



Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will



What do You want from me?

When Mother Gabrielle Marie and Sister Francesca came back from their trip to Portugal last November, the whole community got on a bit of a Fatima kick. Every evening we watched a new documentary about Our Lady's 1917 apparitions and one sister even showed her catechism students an animated film based on Sister Lucia's memoirs. As Sister watched the cartoon with her third and fourth graders, something in particular struck her. Ten-year-old Lucia would ask Our Blessed Mother the very same thing at the beginning of every apparition: *What do You want from me?*

How often do I ask that question of God, or of His Mother? Or do I rather jump into what *I think I should* be doing for God's glory without actually consulting Him first?

Remember Peter in the garden of Gethsemane? He slept when he should have been praying...praying that he "may not enter into temptation," as Jesus warned (Lk 22:40). But Peter, not fortified by prayer nor enlightened by divine wisdom, fell into excessive zeal and impulsively cut off the ear of the high priest's slaves as the soldiers came to arrest his Master. Luke's account tells us that those who were with Jesus did ask if they should strike with the sword, but Peter acted – as we so often do – before waiting for the answer. John's Gospel even gives us the slave's name, Malchus, which ironically means *my king* or *kingdom* in Hebrew. By giving him an identity, was John trying to emphasize to his readers the particular love God has for each soul, even those who seek to do Him harm? Or, having witnessed Jesus heal that same slave's ear, was he seeking to highlight the nature of God's Kingdom and the tenderness of its King? One thing, however, is crystal clear – Jesus' rebuke to Peter (and us!): ***"No more of this!...Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the chalice which the Father has given Me?"*** (Lk 22:51, Jn 18:11)

This burst of misguided, though well-intentioned, passion was not unusual for Peter, or even for the other Apostles. When Jesus spoke to them about His approaching death and resurrection, about all that He



was to suffer at the hands of the chief priests and scribes, Peter immediately reproaches the One he had just proclaimed as the Christ. "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You," he says. No doubt, he was concerned for his friend, the Son of the living God. But could Peter have also been reacting in fear – fear that he too, as Jesus' top man, would also have to suffer and die? How does Jesus reply? *"Get behind me, Satan! **You are a hindrance to Me, for you are not on the side of God, but of men**"* (Mt 16:22-23). The Lord sure doesn't sugarcoat anything, not even with His closest companions.

The other two members of Jesus' inner circle - James and his brother John - weren't exempt from the same temptations either. Before we get into the incident at Samaria, let's backtrack a bit to three interesting passages that immediately precede it. In chapter nine of Luke's gospel, while everyone was full of admiration for all that Jesus did, He made a point to say the following to His disciples: *"For your part, **you must have these words constantly in mind: The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the power of men.**"* Not knowing what that meant and afraid to ask the Lord about it, the disciples soon begin to argue over who is the greatest among them, prompting Jesus to then teach them that *"**the least among you all is the one who is the greatest.**"* Shortly after, perhaps motivated by pride and a bit of jealousy, John goes on to inform Jesus that they tried to stop a man outside of their group from driving out devils in His name. Another rebuke and another lesson also for us: *"You must not stop him. Anyone who is not against you is for you."* Finally, we arrive outside of a Samaritan village where messengers were sent to prepare the people for Jesus' arrival, but they refused to welcome Him. So James and John, probably seething with semi-righteous indignation, ask: "Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to burn them up?" It's almost as if they were frustrated at Jesus' lack of response and wanted to provoke a retaliation by offering their own services for this "just cause". As you might remember, the aptly nicknamed Sons of Thunder were admonished again. They still didn't get it, but at least they asked what the Lord wanted this time.

Why are we bringing all of this up? Did the Holy Spirit include these passages in the Gospel simply to show us the Apostles' weaknesses? No, they are found in Sacred Scripture to show us our weakness, to show us the temptations that even the closest followers of Jesus can fall into when their human wills are not in sync with God's. As Jesus told Luisa¹, in order to *live in* the Divine Will we must first *do* His Will. To do His Will, we must abandon our human way of thinking and adopt the divine reasoning. And to do that, we must always return to our original question: *What do You want from me?*



¹ The Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta (1865-1947) – a mystic from southern Italy who wrote a thirty-six volume diary (*Book of Heaven*) filled with the teachings Our Lord gave her on how to live in His Holy and Divine Will. If you'd like to read these beautiful writings, drop us an email and we'll get you started: daughtersofdivinewill@gmail.com.

