



Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will



Are You Happy?



This is the number one question Mother Gabrielle Marie asks young sisters who are in the beginning stages of the religious life or those preparing to take important steps forward. That's the first thing she asked Sister Maria Teresa when the two discussed if the novice was ready to make her first profession. She said *yes*, both to her spiritual mother and to Jesus, as would any woman in love when her fiancé pops the question. And that *yes* was confirmed on Sunday, August 4th, *Feast of the Eternal Father*, when Sister Teresa vowed "to live for one year in obedience, poverty, chastity, and charity according to our way of life based on that of the Holy Family of Nazareth and the Rule of Saint Benedict," thus consecrating herself "to Adoration of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament and to the Divine Will in Creation, Redemption and Sanctification on behalf of Holy Church." A few days before her profession, Sister Teresa expressed

to one sister that she was of course getting excited, but trying not to live that joy in her emotions... which are fleeting. She was experiencing a deeper kind of happiness, a profound peace of soul that accompanies us whenever we're on the path of God's Will. In fact, this is often evident to those of us who live with her and probably to those she comes in contact with day by day, as well.

The humorous nun from southern Italy was happy when a supposed quick trip to a doctor's appointment turned into a more than twelve hour ordeal after our car broke down an hour away from home in the hospital parking lot. At around eight o'clock that night when the mechanic finally broke the news that the car wouldn't be ready until the next morning, Teresa smirked at the two sisters with her and, in her endearing Italian accent, repeated a line that we pray to Our Lady three times a day: "*Mother, I put my whole day on your lap.*" Tired and hungry, we all burst out into laughter. Teresa kept her joy when severe allergies forced her to move from her spacious bedroom to one about half its size, with only a small skylight to get some sun and fresh air. And the naturally driven novice also remained happy when she wasn't able to finish her summer habit in time for the profession ceremony. She laughed at her mistakes, gave her *fiat* to the situations that took time away from her sewing, and resigned herself to wearing a not so perfect hand-me-down habit on her wedding day.

Mother Gabrielle Marie looks for this kind of simple happiness when it comes to discerning the vocations of all of her daughters. As she so practically puts it, we've all got faults and we're all going to be on the path of conversion until the day we die. That's not a problem and it's even good for us, spiritually, to



Sister Teresa kisses the cross which she received at her first vows and will forever wear on her right side.

learn to live with each other's weaknesses. But if a sister is not happy, if she doesn't feel at peace or at home in community, it's a sign of one of two things: either she doesn't have a true vocation to the religious life or she's not yet willing to give up her own will for the Divine. And there's no room for the latter in any vocation, whether one is called to the religious, married, or single state.

Happiness is not about everything going our way. It shouldn't depend on people liking us or even our personal relationships running smoothly a hundred percent of the time. Unfortunately, the mentality of today is: *If I could just have this, achieve this, overcome this, change this...then I'd be happy.* But we should be able to maintain an inner peace and contentment regardless of what external circumstances may surround us, trusting that *"all things work together for the good for those who love God and are called according to His Will"* (Romans 8:28). In Jesus' farewell discourse before His Passion, He plainly tells us that there will be weeping and wailing, suffering and sorrow, persecutions and all kinds of trials. But Jesus also promises that, like a woman in childbirth, our very sufferings and sacrifices will bring forth life. Our sadness will be transformed into joy, one that will be complete and no one will be able to take from us. For He shall fill our hearts with His own joy; the joy of God Himself will dwell in us...but only if we follow the simple recipe He very clearly lays out in John 15:

*"If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, you may ask for whatever you please and you will get it. It is to the glory of My Father that you should bear much fruit and be My disciples. I have loved you just as the Father has loved Me. **Remain in My love.** If you keep My commandments you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and remain in His love...This is My commandment: love one another as I have loved you. No one can have greater love than to lay down his life for his friends."*



A word from Our Lady:

"When one really loves, sacrifices and pains are refreshments; they are reliefs and outpourings of the love that one possesses. Oh! My child, if you do not experience the good of sacrifice, if you do not feel how it brings the most intimate joys, it is a sign that the divine love does not fill all of your soul, and therefore that the Divine Will does not reign as Queen in you. It alone gives such strength to the soul as to render her invincible and capable of bearing any pain.

