

EXERCISE OF PREPARATION FOR DEATH

By St. John Eudes (1601–1680)



**Ten Days to an Optimal Approach
to Your Own Mortality**

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XVIII. PREPARATION FOR A HAPPY DEATH.

Death is usually preceded by such violent throes or intense weakness that the dying person is unable to direct his thoughts to God and cannot pay Him the homage owed to His divine majesty at that crucial time.

Therefore, it is extremely advisable to anticipate this disability by setting aside a few days each year to carry out now what one ought rightfully to render to God at the hour of death. St. Gertrude tells us that when she had once performed this exercise, Our Lord revealed that it was most pleasing to Him, and He promised to set aside her preparation and keep it for the day of her death. You should be confident that in His goodness He will give this grace to you also, if you make use of the same exercise. For this purpose it would be well to devote ten days to a series of ten meditations and spiritual exercises in preparation for a Christian and holy death. I now present them in due order, showing how they are to be carried out.

First Day

XIX. MEDITATION ON SUBMISSION TO THE DIVINE WILL.

1. O my Lord Jesus, behold me prostrate at Thy feet, adoring my Judge and Sovereign, as Thou dost pronounce on me the sentence of death, pronounced to Adam and in his person to all sinners, by, Thy words:

"Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return" (Gen. 3, 19). In honor of Thy exceeding great love and most profound humility as, prostrate upon the ground at Pilate's feet, Thou didst hear and accept the sentence of death, spoken by the Roman Governor but willed by Thy Eternal Father, in

honor of and in homage to His divine justice, I submit with my whole heart to the sentence of death Thou didst pass upon me even at the beginning of the world, recognizing that I have deserved it not only by original sin, but each time I have committed sin.

2. O my God, I recognize that even if I were guilty of no sin, whether original or actual nevertheless, by Thy absolute sovereignty and power over me Thou couldst in all holiness take away my life, annihilate me and do with me as Thou wilt.

And so in honor of the very great love and in union with the deep submission with which the Blessed Virgin, Thy Mother, accepted death even though she was not obliged to die, by reason of any sin, original or actual, I, too, accept death in homage to Thy sovereignty, abandoning myself entirely into Thy hands, that Thou mayest dispose of me in time and in eternity, according to Thy holy will, for Thy greater glory.

3. O Jesus, Thou art eternal and immortal; Thou art the source of all life, and yet Thou dost will to die on the Cross the most cruel and ignominious of all deaths in homage to the justice and sovereignty, the divine and eternal life of Thy Father, and to give me a token of Thy love. And so, my Saviour, even if I were not obliged to die on account of my sins, and even if (to suppose the impossible) I depended in no way upon Thy sovereignty, and even indeed if Thou hadst not died for me in particular, I ought not only to accept death, but even to desire to die. in order to honor Thy holy death, which is so exalted and worthy of honor that all living creatures ought to subject themselves to death voluntarily even if they were not already obliged to die, in homage to the death of their Creator made Man.

But even if Thou hadst not died, O my God, all living things ought most willingly to sacrifice their very existence to pay homage to Thy supreme and eternal being, and to bear witness by this sacrifice that Thou alone art worthy to live, and that no other being or life has any right to show itself, but should be annihilated in Thy presence as the stars of heaven are extinguished in the light of the sun.

Thy death is so worthy of honor and homage, Thy life is most worthy to be adored. With excessive love Thou didst will to die, not only to satisfy the justice of Thy Father and to honor His sovereignty, but also to sacrifice

Thy human and temporal life for the glory of the divine and eternal life with Thy Father and Holy Spirit. By this sacrifice Thou didst bear witness before heaven and earth, that there is none but the divine life alone that is worthy of existence., and all other created life, however noble and excellent, should be extinguished in the sight and in the presence of this supreme and uncreated life. Therefore, in honor of Thy death, in homage to Thy life, in union with the infinite love with which Thou didst thus will to die, for such great and divine intentions, and also in honor of the burning love with which Thy Blessed Mother and all Thy saints, especially Thy holy martyrs, embraced death with a very ready will for the same intentions, I accept and embrace death with my whole heart, in whatever form it may please Thee to send it to me, that is, in the place, time, manner, and under all the circumstances it shall please Thee to decree.

And so if Thou dost order me to die a painful or even a shameful death, or that I be left desolate and abandoned by all human help, or if I am to be deprived of the use of my senses and reason. provided Thou art always with me, Thy holy will be done. I desire to accept and embrace all this in honor of Thy most sorrowful and ignominious death, in honor of the unspeakable desolation Thou didst suffer on the Cross, abandoned even by the All-loving Father. I accept it in homage to the surrender of Thy senses Thou didst make in earliest childhood. I honor Thee in the humiliation Thou didst suffer, being treated as a madman by Thy own people, at the beginning of - the preaching of the Holy Gospel, and by Herod and his court during Thy Passion.

Finally, my Dear Jesus, I place myself entirely in Thy hands. I abandon myself so completely to Thy good pleasure that I no longer desire to have any other will or desire, save to let Thee will, desire and choose for me, in this and in everything else. Thou dost possess infinite wisdom and power and Thou hast a far greater knowledge and power and will to further Thy glory than I ever could have. One thing alone I beg of Thee, and it is that, since Thou didst die in love, by love and for love, if I am not worthy to die for Thy love or by that love, at least Thou mayest permit me to die in Thy dear love.

4. O my Jesus, I implore that, just as Thou didst perform all Thy actions and functions for Thyself and for all men, especially for Thy

children and friends, I may be permitted, in honor of and in union with Thy love, to perform all these actions and render unto Thee all due homage not only for myself but for all men, especially for all those for whom Thou knowest that I am both bound and anxious to pray with particular fervor.

O Mother of Jesus, surely it would seem that thou shouldst not have died, since thou art the Mother of the Eternal and Immortal Son of God, who is life itself! Yet thou didst willingly submit to death, in homage to the most adorable death of thy Son. Thus, thy death is so exalted and worthy of honor that all creatures ought to subject themselves to death by their own free will, in order to honor the death of their Sovereign Lady, the Mother of their Creator. Therefore, O holy Virgin, even if I were not obliged to die, I should, nevertheless, wish to accept death freely, and offer it to thee together with the death of each one who is dear to me, and of all mankind, in homage to thy most holy death. I most humbly implore thee, O Mother of Life, to unite my death to thine in honor of the death of thy Son and to obtain from Him the grace to die in His favor and in His love.

Second Day

XX. THANKSGIVING FOR ALL THE BENEFITS OF YOUR WHOLE LIFE.

After you have made the solemn act of acceptance, you should prepare for a holy death, first by thanking Our Lord for all the favors you have received from Him in your whole lifetime. And it is very wise to devote a day to this exercise as follows:

1. O Jesus, I contemplate and adore Thee as the principle and source of all good things and all temporal and eternal graces, past, present and future, in heaven and on earth, especially those I have received from Thee. I refer all these graces to Thee, for Thou art their source and Thy glory is their destiny. O Good Jesus, who could ever describe all the favors Thou hast done me? They are numberless and I am utterly incapable of thanking Thee for them as Thou dost deserve. O dearest Lord, may all that ever was, is, or shall be in me, may all earthly and heavenly creatures, all the angels and saints, Thy Holy Mother, Thy Holy Spirit, Thy Eternal Father, all the powers of Thy divinity and humanity, and all the graces and mercies which emanated from Thee, may all these be employed in praising Thee forever. May they be entirely transformed into everlasting praise of Thee, of all that

Thou art together with Thy Father, Thyself and Thy Holy Spirit, and of all the graces Thou didst ever impart to Thy sacred humanity, Thy Blessed Mother, the angels and saints, and all creatures, and especially the graces Thou hast given me, or would have given me if I had not stood in Thy way.

O Father of Jesus, Holy Spirit of Jesus, Mother of Jesus, angels of Jesus, Saints of Jesus, and all creatures of Jesus, bless and give thanks to Him for me forever. O Divine Jesus, do Thou glorify Thyself for me and return to Thyself a hundredfold all the thanks I ought to render to Thee.

2. O Good Jesus, Thou knowest how many favors and benefits I have received from Thy Blessed Mother, the angels and saints in heaven, and from many persons on earth. Thou knowest also how incapable I am of acknowledging them and giving thanks for them as I ought. And so I have recourse to Thee, imploring Thee most humbly to make up for my deficiencies and to give, on my behalf, to all those souls, both in heaven and on earth, all that I ought to render to them for the benefits I have received at their hands.

