

NOVENA IN PREPARATION FOR THE FOUNDER'S DAY

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DAY ONE - FORMING ONESELF IN HOLINESS

Mt 5:48 : "Be holy as your Heavenly Father is Holy".

Jn. 10/10 : "I came that they may have life and live it to the full." 1 Thes 4: 3 : "What God wants is for you all to be holy".

Reflections from the Life & Works of SFS :

St. Francis de Sales (SFS) terms the pursuit of Holiness, as *DEVOTION*, which he defines thus: "In so far as divine love enriches us it is called grace, which makes us pleasing to God. In so far as it gives us the strength to do good, it is called charity. But when it grows to such a degree of perfection that it makes us not only to do good but rather moves us to do it carefully, frequently, and promptly, it is called *devotion*." ... "In conclusion, charity and devotion are not more different from each other than the flame from the fire, all the more so because charity is a spiritual fire which when it burns with intense flames is called devotion. In fact, devotion adds to the fire of charity only the flame which makes charity prompt, active and diligent not only to keep God's commandments but also to put into practice his counsels and inspirations. [III,15,16; IDL, Pt I, ch. 1, pg. 36, 37]

"Sugar sweetens fruits that are not quite ripe and puts right anything unpleasant or harmful in those that are fully ripe. Indeed, devotion is the true spiritual sugar, removing unpleasantness from mortifications, ... Devotion takes away discontent from the poor and anxiety from the rich, despair from the oppressed and arrogance from the powerful, sadness from the lonely, ... [III,18; IDL, Pt I, ch. 2, pg. 36]

We are mistaken if we presume that perfection is an art; that we discover its magic formula, we could attain perfection instantly and without much effort. Indeed, the secret of perfection lies the practice the love of God simply yet assiduously, intent on union with the Beloved". [VI, 151-152, Conf. 18, SC II, p. 29]

There is nothing so blessed as a devout religious, nothing so miserable as a religious without devotion. [Mackey IV. p. 33]

Reflections from the Life & Writings of PMM:

Many forget their sanctification, their salvation, their own perfection, and their excuse is that they are busy with the salvation of others, with works of zeal. What madness! As if we are indispensable, as if the Almighty cannot realize His plans without us. Besides, what good can we do for others when we are good-for-nothing ourselves. (Let to Fr.FrancisSermet, 6-07-1849)

If we desire to ignite the fire of God's love in the hearts of others, we need to be burning with divine ardour ourselves. If we wish that sinners weep over their sins, we ought to weep over ourselves and over the sins of others. It is only zeal for one's own sanctification that can lead to zeal towards others. [Fr. J. LAVOREL, Kamptee, 28-07-1852]

May God's name be made holy, may his kingdom come and not ours, may his will be done, and not ours. Everything else is temptation, sin and unhappiness". [Let to Fr. Dupont, 2403-1852]

DAY TWO - PRAYING CONTINUALLY

Mt. 7:7 : "Ask, and it will be given to you seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ... If you, then, who are evil know, how to give your children what is good, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!"

Mt. 26:40-41 : “Then Jesus returned to the disciples and found them sleeping. “Were you not able to keep watch with Me for one hour?” He asked Peter. “Watch and pray so that you will not enter into temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak.””

Jn. 15:16 : “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last – and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.” **Reflections from the Life & Works of SFS:**

For SFS: “*Prayer* is the opening of our understanding to God’s brightness and light and exposing our will to the warmth of his love. ... In prayer, God provides us with His shower of blessings: its **waters** quench the heart’s thirst for love, wash away imperfections, and make the plants of our good desires blossom and bear colourful flowers.” [IDL II, ch.1, pg. 85];

Prayer is the means by which we ascend to God; sacraments are the channels by which God descends to us.[VI, 337-339, Conf. 18, SC II, p.1]

Thinking, study, meditation, contemplation are all similar acts. Thinking that is an act of the mind may be compared to the activity of flies; study to the work of drones; meditation to that of bees; contemplation to the flight of the queen bee. The first two activities are of no great consequence. The third and fourth are acts of prayer. The objective of prayer is union with God. God has no need of our prayers. We need prayer, however, to transform our soul. Our prayer will continue even in heaven. [VIII, 166-168, Sermon. 105]