Place your hand upon your heart and observe how many voids of love there may be in it. Reflect: that secret self-esteem, that becoming disturbed at every slightest adversity, those little attachments you feel to things and to people, that tiredness in good, that bother caused in you by that which is not to your liking, are equivalent to as many voids of love in your heart; voids which, like little fevers, deprive you of the strength and of the desire to be filled with Divine Will. Oh! how you too will feel the refreshing and conquering virtue in your sacrifices if you fill these voids with love. My child, give Me your hand and follow Me so I can continue to give you My lessons."

(The Virgin Mary in the Kingdom of the Divine Will, Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta, Appx. Meditation #1)

A brief Public Service Announcement:



If you haven't read Jesus' farewell discourses in a while, we highly suggest that you pick up the Gospel of John again and bring it to prayer. They are so incredibly beautiful and can be found from the end of chapter 13 through chapter 17. For those of you who have been reading the Divine Will writings of Luisa Piccarreta for some time, Our Lord's words to His Apostles are going to speak to your heart like never before. If you're not familiar with the Servant of God's prolific works, contact us and we'll help you get started.

The teachings found in Luisa's diaries (given to her by Jesus Himself) will make Sacred Scripture come alive for you. It will help you understand what you have been praying for in the Our Father every time you've habitually repeated, "*Thy Kingdom come, on earth as it is in Heaven.*" Our Lord's plea to "*be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect*" (Matt 5:48) will no longer seem like such an abstract and almost impossible command. All of Jesus' parables, all of His lessons on the Kingdom will reach you in a much more personal way. You'll start to get what St. Paul meant when he said, "*I have been crucified with Christ and yet I am alive; yet it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me*" (Gal 2:20). In short, you will experience an even greater ardor for the Catholic faith you already love and thirst to learn more.

In fact, that's exactly what private revelation is meant to do. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us, Christ's definitive Revelation is already complete, but "*it has not been made completely explicit; it remains for Christian faith gradually to grasp its full significance over the course of the centuries*" (CCC #66). The Catechism further explains that teachings privately revealed throughout certain periods of history can actually serve to help the faithful live divine Revelation – both Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition - more fully (CCC #67). So there's no need to doubt, fear, or procrastinate. Just dive in right now...or you're going to kick yourself later!

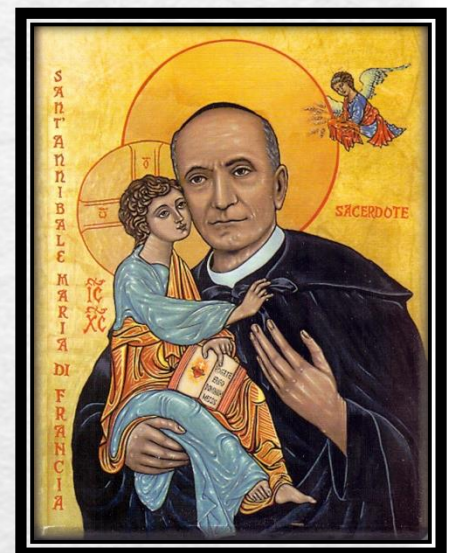
But don't just take our word for it. Listen to the words of a saint...

from the desk of St. Annibale Maria di Francia,
extraordinary confessor of Luisa Piccarreta and ecclesiastical censor of her writings:

"Our Lord Jesus Christ wanted to choose a soul as the instrument of His omnipotent hand...to illustrate what Divine Will means, and thus to prepare the great triumph of the third *Fiat* upon earth. The first *Fiat* extracted the whole universe from nothing. The second *Fiat*, pronounced by the Most Holy Virgin Mary, hailed by the Angel, determined the Incarnation of the Divine Word in Her most pure womb and the subsequent Redemption of mankind. The third *Fiat* was left to us by Our Lord Jesus Christ in the great prayer of the Our Father, with those divine words: "*Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.*"

This supplication of the third *Fiat* which has resounded for twenty centuries on the lips of the children of the Holy Church, in the royal Priesthood of the great sacrifice of Holy Mass... must have its great fulfillment. It cannot remain unanswered. All saints, all doctors, all preachers, all the scholars of ascetic theology have sung the praises of the fulfillment of the Will of God as the highest perfection. They have defined the three degrees: (1) uniformity with the Divine Volition, (2) conformity to It, and (3) transformation - that is, the annihilation of our will for the Divine.

