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fifteen minutes




By Rev. Wm. Smith, S. J.

Fifteen Minutes with Christ the Worker



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A small crest or logo featuring a crown atop a shield with decorative flourishes.

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CHRIST THE WORKER

(with a Fifteen Minute Service)



THE prayers in this booklet are being used each Tuesday evening, in a short service before classes, by the men and women who attend the Crown Heights School of Catholic Workmen, Brooklyn, N. Y. Together with a five-minute talk, the prayers take just fifteen minutes. It is with the hope that they may be helpful to Catholic workers in many places that they have been published.

A short treatise on "Jesus of Nazareth, Lord and Laborer" is included in the booklet to bring out more forcefully the meaning of the prayers and to familiarize the "man on the street" with the mind of the Divine Master in regard to him.

The "Hymn to Christ the Worker," the "O Salutaris" and the Divine Praises have been added for the benefit of those who may wish to conclude the service with Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

THE AUTHOR.

"Is Not This the Carpenter's Son?"

When Christ set out to teach the people, His neighbors were astonished. They were bewildered by His winning ways and they wondered at His wisdom. Poor, simple souls, the only thing they could say was, "Is not this the carpenter's Son?" And indeed it was. When the Lord of Creation came to earth, He came to save not to destroy. No sound of trumpet heralded His coming, no tread of marching feet thundered His approach. The roar of cannon and the blazing torch played no part in His conquest of the world.

He had chosen a virgin-maid to be His Mother, as it had long before been told. Joseph, a carpenter, was His foster father and the protector of the little family. Nazareth was to be His dwelling place, Nazareth . . . the backwoods of the world, Nazareth so little thought of that people asked "Can any good come out of Naz-

areth?" . . . had become the home of God on earth.

The poorest of the poor, Mary and Joseph and the Boy Jesus formed a human family in the little cottage that they called home . . . a human family that has been the model of human living ever since. Joseph was a carpenter and so, too, would the Boy be. In the shop that Joseph himself, most likely, had built He served His apprenticeship. With the tools that Joseph had forged and fashioned, the Creator of the world learned to labor in a human way. The first stroke of the hammer in that Sacred Hand brought a new dignity to manual toil that the world had never known before. Christ, the Carpenter, had sanctified labor with His own Hand.

One word from those youthful Lips, one desire even from that divine Will and the carpenter shop would have been transformed into the most perfect of modernized factories, the tools changed to split-second automatic machinery. But He had not come for that. His divinity was to be hid beneath the lowliness of our human-

ity. He would teach us the value of toil and humility and obedience, by learning it in a human way from the privileged humans that the Father had set over Him. Thirty arduous, but peaceful years of His life He spent in the workshop of a carpenter. The hard blows from His home-made hammer strengthened the muscles of the growing boy. Tree trunks and twisted stumps, cross-beams and two-by-fours had felt the grip of those hardened Hands as He pulled and struck and sawed to fashion the furniture that went to fit out the homes of His friendly neighbors. Many a day the honest sweat poured from His Sacred Brow as He plied His trade in the heat of the scorching sun. When the toil of the day was over, just as any other hungry workingman, He went back to the cottage on the hillside, washed and ate of the steaming meal which Mary had made ready for Him. When the evening prayer was said, He welcomed the well-earned night's sleep that would restore the strength to His tired muscles and bring refreshment to soul and body.

This was the Carpenter of Nazareth. This was He who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, had enjoyed from all eternity, as the Second Person of the Trinity, the happiness of heaven. He had seen the angels come into being in the brightness of their reflected glory and had seen Lucifer fall from heaven like the lightning. He had seen the stars appear in the heavens and the earth emerge from the flowing waters. He had foreseen, with the Father, the creation of the human race, the rebellion of its chosen representative and the consequences that would follow. He knew now the inner secrets of the hearts of men to the end of time and the broad movements of history that had taken place and those which are yet to come. The universe was a tiny ball in the palm of His Hand, yet His love for us had driven Him to come and dwell amongst us. His love for us was unsatisfied until He could live our lives, experience our joys and sorrows, and finally offer up His Own spotless life upon a cross of shame to redeem, with the sufferings of a human soul

and body, those children of the Father who with a human soul and body, had defied the dignity and the supremacy of the One and undivided Trinity.