3. O Mother of Grace, Mother of my God, it is through thy intercession that I have received all the graces ever bestowed on me from heaven. May heaven and earth bless thee for them all, on behalf of myself and of all the thoughtless persons who have received favors from thee and give thee no thanks whatever.

Third Day

XXI CONFESSION AND SATISFACTION.

Having set aside one day to thank God for all the graces He has given you in your lifetime, it is most necessary that you devote another day to ask forgiveness for your sins and to make satisfaction to Him. To that end, you ought on this day to make a good confession, either an extraordinary confession or one marked by unusual contrition and self-abasement, with as much care and preparation as if it were to be your last confession. The acts of contrition and other exercises for confession in «Part Two» will serve your purpose here also. Besides doing this, you would do well to set aside a little time during the day to meditate on this matter, in the presence of God, in the following way:

1. O Most Lovable Jesus, infinitely worthy of all service and love, to whom I owe debts without number, Thou didst create me only to love and serve Thee. Yet I have done scarcely anything but offend Thee by thought, word and deed, by all my bodily senses and spiritual faculties, by my misuse of Thy creatures, against all Thy commandments, in countless different ways. O what sins! What ingratitude! What betrayals! Lord Jesus, I cast all my offenses upon Thy divine love, into the abyss of Thy mercies. Grant that I may be utterly changed into sorrow and contrition, with tears of blood to detest and wipe out the sins I have committed against that immense Goodness, so deserving of love and honor! My God, what is there that I could ever do to make reparation for my sins? But even if I were to suffer all the torments and martyrdom in the world, I still could not of myself alone repair the insult given Thee by even the least of my faults.

2. O Good Jesus, I offer Thee instead all the glory, love and service given Thee by all the saints and Thy most Blessed Mother, by their holy thoughts, words and actions, by holy use of their bodily senses and their spiritual powers, by their eminent virtues and sufferings, in satisfaction for the failures of my lifetime. I offer Thee likewise all the honor given Thee forever by all the angels, by the Holy Spirit, by Thyself, and by the Eternal Father, in reparation for the dishonor I have given Thee all my life.

3. O Heavenly Father, O Holy Spirit, O ye angels and saints, offer up for me, to my Saviour, all the love and glory you ever gave Him, in satisfaction for the wrong I have done Him by my offenses.

4. Miserable sinner that I am, by offending my God I have offended all things. I have offended the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, the Mother of God, all the angels and saints, and all creation, for all are concerned and offended in offense to their Creator. How, O my God, how can I make reparation for so many offenses, make satisfaction to so many persons and pay off so many debts? I know what I will do: I have my Jesus who is in Himself an infinite wealth of virtues, merits and good works. He has been given me to be my riches, my virtue, my sanctification, my redemption and reparation. I shall offer Him to the Eternal Father, to the Holy Ghost, to the Blessed Virgin, to all the angels and all the saints in reparation and satisfaction for all the faults I have committed. O Holy Father, O Divine Spirit, I offer all the love and honor that my Jesus gave you by all His

divine thoughts, words and actions, by His divine employment of all the members of His body and of His soul, by all His glorious virtues and heroic sufferings, in satisfaction for all the offenses I have committed against you all my life long.

O holy Virgin, O holy angels, O blessed saints, I offer you my treasure and my all, my Saviour Jesus Christ. I conjure you to draw upon His infinite storehouse of merit whatever you require in payment and satisfaction for all the debts I owe you, by reason of my sins and negligences.

5. O my Jesus, my divine Redeemer, do Thou make reparation for all my faults, and by Thy very great mercy atone for all my sins committed against the Eternal Father, Thyself the Son, the Holy Spirit, Thy most Blessed Mother, the angels and saints and all persons I have offended. I give myself to Thee to do and suffer in atonement whatsoever may be pleasing to Thy holy will, accepting now all the sufferings of body or spirit that I may have to bear, whether in this world or in the next, in satisfaction for my sins.

6. O most holy Virgin, I have so many obligations to serve and venerate thee; yet I have so little honored and so greatly offended thee by offending thy Son! I beg thy forgiveness, O Mother of Mercy, and I offer Thee in satisfaction all the honor ever accorded thee in heaven and on earth. I implore all the angels and saints, the Holy host, thy Son, and the Eternal Father to supply for my deficiencies, and fill up the measure of glory I ought to have rendered to thee all my life long.

Fourth Day

XXII. HOLY COMMUNION.

Holy Communion is the most precious and effective means given you by God to render to Him all the honor and service you owe to Him. To prepare for a holy death, you should make a point of taking one day of this exercise to dispose yourself for an exceptionally well prepared Communion, marked by extraordinary devotion and approached with as much care and recollection as if it were to be your last. The exercise I drew up for Holy Communion, in Part Two of this book, will prove sufficient for this purpose, provided you use it profitably.

Let me merely tell you that you should offer this special Communion to Our Lord: 1. in honor of all that He is in Himself and towards You; 2. in thanksgiving for all the effects of His love for His Father and for all creatures, but especially for You; 3. in satisfaction for all the dishonor and pain given Him by all the sins of the world, especially by your own; and 4. for the fulfilment of the plans of His Divine Providence for all men, especially for you.

Offer yourself to the Eternal Father, begging Him to unite you with the surpassing love of His paternal heart when He received His Son Jesus Christ into His bosom on the day of the Ascension. Give yourself to Jesus and beg Him to unite you with the most ardent love and profound humility with which He instituted the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, on the eve of His death. Offer yourself to the Blessed Virgin, to St. John the Evangelist, to St. Mary Magdalen and St. Mary of Egypt, and all the other saints, praying that they may cause you to participate in the love and fervor, the humility, purity and sanctity with which they received Holy Viaticum.

After you have received Communion and made the usual thanksgiving to Our Lord with unusual fervor, adore His divine plans from all eternity for you. Beg Him to forgive all the obstructions you have ever placed in the way of their operation. Fervently beg Him not to let you die until He has completed the plans of His goodness and the work of His grace in your soul. Give yourself to Him with a great desire and mighty resolution to work manfully to consummate His work in you, and to destroy in yourself everything that might stand in His way, so that you may be able to repeat to Him, on the last day of your life, His words to the Heavenly Father On Good Friday: *Opus consuminavi quod dedisti mihi ut faciam*, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17, 4).

Fifth Day

XX111. EXTREME UNCTION.

You do not know whether you will be able to concentrate on God when you receive the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, (assuming that it may please Him to grant this grace). It would, therefore, be a good thing to devote the fifth day to acquit yourself of the obligations to Our Lord to this

holy Sacrament and to prepare for a meritorious reception of Extreme Unction.

1. O Jesus, I adore Thee as the author of the Holy Sacrament of Extreme Unction, and as the source of its priceless graces, which Thou hast acquired and merited for us by the shedding of Thy Precious Blood.

I refer to Thee all the graces Thou didst ever produce in souls through Extreme Unction. I bless Thee a thousand times for all the glory Thou hast given to Thyself by this last Sacrament. I adore the infinite design of Thy Providence in the institution of Extreme Unction and I surrender myself to the accomplishment of Thy divine Plan for me according to Thy holy will. I implore Thee most humbly to grant me the grace of receiving this Sacrament at the end of my life. And if I should not be able to receive it, I implore Thee to produce in MY soul, by Thy great mercy, the same graces I would acquire by its reception.

2. O Jesus, I adore Thee in the holy anointing of Thy sacred body in the last days of Thy life by St. Mary Magdalen, and at Thy burial by St. Nicodemus and St. Joseph of Arimathea. I offer Thee all the holy unctions ever performed, in this last Sacrament, upon the bodies of all Christians who have received it or ever shall do so, in boner of and homage to the divine anointing of Thy deified body.

3. O Good Jesus, I adore Thee as High Priest to whom, before all others, belongs the right of conferring all the Sacraments. I give myself to Thee as High Priest and implore Thee to inspire in my soul all the dispositions required for the fruitful reception of Extreme Unction and to produce in me all the graces represented by its consoling ceremonies.

