

NOVENA

IN HONOR OF

ST. TERESA

*Translated from the Italian of*  
*ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI*



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## PREFACE.

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We earnestly recommend to the faithful the following little work of St. Alphonsus, "A NOVENA IN HONOR OF ST. TERESA."

The Church beholds with delight the new and increased impulse recently given to the devotion to this seraphic virgin and most highly venerated Saint of Spain, whose enlightened faith and sublime example of the noblest Christian virtues, exerted a most happy influence on the age in which she lived.

Ever watching over her children with maternal love and solicitude, she inspires them to seek the most appropriate and effectual means for securing an increase of faith and devotion, amid the peculiar dangers and temptations of the times.

The present age, like that of St. Teresa, is marked by more than a tendency to laxity and indulgence—scientific pursuits—the seeking of worldly wisdom, occupies the minds of the great majority of men to the ignoring and even the denying of the supernatural, whilst the love of sensual and material goods has banished from their hearts the love of God, and holds them captive to the things that pass away with time.

Now for these prevailing evils no more effectual remedy can be recommended than this devotion, presented to us in a form that breathes the very spirit of St. Teresa, the pride of the Church, and the glory of her native land, whose beautiful and heroic life of active faith mirrored forth the transcendent virtues of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ at a time when faith was weakening and charity growing cold.

A model of heroic virtue she has demonstrated by her own example and that of her daughters, the practicability of observing the austere counsels of the gospel.

May we not hope that this little work will meet with a ready acceptance, and accomplish the mission intended by its sainted author, viz: to lead souls to a higher and more intimate union with God by securing for them, through the intercession of St. Teresa, a participation in her spirit of heroic faith, and of generous and devoted sacrifice.

†JAMES GIBBONS,  
Archbishop of Baltimore.

*August 12, 1882.*

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## NOVENA

IN HONOR OF

# ST. TERESA

*Translated from the Italian of  
St. Alphonsus Liguori.*

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## A LITTLE CHAPLET

TO BE RECITED EVERY DAY OF THE NOVENA

I. O most amiable Lord, Jesus Christ! we thank Thee for the great gift of faith and of devotion to the Holy Sacrament, which Thou didst grant to Thy beloved Teresa: we pray Thee, by thy merits, and by those of Thy faithful spouse, to grant us the gift of a lively faith, and of a fervent devotion toward the most Holy Sacrament of the altar; where Thou, O infinite Majesty! hast obliged Thyself to abide with us even to the end of the world, and wherein Thou didst so lovingly give Thy whole Self to us.

Our Father, &c. Hail Mary, &c.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and  
ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

O Jesus, who didst pierce with love  
Teresa's beauteous heart,  
Of her sweet love upon my soul  
Let fall a flaming dart.

II. O most merciful Lord, Jesus Christ!  
we thank Thee for the great gift of hope  
which Thou didst grant to Thy beloved  
Teresa: we pray Thee, by Thy merits, and  
by those of Thy holy spouse, to give us a  
great confidence in Thy goodness, by reason  
of Thy precious blood, which Thou hast shed  
to its last drop for our salvation.

Our Father, &c. Hail Mary, &c. Glory, &c.

O Jesus, who didst pierce with love  
Teresa's beauteous heart,  
Of her sweet love upon my soul  
Let fall a flaming dart.

III. O most loving Lord, Jesus Christ!  
we thank Thee for the great gift of love  
which Thou didst grant to Thy beloved  
Teresa; we pray Thee, by Thy merits, and

by those of Thy most loving spouse, to give  
us the great, the crowning gift of Thy per-  
fect love.

Our Father, &c. Hail Mary, &c. Glory, &c.

O Jesus, who didst pierce with love  
Teresa's beauteous heart,  
Of her sweet love upon my soul  
Let fall a flaming dart.

IV. O most sweet Lord, Jesus Christ! we  
thank Thee for the gift of great desire and  
resolution which Thou didst grant to Thy  
beloved Teresa, that she might love Thee  
perfectly; we pray Thee, by Thy merits  
and by those of Thy most generous spouse,  
to give us a true desire, and a true resolu-  
tion of pleasing Thee to the utmost of our  
power.

Our Father, &c. Hail Mary, &c. Glory, &c.

O Jesus, who didst pierce with love  
Teresa's beauteous heart,  
Of her sweet love upon my soul  
Let fall a flaming dart.

V. O most kind Lord, Jesus Christ! we  
thank Thee for the great gift of humility  
which Thou didst grant to Thy beloved  
Teresa; we pray Thee, by Thy merits, and  
by those of Thy most humble spouse, to  
grant us the grace of a true humility, which

may make us ever find our joy in humiliations, and prefer contempt before every honor.

Our Father, &c. Hail Mary, &c. Glory, &c.

O Jesus, who didst pierce with love  
Teresa's beauteous heart,  
Of her sweet love upon my soul  
Let fall a flaming dart.

VI. O most bountiful Lord, Jesus Christ! we thank Thee for the gift of devotion towards Thy sweet mother, Mary, and her holy spouse, Joseph, which Thou didst grant to Thy beloved Teresa; we pray Thee, by Thy merits, and by those of Thy most dear spouse to give us the grace of a special and tender devotion towards Thy most holy mother, Mary, and towards Thy beloved foster-father, Joseph.

Our Father, &c. Hail Mary, &c. Glory, &c.

O Jesus, who didst pierce with love  
Teresa's beauteous heart,  
Of her sweet love upon my soul  
Let fall a flaming dart.

VII. O most loving Lord, Jesus Christ! we thank Thee for the wonderful gift of the wound in the heart which Thou didst grant to Thy beloved Teresa; we pray Thee, by Thy merits, and by those of Thy seraphic

spouse, to grant us also a like wound of love, that, henceforth, we may love Thee, and give our mind to the love of nothing but Thee.

Our Father, &c. Hail Mary, &c. Glory, &c.

O Jesus, who didst pierce with love  
Teresa's beauteous heart,  
Of her sweet love upon my soul  
Let fall a flaming dart.

VIII. O most beloved Lord Jesus Christ! we thank Thee for the eminent gift of the desire for death which Thou didst grant to Thy beloved Teresa; we pray Thee, by Thy merits, and by those of Thy most constant spouse, to grant us the grace of desiring death, in order to go and possess Thee eternally in the country of the blessed.

Our Father, &c. Hail Mary, &c. Glory, &c.

O Jesus, who didst pierce with love  
Teresa's beauteous heart,  
Of her sweet love upon my soul  
Let fall a flaming dart.

IX. Lastly, O dearest Lord, Jesus Christ! we thank Thee for the gift of the precious death which Thou didst grant to Thy beloved Teresa, making her sweetly to die of love; we pray Thee, by Thy merits, and by

those of Thy most affectionate spouse, to grant us a good death; and, if we do not die of love, yet, that we may, at least, die burning with love for Thee, that so dying, we may be able to go and love Thee for evermore with a more perfect love in heaven.

Our Father, &c. Hail Mary, &c. Glory, &c.

O Jesus, who didst pierce with love  
Teresa's beauteous heart,  
Of her sweet love upon my soul  
Let fall a flaming dart.

V. St. Teresa, pray for us:

R. That we may become worthy of the promises of Jesus Christ.

LET US PRAY

Graciously hear us, O God, our salvation! that as we rejoice in the commemoration of the blessed virgin Teresa, so we may be nourished by her heavenly doctrine, and draw from thence the fervor of a tender devotion; through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

I. CONSIDERATION.

OF ST. TERESA'S GIFT OF FAITH, AND DEVOTION  
TOWARDS THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

Our Saint received from God the gift of faith in so large a measure, that she herself has written in her life, as follows: "The devil never had the power to tempt me in any way against the faith: it even seemed to me that the more impossible, naturally speaking, the things which it teaches were, the more firmly did I believe them; and the more difficult of belief they were, the more did they inspire me with devotion." One day, when it was told her that she might be delated (as a heretic) before the Sacred Office, "I began to laugh," she writes, "knowing so well that for the things of the holy faith, or for the least of the ceremonies of the Church, I would give my life a thousand times over.

This love for the faith gave her the fortitude, when but seven years of age, to set out from her father's house with her little brother, to go to the Moors, in order that she might sacrifice her life in honor of the faith; when farther advanced in life, such was her conviction of its truth, that she felt as if she should have had the courage to subdue all the Lutherans to the faith, and to bring them to an acknowledgment of their errors.



In a word, the satisfaction which she experienced at seeing herself in the number of the children of the Church was such, that, at the hour of her death, she could not often enough repeat to herself these words: "After all, I am a daughter of the Holy Church, after all, I am a daughter of the Holy Church." From this wonderful gift of faith, which the Saint possessed, arose the great love which she bore towards the most Holy Sacrament, which is called the mystery of faith pre-eminently above all the others. She used to say that God has conferred upon us a greater grace in giving us the Holy Eucharist than in becoming man; and so, one of the principal virtues which the Saint possessed during her lifetime, was her special love towards the Most Holy Sacrament, as she revealed after her decease. When the Saint heard any one say that they would have wished to have been living at the time when Jesus was upon earth, she used to laugh, and say: "And what more do we want, having Him, as we have, in the most Holy Sacrament? Surely, if it was enough, while He was upon earth, to touch His raiment, in order to be healed of infirmities, what will He not do for us when He is within us? Oh, how sweet it is," she wrote, "to see the Shepherd become a Lamb. He is a Shepherd, because He gives food. He is a Lamb, because He is Himself the food. He is a Shepherd, because He nourishes.

He is a Lamb, because He is the nourishment. When, therefore, we pray to Him for our daily bread, we are asking of Him that the Shepherd may be our food and sustenance."

The Saint ever deplored the injurious treatment which this Sacrament of love received at the hands of the heretics; and she used to say to God: "How is it, then, O my Creator! that bowels so burning with love as Thine can permit that this Sacrament, which Thy Son has instituted with so fervent a love, and in order to please Thee, because Thou hast given Him an obedience to love us, should be so little thought of, as we see it to be at this day by the conduct of the heretics who are tearing His Churches away from Him? Was it not enough, O my Father! that He had not, during His lifetime, where to lay His head, without their now rending from Him the holy places where He deigns to abide and to invite His friends, knowing, as He does, their need of such food for their support?" For twenty-three years she communicated every day, and every time with such fervor and such desire, that in order to receive communion, she would, as she said, willingly have made her way in front of the spears of an army drawn up against her.

The Divine Lover responded to the love with which this cherished spouse of His de-

sired Him, and with which she disposed herself to receive Him under the sacramental species. As darkness disappears before the sun, so at the moment of communion the obscurities and troubles of the Saint vanished away. It then seemed to her that her soul lost all its affections and all its desires, being perfectly united to God and absorbed into Him. Although she was usually pale in consequences of her penances and infirmities, her biographer says, that no sooner had she communicated than her countenance became shining as crystal, ruddy, extremely beautiful, and with such an air of majesty about it, that it was easy to recognize what a divine guest she had within her heart.

