

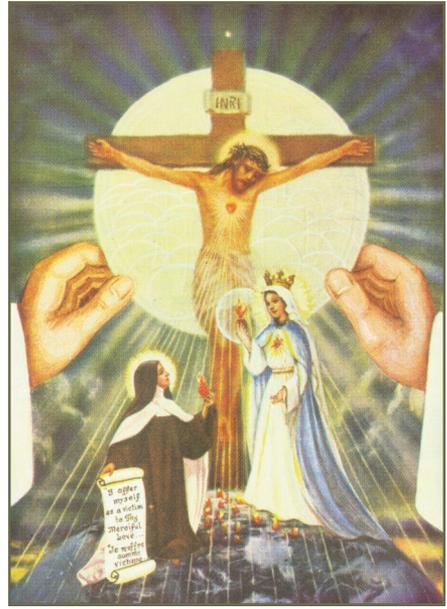
Human respect, often called **COMMON PRUDENCE, RESPECT FOR THE OPINIONS OF OTHERS,** and the like, paralyses the powers of action of those who are called to be apostles and reduces works for souls to triviality. Living in the midst of great communities of pagans or non-Catholics or the lapsed, the faithful make little or no effort to convert them and the graces God offers are returned unused. Aware of this, the Army of Mary sets itself to a deliberate campaign against the operation of the spirit of human respect in its members. The principal means employed are insistence upon sound and strict discipline and constant indoctrination of the fact that human respect in a Child of Mary is comparable to cowardice in a soldier. Love, loyalty and discipline, if they are genuine, will certainly result in sacrifice and courage. **“What a shame to be the delicate member of a Thorn-crowned Head!”** ... words of St. Bernard which the member must constantly apply to himself.

**“If you fought only when you felt ready for the fray, where would be your merit?”** asks St. Terèse of Lisieux. **“What does it matter even if you have no courage, provided you behave as though you were really brave? If you feel too lazy to pick up a bit of thread, and yet do so for the love of Jesus, you gain more merit than for a much nobler action done on an impulse of fervor. Instead of grieving, be glad that, by allowing you to feel your own weakness, Our Lord is furnishing you with an occasion of saving a greater number of souls.”**

### **PRAYER – THE LIFE OF THE SOUL**

Courage is shown not only in the performance of his apostolic work, but also in his prayer-life. His devotion to the means of grace appointed by the Church and fidelity to prayer have a

quality of heroism and are models and inspirations to the rest of the faithful. Only thus will he attain the degree of courage expected of him in his work for souls. Natural timidity and fear, false or well-grounded, must be overcome. Every member amongst the most wretched and dejected of the population must not only be visited but known personally and intimately. That is the goal, and his courage must rise to attain it. He always remembers that his search for each individual member of the degraded classes may be their only chance of eternal life. How intense, how earnest, how courageous must that search be!



Natural philanthropy serves humanity for humanity's sake; but that is not love and it requires no courage. The apostolate sets itself to a devoted and universal attention to the **“DOWN-AND-OUT,”** the hopeless, the impossible, the unlovely, the repulsive elements of the population that those who see it at work are amazed at the courage of such love and recognize in it a confounding of the materialistic systems which offer but a

counterfeit of Christian charity. The effect is electrifying; even the irreligious are startled into a new seriousness towards religion; modes of thought are changed, and new and better ways of living begin to show themselves.

Through the strictly disciplined system of the apostolate, the member is thoroughly trained in the spirit and practice of prudence. He is warned against a common fallacy of the present day which confounds the Christian virtue of prudence with that which is merely natural - the prudence of the flesh.

The exercise of prudence demands, in the first place, a mature deliberation of which the best means to attain the end in view may be discovered and a wise judgment as to the means likely to be most effectual. Secondly, it requires that the plan adopted be executed without delay, but with foresight, discretion and necessary caution. The Gospel must be preached to every creature. That supreme wish must swallow up every difficulty and overcome every obstacle.

The Child of Mary is trained in such a way that his outlook will invariably be apostolic. The apostolic spirit enters his soul and reigns there as master. By a judicious mixture of prudence and courage, he sets himself against the spirit of cowardliness which seems to prevail even amongst the good. His training fits him to undertake difficult work and the system reduces the possibilities of harm to the absolute minimum. When it is known that a work is difficult and dangerous, but yet is necessary if certain souls are to be saved, everything possible is done in the interests of safety and the attack goes on with appropriate materials. They do not stand by and look on while souls are being plunged into hell.

One of the reasons why so few of us succeed in attaining the higher reaches of the spiritual life is simply that we do not persevere. Aware of this, the apostolate trains all its members in perseverance and determination. We are warned that, unless we aim at perfection of membership, we cannot hope to persevere. It would be too much to expect perseverance to be achieved without regular performance of acts which are bordering on heroism. Thus, the stamp of persevering effort characterizes every duty. Instability and novelty-seeking, which result inevitably in the breaking down of discipline, are shunned. The only way to achieve anything great and real is through sustained effort and that, in its turn, arises only from the unconquerable will to win.

The Child of Mary never accepts defeat, nor does he court defeat by classifying items of work as **UNPROMISING, HOPELESS,** and the like. As far as he is concerned, no soul is in a hopeless position. He considers it wrong to abandon priceless souls to their own ways, therefore leaving them free to pursue unchecked their reckless course to hell. He is not immediately concerned with results. Whether a harvest springs up at his heels or not, he carries on, impelled by only the highest considerations. He never allows that grain of doubt to enter his mind as to whether his efforts are justified or not. He knows they are, just because souls are worth the infinite price of the Precious Blood of Christ. His is a life of faith and he never subjects faith to the approval of human reasoning. He perseveres in spite of the natural timidity, the pettiness and the worldly prudence which tempt him to present only a casual or half-hearted service to his Queen. For him, intensity of purpose is more important by far than the completion of a definite program of works.