



Daring Practical Faith in Divine Providence

Part Six

Father Joseph Kentenich, *Childlikeness Before God*, 155-156

Introduction: We continue with Father Kentenich's insights given at the retreat for the Swiss priests' community of the Bethlehem Fathers in 1937. In Part Five, Father Kentenich gave the following point: *That daring interior attitude is the ability to muster a maximum of love and humility when given minimum of natural and supernatural insight.* Part Six continues with Father Kentenich showing how this is only possible with the help of God's grace.

Importance of grace

Father Kentenich gives two conditions for having a daring interior attitude:

First, such a maximum [of love and humility] is possible only with a considerable degree of grace. Without grace to guide our insight and searching [for God], how could we hope to muster a maximum of love and humility! *Second*, by knowing that the aim of God's government is not primarily [directed toward] our intellect but [toward] our will. I think that these two conditions make the problem of our times more or less understandable for modern thinking...

Why God prefers the *little souls*

This difficulty of living a *maximum of love* is explained by Father Kentenich:

For the most part, I do not think that the world manages this daring of a maximum of love. This is why Christ and probably even the heavenly Father prefer the so-called *little souls*: Father, I thank you... that you have revealed this to the merest children (Mt 11:25; Lk 10:21), for only the little ones manage to muster the maximum of love and humility in the face of a minimum or low degree of natural and supernatural insight. It is a tragedy in the life of the Church, in the life of religious men and women, perhaps even in our own lives, that while stressing so much the cultivation of the virtues, we have left our love so terribly uncultivated...

Thought question: When have you found it difficult live the *daring of a maximum of love*?

The importance of the maximum of love

Father Kentenich poses the question:

Do you know why we so often bitterly disappoint others in our old age? Because throughout our lives we pay too little attention to the most important ingredient of inner transformation: *love*. No virtue can form the soul as deeply as love. It is good that we strive for every kind of moral virtue such as: humility, obedience, purity, etc. but none of these virtues forms the human person as much as love. If you would really understand this, you would set your sights much more on the immediate fostering of love of God... in your formation and in the formation of others.

Love the unitive and assimilating power

Love is simply *the* unitive and assimilating¹ power. Everything else assimilates us to some degree, but *the* assimilating power is love. This is why I think our formation should emphasize love from early on; otherwise in old age we will bitterly disappoint ourselves and others... Work, rather, so that our soul's power to love is increased... How is Catholicism supposed to show its ability to truly form the human person [through the education to love] if we can't form our elite! We... should really show what the Catholic faith can do in education. It has been done in the past! Perhaps you do not sense the importance if these few thoughts. But observe how things are around you!

Thought question: How have you experienced love as a power of unity and making similar to the one you love?

Commitment to daring love

Father Kentenich continues:

We therefore want to keep in mind that our aim is to commit ourselves to the daring of love, come what may! The more cross and suffering we have; the more unshelteredness [we experience]; the more we know what God wants. [He wants] to bind our power of love to himself. (...)

Conclusion of the interior daring *yes*

Father Kentenich concludes with a brief summary:

With that I have given you a general answer. What is it? The interior daring of the *yes* consists in the ability, with the help of grace, to strive for a maximum of love and a maximum of humility - healthy humility, of course - given a minimum of natural insight and a low degree of the bright-dark insight of faith.

Thought question: Can you give an example of a person or saint for whom cross and suffering helped them grow in love?

My reaction to the *yes* of the Heavenly Father

The next insight Father Kentenich shared has to do with our response to God. What does our *yes* to the Heavenly Father look like:

I now want to go beyond the general answer a bit and apply it to our everyday lives. Do you know how the soul responds when he/she has made this attitude his/her own? The soul also speaks its *yes*. What does this *yes* look like? It looks like the heavenly Father's *yes* and has three characteristics. In my view it is:

- First: a childlike joyful *yes* to my way in life,
- Second, a childlike courageous *yes* to my way of the cross, and
- Third, a childlike trusting *yes* to my way to heaven.

-to be continued in Part Seven-

¹ Assimilating power means to become similar to the one you love. Sometimes husbands and wives who have loved each other for many years even begin to look like each other.