



Spiritual Letter Box

THE ANGUISH OF YOUNG PEOPLE - II

As indicated in the preceding issue of the review, we will continue to print the answer given by Marie-Paule in 1975 to a young girl who had sent her a long letter full of all kinds of questions. Almost forty years later, this reply has not lost any of its pertinence or its timeliness, in fact. The numbers inserted in the young girl's letter were put there by Marie-Paule in order to facilitate her replies.

– Editorial Staff

CONTINUATION OF THE YOUNG GIRL'S LETTER

14.- I know a girl who has everything she wants. She is rich, beautiful; she has the love of a family that is very close. This family belongs to the Mormon religion; she is certain of her religion and very sincere with herself. She likes her work and life. She is an artist and her records pay her thousands of dollars. Let no one tell me that she has suffered; I will not believe it for one second. It is not her fault if she was born in this family of Mormons. I have studied this religion a little and it makes sense. She thinks that she is on the right road. I would gladly change places with her. This is why I say that life is unfair. How can one explain sickness, tuberculosis, etc.? **15.-** Why are there volcanoes that destroy cities in a few minutes? Was Pompeii a damned city? There are so many earthquakes everywhere, is it because so much evil is committed? **16.-** If I were raped – and this can happen to any good girl – could I have an abortion instead of giving birth to a child that would be unhappy? Why does not God stop all these disasters?

17.- Why does one have to go to Mass? I answer: "In order to prove one's faith," but there are other ways to prove one's faith without going to church. Those who practice the most are not the most holy! **18.-** And how can one know what is good and what is bad, with the priests we have now? We cannot blame those who sin... To sin involuntarily?...! I cannot understand that. **19.-** Why must people be married before having any relations? Why would it be wrong to have pre-marital relations? It is good to give oneself to the other; this is love, is it not?... Give pleasure to the other and receive pleasure from the other... Is that really selfishness? Those who get married so often get a divorce a short time after because they do not know each other enough before their marriage. So if "free unions" were allowed before marriage, people would know each other as they are, and there would not be so many broken marriages! Answer these questions. I am mixed up since we have been receiving courses in sexology. We are left with freedom to think, freedom of opinion, but my opinion is wavering. If you told me what is good and what is bad, if you gave me good reasons to follow

the Second Vatican Council, well, I think, I would stand firm. **20.-** I am a sincere girl, I do not wish to hide behind a false devotion, behind opinions that are not sincere. I do not want to think that I am privileged because of the things I understand or say, when in fact, I do not execute them because I lack courage or I am afraid to suffer. **21.-** Example: I think of the "BEATITUDES": "Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God." The pure of heart are detached from everything... well, for myself, I do not put this teaching into practice, or at least, not very much.

22.- It is also written in the Gospel: "Whoever claims to love me but does not love his brother, is a liar." I don't like my father at all, I wish he were DEAD. So I don't like God since I don't like my father. Should I pass as a liar by saying that I like him? What would be the use of lying since God knows everything? I really want to love God, but again I say: I am afraid. Who will take this fear away from me? What can I do? I desire so much to continue on the right road. **23.-** There is another thing that I ask of God: it is the awareness of His presence. The more I pray to God, the less I hear Him and the more I am going downhill. Why?

I leave you on this point, hoping that you will answer me. Here are a few sentences of a prayer that encourages me a lot:

24.- "It is getting late and death is near. I fear the darkness, the temptations, the crosses, the sorrows. How I need you, oh my Jesus, in this night of exile."

X... 14 years old

MARIE-PAULE'S REPLY

14. Another Religion

I understand your thinking in making the comparison between two families of different religions. Religion is not the barometer of an easy life or of the difficulties in these families. Trials and joys are the lot of all human beings. If there are years that are easy to live, there are others that exact courage and tenacity.

We cannot judge a life by singling out a few years of happiness on the part of one, and a few years of trial on the part of the other. Above all, do not believe that trials come only in Catholic families! However, with Christ and His teaching, we experience security, a means of asceticism, which help us reach summits of love. What counts is to make the best of what is presented to us, as did the little Thérèse of the Child Jesus. She did not try to transform her Community in order to have an easy life, but tried to change herself, make herself perfect through her contact, at times difficult, with her Sisters within a poor Community.

Suffering from tuberculosis, she carried on with her life of intimacy with the Lord whom she loved to the point of dying of love. Is that not wonderful? She sanctified herself through the little things of everyday life.



Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus

She did “all the ordinary things of life in an extraordinary way” because she loved. This is true love, the love that is giving which transforms one’s life.

15. Phenomena of Nature

The catastrophes you mention are phenomena of nature. One must not connect the idea of chastisement to all the calamities that occur and destroy cities where people of all conditions lived. Trial is not necessarily a chastisement.

If one were to ask God to put an end to these disasters, one would also have to implore Him to put an end to the sun that burns the desert, to put an end to the lightning that kills man sometimes, etc. Then, why not ask man to stop building airplanes because some of them crash, or to stop building boats because some sink, etc.

Instead, why not look at the beautiful sun that shines, the rain that makes the plants grow and the flowers bloom. Why not dwell on the joy of living in fraternal charity which still exists, believe me.

16. Responsibility

The more the woman becomes “the object” of man, the more she is exposed to rapes or assaults of all kinds. The young girl who is raped is not responsible for that act. But if there is conception and she undergoes an abortion, then it is she who bears the weight or the responsibility of her consent. Besides, there is no proof that the child would be unhappy. So many children who have not known their parents, have lived happily in homes where they were welcomed with so much love. “We could not love this child any more if he were our own!” the new parents repeat with profound joy. And when these children come to marriage, the same cry of love for their parents bursts forth.

