

Pedagogical Course
2 - 10 October 1951

Mechanistic thinking, its effects and cure
with special reference to fatherhood

Fifth Conference

Whoever wants to heal an illness must first make a diagnosis. People today are ill, so we must first get to know the illness in detail. We can see that their soul life is, on the one hand, stunted in many ways, and, on the other, in the process of disintegrating. We have tried to discuss this disintegration to some extent from the point of view of mechanistic thinking. Our first question was: what do we understand by mechanistic thinking? Now that we have defined our terms, we can begin to apply them to everyday life. We are dealing with three topics:

1. the separation of ideas from life,
2. the separation of the First from secondary causes, and
3. a mechanistic separation within the individual spheres of life.

There are life-processes both in the natural and the supernatural orders. We are at pains to remain in the natural order. Its fundamental cell is the family. According to God's intentions, a sound natural family should be an organic whole. In it we should find that husband and wife, father and mother, parents and children live spiritually in one another. They should form a vital, organic unit. That is to say, they should not simply live next to one another or even in opposition to one another.

Today this vital unity has to a large extent been disturbed. This does not mean that we are unaware that from time immemorial there have been obstacles in the way to forming such a vital unity. We are not concerned with this here. Our question is: why is there this lack of unity? One of the most important reasons is to be found in a separatistic and mechanistic way of thinking and behaving. Some people even boast when they have been able to tear a family apart. They separate the father and mother, the parents and children.

How can we describe the woman who has been torn out of the organism of the God-willed family as a result of mechanistic thinking and living? What is the child like who no longer has a home in a natural family?

In the interests of the subject of this training course we want to leave aside these two questions and concentrate on the **father of the family**. The reason for the homelessness in our present-day world is to be found in the fact that it has become fatherless.

We could, in addition, say with Nietzsche: There are no longer any mother countries today. This may be true. It is the reason why, particularly in Catholic circles, so much is said about motherhood and motherliness. However, the significance of fatherhood and fatherliness is too little seen.

From the metaphysical point of view, the final authority rests with the father of a family. He has the primary power because he shares in God's act of begetting. The authority of the mother is only supplementary and derived.

A tremendous amount depends on not tearing the father out of the organism of family life. The condition for healing the world is the healing of the family, and the healing of the family essentially includes reforming our idea of the father, the consciousness of what it means to be a father and what is meant by fatherliness. The basic metaphysical reason for the father being the final authority in the family lies in his participation in God's creative activity. Within the Blessed Trinity the Father is the final authority because he begets the Son (cf Jo 14,29; 1 Cor 15,24ff). The Father begets the Son, the Holy Spirit proceeds from Father and Son.

We are living in a fatherless time. It is fatherless because the family has become fatherless. Let us first of all state the fact, then seek its reasons, and finally show the significance of the father's authority.

Firstly, the fact. Today the father is often taken out of the total framework of the family, This is even consciously aimed at and results in splitting, separating and tearing family life apart. A sound vital structure, the family, is thus destroyed. Separatistic thinking is highly successful in separating not only ideas from life, but also life-processes. This is the tragedy of mechanistic thinking.

Since today the father is taken out of the framework of the family, an effort is made to bring about the so-called 'mother families', that is to say, families without a father. Thus some years ago a member of parliament suggested that as a result of the shortage of men, not only polygamy, but also the dissolution of marriage on agreement without a legal framework should be allowed. The grounds on which he made this proposal were that many women are unable to find husbands. A second reason was that today man has a far greater role to play in public life. He has to be active in politics and the economy. Therefore he should be freed from the family.

These ideas are not simply an admission to human weakness in everyday life, but a way of thinking which is fundamentally wrong - it has been misguided and deceived. This is mechanistic thinking. People with these modern attitudes also try to separate sexuality and love. In this we see the tragic effects of separatism, of mechanistic thinking.

Now let us cast some light on circles within the Catholic Church - our Catholic pastors and educators. Don't you think that we all have to admit that also we have to a certain extent been affected by this separatism, which increasingly excludes the father from the family as a whole? For example, when we look for helpers in educating families, for any form of education, we always collect the mothers, hardly ever the fathers. We do not know what to say to the fathers of families who are meant to develop in themselves the main power of generation. This means giving in to the present-day worldly spirit. Without our even realising it, we have been infected by mechanistic thinking. We do our share, although not consciously, towards tearing apart the organic structural unity of the family. And then we start to look for the reason why people today are unable to have religious experiences. We shall later point out in detail what damage is done when we remove the idea of the father from the family.