In order to dispose myself for its reception, O my Saviour, behold I cast myself down at Thy feet, accusing myself before Thee and Thy heavenly court of all my sins, most humbly begging Thy forgiveness with all the humility and contrition I can muster, with my whole heart imploring Thee, together with Thy Blessed Mother and all the angels and saints, to ask forgiveness from Thy Eternal Father, and to offer to Him in satisfaction for my sins the full measure of Thy infinite merits and sufferings.

O Good Jesus, come into my soul and into my heart. Come to bring me Thy holy peace and to destroy in me all that might disturb the peace and repose of my spirit. Come unto me, and with Thy Precious Blood

purify me of the foulness of my sins. Come to grant me full and total absolution, indulgence and remission of all my sins.

O Most Kind Jesus, I offer Thee all the senses and members of my body and all the powers of my soul. Anoint me, I beg Thee, with the sacred oil that ever flows from Thy divine Heart, that is, with the oil of Thy grace and mercy and, by this heavenly anointing, cleanse me of the evil effects of my sins. O Dearest Jesus, I offer Thee the holy employment of bodily senses and spiritual powers ever made by Thy Divine Self, by Thy Blessed Mother and all the saints, in satisfaction for my abuse or misuse of the members and senses of my body and the faculties of my soul. May it please Thee to grant me the grace to employ them in future only for Thy pure glory.

Finally, O Most Amiable Jesus, may it please Thee to give me Thy holy blessing. Ask the Beneficent Father and the Holy Spirit to bless 'me with Thee, so that this divine and mighty benediction may destroy in me all that displeases Thee, and transform me utterly into eternal benediction and praise of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Sixth Day

XXIV. CHRIST'S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT, AND THE WILL YOU SHOULD MAKE IN ITS HONOR.

On this day you should prepare to make a will, in imitation and honor of the final testament of Jesus Christ on earth. In the presence of God you should meditate on the infinitely adorable legacy left by Christ and consider how to make your own will in the same spirit with similar dispositions. This may be done in the following manner:

O Jesus, I adore Thee in the last days of Thy life. I adore every aspect and event of these last days, but especially Thy divine Testament pronounced in the Cenacle, on Mount Olivet and from the Cross. I adore, bless and glorify the supreme love for Thy Father, the most burning charity towards us and all the other holy dispositions of Thy last Testament to mankind.

In Thy last will there are five bequests:

The first bequest is to Thine enemies, for, O wonder of wonders, O immensity of goodness, Thy first word and first prayer on the Cross is for

Thine enemies, begging the Father to pardon them, in the very hour when they were crucifying Thee.

The second bequest is to the Heavenly Father, the final gift of Thy holy soul with these words: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23, 46). These words were uttered not only with reference to Thy deified soul, but to my soul and to the souls of all who belong to Thee, which were all at that moment before Thy sight, and Thou didst look upon them as Thy own possession, forming all together but one soul with Thine, by virtue of their most intimate union. When Thou didst say to the Father: Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum, Thou didst speak for Thyself and for me; Thou didst commend my soul together with Thine into the hands of Thy Father, addressing this prayer to Him who is at once Thy Father and mine, in Thy Name and my own, against the hour when my soul shall leave my body. And Thou didst make the offering of my soul with the same love with which Thou didst say Pater or Father in general, not My Father in particular, to show that Thou didst regard Him not only as Thy own Special Father, but as the common and universal Father of all Thy brethren and members.

Thou didst pray to Him not only for Thyself in particular, but also in general for all who belong to Thee, with filial confidence and love, as much for Thyself as for them, for which mayst Thou be loved and blessed forever.

The third bequest in Thy will concerns the Blessed Mother, to whom Thou didst give that which was most dear to Thee after herself, the beloved disciple, St. John the Evangelist. At the same time there were represented in the person of St. John all the other disciples and children, until the end of time. When Thou didst say to Mary the words, "Woman, behold thy son" (John 19, 26), Thou didst give her not 'only St. John, but all other Christians to be her children. Reciprocally, in saying to St. John the words "Behold thy Mother?" (John 19, 27), Thou didst give to him and also to all Christians, represented in his person, Thy most precious possession in the order of created beings, namely, Thy most Blessed Mother. Thou didst give her to them to be their Mother just as she was Thy Mother, imparting to them Thy precious relationship and character with her. That was the reason Thou didst call her no longer Thy Mother, but Mulier, "woman," to show the transfer to us of Thy relationship to her as Son, and the gift to us, as

Mother, of her who was about to cease to be Thy Mother for a time by reason of her Son's death. And so, good Jesus, Thou didst bequeath me in Thy will to Thy Blessed Mother, not only as a servant and subject, but actually as a son: Mulier, ecce filius tuus. Thou didst give her to me not only as my Queen and Lady, but in the most honorable and lovable character there is-that of a Mother. O love! O excess of goodness! May the whole world be transformed into love for so great a goodness!

The fourth bequest in Thy will is particularly ours and concerns us so diversely that it seems to have been made for us alone.

1. During Thy last days on earth, O Jesus, Thou didst express a surpassing and extraordinary love, assuring us that Thy Father loves us as He loves Thee (John 17, 23), and that Thou lovest us as Thy Father loves Thee (John 15, 9). And Thou dost consequently urge us to love one another as Thou hast loved us (John 13, 34).

2. Thou didst likewise commend us with most particular affection to the most exalted and powerful persons most dear to Thee, by whom Thou art most loved in heaven and on earth-that is, Thy Eternal Father and Thy divine Mother. To the Father just before setting out on the road to Calvary, Thou didst address a beautiful prayer: "Holy Father, keep them in thy name whom Thou hast given me. Not for them only do I pray but for them who through their word shall believe in me" (John 17, 11-20). While hanging on the Cross, Thou didst place our souls in His hands together with Thine own, as has been said. Thou didst also commend us to Thy divine Mother.

3. We share in Thy will because in Thy last, solemn and public prayer, Thou didst obtain from the Heavenly Father the greatest favors that could have been asked of Him, or that He could have given us. Here are the prayers Thou didst address to Him for us: 'Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me' (John 17, 24), that is, that they should have their dwelling and take their rest with Me forever in Thy bosom and Thy Fatherly Heart. "Just Father, may the love wherewith Thou hast loved me, be in them" (John 17, 25-26), that is to say: love them as Thou lovest Me, love them with the greatest, the most burning and most divine love that could ever possibly exist. Look upon them as Thou dost regard Me; love them with the very heart with which Thou lovest Me; treat

them as Thou dost treat Me; give them all that Thou givest Me. "That they may be one, as thou, Father, in me and I in thee; that they also may be one in us ... I in them, and thou in me: that they may be made perfect in one" (John 17, 21-23). O dearest Lord, what love! What more couldst Thou ask the Father for us?

4. We share in Thy will because Thou didst give us the most rare and precious gift, Thy Eternal Father to be our Father, praying Him to love us as He loves Thee, as His children with sublime paternal love. Thou didst give us Thy Blessed Mother to be our Mother. Thou didst give us Thy most Holy Body in the Eucharist, Thy holy soul on the Cross in death with the words: I lay down my life for my sheep" (John 10 , 15). Thou didst give Thy Precious Blood to the very last drop, Thy life, merits, sufferings, humanity and divinity, as expressed in these words: "The glory which thou hast given me, I have given to them" (John 17, 22). Thou didst give up all without reserve. O dearest Lord, how admirable is Thy goodness, poured forth for us in the very hour when we were causing Thee to suffer so many evils! How can we love Thee so little and think so seldom of Thee? How can so great a love be held so cheap and be so despised by those whom Thou so lovest? The filth and last bequest in Thy will was made on Mount Olivet when, departing from the apostles and ascending into heaven, Thou didst give them Thy holy blessing. We share in this bequest also, for in imparting Thy blessing to the holy apostles and disciples Thou didst bless all of us, each one in particular, for we were all just as much present in Thy sight then as we are now. May heaven and earth bless Thee, O Author of all gifts, and may all things in heaven and earth be transformed into eternal blessings of Thee.

Such, good Jesus, are the five clauses of Thy admirable will, in honor of which I desire. if it please Thee, to draw up my own testament as follows:

XXV. LAST SPIRITUAL WILL AND TESTAMENT.

1. O Most Kind Jesus, in honor of and in union with the love with which Thou didst shed Thy Blood and die for Thy enemies and pray to Thy Father to pardon those who crucified Thee, with my whole heart I fully

forgive all those who have ever offended or injured me, and I implore Thee to grant them full pardon.