17. To Prove One’s Faith

We must go to Mass because we love God. Mass and Communion are the supreme source of graces. The soul, like the body, must be fed in order to live. It is true that those who practise the most are not always the holiest, though this is not a matter easy to judge; but at least they are taking the means to become holy. The assistance at Mass is also a testimony of our faith.

18. The Priests

It is true that confusion reigns today in the teaching of religion.

Our young people are very intelligent, very developed. You are right in saying that you cannot understand “how a person can commit a sin involuntarily nowadays”.

19. Pre-marital Relations

Those who perform the conjugal act before marriage falsify the meaning of true love.

Conjugal love was elevated to the dignity of a sacrament. The graces attached to it are exceptional and bind two souls, first of all, and then two bodies for the purpose of procreation, in a wonderful harmony if the husband and wife follow the same path.

Man is, first of all, “spirit”, that is, he must guide himself with

his intelligence, a sound reason and a right judgment. He must not be led by his instincts; on the contrary, he must check his instincts, which would make him like the brute, in order to keep his dignity of man which makes him respect God’s salutary laws.

Futile attempts are made to save marriage by falsifying its true grandeur, which is to respect each other, not only during courtship, but in marriage itself.

It is not trial marriages and pre-marital relations that ensure the success of marriage; on the contrary, they mark the beginning of innumerable difficulties.



A young couple consecrates itself to the Lady of All Peoples, after their wedding ceremony at Spiri-Maria.

Faithfulness to God in His laws, the reciprocal fidelity of the husband and wife, in spite of the efforts that this implies, are the criteria of a happy life. If there is reciprocal respect during the courtship, faithfulness between husband and wife will be observed better in the conjugal life.

Success in marriage depends upon the basic principles which Christian morality clearly sets forth. If everything goes well at the level of the spirit, if two souls follow the same path, sustain each other in trials and deny themselves, if necessary, the true love that begins at the level of the heart easily blossoms in the carnal love wanted by God in marriage.

To reverse these values, is to put a check on true love and invite, in advance, problems of all kinds. You see, then, my dear

girl, that “giving pleasure to the other” in “free love” would more easily lead to separation or divorce.

At first, the intelligence promotes the knowledge of the other, then the heart permits the giving of self, true love. It is a true, genuine love which exacts, at times, the renouncement of carnal love in order to maintain human dignity in full bloom.

20. Sincerity

Keep your beautiful sincerity. You did well to write your thoughts this way, to relate this confusion in your life, to search for enlightenment. Carry on like this in order to safeguard your psychological, spiritual and emotional equilibrium which is being terribly shaken by contradictory teachings. Remember that if you want to live with God, you must choose the ascending road which demands efforts; whereas laxity leads to a vertiginous descent towards ephemeral pleasures that torment and deceive, an ending which is sometimes tragic, so different from that which promotes pure, overflowing, fulfilling and lasting joy.

21. Courage

You are young. It is very certain that you cannot put into practice all the elements that make up the beatitudes. It is an ideal to attain. We do not arrive at perfection right from the beginning. You need to make progress slowly. So do not judge yourself too severely, otherwise your courage will fail you. God is so good! He gathers in the least effort you put forth, an effort that is all the more meritorious because you are afraid to suffer.

God is Love; you know that. Live every minute that goes by in true love and you will be surprised with the result. Do not let your thoughts dwell too much on what tomorrow will be, because God gives grace for the present moment. Little by little you will understand more, delve more deeply and learn self-abandonment in order to live in peace, relaxation, and unshakeable confidence in Him.

22. Hatred or Love

“You think you detest your father, you would prefer him dead.” This one sentence says everything... I understand, then, your suffering and that of your mother.

Think for a moment. If your father were subjected to torture, would you remain indifferent in spite of the sentiments you say

you have for him?... I am sure that you would cry, that you would not be able to bear to see him suffer. So, your filial sentiment is not one of hatred, but rather, a keen, spontaneous reaction that you feel because of the life he leads or the suffering he causes at home.

Mark this well, my child: whatever your father’s way of life, you must excuse him. To nourish sentiments of rebellion and hatred towards him would only quicken your suffering. May your kindness towards him be your weapon of defence, as it was for Christ in all circumstances. And you will come to love those who make you suffer. To love is to live. To hate is to die because there is nothing beautiful left in this life for those who hate.

Choose to love because love is the balm that soothes all wounds. To love is to stamp life with beauty, freshness, hope, the reflection of peace, renewed confidence. To love is to experience happiness by giving it to others. Such is the way, the good road that you must follow.



“Prayer is an offering which binds the soul to God. On certain days everything is dryness and it is an effort to pray. At other times, the upsurge to God becomes easy, gentle and sweet.” – Marie-Paule

23. The Gift of God’s Presence

“You have the impression of going downhill, of not being heard by the Lord when you pray,” because you put too much emphasis on feeling His presence. Think, above all, of prayer as an offering which binds the soul to God. On certain days everything is dryness and it is an effort to pray. At other times, the upsurge to God becomes easy, gentle and sweet. This is normal. It is like the rain and the sun-

shine which are so necessary for the earth. When prayer is dry, you make the offering to God; when it is easy, you receive. If you really want to love, you must consent to give, above all; but know that God does not let Himself be surpassed in generosity.

24. A Prayer

I notice, dear child, that your prayer constantly reminds you of crosses, sorrow, temptations, exile, etc.

God is our refuge. He seeks our happiness by encouraging us to have confidence. Hide yourself in His hand like this little bird He is protecting, and love Him, invoke Him while contemplating everything He has done for us. That will be a confident prayer of every moment, and your life will be transformed and will blossom out.

Marie-Paule