

INTRODUCTION

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY

The disciples knew Our Lord Jesus Christ very well in this detail: that he prayed often in their midst or alone. Moved by Our Lord's dedication to prayer, they asked him once: "Lord, teach us to pray." In answer, Our Lord gave them the model of all prayer: "When you pray, say: Our Father who art in heaven..." Buoyed by this confidence, we pray. We begin with the prayers we learned in childhood. They are very much a part of Christian tradition.

Through our vocal prayers, we learn the life of Jesus Christ and we gain his confidence in talking to our Father God. Then our conversations with God become sincere and true, face to face, heart to heart.

This is the way Saint Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer taught and lived throughout his life, a life of prayer. "Let us begin to do the same with God; we can be quite sure he listens to us and answers us. Let us pay attention to him and open up our soul in humble conversation, telling him in confidence everything that is in our heart: our joys, sorrows, hopes, annoyances, successes, failures, even the most trivial happenings in our day. We will discover that our heavenly father is interested in everything about us."

"The year 2000 marks a kind of challenge. We must look at the *immensity of good* that has sprung from the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word and, at the same time, not lose sight of the *mystery of sin*, which is continually expanding. Saint Paul writes that 'where sin increased' (*'ubi abundavit peccatum'*, 'grace overflows all the more' (*'superabundavit gratia'*; cf. Rom 5:20).

This profound truth presents a perennial challenge for prayer. It shows how necessary prayer is for the world and for the Church, because in the end it constitutes *the easiest way of making God and His redeeming love present in the world*. God entrusted to men their own salvation; He entrusted to them the Church and, in the Church, the redeeming work of Christ. God entrusted this to all, both to individuals and to humanity as a whole. *He entrusted all to one and one to all*. The prayer of the Church, and especially the prayer of the Pope, must constantly reflect this awareness."

Through vocal prayers, we begin this conversation with God. "*Prayer is a search for God, but it is also a revelation of God*. Through prayer God reveals Himself as Creator and Father, as Redeemer and Savior, as the Spirit who 'scrutinizes everything, even the depths of God' (1 Cor 2:10) and above all 'the secrets of human hearts' (cf. Ps 43[44]:22). *Through prayer God reveals Himself above all as Mercy* – that is, Love that goes out to those who are suffering, Love that sustains, uplifts, and invites us to trust. The victory of good in the world is united organically with this truth. A person who prays professes such a truth and in a certain sense makes God, who is *merciful Love*, present in the world."

Hence, this Handbook is a compilation of the prayers that will help us talk to God in a confident and intimate way. Most of these prayers are traditional and are thus grounded in the piety of the Communion of Saints. Some are fruit of the meditations of

Saint Josemaría Escrivá from his book, *The Way of the Cross*, and from his various homilies that deal with devotion to St. Joseph and to Mary, the Mother of God.

We entrust this Treasury of Prayers to the Blessed Virgin Mary. May she, who needed only to embrace her Son to make her prayer heard, teach us to pray as she prays – with the utmost confidence not because of our own worth, merit or devotion, but solely because of the *Love* and *Mercy* of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, New York: Knopf, 1994, p. 23-24. (=CTH)
2. *Ibidem* p.26.

HOW TO BE A TRUE CATHOLIC

UNIVERSAL CALL TO HOLINESS

“All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity.”¹ “Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”² God wants us to be holy. Each Christian must try to sanctify himself in his place within the Church of Christ.

In particular, the laity “by their very vocation, seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations.”³

“Hence the laity, dedicated as they are to Christ and anointed by the Holy Spirit, are marvelously called and prepared so that even richer fruits of the Spirit may be produced in them. For all their works, prayers, and apostolic undertakings, family and married life, daily work, relaxation of mind and body, if they are accomplished in the Spirit – indeed even the hardships of life if patiently born – all these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. In the celebration of the Eucharist these may most fittingly be offered to the Father along with the body of the Lord. And so, worshiping everywhere by their holy actions, the laity consecrate the world itself to God, everywhere offering worship by the holiness of their lives.”⁴

“[Lay Christians] live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel, they may work for the sanctification of the world from within, as a leaven.”⁵

This universal call to holiness “pertains to them in a special way so to illuminate and order all temporal things with which they are so closely associated that these may be effected and grow according to Christ and may be to the glory of the Creator and Redeemer.”⁶

“Let us listen to Our Lord: ‘He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is dishonest in a very little thing is dishonest also in much.’ It is as if he were saying to us: ‘Fight continuously in the apparently unimportant things which are to my mind important; fulfill your duty punctually; smile at whoever needs cheering up even though there is sorrow in your soul; devote the necessary time to prayer, without

haggling; go to the help of anyone who looks for you; practice justice and go beyond it with the grace of charity.”⁷

In order to sanctify ourselves in the ordinary circumstances of our life, we need to grow in our spiritual life, especially through prayer, self-denial and work.

Life of Prayer

“We learn to pray at certain moments by hearing the Word of the Lord and sharing in his Paschal mystery, but his Spirit is offered us at all times, in the events of *each day*, to make prayer spring up from us.”⁸

“Prayer in the events of each day and each moment is one of the secrets of the kingdom revealed to ‘little children’, to the servants of Christ, to the poor of the Beatitudes. It is right and good to pray so that the coming of the kingdom of justice and peace may influence the march of history, but it is just as important to bring the help of prayer into humble, everyday situations; all forms of prayer can be the leaven to which the Lord compares the kingdom.”⁹

“But do not imagine that prayer is an action to be carried out and then forgotten. The just man ‘delights in the law of the Lord, and meditates on his law day and night. Through the night, I meditate on you’ and ‘my prayer comes to you like incense in the evening.’ Our whole day can be a time of prayer—from night to morning and from morning to night.”¹⁰

Life of Self-Denial

“The way of perfection passes by way of the Cross. There is no holiness without renunciation and spiritual battle. Spiritual progress entails the asceticism and mortification that gradually lead to living in the peace and joy of the Beatitudes.”¹¹ “Without mortification there is no happiness on earth.”¹²

Life of Work

“*Human work* proceeds directly from persons created in the image of God and called to prolong the work of creation by subduing the earth, both with and for one another. Hence work is a duty: ‘If any one will not work, let him not eat.’

Work honors the Creator’s gifts and the talents received from him. It can also be redemptive. By enduring the hardship of work in union with Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth and the one crucified on Calvary, man collaborates in a certain fashion with the Son of God in his redemptive work. He shows himself to be a disciple of Christ by carrying the cross, daily, in the work he is called to accomplish.

Work can be a means of sanctification and a way of animating earthly realities with the Spirit of Christ.”¹³ “In work, the person exercises and fulfills in part the potential inscribed in his nature. The primordial value of labor stems from man himself, its author and its beneficiary. Work is for man, not man for work. Everyone should be able to draw from work the means of providing for his life and that of his family, and of serving the human community.”¹⁴

SPIRITUAL GAME PLAN

Do you want to be a better Christian? The first of your battles will be entering into and remaining in the state of grace, avoiding any mortal sin; and, since you want to love God above all things you will also try not to commit venial sins.

The practice of some acts of piety throughout the day will help you to have a contemplative life in the midst of your daily routine. The most important thing is to be consistent in your daily schedule in your spiritual game plan so you will live as a child of God.

Daily

- *Get up at a fixed time*, as early as possible. Eight hours of sleep are enough. Usually, more than this or less than six hours of sleep may not be good.
- *Offer your day* to God through the intercession of Our Lady.
- *Work with order and intensity* during the day as a way of serving God. Set goals and establish priorities in order to develop a practical schedule. Sanctifying ordinary work is the goal of our life.
- Try to attend *Mass*, receiving *Holy Communion*, as often as possible. This is the best sacrifice we can offer to God. Prepare yourself for the Mass by spending some time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.
- Before Holy Mass, and as a preparation, *spend some time* (15 minutes if possible) in *mental prayer* before the Blessed Sacrament.
- Pray the *Angelus* at noontime. (During Eastertide, we say the *Regina Cæli* instead.)
- Pray the *Rosary*, if possible, with your family, offering each decade for a specific intention.
- Do some *spiritual reading*. Start with the New Testament or some well known spiritual books. Ten to fifteen minutes is sufficient.
- Make a short *examination of conscience* at the end of the day before going to bed. Two or three minutes is enough. Follow these steps: Humble yourself in the presence of God. Tell Him, "Lord, if you will, You can make me clean." Ask for light to acknowledge your defects and virtues, and to see the dangers and opportunities of the day. Ask for repentance, amendment and encouragement.

Weekly

- Sunday is the Lord's Day. Center all activities on the Holy Mass. It is also a family day – for rest and spiritual growth.
- If you do not receive Holy Communion every day, receive at least on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
- Saturday is traditionally dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Honor her and say some special prayer such as the *Hail Holy Queen*.

Monthly

- Go to *Confession* at least once a month. It is the sacrament of joy. Pope John Paul II says: "God is always the one who is principally offended by sin – 'I have sinned against You' – and God alone can forgive. He does so through the ministry of the priest in the sacrament of Penance which is the ordinary way of obtaining forgiveness

and remission of mortal sins. Every mortal sin must always be stated with its determining circumstances in an individual confession.

- Have *spiritual guidance* with a wise prudent and knowledgeable priest.
- *Spend a few hours in recollection.* Better before the Blessed Sacrament. Consider how you are directing your life toward God.

Yearly

- A few days of *retreat* are necessary for the soul in the same way that the body needs a vacation. Spend three days within the year in silence, talking only to God. A retreat is a yearly opportunity for conversion.

Always

- Stay in the *presence of God*. Try to please Him in everything as a child tries to please his father.
- *Thank God* for the graces he constantly gives us.
- Do everything for the love of God: this is purity of intention. Always purify your intention. Make *acts of contrition* and *atonement* for yours sins and sins of others.
- Try to live as you would like to die. We shall die as we have lived.

SUMMARY OF CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

A. We are required to know and to believe:

- The Apostles' Creed. Especially:
 - That there is one supreme, eternal, infinite God, the Creator of heaven and earth.
 - That the good will be rewarded by him for ever in heaven, and the wicked, who die unrepentant, will be punished for ever in hell.
 - That heaven and hell equally on the simple word of Christ.
 - That in the Holy Trinity there are three Persons, co-eternal, co-equal: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
 - That God the Son, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, became man, and died on the cross to save us.
- The Commandments of God and of the Church.
- The seven Sacraments; especially of the necessity of Baptism and that the Eucharist is a pledge of our future glory.
- That Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, which form one sacred deposit of the Word of God, is committed to the Church.
- Whatever God teaches us by his holy Church, who in her teaching cannot deceive us nor be deceived.

“The sole Church of Christ [is that] which Our Savior, after his resurrection, entrusted to Peter's pastoral care, commissioning him and the other apostles to extend and rule it. . . . This Church, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him.”¹⁵

“The Roman Pontiff, head of the college of bishops, enjoys [this] infallibility in virtue of his office, when as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful – he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals. . . . The infallibility promised to the Church is also present in the body of bishops when, together with Peter's successor, they exercise the supreme Magisterium, above all

in an Ecumenical Council. When the Church through its supreme Magisterium proposes a doctrine 'for belief as being divinely revealed,' and as the teaching of Christ, the definitions 'must be adhered to with the obedience of faith.' This infallibility extends as far as the deposit of divine Revelation itself."¹⁶

B. We are required to know the basic prayers: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be.

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS

"The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions."¹⁷

Baptism¹⁸

By which we are born to the divine life: made heirs of heaven

The fruit of Baptism, or baptismal grace, includes:

- Forgiveness of original sin.
- Birth into the new life by which man becomes an adoptive son of the Father, a member of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit.
- Incorporation into the Church, the Body of Christ, and participation in the priesthood of Christ.
- The imprint on the soul an indelible spiritual sign, the *character*, which consecrates the baptized person for Christian worship. Because of the *character* Baptism cannot be repeated.

Confirmation¹⁹

*By which the divine life is fostered and increased,
to make us soldiers of Christ.*

The fruits of Confirmation are:

- Perfects Baptismal grace.
- Gives the Holy Spirit to root us more deeply in the divine filiation.
- Incorporates us more firmly into Christ.
- Strengthens our bond with the Church and associates us more closely with her mission.
- Helps us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.
- Imprints, like Baptism, a spiritual mark or indelible *character* on the Christian's soul; for this reason one can receive this sacrament only once in one's life.

The Holy Eucharist²⁰

By which the divine life is nurtured

The fruits of the Eucharist are:

- Increases the communicant's union with the Lord.
- Forgives venial sins.
- Preserves him from grave sins.

- □ Strengthens the bonds of charity between the communicant and Christ.
- Reinforces the unity of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ.

The Holy Eucharist is really, truly and substantially the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, of Jesus Christ, under the appearances of bread and wine. The Holy Eucharist is not only a Sacrament; it is also a sacrifice – the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The Church warmly recommends that the faithful receive Holy Communion each time they participate in the celebration of the Eucharist; she obliges them to do so at least once a year.

Reconciliation or Penance²¹

By which we recover the divine life lost by sin

The fruits of Penance are:

- □ Reconciliation with God: the penitent recovers grace;
- □ Reconciliation with the Church;
- □ Remission of the eternal punishment incurred by mortal sins;
- Remission, at least in part, of temporal punishments resulting from sin;
- Peace and serenity of conscience, and spiritual consolation;
- Increase of spiritual strength for the Christian battle.

Individual and integral confession of grave sins followed by absolution remains the only ordinary means of reconciliation with God and with the Church.

Anointing of the Sick²²

*By which the divine life is strengthened
during grave illness or old age*

The fruits of the Anointing of the Sick are:

- □ Uniting of the sick person to the passion of Christ, for his own good and that of the whole Church;
- □ Strengthening, peace, and courage to endure in a Christian manner the sufferings of illness or old age;
- □ Forgiveness of sins, if the sick person was not able to obtain it through the sacrament of Penance;
- □ Restoration of health, if it is conducive to the salvation of his soul;
- □ Preparation for passing over to eternal life.

Holy Orders²³

*By which the apostolic ministry is perpetuated:
making possible the transmission of the divine life*

The effects of the Holy Orders are:

- □ Gives the mission and faculty (“the sacred power”) to act *in persona Christi*;
- □ Configures to Christ as Priest, Teacher and Pastor;
- □ Imprints, like Baptism, an indelible *character* that cannot be repeated or conferred temporarily.

It is bishops who confer the sacrament of Holy Orders in the three degrees: episcopate, presbyterate, and diaconate. In the Latin Church the sacrament of Holy Orders for the presbyterate is normally conferred only on candidates who are ready to embrace celibacy freely and who publicly manifest their intention of staying celibate for the love of God's kingdom and the service of men.

Matrimony²⁴

*By which human love of the spouses is perfected,
leading them to the divine life*

The fruits of Matrimony are:

- Union of Christ and the Church.
- Gives spouses the grace to love each other with the love with which Christ has loved his Church;
- Perfects the human love of the spouses;
- Strengthens their indissoluble unity;
- Sanctifies them on the way to eternal life.
- Integrates the spouses into God's covenant with man: "Authentic married love is caught up into divine love."

"The marriage covenant, by which a man and a woman form with each other an intimate communion of life and love, has been founded and endowed with its own special laws by the Creator. By its very nature it is ordered to the good of the couple, as well as to the generation and education of children. Christ the Lord raised marriage between the baptized to the dignity of a sacrament."

The *marriage bond* has been established by God himself in such a way that a marriage concluded and consummated between baptized persons can never be dissolved.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF GOD²⁵

"What good deed must I do, to have eternal life?"

—"If you would enter into life, keep the commandments" (Mt 19:16-17).

By the life of Christ and by his preaching he attested to the permanent validity of the Ten Commandments.

The Decalogue contains a privileged expression of the natural law. It is made known to us by divine revelation and by human reason.

1. I am the Lord thy God.

Thou shalt not have strange gods before me. Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing; nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them.

2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

3. Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.

4. Honor thy father and thy mother.

5. **Thou shalt not kill.**
6. **Thou shalt not commit adultery.**
7. **Thou shalt not steal.**
8. **Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.**
9. **Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.**
10. **Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.**

THE SIX PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH²⁶

The precepts of the Church are set in the context of a moral life bound to and nourished by liturgical life. The obligatory character of these positive laws decreed by the pastoral authorities is meant to guarantee to the faithful the indispensable minimum in the spirit of prayer and moral effort, in the growth in love of God and neighbor:

1. "You shall attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation."

It requires the faithful to participate in the Eucharistic celebration when the Christian community gathers together on the day commemorating the Resurrection of the Lord.

2. "You shall confess your sins at least once a year."

It ensures preparation for the Eucharist by the reception of the sacrament of reconciliation, which continues Baptism's work of conversion and forgiveness.

3. "You shall humbly receive your Creator in Holy Communion at least during the Easter season."

It guarantees as a minimum the reception of the Lord's Body and Blood in connection with the Paschal feasts, the origin and center of the Christian liturgy.

4. "You shall keep holy the holy days of obligation."

It completes the Sunday observance by participation in the principal liturgical feasts which honors the mysteries of the Lord, the Virgin Mary and the saints.

It also requires to abstain from those labors and business concerns which impede the worship to be rendered to God, the joy which is proper to the Lord's Day, or the proper relaxation of mind and body.

5. "You shall observe the prescribed days of fasting and abstinence."

It ensures the times of sacrifice and penance which prepares us for the liturgical feasts: they help us acquire mastery over our instincts and freedom of heart.

6. To observe the laws of the Church concerning marriage.

DAYS OF PENANCE²⁷

"Conversion is accomplished in daily life by gestures of reconciliation, concern for the poor, the exercise and defense of justice and right, by the admission of faults to one's brethren, fraternal correction, revision of life, examination of conscience, spiritual direction, acceptance of suffering, endurance of persecution for the sake of righteousness. Taking up one's cross each day and following Jesus is the surest way of penance. The seasons and days of penance in the course of the liturgical year Lent, and each Friday in memory of the death of the Lord."²⁸

All members of the Christian faithful are, in their own way, bound to do penance in virtue of divine law; in order that all may be joined in a common observance of penance,

penitential days are prescribed in which the Christian faithful in a special way pray, exercise works of piety and charity, and deny themselves by fulfilling their responsibilities more faithfully, and especially by observing fast and abstinence according to the norm of the following canons:

- All Fridays through the year and the time of Lent are penitential days and times throughout the universal Church, which are especially appropriate for spiritual exercises, penitential liturgies, pilgrimages as signs of penance, voluntary self-denial such as fasting and almsgiving.
- Abstinence from eating meat or some other food or another penitential practice, according to the prescriptions of the conference of bishops, is to be observed on Fridays throughout the year unless they are solemnities. Abstinence and fast are to be observed on Ash Wednesday and on Good Friday.
 - All persons who have completed their fourteenth year are bound by the law of abstinence. All adults are bound by the law of fast up to the beginning of their sixtieth year. Nevertheless, pastors and parents are to see to it that minors who are not bound by the law of fast and abstinence are educated in an authentic sense of penance.
 - It is for the conference of bishops to determine more precisely the observance of fast and abstinence and to substitute in whole or in part for fast and abstinence other forms of penance, especially works of charity and exercises of piety and missionary works.
 - Diocesan bishops can proclaim special days of penance for their own diocese or territories, but only for individual occasions (*per modum actus*).

CHURCH LAWS CONCERNING MARRIAGE²⁹

Matrimony is defined as the *marriage covenant by which a man and woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life is by its nature ordered towards the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring*. For a baptized couple, this covenant has been raised by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament.

Since Christ instituted this sacrament, he also gives a man and woman their vocation to marriage. The covenant thus involves not only a man and woman, but also Christ. In establishing marriage as a vocation in life, God gave it the characteristics that enable human love to achieve its perfection, and allow family life to be full and fruitful. Outside marriage, or without a proper realization of its nature, the right conditions for the fruitfulness of human love and for a successful family life do not exist.

The Catholic Church has the right to establish laws regarding the validity of marriages since marriage for the baptized is both a covenant and a sacrament. And it is only the Catholic Church that has jurisdiction over those marriages, with due regard for the competence of civil authority concerning the merely civil effects. No one else has the power or authority to change ecclesiastical laws.

Unity and Indissolubility

Unity of marriage signifies that the *covenant* established is between one man and one woman: the husband cannot marry another woman during the lifetime of his wife, nor

can the wife marry another man during the lifetime of her husband. *Polygamy* – having more than one husband/wife at the same time – is contrary to the equal personal dignity of men and women who in Matrimony give themselves with a love that is total, and therefore, unique and exclusive.

Indissolubility means that the bond of sacramental marriage cannot be broken except by death of either husband or wife.

Consent

Matrimonial consent is an act of the will by which a man and a woman, in an irrevocable covenant, mutually give and accept each other, declaring their willingness to welcome children and to educate them. Consent must be a free act of the will of each of the contracting parties, without coercion or serious fear arising from external circumstances. To be free means:

- *Not to be acting under constraint.*
- *Not impeded by natural or ecclesiastical law.*

Only those capable of giving valid matrimonial consent can get married: Matrimony is created through the consent of the parties, legitimately manifested between persons who, according to law, are capable of giving consent.

Conditions for a valid marriage

1. The contracting parties must be capable, according to Church law, of giving matrimonial consent. Before Matrimony is celebrated, it must be evident that no impediment stands in the way of its valid and licit celebration.
2. The consent given by the parties must be deliberate, fully voluntary, free, mutual, and public. Therefore, the following are incapable of contracting marriage:
 - Persons who lack sufficient use of reason.
 - Persons who suffer from grave lack of discretion of judgment concerning essential matrimonial rights and duties which are to be mutually given and accepted.
 - Persons who, due to serious psychic illness, cannot assume the essential obligations of Matrimony.
3. The consent must be *legitimately manifested in canonical form*, with the presence of an authorized priest or deacon and in the presence of two witnesses. Canonical form does not oblige non-Catholics when they marry between themselves, but only Catholics—even if only one of the two parties is Catholic—who have not left the Church by a formal act. *The bishop, priest, or deacon who assists at the celebration of a marriage receives the consent of the spouses in the name of the Church and gives them the blessing of the Church. The presence of the Church's minister and also of the witnesses visibly expresses the fact that marriage is an ecclesial reality.*

Valid Age

To be married the Church requires that men have completed their sixteenth year (one completes one's sixteenth year the day after one reaches sixteen years of age) and that women have completed their fourteenth year of age (one completes her fourteenth year of age the day after she reaches fourteen years of age). These ages are the minimum for

validity. There may also be civil laws regulating the minimum age for each state and country, but these do not invalidate marriage in the eyes of the Church.

Invalid marriages

Marriage is permanent because God established it so from the very beginning. The indissolubility of marriage is for the good of husband and wife, their children and human society as a whole. The civil government has no power to dissolve a valid marriage – even if the marriage is between non-Catholics.

The government can only dissolve the civil aspects of marriage, such as ownership of property, custody of the children, etc. *Even when civil divorce* is allowed by the country's law, marriage, in God's eyes, still exists.

The Church does not have the power to dissolve a valid, sacramental marriage which has been *consummated*. She may only declare a marriage *null and void* upon investigation and evidence that the marriage did not exist from the very beginning. The reasons could be one of the following:

- Lack of a fully *voluntary and free consent*.
- Some deficiency in the *form of the marriage celebration*.
- The presence of *impediments* that make marriage invalid.

The *declaration of nullity* (so-called *annulment*) is a very important decision of an ecclesiastical court. A very careful investigation has to be made by the court before that conclusion is reached, insuring that no valid marriage is declared *null and void* by mistake.

Mixed Marriages

Marriages between a Catholic and a baptized Christian who is not in full communion with the Catholic Church are called *mixed marriages*. For *mixed marriages* permission from the local Ordinary, not dispensation, is required for validity. Marriages between Catholics and unbaptized persons (*disparity of cult*) are invalid unless a dispensation from the local Ordinary is granted.

All of this presupposes that these marriages are celebrated with all other necessary conditions.

The local bishop may grant permission or dispensation for such marriages on the following conditions:

- The Catholic party declares that he or she is prepared to remove dangers of falling away from the faith and makes a sincere promise to do all in his or her power to have all the children baptized and brought up in the Catholic Church.
- The other party is to be informed at an appropriate time of these promises which the Catholic person has to make. It is important that the other person be truly aware of the commitments and obligations of the Catholic spouse.
- Both persons are to be instructed on the essential ends and properties of marriage, which are not to be excluded by either party.
- They should *marry in the Catholic Church*. The canonical form (Church ceremony with an authorized Catholic priest or deacon and at least two other witnesses) is to be

followed. When there are serious difficulties the local bishop may give a dispensation and allow a form which is public to be followed. However, it is never allowed to have the Catholic priest or deacon and a non-Catholic minister, rabbi or public official, each performing his own rite, asking for the consent of the parties. Likewise, it is forbidden to have another religious marriage ceremony before or after the Catholic ceremony for giving or receiving the matrimonial consent. Marriage consent is given only once.

Worthy reception of the Sacrament of Matrimony

Once the requirements for a valid marriage are fulfilled, some other conditions are needed for the worthy reception of the sacrament of Matrimony:

- Both parties must be *baptized persons*.
- *Rectitude of intention*. Thoughtfulness and prudence are always necessary for the choice of a future spouse. Being carried away by emotions or momentary passions should be avoided. Premarital pregnancy is not a sufficient motive to marry someone since that could involve an added mistake.
- *Spiritual preparation*. One should be in the state of grace. The sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist are strongly recommended as immediate preparation. A general confession would be advisable in the case of someone who has been away from the sacrament of Reconciliation for a long time.
- *Having previously received the sacrament of Confirmation*. Otherwise one should receive this sacrament unless grave difficulties arise.
- *Knowledge of the duties of married life*. Such duties include mutual fidelity of the spouses until death and care for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the children sent by God.
- *Obedience to the marriage laws of the Church*.

INDULGENCES³⁰

Definition

“An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints.”

Explanation

- Through indulgences the faithful can obtain the remission of temporal punishment resulting from sin for themselves and also for the souls in Purgatory.
- An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin.
- Indulgences may be applied to the living or the dead.
- An indulgence is obtained through the Church who, by virtue of the power of binding and loosing granted her by Christ Jesus, intervenes in favor of individual Christians and opens for them the treasury of the merits of Christ and the saints to obtain from the Father of mercies the remission of the temporal punishments due for their sins.

Thus the Church does not want simply to come to the aid of these Christians, but also to spur them to works of devotion, penance, and charity.

- Since the faithful departed now being purified are also members of the same communion of saints, one way we can help them is to obtain indulgences for them so that the temporal punishments due for their sins may be remitted.

Requirements

To gain an indulgence one must:

- Be baptized, not excommunicated and in the state of grace at least at the completion of the prescribed works.
- Have at least the intention of receiving the indulgence and fulfill the enjoined works at the stated time and according to the tenor of the grant.

The *usual conditions* for gaining a plenary indulgence are in addition to the good work to which it is attached:⁷

- *Confession* on the day itself, or within some days before or after the performance of the good work.
- *Holy Communion* on the day itself, or within some days before or after the performance of the good work.
- *Prayer for the intention of the Pope*. For this, recitation of one *Our Father* and one *Hail Mary* suffices, though the faithful may say any other prayer according to their personal devotion.
- *Exclusion of all attachment to sin, even the slightest venial sin*.
- It is recommended that reception of Holy Communion and prayer for the Pope's intentions take place on the same day as the good work.
- Only one plenary indulgence may be gained on any one day with the exception of the plenary indulgence applicable at the moment of death. Several plenary indulgences may be gained on the basis of a single sacramental confession; only one may be gained, however, on the basis of a single communion and prayer for the Pope's intentions.
- If we are not properly disposed to receive a plenary indulgence when it is granted to us, we receive only a partial indulgence according to the perfection of our dispositions.

Plenary Indulgence

A *plenary indulgence* called "Portiuncula" may be gained by visiting any parish church on two days of the year; the titular feast of the church and either on August 2, the day of the "Portiuncula" indulgence, or on another suitable day to be fixed by the Ordinary. Another *plenary indulgence* applicable only to the dead may be gained in all churches on November 2. On these visits the faithful should recite the *Our Father* and the *Creed*, and fulfill the three requirements (Confession, Communion, and prayer for the Pope).

A *plenary indulgence* may also be gained by:

- Visiting the Blessed Sacrament for half an hour at least;
- Reading the Bible for at least half an hour;

- Making the Stations of the Cross;
- Praying the Rosary (five decades) in a church or with the family;
- Receiving the apostolic blessing at the hour of death.

Partial Indulgence

Any of the faithful who, being at least inwardly contrite, performs a work carrying with it a partial indulgence, receives through the Church the remission of temporal punishment equivalent to what their own act already receives. A *partial indulgence* is granted to the faithful who:

- *In the performance of their duties and in bearing the trials of life*, raise their mind with humble confidence to God, adding – even if only mentally – some pious invocation. This first grant is intended to serve as an incentive to the faithful to put into practice the commandment of Christ that “they must always pray and not lose heart” and at the same time as a reminder so to perform their respective duties as to preserve and strengthen their union with Christ.
- In a spirit of faith and mercy *give* of themselves or of their goods to serve their brothers in need. This second grant is intended to serve as an incentive to the faithful to perform more frequent acts of charity and mercy, thus following the example and obeying the command of Christ Jesus.
- In a spirit of penance voluntarily *deprive themselves* of what is licit and pleasing to them. This third grant is intended to move the faithful to bridle their passions and thus learn to bring their bodies into subjection and to conform themselves to Christ in his poverty and suffering.
- *Devoutly use religious articles* (crucifixes, crosses, rosaries, scapulars, medals) properly blessed by a priest.

But self-denial will be more precious if it is united to charity according to the teaching of St. Leo the Great: “Let us give to virtue what we refuse to self-indulgence. Let what we deny ourselves by fast – be the refreshment of the poor.”

THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES³¹

The theological virtues dispose Christians to live in a relationship with the Holy Trinity. They have God for their origin, their motive, and their object – God known by faith, God hoped in and loved for his own sake. There are three theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity.

Faith

- Faith is the theological virtue by which we believe in God and believe all that he has said and revealed to us, and that Holy Church proposes for our belief, because he is truth itself.
- By faith “man freely commits his entire self to God.” For this reason the believer seeks to know and do God’s will through charity.
- The gift of faith remains in one who has not sinned against it. But “faith apart from works is dead” when it is deprived of hope and love, faith does not fully unite the believer to Christ and does not make him a living member of his Body.

- The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live on it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it, and spread it.
- Service of and witness to the faith are necessary for salvation.

Hope

- Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit.
- The virtue of hope responds to the aspiration to happiness which God has placed in the heart of every man; it takes up the hopes that inspire men's activities and purifies them so as to order them to the Kingdom of heaven; it keeps man from discouragement; it sustains him during times of abandonment; it opens up his heart in expectation of eternal beatitude. Buoyed up by hope, he is preserved from selfishness and led to the happiness that flows from charity.
- Christian hope unfolds from the beginning of Jesus' Preaching in the proclamation of the beatitudes.
- Hope is the "sure and steadfast anchor of the soul . . . that enters . . . where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf."
- Hope is also a weapon that protects us in the struggle of salvation: "Let us . . . put on the breastplate of faith and charity, and for a helmet the hope of salvation."
- It affords us joy even under trial: "Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation."

Charity

- Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

CARDINAL VIRTUES³²

The human virtues are stable dispositions of the intellect and the will that govern our acts, order our passions, and guide our conduct in accordance with reason and faith. They can be grouped around the four cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.

- Prudence disposes the practical reason to discern in every circumstance, our true good and to choose the right means for achieving it.
- Justice consists in the firm and constant will to give God and neighbor their due.
- Fortitude ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good.
- Temperance moderates the attraction of the pleasures of the senses and provides balance in the use of created goods.

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT³³

They belong in their fullness to Christ, Son of David. They complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them. They make the faithful docile in readily obeying divine inspirations.

- Wisdom.
- Understanding.
- Counsel.
- Fortitude.
- Knowledge.
- Piety.
- Fear of the Lord.

FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT³⁴

The fruits of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory. The tradition of the Church lists twelve of them.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| • <input type="checkbox"/> Charity. | • <input type="checkbox"/> Generosity. |
| • <input type="checkbox"/> Joy. | • <input type="checkbox"/> Gentleness. |
| • <input type="checkbox"/> Peace. | • <input type="checkbox"/> Faithfulness. |
| • Patience. | • <input type="checkbox"/> Modesty. |
| • <input type="checkbox"/> Kindness. | • Self-control. |
| • <input type="checkbox"/> Goodness. | • <input type="checkbox"/> Chastity. |

WORKS OF MERCY³⁵

The *works of mercy* are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities. Among all these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God.

Spiritual

- To feed the hungry.
- Give drink to the thirsty.
- Clothe the naked.
- Shelter the homeless.
- Visit the sick.
- Visit the imprisoned.
- Bury the dead.

Corporal

- To counsel the doubtful.
- Instruct the ignorant.
- Admonish sinners.
- Comfort the afflicted.
- Forgive offenses
- Bear wrongs patiently.
- Pray for the living and the dead.

MORTAL AND VENIAL SINS³⁶

For a *sin* to be *mortal*, three conditions must together be met: “Mortal sin is sin whose object is grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent.”

- *Grave matter* is specified by the (Decalogue), the Ten Commandments.
- Mortal sin requires *full knowledge* and *complete consent*. It presupposes knowledge of the sinful character of the act, of its opposition to God’s law. It also implies a consent sufficiently deliberate to be a personal choice. Feigned ignorance and hardness of heart do not diminish, but rather increase, the voluntary character of a sin.
- Unintentional ignorance can diminish or even remove the imputability of a grave offense. But no one is deemed to be ignorant of the principles of the moral law, which are written in the conscience of every man. The promptings of feelings and passions can also diminish the voluntary and free character of the offense, as can external pressures or pathological disorders. Sin committed through malice, by deliberate choice of evil, is the gravest.

CAPITAL SINS AND OPPOSED VIRTUES³⁷

Vices can be classified according to the virtues they oppose, or also be linked to the *capital sins* which Christian experience has distinguished, following St. John Cassian and St. Gregory the Great. They are called “capitals ” because they engender other sins, other vices.

Capital Sins

- Pride.

- Covetousness.
- Lust.
- Anger.
- Gluttony.
- Envy.
- Sloth.

Virtues Opposed to Capital Sins

- Humility.
- Liberality.
- Chastity.
- Meekness.
- Temperance
- Brotherly Love.
- Diligence.

SINS AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT³⁸

“Whoever *blasphemes against the Holy Spirit* never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin. There are no limits to the mercy of God, but anyone who deliberately refuses to accept his mercy by repenting, rejects the forgiveness of his sins and the salvation offered by the Holy Spirit. Such hardness of heart can lead to final impenitence.”

This sin blocks the person's route to Christ, who is the only one who can take away the sin of the world, and the sinner puts himself outside the range of God's forgiveness. In this sense, the sins against the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven.

SINS THAT CRY TO HEAVEN³⁹

The catechetical tradition also recalls that there are “*sins that cry to heaven*”: the blood of Abel, the sin of the Sodomites, the cry of the people oppressed in Egypt, the cry of the foreigner, the widow, and the orphan, injustice to the wage earner.

SACRAMENTALS⁴⁰

Sacramentals are sacred signs instituted by the Church. They prepare men to receive the fruit of the sacraments and sanctify different circumstances of life. Among the sacramentals blessing operate an important place. They include both praise of God for his works and gifts, and the Church's intercession for men that they may be able to use God's gifts according to the spirit of the Gospel.

BEATITUDES⁴¹

The Beatitudes respond to the natural desire for happiness. This desire is of divine origin: God has placed it in the human heart in order to draw man to the One who alone can fulfill it. They teach us the final end to which God calls us: the Kingdom, the vision of God, participation in the divine nature, eternal life, filiation, rest in God.

The Beatitudes are at the heart of Jesus' preaching. They take up the promises made to the chosen people since Abraham. They also fulfill the promises by ordering them no longer merely to the possession of a territory, but to the Kingdom of heaven.

- Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
- Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
- Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
- Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
- Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
- Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYER¹²

Prayer and *Christian life* are *inseparable*, for they concern the same love and the same renunciation, proceeding from love.

The Battle of Prayer

- The principal difficulties in the practice of prayer are:
 - Distraction.
 - Dryness.
- The remedy lies in faith, conversion, and vigilance of heart.
- Two frequent temptations threaten prayer:
 - Lack of faith
 - Acedia – a form of depression stemming from lax ascetical practice – that leads to discouragement.

The Church invites the faithful to regular prayer: daily prayers, the Liturgy of the Hours, Sunday Eucharist, and the feasts of the liturgical year.

The Christian tradition points out to three major expressions of the life of prayer: vocal prayer, meditation, and contemplative prayer. They have in common the recollection of the heart.

Vocal prayer, founded on the union of body and soul in human nature, associates the body with the interior prayer of the heart, following Christ's example of praying to his Father and teaching the Our Father to his disciples.

Meditation is a prayerful quest engaging thought, imagination, emotion, and desire. Its goal is to make our own in faith the subject considered, by confronting it with the reality of our own life.

Contemplative prayer is the simple expression of the mystery of prayer. It is a gaze of faith fixed on Jesus, an attentiveness to the Word of God, a silent love. It achieves real union with the prayer of Christ to the extent that it makes us share in his mystery.

Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death: By asking Mary to pray for us, we acknowledge ourselves to be poor sinners and we address ourselves to the “Mother of Mercy,” the All-Holy One.

Prayer in the events of each day and each moment is one of the secrets of the kingdom revealed to “little children,” to the servants of Christ, to the poor of the Beatitudes. It is right and good to pray so that the coming of the kingdom of justice and peace may influence the march of history, but it is just as important to bring the help of prayer into humble, everyday situations; all forms of prayer can be the leaven to which the Lord compares the kingdom. Prayer presupposes an effort, a fight against ourselves and the wiles of the Tempter. The battle of prayer is inseparable from the necessary “spiritual battle” to act habitually according to the Spirit of Christ: we pray as we live, because we live as we pray.

In the Our Father, the object of the first three petitions is the glory of the Father: the sanctification of his name, the coming of the kingdom, and the fulfillment of his will. The four others present our wants to him: they ask that our lives be nourished, healed of sin, and made victorious in the struggle of good over evil.

1. Vatican Council II, Lumen Gentium (=LG) 31.
2. John
3. Lumen Gentium, 31.
4. CCC 901; cf. LG 10, 34; I Peter 2:5.
5. LG 31.
6. Ibidem.
7. Saint Josemaría Escrivá, Christ is Passing By (=CPB) 77.
8. CCC 2659; Cf. Matthew 6:11, 34.
9. CCC 2660; Cf. Luke 13:20-21.
10. CPB 119.
11. CCC 2015; Cf. 2 Timothy 4.
12. Saint Josemaría Escrivá, Furrow (=FW) 983.
13. CCC 2427.
14. CCC 2428; cf. LE 27.
15. CCC 816.
16. CCC 891.
17. CCC 1131
18. CCC 1279
19. CCC 1316
20. CCC 1416.
21. CCC 1497.
22. CCC 1527, 1532.
23. CCC 1536, 1598.
24. CCC 1638, 1641, 1660, 1664.
25. CCC 2075, 2076, 2080.
26. CCC 2041

27. Extracted from the Code of Canon Law.
28. CCC 1435, 1438
29. Extracted from Code of Canon Law.
30. CCC 1471-1479.
31. CCC 1814-1829, 1842, 1843, 1844.
32. CCC 1805-1807, 1835-1837.
33. CCC 768, 798-801, 1830.
34. CCC 1832.
35. CCC 2447
36. CCC 1857-1860.
37. CCC 1866-1867.
38. CCC 1864; cf. John 1:29..
39. CCC 1867.
40. Cf. CCC 1677-1678.
41. CCC 1716, 1718, 1726.

BASIC PRAYERS

A certain memorization of some essential prayers, far from opposing the dignity of young Christians, or obstructing personal dialogue with the Lord, constitutes a real need. What is memorized must at the same time be absorbed and gradually understood in depth, in order to become a source of Christian life.¹

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

The Christian begins his day, his prayers, and his activities with the Sign of the Cross. The sign of the cross strengthens us in temptations and difficulties.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

By the sign of the cross de-liver us from our enemies, you who are our God. In the name . .

In nómine Patris, et Fílii, et Spíritus Sancti. Amen.

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Per signum crucis de inimícis nostris líbera nos, Deus noster.

In nómine Patris, . . .

THE LORD'S PRAYER

"In the Our Father, the object of the first three petitions is the glory of the Father: the sanctification of his name, the coming of the kingdom, and the fulfillment of his will. The four others present our wants to him: they ask that our lives be nourished, healed of sin, and made victorious in the struggle of good over evil.

"By the final 'Amen', we express our '*fiats*' concerning the seven petitions: 'So be it.'"²

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Amen.

Pater noster, qui es in cælis: sanctificétur nomen tuum; advéniat regnum tuum; fiat volúntas tua, sicut in cælo, et in terra.

Panem nostrum cotidiánum da nobis hódie; et dimítte nobis débita nostra sicut et nos dimíttimus debitóribus nostris; et ne nos indúcas in tentatiónem; sed líbera nos a malo. Amen.

THE HAIL MARY

“Hail Mary”, the greeting of the angel Gabriel, opens this prayer. It is God himself who, through his angel as intermediary, greets Mary. Our prayer dares to take up this greeting to Mary with the regard God had for the lowliness of ‘his humble servant and to exult in the joy he finds in her.

“Full of grace, the Lord is with thee.” These two phrases of the angel’s greeting shed light on one another. The grace with which Mary is filled is the presence of Him who is the source of all grace.

“Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.” After the angel’s greeting, we make Elizabeth’s greeting our own. “Filled with the Holy Spirit “Elizabeth is the first in the long succession of generations who have called Mary *blessed*.” “Blessed is she who believed....” Mary is “blessed among women” because she believed in the fulfillment of the Lord’s word, thus becoming the mother of believers, through whom all nations of the earth receive him who is God’s own blessing: Jesus, the “fruit of thy womb.”

“Holy Mary, Mother of God.” Mary is Mother of God and our mother; we can entrust all our cares and petitions to her: she prays for us as she prayed for herself: “Let it be to me according to your word.” By entrusting ourselves to her prayer, we abandon ourselves to the will of God together with her.

“Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.” By asking Mary to pray for us, we acknowledge ourselves to be poor sinners and we address ourselves to the “Mother of Mercy,” the All-Holy One. And our trust broadens further to surrender “the hour of our death” wholly to her care. May she be there as she was at her son’s death on the cross. May she welcome us as our mother at the hour of our passing to lead us to her son, Jesus, in paradise.³

Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb
Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at
the hour of our death. Amen.

Ave, María, grátia plena, Dóminus tecum; benedícta tu in
mulieribus, et benedíctus fructus ventris tui, Iesus.

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Sancta María, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatóribus, nunc et
in hora mortis nostræ. Amen.

THE GLORY BE

The Glory Be, perhaps derived from Christ command: “Baptized in the Name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit”, has been recited since the first centuries of Christianity. This hymn of praise to the triune God joins us with the heavenly hosts in glorifying God. With the *Glory Be* we also profess, in a formula against the heresies of Arius (who denied the divinity of the Son) and Macedonius (who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit), our faith in the most fundamental and basic mystery of revelation: the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world
without end. Amen.

Glória Patri, et Fílio, et Spirítui Sancto.

Sicut erat in principio
et nunc et semper et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

The *Apostles' Creed* is so called because it is rightly considered to be a faithful summary of the Apostle's faith. It is the ancient baptismal symbol of the Church of Rome.⁴

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son,
our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

SYMBOLUM APOSTOLORUM

Credo in Deum, Patrem omnipotentem,
Creatorem caeli et terrae.
Et in Iesum Christum, Filium eius unicum,
Dominum nostrum:
qui conceptus est de Spiritu Sancto,
natus ex Maria Virgine,
passus sub Pontio Pilato,
crucifixus, mortuus, et sepultus;
descendit ad inferos;
tertia die resurrexit a mortuis;
ascendit ad caelos;
sedet ad dexteram Dei Patris omnipotentis;
inde venturus est iudicare vivos et mortuos.
Credo in Spiritum Sanctum,
sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam,

Sanctorum communionem,
remissionem peccatorum,
carnis resurrectionem,
vitam aeternam. Amen.

MORNING OFFERING

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer you my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of your Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all my relatives and friends and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father. Amen.

CONSECRATION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

My Queen and my Mother, I give myself entirely to you and in proof of my affection, I give you my eyes, my ears, my tongue, my heart, my whole being without reserve. Since I am your own, keep me and guard me as your property and possession. Amen.

PRAYER TO ONE'S GUARDIAN ANGEL

Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom his love commits me here ever this day (or night), be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

ANGELE DEI

Angele Dei, qui custos es mei, me tibi commissum pietates superna illumina, custodi, rege et governa. Amen.

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ACT OF FAITH

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths that the holy Catholic Church teaches, because you have revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

ACT OF HOPE

O my God, relying on your almighty power and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon for my sins, the help of your grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer.

ACT OF CHARITY

O my God, I love you above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because you are all-good and worthy of all love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me, and ask pardon of all whom I have injured.

PRAYER BEFORE A DAY'S WORK

Direct, we beg you, O Lord, our actions by your holy inspirations, and carry them on by your gracious assistance, that every prayer and work of ours may begin always with you, and through you be happily ended. Amen.

PRAYER TO KEEP PRESENCE OF GOD

Lord, God Almighty, you have brought us safely to the beginning of this day. Defend us today by your mighty power, that we may not fall into any sin, but that all our words may so proceed and all our thoughts and actions be so directed, as to be always just in your sight. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

ACCEPTANCE OF GOD'S WILL

In all things may the most holy, the most just, and the most lovable will of God be done, praised, and exalted above all for ever. Your will be done, O Lord, your will be done. The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Lord Jesus Christ, Shepherd of souls, who called the apostles to be fishers of men, raise up new apostles in your holy Church. Teach them that to serve you is to reign: to possess you is to possess all things. Kindle in the young hearts of our people the fire of zeal for souls. Make them eager to spread your Kingdom upon earth. Grant them courage to follow you, who are the Way, the Truth and the Life; who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

PSALM 94 (95)

This hymn of adoration to God was an introduction to the Sabbath liturgy of the Synagogue. The Church has placed it at the beginning of each day's divine office.

Come, let us sing to the Lord
and shout with joy to the Rock who saves us.
Let us approach him with praise and thanksgiving
and sing joyful songs to the Lord.
The Lord is God, the mighty God,
the great king over all the gods.
He holds in his hands the depths of the earth
and the highest mountains as well.
He made the sea; it belongs to him,
the dry land, too, for it was formed by his hands.

Come, then, let us bow down and worship,
bending the knee before the Lord, our maker.
For he is our God and we are his people,
the flock he shepherds.
Today, listen to the voice of the Lord:
Do not grow stubborn, as your fathers did
in the wilderness, when at Meriba and Massah
they challenged me and provoked me,
Although they had seen all of my works.
Forty years I endured that generation.
I said, "They are a people whose hearts go astray
and they do not know my ways."
So I swore in my anger,
"They shall not enter into my rest."
Glory be . . .

PSALM 94 (95)

Veníte, exsultémus Dómino;
iubilémus Deo salutári nostro.
Præoccupémus fáciem eius in confessióne et
in psalmis iubilémus ei.
Quóniam Deus magnus Dóminus
et rex magnus super omnes deos.
Quia in manu eius sunt profúnda terræ,
et altitúdines móntium ipsíus sunt.
Quóniam ipsíus est mare, et ipse fecit illud,
et siccam manus eius formavérunt.
Veníte, adorémus et procidámus et
génua flectámus ante Dóminum, qui fecit nos,
quia ipse est Deus noster,
et nos pópulus páscuæ eius et oves manus eius.
Utinam hódie vocem eius audiátis:
"Nolíte obduráre corda vestra,
sicut in Meríba secúndum diem Massa in desérto,
ubi tentavérunt me patres vestri:
probavérunt me, etsi vidérunt ópera mea.
Quadragínta annis taéduit me generatiónis illíus,
et dixi: Pópulus errántium corde sunt isti.
Et ipsi non cognovérunt vias meas;
ídeo iurávi in ira mea:
Non introíbunt in réquiem meam".
Glória Patri . . .
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LITURGY OF THE HOURS

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The mystery of Christ, his Incarnation and Passover, which we celebrate in the Eucharist especially at Sunday Mass, permeates and transfigures the time of each day, through the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, "the divine office." This celebration, faithful to the apostolic exhortations to "pray constantly," is "so devised that the whole course of the day and night is made holy by the praise of God." In this "public prayer of the Church," the faithful (clergy, religious, and lay people) exercise the royal priesthood of the baptized.