I offer myself to Thee to do and suffer whatever may please Thee for their sake, even to shed my blood and die for them, if necessary. So, too, in all the humility I can muster, I beg all whom I have ever offended or displeased in my whole life to forgive me, and I give myself to Thee to make whatever satisfaction to them Thou mayest desire.

2. In honor of and in union with the exceeding great love, the most perfect confidence and all the other dispositions with which Thou didst commend Thy soul and all the souls that belong to Thee into the hands of Thy Father, I surrender my soul, with the souls of all those for whom I am bound to have special concern, into the gentle hands and the most loving heart of the Divine Father, who is my God, my Creator and my Most Lovable Father, that He may dispose of them according to His good pleasure. I trust that His infinite goodness will place them with Thy soul, good Jesus, in His Fatherly Bosom, there to love and bless Him eternally with Thee, according to the desire of Thy soul, expressed in the words: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me" (John 17, 24).

3. In honor of and in union with Thy great charity in giving all Thy friends and children to Thy most Blessed Mother, I resign into her hands all those entrusted to my care, imploring Thee, Good Jesus, to commend them Thyself to Thy Virgin Mother. I implore her with my whole heart, by ~Thy very great love for her and hers for Thee, and by the same love with which Thou didst give her Thy friends and children, to look upon them henceforth as her children in a more special way, and to be their Mother.

4. In honor of and in union with the exceedingly powerful love whereby Thou didst commend me to Thy Father on Thy last day, and didst beg Him, on my behalf, for such great favors, giving me all that was most dear to Thee, with such extraordinary tokens of that love, urging me also to love my neighbor as Thou didst love me: I commend to Thee all those whom Thou knowest I should commend particularly to Thee, and I beg Thee on their behalf for all that Thou didst ask for me from Thy Eternal Father on Good Friday. I abandon myself to Thee to love Thee as Thou lovest the Father and as the Father loves Thee. I give myself also to Thee to

love my neighbor as Thou didst love me, and to shed my blood and give my life for him, if it is Thy holy will.

5. O Jesus, God of all blessings, I adore Thee in the last moment of Thy sojourn on earth, upon Mount Olivet, as Thou didst leave the earth to ascend into heaven. I adore Thee giving Thy most holy blessing to Thy Blessed Mother, Thy apostles and disciples; I adore the exceeding great love and all the other dispositions which filled Thy divine soul when Thou didst impart this supreme blessing as is related in the Holy Gospel (Luke 24, 50).

O Good Jesus, behold me prostrate at Thy feet, in union with the humility and the other holy dispositions of the Blessed Mother and the holy apostles and disciples as they received Thy blessing. I most humbly implore Thee, by all Thy love for them, and theirs for Thee, to give now to me and to all I have commended to Thee, Thy most holy blessing, so that by the power of that divine blessing all that displeases Thee in me may be destroyed and I may be altogether transformed into everlasting praise, love and benediction of Thee.

Seventh Day

XXVI. THE AGONY AND THE MOMENT OF DEATH.

You shall consider this day as if it were to be your last. You must strive to spend it with as much care and devotion as if you had only this one day in which to love God. For this purpose, you should apply yourself to the contemplation and adoration of Our Lord in the last day of His life on earth, and to do everything in union with the holy and divine dispositions of His last actions. With the last day of your life in view, you should implore Jesus to unite you to his dispositions and foster them in your heart, that you may be of the number of those of whom it is said: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord" (Apoc.14, 13) that is, who die in the dispositions of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Similarly you should consider and honor the Blessed Virgin on the last day of her life, uniting yourself to her dispositions, offering her the last day of your life. The prayers addressed to Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother for the end of the year should also serve your purpose here.

I may also add at this point that it is a good thing on this day to adore Jesus and honor His most holy Mother in their agony and death, offering your agony and death in union with theirs, imploring them to bless and sanctify your death by their own. It is also most beneficial to adore the infinite power of the divine love that caused the death of Jesus and of His most holy Mother, for they both died of love and by love.

You should implore that divine love to cause you to die with Jesus and His divine Mother, and to consume and sacrifice your life in its sacred flames. You should also honor the holy martyrs and all saints in their agony and death; offer them your agony and death, in union with their own, begging them to unite you with their holy dispositions as they prepared for death. Implore them specially to associate you with all the love and glory they gave to Our Lord on the last day of their life and at the moment they died for Him.

You should pray specially to St. John the Evangelist, St. Mary Magdalen and the good thief who died with Jesus, and all the other saints who were present at the death of the Son of God, that through the merits of their privilege in being near Him in death, they may give you special assistance at the hour of your own death.

On this same day it would be most advisable to read the Passion of Our Lord, the seventeenth chapter of St. John, containing His last words and prayers before setting forth to be crucified, as well as the prayers of Holy Mother Church for the agonizing soul, which are to be found at the end of the Breviary. For you do not know whether you will be in a fit state on the last day of your life to complete these preparations for a holy death. Hence, it is a good thing to anticipate that day, and to read the Passion of Our Lord and the above-mentioned prayers with all the devotion you would wish to put into them at the hour of death, and all the devotion with which they have ever been read by the whole Church.

But above all, when you read the seventeenth chapter of St. John, which contains the last words and prayers of Jesus, give yourself to Him in a sincere effort to pronounce these words and prayers in union with His love, dispositions and intentions when He spoke them, imploring Him to foster in your heart these sublime dispositions in preparation for the last day of your life and to produce the effects of these holy words. -

Finally, cast yourself down at the feet of Jesus and His most holy Mother, to implore them to give you their most holy blessing. "O Jesus, O Mother of Jesus, give me your holy blessing for the last moment of my life. By your great goodness, grant that the last moment of my life may be consecrated to the glory of the last moment of yours, and that my last breath may be an act of most pure love for you!"

Eighth Day

XXVII. THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT.

It is a most holy practice, when present at a deathbed, to kneel down at the moment the person dies, to adore the advent of the Son of God, who comes to judge that soul right there in the body, where it remains until it is consigned elsewhere by His judgment. It would be quite easy to prove that the Son of God thus comes to judge the soul at the hour of death, because several passages of Holy Scripture clearly speak of it.

This is not, however, the place to do so. All I have to say for the present is that if it is beneficial to adore the Son of God in the exercise of His judgment upon others at the hour of death, how much more should you adore Him in His coming for you and His judgment~ merit at the hour of your death. Therefore, you must render to Him now, freely and out of love, the honor that shall be obligatory when your end comes. Hence, this day shall be spent in this exercise, performed as follows:

1. O Jesus, Thou art the Saint of saints and Sanctity Itself, infinitely above all sin and imperfection. Yet, I behold Thee prostrate with Thy face to the earth at the feet of the All-just Father in the Garden of Olives, and the following day at the feet of Pilate, where the Eternal Father contemplates Thee as the Victim who has taken upon Himself all the sins of the world, giving Himself without reserve for the ransom of mankind. Thou hast taken the place of all sinners and borne the heavy judgment of our sins by dying on the Cross for our salvation. Thou dost accept that judgment with most perfect submission, most profound humility and most ardent love for Thy Father and for us. O Jesus, I adore and glorify Thee in this judgment and in all the holy dispositions of humiliation, contrition, submission and love with which Thou didst suffer to be judged and condemned to save us.

2. In honor of and in union with these dispositions, behold me prostrate at Thy feet, great Jesus, adoring Thee as my sovereign judge. I most willingly submit myself to Thy supreme power. I infinitely rejoice that Thou hast sovereign power over me and over all men and angels. A thousand times I bless the Eternal Father for having given Thee this power. I affirm sincerely that if, to imagine the impossible, Thou didst not have this power, and I did have it, I would want to strip myself of it to give it to Thee; if I were not subject to Thy power to judge me, I should wish to subject myself voluntarily to that power, out of homage to Thy divine justice and to the condemnation Thou didst undergo from Thy Father during Thy holy Passion.

3. O Jesus, I adore Thee in Thy coming at the hour of my death and at the moment of Thy judgment of my soul. I adore now every aspect and detail of my particular judgment. May it please Thee to grant me now some measure of the divine light by which Thou wilt clearly show me every event of my whole life, compelling me to give an account of everything. Grant me a share in the zeal for justice with which Thou wilt be avenged for my offenses, so that I may from now on see my sins clearly and make reparation by perfect contrition, horror and detestation for these same sins.

