

VISITS
TO THE
MOST HOLY SACRAMENT
BY
ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI.

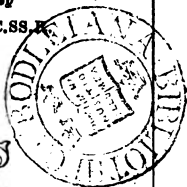


THOU ART A PRIEST FOR EVER, ACCORDING
TO THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDECH.

VISITS
TO
THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT
AND
THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

By ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI.

A new Translation, edited by
THE REV. R. A. COFFIN, C.S.S.



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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE present small edition of the *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament* has been prepared with a view to meet the wishes of those who have expressed a desire to have the new translation of them in a more portable form.

A selection from the other Devotions to the Blessed Sacrament, as also the Preparation and Thanksgiving for Holy Communion, have been added, in order to make the volume as complete as possible for the purpose for which it is intended.

R. A. COFFIN, C.S.S.R.

*Bishop Eton, near Liverpool,
June 12, 1855.*

TO MARY,
THE EVER-IMMACULATE VIRGIN MOTHER
OF GOD.

MY most holy Queen,—On the point of publishing the present little work, in which I treat of the love of thy Son, I know not to whom I can better dedicate it than to thee, my most beloved Mother, who, amongst all creatures, art His most tender lover. I believe that by this little offering which I present to thee, and which is composed for the sole purpose of inflaming souls more and more with the love of Jesus Christ,—I believe, I say, that by it I shall greatly please thee, who desirest to see Him loved by all as He deserves. To thee, then, I consecrate it, such as it is ; do thou graciously accept and protect it ; not indeed that I may receive the praises of men, but that all who read it may for the future correspond, by

their greater devotion and affection, with the tender and excessive love which our most sweet Saviour has been pleased to show us in His Passion, and in the institution of the Most Holy Sacrament. As such, I place it at thy feet, and beseech thee to accept the gift as wholly thine, as also the giver, who has long since placed all his hopes in thee, and wishes and hopes always to call himself, and to rejoice in being,

Most gracious Lady,

Thy most loving, though most unworthy servant,

ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI,

Of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

INTRODUCTION.

FOR THE VISIT TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

OUR holy faith teaches us, and we are bound to believe, that in the consecrated Host, Jesus Christ is really present under the species of bread. But we must also understand that He is thus present on our altars as on a throne of love and mercy, to dispense graces, and there to show us the love which He bears us, by being pleased to dwell night and day hidden in the midst of us. It is well known that the Holy Church instituted the Festival of Corpus Christi with a solemn octave, and that she celebrates it with the many usual processions, and such frequent expositions of this Most Holy Sacrament, that men may thereby be moved gratefully to acknowledge and honour this loving presence and dwelling of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar, by their devotions, thanksgivings, and the tender affections of their souls. O God! how many insults and outrages has not this

amiable Redeemer had, and has He not daily, to endure in this Sacrament on the part of those very men for whose love He remains upon their altars on earth ! Of this He indeed complained to His dear servant Sister Margaret Alacoque, as the author of the *Book of Devotion to the Heart of Jesus* relates. One day, as she was in prayer before the Most Holy Sacrament, Jesus showed her His Heart on a throne of flames, crowned with thorns, and surmounted by a cross, and thus addressed her : " Behold that Heart, which has loved men so much, and which has spared Itself nothing ; and has even gone so far as to consume Itself, thereby to show them Its love ; but in return the greater part of men only show Me ingratitude, and this by the irreverences, tepidity, sacrileges, and contempt which they offer Me in this Sacrament of Love ; and that which I feel the most acutely is, that they are hearts consecrated to Me." Jesus then expressed His wish, that the first Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi should be dedicated as a particular festival in honour of His adorable Heart ; and that on that day all souls who loved Him should endeavour, by their homage, and by the af-

fections of their souls, to make amends for the insults which men have offered Him in this Sacrament of the Altar ; and at the same time He promised abundant graces to all who should thus honour Him.

We can thus understand what our Lord said of old by His prophet, that His delight is to be with the children of men ; since He is unable to tear Himself from them even when they abandon and despise Him. This also shows us how agreeable all those souls are to the Heart of Jesus who frequently visit Him, and remain in His company in the churches in which He is, under the sacramental species. He desired St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi to visit Him in the Most Blessed Sacrament thirty-three times a day ; and this beloved Spouse of His faithfully obeyed Him, and in all her visits to the altar approached it as near as she possibly could, as we read in her life. But let all those devout souls who often go and spend their time with the Most Blessed Sacrament speak ;—let them tell us the gifts, the inspirations which they have received, the flames of love which are there enkindled in their souls, the paradise which they enjoy in the presence of this hidden God. The

servant of God and great Sicilian missionary-father, Louis La Nusa, was, even in his youth and as a layman, so enamoured of Jesus Christ, that he seemed unable to tear himself from the presence of his beloved Lord ; and such were the joys which he there experienced, that his director, having commanded him, in virtue of obedience, not to remain there for more than an hour ; when that time had elapsed, he showed in obeying (says the author of his life), that in tearing himself from the bosom of Jesus Christ, he had to do himself just such violence as a child which has to detach itself from its mother's breast in the very moment in which it is satiating itself with the utmost avidity ; and when he had to do this, we are told that he remained standing with his eyes cast on the altar, making repeated inclinations, as if he knew not how to quit his Lord, whose presence was so sweet and gracious to him. St. Aloysius was also forbidden to remain in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament ; and as he used to pass before it, finding himself drawn, so to say, by the sweet attractions of his Lord, and almost forced to remain there, he would, with the greatest effort, tear himself away,

saying, with an excess of tender love : *Depart from me, O Lord, depart !* There it was also that St. Francis Xavier found refreshment in the midst of his many labours in India ; for he employed his days in toiling for souls, and his nights in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament. St. John Francis Regis did the same thing ; and sometimes finding the church closed, he endeavoured to satisfy his longings by remaining on his knees outside the door, exposed to the rain and cold, that at least at a distance he might attend upon his Comforter concealed under the sacramental species. St. Francis of Assisi used to go and communicate all his labours and undertakings to Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament. But tender indeed was the devotion of St. Wenceslaus, duke of Bohemia, to the Most Holy Sacrament. This holy king was so enamoured of Jesus there present, that he not only gathered the wheat and grapes, and made the hosts and wine with his own hands, and then gave them to be used in the Holy Sacrifice, but moreover, he used, even during the winter, to go at night to visit the church in which the Blessed Sacrament was kept ; and these visits enkindled

in his beautiful soul such flames of Divine love, that their ardour imparted itself even to his body, and took from the snow on which he walked its wonted cold; for it is related, that the servant who accompanied him in these nightly excursions, having to walk through the snow, suffered much from the cold. The holy king, on perceiving it, was moved to compassion, and commanded him to follow him, and only to step in his footmarks: he did so, and never afterwards felt the cold.

In the visits you will read other examples of the tender affection with which souls inflamed with the love of God loved to dwell in the presence of the Most Holy Sacrament. But you will find that all the Saints were enamoured of this most sweet devotion; since, indeed, it is impossible to find on earth a more precious gem, or a treasure more worthy of all our love, than Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament. Certainly amongst all devotions, after that of receiving the Sacraments, that of adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament holds the first place, is the most pleasing to God, and the most useful to ourselves. Be not then loth, devout soul, now to begin; and forsaking

the conversation of men, dwell each day, from this time forward, for at least half or quarter of an hour, in some church, in the presence of Jesus Christ under the sacramental species. "Taste and see how sweet is the Lord." Only try this devotion, and by experience you will see the great benefit that you will derive from it. Be assured that the time you will thus spend with devotion before this Most Divine Sacrament will be the most profitable to you in life, and the source of your greatest consolation in death and in eternity. You must also be aware, that in a quarter of an hour's prayer spent in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, you will perhaps gain more than in all the other spiritual exercises of the day. It is true, that in every place God graciously hears the petitions of those who pray to Him, having promised to do so: "Ask, and you shall receive;" yet the disciple tells us that Jesus dispenses His graces in greater abundance to those who visit Him in the Most Holy Sacrament. Blessed Henry Suso used also to say, that Jesus Christ hears the prayers of the faithful more graciously in the Sacrament of the Altar than elsewhere. And where, indeed, did holy

souls make their most beautiful resolutions, but prostrate before the Most Holy Sacrament? Who knows but that you also may one day, in the presence of a tabernacle, make the resolution to give yourself entirely to God? In this little book I feel myself bound, at least out of gratitude to my Jesus in the Holy Sacrament, to declare, that through the means of this devotion of visiting the Most Blessed Sacrament, which I practised, though with so much tepidity and in so imperfect a manner, I abandoned the world, in which, for my misfortune, I lived until I was six-and-twenty years of age. Fortunate indeed will you be if you can detach yourself from it at an earlier period, and give yourself without reserve to that Lord who has given Himself without reserve to you. I repeat it, that indeed you will be blessed, not only in eternity, but even in this life. Believe me, all is folly : feasts, theatres, parties, excursions, —these are the pleasures of the world, but pleasures which are filled with the bitterness of gall and with sharp thorns. Believe me, who have experienced it, and now weep over it. Be also assured that Jesus Christ finds means to console a soul which remains with

a recollected spirit before the Most Blessed Sacrament, far beyond what the world can do with all its feasts and pastimes. Oh, how sweet a joy it is, to remain with faith and tender devotion before an altar, and converse familiarly with Jesus Christ, who is there for the express purpose of listening to and graciously hearing those who pray to Him ; to ask His pardon for the displeasures which we have caused Him ; to represent our wants to Him, as a friend does to a friend in whom he places all his confidence ; to ask Him for His graces, for His love, and for His kingdom ; but above all, oh, what a heaven is it there to remain making acts of love towards that Lord who is on the very altar praying to the Eternal Father for us, and is there burning with love for us ; since indeed that love it is which detains Him there, thus hidden and unknown, and when He is even despised by ungrateful souls ! But why should we say more ? “Taste and see.”

And now as to the visits to the Most Blessed Virgin, the opinion of St. Bernard is well known, and generally believed : it is, that God dispenses no graces otherwise

than through the hands of Mary: 'God wills that we should receive nothing which does not pass through Mary's hands.' Hence Father Suarez declares that it is now the sentiment of the universal Church, that 'the intercession of Mary is not only useful, but even necessary to obtain graces.' And we may remark that the Church gives us strong grounds for this belief, by applying the words of the Sacred Scripture to Mary, and making her say: "In me is all hope of life and of virtue. Come over to me, all ye that desire me" (Ecclus. xxiv. 25). Let all come to me; for I am the hope of all that you can desire. Hence she then adds: "Blessed is the man that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors" (Prov. viii. 34). Blessed is he who is diligent in coming every day to the door of my powerful intercession; for by finding me he will find life and eternal salvation: "He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord" (ibid. 35). Hence it is not without reason that the Holy Church wills that we should all call her our common hope, by saluting her saying, 'Hail, our hope!'

‘Let us then,’ says St. Bernard (who went so far as to call Mary ‘the whole ground of his hope’), ‘seek for graces, and seek them through Mary.’ Otherwise, says St. Antoninus, if we ask for graces without her intercession, we shall be making an effort to fly without wings, and we shall obtain nothing: ‘He who asks without her as his guide, attempts to fly without wings.’

In Father Auriemma’s little book, *Affetti Scambievoli*, we read of innumerable favours granted by the Mother of God to those who practised this most profitable devotion of often visiting her in her churches or before some image: we read of the graces which she granted in these visits to blessed Albert the Great, to the Abbot Rupert, to Father Suarez, especially when she obtained them the gift of understanding, by which they afterwards became so renowned throughout the Church for their great learning: the graces which she granted to the Venerable John Berchmans of the Society of Jesus, who was in the daily habit of visiting Mary in a chapel of the Roman college, and declared that he renounced all earthly love to love no other after God than the Most Blessed Virgin, and had written

at the foot of the image of his beloved Lady: 'I will never rest until I shall have obtained a tender love for my Mother:' the graces which she granted to St. Bernardine of Sienna, who in his youth also went every day to visit her in a chapel near the city-gate, and declared that that Lady had ravished his heart; hence he called her his beloved, and said that he could not do less than often visit her; and by her means he afterwards obtained the grace to renounce the world, and to become what he afterwards was, a great saint and the apostle of Italy.

Do you, then, be also careful always to join to your daily visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament a visit to the most holy Virgin Mary in some church, or at least before a devout image of her in your own house. If you do this with tender affection and confidence, you may hope to receive great things from this most gracious Lady, who, as St. Andrew of Crete says, always bestows great gifts on those who offer her even the least act of homage.

Mary, Queen of sweetest hope,
Who can e'er forget thee?
By thy mercy, by thy love,
Have pity, Queen, on me!

ON SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

As in all the following visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament a spiritual communion is recommended, it will be well to explain what it is, and the great advantages which result from its practice. A spiritual communion, according to St. Thomas, consists in an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, and in lovingly embracing Him as if we had actually received Him. How pleasing these spiritual communions are to God, and the many graces which He bestows through their means, was manifested by our Lord Himself to Sister Paula Maresca, the foundress of the convent of St. Catherine of Sienna in Naples, when (as it is related in her life) He showed her two precious vessels, the one of gold, the other of silver; He then told her that in the gold vessel He preserved her sacramental communions, and in the silver one her spiritual communions. He also told Blessed Jane of the Cross, that each time that she

communicated spiritually she received a grace of the same kind as the one which she received when she really communicated. Above all, it will suffice us to know that the holy Council of Trent greatly praises spiritual communions, and encourages the faithful to their practice.

Hence all devout souls are accustomed often to practise this holy exercise of spiritual communion. Blessed Agatha of the Cross did so two hundred times a day. And Father Peter Faber, the first companion of St. Ignatius, used to say that it was of the highest utility to make spiritual communions, in order to receive the sacramental communion well.

All those who desire to advance in the love of Jesus Christ are exhorted to make a spiritual communion at least once in every visit that they pay to the Most Blessed Sacrament, and at every Mass that they hear ; and it would even be better on these occasions to repeat the communions three times, that is to say, at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end. This devotion is far more profitable than some suppose, and at the same time nothing can be easier in practice. The above-named Blessed Jane of the

Cross used to say, that a spiritual communion can be made without any one remarking it, without being fasting, without the permission of our director, and that we can make it at any time we please: an act of love does all.

ACT FOR A SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

My Jesus, I believe that Thou art truly present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love Thee above all things, and I desire to possess Thee within my soul. Since I am unable now to receive Thee sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace Thee as being already there, and unite myself wholly to Thee; never permit me to be separated from Thee.

A SHORTER ACT.

I believe that Thou, O Jesus, art in the Most Holy Sacrament! I love Thee and desire Thee! Come into my heart. I embrace Thee; oh, never leave me!

‘May the burning and most sweet power of Thy love, O Lord Jesus Christ, I beseech Thee, absorb my mind, that I may die through love of Thy love, who wast gra-

ciously pleased to die through love of my love.'—*St. Francis of Assisi.*

'O Love who art not loved! O Love who art not known!'—*St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi.*

'O my Spouse, when wilt Thou ravish me in Thyself?'—*St. Peter of Alcantara.*

Jesus, my good, my sweetest love,
Strike and inflame this heart of mine,
Make it all fire for love of Thee!

Hail to the love of Jesus, our Life, and our All! Hail to Mary, our hope! Amen.

ACTS TO BE MADE BEFORE EACH VISIT TO
THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT.

My Lord Jesus Christ, who, for the love which Thou bearest to men, remainest night and day in this Sacrament full of compassion and of love, awaiting, calling, and welcoming all who come to visit Thee; I believe that Thou art present in the Sacrament of the Altar; I adore Thee from the abyss of my nothingness, and I thank Thee for all the graces which Thou hast bestowed upon me, and in particular for having given me Thyself in this Sacrament, for having given me Thy most holy Mother Mary for my ad-

vocate, and for having called me to visit Thee in this church. I now salute Thy most loving Heart ; and this for three ends : 1. in thanksgiving for this great gift ; 2. to make amends to Thee for all the outrages which Thou receivedst in this Sacrament from all Thine enemies ; 3. I intend by this visit to adore Thee in all the places on earth in which Thou art present in this Sacrament, and in which Thou art the least revered and the most abandoned. My Jesus, I love Thee with my whole heart. I grieve for having hitherto so many times offended Thy infinite goodness. I purpose by Thy grace never more to offend Thee for the time to come ; and now, miserable and unworthy though I be, I consecrate myself to Thee without reserve ; I give Thee and renounce my entire will, my affections, my desires, and all that I possess. From henceforward do Thou dispose of me and of all that I have as Thou pleasest. All that I ask of Thee and desire is Thy holy love, final perseverance, and the perfect accomplishment of Thy will. I recommend to Thee the souls in purgatory ; but especially those who had the greatest devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament and to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. I

also recommend to Thee all poor sinners. In fine, my dear Saviour, I unite all my affections with the affections of Thy most loving Heart ; and I offer them, thus united, to Thy Eternal Father, and beseech Him in Thy Name to vouchsafe, for Thy love, to accept and grant them.

VISITS TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT, ETC.

FIRST VISIT.

BEHOLD the source of every good, Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, who says, "If any man thirst, let him come to Me" (St. John vii. 37). Oh, what torrents of grace have the Saints drawn from the fountain of the Most Blessed Sacrament! for there Jesus dispenses all the merits of His Passion, as it was foretold by the Prophet: "You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains" (Is. xii. 3). The Countess of Feria, that illustrious disciple of the Venerable Father John d'Avila, afterwards a poor Clare, and surnamed the spouse of the Most Blessed Sacrament from her long and frequent visits to it, on being asked how she employed the many hours thus passed in the presence of the Holy of holies,

replied : 'I could remain there for all eternity. And is not the very essence of God, which will be the food of the blessed, there present? Good God! am I asked what I do in His presence? Rather, what is not done there? We love, we ask, we praise, we give thanks. We ask, what does a poor man do in the presence of one who is rich? What does a sick man do in the presence of his physician? What does a man do who is parched with thirst in the presence of a limpid fountain? What is the occupation of one who is starving, and is placed before a well-charged table?'

O my most amiable, most sweet, most beloved Jesus, my Life, my Hope, my Treasure, the only Love of my soul; oh, what has it cost Thee to remain thus in the midst of us in this Sacrament! Thou hadst to die, that Thou mightest thus dwell amongst us on our altars; and then, how many insults hast Thou not had to endure in this Sacrament, in order to aid us by Thy presence! Thy love, and the desire which Thou hast to be loved by us, have conquered all.

Come then, O Lord, come and centre Thyself within my heart; close its doors

for ever, that henceforward no creature may enter there, to divide the love which is due to Thee, and which it is my ardent desire to bestow all on Thee. Do Thou alone, my dear Redeemer, rule me ; do Thou alone in full possess me ; and if betimes I do not obey Thee perfectly, chastise me with rigour, that thenceforward I may be more watchful to please Thee as Thou wilt. Grant that I may no longer seek for any other pleasure than that of giving Thee pleasure ; that all my pleasure may be to visit Thee often on Thine altars ; to entertain myself with Thee, and to receive Thee in the Holy Communion. Let all who will, seek other treasures ; the only treasure which I love, the only one which I desire, is that of Thy love ; for this alone will I ask at the foot of the altar. Do Thou make me forget myself, that thus I may alone remember Thy goodness. Blessed Seraphim, I envy you, not for your glory, but for the love which you bear to your and my God ; oh, do you teach me what I must do to love Him, and to give Him the greatest pleasure.

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, I will love Thee alone ; I will please Thee alone.

Then follows the Spiritual Communion, after which the visit should be paid to the ever-blessed Mary, the Mother of God, before some image of her.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

In our Mother Mary we have another fountain, which is indeed fruitful to us. She is so rich in good things and in graces, says St. Bernard, that there is no one in the world who does not participate in them: 'Of her fulness we have all received.' The Most Blessed Virgin Mary was filled by God with grace, and as such was saluted by the angel: "Hail, full of grace;" not for herself alone, but also for us. St. Peter Chrysologus adds, that she received that great abyss of grace, that she might then impart it to all who are devout to her: 'The Blessed Virgin received this grace, that she might give in return salvation to all.'

Ejaculatory Prayer. Cause of our joy, pray for us!

Then is said the following Prayer to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, which should be recited every day after each visit to her, thereby to obtain her most powerful patronage.

Most holy Immaculate Virgin and my Mother Mary, to thee who art the Mother of my Lord, the Queen of the world, the advocate, the hope, the refuge of sinners, I have recourse to-day,—I, who am the most miserable of all. I worship thee, O great Queen, and I thank thee for all the graces which thou hast hitherto granted me ; and especially I thank thee for having delivered me from hell, which I have so often deserved. I love thee, most amiable Lady ; and for the love which I bear thee, I promise always to serve thee, and to do all that I can that thou mayest also be loved by others. I place all my hopes in thee, and I confide my salvation to thy care ; accept me for thy servant, and receive me under thy mantle, O Mother of Mercy. And since thou art so powerful with God, do thou deliver me from all temptations, or rather obtain me strength to triumph over them until death. Of thee I ask the true love of Jesus Christ ; through thee I hope to die a good death. My Mother, by the love which thou bearest to God, I beseech thee to help me always, but especially at the last moment of my life ; leave me not until thou seest me safe in heaven, blessing

thee, and singing thy mercies for all eternity. Amen.

SECOND VISIT.

The devout Father Nieremberg says, that bread being a food which is consumed by eating, and which keeps when preserved for use, Jesus was pleased to dwell on earth under its species, that He might thus not only be consumed by uniting Himself to the souls of His lovers by the means of the Holy Communion, but also that He might be preserved in the tabernacle, and be present with us, and thus remind us of the love which He bears us. St. Paul says: "He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant" (Phil. ii. 7). But what must we say when we see Him 'taking the form of bread?' 'No tongue would suffice,' says St. Peter of Alcantara, 'to proclaim the greatness of the love which Jesus bears to every soul which is in a state of grace; and therefore, in order that His absence might not be to them an occasion of forgetting Him, this most sweet Spouse, when He was pleased

to quit this life, left as a memorial this Most Blessed Sacrament, in which He Himself remained ; He willed not that between these souls and Himself any other pledge but Himself should remain, whereby to keep alive their remembrance of Him.'

Since, then, my Jesus, Thou art enclosed in this tabernacle to receive the supplications of miserable creatures who come to seek an audience of Thee, listen this day to the petition addressed to Thee by the most ungrateful sinner living on earth.

I come repentant to Thy feet ; for I now know the evil which I have committed in giving Thee displeasure. My first prayer and desire, then, is, that Thou wilt be pleased to pardon me all the sins which I have committed against Thee. Ah, my God, would that I had never offended Thee ! After this I must tell Thee my next desire. Now that I have found out Thy sovereign goodness, I have become enamoured of Thee ; I feel an ardent desire to love Thee and to please Thee ; but I have not the strength to do this unless Thou helpest me. Manifest, O great Lord, Thy supreme power, and Thy immense goodness to the whole court of heaven ; change me from a

great rebel, such as I have hitherto been to Thee, into a great lover of Thee. Thou canst do it, and I know that such is Thy will; supply all that is wanting in me, that thus I may be enabled to love Thee much, —at least that I may love Thee as much as I have offended Thee. I love Thee, my Jesus; I love Thee above all things; I love Thee more than my life, my God, my Love, my All!

Ejac. My God and my All!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

“Let us go with confidence to the throne of grace: that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid.” *Heb.* iv. 16.

St. Antoninus says, that Mary is this throne, from which God dispenses all graces. O most amiable Queen, since thou hast so great a desire to help sinners, behold a great sinner who has recourse to thee; help me much, and help me without delay!

Ejac. Sole refuge of sinners, have mercy on me. *S. Aug.*

Then follows the usual prayer.

THIRD VISIT.

“ And My delights were to be with the children of men.” *Prov. viii. 31.*

Behold our Jesus, who, not satisfied with dying on earth for our love, is pleased even after His death to dwell with us in the Most Holy Sacrament, declaring that He finds His delights among men. ‘O men,’ exclaims St. Teresa, ‘how can you offend a God who declares that it is with you that He finds His delights!’ Jesus finds His delights with us; and shall we not find ours with Jesus? And we especially who have had the honour to dwell in His palace? How greatly do those vassals esteem themselves honoured to whom the king assigns an abode in his own residence! Behold the palace of the King; it is this house in which we dwell with Jesus Christ. Let us, then, learn to thank Him for it, and to avail ourselves of conversing with Jesus Christ.

Behold me, then, O my Lord and God, before this altar, on which Thou residest night and day for my sake. Thou art the Source of every good; Thou art the Healer of every ill; Thou art the Treasure of every

poor creature. Behold now at Thy feet a sinner, who is of all others the poorest and most infirm, and who asks Thy mercy ; have pity upon me ! Now that I see Thee in this Sacrament, come down from heaven upon earth only to do me good, I will not be disheartened at the sight of my misery. I praise Thee, I thank Thee, I love Thee ; and if Thou willest that I should ask Thee for an alms, I will ask for this ; O listen to me : I desire never more to offend Thee ; and I desire that Thou shouldest give me light and grace to love Thee with all my strength. Lord, I love Thee with my whole soul ; I love Thee with all my affections. Do thou grant that I may thus speak with truth ; and that I may speak in the same way during life and for all eternity. Most holy Virgin Mary, my holy patron saints, ye angels, and all ye blessed spirits of paradise, help me to love my most amiable God.

Ejac. O Good Shepherd, true Bread, Jesus, have mercy on us : do Thou feed us ; do Thou guard us ; do Thou show us good things in the land of the living !

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

“ Her bands are a healthful binding.” *Ecclus.* vi. 31.

The devout Pelbart says, that devotion to Mary is a chain of predestination. Let us beseech our sovereign Lady to bind us always more closely by the chains of love to confidence in her protection.

Ejac. O clement, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary !

The usual prayer.

FOURTH VISIT.

“ Her conversation hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness.” *Wisd.* viii. 16.

