

VISITS

TO THE

MOST HOLY SACRAMENT, ETC.

FOR EVERY DAY IN THE MONTH.

ASPIRATIONS OF LOVE TO JESUS

IN THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

RULES FOR FREQUENT COMMUNION

WITH A DEFENCE OF THE SAME.

MEDITATIONS

FOR EVERY DAY IN THE WEEK;

AND

A NOVENA FOR ALL SOULS' DAY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN OF

ST. ALPHONSUS M. LIGUORI,

Bishop of St. Agatha, and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

BY A CATHOLIC CLERGYMAN.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A METHOD OF DEVOUTLY HEARING MASS,

BY BLESSED LEONARD A PORTO MAURITIO.

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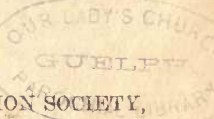
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ADVERTISEMENT.

IN the former translation of the Visits to the Blessed Sacrament, two-thirds of the Introduction, a small portion of each Visit, a considerable part of the Acts for Communion, and about one half of the Aspirations of Love to Jesus in the Holy Sacrament, were omitted. All these defects are supplied in the present translation. The Visits to the Blessed Virgin contained in the former, and reprinted in this edition of the Visits to the Holy Sacrament, were taken from a French translation of the Visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and differ considerably from the Visits to the Blessed Virgin given in the Italian edition of the works of St. Alphonsus, lately published at Monza. The Devotions for Confession were also taken from the French translation. The method of hearing Mass, contained in the former translation of the Visits, is the work, not of St. Alphonsus, but of Blessed

Leonard. It is now faithfully translated from the original Italian. In addition to the matter contained in the former edition of the VISITS, the reader will find, in this volume, the substance of all that St. Alphonsus has written on the advantages of, and the rules for, Frequent Communion, along with a defence of his doctrine on the same subject, and a Novena for All Souls' day. The first reply to the person who assailed his opinion on Frequent Communion, was written at the request of Pope Clement the Thirteenth.

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TO THE
IMMACULATE MOTHER OF GOD,
ALWAYS A VIRGIN.

MOST HOLY QUEEN:

I do not know any one to whom I can dedicate this little book, which treats of the love of thy Son, with more propriety than to thee my most dear Mother, who, among all creatures, art the first lover of Jesus. By this little tribute which I present to thee, and which has been composed for the sole purpose of making souls more enamored of Jesus Christ, I expect to afford great gratification to thy heart, which desires so ardently to see him loved by all as much as he deserves. To thee then, such as it is, I present it: accept it; and protect it, by obtaining, not for me the praises of men, but for all who read this little work, the grace that they may henceforth correspond with greater devotion, and with a more tender affection, to the excess of love which

our most sweet Saviour has shown to us in his passion, and in the institution of the most holy sacrament. I place this little book at thy feet, and I pray thee to accept as thy own the gift and the giver, who has for a long time placed in thee, after thy Son, all his hopes; and who wishes and hopes always to be happy with thee, O most amiable Lady, and always to call himself,

Thy most loving,

Though most unworthy servant,

ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI,

Of the Congregation of the most Holy Redeemer.

TO THE READER.

MY DEAR READER: I entreat you not to despise this little book, which I have composed in a style altogether simple, because I thought that simplicity of style would render the book more useful to all sorts of persons. I also entreat you, as often as you use this little book in your visits to the blessed sacrament, to recommend me, whether I am living or dead, to Jesus, in the most adorable sacrament, and I promise to pray in the holy Mass for every one who shall perform this act of charity.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

VISITS TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

FAITH teaches, and we are obliged to believe, that Jesus Christ is really present in the consecrated Host, under the appearances of bread; but we should also know that he remains on our altars, as on a throne of love and of mercy, there to dispense his graces, and there to show his love for us, by remaining with us night and day in this hidden manner. We know that the holy Church has instituted the festival of the most holy sacrament, which is celebrated for eight days, with so many solemn processions and expositions of the adorable sacrament, that Christians may, by their devotions, their thanksgivings, and affections, gratefully acknowledge and honor the loving presence and dwelling of Jesus Christ

in the sacrament of the altar. O God! how many injuries and insults must this amiable Redeemer have suffered, how many must he suffer every day, from the very men for the love of whom he remains on our altars! Of this he bitterly complained to his dear servant, sister Margaret Alacoque, as is related by the author of the book "On the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus." One day while she remained in prayer before the blessed sacrament, Jesus showed her his heart in a throne of flames, crowned with thorns, and fastened to a cross, and said to her: "Behold that heart which has loved men so ardently, which has reserved nothing, and which has been consumed for the love of them. But, in return, the greater part of them treat me only with ingratitude, by their irreverence, coldness, sacrileges, and by the insults which they offer to me in this sacrament of love. And what is most painful to me is, that there are among them hearts consecrated to me." Hence, Jesus requested her to procure the dedication of the first Friday after the octave of the holy sacrament to the honor of his adorable heart, that, on that day, the souls consecrated to his love might endeavor to compensate, by their devotions and affections, the insults which he has received from men in the sacrament of the altar; and he

promised the most abundant graces to all who should render him this homage.

This explains what the Lord had already said by his prophet, that, "his delights are to be with the children of men;" for, when they even abandon and despise him, he will not depart from them. This also shows how pleasing to the heart of Jesus are the souls who visit him, and remain with him in the holy sacrament. He commanded St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzis to visit him in the holy sacrament thirty-three times in the day. This holy spouse of Jesus Christ, as we read in her life, cheerfully obeyed, and, at each visit, approached as near as she could to the altar. But let those devout souls, who frequently visit the holy sacrament, speak and tell the gifts, the lights, the flames which they receive, and the paradise which they enjoy in the presence of this God concealed in the holy Eucharist. That great Sicilian missionary, Father Lewis La Nusa, was from his youth, even when a secular, so enamored of Jesus Christ, that he could not without great difficulty withdraw from the presence of his dear Lord. He was commanded by his director not to remain longer than an hour before the holy sacrament; but such were the delights which he tasted at the foot of the altar, that, in separating himself, through obedience, from the bosom of

Jesus Christ, he appeared to suffer as much violence as an infant does, when torn from the breast of its mother. And, when he was obliged to depart, it is said that he stood looking at the altar, and bowed several times, as if he knew not how to leave the society of his Lord, whose presence was so sweet and pleasing to him. St. Lewis Gonzaga was commanded not to remain before the blessed sacrament; but, in passing before the altar, he felt himself drawn by the sweet attractions of his Saviour to remain with him, and with reluctance retired, saying with tenderness of love, *Recede a me, Domine, recede*. It was at the foot of the altar that St. Francis Xavier found repose and refreshment after the many labors he endured in India; for, after spending the day in saving souls, he employed the night in prayer before the most holy sacrament. Such too, was the practice of St. John Francis Regis, who, when he found the church closed, consoled himself by remaining on his knees in the rain and cold, to honor and adore from a distance his comforter in the holy sacrament. In all his difficulties, St. Francis of Assisium had immediate recourse to Jesus in the holy sacrament.

St. Wenceslaus had a most tender devotion to the holy Eucharist. This holy king was so much

enamored of Jesus in the holy sacrament, that, with his own hands, he gathered the wheat and grapes, and made the hosts and wine for the use of the altar. He visited the adorable sacrament by night, and from these visits his holy soul drew such flames of divine love, that the heat was communicated to his body, which, by touching the snow, divested it of its cold. It is related that, when the servant who accompanied the saint complained of the cold, the holy king commanded him to walk in his footsteps, and the servant felt the cold no more.

In the visits for each day you will read other examples of the tender affection with which souls inflamed with the love of God desired to remain in the presence of the most holy sacrament: you will find that all the saints have been enamored of this most sweet devotion. On this earth we cannot find a more brilliant jewel or a more lovely treasure than Jesus in the sacrament. Certainly, after the frequentation of the sacraments, the adoration of Jesus in the holy Eucharist is, of all devotions, the most acceptable to God and the most useful to us. Do not then, O devout soul, refuse to begin this devotion: from this day forward retire each day from the conversation of men, and remain for some time, at least for half an hour or for a quarter, in some

church, before Jesus Christ in the holy sacrament. "Taste, and see how sweet the Lord is." Make a trial of this devotion, and you will see the great fruit which you shall draw from it. Be assured that, of all the moments of your life, the time which you spend in devotion before this most divine sacrament will be that which shall give you greatest support during life, and the greatest consolation at the hour of death, and for all eternity: and be persuaded that you shall gain more in a quarter of an hour spent in prayer before the holy Eucharist than in all the other spiritual exercises of the day. It is true, that God hears in all places the prayers of all who seek his graces; for he has said, "Ask, and you shall receive." But the *Disciple* teaches that Jesus, in the holy sacrament, dispenses his favors with greater abundance to all who visit him: and blessed Henry Suson used to say, that Jesus, on the altar, hears the prayers of the faithful more readily than he does in any other place. And where but at the foot of the altar have holy souls made the most generous resolutions? Perhaps you, too, will one day, before some tabernacle, resolve to give yourself entirely to God? At least through gratitude to my Jesus, in the holy sacrament, I must proclaim to all who read this little book that, in remuneration for my cold and im-

perfect visits to the blessed sacrament, I am now removed from the dangers of the world, where I unfortunately lived till my twenty-sixth year. Happy you, if you can at an earlier age retire from the world, and give yourself entirely to that God who has given himself entirely to you. I repeat, happy you, not only in the next, but even in this life. Believe me, that all is folly. Feasts, comedies, parties of pleasure, amusements, these are the goods of the world ; but they are goods which are full of gall and of thorns. Believe one who has had experience of them, and is now weeping for it. Be assured that Jesus Christ will give more consolation to those who remain with recollection before the holy sacrament, than they could receive from all the pleasures and pastimes of the world. Oh ! how delightful is it to remain with faith, and with a tender devotion, at the foot of the altar, and to converse familiarly with Jesus Christ, who dwells in our tabernacles for the purpose of hearing the prayers of all who visit him ! How delightful to implore his pardon for our offences, to lay before him all our wants, as one friend does to another in whom he places all his confidence, to ask his graces, his love, and his glory ! But oh ! what a paradise to continue in acts of love of that Lord who remains on the altar interceding before his Father in our

behalf, and burning with love for us! He is content to remain there hidden and unknown, and even despised by ungrateful souls. But of what use is it to say more on the subject? "Taste and see."

With regard to the visits to an image of most holy Mary, it is the opinion of St. Bernard, and of the generality of theologians, that God gives no grace to man which does not pass through the hands of Mary. "*Deus nihil voluit nos habere quod per manus Mariæ non transiret.*" Hence, Saures asserts that it is the sentiment of the universal Church that, to obtain God's graces, the intercession of Mary is not only useful, but even necessary. "*Sentit Ecclesia Virginis intercessionem esse utilem ac necessariam.*" This doctrine is strongly confirmed by the conduct of the holy Church, in applying to Mary the following words of the sacred scriptures: "In me is all hope of life and of virtue: come over to me, all ye that desire me." Eccl. xxiv. 25, 26. "Blessed is the man that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates." Prov. viii. 34. Happy the man who is diligent in coming every day to the gate of my powerful intercession; for, in coming to me, he shall find life and eternal glory. "He who shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord." Prov. viii. 35. Hence, the

Church justly invites us all to call Mary our common hope : “ *Spes nostra salve.* ”*

* In a notice to the reader, prefixed to the GLORIES OF MARY, St. Alphonsus explains the sense in which he wished his doctrine regarding the privileges of the Blessed Virgin to be understood. He concludes this explanation in the following words : “ Then, to say all in a few words, the God of all holiness, in order to glorify the Mother of the Redeemer, has decreed and ordained, that her great charity should pray for all those for whom her Divine Son has paid and offered the most superabundant price of his precious blood, in which alone is ‘ *our salvation, life, and resurrection.* ’ And on the foundation of this doctrine, and inasmuch as they accord with it, I have intended to lay down my propositions, which the saints, in their affectionate colloquies with Mary, and in their fervent discourses upon her, have not hesitated to assert.”—*Glories of Mary*, Monza Edition, vol. i. pp. 11, 12.

In the third chapter of the first volume (pp. 123, 124) St. Alphonsus compares the hope which we place in the Blessed Virgin, to the confidence which a person has in a minister of state whom he asks to procure a favor from his sovereign.

“ Whatsoever Mary obtains for us, she obtains it through the merits of Jesus Christ, and because she prays in the name of Jesus Christ.”—*Glories of Mary*, vol. i. p. 183.

“ Mary, then, is said to be omnipotent in the manner in which omnipotence can be understood of a creature ; for a creature is incapable of a divine attribute. Thus she is omnipotent, inasmuch as she obtains, by her prayers, whatever she asks.”—*Ibid.* p. 223.

“ To obtain favors through the intercession of Mary by practising devout exercises in her honor, the first condition

“Let us, then,” says St. Bernard, “seek grace, and let us seek it through Mary.”

I recommend you to read in the work of Father Auriemma, entitled *Affetti Scamb.*, an account of the numberless favors which the Mother of God has obtained for those who have practised that most useful devotion of visiting churches or images dedicated to her honor. For blessed Albertus Magnus, the Abbot Rupert, and Father Suares, she obtained the gift of understanding, by which they became so celebrated for learning. She obtained special graces for Brother John Berkmans, of the society of Jesus, who was accustomed to visit her image every day in a chapel of the Roman College. In his visits, he protested, that in order to love her only after God, he renounced all love of the world; and, under the image of his beloved queen, he always kept the following inscription: “I shall never rest until I shall have obtained a tender love towards my Mother.”

In his youth, St. Bernardine of Sienna was ac-

2, that we perform our devotions with a soul free from sin, & at least, with a desire to give up sin.” “If a person wish to commit sin with the hope of being saved by the Blessed Virgin, he shall thus render himself unworthy and incapable of her protection.”—*Glories of Mary*, vol. ii. pp. 125, 326.

customed to visit an image of Mary every day in a chapel near the gate of the city, saying, that she had wounded his heart. Hence, he called her his beloved, and used to say, that he could not do less than pay frequent visits to her. Through her intercession, he afterwards obtained the grace to abandon the world, and to become a great saint and the apostle of Italy.

Endeavor, then, to unite, each day, with the visit to the blessed sacrament, a visit to most holy Mary in some church, or at least before some image of her in your own house. If you make these visits every day with confidence and devotion, you may expect to receive great favors from this most grateful queen; who, according to St. Andrew of Crete, usually bestows great gifts on those who perform any little devotion in her honor. "*Solet maxima pro minimis reddere.*" Sweet Mary, my hope, who can ever forget thee? O queen of mercy, have pity on me!

ON SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

Since it is recommended to terminate each visit to the blessed sacrament by a spiritual communion, it will be useful to explain its nature and its fruits. According to St. Thomas, a spiritual communion consists in desiring ardently to receive Jesus in the holy sacrament, and in em-

bracing him with the same love as if you had already received him.

By showing to Sister Paula Maresca two precious vessels, one of gold and the other of silver, in the former of which he preserved her sacramental communions, and in the latter her spiritual communions, our Lord gave her to understand that spiritual communions are very pleasing to him, and a great source of grace to us. And, to blessed Jane of the Cross, he said, that, as often as she communicated spiritually, she received a grace similar to that which she derived from her sacramental communions. But it is enough to know that the holy Council of Trent extols the advantages of spiritual communion, and exhorts the faithful to practice it.

Hence all devout souls are accustomed to make frequent spiritual communions. Blessed Agatha of the Cross made two hundred spiritual communions in the day; and Peter Faber, the first companion of St. Ignatius, used to say, that spiritual communions are a most powerful help to receive the holy Eucharist with the proper dispositions.

Hence, I exhort all who desire to advance in the love of Jesus Christ, to make a spiritual communion at each visit to the blessed sacrament, and at each mass which they hear. It would be better to make a spiritual communion three times

on these occasions; that is, in the beginning, middle, and end of the visit and of the mass. This devotion is more profitable than some imagine it to be, and is, at the same time, most easy. Blessed Jane of the Cross used to say, that a spiritual communion may be made as often as we please, without being observed by any one, without being fasting, and without leave of our director. The entire consists in making an act of love.

AN ACT FOR SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

My Jesus, I believe that thou art present in the most holy sacrament. I love thee above all things: I desire to receive thee into my soul. Since I cannot now receive thee sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace thee, and I unite myself entirely to thee, as if thou hadst already come: do not permit me to be ever separated from thee.

A SHORTER ACT.

I believe in thee, O Jesus, present in the most holy sacrament. I love thee, I desire to receive thee. Come into my heart. I embrace thee, do not ever more depart from me.

“O Lord Jesus Christ, let the sweet and consuming force of the love of thee absorb my mind, that I may die for the love of thee, who didst

condescend to die for the love of me.”—*St. Francis of Assisium.*

“O love not loved! O love not known!”—*St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzis.*

“O my spouse, when wilt thou take me to thyself?”—*St. Peter of Alcantara.*

Jesus, source of all my good, my sweet love, wound, inflame this heart of mine, that it may always burn for thee. Live the love of Jesus, our life, our all, and live Mary, our hope after Jesus. Amen.

ACTS TO BE MADE AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH
VISIT TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

My Lord Jesus Christ, who, through the love which thou didst bear to men, dost remain with them day and night in this sacrament, full of mercy and of love, expecting, inviting, and receiving all who come to visit thee, I believe that thou art present in the Sacrament of the Altar. From the abyss of my nothingness, I adore thee, and I thank thee for all the favors thou hast bestowed upon me, particularly for having given me thyself in this sacrament, for having given me for my advocate thy most holy Mother, Mary, and for having called me to visit thee in this church. I, this day, salute thy most loving heart, and I intend to salute it for three ends; first, in

thanksgiving for this great gift; secondly, in compensation for all the injuries thou hast received from thy enemies in this sacrament; thirdly, I intend, by this visit, to adore thee in all places in which thou art least honored and most abandoned in the holy sacrament. My Jesus, I love thee with my whole heart. I am sorry for having hitherto offended thy infinite goodness. I purpose, with the assistance of thy grace, never more to offend thee; and, at this moment, miserable as I am, I consecrate my whole being to thee. I give thee my entire will, all my affections and desires, and all that I have. From this day forward do what thou pleasest with me, and with whatever belongs to me. I only ask and desire thy holy love, the gift of final perseverance, and the perfect accomplishment of thy will. I recommend to thee the souls in purgatory, particularly those who were most devoted to the blessed sacrament and to most holy Mary, and I also recommend to thee all poor sinners. Finally, my dear Saviour, I unite all my affections with the affections of thy most loving heart; and thus united, I offer them to thy eternal Father, and I entreat him in thy name, and for thy sake, to accept them.

VISITS
TO THE
MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

FIRST VISIT.

BEHOLD Jesus in the holy sacrament, the source of every good, inviting all to visit him. "Let him that thirsts come to me." St. John vii. Oh! what waters of grace have the saints continually drawn from this fountain, where, according to the prediction of Isaias, Jesus dispenses all the merits of his passion! "You shall draw waters in joy from the fountains of your Saviour." Isaias xii. From her long and frequent visits to Jesus Christ in the holy Eucharist, the Countess of Feria, that illustrious disciple of the venerable Father M. Avila, was called the Spouse of the Sacrament. Being asked how she was employed during the hours which she spent at the foot of the altar, she

replied, "I would remain there for all eternity; for the holy sacrament contains the essence of God, who will be the food of the blessed. Good God! I am asked what I do in the presence of my Saviour. Why am I not rather asked, what do I not do? I love him, I praise him, I thank him for his favors, I supplicate his mercy; I do what a beggar does in the presence of a rich man, what a sick man does in the presence of his physician, what a person parched with thirst does before a clear fountain, or what a man fainting from hunger does before a splendid table."

O my most amiable, sweet, and beloved Jesus! my life, my hope, my treasure, and the only love of my soul, how dearly has it cost thee to remain with us in this sacrament! To dwell on our altars, and to assist us by thy presence, thou hadst first to die on a cross, and afterwards to submit to numberless injuries in the holy sacrament. Thy love, and thy desire to be loved by us, have conquered all difficulties.

Come, then, O Lord, come and take possession of my heart. Lock the door of it for ever, that no creature may ever enter, to share in

that love which is due to thee, and which I desire to give entirely to thee. O my dear Redeemer, mayest thou alone reign over me mayest thou alone possess my whole being and, should I ever be wanting in perfect obedience to thee, chastise me with severity, that, for the future, I may be more careful to please thee in all things. Grant that I may never more desire or seek any other pleasure than that of pleasing thee, of visiting thee on the altar, of remaining with thee, and of receiving thee in the holy sacrament. Let others seek earthly goods, I love and desire only the treasure of thy love. This gift only do I ask of thee at the foot of thy altar. Grant that I may forget myself to remember only thy goodness. Ye blessed seraphim, I do not envy your glory but your love for your and my God. Teach me what I must do to love and please him.

Ejaculatory Prayer. My Jesus, I wish to love thee only; thee only do I desire to please.

At the end of each Visit you will make the Spiritual Communion. You will then make a visit to some image of our Mother, Mary.

FIRST VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Prayer of St. Ephrem.

MOST pure and immaculate Virgin! divine Mary, Mother of God! thou art elevated in dignity above all the saints; thou art the hope of our fathers and the joy of the elect. Through thee, as the Mother of Jesus, we have been reconciled with God. O great queen! have compassion on us, and grant us an asylum in the arms of thy mercy. We dedicate and consecrate ourselves to thy service; suffer not the devil to draw us with him into eternal flames.

Ejac. Cause of our joy, pray for us.

A Prayer to Most Holy Mary, which ought to be repeated every day at the end of the Visit, in order to obtain her most powerful patronage.

MOST holy and immaculate Virgin, to thee my Mother Mary, who art the mother of my Lord, the queen of the universe, the advocate, the hope, the refuge of sinners, to thee, I who am the most miserable of all, have recourse. I salute thee, O great queen; I thank thee for all the favors thou hast hitherto bestowed upon me, particularly for having delivered me from hell, which I have so often deserved. I love

thee, O most amiable lady, and, through the love which I bear thee, I promise always to serve thee, and to do all that I can to induce others to love thee. In thee, after Jesus, I place all my hopes, all my salvation. Accept me for thy servant, O Mother of Mercy, and take me under thy protection; and, since thou art so powerful before God, deliver me from all temptations, or rather obtain for me strength to conquer them till death. From thee I ask the true love of Jesus Christ; through thy intercession, I hope to die a good death. O my Mother, through the love which thou dost bear to God, I implore of thee to assist me always, but particularly at the last moment of my life. Do not leave me till thou seest me safe in heaven, to bless thee and to sing thy mercies for all eternity. Amen: such my fervent hope, such my ardent wish.

SECOND VISIT.

THE devout Nierembergh says, that since bread is a sort of food which is consumed for nourishment, and may be preserved for use, Jesus wished to remain on earth under its species, not only to be consumed by uniting him-

self to the souls of his lovers, by means of the holy communion, but also to be preserved in our tabernacles, and thus, by his presence on the altar, to remind us of the love which he bears us. "He," says St. Paul, "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant." Phil. ii. 7. But what should we say when we see him *taking the form of bread*? "No tongue," says St. Peter of Alcantara, "can express the greatness of the love which Jesus bears to all who are in the state of grace. Hence, that his absence from them might not be an occasion of forgetting him, this most sweet spouse, before his departure from this world, left, as a memorial of his love, this most holy sacrament, in which he himself remained. He did not wish that between him and his servants there should be any other pledge than himself, to keep alive the remembrance of him."

Since then, my Jesus, thou dost remain in this tabernacle, to hear the supplications of the miserable who come to present their petitions to thee, attend to the prayer of a sinner the most ungrateful among men.

Knowing the evil which I have done in offending thee, I repent, and cast myself at thy

feet. I ask the pardon of all my offences. Ah, that I had never offended thee my God! Now that I know thy infinite amiableness, I am enamored of thee, and I feel a strong desire to love thee and to please thee. But this, O Lord, I cannot do, unless thou assist me. O sovereign Lord, make known to all paradise thy great power, and thy infinite goodness, by changing a great rebel against thy Majesty into an ardent lover of thy divinity. Thou art able and willing to do it. Supply what is wanting in me, that I may love thee intensely, or at least as much as I have offended thee. I love thee, O Jesus, I love thee above all things; I love thee more than my life, O my God, my love, my all.

Ejac. My God and my all.

The Spiritual Communion.

SECOND VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Prayer of St. Ephrem.

O QUEEN of the universe and most bountiful sovereign! thou art the great advocate of sinners, the sure port of those who have suffered shipwreck, the resource of the world, the ransom of captives, the solace of the weak, the consolation of the afflicted, the refuge and sal-

vation of every creature. O, full of grace! enlighten my understanding, and loosen my tongue, that I may recount thy praises, and sing to thee the angelical salutation, which thou so justly deservest. Hail, thou who art the peace, the joy, the consolation of the whole world! Hail, paradise of delight, the assured asylum of all who are in danger, the source of grace, the mediatrix between God and man!

Ejac. Refuge of sinners, take pity on me.

THIRD VISIT

“My delights were to be with the children of men.”
PROV. viii. 31.

BEHOLD our Jesus, who, after having died for our redemption, wished to remain with us in the most holy sacrament, declaring that his delights are to be with the children of men. “O men,” says St. Teresa, “how can you offend a God who declares that among you he finds his delights! Jesus delights in our society, and shall not we delight in the company of Jesus? we, particularly, who have had the honor of dwelling in his palace? How highly do vassals esteem the privilege of living in the palace of their sovereign? Behold the palace

of the King, this house in which we dwell with Jesus Christ. Let us be careful to thank him, and to avail ourselves of the conversation of Jesus Christ. Behold me, then, O my Lord and my God, before this altar, where thou dost remain night and day for the love of me. Thou art the fountain of every good, the remedy of every evil, the treasure of every one who is in need. Behold, at thy feet, a sinner, among all the most needy, the most infirm: I ask thy mercy, have pity on me. Seeing that in this sacrament thou hast descended from heaven solely for my sanctification, I will not allow my miseries to discourage me. I praise thee, I thank thee, I love thee; and if thou wish me to ask an alms, I ask the grace never more to offend thee, I ask the light and grace to love thee with all my strength. Lord, I love thee with my whole soul; I love thee with all the affections of my heart. Grant that I may repeat these words with sincerity, that I may repeat them continually in this life, and for all eternity. Most holy Mary, my holy patrons, all ye blessed angels and saints of paradise, help me to love my most amiable God.

Ejac. Good Pastor, true bread, Jesus, have

pity on us, feed us, defend us, grant that we may see good things in the land of the living.

The Spiritual Communion.

THIRD VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN:

Prayer of St. Germanus.

Most holy Virgin! who art the greatest consolation that I receive from God, thou who art the heavenly dew which assuages all my pains, thou who art the light of my soul when it is enveloped in darkness, thou who art my guide in unknown paths, the support of my weakness, my treasure in poverty, my remedy in sickness, my consolation in trouble, my refuge in misery, and the hope of my salvation; hear my supplications, have pity on me, as becomes the mother of so good a God, and obtain for me a favorable reception of all my petitions at the throne of mercy.

Ejac. O merciful, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary.

FOURTH VISIT.

“For her conversation has no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness.” WISD. viii. 16.

WORLDLINGS feel so happy in the society of a friend, that they lose entire days in his com-

pany. They who love not Jesus, experience tediousness in remaining with him in the tabernacle. The saints enjoyed a paradise before the holy sacrament. After her death, St. Teresa said from heaven to one of her religious: "we who rejoice in heaven and you who suffer on earth, ought to be the same in purity and love. And what we do in heaven before the divine essence, you should do on earth before the most holy sacrament." Jesus then, in the adorable Eucharist, ought to be our paradise on earth.

O immaculate Lamb! immolated for us on the cross, remember that I am one of those souls whom thou hast redeemed by so many sorrows, and by so painful a death. Since thou hast given thyself entirely to me, and since thou dost daily offer thyself in sacrifice for me on the altar, grant that thou mayest be for ever mine, and that I may for ever belong entirely to thee. I offer myself to thee without reserve, that thou mayest do with me what thou pleasest. I give thee my will, chain it to thyself with the sweet bonds of thy love, that it may be the eternal slave of thy most holy will. I wish to live no longer for the gratifica-

tion of my own desires, but for the sole purpose of pleasing thee. Destroy in me whatever is not agreeable to thee. Grant me the grace to think only of pleasing thee, and to desire only what thou dost desire. I love thee O my dear Saviour! with my whole heart. I love thee because thou dost desire to be loved by me: I love thee because thou art worthy of all my love. It grieves me that I do not love thee as much as thou deservest. I would wish to die for the love of thee. Lord, accept my desire: give me thy love. Amen, Amen.

Ejac. O will of my God, I sacrifice myself entirely to thee.

The Spiritual Communion.

FOURTH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Prayer of St. Germanus.

O SOVEREIGN QUEEN! thou art our defence and our joy. Make me worthy to share with thee the happiness which thou enjoyest in heaven. Yes, my refuge, my defence, my strength, my hope, obtain for me, by thy powerful intercession, a place with thee in paradise. Being the mother of God, thou canst obtain it, if thou pleasest. O Mary! thou art all pow-

erful in saving sinners, and, being the Mother of Mercy, thou canst want no inducement to save them by thy intercession.

Ejac. O my Mother and my hope! obtain for me the grace to be devoted entirely to Jesus.

FIFTH VISIT.

“The sparrow hath found herself a house, and the turtle a nest for herself, where she may lay her young. Thy altars O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.” Ps. lxxxiii. 3.

THE sparrow, says David, has found herself a house, and the turtle a nest; but thou, O my King and my God, hast taken up thy dwelling with us on the altar. It must be said, that thy love for man is excessive; thou couldst not to do more to gain his love. O most amiable Jesus, grant that we may love thee intensely. It is not just that we should love with coldness a God that loves us with so much tenderness. Draw us to thyself with the sweet attractions of thy love. Make us understand the strong claims which thou hast to all the affections of our hearts.

O infinite Majesty and infinite goodness, now has it happened that though thou lovest men so ardently, and hast done so much to be loved

by them, so few of them love thee? I will be no longer among the unhappy number of those who have been ungrateful to thee. I am resolved, to the utmost of my ability, to love thee, and to love thee only. Thou dost deserve my love; thou dost command and press me to love thee: I desire to obey thee. O God of my soul, make me please thee in all things. I ask and hope for this grace, through the merits of thy passion. Give the goods of the earth to those who wish for them; I only desire and seek the great treasure of thy love. I love thee, my Jesus; I love thee, infinite goodness. Thou art my riches, my happiness, and my love.

Ejac. My Jesus, thou hast given thyself entirely to me; I give my whole being to thee.

The Spiritual Communion.

FIFTH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

WE look up to thee, O Queen of the world! for protection. After a life of so much sin and ingratitude, we have to appear before our Judge, and who shall appease his wrath? No one is so well qualified to do it as thyself, who lovedst him so tenderly, and wast so tenderly loved by

him. O Mother of Mercy, open then thy ears to our sighs and prayers. Thou dost not look with disdain on the sinner, however enormous his crimes may have been; if with sincere repentance he cries out to thee and entreats thy intercession, thou despisest him not. Thou animatest and consolest him, and dost not abandon him, until thou hast reconciled him with his Judge.

We fly, therefore, to thy protection, entreating thee to appease the indignation of thy Son, and to restore us to his grace.

Ejac. O Mary! show thyself a mother to us.

SIXTH VISIT.

“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” LUKE xii. 34.

JESUS CHRIST says, that whatsoever a person regards as his treasure, on that his affections rest. Hence, the saints, who neither esteem nor love any other treasure than Jesus Christ, have fixed their hearts and all their affections on this most holy sacrament. My most amiable Jesus, who, for the love of me, dost remain night and day enclosed in this tabernacle, draw, I entreat thee, my whole heart to thyself, that

I may think only of thee, that I may hope only in thee, and that I may love and seek only thee. Grant me this grace, through the merits of thy passion; through them I ask and hope for it. O my adorable Saviour! O divine lover, how amiable are the tender inventions of thy love, to gain the love of souls! O eternal Word! thou wast not content with becoming man, and dying for us; thou hast also given us thyself in this sacrament, to be our companion, our food, and a pledge of eternal glory. Thou dost appear among us, at one time, an infant in a stable, and at another, a poor artisan in a shop; now a criminal on a cross, and again under the appearance of bread on the altar. Tell me, what more couldst thou do to induce us to love thee? O God, infinitely amiable, when shall I begin to correspond to such an excess of love? Lord, I desire to live only to love thee. Of what use is life to me, unless I spend the entire of it, in loving and in pleasing thee, my beloved Redeemer, who hast spent thy whole life for me? And what shall I love, if I love not thee, who art all beauty, all sweetness, all goodness, all love, all loveliness. May I live only to love thee, and may

my soul melt through love, at the sole remembrance of thy love; and, at the bare mention of the crib, the cross, or the sacrament, may my heart be inflamed with a desire to do great things for the love of thee, who hast done and suffered so much for the love of me.

Ejac. Grant O my Lord, that before I die, I may do something for the love of thee.

The Spiritual Communion.

SIXTH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Prayer of St. Bernard.

O MARY! thou art the only woman on whom the Saviour of the world has poured the treasures of his grace without measure; hence we are taught to honor thy chaste womb as the temple of God, wherein he was pleased to begin the great work of our redemption, the reconciliation of God with man. Thou, O Mother of God, art that spiritual garden, whose fruit is never gathered by the hands of sinners. Thou art that hallowed soil, where God has planted all the flowers which adorn his church, and amongst the rest, the holy virtues of humility, purity, and charity, which are greater ornaments to the souls of men than violets, lilies,

and roses are to the earth. Thou art the paradise of God, whence flows the stream of living water to moisten the earth. Oh, what benefits were bestowed on the world through thee, when thou wast selected to be the fortunate channel of so many graces!

Ejac. Hail! our life, our sweetness, and our hope.

SEVENTH VISIT.

“Behold I am with you all days, to the consummation of the world.” MATTH. xxviii. 20.

OUR loving Pastor, who has given his life for his sheep, did not wish to be separated from us by death. Behold, he says, O my beloved sheep, I am always with you. For you, I have remained on earth in this sacrament; here you can find me whenever you wish, always ready to assist and console you by my presence. I will not leave you till the end of the world; as long as you shall remain on earth, I will dwell among you. “The Saviour,” says St. Peter of Alcantara, “did not wish to leave his spouse, at such a distance, without a companion. Hence, he has instituted the holy sacra-

ment, in which he himself, the best of all spouses, remains with her.”

Most sweet Lord, most amiable Saviour, I now visit thee in this altar; but thou dost visit me with far greater love, when thou comest to my soul in the holy communion. Thou art not only present with me then, but thou art also my food, thou dost unite and give thyself entirely to me, so that I may then say with truth: My Jesus, now thou art all mine. Since thou givest thyself to me without reserve, it is but just that I offer myself entirely to thee. I am a worm, and thou art God. O God of love, O love of my soul, when shall I see myself altogether thine, not in words, but in deed. Thou canst make me entirely thine. Increase, O Lord, my confidence to obtain, through the merits of thy blood, the grace that before I die I may belong entirely to thee, and that I may be divested entirely of self-love. Thou, O Lord, dost hear the prayers of all; receive this day the petition of a soul that sincerely desires to love thee. I wish to love thee with all my strength; I wish to obey thee in all things without interest, without consolation, without reward. I desire to serve thee through love, for

the sole purpose of pleasing thy heart, which has loved me to such excess. Thy love will be my reward. O beloved Son of the eternal Father! take possession of my liberty, of my will, of all that I am and have, and give thyself to me. I love thee, I seek and sigh after thee; I desire to possess thee.

