

Homely by

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1. Holiness is not a dress that is bought at department stores. Holiness is a dress made by God. It is the Holy Spirit, the spirit of holiness, who clothes the baptized with those Christian virtues that make him/her faithful disciple of Jesus. There is, however, an important condition. Following the example of Mary, she must give her assent to divine grace: *Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum*. It is in this harmony between the divine will and the human will that holy person is born and flourishes. Leopoldina herself confesses that from the early years she was aware of the concrete presence of God in her life³. The marquis Metilde of Canossa, her secretary, adds that at 17 years of age the Blessed was endowed with singular virtues, such as piety, beautiful manners, modesty, humility; a virtue which she maintained even during the years spent at court in both Vienna and Prague. Leopoldina lived in the world with the same concentration that she held in the adoration of the Eucharistic Jesus. She even went so far as to make the vow of perfection, promising God of do everything in the most perfect and most pleasing way. In January 1800 he noted: "I wish we were all saints, and that there was such fervor among us that we all burned with love for our sweet husband Jesus". One day San Gaspare Bertoni defined Leopoldina "a vase filled with the most particular graces".

2. The virtue of faith shone in Leopoldina. A witness states that the first of the theological virtues was so impressed on her heart that she practiced it not only with regard to believing all that God revealed but also with what God could do for himself and through His saints. She was not at all surprised by the miracles made by God through His saints, considering much more difficult to explain their absence rather than their presence.

Faith is that virtue that does not fear stormy waves, but wins them by trusting in God. Leopoldina used to say: «The more the work suffers difficulties, the more we must be certain of its success. The righteous man lives by faith and it would no longer be faith if everything went without contradictions and so to speak at full speed ». It was spontaneous for her to communicate her faith to others, who, considering her teacher and model of faith, tried to imitate her.

1 Leopoldina was born in Florence on May 31, 1773, second daughter of a family of the court of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. The father Joseph was from Soissons in France, and her mother, Susanna Arnth, descended from a Hungarian family from Hermanstadt. Leopoldina lived in Italy, France and at the court of Vienna and Prague. In 1809 she founded the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family. She died in Verona on August 17, 1834

2 Homily held in Verona on April 29, 2017, in the mass of the beatification.

3 The notes refer to the first volume of the *Positio*.

3. Trust in divine Providence pushed her to be exemplary in charity, carried out through the works of corporal and spiritual mercy. For example, she set up free schools for poor girls; she established that her spiritual daughters prepare them to receive the sacraments; offered them adequate education in the boarding schools of S. Teresa and S. Domenico. She ordered houses to be opened to accommodate people who wanted to gather in spiritual exercises.

Toward her spiritual daughters and collaborators, charity and patience were inexpressible: she loved them with maternal tenderness, without doing partiality; she animated, encouraged, exhorted, admonished them;

she provided generously for their needs, sometimes prevented their desires. Inspired by Santa Teresa d'Avila she used to say: «bread for healthy, sweet to the sick ».

4. This charity was the fruit of her inner life, made up of prayer, meditation, adoration. She was particularly devoted to the Eucharist and one day she noted that she felt particularly gratified to have always lived in a house where the divine Sacrament was kept. For this reason, she participated with devotion in the celebration of Mass, which gave her consolation and courage to face the many challenges of daily life.

Witnesses are agreed to declare that an extraordinary strength was the decoration of her life.

She resolutely faced the obstacles encountered in doing good, courageously resisting a thousand contrarieties encountered for the foundation of the new institute. She was strong in patience, even when her spiritual guide intervened on her soul, more with hard hammer blows than with the delicacy of the chisel. Her delicate nature, accustomed to noble and gentle traits, resented it, but her will be decisive. These mortifications helped her to repudiate self-love and strengthen her in humility. In May 1800, in taking on the office of superior she wrote: "I clearly see my misery at the moment and this makes the burden of the office heavier for me." 9 Starting, then, the office confesses to feeling confused, since she believed her companions superior to her. Metilde di Canossa, enlighten by the humble and respectful attitude of the Blessed, who wished to be the least of all, notes: "How industrious she was in humiliating herself! Never a word of what had been in the world "10. She had no vainglory feelings. The good she did attributed it to the Lord and His providence. Because of her spirit of humility, she prayed that her institution would be great before God and small before the world.

In8 Positio 1 p. cxvls.

9 Positio I p. with linguistic tweaks.

10 Positio 1 p. cxxnvlll.3

Constitutions reserved a special place for humility, which the Sisters of the Holy Family are called to live with utmost commitment, as the foundation of their spirituality and their mission.

5. From the courtyard to the cloister, the life of Blessed Leopoldina could be qualified, but also from the courtyard and cloister to holiness. Because evangelical perfection was the ideal of this noble, educated polyglot woman, foundress of a religious congregation and heroic model of discipleship of Christ. Leopoldina joins the ranks of women who have seen from the beginning in the risen Christ the teacher of their life and the benefactor of needy humanity. To all - but especially to the Sisters of the Holy Family scattered throughout the world - the new Blessed addresses the exhortation to keep our gaze of faith and hope always fixed in God (1 Pt 1,21), so as not to get lost in the noise of the world . Everything is vanity, the grass withers, the flowers fall. Only the word of God - says St. Peter - remains forever (Pt 1,25). Blessed Leopoldina Naudet, pray for us

Amen