Secondly, let us enquire into the reasons for this concept of a fatherless family, a fatherless world order. We could quote many reasons. One of the most essential is the disappearance of the father and the consequent disappearance of fatherly authority. The reasons why the idea of the father is being eradicated can be found in the conditions of our time. There are direct

and indirect reasons.

(a) The direct reasons may be external or internal.

(I) The external reasons are to be found, firstly, in the long absence of the fathers during the war. As a result, the concept of the mother came into the foreground, and the authority of the mother was emphasised. A second external reason for the disappearance of the father's authority during the long period of separation during the war lies in the unfulfilled longings of the husband and wife. They set great hopes in each other and expected them to be fulfilled when they were re-united in the family - hand in hand, heart in heart. The effect of their reunion and the restoration of their life together was often a terrible disappointment. The husband had in the meantime developed quite differently and the wife had gone her own way. The result was deep disappointment in each other. Besides this, the wife had wielded the sceptre for years and did not want to give up any part of her authority. To a great extent she wanted to do the ruling herself. In addition, our men often returned from the war both tired and ill. They became the object of their wife's motherly love, and were no longer the natural upholders of authority.

We could still mention a number of exterior reasons. They repeatedly confirm our image of our present-day world and reveal the disappearance of fatherly authority from the family.

(ii) The internal reasons for the father's loss of authority may well consist in this, that in the course of time fathers have behaved in such a way that they showed their inner helplessness. They were unable to protect their children from the dangers of bomb warfare, and had constantly expose themselves to dangerous situations with which they could not cope. As a result the awareness of the father's strength has disappeared, and with it a fundamental family experience has been set aside.

(b) If you want to know the indirect reasons, you must first of all cast back into history. Protestantism has robbed us of the concept of the father in religious life, insofar as the father is represented by the papacy, by the Holy Father. The Enlightenment did the rest. Until that time we had a patriarchal age. In everyday life the authority of the father was in the foreground, and together with the authority of the father in the family there was in general a certain patriarchal form of government of the peoples. The authority of the father, a fatherly form of government and wisdom in government and state affairs, are thus intimately related. The French Revolution proclaimed the motto: 'Liberty, equality, fraternity'. The family was also beheaded, everyone was equal to everyone else and the family no longer had a 'head', it no longer had a hold in a strong, final authority.

Of course, we must also admit that in the past the authority of the father had often been misused. A hunger for power on the part of the father was praised. People were no longer aware that the authority of the father consists in selflessly serving the life of another, that is, both natural and supernatural life, particularly in the family.

Thirdly, let us add a word about the significance of the father's authority, the significance of having known a good father.

First statement: It provides strong and reliable support for both the individual and the community.

In the first place it offers the individual person strong support. One of the essential conditions for life in the child and young person is fatherly authority. It gives the child, whether a girl or boy, an instinctive awareness of authority and hence the experience of security. It gives a child both a spiritual and physical sense of being sheltered. This instinctive experience of fatherly authority at the same time offers the child by word and example an original concept of the world and an ability to make contact with others.

Each one of these statements contains a whole world (of thoughts and experiences). Do we want to take the time to think them through in detail? Whoever only listens to these thoughts, whoever takes in only some impressions, but does not grasp the intrinsic relationships, will not be able to do much with them in practical life.

Genuine, fatherly authority also provides strong support to the community. Brothers and sisters, who are equals in a family, need a superior authority. Of course, this may and should also be the authority of the mother, but seen from the metaphysical point of view, the final support for the family's ability to make contact with other people, its possibility to enter into contact with others, and its actual contact with others, must be the father. We are brothers and sisters because we have been begotten by the same father - of course, also because we have been borne by the same mother. However, according to St Thomas and Leo XIII and as practical life proves, because the father's act of generation is primary, the father is also primary. The father is the stronghold of a family, the cement which keeps it together. Of course, the father must be supplemented by the mother.

