferings were so great that the cold, the snow, the ice seemed sweet to me⁽²⁾ and I desired them with great fervor,⁽³⁾ saying to my dear Jesus: "Thy pains, dear God, are the pledges of Thy Love", and then I remained so, rejoicing in my well-beloved Jesus in great delight and peace, without movement of my faculties but thus in silence. Fervor did not fail me in prayer for the above-mentioned needs; I know that I had a particular urge to go to Rome in behalf of this great wonder of God; I asked my Sovereign Good whether He wished me to write the rule for the Poor of Jesus; at this, I felt a mighty urge with great sweetness. I rejoiced within myself that our great God should wish to avail Himself of this great sinner and, on the other hand, I did not know where to cast myself seeing I was so vile. It is enough. I know that I say to my Jesus that all creatures shall sing His mercies.

- (1) St. John of the Cross: "How gently and lovingly thou awakenest in my bosom, Where thou dwellest secretly and alone! And in thy sweet breathing, full of blessing and glory, How delicately thou inspirest my love!" "Secretly because this sweet embrace is made in the depth of the substance of the soul." *Living Flame of Love*, strophe 4, vs. 3; p. 104 & 111, #14. (S)
- (2) "Corpus infestis domitu flagello
Hinc fames torquet, sitis atque frigus" (I Vesp. Hymn)
- (3) St. Teresa, "She was willing to be cut in pieces, soul and body, to show the delight she felt in that pain. To what torments could she then be exposed, that would not be delicious to endure for her Lord? She sees clearly that the martyrs did little or nothing, so far as they were concerned, when they endured their tortures, because the soul is aware that its strength is derived from another source." *Life by Herself*, ch. XVI, #6, p. 129. (S)

THURSDAY, TWENTY-EIGHTH: During prayer I was dry and distracted a little; during

Holy Communion I was recollected; afterwards, that is, during my thanksgiving and prayer, I was amidst much tenderness with tears, especially in praying to the Sovereign Good for the happy outcome of the holy inspiration which by His infinite goodness He has given me and is giving me continuously. I recall that I was praying to the Blessed Virgin, in union with all the angels and saints, and especially the Holy Founders, and in an instant it seemed to me that I saw them in spirit,⁽¹⁾ prostrated before the Most Holy Majesty of God praying for that - this happened to me in an instant, as a flash of lightning,⁽²⁾ amidst a sweetness mingled with tears; the manner in which I perceived them was not in corporeal form; it was therefore in spirit, with the knowledge of the soul which I know not how to explain, and almost immediately this disappeared.

(1) St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, q. 174, a. 2. (S)

(2) cf. P. Gaetan, pp. 17-18, for similar vision reported on authority of Rosa Calabresi: "With a spirit of deep reverence and marks of great humility, the servant of God told me that one feast of the Blessed Trinity, he received a most extraordinary favor during prayer: 'I was transported to Paradise and allowed to contemplate the kingdom of heaven. I saw the angelic hierarchies, the orders and choirs of Saints, the Blessed Virgin, the sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ... O God, what a spectacle! I heard the melodies of the holy angels repeating, "In Heaven, in Heaven, in Heaven!" On hearing those angelic voices, I was completely ravished and had the most exalted understanding surpassing all human understanding.' He said that he had seen a throne of immense glory, upon which he contemplated the Blessed Trinity under symbols of three very noble and resplendent persons. The Holy Spirit showed him the place of glory which He had prepared for him and here the servant of God once more reverted to exclamations: 'O what things I understood relative to the power, wisdom, goodness and other divine attributes! I cannot tell them, for there are no terms for me to express myself as I should.' He added that he was in heaven for the space of an hour and a half." (P. Gaetan gives extensive notes on this passage.)

St. Teresa, "The vision passes as quickly as a flash of lightning." *The Interior Castle*, VI, ch. IX, #2, p. 203. (S)

St. John of the Cross, "...the soul sees a light, after the manner of a lightning flash, which, on a dark night, reveals things suddenly and causes them to be clearly and distinctly seen, and then leaves them in darkness, although the forms and figures of them remain in the fancy." *Ascent of Mt. Carmel*, lib. II, ch. XXIV, #5; p. 190. (S)

FRIDAY, THE TWENTY-NINTH: I unworthily made my prayer and Most Holy Communion, dry, and during prayer I was distracted; I wish to explain what happens to me in distractions. When I am distracted, my soul remains neither more nor less in peace with God in spite of the fact that it is troubled with thoughts which molest me.⁽¹⁾ At night I say to my mind which strays now here, now there: "Go where you will, always you will go with God."

I cannot say what happens to me during these distractions, that is to say, what kind of thoughts have passed through my mind during the time of prayer - unless they be evident temptations - I know only that they are of indifferent things and sometimes I recall that there comes to me even some spiritual thoughts; nevertheless, by the knowledge that God gives me, and I am aware of it, I know that the soul holds itself fast in God in peace, but it stays more insensible and hidden, and the will, which is the

mouth through which the most holy nourishment of divine love enters, is aware of this. The will continues to suckle secretly because of the hindrance which the two faculties of memory and understanding cause it, for they stray away in distraction; nevertheless, it does not stop being attentive to its nourishment which is the most holy love of God; at most it does not enjoy it as much as when the other two powers remain united with it, and this seems to me is as when a baby has its mouth to its mother's breast and takes its milk; with its hands and feet it struggles, fidgets, tosses its head around, and does other like things, but always it takes its milk, because it never takes its mouth away from its mother's breast. It is certain that it would have more success by lying quiet than by acting as I have described; nevertheless, the milk flows down its throat since it never removes its mouth from its mother's breast. So, too, it is with the soul - the will which is the mouth never fails to suck the milk of most holy love, even though the faculties, memory and understanding, go astray; it is however certain that it experiences more help and benefit when they keep quiet and stay united to it.⁽²⁾

I do not know how to explain myself better because the Lord does not make me understand it otherwise.

(1) St. Teresa, *The Interior Castle*; V, ch. I, #5; p. 88 (explains how distraction is compatible with prayer of quiet. (S)

(2) "In the prayer of quiet, when the water flows from the spring itself and not through conduits, the mind ceases to act; it is forced to do so, although it does not understand what is happening and so wanders hither and thither in bewilderment, finding no place for rest. Meanwhile, the will, entirely united to God, is much disturbed by the tumult of the thoughts: no notice, however, should be taken of them, or they would cause the loss of a great part of the favor the soul is enjoying. Let the spirit ignore these distractions and abandon itself in the arms of divine love: His Majesty will teach it how best to act, which chiefly consists in its recognizing its unworthiness of so great a good and occupying itself in thanking Him for it." op. cit. IV, ch. III, #7; p. 78-79. (S)

Poulain, A., S.J. *The Graces of Interior Prayer*, ch. IX, n. 18, 33, 34 (defines the sense in which the intellect is suspended - a commentary on the preceding passage from St. Teresa). (S)

St. Teresa, "Think well over the comparison which I am about to make - our Lord suggested it to me in this very state of prayer, and it explains my meaning very clearly. The soul is here like a little babe at breast of its mother... Any effort to constrain the understanding to take part in what is passing will result in failure..." *The Way of Perfection*, ch. XXI, #7; p. 185. (SG)

St. Francis de Sales, "It is true the repose of the soul is not so great as when the understanding and memory conspire with the will. ...This soul... resembled the little child who, while sucking, might see and hear and even move his arms without quitting the dear breast. ...the will does not move to bring back the other powers which are straying because she would lose her repose... and would lose her labor..." *Treatise on the Love of God*, bk. VI. ch. X, XI, pp. 259 et sq. (SG)

P. Gaetan (p. 33-35) argues from this day's account that our Holy Founder had read St. Francis de Sales and probably St. John of the Cross. vd. P. 47. He cites these passages as well:

St. John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mt. Carmel*, II, ch. XIV, p. 122 sq.