Ejac. My Jesus, make me entirely thine.

The Spiritual Communion.

SEVENTH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Prayer of St. Bernard.

O BLESSED QUEEN! it is of thee the prophet speaks, when he says, "Who is she that riseth like the day star, beautiful as the moon, brilliant as the sun?" Yes, thou didst appear in the world like the bright day star, preceding by the light of thy sanctity the coming of the Sun of Justice. The day on which thou camest into the world, may well be styled a day of salvation and a day of grace. Thou art beautiful as the moon; because as none of the celestial bodies so nearly resembles the sun as it does, so there is no creature whose perfections so nearly approach to those of God as thy own. The moon enlightens the night by reflecting the

rays of the sun, and thou enlightenest our darkness by the splendor of those virtues with which God has adorned thee. But thou art even more beautiful than the moon, because in thee is found neither spot nor shade; thou art brilliant like the sun; I mean that divine Sun who created the one which enlightens the earth, for, as he in his humanity is the most resplendent amongst men, so art thou the brightest amongst women.

Ejac. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners.

EIGHTH VISIT

To every soul that visits Jesus in the holy sacrament he addresses the words of the spouse in the Canticles: "Arise, make haste, my love, my beautiful one, and come." Cant. ii. 10. O soul, who dost visit me, *arise*, arise from thy miseries; I am here to enrich thee with my graces. *Make haste*, draw near to me, be not afraid of my majesty, which is humbled in this sacrament, to take away from thee all fear, and to inspire thee with confidence. *My love*, be no more my enemy, but be always my beloved; for I love thee and thou lovest me. *My beau-*

tiful one, my grace has made thee beautiful. *And come*, come and unite thyself to me, and ask with confidence whatsoever thou pleasest.

St. Teresa used to say, that this great King of Glory has clothed himself with the appearances of bread in the sacrament, and has concealed his majesty, to encourage us to approach with confidence to his divine heart.

Let us, then, draw near to Jesus with great confidence and love; let us unite ourselves to him, and ask his graces.

O eternal Word, made man, and concealed in this sacrament for my sake, what ought to be my joy when I stand before thee, who art my God, who art infinite majesty and infinite goodness, and whose love for my soul is so tender. O all ye souls that love God, whether you are in heaven or on earth, love him also for me. Mary, my Mother, assist me to love him. O most loving Lord, grant that thou mayest be the object of all my affections. Take full possession of me, and rule my whole will with undivided sway. I consecrate to thee my whole mind, that it may always think of thy goodness; I consecrate to thee my body, that it may help me to please thee; I consecrate to

thee my soul, that it may be thine without reserve. O beloved of my soul, that all men were convinced of the tenderness of thy love for them, that thus they might all live only to honor and please thee as much as thou dost desire and deserve. May I, at least, live always enamored of thy infinite beauty. From this day forward, I will do all in my power to please thee. I purpose to do whatever I know to be pleasing to thee, though it should cost me the greatest pain, and though it should be an occasion of losing all my property, and even my life. Happy me, if I lose all things to gain thee my God, my treasure, my love, my all.

Ejac. Jesus, my love, take full possession of me.

The Spiritual Communion.

EIGHTH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Prayer of St. Bernard.

SWEET and amiable Mary, no one can pronounce thy name without feeling the greatest desire of loving thee; and they who love thee cannot call thee to mind without being animated to love thee more. Pray for us to thy divine Son that he would vouchsafe to strengthen our

weakness: no one is better entitled to speak in our favor to thy God, and ours, than thyself, who art nearest to him. Intercede, then, for us, O blessed Mother, because thy Son hears thee, and thou canst obtain whatever thou askest.

Ejac. O Mary, obtain for me the grace to have continual recourse to thee.

NINTH VISIT.

ST. JOHN says, that he saw the Lord “girt about the paps with a golden girdle.” Apoc. i. 13. Jesus remains in the holy sacrament with paps full of milk; that is of graces, which, in his mercy, he wishes to dispense to all his children: and, like a mother in search of her infants to give them suck, he says to us all, “You shall be carried at the breasts.” Isaias lxvi. 12.

The venerable Father Alvarez saw Jesus in the holy sacrament, having his hands full of graces, and seeking souls to whom he could dispense them. We read of St. Catherine of Sienna, that she approached the holy sacrament with the love and avidity with which an infant seizes its mother’s breast.

O most beloved and only begotten of the eternal Father, I know that thou art worthy of infinite love. I desire to love thee as much as thou dost deserve, or, at least, as much as a soul can ever desire to love thee. I well know that I, who have been so great a traitor and rebel to thy love, am unworthy to love thee, or to approach so near thee as I do in this church. But I know that thou seekest my love. I hear thee say, "My son give me thy heart." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart." Thou hast preserved me in life, and hast not sent me to hell, that I might be entirely converted to thee, and devoted to thy love. Since, then, thou dost wish to be loved even by me, behold, O my God, I give myself to thee. I love thee, O my God, who art all goodness, all love. I choose thee for the only King and Lord of my poor heart. Thou dost wish for it, I consecrate it to thee: it is cold and disgusting, but if thou accept it thou wilt change it. Change me, O my Lord, change me. I do not wish to be ever more, as I have hitherto been, so ungrateful to thee, and so little inflamed with the love of thy infinite goodness, which merits infinite love. Grant that hence-

forth I may supply my past want and neglect of thy love.

Ejac. My God, my God, I desire to love thee, I desire to love thee, I desire to love thee.

The Spiritual Communion

NINTH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Prayer of St. John Damascene.

HAIL! Mary, the hope of Christians. Hear the petition of a sinner, who wishes to love thee with the greatest tenderness, and to honor thee as thou deservest, and who reposes in thee, next to God, his hope of salvation. Being indebted to thee for the preservation of my life, I entreat thee to restore me to the grace of thy divine Son. Thou art the surest pledge of my salvation; deliver me, then, by thy prayers, from the heavy load of my sins. Disperse the darkness of my understanding; banish every inordinate affection from my heart; repress the temptations of my spiritual enemies, and so order my life that, under thy protection, I may arrive at eternal repose in heaven.

Ejac. O my Mother, obtain for me the grace that I may always remember thee.

TENTH VISIT.

O FOOLISH, miserable worldings, where do you go in search of peace and content of soul? Come to Jesus, for he alone can give that happiness which you seek. "Miserable souls, whither are you going? The good which you seek is from him." My soul, do not imitate their folly: "seek the one good which contains all good." *St. Augustine*. If thou wish to find him immediately, behold he is at hand; say to him whatsoever thou pleasest: he remains in this tabernacle to console thee, and to hear thy petitions. *St. Teresa* says, that all art not permitted to speak to their sovereign. The most they can expect is to be allowed to present their petitions to him through the medium of a third person. But to speak to thee, O King of glory, the intervention of a third person is not necessary. Thou art always ready to give audience to all in the most holy Sacrament of the Altar. He who wishes can find thee there at all times, and can converse familiarly with thee. O how difficult is it to obtain an audience of an earthly monarch! Kings give audience to their subjects only seldom in the year; but thou, O

Lord, dost give audience night and day to all who approach thee.

O sacrament of love, whether thou givest thyself to us in the holy communion, or dost remain on our altars, thou knowest how to draw to thyself, by the sweet attractions of thy love, so many hearts, which, enamored of thee, and astonished at thy goodness, burn with the happy flames of thy love, and think continually of thee. Draw to thyself my miserable heart, which also desires to love thee, and to be forever the servant of thy love.

From this day forward, I deposit in the hands of thy goodness all my interests, all my hopes, all my affections, my soul, my body. Accept me, O Lord, and dispose of me as thou pleasest. O my love, I will never more complain of thy holy arrangements. I know that they all proceed from thy loving heart, and shall, therefore, be full of love, and shall be for my welfare. It is enough for me that these arrangements come from thy will, I also wish for them all for time and for eternity. Do whatsoever thou pleasest in me, and with me; I unite myself entirely to thy will, which is all holy, all good, all perfect, all love. O will of

my God, how dear art thou to me? I wish always to live and die united and chained to thee. Thy pleasure is my pleasure. I wish that thy desires may be my desires. My God, my God, bless me, and make me henceforth live only for thee, only to wish what thou wishest, and to love thy amiable will. May I die for the love of thee, since thou, who hast become my food, hast died for the love of me. I curse the days in which, by doing my own will, I have so much displeased thee. I love thee, O will of my God, as much as I love God; for thou art one thing with God. I love thee with my whole heart. I give myself entirely to thee.

Ejac. O will of God, thou art my love.

The Spiritual Communion.

TENTH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Prayer of St. Andrew of Jerusalem.

HAIL! Mary, full of grace: the Lord is with thee. Hail! source of our joy. Through thee, as the Mother of Jesus, the sentence of our condemnation has been revoked, and changed into a judgment of benediction. Hail, temple

of the Deity's glory, sacred dwelling of the King of Heaven; thou art the reconciliation of God with man. Hail, Mother of our bliss; thou art truly blessed, because thou wast the only one amongst women found worthy to be the Mother of thy Creator. All nations call thee blessed. If I place my confidence in thee I shall be saved. Under thy protection I have nothing to fear, because, in being devoted to thee, I hold in my hand the most assured arms of salvation, which the Almighty grants only to those whom he wishes in a special manner to save.

Ejac. We fly to thy protection, O sacred Mother of God.

ELEVENTH VISIT.

“Let us endeavor,” says St. Teresa, “not to stray far from our dear pastor, Jesus, nor to lose sight of him; for the sheep that remain near their pastor are always more caressed, and better attended: they also receive from him some chosen morsels of the food which he himself eats. Should the pastor slumber, the sheep do not wander away from him, but remain near him till he awakes, or till they rouse

him from sleep, and then he gives them new proofs of his love." O my Redeemer, concealed in this sacrament, behold me present before thee. I wish for no other favor than fervor and perseverance in the love.

I thank thee, O holy Faith: thou dost teach and assure me that the divine sacrament of the altar, that heavenly bread, contains not bread, but my Lord Jesus Christ, and that he dwells in that sacrament for the love of me. My Lord, and my all, I believe that thou art present in the holy sacrament; and, though I do not see thee with the eyes of the body, still, guided by the light of faith, I adore thee, under the consecrated host, as the Monarch of heaven and earth, and as the Saviour of the world. Ah! my most sweet Jesus, as thou art my hope, my salvation, my strength, my consolation, so, also, I wish that thou be the sole object of my love, of all my thoughts, of all my desires, of all my affections. I rejoice more in the supreme felicity which thou dost enjoy, and which thou wilt eternally enjoy, than in any good which I could possess for time or for eternity. My greatest happiness consists in knowing that thou, my beloved Redeemer, art

perfectly happy, and that thy felicity is infinite. Reign, O my Lord, reign over my whole soul. I consecrate it to thee entirely, take possession of it for ever. May my will, my senses, my powers, be all slaves of thy love, and may they serve only to please thee. Such was thy life, O most holy Mary, the Mother of my Jesus; the first of all lovers: assist me, obtain for me the grace to live henceforth, as thou didst live, always happy in belonging entirely to God.

Ejac. My Jesus, may I be entirely thine, and mayest thou be entirely mine.

The Spiritual Communion.

ELEVENTH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

MOTHER of mercy! appease the anger of thy Son. Whilst thou wast upon earth, thou didst occupy only a small portion of it: but being now seated in the highest heavens, we look up to thee as the general mediatrix of all nations. We entreat thee, O sacred Virgin! to grant us the assistance of thy prayers, which are more desirable and more precious than all the treasures of the earth. Thy prayers move the Almighty to pardon our sins, and obtain for us the most abundant graces, to enable us

to practise the virtues of a Christian life; they arrest the progress of our enemies, frustrate their designs, and triumph over the efforts of their malice.

Ejac. Mary! thou art my consolation, and, after Jesus, the foundation of my hope.

TWELFTH VISIT.

“God is charity: and he that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him.” 1 JOHN iv. 16.

HE who loves Jesus dwells with Jesus, and Jesus with him. “If any one love me.....my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him.” St. John xiv. 23. When the holy viaticum was brought to St. Philip Neri, he exclaimed, “Behold my love! behold my love!” Let each of us, then, say before Jesus in the holy sacrament, behold my love, the object of all my affections during my whole life, and for all eternity.

Since then, my Lord and my God, thou hast said in the gospel that thou wilt love him who loves thee, and that thou wilt come to make thy abode in him, and never more to depart from him, I love thee above all things.

Love me then O Lord, for I esteem the happiness of being loved by thee more than all the kingdoms of the earth. Come and fix thy dwelling in my poor soul, so that thou mayest never more depart from me, or rather, that I may never banish thee from my heart. Thou dost not depart unless thou art driven away. I may, as I have hitherto done, expel thee again from my soul. Ah! do not permit one so highly favored ever to be guilty of such wickedness and such horrid ingratitude as to banish thee again from my heart, after having received so many graces from thee. But this may happen; and therefore, if it be pleasing to thee, I desire to die, that, dying in union with thee, I may live for ever united to thee. Yes, my Jesus, such my firm hope. I embrace thee, my poor heart clings to thee. Grant that I may always love thee, and that thou mayest always love me. Yes, my most amiable Redeemer, I will always love thee. Thou wilt always love me, O God of my soul: I hope that we will love each other for all eternity. Amen.

Ejac. My Jesus, I desire always to love thee, and to be loved by thee.

The Spiritual Communion.

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TWELFTH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Prayer of St. Ildefonsus.

O MY Sovereign, and Mother of my God, thou art blessed amongst all women, pure amongst all virgins, and queen of all the heavenly host; all nations pronounce thee blessed. Vouchsafe that I may publish as much as possible thy greatness, that I may love thee to the utmost of my power, and that I may serve thee with all the capacity of my soul.

Ejac. Vouchsafe that I may praise thee, O blessed Virgin.

THIRTEENTH VISIT.

“My eyes and my heart shall be there always.”
1 KINGS ix. 3.

JESUS has fulfilled this consoling promise in the holy sacrament of the altar, in which he dwells with us night and day. My Lord, would it not be enough for thee to remain in this sacrament during the day, when thou mightest expect to receive the adoration of thy servants, and to enjoy the delight of their society? But why remain there during the whole night when the churches are closed, and men retire to their houses and leave thee

entirely alone? But I understand the reason: love has made thee our prisoner. The excessive love which thou dost bear us has chained thee to the earth, so that thou dost not depart from us either by night or by day. Ah! most amiable Saviour, such tenderness of love should compel all men, until driven away by force, to remain continually with thee in the holy sacrament; and, at their departure, they should leave at the foot of the altar their hearts and all their affections with an incarnate God, who remains alone shut up in a tabernacle, all eyes to see and to provide for their wants, and all hearts to love them, longing for the morning, that he may be visited by the souls whom he loves.

Yes, my Jesus, I desire to satisfy thee; I consecrate to thee my whole will and all my affections. O infinite majesty of God, thou hast left thyself in this divine sacrament, not only to be present with, and near to us, but principally to communicate thyself to thy beloved souls. O Lord, who shall dare to approach thee and eat thy flesh? But who, on the other hand, can withdraw from thee? To come into our souls, and to take possession of

our hearts thou hast concealed thyself under the consecrated host. Thou dost burn with a desire to be received by us, and thou dost delight in an union with us. Come, then, my Jesus, come; I desire to receive thee, that thou mayest be the God of my heart and of my will. My dear Redeemer, whatever is in me, I yield to thy love; for thee I renounce gratifications, pleasures, self-will and all that I possess. O love, O God of love, reign and triumph over my whole being; destroy in me whatever is mine and is not thine. My love, do not permit my soul, which, by receiving thee in the holy communion, has been filled with the majesty of a God, ever again to become attached to creatures. I love thee, O my God, I love thee; I desire to love thee alone, and for ever.

Ejac. "Trahe me vinctulis amoris tui."

The Spiritual Communion.

THIRTEENTH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Prayer of St. Ildefonsus.

Most humble handmaid of thy divine Son!
I prostrate myself before thee, conjuring thee
to obtain pardon of my sins, that I may be

cleansed from all the imperfections of my life. I entreat thee to procure me the grace of being always united to God and to thee, and to be ever a faithful servant of thy Son and of thee: of thy Son, as my Lord and my Redeemer; and of thee, as the cause of my redemption: for if he has paid the price of my redemption, it was with the body which he received from thee.

Ejac. O Mary! obtain for me confidence in thy intercession, and the grace that I may continually have recourse to thee.

FOURTEENTH VISIT.

Most amiable Jesus! I hear thee exclaim from this tabernacle, "This is my rest for ever and ever: here will I dwell, for I have chosen it." Ps. cxxxi. 14. Since, then, thou hast chosen thy dwelling among us in the holy sacrament, since thy love for us makes our tabernacles the *place of thy rest*, it is but just that our hearts too should always dwell there with thee, and should there find delight and repose. Happy you, O loving souls, to whom no repose which this world can afford, is more sweet than that which you enjoy in the presence of

your Jesus in the holy sacrament! And happy me, O my Lord, if henceforth my greatest delight shall consist in remaining always before thee, and in always thinking of thee, who art present in the holy sacrament, always thinking of me and of my welfare.

Ah! why have I lost so many years in which I have not loved thee. Unhappy years, I curse you; and I bless thee, O infinite patience of my God, who has so long borne with one so ungrateful to his love. But, in spite of all my ingratitude, thou dost still bear with me; and why, O my God? It is that, being overcome by thy mercy and thy love, I may one day give myself entirely to thee. I will not, O Lord, resist any longer; I will never more be ungrateful to thee. It is my duty to consecrate to thee the remainder of my life, whether it be short or long. I hope, O my Jesus, to obtain from thee help to become entirely thine. Thou didst bestow many blessings on me when I fled from thee, and despised thy love; how much greater favors may I expect from thee, now that I seek after thee, and desire to love thee? Give me, then, the grace to love thee, O God, who art worthy of infinite love. I love thee

with my whole heart; I love thee above all things; I love thee more than myself, more than my life. I am sorry for having offended thee, O infinite goodness. Pardon me, and with the pardon of my sins grant me the grace to love thee ardently till death in this world, and for all eternity in the next. Omnipotent God, by thy Almighty power, show to the world this prodigy, that a soul so ungrateful as mine may become one of thy greatest lovers. O my Jesus, through thy merits grant me this favor. I desire and purpose to love thee with my whole soul during my entire life. Thou hast inspired the desire; give me strength to make it efficacious.

Ejac. My Jesus, I thank thee for having borne with me so long.

The Spiritual Communion.

FOURTEENTH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Prayer of St. Anselm.

WE entreat thee, most sacred Virgin, by that fulness of grace, whereby thou wast elevated to the highest degree of dignity and glory which a pure creature can possibly attain, that

thou wouldst procure for us a fellowship with thee in glory. Pray for us, that we may obtain that happiness, to purchase which for us God vouchsafed to become man in thy immaculate womb. Be not deaf to our supplications: whatever thou askest of thy Son, he will grant to us: if thou desirest our salvation, and prayest for it, we are sure to be saved. But if thou dost shut the bowels of thy mercy against us; if thou, who art the Mother of clemency, dost not take pity on us, what will be our lot when thy Son shall appear in judgment?

Ejac. O Mary! behold our danger, and have compassion on us.

FIFTEENTH VISIT.

“I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?” LUKE xii. 49.

THE venerable Father Francis Olimpio used to say, that there is nothing so much calculated to kindle the fire of divine love in the hearts of men as the holy sacrament of the altar. Hence our Lord appeared to St. Catherine of Sienna, in the blessed Eucharist, as a furnace of love, from which divine flames went forth to all

parts of the earth. The saint was astonished to find that all men were not on fire with the love of a God who had shown so much love to man. My Jesus, inflame my soul with thy love. Grant that I may think only of thee, and that I may desire, and seek, and sigh after thee alone. O happy me, if this holy fire of thine shall possess my whole being, and shall continue, during the remainder of my days, to consume in me all earthly affections.

O divine word, O my Jesus, I see thee entirely sacrificed and annihilated on the altar for the love of me. Since, then, thou dost sacrifice thyself as a victim of love for me, it is my duty to consecrate myself entirely to thee. Yes, my God and my supreme Lord, I sacrifice to thee my whole soul, my whole being, my whole will, and my entire life. O eternal Father, I unite this poor sacrifice of mine with the infinite sacrifice which Jesus thy Son, and my Saviour, offered once on the cross, and which he offers every day so often on our altars. Accept this offering, through the merits of Jesus, and give me the grace to repeat it every day of my life, and to die sacrificing my whole being to thy honor. I desire the grace bestowed

on so many martyrs, to die for the love of thee. But if I am unworthy of so great a favor, grant me at least, O Lord, the grace cheerfully to sacrifice to thee my life, by embracing that death which thou wilt appoint for me. Lord I desire this grace; I wish to die with the intention of honoring and pleasing thee. From this moment I sacrifice my life to thee; I offer to thee my death whenever and in what way soever it shall happen.

Ejac. My Jesus, I wish to die to please thee.

The Spiritual Communion.

FIFTEENTH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Prayer of St. Anselm.

HELP us, O Queen of mercy! without regarding the multitude of our sins. Remember, that our Creator assumed from thee a human body, not to condemn, but to save sinners. Hadst thou been chosen to be the Mother of God for thy own benefit alone, thou mightest then be said to have no particular interest in our salvation; but God clothed himself in thy flesh for the sake of all mankind. Help us, therefore, and protect us: thou knowest the

need which we have of thy assistance, and we earnestly recommend ourselves to thy prayers. Pray that we may not be eternally lost, but with thee may serve and love Jesus Christ for ever.

SIXTEENTH VISIT.

OH! if men always sought from Jesus in the holy sacrament, a remedy for their evils, they certainly should not be so miserable as they are! "Is there," exclaims the prophet Jeremias, "no balm in Galaad? or is there no Physician there?" Jer. viii. 22. Galaad, a mountain in Arabia, abounding in aromatic ointments, is, as Venerable Bede remarks, a figure of Jesus Christ, who has prepared in this sacrament all the remedies of our souls. Why then, (the Redeemer seems to cry out to us,) O children of Adam, do you complain of your miseries, when you have in this sacrament the Physician and the remedy of all your maladies: "Come to me, all you that labor,... and I will refresh you." Matt. xi. 28. With the sisters of Lazarus I will say to thee, O Lord, "Behold he whom thou lovest is sick." Lord, I am that miserable creature whom thou

lovest; my past sins have covered my soul with wounds; O, my divine Physician, I come to thee that you mayest heal me! If thou willest, thou canst cure all my diseases; "heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee." Ps. xl. 5.

O my most sweet Jesus, draw me to thyself by the most amiable attractions of thy love. I would rather be united to thee than be made the lord of all the earth. I desire nothing in this world but thy love. I have nothing to give thee, but were it in my power to possess all the kingdoms of the earth, I would wish to have them only to renounce them for the love of thee. I renounce, then, for thy sake, all that it is in my power to renounce. I renounce all relatives, all advantages, all pleasures, and even all spiritual consolations; I renounce my liberty and my will. To thee I desire to give all the affections of my heart. I love thee, O infinite goodness. I love thee more than myself, and I hope to love thee for eternity.

Ejac. I give myself to thee, O my Jesus, accept me.

The Spiritual Communion.

SIXTEENTH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Prayer of St. Peter Damian.

O HOLY Virgin! come to the assistance of those who call upon thee: cast a look of pity on us. Hast thou, in the close alliance thou holdest with the Deity, forgotten thy fellow creatures? Ah! certainly not. Thou knowest too well the misery of our condition, and the dangers to which we are exposed, and it would ill become clemency and compassion like thine to forget us. Exert thy influence in our behalf. Nothing is impossible to thee, and thou canst, by thy prayers, obtain for the most grievous sinner, the sweet hope of salvation. The greater thy power is, the greater ought also to be thy mercy.

Ejac. O Mary! thou canst by thy intercession cleanse me from my sins, and I look for this favor from thee.

SEVENTEENTH VISIT.

THE greatest enjoyment of loving souls is found in the presence of those whom they love. If, then, we ardently love Jesus Christ, behold we are in his presence. Jesus, in the holy

sacrament, sees and hears us, and shall we say nothing to him? Let us console ourselves by his society; let us rejoice at his glory, and at the love which so many souls enamored of the most holy sacrament bear to him. Let us desire that all may love and may consecrate their hearts to Jesus in the blessed Eucharist: let us at least consecrate to him all the affections of our souls. Let Jesus be the object of all our love and of all our desires. Father Sales, of the Society of Jesus, was consoled by the bare mention of the most holy sacrament; his desire of visiting his Redeemer was never satiated. In going to the door, in returning to his cell, or passing through the house, he always took occasion to repeat his visit to his beloved Lord, so that he was observed to visit the blessed sacrament almost every hour in the day. He thus merited the grace to die by the hands of the heretics, while he was defending the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. O most amiable Jesus, that I too had the happiness of dying in defence of the truth of this sacrament, in which thou hast shown the tenderness of thy love for us. But since thou, O my Lord, dost work so many wonders

in this sacrament, perform also the miracle of drawing me entirely to thyself. Thou dost desire and deserve to possess my whole being; give me strength to love thee with my whole heart. Give to those who wish for them, the goods of this world: I renounce them all for thy sake; I wish and sigh only for thy love. This only do I ask, this only shall I always seek. I love thee, my Jesus: make me always love thee; I desire nothing else.

Ejac. My Jesus, when shall I truly love thee?

The Spiritual Communion.

SEVENTEENTH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Prayer of St. Damian.

O MOTHER of God! cast upon us one look of compassion. I know that thou art full of goodness, and that thou lovest us in a measure that surpasses all other love. How often dost thou appease the anger of our Judge, when the hand of his justice is raised to strike us? All the treasures of mercy are in thy hands, and thou seekest every opportunity of saving miserable sinners and making them partakers of

thy glory. Ah! never cease to interest thyself in our regard, that we may one day arrive at the happiness of seeing thee in heaven, as the greatest good that we can enjoy, next to that of seeing God, is to see thee, to love thee, and to be under thy protection. Since thy Son desires to honor thee by refusing nothing that thou askest, hear our prayer, and intercede in our behalf.

Ejac. O Mary! I love thee as the most amiable of the works of God, and place my confidence in thee.

EIGHTEENTH VISIT.

IN the valley of Josaphat, God shall one day sit on a throne of majesty; but in the holy sacrament he is now seated on a throne of love. If to show his love for the poor, a king came to dwell among them, how great would be their ingratitude if they did not frequently visit him, particularly when they knew that he ardently desired to see them, and that he came among them to be visited by them? Ah, my Jesus, I know that through love for me thou hast come to dwell with me in the sacrament of the altar. Were it in my power, I would

wish to remain in thy presence night and day. If, O my Lord, the angels continually stand around thy altars, astonished at thy love for us, it is but just that I, seeing thee in this tabernacle for my sake, should endeavor to please thee by remaining in thy presence, to praise thy love and goodness towards me. "I will give praise to thee in the sight of the angels: I will worship towards thy holy temple, and I will give glory to thy name, for thy mercy and for thy truth." Ps. cxxxvii. 2.

O God, concealed in the holy sacrament; O bread of angels, O divine food, I love thee, but my love for thee does not satisfy thee or me. I love thee, but I love thee too little. O my Jesus, give me a clear knowledge of the infinite beauty and goodness which I love. Help me to banish from my heart all earthly affections, and to consecrate it entirely to thy divine love. To gain all my love, and to unite my entire being to thyself, thou dost descend every day from heaven on our altars; it is, then, but reasonable that I should think only of loving thee, and of adoring and pleasing thee. I love thee with my whole soul, and with all my affections. If thou wishest me to love thee as thou

dost deserve, give me more love, more flames, which will make me always advance in thy love, and always desire more ardently to please thee.

Ejac. Jesus, my love, give me love.

The Spiritual Communion.

EIGHTEENTH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Prayer of St. Bernard.

O SOVEREIGN queen! on thee the Almighty has bestowed the perfection of all graces. Thou art styled full of grace, because the Holy Ghost has given it to thee in its greatest plenitude. We entreat thee to impart to us a portion of the fulness which thou hast received. Remember our necessities, and hear our prayers. Make us partakers of the riches and abundance which thou possessest. All nations call thee blessed; the whole hierarchy of heaven sings thy praises, and we, who are upon earth, cry out to thee. Receive our homage, O full of grace! Mother of God, our sovereign and our queen, the Lord is with thee; make intercession for us.

Ejac. O Mary! look down upon us, and draw our hearts to God.

NINETEENTH VISIT.

To enjoy the society of a dear friend is agreeable to all; and will it not be sweet to us in this valley of tears to remain in the company of our best friend, who can bestow upon us every blessing we stand in need of, who loves us to excess, and who, through love, dwells continually with us? Behold, in the holy sacrament, we can converse with Jesus whenever we please; we can open to him our hearts, lay before him all our wants, and ask his graces. In a word, we can, in this sacrament, address the King of heaven with unbounded confidence and without restraint. Happy, indeed, was the lot of Joseph, when God, by his grace, descended into the prison to console him. "She went down with him into the pit, and in bonds she left him not." Wis. x. 13. But far more happy are we in having always with us, in this land of misery, our God made man, who, by his real presence, assists us all the days of our life, with so much tenderness and compassion. What a consolation to a poor captive to have an affectionate friend, who converses with him, who consoles him, inspires him with hope,

assists him, and endeavors to deliver him from his chains! Behold our good friend Jesus, who, in this sacrament, consoles us by the assurance that he is *with us all days*. Behold me, he says, entirely yours; behold me come from heaven to console, to assist and deliver you. Receive me, remain with me always, unite yourselves to me; and thus you shall not feel your miseries here, and hereafter you shall come with me to my kingdom, where you shall enjoy complete happiness.

O God! O incomprehensible love! since, to be near to us, thou dost deign to descend on our altars, I purpose to visit thee frequently, I wish to enjoy as much as possible thy most sweet presence, which renders the saints in paradise happy. Oh that I could always remain before thee to adore and to love thee! Awaken! I entreat thee, my soul, when, through tepidity or attention to worldly affairs, I neglect to visit thee. Enkindle in my soul a strong desire to remain always near thee in this sacrament. Ah, my loving Jesus, that I had always loved thee! It is a consolation to me that I have still time to love thee, not only in the next, but even in this life. I wish to love

thee, O my sovereign good, my love, my treasure, my all. I wish to love thee with all my strength.

Ejac. My God, help me to love thee.

The Spiritual Communion.

NINETEENTH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Prayer of the Abbot of Celles.

DRAW me after thee, O Virgin Mary! that I may run in the odor of thy perfumes. Draw me because I am impeded by the weight of my sins, and by the malice of my enemies. As no one can go to thy divine Son who is not conducted by his heavenly Father, so I presume also to say, that no one can approach this same Jesus but through thy intercession. Thou art the teacher of true wisdom: through thee sinners obtain grace because thou art their advocate; thou promisest to obtain help for those who honor thee, because thou art the treasure of God and the depository of all his graces.

Ejac. O thou, who art the salvation of those who invoke thee, save me.

TWENTIETH VISIT

“In that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for the washing of the sinner.” ZACH. xiii. 1.

JESUS, in the holy sacrament, is the fountain foretold by the prophet, which is open to all, and in which we can, whenever we wish, wash our souls from the stains of our daily sins. When a fault is committed, what more efficacious remedy can there be than to have immediate recourse to the holy sacrament! My Jesus, I purpose always to avail myself of this remedy; for I know that the waters of this fountain not only cleanse my soul, but also give me light and strength to avoid sin, and to suffer with joy all crosses, and, at the same time, inflame my heart with thy love. I know that for these ends thou dost expect me to visit thee and dost reward with so many graces the visits of thy lovers. My Jesus, wash me from all the faults which I have this day committed; I am sorry for them, because they have displeased thee, give me strength to love thee ardently. Oh that I could, like thy faithful servant Mary Diaz, remain always near thee. This holy soul lived in the time of St. Teresa

and had permission from the bishop of Avila to live in the tribune of the Church. Here she remained almost continually before Jesus in the holy sacrament, whom she called her neighbor, and scarcely ever left the church except to go to confession or communion. The venerable Brother Francis of the Infant Jesus, of the order of the discalced Carmelites, could never pass by a church without paying a visit to the blessed sacrament. He used to say, that a person should not pass the house of a friend without going in to salute him and speak a word to him. But he was not content with saying a word to his beloved Lord, he remained before him as long as he was allowed.

O my only and infinite good, I see that thou hast instituted this sacrament, and that thou remainest on this altar to be loved by me. For this end thou hast given me a heart capable of loving thee. Why, then, am I so ungrateful as not to love thee, or to love thee so little? It is not just that such amiable goodness should be so little loved. The love which thou dost bear me merits far greater love from me. Thou art an infinite God, I am a miserable worm. It would be very little for me to die, to be con-

sumed for thee who hast died for my sake, and who dost offer thyself in sacrifice every day for the love of me. Thou dost deserve infinite love. I desire to love thee with my whole heart. Assist me, O my Jesus; help me to love thee, and to do all thou dost demand of me.

Ejac. "My beloved to me, and I to him."

The Spiritual Communion.

TWENTIETH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Prayer of the Abbot of Celles.

MOST sweet virgin, thou hast found grace and favor with God, in having been preserved from original sin, filled with the Holy Ghost and chosen to be the Mother of the Son of God. Thou holdest in thy hands all the treasures of grace, not only for thy own benefit, but also for ours; and thou failest not to distribute them according to our necessities. Thou assistest the good, by obtaining for them grace to persevere, and thou helpest the wicked by preparing them to receive the divine mercy; thou aidest the dying by defending them against the snares of the devil, and, after death, thou re-

ceivest their souls, and conductest them to the mansions of the blessed.

Ejac. O Mary! happy is he who serves thee and trusts in thee.

TWENTY-FIRST VISIT.

“Wheresoever the body shall be, thither will the eagles also be gathered together.” LUKE xvii. 37.

By this body the saints commonly understand the body of Jesus Christ, and by the eagles they understand souls detached from the world, who, like eagles, soar above the things of the earth, and fly up into heaven; after which, in thought and affection, they constantly sigh, and in which they continually dwell.

These eagles find their paradise on earth in Jesus in the holy sacrament; so that their desire to remain with him appears incapable of being ever satiated. “If,” says Jerome, “the eagle, as soon as he perceives the smell of a dead body, sets off from a distance in search of his prey, how much more eagerly ought we to run and fly to Jesus in the holy Eucharist, as to the most delicious food of our souls?” Hence, in this valley of tears, the saints, like the thirsty stag, have always sighed after this

celestial fountain. Father Balthasar Alvarez, of the society of Jesus, was accustomed, in whatever occupation he was engaged, to cast his eyes frequently to the tabernacle in which he knew the holy Eucharist was preserved. He visited the blessed sacrament very often, and sometimes spent the entire night at the foot of the altar. He used to weep in considering that the palaces of the great are always crowded with courtiers, paying homage to men from whom they expect some miserable recompense, and that the churches in which the Sovereign of the universe dwells with us, as on a throne of love, rich in infinite and eternal treasures, are so much abandoned. And he would frequently extol the great happiness of religious who can, even in their own houses, visit as often as they please, by day or by night, this great Lord in the most holy sacrament.