At those times it occurred that her virginal body used to seem ready to quit the earth, raising itself in the air in the presence of all the sisters. One day when she was making her preparation for communion, Jesus Christ, being in the hands of an unworthy priest, who was in a state of mortal sin, spoke to her, and tenderly said to her: "Behold My great goodness in placing Myself in the hands of My enemy for your good, and for the good of every one."

Another time (it was on Palm-Sunday), as she was considering that among all that crowd which had proclaimed Jesus Christ by their salutations as the Messiah at Jerusalem, there was no one who received Him

into his house, she invited Him to come and enter her poor heart, and with this pious thought she went to receive communion. The affectionate invitation of His beloved was so agreeable to the Divine Spouse, that when she received the sacred Host it seemed to her that her mouth was full of warm blood, accompanied with a heavenly sweetness. Then she heard the voice of Jesus, which said to her, "My daughter, it is My will that My blood should be for your profit: I have shed it in great sufferings, and you enjoy it, as you see, with great delights."

#### FRUIT.

Let the fruit of this consideration be that of continual thanksgiving, in union with the Saint, to the Lord, for having bestowed upon us the great gift of the faith, in making us children of the Holy Church, from which so many millions of souls, less guilty, it may be, than ourselves, in the sight of Divine Justice, remain separated.

Moreover, with regard to that greatest of all the gifts which Jesus Christ has bequeathed to us in the Sacrament of the altar, in leaving Himself, whole and entire, to be our food, our companion, and our shepherd, let us practice that excellent instruction which this holy mother revealed from heaven to a certain soul: "The inhabitants of heaven and those on earth ought to be one and the same thing in purity and in love; we, in a

state of joy; you in one of suffering. And, what we do in heaven with the Divine Essence, you ought to do on earth with the Most Holy Sacrament. You will signify this to all my children." With regard to the love and tender devotion which are due to Jesus in the Holy Sacrament, she has again left us in her works the following directions: "Let us act so as not to be at a distance from our Shepherd, nor lose Him from our sight: because those sheep which keep near their shepherd are always more caressed and better taken care of than others, and because He is always giving them some morsels of His own food. If it happens that the Shepherd falls asleep, the sheep keeps close beside Him until He awakes, or until itself shall arouse Him, and then He lavishes upon it His caresses anew."

St. Philip Neri, that other seraph of love, on seeing his Jesus entering into his chamber to be his viaticum, could not refrain from crying out in a holy transport, "Behold my love, behold my love." So let us, when we see the King and Spouse of our souls coming to meet us in the Holy Communion, cry out and say, "Behold our love, behold our love." And we know that God wishes us to give Him this appellation. "God is love," I John iv. 16. He does not wish to be called merely a lover, but love itself, to make us understand that, as there is no

love which does not love, so He is a goodness, in His own nature so loving, that He cannot live without loving His creatures.

#### PRAYER.

My holy seraph, who, by your purity and your ardent love, were upon earth the delight of your God: you whom He loved so much as one day to tell you that as Magdalen was His beloved one when He was upon earth, so you were, in the same degree, His beloved one, now that He is in heaven: you, whom He treated with such tenderness, whether He admonished you as a father, or conversed with you as a spouse, so frequently giving Himself to you in communion with such abundant overflowing of grace: O Teresa! pray to your God for me, who, alas! am not the object of His delight, but who am the cause of His sufferings through my evil life. Pray Him to pardon me, to give me a new heart, a heart pure and full of love, like unto yours.

And Thou, my most loving Jesus, Who, although foreseeing my unthankfulness, hast never ceased to bestow upon me an abundance of graces, and, above all, that of a vocation to the holy faith; Thou, Who has not disdained to give Thyself to me so frequently, and so lovingly, in the Most Holy Sacrament; ah! of Thy mercy enkindle such a flame within my heart, that my practice may become conformable to my faith.

Ah! Thou divine, true, and only lover of my soul, when will that day at length arrive on which I shall begin to love Thee with my whole heart? Oh! would to God that this were that day of happiness for me—this, on which I have, in the present year, begun to honor Thy dear spouse and my tender advocate, Teresa! Ah! my Redeemer, by the merits of Thy Blood; by those of Mary, Thy most holy Mother; by those even of Thy beloved Teresa, grant me, I pray Thee, such burning love for Thy goodness as may make me continually deplore the offenses which I have given Thee, and may urge me, henceforth, to study nothing, but Thy good pleasure, in order that I may please Thee only, as Thou dost deserve. Amen.

## II. CONSIDERATION.

OF THE GIFT OF HOPE WITH WHICH ST.  
TERESA WAS ENDOWED.

The mercies of God are commensurate with the confidence which a soul places in Him: so that when the Lord wishes to enrich a soul with graces, He first of all enriches it with confidence.

So great was the confidence with which the holy mother Teresa was gifted by God, that by it she gained the accomplishment of all that she undertook for the glory of her spouse: so much so, that she was commonly styled, "The omnipotent Teresa."

Ever bearing in mind that God is faithful, as the apostle says, and that He cannot fall short of his word, from this reflection she drew that great courage which fortified her in every storm: "Oh, my Lord," she used to exclaim, "who shall sufficiently declare how Faithful You are to Your friends? May everything fail me, provided that Thou dost not abandon me; me, who have found by experience how great is the gain of those who trust in Thee alone." With this immovable anchor as her stay, she undertook the great work of the reform of the religious of both sexes in the Carmelite order, and of the foundation of a vast number of religious houses, in spite of innumerable ob-

stacles raised by men and devils, without support, without money, but simply with confidence in God. She was accustomed to say, that in order to found a monastery, nothing more was requisite than the hiring of a house and a bell.

Whenever the strength of the opposition increased, her courage would increase also, and she would say: "This is a sign that the seed sown will produce the more abundant fruit;" and so all turned out successfully. She has also written somewhere: "Thus I hope, because the true way of escaping a fall is to affix one's self to the cross, and to confide in Him Who has been suspended thereon: I find that in Him alone there is a true friend; so overpowered am I with a sense of this that it seems to me that, with the grace of God, I could withstand the whole universe contending against me." Hence arose the great disgust she felt whenever she had to deal with persons who relied on human judgments and resources.

When the holy mother was at Toledo, a priest told her that the accomplishment of the reform was to be despaired of; but Teresa, with a dauntless courage, consoled everyone, and confiding in God, she replied, that "in spite of opposition, all would prosper for the best." When, on her journeys, she met with any dangerous piece of road, she would be the first to pass over it, en-

couraging the rest by her example. Full of confidence in her Lord, she was not afraid even of hell itself; she used to say, she no more feared the demons than the flies. She was never seen to grieve nor to rejoice at any occurrence, whether prosperous or adverse; but she was ever calm and equable in herself, in the midst of a profound peace; ever constant in her sweet hope, persuaded that God cannot fail one who serves Him, and has fixed his hopes in Him.

It was, then, upon this hope that Teresa rested all the prayers which she addressed to God. And as she did not know how to ask Him for anything but what might contribute to the good pleasure of her Lord, the prayers of this holy spouse of His were so acceptable to God, that He even went so far as to promise to grant her everything that she might ask Him for. One day, when Teresa was petitioning Him for a grace, and feared His refusal on account of her unworthiness, Jesus appeared to her, and showing her the wound in His left hand, "He told me" (these are the words of the Saint) "that I ought not to doubt, but that He Who had suffered so much for me would most willingly grant me all that I might ask Him for: that He promised to grant me all that I might demand of Him: that I ought to remember that, even at the time when I served Him not, I had never asked Him for

anything without His giving me it, and better than I had known how to ask for; and that with much greater reason now, when He knew my love for Him, would He hear me: that I ought not to doubt it."

She then goes on to assure us, that, in virtue of this promise, she had ever obtained from God more than, in her lifetime, she could have asked of Him; and for the consolation of those devoted to her, she has left upon record the following words: "I should be tedious both to myself and to my readers, if I were to recount all the graces which God has conferred upon me, if I were to say how many souls have been extricated from sin by my prayers, and how many others have been advanced to higher degrees of perfection." One night, while the Saint was returning thanks to God for a grace which she had received, He lovingly made her this answer, "And what can you ask of me, my daughter, which I would not grant you?" Another day He said to her, "You are aware of the espousals contracted between thee and Me; it is for this reason that I give thee all the sufferings, which I have undergone, that, by these sufferings, as by a property of which you are the owner, you may ask of My Father whatever you may desire."

In conclusion, the Saint has drawn up for our instruction, in her "Thirteenth Exclama-

tion after Communion," the following passage: "Oh! oh! oh! how small is the confidence which we repose in Thee, O Lord! And yet what greater riches, what more beautiful treasures could you have handed over to us? You have given us three and thirty years of the toil, and then the most painful death of Thy Son; knowing beforehand, even, how ungrateful we would be, you have not omitted to confide to us the priceless treasure of that same Son in the Most Holy Sacrament, that there might be nothing in Thee of which we might not, through Him, gain possession, O merciful Father! O ye souls of the blessed! who have so well known how, at this cost, to appropriate to yourselves so precious and so permanent an inheritance, declare to us how it was that you made use of so infinite a good? Succor us now that you are standing so near its source: draw water from thence for us who are dying here of thirst."

#### FRUIT.

Learn from hence, O devout soul! how God listens to those prayers which are made with confidence; ask, then, with confidence, and you shall have whatever you desire. Heaven and earth may fail you, but the word of God, Who has said, "Whosoever asketh, receiveth" (Matth. vii. 8), cannot fail. He that asks, obtains, even when he does not deserve to obtain what he asks, as

St. Thomas says. On the other hand, he who does not ask, does not obtain. Behold then, on what our victory, in times of temptation, hangs: "I will call upon the Lord in praising Him, and He will save me from mine enemies." (Ps. xvii. 4.) Let us have recourse to God and we shall be conquerors. Behold, on what all our good depends: "Ask, and you shall receive." Let us ask, and it will be given us. Our Saint used to say: "For gaining the divine graces, prayer is the only portal: shut this, and I know not how God shall bestow them. Let us observe that our Father and God not only takes care of us, but that He is ever full of anxiety for our good, as He gives us to understand in the divine Scriptures." Let us pray, then, with confidence; let us pray to God in the name of Jesus Christ, His Son, Who has made us this promise: "Everything that you shall ask of the Father in My name He will give it to you." (John, xvi. 23). God, without our praying to Him, always takes care of us. "God," says the Psalmist, "takes care of me." (Ps. xxxix. 18.) And the Prophet says that it is easier for a mother to be forgetful of her son, than it is for God to be forgetful of a soul. It will be enough to show Him our miseries, and to say to Him with the leper in the Gospel, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst heal me" (Matt. 8-2); or with the sister of Lazarus, "He whom Thou lovest is sick"

(John, xi. 31); but "we ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke, xviii. 1); otherwise, on the day on which we leave off praying we shall fall.

#### PRAYER.

Having given me to understand, O my holy advocate! that your Spouse has made you a promise to grant you everything that you may ask of Him, and that a great number of souls have received help through your prayers, make me, too, one of their number. Recommend me to Jesus, and change me into a new man, as you have changed so many others through your prayers.

