

IN THE SCHOOL OF
THE HOLY SPIRIT

IN THE SCHOOL
OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT •• Jacques Philippe

Translated by Helena Scott



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INTRODUCTION

My Jesus, it is truly easy to become holy; it just takes a little good will! And if He finds this minimum of good will in a soul, He quickly gives Himself to her. And nothing can stop Him, neither our faults nor our falls, absolutely nothing. Jesus hurries to help that soul; and if the soul is faithful to this grace from God, she can in a short time reach the highest level of holiness that a created being can attain here below. God is very generous and does not refuse His grace to anyone. He gives even more than we ask for. The shortest road is faithfulness to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

This beautiful text is taken from the diary of St. Faustina.¹ Even though it is simple and concise, it delivers an extremely important message for people who aspire to holiness—to people who want to respond as far as possible to God's love.

¹ *Petit journal de Soeur Faustine* (Marquain, Belgium: Jules Hovine), p. 142; English ed.: St. Faustina Kowalska, *Diary: Divine Mercy in my Soul* (Stockbridge, Mass.: Marians of the Immaculate Conception: 1999). Sister Faustina, who was born in 1905 and died on October 5, 1938, was beatified by Pope John Paul II on the Sunday after Easter 1993. She was canonized on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 30, 2000. This Polish religious received from Jesus the mission of making Divine Mercy better known in the world, especially by means of an icon of Christ's Mercy that she asked a painter to produce.

In the School of the Holy Spirit

The major question for such souls, a question that sometimes causes them pain, is to know what to do about this message.

Maybe you never have been particularly concerned about this question. Maybe you never have aspired to love God as much as he possibly can be loved. If not, I ask that you now beg the Holy Spirit to put that desire in you, and even that you beg him to leave you restless until you have that aspiration. Then you will be really happy; for as our Lord said: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied!”²

For those who aspire to the fullness of love, every suggestion that shows them a clearer or quicker way to that goal is extremely valuable. Almost nobody realizes it, but in my opinion it is just as important to help devout people become even holier—and faster—as it is to help sinners be converted. It benefits the Church just as much. The world will be saved by the prayers of the saints.

This is why it is very important, even if not everyone understands, to pass on the best parts of the saints’ messages to today’s Christians in order to help them progress faster toward the perfection of love.

The key question in this process may be our not knowing where to focus our efforts. The answer isn’t always apparent, nor is it what we might suppose at the outset.

² Matthew 5:6. In Scripture, righteousness or justice means, rather than the meaning it is commonly given, the attitude of people whose will is fully “adapted” to God’s will, loving him and loving their neighbor. In other words, the scriptural term “righteousness” is what we understand as holiness.

St. Faustina, in the passage quoted above and also in some of the other reflections in her *Diary*, gives us an indication from her own experience that is worth paying attention to: the shortest way to holiness is *faithfulness to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit*. So, rather than scattering our efforts in areas of our lives where they might turn out to be sterile or unproductive, Sister Faustina proposes that we center them on this point: be alert to recognize, welcome, and put into practice the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. Faithfulness to such inspiration is by far the most “profitable” course.

Let’s first consider why this is, and then try to see exactly what is involved.