

EXPLANATION OF THE METHOD OF MENTAL PRAYER

(In conformity with the text of 1739)

CHAPTER I

OF MENTAL PRAYER IN GENERAL AND OF THE DISPOSITION OF THE SOUL FOR MENTAL PRAYER

- 1 Mental prayer is an interior activity
whereby
the soul applies itself to God.
- 2 It is so called
 1. to distinguish it from vocal prayer
which is partly an activity of the body,
since it is produced by the mouth,
but at the same time is an activity of the mind
which should be involved in it.
- 3 2. It is called interior
because it is not simply an activity of the mind,
but of all the powers of the soul
and because,
in order to be genuine and effective,
it must take place in the depths of the soul,
that is to say,
in the innermost part of the soul
- 4 For if mental prayer takes place in the mind only,
or in the superficial part of the heart,
it would easily lie open to human and material distractions
which would prevent it from being fruitful,
and this activity of the mind,
not having penetrated the soul,
would only be temporary
and would consequently leave the soul
in dryness
and devoid of God.
- 5 Mental prayer is called an interior activity
because the soul busies itself therein with that which is
proper to it in this life which is
to know God and to love Him
and to take all the means needed
to achieve both these ends. cf. Jn 17,3: Lk 10,27-28
- 6 But the principal activity of the soul

in mental prayer that is truly interior
is to fill itself with God
and to unite itself interiorly with Him,
which is for the soul a sort of apprenticeship and foretaste
through a lively faith
of that which the soul should do in reality
for all eternity.

cf. Ep 3,19

It is for this reason
that mental prayer is called an interior activity whereby
the soul applies itself to God.

- 7** There are three parts to mental prayer.
The first is the disposition of the soul for mental prayer,
and this is properly called recollection.
The second part is attention to the topic of mental prayer.
The third part is the thanksgiving at the end of mental prayer.
- 8** The first part is called the disposition of the soul for mental prayer because the mind, being ordinarily attentive for the greater part of the day to things that are of themselves exterior and material, goes thereby, in some manner, out of itself and takes on, at least to some degree, the characteristics of the objects to which it is attentive.
- 9** Therefore, when we wish to apply our mind to mental prayer, we must begin by withdrawing it entirely from attention to exterior and material things and by being attentive only to spiritual and interior things.
And it is for this reason that we must begin by being attentive to the presence of God and that the acts of the first part serve to maintain and occupy the mind with it while these acts continue.
- 10** It is in this way that the first part disposes us for mental prayer,

inasmuch as attention to the presence of God,
to which we are attentive
and which the acts of the first part
help to keep before our minds,
withdraws the mind from exterior things
to occupy it only with that object the attention to which is alone
capable of keeping the mind within itself
and thus rendering it interior.

- 11** For attention to God has the characteristic
of being incompatible
with attention to exterior and material things
because God is a spiritual being, cf. Jn 4,24
and attention to God is in no way suitable
even to attention to spiritual creatures
because God is infinitely above all created things,
however detached from matter and however perfect
they may be,
and the more our mind is attentive to God,
the more this attention supplants attention to creatures.

And by a necessary consequence,
the more a soul is attentive to God,
the more it disengages itself from all concern for creatures
and consequently from whatever attachment and affection it
may have had for them
because as one produces the other,
the elimination of one from the soul
necessarily causes the elimination of the other.

- 12** And it is in this way
that the soul imperceptibly filling itself
with God cf. Ep.3,19
detaches itself from creatures,
and becomes what we call interior
by turning away from and breaking off with
material and exterior objects.

- 13** It is also for this reason
that the first part of mental prayer is called recollection,
for it serves to empty the mind of exterior things,
to bring it back within itself and to keep it there,
and consequently to recollect the soul
through attention to God
and to purely interior matters.

CHAPTER II

AN EXPLANATION OF THE DIFFERENT WAYS OF PLACING OURSELVES IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

14 Hence, the first thing to be done in mental prayer is to become filled interiorly with the thought of God's presence, which must always be done through a sentiment of faith, based on a passage taken from Holy Scripture.

15 We can consider God present in three different ways:
first, in the place where we are;
second, within ourselves;
third, in the church.

16 Each of these three ways of considering God present can be divided into two other ways:

We can consider God present in the place where we are

1. because He is everywhere;

cf. Ps 139,7-10

2. because, wherever two or three persons are gathered together in the name of Our Lord, He is in their midst.

Mt. 18,20

We can consider God present within us in two ways:

first, as being within us in order to preserve us in being;

cf. Acts 17,28

second, as being within us by His grace and by His Spirit.

cf. 1 Cor 6,19

Finally, we can consider God present in the church,

first, because it is the house of God;

cf. Ps 93,5

second, because Jesus Christ Our Lord

dwells there in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

#1 THE FIRST WAY OF PUTTING OURSELVES IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN THE PLACE WHERE WE ARE BY CONSIDERING GOD PRESENT EVERYWHERE

17 First, we can easily consider God present in the place where we are by interiorly dwelling on the thought that David expressed in the 138th Psalm:

Where would I go, he says, O my God,
to get far from Thee?
And where would I flee

to avoid appearing before Thee?
If I go up into heaven,
Thou art dwelling there.
If I go down into hell,
Thou art always present there.
If I go and live at the sea's extremity,
It will be Thy hand that guides me there
and Your right hand which holds me there.

Ps 139,7-10

From this it is easy to conclude
that in this passage David wishes to make us understand
that wherever we go,
no matter how far off
or how hidden from men's eyes,
we shall always find God
and cannot escape His presence.

- 18** This is something we should think of particularly
when tempted to offend God,
paying attention to what Suzanna said
when she was tempted by the two old men:
It is far better for me
to fall into your hands
without offending God
than to sin
in the presence of my God.

Dan. 13:23

We should say to ourselves,
following the example of this saintly woman,
It is better for me
to be tempted and harrassed by the devil
than to sin
in the presence of my God,
since
wherever I may go
I cannot hide from Him.

Ps 139,7

- 19** This way of placing ourselves in God's presence
by considering Him in the place where we are
can produce three principal effects in us.

- 20** The first is to keep us easily
recollected
and attentive to God's presence,
whether we are walking about or remaining
in one place,
even in the most distracting surroundings.

cf. Ps 139,3

21 The second is to prevent us from offending God
when we are tempted,
or find ourselves in some occasion of failing into sin;
for just as we would be ashamed to say something
or do anything
that might displease a person
whom we respect
how much more
should we fear to offend God in His presence
the God who has shown us so much goodness and love. cf. Dn 13,3

22 The third effect is to inspire us with confidence in God,
with the view that attention to His holy presence
in the place where we are
will give us strength against temptations and will deliver
us from them.

My eyes, said David, in Psalm 24,
are always lifted to the Lord,
so that He may prevent my feet from being caught
in the snare. Ps. 25:15

If I walk, he says in Psalm 22,
in the midst of the shadow of death
(that is, in sin which brings death to the soul),
I shall fear no evil, O my God,
for Thou art with me. Ps. 23:4

I took care, he says in Psalm 15,
to have the Lord ever present before me,
because He is at my side,
to protect me from being shaken. Ps. 16:8

23 When placing ourselves in God's presence after this fashion
we may entertain thoughts such as the following:

a. How happy I am, O my God,
to find Thee always present
wherever I may go or wherever I may be. Ps 16,8
Ps 139,7-8

b. If my senses experience some repugnance for a particular
place,
how could my soul share their displeasure,
since Thou art always in that place
I can always think of Thee. Ps 16,8

c. It is a sort of foretaste of the joy of heaven
to be able to always be with Thee cf. Ps 23,4
and to be able to think of Thee always. cf. Ps 16,8

d. I beg of you to give me this grace, O my God,
and never to permit me to do anything displeasing to Thee.
since without Thy help, cf. Ps 25,15
I can do nothing good. cf. Jn 15,5

e. Keep my mind so recollected and so attentive to you
that nothing exterior may ever be able to distract it.

#2 THE SECOND WAY OF PLACING ONESELF IN GOD'S HOLY PRESENCE IN THE PLACE WHERE WE ARE BY CONSIDERING OUR LORD AS PRESENT IN THE MIDST OF THOSE GATHERED TOGETHER IN HIS NAME

24 We can consider God present in the place where we are
because Our Lord says in St. Matthew's Gospel, Ch. 18,

Whenever two or three persons
are gathered in His Name,
He will be in their midst. Mt 18,20

25 Is it not a great blessing to know,
when we are together with our Brothers,
whether to make mental prayer
or to perform some other exercise,
that we are in the company of Our Lord,
and that He is in the midst of the Brothers?

26 He is in their midst cf. Jn 20,19-22
to impart His Holy Spirit to them;
and to direct them through Him
in all their actions
and in all they do. cf. Rm 8,14;Ga 5,25

27 He is in their midst
to unite them to one another
thus accomplishing by Himself
what He had asked His Father for them before His
death, through these words in St. John, Ch. 17:
Make them be one in us Jn 17,21
as You, my Father, and I are one, Jn 17,23
and make them complete in their unity,
in other words, that they may be so united and closely
bound together
having but one spirit, namely the Spirit of God,

that they may never be disunited.

cf. Eph 4,3-6

28 Jesus Christ is in the midst of the Brothers in their exercises
so that He may give them the spirit of their state,
and to maintain and strengthen them in the possession of that spirit,
which is for them the source and the assurance of their salvation
so long as they always preserve it
soundly and without alteration.

29 Jesus Christ is in the midst of the Brothers
to teach them the truths and maxims of the
Gospel
to implant these deeply in their hearts,
and to inspire them to make them the rule of their
conduct,
to make them understand them,
and to make known to them the way to put them into
practice,
in the manner most agreeable to God
and most fitting to their state of life.

cf. Jn 14,26

30 Jesus Christ is in the midst of the Brothers
to lead them to practice these Gospel principles
in a uniform manner in their Society,
so as always to preserve
an entire and perfect union among themselves.

31 Jesus Christ is in the midst of the Brothers in their
exercises
so that
all their actions being directed to Him as to
their center;
they will become one in Him
By the union they will have with Jesus Christ
who acts in them and through them.

cf. Jn 17,21

cf. Ga 5.25; 2.20

32 Jesus Christ is in the midst of the Brothers (in their exercises)
to give them completion and perfection
for Jesus Christ is, in their regard
like the sun
which not only gives plants the power to produce,
but also gives to their fruit goodness and
perfection
which is greater or less
in proportion as they have been more or less
exposed to the rays of the sun.

In the same way, the Brothers perform their exercises

and the actions appropriate to their state,
with greater or lesser perfection
in proportion as they are in greater or lesser
contact, conformity and union with Jesus Christ.

33 This way of placing oneself in God's presence
by considering Jesus Christ in our midst
can produce three different benefits.

34 The first is that all our actions will be referred to Jesus Christ
and will tend towards Him as towards their center.

They will draw all their efficacy from Him,
just as the branches of a vine

draw the sap from the vine itself,

Jn 15,5

and thus, there is a continual movement
of our actions to Jesus Christ

and from Jesus Christ to us,

since He is the one who gives spirit and life to what
we do.

cf. Ga 5,25

35 The second fruit is that we establish a close union with Jesus Christ
who lives in us
and in whom we live.

Ga 2,20

as the Apostle Saint Paul so admirably describes.

It is because of this

that we can do nothing without Jesus,

as He himself says,

and that Jesus Christ does all in us

because He dwells in us

and we in Him;

and in this way, He tells us,

we shall bear much fruit.

Jn 15,5

36 The third consequence of this way
of considering Jesus Christ in our midst

is that He will pour out His Spirit upon us,

J 13,1-2

And it is as He says by a prophet,

(Vulgate J 12,28)

it is this Spirit of truth, He tells us,

cf.Ac2,17

which the world cannot receive because it knows

Him not.

Jn 14,17

This same Holy Spirit, will enliven our actions,

and will become a life-giving spirit in them;

cf. Ga 5,25

they will not be dead works in us,

not only as Christian works,

but even in relation to our state and perfection,

which require that they possess a special perfection.

- 37 We may entertain thoughts such as the following according to this way of putting ourselves in the presence of God.
- a. How happy I am, my God,
to be engaged in mental prayer with my beloved Brothers,
since, according to your words we have the advantage
of having Thee in our midst. Mt 18,20
- b. Thou art present here, O my Jesus,
to pour out Thy Spirit upon us
as Thou didst declare through the prophet, J 13,15
and as Thou didst do
for the Apostles and the first disciples
when they were together
persevering in prayer Ac 2,1-3
in intimate union of mind and heart, cf. Ac 4,32
in the Cenacle. Ac 1,3
- c. Give me also the grace,
through Thy presence in our midst,
as we gather here to pray to Thee, cf. Mt 18,20
to possess an intimate union of mind and heart
with my Brothers, cf. Ac 4,32
and to enter into the disposition
of the holy Apostles in the Cenacle. Ac 1,12-14
- d. so that once having received thy divine Spirit
in the fullness which Thou has destined
for me, cf. Ep 3,19;Co 12,10
I may let myself be quided by Him Ep 1,1-23
in fulling the duties of my state, Ga 5,25
and that He may make me participate in thy zeal Rm8,14
for the instruction
of those whom Thou has deigned to entrust to my
care.
- 38 One may make similar reflections, modeled on the foregoing,
based on the other ends and benefits resulting from this way
of placing oneself
in the presence of God
by considering Jesus Christ in our midst cf. Mt 18,20
as we make mental prayer together. cf. Ac 1,14

#3 FIRST WAY OF CONSIDERING GOD PRESENT WITHIN OURSELVES AS EXIST-

ING ONLY IN HIM

- 39** We may consider God present in ourselves
because He is present within us to preserve us in being,
as St. Paul says in the Acts of the Apostles,
Ch. 17, v.28.
in these words:
God is not far from us,
for we have life, movement and being
only in God. Ac 17,18
- 40** In fact, we have being, movement and life,
only because God abides in us;
He communicates all this to us,
and even communicates this
in such a way that if God ceased for a moment
to dwell in us
and to maintain us in being
we would immediately fall back
into nothingness.
- 41** How great a favor it is, then, that God
by His power
and His presence within us
makes us what we are.
This led Saint Paul to say
that we belong to God's family. Ac 17,28
and St. Leo declares
that we are made sharers in the divinity.
- 42** This idea should make us realize and hold for certain at the same time
that since we are of God's family Ac 17,18
and live only because He imparts life to us,
we should manifest by all our conduct cf.Rm8,1-14;Ga5,13-25
that indeed we live by God's life
and that we have only thoughts which fill us with God.
and have only slight esteem for all the things of
this world, cf. Co 13,1-2
according to what they are exteriorly.
And if we do have any esteem for them,
it should be for what they are in God's sight.
For we should be firmly convinced
that God is in all things,
that all things are nothing
save in so far as God dwells in them
and as they are filled with Him. cf. Ws 11,21-12,1
- 43** From this it follows

that we wrong God dwelling in us
when we do anything that displeases Him,
when we make evil use of senses,
and when we seek
to satisfy ourselves
and not to satisfy God,
who is the only one in whom we should find
all our joy
and all our satisfaction,
since He deigns
to find His delight
and His joy
in sustaining us and preserving our being
through his present and continual dwelling in us.

44 This way of placing ourselves in God's presence
by considering Him within us to preserve us in being,
can have in us three principal effects.

45 The first is to take care of our bodies in view
of preserving God's life in us,
so that we may live by His life
and live through Him.

46 The second is not to use
the life that God gives us
and which He gives us continually,
as well as the actions that He performs in us and with us,
and which we perform through Him,
to offend Him.

cf. Ac 17,18

47 The third is to beg Him often to annihilate us
rather than to allow that we should have
or that there should ever be in us any movement or action
apart from what tends
to the fulfilling of His designs upon us,
and to doing His holy will.

cf. Ps 119

48 We may entertain thoughts such as follows
when using this way of placing ourselves in God's presence:

a. O my god, Thou art in me
and in all creatures;
and they all subsist only by Thee
because Thou dwellest in them.

cf. Ws 11,21-12.1

b. Help me, then, to make use

of all my members
and of my whole being,
and help me to use all other creatures,
for Thy service alone.

c. Is it possible, O my God,
that, knowing that Thou dwellest within me
to preserve me in being,
I should make use of this being and of this life
you give me,
in order to offend you?
What, my God!
Thou dost act in me,
and I would act against Thee?
and I would use the activity
Thou inspirest in me and with me,
against Thee!

d. Rather, destroy whatever being there is in me, by ceasing
to dwell within me
and to act with me,
than to allow
me to commit the slightest sin.

49 OR IN ANOTHER WAY:

a. How your dwelling in me, O my God,
should give me confidence in Thee
and reliance on Thee.

If I walk, says the Royal Prophet,
I will fear no evil
because You are with me.

Ps 23,4;138-7

It is He, he says again,
who will turn my steps aside,
so that I may avoid the snare laid
for me.

Ps 25,15

It is He, he says again.
who will teach my hands and my fingers
to wage war,
and to resist sinful occasions.

Ps 144,1;18,35

b. That which should inspire me, O my God,
is Thy presence
and thy continual abiding in my members,

to wage war against sin,
and to resist the devil
with all my senses
and by the life that Thou
givest me through them.

Ps 144,1;18,35

Ac 17,18

50 Or again:

a. Should I not be prompted
to think of Thee, my God,
since Thou art always with me and
within me?
and since I cannot do anything without Thee.

cf. Ps 16,8
cf. Jn 15,5

b. All my actions should be so many reminders
inviting me to lift my spirit to Thee,
all the aspirations of my heart
are so many caresses which Thou givest it
to remind it to be all for You.

Ps 25,1

c. Give to my mind such feelings,
and give to my heart such tendencies
that my mind may be always occupied with the
thought of Thee,
and my heart may love Thee alone.

Ps 16,8

#4 SECOND WAY OF CONSIDERING GOD WITHIN US: THROUGH HIS GRACE AND HIS SPIRIT

51 We may consider God present within us
because He abides in us by His grace and His Spirit,
as Our Lord says in St. Luke, CH. 17,
The kingdom of God is within you.

Lk 17,21

It is by His Holy Spirit that God reigns within us;
it is even through the indwelling of the Most Holy Trinity within
us;

as Jesus Christ again says in St. John, Ch. 14, v.23
If anyone loves Me, he says, he will keep My word
and My Father will love him,
and we will come to him
and make our abode in him.

Jn 14:13

52 Is it not the greatest advantage we can enjoy in this world
to have God abiding within us
and reigning over us

in as absolute a manner as a King reigns in his kingdom,
and with a complete dependence on our part?

- 53** In this way
God guides all our interior tendencies
 according to His good pleasure; cf. Ep 1-5
He curbs all our passions
and makes Himself so completely master of our senses
that they seek out their proper objects cf. Rm 8,1-14;
only when there is some need for doing so. Ga 5,13-25; Co 13-1-2
- 54** Furthermore,
when God has thus become the master of our heart
 by the inner awareness that He gives us
 by dwelling in us,
He lets
 nothing of what which is within us
 transpire outwardly;
all our exterior appearance is as it were in a state of
expectation,
with the result that our senses,
 because of this continual inner awareness,
display hardly any further activity,
 since the vital spirits which control them
 are restrained within ourselves.
And as all our inner activity is deeply absorbed
 by the Holy Presence of God
 and by His in dwelling within us,
our soul comes to neglect and even to despise
 all that is external,
and pays no attention to anything
 except to what is taking place within it.
So it is that God rules fully over it,
 as the author of the Imitation says
 in Book 2, Chapter 1:
 Learn to despise exterior things
 and to give yourself to those that are interior;
 and you will see
 that the Kingdom of God will come
 unto you. cf. Lk 17,21
- 55** When God reigns thus in a soul,
it is honored, says St. Paul, 2 Co.,ch.6,v.17
 by being the temple of God.
 You are, he tells us, the temple of
 the living God,

as He Himself declares:
I shall dwell in them and I shall walk among them;
I will be their God and they shall
be My people. 2 Co 6,16; quoting Lv 26,11-12

- 56** The very body which this soul animates,
according to the expression of the same St. Paul,
1 Co.,ch.7,v.19
becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit.
Do you not know, he asks,
that your members are the temple of the Holy Spirit
who is in you,
and whom you have received from God;
and hence you are not your own. 1 Cor. 6:19
- 57** Such is indeed the case,
because everything in man, body and soul,
belongs to God.
For, as the Saint insists in that same Epistle Ch.3:16
the temple of God, and the Holy Spirit abides in him.
Do you now know, he adds,
that you are the temple of God
and that the Spirit of God abides in you? 1Co6,19
- 58** We should, then, take very great care
not to profane that temple,
nor to destroy it
by driving out God and His holy Spirit from our hears;
because if anyone
says the same St. Paul, v.17 in the same Ch. 3,
destroys the temple of God,
him will God destroy;
for His temple is holy,
and you are that temple. 1 Co 3,17
- 59** This thought, that we are the temples of God and of His holy Spirit
should lead us to reflect seriously cf. 2 Co. 6,16-18
that we are obliged to live in great holiness,
and that we should
not only refrain from sullyng our souls by any vice,
but we are also obliged cf. 2 Co 7,1
with particular care to adorn it with all sorts of virtues;
for the Holy Spirit
is well pleased only in souls which possess them.
This is why St. Lucia said
that chaste bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit.

- 60** God, who delights in such souls, cf. Mt 17,5
 takes pleasure instructing them on the path which He
 wishes them to follow
 in order to be entirely His. Ps 25,4; 27,11; 86,11; 119-33
 And, it is by His holy Spirit that they understand
 says St. Paul
 what is most hidden in God,
- 61** It is also this Holy Spirit 1 Co 2,10
 who pours out in the souls who possess Him
 that fullness and abundance of grace cf. Ep 1,1-23
 which causes them to let themselves
 be led and directed by the
 same Spirit, cf. Rm 8,14;Ga 5,25
 so that they lose all attachment to human
 and created things,
 and become attached
 only to God,
 whom they possess interiorly,
 and to what concerns Him.
- 62** We might thus occupy ourselves interiorly
 according to this way of considering God present within us
 by His Spirit and His grace,
 and as being His temple:
- a. How good Thou are, O my God,
 to pour out Thy holy Spirit upon me! cf. Rm 8,9
 It is, no doubt,
 to guide and direct me in my actions. cf. Rm 8,14;Ga 5,25
- b. Thy intention, then, is
 that I should do nothing but
 through the movement of Thy divine Spirit;
 that I should experience only those sentiments
 with which Thy Spirit may inspire me,
 and that all my affections
 may be conformable to Thine.
 That I be
 through thy divine Spirit
 filled and absorbed by Thee,
 and freed from all attachment to creatures,
 because the Holy Spirit will show me in creatures
 only what is of Thee,
 to destroy entirely in us
 every notion that we might have of them,
 which is capable only of creating obstacles

to our being filled and absorbed by Thee.

- c. Come, then, Holy Spirit!
Possess my heart,
and inspire all my actions to such a degree cf. Ga 5,25
that it may be said that Thou causes them rather
than I;
and so that I may not experience either life,
movement or action
save inasmuch as Thou Thyself givest them
to me. Ac 17,18
- d. Happy the man who lives and acts
only by the Spirit of God; cf. Ga 5,25
It is of Him that we may say
that he lives no longer but that it is Jesus Christ,
or rather the Holy Spirit,
who lives in him.

