

FR. LORENZO SALES, M.C.

The Littlest Way of Love

*Abridged message
from
the Heart of Jesus
to
Sister Conceolata Petrone*



Table of contents

Foreword	9
A Way and a Mission	9
Love and acts of love	11
Formula for a ceaseless act of love	21
Continuity in the act of love	27
The virginity of the ceaseless act of love	34
Answers to a few questions	42
A cheerful "Yes" to everything and seeing Jesus in everyone	52
Say "Yes" to everything with thanksgiving	61
The "Littlest Way of Love" and the apostolate	67
The work of the "Littlest Souls"	72
A letter from Sr. Consolata to the "Littlest Souls"	90
Consolata's call to the "Littlest Souls" for the "Angelets" (Little Angels)	93
Sr. Consolata's prayer to obtain heroic faithfulness to the "Littlest Way"	97
PRAYER for obtaining Graces through the intercession of Sr. Consolata	98

Foreword

A Way and a Mission

Sr. Consolata Betrone, a Capuchin nun, (1903-1946) had the mission of contributing to the spiritual renewal of the world by showing souls the "Littlest Way of Love." This way can be summarized into three points:

1. Making an internal, ceaseless act of love.
2. Say a cheerful "yes" to everyone, since it's Jesus we see and deal with in everyone.
3. Say a grateful "yes" to everything God asks of us.

The premise of this new way is a ceaseless love that unites the soul to Christ. This is how one more readily loves one's neighbor out of love for the Lord, and eagerly accepts all sacrifices.

Jesus Himself taught Sr. Consolata the words of the act of love which would be most agreeable to Him: "Jesus, Mary, I love You. Save souls!" He insistently requested that she repeat this prayer, if only in her mind, as often as she was allowed to by her duties.

This booklet is a faithful summary of the writings of Sr. Consolata Betrone found in: "*Jesus Appeals to the World*"¹ and in the "*Biographie de Soeur Consolata Betrone*"².

We are therefore grateful to these works. We are happy to condense certain passages here, and to bring to light those which specifically deal with the "Littlest Way of Love" which was revealed to the modest religious capuchin by Our Lord.

We have chosen a catechism style of question and answer because this seemed to be the best way to achieve our end, which was making each point we touched upon easily understandable by the reader.

We eagerly recommend this booklet to all little souls for their own spiritual benefit, and for a greater and more widespread knowledge of the doctrine it contains.

Fr. L. Sales

¹ *Jesus Appeals to the World*, Alba House, 200 p., 1957, 2187 Victory Blvd., Staten Island, N.Y. 10314, U.S.A.

² *Biographie de Soeur Consolata Betrone*, by L. Sales, m.c., Editions Salvator, 486 p., 1953. This book is presently out of print.

Love and acts of love

1. *What is so special about the act of love?*

1. The act of love is part of the supreme perfection of the theological virtue of Charity, the queen of all virtues. It brings them to birth, sustains them, gives them life and perfects them¹. Faith and Hope are Charity's sisters; but they halt on the threshold of eternity. Because Faith will be replaced with Vision, and Hope with possession, only love enters Heaven and remains there eternally².

2. The act of love is also the most sanctifying, because it unites us to God, who is infinite holiness,³ in the most direct and intimate way.

¹ "In the same way as the branches of a tree are all attached to the same trunk, so do all the virtues proceed from love." (*St. Gregory The Great, Hom. 27, in Evang. vig. Apost.*)

² "Love will have no end... Now only these three things remain: Faith, Hope, and Charity, but the greatest of all is Love" (*1 Cor. 13:8-13*).

³ "If anyone loves Me, He will keep My commandments, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and We will make Our home in him" (*John 14:23*). "God is love, and whoever lives in love, lives in God, and God in him" (*1 John 4:16*).

3. For the same reasons, the act of love is the most apostolically fruitful in that which pertains to the salvation of souls¹.

2. *What is the value of the act of perfect charity according to the doctrine of the Church?*²

1. An act of perfect love for God immediately reconciles the soul with God, even if it's full of mortal sins, and even before sacramental confession, as long as the will to confess is present³.

2. Even more importantly, an act of perfect love purifies us of venial sins⁴.

3. After a serious sin, an act of perfect love (accompanied by the intention to go to confession) can immediately return to us the merits we've lost, along with sanctifying grace. It can even enable us to acquire more merits, something that would have been impossible for us even through good works, as long as we were still in a state of sin.

¹ "He who remains in Me and I in him will bear much fruit" (*John 15:5*). That is, fruits of sanctity and of saving souls. "The tiniest act of pure love has more value in God's eyes, and is more useful to the Church and to the soul itself, than all other (purely) exterior works as a whole." (*St. John Of The Cross, Cant. spir., str. 27.*) "A single act of love is more glorious than all the apostolates in the universe." (*B.J. Eymard, Euch. League of Milan, 1925.*)

² Cf. *Comment aimer le bon Dieu, (How to love God.) Grégorienne, Padoue.*

³ *Council of Trent, Sess. 14, c.4.*

⁴ "Love covers a multitude of sins" (*1 Peter 4:18*).

4. An act of perfect love, like every other supernatural action, diminishes the sorrows of purgatory; it can obtain a complete remission for us if it's accomplished with a zeal and perfection whose value only God can appreciate¹.

5. Every act of perfect love further develops the state of unity between God and the soul, and consequently also the divine life within the soul².

6. Every act of perfect love, like every other supernatural action, earns us an increase in sanctifying grace, which, in its turn, increasingly affects our actions. In addition to that, it earns us a greater glory in heaven.

3. *What is perfect love?*

1. Perfect love is loving God for Himself, and finding our happiness in Him.

2. This level of perfection in love is preceded by two others. These are: **initial love**, and **progressive love**. *Initial love* consists mostly of the flight from sin, and of resistance to its lures; it finds impetus in motives stemming from the holy fear of God. *Progressive love* works to acquire virtue, and when discouraged, is sustained by the hope of a reward.

3. In these normal progressions of love, all the motives dovetail harmoniously, and while acquiring divine bene-

¹ Cf. *Saint Thomas, Supp. q. 5 a. 2, 3.*

² "He who unites himself with the Lord is one with Him in spirit" (*1 Cor. 6:17*). And love is precisely what unites us to God, as St. Thomas explains: "Love causes man to offer himself to God, remaining with Him in a real spiritual union."

fits, the soul finally opens up to that perfect love through which God is loved for Himself.

4. This pure and perfect love produces virtues, and strives to procure glory for God.

4. Is it possible to make acts of perfect Love?

1. Acts of perfect love are not only possible, but become easy. This is how: since these actions are, shall we say, the result of repeated efforts by the soul to arrive at friendship love with God, once the soul reaches a certain degree of love intensity, it experiences the need to find release in flights of blazing love, which seem to assuage its oppressed heart...

2. When I say "Jesus, I love You," and reaffirm the total gift of myself to Him through the difficulties I encounter and the fatigue I experience, and I do it because He is worthy of being loved, honored, and faithfully served, I make an act of perfect love. The *act of charity* which we learn in the catechism is a perfect act of love.

3. Even in the initial and progressive levels, a perfect act of love already facilitates the flight from sin and the exercise of virtue, because it continually demands and brings about an intimate experience of the supreme motive of love, which is the infinite goodness of God.

5. Can we make an act of perfect love on our own?

Whether making an act of perfect love, or doing any other supernatural action, it's always necessary to be helped by grace. God never refuses to help anyone who

wants to love Him. Let's not forget that He Himself made love a commandment, and requires it from all men.

6. *Does the element of "feelings" enter into the perfection of the act of love?*

"Feelings" are not at all necessary in an act of perfect love. I can love God with a perfect and intense love, even with an icy heart, even while experiencing disgust or aversion. To love God with an act of perfect love, it's enough to want to love Him in that way. In these circumstances, the act of love can be even purer, more generous, and therefore more meritorious and agreeable to God.

7. *In how many ways can we make acts of perfect love?*

1. As far as God is concerned, we can make acts of perfect love of all of our actions, even the most minor ones, even those which are indifferent in themselves (eating, drinking, sleeping¹).

2. Also, offering the sacrifices inherent to our daily duties, our daily sufferings whether little or large, to God with love.

3. By multiplying our acts of perfect love throughout the day. It doesn't matter if they are simple internal or external acts (like an invocation,) as long as they always spring from internal love.

¹ "So whether you eat or whether you drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." (1 Cor. 10:31)

8. *Is multiplying acts of perfect love a useful thing to do?*

It's a very holy and useful thing for the soul to do.

1. To obey the first commandment in all of its perfection;

2. To exercise, develop and perfect the theological virtue of Charity within ourselves, in order to develop and perfect all of the other virtues along with it;

3. Because it's a big help for the soul to put its purity of intention into all of its actions;

4. To augment the supernatural value of our actions, by increasing sanctifying grace within ourselves¹;

5. To increase the fervor of our religious devotions, and even substitute for them when it is impossible for us to accomplish them;

6. To help us give the maximum value to every instant of our short earthly journey for the glory of God, our own sanctification, and the salvation of souls.

7. Because it will be easier for us to make our death a holocaust of love, if we've made our life a sacrifice of love.

¹ Suarez teaches that, "when sanctifying grace is in operation with all of its inner activity, it becomes doubled: thus if a just person does an action, whatever it is, as perfectly as possible, and out of pure love for God, whatever grace was already in him is doubled, through this action." (*Suarez, in 3 p. tom. II, disp. 18.*) Love increases grace, and grace augments love. The more one loves, the more capable of loving one becomes.

9. *Wouldn't it be sufficient to state our intention at the beginning of each day?*

It would be sufficient, at most, for giving our actions throughout the day a supernatural value, but not for obtaining this fullness of supernatural or divine life that Jesus earned for us, and which He would like to see in us¹. In other words, and to better develop this idea:

1. The intention stated at the beginning of the day can easily be displaced by other less perfect intentions. By making frequent acts of perfect love, we place ourselves beyond the reach of this danger.

2. Real love is more perfect than love that is simply given out of habit, so it affects our spiritual life even more completely.

3. By making frequent acts of perfect love we nourish and perfect our internal life - the real life of the soul - in the best way, thus avoiding the dissipation of the spirit which would deprive us of precious time for all eternity.

4. Loving God with a real love, in whatever measure is possible to each individual is a part of, as we have already said and as we will see more clearly later, this perfect love with which God wants us to love Him, and which He has ordained from us in the first commandment.

5. The fact of multiplying acts of love helps the soul to accomplish another divine precept: "One should always pray, and not give up." (*Luke 18:1*). St. Paul often brings it

¹ Saint Thomas teaches that charity is perfect "when one loves as much as one is able." This precept of love has no limits. It asks us to always continue to grow in love. God, who is the Infinite Good, deserves to be loved without measure.

up: "Pray ceaselessly." (1 *Thessalonians* 5:17.) The act of love is not only the very best of prayers, but even as short, easy and completely *internal* as it is, it makes the adherence to this commandment admirably simple, without overly tiring the spirit with multiple and complex formulas.