The Liturgy of the Hours, which is like an extension of the sacrifice of the Mass, does not exclude but rather in a complementary way calls forth the various devotions of the People of God, especially adoration and worship of the Blessed Sacrament.

The Psalms constitute the masterwork of prayer in the Old Testament. They present two inseparable qualities: the personal, and the communal. They extend to all dimensions of history, recalling God's promises already fulfilled and looking for the coming of the Messiah.⁵

Gatherings of the laity—for prayer, apostolic work or any other reason—are encouraged to fulfill the Church's office by celebrating part of the Liturgy of the Hours.⁶

Morning Prayer

Morning Prayer, celebrated as the light of a new day is dawning, recalls the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the true light enlightening all mankind (Jn 1:9) and "the Sun of justice" (Mt 4:2), "rising from on high" (Lk 1:78).⁷

God, come to my assistance.

R. Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be to the Father . . .

As it was in the beginning. . . . Alleluia.

HYMN

The day is filled with splendor
When God brings light from light,
And all renewed creation
Rejoices in his sight.
The Father gives his children
The wonder of the world
In which his power and glory
Like banners are unfurled.
With every living creature,
Awaking with the day,
We turn to God our Father,
Lift up our hearts and pray:
O Father, Son and Spirit,
Your grace and mercy send,
That we may live to praise you
Today and to the end.

PSALMODY

Ant. 1 It is you whom I invoke, O Lord. In the morning you hear me.
Morning prayer for help

Psalm 5:2-10,12-13

*Those who have received the Word of God
which dwells within will rejoice for ever.*

To my words give ear, O lord, *
give heed to my groaning.
Attend to the sound of my cries, *
my King and my God.
It is you whom I invoke, O Lord. *
In the morning you hear me;
in the morning I offer you my prayer, *
watching and waiting.
You are no God who loves evil; *
no sinner is your guest.
The boastful shall not stand their ground *
before your face.
You hate all who do evil: *
you destroy all who lie.
The deceitful and bloodthirsty man *
the Lord detests.
But I through the greatness of your love *
have access to your house.
I bow down before your holy temple, *
filled with awe.
Lead me, Lord, in your justice, +
because of those who live in wait; *
make clear your way before me.
No truth can be found in their mouths, *
their heart is all mischief,
their throat a wide-open grave, *
all honey their speech.
All those you protect shall be glad *
and ring out their joy.
You shelter them; in you they rejoice, *
those who love your name.
It is you who bless the just man, Lord: *
you surround him with favor as with a shield.
Glory be . . .

Ant. It is you whom I invoke, O Lord. In the morning you hear me.

Ant. 2 We praise your glorious name, O Lord,
our God.

Canticle

Glory and honor are due to God alone

1 Chronicles 29:10-13

*Blessed be the God and Father of
our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 1:3).*

Blessed may you be, O Lord, +
God of Israel our father, *
from eternity to eternity.
Yours, O Lord, are grandeur and power, *
majesty, splendor, and glory.
For all in heaven and on earth is yours; +
yours, O Lord, is the sovereignty: *
you are exalted as head over all.
Riches and honor are from you, *
and you have dominion over all.
In your hands are power and might; *
it is yours to give grandeur and strength to all.
Therefore, our God, we give you thanks *
and we praise the majesty of your name.
Glory be . . .

Ant. We praise your glorious name, O Lord, our God.

Ant. 3 Adore the Lord in his holy court.

A tribute of praise to the Word of God

Psalm 29

*A voice was heard from heaven, saying,
'This is my beloved Son' (Mt 3:17)*

O give the Lord you sons of God, *
give the Lord glory and power;
give the Lord the glory of his name. *
Adore the Lord in his holy court.
The Lord's voice resounding on the waters, *
the Lord on the immensity of waters;
the voice of the Lord, full of power, *
the voice of the Lord, full of splendor.
The Lord's voice shattering the cedars, *
the Lord shatters the cedars of Lebanon;
he makes Lebanon leap like a calf *
and Sirion like a young wild-ox.
The Lord's voice flashes flames of fire. +
The Lord's voice shaking the wilderness *
The Lord's shakes the wilderness of Kadesh;
the Lord's voice rending the oak tree *
and stripping the forest bare.
The God of glory thunders. *
In his temple they all cry: "Glory!"

The Lord sat enthroned over the flood;
the Lord sits as king for ever.
The Lord will give strength to his people, *
the Lord will bless his people with peace.
Glory be . . .

Ant. Adore the Lord in his holy court.

SCRIPTURE READING

2 Thess 3: 10-13

We gave you a rule when we were with you: not to let anyone have any food if he refused to do any work. Now we hear that there are some of you who are living in idleness, doing no work themselves but interfering with everyone else's. In the Lord Jesus Christ, we order and call on people of this kind to go on quietly working and earning the food that they eat. My bro-thers, never grow tired of doing what is right.

RESPONSORY

R. Blessed be the Lord our God, * blessed from age to age. Repeat R.

His marvelous works are beyond compare, * blessed from age to age. Glory be . . . **R.**

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH

Ant. Blessed be the Lord our God.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; *
he has come to his people and set them free.

He has raised up for us a mighty savior, *
born of the house of his servant David.

Through his holy prophets he promised of old +
that he would save us from our enemies, *
from the hands of all who hate us.

He promised to show mercy to our fathers *
and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham: +
to set us free from the hands of our enemies, *
free to worship him without fear,
holy and righteous in his sight *
all the days of our life.

You, my child, shall be called the prophet
of the Most High; *
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
to give his people knowledge of salvation *
by the forgiveness of their sins.
In the tender compassion of our God *
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
to shine on those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death, *
and to guide our feet into the way of peace. Glory be . . .

Ant. Blessed be the Lord our God.

INTERCESSIONS

As the new day begins let us praise Christ, in whom is the fullness of grace and the Spirit of God.

R. *Lord, give us your Spirit.*

We praise you, Lord,

— and we thank you for all your blessings. **R.**

Give us peace of mind and generosity of heart;

— grant us health and strength to do your will **R.**

May your love be with us during the day;

— guide us in our work. **R.**

Be with all those who have asked our prayers,

— and grant them all their needs. **R.**

Our Father . . .

PRAYER

Father,

may everything we do

begin with your inspiration

and continue with your saving help.

Let our work always find its origin in you

and through you reach completion.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

DISMISSAL

If a priest or deacon presides, he dismisses the people as at Mass.

Otherwise Morning Prayer concludes:

May the Lord bless us,

protect us from all evil

and bring us to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

MIDDAY PRAYERS

ANGELUS

For centuries the Church has recited the *Angelus* several times each day, especially at noon, in honor of the Incarnation and the Blessed Mother of God.

V. The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary;

R. **And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.**

Hail Mary . . .

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

R. **Be it done unto me according to your word.**

Hail Mary . . .

V. And the Word was made flesh.

R. **And dwelt among us.**

Hail Mary . . .

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. **That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.**

Let us pray.

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we to whom the incarnation of Christ, your Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by his passion and cross be brought to the glory of his resurrection, through the same Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

V. Angelus Dómini, nuntiávit Mariæ.

R. **Et concépit de Spíritu Sancto.**

Ave María . . .

V. Ecce ancílla Dómini.

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R. **Fiat mihi secúndum verbum tuum.**

Ave María . . .

V. Et Verbum caro factum est.

R. **Et habitávit in nobis.**

Ave María . . .

V. Ora pro nobis, sancta Dei Génatrix.

R. **Ut digni efficiámur promissionibus Christi.**

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Orémus.

Grátiam tuam, quaésumus, Dómine, méntibus nostris infúnde; ut qui, ángelo nuntiánte, Christi Fílii tui incarnatiómem cognóvimus, per passiómem eius et crucem, ad resurrectiόνis glóriam perducámur. Per eúndem Christum Dóminum nostrum.

R. Amen.

V. Queen of heaven, rejoice! Alleluia.
R. For he whom you did merit to bear. Alleluia.
V. Has risen, as he said. Alleluia.
R. Pray for us to God. Alleluia.
V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary. Alleluia.
R. For the Lord is truly risen. Alleluia.

Let us pray.

O God, who gave joy to the world through the resurrection of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, grant, we beseech you, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, his Mother, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life, through the same Christ our Lord. **R. Amen.**

V. Regína cæli, lætâre. Allelúia.
R. Quia quem meruísti portâre. Allelúia.
V. Resurréxit, sicut dixit. Allelúia.
R. Ora pro nobis, Deum. Allelúia.
V. Gaude et lætâre, Virgo Maríâ. Allelúia.
R. Quia surrêxit Dóminus vere. Allelúia.

Orémus.

Deus, qui per resurrectionem Filii tui, Dómini nostri Iesu Christi, mundum lætificáre dignátus es: præsta, quaésumus; ut, per eius Genitrícem Vírginem Maríam, perpétuæ capiámus gáudia vitæ. Per eúndem Christum Dóminum nostrum. **R. Amen**

EVENING PRAYERS

BRIEF EXAMINATION AT NIGHT

Make a brief examination of conscience before going to rest at night. Two or three minutes are enough.

- **Place yourself in the presence of God** recognizing his strength and your weakness. Tell him: "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean."
- **Ask your guardian angel** for light to acknowledge your defects and virtues: *What have I done wrong? What have I done right? What could I have done better?*
- **Examine** your conscience with sincerity:

- *Did I often consider that God is my Father? Did I offer him my work? Did I make good use of my time? Did I pray slowly and with attention?*
- *Did I try to make life pleasant for other people? Did I criticize anyone? Was I forgiving? Did I pray and offer some sacrifices for the Church, the Pope and for all those around me?*
- *Did I allow myself to be carried away by sensuality? By pride?*
- **Sorrow.** Make an act of contrition asking our Lord's pardon.
- **Resolution.** Make a specific resolution for tomorrow:
 - *Staying away from certain temptations.*
 - *Avoiding some specific faults.*
 - *Exerting special effort to practice some virtue.*
 - *Taking advantage of occasions for improvement.*
- Pray three Hail Marys to the Virgin Mary asking for the virtue of purity for yourself and your loved ones.

ACT OF CONTRITION

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.

I CONFESS

I confess to almighty God,
 to blessed Mary ever Virgin,
 to blessed Michael the archangel,
 to blessed John the Baptist,
 to the holy apostles Peter and Paul,
 and to all the saints,
 that I have sinned exceedingly in thought,
 word and deed,
 through my fault, through my fault,
 through my most grievous fault.
 Therefore, I beseech blessed Mary ever Virgin,
 blessed Michael the archangel,
 blessed John the Baptist,
 the holy apostles Peter and Paul,
 and all the saints,
 to pray for me to the Lord our God.

CONFITEOR

Confíteor Deo omnipoténti,
beátæ Mariæ semper Vírgini,
beáto Michaéli Archángelo,
beáto Ioánni Baptístæ,
sanctis apóstolis Petro et Paulo,
óm nibus Sanctis, et vobis, fratres:
quia peccávi nimis cogitatióne,
verbo et ópere:
mea culpa, mea culpa, mea máxima culpa.
Ideo precor beátam Mariám semper Vírginem,
beátum Michaélem Archángelum,
beátum Ioánnem Baptístam,
sanctos apóstolos Petrum et Paulum,
omnes Sanctos, et vos, fratres,
oráre pro me ad Dóminum, Deum nostrum.

PRAYER FOR THE POPE

- V.** Let us pray for our Sovereign Pontiff **N.**
R. May the Lord preserve him and give him life, and make him blessed upon the earth, and deliver him not to the will of his enemies.

ORATIO PRO PONTIFICE

- V.** Oremus pro Pontífice nostro **N.**
R. Dóminus conservet eum et vivíficet eum, et beatum faciat eum in terra, et non tradat eum in ánimam inimicórum eius.

ACCEPTANCE OF DEATH

O Lord, my God, from this moment on I accept with a good will, as something coming from your hand, whatever kind of death you want to send me, with all its anguish, pain and sorrow.

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

- V.** Jesus, Mary and Joseph.
R. I give you my heart and my soul.
V. Jesus, Mary and Joseph
R. Assist me in my last agony.
V. Jesus, Mary and Joseph.
R. May I sleep and take my rest in peace with you.

PSALM 50 (51)

David the contrite king, model of repentance, confesses his sins. He asks for forgiveness with true contrition and begs for the continuance of the friendship of God. He promises to show his gratitude by serving Him and teaching others to do His will.

Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.
In your compassion blot out my offense.
O wash me more and more from my guilt
and cleanse me more from sin.
My offenses truly I know them;
my sin is always before me.
Against you, you alone, have I sinned;
what is evil in your sight I have done.
That you may be justified when you give sentence
and be without reproach when you judge.
O see, in guilt I was born,
a sinner was I conceived.
Indeed you love truth in the heart;
then in the secret of my heart teach me wisdom.
O purify me, then I shall be clean;
O wash me, I shall be whiter than snow.
Make me hear rejoicing and gladness,
that the bones you have crushed may revive.
From my sins turn away your face
and blot out all my guilt.
A pure heart create for me, O God,
put a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
nor deprive me of your Holy Spirit.
Give me again the joy of your help;
with a spirit of fervor sustain me,
that I may teach transgressors your ways
and sinners may return to you.
O rescue me, God, my helper,
and my tongue shall ring out your goodness.
O Lord, open my lips
and my mouth shall declare your praise.
For in sacrifice you take no delight,
burnt offering from me
 you would refuse,
my sacrifice, a contrite spirit.
A humbled, contrite heart
 you will not spurn.
In your goodness, show favor to Zion:
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Then you will be pleased with lawful sacrifice,
(burnt offerings wholly consumed),
then you will be offered young bulls on your altar.

PSALMUS 50 (51)

Miserére mei, Deus,*
secúndum misericórdiam tuam;
et secúndum multitudínem miseratiónum tuárum*
dele iniquitátem meam.
Amplius lava me ab iniquitáte mea*
et a peccáto meo munda me.
Quóniam iniquitátem meam ego cognóscó,*
et peccátum meum contra me est semper.
Tibi, tibi soli peccávi*
et malum coram te feci,
ut iustus inveniáris in senténtia tua*
et æquus in iudício tuo.
Ecce enim in iniquitáte generátus sum,*
et in peccáto concépit me mater mea.
Ecce enim veritátem in corde dilexisti*
et in occúlto sapiéntiam manifestásti mihi.
Aspérges me hyssópo, et mundábor;*
lavábis me, et super nivem dealbábor.
Audíre me fácies gáudium et lætítiam*,
et exultábunt ossa, quæ contrivísti.
Avérte faciém tuam a peccátis meis*
et omnes iniquitátes meas dele.
Cor mundum crea in me, Deus,*
et spíritum firmum ínnova in viscéribus meis.
Ne proícias me a fácie tua*
et spíritum sanctum tuum ne áuferas a me.
Redde mihi lætítiam salutáris tui*
et spíritu promptíssimo confírma me.
Docébo iníquos vías tuas,*
et ímpii ad te converténtur.
Líbera me de sanguínibus, Deus, Deus salutis meæ,*
et exultábit lingua mea iustítiam tuam.
Dómine, lábía mea apéries,*
et os meum annuntiábit laudem tuam.
Non enim sacrificío delectáris,*
holocáustum, si ófferam, non placébit.

Sacrificium Deo spíritus contribulátus,*
cor contrítum et humiliátum, Deus, non despícies.
Benígne fac, Dómine, in bona voluntáte tua Sion,*
ut ædificéntur muri Ierúsalem.
Tunc acceptábis sacrificium iustítiæ,
oblatiónes et holocáusta; *
tunc impónent super altáre tuum vítulos.
Gloria...

LITURGY OF THE HOURS (Evening Prayer)

Evening Prayer is celebrated in order that we may give thanks for what has been given us or what we have done well during the day. We also recall our redemption and that evening sacrifice of the Lord's Supper with the apostles. There he instituted the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist. He was anticipating the sacrifice he was to offer to the Father on the next day. We ask Christ to give us the grace of eternal light which knows no setting.*

God, come to my assistance.

R. Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be. . . . Alleluia.

HYMN

Christ be near at either hand,
Christ behind, before me stand,
Christ with me where'er I go,
Christ around, above, below.
Christ be in my heart and mind,
Christ within my soul enshrined,
Christ control my wayward heart;
Christ abide and ne'er depart.
Christ my life and only way,
Christ my lantern night and day;
Christ be my unchanging friend,
Guide and shepherd me to the end.

PSALMODY

Ant. 1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

Trust in time of affliction

Psalm 26(27)

God now truly dwells with me (Rv 21:3)

I

The Lord is my light and my help; *
whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life; *
before whom shall I shrink?

When evil-doers draw near *
to devour my flesh,

it is they, my enemies and foes, *
who stumble and fall.
Though an army encamp against me *
my heart would not fear.
Though war break out against me *
even then would I trust.
There is one thing I ask of the Lord, *
for this I long,
to live in the house of the Lord, *
all the days of my life,
to savor the sweetness of the Lord. *
to behold his temple.
For there he keeps me safe in his tent *
in the day of evil.
He hides me in the shelter of his tent, *
on a rock he sets me safe.
And now my head shall be raised *
above my foes who surround me
and I shall offer within his tent +
a sacrifice of joy.*
I will sing and make music for the Lord.
Glory be . . .

Ant. The Lord is my light and my help; whom shall I fear?

Ant. 2 I long to look on you, O Lord; do not turn your face from me.

II

*Some rose to present lies and false evidence
against Jesus (Mk 14:57)*

O Lord, hear my voice when I call; *
have mercy and answer.
Of you my heart has spoken: *
"Seek his face."
It is your face, O Lord, that I seek; *
hide not your face.
Dismiss not your servant in anger; *
you have been my help.
Do not abandon or forsake me, *
O God my help!
Though father and mother forsake me, *
the Lord will receive me.
Instruct me, Lord, in your way; *
on an even path lead me.

When they lie in ambush protect me *
from my enemy's greed.
False witnesses rise against me, *
breathing out fury.
I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness *
in the land of the living.
Hope in him, hold firm and take heart. *
Hope in the Lord!
Glory be . . .

Ant. I long to look on you, O Lord; do not turn your face from me.

Ant. 3 He is the firstborn of all creation; he is supreme over all creatures.

Canticle

Colossians 1:12-20

*Christ the first-born of all creation
and the first-born from the dead*

Let us give thanks to the Father, +
who has qualified us to share *
in the inheritance of the saints in light.
He has delivered us from the dominion
of darkness *
and transferred us to the kingdom
of his beloved Son,
in whom we have redemption, *
the forgiveness of sins.
He is the image of the invisible God, *
the firstborn of all creation,
for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, *
visible and invisible.
All things were created *
through him and for him.
He is before all things, *
and in him all things hold together.
He is the head of the body, the Church; *
he is the beginning,
the firstborn from the dead, *
that in everything he might be preeminent,
For in him all the fullness of God
was pleased to dwell, *
and through him to reconcile to himself all things,
whether on earth or in heaven, *
making peace by the blood of his cross.
Glory be . . .

Ant. He is the firstborn of all creation; he is supreme over all creatures.

SCRIPTURE READING

Jas 1:22,25

You must do what the Word tells you, and not just listen to it and deceive yourselves. But the man who looks steadily at the perfect law of freedom and makes that his habit – not listening and then forgetting, but actively putting it into practice – will be happy in all that he does.

RESPONSORY

R. Claim me once more as your own, Lord * and have mercy on me. Repeat R.
Do not abandon me with the wicked; * have mercy on me. Glory be . . . **R.**

CANTICLE OF MARY

Ant. The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, *
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant. *
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me, *
and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him *
in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm, *
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, *
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel *
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers, *
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory be . . .

Ant. The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.

INTERCESSIONS

Let us praise God, our almighty Father, who wished that Mary, his Son's mother, be celebrated by each generation. Now in need we ask:

R. Mary, full of grace, intercede for us.

You made Mary the mother of mercy,
– may all who are faced with trials feel
her motherly love. **R.**

You wished Mary to be the mother of the family
in the home of Jesus and Joseph,
– may all mothers of families foster love
and holiness through her intercession. **R.**

You gave Mary strength at the foot of the cross

and filled her with joy at the resurrection
of your Son,

– lighten the hardships of those who are burdened
and deepen their sense of hope. **R.**

You made Mary open to your word
and faithful as your servant,

– through her intercession make us servants
and true followers of your Son. **R.**

You crowned Mary queen of heaven,

– may all the dead rejoice in your kingdom
with the saints for ever. **R.**

Our Father, . . .

PRAYER

Stay with us, Lord Jesus,
for evening draws near,
and be our companion on our way
to set our hearts on fire with new hope.
Help us to recognize your presence among us
in the Scriptures we read,
and in the breaking of bread,
for you live and reign with the Father
and the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever. **R. Amen.**

DISMISSAL

If a priest or deacon presides, he dismisses the people as if at Mass.

Otherwise Evening Prayer concludes:

May the Lord bless us,
protect us from all evil
and bring us to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

1. John Paul II, Catechesis Tradendæ 55
 2. CCC 2857, 2865
 3. Cf. CCC 2676-2677
 4. Cf. CCC 194
 5. Cf. CCC 1174, 1178, 2586.
 6. Cf. General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours 27.
 7. Cf. General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours 37.
- * Cf. GILH, n. 37

PREPARATION FOR MASS

INTRODUCTION

“When our Lord instituted the Eucharist during the Last Supper, night had already fallen. This indicated, according to St. John Chrysostom, that ‘the times had run their course.’ The world had fallen into darkness, for the old rites, the old signs of God’s infinite mercy to mankind, were going to be brought to fulfillment. The way was opening to a new dawn—the new pasch. The Eucharist was instituted during that night, preparing in advance for the morning of the resurrection.

“We too have to prepare for this new dawn. Everything harmful, worn out or useless has to be thrown away—discouragement, suspicion, sadness, cowardice. The Holy Eucharist gives the sons of God a divine newness and we must respond in ‘the newness of your mind,’ renewing all our feelings and actions. We have been given a new principle of energy, strong new roots grafted onto our Lord. We must not return to the old leaven, for now we have the bread which lasts forever.

“Think of the human experience of two people who love each other, and yet are forced to part. They would like to stay together forever, but duty—in one form or another—forces them to separate. They are unable to fulfill their desire of remaining close to each other, so man’s love—which, great as it may be, is limited—seeks a symbolic gesture. People who make their farewells exchange gifts or perhaps a photograph with a dedication so ardent that it seems almost enough to burn that piece of paper. They can do no more, because a creature’s power is not as great as its desire.

“What we cannot do, our Lord is able to do. Jesus Christ, perfect God and perfect man, leaves us not a symbol, but a reality. He himself stays with us. He will go to the Father, but he will also remain among men. He will leave us not simply a gift that will make us remember him, not an image that becomes blurred with time, like a photograph that soon fades and yellows, and has no meaning except for those who were contemporaries. Under the appearances of bread and wine, he is really present, with his body and blood, with his soul and divinity.”¹

“Anyone who desires to receive Christ in communion must be in the state of grace. Anyone aware of having sinned mortally must not receive communion without having received absolution in the sacrament of penance.”²

“Sometimes, indeed quite frequently, everybody participating in the Eucharistic assembly goes to Communion; and on some such occasions, as experienced pastors confirm, there has not been due care to approach the sacrament of Penance so as to purify one’s conscience. This can of course mean that those approaching the Lord’s table find nothing on their conscience, according to the objective law of God, to keep them from this

sublime and joyful act of being sacramentally united with Christ. But there can also be, at least at times, another idea behind this: the idea of the Mass as only a banquet in which one shares by *receiving the body of Christ in order to manifest, above all else, fraternal communion*. It is not hard to add to these reasons a certain human respect and mere conformity.

“This phenomenon demands from us watchful attention and a theological and pastoral analysis guided by a sense of great responsibility. We cannot allow the life of our communities to lose the good quality of sensitiveness of Christian conscience, guided solely by respect for Christ, who, when He is received in the Eucharist, should find in the heart of each of us a worthy abode. This question is closely linked not only with the practice of the sacrament of Penance but also with a correct sense of responsibility for the whole deposit of moral teaching and for the precise distinction between good and evil, a distinction which then becomes for each person sharing in the Eucharist the basis for a correct judgment of self to be made in the depths of the personal conscience. St. Paul’s words, ‘Let a man examine himself,’ are well known; this judgment is an indispensable condition for a personal decision whether to approach Eucharistic Communion or to abstain.”³

Sacramental communion increases the communicant’s union with the Lord, forgives his venial sins, and preserves him from grave sins. Since receiving this sacrament strengthens the bonds of charity between the communicant and Christ, it also reinforces the unity of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. The Church warmly recommends that the faithful receive Holy Communion each time they participate in the celebration of the Eucharist; she obliges them to do so at least once a year.⁴

Our Lord told us: “I tell you most solemnly, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you will not have life in you.”

We must fast one hour before Communion. Water and medicines do not break the fast. The elderly and those who are sick, as well as those caring for them, may receive Holy Communion even if they have consumed something within the preceding hour.⁵

One should receive Holy Communion with utmost reverence and devotion, bearing in mind that he is receiving Christ Himself and not just an ordinary piece of bread. In some countries where the Holy See has confirmed the consultation of the Bishops’ Conference, Holy Communion may be taken in the hand, however, every Christian has always the right to receive Holy Communion in the mouth.

Internal Participation

To celebrate and to offer the Holy Mass with greater fruit, we should consider that:

- The Mass is the most important event which happens to mankind each day.
- The Mass is the center of Christian life. All the sacraments, prayers, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, devotions, mortifications offered to God as well as apostolate, have the Mass as their central point of reference. If the center were to disappear and if attendance at Mass were consciously abandoned, then the whole Christian life would collapse.

- The Mass is the most pleasing reality we can offer to God. Every member of the Mystical Body of Christ receives at Baptism the right and duty of taking part in the sacrifice of the Head of that Body. Our Mother the Church wants us to assist at the Mass, not as strangers and passive spectators, but with the effort to understand it better each time. We participate in the Mass in a conscious, pious and active manner, with right dispositions and cooperating with divine grace.
- Pray on the way to Mass. Whether you drive to a distant chapel, or walk down the street to a cathedral, turn your attention to the coming celebration. Pray for the priest, that he will minister to the needs of the parish. Pray for the congregation, that they will open their minds and hearts to what is being taught at the Mass.
- Offer this sublime sacrifice in union with the Church. Live the Holy Mass feeling part of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, the people of God. Be united to the bishop of the diocese where the Mass is being offered and to the Pope, the Vicar of Christ for the Universal Church.
- Be united to the Sacrifice of Jesus who is the only Victim. Through him, we also offer to God the Father with the Holy Spirit, all the sacrifices, sufferings, self-denials and tribulations of each day.
- Have the necessary preparation for Communion. If you are going to receive Holy Communion, you need—besides being in the state of grace—to have the right intention and keep the eucharistic fast.

These should be our thoughts and intentions at every Mass that we attend, uniting ourselves with Christ and making his desires and sentiments on the cross our own.

As immediate preparation, excite in your soul lively sentiments of faith, humility, and desire. Ask yourself:

- **Who becomes present?**
- **To whom does He becomes present?**
- **Why does He become present?**

PRAYER OF ST. AMBROSE

Lord, Jesus Christ,
I approach your banquet table
in fear and trembling,
for I am a sinner,
and dare not rely on my own worth
but only on your goodness and mercy.
I am defiled by many sins
 in body and soul,
and by my unguarded thoughts and words.
Gracious God of majesty and awe,
I seek your protection,
I look for your healing,
Poor troubled sinner that I am,
I appeal to you, the fountain of all mercy.
I cannot bear your judgment,
but I trust in your salvation.
Lord, I show my wounds to you
and uncover my shame before you.
I know my sins are many and great,
and they fill me with fear,
but I hope in your mercies,
for they cannot be numbered.
Lord Jesus Christ, eternal king, God and man,
crucified for mankind,
look upon me with mercy and hear my prayer,
for I trust in you.
Have mercy on me,
full of sorrow and sin,
for the depth of your compassion never ends.
Praise to you, saving sacrifice,
offered on the wood of the cross for me
 and for all mankind.
Praise to the noble and precious blood,
flowing from the wounds of my crucified
 Lord Jesus Christ
and washing away the sins of the whole world.
Remember, Lord, your creature,
whom you have redeemed with your blood.
I repent my sins,
and I long to put right what I have done.
Merciful Father, take away
 all my offenses and sins;

purify me in body and soul,
and make me worthy to taste the holy of holies.
May your body and blood,
which I intend to receive,
 although I am unworthy,
be for me the remission of my sins,
the washing away of my guilt,
 the end of my evil thoughts,
and the rebirth of my better instincts.
May it incite me to do the works pleasing to you
and profitable to my health in body and soul,
and be a firm defense
 against the wiles of my enemies. Amen.

ORATIO S. AMBROSII

Ad mensam dulcissimi convívii tui,
 pie Dómine Iesu Christe,
ego peccátor de própriis meis méritis
 nihil præsumens,
sed de tua confídens misericórdia et bonitáte,
accédere véreor et contremísco.
Nam cor et corpus hábeo
 multis crimínibus maculátum,
mentem et linguam non caute custodítam.
Ergo, o pia Déitas, o treménda maiéstas,
ego miser, inter angústias deprehénsus,
ad te fontem misericórdiæ recúrro,
ad te festíno sanándus,
sub tuam protectiónem fúgio;
et, quam Iúdicem sustinére néqueo,
Salvatórem habére suspíro.
Tibi, Dómine, plagas meas osténdo,
tibi verecúndiam meam détego.
Scio peccáta mea multa et magna,
 pro quibus tímeo:
spero in misericórdias tuas,
 quarum non est númerus.
Réspice ergo in me óculis misericórdiæ tuæ,
Dómine Iesu Christe, Rex ætérne, Deus et homo,
crucifíxus propter hómínem.
Exáudi me sperántem in te:
miserére mei pleni misériis et peccátis,

tu qui fontem miseratiónis
numquam manáre cessábis.
Salve, salutáris víctima,
pro me et omni humáno género
in patíbulo Crucis obláta.
Salve, nóbilis et pretióse Sanguis,
de vulneribus crucifíxi
Dómini mei Iesu Christi prófluens,
et peccáta totíus mundi ábluens.
Recordáre, Dómine, creatúrae tuæ,
quam tuo Sáanguine redemísti.
Paénitet me peccásse,
cúpio emendáre quod feci.
Aufer ergo a me, clementíssime Pater,
omnes iniquitátes et peccáta mea,
ut, purificátus mente et córpore,
digne degustáre mérear Sancta sanctórum.
Et concéde, ut hæc sancta prælibátio
Córporis et Sáanguinis tui,
quam ego indígnus súmerem inténdo,
sit peccatórum meórum remíssio,
sit delictórum perfécta purgátio,
sit túrpium cogitatiónum effugátio
ac bonórum sénsuum regenerátio,
operúmque tibi placéntium salúbris efficácia,
ánimæ quoque et córporis
contra inimicórum meórum
insídias firmíssima tuítio. Amen.

PRAYER OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

Almighty and ever-living God,
I approach the sacrament of your only-begotten son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
I come sick to the doctor of life,
unclean to the fountain of mercy,
blind to the radiance of eternal light,
and poor and needy to the Lord
of heaven and earth.
Lord, in your great generosity,
heal my sickness, wash away my defilement,
enlighten my blindness, enrich my poverty,
and clothe my nakedness.
May I receive the bread of angels,

the King of kings and Lord of lords,
with humble reverence,
with the purity and faith,
the repentance and love,
and the determined purpose
that will help to bring me to salvation.
May I receive the sacrament
of the Lord's body and blood,
and its reality and power.
Kind God,
may I receive the body of your only begotten Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ,
born from the womb of the Virgin Mary,
and so be received into his mystical body
and numbered among his members.
Loving Father,
as on my earthly pilgrimage
I now receive your beloved Son
under the veil of a sacrament,
may I one day see him face to face in glory,
who lives and reigns with you for ever. Amen.

ORATIO S. THOMÆ DE AQUINO

Omnípotens sempitérne Deus,
ecce accédo ad sacraméntum unigéniti Fílii tui,
Dómini nostri Iesu Christi:
accédo tamquam infírmus ad médicum vitæ,
immúndus ad fontem misericórdiæ,
cæcus ad lumen claritátis ætérnæ,
pauper et egénus ad Dóminum
cæli et terræ.
Rogo ergo imménsæ largitátis tuæ abundántiam,
quátenus meam curáre dignéris infirmitátem,
laváre foeditátem, illumináre cæcitatém,
ditáre paupertátem, vestíre nuditatém,
ut panem Angelórum,
Regem regum et Dóminum dominántium,
tanta suscípíam reveréntia et humilitáte,
tanta contritióne et devotióne,
tanta puritáte et fide,
tali propósito et intentiόne,
sicut éxpedit salúti ánimæ meæ.

Da mihi, quæso, domínici Córporis et Sánguinis
non solum suscípere sacraméntum,
sed étiam rem et virtútem sacraménti.

O mitíssime Deus,
da mihi Corpus unigéniti Fílii tui,
Dómini nostri Iesu Christi,
quod traxit de Vírgine María, sic suscípere,
ut córpori suo mýstico mérear incorporári
et inter eius membra connumerári.

O amantíssime Pater,
concéde mihi diléctum Fílium tuum,
quem nunc velátum in via suscípere propóno,
reveláta tandem fácie perpétuo contemplári:
Qui tecum vivit et regnat
in saécula sæculórum. Amen.

PRAYER TO THE VIRGIN MARY (FOR PRIESTS)

Mother of mercy and love,
blessed Virgin Mary,
I am a poor and unworthy sinner,
and I turn to you
in confidence and love.
You stood by your Son
as he hung dying on the cross.
Stand also by me, a poor sinner,
and by all the priests
who are offering Mass today
here and throughout the entire Church.
Help us to offer a perfect and acceptable sacrifice
in the sight of the holy and undivided Trinity,
our most high God. Amen.

ORATIO AD BEATAM MARIAM VIRGINEM

O Mater pietátis et misericórdiæ,
beatíssima Virgo María,
ego miser et indígnus peccátor
ad te confúgio toto corde et afféctu,
et precor pietátem tuam,
ut, sicut dulcíssimo Fílio tuo
in Cruce pendénti astitísti,
ita et mihi, mísero peccatóri, et sacerdotibus ómnibus,

hic et in tota sancta Ecclesia hodie offerentibus
clementer assistere digneris
ut, tua gratia adiuti,
dignam et acceptabilem hostiam
in conspectu summæ et individuæ Trinitatis
offerre valeamus. Amen.

STATEMENT OF INTENTION (FOR PRIESTS)

My purpose is to celebrate Mass
and to make present the body and blood
of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to the rite of the holy Roman Church
to the praise of our all-powerful God
and all his assembly in the glory of heaven,
for my good and the good
of all his pilgrim Church on earth,
and for all who have asked me to pray for them
in general and in particular,
and for the good of the holy Roman Church.
May the almighty and merciful Lord
grant us joy and peace,
amendment of life, room for true repentance,
the grace and comfort of the Holy Spirit,
and perseverance in good works. Amen.

FORMULA INTENTIONIS

Ego volo celebrare Missam,
et conficere Corpus et Sanguinem
Domini nostri Iesu Christi,
iuxta ritum sanctæ Romanæ Ecclesiæ,
ad laudem omnipotentis Dei
totiusque Curiæ triumphantis,
ad utilitatem meam totiusque Curiæ militantis,
pro omnibus qui se commendaverunt
orationibus meis
in genere et in specie,
et pro felici statu sanctæ Romanæ Ecclesiæ. Amen.
Gaudium cum pace,
emendationem vitæ, spatium veræ penitentiae,
gratiam et consolationem Sancti Spiritus,

perseverántiam in bonis opéribus,
tríbuat nobis omnípotens et miséricors Dóminus. Amen.

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH (FOR PRIESTS)

O blessed Joseph,
happy man whose privilege it was,
not only to see and hear that God
whom many a king has longed to see, yet saw not,
longed to hear, yet heard not;
but also to carry him in your arms and kiss him,
to clothe him and watch over him!

V. Pray for us, blessed Joseph.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

God, who has conferred upon us a royal priesthood,
we pray to you give us grace to minister

at your holy altars

with hearts as clean and lives as blameless

as that blessed Joseph

who was found worthy to hold in his arms

and with all reverence to carry

your only-begotten Son,

born of the virgin Mary.

Enable us this day to receive worthily

the sacred body and blood of your Son,

and fit us to win an everlasting reward

in the world to come;

Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRECES AD S. IOSEPH

O felícem virum,
beátum Ioseph,
cui datum est, Deum,
quem multi reges voluérunt vidére et non vidérunt,
audíre et non audiérunt,
non solum vidére et audíre,
sed portáre, deosculári, vestíre et custodíre!

V. Ora pro nobis, beáte Ioseph.

R. Ut digni efficiámur promissionibus Christi.

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Orémus.

Deus, qui dedísti nobis regale sacerdotium,
præsta, quaesumus,
ut sicut beátus Ioseph unigénitum Fílium tuum,
natum ex María Vírgine,
suis mánibus reverénter
tractáre mérui et portáre,
ita nos fácias cum cordis mundítia
et óperis innocéntia
tuis sanctis altáribus deservíre,
ut sacrosánctum Fílii tui Corpus et Sánguinem
hódie digne sumámus,
et in futuro saéculo praémium habére
mereámur ætérnum.

Per eúndem Christum Dóminum nostrum. Amen

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1. Saint Josemaría Escrivá, *Christ is Passing By*, nos. 155 , 83, Scepter Press, New York.
 2. CCC 1415.
 3. John Paul II, *On the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist*, no. 11, 1980.
 4. CCC 1416-1417
 5. CIC 919

VESTING PRAYERS (FOR PRIESTS)

“The vestment common to ministers of every rank is the alb, tied at the waist with the cincture, unless it is made to fit without a cincture. An amice should be put on first if the alb does not completely cover the street clothing at the neck. Unless otherwise indicated, the chasuble, worn over the alb and stole, is the vestment proper to the priest celebrant at Mass and other rites immediately connected with Mass.”⁶

The saying of the following is suggested.

The celebrant washes his hands and asks for the grace of purity.

Give virtue, O Lord, to my hands, that every stain may be wiped away: that I may be enabled to serve You without defilement of mind or body.

Da, Dómine, virtútem mánibus meis ad abstergéndam omnem máculam; ut sine pollutióne mentis et córporis váleam tibi servíre.
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The amice, a rectangular piece of white linen cloth, is the helmet of salvation and a sign of resistance against temptation. The priest usually kisses it and passes it over his head before putting it across his shoulders and tying it around the waist.

Place, O Lord, on my head the helmet of salvation, that I may overcome the assaults of the devil.

Impóne, Dómine, cápiti meo gáleam salútis, ad expugnándos diabólicos incúrsus.

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The **alb**, a white linen tunic which covers the priest's whole body, signifies perfect integrity.

Purify me, O Lord, from all stain and cleanse my heart, that, washed in the Blood of the Lamb, I may enjoy eternal delights.

Deálba me, Dómine, et munda cor meum; ut, in ságuine Agni dealbátus gáudiis pérfruar sempitérnis.

The **cincture**, a cord which fastens the alb at the waist, stands for purity.

Gird me, O Lord, with the cincture of purity, and quench in my heart the fire of concupiscence, that the virtue of continence and chastity may remain in me.

Præcíngue me, Dómine cíngulo puritátis, et extíngue in lumbis meis humórem libídinis; ut máneat in me virtus continéntiæ et castitátis.

The **stole**, the long silk band that fits around the neck, is a symbol of immortality and the sign of the dignity of the ministerial priesthood.

Restore to me, O Lord, the state of immortality which was lost to me by my first parents, and, although unworthy to approach your sacred mysteries, grant me nevertheless eternal joy.

Redde mihi, Dómine, stolam immortalitátis, quam pérdidi in prævaricatióne primi paréntis: et, quamvis indígnus accédo ad tuum sacrum mystérium, mérear tamen gáudium sempitérnum.

The **chasuble**, the outermost vestment worn by the celebrant at Mass, is the emblem of charity which makes the yoke of Christ light and agreeable.

O Lord, you said, "My yoke is sweet and my burden light," grant that I may carry it so as to obtain your grace. Amen.

Dómine, qui dixísti: Iugum meum suáve est et onus meum leve: fac, ut istud portáre sic váleam, quod cónsequar tuam grátiam. Amen.

6. IGMR 298-299

THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE

This is the Mass

The Mass, the memorial of the Death and Resurrection of the Lord, in which the Sacrifice of the Cross is perpetuated over the centuries, is the summit and source of all Christian worship and life; it signifies and effects the unity of the people of God and achieves the building up of the Body of Christ. It is an action of Christ himself and the Church; in it Christ the Lord, by the ministry of a priest, offers himself, substantially present under the forms of bread and wine, to God the Father and gives himself as spiritual food to the faithful who are associated with his offering.¹

The Mass is Christ on the Cross

Men are born to live. Christ, however, was born to die.

On the night of the Last Supper, Christ instituted the Mass in order to leave a memorial to his beloved Spouse, the Church. He offered his body and blood under the species of bread and wine to God the Father.

Taking bread, Christ said: "This is my body which will be given up for you." Also taking the chalice with wine, he said: "This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all men so that sins may be forgiven." Christ then commanded his apostles: "Do this in memory of me", making them priests of the New Testament. This rite anticipates the bloody sacrifice that Christ accomplished on the Cross once and for all on Good Friday for the redemption of the world.

The Church continues offering the sacrifice of the Cross but in a bloodless manner. The Mass is neither a repetition nor a substitute for the Cross, but the merit we gain from the Mass is the same merit we would have gained if we were actually present at the foot of the Cross on Calvary.

However, the historical event of Calvary does not repeat itself nor is it continued in each Mass. The sacrifice of Christ is perfect and therefore does not need to be repeated. Glorious in heaven, Christ does not die again. His sacrifice is not repeated, rather the presence of the singular sacrifice of the Cross is multiplied, overcoming time and space.

The Mass is the Sacrifice of the New Covenant

The main sign or figure of the Sacrifice of Christ in the Old Testament is the paschal lamb. At every Passover, the Jews recalled and renewed their covenant with God by sacrificing a lamb. This sacrificial lamb once spared the firstborn of the Jews from the exterminating angel who came to slay the firstborn of every family in Egypt.

Our Lord anticipates his Sacrifice on the Cross in the Last Supper, within the Jewish ritual celebration of the Passover. In the Cenacle as in Calvary, the essential elements of the sacrifice are there: the immolation and self-offering (body and blood) to God the

Father. Christ is the unspotted Lamb. He sets all men free from the slavery of sin and establishes the eternal alliance between creature and Creator, the New Covenant. More than that, what had only been a foreshadowing in sign is now fully reality: the communion of blood and of life between God and man.

When the faithful are said to offer Mass together with the priest, this does not mean that all the members of the Church, like the priest himself, perform the visible liturgical rite. Only the celebrant does this. He has been divinely appointed for the purpose through the sacrament of Holy Orders.

The principal Victim of the Sacrifice then is Jesus Christ. But the faithful, in order to exercise their common priesthood fully, should unite their sacrifice to his and thus offer themselves also to God the Father, "I exhort you . . . to present your bodies as a sacrifice, living, holy, pleasing to God – your spiritual service," wrote St Paul to the Romans.²

The Mass "requires all Christians, so far as human power allows, to reproduce in themselves the sentiments that Christ had when he was offering himself in sacrifice: sentiments of humility, adoration, praise and thanksgiving to the divine Majesty. It requires them also to become victims, as it were; cultivating a spirit of self-denial according to the precepts of the Gospel, willingly doing works of penance, detesting and expiating their sins. It requires us all, in a word, to die mystically with Jesus Christ on the Cross, so that we may say with the same Apostle: 'With Christ, I hang upon the Cross.'"³

The Mass is the Sacrifice of the Church

Christ bequeathed his Sacrifice to the Church, not just to each individual believer. God wants to save men, not in an isolated manner—disregarding any relationship between them—but as a people. Each Mass presupposes union among the faithful and of the faithful with their bishop, the Pope and the Universal Church. Moreover, that solid union is made stronger with the celebration of the Eucharist and is a consequence of it. The Second Vatican Council states it in this manner: "In the sacrament of the eucharistic bread, the unity of believers, who form one body in Christ⁴ is both expressed and brought about."⁵

Both on the Cross and in the Mass, the Priest and Victim are one and the same: Christ himself. He is both the one who offers and the one who is offered. No longer is there separation between priests and victims.

The words of Jesus Christ in the Last Supper – "Do this in memory of me" – command the continuation of his Sacrifice on the Cross in every Holy Mass celebrated anywhere in the world until the end of time. This was announced in the Old Testament with these words of the Prophet Malachi: "From the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place there is a sacrifice and there is offered to my name a clean oblation."⁶

Following Christ's command, the priest offers the Mass acting as the representative of Christ. That is why he does not say: "This is the body and blood of Christ" but: "This

is my body” and “This is my blood.” The priest is the chosen instrument of Christ in the same manner that the brush is the painter’s tool.

In the Mass, Christ is no longer alone on the Cross. As in any other sacrament, the Mass is an action of Christ and also of the Church. At the moment of the offertory the entire Church presents itself for sacrifice with Christ.

We have testimonies from the very beginning of the life of the Church that the Christians had the celebration of the Holy Mass on Sunday, the Lord’s day, when the victory and triumph of the Lord’s death became present.

In the Old Testament, the Jews rested on Saturday, giving thanks to God for the gift of creation. In the New Testament, we celebrate a new creation to the life of grace, a supernatural creation far superior to the material creation of the world. No wonder then that the Church requires us to go to Mass at least on Sunday under the pain of mortal sin.

“The Holy Mass cheers the heavenly court; it alleviates the poor souls in purgatory; it attracts all sorts of blessings to the earth; it gives more glory to God than all the sufferings of the martyrs put together, the penances of all the monks, all the tears shed by them since the beginning of the world and all their deeds until the end of time.”⁷

The Mass in the Life of each Christian

Since the Mass is the same Sacrifice as Calvary sacramentally renewed, with all its strength and sanctifying power, the Church considers it as the center of its life and the life of each faithful.

“The Eucharistic Sacrifice is the ‘source and summit of all Christian Life’. It is a single Sacrifice that embraces everything. It is the greatest treasure of the Church. It is her life.”⁸

The Mass is also the center of the life and mission of each priest who finds in it the direction and goal of his ministry.

“The Holy Mass brings us face to face with one of the central mysteries of our faith, because it is the gift of the Blessed Trinity to the Church. It is because of this that we can consider the Mass as the center and the source of a Christian’s spiritual life.

“It is the aim of all the sacraments. The life of grace, into which we are brought by baptism, and which is increased and strengthened by confirmation, grows to its fullness in the Mass.”⁹

“The more perfect form of participation in the Mass whereby the faithful, after the priest’s Communion, receive the Lord’s Body from the same Sacrifice is warmly recommended to those who are duly prepared and in the state of grace.”¹⁰

Since the Sacrifice of the Mass is the same as the Sacrifice of Calvary, their purpose is the same:

- □ To adore the Blessed Trinity. The Sacrifice of the Cross was first of all a Sacrifice of adoration and praise of God. Although the Mass is sometimes offered “in honor and in memory of the saints, the Church teaches us that the Mass is not offered to the saints but to God alone who has given them their crown.”¹¹
- □ To give thanks for the many benefits we receive from God including those which we are not aware of. The second aim of the Mass is thanksgiving. Only Christ Our Lord can offer God a worthy hymn of thanksgiving. He did so in the Last Supper when he

gave thanks and when, hanging on the Cross, he continued to give thanks: Our Lord continues to thank God the Father for us in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

- To ask pardon for our sins and for the many times we have not loved God as we should. This desire for expiation and atonement should lead us to make a good confession. The same Christ who died on the cross for our sins is present and offered in the Mass “so that sins may be forgiven.”
- To ask for the many things, spiritual and material, which we need. The fourth purpose of the Mass is petition. Jesus Christ on the Cross died “offering prayers and supplications and was heard because of his reverent obedience” and now in heaven “lives always to make intercession for us.”¹² These graces benefit those who attend Holy Mass and the persons for whom it is offered.