63 A WAY OF BEING ENGAGED IN MENTAL PRAYER BY CONSIDERING GOD
WITHIN US AS IN HIS TEMPLE

- a. How happy I should consider myself, O my God,
when I reflect that I am Thy temple, cf. 2 Co 6,6
and that Thou thyself assurest me
that I have honor
I need not go far cf. Jn 14,23
to adore Thee and pay Thee homage; cf. Ps 139,7; Ac 17,17
I merely need to enter within myself
to offer Thee
as though in Thy living temple, cf. 2 Co 6,16
the worship I owe to Thee.
- b. This temple, O my God, is very different
from those built by the hand of men, Ac 7,48
since this one is Thine,
truly worthy to receive Thee and shelter Thee,
only because Thou art the one who fashioned it.
cf. Ac 7,50; 2 S 7,1-29
- c. Embellish it by your dwelling in it;
with all that can make it please Thee and draw Thee to it.
Since Thou art Holy and holiness itself, cf. Is 5,16;6,3
impart this holiness to my soul, I beseech Thee, in such abundance
that mayest take delight in it, cf. Mt 17,5
and that there may be nothing in it which is not agreeable to Thee,
so that to it may be applied

the words of Saint Paul:
The temple of god is holy,
and Thou art that temple.

1 Co 3,17

#5 THE FIRST WAY OF PLACING ONESELF IN GOD'S HOLY PRESENCE IN THE CHURCH BY CONSIDERING IT AS THE HOUSE OF GOD

- 64** We may consider God as being present in the church because it is the house of God, cf. Ps 93.5
as Our Lord says in St. Matthew, ch. 21, v. 13:
My house shall be called a house
of prayer. Mt 21,13; cf. Is 56,7
This should lead us to two conclusions:
- 65** 1) That the church, according to the testimony of our Lord Himself
is the house of God
because it is there that God wishes Christians to assemble,
in order to adore Him and pay Him their homage;
and that, consequently,
they should have great respect for it
and demonstrate this
as well by their bearing, their posture,
as by their decorum, their silence and their external piety;
- 66** 2) That the church itself,
according to the intention and command of God
is so completely dedicated to prayer cf. 2 Ch 7,15-16
that when we are in it
we are not allowed to do anything
but pray to God,
and, one should not come there with any other purpose,
except to hear to the word of God.
- 67** This is what Jesus Christ did
when He entered the temple of Jerusalem,
a place much less worthy of veneration than our churches,
and drove out the buyers and sellers,
and overturned the tables of the money changers,
and the booths of those who sold doves. cf. Mt 21,12
O marvel!
Jesus Christ drove out from the Jewish temple
those who exchanged the coins
of foreigners who came there to buy,
and those who sold and bought there
the things intended for the sacrifices,

looking upon these sales and purchases as profaning the temple which He called the temple of God,

Mt 21,13

although the only sacrifices offered there were crude, consisting in slaughtering animals and in partly burning them.

cf. He 9,12-13

- 68** What respect, then, must He not require us to display in our Christian churches which are places where we offer daily and in many churches a great number of times, the same Jesus Christ, the Son of God and God himself, and who, by His sacrifice, consecrates and sanctifies these churches with an external holiness of no small degree, and causes them to share in the sanctity of Jesus Christ, through the offering and immolation He makes of Himself whole and entire in His sacrifice. cf. He 10,10

- 69** This consideration of God present in the church because it is the house of God should produce three main benefits in us:

- 70** The first is never to enter a church except in a state of great interior and exterior innocence; hence, before going in, we should purify ourselves both in soul and in body, at least by making the sign of the cross with holy water and by an act of contrition.

It is for this purpose that there is the custom of putting holy water at the door of the churches.

- 71** The second is always to remain there in the deepest respect with great exterior and interior reverence, recalling what the Church chants on the feast of the Dedication of Churches:

Holiness benefits those who enter into the house of God. Ps 93,5

- 72** The third is while there always to apply ourselves to prayer when we are not busy listening to the word of God, since the church is a house of prayer, cf. Mt 21,13 and since one draws down on oneself many extraordinary and abundant graces of God, by the prayers offered in the church,

- 73 for which God gives a special blessing. cf. 2 Ch 7,15-16
During mental prayer, we can occupy ourselves as follows;
when considering God present in the church.
- a. What is said in scripture, O my God
at the time of the dedication of the temple at Jerusalem:
 The majesty of God filled the temple;
 and the whole people, having beheld the glory of God,
 fell prostrate to adore Him. 2 Ch 7,1-3
Should no doubt made me resolve
never to enter or to remain in a church
 save with fear and trembling, cf. 2 Co 7,15
 considering the majesty of God who dwells there,
all the more because even the angels tremble
before Him. cf. Is 6,1-6
- b. And it is true
 that Oza fell down dead because he had
 touched the Ark, 2 S 6,7
 (which was nothing but a wooden coffer),
with how much more reason
should I fear being struck by God
if I dare enter and remain in the church
 which is the house of God, cf. Mt 21,13
when I am covered with sin,
for as David said,
 holiness befits the house of God. Ps 93,5
- c. Give me that holiness, O my God,
 the surest mark of my attachment
 to Thee and to Thy service.
Purify my soul to bring this about,
and in this way make it worthy of the graces cf. He 9,14
which Thou dost pour out in abundance
 on those who appear before Thee
 with pure hearts
 and with total detachment from the slightest sin.
Since these faults arouse Thine indignation,
grant that none may be found in me
when I enter that place where Thou desire to be
adored.
- d. The respect which I should show
 for Thy dwelling place in this holy sanctuary
should lead me, O my God,
 to cleanse myself entirely from all sin.

74 One can also proceed as follows,
when considering the church as a house of prayer: cf. Mt 21-13

a. Thou didst say to Solomon, O my God,
after he had dedicated to Thee the Jewish temple,
that Thine eyes as well as Thine ears
would be open to the prayer
of him who would pray to Thee in that place,
because Thou hadst chosen and sanctified it
for Thyself
so that Thy name might be invoked
and honored there eternally. 2 Ch 7,15-16

With how much more reason
can one not say the same of our churches,
where Thou dost wish to be honored
by an interior worship in spirit and
in truth Jn 4,24
as Thou Thyself did say.

b. I beg this grace of Thee, my God.
That Thou wouldst have the goodness
to listen to my prayers offered in this church,
since it is a place
which Thou had indeed consecrated to Thyself
to be thus always until the end of
time cf. 2 Ch. 7,15-16

c. It is in this Holy place, O my God
that Thou desirest the faithful should come to pray
to Thee.
This is even the most appropriate place for doing this,
since it is indeed the place
of Thy dwelling on earth,
and since Thy graces are more abundantly bestowed here
than anywhere else.

d. Pour out, then, Thy graces upon me,
and dispose my heart
to welcome them,
and to make use of them
since the graces we receive in a church
all carry with them a special blessing from Thee.

**#6 SECOND WAY OF PLACING ONESELF IN GOD'S HOLY PRESENCE IN THE
CHURCH BY CONSIDERING OUR LORD IN THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT OF
THE ALTAR**

- 75 We may consider God present in the church
because Our Lord Jesus Christ resides there constantly
in the most Blessed Sacrament of the altar.
- 76 It is He who sanctifies these temples
in which He is always really present,
to pour out His graces abundantly on those who adore
Him there.
This is why
we can apply to these sacred edifices
the words of the Apocalypse:
Behold the tabernacle of God with man,
and He will dwell with them. Ap 21,3
and He will be their God.
This is the favor Our Lord grants to mankind,
and that is why He is called their God.
- 77 In view of this continual dwelling of Our Lord Jesus Christ
in the most Blessed Sacrament of the altar,
we may reflect:
- 78 1. that it is a great honor for us
to have always Our Lord with us in the tabernacle,
and to be able to adore and worship Him there
in this adorable Sacrament,
that He is there to listen to our prayers
and to present them for us to the eternal Father,
acting as our Mediator and our Intercessor
before God cf. He 7,25;9.15
when we address our prayers to Him in church,
so that they may be agreeable in His sight cf He12,28
- 79 2. that, since His mediation is efficacious
when He offers our petitions to the eternal Father,
and since the Father always hears Him, as St. Paul says,
because of the profound respect,
with which He prays for us cf. He 5,7
we should, when we are in church have recourse to Him
and be thoroughly convinced that if Our Lord Jesus Christ deigns
to take our interests to heart cf. He 10,19-25
He will obtain for us, without any doubt,
whatever we ask through Him, Jn 14,13-14
and whatever He himself will ask for us from His
eternal Father cf. Jn 15,16;16,23
since He is our God
who has dedicated himself totally to our

salvation
and to whatever concerns the good of our soul.

Jn 17,19

- 80** 3. When we find ourselves
in some special and extraordinary necessity,
or undergo some violent temptation,
we shall find a powerful and efficacious help
in our need
and to overcome the temptation which is harassing us,
if we turn to Our Lord abiding in the church
in the most Blessed Sacrament of the altar
for Jesus Christ in the Eucharist is a
physician cf. Mt 8,8; Lk 4,23;5,31
who heals all our ills,
and gives us all the graces we need cf. Jn 1,14; 16-17; Rm 5,2
to obtain for us all our soul requires.
- 81** 4. It is a powerful means
of maintaining ourselves in the love of god
to remain attentive and respectful
before Our Lord present in the church;
for, since Jesus Christ
in His humanity
is an ardent furnace of love for His Father, cf. Lk 12,49
He can make us share in this love
while we are paying our homage
to His most sacred humanity in whose presence we are.
All the more, because Our Lord Jesus Christ
remains with us in this sacrament
to give us, as He says, life
in abundance Jn 10,10;6,33-59
and this life in abundance consists
according to Jesus Christ Himself,
in the knowledge and the perfect
love of God Jn 17,3; cf. Lk 10,22-28
- 82** The way in which we occupy ourselves in the church considering Jesus
Christ as residing constantly in the most
Blessed Sacrament of the altar:
- a. I need only to approach Thee, divine Jesus cf. He 4,16
residing in the most Blessed Sacrament of the altar,
it is there truly
that I can have Thee always present
before me cf Pe 16,8
Thou dwellest there as on Thy throne,
to receive our homage and our adoration;

Thou residest there to fill us with all the graces
we need.

cf. He 4,16

b. In whatever state I may be
of dryness in mental prayer,
of afflictions and temptations,
I need only to present myself before Thee
to find solace for my woes.
No matter what difficulty I may experience
in overcoming myself in order to do good,
Thou art always ready to help me.
Thou art my only resource
in my distress
Thou are my only refuge
when deep distress overwhelms me.

He 10,19-21

Ps 32,7;46,2

c. It is Thou who dost inspire and encourage me to do good
when I feel cowardly;
and when I feel tepid,
all I need to do is to turn to Thee,
who art a God of love,
and who showest in Thy divine sacrament
a tender love for us.
Thou canst easily
fill me
with all that is lovable and loving in Thee
Set me aflame with love for God
and give me a burning love for my neighbor.

cf. Lc 10,25-28

83 OR IN ANOTHER MANNER:

a. I unite myself to Thee, O my Jesus,
present in the most Blessed Sacrament,
where Thou art the victim for
my sins,
for it is in this sacrament
that Thou dost constantly offer to the eternal Father
the merits of Thy sacred passion and death,
in satisfaction for my sins.

cf. He 7,26-28;1 Jn 2,2;4,10

cf. He 9,1-28

b. Give me the grace
in order to satisfy for them,
to share in Thy interior dispositions
of love for suffering.

c. I shall strive, O my savior Jesus,
to remain absorbed in this consideration while in Thy

presence,
being convinced as I am
that sin displeases Thee in me;
I know that Thou wilt strive
to destroy it in me.

d. Help me, then, I beg of Thee,
so that I may apply myself to this with all care,
thus accomplishing Thy desires in my regard.

CHAPTER III

DIFFERENT WAYS OF ATTENDING TO THE PRESENCE OF GOD

#1 BY MULTIPLIED REFLECTIONS: REFLECTIONS MADE ON THE PRESENCE GOD SHOULD BE BASED ON ONLY ONE OF THE WAYS OF CONSIDERING GOD PRESENT

84 When we place ourselves in the presence of God
following one of the ways suggested above,
it is important
that the reflections we make
should all refer to the same way,
and should all tend to the same end.
For, besides the fact that this practice
helps to control the mind
and teaches it to reason correctly,
it also contributes greatly to keeping the soul in a
recollected state,
and gives it more facility for occupying itself
for a longer time and in a more interior manner
with the presence of God.

85 Whereas,
if one allows the mind to make
a reflection on one manner, and then on a different
one,
the mind is taken up with different thoughts
and making different reflections
which have no connection with each other;
it remains in a sort of dissipated state,
and cannot succeed
in reflecting and thinking correctly.
And the soul by this manner of making reflections
loses its capacity for interior recollection.

86 Suppose that, for instance, we make a few reflections

on the way of placing ourselves in God's presence,
considering Him in the place where we are;
and that we place ourselves in God's presence
considering Him present within ourselves as in His
temple.

This second consideration is out of place at this point,
because these two ways of placing ourselves in God's presence
are not suitable to each other,
since each one has a different purpose.

For the purpose of the first way
is to lead us to keep ourselves recollected wherever we
may be,
because of God's presence.

And the purpose of the other way
is to help us preserve great purity of heart
because we are the temples of God.

Or we may, in this second way, have this other purpose
of adoring God dwelling in our heart,
or some other purpose that is related to this second
way.

#2 BY SHORT AND PROLONGED REFLECTIONS: HOW TO MAINTAIN OUR- SELVES IN THE HOLY PRESENCE OF GOD BY RECALLING PASSAGES OF HOLY SCRIPTURE, AND THE REFLECTIONS THAT CAN BE MADE ON SUCH PASSAGES

87 These six ways of placing ourselves in the presence of God
should help the soul maintain this awareness
for some time during mental prayer.
but it can be said
that they make us aware of God's presence
only in a passing manner
and as it were, external to the soul,
because they lead us to recognize the presence of God
only through reasoning and multiple reflections;
which, with respect to truths of faith,
darken the mind rather than enlighten it
and shut it up rather than open it,
to a deeper understanding of the sacred
mysteries which these truths contain,
and keep the soul away from God instead of drawing it
closer to Him;
unless these reasonings and reflections
are based on and supported by views of faith.

88 An easier means for making us more deeply aware of the
presence of God,
in an interior manner,

is to recall some passage of Holy Scripture
which reminds us of the presence of God,
as for example this one in Psalm 15:8.

I intend
to keep God always before me.

Ps 16,8

Then we reflect on this passage
without much reasoning
because reasoning destroys faith,
or at least introduces obstacles which diminish it
and keeps it from being as lively as it might be,
and prevents it from being firmly fixed
in our mind and our heart.

89 We might make the following reflection on this passage:

What a joy it is
for our souls to be constantly occupied
with the presence of God!
This is an anticipation of the happiness of
heaven.

cf. Ps 16,8

Then we remain for as long a time as we can,
in an attention at once simple
and at the same time, as lively as possible,
on this passage.

This reflection is not encumbered with reasoning.

90 The grasp that the mind has of it, and the attention it
pays to it
not only does not hinder
but does not even distract our attention
from the passage,
which, being of faith,
causes the mind to be imbued with this truth;
and the understanding it has of it becomes so clear
that it cannot help adoring it in God and outside
of God
as something that came forth the mouth of God
as it were, and according to our human way of
expressing ourselves.

cf. Mt 4,4

91 When considering such things
we must not let the mind grow fatigued,
as might happen sometimes,
especially when one is just beginning to apply oneself
to mental prayer,
for fear that

the mind, not yet accustomed to this and not having
acquired much facility,
may grow disgusted.

92 So, when we find that we cannot occupy ourselves any longer
with this passage,

by means of the reflection we made on it,
we should turn our mind to another reflection,
which, since it is new and capable of touching the
heart,
(makes the truth)
which we are seeking to impress on our minds and hearts
take on a fresh meaning.

93 Thus, we might turn to another reflection:
that it is a sign that we love God very little
if we rarely recall
that we are in His presence.

cf. Ps 16,8; Gn 28,16

94 This reflection will remind us of the passage
as though for the first time,
and in this way its meaning is renewed,
and the mind discovers a new readiness to apply itself to it
once more.

We must, then, again turn our attention
both to the passage which was at first proposed,
and to this second reflection,
for as long a time as possible.

95 When we find ourselves unable to apply ourselves thereto any
longer
(we still take up another reflection,)
and in this way learn
how to dwell on the thought of God's presence
as long as we find it useful to do so.

96 This is how,
through attention to some passage of faith
joined with some reflection
we can gradually acquire a certain facility
for making ourselves aware of the presence of God
by simple attention.

97 All six of the ways
suggested above for placing ourselves in God's presence,
considered as truths of faith,

can help us to fix our attention on the presence of God,
provided that the reflections we make
 on each of these ways
are rare,
and that each of them is prolonged for a considerable time,
 as we have just indicated,
and without any reasoning.

- 98** This manner of placing ourselves in the presence of God by attention,
and by few reflections,
each of which should be prolonged,
can be called
 not simple attention,
 but an attention mingled with reflections.
And since these reflections are rare and without reasoning,
 no matter how little aptitude a soul may have
 for attending to the presence of God by such attention,
it can gradually acquire this habit.

#3 APPLYING OURSELVES TO THE PRESENCE OF GOD BY SIMPLE ATTENTION

- 99** Applying ourselves to the presence of God
 by simple attention
consists in being before Him
 with a simple interior view of faith
 that He is present,
and remaining thus for some time,
 for a few minutes, or even a quarter of an
 hour, more or less,
 as we may feel ourselves interiorly absorbed and
 attracted.
- 100** It even happens to a number of souls
 who have reached interior detachment
 and are free from affection to created things,
that God gives them this grace
which they rarely or even never lose.
And for them this is an anticipation and a foretaste of the joy
of heaven.
- 101** However a soul will not ordinarily
enjoy such a favor
unless it has preserved throughout life its innocence,
or unless it has for a long time remained faithful to God,
and has thoroughly purified itself
 not only from sin

and all affection for the slightest sins,
but also is entirely detached from its
selfish inclinations
and all human self-seeking,
and unless it has resolutely turned aside
from what pleases the senses and the mind,
becoming, as it were, uninterested
in such things;
and finally unless it has entirely renounced its own self-
will,
(so that the will of God)
as an active force within the soul
becomes the principle of all it does;
so that the presence and action of God within this soul are
the only,
or practically the only object
of its attention.

- 102** Then such souls can say with St. Paul
that it is no longer they who live,
but Jesus Christ who lives in them. Ga 2,20
And that, so to speak,
they live the very life of God Himself,
which consists in thinking only of Him and of what concerns Him
and in acting only for Him. cf. Jn 5,30; 8,29; 8,55; Jn 14,31
- 103** Souls that have attained this state and have acquired these
dispositions no longer pay attention to creatures
save in so far as they are related to God,
and consequently no longer find anything lovable in them
except that which comes from God;
they can no longer separate the thought of these creatures
from the thought of God.
- 104** Although there exists no comparison
that can make perfectly clear the difference
between the way of placing oneself in God's presence
through reflections and reasonings,
and of doing so
by simple attention,
we may, nevertheless, make use of the one which follows,
or some other one like it,
in order to give some idea of the difference
and to enable us to grasp it, as far as the human mind is
capable of doing so.
- 105** A person, for example, who does not know anything about

painting,

 sees a beautiful picture,
but cannot judge correctly of its excellence and its
perfection,
(because that person does not know what this
excellence consists in,) or why the picture seems so
beautiful
 in the eyes of those well-versed in painting.

106 Hence, this person must,
 if he wishes to understand the beauty of the picture,
be instructed by a skilled painter
who can teach him, through reasoning,
 why this picture is such a good one,
 and what constitutes its beauty.
It is also necessary that the painter
helps the person he is instructing
make reflections on his explanations
 concerning the beauty of this work.

107 On the contrary,
a person who is perfectly familiar with the art of painting,
 as soon as he finds himself in the presence of a
 painting that is well done
needs neither much reasoning
nor deep and frequent reflections
to appreciate how beautiful it is
 since he perceives this as soon as the picture is before his eyes.

108 That is why, by an act of simple attention
he admires its beauty
and can remain for a long time considering its perfection,
 without ever growing bored, or reflecting that he had
 been looking at it for a long time.
Because perfection of the work has absorbed his attention
and gives him great pleasure as he considers it;
 in fact,
the longer he looks at it
the more he finds it beautiful and pleasing to his eyes
and the more thoroughly does he grasp what makes it so
excellent and surprising
 in the eyes of men.

109 It is the same, with all due proportion,
when we apply ourselves to the presence of God in mental
prayer.

- 110 A person who has just left the world,
or while still living in it,
and who wishes to make mental prayer,
but who, up to now, has done nothing
but satisfy his mind and senses,
is ignorant of the art of knowing God,
and of thinking interiorly of Him and of
His presence.
- 111 For this reason, it would seem
that the best way for such a one to learn how to think of
God would be to convince himself of God's presence through
various reasons based on faith,
which can help him
to become aware of God's presence.
Such reflections will not withdraw his mind entirely
from material things
for what mind can suddenly turn
from the consideration of material things to that of purely
spiritual realities?
This would be very difficult for many,
and altogether impossible for some.
- 112 Hence, it seems
to be much more advisable
gradually to insinuate spiritual thoughts
into the minds of those who are beginning
to devote themselves to God and to mental prayer,
by means of material things
combined with and enlivened by considerations inspired by
faith,
and we need to make use of similar means
to help the soul become familiar with the presence of
God,
rather than expecting the mind to apply itself directly
to purely spiritual things with no connection to matter
or to occupy itself with the presence of God
by a pure act of simple attention.
- 113 Acting thus would merely
(for souls who follow the ordinary path)
make mental prayer tedious;
and might even disgust them, perhaps for always, with the
spiritual life, because,
lacking light and familiarity
with God and with interior practices of the soul,
they would view then

as impossible
what later on, through frequent application to mental
prayer,
(might become for them)
not only possible,
but even easy and agreeable.

114 For this reason,
such persons should ordinarily,
when they first begin to give themselves to mental prayer,
make use of reasonings and frequent reflections,
most of which should be warm and affective,
in order to learn how to apply themselves to the presence of
God.

115 However, a person who has devoted himself to mental prayer
for a considerable time,
and who finds it easy
to place himself in God's presence in an interior manner,
usually needs only to remain recollected
and to have a simple attention to the presence of God
in order to find his attention absorbed thereby
at least during the time of mental prayer,
without its wandering off during this time.

116 This simple attention procures for the soul an inner consolation,
causing it to find delight and joy in this awareness of
the divine presence,
without any need,
in order to maintain this,
of combining it with any other thoughts or reflections.

117 Because this simple attention,
without being directed to any particular concepts and
without any concern for self,
occupies the mind so powerfully
and penetrates the heart so deeply,
the mind can dwell on no other thoughts,
and the heart is inclined toward no other affection
than that of God,
and neither mind nor heart can entertain any other affection.