Our present-day world no longer acknowledges any fatherly authority, and those who on this account overlook its final roots within the family must look for new and extraneous means of forming a community, of making contact possible and creating possibilities for contact. This could be dictatorship. It forces people under its yoke. If we had genuine fathers, if we had ideal families, we would not need dictatorships. There would again be a genuine community which would have a firm and safe support, a final stronghold in fatherly authority. This fatherly authority would and should expand and spread out in every direction, so as to form the community and the government of the state.

If we want to get to the root of modern problems, we must allow an eminently father-conscious era to develop. Of what good is it if we pastors and educators work constantly, but do not get a grip on the roots of the disease and try to heal it?

People talk of the United Nations. It aims at restoring unity between peoples. You will notice, however, that all the means applied as a palliative will not have the desired effect and will never have it. We may even say that not even the authority of the Pope and priests, in so far as it should provide security for people today, will finally achieve its aim unless the authority of the father in the natural family is restored. In the normal course of events, religious authority, a certain supernatural fatherly authority, will only play a vital role if there is a foundation for it in the natural order, in natural fatherliness. It may be that a supernatural fatherliness and childlikeness is possible even without a natural foundation, but for long periods in a person's development the instinctive element will be lacking in this relationship. There is hardly anything that can take the place of this instinctive element.

Let me remind you of what I have said about St Thérèse of the Child Jesus. Here you have an analysis of an exemplary soul in her childlike relationship to her exemplary father.

You will surely not take it amiss or misinterpret me if I dare to say that even God's fatherly authority can in practice hardly give people today the security they need in the confusion of our present world situation, unless it is built upon natural experiences with their own father. This is not meant theologically - of course, theologically God is the final authority - but psychologically. As sense-endowed beings we are dependent on sensible impressions in the natural order. Our childlike surrender to God's fatherly authority often lacks the instinctive, sub-conscious sense of being fulfilled and gripped by the other person. Unless this experience of fatherly authority in the natural order is present in some way, either from the true father or from a so-called foster-father; unless a deep childlike experience in the natural order is there, there will be a terrible tragedy in every respect, not simply for the individual person, but for the whole of our present, civilized world.

Today it is not as easy to be a father as in the former patriarchal age. If, for example, a father lacks deep reverence for the mother, his wife, we shall find that according to the law of over-compensation the wife and children will soon form an opposition party. It is really not easy today to be a father.

If, for example, the father has developed too great a hunger for power in relation to his children, if he does not know how to direct their urge for freedom into the correct channels by guiding them from within, he will find very soon that he has brought up rebels. Hence: renew the world by renewing the father and fatherhood. A tremendous programme!

A second statement may also be made. The father's authority brings about a creative polarized unity between father and mother. Two functions of the father's authority achieve this:

1. It helps the mother to be a true mother,
2. it requires supplementation by the mother, so that without this supplementation it cannot exist.

You will notice that this is a gigantic programme of reform to which we should dedicate our entire love. It is the restoration of the father's authority. If only we had more educators who truly loved and never relinquished their love, and who constantly did this detailed and hidden work in the background!

I should now like to enlarge on the father's double function in regard to the creative polarized unity between father and mother.

The first function: In order to be a true mother, a wife needs the father's authority. If she does not have this need satisfied, if she finds no inner stronghold in the father's authority, if she is not supported and supplemented, you will soon notice that she is unable to love her children. She will become afraid of children. Then motherhood will not mature sufficiently to become perfect motherliness. Motherliness needs in some way or other to develop childlikeness within itself. The most beautiful realm of a woman's soul is the realm of childlikeness. There is a child in hiding in every woman; a child is crying in every woman. In relation to whom should a woman develop her childlikeness, even when she is a mother? In relation to the father!

In sound families, for example, a mother does not address her husband by his Christian name, but rather calls him "Father"; just as the father calls his wife "Mother". They do this not just for the sake of the children, but because of a sound, natural need which includes the parent's

ability to supplement each other.

The second function: If fatherliness is to develop, the father needs to be supplemented by a true mother, by true motherliness. Without this supplementation his fatherliness cannot mature.

(I) In relation to the authority of the father, true motherliness first of all acts as a supplement. The father's hunger for power has to be mitigated by the mother's selflessness; the father's autocratic disposition by the mother's attitude of service. The father's urge to see a finished product, even in education, needs to be balanced by the mother's love, humility and constant cheerfulness. The father's nervousness must also be moderated by the mother's patience, self-sacrifice and self-surrender. This is the ideal of the genuine mother. Can such women still be found today?

