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Visits to the **BLESSED SACRAMENT**



by

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THE QUEEN'S WORK
3742 West Pine Blvd.
St. Louis, Mo.

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VISITS TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

The visits which a man or woman pays during the course of a lifetime are infinitely varied.

There is the swift little call when a friend drops in, says "Good morning," asks about your health or your state of mind, and runs off again. "Pop calls," they call them down south.

There is the leisurely visit, when you sit down with a friend, quite content to thrash out a variety of subjects from start to finish. During such leisurely visits you are likely to become very personal, talking about your intimate problems and ideals, listening attentively while your friend speaks about things that as a rule he keeps hidden in his soul.

There is the sort of visit which is characterized by a happy wordlessness. In the twilight, with a really close friend, you are content just to sit and know that your friend is there. Strength and sympathy travel on unseen currents and waves between you. You pass beyond the need of words.

There is the hurried call you make in time of need. "May I borrow . . . ?" "Will you let me have . . . ?" "I'm in a pinch and need help . . ." "What would you do in this situation . . . ?"

There is the prolonged consultation when you talk over a complicated problem with a friend who is a doctor or a lawyer or just a wise counselor likely to give you the advice and guidance you need.

There is the breathless reunion of lovers. There is the contented interchange of thoughts between old friends. There is the quick give-and-take of associates who find one another congenial. There is the clinging together of people in trouble. There is the assurance with which you ask a favor of a friend and the readiness with which your favor is granted.

All this comes in the course of human visits.

The Same With Him

Really there is no essential difference between purely human visits and our visits to this God-With-Us. He is a friend such as no other friend can possibly be. He is a lover who asks nothing of His beloved which is not for that beloved's good. He is the powerful personage who can grant the most unbelievable favors. He is the skilled physician, the wise lawyer, the prudent counselor. He is content with the quick "pop call" which an intimate reserves for an intimate. He delights in the prolonged visit which is characterized by a thrashing out of a variety of questions. He is happy when we love Him well enough to sit silently with Him, content that the waves of understanding and love supply for any

need of slow and clumsy words. He is divinely pleased, when we ask Him to supply for our wants. He answers questions with a finality and assurance that make the wisest advice of a human guide seem halting and stuttering.

Visits to the God-With-Us may be as varied as our visits to a human friend.

They have only this difference: This Divine Friend is eager for our visits as no human friend has ever been. He is understanding and sympathetic as no other dearest intimate could ever be. He is not hampered by human ignorance or human poverty; He can meet our needs and answer our questions out of divine riches and limitless wisdom.

Courtesy Calls

Life would be very rich and the soul would be wonderfully blessed if the simple resolution were taken never to pass a church on foot without pausing for the briefest visit. That is a kind of universal "when" which is well worth a resolution.

Good manners have always dictated that we call upon our friends on the great days or great anniversaries of their lives. We certainly pay the same courtesy to God and call upon God-With-Us on the great feasts of His Church and on the days that mark anniversaries in the lives of Christ and His Mother.

When a friend has done us a favor, we think it the proper thing to pause and thank him. When God has conferred on us some special blessing, some success or grace or good fortune, mere human decency demands that we call to express our gratitude.

Regularly

Good friends often, if they are easily reached, try to get in contact with one another at least once a day, by a short call, by telephone, at lunch.

Once a day it is within the power of everyone to pay a brief call on the Best of Friends. The call may be short. It is its regularity that is the proof of friendship.

“Wish me luck,” cries the friend popping into his friend’s home or office. “I’m off to tackle that job.” Then, with the greeting and good wishes of his friend in his ears, he goes off more jauntily to his new project.

Before we undertake anything important, before we embark on a new enterprise, certainly before we set out for some situation that is fraught with danger or the possibility of temptation, we will inevitably make a call upon Christ. Where the friend can give us only the reassurance of his good wishes and perhaps his prayers, the God-With-Us can give us the grace and strength necessary to make our undertaking a success or to fight happily through our peril.

But there is no precise “when.” All times are suitable.

How?

Though, in the pages that follow, there are prayers indicated for visits to the Blessed Sacrament, the simplest and best visit would run thus:

1. Through faith in His presence, we enter the house of our God in the Eucharist.

2. We genuflect because that is an act of faith by which we adore the God who deigns to dwell with men.

3. We pause briefly while we recall who is present upon the altar.

4. We think then of the tremendous, infinitely vast love that holds Christ unendingly in the tabernacle waiting for men.

5. Simply we thank Him for His presence.

6. We then tell Him our most pressing need or problem, asking His guidance and advice.

7. We commend to Him the world, those we love, those for whom we have promised to pray.

8. We express regret that we must leave, but promise that we will be back at the first opportunity.

9. Our genuflection is a graceful gesture of departure.

10. We leave, asking Him to come with us in His strength and through His grace.

Methods

The following methods are merely suggested. The better the visit, the less likelihood is there that the visitor will need a book. We don't carry a book along when we visit a friend. We know we are going to have plenty to say and do. We may, however, take along a book when calling upon someone who is not particularly talkative or whom we don't know as well as we should. The book is a guide, a starting point in conversation. We are real friends when we talk straight from the heart.

