

## DEVOTIONS BEFORE HOLY COMMUNION

### *Prayer of St. Ambrose (†397)*

O Gracious Lord Jesus Christ, I, a sinner, presuming not on my own merits, but trusting to Thy mercy and goodness, fear and tremble in drawing near to the Table on which is spread Thy Banquet of all delights. For I have defiled both my heart and body with many sins, and have not kept a strict guard over my mind and my tongue. Wherefore, O gracious God, O awful Majesty, I, a wretched creature, reduced to extremity, have recourse to Thee, the fount of mercy; I fly to Thee that I may be healed, and take refuge under Thy protection, and I ardently desire to have Him as my Savior Whom I am unable to withstand as my Judge.

To Thee, O Lord, I show my wounds, to Thee I lay bare my shame. I know that my sins are many and great, on account of which I am filled with fear. But I trust in Thy mercy, for it is unbounded. Look down upon me, therefore, with eyes of mercy, O Lord Jesus Christ, eternal King, God and Man, crucified for man. Hearken unto me, for my hope is in Thee; have mercy on me, who am full of misery and sin, Thou Who wilt never cease to let flow the fountain of mercy. Hail, Thou saving Victim, offered for me and for all mankind on the tree of the cross. Hail, Thou noble and precious Blood, flowing from the wounds of my crucified Lord Jesus Christ and washing away the sins of the whole world.

Remember, O Lord, Thy creature, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy Blood. I am grieved because I have sinned, I desire to make amends for what I have done. Take away from me, therefore, O most merciful Father, all my iniquities and offenses, that, being purified both in soul and body, I may worthily partake of the Holy of Holies; and grant that this holy oblation of Thy Body and Blood, of which though all unworthy I purpose to partake, may be to me the full remission of my sins, the perfect cleansing of my offenses, the means of driving away all evil thoughts and of renewing all holy desires, the advancement of works pleasing to Thee, as well as the strongest defense and protection for soul and body against the craft and the snares of my enemies. Amen.

### *Prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas (†1274)*

Almighty and everlasting God, behold, I am about to approach the Sacrament of Thine only-begotten Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. I approach as one who is sick to the Physician of life, as one unclean to the Well-spring of mercy and goodness, as one blind to the Light of eternal brightness, as one poor and needy to the Lord of Heaven and earth.

Wherefore I beseech Thee, of Thine infinite goodness, to heal my sickness, to wash away my filth, to enlighten my blindness, to enrich my poverty, and to clothe my nakedness, that I may receive the Bread of Angels, the King of kings, the Lord of lords with such reverence and humility, with such contrition and devotion, with such purity and faith, with such purpose and intention, as may conduce to the salvation of my soul.

Grant, I beseech Thee, that I may receive not only the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Our Lord, but also the fruit and virtue of this Sacrament. O most indulgent and merciful God, grant me so to receive the Body of Thine only-begotten Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, which He took of the Virgin Mary, that I may be found worthy to be incorporated with His Mystical Body and numbered among His members. O most loving Father, grant that I may one day contemplate for ever, face to face, Thy beloved Son, Whom now on my pilgrimage I am about to receive under a veil, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

### *Prayer to the Blessed Virgin*

O most blessed Virgin Mary, Mother most loving and most merciful, I, a miserable and unworthy sinner, come before Thee, with the heartfelt prayer, that of Thy loving kindness Thou wouldst vouchsafe graciously to be near me and all who throughout the whole Church are to receive the Body and Blood of Thy Son this day, even as Thou wert near Thy most dear Son as He hung bleeding on the cross, that, aided by Thy gracious help, we may worthily offer up a pure and acceptable sacrifice in the sight of the holy and undivided Trinity. Amen.

### *Prayer to St. Joseph*

Happy wast thou, O blessed Joseph, to whom it was given not only to see and to hear that God whom many kings desired to see, and saw not, to hear, and heard not; but also to bear Him in thine arms, to embrace Him, to clothe Him, and to guard and defend Him.

ᵛ. Pray for us, O blessed Joseph.