Jesus of Nazareth—Lord and Laborer

“If there is a God, why doesn’t He show Himself to us?” is a challenge that has been thrown at the Creator of the world by ignorant men in various ways. Steeped in their own pride or stifled by willful ignorance such blasphemers refuse to accept the glad tidings of Christian revelation. They can’t think and they won’t believe. Like the rebellious angels and their own defiant first parents before them, they still echo the cry, “We will be like gods—we will not serve.”

The answer to their challenge has been given very convincingly by a character in one of Owen Francis Dudley’s books. It runs along something like this: “If you can tell me of a better way for God to reveal Himself than the way He has, I would like to know of it. What better way could God have manifested Himself than to speak to us with human lips,

to look at us with human eyes, to work His miracles for us with human hands?" Think that over. Are not the means God used to bring us the message of His Love for us, a sign of Divine Wisdom? What better way, what more attractive way, what way more in keeping with our own human dullness could God have chosen?

Only a man, ignorant of the character of Christ, or one, blind to His grace, can doubt His claims to divinity today. The critics of history have fine-combed His character for a flaw or imperfection. They have found none. His ringing challenge still resounds unanswered, "Who will convince Me of sin?" His bitterest enemies have been forced to admit that no human intellect has ever equaled His. The teachings He left are so simple that the little tots in the grade school can understand them. His mysteries are so profound that men of genius have stood bewildered before them. Yet never a contradiction appears in any one of them. He revolutionized society. With twelve uneducated men He conquered the

world. All world events are dated before and after His birth.

One claim, in all His utterances, stands forth with startling significance. Upon it stands or falls everything else that He said or did. It is the keystone of Christian belief. If it be true, He has the right to command the world, to reward or condemn every creature on the earth. If it be false, religion is a mockery and the Church of Christ the basest fraud ever perpetrated by man upon man.

Jesus Christ, the Carpenter of Nazareth, claimed to be God, equal to the Father in all things! That claim is either true or false. If true we owe Him praise, reverence and service. If false, He is neither holy nor brilliant, but the arch-hypocrite of history who suffered a death worthy of His infamous deception.

God? Hypocrite? Fool? The utter absurdity that Jesus Christ was either a fool or a hypocrite is perfectly evident to all except those who blind themselves to the truth.

For a man *to say that he is God* and really to *be convinced* of it, when

it is not so, is a clear sign of insanity. The asylums are filled with poor unfortunates who go about saying, "I am Napoleon," "I am Caesar." Those who have hated Christ the most have testified that His intellectual ability has never been equaled in history. His intellectual soundness was such that His subsequent deeds showed it to be divine.

For a man *to say that he is God*, and to *know* that he is speaking *falsely*, is base hypocrisy. To carry the deception to the extent of adding threats of hell-fire to those who will not believe him and to urge men to endure torture and horrible death in defense of his claim, would brand the originator of such a scheme the arch-hypocrite of history. The unanswered argument for the sincerity and holiness of the character of Christ still goes ringing down the years. "Who will convince Me of sin?" His holiness precludes the very shadow of insincerity.

Thinking men and women accept the truth when they find it.

Christ claimed to be God. His character substantiates that claim. Three years of miracles confirm it. The promise and the reality of His Resurrection from the tomb, in confirmation of the claim, make it a "fool-proof" historical fact for men of good will.

We who enjoy the priceless gift of faith need no arguments from reason to tell us of the truth of Christ's divinity. The reality of His Presence in our hearts in Holy Communion, the soothing touch of His Healing Hand upon our hearts in the consoling Sacrament of Penance, the nearness of Him that we experience when the priest raises the unspotted Host in Holy Mass tell us far better than human words that it is His delight "to be with the children of men." Let us breathe a tiny prayer that those who still sit in the shadow of spiritual death, who have not yet experienced what it means to know the one true God, may by the example of our lives be brought to the light that came into the world when God deigned to be made flesh in Jesus Christ, the Carpenter of Nazareth.