118 It is through such simple attention
that the soul detaches itself entirely from created things,
and gradually comes
to a clearer knowledge of
and a more intimate union with

God's own being and of His divine perfections,
When God
 possesses a soul,
 and is intimately possessed by it,
He cannot allow anything in it
 which is not of God or for God
 or anything which might still have
 the savor of created beings.

119 When a soul has been sufficiently purified and detached
from the slightest sins,
 so that it can begin to practice
 simple attention to the presence of God,
it finds its path
 (in the practice of virtue,
 in the exercise of mental prayer, and in the facility for
 concentrating on the presence of God)
much shorter and freed from many obstacles.

120 But if a soul
 wishes to walk resolutely in this path,
it should watch over itself very carefully,
 so as to break off all attachments, even natural ones;
for God gives this grace
 only to souls that are very pure,
 or which He Himself wishes to purify in this way
 by His special goodness.

121 It is worth observing,
when speaking of applying ourselves to the presence of God,
that we should dwell on it for a considerable time,
 because this contributes more than anything else
 to procuring for us the spirit of mental prayer
 and the interior application we should have for it.

We must insure
that our mind remains filled with the thought of God's
presence as long as possible,
and we should not go on to any other subject
 until we cannot pay attention
 to this one any longer.

* This ends the explanation of the Preface; what follows is the explanation of the nine acts of the First Part.

EXPLANATION OF THE FIRST PART OF THE METHOD OF MENTAL PRAYER

122 Since the acts of the method of mental prayer
(which the Brothers use)
prescribed in the first part,
all have reference to the presence of God
in which we should have tried to place ourselves
at the beginning of mental prayer,
they will help us very much to remain therein
during the whole time of mental prayer,
and they can also be of great usefulness
to help keep the mind recollected,
not only during mental prayer,
but even during the day.

123 There are nine acts that it is fitting to make
in the first part of mental prayer.

CHAPTER 4

OF THE THREE ACTS THAT RELATE TO GOD

124 The first three acts relate to God
because they are addressed to Him
and the mind, in making them, occupies itself
either with God,
or with His kindnesses
or with graces we have received from Him.

These three acts are

1. An act of faith
2. An act of adoration
3. An act of thanksgiving

#1 OF THE ACT OF FAITH: OF THE DIFFERENT WAYS OF PUTTING OURSELVES IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

125 Immediately after impressing the mind with the thought of the presence of God
by one of the six ways proposed above,
or by attention of the mind mixed with a few
reflections, or by simple attention,
it is fitting to make an act of faith
on this truth that God is present to us
according to the way that was used
to become imbued with this truth of faith.

126 And to make this act of faith more alive and more moving,
and to remain in this sentiment of faith for a longer time,
we can profitably call to mind
one of the passages spoken of above

or some other
that is related to the way according to which we will
have placed ourselves in the presence of God.

And when we notice
that the mind is distracted or is poorly attentive,
we can repeat the passage and once more pay attention,
in order to keep the mind
more fixed and more settled
on the presence of God.

Of the act of faith on the presence of God in the place
where we are because He is everywhere

127 This is how we may make this act of faith
on the words of Jacob

taken from Gen., Ch. 28:

How awesome is this place,
truly the Lord is in this place,
and I did not think of it.

Gn 28,16

a. How frightening it is to be in this place
without realizing God is there,
without respect,
without a deep realization
of our nothingness before God,
and without remorse
at the thought of our sins.

b. God is truly here,
and I did not think of it.

Gn 28,16

I firmly believe, O my God, this truth
that thou art here.

It is possible that Thou shouldst be here
and that I do not think of Thee?

cf. Gn 28,16

I believe, O my God, that this place
wherever it may be,
is the sanctuary of Thy divinity.

c. This is that made Jacob afraid
in the place where he was,
in view of his sins,
and it is that which should make a Christian have
in great confidence in You.

Gn 28,17

128 We can make another act of faith
on these words of Jeremiah where God says:

I fill both heaven and earth.

Jer 23,24

a. Thou art, O my God, in heaven.
and Thou art there in all its vastness;
Thou art also on earth
which thou dost permeate entirely
because it contains Thee
and, rather Thou dost contain it within
Thyself.

cf. Wis 1,7

b. This I believe, O my God,
that wherever I go I will find Thee,
and that there is no place
not honored by Thy presence;
for as the Royal Prophet so rightly says, in Psalm 74;
He is not distant from the Orient
nor from the Occident,
nor from the mountains nor from the desert.
Thus, wherever I may go,
it is my happiness to be always with Thee,
as the same prophet says,
Psalm 72.

Ps 72,23-18

ACT OF FAITH ON THE PRESENCE OF OUR LORD DWELLING IN THE MIDST OF THOSE WHO ARE ASSEMBLED IN HIS NAME

129 We may make an act of faith by considering,
as St. Matthew says, Ch. 18,
Our Lord in the midst of us
when there are several of us
gathered together in His name.

Mt 18,20

Thus when making mental prayer
this is how we can proceed:

a. I believe, O my God and Savior Jesus,
that Thou art in the midst of us
when we are making mental prayer
together,
because then we are really
assembled in Thy name.

Acts 1,14;2,1

cf. Mt 18,20

b. Can we enjoy any greater happiness
than to have Thee in the midst of us?
For this is the means, if we so desire it,
to possess Thy Spirit fully.
And this is what gives us a great facility
to have Thee ever present
and to have among us an intimate union in Thee

cf. Ep 3,19;1,1-23; Col 2,10

and in Thy holy love.

cf. Jn 17,21

c. Grant us this grace, O my God, we beg of Thee.

ACT OF FAITH ON THE PRESENCE OF GOD WITHIN US TO PRESERVE US IN BEING

130 We may make an act of faith considering that God is present within us to preserve us in being,

as St. Paul says in the Acts of the Apostles, Ch. 17:

God is not far from us,

for we have life

and movement

and being only in God. Acts 17,27-28

a. I possess Thee within me, O my God,
since I have life
only because Thou

givest me a share in Thine,

and since Thou abidest in me,

to communicate it to me.

b. It is Thou, also, who givest life to all my members
thanks to Thy dwelling within me.

It is by Thee and in Thee

that my mind thinks

and my heart seeks and loves

what is truly good.

c. Not only dost Thou give me being,

but so great is Thy goodness

that Thou dost continually

preserve it in me,

and all this Thou dost

through Thy indwelling within me.

d. All this I believe, O my God,

because it is Thou that hast revealed it to me.

e. Give me the grace to profit by this grace

of having Thee constantly present

to my mind.

cf. Ps 16,8

ACT OF FAITH IN GOD PRESENT IN US AS IN HIS KINGDOM

131 We make an act of faith in the presence of God
because He reigns in us,
as Our Lord says in St. Luke, Ch. 17, v. 21, Lc 17,21
and because, we are His temples,
as St. Paul tells us 2 Co. ch. 6, v. 17 2 Co 6,16
and in 1 Co. ch. 7, v. 19 1 Co 6,19

132 Considering God as reigning in us by His grace,
we may make an act of faith in this fashion:

a. If I am fortunate enough to possess Thy holy grace,
I believe, O my God, and am fully persuaded
that Thou art
and reignest in me. cf. Lc 17,21

b. Do Thou, then, rule over all my movements,
both interior and exterior,
so that I may not be master of any of them.
It is for Thee, O my God,
since Thou established Thy reign
within me cf. Lc 17,21
to direct all of these movements, cf. Rm 8,12-15; Ga 5,25
and not to allow a single one
to escape from Thy control.
It is only right that Thou, who reignest in my heart,
shouldst be the master of all that takes place
within it.

c. Permit not, then, that it should act of its own accord,
or under the inspiration of any human motives;
eradicate so completely from my heart
all natural sentiments and affections
that nothing but what is from Thee and for Thee may
appear in it. cf. Rm 8,1-14; Ga 5,13-25 Col 3,1-2

133 Considering God in our body as in His temple,
we may make an act of faith as follows:

a. What great purity should I not
cultivate in my body, O my God, cf. 1 Co 6,15-19
since it is Thy temple,
and since Thou dwellest in it. 2 Co 6,16
Everything in it should proclaim
the sanctity of the One who resides there,
for, as St. Paul said:
Know you not that your bodies
are the temples of the Holy Spirit? 1 Co 3,16;6,19

b. I must, then, offer Thee my body,
according to the words of the same Apostle,
as a living victim, holy and agreeable in Thine eyes,
rendering Thee rational and spiritual
worship.

Rm 12,1

I must then, from this moment and in the future
look upon my body
as consecrated to Thee, and sanctified
by Thy presence and Thine indwelling within it.

c. In view of this
I must not allow in it any movement that does not
tend to Thee;
I must observe great restraint in the use of my
senses
out of respect for Thy holy present.

134 3. Considering God in our soul as in His temple,
we may make an act of faith
as follows:

a. I believe, O my God,
that Thou art the treasure of my soul,
and that it enjoys the blessing of possessing Thee,
since St. Paul assures us that:
We are the temple of the living God,
who dwells in us

and converses with us.

2 Co 6,16

It is, then, to let me enjoy Thy companionship
that Thou takest up thy dwelling
in my soul
as in Thy sanctuary
to make it a place where Thou dost take Thy
delights.

cf. Mt 3,12; Jr 3,19

b. I adore Thee in my soul
as in the place where Thou dost dwell,
for it is in my soul that Thou wishest
me to adore Thee in spirit.

Jn 4,23

c. Inspire my soul with such total detachment
from all created things
that Thou mayest be well pleased there,
and mayest fill me

cf. 17,5

with Thy blessings and Thy grace. cf. Ep 1,1-23
So that, being adorned
as is proper for the place
where Thou desirest to establish Thy
dwelling, cf. Ps 93,5
it will be worthy
to welcome Thee
and to shelter Thee within itself.

ON THE ACT OF FAITH IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN THE CHURCH

135 We may make an act of faith
in God's presence in the church
because it is the house of God
as follows:

- a. When I am in church, O my God,
I am in a most appropriate place to pray to Thee,
because it is Thy dwelling and abode,
and Thou thyself hast said Ap 21,3
that it is a House of prayer. Mt 21,13
- b. It is in this place that Thou dost promise
to pour out Thy graces and blessings
on all who offer their prayers to Thee;
and that
here all will receive and will obtain from Thee
whatever they ask of thee,
because, Thou sayest, thine eyes
will be open
and thine ears will be attentive
to the prayers of those who pray to Thee
in this sacred place. cf. 2 ch 7,15-16
May my prayer here be agreeable to Thee!
Thy special presence in this holy place
which is totally consecrated to Thee cf. 2 Ch 7,16
should incite us to pray there, O my God.
- c. Since I wish only to love Thee
and desire only
what can obtain for me this favor,
give me in this holy place
the graces that I beg of Thee cf. 2 Ch 7,16
in virtue of Thy holy presence,
and because of Thy abiding presence here.

ACT OF FAITH IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT

136 Finally, we may make an act of faith
in the presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ, residing in the
church in the Most Blessed Sacrament
as follows:

a. O my God and Lord Jesus, it is truly here
the place where Thou dost dwell
in the most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. cf. Jn 20,18

In this sacred place
I can, and most justly
should recognize Thy presence,
because Thou dost truly reside
in this most holy and adorable Sacrament.

b. How happy should I consider myself to be there often
to keep Thee company
and pay Thee my homage.

c. And though Thou are hidden here hidden by a veil
from my eyes,
(still Thou art there)
as great,
as powerful,
as adorable
and as lovable
as Thou art in heaven;
for Thou art the same God,
and art truly present
in the one place as in the other.

d. But here
you are in this place
sacrificed for us out of love,
and so Thou art there for us
a loving God, a God of goodness.
Thou art here to pour out open us
all the blessings of heaven, cf, Ep 1, 3-6

provided we do not make ourselves unworthy of them
by our sins,
and by our lack of gratitude
for all Thy goodness.

REFLECTIONS WE MAY MAKE ON GOD'S PRESENCE

137 After making or eliciting an act of faith in the presence of God,
it would be appropriate to reflect on this act of faith,
(keeping in mind the method we used when placing ourselves in God's presence.)

138 For instance, if we placed ourselves in the presence of God
by considering Him in the place where we are,
we might make some reflections like the following:

a. Is it possible, O my God,
that Thou shouldst be in all the places
where I go or where I am, Ps 139,7-10
without my thinking of this? Gn 28,16

b. Enlighten me, O my God, with Thy divine light,
so that I may always be aware
of Thee, and recognize you cf. Ps 4,7;36,10
always present in every place, cf. Ps 139,7-10
so that the thought of Thy divine presence
may restrain me from offending Thee. cf. Dn 13,23

c. How could I, depending as I do on God
for my very being and for every
blessing, Ac 17, 27-28
(dare to sin)
in the presence of my God? Dn 13,23

How could I dare even to remain there
without respect and without decorum?

d. What!
The presence of a king
makes us restrain all the movements of our body and soul,
so as not to perform a single action
except with circumspection,
because the prince in whose presence we are
deserves this consideration,
and we would dare to fail in this regard before God,
in whose presence we are at all time,
wherever we may be, and wherever we
may go! cf. Ps 139,7-10

e. O my God, give me this grace,
that the thought of Thy holy presence may continually
remain before my mind,
so that,

since I am always in Thy holy presence,
I may not fail for a single instant
to think of thee, etc.

cf. Ps 16,8

139 When we begin to experience a certain facility
in making reflections on these acts,
we should
 use only a few words in these reflections
 and then try to pause for a few moments in an attitude
 of inner silence,
in order to let the reflections we have just made penetrate
our minds in a more interior manner.

140 Using many words in speaking interiorly when praying thus
tends
 to unsettle the mind
 and disturb the depths of the soul,
rather than
 procure for us true awareness of God and
 attention to Him,
 (and to do this in an interior manner.)

On the contrary, such a multiplicity of words of the mind
and heart
 shrivels the soul,
 is only passing
 and often leaves it
 devoid of God
 and of spiritual and interior matters.

141 Just these few words:
 O my God,
 since Thou art always present before me
 how could I dare take the liberty
 of doing anything that might displease Thee?

Ps 16,8

Dn 13,23

Just these few words, I say,
 if they sink deep into the mind, and are reflected upon seriously
 give the soul a vivid grasp of this truth,
 which will then remain deeply engraved on it.
 and which later can easily
 (come back to the mind from time to time.)

142 Even if it does not come back,
the deep reflection which we made on it will often
leave behind it
 such an impression on the soul,

such a yearning for God,
such a horror for sin
and for anything that displeases God,
that the soul will often be aware of God,
will continue to hold sin in abomination.
Thus the soul will grow accustomed gradually
to delight in God
and in all that leads to God,
and to delight in what leads to God,
only because it helps to possess God,
and not as being in itself capable
of attracting the soul,
of causing the soul to cling to it,
and to attach itself thereto.

143 Some passages of Holy Scripture are often very useful
to help the soul make reflections of this sort, in few
words,

especially since, being the words of God
as faith makes them known to us,
they possess of themselves their own divine
unction.

cf. 1 Jn 2,27

Of themselves

they lead us to God,
makes us delight in God,
and help us
(to keep Him before our minds,)

and preserve within ourselves a delight for God.

144 We can use these two types of reflections
in all the acts of mental prayer.

145 After making an act of faith, and some reflections on it
as mentioned above,
we should next make an act of adoration, of God who is
present,
because the first duty
a Christian owes God is to adore Him.

#2 THE ACT OF ADORATION

146 We make an act of adoration
by recognizing God as our Creator and our sovereign Lord,
and remaining in profound respect in His holy presence,
realizing
our lowliness and nothingness,

our dependence on God,
our unworthiness
to enjoy the advantage and happiness of being in
His holy presence.

147 This act of adoration may be made as follows:

- a. Thou are adorable everywhere, O my God,
since Thou dost fill heaven and earth. Jr 23,24
There is no place where Thou art not
present, cf. Pr 139,9-10
or where Thou shouldst not be adored.
- b. I am Thy creature,
and as such I must recognize
in whatever place I may be
Thine infinite greatness Jb 40,10
and Thy sovereign majesty. Si 13,13
I should abase myself profoundly
in the sight of Thy infinite perfections.
and of that which is within Thee
that our minds cannot comprehend
because we cannot understand
what Thou truly art
and the excellence
of Thy divine Essence. cf. 1 Co 2, 6-16
- c. O my God, I acknowledge Thee in this place
as in a place consecrated to Thee,
for Thy presence here
consecrates it entirely
and makes it a sacred place,
sanctified by Thee. cf. 2 Ch 7,16
- d. I adore Thee, then, in this place
as in Thy temple and sanctuary,
for Thou dost impart to it
a share of Thy holiness
(by Thy abiding presence here.)
- e. The Angels who accompany Thee everywhere
adore Thee here; cf. Is 6,2-3
it is then very fitting that I, a miserable creature,
should join myself to them in paying Thee my homage,
trusting that Thou wilt find acceptable
the worship I pay Thee,
and which I unite with theirs.

#3 THE ACT OF THANKSGIVING

148 The third act to be made in the first part of mental prayer
is an act of thanksgiving,
(because after acknowledging God's infinite greatness,
and paying Him the homage
due Him because of His excellence
and our dependence on Him,
it is only right
that we should recall to mind the goodness He shows and has always
shown us,
and that we should offer Him our very humble thanks,
and in particular
for having created us, cf. Col 1,15-20; Rm 6,22
redeemed us
and delivered us from our countless sins,
for having protected us from the occasions of committing them
again,
and from the wickedness of the world cf. Jn 17,15
by bringing us into the community,
and for the innumerable graces
He has bestowed on us
from the moment of our existence
especially for the grace He is giving us at this very moment,
of maintaining us in His holy presence,
and allowing us to converse with Him in mental prayer.

149 This act of thanksgiving may be made in this way:

a. I have received, O my God, so many blessings
from Thine infinite goodness,
that I would have to be very ungrateful
if I failed to express to Thee
my very humble gratitude. cf. Ps 103,2
I owe Thee everything that I am;
there is nothing good in me which I have not received
from Thine infinite goodness. 1 co 4,7

b. Thanks to Thee
I have been redeemed
and delivered from my many
sins; cf. Col 1, 15-20; Rm 6,22
and it is Thee that hast withdrawn
from all the occasions of sin which I might have
encountered,

and in which I might have committed many more sins.
by withdrawing me from the world.
(give me the grace,) O my God, I beg of Thee,
never to forget
so great a favor,
that I may thank Thee for it every moment of my life.

cf. Jn 17,15

c. I should consider the advantage I have
of belonging to the community
as my sovereign happiness on this earth.
For me, this is an anticipation of paradise,
where I enjoy the blessing of possessing Thee
as far as faith allows me to.
I am enjoying this blessing right now, O my God,
for Thou are present to me,
as truly as Thou art present to the saints in heaven,
even though I am able to know
and to delight in this privilege
only as far as one can do so through faith.

Still, I consider this
such a great favor
that I am constantly prostrate
in mind and heart
before Thee,
to assure Thee how grateful I am for this favor.

This constitutes all the bliss of the angels and saints
although not in the same manner.
It is Thou, O my God, who art the object
of their joy and happiness,
as Thou art of that which I feel
and enjoy within myself
at this moment when I think of Thee.

d. Accept, I beg of Thee, O my God,
the thought of Thee and the affection I have for Thee
as my gratitude for the grace which Thou givest me
of thinking of Thee at this moment,
and of being taken up the thought of Thy holy
presence,
for this is an action which I can offer to Thee,
that will be the most agreeable to Thee.”

cf. Ps 16,8

CHAPTER 5

THE THREE ACTS WHICH REFER TO OURSELVES

- 150** The acts to be made next in mental prayer refer to ourselves.
The first is an act of humility,
The second is an act of remorse,
The third is an act of contrition.

#1 THE ACT OF HUMILITY

- 151** The act of humility is made
by acknowledging ourselves unworthy to appear before God
because we are nothing.

To maintain ourselves in this sentiment
we can make use of these words of Abraham in
Genesis, Ch. 18:

How shall I dare appear before my Lord,
since I am but dust and
ashes?

Gn 18,27; Cf. Jb 30,19; Ps 144,13

- 152** It is very appropriate for us to make this act at this point,
(for after offering God our homage)
by adoration and thanksgiving
for His goodness in allowing us
to come before Him;
and to speak to Him,
it is only right that we should look within ourselves
to consider

what a great honor is given us,
and how unworthy we are of this grace,
since we are nothing,
and hence much less than dust and ashes;
which are not only something which exists,
but are also useful in some manner,
whereas since we are nothing,
we are good for nothing;
and all that we can do of ourselves
is to offend God.

Gn 18,27

This is something which we should always have deeply impressed
in our mind in mental prayer,
(so as to keep ourselves in a sentiment of deep humility.)

- 153** This is how we may make this act of humility.
a. What am I, O my God?

I, who of myself, (possess)
only nothingness and sin;
that is all I can rightly claim as my own. cf. Rm 7,14; Ga 6,3
If an ancient hermit said to himself.
What can you glory in,
since you are nothing but dust
and ashes? Gn 18,27; Jb 30,19
what reason can I have to exalt myself,
convinced as I am that it would be paying me too much
honor to call me dust and ashes,
for dust and ashes
are the work of God;
and thus they do not belong to me
but rather they belong entirely to God who made
them.
Thus the only thing I can claim is nothingness;
that is all there is in me except for what God has
done,
and all that I rightly own is sin.

b. How then could I dare approach Thee and think
of Thee, cf. Gn 18,27
if I thought only of what I am?
All I can do, O my God,
is to humble myself before Thee,
recalling to mind
what I am
and what Thou art.

c. And yet,
what a great honor Thou payest me
by keeping me in Thy presence
and doing me the favor
of conversing with me. cf. 2 Co 6,16
Thou dost act thus so that,
since I am nothing of myself,
I may be wholly lost in Thee,
and that Thou mayest be totally in me.

d. Give me this grace, I beg of Thee, O my God,
since Thou willest that I should be entirely Thine.

#2 ACT OF REMORSE

154 After this act of humility
it is appropriate to make an act of remorse,

which consists
in recognizing ourselves unworthy to appear before God
because we have so grievously offended Him;
for it is not sufficient for us to admit our nothingness,
and in consequence
to humble ourselves before God;
it is also very useful to feel ashamed in His presence
because of our sins,
and to make our own and to share the attitude and feelings
of the publican in the Gospel,
who, standing in a corner of the temple, said to God
and not daring even to lift his eyes to God
so great was the shame he felt.
My God, have mercy on me, a sinner!

Lk 18,13

155 The act of remorse may be made as follows:

a. I recognize, O my God,
how grievously I have offended Thee!
and my sins
are always vividly before my mind,
for it is against Thee that I have sinned,
and I have done so in Thy presence,
still more, I was conceived in sin,
and this gives me continually
a reason to feel remorse.

Ps 51,5-7

b. But this sentiment is powerfully increased in me
when I dare appear in Thy presence,
and take the liberty
of conversing with Thee in mental prayer.
Abraham, although a just man, did not dare to do this,
because he considered himself
nothing but dust
which people trample upon.
How then shall I dare to presume this,
covered with sin as I am?

