

Heart Of Jesus

Source of All Consolation

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Being Selected Passages from Book 3 of the Imitation of the Sacred Heart, by Father Arnold, S.J.

THAT THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS TEACHES US IN AFFLICTION TO HAVE RECOURSE TO PRAYER.

1. THE VOICE OF JESUS. – My child, when I had entered the garden of the Olives, when the earth was silent all around, behold, there rushed and pressed upon Me, on the one hand, all the sins of the world; on the other, the frightful tortures of My Passion; and with such violence did they crowd upon My Heart that although It is the strength of them that are weak, It began to fear to grow weary, sad, disconsolate.

But when I beheld distinctly that, by the great sufferings taken upon Me with so much love, and offered up with so great a mercy for the salvation of all men, not a few would refuse to be saved, and would, by a wilful hard-heartedness, misuse them for their deeper destruction, and return Me at last nothing except the blackest ingratitude – then My child, My Heart, growing faint with anguish, forced Me to exclaim: ‘My soul is sorrowful, even unto death.’

However, having withdrawn from My disciples and advanced a little, kneeling down, I prayed.

Meanwhile, by the struggle between the superior and inferior part of My Heart, My sorrows increasing to such a degree that My sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground, I fell upon My face, and being in an agony, I prayed the longer.

And as My agony, on account of that inward struggle, continued, I persevered in prayer: ‘Father, if You will, remove this chalice from Me, yet; not My will but Yours be done. Yea, My Father, Your will be done!’

Then, sent from heaven, an angel appeared – not to take away the chalice of My Passion, which My Father willed Me wholly to drain, but to strengthen Me; that when joy was sent before Me without My Passion, despising the shame, I might voluntarily endure the cross.

Reflect, My child, how painful a struggle My Heart underwent that night: a struggle the like whereof is not found: a struggle on the result of which hung the salvation of the world.

My Heart fought, labouring, wrestling, resisting even unto blood and overcome; but it conquered in prayer.

2. Behold, My child, behold a source of varied consolation for you: My Heart, struggling with death, and praying: fighting by love; triumphing by love.

For lo! To what extent I felt the hardship of My sufferings; to what an extent I tasted their bitterness! And all this, My child, to teach, to relieve, to encourage you.

Be not, then, cast down, nor wonder when you feel a repugnance to suffering. For if My Heart, although holy and perfect, felt Its pains to such a degree, what wonder if your heart feels them likewise?

But never shall you experience, never shall you feel, so much as My Heart felt. Were you to endure at once in your heart whatever you shall have to suffer during your whole life, it would be no more than a little drop of the chalice, which My Heart drained in the garden.

Whatever may be the reluctance, which you experience in yourself, follow My example; yield not to nature opposing, but go counter thereto.

To this end, in every difficulty, in every anguish, hasten you without delay to prayer.

3. If, when you are troubled, you have recourse to prayer, distress will ever prove gainful to you. By prayer, you shall either be delivered from it with merit, or you shall be helped to endure it for your good.

Come then, My child, and with knees bent, or with your heart at least humbly prostrate, pray you like Myself; pray that, if it be the divine will, the cup of your affliction may pass away; yet not so that yours, but the divine will be done.

Pray, if this chalice may not pass away, that you obtain grace to be resigned, to submit yourself to drink it.

Be of good cheer, My child; under no circumstances shall you ever have afflictions, which will require you to struggle as much, in order to be resigned, as I had. You shall never have a contest, which will cause you a bloody sweat.

Whatsoever difficulty you may have, exert yourself, wrestle, fight with yourself, to overcome your feeling. Struggle again and again, pray, and pray the longer, until you have rendered your heart conformed to the divine will, and prepared it, in spite of nature, to follow Me through every hardship which may be sent it from above.

4. It is a great misfortune for you, child, that you are wont to have recourse to prayer rather slowly, and first to try human skill; that you suffer the unwearied enemy of your salvation, and the ill-regulated propensity of nature, to obtain too great a sway over your heart.

Hearken not to the suggestions of the devil, or of any passion whatsoever. For, by false reasonings, they seek to deceive, to injure you. Forbidding yourself all reasoning, all intercourse with them, come you forthwith to My Heart; here is your counsel, here you help, here you comfort.

