

## THE SPIRITUALITY OF NOTRE DAME

St. Julie never thought out a theory of spirituality. Just as she never conceived of education in the abstract and never stopped to write about it, so she never speculated on spirituality, but shaped it by living it. Her approach was entirely practical. In response to the needs of the Church in her own day, she founded a congregation whose *raison d'être* was to promote God's glory by the service of education. This was a departure from the traditional enclosed and stratified forms of consecrated life, and to make it succeed Julie had to do much more than train teachers and open schools. She had to make sure that her sisters had a spiritual formation and outlook consonant with the form of life they were called to lead. They needed an understanding of the apostolate as a supernatural reality, a spirituality of action to find their sanctification in their work, of unity to ensure inner harmony and strength, and of community since this was to be their form of witness. This spirituality was marked unconsciously by Julie's own spirit of joy, universal zeal and realism, and was associated especially with Our Lady.

Julie was conscious of having an apostolic vocation and looked on it as God's free gift to herself and to her sisters. It was the characteristic mark of her congregation. "All congregations have each their own end in view," she said during the retreat of 1814, "and the sisters belonging to them have their own special means for attaining this end. Some care for the sick. But we, sisters, have souls to care for." This care of souls, which was nearly always associated in her writings with the glory of God, was the one essential apostolate for Julie. In her own way, she understood and lived out the statement of Vatican II that the apostolate of the Church and of all her members is primarily designed to manifest Christ's message by words and deeds and to communicate his grace to the world. Julie said: "We are part of that selected number of apostles destined to promote the glory of God by making him known and loved by those who are confided to us. By our vocation we follow in the footsteps of priests, bishops and apostles, even of Jesus Christ himself, since his work on earth was chiefly to instruct people so as to put them in the way of salvation. Our holy institute involves the calling of an apostle, and an apostle is one devoted entirely to the glory of God, so that always and everywhere she cares for his interests and his greater glory." It is because she understands the apostolate as a supernatural reality that Julie does not speak of it as 'works.' She will urge the sisters to "put people in the way of salvation ... to break the bread of sound doctrine ... to spend themselves without reserve for others ... to go forth to the conquest of souls;" but she always keeps before them the vision of faith by which the apostolate, being the work of Christ himself, stretches beyond any immediate task that a sister or a community may have to do and embraces the whole of mankind: "After making her his spouse, God makes the Sister of Notre Dame his apostle. He initiates her into the greatest of all vocations here below. You know our Lord said to his apostles: 'Go, teach all nations.' So our zeal ought to be wider than the universe. All souls are ours and we ought to love them all and be ready to shed our blood for them all ... In your prayer, think of the obligation you have before God, not just for the people directly under your care but with regard to all souls whatsoever." The love for all and

the prayer for all follow from the fact that God makes the Sister of Notre Dame his apostle. Julie therefore takes it that the apostolic potential of the sister derives from her consecration, not from a particular work that she may be doing. She speaks of “one holy and apostolic vocation” which is to be understood as necessarily including “the desire and determination of saving the souls of others,” and yet says that every sister is to be “completely indifferent as to what she does since in religion all tasks are equally great.” Not all lead, not all teach, not all are directly engaged with the children; but, precisely because their self-donation in response to God has a supernatural value, all can be apostolically effective.

The effectiveness serves the whole Church, and Julie is often at pains to keep this point of view before the sisters. She writes: “It is the prayerful lives and self-immolation of religious men and women that obtain the peace and tranquility of kingdoms, the calm happiness of family life and a spirit of content among the people. It is from her religious, and especially from us Sisters of Notre Dame, that the Church expects good shepherds. Faith asks of us zealous confessors; holy missionaries count on us for the success of their labors. Sinners await our help to obtain the powerful graces necessary for perfect conversion ... To fulfill the vocation of a Sister of Notre Dame it is not sufficient to be a good and holy class mistress. No, we must always be about the salvation of souls, of all souls without exception. We must devote ourselves without ceasing to all the interests of holy Church, and take to heart in a practical way whatever concerns the glory of God.”