My most beloved Lord, although thou seest that I am so miserable and so ungrateful, still thou invitest me to draw near to thee. I, therefore, will not be disheartened by my miseries. I come to thee, change me, O my Saviour; banish from me every affection which is not for thee, every desire which is not pleasing to

thee, and every thought which does not tend to thee. My Jesus, my love, my treasure, I desire to content and please thee alone. Thou alone dost merit all my love, and thee only do I wish to love with all my heart. O my Lord, detach me from all creatures, and bind me to thyself alone; but bind me, so that I may never more be separated from thee, either here or hereafter.

Ejac. My most sweet Jesus, do not permit me to be ever separated from thee.

The Spiritual Communion.

TWENTY-FIRST VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Prayer of William of Paris.

I ADDRESS my petitions to thee, O Mother of God! whom the whole church styles the Mother of Mercy. Canst thou, whose prayers are always acceptable to God, refuse thy intercession in behalf of sinners? Justly does St. Bernard say, that we may cease to call thee the Mother of Mercy, if any one ever invokes thee in the hour of need, without experiencing thy assistance. Thou wilt not, therefore, exclude me from a share in thy compassion.

Thou wilt intercede for me with more earnestness than I can for myself; and thou wilt procure more abundant graces than I could presume to ask. O Mother of Mercy! can that clemency, which never abandoned any one, refuse me its assistance in the danger to which I am exposed of being eternally lost?

Ejac. O Mary! I am thine: save me.

TWENTY-SECOND VISIT.

NOT finding her beloved, the spouse of the Canticles went about the city, asking, "Have you seen him whom my soul loveth?" Cant. iii. 3. Jesus was not then on earth; but now, if a soul that loves Jesus seeks him, she can find him at all times in the holy sacrament. The venerable Father Avila used to say, that he neither knew nor desired any sanctuary more amiable than a church in which the holy Eucharist was preserved.

O infinite love of my God, worthy of infinite love! O my Jesus, how hast thou been able to submit to such debasement as to conceal thyself under the appearances of bread, in order to dwell among men, and to unite thyself to their hearts? O incarnate Word, thy humiliation

has been extreme, because thy love for us has no bounds. How can I but love thee with all my affections, when I reflect on all thou hast done to captivate my heart? I love thee ardently; and, therefore, I prefer thy will to all my interests, to all my pleasures. My delight is to please thee, my Jesus, my God, my love, and my all. Kindle within me a strong desire to remain continually before thee in the holy sacrament, to receive thee and keep thee company. I should be ungrateful if I did not accept so sweet and gracious an invitation. Ah! Lord, destroy in me all affection to creatures. Thou, my Creator, dost wish to be the sole object of all my thoughts and affections. I love thee O most amiable goodness of my God; I seek nothing from thee but thyself. I do not wish for my own satisfaction; for me it is enough to satisfy thee. My Jesus, accept this good desire of a sinner, who wishes to love thee. Assist me by thy grace, and grant that I, a miserable slave of hell, may be henceforth the happy bondsman of thy love.

Ejac. Jesus, source of all my good, I love thee above all earthly goods.

The Spiritual Communion.

TWENTY-SECOND VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Prayer of William of Paris.

O MOTHER of God! thy goodness never despises the sinner who recommends himself to thy patronage, however enormous his crimes may have been: and hence the Church justly calls thee her advocate and the refuge of sinners. Let not, then, my crimes prevent thee from fulfilling this office of mercy, whereby thou becomest the mediatrix of peace, the hope and secure asylum of all who are in affliction. Let it not be said that the Mother of God, who, for the sake of the world, brought forth the source of mercy, can refuse to look down with pity on any wretch that flies to her for assistance. Thou art employed as the mediatrix between God and man: let me experience a share of thy great compassion.

Ejac. O Mary, my loving Mother, may I, under God, owe my salvation to thee.

TWENTY-THIRD VISIT.

To visit the places in the Holy Land in which our most beloved Saviour was born, in which he suffered and died, many Christians

submit to much fatigue, and expose themselves to many dangers. For us, it is not necessary to make so long a journey, nor to encounter so many perils. The same Lord is near us; he dwells in the church, at the distance of a few paces from our houses. "Pilgrims," says St. Paulinus, "regard it as a great happiness to procure a small portion of dust from the stable in which Jesus was born, or from the sepulchre in which he was buried." With what ardor, then should we visit the most holy sacrament, in which the same Jesus is present in person, particularly when such a visit can be made without fatigue or danger! In one of her letters, a religious, to whom God granted a tender devotion to the blessed Eucharist, gave expression to the following sentiments: "I see numberless graces which art not given to Christians, because they do not go to this divine sacrament. O holy mystery! O sacred host! It is in this host that God manifests his power. This host contains all that God has ever done for us. We need not envy the blessed; for the same Lord whom they enjoy in heaven we have on earth, with greater wonders of his love. Induce all those with whom

you converse to dedicate themselves entirely to the most holy sacrament. I speak thus, because this sacrament enraptures my soul. Nor can I ever cease to speak of the most holy Eucharist, in which Jesus merits so much love. I know not what to do for Jesus in the holy sacrament." Thus the letter terminates.

O ye seraphim, who sweetly burn with love before your and my Lord, it is not for your sake, but for mine, that the King of heaven is present in this sacrament. O loving angels, inflame me with your ardor, that, along with you, I also may burn with love. O my Jesus, make me comprehend the excess of thy love for men, that, at the sight of such love, the desire of loving and pleasing thee may be continually increased in my heart. I love thee, O most amiable Lord; I wish always to love thee, through the sole motive of pleasing thee.

Ejac. O Jesus, I believe in thee, I hope in thee, I love thee, I give myself to thee.

The Spiritual Communion.

TWENTY-THIRD VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Prayer taken from St. Augustin and St. Bernard.

REMEMBER, O Mary, full of goodness! that

no sinner has ever been heard of that has had recourse to thy protection and been abandoned by thee. Let us, then, seek for grace through the means of Mary, because she can obtain what she asks, and her demands never meet with a refusal. O Mother of God! thou prayest for all, vouchsafe to pray for me, who am the greatest of sinners, and, therefore, have the greatest need of thy intercession.

Ejac. I fly to thy protection. O sacred Mother of God!

TWENTY-FOURTH VISIT

“Verily, thou art a hidden God.” ISA. xlv. 15.

IN no work of divine love are these words so clearly verified as in the adorable mystery of the Eucharist, in which our God is altogether hidden. In taking flesh, the eternal Word concealed his divinity, and appeared on earth in the form of man; but in this sacrament he hides his humanity, and as St. Bernard says, “to show the tenderness of his love for us, he takes the appearance of bread.” “The divinity is hidden, the humanity is hidden, the bowels of charity only appear.” O my beloved Redeemer, at the sight of such an excess of love

for man I am struck with astonishment, and know not what to say. In this sacrament thou concealest thy majesty, thou debasest thy glories, thou dost even destroy and annihilate thy divine life, for the love of man. And whilst thou remainest on the altar thy sole occupation seems to consist in loving us, and in manifesting thy love for us. But what return do we make to thee, O great Son of God?

O Jesus, thy love for men is ardent to an excess; for thou dost prefer their welfare to thy own honor. And didst thou not foresee the insults to which the institution of this sacrament of love should expose thee. I know and thou also dost well know, that the greater part of men neither adore thee nor acknowledge thy presence in this sacrament. I know that these very men have gone so far as to trample on the consecrated hosts, to cast them contemptuously on the ground, and to throw them into the fire: and I see that even the greater part of those who believe in the holy Eucharist, instead of repairing such outrages by their homage and love, come to the church to offend thee by their irreverence, or abandon thee altogether, and even sometimes leave thee

without a lamp and without the ornaments necessary for the decent decoration of thy altar.

O my most sweet Saviour, that I could wash with my tears, and even with my blood, those unhappy places in which thy loving heart has been so grossly outraged in this sacrament! But if I am not allowed to do this, I desire at least, O Lord, and purpose, frequently to visit and adore thee, in compensation for the insults which thou dost receive from men in this most divine mystery. Accept, O eternal Father, this poor homage which I, the most miserable of men, offer to thee this day, in reparation of the injuries committed against thy Son in the holy sacrament. Accept it in union with that infinite honor which Jesus Christ rendered to thee on the cross, and which he renders to thee every day on the altar. O my Jesus, that I could enamor all men of this holy sacrament!

Ejac. O my amiable Jesus, make all men know and love thee.

The Spiritual Communion.

TWENTY-FOURTH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Prayer taken from several of the Fathers.

LET us go, says St. Paul, to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy in the time of need. Thou, divine Mary, art this throne of grace, from which God dispenses all his blessings. Most amiable queen, thy delight is to assist those who are in the wretched state of sin: behold, then, at thy feet a grievous sinner, imploring the aid of thy prayers. Help me to the utmost of thy power, and without delay: the wonders of thy mercy will be enhanced by saving one that has deserved a thousand hells. Thy Son cannot withstand thy intercession. I entreat thee, therefore, by the love which thou entertainest for Jesus, to procure pardon for me for the past, and grace to lead a holy life for the future. O Mary, thou art my strength, and the ground of my hope.

Ejac. O Mary, cast a look of compassion on me.

TWENTY-FIFTH VISIT.

ST. PAUL extols the obedience of Jesus Christ, saying, that he was obedient to his

eternal Father, even unto death. "He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death." Phil. ii. 8. But in this sacrament he has gone farther; for here he has become obedient not only to his eternal Father, but even to men; and not only till death, but even to "the consummation of the world." In obedience to man, the King of glory descends from heaven, and remains on our altars. "And I do not resist." Isa. i. 5. He remains there motionless: he allows himself to be exposed in the remonstrances, or to be shut up in our tabernacles; to be carried to the houses of the faithful, or through the streets; to be given in the holy communion to sinners, as well as to the just. St. Luke tells us, that during life he was subject to Mary and Joseph: but in the holy sacrament he is obedient to as many creatures as there are priests on earth. "And I do not resist." Allow me to speak to thee this day, O most loving heart of Jesus, from which have proceeded all the sacraments, but particularly this sacrament of love. I would wish to render to thee as much honor and glory as thou givest in the holy sacrament to thy eternal Father. I know that on this altar thou

lovest me with the same tenderness with which thou didst love me, when, amidst the sorrows of the cross, thou didst offer for me thy divine life. Enlighten, O divine heart, with the knowledge of thy love, all who do not know thee. Through thy merits, deliver, or at least relieve those afflicted souls in purgatory, who are thy eternal spouses. With all the souls who, at this moment, love thee in heaven and on earth, I unite in adoring, in thanking, and in loving thee. O most pure heart, purify my heart from all attachment to creatures, and fill it with thy holy love. O most sweet heart, take possession of my whole heart, that it may be entirely thine, and that it may be always able to say: "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Rom. viii. 35. O most holy heart, inscribe on my heart the bitter sorrows which thou didst suffer for so many years on earth for the love of me, that at the sight of them, I may henceforth, for the love of thee, rejoice in all the pains of this life, or that I may at least bear them with patience. Most humble heart of Jesus, grant me a portion of thy humility. Most meek heart, impart to me thy sweetness. Take from my heart whatever

is not pleasing to thee; convert it entirely to thyself, that it may wish and desire only what thou dost wish. In a word, make me live only to obey thee, to love thee, and to please thee. I know that I owe thee a great deal, and that I am bound by many obligations to thee. It would be very little, were my whole being destroyed and consumed for the love of thee.

Ejac. O heart of Jesus, thou art the only Lord of my heart.

The Spiritual Communion.

TWENTY-FIFTH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

O my sovereign Queen! thou art the treasure of God, and in thy hands are deposited those stores of mercy, which he wishes to bestow upon us. Thou hast said, by the mouth of the prophet, that thou holdest in thy hands the treasures of heaven, to enrich those who love thee. Prov. viii.

My loving Mother, I am an unfortunate sinner, and in the greatest need of help. Remember that I love thee with all my heart; yes, next to God, there is no object that I love so much as thee. because I know that this is due

to thy unrivalled perfections. Have pity on me, and forsake me not; help me during life, and help me at the hour of death, that I may one day arrive at the enjoyment of thy happy society in the kingdom of heaven.

Ejac. O Mary! all my hopes are directed towards thee.

TWENTY-SIXTH VISIT.

‘ Rejoice and praise, O thou habitation of Sion; for great is he that is in the midst of thee, the Holy One of Israel.” Isa. xii. 6.

O God! what should be our joy, our hopes, and our affections, in considering that the Holy of Holies, the true God, whose presence gives beatitude to the saints in paradise, and who is love itself, lives and dwells in the midst of us, in our churches, in the vicinity of our houses.

Amorem, says St. Bernard, *non tam habet quam ipse est*. This sacrament is not only the sacrament of love, but it is love itself; the very God, who, through the infinite love which he bears to his creatures, is called, and is love itself. “God is charity” 1 St. John iv. 16. But, O my Jesus, concealed in this sacrament, I hear thee complain, that thou hast come to be our

guest on earth, and that we have not received thee. "I was a stranger, and ye received me not." Thy complaint is just, O Lord, and I am one of those ungrateful souls who have left thee alone, and have neglected to visit thee. Chastise me as thou pleasest, but not with the chastisement which I have deserved, of being deprived of thy presence. I will amend, and will correct my past neglect. Henceforth, I will not only visit thee frequently, but I will remain in thy presence as long as I can. O most merciful Saviour, grant that I may be faithful to thee, and that I may inflame, by my example, others to keep thee company in the most holy sacrament. The eternal Father exclaims, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. xvii. 5. Then, a God finds in thee all his delight, and shall not I, a miserable worm, feel happy in remaining with thee in this valley of tears? O consuming fire, destroy in me all attachment to created objects; for these only can make me unfaithful to thee, and separate me from thee. "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Thou hast already done so much for me, grant me one favor more: banish from my heart all love

which tends not to thee. Behold, I give myself entirely to thee; I consecrate all the remaining days of my life to the love of the most holy sacrament. Thou, O Jesus, in the blessed Eucharist, shalt be my consolation and my love during life, and also at the hour of death, when thou wilt come to be my viaticum and conductor to thy eternal kingdom. Amen, amen, such my hope and my ardent wish.

Ejac. When, O my Jesus, shall I see thy beautiful countenance?

The Spiritual Communion.

TWENTY-SIXTH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

O MARY! I will say to thee in the words of thy servant St. Bernard: thou art the queen of mercy. And who are the subjects of thy mercy but such as are in misery and affliction? Yes, thou art truly the queen of mercy, and I, the most wretched of sinners, am thy subject. I, therefore, of all others, am the best entitled to thy compassion. Turn then, O my advocate, those eyes of mercy towards me, and after my days of exile, show me Jesus, the blessed fruit of thy womb

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Ejac. O Mary, my refuge, pray for me to Jesus.

TWENTY-SEVENTH VISIT.

IN the office of the most holy sacrament we read the following words: "Neither is there any nation so great, that hath its gods so nigh them as our God is to us." The Gentiles hearing the works of love of our God, exclaimed, O how good is this God of the Christians! And in reality, although the Gentiles formed Gods for themselves, according to their own caprice, still, if you read their legends, you shall find, that none of them had ever imagined a god so enamored of men as is our true God, who, to show his love for his adorers, and to enrich them with his graces, has, by a prodigy of love, made himself our perpetual companion, hidden night and day within our altars, as if he could not separate himself from us, even for a moment. "He hath made a remembrance of his wonderful works." Ps. cx. 4. Then, O most sweet Jesus, to satisfy thy desire to be near to us and present with us, thou hast wrought the greatest of all thy miracles. And why do men fly from thy presence?

How can they live so far from thee, or come so seldom to visit thee? Such is the tediousness which they feel in thy company, that a quarter of an hour spent in thy presence appears to them an age. O my Jesus, how great is thy patience? Lord, I understand thee: thy patience is great, because thy love for men is infinite; it is this love which makes thee dwell continually among them in spite of their ingratitude.

Ah! my God, who, because thou art infinite in all perfections, art infinite in love, do not permit me to be henceforth as I have hitherto been, among the number of those ungrateful Christians. Give me a love proportioned to thy merits and to my obligations. I, too, once felt tediousness in thy presence, because I did not love thee, or because I loved thee too little. But if with the aid of thy grace I attain an ardent love of thee, I shall never more experience tediousness in remaining with thee night and day in the holy sacrament. O eternal Father, I offer thee thy own Son; accept him for me, and through his merits grant me so ardent and tender a love towards the holy Eucharist, that always turning to some church

where he is present in the blessed sacrament, I may dwell in thought with him, and long for the time of going to entertain myself in his presence.

Ejac. My God, for the love of Jesus, give me a great love for the most holy sacrament.

The Spiritual Communion.

TWENTY-SEVENTH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

My queen! thou hast said to thy servant St. Bridget, that as often as a man sins, if he returns to thee with sincere repentance, thou wilt receive him and restore him to the friendship of God; that thou dost not consider the greatness of his crimes, but the sincerity of his repentance; and that thou art ever ready to apply a cure to his wounds, because thou art in reality, as in name, the Mother of mercy. Since, therefore, thou rejectest no sinner who approaches thee with a sincere detestation of his crimes, and since thou hast both the power and the will to heal him, behold, I present myself before thee, and beseech thee to apply thy celestial remedies to the deep wounds of my soul.

Thy Son can refuse thee nothing: entreat him, then, to pardon me and to grant me his love.

Ejac. O Mary! my hope, I expect all through thee.

TWENTY-EIGHTH VISIT.

God has given to us his only son; why, then, says St. Paul, should we fear that he will refuse us any good gift which we stand in need of? "How hath he not, also, with him given us all things?" Rom. viii. 32. We know that "the Father hath given all things into his hands." St. John xiii. 3. Let us, then, thank the most loving God, who wished to enrich us with all gifts and graces, by giving us Jesus in the holy sacrament. "In all things you are made rich in him.....so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace." 1 Cor. i. 5. Thus, O Saviour of the world, O incarnate Word, I can say that thou art mine, and altogether mine, if I wish to possess thee. But can I also say that I belong entirely to thee, who dost wish that I should be thine without reserve? Ah! Lord, put an end to such a deordination and to such ingratitude as that I should refus-

to yield to thy desire, and to give my whole being to thee.

If such has hitherto been the case, O may it never happen again! I this day resolutely consecrate myself entirely to thee; I consecrate to thee for time and for eternity my life, my will, my thoughts, my actions, and all my acts of repentance. Behold me entirely thine. As a victim devoted to thee, I renounce all creatures, and offer my whole being to thee. Consume me with the flames of thy divine love. I wish that no creature may ever again have any share in my heart. The proofs of love which thou gavest me when I did not love thee, make me confidently hope that thou dost accept me now that I love thee, and through love offer myself to thee.

Eternal Father, I offer to thee this day all the virtues, the acts, the affections of thy beloved Jesus. Accept them for me, through his merits, which are all mine, for he has given them to me: grant me the graces which he asks for me. With these merits, I thank thee for so many mercies which thou hast shown me. With them I atone for the debt which I have contracted by my sins. Through them,

I hope for every grace which I stand in need of, for pardon, for perseverance, for paradise, and, above all, for the great gift of thy pure love. I see that all obstacles to my salvation come from myself: but to this evil, also, do thou, O Lord, apply a remedy. I ask this favor, in the name of Jesus Christ, who has said: "Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, that I will do." John xiv. 13. Then thou canst not reject my petition. Lord, I wish only to love thee, to give myself entirely to thee, and never more to be, as I have hitherto been ungrateful to thee. Hear me, O Lord, and grant that I may be this day converted entirely to thee; so that I may never cease to love thee. I love thee, my God; I love thee, O infinite goodness; I love thee, my love, my paradise, my life, and my all.

Ejac. My Jesus, my all, thou dost wish me to be thine; I wish thee to be mine.

The Spiritual Communion.

TWENTY-EIGHTH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

O MARY, how lovely is the name given to thee by thy faithful servants: *most amiable*

Mother. Yes, thou art truly amiable: thy beauty and thy goodness have won the heart of the King of kings, even of God himself. He has said to thee, "How beautiful thou art, my beloved;" and again, "Thou art all beautiful, and there is no spot in thee." If, then, thou art so dear to God, how can I, a miserable sinner, and indebted to thee for so many benefits, refuse to love thee? I love thee, therefore, my most amiable queen, and I desire to be of the number of thy most devoted lovers. Accept my desire, and obtain for me from God the love which I ask, since nothing is more pleasing to him than to love thee.

Ejac. O my amiable Mother, grant that I may love thee with the greatest ardor.

TWENTY-NINTH VISIT.

"Behold I stand at the gate and knock." APOC.
iii. 20.

O most loving Pastor, for the love of thy sheep, thou wast not content with offering thyself once a bleeding victim on the altar of the cross, but didst also wish to conceal thyself in this divine sacrament on the altars of thy church, that thou mightest be always near to

we, to knock at the door of our hearts, and thus obtain admission into our souls. O that I knew how to enjoy thy society, like the spouse in the Canticles, who said, "I sat down under his shadow whom I desired." Can. ii. 3. Ah! if I loved thee, if I truly loved thee, O my most amiable Jesus, I, too, would desire to remain night and day at the foot of the altar, and, being near thy majesty, veiled under the consecrated species, I would enjoy those delights and that peace which thy lovers feel in thy presence. Ah! draw me with the odors of thy beauty, and of the infinite love which thou dost display in this sacrament. "Draw me: we will run after thee to the odor of thy ointments." Can. i. 3. Yes, my Saviour, I shall then renounce all creatures, and all the pleasures of this world, to run to thee in the holy sacrament. "As olive plants round about thy table." Ps. cxxvii. 3. Like olive plants, these happy souls, who assist with love before the blessed sacrament, render to God abundant fruits of sanctity. But O my Jesus, I am ashamed to appear in thy presence so naked and so devoid of virtue. Thou hast commanded that no one shall come to honor thee

on the altar without presenting some gift to thee, "Thou shalt not appear empty before me." Exod. xxiii. 15. What, then, shall I do? Shall I no more appear in thy presence to visit thee? No; this is not pleasing to thee. Poor as I am, I will come, thou wilt provide me with the gifts which thou dost desire from me. I know that thou dost remain in this sacrament, not only to reward thy lovers, but also to dispense thy favors to the poor. I adore thee, O King of my heart, O true lover of men, O Shepherd, too much enamored of thy flock: to this throne of thy love I approach to-day; and, having nothing else to offer thee, I present to thee my miserable heart, that it may be wholly consecrated to thy love and service. With this heart I am able to love thee; with this heart I wish to love thee as much as I can. Draw it, then, to thyself, and bind it entirely to thy will, that henceforth I may be able to say with St. Paul, who was bound with the chains of thy love, "I, the prisoner of Jesus Christ." Eph. iii. 1. Unite me, O Lord, entirely to thyself, make me even forget myself, that I may one day lose all things, even myself, to find only thee, and to love thee for ever.

love thee, O my Lord, concealed in this sacrament. I bind and unite myself to thee. Grant that I may find thee, and love thee, and that thou mayest never more depart from me.

Ejac. My Jesus thou alone art sufficient for me.

The Spiritual Communion.

TWENTY-NINTH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

O CHARITABLE queen, thou art styled by thy servants *the advocate of sinners*. Since, then, thou art employed in defending sinners, who place themselves under thy protection, I fly to thee, and address thee in the language of one of thy most devoted servants. O loving advocate, exercise thy office in my behalf; undertake my defence. It is true that I have been a rebel to thy beloved Son; but the evil is committed: save me, then, from the dreadful consequence of my rebellion. If thou tell thy divine Son that thou hast taken me under thy protection, I shall be pardoned and saved.

Ejac. O my Mother, my dear Mother, save me.

THIRTIETH VISIT.

“Why hidest thou thy face?” JOB xii. 24.

JOB was seized with fear when God veiled his face. But, by concealing his majesty in the holy sacrament, Jesus inspires us not with terror, but with love and confidence; for he remains hidden on our altars for the express purpose of increasing our confidence and of manifesting his love. “While God,” says Novarino, “hides his face in this sacrament, he proclaims his love.” And if the King of heaven displayed on the altar the splendor of his glory, who would dare to approach him, or lay before him his affections and desires?

Ah, my Jesus, what a loving invention is this sacrament, in which thou veilest thy divinity under the appearance of bread, to induce us to love thee, and to give all who desire it an opportunity of finding thee on earth. The prophet had reason to call on us to proclaim to the world the inventions of the love of our great God. “Make his works known among the people.” Is. xii. 4. O most loving heart of my Jesus, worthy of possessing the hearts of all creatures! O heart, always full of flames

of the most pure love! O consuming fire, consume my entire being, and give me a new life of love and grace! Unite me to thyself, so that I may never be separated from thee. O heart, opened to be the refuge of souls, receive me. O heart so sorrowful on the cross for the sins of the world, give me a true sorrow for my sins. I know that thou dost now entertain for me the same sentiments of love which thou hadst for me when thou didst expire on Calvary; and, therefore, thou dost ardently wish me to be united to thee. And can I any longer refuse to yield myself up entirely to thy love, to thy desire? Ah, my beloved Jesus, I entreat thee, through thy own merits, to wound my soul with thy love, and to bind and unite me entirely to thy heart. I resolve this day, with the assistance of thy grace, to do all in my power to please thee, and, for thy sake, to trample under foot all human respect, all inclinations and repugnances, all pleasures and conveniences, which may be an obstacle to the perfect accomplishment of thy will. Grant, O Lord, that I may fulfil this purpose, so that henceforth all my actions, and all my sentiments and affections, may be in all things con-

formable to thy will. O love of God, banish from my heart all other love. O Mary, my hope, thou art all powerful before God, obtain for me the grace to be, till death, the faithful servant of the pure love of Jesus. Amen, amen. Such my hope and desire for time and eternity.

Ejac. "Who shall separate me from the charity of Christ?"

The Spiritual Communion.

THIRTIETH VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

O MARY, we are taught by thy servant St. Bonaventure to regard thee as *the Mother of orphans*. Those unfortunate sinners, who have lost God, their Father, are orphans indeed. I fly then, to thee, O merciful Mother: I have by my sins lost my Father; all my hope rests in thee, who still remainest as my Mother. I feel fresh confidence arise within me when I hear a holy bishop ask, who has ever called on Mary without being heard? Who was ever lost, that had sincere recourse to her? I fly, therefore, to thy holy protection; have compassion on me; help me, and do not forsake me.

Ejac. O Mother of my God, augment daily my confidence in thee.

THIRTY-FIRST VISIT.

OH! how delightful to behold our Redeemer “weary with his journey,” and, full of sweetness and love seated on the fountain, waiting for the Samaritan to convert and save her. “Jesus, therefore, sat thus on the well.” John iv. 6. With equal sweetness and love, he descends every day from heaven, and remains with us on our altars, as on so many fountains of grace, expecting and inviting souls to keep him company, at least for some time, in order to draw them to his perfect love. From every altar on which he is present in the holy sacrament he seems to say to all: Christians, why do you fly from my presence? Why do you not come and draw near to one who loves you so tenderly, and who, for your sake, remains in such a state of humiliation? Why do you tear me? I am not come to judge you; but I am hidden in this sacrament of love to save all who have recourse to me. “I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.” John xii. 47.

Let us, then, be persuaded, that as Jesus Christ in heaven is "always living to make intercession for us," (Heb. vii. 25,) so, in the sacrament of the altar, he is night and day fulfilling the office of our advocate, offering himself a victim to his eternal Father, to obtain for us mercy and numberless graces. Hence, the devout A-Kempis says, that we ought to speak to Jesus in the holy sacrament as to a beloved friend, without restraint or fear of chastisement. "*Sicut solet loqui dilectus ad dilectum, amicus ad amicum.*"

Since, then, O my hidden King and Lord, thou dost invite me to speak to thee, permit me to open my heart to thee with confidence, and to say, O my Jesus, O enamored of souls, I well know the injustice and ingratitude of men to thee. Thou lovest them, and art not loved; thou dost confer benefits, and, in return, dost receive insults. Thou dost desire to speak to them, and they do not listen to thee; thou dost offer thy graces, and they refuse them. Ah, my Jesus, I, too, have been once among the number of these ungrateful souls. O God! it is too true. But I desire to amend, and, by doing all in my power to please thee, I wish to

compensate, during the remainder of my life, the insults I have offered to thee. Tell me, O Lord, what thou dost wish from me: I will do it without reserve. Make thy will known to me by means of holy obedience, and I hope to do it. My God, I firmly promise never to omit any act which I know to be pleasing to thee, though the performance of it should cost me the loss of all things, of relatives, friends, character, health, and even life. Let all be lost, provided thy will be done. Happy loss, when all is sacrificed to content thy heart, O God of my soul. I love thee, O sovereign good, amiable above every good; and in loving thee, I unite my little heart with all the hearts of the seraphim. I unite it with the heart of Mary and with the heart of Jesus. I love thee with my whole soul: thee only do I wish to love now and for ever.

Ejac. My God, my God, I am thine, and thou art mine.

The Spiritual Communion.

THIRTY-FIRST VISIT TO THE BLESSED
VIRGIN.

O MARY, thou art the tower of David, and

therefore, art able to defend those who take refuge under thee. Protect all who are engaged in the contest. I experience continual assaults from my enemies, who are striving to deprive me of the grace of God, and to withdraw me from thy protection. But thou art the fortress and the bulwark of our hope; thou dost not disdain to fight in behalf of those who trust in thee. O Mary, defend me, then, against all my enemies, and fight my battles for me, because I rely with confidence on thee.

Ejac. O Mary, thou art my protectress.

My Jesus, my sovereign good, thou art mine: I give thee my heart and my whole being; from thee I wish for nothing but thyself.

“For what have I in heaven? and, beside thee, what do I desire upon earth?.....Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever.” Ps. lxxii. 25, 26.

ACTS FOR COMMUNION.

ON PREPARATION FOR COMMUNION.

“No action of the Saviour,” says St. Francis de Sales, “can be considered more loving or more tender than the institution of the holy

Eucharist, in which he, as it were, annihilates himself, and takes the form of food, to unite himself to the souls and bodies of his faithful servants." Hence, the learned Gerson says, that the holy communion is the most efficacious means of kindling devotion and divine love in the soul.

And, in reality, what act can be more acceptable to God than to receive the holy Eucharist? St. Denis teaches, that love tends in a special manner to a perfect union: but how can the soul be more closely united to Jesus Christ than by the holy communion? "He that eateth my flesh," says Jesus, "and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." John vi. 57. "If," says St. Augustin, "you receive this sacrament every day, Jesus will always dwell with you, and you will make daily progress in divine love."

Moreover, the holy communion is a most powerful remedy for our spiritual infirmities: it is called by the Council of Trent, "the antidote by which we are delivered from daily faults, and preserved from mortal sins."

"How, then," asks Cardinal Bona, "does it happen that, from so many communions,

Christians draw so little fruit, and that they still remain subject to the same faults?" "The defect," he answers, "is not in the food, but in the dispositions of those who eat it." "Can a man," says Solomon, "hide fire in his bosom, and his garments not burn?" God is "a consuming fire;" he comes to us in the holy communion to light up this divine fire; "and how," says William of Paris, "does it happen that, by a diabolical miracle, in the midst of such intense flames, our souls remain cold in divine love?"

All arises from a want of the proper dispositions, and particularly from a want of preparation. Fire instantly inflames dry, but not green wood; for the latter is not fit for combustion. Hence, the saints have derived great profit from their communions, because they took great pains to prepare themselves for the holy Eucharist. St. Lewis Gonzaga spent three days in preparation for communion, and the three following days in thanksgiving.

Preparation for communion consists principally in detachment from creatures, and in a great desire to advance in divine love. First, then, the soul should put off all worldly attach-

ments, and banish from the heart whatever is not God. "He that is washed," says Jesus Christ, "needeth not but to wash his feet." John xiii. 10. These words, according to St. Bernard, signify, that to receive the holy sacrament with great profit, it is necessary not only to be cleansed from grievous sins, but to be free from earthly affections, which are displeasing to God; and, because they tarnish the soul, prevent the fruits of the holy communion.

St. Gertrude once asked our Lord what preparation he wished her to make for communion. In answer, he said, "I only wish you to receive me with a heart emptied of all self-love."

Secondly, a great desire of receiving Jesus Christ, and of his holy love, is necessary for communion. "In this holy banquet," says Gerson, "the hungry only are satiated." And most holy Mary said, "he hath filled the hungry with all good things." Luke i. 53. "As," says the venerable Avila, "Jesus did not come into the world until he was eagerly longed for, so he comes only to the souls of those who desire to receive him: hence his holy flesh should not be given to those who have no relish for it." Our Lord once said to St. Matilda:

“The bee does not fly with such ardor to the flowers from which it sucks the honey, as I, through force of love, come to Christians in the holy communion.” Since, then, Jesus Christ so ardently desires to come into our souls, it is but just that we, too, should burn with a strong desire to receive him, and to be filled with his holy love. St. Francis de Sales teaches, that the principal intention of Christians in receiving the holy Eucharist should be to advance in divine love; because, as the Son of God gives himself to us only through love, so we ought to receive him through love.

ACTS BEFORE COMMUNION.

1. *An Act of Faith.* “Behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills.” Cant. ii. 8. Ah, my most amiable Saviour, how many rough and lofty mountains hadst thou to pass in order to come and unite thyself to me in this most holy sacrament. First, from being God, thou hadst to become man; from being infinite, to become an infant; from being the Lord of the universe, to become a servant; from the bosom of thy eternal Father, thou hadst to descend into the womb of a

virgin; from heaven into a manger; and from a throne of glory to an ignominious gibbet. And this morning thou hadst to come from thy celestial seat to dwell in my heart.

“He standeth behind the wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices.” Cant. ii. 9. Behold, O my soul, thy lover Jesus burning with the same love with which he loved thee when he expired on the cross: behold him concealed under the sacramental species, “looking through the lattices.” Like an ardent lover, he desires to see thee correspond with his love. And from the consecrated host, as “through the lattices,” he looks at thee, but is not regarded. There he beholds thee this morning coming to eat his divine flesh; there he observes the objects of thy thoughts, of thy love, and of thy desires, and the offerings thou dost intend to present to him.

Prepare thyself, then, O my soul, to receive Jesus; first, by faith, saying to him: Then, my beloved Redeemer, in a few moments thou wilt come into my heart. O hidden God, unknown to the greater part of mankind, I believe thee present in the holy sacrament, and I adore

thee for my Lord and Saviour; and, to confess this truth, I would cheerfully lay down my life. Thou comest to enrich me with thy graces, and to unite thyself entirely to me. How great, then, ought to be my confidence in thee, who comest to me in so loving a manner!

2. *An Act of Confidence.* My soul dilate thy heart: thy Jesus can give thee every good gift; he loves thee ardently. Hope, then, for great favors from this Lord, who, through an impulse of love, comes to thee all love. Yes, my Jesus, my hope, I trust in thy goodness; that in giving thyself to me this morning, thou wilt kindle in my poor soul the flames of thy pure love, and of an ardent desire to please thee, that from this day forward I may wish only what thou wishest.

