

*The most beautiful
texts of
Saint Rafael Arnaiz,
Trappist monk*

(July - December)



year 1933

It has been some three years since I have been able to spend days at the Trappist monastery. However, during this space of time, God our Lord has worked in me in such a way that I have formed the determined resolution to give myself to Him with all my heart, body and soul, and in order to carry out my purpose and resolution, and also counting on God's help, it is my desire to enter the Cistercian Order.

I believe I can count on God, and in Him alone I trust, but in my first steps, I also trust in the charity of His Reverence, whom I already treat as a father and whom I beseech to admit me as a son.

On the other hand, I only have to add that I am not moved to make this change of life by the sorrows, sufferings, disappointments and disappointments of the world.... What the world can give me, I have everything. God, in his infinite goodness, has given me in life, much more than I deserve... Therefore, my Reverend Father, if you receive me in the community with your children, be assured that you receive only a very joyful heart with much love for God.

There are many tabernacles in the roundness of the earth, but only one God, who is Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Consoling truth that makes the monk in his choir, the missionary in the land of the unbelievers, and the layman in his parish so united. There is no distance, no age..., at the foot of the tabernacle we are all close, God unites us. Let us ask Him, through Mary's mediation, that one day in heaven we may be able to contemplate that God who, for love of man, hides Himself under the species of bread and wine. So be it.

How happy I am to know that I am so dear to the Lady, and how good God is to me, that without deserving it, He treats me like this; sometimes I am afraid of not knowing how to reciprocate, because my behaviour has always been rather average, and I am neither fervent, nor mortified, nor anything really that makes me stand out among other men, and yet, you see, my good God treats me with favours that I do not deserve.... Mysteries of his will and that make us think and reflect on many things..., for indeed, man deserved nothing,

and instead our Lord came down to be nailed to a cross.... He gives us everything, and when we give him a little bit, we call it a sacrifice; it seems to me that this word is misused in this case...

I don't want to play down the importance of your sorrows, what I do want is to see a joyful heart in the midst of all the dejection that men and illnesses can bring... All that is child's play, compared to the great Truth..., the only Truth, which is God, and knowing that we are sustained by Him, gives us strength for many things, even heroic deeds in the eyes of men, but as I tell you, even those same heroic deeds are pastimes in the eyes of God..., and very simple indeed, there is only one thing to do..., it is to give ourselves to Him in such a way that we do not have to put anything more than our good will...

I read somewhere that he who seeks God, finds Him.... The only thing that matters is to seek Him, and once you have found Him, I assure you, granny, that there is no sorrow, no joy, there is nothing..., there is nothing but Him who fills everything and floods everything... And this is not the patrimony of privileged souls, no; every creature can find Him, what happens is that you have to look for Him not in men and their affection, nor in material things and in the world..., no; neither can He be found looking for wellbeing and peace... To find him we must seek him in the cross, in the renunciation of self and in sacrifice.... It is then that God shows Himself to us, and He prevents us from seeing anything else, because He is so absorbing that there is nothing else but Him.

On the question of my books, rules and working tools, I did indeed leave them all, conditionally, thinking that they will be useful to the community in the future, although, of course, I am going to La Trapa all alone ... I suppose you will understand perfectly well what I mean. I will be useful to the community, as far as I am concerned, but my hobbies will remain at the door... My only hobby is God.

I have been thinking about it for years and for years God has been gently and softly calling me. Therefore, in me there is only one thing to do, and that is to go.... The thing is very simple..., to go.... Of course, for this I have to jump and destroy many things, but this destruction is for the moment..., later, when the wounds are healed and God takes possession of us, this affection which we seem to renounce at first, grows and above all is purified..., and is purified in God. Then, some in the world and others in the choir of a monastery,

identify with each other more and love each other more, because true love is that which is founded on Christ and based on charity.

Praise God, praise Him at all times, even when pain imprisons us, when our hearts are torn and even when desolation takes hold of us. Praise God at all times, there is no prayer that God is more grateful for, nor is there any prayer that brings us closer to Him; that will soon be my life.... A life that will be spent in the choir, in work and in silence, and that will be reduced to one thing: to praise God at all times.

And it is not that my vocation is in danger; on the contrary, I am more and more happy with the path I have taken, and more and more determined to do everything. For me the first thing is God, and with His help I will succeed in overcoming the creatures, and if then all I can offer Him is a bloody heart, it is because He has willed it so, and He will take care to heal it for me, for it will be His completely. I do not count on my strength, but with the help of God and of the Blessed Virgin, everything will be done.... To do otherwise would be cowardice.

How much God asks of me!!!, for not only does He ask me to give up everything, but before giving it up for good, He asks me to savour it well, and it is hard to have to undergo an operation, but it is harder to have to prepare all the utensils oneself, and even to take pleasure in the preparations.

My mother plays the piano..., I have to go.... If I keep quiet, I suffer a lot, if my joy makes my parents happy, I suffer even more... How good God is, Uncle Polin, who makes me suffer for Him, for if it were not for Him, I would not have to tear my heart out little by little....

Brother Rafael

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