Even had an Angel visibly to be sent down from heaven, you should not be left without consoling aid, if you pray, as it behooves you.

And if, despite your pious efforts, you continue to feel an opposition within yourself, be not on that account dejected. Provided you will go resigned to the divine will, this repugnance felt, indeed, but not willed, so far from doing you harm, shall, on the contrary, if you struggle against it, be of the greatest advantage to you.

It is the characteristic of an heroic disciple of My Heart, to pray and endeavour with all his strength to overcome himself completely in those things from which nature shrinks as well as in those to which it is prone.

5. When you pray in affliction, child, you ought so to pray, that you are willing to be resigned – whether you obtain relief, or, in its stead, receive something else, which is better for you because more conformable to the divine will: or whether you taste sweetness, or experience bitterness.

For that prayer is not the best, in which the greatest consolations are felt; since what is sweet is not always useful, nor is that which is bitter always hurtful. Nay, more, in man's present state, sweetness is wont to do harm, bitterness to be advantageous.

That is the best prayer from which you go with greater humility and greater charity and feel so disposed that in order to do the good pleasure of God, you are willing to go against whatever is pleasing to nature, and to embrace whatever is displeasing thereto.

How pitiful a sight before God and angels and men, to see persons who daily pray long and much, go thence, and carry nothing away with them but faults of negligence and abuse of grace, or a more delicate pride and self-love; having in nowise become better inclined towards their duties, nor abler to bear the defects of their neighbour, nor to curb their own inclinations.

You, My son, do you pray better, as taught by My example. Pray and overcome nature; pray and resign and conform yourself to the divine good pleasure.

These arduous efforts shall not long be needed. Yet a little while, and you shall no longer prepare yourself for tribulations, nor encourage yourself in them; but you shall sing glad and glorious triumphs with the Saints, who all have come out of great tribulation, and who now, in their reward, are enraptured by the unbroken excess of rejoicings, and exult for evermore.

6. THE VOICE OF THE DISCIPLE. – Thanks be to You, most compassionate Jesus, true comforter of all that are in trouble; thanks to You, for that You console me so disinterestedly and so gently, amid all the repugnance I am wont to feel in regard to sufferings; and for that, at so great a cost to Yourself, you did open for me a source of remedies in every affliction.

O sweet Jesus, my love and my every good! I beg and implore you, bestow upon me the grace always and everywhere to repose with You in the divine will, and to continue thus with You for ever.

HOW, FROM THE EXAMPLE OF THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS, WE SHOULD LEARN TO ENDURE BODILY AILMENTS AND PAINS.

1. THE VOICE OF JESUS. – My child, after the scourging, while My whole body was dripping with blood, behold the soldiers led Me into the courtyard of the governor's residence and there gathered together the whole band.

And plaiting a crown of thorns, they placed the same cruelly upon My head; and a reed in My right hand.

And they came one by one, and bending the knee before Me, they mocked Me; and rising, they took the reed and struck My head with the same, so that the points of the thorns, driven in ever deeper, pierced My head on every side.

Now, My child, My suffering had come to an unutterable excess; and even to My latest sigh, as long as the crown remained, were they to go on with ever-increasing violence.

2. Behold, I dragged Myself, My limbs worn, My joints bruised, all My senses sickly, weary, and, through the excess of pain, hardly under My control.

From the sole of the foot, even to the top of My head, there was in Me no soundness, neither within nor without.

My child you will never more perfectly understand these torments of My Passion than when you shall suffer similar ones; when you feel your body writhing with pain, and your soul undone by afflictions.

When man is despoiled of fortune, reputation, or other external possessions, it is hard, indeed and distressing to nature; but it is much harder and much more distressful to be tortured by the pains of bodily ailments.

For in these outward things, by greatness of soul, with the aid of grace, a person can raise himself so far as either to forget or not to heed the cause and effect of his troubles; but in bodily ailments, he cannot avoid feeling that which he feels, and whatsoever he may do, always and everywhere he has his aching self with him.

However, if sickness is the greater pain, it procures also greater advantages for him that suffers rightly.

Wherefore child, let it be your chief care to endure the same with a heart well-disposed, and to follow therein, as much as you can the dispositions of My Heart.