But the revelations on this topic, which fill the manuscripts of the author of *The Hours of the Passion*, have the character of an instruction all new and celestial, and always in the simplest and most persuasive way...[They] add a fourth quality which encompasses everything, which has not been expressed by any writer until now, but which somehow hovers in sacred books, especially in the Psalmist and in the Apostle of the gentiles. And it is: **to operate completely IN the Divine Will...**



These admirable writings, which we piously believe to have been dictated by the Divine Incarnate Word, lead one who reads them with faith, always of love, step by step, to the understanding of this formula. In many ways these revelations open new horizons, not yet contemplated until now, concerning the mysteries of the Divine Will and about operating and living in It. And one thing is certain: even before arriving at the complete knowledge of what it means to operate and live in the Divine Volition, one who reads these writings cannot help but remain enamored with the Will of God and feel new strong impulses...to transform all of himself in the Divine Will.”

(from his Preface to The Twenty-Four Hours of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ)



To the point of shedding your blood



In a spiritual rut? Do you ever feel like you keep hitting a wall whenever you try to move forward? The first thing you should do is bring this to prayer. Pour out your heart to Jesus who knows you better than you know yourself. However, we'd like to offer a little food for meditation when you place yourself before the Blessed Sacrament and “enter into your inner chamber” to talk to the Father (Matt 6:6). It's inspired by St. Paul's admonition to the Hebrews: “*In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.*” Now let's add the word “self-will” to the first part of that sentence. Have you resisted your self-will at all costs?

From the wisdom of another saint and Third Order Dominican who, not surprisingly, the Lord chose to be present at Luisa's mystical marriage:

“In the time of labors and persecutions, of insults and injuries inflicted by one's neighbor, of mental conflicts and deprivation of spiritual consolations, by the Creator or the creature (by the Creator in His gentleness, when He withdraws the feeling of the mind, so that it does not seem as if God were in the soul, so many are its pains and conflicts; and by fellow creatures, in conversation or amusement, or when the soul thinks that it loves more than it is loved) – in all these things, I say that the soul perfected by humility says: ***‘My Lord, behold Your handmaid: be it done unto me according to Your word, and not according to what I want with my senses.’*** So it sheds the fragrance of patience, around the Creator and its fellow creature and itself. It has peace and quiet in its mind. It has found peace in warfare, because it has driven far from its self-will founded in pride, and has conceived divine grace in its soul. And it bears in its mind's breast Christ crucified, and rejoices in the wounds of Christ crucified, and seeks to know nothing but Christ crucified; and its bed is the Cross of Christ crucified. There it annuls its own will, and becomes humble and obedient. For there is no obedience without humility, nor humility without charity.” (from The Letters of St. Catherine of Siena, #8)



Imitation of Christ

[Jesus to Luisa Piccarreta]: “My daughter, the last act of My life was to lay Myself on the cross and to stay there until I died, with My arms opened...I was the true portrait, the living image of one who lives, not of the human will, but of the Divine. Being unable to move, having lost every right over Myself, the horrible tension of My arms - how many things they said! Yet while I was losing My rights, others acquired My Life...And even though My Humanity is in Heaven and is not subject to suffering, I keep searching for souls who act not in the human will, but in the Divine, and who oppose nothing; souls who lose each one of their rights so that,

leaving all of their rights at the mercy of My Will, It may continue Its act of placing all souls – sinners and saints, innocent and evil – in the arms of those who offer to lay themselves in My Will, in order to repeat and continue what My arms did, stretched out on the cross. This is why I have laid Myself within you – so that the Supreme Will may continue Its act of bringing everyone into My arms.” (Book of Heaven, Vol. 17, 7/25/1924)

A little encouragement from one who knows...