4. O my God, how many sins I have committed against Thee all my life, by thought, word and deed, in every way! They can not be numbered, I confess; and I accuse myself before Thee, Thy Blessed Mother, before all the angels and saints, and, if it be Thy holy will, before the whole world. I accuse myself of my sins just as they are in Thy sight, as Thou knowest them. If only I could see my offenses as Thou seest them!

If only I knew myself as Thou knowest me, and as I shall see and know myself in Thy light at the moment of judgment! How I shall be confounded and humiliated then by the realization of what I am! What horror my crimes will awaken in me! What regret, what anguish at having so little loved and so greatly offended so transcendent a goodness as Thine! How quickly will I then accuse and condemn my own self! Indeed there will be no need of any other judge, for I shall be the first to pass sentence upon my own misdeeds and ignominy.

5. But why wait until that final hour? Lord, at this very moment I surrender myself to the zeal of Thy divine justice and to the spirit of Thy

just hatred and righteous horror for sin. In honor of and in union with Thy extreme hatred of sin, I hate and detest all my sins; I hold them in abhorrence; I renounce them forever; I offer myself to Thee to suffer for them all the penance Thou shalt order. Casting myself down before Thy face, in the ultimate depths of abjection, to which, O great God, I have deserved to be reduced by my sins, I pronounce against myself, in the presence of heaven and earth, that final sentence. Since I, who am nothing but a worm of the earth, a handful of ashes and mere nothingness, have in so many ways offended so exalted and great a majesty, there are no tortures, either on earth, in purgatory or in hell, capable of worthily expiating my sin, without the intervention of Thy mercy and the power of Thy Precious Blood. For all these torments are finite, while the offense of my sins is infinite, since they offend an infinite majesty, and consequently deserve an infinite punishment.

So, my sovereign Judge, falling down once more at Thy feet, and in the nethermost depths of the bottomless pit of my sins, I adore and bless and love Thee with my whole heart, as pronouncing the sentence that Thou shalt pronounce at the hour of my death, and I voluntarily, with all the love possible to me, submit to this sentence, whatever it may be, telling Thee with the Royal Prophet, with all the power of my will: "Thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgment is right" (Ps. 118, 137). And I most obediently accept anything it may please Thee to ordain in my regard, in time and eternity, giving myself to Thee to bear not only all the sufferings of Purgatory, in homage to Thy divine justice, but any other penalty Thou mayest impose upon me. I take no thought of what is to become of me nor of what is to be done to me in time and eternity, provided only that the wrong and dishonor I have done Thee may be made good, no matter what the cost.

And yet, O God of mercy, do not permit that I should be numbered among those who will never love Thee. O most merciful Lord, what am I that Thou deignest to open Thy blessed eyes to look upon me, to summon me into Thy presence in judgment and to exercise Thy justice upon me? It is all too true that I deserve Thy mercy far less than Thy justice. But, O Thou Saviour of my soul, remember that Thou didst will to be judged for me, and that Thou art most worthy that my sins should be forgiven in

Thee, since Thou didst ask the All merciful Father to pardon them for me. And yet, Lord, enter not into judgment with Thy miserable and unworthy servant, but offer for me to Thy Father the judgment Thou didst sustain for my sins, and pray that His divine forgiveness be granted, not to me but to Thee.

O Father of Mercy, I confess that I have deserved to bear the stern weight of Thy judgments, and that I am not worthy that Thou shouldst give me the least grace, nor that Thou shouldst pardon the very smallest of my sins. I offer Thee the terrible judgment Thy Son sustained for my faults, and I implore Thee to pardon them, not to me, but to Thy Beloved Son, who begs Thy forgiveness on my behalf, and to give Him, also, all the graces I need for Thy service. All possible punishments in the world, visited upon me, are incapable of giving Thee fitting satisfaction for the very least of my crimes. Thy Son alone can make perfect reparation for the dishonor I have given Thee. And so I offer to Thee, and I implore Him to offer with me, all that He did and suffered in His whole life, and all the honor He ever rendered to Thee, whether by Himself or through His Blessed Mother, His angels and all His saints.

O Mother of Mercy, Mother of Jesus, O angels and saints of Jesus, offer to God all your merits and works on my behalf and all the glory you ever gave Him, in satisfaction for my offenses and implore Him to treat me not according to the rigor of His justice, but the multitude of His mercies, in order that I may love and bless Him with you forever.

Ninth Day

XXVIII. DEATH AND BURIAL.

Since Jesus Christ, our Lord, willed to pass through all the phases of human life, in order to honor His Eternal Father and to bless and sanctify them for you, you should also have a holy zeal for honoring Him particularly in each of the phases of His life, and to consecrate all the states, in which you have been and are to be, to the honor of each aspect of His mortal life. Following this teaching, after you have adored Him in the last moment of His life, dedicating to Him your own last moment, it is now very appropriate to adore Him in the state of death, in which He remained for three days, and to consecrate to Him the condition of death in which

you are to be from the last moment of your life until the day of the general resurrection, as follows:

1. O Jesus, Thou art eternal life and the source of all life, yet I behold Thee cold in the darkness and shadow of death. I see Thee bid farewell, for a little while, to Thy most lovable Mother, to Thy dearly beloved apostles and disciples, and to all Thy friends left bathed in tears, in the greatest mourning and lamentation of all time. I contemplate Thy holy soul separated from Thy divine Body, with which it had so holy, so close and so sublime a union. I see this same Body, more holy and sacred than all the heavenly bodies (I mean than all those in all the heavens, and more than the empyrean heaven itself), lying in a sepulchre, among the rocks in the dust. O my Jesus, I adore, praise and glorify Thee thus. I offer Thee all the honor rendered to Thee in this state by Thy holy Mother, by St. Mary Magdalen, by the holy apostles and disciples, by the angels, by the holy souls Thou didst free from Limbo and by the whole Church, with all the glory Thy Father gave Thee, and which Thou now enjoyest in heaven, in recompense for that humiliation Thou didst bear on earth. I offer Thee the state of death which will one day be mine, in honor of that state of death in which Thou didst remain before the Resurrection. I offer Thee the separation from the company of my friends and relatives that I shall one day have to bear, in honor of the most bitter separation which Thou didst suffer, torn from the most sweet company of Thy dearest Mother, of Thy dearly beloved apostles and disciples. I offer Thee all the sorrow and the tears of my relatives and friends in honor of the sorrow and tears of Thy harrowed Mother and sorrowing apostles. I offer Thee the separation of my soul from Thy sacred body. I offer Thee all the states of my soul, until its reunion with its body, whatever they may be, in homage to the state in which Thy holy soul existed during the time it was separated from Thy body. I offer Thee the burial of my body and all the actions that shall be done in performing this burial, in honor of the burial of Thy holy body. In honor of and in union with the same love with which Thou, O good Jesus, didst will that Thy sacred body should lie upon the dust within a hollow rock, and by which Thou hast so often given me this same body in Holy Communion, although I am nothing but a worm of the earth, I most willingly surrender my body to the ground and to the worms. I consent to

be reduced to ashes and dust, but only on condition, O crucified Saviour, that all the grains of dust into which my flesh and bones shall crumble, may be so many voices praising and glorifying without interruption the adorable mystery of Thy burial, and that I may thus sing with the holy psalmist: *Omnia ossa mea dicent, Domine quis similis tibi?* "All my bones shall say: Lord, who is like to thee?" (Ps. 34, 10).

2. O Divine Jesus, even though Thy body and soul were separated, nevertheless they are continually united to Thy divinity. Thus, they never ceased to be worthy of infinite honor and adoration. Therefore, I adore Thy holy soul in its descent into Limbo. I adore all that happened in Thy soul and all the efforts produced in the souls of the Holy Patriarchs in Limbo. I also adore Thy body in the tomb, in all its members, for there is no part of it that is not infinitely adorable. I adore you, O most holy eyes of my Saviour's body. I adore you, O, sacred ears of my God. I adore and praise you, O most blessed mouth and tongue of Him who is the Word and eternal utterance of the Father. I adore and bless you, O most divine hands and feet of my Lord. I adore and love you, O most amiable Heart of Jesus.