St. Teresa, *The Interior Castle*, IV, ch. I, #8, 9; pp. 59-60.

SATURDAY, THE THIRTIETH: Feast of St. Andrew the Apostle. I was dry and distracted during prayer; during Communion I was recollected, thereafter I had abundance of tears; I recall that I kept begging my Jesus to make me humble in the deepest degree; I was desirous of being the last of men, the dregs of the earth. I kept praying ⁽¹⁾ with many tears to the Blessed Virgin to obtain this grace for me; I recall that I said to my Jesus that He should teach me what degree of humility pleases Him most, and I heard said in my heart: "When you throw yourself in spirit under the feet of all creatures, even under the feet of demons, that it is which pleases Me most."

I already understood that to abase oneself even below hell, under the feet of the devils, then God elevates to Paradise, because just as the devil wished to raise himself to the peak of Paradise and was cast down into the lower depth of hell for his pride, so on the contrary the soul which humbles itself even beneath hell makes the devil tremble and the Sovereign God raises it to Paradise; I know that everything is from my God; to Him be honor and glory forever. Amen.

(1) St. John Chrysostom: "Nullum remedium potest esse contra superbiam, nisi sola oratio." Hom. 15 in Matt. (S)

cf. P. Gaetan pp. 73-76, giving the following citations:

Poulain, "God does not come empty-handed to the soul and his sanctifying action is so much the stronger and more notable as the prayer is higher. The soul who permeates herself with God in the mystic union feels that she thus without exactly knowing how permeates herself with love, humility and devotion." op. cit. ch. XII, # 1, cf. #4, 5, pp. 151,152. (G)

St. John of the Cross: "For communications which are indeed of God have this property, that they humble the soul and at the same time exalt it. For upon this road to go down is to go up, and to go up, to go down, for he that humbles himself is exalted and he that exalts himself is humbled." *The Dark Night of the Soul*, bk. II, ch. XVIII, #2, p. 461. (G)

St. Teresa, *Life by Herself*, ch. XV, #22, pp. 124-125; ch. XIX, #2, p. 149. (G)

FIRST OF DECEMBER, SUNDAY: As well during prayer as during Communion I was dry and distracted,⁽¹⁾ with also a bit of sadness of which I have spoken above.

(1) *Dark Night* - I, 9. p. 373 sq. (S)

MONDAY, THE SECOND: I was without feeling and distracted both during holy prayer and during Holy Communion, with this difference that at Most Holy Communion I was not distracted, it almost never happens that I remain distracted there; dry, arid, yes, but either more or less, either before or after, I always feel for the most part some movement of my heart⁽¹⁾ that comes and goes in an instant, so that I scarcely am aware of it; and then I remain as a stump; this continues more or less; in all things blessed be the most sweet Giver of all things.

(1) Fr. Stanisloao sees in this a likeness to the Divine Touch of which St. John of the Cross

treats in the *Ascent of Mt. Carmel* (II, ch. 26, #5, p. 196), where he says, "These manifestation (are) equivalent to contact with the Divinity which the soul experiences, and thus it is God Himself Who is perceived and tasted therein."

And, in *The Living Flame of Love* - stanza 2,
"Oh, sweet burn! Oh, delectable wound!
Oh, soft hand! O delicate touch
That savors of eternal life and pays every debt!
In slaying, thou hast changed death into life." v. III, p. 40. (S)

On this day our Holy Founder began writing the Holy Rule.

TUESDAY, THE THIRD: I was troubled all the day long with great troubles; I have experienced them when I was a secular, but they were not so keen and violent; for my part, although I am in this condition, I feel a great desire that they continue; I can readily say that when this kind of agony and affliction - I know not just what to call them - comes to me I seem to be buried in an abyss of miseries, to be the most miserable and desolate man alive; and nevertheless, my soul embraces them because it knows it is the will of God and that they are the joys of Jesus. I say of them with St. Teresa: "Either to suffer, or to die."⁽¹⁾

(1) Tauler: "Quamvis autem spirituales martyres isti diversis abundant afflictionibus, amant nihilominus Deum suum, nec mince veras virtutes studio et intentione, quam praecedentes prosequuntur. Habent autem curas et angustias multas in hac vita, adeo ut saepe ignorent, quo se prae huiusmodi moeroribus vertere debeant, et nudae duntaxat fidei, spei et charitati in obscura quadam caligine innituntur." In festo plur. martyr. (S)

WEDNESDAY, THE FOURTH: I was recollected at prayer and experienced besides sweet restlessness of thought; during Most Holy Communion I was in much sweetness, my dear God gave me infused knowledge of the joy the soul will have when we will see Him face to face and be united to Him in holy love; then there came to me sorrow at seeing Him offended, and I told Him that I desired to be torn to shreds for one soul; alas! I seemed to faint away at seeing the ruin of so many souls who do not experience the fruit of the Passion of my Jesus; when God gives me this very high comprehension of the joy one will feel when one shall see Him face to face,⁽¹⁾ that is, when united to Him, my soul can no longer suffer, so to speak, to remain any longer in my body, because through a very high light of Faith, she beholds herself in the love of God; there comes over her the desire to free herself from the body. I know that I have said before that the body is the chain of the soul, which holds her bound, and that until God breaks it by means of the death of the body, she cannot fly to the union and perfect vision of her beloved.

(1) St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* III, 95, 5.

THURSDAY, THE FIFTH: I was in abundant peace during prayer and Communion; at the beginning I had much tenderness, that is, before communicating - and much knowledge of myself, and I asked the Angels who assist at the Adorable Mystery to drive me out of the church, for I am worse than a demon; however, confidence in my Sacramental Spouse present in the Sacrament did not leave me; I asked Him to recall what He has left me in His holy gospel - that He came to call not the just but sinners.

FRIDAY, THE SIXTH: I was particularly recollected especially during prayer, after which I was in great peace and consolation, with very sweet affections; I had particular fervor in praying God to hasten the foundation of this Congregation of Holy Church, and (in praying) for sinners; I possessed a keen infused knowledge of the torments of my Jesus and I had so ardent a desire to be united perfectly with Him that I kept desiring actually to feel His anguish and to be on the cross with Him; such wonderful things cannot be explained through bodily comparisons because God makes them understood in the depths of the soul with actions so spiritual that they are unexplainable, and the soul understands them in an instant.⁽¹⁾ All the rest of the day I was dry and also bothered with thoughts, but in peace.

(1) St. Teresa, *Life by Herself*, cap. 25 & 26. (S)

SATURDAY, THE SEVENTH: During my prayer in the morning, I was in peace and then I was again bothered by thoughts during Most Holy Communion. I was particularly recollected and exalted with tears until I became sick to my stomach, for I was trembling somewhat from the cold, but thereupon all vanished. This happens to me often, I know that I have already felt weak in body - oh! infinite mercy of our Sovereign Good - after Most Holy Communion I feel myself improved and strong; according to the understanding that God gives me this comes from the great strength which the soul receives from the Angelic Food, a strength that flows over even to strengthen the body. I had as well great fervor mingled with tears in praying for the conversion of poor sinners, I kept telling my God that I could not bear it any longer to see Him offended; I had also a particular tenderness in beseeching God, by His Mercy, to establish quickly the Holy Congregation and to send forth a band for His greater glory and the profit of their neighbor - and this with great desire and fervor; as for myself I asked Him to accept me as that least of the servants of His poor, and to myself I appeared to be most unworthy - as it is in truth - to serve Him as kitchen drudge. I had full knowledge of myself; when God gives me this deep knowledge of myself, it seems to me that I am worse than a demon, that I am an unclean sewer, and so it is in truth, but the great and very tender confidence in my Spouse, present in the Sacrament, never leaves me;⁽¹⁾ I told Him that to do me these innumerable favors and such great graces will make His infinite mercies shine forth all the more, because He does them to the greatest of sinners; may His Holy Name be praised in all things.

