

Letter to Marguerite Teilhard-Chambon dated August 22, 1915

"Don't worry about whether your life is worthwhile, about its anomalies, its disappointments, its somewhat obscure and sombre future. You are doing what God wills. In the midst of your anxieties and dissatisfaction you are offering him the sacrifice of a humbled soul bowing, in spite of everything, to an austere Providence. You are deprived even of the joy of feeling that you are resigned, that you accept, that you love, and yet at the same time you want to be resigned, to show that you are faithful. Don't be afraid; all this toil is set to your credit and is a magnificent use of your time. It matters little that others may do more good than you, and at less cost: the great thing is not to do good, but to fill the place, even if it is more lowly, willed for you by God. – It matters little that in your innermost self you feel, like the natural drag of a weight, a tendency to wrap yourself up in your sorrows and shortcomings: there are plenty of other 'natural', 'gravitational' forces in us, what we call enjoyment, egoism, following the line of least resistance; but doesn't *truth* consist in freeing oneself from these in spite of the *compulsive* attitude this temptation imposes on us? – It matters little that, humanly speaking, you feel a 'wash-out', if God for his part finds you a success as he would have you be. I know that it is just this last point that you question. You don't want to admit that in your case suffering sanctifies. Believe in all humility what you are told by our Lord's promises, by the example of the saints, by the assurances of those who speak to you in the name of God. Bit by bit, our Lord conquers you and makes you his own.

[...] I beg you, when you feel sad, paralyzed, to *adore* and trust yourself to God. Adore, offering God your existence that seems to you to be spoilt by your circumstances: what finer homage could there be than this lovely renunciation of what *one might have been*... Entrust yourself, lose yourself blindly in your trust in our Lord, who seeks to make you worthy of himself, and will make you so, even if you are left in darkness until the end, providing you hold his hand all the time, clasping it more tightly the more you feel disappointed and saddened. Put aside every excessive concern with interior aesthetics, with your own internal state, every debilitating analysis of your precise degree of sincerity and moral integration. Right to the end we shall carry with us a burden of inconsistencies and unachieved aims: the great thing is to have found the center of unification, God, and to have tried loyally throughout our lives to make Him reign in our own person – the little fragment of being that we rule and that is so little our own. When, one day, which will not be long in coming (all life is brief), Jesus Christ makes himself at the heart of our being, all the elements that we have worked so laboriously to orientate towards him will move of their own accord to group themselves in their real place. In one sense, success for our efforts counts little (God can correct everything in the twinkling of an eye): all that's worthwhile is the effort."

(Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Making of a Mind*,
trans. René Hague, Harper & Row, 1965; 67, 68)