10. Does what we've just said apply to all Christians?

1. Yes, because all Christians are required to aim for perfect love by the first commandment.

2. We would also like to say that the practice of the act of love, in certain regards, is more suited to people living in the world and active religious than to those who are living in cloisters. The latter are, in effect, drawn by their surroundings and their lives of prayer to a constant union with God; while it's far more difficult for active religious, and even more for people living in the world, because of the variety and nature of their daily occupations, as well as their many material preoccupations. And besides, they also aren't in a position to make long vocal prayers.

3. In contrast, an act of love is quickly made! It doesn't take effort, and doesn't interrupt external activity; on the contrary, it gives life and sanctifies the activity for eternity. In this way, the soul takes on the habit of making acts of love little by little. It becomes more and more intimately united to God, even to becoming, with time, virtually ceaseless.

4. This explains why the doctrine pertaining to the ceaseless act of love, as given to Sr. Consolata Betrone by Jesus, and outlined in the book *"Jesus Speaks to the World"*, has drawn as much interest from people living in the world, as from souls consecrated to God.

A Few Thoughts

(Excerpts from the lessons given to Sr. Consolata by Jesus)

Consolata, tell the world how good and maternal I am, and how I only ask for love in exchange. Today, like yesterday, like tomorrow, I ask for nothing but love of my poor creatures. Oh! if you could descend into each heart and pour torrents of the caresses of my love into them! I burn with the desire to be lovingly served by my creatures. It's not the avoidance of sin out of fear for my punishments that I desire. I want to be loved. I want the love of my creatures; and once they love Me, they won't offend me any longer.

Love Me, Consolata. Love only Me. There is everything in love. When you love Me, you give Jesus everything He desires from his creatures: love.

Only divine love can transform apostates into apostles; dirtied lilies into immaculate lilies; sinners covered in vices into trophies of mercy.

Put all of your attention into doing your daily duty, so that you can make it with all possible love. Your actions will be so much more valuable, and you will grow even more quickly in love.

Transform any disagreeable thing you meet in your daily walk into bouquets of flowers. Gather them with love, and offer them to Me with love. Gifts? This is how I appreciate them: when they are given with all possible love. This is how even your most insignificant actions become precious.

Consolata, tell souls that I prefer an act of love and a Communion of love over any other gift they could offer Me.

Yes, I prefer an act of love over a discipline, because I am thirsty for love.

Consolata, write this down – I am demanding this obedience from you – that for a single one of your acts of love, I would create Paradise.

Love Me, Consolata. Love will make all shortcomings disappear.

Love is holiness. The more you love Me, the holier you will become. Remember that it is love, and love alone, that will carry you, victorious, to every summit.

Love Me and you will be happy; and the more you love Me, the happier you will be. Oh, if people loved Me, what joy would reign in this most miserable world!

Formula for a ceaseless act of love

11. *What is the formula for making a ceaseless act of love?*

The formula for making a ceaseless act of love, as dictated to Sister Consolata Betrone by Jesus, is as follows:

Jesus, Mary, I love You. Save souls!

12. *Why a formula?*

Because, it's part of our nature to condense and express, through the use of formulas, the sentiments of our soul. We find a confirmation of that in all of the liturgies of the Church, and in the consent it gives to so many prayers and invocations. As for the rest, isn't in the Holy Scriptures that the saints in heaven (*Apocalypse 4:6*) and the angels (*Isaiah 6:3*) express their ardent love by endlessly repeating "*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord, God of hosts*"?

13. *What is the intrinsic value of this formula?*

1. It expresses an act of perfect and pure love (as has previously been explained).

2. It unites the love of the most Holy Virgin Mary to the love of Jesus (and through Him to God, the Holy Trinity).

3. It unites the love of God to the love of neighbor, by making entreaties in favor of all souls. It contains not only an act of perfect love, but also one of perfect charity. And the entire Law is summed up in love and charity.

14. What is the extrinsic value of this formula?

Its extrinsic value resides in this: it comes directly from Jesus, who conferred an anointing and a particular value upon it, summarized in the promises He made to Sister Consolata Betrone.

15. Can't the uniformity of this formula seem monotonous?

All souls are free to follow the spirit's leads to advance in perfection in Love; it would therefore seem that:

a) it's less tiring for the spirit to utilize a single formula rather than many different ones;

b) it's a help for the soul, since it will make it easier for the act of love to become a habit;

c) in any case, the monotony doesn't hinder the perfection of love, or the value of the act of love, in any way. Rather, it renders it more meritorious, because of the greater effort necessary to remain attentive. Of course, the repetition of recited prayers during the Rosary can hinder certain spiritual conditions, but that doesn't stop the holy Rosary from being well recommended!

16. *What can be said about the formula relative to exercising a ceaseless act of love?*

1. The formula serves to set the spirit, the will and the heart on the perfection of love, and upon the object of that love: Jesus, Mary, souls. The goal: a life of love, intimacy with Jesus. The means: is the ceaseless act of love, and the formula is a help for practicing this act.

2. Since it's an act of love, it's not necessary to pronounce the formula out loud. The act of love is an internal action of the will which wants to love, of the heart which does love. It's evident that, in certain moments of struggle or dryness, the vocal recitation of the formula can be a help for the soul.

3. It's therefore unnecessary to believe that making a ceaseless act of love, even when set in a formula, is made better by the mechanical repetition of this formula. A ceaseless act of love, even set in this way, must above all else be a continuous, silent and ardent effusion of love and charity.

4. Insofar as what Jesus wants from us, it's not the number of acts of love that is most important. Between two people, if the former makes a thousand successive acts of love, or nearly that many, and the latter makes a lesser number, but slips them into every free moment of the day, and remains closely united to Jesus, then it's the latter person who will have better understood the Little Way of Love.

17. *What can be said about the formula of a ceaseless act of love relative to indulgenced invocations?*

1. The formula "Jesus, Mary, I love You. Save souls!" has an indulgence attached to it (300 days, granted by Cardinal Fossati, the archbishop of Turin). It can therefore be used by everyone as an invocation to obtain the attached indulgence.

2. Meanwhile, let's not forget that the internal act of perfect love is, itself, the *Indulgence of indulgences*, as Jesus explained to Sr. Consolata, and as we have seen, according to the doctrine of the Church on the value of an act of love.

It remains understood that this act, this prayer, must always be made with a will for perfection.

A Few Thoughts

(Excerpts from the lessons given to Sr. Consolata by Jesus)

Consolata, establish within yourself a continuous "Jesus, Mary, I love You. Save souls!" Consider that it's the only resolution that will allow you to answer "YES" to all of my requests for sacrifices.

Why don't I permit you many oral prayers? Because the act of love is more fertile. A single "Jesus, Mary, I love You. Save souls!" makes up for a thousand blasphemies. Tell Me, what prayer can anyone say to Me that is more beautiful? "Jesus, Mary, I love You. Save souls!": Love and souls, what could anyone want that would be more beautiful?

Consolata, I promise that I will make you reach all the summits of Love, and of sorrow. You, just live and say "Jesus, Mary, I love You. Save souls!" Nothing else.

Remember that an act of love on your part can decide the salvation of a soul, its eternal salvation. So see that you don't waste a single "Jesus, Mary, I love You. Save souls!"

"Jesus, Mary, I love You. Save souls!" includes everything: the souls in purgatory, as well as those in the militant Church; the innocent soul, as well as the guilty one, the dying one, the atheist, etc., all souls.

A ceaseless act of love contains all resolutions: by practicing it, you accomplish everything else.

Live, annihilated and enclosed in a single perpetual "Jesus, Mary, I love You. Save souls!" Nothing, no one, must exist for you, except for the act of love.

Follow Me in a ceaseless act of love, day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute; I Myself will take care of all the rest, I Myself will provide.

Do you know what your cross is? To not miss a single act of love. I love you, and this cross which I place on your shoulders annihilates everything within you; at the same time, it permits you to scrupulously observe all of the points of the Rule, the Constitutions, the Directory.

As long as you remain in Me by a continuing act of love, you live a marvelous and divine Life.

If a creature of good will loves Me and wants to make his life an act of love (with the heart, as understood) from awakening until the moment of sleep, I will do enormous things for this soul. Write it down.

Continuity in the act of love

18. How is continuity in the act of love to be understood?

1. According to the lessons Jesus gave Sr.Consolata, continuity in the act of love should be understood in this way: when praying or meditating, when working out of duty, charity or necessity; when, through obligation, we are busy with occupations that absorb our internal faculties, the act of love is perpetuated by intention. Jesus counts it as well, even if the spirit and the heart aren't able to concentrate seriously on love in those moments.

2. It's therefore unnecessary to sacrifice duty for love (which would be a contradiction) but rather to sanctify duty with love.

3. Moreover, it gives an eternal value to the numerous moments of the day which, quite often through lack of vigilance or self-control, risk being lost in daydreams or useless indiscretions.

4. Every instant of our earthly life is a gift from God, and contains within itself an inestimable eternal value. Why willingly waste a single one? The act of love is a great help for imbuing each instant of our free time with such value.

19. Is continuity possible with the act of love?

1. There is an effective and absolute continuity: loving God with a real love from the moment of awakening in the morning until going to sleep at night, without losing sight of the presence of God for even one short instant, and loving Him ceaselessly with a real love, even through our most absorbing or distracting occupations. That kind of continuity isn't possible for human nature without being specially privileged by God. The Holy Virgin was indisputably privileged in this way. While on earth, She loved God with a perfection superior to the very Seraphim of heaven.

2. There is a continuity which is moral and effective: to not willingly waste a single act of love during those moments when the heart and spirit are free to love. Even that continuity is impossible on this earth without a special grace from God. And God isn't obliged to give it to anyone. However, He can bless a few souls with it, at least for a while.

3. Finally, there is the moral continuity of love, which is not an effective one, but one of will and effort: to push oneself to not voluntarily waste a single act of love, even when the effort is unsuccessful, by making a renewed effort after failures of greater or lesser duration, caused by absentmindedness or instability. This continuity is always possible with the help of God for every soul of good will, and it's precisely this continuity of love that Jesus asks of humble souls.

20. *Understood in this way, is continuity of love part of the perfection of love which the first commandment asks of us?*

1. God doesn't demand the impossible, but perfection: His law can only be one of perfection. Therefore, if He requires us to love with all our heart, it's because we are capable of doing so, and we must drive ourselves to love Him in that way.

If He commands us to love Him with our entire spirit, our entire soul and all of our strength, it's because we are capable of doing so, and we must do so.

2. That's why the effort the soul makes to keep itself as closely united to God as is possible for the heart and spirit is a part of the aforementioned perfection of love, and is an actual duty, even if the means of obtaining this end are not the same for all souls.

3. The means that Jesus proposed to Sr. Consolata is the act of love. So, when Jesus asked Sr. Consolata to push herself to make her life into a ceaseless act of virginal love, He only asked her to put into practice that which is inherently contained in the first commandment.

4. The means for attaining this continuity of love can vary from soul to soul, therefore souls are called to different degrees of perfection in the continuity of love. The important thing is for each soul to dedicate all of its strength to achieving this perfection.

21. *What kind of continuity of love did Sr. Consolata have?*

1. During the first years, after Jesus asked her to give Him a ceaseless act of love, it was a continuity of will and effort. Progress was slow, and consisted mostly of the elimination of all voluntary lapses in the exercise of love. During the last two years, Jesus gave her the grace of a moral and effective continuity. That is the one which consists of not voluntarily losing a single opportunity to make an act of love between one Communion and the next.

