

The Humanity of Christ-- 2

9 When God is pleased to suspend all the faculties, as we have seen that He does in the modes of prayer already described, it is clear that, though we may not desire it to be so, this Presence is taken from us. At such a time as that, let this be done... But that we should exert care and skill to accustom ourselves not to endeavor with all our strength to have always before us -- and the Lord grant it be always! -- this most sacred Humanity, it is that, I say, which seems to me not to be right. The soul is left, as the phrase has it, in the air; for it has nothing to lean upon, however full it may think itself to be of God. It is a great thing for us, while we live as human beings, to have before us Christ's Humanity. This is that other inconvenience to which I have already referred.

10 We are not angels and we have bodies. To want to become angels while we are still on earth, and as much on earth as I was, is ridiculous. As a rule, our thoughts must have something to lean upon, though sometimes the soul may go out from itself and very often may be so full of God that it will need no created thing to assist it in recollection. But this is not very usual: when we are busy, or suffering persecutions or trials, when we cannot get as much quiet as we should like, and at seasons of aridity, we have a very good Friend in Christ. We look at Him as a Man; we think of His moments of weakness and times of trial; and He becomes our Companion. Once we have made a habit of thinking of Him in this way, it becomes very easy to find Him at our side, though there will come times when it is impossible to do either the one thing or the other. For that reason it is advisable to do as I have already said: we must not show ourselves to be striving after spiritual consolations; come what may, the great thing for us to do is to embrace the Cross.

11 God is well pleased to see a soul humbly taking His Son as Mediator, and yet loving Him so much that, even if His Majesty is pleased to raise it to the highest contemplation, as I have said, it realizes its unworthiness, and says with Saint Peter: "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." I have proved this, for it is in this way that God has led my soul ... What I have learned is this: that the entire foundation of prayer must be established in humility, and that, the more a soul abases itself in prayer, the higher God raises it. I do not remember that He has ever granted me any of the outstanding favors of which I shall speak later save when I have been consumed with shame by realizing my own wickedness; and His Majesty has even managed to help me to know myself by revealing to me things which I myself could not have imagined. I believe myself that, when a soul does anything to further its own progress in this Prayer of Union, it may seem to be deriving some immediate benefit but will very quickly fall again, because it has not laid the proper foundations. Indeed, I fear it will never attain to true poverty of spirit, which consists in seeking, not comfort or pleasure in prayer (for it has already abandoned earthly comforts and pleasures), but consolation in trials for the love of Him Who suffered trials all His life long; and we must endure these trials, and be calm amidst aridities, though we may feel some regret at having to suffer them. They should not cause us the unrest and distress which they cause some people who think that, if they are not for ever laboring with the understanding and striving after feelings of devotion, they are going completely astray, as if by so laboring they were meriting some great blessing. I do not mean that these things should not be sought after, or that we

should not be careful how we approach the presence of God, but merely that, as I have said elsewhere, we must not worry ourselves to death if we cannot think one single good thought. *We are unprofitable servants: what do we suppose it is in our power to accomplish?*

14 I will conclude, then, by saying that, whenever we think of Christ, we should remember with what love He has bestowed all these favors upon us, and how great is the love which God has revealed to us in giving us such a pledge of the love which He bears us; for love begets love.

QUESTIONS:

What are the problems when a person of prayer wants to be an angel?

What are the different levels of our humanity subject to temptation?

Describe humility according to St. Teresa upon which interior prayer is based?

How does this approach towards the Humanity of Christ effect my life of prayer?