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J.M.J.

St. Alphonsus Liguori Book of Prayers for Holy Communion



*St. Alphonsus Liguori, Lover of the Holy Eucharist,
Teacher of Prayer, pray for us!*



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*Praised be Jesus Christ
in the Most Blessed Sacrament!*

ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

ACTS FOR HOLY COMMUNION

I.

Preparation for Communion.

St. Francis de Sales says, that our Saviour can never be seen more amiable and more tender, in all that He has done for us, than in the Holy Communion, in which He, so to say, annihilates Himself and becomes food, that He may unite Himself to the hearts and bodies of His faithful (Introd., ch. 21.) Therefore the learned Gerson used also to say, that there was no means more efficacious than the Holy Communion whereby to enkindle devotion and the holy love of God in our souls.

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

advance in divine love.

Again, if there is question of healing our spiritual infirmities, what more certain remedy can we have than the Holy Communion, which is called by the sacred Council of Trent “a remedy whereby we may be freed from daily faults, and be preserved from mortal sins.” [*Sess. xiii. c. 2.*]

Whence does it come, asks Cardinal Bona, that in so many souls we see so little fruit with so frequent Communions, and that they constantly relapse into the same faults? He replies: “The fault is not in the food, but in the disposition of him who receives.” [*De Sacr. M. c. 6, 6.*] Can a man, says Solomon, hide fire in his bosom, and his garments not burn? God is a consuming fire. [*Deut. iv. 24.*] He comes Himself in the Holy Communion to enkindle this divine fire; how is it, then, says William of Paris, that we see so diabolical a miracle as that souls should remain cold in divine love in the midst of such flames?

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

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

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

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

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

2. In the second place, it is necessary, in the Holy Communion, to have a great desire to

receive Jesus Christ and His holy love. In this sacred banquet, says Gerson, only those who are famishing receive their fill; and the most blessed Virgin Mary had already said the same thing:

He hath filled the hungry with good things.

[Luke, i. 53.]

As Jesus, writes the Venerable Father Avila, only came into this world after He had been much and long desired, so does He only enter a soul that desires Him; for it is not becoming that such food should be given to him who has a loathing for it.

Our Lord one day said to St. Matilda:

“No bee flies with such impetuosity to flowers, to suck their honey, as I fly to souls in the Holy Communion, driven by the violence of my love.” [*Spir. Grat.* 1. 2, c. 3.] Since then, Jesus Christ has so great a desire to come into our souls, it is right that we also should have a great desire to receive Him and His divine love by the Holy Communion. St. Francis de Sales teaches us that the principal object which a soul should have in view in communicating should be, to advance in the love of God; since He who for love alone gives Himself to us should be received for love.

St. Alphonsus Ligouri's

ACTS BEFORE COMMUNION.

1. *An Act of Faith.*

*Behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains,
skipping over the hills. [Cant. ii. 8. 2]*

Ah, my most amiable Saviour, over how many, what rough and craggy mountains, hast Thou had to pass in order to come and unite Thyself to me by means of this most holy sacrament!

Thou, from being God,
hadst to become man;
from being immense,
to become a babe;
from being Lord,
to become a servant.

Thou hadst to pass
from the bosom of Thy Eternal Father
to the womb of a Virgin;
from heaven into a stable;
from a throne of glory
to the gibbet of a criminal.

And on this very morning

Thou wilt come from Thy seat in heaven
to dwell in my bosom.

*Behold He standeth behind our wall, looking
through the windows, looking through the lattices?*
[*Cant. ii. 9.*]

Behold, O my soul, thy loving Jesus, burning with the same love with which He loved thee when dying for thee on the Cross, is now concealed in the Most Blessed Sacrament under the sacred species; and what is He doing? Looking through the lattices. As an ardent lover, desirous to see you correspond to His love, from the Host, as from within closed lattices, whence He sees without being seen, He is looking at you, who are this morning about to feed upon His divine Flesh; He observes your thoughts, what it is that you love, what you desire, what you seek for, and what offerings you are about to make Him.

Awake, then, my soul, and prepare to receive thy Jesus; and, in the first place, by faith, say to Him: So, then, my beloved Redeemer, in a few moments Thou art

coming to me? O hidden God, unknown to the greater part of men, I believe, I confess, I adore Thee in the Most Holy Sacrament as my Lord and Saviour!

And in acknowledgment of this truth

I would willingly lay down my life.