2. This is in regards to Sr. Consolata's active part in the exercise of a ceaseless act of love. It is evident that Jesus also gave her the free gift of being able to consider her entire life as having been a ceaseless act of love.

22. *What can be said about the vow of ceaseless love?*

1. By making this vow, the soul takes on the obligation of never voluntarily wasting an act of love from one Communion to the next.

2. Since this is one of the most arduous vows, it must be considered very very carefully before pronouncing it, or allowing other souls to undertake it. It should only be permitted for souls which have a deep internal life, for souls which have already practiced ceaseless acts of love for a long time, in all spiritual conditions, and have practically arrived at a continuity of moral love through will and effort.

3. In any case, it would be better if the soul did not bind itself suddenly and perpetually, but rather advance in

this way in successive stages; and never on pain of sinning,
but rather of simple imperfection.

A Few Thoughts

(Excerpts from the lessons given to Sr. Consolata by Jesus)

I am asking a ceaseless "Jesus, Mary, I love You. Save souls!" from you, from the moment you rise in the morning until you go to bed at night. If you think I'm omnipotent, then believe that I can give you this continual act of love: I want it.

Love Me continually. It doesn't matter if your heart is made of stone or ice!

Everything is contained in, everything is dependent on a continual act of love.

Say goodbye forever to all that is created and to this world, and escape into a ceaseless act of love. You see, each has his own tastes. Here are mines: smallness, nothingness, annihilation, but love.

It doesn't matter if the demon, if your passions, set loose every possible tempest within your soul. Thunder, wind, lightning will be impotent against you. You must tell yourself, "I want to continue, dauntlessly, my act of love from one Communion to the next; that is my duty, my only duty." And go forward!

The ceaseless act of love is your standard; defend it before the enemy (even at the cost of your life).

All that tempts you to turn away from a ceaseless act of love would not come from Me, but from the enemy.

Love Me always, through the battle and the inevitable falls; train yourself to remain unimpressed by failure, but to continue, impervious, your act of love.

You do the impossible to give Me a ceaseless act of love, but when you fail, I Myself will make reparation. No, don't be afraid, I will not stop being good.

Don't you think I can give you this ceaseless act of love? You see, it pleases Me to see you struggle, fall, get up, to see your strengths at work, to see what you know how to do. Shall I tell you what pleases Me the most? It's to see you firm, rising above everything, seeing you continue your act of love.

For your faithfulness to the ceaseless act of love to become heroic, it's necessary to will it, strongly will it, heroically will it.

The virginity of the ceaseless act of love

23. *What does "virginity of love" mean?*

You practice virginity of love by maintaining a spirit which is free of all that could prevent it from concentrating on God, in order to love Him.

24. *What are the virginity of love's specifics?*

Specifically, it is a threefold virginity of spirit, of the tongue, and of the heart.

25. *How is virginity of the spirit practiced?*

It is practiced by the effort made by the soul which does not want to voluntarily allow even the tiniest useless thought.

26. *And what are these useless thoughts?*

1. Mostly, they concern the past (we can't go back there), or the future (which is out of our hands), and so far as the present moment, all thoughts which do not

pertain to the duty at hand, and to which it's necessary to apply our spirit.

2. Preoccupations of all sorts, voluntarily engaged in, or prolonged beyond necessity¹.

3. The soul centering in on itself, which is quite easily begun and nurtured, and therefore detrimental to its spiritual good.

27. *What is meant by the "soul centering in on itself"?*

1. For example if, within the spirit, a soul unnecessarily dwells on a more or less voluntary lapse, the soul not only does not get anything out of it, it wastes its time. But the soul can also be upset, even discouraged, when it goes so far as to listen to the insinuations of self-love. Conversely – if after having asked forgiveness from God, renewed its good intentions and made reparation for infidelity – the soul no longer dwells on it, but continuing the song of love makes an even greater work, and stops wasting time, that's when it will advance.

2. Other situations which are useless and dangerous to dwell on are reprimands, humiliations, and failure in endeavors. It's better to abandon them to God, no longer think about them, and continue to love.

3. Or yet again, when the soul gets lost in suppositions and conjectures concerning things that have been said or left unsaid, done or left undone, on the why of this or that disposition regarding it. Those are all times that the

¹ "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all of these things shall be added unto you. Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself." (Matt. 6:33-34)

devil steals from the soul, and which would have been more usefully employed in loving.

28. How is virginity of the tongue practiced?

It's practiced by being vigilant over oneself to avoid all useless speech, and any talking not required by duty, charity, or necessity¹.

29. How is virginity of the heart practiced?

1. It's practiced by fighting against inquisitiveness, either about the events of the world (curiosity, etc.,) or about one's neighbor (being interested in another's private life).

2. It's also practiced, by those souls which are already advanced in the perfection of love, by refusing the heart all human satisfaction, even those that are not bad. God alone, in the spirit and the heart. He alone is sufficient for everything.

30. What is the objective of this threefold virginity?

1. It's always the same: raising the soul to the perfection of love. Thoughts, curiosities, useless words which are voluntarily said are imperfections of love, failures in the perfect life of love. If Jesus condemns all useless words in the Gospel, it's because they are a fault for the soul and

¹ "I tell you that men will have to give an account on the day of judgment for every idle word they have spoken." (Matt. 12:36)

they steal precious moments that could have been consecrated to loving God.

2. On the other hand, if we don't make silence (internal and external) a means for reaching the perfection of love, then the silence is senseless. It is then no longer virtuous and could therefore simply become an affected and useless muteness.

31. Is this virginity of love possible for the soul?

We will repeat what we've already said about the continuity of the act of love: what counts the most before God is good will and the soul's constant and generous effort. The rest, that is the success, doesn't depend on the soul but on the divine grace which God, in His loving designs on the soul, bestows on it. We won't be judged on our successes, but rather on the effort we made to succeed. Useless thoughts, words, superfluous curiosities, which the soul does not want, against which it fights, don't impede the perfection of love but make it more meritorious before God.

32. What is the relationship between virginity of love and the ceaseless act of love?

They are both reciprocal. The virginity of love (or the battle against useless thoughts and words) is necessary for exercising a ceaseless act of love. Of its own, the exercise of a ceaseless act of love is a very efficient means to achieve the aforementioned threefold virginity; it helps the soul to set its spirit and heart on God.

33. *Is there a difference between the virginity of love and the virginity of the act of love?*

They are substantially the same. Still, Jesus asks Sr. Consolata expressly for "the virginity of a ceaseless act of love;" the endless gift, virginally pure, without an admixture of other thoughts, however good.

34. *Why exclude thoughts "however good?"*

1. If for example, I pondered on my future, I could certainly do it in a good way and therefore the thought would be good; but if I confide it all to Jesus, who thinks of everything to the last detail, and I consecrate the present moment to thinking about Him and loving Him, I then accomplish a far more perfect thing.

2. Here is the other reason Jesus gave Sr. Consolata: "The good thoughts which penetrate your heart can carry within themselves self-love, complacency and can threaten the integrity of the act of love. But, if while trusting blindly in Me, you have confidence that I will provide in all ways, not letting any thought penetrate into you, then your act of love will have a virginal purity." As can be seen, there are nuances of perfection. Only the souls which have attained a high degree in the life of love can perceive them.

35. *Of what does the vow of virginal love consist?*

The vow of virginal love, requested of Sr. Consolata by Jesus, consists in undertaking the prevention of any voluntary thought, word, or useless attachment, with the aim of loving in a virginal and ceaseless way.

36. *What can be said about this vow?*

All that we have said about the vow of ceaseless love.

A Few Thoughts

(Excerpts from the lessons given to Sr. Consolata by Jesus)

Consolata, you know how much I love you! You see, even if My heart is divine, it's also human like yours. It thirsts for your love, for all your thoughts and wants them all.

I will think of everything, even the tiniest things; you, think only of Me, I'm thirsty for your love. All of it. Don't add a single stray thought, it would be a thorn in My head.

Give Me all of your words, I want them all. I want your continual silence. I want you to be all Mine.

Always observe silence; be miserly with words, even the necessary ones; answer everyone with smiles and always wear a pleasant countenance.

Forget everything completely, think only of loving Me more and more; concentrate all of your thoughts, your heart-beats, the silence, on this alone: loving.

Say goodbye forever to every thought, to every word. Let others do whatever they want; you, be in Me, and you will bear much fruit, because I will be the One acting in you.

Put all of your efforts into being firmly united to the "Life," into not becoming detached from "Jesus only," into having no other thought (I think of everything), into not saying a single word that isn't required of you.

The thoughts that come to you, Consolata, and which you don't want, are not acts of infidelity.

I am leaving you the struggle against useless thoughts because it's meritorious for you. When we decide to do nothing but love, all obstacles to love become a source of merits.

I allow this struggle against the thoughts that assault you, this struggle that overwhelms you, because it glorifies Me and gives souls to Me. Offer it to Me every instant: "For You, and for souls." I change these thoughts that you do not want, that continually try you when you are asleep or awake to prevent you from loving, into graces and blessings for souls.

As you can see, it's the enemy that prevents you from accomplishing a ceaseless act of love. That is the reason for your perpetual struggle against thoughts; even good thoughts can serve as a weapon to prevent you from loving.

The virginity of the spirit makes you become beautiful and immaculate; the act of love makes you become ardent as I want you to be.

Answers to a few questions

37. *Doesn't the exercise of a ceaseless act of love risk becoming an obsession for the spirit?*

1. That exercising a ceaseless act of love requires uncommon will power and energy, and consequently, is costly to human nature, is undeniable. But it mustn't be forgotten that in practicing spiritual asceticism, everything is costly, even a single step in virtue. Jesus didn't present the ceaseless act of love to Sr. Consolata as a solace, but as a cross, upon which she was to live her vocation as victim of love, upon which she was to complete her holocaust of love and suffering for souls.

2. We cannot affirm in an absolute manner that they are truly overwhelming for the spirit; it's necessary to discern:

a) If these are souls that never think of God, who don't even offer a single heartbeat to Him, then yes, for them it would not only be oppressive, but completely senseless. You may as well expect a dead man to get up and walk. Such souls must begin by finding grace in a good confession.

b) As for souls who are already trying to practice virtues, far from overwhelming the heart, on the contrary, this act will permit them to pour themselves out in greater flights of love, and at the same time to experience His goodness, the unchangeable faithfulness of God.

c) When a soul makes an effort to achieve this degree of perfect love, it finds the most beautiful expression of its life in the act. For the souls who are sincerely and strongly decided to live a life of love in all of its perfection, far from being oppressive to their spirits, the ceaseless act of love becomes a real "liberation" for them. The proof is given to us in the experience of the "littlest" souls. Where previously, their spirits were tortured in trying to find a way and a means to satisfy their ardent desire to love and to save souls, they now feel that they are free and happy, completely where they're supposed to be. In the littlest way, and even more in the ceaseless act of love, they have found what they used to painfully try to find elsewhere. The act of love has so completely become the heart of their spiritual life that they can no longer do without it, and feel a bottomless emptiness whenever they fail to practice it.