Christ and the Man-on-the-Street

From the first to the last the Divine Master cast His lot with people who were poor and had to work for a living. He lived His life as a humble craftsman. He chose fishermen and the like as His first disciples. He preached to the poor. He taught His lessons by examples taken from the lives of men and women who stood about and listened to Him.

His interests were the interests of the people. He fed the multitude, He filled the nets of His fisherman pupils, He cured the sick and the lame who lay helpless by the roadside. The blind and the deaf and the lepers who sought Him out were the poor outcasts of society. When John the Baptist sent word asking, from his prison cell, if He were really the Redeemer, He gave as a proof of His claim to the title—that the blind see and the lame walk and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.

He made Himself a man among men. He talked the language that the man on the street could understand His aim was to draw men nearer to

heaven, but His lessons were taken from the daily lives of His fellow workers. He sees a farmer in the field sowing seed and explains to His listeners that grace is like a seed that falls onto the earth. He tells the merchants that salvation is like a pearl to be sought at any sacrifice. A shepherd goes by and He speaks of repentance and the lost sheep. He encourages initiative and the need of heaping up spiritual riches by a story of ten pieces of money. The justice of a living wage and the generosity of God to men are exemplified by a story of workers in a vineyard. He talks of servants and fishermen, of farmers and housewives. Wine bottles and wheat and cockle, new and patched up clothing, bread and fishes and coats all find their way into His instructions. In His life, in His manners, in His teaching, in His associations He identified Himself with the working class. He was the God of all, but His deepest concerns were for those who could least protect themselves against the greed and the unjust power of godless men. This being the spirit of Christ, He was not

unmindful of those who would like to work but are prevented from doing so.

Christ and the Unemployed

When a man is out of a job, sees his small hard-earned bank account dwindle week by week, fears the thought of beholding his family evicted from the shack he looked upon as home, he needs more than an ordinary word of encouragement to keep his feet on the ground. He will become desperate and turn to rash measures of self-defense or he will drop on his knees and throw himself on the mercy of God. Christ knew that. He knew, too, that in the Divine Plan that He and the Father had set for the world such miseries were not included. They are the outcome of man's ingratitude to man, the misuse of God's great natural gift, freedom of the will. God so loved liberty and so loved men that He wished to share that great privilege with His children even though they would use it at times to turn against their fellow creatures, yes, even against the very One who gave it to them.

But He would have no part in the betrayal. By every means possible He would induce men to use their liberty in charity and justice. But He could not deprive the unjust of that power of free choice without contradicting human nature as He willed to create it. God tolerates the misuse of our free wills, that the rational, God-fearing members of the human race may enjoy the proper use of them.

To offset the sufferings that come to men because of the wickedness of their fellow men He floods the world with spiritual peace and joy. God so made us that even the full possession of all the world can offer us would never satisfy us. Our nature is so noble a creation that nothing less than the complete possession of God Himself will ever bring our hearts to rest. Only such a joy for us can satisfy the Infinite Love that He has for us. It is really to draw us closer to Himself and away from the snares of earth, to gain a greater claim on His Care and Providence, that He allows hardship and suffering to come into our lives.

But there are many who would prefer to choose their own way of life. They have not fully learned God's place in the world and their own. They have not yet grasped the meaning of the word "creature" and the word "Creator." The fact that we are but mud and spirit escapes them. And so rebellion of spirit, disturbance of mind creeps into their hearts. Divinely aware of this danger and humanly conscious of the weaknesses of His children, Christ reassures us of the tender care, the immeasurable love that the Father has for us. A tiny spark of the spirit contained in the discourse of Christ which I am about to quote, if it could but nestle in the heart of every despairing soul, could today change the universe. These peaceful, powerful words of Christ can bring hope into the most hopeless heart. They have a divine guarantee . . . they contain Christ's message to the unemployed and the exploited . . . once grasped and accepted on their face value they will turn weakness into strength, distress into

determination, fear into fortitude and failure into a success that no worldly gain can ever equal.