3. And first, when you feel any indisposition, accept it as a dispensation of the love of My Heart, and say, at least interiorly; 'Blessed be the Lord, because He has visited His servant!' And although you feel that you do so only with difficulty, do not neglect it; for you will thereby more easily overcome reluctant nature, and gain the more merit.

Next, resign yourself to the divine will in the best manner you are able, and renew this holy resignation as frequently as possible, being assured that you shall derive the greatest strength and comfort.

Afterwards, unite your sufferings with Mine, and this by repeated acts, for various ends, which your need, advantage, or even your piety may suggest.

By this divine union, which overflows with the junction of grace, your afflictions will be soothed, and will become for you lighter and sweeter.

Lastly, to help you to persevere and to possess your soul in peace, constantly withdraw as far as possible, your attention, and even your thoughts from the causes of your sufferings and from the sufferings themselves; direct your mind to My example and the unconquerable patience of the Saints; and think how boundless, how sweet a reward, you shall obtain in heaven, unless you lose it by voluntary impatience.

4. Meanwhile, My child, since you need much grace, and can of yourself do nothing profitable, according to your strength persist in prayer especially in short and fervent aspirations, addressing Me in these or similar terms: 'Behold, Lord, he whom You did love even to death is sick.'... 'Lord, grant me patience. Give me resignation.'... 'Grant me to be united with you unto the end.'

And if your infirmity increases, you will exhibit a conduct most worthy of a disciple of My Heart, if you do actually offer to Me your body, as a living victim, and accept death at the time and in the manner which may be most pleasing to Me.

Know, My child, that whatsoever you may do to the contrary, you shall occasionally be inclined to dejection of spirits.

Remember that this is the effect of sickly and languishing nature, whereby you should not at all be made uneasy. Only take care you do not yield to it, or indulge it of your own accord. For by giving scope and indulgence to the same, you would both increase your sufferings and render your heart itself ill-disposed.

If at any time your suffering and anguish should bring you so far as to be hardly able to use the powers of your soul with consciousness, remain you quietly in My arms; neither do you endeavour, with violence or anxiety, to excite within you any acts or affections, but be satisfied with remaining calmly resigned to Me.

Blessed is he that in sickness adhered perseveringly to the saving will of My Father. For so long as he is united to the divine good pleasure, he reposes upon My heart, and all is safe.

My child, do not be despondent in mind, nor feel distressed on account of the greatness or the length of your sufferings; remember that several of the Saints dragged out a life amidst the pains of sickness, and thereby sanctified themselves because they were resigned; and reflect that however great and lasting your pain may be, it is as nothing compared to the unmeasured and ever-enduring joy whereby your patience shall be rewarded in heaven.

Call to mind that My torments and My martyrdom lasted as long as My life; and remember that I endured all this willingly for love of you. By these things, you shall be much assisted to bear with constancy your afflictions for love of Me.

5. Show not yourself voluntarily peevish or impatient toward them that take care of you. Your illness will often make them appear to you careless or neglectful.

So often that it is needful or useful, you may freely make known with humility and charity whatsoever you think is necessary or advantageous for you. But, meanwhile, you should feel so disposed that, whether your desire be granted or refused, you will continue calm and resigned.

Patiently bear, as not the least portion of your illness, whatsoever you may have to endure from them that have care of you. For under the disagreeable circumstances wherein you are placed, this may have great merit.

6. Beware, My child, lest, under pretence of infirmity, you indulge the flesh. Herein do many err, who by sickness are not only not made better, but rather worse, becoming lovers of the body and slaves of their passions.

Give to the body what is due to the body; but neither in good nor in ill health, neither in life nor in death, minister food to the inordinate propensities of the flesh; which, as in health so also in sickness, are dangerous, and therefore to be mortified.

In a spirit of mortification, submit to whatever unpleasant remedies may be prescribed. This mortification is the more precious, and a proof of purer love for Me, as it is irksome and further removed from natural inclination.

7. Whilst you are sick, child, do not trouble yourself with desires of attending to your office or employment, of labouring for yourself or others, or performing works of piety or, in fine, of doing other good things which are incompatible with your infirmity.

Such things serve for nothing but to cause you useless affliction, to disquiet you to no good purpose, and to displease Me.