“That prayer is perfect when it involves the tongue, the mind, the life, the entire person himself” [VIII, 407, Sermon. 156]

As Bread (*rice, rotis*) accompanies every dish, so does the “bread of heaven” accompany every prayer and action [IDL, II, ch.1, 86]

I strongly recommend to your *prayer of the mind and of the heart*, and especially that based on the life and passion of our Lord. By looking at him often in meditation, your whole being will be filled with him... You will learn his *attitudes* and model your actions on his. [IDL II, ch.1, pg.85]

Reflections from the Life & Writings of PMM:

Our first duty is to be formed in *piety* by means of the faithful observance of our spiritual exercises: retreats, meditations, examination of conscience, spiritual reading, and, habitual recollection and purity of conscience. These should not be compromised by a multiplicity of activities that we needlessly undertake. St. Bernard calls them ‘cursed’, because they become an obstacle to the first duty prescribed to us. A well-ordered charity places on us the obligation to take care of our soul before everything else: “what does it profit a man, if he gains the whole world, ...” “In vain does the hungry child suck the milk-less breast of a languid mother for sustenance. (Letter to Fr. Francis Decompoix, Vizag, 3-06-1850)

Dangers of Lukewarmness: After the exercises of a well-made retreat are brought to a close, the subjects resume their ordinary course. We neglect the daily exercises; we fall into routine and dissipation. Oh, what a misery, what an abuse of grace! Living in this manner, how can one gain the apostolic spirit which is the spirit of zeal, of fervour? How to create this total renewal, a New man who is created in justice and holiness of truth. How to deepen (the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ) with life almost sensual where the body weighs down the soul? ... The knowledge of Jesus Christ is essentially practical, imitation not in words but in the power of God. (1 Cor. 4/20) [Document : dispatched on 25-06-1848]

“The spiritual exercises and especially the examination of conscience and meditation, are really our two eyes, two arms, two feet. They are like the compass of our external operations; they are the family sanctuary where God speaks to the heart the secret language which is not heard elsewhere. “It is there that the heart feels the effects of the promise which

Our Lord makes in these words of the Prophet: "I will lead the soul to the secret place and there speak to her heart". [let to Sr. Jeanne Grandchamp, 29-12-1857]

DAY THREE - IMITATING ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

1 Cor 11: 1 : "Take me for your model, as I take Christ".

Jn. 13: 13-17 : "You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do."

Lk. 6: 38b-40 : "For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you. And he told them a parable: 'Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? No disciple is superior to the teacher, but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher'".

Personal Testimony of SFS and Eulogy of his Devotees:

I desire to possess just a few things; what I cherish, however, I do so for love of God. I have almost no desires; but if I were to be born again, I would not have any or I would not want to have any at all. If God came to me and favoured me with the intimate feeling of His presence, I would go to him and cherish his graces. If, however, it was His will not to come to me, I would stay where I am and not seek to go towards Him – content with the simple understanding that faith offers me". [VI, Conf. XXI, 383, SC II, p.46]

All I seek is the glory of God. Indeed, if I should find anything to the contrary, I would forth with banish it from my heart. XIII, 373-377, Let. 436, to Mme Chantal, Rumilly 7/3/08]

There is a small miracle that God works every evening when I retire I can neither move my body nor my mind, I am so tired everywhere; and in the morning I am as lively as ever. [XIII, 221-222, Let. 365, to Mme. Chantal, Bonneville 2/10/06]

St. John Bosco: "Oh, the sweetness and charity of St. Francis de Sales! Guide me in everything".