She emphasizes the apostolate as a single supernatural reality when she repeats, as she does frequently, that it is God’s call which has brought the sisters to it: “Think of the choice God made of you, to reckon you among the ranks of the apostles.” The purpose of the call is supernatural; so too is the strength of the Spirit in which the sister responds. Her motive and intention, under God’s grace, are supernatural and it is a supernatural life that she is expected to live: “Never let us forget that we are ‘debtors’ to souls ... that we no longer live a natural life but a supernatural one ‘hidden with Christ in God.’” (Col 3:3). This supernatural life is no rarefied existence. Julie was no more hidden from people and from reality than St. Paul was. Being “hidden with Christ in God” was, for her as for him, being plunged in the very source of the apostolate, and they drew from this living source the life which they communicated to others. Julie communicated it by her teaching, her letters, her travels, her formation of the sisters, her conversation, her domestic work, her prayer. She sought and found God in everything: people, things, circumstances; and she bore joyful witness to him everywhere. This was her basic apostolate, as it is that of the congregation. The service of the Church through education was the most affective way she found of expressing it.

The vocation to an apostolic way of life in Notre Dame calls for a response of complete dedication. The sister has to go out from herself to God in others, and give over her faculties and energy to the work God chooses. Julie did not think that so radical a self-donation was possible without God’s intervention. The going out from oneself was an *ecstasis*, the handing over of one’s faculties and energy, a “rapture,”

in which the initiative was God's and the continued perseverance a divine gift. Yet in a striking passage in one of her later conferences, the sixth to be written up in the book of *Themes*, she makes it clear that this kind of radical response is precisely what is expected of a Sister of Notre Dame. With the supernatural call comes the power to respond supernaturally. God draws the sister to himself in and through her work just as thoroughly as he takes possession of others through ecstasies and raptures. According to Père Sellier's evidence, Julie had had personal experience of the traditional type of ecstasy and rapture at Cuvilly. She had also had three visions: at Compiègne, at Amiens on February 2, 1806, and again at Amiens shortly before the closing of the house in 1812. She knew, therefore, what she was implying when she used the words 'mystic,' 'ecstasy' and 'rapture.' Yet she does not hesitate to use them frankly to describe the apostolic spirituality of her sisters.

She singles out as the main elements in that spirituality: union with God in and through Christ, who is sought in all things and in a particular way in one's work; unity of life; openness to the Holy Spirit; prayer and sense of community, and love of Our Lady.

Union with God for Julie is what *Perfectae Caritatis* means by contemplation: adherence to God in mind and heart. It argues some authentic experience of God's presence and action, a personal response to a person known and loved, and it is the living relationship which prompts the desire actively to spread news of the kingdom. There is no apostolate without it. Julie puts it first on her list of the dispositions which are conducive to apostolic effectiveness; She makes it essential for any apostolic result. "If you are not united to God," she says, "your instructions will bear little fruit in the souls of your children. Your work will be only an exterior performance ... bringing forth nothing for eternal life ... To have the spirit of the institute is to live in close union with God." It is this union which is liberating for the sister, and it is the source of simplicity and joy as well as zeal both for her and for the community.

Union with God is not static. On the contrary, it is a reality which is constantly growing in ways which befit individual vocations. Julie's earliest recorded reference to ways of deepening it occurs in a letter to Mère St. Joseph dated July 15, 1795, in which she used the significant expression that the beauties of nature are only fully appreciated by "those who have the joy of seeing God in all things." The seeking and finding God in all things became, under the Ignatian influence of the Fathers of the Faith, an important element in her spirituality. For St. Ignatius, "*quaerere Deum in omnibus rebus*" meant more than "act for God, not for self," and referred to more than the intention with which one acts. He had in mind an actual, objective finding of God present in and active in all things; and he saw that the specific grace of the religious apostle consists in a loving consciousness of God present and operating, not only in the depths of the soul in prayer, but in the whole of creation and more especially in the field of his apostolate. God is in creation in various ways according to the level of being through the whole gamut of creatures from the chemical elements of which everything material is composed to the quasi-divinized man in the state of grace. When G. M. Hopkins jotted down in his notebook: "I have just been

looking at a bluebell in the garden and I know the beauty of our Lord by it," he meant that he "saw" or "inscaped" our Lord's beauty in it and through it. It was more than merely a reminder. "The world is charged with the grandeur of God" is another way of saying "Heaven and earth are full of thy glory;" and the seeking God in all things is an appreciation of that glory: recognizing it, witnessing to it, drawing attention to it at every level of creation. Julie could find God's goodness everywhere because she had a constant, permanent consciousness of it by a gift of infused practical union with him. Other sisters may begin with a sporadic loving consciousness of God; but Julie clearly expects it to develop, since she speaks of "perpetual" ecstasy and "long-continued" rapture of action. Just as St. Ignatius and Fr. Nadal supposed that this gift of seeking and finding God in everything was at least theoretically available to all members of the Society of Jesus (*etiam inquieti*: even the restless), so Julie is confident that fidelity would dispose the Sisters of Notre Dame to receive the same gift.