Talking from the heart is an essential of visits to the Blessed Sacrament.

FIRST VISIT

The Visit of Faith and Need

Part 1. Faith:

Kneeling in the presence of the Eucharistic God, I ask myself these simple questions:

1. Who is this who dwells upon the altar?

The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity . . . true God and true man . . . my Redeemer . . . my Savior and best Friend . . . with the infinite power of God . . . with the burning love of His Sacred Heart . . . waiting for my arrival.

2. How do I know this?

Because He said, "This is my body" and "This is my blood," and commanded His priests to continue His action until the end of time.

Because He loved me so much that He would not permit Himself to be taken away from me by any power on earth, but would stay with me all days, even to the end of the world.

Out of a great faith I cry:

My Eucharistic God, I believe that you are present on the altar and in the tabernacle. I know your words and I hear them again in perfect clarity. I am sure that your love was great enough to make this wonder possible. I have experienced in my soul the joy of your presence. My Divine Savior, I believe; help my unbelief.

Part 2. Adoration:

Since this is God present here . . .

Since this is my Blessed Savior . . .

Since this is the future Judge of the living and the dead . . .

Since this is the King of Kings whom the whole world of men and angels must adore . . .

I owe him my obedience . . .

I should bow before Him as a creature before his Creator . . .

I should kneel as a subject to his king . . .

I should honor Him as one honors the person who has saved him from terrible evil . . .

Hence I say:

My God, my Captain, my Savior and my King, I kneel willingly before you. I acknowledge you as the one who made me

because of your love for me, who redeemed me on the cross, who will one day judge me and decide my eternal fate, who are the King of heaven and of earth. Accept my service and my life. Let me live for you and serve you with devoted heart.

Part 3. Gratitude:

Why does the great God and the supreme King continue in the tabernacle?

Because He loves me with so personal a love that He continually seeks my company . . . Because He feels that His presence here will give me new strength and courage . . . Because He can from the tabernacle more easily confer His favors and blessings upon me . . . Because He is unwilling to leave me alone in the midst of temptations and perils.

In gratitude I cry:

My generous God and Lover, from my heart I thank you for your presence here within reach of my hand, within easy ear-shot of my cry. You have been wonderfully generous in making the world, in creating me, in giving me divine life and sonship through baptism, in surrounding me with your loving care. You have climaxed your benefits by remaining here at my service. And I am deeply, truly grateful.

Part 4. Presentation of Needs:

The realization of God's goodness and generosity, His desire to help me and to supply my needs awakens new confidence. Quietly I consider:

What I most need for myself.

What I should like to obtain for others.

What things are most needed by sinners and the world.

And I cry:

My generous Savior, I lay my needs at your feet. It is sufficient for me to mention them. Quietly, here and now, I tell them to you . . . And for those I love or those who depend upon me, I ask the following gifts . . . And for those that neglect you and sinners who despise you, I ask . . . My memory of past favors and graces makes strong my confidence. Grant me your love and your grace.

Part 5. My Offer of the Future:

How have I in the past shown my gratitude for Christ's presence?

How frequent and prayerful have been my visits?

How much of strength have I drawn from them?

Has my life indicated my belief in and use of God's presence?

Regretfully but confidently, I say:

Blessed Savior, I offer you my life. Give me now the strength to go forth and carry your spirit to the world. I need you in every act of my daily life. Your strength must supply for mine. Your purity must be my shield. Your life must be my example. Here and now from your living

presence I draw those things which I need. Accept the day ahead and the life that follows. May I live worthy of the great gift of your Eucharistic presence. I shall carry my faith and your spirit to the world.

SECOND TO SEVENTH VISIT

“Pop Calls”

1st Call: At Any Time:

1. I devoutly genuflect, adoring God present and making this act of faith:

2. My God I believe you are present because you have said so. I believe this because I know your desire to be with me. Give me a strong faith.

3. In gratitude I thank you for your presence. This is an added favor to all you have done for me. I am deeply in your debt. But I am grateful.

4. You know my weakness and my needs. Help me with your grace and your strength. Make me courageous, patient, loyal and true.

5. Especially I ask help in this pressing need . . .

6. In return I promise to be not too unworthy of your great love and your presence in my life. Help me with your grace.

2nd Call: First Call of the Day:

Good morning, Blessed Savior. I am beginning the day once more. Yesterday I made many mistakes and did many things

badly. Especially . . . Today I mean to do better. But I have a special problem today with which I must grapple. Give me your strength for that problem . . . I offer you the whole day. Take it and make it worthy of you.

3rd Call: After a Success or Because of Some Joy:

My gracious God, I know that this success and joy have come from you who have always showered favors upon me. My deepest and most heartfelt thanks. Please do not let this blessing turn my head or do me harm. I offer it to you knowing that it came from you. Let it be a spur to further love and more generous service. I lay it gladly and gratefully at your feet.