Listen to the voice of the Laborer of Nazareth, who was at once Lord of the Universe, the Son of Mary, and by trade a carpenter:

“Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat; nor for your body, what you shall put on. The life is more than the food, and the body is more than the raiment. Consider the ravens, for they do not sow, nor do they reap; neither have they storehouse, nor barn, yet *your heavenly Father feedeth them*. How much more valuable are you than they? . . . And for the raiment, why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they labor not, neither do they spin; and yet I say to you, that not even Solomon, in all his glory, was arrayed as one of these. Now, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more you, O ye of little faith. Be not solicitous, therefore, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink or wherewith shall we

be clothed? and be not lifted up on high. For all these things do the nations of the world seek. But your Father knoweth that you have need of these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." . . . This is the divine guarantee of Him who conquered the world, who proved to be the master over life and death, who gave His Life that we might have confidence in His words and promises.

Christ and the Wealthy Employer

The Divine Master was no less solicitous for the rich than He was for the poor, but in a different way. To the poor He was all sympathy and tender compassion, to the rich He was kindly stern. But He did not shun the wealthy. He healed the servant of a centurion, a foreign army officer. The man had built a synagogue for the Jewish people. Zacheus was the chief tax collector in a certain place and no doubt a notorious grafter. But Christ, in spite of popular protest, had dinner with him and won him to repentance.

More than once He accepted invitations to dine with people who were not poor. But His purpose was to reform them, not to cater to their position. He loved the rich as He loved the poor, but His warnings against love of riches were stinging and constant. Riches can be made the instruments of justice, even as poverty can elevate a soul to sanctity. The possessor of vast wealth, however, runs a far greater risk of eternal damnation than those who are removed from the temptations of greed and avarice. He warned the wealthy that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get to heaven. He meant those whose hearts were set on riches and who refused to use their fortunes to save their souls. When a poor widow dropped a few pennies in the collection basket at the Temple door, He called the attention of the disciples to it. She had done more than those who gave generously but who had plenty to give. The classic parable that He preached on profits should certainly give pause to those who feel blessed in an abun-

dance of this world's goods. "And He said to them: Take heed and beware of all covetousness: for a man's life doth not consist in the abundance of things which he possesseth. And He spoke a similitude to them, saying: The land of a certain rich man brought forth plenty of fruits. And he thought within himself, saying: What shall I do, because I have not where to lay up together my fruits? And he said: This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and will build greater: and into them will I gather all things that are grown to me, and my goods. And I will say to my soul: Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thy rest, eat, drink, made good cheer. But God said to him: *Thou fool*, this night do they require thy soul of thee; and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God."

Rich and poor, employer and employee, white and black, Christian, Jew and atheist . . . we all belong to God. He made us, He owns us, He put into our hearts the love that is

there and He wants it back. Nothing we can do, nothing we can give will be a substitute for the love we owe to God. All the woe, all the grief, the sorrow, the torture that the world knows today is the result of but one evil—God's children have refused to allow God to associate with them.

The nations of the world cry for peace, but there is no peace, for they have exiled the Prince of Peace. The happiness of the home is shattered because pagan practices have usurped the place of Christian modesty. The legislators of the land make laws to insure peace and prosperity but they are futile because the Author of all law and the Giver of all good gifts is ignored. Injustice stalks the earth and cruelty keeps the nations of the world in chains because men place confidence in the force of arms and the power that money buys, forgetting the gentle admonition, "Learn of Me for I am meek and humble of heart." There is but one answer to it all . . . to our natural efforts must be added prayer . . . we must pray the world back to God.

Fifteen Minute Service

HYMN TO CHRIST THE WORKER

(Tune—*Ave Maris Stella No. 2*)

(From *Cantuale ad usum Domus Parisiensis Congregationis Missionis*—page 233, Ed. 1910.)

1. Joseph at your work bench,
Mary with your mother's care,
Showing Him our human ways,
Teach us now His Life to share.

REFRAIN

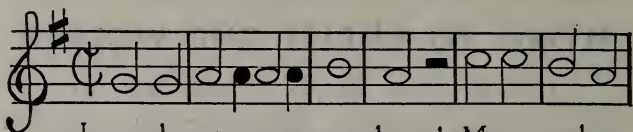
Guide our poor stumbling steps
aright,
Teach us to find our burden light,
Jesus Worker, bless our toil.