Those things I do not now require of you. My child; what I ask for the present is, that you suffer a good heart and be resigned to the divine will,

Do now what I desire of you, and leave all the rest to My providence, that knows how to order everything rightly without you.

8. Look to it, My child, that when sick you be not anxious to follow your own guidance. For it is especially at this time that, being blinded, you would blindly lead yourself into some precipice.

Harken religiously to your superiors, and suffer yourself to be directed by Me through them. Honour the physician for the need you have of him, and obey him in simplicity of heart.

Do not harm yourself, through negligence or carelessness, whilst you are sick; but use remedies in reasonable manner, praying God, from Whom is all healing, that, if it be for your good, He may deign to heal you.

Having done so, how serious soever the disease may be, believe that it is something advantageous for you, since, it is the divine will.

Come, My child, be willingly a martyr to suffering for My love, who, through every excess of pains, became the chief of all martyrs.

Have patience, O child of My Heart; have patience! Behold, still a little while, and your grief shall be turned into joy; and I Myself who for love of you was crowned with thorns – I will crown you with honour and glory.

9. THE VOICE OF THE DISCIPLE. – Blessed are You, O Lord, Who did visit Your servant, that in time You might mercifully prepare me for eternity.

I suffer much, Lord Jesus; You know it. Assist me with Your grace; strengthen me with Your love. If you will that my pain be lasting, increase Your grace, increase my patience.

THAT JESUS CRUCIFIED, BY PRAYING FOR HIS EXECUTIONERS, MANIFESTS THE INFINITE GOODNESS OF HIS HEART TOWARD SINNERS; AND THAT, BY GRIEVOUS SIN, THESE CRUCIFY HIM ANEW.

1. THE VOICE OF JESUS. – My child, behold, at last we have come to Golgotha, to Mount Calvary. They lay down the cross forthwith, they push forward and hurry on everything.

And when they were now ready, raising a shout, they cruelly fastened Me to the cross driving in the nails with violent and repeated strokes, which the valley below re-echoed to the sky, each one of which pierced the Heart of My Mother, there present.

Thus, child, did they pierce My hands and My feet; they counted all My bones, which by the stretching of My body, could be seen distinctly.

Then could you behold the cross ruthlessly raised, and Myself hanging between heaven and earth; whilst the Blood flowed from every wound, washing the earth, and crying to heaven for the salvation of man.

And, to increase My torments, they raised on crosses two thieves, one at My right hand and one at My left, so that I was hanging between them.

But, behold, so soon as I was elevated on the cross, darkness overspread the whole earth. The sun and the moon together in mourning hid their light, and wrapped the world in doleful grief.

The people stood looking on. They that passed by, shaking their heads, blasphemed Me. But they that stood around mocked Me; in like manner also the chiefs of the priests, with the Scribes and elders, insulted Me by derisive gestures. The soldiers, too, jeered at Me, and, adding insults, they offered Me vinegar. All, in fine, sated Me with reproaches.

And, amidst all this, what was I doing, child? What My Heart? “Father”, I exclaimed, unfolding My Heart – ‘Father, forgive them; they know not what they do’; they know not how enormous is the crime which they are committing.

2. The Angels wept at this spectacle; all nature recoiled with horror, amazed at so great a wickedness of men, awe-struck at the marvellous goodness of My Heart.

You alone, wicked sinner, remain unmoved while the universe trembles; you, while heaven and earth are terror-stricken, renew the tortures of My Passion.

Behold, by sinning again, you give a new cause for My death; you perpetrate afresh that for which I was nailed to the cross, that for which I died.

Nay, more, since by My grace, and by your own experience you know Me better, and are bound to requite Me with greater gratitude and a more tender love, if you do again deliver Me up by sin, you have a greater sin than they that crucified Me; you super-add to the painfulness of My wounds; you pierce My Heart, not when It is dead, but while It is living; by your cruelty; as far as in you lies, you slay Me, the Author of life, the Judge of your everlasting destiny.

3. O most wretched of men! Does naught of all this move your heart? More wicked than Judas the betrayer, you say to your vile passions: ‘What will ye give to me, and I will deliver Him to you?’

And, placed between the passions which allure you, and Myself Who forbid you, you exclaim: ‘Not this One, but Barrabas!’