Thou comest to enrich me with Thy graces and to unite Thyself entirely to me;

how great, then, should be my confidence in this Thy so loving visit!

2. *An Act of Confidence.*

My soul, expand thy heart. Thy Jesus can do Thee every good, and, indeed, loves thee. Hope thou for great things from this thy Lord, who, urged by love, comes all love to thee.

Yes, my dear Jesus, my hope, I trust in Thy Goodness, that, in giving Thyself to me this morning, Thou wilt enkindle in my poor heart the beautiful flame of Thy pure love, and a real desire to please Thee; so that, from this day forward, I may never will anything but what Thou willest.

My Jesus, Mercy!

3. An Act of Love.

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

O boundless Love! Incomprehensible Love! Infinite love! a God would give Himself all to me!

My soul, believest thou this?

And what doest thou? what sayest thou?

O God, O God, O infinite amiability, only worthy object of all love,

I love Thee with my whole heart,

I love Thee above all things,

I love Thee more than myself,

more than my life!

Oh, could I but see Thee loved by all!

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

Mother of fair love,
 most holy Virgin Mary,
 help me to love that God
 whom Thou dost
 so ardently desire
 to see loved!



4. *An Act of Humility.*

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

And is it possible, O my Jesus, that Thou who art infinite purity desirest to come and reside in this soul of mine, which has been so many times the dwelling of Thy enemy, and soiled with so many sins? I know, O my Lord, Thy great Majesty and my misery; I am ashamed to appear before Thee.

Reverence would induce me to keep at a distance from Thee; but if I depart from Thee, O my life, whither shall I go? To whom shall I have recourse? and what will become of me?

No, never will I depart from Thee; nay, even I will ever draw nearer and nearer to Thee.

Thou art satisfied that I should receive Thee as food, Thou even invitest me to this.

I come then, O my amiable Saviour, I come to receive Thee this morning, all humbled and confused at the sight of my defects; but full of confidence in Thy tender mercy, and in the love which Thou bearest me.

5. *An Act of Contrition.*

I am indeed grieved, O God of my soul, for not having loved Thee during the time past; what is still worse, so far from loving Thee, and to gratify my own inclinations, I have greatly offended and outraged Thy infinite goodness:

I have turned my back upon Thee,
I have despised Thy grace and friendship;
in a word, O my God,

I was deliberate in my will to lose Thee.

Lord, I am sorry, and grieve for it with my whole heart. I detest the sins which I have committed, be they great or small, as the greatest of all my misfortunes, because I have thereby offended Thee, O Infinite Goodness.

I trust that Thou hast already forgiven me; but if Thou hast not yet pardoned me, oh, do so before I receive Thee: wash with Thy Blood this soul of mine, in which Thou art so soon about to dwell.

6. *An Act of Desire.*

And now, my soul, the blessed hour has arrived in which Jesus will come and take up his dwelling in thy poor heart. Behold the King of Heaven, behold thy Redeemer and God, who is even now coming; prepare thyself to receive Him with love, invite Him with the ardor of thy desire.

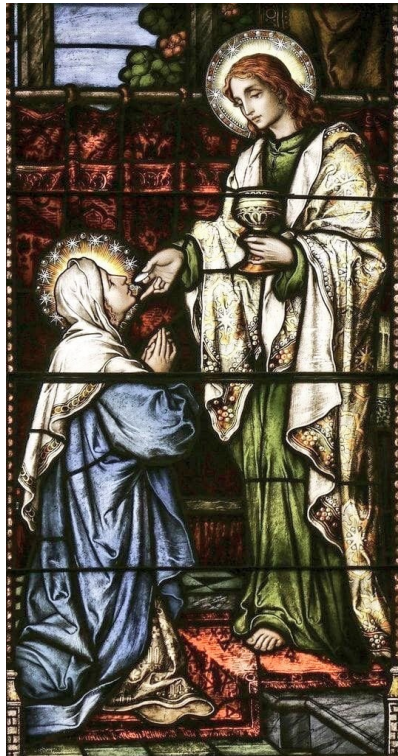
Come, O my Jesus, come to my soul, which desires Thee. Before Thou givest Thyself to me, I desire to give Thee, and I now give Thee, my miserable heart; do Thou accept it, and come quickly to take possession of it. Come, my God! hasten; delay no longer. My only and Infinite Good, my treasure, my life, my Paradise, my love, my all, my wish is to receive Thee with the

love with which the most holy and loving souls have received Thee; with that with which the most blessed Virgin Mary received Thee; to their Communion I unite this Communion of mine.