℞. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

*Let us pray.* O God, Who hast given unto us a royal priesthood, vouchsafe, we beseech Thee, that as blessed Joseph was found worthy to touch with his hands, and to bear in his arms, Thine only-begotten Son, born of the Virgin Mary, so may we be made fit, by cleanness of heart and blamelessness of life, to receive from Thy holy altar; may we this day with reverent devotion partake of the sacred Body and Blood of Thine only-begotten Son, and may we in the world-to-come be accounted worthy of receiving an everlasting reward; through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

### *An Act of Faith and Adoration*

My Lord Jesus Christ, I believe that Thou are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. I believe that in Holy Communion I shall receive Thy Sacred Body and Thy Precious Blood. My faith in Thy Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist is firmly founded on Thy word, O eternal Truth. My Savior and my God, with the angels who surround Thy altar-throne, I bow down in humble adoration before Thy majesty.

### *An Act of Hope*

Jesus, my God, Who in this wonderful Sacrament hast left us a memorial of Thy passion and a pledge of future glory, I hope in Thee because Thou art infinitely good, almighty, and faithful to Thy promises. Through the merits of Thy Precious Blood I hope to obtain the pardon of my sins, the grace of final perseverance, and the everlasting happiness of Heaven.

### *An Act of Love and Desire*

O My Jesus, I love Thee because Thou art infinitely good. Thou knowest well that I love Thee, but I do not love Thee enough. Oh, make me to love Thee more! O Love which burns always and never fails, my God, Thou Who art charity itself, come, and kindle in my heart that divine fire which consumes the saints and transforms them into Thee. Eucharistic Heart of my Jesus, Whose Blood is the life of my soul, may it be no longer I that live, but do Thou alone live in me.

### *An Act of Contrition*

My Lord and my God, I detest all the sins of my life. I am truly sorry that I have offended Thee, because Thou art infinitely good. I firmly resolve, by the help of Thy grace, never to offend Thee again, and carefully to avoid the occasions of sin. "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy" (Ps 50:3). "A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou does not despise" (Ps 51:19).

### *Acts of Humility*

O Lord of glory, O God of infinite sanctity, who am I that Thou should deign to come to me! "The heavens are not pure in Thy sight," (cf. Job 15:15) and wilt Thou dwell in my heart?

The consciousness of my unworthiness would prompt me to exclaim, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinner" (cf. Lk 5:8), but Thy pressing invitation to approach Thy holy table encourages me, and dispels all my fears.

"Here I am, for Thou didst call me" (1 Kings 3:5). Come, then, O Jesus, take possession of a heart that wishes to belong to Thee. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Ps 50:12). "Have mercy on me, O God, and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my iniquity" (Ps 50:3).

"Lord, I am not worthy that Thou should enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my soul shall be healed" (cf. Mt 8:8).

May the Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ keep my soul unto life everlasting. Amen.

## DEVOTIONS AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

### *Prayer of St. Bonaventure (†1274)*

Pierce, O most sweet Lord Jesus, my inmost soul with the most joyous and healthful wound of Thy love, with true, tranquil, and most holy apostolic charity, that my soul may ever languish and melt with love and longing for Thee, that it may yearn for Thee and faint for Thy courts, and long to be dissolved and to be with Thee.

Grant that my soul may hunger after Thee, the Bread of angels, the comforting nourishment of holy souls, our daily and supersubstantial bread, having all sweetness and savor and every delight and taste. Let my heart ever hunger after and feed upon Thee, upon Whom the Angels desire to look, and may mine inmost soul be filled with the sweetness of Thy savor.

May it ever thirst after Thee, the source of life, the fount of wisdom and knowledge, the fountain of everlasting life, the flood of pleasure, the richness of the house of God. May it ever compass Thee, seek Thee, find Thee, run to Thee, attain to Thee, meditate upon Thee, speak of Thee, and do all things to the praise and glory of Thy Name, with humility and discretion, with love and delight, with ease and affection, and with perseverance unto the end.

And mayest Thou alone be ever my hope, my entire assurance, my riches, my delight, my pleasure, my joy, my rest and tranquility, my peace, my sweetness, my fragrance, my sweet savor, my food, my refreshment, my refuge, my help, my wisdom, my portion, my possession, and my treasure, in Whom may my mind and my heart remain fixed and firm and rooted immovably for evermore. Amen.

### *Prayer of St. Augustine (†430)*

Before Thine eyes, O Lord, we bring our sins, and we compare them with the stripes we have received.

If we examine the evil we have wrought, what we suffer is little, what we deserve is great.

What we have committed is very grievous, what we have suffered is very light.

We feel the punishment of sin, yet withdraw not from the obstinacy of sinning.

Under Thy lash our inconstancy is visited, but our sinfulness is not changed.

Our suffering soul is tormented, but our neck is not bent.

Our life groans under the sorrow, yet amends not in deed.