3. *An Act of Love.* Ah, my God, my God, the true and only love of my soul, what more couldst thou do to induce me to love thee. Thou was not content with dying for me, thou didst wish to institute this holy sacrament to give thyself entirely to me, and thus unite thy whole heart to the heart of a creature so vile and ungrateful as I am. And what is more, thou thyself dost invite me to receive thee;

thou dost ardently desire that I should receive thee. O infinite love! incomprehensible love! a God wishes to give himself to me.

My soul, dost thou believe all this? What art thou doing, or what hast thou to say? O God, O God, infinitely amiable, the only object worthy of all love, I love thee with my whole heart; I love thee above all things; I love thee more than myself, more than my life. O that I could see thee loved by all! O that I could make all hearts love thee as much as thou dost desire. I love thee, O most amiable God, and in loving thee, I unite my miserable heart to the heart of the seraphim, to the heart of most holy Mary, and to the heart of Jesus thy most holy Son. Thus I love thee, O infinite goodness, with the love with which the saints, with which Mary and Jesus love thee. I love thee only, because thou art worthy of my love, and through the sole motive of pleasing thee. Begone from my heart, all earthly affections, you tend not to God. Mother of pure love, most holy Mary, help me to love that God whom thou dost desire to see so much loved.

4. *An Act of Humility.* Then, my soul,

thou art going to eat the sacred flesh of Jesus Christ. Art thou worthy to receive him? My God, what am I, and who art thou? I well know who thou art, who givest thyself to me. But dost thou know who I am who am going to receive thee?

And is it possible, O my Jesus, that thou, the God of infinite purity, shouldst desire to come and dwell in my soul, which has been so long the abode of thy enemy, and the sink of so much sin? I am sensible, O Lord, of thy great majesty, and of my own misery: I am ashamed to appear before thee. I would wish, through reverence, to remain far from thee; but if I withdraw from thee, O my life, whither shall I go? to whom shall I fly? or what shall become of me? No, I do not wish to remove from thee; but on the contrary, I desire always to draw nearer to thee. Thou dost wish, and even invite me, to receive thee for the food of my soul. I come then, O my amiable Saviour, to receive thee this morning, but I come covered with shame and confusion at the sight of my sins, but full of confidence in thy mercy, and in the love which thou dost bear to me.

5. *An Act of Sorrow.* O God of my soul, I am sincerely sorry for not having hitherto loved thee. Instead of having loved thee, I have for the sake of my pleasures, offended and despised thy infinite goodness; I have turned my back upon thee; in a word, O my God, I have voluntarily lost thee. Lord, I am sorry, from the bottom of my heart, for all my sins. I hate above all things the offences, whether mortal or venial, which I have committed against thee, who art infinite goodness. I hope that thou hast already pardoned me. But if my sins are not yet forgiven, pardon me before I receive thee. Wash in my blood this soul, which thou dost wish soon to make thy dwelling-place.

6. *An Act of Desire.* O my soul, the happy hour is arrived; Jesus comes to dwell in thy poor heart. Behold the King of Heaven, thy Redeemer and thy God, coming to thee. Prepare thyself to receive him with love; say to him, with the most ardent desire: Come, O my Jesus, come to my soul; I desire to receive thee. Before thou dost give thyself to me, I desire to give thee my miserable heart; accept it, come and take full possession of it.

Come, my God, make haste, do not delay. O my only and infinite good, my treasure, my life, my paradise, my love, my all. I would wish to receive thee with that love with which the most holy and loving souls, with which immaculate Mary, received thee. With their communions I unite this communion of mine.

Most holy Virgin, my Mother, Mary, behold I am going to receive thy Son. I would wish to have thy heart, and the love with which thou didst communicate: give me this morning thy Jesus, as thou gavest him to the shepherds and to the *Magi*. I wish to receive him from thy most pure hands: tell him that I am thy servant, and that I am devoted to thee; and when he comes to me, he will look on me with a more loving eye, and will unite himself more closely to me.

ON THANKSGIVING AFTER COMMUNION.

THERE is no prayer more pleasing to God, or more profitable to the soul, than thanksgiving after communion. It is the opinion of many learned authors, of Suarez, Cajetan, Valentia, Lugo, and others, that, as long as the

sacramental species remain, the holy communion continues to produce an augmentation of grace, provided the soul disposes herself for it by new acts of virtue. Eugene the Fourth, in his decree to the Armenians, teaches that, like corporal food, the holy Eucharist continues to operate and produce its effects in proportion to the dispositions of those who receive it.

Hence, holy souls endeavor to remain as long as possible in prayer after communion. The venerable M. Avila spent two hours in prayer after communion, even during the missions. Father Balthasar Alvarez used to say, that we ought to set as much value on the time after communion as if we heard from the lips of Jesus Christ himself the words which he addressed to his disciples: "But you have not me always with you."

It is not a good practice to begin, as some do, to read immediately after communion: it is better to spend at least a little time in holy affections, in speaking from the heart with Jesus Christ, who is within you, and in repeating several times some tender affection or prayer. Jesus Christ repeated the same prayer for three hours in the garden. "And he prayed

the third time, saying the self-same words." Matt. xxvi. 44.

After communion, then, the soul should entertain herself with Jesus, in affections and prayers. We should be persuaded that prayers after communion have greater value and merit before God than those that are offered at other times: for then the soul is united to Jesus Christ, and her acts derive value from his presence.

Moreover, we must consider that after communion Jesus Christ is more disposed to bestow his graces. St. Teresa says, that at that time Jesus remains in the soul as on a throne of grace, saying to her, "What wilt thou that I should do to thee?" As if he said, O Christian soul, I am come for the express purpose of giving thee my graces: ask what thou wishest, and thou shalt obtain it.

Oh devout soul, what treasures of grace wilt thou receive if thou dost continue to entertain thyself with Jesus at least for a quarter of an hour after communion. For thy thanksgiving, thou canst read the following acts, which I here subjoin. But even after thy thanksgiving thou must, during the day of thy com

munion, take care, by prayers and affections, to keep thyself united with Jesus, whom thou hast received.

ACTS AFTER COMMUNION.

1. *An Act of Faith.* Behold, my God is already come to visit me; my Saviour is come to dwell in my soul. My Jesus is already within my heart. He is come to be mine, and to make me belong to himself. Thus Jesus is mine, and I am his: Jesus is all mine, and I am entirely his.

O infinite goodness! O infinite mercy! O infinite love! A God comes to unite himself to me, and to make himself entirely mine! My soul, what art thou doing, now that thou art so closely united with Jesus, now that thou art made one thing with Jesus? Dost thou say nothing to him? Dost thou not speak to thy God, who dwells within thee? Enliven thy faith, and remember that the angels stand around thee adoring thy God within my breast. Unite with them, and adore thy Lord in the midst of thy heart. Be recollected, banish every foreign thought: unite thy whole heart

and all thy affections with thy God, embrace him, and say :

Ah, my Jesus, my love, my infinite good, my all, mayest thou be always welcome in the poor habitation of my soul. Ah, my Lord, where art thou ? where hast thou come ? Into this heart of mine, which is more unfit to receive thee than the stable in which thou wast born : it is full of worldly attachments, of self-love, and of irregular desires. What has induced thee to come into it ? I would wish to say with St. Peter, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." Withdraw from me, who am unworthy to receive into my soul a God of infinite goodness. Go and repose in those pure souls who serve thee with so much love. But no, my Redeemer, do not depart from me : for if thou leave me, I am lost. I embrace thee, my life ; I unite myself to thee. I have been guilty of an excess of folly by separating myself from thee for the love of creatures. I have ungratefully banished thee from my heart. I wish never more to be separated from thee. I desire, O my treasure, always to live and die united to thee.

Most holy Mary, ye seraphim, and all ye

blessed souls that love God with pure love, obtain for me your affections, that I may welcome my beloved Lord.

2. *An Act of Thanksgiving.* My God and my Lord, I thank thee for the favor thou hast bestowed upon me this morning, in coming to dwell in my soul: but I would wish to render thee a thanksgiving worthy of thee, and of the great favor conferred upon me. But what do I say? What worthy thanksgiving can I, a miserable creature, offer to thee?

Segneri says, that, for a soul after communion, the most appropriate sentiment is one of astonishment at the thought of receiving a God. A God to me! a God to me! "What," said David, "shall I render to the Lord for all the things he hath rendered to me?" Ps. cxv. 12. But what return shall I make to thee, O Jesus, who, after having bestowed on me so many gifts, hast this morning given me thyself? Bless, then, O my soul, and thank thy God according to the best of thy ability. And O Mary, my Mother, my holy advocates, my angel guardian, and all ye souls that love God, "come all ye that fear the Lord, and hear what things he hath done for my soul:" come and

bless and thank my God for me; admire and praise the great graces he has bestowed upon me.

3. *An Act of Oblation.* If a king came to visit a poor shepherd, what better offering could the shepherd make to his sovereign than his entire flock, such as it is? Since, then, thou, O Jesus, my divine King, dost come to visit the poor house of my soul, I offer and give thee my soul and my entire being, along with my liberty and my will. "My beloved to me, and I to him." Thou hast given thyself entirely to me, I give myself without reserve to thee. From this day forward, O my Jesus, I wish to be no longer mine; I desire to be thine, and to be altogether thine. May my senses be thine; may they serve only to please thee. "And what," says St. Peter of Alcantara, "can be more delightful to a soul than to please thee, O most amiable, most loving, and most grateful God?" I give thee all my powers; I wish that they may be all thine. I wish that my memory may serve only to remember thy favors and thy love; that my understanding may be employed only in thinking of thee, whose thoughts are always fixed on

my welfare; and that my will may be occupied only in loving thee, my God and my all, and in wishing only what thou dost wish.

I consecrate then, and sacrifice to thee this morning, O my most sweet Saviour, all that I have and all that I am; my senses, my thoughts, my affections, my desires, my pleasures, my inclinations, and my liberty. In a word, I consign into thy hands my entire body and soul.

Accept, O infinite majesty, the sacrifice of himself, presented to thee by a sinner, who has been hitherto the most ungrateful on earth, but who now offers and gives himself entirely to thee. Do with me, O Lord, and dispose of me as thou pleasest. Come, O consuming fire, O divine love, and consume in me whatsoever is mine, and is not pleasing to thy most pure eyes, that henceforth I may belong entirely to thee, and that I may fulfil not only thy precepts and counsels, but also thy holy desires, and whatever is most pleasing to thee.

O most holy Mary, present with thy own hands this offering to the most holy Trinity, and obtain for me the grace that it may be ac

cepted, and that I may be faithful till death. Amen, amen, amen.

4. *An Act of Petition.* My soul, what art thou doing? These moments, during which thou canst receive whatsoever thou askest, are too precious to be lost. Dost thou not see the eternal Father lovingly beholding within thee his beloved Son, the dearest object of his love? Banish, then, all distracting thoughts, enliven thy faith, enlarge thy heart, and ask what thou pleasest.

Dost thou not hear Jesus himself speaking to thee, “What wilt thou that I should do to thee?” What, O Christian soul, dost thou wish me to do for thee? I am come for the purpose of making thee rich and happy: ask with confidence, and thou shalt have whatever thou wilt.

Ah, my most sweet Saviour, since thou art come into my soul to enrich me with thy graces, since thou dost desire that I should ask them from thee, behold I seek not earthly goods nor riches, nor honors, nor pleasures: give me, I entreat thee, a great sorrow for the offences I have offered to thee; give me a great light, that I may clearly see the vanity of this world

and thy claims to my love. Change this heart of mine, remove from it all earthly attachments; give me a heart perfectly conformed to thy holy will, a heart which will seek only what is most pleasing to thee, and which will aspire only to thy holy love. "Create a clean heart in me, O God." I do not deserve this grace, but thou, O my Jesus, who hast come to dwell in my soul, dost merit it for me. I ask it through thy merits, through the merits of thy most holy Mother, and through the love thou bearest to thy eternal Father.

Here stop for some time to ask of Jesus some particular favors for yourself and for your neighbor. Do not forget to pray for poor sinners, and for the souls in purgatory: pray also for me, who have composed this little book for your benefit.

Eternal Father, Jesus Christ himself, thy Son, has said, "Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father any thing in my name, he will give it you." For the love, then, of this Son, whom I have in my heart, hear me, and grant my petitions.

"Amores mei dulcissimi, Jesu et Maria, pro

vobis patiar, pro vobis moriar, sim totus vester, sim nihil meus." Alphonsus Rodriguez.

Eternal praises and thanks to Jesus in the most holy sacrament. Blessed be the holy and immaculate conception of the blessed Virgin Mary.

Whoever says the following prayer gains an indulgence.

Soul of Christ, sanctify me; body of Christ, save me; blood of Christ, inebriate me; water of the side of Christ, cleanse me; passion of Christ, strengthen me. O good Jesus, graciously hear me; hide me within thy wounds. Do not permit me to be separated from thee; defend me from the wicked enemy. At the hour of death call me; command me to come to thee, that, with the saints and angels, I may praise thee for endless ages. Amen.

ASPIRATIONS OF LOVE.

Taken from manuscripts of St. Francis de Sales.

By St. Alphonsus M. Liguori.

OH! excess of love, consecrated Host! I adore thee within me; one heart is too little to love thee, O my Jesus; one tongue is too little to praise thy goodness. O my Saviour, how

great are my obligations to thee for having visited so poor a creature. I offer myself entirely to thee, in acknowledgment of so great a favor.

No: I do not wish to live any longer in myself. I wish that Jesus alone may live in me. He is mine, and I am his for all eternity. O love, love! no more sins. I will never forget the goodness and the mercies of Jesus, my Saviour and my guest. Yes, my God, I believe firmly that thou art in soul and body within my breast; thy divinity is at present within me, and united to me.

O my God, thou comest in order to unite thyself to me, to apply abundantly to my soul the merits of thy passion, and to sanctify me. Do, then, in me all that for which thou comest. Ah! my God, all-wise, all-powerful, do not lose the fruit of thy journey; unite thyself to me, and me to thee, by an inseparable union, and by perfect love.

My Saviour, through the infinite goodness which has made thee descend on earth, I entreat thee to make me feel the effect of thy love in consuming my soul, so that despising all earthly goods, I may seek only after thee, that

I may think only of thee. Thus may the same love which has made thee die on the cross, make me likewise die in thee, in order to live in thee for eternity.

O God of my soul, who dost deserve to be loved above all creatures, I protest that I regard thee as the only object of my affection, and that I prefer thee to all the goods of the world, and to myself. I wish to be faithful to thee, and I wish never more to see myself separated from thee.

I resign and abandon myself entirely to thee, embracing with all love and respect, all thy holy wills, and thy just designs regarding me. And I pray thee that whatsoever thou hast ordained in my regard, for time and for eternity, may be accomplished. But I hope to see one day thy divine countenance, and thy infinite beauty. My God draw me to thyself, that I may love thee, and may burn with thy love, in which I would wish to be consumed.

O eternal Father, for the love of thy Son, fill my memory with holy thoughts, which will make me always remember thee and thy Son. Ah! make me know and do all that thou dost desire from me. And thou, O Holy Spirit,

fill my will with holy affections, which will produce the fruits that proceed from thy love. Enlighten me with thy light, that I may walk in the straight road to thee, and that my will may have liberty only to be entirely thine.

O Incarnate Word, grant that I may love thee, and love nothing but thee. Remove from me all occasions which turn me away from thy love. Grant that my heart may be wholly occupied in seeking and serving thee as the principal love of hearts. Thou hast come into the world for the sole purpose of dwelling in the hearts thou hast redeemed with thy blood; may my heart, then, be all thine; take possession of it. Look to all my wants; enlighten me, and make me willing to do all thy wills.

O omnipotent Jesus, take away from me all obstacles to the effects of thy power and benevolence. I renounce my liberty and consecrate it entirely to the arrangements of thy holy will. Have mercy on me, and cleanse me from all my stains and infidelities; fill me with thy grace and wisdom. I abandon myself entirely to thee, O my Jesus; I wish to be all thine. I wish to labor fervently for thy glory

and to suffer with patience all tribulations at the sight of thy sufferings. Grant that I may be employed only in what pleases thee.

My God, though there were no punishment for sinners, I would not cease to love thee and to suffer for thee. Grant that I may correspond to thy desires. Thou shalt henceforth be my portion for ever. O Incarnate Word, wash my heart in thy blood, and imprint on it, as the mark of thy love, thy holy name—Jesus.

O my Jesus, through the eternal love thou hast borne me, grant that I may love thee during the short time that I have to live on this earth, in order to be able afterwards to love thee for eternity in heaven. O God of love, grant that I may live only for thee. When shall I be all thine as thou art all mine? When shall I die to myself to live entirely to thy love? I do not even know how to give myself to thee as I ought. Ah! my God, take me and make me all thine.

O Blessed Virgin, I rejoice with thee at thy having won the heart of thy God. Ah! unite me entirely to thy Son; speak to him in my behalf, and beg of him to give me the grace to

do whatsoever he will inspire me to do. Teach me to practice the virtues which thou didst practice on earth, and detach my affections from every thing which is not God, that I may love him with all my strength.

My God, inflame my whole heart with thy love, that I may seek nothing but thy pleasure; that nothing may please me but what pleases thee, and that I may banish from my soul every thing which is not agreeable to thee. Grant that I may always say with sincerity, my God, my God, I wish for thee alone, and for nothing else. My Jesus, give me a great devotion to thy most holy passion, that thy pains and thy death may be always before my eyes to inflame me always with love for thee, and to incline me always to make some return of gratitude for so much love. Give me also a great devotion to the most holy sacrament of the altar, in which thou hast displayed the tenderness of thy love for me. I also pray thee to give me a tender devotion to thy most holy Mother, give me the grace always to love her, and to serve her by always invoking her intercession, and by inducing others to practice devotion to her, and to have confidence in her patronage,

and to me and to all, grant always a great confidence, first in the merits of thy passion, and afterwards in the intercession of Mary.

I pray thee to grant me a holy death. Give me the grace to receive thee in my last illness in the most holy viaticum, that united with thee, burning with holy flames, and with an ardent desire of seeing thee, I may depart from this world to embrace thy feet the first time I shall behold thee.

O my King, come and reign alone in my soul; take full possession of it that it may serve and obey only thy love.

O my Jesus, that I could consume my entire being for thee, who hast consumed thy whole life for me.

O Lamb of God, immolated on the cross, remember that I am one of the souls that thou hast redeemed by so many toils and so many sorrows. Grant that I may never lose thee. Thou hast given thyself entirely to me: grant that I may be all thine, and that I may have no other desire than that of pleasing thee. I love thee, O infinite Good, I love thee in order to please thee. I love thee because thou dost deserve my love. My greatest sorrow arises

from seeing that I have lived so long in the world and have not loved thee.

My beloved Redeemer, give me a portion of the sorrow which thou hadst for my sins in the garden of Gethsemani. O my Jesus, that I had died rather than have ever offended thee.

O love of my Jesus, thou art my love and my hope. I wish to lose life a thousand times rather than lose thy grace.

My God, had I died when I was in sin, I could never more love thee. I thank thee for giving me time, and for calling me to love thee. Now that I am able, I wish to love thee with my whole soul. It was that I might love thee, that thou hast borne with me so long. Yes, I wish to love thee. Ah! for the sake of the blood which thou hast shed for me, do not permit me to betray thee again. "In te Domine, speravi non confundar in æternum." What world? what riches? what amusements? what honors? God, God, I wish for God alone. My God, thou alone who art an infinite good, art sufficient for me.

O my Jesus, bind me entirely to thy love, and draw to thyself all my affections, that I

may be able to love nothing but thee. Make me all thine before I die.

Ah! my God, while I live I am in danger of losing thee. Ah! when shall the day arrive on which I can say, my Jesus I can never more lose thee.

O eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ do not reject me; accept me to love thee, and give me thy holy love. I wish to love thee tenderly in this life in order to love thee ardently in the next.

O infinite Good, I love thee; make me understand the great good which I love, and give me that love which thou dost deserve from me. Grant that I may conquer all things in order to please thee.

O Mary, who dost so ardently desire to see thy Son loved, the grace which I ask thee to obtain for me is, that I may love him during all the remaining days of my life. I desire nothing more. O my Lady and my Mother, in thee I trust. Thou dost obtain whatsoever thou askest from thy God; thou dost pray for all thy clients, pray also for me.

ASPIRATIONS OF LOVE TO JESUS IN THE
HOLY SACRAMENT.

*Which may be used before and after Communion, also
in the Visits to the blessed Sacrament.*

“Go forth ye daughters of Jerusalem, see king Solomon in the diadem wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals.” Cant. iii. 11. O daughters of grace, ye souls that love God, go forth from the darkness of the earth, and behold your king, Jesus, crowned with thorns, with the diadem of insult and of sorrow, with which the impious synagogue, his mother, crowned him on the day of his espousals, on the day of his death, by which he espoused himself to our souls on the cross: go forth again and behold him all mercy and love, coming to unite himself to you in this sacrament of love.

My beloved Jesus, it has, then, cost thee so dearly to unite thyself with our souls in this most sweet sacrament. Thou hadst first to suffer so painful and ignominious a death. Come, make haste, unite thyself to my soul. I was once thy enemy by sin, but now thou dost wish to make me thy spouse by grace. Come

O my spouse Jesus; I will never more betray thee: I wish to be for ever faithful to thee. As a loving spouse, I desire only to think of, and to seek thy pleasure. I wish to love thee without reserve; I wish to be entirely thine. Yes, my Jesus, all, all thine.

2. "A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me: he shall abide between my breasts." Cant. i. 12. The myrrh plant, as soon as it is wounded, sends forth tears and waters of health. To give us his blood, for our sanctification in this bread of life, our Jesus wished to shed the last drop of it through his painful wounds. Come, then, beloved "bundle of myrrh," my dearest Jesus, who, when I behold thee bleeding on the cross, art to me an object of sorrow and compassion. But, in receiving thee in this most sweet sacrament, thou art more sweet to me than a cluster of the choicest grapes to a man oppressed with thirst. "A cluster of cyprius is my love to me in the vineyards of Engaddi." Cant. i. 13. Come, then, to my soul; heal me, and fill me with thy holy love. Ah! what sweetness of spirit do I feel in thinking that I am to receive thee my Saviour, who didst shed all thy blood, and didst offer thyself

in sacrifice on the cross, for my salvation! "*Intus ubera mea commorabitur.*" No, my Jesus, I will never drive thee away: thou shalt never again depart from me. I wish to love thee always, and to be for ever closely united to thee. I will always belong to Jesus; Jesus will be for ever mine, for ever, for ever, for ever mine. "*Intus ubera mea commorabitur.*"

3. "While my king was at his repose, my spikenard sent forth the odor thereof." Cant. i. 11. When Jesus comes to dwell in a soul by the holy communion, oh how the soul, with the aid of the light which the King of heaven brings with him, sees and knows her own baseness, and, like the spikenard, the most lowly of plants, confesses that she is the vilest of creatures! Oh! what sweet odor does she, thus, humbled, send forth to her beloved King, who invites her to unite herself always more closely to him!

My soul, if thou dost wish that Jesus should repose within thee, reflect on thy lowliness, what thou art, and what thou deservest. Humble thyself by banishing all self-esteem, which makes Jesus depart from thee, and prevents him from coming to repose in thy heart.

Come to me, my dear Redeemer; come, and, with thy own divine light, make me sensible of my vileness, my misery, and my nothingness: that thus thou mayest repose with delight in my soul, never more to be separated from me

4. "Think of the Lord, in goodness." Wis. i. 1. My soul, why art thou so timid and so pusillanimous at the sight of the infinite goodness and love of thy God? Why art thou diffident? Now that thou hast received Jesus Christ into thy heart, take care to correspond to his love, and to confide in the boundless goodness of thy God, who gives himself entirely to thee. His judgments are indeed terrible, but only to the proud and the obstinate. But, to the humble and penitent, who desire to love him and to please him, his judgments are all mercy and love, because they proceed from a heart full of compassion and love. Such are the judgments of God, that, in meditating on them, David superabounded in hope. "In thy words I hoped exceedingly." Ps. cxviii. 43. The consideration of them filled his soul with joy and consolation. "Thy judgments are delightful." "I remembered, O Lord, thy

judgments of old, and I was comforted." Ps. cxviii. 52. Ah! this great God is too loving and too good to them who seek him with love. "The Lord is good.....to the soul that seeketh him." Jer. Th. iii. 25. Oh, how good is God to all who endeavor to conform their will to his divine will! "How good is God to them that are of a right heart." Ps. lxxii. 1. My God, my love, my hope, my all, I desire thee, and I desire thee only to love thee, to please thee, and to do always thy holy will. Grant that I may find thee, that I may satisfy thee, and that I may never more abandon thee. *Fiat, fiat.* Amen, amen.

5. "The voice of my beloved knocking: open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled." Cant. iii. 2. Behold the voice of Jesus in the holy sacrament to them who love and desire him. Open to me, he says, O Christian soul, thy heart; I will enter and unite myself with thee. Thus thou wilt become my sister by likeness to me; my love, by the communication of my graces; my dove, by the gift of simplicity, and, my undefiled, by the gift of purity which I shall give thee.

'The spouse adds: "For my head is full of

dew, and my locks of the drops of the night." Cant. v. 2. As if he said: Consider, O my beloved, I have waited all the night of the life of sin, which thou hast spent in the midst of darkness and errors. Behold, instead of coming with scourges to chastise thee, I now come with locks full of celestial dew, to extinguish in thee all impure affections to creatures, and to kindle within thee the happy fire of my holy love. Come, then, O my beloved Jesus, and do in me all that thou dost desire. I renounce all affections to creatures, that I may be entirely thine, and that thou mayest make me what thou dost desire me to be, perfectly conformable to thy holy will.

6. "Let my beloved come into his garden and eat the fruit of the apple trees." Cant. v. 1. Cornelius a Lapide, says, that this is the invitation of a soul that desires the holy communion, to Jesus in the blessed sacrament. Come, she says, O my beloved, into my heart, which was once unhappily not thine, but has now, by means of thy grace, returned to thee. *Come, and eat the fruit of the apple trees.* Come, and taste in me those virtues which thou dost bring with thee. Ah, Lord, at least,

for the honor of thy majesty, purify my soul, adorn it, inflame it with thy love; render it beautiful in thy eyes, that it may become a fit abode for thy divinity.

7. "You shall be carried at the breasts." Is. lxiv. 12. It is from the holy sacrament that Jesus gives us this sweet invitation. Come, he says, and suck the divine milk of this sacrament, in which I give thee my own blood. "But what shepherd," says St. Chrysostom, "has ever fed his sheep with his own blood? Even mothers entrust their children to the care of nurses; but thou, O divine Pastor, enamored of souls, dost wish to nourish them with thy own blood." No wonder, then, that St. Catherine of Sienna approached the altar to receive this holy food with the ardor of an infant sucking its mother's breast. No wonder that the spouse of the Canticles exclaimed, "Thy breasts are better than wine." Cant. i. 1. By these words, she meant that she set a greater value on the milk of this sacrament than on all the pleasures of this world, which are as fleeting and vain as the sweetness and gladness of wine.

O my beloved Jesus, since thou dost wish

to nourish me this morning with thy own blood, in the holy communion, it is but just that I cheerfully renounce all the delights and pleasures of this earth. Yes, I renounce them all; and protest that I prefer to suffer all evils, united with thee, to the enjoyment of all the goods of this world without thee. For me, it is enough to content and please thee, who deservest to be pleased at any cost. Give me, I entreat thee, only thy love and thy grace, and I shall be content. I will say with St. Ignatius, "Give me thy love along with thy grace, and I am sufficiently rich."

8. "Eat, O friends, and drink, and be inebriated, my dearly beloved." Cant. v. 1. Friends, that is, beginners, who scarcely enjoy the divine friendship, eat the flesh of Jesus Christ, but they eat it with difficulty, and without relish. The advanced drink his blood with less labor; but the "dearly beloved" are the perfect, who, inebriated with holy love, and detached from all worldly objects, live forgetful of all things, even of themselves, and seek only to love and please their God.

My beloved Jesus, I am not perfect, but thou canst make me perfect. I am not one of

thy "dearly beloved," because I have been ungrateful and unfaithful to thee; but, by inebriating me this morning with thy love, thou canst make me one of thy "dearly beloved" spouses. "Thy kingdom come." Come, my beloved Lord, and take possession of my whole soul. Establish thy kingdom within me, so that thou only shalt reign in my heart; that there thy love only may command, and may be obeyed. Inebriate me, inebriate my whole soul. Make me forget all creatures, myself, my interests, and all things, that I may love only thee, my God, my treasure, my only good, my all; that I may sigh and seek only after thee; that I may think of and please thee alone. Through the merits of thy passion, grant me this favor. This gift only do I ask, and hope for from thee.

9. "Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples, because I languish with love." Cant. ii. 5. The soul languishes with love, when, forgetful of herself and of all that belongs to her, she seeks only her beloved by holy desires, which are the flowers, and by good works, which are the fruits of divine love.

Ah, my God, concealed in this sacrament,

since thou dost wish me to be entirely thine, make me what thou dost desire me to be: make me forget every thing which does not appertain to thy love. Increase continually my desires to please thee, and grant that these flowers may not be always flowers; grant that they may become fruits, by my doing and suffering something for thee, who hast done and suffered too much for the love of me. O God, O God of my soul, make me love thee, and show my love by deeds, before I die.

10. "My beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands." Cant. v. 10. Our beloved Jesus is rendered all white by purity, and all ruddy by the flames of divine love. My immaculate Lamb, all on fire with love for me, when wilt thou make me like thyself? When wilt thou make me as pure as thyself, O most pure lily? When wilt thou inflame me with the love with which thou dost burn for me? O my God and my all, I renounce all love, and choose only thy most amiable love. Depart from me all creatures; go and endeavor to gain the love of those who seek after thee. I wish only for my God; for him alone do I

desire to reserve my whole heart and all its affections.

11. "The goodness and benignity of God our Saviour appeared." Tit. iii. 4. St. Paul says, that in becoming flesh, God showed to the world the extent of his benignity to man. But, in the institution of the holy sacrament, he has displayed the tenderness of his love for souls. "Does it not," says St. Augustin, "appear folly to say, eat my flesh and drink my blood?" "Take," says Jesus, on the night before his passion, "and eat: this is my body." To show you the ardor of my love for you, I wish you to eat my very flesh. O holy faith! who but Jesus Christ could have asked us to eat his sacred flesh. Who but Jesus Christ could have thought of instituting a means of giving us his body for the food of our souls! Some of his disciples when they heard that he wished to give them his body to be eaten, exclaimed, "This is a hard saying, and who can hear it." John vi. 61. They refused to believe the words of Jesus Christ, and "walked no more with him." But his words are of faith.

But, after all he has done for us. what more

does Jesus Christ demand of us but to love him? "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee but that.....thou love him, and serve the Lord thy God with thy whole heart?" Deut. x. 12.

Ah, my most loving Jesus, what dost thou not give and promise to them who love thee? Thou dost promise them thy love. "I love them that love me." Prov. viii. 17. Thou dost promise to embrace them, though they may have turned their back upon thee. "Turn to me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn to you." Zac. i. 3. Thou dost promise to bring with thee the Father and the Holy Ghost, and to dwell for ever in their souls. "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father.....We will come to him, and make our abode with him." John xiv. 21, 23.

What more couldst thou promise or give to induce men to love thee? Most amiable Lord, I understand thee: thou dost wish to be loved even by me. I love thee with my whole heart; and if I do not love thee, teach me to love thee. Make me love thee, and love thee intensely. "Give what thou commandest, and command what thou pleasest."

12. "Do not consider that I am brown because the sun hath altered my color." Cant. i. 5. The ardor of my passions, says the sacred spouse, (and much more ought I to say so, O my dear Jesus,) has deformed and discolored me. "I am black, but beautiful." Cant. i. 4. O my Redeemer, my works have made me black, but thy merits have rendered me beautiful. I was once black, when I stood alone, and was separated from thee; but now that I am united to thee, thy grace, thy beauty, thy love, have made me beautiful. Yes, my Jesus, such my firm hope, be thou ever blessed for it. But do not permit me ever more to lose thee, or to return to my past deformity. I love thee, O infinite beauty, and I wish that my soul may be beautiful, and always beautiful, in order that I may be always more pleasing in thy divine eyes, and that thou mayest always love me.

13. "Draw me, we will run after thee to the odor of thy ointments." Cant. i. 3. My dear Jesus, because I could not ascend to thee in heaven, thou hast come down to me, in order to unite thyself with me in this sacrament of love; draw me, then, O Lord, entirely

to thyself. I do not wish to draw thee to me that thou mayest permit me to indulge my inclinations; but I wish thee to draw me to thyself by the sweet attractions of thy grace, so that I may desire and do only thy most holy will. It is just that all my inclinations should give way to the holy arrangements. Unite me entirely to thyself, and thus united to thee, and free from earthly affections, I will run along with thee in the way of virtue until I shall repose in this life and the next, only in thy divine will. "In peace, in the self-same I will sleep, and I will rest." Ps. iv. 9.

14. "He brought me into the cellar of wine, he set in order charity in me." Cant. ii. 4. By the cellar of wine St. Bonaventure understands the holy communion, which, by uniting the soul to her divine King, makes her relish that wine of love, which beats down the desires of created objects, and infuses a well-regulated love, a love just and reasonable towards herself, charitable towards her neighbor, and supreme towards God; a love which makes her love above all things him who deserves to be loved above all.

O my King, Jesus, the only Lord of my

heart, thou hast already introduced me into this blessed cellar of thy holy love; that is, within thyself, uniting me with thee by means of this sacrament of love. Yes, my Lord, I already perceive a change in my heart. I feel a holy desire, which gives me peace, which fills me with disgust for all impure affections, and impels me to love thee, my God, with pure love. Ah, my Jesus, since thou hast admitted me into this blessed cellar, do not allow me ever to depart from it. Detach me from all created love, unite me always more closely to thee in this life, that a day may come when I shall be perfectly united to thee in heaven, where I shall see thee face to face, and shall love thee with all my strength, without interruption or imperfection, for all eternity.

15. "My beloved is gone down to his garden.....to feed in his garden and to gather lilies." Cant. vi. 1. Ah, my most sweet Saviour, since thou dost descend from heaven to come to my soul, make me, by thy grace, become thy garden, that thou mayest gather in my heart lilies and fruits pleasing in thine eyes. Pardon me if I have offended thee. if I have left thee, receive me now that I am sorry

for my sins, and return to thee; grant me that purity which thou dost desire from me, give me strength to do thy will, infuse into my soul thy true love, and I shall be pleasing in thy sight. I sacrifice to thee all my inclinations: I desire and wish only to please thee.

16. The spouse calls her beloved "all lovely." Cant. xv. 16. To the souls that love him as their spouse, Jesus is "all lovely," whether he chastises or consoles them, whether he is near to them or far from them; because all proceeds from love, and from a desire to be loved. Treat me, then, O my Jesus, as thou dost wish; I will always love thee whether thou dost console or afflict me. I know that all shall come from thy loving heart, that all shall be for my great good. "My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready." Behold, O Lord, my will prepared to embrace all the arrangements of thy providence. "I will bless the Lord at all times." Ps. xxxiii. O my Creator at all times, whether in prosperity or adversity, I wish always to bless and love thee. I, who have given thee so much displeasure by my sins, neither seek nor merit consolation from thee. I seek only thy pleasure. Provided

thou art content, I shall cheerfully bear with every affliction. My Jesus, my Jesus, whether far or near, thou shalt be always lovely, always dear: whether thou dost console or afflict me, I will always love thee, I will always thank thee.

