

Family Online Marianist Moment - March 2022

Blessed Chaminade and Blessed Adèle are two of our saints who can be those mentors or guides. They were prolific writers through letters and other avenues where they shared reflections on various themes that they considered essential for the interior life. So let us look at what they said concerning Lent, and maybe we can use these words in our reflections on conversion in our lives.

Blessed Chaminade:

As a virtue, penance, whether joined to the sacrament which bears its name or separated from it, includes two things: the first, to leave sin behind by a true change of life, and the second, to expiate sin by voluntary penances in keeping with these words of the Gospel, “preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins” (Mk 1:4; Lk 3:3). The first, to prepare for the life to come by a more holy and more regulated life. The second, to make satisfaction for the past. The one reconciles us with the divine Majesty by changing the heart, and eventually the life, of the sinner. The other anticipates the vengeance God would take someday. It draws upon us the friendship of God and gives us the right, in a sense, to our eternal predestination. But for that, it is necessary that it be sincere and candid. It must be rigorous and prompt, so that if a defective element is found in it, this may be promptly corrected. It must be undertaken through a motive of love of God, a true regret at having offended God, and a sincere desire to satisfy God’s justice to the extent that we can. If we do not resist a habit, it becomes a necessity (Saint Augustine). You shall die in your sins [Jn 8:24].

(Chaminade, Notes for Conferences and Sermons, Legacy, Vol. 4, Doc. 49, [191c-f])

Blessed Adèle:

O my God, you will not reject a heart
that is contrite humble.

No, my dear friend, however guilty we may be, our all-merciful and good God has his arms outstretched to receive us. Let us not insult God’s goodness by doubting his mercy, for it is without limit.

God takes pleasure in saying he is rich in mercy; how often have we not experienced its admirable effects!

The web of our lives, dear friend, is woven with the graces with which God’s mercy has indulged us. God has preserved us in critical situations and plied us with holy examples, pious inspirations, and good advice. A thousand times he has warded off evil and pardoned our sins.

What does God ask in return? Our hearts, so that we might love him alone, and renounce a world that can only make us unhappy, both in this life and in the next. Then he promises us eternal happiness and, even in this life, that peace and joy of soul which is the greatest of temporal goods.

(Letter 119 to Agathe Diché, Agen, March 31, 1810, Letters of Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon, Volume 1, page 134, paragraphs 1-5)