

“You will never be sorry that you were good!”

Dear Friend,

“Why do you talk like that about your mother? I don't like it. I like your mother very much and I think she is really great.” Alone in the back seat of the car as her father was driving them home, Mathilda was mulling over her cousin Nancy's somewhat sharp reply yesterday, made with all the forcefulness of her temperament. Her cousin's words shook her, and we must admit that they were rather strong. So, this makes Mathilda stop and think. She doesn't know why, but it seems that, lately, everything her mother says to her, her way of saying it and her way of doing things really irritates Mathilda, gets on her nerves. Consequently, it is with such feelings that she sometimes allows herself to depreciate and criticize her mother in front of some of her companions. However, her cousin, with whom she always gets along so well, obviously didn't like her comment, and suddenly Mathilda feels badly and is ashamed. Given Nancy's strong reaction, she understood that she hurt and disappointed her. So, as she reflects on this, Mathilda thinks that perhaps she needs to change something in her attitude.

Adolescence is the period between childhood and the adult life. Like Mathilda, you too are right in the middle of this delicate stage. During those years of important physical and psychological changes, adolescent boys and girls, usually have the impulse of rejecting what comes from their parents. They find their parents' authority almost unbearable and in their attempt to acquire independence, they would like to live their life as they see fit.

Does it not seem to you that when Mathilda criticizes her mother, she is experiencing some of the manifestations of such a crisis? And perhaps, as you read this letter, you too will see in yourself a few of these “little signs” indicating that you have entered this phase. Maybe you even already have a

few similar feelings in your heart concerning your mother or your father, but probably more towards your mother.

Depending on your temperament and your character, as well as on your innermost tendencies and the events that will come your way, it is with greater or lesser ease and serenity that you will get through those years of changes leading to adulthood. However, since this period of crisis in adolescence can have consequences on the rest of your life, it is important that you have the means to help you get through it in the best possible way. Thus, we will pass on to you some advice Marie-Paule gave to a young adolescent girl, with such love and gentleness. We suggest you read it slowly in order to assimilate it well.

Here is what Marie-Paule wrote to her: "At present you are going through a difficult phase, a crisis that comes upon young people of your age at one moment or another. Here, your personality wants to assert itself. Your filial affection towards your mother experiences ups and downs because a certain level of independence is developing in you, and this is normal.... While you go through this crisis, you must not hurt the one who has been so good to you. Be prudent in your words and actions towards her. Try to understand what she cannot say, maybe because she is very tired, because of the trials she must endure silently, or else, because of a lack of time or knowledge to express herself. Do not judge her. Be good to her and wait. Time passes. You will be happy one day to have held back words which you could regret, for the events of life open our eyes and clearly show us that our parents want our happiness and our good, while our exuberant youth would prompt us to look for them elsewhere, in an independence that can lead us into all kinds of disillusionment." (Review *L'Armée de Marie*, vol. IV, p. 194) "Go, my dear, towards God who calls you. Be good; you will never be sorry that you were good." (*Id.*, p. 206)

Before going to bed, sitting at her desk where she has a small frame with Marie-Paule's picture in it, Mathilda thinks again of Nancy's words. She

doesn't feel very proud of herself. She opens her diary in order to confide in Marie-Paule. Suddenly, there is a knock at her bedroom door and her mother appears. She holds out some clothes to her, saying:

- "It's late, but I washed the pants and sweater you wanted to wear tomorrow for your outing. I know this is the outfit you were hoping to wear."

- "Oh yes! Thank you! That's super!"

- "Goodnight, my dear!"

- "Goodnight to you too."

And, as her mother turns to leave, Mathilda insists:

- "I'm really, really happy, mother, Thank you! I love you!"

The Daughters of Mary