External Participation

We should also participate in the Mass externally, taking care of little details:

- Attend the Mass with a spirit of prayer, praying as the Church teaches us to pray, avoiding distractions. Be one with the words, actions, and gestures of the celebrant who acts in the person of Christ. Give up personal preferences; accept the option which the celebrant, considering the circumstances of the people in each community, has chosen from among the legitimate possibilities that the liturgy offers us.
- Listen, respond, acclaim, sing or keep opportune silence in order to facilitate union with God and to deepen our reflection on the word of God.
- Stand, sit and kneel with the congregation and be serene even if you see someone who does not do so.
- Be punctual. This is a considerate detail for Christ Our Lord himself and for others who are also attending Mass. Arrive before the priest goes to the altar. Leave only after the priest has left.
- Use your missal, or the missalette available in the church. By reading and following the prayers of the priest, you can avoid distractions. The more complete Missals for the faithful have the prayers of the Mass distributed in three main sections: Fixed Prayers of the Order of Mass, Proper Prayers, and Readings. The missalettes for the use of the faithful usually contain the variable prayers for each day’s Mass and most of the fixed parts of the Order of Mass arranged in their usual sequence.
- Dress properly. We should go to Mass dressed and groomed as for an important meeting and not, for instance, as if we were going to play sports. Dress ought to convey the respect, solemnity, and joy of the Mass.¹³

Communion and Thanksgiving

The right intention in receiving Communion means having this good purpose: to please God, to achieve greater union with him through charity, and to apply this divine remedy to one’s moral weaknesses. The sacrament should not be received out of routine, vainglory, or human respect.

The Eucharistic fast requires abstaining from eating and drinking, except water and medicine, for one hour before actual Communion time. The sick and the elderly, as well as those who take care of them, may receive Holy Communion even if they have taken something within the hour.

We are bound to receive Holy Communion, under serious obligation, at least once a year—ordinarily in Easter time—and when we are in danger of death.

Holy Communion may be received a second time on the same day when one attends Holy Mass again on that day, or when one receives the Blessed Sacrament as viaticum in danger of death.

- Complete the Mass with an intense thanksgiving. Devote a few minutes to private prayer. In this way, your Mass will have direct influence on your work, your family life, your dealings with others, and the manner you will spend the rest of your day. In short, the Mass should not be an isolated event of the day; rather, it should be the inspiration and the dynamo of all your actions.
- Turn the whole day into a continuous preparation for the Holy Sacrifice —working and praying —and, at the same time, into a never-ending act of thanksgiving. For a Christian, all honest activities can be turned into prayer.
- Imitate the piety of the Blessed Virgin Mary and ask it from her. While our Lord offered and immolated his flesh, Mary offered and immolated her spirit. Participate in each Mass as if it were your last.

1. Cf. Codex Iuris Canonici (C. I. C.), 897 & 898.
2. Rom 12:1.
3. Pius XII, Enc. Mediator Dei, Nov 20, 1942.
4. Cf. 1 Cor: 10-17.
5. Vatican Council II, Lumen Gentium, 3.
6. Mt 1: 11.
7. St. John M. Vianney, Sermon on the Holy Mass.
8. John Paul II, Prayer on Holy Thursday, 1982.
9. Saint Josemaría Escrivá, Christ is Passing By, 87.
10. Vatican Council II, Sacrosanctum Concilium, 55.
11. Council of Trent, Session 22, chapter 3.
12. Hebrews 5: 7; 7:25.
13. CCC 1387

PRAYERS AFTER MASS

PRAYER TO THE BLESSED TRINITY (for priests)

May the tribute of my humble ministry be pleasing to thee, Holy Trinity. Grant that the sacrifice which I—unworthy as I am—have offered in the presence of thy majesty, may be acceptable to thee. Through thy mercy may it bring forgiveness to me and to all for whom I have offered it: through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Pláceat tibi, sancta Trínitas, obséquium servitútis meæ: et præsta; ut sacrificium, quod óculis tuæ maiestátis indígnus óbtuli, tibi sit acceptábile, mihíque et ómnibus, pro quibus illud óbtuli, sit, te miseránte, propitiábile. Per Christum Dóminum nostrum. Amen.

<!--[if !supportLineBreakNewLine]-->

PRAYER OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

Lord, Father all-powerful and ever-living God,
I thank you, for even though I am a sinner,
your unprofitable servant,
not because of my worth
but in the kindness of your mercy,
you have fed me with the precious body and blood
of your Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ.
I pray that this holy communion
may not bring me condemnation and punishment
but forgiveness and salvation.
May it be a helmet of faith
and a shield of good will.
May it purify me from evil ways
and put an end to my evil passions.
May it bring me charity and patience,
humility and obedience,
and growth in the power to do good.
May it be my strong defense
against all my enemies, visible and invisible,
and the perfect calming of all my evil impulses,
bodily and spiritual.
May it unite me more closely to you, the one true God,
and lead me safely through death
to everlasting happiness with you.
And I pray that you will lead me, a sinner,

to the banquet where you,
with your Son and Holy Spirit,
are true and perfect light,
total fulfillment, everlasting joy,
gladness without end,
and perfect happiness to your saints.
Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Grátias tibi ago,
Dómine, sancte Pater, omnipotens ætérne Deus,
qui me peccatórem, indígnum fámulum tuum,
nullis meis méritis,
sed sola dignatióne misericórdiæ tuæ
satiáre dignátus es pretióso
Córpore et Sáanguine Fílii tui,
Dómini nostri Iesu Christi.
Et precor, ut hæc sancta commúnio
non sit mihi reátus ad pœnam,
sed intercæssio salutáris ad véniam.
Sit mihi armatúra fídei,
et scutum bonæ voluntátis.
Sit vitiórum meórum evacuátio,
concupiscéntiæ et libídinis exterminátio,
caritátis et paciéntiæ,
humilitátis et obcædiéntiæ,
omniúmque virtútum augmentátio:
contra insídias inimicórum ómnium,
tam visibílium quam invisibílium, firma defénsio:
mótuum meórum,
tam carnálium quam spiritálium,
perfécta quietátio:
in te uno ac vero Deo firma adhæsió,
atque finis mei felix consummátio.
Et precor te, ut ad illud ineffábile convívium
me peccatórem perdúcere dignéris,
ubi tu, cum Fílio tuo et Spírítu Sancto,
Sanctis tuis es lux vera,
satíetas plena,
gáudium sempitérnum,
iucúnditas consummáta et felicitas perfécta.
Per Christum Dóminum nostrum. Amen.

PRAYER OF ST. BONAVENTURE

Pierce, O most sweet Lord Jesus,
my inmost soul with the most joyous
and healthful wound of your love,
with true, serene, and most holy apostolic charity,
that my soul may ever languish and melt
with love and longing for you,
that it may yearn for you and faint for your courts,
and long to be dissolved and to be with you.
Grant that my soul may hunger after you,
the bread of angels, the refreshment of holy souls,
our daily and supersubstantial bread,
having all sweetness and savor and every delight of taste;
let my heart ever hunger after and feed upon you,
upon whom the angels desire to look,
and may my inmost soul be filled
with the sweetness of your savor;
may it ever thirst after you, the fountain of life,
the fountain of wisdom and knowledge,
the fountain of eternal light, the torrent of pleasure,
the richness of the house of God;
may it ever compass you, seek you, find you,
run to you, attain you,
meditate upon you, speak of you,
and do all things to the praise and glory of your name,
with humility and discretion,
with love and delight,
with ease and affection,
and with perseverance unto the end;
may you alone be ever my hope, my entire assurance,
my riches, my delight, my pleasure,
my joy, my rest and tranquility, my peace,
my sweetness, my fragrance, my sweet savor,
my food, my refreshment, my refuge, my help,
my wisdom, my portion,
my possession and my treasure,
in whom may my mind and my heart be fixed
and firm and rooted immovably hence forth
and for ever. Amen.

Transfíge, dulcíssime Dómine Iesu,
medúllas et víscera ánimæ meæ

suavíssimo ac salubérrimo amoris tui vultu,
vera serenaque et apostolica sanctissima caritate,
ut langueat et liquefiat anima mea
solo semper amore et desiderio tui;
te concupiscat et deficiat in atria tua,
cupiat dissolvi et esse tecum.

Da ut anima mea te esuriant, panem Angelorum, refectioem animarum sanctarum;
panem nostrum cotidianum, supersubstantialem,
habentem omnem dulcedinem et saporem,
et omne delectamentum suavitatis.

Te, in quem desiderant Angeli prospicere,
semper esuriant et comedat cor meum,
et dulcedine saporis tui repleantur viscera animae meae;
te semper sicut fontem vitae,
fontem sapientiae et scientiae,
fontem aeterni luminis, torrentem voluptatis,
ubertatem domus Dei.

Te semper ambiat, te quaerat, te inveniat,
ad te tendat, ad te perveniat,
te meditetur, te loquatur,
et omnia operentur in laudem et gloriam nominis tui,
cum humilitate et discretione,
cum dilectione et delectatione,
cum facilitate et affectu,
cum perseverantia usque in finem;
ut tu sis solus semper spes mea, tota fiducia mea, divitiae meae, delectatio mea,
iucunditas mea,
gaudium meum, quies et tranquillitas mea, pax mea,
suavitas mea, odor meus, dulcedo mea, cibus meus, refectio mea, refugium meum,
auxilium meum,
sapientia mea, portio mea,
possessio mea, thesaurus meus,
in quo fixa et firma et immobiliter
semper sit radicata mens mea et cor meum. Amen.

PRAYER TO OUR REDEEMER

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, heal me.
Blood of Christ, drench me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.

Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
Good Jesus, hear me.
In your wounds shelter me.
From turning away keep me.
From the evil one protect me.
At the hour of my death call me.
Into your presence lead me,
to praise you with all your saints
for ever and ever. Amen.

Anima Christi, sanctífica me.
Corpus Christi, salva me.
Sanguis Christi, inébria me.
Aqua láteris Christi, lava me.
Pássio Christi, confórta me.
O bone Iesu, exáudi me.
Intra tua vúlnera abscónde me.
Ne permíttas me separári a te.
Ab hoste malígno defénde me.
In hora mortis meæ voca me.
Et iube me veníre ad te,
ut cum Sanctis tuis laudem te
in sácula sæculórum. Amen..

SELF-DEDICATION TO JESUS CHRIST

Lord Jesus Christ, take all my freedom,
my memory, my understanding, and my will.
All that I have and cherish
 you have given me.
I surrender it all to be guided by your will.
Your grace and your love
are wealth enough for me.
Give me these, Lord Jesus,
and I ask for nothing more.

Súscipe, Dómine, univérsam meam libertátem.
Accipe memóriam,
 intelléctum atque voluntátem omnem.
Quidquid hábeo vel possídeo, mihi largítus es:
id tibi totum restítuo,
 ac tuæ prorsus voluntáti trado gubernándum.
Amórem tui solum cum grátia tua mihi dones,

et dives sum satis,
nec aliud quidquam ultra posco.

PRAYER TO JESUS CHRIST CRUCIFIED

My good and dear Jesus,
I kneel before you,
asking you most earnestly
to engrave upon my heart
 a deep and lively faith, hope, and charity,
with true repentance for my sins,
and a firm resolve to make amends.
As I reflect upon your five wounds,
and dwell upon them
 with deep compassion and grief,
I recall, good Jesus,
the words the prophet David spoke
long ago concerning yourself:
They have pierced my hands and my feet,
they have counted all my bones!
(Ps 21, 17)

En ego, o bone et dulcissime Iesu,
ante conspéctum tuum génibus me provólvo,
ac máximo ánimi ardóre te oro atque obtéstor,
ut meum in cor vívidos
 fídei, spei et caritátis sensus,
atque veram peccatórum meórum pæniténtiam,
eáque emendánda firmíssimam voluntátem
 velis imprímere;
dum magno ánimi afféctu et dolóre
tua quinque vúlnera mecum ipse considéro
 ac mente contéplor,
illud præ óculis habens,
quod iam in ore ponébat tuo David prophéta de te,
 o bone Iesu:
Fodérunt manus meas et pedes meos:
dinumeravérunt ómnia ossa mea. *(Ps 21, 17)*

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER
(attributed to Pope Clement XI)

Lord, I believe in you: increase my faith.
I trust in you: strengthen my trust.
I love you: let me love you more and more.
I am sorry for my sins: deepen my sorrow.
I worship you as my first beginning,
I long for you as my last end,
I praise you as my constant helper,
and call on you as my loving protector.
Guide me by your wisdom,
correct me with your justice,
comfort me with your mercy,
protect me with your power.
I offer you, Lord, my thoughts: to be fixed on you;
my words: to have you for their theme;
my actions: to reflect my love for you;
my sufferings: to be endured for your greater glory.
I want to do what you ask of me:
in the way you ask,
for as long as you ask,
because you ask it.
Lord, enlighten my understanding,
strengthen my will,
purify my heart,
and make me holy.
Help me to repent of my past sins
and to resist temptation in the future.
Help me to rise above my human weakness
and to grow stronger as a Christian.
Let me love you, my Lord and my God,
and see myself as I really am:
a pilgrim in this world,
a Christian called to respect and love
all whose lives I touch,
those in authority over me
or those under my authority,
my friends and my enemies.
Help me to conquer anger with gentleness,
greed by generosity, apathy by fervor.
Help me to forget myself
and reach out toward others.
Make me prudent in planning,
courageous in taking risks.

Make me patient in suffering,
unassuming in prosperity.
Keep me, Lord, attentive in prayer,
temperate in food and drink,
diligent in my work,
firm in my good intentions.
Let my conscience be clear,
my conduct without fault,
my speech blameless,
my life well-ordered.
Put me on guard against my human weaknesses.
Let me cherish your love for me,
keep your law,
and come at last to your salvation.
Teach me to realize that this world is passing,
that my true future is the happiness of heaven,
that life on earth is short,
and the life to come eternal.
Help me to prepare for death
with a proper fear of judgment,
but a greater trust in your goodness.
Lead me safely through death
to the endless joy of heaven.
Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Credo, Dómine, sed credam fírmius;
spero, sed sperem secúrius;
amo, sed amem ardéntius;
dóleo, sed dóleam veheméntius.
Adóro te ut primum princípium;
desídero ut finem últimum;
laudo ut benefactórem perpétuum;
ínvoco ut defensórem propítium.
Tua me sapiéntia dírige,
iustítia cóntine,
cleméntia soláre,
poténtia prótege.
Óffero tibi, Dómine, cogitánda, ut sint ad te;
dicénda, ut sint de te;
faciénda, ut sint secúndum te;
ferénda, ut sint propter te.

Volo quidquid vis,
volo quia vis,
volo quómodo vis,
volo quámdiu vis.
Oro, Dómine: intelléctum illúmines,
voluntátem inflámmes,
cor emúndes,
ánimam sanctífices.
Défleam prætéritas iniquitátes,
repéllam futúras tentatiónes,
córrigam vitiósas propensiónes,
éxcolam idóneas virtútes.
Tríbue mihi, bone Deus,
amórem tui, ódium mei,
zelum próximi,
contéptum mundi.
Stúdeam superióribus obcædíre,
inferióribus subveníre,
amícis consúlere,
inimícis párcere.
Vincam voluptátem austeritáte,
avarítiam largitáte,
iracúndiam lenitáte,
tepiditátem fervóre.
Redde me prudéntem in consíliis,
constántem in perículis,
patiéntem in advérsis,
húmilem in próspéris.
Fac, Dómine, ut sim in oratióne atténtus,
in épulis sóbrius,
in múnere sédulus,
in propósito firmus.
Curem habére innocéntiam interiórem,
modéstiam exteriórem,
conversatiónem exemplárem,
vitam regulárem.
Assídue invígilem natúræ domándæ,
grátia fovéndæ,
legi servándæ,
salúti promeréndæ.
Discam a te quam ténue quod terrénum,
quam grande quod divínium,

quam breve quod temporáneum,
quam durábile quod ætérnum.
Da, ut mortem præveniam,
iudícium pertímeam,
inférnum effúgiam,
paradísium obtíneam.
Per Christum Dóminum nostrum. Amen.

PRAYER TO THE VIRGIN MARY

Mary, holy virgin mother,
I have received your Son, Jesus Christ.
With love you became his mother,
gave birth to him, nursed him,
and helped him grow to manhood.
With love I return him to you,
to hold once more,
to love with all your heart,
and to offer to the Holy Trinity
as our supreme act of worship
for your honor and for the good
of all your pilgrim brothers and sisters.
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Mother, ask God to forgive my sins
and to help me serve him more faithfully.
Keep me true to Christ until death,
and let me come to praise him with you
for ever and ever. Amen.

O María, Virgo et Mater sanctíssima,
ecce suscépi dilectíssimum Fílium tuum,
quem immaculáto útero tuo concepísti, genuísti,
lactásti atque suavíssimis ampléxibus strinxisti.
Ecce, cuius aspéctu lætabáris
et ómnibus delíciis replebáris,
illum ipsum tibi humíliter
et amánter repræsénto et óffero,
tuis brácciiis constringéndum, tuo corde amándum,
sanctíssimæque Trinitáti in suprémum latríæ cultum,
pro tui ipsíus honóre et glória et pro meis
totiúsque mundi necessitatibus, offeréndum.
Rogo ergo te, piíssima Mater, ímpetra mihi véniam
ómnium peccatórum meórum,

uberémque grátiam ipsi deinceps
fidélius serviéndi,
ac déniqúe grátiam finálem, ut eum tecum laudáre
possim per ómnia sáecula sáeculórum. Amen.

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

St. Joseph, father and guardian of virgins,
to whose faithful keeping Christ Jesus,
innocence itself,
and Mary, the virgin of virgins, were entrusted,
I pray and beseech you by that twofold
and most precious charge, by Jesus and Mary,
to save me from all uncleanness,
to keep my mind untainted,
my heart pure, and my body chaste;
and to help me always to serve
Jesus and Mary in perfect chastity. Amen.

Vírginum custos et pater, sancte Ioseph,
cujus fidéli custódiæ ipsa Innocéntia,
Christus Iesus et Virgo vírginum María
commíssa fuit;
te per hoc utrúmque caríssimum
pignus Iesum et Maríam óbsecro et obtéstor,
ut me, ab omni immundítia præservátum,
mente incontamináta,
puro corde et casto córpore
Iesu et Maríæ
semper fácias castíssime famulári. Amen.

CANTICLE OF THE THREE CHILDREN.

Ant. Let us sing the hymn of the three children, which these holy ones sang of old in the fiery furnace, giving praise to the Lord. (P. T. Alleluia).

1. Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord;
praise and exalt him above all forever.
2. Heavens, bless the Lord;
angels of the Lord, bless the Lord.

3. All you waters that are above the heavens,
 bless the Lord,
 let all the powers bless the Lord.
 4. Sun and moon bless the Lord;
 stars of heaven bless the Lord.
 5. Every shower and dew, bless the Lord;
 all you winds, bless the Lord.
 6. Fire and heat, bless the Lord;
 cold and heat, bless the Lord.
 7. Dews and hoar frosts, bless the Lord;
 frost and cold, bless the Lord.
 8. Ice and snow, bless the Lord;
 nights and days, bless the Lord.
 9. Light and darkness, bless the Lord;
 lightning and clouds, bless the Lord.
 10. Let the earth bless the Lord;
 let it praise and exalt him above all forever.
 11. Mountains and hills bless the Lord;
 everything growing from the earth, bless the Lord.
 12. Seas and rivers, bless the Lord;
 fountains, bless the Lord.
 13. Whales and all that move in the waters,
 bless the Lord;
 all you fowls of the air, bless the Lord.
 14. All you beasts and cattle bless the Lord;
 sons of men bless the Lord.
 15. Israel bless the Lord;
 praise and exalt him above all forever.
 16. Priests of the Lord, bless the Lord;
 servants of the Lord, bless the Lord.
 17. Spirits and souls of the just, bless the Lord;
 holy men of humble heart, bless the Lord.
 18. Ananias, Azarias and Misael, bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above all for
 ever.
 19. Let us bless the Father and the Son,
 with the Holy Spirit;
 let us praise and exalt him above all forever.
 20. Blessed are you, Lord, in the firmament of heaven;
 and worthy of praise, and glorious
 above all forever.
- Neither Glory be . . . nor Amen is said.

1. Praise the Lord in his holy place,
praise him in his mighty heavens.
2. Praise him for his powerful deeds,
praise his surpassing greatness.
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3. O praise him with sound of trumpet,
praise him with lute and harp.
4. Praise him with timbrel and dance,
praise him with strings and pipes.
5. O praise him with resounding cymbals,
praise him with clashing of cymbals.
Let everything that lives and that breathes
give praise to the Lord.

Glory be . . .

Ant. Let us sing the hymn of the three children, which these holy ones sang of old in the fiery furnace, giving praise to the Lord. (**P. T.** Alleluia).

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Our Father . . .

V. And lead us not into temptation.

R. But deliver us from evil.

V. Let all your works praise you, Lord.

R. And let your Saints bless you.

V. Your saints shall rejoice in glory.

R. They shall rejoice in their resting place.

V. Not unto us, Lord, not unto us.

R. But unto your name give glory.

V. O Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come unto you.

Priests add:

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And also with you.

Let us pray.

God, who did allay the flames of fire for three children, grant in your mercy that the flame of vice may not consume us your servants.

Direct, we beseech you, Lord, our actions by your inspirations, and further them by your assistance: that every word and work of ours may begin always from you and by you be likewise ended.

Quench in us, we beseech you, Lord, the flame of vice even as you did enable blessed Lawrence to overcome his fire of sufferings. Through Christ our Lord. **R. Amen.**

Dan 3:57-88 et 56

Ant. Trium puerórum * cantémus hymnum, quem cantábant sancti in camíno ignis, benedicéntes Dóminum. (**T. P.** Alleluia).

1. Benedícite, ómnia ópera Dómini, Dómino, *
laudáte et superexaltáte eum in sáecula.
2. Benedícite, cæli, Dómino, *
benedícite, ángeli Dómini, Dómino.
3. Benedícite, aquæ omnes quæ super cælos sunt
Dómino, *
benedícat omnis virtus Dómino.
4. Benedícite, sol et luna, Dómino, *
benedícite, stellæ cæli, Dómino.
5. Benedícite, omnis imber et ros, Dómino, *
benedícite, omnes venti, Dómino.
6. Benedícite, ignis et æstus, Dómino, *
benedícite, frigus et æstus, Dómino.
7. Benedícite, rores et pruína, Dómino, *
benedícite, gelu et frigus, Dómino.
8. Benedícite, glácies et nives, Dómino, *
benedícite, noctes et dies, Dómino.
9. Benedícite, lux et ténebræ, Dómino, *
benedícite, fúlgura et nubes, Dómino.
10. Benedícat terra Dóminum, *
laudet et superexáltet eum in sáecula.
11. Benedícite, montes et colles, Dómino, *
benedícite, univérsa germinántia in terra, Dómino.
12. Benedícite, mária et flúmina, Dómino, *
benedícite, fontes, Dómino.
13. Benedícite, cete et ómnia quæ movéntur
in aquis, Dómino, *
benedícite, omnes vólucres cæli, Dómino.
14. Benedícite, omnes béstiæ et pécora, Dómino, *
benedícite, filii hóminum, Dómino.
15. Bénedic, Israel, Dómino, *
laudáte et superexaltáte eum in sáecula.
16. Benedícite, sacerdotes Dómini, Dómino, *
benedícite, servi Dómini, Dómino.
17. Benedícite, spíritus et ánimæ justórum, Dómino, *
benedícite, sancti et húmiles corde, Dómino.
18. Benedícite, Ananía, Azaría, Mísaël, Dómino, *
laudáte et superexaltáte eum in sáecula.
19. Benedicámus Patrem et Fílium
cum Sancto Spíritu; *
laudémus et superexaltémus eum in sáecula.

20. Benedíctus es in firmaménto cæli *
et laudábilis et gloriósus in sæcula.
<!--[if !supportLineBreakNewLine]-->
Hic non dicitur Gloria Patri . . . neque Amen.

Psalmus 150

1. Laudáte Dóminum in sanctuário eius, *
laudáte eum in firmaménto virtútis eius.
2. Laudáte eum in magnálibus eius, *
laudáte eum secúndum multitudinem
magnitúdinis eius.
3. Laudáte eum in sono tubæ, *
laudáte eum in psaltério et cíthara.
4. Laudáte eum in týmpano et choro, *
laudáte eum in chordis et órgano.
5. Laudáte eum in cýmbalis benesonántibus, *
laudáte eum in cýmbalis iubiliatiónis: *
omne quod spirat, laudet Dóminum.
<!--[if !supportLineBreakNewLine]-->

Gloria Patri . . .

Ant. Trium puerórum * cantémus hymnum, quem cantábant sancti in camíno ignis,
benedicéntes Dóminum. (T. P. Alleluia).

Kýrie, eléison. Christe, eléison. Kýrie, eléison. Pater noster . . .

V. Et ne nos indúcas in tentatiónem.

R. Sed líbera nos a malo.

V. Confiteántur tibi, Dómine, ómnia ópera tua.

R. Et Sancti tui benedícant tibi.

V. Exsultábunt sancti in glória.

R. Lætabúntur in cubílibus suis.

V. Non nobis, Dómine, non nobis.

R. Sed nómini tuo da glóriam.

V. Dómine exáudi orátionem meam.

R. Et clámor meus ad te véniat.

Sacerdotes addunt:

V. Dóminus vobíscum.

R. Et cum spírítu tuo.

Orémus.

Deus, qui tribus púeris mitigásti flammas ígnium: concéde propítius; ut nos fámulos tuos non exúrat flamma vitiórum.

Actiões nostras, quæsumus, Dómine, aspirándo præveni et adiuvándo proséquere: ut cuncta nostra orátio et operátio a te semper incípiat, et per te cœpta finiátur.

Da nobis, quæsumus, Dómine, vitiórum nostrórum flammam extingueré: qui beáto Lauréntio tribuísti tormentórum suórum incéndia superáre. Per Christum, Dóminum nostrum. **R.**
Amen.

PSALM 2

Ant. His kingdom is a kingdom of all ages, and all kings shall serve and obey him. (P. T. Alleluia).

1. Why this tumult among nations,
among peoples this useless murmuring?
2. They arise, the kings of the earth,
princes plot against the Lord
and his Anointed.
3. "Come, let us break their fetters,
come let us cast off their yoke."
4. He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord is laughing them to scorn.
5. Then he will speak in his anger,
his rage will strike them with terror.
6. "It is I who have set up my king on Zion,
my holy mountain."
7. I will announce the decree of the Lord:
The Lord said to me: "You are my Son.
It is I who have begotten you this day.
8. Ask and I shall bequeath you
the nations,
put the ends of the earth in your possession.
9. With a rod of iron you will break them,
shatter them like a potter's jar."
10. Now, O kings, understand,
take warning, rulers of the earth;
11. Serve the Lord
with awe and trembling,
12. Pay him your homage, lest he be angry and you perish, for suddenly his anger will
blaze.
Blessed are they who put their trust in God.
13. Glory be . . .

Ant. His kingdom is a kingdom of all ages, and all kings shall serve and obey him.
(P. T. Alleluia).

V. O Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come unto you.

Priests add:

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And also with you.

Let us pray.

Almighty and eternal God, you have renewed all creation in your beloved Son, the king of the whole universe. May all the people of the earth, now torn apart by the wound of sin, become subject to the gentle rule of your only-begotten Son: Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->**R. Amen.**

This messianic psalm should inspire us with courage to persevere in spite of the attacks of the devil against the Kingdom of God on earth. It also reminds us that our hope relies on being children of God.

Ant. Regnum eius* regnum sempiternum est, et omnes reges sérvient ei et obœdient.
(T. P. Allelúia).

1. Quare fremuérunt gentes, *
et pópuli meditáti sunt inánia?
2. Astitérunt reges terræ,
et príncipes convenérunt in unum *
advérsus Dóminum et advérsus christum eius:
3. 'Dirumpámus víncula eórum *
et proiciámus a nobis iugum ipsórum!'
4. Qui hábitat in cælis irridébit eos, *
Dóminus subsannábit eos.
5. Tunc loquétur ad eos in ira sua *
et in furóre suo conturbábit eos:
6. "Ego autem constítui regem meum *
super Sion, montem sanctum meum!"
7. Prædicábo decretum eius.
Dóminus dixit ad me:
'Fílius meus es tu; * ego hódie génuí te.
8. Póstula a me, et dabo tibi gentes
hereditátem tuam *
et possessiónem tuam términos terræ.
9. Reges eos in virga férrea *
et tamquam vas fíguli confrínges eos'.
10. Et nunc reges intellégite, * erudímini,
qui iudicátis terram.
11. Servíte Dómino in timóre *
et exsultáte ei cum tremóre.

12. Apprehéndite disciplínam, ne quando irascátur,
et pereátis de via, * cum exárserit in brevi ira eius.
Beáti omnes, * qui confídunt in eo.

13. Glória Patri . . .

Ant. Regnum eius * regnum sempitérnium est, et omnes reges sérvient ei et obœdient.
(T. P. Allelúia).

V. Dómine, exáudi oratiónem meam.

R. Et clamor meus ad te véniat.

Sacerdos addit:

V. Dóminus vobíscum.

R. Et cum spírítu tuo.

Orémus.

Omnípotens sempitérne Deus, qui in dilécto Fílio tuo, universórum Rege, ómnia instauráre voluísti: concéde propítius; ut cunctæ famíliæ géntium, peccáti vúlnerē disgregátæ, eius suavíssimo subdántur império: Qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti Deus: per ómnia sácula sæculórum.

R. Amen.

PRAYER TO ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

Saint Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle;
be our defense against the wickedness
and snares of the devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray.
And do you,
O prince of the heavenly host,
by the power of God
thrust into hell Satan and all the evil spirits
who prowl about the world for the ruin of souls.
Amen.

Sancte Míchael Archángele,
defénde nos in proélio,
contra nequítiam et insídias diaboli
esto præsídiū.
Imperet illi Deus, súpplīces deprecámur:
tuque,
princeps milítiaē cæléstis,
sátanam aliósque spírítus malígnos,
qui ad perditiónem animárum pervagántur in mundo, divína virtúte,
in inférnum detróde. Amen.

COMMUNION OUTSIDE MASS

SHORT RITE OF COMMUNION OUTSIDE THE MASS

The place where communion outside Mass is ordinarily given is a church or oratory in which the Eucharist is regularly celebrated or reserved, or a church, oratory, or other place where the local community regularly gathers for the liturgical assembly on Sundays or other days. Communion may be given, however, in other places, including private homes, when it is a question of the sick, prisoners, or others who cannot leave the place without danger or serious difficulty.¹

Among the possible forms, this form of service is used when the longer, more elaborate form is unsuitable.

GREETING

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And also with you.

PENITENTIAL RITE

V. My brothers and sisters, to prepare ourselves for this celebration, let us call to mind our sins.

A pause for silent reflection follows. All say:

**I confess to almighty God,
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have sinned through my own fault**

They strike their breast:

**in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done,
and in what I have failed to do;
and I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin,
all the angels and saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.**

The priest says the absolution:

**May almighty God have mercy on us
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.**

The people answer: **Amen.**

READING OF THE SCRIPTURE

The minister should read a short scriptural text:

<!--[if !supportLineBreakNewLine]-->

A reading of the holy gospel according to John

6:51

Jesus says: "I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world."

V. The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

LORD'S PRAYER AND HOLY COMMUNION

The minister takes the ciborium or pyx containing the body of the Lord, places it on the altar, and genuflects. He then introduces the Lord's Prayer in these or similar words:

Let us pray with confidence to the Father
in the words our Savior gave us:

He continues with the people:

Our Father . . .

The minister genuflects. Taking the host, he raises it slightly over the vessel or pyx and, facing the people, says:

V. This is the Lamb of God
who takes away the sins of the world.
Happy are those who are called to his supper.

The communicants say once:

R. Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word and I shall be healed.

The minister takes a host for each one and says:

V. The Body of Christ

R. Amen.

After Communion, the minister puts any particles left on the plate into the pyx, and he may wash his hands. He returns any remaining hosts to the tabernacle and genuflects.

A period of silence may now be observed, or a psalm or song of praise may be sung.

Meanwhile, not forming part of the rite, one may pray inaudibly:

How holy this feast
in which Christ is our food:
His passion is recalled,
grace fills our hearts,
and we receive a pledge of the glory
to come (P. T. Alleluia).

The minister then says the concluding prayer:

Let us pray.
Lord Jesus Christ,
you gave us the Eucharist
as the memorial of your suffering and death.

May our worship of this sacrament of your
body and blood
help us to experience the salvation you won for us
and the peace of the kingdom
where you live with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

During Easter Time the following prayer is preferred:

Let us pray.

Lord,

you have nourished us

with your Easter sacraments.

Fill us with your Spirit

and make us one in peace and love.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

CONCLUDING RITE AND BLESSING

If the minister is a priest or deacon, he extends his hands and, facing the people, says:

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And also with you.

He blesses the people with these words:

V. May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

V. Go in the peace of Christ.

R. Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION OF THE SICK OR ELDERLY

When a minister of the Church brings communion, the sick or elderly person shares in the eucharistic meal of the community. This holy communion manifests the support and concern of the community for its members who are not able to be present. Holy communion is a bond to the community for its members who are not able to be present. Holy communion is a bond to the community as it is a union with Christ. When the Eucharist is brought to the home, the family should prepare a table with a cloth and lighted candle. All members of the household may receive communion with the sick person according to the usual norms. The following texts are among many that may be chosen from the Rite of Communion of the Sick.

ITEMS THAT MAY BE NEEDED

A briefcase to carry the following items:

- White stole (for the priest or deacon)
- Another white stole (if the sick person is a priest)
- Holy water sprinkler
- Ritual, or card with prayers
- Crucifix
- Purificator

Check with the priest on what is needed; in some cases (e.g. Communion in a hospital), the requirements differ. Priest usually does not wear surplice during the trip but a narrow white stole, under his suit coat.

GREETING

All make the sign of the cross. The minister of communion speaks the following or a similar greeting:

V. Peace be with this house and with all who live here.

All respond:

R. And also with you.

SPRINKLING WITH HOLY WATER

The blessed sacrament is placed on the table. The sick person and all present may be sprinkled with holy water. Before this sprinkling, the minister of communion says:

Let this water call to mind our baptism into Christ, who by his death and resurrection has redeemed us.

PENITENTIAL RITE

The minister invites all to join in the penitential rite:

My brothers and sisters, let us turn with confidence to the Lord and ask forgiveness for all our sins.

After a brief silence, the penitential rite continues:

**I confess to almighty God,
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have sinned through my own fault**

They strike their breast:

**in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done,**

**and in what I have failed to do;
and I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin,
all the angels and saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.**

or he may speak the following invocations to which all respond.

V. Lord Jesus, you healed the sick:
Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

V. Lord Jesus, you forgave sinners:
Christ, have mercy.

R. Christ, have mercy.

V. Lord Jesus, you give us yourself to heal us
and to bring us strength: Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

Then the minister concludes the penitential rite:

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

READING OF THE SCRIPTURE

Then the Scripture is read. An appropriate reading should be selected and prepared by the family or the minister of communion. The following Scriptures are appropriate but should not limit the choice of a reading.

A reading of the holy gospel according to John:

6:51

Jesus says:

“I am the living bread which has come down from heaven.
anyone who eats this bread will live for ever;
and the bread that I shall give
is my flesh, for the life of the world.”

The reader concludes:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All respond:

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

or:

A reading of the holy gospel according to John:

15: 5

I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.

The reader concludes:

The Gospel of the Lord.

All respond:

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

or:

A reading of the first letter of John:

4:16

We have come to know and to believe in the love
God has for us.

God is love, and whoever remains in love remains
in God and God in him.

The reader concludes:

The Word of the Lord.

All respond: **Thanks be to God.**

LORD'S PRAYER AND COMMUNION

Following a time of silence, all join in prayers of intercession. Then, in preparation for holy communion, all recite the Lord's Prayer.

Now let us pray to God as our Lord Jesus Christ taught us.

Our Father . . .

After this, the minister shows the eucharistic bread to those present, saying:

This is the Lamb of God
who takes away the sins of the world.
Happy are those who are called to his supper.

All who are to receive communion respond:

Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word and I shall be healed.

The minister gives communion saying, "The Body of Christ," "The Blood of Christ," as appropriate. The sick person answers "Amen." All who wish receive communion in the usual way. After a time of silence, the minister says the following or another prayer:

All-powerful and ever-living God,
may the Body and Blood of Christ your Son
be for our brother/sister N.
a lasting remedy for body and soul.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

VIATICUM

Viaticum is the sacrament of the dying. When the minister has brought holy communion, the rite may begin with the renewal of the dying person's profession of faith (p. 543).

Viaticum is then celebrated in the same manner as Communion of the sick (p. 308), but after giving communion, the minister says:

May the Lord Jesus Christ protect you
and lead you to eternal life.

R. Amen.

The concluding prayer follows:

God of peace,
you offer eternal healing to those who believe
in you;

you have refreshed your servant **N.**
with food and drink from heaven:
lead him/her safely into the kingdom of light.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->**R. Amen.**

COMMUNIO EXTRA MISSAM

RITUS INITIALES

V. Dóminus vobiscum.

R. Et cum spíritu tuo.

ACTUS PÆNITENTIALIS

V. Fratres, agnoscamus peccata nostra, ut apti simus ad hanc sacram celebrationem participandam.

Et fit brevis pausa silentii. Postea simul faciunt confessionem:

Confíteor Deo omnipoténti et vobis, fratres, quia peccávi nimis cogitatióne, verbo, ópere et omissióne: mea culpa, mea culpa, mea máxima culpa. Ideo precor beátam Maríam semper Vírginem, omnes Ángelos et Sanctos, et vos, fratres, oráre pro me ad Dóminum Deum nostrum.

Minister concludit:

Misereátur nostri omnípotens Deus, et dimíssis peccátis nostris, perdúcat nos ad vitam æternam.

Omnes respondent: Amen.

LECTIO BREVIOR VERBI DEI

Legatur a ministro brevis textus Sacrae Scripturae, in quo sermo sit de pane vitae.

Lectio sancti Evangelii secundum Ioannem. Ego sum panis vivus, qui de caelo descendi. Si quis manducaverit ex hoc pane, vivet in aeternum; panis autem quem ego dabo, caro mea est pro mundi vita. Verbum Domini.

SACRA COMMUNIO

Minister accipit vasculum vel pyxidem cum Corpore Domini, illud super altare deponit et genuflectit. Deinde orationem dominicam his vel similibus verbis introducit:

Præceptis salutariibus moniti, et divina institutione formati, audemus dicere.

et omnes simul pergunt:

Pater noster...

His peractis, minister genuflectit, accipit hostiam, eamque parum elevatam super vasculum vel pyxidem tenens, ad communicandos versus, dicit:

V. Ecce Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccata mundi. Beati qui ad cenam Agni vocati sunt.

Et communicandi semel subdunt:

R. Domine, non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum: sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur anima mea.

Postea accipit vasculum vel pyxidem, accedit ad communicandos, et hostiam parum elevatam unicuique eorum ostendit, dicens:

V. Corpus Christi.

R. Amen.

Distributione communionis expleta, fragmenta quae super patena forte inveniuntur, minister in pyxidem immittit, itemque pro opportunitate manus abluit. Sacramentum autem, si particulae superfuerint, in tabernaculo recondit, et genuflectit.

Tunc pro opportunitate sacrum silentium per aliquod temporis spatium servari vel psalmus aut canticum laudis proferri potest.

O sacrum convivium, in quo Christus sumitur, recolitur memoria passionis eius, mens impletur gratia, et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur (T.P. Alleluia). Panem de caelo praestitisti eis (T.P. Alleluia). Omne delectamentum in se habentem (T.P. Alleluia.)

Deinde minister dicit orationem conclusivam:

Oremus.

Deus qui nobis sub sacramento mirábili
passionis tuæ memóriam reliquisti,
tríbue, quæsumus,
ita nos Córporis et Sánguinis tui
sacra mystéria venerari,
ut redemptionis tuæ fructum
in nobis iúgiter sentiamus.

Qui vivis et regnas in sácula sæculórum.

R. Amen.

Tempore Paschale dicitur:

Oremus.

Spíritum nobis, Dómine, tuæ caritatis infunde.
ut quos Sacramentis paschálibus satiasti,
tua facias pietate concordés.
Per Christum Dóminum nostrum.

R. Amen.

RITUS CONCLUSIONIS

Deinde minister, si est sacerdos vel diaconus, versus ad
populum, extendens manus dicit:

V. Dóminus vobiscum.

R. Et cum spíritu tuo.

Et benedicit populum, dicens:

V. Benedícat vos omnípotens Deus Pater, et Fílius, + et
Spíritus Sanctus.

R. Amen.

V. Ite in pace.

R. Deo grátias.

ORDO MINISTRANDI COMMUNIONEM INFIRMORUM

SALUTATIO

V. Pax huic dómui et ómnibus habitántibus in ea.

Tunc, deposito Sacramento super mensam,
ipsum cum astantibus adorat.

ASPERSIO

Tunc accepta aqua benedicta, aspergit infirmum et cubiculum, dicens:

Sit hæc aqua suscepti baptísmatis memória et Christum récolat, qui Passione et Resurrectione sua nos redemit.

ACTUS PÆNITENTIALIS

V. Fratres, agnoscamus peccata nostra, ut apti simus ad hanc sacram celebrationem participandam.

Et fit brevis pausa silentii. Postea omnes simul faciunt confessionem:

Confíteor Deo omnipoténti et vobis, fratres, quia peccávi nimis cogitatióne, verbo, ópere et omissióne: mea culpa, mea culpa, mea máxima culpa. Ideo precor beátam Mariám semper Vírginem, omnes Ángelos et Sanctos, et vos, fratres, oráre pro me ad Dóminum Deum nostrum.

Et sacerdos concludit:

Misereátur nostri omnípotens Deus
et, dimíssis peccátis nostris,
perdúcat nos ad vitam æternam.

R. Amen.

LÉCTIO S. SCRIPTURÆ

Legi potest a sacerdote textus Sacræ Scripturæ, v.g.

Léctio sancti Evangélii secúndum Ioánnem.

Ego sum panis vivus,
qui de cælo descendi.

Si quis manducáverit ex hoc pane, vivet in æternum;
panis autem, quem ego dabo,
caro mea est pro mundi vita.

Verbum Dómini.

ORÁTIO DÓMINICA

Tunc sacerdos his vel similibus verbis recitationem orátionis dóminicæ introducit:

Nunc autem una simul Deum deprecémur, sicut Dóminus noster Iesus Christus nos dócuit oráre.

et omnes simul pergunt:

Pater noster...

COMMUNIO

Tunc sacerdos ostendit Ss.mum Sacramentum, dicens:

V. Ecce Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccata mundi. Beati qui ad cenam Agni vocati sunt.

R. Dómine, non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum: sed tantum dic verbo, et sanábitur ánima mea.

V. Corpus Christi.

R. Amen.

Distributionis Communionis expleta, minister de more purificationem peragit. Tunc pro opportunitate sacrum silentium per aliquod temporis spatium servari potest.

O sacrum convívium, in quo Christus súmitur, recólitur memória passionis eius, mens impletur grátia, et futuræ glóriæ nobis pignus datur (T.P. Alleluia). Panem de cælo præstitisti eis (T.P. Alleluia). Omne delectamentum in se habentem (T.P. Alleluia.)

Deinde sacerdos dicit orátionem conclusivam:

Oremus.

Dómine, sancte Pater, omnípotens æterne Deus te fidenter deprecamur, ut sacrosanctum Corpus Dómini nostri Iesu Christi Fílii tui, accipienti fratri nostro (sorori nostræ) tam córpori quam ánimæ prosit ad remédium sempiternum. Per Christum Dóminum nostrum.

R. Amen.

RITUS CONCLUSIONIS

Benedíctio

Deinde infirmo et astantibus benedicit, vel super ipsos signum crucis faciendo (silentio) cum pyxide, si Sacramentum superfuerit, vel formula sequens usurpando:

V. Benedíctio Dei Omnipoténtis, Patris, et Fílii, + et Spíritus Sancti, descéndat super vos et máneat semper.

R. Amen.

EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

“The Catholic Church has always offered and still offers to the sacrament of the Eucharist the cult of adoration, not only during Mass, but also outside of it, reserving the consecrated hosts with the

utmost care, exposing them to the solemn veneration of the faithful, and carrying them in procession.”

The tabernacle was first intended for the reservation of the Eucharist in a worthy place so that it could be brought to the sick and those absent outside of Mass. As faith in the real presence of Christ in his Eucharist deepened, the Church became conscious of the meaning of silent adoration of the Lord present under the Eucharistic species. It is for this reason that the tabernacle should be located in an especially worthy place in the church and should be constructed in such a way that it emphasizes and manifests the truth of the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. It is highly fitting that Christ should have wanted to remain present to his Church in this unique way. He wanted to give us his sacramental presence and he wanted us to have the memorial of the love with which *he loved us to the end*.

“The Church and the world have a great need for Eucharistic worship. Jesus awaits us in this sacrament of love. Let us not refuse the time to go to meet him in adoration, in contemplation full of faith, and open to making amends for the serious offenses and crimes of the world. Let our adoration never cease.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Some Christians have the custom of entering a church, at sometime during the day, in order to make a visit to Christ present in the Blessed Sacrament. They spend a few moments of intimacy with the Lord, as they recite short prayers and express personal petitions.

A short time before the Blessed Sacrament will help us to recall the presence of God in our daily routine.

“Jesus has remained in the Sacred Host for us so as to stay by our side, to sustain us, to guide us. And love can only be repaid with love.

“How could we not turn to the Blessed Sacrament each day, even if it is only for a few minutes, to bring Him our greetings and our love as children and as brothers?”⁴

Recite three times:

Our Father . . .

Hail Mary . . .

Glory be . . .

Spiritual Communion

I wish, my Lord, to receive you with the purity, humility and devotion with which your most holy Mother received you, with the spirit and fervor of the saints.

RITE OF EXPOSITION AND BENEDICTION

EXPOSITION

After the people have assembled, a song may be sung while the minister comes to the altar. If the Holy Eucharist is not reserved at the altar where the exposition is to take place, the minister puts on a humeral veil and brings the sacrament from the place of reservation; he is accompanied by servers or by the faithful with lighted candles.

The ciborium or monstrance should be placed upon the table of the altar which is covered with a cloth. If exposition with the monstrance is to extend over a long period, a throne in an elevated position may be used, but this should not be too lofty or distant. After exposition, if the monstrance is used, the minister incenses the sacrament. If the adoration is to be lengthy, he may then withdraw.

In the case of more solemn and lengthy exposition, the host should be consecrated in the Mass which immediately precedes the exposition and after Communion should be placed in the monstrance upon the altar. The Mass ends with the prayer after Communion, and the concluding rites are omitted. Before the priest leaves, he may place the blessed sacrament on the throne and incense it.

ADORATION

During the exposition there should be Biblical readings, prayers, and songs to direct the attention of the faithful to the worship of Christ the Lord. Among the Biblical readings, the following may be used:

1 Cor 11:23-26 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body which shall be given up for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me. For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

Jn 6:54-60

Lk 22:14-20

Mt 26:26-29

To encourage a prayerful spirit, there should be readings from scripture with a homily or brief exhortations to develop a better understanding of the eucharistic mystery. It is also desirable for the people to respond to the word of God by singing and to spend some periods of time in religious silence.

Part of the liturgy of the hours, especially the principal hours, may be celebrated before the blessed sacrament when there is a lengthy period of exposition. This liturgy extends the praise and thanksgiving offered to God in the eucharistic celebration to the several hours of the day; it directs the prayers of the Church to Christ and through Him to the Father in the name of the whole world. (One of the following songs may be sung:)

O salutáris Hóstia

Quæ cæli pandis óstium.

Bella premunt hostília;

Da robur fer auxílium

Uni trinóque Dómino

Sit sempitérna glória:

Qui vitam sine término,

Nobis donet in pátria. Amen.

or:

O Saving Victim opening wide
The gate of heav'n to man below!
Our foes press on from every side;
Thine aid supply, Thy strength bestow.
To thy great name be endless praise
Immortal Godhead, One in Three;
Oh, grant us endless length of days,
In our true native land with Thee. Amen.

or:

Pange, lingua, gloriósi
córporis mystérium,
sanguinisque pretiósí,
quem in mundi prétium
fructus ventris generósi
Rex effúdit géntium.