4th Call: After a Failure, Sin, Mistake:

Merciful Savior, I have made a frightful failure of things. You know this failure of mine. But I confess it humbly. It is the sort of thing I do when I try to work without you, when I turn away from your protection and your association. Forgive me and forgive my mistake. Do not let it do harm to anyone. I dread the thought of hell. I do not want to lose the joys of heaven. I would not willingly nail you to the cross. But I am most deeply sorry, because you are so good and I am such an ingrate. Let me start again. With your strength, I will never repeat this failure.

5th Call: In Time of Need:

Gracious Savior, you are more willing to

fulfill my needs than I am to make them known. Very badly right now I need this favor . . . Grant it to me if it is for my good. If it is not, I accept your decision. But if this is not what is best for me, then give me what in your love and wisdom you see I most need.

6th Call: For Others:

Today, generous Savior, I am praying for others. Bless those whom I love . . . Be gracious to those who have been good to me . . . And protect sinners from the consequences of their sin and the world from their faithlessness and ingratitude . . . Especially I pray for . . . Out of your loving heart, have mercy upon them all.

EIGHTH VISIT

We Watch With Christ

From His vantage point in the tabernacle Christ watches the world. He watches because he loves all men so tenderly. He watches because He would protect them from the consequences of their folly if they would only let Him. He watches because He is waiting for the love and the coming of mankind.

What does He see?

1. The Sinful World

The great mass of mankind rushes wildly into its stupid sins. The world is filled with war and murder, with lust and selfishness,

with crimes of passion and dishonesty, with cruelty of men to men, with sins of the tongue and sins of the mind.

Christ must live on amid a world that seems so intent upon spoiling itself and poisoning life with the horror and ugliness of sin.

I make an act of reparation:

Sorrowful Savior, I deeply regret the sins of the world. First of all, though, I regret the sins that have spoiled and marred my own life. Surely I should never have sinned after your manifestations of graciousness and love for me. But I did, and I am sorry. And may I offer you my love and my service in reparation for the sins of mankind? I will keep myself pure to make reparation for the world's impurity and to be more like your immaculate self and your stainless Mother. I will be kind and just with others to make reparation for the injustices and cruelties that the world showed to you and still shows to men. I will guard my tongue from evil and keep all wrong out of my mind. I will try to speak your truth and in your praise and to use only kind and pure words. I will fill my mind with a deeper knowledge of you and a deeper appreciation of your truth. May my whole life be worthy to offer to you in sorrow for the evil that fills the world. May I do only good.

2. The Busy World

Standing near Christ we see how intensely busy the world is about things that do not

matter. It is making money. It is making war. It is accumulating conquests that will fall from its hands tomorrow. It is rushing after loves that die before they are enjoyed. It is seeking fame, though no one long remembers even the most famous. It is piling up luxuries that leave the heart empty. It is struggling and striving and rushing and growing breathless about things that will be lost in death or destroyed by the swift passage of time.

Comparatively, how few are busy about Christ's important things, "His Father's business." How few are working to become saints, to amass grace, to save souls, to advance the kingdom of God.

I offer my life in reparation for this:

King of Kings, men are so busy about unimportant things. I have spent most of my life worrying and working for the same trifles. Death will take them all. The accidents of life sweep them away. Your concerns are eternal, as undying as souls, as endless as the kingdom of your Father. I know that, no matter what my vocation in life, I can dedicate it to you. My work can be your work. I mean to make it so. I will pray for the advancement of your kingdom and the salvation of souls. Each day I will, through the morning offering, dedicate my day and its work to you. I will not seek the trifles that seem important to the world and are useless for eternity. But I will work to grow richer in grace and to help

souls to attain their happiness. Accept my life and help me to make it worthy of you.

3. The World That Does Not Believe

Standing at the side of the Eucharistic Christ, feeling his presence, I yet see with astonishment that so few really believe in Him.

There are the millions who act as if He were not present and who ignore Him. There are the men who simply refuse to consider the unmistakable proofs of God's existence. There are the millions of Christians who decline to accept the meaning of the clear words, "This is my body . . . This is my blood." Doubt and unbelief are the fashion.

Even among those with faith, how weak and feeble and without effect upon their lives is that faith. Some Catholics live as if they did not really believe. There are Catholics who say they believe Christ is present in the Blessed Sacrament and yet pay little attention to Him.

I offer Christ my faith:

My Lord and my God, I salute you in these words of St. Thomas. I know the weakness of my own faith, and I am sorry. Yet such as my faith is, I offer it to you against the doubt and disbelief of the world. It must wound your divine heart to see men denying your existence. It must cause you infinite pain to see them refusing to accept the great gift of your presence in the world.

And the lives of your friends, contradicting their faith and giving scandal to others, must be the severest trial to your love. I am sorry. Inadequate as is my faith, I offer it to you. But I know that faith is a habit increased by practice. I will practice my faith. I will visit you in the Blessed Sacrament. I will learn my faith more fully. I will make my life a constant expression of that faith. Strengthen my faith, dear Lord, to know you and profess you before the world.

NINTH VISIT

The Lonely Christ

Continuing the thoughts of the preceding visit, we consider:

The loneliness of the Christ as He waits for worshipers and friends, and finds so few actually coming.