Friends on earth find such pleasure in being together, that they lose entire days in each other's company : with Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, those who love Him not get weary. After her death, St. Teresa, who was already in heaven, said to a nun : ‘ Those who are in heaven and those who are on earth should be one and the same in purity and in love ; we enjoying, and you suffering ; and that which we do in heaven with the Divine Essence, you should do on earth with the Most Blessed Sacra-

ment.' Behold, then, our paradise on earth ; —the Most Blessed Sacrament. O immaculate Lamb, sacrificed for us upon the cross, remember that I am one of those souls which Thou hast redeemed by so many sufferings, and by Thy death. Grant that Thou mayest be mine, and that I may never lose Thee, since Thou hast given Thyself to me, and givest Thyself every day, sacrificing Thyself for my love on the altar ; and grant that I may be all Thine. I give myself to Thee without reserve, that Thou mayest dispose of me as Thou pleasest. I give Thee my will ; chain it with the sweet bonds of Thy love, that it may for ever be the slave of Thy most holy will. I wish no longer to live for the satisfaction of my desires, but only to please Thy goodness. Destroy in me all that does not please Thee ; grant me the grace never to have any other thought than to please Thee, any other desire than that which Thou desirest. I love Thee, O my dear Saviour, with my whole heart ; I love Thee because Thou desirest that I should love Thee ; I love Thee because Thou indeed art worthy of my love. I grieve that I love Thee not as much as Thou deservest. I desire, Lord, to die for

Thy love; accept my desire, and give me Thy love. Amen.

Ejac. O good pleasure of my God, I sacrifice myself all to Thee!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

Mary says: "I am the Mother of fair love" (Ecclus. xxiv. 24); that is to say, she is the Mother of that love which beautifies souls. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi saw the Most Blessed Virgin Mary going about dispensing a sweet liquid, which was Divine love. This gift is dispensed only by Mary; from Mary let us seek it.

Ejac. My Mother, my hope, make me belong wholly to Jesus.

The usual prayer.

FIFTH VISIT.

"The sparrow hath found herself a house, and the turtle a nest for herself, where she may lay her young ones: Thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God." *Psa.* lxxxiii. 4.

The sparrow, says David, finds a dwelling in houses; turtle-doves in nests; but Thou, my King and my God, hast made

Thyself a nest and found a dwelling on earth on our altars, that we might find Thee, and that Thou mightest dwell amongst us. Lord, we cannot but say, that Thou art too much enamoured of men ; Thou no longer knowest what to do to gain their love. But do Thou, my most amiable Jesus, give us the grace that we also may be passionately enamoured of Thee. It would indeed be unreasonable were we cold in our love towards a God who loves us with such affection. Draw us to Thee by the sweet attractions of Thy love ; make us understand the endearing claims which Thou hast on our love.

O infinite Majesty and infinite Goodness, Thou lovest men so much, Thou hast done so much that Thou mightest be loved by men : how is it, then, that amongst men there are so few who love Thee ? I will no longer be as I have hitherto been, of the unhappy number of those ungrateful creatures : I am resolved to love Thee as much as I can, and to love no other than Thee : Thou deservest it ; Thou commandest me with so much earnestness to do so, I am resolved to satisfy Thee. Grant, O God of my soul, that I may fully satisfy Thee. I

entreat Thee to grant me this favour by the merits of Thy Passion, and I confidently hope for it. Bestow the goods of the earth on those who desire them; I desire and seek the great treasure of Thy love alone. I love Thee, my Jesus; I love Thee, infinite Goodness. Thou art all my riches, my whole satisfaction, my entire love.

Ejac. My Jesus, Thou hast given Thy whole self to me; I give my whole self to Thee!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

My Lady, St. Bernard calls thee 'the ravisher of hearts.' He says, that thou goest about stealing hearts by the charms of thy beauty and goodness. Steal also my heart and will, I beseech thee: I give them wholly to thee; offer them to God with thine own.

Ejac. Mother most amiable, pray for me!

The usual prayer.

SIXTH VISIT.

“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” *St. Luke* xii. 34.

Jesus Christ says, that where a person esteems his treasure to be, there also he keeps his affections. Therefore the saints, who neither esteem nor love any other treasure than Jesus Christ, centre their hearts and all their love in the Most Blessed Sacrament. My most amiable Jesus, hidden under the sacramental veils, who for the love which Thou bearest me remainest night and day imprisoned in this tabernacle, draw, I beseech Thee, my whole heart to Thee, that I may think of none but Thee, that I may love and seek and hope for Thee alone. Do this by the merits of Thy Passion, through which I seek and hope for it.

Ah, my Sacramental* Lord and Divine Lover, how amiable and tender are the in-

* It is almost impossible to give the full force of the original, *sacramentato*, in English. The word *sacramental* has been adopted from time to time, to avoid the necessity of paraphrasing the expression. Literally translated it is *sacramented*, which is not English. ED.

ventions of Thy love to gain the love of souls ! O Eternal Word, Thou, in becoming man, wast not satisfied with dying for us ; Thou hast also given us this Sacrament as a companion, as food, and as a pledge of heaven. Thou reducest Thyself so as to appear amongst us, at one time as an infant in a stable, at another as a poor man in a workshop, then as a criminal on a gibbet, and now as bread on an altar. Tell me, couldst Thou invent other means to win our love ? O infinite Goodness, when shall I really begin to correspond with such refinements of love ? Lord, I will only live to love Thee alone. And of what use is life to me, if I do not spend it wholly in loving and pleasing Thee, my beloved Redeemer, who hast poured out Thy whole life for me ? And what have I to love, if it is not Thee, who art all beauty, all condescension, all goodness, all loving, all worthy of love ? May my soul live only to love Thee ; may the sole remembrance of Thy love dissolve my soul with love ; may the very names of Crib, and Cross, and Sacrament inflame it with the desire to do great things for Thee, O my Jesus, who hast indeed done and suffered great things for me !

Ejac. Grant, my Lord, that before I die
I may do something for Thee !

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

“ As a fair olive-tree in the plain.” *Ecclus.* xxiv. 19.

I am, says Mary, the beautiful olive-tree, from which the oil of mercy always flows. And I stand in the plain, that all may see me, and that all may have recourse to me. ‘ Remember (let us say in the words of the prayer of St. Bernard), O most compassionate Mary, that it has never been heard of in any age, that any one having recourse to thy protection was abandoned by thee.’ Most merciful Queen, such a thing was never heard of, that any one having recourse to thy aid was abandoned: I will not be the first unfortunate creature who, having recourse to thee, was abandoned.

Ejac. O Mary, grant me the grace always to have recourse to thee !

The usual prayer.

SEVENTH VISIT.

“ Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.” *St. Matt.* xxviii. 20.

Thus our loving Shepherd, who has given His life for us who are His sheep, would not separate Himself from us by death. Behold Me, He says, beloved sheep, I am always with you ; for you I have remained on earth in this Sacrament ; here you find Me whenever you please, to help and console you by My presence : I will not leave you until the end of the world, as long as you are on earth. The Bridegroom, says St. Peter of Alcantara, wished to leave His bride company, that she might not remain alone during so long an absence ; and therefore He left this Sacrament, in which He Himself, the best companion He could leave her, remains.

My sweetest Lord, my most amiable Saviour, I am now visiting Thee on this altar ; but Thou returnest me the visit with far other love when Thou enterest my soul in the Holy Communion. Thou art then not only present to me, but Thou becomest my food ; Thou unitest and givest Thy whole

self to me, so that I can then say with truth, My Jesus, Thou art now all mine. Since then, Thou givest Thyself all to me, it is reasonable that I should give myself all to Thee. I am a worm, and Thou art God. O God of love! O Love of my soul! when shall I find myself all Thine, in deeds, and not only in words? Thou canst do it; by the merits of Thy Blood increase my confidence, that I may at once obtain this grace of Thee, that I may find myself all Thine, and in nothing mine own. Thou graciously hearest, O Lord, the prayers of all; hear now the prayers of a soul who indeed desires really to love Thee. I desire to love Thee with all my strength, I desire to obey Thee in all that Thou willest, without self-interest, without consolations, without reward. I wish to serve Thee through love, only to please Thee, only to content Thy heart, which is so passionately enamoured of me. My reward will be to love Thee. O beloved Son of the Eternal Father, take possession of my liberty, of my will, of all I possess, and of my entire self, and give me Thyself. I love Thee, I seek after Thee, I sigh after Thee; I desire Thee, I desire Thee, I desire Thee!

Ejac. My Jesus, make me all Thine own!
Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

O our own most amiable Lady, the whole Church proclaims and salutes thee as 'our hope!' Thou, then, who art the hope of all, be also my hope. St. Bernard called thee 'the whole ground of his hope,' and said: 'Let him who despairs hope in thee.' Thus also will I address thee: My own Mary, thou savest even those who are in despair; in thee I place all my hope.

Ejac. Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me!

The usual prayer.

EIGHTH VISIT.

To every soul who visits Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, He addresses the words which He said to the Sacred Spouse: "Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come" (Cant. ii. 10). Thou soul which visitest Me, 'arise' from thy miseries; I am here to enrich thee with graces. 'Make haste,' approach, come near

Me; fear not My Majesty, which has humbled itself in this Sacrament, in order to take away thy fear, and to give thee confidence. 'My beloved,' thou art no longer My enemy, but My friend; since thou lovest Me, and I love thee. 'My beautiful one,' My grace has made thee fair. 'And come,' draw near and cast thyself into My arms, and ask Me with the greatest confidence for whatever thou wilt.

St. Teresa says, that this great King of Glory has disguised Himself in the Sacrament under the species of bread, and that He has concealed His Majesty, to encourage us to approach His Divine Heart with greater confidence. Let us, then, draw near to Jesus with great confidence and affection; let us unite ourselves to Him, and let us ask Him for graces. O Eternal Word made man, and present for my sake in this Sacrament, what joy should be mine now that I stand in Thy presence, who art my God, who art Infinite Majesty and Infinite Goodness, and hast so tender an affection for my soul! Ye souls who love God, wherever you may be, either in heaven or on earth, love Him for me also. Mary, my Mother, help me to love Him. And Thou,

most beloved Lord, make Thyself the object of all my love. Make Thyself the Lord of my entire will; possess my entire self. I consecrate my whole mind to Thee, that it may always be occupied with the thought of Thy goodness; I also consecrate my body to Thee, that it may help me to please Thee; I consecrate my soul to Thee, that it may be all Thine. Would, O beloved of my soul, that all men could know the tenderness of the love which Thou bearest them, that all might live only to honour Thee and to please Thee, as Thou desirest and deservest. Grant that at least I may always live enamoured of Thy infinite beauty. From this day forward my desire is to do all that I can to be pleasing to Thee. I now resolve to abandon every thing, be it what it may, as soon as I perceive that it displeases Thee, however much it may cost me, even should it be necessary for this purpose to lose all, or even to lay down my life. Fortunate indeed shall I be, if I lose all to gain Thee, my God, my Treasure, my Love, my All!

Ejac. Jesus, my love, take all that I have; take full possession of me!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

“ Whosoever is a little one, let him come to me.”

Prov. ix. 4.

Mary invites all children who need a mother to have recourse to her, as to the most loving of all mothers. The devout Nieremberg says, that the love of all mothers is a shadow in comparison with the love which Mary bears to each one of us. My Mother, Mother of my soul, thou who lovest me, and desirest my salvation more than any other after God, O Mother, ‘ show thyself a Mother.’

Ejac. My Mother, grant that I may always remember thee !

The usual prayer.

NINTH VISIT.

St. John says that he saw our Lord girt up with a golden girdle, which supported His breasts : “ I saw the Son of Man girt about the paps with a golden girdle ” (Apoc. i. 12, 13). Thus also is Jesus in the Sacrament of the Altar, with His breasts all filled with milk ; that is to say, with the graces which, in His mercy, He desires to bestow upon us.

And as a mother, whose breasts are overcharged with milk, goes about seeking for children who may draw it off, and relieve her of its weight, so also does He call out to us, "You shall be carried at the breasts" (Is. lxvi. 12).

The Venerable Father Alvarez saw Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament with His hands filled with graces, and seeking to whom He might dispense them. Of St. Catharine of Sienna it is related, that when she approached the Most Holy Sacrament, she did so precisely with the same loving avidity with which a child flies to its mother's breast.

O most beloved and only-begotten Son of the Eternal Father, I know that Thou art the object most worthy of being loved. I desire to love Thee as much as Thou deservest to be loved, or at least as much as a soul can ever desire to love Thee. I fully understand that I, who am a traitor, and so great a rebel to Thy love, deserve not to love Thee, neither do I deserve to approach Thee so near as I now am in this church. But I feel that Thou, for all this, seekest my love; I hear Thee say, "My son, give Me thy heart. Thou shalt love the Lord

thy God with thy whole heart." I understand that it is for this end that Thou hast spared my life, and not sent me to hell, that I might be converted and turn all my affections to Thee. Since, then, Thou art pleased that even I should love Thee, oh, yes, my God, I will do so. Behold me : to Thee I yield myself up ; I give myself to Thee ; I love Thee. O God ! all goodness, all love, I choose Thee for the only King and Lord of my poor heart. Thou desirest it, and my will is to give it to Thee : it is cold, it is loathsome ; but if Thou acceptest it, Thou wilt change it. Change me, my Lord, change me ; I no longer have courage to live as I have hitherto done, ungrateful, and with so little love towards Thy infinite goodness, which loves me so much, and deserves an infinite love. Enable me to supply from this day forward for all the love which I have hitherto failed to bear Thee.

Ejac. My God, my God, I will love Thee, I will love Thee, I will love Thee !

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

In all things like to her Son Jesus is His

Mother Mary ; and as she is the Mother of Mercy, she is thrice happy when she helps and consoles the miserable. So great is the desire of this Mother to bestow graces on all, that Bernardine de Bustis says, that 'She desires more to do us good, and to impart to us graces, than we can desire to receive them.'

Ejac. Hail, our hope !

The usual prayer.

TENTH VISIT.

O foolish ones of the world, says St. Augustine, miserable creatures, where are you going to satisfy your hearts ? Come to Jesus ; for by Him alone can that pleasure which you seek be bestowed. 'Unhappy creatures, whither are you going ? The good you seek for comes from Him.' My soul, be not of the number of these foolish ones ; seek God alone : 'seek for that one good in which are all good things.' And if thou desirest soon to find Him, behold, He is close to thee ; tell Him what thou desirest, for for this end it is that He is in the ciborium, to console thee, and to grant

thy prayer. St. Teresa says, that all are not allowed to speak to their king; the most that can be hoped for is to communicate with him through a third person. To converse with thee, O King of Glory, no third person is needed; Thou art always ready in the Sacrament of the Altar to give audience to all. All who desire Thee always find Thee there, and converse with Thee face to face. And even if any one at length succeeds in speaking with a king, how many difficulties has he had to overcome before he can do so! Kings grant audiences only a few times in the year; but Thou, in this Sacrament, grantest audience to all night and day, and whenever we please.

O Sacrament of Love, Thou who, whether Thou givest Thyself in the Communion, or dwellest on the altar, knowest, by the tender attractions of Thy love, how to draw so many hearts to Thyself, who, enamoured of Thee, and filled with amazement at the sight of such love, burn with joy, and think always of Thee; draw also my miserable heart to Thyself; for it desires to love Thee, and to live enslaved by Thy love. For my part, I now and from henceforward

place all my interests, all my hopes, and all my affections, my soul, my body,—I place all in the hands of Thy goodness. Accept me, O Lord, and dispose of me as Thou pleasest. I will never again complain, O my Love, of Thy holy dispensations ; I know that, as they all take their source in Thy loving Heart, they will all be full of love, and for my good. It is enough for me to know that Thou willest them ; I will them also in time and in eternity. Do all that Thou willest in me and with me ; I unite my entire self to Thy will, which is all holy, all good, all beautiful, all perfect, all loving. O Will of my God, how dear art thou to me ! My will is ever to live and die united to and bound up with Thee. Thy pleasure is my pleasure. I will that Thy desires shall also be my desires. My God, my God, help me ; make me henceforward live for Thee alone ; make me will alone what Thou willest, and make me live only to love Thy amiable will. Grant that I may die for Thy love, since Thou hast died and become food for me. I curse those days in which I did my own will, so much to Thy displeasure. I love thee, O Will of God, as much as I love God, since

thou art one with Him. I love Thee, then, with my whole heart, and give myself all to Thee.

Ejac. O Will of God, thou art my love !

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

The great Queen says, "With me are riches . . . that I may enrich them that love me" (Prov. viii. 18, 21). Let us love Mary, if we would be rich in graces. The writer who calls himself 'the Idiot' styles her 'the treasurer of graces.' Blessed is he who has recourse to Mary with love and confidence. My Mother, my hope, thou canst make me a saint ; from thee I hope for this favour.

Ejac. Mother most amiable, pray for me !

The usual prayer.

ELEVENTH VISIT.

'Let us be careful,' says St. Teresa, 'never to be at a distance from, or to lose sight of, Jesus our beloved Shepherd ; for the sheep which are near their shepherd are always more caressed and better fed, and always receive some choice morsels of that

which he himself eats. If by chance the shepherd sleeps, still the lamb remains near him, and either waits until his slumber ends, or itself awakens him ; and it is then caressed with new favours.' My Redeemer, present in this Most Holy Sacrament, behold me near Thee : the only favour which I ask of Thee is, fervour and perseverance in Thy love.

I thank thee, O holy Faith ; for thou teachest and assurest me that in the Divine Sacrament of the Altar, in that heavenly bread, bread does not exist ; but that my Lord Jesus Christ is all there, and that He is there for love of me. My Lord and my All, I believe that Thou art present in the Most Holy Sacrament ; and though unknown to eyes of flesh, by the light of holy faith I discern Thee in 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 will that Thou shouldst be all my love, and the only subject of all my thoughts, of my desires, and of my affections. I rejoice more in the supreme happiness which Thou enjoyest, and wilt enjoy

for ever, than in any good thing which I could ever have in time or in eternity. My supreme satisfaction is, that Thou, my beloved Redeemer, art supremely happy, and that Thy happiness is infinite. Reign, reign, my Lord, over my whole soul ; I give it all to Thee ; do Thou ever possess it. May my will, my senses, and my faculties be all servants of Thy love, and may they never in this world serve for other than to give Thee satisfaction and glory. Such was thy life, O first lover and Mother of my Jesus ! Most holy Mary, do thou help me ; do thou obtain for me the grace to live henceforward, as thou didst always live, in the happiness of belonging to God alone.

Ejac. My Jesus, may I be all Thine, and be Thou all mine !

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

"Blessed is the man . . . that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors."
Prov. viii. 34.

Blessed is he who, like the poor who stand before the gates of the rich, is careful to seek for the alms of graces before the doors of the mercy of Mary ! And

thrice blessed is he who moreover seeks to imitate the virtues which he remarks in Mary, and more especially her purity and humility!

Ejac. My hope, help me!

The usual prayer.

TWELFTH VISIT.

“God is charity; and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him.” 1 St. 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 St. Philip Neri received the Holy Communion as Viaticum, on seeing the Most Blessed Sacrament enter his room, he exclaimed: ‘Behold my Love! behold my Love!’ Let each one of us, then, say, here in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament: Behold my Love! behold the object of all my love for my whole life and for all eternity!

Since, then, my Lord and my God, Thou hast said in the Gospel, that he who loves Thee will be beloved by Thee, and that Thou wilt come and dwell in him, and

never more leave him, I love Thee above every other good : do Thou, then, also love me ; for I, indeed, esteem being loved by Thee above all the kingdoms of the world. Come and fix Thy dwelling in the poor house of my soul in such a way that Thou mayest no more depart from me ; or rather, so that I may never more drive Thee from me. Thou dost not go, if Thou art not expelled ; but as I have already done this, so I might do again. Ah, never allow such a fresh act of wickedness, such horrible ingratitude, to be perpetrated in the world, as that I, who have been so especially favoured by Thee, and who have received so many graces, should again drive Thee from my soul ! But this might happen : I therefore, my Lord, desire death, if it so pleases Thee ; that by dying united to Thee, I may live united to Thee for ever. Yes, my Jesus ; for this I hope. I embrace Thee ; I press Thee to my poor heart : grant that I may always love Thee, and always be beloved by Thee. Yes, my most amiable Redeemer, I will always love Thee ; and Thou wilt always love me. I trust that our love will ever be mutual, O God of my soul, and this for all eternity. Amen.

Ejac. My Jesus, I desire always to love Thee, and always to be beloved by Thee !

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

“They that work by me shall not sin.” *Ecclus.*
xxiv. 30.

He, says Mary, who endeavours to honour me shall persevere to the end. ‘They that explain me shall have life everlasting :’ and those who endeavour to make me known and loved by others will be of the number of the elect. Promise, then, that whenever you can, be it in public or in private, you will speak of the glories of Mary, and of devotion to her.

Ejac. Vouchsafe that I may praise Thee, most sacred Virgin !

The usual prayer.

THIRTEENTH VISIT.

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

Behold, Jesus has verified this beautiful promise in the Sacrament of the Altar, wherein He dwells with us night and day. My Lord, would it not have been enough

hadst Thou remained in this Sacrament only during the day, when Thou couldst have had adorers of Thy presence to keep Thee company ; but why remain also the whole night, when the churches are all closed, and when men retire to their homes, leaving Thee quite-alone ? Ah, yes !. I already understand Thee : love has made Thee our prisoner ; the excessive love which Thou bearest us has so bound Thee down on earth, that neither night nor day canst Thou leave us. Ah, most amiable Saviour, this refinement of love alone should oblige all men ever to stay with Thee in the sacred ciboriums, and to remain with Thee until forcibly compelled to leave Thee ; and when they do so, they should all leave at the foot of the altar their hearts and affections inflamed with love towards an Incarnate God, who remains alone and enclosed in a tabernacle, all eyes to see and provide for them in their necessities, and all heart to love them, and who awaits the coming day to be again visited by His beloved souls.

Yes, my Jésus, I will please Thee ; I consecrate my whole will and all my affections to Thee. O infinite Majesty of God, Thou hast left Thyself in this Divine Sacrament,

not only that Thou mightest be present with and near us, but principally to communicate Thyself to Thy beloved souls. But, Lord, who will presume to approach Thee to feed upon Thy flesh? and who, on the other hand, can keep at a distance from Thee? For this purpose Thou concealest Thyself in the consecrated Host, that Thou mayest enter into us and possess our hearts. Thou burnest with the desire of being received by us, and Thou rejoicest in being there united to us. Come, then, my Jesus, come; I desire to receive Thee within myself, that Thou mayest be the God of my heart and of my will. All that is within me I yield, my dear Redeemer, to thy love; satisfactions, pleasures, self-will, all I give up to Thee. O Love, O God of love, reign, triumph over my entire self; destroy and sacrifice all in me which is mine and not Thine. Permit not, O my Love, that my soul, which, having received Thee in the Holy Communion, is filled with the Majesty of God, should again attach itself to creatures. I love Thee, my God, I love Thee; and I will love Thee alone and for ever.

Ejac. Draw me by the chains of Thy love!
Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

St. Bernard exhorts us, saying: 'Let us seek for grace, and let us seek it by Mary.' 'She,' says St. Peter Damian, 'is the treasure of Divine graces.' She can enrich us, and she desires to do so. She therefore invites and calls us, saying: "Whosoever is a little one, let him come to me" (Prov. ix. 14). Most amiable Lady, most exalted Lady, most gracious Lady, look on a poor sinner, who recommends himself to Thee, and who places all his confidence in Thee.

Ejac. We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God!

The usual prayer.

FOURTEENTH VISIT.

Most amiable Jesus, I hear Thee say from this tabernacle in which Thou art present, "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 on our altars in the midst of us, remaining there in the Most Holy Sacrament, and since Thy love for us makes Thee there find Thy repose, it is but just

that our hearts also should ever dwell with Thee in affection, and should find all pleasure and repose in Thee. Blessed are you, O loving souls, who can find no sweeter repose in the world than in remaining near to your Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament! And blessed should I be, my Lord, did I from this time forward find no greater delight than in remaining always in Thy presence, or in always thinking of Thee, who in the Most Holy Sacrament art always thinking of me and of my welfare. Ah, my Lord! and why have I lost so many years, in which I have not loved Thee? O miserable years, I curse you; and I bless thee, O infinite patience of my God, for having for so many years borne with me, though so ungrateful to Thy love. And still, notwithstanding this ingratitude, Thou waitest for me: and why, my God, why? It is, that one day, overcome by Thy mercies and by Thy love, I may yield wholly to Thee. Lord, I will no longer resist, I will no longer be ungrateful. It is but just that I should consecrate to Thee the time, be it long or short, which I have still to live. I hope for Thy help, O my Jesus, to become entirely Thine. Thou didst favour me so

much when I fled from Thee and despised Thy love ; how much more may I now hope that Thou wilt favour me, now that I seek and desire to love Thee ! Give me, then, the grace to love Thee, O God, 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 Thy pardon grant me the grace to love Thee much in this life until death, and in the next life for all eternity. O Almighty God, show the world the greatness of Thy power, in the prodigy of a soul ungrateful as mine has been becoming one of Thy greatest lovers. Do this by Thy merits, my Jesus. It is my ardent desire, and I resolve thus to love Thee during my whole life : do Thou, who inspirest me with this desire, give me also the strength to accomplish it.

Ejac. My Jesus, I thank Thee for having waited for me until now !

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

St. Germanus, addressing the Most

Blessed Virgin Mary, says: 'No one is saved but through thee; no one is delivered from evils but through thee; there is no one on whom any gift is bestowed but through thee.' Therefore, my Lady and my hope, if thou dost not help me, I am lost, and shall be unable to bless thee in heaven. But, Lady, I hear all the saints say, that thou never abandonest those who have recourse to thee. He only is lost who has not recourse to thee. I, then, miserable creature that I am, have recourse to thee, and in thee place all my hopes.

Ejac. in the words of St. Bernard. Mary is my whole confidence; she is the whole ground of my hope!

The usual prayer.

FIFTEENTH VISIT.

"I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?" *St. Luke xii. 49.*

Father Francis Olimpio, the Theatine, used to say, that there was nothing on earth which enkindled such ardent flames of Divine love in the hearts of men as the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Hence our Lord showed Himself to St. Catharine

of Sienna in this Blessed Sacrament as a furnace of love, from which issued forth torrents of Divine flames, spreading themselves over the whole earth : so much so, indeed, that the saint, in perfect astonishment, wondered how it was possible that men could live without burning with love for such love on the part of God towards them. My Jesus, make me burn with the desire of Thee; grant that all my thoughts, and sighs, and desires, and seekings, may be for Thee alone. Oh, happy should I be, did this Thy heavenly fire fully possess me, and as I advance in years, gradually consume all earthly affections in me !

