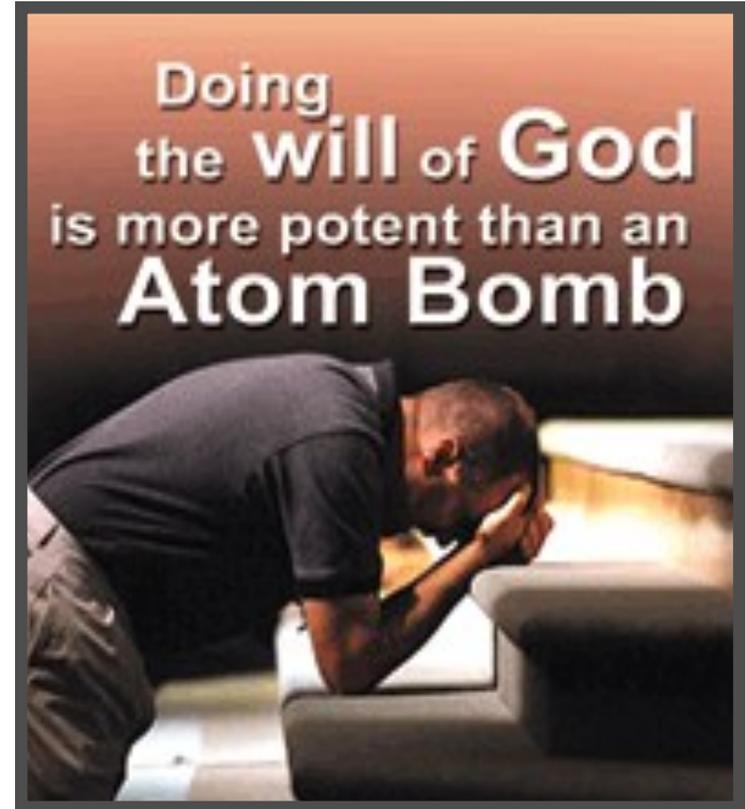


it is our Lord himself who sends you that cross, though it comes to you by means of your neighbor; therefore even in these cases you must embrace the cross as coming from God. Nor let us seek to find out a reason for such treatment. St. Teresa says: "If you are willing to bear only those crosses for which you see a reason, perfection is not for you."

Fourthly, we must be resigned in aridity of soul; if, when we say our prayers, make our Communions, visit the Blessed Sacrament, etc. All seems to weary and give us not comfort, let us be satisfied in knowing that we please God, and that the less satisfaction we feel ourselves in our devotions the more pleasure do we give him. At no time can we know better our own insufficiency and misery than in the time of aridity; and therefore let us humble ourselves in our prayers, and put ourselves with resignation into God's hands, and say: "Lord, I do not deserve consolations; I desire nothing but that Thou have pity on me; keep me in Thy grace and do with me what thou wilt." And so doing, we shall gain more in one day of desolation than in a month of tears and sensible devotion. And generally speaking, this should be the continual tenor of our prayers, offering ourselves to God, that he may do with us as he pleases; saying to him in our prayers, our Communions, and in the visit: "My God, make me do Thy will." In doing the will of God we shall do everything. For this end let us accustom ourselves to have always on our lips the ejaculation: "Fiat voluntas tua!" "Thy will be done," even in the least things we do; for instance, if we snuff out a candle, break a glass, or stumble over something, let us always repeat: "May the will of God be done!" When we lose any of our possessions, or when one of our relatives dies, or anything else of the same sort happens to us, let us say: "O Lord, it is Thy will, it is my will also." And when we fear any temporal ill, let us say: "O Lord, I will whatever Thou willest." Thus we shall be very pleasing in the sight of God, and shall be always in peace.

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The Practice of Conformity to the Will of God



O Lord Almighty, Who permits evil in order to draw good therefrom, hear our humble prayers, and grant that we remain faithful to Thee unto death. Grant us also, through the intercession of Most Holy Mary, the strength ever to conform ourselves to Thy Most Holy Will, in love.

Amen.

The Practice of Conformity to the Will of God

(Taken from "Preparation for Death"

by St Alphonsus de Liguori, Bishop and Doctor of the Church, page 450)

All sanctity consists in loving God; and the love of God consists in fulfilling His holy will. In this is our life: "And life in His good will." (Ps. XXIX, 6) And he who is always united with the will of God is always in peace; for the divine will takes away the bitterness of every cross. By saying, God wills it so, God has so willed, holy souls find peace in all their labors: "Whatsoever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad." (Prov. Xii,27) You say: Everything goes wrong with me; God sends me all kinds of misfortunes. Things go wrong with you, my friend, because you make them go wrong; if you were to be resigned to the will of God, all would go well, and for your good. The crosses which God sends you are misfortunes, because you make them misfortunes; if you would take them with resignation, they would no longer be misfortunes, but riches for paradise. Venerable Balthazar Alvarez says: "He who in his troubles resigns himself with peacefulness to the divine will, runs to God post-haste." Let us now come to the practice.

And first, let us resign ourselves in the sickness which befall us. Worldly people call illnesses misfortunes, but the saints call them visitations of God and favors. When we are ill we ought certainly to take remedies in order to be cured, but we should always be resigned to whatever God disposes. And if we pray for restoration to health, let it always be done with resignation, otherwise we shall not obtain the favor. But how much do we not gain when we are ill by offering to God all we suffer! He who loves God from his heart does not desire to be cured of his illness in order not to suffer, but he desires to please God by suffering. It was this love which made the scourge, the rack, and the burning pitch sweet to the holy martyrs. We must also be especially resigned in mortal sickness. To accept death at such a time, in order that the will of God may be fulfilled, merits for us a reward similar to that of the martyrs, because they accepted death to please

God. He who dies in union with the will of God makes a holy death; and the more closely he is united to it, the more holy death does he die. The Venerable Blosius declares that, "an act of perfect conformity to the will of God at the hour of death not only delivers us from hell, but also from purgatory."

Secondly, we must also unite ourselves to the will of God with regard to our natural defects, as want of talents, being of low birth, weak health, bad sight, want of ability for affairs, and the like. All that we have is the free gift of God. Might he not have made us a fly or a blade of grass? A hundred years ago were we anything but nothingness? And what more do we want? Let it suffice that God has given us the power of becoming saints. Although we may have little talent, poor health, and may be poor and abject, we may very well become saints through his grace if we have the will. Oh, how many unfortunate beings have been damned on account of their talents, their health, high birth, riches or beauty? Let us then be content with what God has done for us; and let us thank him always for the good things he has given us, and particularly for having called us to the holy faith; this is a great gift, and one for which few are found to thank God.

Thirdly, we must resign ourselves in all adversities that may happen to us, as the loss of property, of our expectations, of our relatives; and in the attacks and persecutions we may meet with from men. You will say: But God does not will sin; how is it that I must resign myself when some one calumniates me, wrongs me, attacks and defrauds me? That cannot happen by the will of God. What a deception is this! God does not will the sin of such a one; he permits it: but, on the other hand, he does will the adversity which you suffer by means of this person. So that