Julie can then go on to say that it is particularly in the field of one's apostolic work that one seeks and finds God, going out to him in faith and being possessed by him in what one is doing. Julie seems to be urging a dedication to one's work which is more than devotion to duty or conscientious professional fidelity, but rather a meeting with God in the work itself and surrender to his action there. She seems to want the work to be the content of the sister's union with God. She stresses both the invisible union and the visible quality of the work done; and by regarding them as the two faces of one reality, apostolic relation to God, she points the way to a solution of the greatest problem of the apostolic religious: the tension between prayer and work.

Basically this problem is the age-old one of discontinuity between human achievement and the kingdom of God. Human activity seems to be drawn in two irreconcilable directions: upwards towards a transcendent Lord in prayer, and forward with the development of the earth in work. In theory there is no reason why the two attractions should not unite. Indeed. God's first word to man in Genesis 1:28 was precisely an invitation to live in divine intimacy by doing an earthly work supremely well. But in practice there is a tension between the occupations which take toll of man's efforts and absorb the greater part of his time, and the few leisure moments in which he can turn in pure love and adoration towards God. Teilhard de Chardin asks: "How can the man who believes in heaven and the cross continue to believe seriously in the value of worldly occupations? How can the believer, in the name of all that is most Christian in him, carry out his duty as man to the fullest extent and as wholeheartedly and freely as if he were on the direct road to God?" Some writers assume that the dichotomy is a built-in problem for the apostolic religious, an assumption which was virtually the starting point of the pre-conciliar schema on religious life.

Julie's concept of apostolic spirituality, however, scarcely allows for this problem. She sees only a unified life in apostolic consecration and does not pause to examine the halfway solutions of distortion, disgust or division proposed by those who repress the taste for the tangible in order to concentrate on the 'religious;' or

who abandon the evangelical counsels in order to live what seems to them a wholly human life; or who surrender to the hopelessness of a situation not clearly understood, acquiescing in a double life where they belong neither wholly to God nor wholly to their work. Her simplicity requires a total, single commitment. The apostolic religious directs her work to God by her good intention, but she does not do so only in an attempt to justify her activity by seeing in it a proof of love for God or a means of self-denial. In Julie's thought, it is not a question of separating the intention from the work in such a way that a good intention sanctifies a neutral work. Rather, she wants the whole woman to be committed to God by the self-donation of work done as well as possible. Hence her frequent remarks on the need for study, for professional preparation, for high standards of content and presentation. Like Teilhard de Chardin, though she would never have expressed it in his way, she wanted not only the inner activity of the sister, her *operatio*, to be eternalized, saved and made a means of spreading the Kingdom, but also her *opus*, that is her effort, work and achievement. The *opera sequuntur illos* of the Apocalypse (14:13) had to be literally fulfilled if the rapture of action was to take up into Christ's active influence the whole of the sister's work and being.

Julie could therefore see work as a source of sanctity for the apostolic religious, both in the positive sense of cooperation with God and in the negative sense of a purifying school of penance. The world created by the Father was to be perfected by the work of men. Every contribution to this process, whether it was cleaning the house, feeding les bêtes or giving a lesson, was in some sense a continuing of God's work of creation and an extending of his kingdom in the contemporary world. No sister improved her spelling or reading or needlework without at the same time actualizing some potential, however small, in the total pattern of creation; and the creativeness of work lay, not in the imaginative quality of what was done, but in the fact that all work properly understood shared in the perfecting power of the Father: it was part of his continuing creation. But this continuing creation is directed to the restoration and recapitulation of all things in Christ. By his incarnation, Christ inextricably bound God's Word to the world of matter. The perfecting of material things brings to him a little more fulfillment and increases his blessed hold on the world. In a mysterious way it prepares his second coming, for Christ needs a high peak of the world for his consummation just as he needed a woman for his conception. It is in Christ, for him and with him that the apostolic religious works, aware that through material things he gives eternal life and that through ordinary men and women he acts on mankind. Julie shared fully in this incarnational approach to the idea of work, which owed so much to the French tradition of Bérulle, the Oratory and St. Sulpice; and her "rapture of action" has something in common too with Teilhard's view of adoring the Father through Christ in one's work. "Till now," he wrote, "to adore has meant to prefer God to things by referring them to him ... Now adoration means the giving of our body and soul to creative activity, joining that activity to him to bring the world to fulfillment." (*Christologie et evolution*, unpublished essay, 1933.)