17. "Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon his beloved?" Cant. viii. 5. Ah! who are these souls who, though they dwell on the earth, regard it as a desert, and, detached from visible things, live only to God, as if he alone existed? Him only do they love and desire to please; and thus they leave the earth, and, raising themselves above it, enjoy the delights imparted to them only who seek God alone, and place in him alone all their hopes.

Who are these happy souls? Are they not those who frequently unite themselves by pure love to Jesus in the holy sacrament? My God, I desire to be, by thy grace, one of these blessed souls, to be detached from all things, and to be entirely thine. From this day forward the world shall be for me a desert, where I shall endeavor to live disengaged from every creature, and to think only of thee as if thou

and I were alone in the world. In thee alone I wish to place all my confidence and all my affections; in thee alone, O my God, O beloved God, my hope, my love, my all.

18. "If she be a wall, let us build upon it bulwarks of silver; if she be a door, let us join it together with boards of cedar." Cant. viii.

9. Such precisely are the effects which Jesus produces in the soul when he comes to her in the holy communion. He sees that she is a wall too weak to resist the assaults of hell, and therefore, by the efficacy of the holy sacrament, he fortifies her with bulwarks of silver; that is, of his own divine light. He sees that she is a door which easily grows old, and, therefore, he renews her with boards of strength and perseverance, signified by the cedar, a strong and incorruptible wood; that is, by the gifts of holy fear, of detachment from creatures, and of affection for prayer, by petitions for his grace, by holy desires, and, above all, by the gift of divine love. These are the pillars of holy perseverance.

Bread strengthens the heart of man. As earthly food supports corporal life, so the celestial bread of the holy communion preserves

the life of the soul. "He that eateth me, the same shall live by me. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him." Behold the consoling promises of Jesus Christ to those who receive him in the holy sacrament.

Ah, my Jesus, who is more frail and unfaithful than I am? Thou knowest how often I have yielded to my enemies, how often they have forced their way into my heart, and deprived me of thy friendship. Ah, fortify me by thy own light and thy own strength, that I may never more lose thee, or drive thee away from my soul. My dear Lord and Redeemer, if I am to offend thee again, strike me dead at this moment, as I hope to be now in the state of grace, and to be united to thee. My beloved Jesus, I wish not to live any longer without thee; but, as long as life remains, I shall be in danger of betraying thee as I have hitherto done. Assist me! O most holy Mary; thou art the Mother of perseverance, assist me, have pity on me, obtain for me the gift of perseverance from thy Jesus. Thee I ask to obtain it for me, through thy prayers I hope and wish to receive it.

19. "I found him whom my soul loveth, I held him, and I will not let him go." Cant. iii. 4. Such should be the language of every soul that is united with Jesus in the holy sacrament. Creatures begone from me, depart from my heart: I once loved you because I was blind; but I love you no longer, nor can I ever more love you. I have found one infinitely more amiable than you are. I have within me my Jesus; he has enamored my whole soul of his beauty; to this beloved I have given my entire being. He has accepted me as his own; I am no longer mine. Creatures farewell; I am not, and never shall be yours. I belong, and shall for ever belong to Jesus. "I held him, and I will not let him go." I have received him in the holy communion; he is at this moment united to my heart. I will henceforth embrace him with love, and will never more permit him to depart from me.

Permit me, O most amiable Saviour, to embrace thee, that I may never more be separated from thee. Behold, I unite myself to thee. I love thee, my Jesus: I love thee, I love thee, and would wish to love thee as much as thou

dost deserve. I wish that my whole happiness and repose may consist in loving and pleasing thee. Command all creatures to depart from me, and not to disturb me. "I conjure youthat you stir not up, nor awake my beloved." Ah, unless I myself wish, creatures cannot enter my heart, to disturb and separate my soul from thee. Fortify my will, unite my miserable heart to thy divine heart, that I may always wish what thou dost wish. Grant, O Lord, this grace through thy merits. Amen, amen; such my firm hope and ardent desire.

20. "Arise, O north wind; come, O south wind, blow through my garden, and let the aromatical spices thereof flow." Cant. iv. 16. Fly from me, O cold and noxious wind of earthly affections, and come, O sweet and warming breeze of holy love from the heart of Jesus in the holy sacrament. Ah, do thou alone blow through my whole soul, which Jesus has chosen for his garden of delights. Blow, and new and sweet odors of virtue shall flow from me. My Jesus, my Jesus, thou canst infuse this holy gift into my soul; from thee I hope for it.

21. "I have gathered my myrrh, with my aromatical spices." Cant. v. 1. A soul that has received Jesus in the holy sacrament should be careful to gather myrrh, that she may be able always to send forth odors of the virtues which spring from mortification. "I have eaten the honeycomb with my honey." Ibid. The soul that loves God alone, is not content with the honeycomb without the honey. Hence she says to Jesus: Lord, for me thy consolations are not sufficient without thyself, who art the source of consolation; for me, the fruits of love are not enough without thyself, who art the object of all my love. No, my Jesus; thou art sufficient for me. I am ready to renounce all thy consolations, provided I possess thee alone, my God, and my only good. I love thee, not to please myself, but to please thee, who dost wish to be loved by me, and dost merit all the love of all souls, whether they are in joy or in sorrow.

22. "I shall want nothing; he hath put me in a place of pasture." Ps. xxii. 1. Ah, my most loving Jesus, since thou dost invite me to this table of love, to eat thy own divine flesh, what can be ever wanting to me? "The Lord

is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" Ps. xxvi. 1. Since thou, O omnipotent God, art my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? I give myself entirely to thee: accept me, and then treat me as thou dost wish; chastise me, manifest thy wrath as much as thou pleasest; kill me, destroy me, still I will always say with Job: "Although he shall kill me, I will trust in him." xiii. 15. Provided I am thine, and love thee, I am willing to be treated with the utmost rigor, and, if thou dost wish, to be annihilated.

23. "Behold, I have graven thee in my hands; thy walls are always before my eyes." Is. xlix. 16. Behold the loving care of God for the soul he loves! That he may not forget her, he carries her graven in his hands, and declares that a mother will sooner forget her son, than he will forget a soul in the state of grace. "Can a woman forget her infant?..... And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee." Is. xlix. 15. "Thy walls are always before my eyes." He always watches over the souls that love him, to defend them against all the attacks of their enemies. "Thou hast crowned us with the shield of thy good will."

Ps. v. 13. Our good God, always attentive to our welfare, surrounds us with the shield of his good will, and delivers us from all dangers. O my God, O infinite goodness, who, more than all others, dost love me and desire my welfare, I abandon myself entirely to thee. If thou art with me, I am willing to be deprived of all things. I know that I should endeavor to conform to thy holy desires, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Behold me, O my sweet Lord, ready and resolved to do whatever thou pleasest. "Thy will be done." I desire only to do thy will. But assist me, O Lord, otherwise I shall do no good: teach me not only to know, but to do all that thou dost wish me to do. "Teach me to do thy will." Grant, O Eternal Father, that I may be able to say with truth what Jesus, thy Son, said when he was on earth: "I do always the things that please him." John viii. 29. This grace, O my God, I desire, I ask and hope for, through the merits of thy Son, and of most holy Mary.

24. "My son, give me thy heart." Prov. xxiii. 26. My soul, behold all that the Lord demands of you, now that he comes to visit you. He wishes for your heart and your will.

He gives himself to you without reserve: it is just that you also give yourself entirely to him, and that you seek only to do his will. "For the Lord will return to rejoice over thee in all good things." Deut. xxx. 9. Take care that when Jesus comes to visit you again he may find that you have fulfilled his holy will in all things. My Jesus, I wish to please thee; assist my desire, give me strength, and do with me what is pleasing to thee.

25. "What is there that I ought to do more for my vineyard that I have not done to it?" Is. v. 4. My soul, do you hear what your God says to you? What ought I to do more for you that I have not done? For your sake I have become man. I, the eternal Word, have been made flesh: I, the Lord of all things have taken "the form of a servant." Like a worm, I have been born in a stable, "a worm, and no man." I have even died for you, and died on an infamous gibbet. "Made obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." What more could I do than give my life for you? "Greater love than this no man hath that a man lay down his life for his friends." John xv. 13. But my love has done still more

for you. After having died for you, I have instituted the holy sacrament, to give myself entirely to you for your spiritual food. Tell me, what more ought I to do to gain your love?

My Lord, and my Redeemer, thou hast just reason to upbraid me with ingratitude. I know not what to answer. Thou hast been infinitely good to me, and I have been infinitively ungrateful to thee, I see thy infinite goodness; I behold my own ingratitude, and, prostrate at thy feet, I say: My Jesus, have pity on me, have pity on me, who have repaid thy love with so much ingratitude. Take vengeance on me, take vengeance on me; chastise me, but not by abandoning me: chastise and convert me. Do not permit me to live any longer ungrateful to thee: grant that, at least through gratitude, I may love thee, and that before I die I may make some return for thy love.

26. "Put me as a seal upon thy heart." Cant. viii. 6. Yes, my beloved Jesus, since I have consecrated my whole soul to thee, it is but just that I put thee as a seal of love upon my heart, to close the door of it against all other love, and to proclaim to all that my heart is thine, and that thou alone hast full dominion

over my soul. But, my Lord, what canst thou expect from me without the aid of thy grace? I can only give thee my poor heart, that thou mayest dispose of it as thou pleasest. Behold I give it to thee without reserve; I consecrate it and sacrifice it entirely to thy love. Possess it O Lord, for ever; I do not wish ever more to have any part of it. Ah! do not leave my heart any longer in my own hands; if thou do, I will rob thee of it again. O most loving God, O infinite love, since thou hast so many claims to my love, make me, I entreat thee, love thee. I desire to love thee only to please thee. Since thou dost work so many wonders in order to come into my heart in this sacrament, perform one miracle more; make my soul become all thine, but without reserve or division, so that I may be able to say in this life, and for eternity, that thou art the only Lord of my heart, and my only riches. "Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever." Ps. lxxii. 26. Most holy Mary, my Mother and my hope, assist me, and I shall be certainly heard. Amen; such my fervent wish and hope. Amen.

SIGHS OF LOVE TOWARDS GOD.

1. LORD, who am I that thou hast loved me so much, and that thou dost so ardently desire to be loved by me?

2. O God, infinitely amiable, I love thee.

3. I love thee above all things, more than my life, more than myself; but still, O Lord, I see that I love thee too little.

4. O King of heaven, make thyself also King of my heart: take full possession of my whole being.

5. I renounce all, and turn to thee. I embrace thee, and unite myself to thee; do not reject me. O infinite good, I love thee.

6. O my Jesus, thou hast bound me to thyself: how can I ever bear to be separated from thee? I love thee, and will never cease to love thee.

7. Unite thyself to me, O Lord: let not the enormity of my sins drive thee away from me.

8. O God, O God, whom shall I love if I love not thee, my life, my love, my all?

9. *Chosen out of thousands*, my God, thee only, thee only do I choose for the object of all my love.

10. My Redeemer, I desire nothing from thee but thyself.

11. O that I could consume my whole being for thee, who hast consumed thyself entirely for me.

12. Take, O Lord, my whole will, and do with me what thou pleasest.

13. O God not known! O God not loved foolish the soul that loves not thee.

14. O my God, in yielding to sin, I knew that I offended thee grievously. Is it possible that I deliberately displeased thee.

15. Had I died in my sins, I could never more love thee; but now that I am able, I wish to love thee.

16. Lord, do not permit me, after having received so many graces, ever more to betray thee. Strike me dead rather than allow me again to offend thee.

17. Thou hast borne with me that I may love thee. I, therefore, ardently wish to love thee.

18. My God, thou hast conquered me. I will resist no longer; I give myself to thee.

19. O God, how many years have I lost, which I might have spent in thy love!

20. To thee, O my God, I consecrate the remainder of my life; it may be very short.

21. I care not for riches, honors, or pleasures: I wish only for God, for God, for God.

22. O sovereign of hearts, reign in my heart. Ah, draw me entirely to thyself.

23. Bind me, O God, to thee; but bind me so that I can never more separate myself from thee.

24. Thou wilt never abandon me; I will never abandon thee. Then, O my God, my God, we will love each other for ever.

25. O my Jesus, my love, my life, my treasure, my all, make me entirely thine before I die.

26. Ah, my Jesus, grant that I may see thee appeared the first time I shall behold thee.

27. When shall I be able to say, my God, I can never lose thee again?

28. When, O Lord, shall I see thee, and love thee face to face for all eternity, and with all my strength?

29. Ah, my infinite good, as long as I live, I am in danger of losing thee.

30. My Jesus, thou hast too many claims to

my love; I ardently desire to love thee. I love thee, I love thee, I love thee.

31. O eternal Father, for the sake of Jesus, give me thy love.

32. Accept as thy lover one of the most ungrateful souls on this earth.

33. My God, I wish to love thee ardently in this life, that I may love thee with my whole soul in the next.

34. O my Jesus, thou hast given thyself entirely to me; I give myself without reserve to thee.

35. Oh! what greater pleasure can I enjoy than to please thee, my God?

36. My beloved Jesus, I wish to love thee as much as I have offended thee.

37. I love thee, O infinite goodness. Make me comprehend the great good which I love.

38. My Jesus, thou art the vine, I am the branch. Keep me always united to thee; do not permit me to be ever cut off from thee.

39. Oh! my God, what complacency do I feel in thinking that thou art infinitely happy.

40. Ah, Lord, where art thou? Art thou with me? Am I in the state of grace? Thou

knowest that I love thee, and that I love thee more than myself.

41. Give me, my Jesus, that love which thou seekest from me.

42. Oh that I had always loved thee.

43. Oh, if I loved thee, my God, if I loved thee! I love thee, but I love thee too little.

44. Grant, O Lord, that I may love thee entirely, and that I may conquer all difficulties in order to please thee.

45. I give thee my will: I wish nothing but what thou dost wish.

46. I seek not pleasures from thee: I wish only to content thee, my God, my love, my all.

47. O Infinite God, I do not deserve to love thee: permit me, O Lord, to love thee.

48. I hope to love thee for eternity, O eternal God.

49. O my dear Jesus, thou hast suffered so much for me, I wish to suffer for thee as much as thou dost wish me to suffer.

50. O God of my soul, I cannot bear to live any longer without loving thee.

51. O will of God, thou art my love.

52. O omnipotent God, make me a saint.

53. It will be thy glory, O Lord, to make thy enemy become a great lover of thy divinity.

54. Thou soughtest after me, O my God, when I fled from thee. Thou wilt not drive me away now that I seek thee.

55. My most loving Jesus, to pardon me, thou hast not pardoned thyself.

56. I thank thee for giving me time to love thee. Yes, my God, I love thee, I love thee, I love thee, and will always love thee.

57. O God, worthy of infinite love, may I be one day perfectly converted to thee, my love, my all.

58. Chastise me as thou wishest, but do not deprive me of the power of loving thee.

59. Eternal Father, thou hast given me thy Son: miserable as I am, I give myself to thee: for thy mercy's sake, accept me.

60. I wish, O Lord, to compensate the insults I have offered to thee by doing all in my power to please thee.

61. I wish to love thee, my God, without interest, without interruption, and without reserve.

62. My Jesus, despised for the love of me, grant that I may be despised for thy sake.

63. My afflicted Jesus, make me suffer with love the pains of this life.

64. I would wish, my Redeemer, to die for thee, who hast died for me.

65. This day I resolve to give myself entirely to thee.

66. Oh that all loved thee as much as thou deservest.

67. Grant, O Lord, that I may never omit any thing which I know to be pleasing to thee.

68. Happy me, if I lose all to gain thee, my God, my all.

69. O Jesus, immolated for my sake, I sacrifice to thee my whole will.

70. O my God, when shall I see myself entirely thine?

71. Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

72. The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever.

73. Who shall separate me from the love of Christ.

74. O good Jesus, do not permit me to be separated from thee, do not permit me to be separated from thee.

75. What have I in heaven? and, besides thee, what have I on earth? Thou art the

God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever.

76. May I die for the love of thee, who hast died for the love of me.

77. My love is crucified.

78. "Give me thy love along with thy grace and I am sufficiently rich."—*St. Ignatius*.

79. May I die, O Lord, that I may see thee

80. Ah, my Jesus, he who does not love thee does not know thee.

81. I love, O Lord, thy pleasure more than all the pleasures of the world.

82. My Jesus crucified, how does it happen that all are not enamored of thee?

83. Thou hast died for me, O that I could die for thee, my Jesus, my love, my treasure, my all.

84. Lord, what return shall I make to thee for having suffered so much for my sake?

85. O infinite goodness, I esteem thee more than all things; I love thee with my whole heart, I give myself entirely to thee. Accept my love, and give me an increase of love.

86. Make me forget all things to remember thee, my love, my all.

87. I would wish to love thee as much as

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thou dost deserve. Accept, O God, my desire, and give me thy love.

88. I have sinned enough against thee; I now wish to love thee.

89. O God, O God, I am thine, thou art mine.

90. Let all be lost provided God is not lost.

91. Thou alone, my Jesus, thou alone art sufficient for me.

92. O Mary, look down on me, and draw me to God.

93. My mother, obtain for me confidence in thee, and the grace always to have recourse to thee.

94. O Mary, thou hast to save me; thou canst obtain for me the grace to be a saint; I hope thou wilt procure it for me. Have pity on me.

DIRECTIONS FOR SPIRITUAL SOULS WITH
REGARD TO THE FREQUENTATION
OF THE SACRAMENTS.

IN this chapter, I shall speak of the manner in which a confessor should direct spiritual souls, with regard to the frequentation of the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist. As

to confession, it is useful to recommend them to make a general confession: because, according to St. Charles Borromeo, general confessions contribute greatly to a lasting change of life. But, if they have already made one, or if they be tortured by scruples, the confessor must forbid them to make a general confession. With regard to ordinary confessions, some persons of very delicate consciences have been in the habit of going to confession every day. But, for the generality of spiritual souls, and particularly for the scrupulous, it will be sufficient to confess their sins once, or at most twice a week. In his treatise on communion, Father Barisoni resting on the authority of St. Ambrose, and of many other authors, says, that when a spiritual soul feels her conscience burdened with a venial sin which she has not an opportunity of confessing, she ought not to abstain from the holy communion. St. Francis de Sales gives the same advice in one of his letters. The holy Council of Trent teaches that, for the remission of venial sins, there are other means, such as acts of contrition or of charity. It is better to employ these means to purify the soul from a venial sin than to be de-

prived of communion, in consequence of not having an opportunity of going to confession. And a learned director has said, that it is sometimes more profitable to a timorous soul to prepare for the holy communion, by her own acts than by confession: because, she then makes more fervent acts of sorrow, of humility, and confidence.

In allowing their penitents to the holy communion, some confessors are too indulgent, and others are too rigid. It is certainly a mistake, as Benedict the XIV., in his Diocesan synod well observes, to allow frequent communion* to those who frequently fall into grievous sins, and are not careful to do penance for their transgressions and to amend their lives: or to those who have an affection for deliberate venial sins, and have no desire to avoid them. To such persons, when they are exposed to the danger of mortal sin, it is sometimes useful to permit them to go to communion, that they may receive strength to resist

* By frequent communion, St. Alphonsus always understands not weekly communion, but communion either every day, or at least several times in the week.

temptations. But to those who are not in such danger, and who ordinarily commit deliberate venial sins without giving any proof of amendment, or of a desire of amendment, it is right not to allow communion more than once a week. It may be even useful, sometimes to defer their communion for an entire week, that they may conceive a greater horror of their defects, and a greater reverence for the sacrament.

If some are too indulgent, others are too rigid, and act in opposition to the spirit of the Church, by refusing, without any regard to the necessity or profit of their penitents, frequent communion for no other reason than because it is frequent. In explaining the desire of the holy Council of Trent, that all who assist at Mass should communicate, the authors of the Roman Catechism, (n. 60,) say, that it is the duty of the pastor, to exhort the faithful not only to frequent, but even to daily communion, and to teach them that the soul, as well as the body, stands in need of daily food. I abstain from adducing quotations on this subject from the holy fathers, or from spiritual writers. They may be found in a great many books, which

treat on frequent communion. It is, enough for me to know from the Roman Catechism, (n. 60,) and from the decree of Innocent the XI., that frequent, and even daily communion, has been always approved by the Church, and by the holy Fathers, who, as a learned author has shown, when they saw the practice of daily communion given up, adopted every means in their power to re-establish it. In the third council of Milan, at which St. Charles Borromeo presided, parish priests were commanded to exhort the people to daily communion; and, it was ordained that they who dared to teach the contrary in any diocese of the province, should be forbidden to preach, and should be severely chastised by the bishop, as disseminators of scandal, and declared enemies of the spirit of the Church. In the decree of Innocent XI., bishops were commanded to encourage among the faithful, the practice of daily communion. Some rigorists admit that, for those who have the necessary dispositions, daily communion is lawful. But, what do they understand by the necessary dispositions? If they mean that the soul should be worthy of receiving the holy Eucharist, then who

should ever communicate? Christ alone communicated worthily; for a God only is worthy of receiving a God. If they mean the proper dispositions, then it has been already said, that they whose conscience is burdened with actual venial sins, or who have an affection for them, should not be allowed to communicate every day. But St. Francis de Sales, (c. 20. Dev. Life,) says, that they who have no affection even for venial sins, who have conquered the greater part of their corrupt inclinations, and have a great desire of communion, may receive the holy Eucharist every day. St. Thomas, (4 sen. dis. 12, 9 a.) teaches that “when any person knows from experience, that, by daily communion, his love of God is increased, and his reverence not diminished, he ought to communicate every day.”

And although it is an act of virtue to abstain sometimes through reverence from the holy table, still, Father Granada in his treatise on communion, says, that it is better to receive the blessed Eucharist every day through love than to abstain through reverence. This doctrine is confirmed by St. Thomas, who says: (p. 3, q. 80, a. 10, ad. 4,) “It belongs to rev

erence for this sacrament to receive it daily, and to abstain from it sometimes.....However, love and hope, to which the scripture constantly exhorts us, are preferable to fear." Father Barisoni well observes, that they who communicate with a desire of advancing in divine love, perform an act of reverence towards Jesus Christ. They do a positive act of reverence, but the reverence of those who abstain from communion is merely negative. St. Gertrude, St. Catherine of Sienna, St. Teresa, St. Jane Chantal, and other saints, who certainly had great reverence for the holy Eucharist, have practised daily communion. To those who would say that, at present, there are no Teresas, Barisoni answers that it is temerity to suppose that the hand of the Lord is shortened. The venerable Avila goes so far as to say, that he who censures those who communicate very frequently, perform the office of the Devil.

From what has been already said it appears, that (if, ordinarily speaking, you except, in conformity with the practice of some prudent directors, one day in the week, and also the days on which the confessor forbids commu-

nion to his penitents, in order to try their obedience and humility, or for some other good end,) a director cannot, without scruple, refuse frequent, and even daily communion to those who desire it, in order to advance in divine love, provided they are free from affection to every venial sin; provided also, they devote a good deal of time to mental prayer, endeavor to walk in the way of perfection, and abstain from all fully deliberate venial sins. This is, as St. Prosper says, the perfection which a soul subject to human frailty can attain. And when a confessor thinks it useful to allow frequent communion to such persons, Innocent XI., in his decree, forbids bishops and parish priests to fix, for the faithful, even for merchants, or for married persons, the number of their communions; and he ordains, that the communions of the people should be left to the decision of their confessors.

And if, through mere frailty, a soul should sometimes fall into a deliberate venial sin, but speedily repents of her fault, and purposes to amend, on what ground can she be refused communion, if she desires it, in order to receive from the sacrament strength to avoid a

relapse, and to advance in perfection? Alexander the Eighth condemned the following propositions of Baius: "They who claim a right to communion before they have done penance for their sins, are to be considered as guilty of sacrilege." "They, whose love of God is not most pure, and free from all admixture, are to be likewise repelled from the holy communion." The holy Council of Trent calls the holy Eucharist "the antidote by which we are delivered from daily faults, and preserved from mortal sins." It is certain that to preserve the faithful from relapses, the apostles allowed daily communion to the first Christians, among whom, as may be inferred from the epistles of St. Paul and St. James, there were certainly some as imperfect as those of whom we now speak, and perhaps more imperfect. In the post-communion of the Mass for the twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost, the holy Church prays, that "whatever is vicious in our mind may be cured by the healing efficacy of this sacrament." The holy Eucharist, then, has been instituted even for the imperfect, that they may be healed by virtue of that divine food. In the "Devout Life,"

chapter 21, St. Francis de Sales says: "If they ask you why you communicate so often, tell them that two classes of persons should communicate frequently; the perfect, to preserve perfection, and the imperfect, to attain perfection; the strong, that they may not become weak, and the weak to become strong; the sick, to be cured, and those who are in health, to prevent sickness. And as to yourself, tell them, that because you are imperfect, infirm, and weak, you stand in need of frequent communion. Tell them, that all who are free from worldly occupations, because they have the opportunity, and all who are engaged in worldly affairs, because they stand in need of communion, should communicate frequently." In conclusion he says: "Philothea, communicate often, and as often as you possibly can, with the advice of your spiritual father; and believe me, that, as the hares on our mountains become white, because they feed only on snow, so, by eating purity itself in this sacrament, you will become all pure." In his treatise on communion, Father Granada says, that a man ought not to abstain from this sacrament on account of his own unworthiness; since it has

been instituted as a treasure for the needy, and a remedy for the sick. Hence (he adds) no one, however imperfect he may be, should abstain from this remedy, if he sincerely desires to be cured. This author says that the weaker a soul is the more she has need of eating this bread of the strong. This is conformable to the doctrine of St. Ambrose and of St. Augustin. The former says: "I who always sin, ought constantly to apply a remedy;" and the latter: "you sin daily, receive daily."

St. Thomas teaches, (3 p. q. 79, a. 8,) that the augmentation of grace produced by this sacrament is not impeded by venial sins, unless they are actually committed in receiving communion; and that though these are an obstacle to a part of the fruit of the sacrament, they do not hinder its entire effect. This doctrine is commonly held by theologians: it is taught by Soto, Suarez, Valentia, Vasquez, Coninch, and by many others. It is moreover the opinion of many learned authors that this sacrament by its own efficacy remits venial sins in which the soul does not take actual complacency. In the Catechism of the Council of Trent, (euch. p. 2, n. 52,) we read that "the Eucharist cer-

tainly remits venial sins. For, washing away these lesser faults, it completely restores whatever the soul has lost by the ardor of passion." It must, at least, be admitted with St. Thomas that the holy communion excites acts of charity, by which venial sins are forgiven.

But, if by frequent communion the soul does not advance in perfection, nor abstain from deliberate faults though only venial, such, as vanity of dress or attachment to sensual pleasures, to the indulgence of the taste, of the eyes, and of the ears, then, it certainly is better to restrain the use of communion, in order to make her seriously reflect on the amendment of her life, and on her advancement in perfection. For my part, I would have very great difficulty in allowing frequent communion to a person, who should wish to persevere in any defect, which though not evidently a venial sin, would be certainly contrary to perfection. It must be observed that although, as St. Thomas says, "to approach the holy communion, great devotion is necessary," still this devotion need not be intense or sensible. It is enough for the director to know that the will of the penitent is prepared to do what is pleas-

ing to God. They who abstain from communion because they do not experience great fervor, are, as the learned Gerson says, like the man who, when cold, refuses to approach the fire because he does not feel warm. Hence, Father Granada and Cajetan teach, that they who, through immoderate fear of their own unworthiness, omit communion, impede very much their own advancement. St. Laurence Justinian says, that to continue her communions it is not necessary for the soul to feel in herself an increase of fervor: because it sometimes happens that this sacrament produces its effect, although we do not perceive it. St. Bonaventure says: (*de Profectu Religios.* cap. 78,) "Trusting in the mercy of God, though you feel tepid, approach with confidence: let him who thinks himself unworthy, reflect that the more infirm he feels himself, the more he requires a physician: you do not seek to unite yourself with Christ, in order to sanctify him, but that he may sanctify you." He afterwards adds: "Nor is the holy communion to be omitted, because a person in his preparation does not feel a special devotion, nor because, at communion or after it, he feels less devout than

he would wish." The saint then is of opinion, that we ought not to abstain from the holy Eucharist, though we should feel less devotion after than before communion. To forbid them communion is sometimes useful to those who have a strong desire of the holy Eucharist, particularly if the prohibition produce disquietude; for such disquietude is a mark of pride, which renders the soul unfit for the holy sacrament: but persons who feel aridity and tediousness in their communions, should be made to communicate more frequently, that they may receive strength from the sacrament.

Would to God! would to God! there were in the world, many of these souls (whom some rigorists regard as irreverent and rash,) who having a horror even of light faults, would endeavor to communicate frequently and even every day with a true desire of their own amendment, and of their own advancement in divine love. Certainly, if there were many such souls, Jesus Christ would be much more loved in the world than he is! All who have been employed in the direction of souls know well, from experience, as I do also, that they who approach the holy communion with good

desires, make great progress in virtue, and that the Lord draws them wonderfully to his love. It often happens, that, for their greater good, they do not perceive their own improvement, and that they are left in desolation and darkness, and without the comfort of sensible devotion. To such souls, as St. Teresa and blessed Henry Suson teach, frequent communion is a most powerful help. Hence, to conclude, let the confessor recommend communion as often as his penitents show a sincere desire of it, and as often as he perceives that, by receiving the holy sacrament, they advance in perfection. Let him also be careful to exhort his penitents to spend as much time as possible in thanksgiving after communion. Ordinarily, the thanksgiving should last for an hour; let it be made at least for half an hour, and let the soul be employed in acts of love, and in petitions to God. St. Teresa says, that, after communion, Jesus remains in the soul as on a throne of mercy to dispense his graces, saying to her: "What wilt thou that I should do for thee?" In another place she says: "After communion, let us not lose so good an opportunity of negotiation; his divine Majesty does not treat with

ingratitude the abode in which he is well received." Some directors do not remain sufficiently long with Jesus Christ in acts of devotion after Mass, and therefore they abstain from recommending to others what they themselves neglect.

Let the confessor also recommend his penitents to make frequent spiritual communions. The practice of spiritual communion has been greatly praised by the Council of Trent. "Spiritual communions," says St. Teresa, "are very profitable: in them the Lord will try how much you love him."

ON COMMUNION.

Of all the sacraments, the adorable sacrament of the altar is the most excellent. The other sacraments contain the gifts of God, but the holy Eucharist contains God himself. Hence, St. Thomas says, (3 part. ques. 73, art. 3.) that the other sacraments have been instituted by Jesus Christ, to prepare men either to receive or to administer the blessed Eucharist, which, according to the holy Doctor, is the consummation of the spiritual life, because from this sacrament is derived all the perfec-

tion of the soul. For, all perfection consists in an union with God, and of all the means of uniting the soul with him, there is none better than the holy communion, by which, as Jesus Christ himself has said, the soul becomes as it were identified with him. "He that eateth my flesh.....abideth in me and I in him." St. John vi. 27. Hence St. John Chrysostom says, that Jesus has given his body to us, under the appearance of bread, that we may become one thing with him. *Corpus suum in nos contemperavit ut unum quid simus.* Homily 61. And St. Cyril of Alexandria teaches, that, as two pieces of wax melted together become one, so we, by the holy communion, are similarly united with Jesus Christ. *Ut unum ex utrisque factum videatur.* St. Cyr. lib. 10, in Joan. c. 13. Hence, our Saviour instituted this sacrament under the form of food, to show, that as corporal food is changed into our flesh, so this heavenly bread becomes one thing with us; but with this difference, that earthly food is converted into our substance, while this divine bread transforms those who eat it, into Jesus Christ. "Eat, and you shall be by grace what I am by nature." Rupert, in

Exod. lib. 3, c. 12. "I will not be changed into you, but you shall be changed into me." St. Augustin.

2. The principal effect of this sacrament is, to preserve in the soul the life of grace. Hence, it is called bread; for, as earthly bread supports corporal life, so this heavenly bread preserves the life of the soul, which consists in the grace of God. The Eucharist is, according to the Council of Trent, the divine medicine which purifies the soul from venial, and preserves her from mortal sins. *Antidotum quo liberemur a culpis quotidianis, et a peccatis mortalibus preserveremur.* Sess. 13, c. 2. Like a stream of water, this sacrament extinguishes the ardor of the passions by which we are consumed. Let him in whose soul the flame of some particular passion is kindled, approach the holy communion, and he will find the passion altogether, or at least in a great measure, destroyed. "If any of you," says St. Bernard, "do not experience such frequent or such violent motions of anger, of envy, or of lust, let him give thanks to the body of the Lord, which produces fruit in his soul." (Serm. de Bap. in cœna Dom.) The angelic Doctor teaches, that the

holy communion gives us strength to overcome all the attacks of the devil. "It repels every assault of the demons." (St. Tho. 3, p. qu. 79, art. 1.) St. Chrysostom asserts, that when we receive the holy Eucharist, the devils are put to flight, and the angels run to our assistance. Moreover, this sacrament infuses into the soul great interior peace, a strong inclination to virtue, and a great willingness to practise it, and thus renders it easy to walk in the path of perfection.

3. The holy communion as, St. Thomas teaches, infuses divine charity into the heart. Jesus Christ protested that he came into the world for no other purpose than to kindle in our souls the holy fire of divine love. "I came to cast fire on the earth; and what will I, but that it be kindled? Luke xii. 49. The venerable Father Olimpio, of the order of Theatines, used to say, that there is no mystery of redemption better calculated to inflame us with the love of Jesus Christ, than the sacrament of the altar, in which he gives himself entirely to us, and pours forth all his love. Hence, speaking of the institution of this sacrament, St. John says: "Jesus, knowing that his hour

was come, to pass from this world to his Father, when he had loved his friends who were in the world, he loved them even to the end."

xiii. 1. "He loved them to the end;" that is according to the commentators, he loved them to the utmost of his power. Hence, the Council of Trent has said, that in this sacrament Jesus "poured forth, as it were, all the riches of his divine love towards man." Sess. 13, cap. 2. The holy communion has been called by St. Thomas, "the sacrament of love," and by St. Bernard, "the love of loves." St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzis used to call the day of communion "the day of love," and would say, that a soul after communion might exclaim with Jesus dying on the cross, "It is consummated;" for, after having given himself to me, God has nothing more to give me, nor can I desire any thing else from him.

4. Should not all, then, ardently desire to receive Jesus as often as possible in the holy communion. We know from the Acts of the Apostles, that, in the first ages of the church, all the faithful communicated every day. "Continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house."

