

## *The World Needs You!*

*Dear Friend,*

*Summer brings with it pleasant days with blue skies, hot weather and a greater freedom. Mathilda and some of her girlfriends are going to a water park with the parents of the one who organized this summer activity. They can't wait to see each other again, to go and have fun on the water slides, in the swimming pools and with the water games. In the few days preceding this anticipated outing, Mathilda expresses to her mother her hope of being able to get herself a bikini since she no longer has a bathing suit. She has grown a lot this year and her body has become the body of an adolescent. Several times, when talking with her mother, she mentions this desire again, saying that she will be the only one in the group not wearing a bikini, but her mother refuses. Once in the store, her mother shows her a few nice bathing suits and tankinis, among which Mathilda chooses one that is fuchsia in color and covers her well. She doesn't insist any more on a bikini. From the very beginning, Mathilda has always been accustomed to being modest. Deep down, she would not have felt very comfortable exposing her body before all the boys of all ages she will meet, for her mother has talked to her about men, what attracts them in women and how these latter can help them to remain pure while also protecting themselves.*

*Her good mother also explained to her that the body is like the envelope of the spiritual soul and that it hides from view what is sacred and intimate in us, the mystery of our being, the "spark" of God we all possess. Thus, because of this sacred value and this something unique which we all have and which comes from God, we must respect our own body as well as that of others. And Mathilda also hopes to remain chaste, and she has noticed that, sometimes, the way boys look at a girl's body can be disturbing and make one feel uncomfortable.*

*Isn't it hard sometimes to make the choices which correspond to our deep convictions or values? We really feel that Mathilda is torn. She doesn't want to feel too different from the group in which she hopes to be accepted, and in order not to be excluded from it, she thinks that she too has to have a bikini.*

*Of course, you too hear it said almost everywhere that a girl can dress in whatever way she likes because it is her body, so she can do whatever she wants with it, and there is nothing wrong with showing it off to feel beautiful. That's false! And even if adults say this to you, they are wrong! They haven't understood the grandeur of the woman and of her mystery.*

*You have a dignity which you must learn to acknowledge and assert, for it is through the woman dressed modestly and decently that men learn the importance of the deep respect, the thoughtfulness and the true love a woman needs. And since the woman is the one who educates and inspires, it is up to her to elevate this world to a greater wisdom, to more respect, love and beauty. And young girls are important instigators of this renewal in mentalities. That is the reason it falls to you to understand well how to prepare this.*

*To **voluntarily** choose to be modestly dressed is one means of doing so, and to persist in this choice even if all the other girls around you are trying to have people look at their chests, their slim waists, their legs, thighs or shoulders. Consequently, as a guide in this, ask yourself often: "Would Marie-Paule dress this way?" Unfortunately, the sense of modesty, which is the natural reflex of covering up what is most intimate, can weaken little by little. This is what would have happened with Mathilda if she had given in to the idea of also wearing a bikini. However, she made the right choice! Gradually, she will gain greater strength or firmness of will and she will not be so afraid to let the wonderful moral values instilled in her show through. Living these values will enable her to be the inspirer of positive changes for a better, more beautiful world. The world has a need of "spirits of light and souls that radiate," Marie-Paule said. (*The Hosanna of Life!*, p. 31) The world needs you! Remember that changes begin within ourselves before spreading afterwards to those around us.*

*And you know what? All the girls complimented Mathilda on her fuchsia bathing suit. When she bought it, her mother had also suggested she add to it a lovely beach dress which she likes very much besides. So, she had a very enjoyable day! And to top it all off, unlike what she thought, she wasn't the only one in the group wearing a bathing suit!*

*The Daughters of Mary*