This is achieved only by openness to the Holy Spirit. It was the Spirit whose brooding over the waters gave life to creation, and whose overshadowing of our Lady brought about the incarnation. His action transforms the soul in the life of active, practical mysticism which Julie describes. She therefore often commends her work to him, urging the sisters to invoke him and to let his light shine through them, illuminating their work and filling them with a joy which will attract people to God's service.

The apostolic religious also finds in her work the purification of penance. Julie could demand that the sisters should "sacrifice their peace and comfort, their convenience, their favorite devotions, even their very lives" for it. Crosses would come from themselves, from their circumstances, from the children, from the very pressure of fidelity to timetables, from the effort to reach out to all in need, from the constantly renewed striving to make the unwilling learn. Dedication to apostolic work, of its nature, involves deep renunciation. In any circumstances, work requires a victory over inertia, but to dedicate oneself to the apostolate is to lay oneself open to a particular share in the sufferings of Christ. Over and over again the apostolic religious has to go beyond herself in a detachment which is not far removed from the detachment of the cross. The suffering may be hidden, arising from the ordinary things of life and from the human condition itself as well as from the circumstances of the apostolic commitment, but it is inevitable. Its depth, ordinariness and inevitability are to be understood in the light of the cross, which is the symbol, the way, the very act of progress, the synthesis of the upward and forward movements by which the apostle seeks to bring men to God.

In an institute necessarily marked by the cross because of its apostolic nature, prayer must be a first priority. A person cannot find God either in other human persons or in created things unless he has found God first. Personally, by adhering to him in his own mind and heart. The apostolic religious must find God in others, therefore she is under a particular necessity to pray. "Without prayer there is no Sister of Notre Dame," said Julie. "Prayer alone can teach us to live in God and for God." But she immediately associates prayer with work: "The prayer most conducive to our progress is apostolic prayer ... It is necessary for the success of any work we may undertake ... for it is the sole means by which we can hope to do good to souls." Prayer is helped by work, "for our Lord is easily found by those who all day long have sought him in their work;" and, as we have seen, it informs all apostolic tasks: "A Sister of Notre Dame must give herself up to prayer in spite of all the many and varied occupations which fill her day." The sister, however, has the responsibility of ensuring that she has time for private prayer. She has to plan out space for it, set up its framework and apply herself to it with steady generosity. The object of her prayer will be practical, the tone intensive and definite, the emphasis on love and the will, the issue service. But prayer, whether liturgical, communal or private, will overflow into the apostolic action whose intensity will bring the sister back again to prayer. Her life will be, as Julie's was, a cycle in which prayer and action revolve round the common center of God in all things.

The apostolic response of the Sister of Notre Dame is a response in and through community. The apostolate is undertaken by the whole community, which exists for the sake of it, and the two elements, apostolate and community, are so closely linked that they are virtually interdependent. The call of the apostolic religious is to both, for to be involved in an apostolic community is not the result simply of a personal decision but of a real vocation by God, recognized as such. Julie emphasizes that the congregation as a whole is called to the apostolate, and that it is God's gift which attracts individual sisters to join in it. By their consecration the sisters become community women. Therefore they should seek together God's will for the apostolate and find together support, facilities and the warmth and joy of interpersonal relations which themselves witness to God's goodness. It is in community that each sister should find the opportunity for her own best contribution to the apostolate.

Apostolic community is primarily a bond in the spirit, unity of heart and mind in fellowship, in faith, in worship, in purpose, in mutual sharing, for the sake of announcing God's kingdom as was the case in the early Church. In so far as it is "a loving union of persons with and in Christ, through the Holy Spirit, in the image of the life of love of the Trinity" (*Community Directives*, 1968, p. 1), it is like all other communications of God: a free divine gift. Strictly speaking, we cannot create community but, when called to it, we are enabled by God's grace to build it on the one foundation, Jesus Christ. (1 Cor 3:11) In so far as community is strengthened or impaired according as we build it or not, its development is, like many other things in the order of the incarnation, dependent on man's co-operation. Unity is fostered by the common vocation: the one aim and work, the shared spirit and traditions, the union in love of each other, the care for good relations; and for all these things each sister has a responsibility. The apostolate begins within the community in mutual service, a fostering of the living bond in unity and charity. So strengthened, the community is capable of effective apostolic work in the locality where it is missioned.