If Thou spare us, we correct not our ways; if Thou punish, we cannot endure it.

In time of correction we confess our wrongdoing; after Thy visitation we forget that we have wept.

If Thou stretch forth Thy hand, we promise amendment; if Thou withhold the sword, we keep not our promise.

If Thou strike, we cry out for mercy; if Thou spare, we again provoke Thee to strike.

Here we are before Thee, O Lord, confessedly guilty; we know that unless Thou pardon we shall deservedly perish.

Grant then, O almighty Father, without our deserving it, the pardon we ask; Thou Who made out of nothing those who ask Thee. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

℣. Deal not with us, O Lord, according to our sins.

℟. Neither reward us according to our iniquities.

*Let us pray.* O God, Who by sin art offended and by penance pacified, mercifully regard the prayers of Thy suppliant people, and turn away the scourges of Thy wrath, which we deserve for our sins. Through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

*Offering of St. Ignatius of Loyola (†1556)*

Take, O Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my whole will. Thou hast given me all that I am and all that I possess: I surrender it all to Thee that Thou mayest dispose of it according to Thy will. Give me only Thy love and Thy grace; with these I will be rich enough, and will have no more to desire.

*St. Francis Xavier's Hymn of Love (†1552)*

O God, I love Thee not because  
I hope for Heaven thereby,  
Nor yet because who love Thee not  
Are lost eternally.

Thou, O my Jesus, Thou didst me  
Upon the cross embrace;  
For me didst bear the nails and spear  
and manifold disgrace;

And griefs and torments numberless,  
And sweat of agony;  
Even death itself — and all for me  
Who was Thine enemy.

Then why, O blessed Jesus Christ,  
Should I not love Thee well?  
Not for the sake of winning Heaven,  
Nor of escaping hell;

Not with the hope of gaining aught,  
Not seeking a reward;  
But, as Thyself hast loved me,  
O ever-loving Lord?

Even so I love Thee, and will love,  
And in Thy praise will sing;  
Solely because Thou art my God  
And my most loving King.

*Adoro Te Devote — Hymn of St. Thomas Aquinas*

O Godhead hid, devoutly I adore Thee,  
Who truly art within the forms before me;  
To Thee my heart I bow with bended knee,  
As failing quite in contemplating Thee.

Sight, touch, and taste in Thee are each deceived;  
The ear alone most safely is believed:  
I believe all the Son of God has spoken,  
Than Truth's own words there is no truer token.

God only on the cross lay hid from view;  
But here lies hid at once the manhood too:  
And I, in both professing my belief,  
Make the same prayer as the repentant thief.

Thy wounds, as Thomas saw, I do not see:  
Yet Thee confess my Lord and God to be:  
Make me believe Thee ever more and more;  
In Thee my hope, in Thee my love to store.

O Thou memorial of Our Lord's own dying!  
O living Bread, to mortals life supplying!  
Make Thou my soul henceforth on Thee to live:  
Ever a taste of heavenly sweetness give.

O loving Pelican! O Jesu Lord!  
Unclean I am, but clean I am in Thy blood  
Of which a single drop, for sinners spilt,  
Can purge the entire world from all its guilt.

Jesu! Whom for the present veiled I see,  
What I so thirst for, oh, vouchsafe to me:  
That I may see Thy countenance unfolding,  
And may be blest Thy glory in beholding.

*Prayer to the Blessed Virgin*

O Mary, Virgin and Mother most holy, behold, I have received Thy dearly beloved Son, Whom Thou didst conceive in Thy immaculate womb, didst bring forth and nourish and strain to Thyself in sweetest embrace. Behold Him Whose every glance filled Thee with joy and all delight: Him I present and offer to Thee in loving humility, to be clasped in Thy arms and loved in Thy heart, and to be offered in supreme adoration to the most Holy Trinity, for Thine own honor and glory, for my needs, and for the needs of the whole world. I beg Thee, therefore, most dear Mother, obtain for me the forgiveness of all my sins, the precious grace of serving Thee more faithfully for the future, and that final grace of being able along with Thee to praise Him through endless ages. Amen.

*Prayer to St. Joseph*

Saint Joseph, Guardian of virgins and father, to whose faithful care Christ Jesus, innocence itself, and Mary, Virgin of virgins, were entrusted, I ask and beg of thee, through these two dearest pledges, Jesus and Mary, preserve me from all defilement, and make it always possible for me unsullied in mind, pure in heart, and chaste in body to give to Jesus and Mary my holiest service. Amen.