Reflections from the Life & Writings of PMM :

The solemn approval of our Congregation which confirms our name as the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales, places on us a stricter obligation to learn about him, to be filled with his spirit, to acquire and to imitate his virtues. (Let to Cardinal Gabriele Della Genga Sermattei. Rome. 29-05-1857)

May the members of our Congregation obtain from the perfect model, the Holy Apostle of the Chablais, a little of that zeal and gentleness which will make us die to ourselves in order to live only for God and for the welfare of the people, like other St. Francis de Sales. [Circular to confrères in India, 17-04-1852]

I want to have a little of the patience and the gentleness of St. Francis de Sales. I wish them for You and earnestly ask our Holy Patron to inspire you with them, to obtain them for you so that we may become like him, worthy servants of Jesus Christ. (Letter to Fr. Cheminal, Jan. 29, 1843)

DAY FOUR - LIVING OUR CONSTITUTIONS

Jn. 1: 1; 17: 3 : "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word

was God" ... "And this is eternal life that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent"

Mt. 4: 4 : "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

Jn. 8: 31-32 : “To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Reflections from the Life & Works of SFS:

Just as to propel a boat each rower needs to work according to a set pattern, rhythmically, so also novices should be well trained and formed in the authentic charism of the congregation so that they learn to live in the right spirit. [VI,236, Conf. 13, SC II, p. 90] The daughters of the Visitation have very few rules concerning external behaviour, few exterior mortifications, few ceremonies, and a short community prayer. Therefore, they are expected to apply themselves to these minimum obligations, willingly and with much love. Ensure therefore that your exterior actions radiate your inner disposition, and, that the interior is strengthened by externals; just as fire produces ashes and ashes protect the fire. [VI,13, conf. 1, SC I, 162]

Let Martha remain active in her endeavours; but she should not interfere with Mary. Let Mary pursue her contemplation; but she should not despise Martha. Remember, the Lord will always take the side of the underdog. [VI,17, conf. 1, SC I, 166] **Reflections from the Life & Writings of PMM:**

The spirit in which Fr. Mermier sought the approbation of the Holy See for the Congregation: “I acknowledge that I possess a mediocre intelligence and knowledge. I am without virtue and merit, yet it has pleased divine Wisdom and my superiors, to assign me to the Missions; although fully unworthy, I have thought of the Rules and Constitutions without which there can neither be order nor sanctification of the Missionaries, or a fruitful work”. [cf. – 13–

Jean REY, “Fr. Peter Mermier”, 1960, p. 70] The RULE is for us the cream of the Gospel; the key of Paradise. [let to Fr. Dupont, Yanam, June 1849]

“During these four months, we observed our Rules better than ever, like in a Novitiate. We made our Annual Retreat from 13th. to 21st. November. It showed us the way to be followed: self-abnegation ... ‘If anyone wishes to be my disciple ...’ [Let. of Fr. Jacques Martin, to Fr. Mermier, 9th. January 1846]

During the retreat I gave recently to our confreres, I spent two Exercises daily to explain the Rules. They seemed to understand. I hope we shall become more regular in the observance of the Rules, otherwise, my poor conscience would not be at peace. Yes, after the vows, the essential for men devoted to the Apostolate is the exercise of abnegation, as it is mentioned in the Rules. ... In spite of some remarks, I found much good-will in our dear confreres, whose only defect is that they have not received sufficient formation. [Let to Bishop Neyret, 30-06-1849]

DAY FIVE - BECOMING DEDICATED MISSIONARIES

Mk. 3 : 14 : So they came to him and he appointed twelve; they were to be his companions and to be sent out to preach, with power to cast out devils.

Jn. 15: 14-16 : “You are my friends, if you do what I command you, ... You did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last,”

1 Cor 9: 16 : Not that I boast of preaching the gospel, since it is a duty which has been laid on me; I should be punished if I did not preach it.

Reflections from the Life & Works of SFS:

Many are **called** by God to enter religious life; however, only a few persevere in their vocation... There are others who were not really called; but because they came, they were **chosen**, and their vocation rendered pleasing and acceptable to God. There are yet others who are driven by the boredom and dissatisfaction they experience in the world, enter

religious life. Even these are **called** and **chosen**... God utilizes various means to draw men and women to His service. The vocation of some is the result of preaching: the words of the preacher are the seeds sown in the receptive heart of the listener... Others are touched by the reading of good books, or by hearing the holy words of the Gospel being proclaimed... Yet others are led to despise the world and embrace religious life as a result of sufferings that struck them and misfortunes they experienced... Very often such persons have rendered significant service to God and have grown to become great saints – even greater – than those who may have been drawn to religious life through regular motives. [VI,316-7, footnote (o), Conf. 17, SC II, p. 52-53]

