

TEXTS ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE

By Fr. Kentenich

1) The world situation demands even more than before - and tomorrow even more than today - that we should live generously through faith in Divine Providence. It alone gives the calm and security that modern man needs if he is not to be broken by life; a security that is connected with holy composure and patience, while the modern pagan, who sees his life doomed to destruction in the present-day deluge, becomes obsessed with himself ... The genuine Christian acknowledges his limits, but casts himself trustingly into the Father's arms, and so becomes the master of all his worries. ...

2) Anxiety is, above all, a symptom of our present age. Therefore, it is a typical inner experience of modern man. We all know about it either from our own experience or from others. We are living in a period of tremendous spiritual - intellectual earthquakes. The social order we were accustomed to is threatened. Whatever had a firm and definite form yesterday threatens to vanish into nothingness tomorrow. We do not know what the future holds for us. We are absolutely uncertain about the present and the future. Insecurity and anxiety prevail wherever we go.

3) On the one hand, we should learn to acknowledge joyfully our own helplessness, on the other hand, we should throw ourselves into the arms of a Being who is all-powerful and all-kind. He who wants to overcome anxiety will never succeed unless he becomes a child. Without a simple faith in the Heavenly Father, we will not accomplish anything.

4) Unless I am bound up in the personal God, life will drive me mad. It is necessary that I find rest in God.

5) The most beautiful gift which God has given us is simple faith in Divine Providence. As genuinely Catholic families we must make it a point to acquire simple faith in Divine Providence. The deepest reason for it lies in the fact that the Sacrament of baptism

is the grace of sonship and childlikeness. From 1912 on, God has placed childlike faith in Divine Providence into our cradle, as a birthday gift for those who officially belong to our family. Let us pride ourselves in acquiring the authentic spirit of our family. If we make Schoenstatt's spirit our own, it is understood that we all have a very deep, simple belief in Divine Providence. Let us strive to increase it.

6) "It is my greatest concern to be endlessly carefree every moment." We needlessly worry too much because we are not childlike enough. We think we have to guide ourselves along life's path. Of course, I must provide, too, but moderately so. By worrying excessively we commit the greatest fault against our family. ... How much anxiety and strength it costs me until I succeed in quieting my poor heart. Grave decisions have to be made. I am thinking of my future, of my parents, of my sisters and brothers. What should I do? It should be my greatest concern to be endlessly carefree every moment. I bind myself to the Father's will, for the Father cares for my own and my family's destiny. I will be given what is most necessary, but more important than all economic security is the interior acceptance of everything that the Father asks of me. Of the highest value is my growth in the likeness of our Lord, also in his suffering.

7) Nothing, absolutely nothing happens in our lives without God having planned it from all eternity. Everything, even the smallest details of our lives, is embedded in his wise, loving and omnipotent plan. ...

8) What is faith in Divine Providence? It is a daring, blindly trusting and loving leap into the arms of God as he opens them to us through the conditions of life and the circumstances of world history. It is there that we hear the living God speaking to us! He speaks to us personally but also through world history and world events.

A leap, a courageous leap into the arms of God - this is faith in Divine Providence. It is almost as if I

were to say: I must jump down from the peak of a mountain into the sea. It is God who is behind all world events and every situation. Whether I am healthy or sick, whether I meet with success or failure - all this is not by chance. God is behind it! Faith in Divine Providence enables me to take a daring leap into the arms of God who is behind all these things.

9) The person who believes in Divine Providence has jumped out of all complacent security into - into what? Into uncertainty? Oh no, not into uncertainty, but always into the arms of God, the arms of the eternal, the arms of the infinite God. This is what faith in Divine Providence is. It is the Holy Spirit who must give us this faith. Then we will be transformed people, a new creature, a new creation. We must dare to take this jump with great trust. Why? Was it not our Lord himself who said that if anyone believes and trusts with faith, he will be able to tell the mountain to throw itself into the sea, and it will do so?

10) The person who believes in Divine Providence may be thrown out of his environment; it seems as if he is falling out of the arms of God into the abyss, but down below the arms of God catch him once again. Who can form such people, who alone can do so? The Holy Spirit - the Spirit of God!