3. The effort to preserve the intimacy of love with Jesus is never as painful as the many instances of the soul's centering in on itself, of unsatisfied and insatiable desires that cause preoccupations of all sorts, and the continual concentration on oneself. The exercise of a ceaseless act of love helps the soul to free itself from all of its shackles. These are the shackles that make the spiritual life burdensome, but not the intimacy of love with Jesus.

4. For the rest, Jesus doesn't require the same degree of perfection in this act of love from all souls, even from the "very little" ones. There are an infinity of degrees in the

perfection of love. What's more, Jesus asks the great majority of souls that it be practiced only in the form of frequency.

38. Doesn't the ceaseless act of love risk obstructing the action of grace in the soul?

1. It's a mistake to think that exercising a ceaseless act of love could be an obstacle, even a small one, for the action of grace in the soul. The opposite is true.

2. Every act of love is already, in itself, the fruit of grace: inspired by grace and carried out with its help¹. It follows that exercising a ceaseless act of love is, in itself, a ceaseless exercise of correspondence with grace.

3. If every act of perfect love already draws God, the Author and Giver of grace (*John 14:23*), to the soul, what can be said about the soul that drives itself to make a ceaseless act of perfect love out of its day?

4. The first and indispensable condition for the soul's bearing much fruit of sanctification is its union with Jesus (*John 15:5*), and it's love that causes this union. The soul which drives itself to love ceaselessly can do no less than achieve a perfect intimacy of love with Jesus, and consequently acquire and perfect the virtues.

5. The correspondence with divine grace will be even more perfect when the soul makes an extra effort to remain wrapped up in silence with God, and will perceive the least word or inspiration of grace. What more efficient means is there besides a virginal ceaseless act of love for

¹ "Not that we're competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God." (*II Cor. 3:5*)

maintaining the soul in a virtuous internal and external silence, in this continual vigilance of love?

6. Of herself, Sr. Consolata was able to state that during her religious life as a capuchin, she had never said "no" to God, and she had never allowed a single inspiration of grace to pass uselessly. Her life is there precisely to show the marvels that grace can work in a soul that strives to keep itself ceaselessly united to Jesus through love.

39. Doesn't exercising the ceaseless act of love risk halting the free flight of the soul in its relations with God?

1. Jesus explained to Sr. Consolata: "When you pray, meditate, or talk with Me, the act of love continues." These words explicitly state to all souls that they can keep their full spiritual liberty in their relationship with God.

It can therefore converse, speak, be open with Him in a way that pleases Him very much, all without discontinuing the act of love.

2. While insisting on the greater value of the act of love in comparison with vocal prayers, Jesus still generally left Sr. Consolata free on that point. And we know that she made the "Way of the Cross" daily, and sometimes even twice daily (morning and night) that she recited one hundred Requiems every night before bed, that she made act of grace novenas of nine Magnificats every day; and we also know about her frequent colloquies with Jesus and the Blessed Mother, her invocations to the saints in heaven, her individual prayers for those who did good to her or for all who asked her to pray for them.

3. It is therefore clear that when it is properly understood, the exercise of a ceaseless act of love does not weigh

down the wings of the soul in its flights towards God. Rather, it maintains it in its full liberty, which permits it to raise itself to higher spheres of pure love. It doesn't prevent the soul from meditating when it feels the urge; from simply fixing its attention on God when it feels called to do so; from speaking familiarly with God; from saying other prayers, etc. In all these different situations, the act of love continues, even if the spirit and heart don't remain completely centered on the "Jesus, Mary, I love You. Save souls!"

4. It would be a grace to hope that the soul, as it progresses in intimate love with God, would do an act of love (of the heart) before every other prayer formula or way of praying. The important thing is for the soul to use the act of love to remain firmly united to Jesus through all the free moments of the day.

40. Are legitimate consolations and innocent distractions permissible for the soul which consecrates itself to the exercise of a ceaseless act of love?

1. Of course. Sr. Consolata never allowed herself a voluntary absence from the communal recreations. Far from being taciturn, she showed herself to be full of life. In a few instances she composed, and even read, some poems (rhymed poetry). When the community would gather near the radio to hear the voice of the Holy Father, or to follow certain religious ceremonies, she always participated with full spiritual joy. She loved song and willingly took part. Had she been permitted, she would voluntarily have learned the art of painting. In the parlor, with her parents or acquaintances, she was able to blend a religious reserve with easiness and amiability. She was never at a loss for spirit filled words, especially when it

became necessary to recover discourses that were taking dangerous turns, etc.

2. Doesn't St. Paul tell us that we must sanctify even our mundane actions like eating, drinking, sleeping? Therefore, a restful moment, an honest recreation, can also be sanctified by love and thus transformed into love.

3. It must be remembered that divine requests are not the same for all souls, even when the souls are called to walk identical ways. What Jesus would ask from a cloistered nun, He wouldn't require in same way from a nun with an active life, and even less from a person living in the world. He doesn't even expect to get the same thing from all of those who are cloistered as He did from Sr. Consolata, like not speaking unless someone asks you a question for example (except in a case of necessity, or for charity, or convenience) even during recreation.

4. It's necessary to follow the calls of grace and not to anticipate them. The soul must ask for this grace as it grows in the perfection of love; and to always obtain this grace, ask for renunciation of some consolations or of some of the more unnecessary distractions.

5. However, each soul which is reaching for the perfection of divine love must constantly strive to avoid becoming dissipated. The act of love is a great help in this way. An act of love (of the heart) doesn't bring any discordant notes into a recreation, doesn't ask the soul to make any excessive efforts, and meanwhile it helps maintain the soul in God's presence and thus sanctify, through love, the recreation itself.

41. What can be said about a ceaseless act of love in relation to contemplation?

1. All souls are not called to become sanctified by following the same way, just as they haven't all been given the same gifts by God.

2. If a soul has been favored by God with the gift of infused contemplation, or has arrived at acquired contemplation; if it truly benefits from this spiritual state, or it feels itself advancing in the perfection of love, let it rest on those summits without looking for other ways or means.

3. Still, the act of love could be a great help even for those souls, for example on those days when the Lord hides His presence from them, or in those numerous moments throughout the day when, because of their various external activities, pure contemplative love becomes very difficult for a time, because it is so often interrupted by the external activity.

4. Anyways, since it keeps the soul ceaselessly and virginally fixed in God, it can't be denied that exercising a ceaseless act of love supports the soul and stabilizes it in a contemplative state.

42. Which is the most perfect, "contemplating" or "loving with a real love," that is, through the act of love?

1. The grand masters of the spiritual life teach that internal prayer is a "conversation with God and a contemplation of invisible divine realities."

2. Friendship love is manifested in all of its ardent fervency in the presence of the person who is loved. This which happens in human life also takes place, and in a more noble way, in friendship love with God. From there, the Holy Spirit who raises us to being "lovers of God" simply raises us to the "contemplation" of Him, and finally makes us capable of "intimate conversation" with Him.

3. It's therefore unnecessary to establish a difference in perfection between the elements that make up the structure of the most profound internal life, but it is necessary to see in love a most pressing invitation to contemplation, and in this a stimulation to love always more the infinitely lovable One.

4. It wouldn't be a waste of time to add that, in itself, contemplation is the "rest" of the spirit, which adores, thanks, praises and blesses while gathering the words of the Divine Master; while the necessities of life require an occupation with so many things that are more the basis of "action." In this condition, through the active and vigilant exercise of a ceaseless act of love for God, everything is accomplished for the glory of God; and under the effect of every effort to do good, the will tries to make the One who is worthy of all praises and blessings better known, loved, and served.

A Few Thoughts

(Excerpts from the lessons given to Sr. Consolata by Jesus)

Never turn your glance away from Jesus, for any reason whatsoever; then you will sail with greater celerity towards the eternal shores.

I want you perfect, I want you to be continually with Me; consequently: Jesus only! Only Me: I am sufficient. Do you really trust Me?

Close all of the doors to the senses. Let's live in intimacy, always, the two of us, alone. Deny entrance to all thought, to everything, always. The two of us, alone.

I am always faithful to My promises; so will you be, if you remain in Me. You will become faithful with everything you promise Me, to your resolutions, because what is found in the vine is also found in its branches.

You live in Me and we are one; you will bear much fruit and become powerful, because you will disappear like a drop of water in the ocean. Within you will pass my silence, my humility, my purity, my charity, my gentleness, my patience, my thirst for suffering, my zeal for souls, to want to save them at any cost.

Always remember that I alone am holy, and I can make you holy, by transfusing my holiness into you. My holiness becomes yours, as your purity is mine, my humility, yours. You see? I am Love, and as long as you live in love, you live in Me, but I also live in you.

You must have such mastery over your thoughts and your words that the devil can't bother you in any way, and this mastery is a gift that the act of love gives you as a favor.

As long as you love, the devil can't cause a bad thought to enter into you because all of your faculties are absorbed by love; but if you were to stop loving, that would be when he could do so. That's why you must always love.

This ceaseless act of love gives you the threefold virginity: of the body, of the heart and of the spirit.

If you efface yourself, you don't allow a thought to enter, I will think in you. If you don't speak, I Myself will speak in you. If you don't seek to do your own will, I will act within you: it will no longer be you who live, but I who live in you.

A cheerful "Yes" to everything and seeing Jesus in everyone

43. *Is ceaseless love the summary of the Very Humble Way of Love?*

In the divine lessons given to Sr. Consolata, the practice of the *Very Humble Way of Love* includes two more points:

- a) a cheerful "yes" in everything, seeing and dealing with Jesus in everyone;
- b) a "yes" to everything out of recognition and gratitude.

44. *What correlation is there between these two points?*

1. Love for God cannot be separated from love for neighbor. Jesus united the two commandments "The second is like the first" (*Matthew 22:39*). In the first one, we love God for Himself; in the second, we love Him in our neighbor. Our neighbor is, in some way, God made visible to us, and to Whom we do good (through our neighbor). The perfection of God's love asks for the per-

fection of charity towards our neighbor, and is the spirit of it. As I try to not lose a chance to make an act of love, I must also not lose a chance to make an act of charity¹.

2. To love God with the perfection required by the first commandment, I must necessarily renounce everything that gets in the way of so perfect a love; in the same way, I must strive to please God in everything by the perfect observance of His Law, and the perfect acting out of His Will in me. Also, to be perfect in charity, I must keep myself from all that could offend or hurt my neighbor, and on the contrary do all of the good I can for him in opposition to my tastes, my convenience, my satisfactions, etc. In this total renouncement made because of love of God, and in this total abnegation towards one's neighbor, is found the perfection of sacrifice included in the "yes" to everything.

3. This "everything," as each person sees it, is relative to the perfection of our love for God. In practice, this is how the perfection of fraternal charity (by not missing an act of charity from one Communion to the next) and the perfection of sacrifice (by not missing a sacrifice from one Communion to the next) will become more easily obtained as the love for God becomes more perfect in the soul (by not missing an act of love from one Communion to the next).

¹ "How can he who doesn't love the brother he can see, love the God whom he cannot see?" (*1 John 4:20*).

45. *Why "see" Jesus in our neighbor?*

Because our neighbor is made in the image and likeness of God, and because Jesus identified Himself with our neighbor¹.

46. *To "see Jesus" in our neighbor, is it necessary to exercise Christian charity?*

It is necessary as the supernatural beginning and end of our act of charity. If our act of charity springs from a purely human origin, it can't have a supernatural value and therefore, an eternal Life².