How mysterious and inscrutable are the ways of God!!! Some people disgusted with the world enter and faithfully persevere in the religious life they have embraced; while others who respond faithfully to a call to join the convent, and begin with great fervour, end up disastrously and abandon everything. [VI, 311- 323, *passim*, Conf. 17, SC II, p.48, 52-53, 60]

Reflections from the Life & Writings of PMM:

Usually the Missionaries are looked upon as extraordinary people destined to combat the greatest disorders, to correct the greatest abuses and to remedy the greatest evils. This opinion of the people should be fostered and even increased, if possible. For this, it is necessary to have well-prepared men, men well exercised for a long time and men well tested from all angles. To have such men, thus chosen, and well prepared a Congregation is necessary. [Mermier, *Memoirs* p. 18]

We now have thirteen missionaries, and four more are expected. I foresee however, that it will be difficult to choose *four* missionaries out of that number to be sent to India, since extraordinary vocations are rare. I need the spirit of discernment to make the right choice. We are praying. Pray with us and for us. [let to J-M. Tissot, 12-09-1947]

Without self-knowledge (of one's defects and weaknesses), a missionary is like a reed shaken by the wind, a tower built on shifting sand. The totality of qualities which make a Missionary, though necessary, is rarely found blended together in one person. They need to be nurtured and imbibed through prayer and self-discipline. I am convinced more than ever of the need to have missionaries who are filled with the Spirit of God, who pray, who study, who mortify themselves, who love their brethren. [MERMIER, Personal Diary when in Rome (1842-43), quoted in Moget, op. cit, p. 43]

DAY SIX - PRACTICING LITTLE VIRTUES

Mt. 10: 42 : "Anyone who gives so much as a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is a disciple, then I tell you solemnly, he will most certainly not lose his reward."

Mt. 11: 28, 29 : "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

James 1: 22 : "Do not deceive yourselves by just listening to His Word; instead, put it into practice" (Jam.1,22)

Reflections from the Life & Works of SFS:

God has endowed us with two kinds of qualities: one that leads us to humble ourselves and the other that leads us to glorify God. Thus, while we must acknowledge our lowliness and misery, we should also recognize the goodness and dignity that God has endowed us with, which leads us to union with Him in whom lies our true and eternal happiness. [VI,76, Conf. 5, SC I, pp. 78-79]

I would rather that you possess more of humility and less of other virtues, than that you have more of other virtues and be wanting in humility. [VI,130, Conf. 8, SC I, p. 59] Among the beggars, the one whose misery is most evident and appalling the receives more sympathy and alms. So, it is with the mercy of God – showered on the most humble. ...

Such humility will also serve to preserve chastity. ...External acts of humility are only the skin that covers the fruit. [XIII, 392^a-392^e, let. 238bis, to Mme. Chantal, Annecy, 1/11/1604] With God's grace, I shall never fail to practice the maxim which states: Order your lives according to the light of the Gospel, never on the basis of human prudence. Live in peace by combating evil through goodness and overcoming bitterness through gentleness. [XX, 299, let. 1911, to Mme. Chantal, Annecy, April 1622]

Discipline is meant to provide order in our lives, not to cause problems; and so I would have no scruples in changing my lifestyle and routine if the care of my flock so demands. [XII, 403, let. 248, to Bishop Andre Fremyot, 1604]

Reflections from the Life & Writings of PMM:

What is more important is the spirit of the Rule: self-denial; the sacrifice of our comfort and facilities; becoming all to all, everywhere, always, in the least things; to 'be like the grain of wheat buried in the soil. Charity and gentleness towards our neighbour are the daughters of God's love. (Let to Fr. Jean-Marie Tissot, in Vizag, 06-07-1849]

People generally speak of the gentleness of St. Francis de Sales; and they are right. But according to me it does not bring out fully his characteristic trait. His gentleness appears to me to be but a means of exercising his zeal. His characteristic trait is zeal.

You are right to take as your motto: "To God alone be honour and glory" (*Soli Deo honor et Gloria*) Along with gentleness have a strong zeal against vice.