And Thou, O Eternal Father! Who hast not spared Thy dearly-beloved Son from death, in order to bestow upon me forgiveness and salvation, I beseech Thee, for the love of this same Son, pardon and save me.

Thou, my Creator and my Father, art not only merciful, but also faithful: Thou art, therefore, obliged to grant everything which is demanded of Thee, for the love of Jesus, who has made us a promise that Thou wouldst give us everything that we might ask of Thee in His name. Thou art also just; so that when we repent of the offences which we have committed against Thy goodness, it cannot but be that Thou wilt pardon and save us, through the merits of Jesus Christ, Who, by His death, has made satis-

faction to Thy justice, and for us has obtained salvation. Thus, O my God and my Hope! filled with confidence, I have recourse to Thee, and I pray Thee, for the love of Jesus, to grant me the disposition never to hope for, and never to desire, anything but Thy holy love. O Thou Who art exceedingly lovely, and the object of my fervent love! enable me to go entirely out of myself, that I may repose in Thee alone. In Thy hands, O Lord! I place all my hopes and all my soul, that while this life lasts I may live with fullness of confidence in Thee, and, at my departure from this world, may breathe forth my last sigh in an act of perfect self-abandonment to Thee. And you, my sweet mother, and my hope, Mary, obtain for me the grace of perpetual prayer, and of confidence in the merits of Jesus, and your own. Amen.

### III. CONSIDERATION.

#### OF TERESA'S GREAT AND BURNING LOVE FOR GOD

The heart of this seraph was so on fire with the love of God that all her thoughts and all her sighs were nothing but love, and had reference to the good pleasure of God, so much so, that her confessor used to say, that when speaking to her, he seemed to have before his eyes a seraph of love. The sacred flame of the love of God burned within her soul ever since the moment when, being only seven years of age, she had the courage, as we have already mentioned, to leave her native country, and her father and mother, in order to go amongst a barbarous people, that she might sacrifice her life for Jesus Christ; as it is also stated in the bull of her canonization.

Her love increased as she advanced in age, and although it grew somewhat cool for some years, yet when God, by a fresh illumination, called her to a love of greater perfection, her correspondence with His grace was such as to merit for her that she should hear from the very lips of her Spouse, that if He had not already created Paradise, He would have created it expressly and entirely for her. And on another occasion, He even told her that He was all hers, because she was all His: this is also recorded in the bull of her canonization.



In short, so completely was she given up to God, that, inebriated with the divine love, she knew not how to speak of anything save of her Beloved One. She knew not how to think of anything save of her Beloved. She could not even hold converse with any one save with her Beloved. For, accustomed as she was to hold sweet converse with her God, she could not lend herself to any accord with creatures, excepting with those who were wounded, as she expressed herself, with the same love.

By love, so strongly was she drawn to God, that she declared herself to be incompetent for the management of worldly affairs. So that, one day, she said: "If the Lord keeps me in my present state, I shall render but a bad account of the affairs which He has entrusted to my charge; for it seems as if I were continually being drawn towards God, as if it were by cords." Everything which tended to interrupt her continual union with God was a burthen to her, not excepting even her meals: "It is an exceeding punishment to me," she writes, "to be obliged to eat often; this makes me weep, and give utterance to speeches of affection, almost without being aware of what I say." But let us listen to the beautiful sentiments which she has recorded for us in reference to her love for God, and let us warm our hearts with that blessed flame which burned in the

heart of this seraphic Saint. In one place, she says: "Behold what I am always saying, and, as it seems to me, with all my heart; O Lord! I do not think of myself, I wish for nothing but for Thee alone."

Although she was exceedingly humble, she does not shrink from saying, in another place, that she had a great love for God. It is with holy fervor that she has written: "I am altogether imperfection, excepting in desire and in love; I think that I do love my Lord well, but my works make me sad."

So ardently did she desire to advance, as far as she possibly could, in the love of her God, that she expresses herself elsewhere in the following terms: "If I were to have my choice of undergoing all the sufferings of the world even to the last, and of obtaining afterwards a small additional degree of glory, or, without afflictions of any kind, to settle down in a degree of glory but a little inferior, I would willingly prefer to bear all the suffering for the smallest possible additional joy in the knowledge of God; because I see that they who best know Him love Him also most." On seeing that she loved God so much, and that she was so much beloved by Him, she wrote in holy transport: "Oh! what a beautiful exchange it is to give our love to God, and to receive from Him His own." We are also aware how many charms she found in that loving

petition which she was so frequently addressing to God (either to *suffer, or to die*, through her desire of pleasing Him, as she herself relates in the fortieth chapter of her life. It seemed to her that the desire of suffering for God was so sweet to her loving heart, that she could gain no merit by it. And she goes on to say, that the only reason why one should love the present life is for the opportunity it affords us of suffering for God. In her own words: "It being the case that the desire of sufferings brings me no merit, and life seemed to me to be worthless excepting for them, I pray to God for them most fervently. I say, then, to Him with all my heart: Lord, either to suffer or to die: I ask for nothing but this for myself."

It was by this that she merited to be united to Jesus Christ, Who, on presenting her with a nail, declared her to be His spouse of love and of the cross. The Lord, stretching His right hand towards her, as we read in the appendix to her life, proceeded to say to her: "Behold this nail: it is a token that henceforth you shall be my spouse: you have not merited it until now; for the future you shall not look upon My honor merely as that of your Creator, of your King, and of your God, but since you are my true spouse, My honor is yours, and your honor is Mine." She said, one day, in a transport of love, that it would give her real joy to see any

one in Paradise rejoicing in a higher degree of glory than her own; but that she did not know whether she could rejoice at seeing a soul have a greater love for God than herself. In conclusion, her whole employment consisted in whatever could procure glory for God; but her great love for Him caused her to regard all that she did as nothing. "O Lord!" she said, "I fear that I am not serving Thee: I cannot discover anything which can be sufficient to pay Thee the smallest item of what I owe Thee." The only thing which contented her in this life, and the prayer which she continually offered up to God, was this: "Ah, my Lord! enable us all to become worthy of loving Thee; since live we must, let us live for Thee; ever leaving our own selfish interests out of sight. What greater gain can we have than that which consists in being pleasing in Thy sight, O my Joy and my God! what can I do to please Thee?"

In a word, her whole life was a continual exercise of love and a perpetual study of whatever could please her Beloved One; and at last, as we shall see when considering her death, her very life was terminated through the violence of her love, wholly consumed in that furnace of love with which she was all on fire.

#### FRUIT.

The fruit to be drawn from this consideration is pointed out in the words which

the Lord one day addressed to St. Teresa, in order to make her understand that true love in this life does not consist in any sensible sweetnesses, but in the accomplishment of the will of God, and in the undergoing sufferings with calmness: "Thinkest thou, My daughter," He said to her, "that gratifications constitute merit? No: this consists in acting, in suffering, and in loving. Consider My life, altogether filled up, as it was, with sufferings; when you look at My Mother embracing Me in her arms, do not suppose that she enjoys this satisfaction without suffering the cruel torment which St. Simeon had predicted for her, when he said to her: 'A sword shall pierce thine own soul.' My Father having from that time given her the illumination to understand all that I was to suffer."

"Believe Me, My daughter," He added, "that he who is most beloved of My Father, is also he on whom He lays the heaviest crosses, and that the love on the one side corresponds to the sufferings on the other. How could I testify this love, save in desiring for thee what I have desired for Myself? Behold these wounds! no pains of yours will ever be so great. You will thus participate in My lamentations for the loss which men of the world sustain, all whose desires are bent towards the acquisition of precisely the contrary." He finished by say-

ing: "To suppose that My Father admits any one into friendship with Himself without sufferings, is folly; for those for whom He entertains a great love He leads on by the way of sufferings, and these sufferings are the greater in proportion to the greatness of His love."

If, then, it is our wish to love our dearest Lord with a genuine love, and to study how to give satisfaction to His heart rather than to gratify our own, we must put in practice the excellent instruction which our Saint used to give and to observe: "Ever march forward with the desire of suffering everything, on every occasion, for the love of Jesus." The least one can do is to conform one's self perfectly to the will of God in all adversities. This is what St. Teresa one day came down from heaven to say to a devout soul: "Oblige yourself to bear those fervent desires for the accomplishment of the divine will, which I had for death as long as I lived." It is also the object of that pious practice which the Saint suggests of offering one's self wholly to God fifty times every day, with great fervor, and the desire of pleasing Him. By acting in this manner, we shall be very pleasing in the sight of God, and shall not feel the crosses He sends us, for the Saint used to say, "The weight of the cross makes itself felt by him who drags it along, but not by

him who embraces it." Just as a miser, instead of being fatigued, feels joy as he carries his weight of gold, and rejoices the more in proportion to the greatness of its weight, so does a loving soul rejoice the more, the more she has to suffer for God, because she perceives that in offering up her sufferings to her Beloved, she is exceedingly acceptable to Him.

PRAYER.

Oh, holy seraph, beloved spouse of Jesus crucified! who wast all on fire while upon earth with so burning a love for your God and mine, who now burnest still with a purer and brighter flame in heaven, obtain for me, I entreat you, you whose desire it ever was that God might be loved by all men, obtain for me also a spark of this heavenly flame, which may enable me to forget the world, its creatures, and even myself; and may dispose me to devote all my thoughts, all my desires, and all my affections to the accomplishment, whether it be in the midst of joy or pain, of the will of this Sovereign Good, Who deserves to be sovereignly obeyed and loved. Do this, O my dear Saint! for it is what you are able to do; make me burn, wholly and entirely, like yourself, with divine love.

And Thou, O my God! I will pray to Thee in the words of the Saint: "O Thou loving One! Who lovest me more than I

can comprehend, grant that my soul may serve Thee for Thy satisfaction rather than for its own pleasure: that my natural self may henceforth die, and that Another may live within me. May He live, and give life to me: may He reign, and I be His slave, so that my soul may wish for no other liberty. Happy they who shall find themselves bound by the chains of the blessings of the mercy of God without the power of disengagement! Love is as strong as death and firm as hell. Oh, would to God that we might be cast into this divine hell, without the hope, or, I should rather say, the fear of ever coming out of it again!"

And thou, most holy Virgin Mary, who wert and art of all creatures the most loving and the most beloved by God; thou through whom the divine love is bestowed upon us, succor and assist me that I may never show myself ungrateful towards a God Who is so lovely and Who has loved me so much. Amen.

#### IV. CONSIDERATION.

##### OF THE GIFT OF PERFECTION WITH WHICH ST. TERESA WAS ENDOWED.

There are two things requisite in order to the attainment of perfection: a great *desire* and a great *generosity*.