Silence

In these dark, confusing, and dividing times, the answer to this question can sometimes seem impossible to figure out. But are we really listening? With so many different narratives competing for our attention, with so much stimulation and information available with the click of a mouse, are we allowing ourselves the silence necessary in order to hear the Lord's voice? Look at the change we find in fiery, ready-to-react John after he rested his head on Jesus' Heart at the Last Supper. The same Apostle who once sought an important place at the Messiah's right hand finally learned what it meant to be both a humble and courageous follower of Christ. In Jesus' darkest hour, the beloved Apostle lovingly served his Lord and God with his faithful presence. St. John silently remained at the foot of the Cross with our Sorrowful Mother when the other ten ran away in fear. With Her he prayed, with Her he suffered, and with Her he accepted all that was happening with filial trust.



Every day we all need to cultivate that spirit of silence...both exteriorly and interiorly, while in prayer and about our duties, when alone or with others. Silence will enable us to receive and understand what the Holy Spirit wants to communicate to our souls. It will allow us to recognize and appreciate God's love hidden in creation and in the daily circumstances of life. In moments of trial and difficulty, silence will make room in our minds and hearts for the divine wisdom to reveal what we are indeed supposed to do. It will help us to be more present to others as we seek to listen and love, rather than rushing to speak. And if we persevere, silence will give us a more constant inner peace, freeing us to focus on the more important things in life...such as the presence of the Most Holy Trinity in our souls!

Detachment

God wants us free. As Ven. Fulton Sheen wrote², "*There is the freedom of a total abandonment to God: our free will is the only thing that is really our own...Because freedom is our own, it is the only perfect gift that we can make to God...**Mary totally, yet freely, surrendered Her will, so that one might say that it was not a matter of Her will doing the will of Her Son but of Mary's will being lost in that of Her Son.***" That's what our freedom should look like if we want to live in God's Will on earth as in Heaven - for the extent of our freedom will also be the extent in which we are capable of loving.

There are no painless shortcuts to freedom – it comes only with detachment. It could start with simply asking the Lord what we're attached to or, in other words, what's blocking us from deeper intimacy with Him. What does He want to gently and gradually free us from so that we can more fully give over our wills to Him? This may involve a specific renunciation of certain habitual sins or addictive enjoyments in our lives. Sometimes we need to just invite the Lord to strip us where it's most necessary...and then be ready! He will want to detach us even from holy things if they prevent us from

² Fulton J. Sheen, *The World's First Love: Mary, Mother of God* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1996), 31.

total abandonment to His Will. But above all, we need to open ourselves up to the action of the Holy Spirit in prayer. He prepares us for that total gift of self that we have been created for. Two Benedictine monks put it best:

"The Holy Spirit, who is Himself the Love of God, has a special role in prayer. Through pure grace, the Holy Spirit freely communicates to the soul who humbly welcomes Him what He has received in the depths of God: the blessing of the Father and the thanksgiving of the Son...In this way, the Holy Spirit moves us into greater freedom. *The freer our will becomes, the more our will actually becomes conformed to the Will of God.* This freedom is beyond mere human freedom; it is the freedom of the adopted children of God. Then we experience the Holy Spirit not only leading us in prayer, but praying in us."³

Obedience

"*Mary! – teach us, then, that there is no freedom except in doing, out of love, what Thou didst do in the Annunciation, namely, saying Yes to what Jesus asks*" (Ven. Fulton J. Sheen). Silence and detachment should ultimately lead us to greater obedience – obedience motivated by love. Two thousand years before Fatima, Mary answered little Lucia's question at the wedding feast of Cana: "***Do whatever He tells you***" (Jn 2:5). Yet, none of us have been perfectly obedient to the Gospel. If we regularly read from Scripture itself and not the watered-down version that society offers us, all of us can admit how much we've fallen short of the mark. We need help, divine help!