O Divine Word ! O my own Jesus ! I see Thee all sacrificed, all annihilated, and so to say destroyed on the altar, for my love. It is, then, but right that, as Thou sacrificest Thyself as a victim of love for me, I at least should consecrate myself wholly to Thee. Yes, my God and my sovereign Lord, I now sacrifice to Thee my whole soul, my entire self, all my will and my whole life. I unite this poor sacrifice of mine, O Eternal Father, with the infinite sacrifice of Himself which Jesus, Thy Son and my Saviour, once offered to Thee on the cross, and which He

now offers to Thee so many times every day on our altars. Accept it, then, through the merits of Jesus; and grant me the grace to renew it every day of my life, and to die sacrificing my whole self to Thy honour. I desire the grace granted to so many martyrs, to die for Thy love. But if I am unworthy of so great a grace, grant at least, my Lord, that I may sacrifice my life to Thee, together with my entire will, by accepting the death which Thou sendest me. Lord, I desire this grace; I desire to die with the intention of honouring and pleasing Thee thereby: and from this moment I sacrifice my life to Thee; and I offer Thee my death, when or wheresoever it may take place.

Ejac. My Jesus, I desire to die in order to please Thee!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

Allow me also, my most sweet Queen, to call thee, with thine own St. Bernard, 'the whole ground of my hope,' and to say, with St. John Damascene, 'I have placed my whole hope in thee.' Thou hast to obtain for me the forgiveness of my sins; thou,

perseverance until death ; thou, deliverance from purgatory. All who are saved obtain salvation through thee : thou, then, O Mary, hast to save me : ‘ He will be saved whom thou willest.’ Will, then, my salvation, and I shall be saved. But thou savest all who invoke thee ; behold, then, I invoke thee, and say :

Ejac. O salvation of those who invoke thee, save me !

The usual prayer.

SIXTEENTH VISIT.

Had men but always recourse to the Most Blessed Sacrament to seek from It the remedy for their ills, they certainly would not be as miserable as they are. The prophet Jeremias, lamenting, exclaimed : “ Is there no balm in Galaad ? or is there no physician there ? ” (Jer. viii. 22.) Galaad, a mountain of Arabia, rich in aromatical spices, according to Venerable Bede, is a figure of Jesus Christ, who in this Sacrament keeps in readiness all the remedies for our woes. Why, then, our Redeemer seems to ask, do you complain of your misfortunes, O sons of

Adam, when you have the Physician and the remedy for them all in this Sacrament ? " Come to Me, and I will refresh you " (St. Matt. xi. 28). I will, then, address Thee in the words of the sisters of Lazarus : " Behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick " (St. John xi. 3). Lord, I am that miserable creature whom Thou lovest ; my soul is all wounded by the sins which I have committed : my Divine Physician, I come to Thee, that Thou mayest heal me ; if Thou wilt, Thou canst cure me : " Heal my soul ; for I have sinned against Thee " (Ps. xi. 5). Draw me wholly to Thyself, my most sweet Jesus, by the all-winning attractions of Thy love. Far rather would I be bound to Thee than become the lord of the whole earth. I desire nothing else in the world but to love Thee. I have but little to give Thee ; but could I gain possession of all the kingdoms of the world, I would do so, that I might renounce them all for Thy love. For Thee, then, I renounce what I can ; I give up all relations, all comforts, all pleasures, and even spiritual consolations : for Thee I renounce my liberty and my will. On Thee I desire to bestow all my love. I love Thee, infinite Goodness, I love Thee more than

myself, and I hope to love Thee for all eternity.

Ejac. My Jesus, I give myself to Thee : do Thou accept me !

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

My Lady, thou didst say to St. Bridget :
However much a man sins, if he returns to me with a real purpose of amendment, I am instantly ready to welcome him : neither do I pay attention to the greatness of his sins, but to the intention alone with which he comes. I do not disdain to anoint and heal his wounds ; for I am called, and truly am, the Mother of Mercy.' Since, then, thou hast both the power and the will to heal me, behold, I have recourse to thee, O heavenly physician ; heal the many wounds of my soul : with a single word addressed by thee to thy Son I shall be restored.

Ejac. O Mary, have pity on me !

The usual prayer.

SEVENTEENTH VISIT.

Loving souls can find no greater delight

than to be in the company of those whom they love. If we, then, love Jesus Christ much, behold we are now in His presence. Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament sees us and hears us: shall we, then, say nothing to Him? Let us console ourselves in His company; let us rejoice in His glory, and in the love which so many enamoured souls bear Him in the Most Holy Sacrament: let us desire that all should love Jesus in the Holy Sacrament, and consecrate their hearts to Him; at least let us consecrate all our affections to Him. He should be all our love and our whole desire. Father Salesius, of the Society of Jesus, felt consolation in only speaking of the Most Blessed Sacrament: he could never visit It enough: when called to the parlour, on returning to his room, when going about the house, he always profited of these occasions to repeat his visits to his beloved Lord; so much so, that it was remarked that scarcely an hour of the day passed without his visiting Him. At length he obtained the favour to die by the hands of heretics while defending the truth of the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament. Oh, had I but the happiness to die for so noble a cause as the defence of

this Sacrament, in which, O most amiable Jesus, Thou hast taught us the tenderness of the love which Thou bearest us! But since, my Lord, Thou workest so many miracles in this Sacrament, work this one also : draw my entire self to Thee. Thou indeed desirest that I should be all Thine; and Thou dost also indeed deserve that I should be so. Give me the strength to love Thee with all the affection of my soul. Give the goods of this world to whomsoever Thou wilt. I renounce them all: I sigh after and desire Thy love alone; this alone do I now, and will always seek. I love Thee, my Jesus; grant me the grace always to love Thee, and grant me this alone.

Ejac. My Jesus, when shall I really love Thee?

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

My most sweet Queen, how pleasing to me is that beautiful name by which thy devout clients address thee: 'Most amiable Mother!' Yes, my Lady, thou art truly and indeed amiable. Thy beauty has captivated thy Lord Himself: "And the King shall greatly desire thy beauty" (Ps. xliv. 12).

St. Bernard says, that thy very name is so amiable to thy lovers, that when they pronounce or hear it, they are inflamed with a fresh desire to love thee : ‘ O sweet, O pious, O exceedingly amiable Mary ! Thou canst not be named without inflaming, neither can thy name be heard without enkindling, the affections of those who love thee.’ It is, then, reasonable, my most amiable Mother, that I should love thee. But I am not satisfied with only loving thee : I desire in the first place on earth, and then in heaven, to be, after God, thy greatest lover. If my desire is presumptuous, it is thou thyself who art to blame, on account of thy amiability, and the special love which thou hast shown me. If thou wert less amiable, my desire to love thee would be less. Accept, then, O Lady, this my desire : and in token that thou hast accepted it, do thou obtain me from God this love for which I ask thee, since He is so well pleased with the love which is borne thee.

Ejac. My most amiable Mother, I love thee much !

The usual prayer.

EIGHTEENTH VISIT.

One day Jesus will be seated on a throne of majesty in the valley of Josaphat : but now, in the Most Blessed Sacrament, He is seated on a throne of love. Did a king, to show his love for a poor shepherd, go and live in his village, how great would be the ingratitude of this peasant did he not often go to visit him, knowing the king's wish to see him, and that for this purpose he had come to reside there ! Ah, my Jesus, for love of me Thou dwellest in the Sacrament of the Altar. Could I, then, do so, my desire would be to remain night and day in Thy presence. If the angels, O my Lord, filled with astonishment at the love which Thou bearest us, remain always around Thee, it is but reasonable that I, seeing Thee for my sake on this altar, should endeavour to please Thee, at least by remaining in Thy presence, to praise the love and goodness which Thou hast for me : " I will sing 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. 1, 2).

O God, present in this Most Holy Sacrament, O Bread of angels, O heavenly food, I love Thee ; but Thou art not, neither am I, satisfied with my love. I love Thee ; but I love Thee too little. Do Thou, my Jesus, make known to me the beauty, the immense goodness which I love : make my heart banish from itself all earthly affections, and give place to Thy Divine love. To fill me with Thy love, and to unite Thyself all to me, Thou descendest every day from heaven on our altars : it is, then, but just that I should think of nothing else but of loving, adoring, and pleasing Thee. I love Thee with my whole soul, I love Thee with all my affections. If Thou art graciously pleased to make me a return for this love, increase my love ; render its flames more ardent ; that thus I may always love Thee more, and desire more and more to please Thee.

Ejac. Jesus, my Love, give me love !

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

As poor sick persons, who on account of their miseries are abandoned by all, find shelter in the public hospitals ; so also do the most miserable sinners, who, although

discarded by all, find protection in the mercy of Mary, by whom they are never rejected; for God has placed her in the world as a receptacle and as a public hospital for sinners, as St. Basil of Seleucia gives us to understand. Hence St. Ephrem also calls her 'the asylum of sinners.' Therefore, my Queen, if I have recourse to thee, thou canst not reject me on account of my sins; nay, even the more wretched I am, the greater is the claim which I have upon thy protection, since God has created thee as the refuge of the most miserable. Therefore to thee I have recourse, O Mary; I place myself under thy mantle. Thou art the refuge of sinners; thou art, then, my refuge, the hope of my salvation. If thou reject me, to whom shall I have recourse?

Ejac. Mary, my refuge, save me!

The usual prayer.

NINETEENTH VISIT.

It is sweet to every one to be in the company of a dear friend: and shall we not find it sweet, in this valley of tears, to remain in the company of the best Friend

we have, and who can do us every kind of good; who loves us with the most tender affection, and therefore dwells always with us? Behold, in the Most Blessed Sacrament we can converse at pleasure with Jesus, we can open our hearts to Him, we can lay our wants before Him, and we can ask Him for His graces; in a word, in this Sacrament we can treat with the King of Heaven in all confidence and without restraint. Joseph was only too happy when, as the sacred Scripture tells us, God descended by His grace into his prison to comfort him: "She went down with him into the pit, and in bands she left him not" (Wisd. x. 13). But we are yet more highly favoured; for we have always with us in this land of miseries our God made Man, who, by His Real Presence, is with us all the days of our life, and comforts and helps us with the greatest affection and compassion. What a consolation it is to a poor prisoner to have an affectionate friend, who keeps him company, consoles him, gives him hope, succours him, and thinks of relieving him in his misery! Behold our good Friend Jesus Christ, who in this Sacrament encourages us, saying: "Behold, I am with

you all days." Behold Me, He says, all thine: I am come from heaven into thy prison expressly to console thee, to help thee, to deliver thee. Welcome Me, and do so always; cling to Me, and thus thou wilt never feel thy miseries; and afterwards thou wilt come with Me to My kingdom, where I shall make thee perfectly happy.

O God, O incomprehensible ocean of love, since Thy condescension towards us is so great, that in order to dwell near us Thou descendest upon our altars, I propose often to visit Thee; I am determined, as often as I possibly can, to enjoy Thy most sweet Presence, which is the beatitude of the saints in heaven. Oh, could I but always remain in Thy Presence, to adore Thee, and to make Thee acts of love! Arouse, I beseech Thee, my soul, when through tepidity or worldly affairs it neglects to visit Thee. Enkindle in me a great desire always to remain near Thee in this Sacrament. Ah, my loving Jesus, would that I had always loved Thee! would that I had always pleased Thee! I console myself that I still have time to do so, not only in the next life, but also in this. I am determined to do so; I am determined to love Thee in-

deed, my Sovereign Good, my Love, my Treasure, my All. I will love Thee with all my strength.

Ejac. My God, help me to love Thee !

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

The devout Bernardine de Bustis says :
' O sinner, whoever you may be, despair not; but with confidence have recourse to this Lady: you will find her hands filled with mercies and graces. And know also,' he adds, ' that this most compassionate Queen has a greater desire to do you good than you can have to be succoured by her.' I will ever, O my Lady, thank God for having taught me to know thee. Unfortunate indeed should I be, did I not know thee, or did I forget thee. Ill would it fare with my salvation. But, my Mother, I bless thee, I love thee ; and so great is my confidence in thee, that I place my whole soul in thy hands.

Ejac. O Mary, blessed is he who knows thee, and puts his trust in thee !

The usual prayer.

TWENTIETH VISIT.

The prophet Zacharias says : " 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" (ch. xiii. 1). Jesus in the Holy Sacrament is the fountain foretold by the prophet, as open to all ; and to which we can go whenever we please, to wash our souls from all the stains of sin which are daily contracted. When any one falls into some fault, what more beautiful remedy is there than to have immediate recourse to the Most Blessed Sacrament ? Yes, my Jesus, I resolve always to do this ; for I know that the waters of this fountain of Thine not only cleanse me, but also give me light, and strengthen me not to fall, and enable me cheerfully to bear contradictions, and also inflame me with Thy love. I know that for this end it is that Thou awaitest my visits, and recompensest those of Thy lovers with so many graces. My Jesus, delay not ; but wash me now from all the defects which I have committed this day, and for which I am grieved because they have displeased Thee ; strengthen me

against relapse by giving me a great desire to love Thee much. Oh, could I but always dwell near Thee, as did Thy faithful servant Mary Diaz, who lived in the time of St. Teresa, and had permission from the Bishop of Avila to inhabit the tribune of a church, where she remained almost always in the Presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament, which she called her neighbour, and which she only left to go to confession and communion. When the Venerable Brother Francis of the Infant Jesus, of the Order of the Discalced Carmelites, passed before a church in which the Blessed Sacrament was kept, he could not refrain from entering to visit it, saying: 'That it was not becoming for a friend to pass before the door of a friend without entering, at least to salute him and exchange a word.' But a word did not satisfy him; he always remained as long as obedience allowed him in the Presence of his beloved Lord.

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; and that for this end Thou hast given me a heart capable of loving Thee much. Why is it, then, that I am so un-

grateful as not to love Thee? or that I love Thee so little? Now it is not just that such goodness as Thou art should be so little loved. The love, at least, which Thou bearest me, deserves other and greater love on my part. Thou art an infinite God, and I am a miserable worm. It would be little did I die for Thee, or wear myself out for Thee, who didst die for me, and dost sacrifice Thy entire self for me every day on the altar. Thou deservest to be much loved; I will love Thee much: help me, my Jesus, help me to love Thee, and to do that which pleases Thee so much, and which Thou so earnestly seekest of me.

Ejac. My Beloved to me, and I to my Beloved!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

My most sweet, most compassionate, most amiable Queen, oh, how great is the confidence with which St. Bernard inspires me when I have recourse to thee! He says, that thou dost not go examining the merits of those who have recourse to thy compassion, but that thou offerest thyself to help all who pray to thee: 'Mary does not dis-

cuss merits, but shows herself ready to hear and welcome all.' Therefore, if I pray to thee, thou dost graciously hear me. Well, then, listen to what I have to ask thee: I am a poor sinner, deserving of a thousand hells. I wish to change my life; I wish to love my God, whom I have so greatly offended. I dedicate myself to thee as thy slave; to thee I give myself, miserable as I am; save, then, a poor creature who is no longer his own, but thine. My Lady, dost thou understand me? Yes; I trust that thou hast understood me, and graciously heard my prayer.

Ejac. O Mary, I am thine; save me!

The usual prayer.

TWENTY-FIRST VISIT.

"Wheresoever the body shall be, thither will the eagles also be gathered together." *St. Luke xvii. 37.*

The Saints generally understand by this body that of Jesus Christ; and by the eagles, souls who, being detached from creatures, rise above the things of the earth, and fly towards heaven, after which they always

sigh in thought and affection, and where they constantly dwell. These eagles also find their paradise on earth wherever they find Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament ; so much so, indeed, that they seem never to tire hovering around Him. If eagles, says St. Jerome, on scenting a dead body go from afar to seek it, how much more should we run and fly to Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament, as to the most delicious food of our hearts ! Hence Saints in this valley of tears have always as parched harts run to this fountain of paradise. Father Balthasar Alvarez, of the Society of Jesus, in whatever occupation he was engaged, used often to cast his eyes towards the place in which he knew that the Blessed Sacrament was ; he often visited It, and even spent entire nights before It. He used to weep when he saw the palaces of the great ones of this world filled with people, who courted a man from whom they hoped for some miserable earthly good, and the churches so abandoned, in which the supreme Sovereign of the world dwells, and remains with us as on a throne of love, rich in immense and eternal treasures. He used also to say, that religious persons were indeed fortunate, be-

cause in the very houses in which they reside, they can, whenever they please, either night or day, visit this great Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament; and this lay people cannot do.

Since, then, my most loving Lord, notwithstanding that Thou seest me as a leper, and so ungrateful to Thy love, Thou invitest me to approach Thee, I will not be discouraged at the sight of my miseries; I come and approach Thee; but do Thou wholly change me. Drive from me every love which is not for Thee, every desire which displeases Thee, every thought which does not tend towards Thee. My Jesus, my Love, my Treasure, my All, I am determined to please Thee alone. I will give pleasure to Thee alone. Thou alone deservest all my love; Thee alone will I love with my whole heart. Detach me from every thing, my Lord, and bind me to Thyself alone; but bind me so firmly, that I may never more be able to separate myself from Thee, either in this life or in the next.

Ejac. My most sweet Jesus, never allow me to be separated from Thee!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

Denis, the Carthusian, calls the Most Blessed Virgin 'the advocate of all the wicked who have recourse to her.' Since, then, O great Mother of God, thy office is to defend the causes of the most guilty criminals who have recourse to thee, behold me now at thy feet; to thee I have recourse, and I address thee in the words of St. Thomas of Villanova: 'O gracious advocate, fulfil thy charge.' Now quickly enter upon thy office, undertake my cause: it is true that I have indeed been guilty before my Lord, having offended Him, after the many benefits and graces He has conferred upon me; but the evil is done; thou canst save me. Thou hast only to tell thy God that thou defendest me, and then I shall be forgiven, and shall be saved.

Ejac. My dear Mother, thou hast to save me!

The usual prayer.

TWENTY-SECOND VISIT.

The Spouse in the sacred Canticles went about seeking for her Beloved; and not

finding Him, she asked all whom she met : " Have you seen Him whom my soul loveth ? " (Cant. iii. 3.) Jesus was not then on earth ; but now, if a soul which loves Him seeks Him, she can always find Him in the Most Blessed Sacrament. The venerable father, Master Avila, used to say, that amongst all sanctuaries he could neither find nor desire a more delightful one than a church in which the Most Blessed Sacrament is reserved.

O infinite love of my God, worthy of infinite love ! And how couldst Thou, my Jesus, ever abase Thyself so far as, in order to dwell amongst men, and to unite Thyself to their hearts, to humble Thyself to such a point as to conceal Thyself under the species of bread ? O incarnate Word, Thou art supreme in Thy humility, because Thou art supreme in Thy love ! How can I do otherwise than love Thee with my entire self, knowing as I do how much Thou hast done to captivate my love ? I love Thee much ; and therefore I give Thy good pleasure the preference above every interest and every satisfaction of my own. My pleasure is to give Thee pleasure, my Jesus, my God, my Love, my All. Make me hunger to be

continually in Thy presence in the Blessed Sacrament, to receive Thee into myself, and to keep Thee company. I should be indeed ungrateful, did I not accept so sweet and gracious an invitation. Ah, Lord, annihilate in me all affection for created things ! Thou wilt that Thou alone, my Creator, shouldst be the object of all my sighs, of all my love. I love Thee, most amiable goodness of my God. I ask nothing of Thee but Thyself. I desire not my own pleasure ; Thy pleasure is all my desire, and sufficient for me. Accept, my Jesus, this good desire of a sinner who wishes to love Thee. Help me by Thy grace. Grant that I, a miserable slave of hell, may from this this day forward be the happy slave of Thy love.

Ejac. I love Thee, Jesus, my Treasure, above every other treasure !

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

My most sweet Lady and Mother, I am a vile rebel to thy great Son ; but I come repentant to thy mercy, that thou mayest obtain me pardon. Say not that thou canst

not do so; for St. Bernard calls thee 'the minister of propitiation.' To thee also it belongs to succour those who are in dangers, St. Ephrem calling thee 'the helper of those in peril.' My Lady, who is in greater danger than I am? I have lost God: it is certain that I have been condemned to hell. I know not whether God has yet pardoned me. I may again lose Him. But thou canst obtain me all; and from thee I hope for every good, for forgiveness, perseverance, and heaven. I hope to be one of those who, in the kingdom of the blessed, will most praise thy mercies, O Mary, for having saved me by thy intercession.

Ejac. I will sing the mercies of Mary for all eternity; I will sing them for ever and ever! Amen, amen.

The usual prayer.

TWENTY-THIRD VISIT.

Many Christians submit to great fatigue, and expose themselves to many dangers, to visit the places in the Holy Land where our most loving Saviour was born, suffered, and

died. We need not undertake so long a journey, or expose ourselves to so many dangers ; the same Lord is near us, and dwells in the church, only a few steps distant from our houses. If pilgrims, says St. Paulinus, consider it a great thing to bring back a little dust from the crib, or from the holy sepulchre in which Jesus was buried ; with what ardour should not we visit the Most Blessed Sacrament, where the same Jesus is in person, and where we can go without encountering so much fatigue and so many dangers ! A religious person, to whom God gave great love for the Most Blessed Sacrament, amongst other things, wrote as follows in a letter : ‘ I see that every good thing that I have comes to me from the Most Blessed Sacrament. I have given and consecrated my whole self to Jesus in this Sacrament. I see innumerable graces, which are not granted because people do not go to this Divine Sacrament. I see the great desire that our Lord has to dispense His graces in the Sacrament. O holy mystery ! O sacred Host ! Where is it that God manifests His power the most, if it is not in this Host ? For this Host contains all that God has ever done for us. Let us not envy the blessed

who are in heaven, since on earth we have the same Lord, with greater wonders of His love. Endeavour that all with whom you speak should devote themselves to the Most Blessed Sacrament. I speak thus, because this Sacrament makes me beside myself. Neither can I cease speaking of the Most Blessed Sacrament, which deserves so greatly to be loved. I know not what to do for Jesus in this Sacrament.' Thus the letter ends.

O Seraphim, who remain sweetly burning with love around your and my Lord ; though it is not indeed for love of you but of me that this King of Heaven is pleased to be present in this Sacrament,—O loving Angels, let me also burn with love ; and do you enkindle your love in me, that with you I also may burn ! O my Jesus, teach me to know the greatness of the love which Thou bearest to men, that at the sight of so great love, my desire to love Thee and please Thee may go on always increasing ! I love Thee, most amiable Lord, and will always love Thee ; and this alone to please Thee.

Ejac. My Jesus, I believe in Thee, I hope in Thee, I love Thee, and I give myself to Thee !

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

Most amiable Virgin, St. Bonaventure calls thee 'the Mother of orphans;' and St. Ephrem, moreover, calls thee 'the receiver of orphans.' Alas, these wretched orphans are no others than poor sinners who have lost God! Behold, then, I have recourse to thee, most holy Mary. I have lost my Father; but thou art my Mother, who must enable me to recover Him. In this my so great misfortune I call thee to my aid; do thou succour me. Shall I remain disconsolate? No; for Innocent III., speaking of thee, asks, 'Who ever called upon her, and was not graciously heard by her?' And who ever prayed to thee, and was not heard and helped by thee? Who was ever lost who had recourse to thee? He alone is lost who has not recourse to thee. Then, my Queen, if thou desirest my salvation, enable me always to invoke and confide in thee.

Ejac. My own most holy Mary, give me confidence in thee!

The usual prayer.

TWENTY-FOURTH VISIT.

“ Verily Thou art a hidden God.” *Is.* xlv. 15.

In no other work of Divine love are these words so fully verified as in this adorable mystery of the Most Holy Sacrament, where our God is entirely hidden. When the Eternal Word took flesh, He hid His divinity, and appeared as a man on earth ; but remaining with us in this Sacrament, He hides even His humanity, and, as remarks St. Bernard, appears only under the form of bread, to show thereby the tenderness of the love which He bears us : ‘ The Divinity is hid, the Humanity is hid ; the bowels of charity alone appear.’ O my Beloved Redeemer, at the sight of the excessive tenderness Thou hast for men, I am, beside myself, my Lord, and know not what to say. In this Sacrament Thou goest so far for their love as to hide Thy majesty and lower Thy glory ; Thou goest so far as even to consume and annihilate Thy Divine life. And whilst Thou art on the altar Thou seemest to have nothing else to do than to love men, and to show them the love which Thou bearest them. And what gratitude

do they show Thee in return, O great Son of God ?

O Jesus, O too great Lover of men, allow me so to say, for I see that Thou preferrest their advantage to Thine own glory. And didst Thou not know to how much contempt this loving design of Thine would expose Thee ? I see, and before me Thou didst see it full well Thyself, that the greater part of men adore Thee not, neither will they acknowledge Thee for what Thou art in this Sacrament. I know that these very men have gone so far as to trample on the consecrated Hosts, that they have thrown them on the ground, into water, and into fire. And I see the greater part even of those who believe in Thee, O God, who, so far from repairing so many outrages by the homage of their devotion, either come to the church to offend Thee still more by their irreverences, or else abandon Thee on Thy altar, and sometimes even leave it unprovided with a lamp or the necessary ornaments !

Oh, could I, my most sweet Saviour, but wash with my tears, or even with my blood, those unhappy places in which, in this Sacrament, Thy love and Thy enamoured

Heart have been so greatly outraged ! But if so much is not granted me, I desire at least, my Lord, and determine, to visit Thee often, in order to adore Thee as I now adore Thee, and this in compensation for the insults which Thou receivest in this most Divine mystery. Accept, O Eternal Father, this scanty honour, which I, the most miserable of men, now offer Thee in reparation of the outrages offered to Thy Son in the Most Holy Sacrament ; accept it in union with that infinite honour which Jesus Christ gave Thee on the cross, and which He daily gives Thee in the Most Blessed Sacrament. O my Sacramental Jesus, would that I could fill all men with love for the Most Blessed Sacrament !

Ejac. O amiable Jesus, make Thyself known, make Thyself loved !