In the first place, a great *desire* for sanctity is one great means towards becoming a saint; for, on the one hand, God does not bestow the abundance of His graces except on those souls which hunger for them, as the most Holy Mary says, in her sublime canticle: "He has filled with good things those who were hungry."—(Lu. i. 53.) And, on the other hand, this desire is necessary as regards ourselves, to the end that we may have the power of persevering under the hardships which we must endure if we would gain the great treasure of perfection. For, that which is but little desired, men make but little exertion to obtain; whereas, on the contrary, to compass the acquisition of what is much desired, there is no toil, however arduous, which they do not find to be easy and sweet. On this account it is that God gives the appellation of "blessed" to those who have not the desire merely, but a hunger besides, *i. e.*, an ardent desire for sanctity: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice." (Matth. v. 6.)

Teresa, whom we may compare to an eagle of heaven, and to whom the desire of fulfilling the perfect will of God gave wings wherewith to fly rapidly forward to perfection, has left us on record the following words: "Let us entertain great thoughts, for from them proceeds our good." And she says elsewhere: "We must not have meagre desires, but we must hope of God, that, through the efforts we make, we may be able gradually to reach that point which many of the saints by His grace have gained." She used to say that the Divine Majesty loves generous souls, provided only that they put no trust in themselves; and she testified, speaking from experience, that she had never seen any faint-hearted soul make as much progress in several years as generous souls within a small space of time: "For," said she, "the Lord is as pleased with desires as with their effects."

Oh! how great, in truth, were her desires of pleasing her Lord! She does not shrink from the avowal, that, full of all sorts of imperfection as she was, her desires were, nevertheless, great and perfect. Elsewhere she writes: "The desires of serving God come to me attended with transports which I am unable to express. It seems to me that no suffering, not even death, or martyrdom itself, would be difficult for me to endure." Indeed, there was nothing, whatever might

be its difficulties, which she did not undertake and carry on to a successful termination, when once she knew that it was pleasing to God. And she testified this of herself in the memoirs which she drew up of her life: "There is nothing, however painful, which I am not ready to bear as soon as it comes."

Thus the Saint, having learned by experience, used to say: "I am astonished to see how many aids for a spiritual life are furnished us by the courage for great undertakings. For, although the soul has not, just at first, a sufficiency of strength, it nevertheless takes forthwith, its generous flight, and is carried forward far beyond the point at which it aimed." And here she adds a lesson of much importance, namely, that there is no humility in not wishing to become a saint. "Humility is necessary," she says; "but we must understand that the devil strives to make us look upon great desires, and the wish to imitate the saints, as the results of pride."

But, besides this, in order to arrive at perfection, it is not enough to have merely the *desire*, we must also make the firm *resolution* of attaining it; otherwise, the desire without the resolution will be of no avail. This is what happens to such a number of souls who are always desiring, and are perpetually multiplying their desires,

but who never come to a determination of setting themselves to the work in earnest, and so remain ever in their tepidity, without making any progress.

"I would rather have," writes the Saint on this subject, "I would rather have a short prayer producing great results, than a prayer of several years in length, during which the soul never resolves on performing anything of any real value for God." St. Bernard says that many fail of becoming saints because they lack the courage for it. And it was the subject of our Saint's lamentation when she said: "Many remain at the foot of the mountain, who could ascend to its summit." On the other hand, she gave the assurance that when a soul, solely in order to please God, undertakes anything with resolution, she easily accomplishes her purpose. "It is quite true, Lord," she writes in her "Foundations," "as it is said by Your prophet, that You pretend there is fatigue in the observance of Your law: for I can perceive none; and I know not how the way which leads to You is to be called straight. I have experienced in a variety of circumstances," she added, "that when anyone from the outset resolves courageously on the accomplishment of anything, whatever may be its difficulties, if he does it in order to please God, he has nothing to fear. The devil," she said, "has great fear of reso-

lute souls, seeing that every plot which he contrives for their hurt, turns to their profit."

The holy mother vigorously practiced what she taught to others. When she was called to give herself wholly up to God, she gave herself up to Him without reserve; and that with so strong a resolution, that to oblige herself to search out whatever might give the most pleasure to her Beloved, she went so far as to bind herself by that sublime vow, at which the saints have been filled with astonishment, and which is styled by the sacred tribunal of the Rota, "a very difficult vow," always to do what she understood to be most perfect. Herein, Teresa exhibits to us the courage and the resolution with which she aimed at the highest perfection to which a soul upon earth can attain, in order that she might please God to the utmost extent of her powers.

#### FRUIT.

Let the fruit of this meditation, then, be the formation of a hope to pant with a sincere desire, like that of St. Teresa, and heartily to resolve to give one's self wholly up to God, studying to advance every day further and further towards perfection. A great servant of God, Father Hyppolito Durazzo, of the Company of Jesus, used with good reason to say, as we read in his life, that men of the world never think that

they have enough of the good things of this life, and are always endeavoring after more; but with respect to the rest they say: "The least little corner of Paradise is sufficient for us." Whereas, on the contrary, he who truly loves God and not the world, ought to be content with the least little corner of the earth; but for the good things of heaven he ought always to be striving more and more without ever resting satisfied. This good father used also to say, "that to become a saint one need desire nothing but what is to be obtained through the desire, alone, namely, to be pleasing to God."

After the desire is formed one must then most firmly resolve to give one's self up to God without reserve. God gives us this desire already. This desire is His voice distinctly speaking to us and calling us to His love. He has already called us a great many times over, and what is it that we are waiting for? Is it that we wish to wait until He cease to call us, and until He abandon us? Now is the time for putting an end, once for all, to our hesitations, and for renouncing everything which is not for God. It is not a time for prolonging our resistance to the love of that Lord Who, alone, deserves to be loved. We must, then, break through every earthly attachment which hinders us from belonging entirely to God.

Resolution! resolution! God! God only; and nothing else but He!

PRAYER.

O my Saint! I rejoice with you now that I behold you in heaven where you are loving your God with a love which fully contents that heart of yours, which so much desired to love Him upon earth. But, since, in heaven, the desire of seeing God loved has strengthened together with the love of your own heart, assist, O holy mother! this miserable soul of mine, which desires to burn, like yourself with holy love for this Infinite Goodness, Which deserves the love of an infinity of hearts. Say for me to Jesus what you once said to Him in this life for one of His servants: "Lord! let us take Him to be our friend." Ask Him to inspire me with the resolution of consecrating my whole will, once for all, to Him, and of studying in everything that only which is most pleasing in His sight and which may best promote His glory.

And Thou, O my Lord! tell me what it is that Thou dost look for from me in bestowing upon me so many graces! Ah! I understand Thee—I understand Thee, my treasure, my all, my true lover! Since Thou lovest me greatly, Thou dost wish me to love Thee greatly, and to become all Thine own. Thou dost wish that my heart may no longer be divided, but that its whole at-

tention may be devoted to loving Thee alone. Yes, Thee alone. But, in truth, if thou art the only one lovely, it is no more than just that Thou be solely loved by me and by all mankind. Since, then, O my beloved one! Thou dost inspire me with this desire of loving Thee, so overrule me that I may put it in practice, and that I may love Thee as much as Thou desirest. If Thou wilt have my heart, behold, here it is. I withdraw it from the love of creatures to give it wholly up to Thee. If Thou dost wish me to desire and to ask for Thy love, yea, my God, I ask it of Thee, and I desire to love Thee more than even the seraphim do; hearken to my prayer. I ask it of Thee, not in order to become distinguished amongst the saints, nor to gain a high degree of glory in Paradise, but only in order to be pleasing in Thy sight. I offer myself even, provided that I may love Thee the more, to suffer pain of every description, and for all eternity, if such be Thy good pleasure. Harken to me, my Lord, for the love of Jesus Christ, and for the love of St. Teresa. O, blessed and holy Virgin Mary, you are my hope; I hope for all good things through you.



## V. CONSIDERATION.

### ON THE HUMILITY OF ST. TERESA.

Humble hearts are the targets at which the arrows of divine love are aimed; and so, as St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi used to say, the one practice suitable for us, in order to obtain the divine love, is that of self-humiliation. It was because God found the heart of Teresa full of humility that it pleased Him to concentrate in her such an accumulation of graces. The Saint, in speaking of herself, declares that the greatest of the graces with which the Lord enriched her were those which she received at the very times when she was most humbling herself before God.

Our Saint was in reality so humble that, although the Lord treated her as His beloved spouse, as we have observed above, she nevertheless treated with her Lord only in the character of an ungrateful and faithless spouse. For this reason it was that how many soever might be the favors heaped upon her by Jesus Christ, and how great soever the commendations which she received from men, she could never be persuaded to think well of herself. Although God Himself had conveyed to her an assurance that her visions were not illusions, but gifts of His love, so that in receiving them it was impossible for her to doubt of their coming

from God, nevertheless the opinion which she entertained of herself was so mean that she was perpetually fearing lest she might be mistaken, being unable to believe that God would grant such favors to a soul so unworthy as she thought herself to be. One day, as the Saint was on her way to Burgos to found a convent, a religious mentioned to her the reputation for sanctity which she enjoyed. In reply, she said: "Three things have been said of me: that when I was a little child I had a good disposition and that I was discreet. There are some persons who say of me now that I am a saint. In times gone by I believed the two former of these, and I have accused myself in confession of having yielded to this vanity; but I have never practiced upon myself so great a deception as to give credence to the third."

In the account of her life which she addressed to her confessor she says, when speaking of the graces which the Lord bestowed upon her: "Formerly it seemed to me that I should feel confusion at their being known, but it now seems to me that so far from being the better I am much worse on their account; for with so many graces I do so little. For this reason it seems to me, in every point of view, that there is not in the whole world a creature worse than myself." Elsewhere she says: "I do nothing but receive graces without profiting by them,

as if I were the most useless thing in the world. All others bear fruit; it is I only who am good for nothing." A certain person, on seeing how many favors she received from God, and how great her reputation for sanctity was in the world, said to her: "My mother, be on your guard against vain glory." Teresa, all astonishment, replied: "Vain glory! on what account I know not. I shall have much to do, seeing what I am, to keep myself out of despair."

That light of illumination whereby God had given her to see the greatness of His majesty and the love which He bore towards her made her regard as grave faults the little defects into which she used to fall—defects which others like ourselves would not pronounce upon even as such. In consequence, she used continually to exclaim, full of confusion: "Lord! put some limit to so many favors; how is it that you have so quickly forgotten my ingratitude?" In writing the account of her life for her confessor, she prays him in one place to publish her sins everywhere, "in order that," she said, "I may no longer impose upon the world, which deems that there is something good in me." And when those to whom she made a manifestation of her bad life would not participate in the opinion which she entertained of herself she betook herself to her Spouse and laid her complaint before

Him, saying: "Lord! why is it that these people do not believe me? Do you look to it. For my part, I know not what I can do more." On the other hand, when she thought that others might have knowledge of the graces which God bestowed upon her, this thought alone caused her so much affliction, that, as she says in her Life, she would have wished to be buried alive, so as not to be seen any longer in the world. Wherefore it was, as she relates, that the Lord, in order to tranquillize this affliction, one day said to her: "Teresa, what are you afraid of? If men were to know the graces which I bestow upon you, they would be able only to praise Me or to blame you." The Saint subjoins that these words restored her to tranquillity.