(1) Cant. VIII. 5; Is. 40, 31.

“On this day the glorious Father finished the writing of the Rule and looking forward to the foundation of the Institution... he prays God to send quickly companions “for His own divine glory and the salvation of their neighbor.” The prayers of Founders have a Special efficacy before the throne of God, and we may believe that these prayers have had an active part in the vocation of all those who have joined the Institute.” Fr. Stanislao, C.P.

Well do the words of St. Paul the Apostle apply to our Holy Founder:

“Et ego cum venissem ad vos, fratres, veni non in sublimitate sermonis aut sapientiae, annuntians vobis testimoni Christi... Et ego in infirmitate, et timore, et tremore multo fui apud vos: et sermo meus, et praedicatio mea, non in persuasibilibus humanae sapientiae verbis, sed in ostentione spiritus et virtutis.” (3rd Lessons)

SUNDAY, THE EIGHTH: During prayer I was in peace as usual; in making the offering

of the torments which my Jesus suffered, I felt myself constrained to weep, and equally so in praying for all men; during Holy Communion I was particularly recollected especially in going through the sorrowful and loving recital of His torments to my Jesus. This high grace, which my Jesus paid me then, I know not how to explain, because I cannot. Know that in relating His own pains to my Jesus, sometimes as soon as I have related one or two of them, I am forced to stop there because my soul can no longer speak and feels itself melting away;⁽¹⁾ so it stands fainting away with a very high sweetness mingled with tears with the pain of her spouse infused in her, or indeed, to explain myself better, plunged into the heart and the very holy sorrow of her sweetest Spouse Jesus;⁽²⁾ sometimes she has knowledge of all and she remains so in God with this sorrowful and loving regard; this is very difficult to explain; it seems to me to be always new.⁽³⁾

- (1) St. Thomas, *Suma Theol*, I, Q.28, A.5 - Liquefaction the first effect of love. (S)
cf. Richard of St. Victor, *De Gradibus violentiae charitatis*, grad. III. (S)
cf. Cant. V, 6. (S)
cf. Hugo of St. Caro - Opera, pars III, Comm. in Cant. (S)

- (2) "...the sufferings of its Spouse are infused into it. In order to explain myself better, I might say that "my soul is plunged into the Heart and sacred grief of its sweet Spouse, Jesus..."
This is P. Gaetan's translation and is exact, though not following the phrasing of the original.

cf. "...immo me totum trahe in Cor tuum. Ad hoc enim perforatum est latus tuum ut nobis pateat introitus" - *De Vita Mystica* (End of VIII and beginning of IX Lesson for the Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.)

cf. "Then fly in spirit into that beautiful Heart, and there place yourself upon that Divine Altar... In this Sacred Heart I wish my daughter to live always, but in pure Faith, without images... there the colloquies of love should be made, now speaking of His Passion, now of the sorrows of our dear mother; now offering that great Heart to the Eternal Father; love will teach you all..." *St. of the Cross*, Let. #278.

- (3) Fr. Stanislaw's commentary draws attention to:

- (1) The practice of offering the Sufferings of our Lord to Him during Holy Communion - "Respice in faciem Christi tui" Ps. 83/10.
St. Teresa was taught this by our Lord.
- (2) Recalling to our Lord His own sufferings (cf. I Cor. XI, 26)
St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi's practice - Advice of St. John Chrysostom, Hom. 26 in Ep. I ad Cor. - Our Lord taught it to St. Gertrude.

MONDAY, THE NINTH: I was troubled and molested by thoughts; during Most Holy Communion I was recollected. Later dry, and once again harassed by thoughts; in my petitions made to my God during my prayer at night, I was very fervent, especially in praying for the conversion of sinners.

TENTH, ELEVENTH, TWELFTH, THIRTEENTH: I was dry, distracted, tempted; I kept myself by sheer force at prayer; I was tempted to gluttony; hunger kept coming over me; I felt the cold more than ordinarily and my flesh desired to be relieved and, to that end, I

kept wishing to escape from prayer. The spirit, with the grace of our dear God, resisted; both the violence and the assaults that continued to come both from the flesh and from the demon; for my part I believe that the devil had a hand in it because I know he is very jealous of any one who prays;⁽¹⁾ then, as I have said, the resistance made my heart leap; I shook from head to foot, the bones in my thighs and chest ached, but by the mercy of God I kept saying that, "I wish to remain so even were it necessary to carry me away in small pieces"; and this happened because the flesh wished to take its rest ahead of the time which I had prescribed to spend in prayer; when the hour came for me to depart, I remained in peace with tranquility, desirous of suffering always more; on the contrary, I asked my God never to take my sufferings from me. This has happened to me at other times and frequently; may the dear God be blessed for it. I bow that I understand that this sort of prayer of suffering is a great gift which God grants a soul to make it an ermine of purity, a rock amidst suffering to such an extent that it no longer takes any account of them; and when it shall have arrived by the favor of God at this state, the Sovereign Good will consume it with love; it is necessary to be careful not to leave prayer at this so painful a time, because the suffering will not diminish but on the contrary the soul would be afflicted more without profit, because it would see itself going into tepidity; that is why I know that God gives me to understand that the soul, which God wishes to draw to high union with Him by the means of prayer, must pass by this way of suffering during prayer,⁽²⁾ she must also, I say, suffer without any sensible consolation so that the soul knows not where it is, so to speak, but has a high infused knowledge which God gives her, that she is always in the arms of her Spouse, suckled by His infinite charity; I know, as I have also understood, but in secret, when I was in a particular suffering, that to him who shall conquer, there will be given the hidden manna which is what Holy Scripture⁽³⁾ says: the hidden manna, I understood will be the very sweet food of holy love, that is, the soul in highest repose with her sweetest spouse in holy prayer: Deo Gratias.⁽⁴⁾

(1) St. John of the Cross: "And the devil, becoming aware of this prosperity of the soul (for in his great malice he envies all the good that he sees in her), makes use of all his skill at this time and exercises all his arts so that he may be able to distract the soul from even the least part of this blessing... The devil profits by the desires of the senses, although as a rule he can do very little, or nothing, in this state, since they are already mortified... sometimes he stirs up motions in the sensual part of the soul..." *Spiritual Canticle*, stanza 16, #2, pp. 275-276. (S)

(2) St. Paul of the Cross: "I would that you were more fervent in prayer; take care that you never leave it, for that will be your ruin. Oh, happy those who will be voluntarily crucified with Christ. What do I mean?"

"Oh, happy those who are faithful in suffering every pain for love of Jesus! Oh, the great treasures they will acquire by remaining in prayer when dry and desolate! Take courage, dearly beloved. After the storm comes the calm. Now is the time of trial; you must suffer the trial of God: "quia acceptus eras Deo necesse fuit ut tentatic probaret te", the angel said to Tobias. Woe to those who during the trial of God leave the path they started on, for they give themselves to sin and then to damnation..." Letter, #246.