47. *In practice, how does one "see Jesus" in one's neighbor?*

It's done by addressing all of the good that we do to our neighbor to Jesus, by doing it solely for Him.

48. *Why is it said that we must see Jesus "in everyone"?*

Because charity is universal. If I exclude anyone from my charity, be it a single soul or a single brother, my charity is no longer perfect.

¹ "I tell you the truth, every time you have done something to the least of your brothers, you have done it to Me" (*Matt. 23:40*).

² "Love ponders no evil" (*1 Cor. 13:5*).

49. *How is it possible to see Jesus in our brothers who have serious faults?*

1. If we exclude our brothers who have serious faults from this vision of faith we would no longer be able to be charitable because, unfortunately, no one is without faults, and by that simple fact it would no longer be possible to exercise Christian charity.

2. Because it's faith that lets us see Jesus in everyone. He even, without making any exceptions, identified Himself with prisoners ("I was in prison, and you visited Me"). Likewise, I don't balk at the diminutive size of the consecrated Host and through faith, I believe that it completely contains Jesus; and as even the poor workmanship of a crucifix doesn't prevent me from giving Him the homage due Him, in the same way, in the exercise of charity, my faith makes me see Jesus in all my brothers, whatever their condition.

3. Note: we don't need to see Jesus in the faults of our neighbor, but on the contrary, see the Jesus who allows such faults to render our faith and charity more meritorious.

50. *What does "deal with" Jesus in our neighbor mean?*

It means that I must treat my neighbor in the same way as I would treat Jesus in person, and do it in this way:

1. Always esteem and respect my neighbor. Even if I must reproach or disapprove of his actions, I must always respect his person.

2. Avoid with extreme prudence all that could, in one way or another, risk being an offense against charity: in

my thoughts¹, in my judgments², in my words³, in my conversations⁴.

51. Why is it said: deal with Jesus "in everyone"?

1. That means that we must treat everyone well, whoever they are: our betters as our equals and our inferiors, the rich as the poor, the intelligent as the ignorant⁵.

2. That we must, besides that, treat well not only those who interest us and are good to us, but also strangers and those we haven't heard anything good about⁶.

¹ "Love ponders no evil" (1 Cor. 13:5).

² "Do not judge" (Matt. 7:1).

³ "But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother without cause will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, Raca, is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell" (Matt. 5:22). "Brothers, do not slander one another" (James 4:11).

⁴ "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves" (Romans 12:10).

⁵ "My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?" (James 2:1-4).

⁶ "If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?" (Matt. 5:46-47).

3. And to do this all the time, not only when it's easy but also when, because of various spiritual circumstances, it costs us greatly.

52. What does practicing this "yes" require of us?

1. That our charity grow to include acts and doesn't stop at noble sentiments and kind words¹.

2. That we never refuse to do a favor, render a service, lend a hand to our brothers in need, each and every time that we are not physically or morally prevented from doing so. In these latter situations our refusal must be so charitably expressed that it is well accepted, without reservations.

3. That we be at our neighbor's service with solicitude and promptness in foreseeing his worries and pains, within the limits of what is possible and convenient.

53. What does this yes in "everything" include?

In the same way as we must not make exceptions in our good will towards our neighbor, we also must not make exceptions in our good will towards anyone. We must do good to everyone, without regard for whether the person who is asking for help, or the one to whom we are doing good, is attractive or homely, is worthy or unworthy, is just or unjust, is friend or foe. We must not only forgive offenses but also love and do good to the

¹ "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth" (1 John 3:17-18).

offender. That's Mercy: the sublime summit of charity, proposed by Our Lord Jesus Christ through his example and his instruction (*Matthew 5:39* and following):

"But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. But I tell you: love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

54. What does a "cheerful" yes mean?

1. That charity must be done voluntarily, in all ways, and that when we give, we must do so without humiliating the recipient.

2. That we must rejoice and feel that we are sweetly and holily happy to ease, to help, the comfort the person of Jesus in our neighbor. "If you knew the gift of God and Who it is who asks you for a drink!" (*John 4:10*).

3. That our facial expressions must always be loving, radiating the extreme goodness and gentle condescension of Jesus' Heart.

4. That we must rejoice with those who rejoice, suffer with those who suffer, in order to render more complete the joy of our brothers and less sorrowful their suffering.

5. Finally, that we must be ready to suffer everything rather than cause suffering to our neighbor.

A Few Thoughts

(Excerpts from the lessons given to Sr. Consolata by Jesus)

The Sister, whoever she is, must no longer exist for you, but only Jesus, who is in reality present in this heart.

I give Myself to you and I give you everything, and you, give yourself entirely and give all the help you can. Be truly annihilated in an act of love towards Me and an act of charity towards your Sisters, towards everyone.

Always do everything you can, never avoid making a single sacrifice, never refuse. I will always help you to persevere in your duties towards charity.

Don't see the creature any longer, but see only the Jesus within it. If you do this, all sacrifices will become sweet. Annihilate yourself. I became a Sacrifice for you. Look: they take Me, sacrifice Me, exhibit Me, abandon Me, they do whatever they want with Me. Do the same yourself! Let your Sisters do whatever they want with you.

There's so much to do and so urgently... and you see a Sister who needs help... Oh! don't pass her by, but stop! Make this act of charity, and I will see to it that you arrive on time to do your duty.

Don't be afraid to exaggerate condescension, thus showing in your behavior and words how good and condescending I am.

While completely forgetting yourself, give yourself to everyone with an ever present smile. Don't omit a single act of love for Me, nor an act of charity for your Sisters and your neighbor.

Don't omit a single act of love for Me, see Me in everyone and say a resolute "yes" to all, with firm confidence that My help will never fail you. And smile. Always smile. I Myself will be smiling through you.

Remember that a loving glance and a sweet smile have a greater influence on a soul than the loveliest sermon. Isn't it true that feeling yourself loved and understood in a brotherly, holy manner can make the Way of Perfection seem a lighter one to travel?

I keep pain for Myself, and I give smiles to souls; you do the same.

Say "Yes" to everything with thanksgiving

55. Who is this "yes" addressed to?

We say it to God, who has all of the rights of Creator, Lord, and Redeemer over us; who wants and deserves to be served by us every instant of our lives, through a loving and perfect submission to his will for us, in whatever way that will is manifested.

56. What is included in this "yes"?

1. Generally, it includes our effective and affective acceptance of the divine will and of all divine dispositions that concern us.

2. For what particularly concerns our "sanctification": we must follow Jesus' action in our soul with docility and meekness, letting him choose the road, the manner and the means to sanctify us; our part is to always say "yes," moment by moment, with a will to follow and promptness of action.

3. Concerning suffering: we should not go looking for it, but only accept it, moment by moment, from the loving hand of God. Yes, He will choose heartaches for us,

and they will always be accompanied by His grace and will be the most sanctifying ones for us.

57. What is meant by "yes" to "everything"?

It means that we must never have any reservations about following God's will with our heart and actions. God wants everything and deserves everything. He also returns everything. Our perfect adherence to God's will must include:

1. Not only things of importance but also minor things, which puts more emphasis on the refinement of our love¹.

2. Not only the act of doing everything God wants, asks, sends, but also perfection in the way it's carried out: the time, the place, the manner, etc.; to do His will on earth as it is done in heaven.

3. Not only what conforms to our desires, to our tastes, but also to what contradicts them.

4. Not only what brings us joy, pleasure or some sort of satisfaction, but also the things that cause us sorrow and suffering.

58. In practice, what does faithfulness to "a yes to everything" call for?

1. The perfect observance to the law of God.
2. The perfect carrying out of daily duties.

¹ "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much" (*Luke 16:10*).

3. The generous and constant correspondence with grace, by trying to not allow even a single good inspiration to be wasted.

4. Gathering with love the little acts of virtue, the little sacrifices and the minute renunciations that Jesus endlessly sows in our path.

5. Accepting, moment by moment, the choices that God makes concerning us, whether they come directly from Him, or through events, or our neighbor.

6. Accepting, day by day, whatever trials He will choose to send our way; in our body, in our heart, or in our spirit.

59. What is meant by a "grateful" yes?

It means the perfection with which we must accept and follow the divine Will:

- a) without complaint;
- b) with love;
- c) with a joyful will;
- d) with gratitude.

60. Why even with gratitude?

1. Because, whatever choices God makes concerning us, they are always the work of His infinite goodness and of his inexhaustible merciful love, so they are always for our greatest good.

2. In particular, concerning suffering:

a) through it, Jesus has shown us His special love, "As my Father has loved Me (by crucifying Me), so have I loved you" (*John 15:9*).

b) through it, Jesus gives us the means to prove our love for Him;

c) through it, He purifies us and makes us do our purgatory while on earth;

d) through it, He sanctifies us and fills our brief existence here with merit;

e) through it, He makes us cooperate with the salvation of souls.

61. Would our tears be contrary to a "yes to everything"?

No, no more than the prayers we make, asking God to deliver us from some suffering, as long as our will always remains fully submitted to God's will. "Father, if it's possible, take this cup away from Me. Yet, not as I will but as You will" (*Matthew 26:39*).

62. Does the "yes to everything" take into consideration the state of the victim?

The "yes to everything" doesn't exact from the soul a particular self offering as a victim, if God Himself doesn't intervene to claim it. Yet, if we practice in a perfect way the "yes to everything," we in fact achieve the state of victim, following the Divine Victim, and united with Him, to the end of the Redemption of the world.

A Few Thoughts

(Excerpts from the lessons given to Sr. Consolata by Jesus)

Always remain faithful to your act of love, strive to not waste a single one, and to not omit a single act of charity. Gather with love the flowers of virtue that I cause to spring up on your path, and the fruit that you bear will be abundant.

Holiness is forgetting yourself in everything: thoughts, desires, words. Let Me do everything: I will do it all, and you, moment by moment, with great love give Me what I ask of you.

I have rights on you, and you, you only have one: obeying Me. I need a docile will which allows Me to do everything, which lends itself to everything, which relies on Me and always serves Me, in all circumstances, with peace and joy.

Let Me do what I want. Recognize that I alone exist; there's nothing left of you but your continual act of love and your great docility in doing, simply and always, what I want directly or indirectly through your Superiors and your Sisters.

To maintain a continual act of love in your heart, for it to not be interrupted, it is necessary to always burn within it the sacrificial fire, fed by continuous little acts of virtue. It's not enough to give everything; it's necessary to not take anything back again, to accept everything and suffer everything for the love of Jesus.

The generosity I expect from you is the acceptance of suffering, minute by minute; suffering, not sought after, but accepted as I accepted it Myself

Yes, suffering is the most desirable thing on earth once you understand its value, you see that you can really prove your love for God through it, and finally, that it's like money with which you can buy the salvation of souls.

Remember, the greater your sorrow will be, the more you will know that I love you. Always remember that I will manifest the intensity of My love for you through the intensity of the suffering I send you.

Remember and hold as certain that along with each burden, I will also send the strength to carry it; so, don't be afraid of anything. I love you, and I never stop thinking of you; you, preoccupy yourself with always loving Me.

Love only Me, love Me always; with a great love, answer "yes" to all and to everything, always: there is your path. Nothing but that; it is I who will think about and provide for all of the rest!