And when your conscience cries out against you: ‘What, then, shall I do with Jesus?’ You shout, by your actions: ‘Let Him be crucified! Let Him be crucified!’

And – oh fearful crime! – wishing to gratify your desires, with Pilate you give Me up to be scoffed at, to be scourged, to be crucified.

Is this, O man – is this the return you make to Me, Who created you, Who redeemed you, Who preserved you? Have all My favours, so great and so numerous, come to this, that for all these things you make again a mockery of Me, and nail Me to the cross?

4. Oh, if you did realise how frightful an evil you are committing when you sin in this manner, how could you venture to do it? How can you have the hardihood?

Do you desire to know how great an evil grievous sin is? Consider how, in order to atone for it, I, the only Son of God, did give – not the world, not heaven, not mankind, not the Angels – but My own Self, the Lord of heaven and earth, of men and Angels, so as to pour out My Blood, and lay down My very life, amid torments surpassing all understanding.

Do you wish to know this still more clearly? Reflect, with a living faith, how sin renders all the torments of My Passion useless, and renews the same, in most cruel manner, for your greater condemnation.

Assuredly, the malice of sin is nowhere seen more evidently than in My Passion; neither could the enormity of sin have ever been known so clearly, if I had not died for it upon the cross.

Weep, then, sinner – weep for yourself, and over your future lot; for if in the green wood, if in Me, the sins of others do produce such an effect, what will your own sins, so great and so numerous, do in the dry wood, in you?

If the Angels when they yielded to pride, were not spared, but were dealt with according to justice, how much greater punishments, do you think does that man deserve who tramples upon the Son of God, even after he has crucified Him?

Be not deceived, be not over-confident, because you are not punished on the spot: for now, I endure: in time, I give way to mercy, because for the exercise of justice I have an eternity.

If you so will, you can fill up the measures of the sins which are tolerated in you. I will not take away your free will. I desire from men no service extorted by necessity.

Behold, from the treasury of My Heart I have poured out upon you abundant grace; if you will co-operate efficaciously, I will give you an incomparable reward; if, on the contrary, you will not, look you to it; you shall bear the consequences.

But lo! I am still your Saviour, still your Father, ready to receive you in My arms; but afterwards you shall find Me a just judge and Retributor.

Have pity on your soul, while it is yet time; and do not render yourself for ever unhappy, by misusing that passion whereby you can secure for yourself everlasting bliss.

5. Come, oh, come to the cross; here the kindness of your Saviour is made manifest; here the greatness of My fatherly affection shines forth; here My Wounds do not only move to sorrow and penitence, but, likewise offer both pardon and grace; here the voice of My Blood, with a loud cry, makes intercession for you; here, finally My Heart burns with desire for your eternal salvation.

Contemplate, gaze upon Me, the Son of God, nailed to the cross, and dying for sin; and you will detest the same with your whole heart, and turn again to serve Me with fervour; even as the crowd of those that were present on Calvary, and beheld this spectacle, returned striking their breasts.

If you are tempted to sin again, fly to the cross; and, looking upon Me hanging thereon, say to yourself: ‘Behold, the Son of God dies upon a cross to save me: shall I crucify Him anew, in order to damn myself? Should I do this, can there be in hell punishments enough to punish, according to its deserts, so great an iniquity?’

In every contest with the devil, you can contend with him in no more advantageous place than beneath the cross; for here was he despoiled of his sway and strength; here you shall easily triumph over him.

6. And you, My child, did you understand what I say? Did you fully comprehend what horrible things the sinner does against Me, when he sins grievously? Can you behold unmoved all this? Are you not willing to use your every effort to hinder such things?

See how important a matter it is to prevent sin, since, by so doing, you hinder Me from being again overwhelmed with reproaches, from being again torn to pieces by scourges, from being again crucified, at least in desire, by the sinner.

Wherefore, should you prevent only one sin, you would do something greater and better than if you should preserve your country from destruction.

Can you love Me, and not care to turn away so great an evil from Me? If love does not inflame you, let compassion at least move you to take care that I be not again subjected to insults so great and manifold.

