

But the things which are especially wont to hinder spiritual joyfulness in a virtuous soul are the defects which she commits, and without which she knows full well that she cannot live. Behold here a delusion: behold the deceit of the enemy, whereby he is accustomed to do very great harm to the inexperienced.

It depends on thee alone, My Child, to make these defects—after they have been committed—subservient to thy profit, and, consequently, to the joyfulness of thy heart. For it is a source of great advantage, nay, of great merit, on the one hand, forthwith to repent, through love for Me, of the faults committed; and, on the other, to rejoice in the humiliations which follow these faults, because My honor is thereby repaired.

Finally, My Child, whatever obstacles thou mayst find in thy way, leave nothing that is right untried, to guard against this baneful gloominess. Beware, however, lest, whilst shunning sadness, thou run into it by the other extreme. Wherefore, to avoid it, do not give thyself up to dissipation, to the neglect of thy spiritual exercises, to the pursuit of sensual delights. For, of the end of such a joy, mourning takes hold.

6. My Child, after the possession of the state of grace, the chief of the means to enjoy spiritual gladness, and to preserve the same, is to be meek and humble of heart, for love of Me.

Be humble, and thou shalt never be cast down: love fervently, and thou shalt ever possess a joyful heart.

If thou followest the propensity or the aversion of nature: if thou art lukewarm or careless in the

things which concern My service, even shouldst thou have all the delights of earth, thou canst never taste nor possess true joyfulness of heart.

There are also outward things which contribute to the joy of the heart: holy endeavors to cultivate spiritual gladness, pious jubilations by hymns and canticles, intercourse with those who are spiritually joyous, cheerfulness in action, resignation in suffering, a holy freedom in one's proceeding.

Pray, My Child, and strive to make a right use of these means, and thus shalt thou enjoy true gladness, compared to which all other delight is mere grief—all other gayety, sadness—all other sweetness, bitterness.

This is My joy, wherein rejoice thou always: again, I say, rejoice.

7. *The voice of the Disciple.*—O Jesus! whose Heart is the never-failing fountain of exquisite gladness, whence heaven draws as well as earth; where, save in Thee, shall I find true joyfulness of heart?

O most sweet Jesus! who hast pity in cheerfulness, have pity on me, Thy unworthy Child; fill my heart with holy gladness.

Without Thee, my soul is like a field without water, dry and wretched: Thou alone art true and efficacious refreshment.

When Thy refreshing Spirit is not within me, distasteful is all that creatures can offer: but when Thou cheerest up the heart, my soul leaps for joy; and, in her gladness, bears all things with ease, finds all savory, tastes sweetness even in what is bitter.

Thus do Thou ever, I entreat Thee, gladden my soul. Grant me a humility so solid that I be never