"I tell you that he who is to serve God in a great way must suffer great trials and great sufferings... Above all, never leave prayer, even though you should have to endure the pains of hell. Jesus persevered in Agony, and sweated blood. You are not yet tried in this way, and so you are wrong in lamenting." Letter, #247.

(3) Apoc. 2, 17. cf. St. Bernard, *De Conversione*," ch. 31, and from the feast of St. Paul: "Ego dabo tibi thesauros absconditos, et arcana secretorum ut scias quia ego Domino, qui voco nomen tuum." [*I will give you the hidden treasures that you may know that I am the Lord, who calls your name.*] Vesp. 2 Antiphon.

(4) Fr. Stanislao sees in these trials a simultaneous purgation of sense and spirit.
Scaramelli, *Directorium Mysticum*., Tr. V. no. 41. (S)
St. John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mt. Carmel*, 1st stanza.

SATURDAY, THE FOURTEENTH: I was recollected and I also underwent dryness and wandering of mind, and again the sufferings which I have just mentioned, but not so violent. During Holy Communion I was recollected and with some tenderness in making loving affections to my Jesus in the Sacrament; may He be praised and loved by all. Amen.

FIFTEENTH, SIXTEENTH, SEVENTEENTH, EIGHTEENTH: On these days I was dry, distracted by troubles, and combats between the flesh and the spirit of the sort which I have explained above; and now greater and now lesser assaults of impatience, and to leave prayer, temptations to eat, in feeling myself moved to a particular appetite for food, and this, too, happened in prayer; I kept asking my Jesus not to deliver me but rather to have me undergo these sufferings; whence it follows by a special grace of my God that, although I am in particular desolation, temptation and interior afflictions, I do not desire to be relieved of them. I have had during these days a singular movement of my heart verging toward tears⁽¹⁾ but it subsided at once, or at most endured but shortly, and then I was in the state described above; but by the Mercy of the Sovereign Good, peace of heart does not leave; I know that I do not find my heart troubled with scruples but certainly in peace with God; it even seems to me that I do no good - and so it is in fact - but I entrust myself to the Sovereign Kindness of the Sovereign Good: Whom may all love. Amen.

The continual desire for the conversion of all sinners does not leave me, and I feel myself moved to pray especially for this to my God, because I would wish that He be not offended anymore.

(1) P. Stanislao treats of the gift of tears -
St. Teresa, *Interior Castle*, VI, ch. VI, #7, p. 177. (S)
St. Teresa, *Life by Herself*, ch. XII, p. 89 et sq. (S)
St. Lawrence Justinian, *De Ligno Vitae*, ch. IX. (S)
Missale Romano, Oratio pro petitione lacrimarum. (S)

THURSDAY, THE NINETEENTH: I had a sweetness mingled with tears of particular contrition for my sins⁽¹⁾ and this before making my confession and also afterwards; then this disappeared.

(1) St. Teresa: "It may seem to you, sisters, that souls to whom God has communicated Himself in such a special manner may feel so sure of enjoying Him forever as no longer to require to fear or to mourn over their past sins... This is a great mistake, for sorrow for sin increases in proportion to the divine grace received and, I believe, will never quit us until we come to the land where nothing can grieve us any more. Doubtless we feel this pain more at one time than at another and it is of a different kind... *Interior Castle*, VI, ch.

7, #1, p. 182. (S)

“I know someone who though she had ceased to wish for death in order to see God, yet desired it that she might be freed from her continual regret for her past ingratitude towards Him to Whom she owed, and always would owe, so much. She thought no one’s guilt could be compared to her own, for she felt there could be none with whom God had borne so patiently nor on whom He had bestowed such graces.” *ibid.* #3, p. 183. (S)

FRIDAY, THE TWENTIETH: I had some aridity and also some recollection because of the torments of my Jesus. I recall that the Thursday night preceding I was saying that for me to recall the funereal ⁽¹⁾ and sorrow-laden day of Friday is a thing to cause fainting and total prostration. I kept on asking my Jesus to make me swoon away.

(1) St. Paul of the Cross: “Continue to pray and to celebrate the funeral services of the Heavenly Spouse in these holy days with sentiments of a sorrowful love and loving sorrow. The Sacred Passion is a work of love; I say no more; do not forget the Sorrowful Virgin, celebrate the funeral services of the Divine Son with her.” Letter #746.

St. Paul of the Cross: “Ah! dearest brothers, recalling Friday to our mind is enough to cause the death of one who truly loves, because it is as much as to say, this is the day on which my Incarnate God suffered so much for me and then left His most holy life, dying upon the hard tree of the cross...” Extract from original Rule quoted by Bl. Vincent Strambi, *The Life of Bl. Paul of the Cross*, p. 66.

SATURDAY, THE TWENTY-FIRST: Feast of St. Thomas, Apostle. I was much tried by assaults and combats of the sort mentioned above and it is the same.

As the soul, by the grace of God, wishes to subject the flesh and make it submissive and obedient by uniting it to reason, the flesh on the contrary finds that hard and consequently, when it feels hunger, would wish to nourish itself, and when it is worn out from being at work or from being a long time kneeling at prayer, it would wish to take its rest; if it is cold, it would wish to warm itself, etc. etc. And, I say, because on this day I found myself assailed with great vehemence by most of these things, the spirit resisted and wished to stay with God in prayer even though it felt afflicted and desolate; and on the contrary the flesh did not want to, and, therefore, the passions were stirred up with vehement afflictions of my heart which was palpitating and made me tremble from head to foot until my bones ached, and I was brought to the point where it seemed I could bear no more.

Then my adversary⁽¹⁾ came to battle with temptations to impatience; he incited me to indignation against the Priests who were coming to say Mass, making me see that they were coming very late and it seemed to me that I would be forced to make some unbecoming remarks to them; but I thereupon called upon God and upon Mary to aid me, and I declared that I want to remain thus until all the Masses are said - this, in order to go contrary to the temptation, for it seemed that I was being forced to leave. When that was over, I felt temptations of most horrible blasphemies against God; it seemed as though I heard horrible atrocities spoken within me; then I kept calling out to Mary to help me. Know that in this state, the soul finds itself as though in a great abandonment; she feels no longer any devotion of heart toward her God; she no longer recalls anything of the particular things of the spirit;⁽²⁾ she seems reduced to an abyss of

miseries.

It is true however, that although she is in great desolation, the above-mentioned temptations against God disappear as a flash of lightning; and the Sovereign Good does not permit the soul to remain in these horrible temptations. In the secret recesses of the heart, there is a kind of secret and almost unfelt desire of always being in sufferings whether of this sort or any other;⁽³⁾ however, it is true that I pray God to deliver me from those against Himself, those diabolical words slay the heart and soul. To suffer is of small concern, but what the soul cannot endure is to be tempted against its God. Nevertheless, I know that in this the glory of God shines forth, and the devil remains confounded, because in these struggles which the soul makes and in these sufferings, according to the understanding which God gives me, the Sovereign Good takes delight, and the devil remains confused and then takes to flight. I understand also that God holds the soul in His Arms, but she does not perceive it, and thence it comes that it appears to her that she is in great abandonment and great misery, as all this is mixed up with the above-mentioned assaults; and if God in His Infinite Pity did not give a particular succor, these would be things at which to be terrified.

I have something to tell for the greater glory of God, and it is that when I am in this state, in which I had already been a few rare times and with a long duration, but not with such a great vehemence, I beseech Jesus Crucified not to deliver me from it; on the contrary, I desire them in order to suffer, and I have a secret fear that they may leave - excepting however those temptations against God, unless God chooses to permit them for my greater mortification. The above mentioned fear comes from the desire which the soul has to follow Jesus in His sufferings. Of the profit the soul gains thereby one can only say that it is enough, but the soul does not seek this because love seeks no gain but only the glory of her Sovereign Good.