Nobis datus, nobis natus
ex intácta Vírgine,
et in mundo conversátus,
sparso verbi sémine,
sui moras incolátus
miro clausit órđine.
<!--[if !supportLineBreakNewLine]-->

or:

Adoro Te Devote

BENEDICTION

Eucharistic hymn and incensation

Toward the end the priest or deacon goes to the altar, genuflects, and kneels. As a hymn or other eucharistic song is sung, the minister, while kneeling, incenses the sacrament if the exposition has taken place with the monstrance. (One of the following hymns may be sung:)

* **Tantum ergo sacramentum
veneremur cernui,
et antiquum documentum
novo cedat ritui;
praestet fides supplementum
sensuum defectui.**

**Genitori Genitroque
laus et iubilatio,
salus, honor, virtus quoque
sit et benedictio;
procedenti ab utroque
compar sit laudatio.
Amen.**

or:

**Bowing low, then, offer homage
To a Sacrament so great!
Here is new and perfect worship;
All the old must terminate.
Senses cannot grasp this marvel:
Faith must serve to compensate.
Praise and glorify the Father,
Bless His Son's life-giving name,
Singing their eternal Godhead,
Power, majesty and fame,
Offering their Holy Spirit
Equal worship and acclaim. Amen.**

V. Panem de caelo praestitisti eis. (T.P. Alleluia).

R. Omne delectamentum in se habentem. (T.P. Alleluia).

V. You have given them Bread from heaven (P.T. Alleluia).
R. Having all sweetness within it (P.T. Alleluia).

Prayer

Afterward the minister rises and sings or says:

Oremus.

Deus qui nobis sub sacramento mirábili, passionis tuæ memoriam reliquisti: *
tríbe quæsumus, *

ita nos córporis et sánguinis tui sacra mysteria venerári, ut redemptionis tuæ fructum in nobis iúgiter sentiámus. * Qui vivis et regnas in sácula sæculorum.

R. Amen.

or:

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, you gave us the Eucharist as the memorial of your suffering and death. May our worship of this sacrament of your body and blood help us to experience the salvation you won for us and the peace of the kingdom where you live with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

Eucharistic Blessing

After the prayer the priest or deacon puts on the humeral veil, genuflects, and takes the monstrance or ciborium. He makes the sign of the cross over the people with the monstrance or ciborium, in silence. (Afterwards, the divine praises may be said:)

Blessed be God.

Blessed be His Holy Name.

Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man.

Blessed be the Name of Jesus.

Blessed be His Most Sacred Heart.

Blessed be His Most Precious Blood.

Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.

Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary Most Holy.

Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.

Blessed be her glorious Assumption.

Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.

Blessed be St. Joseph, her most chaste spouse.

Blessed be God in His Angels and in His saints. Amen.

Reposition

After that the priest or deacon who gave the blessing, or another priest or deacon, replaces the blessed sacrament in the tabernacle and genuflects. Meanwhile the people may sing or say an acclamation, and the minister then leaves. (One of the following songs may be sung:)

**O Sacrament Most Holy
O Sacrament Divine,
All praise and all thanksgiving
Be every moment Thine,
Be every moment Thine.**

or:

**Holy God, we praise thy name!
Lord of all, we bow before thee;
All on earth thy scepter claim,
All in heav'n above adore thee;
Infinite thy vast domain,
Everlasting is thy reign.**

or:

**Laudáte Dóminum omnes gentes;
Laudáte eum omnes pópuli.
Quóniam confirmáta est super nos misericórdia eius;
Et véritas Dómini manet in ætérnum.
Glória Patri . . .**

ADORO TE DEVOTE

That the Body and Blood of Christ are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament is something that "cannot be apprehended by the senses," says St. Thomas Aquinas, "but only by faith, which relies on divine authority."

I devoutly adore You, O hidden God,
truly hidden beneath these appearances.
My whole heart submits to You
and in contemplating You
 it surrenders itself completely.
Sight, touch, taste are all deceived
 in their judgment of You,
but hearing suffices firmly to believe.
I believe all that the Son of God has spoken:
there is nothing truer than this word of Truth.
On the Cross only the Divinity was hidden,
but here the Humanity is also hidden.

I believe and confess both
and I ask for what the repentant thief asked.
I do not see the wounds as Thomas did,
but I confess that You are my God.
Make me believe more and more in You,
hope in You, and love You.
O Memorial of our Lord's death!
Living Bread that gives life to man,
grant my soul to live on You
and always to savor Your sweetness.
Lord Jesus, good Pelican,
wash me clean with Your Blood,
one drop of which can free
the entire world of all its sins.
Jesus, whom now I see hidden,
I ask You to fulfill what I so desire:
that on seeing You face to face,
I may be happy in seeing Your glory. Amen.

Adoro te devote, latens Déitas,
Quæ sub his figuris vere látitas:
Tibi se cor meum totum súbiicit,
Quia te contemplans totum déficit.
Visus, tactus, gustus in te fállitur,
Sed auditu solo tuto crédito.
Credo quidquid dixit Dei Fílius:
Nil hoc verbo Veritatis vérius.
In cruce latebat sola Déitas,
At hic latet simul et humánitas;
Ambo tamen credens atque cónfitens,
Peto quod petivit latro pænitens.
Plagas, sicut Thomas, non intúeor;
Deum tamen meum te confíteor.
Fac me tibi semper magis crédere,
In te spem habére, te dilígere.
O memóriale mortis Dómini!
Panis vivus, vitam præstans hómimi!
Præsta meæ menti de te vívere.
Et te illi semper dulce sápere.
Pie pellicane, Iesu Dómine,
Me immundum munda tuo ságuine.

Cuius una stilla saluum fácere
Totum mundum quit ab omni scélere.
Iesu, quem velatum nunc aspicio,
Oro fiat illud quod tam sítio;
Ut te revelata cernens facie,
Visu sim beatus tuæ gloriæ.
Amen.

FIFTEEN MINUTES WITH THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

As a suggestion for having a personal conversation with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament we include this well known devotion. Jesus is the one asking us to trust him and to open our heart with all the concerns, burdens and desires that we have.

My child, you need not know much in order to please me; only love me dearly. Speak to me as you would talk to your best friend:

- Have you no one to recommend to me? Tell me the names of your relatives, of your friends; after each name add what you wish me to do for them. Ask a great deal: I love generous hearts that forget themselves for others.
- Tell me about the poor whom you want to help, the sick whom you have seen suffer, the sinner whom you would like to convert, the people who are alienated from you, and whose affections you wish to win back. For all recite a fervent prayer. Remind me that I have promised to grant every prayer that comes from the heart; and surely the prayers are heartfelt which we say for those whom we love, and who love us.
- Have you no favors to ask for yourself? Write, if you like, a long list of all your wishes – all the needs of your soul – and come and read it to me. Tell me simply how self-indulgent you are, how proud, how touchy, how selfish, how cowardly, how idle; ask me to help you to improve. Poor child! Do not blush! There are in heaven many saints who had the same faults as you; they prayed to me, and, little by little, they were cured.
- Do not hesitate to ask for the goods of body and mind – for health, for memory, for success. I can give everything, and I always give when the gifts would make souls more holy. What do you want today, my child? Oh, if you knew how I long to do you good!
- Have you no plans to interest you? Tell me all about them. Do they concern your vocation? What do you dream about? What would you like? Are you planning something pleasing for your mother or father, for your family, for those close to you? What do you wish to do for them?

- And have you no thoughts of zeal for me? Are you not anxious to do a little good for the souls of your friends, for those whom you love, and who, perhaps forget me? Tell me who interests you, what motives urge you, what means you wish to use.
- Confide to me your failures; I will show you the cause. Whom do you wish to see interested in your work? I am the Master of all hearts, my child, and I lead them gently where I please. I will place about you those who are necessary to you; never fear!
- Have you nothing that annoys you? My child, tell me your annoyances, with every detail. Who has pained you? Who has wounded your self-love? Who has treated you contemptuously? Tell me all, and then say that you forgive and forget; and I will give you my blessing.
- Do you dread something painful? Is there in your soul a vague fear which seems unreasonable, and yet torments you? Trust fully in my providence. I am here, I see everything; I will not leave you.
- Are there about you friends who seem less kind than formerly, who neglect you through indifference or forgetfulness, without your having consciously done anything to wound them? Pray for them, and I will restore them to you, if their companionship is good for you.
- Have you no joys to tell me? Why not confide to me your pleasures? Tell me what has happened since yesterday to console you, to make you look happy, to give you joy. A surprise visit has done you good; a fear has been suddenly dispelled; you have found unexpected success; you have received some mark of affection—a letter, a present; some trial has left you stronger than you supposed. All these things, my child, I obtained for you. Why are you not grateful? Why do you not say I thank you? Gratitude draws benefits, and the benefactor loves to be reminded of his bounty.
- Have you no promises to make me? You know I read the very bottom of your heart. Men are deceived, but not God; be frank.
- Are you resolved to avoid that occasion of sin, to give up the object which leads you astray—not to read that book which excites your imagination; to withdraw your friendship from that person who is irreligious, and whose presence disturbs the peace of your soul? Will you go at once and be kind to that companion who annoyed you?
- Well, my child, go now and resume your daily work. Be silent, be honest, be patient, be charitable, love very much the Blessed Mother of Jesus; and tomorrow bring me a heart even more devoted and loving. Tomorrow I shall have new favors for you.

GUIDE FOR A GOOD CONFESSION

“To those who have been far away from the sacrament of Reconciliation and forgiving love I make this appeal: come back to this source of grace; do not be afraid! Christ himself is waiting for you. He will heal you, and you will be at peace with God!”¹

The basic requirement for a good Confession is to have the intention of returning to God like the *prodigal son* and to acknowledge our sins with true sorrow before his representative, the priest.

Examination of Conscience

Examine your conscience. Recall your sins. Calmly ask yourself what you have done with full knowledge and full consent against God’s Commandments.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

- Have I performed my duties towards God reluctantly or grudgingly?
- Did I recite my usual prayers?
- Did I receive Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin or without the necessary preparation?
- Did I miss the one-hour Eucharistic fast?
- Did I fail to mention some grave sin in my previous confessions?
- Did I seriously believe in superstition or engage in superstitious practices (palm-reading, fortune telling, etc.)?
- Did I seriously doubt in matters of Faith?
- Did I put my Faith in danger by reading books, pamphlets, or magazines which contain errors or are contrary to Catholic faith and morals?
- Did I endanger my Faith by joining or attending meetings and activities of organizations contrary to the Church or to the Catholic faith (Protestant services, non-Catholic prayer-meetings, the Communist Party, Freemasonry, “weird” cults and other religions)?
- Have I committed the sin of sacrilege (profanation of a sacred person, place or thing)?

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

- Did I try my best to fulfill the promises and resolutions which I made to God?
- Did I take the name of God in vain? Did I make use of God’s name mockingly, jokingly, angrily or in any other irreverent manner?
- Did I make use of the Blessed Virgin Mary’s name or the saints’ names mockingly, jokingly, angrily or in any other irreverent manner?
- Have I been a sponsor in baptism and ceremonies outside the Catholic Church?
- Did I tell a lie under oath?
- Did I break (private or public) vows?

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

- Did I miss Mass on Sundays or Holy days of obligation?
- Did I allow myself to be distracted during Mass, by not paying attention, looking around out of curiosity, etc.?
- Have I arrived at Mass so late without sufficient reason that I failed to fulfill the Sunday obligation?
- Did I misbehave or have an improper posture or dress in church, or cause others to get distracted?
- Did I generously help the Church in her necessities to the extent that I am able?
- Did I fast and abstain on the days prescribed by the Church?
- Have I done any work or business that would inhibit the worship due to God, the joy proper to the Lord's Day, or the appropriate relaxation of mind and body, on Sundays and Holy days of obligation?

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

(FOR PARENTS)

- Have I neglected to teach my children their prayers, send them to Church and give them a Christian education?
- Have I given them bad example?
- Did I neglect to watch over my children: the companions they have, the books they read, movies and TV shows they watch?
- Have I seen to it that my children made their First Confession and First Communion?
- Have I seen to it that they have received the sacrament of Confirmation?

(FOR CHILDREN)

- Have I been disobedient towards my parents?
- Have I neglected to help my parents in their needs?
- Did I treat my parents with little affection or respect?
- Did I feel hurt and react proudly when I was corrected by them?
- Did I have a disordered desire for independence?
- Did I do my house chores?
- Did I quarrel with my brothers and sisters?

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

- Did I easily get angry or lose my temper?
- Was I envious or jealous of others?
- Did I injure or take the life of anyone? Was I ever reckless in driving?
- Was I an occasion for others to sin with my conversations, dirty jokes, way of dressing, invitations to attend certain shows, lending them harmful books or magazines, helping them to steal, etc.? Did I try to repair the scandal done?
- How many persons did I lead to sin? What sins?
- Did I neglect my health? Did I ever attempt to take my life?
- Have I mutilated myself or another?

- Did I get drunk or take prohibited drugs?
- Did I eat or drink more than the sufficient amount, allowing myself to get carried away by gluttony?
- Did I participate in any form of physical violence?
- Did I consent or actively take part in direct sterilization (“tubal ligation,” vasectomy, etc.)? Do I realize that this will have a permanent effect on my married life and that I will have to answer to God for its consequences?
- Did I consent, recommend, advise, or actively take part in an abortion? Am I aware that the Church punishes with automatic excommunication (*latae sententiæ*) those who *procure and achieve* abortion? Do I realize that this is a very grave crime?
- Did I cause anyone harm with my words or actions?
- When someone offends me, do I desire revenge, harbor enmity, hatred or ill-feelings?
- Did I ask pardon whenever I offended anyone?
- Did I insult or tease others?

THE SIXTH AND NINTH COMMANDMENTS

- Did I entertain indecent thoughts?
- Did I recall impure thoughts?
- Did I consent to evil desires against the virtue of purity, even though I may not have carried them out? Were there any circumstances that aggravated the sin: (the affinity with or the married state or the consecration to God of the person involved)?
- Did I engage in impure conversations? Did I start them?
- Did I look for fun in forms of entertainment which put me in proximate occasions of sin (some dances, immoral movies or shows, readings, bad company, houses of ill-repute)?
- Do I realize that I may already be committing a sin by putting myself in these occasions (sharing a room with a person of the opposite sex, being alone with a person of the opposite sex in circumstances which could lead to sin, etc.)?
- Do I take care of those details of modesty and decency which are the safeguards of purity?
- Before going to a show or reading a book, do I try to find out its moral implications, so as not to put myself in immediate danger of sinning and in order to avoid distorting my conscience?
- Did I entertain impure feelings?
- Did I willfully look at immodest pictures or cast immodest looks upon myself or others? Did I willfully desire to commit such sins?
- Did I lead others to sins of impurity or immodesty? What sins?
- Did I commit impure acts? By myself through the practice of self-abuse which is a mortal sin? With someone else? How many times? With people of the same or opposite sex? Was there any circumstance of relationship, affinity, etc., which could have given the sin special gravity? Did these illicit relationships have any consequences? Did I do anything to prevent these consequences?

- Do I have friendships which are habitual occasions of sin? Am I prepared to break with them?
- In courtship, is true love my fundamental reason for dealing with the other person? Do I live the constant and cheerful sacrifice of not putting the person I love in danger of sinning? Do I degrade human love by confusing it with selfishness or pleasure?
- Did I engage in acts such as “petting,” “necking,” passionate kisses or prolonged embraces?

(FOR MARRIED PEOPLE)

- Did I make improper use of marriage? Did I deprive my spouse of the marital right? Did I betray conjugal fidelity in desire or in deed? Did I use any birth control device before or after new life had already been conceived?
- Did I without grave reasons make use of marriage only in those days when offspring will not be engendered with the intention of avoiding conception?
- Did I take “the pill” or practice other artificial methods in order to prevent having children?
- Did I suggest their use to other people?
- Did I have a hand in contributing to the *contraceptive mentality* by my advice, jokes, attitudes, etc.?

(On abortion, sterilization, etc., see FIFTH COMMANDMENT).

THE SEVENTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS

- Did I steal any object or amount of money? How much was it worth? Did I give it back; or at least, have the intention to do so?
- Have I done or caused damage to others’ property? To what amount?
- Did I harm anyone by deception, fraud, or coercion in business contracts or transactions?
- Did I spend beyond my means? Do I spend too much money unnecessarily due to whim, vanity or caprice?
- Do I give alms according to my capacity?
- Am I envious of my neighbor’s goods?
- Did I neglect to pay my debts?
- Did I retain things found or stolen?
- Did I desire to steal?
- Am I diligent in my work and studies or do I give in to laziness or love of comfort?
- Was I greedy? Do I have an excessively materialistic view of life?

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

- Did I tell lies? Did I repair any damage that may have resulted as a consequence of this?
- Have I unjustly accused others?
- Did I sin by detraction, that is, telling the faults of others without necessity?
- Did I sin by calumny, that is, telling derogatory lies about others?
- Did I judge others rashly or have I suspected others falsely?

- Did I engage in gossip, back-biting, or tale-telling?
- Did I reveal secrets without due cause?

Shorter Examination of Conscience

- When was my last good Confession? Did I receive Communion or other sacraments in the state of mortal sin? Did I intentionally fail to confess some mortal sin in my previous Confession?
- Did I seriously doubt my faith or put myself in danger of losing my faith through readings hostile to Catholic teachings or involvement in non-Catholic sects? Did I engage in superstitious practices: palm-reading, fortune telling, etc.?
- Did I take the name of God in vain? Did I curse, or take a false oath? Did I use improper language?
- Did I miss Mass on Sundays or holy days of obligation through my own fault, without any serious reason? Did I keep fast and abstinence on the prescribed days?
- Did I disobey my parents and lawful superiors in important matters?
- Did I hate or quarrel with anyone, or desire revenge? Did I refuse to forgive? Did I hurt or cause to kill someone? Did I get drunk? Did I take illicit drugs? Did I consent to, recommend, advise or actively take part in an abortion?
- Did I willfully look at indecent pictures or watch immoral movies? Did I read immoral books or magazines? Did I engage in impure jokes or conversations? Did I willfully entertain impure thoughts or feelings? Did I commit impure acts, alone or with others? Did I take contraceptive or abortifacient pills or use other artificial means in order to prevent conception?
- Did I steal or damage to another's property? How much? Have I made reparation for the damages done? Have I been honest in my business relations?
- Did I tell lies? Did I sin by calumny, or detraction telling the unknown grave faults of others without necessity, even if they are true? Did I judge others rashly in serious matters? Have I tried to make restitution for the bad reputation I caused?

If you remember other serious sins besides those indicated here, mention them in your Confession.

Before Confession

Be truly sorry for your sins.

“The essential act of Penance, on the part of the penitent, is *contrition*, a clear and decisive rejection of the sin committed, together with a resolution not to commit it again, out of the love one has for God and which is reborn with repentance. Understood in this way, *contrition* is therefore, the beginning and the heart of *conversion*, of that evangelical *metánoia* that brings the person back to God like the Prodigal Son returning to his father, and which has in the sacrament of Penance its visible sign and which perfects attrition.”*

The *resolution to avoid committing these sins in the future* (amendment) is a sure sign that your sorrow is genuine and authentic.

This does not mean that a promise never to fall again into sin is necessary. A resolution to try to avoid the near occasions of sin suffices for true repentance. God's grace in cooperation with the intention to rectify your life will give you the strength to resist and overcome temptation in the future.

Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.

or any other like: I confess . . .

You may now go to Confession

During Confession

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• You can begin your confession by making the sign of the cross
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• The priest encourages you to have confidence in God saying:
"May the Lord be in your heart and help you to confess your sins with true sorrow."

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• Either the priest or you may read or say by heart some words taken from the Holy Scripture about the mercy of God and repentance, e.g.: **Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you** (John 21:17).

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• Then, accuse yourself of your sins. You may begin, "**Blessed me father, for I have sinned.**"

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• You may continue with the time since your last confession:
"My last good confession was . . . (how many weeks, months or years approximately.)"

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• Say the sins that you remember. Start with the one that is most difficult to say, after this it will be easier to mention the rest. If you received general absolution, tell this to the priest and the sins forgiven then.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• If you do not know how to confess, feel uneasy or ashamed, simply ask the priest to assist you. Be assured he will help you make a good confession. Simply answer the questions without hiding anything out of shame or fear. Place your trust in God; he is your merciful Father and wants to forgive you.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• If you do not remember any serious sins, be sure to confess at least some of your venial sins, adding at the end: "**I am sorry for these and all the sins of my past life, especially for . . .** (mention in general any past sin for which you are particularly sorry, for example all my sins against charity, purity, etc.)".

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• The priest will give you the opportune advice to help you to be a better Christian, assign you some penance and invite you to manifest your contrition. You may say for example: **Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• The priest gives you the absolution. Listen to words the absolution attentively.

God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church, may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, ✠ and of the Holy Spirit.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• At the end, answer: “**Amen**”.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• The priest may continue; *May the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of all the saints, whatever good you do and suffering you endure, heal your sins, help you to grow in holiness, and reward you with eternal life. Go in peace.*

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• Be willing to do the penance as soon as possible. This *penance* will diminish the temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven.

After Confession

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• *Give thanks* to God for forgiving you again.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• If you *recall some serious sin* you forgot to tell, rest assured that it has been forgiven with the others, but be sure to confess it in your next Confession.

DEVOTIONS TO THE BLESSED TRINITY

TE DEUM

This hymn of praise can be traced back to the first centuries of Christendom. During the Middle Ages it was ascribed to Saints Ambrose and Augustine. It has been also attributed to the bishop Nicetas of Remesiana. Since the sixth century it has been recited as part of the Divine Office.

1. Te Deum laudamus; te Dóminum confitemur.
2. Te ætérnum Patrem omnis terra venerátur.
3. Tibi omnes ángeli; tibi cæli et univérsæ Potestátes;
4. Tibi Chérubim et Séraphim incessábili voce proclámant;
5. Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dóminus Deus Sábaoth.
6. Pleni sunt cæli et terra maiestátis glóriæ tuæ.
7. Te gloriósus Apostolórum chorus,
8. Te prophetárum laudábilis númerus.
9. Te mártýrum candidátus laudat exércitus.
10. Te per orbem terrárum sancta confitétur Ecclésia,
11. Patrem imménsæ maiestátis:
12. Venerándum tuum verum et únicum Fílium;
13. Sanctum quoque Paráclitum Spíritum.
14. Tu Rex glóriæ, Christe.
15. Tu Patris sempitérnus es Fílius.
16. Tu ad liberándum susceptúrus hóminem, non horruísti Vírginis úterum.
17. Tu, devícto mortis acúleo, aperuísti credéntibus regna cælórum.
18. Tu ad déxteram Dei sedes, in glória Patris.
19. Iudex créderis esse ventúrus.
20. * Te ergo quæsumus, tuis fámulis súbveni: quos pretióso sáanguine redemísti.*
21. Ætérna fac cum sanctis tuis in glória numerári.
22. Salvum fac pópulum tuum, Dómine, et bédedic hereditáti tuæ.
23. Et rege eos, et extólle illos usque in ætérnum.
24. Per síngulos dies bédicimus te.

25. Et laudámus nomen tuum in sáeculum, et in sáeculum sáeculi.

26. Dignáre, Dómine, die isto sine peccáto nos custodíre.

27. Miserére nostri, Dómine: miserére nostri.

28. Fiat misericórdia, tua, Dómine, super nos, quemádmódum sperávimus in te.

29. In te, Dómine, sperávi; non confúndar in ætérnum.

V. Benedíctus es, Dómine, Deus patrum nostrórum.

R. Et laudábilis, et gloriósus in sáecula.

V. Benedicámus Patrem, et Fílium, cum Sancto Spíritu.

R. Laudémus, et superexaltémus eum in sáecula.

V. Benedíctus es, Dómine, in firmaménto cæli.

R. Et laudábilis, et gloriósus, et superexaltátus in sáecula.

V. Bénedic, ánima mea, Dómino.

R. Et noli oblivísci omnes retributiónes eius.

V. Dómine, exáudi oratiónem meam.

R. Et clamor meus ad te véniat.

Sacerdotes addunt:

V. Dóminus vobíscum.

R. Et cum spíritu tuo.

Orémus.

Deus, cuius misericórdiæ non est númerus, et bonitátis infínitus est thesáurus: * piíssimæ Maiestáti tuæ pro collátis donis grátias ágimus, tuam semper cleméntiam exorántes; * ut, qui peténtibus postuláta concédis, eósdem non déserens, ad præmia futúra dispónas.

Deus, qui corda fidélium Sancti Spíritus illustratióne docuísti: * da nobis in eódem Spíritu recta sápere; * et de eius semper consolatióne gaudére.

Deus, qui néminem in te sperántem nímium afflígi permíttis, sed piúm précibus præstas audítum: * pro postulatióne nostris, votisque suscéptis grátias ágimus, te piíssime deprecántes; * ut a cunctis semper muniámur advérsis. Per Christum Dóminum nostrum.

R. Amen.

1. We praise you, O God, we acknowledge you to be the Lord.
2. You, the Father everlasting, all the earth does worship.

3. To you all the angels, to you the heavens, and all the powers,
4. To you the cherubim and seraphim cry out without ceasing:
5. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts.
<!--[if !supportLineBreakNewLine]-->
6. Full are the heavens and the earth of the majesty of Your glory.
7. You, the glorious choir of the apostles,
8. You, the admirable company of the prophets,
9. You, the white robed army of martyrs do praise.
10. You, the holy Church throughout the world do confess:
11. The Father of incomprehensible majesty;
12. Your adorable, true, and only Son,
13. And the Holy Spirit the Paraclete.
14. You, O Christ, are the King of glory.
15. You are the everlasting Son of the Father.
16. Having taken upon yourself to deliver man, you did not disdain the Virgin's womb.
17. Having overcome the sting of death, you have opened to believers the kingdom of heaven.
18. You sit at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father.
19. You, we believe, are the Judge to come.
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->20. We beseech you, therefore, to help your servants whom you have redeemed with your precious Blood.
21. Make them to be numbered with your saints in glory everlasting.
22. O Lord, save your people, and bless your inheritance.
23. And govern them, and exalt them for ever.
24. Day by day we bless you.
25. And we praise your name forever; yes, for ever and ever.
26. Vouchsafe, O Lord, this day, to keep us without sin.
27. Have mercy on us, O Lord; have mercy on us.
28. Let your mercy, O Lord, be upon us; as we have trusted in You.
29. In you, O Lord, have I trusted: let me not be confounded forever.
- V. Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers.

R. And worthy to be praised, and glorified forever.

V. Let us bless the Father, and the Son, with the Holy Spirit.

R. Let us praise and exalt him forever.

V. Blessed are you, O Lord, in the firmament of heaven.

R. And worthy of praise, and glorious, and exalted above all forever.

V. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

R. And forget not all his benefits.

V. O Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come to you.

Priests add:

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And also with you.

Let us pray.

O God, of your mercies there is no number, and of your goodness the treasure is infinite; we render thanks to your most gracious majesty for the gifts you have bestowed upon us; evermore imploring your clemency, that as you grant the petitions of them that ask you, you may never forsake them, but may prepare them for the rewards to come.

O God, who has taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit: grant us, by the same Spirit, to relish what is right, and evermore to rejoice in his consolation.

O God, who suffers none that hope in you to be afflicted overmuch, but does listen graciously to their prayers; we render you thanks because you have received our supplications and vows; and we most humbly beseech you that we may evermore be protected from all adversities. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

ATHANASIAN CREED (QUICÚMQUE)

Taking its name from its St. Athanasius (+373) even if it is no longer attributed to him, this prayer tells us again the essential doctrines of Christianity, especially the mysteries of the Holy Trinity.

Saint Teresa of Jesus recounts a meditation on this Creed in the following: "Once when I was reciting the *Quicumque vult*, I was shown so clearly how it was possible for there to be One God alone and Three Persons that it caused me both amazement and much comfort. It was of the greatest help in teaching me to know more of the greatness of God and of his marvels."

Ant. Glory be to you, equal Trinity, one Godhead, both before all time, now and for ever. (P. T. Alleluia).

1. Whoever wishes to be saved must, above all, keep the Catholic faith.
2. For unless a person keeps this faith whole and entire, he will undoubtedly be lost forever.
3. This is what the Catholic faith teaches: we worship one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity.
4. We distinguish among the persons, but we do not divide the substance.
5. For the Father is a distinct person; the Son is a distinct person; and the Holy Spirit is a distinct person.
6. Still the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit have one divinity, equal glory, and coeternal majesty.
7. What the Father is, the Son is, and the Holy Spirit is.
8. The Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated, and the Holy Spirit is uncreated.
9. The Father is boundless, the Son is boundless, and the Holy Spirit is boundless.
10. The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, and the Holy Spirit is eternal.
11. Nevertheless, there are not three eternal beings, but one eternal being.
12. Thus there are not three uncreated beings, nor three boundless beings, but one uncreated being and one boundless being.
13. Likewise, the Father is omnipotent, the Son is omnipotent, and the Holy Spirit is omnipotent.
14. Yet there are not three omnipotent beings, but one omnipotent being.
15. Thus the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.
16. But there are not three gods, but one God.
17. The Father is lord, the Son is lord, and the Holy Spirit is lord.
18. There are not three lords, but one Lord.

19. For according to Christian truth, we must profess that each of the persons individually is God; and according to Christian religion, we are forbidden to say that there are three gods or three lords.
 20. The Father is not made by anyone, nor created by anyone, nor generated by anyone.
 21. The Son is not made nor created, but he is generated by the Father alone.
 22. The Holy Spirit is not made nor created nor generated, but proceeds from the Father and the Son.
 23. There is, then, one Father, not three fathers; one Son, not three sons; one Holy Spirit, not three holy spirits.
 24. In this Trinity, there is nothing greater, nothing less than anything else. But the entire three persons are coeternal and coequal with one another.
 25. So that, as we have said, we worship complete unity in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity.
 26. This, then, is what he who wishes to be saved must believe about the Trinity.
 27. It is also necessary for eternal salvation that he believes steadfastly in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 28. The true faith is: we believe and profess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both God and man.
 29. As God, he was begotten of the substance of the Father before time; as man, he was born in time of the substance of his Mother.
 30. He is perfect God; and he is perfect man, with a rational soul and human flesh.
 31. He is equal to the Father in his divinity, but he is inferior to the Father in his humanity.
 32. Although he is God and man, he is not two but one Christ.
 33. And he is one, not because his divinity was changed into flesh, but because his humanity was assumed to God.
 34. He is one, not at all because of a mingling of substances, but because he is one person.
 35. As a rational soul and flesh are one man: so God and man are one Christ.
- <!--[if !supportLineBreakNewLine]-->

<!--[if !supportLists]-->**36.** He died for our salvation, descended to hell, arose from the dead on the third day.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->**37.** Ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty, and from there he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->**38.** At his coming, all men are to arise with their own bodies; and they are to give an account of their lives.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->**39.** Those who have done good deeds will into eternal life; those who have done evil will go into everlasting fire.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->**40.** This is the Catholic faith. Everyone must believe it, firmly and steadfastly; otherwise he cannot be saved.

Glory Be...

Ant. Glory be to you, equal Trinity, one Godhead, both before all time, now and for ever. (**P. T.** Alleluia).

V. O Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come unto you.

Priests add:

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And also with you.

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, who has enabled your servants, in confessing the true Faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of Majesty to adore its Unity: we beseech You, that by steadfastness in the same Faith, we may ever be defended against all adversity. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

Ant. Glória tibi, Trínitas æquális, una Déitas, et ante ómnia sáecula, et nunc, et in perpétuum. (**T.P.** Alleluia).

1. Quicúmque vult salvus esse, ante ómnia opus est, ut téneat cathólicam fidem:

2. Quam nisi quisque íntegram inviolatámque serváverit, absque dúbio in ætérnum períbit.

3. Fides autem cathólica hæc est: ut unum Deum in Trinitáte, et Trinitátem in unitáte venerémur.

4. Neque confundentes personas, neque substantiam separantes.
5. Alia est enim persona Patris alia Filii, alia Spiritus Sancti:
6. Sed Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti una est divinitas, æqualis gloria, coætérna maiestas.
7. Qualis Pater, talis Filius, talis Spiritus Sanctus.
8. Increátus Pater, increátus Filius, increátus Spiritus Sanctus.
9. Imménsus Pater, imménsus Filius, imménsus Spiritus Sanctus.
10. Ætérnus Pater, ætérnus Filius, ætérnus Spiritus Sanctus.
11. Et tamen non tres ætérni, sed unus ætérnus.
12. Sicut non tres increáti, nec tres imménsi, sed unus increátus, et unus imménsus.
13. Simíliter omnípotens Pater, omnípotens Filius, omnípotens Spiritus Sanctus.
14. Et tamen non tres omnípotétes, sed unus omnípotens.
15. Ita Deus Pater, Deus Filius, Deus Spiritus Sanctus.
16. Et tamen non tres dii, sed unus est Deus.
17. Ita Dóminus Pater, Dóminus Filius, Dóminus Spiritus Sanctus.
18. Et tamen non tres Dómini, sed unus est Dóminus.
19. Quia, sicut singillátim unamquámque personam Deum ac Dóminum confitéri christiána veritáte compéllimur: ita tres Deos aut Dóminos dícere cathólica religióne prohibémur.
20. Pater a nullo est factus: nec creátus, nec génius.
21. Filius a Patre solo est: non factus, nec creátus, sed génius.
22. Spiritus Sanctus a Patre et Filio: non factus, nec creátus, nec génius, sed procédens.
23. Unus ergo Pater, non tres Patres: unus Filius, non tres Filii: unus Spiritus Sanctus, non tres Spiritus Sancti.
24. Et in hac Trinitáte nihil prius aut postérius, nihil máius aut minus: sed totæ tres personæ coætérnæ sibi sunt et coæquáles.
25. Ita ut per ómnia, sicut jam supra dictum est, et únitas in Trinitáte, et Trínitas in unitáte veneránda sit.
26. Qui vult ergo salvus esse, ita de Trinitáte séntiat.
27. Sed necessárium est ad ætérnam salútem, ut incarnatióem quoque Dómini nostri Jesu Christi fidéliter credat.
28. Est ergo fides recta ut credámus et confiteámur, quia Dóminus noster Jesus Christus, Dei Filius, Deus et homo est.
29. Deus est ex substantia Patris ante sæcula génius: et homo est ex substantia matris in sæculo natus.

30. Perféctus Deus, perféctus homo: ex ánima rationáli et humána carne subsístens.

31. Æquális Patri secúndum divinitátem: minor Patre secúndum humanitátem.

32. Qui, licet Deus sit et homo, non duo tamen, sed unus est Christus.

33. Unus autem non conversióne divinitátis in carnem, sed assumptióne humanitátis in Deum.

34. Unus omníno, non confusióne substántiæ, sed unitáte persónæ.

35. Nam sicut ánima rationális et caro unus est homo: ita Deus et homo unus est Christus.

36. Qui passus est pro salúte nostra: descéndit ad íferos: tértia die resurréxit a mórtuis.

37. Ascéndit ad cælos, sedet ad dexteram Dei Patris omnipoténtis: inde ventúrus est iudicáre vivos et mórtuos.

38. Ad cúius advéntum omnes hómínes resúrgere habent cum corpóribus suis: et redditúri sunt de factis própriis ratióem.

39. Et qui bona egérunt, ibunt in vitam ætérnam: qui vero mala, in ignem ætérnum.

40. Hæc est fides cathólica, quam nisi quisque fidéliter firmitérque credíderit, salvus esse non póterit.

Glória Patri . . .

Ant. Glória tibi, Trínitas æquális, una Déitas, et ante ómnia sæcula, et nunc, et in perpétuum. (**T. P.** Allelúia).

V. Dómine, exáudi oratióem meam.

R. Et clamor meus ad te véniat.

Sacerdotes addunt:

V. Dóminus vobíscum.

R. Et cum spírítu tuo.

Orémus. Omnípotens sempitérne Deus, qui dedísti fámulis tuis in confessióne veræ fide: ætérnæ Trinitátis glóriam agnóscere, et in poténtia maiestátis adoráre unitátem: quæsumus, ut eiúsdem fídei firmitáte ab ómnibus semper muniámur advársis. Per Dóminum nostrum Iesum Christum Fílium tuum: qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spírítus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

R. Amen.

ANGELIC TRISAGION

The Holy Trinity is the central mystery of our faith. The feast of the Holy Trinity, which is celebrated on the Sunday after Pentecost, was established for the whole Western Church in 1134 by Pope John XII. The Angelic Trisagion is said for the three days prior to Trinity Sunday.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

V. Lord, open my lips.

R. And my mouth shall declare your praise.

V. O God, come to my assistance.

R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

V. Glory be . . .

R. As it was . . .

FIRST DECADE

All say the invocation, **Holy is God (Sanctus Deus)**; afterwards the Lord's Prayer is said as usual, alternating the priest (or whoever presides) with the people. Then whoever presides says nine times the prayer, **To You, O Blessed Trinity (Tibi Laus)**. Each time the people answer with the prayer **Holy, Holy...**

Holy is God! Holy and strong! Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us.

Our Father . . .

V. To you, O Blessed Trinity, be praise and honor and thanksgiving, for ever and ever!

R. Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are filled with your glory.

V. Glory be . . .

R. As it was . . .

The Second and Third Decades are said in the same way, beginning with the words: **Holy is God (Sanctus Deus)...**

ANTIPHON

God the Father unbegotten, only-begotten Son, and Holy Spirit, the Comforter: holy and undivided Trinity, with all our hearts we acknowledge you: Glory to you forever.

V. Let us bless the Father, and the Son with the Holy Spirit.

R. Be praised and exalted above all things forever.

Let us pray.

Almighty ever-living God, who has permitted us your servants, in our profession of the true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of that majesty to adore the Unity, grant that by steadfastness in this same faith, we may be ever guarded against all adversity: through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

After this all say:

Set us free, save us, vivify us, O Blessed Trinity!

In nómine Patris et Fílii et Spíritus Sancti. Amen.

V. Dómine, labia mea apéries.

R. Et os meum annuntiábit laudem tuam.

V. Deus, in adiutórium meum inténde.

R. Dómine, ad adiuvándum me festína.

V. Glória Patri, etc.

R. Sicut erat in princípio, etc.

PRIMA DECAS

All say the invocation, **Sanctus Deus...**; afterwards the Lord's Prayer is said as usual, alternating the priest (or whoever presides) with the people. Then whoever presides says nine times the prayer, **Tibi Laus...** Each time the people answer with the prayer **Sanctus, Sanctus...**

Sanctus Deus, Sanctus fortis, Sanctus immortalis, miserére nobis.

Pater Noster...

V. Tibi laus, Tibi glória, Tibi gratiarum áctio in sácula sempitérna, O Beáta Trínitas.

R. Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dóminus Deus exercítuum. Pleni sunt cæli et terra glória tua.

V. Glória Patri, etc.

R. Sicut erat, etc.

The Second and Third Decades are said in the same way, beginning with the words: **Sanctus Deus...**

ANTIPHONA

Te Deum Patrem ingénitum, te Fílium unigénitum, te Spíritum Sanctum Paráclitum, sanctam et indivíduam Trinitátem, toto corde et ore confitémur, laudámus, atque benedicimus: Tibi glória in sácula.

V. Benedicámus Patrem, et Fílium cum Sancto Spíritu.

R. Laudémus et superexaltémus eum in sácula.

Orémus.

Omnípotens sempitérne Deus, qui dedísti fámulis tuis in confessióne veræ fidei, æternæ Trinitátis glóriam agnóscere, et in poténtia maiestátis adoráre Unitátem: quæsumus, ut eiúsdem fidei firmitáte, ab ómnibus semper muniámur advérsis. Per Christum Dóminum nostrum. Amen.

After this all say:

Líbera nos, salva nos, vivífica nos, o Beáta Trínitas!

DEVOTIONS TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Christ, having entered the sanctuary of heaven, intercedes for us constantly as the mediator at the right hand of the Father who assures us of the permanent outpouring of the Holy Spirit. There is no other way to the Father but through Christ.¹

FIRST FRIDAY DEVOTION

The prayer of the Church venerates and honors the Heart of Jesus which, out of love for man, he allowed to be pierced by our sins.²

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is of great antiquity in the Church. It was St. Margaret Mary Alacocque, however, who made this devotion widespread. In 1690, within the octave of the feast of Corpus Christi, our Lord appeared to her and said: "Behold this Heart which, notwithstanding the burning love for men with which it is consumed and exhausted, meets with no other return from most Christians than sacrilege, contempt, indifference and ingratitude, even in the Sacrament of my love. But what pierces my Heart most deeply is that I am subjected to these insults by persons especially consecrated to my service."

However, to those who show Him love and who make reparation for sins, Our Lord made a great promise: "I promise you in the unfathomable mercy of my Heart that my omnipotent love will procure the grace of final penitence for all those who take communion on nine successive first Fridays of the month; they will not die in my disfavor, or without having received the Sacraments, since my divine Heart will be their sure refuge in the last moments of their life."

The great promise of the Sacred Heart is most consoling: the grace of final perseverance and the joy of having His Heart as our sure refuge and infinite ocean of mercy in our last hour.

To gain this grace, we should:

- Receive Holy Communion on nine consecutive first Fridays without any break;
- Have the intention of honoring the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of reaching final perseverance;
- Offer each Holy Communion as an act of atonement for offenses against the Blessed Sacrament.

Introductory Prayer

Almighty and everlasting God,
look upon the heart of your well-beloved Son
and upon the praise and satisfaction
which he offers to you in the name of all sinners;
and grant them pardon when they seek your mercy.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son, who live and reigns with you for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

Reading

Jn 19:31-37

Since it was the day of Preparation, in order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the sabbath (for that sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate

that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him; but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.

He who saw it has borne witness – his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth – that you also may believe. For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, “Not a bone of him shall be broken.” And again another scripture says, “They shall look on him whom they have pierced.”

Consideration³

1. Love is revealed to us in the incarnation, the redemptive journey which Jesus Christ made on our earth, culminating in the supreme sacrifice of the cross. And on the cross it showed itself through a new sign: “One of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.” This water and blood of Jesus speak to us of a self-sacrifice brought to the last extreme: “It is finished” – everything is achieved, for the sake of love . . .

The fullness of God is revealed and given to us in Christ, in the love of Christ, in Christ’s heart. For it is the heart of Him in whom “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.” Were one to lose sight of this great plan of God – the overflow of love in the world through the incarnation, the redemption and Pentecost – he could not understand the refinement with which our Lord deals with us.

2. Let us realize all the richness hidden in the words “the Sacred Heart of Jesus.” When we speak of a person’s heart, we refer not just to his sentiments, but to the whole person in his loving dealings with others. In order to help us understand divine things, Scripture uses the expression “heart” in its full human meaning, as the summary and source, expression and ultimate basis, of one’s thoughts, words and actions. A man is worth what his heart is worth. . . .

So when we talk about the heart of Jesus, we stress the certainty of God’s love and the truth of His commitment to us. When we recommend devotion to the Sacred Heart, we are recommending that we should give our whole self to Jesus, to the whole Jesus – our soul, our feelings and thoughts, our words and actions, our joys.

That is what true devotion to the heart of Jesus means. It is knowing God and ourselves. It is looking at Jesus and turning to Him, letting Him encourage and teach and guide us. The only superficiality that could beset this devotion would be due to man’s own failure to understand the reality of an incarnate God.

3. Jesus on the cross, with His heart overflowing with love for men, is such an eloquent commentary on the value of people and things that words only get in the way. Men, their happiness and their life, are so important that the very Son of God gave Himself to redeem and cleanse and raise them up. “Who will not love this heart so wounded?” a contemplative asks in this connection. “Who will not return love for love? Who will not embrace a heart so pure? We, who are made of flesh, will repay love with love. We will embrace our wounded One, whose hands and feet ungodly men have nailed; we will

cling to His side and to His heart. Let us pray that we be worthy of linking our heart with His love and of wounding it with a lance, for it is still hard and impenitent. . . .”

But note that God does not say: “In exchange for your own heart, I will give you a will of pure spirit.” No, He gives us a heart, a human heart, like Christ’s. I don’t have one heart for loving God and another for loving people. I love Christ and the Father and the Holy Spirit and our Lady with the same heart with which I love my parents and my friends. I shall never tire of repeating this. We must be very human, for otherwise we cannot be divine. . . .

If we don’t learn from Jesus, we will never love. If, like some people, we were to think that to keep a clean heart, a heart worthy of God, means “not mixing it up, not contaminating it” with human affection, we would become insensitive to other people’s pain and sorrow. We would be capable only of an “official charity,” something dry and soulless. But ours would not be the true charity of Jesus Christ, which involves affection and human warmth. In saying this, I am not supporting the mistaken theories—pitiful excuses — which misdirect hearts away from God and lead them into occasions of sin and perdition. . . .

4. But I have still a further consideration to put before you. We have to fight vigorously to do good, precisely because it is difficult for us men to resolve seriously to be just, and there is a long way to go before human relations are inspired by love and not hatred or indifference. We should also be aware that even if we achieve a reasonable distribution of wealth and a harmonious organization of society, there will still be the suffering of illness, of misunderstanding, of loneliness, of the death of loved ones, of the experience of our own limitations.

Faced with the weight of all this, a Christian can find only one genuine answer, a definitive answer: Christ on the cross, a God who suffers and dies, a God who gives us His heart opened by a lance for the love of us all. Our Lord abominates injustice and condemns those who commit it. But He respects the freedom of each individual. He permits injustice to happen because, as a result of original sin, it is part and parcel of the human condition. Yet His heart is full of love for men. Our suffering, our sadness, our anguish, our hunger and thirst for justice. . . . He took all these tortures on Himself by means of the cross. . . .

Suffering is part of God’s plans. This is the truth, however difficult it may be for us to understand it. It was difficult for Jesus Christ the man to undergo His passion: “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but yours be done.” In this tension of pleading and acceptance of the Father’s will, Jesus goes calmly to His death, pardoning those who crucify Him.

This supernatural acceptance of suffering was, precisely, the greatest of all conquests. By dying on the cross, Jesus overcame death. God brings life from death. The attitude of a child of God is not one of resignation to a possibly tragic fate; it is the sense of achievement of someone who has a foretaste of victory. In the name of this victorious love of Christ, we Christians should go out into the world to be sowers of peace and joy through everything we say and do. We have to fight—a fight of peace—against evil, against injustice, against sin. Thus do we serve notice that the present condition of

mankind is not definitive. Only the love of God, shown in the heart of Christ, will attain the glorious spiritual triumph of men.

**ACT OF CONSECRATION
TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

ST. MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE

I give myself and consecrate to the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ, my person and my life, my actions, pains and sufferings, so that I may be unwilling to make use of any part of my being other than to honor, love and glorify the Sacred Heart.

This is my unchanging purpose, namely, to be all His, and to do all things for the love of Him, at the same time renouncing with all my heart whatever is displeasing to Him. I therefore take you, O Sacred Heart, to be the only object of my love, the guardian of my life, my assurance of salvation, the remedy of my weakness and inconstancy, the atonement for all the faults of my life and my sure refuge at the hour of death.

Be then, O Heart of goodness, my justification before God the Father, and turn away from me the strokes of His righteous anger. O Heart of love, I put all my confidence in you, for I fear everything from my own wickedness and frailty, but I hope for all things from your goodness and bounty.

Remove from me all that can displease you or resist your holy will; let your pure love imprint your image so deeply upon my heart, that I shall never be able to forget you or to be separated from you.

May I obtain from all your loving kindness the grace of having my name written in your heart, for in you I desire to place all my happiness and glory, living and dying in bondage to you.

Concluding Prayer

Father,
we honor the heart of your Son
broken by man's cruelty,
yet symbol of love's triumph,
pledge of all that man is called to be.
Teach us to see Christ in the lives we touch,
to offer him living worship
by love-filled service to our brothers and sisters.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

LITANY OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

According to tradition, this litany, which in 1899 was approved for public recitation, originated at Marseilles, where devotion to the Sacred Heart was very prevalent from the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Lord, have mercy	Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy	Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy	Lord, have mercy
God our Father in heaven	have mercy on us
God the Son, Redeemer of the world	
God the Holy Spirit	
Holy Trinity, one God	
Heart of Jesus, Son of the eternal Father	
Heart of Jesus, formed by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mother	
Heart of Jesus, one with the eternal Word	
Heart of Jesus, infinite in majesty	
Heart of Jesus, holy temple of God	
Heart of Jesus, tabernacle of the Most High	
Heart of Jesus, house of God and gate of heaven	
Heart of Jesus, aflame with love for us	
Heart of Jesus, source of justice and love	
Heart of Jesus, full of goodness and love	
Heart of Jesus, wellspring of all virtue	
Heart of Jesus, worthy of all praise	
Heart of Jesus, king and center of all hearts	
Heart of Jesus, treasure-house of wisdom and knowledge	
Heart of Jesus, in whom there dwells the fullness of God	
Heart of Jesus, in whom the Father is well pleased	
Heart of Jesus, from whose fullness we have all received	
Heart of Jesus, desire of the eternal hills	
Heart of Jesus, patient and full of mercy	
Heart of Jesus, generous to all who turn to you	
Heart of Jesus, fountain of life and holiness	
Heart of Jesus, atonement for our sins	
Heart of Jesus, overwhelmed with insults	
Heart of Jesus, broken for our sins	
Heart of Jesus, obedient even to death	
Heart of Jesus, pierced by a lance	

Heart of Jesus, source of all consolation
Heart of Jesus, our life and resurrection
Heart of Jesus, our peace and reconciliation
Heart of Jesus, victim for our sins
Heart of Jesus, salvation of all who trust in you
Heart of Jesus, hope of all who die in you
Heart of Jesus, delight of all the saints

Lamb of God, you take away
the sins of the world **have mercy on us**

Lamb of God, you take away
the sins of the world **have mercy on us**

Lamb of God, you take away
the sins of the world **have mercy on us**

V. Jesus, gentle and humble of heart.

R. Touch our hearts and make them like your own.

Let us pray.

