

(From the Yellow Book - I beseech you, listen to my messages and live them)

(P. 171 - 173)

"Pray in order to be able to accept the Cross"

If we ask ourselves what Our Lady has said about suffering and the cross we will not find much except several references, for invitations. Once, it was Good Friday, She said in a message, "*Do not be afraid to carry your cross, my Son Jesus is with you.*" Our Lady knows that we have the cross but She invites us to carry it, as we are not alone, "*My Son Jesus is with you.*"

Last year, before the Feast of the Cross, She again said, "*I invite you to pray before the Cross because many great graces come from it*", and She also invited us all to consecrate ourselves. Why consecrate ourselves to the Cross and how? Our Lady did not explain how, but we can understand what it means to consecrate ourselves. On this point we are helped by the tradition of the Church and the mystic experience of many saints. To consecrate oneself to the Cross and through the Cross to Our Lord means to abandon ourselves, to give one's own life. The following is very important with regard to consecrating ourselves to the Cross and that is to ask ourselves if this Cross speaks to me. In every Christian family and certainly also in your family there is a cross either on the wall or on your Rosary. How often do we swear in the vicinity of the Cross or behave badly, selfishly, with pride, offend others or do not want to be reconciled. If this is so and it is often so, this means that we are not consecrated to the Cross; that is the Cross does not speak to us, because the words of the Cross are always, "be reconciled, forgive, love unconditionally".

If we have understood the Cross we have understood everything. But if we do not understand the Cross we will never understand anything of our life as a Christian. Our Lady wants us to understand the Cross because She herself understood it, not because She ran away from it, but because She accepted it, with her Son Jesus.

In the last message She spoke about the Cross and about suffering, expressing a wish, "*I wish that your cross may be a joy.*" If She so wishes, this means that it is possible. She never utters a word which is out of place; so if She expresses this wish, it must be possible for me and for you, your suffering and mine, and our crosses become a joy. She also showed us how we can do this, "*Especiallly, dear children, pray to be able to accept the cross and suffering, with love*".

She does not invite us immediately to accept this, but to pray in order to be able to accept it. If we are sad or have many problems, much suffering or if we are desperate, perhaps at this point we are unable to accept this message. Maybe it will make us angry if one says, "Take your cross and accept it with joy and love." We may ask ourselves, when was it last that we prayed for the grace to accept the cross and suffering, with love, as Jesus did? This is the point we must understand, but can only do so through prayer. Our Lady is not happy when we suffer and is certainly not pleased when we have to carry our crosses. We should not feel afraid in the face of this invitation, "Accept with love your suffering." Our Lady wants to teach us a strategy by which we can bear the cross and suffering. We have already so often found false methods of facing suffering. So when we try to run away from suffering, from the cross, and we do not want to accept it, every cross we do accept becomes twice as heavy. By inviting us to accept suffering She shows us a path, a way for healing. In fact She goes on to say, "*I can only in this way give you with joy the graces and healing which Jesus allows me.*"

You see, when you accept suffering with love, as Jesus did, this is the final condition for being healed. I want to tell you something else in regard to perceiving two sources of suffering. One kind of suffering comes because we love and the other because we do not want to love, that is because we sin, because we hate. When one loves, this love is always connected to suffering and to the cross because love always guides us towards others and we always meet with so much suffering in others. If we love them we are bound to suffer, but this suffering makes us grow, helps us and the others too. For example, when a mother loves her child who is ill she suffers and the mother being with her child becomes a more mature mother and her love is purified. It is always like this. This suffering always accompanies love and at this juncture we can perhaps better understand the cause of Jesus' and Our Lady's suffering.

Humanly speaking Our Lady says she suffers and the visionaries have seen her cry many times. Those in Heaven cannot suffer, but Our Lady tells us in this way that She loves us and wants to teach us about love so that we can understand suffering and be able to bear it and be able to help others to be saved by suffering. From this suffering which comes because we love, we cannot be saved because Jesus himself was not saved. But there is another kind of suffering. If somebody hates and does not want to forgive, what is this? Rancour. He can never be content or happy because hate destroys; he cannot bring life to us. This hate is dangerous because it personally destroys those who bear hate and do not want to be reconciled and these people then destroy others. Think of an alcoholic, one who drinks excessively, what is his suffering? How does his family suffer? it becomes a problem and the cause of much suffering. And if somebody takes drugs, how much suffering there is! Do you see the point? If only we Christians understood this suffering that comes from sin we would understand that we must leave sin in order to have love. I am telling you that when we possess love, suffering does not interest us any more, only one thing interests us and that is to love in every circumstance and every moment. And here today in celebrating the Feast of the Cross we should understand this point of Christian life. And so Our Lady invites us to come near to the Cross, pray before it and consecrate ourselves to it. And She is not afraid because She knows what significance the Cross and suffering had in her life and that of her Son. Our Lady has understood what her duty was; we are born under the Cross when Jesus said, "Mother, this is your Son" and then to the disciple, "Here is your Mother". We can well say that in that instant our Church and our community were born. As every mother, Blessed Mary wants to educate us and as Queen of the prophets She could not hide the Cross from us, She could not fail to speak about suffering and had to invite us to conversion, because all prophets had to do the same. Only the false prophets have promised peace and have not spoken of suffering or the need for conversion. Our Lady as Queen of the prophets invites us to pray in order to accept our crosses and with our cross and our suffering to be able to build a new world.

(Fr. Slavko Barbaric - 14th September 1986)