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NIHIL NISI IESUM

# Purity of Heart

*"Blessed are the pure in heart,*
*for they shall see God."*
*(St. Matthew 5:8)*

## The Greatest Benediction

### Jesus offers nine benedictions:

***Three*** *pertain to the Kingdom* (the poor in spirit, the persecuted, the calumniated).

***Three*** *to consolation* (those comforted, those satisfied, those obtaining mercy).

*And* ***three*** *to possession* (of land, of sight, of childhood).

**But only one promises *God Himself*: *the Pure in Heart***

Every other blessing gives something *other than*, something l*ess than*, God Himself.

This is kept only for the pure of heart.

All the other blessings pertain to God's justice in the way of recompense, and this justice *is* inseparable from His love.

But only this one pertains *solely* to God' love, and not His justice.

It is not a matter of recompense: it is a *spontaneous* gift, the unsurpassable gift, the most sublime gift, of Himself to those whose hearts are a pure reflection of His own love. Having been created in the *imago Dei*, the image of God, that image once again becomes, as it had been long ago at Baptism, pure, free from sin, untainted by selfishness – with nothing in the soul that is contrary to God. The mirror is unblemished and reflects nothing other than God Himself; it is the giving of God to the soul ***in*** the soul – not in anything outside of it, but in the very soul itself!

These, St. John, tells us, are the ones "who ... have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb." (Apocalypse 7.14). Spotless, unblemished before God.

*Strive* for mercy, peace, meekness; *thirst* for holiness, for justice — but *seek first purity in heart* ... and when you see God, you will see the beginning, the purpose, and the end ... of all lesser things.

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## Encouragement from a Consecrated and Cloistered Nun:

My Little Children, you may ask:

***How do I attain to purity of heart — and the promise of seeing God?*** How can *my* heart, so stained and marred by sins, become pure? For so many, the understanding of having a pure heart pertains only to sexuality. Yes, a person becomes impure through illicit relationships, gestures, and words; by deliberately lingering on lurid sexual imagery (which abounds). However, there is far more to purity of heart that simply leading a sexually chaste life, just as there is far more to the actuality of sin than just limiting it to that which is committed in and through the body.

How, then, can I attain purity of heart?

Purity of heart, my children, comes about by a total exposure to the word of God and putting the Word into *practice* in our lives, by being *obedient* to His truth, by deep and honest prayer, by *frequenting the Sacraments*, ***especially the Sacrament of Penance***, by the practice of *self-discipline*, and by cultivating an attitude of *reverence* towards all human beings in whom God lives.

Jesus himself has told us what it is that makes our hearts impure, but He has also told us what makes our hearts pure — *remaining in Him*:

*"Now you are clean by reason of the word, which I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you." (St. John 15.3-4)*

In St. Mark's Gospel we read,

"Understand you not that every thing from without, entering into a man cannot defile him, because it entereth not into his heart, but the things which come out from a man, they defile a man. For from within out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile a man." (St. Mark 7 18-23)

It is ***these*** things, to what ever degree they rest in the human heart, that make us impure, and it is these sins and attitudes that we need to root out of our souls in order to become pure.

When you reflect sufficiently upon it, all these sins cause a death in one form or another, either physically, or through the death of the soul to God. In the very least, they all involve a death of trust!

To you who are reading this article I cannot exhort you more to the beauty and joy of knowing and possessing a pure heart, uncorrupted by the world and untainted by sin. *It will enable you to really see God in this world and all around you*, it will enable you to experience a beauty of being that you would never have dreamed

possible: to live without any ensnarement, to be free of being chained to and by the spirit of this world.

It is within the reach of everyone. No matter how far you may have strayed you must *never, never, loose hope*, but cling to God and trust to His grace. With Him all things are possible — especially those things you think impossible to yourself. His greatest miracles have never been raising the dead — ***but in making Saints out of sinners*** — which is a raising from the Second Death.[1]

There are, however, and for the most part, few *instant* conversions to purity. It will take years of constant effort, of falling and rising to attain a pure heart — but it ***is*** possible to regain that clarity of vision and heart, in God.

It opens us up to love truly, to really experience human and divine love as God intended, because so much dross is laid aside and right choices are made; and to the degree that all these things are gradually purged from the human soul, God can ever more deeply possess us.

### *Beati mundo corde* — the Greatest Blessing: the *Vision* of God

"**Blessed are the pure in heart** *for they shall* ***see*** *God*." (St. Matthew 5.8) This is the *Third Beatitude* from Christ's *Sermon on the Mount*. Of all eight Beatitudes, only the third makes this promise: that the pure in heart will ***see*** God! In the life to come, yes. But you will find that you see with new eyes and a new heart even in this life, for all will become numinous, be invested with God. You will see beyond the superficies, the mere appearances that either obscure or deceive ... to the Presence of God and of His most holy will in all things, in all places, and at all times.

The spirit of this world has reduced all love to such a degrading, utterly impoverished state, that many people now do not so much as authentically understand what love is and and what its demands really are. This is a tragedy of epic proportions. It is death of divine love, both of the acceptance and of the giving of love. How can we give or accept what we do not know, do not understand?

A pure heart gives you the defenses of a child, and their puissance is great indeed:

*innocence and guilessness*. A pure heart allows the love of God to flow through it for others, holding nothing for itself.

It is the very purity of heart and soul that attracts us to the Saints. Who of us are not filled with awe, wonder and joy at the awareness of the reality of the Immaculate and totally loving Heart of Mary? How the very concept draws us, speaks to us: a veritable haven of goodness, love, and purity where no stain of sin nor shadow of evil dwells.

**Pray to Mary**, pray to her, that she may grant you the graces that you need to attain, little by little, day by day, purity of heart — and what you will become is nothing less than a vessel totally open *to* God and *for* others; a cistern of deep, cool water in a parched and barren world.

Love purely, and they will come ... God, and all who encounter Him in you.

What greater gift have you to give ... than God Himself?

May God bless you with, and keep you in, this inestimable grace!

A Poor Clare Colettine Nun

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[1] Apocalypse 20.6

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