Alas, my Beloved, Thy perfect body is lifeless because of my sins! Those sacred eyes, that by their sweet aspect gave joy to all who came in contact with Thee, are now darkened by the shadow of death. Those holy ears, always open to hear the cries and prayers of all unhappy creatures, are now closed and hear no more. Those divine lips, which pronounced the words of life, have become mute and speak no words. Those blessed hands that wrought so many miracles are lifeless and still. Those holy feet, so often wearied for the salvation of the world, are no longer able to walk. But above all, the most loving Heart of my Jesus, the most exalted and noble throne of divine love, is without life or feeling. Ah, my Dear Jesus, who has brought Thee to this pitiable state? My sins and Thy love! Cursed and detestable sin, how I abhor you! O love of my Saviour, may I love you, may I bless you without ceasing!

3. O Good Jesus, I surrender myself completely to the power of Thy holy love. I implore Thee by that love, to reduce me now into a state of death that may imitate and honor Thy state of death. Utterly extinguish in me the life of sin and of the old Adam. Cause me to die to the world, to myself and to all that is not Thee. Mortify my eyes, ears, tongue, hands,

feet, heart and all the other powers of my body and soul, so that I may no longer be able to see, nor hear, speak, taste, act, walk, love, think, will, nor make any other use of all the parts of my body or the faculties of my soul, save in accordance with Thy good pleasure, led by the guidance of Thy divine spirit.

4. O my Well-beloved Jesus, I give myself to Thee to derive the benefits of these words of Thy apostle: "You are dead: and your life is hid with Christ in God" (COL. 3, 3). Hide me utterly with Thee in God. Bury my mind, my heart, my will and my being, so that I may no longer have any thoughts, desires, or affections, any sentiments and dispositions other than Thine own. And just as the earth changes and transforms into itself the bodies buried within it, do Thou change and transform me completely into Thyself. Bury my pride in Thy humility, my coldness and tepidity in the fervor of Thy divine love, and all my other vices and imperfections into Thy holy virtues and perfections so that, just as the earth consumes all the corruption of the body buried in it, so all the corruption of my soul may be consumed and annihilated in Thy divine perfections.

5. O Mother of Jesus, I honor and revere thee in the state of thy death and burial. I offer thee all the honor then given thee by the angels and holy apostles. I thank thee for all the glory thou didst give to the death and burial of Thy Son by thine Own. I offer thee my own death and burial, imploring thee to obtain for me, by thy holy prayers, the grace that every aspect of my earthly end may pay everlasting homage to the death and burial of thy spotless self and of thy beloved Son, our Saviour.

Tenth Day

XXIX. ENTRANCE OF THE SOUL INTO HEAVEN AND UNDYING LIFE.

Even though we are most unworthy to see the face of God and to be admitted into the blessed company of the citizens of heaven, it is, nevertheless, most certain that the Father, the Son, the Spirit, the Blessed Virgin, all the angels and all the saints eagerly desire to behold you soon joined with them, to be overwhelmed as they are in torrents of the heavenly and unspeakable delights of divine love which reigns with fulness in heaven. And we ought to have great trust that, in the goodness of God, this will one day be realized for us. Our greatest consolation in this

world ought to be the thought and expectation of that day when we shall begin to love and glorify God in all perfection. What rejoicings we should voice with the Royal Prophet, at the vision and thought of that blessed day: *Laetatus sum in his quae dicta sunt mihi, in domum Domini ibimus*: I rejoiced at the things that were said to me: We shall go into the house of the Lord" (Ps. 121, 1). 'Blessed are they who dwell in thy house, O Lord: they shall praise thee forever and ever.'" (Ps. 83, 5).

Surely if you celebrate the day of your birth into the life of grace by holy Baptism, how much more should you celebrate the feast of your entrance into heaven and your birth into the life of glory! Anticipate that day, and begin now to celebrate that feast by means of the following exercises:

1. O Jesus, I adore, praise and glorify Thee countless times at the moment of Thy triumphant entrance into heaven. I offer Thee all the glory, love and praises that were given to Thee in welcome by the Father, the Holy Spirit, Thy Blessed Mother and all the angels. I also honor Thy Blessed Mother in the moment of her assumption into Paradise. I offer her all the glory and praises that were given her by the Omnipotent Father, by her Beloved Son, Thyself, Thy Holy Spirit, all the angels and all the saints. I offer to Thee and to Thy glorious Mother, my own entrance into Paradise, which, I hope, by Thy great mercy, to make one day, in honor of the glorious and triumphant entry of Thy ascension and her assumption. O my Most Adorable Jesus, I desire to consecrate everything that ever was, is and shall be in me, in time and in eternity, to the honor and homage of Thee and Thy most holy Mother.

2. O Most Admirable and Most Adorable Trinity, I adore, bless and magnify Thee infinitely for all that Thou art in Thy manifold works of mercy and justice toward me and to all Thy creatures, in heaven, on earth and in hell. I offer Thee all the adoration, love, glory, praise and benediction accorded Thee forever. O my God, how I rejoice to behold Thee so full of greatness, of marvels, of glory and joy! It is enough. I desire no other glory, felicity or happiness, in eternity save to behold the incomprehensible glory, felicity and happiness of Him whom I love more than myself. O my glory and my love, may all heaven and earth be transformed into glory and love for Thee! Finally, I sacrifice myself all to

Thee to be sacredly annihilated and consumed forever in the most pure fire of Thy divine love.

3. O Jesus, Thou only object of my love, with what love, with what praises can I ever repay Thee for all that Thou art in Thyself, and for all the innumerable effects of Thy goodness towards all Thy creatures, myself in particular? Lord, may all Thy creatures, all Thy angels and saints, Thy Blessed Mother, and all the powers of Thy divinity and humanity be employed in blessing and loving Thee forever.

4. O Mother of God, O holy angels, O blessed saints, I hail, honor and thank you all in general, and each one in particular, especially those to whom I owe some special obligation and with whom I am to be most closely associated in eternity. In thanksgiving for all the favors I have received from you, and much more for all the glory and services you have rendered to my God, I offer to each one of you the most amiable Heart of my Jesus, source Of all joy, all glory and all praise. I give you my mind and my heart; unite them with your minds and hearts and associate me in your constant chorus of praise to Him who created me, that I may praise and love Him eternally with you. Pray ardently that I may bless and love Him through you, while awaiting the day when it may please Him to unite me with you .to love and glorify Him to perfection.

5. O blessed day, when I shall begin to love most purely and perfectly my Lord and Saviour who is infinitely amiable! O thousand times happy day in which I shall begin to be all love for him who is all love for me! O Jesus, my sweet love, how consoled. I am when I think that I shall love and bless Thee eternally! My eyes dissolve in tears and my heart melts with joy at the sweetness of the thought that some day I shall be completely transformed into praise and love for Thee. But, alas, when will it come, this day, so longed for and a thousand times desired?

Will it yet delay for long? *Heu mihi quia incolatus meus prolongatus est! "Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged" (Ps. 119, 5). Usquequo, Domine, oblivisceris me in finem, usquequo avertis faciem tuam a me? "How long, O Lord, wilt thou forget me unto the end? How long dost thou turn away thy face from me" (Ps. 12, 1)? Quaemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum ita desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus (Ps. 41, 2) .*

No more the hunted stag desires,
Fleeing in woe and weariness,
Waters to quench his burning thirst,
Than my poor heart with sadness pressed
Sighs after Thee, O Lord, my rest.

My heart is driven nigh to death
By cruel desires, merciless,
And longs for Thee, Lord, Mighty God,
And in its longing, cries apace:
When shall my eyes behold Thy face?

When, ah, when will come that day
To take my earthly woes away
And bring me home at last to Thee?

While waiting for that day, I desire, O my Saviour, to realize in myself St. Paul's words: "Our conversation is in heaven" (Phil. 3, 20), as well as Thy words of reassurance and guidance: "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17, 21). I desire to live on earth as though I were not here, but living by my heart and spirit in heaven. I desire to concentrate all my powers on the establishment of the kingdom of Thy glory and holy love within myself. But Thou knowest, Lord, that of myself I can do nothing; therefore, I give myself to Thee, that Thou mayest destroy every obstacle and perfectly establish the kingdom of Thy pure love in my body, in my soul, and in all my thoughts, words and actions.

