

Selections from Chapter XXII of Volume 2 of:

Garrigou-Lagrange, Reginald, O.P. *The Three Ages of the Interior Life: Prelude of Eternal Life, Vol 2.*, translated by Sister M. Timothea Doyle, O.P., Volume 2. Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., Rockford, IL: 1948.

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Ch 22 : Docility to the Holy Ghost (selection from)

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CONDITIONS REQUIRED FOR DOCILITY TO THE HOLY GHOST

To be docile to the Holy Ghost, we must first hear His voice. To do so, recollection, detachment from the world and from self are necessary, as are the custody of the heart, the mortification of self-will, and personal judgment. If silence does not reign in our soul, if the voice of excessively human affections troubles it, we cannot of a certainty hear the inspirations of the interior Master. For this reason the Lord subjects our sensible appetites to severe trials and in a way crucifies them that they may eventually become silent or fully submissive to our will animated by charity. If we are ordinarily preoccupied with ourselves, we shall certainly hear ourselves or perhaps a more perfidious, more dangerous voice which seeks to lead us astray. Consequently our Lord invites us to die to ourselves like the grain of wheat placed in the ground.

To hear the divine inspirations, we must, therefore, create silence in ourselves; but even then the voice of the Holy Ghost remains mysterious. As Christ says: "The Spirit breatheth where He will; and thou hearest His voice, but thou knowest not whence He cometh and whither He goeth. So is everyone that is born of the Spirit." (27) Mysterious words, which should make us prudent and reserved in our judgments about our neighbor, attentive to the attractions placed in us by the Lord, which are the mixed seed of a future known to divine Providence. They are attractions toward renunciation, toward interior prayer; they are more precious than we think. Some intellectuals from an early age have an attraction to silent mental prayer, which alone perhaps will preserve them from spiritual pride, from dryness of heart, and will make their souls childlike, such as they must be to enter the kingdom of God, and especially the intimacy of the kingdom. A vocation to a definite religious order may often be recognized by these early attractions.

The voice of the Holy Ghost begins, therefore, by an instinct, an obscure illumination, and if one perseveres in humility and conformity to the will of God, this instinct manifests its divine origin clearly to the conscience while remaining mysterious. The first gleams will become so many lights which, like the stars, will illumine the night of our pilgrimage toward eternity; the dark night will thus become luminous and like the aurora of the life of heaven, "and night shall be my light in my pleasures." (28)

To succeed in being docile to the Holy Ghost, we need, therefore, interior silence, habitual recollection, attention, and fidelity.

ACTS WHICH PREPARE THE SOUL FOR DOCILITY TO THE HOLY GHOST

We dispose ourselves to docility to the Holy Ghost by three principal acts: (1) By obeying faithfully the will of God which we already know through the precepts and the counsels proper to our vocation. Let us make good use of the knowledge that we have; God will give us additional knowledge. (2) By frequently renewing our resolution to follow the will of God in everything. This good resolution thus renewed draws down new graces on us. We should often repeat Christ's words: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." (29) (3) By asking unceasingly for the light and strength of the Holy Ghost to accomplish the will of God. We may with profit consecrate ourselves to the Holy Ghost, when we feel the attraction to do so, to place our soul more under His dominion and as it were, in His hand. We may make this consecration in the following terms: "O Holy Ghost, divine Spirit of light and love, I consecrate to Thee my mind, my heart, my will, and my whole being for time and eternity. May my mind be ever docile to Thy celestial inspirations and to the teaching of the holy Catholic Church of which Thou art the infallible Guide. May my heart be always inflamed with love of God and of my neighbor. May my will be ever conformed to the divine will, and may my whole life be a faithful imitation of the life and virtues of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom, with the Father and Thee, O Holy Ghost, be honor and glory forever." (30)

St. Catherine of Siena used to pray: "O Holy Ghost, come into my heart; by Thy power, O God, draw me to Thyself and grant me charity with filial fear. Keep me, O ineffable Love, from every evil thought; warm and kindle me with Thy sweetest love, and every suffering will seem light to me. My Father, my sweet Lord, help me in all my actions. O Jesus love, O Jesus love!"

This consecration is also admirably expressed in the beautiful sequence:

*Veni, Sancte Spiritus,
Et emitte coelitus
Lucis tuae radium.*

When such a consecration is made with a great spirit of faith, its effect may be most profound. Since a fully deliberate pact with the devil brings in its wake so many disastrous effects in the order of evil, an act of consecration to the Holy Ghost can produce greater ones in the order of good, for God has more goodness and power than the devil has malice.

Consequently the Christian who has consecrated himself to Mary Mediatrix, for example, according to the formula of St. Grignon de Montfort, and then to the Sacred Heart, will find treasures in the often renewed consecration to the Holy Ghost. All Mary's influence leads us to the intimacy of Christ, and the humanity of the Savior leads us to the Holy Ghost, who introduces us into the mystery of the adorable Trinity. We may fittingly make this consecration at Pentecost and renew it frequently.

Especially when difficulties arise, when most important actions are being changed, we must ask for the light of the Holy Ghost, sincerely wishing only to do His will. This done, if He does not give us new lights, we shall continue to do what will seem best to us. Therefore, at the opening assemblies of the clergy and of religious chapters, the assistance of the Holy Ghost is invoked by votive Masses in His honor.

Lastly we should note exactly the different movements of our soul in order to discover what comes from God and what does not. Spiritual writers generally say that God's action in a soul submissive to grace is ordinarily characterized by peace and tranquillity; the devil's action is violent and accompanied by disturbance and anxiety.

Selected
Footnotes

27. John 3:8.

28 Ps. 138: 11.

29. John 4: 34.

30. This act of consecration to the Holy Ghost was enriched with an indulgence of 300 days by His Holiness Pius X.