Most holy Virgin and my Mother Mary, behold, I already approach to receive thy Son. Would that I had the heart and love with which thou didst communicate!

Give me this morning thy Jesus,
as thou didst give Him to the shepherds
and to the kings.

I intend to receive Him
from thy most pure
hands. Tell Him that I
am thy servant and thy
client; for He will thus
look upon me with a
more loving eye, and
now that He is coming,
will press me more
closely to Himself.



My Jesus, Mercy!

Prayers with Partial Indulgences

May the Most Blessed Sacrament be ever thanked and praised!

Blessed be the holy and Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary!

Prayer of St. John Chrysostom

We give Thee thanks, O most merciful Lord and Redeemer of our souls, for this day Thou hast made us worthy by means of these immortal and heavenly mysteries.

Direct our way; keep us in fear of Thee; guard our lives; and make our steps firm through the prayers and intercessions of the glorious and holy Mother of God and ever-Virgin Mary. Be exalted above the heavens, O God, and above all the earth, Thy glory, now and forever and ever. Amen.

St. Thomas More Prayer:

Give me the Grace

Give me the grace to long for Your Holy Sacraments, and especially to rejoice
 in the presence of Your body,
 sweet Saviour Christ,
 in the Holy Sacrament of the altar. Amen.

St. Alphonsus Ligouri's

THANKSGIVING AFTER COMMUNION.

There is no prayer more agreeable to God, or more profitable to the soul, than that which is made during the thanksgiving after Communion.

It is the opinion of many grave writers (Suarez, Cajetan, Valentia, De Lugo, and others), that the Holy Communion, so long as the sacramental species lasts, constantly produces greater and greater graces in the soul, provided the soul is then constant in disposing itself by new acts of virtue.

The Council of Florence, in the decree of Eugenius IV to the Armenians, teaches that the Blessed Sacrament produces the same effect in the soul as material food, which, when it enters the body, takes effect according to the state in which it finds it.

For this reason, holy souls endeavor to remain as long as possible in prayer after Communion. The Venerable Father Avila, even when he was given his missions, used

to remain for at least two hours in prayer.

Father Balthasar Alvarez used to say, that we should set great value on the time after Communion, imagining that we hear from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself the words that He addressed to His disciples: *But Me you have not always with you.* [Matt. xxvi. II.]

It is not advisable, as many do, to begin to read immediately after Communion: it is then better to spend at least a short time in producing holy affections, and in conversing with Jesus, who is then within us, and in repeating many times words of tenderness, or some feeling prayer. Jesus Christ repeated the same prayer in the garden three times: *And He prayed the third time, saying the self-same word.* [Matt. xxvi. 44.] In affections and prayers it is, then, that the soul should entertain itself with Jesus after Communion; for we must know, that the acts formed in prayer after Communion are far more precious and meritorious in the sight of God than when made at another time; for the soul being then united with Jesus, the

value of the acts is increased by the presence of Jesus. We should, moreover, know, that after Communion Jesus Christ is more disposed to grant graces. St. Teresa says, that after Communion Jesus places Himself in the soul as on a throne of grace, and then says: *What wilt thou that I should do for thee?* [*Mark*, x. 51.] meaning, O soul, I am come for the express purpose of granting thee graces: ask Me what thou wilt, and as much as thou wilt, thou shalt receive all.

Oh, what treasures of grace would you receive, devout soul, if you only entertained yourself with Jesus for an hour, or at least half an hour, after Communion! For this purpose you can read the following acts. After your prayer is ended be also careful during the whole day on which you have communicated to keep yourself united by affections and prayers with Jesus, whom you have received.

ACTS AFTER COMMUNION,*I. An Act of Faith.*

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

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

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I Love You, Save Souls!

2. *An Act of Welcome.*

Ah, my Jesus, my love, my infinite good, my all, be ever welcome in the poor dwelling of my soul! Ah, my Lord, where art Thou! to what a place art Thou come! Thou hast entered my heart, which is far worse than the stable in which Thou wast born; it is full of earthly affections, of self-love, and of inordinate desires. And how couldst Thou come to dwell there? I would address Thee with St. Peter: *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.* [Luke, v. 8.] Yes, depart from me, O Lord, for I am indeed unworthy to receive a God of infinite goodness; go and find repose in those pure- souls who serve Thee with so much love. But no, my Redeemer; what do I say? Leave me not; for if Thou departest, I am lost. I embrace Thee, my life; I cling to Thee.