I recommend to you as much knowledge as virtue. You can have zeal without knowledge, but this zeal is incapable of doing any good; it certainly is not what can do any lasting good". [Register of La Feuillette, pp.26-27, Preserved in the MSFS Central Archives]

DAY SEVEN - PURIFYING OUR MOTIVES

Micah 6: 8 : "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

Psalm 116: 6 : "The LORD preserves the simple; when I was brought low, he saved me."

Lk. 16: 13 : "No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

Mt. 6: 33 : "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

Reflections from the Life & Works of SFS:

There are persons of high social standing and learned who were vanity shops in the world that choose to enter religious life not so much as to humiliate themselves but with the intention of dominating everyone by assuming the charge of teachers of philosophy and theology. Such persons should be carefully scrutinized and admitted only if they show definite signs of desiring to respond to God's transforming grace. If they do so, they will indeed change into humility-shops in religious life from being vanity shops in the world. [VI, conf. 17, p. 327-328, SC II, p. 65]

The purpose of **prayer** is to unite oneself with God. This requires that we have the right intention, that we devote the required attention and that we proceed with due reverence. To ensure these conditions, we require to be poor through humility, rich in hope, and to be united with our Lord on the Cross. This means that in prayer we must always ask the Lord to increase our faith, hope and charity. [VI, 403, app. C]

Reflections from the Life & Writings of PMM:

“Here is a counsel which I give you: be on your guard against the poison of vainglory. Continue in the same way without looking back. Always apply yourself to be more and more simple (*“Be simple as doves”*) Purify your intentions more and more *“If your eyes were simple, ...*Yes, according to manner of St. Francis de Sales. ... *“How important is this second article of our Rules: ‘Each one will strive to cultivate the purest intention of pleasing God alone’. Pray for your Superior, that he may try at least to begin, even if so late, to practice what he preaches. (namely, conformity to God’s Will)”* [let. to Fr. J-M. Tissot, in Yanam, 12-09-1847]

We do much when we do little, if we do it for God, when and as He wants. On the contrary, we do little or even nothing when we achieve much without right and pure intentions. ‘They have received their reward.’ How consoling this doctrine for humble souls! How dumbfounding it is for vain and ambitious me... St. Francis de Sales used to say. Offer yourself generously to His Holy Will as a willing holocaust. Such is the means to attract on you and your mission the most abundant blessings. ... [let. to Fr. A. Delalex, at Yanam, end of April 1855]

How great a person is when he wills only what God wills, when He wills it, and, in relation to whomsoever He wills it. [let. to Fr. Cheminal, 05-01-1843]

“I resign myself perfectly and joyfully to the Holy Will of God, who wishes me to be here (at Rome). I am sincerely grateful to it. [let. to Bishop Rendu, 28-03-1843]

What the Lord wants from us is a right and pure intention, fidelity in all that we do: Not *how much*, but *how well*. The sovereign Judge considers not the weight but the value of our work. ... The less there is of ourselves in our actions, the more there is of God.

DAY EIGHT - BEING OPEN TO FRATERNAL CORRECTION

Mt. 18: 1 : “If your brother sins, go to him and show him his fault. But do it privately, just between yourselves.”

Mt 12: 33-37 : “I tell you this: on the judgment day you will have to give an account of any useless word you have spoken. Your own words will declare you either innocent or guilty.”

Eph 4: 1-11 : “Be humble, kind, patient, and bear with one another in love.”

1 Jam1:19-21 : “Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger, for human anger does not bring about what is right before God.” **Reflections from the Life & Works of SFS:**

Laxity, whether of spirit or body, is one of the greatest obstacles to Religious Life. Persons who do not make an effort to rid themselves of it should not be admitted to the convent. [VI, conf. 17, p. 331, SC II, p. 69]

Do not be disturbed when people speak about the faults we commit or about the virtues we lack. Rather, let us thank God for having shown us the way to acquire those virtues or to correct those faults. [VI, conf. 18, p.344, SC II, p. 7]

We may enter religious life with our bad habits, passions and inclination to evil. We may not however allow these to rule our life. Rather we require to earnestly strive to overcome these imperfections by being guided by right reason, by living according to the Constitutions and through obedience to our Superiors. [VI, conf. 20, p. 377, SC II, p. 41]