I conferred with my highly spiritual brother⁽⁴⁾ - I am not worthy to be called his brother - and the conference was on the spiritual sufferings which one experiences, and I told him I did not dare to speak of sufferings⁽⁵⁾ because I fear that they depart when one feels any solace, although it is not so. I said I fear more to see my sufferings taken from me than another fears to lose his wealth.

It is true that fear afflicts it sometimes, but I feel afraid of losing my sufferings, but it does not bother me by taking away my peace of heart, and therefore I take care not to relate them except to him to whom I am obliged by holy obedience. I will even take courage to say how sweet are sufferings, if I speak to one who suffers, but to tell him then of all mine that the Savior has given me; this - no. I would that I were able to say that everybody felt the great grace that God works by His Mercy when He sends suffering and especially when the suffering is without comfort, because then the soul remains purified as gold in the fire and becomes beautiful and light to take wing toward its Good, that is, to the blessed transformation without perceiving it.

She carries the Cross with Jesus and knows it not and this comes about from the multitude and variety of sufferings which put it in great forgetfulness, so much so that she no longer remembers she is suffering. I understand that this is a great way of suffering with fruit, which greatly pleases God because the soul comes thereby to be indifferent to such an extent that she no longer thinks either of suffering or of rejoicing,

but solely holds herself fixed to the most holy will of her dear Spouse, Jesus, wishing to be crucified with Him because that is more conformed to her well-beloved God, Who, during the whole of His Most Holy Life, did nothing else but suffer.⁽⁶⁾ In all may the Sovereign Good be praised, Who by His infinite kindness gives and infuses this understanding to this great sinner.

- (1) “Mihi credite, fratres, pertimescit satanas piorum vigiliis, orationes...” [*Believe me, brothers, Satan is afraid of the prayers of the pious.*] 6th Lesson, Feast of St. Anthony, Abbot. (S)
- (2) This obscure passage is translated by Fr. Gaetan as follows: “Suffice it to know that, in this state, the soul is as in great abandonment, it no longer feels that genial devotion to God, it no longer remembers any of the principles of the spiritual life, it seems to be reduced to an abyss of miseries.”
- (3) St. Teresa: “I feel certain that souls which have reached perfection do not ask God to deliver them from trials or temptations, nor from persecutions and combats. ... Believe me, sisters, the battle never comes soon enough for the soldiers of Christ, the contemplatives and those who practice prayer. They have little fear of open enemies, knowing them well already and being aware that such foes have little power against the strength given them by God through which they always gain the victory and come forth from the fray with great spoils and riches, so that they never beat a retreat.” *The Way of Perfection*, ch. XXXVIII, #1, pp. 234, 235. (S)
- (4) “I know no reason why it should not be lawful for him who is beginning to love and serve God in earnest to confide in another his joys and sorrows; for they who are given to prayer are thoroughly accustomed to both. For if that friendship with God which he desires be not real, let him not be afraid of vain-glory...” *Life by Herself*, ch. VII, #33, 34, p. 55. (S)
- (5) “It is not much to despise all human consolation when we have divine. But it is much, and very much to be able to forego all comfort, both human and divine, and to “be willing to bear this interior punishment for God’s honor and to seek oneself in nothing, nor to think of one’s own merit.” *Imitation of Christ*, II, ch. 9, #1. (S)
- (6) “During the first years that the servant of God devoted himself entirely to the divine service,” says Father John Mary, “the Lord was pleased to grant him many supernatural lights and singular graces, but at the same time He prepared him for great crosses and trials. In interior locutions He often said to him: “Ostendam tibi quanta oporteat pro nomine Meo pati.” [*I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.*] cf. Acts. IX, 16, used for 4th Ant. at I Vesp. (G)

SUNDAY, THE TWENTY-SECOND: I was recollected with much sensible fervor.

MONDAY, THE TWENTY THIRD: During my night prayer, I was in great peace, sweetness and tears with a very deep knowledge of the divine perfections,⁽¹⁾ especially of the Infinite Goodness; and for the rest of the day, I was buried in desolation and disturbed exteriorly by thoughts about the future caused by the devil. This term “exteriorly” I understand in the sense that these thoughts come as when the waters of the ocean are in tempest, which tossed by the wind raises great waves; when they approach the rocks, they strike them to pieces, but it is not thus; they beat upon them, yes, but they neither make a breach nor shatter them into pieces - it may happen that

they detach thereby a little dirt, but because of the hardness of rock, there is no danger that the waves - be they ever so large - will end by smashing them; so it happens to the soul when engaged in prayer, for in this case she is rock, for God sustains her in His Infinite Love and therefore one can call her a rock of firmness because the Sovereign Good gives this to it: then the demon jealous of the high state of the soul when it is in prayer, seeing that he cannot snatch it from the Infinite Hands of the Immense God, seeks at least to trouble it somewhat by assaulting it, now with imaginations, now with a variety of thoughts, and at times to delude it better with his infamous inventions, and that to tear it away from its deep attention to God. I but what if it? In the midst of these furious waves of the demons, the soul stands as a rock so long as it remains always united to its Beloved Good. These waves of thoughts do not serve anything other than to unburden it a bit, that is, make it remain for a few moments without that singularity and highest continuous sight of her Well-Beloved, although I understand, (the union) is not less at such a moment. I so spoke to be able to express myself better, because the soul is united neither more nor less but it only seems so to the soul which wrestles against the assaults which she repulses; wherefore, it seems to the poor soul, since she loses little of her loving attention, then she is no longer in the arms of her dear Spouse; God, on the contrary, makes me understand that she is there, and He is pleased to see her go to battle, and that is more profitable for her, because through the effect of that which she suffers in fighting, she purifies herself just as the rock, which before the storm was somewhat encrusted, after the storm becomes a bit cleaner, for the motion of the waves cleanses it. It is nevertheless true that one must keep oneself always united to God without taking account of them, for the enemy, seeing that he gains nothing, flees ashamed because he sees that one, with the help of God, does not fear these things.

When I find myself in these storms of thought and other disturbances, I turn toward my God saying to Him: "My God, take notice a little of the state my poor soul finds herself in..." and I beseech Him that, if it be His Host Holy Will, He deliver me from them; and then I continue to keep myself thus; I do not fail to admit that they give me much vexation but may all be for the love of the Sovereign Good to Whom be honor and glory forever. Amen.

(1) cf. Scaramelli, *Directorium Misticum*; Tract. IV, no. 108. (S)

TUESDAY, THE TWENTY-FOURTH: I was amidst a greater recollection and tears especially during Holy Communion; on this most holy night I was also recollected but not in so singular a fashion; I had also much tenderness, especially in recalling the infinite love of our dear God in being made man, in being born amid so much inconvenience and so much poverty; and then I reposed thus in my God.

WEDNESDAY, THE TWENTY-FIFTH: At day-break I made my Confession with special tenderness of contrition and deep knowledge of myself; after Most Holy Communion I was as dry as a stump, and I stayed that way almost all day.⁽¹⁾

(1) Jesus said to St. Gertrude, who complained to Him that on feast days she experienced less devotion: "This does not happen by chance, but indeed by My divine arrangement, for on week days and also at certain hours I impart you at times the grace of devotion, in order to raise your heart from man to Myself, for without this you would remain in your tepidity; but on feast days I stop at times this feeling of devotion, so that you may burn with a greater desire of having it and at the same time be exercised in humility by means

of which you will acquire a greater salvation than you would have if you had had the feeling and grace of sensible devotion.” (S)

Paul of the Cross: “The better and more perfect way to celebrate the holy feast of Christmas is the stripping of every sensible contentment, that all the contentment may be in the fulfilling of the divine Good Will. All the most holy life of Jesus was a cross...” Letter #756.