Gn 18,27

c. Yet do Thou pardon me, O my God.
I come to Thee to avow my sins
and to manifest to Thee my injustice,
because I know that
not only will this action
not incur Thine indignation
but that it will rather
draw down Thy mercy on me.
This is why the remorse I feel

Ps 32,5

cf. Ps 32,1-5

over the great number of sins I have
committed cf. Ps 51,19
serves to increase my confidence;
for the greater my remorse
for having committed them.
the more willing
wilt Thou be to pardon them. cf. Ps 32,1-11; 51,10-14; 19

d. This is why I beg of Thee, O my God,
to permit me to appear today in Thy presence
as a sinner, full of remorse
not in appearance only,
but in truth. cf. Lk 18,9-14

#3 ACT OF CONTRITION

156 After this act of remorse,
it is important to make an act of contrition,
by asking God to pardon all our sins,
and by taking a firm resolution not to commit them again,
for this act is able to obtain for us the remission of all our
sins,

as David says in Psalm 31:

I said, I confess my sinfulness to God,
and at the same time Thou didst take away, O my God
the guilt of my sin. Ps 32,5

157 This act made from the depth of our heart
and with a sincere resolve to give up our sins,
will cause God to forget them; cf. Is 43,25;
Ps 85,3; 78,3

they will even be hidden from Him,
as David again says in the same Psalm,
they will not be imputed
to the one who committed them, Ps 32,1-2
during the whole time he makes mental prayer.

158 This is why,
when making this act,
we should especially strive to ask God for true contrition,
and then have full confidence
that God will not despise the prayer
of a contrite and humble heart, Ps 51,19
as David says in Psalm 50.

159 This is how we may make such an act of contrition:

- a. How sorry I am, O my God,
for having so grievously offended Thee.
My sins are before me always,
and I cannot think of them
without fainting away, Ps 51,5
to speak like the Royal Prophet,
when I reflect on the great number of sins
I have committed against Thee. Ps 38,5
- Reprove me not, O God,
as David again says,
in Thine anger,
and do not chastise me Ps 6,2;38,2
in Thine indignation.
- b. I know that I deserve nothing but Thy wrath;
but have compassion on me
because I am so weak, even weakness itself,
cast Thine eyes upon me, Ps 69,17
and draw my soul from sin,
since no one but Thee can do this. cf. Ps 6,2-6
- c. I offer Thee the sorrow of my heart,
and its groanings,
because my sins are so great Ps 6,7
both in number and in grievousness,
that, as David says,
they rise over my head
and crush me down like a very heavy
burden. Ps 38,5
- d. How miserable I am, O my God,
seeing myself in this state!
I am afflicted and humbled beyond belief,
seeing myself overwhelmed by so many sins;
and the groanings of my heart are great,
and are not hidden from Thee. Ps 38,10
- Pardon me, then, for all my sins, Ps 51
so that I may appear before Thee
in a state
and in an attitude which Thou wilt find
agreeable. cf. Lk 18,9-14
- e. I am ready, O my God,

to accept all the sufferings it will please Thee to make
me endure

to satisfy for my sins.

Do not abandon me, then, I beg of Thee,
and depart not from me.

Ps 38,22

Turn away Thine eyes only from my sins,
and give me the grace to be purified of them
all. For this purpose, create in me a pure
heart,

(and renew within me Thy Holy Spirit.

Ps 51,1-2

f. I hope for this grace from Thee, O my God,
because Thou wilt not despise
the prayer of those who humble themselves,
since this prayer is most agreeable to
Thee.

Ps 51,19

**(This act of contrition is largely made up of extracts
from the seven penitential psalms.)**

160 After having made an act of contrition,
if it has been done with a sincere heart,
deeply penetrated with horror for sin,
we may feel confident
that God will no longer consider our transgressions.
Thus we will be able to appear in His presence
as freed from our sins,
or at least as covered
by the veil of His divine mercy
and of His good will towards us.

cf. Ps 85,3;78,38

CHAPTER 6

THE THREE ACTS RELATING TO OUR LORD

161 However, since
we cannot be certain
of having made a perfect and complete act of contrition,
it is important,
after striving to do so,
to make three other acts that refer to Our Lord;
these are the three final acts of the first part of
mental prayer.

162 These three acts which refer to Our Lord are:
1. an act of application of the merits of Our Lord;
2. an act of union with Our Lord;
3. and an act of invocation of the Spirit of Our Lord.

#1 THE ACT OF APPLICATION

- 163** First, we make an act of application of the merits of Our Lord; for
 since we cannot be certain that our act of contrition
 fulfilled all the required conditions,
we take the precaution of drawing down on ourselves
 the merits of Our Lord's Passion
 and the graces which He merited for us by His death,
and by covering our sins as with a veil,
 which will hide them from God's eyes, cf. Ps 85,3;78,38
will be in a better condition to appear before Him in mental prayer,
 in a manner which will be agreeable to Him. cf. Lk 18,9-14
- 164** This act of application of Our Lord's merits is made
by begging Him to apply to us the merits of His passion,
so as to make us
 more agreeable to God His Father,
 and better disposed to receive the graces and lights in
 mental prayer,
 for there is nothing we should fail to do
 so that God may let Himself be moved by our
 prayers,
 and may, in His goodness,
 grant us all that we ask of Him. cf. He 4,14-16
Jn 15,16;16,24-27
- 165** We may make this act of application of Our Lord's merits in
this fashion:
- a. It is true, O my god, that when I am in Thy presence
 my heart should be so filled with horror for sin
 that being entirely purified,
I may be found worthy to converse with Thee.
- b. But my heart is so strongly inclined to sin
 that I cannot know completely,
 and much less be certain,
whether the sorrow and pain I feel for my sins is genuine,
and whether I am ready to carry out what I have resolved.
- c. This is why I insistently beg Jesus Christ our Lord,
 to have the goodness to apply to me the merits
 which He graciously obtained for me

by His passion and death;
for these are in themselves most efficacious and
most sovereign,
So that, once covered by them,
nothing of sin will appear in me
and by this means I shall be to Thee
more agreeable
and better disposed to receive Thy graces and lights
in mental prayer,
for there is nothing I should fail to do in order
to receive the fullness of Thy blessings
and to obtain the effect of my prayers.
So, too, there is nothing which will make me more
capable of this
than being clothed in Thy merits;
for they give such purity and innocence to a soul
that in a moment it becomes by them
in Thy sight
entirely different from what it was before.

cf. Ps 85,3;78,38

Ep 1,1-3

d. This is the grace, O my Jesus, which I beg of Thee.”

#2 ACT OF UNION WITH OUR LORD

166 It is true that
if this act of application of Our Lord’s merits
is properly made
it can render us agreeable to God,
give Him a motive for willingly keeping us in His holy presence,
and help us obtain the object of our prayers.

167 Yet, even though by this act our sins are hidden from God’s
sight,
and because of the efficacy of the merits of Our Lord
which are applied to us,
God no longer remembers our sinfulness,
however,
there remains for us the obligation of making satisfaction
for them,
for the merits of the passion and death of our Lord
are applied to us
to bring about in us the destruction of sin,
but only on condition
that we fully and entirely satisfy
the punishment due to them.

cf. Ps 85,3;78,38

cf. Is 43,25;

Jr 31,34

This is why
it is only right that we should not be content

with making an act of application of Our Lord's merits;
but we must also make
an act of union with Our Lord,
uniting ourselves to His interior dispositions
when He made mental prayer,

begging Him

to come and make mental prayer in us,
and to present our needs to His Father,

considering us as belonging to Him

and as His very members

which have and can have

no interior life, movement or activity

but in Him,

for these things exist in those who belong to Him
only in so far as He gives life to them.

cf. He 4,14-18

cf. He 5,1-10

1 Co 12,27

Ac 17,27

168 And they must be convinced that if Our Lord deigns in His
goodness

to unite Himself to them in mental prayer

and to make mental prayer in them,

their mental prayer will be most agreeable to the

Eternal Father

(and will draw down on them a great many

graces.

cf. He 10,1-18

169 This is how we may make this act of union with Our Lord.

a. I unite myself, O my dear Jesus,
to Thy interior dispositions when Thou didst make mental
prayer.

It was then truly

when Thou wast in Thy Father

and Thy Father in Thee.

Jn 14,11

It was then

that Thou didst think what He thought

that thou didst love what He loved;

and that Thou didst adore His divine

will

in Thy regard

cf. Jn 8,29

cf. Jn 8,55

because all Thou didst desire cf. Jn 14,31

was that His holy will might be fulfilled

in Thee.

cf. Jn 5,30

b. Accomplish in me also what thou wishest
me to do.

cf. Ac 22,10

c. Do Thou present my mental prayer

and make all my needs known
to Thy eternal Father.

cf. He 4,14-18
He 5,1-10

d. May I not think of Him but save by Thee,
and may I not love Him but in Thee,
so that I may obtain, in Thee and through Thee,
what I of myself
(could never acquire,)
and that nothing will be refused me
that Thou will have the goodness
to ask for on my behalf,
for I know that, as Thou Thyself has said,
Thou art always heard by the eternal
Father.

Jn 11,41-42

May I not think of Him but by Thee;
and may I not love Him but in Thee!

e. Take possession of me, I beg Thee,
as one belonging to Thee;
and fill me with Thy life as being one of Thy
members.

1 Co 12,27

f. May I abide in Thee,
and do Thou abide in me,
for I can do no good
except in so far as I am in Thee
and Thou are in me,
for
Thou art the author of all good.

Jn 15,4-5

cf. 1 Co 8,6;2 Co 1,3

g. Finally, may my interior life
be maintained and preserved
by the life which Thou livest in me,
for
just as a branch can have no sap in it
unless it remains attached to the
vine,
so too, O my loving Jesus,
my soul can have no life,
movement or interior activity
except in so far as it remains united with
Thee,
and as I remain wholly one
with Thee and in Thee.

Jn 15,4

Ac 17,28

Jn 15,4

#3 ACT OF INVOCATION OF THE SPIRIT OF OUR LORD

170 It is not enough in mental prayer
to have drawn Our Lord to us
and to have united ourselves with Him and with His holy
dispositions to make mental prayer and to have begged Him to
make mental prayer in us.

It can happen
that we might not remain in this disposition for very long
because of the distractions
that might fill our minds during mental prayer,
or because of the natural thoughts and human considerations
we might not draw much benefit from it.
So, it would seem to be appropriate for us
to implore Our Lord to give us His Spirit,
so that we may make mental prayer solely under His
guidance,
and in order to be filled by His divine Spirit
we need to abandon
our own mind and our own thoughts,
and to entertain within ourselves during mental prayer
only those which the Holy Spirit may be pleased
to inspire us with and to give us during this time.

Thus, may be fulfilled in us,
what Saint Paul says
that it is the Spirit of God that prays
in us, Ga 4,6
for we cannot conceive even a single good thought,
as coming from ourselves. 2 Co 3,5; cf. 1 Co 12,3

171 This is how we may make this act
which is called an act of invocation of the Spirit of Our Lord.

a. My Savior Jesus,
Thou didst pour forth Thy divine Spirit on the holy
Apostles
(while they prayed in the
Cenacle) cf. Ac 1,14;2,1-2
where they had received Thy sacred Body
from Thy blessed hands.

b. I pray Thee, give me the grace
to receive today that same Holy Spirit,
so that I may make mental prayer only under His
guidance,

so that by possessing Him fully
Thou wilt remove from my mind all my own thoughts,
and thus I shall be occupied throughout my mental prayer only with those
which Thy divine Spirit shall be pleased
to inspire me with
and to impart to me.
For, as Saint Paul says,
No one can say 'Amen' in a manner worthy of God
except in the Holy Spirit. 1 Co 12,3

c. This same Holy Spirit
will make my prayer rise up unto Thee
like sweet smelling incense, Ps 141,2
He too will preserve in me the spirit of mental prayer
and keep alive the fire
which He will have enkindled within me
during this time, cf. Lk 12,49
to express myself with Thine own words.

d. So I say with the Church:
Come, O Holy Spirit,
and send down upon us
from heaven
a ray of Thy holy light.

172 All the acts given as models
in this first part of mental prayer
have been offered merely to help
those who are beginning to make mental prayer,
and who cannot as yet produce their own acts.

173 Such persons should select those which they think proper,
or which they find useful for themselves.
If they cannot make use of these,
they should make
other acts based on the ones offered here as models,
according as their minds and hearts may suggest.

174 It is not intended
that they simply get into the habit of using
the acts given here,
otherwise their prayer would
not truly be prayed from the heart,
but would degenerate into vocal prayer,
which would not have the same value for them
as it would if produced in them
by the Holy Spirit

(who inspires them to make mental prayer)
from the depths of their hearts.

- 175 The same can be said of all the other acts
which are offered as models
in the Explanation of the two other parts of mental prayer.

EXPLANATION OF THE SECOND PART OF THE METHOD OF MENTAL PRAYER WHEN CONSIDERING A MYSTERY

- 176 In the second part of mental prayer,
we may take one of the mysteries of our holy religion,
as a subject of our meditation,
especially the mysteries of Our Lord.

CHAPTER 7

WHAT IS MEANT BY A “MYSTERY” AND BY THE “SPIRIT” OF A MYSTERY.

- 177 By the “mysteries” of Our Lord life we mean
the principal actions that the Son of God made man
performed and accomplished for our salvation
such as His Incarnation, Nativity, Circumcision,
Passion and Death.

We may also meditate on the mysteries of the Most Blessed
Virgin,
such as her Immaculate Conception, her Nativity, etc.

- 178 We begin by filling ourselves with the spirit of the mystery.
This can be done
either by considering what is said of it in the Gospel,
or what the Church teaches on the subject,
either by a simple view of faith,
that is, by a simple attention to the mystery
which we believe because faith teaches it to us,
or by making some reflections
on the mystery or on what the meditation says
about it.
These reflections should stir up
our devotion to this mystery
and help us to maintain ourselves in an attitude
of interior respect,
as we consider it.

- 179 We should join to this reverential attitude before the

mystery an interior desire of profiting by it
and of receiving the spirit, the grace and the benefits
that Our Lord Himself wishes us (to draw from it.)

180 For He performed these divine mysteries of our holy religion
not only to redeem us,
but also to instruct us
and to lead us by His example
to the practice
of the most solid and sanctifying virtues,
such as He Himself practiced
in the sacred mysteries that He accomplished;
this is what is called the spirit of these mysteries.

181 Each one of them has a spirit proper and special to itself,
because Our Lord therein practiced certain virtues
which are especially evident,
and which we observe in a special way with admiration
and astonishment
when we pay serious and deep attention,
Our Lord practiced these virtues
to give us an example,
and to lead us to practice them in imitation of Him,
with the help of the grace
which He merited for us,
and which is attached to the mystery
as being part of the spirit and of the act itself.

182 The spirit of the mystery of the Incarnation is charity,
since it was by charity and out of love for men
(as Our Lord Himself says),
that the eternal Father gave them His
only Son, Jn 3,16
that the Son Himself became man,
and that the Holy Spirit accomplished this
mystery. cf. Mt 1,20; C 1,35
it is also humility,
since as St. Paul says,
The Son of God annihilated Himself,
taking the form of a slave... Ph 2,7

183 The spirit of the mystery of Our Lord's Nativity
is the spirit of childhood;
when the Son of God came into this world, Jn 1,11
as we read in Saint John's Gospel, Ch. 1,
he gave to all those who received Him
the power to become children of God. Jn 1,12

- This spirit of childhood consists
in simplicity, docility, purity,
and disdain for the worldly riches and
grandeur. cf. Ep 6,5; 4,2; Col 3,23;3,12
cf. Lc 6,24-26
- 184** The spirit of the mystery of the Circumcision
is humility and mortification,
for Our Lord designed to take upon Himself
in allowing Himself to be circumcised. cf. Jn 1,29
the mark of a sinner,
and shed His blood in suffering and pain. cf. He 9,11-15
- 185** The spirit of the mystery of the Transfiguration
is the spirit of prayer and mental
prayer, cf. Lk 9,28-29
and thus with the others.
- 186** We may make nine acts in the second part of mental prayer,
all referring to the mystery which we are considering.
- 187** The first three refer to Our Lord;
the next three to ourselves;
and the last three refer:
first, to Our Lord,
second, to God,
and third, to the saints.
- Thus each of these three final acts has a particular
object:
the first has for its object Our Lord,
the second, God the Father,
and the third to the saints to whom we have a
special devotion.

CHAPTER 8

THE THREE ACTS WHICH REFER TO OUR LORD

- 188** The three acts that refer to Our Lord are:
1. an act of faith;
2. an act of adoration;
3. and an act of thanksgiving.

#1 ACT OF FAITH ON A MYSTERY

- 189** We may make an act of faith on the mystery we have chosen as
the subject of our mental prayer,

for instance, the Nativity of Our Lord,
by believing firmly that He truly accomplished this mystery,
that is, that once He had become incarnate
He was born as a little child,
from the womb of the most blessed Virgin.

190 To convince ourselves more firmly of this truth
we may call to mind a passage of Holy Scripture
which teaches it to us, or which refers to it,
such as the words which the Angel said to the
shepherds:

In Saint Luke, Ch 2:

Today in the town of David
a Savior has been born to you,
who is Christ the Lord.

Lk 2,11

or again these words of Saint Matthew, Ch. 1

quoting the prophet Isaiah:

Behold, a virgin shall conceive,
and shall bring forth a son;
and he shall be called Immanuel,
that is, God with us.

Mt 1,23

cf. Is 7,14; 8,8-10

191 This is how we may make this act:

a. My Lord Jesus Christ, I firmly believe
that Thou,

cf. Jn 1,14;1,18

who art the only Son

1 Jn 4,9

of God the almighty Father,

who art one eternal God with Him,

cf. He 1,3

didst deign to become man

cf. He 2,14

clothing Thyself in our flesh

by taking up a body and a soul

like ours,

through the operation of the Holy Spirit,

in the womb of the most pure

Virgin

cf. Lk 1,35; Mt 1,20

from which Thou wert born

under the form of a tiny

infant.

cf. Lk 2,6-17

although Thou didst not cease to be God.

b. This, I believe, O my Savior,
because faith teaches me this truth.

192 Manner of turning our thoughts on this act of faith:

a. Yes, my God,

I believe that Thou didst become a little child
out of love for me.
Thou wast born in a stable,
in darkest night.
in the depths of winter.
Thou didst lie
on straw and hay.

cf. Lk 2,7
cf. Ws 18,14-15

cf. Lk 2,7

Thy love for me reduced Thee
to this unheard-of poverty and wretchedness,
to such extreme destitution that nothing like it
had ever been heard of before.

I believe, O my Lord,
all these truths which faith teaches me
about Thy love for me.

b. Thou couldst have been born
admit the abundance of riches,
surrounded by the glory
and in splendor of the most magnificent palace ever built.

At Thy birth Thou couldst
have taken possession of all the kingdoms of this
earth, for they all belong to Thee.

cf. Lk 4,5-6

The earth and all it holds is the Lord's,
says the Royal Prophet,

Ps. 23, Ps 24,1

But Thou didst not choose to enjoy all these rights,
O my divine Savior.

c. Thine infinite wisdom judged
that it was much more advantageous for me to give me
in Thy adorable Person
the example

of the kind of life I must live,
and of the path I must follow
to attain true glory
and the enjoyment of the true good,
and of spiritual and heavenly riches,
by despising
the perishable goods of this earth,
and its false and fleeting honors.

d. Thou knowest well,
how strongly my inclinations
of pride, of selfishness,
and my avidity for sensual pleasure
(passionately dominate me.)

In Thy infinite love and goodness Thou didst resolve
to heal me at Thine own expense of this deadly
malady,
(and then merit for me the grace)
to follow Thee and to walk in Thy
footsteps.

cf. 1 Pt 2,21

e. This is what I am resolved to do, O my loving Savior,
whatever it may cost me,
whatever repugnances
my corrupt nature may experience,
whatever difficulties
my self-love may encounter.

f. Help me, I beg of Thee, O my God,
in my weakness
which is so strong (when I wish to act.)

g. Grant me the grace
which Thou has merited for me in this mystery,
of imitating Thee.

h. Increase, O Lord, I pray, my faith which is so
frail.

Mc 9,24

193 Another manner of dwelling on this act of faith.
By considering Our Lord becoming a child of man
(in order to make us children of God.)

a. I believe with all my heart, O my God,
the eternal Word,
the one true Son of God the Father,
that Thou didst become a child of man
so as to merit for me the grace
of becoming a child of God Thy Father.

cf. Jn 1,1-18;
1 Jn 4,9; Ga 4,4

b. It was the infinite greatness of Thy love
Lord,
which led Thee to this excess
of abasement and humiliation.

cf. Jn 3,16

cf. Ph 2,7

c. Thou came into Thine Own,
says the evangelist Saint John, Ch. 1,
that is, into this world which belongs to Thee
but Thine own received Thee not.

Jn 1,11

The Jews,
who were Thy special people and Thy servants,
did not acknowledge Thee.

They rejected Thee, and would not welcome Thee.

But to as many as received Thee Thou gave
the power of becoming children of God.

Jn 1,12

The Jews refused to acknowledge Thee
because of the poor and miserable condition
in which Thou didst choose to enter this
world.

cf. Lk 2,7

They were scandalized

by Thine exterior abjection;

they could not admit

that Thy wisdom

and Thy love for men

could lead Thee to share our wretched
state

cf. Jn 1,29

in order

to enrich us with the inestimable
treasure

of Thy grace in this world,
and Thy glory in the next.

cf. 1 Co 1,22-25

d. O excessive bounty of my God!

Thou didst abase Thyself in this world
to lift me up to heaven.

Thou didst become miserable on earth
to make me blessed in heaven.

e. O infinite charity of God's eternal Son.

Thou didst become my brother

when Thou didst make Thyself son of man,
so that

Thou didst not need to blush,
as the Apostle says in the Epistle to the
Hebrews, Ch. 2

when calling us brothers,

saying to Thy Father:

I will declare Thy name to my brethren;
in the midst of the church I will praise Thee.

Here am I with the children Thou has given me.

These children, adds Saint Paul,
are born of flesh and blood.

He too needed to be born in the same way.

He made Himself in all things,

like unto His brothers,

so that as a merciful Pontiff, faithful to God,

He might expiate the sins of His people;
and having been put to the test,
might help those who are also tempted.

He 2,11-18

f. What a great happiness is this, what prodigious joy!
what lofty nobility I enjoy,
surpassing any the world can offer!
I can really be for all eternity
the son of God and the brother of God!
What a dignity, what a privilege, what a blessing!
My soul, canst thou grasp it?

g. It is Thou, O most beneficent, unique and eternal Son
of God

to whom I owe everything.

It is to Thy love, O my Lord and my God,

cf. Jn 20,28

to whom I am indebted

for this incomparable favor.

When Thou didst become the child of the most pure
Virgin

(Thou didst win for me the power)

of enjoying the grace of adoption of the sons
of God,

Rm 8,14-15

(according to an expression of St. Paul)

h. Grant O my loving Jesus,
that I may make myself worthy as much as I can,
of this grace
which cost Thee so dearly to merit it for me.

O Lord, may I live

in such a manner that there may be at least some resemblance
between my life and Thine,
through my imitation of Thy sacred virtues.

i. This is the grace I beg of Thee,
as the spirit of the mystery
of Thy adorable birth and childhood.
I implore you, Lord, to grant me this,
through the merits of this your birth.