Reflections from the Life & Writings of PMM:

“... you ask me pardon. You think that I want to punish you by my silence. My friend, if it is my thought, it is too much. ..It has never entered into my spirit. I have nothing but thanksgiving, blessings, words of encouragement and comfort for you but they do not reach you. What a terrible disposition of the divine Providence. We had taken every kind of precaution, we had stamped our letters, some of them till ... and everything is in vain whereas we receive regularly all your letters in around 40 days. ... If there is my fault, the correction is severe ... But may God be blessed and may his most loving will be done; may

our beloved deceased (Fr. Martin) rest in the peace of the Lord.” [Let. to Fr. J-M. Tissot, 23-07-1846] I desire that our missionaries in India should make the greatest efforts and sacrifices for an exact observance of the Rules as far as their duties allow. Fraternal correction should be made every month when they are only two in a station. ... [Let to Bishop Neyret, 30-06-1849] All our fathers and brothers must practice every month, fraternal correction in public or in private. Here, in Annecy, we do it in private. This is how we proceed: on the last or the first day of the month, every religious goes to his superior and asks for correction. This practice is of greatest importance for the knowledge of defects for the practice of self-denial, for exercises of abnegation – the only means of acquiring humility. [Let. to Fr. J-M. Tissot, at Vizag, 06-07-1849]

DAY NINE - CARRYING ONE'S CROSS

Mark 8:34 : He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, whoever wishes to come after me, must deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Mk 10:38 : And whoever does not take up his cross, and follow after me, is not worthy of me.

Gal. 2:19b-20 : I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith in the Son of God, who has loved me, and given himself up for me.

Heb 2: 18 : Because he himself was tested through suffering; he is able to help those who are being tested.”

Reflections from the Life & Works of SFS:

The name and term ‘Cross’: A word and object that was dreaded and despised, the Cross, assumed dignity and respect, through the suffering and crucifixion of Christ. In the Gospels, [Mt. 10/38; Lk. 9/23] Christ Himself says: “He who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me”. Accordingly, the word *Cross* refers to the trials and tribulations one requires to assume in order to obtain salvation. It also serves to remind one of the instruments of punishment meted out to noted criminals, and, an instrument of torture. ... [II, 31,33, Defence of the Standard of the Cross, Ch. I]

God has testified to the power of the Crucifix and the Cross by the chastisement meted out to those who have by word or deed denigrated it. ... To honour the Cross is to honour the Crucified. Disrespect to the Cross is disrespect to the Crucified. Thus, the Jews, Turks, and such heathens who were unable to slight Jesus in person, do so by desecrating his images.

[II, 240, Defence of the Standard of the Cross, ch. 14]

When God chooses to place heavy crosses on your shoulder, He provides you with greater strength to bear them. [XIII, 17, let. 276, Let. to Mme. Chantal, end February 1605] Unite your little crosses with the Cross of the Saviour. When the Lord took up His cross, the crosses of humanity of all times were added to its weight. [XIII, 281, let. 394, to Mme.

Chantal, 14/4/07]

Reflections from the Life & Writings of PMM:

On the day assigned for erecting the Cross, as was customary during the course of the parish missions, the object of his sermon was to make people understand that it is not enough to bear the cross; in order to honour it worthily, but that it must be borne with honour and pride; and that one must consider oneself privileged to follow the divine Master under His banner.” [Jean REY, 1960, p. 71]

Consider all your worries and doubts as crosses, gifts of God. They are the treasures given to you by the Lord. They are the barren field which you have to cultivate at the sweat of your brow, assiduously and with patience. [let. Fr. Francis Decompoix, April 1855] Interior sorrows are an excellent cross which we should carry in a spirit of resignation and even of joy. ... When St. Paul tells us to rejoice, he adds: ‘in the Lord.’ True joy is never without thorns and without sacrifices”. [letter to Sister, Louise MERMIER, 18-04-1851] To a

confrere recovering from illness: "Providence has to make you go through trials in order to form that new man in you which makes you like Jesus Christ. Your path of sickness has greatly edified me. I have suffered with you and I have thanked God with you." [to Fr. Guillermin, April 1855]