Acts n. 46. In the Syriac version, instead of "breaking bread," we find the words "breaking blessed bread," which express more clearly the blessed Eucharist. Besides, by the *breaking of bread*, the interpreters of the sacred scripture understand the holy communion. Hence, according to St. Thomas, (part 3, ques. 80, art. 10,) it is certain that, in the early ages, all who assisted at Mass received the communion. This fact is attested by St. Denis the Areopagite, and by St. Jerom, in his letters to Lucina and Pammachius, in which he states that this pious practice was preserved in Rome and Spain even in his own time. By degrees, the piety of the faithful began to grow cold. Such was their lukewarmness in the time of Pope Fabian, that he had to command all Christians to approach the holy communion at least three times in each year; that is, on the festivals of Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas. In after ages, the tepidity of Christians became so great, that Innocent the Third obliged all the faithful, under very severe penalties, to communicate at least at Easter. The decree of Innocent was afterwards confirmed by the Council of Trent. (Sess. 13, chap. 9.) These

enactments of Popes and Councils do not prove that the practice of frequent communion is not very laudable: they only show the decay of the fervor which animated the first Christians.

5. Among the spiritual writers of the present day, some are favorable, and others opposed to frequent communion. I agree with the former; because, as the learned Petavius has shown in his work against the rigid Arnald, their opinion appears to be that of the holy fathers and of the Church. St. Basil, in a letter to a friend, states that it was to him a source of the greatest consolation to know that all the faithful of his diocess received the holy Eucharist four times in the week. In one place St. Augustin says: "I neither praise nor censure the practice of daily communion." The holy doctor probably used these words because the practice of daily communion did not then prevail in Africa, and because it was censured by many. But in one of his sermons, he exhorts the faithful to daily communion. "This," he says, "is daily bread: receive it every day, that you may daily draw fruit from it." Serm. 28.

St. Antonine relates, that a certain prelate

once reproved St. Catherine of Sienna for going to communion every day, and added, that St. Augustin neither praised nor censured daily communion. "Then," replied the holy Virgin, "why do you rebuke me for a practice which St. Augustin would not censure?" The sentiment of the Church may be inferred from the Council of Trent, session 22, chapter 6, where the holy synod expressed a strong desire that all the faithful who assisted at Mass should communicate. In a decree of the Sacred Congregation, dated February 22, 1679, and approved by Innocent XI., it is asserted that the practice of frequent, and even of daily communion, was always praised by the holy fathers. In that decree, the bishops of those places in which the faithful communicate every day, are exhorted to give God thanks for it, and to cherish, by all means in their power, so useful a devotion. Bishops and parish priests are also forbidden to fix, by a general law, the days of the week on which the people are to communicate, and are commanded to leave their communions to the discretion of their confessors.

6 In the life of St. Margaret of Cortona, we

read that our Lord told her that he would give a great reward to her confessor for having advised her to communicate often. It is related in the life of the venerable Anthony Torres, that after death he appeared in glory to a certain person, and said, that his beatitude in heaven had been increased because he recommended frequent communion to his penitents. To the venerable Prudentiana Zagnoni, of the convent of St. Clare, in Bologna, our Lord once said: "If you frequent the holy communion, I will forget all your ingratitude." Lewis Blossius, (*Monil Spir.* cap. 6, sec. 1,) writes, that, of those who dissuaded others from the practice of frequent communion, Jesus Christ complained to St. Gertrude in these words: "My delights are to be with the children of men: to remain with them, I have instituted the holy sacrament of the altar. Whosoever, then, prevents a soul from receiving me, hinders my delights." Hence, John of Avila used to say, that they who censure frequent communion perform the office of the devil, who detests the holy Eucharist, because souls derive from it great strength and fervor to advance in perfection.

7. According to St. Thomas, it is certain that frequent, and even daily communion is in itself most useful, but only for those who have the proper dispositions, and not for all indiscriminately, who are even in the state of grace. Hence, after having said, "receive daily, that it may be every day profitable to you," St. Augustin adds: "Live in such a manner that you may be worthy to receive every day." A person who commits deliberate venial sins, by telling wilful lies, by vanity of dress, by feelings of dislike, or by inordinate attachments, or who is guilty of any other similar faults which he knows to be an obstacle to his advancement in perfection, and who does not endeavor to correct these defects, cannot be permitted to communicate more frequently than once a week. To receive strength to preserve him from falling into mortal sins, he may be allowed communion every eight days. For my part, I should have great difficulty in allowing frequent communion to persons disposed to persevere in any defect which, though not clearly a venial sin, would be certainly contrary to perfection, particularly if it were a defect against humility or obedience. But, if a soul

has no affection for any venial sin, if she abstains from deliberate venial sins, and attends to mental prayer and the mortification of her passions and senses, the confessor may permit her to communicate three, four, or even five times in the week. And when a soul has attained a considerable degree of perfection, when she spends several hours in the day at prayer, and has, moreover, conquered the greater part of her evil inclinations, she may, according to St. Francis de Sales, (chap. 20 of the Introduction to a Devout Life,) be allowed communion every day. For, as St. Prosper says, this is the perfection which a person subject to human frailty can attain in this life. St. Thomas teaches, that “if any one finds by experience that by daily communion the fervor of his love is increased, and his reverence not diminished, such a person ought to communicate every day.” (In 4 Sent. Distin. 2, ques. 3, a. 1.) Hence, in permitting, more or less, frequent communion to his penitents, a confessor should be regulated by the fruits of their communions. The same rule is given in a decree approved by Innocent the Eleventh. In that decree, it is ordained that “frequent communion should be

left to the decision of confessors, who ought to prescribe what they judge to be most profitable to their penitents, from the purity of their conscience, and from the fruit which they receive from frequent communion."

8. To regulate the frequency of your communions belongs not to you, but to your director: to you it only belongs to make such preparation for the holy sacrament that your spiritual father may find in you the dispositions necessary for frequent communion. The preparation for frequent communion is twofold, remote and proximate. The remote preparation consists in detachment from creatures. In his commentary on the 131st Psalm, St. Augustin says: If you expected a visit from a great personage, to whom certain objects in your house should be offensive, would you not remove them before his arrival? When, then, you wish to receive Jesus Christ, you should remove from your breast all earthly affections which you know to be displeasing to him. He who wishes to communicate often must empty his heart of the things of the earth. This is precisely what our Lord once said to St. Gertrude: "I want nothing more from you than

that you come to receive me with a heart divested of all self-love." As to the immediate preparation, you should begin it the evening before communion by acts of love and of desire. As soon as you awake in the morning, consider that you are to receive Jesus Christ, and, with a fervent aspiration, invite your Spouse to hasten into your soul. Immediately before communion, you should, even though you had made morning prayer, excite in your soul lively sentiments of faith, of humility, and of desire.

9. First, you ought to animate your faith by reflecting on the majesty of him whom you are to receive. If faith did not assure us of it, who could ever imagine that a God wished to make himself the food of his own creatures? But the Church has declared in several of her councils, and especially in the Council of Trent, (sess. 13, can. 1,) that our Redeemer, Christ Jesus, is really and truly present in the consecrated host. How beautiful was the reply of St. Lewis, king of France, to a person inviting him to behold Jesus Christ, who appeared in the consecrated host under the form of an infant: "Let those," said the holy king, "who

do not believe by faith, go and see: I believe more firmly than if I saw Jesus Christ with my eyes." And he remained where he was. Secondly, you should excite sentiments of humility by considering that, in spite of your misery, you are to receive a God into your mouth and into your heart. The venerable Segneri used to say, that, for a person going to communion, the most appropriate sentiment is one of astonishment, which would make him exclaim, "What! a God to me! a God to me!" What would be the sentiments of a shepherd if he saw his sovereign coming to dwell with him in his tent? What are your sentiments when you behold the King of heaven coming into your heart in the holy communion? Will you not at least say to him with true humility, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof?" To humility unite an act of contrition and of hope, confidently expecting that Jesus Christ, when he comes into your soul, will enrich you with his graces. Thirdly, you must excite an ardent desire of receiving Jesus Christ in the holy sacrament. To nourish the soul, this celestial bread must be eaten with hunger. He

who receives it with the strongest desire receives from it the greatest graces. St. Francis de Sales used to say, that he who gives himself to us only through love should be received only through love. Our Redeemer said once to St. Matilda: "When you communicate, desire to have the greatest love which the saints have had from me; and, in return for this desire, I will accept your love, in proportion to the fervor with which you wished for it." To remember these acts, it will be sufficient to say to yourself, before communion: "Who comes? to whom does he come? why does he come?" A God of infinite majesty comes: he comes to you, a miserable sinner, and he comes to be loved by you.

10. After communion, remain with Jesus Christ as long as you can. Father M. Avila said that we should set great value on the time after communion, because it is a precious time for acquiring treasures of grace. St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzis was accustomed to say: "The time after communion is the most precious part of our life, and it is fittest for negotiating with God, and for inflaming our souls with his divine love. At that time, we have

no need of masters, or of books; for Jesus Christ himself teaches us how we are to love him." St. Teresa, too, used to say: "After communion, let us not lose so good an opportunity of negotiation. God does not repay with ingratitude the abode in which he is well received." In another place, she says, that after communion Jesus Christ remains in the soul as on a throne of grace, and appears to say to her what he said when on earth to the man who was born blind: "What wilt thou that I should do to thee?" Beloved soul, tell me what you want from me; I am come for the purpose of bestowing on you the graces you ask of me. It is the opinion of Cajetan, Suarez, Gonet, Valentia, Lugo, and others, that as long as the sacramental species remain, the fruit of the sacrament, and divine love, are increased in proportion to the efforts of the soul to unite herself with Jesus Christ, and to the good acts which she performs. For, the operation of this celestial bread in the soul is similar to that of corporal food, which gives nourishment and strength in proportion to the time it remains in the body. Many religious communicate frequently, and draw but little

fruit from their communion, because they remain but a short time with Jesus Christ. To St. Margaret of Cortona our Lord once said, "I treat souls as they treat me." If you are not prevented by some duty of obedience or of charity, be careful to remain with Jesus Christ at least for half an hour after communion. I say, at least for half an hour; for an hour is the proper time for thanksgiving. Endeavor to employ yourself after communion in acts of recollection, of thanksgiving, of love, of sorrow, of oblation of yourself and all you possess; but, above all, in petitions to Jesus Christ for his graces, and particularly for the gift of final perseverance, and of his holy love. In these acts consists that *negotiation* of which St. Teresa speaks. And, when you feel dryness and dissipation of mind, read a book which contains devout affections towards God. The entire day of communion should be spent in more than usual recollection. St. Lewis Gonzaga endeavored to entertain himself for three days after communion in thanking Jesus Christ. Nor should your recollection be diminished because you communicate more frequently; on the contrary, the oftener you re-

ceive the Lord, the more closely should you keep yourself united to him.

AN APOLOGETIC REPLY,
ON THE SUBJECT OF
FREQUENT COMMUNION,
TO D. CYPRIAN ARISTASIO.

AFTER the publication of my Practical Instructions for Confessors, a small book appeared, in which the author, under the feigned name of D. Cyprian Aristasio, assails several propositions contained in my work. While in Rome on the occasion of my elevation to the episcopacy, I published a brief reply to his charges. Aristasio published a rejoinder, to which, on account of my episcopal duties, I was not able to reply, and which has been learnedly answered by a member of my congregation, in a dissertation from which I confess that I have taken the greater part of this brief defence.

Aristasio has attacked several propositions of mine; but the one which he principally assails is, that "persons who are in the state of grace, and fall into habitual venial sins, may be allowed to communicate once in every eight days." In my Practical Instructions for Confessors, I have said, that "it is right not to allow communion more than once a week to those who ordinarily commit deliberate venial sins, and in whom there appears to be no improvement, nor desire of improvement. It may be even useful sometimes to deprive them of communion for an entire week, that they may conceive a greater horror of their faults, and greater reverence for the sacrament." Behold the scandalous proposition which has given so much offence to my adversary. He maintains that weekly communion is frequent communion, and that therefore it should be permitted only to those "who are free from mortal sin, and from affection to venial sin, and who have a great desire of communion." Aristasio has taken this doctrine from St. Francis de Sales: (Philothea, chap. 20:) he adds, that such, too, is the doctrine of Father Avila. We shall hereafter see what has been taught by Father

Avila; let us first examine the authority adduced by St. Francis de Sales, in support of his opinion.

Before we enter into the examination of this authority, it will be useful to take a view of the discipline of the Church on this matter for several centuries, and of the sentiments of the holy Fathers. Cassalius (de vet. sacr. Christ. rit. c. 18,) states, that during the entire of the sixth century, the faithful were accustomed to communicate every day, or nearly every day. The same is stated by Cardinal Bona, (Liturg. 1, 2, c. 17, n. 2,) and may be inferred from St. Augustin, (ep. 54, alias 118, ad Januar.,) from St. Jerom, (ep. ad Luc.,) and from St. Isidore, (de Eccle. Offic., cap. 18,) whose words shall be hereafter cited. That such was the ancient custom appears certain, from a decree of the Sacred Congregation, dated June, 1587. In that decree, which was made against a bishop who prohibited his subjects generally to communicate more frequently than three times in the week; it is said: "*Quia omnes adstantes antiquis temporibus, peracta consecratione Eucharistiam sumebant.*"

In the decree of Gratian, (can. 15, de cons.

dis. 2,) we read the following words of St. Hilary: "*Si non sint tanta peccata ut excommunicetur, is non debet se a medicina corporis et sanguinis Domini separare: unde timendum est ne, diu abstractus a sanguine Christi, alienus remaneat a salute.*" 'If the sins of an individual be not so grievous as to merit excommunication he should not abstain from the body and blood of the Lord; if he abstain for a considerable time, it is to be feared that he endangers his salvation."

Following Arnald, Aristasio raises two difficulties on this passage. The first is, that the words are not the words of St. Hilary, but of St. Augustin, who in a letter to Januarius states first the sentiments of two learned men, (without naming them,) one of whom said, "*Eligendi sunt dies quibus purius homo vivit, quo ad tantum sacramentum dignius accedas:*" "To approach the more worthily to so great a sacrament, a man must choose for communion the days on which he lives more purely." The other said, "*Si tanta non sunt peccata ut excommunicandus homo judicetur, non se debet a quotidiana medicina dominici corporis separare.*" "If the sins of an individual be not so

grievous as to merit excommunication, he ought not to abstain from the daily medicine of the body of the Lord;" but omitted the following words: "*Unde timendum est ne, diu abstractus a corpore Christi alienus remaneat a salute:*" "By abstaining from communion for a considerable time, it is to be feared that he endangers his salvation." These latter words says Aristasio, are not found in the works of St. Augustin, of St. Isidore, or of venerable Bede. After stating the sentiments of these two learned men, St. Augustin, without deciding the question, concludes by saying, that each person should do what he believes to be conformable to piety: "*Faciat autem unusquisque quod secundum fidem suam pie credit esse faciendum.*"

First, I answer, that though the words which have been cited are not found in the works of St. Hilary, which are now extant, still there are sufficient arguments and authorities of ancient writers to render it morally certain that these words were written by the holy doctor. It is well known that the homilies of St. Hilary on Job, his commentaries on the Epistle to Timothy, and several of his treatises on the

Psalms, have been lost. The passage in question, then, might have been contained in some of the works of St. Hilary, which were extant in the time of Gratian. To him it was ascribed for many centuries by the learned; to him it was attributed, not only by Gratian, but also by Ivone, Rabano, Burcardo, Polibius, and Reginone, who wrote glosses on the canons. Moreover, Antony Democaro, Antony Cunzio, Antony Agostini, and Pitteo, who were employed by Pius the Fourth, by St. Pius the Fifth, and by Gregory the Thirteenth, in correcting the canons, never insinuated that the words were falsely ascribed to St. Hilary. All this gives a moral certainty that the words are the genuine words of the holy doctor. It is true that the same words are found in the works of St. Augustin; but he does not decide the question. He only relates the words as written by another author, and who can say that the author to whom he alluded was not St. Hilary?

It is not true that the sentiments of St. Isidore and of venerable Bede are the same as those of St. Augustin; for the two former agree in opinion with St. Hilary. After ex-

norting the faithful to communicate every day with faith and humility, St. Isidore says, (1. eccle. or. offic. c. 18 editio. Paris, an. 1650,) “*Cæterum si peccata non sunt tam gravia quod judicatur homo excommunicandus, is non debet se separare a quotidiana medicina corporis Domini.*” “If the sins of a person be not so grievous as to merit excommunication, he ought not to abstain from the daily medicine of the body of the Lord.” He then adds: “*Unde timendum est ne dumqu isque diu separatur a corpore Christi remaneat alienus a salute cum ipsemet dicat. Nisi manducaveritis,*” &c. “It is to be feared that by abstaining from communion for a long time, he endangers his salvation; for the Lord himself says: “except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you.” Bede omits the words “*unde timendum est,*” &c.; but decides the question in the same way as St. Hilary. “*Panam cælestem,*” he says, “*spiritualiter manducate: peccata, etsi sint quotidiana, non sint mortifera.*” In Epis. ad Corinth. cap. 11. The same doctrine is held by other ancient authors, resting on the authority of St. Hilary. Thus Eterius Ussamensis, who

lived in the ninth century, (apud Nat. Alex. sec. 8, cap. 1, art. 8,) adopts the words of the saint: "*Cæterum si non sint tanta peccata,*" &c. In a letter to Guntard, Amalarius Mesensis says; "*Præcipitur in canonibus* (that is, in the tenth canon of the Apostles, and in the second of the Council of Antioch,) *ut omnes qui ingrediuntur in ecclesiam communicaverint, dicant cou- sam: et, si rationabilis exiterit indulgeatur illis: sin autem excommunicentur.*" "The canons command that all who enter the church should communicate; they ordain that those who assign a reasonable cause for not communicating, should be treated with indulgence, and those who do not, should be excommunicated." He then censures the opinion of Gennadius, who recommended communion only on Sundays, and exhorts those who are in the state of grace to communicate every day. In conclusion, he says: "*Fili si te noscis peccatorem fac pœnitentiam et in spiritu contrito et humiliato suscipe illum.*" "Son, if you know that you are a sinner, do penance, and receive him with a contrite and humbled heart."

The same doctrine has been taught by Raban, a Maurist monk (ist. cler 1. 1, c. 31;) by

Beatus, a priest (Bibl. P. P. t. 13, edit. Lugd. 1. 1. p. 372;) and by Algera, who after praising St. Hilary, adopts his words: “*Cæterum si non sint tanta peccata.....unde, timendum est,*” &c. (De Sac. Corp. 1. 1, c. 22.) The second difficulty raised by Aristasio and Arnald against the inference drawn from the words of St. Hilary is, that the word *excommunicetur* should not be understood according to its present signification; because, in the first ages of the church, there were two kinds of excommunication: one, by which obstinate sinners were cut off from the body of the faithful; the other, by which all who committed even an occult mortal sin were separated from the communion of the faithful, and were, consequently, forbidden to receive the Eucharist until they had done public penance. In answer to this objection, I say, in the first place, that it is admitted as certain, by all the learned, by Morino, Petavius, Thomassinus, Bellarmine, Estius, Christianus Lupus, and others, that the practice of the church was to deprive sinners of the sacraments, and to subject them to penance, not for all sorts of sins, but only for certain enormous crimes, such as idolatry, homi-

cide, adultery, and the like. It is disputed among the learned whether sinners were condemned to public penance for crimes of this kind when the crimes were occult. Natalis Alexander, Juenin, and Witasse, assert that they were; but Christianus Lupus, Estius, Bellarmine, Frassen, Sirmond, Tournely, Cardinal Gotti, and others, maintain that the perpetrators of the above mentioned crimes were obliged to submit to public penance only when the crimes were public and scandalous. Petavius (*ad hæres.* 59, t. 2, p. 248,) also held this opinion, and deduced it from many passages of the writings of St. Augustin. But, though it should be admitted that formerly the faithful were deprived of the Eucharist for all sorts of sin, it cannot be denied that they were forbidden to communicate only on account of mortal sins. For as we have seen, no one was obliged to abstain from communion on account of venial sin.

Such was the discipline of the church for several centuries. When fervor began to decay, and the faithful began to abstain from communion, all were commanded to communicate at least every week. Peter Comestor

says: “*In prima ecclesia quotquot intererant consecrationi Eucharistiæ communicabant eadem. Postquam autem crevit numerus fidelium, nec omnes accedere ad Eucharistiam visum est, statutum est ut saltem diebus dominicis fideles, communicarent.*” Serm. 16. “In the primitive church all who were present at the consecration received the Eucharist. Subsequently, when the number of the faithful increased, and it was deemed inexpedient that all should approach the Eucharist, it was ordained that the faithful should communicate at least on Sundays.”

The author *de officiis apud bibl. P. P. tom. 10, c. 66, p. 1198*, says: “*Postquam autem ecclesia numero augebatur, sed sanctitate minuebatur propter carnales, statutum est ut qui possent singulis dominicis communicarent.*” “When the church had acquired an increase in her number, but suffered a diminution of her sanctity, in consequence of the carnal affections of her children, a law was made that all who had it in their power, should communicate every Sunday.” In the Capitulars of the bishops, confirmed by Charlemagne, it was ordained: “*Ut omnes per dies dominicos et fes-*

tivitates præclaras sacra Eucharistia communicent nisi quibus abstinere præceptum est." Capitular. 1. 5, cap. 334. "That all, except those who were commanded to abstain, should communicate on the Sundays and principal festivals." Mark the words, "except those who were commanded to abstain." Where, I ask, is the precept to be found of not communicating with an affection to venial sins? In another part of the same Capitulars, (lib. 6, cap. 17,) we find the following words: "*Si fieri potest, omni die dominica communicent; nisi criminali* (mark this word) *peccato et manifesto impediuntur: puta aliter salvi esse non possunt."* "If possible, let the faithful communicate on every Sunday, unless they be prevented by a grievous and manifest sin; otherwise, they cannot perhaps obtain salvation." Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, remarks, (Spicil. tom. 9, cap. 12,) that in the Greek church all the faithful were obliged, under pain of excommunication, to communicate every eight days. Now, if, in the former ages of the church, weekly communion was commanded to all, how can it be forbidden at the present time to those who desire to pre-

serve themselves in the grace of God? My monitor will say, that even in the early ages of the church, exemption from an affection to venial sin was considered necessary for weekly communion. I say it was not: for, as we have already seen, communion was forbidden only to those who had an affection to mortal sin. Moreover, Pope Nicholas, writing to the Bulgarians, tells them that they may communicate every day in Lent: "*Si mens sine affectu peccandi sit, vel si hanc non de criminalibus peccatis conscientia impænitens, vel non reconciliata fortassis accuset:*" Res. ad Bul. cap. 9. "If they be free from an affection to sin, or if their conscience should not reproach them with the guilt of unrepented grievous sins." Thus, at that time, they who had not a consciousness of grievous sins, nor an affection for them, or who had confessed them, might communicate every day.

Such was the tepidity of the faithful from the tenth till the sixteenth century, that few communicated once a year, and the number of those who communicated three times a year was still fewer. To receive the holy Eucharist six or seven times a year was regarded as

frequent communion. Religious only were commanded to communicate once a month. (Clement. ne in agr. § 6, sane de statu Monach.) Hence, in the life of St. Francis de Sales, it is related, as a proof of great piety in his Father, that he went to communion once a month. And, because St. Francis Borgia, while a secular, communicated every Sunday, many accused him of going to communion too frequently. But monthly or weekly communion cannot be called frequent, on account of the great coldness of these miserable times; for, according to the ancient discipline of the church, it should be called rare, rather than frequent.

Let us now examine the argument deduced from the authority of St. Francis de Sales, which Aristasio has put forward with so much pomp. We have already seen, that in the time of St. Augustin, it was disputed whether they who were free from mortal sin should communicate every day. Some denied; others, among whom were St. Isidore, Venerable Bede, Eterius and Amalarius, asserted that they ought. But Gennadius adopted a middle course, and expressed his opinion

in the words ascribed to St. Augustin: "*Quotidie Eucharisticæ communionem percipere nec laudo nec vitupero. Omnibus tamen dominicis communicandum suadeo et hortor, si tamen mens in affectu peccandi non sit: nam habentem adhuc voluntatem peccandi gravari magis dico Eucharisticæ perceptione quam purificari.*" De Eccles. dogmat. in cap. Quotidie, 13 de consecr. dis. 2. "The practice of daily communion I neither praise nor censure; but I strongly, and earnestly recommend the faithful to receive on all Sundays, if, however, they be free from affection to sin: for persons who have an affection for sin, instead of being made more holy, are rendered more guilty by receiving the Eucharist."

Now, at present, all agree that these words were written by Gennadius, and that Gratian and St. Francis de Sales erred in ascribing them to St. Augustin. St. Francis inferred from these words, which he believed to be the words of St. Augustin, that weekly communion ought to be allowed only to those "who have no affection to mortal or to venial sin." Introd. part 2, chap. 20. Thus, by the words of Gennadius, "*si tamen mens in affectu pec-*

candi non sit," which he attributed to St. Augustin, St. Francis was induced to forbid communion every Sunday to those who have an affection for any venial sin. It is necessary, then, to examine whether these words of Genadius should be understood of an affection to mortal, or of an affection to venial sin. In his book on frequent communion, Arnald says, they ought to be understood of an affection to venial sin. But others commonly understand them of an affection to mortal sin. Thus, in the Gloss on the canon *Quotidie* we read: "*Quærebatur utrum quotidie esset communicandum, Augustinus* (the Gloss falls into the error of Gratian, in ascribing the words to St. Augustin,) *non vult præcise respondere, ad hoc, sed monet omnes omni die dominico communicare qui non sunt conscii peccati mortalis nec habent propositum peccandi. Sed quando dicitur quod mens est sine affectu peccandi? Credo quod quando proponit firmiter abstinere a quolibet peccato mortali.*" "It was asked, whether it was advisable to communicate daily? To this question St. Augustin does not give a direct answer, but recommends all who are neither conscious of mortal sin, nor disposed

to commit sin, to communicate every Sunday. But when can the soul be said to be free from affection to sin? I believe that the soul can be said to be free from affection to sin when she purposes firmly to abstain from every mortal sin." In several parts of his works, St. Thomas explains the words of Gennadius in the same sense: "*Non potest,*" he says, (*homo*) "*uniri Christo dum est in affectu peccandi mortaliter: et ideo in libro de ecclesiasticis dogmatibus dicitur, si mens in actu (alias affectu) peccandi est, gravatur magis Eucharisticæ perceptione quam purificatur.*" 3. p. qu. 79, art. 3. "A man cannot be united to Christ so long as he retains an affection to mortal sin; and hence it is said in the book on Ecclesiastical Dogmas, that a person who has such an affection, instead of being made more holy, is rendered more guilty by receiving the Eucharist." And, in another place, he says, "*Tertio modo dicitur aliquis indignus ex eo quod cum voluntate peccandi mortaliter, accedit Eucharistiam: unde (in lib. de eccl. dogma) dicitur. Si mens in affectu peccandi non sit.*" In 1, ad Cor. 2, lect. 7. "In the third sense, a person is said to be unworthy, if he approach the Eucharist with a disposition

to commit mortal sin: hence it is said, in the book on Ecclesiastical Dogmas: ‘if the soul be not free from affection to sin,’” &c. The words of Gennadius are understood in the same sense by St. Antonine, (p. 3, tit. 14, c. 12;) by Tournely (de Sacr. Pœnit. t. 9, p. 297;) by Theophilus Raynaud (Heter. sect. 1, P. n. 13;) by Frassen, Hugh of St. Victor, (tract de anima, 1, 3, c. 50;) by Hincmar, Eterius, Albinus, Flaccus, Taulerus, Granada, and by Dominic Soto, who says: “*Hoc testimonium* (that is, of Gennadius,) *S. Thomas Scotus et omnes intelligunt de affectu ad peccatum mortale. Certissimum est intelligi de peccato mortali; nam affectus ad venialia non obstat effectui hujus sacramenti.*” Tom. 1. in 4, disp. 11, q. 2, art. 3. “This passage is understood by St. Thomas, Scotus, and all writers, of an affection to mortal sin. It most certainly is to be understood of mortal sin: for an affection to venial sins is not an obstacle to the effect of this sacrament.” That Gennadius intended to speak only of mortal sins, is clear from the object of his book, which was to confute certain heretics, who asserted that a person who communicated frequently could not be lost though

ne were a heretic, and guilty of the most enormous crimes. It may be added, that from the time of Gennadius till the eighth century it was not usual to confess venial sins, as we learn from Natalis Alexander (*Hist. Eccl. sec. 14, d. 15, sec. 25;*) from Monsignor Milante, (*exerc. 10, in prop. 16, Alex. VIII. tom. 3;*) from Martene, Morino, Thomassinus, Duhamel, and Mabillon. In saying that the holy bishop of Geneva, my special advocate, mistook, with Gratian and several commentators on the canons, a passage from Gennadius for one from St. Augustin, I did not intend to charge my saint with a want of accuracy; but I wished to show, that, had St. Francis (who was so strongly inclined to assist souls by frequent communion) known that the words which he ascribed to St. Augustin were written by Gennadius, he would very probably have paid no attention to them.

But even during the tepid ages of the church the spiritual masters recommended communion every Sunday to those who were in the state of grace. John Rusbrochius (*spec. æter. sal. coll. 1352, c. 11, a. 15,*) says, that "they who are not conscious of great sins may approach

the Sacrament on Sundays, and even on other days." Salazar, a theologian esteemed even by Arnald, says, that weekly communion may be recommended "to all, even the least perfect." He adds: "When I say all, I mean those who are in the state of grace, and who shun as much as possible the occasions of offending God by mortal sin." Lewis Blossius, (Apud Petavium, lib. 5, cap. 4,) speaking of frequent communion, says: "*Nec perinde necessaria hic est magna devotio sensibilis, sed satis fuerit nullius peccati mortalis sibi conscium esse et Deo velle placere. Non ergo ob id abstinere debetis quod vitiosos vos esse conspicitis: quinimo ob hoc ipsum tanto amplius ad hanc gratiam præparandum est.*" L. 4, de poenit. c. 1. "Nor is any great degree of sensible devotion required. It will be sufficient if the soul be not conscious of mortal sin, and if she be sincerely disposed to please God. You should not, therefore, abstain from communion because you know that you are imperfect; on the contrary, this very consideration should the more readily induce you to prepare for the grace of this sacrament."

Suares says "*Raro alicui consulendum ut*

frequentius quam octavo die communicet." "Few should be advised to communicate oftener than on every eighth day." On the authority of St. Bernard he adds: "*Non esse omittendam hujusmodi frequentiam propter sola peccata venialia; quia non est exiguus hujus sacramenti fructus quod in magnis peccatis impedit consensum.*" Tom. 3, in 3 p. S. Th. q. 80, a. 11, sect. 3. "We should not be deterred by venial sins from such frequentation of the Eucharist, for it is no small portion of the fruit of this sacrament, that it prevents us from consenting to grievous sins." After having said, that a sinner who has confessed even grievous sins, should communicate, "in order that the life received through one sacrament may be preserved by the other," Father Granada adds: "If you tell me that you are a sinner, I answer, that when you are free from mortal sin, the very reason which makes you abstain from the sacrament ought to induce you to frequent it; for this sacrament pardons sinners, nourishes the weak, and heals the infirm." Memor. par. 1, tr. 3, c. 8. In the tenth chapter he says: "It must be remembered that a Christian is assisted by this sacrament, not

only when he makes progress, but also when he does not go backwards. To fall into fewer sins is one of the signs of advancing in a spiritual life. And the remedy which preserves us from sickness is not less necessary than that which improves our health. Hence, as St. Hilary says, a person who does not commit mortal sins, ought not to abstain from the medicine of the body of the Lord." Taulerus says: "Do then what I advise you, and having grounds to hope that you are not in mortal sin.....communicate every Sunday." Ser. in dom. 7, post Trin. In a letter to a certain preacher, in which he permits weekly communion to married persons who have but little fervor, the venerable Father Avila says: "You ought to instruct them to satisfy their obligations, and to spend the time which they can spare, in some devout exercise; and you should teach them, that it will be profitable to them to communicate every eight days." Letter 3, part 1. My adversary has given a different version of this letter: he has transcribed the words of Avila from the author of his life. But the extract which I have just given is conformable to four editions, and particularly to

the Spanish edition of the letters of Avila. It may be useful here to add what Father Avila says in the same letter. "But it ought to be remarked, that although the fruit does not appear, some derive this advantage from communion," (he speaks of frequent, and even daily communion,) "that they do not go back; and they know by experience that when they neglect to frequent this sacrament, they easily commit certain faults, which they avoid as long as they continue to frequent the table of the Lord. For them, then, such frequent communion is not unfit; for, from it they derive this benefit, that through the strength which they receive from communicating frequently, they do not fall into any irregularity."

In our own times, in his "Ascetic Directory," (a work which, though modern, has gone through several editions, and has received the general approbation of the learned,) Father Scaramelli says: "A confessor may, and ought to allow communion every eight days to those souls whom he finds disposed for sacramental absolution." Tom. 1, tract 1, art. 10, cap. 6. And he adds: "This is the common opinion of spiritual fathers, and appears in

present to be the practice of the church." This last passage has greatly displeased Aristasio. Hence, in his second book, he spares me, but severely assails poor Father Scaramelli. But Scaramelli is not the only author who recommends communion to those who are free from mortal sin. Wigandt, a doctor of the university of Vienna, says, that "they who avoid mortal sins may communicate once in the week, and sometimes twice, that is, when some particular festival occurs." Tr. 12, exam. 4, de Euch. cas. 6, q. 9. Clericatus, an author highly praised by Benedict XIV., gives the following rule: "There is no one to whom monthly communion may not be recommended: there are but few to whom weekly communion should be forbidden; and very few to whom daily communion ought to be allowed." Stapleton, a doctor of Louvain, teaches that "all the proof which is required consists in not communicating in mortal sin, in having faith and charity, and some reverence due to the sacrament." Orat. acad. p. 328. Theophilus Raynaud (Heter. sp. sect. 1, pu. 4, n. 27,) asserts that all who have not a consciousness of mortal sin should be advised to communicate

every Sunday. Father Francis of the Annunciation says, that "all Christians who confess their sins with the requisite dispositions may, and ought to be permitted and advised to communicate every eight days. The rule must not be extended to a penitent who communicates without any attention to the sacrament, without piety, and without a desire of amending his life: but persons of this character abstain from the sacraments without being forbidden to approach them." *Regola*. 1, p. 664. In his treatise on frequent communion, (lib. 1, cap. 1,) Monsignor Cacciaguerra says: "If our bad habit was so strong as to lead us into some mortal sin, St. Augustin advises, that, to free ourselves from it, we should always receive again the holy communion." And, in another place, (lib. 3, c. 1, l. 2,) he devotes an entire chapter to show that "there is no habit, however deplorable or deep-rooted, which may not be diminished, and ultimately extinguished, by frequent communion." The same doctrine is taught by Nicholas Turlot (*tesoro della doct. Christ.* t. 2, p. 4, cap. 22;) by Nicholas Rogiero, a member of the congregation of the *Pii Operarii* (*Primo. indir.* c. 3,

s. 1;) and by Cuniliati, who says: "When no other fruit is derived from communion than the avoidance of mortal sins, the director ought not to be reluctant to allow it; for the preservation from mortal sin is one of the principal fruits of the holy communion." Catech. ragion. p. 53. He then relates the example of a certain nobleman, who was so addicted to a grievous sin of the flesh that he despaired of amendment. His confessor asked him whether he fell into the sin on the days of communion: the noblemen having replied in the negative, the confessor obliged him to communicate every day for several weeks, and thus freed him from the vicious habit. Such, then, being the doctrine of so many modern authors, it appears to me that, with Father Scaramelli, it may be very reasonably asserted that, according to the common opinion of spiritual fathers, and according to the present practice of the church, all who are not conscious of mortal sin should be allowed to receive the holy Eucharist. Let us now examine the principal reason why, according to Aristasio, weekly communion should not be permitted to those who are free from mortal sin, but retain an

affection to venial sins. It is certain that the Eucharist is not only a refection which nourishes the soul, and leads to perfection, but that, according to the Council of Trent, (sess. 13, c. 2,) it is a remedy which delivers us from venial, and preserves us from mortal sins. But Aristasio says, that, to those who are indisposed, food is noxious, and not nutritious. The learned Collet, the continuator of Tournely, (de Euch. p. 1, c. 8, conc. 3,) answers this objection by saying, that "the condition of spiritual is not the same as that of corporal food: the latter, because it must be changed into the substance of him who eats it, stands in need of the action of a living principle; but celestial food, because it changes into itself him who receives it, requires in him nothing more than spiritual life." Aristasio rejoins, and says, that a person who has an affection to venial sins is rendered more guilty by receiving the Eucharist; and, to prove his assertion, he adduces the words of Gennadius: "*Habentem adhuc voluntatem peccandi gravari magis quam purificari.*" "A person who has an affection to sin, instead of being made more holy, is rendered more guilty by receiving the Eu-

charist." The answer to this is clear; for, as has been already demonstrated, Gennadius spoke of mortal sin, which, according to St. Paul, certainly renders a person who communicates more criminal. "*Judicium sibi manducat et bibit.*" "He eateth and drinketh judgment to himself."