The community apostolate must be the norm for that of the individual sister, for the sister is accountable to the community. She is admitted to it by her own free choice and the congregation's acceptance of her at the time of her vows, and thenceforward she has to consider the community in all that she does. This does not mean that she has the idea of community perpetually in mind, but that she is permanently in the state of being a community woman. It is no longer enough for her to be accountable to herself. Her conscience has a community dimension also, and she has always to reckon the effect of her decisions and actions on community charity.

It is to be expected that the vows of a Sister of Notre Dame will be understood against the background of apostolic community. She vows total dedication in response to God's total self-giving and enters by her vow of chastity into Christ's utter surrender in love to his Father. It is in this surrender that the work of our redemption has its beginning; from it the apostolate springs. The vow of chastity must therefore always have an apostolic connotation, all the more so as it points to

the reality of the kingdom and to eschatological truths. The Sister of Notre Dame, however, vows chastity for the sake of the kingdom, not only to be apostolic but to live an actively apostolic life and to be associated in community with others who share the same goal. Her consecrated love has to go out to others, as Christ's did in service and availability. "We are not our own," Julie said, "we do not belong to ourselves. We must spend ourselves until death to be better able to help the people confided to us." Her exhortations to the sisters to love each other, to love the children and to love those whom they served, appealed in effect to their vow of apostolic chastity.

To live out this dedication completely, the sisters needed to be free, unhampered by the burden of any kind of possession. They must cling neither to material goods nor to goods of the intellect or emotions, for their wealth is the fullness of Christ who possesses them; and without some experience of the riches of Christ, evangelical poverty is not possible. Julie does not identify evangelical poverty with social or economic deprivation. Rather she follows the biblical thought by which the poor man, the '*anaw*,' is the opposite of the rich, who are condemned for self-sufficiency, pride, greed, injustice, ambition, hardheartedness, exclusiveness, selfishness. "Evangelical poverty may be called the foundation of all virtue," she wrote. "Give me a soul that is poor in spirit and you give me a soul that is humble, obedient, charitable, detached from everything as well as from self, and therefore a soul that is united to God, since she only wants what God wants." Apostolic poverty, she said elsewhere, is not the poverty of the Poor Clares or the Trappistines. It has to be adapted to the work one is doing, and justice demands that the work be done well and that necessary facilities be provided. The use of such facilities, however, must be non-possessive, and for this the spirit of poverty is necessary: "Temporal goods do not cause men to be lost; they are God's gifts, to be used with prudence ... Neediness and poverty do not make saints; people in great temporal misery may desire to be rich. Humility alone makes us pleasing to God. So Job was rich in his possessions but had nevertheless the spirit of poverty ... because his heart was not attached to temporal things." The fact that the individual sister does not possess anything of herself, but is provided by the community with what she needs for her apostolic life and work, is an important element in Julie's idea of poverty. Whatever the sisters have is pooled; they have it together for the sake of others. Therefore their poverty is not so much a question of being without as of sharing, being available, living a common life simply, working for one's living, depending on the community, giving oneself in service, pooling all resources. The spirit is safeguarded by dispossession; but dispossession alone does not constitute apostolic poverty, and it is apostolic poverty that is needed if the community is effectively to serve the poor.

The sister fits herself to the work of the community by her vow of obedience. This vow integrates her into the apostolic group, because it draws all the members of the community together in a common will to achieve the goal of their apostolate. By it the sister promises to work for the end of the congregation, to be loyal to authority and to collaborate with her sisters. The vow also ensures the mobility

necessary for the community's mission, and is the measure of its apostolic effectiveness. But the individual sister, by her obedience, finds her personal apostolate also enriched. By putting God's will sought in community above her own, she lives in close union with the obedience of Christ, that obedience whose uncreated source is the communion of will between the Son and the Father and whose practice on earth was the essence of the sacrifice of Christ. Like our Lord himself, the sister grows in her understanding of God's will as she continues to obey, and she finds herself increasingly involved in the self-emptying of Christ: a mature, free, personal submission, fully in accord with human dignity, and rich in apostolic effects.