11) God created the world; he conserves and governs it. He governs it with love. He looks after everything, the mighty affairs of the world and the bird as it flies through the air. He orders and guides everything. Nothing is insignificant in his eyes. We call this activity, which directs in love, Divine Providence; and many examples of it are to be found in Holy Scripture.

12) Divine Providence arranged that the infant Moses should be placed among the reeds of the river Nile so that he might be found by the daughter of Pharaoh. A perfect education and training at the King's court prepared him to be the great leader of his people. But why did he have to flee to the desert to be a shepherd for Jethro for so many years? Just because that was the

best way of learning the desert tracks and the life of the desert, so that he would be able to lead the Israelites during their forty years wondering there - Divine Providence worked no less wonderfully.

13) Let us look into our own lives. How often has something insignificant turned out for the best? God rules the world with love! We have only to love him, and then all things work out for their best. For "everything helps to procure the good of those who love God." (Rom 8: 28).

14) The loving hand of Divine Providence guides our whole life - when joyful events occur in our lives, we accept them as gifts from our heavenly Father and respond with childlike gratitude. If he sends us cross and suffering, we regard it as a check and accept it as an admonition to change our ways. It is as though he were to say "Stop, you must change your outlook on the cross, otherwise your life will not be pleasing to me."

15) "God is Father, God is good, all he does is always good." The everyday saint lives, loves and thinks as a simple child of Divine Providence, and as a lover of eternal wisdom. In every event, even in disappointment and the blows of life, he sees a message, a greeting from God, who is waiting for our answer, and who, unflinching receives a reply.

16) God says a fatherly yes to my person. What does the catechism teach us about Divine Providence? From all eternity motivated by love, wisdom and omnipotence, God made an overall plan of the universe as well as one of our own little lives. Out of love, wisdom and omnipotence he carries out the plan of our little lives in all its details while yet leaving our free will fully intact.

17) On the part of God, this implies two facts: First, there is an act of the mind; he made a plan and included in this plan everything that is happening today. This makes us interiorly peaceful. Everything has been foreseen. "God's goodness is the source of everything." Secondly, it also includes an act of the will. He wants every happening in life to serve the executions of his plan. Let us make these thoughts our own by praying them through. Nothing can happen any more that would confuse

us. We should often repeat these key words:

"The storm may rage,
the wind may howl
and lightning strike from heaven.
I have the trust of a captain's child,
my father steers the vessel."

When all sheltering nests around us are thrown into the sea and all earthly support is taken away from us, what is left? Nothing but to be engulfed in the heart of God. For us this means to be at home in the heart of the Mother Thrice Admirable and thereby in the heart of God.

Cling to unshakable faith in Divine Providence which cannot be outdone by anything in the world. This takes grace. Don't be afraid of anything. Catholics have faith in Divine Providence in their blood. God's fatherly will stands behind everything.

18) I know that I am loved. My life's destiny is not blindly tossed about; it is directed by God the Father.

I also want to be convinced that God speaks a personal yes to my destiny. The God who speaks this yes is a personal God. This is important. God is not an archetypal law, but the archetypal person, a personality, a personal God and Father.

He also says yes to my personality with its originality. Without knowing and realizing it, we come into situations when we wonder whether God loves us personally.

We greatly lack personal self-esteem. Many quarters are doing everything to rob us of this self-esteem as much as possible. In view of such a situation we cannot do enough to acquire a greater personal, experiential self-esteem. What must I now do so that I may tell myself: God loves me personally! He says a yes to me as a person.

19) A soul in the state of grace is the object of God's special Providence. The Old Testament has many such passages which support our claim to assume: "As a mother comforts her son, so will I comfort you." (Isaiah 66: 13)

In the New Testament we learn of the lilies in the field, the birds of the air. These thoughts should shape our

lives. At the height of their development, the people of the Old Testament believed that God led the whole nation, but they never considered the idea that God would also guide and love the individual person.

That is why our Lord emphasized over and over again that the Father gives all his love to each person, that in each person's life he cares for all, even the smallest things. I am personally the object of his special Providence.

