

## **19. "Cast all your burdens on Him" (1Pe 5,7)**

*The Circular letters 7 & 8 written in prison comments on verses from the letters of Saint Peter, which we know Clorivière worked on during this time in prison. He hoped, moreover, to be able to give his Commentaries of the letters of St Peter to the Pope upon his release from prison, which he will do in 1813 when, eventually, he will be able to meet the Pope.*

From the *Explication des Epitres de Saint Pierre* (in French) Volume 2 p. 35-39.

*Perfection that confidence must have.*

"Cast all your burdens on Him" he said. This expression he uses 'Cast' marks the perfection that our confidence must have; We must strip ourselves of everything that may be contrary to it, we must get rid of it entirely; it would not be enough; we must dismiss it with disdain far from us, never to take it up again; we must give it up, we must abandon forever the eager care to which our anxiety brings us, not only as useless, but as pernicious and criminal; The Lord shows us the futility of it, when he compares this care with that which one would take to add something to his size: 'Can anyone of you, however much you worry, add one single cubit to your span of life?' (Mt 6,27) He makes us see the crime when he tells us that to give ourselves up with concern to these kinds of care is to act like men who do not know God; the danger, because, when the mind is occupied with these cares, it constantly thinks about them and is no longer able to fill itself with God: 'Wherever your treasure is, there will be your heart too.' (Mt 6,21) This is a burden that overpowers us, that keeps us bowed to the ground, and prevents us from raising our eyes to heaven. It is an evil that demoralizes us, and that would inevitably lead us to death. We can never get rid of it too soon and in a thorough way. It is not in our power to get rid of certain impressions, troubles, fears which are felt in us despite ourselves; but these things are not attributed to us, since they are involuntary, they do not really diminish our confidence, they only exercise it in a painful manner, but which, in the plan of God, can be used to make it purer and stronger; All we have to do is to relentlessly combat these impressions, to dispel them peacefully and without disturbance when they return; to endure them and to despise them, when all our efforts are useless; to humble ourselves before God; without destroying and discouraging ourselves; to counter them with acts of confidence, although devoid of all feeling, and to continually implore God to perfect this virtue in us.

The way to achieve this perfection is to remember the goodness, wisdom and power of God.

One of the means that we must use for this is to think of the goal that we must envisage in the practice of this virtue, considering who is the one in whom we place our concerns: *In Him*. Nothing is more apt to procure the glory of God, than a confidence which leads us to reject all our worries because of Him. Above all, it honors his kindness, his power, his wisdom. *His infinitely merciful kindness*, which, despite our numerous offences and ingratitude, is always ready to forgive us and come to our aid as soon as we ask for his assistance. *His power*, to which nothing is impossible, and which can make us triumph over all our enemies and overcome the most insurmountable obstacles and difficulties. *His wisdom*, whose resources are infinite, and who knows how to draw his glory and our good from what seems to be most contrary to it. Confidence never honors God more, never is more necessary to us than when everything is humanly desperate, and when we see in ourselves, or outside ourselves, nothing on which we can rely, nothing to what we can have recourse. Then to confidently claim the help of the Lord, is to testify in an impressive way that we recognize in him a father full of tenderness, an all-powerful God to whom everything is subject; an infinitely wise Master, from whom nothing can be hidden. It is true that, in what concerns natural things, one should not, by a false confidence, expose oneself to extreme necessities, which would be to tempt God and to be guilty of a criminal presumption which would deserve to be punished by complete neglect; neither can we, on these occasions, count absolutely on a particular and miraculous assistance which God has not promised us and which is not necessary; however, when one is in this unavoidable situation, not to despair, but to have recourse to God in confidence is an act which honors him, provided that one is resigned to whatever it pleases Him to ordain. This trust often gets unforeseen and miraculous help; there are a thousand proofs of this in the holy books; and there are a few virtuous people who have sometimes experienced it; But it is mainly in spiritual needs that we can and must always confidently claim the mercy of God. We can, because the Lord has promised to assist us, and not to refuse us anything that we ask him in the name of Jesus Christ: 'Anything you ask from the Father, he will grant in my name' ( Jn 16,23) We must, because without this we would misunderstand, we would offend the excessive goodness of the Lord, we would refuse to believe in his promises, we would act against Christian hope, we would inevitably run to our doom; this is the case of one who would soon be threatened with some atrocious treatment, some infamous torment which he does not feel the strength to endure; this is the case for all sinners who, after a criminal life, find themselves at the hour of death; it is that of all those who are assailed by some violent temptation, which they do not feel the strength to resist without an extraordinary help of grace. It also sometimes happens to the virtuous that the spirit of malice seizes their imagination so much, that it covers their understanding with darkness so deep, that they see themselves only as subjects of confusion and despair; it seems to them that they are without faith, without hope, without love; that their lives have been nothing but a web of hypocritical and proud actions; that God views them only with indignation, and that the sentence of their eternal reprobation is already pronounced. In all these cases, we have

recourse only in great confidence, in boundless confidence, all based on the greatness of the mercies of God and on the infinite price of the merits of Jesus Christ, our Lord. It is then that, according to the advice of the sage, we must form thoughts of God worthy of his goodness: 'Have righteous thoughts about God'(Sag 1,1), and throw into his bosom all our fears and our requests. The less we find in ourselves motives that can excite and support our confidence, the more honorable it is to the Lord.