2. By Your toil with Joseph,
In Your days at Mary's side,
Christ, the Worker, we have found,
Our own labor sanctified.—Refrain.

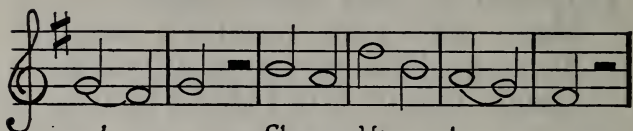
3. With a hammer in Your Hand,
Great Master of creation,
You gave to us Your workmen,
New symbols of salvation.
—Refrain.

4. Jesus, by Your labor,
Borne for us with sacred Love,
Teach us how to work and pray
Till we rest with Thee above.
—Refrain.

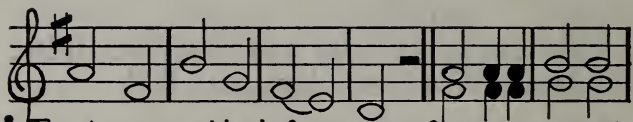
HYMN TO CHRIST THE WORKER



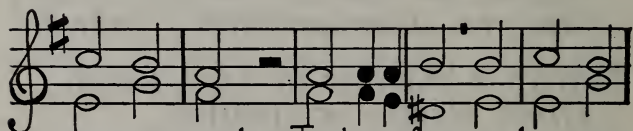
Jo-seph at your work bench, Mar-y with your



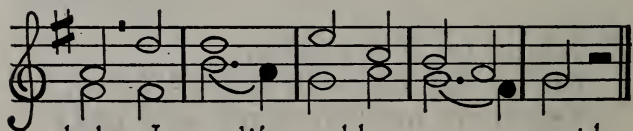
moth-er's care, Showing Him our hu-man ways,



Teach us now His Life to share. Guide our poor stumbling
(Refrain)



steps a - right. Teach us to find our bur-den



light, Je-sus Work-er, bless our toil.

PRAYER TO CHRIST, THE WORKER

I believe in God—the Father Almighty—Creator of heaven and earth.—I believe in Jesus Christ—His Only Son—True God and True Man.

Dear Lord—by Your labors in the carpenter shop of Nazareth—by the honest sweat that dropped from Your Sacred Brow—by the hardened Hands that held the hammer—by the weariness You felt from Your daily toil—You have shown us—that You were truly man even as we—Your fellow workers.

Dear Lord, by the miracles You wrought—with those same calloused Hands—by Your unquestioned holiness—by Your all-surpassing knowledge—by Your power over life—and Your victory over death in the Resurrection—You proved to a scoffing world—that You were indeed the Son of God.

Christ, the Worker—King of Kings—and Worker of Workers—I praise You.

One with the Father and the Holy Ghost—One God in Three Divine Persons—I adore you.

Sacred Heart of Jesus—rule the world!

Thy Kingdom Come!

Let Social Justice reign!

PRAYER FOR WORKERS

O Christ, the Worker—You have said, “Come to Me all you who labor and are heavily burdened—and I will refresh you.”—We come to You to-night—humbly and hopefully.—You are the Way, the Truth and the Life.—In You alone can we find strength and courage—peace and progress.—We believe that we have been made—to the image and likeness of the one true God.—We refuse to believe—that we are merely matter—one with the worms of the earth—and the dirt of the fields.—We are children of the Father—endowed with reason—gifted with a free will—beautified in Baptism—by the grace of the Creator.—We are the adopted sons of God—sharers in the merits of His own Son—destined to live forever with the angels and the saints.

Give us the grace, O Christ, the Worker—to know our dignity as human beings.—Give us the grace—to recognize our duties—as members of one human family. Teach us to do an honest day’s work—for an honest day’s pay—to do battle against injustice—by prayer and sacrifice—but

never to yield—to the impulse of violence—or revenge.

Sacred Heart of Christ the Worker—be our strength—our solace—and the model of our manhood.