Moreover, the humility of our Saint was not of that description which some possess, who, although entertaining, in some instances, a mean opinion of themselves, and expressing it also before others, yet cannot bear that others should publish their defects and subject them to contempt. No. The Saint, like all souls that are really humble, regarded herself and wished to be regarded and treated as a vile creature. She even went so far as to say that there was no music more pleasing to her ears than the reproaches addressed to her in regard to her defects. She was frequently the object of

contempt and of opprobrious treatment; and on such occasions her soul, truly humble as it was, took greater delight in seeing herself despised than had she been praised and honored. How often, in the establishment of those monasteries by which she procured so much glory to God, how often were insults heaped upon her as a hypocrite, a liar, a proud woman, and one filled with illusions! And this, too, as it once happened, from the pulpit, and in her own presence. The Nuncio of the Pope, in a fit of anger, went so far as to enjoin her to retire into a monastery, and not to go out of it any more, telling her that she was a restless and vagabond woman. She shut herself up, as she was bidden, without making any defence, satisfied in having met with contempt and confusion.

On another occasion an accusation was brought before the Inquisition against her as a sorceress and a witch. Having also heard a certain religious laying a great deal of evil to her charge, she answered: "If this father had known me, he might have said much more against me." On her entrance into Seville, she was, in the first instance, an object of contempt and displeasure, whereupon she said: "Blessed be God! for here they know me to be what I am." Elsewhere she writes: "So far am I from wishing ill to any of those who spoke evil

of me, that it seems to me as if I entertained for them even a greater love than I did before." At the time when she was making the foundation at Burgos, as the Saint was passing along a narrow footpath, on which there happened to be a certain woman she asked her permission to be allowed to pass by; but this woman, seeing her clad in raiment which bespoke the greatest poverty, said to her, "Go along, you hypocrite;" and then, with a rough push, caused her to fall into a muddy stream. The Saint's companions wished to rebuke the woman, but she took her part against them, saying, "My daughters, hold your peace. Do you not perceive that this woman has acted very rightly?" On another occasion she was in a church, and certain persons wishing to pass by, she did not take heed to rise sufficiently soon from the place where she was kneeling, whereupon they kicked her and so sent her to another part of the church. Another woman, who had lost one of her wooden shoes, fancying that Teresa had stolen it from her, had the impudence to go and strike her on the face with the one remaining. All this the Saint tranquilly received, better contented with these insults than a man of the world would be with its greatest honors. The tribunal of the Rota has even attested that the greater the offences she received from any the more did they draw down upon themselves her love.

So much so, indeed, was this the case that it was a common saying that, in order to be beloved by Teresa, it was necessary to treat her in a humiliating and injurious manner.

#### FRUIT.

All wish to be humble, but there are few that wish to be humbled. St. Ignatius of Loyola came, sent from heaven by the Most Holy Virgin, to give the following counsel to St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi: "Humility is a rejoicing in everything that leads us to despise ourselves." This is what is meant by being humble of heart, as Jesus Christ teaches us to be—namely, to look upon ourselves as what we really are, and to wish that others may look upon us and treat us in the same way. Behold, then, for the practice of humility, the following most important maxims, which are borrowed from the Saint herself: 1. To avoid every occupation and every conversation which can in any way have to do with self-love, unless some notable utility oblige us to enter upon it. The Saint enjoins, nevertheless, that we never put ourselves forward, excepting under obedience or from motives of charity. 2. Never to manifest our interior devotion, unless through some great necessity; and never to affect outwardly a devotion which is not within the heart. 3. To rejoice on beholding ourselves the object of complaints, of insults and mockeries, without seeking to

justify ourselves, unless, at least, this be necessary for some greater good; "and when we are reprov'd," says the Saint, "let us receive the reproof with interior as well as exterior humility, offering up a prayer to God for him by whom we are reprimanded." 4. To ask unceasingly of God what St. John of the Cross used to ask of him—to be despised for His love. Finally, not to expect that the senses and the inferior part of the soul should find satisfaction in this; but to act by reason, contenting ourselves with pleasing God; and for this it is especially useful to exercise ourselves during prayer in a preparation for receiving contempt of every description; and to pray earnestly to Jesus and Mary to grant us the fulfilment of our good resolutions in the occasions which may offer.

#### PRAYER.

O my holy advocate! who hast wounded the heart of thy God by thy beautiful humility, I pray thee, by the love which thou bearest towards thy dear mother Mary, and thy beloved Spouse Jesus, to obtain for me holy humility, in order that, with you, transforming myself into the likeness of my Jesus in His state of humiliation upon earth, I may one day be able to see and to love Him with you in Paradise.

And Thou, my most humble Jesus, Who, to teach me to bear insults, and to make

them sweet and agreeable to me, hast willed to be the most insulted and the most humbled of all mankind, even so as to glut Thyself with ignominies, and to make Thyself the very scorn of men: ah! through the abundance of Thy mercies put an end to the derangement which vanity has occasioned within my heart. I see, O my Saviour! that up to this moment my pride has hindered me from becoming like unto Thee in any wise. I see that I cannot be admitted into Thy kingdom because I have not been like unto Thee, Who, for the love of me, hast consented to die, as a malefactor, hanging upon an ignominious cross. Ah! my Lord, Thou, innocent as Thou wert, Thou hast endured all this opprobrious treatment for me, while I have not been able to endure for Thee the few little insults which I have met with. I know that I have many times over deserved the eternal contempt of hell. I see that this is a great punishment for my sins, that after having been so ungrateful, I have also become so proud. My dear Redeemer, for the future I will be so no more. What I desire and pray for is, that I may have a share in humiliations with Thee: and because I have had the presumption so often to contemn Thy majesty and Thy infinite goodness, I now wish to embrace contempt of every kind in order to please Thee. But what good will all my resolutions do me, O Lord! if Thou dost not grant me Thy as-

sistance in carrying them into execution? Since it is Thy wish to save me, help me, O my despised Jesus! by the merits of the indignities which Thou has endured, to bear in a tranquil spirit all the contempt which I shall meet with to the very end of my life.

And Thou Who, after Jesus, hast been the most humble of all creatures, my most holy Mother Mary who wast made so great because of Thy humility, obtain for me, my Queen, a true humility not that I may become great in glory, but that I may greatly please God, and become more like unto Thyself and unto my despised Jesus. Amen.

## VI. CONSIDERATION.

ON TERESA'S DEVOTION TOWARDS THE MOST  
HOLY VIRGIN MARY AND TOWARDS THE  
GLORIOUS SAINT JOSEPH.

It was vouchsafed to St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, to behold the divine love under the form of a sweet liquid in a precious vessel. This liquid was dispensed by the hands of the most Holy Mary. As all God's graces are bestowed through the hands of Mary, it is also through her that the gift of gifts, the divine love, is conveyed to the faithful.

Our Saint well knew that she had received all her graces, and above all, the gift of love, which made her beautiful soul so rich, through the hands of this most sweet Mother. And so, in order to testify her thankfulness to her most holy Mother, she did not know what to do enough to love and honor her. From her early childhood, while still an inmate of her parental home, she would go in quest of secluded spots where she might honor Mary by saying the Rosary and other pious prayers. On the death of her mother, she hastened to present herself before her Queen, and with confidence and love, proceeded to offer herself up to be a daughter to her protesting, that from that moment she should be her only and dearest Mother.

In truth, in all her tribulations, and in all her needs, the Saint ever had recourse to Mary, as to her most loving Mother. It was with the special object of seeing her honored everywhere, that she undertook the work of reforming the Carmelite order, whose glory it is to fight under the banner and the especial protection of the Queen of Heaven.

Mary, on her part, who cannot do otherwise than love those who love her, even in the words of St. Ignatius the Martyr, "is always more loving towards them than they towards her, not choosing to be outdone by her children in this combat of love," this august Queen well knew how to return and to exceed the love which her dearest daughter bore towards her, by obtaining for her a great abundance of graces. On the day on which she condescended to come down so tenderly from heaven, and with her own hands to decorate our Saint with a mystical and precious necklace, she made her clearly understand how much satisfaction she felt at seeing her become, through her mediation, the most cherished spouse that her Jesus had. It appears more evident still, from the circumstances attending her death, how greatly she was beloved by this affectionate Mother, who then appeared standing beside her beloved daughter, to fortify her for her

departure, and to receive into her arms her blessed soul.

Our Saint had also a great devotion to the glorious spouse of Mary, St. Joseph: it may even be said, that the glory of kindling in the world the devotion towards that great saint was hers. She had felt, from her early childhood, an extreme affection for St. Joseph. She never took any affair in hand without commending it to St. Joseph, her father and her lord—styling him thus on account of the affection and of the reverence which she bore him. All the convents which she founded she consecrated under the invocation of his name; and when she herself came to be honored by the Church as a saint and some of her religious substituted for the title of St. Joseph that of St. Teresa, she appeared at Avila to Sister Isabella of St. Dominic, and enjoined her to restore the title of St. Joseph, as speedily as possible, bearing her testimony from heaven itself that the glory of her beloved saint was an object of greater concern to her than her own.

It is well known how extremely reserved the Saint's humility caused her to be in regard to everything connected with the manifestation of the graces which she received from heaven: but her desire of seeing St. Joseph glorified by all men was so great,

that she did not hesitate to make known the extraordinary favors which she had obtained through him, as their channel. In the history of her life she avers, that she never remembered to have asked him for any grace which she did not obtain. "It would almost appear incredible," she wrote, "if I were to enumerate the manifold graces which God has bestowed upon me, through this blessed saint, as their channel, or the corporal and spiritual dangers from which he has delivered me."

"Each of the other saints," she adds, seems to have received from God the power of succoring us in a single necessity only; experience teaches us that St. Joseph succors us in all. It seems that hereby the Lord would give us to understand, that as it was His will to be subject to him upon earth, so also, in the same way, He now grants him in heaven all that he requests." "How glad should I be if I could prevail upon all men," she says, in conclusion, "to cultivate a devotion towards this glorious saint, by the results of my own experience of the great favors which he obtains from God. I have never known any who had this devotion, without seeing them make an uninterrupted progress in virtue. I only ask, for the love of God, that he who does not give credence to what I say would be at the pains of giving it a trial."

## FRUIT.

St. Francis of Sales used to say that, next after the merits of Jesus Christ, the protection of Mary is so powerful and so beneficial to the soul, "that, according to my judgment, I look upon it to be the firmest support we can have with God." Father Suarez asserts that, according to the received opinion of the Church, the protection of Mary is profitable and necessary, because God has determined to bestow all graces by means of Mary.

