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Total Surrender

“The spirit of the Society is one of loving trust, total surrender and cheerfulness as lived by Jesus and Mary in the Gospel.”

- Introduction
 - Today we enter into the second day of our Triduum pondering, in the midst of the Year of Faith, the spirit of the Society of the Missionaries of charity: “loving trust, total surrender and cheerfulness as lived by Jesus and Mary in the Gospel.”
 - Yesterday we spoke about eight different ways the Church is calling us to grow in loving trust. That loving trust is an attitude that is meant to encompass our entire and influence the way we look at every situation, but it is meant to pass from attitude to acts of loving trust and ultimately to a whole hearted blank check we give to God. That’s what we will discuss today: the total surrender to God flowing from our loving trust.
 - We see that total surrender in the figure of Abraham, as he surrendered to God’s plans, left his native Ur, and even was willing to surrender his beloved Son to the Lord if that’s what the Lord was asking.
 - We see it in Jesus, who put himself entirely at God’s disposal, whose entire existence was to do whatever pleased the Father and to belong to him.
 - We see in in Mary, the handmade of the Lord, who allowed her entire life to develop according to God’s word. Blessed Mother Teresa said of her:
 - (MT) Being the handmaid of the Lord, Mary was completely empty of self and God filled her with grace — full of grace — full of God. Handmaid is to be at one’s disposal — to be used according to someone’s wish — with full trust and joy — to belong to someone without reserve — and this is one main reason of the Spirit of the Society.
 - Mary’s life shows us that faith is fundamentally a “fiat” not a “faciam,” a let it be done to be in faithful, total surrender, rather than an “I will do.”
 - So today we will ponder what this means in our faith and how to grow in the total surrender to which God is calling us as a consequence of our loving trust in him.
- Meditation on death
 - I want to begin with pondering our death. Death is the ultimate total surrender we’re called to make in faith, and pondering our death will help us much more easily make the right choices here in life.
 - The greatest meditation on the total surrender of death I’ve ever read was published two years ago this September by Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia, in a letter to his brother priests two days before he would retire. Full of faith in contrast to those filled with phobias, Cardinal Rigali called reflection on death an “uplifting” though “challenging” theme. It shows a great spirituality of total surrender and how to make it practical.
 - “Preparing for death is the greatest opportunity in our lives,” Cardinal Rigali wrote somewhat provocatively. Rather than dreading death as the inexorable occasion in which our life will be taken from us, we can learn from Jesus how to make our death an act of supreme self-giving love. Sometimes we view the crucifixion as if Jesus suffered it passively, exclusively as a victim. Jesus, however, in foretelling his death, clarified that he was approaching it with full freedom, love and courage. “I am the Good Shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep,” Jesus stressed. “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down” (Jn 10:11, 18).
 - Likewise, all of us have been given by Jesus’ death and resurrection a similar power. “We have the possibility to rehearse our death,” Cardinal Rigali wrote, “not in its minute details—although saints

have found this useful—but in the sense of accepting it in anticipation by an act of our will that will be consummated freely at the moment of our death and offered to the Father in union with the death of Jesus. We can indeed accept and anticipate by an act of our will the laying down of our life in union with Jesus!”