1. We consider the empty churches of the world . . .

Compared with the crowded streets . . .

the filled theaters . . .

the busy markets . . .

the shops and stores . . .

the pleasure resorts, games, tracks . . .

the gathering at parades and demonstrations which are often opposed to His honor and interests . . .

And in His churches where he waits:

A handful of worshipers . . .

Often no one at all . . .

2. We consider that though Christ loves the world and all men in it with the most intense love . . . though He does all in His power to win that love for which He thirsts . . .

He sees men and women pouring out their love on every type of trivial, sinful, unimportant, or human thing:

Loving other people . . .

Loving money or power . . .

Loving mere pleasure or just a good time . . .

Loving the arts and literature . . .

And so few of them loving Him:

Men without faith cannot and do not love Him.

Men with faith love him so coldly and so little.

The warmest human love for Christ is full of distractions and small sins.

It is so easily turned aside from Christ to other things and other people.

3. Turning from the world, I think only of what Christ has seen in me.

- a. How infrequent my visits to Him.

I make a sincere examination of conscience and an act of sorrow.

- b. How imperfect, distracted, tawdry, cold, human my love for Him:

People and things come first.

At prayer I am so distracted.

In His presence I yawn or think of other things.

4. Realizing all this, I make:

- a. An act of sorrow for the neglect of the world and for my own neglect.
- b. I sympathize with Christ in His loneliness.
- c. I ask Him to make warm my love and devoted service.
- d. I promise that with me no person or thing will ever come before His love and His service.

TENTH VISIT

The Invitation of Christ

Christ never spoke more beautiful or more reassuring words than He did when He cried, "Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you."

It was His great invitation to the whole world, the world of the burdened, the weary, the exhausted, the sorrowful, the tortured, the discouraged, the unhappy.

Fortunately He did not mean that we had to come to a man written up in the pages of a history, even the beautiful history which is the Gospel. He did not mean that we had to come to His shadowy spirit. He meant that the people of His day could come to Him in person. They did. All the sick and the weary, the troubled and distressed, those who needed divine help and human consolation came. And for all He fulfilled His promise with joyous literalness.

He meant that invitation to hold as long as there would be weary and burdened men (which will be as long as men are men). His physical presence was what they needed. They needed to feel the nearness of His beating heart and the closeness of His love. That He meant to be possible for our age as well as for the brief years of His life on earth. He would not deny to all future generations what He gave, during His own time on earth, to the inhabitants of an obscure village. His invitation is universal, as universal as human needs. Its fulfillment is possible right here and now.

Quietly we remember the acceptance of that invitation by the men and women of His time. We watch the reassuring procession that came and went—laboring men and women, people crushed by sorrow, the sick and the afflicted, the poor and the wretched, those who though rich like Nicodemus, were terribly lonely; those who had known love and found it as unsatisfactory as Magdalen did, until they found His love; old widows and little children; strong captains of Roman legions and little blind girls; learned men and lepers; sisters who had lost their brothers and mothers who had lost their sons; men who had lost their power to see, and those whose hearts were sick. And all went away healed.

I apply all this to the Christ who waits in the Eucharist.

1. "Come to me."

To whom? The merciful . . . the power-

ful . . . the tender and loving . . . the strong and sympathetic . . . the never too busy . . . the patient and forgiving . . . the healing . . . the counseling Christ . . . who is God . . . made man out of love for men.

2. "All you that labor."

My work is hard . . . monotonous . . . not too successful . . . so different in its results from my high hopes of it . . . oppressive at times . . . Later He said, "My yoke is sweet." Christ willingly takes His share in the yoke of my labor. He willingly carries with me the load of my work. What can I do to make the labor of life easier?

a. I can ask Him to help me carry that labor. Quietly I do so.

b. I can ask Him to accept it and make it successful in the sense of His worthwhile success.

c. I can model it on His labor—patient, tireless, offered to His Father.

d. I can unite it with His work on earth . . . and His patient work in the tabernacle.

My Eucharistic God, I come to you and lay at your feet my work in life. Often it is heavy and oppressive. Too frequently I realize how imperfect and unsatisfactory it is. Give me strength to do my work in life well. Accept all that I do for your honor and the advancement of your cause on earth. I will try to make my labor like yours. So that it may merit an eternal reward, I unite it with your work, which was entirely pleas-

ing to your heavenly Father. Give me joy in my work and grace from my work and the conviction that what I do is acceptable to you.

3. "Are burdened."

Life is often a burden. Trials press heavily upon us. We cannot escape the burden of ourselves, limited, imperfect, disappointing as we are to ourselves. Responsibilities press upon us. Poverty often adds its pressure. We carry the troubles of others, and the troubles that often are other people. Sickness weighs us down.

And there is my own particular burden which at the present time I find so hard to bear.

