

† Praised be Jesus, Mary, and Saint Joseph, now and forever! Amen. †

Chapter 4

Holy Indifference

Christ:

My child, let Me do with you as I please. I know what is best for you. You think as a human being, so that your judgments are often influenced by your feelings, moods or prejudices.

2. I take better care of you than you could ever take of yourself. Anyone who does not give Me his whole-hearted attention and loyalty, is taking a great risk. I alone can lead you to eternal life. Let Me do with you as I please. Whatever I do will always be best for you.

3. Knowing all things, I know your most important needs. I want you to gain the perfect and unending joy of Heaven. For this reason I will place you at times in a spiritual darkness of doubts and confusion. Then again I will let you enjoy the light of My truth and joy. One day I will console you, and on the next day you may find life hard and sorrowful. But through all these changing conditions, remember that My hand is leading you on toward Heaven.

4. Follow My Will in all things. Be just as ready to experience suffering as to have joy, just as glad to be poor and needy as to be well off. If you prefer My Will in all these things, you will be preferring the Perfect Wisdom and the Highest Good.

Think:

God made me for the perfect life of Heaven. Whatever He sends me is sent with this goal in view. Some things I can remedy and improve in my daily life, while other things are beyond my control. After I have done my best, I should accept the results as God's Will for me. Be it hard or easy, pleasant or disagreeable, I can always be sure that God knows, wants and permits what is good for my soul.

Pray:

My God and my All, You made and control all things in my daily life. How can I forget this truth and complain about anything? Grant me the holy dispositions which you mentioned a moment ago. Make me equally willing to receive from Your hand the sweet and the bitter, the joy and the sorrow. I thank you now for whatever You decide to send me. Only keep me from sin, and I shall fear neither death nor hell. As long as You do not separate me from You forever, nor blot me out of the book of life, whatever suffering comes to me will not hurt me for long. Grant me the grace to see, love and prefer Your Will in everything that happens to me today. Amen.

October 30th

Saint Alphonsus Rodriguez

Confessor, Jesuit Coadjutor

(1531 - 1617)

Saint Alphonsus Rodriguez was born in Spain in 1531, of a well-to-do commercial household of Segovia, the third of eleven children. When Alphonsus was eleven years old, he and his older brother were sent to a Jesuit college which had just been founded. He had already manifested great joy in serving the Jesuits when they had given a mission in Segovia and lodged in his father's country home; now he rejoiced in the one year of study he was able to undertake, before the death of his father interrupted these pursuits. His brother, after certain affairs were settled, returned to school, but Alphonsus was obliged to remain at home, destined one day to replace his father.

He accepted this lot and in 1557 married a virtuous wife; they were blessed with a daughter and two sons. But God intended to sanctify this soul of predilection by great and heroic sufferings. Only five years later he was already a widower, with only one little boy of three years remaining for him to raise. He believed this calamity must have come upon him for his sins, and he developed a great horror of sin; he asked God to let him bear even the torments of hell here on earth, rather than fall into a single mortal sin. He offered himself entirely to God, for whatever He might desire of him. Then he began a life of severe penance. A year later his mother died. He looked at his beautiful and innocent child, the only bond which still attached him to the earth; and he prayed to God that if ever that child should offend Him, to take him at once. His prayer was granted before long.

Alphonsus left Segovia and went to Valencia, where a Jesuit priest he had loved and admired earlier in Segovia was then stationed. This priest helped him to attain a loving confidence in God. He was thirty-eight years old when he requested his admission to the Order, but insufficient instruction and his unstable health, affected by his austerities, were regarded as obstacles. For two years he was employed as a preceptor of the young by two families of that city; finally, when he renewed his request for admission, he was accepted.

His religious life was spent primarily as a porter in a Jesuit college on the island of Majorca; his interior life was a succession of moral tortures, borne with perfect humility and love of God. The demons would not leave alone this holy man who made it his joy to take upon himself all the most humble and fatiguing offices. He cast himself, as it were, into the abyss of the love of Jesus Crucified. Twice he was thrown down a cement staircase by the devil; but his love for his crucified Saviour was proof against all such attempts on his virtue. He was afflicted with various illnesses, which plunged him into a sort of preliminary purgatory but did not change his life of effacement and service.

In 1591 he was already 60 years old when he received an order to sleep thereafter in a bed; until then he had contented himself with a few hours of sleep on a table or in a chair. He served a chapel where the elderly or infirm fathers celebrated late Masses. He was told to write the story of his life, which work he began with hesitation in 1604. He was not spared the trial of being misunderstood and underestimated by a new Superior, but he found only joy and consolation in the public reproaches he received. He wrote in his book of maxims: "In the difficulties which are placed before me, why should I not act like a donkey? When one speaks ill of him — the donkey says nothing. When he is mistreated — he says nothing. When he is forgotten — he says nothing. When no food is given him —

he says nothing. When he is made to advance — he says nothing. When he is despised — he says nothing. When he is overburdened — he says nothing... The true servant of God must do likewise, and say with David: Before You I have become like a beast of burden.”

The story of his association in his old age with Saint Peter Claver, the novice whose future mission he saw by a vision and foretold to him, is written into the annals of the Church in letters of gold; the two Saints were canonized together by Pope Leo XIII after more than two centuries.

Saint Alphonsus died in 1617; already he was known and loved as a Saint by the population. In 1825 he was beatified, and in 1888 Pope Leo XIII closed the inquiries after two new miracles had been verified, and proceeded to the ceremonies of canonization in Rome. The memory of Saint Alphonsus remains in benediction in the Order and in the hearts of those who know the value of the Cross of Christ and its perpetuity in His Mystical Body.

Source: Biography of Saint Alphonsus Rodriguez, text by Abbé L. Tabourier, in *Un Saint pour chaque jour du mois* (Paris: 1932), Vol. 10, October.

Saturday

Our Lady's Day

(Excerpt from a prayer to our Lady, Help of Christians)

Immaculate Virgin, Mother of God and our Mother Mary, thou seest the attacks that are everywhere made by the devil and the world upon the Catholic faith, in which, by God's grace, we intend to live and die, in order that we may attain to eternal glory. Do thou, the Help of Christians, renew thine ancient victories and save thy children. We entrust to thee our firm purpose never to enroll ourselves in societies hostile to our holy religion; do thou, who art all holy, present to thy divine Son our good resolutions and obtain for us the grace we need to be unshaken in their observance even to the end of life . . . Protect the people who proclaim thee Queen and by the power of thine intercession hasten the day when all nations shall be gathered at the feet of the chief Shepherd. Amen.

Mary, Help of Christians, pray for us!

Source: *The Raccolta*, revised by Pope Pius XII and published in English in 1957.
Imp. 1958 by Cardinal Spellman

Closing thought

One act of resignation to the divine will in that which is contrary to our inclination, is of more value than ten thousand words of thanks for that which conforms to our taste.

~ St. Vincent de Paul

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