- The rehearsing of our death in Christ each day is not meant to be a morbid exercise, but a life-giving daily encounter with the Father in which we entrusted ourselves to him through, with and in Christ. “The Father wills that we pass through death with His Son in order to live, not in order to die.” Cardinal Rigali declared. “Seen in this perspective, *death is the moment to give all, to surrender all with Jesus and in union with His sacrifice*. All of this can be anticipated by an act of our will, by an act of our love. When anticipated by an act of loving acceptance, death is an opportunity to say ‘yes’ to the Father, just as Jesus did; to say ‘yes’ with all our heart, as Jesus did.”
- Because the anticipation day-after day in self-offering to God become a person’s fundamental “yes” to God, it is a daily moment of conversion and “a magnificent opportunity to be able to make up for every lack of love in our lives, for every lack of obedience, for every lack of saying ‘yes,’ for every sin that we have ever committed.” Presenting ourselves to the Lord each day in this anticipated death — which can be done both at our early morning offering of the whole day to God conscious that it may be our last day, or at night at our examination of conscience when we make our own Jesus’ words, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit” (Lk 23:46)— is the means by which we learn to say “yes” and offer ourselves in love to God throughout the day. And this self-surrender will bring, the Cardinal assured us, doubtless from personal experience, not sadness but “joy and peace and love in obedience.”
- He says that this daily dying and rising with Christ is the best way to be freed of the fear of a sudden death, even if it should come today. “When the hour of death comes,” he noted, “we may not be conscious. It may come very suddenly, by reason of an accident, by reason of a heart attack; there are a million and one possibilities left to our imagination but this does not matter. The point is: *the surrender will have been made thousands of times!* The Father will understand that each of us had the power, which we exercised, the power, with His Son Jesus, to lay down our life freely, lovingly and definitively. Then there will be no obstacle to the consummation of our love. Life and holiness will be ours forever in the communion of the Most Blessed Trinity.” Death will therefore become the final renewal of our baptismal promises and the fulfillment of our self-offering with Christ to the Father in the Holy Eucharist. And the Father will be able to view our death as the “re-enactment” of the death of his Son and apply to us the “full salvific power of the cross and resurrection.”
- Since preparing for death is the greatest opportunity in our lives, Cardinal Rigali stressed, “Now is the time to give all!”
- Now’s the time for total surrender in loving trust. Plenty of ways we can renew it each day:
 - Morning Offering
 - Mass
 - Enter into Mary’s and Jesus’ total surrender in each of the mysteries of the Rosary
 - Angelus (behold the handmade... let it be done to me according to your word)
 - Particular exam
 - Examination of Conscience
 - Night Prayers (“Father into your hands I commend my spirit”)
- Total surrender in our prayer
 - I’d like to speak in greater depth about two particular contexts just mentioned to enhance in us a sense of total surrender, prayer and the Mass.
 - Prayer is meant to assist us in our total surrender, the complete entrustment of ourselves to God.
 - Prayer isn’t an exchange of words or ideas but fundamentally an exchange of persons. God gives himself to us and we give ourselves to him.
 - This involves two moments:
 - First, God gives himself. As we hear in St. Luke’s Gospel, the Father always responds to petitions by giving himself, by giving the Holy Spirit.
 - Second, we pray by entering into God and committing ourselves entirely to him.

- This involves on God’s part, pure grace and love; on our part, loving trust and total abandonment:
 - B16 on St. Francis de Sales: “The 20-year-old Francis found peace in the radical and liberating love of God: loving him without asking anything in return and trusting in divine love; no longer asking what will God do with me: I simply love him, independently of all that he gives me or does not give me. He simply loved God and abandoned himself to his goodness. And this was to be the secret of his life...
 - B16 on abandonment (in his catechesis on the prayer at the healing of Lazarus): Abandoning ourselves to God’s love that always precedes and accompanies us is one of the basic attitudes for our dialogue with him. On Jesus’ prayer in the account of the raising of Lazarus the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* comments: “Jesus’ prayer, characterized by thanksgiving, reveals to us how to ask: before the gift is given, Jesus commits himself to the One who in giving gives himself. **The Giver is more precious than the gift;** he is the ‘treasure’; in him abides his Son’s heart; the gift is given ‘as well’ (cf. Mt 6:21, 33)” (n. 2604). **To me this seems very important: before the gift is given, committing ourselves to the One who gives. The Giver is more precious than the gift. For us too, therefore, over and above what God bestows on us when we call on him, the greatest gift that he can give us is his friendship, his presence and his love. He is the precious treasure to ask for and to preserve for ever.**
 - We learn how to entrust ourselves to God through Jesus:
 - B16 on how Jesus prays in complete trust and total submission to the Father (Garden of Gethsemane)
 - After the invitation to stay with him to watch and pray which he addresses to the three, Jesus speaks to the Father “alone”. Mark the Evangelist tells us that “going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him” (14:35). Jesus fell prostrate on the ground: a position of prayer that expresses obedience to the Father and abandonment in him with complete trust.
 - B16 on Jesus’ last words from the Cross
 - The words spoken by Jesus after his invocation, “Father”, borrow a sentence from Psalm 31[30]: “into your hand I commit my spirit” (Ps 31[30]:6). **Yet these words are not a mere citation but rather express a firm decision: Jesus “delivers” himself to the Father in an act of total abandonment.** These words are a prayer of “entrustment” total trust in God’s love. Jesus’ prayer as he faces death is dramatic as it is for every human being but, at the same time, it is imbued with that deep calmness that is born from trust in the Father and from the desire to commend oneself totally to him.
 - In Gethsemane, when he had begun his final struggle and his most intense prayer and was about to be “delivered into the hands of men” (Lk 9:44), his sweat had become “like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground” (Lk 22:44). **Nevertheless his heart was fully obedient to the Father’s will,** and because of this “an angel from heaven” came to strengthen him (cf. Lk 22:42-43). Now, in his last moments, Jesus turns to the Father, telling him **into whose hands he really commits his whole life.**
- The whole purpose of prayer is to enter into the total self-giving, the total surrender of the Persons of the Trinity to each other. The future Pope Benedict XVI wrote about this in his book *Feast of Faith* when he took up the question of how prayer is even possible. It’s the deepest thing I’ve ever read about how we are to pray. There are four steps to the “formal structure of Christian prayer”
 - God is an internal dialogue of persons — The basic reason why man can speak with God arises from the fact that God himself is speech, word. His nature is to speak, to hear, to