You make profession of being a disciple of My Heart; of you, therefore, I ask, of you I desire with My innermost Heart, that, by yourself and by others, whomsoever you can induce thereto, you strive, as much as you can, always and everywhere to prevent sin, and to make amends to Me by the fidelity of your love for the cruel ingratitude of sinners.

7. THE VOICE OF THE DISCIPLE. – But I also, Lord Jesus, am a sinful person. I am not worthy, I confess it to you, to be called a disciple of Your Heart.

O most benign and sweet Jesus I humbly implore You, grant me grace to make amends, for the great wrongs I have done You, and to love You, during the remainder of my life, with the more fervour and tenderness, the kinder and sweeter You have been to me.

HOW GREAT A TENDERNESS OF HEART JESUS MANIFESTED TOWARDS US WHEN HE GAVE US HIS OWN MOTHER AS OUR MOTHER.

1. THE VOICE OF JESUS. – Behold, My child, there stood beneath the cross the Virgin Mary, My Mother, whom neither affliction of heart, nor the insults of the crowd, nor the cruelty of the executioners, nor the danger of death could part from Me.

For she was prepared in her heart either to die in My presence, or to be present while I was dying.

There also stood the disciple who, by the innocence of his life, was most endeared to Me, and who, at the last Supper reposing upon My Breast, was inflamed with the love of My Heart.

When I saw My Virgin Mother and the virgin disciple, whom My Heart loved, looking upon My Mother, I said: ‘Woman, behold your son.’ Then to the disciple, as to one representing all mankind: ‘Behold your Mother’, and from that hour the disciple took her as a mother.

2. Behold, then, My child, when men were incessantly heaping new and more cruel torments upon Me, when the malice of the human heart most overflowed, then, more than ever, overflowed the love of My Heart.

When about to expire and to go away into My kingdom, I did not wish to leave My disciples orphans, but, in My love, I resolved to give them a mother, the best of all mothers, My own Mother herself.

Nay, more, on account of the eminent dignity of My Mother, and My perfect love for her, it was becoming that I should manifest every solicitude and every care for her, that I should provide for her the honour and love which were and are her due.

For this it was befitting that, always and everywhere, I and she being known together, should also be loved together.

And, indeed, even from the beginning of the world, when God promised Me as a Saviour to man groaning beneath the tyranny of the infernal serpent, He promised also My Mother.

This divine promise, so full of all consolation, was spread among the whole posterity of the first man, and ever continued to be cherished with a religious reverence. For although it was obscured among the nations, it was preserved always unchanged among the people of God; and from time to time it was renewed through the Prophets and unfolded the more clearly, the more nearly the fulness of time was at hand when God would send His own Son to be born of the Virgin Mary.

Wherefore, My child, those whom from eternity, in the counsels of His mercy, God had joined together, whom He had promised together, them also were men expecting, for them together they were longing. For often as they did exclaim with a sign to My Father in heaven: 'Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down the just!' so often they sighed for My future Mother: 'Let the earth be opened, and bud forth the Saviour!'

3. When at length I came into the world as the Saviour, behold, I was seen with My Virgin Mother! From the time I possessed a created Heart, this Heart was inseparably united to the Heart of My Mother.

I ever honoured and loved the Virgin in a manner worthy of her as My Mother; and she in return honoured and loved Me not only as her Son, but also worshipped and cherished Me as her God.

There is no created being upon earth, nor in heaven, that has honoured and loved Me, that has worshipped and cherished Me, as much as My Virgin Mother. She, by herself, she alone, by her worship and love, has incomparably surpassed and excelled all the Saints and Angels together.

Nor is there anywhere a heart which is so much united, so acceptable to My Heart, as in the heart of My Virgin Mother.

And should not I honour, should not I love, such a Mother? And should not I wish to see her honoured and loved always and everywhere? It is thus My Heart is known.

4. Verily, verily, I say, wheresoever the Gospel shall be preached in the whole world it will be said, that My Mother has done these things for Me, and that I have been subject to her. Nay, even to the end of time, wheresoever I shall be worshipped and loved as a Saviour, there also shall Mary be honoured and loved as a Mother.

Moreover, in whatsoever place My religion shall exist, it will ennoble the mind of man and elevate the condition of woman.

