



## The Tenderness and Strength of Jesus' Love for the Father

Jesus' love for His Father began at the instant of His conception, in all the fullness of its tenderness and strength. For the rest of us, on the other hand, spiritual love of God usually awakens only very slowly. The life of the senses and of the imagination develops in us before spiritual life, and too often our first tendency is to enjoy the pleasures of the senses which surround us. It sometimes takes many years for generous love to blossom even between members of the same family. This is the love that desires the welfare of another, which gives itself, lavishes itself, forgets itself, the love that consummates the perfect union of hearts. The progress of our love for God, beyond the reach of the senses, is even more gradual as a rule. The human will is, of course, naturally inclined to love the Author of human nature more than itself, and to love the true and the good. Little by little, we also learn that God is the supreme and wholly supernatural beauty. Yet the efficacious love of God, the desire for His kingdom and His glory, wins out only with great difficulty over our selfishness, and our more or less unruly love of creatures. It succeeds only by slow degrees in inspiring all our affections, vivifying and ennobling them. Our poor hearts are slow to give themselves to God for all eternity.



Christ's Heart, on the other hand, did not hesitate a moment to give itself entirely to His Father. From the first instant of His existence, His Heart possessed the fullest generosity. As St. Paul says: "When He [Christ] cometh into the world, He

saith: *Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldest not: but a body Thou hast fitted to Me ... Behold, I come to do Thy will, O God.*" (Heb. 10:5,9)

No one knows how tender was the filial love of the Child Jesus for His Father. Indeed, He loved His  
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Holy Mother and St. Joseph deeply, and from the first moments of His life He loved souls ardently. But how much more did He love His Father in Heaven, His one and only Father!

This powerful love derived from the start from the supernatural love that always enlightened His sacred soul. This light revealed to Him without any obscurity the infinite splendor and the infinite goodness of the heavenly Father. This light guided His preferences, and so He could not err in His choices of affection.

This tender and enlightened love of Jesus for His Father inspired and continues to inspire in Him adoration and thanksgiving. As He Himself told us: "God is a spirit; and they that adore Him, must adore Him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24)

Adoration springs spontaneously from His heart. He is happy to acknowledge that God is infinitely good in Himself, that He is our Creator and our Father. He acknowledges this in practice by bowing with love before His infinite majesty. Jesus even rejoices in His own abasement, in His hidden life, ignored by men. He annihilates Himself, to some extent, in terms of His human nature, so that He may better acknowledge God's infinite sanctity. Thus we bow and fall to our knees upon entering a church, to acknowledge our own nothingness before the infinite greatness of the Most High. But this is only a momentary attitude on our part. We have hours of adoration and hours of forgetfulness and indifference. Christ, for His part, never for a moment ceased adoring His Father, from the first instant of His life until His death on the cross. And this adoration continues now and will continue forever within His sacred soul, in acknowledgment of His Father's infinite goodness and as a song of praise to Him. Christ the Savior is the praise of God.

This tender love also ceaselessly inspires Christ to acts of thanksgiving; for God is not merely good in Himself, He is our benefactor, and no one will ever receive more from Him than did Christ. What manner of thanksgiving has Christ made? He thanks God for Himself and for all creation, for the treasure of supernatural life given to souls: "I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast

revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight." (Matt. 11:25f)

The strength and generosity of Jesus' love are as great as its tenderness. From the first moment, this love inspired in Him not only adoration and thanksgiving, but reparation as well. In fact, while God is a benefactor, He is also a Father who has been outraged by His children. He is the Creator and Master that thousands of souls refuse to acknowledge, even though they have been created to sing His praises more perfectly than do the stars in the firmament.

Besides, in saying to His Father, "*Behold, I come,*" (Heb. 10:9) Jesus from the first moment of His life offered Himself up as a victim of reparation in the place of the guilty, in the place of entire peoples who through pride and error are unwilling even to pronounce God's name when they need His help most.

Many saints have been enlightened from their childhood with regard to their providential mission, whether apostolic or reparative. Why, then should Jesus not have been enlightened regarding His own mission? And from the first moment Jesus, foreseeing Calvary, loved His Father and offered Him in advance His entire life and His death on the cross. This is the strongest and most generous love. It is the love of the Word made flesh which pleases God more than all of men's sins displease Him.

Heart of Jesus, burning furnace of charity, have mercy on us! What is sweeter or more tender than divine charity? What is stronger than the fire in a furnace which burns and consumes all? Hell makes furious efforts against the Savior, but its rage merely arouses His love to even more heroic acts which change the opprobrium that envelops Him into an incense of adoration. Heart of Jesus, loaded down with opprobrium, have mercy on us! This is strength in the highest degree united to the most profound humility and the greatest tenderness. "Love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell." (Cant. 8:6) Jesus, most powerful, have mercy on us! Jesus, meek and humble of heart, have mercy on us! This love is the source of all virtues, of all energy. Heart of Jesus, abyss of all virtues, have mercy on us! Whether the Savior's heart is touched by an angel or a man, even when the devil strikes it, it always answers with love of God. This created love within Christ's sacred soul is the highest manifestation of the uncreated love of God. †

# Modesty, the Handmaid of Purity

**D**o we remember what Our Lady told Jacinta of Fatima? "Certain fashions will be introduced which will greatly offend Almighty God." No doubt the children of Fatima would recoil with horror and outrage if they came upon the fashions of today. Arms hang out, chests and stomachs are exposed, knees cross and uncross for all to see. Men, as well as women, appear in public in less than one would have worn to the beach 100 years ago. To top all of this, the vulgarity of exposure is highlighted by the tattoos that have become the recent fad.