XXX. CONCLUSION OF THE EXERCISE.

At the end of these exercises on the subject of death, you should thank Our Lord for the graces He has given you through them, and beg Him to forgive the faults you have committed in their performance. Ask Him to compensate for your deficiencies, and to accomplish in you the fulfilment of His words: "Blessed is that servant, whom when his lord shall come he shall find so doing. Amen I say to you: he shall place him over all his goods" (Matt. 24, 46-47). Pray that He may ever watch within you and

for you, lest you be taken by surprise. Beg Him to keep these exercises and preparations in store for you against the hour of your death and to be Himself your disposition and preparation.

Follow the same procedure proportionately, invoking the Blessed Virgin, the angels and saints, especially the saints on whose feast day the Lord knows you are going to die.

XXXI. SOME OTHER POINTS OF ADVICE AND NECESSARY DISPOSITIONS FOR A HOLY DEATH.

I shall here add a few other suggestions and practices which may prove useful to you, when you sense that your life is approaching its end.

The chief thing for you to do, when you feel that you are nearing the end of your life, is to devote yourself as much as possible to acts of love of Jesus, ever uniting humility with love. There is no more powerful and effective means of quickly wiping out our sins, advancing with great strides along the road to God, and giving Him pleasure than the divine exercise of active love.

If you are worried by the fear of death or by qualms of mistrust by reason of your past sins, ask some kind person to read to you the passages about confidence contained in 'Part One' of this book.

If you are not too sick to listen to reading aloud, ask some kind friend to read to you, from time to time, the foregoing meditations on death, and the exercises of praise and glorification of Jesus which are to be found in 'Part Five' of this book.

Let him also read passages from the Lives of the Saints or some other book of devotion, but particularly the Passion of Jesus Christ, the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel of St. John and the prayers for the agonizing soul, as on the seventh day of the "Exercise of Preparations for Death."

Do not forget, when you are at the end of your life, to remind one of your friends to gain a plenary indulgence for you, not in your own interest but for the pure glory of God, according to the method suggested in 'Part Six,' where indulgences are discussed.

Frequently clasp the Crucifix in your hands, so that you may from time to time make acts of love while kissing the Cross and the Five Wounds, as I explain in 'Part Five.'

Let the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary be ever in your heart and frequently on your lips. Renew the desire to pronounce them with the intentions recommended for the Rosary of Jesus and Mary in 'Part Three.'

Pray with St. Francis: "Lord, release my soul from the prison of this body that I may praise Thy Holy Name with all the just who await me in heaven."

Constantly invoke the Blessed Virgin, using the words of Holy Church: *Maria Mater gratiae, Mater misericordiae, tu nos ab hoste protege et hora mortis . Suscipe:* "O Mary, Mother of Grace, Mother of Mercy protect us from the enemy and receive us at the hour of death."

O Mother of Jesus, be a mother to my soul. *Monstra te esse Matrem.* "Show thyself my Mother." *Monstra te esse Matrem Jesu.* "Show that thou art the Mother of Jesus," by destroying in me, by thy prayers and merits, all that is contrary to the glory of thy Son Jesus, and causing Him to be loved and glorified perfectly in me.

Repeat with St. Stephen: *Domine Jesu suscipe spirituum meum:* "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7, 58).

As you say all these words, ever unite yourself with the devotion, the love and the other holy dispositions with which they were first pronounced.

Accept your suffering in union with Jesus, in agony in the garden of Olives: *Pater, non mea voluntas sed tua fiat:* 'Father, not my will but thine be done' (Luke 22, 42). And again with Jesus agonizing on the Cross, say: *Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum.* 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit' (Luke 23, 46).

Constantly lift up your heart to Jesus, saying to Him with the beloved disciple St. John: *Veni Domine Jesu:* "Come, Lord Jesus" (Apoc. 22, 20).

Repeat with St. Peter: *Domine, tu scis quia amo te.* "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee" (John 21, 16) .

Say with the good thief: *Memento mei, Domine, dum veneris in regnum tuum:* "Lord, remember me when thou shalt come into Thy Kingdom" (Luke 23, 42). And as you pronounce these words, unite yourself with the,

heartfelt contrition of the good thief, contrition so deep and moving that he merited the infinite grace to hear from the lips of the Son of God: "Amen I say to thee: this day thou shalt be with me in paradise" (Luke 23, 43).

Humbly repeat with the poor publican in the Gospel: *Deus propitius esto mihi peccatori*. "O God, be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18, 13).

Let your heart chant with King David: *Miserere mei Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam*: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy" (Ps. 50, 3). *Suscipe me secundum eloquium tuum et vivam, et non confundas me ab expectatione mea*: "Uphold me according to thy word, and I shall live: and let me not be confounded in my expectation" (Ps. 118, 116). *In te Domine speravi, non confundar in aeternum*: "In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded" (Ps. 30, 1).

You may also make use of these little aspirations: "O Jesus, love Thy Father and Thy Holy Spirit for me." "O Father of Jesus, O Holy Spirit of Jesus, O Mother of Jesus, O angels of Jesus, O saints of Jesus, love Jesus for me." *Volo Domine Jesu te regnare super me*: "Lord Jesus, I will to have Thee reign over me."

Dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum: "Lord Jesus, reign over me in the midst of all Thy enemies."

"O my Dear Jesus, be Jesus to me; O my all, be all to me, for the past, present and future."

Unum necessarium, unum volo, unum amo, unum quaero: "One thing alone is necessary. Farewell to all things else; speak of them no more to me. I desire but one thing, I seek but one thing, I love but one thing, which is all to me, and all else is nothing to me. It is my sweetest Jesus Whom I desire, my Dearest Jesus whom I seek. Him I love and Him I long to love with all the love in heaven and on earth."

Jesus meus et omnia: "My Jesus is all to me. Once more, farewell to all that is not Jesus. My Jesus is sufficient for me. I desire nought but Him in heaven and on earth."

Veni Domine Jesu: "Come Lord Jesus, enter into me, there to love Thyself to perfection."

"O Jesus, my all, be Thou my preparation for my death. O Jesus, I give myself to Thee to die with Thee, in Thee and by Thee."

"O Jesus, I give myself to Thee to unite myself, at the moment of death, with all the dispositions of love and sanctity which ennobled the death of Thy divine humanity, Thy holy martyrs and all the other saints."

"O Jesus, O Mary, Mother of Jesus, I implore you to give me your holy blessing."

Finally, try to make your last word be the Holy Name of Jesus and the sweet name of Mary: "Jesus, Mary!" or else, "Live Jesus! or Jesus, be Jesus to me!"

Thus, you may converse with Our Lord with profound devotion and consoling ease by means of frequent ejaculations. But if you wish Him to give you the grace to make these loving aspirations at the hour of your death, you must develop the habit of saying these words and pronouncing these ejaculations frequently during your life, especially at night, lying in bed before falling asleep, using now one, now another, according to the inspiration of the spirit of God.

It would also be well to ask those present around to assist you during your last sickness, to read and reread frequently the above prayers. And if by chance you should lose the power of speech, let them diligently continue to make these acts on your behalf, particularly if it should happen that you lose the use of your senses or your reason. Once you have made the request and expressed to your friends that it is your will for them to make acts of love in your name and for you, Our Lord will accept these precious acts as if you yourself were making them, since they are made at your request and on your behalf.

Pray also to the Blessed Virgin and your special angels and saints to carry out all these things for you, together with everything else they know God expects of you on the last day of your life. But above all, supplicate Jesus Himself to do this for you, and put great trust in His infinite goodness, that He will be your all, and will do on, your behalf everything that is required of you for a holy and happy death. And I pray you to note this last point well.

Even though you should prepare yourself for death with all possible care and devotion, by means of these exercises, none the less, after having done all that has been suggested, you should not rely or rest upon your own acts, exercises and preparations, but rather place all your reliance and

trust in the pure goodness and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, ever imploring Him to be your preparation, your virtue, your sanctification and your all. For after all is said and done, to Jesus Christ alone does it belong to be all and accomplish all, in all men and all things that He may have the glory Of all, according to the divine words of St. Paul, with which I began this book, and by which I wish to finish it: *Omnia in omnibus Christus*: "Christ is all and in all" (Col. 3, 11). Oh, Let Him then be all, in time and in eternity!