Let us, then, love Mary, and ever have recourse to her protection, if we wish to save and sanctify ourselves: let us, with St. Bernard, address her as "the whole incentive of our hope;" with St. Bonaventure, as "the salvation of him who calls upon her;" with St. Germain, as "the life of Christians;" with St. Augustine, as "the only refuge of sinners;" and let us crown all by saluting her, with the whole Church militant, as "our life and our hope." *Vita, dulcedo, spes nostra, salve.*

St. Teresa used, moreover, to say, that she could not understand how it was possible to have a devotion to the Queen of Angels, without bearing an especial affection towards her spouse, St. Joseph, who was so diligent on earth in the service of Mary and of her dear Son, Jesus. Let us, then be-

take ourselves to this saint, and ask her to obtain for us a devotion to the Most Holy Mary and to St. Joseph.

## PRAYER.

I rejoice, O Teresa! at your being in heaven in company with your holy father Joseph, who loved you so tenderly and conferred so many favors on you upon earth. Now that you are returning him thanks and enjoying the contemplation of that great glory wherewith Jesus has enriched him, commend me to the care of this powerful intercessor: pray him to take me also, miserable as I am, under his protection. Address yourself, likewise, O my saint! to that divine Mother whose power is universal: and because it is her glory to be the refuge of sinners tell her that I am one, and the most wretched of them all. Entreat her to look upon me henceforth, commended to her as I am, by you, with compassion, to succor me in my temptations, and to come to my assistance at the hour of my death. Tell her that I hope for eternal salvation through her hands. Tell her this, my saint, and she will certainly listen to what you say: for, loving you so much as she did while you were upon earth, how much greater is her love for you now in heaven, where you love and honor her more! As Mary is my sovereign Queen, and my chief advocate with Jesus Christ, do you be, in the same way, O Teresa! my advocate with Mary.



And next I turn to you, my great protector, St. Joseph: do not disdain to take under your protection the most ungrateful sinner alive: I beg this of you for the love of your dearest Jesus, for the love of Mary your spouse, and for the love of Teresa whom you love so much, and who labored so much on earth to add to your glory. Enable me to die, like you, in the arms of Jesus and Mary.

And thou, Most Holy Virgin Mary, who art the salvation, the consolation, and the treasure of souls, enable me to serve and to love thee: it is in thee that I repose all my hopes.

And lastly, Thou, my most sweet and dear Redeemer, Who knowest well that my only reason for imploring the intercession of Mary, of Joseph, and of Teresa, is because I would not lose Thee, but would wish to love Thee, and to love Thee greatly: ah! my God, my All, my only love, and the King of my heart, reign, reign over my whole self: take the command of my senses and of all my faculties, and, by the sweet influence of Thy love, make them obey Thee as Thou dost require. My King and my Father, I give Thee all my will and all my liberty: accept it, and make me altogether such as will please Thee. Grant me to love Thee, and to be loved by Thee: there is nothing that I desire besides this; with this I am content. Amen.

## VII. CONSIDERATION.

ON THE WOUND OF LOVE WITH WHICH GOD  
PIERCED THE HEART OF SAINT TERESA.

Ever after the time when Jesus so lovingly declared St. Teresa to be His spouse, as we have already seen, she remained so wrapt up in her Beloved One, that she could think of nothing but of pleasing Him. Perceiving herself to be so highly favored by her divine Lover, and at the same time so destitute of the means of corresponding to so many graces, she cried out, in the tenderness of her soul, with the spouse in the Canticles: "Sustain me with flowers: fortify me with fruits, for I am languishing with love." (ii. 5.) She animated herself then, sometimes by the desire of suffering that she might please God the more, other times by ardently longing for death that she might love Him more perfectly: and such were her flowers. But besides this, she made it her study to fortify her languishing heart with the fruits of love, such as good works, penances, humiliations, and, more particularly, the labors she undertook and underwent in the great work of her reform, in the course of which she founded thirty-two convents, poor as she was, destitute of all human aid, and opposed even by the great ones of this world, as the Church commemorates in the lections for her Office.

Her success, however, was too small to satisfy the fervent desires which weighed upon her so heavily, of pleasing her heavenly spouse; and she protested to her Beloved that she could not endure to see herself so much enriched by the gifts which she received, and so niggardly in what she rendered in return. Consequently, enveloped as she was in the holy flames of divine love, and altogether detached from herself, she was frequently all on fire and languishing in the tenderness of her soul. Oh! what a beautiful sight for the blessed spirits who assisted her, was that of this generous spouse of the Crucified, who in her languishings cried out, "I conjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem! should you happen to meet with my Beloved, tell Him that I languish with love." (Cant. v. 8.) The effect of this holy languishing, as explained by the doctors of the Church, is that the soul forgets herself, and all that concerns her, so as to have no love for anything but for her Beloved, and to have no thoughts but how to please Him. Love of this description is that of a spouse, as is observed by St. Bernard in the following words, where he represents a soul raised to this happiness, as thus speaking: "The servant fears; the son honors; the mercenary hopes; and I, because I am a spouse, I love to love, I love to be beloved, and I love Love itself." Precisely such was our seraphic

Saint: languishing in her happiness; forgetting everything which had not a reference to the divine love; loving and being beloved, she made God's pleasure her only study; the only recompense which she desired was that of an addition to her love for Him.

But as the hunter, to obtain possession of his prey, endeavors to make sure of it by inflicting upon it numerous wounds, so does the Divine Archer seem to have acted in like manner toward Teresa, sending to her on several occasions, a seraph to wound that heart of hers, which He willed to be wholly His own.

Let us listen to the Saint herself in the description which she gives us of this grace, in the 29th chapter of her Life: "It was the Lord's will that I should sometimes behold an angel standing at my left hand. He was small, very beautiful, with a face all glistening like fire; his appearance was that of a seraph. I saw that in his hand he held an arrow, on the point of which there was a spark of fire: it seemed to me that with this arrow he sometimes pierced my heart, making it penetrate even to my very vitals, part of which he drew forth and carried away with him, after leaving me all on fire with a burning love for God. So great was the pain which I used to experience that it caused me to utter certain plaintive cries, and so exceeding was the sweetness which I

used to feel from that wound, that it would have been impossible to wish it at an end, or to rest content with any object short of God. This pain is not of a corporal but a spiritual nature; although the body cannot but participate in it in some degree, and even largely. It is a loving interchange of embraces between the soul and God. I pray the Lord to make any one taste of it who will not give credence to me."

O lovely wound! must we then exclaim, O sweet pain! O fire to be longed for! Wound, which makes Him by Whom it is inflicted loved: sweet art thou, because thy sweetness excels that which all the pleasures of the world can give: O fire, which art more to be desired than all the kingdoms of the earth! thou art the most precious gift which the divine Lover can bestow upon His faithful and beloved spouses: a gift directly proceeding from the loving heart of God and whose effect, as the Saint used to say, is to make the soul unsatisfied with everything short of God.

He whose heart is greatly wounded cannot prevent himself from thinking on him by whom the wound was made: and if he wished to forget him, the pain which is experienced would recall him to his remembrance. Thus, in like manner, the soul that is wounded with the love of Jesus cannot exist without loving Jesus, and without

thinking upon Him. Should it happen that the world or creatures endeavor to turn her attention from her loving meditation, the wound in her heart sweetly constrains her to return to it, and to languish in love for Him Who has wounded her; and such was precisely the case with the Saint, who concludes her recital of His grace in the following words: "I was altogether stunned; I would have wished neither to see nor to speak, but only to keep myself in the midst of my delightful pain, which seemed to cause me a greater joy and a greater satisfaction than anything in creation could have procured me."

But, oh! my God, who is there that would not accept this pain, if that can be so termed which is occasioned by this delicious fire of love, which constitutes the happiness of the saints in heaven, and which fills them with joy for all eternity! To prepare the heart, however, for the reception of this

fire and of these wounds, it is necessary to resolve, once for all, to banish far away everything which is not God, and generously to say farewell to all creatures, addressing them thus:

World, honors, riches, creatures, what would you have of me? I renounce you wholly: I take my leave of you: farewell. My God has set me on fire with love: He

has wounded me: by His love He has, at last, gained all my heart: He has made me know that He will not be content unless He has entire possession of it. Depart, then, far from me, creatures; you cannot satisfy me, and I no longer desire such gratification as you procure. Go and content him who seeks you, for I no longer wish for you. And what is it that I do wish for? I wish for God alone: with God I rest content: God only, yes, God only suffices me. To my misfortune I have loved and served you enough. The time which I have still to spend upon earth, whatever its duration may be, I wish to employ wholly and solely in loving that God, Who has first loved me, and Who deserves and demands of me all my love.

#### FRUIT.

We are apt to complain that, seeking God, we do not find Him. "Detach your heart from all things," Saint Teresa says: "Seek God, and you will find Him." Otherwise, the things we love will be continually drawing us off, and will prevent our finding God. The Lord one day said to our Saint: "Oh! how much would I willingly say to a great number of souls! But the world makes a great noise round their hearts, and in their ears, so that my voice cannot make itself heard! Oh! if they would but separate themselves a little from the world! There

are many souls given to prayer, in whom the divine love finds little, if any, place, because they go to prayer with a heart filled with earthly affections. For this reason it is that St. Ignatius of Loyola remarks, that a detached soul will profit more in a quarter of an hour's prayer, than a soul which is not detached will in several hours. No sooner has the bird escaped from the net, than it flies away: so, in like manner, no sooner is the soul, which cannot exist without loving, either the Creator or creatures, set free from earthly affections, than it flies quickly to God. The masters of the spiritual life teach that defects do not prevent our going on to perfection, when the soul endeavors to rise again with humility and peace, as soon as it has fallen: but that the smallest attachment, were it only a fine thread, does. The Roman Senate, as St. Augustine relates, sanctioned the payment of divine honors to thirty thousand deities, that is, to all who were recognized as such in the world: but it refused to decree divine worship to the God of the Christians, whom it styled a jealous God as knowing that He desired to be adored exclusively. And the Roman Senate had good reason for what they thus alleged: not because our God is proud, because He is the true God. The thief is satisfied if he gets a share, but the owner is not satisfied without the whole. God desires, then, to be the sole possessor

of our heart, and, therefore, He lays upon each of us this command: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart." (Matt. xxii. 37.) "Let us act in such a way," said Saint Teresa to a certain superior, "as to detach souls from everything created in order that they may become the spouses of a King, Who is so jealous that He would have them forget everything and even themselves."

Let us, then, set to work to detach our heart from riches by the love of holy poverty: from pleasures, by mortification: from honors, by humility: from relatives, by detachment; and lastly, from self-will by obedience to superiors; frequently putting up to God that excellent prayer: "Create in me, O my God! a pure heart." (Ps. I. 12.) Give me, Lord, a heart empty and detached, that it may be filled with Your holy love.

#### PRAYER.

O my seraphic Saint, Teresa of Jesus! you in whom your Spouse so affectionately enkindled His fire, and whom at the same time He wounded with His love, pray, pray for me, that, wounded by my God, and henceforth burning for Him, who alone deserves to be loved, I may so forget all creatures as to love my Creator alone.