How We May Address the Most Blessed Virgin While Making Mental Prayer on this Same Mystery

194 We may also address ourselves to the most blessed Virgin while considering this mystery, somewhat in this manner:

a. O most blessed Virgin, I firmly believe
that Jesus Our Lord,
the only Son of God the Father,
was conceived in thy womb
by the power of the Holy Spirit. cf. Lk 1,35; Mt 1,20
I believe this because faith teaches me so.

b. It was in thee, O most fortunate Virgin,
that the prophecy of Isaiah was accomplished: cf. Mt 1, 22-23
A virgin shall be with child, and shall bring
forth a son
and they call His name Emmanuel,
that is, God with us. Is 7,4
Thou wast a virgin
when thou didst conceive this divine Infant.
Thou wast a virgin
when thou didst bring Him forth,
and Thou didst remain a virgin
after giving birth to Him
Thou are the purest of virgins
and the most glorious of mothers.

For this reason
thou wilt be called blessed
by all generations to come. Lc 1,48

c. I believe all these truths taught me by faith,
and because God has revealed them.
I greatly rejoice in them, O most blessed Virgin;
I praise thee with all my heart.

d. I very humbly beg thee,
O most holy mother of God,
in thy goodness to intercede for me with thy divine
Child,
that I may be allowed to share
in the spirit and the graces proper to the mystery
of His birth
and most holy childhood.

e. It was through thee, O incomparable Virgin,
that this God of love and mercy
came down to save us.
It was in thee
that He became a child of
man, cf. Ga 4,4; Jn 1,1-18;
just as He is truly 1 Jn 4,9; He 1,3

from all eternity the Son of God.

It was in thee
that He merited for us the grace
of becoming the adopted children of God His
Father.

Rm 8,15;
Ga 4,6; Jn 1,12

We hope to enjoy
through thy intercession,
with your very dear Son
the effects of this grace and the spirit of children of
God.

f. We beg thee to obtain this for us,
through the love by which thou dost love this God of
love
as thy true son,
and through the love by which He loves thee
as His true mother.

Benefits Which May Be Derived From These Considerations

195 The first benefit we can derive
from the consideration of the birth of Our Lord
is a great horror and aversion for sin of any kind,
because the Son of God abased and humbled Himself,
as Saint Paul says in Philippiens, Ch. 2, v. 7:
He annihilated Himself by taking the form of a
slave
when he became a child, in order to destroy sin by
His sufferings,

Ph 2,7
cf He 2,17-18

196 The second,
is great confidence that we shall obtain from God
the pardon of our sins
(provided we truly repent of them
and are resolved not to commit any more voluntarily);
and all the other graces which we may ask for
through the merits of the Son of God become child.

197 The third is
a great love for Our Lord
and a tender devotion towards Him,
considered as our Infant God,
born for love of us.

198 The fourth is
a great contempt for the riches and honors of the world,

since we behold the Son of God born
poor and humble in this world.

199 The fifth,
finally, is a great desire to imitate Him in all the virtues
of which He gives example to us from His birth.

200 How To Address Our Lord by Considering Him Born into This World to Destroy Sin

a. O my Lord and God, how could I dare
commit sin again, knowing
as Saint John says in this First Epistle, Ch. 3
that you came
to take away our sins.
and to destroy the works of the devil
which are our sins.

1 Jn 3,5-8

What, Lord!
Shall I restore in myself
what Thou didst come to destroy
with so much suffering and pain?

b. My sins, O Lord,
reduced Thee to this state
of infancy, in poverty and humiliation.

My sins
made Thee shed so many tears
from the moment of Thy birth.

It was my pride
and my love of luxury and vanity
that humbled Thee
to the point of being born in a stable,
lying in a manger
on a bed of straw between two lowly animals.

Lk 2,7

c. It was to shame and destroy
my stupidity and my insatiable lusting
after pleasures and wealth,
my ill-regulated love
of comfort and pleasures,
that Thou didst endure such harsh poverty.
And now realizing all these truths,
would I dare to commit sin again?
O Lord,
do not permit me to be so heartless
as to still love sin
since it cost Thee so much to destroy it.

d. Thou who art
my Creator
my Father
my King
my God

O! I would rather die
than continue in my evil ways
or return
to those from which thou hast delivered me.

e. Almighty Savior, my loving Jesus,
by the grace and power
of Thy adorable nativity,
destroy and annihilate in me
all sin
and all inclination to sin;
and mercifully pardon me
all those
which I have had the misfortune to commit.

cf 1 Jn 3,5-8

201 Confidence

We may also converse with God in relation to the second effect,

namely, confidence,
in a manner, somewhat as follows:

a. I should feel great confidence, my loving Savior,
that Thy heavenly Father will pardon my sins
for love of Thee
and by Thy merits.

I have that confidence
that for Thy sake
and in view of Thy infinite merits,
He will grant me all the graces I need
to avoid sin,
to correct my defects,
to acquire the virtues He desires to see in me,
and in the end to grant me eternal life.

cf. He 4,16

b. Thy apostle encourages me to have this confidence
when he says, in romans, Ch. 8:
is it possible
that God who has given us His only Son,
has not granted us all things with Him?
Yes, my divine Savior,

Rm 8,32

I hope for everything from the infinite bounty of Thy
Father,
even though I am guilty of many sins
by which I have deserved hell.

c. Thou art the precious pledge
of the love He has for me,
of His willingness
to pardon me
and to save me.

cf. Rm 5,8; Jn 3,16; Ep 5,2

He assures us in Holy Scripture
that He does not will the death of the sinner,
but rather that he should be converted,
live and reach salvation.

Ez 18,32;33,11

Thou art, O my loving Jesus, infant God,
a convincing proof of this truth.

d. And so I place all my confidence
in the mercy of Thy heavenly Father,
in thy love
and in thy merits.

cf. Ep 3,11-12

202 Love for the infant Jesus

a. How could I fail to love Thee,
O eternal Word?
Since it was Thy infinite love for me
which led Thee to take on human
flesh,
as St. John says in the Gospel.

cf. Jn 3,16; Jn 1,14

Thou hadst every reason
to hate me eternally
and to punish me
according to the strict rigor of Thy justice.
because of the enormity of my sins;

cf. Ps 103,10

and yet
Thou gavest me proofs of infinite love!

b. What! Thou didst make Thyself an infant,
a poor, humble infant,
and the most lovable of all infants.
What love dost Thou not show me,
and how little have I loved thee up to now.
What striking proofs
Thou dost give me of Thy love,
and how poorly have I responded to them!

c. Pardon me, my God,
and grant me I beg Thee, Thy holy grace,
for with its help I am resolved to love Thee
with all my heart,
with all my soul,
and with all my strength.

Le 10,27 citant Dt 6,5

d. O Jesus, infant God,
my loving Savior,
beloved son of Mary and of God,
I pledge Thee inviolable and everlasting love.
I offer Thee, I give Thee, I consecrate to Thee this
heart of mine.
Fill it with Thy divine love.

cf. Rm 5,5

e. O God of love,
let me love Thee with all the love
that Thou Thyself desirest
that I should love thee.
Lord, may I live
and may I die
in Thy love
and for Thy love.
For let us therefore love Him
(exclaims your beloved disciple)
because He has first loved us.
(first Epistle, Ch. 4)

1 Jn 4,19

f. O how right, it is to love
the One who has loved us so much,
who is so loving,
who is so worthy of love.
O Jesus, my love! I wish to die of love for Thee.

cf. Jn 3,16; Jn 4,19

203 In the same way we can spend time considering the other benefits that can be derived from this mystery.

SHORT BUT PROLONGED REFLECTIONS

204 The above-mentioned ways
of dwelling on a mystery
by discourse and multiplied reflections
may be useful.
It is not less advantageous
to have recourse
to shorter reflections, continued for a long time,

on a passage of Holy Scripture
which refers to the mystery which we wish to consider.

- 205** For instance,
as regards the mystery of the birth of Our Lord,
we may recall to mind
this passage from Isaiah, Ch. 9:
For a child is born to us,
and a son is given to us.

Is 9,5

Then we reflect
without much inner discourse
on this passage;
this serves to maintain our attention fixed
on the passage,
and on the mystery,
in an interior manner,
based on faith.

- 206** We might, for instance, make the following reflection:
How great must be god's goodness and love for us,
since He gave us His own beloved son!

Then we strive to remain attentive
not only to the passage but to this reflection also,
for as long a time as we can,
and in the most lively
and simplest manner
possible for us.

- 207** This short reflection, based on faith,
and inspired by a passage from Holy Scripture,
gives the soul a certain facility
in applying itself to the mystery in an interior
manner,
(in imbuing itself with it,
so that it imprints itself in the mind and heart,
which are thus filled with it
and marked by it.

They will then share in the spirit and the grace particular
to the mystery
(and by this means)

they will gently and sweetly be disposed and inclined
toward practicing and virtues illustrated in the
mystery.

For this is the end we should always keep in view;
which is what Our Lord Himself had in mind
when accomplishing His mysteries.

208 When we perceive that the mind no longer finds it easy
to pay attention to the passage by means of this first
reflection,
(we should try another)
which is also connected with the passage,
and which can renew the mind's attention to it.

209 We might try this other reflection:
Since God loved me enough
to become a child
for love of me,
is it not right that I should make myself a captive,
and humble myself
like a child,
for love of Him?

This new reflection once again revives our attention
to the passage and to the mystery,
and as a result the mind and heart will turn thereto
with renewed affection and fervor.

CONSIDERATION BY SIMPLE ATTENTION

210 We can, finally, consider a mystery
by simple attention,
also called contemplation.
This consists in keeping ourselves in attitude of deep
interior respect
(while considering the mystery)
by a simple, interior view of lively and respectful faith,
which leads the mind and heart to a sentiment of silent
adoration,
of love,
of admiration,
of gratitude and thanksgiving,
of self-abasement,
and of a desire of the heart
to unite ourselves with Our Lord in this
mystery
(and to share in His spirit and His graces.)

We should remain in this attitude for a more or less lengthy period,
(according as we may feel ourselves drawn and absorbed by it.)
We should not interrupt this process by making distinct acts
on these different interior dispositions.

It is not necessary to differentiate them one from the other,
since we can conceive them

with a simple and implicit movement of the heart,
that is,
without explaining them
or distinguishing them
or actually separating them
into formal acts,
provided that this disposition remains
lively and ardent;
it can be maintained
by a few affectionate words
pronounced from time to time,
more or less frequently
as the need is felt;
and it should always lead to the practice of virtue,
as mentioned previously.

211 What is said in the explanation of the First Part of mental prayer
about the three manners of keeping oneself
in the presence of God.
This can easily be applied
to a mystery.

212 These three different means of engaging in mental prayer
on a mystery,
as in considering the holy presence of God,
can be related to the three stages of the spiritual life:
using set discourses and multiplied reasonings
befits that of beginners,
rare and prolonged reflections
befits the proficient,
while simple attention
befits the advanced.

#2 ACT OF ADORATION

213 After making an act of faith on the mystery
and spending some time dwelling on it
in one of the manners
just proposed
it is proper to make an act of adoration,
to do homage to Our Lord in His accomplishment of the mystery
on which we are making mental prayer
and to remain before Him with attention to His presence
in profound respect.

214 We may do this as follows,

considering Our Lord as a new born infant
and exposed in the crib.

a. Humbly prostrate
before Thy crib,

O most holy and adorable Child Jesus,
I offer Thee my deepest expression of respect,
and recognize Thee for the God of majesty
dwelling in heaven
in light inaccessible
as St. Paul says.

1 Tm 6,16

b. Thou art, O my Lord,
the eternal Word begotten by the eternal Father.
Through Thee were all things made;
by Thee they subsist
and are ruled,
O Wisdom of the Father.

Jn 1,3

cf. Col 1,16-17

Thou hast become a child of man
out of love and for the salvation of men
Heaven and earth are filled
with Thy majesty and glory;
yet behold! here Thou art, lodged in a stable
and lying in a manger.

cf. Is 6,3; Nb 14,21

Lk 2,7

c. O great God!

O tiny babe!
I adore Thee with all my heart.
I adore Thine infinite greatness,
contained in the small body of this infant,
yet not ceasing
to fill and to encompass the entire
universe

cf. Wis 1,7

d. God commanded His angels
(says St. Paul)

to adore thee and thy coming
on earth.
They do so,
proclaiming glory to God most high
and announcing to us the peace
which Thou has come to bring to earth
for all men of good will.

He 1,6

Lk 2,13-14

I unite myself to these celestial spirits
to pay Thee, O my God, my Savior,

all the homage due to Thee.

- e. I abase myself before Thee,
O Lord of angels and men,
and wish to render Thee homage
with all powers of my soul.
I annihilate myself at Thy feet
in adoration of Thine own annihilation,
and wish to honor it by mine,
as far as this is possible.

215 Another way of adoring Our Lord as a child in the arms of His Mother.

- a. O great, eternal God!
In heaven Thou art seated upon the
Cherubim, Dn 3,55; 1 S 4,4; Ex 25,18
as Holy Scripture tells us;
Thou art begotten by the Father in the splendor of
the Saints. Ps 80,2;99,1
Yet out of love for us Thou didst deign
to abase Thine infinite majesty
to the point of becoming a tiny infant,
like unto us,
and of being born of a virgin.
- b. I adore Thee in the arms of Thy most holy mother,
as on the throne
most worthy of Thy majesty
after the bosom of Thy heavenly Father Himself.
I prostrate myself at the foot of this throne of grace,
to offer to Thy supreme majesty cf. He 4,16
all the honor in my power.
I acknowledge Thee as my God,
my Redeemer and Savior, cf. He 2,17
who hast come
to ransom me and deliver me from my
sins. cf. Lk 1,68-69
- c. Thou art the Lord, the true Christ, Son of
the living God, Mt 16,16; cf. Mc 8,2-9
the Messiah sent by God Thy Father, Lk 9,20
promised by the prophets, Lk 1,70
and so long desired
as the one Savior of the world. cf. Jn 4,42
I adore Thee, O Jesus,
Son of God, Son of David,
and Son of the immaculate Virgin, Mt 1,1-18

- d. Thou are my Lord and my God.
 I submit myself totally and irrevocably to Thee
 as to my eternal King
 on whom I depend,
 and desire to depend forever.
 I swear to Thee, O my sovereign Lord,
 eternal fidelity, obedience and love.
- e. Help me, O my adorable Savior,
 by that all-powerful grace
 which Thou didst come to bring and merit for us
 by Thy holy birth,
 so that I may persevere unswervingly
 unto death
 in the fidelity
 I owe Thee
 and which I now promise Thee.
- f. I ask this, O my loving Jesus,
 through the intercession of Thy most holy mother,”

216 An act to honor the most blessed Virgin as mother of God

- a. Most glorious Virgin Mary, mother of my God,
 It was on that happy day
 when thou didst give birth in all purity
 to the infant God,
 that thou didst also become most specially
 the mother of men
 and the Queen
 of all creatures in heaven and on earth.
- b. I prostrate myself with all my soul at thy feet
 to render thee under these titles
 all the reverence which can be given thee.
 Thou art the mother of my Creator, and my own mother;
 thou art my Queen and sovereign Lady.
 I honor and reverence thee, and I love thee,
 after God and thy divine son,
 above all things.
 I submit myself to thy gracious power,
 in time and in eternity.
 O my loving mother,
 who would not be subjected to thee
 since God Himself
 willingly became obedient to thee
 as thy child?

Oh, with all my heart I too subject myself to thee.

- c. I beg thee, most holy mother of God,
to obtain for me from thy beloved Son
the grace to live and die
in submission to Him and to thee.

#3 ACT OF THANKSGIVING

- 217 After adoring Our Lord in this mystery
and paying Him the first duty we owe Him, namely
adoration,
we make an act of thanksgiving
to manifest our due gratitude to Our Lord
and to thank Him for His goodness in performing this mystery
and for all that His excessive charity caused Him to do
and suffer
to bring about our sanctification.

- 218 This we can do somewhat after this fashion:

- a. How right it is, O my God,
that since Thou in Thy great goodness to me
didst deign to become a man
and to be born in the form of an infant
in order to sacrifice Thyself
by offering Thyself to the justice of God thy
Father
as a living, pure, holy
and agreeable victim to God
for the expiation of my sins and for my
sanctification.

cf. He 9,14
cf. He 2,17;

He 10,11-14;13,12

It is indeed right, as I was saying,
that I should profess my entire gratitude to Thee
and offer Thee my very humble thanks.
I thank Thee with all my heart, O God,
for Thy great goodness;
I offer Thee a thousand tokens of gratitude
for such a great blessing.

- b. By sinning I had made myself
the child and slave of the devil,
an object of hatred in the sight of Thy Father,
worthy of eternal death.

cf. Rm 6,16-19

cf. Rm 5,12

But Thou wast touched with compassion
at the sight of my miseries and my
distress.

cf. Ex 3,7-8; Os 11,8-9;

Thou didst come down to earth to deliver me.
Oh! infinite charity of my God!
Oh! incomprehensible goodness!

Jr 31,20; Is 54,8; Ml 1,41

**What shall I render to Thee for so great
a blessing?**

Ps 116,12

c. I should like to offer Thee infinite thanks,
but since I cannot do so
I beg Thee, O my loving Savior,
to make up for my powerlessness,
accepting my good will,
and the offering I make to you
of all the acts of thanksgiving
offered Thee by Thy most holy Mother,
all the blessed angels and saints,
as also
all my thoughts, words and actions,
I beg Thee to bless them and make them agreeable in Thy
sight,
by uniting them to Thy own.

cf. Rm 12,1; He 13,21

d. In all this I seek nothing
but to please Thee alone, O my God.

e. I also offer Thee my will,
wishing to make use of it
only in submission to Thy will and in dependence
upon it.

f. Such is the grace I beg of Thee, O my God,
through the merits of Thy holy birth.

CHAPTER 7

THE THREE ACTS WHICH REFER TO OURSELVES.

219 After we have made the first three acts
which refer to Our Lord,
we make the next three,
which pertain to ourselves:
an act of remorse,
an act of contrition,
and an act of application.

#1 AN ACT OF REMORSE

220 We make an act of remorse
by acknowledging before God how ashamed we are
for not having sufficiently exercised ourselves up to
the present
in acquiring the spirit of the mystery;
which is to conduct ourselves
with the simplicity, docility, and submission
that becomes a child of God,
and to despise
riches, pleasure, and worldly honors,
preferring to them
poverty, suffering, contempt,
in imitation of Our Lord in His birth.

cf. Ep 6,5;
Col 3,22; 3,12;
Mt 18,3

cf. Lk 6,20-26

It would be very appropriate
to think of the principal occasions in which we have failed
in this regard
so as to experience deeper remorse.

221 We may do this in the following manner:

a. What shame and remorse should be mine,
O my Lord and my God,
when in Thy holy presence I consider and recognize
that up until now
I have not or have hardly striven
to acquire the spirit of the mystery
of Thy holy birth and childhood.
Alas! my Lord!
I have not yet seriously fixed
the eyes of my mind and of my faith
on this mystery which Thou hast brought about
as much for my instruction
as for my sanctification.

cf. Jn 20,28

b. What hast Thou done, O my God?
Thou hast humbled and annihilated Thyself, O
my Lord!

cf. Ph 2,6-8

How you overwhelmed my pride!
How you covered me with great remorse!
How rightly should I not address to myself
these reproaches of St. Bernard:
Blush for shame, O worm of the earth!
God humbles Himself,
and you want to raise yourself up!
God subjects Himself to men,
and you in your pride

cf. Lk 2,51

refuse to subject yourself to God!’

I behold Thee

poor, suffering the direst want,
enduring mortification and pain;

and I,

a miserable and unworthy sinner,
who by right should be in hell
suffering infinite torments,

cf. Ps 51,7

I am unwilling to suffer anything,
neither poverty nor pain.

O my God, how ashamed I am of myself in Thy sight!

c. To intensify it even more

I wish to recall to mind

at least some of the occasions
in which I failed
to practice these virtues

of which you give me
such admirable examples.

My God, I was wanting

in submission, docility, simplicity
on such and such occasions....

cf Eph 6,5:4,2

Col 3,12;3,22

cf Lk 6,24-26

I shrank from poverty.

I kept attachments

to this or to that.

I sought my comfort

on such and such an occasion.

What great remorse I have, O my God, over all this.

d. In Thy infinite goodness grant me the grace at least
to suffer this remorse as a means of expiating my
sins.

#2 ACT OF CONTRITION

222 When the act of remorse has been made with sincerity and thoroughness,
it disposes us to make a good act of contrition.
which is very appropriate at this point,
to beg God’s pardon for the faults we committed
against the spirit of the mystery.
For the future, we should resolve to be more faithful
in embracing this spirit and in conforming to it.

223 We may do this as follows:

- a. Not only, my Savior,
do I feel deep remorse when I see
that I have lived all my life
in dispositions and sentiments
so far removed from those
which Thou dost exemplify for me in this mystery,
but I also feel great sorrow for acting thus.
- b. O my God
I am deeply grieved and contrite
for my conduct which is not very Christian.
- c. I beg Thy pardon for this with profound humility,
through the merits
of Thy sacred nativity and Thy divine
childhood.
- d. Give me Thy help, O my loving Savior,
and thy Holy grace with which
I promise Thee to be in the future
more faithful in following the spirit of Thy mystery.

#3 ACT OF APPLICATION

224 After this act of contrition
it will be most profitable to make an act of application,
so that we may draw greater benefit from the mystery.
This we do by applying to ourselves the mystery
by considering before God the great need we have
of acquiring the spirit of the mystery,
with special attention to the occasions
in which we should do so.
For this purpose we should take appropriate and special
means
so as to conduct ourselves according to this spirit
when the opportunity for doing so arises.

225 We may do this somewhat after this fashion:

- a. I recognize in Thy holy presence,
O my divine Savior,
the great need I have
of acquiring the spirit of this mystery of Thy sacred birth,
by practicing and imitating

the admirable examples which Thou hast given me.
Oh! how worthy they are of being imitated.
How badly I need, O my God,
Thy simplicity, humility, gentleness,
docility, submission, and obedience.

cf Eph 6,5;4,2
Col 3,22;3,12; Lk 2,51

b. All these virtues shine forth in Thee, my Lord,
in a manner,
so amazing, so perfect and so admirable,
that all the angels remain in amazement and in wonder.
Indeed, what a wonderful sight
it is to see the great God, almighty and eternal,
who by His immensity fills heaven and
earth,
the Sovereign Lord of all things
before whose majesty
the Cherubim and the powers of heaven
tremble with veneration and awe,
reduced to the state of a tiny child;
He whom all creation must obey
has become Himself submissive and obedient to His own
creatures.
What a marvel!

cf Wis 1,7

cf Is, 6,1-6
cf Ph 2,6-8

Col 1,15-20

c. But, my God,
why hast Thou stooped to such singular depths?
Ah, I am able to understand by Thy grace,
O my loving savior,
it was to teach me by Thy example
to humble myself, to obey
with the simplicity, docility
and submission of a small
child
all those whom Thou has given me
to lead me.

cf Eph 6,5;42

Col 3,22;3,12; Mt 18,3

If Thou hadst merely wished
only to save me
Thou didst not need
to go to such lengths;
Thy incarnation itself would have been more than
enough.