What can I do with my burden?

a. No one, I remember, ever brought his burden to Christ without having that weight lifted and that pressure taken away.

b. I can lay my burden at His feet and ask Him to take it.

c. I can see Christ carrying His cross, and realize that He willingly carries my burden along with that cross.

d. I can offer to help Christ carry His cross, realizing that, if I do, the weight of my own burden will disappear.

e. I can offer to carry this, my burden, out of love for Him, and thereby make my burden enormously valuable.

My blessed Savior, who carried the burden of the cross so willingly, I am carrying a

burden that you have placed upon my shoulders. Remove that burden or make it lighter. I lay this burden at your feet, asking you to take it from my shoulders. But if you think it good for me, I offer it up to you, uniting myself with you as you carried your cross for me. Perhaps if you will let me see in my burden my opportunity for carrying your cross along with you, the weight of my burden will disappear. In any case, may my burden and the way I carry it be acceptable to you and be the source of grace and eternal merit to me.

4. "And I will refresh you."

The Eucharistic Christ refreshed us with His own strength . . . with the richness of His grace . . . with the Bread that comes down from heaven . . . with the Wine that is the strength of virgins . . . with His consoling presence . . . with His wise counsel and guidance . . . with His unfailing sympathy and love.

Eucharistic Savior, give me the strength I need to carry my burden through life. Lend me your courage, your strength, your power. I will receive you often in Holy Communion, knowing that this is the great source of my refreshment. I will cling to your hands, feeling your strength supplying for my weakness. I will listen to your counsels and advice, conscious that in them I shall find certainty and confidence. In all my troubles I will come to you. And each time I do so, I shall gain more strength and be more ready for the difficult things of life.

ELEVENTH VISIT

To the Generous Christ

This visit, following logically from the one that precedes, is based on the beautiful fact that Christ is more eager to give than we are to ask and that He remains in the Blessed Sacrament because His presence there makes it easy for us to ask favors of Him.

The visit is a series of simple considerations for which we ourselves supply the words and the prayers.

1. God has been so wonderfully generous . . . to all the universe . . . to this earth . . . to human beings . . . to me in particular . . .

I sincerely thank Him, thinking over in a special manner what He has done for me . . .

2. Christ, God-With-Us, was simply generosity itself while on earth: with His miracles, His personal service, His gifts, His work . . .

I recall the beautiful unselfishness of the Savior . . .

3. Christ remains in the tabernacle so that He may more easily encourage our requests and more readily assure us of their fulfillment . . .

Inspired with this confidence, I ask:

a. For things for myself . . . to correct my greatest fault . . . to manage my greatest

difficulty . . . for my soul . . . for my success in life . . . for my bodily needs . . . for that particular problem that presses upon me.

b. For things for those near to me . . . those I am related to . . . those I love . . . those who depend upon me . . . those who have done me kindnesses . . . those I have wronged . . . those whom I naturally dislike . . .

c. For those who are near to the interests of the Savior . . . sinners, especially those in danger of death . . . those without faith . . . those who could be saints . . . the Church and the priesthood . . . those at work in the missions . . . those in special need . . . those who are close to the heart of the Savior . . .

4. Generous Savior, I make one condition: I ask all this knowing that you can tell better than I what is best for me. If what I ask would be harmful, or if something else would be better, I accept your wise decision and trust myself to your guidance. I also ask for that gift which you know me to need, even though I may not be aware of my need. Will you accept my deep gratitude, dear Lord, for your immense generosity?

TWELFTH TO SIXTEENTH VISIT

Through Mental Prayer

The following visits are to be made quietly and perhaps wordlessly. The important thing is that we think and feel

seriously and then make resolutions that in some way will affect our lives.

Remember:

1. That Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is the same Christ who walked among men and whose lovely history is recorded in the Gospels.

2. That He mystically continues in the tabernacle the work He began upon earth.

3. That we have the same opportunities of visiting Him, of conversing with Him, of asking His advice, and of profiting by His example that we would have had if we had lived on earth during His life on earth.

4. That hence, in these mental prayers, we simply eliminate distance and time and imagine Christ present before us as He was in His life on earth, living over again with Him the events of His mortal life, and profiting as we should have done had we known Him and visited Him then.

5. That picturing Christ before us, we watch the events of His life as if paralleled now in the tabernacle, and then out of our hearts we talk to Him and make our personal resolutions.

First Visit of Mental Prayer: To the Babe in Bethlehem

1. We imagine that we are present in Bethlehem and that the divine Babe lies before us holding out His arms to us.

2. We ask for deeper love of the Babe and joy in His presence.

3. Briefly we recall the events of Bethlehem: the arrival of Joseph and Mary after their long and tiresome journey; the rejection by the villagers; the finding of the stable-cave; the coming of the God-Man from heaven; the joy of Joseph and Mary; the love of the infant for the world; His patient waiting all through that day for their coming; the small number of those who came to adore Him; the tremendous graces He heaps upon those who do come; His regret that there are not more; the joy of the angels; the importance of all this to earth—God has come and the world is saved.

