

St. Padre Pio Center for Deliverance Counseling™

Christian Resignation as a Prerequisite to Freedom

Our Heavenly Father, as a perfect father, wants his children to experience the freedom that can only come from knowing the Truth, deliverance that frees us from bondages, and holiness that brings us victory in Christ in our lives and to the perfection to which we are all called. The first and critical step to attain this freedom, deliverance, and holiness is to resign ourselves to the will of God.

Reflect on the following instruction. Be sure you understand how Christian Resignation applies to you and your circumstances. Ask your confessor to help you with this understanding if needed.

The Desire for Perfection

Of all the psychological factors that play a part in our spiritual life, a prominent place must be given to the sincere desire for attaining perfection. It is said that when St. Thomas Aquinas was asked by one of his sisters what she should do to reach sanctity, he answered her in one brief sentence: "Will it."

The desire for perfection is an act of the will, under the influence of grace, which aspires unceasingly to spiritual growth until one reaches sanctity. It is under the influence of grace because such a desire is manifestly supernatural and surpasses the exigencies and tendencies of pure nature. It must be constant in its aspiration for ever greater perfection, and it must not stop at any intermediate degree but must aspire to the heights of sanctity.

Sanctity is the supreme good we can attain in this life. By its very nature it is something infinitely desirable, but since it is also an arduous and difficult good, it is impossible to tend toward it efficaciously without the strong impulse of a will that is determined to attain it at any cost. St. Teresa of Avila considers it of decisive importance "to have a great and very determined resolve not to stop until one reaches it," without reckoning the difficulties along the way, the criticism of those around us, the lack of health, or the disdain of the world. Therefore, only resolute and energetic souls, with the help of divine grace, will scale the heights of perfection.

Qualities of the Desire for Perfection

In order that it will possess the greatest possible sanctifying efficacy, the desire for perfection should have the following qualities:

1. ***It should be supernatural***, that is, should flow from grace and be directed to the greater glory of God. This means that the desire for perfection is a gift of God, for which we should petition humbly and perseveringly until we obtain it. "Lord, make me want to love you!"

2. ***It should be profoundly humble***, without reliance entirely on our own strength, but placing our trust in him from whom all graces flow. Nor should we aspire to sanctity for any other motive than to love and glorify God. In the beginning, it is difficult to avoid every trace of presumption and egoism, but it is necessary to be constantly purifying one's intention and perfecting one's motives until they are directed only to the glory of God.
3. ***It should be filled with confidence***. Of ourselves we can do nothing, but all things are possible in him who strengthens us (Phil. 4:13). Countless souls abandon the road to perfection in the face of obstacles because, becoming discouraged and lacking confidence in God, they think that sanctity is not for them. Only those who persevere in spite of hardships will receive the crown of victory.
4. ***It should be the predominant desire***. All other goods must be subordinated to this supreme good. Hence the desire for perfection is not simply one among many, but it must be the fundamental desire dominating one's entire life. Those who wish to become saints must dedicate themselves to this task professionally, and this requires that they put aside anything that may prove an impediment. Many souls have failed in the pursuit of sanctity because they have fluctuated between the things of God and the things of the world.
5. ***It should be constant***. Numerous souls, on the occasion of some great event, such as the termination of a retreat, reception of the religious habit or sacred orders, or profession of vows, experience a great spiritual impulse, as a result of which they resolve to dedicate themselves henceforth to the pursuit of sanctity. But they weary of the pursuit when they experience difficulties, and they either abandon the road to sanctity, or the desire becomes cool. Or sometimes they grant themselves vacations or pauses, under the pretext of resting a while to recover their strength. This is a great mistake because the soul not only does not gain any strength but also is greatly weakened. Later, when it wishes to renew its efforts, a greater effort is required to recapture the spiritual gains previously made. All this could have been avoided if the desire for perfection had remained constant, without undue violence or extremes, but also without respite or weakness.
6. ***It should be practical and efficacious***. This is not a question of wishful thinking but of a definite determination that must be put into practice here and now, using all the means at one's disposal for attaining perfection. It is easy to imagine that one has a desire for perfection because of occasional good intentions or certain noble sentiments experienced during prayer.

But a desire is efficacious only when it is put into execution. To desire perfection in a theoretical way and to postpone one's efforts until some later date is to live in an illusion. The individual passes from one delay to another, and life passes on, so that the person runs the risk of appearing before God with empty hands.