And Thou, my divine Lover, Thou, my dear Jesus, because it is Thy will that I should love Thee, by the merits of Thy

Blood, by the purity of Thy Mother, Mary, by the loving transports of Thy devoted Saint Teresa, make this heart of mine which Thou created only that it might love Thee, my God and my all, begin from this time forth to think the good things of earth as what they really are, vile and miserable, and in loving Thee let it now begin to think of Thee as what Thou art, the only, the infinite good. Disdain not, O Lord! I beseech Thee, to admit to Thy love, a heart which has so long loved creatures in spite of Thee. I clearly see, that, by reason of this, I am no more worthy to love Thee: but Thou hast nevertheless not ceased from being a God infinitely lovely, as Thou hast ever been. Grant me the permission, and make me to love Thee greatly, and to love nothing but Thee. Oh, that I loved Thee, my most lovely Saviour, that I loved Thee heartily! then, surely, there would be no more room in my heart for creatures! But why dost not Thou, my dear Saviour, take all my heart, giving it, as I do, whole and undivided to Thee? If it be attached to creatures, do Thou Thyself detach it from them by the gentle drawings of Thy love. Ah! my God, my God, my God, ah! come into my poverty-stricken heart, and by Thy blessed flames consume and reduce to ashes all the desires, all the solitudes, and all the affections, which have not Thee for their object.

Mary, my mother, aid me: Jesus, my love, hearken to me: let Thy merit prevail over my demerit; let Thy goodness overcome my unworthiness; let Thine infinite love triumph over the ingratitude of my heart. Amen. Amen. Thus I pray: and thus I hope. So may it be!

## VIII. CONSIDERATION.

ON ST. TERESA'S DESIRE FOR DEATH.

If the worldly-minded have a fear of losing their good things, fleeting and miserable as they are, much greater is the fear which the Saints have of losing God, Who is a good, infinite and eternal, and Who promises to bestow Himself in heaven as a recompense to him who shall have loved Him on earth, admitting him to the enjoyment of His beauty and of His own happiness itself. On this account it is that as, while they lived, their whole fear has been simply that of sinning, and thus of losing the friendship of that Lord whom they have loved so well, in like manner their whole desire has been to die in the grace of God, and by death to gain the assurance of loving and possessing Him for ever. Death, then—that object of the greatest terror to souls attached to the earth—is what those who love God especially desire; for, says St. Bernard, it is for these happy souls both the termination of their labors and the gate of life. Hence we see that, among the Saints, one would call this life a prison and pray the Lord to deliver him out of it: “Deliver my soul from this prison.” Ps. cxli 8.) Another, like St. Paul, would call it a real death: “Who shall deliver me from this body of death?” (Rom. vii., 24.) But how are we to express the grief and the extreme anguish which our

Saint experienced through her desire for death, more especially after the time when the Lord called her to His perfect love? She protests, in the history of her life, which she drew up in writing, under obedience to her confessor, that the desire which she had of dying, that she might go to see God, was so great, that it did not even afford her the leisure to think upon her sins. This humble spouse of Jesus crucified spoke in this manner because she was continually bewailing those imperfections in the love of her spouse into which she had fallen in times gone by—imperfections which she pronounced to be monstrous and deserving of hell, but which, in reality, as her biographers declare, never amounted to mortal sin.

The Saint, in thinking, moreover, of the danger she was in, as long as life should last, of offending God and losing Him, used to say that a single day, and even a single hour, seemed to her too long a time. Hence, she would exclaim: "Alas! Lord, as long as we remain in this miserable life, the life eternal is ever in jeopardy. O life; enemy of my good, who shall be able to bring thee to an end? I endure thee, because God endures thee? I preserve thee because thou dost appertain to Him: may I never prove treacherous or ungrateful. Oh! when will that day of benediction arrive on which I shall behold thee swallowed up in the boundless

ocean of the sovereign truth, when thou shalt no longer possess the liberty to sin?"

To her fear of the possibility of offending God in this life, was joined the great desire which this loving soul entertained of seeing face to face the only object of her love, that she might thus gain the power of loving Him more perfectly, and of altogether uniting herself to Him. For this reason she could not endure to see herself at such a distance from that country of the blessed, and with abundance of tears, she would thus utter her complaint before her Spouse: "Alas! alas! Lord, this banishment is long indeed; what shall a soul confined in this prison do? Oh! Jesus, the life of man is long indeed! It is short, when considered as a means of gaining the life which is the true one; but it is long for that soul which desires to behold herself in the presence of her God." At other times, blending with her loving pains her distrust in her own merits and her hope in God, she would occupy herself in the composition of the following beautiful sequence of those loving ejaculations which were so pleasing to her Beloved: "O life!" she would say, "O life! how canst thou keep thyself apart from thy life? O death! O death! I know not who can fear thee, because in thee is life, yet who shall not fear thee after having spent a portion of this life without the love of his God? O my soul! serve thy

God, and hope that in His mercy He will heal thy miseries."

But in order to understand the extent of that burning desire which our Saint had for death, it is necessary that we should have a knowledge of the pain which she experienced in continuing alive; she relates to her confessor that this was such that it seemed already to destroy and bring her life to an end: under its influence, too, she would even fall into an ecstacy. To give vent to her affections, she drew up on this subject those burning words of which that celebrated gloss of hers is composed, which thus begins:

"I live, but yet I live not in myself,  
For since aspiring to a life more high  
I ever die because I do not die."

Elsewhere she says in still stronger terms:

"When will it be, my God, that I shall at length see my soul perfectly united to Thee, and that all my powers shall rejoice in Thee? Do not, O Lord! allow it to continue much longer in its lacerated condition: it really seems as though it beheld itself torn in pieces on every side."

In a word, all the relief, and all the consolation, which she found in this life, was in thinking upon her death. So she used to comfort herself, while on earth, with words like these: "Then, then, O my soul! you

will have entered into your rest, when you shall be holding converse with that sovereign Good, and shall know what He knows: when you shall be loving what He loves, and enjoying that which constitutes His blessedness: for then you will be rid of your own wretched will." Thus, it may be said, that the life of our Saint was sustained by the hope of that life eternal, for which she had sacrificed all the good things of this world: "I had rather live and die," she tells us, "hoping for the life eternal, than have all the good things of the earth in my possession. Do not, Thou, abandon me, O Lord! for I hope in Thee; if, only, I may serve Thee without intermission, do with me whatsoever Thou pleasest."

#### FRUIT.

Let, then, the fruit of this meditation be a great desire for Paradise. When the dignity of Cardinal was offered to St. Philip Neri, he cast the berretta into the air, and looking up to heaven, he replied: "Paradise! Paradise!" The blessed Giles would raise himself from the earth in ecstacy when the children used, out of frolic, to say to him: "Brother Giles, Paradise, Paradise."

It is an opinion among theologians, that in Purgatory there is a peculiar pain called that of languor, which is inflicted upon those who have had but little desire for Paradise during the present life; and reasonably so,



for he has but little love for God who desires but little to go to enjoy His infinite beauty unveiled before his eyes, and so much the more as it is, at the utmost, impossible for us not to be continually offending Him, at least in venial matters; and even if we do love Him here below, our love is, nevertheless, so imperfect, that we scarcely know that we love Him at all.

Let us, then, yearn after Paradise, where we shall offend God no more, and where we shall ever love Him with all our powers. When the troubles of this life press heavily upon us, let us animate ourselves by the hope of Paradise to bear them with tranquility. When the world or the devil present for our acceptance fruits which are forbidden, let us with good courage turn our back upon them, and lift up our eyes to Paradise. If the dread of God's judgments alarm us, let us nerve ourselves by hoping in the goodness of our God, Who, to make us understand how ardently He desires to give Paradise to us, has commanded us, under pain of damnation, to hope for it through His mercy. He has even willed to make purchase of it at the cost of His blood, and of His death, that so He might obtain that great blessedness for us; and to assure us of it the more. He has been pleased to give us a pledge of it in the gift of Himself to us in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar.

If our weakness terrifies us, let us fortify our hope by the same goodness of our Lord, Who, after having given us His merits to entitle us to Paradise, will likewise give us the strength to persevere in His grace even to our life's end, as often as we have recourse to His mercy, and pray to Him for that strength and perseverance.

#### PRAYER.

O my holy advocate! I rejoice with you that you have reached the haven and termination of your sighs; there, you no longer believe; but you behold the beauty of God; you no longer hope; but you are possessed of the sovereign good; you are now rejoicing in the clear vision of that God Whom you so long desired and loved. There your love is satiated; there is nothing for your loving heart to long for more, O my Saint! have compassion on me, who am still in the midst of the storm; pray for me that I may obtain salvation, and that I may go to join you in loving that God Whom you so greatly desire to see beloved.

O beautiful fatherland! O blessed fatherland of God-loving souls! where they love Him without fear of losing Him, without tepidity and without end, I greet thee from afar, from this valley of tears, and I yearn after thee, simply because I hope that in thee I shall love my God with all my powers for evermore.

And Thou, Jesus, my Love, since Thou hast created me that I might love Thee eternally since Thou hast urgently commanded me to love Thee, since it is simply and entirely for this that Thou hast given me life, and preserved me even when I was an enemy to Thee: since Thou art so lovely and so in love with my soul, that Thou knowest not how to do anything, if I may so say, but what may make Thyself beloved by me, thankless and worthless worm of earth although I am: tell me, Lord, why is it that I love Thee not? Tell me how it is that I can love anything else but Thee? Ah! my most lovely Lord, I see that I might justly be condemned to the punishment of no more having the power to love Thee: but no, my Love, I gladly accept every chastisement but this. Make me to love Thee, and then punish me according to Thy will: I wish to save myself in order to love Thee. Change this heart of mine: assist me to drive out of it all love which is not for Thee: my Creator, my God, my Life, my Well-beloved, my Love, my All, save me: I pray Thee to save me, solely that I may love Thee forever with all my powers. Grant me this for the love of Jesus and Mary.

Ah! Mary! Mary! you are my hope: you can do all that you wish; you never send away unconsolated, anyone who has recourse

to you. I, then, betake myself to you; in you I confide; through you I hope to love my God throughout eternity. Amen.

## IX. CONSIDERATION.

ON THE PRECIOUS DEATH OF ST. TERESA.

The holy mother, on leaving the town of Burgos, was desirous of going to her dear Convent of Avila, that she might rest awhile in that her first, and favorite nest, where she began her reform: but her heavenly Spouse summoned her to another home, and to another repose. Already He wished her in the country of the blessed: therefore He permitted that, as she was on her way, her Provincial sent her an order to repair to the convent of Alba, where God was awaiting her, to deliver her from the prison of this life, and to conduct her to the everlasting nuptials.

Come, O my Saint! come: your Spouse deems that your labors have now been sufficient: and His heart is touched with compassion by your sighs. Come to the repose which you desire: come to the haven after having encountered the storm. Come to begin that new life of love into which you will enter by a death of love, which the Lord is preparing for you in this favored spot.

The Saint obeyed, and reached Alba on St. Matthew's day, at six o'clock in the afternoon, in the year 1582. Her daughters welcomed her with great reverence and great affection, perhaps not without some presenti-

ment that they should be losing her before long. They received her benediction and kissed her hand, whilst the Saint was tenderly and affectionately speaking with them.