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

My most powerful Lady, in the midst of my misgivings as to my eternal salvation, how great is the confidence which I feel when I have recourse to thee ; and when I think that thou, my Mother, art, on the one

hand, so rich in graces, that St. John Damascene calls thee 'a sea of graces;' St. Bonaventure, 'the assemblage of graces,' that is, the source in which all graces are congregated; St. Ephrem, 'a fountain of grace and of all consolation;' and St. Bernard, 'the fulness of every good;'—and when, on the other hand, I reflect that thy desire to do us good is so great, that thou esteemest thyself offended, as St. Bonaventure says, by him who does not ask thee for thy graces: 'they sin against thee, O Lady,' he says, 'who do not ask of thee;'—O most rich, O most wise, and most merciful Queen, I see that thou knowest far better than I do the wants of my soul, and that thou lovest me far more than I can love thee! Know, then, the grace for which I now ask thee; obtain me the grace which thou knowest to be the most expedient for my soul. Ask this favour from God, and I am satisfied.

Ejac. My God, grant me the graces which Mary asks Thee for me!

The usual prayer.

TWENTY-FIFTH VISIT.

St. Paul praises the obedience of Jesus Christ, saying, that He obeyed His Eternal Father even to death : "becoming obedient even unto death" (Phil. ii. 8). But in this Sacrament He has gone still further ; for here He has been pleased to become obedient, not only to His Eternal Father, but also to man ; and not only to death, but as long as the world shall last ; so that we can say : 'He has become obedient even unto the consummation of the world.' He, the King of Heaven, comes down from heaven in obedience to man, and then seems to dwell and converse there, in order to obey men : "And I do not resist" (Is. l. 5). There He remains without moving Himself ; He allows Himself to be placed where men will, be it for exposition in the remonstrance, or to be enclosed in the tabernacle ; He allows Himself to be carried wheresoever He is borne, be it into houses or through the streets ; He allows Himself to be given in communion to whomsoever He is administered, be they just or sinners. St. Luke says, that whilst He dwelt on

earth He obeyed the Most Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph; but in this Sacrament He obeys as many creatures as there are priests on earth: "and I do not resist." Permit me now to address Thee, O most loving Heart of my Jesus, from which indeed all the Sacraments flowed forth, but principally this Sacrament of Love. I would gladly give Thee as much glory and honour as 'Thou givest in the Holy Sacrament in our churches to the Eternal Father. I know that on this altar Thou still lovest me with that same love with which Thou didst love me when Thou didst close Thy Divine life in the midst of so much anguish on the cross. O Divine Heart, enlighten all those who know Thee not with the knowledge of Thyself! Through Thy merits deliver from, or at least relieve, the pains of the afflicted souls in purgatory, who are already Thy spouses for all eternity. I adore Thee, I thank Thee, I love Thee, in union with all souls who in this moment love Thee, be they on earth or in heaven. O most pure Heart, purify my heart from all attachment to creatures, and fill it with Thy holy love! O most sweet Heart, possess my whole heart, so that from hence-

forward it may be all Thine, and always be enabled to say: "Who, then, shall separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?" (Rom. viii. 39.) Write, O most sacred Heart, upon my heart all the bitter sorrows which for so many years Thou didst endure on earth with so much love for me, that, on seeing them, I may from henceforward desire, or at least endure with patience, all the sorrows of this life. Most humble Heart of Jesus, give me a share of Thy humility. Most meek Heart, impart Thy sweetness to me. Take from my heart all that displeases Thee; convert it wholly to Thee, so that I may no longer will or desire other than what Thou wilt. In a word, grant that I may live only to obey Thee, only to love Thee, only to give Thee pleasure. I know that I, indeed, owe Thee much; and that Thou hast, indeed, placed me under great obligations: it will be but little if I consume and wear myself out for Thee.

Ejac. O Heart of Jesus, Thou art the sole Lord of my heart!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

St. Bernard says, that Mary is that heavenly ark, in which, if we take timely refuge, we shall certainly be delivered from the shipwreck of eternal damnation : ' She is the ark in which we escape shipwreck.' The ark in which Noe escaped from the general wreck of the world was indeed a type of Mary. But Hesychius says, that Mary is a more spacious, stronger, and more compassionate ark. Only a few men and a few beasts were received and saved by the former ; but Mary, our ark, receives all who take refuge under her mantle, and with certainty saves them all. Unfortunate should we be, had we not Mary ! But still, my Queen, how many are lost ! and why ? Because they have not recourse to thee. And who would ever be lost, had he recourse to thee ?

Ejac. Grant, most holy Mary, that we may all and always have recourse to thee !

The usual prayer.

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.” *Is. xii. 6.*

O God, and what joy ought not we men to conceive, what hopes and what affections, in knowing that in the midst of our land, in our churches, near our houses, the Holy of holies, the true God, dwells and lives in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar ! He who by His presence alone renders the saints in heaven blessed ! He who is love itself. ‘It is not so much that He has love, as that He is love itself,’ says St. Bernard. This Sacrament is not only a sacrament of love, but is love itself ; it is God Himself, who, for the immense love which He bears His creatures, calls Himself, and is, love itself : “God is love” (1 St. John iv. 8). But I hear Thee complain, O my Sacramental Jesus : “I was a stranger, and you took Me not in” (St. Matt. xxv. 43) ; that Thou camest on earth to be our guest for our good, and that we have not welcomed Thee. Thou art right, Lord, Thou art right ; and I am one of these ungrateful creatures who

have left Thee alone, without even visiting Thee. Chastise me as Thou pleasest ; but not by depriving me of Thy presence, which is the chastisement I deserve : no, I will repair my fault, and the indignities which I have heaped upon Thee. From this day forward I will not only visit Thee often, but will remain with Thee for as long a time as I can. O most compassionate Saviour, be pleased to make me faithful to Thee ; and grant that I may also, by my example, excite others to keep Thee company in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I hear the Eternal Father, who says : " This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased " (St. Matt. xvii. 5). A God, then, finds all His complacency in Thee ; and shall not I, a miserable worm, find mine in dwelling with Thee in this valley of tears ! O consuming Fire, destroy in me all affections for earthly things ; for they alone can render me unfaithful, and take me away from Thee. Thou canst do so, if Thou wilt : " Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean " (St. Matt. viii. 2). Thou hast already done so much for me, do this also : banish from my heart all love which does not tend towards Thee. Behold, I give

myself all to Thee : I now dedicate the whole remainder of my life to the love of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Thou, O Sacramental Jesus, hast to be my comfort, my love in life, and at the hour of my death, when Thou wilt come to be my Viaticum and my guide to Thy blessed kingdom. Amen, amen. So do I hope ; so may it be !

Ejac. When, O my Jesus, shall I behold Thy beautiful face !

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

In thee, our own most holy Mother, we find the remedy for all our woes ; in thee we find strength in our weakness ; for St. Germanus calls thee the ‘strength itself of our weakness.’ In thee we find a door by which to make our exit from the slavery of sin ; for St. Bonaventure calls thee ‘the gate of liberty.’ In thee we find our certain peace ; for the same saint calls thee ‘the safe repose of men.’ In thee we find relief in our miserable life ; thou art ‘the solace of our pilgrimage,’ as St. Laurence Justinian calls thee. In thee, in a word, we find Divine grace and God Himself ; for St.

Bonaventure calls thee 'the throne of God's grace;' and St. Proclus, 'the bridge by which God descends to men;' that happy bridge by which God, who had been driven to a distance by our sins, returns to dwell by His grace in our souls.

Ejac. O Mary, thou art my strength, my deliverance, my peace, and salvation !

The usual prayer.

TWENTY-SEVENTH VISIT.

The holy Church sings in the Office of the Most Blessed Sacrament: 'There is no other country, however great, whose gods are nigh it as our God is nigh to us.' When the Gentiles heard how far our God carried His works of love, they exclaimed: Oh, how good a God is this God of the Christians! And, indeed, notwithstanding that the Gentiles imagined their gods according to their own caprices,—yet, read history, and in all their fables, and among the many gods they invented, you will never find that they went so far as even to imagine a god as enamoured of men as is our true God; who,

to show His love for His adorers, and to enrich them with graces, has worked such a prodigy of love as to become their constant companion, and to remain night and day concealed on their altars, seeming as if He knew not how to separate Himself from them even for a moment : " He hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works " (Ps. cx. 4). Thou, then, my most sweet Jesus, hast been pleased to work the greatest of Thy miracles in order to satisfy the excessive desire which Thou hast to remain always near and present to us. Why, then, do men fly from Thy presence ? And how can they live for so long a time at a distance from Thee, or visit Thee so seldom ? How is it, that when in Thy presence they get so weary that a quarter of an hour appears an age ? Oh, patience of my Jesus, how great art Thou ! Yes, my Lord, I understand Thee ; Thy patience is great, because the love Thou bearest to men is great : and this it is which, so to say, forces Thee to dwell always in the midst of such ungrateful creatures.

Ah, my God, who, because Thou art infinite in perfections, art also infinite in love, permit not that I should for the future be,

as I have hitherto been, of the number of these ungrateful ones. Grant me a love equal to Thy merits and to my own obligations. At one time I also was weary in Thy presence, either because I loved Thee not, or because I loved Thee too little ; but if by Thy grace I am enabled to love Thee much, I shall no longer find it tedious to remain even for whole days and nights at Thy feet in the Most Holy Sacrament. O Eternal Father, I offer Thee Thine own Son Himself ; accept Him for me, and through His merits give me so ardent and tender a love towards the Most Blessed Sacrament, that, constantly turning towards some church in which He dwells, I may think of, and desire with longing anxiety, the time when I may be able to go and entertain myself in His presence.

Ejac. My God, for the love of Jesus, give me a great love towards the Most Blessed Sacrament !

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

Mary is that tower of David, of which the Holy Ghost says in the sacred Canticles :
 “ It is built with bulwarks ; a thousand

bucklers hang upon it, all the armour of valiant men" (Cant. iv. 4). A tower built with a thousand fortresses, and containing a thousand shields and weapons, for the benefit of those who have recourse to it. Thou art, then, O most holy Mary, a most powerful defence for all those who are engaged in battle. Oh, how constantly are my enemies attacking me, in order to deprive me of the grace of God and of thy protection, my most dear Lady! But thou art my strength. Thou, indeed, dost not disdain to battle for those who trust in thee; for St. Ephrem calls thee 'the bulwark of all who confide in thee.' Do thou, then, defend and fight for me, who have such great hope and confidence in thee.

Ejac. Mary, Mary, thy name is my defence!

The usual prayer.

TWENTY-EIGHTH VISIT.

God, having given us His own Son, says St. Paul, what good thing is there that we can fear He might deny us? "How hath He not also with Him given us all things?"

(Rom. viii. 32.) We know, indeed, that all that the Eternal Father has He has given to Jesus Christ: "The Father has given Him all things into His hands" (St. John xiii. 3). Let us, then, ever thank the goodness, the mercy, the liberality of our most loving God, who has been pleased to make us rich in all good things, and in every grace, by giving us Jesus in the Sacrament of the Altar: "In all things you are made rich in Him, . . . so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace" (1 Cor. i. 5, 7).

Therefore, O Saviour of the world, O Incarnate Word, if I desire to have Thee, I can really think that Thou art mine, and all mine. But can I at the same time say that I am all Thine, as Thou desirest? Ah, my Lord, prevent it; and never let the world witness such disorder and such ingratitude, as that I should not be Thine when Thou desirest me!

Ah, no; let it never be! If it has been so hitherto, let it never be so again. I now, with the utmost determination, consecrate myself entirely to Thee; for time and eternity I consecrate my life, my will, my thoughts, my actions, my sufferings, to Thee. Behold me all Thine; as a victim

consecrated to Thee, I bid farewell to creatures, and offer my whole self to Thee. Consume me with the flames of Thy Divine love. No, I am determined that creatures shall no longer share my heart. The proofs which Thou hast given me of the love which Thou bearest me, even at a time when I did not love Thee, make me hope that Thou certainly acceptest me now that I love Thee, and out of love give myself to Thee.

Eternal Father, I now offer Thee all the virtues, the actions, the affections, of the Heart of Thy dear Jesus. Accept them, and by His merits, which are all mine—for He has given them to me,—grant me the graces which Jesus asks Thee for me. With these merits I thank Thee for the many mercies which Thou hast shown me ; with these I satisfy for what I owe Thee for my sins ; through these I hope for every grace from Thee,—pardon, perseverance, Paradise, and above all, the crowning gift of Thy pure love. I well see that to all these gifts I myself place impediments ; but do Thou also remedy this. I ask it of Thee in the name of Jesus Christ, who has promised, "Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, that will I do" (St. John xiv. 13,

14). Then Thou canst not refuse me. Lord, my only desire is to love Thee, to give myself to Thee without reserve, and no longer to be ungrateful to Thee, as I have hitherto been. Behold me, and graciously hear me; grant that this may be the day of my entire conversion to Thee, so that I may never more cease to love Thee. I love Thee, my God! I love Thee, Infinite Goodness! I love Thee, my Love, my Paradise, my Good, my Life, my All!

Ejac. My Jesus, who art all mine, Thou desirest me, and I desire Thee!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

What relief do I feel in my miseries, and what consolation in my tribulations, what strength do I not find in the midst of temptations, when I remember and call thee to my aid, O my most sweet and most holy Mother, Mary! Yes, indeed, you were right, O ye Saints, in calling my Lady 'the haven of those who are in tribulation,' with St. Ephrem; 'the repairer of our calamities,' and 'the solace of the miserable,' with St. Bonaventure; and 'the rest from our mourn-

ings,' with St. Germanus. My own Mary, do thou console me. I see myself loaded with sins, and surrounded by enemies; without virtue, and cold in my love towards God. Comfort me, comfort me; and let my consolation be to make me begin a new life, a life which will be really pleasing to thy Son and to thee.

Ejac. Change me, O Mary my Mother: change me; thou canst do it!

The usual prayer.

TWENTY-NINTH VISIT.

"Behold, I stand at the gate, and knock." *Apoc.*
iii. 20.

O most loving Shepherd, who, not satisfied with sacrificing Thyself once to death on the altar of the Cross for the love of Thy sheep, hast moreover been pleased to hide Thyself in this Divine Sacrament on the altars of our churches, to be always nearer to, and to knock at the doors of our hearts, and thus obtain Thy admission! Ah, did I but know how to enjoy Thy nearness to me as did the Sacred Spouse

in the Canticles, who says: "I sat down under His shadow, whom I desired" (Cant. ii. 3). Ah, did I but love Thee, did I but really love Thee, my most amiable Sacrament, I also should wish never to leave the foot of a tabernacle either night or day; and fixing myself near Thy Majesty, concealed under the apparent shadow of the sacred species, I also should find those Divine sweetnesses and that happiness which souls enamoured of Thee there find. Ah, do Thou be graciously pleased to draw me by the odour of Thy beauties, and of the immense love which Thou manifestest in this Sacrament: "Draw me: we will run after Thee to the odour of Thy ointments" (Cant. i. 3). Yes, my Saviour, I will leave creatures and all earthly pleasures, to run after Thee in this Sacrament: "As olive-plants, round about Thy table" (Ps. cxxvii. 3). Oh, what abundant fruits of virtues do those happy souls, like olive-plants, bring forth to God, who assist with love before the sacred tabernacle! But I am ashamed to appear before Thee, O my Jesus, so naked and so devoid of all virtues. Thou hast commanded that all who approach the altar to honour Thee should present a gift: "Thou shalt

not appear empty before Me" (Ex. xxiii. 15). What, then, am I to do? Am I no more to appear before Thee? Ah, no; this would not please Thee. Poor as I am, I will approach Thee; and do Thou provide me with the gifts which Thou desirest. I see that Thou dwellest in the Sacrament, not only to reward Thy lovers, but also to provide for the poor out of Thy riches.

Be it so, then; let us now begin. I adore Thee, O King of my heart, and true Lover of men. O Shepherd, loving Thy sheep beyond all bounds, to this Throne of Thy love I now approach; and having nothing else to present to Thee, I offer Thee my miserable heart, that it may be entirely consecrated to Thy love and to Thy good pleasure. With this heart I can love Thee, and I will love Thee as much as I can. Draw it, then, to Thyself, and bind it wholly to Thy will, so that, filled with consolation, it may be able from henceforth to say, as Thy dear disciple said, that it is bound by the chains of Thy love: "I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ" (Eph. iii. 1). Unite me, my Lord, entirely to Thyself, and make me forget myself, that I may have the happiness one day to lose all things, and even

myself, to find Thee alone, and to love Thee for ever. I love Thee, my Sacramental Lord ; to Thee do I bind myself, to Thee do I unite myself ; make me find Thee, make me love Thee, and never more separate Thyself from me.

Ejac. My Jesus, Thou alone art sufficient for me !

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

St. Bernard calls Mary ‘ the royal road of the Saviour ;’ the safe road by which to find the Saviour and salvation. Since, then, it is true, O Queen, that thou art, as the same Saint says, ‘ the chariot in which our souls go to God,’—the one who guides us to Him,—ah, Lady, thou must not suppose that I shall advance towards God, if thou dost not carry me in thine arms ! Carry me, carry me ; and if I resist, carry me by main force ; do all the violence that thou canst by the sweet attractions of thy charity to my soul and to my rebellious will, that they may leave creatures, to seek for God alone and His Divine will. Show the court of heaven the greatness of thy power. After so many wonders of thy mercy, show this one more :

make a poor creature who was far from God wholly His.

Ejac. O Mary, thou canst make me a saint ; I hope for this grace from thee !

The usual prayer.

THIRTIETH VISIT.

“ Why hidest Thou Thy face ? ” *Job* xiii. 24.

Job feared when he saw that God hid His face : but to know that Jesus Christ veils His Majesty in the Most Blessed Sacrament should not inspire us with fear, but rather with greater love and confidence ; since it is precisely to increase our confidence, and with greater evidence to manifest His love, that He remains on our altars concealed under the appearance of bread. Novarinus says : ‘ that whilst God hides His face in this Sacrament, He discloses His love.’ And who would ever dare approach Him with confidence, and lay bare before Him his affections and desires, did this King of Heaven appear on our altars in the splendour of His glory ?

Ah, my Jesus ! what loving invention was this of the Most Blessed Sacrament, to hide Thyself under the appearance of bread, in order to make Thyself loved, and that Thou mightest be found on earth by all who desire Thee ! The prophet was right in saying that men should speak and raise their voices throughout the world, in order to make known to all men to what an excess the inventions of the love of our good God go for us : " Make His works known among the people " (Is. xxi. 4). O most loving Heart of my Jesus, worthy to possess the hearts of all creatures,—Heart all and ever full of flames of most pure love ! O consuming Fire, consume me all, and give me a new life of love and grace ! Unite me to Thyself in such a way that I may never more be separated from Thee. O Heart, opened to be the refuge of souls, receive me ! O Heart, which on the Cross wast so agonised for the sins of the world, give me true sorrow for my sins ! I know that in this Sacrament Thou preservest the same sentiments of love for me which thou hadst for me when dying on Calvary ; and therefore Thou hast an ardent desire to unite me wholly to Thyself. And is it pos-

sible that I should any longer resist yielding up my entire self to Thy love and to Thy desire? Ah, by Thy merits, my beloved Jesus, be pleased Thyself to wound me, to bind me, to force me, to unite me in all things to Thy Heart. I am now determined by Thy grace to give Thee all the pleasure that I possibly can, by trampling under foot all human respects, inclinations, repugnances, all my tastes and conveniences, which may prevent me from entirely pleasing Thee. Do Thou, my Lord, so help me, that I may execute this determination in such a way, that henceforward all my works, opinions, and affections, may be all in conformity with Thy good pleasure. O Love of God, do Thou drive all other loves from my heart! O Mary, my hope, thou art all-powerful with God, obtain me the grace to be a faithful servant of the pure love of Jesus until death. Amen, amen. So I hope; so may it be in time and in eternity!

Ejac. Who shall separate me from the love of Christ!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

St. Bernard affirms, that the love of Mary towards us cannot be greater or more powerful than it is ; hence by her affection she is always abundant in her compassion for us, and by her power she is plentiful in the relief she affords us : ‘ The most powerful and compassionate charity of the Mother of God abounds in tender compassion, and in kind relief : she is equally rich in both.’ So that, my most pure Queen, thou art rich in power, and rich in compassion ; thou art able to, and desirest to save all. I therefore beseech thee, now and always, in the words of the devout Blossius, saying : ‘ O Lady ! protect me in my combats, and confirm me when I am wavering.’ O most holy Mary, in this great battle in which I am now engaged with hell, do thou always help me ; but when thou seest me wavering and likely to fall, O my Lady ! do thou then extend thy hand with greater promptitude, and sustain me with greater vigour. O God ! how many temptations have I still to overcome before my death ! Mary, my hope, my refuge, my strength, do thou protect me, and never allow me to lose the

grace of God. And on my part, I resolve always and instantly to have recourse to thee in all temptations, saying :

Ejac. Help me, Mary ! Mary, help me !

The usual prayer.

THIRTY-FIRST VISIT.

Oh, how beautiful a sight was it to behold our sweet Redeemer on that day when, fatigued by His journey, He sat down, all engaging and loving, beside the well to await the Samaritan woman, that He might convert and save her ! “ Jesus, therefore, sat thus on the well ” (St. John iv. 6). It is precisely thus that this same Lord seems sweetly to dwell with us all the day long, having come down from heaven upon our altars as upon so many fountains of graces, where He awaits and invites souls to keep Him company, at least for a while, that He may thus draw them to His perfect love. From every altar on which Jesus remains in the Most Holy Sacrament He seems to speak and address all, saying : O men ! why do you fly My presence ? Why do you not

come and draw near to Me, who love you so much, and who remain thus annihilated for your sakes? Why do you fear? I am not now come on earth to judge; but I have hid Myself in this Sacrament of love only to do good, and to save all who have recourse to Me: "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" (St. John xii. 47).

Let us, then, understand, 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 continually, both night and day, exercising the compassionate office of our Advocate; offering Himself as a Victim for us to the Eternal Father, thus to obtain for us His mercies and innumerable graces. Therefore the devout Thomas à Kempis says, that we ought to approach and converse with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament without the fear of chastisement, and unrestrained, as to a beloved friend, 'as one who loves speaks to his beloved, as a friend to a friend.'

Since, then, Thou thus givest me permission, let me, O my hidden King and Lord, now open my heart to Thee with confidence, and say: O my Jesus! O enamoured of

souls, I well know the injustice that men do Thee. Thou lovest them, and art not beloved by them; Thou doest good, and receivest contempt; Thou desirest to make them hear Thy voice, and they give Thee no ear; Thou offerest them thy graces, and they refuse them. Ah, my Jesus! and is it true that I also at one time joined these ungrateful creatures in thus displeasing Thee? O God, it is but too true! But I am determined to amend, and to endeavour, during the time that I still have to live, to make up for the displeasure which I have caused Thee, by doing all that I possibly can to please Thee and to give Thee pleasure. Tell me, Lord, what Thou askest of me, I will execute all without any reserve: make it known to me by the means of holy obedience, and I hope to do it. My God, I now resolutely promise Thee that I will never, from this day forward, omit any thing which I know to be, rather than another, pleasing to Thee, even were I thereby to lose all,—parents, friends, esteem, health, and even life. Let all perish, provided Thou art pleased: happy is that loss, when all is lost and sacrificed to satisfy Thy Heart, O God of my soul! I love Thee, O Sove-

reign Good, worthy of love above every other good; and in loving Thee I unite my poor heart to all the hearts with which the seraphim love Thee; I unite it to the heart of Mary, to the Heart of Jesus. I love Thee with my entire self; Thee alone will I love, and Thee alone will I always love.

Ejac. My God, my God! I am Thine, and Thou art mine!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

Blessed Amadeus says, that our most blessed Queen, Mary, is always in the Divine presence, acting as our advocate, and interposing with God by her prayers, which are most powerful: 'The most blessed Virgin stands before the face of her Creator, interceding with her most powerful prayers for us. For,' he adds, 'she well sees our miseries and our dangers, and the most clement and sweet Lady compassionates and succours us with a mother's love.' Thou, my Advocate and my most loving Mother, thou even now seest the miseries of my soul; thou seest my dangers, and prayest for me. Pray, pray, and cease not to pray,

until thou seest me saved and thanking thee in heaven. The devout Blossius tells me that thou, O most sweet Mary, art, after Jesus, the certain salvation of those who are thy faithful servants. Ah! this grace I now ask thee: grant me the happy lot of being thy faithful servant until death; that after death I may go to bless thee in heaven, where I shall be certain never more, as long as God is God, to leave thy sacred feet.

Ejac. O Mary, my Mother, grant that I may be ever thine!

The usual prayer.

My Good, my God, all mine Thou art;
Myself I give Thee, all my heart;
For Thee, and Thee alone, I sigh.

“What have I in heaven? and besides 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).

DEVOUT ACTS

TO BE MADE IN THE VISITS TO THE MOST BLESSED
SACRAMENT AND TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

When the visit is publicly made with the congregation, the priest should read these Acts with a loud voice, and sentence by sentence, so that the people may repeat them after him.

RENEW, my soul, thy faith and confidence. Thou art now in the presence of the infinite Majesty of thy God, who was once pleased, for thy love, to come down from heaven and become Man on earth, and to die on a cross to save thee ; and is now in the Most Blessed Sacrament, all love, to listen to and grant thee those graces which thou askest of Him. Speak to Him, then, and say :

ACT OF FAITH AND ADORATION.

My God, I believe all that the Holy Church teaches me to believe, because Thou, who art infallible truth, hast revealed it. I believe that Thou art the Creator and Lord of heaven and earth, who eternally rewardest the just in paradise, and chastisest sinners

in hell. I believe that Thou art one God in essence, but three in Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I believe, O Eternal Son of God, that Thou didst take flesh, and didst become Man in the womb of Mary, and that Thou didst die on a cross for our salvation, and that Thou art now present in the Most Blessed Sacrament, to feed us with Thy most Sacred Flesh in the Holy Communion, and to hear and grant our prayers when we come to visit Thee on the altar. Prostrate, then, at Thy feet, I, a miserable sinner, unworthy to appear before Thee, only fit for hell, which I have so often deserved, adore Thee, O Infinite Majesty, and unite my adoration to that which all the Angels and Saints of heaven, together with the most holy Virgin Mary, now offer Thee.