How to arouse the Desire for Perfection

Since the desire for perfection is of such great importance in the struggle for holiness, one should note carefully the following means for arousing this desire:

1. *To beg for it incessantly from God.* Since the desire is supernatural, it can come to us only from above.
2. *To renew it frequently.* It should be renewed daily at the most solemn moment of the day, namely, at the moment of Communion; at other times, on principal feasts, the monthly day of recollection, during the annual retreat, on special anniversaries.
3. *To meditate frequently on the motives that inspire this desire.* The principal motives are the following: (a) our obligation to strive for perfection, (b) consciousness that this is the greatest good we can seek in this life; (c) awareness of the danger we risk if we do not truly strive to sanctify ourselves; (d) recognition of the fact that the perfect imitation of Christ demands perfection and sanctity.

Conformity to God's Will

Perfect conformity to the divine will is a most efficacious means of sanctification. St. Teresa of Avila says in this regard that those who begin the life of prayer must work and resolve and dispose themselves with as much diligence as possible to make their will conformable to that of God; in this consists the greatest perfection that can be attained on the spiritual way.

Conformity to the will of God consists in a loving, total, and intimate submission and harmony of our will with that of God in everything he disposes or permits in our regard. When it reaches a perfect state it is known by the name of *holy abandonment to the will of God*; in its *less* perfect state it is called simply *Christian resignation*.

In order to understand this practice in an orthodox sense, it is necessary to keep in mind certain doctrinal points. In the first place, sanctity is the result of the action of God and the free cooperation of man. God is the director of the work of our sanctification, and therefore nothing should be done that is not in conformity with his plans and under the impulse of his grace.

The basis of abandonment to the will of God is charity. The reason is that love unites the will of the lover to the will of the beloved, and perfect abandonment requires the complete surrender of our own will to that of God. Perfect abandonment is found only in souls that are far advanced in perfection.

Points for Meditation

In order to attain this total abandonment, the following theological points should be meditated upon frequently:

1. Nothing happens that has not been foreseen by God from all eternity and willed or permitted by him.
2. God could not will anything that is not in conformity with the purpose for which he created all things, namely, his own external glory.
3. All things contribute in some way to the good of those who love God and persevere in his love (Rom. 8:28).
4. Abandonment to the will of God does not excuse anyone from fulfilling the divine will of expression by obeying the precepts and commands of God, and then submitting as regards all things else to the divine will of good pleasure, without any anxiety.
5. From what has already been said, it should be evident that abandonment to the will of God is not only an excellent spiritual practice but also a necessary one for the attainment of sanctity. Its excellence lies in its incomparable efficacy for removing the obstacles that impede the action of grace, for making one practice the virtues as perfectly as possible, and for establishing the absolute dominion of God over our will.

Points of Necessity in Practicing Abandonment

The necessity of practicing abandonment to the will of God is based upon the following points:

1. **Divine right.** As God's creatures, we are also his servants. He created us, he conserves us, he redeemed us, he has made us for himself. We do not belong to ourselves, but we are God's (cf. 1 Cor. 6:19). We are also his children and friends through grace, but children should be subject to their father, and friends should be of one mind and one heart.
2. **Our utility.** Abandonment to God's will has a great sanctifying efficacy, and our sanctification is the greatest good we could seek in this world.
3. **The example of Christ.** All during his life on earth Christ fulfilled the will of his heavenly Father. He proclaimed this by his actions and openly professed it in words. His last words from the Cross were a submission and yielding of his whole being to the hands of his Father. Mary, too, handmaid of the Lord, practiced this total abandonment in imitation of her Son.

Suggestions on How to Conform to God's Will

Having traced the general lines of the practice of abandonment to the will of God, we shall now offer some suggestions regarding the method of conforming to God's Will in the circumstances of daily life.

1. Whatever God positively and directly wills is best for us, even if for the time being it causes pain and suffering. In the face of incurable sickness or the death of loved ones, the only Christian attitude is: "Thy will be done." And if our love of God is strong enough to enable us to rise above simple resignation, and through our pain or sorrow give thanks to God, we shall have reached a high degree of abandonment to the will of God.
2. God never wills positively and directly that which refers to evil, which God cannot will as such. But in his infinite goodness and wisdom, God knows how to convert into good the evil he permits, and that is why he permits it. Hence we manifest a lamentable shortsightedness when, in the evils God permits to happen to us, we do not raise our eyes to heaven to adore God, who permits these things for our greater good. We must, therefore, strive to see in the injustice of men the justice of God, which punishes us for our sins, and even his mercy, which gives us an opportunity to make satisfaction for them.
3. It is necessary to conform ourselves to the will of God as known through his precepts and laws. It would be a grave error to attempt to please God with works freely selected by ourselves, and then disregard the laws he has imposed on us directly or through his representatives. The first things that we should observe conscientiously are God's commandments, the laws of the Church, the commands of superiors, and the duties of our state in life. "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).
4. The first and most basic step toward conformity of one's will with that of God is to avoid most carefully all sin, however small.