For whence, think you, has there arisen in the mind of every one of the faithful so great an esteem for innocence, and so humane a feeling for woman, except from My most pure and august Virgin Mother.

Uncivilised barbarism made woman a slave of misery; civilised infidelity, made her an idol of the passions; error in religion, an instrument of deceit; the true religion alone made her truly free and

truly estimable, preserves her free and worthy of honour, by ever proposing to her as a model the Virgin Mother of God.

5. Behold, then, My child, behold your Mother, who adopted you beneath the cross while she was suffering with Me. You shall honour her all the days of your life, remembering what, together with Me, she suffered for you. Acknowledge the greatness of the gift, which, when dying, My Heart bequeathed to you by giving you such a Mother. What is there better that It could have given to you? Behold, in all the world there is nothing dearer to My Heart, nothing sweeter for you than this best of mothers!

For her maternal heart overflows with an extraordinary compassion, love and solicitude; nor can she forget to cherish the children whom, amidst such sorrows, she received from Me when I was expiring.

Her heart, modelled after Mine, is open to all under the sweetest of appellations – the Heart of a Mother; so that all they that have recourse to it are easily admitted, kindly received, and introduced by her to My Heart.

Through the Virgin Mary I came to men, through her also must men come to Me.

Whatsoever graces, therefore, you desire to obtain from Me, entrust it to Mary; that My Mother and your Mother may appeal to My Heart in your favour, and prove that she is a Mother.

She will certainly be heard for the veneration due to her; for it is not becoming that I turn away My face from My Mother, or refuse her anything. A mother's rights, which she possessed and exercised upon earth, she has not lost in heaven, where she reigns with Me, as the Queen of Angels and of all the Saints.

If any one come to Me through My Virgin Mother, he shall not be cast off, but he shall be admitted even into My Heart, and he shall learn by experience how great is the height and depth and the breadth of the power which My Mother possesses over My Heart.

6. As I by nature have God as My Father, and Mary as My Mother, so also, My child, if, by adoption, you desire to have God as your Father, you must have Mary as your Mother.

And if you are desirous to find Mary your Mother, show yourself a son; do not sadden her Heart by grieving My Heart through sin; for accursed is he that angers his mother.

But a twofold curse, a twofold woe, to them that venture to destroy or to diminish the honour and love due to My Mother! For as the praises, so are also the sneers, aimed at My Mother, flung back at Me, her Son.

Therefore, also, shall her enemies be infamous; yea, whosoever shall sin against her shall hurt his own soul. But they that make her known, by duly honouring and loving her, shall have life everlasting.

7. Do not think that Mary is merely equal to the Saints and Angels, or even that she is the first among them, for she forms an order above all the rest of creatures; so that, far surpassing all the Saints and the heavenly Spirits, she beholds none above her except Myself, with the Father and the Holy Ghost.

Therefore, she must be honoured with a special worship and an affection all her own. Love and honour her, child, as much as you are able; you can not offend by excess, so long as you do not honour and love her as a divinity.

Above all, learn of Mary to follow My Heart perfectly; for she kept all My words and all My examples, meditating on them in her heart; and thus she attained to the teaching of My Heart, whose life and virtues and sentiments she showed forth and expressed to perfection in herself.

Blessed shall you be, My child, if you do so venerate My Virgin Mother. Through her, you shall find the way to holiness to the interior life easy and pleasant; through her, you shall obtain mercy and grace and comfort, and everything else that is necessary or useful to you; through her, finally, you shall be and continue with Me.

To her, therefore, have recourse under all circumstances, at all times. She will supply the interior lift that will bring you to holiness. What can you fear? You are a son, she is a mother. Why should you hesitate? Behold, no one goes to her in vain; all receive, through her; the world salvation, the captive redemption, the sinner, hope, the just, glory, the Angels, joy.

8. THE VOICE OF THE DISCIPLE. – O Jesus, my Saviour-God! You give me Your own Mother as a Mother! Who has ever heard anything like this? You alone, O Lord, could draw such a gift from the treasury of Your Heart and bestow the same upon us sinners.

Thanks to You, most loving Jesus! Eternal thanks to You for so great a gift, so kindly bestowed upon me most unworthy.

