

From the Padre's Pen

Letter to Luigi Bazzuto, who later took the name Brother Emmanuele

My dearest Luigino,

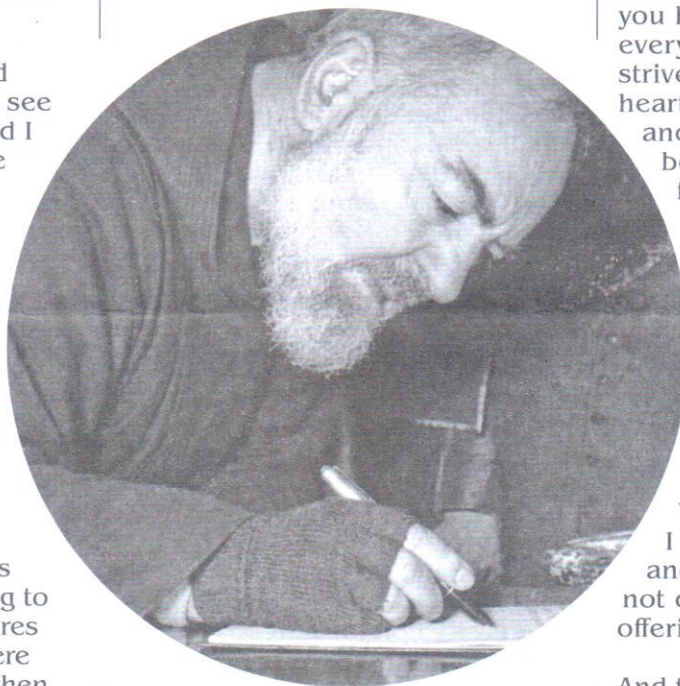
May the Lord bless you and reward you for the affection you hold for my poor soul and that you have expressed with your wishes on the occasion of the Easter festivities. May divine mercy fulfill your vows regarding me and give you complete victory over the enemy, whom you should not fear, because God is faithful and will not allow you to be oppressed and defeated.

I received your latest letter and hasten to respond to you, for I see that you have a great need, and I believe it is not because I have the power to console a soul, but only because the all-wise God chooses to use some natural means. May this letter bring you the consolation that I desire and ask from God for you.

You ask my opinion on your love for God. But how, dearest son, do you not feel this love within your own spirit? What is that burning desire that you express in your words? Who has placed in your heart this longing to love the Lord? Do not holy desires come from Him? If in a soul there is only the desire to love God, then everything is there; God Himself is there, as God is not where there is not a desire for His love. Therefore, be at peace regarding the existence of divine charity in your heart. And if this longing of yours is not satisfied, if it seems to you that you always desire without attaining perfect love, all this does not prove the lack of the existence of God's love in you, but rather means that you must never say "enough." It means that you must not, nor can you, stop along the path of divine love and holy perfection.

You know well that you will obtain perfect love when the object of this love is possessed, which in our case is God Himself. So why so many unnecessary anxieties and

discouragements? Always long—long with greater confidence—and do not fear. How is it possible that a soul that has wholly dedicated itself to heavenly love, seeks with divine help to please Him, desires and yearns evermore for the purest waters of this divine charity—how is it possible, I say, that such a soul may one day depart from this world dry, cold, without longing for God? How is it possible, I say, that this soul may leave this world with the mark of eternal damnation? Does it not seem a contradiction



to you? And to believe all this would not be an offense to divine goodness, which not only does not reject repentant souls but always seeks even the obstinate ones?

My son, be certain of this: God can reject everything in a creature conceived in sin and carrying the indelible imprint inherited from Adam, but He cannot reject absolutely the sincere desire to love Him. Therefore, if you cannot be sure of His celestial predilection for other reasons, and if the belief in what I tell you in the name of God does not lift you up and comfort you, you must at least assure yourself of this sincere desire you have to love Him.

Therefore, I beg you in the name of God not to let yourself be overcome by that fear that appears in your letters—namely, the fear of not loving and fearing God—for it seems to me that the enemy wants to deceive you in some way. I know, my son, that no soul can love its God worthily. When this soul does everything possible on its part, and everything with right intention, and trusts in divine mercy, why should it be rejected by Jesus? Or perhaps has He not commanded us to love God according to our abilities? So, if you have given and consecrated everything to God, if you therefore strive to draw all of God into your heart, if you therefore, with untiring and tireless effort, endeavor how best to serve and love Him, why fear? Perhaps because you cannot do more? But Jesus does not yet ask this of you, and therefore He cannot condemn you. The Spirit of God blows when He wants, where He wants, and how He wants. On the other hand, tell our good God to do in Himself what you cannot do. Tell Jesus: "Do You want more love from me? I have no more! Give me more, and I will offer it to You!" Do not doubt; Jesus will accept the offering, and be at peace.

And that is enough for the present lesson. I feel very ill and do not have the strength to stay longer with you. Pray sincerely and always for the weakness of my spirit. Also, be certain of what I have written in my other letters, even that controversial point, because I told you everything in the Lord, and everything was written at the foot of the Crucifix. Greet your companions, and returning your wishes, I tell you and wish you greater blessings from the Risen Lord.

Most affectionately in Jesus Christ,

Padre Pio, Capuchin

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