Father,

we rejoice in the gifts of love

we have received from the heart of Jesus your Son.

Open our hearts to share his life

and continue to bless us with his love.

We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

R. Amen.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS⁴

The Christian loves to follow the *Way of the Cross* in the Savior's footsteps. The Stations from the Praetorium to Golgotha and the tomb trace the Passion and Death of Christ, who by his holy Cross has redeemed the world.

In order to understand the mystery of Redemption and the *salvific meaning of suffering*, one ought to meditate upon the sufferings of Our Lord which he took upon himself to save men from sin. "*God is always on the side of suffering*. His omnipotence is manifested precisely in the fact that he freely accepted suffering. He could have chosen not to do so. He could have chosen to demonstrate his omnipotence even at the moment of the Crucifixion."

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*My Lord and my God,
under the loving eyes of our Mother,
we are making ready to accompany you
along this path of sorrow,
which was the price for our redemption.
We wish to suffer all that You suffered,
to offer you our poor, contrite hearts,
because you are innocent, and yet
you are going to die for us,
who are the only really guilty ones.
My Mother, Virgin of sorrows,
help me to relive those bitter hours
which Your Son wished to spend on earth,
so that we, who were made from a handful of clay,
may finally live
in libertátem glóriæ filiórum Dei,
in the freedom and glory of the children of God.*

FIRST STATION

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

- V.** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.
R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

It is after ten in the morning. The trial is moving to its close. There has been no conclusive evidence. The judge knows that his enemies have handed Jesus over to him out of envy, and he tries an absurd move: a choice between Barrabas, a criminal accused of robbery and murder, and Jesus, who says he is Christ. The people choose Barrabas, and Pilate exclaims: *What am I to do then, with Jesus?* (Mt 27:22)

They all reply: *Crucify him!*

The judge insists: *Why, what evil has he done?*

Once again they respond, shouting: *Crucify him! Crucify him!*

Pilate is frightened by the growing uproar. So he sends for water, and washes his hands in the sight of the people, saying as he does so: *I am innocent of the blood of this just man; it is your affair* (Mt 27:24).

And having had Jesus scourged, he hands him over to them to be crucified. Their frenzied and possessed throats fall silent. As if God had already been vanquished.

* Jesus is all alone. Far off now are the days when the words of the Man-God brought light and hope to men's hearts, those long processions of sick people whom he healed, the triumphant acclaim of Jerusalem when the Lord arrived, riding on a gentle donkey. If only men had wanted to give a different outlet to God's love! If only you and I had recognized the day of the Lord!

* You may kneel here.

SECOND STATION

JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

Outside the city, to the north-west of Jerusalem, there is a little hill: Golgotha is its name in Aramaic; *locus Calváriae*, in Latin: the place of skulls or Calvary.

Offering no resistance, Jesus gives himself up to the execution of the sentence. He is to be spared nothing, and upon his shoulders falls the weight of the ignominious cross. But, through love, the Cross is to become the throne from which he reigns.

The people of Jerusalem and those from abroad who have come for the Passover push their way through the city streets, to catch a passing glimpse of Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. There is a tumult of voices, and, now and then, short silences: perhaps when Jesus fixes his eyes on someone:

If anyone wishes to come after me, let him take up his cross daily and follow me (Mt 16:24).

How lovingly Jesus embraces the wood which is to bring him to death!

* Is it not true that as soon as you cease to be afraid of the Cross, of what people call the cross, when you set your will to accept the Will of God, then you find happiness, and all your worries, all your sufferings, physical or moral, pass away?

Truly the Cross of Jesus is gentle and lovable. There, sorrows cease to count; there is only the joy of knowing that we are co-redeemers with Him.

THIRD STATION

JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

The heavy Cross cuts and tears into Our Lord's shoulders.

The crowd has swollen into a multitude, and the legionaries can scarcely contain the angry, surging mob which, like a river that has burst its banks, flows through the streets and alleyways of Jerusalem.

The worn out body of Jesus staggers now beneath the huge Cross. His most loving Heart can barely summon up another breath of life for his poor wounded limbs.

To right and left, Our Lord sees the multitude moving around like sheep without a shepherd. He could call them one by one by their names, by our names. There they are, those who were fed at the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, those who were cured of their ailments, those he taught by the lakeside, on the mountain and in the porticoes of the Temple.

A sharp pain pierces the soul of Jesus; Our Lord falls to the ground exhausted.

* You and I can say nothing: now we know why the Cross of Jesus weighs so much. We weep over our wretched failings and also for the terrible ingratitude of the human heart. From the depths of our soul there comes an act of real contrition, that lifts us up from the prostration of sin. Jesus has fallen that we might get up: once and for all.

FOURTH STATION

JESUS MEETS HIS BLESSED MOTHER

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

No sooner has Jesus risen from his first fall than he meets his Blessed Mother, standing by the wayside where He is passing.

With immense love Mary looks at Jesus, and Jesus at his Mother. Their eyes meet, and each heart pours into the other its own deep sorrow. Mary's soul is steeped in bitter grief, the grief of Jesus Christ.

O all you that pass by the way, look and see, was there ever a sorrow to compare with my sorrow! (Lm 1:12)

But no one notices, no one pays attention; only Jesus.

Simeon's prophecy has been fulfilled: *thy own soul a sword shall pierce* (Lk 2:35).

In the dark loneliness of the Passion, Our Lady offers her son a comforting balm of tenderness, of union, of faithfulness; a 'yes' to the divine will.

* Hand in hand with Mary, you and I also want to console Jesus, by accepting always and in everything the Will of his Father, of our Father.

Only thus will we taste the sweetness of Christ's Cross, and come to embrace it with all the strength of Love, carrying it in triumph along the ways of the earth.

FIFTH STATION

SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS TO CARRY THE CROSS

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

Jesus is exhausted. His footsteps become more and more unsteady, and the soldiers are in a hurry to be finished. So, when they are going out of the city through the Judgment Gate, they take hold of a man who was coming in from a farm, a man called Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus, and they force him to carry the Cross of Jesus (cf. Mk 15:21).

In the whole context of the Passion, this help does not add up to very much. But for Jesus, a smile, a word, a gesture, a little bit of love is enough for him to pour out his grace bountifully on the soul of his friend. Years later, Simon's sons, Christians by then, will be known and held in high esteem among their brothers in the faith. And it all started with this unexpected meeting with the Cross.

I went to those who were not looking for me; I was found by those that sought me not (Is 65:1).

* At times the Cross appears without our looking for it: it is Christ who is seeking us out. And if by chance, before this unexpected Cross which, perhaps, is therefore more difficult to understand, your heart were to show repugnance . . . don't give it consolations. And, filled with a noble compassion, when it asks for them, say to it slowly, as one speaking in confidence: "Heart: heart on the Cross! Heart on the Cross!"

SIXTH STATION

VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

There is no beauty in him, nor comeliness: and we have seen him and there was no sightliness, that we should be attracted to him. Despised and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity; and his look was as it were hidden and despised. Whereupon we esteemed him not (Is 53:2-3).

And it is the Son of God who is passing by, a madman . . . madly in Love!

A woman, Veronica by name, makes her way through the crowd, with a white linen cloth folded in her hands, and with this she reverently wipes the face of Jesus. Our Lord leaves the impression of his Holy Face on the three parts of the veil.

The beloved face of Jesus, that had smiled upon children and was transfigured with glory on Mount Thabor, is now, as it were, concealed by suffering. But this suffering is our purification; the sweat and the blood, which disfigure and tarnish his features, serve to cleanse us.

* Lord, help me decide to tear off, through penance, this pitiful mask I have fashioned with my wretched doings . . . Then, and only then, by following the path of contemplation and atonement, will my life begin to copy faithfully the features of your life. We will find ourselves becoming more and more like You.

We will be other Christs, Christ himself, *ipse Christus*.

SEVENTH STATION

JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

Outside the walls of the city, the body of Jesus again gives way through weakness, and he falls a second time, amid the shouts of the crowd and the rough handling of the soldiers.

Infirmity of body and bitterness of soul have caused Jesus to fall again. All the sins of men – mine too – weigh down on his Sacred Humanity.

He has borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows, and we have taken him for a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our iniquities and bruised for our sins. On him fell the punishment that brought us salvation, and by his wounds we have been healed (Is 53:4-5).

Jesus stumbles, but his fall lifts us up, his death brings us back to life.

To our falling again and again into evil, Jesus responds with his determination to redeem us, with an abundance of forgiveness. And, so that no one may despair, again he wearily raises himself, embracing the Cross.

* May our stumbles and defeats separate us from Him no more. Just as a feeble child throws himself contritely into the strong arms of his father, you and I will hold tightly to the yoke of Jesus. Only a contrition and humility like this can transform our human weakness into the fortitude of God.

EIGHTH STATION

**JESUS CONSOLES
THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM**

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

Among the people watching Our Lord as he passes by are a number of women who are unable to restrain their compassion and break into tears, perhaps recalling those glorious days spent with Jesus, when everyone exclaimed in amazement: *bene ómnia fecit* (Mk 7:37), he has done all things well.

But Our Lord wishes to channel their weeping towards a more supernatural motive, and he invites them to weep for sins, which are the cause of the Passion and which will draw down the rigor of divine justice:

Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children . . . For if they do these things to the green wood, what shall be done to the dry? (Lk 23:28, 31).

* Your sins, my sins, the sins of all men, rise up. All the evil we have done and the good that we have neglected to do. The desolate panorama of the countless crimes and

iniquities which we would have committed, if He, Jesus, had not strengthened us with the light of his most loving glance.

How little a life is for making atonement!

NINTH STATION

JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

Our Lord falls for the third time, on the slope leading up to Calvary, with only forty or fifty paces between him and the summit. Jesus can no longer stay on his feet: his strength has failed him, and he lies on the ground in utter exhaustion.

He offered himself up because it was his will; abused and ill-treated, he opened not his mouth, as a sheep led to the slaughter, dumb as a lamb before its shearers (Is 53:7).

Everyone against Him . . . the people of the city and those from abroad, and the Pharisees and the soldiers and the chief priests . . . All of them executioners. His Mother – my Mother – weeps.

Jesus fulfills the will of his Father! Poor: naked. Generous: what is there left for him to surrender? *Diléxit me, et trádidit semetípsum pro me* (Gal 2:20), he loved me and delivered himself up unto death for me.

* My God! may I hate sin, and unite myself to you, taking the Holy Cross into my arms, so that I, in my turn, may fulfill your most lovable Will, . . . stripped of every earthly attachment, with no other goal but your glory, . . . generously, not keeping anything back, offering myself with you in a perfect holocaust.

TENTH STATION

JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

When Our Lord arrives at Calvary, he is given some wine to drink mixed with gall, as a narcotic to lessen in some way the pain of the crucifixion. But Jesus, after tasting it to show his gratitude for that kind service, has not wanted to drink (cf. Mt 27:34). He gives himself up to death with the full freedom of Love.

Then, the soldiers strip Christ of his garments.

From the soles of his feet to the top of his head, there is nothing healthy in him: wound and bruises and swelling sores. They are not bound up, nor dressed, nor anointed with oil (Is 1:6).

The executioners take his garments and divide them into four parts. But the cloak is without seam, so they say:

It would be better not to tear it, but let us cast lots for it to see whose it shall be (Jn 19:24).

Thus, Scripture is again fulfilled: *They divided my garments among them, and upon my vesture they cast lots (Ps 21:19).*

* Despoiled, stripped, left in the most absolute poverty. Our Lord is left with nothing, save the wood of the Cross.

For us to reach God, Christ is the way; but Christ is on the Cross, and to climb up to the Cross we must have our heart free, not tied to earthly things.

ELEVENTH STATION

JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

Now they are crucifying Our Lord, and with him two thieves, one on his right and one on his left. Meanwhile, Jesus says:

Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing (Lk 23:34).

It is Love that has brought Jesus to Calvary. And once on the Cross, all his gestures all his words are of love, a love both calm and strong.

With a gesture befitting an Eternal Priest, without father or mother, without lineage (cf. Hb 7:3), he opens his arms to the whole human race.

With the hammer-blows with which Jesus is being nailed, there resound the prophetic words of Holy Scripture: *They have pierced my hands and feet. I can count all my bones, and they stare and gloat over me (Ps 21:17-18).*

My people, what have I done to thee, or in what have I saddened thee? Answer me! (Mi 6:3).

* And we, our soul rent with sorrow, say to Jesus in all sincerity: I am yours and I give my whole self to you; gladly do I nail myself to your Cross, ready to be in the crossroads

of this world a soul dedicated to you, to your glory, to the work of Redemption, the co-redemption of the whole human race.

TWELFTH STATION

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

On the uppermost part of the Cross the reason for the sentence is written: *Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews* (Jn 19:19). And all who pass by insult him and jeer at him. *If he is the king of Israel, let him come down here and now from the cross* (Mt 27:42).

One of the thieves comes to his defense: *This man has done no evil . . .* (Lk 23:41). Then, turning to Jesus, he makes a humble request, full of faith: *Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom* (Lk 23:42).

Truly, I say to thee: This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise (Lk 23:43).

At the foot of the Cross stands his Mother, Mary, with other holy women. Jesus looks at her; then he looks at the disciple whom he loves, and he says to his Mother: *Woman, behold thy son*. Then he says to the disciple: *Behold thy mother* (Jn 19:26-27).

The sun's light is extinguished and the earth is left in darkness. It is close to three o'clock, when Jesus cries out: *Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani? That is: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* (Mt 27:46).

Then, knowing that all things are about to be accomplished, that the Scriptures may be fulfilled, he says: *I am thirsty* (Jn 19:28).

The soldiers soak a sponge in vinegar and, placing it on a reed of hyssop, they put it to his mouth. Jesus sips the vinegar, and exclaims: *It is accomplished* (Jn 19:30).

The veil of the temple is rent, and the earth trembles, when the Lord cries out in a loud voice: *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit* (Lk 23:46). And he expires.

* Love sacrifice; it is a fountain of interior life. Love the Cross, which is an altar of sacrifice. Love pain, until you drink, as Christ did, the very dregs of the chalice.

THIRTEENTH STATION

JESUS IS LAID IN THE ARMS OF HIS BLESSED MOTHER

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

Mary stands by the Cross, engulfed in grief. And John is beside her. But it is getting late, and the Jews press for Our Lord to be removed from there.

Having obtained from Pilate the permission required by Roman law for the burial of condemned prisoners, there comes to Calvary a councilor named Joseph, a good and upright man, a native of Arimathea. *He has not consented to their counsel and their doings, but is himself one of those waiting for the kingdom of God* (Lk 23:50-51). With him too comes Nicodemus, the same who earlier visited Jesus by night; he brings with him a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight (Jn 19:39).

These men were not known publicly as disciples of the Master. They had not been present at the great miracles, nor did they accompany him on his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. But now, when things have turned bad, when the others have fled, they are not afraid to stand up for their Lord.

Between the two of them they take down the body of Jesus and place it in the arms of his most holy Mother. Mary's grief is renewed.

* *Where has thy Beloved gone, o fairest of women? Where has he whom thou lovest gone, and we will seek him with thee?* (Cant 5:17).

The Blessed Virgin is our Mother, and we do not wish to, we cannot, leave her alone.

FOURTEENTH STATION

JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

Very near Calvary, in an orchard, Joseph of Arimathea had had a new tomb made, cut out of the rock. Since it is the eve of the solemn Pasch of the Jews, Jesus is laid there. Then Joseph, *rolling a great stone, closes the grave door and goes away* (Mt 27:60).

Jesus came into the world with nothing; so too, with nothing – not even the place where he rests – he has left us.

The Mother of Our Lord – my Mother – and the women who have followed the Master from Galilee, after taking careful note of everything, also take their leave. Night falls.

Now it is all over. The work of our Redemption has been accomplished. We are now children of God, because Jesus has died for us and his death has ransomed us. *Empti enim estis pretio magno!* (1 Co 6:20), you and I have been bought at a great price.

* We must bring into our life, to make them our own, the life and death of Christ. We must die through mortification and penance, so that Christ may live in us through Love. And then follow in the footsteps of Christ, with a zeal to co-redeem all mankind.

We must give our life for others. That is the only way to live the life of Jesus Christ and to become one and the same thing with Him.

ACCEPTANCE OF DEATH

We, too, O God, will descend into the grave whenever it shall please you, as it shall please you, and wheresoever it shall please you. Let your just decrees be fulfilled; let our sinful bodies return to their parent dust, but in your great mercy, receive our immortal souls, and when our bodies have risen again, place them likewise in your kingdom that we may love and bless you for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

or:

Dear God and Father of mine, Lord of life and death, with an immutable decree you have established that as a just chastisement for our sins all of us men have to die; look at me here bent low before you. From the bottom of my heart I abhor my past faults for

which I have merited death a thousand times, death that I now accept as atonement for my sins and as proof of my submission to your lovable will. O Lord, happily will I die at the moment, in the place, and in the way that you want. And until that day I will take advantage of the days of life that remain in order to fight against my defects and grow in your love, to break the bonds that tie my heart to creatures and to prepare my soul to appear in your presence; and from this moment on I abandon myself without reserve into the arms of your fatherly providence.

Prayer for a Happy Death

O my Creator and Father, I beg of you the most important of all your graces: that of final perseverance and a holy death. Despite the fact that I have greatly misused the life you have given me, grant me the grace to live it well from this moment on and to end it in your holy love.

Let me die as the holy patriarchs, leaving this valley of tears without sadness, to go and enjoy eternal rest in my true homeland.

Let me die as did glorious St. Joseph, accompanied by Jesus and Mary, pronouncing those sweetest of names, which I hope to extol for all eternity.

Let me die as did the Immaculate Virgin, in the purest of love and with the desire of uniting myself to the only object of my love.

Let me die as did Jesus on the cross, fully identified with the will of the Father and made into a holocaust for the sake of love.

Jesus, having accepted death for me, grant me the grace of dying in an act of perfect love for you.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for me now and at the hour of my death.

St. Joseph, my father and lord, win for me the favor of dying as one of the just.

Prayer for the Moment of Death

O Lord, my God, from this moment on I accept with a good will, as something coming from your hand, whatever kind of death you want to send me, with all its anguish, pain and sorrow.

V. Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

R. I give you my heart and my soul.

V. Jesus, Mary and Joseph

R. Assist me in my last agony.

V. Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

R. May I sleep and take my rest in peace with you.

PRAYER OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Lord Jesus, let me know myself and know you.

And desire nothing save only you.

Let me hate myself and love you.

Let me do everything for the sake of you.
Let me humble myself and exalt you.
Let me think nothing except you.
Let me die to myself and live in you.
Let me accept whatever happens as from you.
Let me banish self and follow you,
And ever desire to follow you.
Let me fly from myself and take refuge in you,
That I may deserve to be defended by you.
Let me fear for myself, let me fear you,
And let me be among those who are chosen by you
Let me distrust myself and put my trust in you.
Let me be willing to obey for the sake of you.
Let me cling to nothing save only to you,
And let me be poor because of you.
Look upon me, that I may love you.
Call me that I may see you,
And for ever enjoy you.
Amen.

ORATIO S. AUGUSTINI

Dómine Iesu, nóverim me, nóverim te,
Nec áliquid cúpiam nisi te.
Óderim me et amem te.
Ómnia agam propter te.
Humíliem me, exáltem te.
Nihil cógitem nisi te.
Mortíficem me et vivam in te.
Quæcúmque evéniant accípíam a te.
Pérsequar me, sequar te,
Sempérque optem sequi te.
Fúgiam me, confúgiam ad te,
Ut mérear deféndi a te.
Tímeam mihi, tímeam te,
Et sim inter eléctos a te.
Diffídám mihi, fidám in te.
Obcædíre velim propter te.
Ad nihil affíciar nisi ad te,
Et pauper sim propter te.
Áspice me, ut dilígám te.
Voca me, ut vídeam te,

Et in ætérnum fruar te.
Amen.

SONNET TO OUR LORD ON THE CROSS

I am not moved to love you, O my God,
That I might hope in promised Heaven to dwell;
Nor am I moved by fear of pain in Hell
To turn from sin and follow where you trod
You move me, Lord, broken beneath the rod,
Or stretched out on the cross, as nails compel
your hand to twitch. It moves me that we sell,
To mockery and death, your precious blood.
It is, O Christ, your love which moves me so,
That my love rests not on a promised prize;
Nor holy fear on threat of endless woe;
It is not milk and honey, but the flow
Of blood from blessed wounds before my eyes,
That waters my buried soul and makes it grow.

PRAYER OF ST. ANDREW (O BONA CRUX)

St. Andrew, the Apostle, was martyred. He died nail to a cross. His desire to be identified with Christ was so great that when he was being led toward the place of his martyrdom, and saw the cross in the distance, he cried out:

O good cross, made beautiful by the body of the Lord; long have I desired you, ardently have I loved you, unceasingly have I sought you out; and now you are ready for my eager soul. Receive me from among men and restore me to my Master, so that by means of you he may receive me who by means of you dying redeemed me. Amen.

O bona crux, quæ decórem et pulchritúdinem de membris Dómini suscepísti; diu desideráta, sollícite amáta, sine intermissione quæsíta et aliquándo cupiénti ánimo preparáta: áccipe me ab homínibus, et redde me magístro meo. Súscipe discípulum Christi, ac per te me recípiat, qui per te móriens me redémit. Amen.

DEVOTIONS TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

“No one can say Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit.” Every time we begin to pray to Jesus it is the Holy Spirit who draws us on the way of prayer by his prevenient grace. Since he teaches us to pray by recalling Christ, how could we not pray to the Spirit too? That is why the Church invites us to call upon the Holy Spirit every day, especially at the beginning and the end of every important action.

If the Spirit should not be worshipped, how can he divinize me through Baptism? If he should be worshipped, should he not be the object of adoration?¹

The traditional form of petition to the Holy Spirit is to invoke the Father through Christ our Lord to give us the Consoler Spirit Jesus insists on this petition to be made in his name at the very moment when he promises the gift of the Spirit of Truth. But the simplest and most direct prayer is also traditional “Come, Holy Spirit,” and every liturgical tradition has developed it in antiphons and hymns.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the heard of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love.

Heavenly King, Consoler Spirit, Spirit of Truth, present everywhere and filling all things, treasure of all good and source of all life, come dwell in us, cleanse and save us, you who are All-Good.

TEN-DAY DEVOTION

This ten-day devotion begins on the eve of the solemnity of the Ascension of Our Lord.

FIRST DAY

Introductory Prayer*

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order to know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard your voice, and I do not want to harden my heart and resist, saying, “Later . . . tomorrow.” *Nunc coepi!* Right now! Lest there be no tomorrow for me.

O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want what you want, because you want it, as you want it, when you want it.

Consideration**

*Pentecost, the day when the Holy Spirit
came down on the Lord’s disciples*

Having just read in the Acts of the Apostles about Pentecost, the day when the Holy Spirit came down on the Lord’s disciples, we are conscious of being present at the great display of God’s power with which the Church’s life began to spread among all nations. The victory Christ achieved through His obedience, His offering of Himself on the cross and His Resurrection – His triumph over death and sin – is revealed here in all its divine splendor.

The disciples, witnesses of the glory of the risen Christ, were filled with the strength of the Holy Spirit. Their minds and hearts were opened to a new light. They had followed Christ and accepted His teachings with faith, but they were not always able to fathom the full meaning of His words. The Spirit of truth, who was to teach them all things,¹ had not yet come. They knew that Jesus alone could give them words of eternal life, and they were ready to follow Him and to give their lives for Him. But they were weak, and in the time of trial, they fled and left Him alone.

On Pentecost all that is a thing of the past. The Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of strength, has made them firm, strong, daring. The word of the Apostles resounds forcefully through the streets of Jerusalem.

The men and women who have come to the city from all parts of the world listen with amazement. "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, Jews as well as proselytes, Cretans and Arabs, we have heard them speaking in our own languages of the wonderful works of God."² These wonders, which take place before their own eyes, lead them to listen to the preaching of the Apostles. The Holy Spirit Himself, who is acting through our Lord's disciples, moves the hearts of their listeners and leads them to the faith.

St. Luke tells us that after St. Peter had spoken and proclaimed Christ's Resurrection, many of those present came up to Him and asked: "Brethren, what shall we do?" The apostle answered: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." And on that day, the sacred text tells us, about three thousand were added to the Church.³

The solemn coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost was not an isolated event. There is hardly a page in the Acts of the Apostles where we fail to read about Him and the action by which He guides, directs and enlivens the life and work of the early Christian community. It is He who inspires the preaching of St. Peter,⁴ who strengthens the faith of the disciples,⁵ who confirms with His presence the calling of the Gentiles,⁶ who sends Saul and Barnabas to the distant lands where they will open new paths for the teaching of Jesus.⁷ In a word, His presence and doctrine are everywhere.

Concluding Prayer

Holy and divine Spirit! Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, your spouse, bring the fullness of your gifts into our hearts. Comforted and strengthened by you, may we live according to your Will and may we die praising your infinite mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SECOND DAY

Introductory Prayer

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order to know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard your voice, and I do not want to harden my heart and resist, saying, "Later . . . tomorrow." *Nunc coepi!* Right now! Lest there be no tomorrow for me.

O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want what you want, because you want it, as you want it, when you want it.

Consideration

The Holy Spirit is present in the Church for all time

The profound reality which we see in the texts of Holy Scripture is not a remembrance from the past, from some golden age of the Church which has since been buried in history. Despite the weaknesses and the sins of every one of us, it is the reality of today's Church and the Church of all time. "I will ask the Father," our Lord told His disciples, "and He will give you another Counselor to dwell with you forever."⁸ Jesus has kept His promise. He has risen from the dead, and in union with the eternal Father, He sends us the Holy Spirit to sanctify us and to give us life.

The strength and the power of God light up the face of the earth. The Holy Spirit is present in the Church of Christ for all time, so that it may be, always and in everything, a sign raised up before all nations, announcing to all men the goodness and the love of God.⁹ In spite of our great limitations, we can look up to heaven with confidence and joy: God loves us and frees us from our sins. The presence and the action of the Holy Spirit in the Church are a foretaste of eternal happiness, of the joy and peace for which we are destined by God.

Like the men and women who came up to Peter on Pentecost, we too have been baptized. In baptism, our Father God has taken possession of our lives, has made us share in the life of Christ, and has given us the Holy Spirit. Holy Scripture tells us that God has saved us "through the baptism of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit; whom He has abundantly poured out upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior, in order that, justified by His grace, we may be heirs in hope to life everlasting."¹⁰

The experience of our weakness and of our failings, the painful realization of the smallness and meanness of some who call themselves Christians, the apparent failure or aimlessness of some works of apostolate, all these things which bring home to us the reality of sin and human limitation, can still be a trial of our faith. Temptation and doubt can lead us to ask: where are the strength and the power of God? When that happens we have to react by practicing the virtue of hope with greater purity and forcefulness, and striving to be more faithful.

Concluding Prayer

Holy and divine Spirit! Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, your spouse, bring the fullness of your gifts into our hearts. Comforted and strengthened by you, may we live according to your Will and may we die praising your infinite mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THIRD DAY

Introductory Prayer

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order to know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard your voice, and I do not want to harden my heart and resist, saying, "Later . . . tomorrow." *Nunc coepi!* Right now! Lest there be no tomorrow for me.

O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want what you want, because you want it, as you want it, when you want it.

Consideration

*The Church is the body of Christ,
enlivened by the Holy Spirit*

Let me tell you about an event of my own personal life which happened many years ago. One day I was with a friend of mine, a man with a good heart but who did not have faith. Pointing toward a globe he said, "Look, from North to South, from East to West." "What do you want me to look at?" I asked. His answer was: "The failure of Christ. For twenty centuries people have been trying to bring His doctrine to men's lives, and look at the result." I was filled with sadness. It is painful to think that many people still don't know our Lord, and that among those who do know Him, many live as though they did not. But that feeling lasted only a moment. It was shortly overcome by love and thankfulness, because Jesus has wanted every man to cooperate freely in the work of redemption. He has not failed. His doctrine and life are effective in the world at all times. The redemption carried out by Him is sufficient, and more than sufficient.

God does not want slaves, but children. He respects our freedom. The work of salvation is still going on, and each one of us has a part in it. It is Christ's will, St. Paul tells us in impressive words, that we should fulfill in our flesh, in our life, what is lacking in His passion, "for the good of His body, which is the Church."¹¹

It is worthwhile putting our lives on the line, giving ourselves completely, so as to answer to the love and the confidence that God has placed in us. It is worthwhile, above all, to decide to take our Christian life seriously. When we recite the Creed, we state that we believe in God the Father Almighty, in His Son Jesus Christ, who died and rose again, and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life. We affirm that the Church, one, holy, catholic and apostolic, is the body of Christ, enlivened by the Holy Spirit. We rejoice in the forgiveness of sins and in the hope of the Resurrection. But do those words penetrate to the depths of our own heart? Or do they remain only on our lips? The divine message of victory, the joy and the peace of Pentecost, should be the unshakable foundation for every Christian's way of thinking and acting and living.

Concluding Prayer

Holy and divine Spirit! Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, your spouse, bring the fullness of your gifts into our hearts. Comforted and strengthened by you, may we live according to your Will and may we die praising your infinite mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FOURTH DAY

Introductory Prayer

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order to know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard your voice, and I do not want to harden my heart and resist, saying, "Later . . . tomorrow." *Nunc coepi!* Right now! Lest there be no tomorrow for me.

O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want what you want, because you want it, as you want it, when you want it.

Consideration

Our faith in the Holy Spirit must be complete

"The arm of the Lord has not been shortened."¹² God is no less powerful today than he was in other times; His love for man is no less true. Our faith teaches us that all creation, the movement of the earth and the other heavenly bodies, the good actions of creatures and all the good that has been achieved in history, in short everything, comes from God and is directed toward Him.

The action of the Holy Spirit can pass unnoticed, because God does not reveal to us His plans, and because man's sin clouds over the divine gifts. But faith reminds us that God is always acting. He has created us and maintains us in existence, and He leads all creation by His grace toward the glorious freedom of the children of God.¹³

For this reason, Christian tradition has summarized the attitude we should adopt toward the Holy Spirit in just one idea: docility. That means we should be aware of the work of the Holy Spirit all around us, and in our own selves we should recognize the gifts he distributes, the movements and institutions he inspires, the affections and decisions he provokes in our hearts. The Holy Spirit carries out in the world the works of God. He is, as we read in a liturgical hymn, the giver of grace, the light of our hearts, the soul's guest, our rest in work, our consolation in sorrow. Without His help there is nothing innocent or valuable in man, since he is the one who cleanses the soiled, heals what is sick, sets on fire what is cold, straightens what is bent and guides men toward the safe harbor of salvation and eternal joy.¹⁴

But our faith in the Holy Spirit must be complete. It is not a vague belief in His presence in the world, but a grateful acceptance of the signs and realities into which he has poured forth His power in a special way. When the Spirit of truth comes, our Lord tells us, "He will glorify me, for he will take of what is mine and declare it to you."¹⁵ The Holy Spirit is the Spirit sent by Christ to carry out in us the work of holiness that our Lord merited for us on earth.

And so, there cannot be faith in the Holy Spirit if there is not faith in Christ, in His sacraments, in His Church. A man cannot act in accordance with his Christian faith, cannot truly believe in the Holy Spirit, unless he loves the Church and trusts it. He cannot be a coherent Christian if he limits himself to pointing out the deficiencies and limitations of some who represent the Church, judging her from the outside, as though he were not her son. Moreover, consider the extraordinary importance and abundance of the

Paraclete when the priest renews the sacrifice of Calvary by celebrating Mass on our altars.

Concluding Prayer

Holy and divine Spirit! Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, your spouse, bring the fullness of your gifts into our hearts. Comforted and strengthened by you, may we live according to your Will and may we die praising your infinite mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FIFTH DAY

Introductory Prayer

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order to know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard your voice, and I do not want to harden my heart and resist, saying, "Later . . . tomorrow." *Nunc coepi!* Right now! Lest there be no tomorrow for me.

O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want what you want, because you want it, as you want it, when you want it.

Consideration

The Holy Spirit is present among us

We Christians carry the great treasures of grace in vessels of clay.¹⁶ God has entrusted His gifts to the weakness and fragility of human freedom. We can be certain of the help of God's power, but our lust, our love of comfort and our pride sometimes cause us to reject His grace and to fall into sin. For more than twenty-five years when I have recited the Creed and asserted my faith in the divine origin of the Church: "One, holy, catholic and apostolic," I have frequently added, "in spite of everything." When I mention this custom of mine and someone asks me what I mean, I answer, "I mean your sins and mine."

All this is true, but it does not authorize us in any way to judge the Church in a human manner, without theological faith. We cannot consider only the greater or lesser merits of certain churchmen or of some Christians. To do this would be to limit ourselves to the surface of things. What is most important in the Church is not how we humans react but how God acts. This is what the Church is: Christ present in our midst, God coming toward men in order to save them, calling us with His revelation, sanctifying us with His grace, maintaining us with His constant help, in the great and small battles of our daily life.

We might come to mistrust other men, and each one of us should mistrust himself and end each of his days with a *mea culpa*, an act of contrition that is profound and sincere. But we have no right to doubt God. And to doubt the Church, its divine origin and its effectiveness for our salvation through its doctrine and its sacraments, would be the same as doubting God Himself, the same as not fully believing in the reality of the coming of the Holy Spirit.

“Before Christ was crucified,” writes St. John Chrysostom, “there was no reconciliation. And while there was no reconciliation, the Holy Spirit was not sent The absence of the Holy Spirit was a sign of the anger of God. Now that you see Him sent in fullness, do not doubt the reconciliation. But what if people should ask, ‘Where is the Holy Spirit now? We can talk of His presence when the miracles took place, when the dead were raised and the lepers were healed. But how are we to know that He is truly present now?’ Do not be concerned. I will show you that the Holy Spirit is present among us now as well.

“If the Holy Spirit were not present, we would not be able to say, ‘Jesus is the Lord,’ for no one can invoke Jesus as the Lord unless it is in the Holy Spirit (I Cor 12:3). If the Holy Spirit were not present, we would not be able to pray with confidence. For when we pray, we say, ‘Our Father, who art in heaven’ (Mt 6:9). If the Holy Spirit were not present, we could not call God our Father. How do we know this? Because the Apostle teaches us: ‘And, because you are His children, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”’ (Gal 4:6).

“When we call on God the Father, remember that it is the Spirit who, with His motion in your soul, has given you this prayer. If the Holy Spirit were not present, there would be no word of wisdom or knowledge in the Church; for it is written, ‘The word of wisdom is given through the Spirit’ (I Cor 12:8) . . . If the Holy Spirit were not present, the Church would not exist. But if the Church exists, there is no doubt of the presence of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁷

Beyond all human deficiencies and limitations, the Church is the sign and in a certain sense, though not in the strict sense in which the Church has defined the nature of the seven sacraments of the new law, the universal sacrament of the presence of God in the world. To be a Christian is to be reborn of God and sent to men to announce the news of salvation. If we had a strong and manly faith, a living faith, if we were bold in making Christ known to others, we would see with our own eyes miracles such as those that took place in the times of the Apostles.

Today, too, blind men, who had lost the ability to look up to heaven and contemplate the wonderful works of God, recover their sight. Lame and crippled men, who were bound by their passions and whose hearts had forgotten love, recover their freedom. Deaf men, who did not want to know God, are given back their hearing. Dumb men, whose tongues were bound because they did not want to acknowledge their defeats, begin to talk. And dead men, in whom sin had destroyed life, come to life again. We see once more that “the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword.”¹⁸ And just as the first Christians did, we rejoice when we contemplate the power of the Holy Spirit and see the results of His action on the mind and will of His creatures.

Concluding Prayer

Holy and divine Spirit! Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, your spouse, bring the fullness of your gifts into our hearts. Comforted and strengthened by you, may we live according to your Will and may we die praising your infinite mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SIXTH DAY

Introductory Prayer

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order to know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard your voice, and I do not want to harden my heart and resist, saying, "Later . . . tomorrow." *Nunc coepi!* Right now! Lest there be no tomorrow for me.

O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want what you want, because you want it, as you want it, when you want it.

Consideration

*Teaching how to correspond
to the action of the Holy Spirit*

I see all the circumstances of life – those of every individual person's existence as well as, in some way, those of the great crossroads of history – as so many calls that God makes to men, to bring them face to face with truth, and as occasions that are offered to us Christians, so that we may announce, with our deeds and with our words strengthened by grace, the Spirit to whom we belong.¹⁹

Every generation of Christians needs to redeem, to sanctify its own time. In order to do this, it must understand and share the desires of other men – one's equals – in order to make known to them, with a *gift of tongues*, how they are to correspond to the action of the Holy Spirit, to that permanent outflow of rich treasures that comes from our Lord's heart. We Christians are called upon to announce, in our own time, to this world to which we belong and in which we live, the message – old and at the same time new – of the Gospel.

It is not true that everyone today – in general – is closed or indifferent to what our Christian faith teaches about man's being and destiny. It is not true that men in our time are turned only toward the things of this earth and have forgotten to look up to heaven. There is no lack of narrow ideologies, it is true, or of persons who maintain them. But in our time we find both great desires and base attitudes, heroism and cowardice, zeal and disenchantment: men who dream of a new world, more just and more human, and others who, discouraged perhaps by the failure of their youthful idealism, hide themselves in the selfishness of seeking only their own security or remaining immersed in their errors.

To all these men and women, wherever they may be, in their more exalted moments or in their crises and defeats, we have to bring the solemn and unequivocal message of St. Peter in the days that followed Pentecost: Jesus is the cornerstone, the redeemer, the hope of our lives. "For there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."²⁰

Concluding Prayer

Holy and divine Spirit! Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, your spouse, bring the fullness of your gifts into our hearts. Comforted and strengthened by you, may we live according to your Will and may we die praising your infinite mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SEVENTH DAY

Introductory Prayer

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order to know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard your voice, and I do not want to harden my heart and resist, saying, "Later . . . tomorrow." *Nunc coepi!* Right now! Lest there be no tomorrow for me.

O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want what you want, because you want it, as you want it, when you want it.

Consideration

*The gift of wisdom makes us know
God and rejoice in His presence*

Among the gifts of the Holy Spirit, I would say that there is one which we all need in a special way: the gift of wisdom. It makes us know God and rejoice in His presence, thereby placing us in a perspective from which we can judge accurately the situations and events of this life. If we were consistent with our faith when we looked around us and contemplated the world and its history, we would be unable to avoid feeling in our own hearts the same sentiments that filled the heart of our Lord: "Seeing the crowds, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were bewildered and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd."²¹

Not that the Christian should neglect to see all that is good in humanity, appreciate its healthy joys or participate in its enthusiasm and ideals. On the contrary, a true Christian will vibrate in unison with all the good he finds in the world. And he will live in the midst of it with a special concern, since he knows, better than anyone, the depth and the richness of the human spirit.

A Christian's faith does not diminish his spirit or limit the noble impulses of his soul – rather it makes them grow with the realization of their true and authentic meaning. We do not exist in order to pursue just any happiness. We have been called to penetrate the intimacy of God's own life, to know and love God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and to love also – in that same love of the one God in three divine Persons – the angels and all men.

This is the great boldness of the Christian faith: to proclaim the value and dignity of human nature and to affirm that we have been created to achieve the dignity of children of God, through the grace that raises us up to a supernatural level. An incredible boldness it would be, were it not founded on the promise of salvation given us by God the Father, confirmed by the blood of Christ, and reaffirmed and made possible by the constant action of the Holy Spirit.

We must live by faith. We must grow in faith – up to the point when it will be possible to describe any one of us, or any Christian, in the terms used by one of the great Doctors of the Eastern Church: "In the same way as transparent bodies, upon receiving a ray of light, become resplendent and shine out, so the souls that are borne and illuminated by the Holy Spirit become themselves spiritual and carry to others the light of grace. From

the Holy Spirit comes knowledge of future events, understanding of mysteries, comprehension of hidden truths, giving of gifts, heavenly citizenship, conversation with the angels. From Him comes never-ending joy, perseverance in God, likeness to God, and the most sublime state that can be conceived, becoming God-like.”²²

Together with humility, the realization of the greatness of man’s dignity – and of the overwhelming fact that, by grace, we are made children of God – forms a single attitude. It is not our own forces that save us and give us life; it is the grace of God. This is a truth which can never be forgotten. If it were, the *divinization* of our life would be perverted and would become presumption, pride. And this would lead, sooner or later, to a breakdown of spiritual life, when the soul came face to face with its own weakness and wretchedness.

“And shall I dare to say, ‘I am holy’?” asks St. Augustine. “If I mean by ‘holy’ that I bring holiness and that I need no one to make me holy, I would be a liar and full of pride. But if by ‘holy’ I understand one who is made holy, as we read in Leviticus, ‘You will be holy, because I, God, am holy,’ then the whole body of Christ, down to the last man living at the ends of the earth, may dare to say, together with its head and under Him, ‘I am holy.’”²³

Love the Third Person of the most Blessed Trinity. Listen in the intimacy of your being to the divine motions of encouragement or reproach you receive from Him. Walk through the earth in the light that is poured out in your soul. And the God of hope will fill us with all peace, so that this hope may grow in us more and more each day, by the power of the Holy Spirit.²⁴

Concluding Prayer

Holy and divine Spirit! Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, your spouse, bring the fullness of your gifts into our hearts. Comforted and strengthened by you, may we live according to your Will and may we die praising your infinite mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

EIGHTH DAY

Introductory Prayer

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order to know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard your voice, and I do not want to harden my heart and resist, saying, “Later . . . tomorrow.” *Nunc coepi!* Right now! Lest there be no tomorrow for me.

O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want what you want, because you want it, as you want it, when you want it.

Consideration

To live according to the Holy Spirit

To live according to the Holy Spirit means to live by faith and hope and charity – to allow God to take possession of our lives and to change our hearts, to make us resemble

Him more and more. A mature and profound Christian life cannot be improvised, because it is the result of the growth of God's grace in us. In the Acts of the Apostles we find the early Christian community described in a single sentence, brief but full of meaning: "And they continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles and in the communion of the breaking of the bread and in prayers."²⁵

This is how the early Christians lived, and this is how we too should live: meditating the doctrine of our faith until it becomes a part of us; receiving our Lord in the Eucharist; meeting Him in the personal dialogue of our prayer, without trying to hide behind an impersonal conduct, but face to face with Him. These means should become the very substance of our attitude. If they are lacking we will have, perhaps, the ability to think in an erudite manner, an activity that is more or less intense, some practices and devotions. But we will not have an authentically Christian way of life, because we are all equally called to sanctity. There are no second-class Christians, obliged to practice only a "simplified version" of the Gospel. We have all received the same baptism, and although there is a great variety of spiritual gifts and human situations, there is only one Spirit who distributes God's gifts, only one faith, only one hope, only one love.²⁶

And so we can apply to ourselves the question asked by the Apostle: "Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"²⁷ And we can understand it as an invitation to deal with God in a more personal and direct manner. For some, unfortunately, the Paraclete is the Great Stranger, the Great Unknown. He is merely a name that is mentioned, but not Someone, not one of the three persons in the one God, with whom we can talk and with whose life we can live.

We have to deal with Him simply and trustingly, as we are taught by the Church in its liturgy. Then we will come to know our Lord better, and at the same time, we will realize more fully the great favor that has been granted us when we became Christians. We will see all the greatness and truth of the *divinization* to which I referred before, which is a sharing in God's own life.

Concluding Prayer

Holy and divine Spirit! Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, your spouse, bring the fullness of your gifts into our hearts. Comforted and strengthened by you, may we live according to your Will and may we die praising your infinite mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

NINTH DAY

Introductory Prayer

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order to know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard your voice, and I do not want to harden my heart and resist, saying, "Later . . . tomorrow." *Nunc coepi!* Right now! Lest there be no tomorrow for me.

O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want what you want, because you want it, as you want it, when you want it.

Consideration

Docility, life of prayer, and union with the Cross

“The Holy Spirit is not an artist who draws the divine substance in us, as though He were alien to it. It is not in this way that He leads us to a resemblance with God – but rather, being God and proceeding from God, He Himself marks the hearts of those who receive Him as a seal upon wax. In this way, by the communication of His own life and resemblance, He restores nature according to the beauty of the divine model, and returns to man his resemblance to God.”²⁸

Let us see how this truth applies to our daily lives. Let us describe, at least in general, the way of life which will bring us to deal in a familiar manner with the Holy Spirit, and together with Him, the Father and the Son.

We can fix our attention on three fundamental points: docility, life of prayer, and union with the Cross.

First of all docility, because it is the Holy Spirit who, with His inspirations, gives a supernatural tone to our thoughts, desires and actions. It is He who leads us to receive Christ’s teaching and to assimilate it in a profound way. It is He who gives us the light by which we perceive our personal calling and the strength to carry out all that God expects of us. If we are docile to the Holy Spirit, the image of Christ will be formed more and more fully in us, and we will be brought closer every day to God the Father. “For whoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the children of God.”²⁹

If we let ourselves be guided by this life-giving principle, who is the Holy Spirit in us, our spiritual vitality will grow. We will place ourselves in the hands of our Father God, with the same spontaneity and confidence with which a child abandons himself to his father’s care. Our Lord has said: “Unless you become like little children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”³⁰ This is the old and well-known “way of childhood,” which is not sentimentality or lack of human maturity. It is a supernatural maturity, which makes us realize more deeply the wonders of God’s love, while leading us to acknowledge our own smallness and identify our will fully with God’s will.

In the second place a life of prayer, because the giving of one’s self, the obedience and meekness of a Christian, are born of love and lead to love. And love leads to a personal relationship, to conversation and friendship. Christian life requires a constant dialogue with God, one in three persons, and it is to this intimacy that the Holy Spirit leads us. “For who among men knows the things of a man save the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so, the things of God no one knows but the Spirit of God.”³¹ If we have a constant relationship with the Holy Spirit, we will become spiritual ourselves, we will realize that we are Christ’s brothers and children of God, and we will not hesitate to call upon our Father at any time.³²

Let us acquire the habit of conversation with the Holy Spirit, who is the one who will make us holy. Let us trust in Him and ask His help and feel His closeness to us. In this way our poor heart will grow; we will have a greater desire to love God and to love all creatures for God’s sake. And our lives will reproduce that final vision of the Apocalypse: the Spirit and the Spouse, the Holy Spirit and the Church – and every Christian – calling on Jesus Christ to come and be with us forever.³³

And finally, union with the cross, because in the life of Christ the Resurrection and Pentecost were preceded by Calvary. This is the order that must be followed in the life of any Christian. We are, as St. Paul tells us, “heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ, provided, however, we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified with Him.”³⁴ The Holy Spirit comes to us as a result of the cross – as a result of our total abandonment to the will of God, of seeking only His glory and renouncing ourselves completely.

Only when a man is faithful to grace and decides to place the cross in the center of his soul, denying himself for the love of God, detaching himself in a real way from all selfishness and false human security, only then – when a man lives by faith in a real way – will he receive the fullness of the great fire, the great light, the great comfort of the Holy Spirit.

It is then, too, that the soul begins to experience the peace and freedom which Christ has won for us,³⁵ and which are given to us with the grace of the Holy Spirit. “But the fruit of the Spirit is: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, long-suffering, mildness, faith, modesty, continence, chastity,”³⁶ and “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”³⁷

Concluding Prayer

Holy and divine Spirit! Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, your spouse, bring the fullness of your gifts into our hearts. Comforted and strengthened by you, may we live according to your Will and may we die praising your infinite mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

TENTH DAY

Introductory Prayer

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order to know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard your voice, and I do not want to harden my heart and resist, saying, “Later . . . tomorrow.” *Nunc coepi!* Right now! Lest there be no tomorrow for me.

O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want what you want, because you want it, as you want it, when you want it.