PRAYER FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

O Christ, the Worker—You who have said—“The foxes have holes and the birds of the air nests,—but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head,”—look down with mercy and kindness upon the unemployed. Grant them the grace—of patience, courage and perseverance—in their dark day of trial.—Soften the hearts of unjust men—whose lives contradict Your teachings—whose souls are shriveled—by a lust for gold.—Give to the unhappy victims—of their injustice O Lord—a new abundance of Your satisfying grace.—Teach them the meaning of the words—“Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.”—Strike fear into the hearts of unjust possessors—that they may heed the warning—“Woe to you that are rich—for you have your consolation.”—Relieve the world of inhuman conditions—that

deprive men—of the right to work.

Christ, the Worker—King of Kings and Worker of Workers—teach all of us the lesson—“Blessed are the poor in spirit—for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.”

Sacred Heart of Jesus, rule the world!

Thy Kingdom Come!

Let Social Justice reign!

Five minute talk

PRAYER FOR EMPLOYERS

O Christ, the Worker—open the hearts—and enlighten the minds—of those who hire their fellow men for pay.—Bring into their souls—the divine light of Your revelations.—Pour into the hearts—of just and honest employers—a superabundance of Your heavenly grace—that the happiness of their lives—may spur on the laggard—to the joys of justice.—Remind the powerful—who rule the lives of men—that they, too—are but clay and spirit as the rest of men.—Teach them that their souls—can be tortured by the flames of Hell—even as the adulterer, the murderer

and the blasphemer. — Make them aware—that one day they, too—must come face to face with Christ, the Carpenter. Grant that they may see the justice—of a living wage—decent working hours—and human conditions for those who toil.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, rule the world!

Let Social Justice reign!

PRAYER FOR ATHEISTS

O Christ, the Worker—have pity on those, who crucify You anew.— Take from their hearts—the hammer of hatred—and from their minds—the bloody spikes of spite and envy.— Say from the altar—as You said from the Cross—“Father, forgive them—for they know not what they do.”— Teach us to know the vile malice—and the deep ingratitude of sin.— Grant that we may live our lives—that other men may say—“See how those Christians love one another.”— Let the beauty of Your teachings—and the grandeur of Your Church—so shine through us—that we may draw all men—from ignorance to light—

from hate to love,—that there may really be “One flock and One Shepherd.”

Sacred Heart of Christ the Worker,
rule the world!

Let Social Justice reign!

PRAYER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

O Mary, Mother of the Sacred Heart, “remember—that never was it known—that anyone who fled to your protection—implored your help—or sought your intercession—was left unaided.”—Your children, Mother Mary—wandering in a weary world—need their mother’s care.—Pray for us—sweet mother—that the spirit of the little home of Nazareth—may take possession of the world.—Fill the hearts of fathers and mothers—sons and daughters—with the love that filled your heart.—You are the mother of all virtues—Mother Mary; we, your children, beg for Social Justice for the world.

Sacred Heart of Christ the Worker,
rule the world!

Mother of the Sacred Heart, hear
our prayer.

Let Social Justice reign!

BENEDICTION

O Salutaris Hostia,
Qui cœli pandis ostium.
Bella premunt hostilia;
Da robur, fer auxilium.

Uni trinoque Domino
Sit sempiterna gloria,
Qui vitam sine termina,
Nobis donet in patria.

Tantum ergo Sacramentum,
Veneremur cernui;
Et antiquum documentum
Novo cedat ritui;
Præstet fides supplementum,
Sensuum defectui.

Genitori, Genitoque,
Laus et jubilatio;
Salus, honor, virtus quoque
Sit et benedictio;
Procedenti ab utroque
Compar sit laudatio. Amen.

P. Panem de cœlo præstitisti eis.

Ch. Omne delectamentum in se
habentem.

OREMUS

Deus, qui nobis sub Sacramento mirabili passionis tuae memoriam reliquisti; tribue, quaesumus, ita nos corporis et sanguinis tui sacra mysteria venerari ut redemptionis tuae fructum in nobis jugiter sentiamus: Qui vivis et regnas in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

THE DIVINE PRAISES

Blessed be God.

Blessed be His holy Name.

Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true Man.

Blessed be the Name of Jesus.

Blessed be His Most Sacred Heart.

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

Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy.

Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.

Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.

Blessed be St. Joseph, her most chaste spouse.

Blessed be God in His Angels and in His Saints.