ACT OF HOPE.

My dear Redeemer, relying on Thy promises, and because Thou art faithful, powerful, and merciful, I hope, through the merits of Thy Passion, for the forgiveness of my sins, perseverance until death in Thy grace; and at length I hope, by Thy mercy, to see Thee and love Thee eternally in heaven.

ACT OF LOVE.

My own dear God, because Thou art an infinite good, and worthy of infinite love, I love Thee with my whole heart, and above all things ; and I desire to see Thee loved by all men on earth as much as Thou deservest. I rejoice that Thou art and wilt be infinitely happy for all eternity.

ACT OF CONTRITION, AND PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT.

My beloved Redeemer, had I for Thy sake abandoned all, had I spent my entire life in a desert, and at length died of torments endured for love of Thee, it would still have been nothing, when compared with the cruel death which Thou, my God, wast pleased to endure for love of me. But what has my conduct towards Thee been hitherto ? I have paid Thee with ingratitude ; instead of loving Thee, I have so often offended Thee. I have turned my back upon Thee, and ungratefully despised Thy grace and Thy love. I am sorry, my Jesus, and from the bottom of my heart am grieved for having offended Thee, O Infinite Goodness ! Oh, that I had rather died, and thus never displeased Thee ! I hate

and detest above every evil all the injuries which I have committed against Thee. My Lord, I promise Thee, and now determine rather to die than ever more to offend Thee; I also determine to receive the holy Sacraments during my life and at my death. I am resolved, O Infinite Majesty, to spend the whole remainder of my life, be it long or short, in loving Thee, my only good, who art amiable above every other good. But, O God of my soul, what will be the use of all my promises, if Thou dost not help me? Without Thy aid I shall again betray Thee worse than ever. I ask Thee, then, for this grace, and I hope for it through the merits of Thy Passion; give me holy perseverance, and never again permit me to separate myself from Thee. Grant that I may rather die than again have the misfortune to incur Thy displeasure.

ACT OF THANKSGIVING.

My Jesus, I thank Thee for all the graces which Thou hast granted me; for having created me, for having redeemed me with Thy precious Blood, and for having made me a Christian by the Sacrament of Bap-

tism ; for having borne with me for so long a time when I was at enmity with Thee. Unfortunate, indeed, would my lot have been, had I then died ; I should now have been in hell ; there, O my God, I should now be for ever lost, and unable to love Thee. I thank Thee, then, for having awaited me with so much patience, and for having (as I trust) pardoned me with so much mercy. I thank Thee especially for dwelling in the Most Blessed Sacrament, and for having given me Thy entire Self as my Food so many times in the Holy Communion, and for now admitting me to Thy Presence. I thank Thee for all ; and I hope to thank Thee in a still more becoming manner for all eternity in heaven, where I hope to sing Thy mercies for ever.

OFFERING.

My Jesus, for love of me Thou wast pleased to die a shameful and cruel death on an infamous gibbet ; what return can I make to Thee for so great love ? I can make no other than the offering of my entire self. Yes, my Lord, I offer and consecrate my whole self to Thee. I give Thee my soul, my body, and my will, resigning

myself in all and for ever to Thy most holy will. Do with me what Thou pleasest. Make me ever love Thee in this life and in the next ; do this, and then dispose of me and of every thing I have as Thou wilt. Tell me what Thou askest of me ; for with Thy grace I will execute it, be it what it may.

PRAYER.

I recommend to Thee, O Lord, the Sovereign Pontiff, and all bishops and priests ; grant them the spirit of their state, so that they may sanctify the world. I recommend to Thee infidels, heretics, and all sinners ; grant them light and strength to renounce sin, that they may live only to love Thee, the Sovereign Good. I recommend to Thee all who are in their last agony, my relations, benefactors, and friends. I also recommend my enemies to Thee in an especial manner, because such is Thy command : make them happy and saints. I recommend the holy souls in purgatory to Thee ; relieve them in their sufferings, and shorten the time of their exile, that they may soon go to enjoy Thee in heaven.

And now, O Jesus, hidden in the Most Blessed Sacrament, I pray to Thee for my-

self; from the throne of love on which Thou art on this altar, grant me by Thy merits great sorrow for my sins, and the forgiveness of all the offences which I have committed against Thee. Grant me holy humility and meekness, that I may bear all insults and persecutions with patience. Grant me the grace to mortify myself in all which is displeasing to Thee. Grant me perfect resignation to Thy holy will, so that I may with interior peace embrace all crosses which come to me from Thy hands. Grant me light to know, and strength to execute Thy holy will. Grant me great confidence in Thy most holy Passion, and in the patronage of Thy most holy Mother Mary. Grant me the supreme gift of Thy holy love, together with a great desire to love and please Thee; so that from henceforward I may always repeat the words which I now address to Thee, 'My God, Thee alone do I desire, and nothing more.' Grant me perseverance until death in Thy love, so that I may never again have the misfortune to lose Thy holy grace. Above all, I beseech Thee to help me always to seek for this holy perseverance from Thee, by always recommending myself to Thee and to Thy

holy Mother, more especially when I am tempted to offend Thee, saying, 'Jesus and Mary, Jesus and Mary, help me!' Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Thy Son, grant me all these graces.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

My Jesus, I love Thee with my whole heart, and I wish to live always united to Thee. As I cannot now receive Thee sacramentally, I receive Thee in spirit. Come, then, into my soul; I embrace Thee, and I unite my entire self to Thee; and I beseech Thee never more to allow me to be separated from Thee.

The Litany of the Blessed Virgin can now be recited, and followed by the hymn Pange lingua.

Sing, my tongue, the Saviour's glory,
Of His flesh the mystery sing;
Of the Blood, all price exceeding,
Shed by our Immortal King,
Destin'd, for the world's redemption,
From a noble womb to spring.

Down in adoration falling,
Lo, the Sacred Host we hail;
Lo, o'er ancient forms departing
Newer rites of grace prevail;
Faith for all defects supplying,
Where the feeble senses fail.

V. Thou gavest them bread from heaven.
R. Containing in itself every delight.

Let us pray.

O God, who, under a wonderful Sacrament, hast left us a memorial of Thy Passion ; grant us, we beseech Thee, so to venerate the sacred mysteries of Thy Body and Blood, that we may ever feel within us the fruit of Thy redemption, who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

VISIT TO THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

O great Queen of heaven, most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary, I, a miserable sinner, salute and worship thee as the Mother of my God. Thou, of all creatures, art the most beautiful, the most holy, the most amiable, and the most beloved of God ; I love thee, my Lady, and, after God, I love thee above every other thing, and I should like to see thee loved by all. In the highest degree I rejoice at thy greatness, and I thank our Lord who has exalted thee so much. I also thank thee, my Mother, for the many graces which thou hast obtained for me from God during the whole course of my

life. I devote myself to thee for thy perpetual servant, and I place myself under thy mantle. In thee do I place my hopes. Accept me, my Queen, and reject me not, as I deserve. I know that thou art so powerful with God, that He refuses thee nothing that thou askest Him. O Mother of mercy, O Refuge of sinners, I place my soul in thy hands ; do thou pity me ! Recommend me to thy Son, and obtain me pardon for all my sins, the love of God, and holy perseverance, that so I may live and die in His grace. Above all, I beseech thee to obtain me the grace ever to recommend myself to thee, and especially whenever I am tempted to offend God. Help me always, in life and in death. My Mother, to thee do I trust. The merits of Jesus thy Son, and thou, by thy intercession, have to save me. Amen. So I hope ; so may it be.

ACTS FOR HOLY COMMUNION.

PREPARATION FOR COMMUNION.

St. Francis of Sales says, that our Saviour can never be seen more amiable and more tender, in all that He has done for us, than in the Holy Communion, in which He, so to say, annihilates Himself and becomes food, that He may unite Himself to the hearts and bodies of His faithful. Therefore the learned Gerson used also to say, that there was no means more efficacious than the Holy Communion whereby to enkindle devotion and the holy love of God in our souls.

And, indeed, if we speak of doing something agreeable to God, what can a soul do more agreeable to Him than to receive Communion? St. Denis teaches us that love always tends towards perfect union; but how can a soul be more perfectly united with Jesus than in the manner of which He speaks Himself, saying: "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him" (St. John vi. 57). St. Augustine says, that if every day you receive this Sacrament, Jesus will be always with you, and that you will always advance in Divine love.

Again, if there is question of healing our spiritual infirmities, what more certain remedy can we have than the Holy Communion, which is called by the sacred Council of Trent 'a remedy whereby we may be freed from daily faults, and be preserved from mortal sins.'

Whence does it come, asks Cardinal Bona, that in so many souls we see so little fruit with such frequent Communions, and that they constantly relapse into the same faults? He replies: 'The fault is not in the food, but in the disposition of him who receives.' "Can a man," says Solomon, "hide fire in his bosom, and his garments not burn?" (Prov. vi. 27.) "God is a consuming fire." He comes Himself in the Holy Communion to enkindle this Divine fire; how is it, then, says William of Paris, that we see such a diabolical miracle as that souls should remain cold in Divine Love in the midst of such flames?

All comes from the want of proper dispositions, and especially from want of preparation. Fire immediately inflames dry but not green wood; for this latter is not disposed to burn. The Saints derived great benefit from their Communions, because

they prepared themselves with very great care. St. Aloysius Gonzaga devoted three days to his preparation for Holy Communion, and three days he spent in thanksgiving to his Lord.

To prepare well for Holy Communion, a soul should be disposed on two main points : it should be detached from creatures, and have a great desire to advance in Divine Love.

In the first place, then, a soul should detach itself from all things, and drive every thing from its heart which is not God. "He that is washed," saith Jesus, "needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly" (St. John xiii. 10); which signifies, as St. Bernard explains it, that in order to receive this Sacrament with great fruit, we should not only be cleansed from mortal sins, but that our feet also should be washed, that is, free from earthly affections ; for being in contact with the earth, they excite a sort of repugnance in God, and soiling the soul, prevent the effects of the Holy Communion.

St. Gertrude asked our Lord what preparation He required of her for the Holy Communion ; and He replied : ' I only ask that thou shouldst come empty of thyself, to receive Me.'

In the second place, it is necessary, in the Holy Communion, to have a great desire to receive Jesus Christ and His holy love. In this sacred banquet, says Gerson, only those who are famishing receive their fill ; and the most blessed Virgin Mary had already said the same thing : " He hath filled the hungry with good things " (St. Luke i. 53). As Jesus, writes the Venerable Father Avila, only came into this world after He had been much and long desired, so does He only enter a soul which desires Him ; for it is not becoming that such food should be given to him who has a loathing for it. Our Lord one day said to St. Matilda : ' No bee flies with such impetuosity to flowers, to suck their honey, as I fly to souls in the Holy Communion, driven by the violence of My love.' Since, then, Jesus Christ has so great a desire to come into our souls, it is right that we also should have a great desire to receive Him and His Divine Love by the Holy Communion. St. Francis of Sales teaches us, that the principal object which a soul should have in view in communicating should be, to advance in the love of God ; since He who, for love alone gives Himself to us, should be received for love.

ACTS BEFORE COMMUNION.

I. *Acts of Faith*.—"Behold He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills" (Cant. ii. 8). Ah, my most amiable Saviour, over how many, what rough and craggy mountains hast Thou had to pass in order to come and unite Thyself to me by the means of this Most Holy Sacrament! Thou, from being God, hadst to become Man; from being immense, to become a babe; from being Lord, to become a servant. Thou hadst to pass from the bosom of Thy Eternal Father to the womb of a Virgin; from heaven into a stable; from a throne of glory to the gibbet of a criminal. And on this very morning Thou wilt come from Thy seat in heaven to dwell in my bosom.

"Behold He standeth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices" (Cant. ii. 9). Behold, O my soul, thy loving Jesus, burning with the same love with which He loved thee when dying for thee on the Cross, is now concealed in the Most Blessed Sacrament under the sacred species; and what doing? "Looking through the lattices." As an ardent lover, desirous to see his love corre-

sponded with, from the Host, as from within closed lattices, whence He sees without being seen, He is looking at you, who are this morning about to feed upon His Divine Flesh; He observes your thoughts, what it is that you love, what you desire, what you seek for, and what offerings you are about to make Him.

Awake, then, my soul, and prepare to receive thy Jesus; and, in the first place, by faith, say to Him: So, then, my beloved Redeemer, in a few moments Thou art coming to me? O hidden God, unknown to the greater part of men, I believe, I confess, I adore Thee in the Most Holy Sacrament as my Lord and Saviour! And in acknowledgment of this truth I would willingly lay down my life. Thou comest to enrich me with Thy graces and to unite Thyself all to me; how great, then, should be my confidence in this Thy so loving visit!

II. *Act of Confidence.*—My soul, expand thy heart. Thy Jesus can do thee every good, and, indeed, loves thee. Hope thou for great things from this thy Lord, who, urged by love, comes all love to thee. Yes, my dear Jesus, my Hope, I trust in Thy good-

ness, that, in giving Thyself to me this morning, Thou wilt enkindle in my poor heart the beautiful flame of Thy pure love, and a real desire to please Thee ; so that, from this day forward, I may never will any thing but what Thou wilt.

III. *Act of Love.*—Ah, my God, my God, true and only Love of my soul, and what more couldst Thou have done to be loved by me ? To die for me was not enough for Thee, my Lord ; Thou wast pleased to institute this great Sacrament in order to give Thyself all to me, and thus bind and unite Thyself heart to heart with so loathsome and ungrateful a creature as I am. And what is more, Thou Thyself invitest me to receive Thee, and desirest so much that I should do so ! O boundless love ! incomprehensible love ! infinite love ! a God would give Himself all to me !

My soul, believest thou this ? And what doest thou ? what sayest thou ? O God, O God, O infinite amiability, only worthy object of all loves, I love Thee with my whole heart, I love Thee above all things, I love Thee more than myself, more than my life ! Oh, could I but see Thee loved

by all ! Oh, could I but cause Thee to be loved by all hearts as much as Thou deservest ! I love Thee, O most amiable God, and I unite my miserable heart in loving Thee to the hearts of the Seraphim, to the heart of the most blessed Virgin Mary, to the Heart of Jesus, thy most loving and beloved Son. So that, O Infinite Good, I love Thee with the love with which the Saints, with which Mary, with which Jesus love Thee. And I love Thee only because Thou art worthy of it, and to give Thee pleasure. Depart, all earthly affections, which are not for God, depart from my heart. Mother of fair love, most holy Virgin Mary, help me to love that God whom Thou dost so ardently desire to see loved !

IV. *Act of Humility.*—Then, my soul, thou art even now about to feed on the most sacred Flesh of Jesus ! And art thou worthy ? My God, and who am I, and who art Thou ? I indeed know and confess whom Thou art who givest Thyself to me ; but dost Thou know what I am who am about to receive Thee ?

And is it possible, O my Jesus, that Thou who art infinite purity desirest to come and

reside in this soul of mine, which has been so many times the dwelling of Thy enemy, and soiled with so many sins? I know, O my Lord, Thy great Majesty and my misery; I am ashamed to appear before Thee. Reverence would induce me to keep at a distance from Thee; but if I depart from Thee, O my life, whither shall I go? to whom shall I have recourse? and what will become of me? No, never will I depart from Thee; nay, even I will ever draw nearer and nearer to Thee. Thou art satisfied that I should receive Thee as food, Thou even invitest me to this. I come then, O my amiable Saviour, I come to receive Thee this morning, all humbled and confused at the sight of my defects; but full of confidence in Thy tender mercy, and in the love which Thou bearest me.

V. *Act of Contrition.* — I am indeed grieved, O God of my soul, for not having loved Thee during the time past; still worse, so far from loving Thee, and to gratify my own inclinations, I have greatly offended and outraged Thy infinite goodness: I have turned my back against Thee, I have despised Thy grace and friendship; in fine, O

my God, I was deliberately in the will to lose Thee. Lord, I am sorry, and grieve for it with my whole heart. I detest the sins which I have committed, be they great or small, as the greatest of all my misfortunes, because I have thereby offended Thee, O Infinite Goodness. I trust that Thou hast already forgiven me ; but if Thou hast not yet pardoned me, oh, do so before I receive Thee: wash with Thy Blood this soul of mine, in which Thou art so soon about to dwell.

VI. *Act of Desire.*—And now, my soul, the blessed hour is arrived in which Jesus will come and take up His dwelling in thy poor heart. Behold the King of Heaven, behold thy Redeemer and God, who is even now coming ; prepare thyself to receive Him with love, invite Him with the ardour of thy desire ; come, O my Jesus, come to my soul, which desires Thee. Before Thou givest Thyself to me, I desire to give Thee, and I now give Thee, my miserable heart ; do Thou accept it, and come quickly to take possession of it.

Come, my God ! hasten ; delay no longer. My only and Infinite Good, my Treasure,

my Life, my Paradise, my Love, my All, my wish is to receive Thee with the love with which the most holy and loving souls have received Thee ; with that with which the most blessed Virgin Mary received Thee ; with their communions I unite this one of mine.

Most holy Virgin and my Mother Mary, behold, I already approach to receive thy Son. Would that I had the heart and love with which thou didst communicate ! Give me this morning thy Jesus, as thou didst give Him to the shepherds and to the kings. I intend to receive Him from thy most pure hands. Tell Him that I am thy servant and thy client ; for He will thus look upon me with a more loving eye, and, now that He is coming, will press me more closely to Himself.

THANKSGIVING AFTER COMMUNION.

There is no prayer more agreeable to God, or more profitable to the soul, than that which is made during the thanksgiving after Communion. It is the opinion of many grave writers (Suarez, Gaetano, Valenza, De Lugo, and others), that the Holy Communion, so long as the sacramental species

lasts, constantly produces greater and greater graces in the soul, provided the soul is then constant in disposing itself by new acts of virtue. The Council of Florence, in the decree of Eugenius IV. to the Armenians, teaches that the Blessed Sacrament produces the same effect in the soul as material food, which, when it enters the body, takes effect according to the state in which it finds it.

For this reason, holy souls endeavour to remain as long as possible in prayer after Communion. The Venerable Father Avila, even when he was giving his missions, used to remain for at least two hours in prayer. Father Balthasar Alvarez used to say, that we should make great account of the time after Communion, imagining that we hear from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself the words which He addressed to His disciples: "But Me you have not always with you."

It is not advisable, as many do, to begin to read immediately after Communion: it is then better to spend at least a short time in producing holy affections, and in conversing with Jesus, who is then within us, and in repeating many times words of tender-

ness, or some feeling prayer. Jesus Christ repeated the same prayer in the garden three times: "And He prayed the third time, saying the self-same word" (St. Matt. xxvi. 44). In affections and prayers it is, then, that the soul should entertain itself with Jesus after Communion; for we must know, that the acts formed in prayer after Communion are far more precious and meritorious in the sight of God than when made at another time; for the soul being then united with Jesus, the value of the acts is increased by the presence of Jesus. We should, moreover, know, that after Communion Jesus Christ is more disposed to grant graces. St. Teresa says, that after Communion Jesus places Himself in the soul as on a throne of grace, and then says: "What willest thou that I should do for thee?" meaning, O soul, I am come for the express purpose of granting thee graces; ask Me what thou wilt, and as much as thou willest, thou shalt receive all.

Oh, what treasures of grace would you receive, devout soul, if you only entertained yourself with Jesus for an hour, or at least half an hour, after Communion! For this purpose you can read the following acts.

Be also careful after your prayer is ended to keep yourself during the whole day on which you have communicated united by affections and prayers with Jesus, whom you have received.

ACTS AFTER COMMUNION.

I. *Act of Faith*.—Behold, my God is even now come to visit me ; my Saviour to dwell in my soul. My Jesus is even now within me. He is come to make Himself mine, and at the same time to make me His. So that Jesus is mine, and I belong to Jesus : Jesus is all mine, and I am all His.

O Infinite Goodness ! O Infinite Mercy ! O Infinite Love ! that a God should come to unite Himself to me, and to make Himself all mine ! My soul, now that thou art thus closely bound to Jesus, that thou art thus one with Him, what doest thou ? Hast thou nothing to say to Him ; dost thou not converse with thy God, who is with thee ? Ah, yes, renew thy faith ; remember that the angels now surround thee adoring their God, who is within thy breast ; do thou also adore thy Lord within thyself. Enter into thyself, and banish thence every other

thought. Unite all thy affections together, and, clinging closely to thy God, say :

II. *An Act of Welcome.*—Ah, my Jesus, my Love, my Infinite Good, my All, be ever welcome in the poor dwelling of my soul ! Ah, my Lord, where art Thou ! to what a place art Thou come ! Thou hast entered my heart, which is far worse than the stable in which Thou wast born ; it is full of earthly affections, of self-love, and of inordinate desires. And how couldst Thou come to dwell there ? I would address Thee with St. Peter : “ Depart from me, for I am a sinful man ” (St. Luke v. 8). Yes, depart from me, O Lord, for I am indeed unworthy to receive a God of infinite goodness ; go and find repose in those pure souls who serve Thee with so much love. But no, my Redeemer ; what do I say ? Leave me not ; for if Thou departest, I am lost. I embrace Thee, my Life ; I cling to Thee. Mad indeed have I been in having separated myself from Thee for the love of creatures ; and in my ingratitude I drove Thee from me. But now I will never more separate myself from Thee, my Treasure ; I desire to live and die ever united to Thee. Most

blessed Virgin Mary, Seraphim, and all souls, do you who love God with pure love lend me your affections, that I may worthily attend on my beloved Lord.

III. *Act of Thanksgiving.*—My God and Lord, I thank Thee for the grace which Thou hast this morning bestowed upon me, of coming to dwell in my soul; but I would wish to thank Thee in a manner worthy of Thee and of the great favour which Thou hast done me. But what do I say? how can such a miserable creature as I am ever worthily thank Thee?

Father Segneri says, that the feeling most becoming a soul who communicates is that of wondering astonishment at the thought, and to repeat: ‘A God is united to me; a God is mine!’ David said: “What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that He hath rendered to me?” (Ps. cxv. 12.) But I! what return shall I make to Thee, my Jesus, who, after having given me so many of Thy good things, hast this morning, moreover, given me Thyself? My soul, bless, then, and thank thy God as best thou canst. And thou, my Mother Mary, my holy advocates, my guardian angel, and all

ye souls who love God, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what great things He hath done for my soul" (Ps. lxxv. 16). Come and bless and thank my God for me, admiring and praising the indeed great graces which He has granted me.

IV. *Act of Oblation*.—"My Beloved to me, and I to Him" (Cant. ii. 16). Should a king go to visit a poor shepherd in his hut, what can the shepherd offer him other than his whole hut, such as it is? Since, then, O Jesus, my Divine King, Thou hast come to visit the poor house of my soul, I offer and give Thee this house and my entire self, together with my liberty and will: "My Beloved to me, and I to Him." Thou hast given Thyself all to me; I give myself all to Thee. My Jesus, from this day forward I will be no longer mine; I will be Thine, and all Thine. May my senses be Thine, that they may only serve me to please Thee. And what greater pleasure, says St. Peter of Alcantara, can be found, than that of pleasing Thee, most amiable, most loving, most gracious God? I at the same time give Thee all the powers of my

soul, and I will that they shall be all Thine; my memory I will only use to recall to mind Thy benefits and Thy love; my understanding I will only use to think of Thee, who always thinkest of my good; my will I will only use to love Thee, my God, my All, and to will only that which Thou willest. My most sweet Lord, I offer, then, and consecrate to Thee this morning all that I am and have,—my senses, my thoughts, my affections, my desires, my pleasures, my inclinations, my liberty, in a word, I place my whole body and soul in Thy hands.

Accept, O Infinite Majesty, the sacrifice of the hitherto most ungrateful sinner Thou hast ever had on earth; but who now offers and gives himself all to Thee. Do with me and dispose of me, O Lord, as Thou plearest.

Come, O consuming Fire, O Divine Love! and consume in me all which is mine, and which is displeasing in Thy most pure eyes, so that from henceforward I may be all Thine, and may live only to execute, not Thy commands and counsels alone, but all Thy holy desires and good pleasure also. Amen.

O most holy Mary, do thou present this offering of mine to the Most Blessed Trinity

with thine own hands ; and do thou obtain Their acceptance of it, and that They may grant me the grace to be faithful unto death. Amen, amen, amen.

V. *Act of Petition.*—O my soul, what art thou doing ? The present is no time to be lost : it is a precious time, in which thou canst receive all the graces which thou askest. Seest thou not the Eternal Father, who is lovingly beholding thee ? for within thee He sees His beloved Son, the dearest object of His love. Drive, then, far from thee all other thoughts ; rekindle thy faith, enlarge thy heart, and ask for whatever thou wilt.

Hearest thou not Jesus Himself who thus addresses thee : “ What wilt thou that I should do to thee ? ” (St. Mark x. 51.) O soul, tell me, what dost thou desire of Me ? I am come for the express purpose of enriching and gratifying thee ; ask with confidence, and thou wilt receive all.

Ah ! my most sweet Saviour, since Thou hast come into my heart in order to grant me graces, and desirest that I should ask Thee for them, I ask Thee not for the goods of the earth—riches, honours, or pleasures ;

but grant me, I beseech Thee, intense sorrow for the displeasures I have caused Thee ; impart to me so clear a light, that I may know the vanity of this world, and how deserving Thou art of love. Change this heart of mine, detach it from all earthly affections ; give me a heart conformable in all things to Thy holy will, that it may seek only for that which is more pleasing to Thee, and have no other desire than Thy holy love : " Create a clean heart in me, O God" (Ps. l. 12).

I deserve not this ; but Thou, my Jesus, deservest it, since Thou art come to dwell in my soul : I ask it of Thee through Thy merits, and those of Thy most holy Mother, and by the love which Thou bearest to Thy Eternal Father.

Here pause, to ask Jesus for some other particular grace for yourself and for your neighbours. Do not forget poor sinners, or the souls in Purgatory ; and pray also for me, who composed this little book for your good.

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 now hold within

my breast, do Thou graciously hear me and grant my petition.