20) For instance, I meditate on world affairs in general. God sends them so that he can execute the plan of my life. What then is my task? I should know that God loves me and I should love him in return. And if I love him, everything else will turn out all right. If I myself had to design the plan of my life, I would return this right to God, for he can plan my life much better than I. If I had to decide and knew that God wanted to relieve me of that, I would immediately return everything to his hands. He wants to show that he is my Father. ... We on our part say, "Yes, Father," and give him the right to do with us as he pleases. All we want to do is to love him in all simplicity and sincerity. "Lord, you know that I would want to love you." Then we become masters and experts in the art of living.

21) It is important for us to realize that we are not members? that we learn to believe that God loves us personally; that he loves me and my personal originality with an immeasurable love. We must allow our personal self-esteem to become alive and to increase. Various camps want to mark us as the remnants of the human race. The person who sees his self-esteem sink becomes worthless. Our whole greatness consists all the more in God looking with benevolence upon us. It does not matter whether the world points a finger at us. We try all the more to be at home in God.

22) God also speaks an heroic yes to each of us because he has given us his only begotten Son. "God's love for us was revealed when God sent his only Son into the world so that we could have life through him." (1 John 4: 9)

God loves us so much that his Son hung on the cross. The cross is the proof of the Father's love. "A man can have no greater love ... " (John 15: 13)

In giving us his only begotten Son, the greatest and best gift, has he not given us everything? We cannot do enough to make this truth our own. God loves me personally. Holy Scripture tells us the same: "The ransom that was paid ... was not paid in silver nor gold, but in the precious blood of our Lord. (1 Peter 1: 18)

23) History teaches us that at all the great turning points in world history bound up with the Catholic renewal of the world, the fate of the Church was placed into the hands of the Mother of God. God made the destiny of the human race dependent on Adam and Eve. They disappointed man. God remained faithful to his plan. After thousands and thousands of years he placed the destiny of the human race once more into the hands of one person, namely, the Mother of God. At today's momentous turning point, let us, therefore, transfer our personal destiny, the destiny of our family and that of our fatherland from our own unreliable hands and place it into the reliable hands of the Mother of God. Then we are in good company. ...

24) Whatever God does, whatever he sends, whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, has only one purpose. Our way leads homeward to the Father. "Homeward to the Father", is the goal of the living God in whatever he ordains and sends. "Homeward to the Father," should be the fundamental tune of our entire thinking, seeking, finding and loving.

Our way leads homeward to the Father, Even if the path is covered with undergrowth and brambles, even if it leads us past the most dangerous abyss on the right and on the left, our way leads homeward to the Father. We should foster within ourselves the firm belief in the profound truth that the great personal God surrounding us is supremely great, supremely kind, and

supremely faithful.

25) Christ stands before us as the man of one single idea: The Father's will be done in the Kingdom of God. Indeed, his loving will. ... After all, God is love. Whatever he does and wills, is born of love, through love, for eternal love. These are the familiar, musical sounds praising the fundamental law of the world, which is love. This song is hardly sung or understood anywhere nowadays and, therefore, one hears it less and less.

Our ranks should take up the song and sing it - harmony until the end of time. We take the words and the melody from the lips of the dying Savior and give it on from one generation to the next. The ultimate cause of the Father's will is and remains love. This is the great secret which the Son clearly unveils in his last hour: "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Live on in my love. You will live in my love if you keep my commandments, even as I have kept my Father's commandments and live in his love." (John 15: 9).

"Yes, Father, yes -
may your will always be done
whether it causes me joy,
suffering or pain."

Psalm 139; 37; 23; 25; 62; 111.

26) "The plan of our lives is perfected in God's thought. Our work consists in responding to God's creative guidance. The best care for our future and salvation is to let God care. Nobody can be more interested in our well-being than he is. God is good; he is my Father, I am his child. ...

"Yes, Father," must be my response to the present moment. I must say "Yes" also to my whole future. We can render God no greater homage than by placing, with eyes closed, our future in his hands. Whatever the future may hold for me - pain or joy, cross or consolation, I accept it willingly. "Yes, Father, I trust you more than myself. These words are my signature to affix to my life. I know that by doing this I do not sign my death sentence, but pledge

myself to following the road to my eternal
happiness."