

Q: Can someone receive the gift of Living in the Divine Will immediately?

A: The gift of Living in the Divine Will is not a virtue, but a gift. And as a gift it consists of God's absorbing the human will and conferring upon it his own "eternal mode" of operation that has neither beginning nor end. To assert that the "eternal mode" is merely a *degree* of growth in holiness, and not a *state* of holiness is to underscore the very doctrines contained in Luisa's text (for the proper interpretations of Luisa's doctrines conder the ecclesiastically approved Doctoral Dissertation on this website re. the distinction of these fundamental terms).

The Divine Will's "absorbing" the finite human will into God's eternal operation does not imply an annihilation of the free human will. Throughout Luisa's text, absorption signifies God's elevation and sublimation of man's finite human action that enables him to participate in and cooperate with God's eternal operation without any violation to the free human will. Because human nature is incapable of elevating itself to partake of God's eternal operation, God accomplishes said elevation through the humanity of his Son.¹

That anyone in the state of grace² may immediately experience the eternal operation of God's uncreated Will is affirmed in Luisa's writings, where Jesus reveals that the Divine Will's creative power³ immediately⁴ enters the soul as soon as it yields its own interests to those of God with a simple but firm act⁵ of the will. Because this simple but firm act of the will is a decision of the soul to resign or «surrender»⁶ itself completely to God, no sooner does the soul «decide»⁷ to

¹ L. PICCARRETA, XX, November 20, 1926.

² When referring to the Holy Spirit's gifts through the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Church acknowledges that each Christian may receive the Spirit's gifts on the condition that one is in a state of grace: "To receive Confirmation one must be in a state of grace. One should receive the sacrament of Penance in order to be cleansed for the gift of the Holy Spirit. More intense prayer should prepare one to receive the strength and graces of the Holy Spirit with docility and readiness to act [cf. acts 1.14] (CCC, 310)".

L. PICCARRETA, VI, April 9, 1904.

³ Ibid., XII, December 22, 1920.

⁴ Ibid., XII, February 16, 1921; Cf. also Ibid., XII; Ibid., XII, December 26, 1919; Ibid., XXX, December 21, 1931; Ibid., XIX, August 31, 1926; Ibid., XXX, November 4, 1931.

⁵ Ibid., XXXV, January 2, 1938; cf. also Ibid., XX, January 13, 1927; Ibid., XXXVI, May 6, 1938.

⁶ Ibid., XIV, June 15, 1922.

⁷ Ibid., *BVM*, day 5; cf. also L. PICCARRETA, XXX, November 4, 1931; Ibid., XXIV, April 1, 1928.

Nota bene: Within the context of Luisa's message of July 8, 1933, the expression, "The decision carries [within itself] the accomplished act", signifies that the soul's *entry* into the life of the Divine Will has *begun*, but the soul must attain to its fullness by accomplishing the "complete act", which God's Will "invests" and progressively makes of the soul a "victim" of his Will by "emptying" it and "filling" it so much so that the soul comes to "possess" the "fullness and totality of the Supreme Being".

Cf. also Ibid., XI, May 25, 1916; XII, July 25, 1917; XII, February 20, 1919; XII, December 6, 1919; XII, 12, December 26, 1919; XIX, August 31, 1926.

do and live in God's Will, than he absorbs⁸ it in such a way that it concomitantly impacts the lives of all creatures.

Indeed, once the soul resolves to live in the Divine Will so that is, to think, say and do everything God desires, a sort of fusion⁹ occurs between the two wills, and the two distinct wills act as one¹⁰ to accomplish eternal acts that may surpass in merit all the works of all human beings combined¹¹. In the soul's fusion with God's Will, God immediately begins to «purify» the soul of its stains, to «break» the inordinate attachments of its human nature, and to «pulverize» its sins and vices, all of which present obstacles to union with his Will¹². God disposes the soul by placing within its acts his own love and Will¹³, so as to convert the soul's weakness to strength, and he invests it with his divine attributes that empower it to continuously partake of his one, eternal operation.

Given the preceding, one must not conclude that once one receives participates in God's eternal mode, it receives an "instant sanctity", whereby the one need not undergo the ascetical stages of purification, illumination and unification in order to attain perfection. I here recall the distinction between the "virtues" (that are "acquired" with repetition of man's good deeds, and attain perfection through the three aforementioned stages) and the mystical "gifts" (that are not acquired, but "freely bestowed" by God). Living in the Divine Will is not a virtue, but a gift that God grants when he wills and to whom he wills¹⁴ — his gifts are not the result of human achievement, they are not the result of the virtues alone.

Although the genuine human correspondence to God's gifts elicits in man the exercise of the virtues and growth in holiness, God's gifts nevertheless remain unmerited and God's pure favor. The gift of Living in the Divine Will, unlike the fruit of personal holiness that derives from the perfection of the virtues, is the fruit of God's largesse that, absorbing and elevating the soul's powers, enables it to impact all creatures. Thus the holiness that Luisa presents, while noting the importance of the Christian virtues and man's achievement, emphasizes the holiness of God's gift and pure favor. For neither human achievement¹⁵ nor the exercise of the virtues over the course of time¹⁶ engender this gift. And yet the soul disposes itself to receive this gift through the exercise of its powers, in particular the will, whose divine acts, in turn, prepare¹⁷ and

⁸ L. PICCARRETA, XXII, August 4, 1927.

⁹ Ibid., XVII, October 6, 1924.

¹⁰ Ibid., III, May 24, 1900.

¹¹ Ibid., XI, March 8, 1914.

¹² Ibid., XII, July 25, 1917.

¹³ Ibid., XXVIII, September 20, 1930; cf. also Ibid., XXX, January 30, 1932.

¹⁴ Ibid., XVII, September 18, 1924.

St. Teresa of Avila upholds this truth: "The Lord gives when he wills and as he wills and to whom he wills, and, as the gifts are his own, this is no injustice to anyone" (T. AVILA, *IC*, mansion IV, I).

¹⁵ L. PICCARRETA, XIX, May 31, 1926.

¹⁶ Ibid., XXVIII, March 12, 1930.

¹⁷ Ibid., XXXVI, August 6, 1938.

dispose all human generations ¹⁸ with God¹⁹ to receive this gift as well. For this reason St. Thomas Aquinas affirms that God's gifts are "more excellent than the virtues", as they "assist the virtues" and "accomplish what the virtues cannot"²⁰.

¹⁸ Ibid., XXIV, September 24, 1928; Ibid., XXXIII, February 10, 1934.

¹⁹ Ibid., XXVIII, February 26, 1930; Ibid., XIX, March 28, 1926.

²⁰ T. AQUINAS, *Summa Theol.* 2/1.68,2: "The gifts of the Holy Spirit are habits whereby man is perfected to obey readily the Holy Spirit"; ID., *Summa Theol.* 2/1.68,8 *ad resp.*: "The gifts are bestowed to assist the virtues and to remedy certain defects [...] so that, seemingly, they accomplish what the virtues cannot. Therefore the gifts are more excellent than the virtues"; cf. also ID., *Summa Theol.* 2/1.68,3 *ad resp.*