My most sweet Loves, Jesus and Mary, may I suffer for you, may I die for you ; may I be all yours, and in nothing my own ! May the Most Blessed Sacrament ever be thanked and praised ! Blessed be the holy and Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary !

There is an indulgence attached to the following prayer :

Soul of Christ, sanctify me ;
Body of Christ, protect me ;
Blood of Christ, inebriate me ;
Water of the Side of Christ, purify me ;
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

O good Jesus, hear Thou me ;
Within Thy wounds, oh, hide me ;
Suffer me not to leave Thee ;
From the evil one defend me ;
In my last hour call Thou me ;
Bid me, oh, bid me, come to Thee ;
With saints and angels may I praise Thee
Through endless ages of eternity.

Amen.

LOVING ASPIRATIONS

TO

JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

*They can be used either before or after Communion,
or in visiting the Blessed Sacrament.*

I. "Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see King Solomon in the diadem wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals" (Cant. iii. 11). O daughters of grace, O ye souls who love God, quit the darkness of earth, and behold Jesus, your King, crowned with a crown of thorns; the crown of contempt and suffering with which the impious synagogue, His mother, crowned Him on the day of His espousals,—that is to say, on the day of His death, by the means of which He espoused Himself on the Cross to our souls. Go forth again, and behold Him all full of compassion and love, now that He comes to unite Himself to Thee in this Sacrament of love.

Has it indeed, then, cost Thee so much,

my beloved Jesus, before Thou couldst come and unite Thyself to souls in this most sweet Sacrament? Wert Thou indeed obliged to suffer so bitter and ignominious a death? Oh, come then, without delay, and unite Thyself to my soul also. It was at one time Thy enemy by sin; but now Thou desirest to espouse it by Thy grace. Come, O Jesus, my Spouse, for never more will I betray Thee; I am determined to be ever faithful to Thee. As a loving spouse, my whole thought shall be to find out Thy pleasure. I am determined to love Thee without reserve; I desire to be all Thine, my Jesus, —all, all, all.

II. "A bundle of myrrh is my Beloved to me; He shall abide between my breasts" (Cant. i. 12). The myrrh plant when pricked sends forth tears, and a healthful liquor from the wounds. Before His Passion, our Jesus determined to pour forth His Divine Blood from His wounds in so painful a way, to give it afterwards all to us for our salvation in this Bread of Life. Come, then, O my beloved Bundle of Myrrh, O my enamoured Jesus; Thou art indeed a subject of grief and pity to me when I consider Thee all

wounded for me on the Cross : but then, when I receive Thee in this most sweet Sacrament, Thou becomest, indeed, to me more sweet and delicious than a bunch of the choicest grapes can be to one who is parched with thirst: "A cluster of cyprus my Love is to me, in the vineyards of Engaddi" (Cant. i. 13). Come, then, to my soul, and revive and satiate me with Thy holy love. Ah, what sweetness do I feel in my soul at the thought, that I have to receive within myself that same Saviour of mine who for my salvation was pleased to be drained of all His Blood, and sacrificed on a cross! "He shall abide between my breasts." No, my Jesus, never more will I drive Thee hence; and Thou shalt never more have to leave me. I am determined ever to love Thee, and to be always united to and closely bound up with Thee. I will always belong to Jesus, and Jesus will be always mine : for ever, for ever, for ever "He shall abide between my breasts."

III. "While the King was at His repose my spikenard sent forth the odour thereof" (Cant. i. 11). When Jesus comes to dwell in a soul in the Holy Communion, oh, how

clearly does she see and know her own nothingness by the bright light which the King of Heaven brings with Him ! As the spikenard is the most lowly amongst plants, so does the soul confess itself the most vile of all creatures ; and when thus humbled, oh, how sweet is the odour which she breathes forth to her beloved King ! and for this reason He invites her to unite herself to Him in closer and closer bonds.

If, then, my soul, thou desirest that thy Jesus should repose in thee, consider thy own nothingness. Who art thou ? what dost thou deserve ? Humble thyself as thou shouldst do, by casting away from thyself all self-esteem which may keep Jesus at a distance from thee, or prevent His coming to repose in thee. Come to me, my dear Redeemer, come ; and by Thy Divine light make me to see my own lowliness, my misery, my nothingness, that Thou mayest be enabled to repose in me with satisfaction to Thyself, to separate Thyself no more from me.

IV. "Think of the Lord in goodness" (Wisd. i. 1). My soul, why art thou so timid and fearful at the sight of the good-

ness and infinite love of Thy Lord? why such distrust? Now that thou art made worthy to receive within thee Jesus Christ, let thy sentiments correspond to this grace, by confiding in that goodness of God, who gives Thee all Himself. Truly His judgments are terrible, but they are terrible only to the proud and to the obstinate; but to the humble and penitent, who desire to love and please Him, His judgments are all mercy and love, emanating from a Heart full of compassion and kindness. So that David, considering these judgments of God, superabounds with hope: "I have more than hoped in Thy judgments" (Ps. cxviii. 43). These judgments made him happy and consoled him: "Thy judgments are delightful" (ib. 39): "I remembered Thy judgments, and was comforted" (ib. 52).

Ah! our great God is only too loving and generous to those who seek Him with love: "The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh Him" (Lam. iii. 25). How good is God to those who seek to unite their will with the Divine Will: "How good is God to Israel, to those that are of a right heart" (Ps. lxxii. 1). My God, my Love, my Hope, my All, I desire Thee, and Thee

alone,—to love Thee, to please Thee, and to do Thy will in all things. Let me always find Thee; make me agreeable to Thee; and never let me leave Thee again. So be it. Amen, amen.

V. “The voice of my Beloved knocking: Open to Me, My sister, My love, My dove, My undefiled” (Cant. v. 2). Such are the words which Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament speaks to those who love and desire Him. Open to Me, he says, O soul, thy heart, and there I will come to unite Myself to thee; so that, being one with Me, thou mayest become My sister by resemblance, My friend by participation in My riches, My dove by the gift of simplicity, My undefiled by the gift of purity, which I shall communicate to thee.

And then He goes on to say, Open to Me, “for My head is full of dew, and My locks of the drops of the night” (ib.). As if He said: Consider, My beloved, that I have waited for thee all the night of the bad life thou hast led in the midst of darkness and error. Behold now, instead of bringing scourges to chastise thee, I come in the Blessed Sacrament, with My hair full of

heavenly dew, to extinguish in thee all impure desires towards creatures, and to kindle in Thee the happy fire of My love. Come, then, O my beloved Jesus, and work in me what Thou wilt. I renounce the love of all things, in order to be all Thine, and that Thou mayest make me as Thou wouldst have me, entirely united to Thy will.

VI. "Let my Beloved come into His garden, and eat the fruit of His apple-trees" (Cant. v. 1). Cornelius à Lapide says, that this is precisely the invitation that a soul desirous of the Holy Communion makes to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Come, my Beloved, she says, into my poor heart, which at one unhappy time did not belong to Thee; but which now, by the help of Thy grace, has returned to Thee: "Come and eat the fruit of Thy apple-trees." Come and taste in me those virtues which Thou dost bring with Thyself when Thou comest to me. O my Lord, at least for the honour of Thy majesty, purify my heart, adorn it, inflame it with Thy love, and make it beautiful in Thy sight, that it may be a worthy dwelling-place for Thee.

VII. "You shall be carried at the breasts" (Is. lxvi. 12). It is thus that Jesus from the sacred altars invites our souls. Come, He says, and suck My Divine milk, which I give you in this Sacrament, wherein I offer you My own Blood to drink. But what shepherd, says St. John Chrysostom, ever feeds his sheep with his own blood? Even mothers give their children to nurses to be fed. But Thou, O Divine Pastor, art so enamoured of our souls as to wish to nourish them with Thine own Blood. St. Catharine of Sienna, then, did well in approaching the Holy Communion as if panting to suck the Divine milk, in the same way as an infant presses anxiously to suck the milk from its mother's breast. And well might the Sacred Spouse say to her Beloved, "Thy breasts are better than wine" (Cant. i. 1); signifying that she esteemed the milk of this Sacrament, as the sacred interpreters explain it, above all the pleasures of the world, which are transitory and vain, as are transitory and vain also the joys and pleasures of wine. O my beloved Jesus, since Thou wilt feed me this morning with Thine own Blood in the Holy Communion, it is but reasonable that I should willingly

renounce all the delights and pleasures which the world might give me. Yes, I give them all up; I protest that I choose rather to suffer all evils united to Thee, than to enjoy all the goods of the world away from Thee. It is sufficient happiness for me to please Thee, who art worthy of all that we can do to please Thee. I will say, then, with St. Ignatius of Loyola, give me, I pray Thee, but Thy love and Thy grace; that is sufficient for me, and I am contented.

VIII. "Eat, O friends, and drink, and be inebriated, my dearly beloved" (Cant. v. 1). The "friends," that is beginners, who scarcely enjoy the Divine friendship, when they receive the Holy Communion, feed indeed on the flesh of Jesus Christ, but they eat with labour; while those who are on the way to perfection eat with less difficulty. But by the "dearly beloved" are meant the perfect, who, inebriated with holy love, live almost out of the world, forgetting all things, even themselves, and think only how they may love and please their God. My beloved Jesus, I am not yet perfect; but Thou canst make me perfect. I am not dear to Thee, and it is my own

fault, because I have been ungrateful and unfaithful; but Thou canst make me become so, by inebriating me this morning with Thy love. "Thy kingdom come." Come, my beloved Lord, and take possession of my whole soul. Establish Thy kingdom in me; so that Thou alone mayest reign in me, that Thy love alone may command me, and that Thy love only may I obey. Inebriate me, inebriate me entirely; make me forget all creatures, myself, my interests, and all, that I may love nothing but Thee, my God, my Treasure, all my Good, my All; may I sigh for Thee alone, seek Thee alone, think of Thee alone, and please Thee alone. Do this by the merits of Thy Passion. This only do I ask of Thee; this I hope.

IX. "Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples: because I languish with love" (Cant. ii. 5). The languor of the soul is when, forgetful of herself and her affairs, she thinks only of seeking refreshment for her languishing love by holy desires, which are the flowers, and by good works, which are the fruits, of Divine love.

O my God, O Blessed Sacrament, since Thou wilt have me to be all Thine, make

me what Thou wouldst have me. Make me forget every thing that does not belong to Thy love. Increase in me always more and more the desire of pleasing Thee. Grant that these flowers may not always remain flowers ; make them also become fruits, by my doing and suffering something for Thee, who hast done and suffered only too much for me. O God, O God of my soul, make Thyself loved, but really loved, by me,—not only in word, but in deed,—before death comes upon me.

X. “ My Beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands” (Cant. v. 10). Our beloved Jesus is all white by His purity, and all red by the flames of His Divine love. My spotless Lamb, all burning with love for me, when shall I make myself like to Thee, pure as Thou art, O lily; burning with love of Thee as Thou dost burn with love of me? Yes, I do renounce all other love, and choose for myself Thy sweet love, my God, my All. Begone, ye creatures! what do you want with me? Go and enjoy the love of those who seek you. I wish only for my God ; for God alone will I keep all my heart and all my affections.

XI. "The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared" (Tit. iii. 4). St. Paul says, that God, by making Himself man, showed the world how far His goodness towards us went. But by giving Himself in this Sacrament, He makes us know the depth of the tenderness of His love towards our souls. 'Does it not seem madness to say, Eat my flesh, and drink my blood?' St. Augustine says, does it not seem a madness, Jesus Christ saying to us, as He said in that blessed night, "Take and eat, this is My Body?" O men, He says, to make you understand how much I love you, I will that you should come and feed on My very flesh. O holy faith! And who among us would have been able to demand so much? Who could have even thought of it, if Jesus had not thought it and done it? Some of the followers of Jesus Christ, when they heard that from His mouth, that is, that He wished to give them His Body to eat, said that this was too hard a thing, and that they could neither believe nor hear it: "This saying is hard, and who can hear it?" (St. John vi. 61.) And they went so far as to leave Him, because they would not believe it: but yet it is of faith that so it is.

But what else does Jesus Christ ask of us, by all this He has done for us, but that we should love Him? as the Lord had once before instructed His people: "And now, Israel, what does the Lord thy God require of thee, but that thou love Him and serve Him with all thy heart?"

O my most loving Jesus, what dost Thou not give, what dost Thou not promise to those that love Thee? Thou dost promise them Thy love: "I love those that love Me" (Prov. viii. 17). Thou dost promise them Thy caresses, even when they have already turned their backs upon Thee: "Turn ye to Me, and I will turn to you" (Zach. i. 3). Thou dost promise to come with the Father and the Holy Spirit to abide for ever in their souls: "He who loveth Me shall be loved of My Father . . and We will come to him and make Our abode with him" (St. John xiv. 21-23).

And what more hast Thou to promise and to give, to entice men to love Thee? My dearest Lord, I see how it is; Thou dost wish also to be loved by me: yes, I love Thee with all my heart; and if I do not love Thee, do Thou teach me to love Thee; make me to love Thee, and to

love Thee above all things : 'Give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt.'

XII. "Do not consider me, that I am brown; for the sun has discoloured me" (Cant. i. 5). The heat of my passions, said the Sacred Spouse (and still more ought I to say it, O my dear Jesus), has deformed and blackened me: "I am black, but beautiful" (Cant. i. 4). But I am black by my own works; I am beautiful by Thy merits, O my Redeemer. I was black at one time, when I was alone and separated from Thee; but now that I am united to Thee, Thy grace, Thy beauty, Thy love has made me beautiful. Yes, my Jesus, so do I hope. Mayest Thou be blessed for ever. Never permit me to lose Thee again, and to return to my former depravity. I love Thee, O Infinite Beauty; I wish also that my soul should be beautiful, always beautiful, that it may be always pleasing in Thy Divine sight, and that Thou mayest always love it.

XIII. "Draw me: we will run after Thee to the odour of Thy ointments" (Cant. i. 3). Since, then, O my dear Jesus, I cannot,

while in this life, ascend to Thee, Thou hast willed to descend to me, to unite Thyself to me in this Sacrament of love. Draw me, my Lord, all to Thee. I do not wish to draw Thee to me, that Thou shouldst do my pleasure; but I desire that Thou shouldst draw me so entirely to Thee by Thy sweet attractions, that I may not be able to desire or do any thing else but Thy most holy will. It is just that my inclinations should yield to Thy disposition. Take me up wholly to Thyself; and so united, I shall be free from earthly affections, and shall run with Thee in the path of virtue, and be able to repose peacefully in Thy Divine will both in this life and in the next: "In peace, in the self-same I will sleep, and I will rest" (Ps. iv. 9).

XIV. "The King brought me into the cellar of wine, and set in order charity in me" (Cant. ii. 4). It is precisely by this cellar of wine that St. Bonaventure understands the Holy Communion, which introduces and then unites the soul to its Divine King, and gives it to taste that wine of love which destroys the desire of created things; infuses a well-regulated love, that is just

towards itself, charitable towards its neighbour, supreme towards God, loving Him above all things, who above all things deserves to be loved.

O Jesus, my King, only Lord of my heart, Thou hast already brought me into the beautiful cellar of Thy love, that is, into Thyself, uniting me to Thee by means of this Sacrament of love. Yes, my Lord, I already feel my heart changed. I feel a holy desire, which gives me peace, and makes me loathe all impure affections, and enkindles in me the pure love of Thee. O my Jesus, since Thou hast given me an entrance to this beautiful cellar, let me no more depart from it. Since Thou hast united Thyself to me, do not leave me again. Detach me from the love of all creatures. Unite me to Thee continually more and more on this earth, that I may one day come to be perfectly united to Thee in heaven; where I shall love Thee face to face with all my strength, without interruption and without imperfection throughout all eternity.

XV. "My Beloved is gone down into His garden . . . to feed in the gardens, and

to gather lilies" (Cant. vi. 1). My sweet Saviour, since Thou dost descend from heaven to come into my soul, by Thy grace do Thou make it become Thy garden, that Thou mayest gather in it lilies and fruits which are agreeable to Thee. Pardon me, if I have offended Thee. Receive me, if I have left Thee, now that I return penitent to Thee. Give me that purity which Thou dost desire to see in me. Give me strength to do what Thou desirest. Grant me Thy true love, and then shall I become pleasing to Thee. I sacrifice to Thee all my inclinations, and I desire and wish for nothing but to please Thee.

XVI. The Sacred Spouse called her Beloved "altogether desirable." Jesus, to those souls who love Him as spouses, makes Himself altogether desirable, whether He chastises or consoles them, whether He appears near or distant, because He does it all for love, and that He may be loved. Treat me, then, O my Jesus, as Thou wilt, I will always love Thee; whether Thou dost give me sweetnesses or tribulations, I know that all will come to me from Thy loving Heart, and that all will be for my greater

good. "My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready." Behold my will is ready, O Lord, to accept all that Thou shalt ordain. "I will bless the Lord at all times." At all times, whether prosperous or adverse, I will bless Thee and love Thee, O my Creator. I neither seek nor merit any consolation from Thee; for I have given Thee nothing but bitterness by my sins : I seek only Thy good pleasure. Provided Thou art satisfied, I shall be content with any punishment. My Jesus, my Jesus, whether far off or near, Thou shalt always be desirable to me, always dear: whether Thou dost console or afflict me, I will always love Thee, always thank Thee.

XVII. "Who is this that cometh up from the desert flowing with delights, leaning upon her Beloved?" (Cant. viii. 5.) Who, then, are those souls who, living on the earth, esteem it a desert? so that, detached from visible things, they live only to God; as if there was no one else but God, whom alone they love and desire to please. And in this way they almost go out of the world, and raise themselves above it; enjoying the delights which are experienced by those

who wish for God alone, and who place in God all their hopes.

Who, then, are these faithful souls, if not those who often and with pure love unite themselves to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament? Yes, my God, such do I also desire to be by the means of Thy grace, detached from all things, and to be all Thine. From henceforth the world shall be to me a desert, where, flying from all attachment to creatures, I will think of nothing but Thee; as if Thou and I were the only persons there. In Thee alone will I put all my confidence, all my love, O God, O beloved God, my Hope, my Love, my All.

XVIII. "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). This is precisely what Jesus does when He comes to a soul in the Holy Communion. He sees that she is a wall too weak to be able to resist the assaults of hell; therefore, by the virtue of the Sacrament, He fortifies her with bulwarks of silver, that is, with His Divine light. He sees that she is a door inclined easily to be corrupted, and He renews it, adjusting her

with planks of strength and perseverance, as is signified by cedar, which is a strong and incorruptible wood; that is, with the gifts of holy fear, with detachment from creatures, with the love of prayer, with supplications, with holy desires, and still more with the gift of Divine love, which are the support of holy perseverance: "Bread strengthens man's heart." Jesus teaches us, that as earthly bread preserves the life of the body, so the heavenly 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." Such are the gracious promises which Jesus makes to him who receives Him in the Blessed Sacrament.

Ah, my Jesus! who is weaker and more unfaithful than I? Thou knowest well how many times I have yielded to my enemies, and how many times they have seized the gate, that is my will, by which they have entered to ruin me by causing me to lose Thy friendship. Oh, fortify me with Thy light and strength, that I may no more lose Thee or drive Thee from me! My Lord and my dear Redeemer, if I am to turn

back and offend Thee again, oh, let me die now, while I hope that I am in Thy grace and united to Thee! I trust not myself, no; nor will I ever, my dear Jesus, live without Thee. But as long as I live, I am in danger of changing my will and betraying Thee, as I have done before: do Thou help me. Help me also, most holy Mary; have pity on me: thou who art the Mother of perseverance, obtain for me this gift from thy Jesus. Of thee I seek it, of thee I hope it, of thee I ask it.

XIX. "I found Him whom my soul loveth: I held Him, and I will not let Him go" (Cant. iii. 4). So ought every soul to say who is united with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament: Creatures, depart from me; go out altogether from my heart. I loved you once, because I was blind; now I love you not, nor can I ever love you again. I have found another good, infinitely more delightful than you; I have found in myself my Jesus, who has enamoured me by His beauty; to this love I have given myself entirely. He has already accepted me; so that I am no longer my own. Creatures, farewell: I am not, nor shall I ever again

be yours; but I am and shall be always Christ's. He, too, is mine, and will always be mine : "I held Him, and I will not let Him go." Now I have pressed Him to my heart, receiving Him in the Holy Communion; for the future I will hold Him with my love, and will not let Him leave me any more.

Permit me, sweet Saviour, to embrace Thee so closely, that I may never more be separated from Thee. Behold, I press Thee to myself, my Jesus; I love Thee, I love Thee; and, oh, that I could love Thee worthily. I wish that my only happiness and repose should be to love Thee and please Thee. Do thou command all creatures to leave me, and not to disturb me; say to them, 'I adjure you, do not arouse or waken My love.' Ah, if I do not wish it, creatures cannot enter in to disturb and divide me from Thee. Strengthen, then, my will, unite my miserable heart to Thy Divine Heart, that it may always will what Thou wilt. Do this, Lord, by Thy merits. Amen, amen. So do I hope; so may it be.

XX. "Arise, O north wind, and come, O south wind, blow through my garden, and

Let the aromatical spices thereof flow" (Cant. iv. 16). Fly from me, O north wind! hurtful and cold wind of earthly affections; and come, thou soft warm breeze of the sacred love of the Holy Spirit, which comes from the Heart of my Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Do thou alone breathe through my soul, which has been chosen by Jesus for His garden of delights. Blow; for by thy breath how many fresh and sweet odours of holy virtues shalt thou draw forth from me! My Jesus, my Jesus, Thou canst do this; and this do I hope from Thee.

XXI. "I have gathered my myrrh, with my aromatical spices" (Cant. v. 1). A soul which has received Jesus must be careful to gather myrrh, that it may always offer the sweet odour of those virtues which arise from mortification. "I have eaten honeycomb with my honey" (ib.). In like manner, the soul that loves God alone is not satisfied with the honey, but will also have the honeycomb; therefore she says to Jesus: 'O Lord, Thy consolations are not sufficient for me, unless Thou givest me Thyself, who art the fountain of consolation; the fruits of love are not enough

for me, if Thou dost not give me also Thyself, who art the object of my love. Truly Thou alone wilt suffice for me; I am ready to renounce all Thy delights, provided I possess Thee alone, my God, and my only good. I love Thee, not to please myself, but to please Thee; for Thou dost desire to be loved by me, and Thou art worthy of all our love, whether Thou dost console or try us.

XXII. "He hath set me in a place of pasture, and I shall want nothing" (Ps. xxii. 1, 2). Ah, my beloved Jesus! since Thou dost invite me in this feast of love to feed on Thy Divine Flesh, what more can I ever want? "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" (Ps. xxvi. 1.) Whom shall I fear, if Thou, O God omnipotent, art my light and my salvation? I give myself all to Thee. Accept me, and then do with me what Thou wilt; chastise me, show Thine indignation towards me when Thou wilt; kill me, destroy me, and I will say always, with Job: "Although He should kill me, I will trust in Him" (Job xiii. 15). Whilst I am Thine, and Thou lovest me, I am content to be treated by

Thee with every hardship ; to be even annihilated, if it so pleases Thee.

XXIII. "I have graven thee in My hands, thy walls are always before My eyes" (Is. xlix. 16). See the loving care that God takes of a soul that He wishes to have to Himself. He carries it written in His hands, so that He may never forget it, and says, that sooner would a mother forget her own son than He a soul in grace : "And if she should forget, yet will I not forget thee" (ib. v. 15). "And thy walls are always before My eyes." His eyes are always open, to watch over that soul, so that its enemies do it not harm : "Thou hast crowned us, as with a shield of Thy good-will" (Ps. v. 13). Our good God surrounds us with the protection of His good-will, wholly solicitous for our good ; and so He delivers us from all dangers. Ah, my God ! infinite goodness, who more than any other lovest me and desirest my good, I abandon myself entirely to Thee. Should every other hope fail me, Thou wilt never fail me. I know that I also must co-operate by obeying Thy holy will. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Nothing else can I say ; be-

hold me ready and determined, my sweet Saviour, to do what Thou pleasest: "Thy will be done." Nothing else do I desire but to accomplish Thy will. But do Thou help me, otherwise I shall do no good at all. Teach me not only to know, but also to do, all that pleases Thee: "teach me to do Thy will." Eternal Father, grant that I may be able to say with truth, as Thy Jesus did whilst He was on earth: "I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." My God! this I desire, this I pray for, and this I hope, through the merits of Thy Son and the most holy Mary.

XXIV. "My son, give Me thy heart" (Prov. xiii. 26). O my soul, behold this is all that thy Lord asks of thee; when He comes to visit thee, He would have thy heart and thy will. He gives Himself to thee without reserve; it is but reasonable that thou shouldst also give Him all thyself without reserve, taking care to follow His will in all things: "For the Lord will return, to rejoice over thee in all good things" (Deut. xxx. 9). Act in such a manner as that Jesus, when He comes to thee again, may find that thou hast executed all

His designs. My Jesus! I wish to please Thee ; help Thou my desire. Give me strength, and do with me whatsoever Thou pleasest.

XXV. "What is there that I ought to do to my vineyard, that I have not done to it?" (Is. v. 4.) My soul, hear what thy God says to thee : what ought I to do more for thee than I have done ? For love of thee I became man : "I am the Word made flesh." Instead of Lord, I have become servant : "taking the form of a servant." I went so far as to be born in a stable, like a worm—for worms are born in stables : "I am a worm, and no man." I died for thee, I died upon the tree of shame : "I was made obedient to death, even the death of the Cross." What remained more for Me to do, but to give My life for thee ? "Greater love than this no man hath, that he should lay down his life for his friends." But My love has invented and done more for thee. After My death, I have chosen to leave Myself in the Most Blessed Sacrament, to give My whole self as food. Tell Me what more could I have done to gain thy love ?

It is true, my Lord and my Redeemer ;

what can I answer? I have nothing to say. Thou hast been too good to me, and I have been too ungrateful towards Thee. I wonder at Thy immense goodness; I see my own baseness, and I throw myself at Thy feet, and say: Have pity on me, my Jesus, though I have repaid Thy love with so much ingratitude. Avenge Thyself, therefore, I pray Thee, avenge Thyself upon me, and chastise me; but do not abandon me; chastise me and change me. Let me not live any longer ungrateful to Thee. Grant that I may love Thee at least out of gratitude, and that before I die I may make Thee some recompense for Thy love.