We must see to it that in renewing the family we again create mother and fatherlands in every regard. That is, we must again be given genuine women and mothers, genuine fathers. Our Lord spent thirty years embedded in a family. He spent thirty years of his life living a quiet life within his family, and by doing so spoke a very clear language. He wanted to heal and sanctify the family.

(ii) In relation to the father, true motherliness has a deep and comprehensive function to protect. With his creative thoughts and ideas, with his roaming ideas, the father can brew and think out great things. But these thoughts are sheltered in the heart of a woman. Indeed, for his ability to think creatively, and more so for his creative activity, the man needs the heart of a woman and mother.

Whoever, therefore, wishes to appear in the Church and the world as a great reformer needs a group of noble-minded women behind him. Man can think and plan, woman shelters these great plans in her heart and in her life, and she is ready to give her all in order to see them carried out.

(iii) In relation to man, to the father, a woman has a third task - it is the function of being his opposite, his complement. What a great, valuable and profound task! Many thoughts we have discussed together about the philosophy of sexuality need to be repeated here. I do not want to go into detail, fruitful as it might be.

In his wisdom, God did not incorporate his idea of human beings in a single person or type, but in two people who were meant to be mutually complementary. This is the reason for the magnetic waves constantly passing between man and woman. This is the reason for the strong and noble urge to bring about the complement of the two sexes according to the ontological order. In relation to man, woman not only exercises an active function, but also an ontological function. The ideal woman complements the nature of man. The authority of the father is relaxed and mitigated by the influence of his wife's mildness, by her characteristic kindness and service. His autocracy is mitigated, while vice versa, in regard to the complement of the wife, the softness and tenderness of woman's nature is crowned and supplemented by the strength, sureness and firmness of the husband.

In view of these great truths, the genuine educator may find an almost passionate urge stirring within himself: If only I could help to bring about sound families! The art of educating is wisdom - it is a charisma. If only we had more charismatic educators! If we do not see education as our life's task, if it does not become our passion, if we are not gripped by the

task of educating, if we do not love those entrusted to us with a genuine, reverent and deep love, then I ask you: What are we doing with all our attempts to bring about reform and our discussions on the subject?

Sixth Conference

(The first part of this conference deals with evaluating mechanistic thinking. Since it needs to be seen in relation to all the previous talks, we are omitting it here and continue the theme of the last conference without interruption.)

We now know the soul life of people today. It is stunted and dismembered.

How can it be healed?

What can we do to make it possible for people today, who have been infected in this way, to experience religion once more? Now that we have diagnosed the faults of our civilization we may and must design a programme for its cure. A tremendous number of thoughts and considerations for the healing of people today pour in upon us. In order to arrange them we shall differentiate between

a radical cure, and
a normal cure.

a) There are four types of radical cure.

Firstly, the total renewal of family life, of the awareness of what it means to be a father or mother, and of fatherliness and motherliness.

How can we describe this in detail? In the natural family the child proceeds via the mother. Historically seen, she is the first person to accept the child, and this includes the sub-conscious soul life of the child. It is she who forms the unconscious soul life of the child even before it is born.

It is she, too, who leads her children to their father. Children cannot know who their father is. It is the task of the mother to attract the children's attention to their father by her love for him. She also draws the picture of the father simply and clearly by submitting to him in simple love and obedience. This experience of their mother's behaviour forms the children and leads them to a deep encounter with their father. Later, when this has become a conscious experience, it will, according to the law of the transference of emotions, symbolise the supernatural world for the children. They will not find it difficult to transfer their love for their earthly mother to our heavenly Mother, and the love they have for their earthly father to the heavenly Father. We have already seen these truths illustrated in the soul life of St Thérèse.

You will ask me how one can create such ideal families. Even if you doubt whether it is possible, it is worth our while to see the intrinsic relationships. If we do not do so we shall never attack the roots of the evil. At any rate we must keep in mind that if we want to renew our society, we must renew the family, we must create a family movement, we must gradually bring home to our youth the necessity for spending the last of their strength in

forming their lives according to the example of the Holy Family.