But what is to be done if we fall into a grave sin? It is necessary to distinguish two aspects of the sin: the offense against God and the humiliation of the sinner. The first must be rejected completely, and one can never repent of it sufficiently. The second can be accepted with penitence and gratitude because one's humiliation through sin is a means of learning the significance of God's law (cf. Ps. 118:71).

5. The soul that wishes to attain perfect abandonment to the will of God must be disposed to practice the evangelical counsels. Religious make a vow to practice certain counsels in their daily life; lay persons are not called upon to do this, but they should observe the spirit of the counsels and carry them out in practice when the duties of their state in life permit. However, it would be an error for the laity gratuitously, to assume a manner of life proper to religious; the first duty of the

laity, whether married or living singly in the world, is to fulfill the duties imposed by their particular vocation.

We do not know what God has decreed for our future, but we do know some things for certain: that the will of God is the supreme cause of all things; that the divine will is essentially good and beneficent; that all things, whether adverse or prosperous, contribute to the good of those who love God. Therefore, we should cultivate a holy indifference, not preferring health to sickness, wealth to poverty, honor to dishonor, a long life to a short life, and so likewise with everything else, but that we desire and choose that which best leads us to the end for which we were created.

If the divine will is the supreme cause of everything that happens, and if the divine will is infinitely good, holy, wise, and powerful, then the more our wills conform to that of God, the more certain we can be that nothing evil will befall us. The evils that God permits will contribute to our greater good if we know how to utilize them in the way God desires.

Understanding the Nature of Holy Indifference

But in order to understand the nature of holy indifference; the following principles should be kept in mind:

1. The purpose of holy indifference is to give oneself completely to God and to become utterly detached from self. It is not a stoical indifference to whatever befalls us, but an efficacious means of uniting our wills to, that of God.
2. This indifference applies only to the superior part of the soul, for it would be impossible to demand of our lower faculties that they remain insensate and indifferent. Therefore one should not be disturbed if one experiences the repugnance or revolt of nature, so long as the will accepts sufferings and trials as coming from the hand of God.
3. This indifference is not merely passive but truly active. In those instances in which the divine will is made manifest, the human will rushes forth to obey with generosity; in those cases in which the divine will is not yet manifested, the human will is perfectly disposed to accept and fulfill whatever God decrees as soon as his will becomes manifest.

Would it be permissible to reach such a point of indifference that one is disinterested in one's own salvation? By no means; God wills that all be saved (cf. 1 Tim. 2:4), and he permits those to be condemned who have deliberately turned away from him and have died unrepentant. It is not that they could not have been saved, but they would not be saved. Hence to renounce one's own salvation under the pretext of practicing perfect abandonment to God's will would be in contradiction to God's will, as well as a violation of man's innate desire for perfect happiness. Moreover, since the glory of God is the prime motive for our existence,

we should positively seek our own salvation, which is the perfect way in which we give glory to God.

Blessings of Complete Abandonment

The blessings of complete abandonment to God's will are innumerable. In addition to those already mentioned, the following should be noted:

1. It gives a sweet intimacy with God, such as a child experiences with its mother.
2. The soul travels with simplicity and freedom, desiring only what God wills.
3. The soul remains constant and serene in all events of life because God wills or permits them.
4. The soul is filled with true joy that no one can destroy, because it wills whatever God wills.
5. One can expect a happy death if one remains faithful in abandonment to God's will.

PRAYER FOR ABANDONMENT TO GOD'S WILL

Always have Holy Water with you for each session and use it to bless yourself wherever you see ✠

We begin by renewal of baptismal promises:

Renewal of Baptismal Promises

V. Do you reject Satan?

R. I do.

V. And all his works?

R. I do.

V. And all his empty promises?

R. I do.

V. Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

R. I do.

V. Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

R. I do.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

R. I do.

V. God, the all-powerful Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and forgiven all our sins. May he also keep us faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ for ever and ever.

℟. Amen.

Litany of Humility

*This Litany was composed by Rafael Cardinal Merry del Val (1865-1930),
the Secretary of State of Pope Saint Pius X*

O Jesus! Meek and humble of heart, Hear me.

From the desire of being esteemed, Deliver me, Jesus
From the desire of being loved, Deliver me, Jesus
From the desire of being extolled, Deliver me, Jesus
From the desire of being honored, Deliver me, Jesus
From the desire of being praised, Deliver me, Jesus
From the desire of being preferred to others, Deliver me, Jesus
From the desire of being consulted, Deliver me, Jesus
From the desire of being approved, Deliver me, Jesus
From the fear of being humiliated, Deliver me, Jesus
From the fear of being despised, Deliver me, Jesus
From the fear of suffering rebukes, Deliver me, Jesus
From the fear of being calumniated, Deliver me, Jesus
From the fear of being forgotten, Deliver me, Jesus
From the fear of being ridiculed, Deliver me, Jesus
From the fear of being wronged, Deliver me, Jesus
From the fear of being suspected, Deliver me, Jesus

That others may be loved more than I,
Jesus grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be esteemed more than I,
Jesus grant me the grace to desire it.