reply... Only because there is already speech, “Logos,” in God can there be speech, “logos,” to God. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was in communication with God.”

- Our human nature enters into that conversation of persons through the Incarnation — In God, there is speech and the intercourse of partners in dialogue. Man could speak with God if he himself were drawn to share in this internal speech. And this is what the Incarnation of the Logos means; he who is speech, Word, Logos, in God and to God, participates in human speech. This has a reciprocal effect, involving man in God’s own internal speech. ... As a result of the Incarnation, human speech has become a component in divine speech; it has been taken up, unconfusedly and inseparably, into that speech which is God’s inner nature.
- The Holy Spirit incorporates us into the body of Christ — Through the Spirit of Christ, who is the Spirit of God, we can share in the human nature of Jesus Christ; and in sharing in his dialogue with God, we can share in the dialogue who God *is*. This is prayer, which becomes a real exchange between God and man.
- The Holy Spirit does that in the Church — The locus of this identification with Christ, facilitated by the Spirit, which necessarily implies that those involved are also identified with one another in Christ, is what we call “Church.” We could in fact define “Church as the realm of man’s discovery of his identity through the identification with Christ that is its source.
- So we enter into that communion of total surrendered by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Church.
- Total surrender in the Mass
 - We can begin this section with some thoughts of the greatest teacher of the faith after Jesus in the history of the Church who is also one of the greatest Eucharistic mystics, whose
 - In the *Adoro Te Devote* he described the exchange we find in the Holy Eucharist.
 - God’s part: “Pie pellicane Iesu Domine...”
 - Our part: “Tibi se cor meum totum subiicit, Quia te contemplan, totum deficit.” To you my whole heart subjects itself, for in contemplating you it loses itself totally.”
 - In *Sacris Solemnis*, “O res mirabilis: manducat Dominum pauper, servus et humilis”
 - In *Lauda Sion*, “Sumit unus, sumunt mille: quantum isti, tantum ille: nec sumptus consumitur.”
 - We talk about this marvelous exchange in the beautiful prayer when the water is mixed with wine: “Per huius aquae and vini mysterium,” ... “through the mystery of this water and wine, ... “
 - We focus first on Jesus’ gift, which is a free gift.
 - B16: Jesus looks at his Passion, death and Resurrection with full awareness. He wishes to spend with his disciples this Supper, that has a quite special character and is different from other meals; it is his Supper, in which he gives something entirely new: himself. In this way Jesus celebrates his Pasch, anticipating his Cross and his Resurrection.
 - B16: Jesus offers and communicates himself in the bread and in the wine. But how can all this happen? How can Jesus give himself at that moment? Jesus knows that his life is about to be taken from him in the torture of the cross.... With the gift of the bread and of the wine that he offers at the Last Supper, Jesus anticipates his death and his Resurrection, bringing about what he had said in his Good Shepherd Discourse: “I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this charge I have received from my Father” (Jn 10:17-18). He therefore offers in anticipation the life that will be taken from him and in this way transforms his violent death into a free act of giving himself for others and to others. The violence he suffered is transformed into an active, free and redemptive sacrifice.
 - SC 8. The Eucharist reveals the loving plan that guides all of salvation history (cf. *Eph* 1:10; 3:8- 11). There the *Deus Trinitas*, who is essentially love (cf. *1 Jn* 4:7-8), becomes fully a part of our human condition. In the bread and wine under whose appearances Christ gives himself to us in the paschal meal (cf. *Lk* 22:14-20; *1 Cor* 11:23-26), God’s whole life

encounters us and is sacramentally shared with us. God is a perfect communion of love between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. At creation itself, man was called to have some share in God's breath of life (cf. *Gen* 2:7). But it is in Christ, dead and risen, and in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, given without measure (cf. *Jn* 3:34), that we have become sharers of God's inmost life. (16) Jesus Christ, who "through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God" (*Heb* 9:14), makes us, in the gift of the Eucharist, sharers in God's own life. This is an absolutely free gift, the superabundant fulfilment of God's promises. The Church receives, celebrates and adores this gift in faithful obedience.