“To live in the Divine Will is not as difficult as you and others believe, nor does sweet Jesus want impossible things... In all He teaches, His love is so great that... in order to make all that He wants and teaches easier, He puts Himself at our disposition, doing together with us all that He wants and teaches. My daughter, everything is in a strong, firm, constant resolution to deliver our will into the hands of Jesus, so that His Will may underlie each one of our acts... However, it is not that we must no longer *feel* our will: to operate on a dead will would be neither ours nor Jesus’ victory. The dead are buried. Therefore Jesus wants our will alive, so that it may feel all the good as His operating Will lays Its acts in it. The human will becomes the residence of the Divine, and gives It all the freedom to dominate and to do whatever It wants. Do you see, then, how easy it is?... The Sanctity of living in the Divine Will is for all; or rather, to tell the truth, It is for all those who want It. Therefore, get down to work. Tell Jesus from the heart: ‘I firmly want it, I continuously want it, I want it!’ , and Jesus will work wonders.”
(from The Letters of Luisa Piccarreta, #19 to Mrs. Antonietta Savorani, 5/7/1935)



Basilica of San Marino



A Time for Change

We’ve got a good problem. As our community steadily grows, we’re running out of space in our house. With eight sisters, one postulant, and two aspirants (young women trying out our life for an extended period of time), just one makeshift bedroom we improvised on the third-floor remains – a little corner in the hallway that we would like to keep free for vocational guests. But the same Lord who has been blessing us with vocations also found the solution through the request of our beloved bishop, H.E. Msgr. Andrea Turazzi.

The diocese owns a structure adjacent to the Basilica of San Marino in the historical center of the world’s oldest independent republic. For a while now, our bishop has desired the presence of a contemplative religious community in the place where the relics of Saint Marinus – founder of the small country surrounded entirely by Italy and co-patron of the diocese – are reserved and venerated. That’s where we come in. Appreciating our dedication to Eucharistic Adoration and noticing the increasing number of white habits among our ranks, Msgr. Turazzi asked Mother Gabrielle Marie if she’d be interested in sending a few sisters to start a new foundation house of the Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will over there. He explained his desire to bring a spirit of prayer back to one of the area’s most significant religious landmarks which has unfortunately become more of a tourist attraction. And our community of sisters would be like a little Nazareth, a hidden oasis of work, prayer, and divine love.

For us it seemed like the perfect fit, so Mother whole-heartedly accepted. There’s plenty of room for the four sisters we plan to send, with the possibility of hosting guests and even adding more sisters in the future.

San Marino is only about forty minutes from our convent in Talamello, so it will be easy for both houses to remain in contact and maintain the unity and fellowship we've enjoyed these past eight years. Most importantly, the sisters going will be able to have the Blessed Sacrament at home in their private chapel as well the opportunity to promote Eucharist Adoration among the people in a small church built where Saint Marinus actually lived over 1,700 years ago.



Of course the change will be bitter-sweet. Though we're all excited about this next phase of God's plan for the Benedictine Daughters, we know that it will be difficult to split up when the time comes. More than just a bunch of nuns living together, we have become a family. But we still have a few months to adjust to the idea and the Lord will give us every grace we need, as He always does. We count on your prayers for all of us, but especially for the sisters who will be the first to venture out to this new foundation...and to a new country! In God's Will, though, distance doesn't matter. We will always be of one mind and heart.

Do you feel called to discern the religious life with the Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will? Don't let little obstacles or concerns discourage you. As you can see, God provides for everything according to His Will. So drop us an email at daughtersofdivinewill@gmail.com and let's take the first step together.



Supporting Our New Endeavors

With the joy of branching out also comes more expense. A bit of work, furniture, and some appliances will be needed before the sisters can move into their San Marino apartment. A new home will also involve a second set of utility bills and another car. If you feel God calling you to support the Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will in this new endeavor or on a regular basis, visit the **"Donations"** page of our website to make a one-time donation by credit/debit card or to sign up for automatic monthly contributions:

www.benedictinesofdivinewill.org

Or simply send a check or money order to the address of our non-profit organization below:
(All donations are tax-deductible)



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Please know how grateful we are for your goodness to us. We pray for all of our benefactors every day, trusting that Our Lord and Our Lady will never be outdone in generosity.

"Whatever you have done to one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto Me."