The "Littlest Way of Love" and the apostolate

63. *What can be said about the "Littlest Way of Love" relative to the Apostolate?*

The "Littlest Way of Love" has an eminently apostolic character and end. True love can't be given without zeal, and true zeal doesn't exist without love. In the "Littlest Way of Love," love and zeal attract one another, and reciprocally complete and perfect one another.

64. *From what is this apostolic character deduced?*

1. From the immediate end of the "Littlest Way of Love," which is to transport the soul to the most perfect intimacy with Jesus. This end, by divine promise, is an assurance of a great abundance of spiritual fruit: sanctification and souls (*John 15:5*).

2. From the formula of the ceaseless act of love, which is the foundation for the Littlest Way of Love: "*Jesus, Mary, I love You. Save Souls!*" Love and souls: a mixture of harmonious contemplation and action, and a ceaseless pulsation of love for God and of charity for one's neighbor.

3. The fact that, in this formula, Jesus has united a properly spoken act of love, "*Jesus, Mary, I love You.*," with a petition in favor of souls, "*Save souls!*", tends to show that love is ceaselessly given to Jesus (Redeemer) and to the Most Holy Virgin Mary (Co-Redemptrix) to obtain salvation for souls. If we consider the value of the prayer in general, and the love at the end of the apostolate in particular, it will be easy to understand the universal reality of the apostolate which is exercised by the soul who is heroically faithful to the "Littlest Way of Love."

4. The great promises which Jesus made to Sr. Consolata concerning her apostolate in favor of souls are another proof of the goals and of the apostolic efficacy of the "Littlest Way of Love."

65. *What can be said about the "yes to everything" relative to the Apostolate?*

The "yes to everything" through which the soul lovingly accepts all God's decisions concerning it, and embraces a daily cross with love, is, in itself, a testimony of love for God and a cooperation for the salvation of souls. Like all acts of love, so are all sorrows offered to God for souls. Therefore, a "yes to everything" for souls.

66. *Why say "universal Apostolate?"*

1. Because, as it was explained in its proper section, the "*save souls*" of the ceaseless act of love includes all the souls of the universe and of all time, and all their necessities. In union with Jesus, the "Littlest Way" embraces the world of souls; it loves, prays and suffers for all the souls which have been created or are yet to be, till the end of

the ages; it claims Sr. Consolata's heroic agenda: "ALL the love and ALL the sorrows for ALL the souls."

2. Concerning the souls in purgatory, the "save souls" has a particular significance: obtaining divine Mercy that purgatory be dispensed with, or that it be shortened.

67. Will the "Littlest Way of Love" be a reflection of good for the whole world?

The "Littlest Way of Love" was unveiled by Jesus for Sr. Consolata with the intention of forming an army of souls consecrated to love for the renewal of the world through love and charity: summary of the Law.

A Few Thoughts

(Excerpts from the lessons given to Sr. Consolata by Jesus)

Love Me for each and every one of my creatures, for each and every heart which exists. I am so thirsty for love!

Yes, ask forgiveness for poor guilty humanity, ask for the triumph of my Mercy for them, but especially, ask, oh! ask for an outpouring upon them of the embrace of divine Love which, like a new Pentecost, delivers mankind from its illnesses.

Ask Me for love, the triumph of my love for you, for each soul on earth, those that exist now, and those that will exist until the end of the ages. Love Me for all of them and, through your prayer and your sacrifice, prepare the world for the coming of my love.

Since you are thirsting to love Me and to save souls, always remain in Me, never leave Me for one instant and you will reap much fruit.

Consider St. Peter: alone, he had fished all night and hadn't caught a thing; with Me, he had barely thrown in the nets before they were full of fish. In the same way, if you remain in Me, with each inspiration for mortification that I send you, you will throw in the nets and I will pull them in, full of souls which you will only know in Paradise.

The fruitfulness and value of the act of love for saving souls will only be known in Paradise.

Does the cross that I've given you please you? It's very fruitful! The cross of love is more fruitful than any other cross for Me and for souls.

You, think only of Me and of souls: of Me, to love Me; of souls, to save them. I am thirsty, thirsty for souls, and that's the reason for your love and your pain.

Without sacrifice, without physical, moral, spiritual suffering, you will not save souls. But you will obtain the conversion of souls through an ceaseless pulsation of love, a ceaseless pulsation of pain.

I saved souls through the martyrdom of love, martyrdom of pain; and you will also save them that way.

The work of the "Littlest Souls"

I. The littlest Souls

68. What are the "littlest souls"?

They are souls called to follow the littlest way of love which was shown to Sr. Consolata Betrone by Jesus.

69. Do they need a special vocation?

1. Before all else, it is necessary to have the vocation of which St. Paul speaks when he asks the faithful of Ephesus to live in a manner worthy of the "vocation" to which they had been called (*Ephesians 4:1*). He's not only speaking of a vocation to faith, but he invites the Christians to remain faithful to their vocation and to make good use of the gifts of God. A Christian is one who daily answers this divine call and regulates his behavior in such a way as to conform to the requirements of this calling, by making an effort to correspond with it more and more closely. Jesus reveals and manifests the ways and means which are more apt to help in advancing on the road of

eternal salvation to those souls which are dear to Him so that they can become perfect in love.

2. When Sr. Consolata receives this divine illumination in her heart and communicates it to souls, these souls, having already been called by Jesus to a Christian life or to the religious life, are concurrently invited and called to grow in love. It's in this sense that we can speak about a special vocation to love; and this vocation, although already included in the Christian vocation, will nevertheless develop and become a reality in a different way in each soul, which will conform to the soul's life conditions.

3. This shows up often in the numerous lessons which Consolata receives from Jesus. Here is an example: "If you believe that I'm omnipotent, then believe that I'm able to give you this continual act of love: I want to do it."

And so, Jesus alone can give a soul the grace to be able to persevere in the ceaseless act of love. When Jesus wants a soul to achieve the perfection of love through the ceaseless act of love, He gives the soul that grace.

70. Are these souls numerous?

1. Their number? Only Jesus knows that. Because only He knows those who belongs to Him and have given themselves to Him completely. It's a consolation to think that Jesus speaks of thousands and thousands of souls who love Him and will love Him in this way.

2. Let's desire not so much to discover the exact number of these souls as to live in such a way as to extend this family, and to rejoice in the thought that the friends of God can become more and more numerous at all times and places.

71. *What formalities must be observed to become a part of these "littlest souls"?*

None. No induction, no insignia, nothing of this sort. There are no associations, no companies, etc., but there is a spiritual way which is open to all souls who feel drawn to embrace it.

72. *Isn't there at least some special consecration required?*

It's natural for the soul who feels drawn to walk this path to experience a need to begin with some sort of consecration to love. The very first of the littlest souls did this, as well as the others who have become a part of this privileged society.

73. *How is this consecration made?*

There's no established ceremony. Taking the example of the first "littlest soul," we recommend:

- a) set a date, preferably a feast of Our Lord or the Blessed Mother or even a First Friday of the month;
- b) prepare for it with a few days of quiet and prayer;
- c) attend mass and receive Holy Communion on the set date, make the consecration of the "littlest souls," entrusting yourself to the Sacred Heart of Jesus through the hands of the Blessed Mother;
- d) end with the recitation of a Magnificat.

74. *Is it necessary to use a special formula for the consecration?*

No, the soul is free to express its own commitment to the Littlest Way of Love, in whatever manner it finds the most pleasant and however the heart dictates.

75. *Nevertheless, couldn't you suggest a formula?*

Yes, but always leaving the soul completely free to modify or add what it will. The following is a suggestion:

"Sacred Heart of Jesus, who has so loved men and who asks nothing but love in return, I, ..., anxious to satisfy the ardent desire of Your divine Heart, through the hands of Immaculate Mary consecrate myself to You as a littlest soul, promising to strive to transform my entire life into a virginal, ceaseless act of love, which includes a cheerful "yes" to everyone, and a grateful "yes" to everything. Accept, O good Jesus, my consecration; bathe it in Your Precious Blood and transform it with Your omnipotent grace, that I may be faithful to it until death, and that this ceaseless act of love, begun here on earth, may continue for an eternity in heaven. Heart of Jesus, so thirsty for love and for souls, make of me Your littlest host of love, that I might co-operate with You and our Most Holy Mother for the salvation of souls. Amen."

76. *Is this sort of consecration binding under pain of sin?*

Absolutely not. Neither mortal sin, nor venial sin. Nothing. Abandoning this way or neglecting the ceaseless act of love simply deprives the individual of the merits and the fruits of the omitted acts.

77. Is it good to renew the act of consecration?

It's good to renew it on the anniversary date, and in other particular circumstances.

78. How should the soul who feels drawn to this way proceed?

It's necessary to proceed slowly, with calm and reflection, to ensure that this impulse is really the fruit of God's grace and not of some fleeting enthusiasm. For that, it would be good to ask for God's enlightenment with a fervent prayer and also to practice for a certain amount of time, without a formal consecration, the three points of the Littlest Way of Love, especially that which concerns the act of ceaseless love. It's only after such reassurance that the heart and spirit are ready and that the soul receives real help for its life within, that it will be ready to make a consecration to the Littlest Way.

79. Generally speaking, what rule should a spiritual director follow?

1. It would be a mistake to believe that a director can push large numbers of souls from among those he directs into following this way, even if they were all good and pious. Besides, it's not the number that counts. In the same way as Jesus needs victim souls who are such in fact and not simply in name, so does He want Littlest souls who really are such, and not only in name.

2. Contrarily, the spiritual director will find that a greater number of souls will desire and be ready to use the act of love as a means to sustain and develop their spiri-

tual life without, however, trying to practice it ceaselessly, as we will see in the next paragraph.

80. Is it necessary for the spiritual Father to follow the same way as the "Littlest Souls" himself?

It's certainly desirable, but not necessary. It's sufficient for him to know what it's all about, so that he can help the soul to sanctify itself in the way of love.

81. What errors can the "Littlest Souls" expose themselves to?

Especially in the beginning, they can be the victims of several illusions and errors, which the devil the adversary of love can use to discourage them.

1. It would be an illusion to think that it's necessary to do everything Sr. Consolata was doing, or to imagine that we can attain the perfection that she achieved with the continuity of the act of love. Besides the different states and conditions of life, it's necessary to remember that Sr. Consolata received some very special graces and gifts which were inherent to her particular mission. The "Way" is identical in itself for all of the littlest souls, but not everyone is called to make the same progress in it. When a soul is doing all it can, it attains the goal which God wants from it.

2. It would be an illusion to expect to arrive at continuity in the act of love in a short time. Remember that Sr. Consolata, in spite of the gifts she received from God, had to be content with a moral continuity of will and effort for at least ten years.

3. It's an illusion to believe that the exercise of the ceaseless act of love doesn't cost the soul anything. We've said it before, but it needs to be said again: it's a cross, but a sanctifying one; it's an immolation of all the senses; it is the death of nature for the triumph of grace.

4. It's an illusion to expect that the enormous things promised to the littlest souls by Jesus consist of extraordinary gifts, charisms, etc. No, they rather consist of the summits of sanctity which are attained by souls through love and suffering. They also have nothing to do with spiritual sweetness, but are compatible with the joys of the heart and the profound peace of spirit which, even in the midst of the greatest agonies, made Sr. Consolata say "I am happy, happy, happy!"