But Thou didst wish to teach me by Thy conduct
how to humble and subject myself,
even as Thou Thyself hadst done.

d. I seem to hear
Thy heavenly Father telling me,

while pointing to Thy adorable person,
abased and annihilated under the form of an
infant:

cf Ph 2,6-8

Amen, I say to you,
unless you be converted
and become like this little Child,
you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Mt 18,3

O my God, I am convinced of this truth,
that if I wish

to share in Thy glory in heaven
I must make myself
like unto Thee on earth.

cf Rom 8,17

e. This is what I am resolved to do,
with the help of Thy grace.

Thou dost teach me

by Thy extreme poverty
and by Thy sufferings,

to prefer

poverty, the world's contempt,
and mortification

to riches, to honors
and to pleasures.

This I propose to do, after Thy example.

cf Lk 6,20-26

f. Help me, my God,

for without Thee I can do nothing.

Jn 15,5

226 It is while making this act of application that we form
resolutions
(although we can form them or renew them during any act
whatsoever);
this is what is meant
by taking appropriate and special means
to conduct ourselves according to the spirit of the
mystery.

227 These resolutions which we should take ought to have three
qualities:

1. They should be present,
so that they can be put into effect on the very
day they are made;
2. Particular,
that is, we must propose to ourselves some

definite acts
related to those virtues we have
observed in the mystery,
and foresee the occasions when
we shall strive to put them into
practice;

3. They should be efficacious,
that is, we must take care to carry them out
when we have the opportunity
without allowing any to slip away.

228 How to form such resources.

a. My God,
to profit
by the grace of Thy holy birth,
and to imitate
the holy examples Thou there gavest me,

b. I shall today
accuse myself of my faults
with all possible simplicity;
I shall obey those under whose authority I am,
in all things, blindly, without reflecting on anything
other than that I must obey
like our savior Child Jesus.
If I were commanded to do such or such a thing,
I fear I should then experience great distaste,
But, most holy infant God,
for Thy love
and to imitate Thee
I am resolved to obey.
I shall give an account of my conscience
without dissimulation;
I shall reveal all that goes on within me
with simplicity and candor,
as a small infant,
in Thy honor, O divine Infant.

cf Lk 2,51

c. Perhaps today
something shall be taken away from me or exchanged.
It seems that I would be disturbed
If I were deprived of certain things.
My God,
in honor of Thy poverty,
I resign myself to this;

and if it does happen to me
I shall bless Thee and rejoice over it.
It seems to me that I am attached to certain things,
well, then,
 for Thy love's sake, and in imitation of Thee
I shall make this known,
so that, if it is thought proper
they may be taken from me or exchanged.
 For I prefer
 to be poor and in want of everything
 with Thee, O my God,
 rather than rich
 without Thee.
I shall pray that I may be put to the test in all
these things,
 where I am sensitive
and I shall reveal which these are.

d. Help me, I beg Thee O my loving Savior,
by Thy grace
 to put these resolutions faithfully into practice.

e. To obtain this from Thy goodness I propose
to cultivate a special devotion
 to Thy divine Infancy,
and to recite the litanies
 with renewed attention.
I shall honor Thee in a special way
 on the 25th of each month.

f. To encourage myself to become more childlike, and to
imitate Thee,
I shall often think
that Thy heavenly Father is speaking to me and saying:
 Amen, I say to you,
 unless you are converted
 and become like this little Child,
 you shall not enter
 into the Kingdom of heaven.

Mt 18,3

CHAPTER 10

THE THREE FINAL ACTS OF THE SECOND PART

229 After making the three acts which concern ourselves

there are still three more to be made;
the first is an act of union with Our Lord;
the second is an act of petition of God;
and the third is an act of invocation to the Saints
for whom we have a particular devotion.

#1 ACT OF UNION WITH OUR LORD

230 We make an act of union with Our Lord
by uniting ourselves interiorly

with His spirit in this mystery,
and with the interior dispositions
He had in accomplishing it.

We should ask Him for a share
in this spirit
and in these dispositions,

and beg Him earnestly to give us the grace to acquire
the spirit of this mystery
and to practice the virtues in that mystery.

231 Our Lord became a child of man

Jn 3,5-7;1,12

to merit for us the grace to be regenerated
in spirit

1 Jn 3,1-3

and to become in Him children of God

Gal 4,5

through adoption and by the grace which
is in Jesus Christ

Jn 1,17

and which He came to bestow on man,
as St. John says.

It is, then, entirely appropriate to unite ourselves with
Jesus Christ in His birth

so as to receive and share His Spirit,

which gives us access to the Father

as His adopted children in His only Son;

Gal 4,5-6
cf Rom 8,14-17

and we should pray to Our Lord to unite us to His own dispositions.

232 This we can do by an act of union, made after this fashion:

a. I unite myself to Thee, divine Jesus, infant God,
with an ardent desire to share

in the spirit of Thy holy infancy,

in Thy dispositions

and in the grace which Thou has merited for me

in the mystery of Thy Holy birth.

b. I most humble beg Thee, loving child Jesus,
to draw me into Thy divine heart;
to impart to me Thy Holy Spirit
and to endow me with the disposition that Thou didst
have
in the stable at Bethlehem,
lying in the crib on hay and
straw
(or, in the arms of Thy holy mother).

cf Lk 2,8

c. I earnestly beg Thee
to impart to me the sentiments and affections
of humility, docility, submission, and obedience

cf Heb 1-.5-7;5,7-8

that Thou didst entertain towards Thy heavenly
Father,
those of Thy most holy mother, and those of Thy
foster father,
the great St. Joseph.

Ph 2,8

cf Lk 2,51

By Thy grace, Lord, may I share
in these sentiments and dispositions,
towards those
who have a right to my obedience.
May I even be prepared and disposed
to submit with simplicity
to all sorts of persons,
in imitation of Thee.

d. Grant me, I ask Thee, Lord,
that I share fully

in Thy holy sentiments
for poverty, mortification, and suffering.

May I love these and practice them with views of faith,
in union with Thy Spirit and Thine own dispositions,
and by the action and the effect
of Thy holy grace which is at work in me.

I promise to cooperate with it
as far as possible.

e. Be my strong Helper, I beg Thee, my good Savior,
since I am so weak.

May I become in Thee a new creature,
may I no longer live or act
like a sinful child of man,
but rather as a child of God,
through Thee regenerated and adopted by the

2 Co 5,17
cf Rom 6,11-14
Gal 2,20
Gal 4,5

eternal Father.

cf Rom 8,14-17

f. Impress Thine image on me, Lord, as a seal does in wax.

May I be in Thee and Thou in me,
in all truth and power.

cf. Jn 15,5

May I not live any longer in myself and of myself, but in
Thee and by Thee,
so that

it may be Thou who livest and actest in me.

Gal 2,20

g. Give me, Lord, Thy spirit of childhood

cf. Jn 3,34

which will enable me to cry out to God with
confidence

Rom 5,5

in union with Thee:

Abba! my Father!

Rom 8,15

#2 ACT OF PETITION

233 When this act of union with Our Lord in a mystery
is properly made in an interior manner,
and once we are interiorly and intimately united with
Him,

we are then well prepared
to present ourselves before God the Father with
filial confidence,
and to obtain from Him
the spirit of the mystery
and all the graces which Our Lord there merited
for us.

Eph 3,12

234 This is why
the next act refers to the eternal Father.
In it we humbly ask for the spirit of the mystery;
we beg God with confidence to grant it to us
through Our Lord, and in union with Him;
for it is in Him alone and by His Spirit

cf Eph 3,12; Lk 11,13

that we dare to make this request and hope to
be heard.

Jn 16,64-26;15,16

235 This can be done in the following manner:

a. Eternal Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
Thou didst show Thy goodness to men

cf Act 17,24
Mt 11,25

by sending them Thine only Son,
so that those who believe in Him and accept Him
may not perish,
but by becoming Thy adoptive children
in Jesus Christ Thy Son,
may have eternal life.

cf Rm 8,14,17
Gal 4,5

Jn 3,16

b. I most humbly beseech Thee
deign
to grant the spirit of this mystery of the birth
of Thy beloved Son
who for love of us
deigned to become an infant;
and for the love of Him I implore Thee to give me
the heart and mind of a child,
so that I may love Thee
as my true and only Father,
that I may fear and honor Thee,
that I may obey Thee
as a good child obeys its father.

c. To this end, give me, I beg Thee, O my God,
an abundant outpouring
of the spirit and the grace of Thy son.
Renew me in Him, O my God,
in His spirit and grace.

cf. Jn 3,5-7

Give me a spirit of submission and obedience
in Thy regard,
and in that of those who take Thy place on earth.

d. Grant I beg thee, that I may despise
the perishable riches of the earth
and the vain honors of the world,
and the fleeting pleasures of this life
for they bring with them eternal woe;
and since Thy son

cf Lk 6,24-26

who turned away from them all
has taught me to seek other benefits
more fitting with my dignity as a child of
God,

cf Jn 1,12

which He came to bestow upon me.
Following His example, O Lord, may I embrace
poverty,
contempt,
and suffering in this life
as a means to procure for me eternal

beatitude.

cf Lk 6,24-26

e. I earnestly beg Thee, O my Father and my God,
to grant me this
in union with Our Lord and through Our
Lord,

cf Eph 3,12; Lk 11,13;
Jn 16,24-26;15,16

in whom alone, and by whose spirit
I dare ask and hope to obtain
from Thy fatherly goodness,
For, it is impossible that,
says St. Paul,
having given us Thy Son,
who is thy truly Beloved,
Thou has not given us in Him and through
Him all that is good.

Rom 8,32

#3 ACT OF INVOCATION OF THE SAINTS

236 The last act of the second part
is an act of invocation of the saints to whom we have a
special devotion.

It is most advantageous to pray to the saints,
to ask them to help us by their intercession,
for, as a saint said,
God often grants to their prayers
what He refuses to ours
because of the imperfections so often found in the
latter.

237 It is true that
when the act of union with Our Lord has been well made,
we should feel confident that we shall obtain from the eternal
Father

whatever we ask of Him
in the name of His most dear Son and in
union with Him.

cf Eph 3,12; Lk 11,13;

Jn 15,16;16,24-26

Still, since we cannot be sure
of having made this act of union and the act of
petition with the required perfection,
it is well to have recourse to the saints,
so that by the help of their prayers and intercession,
which are always agreeable to God whose friends they
are,

we may obtain what we seek;
not to mention, as the Church observes,
that the superabundant merits of the saints
are a great help to us in the sight of God.

238 We make an act of invocation of the Saints to whom we have
a special devotion,
particularly
the ones who were present at the mystery
which we have been considering,
or who took part in it,
by asking them to plead for us before God,
and to ask Him to give us the spirit of the
mystery;
we thus prove to them the great confidence we have in their
intercession.

239 The Most Blessed Virgin should always be invoked in the
first place,
even though she may not have actually taken part in the
mystery
which we are considering,
because she is our Mother, our Advocate and our Mediatrix
before her Son.
Because she loves us;
because she has great power before God;
and because she desires our welfare
more than any other saint and even all of the Saints.

240 Saint Joseph should also be invoked,
as the Patron and Protector of our Society,
since he has such great influence with God.

241 In the same way our holy Guardian Angel and our holy Patrons of
baptism and religious profession
will take interest in us in a special way,
since we have been placed under their special
protection, and recommended to their care by God.

242 In the mystery of Our Lord's nativity
the Most Blessed Virgin took part
by bringing Him into the world.
St. Joseph cared for Him
as his foster father.
The angels were present
and adored Him, glorifying God

cf Lk 2,7

cf Lk 3,23;4,22

and revealing Christ's birth to the shepherds who then came to worship Him.

243 The act of invocation may be made as follows:

- a. Most blessed Virgin, most worthy mother of God,
I very humbly beg thee,
by the infinite dignity which is thine
as the mother of the Messiah, the true God,
I beg of you
by thy cooperation
in the sacred mystery of His nativity,
since while yet a virgin thou didst give Him birth,
grant me thy powerful protection
in the sight of thy beloved Son
and His eternal Father,
so that I may receive the spirit of this mystery.
- b. I have great confidence
that thy motherly solicitude
will grant me this favor,
and that out of regard for thee,
God will bestow on me, in the abundance of His
mercy, all things.

244 Invocation of St. Joseph

- a. Great Saint Joseph, my glorious and very loving father,
I beg thee very humbly,
by that most tender and most respectful love
with which thou didst receive in thine arms
the incarnate Word, the Son of
God made man, cf Jn 1,14; Lk 3,24;4,22
as thy foster Son,
to join thy prayers to those of the Most Blessed Virgin,
thy most dear spouse and my exalted
Queen, cf Lk 1,27
and to pray to Our Lord and to His heavenly Father
to grant me the spirit of this mystery of salvation
in all the fullness which,
by God's grace and mercy,
I am capable of receiving. cf Eph 1,1-23
- b. I have great confidence that God will grant me
everything which thou wilt ask for me,
and I shall remain to thee and to thy holy spouse

eternally grateful for all these favors.

245 Invocation of the angels and shepherds

a. Holy angels of God,
you were present at the birth of the infant Jesus,
to adore Him and pay Him homage.

b. I beg of you
by the joy with which
you gave glory to God on high
and to His incarnate son, Lk 2,14
and in inviting men
to go and pay Him their due homage
when you announced to them the good
news Lk 2,16-17
of His blessed birth.
To ask God and His beloved Son cf Mt 3,17;17,5
to grant me the favor of sharing
in the spirit and the grace of this mystery,
according to the multitude of Their
mercies. cf Eph 1,1-23

c. Holy shepherds, who were privileged
to be the first to see the Savior of the
world, Lk 2,17
to witness His admirable virtues
and to enjoy the peace and the grace
which He came on earth to bring
to men of good will, Lk 2,14

d. I beg you, pray to Our Lord
to grant me in His mercy a share
in this peace and in that grace,
so that with their help
I may come to share in the spirit of this mystery
and to practice the virtues
of which this divine Savior has given me the
example.

246 Invocation of our Guardian Angels and saintly patrons, etc.

a. Holy angel of God, my very charitable guardian,
and you, great Saints N....my glorious patrons,
I beg you

by your concern you have for me
and by the love you have
for God and for His Son Jesus Christ,
our loving Savior,
to intercede with the divine goodness
to obtain for me
the spirit of this mystery,
and the grace faithfully to put into practice
the resolutions which I made.

- b. I have great confidence
in your charity and in your intercessions,
for I look upon you and honor you
as my fathers and protectors in God's sight.
- c. Of all of you, O blessed angels and saints of God,
I beg the same favor
for the love of God
and the salvation of my soul.

EXPLANATION OF THE SECOND PART OF THE METHOD OF MENTAL PRAYER WHEN WE CONSIDER A PARTICULAR VIRTUE

247 We can turn our attention in the second part on some particular virtue, making it the subject of our silent prayer.

CHAPTER 11

WHAT WE MEAN BY A VIRTUE.

248 We call virtues
the holy actions,
sentiments,
dispositions and affections
contrary to vices and sins.
For example,
chastity is opposed to impurity;
humility to pride;
penance to sensuality, and so on.

249 Our Lord taught us the practice of virtue
by his example
and by his words
as something necessary for salvation.
This made Him say that he is the way
because by practicing these virtues
we walk forward on the path to heaven

and arrive at last at true, eternal and blessed
life,

cf Jn 8,12

a life which makes the angels and the saints infinitely
happy,

a life our Lord communicates to them
by the gift of His grace in this world
and of His glory in the next.

Now, we merit to share in this blessed life
in the degree to which we have practiced virtue.

250 We should begin by convincing ourselves interiorly
of the necessity of the virtue which we are considering.
This we can do in two ways.

251 First, by a conviction of faith,
by recalling a mind a passage of Holy Scripture
which speaks of the virtue.
For instance, to convince ourselves of the need for humility
we can recall to mind the words of St. James, Ch. 4:
God resists the proud, Jas 4,6
but gives grace to the humble. quoting Prov 3,34
Then we remain in a sentiment of interior respect,
concentrating on the thought of the virtue taught us in this
passage.

252 The second way of convincing ourselves of the need for this
virtue is to make some reflections on the virtue itself,
which persuade the mind our need of practicing it.
The reflection should be based on what is said of the virtue
in Holy Scripture,
and especially in the New Testament.

253 We might, for instance, make this reflection on humility:
O my God, what a dreadful misfortune it is to be proud,
since Thou dost resist such people and showest Thyself
their enemy.

Jas 4,6

254 Or again,
Lord, how happy are the humble,
since it is to such
Thou grantest Thy grace.

Jas 4,6

255 Or again,
My God, Thou are the friend of the humble;
how strongly this should incite me to become such.

256 Having thus established ourselves firmly on faith,

we proceed to make the nine acts of the second part,
which should be applied to the virtue on which we make
mental prayer, and which we should consider in Our
Lord,
as teaching it to us by His words and example.

CHAPTER 12

THE THREE ACTS WITHIN REFER TO OUR LORD

257 The three acts which refer to our Lord are:
an act of faith,
an act of adoration,
and an act of thanksgiving.

#1 AN ACT OF FAITH

We can make an act of faith on the virtue
by believing firmly that Our Lord taught us this virtue
and practiced it;
and to convince ourselves the more firmly of this truth
we must call to mind a passage of the New Testament.

259 How to make an act of faith on the virtue of
humility, considering Our Lord teaching it to
us by His words.

My Savior Jesus Christ,
I believe with all my heart that Thou didst teach us
the virtue of humility
when Thou didst say, Matthew 11:
Learn of Me,
because I am meek and humble of heart,
and you shall find rest for your souls.

Mt 11,29

260 After making this act we can dwell on it
by discourse and multiplied and
continued reflections,
or by a few short reflections,
filled with faith
and based on some passage of Holy Scripture,
which we dwell on for a considerable time;
or by simple attention to Our Lord
who teaches or practices the virtue,
All this has been explained above
when dealing with the manner of keeping ourselves in
the holy presence of God

in the first part of the Method of Mental Prayer
and according to the ideas presented in the following section.

**261 HOW TO DWELL ON THIS ACT OF FAITH
(by multiplied reflections)**

a. My divine Master,

Thou commandest me to learn of Thee Mt 11,29
how to be meek and humble of heart, Mt 23,12
to humble myself, to abase myself voluntarily
before God and before men.

Thou dost not command me to learn of Thee
how to make miracles,
how to raise the dead, and so on,
because such things are not necessary
in order to be agreeable to Thee.

But it is absolutely necessary for me to be humble.
This is what I must learn of Thee,
who wert infinitely humble
although Thou wert
the Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

b. Thou dost teach me

that if I exalt myself I shall be brought low and Mt 23,12
humbled;

that if I do not receive the Kingdom of God like a
little child, I shall never enter it; Lk 18,17

that if I want to be first
in punishment of my pride
I shall remain last.

Lk 13,30

This was what happened cf Apoc 12,8
to the rebellious angels
who, because they sought to exalt themselves
became the last
and most miserable
of all creatures

If I try to exalt myself like them
I shall be humbled like them.

I must, then, learn from Thee

to be humble of heart Mt 11,29
if I wish to avoid so great a misfortune.

c. That is what I propose to do with the help of Thy holy
grace;

and I beg Thee most humbly
to grant that grace to me.

262 We can dwell on the act of faith
by considering the advantages of humility,
after this fashion:

a. What a great advantage it is to humble oneself with all
one's heart

(for love of Thee, O my God!)

We enjoy peace and tranquility of soul,
as Thou dost teach us:

Mt 11,29

Thou givest Thy grace to the humble,
and Thou givest it most abundantly
to the humblest of all.

Jas 4,6

Thou dost love the humble;

Thou dost console them in their afflictions;

Thou dost protect them in danger;

Thou dost deliver them in times of peril;

Thou dost save them and lead them to glory
for all eternity.

cf Ps 116,6;
76,10;5,12;73,23

b. O Lord, teach me, I beg of Thee,
by the interior light of Thy Holy Spirit
to put into practice this precious lesson.

I wish to learn it from Thee, Mt 11,29

whatever price it may cost my pride.

I resolve constantly and resolutely to abase myself
and to annihilate myself if such were possible
so as to draw down upon myself Thy grace and Thy Holy
Spirit

who abides only with the
humble,

cf Is 11,2;57,15;66,2

and to merit Thy love

which is all I desire

in time and in eternity.

c. Help me, I beg Thee my divine Savior,
with Thy holy grace,

without which **I can do nothing.**

cf Jn 15,5

263 **THE WAY OF DWELLING ON THE ACT OF FAITH**
(by a few but prolonged reflections)

We can dwell on this same act of faith
by considerations mingled with few but prolonged reflections.
By recalling to mind this passage of Holy Scriptures

where Our Lord says:

Everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled;

and he who humbles himself shall be
exalted.

Lk 18,14

in Saint Luke, Ch. 18

We might then make a brief reflection
to help impress this thought on our minds,
and penetrate our hearts
with the advantage and necessity of practicing the
virtue of humility.

264 We might also make this other reflection:

I need to humble myself with all my heart, O my
God, if I do not wish to be humbled and brought
down to hell.

Then we should remain interiorly attentive

to this thought

for as long as we can.

When we are no longer able to dwell on the passage

by fixing our minds on this reflection

we should try another, which,

also related to the topic,

will remind us again of it

and make it possible for us to apply ourselves thereto

with renewed affection.

265 For instance:

What a great advantage it is to humble oneself
for the love of Thee, O my God;
this is how one can be raised up
to enjoy a share in Thy glory in
heaven.

cf Rom 8,7

266 This manner of dwelling for a long time on a virtue

using a passage that awakens our faith

produces this additional good effect

that the mind becomes convinced of the necessity and

the advantages of the virtue,

and the heart is moved by the desire to acquire it and

to practice it.

267 Thus, we can, by various reflections

dwell for a long time with a single passage,

and this contributes much to making us relish

the virtue

and the word of God that teaches it to us.

268 DWELLING ON A SUBJECT DURING MENTAL PRAYER BY SIMPLE ATTEN-

TION

We can, finally, dwell on a virtue by simple attention,
merely keeping ourselves in the presence of Our Lord
and considering Him

teaching us this virtue by word and example,
and practicing it Himself.

And in this sentiment of adoration before Him,

without discourse or reasoning,

but by simple, respectful, and affectionate attention

and one as vivid as possible,

we keep ourselves thus interiorly disposed

for a greater or shorter length of time,

according as we may feel ourselves inclined and drawn thereto.

269 The benefit and the effect produced by this type of mental
prayer,
when we engage in it according to God,
is that it draws the soul sweetly and gently to practice the virtue,
(and leaves us with a supernatural impression and
inclination towards the virtue.)

This leads us

to embrace it with ardor,
overcoming courageously the difficulties and
repugnances

that nature may present.

We embrace with affection the occasions

which arise for practicing the virtue;

we find joy in so doing

and experience a great interior satisfaction

on these occasions.

270 We may make use of any of the three manners of developing our
thoughts
adapting them to the acts which follow,
according to the devotion we feel (and to our dispositions.)

#2 ACT OF ADORATION

271 After dwelling on the act of faith
in one of the three manners proposed above,
we make an act of adoration
by paying homage to Our Lord
when He practiced this virtue
and taught it to us by His words and example;
we remain in His presence
in profound respect.