What is the significance of completely renewing family life? If children have known genuine and noble-minded natural parents, their unconscious and instinctive soul life will have been affected positively, they will have a positive outlook on life. We may never underrate this today. Intellectual knowledge has its value, but today we cannot value highly enough people's need to be gripped and filled in the sub-conscious and instinctive levels of their soul life. Thus, if children really love their father, an instinctive security will mark their emotional and sub-conscious soul life. If children know what it is to be a child, if they have had a genuine mother, the experience of being sheltered leaves its mark on their emotions. This is important for people who live in such a confused, helpless and insecure age. The characteristic mark of our age is this manifold insecurity and sense of exposure.

We will not find it difficult to understand that according to the law of the transference of emotions, such an instinctive security is transferred to God the Father, while an instinctive sense of being sheltered is transferred to our Lady, and hence once again to God the Father. This is immensely facilitated if it is at the same time possible to enlighten the mind, and in this way add a clarified image of the Father and a transfigured image of the Mother to a child's experiences with his or her natural father and mother. If you have understood the intrinsic connections in this life process, you will have before you a complete programme of reform, a complete programme of education, to the realization of which we may devote our entire lives.

However, we want to try to make use of this radical cure through totally renewing the family, we shall have to see it as a long term programme and exercise great patience. Families cannot be renewed over night.

2. A second form of the radical cure is a later experience of being a true child. In this everything is concentrated on life and experience, not on knowledge. Everything depends on our being penetrated and gripped by this experience on a sub-conscious and emotional level. That is why I purposely stressed - it is a later **experience** of being a true child, that is, a person **savours** at a later date what it means to have a true father and mother, and also what it means to have brothers and sisters, although this is included in practice in the concrete experiences with a genuine father.

In what does this later experience consist? I may experience later on in my life which I did not experience as a child. This, of course, presupposes that God gives me a father and mother, or if you prefer, a substitute father and mother, with whom I can experience what I did not experience, or insufficiently experienced, in my natural family when I was a child.

You will now tell me: In theory that is a way, but, but --- how few will be able to follow it! Of what use is the cry of my heart to be a child, if it is not answered by a father and mother? And where are the people today who possess the time and sacrificial strength, the unending love, to take over the place of father and mother for me? And even if such people can be found, they may not overlook that they are faced with a difficult task.

We have spoken these days about the 'tabula rasa'. It is not true. The human soul is inscribed with countless impressions already from childhood. It is much easier if children have experienced that they are real children, that they have a good father and mother, than if they have to catch up on this experience later. In such instances the old picture of the father must

be eradicated not only in theory, but through other experiences. If the old, disfigured image of the father, which was gained in childhood, is not completely eradicated, the new father-image cannot fill and rule the heart completely. It can take decades for this work to be completed. Even when such people are older and think that the new experience of a sound father-child and mother-child relationship is deeply founded, the previous concept of the father and mother will repeatedly break through from the sub-conscious soul life. Whoever, therefore, is allowed to take the place of a father or mother, must be prepared for a very long process of development and must expect innumerable crises in their newly-accepted child. They will need patience, but this should not be too difficult when they know what is involved. Educators love and never give up this love.

3. A third form of the radical cure is the contradictory experience. It is not only possible to experience at a later date what it means to be a child, there are also contradictory experiences. If everyone depended on experiences in the natural family, or such experiences at a later date, countless numbers of people today would remain unable to open themselves for religious values.

Let us observe the contradictory experience as it shows in practical life. If, for example, some's natural father or mother failed them, and if no substitute can be found on a natural level, it is still possible for them to win through to a sound relationship to the heavenly Father and Mother in the supernatural order.

The foundation for this is to be found first of all in contradictory insights. Thus the Bible can lead us to a contradictory insight and then also to contradictory experiences. That is to say, the mind collects the features of God and Mary as depicted in the Scriptures, and arrives at a great synthesis of the God-willed image of father and mother. This synthesis of ideas can gradually lead people to experience on the supernatural level that they are children in relation to God the Father and our Lady, even if this experience was absent or insufficient on the natural level. The mind mediates a contradictory experience. The supernatural world is also a reality. Our childhood before God in and through Christ is also a reality, and it has its own laws and its own possibilities for development.