5. It's a mistake to believe that the act of love is less fervent or agreeable to God when it's continued in disgust, boredom, or as if by force. An act of love which is offered in such circumstances of spirit can have as much value as ten or even one hundred which were done with a felt fervor.

6. It's a mistake to think that after an infidelity or an omission that the act of love is no longer sincere and it loses its value; it's even a means of putting things back into place, regaining the time which was lost and going forward.

82. How must they proceed with exercising the ceaseless act of love?

1. With an energetic will, yes, but also with great calm, peace, and pleasantness. Bit by bit, the act of love must become a need for the spirit, and a joy for the heart, not a torment. It's true that it's a cross, especially during times

of spiritual dryness, but, as Jesus explained to Sr. Consolata, it's a cross which helps to support all other crosses.

2. Little souls, to use the expression, place their hand in Jesus' and let Him lead them through the daily events, even the most tiny and inconsequential ones, as they remain focused on Him, loving Him. Yet again, if you will, the littlest soul has built a dwelling in the Heart of Jesus and abides there, in silence and recollection, attentive and vigilant, so that not a single act of love, a single act of charity, a single act of virtue or a sacrifice will be passed up.

3. But all that, always with calm, without agitation, without even becoming excited, or even less, becoming bothered over one's own problems and infidelities, always ready to take up the song of love again after each interruption which was more or less deliberate, more or less drawn out.

83. What means can the soul use to help with the exercise of the ceaseless act of love?

1. The greatest help is prayer. As the life of Sr. Consolata was a ceaseless act of love, she also made it into a ceaseless prayer to obtain a heroic faithfulness to the Littlest Way of Love from God.

2. Among other means mentioned in various parts of this little book, let's reiterate the following points:

a) renewing the resolution of the ceaseless act of love daily, in holy Communion;

b) renewing it each hour of the day, as Jesus suggested to Sr. Consolata;

c) use it (and the other two points of the Littlest Way of Love) as the basis for self examination;

d) to live in the present moment, sanctifying it with love and through a generous adherence to God's will, without being preoccupied with the next moment.

3. The soul can also help itself with pious maxims on the value of the act of love, for example: "Each act of love lasts eternally... Each act of love is one soul... Each act of love increases my love for Jesus and Jesus' love for me... Each act of love is worth infinitely more than all of the treasures on earth... The act of love helps me to put a maximum value on every instant of the day, etc."

84. What are the spiritual characteristics of the "Littlest Souls?"

1. The usual traits of a Littlest Soul are: confidence and abandon. These two holy traits are like a consequence and a perfection of the life of love.

2. Among the moral virtues which must come to light: humility and charity in a spirit of sacrifice and zeal.

85. What can be said about the "Littlest Way of Love" in relation to the spirit of the various religious congregations?

1. In the same way as little Theresa's "Little Way of Love," when considered in its essence, can't be in opposition to the spirit of any religious congregation, so it is with the "Littlest Way of Love." It's the same spirit from one part or another spiritual childhood drawn from the

Gospel and concretized here in the three points explained above.

2. The primary and essential aim of religious life consists in the concentration of all one's strength towards perfection of charity, or divine love, through voluntary detachment from everything (poverty,) everyone (chastity,) and oneself (obedience). How could a doctrine, a spiritual life whose goal is precisely to make the soul rise higher in the perfection of love, through the perfection of charity, sacrifice, and self-renunciation, be in opposition to all of that?

3. The particular aim of each individual congregation is the one which is set by the Rule or the Constitutions, and applied to various daily activities by the Directory. So, in the Littlest Way of Love, nothing is required of the soul which is opposed to the Rule, nothing is added to the Rule, but only the Rule itself in all of its outer perfection (in execution,) and inner perfection (in purity of intention, love). Sr. Consolata summarized her religious life's practical agenda in these three words: "the Rule, duty, love." And Jesus confirmed it for her: "The ceaseless act of love will bring you to the scrupulous observation of every point of the Rule, the Constitutions and the Directory."

4. If all the members of each religious community were to try to put the agenda of the Littlest Way of Love into the practice, "To not omit a single act of love, a single act of charity, a single act of virtue, a single sacrifice from one Communion to the next," how could the spirit of the Congregation itself, whatever it is, not flourish or revive?

5. That doesn't mean that all, or the majority of religious souls are called to embrace the form of the *Littlest*

Way of Love. The issue is rather the "spirit" of the Littlest Way of Love, that is, cultivating a profound inner life – a life of love – through an exercise which is always more perfect in virtue and apostolate: that's what could and should be the object of all religious souls' aspirations. All can also know the value of an act of love, either within themselves, or as a means of advancing in a life of love.

86. *Could you suggest a special prayer for "littlest souls" to us?*

We suggest this: "O Jesus, You who love the small and humble with a special love, and who reveal your secrets of love to them, change me, also me, into a littlest one, a humble one, and for the good of souls, graciously reveal, also to me, your secrets of love. O Jesus, You who, through an act of love, give Yourself to souls, give Yourself also to me who wants to live in love for You."

II. The "Little Angels"

87. *Who are the "Little Angels?"*

The term "Little Angels," like "Littlest Ones¹," refers to souls, of course. The "Little Angels" are all the souls who, although not called to render God the essence of the act of love, ceaseless and virginal, nevertheless do use it more or less assiduously to progress in the life of love, sanctify themselves and cooperate in the salvation of souls.

88. *Can children and the very young belong to the "Little Angels?"*

Certainly. This was the dearest wish of Sr. Consolata's heart, the most ardent vow of her life: to lead the young to Jesus. When Jesus taught her how to practice the ceaseless act of love, and predicted that other souls would follow her, her first thought was for the young; and how happy she was to be able to give children the doctrine of the act of love through the way of the "Little Angels!"

89. *Is it possible to have children learn the act of love?*

Not only is it possible, but it's not hard. Isn't it written: "From the mouths of children and infants you have ordained praise?" (*Psalms 8:2*). And wasn't this realised to the letter the moment of Jesus' triumphant entry into

¹ Or "littlest souls."

Jerusalem? (*Matthew 21:26*). This God who has given rise to perfect praise in the hearts and on the lips of the Hebrew children will also know how to give rise to the act of love, the true perfect praise, in the heart and on the lips of Christian children¹.

90. How does one proceed with children?

It's necessary to proceed by degrees: first of all, to teach them the act of love, abbreviated in the words "Jesus, I love You," and then "Jesus, Mary, I love You," only the older ones should be made to repeat the complete formula: "Jesus, Mary, I love You! Save souls!"

91. Is it good to make young people learn the act of love?

It's a very useful thing for opening their heart to divine love, and drawing many graces upon them. If we, who are bad, never forget a proof of affection, how many benedictions will the heart of Jesus, which is infinitely good, pour out upon these little ones who make efforts to tell Him and repeat to Him that they love Him? When they grow up, they won't forget the act of love which will be a precious help throughout their life and at the moment of their death.

¹ The last words of Guy of Fongalland, on his deathbed, were: "Jesus, I love You!" In the life of little Maria Filipetto (1912-1927), these words are recorded: "Jesus, I love You! I can't say anything else. Let every beat of my heart be a throb of love for You!" Little Jacinta of Fatima used to say: "I love Jesus and the Madonna so much that I never tire of telling Them that I love Them!"

92. *Whose duty is this?*

All those who have a ministry to children: mothers, religious sisters, teachers, Catholic Action members, etc. Further on, we will print Sr. Consolata's invitation to the "Littlest Souls" on this subject.

93. *Can adults take part in the "Little Angels?"*

Having already explained that Jesus OFFERS the act of love, we will be content to repeat often that He offers it to souls of good will.

1. Consecrated souls who don't feel drawn to take part in the "Littlest Souls" will always be able to practice, with great profit, the act of love (which is an internal act) especially for combating the dissipation of the spirit and its self-absorption.

2. The laity, who are taken up with the necessities of life and don't have the time to say long prayers, can find that the act of love is a great help in their spiritual life, to sanctify their daily fatigue and allow them to pray longer without having it interrupt their activity.

3. The sick can gather incalculable advantages from exercising the act of love: to sanctify their suffering, and sometimes make up for all of the prayers or pious exercises that would otherwise be impossible because of their disease. Occasionally repeating an act of love, while lifting their spirit to thoughts of faith and hope which comforts them, with the certainty of cooperating with the salvation of souls in this way, draws the compassionate glance of the Heart of Jesus and the maternal tenderness of his Mother upon them.

4. The elderly, for whom it's impossible to make great sacrifices or grand actions, perhaps even reduced to inactivity, can find a powerful help in the exercise of the act of love and an easy way to give value for themselves and for souls to their last years of life, and maybe even regain lost time through the intensity of their spiritual life. This explains why the elderly accepted the doctrine of the act of love so favorably and received it with such great spiritual satisfaction.

94. Is a special consecration necessary in order to belong to the the "Little Angels?"

No, because the "Little Angels" don't embrace a particular spiritual life, but simply a particular way of praying, which makes use of the act of love (even as an invocation) in whatever measure possible.

95. In what sense can the act of love be called ceaseless in relation to the "Little Angels?"

In the sense that, although it isn't ceaseless through the action of a single person, it remains such as long as it is done by a number of people, the number itself being more or less important. If there are a certain number of people in a community, or in a parish, who frequently repeat the act of love, then a ceaseless act of love will continually rise to heaven from this community, this parish, and will come back down upon them in a rain of graces and blessings.

III. The Work

96. *What is understood by "The Work of the Littlest Souls?"*

1. The work of the Littlest Souls, promised to Sr. Consolata by Jesus, has the goal of keeping alive and developing the Littlest Way of Love in the world by grouping together the Littlest Souls and the Little Angels.

97. *So the "Littlest Way of Love" must continue in the world?*

It seems so. Sr. Consolata received a promise from heaven that the Littlest Souls and the Little Angels would live in the bosom of the Church until the end of time.

98. *Does the Work have the joy of being a special organization?*

It's evident that it must have its own organization, oriented on the goal it's pursuing.

99. *What is this organization?*

It's not yet possible to determine the precise form under which this organization will present itself. But it seems that it will need a Center of inner and outer activity: its goal being to cause love to radiate out into the world, through the means of the Littlest Way, intensely lived and propagated.

A Few Thoughts

(Excerpts from the lessons given to Sr. Consolata by Jesus)

Among the Benjamins of Catholic Action there are the "Littlest Ones," and there are also some among the little souls. You are part of them, and the souls who will follow you will also belong to them, to give Me a ceaseless act of love.

You remember your great mission: give the little ones to Jesus and Jesus to the little ones? Well! Even in heaven you will present Me with little ones, the littlest ones, and you will give Me to them through a ceaseless act of love.

When your last "Jesus, Mary, I love You!" will have been pronounced, I will gather it up, and through the writings about your life, I will transmit it to thousands of sinful souls who will receive and follow it in the simplicity of this way of confidence and love, and they will thus love Me.

The Littlest Souls will be numerous, so numerous; not just thousands, but millions and millions! They will not all be women; men will also take part. Oh yes, there are even many Littlest Souls among men!

