

promptness in presenting their offering is all the greater that they are more pure and holy; and yet, they are advanced in years, old age bows down their foreheads, they can no more hope for a posterity; they have obtained thee by dint of prayers and weeping, they love thee with the most tender love, but piety triumphs in their souls over every impulse of nature, they dare not retain for themselves that which is holy, they offer it with all their heart to the Holy of holies, who alone is worthy of it. The Lord had respect to Abel and to his offerings. The good will with which His servant offered up to Him as a holocaust the first born of his flocks, was agreeable to Him. But how much more grateful still in His sight, O Mary, was the good-will of thy parents, of those saintly souls that offered thee to Him with such readiness, thee their only Daughter, true holocaust of grace and holiness! "May I learn from them, O my Sovereign! to hate my extreme avarice, I who find it so hard to detach myself, for the love of the Lord, from objects so unworthy of my love, I who, when I succeed in doing so, am not ashamed to offer such sacrifices to God in a cold and cowardly manner."

"Thy parents, O Mary, Virgin most precious, leave then their home, they bear thee in their arms, they hasten forward to consecrate thee to God. Sorrow is not on their countenance: they advance with hearts filled with joy; it is without any after-thought, and full of good will, that they will offer to the Lord, not only the best object they possess, but also what is holiest and most excellent on earth and in heaven?"

An exquisite sensibility, a profound tenderness, are not incompatible with such a generous detachment, as one might think who understands nothing in a life of sacrifice. On the contrary, the most sensitive and loving hearts have always peacefully and joyfully consented to the most trying humiliations. The history of the Saints, from Abraham to our days, is a continual proof thereof. How has God dealt with Mary, the best of mothers, and his only Son, Jesus, willing and