Mad indeed have I been in having separated myself from Thee for the love of creatures; and in my ingratitude I drove Thee from me. But now I will never more separate myself from Thee, my treasure;

I desire to live and die ever united to Thee. Most blessed Virgin Mary, Seraphim, and all souls, do ye who love God with pure love lend me your affections, that I may worthily attend on my beloved Lord.

3. *An Act of Thanksgiving.*

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

Father Segneri says that the feeling most becoming a soul that communicates is that of wondering astonishment at the thought, and to repeat, "A God is united to me; a God is mine!" David said, *What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that He hath rendered to me?* [Ps. CXV. 12.] But what return shall I make to Thee, my Jesus, who, after having

given me so many of Thy good things, hast this morning, moreover, given me Thyself? My soul, bless, then, and thank thy God as best thou canst. And thou, my Mother Mary, my holy advocates, my guardian angel, and all ye souls who love God, *Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what great things He hath done for my soul.* [Ps. Ixv. 16.] Come and bless and thank my God for me, admiring and praising the indeed great graces which He has granted me.

4. *An Act of Oblation.*

My Beloved to me, and I to Him. [Cant. ii. 16.]

Should a king go to visit a poor shepherd in his hut, what can the shepherd offer him other than his whole hut, such as it is? Since, then, O Jesus, my divine king, Thou hast come to visit the poor house of my soul, I offer and give Thee this house and my entire self, together with my liberty and will: *My Beloved to me, and I to Him.* Thou hast given Thyself all to me; I give myself all

to Thee. My Jesus, from this day forward I will be no longer mine; I will be Thine, and all Thine. May my senses be Thine, that they may only serve me to please Thee.

And what greater pleasure, says St. Peter of Alcantara, can be found, than that of pleasing Thee, most amiable, most loving, most gracious God?

I at the same time give Thee all the powers of my soul, and I will that they shall be all Thine; my memory I will only use to recall to mind Thy benefits and Thy Love; my understanding I will only use to think of Thee, who always thinkest of my good; my will I will only use to love Thee, my God, my all, and to will only that which Thou willest.

My most sweet Lord, I offer, then, and consecrate to Thee this morning all that I am and have my senses, my thoughts, my affections, my desires, my pleasures, my inclinations, my liberty; in a word, I place my whole body and soul in Thy hands.

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

Do with me and dispose of me, O Lord, as Thou pleasest.

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

O most holy Mary, do thou present this offering of mine to the Most Blessed Trinity with thine own hands; and do thou obtain their acceptance of it, and that they may grant me the grace to be faithful unto death. Amen, amen, amen.

5. An Act of Petition.

O my soul, what art thou doing?
The present is no time to be lost:

it is a precious time, in which thou canst receive all the graces that thou askest. Seest thou not the Eternal Father, who is lovingly beholding thee? For within thee He sees His beloved Son, the dearest object of His love.

Drive, then, far from thee all other thoughts; rekindle thy faith, enlarge thy heart, and ask for whatever thou wilt.

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

Ah! my most sweet Saviour, since Thou hast come into my heart in order to grant me graces, and desirest that I should ask Thee for them, I ask Thee not for the goods of the earth riches, honors, or pleasures; but grant me, I beseech Thee, intense sorrow for the displeasure that I have caused Thee; impart to me so clear a light, that I may

know the vanity of this world, and how deserving Thou art of love. Change this heart of mine, detach it from all earthly affections; give me a heart conformable in all things to Thy holy will, that it may seek only that which is more pleasing to Thee, and have no other desire than Thy holy love: *Create a clean heart in me, O God. [Ps. 1. 12]*