Consideration

Beginning, and beginning again

In the midst of the limitations that accompany our present life, in which sin is still present in us to some extent at least, we Christians perceive with a particular clearness all the wealth of our divine filiation, when we realize that we are fully free because we are doing our Father’s work, when our joy becomes constant because no one can take our hope away. It is then that we can admire at the same time all the great and beautiful things of this earth, can appreciate the richness and goodness of creation, and can love with all the strength and purity for which the human heart was made. It is then that sorrow for sin does not degenerate into a bitter gesture of despair or pride, because

sorrow and knowledge of human weakness lead us to identify ourselves again with Christ's work of redemption and feel more deeply our solidarity with other men.

It is then, finally, that we Christians experience in our own life the sure strength of the Holy Spirit, in such a way that our own failures do not drag us down. Rather they are an invitation to begin again, and to continue being faithful witnesses of Christ in all the moments of our life—in spite of our own personal weaknesses, which, in such a case, are normally no more than small failings that hardly perturb the soul. And even if they were grave sins, the sacrament of penance, received with true sorrow, enables us to recover our peace with God and to become again a good witness of His mercy.

Such is the brief summary, which can barely be expressed in human language, of the richness of our faith and of our Christian life, if we let ourselves be guided by the Holy Spirit. That is why I can only end these words in one way: by voicing the prayer, contained in one of the liturgical hymns for the feast of Pentecost, which is like an echo of the unceasing petition of the whole Church: "Come, creating Spirit, to the minds of those who belong to you, and fill the hearts that you have created with grace from above Grant that through you we may know the Father and become acquainted with the Son; may we believe in you, the Spirit who proceeds from the Father and Son, forever. Amen."³⁸

Concluding Prayer

Holy and divine Spirit! Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, your spouse, bring the fullness of your gifts into our hearts. Comforted and strengthened by you, may we live according to your Will and may we die praising your infinite mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

VENI CREATOR SPIRITUS

Veni, Creator Spíritus
Mentes tuórum vísita:
Imple supérna grátia
Quæ tu creásti péctora.
Qui diceris Paráclitus,
Altíssimi donum Dei,
Fons vivus, ignis, cáritas,
Et spiritális únctio.
Tu septifórmis múnere,
Dígitus Patérnæ déteræ.
Tu rite promíssum Patris,
Sermóne ditans gúttura.
Accénde lumen sénsibus,
Infúnde amórem córdibus.

Infirma nostri cōporis
Virtūte firmans pēpeti.
Hostem repēllas lōngius,
Pacēmq̄ue dones prōtinus,
Ductōre sic te prævio
Vitēmus omne nōxium.
Per te sciāmus da Patrem,
Noscāmus atque Fīlium,
Teque utriūsque Spīritum
Credāmus omni tēmpore.
Deo Patris sit glōria,
Et Fīlio, qui a mōrtuis
Surrēxit, ac Parāclito
In sæculōrum sæcula. Amen.

V. Emītte Spīritum tuum et creabūntur.

R. Et renovābis faciē terræ.

Orēmus.

Deus, qui corda fidēlium Sancti Spīritus illustratiōne
docuisti; da nobis in eōdem Spīritu recta sāpere; et de eius
semper consolatiōne gaudere. Per Christum Dōminum
nostrum. **R. Amen.**

COME, HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, Creator come,
From thy bright heavenly throne!
Come, take possession of our souls,
And make them all thine own!
Thou who art called the Paraclete,
Best gift of God above,
The living spring, the living fire,
Sweet unction, and true love!
Thou who are sevenfold in thy grace,
Finger of God's right hand,
His promise, teaching little ones
To speak and understand!
O guide our minds with thy blest light,
With love our hearts inflame,
And with thy strength which ne'er decays
Confirm our mortal frame.
Far from us drive our hellish foe,
True peace unto us bring,
And through all perils guide us safe
Beneath thy sacred wing.

Through thee may we the Father know,
Through thee the eternal Son,
And thee the Spirit of them both
Thrice-blessed three in one.
All glory to the Father be,
And to the risen Son;
The same to thee, O Paraclete,
While endless ages run.
Amen.

V. Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created.

R. And you shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray.

O God, who has taught the hearts of the faithful the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that by the gift of the same Spirit we may be always truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolation. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

PRAYER FOR PURITY OF BODY AND MIND

Lord, set aflame our heart and our entire being with the fire of the Holy Spirit, that we may serve you with chaste bodies and pure minds. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

ORATIO AD PETENDAM CASTITATIS

Ure igne Sancti Spíritus renes nostros et cor nostrum, Dómine; ut tibi casto córpore serviámus et mundo corde placeámus. Per Christum Dóminum nostrum. Amen.

Notes

1. Cf. Jn 16:12-13
2. Acts 2: 9-11
3. Cf. Acts 2:37-41
4. Cf. Acts 4:8
5. Cf. Acts 4:31
6. Cf. Acts 10:44-47
7. Cf. Acts 13:2-4
8. Jn 14:16
9. Cf. Is 11:12
10. Tit 3:5-7
11. Cf. Col 1:24: pro corpore eius, quod est Ecclesia
12. Is 59:1: Non est abbreviata manus Domini
13. Cf. Rom 8:21

14. Sequence Veni Sancte Spiritus, Mass of Whit Sunday
15. Jn 16:14
16. Cf. 2 Cor 4:7
17. St. John Chrysostom, Sermones panegyrici in solemnitates D.N. Jesu Christi, hom. I, De Sancta Pentecoste, n. 3-4 (PG 50, 457)
18. Heb 4:12
19. Cf. Lk 9:55
20. Acts 4:12
21. Mt 9:36
22. St. Basil, De Spiritu Sancto, 9, 23 (PG 32, 110)
23. St. Augustine, Enarrationes in psalmos, 85, 4 (PL 37, 1084)
24. Cf. Rom 15:13
25. Acts 2:42
26. Cf. 1 Cor 12:4-6, 13:1-13
27. 1 Cor 3:16
28. St. Cyril of Alexandria, Thesaurus de sancta et consubstantiali Trinitate, 34 (PG 75, 609)
29. Rom 8:14
30. Mt 18:3
31. 1 Cor 2:11
32. Cf. Gal 4:6; Rom 8:15
33. Cf. Rev 22:17
34. Rom 8:17
35. Cf. Gal 4:31
36. Gal 5:22-23
37. 2 Cor 3:17
38. Hymn Veni, Creator, Divine Office of Whit Sunday

DEVOTIONS TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

*"All generations will call me blessed: 'The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship.' The Church rightly honors 'the Blessed Virgin with special devotion. From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin has been honored with the title of 'Mother of God,' to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs. . . . This very special devotion . . . differs essentially from the adoration which is given to the incarnate Word and equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and greatly fosters this adoration.' The liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and Marian prayer, such as the rosary, an 'epitome of the whole Gospel', express this devotion to the Virgin Mary."*¹

THE HOLY ROSARY

The rosary is divided in three parts and each part in five mysteries. For each mystery one Our Father and ten Hail Marys (a decade) are said. There is a pious custom to recite a third part of the rosary daily in many Christian families.

Make the sign of the cross:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Recite three (3) sets of: Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...

Then: Spiritual Communion: I wish, Lord, to receive you with the purity, humility and devotion with which your most Holy Mother received you, with the spirit and fervor of the saints.

Recite the Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day he arose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.*

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Then: One (1) Our Father... Three (3) Hail Marys.. One (1) Glory Be.

Start each Decade by meditating on the Mystery. On the large bead say the Our Father. On the ten small beads say ten Hail Marys. Then recite the Glory Be.

At the end of every decade, recite the following:

O Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fire of hell, bring all souls to heaven, especially those who are in most need of your mercy.

MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

JOYFUL MYSTERIES: (Mondays and Saturdays)

1. The annunciation (Luke 1:30-33)
2. The visitation (Luke 1:50-53)
3. The nativity (Luke 2:10-11)
4. The presentation in the temple (Luke 2:29-32)
5. The finding of the child Jesus in the temple (Luke 2:48-52)

LUMINOUS MYSTERIES: (Thursdays)

1. Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan (Matthew 3:13-17)
Christ descends into the waters, the innocent one who became "sin" for our sake. The heavens open wide and the voice of the Father declares him the beloved Son, while the Spirit descends on him to invest him with the mission that is he is to carry out.
2. Jesus' self-manifestation at the wedding of Cana (John 2:1-12)
This is the first of the signs. Christ changes water into wine and opens the hearts of the disciples to faith, thanks to the intercession of Mary, the first among the believers.
3. Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God, with his call to conversion (Mark 1:15)
Jesus forgives the sins of all who draw near to him in humble trust. He proclaims the inauguration of the ministry of mercy which he continues to exercise until the end of the world, particularly through the sacrament of reconciliation, which he has entrusted to his Church.
4. Jesus' transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36)
In Mount Tabor the glory of the Godhead shines forth from the face of Christ as the Father commands the astonished Apostles to "listen to him" and to prepare to experience with him the agony of the passion, so as to come with him to the joy of the resurrection and a life transfigured by the Holy Spirit.
5. Jesus' institution of the Eucharist, as the sacramental expression of the Paschal Mystery (Matthew 26:26-29)
Christ offers his body and blood as food under the signs of bread and wine, and testifies "to the end" his love for humanity (John 13:1), for whose salvation he will offer himself in sacrifice.

SORROWFUL MYSTERIES: (Tuesdays and Fridays)

1. The agony in the garden (Matthew 26:38-39)
2. The scourging at the pillar (John 19:1)
3. The crowning with thorns (Mark 15:16-17)
4. The carrying of the cross (John 19:17)
5. The crucifixion and death of our Lord (John 19:28-30)

GLORIOUS MYSTERIES: (Wednesdays and Sundays)

1. The resurrection (Mark 16:6-8)
2. The ascension (Acts 1:10-11)
3. The descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles (Acts 2:1-4)
4. The assumption (Song of Songs 2:3-6)
5. The coronation of the blessed Virgin (Luke 1:51-54)

At the end of the Rosary you may say the Hail Holy Queen

Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To you do we send up our sighs mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy toward us, and after this exile show us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

V. Pray for us, O Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray. O God, whose only begotten Son, by his life, death and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life, grant, we beseech you, that meditating upon the mysteries of the most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise. Through the same Christ our Lord. **R.**
Amen.

LITANY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The litany is a way of praying found among many peoples. It is a prayer made to be repeated; one phrase coming over and over again so that the person praying is caught up in the prayer itself. Often litanies are chanted.

The Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary (called the Litany of Loreto) took shape over several centuries. It is rooted in images we find in the Scriptures. It may be said after praying the Rosary.

Lord, have mercy on us. **Christ, have mercy on us.**

Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father of heaven.

Have mercy on us.

God the Son, redeemer of the world.

Have mercy on us.

God the Holy Spirit.

Have mercy on us.

Holy Trinity, one God.

Have mercy on us.

Holy Mary.

Pray for us

Holy Mother of God.

Holy Virgin of virgins.

Mother of Christ.

Mother of the Church.

Mother of divine grace.

Mother most pure.
Mother most chaste.
Mother inviolate.
Mother undefiled.
(Mother immaculate.)
Mother most amiable.
Mother most admirable.
Mother of good counsel.
Mother of our Creator.
Mother of our Savior.
Virgin most prudent.
Virgin most venerable.
Virgin most renowned.
Virgin most powerful.
Virgin most merciful.
Virgin most faithful.
Mirror of justice.
Seat of wisdom.
Cause of our joy.
Spiritual vessel.
Vessel of honor.
Singular vessel of devotion.
Mystical rose.
Tower of David.
Tower of ivory.
House of gold.
Ark of the covenant.
Gate of heaven.
Morning star.
Health of the sick.
Refuge of sinners.
Comforter of the afflicted.
Help of Christians.
Queen of angels.
Queen of patriarchs.
Queen of prophets.
Queen of apostles.
Queen of martyrs.
Queen of confessors.
Queen of virgins.
Queen of all saints.

Queen conceived without original sin.
Queen assumed into heaven.
Queen of the most holy Rosary.
Queen of the family
Queen of peace.
V. Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.
R. Spare us, O Lord.
V. Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.
R. Graciously hear us, O Lord.
V. Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.
R. Have mercy on us.
V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

For the needs of the Church and of the Nation.
Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...
For the (Arch)Bishop of this diocese and his intentions.
Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...
For the holy souls in purgatory.
Our Father... Hail Mary...
May they rest in peace. **Amen.**

THE LITANY IN LATIN

Kýrie, eléison.

Kýrie, eléison.

Christe, eléison.

Christe, eléison.

Kýrie, eléison.

Kýrie, eléison.

Christe, áudi nos.

Christe, áudi nos.

Christe, exáudi nos.

Christe, exáudi nos.

Pater de cælis, Deus.

Miserére nobis.

Fili,

Redemptor

mundi Deus.

Miserére nobis.

Spíritus Sancte Deus.

Miserére nobis.

Sancta Trinitas, unus Deus.

Miserére nobis.

Sancta María.

ora pro nobis

Sancta Dei Génatrix.

Sancta Virgo víginum.

Mater Christi.

Mater Ecclésiæ.

Mater divínæ grátiae.

Mater puríssima.

Mater castíssima.

Mater invioláta.

Mater intemeráta.

(Mater immaculáta.)

Mater amábilis.

Mater admirábilis.

Mater boni consílii.

Mater Creatóris.

Mater Salvatóris.

Virgo prudentíssima.

Virgo veneránda.

Virgo prædicánda.

Virgo potens.

Virgo clemens.

Virgo fidélis.

Spéculum iustítiæ.

Sedes sapiéntiæ.

Causa nostræ lætítiæ.

Vas spirituále.

Vas honorábile.

Vas insigne devotiónis.

Rosa mýstica.

Turris Davídica.

Turris ebúrnea.

Domus áurea.

Foéderis arca.

Iánua cœli.

Stella matutína.

Salus infirmórum.

Refúgium peccatórum.

Consolátrix afflictórum.

Auxílium Christianórum.

Regína Angelórum.
Regína Patriarchárum.
Regína Prophetárum.
Regína Apostolórum.
Regína Mártýrum.
Regína Confessorum.
Regína Vírginum.
Regína Sanctórum ómnium.
Regína sine labe origináli concépta.
Regína in cælum assúmpta.
Regína Sacratíssimi Rosárii.
Regína famíliæ.
Regína pacis.

V. Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccáta mundi.

R. Parce nobis, Dómine.

V. Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccáta mundi.

R. Exáudi nos, Dómine.

V. Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccáta mundi.

R. Miserére nobis.

V. Ora pro nobis, Sancta Dei Génatrix.

R. Ut digni efficiámur promissionibus Christi.

Let us pray.

O God, whose only begotten Son,
by his life, death, and resurrection,
has purchased for us the rewards
of everlasting life;
grant, we beseech you, that we,
who meditate upon these mysteries of the most
holy rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
may both imitate what they contain, and attain to what they promise.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

**MEDITATIONS ON THE MYSTERIES
OF THE ROSARY***

JOYFUL MYSTERIES

FIRST MYSTERY

THE ANNUNCIATION

Don't forget, my friend, that we are children. The Lady of the sweet name, Mary, is absorbed in prayer.

You, in that house, can be whatever you wish: a friend, a servant, an onlooker, a neighbor . . . For the moment I don't dare to be anything. I hide behind you and, full of awe, I watch what's happening:

The Archangel delivers his message . . . *Quomodo fiet istud, quoniam virum non cognosco?*: "But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?" (Luke 1:34). Our Mother's voice reminds me—by contrast—of all the impurities of men, . . . mine too.

And then how I hate those low, mean things of the earth . . . What resolutions!

Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum: "Let it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). At the enchantment of this virginal phrase, the Word became flesh.

The first decade is about to end . . . I still have time to tell God, before anyone else does, "Jesus, I love you."

SECOND MYSTERY

THE VISITATION

By now, my little friend, you have no doubt learned to manage on your own. Joyfully keep Joseph and Mary company . . . and you will hear the traditions of the House of David.

You will hear about Elizabeth and Zachary, you will be moved by Joseph's pure love, and your heart will pound whenever they mention the Child who will be born in Bethlehem.

We walk in haste towards the mountains to a town of the tribe of Judah (Luke 1:39).

We arrive. It is the house where John the Baptist is to be born. Elizabeth gratefully hails the Mother of her Redeemer: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honored with a visit from the mother of my Lord?" (Luke 1:42-43).

The unborn Baptist quivers . . . (Luke 1:41). Mary's humility pours forth in the *Magnificat* . . . And you and I, who are proud – who were proud – promise to be humble.

THIRD MYSTERY

THE NATIVITY

Caesar Augustus had issued a decree for a census to be taken of the whole world. For this purpose, everyone must go to the city of his ancestors. And since Joseph belongs to the house and line of David, he goes with the Virgin Mary from Nazareth to the town of David called Bethlehem in Judea (Luke 2:1-5).

And in Bethlehem is born our God: Jesus Christ! There is no room in the inn; he is born in a stable. And his Mother wraps him in swaddling clothes and lays him in a manger (Luke 2:7).

Cold. Poverty . . . I am Joseph's little servant. How good Joseph is! He treats me like a son. He even forgives me if I take the Child in my arms and spend hour after hour saying sweet and loving things to him.

And I kiss him – you kiss him too! – and I rock him in my arms, and I sing to him and call him King, Love, my God, my Only-one, my All . . .! How beautiful is the Child . . . and how short the decade!

FOURTH MYSTERY

THE PRESENTATION

When the time has come for the Mother's purification, in accordance with the Law of Moses, the Child must be taken to Jerusalem to be presented to the Lord (Luke 2:22).

And this time it will be you, my friend, who carries the cage with the doves (Luke 2:24).

Just think: she – Mary Immaculate! – submits to the Law as if she were defiled.
Through this example, foolish child, won't you learn to fulfill the holy Law of God regardless of any personal sacrifice?
Purification! You and I certainly do need purification.
Atonement and, more than atonement, Love. Love as a searing iron to cauterize our soul's uncleanness, and as a fire to kindle with divine flames the wretchedness of our hearts.
An upright and devout man has come to the Temple, led by the Holy Spirit (it has been revealed to him that he would not die until he had set eyes on the Christ); he takes the Messiah into his arms and says to him: "Now, my Lord, you can let your servant go from this world in peace, just as you promised; because my eyes have seen the Savior" (Luke 2:25-30).

FIFTH MYSTERY

THE FINDING OF THE CHILD JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

Where is Jesus? The Child, my Lady! Where is he?
Mary is crying. In vain you and I have run from group to group, from caravan to caravan: no one has seen him. Joseph, after fruitless attempts to keep from crying, cries too . . .
And you . . . And I.
Being a rough little fellow, I cry my eyes out and wail to heaven and earth, . . . to make up for the times when I lost him through my own fault and did not cry.
Jesus: may I never lose you again . . . Then you and I are united in misfortune and grief, as we were united in sin. And from the depths of our being, come sighs of heartfelt sorrow and burning phrases which the pen cannot and should not record.
And, as we are consoled by the joy of finding Jesus – three days he was gone! – debating with the teachers of Israel (Luke 2:46), you and I will be left deeply impressed by the duty to leave our home and family to serve our heavenly Father.

LUMINOUS MYSTERIES

FIRST MYSTERY

THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him...and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matt 3:13,17)
In Baptism, our Father God has taken possession of our lives. He has made us sharers in Christ's life and sent us the Holy Spirit.
The strength and the power of God light up the face of the earth.

We will set the world ablaze, with the flames of the fire that you came to enkindle on earth! And the light of your truth, our Jesus, will enlighten men's minds in an endless day.

I can hear you crying out, my King, in your strong and ardent voice: *ignem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo nisi ut accendatur?* I have come to bring fire to the earth, and would that it were already enkindled! And I answer, with my entire being, with all my senses and faculties: *ecce ego: quia vocasti me!* Here I am, because you have called me!

God has placed an indelible mark on your soul through Baptism: you are a child of God. Child, are you not aflame with the desire to bring all men to love Him?

SECOND MYSTERY

THE WEDDING FEAST IN CANA

Our Lady was a guest at one of those noisy country weddings attended by people from many different villages. Mary was the only one who noticed the wine was running out. Don't these scenes from Christ's life seem familiar to us? The greatness of God lives at the level of ordinary things. It is natural for a woman, a homemaker, to notice an oversight, to look after the little things that make life pleasant. And that is how Mary acted.

Do whatever he tells you.

Implete hydrias (John 2:7), fill the jars. And the miracle takes place. Everything is so simple and ordinary. The servants carry out their job. The water is easy to find. And this is the first manifestation of our Lord's divinity. What is commonplace becomes something extraordinary, something supernatural, when we have the good will to heed what God is asking of us.

Lord, I want to abandon all my concerns into your generous hands. Our Mother - your Mother - will have let you hear those words, now as in Cana: "They have no wine!..."

If our faith is weak, we should turn to Mary. Because of the miracle at the marriage feast at Cana, which Christ performed at his Mother's request, his disciples learned to believe in him (John 2:11). Our Mother is always interceding with her Son so that he may attend to our needs and show himself to us, so that we can cry out, "You are the Son of God."

Grant me, dear Jesus, the faith I truly desire. My Mother, sweet Lady, Mary most holy, make me really believe!

THIRD MYSTERY

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel (Mark 1:15).

And all the crowd gathered about him, and he taught them (Mark 2:13).

Jesus sees the boats on the shore and gets into one of them. How naturally Jesus steps into the boat of each and everyone of us!

When you seek to draw close to our Lord, remember that he is always very close to you, that he is in you: *regnum Dei intra vos est* (Luke 17:21). The kingdom of God is within you. You will find him in your heart.

Christ should reign first and foremost in our soul. But in order for him to reign in me, I need his abundant grace. Only in that way can my every heartbeat and breath, my least intense look, my most ordinary word, my most basic feeling be transformed into a hosanna to Christ my king.

Duc in altum. Put out into deep water! Throw aside the pessimism that makes a coward of you. *Et laxate retia vestra in capturam*. And pay out your nets for a catch!

We have to place our trust in our Lord's words: get into the boat, take the oars, hoist the sails and launch out into this sea of the world which Christ gives us as an inheritance.

Et regni ejus non erit finis. His kingdom will have no end.

Doesn't it fill you with joy to work for such a kingdom?

FOURTH MYSTERY

THE TRANSFIGURATION

And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light (Matt 17:2).

Jesus, we want to see you, to speak to you! We want to contemplate you, immersed in the immensity of your beauty, in a contemplation that will never cease! It must be wonderful to see you, Jesus! It must be wonderful to see you and be wounded by your love!

And a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him" (Matt 17:5).

Lord, we are ready to heed whatever you want to tell us. Speak to us: we are attentive to your voice. May your words enkindle our will so that we launch out fervently to obey you.

Vultum tuum, Domine, requiram (Ps 26:8). Lord, I long to see your face. I like to close my eyes and think that, when God wills, the moment will come when I will be able to see him, not as in a mirror dimly, but...face to face (1 Cor 13:12). Yes, my heart yearns for God, the living God. When shall I go and behold the face of God? (Ps 41:3).

FIFTH MYSTERY

THE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST

Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end (John 13:1).

When our Lord instituted the Eucharist during the Last Supper, night had already fallen. The world had fallen into darkness, for the old rites, the old signs of God's infinite mercy to mankind, were going to be brought to fulfillment. The way was opening to a new dawn – the new Passover. The Eucharist was instituted during that night, preparing in advance for the morning of the resurrection.

Jesus has remained in the Eucharist for love ... for you.

He has remained, knowing how men would treat him ... and how you would treat him. He has remained so that you could eat him, and visit him and tell him your concerns; and so that, by your prayer beside the tabernacle and by receiving him sacramentally, you could fall more in love each day, and help other souls, many souls, to follow the same path.

Good child: see how lovers on earth kiss the flowers, the letters, the mementos of those they love...

Then you, how could you ever forget that you have him always at your side – yes, Him? How could you forget ... that you can eat him?

Lord, may I never again flutter along close to the ground. Illumined by the rays of the divine Sun – Christ – in the Eucharist, may my flight never be interrupted until I find repose in your Heart.

SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

FIRST MYSTERY

THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN

“Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” And Peter fell asleep. And the other Apostles. And you, little friend, fell asleep . . . and I too was another sleepy headed Peter. Jesus, alone and sad, suffers and soaks the earth with his blood.

Kneeling on the hard ground, he perseveres in prayer . . . He weeps for you . . . and for me. The weight of the sins of men overwhelms him.

Pater, si vis, transfer calicem istum a me: “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me . . . Yet, not my will, but yours be done” (Luke 22:42).

An angel from heaven comforts him. Jesus is in agony. He continues *prolixius*, praying more intensely . . . He comes over to us and finds us asleep: “Rise”, he says again, “and pray that you may not enter into temptation” (Luke 22:46).

Judas the traitor: a kiss. Peter’s sword gleams in the night. Jesus speaks: “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me?” (Mark 14:48).

We are cowards: we follow him from afar but awake and praying, Prayer . . . Prayer . . .

SECOND MYSTERY

THE SCOURGING AT THE PILLAR

Pilate speaks: “it is your custom that I release one prisoner to you at the Passover. Whom shall I set free: Barabbas—a thief jailed with others for murder—or Jesus?” (Matthew 27:17). The crowd, spurred on by their rulers cry: “Put this man to death and release Barabbas” (Luke 23:18).

Pilate speaks again: “What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?” (Matthew 27:22). *Crucifige eum:* “Crucify him!” (Mark 15:14).

Pilate, for the third time, says to them: “Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no crime deserving death” (Luke 23:22).

The clamor of the mob grows louder: “Crucify him, crucify him!” (Mark 15:14).

And Pilate, wanting to please the crowd, releases Barabbas to them and orders Jesus to be scourged.

Bound to the pillar. Covered with wounds.

The blows of the lash sound upon his torn flesh, upon his undefiled flesh, which suffers for your sinful flesh. More blows. More fury. Still more . . . It is the last extreme of human cruelty.

Finally, exhausted, they untie Jesus. And the body of Christ yields to pain and falls limp, broken and half dead.

You and I cannot speak. Words are not needed. Look at him, look at him. . . slowly. After this . . . can you ever fear penance?

THIRD MYSTERY

THE CROWNING WITH THORNS

Our King's eagerness for suffering has been fully satisfied! They lead my Lord to the courtyard of the palace, and there call together the whole troop (Mark 15:16). The brutal soldiers strip his most pure body. They drape a dirty purple rag about Jesus. A reed, as a scepter, in his right hand.

The crown of thorns, driven in by blows, makes him a mock king . . . *Ave Rex Iudæorum* : "Hail, King of the Jews" (Mark 15:18). And with their blows they wound his head. And they strike him . . . and spit on him.

Crowned with thorns and clothed in rags of purple, Jesus is shown to the Jewish crowd: *Ecce Homo*: "Here is the man!". And again the chief priests and their attendants raise the cry, saying, "Crucify him, crucify him" (John 19:5-6).

You and I . . . , haven't we crowned him anew with thorns and struck him and spat on him?

Never again, Jesus, never again . . . And a firm and practical resolution marks the end of these ten Hail Marys.

FOURTH MYSTERY

THE CARRYING OF THE CROSS

Carrying his Cross, Jesus goes out of the city to the place of the skulls – called Golgotha in Hebrew (John 19:17). And they lay hold of a certain Simon from Cyrene, who is coming in from the country; and they make him take the Cross and carry it behind Jesus (Luke 23:26).

The prophecy of Isaiah (53:12) has been fulfilled: *cum sceleratis reputatus est*: “he was counted among the wicked”, for two other were led out with him to be put to death (Luke 23:32).

If anyone would follow me . . . Little friend, we are sad, living the Passion of our Lord Jesus. See how lovingly he embraces the Cross. Learn from him. Jesus carries the Cross for you: you . . . carry it for Jesus.

But don't drag the Cross . . . carry it squarely on your shoulder, because your Cross, if you carry it so, will not be just any Cross. . . . It will be the Holy Cross. Don't carry your cross with resignation: resignation is not a generous word. Love the Cross. When you really love it, your Cross will be . . . a Cross without a Cross.

And surely you will find Mary on the way, just as Jesus did.

FIFTH MYSTERY

THE CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH OF OUR LORD

For Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, the throne of triumph is ready. You and I do not see him writhe on being nailed. Suffering all that can be suffered, he spreads his arms in the gesture of an eternal Priest . . .

The soldiers take his holy garments and divide them into four parts. In order not to tear the tunic, they cast lots to decide whose it shall be. And so, once more, the words of Scripture are fulfilled: “They parted my garments among them, and for my clothes they cast lots” (John 19:23-24).

Now he is on high . . . And close to her Son, at the foot of the Cross, stand Mary . . . and Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen. And John, the disciple Jesus loved. *Ecce Mater tua*: “Behold your mother”: he gives us his Mother to be ours.

Earlier they had offered him wine mixed with vinegar, and when he had tasted it, he would not drink it (Matthew 27:34).

Now he thirsts . . . for love, for souls.

Consummatum est: “It is accomplished” (John 19:30).

Foolish child, look: all this . . . He has suffered it all for you . . . And for me. Can you keep from crying?

GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

FIRST MYSTERY

THE RESURRECTION

When the Sabbath was over, Mary of Magdala and Mary, the mother of James, and Salome bought spices with which to go and anoint the dead body of Jesus. Very early on the following day, just as the sun is rising, they come to the tomb (Mark 16:1-2). And upon entering it they are dismayed, for they cannot find the body of our Lord. A youth, clothed in white, says to them: "Do not be afraid. I know you seek Jesus of Nazareth: *non est hic, surrexit enim sicut dixit*: he is not here for he has risen, as he said" (Matthew 28:5).

He has risen! Jesus has risen: he is not in the tomb. Life has overcome death.

He appeared to his most holy Mother. He appeared to Mary Magdalen, who is carried away by love. And to Peter and the rest of the Apostles. And to you and me, who are his disciples and more in love than Mary Magdalen: the things we say to him! May we never die through sin; may our spiritual resurrection be eternal. And before the decade is over, you have kissed the wounds in his feet, . . . and I, more daring – because I am more a child – have placed my lips upon his open side.

SECOND MYSTERY

THE ASCENSION

Now the Master is teaching his disciples: he has opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and he appoints them witnesses of his life and his miracles, of his Passion and Death, and of the glory of his Resurrection (Luke 24:45 and 48).

Then he brings them out as far as the outskirts of Bethany and blesses them. And as he does so, he withdraws from them and is carried up to heaven (Luke 24:51) until a cloud takes him out of sight (Acts 1:9).

Jesus has gone to the Father. Two angels in white approach us and say, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up to heaven?" (Acts 1:11).

Peter and the others go back to Jerusalem – *cum gaudio magno*: "with great joy" (Luke 24:52). It is fitting that the sacred humanity of Christ should receive the homage, praise and adoration of all the hierarchies of the Angels and of all the legions of the Blessed in heaven.

But you and I feel like orphans: we are sad, and we go to Mary for consolation.

THIRD MYSTERY

THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Our Lord had said: "I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, another Consoler, to be with you forever" (John 14:16). The disciples were gathered together in one room when suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven, the noise of which filled the entire house where they were assembled. At the same time something appeared that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them (Acts 2:1-3).

The Apostles were so filled with the Holy Spirit that they seemed to be drunk (Acts 2:13). Then Peter stood up with the Eleven and addressed the people in a loud voice. We, people from a hundred nations, hear him. Each of us hears him in his own language – you and I in ours. He speaks to us of Christ Jesus and of the Holy Spirit and of the Father.

He is not stoned nor thrown into prison; of those who have heard him, three thousand are converted and baptized.

You and I, after helping the Apostles administer baptism, bless God the Father, for his Son Jesus, and we too feel drunk with the Holy Spirit.

FOURTH MYSTERY

THE ASSUMPTION

Assumpta est Maria in caelum: gaudent angeli: God has taken Mary, body and soul, to heaven; and the angels rejoice!

So sings the Church. And so, with that same cry of joy, we begin our contemplation in this decade of the Holy Rosary.

The Mother of God has fallen asleep. Around her bed are the twelve Apostles – Matthias in the place of Judas.

And we, through a grace respected by all, are also at her side.

But Jesus wants to have his Mother, body and soul, in heaven. And the heavenly court, arrayed in all its splendor, greets our Lady. You and I – children, after all – take the train of Mary's magnificent blue cloak, and so we can watch the marvelous scene.

The most blessed Trinity receives and showers honors on the Daughter, Mother and Spouse of God And so great is the Lady's majesty that the angels exclaim: Who is she?

FIFTH MYSTERY

THE CORONATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

You are all fair, and without blemish. You are a garden enclosed, my sister, my Bride, an enclosed garden, a sealed fountain. *Veni: coronaberis:* "Come: you shall be crowned" (Song of Songs 4:7, 12 and 8).

If you and I had been able we too would have made her Queen and Lady of all creation.

A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman with a crown of twelve stars upon her head, adorned with the sun and the moon at her feet (Revelation 12:1). Mary, Virgin without stain, has made up for the fall of Eve: and she has crushed the head of hell's serpent with her immaculate heel. Daughter of God, Mother of God, Spouse of God.

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit crown her as the rightful Empress of the Universe. And the Angels pay her homage as her subjects . . . and the patriarchs and prophets and apostles . . . and the martyrs and confessors and virgins and all the saints . . . and all sinners and you and I.

SALVE REGINA

Salve, Regína, mater misericórdiæ;
vita, dulcédo et spes nostra, salve.
Ad te clamámus, éxsules fílii Evæ.
Ad te suspirámus, geméntes et flentes
in hac lacrimárum valle.
Eia ergo, advocáta nostra,
illos tuos misericórdes óculos
ad nos convérte.
Et Iesum, benedíctum fructum ventris tui,
nobis post hoc exsílíum osténde.
O clemens, o pia, o dulcis Virgo María.

V. Ora pro nobis sancta Dei Génatrix.

R. **Ut digni efficiámur promissionibus Christi.**

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Orémus.

Omnípotens sempitérne Deus, qui gloriósæ Vírginis Matris Mariæ corpus et ánimam, ut dignum Fílii tui habitáculum effíci mererétur, Spíritu Sancto cooperánte, præparásti: da, ut cuius commemoratióne lætámur, eius pia intercessióne, ab instántibus malis et a morte perpétua liberémur. Per eúndem Christum Dóminum nostrum.

R. Amen.

V. Divínium auxílium máneat semper nobíscum.

R. Amen.

HAIL HOLY QUEEN

Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy,
our life, our sweetness, and our hope.
To you do we cry,
poor banished children of Eve.

To you do we send up our sighs
mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.
Turn then, most gracious advocate,
your eyes of mercy toward us,
and after this exile
show us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus.
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

V. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, by the cooperation of the Holy Spirit you prepared the body and soul of Mary, glorious Virgin and Mother to become the worthy habitation of your Son; grant that by her gracious intercession, in whose commemoration we rejoice, we may be delivered from present evils and from everlasting death. Through the same Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

V. May divine assistance remain with us always.

R. Amen.

MEMORARE

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help or sought your intercession, was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto you, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To you I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word incarnate, despise not my petitions, but, in your mercy, hear and answer me. Amen.

Memoráre, o piísima Virgo María, non esse audítum a sáeculo, quemquam ad tua curréntem praesídia, tua implorántem auxília, tua peténtem suffrágia esse derelíctum. Ego tali animátus confidéntia ad te, Virgo Vírginum, Mater, curro; ad te vénio; coram te gemens peccátor assísto. Noli, Mater Verbi, verba mea despícere, sed audi propítia et exáudi. Amen.

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ALMA REDEMPTORIS MATER (LOVING MOTHER OF THE REDEEMER)

(Hermann the lame)

Loving mother of the Redeemer,
gate of heaven, star of the sea,
assist your people who have fallen
yet strive to rise again.
To the wonderment of nature
you bore your Creator,
yet remained a virgin after as before.
You who received Gabriel's joyful greeting,
have pity on us poor sinners.

Alma Redemptóris Mater
quæ p̄rvia cæli porta manes, et stella maris,
succúrre cadénti.
Súrgere qui curat, pópulo: tu quæ genuísti,
natúra miránte, tuum sanctum Genitórem,
Virgo prius ac postérius, Gabriélis ab ore
sumens illud ave, peccatórum miserére.
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AVE REGÍNA CÆLORUM (HAIL, O QUEEN OF HEAVEN)

Hail, O Queen of Heaven enthroned!
Hail, by angels mistress owned,
Root of Jesse! Gate of morn!
Whence the world's true light was born:
Glorious Virgin, joy to thee,
Loveliest whom in heaven they see.
Fairest thou where all are fair!
Plead with Christ our sins to spare.

Ave, Regína cælórum,
ave, Dómina angelórum,
salve, radix, salve, porta,
ex qua mundo lux est orta.
Gaude, Virgo gloriósa,
super omnes speciósa;
vale, o valde decóra
et pro nobis Christum exóra.

STABAT MATER DOLOROSA (AT THE CROSS HER STATION KEEPING)

At the cross her station keeping
stood the mournful Mother weeping,
close to Jesus to the last.
Through her heart, his sorrow sharing,
all his bitter anguish bearing,
now at length the sword had passed.
Oh, how sad and sore distressed
was that Mother highly blessed
of the sole begotten One!
Christ above in torment hangs,
she beneath beholds the pangs
of her dying, glorious Son.
Is there one who would not weep,
whelmed in miseries so deep,
Christ's dear Mother to behold?
Can the human heart refrain
from partaking in her pain,
in that Mother's pain untold?
Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled,
she beheld her tender Child,
all with bloody scourges rent.
For the sins of his own nation
saw him hang in desolation
till his spirit forth he sent.
O sweet Mother! font of love,
touch my spirit from above,
make my heart with yours accord.
Make me feel as you have felt;
make my soul to glow and melt
with the love of Christ, my Lord.
Holy Mother, pierce me through,
in my heart each wound renew
of my Savior crucified.
Let me share with you his pain,
who for all our sins was slain,
who for me in torments died.

Let me mingle tears with you,
mourning him who mourned for me,
all the days that I may live .
By the cross with you to stay,
there with you to weep and pray,
is all I ask of you to give.
Virgin of all virgins blest!
Listen to my fond request:
let me share your grief divine.
Let me to my latest breath,
in my body bear the death
of that dying Son of yours.
Wounded with his every wound,
steep my soul till it has swooned
in his very blood away.
Be to me, O Virgin, nigh,
lest in flames I burn and die,
in his awful judgment day.
Christ, when you shall call me hence,
be your Mother my defense,
be your cross my victory.
While my body here decays,
may my soul your goodness praise,
safe in heaven eternally.
Amen. (Alleluia.)

Stabat Mater dolorosa
Iuxta crucem lacrimosa,
Dum pendebat Filius.
Cuius animam gementem,
Contristatam et dolentem,
Pertransivit gladius.
O quam tristis et afflicta
Fuit illa Benedicte
Mater Unigeniti!
Quae maeubat, et dolubat,
Pia Mater, dum videbat
Nati poenas inclyti.
Quis est homo, qui non fleret,
Matrem Christi si videret
In tanto supplicio?

Quis non posset contristári,
Christi Matrem contemplári
Doléntem cum Fílio?
Pro peccáti suæ gentis
Vidit Iesum in torméntis,
Et flagéllis súbditum.
Vidit suum dulcem natum
Moriéndo desolátum,
Dum emísit spíritum.
Eia Mater, fons amóris,
Me sentíre vim dolóris
Fac, ut tecum lúgeam.
Fac, ut árdeat cor meum
In amándo Christum Deum,
Ut sibi compláceam.
Sancta Mater, istud agas,
Crucifíxi fige plagas
Cordi meo válide.
Tui nati vulneráti,
Tam dignáti pro me pati,
Pœnas mecum dívide.
Fac me tecum pie flere,
Crucifíxo condolére,
Donec ego víxero.
Iuxta crucem tecum stare,
Et me tibi sociáre
In planctu desidéro.
Virgo vírginum præclára,
Mihi iam non sis amára:
Fac me tecum plángere.
Fac, ut portem Christi mortem,
Passiónis fac consórtem,
Et plagas recólere.
Fac me plagis vulnerári,
Fac me cruce inebriári,
Et cruóre Fílii.
Flammis ne urar succénsus,
Per te, Virgo, sim defénsus
In die iudícii.
Christe, cum sit hinc exíre,
Da per Matrem me veníre
Ad palmam victóriæ.

Quando corpus moriétur,
Fac, ut ánimæ donétur
Paradísi glória.
Amen. Allelúia.

CONSECRATION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

My Queen and my Mother, I give myself entirely to you and in proof of my affection, I give you my eyes, my ears, my tongue, my heart, my whole being without reserve. Since I am your own, keep me and guard me as your property and possession. Amen.

BLESSED BE YOUR PURITY

Blessed be your purity,
May it be blessed for ever,
For no less than God takes delight,
In such exalted beauty.
To you, heavenly Princess,
Holy Virgin Mary,
I offer on this day,
My whole heart, life and soul.
Look upon me with compassion,
Do not leave me, my Mother.

BLESSING AND IMPOSITION WITH THE SCAPULAR OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

The person who is to receive the scapular kneels, and the priest, vested in surplice and white stole, says:

V. Lord, show us your kindness and mercy.

R. And grant us your salvation.

V. Lord, hear my prayer,

R. And let my cry come to you.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And also with you.

Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Savior of mankind, by your right hand sanctify this scapular which your servant will devotedly wear for the love of you and of your Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. By her intercession, may he (she) be protected from the wickedness of the enemy and persevere in your grace until death. You who live and reign for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

Then the priest sprinkles the scapular with holy water and imposes it upon the person (or upon each person), saying:

Receive this blessed scapular and ask the most holy Virgin that, by her merits, it may be worn with no stain of sin and may protect you from all harm and bring you into everlasting life.

R. Amen.

After this the priest adds:

By the power granted to me, I admit you to a share in all the spiritual works performed with the merciful help of Jesus Christ by the religious of Mount Carmel. In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

May almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth, bless you whom He has been pleased to receive into the Confraternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. We beg her to crush the head of the ancient serpent in the hour of your death and to obtain for you the palm and the crown of your everlasting inheritance. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

The priest sprinkles the person with holy water. If there are several persons to be received together, the prayers are said in the plural.

If the scapular is to be blessed alone, then the blessing begins with

O Lord, show us your mercy, and concludes with the prayer, O Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE ***(JOHN PAUL II)***

In January 1979, His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, in the first year of his pontificate, made the first of a long series of pastoral visits. He went to Mexico and presided over the Conference in Puebla. He visited the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the new Basilica built in her honor. There, in the presence of all the bishops of America, the Holy Father addressed this prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

O Immaculate Virgin, Mother of the true God and Mother of the Church! You, who from this place revealed your clemency and your pity to all those who ask for your protection; hear the prayer that we address to you with filial trust, and present it to your Son Jesus, our sole Redeemer.

Mother of mercy, Teacher of hidden and silent sacrifice, to you, who come to meet us sinners, we dedicate on this day all our being and all our love. We also dedicate to you our life, our work, our joys, our infirmities, and our sorrows.

Grant peace, justice and prosperity to our peoples; for we entrust to your care all that we have and all that we are, our Lady and Mother.

We wish to be entirely yours and to walk with you along the way of complete faithfulness to Jesus Christ in His Church: hold us always with your loving hand.

Virgin of Guadalupe, Mother of the Americas, we pray to you for all the bishops, that they may lead the faithful along paths of intense Christian life, of love and humble service of God and souls.

Contemplate this immense harvest, and intercede with the Lord that He may instill a hunger for holiness in the whole People of God, and grant abundant vocations of priests and religious, strong in the faith and zealous dispensers of God's mysteries.

Grant to our homes the grace of loving and respecting life in its beginnings, with the same love with which you conceived in your womb the life of the Son of God. Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Fair Love, protect our families, so that they may always be united, and bless the upbringing of our children.

Our hope, look upon us with compassion, teach us to go continually to Jesus and, if we fall, help us to rise again, to return to Him, by means of the Confession of our faults and sins in the Sacrament of Penance, which gives peace to the soul. We beg you to grant us a great love for all the holy Sacraments, which are, as it were, the signs that your Son left us on earth.

Thus, Most Holy Mother, with the peace of God in our conscience, with our hearts free from evil and hatred, we will be able to bring to all true joy and true peace, which come to us from your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

MAY DEVOTIONS

“God wills that all his gifts should come
to us through Mary” –St. Bernard

It was in Rome, towards the end of the eighteenth century, one fine evening in May. A child of the poor had gathered his companions round him, and led them to a statue of Mary, before which a lamp was burning, as is the custom in that holy city. There, these fresh young voices sang the Litany of our Lady. The next day, the little group, followed by other children, again gathered at the feet of the Mother of God. Next came their mothers, to join the little assembly. Soon, other groups were formed, and the devotion rapidly became popular. Holy souls, troubled by the disorderly conduct which always increases and becomes graver at the return of the pleasant spring-time, saw in these growing practices the hand of God, and they co-operated with the designs of Providence by approving and promoting this new devotion, as a public and solemn act of reparation. The Month of Mary was founded.

Thus, opening out like a flower of love under the lovely Italian sky and with the approval of the Holy Father, this touching devotion was not slow to make its way into France and to every part of the Catholic world. It was like a tiny grain of mustard-seed, and grew rapidly, multiplying its flowers and its fruits beyond all expectations.

(From A Month with Mary, by a Carthusian, Burns and Oates. London)

MARIAN READINGS FOR THE MONTH OF MAY

May 1

MARY IS THE MOTHER OF GOD

“When the Blessed Virgin said yes, freely, to the plans revealed to her by the Creator, the divine Word assumed a human nature: a rational soul and a body, which was formed in the most pure womb of Mary. The divine nature and the human were united in a single Person: Jesus Christ, true God and, thenceforth, true Man; the only-begotten and eternal Son of the Father and from that moment on, as Man, the true Son of Mary. This is why our Lady is the Mother of the Incarnate Word, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity who has united our human nature to himself forever, without any confusion of the two natures. The greatest praise we can give to the Blessed Virgin is to address her loud and clear by the name that expresses her very highest dignity: Mother of God”.¹

Let us offer our Mother today:

Brief but frequent prayers of love, such as:

“Mother of God, you are omnipotent in your petition “

May 2

MARY IS THE MOST PERFECT CREATURE

“She who is full of grace, the object of God’s pleasure, exalted above all the angels and the saints, lived an ordinary life.

“Mary is as much a creature as we are, with a heart like ours, made for joy and mirth as well as suffering and tears. Before Gabriel communicates to her God’s plan, Our Lady does not know she has been chosen from all eternity to be the Mother of the Messiah. She sees herself a humble creature. That is why she can acknowledge, with full humility, that ‘he who is mighty has done great things’ in her”.²

Let us offer our Mother today:

Many glances of affection and many words of love when we see her image or picture in our home, in the church, and in the streets.

May 3

MARY AND THE BLESSED TRINITY

“Through the Incarnation of Our Lord in her immaculate womb, Mary, the Daughter of God the Father, is also the Spouse of God the Holy Spirit and the Mother of God the Son”.³

Let us offer our Mother today:

A “Hail Mary” each time the clock strikes another hour.

May 4

MARY 'S FAMILY: THE TRINITY ON EARTH

“It is only natural that the Church rejoices as it contemplates the modest home of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. We read in the hymn from matins on the feast of the Holy Family: It is pleasing to recall the lowly house of Nazareth and its slender resources. It is pleasing to tell again in song Jesus’ hidden life. Jesus grows up in hidden seclusion, to be trained in Joseph’s lowly trade. The loving Mother sits beside her dear Son, the good wife by her husband, content if her loving attention can ease and comfort them in their weariness”.⁴

Let us offer our Mother today:

A loving review of her life with Jesus as we recite the joyful mysteries of the Rosary.

May 5

MARY AND HER IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

“How would we have acted, if we could have chosen our own mother? I’m sure we would have chosen the one we have, adorning her with every possible grace. That is what Christ did. Being all-powerful, all-wise, Love itself, his power carried out his will . . . This is the clearest reason why Our Lord granted his Mother, from the very moment of her immaculate conception all possible privileges. She was free from the power of Satan. She is beautiful, spotless and pure in soul and body.”⁵

Let us offer our Mother today:

The renewal of our baptismal vows.

May 6

**THE ANNUNCIATION:
MARY IS THE FIRST TABERNACLE**

“If you seek Mary, you will find Jesus. And you will learn a bit more about what is in the heart of God who humbles himself, discarding all manifestations of his power and majesty to take the form of a servant. Speaking in human terms, we could say that God outdoes himself, because he goes much further than he need in order to save us. The only way to measure what he does is to say that it cannot be measured; it comes from a madness of love which leads him to take on our flesh and bear the weight of our sins.”⁶

Let us offer our Mother today:

The Angelus recited punctually at noon and with great affection.

