

Jesus † Mary † Joseph
A. Nature, Value, and Control of Temptations
Chapter 43 - Man's Daily Trials

Christ:

My child, one who does not know My plan might easily be discouraged by the trials of this earthly life. Life on earth is so short. Hardly ever is it free from grief and troubles. Men on earth are stained with many sins, deceived by many desires, enslaved by many fears, endangered by many snares, distracted by many curiosities, entangled with vanities, surrounded by errors, tired with labors, troubled by temptations, exhausted with pleasure, tormented with many wants.

2. Afflictions and sorrows are seldom absent. You are surrounded by so many traps and enemies. Scarcely does one trouble or temptation go, when another arrives. Often enough, the first trouble is still with you when others come. You may wonder that anyone can love this earthly existence with its misfortunes, bitterness, and miseries. Yet, in spite of all this, many love this earthly life and seek all their delight in it.

3. Yet, My loyal follower can smile and be glad through all the darkness and trials. He does not fix his eyes on the present trial, but on the main purpose of his earthly life. He looks beyond the present darkness to the horizon where the light of the eternal day will soon break forth. Then will you be freed from the miserable slavery of your unreasonable desires and selfish ambitions. Then will you find your perfect joy, your all-satisfying life. You will possess at last the true liberty of Heaven without any hindrances, without pain of body or mind – the liberty which I alone can give.

Think:

Live on earth is short and full of dissatisfactions and necessities. Yet God is a wise and loving Father. Every parent seems stern when he is training his children. When they have grown up strong in virtue and firm in character, only then do they appreciate their father's wisdom and love. So, too, with us. We little dream how weak we are until we feel the call to ease, selfishness, and pride. We might never suspect what we really are if God had not given us a life of trial on earth. God made me for heaven, a reward I cannot even begin to imagine. He asks that I do what I can, to be less unworthy of Heaven, by striving on earth for some of His goodness and holiness.

Pray:

My loving God, what good is it for me to think myself better than I really am? Lord, if it were not for my earthly trials, I might never have known how selfish and proud I really am. I thank Thee, my God, for giving me this chance to become in fact what I desire to be in theory. Actions are the proof of true virtue. Every trouble and sorrow on earth was placed here, or permitted, by Thine infinite wisdom. Thou knows what I need, to make me a truly holy man. Some day I shall thank Thee for many a trial which now weighs me down. Make me unselfish enough to follow Thy commands, whether my life be filled with prosperity or misery. Treat me as Thou wishes, and it will be best for me. Amen.

December 13th
Saint Lucy of Syracuse, Virgin and Martyr (†303)

Saint Lucy was a young Christian maiden of Syracuse in Sicily. She had already offered her virginity to God and refused to marry, when her mother pressed her to accept the offer of a young pagan. The mother was afflicted afterwards for several years by an issue of blood, and all human remedies were ineffectual. Lucy reminded her mother that a woman in the Gospel, suffering from the same disorder, had been healed by the divine power. They determined to make a journey to Catania, a port of Sicily, where the tomb of Saint Agatha, martyred in 251, was already a site of pilgrimage. "Saint Agatha," Lucy said, "stands ever in the sight of Him for whom she died. Only touch her sepulchre with faith, and you will be healed." The Saint of Catania had already saved that city, when Mount Etna had erupted the year after her martyrdom: some frightened pagans, seeing a course of lava descending directly toward the city, had uncovered her tomb, and at once it had stopped.

Saint Lucy and her mother spent an entire night praying by the tomb, until, overcome by weariness, both fell asleep. Saint Agatha appeared in vision to Saint Lucy, and addressing her sister in the faith, foretold her mother's recovery and Lucy's future martyrdom: "You will soon be the glory of Syracuse, as I am of Catania." At that instant the cure was effected; and in her gratitude the mother allowed her daughter to distribute her wealth among the poor, and to conserve her virginity.

The young man who had sought her hand in marriage denounced her as a Christian during the persecution of Diocletian, but Our Lord, by a special miracle, saved from outrage this virgin He had chosen for His own. The executioners who would have taken her to a house of ill fame were unable to move her. The exasperated prefect gave orders to attach her by cords to harnessed bulls, but the bulls, too, did not succeed, and he accused her of being a magician. "How can you, a feeble woman, triumph over a thousand men?" She replied, "Bring ten thousand, and they will not be able to combat against God!" A fire kindled around her did her no harm, though she was covered with resin and oil. When a sword was plunged into her heart, the promise made at the tomb of Saint Agatha was fulfilled. Saint Lucy died, predicting peace for the Church.

Sources: Les Petits Bollandistes: Vies des Saints, by Msgr. Paul Guérin (Bloud et Barral: Paris, 1882), Vol. 14; Vie des Saints pour tous les jours de l'année, by Abbé L. Jaud (Mame: Tours, 1950).

Preparing the Stable - December 13th - Provisions

Bring a supply of food to the crib. Deprive yourself of some food at meal time; or a cigarette, or candy; especially when you feel like smoking or eating.

Ejaculation: Jesus, be my strength and nourishment.

Jesus † Mary † Joseph

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