4. Briefly we parallel this with the events that have taken place on the altar: This morning the priest arrives at this altar for Mass. Compare its poverty and inadequacy with the throne of God's glory. How few come for that morning Mass, and how sleepy and inattentive they. The great world outside is not interested and offers no place to the Eucharistic Christ; yet He comes, taking His place in the white swaddling cloths which are the Host. There is joy in the hearts of those who love Him—for God has come again to earth. Oh, the love that burns in the heart of this Eucharistic King! He has come only because He loves men and desires to be with them; He is placed, not in a manger, but upon an altar stone; He patiently waits all

through the day for those who will visit Him and adore Him. How pitifully few come! But with what tremendous graces He blesses those few; His deep regret that there are not more; the angels hover round the tabernacle. And this is vastly important to the world—God has not left the world; He dwells with men; He remains on with them; He is born again and again out of infinite love.

5. Humbly I thank the King for His presence, adore Him here in His mystical Bethlehem, and offer Him my love and my service.

Second Visit of Mental Prayer: To Christ Dwelling in Nazareth

1. We imagine that we are walking down a little street in Nazareth; we knock at the door of a small house and are admitted by Mary, who introduces us to Jesus.

2. We ask for a deeper faith in Him, and a knowledge of how to live.

3. Briefly, we see Christ in His home in Nazareth: We note its poverty compared with the glories of heaven; its lack of even ordinary comforts. But a heavenly purity and sinlessness pervade this home, an un-earthly spirit of complete peace and harmony. We listen to the conversations between Mary and Joseph and Jesus, so beautifully charitable, so kind, so considerate. We watch Jesus, as the little boy, helping His mother; as the young man, taking care

of her. We see the Holy Family's kindness to the neighbors and to all who happen in to ask for any favor. We see God the Father smiling in approval on that little house; we realize how favored we should have been had we been allowed to visit there for even a brief five minutes, and how rich in grace we should have been when we left.

4. Briefly, we see Christ living on in the little house on earth that is the tabernacle: We note the poverty of that tabernacle compared with the mansions of heaven; it is more a voluntary prison than a home; yet it is a center of purity, a source and fountain of sinlessness; there is peace here, and one cannot entertain unkind thoughts near that tabernacle; we listen to the voice of Christ speaking to us, asking us to be kind, to be generous, to be charitable, to be pure. We watch Christ mystically working for the salvation of the world, sending forth His graces, pouring forth His prayer, making His powerful intercession; we see Him heaping graces and blessings on anyone who visits Him. God the Father smiles down upon this tabernacle as the most important home in the world; we are actually privileged to visit this home, to be entertained by Jesus Christ, to see Him and talk with Him, and to go away loaded with His graces and gifts.

5. Humbly I thank my Eucharistic God for the privilege of this visit. I determine to make my home like His. I go forth to live as I have seen Him live.

Third Visit of Mental Prayer: To Christ in Heaven

1. We imagine that we are suddenly transported to heaven and see Christ the King in all His glory, surrounded by His angels and inviting us to share forever His infinite happiness.

2. We ask for a firmer hope in our eternal destiny and a realization that the tabernacle is the gateway to heaven.

3. Briefly, we picture Christ in heaven: Christ the victorious King, the invincible Ruler; Christ of the Sacred Heart, loving and beloved; the one Person for whom our hearts were made and in whom we shall find complete satisfaction; the one Person who is infinitely and completely beautiful; the source of boundless truth; giving those who surround Him, perfect joy, peace without end, love that knows no weariness, access to complete and perfect truth, the end of all worries and troubles and trials; sinlessness and its consequent calm of soul; immortal glory, endless joy.

4. Briefly, we remember that this same Christ is present in the Blessed Sacrament, and that, though His glory is hidden under the Host so that it will not frighten us, it is there in all its beauty and compelling force. Here, as in Heaven, He claims and gives perfect love. Here we find the source of all truth; here we gain strength for the war on temptation that means personal sinlessness. Peace and joy come from Christ in

the tabernacle; we gain calm of soul; we are assured here of our immortal happiness; we have a slight foretaste of eternal joy.

We remember happily that heaven is, in a sense, where Christ is. Christ is here. That closed door is the gateway through which Christ leads us safely from earth to heaven. Each time it opens, the King of Heaven comes forth. Each time we approach it, we get a glimpse of eternal happiness. Through it we shall pass safely to our eternal reward.

5. I make a sincere act of faith in heaven. I express my deep hope that through the favor of the Eucharistic King I shall some day pass safely into the presence of God. I thank Christ for leaving a little of heaven here on earth. I promise to use this gateway as the certain means of reaching Christ in the happiness He prepares for those who love Him.

Fourth Visit of Mental Prayer: Christ Among the Needy

Following the plan of the preceding mental prayers:

1. We see Christ going among the needy, blessing, consoling, curing them.

2. We ask Him for the help and strength we need.

3. We briefly recall Christ's work among the needy of earth: the sick, the sorrowful, the sinful, the outcast.

4. We recall that He remains on in the tabernacle because today the needy depend upon Him as much as ever they did.

5. I gratefully lay my own needs before Him.

Fifth Visit of Mental Prayer: Christ in His Workshop

1. We see Christ at the carpenter's bench in Nazareth.

2. We ask the privilege of modeling our work on His and making that work acceptable to God.

3. We briefly recall that Christ, in a poor carpenter shop, first learned a trade, then worked as His foster father's assistant, then took over the shop, supporting Himself and His mother by working for poor farmers and villagers.