“We need not serve God by consolations, but because He is worthy of being served; and His Divine Majesty is wont to deprive His servants of consolations ad tempus, that they may learn to serve Him through pure love and to become great and most faithful servants of His.

“On the greater solemnities, too, His Divine Majesty is accustomed to deprive His great servants of spiritual consolations to prove their faith and their fidelity.” Christmas Letter to the Community on Monte Argentario, Dec. 15, 1746.

THURSDAY, THE TWENTY-SIXTH: Feast of St. Stephen, Martyr. I was in a special elevation of soul, especially during Most Holy Communion. I was desirous of going to die as a martyr where the adorable mystery of the Most Blessed Sacrament is denied. It is some time already since the Infinite Good bestowed this desire on me, but today I had it in an especial manner: I had the desire for the conversion of heretics especially of England with its neighboring kingdoms, and I made a special prayer for this during Most Holy Communion. I had also a particular knowledge of the Infinite Mercy, our Sovereign Good making me understand how great is the Infinite Love with which He punished here so that an eternity of torments may be escaped, and because His Infinite Majesty knows the place that His Infinite Justice has prepared for the most just and most merited punishment of sin, His infinite Mercy accordingly is moved to pity by the “loving punishments” and with these urging His sinful creatures to correct themselves so that they may escape the eternal punishment and serve Him.⁽¹⁾ All this I understood with an abundance of tears mingled with a very high sweetness.

(1) St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.* I, q. 21, a. 4. ad 3. (S)

FRIDAY, TWENTY-SEVENTH: Feast of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist. I was placed by the Infinite Goodness in a great repose and sweetness, especially at Holy Communion, feeling by an infused knowledge and with the very highest consolations of the Spirit a certain repose of the soul intermingled with the pains of my Redeemer in which the soul takes its delight; love and sorrow intertwined. In regard to this, I cannot make myself understood because it is not explainable; I was saying while I was serving Mass and when I saw Jesus; I was saying that He should send me the Seraphim to transpierce me with arrows of love,⁽¹⁾ that comes from the transports of love which the Infinite Mercy accords to my heart. I asked Him also to allow me to assuage my thirst for love by allowing me to drink at the infinite source of His Most Sacred Heart;⁽²⁾ but this did not happen during Most Holy Communion.

(1) St. Teresa: “While the soul is thus inflamed with love, it often happens that, from a passing thought or spoken word of how death delays its coming, the heart receives, it knows not how or whence, a blow as from a fiery dart. I do not say that this actually is a ‘dart’, but, whatever it may be, decidedly it does not come from any part of our being.” Interior Castle, VI, ch. XI, #2, p. 219. (S)

cf. St. Teresa: First Letter to P. Rodriguez Alvarez. (S)

(2) Eccli. XXIV, 29. (S)

Scaramalli, "After God has inebriated the soul with His holy love and has placed her within His arms in the sweet sleep of love, He there arouses in her heart... a certain thirst with which He draws her closer to Himself entirely ravished by love." Directorium Mysticum, III, X. (S)

Richard of St. Victor: "Whatever happens, the desire of the loving soul does not cease. She drinks, and drinking does not satisfy her thirst. But the more she drinks, the more she thirsts." De Grad. Viol. Charit. (S)

St. Paul of the Cross: "Keep yourself absorbed in God and drink deeply of that precious wine which the Supreme Good gives you, and never be tired of drinking; ask Him for it as a very needy and poor person, that He may let you drink abundantly; ask Him for it as if for an alms... To give to drink to the poor and thirsty ones is a work of mercy; say this to our Lord, for if He is pleased that we do this work of mercy, how much more willingly should He do it, He Who is an Abyss of Love and Mercy? Stay at His feet as a poor person, and ask Him to give you to drink, and let Him fill thee...you may ask for this also in Holy Communion and in that divine chamber of His most Sacred Heart." Letter, #161.

SATURDAY, THE TWENTY-EIGHTH: Feast of The Holy Innocents. In the morning I was dry and heavy of head. I remained thus for a while until the longed-for hour of Most Holy Communion came, after which I was moved by the Infinite Goodness to a very high recollection and to great loving affections with colloquies with our dear Spouse. I then recalled a remembrance of the flight into Egypt undertaken with such inconveniences, and of the suffering and also the sorrow of Blessed Mary and of St. Joseph, but especially of the Blessed Mary. In my poor soul there intermingled sorrow and love with great tears and sweetness. Of all this, the soul has a very high infused knowledge - all at one time or at times of one mystery alone, but it comprehends it in a moment without corporal forms or imaginary ones, but God infuses them in it by a work of His Infinite Charity and Mercy. In the very moment in which the soul comprehends most highly, it either takes delight therein or grieves over it according to the (nature of) the mystery; most often there is intermingled a holy complacency. The same night I had singular contrition over my great sins and defects and countless defects, knowing that I am an abyss of ingratitude. I had particular knowledge of myself throughout the entire day. I know that I say to my Divine Savior that I could call myself nothing other than a miracle of His Infinite Mercies. May His Most Holy Name be praised and glorified by all for it. Amen.

SUNDAY, THE TWENTY-NINTH: During my prayer in the night, I was in peace and also a little bit distracted. I had particular recollection in the offering of His Most Holy Life, Death and Passion as also during the supplications, above all for heretics, and I had a particular motion to pray for the conversion of England; especially since I would that the standard of the Holy Faith be exalted, so that devotion and respect, homage and frequent adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament, the ineffable mystery of the Most Holy Love of God⁽¹⁾ might be extended so that His Most Holy Name might be glorified in a most special manner. The desire to die as a martyr, especially for the Blessed Sacrament there where they do not believe in It, never leaves me. During Most Holy Communion I was almost without feeling, and then there came to me besides

some distractions. In the evening following thereupon, I was recollected and felt myself incited to repair the irreverences especially of the church, feeling myself to remedy these by some corrections as by the grace of God I apply myself to doing. It came to me to say, "Ah, my dear Jesus, would that we could immediately flee from (this) church and that angels could take the Most Holy Sacrament to a place where it would not be so profaned by irreverences and grave offenses." I say to Him that He grant me the strength to weep tears of blood as I so much desire.

(1) cf. Postcommunion for Feast of St. Paul of the Cross.

MONDAY, THIRTIETH: I was at first recollected and then during Most Holy Communion I was also particularly recollected and also moved to weep; the rest of the ensuing day I was amidst distraction and especially thoughts of things in the future; the enemy represented to me that great tribulations must come to my house.⁽¹⁾ I had also extreme desolation. In all things may the Will of our dear God be done. Amen.

(1) See the entry for Nov. 25 and the note.

