

would lie on the ground a tangled mass, they needed to be comforted as one whom his mother comforts. And were they now to be left as orphans, since He who had comforted them even more tenderly than a mother was to go away? And Jesus answers: "No, I will not leave you orphans, I will send you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever."

Thus the deep meaning of Christ's word, that the Holy Spirit is our Comforter, naturally discloses itself. Of course, in order to comfort us He must personally be with us. One can comfort only by means of love. It is the lifting of the too heavy cross from the shoulders, the constant whispering of loving words, the gathering of tears, the patient listening to the complaints of our affliction, the sympathizing with our suffering, the being oppressed with our distresses, the identification with our suffering person. Surely, even a gift can afford comfort; a letter from a distant land can cast a ray of hope into the troubled soul; but to comfort us in such a way that the burden falls from the shoulder, and the soul revives and loves, in its love expecting to rejoice—such comfort we can expect only from the living person who, coming to us with the key to our heart, cherishes us with the warmth of his own soul.

And since no one else can always be with us, wholly enter into our sorrows, fully understand and comfort us with infinite love, therefore is the Holy Spirit the Comforter. He abides with us forever, enters the deep places of every soul, listens to every throb of the heart, is able to relieve us of all our cares, takes all our troubles upon Himself, and by His tender and divinely loving words and sweet communion raises us out of our comfortless condition.

This glorious work of the Holy Spirit must be studied with extreme carefulness.

You can compare it, not to that of the artist who chisels a statue out of marble, but to that of the godly mother who with sacrificing love studies the characters of her children, watches over their souls while they themselves have no thought of it, nurses them in sickness, prays with them and for them so that they might learn to pray for themselves, bends a listening ear to their trifling griefs, and who in and through all this spends the energy of her soul with warnings and admonitions, now chiding, then caressing, to draw their souls to God.

And yet, even this is no comparison; for all the sacrifices of the