St. Thomas asks, "Whether venial sin prevents the effect of the Eucharist?" 3. p. q. 79, a. 8. In his work on the sentences, he said that he who commits a venial sin in the very act of communion loses all the fruit of the sacrament; but in his Sum he has retracted this doctrine. "*Peccata,*" he says, "*venialia dupliciter accipi possunt, uno modo prout sunt præterita, alio modo prout sunt actu exercita. Primo quidem modo peccata venialia nullo modo impediunt effectum hujus sacramenti, &c. Secundo autem modo peccata venialia non ex toto impediunt effectum, sed in parte.*" 3. p. q. 79, a. 8. "Venial sins may be considered under two respects, as having been already committed, or as occurring at the present moment. Considered under the former respect, they by no means prevent the effect of this sacrament; considered under the latter respect, they pre-

vent its effect, not totally, but partially.” Natalis Alexander agrees with St. Thomas, and gives the following reason for his opinion: “The Eucharist has the power of remitting venial sins, which, because they are not opposed to the habit of charity, cannot prevent the entire effect of the sacrament, that is, the increase of grace and of charity. Hence, we learn from the Council of Trent, that he who is not conscious of grievous sin has the dispositions necessary for a worthy communion. *Illos sacramentaliter simul et spiritualiter Eucharistiam sumere qui ita se prius probant et instruunt ut vestem nuptialem induti ad divinum hanc mensam accedant,*” Sess. 13, cap. 8. “Whoever is free from mortal sin is clothed with the nuptial garment; and, therefore, he can eat with profit the body of the Lord, though he should be burdened with venial sins.” Theo. dog. etc. 1, 2, c. 3, prop. 8, t. 1, p. 2. Gonet teaches that actual venial sins do not prevent the principal fruit of the Eucharist; that is, the augmentation of grace. He adds: “Hence, to receive this sacrament worthily, and with fruit, the Council of Trent requires no other necessary disposition than that a person be not

conscious of mortal sin." Manual de Euc. c. 9, q. 3. Such too, is the doctrine of Tournely, (de Euch. q. 7, art. 3, conc. 4,) of Collet (de Euch. par. 1, c. 8, conc. 3,) of Silvius, (in 4, p. q. 78, art. 8,) of Estius, Petavius, Sixtus Senensis, Genettus, Wigandt, Concina, and others. If, then, all these celebrated authors, along with the angelic doctor, teach that they who commit a venial sin in the very act of communion do not lose the increase of grace and charity produced by the holy Eucharist, how can it be said that he who communicates with an affection to venial sin is deprived of all the fruit of the sacrament, and that he is rendered more guilty before God? For my part, I cannot conceive how a confessor can, without scruple, forbid weekly communion to a soul weak in virtue, who wishes to preserve herself in the grace of God, or how he can deprive her of so powerful a help to avoid mortal sins. It cannot be denied that the mere exemption from mortal sin is not a sufficient disposition for frequent communion; but it is sufficient for communion which is not frequent, or for weekly communion, otherwise persons who have an affection to venial sins

should be forbidden to communicate even a few times in the year. Aristasio will ask, what necessity is there of allowing communion every Sunday to such imperfect souls; would it not be sufficient to allow them to communicate once a month? I answer, no; for many by communicating every week, will be preserved from mortal sin, but not by communicating once a month. But Aristasio says, that he will not depart from the rule laid down by St. Francis de Sales. And I answer, let him adhere to it: but he cannot censure our opinion, which, from what has been said, appears to be certainly the common opinion.

DEVOTIONS FOR CONFESSION.

Whoever you are, Christian reader, that design to approach to the holy sacrament of penance, remember that you are going to undertake a work on the good performance of which, more than any other duty, your eternal welfare depends. You must, therefore, retire apart from every external source of distraction, place yourself in the presence of God, and humbly adore him. You should then represent to yourself that this is, as very possibly it

may be, the last confession you will ever have the opportunity of making. This reflection will induce you to discharge every part of your duty, both as to the examination of your conscience, your sorrow for your sins, your firm purpose of amending your life, and the sincerity of your confession, in the most perfect manner possible. Begin your preparation by imploring the light and grace of Almighty God, who alone can discover to you the malice of your sins, and give you true repentance. For this end you may pray as follows:

SUPREME and adorable majesty, God of heaven and earth, I firmly believe that thou art present, and that thou seest me and knowest the dispositions of my heart. I adore thee and render thee my humble homage, acknowledging thee for my God, my Creator, and my sovereign Redeemer. In testimony of this my faith, I prostrate my soul and body before the throne of thy infinite majesty, and offer thee the adoration which is due to thee alone. O Father of lights! who enlightenest every man that comes into the world, send into my heart a ray of light, of love, and of sorrow, that I may know, detest, and confess the sins, which

I have committed against thee. I desire to see my sins in all their enormity, and just as they are in thy sight; I wish to detest them for the love of thee, and to confess them with the same sincerity as I should be glad to do at the moment of my death. But, my God, this knowledge of my sins, and these dispositions of sorrow for them, and sincerity in declaring them to the minister, can come only from the hand of thy bounty. Since, then, in thy desire that the sinner should not die, thou didst send thy Son into the world to purchase his forgiveness, I implore this grace through the merits of Jesus Christ, who died upon the cross for my sins, and who is now sitting at thy right hand, where he continually shows thee in my behalf the wounds which he endured for me.

Mother of my God, who art so charitable to sinners that desire to repent, assist me by thy intercession. My holy angel, who hast been a spectator of all my crimes, help me to discover the sins which I have committed against my God. My blessed patron, and all ye saints of heaven, pray for me, that I may bring forth fruits of penance. Amen.

An offering of the Examination.

JESUS, my God and Saviour, I offer thee the examination which I am going to make, that thy divine justice may be glorified in it. I look to thee with confidence for the grace to do it well. Thus, therefore, in the spirit of charity, in order to please thee and to accomplish thy holy will, together with every intention that can procure thee the greatest honor and glory, I undertake it.

Here the penitent must begin the examination of his conscience. But it must be observed by persons of a timorous disposition, who often approach the sacraments, that their examination ought to be short and unaccompanied with disquietude and scrupulosity. It is sufficient for persons of this description to take a momentary view of the faults into which they are accustomed to fall, and then principally to apply themselves to acts of devotion and contrition, which are always the most essential dispositions for this sacrament, and from which they may easily suffer their minds to be diverted by yielding to fears and anxiety. As for those who seldom approach this sacrament, it is their duty to employ sufficient time to

make a diligent examination of their consciences, and to call to mind, as nearly as possible, both the kind and the number of their sins; because, if their confession fail to be entire for want of this necessary diligence, the sacrament will be equally ineffective as if it were received without true contrition. Persons, therefore, of this sort, must read over leisurely and attentively the commandments of God and of the church, together with the seven capital sins, as they are found expounded in many books of devotion. They must examine all their thoughts, words, and actions, and especially how they have fulfilled the particular duties of their state of life. If they cannot call to mind the precise number of their sins on account of the length of time since their last confession, or the frequent habit of their sins, they must consider how often in the day or week they have sinned in each particular kind, and their confession of them in this manner will satisfy the divine justice, which never obliges us to do what is morally impossible.

When the examination of conscience is concluded, the penitent must proceed to excite

himself to contrition, which may be done by the following considerations:

FIRST CONSIDERATION.

On the Enormity of Sin.

REFLECT, that sin, however trifling it may be, greatly offends Almighty God, and is an insult to the infinite perfections of Him, whose greatness knows no limits, and who is consequently deserving of infinite love. By sin you displease one, who loves you most tenderly. Oh, reflect well on this, and you will discover how base, how cruel, how unreasonable it is to offend him. But, alas! we shall never during this life be able fully to comprehend the entire malice even of a venial sin, or know what punishment he deserves who commits it.

An Act of Contrition.

O MY infinitely amiable God! I acknowledge that my sins are multiplied beyond the number of the hairs of my head, or the grains of sand on the sea shore. But, if I had committed only one, in committing it I have offended thy infinite perfections. Oh! why then is not my heart penetrated with infinite grief and regret?

I have sinned against thy goodness, which I ought ever to have loved. I have preferred a vile creature, a petty honor, a miserable pleasure, some vain interest, to thy sovereign majesty, which I ought to have adored, served, and honored. Ah! my God, pardon my sins. O infinite beauty, infinite goodness! how could I have the audacity to insult and despise thee. But I now heartily repent of my ingratitude and disloyalty; I wish sincerely that I had never offended thee, and resolve never to offend thee again. Yes, I had rather sacrifice all that I possess, and forfeit my honor and my life, than ever more offend so good a God.

Here it is proper for the penitent to consider the sins to which he has been most subject, and the best means of avoiding them for the future, and also to form sincere resolutions of guarding as much as possible against the occasions of them.

SECOND CONSIDERATION.

On the Benefits of God.

REFLECT that God is our sovereign benefactor, who has bestowed upon us innumerable

benefits both general and particular. He has drawn us out of nothing and formed us to his own image and likeness, without his having any need at all of us: we are continually dependent upon him for our preservation: he has redeemed us with the price of the blood of his Son: he has made us Christians in preference to thousands of others whom he has left in the darkness of infidelity: he has borne with us in our sins until the present time: he has given us many and easy means of saving our souls, and still we repay all his mercies with ingratitude: he has created all creatures for our benefit, and the only use which we make of them is, to offend him.

An Act of Contrition.

OH, how great has been my ingratitude! there is, there can be, none equal to it. O my amiable Saviour! is this the recompense that I have made thee, for having drawn me out of the abyss of nothing, in which I should still be, were it not for thee? is this the value that I set upon the precious blood of thy veins, spilt with so much pain and so much love for me?

Ungrateful creature that I am! who will give sighs to my heart, and tears to my eyes, that I may bewail, as I ought, the insults which I have offered to my God, my sovereign benefactor? O God of goodness! have mercy on me. I greatly desire, and firmly resolve, never to offend thee more. Ah! why was I born to receive so many benefits from my God, and still to offend him so often and so grievously as I have done? How could I employ in offending him the hands, the feet, the tongue, the ears, the heart which he gave me to use in his service? O unhappy eyes! O criminal hands! O unfaithful heart! you, by your sins, have been the cause of the pains, the torments, and the cruel death which the Son of God suffered upon the cross.

THIRD CONSIDERATION.

On the presence of God, before whom sin is committed.

REFLECT that the most blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the only and Almighty God, is every where present, that he sees all things, knows all things, and penetrates into the inmost and most secret thoughts of our heart. He is that divine and infinite majesty,

before whom the highest seraphims tremble with a holy fear and veil their faces through respect; and we have the audacity to sin in his presence; to say, to do, and to think, what, if known, would cover us with confusion before the meanest of men.

Reflect, moreover, that this God, before whom we sin, is our sovereign judge, who, at the moment of our death, will inevitably pass sentence upon the thoughts, the words, and the actions of which we may be found guilty.

An Act of Contrition.

SUPREME and just judge of the living and the dead, thou who seest and knowest all things, even those very secrets that pass in the interior of my heart, and which I would not have known to any creature upon earth, is it possible that I should dare to appear in thy presence, after having been so unfaithful to thee? Alas! I cannot fly from thee, because thou art present every where: I cannot hide myself from thy view, because thou seest all things. Ah! has not my insolence been insupportable in having dared, in the presence of thy exalted majesty, before whom the purest

angels cover their faces, to do what I would not have done before the meanest and the last of men? O my God! have mercy on me: I detest, with my whole heart, all my sins for the love of thee.

Another Act of Contrition.

O MY GOD! I am covered with shame and confusion, when I reflect, that I have lived in thy presence with so little regard and respect, and that I have so often broken the protestations that I have made, never to offend thee more. O God! if I had made so many promises to any creature upon earth, how much should I feel ashamed at having broken my word. But, where thou art concerned, I pay little regard to my resolutions, since I daily insult thee before thy eyes. Oh! how great is thy goodness in having borne with me so long. O God of my heart! since thou hast dealt mercifully with me in the course of my most heinous crimes, do not withdraw thy mercy, now that I repent of all my disloyalties, and firmly resolve, with the assistance of thy grace, never to offend thee more. Help me, O Lord, to keep this resolution.

The penitent, having thus excited in his heart a sincere detestation of his sins, and firm resolutions of committing them no more, must now go and accuse himself with courage, simplicity, humility and confidence, without being uneasy, lest any thing should escape his memory. After his confession he must pay attention to, and accept the sacramental penance which is enjoined, listen with docility to the voice of his confessor, and consult him upon any difficulties which may embarrass his mind.

Having retired from the sacred tribunal, he must immediately return thanks to God, renew his good resolutions, and pray for the grace of perseverance. This may be done as follows :

A Prayer after Confession.

WHAT thanks do I not owe to thee, my God, not only for having created me, redeemed me, and called me to the bosom of thy church ; but still more for having waited for my return, whilst I was wandering from thee in the miserable paths of sin, for having so often pardoned me, as I hope thou hast done this day, and for having preserved me from so many other sins, into which I should have fallen had I not been prevented by thy gracious hand.

But my enemies will not cease to tempt me until death, and, if thou support me not, alas! I shall soon begin again to offend thee more grievously than ever. Grant me then, through the merits of Jesus Christ, the precious grace of final perseverance. This divine Saviour has assured us that whatever we ask in his name thou wilt grant it to us. I entreat thee, therefore, through all that thy dear Son has suffered for me, never to let me forsake thee any more. I feel the greatest confidence that, if I continue to pray for this grace, I shall obtain it, because thou hast promised to hear our prayers. But I tremble with fear, lest, in some unguarded moment, I should forget my dependence upon thee, fail to invoke thy help, and thus relapse into my former misery. Grant, therefore, that under all my temptations, I may have instant recourse to thee, by invoking the holy names of Jesus and Mary. Thus, O my God! I may confidently hope to die in thy grace, and to love thee for ever in heaven where I shall be sure never to be separated from thee, and to be consumed in the fire of thy holy love, for all eternity. Amen.

MAXIMS OF ETERNITY:
OR
MEDITATIONS
FOR EVERY DAY IN THE WEEK

MEDITATION FOR SUNDAY.

On the End of Man.

I. CONSIDER, O my soul! that the being which thou enjoyest was given thee by God; he created thee to his own image, without any merit on thy part; he adopted thee for his child by baptism; he loved thee more than the most affectionate parent could have loved thee; he has made thee all thou art, that thou mightest know him, love him, and serve him in this life, and thereby arrive at the eternal possession of him in heaven. Hence, thou didst not come into this world for the sake of enjoyment, to grow rich, and powerful, to eat drink, and sleep like irrational animals, but solely to love thy God and to work out thy

eternal salvation. And is this the object, which I have hitherto had in view? Oh! how unfortunate have I been, in having thought of any thing rather than my last end. O God, I beg of thee, in the name and for the love of Jesus, to grant that I may begin a new life of perfect holiness and conformity to thy divine will.

II. Consider what deep remorse and bitter regret thou wilt feel at the hour of death, if, during life, thou hast not devoted thyself to the service of God. How great will be thy disappointment when, at the close of thy days, thou shalt perceive, that nothing remains at that sorrowful moment of all thy goods, of all thy pleasures, and of all thy earthly glory, but a shadow which flies before thee, and a bitter remembrance which pursues thee. What will be thy consternation, when thou shalt discover that, for the sake of miserable vanities, thou hast lost thy God, thy soul and thy salvation, without the possibility of being able to repair thy misfortune? O despair! O cruel torment! thou wilt then see the value of the time which thou art losing: but it will be too late. Gladly wouldst thou then purchase time at the

price of all thou hast; but thou wilt not be able to do it. Oh! how full of bitterness and sorrow will that day be for every soul that has not loved and served the Lord!

III. Consider the general disregard of men for their last end. Their ordinary thoughts are upon the accumulation of wealth, the gratification of their senses, parties of pleasure, amusement and festivity. They think nothing of God or his service; they do nothing for the salvation of their souls; they regard the affair of salvation as a trifle not worthy of notice. Thus, oh deplorable misfortune! the greater part of Christians, by indulging in foolish pleasures, and criminal gratifications, precipitate themselves into hell. O man! thou takest much pains to damn thyself, and wilt thou do nothing for thy salvation? Listen to the dying sentiments of a secretary of state of one of the kings of England: "How great," said he, "is my misfortune: I have used many sheets of paper in writing letters for my sovereign, and, alas! I have not used one to help me in the recollection of my sins, that I might make a good confession!" Listen to the death-bed sentiments of a king of Spain: "O that I had

spent my life in a desert, occupied in serving God, and had never been a king!" But to what do these sighs and lamentations then serve, but to augment the horrors of despair? Learn, then, this day, at the expense of others, to devote thyself to the salvation of thy soul: remember well that all thy actions, all thy words, and all thy thoughts, which are not directed to God, are entirely lost. Oh! it is time then to amend thy life. Do not wait, therefore, to be convinced of it till thou arrive at the gates of eternity, and the jaws of hell: it will be then too late. O my God! pardon me all the errors of my life: I love thee above all things. I am sorry, from the bottom of my heart, for all my sins. O Mary! my hope, intercede with Jesus in my behalf.

MEDITATION FOR MONDAY.

On the importance of our last end.

I. CONSIDER, O man! how important it is to thee to save thy soul. Thy dearest interests are there concerned, because, if thou attain salvation, thou wilt be eternally happy in the enjoyment of every good both of soul and

body; but, in losing it, thou lovest thy soul and body; heaven and God: thou wilt be eternally miserable, eternally damned. Thy only important, thy only necessary affair, therefore, is to serve thy God and to save thy soul. Do not, then, O Christian! think of serving thy passions now, and of giving thyself to God hereafter. Oh! how many has this false and deceitful hope precipitated into hell! Thousands of sinners have flattered themselves with the hopes of future repentance; but the day in which they hoped, never arrived, and they are now suffering without resource the torments of the damned. And who amongst them all ever thought of falling into that place of woe? Which of them had not the intention of saving his soul? But God curses him that sins in the hope of pardon. Thou sayest perhaps, within thyself, I will commit this sin and then repent: but art thou sure that time will be allowed thee for repentance? thou mayest die the moment thou hast sinned. By sinning thou lovest the grace of God? and what if thou never more recover it? God shows mercy to those who fear him, but not to those who condemn and despise him.

Think not, therefore, that it will cost thee no more to repent of and confess three sins than one. No: in this thought thou art deceived; God might pardon thee a first or second sin, but not a third. He has patience with the sinner for a time, but not for ever. When the measure of iniquity is filled up, his mercy ceases, and he punishes the impenitent sinner either by death, or by abandoning him to a reprobate sense, in which state he goes on from sin to sin without remorse, and, at length is precipitated into hell. O Christian! attend seriously to this. It is time thou shouldst put a period to thy disorders and return to God; thou shouldst fear lest this will be the last warning that he will ever send thee. Thou hast offended him long enough, and he has borne with thee long enough in thy sins: tremble then, lest he should forsake thee after the next mortal sin. Oh! how many souls has this striking thought of eternity caused to retire from the disorders and dangers of the world, to live in cloisters, solitudes, and deserts! Unfortunate sinner that I have been! what is the fruit of all my crimes? a conscience gnawed with despair, a troubled heart,

a soul overwhelmed with grief, hell deserved, and God lost! Ah! my God, my heavenly Father! bind me to thy love.

II. Consider, O man! that this affair of eternity is of all others the most neglected. Mankind have time to think of every thing but God and salvation. If a man of the world is advised to frequent the sacraments, or to spend a quarter of an hour daily in meditation, he will immediately reply: I have a family to provide for, I have my business to attend to, I have sufficient to keep me employed. Good God! and hast thou not a soul to save? will thy riches and thy family be able to assist thee at the hour of thy death, or deliver thee from hell if thou be condemned? No, no: flatter not thyself that thou art able to reconcile God and the world, heaven and sin together. Salvation is not to be attained by a life of indolence and ease. It is necessary to use violence and to make great efforts, in order to obtain the crown of immortality. How many Christians have flattered themselves with the idea of serving God and saving their souls hereafter, who are at this moment, and will for ever be, in the flames of hell! How great is

the folly of men in attending to what will so shortly terminate, and thinking so little of that state which will never end! Ah! Christian, put thy affairs in order; reflect that thy all is at stake: remember that, in a very short time, thy body will be deposited in the earth, and thy soul will go to dwell in the house of eternity. How dreadful, then, will be thy misfortune, if thou be condemned to an eternity of wo. Reflect well on this; for then thou canst have no remedy.

III. Consider and say within thyself: I have a soul, and if I lose it all is lost; I have a soul, and if in losing it I were to gain the whole world, what would it profit me! I have a soul, but if I lose it, although I were to arrive at the highest pinnacle of glory, of what advantage will it be to me? If I hoard up riches, if I get forward in the world, but in the end lose my soul, what will be my consolation? Where are now the dignities, pleasures and vanities of those great ones of the world, whose bodies are mouldering in the dust, and whose souls are a prey to the flames of hell? Since, then, I have a soul, and only one, to save, and if I lose it once, it is lost for ever, I

ought to endeavor to save it. This is an affair of the last importance to me. Eternal happiness and eternal misery are at stake. O my God! I am forced to acknowledge with shame and confusion that I have hitherto blindly wandered astray from thee: I have scarcely ever thought seriously of saving my soul. O my Father, save me, through Jesus Christ. I am willing to part with every thing here, provided I do not lose thee. O Mary! my surest hope, save me by thy powerful intercession.

MEDITATION FOR TUESDAY.

On mortal sin.

I. CONSIDER, O my soul! that having been created to love God, thou hast rebelled against him, and thereby been guilty of the basest ingratitude. Thou hast treated him like an enemy; thou hast despised his grace and friendship. Thou wast aware how much sin offends him, and still thou hast committed it. Yes, thou hast turned thy back on God; thou hast insulted him; thou hast in a manner raised thy hand to strike him; thou hast contristated his holy spirit. The man who sins says to God, if not in words, at least in effect, begone

from me, I will not serve thee, I will not acknowledge thee for my God: the God which I adore is this pleasure, this interest, this revenge. Such has been the language of thy heart every time that thou hast preferred any creature to God. St. Mary Magdalen, of Pazzi, could not conceive how a Christian could knowingly commit a mortal sin. O thou, who art reading these lines, what are thy sentiments? how many mortal sins hast thou committed? O my God! pardon me, have mercy on me: I detest all my sins, I love thee, and grieve sincerely for the insults which I have offered to thee, who art deserving of infinite love.

II. Consider that God thus spoke to thy heart at the moment thou wast offending him: My son, I am thy God, who created thee and redeemed thee with the price of my blood. I forbid thee, then, to commit that sin under pain of incurring my eternal displeasure. But in yielding to the temptation, thou hast replied, Lord, I will not obey thee, I am resolved to gratify my passions, I value not thy friendship. "Thou hast said I will not serve." Ah! my God: and this I have done many, perhaps thousands of times. How couldst

thou bear with my insults? Why did I not die rather than live to offend thee? But, O infinite goodness! I will do so no more; henceforth I will love thee with all my heart. Give me perseverance; give me thy holy love.

III. Consider, O my soul! that, when sins arrive at a certain number, they cause God to abandon the sinner. "The Lord patiently expecteth that when the day of judgment shall come, he may punish them in the fulness of sins." 2 Mac. v. 13. If therefore, thou art again tempted to return to thy sins, say no more within thyself, I will commit this one, and will then repent. For what if the Lord should instantly strike thee dead? or what if he should forsake thee for ever? what has been the fate of thousands who have thus lost the grace of God? They flattered themselves with the hope of pardon; but death surprised them, and hell enveloped them in its flames. Tremble, then, lest thy fate be the same. Those who abuse the goodness of God in order to offend him, are undeserving of his mercy. After the multitude of crimes that he has pardoned thee, thou hast too much reason to fear that, if thou relapse into mortal sin, he will pardon

thee no more. Thank him, then, a thousand times for having borne patiently with thee until now, and form the resolution rather to die than to offend him any more. Say frequently to him, my God, I have already offended thee enough; the remainder of my life shall be spent in loving thee and in bewailing my past ingratitude. O my Jesus! I wish to love thee; grant me the grace to do it. Blessed virgin, my mother, assist me by thy prayers. Amen.

MEDITATION FOR WEDNESDAY.

On Death.

I. CONSIDER that this life must soon terminate. The sentence is already passed: thou must die. Death is certain, but the moment of it is uncertain: we know not when it will arrive. But, to how many casualties and accidents is human life constantly exposed? The bursting of an artery, a stroke of apoplexy, the sting of a venomous animal, an inundation, an earthquake, a thunderbolt, and numberless other causes, which we can neither foresee nor prevent, may deprive thee instantly of life. Death may surprise thee when thou least

expectest it. How many have gone to bed at night in apparent good health, and in the morning have been found dead? And may not the same happen to thee? Numberless others, who have been visited by sudden death, never expected to die in that manner; and, if they were then found in mortal sin, what is now their fate, and what will it be through all eternity? But, at all events, it is certain that either the night will come, when thou wilt no more see the day, or the day will come, when thou wilt no more see the night. I shall come, says Jesus Christ, like a thief in the night, when I am the least expected. Thy good master warns thee of this before-hand, because he wishes thy salvation. O sinner! correspond, then, with this mercy, profit by this admonition, hold thyself always in readiness for death. When that moment comes, there will be no time for preparation. Consider well that thou must certainly die. The scene of this world must soon terminate for thee, though thou knowest not when. Who can tell, whether it will be within a year, within a month, within a week; or even whether thou wilt be alive to-

morrow? O my Jesus! give me light, and pardon me.

II. Consider that, at the hour of thy death, thou wilt be extended on a bed, with thy relations and friends weeping over thee, a priest to assist thee, a lighted taper by thy side, within one step of the terrible passage into eternity. Thy head will be oppressed with pain, thy eyes will become dim, thy tongue parched with heat, thy blood cooling in thy veins, and thy heart in agony: thou wilt see the world passing from before thee. No sooner shall thy soul become separated from thy body, than thou wilt be stript of all things, and cast into the earth to rot. There thou wilt become the food of worms, which will gnaw and devour thy flesh, and, in a short time, nothing will remain of thy body but a few withered bones, and a little dust. Open a grave, and take a view of the state of that rich and avaricious man! of that vain woman! Ah! such is the termination of human life; such is the end of mortal man, and such will soon be thine. But penetrate with the eyes of faith into the other world, and see the condition in which thy soul will be placed. It will instantly be surrounded

by the monsters of hell, representing before thee all the sins which thou hast committed from thy very childhood. At present, the devil hides from thee the malice of thy crimes; he persuades thee that there is little evil in this act of vanity, this indulgence, this resentment, this dangerous company: but in death he will display before thy eyes the enormity of thy sins, to make thee despair. Then thou wilt discover in the light of God himself, the evil which thou hast committed in offending his infinite goodness. Ah! hasten then, whilst time remains, to make reparation for what is past: at the hour of death it will be too late.

III. Consider that death is a moment on which eternity depends. Take a view of a man who is on the point of expiring, and reflect that he is just going to enter into one or other of the two eternities; his fate is pending but for a moment: when that is expired, he is either saved or condemned for ever. O this last breath! O this moment, on which depends an eternity! an eternity either of torment or of glory; an eternity either always happy, or always miserable; an eternity either of all that is good, or of all that is evil; an eternity

either of heaven or of hell. If thou art then saved, thou wilt be secure from all evils, and at the summit of happiness and content; if thou art condemned, thou wilt live in punishment and despair as long as God shall be God. In death thou wilt understand the meaning of heaven, hell, sin, an offended God, the contempt of divine laws, sins concealed in confession, ill-gotten goods unrestored, injuries not pardoned. Unhappy me! will the dying man say: in a few moments, I must appear in the presence of God. What will my sentence be? Whither shall I go? to heaven or to hell? Shall I be happy with the saints, or burn with the damned? Shall I be a child of God or a slave of the devil? Alas! but a minute more and I shall know; and the destiny which I shall then receive, will last for all eternity. Then wilt thou detest a thousand times the day in which thou hadst the misfortune to sin. But it will be too late; thy sorrow will be fruitless, because it will proceed from the fear, and not from the love of God. Ah! my God, from this hour I will turn to thee: I will not delay my repentance until death. I now love thee, I embrace thee, and I wish to die in thy

embraces. O Mary! my true mother, let me die under thy protection: help me at that critical and decisive moment.

MEDITATION FOR THURSDAY.

On Judgment.

I. CONSIDER that the soul shall no sooner have departed from the body, than it will appear before the tribunal of God to be judged. This judge is the Almighty, whose wrath is provoked by thy sins. Thy accuser will be thy mortal enemy, the devil: the matter of thy trial will be thy sins: thy sentence will be without appeal; and if found guilty, thy punishment will be hell. Thou wilt not have the power of calling thy parents, friends, and companions to thy aid: all must be concluded between God and thy soul. Thou wilt then see the deformity of thy crimes, and wilt not be able, as at present, to excuse them. Thou wilt be examined upon all thy sins of thought, of words, of actions, of omissions, of scandal: thou wilt be weighed in the terrible scales of divine justice, and, if found wanting in a single point, thou art lost. My Jesus, and my Judge, pardon me before thou dost judge me.

II. Consider that, at the end of the world, our bodies will rise again to participate in the reward or punishment of the soul according to our works, when all the nations of the earth will be assembled in the valley of Josaphat to be judged. If thou art condemned, thou wilt resume thy body as an eternal prison for thy unfortunate soul. At this sorrowful re-union, the soul will curse the body, and the body the soul, so that, although at present they mutually consent to pursue unlawful pleasures, after death, they will become each other's tormentor. On the other hand, if thou art saved, thy body will arise beautiful, impassible, and glorious, and thus, both in body and soul, thou wilt be judged worthy of eternal happiness. This will close the scene of this world: thus will terminate all the greatness, all the pleasures and all the pomps of the earth. Yes, all will be at an end; nothing will remain but two eternities, one of glory, the other of pain; one of joy, the other of torments; the just will dwell in heaven, the wicked in hell. Wo then to him, that shall have loved the world! wo to him that for the vain and fleeting plea-

tures of the earth, shall have lost his soul, his body, heaven, and God!

III. Consider the eternal sentence which Jesus Christ will pass upon the reprobate and the elect. This sovereign judge, turning towards the reprobate, will say: Behold, ye ungrateful wretches, the event of your crimes; my hour is come, the hour of truth, of justice, of vengeance, and of wrath. Criminal souls, you have chosen my curse, let it fall upon you; be ye cursed for all eternity. Depart from me, despoiled of every good and laden with all evil, into eternal fire. (Matt. xxv.) Then turning towards the elect Jesus will thus address them: Come, ye blessed children of my heavenly Father, come and take possession of the kingdom of heaven which is prepared for you. Come, no longer to carry your cross after me, but to wear a crown. Come to inherit my riches, and to be the companions of my glory. Come from the land of exile to your true country; come from sufferings to glory, from tears to joy. O my Jesus! I hope to be one of those whom thou wilt then bless. I love thee above all things. Bless me at this

moment. O my mother Mary, do thou also bless me.

MEDITATION FOR FRIDAY.

On Hell.

I. CONSIDER that hell is a dreadful prison filled with fire. In this fire the reprobate are enveloped, having an abyss of fire above them, and around them and below them, in their eyes, their mouths, and throughout every part of their frame. There each sense suffers a torment peculiar to itself. The eyes are tormented with darkness and smoke, and at the same time by sight of devils and damned souls; the ears hear nothing but continual howlings, lamentations and blasphemies; the smell is tormented by the stench of half putrefied bodies; the taste by a burning thirst and cruel hunger, without the possibility of being alleviated by a drop of water or a morsel of bread. Hence proceed from those miserable captives, tears, groans, lamentations, howlings and despair; but all in vain, they will never obtain the smallest consolation under their torments, or the least mitigation of their pains. O hell, hell! shall we wait until we are buried in thy

flames to believe thee and to fear thee? And yet this is the conduct of thoughtless and unrepenting sinners. O thou who art reading this, what is thy state? wert thou to die this moment, whither wouldst thou go? Ah! thou couldst not endure the smart of a spark of fire falling upon thy hand, and hast thou the assurance to expose thyself to the hazard of burning in a pool of fire, in desolation and despair for all eternity?

II. Consider the punishments that will be inflicted in hell on all the powers of the soul. The memory will be for ever tormented with the recollection of sin, and remorse of conscience; this gnawing worm will continually remind thee that thou hast damned thyself for some miserable pleasure or interest. O God! what will the soul think of past pleasures, after hundreds, thousands, and millions of years spent in hell? This gnawing worm will call to her recollection the time which God had given her for repentance, the means of salvation wherewith he had furnished her, the good example which he had set before her, and the resolutions which she had formed, but would never execute. The soul will, more

over, see that her present state is irremediable. O God, O God! how terrible is hell. The will, also, shall be eternally contradicted; it will never obtain what it wishes, and will always meet with what it would gladly avoid. The understanding will discover the greatness of the good which it has lost in losing heaven and God. O God! O God! pardon me, for the love of Jesus Christ.

III. Sinner, thou, who at present makest small account of losing God, wilt discover thy misfortune, when thou shalt see the elect triumph and exult with joy on their entrance into heaven, and thyself banished, like an unclean animal, from that blessed country, deprived for ever of seeing the face of an infinitely amiable God, and separated from the company of Mary, of the angels and saints. Then, in fury and despair, thou wilt exclaim: O paradise of delights: O God of infinite goodness! thou art not, and never will be mine. Repent, then, change thy life; do not wait till the time of repentance is at an end. Give thyself to God? begin truly to love him. Beg of Jesus and Mary to have pity on thee.

MEDITATION FOR SATURDAY.

On the eternity of the pains of Hell.