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

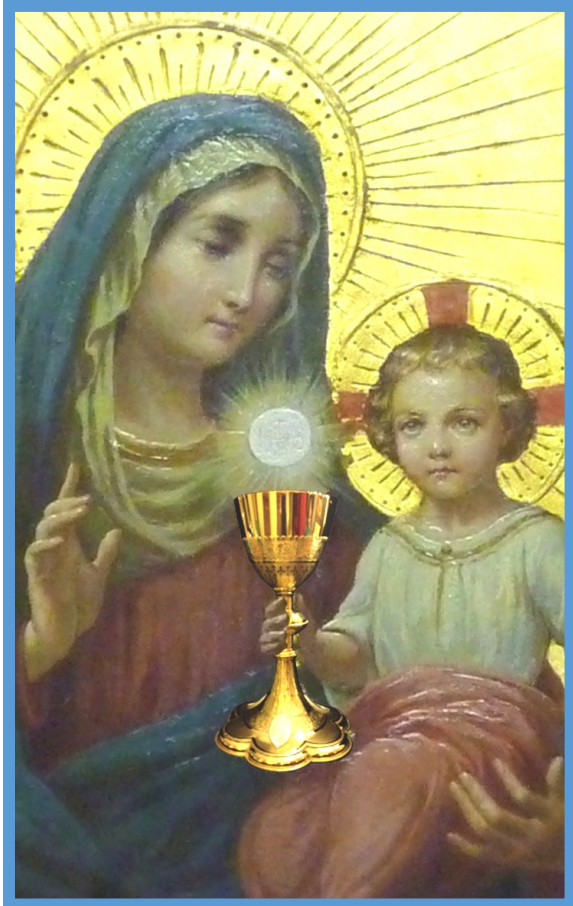
[Here pause, to ask Jesus for some other particular grace for yourself and for your neighbors. Do not forget poor sinners, or the souls in Purgatory; and pray also for me, who composed this little book for your good [and for the compiler of this St. Alphonsus Prayer Book].]

Eternal Father, Jesus Christ Himself, Thy Son, has said, *Amen, amen, I say to you, If you*

ask the Father anything in My Name, He will give it you. [John, xvi. 23.] For the love, then, of this Son, whom I now hold within my breast, do Thou graciously hear me and grant my petition.

Prayer of St. Alphonsus Rodriguez

My most
sweet
Loves,
Jesus and
Mary,
may I suffer
for You,
may I die
for You;
may I be
all Yours,
and in
nothing my
own!



Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I Love You, Save Souls!

Anima Christi Sanctissima

Most Holy Soul of Christ,
sanctify me.

Most Sacred Body of Christ,
protect me.

Most Precious Blood of Christ,
inebriate me.

Purest Water from the Side of Christ,
wash me.

Most Bitter Passion of Christ,
strengthen me.

O Good Jesus,
hear me:

Within Thy Wounds
hide me.



**Suffer me not to be separated
from Thee. [3x]**

From the malignant enemy
defend me.

In the hour of my death
call me.

And bid me come
unto Thee.

That with Thy Saints and Angels
I may praise Thee.

Through endless ages of ages. Amen.



Prayer to Visit Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament

My Lord Jesus Christ,
who for the love You bear us,
remain night and day in this Sacrament,
full of compassion and of love,
awaiting, calling and welcoming
all who come to visit You.

I believe that You are present
in the Sacrament of the Altar.

I adore You from the abyss
of my nothingness
and I thank You for all the graces
You have given me until now,
and in particular, for having given me
Your Most Holy Mother Mary
as my advocate
and for having called me
to visit You in this church.

I now salute your Most Loving Heart,
and this for three ends:
first, in thanksgiving for this great gift;
second, to make amends to You
for all the outrages which you receive
in this Sacrament from all Your enemies;
third, I intend by this visit to adore You
in all the places on earth in which You are
present in this Sacrament and in which You
are the least revered and the most abandoned.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I Love You, Save Souls!

My Jesus, I love You with all my heart.

I grieve for having until now so many times
offended Your infinite goodness.

I purpose by Your grace never more
to offend You for the time to come;
and now, miserable

and unworthy though I am,

I consecrate myself to You without reserve.

I give You and renounce my entire will,
my affections, my desires,
and all that I possess.

From now on, use me
and all that I have as You wish.

All I ask of You and desire is Your holy love,
final perseverance and the perfect
accomplishment of Your will.

I recommend to You the souls in Purgatory;
but especially those who had the greatest
devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament
and to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.

I also recommend to You all poor sinners.

And finally, my dear Saviour,

I unite all my affections with the affections
of Your most loving Heart,
and I offer them with You
to Your Eternal Father

and beg Him for Your sake

and for love of You,

graciously to accept and grant them.

Amen.



My son, give Me your heart,
and let your eyes keep to My ways.
— *Proverbs 23:26*

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I Love You, Save Souls!