It is eminently right for us to pay to Our Lord
these first acts of worship which are due Him as the God-man
who has deigned to become our Teacher and Model.

272 This may be done as follows:

We represent to ourselves Our Lord practicing humility
when washing His Apostles' feet.

a. I adore Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ,
teaching us the holy virtue of humility
when Thou didst kneel at Thy Apostles' feet
to wash them,
thus giving me an example.

Jn 13,15

b. I acknowledge Thee
despite the abjection of Thy position,
as my sovereign Lord and God,
on whom I depend in everything
as well as all creatures in heaven and on earth.

cf Jn 20,28

c. I offer Thee, in view of this, my humblest homage;
I annihilate myself in Thy sacred presence,
and remain in this attitude
of deepest respect
before Thee, my Lord and my God.

273 Then we should remain in a spirit of adoration before our Lord
for as long a time as possible.

#3 ACT OF THANKSGIVING

274 It is only right to express to Our Lord the gratitude we owe
Him by thanking Him for the goodness he showed us in practicing
this virtue

to instruct us,
and in this way
teachings and procuring our sanctification.

275 We can do this as follows:

a. What ingratitude I would show,
O my God, if I failed to thank Thee
for Thy goodness
in humbling Thyself even to the excess
of kneeling at the feet of poor sinners
to wash them;
and in thus teaching me by Thy divine

Jn 13,5

example

the most holy virtue of humility.

I offer Thee, then, with all my heart
my humblest and sincerest thanksgiving.

- b. Oh, what charity! Thou didst will to abase Thyself thus
to encourage me to humble myself
so that in this way and with Thy holy grace I may merit
to be lifted up even unto Thee,
to be united to Thee in this life by grace,
and in the next by glory,
and thus to participate in Thy infinite happiness
for all eternity.
- c. I thank Thee, O my loving Savior,
my good Master, and my God!
I would wish to exhaust myself in gratitude and
thanksgiving.
- d. Complete, I beg of thee O loving Jesus, what I lack through
weakness.

CHAPTER 13

THE THREE ACTS WHICH REFER TO OURSELVES

- 276** After the three acts which we have just made
we should proceed to the next three,
which refer to ourselves,
namely, an act of remorse,
an act of contrition,
and an act of application.

#1 AN ACT OF REMORSE

- 277** We make an act of remorse
by recognizing before God how remorseful and ashamed we are
for not having applied ourselves up to now,
or for not having done so as much as we should,
to the practice this virtue.
We should go over the principal occasions we had of doing so,
in order to feel even greater remorse.

- 278** We can do as follows:

- a. How remorseful I should feel in Thy holy presence,
O my God,

when I consider
how negligent I have been up to now
in trying to humble myself and to practice humility
in spite of the extraordinary examples Thou has given me
of this holy virtue.

b. This is because I have not as yet sufficiently thought
about it, or else
because, although I am indeed a sinner,
I have felt a secret contempt
for Thy humiliations and Thy abasements,
as though these were something unworthy of Thee or of
myself.

c. How many times have I not failed to practice humility
although I have had many occasions most suitable for
doing so, and which Thou didst provide for me in
order to do me more good.

What! the Lord of heaven and earth humbles Himself
so far as to wash men's feet, Jn 13,1-16
poor miserable men as they were.

And I, wretched sinner that I am, nothingness,
formed of the dust of the
earth,

cf Rom 7,24; Gn 2,7; Qoh 3,20

I refuse to be abased!
I find it hard to do a service
to my neighbor
because this offends my pride.

I failed
on this or that occasion....

I fled humiliation and contempt
on such and such occasions....

d. O my God, how remorseful I am of such unworthy conduct.

#2 ACT OF CONTRITION

279 The act of contrition is made
by begging God's pardon for the faults we have committed
against this virtue,
and by taking a firm resolution to be in the future
more faithful to practice it.

280 This can be done as follows:

a. My Lord Jesus Christ,
from the depths of my heart, contrite and humbled
in Thy presence

Ps 51,19

I beg Thy most humble pardon
for the faults I have committed
against the practice of this virtue
 which is so dear and agreeable to Thee,
 and so necessary and so advantageous to me.

b. By the merits of Thy holy humility
pardon me, I implore Thee, O my adorable Savior;
I promise Thee,
 with Thy help,
to be more faithful in practicing this virtue.

#3 ACT OF APPLICATION

281 The act of application is made by applying the virtue to ourselves,
 considering before God the great need we have
 of practicing it
 paying attention to the occasions
 in which we can and ought to do so,
 and for this purpose taking appropriate and particular
 means of doing so.

282 This is how we may make this act:

a. My God, I acknowledge in Thy holy presence
the great need I have of practicing
 this holy virtue of humility and of embracing
 humiliations,
all the more so since I am so proud.

b. Besides this, the example that Thou dost give me, Lord,
should also impress me deeply.

 What! the Lord of angels and of men
 kneels before His own poor creatures,
 washes their feet covered with dust and mud,
 and wipes them,
 thus performing the task of a slave!

Why didst Thou do it, Lord?
to teach me what I should do.

c. Thou didst say so Thyself immediately afterwards,
when Thou didst declare:

 Do you understand what it is that I have just done?
 You call me Lord and Master,
 and you are right, for that is what I am.
 So then, if I, your Master and Lord,

cf Jn 13,1-16

have washed your feet,
you should also wash one another's feet.
I have given you an example,
so that as I have done so too you should
do also.

Jn 13,12-15

In other words,
if I,

although I am God and Lord of all,
have abased Myself
to the point of washing your feet,
you should not find it difficult
to render each other
even the lowliest and humblest services.

You should overcome your pride
at the sight of and in consideration
of a God humbled in this manner.

d. For as Thou didst say again:

The servant is not above His Lord,
nor the disciple above his Master, Jn 13,16

and Thou didst add,

Happy will you be if you understand these things
and put them into practice.

Jn 13,17

e. It was, then, for my instruction, Lord,
that Thou didst humble Thyself.

It was to lead me to humble myself,
to experience no shame when serving others,
even in ways
the most humiliating and lowly
or at least to lead me to overcome my shame.

f. To Thy example Thou dost join a promise that I will be
happy

if I imitate Thee.

g. O my loving Savior, who could refuse to yield
to such touching examples and encouragements?

Thy action and Thy promises ravish my heart.

I wish to humble myself, O my God,
to imitate Thee

and to be happy according to Thy promise.

I wish to abase myself

with Thee
and for love of Thee.

h. Today

I shall ask to be given the most lowly tasks.

I feel a great repugnance for such and such...;
if I were ordered to do it
I should feel deeply humiliated;
if I were assigned to such or such a task,
or if I were commanded to perform
such or such a penance or mortification
I should feel a great repugnance.
My God, for Thy holy love
I shall request to be tried in these ways,
so that by this means I may become truly humble.

- i. Bless these resolutions, I beg of Thee, O my God,
and make them efficacious by Thy holy grace.

CHAPTER 14

THE LAST THREE ACTS OF THE SECOND PART

283 After the three acts which refer to ourselves
we make the last three acts, which are:
an act of union with Our Lord;
an act of petition;
and an act of invocation.

#1 AN ACT OF UNION WITH OUR LORD

284 We make an act of union
with the Spirit of Our Lord
and with the dispositions with which He practiced and
taught this virtue.
We ask Him for a share
in this Spirit
and in these dispositions,
begging Him earnestly to give us the grace to take up
the practice of this virtue,
not only exteriorly
and as philosophers and people of the world do,
or through merely human motives,
but through views of faith
and in union with the spirit and attitudes of Our Lord,
and by the movement of His grace.

285 This we can do as follows:

- a. I unite myself to Thee, my divine Savior,
and to the interior sentiments
with which Thou didst practice

this holy virtue of humility.
How totally were Thy mind and heart overcome
 by the majesty of Thy Father
 when Thou didst kneel
 at the feet of Thy Apostles!

Jn 13,1-16

What an ardent desire of making reparation
 through this enormous humiliation
 to the honor of God Thy Father,
 outraged by the pride of the first man
 and of all his descendants,
 and of mine in particular.

O how this reparation
 was worthy of the divine majesty;
 capable of appeasing God's anger
 and of satisfying for my pride!

b. I earnestly beg Thee, O Lord,
to give me a share in the sentiments Thou didst entertain
then.

(Let me, O loving Savior,)
 partake of the same thoughts
 and the same affections that were thine.

I pray Thee unite
 my mind
 and heart with Thine.

May the unction of Thy holy grace
teach me to be humble of heart
and to practice humility,
 not only in an exterior manner,
 as persons of the world
 do out of shrewdness,
 but by views of faith,
 in union with Thy Spirit,
 in conformity with Thy dispositions,
 and in imitation of Thee.

Mt 11,29

c. Incline and lead my heart to the love and practice of
 humiliations and abjection.

May I love to remain unknown, despised and abased,
so that I may be more like Thee in Thy humiliations,
and so share in Thy glory.

cf Ph 3,10

#2 ACT OF PETITION

286 The act that follows is the act of petition,
by which we humbly beg God the Father
to grant us the grace to embrace the practice of this

virtue in union with Our Lord,
in whom alone and by whose Spirit
we feel confident enough to ask this
and to hope to obtain it.

cf. Eph 3,12; Lk 11,3
Jn 15,6;16,21,26

287 We may make this act in the following manner:

a. My God, I most humbly beg Thee
to deign to grant me Thy grace
so as to walk in the path of humility,
following the example of Thy Son, Our Lord.

1 Pt 2,21

I ardently desire and eagerly long
to acquire this virtue,
in order to be more agreeable in Thy sight,
and to draw down upon me thy holy Spirit,
who visits and takes His rest
only in humble hearts,
as Thou Thyself didst say
by the prophet Isaiah.

cf Is 11,2;57,15;66,2

b. Help me, O my God,
for Thou knowest my weakness and my helplessness
for doing good.
By Thy grace,
may I love and desire
humiliations and contempt;
may I make good use
of all the occasions
which Thou wilt permit me to encounter,
since these are the necessary means
for becoming humble.
In imitation of Thy beloved Son
may I learn to abase myself before all and below all
may I take pleasure in serving others,
considering them all as my masters.

cf Jn 13,12-15; Ph 2,3-4

c. I beg Thee to give me this grace,
O heavenly Father,
**through Our Lord Jesus Christ, in union with
whom,
and in whose spirit alone
I feel confident enough to ask this grace,
with the hope of obtaining it
of Thy infinite**

goodness.

cf Eph 3,12; Lk 11,3;
Jn 15,16;16,24-26

#3 ACT OF INVOCATION OF THE SAINTS

288 The last act of this second part refers to the saints to whom we have a special devotion. This act is made by earnestly imploring them, (especially those who most excelled in the practice of the virtue on which we are making mental prayer) to intercede for us before God, and to beg Him to give us the grace to practice this virtue; thus showing how great a confidence we have in their intercession.

289 This can be done as follows:

Invocation of the Most Blessed Virgin

a. Most blessed Virgin, Mother of God,
thou art the noblest,
the holiest,
the most perfect
and the most excellent of creatures,
and yet thou wert the humblest of all,
for by thy humility thou didst abase thyself
below all things.

cf. Lk 1,46-55

In return,
thou wert raised to the dignity of Mother of God.
I beg thee
by thy holy humility
and by thy love for this virtue,
to be good enough
to obtain for me from thy adorable Son
the love and the practice of this virtue,
which was always so dear to thee,
and which brought thee
such an exalted state of glory.

b. I know that all thou wilt ask for me
will be infallibly granted,
because thou hast all power over thy beloved Son.

290 Invocation of Saint Joseph

- a. Great St. Joseph,
 descendant of the royal family of David, cf Lk. 1,27
 thou didst willingly, however,
 embrace a profession, poor abject and laborious, cf Mt 13,55
 for the love of God,
 so as to live hidden and unknown by the world.
 By the greatness of thy humility
 thou didst deserve to be raised to the dignity
 of spouse of the Mother of God cf Lk. 1,27
 and to be considered as the father
 of the Son of God made man. cf Lk 3,23;4,22
- b. For God's honor I beg thee to please,
 together with thy holy spouse
 ask God to grant the grace
 to acquire this virtue
 by constant fidelity to its practice.

291 Invocation of St. Michael, the Guardian Angel and the Saints in heaven

- a. It was by thy deep humility,
 O great St. Michael,
 that thou didst merit
 to become the prince over all the choirs of angels,
 and to be raised to the great glory
 which you enjoy.
- b. I beg thee to help me by thy holy intercession
 to obtain from God
 the grace to acquire this virtue.
- c. My loving Guardian Angel,
 and all ye blessed spirits
 who by your humility merited
 to be confirmed in grace and in glory;
- d. all you saints, my glorious patrons,
 St. John the Baptist,
 St. Peter, St. Paul...etc...
 (favorite Saints N. etc...)
 who were so pleasing to God
 and merited His favor
 and the glory where you reign with Him,
 by the practice of all the virtues,
 but mainly of humility,
 I have the greatest confidence in your intercession.

e. Grant me, that, I beg of you,
so that with your assistance I may become humble,
for God's greater glory
and to obtain my own salvation.

EXPLANATION OF THE SECOND PART OF THE METHOD WHEN CONSIDERING A MAXIM IN MENTAL PRAYER

292 We can, in the second part of mental prayer,
consider a maxim of the holy Gospel,
and take it as the subject of our mental prayer.

CHAPTER 15

WHAT IS MEANT BY A MAXIM

293 We call maxims
sentences or passages from scripture
which teach us some of the truths necessary for
salvation,
or interior words which make us understand
what we should do or avoid,
what we should esteem or despise,
what we should seek or flee from,
love or hate, etc...
The New Testament is full of such passages.

294 Among these maxims or sentences
some include truths which are also precepts,
and which impose on us the obligations of practicing
the truths contained in these maxims;
for example this one,
 Pardon, and you shall be pardoned;
 judge not, and you shall not be judged.
These are maxims of precept
because Our Lord positively commands us to carry them
out under pain of damnation.
Others express counsels;
in other words
we are not absolutely obliged to practice them in order
to be saved,
(but they are suggested as necessary means)
in order to acquire a greater perfection,
As this one:
 If you wish to be perfect,

Lk 6,37

sell all you have, give it to the poor
and you will have a treasure in heaven;
and then come and follow me
in saint Matthew 5.

Mt 19, 21

295 Some of these counsels are perfectly clear and intelligible,
and easy to understand,

as this one:

Love your enemies;
do good to those who hate you;
pray for those who persecute and calumniate you.
in saint Matthew 5.

Lk 6,27-28

Others are more obscure and difficult to understand,
and need to be explained,
such as the following:

If thy right eye is an occasion of sin to thee,
pluck it out and cast it from thee.

Mt 5,29

in saint Matthew, Ch. 5

If anyone comes to Me
and does not hate his father and mother, etc...

he cannot be My disciple,
in saint Luke, Ch. 14.

Lk 14,26

There are a number of other similar texts
which must not be taken literally.

296 We should begin
by convincing ourselves interiorly
of the necessity or the utility of the maxim on which we
desire to make mental prayer,
through a sentiment of faith,
by recalling to mind the passage of Holy Scripture
in which the maxim is found.

297 The spirit of a maxim
is the holy impression and the salutary effect which it
should produce

when it is seriously meditated on and understood,
as this one, taken as a subject of mental prayer:

What does it profit a man if he gain the whole
world, but suffer the loss of his own
soul?

Mt 16,26

In Saint Matthew, Ch. 16

This maxim, deeply pondered and relished, convinces the mind
that there is no true blessing
except winning eternal glory;

that we should not consider anything in this life as
being an advantage
except what can contribute to our salvation,
and that true goods are to be found only in heaven.
It makes us develop a deep contempt
for all that worldlings
love and pursue so passionately.
It detaches us from goods,
that are perishable, deceptive and fleeting here on
earth,
so that we can attach ourselves only to those of heaven,
that are true, permanent and eternal.

298 The spirit of this maxim,
If anyone wishes to come after Me,
let him deny himself and take up his cross,
and follow me, Mt 16,24
in Saint Matthew, Ch. 16

is to do violence to oneself
so as to resist the vicious inclinations that lead us
to sin,
(and to overcome the repugnance and difficulties)
which we encounter in the pursuit of virtue.

It makes us receive with submission to God's holy will
and as coming from His hands, cf Job 2,10
all the afflictions, pains and adversities of life,
and encourages us to endure them with patience
for the love of Our Lord and in imitation of Him.

299 The spirit of this other maxim,
He who would save his life
will lose it;
but he who loses his life for My sake will find it for
life eternal Mt 16,2
in Saint Matthew, Ch. 16

is to despise and reject
sensual pleasures,
not to seek
the comforts of nature,
not to fear, at least voluntarily,
sufferings and mortifications
still less to flee from them.
It leads us to do penance willingly
and to endure labors,
especially those which are of obligation

and are imposed by our state in life,
without concern about the fear we may have that they may
affect our health;
it even makes us willingly sacrifice our health to the Lord,
keeping in mind these words of the Gospel:
Whoever loses his life for My sake
will find it.

Mt 16,25

300 It was the spirit of this maxim
which made the early Christians face martyrdom joyfully,
and which induced the ancient desert Fathers
to embrace such excessive and lengthy austerities
with so much courage and constancy.
Our Lord kept His promise in their regard,
not only in heaven
by rewarding them with a blessed and eternal life,
but even here below
by making most of them live
to an extreme old age, exempt from illnesses.

301 So it is with all the other maxims,
each of which has a spirit peculiar to it.

CHAPTER 16

THE THREE ACTS WHICH REFER TO OUR LORD

302 Having thus based our prayer on faith
we proceed to make the acts of the second part,
the first three of which refer to Our Lord,
namely,
an act of faith,
an act of adoration,
and an act of thanksgiving.

#1 THE ACT OF FAITH

303 We make an act of faith on the maxim
by representing to ourselves Our Lord when He taught it,
and by assuring Him that we firmly believe
that it was He Himself who taught it to us.
To convince ourselves more fully of this truth
we should recall to mind the passage of the New Testament
where this maxim is found.

304 Thus, if we wish to make mental prayer on the importance of salvation

we might make this act of faith:

a. I believe with all my heart, my Lord Jesus Christ,
that Thou are the one who taught us this maxim:
What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world
if he suffer the loss of soul?

Mt 16,26

b. I believe this truth, O my God,
that I am in this world only to labor for the salvation
of my soul,
and that I am on earth
only to work at meriting heaven
by loving Thee and keeping Thy commandments.
I believe that Thy purpose
in creating me and in calling me to religious life,
was that,
by making a right use of time
and of the graces which Thou dost give me,
and by the good works proper to my vocation,
I should render myself worthy
(in so far as, with the help of Thy grace
I am able to do so),
of a blessed and eternal life.
I believe and even though I should gain the whole
world, if I should lose my soul I would lose all.

Jn 14,15

Mt 16,26

c. It is Thou, my God, who dost teach me this truth.
I beg Thee to let me be fully convinced of it
by Thy grace, and the power of Thy holy Spirit.

305 After making this act of faith
we should remain in the interior disposition which it should induce in us,
attentive to our Lord present,
and to this truth contained in the maxim which He
teaches us,
before going on to the next act.
We should dwell on this first act for a longer or shorter
time,
depending on the attraction we feel.
This is something to do at every act we make,
before passing on to the next.

306 We may dwell on this maxim
by using few but prolonged reflections
and by simple attention,

in the manner proposed above
in the explanation of the method.
This procedure can easily be applied
to the present topic
and to any other,
which is why
we shall say no more about it as present.

#2 ACT OF ADORATION

307 We make an act of adoration
by paying our homage to Our Lord teaching us this maxim,
keeping ourselves attentive
and in deepest respect before Him.

308 This can be done in the following manner.

a. My Lord and my God,
I offer Thee my very humble adoration
as Thou dost teach me this maxim,
and by means of it,
the importance of saving my soul.
I listen with all respect to Thy heavenly doctrine
so necessary for me to know and practice.

b. I acknowledge Thee as the Teacher sent us by God.
In Thy holy Gospel Thou dost enjoin on me
not to seek the title of Teacher,
that the Christ is to be our only
Teacher.

Mt 23,10

With St. Peter I confess
that Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living
God, and that Thou hast the words of
eternal life.

Mt 16,16;Jn 6,69

c. I adore Thee as such
with all the angels and the whole human race.
I prostrate myself at Thy feet
in offering Thee the deepest respect
which I wish always
to display in Thy sacred presence,
and to listen with humility and docility
to Thy holy Word,
which is the life of my soul

Jn 6,63

d. I adore this divine truth in Thee, and outside of Thee,
as coming from Thy sacred mouth

cf Mt 4,4

to enter into my mind,
on which I beg Thee
to impress it deeply,
and on my heart as well.

#3 ACT OF THANKSGIVING

309 We can make this act
by expressing our gratitude to Our Lord
for the goodness He showed us in teaching us this maxim
for our instruction and sanctification.

310 We might proceed in this manner:

a. How deeply indebted I am to Thee, O my God,
for Thy goodness
in teaching us this maxim,
for by it Thou has made known to us
how important salvation is for us.

Such a truth
could never have been taught us worthily
but by a Teacher like Thee, O Lord,
who didst deign to come down from
heaven to earth
to reveal it to us,
to dissipate our darkness
and give us a share in Thy admirable light.

cf Jn 3,13;6,38
cf Jn 1,9

cf 1 P 2,9

b. My divine Master, I thank Thee for this
with all my heart and with all my soul.

c. To show Thee my gratitude
I resolve to think only of saving my soul
and to labor faithfully to sanctify it
by the means which Thou hast taught me.

d. Help me to do this, my God, by your grace,
for I know that without it I can do nothing.

Jn 15,5

CHAPTER 17

THE THREE ACTS WHICH REFER TO US

311 After these first three acts
we make the following ones
which refer to ourselves;
namely: an act of remorse,

an act of contrition
and an act of application.

#1 THE ACT OF REMORSE

312 We make the first of these acts
by admitting before God how remorseful we should feel
for not having yet sought,
or for not having sought as hard as we ought,
to acquire the spirit of the maxim
and to put it into practice.
We should go over the principal occasions which we have had
of doing so, and of those when we failed
to act according to the spirit of the maxim,
in order to increase our remorse.

313 a. My God, how remorseful I am
when in Thy holy presence I remember
how little my conduct has reflected
the spirit of this maxim,
ever since I had the use of reason.
I learned from Thy holy doctrine
that Thou hadst created me and brought me into this
world only that I might apply myself to know Thee,
love Thee, and serve Thee
(by doing Thy holy will)
through obedience to Thy divine commandments
and fulfilling the duties of my state in life.

b. How often have I not frivolously exposed myself
to losing my soul for all eternity,
not for the sake of winning the whole
world,
but to enjoy some base, shameful and fleeting
pleasure,
some ridiculous honor,
some passing satisfaction,
some worthless advantage.

I admit and confess, O my God
that this has happened to me on many occasions,
and especially when....
How ashamed I am, O my divine Savior.

c. I beg Thee, let this shame help me to satisfy Thy
justice.

Mt 16,26

#2 ACT OF CONTRITION

314 We make an act of contrition
by begging God's pardon for the faults we have committed
against the spirit of the maxim,
and we take a resolution to be more faithful in the future
to follow the spirit of the maxim.