O Jesus, be all, be all on earth as Thou art in heaven: be all in all men and things. Be all in this little book. Everything it has Of good is all from Thee. It speaks but of Thee and for Thee; it aims only at forming and establishing Thee in the souls of those who use it. Let its readers see in it nothing but Jesus, seek in it nothing but Jesus, and learn from it nothing but to love and glorify Jesus. Be all to him who has written this book and to those who shall read it; for Thou knowest,

O Jesus, my dear all, that it is my will never, in life or in death, to have any other object or desire but to see Thee live and reign in all men and all things. Live then, Jesus, live and reign in us. The wretched Jews cried: *Nolumus hunc regnare super nos*: "We will not have this man to reign over us." We, on the contrary, desire to proclaim in the face of heaven and on earth:

"We want Thee, Lord Jesus, to reign over us." Reign, therefore, O King of Souls, dwell perfectly and absolutely in thy Kingdom in our hearts that we may forever sing the divine canticle: *Omnia in omnibus Jesu*: "Jesus is all in all things!" Live Jesus! Live Live Thou great all! Live great Jesus, Who art all! Live this great all, which is Jesus! Live Jesus! Live Jesus!

LIVE JESUS AND MARY

Prayer for a Sick Person

As St. Gertrude was wishing to pray for a sick person and asked Christ in what manner she should do so, he answered her: "Pray only that I should give him patience and turn every moment to his advantage; and as often as thou prayest thus, thine own merits and those of the sick person will be increased." (B. iii. ch. 13.)

All-compassionate Jesus! thou who didst truly bear our sickness, and take our pains and infirmities from us: I remind thee of the manifold torture and pains, which for three long hours thou didst endure upon the cross for the salvation of the whole world, and I entreat thee by all that martyrdom, and particularly by the hard thrust of the lance which pierced thy sweet heart, that thou wilt assist this poor sick person and grant him true patience.



I also pray, that thou wouldst grant that every moment that he shall suffer shall tend to thy honor and glory, and to his well-being and salvation, in any way in which thy loving heart has decreed from all eternity. Grant this, O most loving Jesus! through thine infinite goodness and mercy, and through the glorious intercession of thy sweet mother and of all the saints. Amen.

Prayer of One Sick or in Trouble

As St. Mechtildis was once very sick and complained of it, Christ said to her, "Lay all thy pains in my heart, and I will so perfect them and make them so fruitful that they shall bring honor to the saints in heaven, merits to the just, forgiveness to the sinner, refreshment to the poor souls in purgatory." (B. ii. cli. 32.)

Most beloved Jesus! this my sickness, or misfortune, which, thou hast sent me from thy divine heart in token of thy love, I accept with all my heart, and with the same love with which thou hast sent them I offer them in gratitude to thee.

In thy sweet heart I lay all my suffering and pain, with the request that thou shouldst enclose them in thy sufferings and make them perfect. And since I from pain and trouble cannot praise my heavenly Father, God, as I ought to do, I beg of thee that with the same praise with which thou didst once praise him amid thine awful sufferings on the cross, thou wouldst now praise and glorify him in my stead. And even as thou didst thank him for sending thee so many torments and pains, thank him now in like manner for what I suffer. I pray thee also, that with the self-same love, with which thou didst accept and offer to thy heavenly Father all thy sufferings, and the mockeries that assailed thee, thou wouldst offer these my inward and outward calamities, in union with thine own, to his honor and glory. Amen.



An Efficacious Method of Loving and Praising God

*While St. Mechtilde was disquieted because she did not worthily honour and love God, our Lord said to her: **When you desire to praise me, and cannot praise me as you would, say:***

O GOOD Jesus, I praise thee, vouchsafe to supply for me whatsoever is lacking in my praise.

And if you wish to love me, say:

O GOOD Jesus, I love thee: vouchsafe to supply whatever is lacking in my love, and offer the love of thy Sacred Heart to God the Father for me.

Consecrating the Last Two Hours of Your Life

to the Most Holy Virgin *by Rev. Fr. Ildefonso M. Izaguirre, O.P.*



Prostrated at thy feet, and humiliated by my sins, but full of confidence in thee, O Mary! I beg thee to accept the petition my heart is about to make. It is for my last moments.

Dear Mother I wish to request thy protection and maternal love so that in the decisive instant that thou wilt do all thy love can suggest in my behalf.

To thee, O Mother of my soul, I consecrate THE LAST TWO HOURS of my life. Come to my side to receive my last breath and when death has cut the thread of my days, tell Jesus, presenting to Him my soul, "I LOVE IT". That word alone will be enough to procure for me the benediction of my God and the happiness of seeing thee for all eternity.

I put my trust in thee, my Mother and hope it will not be in vain. O Mary! Pray for thy child and lead him to Jesus! Amen.

PRAYERS FOR THE DYING

Aspirations at the Approach of Death



I believe in Thee, my God,
Who art the very Truth itself.

I hope in Thy boundless
mercy. I love Thy infinite
goodness.

In Thee, O Lord, have I
hoped. I shall not be
confounded forever.

May I die, O Lord, for the love of Thee Who wast pleased to
die for the love of me.

Suffer me not, O my God, to be separated from Thee. Thee
only do I desire. O infinite Goodness, I love Thee, I love Thee,
I love Thee.

My Jesus, Thou art about to judge me. Spare and pardon,
before Thou judgest me. I love
Thee, and because I love Thee I am
sorry that I have offended Thee.

My sweetest Jesus, suffer me not to
be separated from Thee.

Blood of Jesus, wash me. Passion of
Jesus, save me.

Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend
my spirit. I desire to die, O Lord, in
order to see Thee.



Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me. Turn thine eyes of mercy towards us, and after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

O Mary, now is the time to help thy servant My Mother, forsake me not.

O paradise, O beautiful country, O country of love, when shall I see thee? My God, when shall I behold Thee face to face? When, O my Jesus, shall I be secure of never losing Thee again?

My God, and my All. I willingly give up all in order to gain Thee, my God. O happy suffering, to suffer for God! happy death, to die in the Lord !

O my God, for the love of Jesus have mercy on me. Send me, O Lord, to purgatory for as long as Thou pleasest, but do not send me to hell, where I cannot love Thee.

O eternal God, I hope and desire to love Thee forever in heaven. My Love is crucified. Jesus, my Love, died for me.

O eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, give me Thy grace. I love Thee, I am sorry for having offended Thee.

How can I thank Thee, O my God, for all the blessings Thou hast bestowed upon me? I hope to thank Thee for all eternity in heaven.

Mary, Mother of grace, Mother of mercy, pray for me.

Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit My Jesus, I commend to Thee my soul, which Thou hast redeemed by Thy precious blood.

Lord Jesus, receive my soul. My God, help me, allow me to come and love Thee for all eternity in heaven. Jesus, my love, I love Thee, I am sorry for having offended Thee.

O Mary, my hope, help me, pray to Jesus for me. By Thy Passion, O Jesus, save me. My Mother Mary, help me in this hour.

St. Joseph, assist me. St. Michael the archangel, defend me.

My angel guardian, protect me.

My patron saint, **N. N.**, commend me to Jesus Christ. All ye saints of God, intercede for me. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! Jesus and Mary, I give you my heart and my soul.

May I die consumed by an ardent thirst to see the desirable Face of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

O MY God, I accept this sickness from Thy hands, whether it be for life or death. Not my will but Thine be done.



Prayer for those in their agony

O MOST merciful JESUS, Lover of souls: I pray Thee, by the agony of thy most Sacred Heart, and by the sorrows of thy Immaculate Mother, cleanse in thine own Blood the sinners of the whole world who are now in their agony and to die this day. Amen. Heart of JESUS, once in agony, pity the dying.

MARY, Mother of GOD and Mother of mercy, pray for us, and for the departed.

JESUS, Mary, Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul.

JESUS, Mary, Joseph, assist me in my last agony.

JESUS, Mary, Joseph, may I breathe forth my soul in peace with you.



ETERNAL FATHER, we offer Thee the Blood, Passion, and Death of JESUS CHRIST, and the sorrows of the most holy Mary and St Joseph, in payment for our sins, in suffrage for the holy souls in purgatory, for the wants of our holy Mother the Church, and for the conversion of sinners. Amen.