May 7

MARY IS OUR MODEL IN ORDINARY LIFE

“We can’t forget that Mary spent nearly every day of her life just like millions of other women who look after their family, bring up their children and take care of the house. Mary sanctifies the ordinary everyday things—what some people wrongly regard as unimportant and insignificant: everyday work, looking after those closest to you, visits to friends and relatives. What a blessed ordinariness, that can be so full of love of God.”⁷

Let us offer our Mother today:

Affectionate details of service and attention to those closest to us.

May 8

THE BIRTH OF OUR LORD

“Iesus Christus, Deus homo: Jesus Christ, God-man. This is one of the ‘mighty works of God,’ which we should reflect upon and thank him for. He has come to bring ‘peace on earth to men of good will,’ to all men who want to unite their wills to the holy will of God—not just the rich, not just the poor, but everyone: all the brethren. We are all brothers in Jesus, children of God, brothers of Christ. His Mother is our Mother.”⁸

Let us offer our Mother today:

Jesus himself when we receive him in Holy Communion.

May 9

MARY WELCOMES THE SHEPHERDS

“You must look at the Child in the manger. He is our Love. Look at him, realizing that the whole thing is a mystery. We need to accept this mystery on faith and use our faith to explore it very deeply. To do this, we must have the humble attitude of a Christian soul.”⁹

Let us offer our Mother today:

Small hidden sacrifices, especially those that go against the grain.

May 10

MARY PRESENTS JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

“She teaches us to have charity. Remember the scene of the presentation of Jesus in the temple. An old man, Simeon, said to his mother Mary, ‘Behold this child is destined to bring about the fall of many and the rise of many in Israel – and to be a sign which men will refuse to acknowledge; and so the thoughts of many hearts shall be made manifest; as for your own soul, it shall have a sword to pierce it.’ So great is Mary’s love for all mankind that she, too, fulfilled Christ’s words when he affirmed: ‘Greater love has no man than this, that he should lay down his life for his friends’.”¹⁰

Let us offer our Mother today:

A pilgrimage to one of her shrines.

May 11

MARY WELCOMES THE MAGI

“‘Going into the house they saw the child with Mary, his Mother.’ Our Lady is always by her Son. The Magi are not received by a king on a high throne but by a child in the arms of his Mother. Let us ask the Mother of God, who is our Mother, to prepare for us the way that leads to the fullness of love . . . Her sweet heart knows the surest path for finding Christ.”¹¹

Let us offer our Mother today:

A visit to a poor person to remind him or her of Our Lady’s concern for him or her.

May 12

**MARY FLEES TO EGYPT WITH JOSEPH
AND THE CHILD JESUS**

“The mystery of Mary helps us to see that in order to approach God we must become little. As Christ said to his disciples: ‘Believe me, unless you become like little children again, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.’

“To become children, we must renounce our pride and self-sufficiency, recognizing that we can do nothing by ourselves. We must realize that we need grace and the help of God our Father to find our way and keep to it.”¹²

Let us offer our Mother today:

A visit to a lonely person to share the joy of trusting in God alone.

May 13

MARY’S HIDDEN LIFE WITH JESUS

“I like to go back in my imagination to the years Jesus spent close to his Mother, years which span almost the whole of his life on earth. I like to picture him as a little child, cared for by Mary who kisses him and plays with him. I like to see him growing up before the loving eyes of his Mother and of Joseph, his father on earth. What tenderness and care Mary and the Holy Patriarch must have shown towards Jesus, as they looked after him during his childhood, all the while, silently, learning so much from him. Their souls would become more and more like the soul of that Son, who was both Man and God. This is why his Mother, and after her St. Joseph, understand better than anyone the feelings of the heart of Christ; and the two of them are thus the best way, I would say the only way, to reach the Savior.”¹³

Let us offer our Mother today:

The effort of doing our ordinary work well, on time, with competence and finesse.

May 14

MARY LOSES AND FINDS THE CHILD JESUS

“The Mother of God, who looked for her Son so anxiously when he was lost through no fault of her own, and experienced such great joy in finding him, will help us retrace our steps and put right whatever may be necessary when, because of our carelessness or our sins, we have been unable to recognize Christ. With her help we will know the happiness of holding him in our arms once more, and telling him we will never lose him again.”¹⁴

Let us offer our Mother today:

A good, sincere and sorrowful confession of our sins and failures in the sacrament of Penance.

May 15

MARY AT CANA

“In the Gospel St. John has recorded a wonderful phrase of our Lady. At the wedding of Cana she turned to the waiters and said: ‘Do whatever he tells you.’ That’s what it is all about – getting people to face Jesus and ask him: ‘Lord, what do you want me to do?’¹⁵

Let us offer our Mother today:

Prompt obedience when we are called or asked to do some errand or some act of service.

May 16

MARY AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

“We find her on Calvary, at the foot of the cross, praying. This is nothing new for Mary. She has always acted like this, as she fulfilled her duties and looked after her home. As she went about the things of this earth she kept her attention on God.”¹⁶

Let us offer our Mother today:

The act of contrition said many times throughout the day asking her to offer our sorrow for our sins to Jesus crucified.

May 17

MARY THE SORROWING MOTHER

“Our Lady is there listening to the words of her Son, united to him in his suffering, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ What could she do? She united herself fully with the redemptive love of her Son and offered to the Father her immense sorrow, which pierced her pure heart like a sharp edged sword.”¹⁷

Let us offer our Mother today:

The mortification of keeping quiet about any pain or discomfort, any inconvenience or disappointment, uniting them with her pain as she stood by Jesus on the cross.

May 18

MARY IS THE CO-REDEMPTRIX

“It is with good reason that the popes have called Mary Co-Redemptrix. ‘So fully, in union with her suffering and dying Son, did she suffer and nearly die; so fully, for the sake of the salvation of men, did she abdicate her mother’s rights over her Son, and immolate him, insofar as it was in her power, to satisfy the justice of God, that it can rightly be said that she redeemed mankind together with Christ’ (Benedict XV, *Inter sodalicia*, 3/22/1918). This gives us a deeper understanding of that moment in the passion of our Lord, which we shall never tire of meditating: *Stabat autem iuxta crucem Iesu mater eius*, ‘there, standing by the cross of Jesus, was his mother’.”¹⁸

Let us offer our Mother today:

Five small hidden sacrifices in honor of the five major wounds of Our Lord.

May 19

MARY’S FAITH

“If our faith is weak, we should turn to Mary. St. John tells us that it was because of the miracle at the marriage feast at Cana, which Christ performed at his Mother’s request, that ‘his disciples learned to believe in him.’ Our Mother is always interceding with her Son so that he may attend to our needs and show himself to us in such a way that we can cry out, ‘You are the Son of God.’”¹⁹

Let us offer our Mother today:

The “Memorare” for the person in our family who most needs the help of Our Lady.

May 20

MARY’S HOPE

“Our Lady, a full participant in the work of our salvation, follows in the footsteps of her Son: the poverty of Bethlehem, the everyday work of a hidden life in Nazareth, the manifestation of his divinity in Cana of Galilee, the tortures of his passion, the divine sacrifice on the cross, the eternal blessedness of paradise.

“All of this affects us directly, because this supernatural itinerary is the way we are to follow. Mary shows us that we can walk this path with confidence. She has preceded us on the way of imitating Christ; her glorification is the firm hope of our own salvation. For these reasons we call her ‘our hope, cause of our joy.’”²⁰

Let us offer our Mother today:

A smile when we do not feel like smiling.

May 21

MARY’S PRAYER

“Let us ask the blessed Virgin to make us contemplatives, to teach us to recognize the constant calls from God at the door of our heart. Let us ask her now: Our Mother, you brought to earth Jesus, who reveals the love of our Father God. Help us to recognize him in the midst of the cares of each day. Stir up our mind and will so that we may listen to the voice of God, to the calls of grace.”²¹

Let us offer our Mother today:

A visit to Jesus truly present in the Blessed Sacrament.

May 22

MARY EVER VIRGIN

“The purity, humility and generosity of Mary are in sharp contrast to our wretchedness and selfishness. To the extent that we realize this we should feel moved to imitate her. We, too, are creatures of God, and if we strive to imitate her fidelity, God will surely do great things in us. Our little worth is no obstacle, because God chooses what is of little value so that the power of his love be more manifest.”²²

Let us offer our Mother today:

The prayer “Blessed be your purity”.

May 23

MARY QUEEN OF THE APOSTLES

“ . . . if we take Our Lady’s hand, she will make us realize more fully that all men are our brothers—because we are all sons of that God whose daughter, spouse and mother she is. Our neighbors’ problems must be our problems. Christian fraternity should be something very deep in the soul, so that we are indifferent to no one. Mary, who brought

up Jesus and accompanied him through his life and is now beside him in heaven, will help us recognize Jesus as he crosses our path and makes himself present to us in the needs of our fellow men.”²³

Let us offer our Mother today:

A kind word, a friendly conversation, a helping hand to persons with whom we live or work.

May 24

MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

“Yes, we are still pilgrims, but our mother has gone on ahead, where she points to the reward of our efforts. She tells us that we can make it. And, if we are faithful, we will reach home. The blessed Virgin is not only our model, she is the help of Christians. And as we besiege her with our petitions – ‘Show that you are our Mother’ – she cannot help but watch over her children with motherly care.”²⁴

Let us offer our Mother today:

In addition to the mysteries of the day, one more part of the Holy Rosary.

May 25

MARY OUR MOTHER

“ . . . [F]ind out for yourself by personal experience the meaning of Mary’s maternal love. It is not enough just to know she is our Mother and to think and to talk about her as such. She is your Mother and you are her son. She loves you as if you were her only child in this world. Treat her accordingly – tell her about everything that happens to you, honor her and love her. No one will do it for you or as well as you . . .”²⁵

Let us offer our Mother today:

Many affectionate thoughts and prayers by saying: “Mary, my Mother” each time we pause in our work.

May 26

MARY IS THE WAY TO JESUS

“Mary does the immense favor of bringing to the cross, of placing face to face with the example of the Son of God, those who come close to her and contemplate her life. It is in this confrontation that Christian life is decided. And here Mary intercedes for us so that our behavior may lead to a reconciliation of the younger brother – you and me – with the firstborn Son of the Father.

“Many conversions, many decisions to give oneself to the service of God have been preceded by an encounter with Mary. Our Lady has encouraged us to look for God, to desire to change, to lead a new life.”²⁶

Let us offer our Mother today:

If we have a friend or if there is a child who does not yet know how to say the Rosary, let us teach the way.

May 27

MARY IS THE MOTHER OF FAIR LOVE

“That is what explains Mary’s life – her love. A complete love, so complete that she forgets herself and is happy just to be there where God wants her, fulfilling with care what God wants her to do. That is why even her slightest action is never routine or vain but, rather, full of meaning. Mary, our mother, is for us both an example and a way. We have to try to be like her, in the ordinary circumstances in which God wants us to live.”²⁷

Let us offer our Mother today:

The Hail Mary said three times before going to sleep every night and each time with more attention and affection.

May 28

**THE ASSUMPTION:
MARY IS TAKEN UP TO HEAVEN**

“Mary has gone to heaven in both body and soul, and the angels rejoice. I can imagine, too, the delight of St. Joseph, her most chaste spouse, who awaited her in paradise. Yet what of us who remain on earth? Our faith tells us that here below, in our present life, we are pilgrims, wayfarers. Our lot is one of sacrifices, suffering and privations. Nonetheless, joy must mark the rhythm of our steps. “Serve the Lord with joy” – there is no other way to serve him.”²⁸

Let us offer our Mother today:

A smile when someone corrects us or misjudges us.

May 29

MARY IS THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN

“She lives now and is protecting us. She is there, body and soul, with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. She is the same person who was born in Palestine, who gave herself to God while still a child, who received the message from St. Gabriel the Archangel, who gave birth to our Savior, and who stood beside him at the foot of the cross. In her, all ideals become a reality; but this should not make us think that her sublime greatness makes her inaccessible to us. She is the one who is full of grace and the sum of all perfections; and she is also our Mother.”²⁹

Let us offer our Mother today:

The “Hail Holy Queen” at each hour.

May 30

MARY IS THE CHANNEL OF GRACE

“Her power before God is such that she can obtain anything we ask for, and, like any mother, she wants to answer our prayers. Like any mother also she knows and understands our weaknesses. She encourages us and makes excuses for us. She makes the way easy for us and, even when we think there is no possible solution for our worry, she always has one ready to offer us.”³⁰

Let us offer our Mother today:

A visit or a conversation with a friend or relative whom we want to encourage to go to Confession.

May 31

**THE VISITATION: MARY SINGS OF
THE LOVE OF GOD**

“God is interested even in the smallest events in the lives of his creatures – in your affairs and mine – and he calls each of us by our name. This certainty which the faith gives enables us to look at everything in a new light. And everything, while remaining exactly the same becomes different, because it is an expression of God’s love. Our life is turned into a continuous prayer, we find ourselves with good humor and a peace which never ends, and everything we do is an act of thanksgiving running through all our day. ‘My soul magnifies the Lord,’ Mary sang, ‘and my spirit rejoices in God, my savior’.”³¹

Let us offer our Mother today:

The Rosary today and every day, said with concentration and affection.

Notes

(All from homilies of Saint Josemaria Escriva)

1. *Mother of God and our Mother*, 274.
2. *Cause of our Joy*, 172.
3. *Mother of God and our Mother*, 274.

4. Marriage: a Christian vocation, 22
5. Cause of our Joy, 171.
6. To Jesus through Mary, 144.
7. To Jesus through Mary, 148.
8. Christ Triumphs through Humility, 13.
9. Christ Triumphs through Humility, 13.
10. Mother of God and our Mother, 287.
11. The Epiphany of Our Lord, 38.
12. To Jesus through Mary, 143.
13. Mother of God and our Mother, 281.
14. Mother of God and our Mother, 278.
15. To Jesus Through Mary, 149.
16. A Life of Prayer, 241.
17. Mother of God and our Mother, 288.
18. Mother of God and our Mother, 287.
19. Mother of God and our Mother, 285.
20. Cause of our Joy, 176.
21. Cause of our Joy, 174.
22. Cause of our Joy, 172.
23. To Jesus through Mary, 145.
24. Cause of our Joy, 177.
25. Mother of God and our Mother, 293.
26. To Jesus through Mary, 149.
27. To Jesus through Mary, 148.
28. Cause of our Joy, 177.
29. Mother of God and our Mother, 292.
30. Mother of God and our Mother, 292.
31. To Jesus Through Mary, 144)

NOVENA TO THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Pope Pius IX instituted this celebration when he proclaimed this dogma on December 8, 1854. In that definition, he expressed the exact meaning of the truth of Mary's Immaculate Conception and affirmed the constant faith of the Church: that she was conceived free from the stain of original sin. This feast has been celebrated in the East and also in many places in the West since the eighth century. This privilege of Mary is the most beautiful fruit of her Son's Redemption. Chosen as Mother of the Savior, Mary received the benefits of salvation from the moment of her conception. Christ came to take away the sin of mankind; he did not allow it to contaminate Mary. The sanctity of our Blessed Mother is a model for all Christians. We seek her intercession to get rid of our sins and achieve sanctity.

FIRST DAY

(NOVEMBER 30)

Mary, the new Eve

Introductory Prayer

Lord God,
may our gifts be sanctified by the Holy Spirit
who formed the Blessed Virgin Mary
to be a new creation,
and sent down upon her
the dew of heavenly grace,
so that her womb might bear the fruit
of our salvation,
Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Reading

Gen 3: 1-6, 13-15

[T]he serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat of any tree of the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate.

Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent beguiled me, and I ate." The Lord God said to the serpent,

**“Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all cattle,
and above all wild animals;
upon your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.
I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your seed and her seed;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”**

Consideration

Mary, Mother of the Incarnate Word, is placed at the very center of that enmity, that struggle, which accompanies the history of humanity on earth and the history of salvation itself. In this central place, she who belongs to the “weak and poor of the Lord” bears in herself, like no other member of the human race, that “glory of grace” which the Father “has bestowed on us in his beloved Son,” and this grace determines the extraordinary greatness and beauty of her whole being. Mary thus remains before God, and also before the whole of humanity, as the unchangeable and inviolable sign of God’s election, spoken of in Paul’s letter: “in Christ . . . he chose us . . . before the foundation of the world, . . . he destined us . . . to be his sons” (Eph. 1:4, 5). This election is more powerful than any experience of evil and sin, than all that “enmity” which marks the history of man. In this history Mary remains a sign of sure hope.¹

Here the Rosary and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary **may be recited or the following concluding prayer may be said.**

Concluding Prayer

Lord God,
you have prepared a worthy dwelling place
for your Son by the Immaculate Conception
of the Virgin;
grant, we pray,
that as you preserved her from all stain of sin
in your foreknowledge of His death,
so we, by her intercession,
may come to you with pure hearts.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

SECOND DAY

(DECEMBER 1)

Mary, full of grace

Introductory Prayer

Lord God,
in your plan for our salvation
your Word became man,

announced by an angel
and born of the Virgin Mary.
May we who believe
that she is the Mother of God
receive the help of her prayers.
We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Reading

Lk 1:26-33

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be.

And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Consideration

When we read that the messenger addresses Mary as "full of grace," the Gospel context, which mingles revelations and ancient promises, enables us to understand that among all the "spiritual blessings in Christ" this is a special "blessing." In the mystery of Christ she is present even "before the creation of the world," as the one whom the Father "has chosen" as Mother of his Son in the Incarnation. And, what is more, together with the Father, the Son has chosen her, entrusting her eternally to the Spirit of holiness. In an entirely special and exceptional way Mary is united to Christ, and similarly she is eternally loved in this "beloved Son," this Son who is of one being with the Father, in whom is concentrated all the "glory of grace." At the same time, she is and remains perfectly open to this "gift from above" (cf. Jas 1:17). As the Council teaches, Mary "stands out among the poor and humble of the Lord, who confidently await and receive salvation from him."²

Here the Rosary and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary may be recited or the following concluding prayer may be said.

Concluding Prayer

Lord God,
you have prepared a worthy dwelling place
for your Son by the Immaculate Conception
of the Virgin;
grant, we pray,
that as you preserved her from all stain of sin
in your foreknowledge of His death,
so we, by her intercession,
may come to you with pure hearts.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

THIRD DAY

(DECEMBER 2)

Mary, the handmaid of the Lord

Introductory Prayer

Lord God,
when your Son came down from heaven
Mary had conceived him in her heart
before she conceived him in her womb:
grant that by holy and just deeds
we may show forth in our lives the Christ whom we have received by faith,
and who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Reading

Lk 1:34-38

And Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, since I have no husband?"

And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible."

And Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Consideration

Indeed, at the Annunciation Mary entrusted herself to God completely, with the "full submission of intellect and will," manifesting "the obedience of faith" to him who spoke to her through his messenger. She responded, therefore, with all her human and feminine "I" and this response of faith included both perfect cooperation with "the grace of God that precedes and assists" and perfect openness to the action of the Holy Spirit, who "constantly brings faith to completion by his gifts."

The word of the living God, announced to Mary by the angel, referred to her: "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son" (Lk 1:31). By accepting this announcement, Mary was to become the "Mother of the Lord," and the divine mystery of the Incarnation was to be accomplished in her: "The Father of mercies willed that the consent of the predestined Mother should precede the Incarnation." And Mary gives this consent after she has heard everything the messenger has to say. . . . The mystery of the Incarnation was accomplished when Mary uttered her fiat: "Let it be to me according to your word," which made possible, as far as it depended upon her in the divine plan, the granting of her Son's desire.³

Here the Rosary and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary may be recited or the following concluding prayer may be said.

Concluding Prayer

Lord God,
you have prepared a worthy dwelling place
for your Son by the Immaculate Conception
of the Virgin;
grant, we pray,
that as you preserved her from all stain of sin
in your foreknowledge of His death,
so we, by her intercession,
may come to you with pure hearts.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

FOURTH DAY

(DECEMBER 3)

Mary, blessed among women

Introductory Prayer

Lord, our God,
savior of the human family,
you brought salvation and joy
to the house of Elizabeth
through the visit of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
the Ark of the new Covenant.
We ask that, in obedience
to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,
we too may bring Christ to others,
and magnify your name
by the praise of our lips
and the holiness of our lives.
We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Reading

Lk 1:39-44

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy."

Consideration

Immediately after the narration of the Annunciation the evangelist Luke guides us in the footsteps of the Virgin of Nazareth towards "a city of Judah". According to scholars

this city would be the modern Ain Karim, situated in the mountains, not far from Jerusalem. Mary arrived there “in haste,” to visit Elizabeth her kinswoman . . .

Moved by charity, therefore, Mary goes to the house of her kinswoman. When Mary enters, Elizabeth replies to her greeting and feels the child leap in her womb, and being “filled with the Holy Spirit” she greets Mary with a loud cry: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!” Elizabeth’s exclamation or acclamation was subsequently to become part of the Hail Mary, as a continuation of the angel’s greeting, thus becoming one of the Church’s most frequently used prayers. But still more significant are the words of Elizabeth in the question which follows: “And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” Elizabeth bears witness to Mary: she recognizes and proclaims that before her stands the Mother of the Lord, the Mother of the Messiah. The son whom Elizabeth is carrying in her womb also shares in this witness: “The babe in my womb leaped for joy”. This child is the future John the Baptist, who at the Jordan will point out Jesus as the Messiah.⁴

Here the Rosary and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary may be recited or the following concluding prayer may be said.

Concluding Prayer

Lord God,
you have prepared a worthy dwelling place
for your Son by the Immaculate Conception
of the Virgin;
grant, we pray,
that as you preserved her from all stain of sin
in your foreknowledge of His death,
so we, by her intercession,
may come to you with pure hearts.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FIFTH DAY

(DECEMBER 4)

The Faith of Mary

Introductory Prayer

All-holy Father, eternal God,
in your goodness
you prepared a royal throne for your Wisdom
in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary;
bathe your Church in the radiance of your
life-giving Word,
that it may press forward on its pilgrim way
in the light of your truth,
and so come to the joy
of a perfect knowledge of your love.

God of wisdom,
in your desire to restore us to your friendship
after we had lost it by sin,
you chose the Blessed Virgin Mary
as the seat of your Wisdom.

Grant through her intercession
that we may not seek the folly of the wise
but the loving service
that marks out the poor in spirit.

We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Reading

Lk 1:45-56

[And Elizabeth exclaimed:]

. . . And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has regarded the low estate
of his handmaiden.

For behold, henceforth all generations
will call me blessed;

for he who is mighty
has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

And his mercy is on those who fear him
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm,
he has scattered the proud

in the imagination of their hearts,
he has put down the mighty
from their thrones,

and exalted those of low degree;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent empty away.

He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
as he spoke to our fathers,

to Abraham and to his posterity for ever."

And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her home.

Consideration

. . . Elizabeth's words "And blessed is she who believed" do not apply only to that particular moment of the Annunciation. Certainly the Annunciation is the culminating

moment of Mary's faith in her awaiting of Christ, but it is also the point of departure from which her whole "journey towards God" begins, her whole pilgrimage of faith. And on this road, in an eminent and truly heroic manner – indeed with an ever greater heroism of faith – the "obedience" which she professes to the word of divine revelation will be fulfilled. Mary's "obedience of faith" during the whole of her pilgrimage will show surprising similarities to the faith of Abraham. Just like the Patriarch of the People of God, so too Mary, during the pilgrimage of her filial and maternal fiat, "in hope believed against hope." . . .

In the expression "Blessed is she who believed," we can therefore rightly find a kind of "key" which unlocks for us the innermost reality of Mary, whom the angel hailed as "full of grace." If as "full of grace" she has been eternally present in the mystery of Christ, through faith she became a sharer in that mystery in every extension of her earthly journey. She "advanced in her pilgrimage of faith" and at the same time, in a discreet yet direct and effective way, she made present to humanity the mystery of Christ. And she still continues to do so. Through the mystery of Christ, she too is present within mankind. Thus through the mystery of the Son the mystery of the Mother is also made clear.⁵

Here the Rosary and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary may be recited or the following concluding prayer may be said.

Concluding Prayer

Lord God,
you have prepared a worthy dwelling place
for your Son by the Immaculate Conception
of the Virgin;
grant, we pray,
that as you preserved her from all stain of sin
in your foreknowledge of His death,
so we, by her intercession,
may come to you with pure hearts.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

SIXTH DAY

(DECEMBER 5)

Mary, co-redemptrix

Introductory Prayer

Lord our God,
in your eternal wisdom
you fill out the passion of Christ
through the suffering that his members endure
in the many trials of this life.
As you gave his Mother strength in her agony
to stand by the cross of your Son,

grant that we too may bring loving comfort to others in their distress of mind or body.

We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Reading

Lk 2:25-35

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to thy people Israel."

And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed."

Consideration

A just and God-fearing man, called Simeon, appears at this beginning of Mary's "journey" of faith. His words, suggested by the Holy Spirit, confirm the truth of the Annunciation. For we read that he took up in his arms the child to whom – in accordance with the angel's command – the name Jesus was given (cf. Lk 2:21). Simeon's words match the meaning of this name, which is Savior: "God is salvation." Turning to the Lord, he says: "For my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel." At the same time, however, Simeon addresses Mary with the following words: "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against, that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed"; and he adds with direct reference to her: "and a sword will pierce through your own soul also."

Simeon's words cast new light on the announcement which Mary had heard from the angel: Jesus is the Savior, he is "a light for revelation" to mankind. Is not this what was manifested in a way on Christmas night, when the shepherds came to the stable (cf. Lk 2:8-20)? Is not this what was to be manifested even more clearly in the coming of the Magi from the East (cf. Mt 2:1-12)? But at the same time, at the very beginning of his life, the Son of Mary, and his Mother with him, will experience in themselves the truth of those other words of Simeon: "a sign that is spoken against."

Simeon's words seem like a second Annunciation to Mary, for they tell her of the actual historical situation in which the Son is to accomplish his mission, namely, in misunderstanding and sorrow. While this announcement on the one hand confirms her faith in the accomplishment of the divine promises of salvation, on the other hand it also

reveals to her that she will have to live her obedience of faith in suffering, at the side of the suffering Savior, and that her motherhood will be mysterious and sorrowful.⁶

Here the Rosary and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary may be recited or the following concluding prayer may be said.

Concluding Prayer

Lord God,
you have prepared a worthy dwelling place
for your Son by the Immaculate Conception
of the Virgin;
grant, we pray,
that as you preserved her from all stain of sin
in your foreknowledge of His death,
so we, by her intercession,
may come to you with pure hearts.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

SEVENTH DAY

(DECEMBER 6)

*Mary, the first of those who heard
the word of God and did it*

Introductory Prayer

Lord our God,
you sent your Son from heaven
into the womb of the Blessed Virgin
to be your saving word and our bread of life:
grant that like Mary we may welcome Christ,
by treasuring his words in our hearts
and celebrating in faith
the deep mysteries of our redemption.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading

Lk 11:27-28

As he said this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!" But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

Consideration

The Gospel of Luke records the moment when "a woman in the crowd raised her voice" and said to Jesus: "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!" These words were an expression of praise of Mary as Jesus' mother according to the flesh . . .

But to the blessing uttered by that woman upon her who was his mother according to the flesh, Jesus replies in a significant way: “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it” (Lk 11:28). He wishes to divert attention from motherhood understood only as a fleshly bond, in order to direct it towards those mysterious bonds of the spirit which develop from hearing and keeping God's word.

. . . Without any doubt, Mary is worthy of blessing by the very fact that she became the mother of Jesus according to the flesh (“Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked”), but also and especially because already at the Annunciation she accepted the word of God, because she believed it, because she was obedient to God, and because she “kept” the word and “pondered it in her heart” (cf. Lk 1:38, 45; 2:19, 51) and by means of her whole life accomplished it. Thus we can say that the blessing proclaimed by Jesus is not in opposition, despite appearances, to the blessing uttered by the unknown woman, but rather coincides with that blessing in the person of this Virgin Mother, who called herself only “the handmaid of the Lord” (Lk 1:38). . . .

If through faith Mary became the bearer of the Son given to her by the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit, while preserving her virginity intact, in that same faith she discovered and accepted the other dimension of motherhood revealed by Jesus during his messianic mission. One can say that this dimension of motherhood belonged to Mary from the beginning, that is to say from the moment of the conception and birth of her Son. From that time she was “the one who believed.” . . . Thus in a sense Mary as Mother became the first “disciple” of her Son, the first to whom he seemed to say: “Follow me,” even before he addressed this call to the Apostles or to anyone else (cf. Jn 1:43).⁷

Here the Rosary and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary **may be recited or the following concluding prayer may be said.**

Concluding Prayer

Lord God,
you have prepared a worthy dwelling place
for your Son by the Immaculate Conception
of the Virgin;
grant, we pray,
that as you preserved her from all stain of sin
in your foreknowledge of His death,
so we, by her intercession,
may come to you with pure hearts.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

EIGHTH DAY

(DECEMBER 7)

Mary, mediatrix of all graces

Introductory Prayer

God of heaven and earth,
your Son, Jesus the Lord,

while dying on the altar of the cross
chose Mary, his mother, to be our mother also.
Grant that we
who entrust ourselves to her maternal care
may always be protected
when we call upon her name.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading

Jn 2: 1-11

On the third day there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; Jesus also was invited to the marriage, with his disciples. When the wine failed, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "O woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

Now six stone jars were standing there, for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the steward of the feast." So they took it.

When the steward of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine; but you have kept the good wine until now." This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Consideration

Mary is present at Cana in Galilee as the Mother of Jesus, and in a significant way she contributes to that "beginning of the signs" which reveal the messianic power of her Son. We read: "When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her. 'O woman. what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come.'" In John's Gospel that "hour" means the time appointed by the Father when the Son accomplishes his task and is to be glorified (cf. Jn 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1; 19:27). Even though Jesus' reply to his mother sounds like a refusal (especially if we consider the blunt statement "My hour has not yet come" rather than the question), Mary nevertheless turns to the servants and says to them: "Do whatever he tells you." Then Jesus orders the servants to fill the stone jars with water, and the water becomes wine, better than the wine which has previously been served to the wedding guests.⁸

. . . [I]n this passage of John's Gospel we find as it were a first manifestation of the truth concerning Mary's maternal care. This truth has also found expression in the teaching of the Second Vatican Council ... "Mary's maternal function towards mankind in no way obscures or diminishes the unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows its efficacy," because "there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim 2: 5) . . . [T]he episode at Cana in Galilee offers us a sort of first announcement of

Mary's mediation, wholly oriented towards Christ and tending to the revelation of his salvific power.

From the text of John it is evident that it is a mediation which is maternal. As the Council proclaims: Mary became "a mother to us in the order of grace." This motherhood in the order of grace flows from her divine motherhood. Because she was, by the design of divine Providence, the mother who nourished the divine Redeemer, Mary became "an associate of unique nobility, and the Lord's humble handmaid," who "cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the Savior's work of restoring supernatural life to souls." And "this maternity of Mary in the order of grace. . .will last without interruption until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect."⁹

Here the Rosary and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary may be recited or the following concluding prayer may be said.

Concluding Prayer

Lord God,
you have prepared a worthy dwelling place
for your Son by the Immaculate Conception
of the Virgin;
grant, we pray,
that as you preserved her from all stain of sin
in your foreknowledge of His death,
so we, by her intercession,
may come to you with pure hearts.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

NINTH DAY

(DECEMBER 8)

Mary, mother of God and our mother

Introductory Prayer

God of mercies,
your only Son, while hanging on the cross,
appointed Mary, his mother,
to be our mother also.
Like her, and under her loving care,
may your Church grow day by day,
rejoice in the holiness of its children,
and so attract to itself all the peoples of the earth.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

Reading

Jn 19:23-27

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus they took his garments and made four parts, one for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was without seam, woven from top to bottom; so they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for

it to see whose it shall be." This was to fulfil the scripture, "They parted my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." So the soldiers did this.

But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

Consideration

If John's description of the event at Cana presents Mary's caring motherhood at the beginning of Christ's messianic activity, another passage from the same Gospel confirms this motherhood in the salvific economy of grace at its crowning moment, namely when Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, his Paschal Mystery, is accomplished. John's description is concise: "Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother: 'Woman, behold your son!' Then he said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother!' And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home."

. . . And yet the "testament of Christ's Cross" says more. Jesus highlights a new relationship between Mother and Son, the whole truth and reality of which he solemnly confirms. One can say that if Mary's motherhood of the human race had already been outlined, now it is clearly stated and established. It emerges from the definitive accomplishment of the Redeemer's Paschal Mystery. The Mother of Christ, who stands at the very center of this mystery – a mystery which embraces each individual and all humanity – is given as mother to every single individual and all mankind.¹⁰

Here the Rosary and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary may be recited or the following concluding prayer may be said.

Concluding Prayer

Lord God,
you have prepared a worthy dwelling place
for your Son by the Immaculate Conception
of the Virgin;
grant, we pray,
that as you preserved her from all stain of sin
in your foreknowledge of His death,
so we, by her intercession,
may come to you with pure hearts.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

DEVOTIONS TO ST. JOSEPH

God chose Joseph to be the husband of the Virgin Mary and is considered as the second greatest saint, next to her. He took an active part in the divine plan of Redemption, being an example of humility, and faith. Scripture also tells us that he was just, pure, gentle, prudent, and unfailingly obedient to the divine will. Joseph worked as an artisan carrying out his work for the glory of God – sanctifying his profession. He died in the presence of Jesus and Mary. We wish to imitate him by renewing our desire to be faithful. We know that the only meaning of our life is to be faithful to the Lord till the last day as was Joseph. Pope Pius IX named him Patron of the Universal Church and Pope John XXIII included his name in the Roman Canon.

“What must Joseph have been, how grace must have worked through him, that he should be able to fulfill this task of the human upbringing of the Son of God.

“For Jesus must have resembled Joseph: in his way of working, in the features of his character, in his way of speaking. Jesus’ realism, his eye for detail, the way he sat at table and broke bread, his preference for using everyday situations to give doctrine – all this reflects his childhood and the influence of Joseph.

“It’s not possible to ignore this sublime mystery: Jesus who is man, who speaks with the accent of a particular district of Israel, who resembles a carpenter called Joseph, is the Son of God.”¹

SEVEN SUNDAYS

Joseph shared the happiness, but also the sufferings of Mary. The Seven Sundays devotion honors the seven joys and seven sorrows of St. Joseph. It starts on the seventh Sunday previous to March 19 (the last Sunday of January or the first Sunday of February).

First Sunday

His sorrow when he decided to leave the Blessed Virgin; his joy when the angel told him the mystery of the Incarnation, that Mary’s child is the Son of God and is the awaited Messiah.

Introductory Prayer

O chaste spouse of Mary,
great was the trouble and anguish of your heart
when you were considering
to send away quietly your inviolate Spouse,
yet your joy was unspeakable,
when the surpassing mystery of the Incarnation
was made known to you by the angel.

By this sorrow and this joy
we beseech you to comfort our souls,
both now and in the sorrows of our final hour,
with the joy of a good life and a holy death
after the pattern of your own life
and death in the arms of Jesus and Mary.

Reading

Mt 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to send her away quietly.

But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us).

When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus.

Consideration

"In the course of that pilgrimage of faith which was his life, Joseph, like Mary, remained faithful to God's call until the end. While Mary's life was the bringing to fullness of that *fiat* first spoken at the Annunciation, at the moment of Joseph's own "annunciation" he said nothing; instead he simply "did as the angel of the Lord commanded him". And this first "doing" became the beginning of "Joseph's way."²

In the words of the "annunciation" by night, Joseph not only heard the divine truth concerning his wife's indescribable vocation; he also heard once again the truth about his own vocation. This "just" man, who, in the spirit of the noblest traditions of the Chosen People, loved the Virgin of Nazareth and was bound to her by a husband's love, was once again called by God to this love."

"Joseph did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife" into his home; what was conceived in Mary was "of the Holy Spirit." From expressions such as these are we not to suppose that his love as a man was also given new birth by the Holy Spirit? Are we not to think that the love of God which has been poured forth into the human heart through the Holy Spirit (cf. Rm 5:5) molds every human love to perfection? . . .

"Through his complete self-sacrifice, Joseph expressed his generous love for the Mother of God, and gave her a husband's 'gift of self.' Even though he decided to draw back so as not to interfere in the plan of God which was coming to pass in Mary, Joseph obeyed the explicit command of the angel and took Mary into his home, while respecting the fact that she belonged exclusively to God."⁴

Here the Litany of St. Joseph may be recited. Otherwise the following prayer may be said.

Concluding Prayer

V. Pray for us, blessed Joseph.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray
Almighty God,
in your infinite wisdom and love
you chose Joseph to be the husband of Mary,
the mother of your Son.
As we enjoy his protection on earth
may we have the help of his prayers in heaven.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Second Sunday

His sorrow when he saw Jesus born in poverty; his joy when the angels announced Jesus' birth.

Introductory Prayer

O most blessed patriarch, glorious Saint Joseph,
who was chosen to be the foster father
of the Word made flesh,
your sorrow at seeing the child Jesus
born in such poverty
was suddenly changed into heavenly exultation
when you heard the angelic hymn,
and beheld the glories of that resplendent night.
By this sorrow and this joy,
we implore you to obtain for us
the grace to pass over from life's pathway
to hear the angelic songs of praise,
and to rejoice in the shining splendor
of celestial glory.

Reading

Lk 2: 1-20

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinus was governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear.

And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!"

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Consideration

"Journeying to Bethlehem for the census in obedience to the orders of legitimate authority, Joseph fulfilled for the child the significant task of officially inserting the name 'Jesus, son of Joseph of Nazareth' (cf. Jn 1:45) in the registry of the Roman Empire. This registration clearly shows that Jesus belongs to the human race as a man among men, a citizen of this world, subject to laws and civil institutions, but also 'savior of the world' . . .

"As guardian of the mystery hidden for ages in the mind of God, which begins to unfold before his eyes 'in the fullness of time,' Joseph, together with Mary, is a privileged witness to the birth of the Son of God into the world on Christmas night in Bethlehem.

"Joseph was an eyewitness to this birth, which took place in conditions that, humanly speaking, were embarrassing—a first announcement of that 'self-emptying' (cf. Phil 2:5-8) which Christ freely accepted for the forgiveness of sins. Joseph also witnessed the adoration of the shepherds who arrived at Jesus' birthplace after the angel had brought them the great and happy news (cf. Lk 2:15-16). Later he also witnessed the homage of the magi who came from the East (cf. Mt 2:11)."⁴

Here the Litany of St. Joseph may be recited. Otherwise the following prayer may be said.

Concluding Prayer

V. Pray for us, blessed Joseph.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray

Almighty God,

in your infinite wisdom and love

you chose Joseph to be the husband of Mary,

the mother of your Son.
As we enjoy his protection on earth
may we have the help of his prayers in heaven.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Third Sunday

His sorrow when he saw Jesus' blood shed in circumcision; his joy in giving Him the name Jesus.

Introductory Prayer

O glorious Saint Joseph,
who faithfully obeyed the law of God,
your heart was pierced
at the sight of the most precious Blood
that was shed by the infant Saviour during
his circumcision,
but the name of Jesus gave you new life
and filled you with quiet joy.

By this thy sorrow and this thy joy,
obtain for us the grace
to be freed from all sin during life,
and to die rejoicing,
with the holy name of Jesus in our hearts
and on our lips.

Reading

Lk 2:21

And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Consideration

"A son's circumcision was the first religious obligation of a father, and with this ceremony Joseph exercised his right and duty with regard to Jesus.

The principle which holds that all the rites of the Old Testament are a shadow of the reality (cf. Heb 9:9ff.; 10:1) serves to explain why Jesus would accept them. As with all the other rites, circumcision too is "fulfilled" in Jesus. God's covenant with Abraham, of which circumcision was the sign (cf. Gn 17:13), reaches its full effect and perfect realization in Jesus, who is the "yes" of all the ancient promises (cf. 2 Cor 1:20).

At the circumcision Joseph names the child "Jesus." This is the only name in which there is salvation (cf. Acts 4:12). Its significance had been revealed to Joseph at the moment of his "annunciation": "You shall call the child Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (cf. Mt 1:21). In conferring the name, Joseph declares his own legal fatherhood over Jesus, and in speaking the name he proclaims the child's mission as Savior."⁵

Here the Litany of St. Joseph may be recited. Otherwise the following prayer may be said.

Concluding Prayer

V. Pray for us, blessed Joseph.

R. **That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.**

Let us pray

Almighty God,
in your infinite wisdom and love
you chose Joseph to be the husband of Mary,
the mother of your Son.

As we enjoy his protection on earth
may we have the help of his prayers in heaven.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Fourth Sunday

His sorrow when he heard the prophecy of Simeon; his joy when he learned that many will be saved through the sufferings of Jesus.

Introductory Prayer

O most faithful Saint Joseph,
who shared the mysteries of our Redemption,
the prophecy of Simeon
touching the sufferings of Jesus and Mary
caused you to shudder with mortal dread,
but at the same time filled you with a blessed joy
for the salvation and glorious resurrection
which would be attained by countless souls.

By this thy sorrow and this thy joy,
obtain for us that we may be
of the number of those who,
through the merits of Jesus
and the intercession of Mary the Virgin Mother,
are predestined to a glorious resurrection.

Reading

Lk 2:22-35

And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him

according to the custom of the law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

“Lord, now lettest thou thy servant
depart in peace,
according to thy word;
for mine eyes have seen thy salvation
which thou hast prepared in the presence
of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to thy people Israel.”

And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.”

Consideration

“This rite, to which Luke refers, includes the ransom of the first-born and sheds light on the subsequent stay of Jesus in the Temple at the age of twelve.

“The ransoming of the first-born is another obligation of the father, and it is fulfilled by Joseph. Represented in the first-born is the people of the covenant, ransomed from slavery in order to belong to God. Here too, Jesus – who is the true ‘price’ of ransom (cf. 1 Cor 6:20; 7:23; 1 Pt 1:19) – not only ‘fulfills’ the Old Testament rite, but at the same time transcends it, since he is not a subject to be redeemed, but the very author of redemption.

“The gospel writer notes that ‘his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him’, in particular at what Simeon said in his canticle to God, when he referred to Jesus as the ‘salvation which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel’ and as a ‘sign that is spoken against.’⁶

“Together with Mary, Joseph is the first guardian of this divine mystery. Together with Mary, and in relation to Mary, he shares in this final phase of God’s self-revelation in Christ, and he does so from the very beginning.”⁷

Here the Litany of St. Joseph may be recited. Otherwise the following prayer may be said.

Concluding Prayer

V. Pray for us, blessed Joseph.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray

Almighty God,
in your infinite wisdom and love
you chose Joseph to be the husband of Mary,
the mother of your Son.

As we enjoy his protection on earth
may we have the help of his prayers in heaven.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Fifth Sunday

His sorrow when he had to flee to Egypt with the Child Jesus and Mary; his joy in being always with Jesus and Mary.

Introductory Prayer

O most watchful guardian of the Son of God,
glorious Saint Joseph,
great was your toil in supporting
and waiting upon the Son of the God,
especially in the flight into Egypt!
Yet, how you rejoiced
to have God himself always near you.
By this sorrow and this joy,
obtain for us the grace of keeping ourselves
safe from the devil,
especially by fleeing from dangerous occasions.
May we serve Jesus and Mary,
and for them alone may we live, and happily die.

Reading

Mt 2:13-15

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son."

Consideration

Herod learned from the magi who came from the East about the birth of the "king of the Jews" (Mt 2:2). And when the magi departed, he "sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under" (Mt 2:16). By killing them all, he wished to kill the new-born "king of the Jews" whom he had heard about.⁸

". . . The Church deeply venerates this Family, and proposes it as the model of all families. Inserted directly in the mystery of the Incarnation, the Family of Nazareth has its own special mystery. And in this mystery, as in the Incarnation, one finds a true fatherhood: the human form of the family of the Son of God, a true human family, formed by the divine mystery. In this family, Joseph is the father: his fatherhood is not one that derives from begetting offspring; but neither is it an "apparent" or merely "substitute" fatherhood. Rather, it is one that fully shares in authentic human fatherhood and the mission of a father in the family. This is a consequence of the hypostatic union: humanity taken up into the unity of the Divine Person of the Word-Son, Jesus Christ. Together with human nature, all that is human, and especially the family – as the first dimension of

man's existence in the world – is also taken up in Christ. Within this context, Joseph's human fatherhood was also "taken up" in the mystery of Christ's Incarnation."⁹

Here the Litany of St. Joseph may be recited. Otherwise the following prayer may be said.

Concluding Prayer

V. Pray for us, blessed Joseph.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray

Almighty God,

in your infinite wisdom and love

you chose Joseph to be the husband of Mary,
the mother of your Son.

As we enjoy his protection on earth
may we have the help of his prayers in heaven.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sixth Sunday

His sorrow when he was afraid to return to his homeland; his joy on being told by the angel to go to Nazareth.

Introductory Prayer

O glorious Saint Joseph,
you marveled to see the King of Heaven
obedient to your commands.

Your consolation in bringing Jesus
out of the land of Egypt

was troubled by your fear of Archelaus.
Nevertheless, being assured by an angel,
you lived in gladness at Nazareth
with Jesus and Mary.

By this sorrow and this joy,
obtain for us that our hearts
may be delivered from harmful fears,
that so we may rejoice in peace of conscience
and may live with Jesus and Mary,
and, like you, may die in their company.

Reading

Mt 2:19-23; Lk 2:40

But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead."

And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district

of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Consideration

Work was the daily expression of love in the life of the Family of Nazareth. The Gospel specifies the kind of work Joseph did in order to support his family: he was a carpenter. This simple word sums up Joseph's entire life. For Jesus, these were hidden years, the years to which Luke refers after recounting the episode that occurred in the Temple: "And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them" (Lk 2:51). This "submission" or obedience of Jesus in the house of Nazareth should be understood as a sharing in the work of Joseph. Having learned the work of his presumed father, he was known as "the carpenter's son." If the Family of Nazareth is an example and model for human families, in the order of salvation and holiness, so too, by analogy, is Jesus' work at the side of Joseph the carpenter. In our own day, the Church has emphasized this by instituting the liturgical memorial of St. Joseph the Worker on May 1. Human work, and especially manual labor, receive special prominence in the Gospel. Along with the humanity of the Son of God, work too has been taken up in the mystery of the Incarnation, and has also been redeemed in a special way. At the workbench where he plied his trade together with Jesus, Joseph brought human work closer to the mystery of the Redemption.

In the human growth of Jesus "in wisdom, age and grace," the virtue of industriousness played a notable role, since "work is a human good" which "transforms nature" and makes man "in a sense, more human."

What is crucially important here is the sanctification of daily life, a sanctification which each person must acquire according to his or her own state, and one which can be promoted according to a model accessible to all people: "St. Joseph is the model of those humble ones that Christianity raises up to great destinies; . . . he is the proof that in order to be a good and genuine follower of Christ, there is no need of great things – it is enough to have the common, simple and human virtues, but they need to be true and authentic."¹⁰

Here the Litany of St. Joseph may be recited. Otherwise the following prayer may be said.

Concluding Prayer

V. Pray for us, blessed Joseph.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray

Almighty God,

in your infinite wisdom and love

you chose Joseph to be the husband of Mary,

the mother of your Son.

As we enjoy his protection on earth
may we have the help of his prayers in heaven.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Seventh Sunday

His sorrow when he lost the Child Jesus; his joy in finding Him in the temple.

Introductory Prayer

O glorious Saint Joseph,
pattern of all holiness,
when you lost the child Jesus,
you sought him sorrowing
 for the space of three days,
until with great joy you found him again
 in the temple,
sitting in the midst of the doctors.
By this sorrow and this joy,
we ask you, with our hearts upon our lips,
to keep us from ever having the misfortune
to lose Jesus through mortal sin.
Grant also that we always may seek him
 with unceasing sorrow,
when we commit a serious sin,
until we find him again,
ready to show us his great mercy
in the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Reading

Lk 2:41-50

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom; and when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the company they went a day's journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances; and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him.

After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously."

And he said to them, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" And they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them.

Consideration

Joseph, of whom Mary had just used the words “your father,” heard this answer. That, after all, is what all the people said and thought: Jesus was “the son (as was supposed) of Joseph” (Lk 3:23). Nonetheless, the reply of Jesus in the Temple brought once again to the mind of his “presumed father” what he had heard on that night twelve years earlier: “Joseph . . . do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.” From that time onwards he knew that he was a guardian of the mystery of God, and it was precisely this mystery that the twelve-year-old Jesus brought to mind: “I must be in my Father’s house.”¹¹

Here the Litany of St. Joseph may be recited. Otherwise the following prayer may be said.

Concluding Prayer

V. Pray for us, blessed Joseph.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray

Almighty God,
in your infinite wisdom and love
you chose Joseph to be the husband of Mary,
the mother of your Son.