A woman, with her impressionable and emotional nature, can also arrive at contradictory experiences through examples. Should she, for example, observe sound family life among her circle of acquaintances, where children have a heartfelt relationship to their father and mother, this can lead her to a contradictory experience. By experiencing the opposite state of affairs in others, she can make up for what was lacking in her childhood experiences.

I could tell you of countless experiences I have had with these contradictory experiences. However, I suggest that you observe life and fit everything together yourselves. In this way you will arrive at a clear and firm conviction.

Nevertheless, I think I must add here that if childlike love, and hence the ability to have religious experiences, is awakened in this way, a certain constraint remains until the end of one's day, because the sub-conscious soul life has not been gripped on the natural level. Therefore, it is necessary to add: If such a soul is to become healthy once more, this contradictory experience should, if at all possible, be supplemented by a later experience of being a child. When both the contradictory and the later experiences blend, the soul can gradually become as free as a little bird, the soul will later be able to sing and rejoice at possessing childlike love, and will at the same time be gripped by a deep ability to have

religious experiences.

4. A fourth form of the radical cure is the supplementary experience. Let us suppose that I have never known what it is to be a true child, that this experience has never gripped my sub-conscious soul life, because I have never known what it was like to have a genuine father and mother. Now it is possible, if I am later privileged to offer the love of a father or mother to children, whether they are physically or spiritually my own, to experience in these children what it means to love as a child and be a child. In practice I experience two things: the awakening of richly creative fatherliness or motherliness in myself, an experience which sinks down into the sub-conscious soul, and childlikeness in the other person. This can awaken childlikeness in me as a conscious experience, and this can then be transferred to my relationship to God. If, prior to this, I was a child only on the rational level, this supplementary experience can awaken the instinct of childlikeness within me. Thus, as a mature person, it is possible to be given a deep, later experience of what it means to be a true child.

Forgive me for emphasising these things in such psychological terms. We are discussing the psychological foundations for the ability to have religious experiences. Please keep in mind that grace also works in this way. When nature and grace are in harmony, the radical cure has achieved its aim.

However, in numberless instances these four forms of radical cure cannot be applied. In their stead the

b) normal cure comes into its own. It is to be found in a Marian method of education.

In order to give the people of today the ability to experience religion once more, a deep devotion to Mary is a practical way to effect a normal cure. Let us examine the effectiveness and mode of operation of devotion to Mary.

One obstacle may suggest itself to you. You may ask: If my soul or the souls of my followers are so sick, how can we make a tender love for Mary our own? It is true, this is a big obstacle. If the soul of people today is so thoroughly infected, can it still take up the seed of love for Mary? The answer: If there is any possibility of creating openness for religion, it is through Mary. The deeper psychological reason for this is that normally the deepest experience of the tiny child is the love of his or her mother. Should this love not be present, we may ask in despair how we can possibly help the people of today. Hence, if there is the least possibility of creating openness for religion, it is through love for Mary.

Everyday life sometimes reveals strange combinations. I have in mind a young seminarian who is strongly inclined towards speculative thought. He is surrounded by grave dangers to his faith. Strangely enough his concept of Christ is completely distorted, but his picture of Mary is undamaged. This is actually illogical. Nevertheless it is possible. In this instance, his childhood experience of his mother's love so deeply gripped his sub-conscious soul life that his ideal of Mary was not involved in the upheavals and crises of puberty.

I now turn to those who have suffered under the modern, mechanistic methods of education, or who have gone through schools that were extreme in their liturgical orientation. If you do not discover how to transfer the inner warmth of emotion, which has been awakened by genuine motherly love, to our Lady, your later lives will lack something extremely

significant: the starting-point for the ability to have religious experiences. Nevertheless it is quite possible for this deep, inner ability to have religious experiences break through in later life, even if it has been stifled and overgrown for many years.

Fathers and mothers, please lead your children to surrender themselves deeply to our Lady, otherwise you will deprive them of a starting-point for religious experiences, which seen in human, psychological terms, can be replaced by nothing else.

If, however, this germinal openness for devotion to Mary is no longer present in the soul, we are helpless. We can at best attempt to apply the four radical cures.

1. What is the effect of devotion to Mary? If my soul has to some extent been touched by love for Mary, she gives me a threefold ability to have religious experiences.