XXVI. "Put Me as a seal upon thy heart" (Cant. viii. 6). Yes, my beloved Jesus, since I have consecrated to Thee all my heart, it is but just that I should put Thee as a seal of love upon it, to close the entrance against any other affection; and thus to make known to all that my heart is Thine, and that Thou alone possessest dominion over it. But, my Lord, what dost Thou hope from me, if Thou dost not do the work Thyself? I can do nothing but give Thee my poor heart, that Thou

mayest dispose of me according to Thy pleasure. Behold, I give it all to Thee, I consecrate it to Thee, I sacrifice it to Thee. Do Thou possess it for ever; I will no longer have any part in it. If Thou lovest it, mayest Thou be able to preserve it for Thyself. Leave it no longer in my hands, lest I should again take it from Thee. O God most gracious, O Infinite Love, since Thou hast so constrained me to love Thee, I pray Thee, make Thyself loved, make Thyself loved by me. I only wish to live that I may love Thee, I only wish to love Thee in order to please Thee. Thou who dost work miracles to be able to enter into my heart in this Sacrament, work also this one, make my heart all Thine; but all, all, all, without division, without reserve, so that I may say, both in this life and in eternity, that Thou art the only Lord of my heart, and my only treasure: "God is the God of my heart, and my portion for ever."

Most holy Mary, my Mother and my hope, do thou help me, and I shall certainly be heard. Amen, amen. This I wish, this I hope. So be it.

DEVOUT ASPIRATIONS,

TO BE MADE BEFORE AND AFTER COMMUNION.

Extracted from the Mss. of St. Francis of Sales.

BEFORE COMMUNION.

O my true and perfect Love, what affection is this that brings Thee to such a miserable thing as I? Come, yes come, desired of my heart; my soul sighs for Thee; I offer to Thee, O my God, this communion, to satisfy the desire Thou hast to come and unite me to Thyself, my God, and my All. Oh, what a wonder! A God descends from heaven for me, and hides His majesty under the vile clothing of the species of bread and wine! Oh, how true it is, my Lord, that having always loved Thine own, Thou hast loved them especially at the end, when Thou didst institute this Divine Sacrament.

O my God, Thou art goodness itself; how, then, is it possible that I can love any thing else but Thee? Ah, Lord, draw me always closer and closer into Thy Heart. I prefer Thy love and Thy goodness above

all that is to be found in the world. Thou art the only object of my affections. I wish for none other but Thee. I will leave all in order to love Thee. Give me grace to do it; without that I can do nothing.

Ah, my Beloved, if Thou wouldst have me look to Thee, do Thou first turn to me, and by Thy Spirit draw mine to Thee. I am nothing, I can do nothing, I am worth nothing; therefore let me not be ungrateful for all the graces that Thou hast deigned to grant me. I offer myself for Thy love, to be entirely deprived of every sensible consolation, and to suffer all the afflictions Thou shalt be pleased to send me, whether in time or eternity. I am, and will be all Thine; I dare to ask Thee not only for Thy gifts, but also for Thyself. I desire to receive Thee, to be more united to Thee.

O Eternal Father, I offer to Thee the Passion of Thy Son for my salvation and that of the whole world. Look not at my sins; but look at the love of Thy beloved Son towards us, which has drawn Him into this Sacrament. By this love, my God, have pity on me!

My Redeemer, I acknowledge myself to be infinitely unworthy of approaching to

receive Thee, by reason of my sins and my want of purity. Therefore I say to Thee, Lord, I am not worthy. Even if I had all the love of the Seraphim, I should still be unfit to receive Thee ; again, then, I repeat, Lord, I am not worthy.

Come, O my sweet Saviour, and work in me that which Thou dost come to me to do. I am nothing but wretchedness; but Thy goodness does not let Thee see my misery. Come into my soul and sanctify it ; take possession of my heart and purify it ; enter into my body and keep it ; and never separate me from Thy love.

Burn, O consuming Fire, all Thou dost see in me unworthy of Thy presence, and that may put an obstacle to Thy grace and love. O Mother of my Redeemer, have compassion on me a poor sinner ; pray for me, that by thy help I may embrace thy Son with perfect love, and become a soul after His own Heart.

ASPIRATIONS OF LOVE.

TO BE MADE AFTER COMMUNION, AND AT THE VISIT
TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

O excess of love ! Sacred Host, I adore Thee within me. One heart is too little to love Thee, my Jesus ; one tongue is not enough to praise Thy goodness. O my Saviour, how great are my obligations to Thee, for visiting such a poor creature as I am ! I offer myself all to Thee, in gratitude for so great a favour.

No, I will no longer live in myself, but that Jesus alone should live in me. He is mine, and I am His, for all eternity. Oh, love, love ; no more sins ! I will never forget the goodness and mercy of God, my Saviour and my guest. Yes, my God, I firmly believe that Thou, Body and Soul, art in my breast : Thy Divinity is now within me, and united to me.

I adore Thee, and I venerate Thee, as if I were the smallest worm crawling along in the dust of its own nothingness, to testify the desire I have to give Thee glory. But is it possible that Thy Infinite Majesty

should have deigned to visit the least of Thy creatures? With a softened heart, my dear Saviour, I thank Thee for this great gift. I thank Thee for it a thousand times. Grant that I may thank Thee for it as Thou dost deserve. May Thy most holy Mother, and all the angels and saints, give Thee thanks for it! On my part I offer Thee all the praises and thanksgivings that have been and ever shall be offered to Thee by all creatures.

O my God, Thou dost come to unite Thyself to me, to apply to my soul more abundantly the merits of Thy Passion, and to sanctify me. Accomplish in me, then, all that Thou didst come to do. My God, Thou art all-wise and all-powerful, let not the fruit of Thy coming be lost: unite Thyself to me, and me to Thee, by an inseparable union and a perfect love. Unite the abyss of Thy mercy with the abyss of my misery, and make me live a life all divine.

My Jesus, Thou knowest what is wanting in me; Thou knowest that without Thee I can do nothing; Thou knowest my weakness: have pity on me; give me humility, purity of heart, love and conformity to Thy

holy will, strength against my bad habits, remission of my sins, and grace never more to commit them. Give me a thorough contempt for all things, so that I may love none other but Thee. Give me patience to suffer for Thy love all that may happen to me. I hope all from Thee. O most holy Virgin, my dear Mother, beg of thy Son, by the love He bears thee, to grant me, for thy sake, all I ask.

My God, and my only good, I am more pleased in Thy infinite perfections than if they were my own. I rejoice that nothing in the world can take them from Thee, or diminish them. Come, then, Thou art always welcome; always perfect and infinite in Thy majesty, O my Jesus, my Love and my God. Come and make me all Thine.

My Saviour, by that infinite goodness which made Thee come down to this earth, I pray Thee, let me experience the effects of Thy love, in feeling my soul so absorbed in Thee, that, despising all earthly things, it may see nothing but Thee, and think of nothing but Thee; that the same love which made Thee die for me on the cross may make me in like manner die in Thee, to live in Thee for all eternity.

O God of my soul, who meritest to be loved above all creatures, I protest that I hold Thee as the only object of my affections, and I prefer Thee to all the goods of the world, and to myself. I desire to be faithful to Thee, and never more to see myself separated from Thee.

I resign and abandon myself entirely to Thee, embracing with all affection and respect Thy will, and Thy just designs over me. And I pray that whatever Thou hast ordained concerning me in time and in eternity may be accomplished; but I hope one day to see Thy Divine face and Thy infinite beauty. My God, draw me to Thee, to love Thee and to burn with Thy love, by which I would be entirely consumed. Hide me, I pray Thee, in Thyself, that no creature may ever be able to find me again. O Eternal Father, for the love of Thy Son, fill my memory with holy thoughts, which shall constrain it to have a continual remembrance of Thee and of Thy Son. Oh, make me know and do all that Thou desirest of me. And Thou, O Holy Spirit, fill my will with holy affections, that shall bring forth all those fruits which proceed from Thy love. Illuminate me with Thy light; so

shall I walk straight to Thee, and my will shall be no longer free to give itself to any but Thee.

My God and my All, I will no more seek any thing out of Thee, now that I can find all things in Thee. O merciful Father, make me have a care for Thy service, as Thou hast had so much for my good. I wish to employ all my thoughts in seeking ways to please Thee, and in preserving me from offending Thee any more.

O incarnate Lord, make me love Thee, and none other than Thee. Remove from me all occasions which might drive me from Thy love. Let my heart be always occupied in contemplating Thee and serving Thee, Thou that art the master-love of all hearts. Thou didst but come into the world to dwell in the hearts Thou hadst redeemed with Thy Blood ; then may my heart be all Thine, do Thou possess it. See, then, all my wants, and enlighten me ; excite me, and make me prompt to obey Thy will.

O Jesus Almighty, take from me all that can hinder the effects of Thy power and goodness. I renounce my liberty, and consecrate it entirely to the designs of Thy

will. Have pity on me, and cure me of all my impurities and infidelity ; fill me with Thy grace and wisdom. I abandon myself wholly to Thee, O my Jesus ; I wish to be all Thine, I wish to employ myself with fervour for Thy glory, and to suffer patiently all tribulations at the sight of Thy sufferings. Enable me to employ myself solely in things that are pleasing to Thee. My God, let me discern Thee with a true faith, to know Thee and love Thee ; let me know Thy will to fulfil it, let me see myself to confess my deformity, to abhor and humble myself ; and in the end let me see Thy Divine face in all eternity. Lord, I have wasted my substance, like the prodigal son ; but I have not been able to exhaust Thy mercies. Grant that I may take Thy will for the sole guide of my life, and not my own senses nor human respect. Write in my heart the law of Thy love so deeply, that it may never be effaced.

My God, even if there were no place of torment for the wicked, I would not leave off loving Thee and suffering for Thee. Make me correspond to Thy desires. From this time forth Thou shalt be my portion for ever. I submit myself with confidence

to all that Thou shalt ordain for me in time and in eternity. O incarnate Word, wash my heart with Thy Blood, and imprint there, as a sign of Thy love, Thy holy Name of Jesus. •

Lord, abandon me not into the power of my vices; remember that I am the work of Thy hands; permit me not to become the prey of demons. I am a sinner, it is true; but I have been redeemed by Thy Blood. Eternal Father, look at the Passion of Thy Son, whose merits sue mercy for me: these I offer to Thee; by these do Thou detach me from worldly affections, and fill me with Thy love, and make me die with resignation, with faith, with confidence, and with perfect love.

O my Jesus, by that eternal love which Thou hast borne me, give me grace to love Thee during the short time that remains for me to live on this earth, that I may afterwards love Thee eternally in heaven. O God of love, make me live only for Thee. When shall I be all Thine, as Thou art all mine? When shall I die to myself, to live only for 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!

My God, I wish for my eyesight only to look at Thee; for my tongue only to speak of Thee; for my heart only to love Thee; for my body only to offer it to Thee; for my life only to sacrifice it to Thee. O God of love, give me Thy love. Infinite Power, help my weakness. Eternal Wisdom, enlighten my darkness. Immense Goodness, pardon my malice. O infinite Goodness, too late have I loved and known Thee: do with me what Thou pleasest: I wish for nothing but what Thou shalt do.

O Blessed Virgin, I rejoice with thee in that thou hast gained the heart of thy God; ah, unite me wholly to thy Son, speak to Him for me, and obtain for me the grace of following all His inspirations. Thou must teach me to practise the virtues thou didst exercise on earth, and detach me from affection to all that is not God, that I may love Him with all my strength.

My God, enkindle Thy love in me, so that I may seek nothing else but Thy pleasure; so that nothing may please me that does not please Thee; and drive from my heart all things that are not agreeable to Thee. May I always be able to say with true affection: My God, Thee alone do I

desire, and nothing more. My Jesus, give me a great love for Thy Passion, that, Thy sufferings and Thy death being always before my eyes, they may continually excite my love towards Thee, and make me desirous of rendering Thee some token of gratitude for so much love. Give me also a great love to the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, in which Thou hast revealed the great affection Thou dost bear us. Besides this, I beg of Thee to give me a tender devotion to Thy most holy Mother: give me grace always to love and serve her; always to have recourse to her intercession, and to induce others to honour her; and give to me and to all men a great confidence, first in the merits of Thy Passion, and next in the intercession of Mary.

I pray Thee to grant me a holy death. Enable me at that moment to receive Thee with great love in the Most Holy Viaticum; so that, united to Thee, burning with a holy fire, and with a great desire of seeing Thee, I may go forth from this life to embrace Thy feet the first time it shall be given me to see Thee.

O my King, come and reign alone in my soul; do Thou possess it entirely, that it

may not serve nor obey any thing but Thy love.

O my Jesus, would that I could annihilate myself all for Thee, who hast annihilated all Thy life for me !

O Lamb of God, sacrificed on the Cross, remember that I am one of those souls that Thou hast redeemed with so much suffering and grief. Let me never lose Thee. Thou hast given thyself all to me, let me be all thine ; let all my eagerness be to please Thee. I love Thee, O immense Good, in order to please Thee ; I love Thee because Thou art worthy of it : my greatest sorrow is to think I have been so long in the world without loving Thee.

My beloved Redeemer, make me feel the grief Thou hadst for my sins in the garden of Gethsemani. O my Jesus, would that I had died before, and had never offended Thee ! Oh, love of my Jesus, Thou art my love and my hope ! I will rather lose my life a thousand times than lose Thy grace.

My God, if I had died when I was in sin, I could never love Thee again : I thank Thee for giving me time, and calling me to love Thee. Now, then, that I can love Thee, I will love Thee with all my soul.

For this reason hast Thou borne with me, that I should love Thee; yes, I will love Thee.

Ah, by the Blood which Thou hast shed for me, permit me not to betray Thee again: "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded for ever." What is the world? what are riches? what are pleasures? what are honours? God, God, I will have God alone. My God, Thou art sufficient for me, Thou art an infinite Good.

O my Jesus, bind me altogether to Thy love, and draw all my affections to Thee, that I may love none other but Thee: make me all Thine before I die.

Ah, my God, as long as I live I am in danger of losing Thee. When shall the day come that I can say to Thee: My Jesus, I cannot lose Thee more?

O Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, despise me not; accept of me to love Thee, and do Thou give me Thy love. I wish to love Thee much in this life, that I may love Thee much in the next.

O infinite Good, I love Thee; but make me know the great Good that I love, and give me such a love as Thou dost desire. May I conquer all things to please Thee!

O Mary, of thee, who so much desirest to see thy Son beloved, do I ask this grace, to love Him during all the remainder of my life; and I desire nothing more. My Lady and my Mother, I trust in thee; thou dost obtain all thou dost ask of thy God; thou dost pray for all who are devoted to thee, pray also for me.

PETITIONS TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

O my Jesus, now that Thou, who art the true Life, art come to me, make me die to the world, to live only to Thee, my Redeemer; by the flames of Thy love destroy in me all that is displeasing to Thee, and give me a true desire to gratify and please Thee in all things.

Give me that true humility which shall make me love contempt and self-abjection, and take from me all ambition of putting myself forward. Give me the spirit of mortification, that I may deny myself all those things that do not tend to Thy love, and

may lovingly embrace that which is displeasing to the senses and to self-love.

Give me a perfect resignation to Thy will, that I may accept in peace pains, infirmities, loss of friends or property, desolations, persecutions, and all that comes to me from Thy hand. I offer Thee all myself, that Thou mayest dispose of me according to Thy pleasure. And give me grace always to repeat this entire offering of myself, especially at the time of my death. May I, then, so sacrifice my life to Thee, with all my affection, in union with the sacrifice that Thou didst make of Thy life for me to the Eternal Father. My Jesus, enlighten me, and make me know Thy goodness, and the obligation I am under to love Thee above all, for the love Thou hast borne me in dying for me, and in leaving Thyself in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I pray Thee to give Thy light to all infidels who know Thee not, to all heretics who are out of the Church, and to all sinners who live deprived of Thy grace. My Jesus, make Thyself known, make Thyself loved. I recommend to Thee all the souls in purgatory, and especially N. N.; alleviate the pains they suffer, and shorten the

time of their banishment from Thy sight ; do this through Thy merits, and those of Thy most holy Mother and all the Saints.

My God, enkindle the flame of Thy love within me, so that I may seek nothing but Thy pleasure, that nothing may please me but pleasing Thee ; I drive from my heart every thing which is not agreeable to Thee. May I always be able to say with real affection : O God, my God, I wish for Thee alone and nothing more. My Jesus, give me a great love for Thy Most Sacred Passion, that Thy sufferings and death may be ever before my eyes to excite me to love Thee always, and to make me desire to give Thee some grateful compensation for Thy so great love. Give me also a great love for the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, in which Thou hast made known the exceeding tenderness Thou hast for us. I also beg of Thee to give me a tender devotion to Thy most holy Mother : give me grace always to love and serve her, always to have recourse to her intercession, and to induce others to honour her and confide in her patronage ; and grant to me and to all men ever to have a great confidence, first in the merits of Thy Passion, and then in the intercession of Mary.

I pray Thee grant me a happy death. Grant that I may then receive Thee with great love in the Most Holy Viaticum, that in Thy embrace, burning with a holy fire, and a great desire of seeing Thee, I may quit this life to throw myself at Thy feet the first time it shall be my lot to see Thee.

Above all, I pray Thee, O my Jesus, to give me the grace of prayer, that I may recommend myself always to Thee and Thy most holy Mother, especially in time of temptation : and I pray Thee, by Thy merits, to grant me holy perseverance and Thy holy love.

Bless me, my Jesus, and bless me altogether,—my soul, my body, my senses, and my faculties. Bless especially my tongue, that it may only speak for Thy glory. Bless my eyes, that they may not look at any thing that might tempt me to displease Thee. Bless my taste, that it may not offend Thee by intemperance ; and bless all the members of my body, that they may all serve Thee and not offend Thee. Bless my memory, that it may always remember Thy love and the favours Thou hast accorded me. Bless my understanding, that it may know Thy goodness, and the obli-

gation I have of loving Thee ; and that it may see all that I must avoid, and all that I must do to conform myself to Thy holy will. Above all, bless my will, that it may love no other but Thee, the infinite Good ; that it may seek for nothing but to please Thee, and may take delight in nothing but what conduces to Thy glory.

O my King, come Thou and reign alone in my soul ; take entire possession of it, that it may neither serve nor obey any thing but Thy love.

Oh, my Jesus, that I might spend myself all for Thee, who hast spent all Thy life for me !

O Lamb of God, sacrificed on the Cross, remember that I am one of those souls which Thou hast redeemed with so much labour and sorrow. Never let me lose Thee again. Thou hast given Thyself all to me ; make me to be all Thine, and let my only wish be to please Thee. I love Thee, O immense Good, in order to give Thee pleasure. I love Thee, because Thou art worthy of my love. I have no greater grief than that of thinking that I have been so long in the world without loving Thee.

My beloved Redeemer, give me a portion

of that grief which Thou didst feel for my sins in the garden of Gethsemani. O my Jesus, would that I had died and never offended Thee! O love of my Jesus, Thou art my love and my hope! I will rather lose my life, and a thousand lives, than lose Thy grace.

My God, if I were to die in sin, I could no more love Thee. I thank Thee that Thou givest me time, and dost call me to love Thee. Now, then, that I can love Thee, I will love Thee with all my soul. Thou hast borne with me so long, that I might love Thee. Yes, and I will love Thee. Ah, by the Blood that Thou hast shed for me, suffer me not to betray Thee again. "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me not be confounded for ever." What is the world? what are riches? what are pleasures? what are honours? God, God, I wish for God alone. My God, Thou art sufficient for me; Thou art an infinite Good.

O my Jesus, bind me wholly to Thy love, and draw all my affections to Thyself, so that I may love none other but Thee. Make me all Thine before I die.

Ah, my God, as long as I live I stand in danger of losing Thee. When shall the day

come that I can say : My Jesus, I can no longer lose Thee?

O Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, despise me not; suffer me to love Thee, and give me Thy holy love. I wish to love Thee greatly in this life, that I may love Thee greatly in the next.

O infinite Good, I love Thee; but do Thou make me know the great good that I love, and give me the love Thou dost desire to see in me. Enable me to overcome all things to please Thee.



PRAYER OF ST. BONAVENTURE TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

WOUND, O my most tender Jesus, the inmost of my soul with the sweet dart of Thy love, that through Thy love and the desire of possessing Thee, my soul may languish and melt within me, and so long to quit this life, to come and unite itself perfectly with Thee in a happy eternity. Make my soul always to hunger after Thee, the Bread of angels, my Jesus, in the Blessed Sacrament. May it ever thirst after Thee, O

fountain of life and light ! May it ever desire Thee, seek Thee, speak to Thee alone, find Thee, and do all things to Thy praise and glory to the end ! Thou, my Redeemer, art my only hope, my riches, my consolation, my peace, my refuge, my wisdom, my portion, and my treasure. On Thee may my heart and my mind be ever fixed ! Amen.

PRAYER TO THE MOST HOLY MARY.

TO OBTAIN THE LOVE OF JESUS, AND LOVE
TOWARDS HER.

O MARY, thou dost so much desire to see this thy Son Jesus loved ; if thou lovest me, this is the grace I ask of thee, and which thou must procure for me : obtain for me a great love for Jesus Christ, and not to love any other than Him. Thou obtainest from Him all that thou dost wish ; listen to me, then, pray for me and comfort me ; bind me in such a manner to Jesus, that I shall no longer be able to leave off loving Him. Obtain for me also a great love towards thee, who art of all creatures the most loving, the most lovely, and the most loved

by God. I rely greatly on thy compassion, and I love thee, my Lady ; but I love thee only a little : ask thy God to give me a greater love ; for to love thee is a grace which God grants only to those whom thou dost wish to be saved. Live Jesus our love, and Mary our hope !

MEDITATIONS

FOR

THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

MEDITATION I.

ON THE LOVE OF JESUS IN THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

OUR most loving Redeemer, knowing that He must leave this earth and return to His Father as soon as He should have accomplished the work of our redemption by His death, and seeing that the hour of His death was now come, — “Jesus knowing that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world unto the Father” (St. John xiii. 1), — would not leave us alone in this valley of tears, and therefore what did He do? He instituted the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, in which He left us His whole Self. ‘No tongue,’ said St. Peter of Alcantara, ‘is able to declare the greatness of the love that Jesus bears to every soul: and therefore this Spouse, when He would leave

this earth, in order that His absence might not cause us to forget Him, left us as a memorial this Blessed Sacrament, in which He Himself remained ; for He would not that there should be any other pledge to keep alive our remembrance of Him than He Himself.' Jesus, therefore, would not be separated from us by His death ; but He instituted this Sacrament of Love, in order to be with us even to the end of the world : " Behold I am with you even to the consummation of the world" (St. Matt. xxviii. 20). Behold Him, then, as faith teaches us,—behold Him on so many altars shut up as in so many prisons of love, in order that He may be found by every one that seeks Him. But, O Lord, says St. Bernard, this does not become Thy majesty. Jesus Christ answers, It is enough that it becomes My love.

They feel great tenderness and devotion who go to Jerusalem and visit the cave where the Incarnate Word was born, the hall where He was scourged, the hill of Calvary on which He died, and the sepulchre where He was buried ; but how much greater ought not our tenderness to be when we visit an altar on which Jesus remains

in the Most Holy Sacrament ! The Ven. Father John Avila used to say, that of all sanctuaries there is not one to be found more excellent and devout than a church where Jesus is sacramentally present.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my beloved Jesus, O God, who hast loved men with such exceeding love ! what more canst Thou do to make Thyself loved by these ungrateful men ? Oh, if men loved Thee, all the churches would be continually filled with people prostrate on the ground adoring and thanking Thee, and burning with love for Thee at seeing Thee with the eyes of faith hidden in a tabernacle. But no ; men, forgetful of Thee and of Thy love, are ready enough to court a man from whom they hope for some miserable advantage, while they leave Thee, O my Lord, abandoned and alone. Oh, that I could by my devotion make reparation for such ingratitude ! I am sorry that I also have hitherto been like them, careless and ungrateful. But for the future I will not be so any longer, and I will devote myself to Thy service as much as I possibly can. Do Thou inflame me with Thy holy love, so that from

this day forth I may live only to love and to please Thee. Thou deservest the love of all hearts. If at one time I have despised Thee, I now desire nothing but to love Thee. O my Jesus, Thou art my Love and my only Good, 'my God and my All.' Most holy Virgin Mary, obtain for me, I pray thee, a great love for the Most Holy Sacrament.

MEDITATION II.

**JESUS REMAINS ON THE ALTAR, THAT EVERY BODY
MAY BE ABLE TO FIND HIM.**

St. Teresa said, that in this world it is impossible for all subjects to speak to the king. As for the poor, the most they can hope for is, to speak with him by means of some third person. But to speak with Thee, O King of Heaven, there is no need of third persons; for every one that wishes can find Thee in the Most Holy Sacrament, and can speak to Thee at his pleasure and without restraint.