As we enjoy his protection on earth
may we have the help of his prayers in heaven.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

LITANY OF SAINT JOSEPH

Lord, have mercy **Lord, have mercy**
Christ, have mercy **Christ, have mercy**
Holy Trinity, one God **have mercy on us**

Holy Mary **pray for us**
Saint Joseph **pray for us**
Noble son of the House of David **pray for us**
Light of patriarchs **pray for us**
Husband of the Mother of God **pray for us**
Guardian of the Virgin **pray for us**
Foster father of the Son of God **pray for us**
Faithful guardian of Christ **pray for us**
Head of the holy family **pray for us**
Joseph, chaste and just **pray for us**
Joseph, prudent and brave **pray for us**
Joseph, obedient and loyal **pray for us**
Pattern of patience **pray for us**
Lover of poverty **pray for us**
Model of workers **pray for us**
Example to parents **pray for us**
Guardian of virgins **pray for us**
Pillar of family life **pray for us**
Comfort of the troubled **pray for us**
Hope of the sick **pray for us**
Patron of the dying **pray for us**
Terror of evil spirits **pray for us**
Protector of the Church **pray for us**

Lamb of God, you take away
the sins of the world **have mercy on us**
Lamb of God, you take away
the sins of the world **have mercy on us**
Lamb of God, you take away
the sins of the world **have mercy on us**

V. God made him master of his household.
R. And put him in charge of all that he owned.

Let us pray.

Almighty God,
in your infinite wisdom and love
you chose Joseph to be the husband of Mary,
the mother of your Son.

As we enjoy his protection on earth
may we have the help of his prayers in heaven.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

VARIOUS PRAYERS

PERSONAL MEDITATION

Before

My Lord and my God, I firmly believe that you are here, that you see me, that you hear me. I adore you with profound reverence; I beg your pardon for my sins and the grace to spend this time of prayer fruitfully. My immaculate Mother, St. Joseph my father and lord, my guardian angel, intercede for me.

After

I thank you, my God, for the good resolutions, affections and inspirations that you have communicated to me in this meditation. I beg your help in performing them. My immaculate Mother, St. Joseph my father and lord, my guardian angel, intercede for me.

SPIRITUAL READING

Before

Veni, Sancte Spíritus, reple tuórum corda fidélium, et tui amóris in eis ignem accénde. Emitte Spíritum tuum, et creabúntur.

R. Et renovábis fáciem terræ.

Orémus. Deus, qui corda fidélium Sancti Spíritus illustratióne docuísti, da nobis in eodem Spíritu recta sápere, et de ejus semper consolatióne gaudére. Per Christum Dóminum nostrum.

R. Amen.

Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created.

R. And you shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray.

O God, who has taught the hearts of the faithful
by the light of the Holy Spirit,
grant that by the gift of the same Spirit
we may be always truly wise
and ever rejoice in his consolation.
Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

After

V. Agimus tibi grátias, omnípotens Deus, pro univérsis
benefíciis tuis, qui vivis et regnas in sæcula sæculórum.

R. Amen.

V. Deus det nobis suam pacem.

R. Et vitam ætérrnam.

V. Amen.

V. We give you thanks, almighty God, for all your benefits, who live and reign for ever
and ever.

R. Amen.

V. May the Lord grant us his peace.

R. And life everlasting.

V. Amen.

BLESSING BEFORE MEALS

V. Bénedic, Dómine, nos et hæc tua dona quæ de tua largitáte
sumus sumptúri. Per Christum Dóminum nostrum.

R. Amen

(Add for midday)

V. Mensæ cæléstis partícipes fáciat nos, Rex ætérrnæ glóriæ.

R. Amen.

(Add for evening)

V. Ad coénam vitæ ætérrnæ perdúcat nos, Rex ætérrnæ glóriæ.

R. Amen.

V. Bless us, O Lord, and these your gifts which we are about to receive from your
bounty, through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen

(Add for midday)

V. May the King of everlasting glory make us partakers of the heavenly table.

R. Amen.

(Add for evening)

V. May the King of everlasting glory lead us to the banquet of life eternal.

R. Amen.

GRACE AFTER MEALS

V. Ágimus tibi grátias, omnípotens Deus, pro univérsis beneficiis tuis, qui vivis et regnas in sæcula sæculórum.

R. Amen.

V. Deus det nobis suam pacem.

R. Et vitam ætérnam.

Amen.

V. We give you thanks, almighty God, for all your benefits, who live and reign for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

V. May the Lord grant us his peace.

R. And life everlasting.

V. Amen.

SOME ASPIRATIONS

Abba, Pater! (Gal 4:6)

Adauge nobis fidem (Lk 17:5).

Ago tibi grátias pro univérsis beneficiis tuis, étiam ignótis.

Apud Deum ómnia possibília sunt (Mt 19:26).

Cor contrítum, et humiliátum, Deus non despícies (Ps 50:19).

Cor Iesu sacratíssimum, dona nobis pacem.

Cor Mariæ dulcíssimum, iter para tutum.

Cor mundum crea in me, Deus (Ps 50:12).

Credo, sed ádjuva incredulitátem meam (Mk 9:23).

Deo omnis glória.

Diligéntibus Deum ómnia coóperantur in bonum (Rom 3:28).

Dómine, quid me vis fácere? (Acts 9:6).

Dómine, tu ómnia nosti; tu scis quia amo te (Jn 21:17).

Dómine, ut vídeam (Lk 18:41).

Dóminus meus et Deus meus. (Jn 20:28).

Ecce ego, quia vocásti me (1 Kgs. 3:6).

Fílius hóminis non venit ut ministrarétur ei, sed ut ministráret (Mk 10:45).

Iesu, fili David, miserére mei peccatóris (Mk 10:47).

Iesu, Iesu, esto mihi semper Iesus.
Illum oportet crescere, me autem minui (Jn 3:30).
In te, Dómine, sperávi; non confúndar in ætérnum (Ps 30:2).
Jesu, fili David, miserére mei (Mk 10:47).
Mater pulchræ dilectiónis, fílios tuos ádjuva.
Meus cibus est ut fáciam voluntátem ejus qui misit me, ut
perfíciam opus ejus (Jn 4:34).
Monstra te esse matrem.
Non volúntas mea, sed tua fiat (Mt 26:39).
Ómnia possum in eo qui me confórtat (Phil 4:13).
Páuper servus et húmilis.
Quia tu es, Deus, fortitúdo mea (Ps 42:2).
Regína apostolórum, ora pro nobis.
Sancta María, spes nostra, ancílla Dómini, ora pro nobis.
Sancta María, spes nostra, sedes sapiéntiæ, ora pro nobis.
Sancta María, stella maris, fílios tuos ádiuva.
Sine me nihil potéstis fácere (Jn 15:5).
Tantum dic verbo (Mt 8:8).

A clean heart create for me, O God.
A contrite and humble heart, O God, you will not despise.
A poor and lowly servant am I.
All the glory for God.
For those who love God all things work together unto good.
For you, O God, are my strength.
He must increase, but I must decrease.
Here I am, for you did call me.
Holy Mary, our hope, handmaid of the Lord, pray for us.
Holy Mary, our hope, seat of wisdom, pray for us.
Holy Mary, star of the sea, help your children.
I can do all things in Him who strengthens me.
I do believe; help my unbelief.
I give you thanks for all your benefits, even the unknown ones.
In you, O Lord, I take refuge: let me never be put to shame.
Jesus, Jesus, always be Jesus to me.
Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me, a sinner!

Lord, increase our faith.

Lord, that I may see!

Lord, what do you want me to do?

Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you!

Mother of fair love, help your children.

My Lord and my God!

Not as I will, but as you will.

Queen of apostles, pray for us.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, grant us peace.

Show that you are our mother.

Sweet heart of Mary, prepare a safe way for us.

PRAYERS AT THE TIME OF DEATH

As death approaches, the Church stays close to the one who is dying, to give comfort and support. The family should ask that holy communion be brought to the dying. This is viaticum, food for the journey. Members of the local Church may wish to join the family in a vigil of prayer. After death, the family is encouraged to continue in prayer, to take part in the preparation of the vigil (wake) and funeral liturgies, and to participate in the preparation of the body for burial. In all of these moments, many of the traditional prayers of the Church may be chosen.

VIATICUM

Viaticum is the sacrament of the dying. In viaticum the dying person is united with Christ in his passage out of this world to the Father. When the minister has brought holy communion, the rite may begin with the renewal of the dying person's profession of faith.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

V. Do you reject sin so as to live in the freedom of God's children?

R. I do.

V. Do you reject the glamor of evil and refuse to be mastered by sin?

R. I do.

V. Do you reject Satan, father of sin and prince of darkness?

R. I do.

V. Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

R. I do.

V. Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

R. I do.

V. Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

R. I do.

V. This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.

R. Amen.

Viaticum is then celebrated in the same manner as Communion of the sick (p. 308), but after giving communion, the minister says:

May the Lord Jesus Christ protect you
and lead you to eternal life.

R. Amen.

The concluding prayer follows:

God of peace,
you offer eternal healing to those who believe
in you;
you have refreshed your servant **N.**
with food and drink from heaven:
lead him/her safely into the kingdom of light.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

COMMENDATION OF THE DYING*

Through the prayers for the commendation of the dying the Church helps to sustain this union until it is brought to fulfillment after death.

Christians have the responsibility of expressing their union in Christ by joining the dying person in prayer for God's mercy and for confidence in Christ. In particular, the presence of a priest or deacon shows more clearly that the Christian dies in the communion of the Church. He should assist the dying person and those present in the recitation of the prayers of commendation and, following death, he should lead those present in the prayer after death. If the priest or deacon is unable to be present because of other serious pastoral obligations, other members of the community should be prepared to assist with these prayers and should have the texts readily available to them.

The minister may choose texts from among the prayers, litanies, aspirations, psalms, and readings that appear below; others may be added. In the selection of these texts the minister should keep in mind the condition and piety of both the dying person and the members of the family who are present. The prayers are best said in a slow, quiet voice, alternating with periods of silence. If possible, the minister says one or more of the brief formulas with the dying person. These may be softly repeated two or three times.

These texts are intended to help the dying person, if still conscious, to face the natural human anxiety about death by imitating Christ in his patient suffering and dying. The Christian will be helped to surmount his or her fear in the hope of heavenly life and resurrection through the power of Christ, who destroyed the power of death by his own dying.

Even if the dying person is not conscious, those who are present will draw consolation from these prayers and come to a better understanding of the paschal character of Christian death.

This may be visibly expressed by making the sign of the cross on the forehead of the dying person, who was first signed with the cross at baptism.

Immediately after death has occurred, all may kneel while one of those present leads the prayers.

SHORT TEXTS

One or more of the following short texts may be recited with the dying person. If necessary, they may be softly repeated two or three times.

Who can separate us from the love of Christ?

Romans 8:35

Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

Romans 14:8

We have an everlasting home in heaven

2 Corinthians 5:1

We shall be with the Lord for ever.

1 Thessalonians 4:17

We shall see God as He really is.

1 John 3:2

We have passed from death to life because we love each other. **1 John 3:14**

To you, Lord, I lift up my soul.

Psalms 25:1

The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Psalms 27:1

I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Psalms 27:13

My soul thirsts for the living God.

Psalms 42:3

Though I walk in the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me. **Psalms 23:4**

In my Father's home there are many dwelling places, says the Lord Jesus. **John 14:2**

Come, blessed of my Father, says the Lord Jesus, and take possession of the kingdom prepared for you.

Matthew 25:34

The Lord Jesus says, today you will be with me in paradise.

Luke 23:43

The Lord Jesus says, I go to prepare a place for you, and I will come again to take you to myself.

John 14:2-3

I desire that where I am, they also may be with me, says the Lord Jesus. **John 17:24**

Everyone who believes in the Son has eternal life.

John 6:40

Into your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit.

Psalms 31:5a

Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

Acts 7:59

Holy Mary, pray for me.

Saint Joseph, pray for me.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, assist me in my last agony.

BIBLICAL READINGS

The word of God is proclaimed by one of those present or by the minister.

Isaiah 35:3-4; 6c-7; 10.1

John 4:16.

Job 19:23-27a.

Psalms 23.

Psalms 25:1,5-11.

Psalms 91.

Psalms 114.

Psalms 115:3-5.

Psalms 121:1-4.

Psalms 123.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4.

Revelation 21:1-5a, 6-7

Matthew 25:1-13.

Mark 15:33-37.

Mark 16:1-8.

Luke 22:39-46.

Luke 23:42-43.

Luke 24:1-8.

John 6:37-40.

John 14:1-6; 23; 27.

LITANY OF THE SAINTS

When the condition of the dying person calls for the use of brief forms of prayer, those who are present are encouraged to pray the litany of the saints—or at least some of its invocations—for him or her. Special mention may be made of the patron saints of the dying person, of the family, and of the parish. The litany may be said or sung in the usual way. Other customary prayers may also be used.

Lord, have mercy **Lord, have mercy**
Christ, have mercy **Christ, have mercy**
Lord, have mercy **Lord, have mercy**
Holy Mary, Mother of God **pray for him/her**
Holy angels of God
Abraham, our father in faith
David, leader of God's people
All holy patriarchs and prophets
Saint John the Baptist
Saint Joseph
Saint Peter and Saint Paul **pray for him/her**
Saint Andrew
Saint John
Saint Mary Magdalene
Saint Stephen
Saint Ignatius
Saint Lawrence
Saint Perpetua and Saint Felicity
Saint Agnes
Saint Gregory
Saint Augustine
Saint Athanasius
Saint Basil
Saint Martin
Saint Benedict
Saint Francis and Saint Dominic
Saint Francis Xavier

Saint John Vianney

Saint Catherine

Saint Teresa

Other saints may be included here.

All holy men and women

Lord, be merciful **Lord, save your people**

From all evil

From every sin

From Satan's power

At the moment of death **Lord, save your people**

From everlasting death

On the day of judgment

By your coming as man

By your suffering and cross

By your death

 and rising to new life

By your return in glory

 to the Father

By your gift

 of the Holy Spirit

By your coming again

 in glory

Be merciful to us sinners **Lord, hear our prayer**

Bring **N.** to eternal life,
 first promised to him/her
 in baptism

Raise **N.** on the last day,
 for he/she has eaten
 the Bread of life

Let **N.** share in your glory,
 for he/she has shared in
 your suffering and death

Jesus, Son of the living God **Lord, hear our prayer**

Christ, hear us **Christ, hear us**

Lord Jesus,

 hear our prayer **Lord Jesus, hear our prayer**

PRAYER OF COMMENDATION

When the moment of death seems near, the following prayer may be said:

I commend you, my dear brother/sister,
to almighty God,
and entrust you to your Creator.
May you return to Him
who formed you from the dust of the earth.
May holy Mary, the angels, and all the saints
come to meet you as you go forth from this life.
May Christ who was crucified for you
bring you freedom and peace.
May Christ who died for you
admit you into His garden of paradise.
May Christ, the true Shepherd,
acknowledge you as one of His flock.
May he forgive all your sins,
and set you among those He has chosen.
May you see your Redeemer face to face,
and enjoy the vision of God for ever.

R. Amen.

The Hail Holy Queen (p. 483) may be said.

ACCEPTANCE OF DEATH (see p. 388)

PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD*

*At the death of a Christian, whose life of faith was begun in the waters of baptism and strengthened at the eucharistic table, the Church intercedes on behalf of the deceased because of its confident belief that death is not the end nor does it break the bonds forged in life. The Church also ministers to the sorrowing and consoles them in the funeral rites with the comforting word of God and the sacrament of the eucharist.** ()*

PRAYERS AFTER DEATH

The following prayers may be recited immediately after death and may be repeated in the hours that follow.

Saints of God, come to his/her aid!

Come to meet him/her, angels of the Lord!

R. Receive his/her soul and present him/her to God the Most High.

May Christ, who called you, take you to himself;
may angels lead you to Abraham's side. **R.**

Give him/her eternal rest, O Lord,
and may your light shine on him/her for ever. **R.**

Let us pray.

All-powerful and merciful God,
we commend to you **N.**, your servant.
In your mercy and love,
blot out the sins he/she has committed
through human weakness.
In this world he/she has died:
let him/her live with you for ever.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

These verses may also be used.

V. Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord.

R. And let perpetual light shine upon him/her.

V. May he/she rest in peace.

R. Amen.

V. May his/her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.

GATHERING IN THE PRESENCE OF THE BODY

When the family first gathers around the body, before or after it is prepared for burial, all or some of the following prayers may be used. It is most fitting that family members take part in preparing the body for burial.

All make the sign of the cross:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

Then one member of the family reads:

My brothers and sisters, Jesus says: "Come to me, all you who labor and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light."

The body may then be sprinkled with holy water.

The Lord God lives in his holy temple
yet abides in our midst.

Since in baptism **N.** became God's temple
and the spirit of God lived in him/her,
with reverence we bless his/her mortal body.

Then one member of the family may say:

With God there is mercy and fullness of redemption;
let us pray as Jesus taught us:

Our Father...

Then this prayer is said:

Into your hands, O Lord,
we humbly entrust our brother/sister **N**.
In this life you embraced him/her
 with your tender love;
deliver him/her now from every evil
and bid him/her enter eternal rest.
The old order has passed away:
welcome him/her then into paradise,
where there will be no sorrow,
 no weeping nor pain,
but the fullness of peace and joy
with your Son and the Holy Spirit
for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

All may sign the forehead of the deceased with the sign of the cross. One member of the family says:

Blessed are those who have died in the Lord;
let them rest from their labors
for their good deeds go with them.

V. Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord.

R. And let perpetual light shine upon him/her.

V. May he/she rest in peace.

R. Amen.

V. May his/her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.

All make the sign of the cross as one member of the family says:

May the love of God and the peace
 of the Lord Jesus Christ
bless and console us
and gently wipe every tear from our eyes:
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

Lord Jesus, our Redeemer,
you willingly gave yourself up to death

so that all people might be saved
and pass from death into a new life.
Listen to our prayers,
look with love on your people
who mourn and pray for their brother/sister
Lord Jesus, holy and compassionate:
forgive **N.** his/her sins.
By dying you opened the gates of life
for those who believe in you:
do not let our brother/sister be parted from you,
but by your glorious power
give him/her light, joy, and peace in heaven
where you live for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

PRAYERS AT THE GRAVESIDE

Aside from the time of mourning the month of November, especially All Saints Day and All Souls Day, is a traditional time for visiting graves, as is the anniversary of death. Some or all of the following prayers may be used when visiting the grave of a family member or friend.

All make the sign of the cross. The leader begins:

Praise be to God our Father, who raised Jesus
Christ from the dead. Blessed be God for ever.

All respond:

Blessed be God for ever.

The following Scripture texts may be read:

2 Cor 5: 1

We know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have a building
from God, a dwelling not made with hands,
eternal in heaven.

or

Rom 8: 38-39

I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present
things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will
be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

After a time of silence, all join in prayers of intercession, or in one of the litanies or other prayers.

All then join hands for the Lord's Prayer.

Then the leader prays:

Lord God,
whose days are without end
and whose mercies beyond counting,
keep us mindful
that life is short and the hour of death unknown.
Let your Spirit guide our days on earth

in the ways of holiness and justice,
that we may serve you
in union with the whole Church,
sure in faith, strong in hope, perfected in love.
And when our earthly journey is ended,
lead us rejoicing into your kingdom,
where you live for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

or:

Lord Jesus Christ,
by your own three days in the tomb,
you hallowed the graves of all who believe in you
and so made the grave a sign of hope
that promises resurrection
even as it claims our mortal bodies.
Grant that our brother/sister, **N.**,
 may sleep here in peace
until you awaken him/her to glory,
for you are the resurrection and the life.
Then he/she will see you face to face
and in your light will see light
and know the splendor of God,
for you live and reign for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

V. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,

R. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

V. May they rest in peace.

R. Amen.

V. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God,
 rest in peace.

R. Amen.

All make the sign of the cross as the leader concludes:

May the peace of God,
which is beyond all understanding,
keep our hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God
and of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

R. Amen.

RESPONSORY FOR THE DEAD

V. Ne recordéris peccata mea, Dómine.

R. Dum veneris iudicare sæculum per ignem.

V. Dírige, Dómine Deus meus, in conspectu tuo viam meam.

R. Dum veneris iudicare sæculum per ignem.

V. Requiem æternam dona ei (eis), Dómine, et lux perpetua lúceat ei (eis).

R. Dum veneris iudicare sæculum per ignem.

V. Kyrie, eléison.

R. Christe, eléison. Kyrie, eléison.

Pater noster...

V. Et ne nos indúcas in tentatiónem.

R. Sed líbera nos a malo.

V. A porta ínferi.

R. Erue, Dómine, ánimam eius (ánimas eorum).

V. Requiescat (-ant) in pace.

R. Amen.

V. Dómine, exáudi orátióem meam.

R. Et clámor meus ad te véniat.

V. Dóminus vobiscum.

R. Et cum spírítu tuo.

Oremus.

Absolve, quaésumus, Dómine, ánimam famuli tui **N** (famulæ tuæ **N**) ab omni vínculo delictorum: ut, in resurrectionis gloria, inter Sanctos et electos tuos resuscitatus (-a) respiret.

For friends and collaborators

Deus, veniæ largitor, et humanæ salútis amator: quaésumus clementiam tuam; ut nostræ congregationis fratres, propinquos et benefactores qui ex hoc sæculo transierunt, beata María semper Vírgine intercedente cum ómnibus Sanctis tuis, ad perpetuæ beatitúdinnis consortium pervenire concedas. Per Christum Dóminum nostrum.

For Father and Mother

Oremus. Deus, qui nos patrem et matrem honoráre præcepisti: miserére clementer animabus parentum nostrorum, eorumque peccata dimítte; nosque eos in æternæ claritatis gaudio fac vidére. Per Christum Dóminum nostrum.

For all the Faithful Departed

Fidelium, Deus, ómnium cónditor et redemptor, animabus famulorum famularumque tuárum remissionem cunctorum tríbe peccatórum: ut indulgentiam, quam semper

obtaverunt, piis supplicatióibus consequantur. Per
Christum Dóminum nostrum.

R. Amen.

V. Requiem æternam dona ei (eis), Dómine.

R. Et lux perpetua lúceat ei (eis).

V. Requiescat (-ant) in pace.

R. Amen.

V. Ánima eius (Ánimæ eorum) et ánimæ omnium fidelium
defunctorum per misericordiam Dei requiescant in pace.

R. Amen.

V. Do not remember my sins O Lord,

R. When you come to judge the world by fire.

V. Direct my way in your sight, O Lord, My God.

R. When you come to judge the world by fire.

V. Give him (her) eternal rest, O Lord, and may your light shine on him (her) forever.

R. When you come to judge the world by fire.

V. Lord have mercy.

R. Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.

Our Father. . .

V. And lead us not into temptation.

R. But deliver us from evil.

V. From the gates of Hell.

R. Deliver his (her) soul, O Lord.

V. May he (she) rest in peace.

R. Amen.

V. Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come to you.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And also with you.

Let us pray.

Lord, welcome into your presence your son (daughter) **N.**, whom you have called from this life. Release him (her) from all his (her) sins, bless him (her) with eternal light and peace, raise him (her) up to live for ever with all your saints in the glory of the Resurrection.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

A parent

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you command us to honor father and mother. In your mercy forgive the sins of my (our) parents and let me (us) one day see them again in the radiance of eternal joy.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Brothers and sisters

Let us pray.

God, our maker and redeemer, in your mercy hear our prayer. Grant forgiveness and peace to our brothers (sisters) **N.** and **N.** who longed for your mercy.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

V. Give him (her) eternal rest, O Lord.

R. And may your light shine on him (her) forever.

V. May he (she) rest in peace.

R. Amen.

V. May his (her) soul and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

R. Amen.

BLESSINGS

BLESSING OF HOLY WATER OUTSIDE MASS

On the basis of age-old custom, water is one of the signs that the Church often uses in blessing the faithful. Holy water reminds the faithful of Christ, who is given to us as the supreme divine blessing, who called himself the living water, and who, in water, established baptism for our sake as the sacramental sign of the blessing that brings salvation.

The blessing and sprinkling of holy water usually take place on Sunday, in keeping with the rite given in the Roman Missal (Sacramentary).

But when the blessing of water takes place outside Mass, the rite given here may be used by a priest or deacon. While maintaining the structure and chief elements of the rite, the celebrant should adapt the celebration to the circumstances of the place and the people involved.

ORDER OF BLESSING

INTRODUCTORY RITES

The celebrant begins with these words:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All make the sign of the cross and reply:

Amen.

The celebrant greets those present in the following or other suitable words, taken mainly from sacred Scripture.

May God, who through water and the Holy Spirit has given us a new birth in Christ, be with you all.

All make the following or some other suitable reply.

And also with you.

As circumstances suggest, the celebrant may prepare those present for the blessing in the following or similar words.

The blessing of this water reminds us of Christ, the living water, and of the sacrament of Baptism, in which we were born of water and the Holy Spirit. Whenever, therefore, we are sprinkled with this holy water or use it in blessing ourselves upon entering the church or at home, we thank God for his priceless gift to us and we ask for his help to keep us faithful to the sacrament we have received in faith.

READING OF THE WORD OF GOD

A reader, another person present, or the celebrant reads a short text of sacred Scripture.

Listen to the words of the holy Gospel
according to John:

7:37-39

Let anyone who is thirsty come to me.

On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood up and exclaimed, "Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as scripture says:

'Rivers of living water will flow from within him.'"

He said this in reference to the Spirit that those who came to believe in him were to receive. There was, of course, no Spirit yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

The reader concludes:

The Gospel of the Lord.

All respond:

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

ALTERNATIVE READINGS:

Isaiah 12:1-6 – *You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.*

Isaiah 55:1-11 – *Oh, come to the water, all you who are thirsty.*

Sirach 15:1-6 – *She will give him the water of wisdom to drink.*

1 John 5:1-6 – *Jesus Christ came by water and blood.*

Revelation 7:13-17 – *The Lamb will lead them to the springs of living water.*

Revelation 22:1-5 – *The river of life, rising from the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

John 13:3-15 – *You too are clean.*

PRAYER OF BLESSING

After the reading, the celebrant says:

Let us pray.

All pray briefly in silence; then, with hands outstretched, the celebrant says the prayer of blessing.

Blessed are you, Lord, all-powerful God,
who in Christ, the living water of salvation,
blessed and transformed us.

Grant that, when we are sprinkled with this water
or make use of it,
we will be refreshed inwardly by the power

of the Holy Spirit
and continue to walk in the new life
we received at baptism.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

or

Lord, holy Father,
look with kindness on your children
redeemed by your Son
and born to a new life by water and the Holy Spirit.
Grant that those who are sprinkled with this water
may be renewed in body and spirit
and may make a pure offering of their service to you.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

or the celebrant says:

O God, the Creator of all things,
by water and the Holy Spirit
you have given the universe its beauty
and fashioned us in your own image.

R. Bless and purify your Church.

O Christ the Lord, from your pierced side
you gave us your sacraments
as fountains of salvation.

R. Bless and purify your Church.

O Holy Spirit, giver of life,
from the baptismal font of the Church
you have formed us into a new creation
in the waters of rebirth.

R. Bless and purify your Church.

After the prayer of blessing, the celebrant sprinkles those present with holy water, as a suitable song is sung; as circumstances suggest, he may first say the following words.

Let this water call to mind our baptism into Christ, who has redeemed us by his death and resurrection.

R. Amen. ¹

BLESSING OF AN ADVENT WREATH

The Advent wreath is made of four candles and a circle of branches. Before the first candle is lighted, the household gathers for this blessing.

All make the sign of the cross. The leader begins:

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All respond:

Who made heaven and earth.

The leader may use these or similar words to introduce the blessing:

In the short days and long nights of Advent, we realize how we are always needing salvation by our God. Around this wreath, we shall remember God's promise.

Then the Scripture is read:

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah: **9:1-2**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone. You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing.

(Alternate Readings such as Is 63:16-17 or Is 64:2-7 may be used.)

The reader concludes:

The Word of the Lord.

All respond:

Thanks be to God.

After a time of silence, all join in prayers of intercession and in the Lord's Prayer.

Then the leader invites:

Let us now pray for God's blessing upon us and upon this wreath.

After a short silence, the leader prays:

Lord our God,
we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ:
he is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples,
he is the wisdom that teaches and guides us,
he is the Savior of every nation.

Lord God,
let your blessing come upon us
as we light the candles of this wreath.
May the wreath and its light
be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation,
may he come quickly and not delay.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen. ²

**BLESSING OF A CHRISTMAS CRÈCHE
OR MANGER SCENE**

The manger scene has a special place near the Christmas tree or in another place where the family members can reflect and pray during the Christmas season. It is blessed each year on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

All make the sign of the cross. The leader begins:

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All respond:

Who made heaven and earth.

The leader may use these or similar words to introduce the blessing:

We are at the beginning of the days of Christmas.

All through the season we will look on these images of sheep and cattle, of shepherds, of Mary and of Joseph and Jesus.

Then the Scripture is read:

Listen to the words of the holy Gospel according to Luke:

2:1-7

The birth of Jesus

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinus was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

The reader concludes:

The Gospel of the Lord.

All respond:

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The figures may be placed in the manger. After a time of silence, all join in prayers of intercession and in the Lord's Prayer.

Then the leader invites:

Pray now for God's blessing as we look on these figures.

After a short silence, the leader prays:

God of every nation and people,
from the very beginning of creation
you have made manifest your love:
when our need for a Savior was great
you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary.
To our lives he brings joy and peace,
justice, mercy and love.

Lord,
bless all who look upon this manger;
may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus,
and raise our thoughts to him,
who is God-with-us and Savior of all,
and who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

or

God of Mary and Joseph, of shepherds and animals,
bless us whenever we gaze on this manger scene.
Through all the days of Christmas
may these figures tell the story
of how humans, angels, and animals
found the Christ in this poor place.
Fill our house with hospitality, joy,
gentleness, and thanksgiving
and guide our steps in the way of peace.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

The leader says:

Let us bless the Lord.

All respond, making the sign of the cross:

Thanks be to God.

Then Christmas songs and carols are sung, for example:

It came upon a midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all
From heaven's all gracious King";
The world in solemn stillness lay,
To hear the angels sing.
Yet with the woes of sin and strife,
The world has suffered long;

Beneath the heavenly hymn have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And warring humankind hears not
The tidings which they bring;
O hush the noise and cease your strife
And hear the angels sing. ³

BLESSING OF A CHRISTMAS TREE

When the tree has been prepared, the household gathers around it. All make the sign of the cross. The leader begins:

Blessed be the name of the Lord.

All respond:

Now and for ever.

The leader may use these or similar words to introduce the blessing:

This tree is a blessing to our home. It reminds us of all that is beautiful, all that is filled with the gentleness and the promise of God. It stands in our midst as a tree of light that we might promise such beauty to one another and to our world. It stands like that tree of paradise that God made into the tree of life, the cross of Jesus.

Then the Scripture is read:

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul
to Titus:

3:4-7

His own compassion saved us

But when the kindness of generous love of God our savior appeared, not because of any righteous deeds we had done but because of his mercy, he saved us through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the holy Spirit, whom he richly poured out on us through Jesus Christ our savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

(Alternate Readings such as Ps 96:11-13 may be used)

The reader concludes:

This is the Word of the Lord.

All respond:

Thanks be to God.

After a time of silence, all join in prayers of intercession and in the Lord's Prayer. Then the leader invites:
Let us now pray for God's blessing upon all who gather around this tree.

After a short silence, the leader prays:

Lord our God,
we praise you for the light of creation:
the sun, the moon, and the stars of the night.
We praise you for the light of Israel:
the Law, the prophets, and the wisdom
of the Scriptures.

We praise you for Jesus Christ, your Son:
he is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace,
who fills us with the wonder of your love.

Lord God,
let your blessing come upon us
as we illumine this tree.
May the light and cheer it gives
be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts.
May all who delight in this tree
come to the knowledge and joy of salvation.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

or

God of all creation,
we praise you for this tree
which brings beauty and memories and the
promise of life to our home.
May your blessing be upon
 all who gather around this tree,
all who keep the Christmas festival by its lights.
We wait for the coming of the Christ,
the days of everlasting justice and of peace.
You are our God, living and reigning,
 for ever and ever.

R. Amen.⁴

The lights of the tree are then illuminated.

BLESSING AND IMPOSITION WITH THE SCAPULAR OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

(see p. 470)

BLESSING OF A NEW HOME

When any of the faithful wish to mark their moving into a new home with a religious celebration, the parish priest (pastor) and his associates should gladly cooperate. The occasion provides a special opportunity for a gathering of the members of the community to mark the joyful event and to thank God, from whom all blessings come, for the gift of a new home.

The present order may be used by a priest or deacon. It may also be used by a layperson, who follows the rites and prayers designated for a lay minister.

While maintaining the structure and chief elements of the rite, the minister should adapt the celebration to the circumstances of the place and the people involved.

There is to be no blessing of a new home unless those who will live in it are present.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

When the family members and their relatives and friends have gathered in a convenient place, the minister says:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All make the sign of the cross and reply:

Amen.

A minister who is a priest or deacon greets those present in the following or other suitable words, taken mainly from sacred Scripture.

Peace be with this house and with all who live here.

All make the following or some other suitable reply:

And also with you.

A lay minister greets those present in the following words.

May the God whom we glorify with one heart and voice enable us, through the Spirit, to live in harmony as followers of Christ Jesus, now and for ever.

R. Amen.

In the following or similar words, the minister prepares those present for the blessing.

When Christ took flesh through the Blessed Virgin Mary, he made his home with us. Let us now pray that he will enter this home and bless it with his presence. May he always be here among you; may he nurture your love for each other, share in your joys, comfort you in your sorrows. Inspired by his teachings and example, seek to make your new home before all else a dwelling place of love, diffusing far and wide the goodness of Christ.

READING OF THE WORD OF GOD

A reader, another person present, or the **minister** reads a text of sacred Scripture.

Listen to the words of the holy gospel
according to Luke:

10:5-9

Peace to this house.

The Lord said to the seventy-two: "Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household.' If a peaceful person lives there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is offered to you, for the laborer deserves his payment. Do not move about from one house to another. Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you, cure the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God is at hand for you.'

ALTERNATIVE READINGS:

Genesis 18:1-10a — *Lord, do not pass your servant by.*

Mark 1:29-30 — *Jesus went straight to Simon's house.*

Luke 10:38-42 — *Martha welcomed Jesus into her house.*

Luke 19:1-9 — *Today salvation has come to this house.*

Luke 24:28-32 — *Stay with us.*

As circumstances suggest, the following responsorial psalm may be sung or said, or some other suitable song.

R. Happy are those who fear the Lord.

Ps 112

Happy the man who fears the Lord,
who greatly delights in his commands.
His posterity shall be mighty upon the earth;
the upright generation shall be blessed. **R.**
Wealth and riches shall be in his house;
his generosity shall endure forever.
He dawns through the darkness,
a light for the upright;
he is gracious and merciful and just. **R.**
Well for the man who is gracious and lends,
who conducts his affairs with justice;
He shall never be moved;
the just man shall be in everlasting remembrance. **R.**
An evil report he shall not fear;
his heart is firm, trusting in the **Lord**.
His heart is steadfast; he shall not fear
till he looks down upon his foes. **R.**
Lavishly he gives to the poor;
his generosity shall endure forever;
his horn shall be exalted in glory. **R.**

ALTERNATIVE RESPONSORIAL PSALMS:

Psalm 127: 1, 2, 3-4, 5

R. (see v. 1) The Lord will build a house for us.

Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-6a

R. (v. 4) See how the Lord blesses those who fear him.

As circumstances suggest, the minister may give those present a brief explanation of the biblical text, so that they may understand through faith the meaning of the celebration.

INTERCESSIONS

The intercessions are then said. The minister introduces them and an assisting minister or one of those present announces the intentions. From the following intentions those best suited to the circumstance may be used or adapted, or other intentions that apply to the particular circumstances may be composed.

The minister says:

The Son of God, Lord of heaven and earth, made his home among us. With thankfulness and gladness let us call upon him, saying:

R. Stay with us, Lord.

or

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

Lord Jesus Christ, by your life with Mary and Joseph you sanctified the life of the home; dwell with us in our home, so that we may have you as our guest and honor you as our Head. (For this we pray:) **R.**

Assisting minister:

In you every dwelling grows into a holy temple; grant that those who live in this house may be built up together into the dwelling place of God in the Holy Spirit. (For this we pray:) **R.**

Assisting minister:

You taught your followers to build their houses upon solid rock; grant that the members of this family may hold fast to your teachings and, free of all discord, serve you with their whole heart. (For this we pray:) **R.**

Assisting minister:

You had no place to lay your head, but in uncomplaining poverty you accepted the hospitality of your friends; grant that through our help people who are homeless may obtain decent housing. (For this we pray:) **R.**

PRAYER OF BLESSING

A minister who is a priest or deacon says the prayer of blessing with hands outstretched; a lay minister says the prayer with the hands joined.

Lord,

be close to your servants
who move into this home (today)
and ask for your blessing.

Be their shelter when they are at home,
their companion when they are away,
and their welcome guest when they return.

And at last receive them
into the dwelling place you have prepared for them
in your Father's house,
where you live for ever and ever. **R. Amen.**

After the prayer of blessing, the minister sprinkles those present and the new home with holy water and, as circumstances suggest, during the sprinkling may say:

Let this water call to mind our baptism into Christ, who has redeemed us by his death and resurrection.

R. Amen.

CONCLUDING RITE

The minister concludes the rite by saying:

May the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, and may the word of Christ in all its richness dwell in us, so that whatever we do in word and in work, we will do in the name of the Lord. **R. Amen.**⁵

It is preferable to end the celebration with a suitable song.

BLESSING FOR A PLACE OF WORK

When a place of work is blessed, both those who labor there and those who share the fruit of that labor should be invited.

All make the sign of the cross. The leader begins:

Blessed be God, who has begun a good work in us. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

All respond:

Now and for ever.

The leader may use these or similar words to introduce the blessing:

Jesus showed us the dignity of labor. He was known as the carpenter's son, and he willingly worked with the tools of his trade. Through the labor of our hands, we bring God's blessing upon ourselves and others. Let us pray for all who will work here and for those who will share the fruit of their labor.

Then the Scripture is read:

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul to the Thessalonians:

1 Th 4:10-12

We urge you, brothers [and sisters], to progress even more, and to aspire to live a tranquil life, to mind your own affairs, and to work with your [own] hands, as we instructed you, that you may conduct yourselves properly toward outsiders and not depend on anyone.

(Alternate READINGS such as Matthew 6:25-34 may be used.)

The reader concludes:

The Word of the Lord.

All respond:

Thanks be to God.

After a time of silence, all join in prayers of intercession and in the Lord's Prayer. A cross or other symbol may then be revered with a kiss and put in a place of honor. The leader then speaks the prayer of blessing; one of the following may be used or adapted as needed.

OF AN OFFICE

O God, in your wise providence you are glad to bless all human labor, the work of our hands and of our minds. Grant that all who plan and conduct business in this office may through your guidance and support come to right decisions and carry them out fairly.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

OF A SHOP OR FACTORY

God, our all-provident Father, you have placed the earth and its fruits under our care, so that by our labor we will endeavor to ensure that all share in the benefits of your creation. Bless all those who will use this building either as buyers or sellers, so that by respecting justice and charity they will see themselves as working for the common good and find joy in contributing to the progress of the earthly city.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Then holy water may be sprinkled on the place and the participants.

All make the sign of the cross as the leader concludes:

May God, the Father of goodness, who commanded us to help one another as brothers and sisters, bless this building with his presence and look kindly on all who enter here.

R. Amen. ⁶

BLESSING OF TRAVELERS (SHORTER RITE)

The minister says:

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All reply:

Who made heaven and earth.

One of those present or the minister reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example:

Listen to the words of the book of Tobit: **5:17b-18a**

[Tobit] called his son and said to him: "My son, prepare whatever you need for the journey, and set out with your kinsman. May God in heaven protect you on the way and bring you back to me safe and sound; and may his angel accompany you for safety, my son."

Then the minister says the prayer of blessing.

All-powerful and ever-living God,
when Abraham left his own land
and departed from his own people,
you kept him safe all through his journey.

Protect us, who also are your servants:

walk by our side to help us;

be our companion and our strength on the road
and our refuge in every adversity.

Lead us, O Lord,

so that we will reach our destination in safety
and happily return to our homes.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **R. Amen.** ⁷

or

May God bless you with every heavenly blessing
and give you a safe journey;

wherever life leads you,
may you may find him there to protect you.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **R. Amen.**

The blessing may conclude with a song such as “Now Thank We All Our God.” ⁷

BLESSING AND THANKSGIVING AT MEALS

(see p. 540)

BLESSING OF A MOTHER BEFORE CHILDBIRTH (SHORT FORMULARY)

As circumstances suggest, a priest or deacon may use the following short blessing formulary.

God has brought gladness and light to the world through the Virgin Mary’s delivery of her child. May Christ fill your heart with his holy joy and keep you and your baby safe from harm. In the name of the Father, @ and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen. ⁸

BLESSING OF A MOTHER AFTER CHILDBIRTH (SHORT FORMULARY)

As circumstances suggest, a priest or deacon may use the following short blessing formulary.

May the Lord God almighty, who through the earthly birth of his own Son has filled the whole world with joy, so bless @ you that the child he has given you will always bring joy to your heart.

R. Amen. ⁹

BLESSING OF ROSARIES (SHORTER RITE)

To begin, the celebrant says:

Lord, show us your mercy and love.

All reply:

And grant us your salvation.

As circumstances suggest, the celebrant may prepare those present for the blessing.

One of those present or the celebrant reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example:

Lk 2:51b-52

Mary, his mother, kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man.

or

Acts 1:14

All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

With the hands outstretched, the celebrant says the prayer of blessing:

Blessed be our God and Father,
who has given us the mysteries of his Son
to be pondered with devotion
and celebrated with faith.

May he grant us, his faithful people,
that by praying the rosary we may,
with Mary the Mother of Jesus,
seek to keep his joys, sorrows,
and glories in our minds and hearts.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

or

In memory of the mysteries
of the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord
and in honor of the Virgin Mary,
Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church,
may those who devoutly use this rosary to pray
be blessed,

in the name of the Father, and of the Son, @ and
of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

(SHORT FORMULARY)

In special circumstances, a priest or deacon may use the following short blessing formulary.

May this rosary and the one who uses it be blessed, in the name of the Father, and of the
Son, @ and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen. ¹⁰

BLESSING OF RELIGIOUS ARTICLES

(SHORT FORMULARY)

*To be used to bless medals, small crucifixes, statues, or pictures that will be displayed
elsewhere than in a church or chapel, scapulars, rosaries, and other articles used for
religious devotions.*

In special circumstances, a priest or deacon may use the following short blessing formulary.

May this (name of article) and the one who uses it be blessed,

in the name of the Father, and of the Son, @ and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen ¹¹

BLESSING OF MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION

(SHORTER RITE)

At the beginning of the celebration, the minister says:

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All reply:

Who made heaven and earth.

One of those present or the celebrant reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example:

Listen to the words of the holy gospel
according to John:

14:6

Jesus said to Thomas: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

PRAYER OF BLESSING

A minister who is a priest or deacon says the prayer of blessing with hands outstretched; a lay minister says the prayer with the hands joined.

All-powerful God,
Creator of heaven and earth,
in the rich depths of your wisdom
you have empowered us to produce great and
beautiful works.

Grant, we pray, that those who use this vehicle
may travel safely, with care
for the safety of others.

Whether they travel for business or pleasure,
let them always find Christ
to be the companion of their journey
who lives and reigns with you for ever and ever.

R. Amen ¹²

As circumstances suggest, the minister may sprinkle those present and the vehicle with holy water.

Notes

1. Book of Blessings, ICEL, 1990. p. 579
2. Catholic Household Blessings, National Conference of Bishops, 1988, p. 110
3. *ibid*, p. 117
4. *ibid*, p. 113
5. Book of Blessings, p. 237
6. Catholic Household Blessings, p. 301
7. Book of Blessings, p. 226
8. *ibid*, p. 77
9. *ibid*, p. 84
10. *ibid*, p. 558
11. *ibid*, p. 548
11. *ibid*, p. 381

SACRAMENTS WHEN IN DANGER OF DEATH

BAPTISM

At the moment of death, or when there is urgency because of imminent danger of death, the minister omitting all other ceremonies, pours water (not necessarily blessed but real and natural water) on the head of the person to be baptized while saying:

N., I baptize you in the name of the Father, @

The minister pours water the first time.

and of the Son, @

The minister pours water the second time.

and of the Holy Spirit. @

The minister pours water the third time.

It is desirable that the minister, as far as possible, should use one or two witnesses.

A profession of faith—like the Apostles' Creed, p. 22—is made by the candidate before the Baptism is required for adults.

(Cf. Rite of Baptism for children nn. 21.1, 160, 164 & Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults nn. 373)

CONFIRMATION

When circumstances permit, the entire rite is followed. In case of urgent necessity, the minister of Confirmation lays his hands upon the sick person as he says:

All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

by water and the Holy Spirit

you freed your son (daughter) from sin

and gave him (her) new life.

Send your Holy Spirit

upon him (her) to be his (her)

Helper and Guide.

Give him (her) the spirit of wisdom

and understanding,

the spirit of right judgment and courage,

the spirit of knowledge and reverence.

Fill him (her) with the spirit of wonder

and awe in your presence.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Then the minister dips his right thumb in the chrism and with it makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the one to be confirmed, as he says:

N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit. @

The newly confirmed responds, if he is able: Amen.

Other parts of the preparatory and concluding rites may be added in individual cases, depending on the circumstances.

In case of extreme necessity, it is sufficient that the anointing be done with the sacramental form:

N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit. @

(Cf. Rite of Confirmation nn. 53, 54 & 56)

SACRAMENTAL ABSOLUTION

When pastoral need dictates, the priest may omit or shorten some parts of the rite but must always retain in their entirety the penitent's confession of sins and acceptance of the act of penance, the invitation to contrition, and the formularies of absolution and dismissal. In imminent danger of death, it is sufficient for the priest to say the essential words of the form of absolution, namely:

I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, @ and of the Holy Spirit.

The penitent answers: **Amen.**

(Cf. Rite of Penance nn. 21 & 44)

ABSOLUTION FROM CENSURES

The form of absolution is not to be changed when a priest, in keeping with the provision of law, absolves a properly disposed penitent within the sacramental forum from a censure *latæ sententiæ*. It is enough that the confessor intend to absolve also from censures. Before absolving from sins, however, the confessor may absolve from the censure, using the formula which is given below for absolution from censure outside the sacrament of penance.

When a priest, in accordance with the law, absolves a penitent from a censure outside the sacrament of penance, he uses the following formula:

By the power granted to me, I absolve you from the bond of excommunication (or suspension or interdict). In the name of the Father, and of the Son, @ and of the Holy Spirit.

The penitent answers: **Amen.**

(Cf. Rite of Penance, Appendix I, nn.1-2)

DISPENSATION FROM IRREGULARITY

When, in accordance with the law, a priest dispenses a penitent from an irregularity, either during confession, after absolution has been given, or outside the sacrament of penance, he says:

By the power granted to me I dispense you from the irregularity which you have incurred. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, @ and of the Holy Spirit.

The penitent answers: **Amen.**

(Cf. Rite of Penance, Appendix I, nn.3)

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

When a priest has been called to attend a person who is already dead, he is not to administer the sacrament of anointing. Instead, he should pray for the dead person, asking that God forgive his or her sins and graciously receive him or her into the kingdom.

If the priest has reason to believe that the person is still living, he anoints him or her.

First he anoints the forehead, saying:

Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. @

R. Amen.

Then he anoints the hands, saying:

May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up.

R. Amen.

The sacramental form is said only once, for the anointing of the forehead and hands, and is not repeated.

(Cf. Pastoral care of the sick nn. 124, 263-264. The sacrament is to be conferred upon sick persons who requested at least implicitly when they were in control of their faculties or when there is a doubt whether the person is dead. Cf. *Codex Iuris Canonici* cc. 1005-1006)

APOSTOLIC PARDON

At the conclusion of the sacrament of penance or the penitential rite, the priest may give the apostolic pardon for the dying, with plenary indulgence, using one of the following:

Through the holy mysteries of our redemption, may almighty God release you from all punishments in this life and in the life to come. May he open to you the gates of paradise and welcome you to everlasting joy. **R. Amen.**

or

By the authority which the Apostolic See
has given me,
I grant you a full pardon and the remission
of all your sins

in the name of the Father, and of the Son, @
and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

(Cf. Pastoral care of the sick n. 201)