So long as this heart of mine shall be capable of loving, I will love you, O Mother of Jesus and my Mother! Yea, it will burn to influence all hearts with the same fire of love, that we may all begin upon earth to love you, for the sake of Jesus, and Jesus for His own dear sake; that thus we may deserve to be made blissful in heaven, and continue to love and to cherish throughout joyous and endless years.

THE HEART OF JESUS, AFTER HIS DEATH OPENED FOR LOVE OF US, IS THE REFUGE AND SOLACE OF ALL

1. THE VOICE OF THE DISCIPLE.

– See Jesus dying upon the cross! O spectacle! O God, behold Your Son! O Mary, behold your Jesus! O Angels, look on, and weep!

2. But, behold, one of the soldiers, with a spear opened His Side, and immediately there issued forth Blood and Water. New miracle of love! Manifold mystery!

The Heart of Jesus is opened that thence may be formed His only one, His perfect one, His Virgin Spouse, the Holy Church.

Blood and water issued forth; Blood that redeems, Water that cleanses souls. The Water flows, that by the laver of Baptism men may be born again into the Church; the Blood flows, that by the fruit of His Heart, the most Holy Sacrament, they may be perfected in the Church.

Jesus willed that His Heart should be opened, to show us that, even after the end of His life, He does by no means cease to cherish us; and to convince us that, even after His death, His Heart is burning with love for us.

Finally, He willed that It should be opened, that we might possess in His Heart a permanent place of refuge, solace, everything necessary and useful.

He willed that His Heart should not merely be wounded, but that It should be opened, and continue open, that there might ever be access, that the door might ever remain unclosed, through which he that enters in shall be saved, and shall go in and go out and find the pastures of life ever-lasting.

3. Behold, then, through the opening of the side, the innermost of His Heart is seen; that great mystery of love is revealed, the designs of the Mercy of our God are unclosed, whereby He visited us, He the Orient from on high.

Jesus willed to retain for ever the visible wound of His Heart, whence the invisible wound of His love is made to appear, that It may not be only the place of refuge for mortals, but likewise the paradise of the blessed.

Hence, it is, that, from this fountain of the Saviour, men upon earth draw with joy the living waters of all gifts and graces; and the Angels and Saints in heaven obtain with exultation ever-flowing streams of admiration and praise, and thanksgiving, and never-ending love.

4. O my soul, and all souls that heed me! Lift up your eyes to Jesus; see your own Beloved; view that Heart wounded by love, opened by love.

Behold, the opened Breast displays the affections of His Heart; the wound proves to what an extent that Heart cherishes you.

The whole appearance shows that Jesus, your Beloved above all, is truly meek and humble of Heart.

The Heart of your Jesus, behold, is open; It is opened that you may draw near and enter therein; that to Him you may give and deliver up your heart.

5. Behold the unfathomable abyss of goodness; who shall measure the same? Who shall comprehend its depth and breadth? Neither man nor Angel shall ever comprehend its bounds.

Who among the unfortunate can dread to approach the Heart of Him, Who died for love of the wretched; yea, who even keeps His Heart open, that to all may be given a free entrance.

Gaze upon the Heart of Jesus, Who died for you; and His evident love, stronger than death, more vigorous than life, all sweetness, yes, it will expel fear, will remove distrust, will cast aside faint-heartedness, will arouse faith, will strengthen hope, will enkindle love – and you will go to immerse yourself in this ocean of goodness.

If ever you become forgetful of the love of Jesus, or doubt His affection, turn yourself to Him, and hearken; His wounded Heart will cry out how He loves, how much He cherishes; and will cry out again that you should love in return, that you should requite his affection.

If you are straitened, if you are troubled, hasten, run to this foundation of every grace, to this gushing spring of all consolation.

If your unfaithfulness frighten you, let your confidence and courage be cheered on by the tokens of benignity of the Heart of Jesus, His head bowed down, His arms out-stretched, His breast glowing with love for you.

In every peril, in every difficulty, throw yourself confidently upon the Heart of Jesus; cast your anxieties upon Him, because He has a care of you.

And if you have done any good action, if you have gained any merit, hide it safely in the Heart of Jesus, that this Sacred Heart may sanctify the same by Its virtue, may keep it from the thief, vain-glory, and from the moth, self-love; and may guard it for the day of final retribution.