4. We recall that He remains in the tabernacle because He still wants mystically to work for men—through prayer, intercession, the outpouring of His grace. And here as in Nazareth, His work is humble, largely unknown, unrecognized and unthanked.

5. I offer Christ my work, asking Him to make it like His own.

SEVENTEENTH VISIT

Round the Eucharistic World

Christ wishes by the most wonderful miracle to be:

Present in all the countries of the world . . .

Present at every period of history . . .

Present to supply the needs of every individual who may need Him . . .

1. I look back through Christian history:

From the moment of the Last Supper, Mass has been going on without interruption. Christ has been coming in the Eucharist. Tabernacles and human hearts have welcomed Him. I pause to see Christ in Rome, in Greece, in the catacombs, in the barbaric villages of the newly converted tribes, in the countries of rising Europe; carried by the traveling monks and priests to pagan countries; in all lands, even those that now are Protestant.

Attacks upon Him, from the attacks of Nero, through the attacks of the Reformation, to the attacks of modern Russia and Mexico, do not keep Him from entering the world and staying with men.

I adore Christ who has come to all the periods of modern history and thank Him for this proof of His overwhelming love for men.

2. I look across the modern world:

There is no place where Christ is not mystically coming in the Mass and remaining on in the tabernacle: in the most modern and busy of modern cities; backward African and Asiatic villages; great cathedrals; harbor towns; carried by mission-

aries into the bush and the jungle; on ships at sea; on altars built of brush by explorers; in countries that are Christian; in countries that are overwhelmingly pagan; even in countries that are trying to drive Him forth.

I adore Christ in the tabernacles of the world, realizing what His presence everywhere means to mankind: We are never, except by an act of unbelief or of hatred, separated from the Christ who loves us.

3. I observe the hours and find Christ coming into the world at each second of the day. As the Host is lifted in Mass, it greets the rising sun. And all through the day and all through the night the Eucharistic Christ remains on, watching over the world, awake or asleep, acting as tireless sentry over the souls of mankind.

I thank the Savior who has loved us enough to stay with us every minute of the day throughout all the days of history.

EIGHTEENTH VISIT

To Christ, the King of Social Order

Christ, while on earth, was most keenly interested in the temporal welfare of mankind.

He promised eternity to those who cared for the temporal needs of their fellow men. Thus:

1. His chief commandments were to love God and to love our neighbor.

2. He outlawed those things which make for human unhappiness in this world—sin, the love of money, selfishness, the seeking after power, oppression and injustice, lust and passion, cruelty to women and children, oppression and exploitation.

3. He laid down laws of justice for rulers, of charity and mercy for the rich, of care and love for the poor, of gentleness toward the weak and the needy.

4. He cured disease that brought unhappiness, but attacked sin as the source of most of the world's unhappiness and misery.

5. So today Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is keenly interested in all that makes for human happiness. We make this visit that His desires for the happiness of mankind in this world may be fulfilled.

1. Briefly we recall the intense interest which Christ displayed and the consuming labor which He expended wherever man's happiness in this life was concerned: His pleas for justice, mercy, charity; His attitude toward the poor, the weak, and the needy; His commandment to love our neighbor; His work for others—His miracles of healing and mercy; His law founded on this love of men and this desire for their happiness.

Most of all, He tried to unite disunited mankind in His mystical Body. "I am the vine; you are the branches," He cried, hoping that all men would put aside their

hatreds, oppressions, lusts, murders, and unite in peace, in perfect harmony, in justice, in love.

Briefly I pray:

Lord and Lover of mankind, thy Kingdom come! May the hatreds and injustices and sins that you feared and strove to drive from the hearts of men disappear under the power of your love. May men put aside sin as the source of the world's greatest unhappiness. May there be justice in government, peace among peoples and individuals, love among all men, unity in the world. I repeat your prayer that "they may be one, as thou, Father, and I are one."

2. We must remember that it was Christ who started all humanitarian reforms. Before He came, the strong alone were conceded rights. He taught men mercy and charity. He was gentle to women and children. He raised the standard of laboring men. He established the great brotherhood that should unite all His followers. All hospitals, orphanages, refuges, were the result of the teaching of the Divine Physician. All movements to improve mankind started when He taught men that all their fellow men were their brothers.

Yet today the modern world is trying to eliminate unhappiness while eliminating Christ, the lover of mankind. They want reforms without Christ who is the source of reforms. They begin to work for humanity by driving out humanity's Savior.

Humbly I cry:

Blessed Savior, show all men that there is no peace except in you and no happiness except in a heart that has driven out the sin that killed you. Be King of all men, even of those who strive to drive you forth, since only under your leadership will justice rule, peace prevail, men love one another, and the strong be merciful to the weak. By a great miracle of your grace soften those hearts which try to love their fellows though hating you. You are the King and center of all human happiness, the initiator of all human reforms, the source of human peace. Exercise your power by winning your enemies and making your friends and followers truly zealous for human happiness.