For this reason, said the same saint, Jesus Christ has concealed His majesty in the Sacrament, under the appearance of bread, in

order to give us more confidence, and to take away from us all fear of approaching Him. Oh, how Jesus seems continually to exclaim from the altar: "Come to Me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (St. Matt. xi. 28). Come, He says, come, ye poor; come, ye infirm; come, ye afflicted; come, ye just and ye sinners, and you shall find in Me a remedy for all your losses and afflictions: such is the desire of Jesus Christ; to console every one who has recourse to Him, He remains day and night on our altars, that He may be found by all, and that He may bestow favours upon all. Hence the Saints experienced in this world such pleasure in remaining in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, that days and nights appeared to them as moments. The Countess of Feria having become a nun of the order of St. Clare, was never wearied of remaining in the choir in sight of the tabernacle: being asked one day what she was doing so long before the Most Holy Sacrament, she answered with surprise: 'What do I do before the Blessed Sacrament? what do I do? I return thanks, I love and I pray!' St. Philip Neri being in the pre-

sence of the Blessed Sacrament, exclaimed : ' Behold my love, behold all my love !' Ah, if Jesus were thus our whole love, days and nights in His presence would appear also to us as moments.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my Jesus, from this day forward I also hope to say always to Thee, when I come to visit Thee on Thy altars : ' Behold my love, behold all my love !' Yes, my beloved Redeemer, I will love none other but Thee; I desire that Thou shouldst be the only love of my soul. I seem to die of sorrow when I think that hitherto I have loved creatures and my own pleasures more than Thee, and have turned my back upon Thee, the Sovereign Good. But Thou wouldst not have me lost, and therefore hast Thou borne with me with so much patience; and instead of chastising me, Thou hast pierced my heart with so many darts of love, that I could no longer resist Thy kindness, but have given myself up to Thee; I see that Thou wouldst have me to be entirely Thine. But since Thou wouldst have it to be so, do thou make me so Thyself; for it is Thou who must do it. Do Thou detach my heart

from all earthly affections and from myself, and grant that I may seek none other but Thee, that I may think of none but Thee, that I may speak of none but Thee, and that I may only desire and sigh to burn with love for Thee, and to live and die for Thee alone. O love of my Jesus, come and occupy my whole heart, and expel from it all other love but that of God! I love Thee, O Jesus in the Sacrament, I love Thee, my Treasure, my Love, my All. O Mary, my hope, pray for me, and make me belong entirely to Jesus.

MEDITATION III.

ON THE GREAT GIFT WHICH JESUS HAS MADE US BY
GIVING HIMSELF TO US IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

The love of Jesus Christ was not satisfied with sacrificing for us His Divine Life in the midst of a sea of ignominies and torments, in order to prove to us the affection that He bore us; but besides all this, in order to oblige us to love Him more, on

the night before His death He would leave us His whole Self as our food in the Holy Eucharist. God is omnipotent; but after He has given Himself to a soul in this Sacrament of love, He has nothing more to give her. The Council of Trent says, that Jesus, in giving Himself to us in the Holy Communion, pours forth, as it were, all the riches of His infinite love in this gift: 'He has, as it were, poured forth the treasures of His love towards man.' How would that vassal esteem himself honoured, writes St. Francis of Sales, were his prince, whilst he was at table, to send him a portion of his own dish; and what would it be if this portion were a piece torn out from his own arm? Jesus in the Holy Communion gives us for our food, not only a portion of His own meal and of His most Sacred Flesh, but all His Body: "Take and eat, this is My Body." And together with His Body He gives us also His Soul and His Divinity; so that, as St. Chrysostom says, our Lord, in giving Himself to us in the Blessed Sacrament, gives us all that He has, and nothing more remains for Him to give us: 'He gave all to thee, and left nothing for Himself.' O wonderful prodigy of Divine love,

that God, who is the Lord of all, makes Himself entirely ours !

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my dear Jesus, what more canst Thou do to make us love Thee ? Oh, make us understand what an excess of love Thou hast shown us in reducing Thyself to food, in order to unite Thyself thus to us poor sinners ! Thou, therefore, my dear Redeemer, hast had so much affection for me, that Thou hast not refused to give Thyself again and again entirely for me in the Holy Communion. And yet I have had the courage to drive Thee so many times away from my soul ! But Thou canst not despise a humble and contrite heart. Thou didst become man for my sake, Thou didst die for me, Thou didst even go so far as to become my food ; and what more can there remain for Thee to do to gain my love ? Oh, that I could die with grief every time that I remember to have thus despised Thy grace ! I repent, O my Love, with my whole heart, for having offended Thee. I love Thee, O Infinite Goodness ! I love Thee, O Infinite Love ! I desire nothing

but to love Thee, and I fear nothing but to live without Thy love. My beloved Jesus, do not refuse to come for the future into my soul. Come, because I would rather die a thousand times than drive Thee away again, and I will do all I can to please Thee. Come and inflame my whole soul with Thy love. Grant that I may forget every thing, to think only of Thee, and to aspire to Thee alone, my Sovereign and my only Good. O Mary, my Mother, pray for me; and by thy prayers make me grateful for all the love of Jesus towards me.

MEDITATION IV.

ON THE GREAT LOVE WHICH JESUS CHRIST HAS SHOWN
US IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

“Jesus, knowing that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world to the Father: having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end” (St. John xiii. 1). Jesus knowing that the hour of His death was come, desired to leave us, before He died, the greatest pledge of

His affection that He could give us ; and this was the gift of the Most Holy Sacrament : " He loved them to the end ;" which St. Chrysostom explains, ' He loved them with extreme love.' He loved men with the greatest love with which He could love them, by giving them His whole Self. But at what time did Jesus institute this great Sacrament, in which He has left us Himself ? On the night preceding His death : " The same night in which He was betrayed" (writes the Apostle), " He took bread ; and giving thanks, broke and said, Take ye and eat ; this is My Body" (1 Cor. xi. 23, 24). At the very time that men were preparing to put Him to death, He gave them this last proof of His love. The marks of affection which we receive from our friends at the time of their death, remain more deeply impressed on our hearts ; for this reason did Jesus bestow on us this gift of the Blessed Sacrament just before His death. With reason, then, did St. Thomas call this gift ' a sacrament and pledge of love ;' and St. Bernard, ' the love of loves ;' because in this Sacrament Jesus Christ united and accomplished all the other acts of love which He had shown us. Hence St. Mary Magdalene

of Pazzi called the day on which Jesus instituted this Sacrament, 'the day of love.'

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O infinite love of Jesus, worthy of being loved with a like infinite love! Thou, my Lord, dost love men so much; how is it, then, that men love Thee so little in return? What more couldst Thou do to make Thyself loved by them? O my Jesus, Thou art so amiable and so loving; make Thyself, I pray Thee, known; make Thyself loved. When shall I love Thee as Thou hast loved me? Oh, discover to me more and more the greatness of Thy mercy, in order that I may burn ever more and more with Thy love, and always seek to please Thee. O beloved One of my soul, would that I had always loved Thee! Alas, there was a time when I not only did not love Thee, but despised Thy grace and Thy love! I am consoled by the sorrow which I feel for it, and I hope for pardon through Thy promise to forgive him that repents of his sins. To Thee, O my Saviour, do I turn all my affections; help me, through the merits of Thy Passion, to love Thee with my whole

strength. Oh, that I could die for Thee, as Thou didst die for me! O Mary, my Mother, do thou obtain for me the grace from henceforth to love God alone.

MEDITATION V.

ON THE UNION OF THE SOUL WITH JESUS IN THE HOLY COMMUNION.

St. Dionysius the Areopagite says that the principal effect of love is to tend to union. For this very purpose did Jesus institute the Holy Communion, that He might unite Himself entirely to our souls. He had given Himself to us as our Master, our Example, and our Victim; it only remained for Him to give Himself to us as our Food, that He might become one with us; as food becomes one with the person that eats it. This He did by instituting this Sacrament of love: 'The last degree of love' (says St. Bernardine of Sienna) 'is when He gave Himself to us to be our food; because He gave Himself to be united with us in every way, as food and he who takes it are mutually united.' So that Jesus Christ was

not satisfied with uniting Himself to our human nature ; but He would, by this Sacrament, find a way of uniting Himself also to each one of us, so as to make Himself wholly one with him who receives Him. Hence St. Francis of Sales writes : ‘ In no other action can our Saviour be considered more tender or more loving than in this, in which He, as it were, annihilates Himself, and reduces Himself to food, that He may penetrate our souls, and unite Himself to the hearts of His faithful.’ Because Jesus loved us ardently, He desired to unite Himself to us in the Holy Eucharist, in order that we might become the same thing with Him ; thus writes St. Chrysostom : ‘ He mingled Himself with us, that we might be one ; for this belongs to those who love greatly.’ Thou wouldst, in short, O God of love, that our hearts and Thine should form but one heart. ‘ Thou wouldst that we should have one heart with Thee,’ said St. Laurence Justinian. And Jesus Himself said this : “ He that eateth My flesh abideth in Me, and I in him ” (St. John vi. 57). He, therefore, that communicates, abides in Jesus, and Jesus abides in Him ; and this union is not of mere affection, but it is a true

and real union. As two wax tapers, when melted, says St. Cyril of Alexandria, unite themselves together into one, so he that communicates becomes one with Jesus Christ. Let us, therefore, imagine, when we communicate, that Jesus Christ says to us that which He said one day to His beloved servant, Margaret of Ypres: 'Behold, O my daughter, the beautiful union between Me and thee; come, then, love Me, and let us remain constantly united in love, and never more be separated.'

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my Jesus, this is what I seek of Thee, and what I will always seek for from Thee in the Holy Communion: 'Let us be always united, and never more be separated.' I know that Thou wilt not separate Thyself from me, if I do not first separate myself from Thee. But this is my fear, lest I should in future separate myself from Thee by sin, as I have done in times past. O my blessed Redeemer, permit it not: 'Suffer me not to be separated from Thee.' As long as I am alive, I am in danger of this; oh, through the merits of Thy death, I be-

seech Thee let me die, rather than repeat this great injury against Thee. I repeat it, and pray Thee to grant me Thy grace always to repeat: 'Suffer me not to be separated from Thee; suffer me not to be separated from Thee.' O God of my soul, I love Thee; I love Thee, and will always love Thee, and will love Thee alone. I protest before heaven and earth that I desire Thee alone, and nothing but Thee. O my Jesus, hear me; I desire Thee alone, and nothing but Thee. O Mary, Mother of Mercy, pray for me now; and obtain for me the grace never more to separate myself from Jesus, and to love only Jesus.

MEDITATION VI.

ON THE DESIRE WHICH JESUS CHRIST HAS TO UNITE
HIMSELF TO US IN THE HOLY COMMUNION.

"Jesus knowing that His hour was come" (St. John xiii. 1). This hour, which Jesus called 'His hour,' was the hour of that night in which His Passion was to begin. But why did He call so sad an hour His hour?

Because this was the hour for which He had sighed during His whole life, having determined to leave us in this night the Holy Communion, by which He desired to unite Himself entirely with the souls whom He loved, and for whom He was soon to give His Blood and His Life. Behold how He spoke on that night to His disciples: "With desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you." By which words He would express to us the desire and anxiety that He had to unite Himself with us in this Sacrament of love. "With desire have I desired;" these words, said St. Laurence Justinian, were words which came from the Heart of Jesus, which was burning with infinite love: 'This is the voice of the most ardent charity.' Now the same flame which burnt then in the Heart of Jesus, burns there at present; and He gives the same invitation to all of us to-day to receive Him as He did then to His disciples: "Take ye and eat; this is My Body" (St. Matt. xxvi. 26). And to allure us to receive Him with affection, He promises Paradise to us: "He that eateth My flesh hath everlasting life" (St. John vi. 55). And if we refuse to receive Him, He threatens us with death: "Except you eat

the flesh of the Son of man, you shall not have life in you" (St. John vi. 54). These invitations, promises, and threats, all arise from the desire of Jesus Christ to unite Himself to us in the Holy Communion, through the love that He bears us. 'There is not a bee,' said our Lord to St. Matilda, 'which seeks the honey out of the flowers with such eagerness of delight, as I have to enter into the souls that desire Me.' Jesus, because He loves us, desires to be loved by us; and because He desires us, He will have us desire Him. 'God thirsts to be thirsted after,' writes St. Gregory. Blessed is that soul that approaches the Holy Communion with a great desire to be united to Jesus Christ.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

My adorable Jesus, Thou canst not give us greater proofs of Thy love, to show us how much Thou lovest us. Thou hast given Thy life for us; Thou hast bequeathed Thyself to us in the Holy Sacrament, in order that we may come and nourish ourselves with Thy flesh; and Thou art most anxious that we should receive Thee. How, then, can we behold all these proofs of Thy love,

and not burn with love for Thee? Begone, ye earthly affections, begone from my heart; it is you that hinder me from burning with love for Jesus as He burns with love for me. And what other pledges of Thy love can I expect, O my Redeemer, than those which Thou hast already given me? Thou hast sacrificed Thy whole life for the love of me; Thou hast embraced for my sake a most bitter and infamous death; Thou hast for my sake reduced Thyself almost to annihilation, by becoming food in the Holy Eucharist in order to give Thyself entirely to us. O Lord, let me no longer live ungrateful for such great goodness. I thank Thee for having given me time to bewail the offences I have committed against Thee, and to love Thee during the days that remain to me in this life. I repent, O Sovereign Good, for having hitherto despised Thy love. I love Thee, O Infinite Goodness! I love Thee, O Infinite Treasure! I love Thee, O Infinite Love, who art worthy of infinite love! Oh, help me, my Jesus, to discard from my heart all affections that are not directed to Thee; so that from this day forward I may not desire, or seek, or love any other but Thee. My beloved Lord, grant

that I may always find Thee, grant that I may always love Thee. Do Thou take possession of my whole will, in order that I may never desire any thing but what is pleasing to Thee. My God, my God, whom shall I love, if I love not Thee, who art the Supreme Good? I do indeed desire Thee, and nothing more. O Mary, my Mother, take my heart into thy keeping, and fill it with pure love for Jesus Christ.

MEDITATION VII.

THE HOLY COMMUNION OBTAINS FOR US PERSEVERANCE IN DIVINE GRACE.

When Jesus comes to the soul in the Holy Communion, He brings to it every grace, and specially the grace of holy perseverance. This is the principal effect of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, to nourish the soul that receives It with this food of life, and to give it great strength to advance unto perfection, and to resist those enemies who desire our death. Hence Jesus calls Himself in this Sacrament Heavenly Bread : "I am the living Bread which came

down from heaven ; if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever" (St. John vi. 51, 52). Even as earthly bread sustains the life of the body, so this heavenly bread sustains the life of the soul, by making it persevere in the grace of God. Therefore the Council of Trent teaches, that Holy Communion is that remedy which delivers us from daily faults and preserves us from mortal sins. Innocent III. writes, that Jesus Christ by His Passion delivers us from sins committed, and by the Holy Eucharist from sins which we might commit. Therefore St. Bonaventure says, that sinners must not keep away from Communion because they have been sinners ; on the contrary, for this very reason they ought to receive it more frequently ; because 'the more infirm a person feels himself, the more he is in want of a physician.'

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Miserable sinner that I am, O Lord, wherefore do I lament my weakness when I consider my many falls from grace? How was it possible that I should have resisted the assaults of the devil while I stayed away

from Thee, who art my strength? If I had oftener approached the Holy Communion, I should not have been so often overcome by my enemies. But in future it shall not be so: "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded for ever." No, I will no longer rely on my own resolution. Thou alone art my hope, O my Jesus; Thou wilt give me strength, that I may no more fall into sin. I am weak; but Thou, by the Holy Communion, wilt make me strong against every temptation: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." Forgive me, O my Jesus, all the offences I have committed against Thee, of which I repent with my whole heart. I resolve rather to die than ever to offend Thee again; and I trust, in Thy Passion, that Thou wilt give me Thy help to persevere in Thy grace to the end of my life: "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded for ever." And with St. Bonaventure I will say the same to thee, O Mary, my Mother: 'In thee, O Lady, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded for ever.'

MEDITATION VIII.

ON PREPARATION FOR, AND THANKSGIVING AFTER,
COMMUNION.

Cardinal Bona asks, wherefore it happens that so many souls, after so many Communions, make so little advance in the way of God? and he answers: 'The fault is not in the food, but in the disposition of him who eats it;' that is to say, in the want of due preparation on the part of the communicant. Fire soon burns dry wood, but not that which is green, because the latter is not fit to burn. The Saints derived great profit from their Communions, because they were very careful in their preparation for it. There are two principal things which we should endeavour to obtain in order to prepare ourselves for Holy Communion. The first is, detachment from creatures, by driving from our heart every thing that is not of God and for God. Although the soul may be in a state of grace, yet if the heart is occupied by earthly affections, the more there is of earth in the soul, so much less room will there be for Divine love. St. Gertrude once asked our Lord what prepa-

ration He required of her for Holy Communion, and Jesus answered her : ' I require none other from thee, but that thou shouldst come to receive Me void of thyself.' The second thing that is necessary in order to reap great fruit from Communion is, the desire to receive Jesus Christ with the view of loving Him more. Gerson says that at this banquet none are satiated but those who feel great hunger. Hence St. Francis of Sales writes, that the principal intention of a soul in receiving Communion should be to advance in the love of God. ' He' (says the Saint) ' should be received for love, who out of pure love alone gives Himself to us.' And therefore Jesus said to St. Matilda : ' When thou art going to communicate, desire all the love that any soul ever had for Me, and I will receive it according to thy desire, as if it were thine own.'

It is also necessary to make a thanksgiving after Communion. There is no prayer more dear to God than that which is made after Communion. We must occupy this time in acts of love and prayers. The devout acts of love which we then make have greater merit in the sight of God than those

which we make at other times, because they are then animated by the presence of Jesus Christ, who is united to our souls. And as to prayers, St. Teresa says that Jesus, after Communion, remains in the soul as on a throne of grace, and says to it: 'What wilt thou that I should do for thee?' Soul, I am come from heaven on purpose to bestow graces upon thee; ask Me what thou wilt, and as much as thou wilt, and thou shalt be heard. Oh, what treasures of grace do they lose who pray but a short time to God after Holy Communion!

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O God of love, dost Thou, then, so much desire to dispense Thy favours to us, and yet are we so little anxious to obtain them? Oh, what sorrow we shall feel at the hour of death, when we think of this negligence, so pernicious to our souls! O my Lord, forget, I beseech Thee, all that is past; for the future, with Thy help, I will prepare myself better, by endeavouring to detach my affections from every thing that prevents me from receiving all those graces which Thou desirest to bestow upon me. And after

Communion I will lift up my heart to Thee as much as I can, in order to obtain Thy help, that I may advance in Thy love,—oh, grant me grace to accomplish this. O my Jesus, how negligent have I hitherto been in loving Thee! The time which Thou in Thy mercy mayest yet allot to me in this life, is the time to prepare myself for death, and to make amends by my love for the offences I have committed against Thee. I will spend it entirely in lamenting my sins and in loving Thee. I love Thee, my Jesus, my Love; I love Thee, my only Good; have pity on me, and do not forsake me. And thou, O Mary, my hope, do not cease to help me by thy holy intercession!

AN EASY METHOD

OF

**ASSISTING AT THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF
MASS WITH PROFIT.**

BY THE

BLESSED LEONARD OF PORT MAURICE.

THE angelical doctor, St. Thomas, tells us that we have all four special debts which we owe to Almighty God, answering to the four great ends for which Jesus Christ instituted the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar. These are,

1. To praise and honour the Infinite Majesty of God, in acknowledgment of His supreme dominion over us.

2. To satisfy Almighty God for the sins we have committed against Him.

3. To thank Him for all the blessings He has bestowed upon us.

4. To implore His divine grace and assistance.

The method for hearing Mass as here given is especially conformable to the spirit of the Church,

whose wish it is that we should, when assisting at Mass, unite our intention to that of the Priest, who offers up the Holy Sacrifice for the four ends just mentioned ; by so doing we shall be able, according to St. Thomas, to pay off, in the most efficacious manner, the four debts which we have contracted with Almighty God.

As soon, therefore, as the Mass commences, while the Priest humbles himself at the foot of the Altar, and says the *Confiteor*, make a short examination of conscience, an act of true contrition, beg pardon of God for your sins, and invoke the assistance of the Holy Spirit and of the Blessed Virgin, that you may hear Mass with all reverence and devotion.

Then divide the Mass into four parts, in which you will pay off the four great debts, in the following way :

From the Introit to the Gospel.

I. From the beginning up to the Gospel you will pay your first debt, of honouring and praising the majesty of God, who is worthy of infinite honour and praise. Humble yourself, therefore, with Jesus; acknowledge your own nothingness; confess sincerely that you are but utter nothingness in the presence of His Immense Majesty; and

then with great modesty and recollection, with humility of heart and body, say :

“ O my God, I adore Thee, and acknowledge Thee to be the Lord and Master of my soul. I protest that all that I am, all that I have, I have from Thee : and since Thy exceeding Majesty demands an infinite homage and worship, and I, a miserable creature, am utterly unable to acquit myself of this great debt, I offer Thee the humiliations and the homage which Jesus offers to Thee upon the altar. What Jesus does, I intend to do likewise, in union with Him. I humble and prostrate myself before Thy Majesty : I adore Thee, in union with the humiliations of Jesus : I rejoice and am full of joy that the blessed Jesus offers up to Thee for me an infinite honour and worship.”

Close your book, and continue to make in your heart several acts of joy at the thought that God is infinitely honoured ; and say again and again :

“ Yes, my God, I rejoice at the infinite honour which this Holy Sacrifice gives to Thy Majesty : I rejoice at it, and am glad, as far as I know how and can.”

Do not care to bind yourself to these words, but follow the promptings of your own devotion, keeping yourself recollected and united to God.

Oh, how well in this way, how well, will you pay off your first debt!

From the Gospel to the Elevation.

II. In the second part, which is from the Gospel to the Elevation, you will pay off the second debt. Cast a glance upon your many most grievous sins, consider the immense debt you have contracted on account of them with the Divine justice, and say with a humble heart:

“Behold, O my God, the traitor who has so often rebelled against Thee! Alas, with sorrow I hate and detest, with all the affections of my heart, my most grievous sins; and I offer Thee in satisfaction for them the satisfaction which Jesus gives Thee upon the Altar. I offer Thee all the merits of Jesus, the Blood of Jesus; Jesus, God and Man, who as a victim is sacrificing Himself again for me: since upon that Altar my Jesus is my Mediator and my Advocate, by His most precious Blood He is imploring pardon for me. I unite myself to the voice of that loving Blood; and I ask mercy for all my

most grievous sins. The Blood of Jesus cries to Thee for mercy ; my broken heart also cries to Thee for mercy. Ah, my beloved God, if my tears move Thee not, let the groans of my Jesus move Thee ; and that mercy which He obtained for all mankind upon the Cross, why should He not obtain it for me upon the Altar ? Yes, I hope that, in virtue of that most precious Blood, Thou wilt pardon me all my sins, which I will never cease to lament even to the last moment of my life."

Close your book, and repeat several times acts of true interior and earnest contrition. Give vent to your affections, and in silence, but in the depth of your heart, say to Jesus :

" My beloved Jesus, give me the tears of Peter, the contrition of Magdalene, and the sorrow of those saints who, once sinners, became true penitents, so that in this Mass I may obtain a most complete pardon of all my sins."

From the Elevation to the Communion.

III. In the third part, which is from the Elevation to the Communion, consider the amount of

the many and wonderful blessings you have received, in payment for which offer to Almighty God a gift of infinite value, the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ: invite all the angels, and all the saints, to thank Him for you in this or the like manner:

“Behold me, my most beloved God, laden with blessings, general and particular, which Thou hast bestowed upon me, and which Thou wilt still bestow upon me, in time and in eternity. I acknowledge that Thy mercies towards me have been, and are, infinite: I am ready to pay Thee for them, even to the last farthing; wherefore, in gratitude and in payment for them, behold this divine Blood, this most precious Body, this innocent Victim, which I present to Thee by the hands of the Priest. I am sure that this offering which I present to Thee is sufficient to pay Thee for all the gifts Thou hast bestowed upon me. This gift of infinite value is of itself worth all the gifts which I have ever received, or ever shall receive from Thee. Ye holy angels, and all ye blessed saints of heaven, oh, help me to thank my God, and offer to Him, in thanksgiving for His blessings to

me, not only this but all the Masses which are at this moment celebrated through the whole world; so that His most loving beneficence may receive a complete recompense for all the favours which He has shown me, and which He will confer upon me for ever and ever. Amen."

Oh, how pleased is our good God with such a thanksgiving! Oh, how is He satisfied by this one offering, which, being of an infinite value, is worth more than all other offerings together. And in order to excite yourself the more to this devotion, invite the whole court of heaven to thank Him for you; invoke those saints to whom you are more especially devout, and say to them in the inmost of your heart:

"O my beloved saints and advocates, thank the good God for me, that I may not live and die ungrateful; beg of Him to accept my good-will, and to have regard to the loving thanksgivings which Jesus in this Mass is offering to Him for me."

Do not be content with saying this once only, but repeat it again and again; and be assured that in this way you will completely acquit yourself of this great debt.

From the Communion to the end of Mass.

IV. In the fourth part, which is from the Communion to the end of the Mass, after having made a spiritual communion while the Priest is communicating sacramentally, consider God to be within you, and then open your heart, and ask Him for many graces, and know that then Jesus unites Himself with you, and prays and supplicates for you: therefore enlarge your heart, and do not ask for trifling things, but ask for great graces; for great is the offering which you make to God of His Divine Son. Say, then, with a humble heart:

“ My beloved God, I acknowledge myself quite unworthy of Thy favours ; I confess my exceeding unworthiness, and that for my many grievous sins I do not deserve to be heard by Thee. But how canst Thou refuse to listen to Thy Divine Son, who prays upon the Altar for me, and offers Thee His Blood and His Life? Hear, I beseech Thee, my most beloved God, the prayers of this my great Advocate, and for His sake grant me all the graces Thou knowest to be necessary for me to accomplish the great affair of my eternal salvation. And now I make bold to ask of Thee a

general pardon for all my sins, the grace of final perseverance ; moreover, I beg of Thee, O my God, trusting in the prayers of my Jesus, all virtues in an heroic degree, and all those efficacious helps which I require to become a saint. I also ask of Thee the conversion of all unbelievers, and of all sinners, and particularly of those who are related to me, either by ties of kindred, or spiritually ; I ask of Thee the deliverance, not of one soul only, but of all the souls in purgatory. Bring them all forth, so that by the efficacy of this divine sacrifice that prison of purification may remain empty. Convert all living souls ; may this miserable world become a paradise of delights for Thee, in which having been loved, and revered, and praised by all, may we come at length to praise and bless Thee for all eternity. Amen."

Ask then, ask for yourself, for your children, friends, parents, and relations ; ask that all your wants, both spiritual and temporal, may be supplied. Ask, also, for the fulness of all blessings upon the Holy Church, and for its deliverance from all evils ; and ask, not with lukewarmness, but with a great confidence, and be assured that

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your prayers, united to the prayers of Jesus, will have been heard.

As soon as the Mass is over, make an act of thanksgiving to Almighty God; and leave the Church with a heart full of compunction, as if you were coming down from Mount Calvary.



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