I. CONSIDER that the torments of hell will never terminate. The damned suffer in every way, and they suffer eternally. A hundred years of suffering will pass away, a thousand will pass away, and hell will be still only at its commencement. A hundred thousand and a thousand million of years and ages will go over, and hell will still begin anew. Were an angel to be sent to one of the damned, informing him that, after as many million of ages are expired as there are drops of water in the sea, leaves upon the trees, and grains of sand on the sea or upon the earth, he should be delivered from hell, this news would fill him with inconceivable joy. For although he would be compelled to suffer for an innumerable multitude of ages, still he would be able to say : the time will come when my sufferings will end. But alas ! as many ages will really expire, and hell will be only at its commencement. Nay, this number of ages may be multiplied as many times as there are grains of sand on the earth, drops of water in the ocean, and leaves on the trees, and, at the close of this immense

period, hell will begin again. There is no a wretch in that abode of torments, that would not willingly make this proposition to the Almighty : increase, O Lord, as much as thou pleasest, my torments, prolong the duration of them to any extent thou pleasest, provided they may terminate. But no : this termination will never be granted. It would be an alleviation, if the unfortunate sufferer could flatter himself with the hope, that perhaps the Lord would one day have compassion on him and deliver him from hell. But alas ! he will always carry the sentence of his eternal reprobation before his eyes, and will see that all these pains, this fire, this despair, these lamentations, will never cease, will never end. O hell ! O eternity ! how can men believe in you and yet continue in sin ?

II. Christian soul ! pay attention to these truths : remember that hell is for thee, if thou live in sin. This horrible furnace is already enkindled under thy feet, and numbers throughout the world, whilst thou art reading this are falling into it. Reflect, that if the same misfortune ever befall thee, it will be irreparable, if ever, then, thou deservedst hell, thank

God with all thy heart for his mercy in having spared thee. Weep over thy sins; employ every possible means of securing thy salvation; approach frequently to the sacraments; read daily some pious book; entertain a sincere devotion to the blessed Virgin, recite every day the Rosary, and fast every Saturday in her honor; be firm and resolute in resisting the beginning of temptation, invoking frequently the holy names of Jesus and Mary; fly all occasions of sin; in short, use thy utmost endeavors to avoid eternal misery, remembering that there cannot be too great security, where eternity is at stake. Consider what numbers of men have hidden themselves in deserts, and shut themselves up in caverns, in order the more effectually to secure their eternal welfare. And what art thou doing? Oh! give thyself sincerely to God, and say to him from thy heart: Lord, behold I am now thy servant: ready and willing to do whatever thou commandest me. Mary, assist me.

ON THE MASS.

It is certain that man cannot perform an action more holy or more exalted than the celebration of the holy Mass. "*Nullum aliud opus,*" says the Council of Trent, "*adeo sanctum ac divinum a Christi fidelibus tractari posse quam hoc ipsum tremendum mysterium.*" Sess. 22, decr. de observ. in cel., &c. God himself could not enable man to perform a more sublime action than the celebration of the Mass.

All the ancient sacrifices, with which God was so much honored, were but a shadow and a figure of the sacrifice of the altar. All the honor which the angels, by their adorations, or men, by their works, their penances, and martyrdoms, have ever given or shall give to God, have not given, and cannot give so much glory to the Lord as the celebration of a single Mass; for, all the honors of creatures are finite, but from the sacrifice of the altar God receives an infinite honor, because the victim offered is of infinite value. The Mass, then is an action which gives to God the greatest honor that can be given to him: it is a work which beats down most effectually the powers

of hell, which affords the greatest relief to the souls in purgatory, which appeases most efficaciously the anger of God against sinners, and which brings to men on earth the greatest benefits.

Jesus Christ has promised that we shall receive whatsoever we ask the Father in his name. "If you ask the Father any thing in my name, he will give it you." John xv. 23. How much more confidently should we hope to obtain the objects of our prayers, when we offer to the Father, Jesus Christ himself? Our loving Redeemer is constantly interceding for us in heaven. "Who also maketh intercession for us." Rom. viii. 34. But he performs, in a special manner, the office of our advocate during the Mass, in which he offers himself to the Father by the hands of the priest, to obtain for us the gifts of divine grace. If we knew that all the saints, along with the divine Mother, united in praying for us, how great should be our confidence? But, it is certain, that a single prayer of Jesus Christ is infinitely more powerful than all the prayers of the saints. Oh! how great would be the misery of poor sinners, if they had not this sacrifice to appease

the anger of God! “*Hujus quippe oblatione,*” says the Council of Trent, “*placatus Dominus, gratiam et donum pœnitentiæ concedens, crimina et peccata etiam ingentia dimittit.*” In a word, as the passion of Jesus Christ was sufficient for the redemption of the whole world, so, a single Mass is sufficient for the salvation of all men. What does the priest say in the oblation of the chalice? “*Offerimus tibi Domine calicem salutaris.....pro nostro et totius mundi salute.*” “We offer to thee, O Lord, the chalice of salvation.....for our own salvation, and for the salvation of the whole world.”

The Mass is, according to the prediction of the prophet, “the good and the beautiful thing” of the Church. “For what is the good thing of him, and what is his beautiful thing, but the corn of the elect, and wine springing forth virgins?” Zac. ix. 17. In the Mass, the incarnate Word is offered in sacrifice to his eternal Father, and is given to us in the sacrament of the Eucharist, which, as the angelic doctor teaches, is, as it were, the end and object of all the sacraments. “Almost all the sacraments are consummated in the Eucharist.” Hence, St. Bonaventure says, that the Mass is

the work in which God places before our eyes all the love which he has borne us, and is a certain abridgment of all the favors he has bestowed upon us. "It is a memorial of all his love, and, as it were, a compendium of all his benefits." De Instit. part. 1, cap. 11. Hence, the devil has always endeavored to deprive the world of the Mass by means of the heretics, constituting them the precursors of antichrist, whose first efforts will be to abolish the holy sacrifice of the altar; and, in punishment of the sins of men, his efforts will, according to the prophet Daniel, be successful. "And strength was given him against the continual sacrifice because of sins." Dan. viii. 12. The same St. Bonaventure teaches, that in each Mass, God bestows on the world a benefit not inferior to that which he conferred by his incarnation. "In descending every day on the altar, God appears not to do less than when he assumed human nature." Loc. cit. Thus, as the doctors teach, if Jesus Christ had never been in the world, the priest, by pronouncing the form of consecration, would, according to St. Augustin, bring him there. "O venerable dignity of priests, in whose hands, as in the womb of

the virgin, the Son of God is made flesh." In Ps. xxvii.

Moreover, St. Thomas teaches, that since the sacrifice of the altar is nothing else than the renewal of the sacrifice of the cross, one Mass brings to men all the same goods and salvation which were produced by the sacrifice of the cross. "In every Mass," he says, "is found all the fruit which Christ produced, on the cross. Whatever is the effect of the passion of the Lord, is wrought by this sacrifice." In cap. vi. Isa. St. Chrysostom says, that "the celebration of Mass is of as much value as the death of Christ on the cross." Serm. 48, apud Disci. And of this we are still more strongly assured by the holy Church, in the collect of the Mass for the Sunday after Pentecost. "As often as the Commemoration of this Victim is renewed, so often is the work of redemption performed." And, as the Council of Trent has declared, the same Saviour who was offered for us on the cross, is immolated on the altar by the ministry of his priests. "*Una enim eademque est hostia, idem nunc offerens sacerdotum ministerio; qui seipsum tunc in cruce obtulit sola ratione offerendi diversa.*"

Sess. 22, c. 2. Hence, by the sacrifice of the altar is applied to us the sacrifice of the cross. The passion of Jesus Christ has made us capable of redemption: the Mass puts us in the possession and enjoyment of his merits.

METHOD OF ASSISTING AT THE HOLY MASS.

By Blessed Leonard a Porto Maurifio.

I KNOW not what your sentiments are regarding the august sacrifice of the holy Mass. You hear Mass every day; but do you understand the nature of that tremendous sacrifice? In the old law, oxen, lambs, and other animals, were offered to God; but, in the sacrifice of the Mass, we offer to him the true body and the true blood of Jesus Christ our Lord, along with his soul and divinity. We offer Jesus entirely, true God and true man; and we repeat the very same action which was once performed on Calvary, with this difference, that on Calvary the most precious blood of Jesus was really shed, but, on our altars, it is shed only in a mystical manner. Had you been present at the oblation of the great Victim offered on Cal-

vary, with what sentiments of reverence would you have beheld that sacred spectacle? how many tears of devotion would you have shed? Where then is your faith? Is not what was done on that mountain renewed on our altars? In the holy Mass the principal priest is Jesus Christ, who by his minister offers himself entirely to the most holy Trinity. But he is not the only priest; for all who assist at Mass, perform, in a certain manner, the office of priests, by uniting with the celebrant in offering the holy sacrifice. Hence, when the priest turns to the people, he says to them: "Pray, brethren, that mine and your sacrifice may be made acceptable to God." All, then, who assist at Mass, join with the priest in presenting to God the great oblation. Hence, as often as you hear Mass, you perform, in a certain manner, the office of a priest. Will you, then, ever again dare to hear Mass, sitting, chatting, or half asleep? or will you assist at it with a distracted mind, muttering some vocal prayers?

To hear henceforward the holy Mass with fruit, you must remember, that, as St. Thomas teaches, we owe four debts or obligations to God. The first is, to praise and honor his in-

finite majesty, which is worthy of infinite love and infinite praise. The second is, to make satisfaction to him for so many sins which we have committed. The third, to thank him for the great benefits he has bestowed upon us. The fourth is, to pray to him as the giver of all graces. The easiest and most profitable manner of hearing Mass is, to endeavor, during the holy sacrifice, to discharge these four obligations.

It is an infallible truth, that, in the holy Mass, our good Jesus, by an act of infinite debasement, adores for us, the most holy Trinity, and humbles himself for us before God; and that, since he is not only man, but also the true, omnipotent, and infinite God, he gives, by that humiliation, infinite homage to the most holy Trinity. Thus we, who unite with him in offering the great sacrifice, are enabled through him to give to God infinite homage and infinite honor. Yes, yes, by hearing Mass, we render to God infinite homage and infinite honor. Remember then, and remember it with amazement and astonishment, that as often as you hear Mass, you give more honor to God than he receives from all the

adorations of all the angels in heaven and of all the blessed spirits together. For, they are creatures, and therefore their homage is limited and finite; but, in the Mass, Jesus Christ humbles himself, and the merit and value of his humiliation is infinite, and, therefore, the homage and honor which we render to God, through him, is also infinite. O, how well then do we discharge our first debt to God, by hearing the holy Mass! Will you ever again say that it matters little whether you hear a Mass more or a Mass less? Oh horrible blindness!

The second debt which we owe to God is, to satisfy his justice for our sins. Oh, how immensely great is this debt! All the good works of all the just, of all the martyrs, and of all the saints, who have been, who are, or shall ever be, are not sufficient to satisfy the divine justice for a single mortal sin. But, by the holy sacrifice of the Mass, you can most fully atone for all the sins you have ever committed. And, to understand the extent of your obligations to Jesus Christ, consider, that though we offended him, he not only satisfied for us the divine justice on Calvary, but has

also given us, and continually gives us, the means of making full satisfaction to God in the holy sacrifice of the Mass; for, there, is renewed the oblation which Jesus made to his eternal Father on the cross for the sins of the world, and there, the same divine blood, which was shed for the redemption of the human race, is applied, and offered in a special manner for the sins of those who assist at the tremendous sacrifice.

You will then, perhaps, say, that since the Mass is of infinite value, it gives infinite satisfaction to God, and that, therefore, to discharge the enormous debts which we have contracted by so many grievous sins, it will be enough for us to hear a single Mass. The Mass, indeed, is of infinite value; but, as the holy Council of Trent teaches, God accepts it only in a finite manner, according to the dispositions of the person for whom it is offered or who assists at it. Since, then, we do not know the manner or measure in which God accepts the holy sacrifice, it will be always useful to hear many Masses, and also to perform many other satisfactory works. It is true that of all the good works you can perform, the principal,

the most efficacious, and the most satisfactory is the holy Mass; for, by this alone, you make more satisfaction to God, on account of the infinite dignity of the Victim, than all the martyrs have rendered to him by their blood, and all penitents, by their austerities. Arise, then, from your lethargy, and attend to this great truth:—The more Masses you hear, the sooner you shall satisfy the divine justice for the great many grievous sins you have committed.

The third obligation is a debt of gratitude to God for the immense benefits which he has bestowed upon us. Bring together before your mind all the gifts and graces which you have received from God; so many supernatural favors, your body and soul, your senses, powers, and health. But, above all, reflect on the life of Jesus his son, and the death which he suffered for our redemption. These increase, beyond measure, the debt we owe to God. How shall we be ever able sufficiently to thank him? It is by offering to him this great sacrifice of the Mass, which is called the eucharistic sacrifice, or a sacrifice of thanksgiving. By this alone we give to God, as it were, the equivalent of all that he has given or can ever

give to us, and we thank him most abundantly for all the benefits we have ever received from him. O blessed Mass! O blessed Mass!

By the holy Mass we can also discharge our fourth obligation to God, which is to supplicate, and ask for new graces. You are already convinced of the great miseries of your soul and body, and consequently of the necessity of having recourse to God for continual aid and succor; for he alone is the author and source of all our good, temporal as well as eternal. How can you dare to ask him for new favors, when you reflect on the extreme ingratitude with which you have corresponded with his gifts, and have even turned his graces against him? But, have courage and confidence; for if you are unworthy of new favors, your good Jesus has merited them for you. He offers himself in the Mass as a *pacific Victim*, or as an impetratory sacrifice, to obtain for us from the Father all the graces we stand in need of. Yes, yes, our dear and beloved Jesus, as our high priest, recommends our cause to his Father, he prays for us, and becomes our advocate. If we knew that the great Virgin united with us in begging of the

eternal Father the graces we require, with what confidence should we expect to be heard? How great then, ought to be our confidence and our hopes, when we are assured that, in the Mass, Jesus himself prays for us, that he offers for us to the eternal Father his most precious blood, and that he pleads in our behalf. O blessed Mass, which is the source of all our good! In what blindness have you hitherto lived? how many masses have you hitherto neglected? how many treasures of temporal and spiritual graces have you lost? Shake off your sloth, and resolve henceforth to hear as many masses as possible, and to assist at them with fervor. Behold a practical method of hearing Mass devoutly.

To pay the four debts which you owe to God, imagine that you are the debtor in the gospel who owed the ten thousand talents, and that you hear the divine justice demanding payment. Ask the Lord to have patience with you, and to allow you sufficient time to hear Mass; tell him that, in the Mass, Jesus will enable you to make full satisfaction to his justice. Then divide the Mass into four parts.

In the first part, which will be from the be-

ginning to the Gospel, humble yourself with Jesus, and, sinking into the abyss of your own nothingness, confess sincerely that you are a most miserable nothing before the majesty of God; and thus humbled interiorly, and also with a composed and modest exterior, say :

“Ah my God! I adore thee, I acknowledge thee for my Lord, and the Master of my soul. I protest that all I am and have are thy gifts. And, because thy majesty merits infinite honor and homage, I, who am a poor miserable creature, utterly incapable of paying the great debt which I owe to thee, offer to thee the humiliations and homage which Jesus presents to thee on the altar; what Jesus does, I also intend to do. I humble and prostrate myself with him before thy majesty. I adore thee with the same humiliations which Jesus offers to thee. I am filled with joy and delight in reflecting that Jesus gives thee, for me, infinite honor and homage.”

Répeat many internal acts of this kind; you need not adhere to the words, it is better to use the language which your own devotion will dictate. Oh, how fully will you pay your

first debt, by assisting at the first part of the Mass in this manner.

In the second part, which will be from the Gospel to the Elevation, you shall discharge your second obligation. Reflecting for a moment on the enormity of your sins, and on the immense debt which you have contracted by them towards the divine justice, say, with an humble heart :

“Behold, my God, the traitor who has so often rebelled against thee. Ah, with a sorrowful heart, and with all the affections of my soul, I abhor and detest my most grievous sins, and I offer for them the same satisfaction which Jesus presents to thee on the altar. I offer to thee all the merits of Jesus, the blood of Jesus, Jesus entirely, God and man, who is here immolated again for me. And, since my Jesus himself is, on this altar, my mediator and my advocate, and since, with his most precious blood, he implores pardon for me, I unite with the cry of his blood, and supplicate mercy for all my sins. The blood of Jesus cries for mercy ; and my sorrowful heart also implores mercy. Ah, my dear God, if my tears do not move thee, let at least the groans of my Jesus

excite thy pity. Why should he not obtain for me that mercy which he obtained for the whole human race upon the cross? Yes, I hope that for the sake of that most precious blood, thou wilt pardon all my most grievous sins, which I will continue to bewail till my last breath."

Repeat many such acts of true contrition, and rest assured that you shall thus most fully discharge all the debts which you have contracted by so many grievous sins.

In the third part, from the Elevation to the Communion, reflecting on the great and important benefits received from God, you shall, in return for them, offer to him a gift of infinite value, that is, the body and blood of Christ. Invite all the angels and saints to thank God, in the following, or in some similar manner:

"Behold me, O my most loving God, loaded with the general and particular benefits which thou hast bestowed, and wilt bestow upon me, in time and eternity. I know that thy mercies to me have been, and are infinite. But I am ready to pay thee for all, even to the last farthing. Behold the tribute of my grati-

tude, the payment which I offer for all thy goodness, is this divine blood, this most precious body, this innocent victim, which I present to thee by the hands of the priest. I am certain that this oblation is sufficient to pay for all the gifts thou hast conferred upon me ; this gift of infinite value is an equivalent for all the favors I have ever received, or now receive from thee. Ah, ye holy angels, and all ye blessed spirits, help me to thank my God ; and, in thanksgiving for his great benefits, offer to him not only this Mass, but also all the masses that are now celebrated throughout the whole world, that his loving goodness may be fully recompensed for all the graces which he has bestowed, and is to bestow upon me now and for eternity. Amen."

Oh, how pleasing to our good God will be such an affectionate thanksgiving ! What satisfaction will be afforded to him by this sole oblation, which, because of its infinite value, has greater efficacy than all other offerings.

In the fourth part, from the Communion to the end of Mass, ask with great confidence the divine graces, knowing that during that time Jesus is united with you, and prays and sup-

plicates for you. Dilate your heart, then, and ask not things of little value, but great graces; for great indeed is the oblation of the divine Son, which you present to the Father. Say to him, with an humble heart:

“My dear God, I acknowledge that I am utterly unworthy of thy favors; I confess my infinite unworthiness, and that, for my manifold and grievous sins, I do not deserve to be heard. But how canst thou refuse to hear thy divine Son, who, on this altar, prays for me, and offers for me his blood and his life? Ah, my most loving God, hear the prayers of this my great advocate, and, for his sake, grant me all the graces which thou knowest to be necessary to secure the great affair of my eternal salvation. I am now encouraged to ask of thee a general pardon of all my sins, and the gift of final perseverance. Trusting in the prayers of my Jesus, I ask of thee, O my God, all virtues in an heroic degree, and all the efficacious helps necessary to make me truly a saint. I ask of thee the conversion of all sinners, and particularly of those who are related to me. I ask for my sisters in religion a great spirit of devotion; make all of them saints, that this

convent may be a true paradise of delights to thee, and a true school of virtue to us all. Amen."

Pray, pray for yourself, and for the monastery; pray with great confidence, and be assured that your prayers, united with the prayers of Jesus, shall be heard.

But pray particularly for sorrow for your sins, for the gift of perseverance and of divine love; and recommend to God, in a special manner, your relatives, sinners, and the souls in purgatory.

DEVOUT EXERCISE FOR THE NINE DAYS
PRECEDING ALL SOULS'-DAY, FOR THE
REPOSE OF THE HOLY SOULS IN PUR-
GATORY.

BY ST. ALPHONSUS M. LIGUORI.

Advantages of this Devotion.

THE practice of recommending to God the souls in Purgatory, that he may mitigate the great pains which they suffer, and that he may soon bring them to his glory, is most pleasing to the Lord, and most profitable to us. For, these blessed souls are his eternal spouses, and they are most grateful to those who obtain

their deliverance from prison, or even a mitigation of their torments. Hence, when they shall enter into heaven, they will certainly not forget those who prayed for them. It is a pious belief that God manifests to them our prayers for them, that they also may pray for us. It is true that these blessed souls are not in a state to pray for themselves, because they are, as it were, criminals atoning for their faults. However, because they are very dear to God, they can pray for us, and obtain for us the divine graces. St. Catharine, of Bologna, when she wished to obtain any grace, had recourse to the souls in purgatory, and her prayers were immediately heard: she declared that by praying to those holy souls, she obtained many favors, which she had sought through the intercession of the saints, but had not obtained. The graces which devout persons are said to have received through these holy souls are innumerable.

But if we wish for the aid of their prayers, it is just, it is even a duty to relieve them by our suffrages. I have said that *it is even a duty*: for Christian charity commands us to relieve our neighbors who stand in need of our

assistance. But who among all our neighbors have so great need of our succor, as these holy prisoners? They are continually in that fire which torments more severely than any earthly fire. They are deprived of the sight of God, a torment far more excruciating than all other pains. Let us reflect that among these suffering souls, are parents or brothers, or relatives and friends who expect our succor. Let us moreover remember that these holy queens being in the condition of debtors for their sins, cannot assist themselves. This thought should impel us to relieve them according to the best of our ability. And, by assisting them, we shall not only give great pleasure to God, but shall also acquire great merit for ourselves. And in return for our suffrages, these blessed souls will not neglect to obtain for us many graces from God, but particularly the grace of eternal life. I hold for certain, that a soul delivered from purgatory by the suffrages of a Christian, will, when she enters paradise, not fail to say to God: "Lord, do not suffer to be lost the person who has liberated me from the prison of purgatory, and has brought me to the enjoyment of thy

glory sooner than I deserved." I publish the following novena, that all the faithful may, by masses, by alms, or at least by their prayers, endeavor to relieve and liberate from purgatory these blessed souls.

Considerations and Prayers to be read for the People on every day of the Novena.

Let us recommend to Jesus Christ and to his holy mother, all the souls in purgatory, but especially those of our relatives, benefactors, friends, and enemies, and still more particularly the souls of those for whom we are bound to pray: and let us consider the great pains which these holy spouses of Jesus Christ endure, and offer to God for their relief the following prayers.

Manifold are the pains which these blessed souls suffer; but the greatest arises from the reflection that by their sins they themselves have been the cause of the torments which they endure.

O Jesus, my Saviour, I have so often merited hell: if I were now among the damned, how great would be the pain which I should feel in thinking that I was the cause of my

own damnation? I thank thee for the patience with which thou hast borne me. My God, because thou art infinite goodness, I love thee above all things, and I am sorry from my heart for having offended thee. I promise thee rather to die than ever offend thee more. Have pity on me, and have pity also on those blessed souls who burn in that fire. Mary, mother of God, succor them by thy powerful prayers.

Let us here say a *Pater* and *Ave* for these souls. Then all the people shall say the following prayer: "O Jesus, for mercy's sake console these souls, these spouses whom thou lovest so tenderly, and who are so severely tormented."

2. Another pain which greatly torments these blessed souls arises from the remembrance of the time which they lost, and in which they could have merited so much glory in paradise, and from the conviction that this loss is now irreparable. For, after death, the time of merit is at an end. Ah, unhappy me, who have lived so long, and have acquired merits only for hell! I thank thee O Lord, for having given me time to repair the evil

which I have done. I am sorry for having offended so good a God. Help me to spend the remainder of my life in loving and serving thee. Have pity on me, and have pity also on those holy souls who burn in that fire. O Mary, mother of God, succor them by thy powerful prayers.

Pater. Ave. O Jesus, for mercy's sake, &c., as above.

3. Another pain which tortures these blessed souls is the frightful appearance of the sins for which they are suffering. In this life, the deformity of sin is not understood, but, in the next, it is fully comprehended. This is one of the severest torments of the souls in purgatory.

O my God, because thou art infinite goodness, I love thee above all things, and I am sorry, from the bottom of my heart for having offended thee, I promise thee, to die rather than ever offend thee more. Give me holy perseverance; have pity on me, and have pity also on those holy souls who burn in that fire. O mother of God, assist them by thy powerful prayers.

Pater. Ave. O Jesus, for mercy's sake, &c.

4. The pain which still more afflicts these

holy souls, the spouses of Jesus, is the thought of having, during life, displeased by their sins that God whom they so ardently love. Some penitents have felt so much pain and sorrow in thinking of having, by their sins, offended so good a God, that they died by grief. The souls in purgatory understand far better than we do, the claims which God has to our love: they love him with all their strength. Hence, at the thought of having offended him during life they experience pain which surpasses all other pain.

O my God, because thou art infinite goodness, I am sorry, with my whole heart, for having offended thee. I promise to die rather than ever offend thee more. Give me holy perseverance: have pity on me, and have pity on all those holy souls who burn in that fire, and love thee with all their hearts. O Mary, mother of God, assist them by thy powerful prayers.

Pater. Ave. O Jesus, for mercy's sake, &c.

5. Another great torment of these blessed souls arises from not knowing when their pains shall cease, or how long they shall remain in that fire. They feel certain that they

shall be one day liberated; but the uncertainty of the duration of their sufferings, torments them severely.

Unhappy me! O Lord, if thou hadst sent me to hell I should be certain of never leaving that prison of torture. I love thee above all things, O infinite goodness, and I am sorry, with my whole heart, for having offended thee. Give me holy perseverance; have pity on me, and have pity also on those holy souls who burn in that fire. O Mary, mother of God, assist them by thy powerful prayers.

Pater. Ave. O Jesus, for mercy's sake, &c.

6. These blessed souls are indeed consoled by the remembrance of the passion of Jesus Christ, and of the holy sacrament of the altar; because through the communions of the faithful, and the masses celebrated throughout the Church, they have received and receive so many graces. But they are tormented by the thought of having been ungrateful during life for these two great benefits of the love of Jesus Christ.

O my God, thou hast died also for me, and hast given thyself so often to me in the holy communion. And I have always repaid thee

with ingratitude! But, now I love thee above all things, O my sovereign good, and I am sorry, with my whole heart, for having offended thee. I promise to die rather than ever offend thee more. Give me holy perseverance: have pity on me, and have pity also on all those holy souls who burn in that fire. O Mary, mother of God, assist them by thy powerful prayers.

Pater. Ave. O Jesus, for mercy's sake, &c.

7. The pains of these blessed souls are increased by all the particular favors which they received from God, such as to have been made Christians, to have been born in a Catholic country, to have been allowed time for repentance, and to have obtained the pardon of their sins. All these favors make them feel more sensibly their past ingratitude to God.

But who, O Lord, more ungrateful than I have been? Thou hast waited for me with so much patience, thou hast often pardoned me with so much love, and I, after so many promises, have again offended thee! Ah, do not send me to hell. I am sorry, O infinite goodness for having offended thee: I promise to die, rather than ever offend thee more. Give

me noly perseverance. Have mercy on me, and have mercy also on those holy souls who burn in that fire. O Mary, mother of God, assist them by thy powerful prayers.

Pater. Ave. O Jesus, for mercy's sake, &c.

8. Another very severe torment of these blessed souls is caused by the thought that, during life God showed to them so many special mercies not shown others, and that, after they had by their sins compeiled him to hate them, and to condemn them to hell, he, through his pure mercy, had pardoned and saved them. Behold, O my God, I am one of those ungrateful souls who, after having received from thee such great favors, have despised thy love, and have forced thee to condemn me to hell. O infinite goodness, I now love thee above all things, and I am sorry, with my whole heart, for having offended thee. I promise thee to die rather than ever offend thee more. Give me holy perseverance; have mercy on me, and have mercy also on those holy souls who burn in that fire. O Mary, mother of God, assist them by thy powerful prayers.

Pater. Ave. O Jesus, for mercy's sake, &c.

9. Great, indeed, are all the pains of these

blessed souls: the fire, the tediousness, the darkness, the uncertainty of the time of their deliverance from that prison: but, of all the pains endured by those holy spouses, the greatest is caused by their being at a distance from their spouse, and by the privation of the sight of him.

O my God, how have I been able to live so many years at a distance from thee and bereft of thy grace? O infinite goodness, I love thee above all things, and I am sorry, with my whole heart for having offended thee. Give me holy perseverance, and do not permit me ever again to see myself thy enemy. Have mercy, I entreat thee, on these blessed souls; alleviate their pains, and abridge the time of their exile, by calling them soon to love thee face to face in paradise. O Mary, mother of God, assist them by thy powerful prayers: pray also for us, who are still in danger of being lost for ever.

Pater. Ave. O Jesus, for mercy's sake, &c.

PRAYERS TO JESUS CHRIST,

For these Souls, through the pains which he suffered during his passion.

O most sweet Jesus, through the bloody sweat which thou didst suffer in the garden of Gethsemani, have mercy on these blessed souls.

The People shall answer:

Have mercy on them, O Lord, have mercy on them.

O most sweet Jesus, through the pains which thou didst suffer during thy most cruel scourging, have mercy on them.

R. Have mercy on them, &c.

O most sweet Jesus, through the pains which thou didst suffer in thy most painful crowning with thorns, have mercy on them.

R. Have mercy on them, &c.

O most sweet Jesus, through the pains which thou didst suffer in carrying thy cross to Calvary, have mercy on them.

R. Have mercy on them, &c.

O most sweet Jesus, through the pains which thou didst suffer during thy most cruel crucifixion, have mercy on them, &c.

R. Have mercy on them, &c.

O most sweet Jesus, through the pains which thou didst suffer in thy most bitter agony on the cross, have mercy on them.

R. Have mercy on them, &c.

O most sweet Jesus, through that immense pain which thou didst suffer in breathing forth thy blessed soul, have mercy on them.

R. Have mercy on them, &c.

Let us recommend ourselves to the souls in purgatory, and say :

Blessed souls, we have prayed for you: we entreat you, who are so dear to God, and who are secure of never losing him, to pray for us miserable sinners, who are in danger of being damned, and of losing God for ever.

Let us Pray.

O God, the author of mercy, the lover of the salvation of mankind; we address thy clemency, in behalf of our brethren, relations, and benefactors, who are departed this life, that by the intercession of blessed Mary, ever a virgin, and of all the saints, thou wouldst receive them into the enjoyment of eternal happiness; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

ADMONITIONS NECESSARY FOR PERSONS
OF EVERY STATE OF LIFE, WHO WISH
TO SAVE THEIR SOULS.

BY ST. ALPHONSUS M. LIGUORI.

GOD wishes the salvation of all. "Who will have all men to be saved." Tim. ii. 4 And he wishes to give to all, the help necessary for their salvation; but, according to St. Augustin, he gives it only to those who ask it from him. "*Non dat nisi petentibus.*" In. Ps. c. Hence, it is the common opinion of theologians and of the holy Fathers, that, for adults, prayer is necessary as a *means* of salvation; that is, that he who does not pray, or neglects to ask of God the helps necessary to conquer temptations, and to preserve the grace received, cannot be saved.

On the other hand, the Lord cannot refuse to grant his graces to those who ask them from him; for he has promised to hear all who call upon him. "Cry to me, and I will hear thee." Jer. xxxiii. 3. "You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you." John xv. 7. "Ask and it shall be given you." Mat. vii. 7. These promises are not to be un

derstood of temporal goods; for God gives temporal blessings only when they are profitable to the soul. But, he has promised spiritual graces absolutely to all who ask them; and, having promised them to us, he is bound to give them, if we pray for them. "By promising," says St. Augustin, "God has made himself a debtor." De verb. Dom. ser. 2.

It is necessary, then, to know that God has promised to hear our prayers, and that we are commanded, under pain of mortal sin, to pray. "Ask, and it shall be given you." Matt. vii 7. "We ought always to pray." Luc. xviii. 1. These words, "ask," "we ought to pray," as St. Thomas teaches, imply a grievous precept, which obliges us, during our whole lives, but particularly when we are in danger of death, or of falling into mortal sin; for, unless we have recourse to God on these occasions, we shall be certainly conquered. And they who find that they have fallen into mortal sin, are guilty of a new sin, if they neglect to ask of God help to rise from their miserable condition. But you will ask, how can God hear those whom he knows to be his enemies? God hears sinners who pray for pardon with an

humble heart: for it is written in the gospel, that "every one that asketh, receiveth." Luc. xi. 10. The words "every one" include all, whether just or unjust: by these words, God has promised to hear all who pray to him, whether they are saints or sinners. In another place, God says: "Call upon me.....and I will deliver thee." Ps. xlix. 15. Call upon me, and I will deliver thee from hell, to which thou hast been condemned.

On the day of judgment there shall be no excuse for those who die in sin. It will be useless for them to say that they had not strength to resist the temptations by which they were molested; for Jesus Christ shall answer: If you had not strength, why did you not ask it? if you had prayed for it, I should certainly have given it to you. And if you had already fallen into sin, why did you not come to me, and I would have freed you from it?

If, dear reader, you wish to be saved, and to preserve your soul in the grace of God, you must frequently beg of him to keep his hand over you. The Council of Trent has declared (sess. 6, c. 13, can. 22,) that, to persevere in the grace of God, the common help which he

gives to all, is not sufficient, but that a special grace, which is obtained only by prayer, is necessary. Hence, all theologians teach that every one is bound under pain of mortal sin, to recommend himself often to God, by asking of him holy perseverance, at least once in the month. And they who are exposed to many dangerous occasions are bound to pray more frequently for the grace of perseverance.

To obtain this grace, it is very useful to cherish a particular devotion to the mother of God, who is called the mother of perseverance. They who have not this special devotion shall scarcely obtain the gift of perseverance. For St. Bernard says that all graces, and particularly the gift of perseverance, which is the greatest of all, come to us through the hands of Mary.

O would to God that preachers were more careful to inculcate to their hearers, the necessity of this great means of prayer. Although it is the duty of preachers to preach frequently on prayer, and in almost all their instructions to exhort the faithful to the practise of it, there are some who, in the whole course of Lenten sermons, scarcely ever speak of prayer, except

perhaps once or twice in a passing way. They who are guilty of such neglect of duty, shall have to render a great account to God. There are also many confessors who attend only to the purpose of their penitents never more to offend God, but take very little trouble to exhort them to have recourse to God by prayer whenever they shall be tempted to sin again. Confessors should be persuaded that when a penitent is strongly tempted, all his purposes and resolutions will be of little use unless he ask of God help to resist the temptation : prayer alone can save him. It is certain that they who pray are saved, and that they who do not pray are damned.

Hence, my dear reader, I say again, if you wish to save your soul, pray continually to the Lord to give you light and strength not to fall into sin. In asking this grace, it is necessary to be importunate with God. St. Jerom says that "such importunity with the Lord is seasonable." Do not omit to entreat him every morning to preserve you from sin during the day. And when any bad thought or dangerous occasion occurs to you, do not pay a moment's attention to the temptation, but turn instantly

to Jesus Christ and to the holy Virgin, and say: "My Jesus, assist me; most holy Mary, pray for me." To banish the temptation, it will then be sufficient to pronounce the names of Jesus and Mary; but should it continue, be careful to continue to call on Jesus and Mary for aid, and you shall never be conquered.

THE END.