315 This we can do as follows:

a. In the sorrow which I feel, O my Savior and my God,
because my conduct has been
so contrary to the spirit of this holy maxim,
I most humbly beg Thy pardon.

b. I am filled with regret,
especially because I know
that in so acting I have displeased and offended
Thee very much,
for by neglecting my salvation
I despised
Thy divine majesty, Thy grace and Thy friendship,
which I should esteem infinitely,
and prefer
to all the honors, pleasures and goods
of this world.

cf Lk 6,24-26

c. Pardon me, Lord, I beg of Thee,
for my deplorable conduct.
I detest it with all my soul.

d. I promise Thee, my God,
to prefer my salvation to everything else,
so that I may preserve Thy grace and love,
which is what I desire above all else.
In the future I shall repeat on all occasions,
what the ancient hermit said:
I want to save my soul!

e. For this I need Thy holy grace, my divine Savior,
for without it I can do nothing.
I ask it of Thee, humbly,
by the desire which Thou Thyself dost have of my
salvation.

Jn 15,5

#3 ACT OF APPLICATION

316 We make this act by applying to ourselves the maxim in
question,

(considering before God how badly we need)
to enter into the spirit of the maxim,
and examining the occasions
on which we can and should do so.
We must also for this take appropriate and definite means.

317 We can make this act as follows:

- a. How grateful I am, O Lord Jesus Christ,
for Thy goodness
in coming from heaven to earth cf Jn 3,13;6,38
to teach me this truth which is so important for my
soul.
- b. I acknowledge the great need I have
to fill my mind and heart with this divine maxim,
especially since, if I fail to practice it,
I shall be lost,
as Thy servant Moses warns me
by these words:
The Lord your God
will raise up for you from among your brethren
a prophet like unto me.
Listen to all he shall tell you. Acts 3,22,23
Whoever refuses to listen to him quoting
shall be exterminated from the midst of the
people. Dt 18,15-19
- c. Thou, O Lord, art this divine prophet Jn 6,63
whose words are spirit and life,
which give the spirit of God and eternal life
to those who heed them with humility and
docility,
and faithfully put them into practice. cf Lk 18,21;11,28
- d. I understand, O my God,
that if I lose my soul I lose everything,
and if I save it, I gain everything.
Consequently, I do not want ever to prefer anything to my
salvation.
- e. From this day forth,
if I experience a disorderly desire
to master external things,
such as writing, arithmetic
and other such matters,

even though they may be
necessary or useful in my employment,
and even if I have permission to pursue
them,

I shall convince myself
that these things must not be placed on the same level,
still less preferred
to the spiritual exercises which are established
to procure my salvation.

If such a desire or thought occurs to me
to spend on them some or all of the time
reserved for my spiritual exercises,

I shall admonish myself:

What good would it do me to become
most proficient in these matters,
if I lose my soul
by neglecting what can promote its
salvation?

Mt 16,26

f. If my eagerness
to procure the material welfare of the house
leads me to busy myself with these concerns,
without an absolute necessity
and without the sanction of holy obedience,
while neglecting my spiritual reading, my mental prayer,
etc.

g. or if greed incites
me to accept anything
from my students or their parents
against Rules and my vows,
I shall arm myself with the thought:
What profit would it be for me to gain the whole
world if I then lose my soul?

Mt 16,26

h. Even if the pretext of indiscreet and ill-regulated zeal
should lead me
to pursue the salvation of others
in a manner which would endanger my own,
I shall resist this enemy attack
with the spiritual weapon
which my Savior has placed in my hands:
What dost it profit to gain the whole world,
to procure the salvation of all souls,
if I thereby lose my own?

Mt 16,26

i. Grant me, I beg Thee, my dear Jesus,

Thy Holy Spirit and Thy grace
to help me in my great weakness.

CHAPTER 18

THE LAST THREE ACTS OF THE SECOND PART

318 The last three acts of this second part are:
an act of union with Our Lord,
an act of petition,
and an act of invocation of the saints.

#1 THE ACT OF UNION WITH OUR LORD

319 We make an act of union with Our Lord
by uniting ourselves
to His Spirit
and to His interior dispositions
with which he taught this maxim.
We ask Him for a share
in this spirit
and in these dispositions,
begging Him earnestly to give us the grace to enter
into the spirit and practice of this maxim.

320 This we can do as follows:

a. My divine Master, I beg Thee to give me the grace
to unite myself with Thy holy Spirit and with the
interior dispositions
with which Thou didst teach us.
this great truth:

that it is of no use to gain the entire world
if we then lose our souls.

Mt 16,26

b. What aversion did Thy holy Spirit not inspire Thee with
for all the world's vanities,
and the pleasures of this miserable life.

cf Lk 6,24-26

c. What contempt didst Thou not feel
for the world's perishable grandeur.
Thou didst give us a convincing proof of this since,
although Thou couldst have enjoyed all these things,
by having and possessing kingdoms and empires,

cf Mt 4,8-9; Lk 4,5-7

and of all that the universe contains,
since Thou are in very truth

the Lord and sovereign Master
of all things.
Thou didst flee and didst hide Thyself
when the people wished to make Thee their king, Jn 6,15
to teach us
by Thy example as well as by Thy words,
to despise all that passes away with time,
and to value only
what can contribute to the salvation of our souls.

c. I unite myself with Thee, my loving Savior, and with Thy
sentiments.
(I beg Thee that Thy divine Spirit)
and Thy divine heart
may teach my mind
and my heart
to despise all that the world in its blindness
esteems
and pursues with so much ardor.

d. Speak to my soul with a single powerful and efficacious
interior word,
What doth it profit a man to gain the whole
world... Mt 16,26
And with Thy prophet Samuel may I reply:
Speak, Lord, for Thy servant hears. 1 Sam 3,10

#2 ACT OF PETITION

321 We make an act of petition
by asking God the Father very humbly
to grant us the grace to enter into the spirit of this
maxim and to grant this in union with Our Lord.

322 We can do this as follows:

a. Eternal Father in heaven, Thou has deigned
out of consideration for Thy beloved Son, cf Mt 3,17;17,5
to allow me to call Thee my Father.
I now have confidence,
in the name of that dear Son, Gal 4,5-6
to ask Thee in all humility to give me the spirit of this
maxim, cf Jn 15,16
which our divine Master was pleased to teach us.

Thou didst declare: When He was transfigured on Mt. Thabor
That this is Thy beloved Son
in whom Thou art well pleased; Mt 17,5
and Thou didst command us to listen to Him
as to our Master sent to teach us
the truth
and the way
leading to true life. Jn 14,6

b. I beg Thee, O my God,
by the goodness which Thou didst manifest
in deigning to be my Father,
to give me
the spirit of understanding,
and docility of heart cf Wis 9,1-11
which will make me welcome His holy teaching
into the depths of my soul.

c. Engrave, I beg Thee, with Thy divine finger,
(which is the Holy Spirit) cf Lk 11,20
in the deepest recesses of my heart this divine maxim:
What dost it profit a man if he gains the whole
world and then loses his soul? Mt 16,26
so that I may not seek or desire anything
but the Kingdom of God and His justice, Mt 6,33
through the practice of virtue.
Grant me this grace
in union with Our Lord and through Our Lord,
in whom alone and by whose spirit
I dare beg this of Thee,
with the firm hope of obtaining all from
Thy goodness. cf Eph 3,12; Lk 11,13;
Jn 16,24-26;15,16

#3 ACT OF INVOCATION OF THE SAINTS

323 We make an act of invocation
by praying to the Saints to whom we have a special devotion,
and particularly
to those who most assiduously and perfectly practiced
this maxim,
to appeal to God
and ask Him to give us the spirit of the maxim to help us
practice it.

324 a. Most holy virgin, worthy mother of God,

thou are all powerful with thy beloved Son.
I beg thee to obtain for me the grace
from His divine mercy
that I may despise all that might harm
the salvation of my soul.
May I prefer my salvation to all the goods of this
earth.

b. Great St. Joseph,
my holy guardian Angel,
my holy patrons...
ye holy Apostles
who left all to follow Our Lord,
especially St. Matthew and St. Barnaby

Mt 19,27
Lk 5,28

and you glorious martyrs
who preferred to die
in the cruelest torments
rather than risk losing your souls;

Acts 4,36-37

and you, saintly anchorites and religious
who scorned the world, its riches and its promises
for the love of God
and to make sure of your salvation.

c. I beg you to obtain for me from the Lord these same
sentiments
which, by grace, filled your own hearts.

d. I have great confidence in your intercession.

NOTICE

325 As both the first and the second parts of the Method of
Mental Prayer contain nine acts,
this great number might hinder those
who wish to apply themselves in the second part,
and who find the time too short to do so.
Here are some suggestions to help them.

326 1) Make the acts of the first part in abridged form and in few
words without spending more than a brief time on them.
For example, the act of faith in the presence of God;
My God, Thou art present within me as in Thy
temple!
after which we remain for a moment recollected and

attentive to God present in us.

Act of adoration:

My God, I adore Thee!

then we adore God for about the time of an Our Father
adoring God interiorly and with respect.

Act of thanksgiving:

My God, I thank Thee!

then we dwell on this sentiment of gratitude for about
the same length of time.

And so on for the other acts.

- 327** 2) Make one act,
including in it the interior sentiments of all of the other
implicitly,
that is, not distinctly and not actually expressed in
formal or verbal acts.

We present ourselves before God in a spirit
of interior adoration

by a simple view of faith in His holy presence,
in His supreme greatness and infinite
excellence;

with thanksgiving for His blessings;

with humility over our lowliness and nothingness;

with remorse and contrition for our sins;

with application, union and invocation,

in view of the need we have
or Our Lords' merits,
of being united with Him,
and of being guided by His spirit.

We ask for all these things

by a simple desire of the heart, merely exposing
our needs to the eyes of Our Lord.

All this can be done,

along with many other acts such as acts of hope, love,
resignation...

and in very little time, about that of a Miserere.

This manner of proceeding is easy for one

who is truly interior,

who remains as much as possible in the presence of God,

who is always very recollected, in his eyes and in his mind

who is exact about silence,

who does not bother with that which does not concern
him,

and who is faithful to obedience.

- 328** 3) Make only the act
of God's presence, (and that of adoration,)
and then go on to the second part,
omitting all the other acts.
- 329** 4) Limit ourselves to not making
all the acts of the second part during a single time mental
prayer but only two or three, or even a single one
on which we wish to dwell;
we could make all the acts one after another in this
way in successive mental prayers
shortening the acts which have already been made
in the mental prayer or mental prayers that have
gone before,
or even omitting them altogether,
and concentrating on those or the one which we now
desire to make.

This manner of proceeding would seem to be useful
in order to permeate ourselves more deeply
with the meaning and the spirit of the various acts,
and to let them penetrate us in a more interior manner;
we should remember to make resolutions,
or to renew those previously made,
for these may be continued over a space of several
days, especially when we notice that we have not
practiced them too faithfully, or that we still need them.

- 330** 5) Finally,
When we feel ourselves interiorly and gently drawn
to some sentiment which we had not proposed to ourselves
beforehand,
like the love of God
or the desire to show Him our confidence and submission,
or to ask Him for something
with earnestness and confidence,
either for ourselves or for someone else,
or reflect on some word of God
we should follow this attraction and other similar ones
according to God, faith, and the perfection of our state.
We should follow it, I say, for as long as God is
pleased to let us dwell on it,
(for this is a sign that God desires this of us
at the moment.
We can know this is the case
when we leave mental prayer with renewed zeal
for doing our duty
for the love of God, and to please Him.

331 This second part can also be used to make mental prayer
on the Last Ends,
on sins,
and on one of the commandments, etc.

EXPLANATION OF THE THIRD PART OF THE METHOD OF MENTAL PRAYER WHICH CONTAINS THREE ACTS

332 The first is a review of what we have done in mental prayer;
the second is an act of thanksgiving;
and the third is an act of offering.
All these should take up only a little time.

ACT OF REVIEW

333 We make this review
by reviewing in our mind
the principal things we have accomplished in mental
prayer,
the sentiments God gave us during that time,
and which seem to be the most practical and
useful,
of the benefits which we can draw from them.

334 We may make this act as follows:

a. My God, what have I done during my mental prayer?

b. I began by putting myself in Thy holy presence,
considering Thee, for example,
as being within me as in Thy Kingdom.
I paid my homage to God by an act of adoration...etc.

c. I applied myself to such or such a subject,
for instance, to the maxim:
What will it profit a man...etc.

d. I awakened such or such good sentiments,
for instance, that if I lose my soul
I lose everything;
that I must never prefer anything to my salvation.
These sentiments can surely be
very useful and advantageous to me in my state.

cf Mt 16,16

e. I took such or such resolutions...
If we had omitted to take any,

now would be the time to do so.

ACT OF THANKSGIVING

335 We make this act
by thanking God
for the graces received from Him during mental prayer,
for the good sentiments He has given me
and the affections He awakened in us
for the good of our soul
and for our advancement in virtue.

336 This act may be made as follows:

a. My God, I thank Thee with all my heart
for the graces which I have received from Thy divine
bounty
during this mental prayer,
for the sentiments which Thou didst inspire me with,
for the affections
which Thou wert good enough to infuse in me,
especially for...
and for the resolutions that I adopted
for the good of my soul
and my advancement
in virtue and perfection.

ACT OF OFFERING

337 Finally, we make this last act of all
by offering to God our mental prayer,
the resolutions we made in the course of it,
and the dispositions in which we are to accomplish
them.

We also offer ourselves to God
with all our actions
and in all that I shall do
during this day.

cf Rom 12,2

338 This may be done as follows:

a. My God, I offer Thee my mental prayer,
the resolutions
which Thou gavest me the grace to take,
and the dispositions in which I am
of accomplishing them.

b. I very humbly beg Thee
to deign to bless them
and to give me the grace to be faithful
in putting them into practice.

c. I offer myself also to Thee, my God,
with all my actions and all that I shall do
during this day.

cf Rom 12,2

d. Accept, I beg Thee, my God, the desire I have
of pleasing Thee alone,
of glorifying Thee perfectly
and by accomplishing unceasingly
Thy holy will.

INVOCATION OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN

339 We conclude our mental prayer by placing all that we have done,
thought of and resolved under the protection of the Most Blessed
Virgin,
so that she may offer it to her beloved Son,
and so that by this means we may obtain from Him the
graces we need
(to practice the virtue or the maxim on
which we have made mental prayer.)

340 We can do this in the following manner:

a. Most holy Virgin, most worthy Mother of God,
who art also my loving mother and my advocate,
my refuge and my protectress,
I come to thee with deep humility
as to her in whom, after God,
I place all my trust,
begging thee to receive under thy protection
my mental prayer, my resolutions
and all that I have done here.

b. I very humbly beg Thee
to give it your Holy Blessing
and to obtain that of thy beloved Son,
offering it all to Him
and begging Him to grant me, out of consideration
for Thee,

the graces I need
to accomplish my resolutions,
to practice the virtue (or the maxim)
on which I made mental prayer,
for the greater glory of God, thy honor, and my
salvation.

Sub tuum.... or O domina mea.

FOREWORD

This translation is based on the text of the Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer, as published in 1989, in the Cahiers Lasalliens 50, by Miguel Campos, FSC and Michel Sauvage, FSC. The text is the complete text of the 1739 edition of the Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer, published in 1963 in the Cahiers Lasalliens 14, but put into a format which makes this difficult text easier to read.

The typographical arrangement makes clearer the distinction between St. John Baptist de La Salle's explanation of the method of mental prayer and the models of prayer he proposed. Also, the scriptural references, explicit and implicit, are more easily identified. The authors of Cahiers Lasalliens 50 also indicate in the margin biblical passages that could clarify the text.

This is a revised translation by Bro. Donald Mouton, FSC based on an earlier translation by Bro. Richard Arandez, FSC. Bro. Cyril Ory, FSC assisted in a part of this revision.

For convenience, the "Method of Mental Prayer", as found in the Collection, is included.

May 7, 1991

FORWARD TO THE WEB EDITION

This web edition attempts to follow the format of the Cahiers Lasalliens 50 by Miguel Campos, FSC and Michel Sauvage, FSC. For printing purposes, a combination of the American "letter" size paper and the European A4 was used so that it will be printable on either sizes of paper.

Contents

EXPLANATION OF THE METHOD OF MENTAL PRAYER	1
CHAPTER I	1
OF MENTAL PRAYER IN GENERAL AND OF THE DISPOSITION OF THE SOUL FOR MENTAL PRAYER	1
CHAPTER II	4
AN EXPLANATION OF THE DIFFERENT WAYS OF PLACING OURSELVES IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD	4
#1 THE FIRST WAY OF PUTTING OURSELVES IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN THE PLACE WHERE WE ARE BY CONSIDERING GOD PRESENT EVERYWHERE	4
#2 . THE SECOND WAY OF PLACING ONESELF IN GOD’S HOLY PRESENCE IN THE PLACE WHERE WE ARE BY CONSIDERING OUR LORD AS PRESENT IN THE MIDST OF THOSE GATHERED TOGETHER IN HIS NAME	7
#3 FIRST WAY OF CONSIDERING GOD PRESENT WITHIN OURSELVES AS EXIST- ING ONLY IN HIM	10
49	OR IN ANOTHER WAY: 13
#4 SECOND WAY OF CONSIDERING GOD WITHIN US: THROUGH HIS GRACE AND HIS SPIRIT	14
63	A WAY OF BEING ENGAGED IN MENTAL PRAYER BY CONSIDERING GOD WITHIN US AS IN HIS TEMPLE
#5 THE FIRST WAY OF PLACING ONESELF IN GOD’S HOLY PRESENCE IN THE CHURCH BY CONSIDERING IT AS THE HOUSE OF GOD	19
#6 SECOND WAY OF PLACING ONESELF IN GOD’S HOLY PRESENCE IN THE CHURCH BY CONSIDERING OUR LORD IN THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR	22
CHAPTER III	26
DIFFERENT WAYS OF ATTENDING TO THE PRESENCE OF GOD	26
#1 BY MULTIPLIED REFLECTIONS: REFLECTIONS MADE ON THE PRESENCE GOD SHOULD BE BASED ON ONLY ONE OF THE WAYS OF CONSIDERING GOD PRESENT	26
#2 BY SHORT AND PROLONGED REFLECTIONS: HOW TO MAINTAIN OUR- SELVES IN THE HOLY PRESENCE OF GOD BY RECALLING PASSAGES OF HOLY SCRIPTURE, AND THE REFLECTIONS THAT CAN BE MADE ON SUCH PASSAGES	27
#3 APPLYING OURSELVES TO THE PRESENCE OF GOD BY SIMPLE ATTENTION	30
EXPLANATION OF THE FIRST PART OF THE METHOD OF MENTAL PRAYER	35
CHAPTER 4	36
OF THE THREE ACTS THAT RELATE TO GOD	36
#1 OF THE ACT OF FAITH: OF THE DIFFERENT WAYS OF PUTTING OURSELVES IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD	36
ACT OF FAITH ON THE PRESENCE OF OUR LORD DWELLING IN THE MIDST OF THOSE WHO ARE ASSEMBLED IN HIS NAME	38
ACT OF FAITH ON THE PRESENCE OF GOD WITHIN US TO PRESERVE US IN	

BEING	39
ACT OF FAITH IN GOD PRESENT IN US AS IN HIS KINGDOM	39
ON THE ACT OF FAITH IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN THE CHURCH	42
ACT OF FAITH IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT ..	43
REFLECTIONS WE MAY MAKE ON GOD’S PRESENCE	43
#2 THE ACT OF ADORATION	46
#3 THE ACT OF THANKSGIVING	48
CHAPTER 5	49
THE THREE ACTS WHICH REFER TO OURSELVES	49
#1 THE ACT OF HUMILITY	50
.....	50
#2 ACT OF REMORSE	51
#3 ACT OF CONTRITION	53
CHAPTER 6	55
THE THREE ACTS RELATING TO OUR LORD	55
#1 THE ACT OF APPLICATION	56
#2 ACT OF UNION WITH OUR LORD	57
#3 ACT OF INVOCATION OF THE SPIRIT OF OUR LORD	59
EXPLANATION OF THE SECOND PART OF THE METHOD OF MENTAL PRAYER	
WHEN CONSIDERING A MYSTERY	62
CHAPTER 7	62
WHAT IS MEANT BY A “MYSTERY” AND BY THE “SPIRIT” OF A MYSTERY.	62
CHAPTER 8	64
#1 ACT OF FAITH ON A MYSTERY	64
#2 ACT OF ADORATION	78
#3 ACT OF THANKSGIVING	82
CHAPTER 7	83
THE THREE ACTS WHICH REFER TO OURSELVES.	83
#1 AN ACT OF REMORSE	83
#2 ACT OF CONTRITION	85
#3 ACT OF APPLICATION	86
CHAPTER 10	90
THE THREE FINAL ACTS OF THE SECOND PART	90
#1 ACT OF UNION WITH OUR LORD	91
#2 ACT OF PETITION	93
#3 ACT OF INVOCATION OF THE SAINTS	95
EXPLANATION OF THE SECOND PART OF THE METHOD OF MENTAL PRAYER	
WHEN WE CONSIDER A PARTICULAR VIRTUE	99
CHAPTER 11	99
WHAT WE MEAN BY A VIRTUE.	99
CHAPTER 12	101
THE THREE ACTS WITHIN REFER TO OUR LORD	101
#1 AN ACT OF FAITH	101
261	HOW TO DWELL ON THIS ACT OF FAITH
102	
#2 ACT OF ADORATION	105
#3 ACT OF THANKSGIVING	106

CHAPTER 13	107
THE THREE ACTS WHICH REFER TO OURSELVES	107
#1 AN ACT OF REMORSE	107
#2 ACT OF CONTRITION	108
#3 ACT OF APPLICATION	109
CHAPTER 14	111
THE LAST THREE ACTS OF THE SECOND PART	111
#1 AN ACT OF UNION WITH OUR LORD	111
#2 ACT OF PETITION	112
#3 ACT OF INVOCATION OF THE SAINTS	114
EXPLANATION OF THE SECOND PART OF THE METHOD WHEN CONSIDERING A MAXIM IN MENTAL PRAYER	116
CHAPTER 15	116
WHAT IS MEANT BY A MAXIM	116
CHAPTER 16	119
THE THREE ACTS WHICH REFER TO OUR LORD	119
#1 THE ACT OF FAITH	119
#2 ACT OF ADORATION	121
#3 ACT OF THANKSGIVING	122
CHAPTER 17	122
THE THREE ACTS WHICH REFER TO US	122
#1 THE ACT OF REMORSE	123
#2 ACT OF CONTRITION	123
#3 ACT OF APPLICATION	124
CHAPTER 18	127
THE LAST THREE ACTS OF THE SECOND PART	127
#1 THE ACT OF UNION WITH OUR LORD	127
#2 ACT OF PETITION	128
#3 ACT OF INVOCATION OF THE SAINTS	129
NOTICE	130
EXPLANATION OF THE THIRD PART OF THE METHOD OF MENTAL PRAYER WHICH CONTAINS THREE ACTS	133
ACT OF REVIEW	133
ACT OF THANKSGIVING	134
ACT OF OFFERING	134
INVOCATION OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN	135
FOREWORD	136
FORWARD TO THE WEB EDITION	136