

## LETTER TO A UNIVERSITY STUDENT

### H. G. Bishop Moussa

I thank God that He has granted you the blessing of entering the academic field. A university is not only a school of knowledge, but also a school of life. The young person who spends the university years with an upright heart builds a mature and effective Christian personality and increases his experiences of life day by day. He is transformed by grace into a faithful witness to Christ in an age in which faithful witnesses are rare.

You may have left your small town and found that your lifestyle has changed totally and radically: here you are in the middle of a vast and limitless city. Here you are experiencing complete freedom with no supervision. Here you go out through the university gates without any questions. You listen to lectures without the daily supervision of your teachers, for you alone are responsible. Here your loneliness and the absence of your family sometimes makes you feel greatly upset and depressed.

The food, clothes, your roommates, the atmosphere at university, the method of teaching, and others things are factors that make you wonder, shock you, pain you, teach you, or make you victorious.

### How Can You Act in a Christian Way?

#### 1. Hold on to Your Christ:

If you have neglected the life of fellowship you had during your secondary school education or in your small town, you must strive now several times harder in order to face up to the new circumstances.

**Prayer** is the overflowing fountain in which you cleanse your heart and from which you slake your thirst. The chance of being alone in your chamber is the basic opportunity during which you breathe the gentle breeze of the Spirit. Your spirit will be filled only with Christ, so if you deprive it of Him, you will be torn by a morbid homesickness for your family or you will take a deviant path toward destructive friends or toward a person of the opposite sex.

**Prayer** is a basic necessity in your life. It gives you great divine resources to face this age which has reverted to the worship of idols such as materialism, greed, and the pleasures of the flesh and in which human hearts have become devoid of the fear of God. People now race to accumulate wealth, to use power, cunning, dishonesty and bribery to reach eminent positions. They resort to lying to raise themselves and to injustice and tyranny in order to rule over others.

These have all become normal and desirable matters for the children of this world.

+ Embrace your Bible, dear reader, and hide its words in your heart; only then can you avoid sinning against God.

+ Hold on to your Christ, my friend, for He is your best friend and companion in your days as an alien on earth, the best father for your life, and the best physician for your circumstances.

+ Organize your prayers according to a system, and persevere in carrying it out with faithfulness under the guidance of your father confessor.

+ Read spiritual books regularly so that they may stimulate within you a conservative, loving and worshipful spirit.

## **2. Define Your Personality Traits:**

You may feel, dear reader, that your behavior in the Way of the Kingdom makes other accuse you of backwardness and deficiency. Be sure, my friend, that unless you live your Christianity in depth and define your personality traits clearly, the people of the world will intimidate you with their criticism, and you will imagine that you are wrong and they are right. The well-defined Christian youth has a strong personality and definite characteristics. He does not feel inferior because he does not sin, and he does not feel deprived because he avoids the prevalent pleasures of this age. On the contrary, he feels that he is a son of God and that he follows what is right.

The Christian youth is not ashamed of the Way of the Kingdom and does not take part in the works of darkness. He deals with the society in which he lives with love; he preserves his eternal inheritance, loves those who surround him, prays for them, and invites them to follow the way of purity. He pulls them out of the fire with great caution so that he may not be involved himself in what is not fitting for him. The well-defined youth who is not passive is

always strong, always victorious. The youth who is internally defeated and who feels that religion has deprived him of being normal like those around him is a coward, hesitant, and prepared to flee in situations that call for witnessing.

You will see around you young persons who enter into relationships with the opposite sex. If you are convinced of the soundness of your walk with Christ, you will face these situations without experiencing any attraction, without pride or arrogance, and without feeling deprived or lacking in some way. You have come to university to acquire knowledge, so postpone the issue of marriage to a more suitable time.

Be filled with the mind of the Kingdom, with the Lord of the Kingdom, and with the children of the Kingdom, so that you may live as king over your self and your weaknesses, and over conflicts with people and with the times.

### **3. Maintain Your Relationship with Your Father Confessor:**

You will make many mistakes, my brother, if you do not maintain your relationship with a father confessor, even in the place where you are a stranger if you come from another town. This is the beginning of withdrawal from the way of the Kingdom. Regular confessions are important stations that occur at close intervals during which you re-examine yourself and ascertain your progress.

Make haste, my brother, in choosing a father confessor and keep in touch with him continually so that you obtain the help of the Holy Spirit in the personal, social, spiritual and academic circumstances of your life. You will find that you get sound advice and sincere help from your spiritual father.

### **4. Beware of Ceasing to Serve:**

It is evident that the circumstances of the new university life cause some kind of confusion and preoccupation initially because of the change in lifestyle, in living quarters, in food, and in studies. Hence, you may neglect your work in one of the fields of service. This is a grave danger, for the spirit of service will grow cold in time and you will be lost in the vortex of those who are lost.

Join the nearest branch of Church education quickly, for service is an important weapon in your fight with the enemy and with yourself. It satisfies your soul with the richness of the word and of prayer, and keeps you in a holy, spiritual and social atmosphere that makes up

for the circle of family and friends in your small town if you are a stranger.

## 5. Social Activities:

It is good to deal with everybody with love, but you should also do so with discrimination. How many corrupt friendships have destroyed the lives of many!

Be active in your social life, but under the supervision of your conscience and of your father confessor.

Do not participate in activities you know will harm your life, and do not ignore the inner voice of the Spirit of God Who warns you against them

## 6. Study Regularly and Seriously:

The freedom of university life often turns into confusion. That is why the mature young person should plan his time seriously and firmly.

Give everything its due: spiritual life and the church, studying and rest.

Value the painful sacrifices your family is making in order to support you, and value the opportunity to witness to Christ through your success and progress.

The university student who makes the freedom of university the occasion of negligence, of emotional involvement, and of academic failure does not deserve his father's sweat or his mother's tears.

And now, beloved friend, I leave you to spend some time in your chamber in prayer during which you renew your promises and define the milestones of the way, and

**may the Lord be with you.**