TUESDAY, THIRTY-FIRST: Feast of St. Sylvester. I was dry and distracted; but at peace interiorly, bothered by the thoughts mentioned above; at Most Holy Communion (I was) in peace, yes, but almost without feeling and unmovable during my affections; toward evening, I was particularly recollected.

cf. *Imitation of Christ*, II, c. 9, #7.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY FIRST: I was raised very high by the Infinite Charity of our most sweet God to a great recollection and tears in abundance, especially after Most Holy Communion, during which I felt very sensible affections of holy love, seeming to be liquefied in God. I was relating my miseries with great confidence and with great sweetness to my Jesus; I told Him of the scruples that I may find in a vow which I have to deprive my body of unnecessary pleasures;⁽¹⁾ then I was telling Him that He knows that when I am hungry, I feel pleasure in eating even dry bread, and I hear said sweetly in my interior, "But that is necessary." Then my heart melted away and I burst into most tender tears mingled with great affections of love; I had also cognizance of the soul united in the bond of love to the most Sacred Humanity and at the same time liquefied and raised to high and sensible knowledge of the Divinity.⁽²⁾ This astonishing and very high marvel cannot be spoken of, nor can it be explained even by one who experienced it; and it is impossible because the soul understands inasmuch as God wills it; it experiences very sweet and exceedingly high marvels because (He Who is) Immense makes it understand it; but to narrate it afterwards is very much impossible; these are things which are experienced and comprehended in an instant; at least it seems so to the soul, because were they to endure a full thousand years it would not seem, in my opinion, to be a moment, because the soul is in her Infinite Good; I do not desire anything but His Glory, His Love, and that He should be feared and loved by all. I had other very special graces, especially in thinking of the most Holy Mystery of the Circumcision, and likewise in serving Mass I experienced such a high light concerning the charity which God shows me, and concerning my misery, ingratitude, and life, that I dared not even raise my eyes to look at the image of Mary; always with great tears mixed with great sweetness, especially in seeing my Spouse, Jesus, present in the

Blessed Sacrament.⁽²⁾

- (1) St. John of the Cross: "...be continually careful and earnest in imitating Christ in everything, conforming thyself to His life; for this end thou must meditate thereon, that thou mayest know how to imitate it, and conduct thyself in all things as He would have done Himself. To do this well, every satisfaction offered to the senses, which is not for God's honor and glory, must be renounced and rejected for the love of Jesus Christ, Who in this life had and sought no other pleasure than doing the will of His Father, which was His meat, as He tells us Himself.

"For instance, if the pleasure of listening to anything which tends not to the service of God presents itself, seek not that pleasure, neither give ear to what is said. If thou art offered the sight, pleasurable in itself, of things which do not lead thee nearer to God, seek not that pleasure, and abstain from that sight. Do the same also in conversation and every other commerce of society. Practice the same mortification with respect to the other senses, as far as possible; and if it be not possible, it will be enough not to seek the pleasure that is offered... Let the soul strive always, not after that which is most easy, but after that which is most difficult; not after that which is most pleasant but after that which is most unpleasant; not after that which is apt to give pleasure, but after that which giveth none..."

"He who will put this advice into practice," says St. John of the Cross, "will not need any other instruction, for the whole substance of perfection is summarized in this."

Ascent of Mt. Carmel, ch. XIII, I 3-8; pp. 60-62. (G)

cf. this vow of St. Paul of the Cross with that of St. Teresa of Avilla and that of St. Andre Avellina.

- (2) Father Stanislao interprets the narratives of this day as the mystical espousals or transforming union of our Holy Founder. We will attempt a brief outline of what he says:

St. Teresa remarks that "in one sort of rapture, the soul ... is struck by some word of God which it either remembers or hears. His Majesty, touched with pity by what He has seen it suffer for so long past in its longing for Him, appears to increase the spark I described in the interior of the spirit until it entirely ignites the soul which rises with new life like a phoenix from the flames." (*Interior Castle*, VI, ch. IV, #3, p. 154). St. Paul says the same: "Then I heard said sweetly ... then my heart melted away..."

St. Teresa says that at the first time this grace is usually accompanied by a vision of the Sacred Humanity: "We now come to speak of divine and spiritual nuptials. The first time God bestows this grace, He, by an imaginary vision of His Most Sacred Humanity, reveals Himself to the soul so that it may understand and realize the sovereign gift it is receiving." (o.cit. VII, ch. II, #1, p. 235). St. Paul speaks "of the soul united in the bond of love to the Most Sacred Humanity, etc."

In this case the Man-God is not the God of contemplation, but the means, not the terminus, but the way, as St. Thomas says (2-2, 82, 3 and 2). For Christ is the gate (John X, 9), and one cannot enjoy the food of heavenly delights, except by passing through the gate of the Sacred Humanity. (St. Thomas, In Cap. XIV, Joan. lect II).

We do not know in what way Christ appeared to St. Paul on this day. St. Teresa says that He appeared to her glorious as in His Resurrection, (*Life*, ch. XXVIII, #4, 5, p. 246-247).

Having passed through the gate of the Sacred Humanity, the soul of Paul found itself in the presence of the august Majesty of God. What did it see?

The Apostle says that he hears “secret words” (II Cor. 12, 4). Paul of the Cross says that “this astonishing and very high marvel cannot be spoken of, nor can it be explained even by one who experiences it.” And St. Teresa, “nor does the latter (the soul) so understand what happens as to be able to explain it to others afterwards” (*Interior Castle*, VI, ch. IV, #3, p. 155). Paul calls it a “high and sensible knowledge”, that is, an “experimental knowledge of God”, which “liquifies the soul”. Three times he speaks of this liquefaction of this day. St. Gregory says that the kiss of the Spouse of the Canticle (a figure of the mystical union) liquifies the soul of the Beloved.

Paul does not attempt to describe the consequences of the liquefaction, “but St. Teresa uses several comparisons (*Interior Castle*, VII, ch. II, #1, 3, 6, 5, pp. 235-238). St. John of the Cross remarks that the soul “is at last transformed and perfected interiorly in the fire of love; not only is it united by this love, but it has now become one living flame within it” (*Living Flame of Love*, Prologue # 4, p. 17, for first redaction, and p. 115 for second. Cf. *Spiritual Canticle*, stanza 22, verse I, #3, p. 140, for first redaction, and pp. 307, 308 for second). St. Paul intimates these effects when he says, “the soul is in her Infinite Good”, that is, she is immersed and lost in God and becomes one with Him. (I Cor. 6, 17).

St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross both tell us that in these perfect raptures the espousal of the soul with God is consummated. True, some saints have had external signs of this espousal, as also did Paul, on the feast of the Presentation on Monte Argentario, but these external circumstances are not necessary, for they are only signs. Cf. *Interior Castle*, VI, ch. IV, #1, p. 154, and #4, p. 155; also St. John of the Cross, *Exercise of Love*, strophe 14, 15.

Finally, St. Teresa describes the effects of this union. “If, as David says, ‘With the Holy Thou shalt be holy’, doubtless by its becoming one with the Almighty, by this sovereign union of spirit with spirit, the soul must gather strength, as we know the saints did, to suffer and to die... This must be the reason of the severe penances by many of the saints... This caused the zeal felt by our Father Elias for the honor of God and desires of St. Dominic and St. Francis to draw souls to praise the Almighty” (*Interior Castle*, VII, ch. IV, #16, pp. 258, 259). Without doubt these are the “very special graces” which St. Paul mentions towards the end.

.....

We have ventured this resume from Fr. Stanislao because the other Paulacrucian authority, Fr. Gaetan, does not agree with him in this point. We refer the reader to Chapter ‘The Second’ of Fr. Gaetan’s *Oraison et ascension mystique di S. Paul*. On the testimony of Rosa Calabrese, who is relating what St. Paul told her, Fr. Gaetan places the mystical espousals on the Feast of the Presentation, 1723. Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, in his recent work *La Vie Interieure*, follows Fr. Gaetan, when he writes, “Before the age of 31, St. Paul of the Cross received the grade of transforming union... This signal grace was accompanied by apparitions of our Lord, of the Mother of God, and many saints”. II. 666.