When she arrived she was fatigued from her journey, and unwell from an attack of fever; so that she retired immediately to her bed at the entreaty of her children with these words: "Oh! may God assist me, my dear daughters, as I feel quite overpowered! It is now more than twenty years since I lay down to rest at such an early hour. Blessed be the Lord that my sickness has fallen upon me while I am amongst you."

During the eight subsequent days her illness continued, though she would never allow it to prevent her from rising to receive in the Holy Sacrament, her Jesus, Who was to her the only life of her life.

But on St. Michael's day, still suffering from the sickness which was to conduct her to her grave, she took to her bed in the infirmary, never to leave it more. There she remained for a day and a night in an ecstasy of prayer, and during this period she gained the knowledge that the time of her entering into rest was at hand: having learned through a revelation, the hour and the moment of her decease, she then told the venerable Sister Ann of Saint Bartholomew, her beloved companion in all her travels,

that the hour of her departure had arrived. Three days before her death, when Father Anthony of Jesus had come to receive her confession, he told her to pray to God to preserve her life for the good of the reform: but the Saint replied that there was no longer any need to think of this, because her death was a certainty, and her presence upon earth was no longer necessary. The doctors ordered her to be cupped, to which she willingly submitted, not out of any desire for recovery, but from the fervent wish which she had to suffer, and to close her life in the midst of sufferings, as she had ever desired, for the love of her dearest Spouse, Whose will it had been to expire amidst so many torments.

On the eve of St. Francis, she asked for the Most Holy Viaticum, and whilst they were bringing it, all her religious being assembled in her chamber she burst into tears, and clasping her hands together, said to them, "My daughters and my mothers pardon me for the evil examples which I have set you, and do not imitate me; me, who am the greatest sinner in the world, and who have observed my Rule less than all others. For the love of God, my children, I pray you to observe that Rule perfectly, and to be obedient to your superiors." She, who had been so great a lover of obedience, recommended nothing but this virtue when at the point of

death, knowing, as she did, that the perfection of every religious depends on the perfection of his obedience.

The Holy Viaticum having arrived, she had the courage, at the sight of her Spouse, to raise herself into a sitting posture, although her feebleness was such that she could scarcely stir. The ardor with which her love inspired her was so great, as is recorded in her Life, that she appeared ready to throw herself from her bed to go to meet the only Beloved One of her soul, and to receive Him. Her countenance became so bright and glistening that they could not look at her any longer. She clasped her hands together, burning, like the Phoenix, with the liveliest ardor the nearer she approached the end of her life and the more she lovingly conversed with her Spouse, so as to draw tears from all who were present. Amongst other things, she said: "O my Lord and my Spouse! The hour so earnestly longed for has at length arrived. It is at length time that we should see each other, O Lord! The day has dawned at last when I am to leave my place of exile and my soul is to go to participate with Thee in that joy which it has so ardently desired."

What gave her most consolation in that hour, and chiefly called forth her thankfulness towards God was the fact of her being a child of the Holy Church. She could not

refrain from saying over and over again: "After all, O Lord! I am a daughter of the Church." She also frequently repeated the versicle of David's: "A contrite and an humbled heart, O my God! Thou wilt not despise." On the following day, after receiving Extreme Unction, she held the Crucifix tight in her embrace, and remained for fourteen hours in an ecstasy, with a countenance shining like fire, and immovable, beginning from that time to experience a foretaste of the great glory which God had prepared for her in heaven, where her Spouse was summoning her in these words: "Arise, make haste, my beloved, and come." (Cant. ii., 10.) Then it was that before the Saint expired, Sister Ann, her companion, saw her Spouse, Jesus, with a multitude of angels, who took up their position at the foot of her bed, awaiting the moment when they should conduct her to heaven. She also saw, bearing her company, her sweet mother, Mary, and her beloved father St. Joseph. Lastly, she saw a multitude of persons, clothed in white and all glistening with light, entering with great joy into the cell of the dying saint. It is supposed that these were the ten thousand martyrs who had promised her that they would accompany her to Paradise. They drew near to the bed at the moment when Teresa, her beautiful life being consumed in a sweet furnace of love, expired sweetly through the force of that love.

Her blessed soul, issuing forth from its prison, flew away like a dove to go to take possession of its Beloved, and indeed at the very moment they saw her soul, as a white dove, flying up to heaven. At the same moment she appeared in glory to Sister Catherine of Jesus, and told her that her life had been terminated through the vehemence of her love, and that she was gone to rejoice in God. Her virgin body forthwith exhaled a delightful fragrance, which diffused itself throughout the whole convent.

#### FRUIT.

Behold the beautiful reward wherewith the labors of the saints are requited at the hour of their death. Whilst sinners experience at their decease the first fruits of their damnation, sadness, confusion, remorse, despair, the saints on the contrary, receive, as a foretaste of Paradise, confidence, peace, light and joy. Alas! how is it that there can be so many who are blind enough to give their whole thought to the things of this world, conscious although they be that they will shortly have to leave it? Come, come, you senseless ones; come and see in this poor cell of Teresa, how contentedly those die and leave the world who have previously taken leave of it during their lifetime in order to give themselves up to God. O devout soul! Ever let your eyes rest on that close of existing scenes which will come

upon you at the hour of death. Do that now which you will wish but not have the power to do then, and you will become a saint, and your death also will be a happy one.

#### PRAYER.

Behold, then, O Teresa! your sighs heard, your desires fulfilled, your love satisfied. You are now released from banishment. You have already reached your place of rest. In that dear fatherland you no more go on praying for your life to end because you are possessed of that real and true life which will fully and eternally satiate your heart, and leave you nothing to desire more. You are now rejoicing in that Good which was the object of your love. You are loving that God Whom you sought after, and you possess that love for which you so ardently longed. This thought gives me comfort in sympathy with yourself, and I return thanks to your God, Who has already crowned you as a spouse of His for all eternity, and has accumulated so much glory upon you in the abode of the blessed. But, amidst your splendors, do not be unmindful of us, wretched as we are. Have compassion on us, who are going on our way weeping, as travelers in this valley of tears, and are ever in danger of losing God. In pity, address yourself to your Jesus in our behalf, that He may pardon the manifold sins

which, up to this day, we have committed. Pray Him to deliver us from an attachment to the things of this world, which hinder us from one day going to join you in loving Him in Paradise.

And Thou, my lovely Redeemer and Father of souls, save me too for the glorification of Thy merits, causing me to depart out of this life into Thy grace. Ah! my only good, it is true that I have been the most ungrateful of Thy creatures; it is true that the more the blessings which I have received from Thee, so much the more ungrateful have I been. But this day I do truly desire to love Thee with my whole heart, and to consecrate myself altogether to Thy pure love. Receive me, my Lord! I give, and I consecrate myself to Thee without reserve. I cast away and despise as dirt all that the world prizes, and all that it can offer me, that so I may possess Thee only, O my Jesus! with Thy love. In a word, O my God! and my All, I wish for nothing but for Thee only, in time and in eternity. Thou art, and Thou shalt be, my only treasure, the only one for which I desire to live and to sigh. Grant O my dearest Saviour! that this desire which Thou hast Thyself given me may be perfected in me by Thy grace. Thou didst make of Thyself a sacrifice to be wholly and entirely consumed for me: grant that through love I may consume my-

self wholly for Thee, that so I may one day go to possess Thee through love in heaven, where I shall never more be able to lose Thee, where I shall be ungrateful no more, but where I shall love Thee with all my powers, and through all eternity.

And you, my sweetest hope, Most Holy and ever Virgin Mary, obtain for me all that I desire of your Son. Receive me, I pray you, for the love of Him, into the number of your servants as the meanest of your slaves. You are my refuge and my salvation: do not permit one who confides in you to be lost. I hope, through your intercession, to go to praise the divine mercies in heaven. Thus, will I go on ever singing and repeating those words in which your daughter Teresa took so much pleasure while she was yet alive upon earth: "I will forever sing the mercies of the Lord. *Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo.*" (Ps. lxxxviii, 2.) Amen. So may it be.

## MEDITATION.

FOR THE 15TH OF OCTOBER, THE FEAST OF  
SAINT TERESA.

I. Let us consider the burning love which this seraphic Saint entertained for God. To her it seemed impossible that there could be in the world a single person who did not love God: and she used to say: "My God, art not Thou exceedingly lovely on account of Thine infinite perfections, and of the infinite love which Thou bearest towards us? How, then, can there be any one who does not love Thee?" Most humble although she was, yet in speaking of love she did not shrink from saying: "I am all imperfection, excepting in desires and in love." The Saint has left us on record the following excellent instruction: "Detach your heart from everything: seek God and you will find Him." On the other hand, she used to say, that it is easy for those who love God to detach themselves from the earth: "Ah! my God, we only need to love Thee truly, for Thee to make everything easy to us." Again, she writes elsewhere: "Since live we must, let us live for Thee, so that our selfish interests may at last disappear. What greater advantage can any one gain than that which is to be found in pleasing Thee? O my delight and my God! what shall I do in order to please Thee?" She even went so far as

to say that she should not be made sorry by seeing others in heaven more happy than herself: but that she could not make up her mind to see any one love God more than she should love Him.

II. What makes this Saint an object for our admiration, is the steadfastness of soul with which she strove to accomplish everything that she knew to be acceptable to God. She used to say: "There is nothing, however painful, which I am not prepared courageously to undertake, if it were set before me to do." Hence she gave it as her instruction, that "the divine love is to be acquired by a determination to act and to suffer for God." "For," she said in another place, "the devil has no fear of irresolute souls." To please God, she even went so far, as is well known, as to make a vow of performing whatever was most perfect. And since sufferings endured for God are the strongest proofs of love, she desired to live for nothing but to suffer. Therefore she wrote: "It seems to me that there is no reason to live, except it be to suffer: and this it is which I most fervently pray to God for. To Him I say with my whole heart, Lord, either to suffer or to die; I ask of thee for myself nothing but this." Her love became so ardent, that Jesus Christ one day said to her, "Teresa, you are all mine, and I am all yours."

III. So dear did she become to her spouse that Jesus sent one of the seraphim to her to wound her heart with a barb of fire. At length she died as she had lived, all inflamed with love. When the end of her life was drawing near, all her sighs were for death, that she might go to unite herself to her God: "O death!" she said, "I know not who can dread thee, for in thee is life: serve thy God, my soul, and hope that He will bring thee a remedy for thy pains." For this reason she composed that affectionate Gloss which opens with the following words:—

"I live, but yet I live not in myself,  
For since aspiring to a life more high  
I ever die because I do not die."

When the Holy Viaticum was brought her, she exclaimed: "O my Saviour! the longed-for moment is at last come: now begins the time for our seeing each other face to face." Then she died of love, as she herself revealed after her decease.

O my seraphic Saint! you are now rejoicing in your God, Whom you loved so much during your life-time, when in constant danger of losing Him: obtain for us, by your prayers, the grace that we may go to love our God in Paradise with you for evermore. Amen.