After your death, the Littlest Souls will hasten towards you, just as one day, noticing you were at St. Maxim's, the little ones of the catechism, the Benjamins, hastened towards you.

I want a wave of love to surge from the earth to heaven. You yourself must blaze the trail of the Littlest Way. One day you will serve as a model: as the world has its eyes fixed on St. Theresa today, so will the millions of Littlest Souls turn towards you.

Yes, the hearts of the Littlest Souls are destined to die of love for Me, to be consumed exclusively for Me. The world doesn't have the right to call Me cruel, because such a great number will die in sin, victims of the world! Isn't it therefore just that a creature should consume itself for its Creator?

Forget yourself, don't think of yourself or of the concerns of your special vocation. No, the Heart of Jesus has used you as an instrument (as you use a broom), but the One who will accomplish the marvelous Work of the Littlest Souls is Him, exclusively Him.

Yes, the Littlest Souls are the pupil of my eyes.

A letter from Sr. Consolata to the "Littlest Souls"

Dearest "Littlest Soul,"

At night, when you are getting ready to go to bed, make sure you pray to your good guardian angel, asking him to love Jesus for you while you sleep, and to inspire the act of love into you when he awakens you in the morning. If you are faithful to praying in this way every night, he will be faithful, every morning, to awakening you with a "Jesus, Mary, I love You! Save souls!"

With your day begun in this way, you will continue it by loving, and by approaching the Eucharistic Jesus. However, this doesn't mean that you must abandon every other prayer; no, continue your usual pious practices without adding any new ones, but let the act of love absorb all of your free time. Afterwards, if Jesus moves you, you can even say some vocal prayers.

In Holy Communion, confide and abandon your person, your preoccupations, your projects, your desires, and your sorrows to Jesus, and don't think about them any longer. Because the whole life of a "Littlest Soul" is based on the divine promise "I will think of everything; you, think only of loving Me." (Copy these words onto an icon of the Sacred Heart, and try to have them always present in your spirit; they will be a great help to you, for freeing your spirit from

all preoccupations, and they will be a proof, through experience, that Jesus is faithful to this promise.)

After having abandoned everything to Jesus in Holy Communion, renew your promise of the ceaseless act of love, the "Yes to everything" He will ask of you throughout the day, and the resolution to see Him, speak to Him, and serve Him with love in all creatures you will have to deal with.

Once and for all, intend to direct your entire act of love towards heaven, and beg Him to grant you the faithfulness to live it out until your next Communion, that it may thus be the reparation for your infidelities.

You will leave church having begun your act of love, and you will continue it in transit, at home, wherever your duty binds you. Rest assured that Jesus promised that when you write, pray, or speak from necessity or for charity, the act of love continues just the same.

On your work (for example, on your stitching) or at your place of work, try to keep the words, written on an icon or a card, "Jesus, Mary, I love You! Save souls!" in plain sight. It will serve as a reminder.

From among the obstacles to the ceaseless act of virginal love you owe Jesus, He teaches you to combat three: thoughts, discussions, useless attachments. Thoughts, preoccupations: all become useless from the moment Jesus promises his "Littlest Soul" that He will think of everything, right up to the tiniest details. Useless conversations: if you speak beyond what concerns duty, charity, politeness, it's wasted time, stolen from love. Attachments, curiosities, etc., everything, in short, which distracts your spirit from the single thing it must remain devoted to: loving Jesus, ceaselessly, with a virginal love.

Meanwhile, it's necessary for you to admit that in order to realize the divine desires, "one must not omit a single act of love or any of charity, from one Communion to the next," and that the work of your soul, carried along by grace, will be lengthy and continue to require constant and generous efforts, especially without discouragement, for a long time. With each more or less voluntary infidelity, renew your resolution for virginal love and begin again. If this infidelity causes you to suffer, offer it to Jesus as an act of love. You will see and be aware of the tenderness with which Jesus will raise you back up after a fall or an infidelity; how He will hasten to set you back on your feet, so that you can continue your song of love.

What will be a great help for giving your being to Jesus in the ceaseless act of love will be renewing, every moment, your resolution to do it; and after that, your self examination on this resolution. Note that in the self examination, all that must be considered as failure is the time which was wasted in useless conversations, or the fantasy of useless thought, etc. Make reparation, if God wants you to, by making a cross on the ground with your tongue, and peacefully begin again with your service of love.

The resolution with which you concentrate all of your energy will always reflect on the ceaseless act of love. But don't be afraid, Jesus will always help you. He said: "Love, and you will be happy, and the more you love Me, the happier you will be!" Take courage, Jesus and Mary will help you. Don't be afraid, ever; have confidence and believe in their love for you.

Affectionately,

Sr. M.-Consolata, R.C.SR.

Consolata's call to the "Littlest Souls" for the "Angelets" (Little Angels)

We would like to point out that Sr. Consolata reserved the term "Little Angels" for little ones, according to their age, and it came from a particular inclination of her heart.

"The day when, at the gate in the parlor, I learned that a section for "Little Angels" had been constituted in Catholic Action, I addressed this ardent, although timid, desire to God: "Jesus, to whom will You confide the direction of the 'Angelets'?" And Jesus, always good, always maternally condescending, as if He wanted to compensate me for the sacrifice of complete annihilation He asked from me concerning the "Littlest Souls," answered me within: "The Angelets will be yours, really yours. It's you I confide them to, and you will assemble them." From that moment, the Angelets were born in my heart, begotten by a very lively affection.

But how could I assemble "the Angelets" throughout the world and teach them the act of love, me, a poor contemplative nun closed up in a cloister? What is impossible for the creature isn't so for the Almighty. With complete confidence, I awaited the accomplishment of the divine promise; and so set about preparing the way with prayer.

But see, O Jesus, now You've asked me for the sacrifice of my life, and soon I will stand in your divine presence. O

Jesus, You are the only One who knows with what love, with what tenderness, I would have assembled the "Angelets" of the universe, to teach them how to stutter, to repeat the act of love! But here I am, coming in your direction. Ah well! I pray, I beg You, through the heart of your divine Mother, who is also mine, I ask You to raise up, from among the "Littlest Souls" of the entire world, from among the souls who are devoted to working with children: in the orphanages, in the schools, in the churches, in the associations, among the mothers and sisters of good families, I beg You to raise apostle's hearts from everywhere, which will try to promote the coming of your reign of love, gathering many "Angelets" (of both genders) from those who are born to life, and teaching them the act of love.

O Jesus, I am coming to You, but, near your divine Heart where I will love eternally, I will watch over these apostles and protect them, and through them I will assemble the "Angelets" for You from all parts of the world, while You and your Mama, who is also mine, receive perfect praise from these innocent hearts. And that's how your promise will be accomplished. Thank You, O my God, now and always!

A few thoughts by Sr. Consolata concerning the exercise of the ceaseless act of love

I'm not always able to express myself as I would wish, but I understand that in practice, an act of love gives Jesus to the soul, or increases its grace; it's like a Communion.

How the certainty that each act of love lasts eternally makes me joyful, active, vigilant! If the ceaseless act of love gives all to Jesus, it also gives everything to the soul. Yes, truly, the act of love is everything: it is light, strength and everything else.

The ceaseless act of love prepares the soul to resist temptation. It sustains the soul during temptation because love is everything.

The ceaseless act of love always maintains the soul in peace. I believe that it has a strong influence over suffering; it helps the soul to suffer with joy.

Being gathered up, I am separated from the earth. The ceaseless act of love unites me to God.

I joyfully notice that the act of virginal love transforms, raises and divinizes the soul.

To live on the Cross of the ceaseless act of love is to live in detachment from the world: God and souls, that's the realization of divine will!

For me, the most perfect sacrifice, the true holocaust, is to never omit a single act of love from awakening till sleeping.

Love and souls! Don't omit a single act of love, don't lose a single soul!

The ceaseless act of love is more powerful than any suffering: so, to place myself above suffering, I must not cease to love.

Be watchful that the thorns of preoccupations don't suffocate the act of love, and remember that it's through patience that the soul will bear the fruit to which it aspires!

Concentrate everything into this intention, into this "I will not omit a single act of love" and all of the rest will come of itself.

Everything, all strengths, all energies, all activities of the soul: all must be put to work in such a way that the act of love is never interrupted. Nothing else should hold your attention, only the act of love. Behold my life: the act of love. It's all that Jesus has asked of me.

I desire, I always desire, with all of my strength, I desire to live the present moment; I don't want to allow a single thought, a single preoccupation to penetrate my soul. Not a single word will escape my lips, if it's not uttered out of true necessity: no, nothing can make me omit a single act of love.

I desire, with all of my strength, I desire a continuous: "Jesus, Mary, I love You! Save souls!" I want to see and deal with Jesus alone in all men. Jesus, I trust in You.

O Jesus, with Your help, I don't want to miss a single act of love, not a single one. Yes, Jesus, that's what I want! And this "I want," so that it can be faithful, I plunge it into a bath of your divine Blood, and I leave it there forever.

It seems to me that Jesus has really rooted the ceaseless act of love within me. Throughout my continuous struggles, I use

all of my strength to prevent any creature, any task, any temptation from turning me away from the act of love.

Sr. Consolata's prayer to obtain heroic faithfulness to the "Littlest Way"

Jesus, when my spirit is presented with images, thoughts, memories, please remind me that I've renounced everything for your love, and that I've promised You that I would keep my spirit intact, wanting only one single thought, but forever: "Jesus, Mary, I love You! Save souls!"

Jesus, when I get the urge to express a point of view about work, or the desire to give advice, etc., please remind me that I must not interest myself in anything, except the thought of following You, of preoccupying myself only with loving You.

Jesus, when during recreation or during the hour of mandatory silence, I am tempted to speak or make confidences, please remind me that, through love for You, I have promised to hold my tongue, through the daily Eucharistic Meeting, to not speak without being questioned, and to answer only what is necessary, and always in a soft voice.

Jesus, when a wave of disgust surprises me, please remind me that in compensation for all You've done for me and for all You will yet do, that I have promised You a ceaseless act of love, that it's only by loving You with a ceaseless love that I

will attain the summit, that I will be living my vocation and that I will be helping to save souls.

Jesus, when the enemy presents me with my sisters' faults, please remind me that I must not allow myself to judge or blame, but only to be compassionate, to speak and to serve and all with love.

Jesus, to do You homage with this ceaseless act of love, I have renounced everything. Ah! Don't let me lose ground, or take a thought back from You, or speak a word which could be a negation of this Love!

PRAYER
FOR OBTAINING GRACES
THROUGH THE INTERCESSION
OF SR. CONSOLATA

Father of all compassion, You have brought among us Your servant sister M. Consolata Betrone to spread throughout the world the incessant love towards Your Son Jesus in the simple path of confidence and love.

Make us, too, capable, guided by Your Spirit, of being ardent witnesses of Your love and of Your immense bounty and grant us, by Your intercession, the grace which we need.

For Christ our Lord. Amen

Imprimatur
Turin, March 11 1995
† Pier Giorgio Micchiardi

Anyone receiving graces through the intercession of Sr. Consolata Betrone is asked to give notice of them to the following address:

Monastero Sacro Cuore
Via Duca d'Aosta,1
10024 Moncalieri (TO) Italy

www.consolatabetrone-monasterosacrocuore.it