○ Now we turn to our own. Rom 12. *Logike Latreia*:

- SC 70. The mystery "believed" and "celebrated" contains an innate power making it the principle of new life within us and the form of our Christian existence. By receiving the body and blood of Jesus Christ we become sharers in the divine life in an ever more adult and conscious way. Here too, we can apply Saint Augustine's words, in his *Confessions*, about the eternal *Logos* as the food of our souls. Stressing the mysterious nature of this food, Augustine imagines the Lord saying to him: "I am the food of grown men; grow, and you shall feed upon me; nor shall you change me, like the food of your flesh, into yourself, but you shall be changed into me." (198) It is not the eucharistic food that is changed into us, but rather we who are mysteriously transformed by it. Christ nourishes us by uniting us to himself; "he draws us into himself." Here the eucharistic celebration appears in all its power as the source and summit of the Church's life, since it expresses at once both the origin and the fulfilment of the new and definitive worship of God, the *logiké latreía*. Saint Paul's exhortation to the Romans in this regard is a concise description of how the Eucharist makes our whole life a spiritual worship pleasing to God: "I appeal to you therefore, my brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (*Rom* 12:1). In these words the new worship appears as a total self-offering made in communion with the whole Church. The Apostle's insistence on the offering of our bodies emphasizes the concrete human reality of a worship which is anything but disincarnate. The Bishop of Hippo goes on to say that "this is the sacrifice of Christians: that we, though many, are one body in Christ. The Church celebrates this mystery in the sacrament of the altar, as the faithful know, and there she shows them clearly that in what is offered, she herself is offered." Catholic doctrine, in fact, affirms that the Eucharist, as the sacrifice of Christ, is also the sacrifice of the Church, and thus of all the faithful. This insistence on sacrifice – a "making sacred" – expresses all the existential depth implied in the transformation of our human reality as taken up by Christ (cf. *Phil* 3:12).
- SC 71 Christianity's new worship includes and transfigures every aspect of life: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (*1 Cor* 10:31). Christians, in all their actions, are called to offer true worship to God. Here the intrinsically eucharistic nature of Christian life begins to take shape. The Eucharist, since it embraces the concrete, everyday existence of the believer, makes possible, day by day, the progressive transfiguration of all those called by grace to reflect the image of the Son of God (cf. *Rom* 8:29ff.). There is nothing authentically human – our thoughts and affections, our words and deeds – that does not find in the sacrament of the Eucharist the form it needs to be lived to the full. Here we can see the full human import of the radical newness brought by Christ in the Eucharist: the worship of God in our lives cannot be relegated to something private and individual, but tends by its nature to permeate every aspect of our existence. Worship pleasing to God thus becomes a new way of living our whole life, each particular moment of which is lifted up, since it is lived as part of a relationship with Christ and as an offering to God. The glory of God is the living man (cf. *1 Cor* 10:31). And the life of man is the vision of God. (203)
- We live this reality in the Offertory. We're called to prepare for Mass with this in mind, and make of ourselves the sacrifice of Abel. We pray for it specifically in Eucharistic

Prayer III: “Therefore, O Lord, we humbly implore you: by the same Spirit graciously make holy these gifts we have brought to you for consecration, that they may become the Body and + Blood of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ at whose command we celebrate these mysteries.” We’re asking not only that the bread and wine be consecrated but all our own gifts, including the total gift of ourselves, together with the bread and wine.