That, in the opinion of the world, others may increase and I may decrease,
Jesus grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be chosen and I set aside,
Jesus grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be praised and I unnoticed,
Jesus grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be preferred to me in everything,
Jesus grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may become holier than I, Provided that I may become as holy as I should,
Jesus grant me the grace to desire it.

Amen.

Litany of Abandonment to God

Lord Jesus, enlighten my heart and mind by Your Holy Spirit
Lord Jesus, teach me to be patient when I pray
Lord Jesus, teach me to pray well
Lord Jesus, teach me to have more faith in You
Lord Jesus, teach me to be more abandoned to You
Lord Jesus, I pray for Your blessing
Lord Jesus, I pray for Your grace
Lord Jesus, I pray for Your mercy
Lord Jesus, I pray for Your forgiveness
Lord Jesus, teach me to have the will to love my neighbors
Lord Jesus, teach me to have the will to forgive my neighbors
Lord Jesus, I long for You
Lord Jesus, I love You
Lord Jesus, come to me, I welcome You
Lord Jesus, I abandon myself to You :

O Lord Almighty, at this moment, I commend my spirit to You,
For the earth belongs to You, and I am Your creation. (*say three times*)

Amen.

Preliminary Prayers of Abandonment

Father, I abandon myself into your hands;
do with me what you will.
Whatever you may do, I thank you:
I am ready for all, I accept all.
Let only your will be done in me,
and in all Your creatures -
I wish no more than this, O Lord.
Into your hands I commend my soul;
I offer it to you with all the love of my heart,
for I love you Lord,
and so need to give myself,
to surrender myself into your hands,
without reserve,
and with boundless confidence,
For you are my Father.

—St. Charles de Foucauld

O my God, I thank you and I praise
you for accomplishing your holy and all-lovable will
without any regard for mine.
With my whole heart, in spite of my heart,
do I receive this cross I feared so much!

It is the cross of Your choice, the cross of Your love.
I venerate it;
nor for anything in the world
would I wish that it had not come,
since You willed it.

I keep it with gratitude and with joy,
as I do everything that comes from Your hand;
and I shall strive to carry it without letting it drag,
with all the respect
and all the affection which Your works deserve.

Amen.

—St. Francis De Sales

Act of Abandonment to Divine Providence

O sovereign goodness of the sovereign Providence of my God!
I abandon myself forever to Thy arms.

Whether gentle or severe, lead me henceforth wherever Thou desire;
I will not regard the way through which Thou will have me pass,
but keep my eyes fixed upon Thee, my God, who guides me.

My soul finds no rest without the arms and the bosom
of this heavenly Providence, my true Mother, my strength and my rampart.

Therefore I resolve with Thy divine assistance, O my Savior,
to follow Thy desires and Thy ordinances,
without regarding or examining why Thou does this rather than that;
but I will blindly follow Thee according to Thy divine will,
without seeking my own inclinations.

Hence I am determined to leave all to Thee,
taking no part therein save by keeping myself in peace in Thy arms,
desiring nothing except as Thou incites me to desire, to will, to wish.

I offer Thee this desire, O my God, beseeching Thee to bless it;
I undertake all it includes, relying on Thy goodness, liberality, and mercy,

with entire confidence in Thee, distrust of myself,
and knowledge of my infinite misery and infirmity.
Amen!

—St. Jane Frances de Chantal

Prayer of Surrender

"...may Thy will be done" (Matthew 26:42)

Loving Father, I surrender to You today with all my heart and soul. Please come into my heart in a deeper way. I say "Yes," to You today. I open all the secret places of my heart to You and say, "Come on in." Jesus You are Lord of my whole life. I believe in You and receive You as my Lord and Savior. I hold nothing back. Holy Spirit, bring me to deeper conversion to the person of Jesus Christ. I surrender all to You: my health, my family, my joy and sorrows, my resources, occupation, skills, relationships, time management, successes and failures. I release it and let it go. I surrender my understanding of how things ought to be, my choices and my will. I surrender to You the promises I have kept and the promises I have failed to keep. I surrender my weaknesses and strengths to You. I surrender my emotions, my fears, my insecurities, my sexuality. I especially surrender _____, _____, _____. (Continue to surrender other areas as the Holy Spirit reveals them to you.) Lord, I surrender my entire life to You, the past, the present, and the future. In sickness and in health, in life and in death. I belong to You. Amen.