3. Christ stays on in the Blessed Sacrament to continue His work for human betterment and happiness.

He is still the center of man's noblest love.

He is the Head of the Mystical Body, to which He strives to unite all mankind.

He repeats from the tabernacle His moral law with all its social consequences.

He is still the King of Kings, holding back injustice and cruelty and oppression from the world.

At His altar men still meet in their most perfect unity and equality.

In His presence men find their deepest peace.

From His Eucharistic strength sinlessness comes to weak hearts.

He is the center of man's truest happiness.

He inspires men and women with the most unselfish desire to serve their fellow men.

Gratefully I pray:

Eucharistic King of mankind, remain with us always the source of our truest happiness in time and in eternity. From your tabernacle rule and guide the world. Give men freedom from sin, which is your greatest enemy and their greatest woe. By your shining example teach them mercy and justice and peace and love.

4. What does the Eucharistic Christ expect as my part in man's happiness?

First: I make an examination of conscience:

What do I do to make happier my home . . . my associates . . . my dependents . . . those I could influence? . . .

How strong is my zeal for the cause and the interests of the Social Reign of Christ?

Is the world better for my presence . . . Do I harm the world by sin . . . by injustice . . . by cruelty . . . by selfishness?

Second: I look into my own life to see how I can advance the cause of Christ and the happiness of mankind:

By more zeal in the conversion of souls . . .

By greater purity of life . . .

By putting the Corporal Works of Mercy into constant practice . . .

By charity and justice toward all . . .

By remembering that all men are my brothers, members of the Mystical Body, and hence deserving of my love . . .

By doing this today and in my regular work . . .

Humbly I say:

Jesus, King of Social Order, in the past I have failed to advance your kingdom and to make my fellow men happier and the world a better place. I am sorry. With your grace I will be a real apostle. I will exercise justice and charity. I will live at peace. I will do my part to keep sin from the world. You are my King. I acknowledge all men as my brothers. I admit all the implications of the doctrine of your Mystical Body. Give me the strength to fashion my life by your active love for and service of mankind.

EPILOGUE

The great desire of all men has been to have their God or gods dwelling with them. Because of that, the pagans placed beautiful statues of their deities in temples, where they could be visited and honored and implored.

Because the desire is natural, God filled the Temple of the Old Law with the brightness of His presence, and the Holy of Holies became the sanctuary of God dwelling among men.

But Christianity was to find God present in a form so dear and personal and intimate that He became the God-With-Us foretold by the prophets. "His name will be called Emmanuel," prophesied Isaias, and Emmanuel simply meant "God with us." Jesus determined that throughout all time He would remain with us, God dwelling among His creatures, God making His abode with the sons of His creation.

"This is my body . . . This is my blood." Christ spoke the miraculous words over the bread and wine. "Keep doing this for a memory of me," he added. And Christians knew that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity would be with them for all time.

Open Doors

So the doors of Catholic churches are open all through the day. Our God is present, not in a marble statue nor in His radiant spirit, but in His flesh and blood, His

soul and divinity. Protestant churches, that banished the Blessed Sacrament, are closed most of the time. Jewish churches are opened only for services. Catholic churches hold wide their doors for the coming and the going, the brief and the prolonged visits of those who believe the words of Christ and are made happy by the certainty that God's "delight is to be with the children of men."

Upon the altar Christ waits. His love holds Him there in the hope that His beloved friends will visit Him. That hope is one not too often realized. The world flows restlessly past the church. His faithful friends are extremely busy and preoccupied. A thousand seem to hurry by for one who enters. But He remains undiscouraged by disappointments.

To Those Who Come

Yet, because there is faith in the hearts of men and love even in cold souls, a faithful few come, kneel for a moment, adore their God from the depths of a splendid belief, place their needs at His feet, and hurry again on their way, loaded down with the blessings and graces of a grateful God. No one has ever paused even for a second before the waiting Christ without knowing the favor of His gratitude. The briefest visit wins incredible graces. From a swift prayer of love or petition comes strength, courage, renewed hope, success, favors for self and others.

The moments of our visits to the waiting Christ are, like the moments which follow Holy Communion, rich beyond all reckoning in the graces, temporal and spiritual, which God bestows on those who seek and find Him.

Fulfilment

“Seek and you shall find.” Seek Him in the tabernacle of His love and you shall find God Incarnate; shall find peace for your soul, grace and blessings beyond all measuring, the satisfaction of the needs of life.

“Ask and you shall receive.” Ask the listening Christ, and you will join the long line of those who, since His generous days upon earth, have stretched out empty hands and gone away laden with God’s good gifts.

“Knock and it shall be opened to you.” Knock at the locked door of the tabernacle, and that door will disappear. You will see with the clearness of faith the Christ who is within easy reach of your hand. Kneeling in the presence of the Incarnate God, you will have a foretaste of eternal joy. You will find that door is the gateway to peace, to plenty, to strength, to intimate friendship and association with the God who dwells among us.

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