Modesty is also deportment, how we carry ourselves, how we move, how we avert our eyes. Modesty is a sister to humility - they are the twin reins that restrain our "self". Most importantly, modesty is the guardian of purity. When we relax our modesty in dress, we lose with it our modesty in deportment. There is a terrible consequence to this: No longer practicing the modesty which preserves our own purity, we forget the dignity with which our bodies and souls were raised at baptism. Sadder still, we lose the vigilance necessary to preserve our children's innocence. Clothing, posture, deportment, purity: all these things are linked through modesty.

## How modest should we be?

In the early 1900s, God prepared a young Brazilian girl by the name of Cecy Cony for the religious life by which He espoused her when she became of age. He allowed Cecy to see and hear her Guardian Angel during most of her life. Cecy was five when she first "met" her angel at a carnival. Lost among frightening people she did not know, she suddenly realized the presence of her angel, whom she later called "New Friend." On that day, her angel restored her to her family servants. After that, she was aware that her New Friend accompanied her everywhere. The little girl found in him a companion who assuaged all her fears, prayed with her, instructed her and protected her.

When Cecy was a young woman, she became Sister Maria Antonia of the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity. Among these sisters she lived out the rest of her thirty-nine years in humble obedience, a favorite plaything of Our Lord.

One of the very smallest instructions, but most meaningful is described in her autobiography (written under obedience), *Under Angel's Wings*. Recalling her formative years, she writes:

If my New Friend had not filled me with the greatest respect for his holy presence, I think that I should have acquired at an early age careless habits, more or less immodest. I realized perfectly well,



"See that you despise not one of these little ones; for I say to you, that their angels in Heaven always see the face of My Father in Heaven." (Mt. 18:10)

To order *Under Angel's Wings* call Our Lady's Book Service at 1-800-263-8160 or visit [www.fatimashoppe.org](http://www.fatimashoppe.org)

when I was in the presence of the Sisters [who taught her at school] or of other persons for whom I had great respect, that I should be careful of the postures I assumed. But I learned to be even more careful when I was alone, for then I felt myself being observed by my New Friend.

Until I was eight years of age it was Acacia [the family servant] who dressed and bathed me, combed my hair, put me to bed and called me in the morning. I had learned to rely on her too much; so it was not until I was ten or eleven that I dispensed

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# News from the Apostolate

**T**he miraculous waters of Fatima are overshadowed by the famous curative waters of Lourdes. But a spring near the Capelinha at Fatima continues these many years to flow with waters of efficacious blessing. Each year on our October pilgrimage, the Fatima Center obtains water for its friends. Back home, volunteers fill the small vials to pass out to those who request them. If you would like some water for yourself or another, please do not hesitate to contact the Fatima Center. One of our own staff recently had a pre-cancerous growth. She applied Fatima water to it, and the growth disappeared. †

## MODESTY, THE HANDMAID OF PURITY

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completely with her services in this regard. Oftentimes, on getting up in the morning and dressing myself – for example, putting on my stockings – I was not careful of my position or of my dress. At such times I immediately felt the holy presence of my Guardian Angel so vividly, without ever seeing him, and I so strongly felt his reproof of my improper posture, that, being thoroughly ashamed, I would close my eyes lest I see his holy face regarding me sternly.

This scene was repeated innumerable times, sometimes when I was alone, other times when I was in the midst of the most interesting games. Through the grace of the good God I do not remember ever resisting these holy warnings of my New Friend, even though oftentimes I had to subdue my rebellious nature, filled with bad inclinations as it was.

On one occasion my father took us to see a military celebration in Rio Grande do Sul. I was delighted when I saw that there anyone could ride on horseback. Women and children were doing it. I had never ridden except once or twice when my father had seated me on his horse, Congo. At this celebration, I had my heart set on riding. A certain lieutenant was taking care of me, and he brought me a beautiful little pony. This filled me with happiness. He placed me astride the pony as if I were a boy, and I had just begun to pull on the reins when I heard and felt the warning of my New Friend just as vividly as I heard and perceived the lieutenant.

My New Friend did not want me to continue any farther. I felt his holy arm taking me gently from the pony, just as I had previously felt the lieutenant lifting me onto the pony's back. When I reached the ground, I said to the lieutenant: "I do not wish to ride any more." The lieutenant admired my seeming agility in dismounting from the pony, and he related the fact to my father, who called me cowardly

and silly. I should have liked to ride on the pony, but I wanted much more to please my New Friend.

The editor of the text comments that since God had chosen little Cecy for intimate union with Himself during her earthly life, her Guardian Angel was charged with the duty of preserving her from the danger of even the slightest fault against modesty.

The idea of a little girl riding astride was not shocking to Cecy's contemporaries. But it did offend the Angel's sensibilities in behalf of Our Lord. If it so disturbed Cecy's angel, that he drew her down from the horse, then perhaps we need some self-examination. Men, as well as women, can ask themselves simply: What gestures do I make, what postures do I assume that may cause my Angel anguish? What clothes do I put on that encourages others – my children, for example, to put aside modesty of manner? Do I throw myself down in a slovenly sprawl? Do I don sweatpants to go shopping?

In charity for the souls of others, do I exemplify self-restraint? Do I teach my boys the modesty of Saint Joseph? Do I teach my girls that there are some activities not appropriate for them either due to the activity itself, or by the requisite dress?

Perhaps we have to look through the eyes of an Angel to scrutinize ourselves, asking ourselves over and over again, 'what would Mary wear, what would Mary do?' But, knowing Our Lord's desire for pure souls, we can offer this effort through the Immaculate Heart of Mary in reparation for the fashions that offend Almighty God. This little penance will bring our own lives in greater conformity to the example of our august Mother, and it will help to save souls. †

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We'd like to hear from YOU! Write or call:  
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