EPILOGUE

At the close of the retreat, St. Paul of the Cross gave the diary and the Holy Rule to his Bishop. Later he made the painful trip to Genoa of which his biographers speak⁽¹⁾ and then retired again into his cell at San Carlo. On January 25th he changed his abode going to the Church of St. Stefano, which he calls “a paradise of solitude... I do not know where I could find a place more fitting, more devotional, and more removed from the noises of the world, unless I should go into a desert.”⁽²⁾

Yet Paul was not content, and on the following day we find him beginning his Passionist missionary life. For the first time in the holy habit, he shows himself a zealous hunter for souls,⁽³⁾ going forth to give the fruit of his contemplation to others and carry them along to God in the torrent of his own ardent love.

He writes to Msgr. [Bishop] Gattinara: “Sunday, that is, yesterday, I began going about with the cross and little bell, inviting the people to praise God at the Christian Doctrine, and through the mercy of the Great God, all turned out well, and for the first time there came to me a particular number of people, and I had again great fervor in speaking the holy word of God to them. While I was going through the streets, when I would turn around and would see crowds of children close by, my heart rejoiced so greatly, that I kept back the tears by force. I do not want to omit telling you that the devil uses all his infamous wiles (which I do not write now, in order not to be too long) in order to disturb this work of God. It is enough that I can say nothing except, *Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat*; and now I see clearly that it is God’s most holy will that I perform these exercises.”⁽⁴⁾

A few days later (February 6) St. Paul of the Cross wrote to a nun of the convent of Augustines at Castellazzo. This is the first of his many letters of spiritual direction.⁽⁵⁾ In the following month (March) he writes to his bishop, asking permission to give a discourse to the nuns of this convent on Monday, Thursday and Saturday, together without a devout meditation.⁽⁶⁾

Thus, from the very first of his religious life, St. Paul of the Cross gives us the example of the perfect Passionist. For he had withdrawn far from the society of men and the noise of the world to devote himself in solitude to his own spiritual advancement; to prayers, fastings and other pious exercises by which he became more and more inflamed with divine love. Thus, having grown stronger in Christian virtues, he became better qualified and more ready to preach the word of God with more abundant fruit, stirring in every place, to the utmost of his power, the practice of piety and a grateful remembrance of and veneration for the Passion and Death of Christ the Lord.⁽⁷⁾

(1) *Life*, by Fr. Pius of the Holy Ghost, p. 44, 45.

(2) *Lettere di San Paolo della Croce*, #2.

(3) Antiphon at the Magnificat, II Vespers of Feast.

(4) *Lettere di San Paolo della Croce*, #2.

(5) op. cit. #5.

(6) op. cit. #3.

(7) Adapted from our Holy Rules, #10.

APPENDIX

Pere Gaetan de Saint Nom de Marie has translated large portions of the diary in his work, *Oraison et Ascension Mystique de S. Paul de la Croix* (pp. 30-83). After an introduction in which he gives his reasons for believing our Holy Founder was acquainted with the mystical theology of St. Francis de Sales and St. John of the Cross, he analyzes the contents under four heads:

I. SPIRITUAL PURGATION.

A) Active – January 1.

B) Passive - “It would be hard to answer with mathematical precision ... the exact duration of these periods“ (pp. 44, 45). Nov. 21, 25, 29, Dec. 23, 1-13, 21.

II. HIS PRAYER ON THE PASSION OF OUR LORD:

A) Pere Gaetan cites the following letter:

“... The point that Your Reverence does not understand, namely, how by love you can make your own the sufferings of sweet Jesus, will be made comprehensible to you when it pleases the Divine Majesty. This is a work wholly divine. The soul, all immersed in pure love, without images, in pure and naked faith, suddenly finds herself, when it pleases the Sovereign Good, plunged wholly in the sea of the Savior’s sufferings. In a glance of faith she understands them all without understanding, for the Passion of Jesus is a labor of love. And as the soul remains thus lost in God, Who is all charity, all love, it becomes a fountain of love and grief, for the mind is entirely penetrated with it; it is wholly drowned in dolorous love and amorous pain. *Opus Dei!* Work of God! Truly, you will understand nothing of this unless the Sovereign Master instruct you... As for me, when I try to explain it, I can only babble. I have said nothing, nothing, nothing.“ Letter #1137.

Pere Gaetan then suggests for comparison Nov. 26; Dec. 8, 20, 27, 28, 29.

B) Another letter is cited:

“... When you go to pray, always go clothed and wrapped in the sacred sufferings of Jesus, but in pure faith, without imagination. To speak confidentially between ourselves, I do precisely what I am telling you and I find it very good. Loaded with the cords, chains, blows, lashes, wounds, thorns, cross and death of my Savior, I fly with Him to the bosom of the Eternal Father where the gentle Jesus always remains, and let myself be entirely engulfed in His immense divinity. In this form I adore, I love, etc., in sacred silence of faith and love. I don’t know how all this escapes my pen, for I do not usually speak about myself; on the contrary, I am as secretive as possible. But with you, I speak in sacred and secret confidence in Jesus Christ. You can try it. I hope you will find it helpful.“ Letter #1647.

III. CONSOLATIONS

“...make scarcely any account of extraordinary communications received in prayer“ (p. 65).

cf. *Dark Night of the Soul*, Bk. II ch. XVII.

Poulain, *The Graces of Interior Prayer*. ch. VIII. #9, ch. XXIX, #6.

(A) Four times in ecstatic prayer or ecstasy - Dec. 4, 23, 26; Jan. 1.

(B) Four times very probably in ecstasy - Nov. 26, 27, Dec. 27, 28.

(C) About 20 times we hesitate to decide:

- 1) 9 times: "I was recollected..."
- 2) 6 times: "I was particularly recollected..."
- 3) Dec. 19: "I had sweetness mingled with tears..."
- 4) Dec. 5: "I had much sweetness..."
- 5) Dec. 22: "I was recollected with much fervor..."
- 6) Dec. 24: "I had more recollection and tears..."

"What degree of prayer do these indicate? ... We who are outsiders can only admire God's work in the soul of his servant, without assuming to assign a code for fitting his every expression with a degree of prayer." (p. 72)

But compare Fr. Stanislao:

"It seems to me that I can now assert with solid foundations that his ordinary prayer was the prayer of quiet, and that at times he was raised to full union and ecstasy. The reader may judge whether I am wrong in seeing in the last day of the retreat the high gift which mystical doctors call the 'spiritual espousals', notwithstanding the reticence ambiguity with which the Saint describes the rapture of that day." (p. 37)

Fr. Stanislao explanation of the words "recollected" and "particularly recollected":

"...if the prayer of quiet is therefore a recollection of the soul, the full union is a recollection more profound – or a particular recollection. And so St. Paul uses this term to indicate to his director a more intimate union between his soul and God" (p. 39).

cf. St. Teresa, *Interior Castle*, IV, c – III and *Life by Herself*, ch. XV.

IV. SUBLIME TENDENCY TOWARD VIRTUE.

cf. Poulain, op. cit. Ch. XII, # I.

A) Humility.

cf. *Dark Night of the Soul*, Bk. II, ch. XVIII.

St. Teresa, *Life by Herself*, ch. XV, XIX.

Nov. 30, Dec. 5, 28, Jan. 1.

B) Love of God.

Dec. 27.

C) Love of Suffering.

Nov. 26, Dec. 3, 6 15-18, 21.

D) Zeal for Souls.

Dec. 4, 7, 9, 15-18, 6, 7, 26, 29.