She, first of all, gives me the ability to have religious experiences in relation to God the Father. There are two reasons for this. In the natural family it is the mother's main task to place the father in the foreground. If she does not do so, she is not a real mother. Children get to know their father through their mother. We have both the right and the duty - seen merely from the psychological point of view - to apply this law to our Lady. Do you not think that it is an essential task of our Lady to lead her children to the Father?

The spiritual trends in Schoenstatt confirm this. From the first we tried to be genuine children of our Lady. In the course of twenty-five years we have experienced plentifully that our Lady has led us to the Father. That is why our marian kingdom is in a marked sense a kingdom of the Father. Let us thank the Lord God from our hearts. We are also convinced that having led us to the Father, our Lady will preserve our image of the Father through every battle.

Our Lady's activity is determined by what she is, both psychologically and in the order of grace. Ontologically our Lady is eminently a child of the Father. Having been created by the Father, she is uniquely his child.

She also lived in the deepest vital union with our Lord. Since our Saviour is eminently the Child of the Father, she must, in virtue of this vital union, also be an eminent child of the Father.

She also shares - even though only in a creaturely way - in the Father's act of generation. Our Lord is not only the Child of the heavenly Father, he is also her Child. She is, therefore, a unique reflection of the heavenly Father. The activity most proper to the Father, his fatherly act of generation, is reflected in her, although in a creaturely fashion. That is why she is uniquely and eminently a child of the Father.

Since what she is determines her action, and since she was in a very deep sense the child of the Father, she will, seen psychologically, give her children a deeper childlike love for the Father. This is in keeping with the law of the transference of life. This psychological foundation is supported by our Lady's activity in the realm of grace. Mary's mediation of grace is combined with the psychological process.

When I lead my followers to our Lady, she sees to it in her own way that they become open for the Father. The same applies to our Lord. Please examine and weigh up for yourselves what has been said.

We may even say that when our Lady leads us to a deep encounter with our Father in heaven, this will sooner or later exercise a positive influence on our distorted father-image on a natural level.

If, for example, my mother-image is distorted, and I take in the image of our Lady, does it not often happen that the rays of Mary's image reflect back on my natural mother-image, so that as time goes by I gradually achieve a deep encounter with my mother in the natural order?

The same life process repeats itself in regard to the supernatural Father-image - it reflects back on our natural father-image.

2. How devotion to Mary enables a person to have religious experiences

This touches upon the mystery of the operation of grace. When we try to lift the veil a little from this mystery, we do so with great reverence. One can easily make a disposition of the thoughts in a purely theoretical way. Let us recall that our Lady is personified openness for the divine. She is personified openness! *Ecce ancilla Domini!* If I possess a deep devotion to Mary, I also share, according to the law of the transference of life, in her openness for God and the divine. Even more, she gives me not only a matching impressionability and receptivity for supernatural interests, but also a sound natural disposition. What does this imply? From long experience I think I can say that deep and tender devotion to Mary gives back to a person a sound openness for values. This is all well and good in theory, but the hidden intrinsic relationships must be observed for years. We are thinking here of the law of the transference of life, as well as of the law that the activity of our Lady is governed by her position in the ontological order.

If any nature is still healthy today, it is the nature of woman, but to a great extent she, too, has been adversely affected by mechanistic thinking, by a purely masculine way of thinking. The ideal of womanhood is always sound, original, natural. Because by her very being she is so close to life, she preserves an organic, symbolical, total and centralised thought process. If the religious element still exists to some extent, it has found a port of refuge in the nature of woman. By nature woman is thoroughly sound, sounder than man, at least in regard to mechanistic thinking.

When I give myself to our Lady, I can expect her to give me some of her naturally sound way of thinking and feeling. We are thinking here of the 'donum integritatis', her instinctive purity - she was without original sin, her emotional life was sound. On the natural level her thinking and emotions were thoroughly healthy. When I give myself to her, I may expect that according to the law of the transference of life, some of her sound way of thinking will be transferred to me.

"Who finds me, finds life ...", that is, supernatural life, a supernatural openness for life. "Who finds me" will also find a thoroughly sound natural life, and may expect to be healed of an unhealthy mechanistic way of thinking, living and loving.