- We also see ponder it in Eucharistic Prayer IV after the consecration: “Look, O Lord, upon the Sacrifice which you yourself have provided for your Church, and grant in your loving kindness to all who partake of this one Bread and one Chalice that, gathered into one body by the Holy Spirit, they may truly become a living sacrifice in Christ to the praise of your glory
- (MT) Total Surrender consists in giving ourselves completely to God. Why must we give ourselves fully to God? Because God has given Himself to us. If God, who owes nothing to us, is ready to impart to us no less than Himself, shall we answer with just a fraction of ourselves? To give ourselves fully to God is a means of receiving God Himself; I for God and God for me. I live for God and give up my own self and in this way induce God to live for me. Therefore, to possess God we must allow Him to possess our soul. How poor we would be if God had not given us the power of giving ourselves to Him. How rich we are now. How easy it is to conquer God! We give ourselves to God; then God is ours and there can be nothing more ours than God. The money with which God repays our surrender is Himself. We become worthy of possessing Him when we abandon ourselves completely to Him. (To surrender means possessing Him when we abandon ourselves completely to Him.
- Consecration
 - This is a good time to talk about how Jesus prayed for us during the first Mass that we might be able to unite ourselves totally to him to the Father and for the world in this way. It’s in his famous prayer for the Father to consecrate us within his own consecration to the Father.
 - B16: At the centre of this prayer of intercession and of expiation in favor of the disciples is the **request for consecration**; Jesus says to the Father: “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you did send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth” (Jn 17:16-19).
 - I ask: what does “consecrate” mean in this case? First of all it must be said that really only God is “consecrated” or “holy”. “To consecrate” therefore means “to transfer” a reality – a person or a thing – to become the property of God. And two complementary aspects are present in this: on the one hand, removing them from ordinary things, segregating, “setting them apart” from the context of personal human life so that they may be totally given to God; and on the other, this segregation, this transferal into God’s sphere, has the very meaning of “sending”, of mission: precisely because he or she is given to God, the reality, the consecrated person, exists “for” others, is given to others. Giving to God means no longer existing for oneself, but for everyone. Whoever, like Jesus, is segregated from the world and set apart for God with a view to a task is for this very reason, fully available to all. For the disciples the task will be to continue Jesus’ mission, to be given to God and thereby to be on mission for all. The Risen One, appearing to his disciples on Easter evening, was to say to them: “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you” (Jn 20:21)
 - Chrism Mass, 2012: **“But does our consecration extend to the daily reality of our lives – do we operate as men of God in fellowship with Jesus Christ? This question places the Lord before us and us before him.** ... Two things, above all, are asked of us: there is a need for an interior bond, a configuration to Christ, and at the same time there has to be a transcending of ourselves, a renunciation of what is simply our own, of the much-vaunted self-fulfilment. We need, I need, not to claim my

life as my own, but to place it at the disposal of another – of Christ. I should be asking not what I stand to gain, but what I can give for him and so for others. Or to put it more specifically, this configuration to Christ, who came not to be served but to serve, who does not take, but rather gives – what form does it take in the often dramatic situation of the Church today?

- This consecration must take the form of a particular commitment on the part of those who live out their baptismal consecration within a special ecclesial consecration:
 - MND to consecrated: “*Consecrated men and women*, called by that very consecration to more prolonged contemplation: never forget that Jesus in the tabernacle wants you to be at his side, so that he can fill your hearts with the experience of his friendship, which alone gives meaning and fulfilment to your lives.”
- The ultimate reality of this consecration is becoming one with Christ, in a loving consecrated belonging to him and in the sharing of his self-giving mission for the salvation of the human race:
 - SC 36. We can recall an evocative phrase of Saint Augustine which strikingly describes this dynamic of faith proper to the Eucharist. The great Bishop of Hippo, speaking specifically of the eucharistic mystery, stresses the fact that Christ assimilates us to himself: "The bread you see on the altar, sanctified by the word of God, is the body of Christ. The chalice, or rather, what the chalice contains, sanctified by the word of God, is the blood of Christ. In these signs, Christ the Lord willed to entrust to us his body and the blood which he shed for the forgiveness of our sins. If you have received them properly, you yourselves are what you have received." Consequently, "not only have we become Christians, we have become Christ himself." We can thus contemplate God's mysterious work, which brings about a profound unity between ourselves and the Lord Jesus: "one should not believe that Christ is in the head but not in the body; rather he is complete in the head and in the body."
- Practical applications and consequences
 - I'd like to finish by taking advantage of some of the work I prepared for this Triduum more than a decade ago, based on the commentaries in your statutes. It provides a good review of what we've covered up until now as well as some practical tips of how to live this total surrender with loving trust in day to day love.
 - Total surrender means:
 - Total self-emptying through a conscious gift of ourselves and not just of our things, or our obedience, or our own sexuality:
 - (FXNVT) If you give up everything, but still do not deny yourself, you actually have not given up anything at all. You will gradually gather again to yourself all those things you gave up in the first place.
 - (MT) Maybe Jesus is asking you something in a special way — maybe something small. Even during a retreat..., Jesus can pass you by. If He is not asking you it might be because you are holding something very tight — He will never force it out of you. Maybe he wants you just to smile, to say, “May I?”, to be on time, or to give up an unhealthy friendship. We have given up the most beautiful and natural love of father and mother and we did that to be completely His. I always think — I don't need God to judge me. The person who will judge me is my mother, for I have given her great sorrow to follow Jesus. [We're called to share the Passion of Christ in our lives], but do we really allow Jesus to do so?
 - It means to give God a free hand in the mission:
 - (MT) One day St. Margaret Mary asked Jesus, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” Give me a free hand,” Jesus answered. He will perform the divine work or sanctity, not you; and He asks only for your docility. Let Him empty and amend you, and afterward fill the chalice of your hearts to the brim, that you in your turn may give of your abundance.