Enter Mary at Guadalupe, Lourdes, Fatima, etc. Enter Our Lord and Our Lady at Corato to a little Italian woman named Luisa. Though private revelation adds not one comma to the deposit of



faith (Sacred Scripture + Sacred Tradition), it does help us to gradually grasp the full significance of public revelation and to "*live more fully by it in a certain period of history*" (CCC 66-67). Heaven comes to remind us, correct us, warn us, and to encourage us to greater holiness. When God speaks to us, we should be listening - especially when the Church has given its stamp of approval! So how is Our Heavenly Father asking us to live our faith more fully in this moment of history? What is He begging us to do for the salvation of souls and the coming of His Kingdom?

**Our Lady of Fatima to Lucia dos Santos,
St. Francisco Marto, and St. Jacinta Marto**

"Pray the Rosary every day to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war." (5/13/1917)



"[Jesus] wishes to establish devotion to My Immaculate Heart in the world. I promise salvation to those who embrace it...You are suffering very much, but do not be discouraged. I will never leave you. ***My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God.***" (6/13/1917)

³ Fr. Thomas Acklin, OSB and Fr. Boniface Hicks, OSB, *Personal Prayer: A Guide for Receiving the Father's Love* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2020), 17.

"Pray, pray much, and sacrifice for sinners, for many souls go to hell because there is no one to sacrifice and pray for them...Say many times, *'O Jesus, this is for love of Thee, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.'*" (8/19 and 7/13/1917)⁴

"Let them offend Our Lord no more for He is already much offended." (10/13/1917)



Our Lord to the Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta

"My daughter, the third FIAT - My *Fiat Voluntas Tua, on earth as it is in*

Heaven' - will be like the rainbow which appeared in the sky after the deluge...As It comes to be known, loving and disinterested souls will come to live in My FIAT. They will be like rainbows of peace which will reconcile Heaven and earth, and dispel the deluge of so many sins which inundate the earth...Be cheered - come into My Will. I chose you...so that my Will may have full completion in you, and so that you may be like a rainbow of peace which, with its seven colors, attracts others to live in My Will...As you move forward on the path of My Volition, the rainbow of peace will form, which will form the link of connection between the Divine Will and human will. From it, My Will will have life on earth, and this will begin the fulfillment of My prayer, and the prayer of the whole Church: *'Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.'*"

(Vol. 12, 3/2/1921)

"My daughter, I repeat it to you – do not look at the earth. Let them do what they want. They want to make war – so be it...My war will be war of love...All of your acts and those of others done in My Volition will wage war on creatures...with weapons of love, giving them gifts, graces, and peace. This Will of Mine...will overwhelm him and give him the light in order to see – not evil, but the gifts and riches with which I want to enrich him. The acts done in My Will...descending from Heaven, will bring all goods upon earth. They will bring the New Era, and the triumph over human iniquity. Therefore, *multiply your acts in My Will*...Conquered by so much love, these children will bind themselves to their Father with a lasting peace and will love Him...I want you at work together with Me to acquire new riches to be given to creatures. *Be faithful to Me and occupy yourself with nothing else.*"

(Vol. 12, 4/26/1921)

What does it mean to do an act in the Divine Will? It's as simple as enjoying the company of those around you, fulfilling the duties of your state in life, living out your Catholic faith, and doing/accepting whatever else God wills in each moment with great love. Then – and this is the important part – freely inviting Jesus to do it all in you. With your surrender, He'll jump into the driver's seat and take care of all the rest!



⁴ Our Lady's request to Sister Lucia on 12/10/1925 for the First Five Saturdays: *"Give Me consolation and make known that I promise to assist at the hour of death, with the graces necessary for salvation, all who on the First Saturday of five consecutive months confess their sins, receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the Rosary, and keep Me company for fifteen minutes meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary, in order to make reparation to My Immaculate Heart."*



Sister Grace (right) with our newest postulant, Sister Dora, from Croatia. She's 31 years old and entered the community right before Vespers on the Feast of St. Scholastica!



Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common. (Acts 4:32)



Easter Alms



If you feel called to financially support the Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will this Easter season or throughout the year, visit the "Donations" page of our website to make a one-time donation by credit/debit card or to sign up for automatic monthly contributions...



www.benedictinesofdivinewill.org



You can also simply send a check or money order to the address of our U.S. non-profit organization below:
(All donations are tax-deductible)

**Benedictine Daughters
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We will be offering up nine days of prayer for you and your needs and intentions this Pascal season. Holy Mass will also be celebrated for all of our family members, friends, and benefactors both in Talamello and San Marino.



*Thank you for everything
and Happy Easter!*