Julie saw the Sister of Notre Dame as a prayerful, consecrated woman responding to God, enriched by his quickening Spirit and sent to give Christ to the world of her day. It was natural, therefore, to think of her in terms of our Lady. "The Sisters of Notre Dame are the company of Mary," she wrote. "Hence in each one ought to be found the spirit of Mary, the virtue of Mary, the strength and power of Mary." The title, "Sister of our Lady," was not given simply as a tribute to the Mother of God or as an invocation of Mary's powerful protection and intercession. The sisters were to bear Mary's name because the role of the Virgin Mother in the incarnation and redemption is the pattern of the Church apostolic, whose mission is theirs. "The Church, contemplating Mary's mysterious sanctity, imitating her charity and faithfully fulfilling the Father's will, becomes herself a mother by accepting God's word in faith ... In imitation of the Mother of her Lord and by the power of the Holy Spirit, she preserves with virginal purity an integral faith, a firm hope and a sincere charity. The Church in her apostolic work rightly looks to her who brought forth Christ ... so that through the Church Christ may be born and grow in the hearts of the faithful also. The Virgin Mary in her own life lived an example of that maternal love by which all should be animated who cooperate in the apostolic mission of the Church for the rebirth of men." (*Lumen Gentium*, No. 64, 65.)

In singling out "integral faith, firm hope and sincere charity," the Council reminded us that Marian spirituality leads always to "the Story of the most holy and undivided Trinity" (*Lumen Gentium*, No. 69). It comes from the Father, is grounded in the virtue of faith and is characterized by a limpid simplicity. Mary is blessed because she has believed (Lk 1: 45), and the simple purity of her response was so great that within its transparency God focused his immensity to the point of becoming man. Her singleness of purpose, her unswerving attraction to God, her unique proximity to him are all expressions of her pure faith. This is the faith of the Queen of Apostles, lived out in simplicity. The sister's sharing in it, when she welcomes with faith God's purifying action in her work, is a sharing too in the peerless simplicity of Mary's Immaculate Conception. It is significant that Julie's favorite Marian mysteries were the Immaculate Conception and the sorrows at the foot of the cross.

Marian spirituality is concretely expressed in a continuation of the saving work of Christ in hope and in obedience. By a kind of spiritual instinct, Julie's devotions

centered on the work of the redemption: the precious blood, the Sacred Heart, the holy Eucharist, the sorrows of Mary; and her love for our Lady was often expressed in her seeking of God's saving will. She found, as Mary did in her days of suffering, that the Child was nearest when he was no longer carried under her heart but had been born into the world and had seemingly gone off into the darkness of the cross, leaving her with nothing but emptiness, night and a sense of failure. Her abandonment of the congregation into God's hands with a *Magnificat* after the bitter days of misunderstanding, when devotion to our Lady could only be trust in the darkness to the will of God, showed how clearly Mary was to her the Mother of Holy Hope.

Finally, Mary is the spouse of the Holy Spirit, overshadowed by him to become the mother of fair love. With discerning instinct Julie made this Marian charity the hallmark of the spiritual life of her congregation. The sisters must be united in all the things that really mattered: the same aim, the same spirit, the same life. There must be no distinctions. She said that charity must constitute the cement in the building of Notre Dame, that the sisters must be united as children of the same family. Openness to the Spirit would secure this and, as his light shone through them and his joy filled them, they would find their life unified and fruitful and their love reaching to the ends of the earth.

All Julie's apostolic response to God can be regarded to some extent as Marian. Her openness, her zeal, her joy, her realism, her faith, her simplicity reflect the beauties of Mary. Nowhere does she more clearly show herself "moved to a filial love towards our mother and to the imitation of her virtues" than in the fiat to God's will which echoed our Lady's at the incarnation and which throughout her life was the keynote of her apostolic spirituality. The one absolute was God, always greater than what she knew of him and always dearer than the things he willed for her. To him she gave absolute allegiance. But she knew that his will was never precisely identical with any of the things which he willed. "Be it done to me according to thy word" was not, then, a static assent. She embraced each word as it came, pondering it in her heart, and meeting each unique situation as a responsibility which she could not evade by the repetition of some former solution. Like Mary, she had the inner freedom of those who wait on God, and this was so characteristic of her that her movement was constantly forward. It is this which prompts the thought that she belongs to the present and the future and that in spirituality as in education her charism is effective with us now.