- This means that we give him complete freedom in doing with us as He wills, that he may use us “without consulting us” for His glory and the good of the poor We are entirely at the disposal of the Father as Jesus and Mary were.
- We don’t try to control his action:
 - (MT) One thing Jesus asks of me: that I lean upon Him; that in Him and in Him alone I put complete trust; that I surrender myself to Him unreservedly. I need to give up my own desires in the work of my perfection. Even when all goes wrong and I feel as if I were a ship without a compass, I must give myself completely to Him. I must not attempt to control God’s action; I must not count the stages in the journey He would have me make. I must not desire a clear perception of my advance upon the road, not know precisely where I am upon the way of holiness. I asked Him to make a saint of me, yet I must leave to Him the choice of the saintliness itself and still more the means that lead to it.
- In giving ourselves completely to God, because God has given himself to us, we are entirely at His disposal:
 - to be possessed by Him so that we may possess Him;
 - to take whatever he gives and to give whatever he takes with a big smile;
 - to be used by Him as it pleases Him without being consulted;
 - to offer Him our free will, our reason, our whole life in pure faith, so that He may think His thoughts in our minds, do His work through our hands, and love with our hearts.
- • Total surrender involves a wholeheartedness:
 - to respond totally and radically “without counting the cost” (MT)
 - to fill the present moment, even our smallest actions, with all the self-giving of which we are capable;
 - to spend the totality of our energy and love, “even until it hurts” (MT) and beyond;
 - to love only for His sake, as pure gift in return, neither asking nor expecting reward.
- Our total surrender consists also in being totally available to God and His Church through our availability to our Superiors, our sisters and the people we serve.
 - (MT) We have every reason to be the happiest people in the world. To be the happiest we have to belong to Jesus fully without any reservations as He alone is worthy of our love and total surrender. If we really belong fully to Him, then we must be at His disposal — that He may be free to use us and do with us whatever and whenever He would, through our superiors, whoever they may be. They are the instruments of His will. They may be people we like or dislike, they may be clever and highly gifted, or they may not be so, they may be of any nationality, they may be holy or not so holy — it makes no difference to us. The only thing that matters is our conviction that they are the instruments of God’s will for us and that we are infallible in obeying them — through cheerful, constant, and prompt obedience, we relive Christ’s obedience.
- Conclusion
 - One of my favorite prayers to help me with Total Surrender is St. Ignatius of Loyola’s famous Suscipe: “Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding and my entire will, all I have and call my own. You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace. That is enough for me.”
 - Blessed Mother Teresa gave what I think is a beautiful commentary on that prayer with which we’ll finish today:
 - (MT) To surrender means to offer God my free will and my reason, my own light in pure faith. My soul may be in darkness, but I know that darkness, trials, and suffering are the surest test of my blind surrender. Surrender is also true love. The more we surrender, the more we love God and souls.... There is no limit to the love that prompts us to give. To give ourselves to God is to be His victim, the victim of His unwanted love; i.e., of the love of God which has not been accepted by men. The spirit of our Society is one of complete

surrender. We cannot be pleased with the common. What is good for others is not sufficient for us. We have to satiate the thirst of an infinite God, dying of love. Only total surrender can satisfy the burning desire of a true Missionary of Charity.