

# PRAYERS AND READINGS BEFORE THE BLESSED SACRAMENT



SOCIETY OF CATHOLIC PRIESTS  
ADORATE!

## FOREWORD

This booklet is offered as a help to prayer and devotion to those taking part in the Society of Catholic Priests devotion *Adorate!* Several members of the Society in the European and North American provinces are providing, in Corpus Christide, a special focus of prayer and devotion before the Blessed Sacrament.

This booklet gives prayers and readings which individuals can use to assist their time of stillness and prayer.

I am very grateful to Fr. Tripp Norris who prepared a similar booklet for his people at St. Columba, Suwanee. We have used his excellent format for this collection, as well as some of his text. I also thank other SCP contributors: Michael Burgess, Philip Chester, Kathryn Fleming, Craig Huxley-Jones, Andrea Jones, Samantha Martell, Andrew Nunn. I am grateful to staff at my own church St Chrysostom's, Manchester — especially Kenson Li — for help in the production of the booklet.

Fr. Ian Gomersall  
European Provincial Rector, SCP

## CELEBRATING, WORSHIPING, CONTEMPLATING

There is a particular need to cultivate a lively awareness of Christ's real presence, both in the celebration of Mass and in the worship of the Eucharist outside Mass. Care should be taken to show that awareness through tone of voice, gestures, posture, and bearing. In this regard, we're keenly aware of the benefit and importance that moments of silence both in the celebration of Mass and in Eucharistic adoration can bring to God's faithful people. The way that the clergy and the faithful treat the Eucharist should be marked by profound respect. The presence of Jesus in the tabernacle must be a kind of magnetic pole attracting an ever greater number of souls enamoured of him, ready to wait patiently to hear his voice and as it were, to sense the beating of his heart. "O taste and see that the Lord is good!" (Ps 34:8)

It is the increasing hope and prayer of the Church that Eucharistic adoration outside Mass become a commitment for individual parishes, religious communities, and the laity. Let us take the time to kneel before Jesus present in the Eucharist, in order to fully appreciate all that our Saviour endured in His love for us. Let us deepen through adoration our personal and communal contemplation, drawing upon aids to prayer inspired by the word of God and the experience of so many mystics, old and new.

Fr. Tripp Norris

## ON WAITING ON GOD

*St. Ephraem the Syrian (306-373)*

Never, when I would draw near you  
can I forget my nature's weakness;  
When I contemplate you in silence  
It would be too much for me if I could understand.  
Yet no one blames a baby  
For making free with those whom he knows;  
His childishness is not blamed by those who understand.  
Then do not blame us for making bold with you  
(for who dare gaze on you?)  
It is love that has stirred up my littleness  
To sing praises in the presence of your majesty.  
Turn me to you, O Lord, that free from fear  
I may sing to your glory, as best I may!

## THE BODY OF CHRIST

*St. Augustine (354-430)*

Since you are the Body of Christ and his members,  
It is your mystery that is placed on the Lord's table,  
It is your mystery that you receive.  
You hear the words: The Body of Christ,  
And you answer: Amen.  
Be therefore members of Christ,  
That your Amen may be true....  
If you have received well,  
You are that which you have receive.

## EXCEPT FROM THE LITURGY OF ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Of your mystical supper, O Son of God,  
receive me today as a communicant;  
for I will not speak of the Mysteries to your enemies,  
nor will I give you a kiss as Judas did,  
but like the thief I now acknowledge you:  
Jesus, remember me in your Kingdom.

## ACT OF FAITH IN THE DIVINE EUCHARIST

*Saint Gregory VII (1015-1085)*

I believe in my heart and openly profess that the bread and wine which are placed upon the altar are by the mystery of the sacred prayer and the words of the Redeemer substantially changed into the true and life-giving Flesh and Blood of Jesus Christ Our Lord and after the Consecration there is present the true Body of Christ which was born of the Virgin Mary and offered up for the salvation of the world, hung upon the Cross, and now sits at the right hand of the Father and there is present the true Blood of Christ which flowed from his side. They are present not only by means of a sign and of the efficacy of the Sacrament, but also in the very reality and truth of their nature and substance. Amen.

## ACT OF ADORATION

*St. Francis of Assisi (c.1182-1226)*

We adore You, Most Holy Lord, Jesus Christ, here and in all the churches of the whole world, and we bless You because by Your Cross You have redeemed the world. Have mercy on us.

## O SACRUM CONVIVIVM

*Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)*

O sacrum convivium,	O sacred Banquet
in quo Christus sumitur;	wherein Christ is received;
recolitur memoria passionis eius:	the memory of His Passion is renewed
mens impletur gratia:	the mind is filled with grace,
et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur.	And the pledge of future glory is given
unto us.	

## DESIRE FOR CLOSER UNION

*Saint Bonaventure (1221-1274)*

Lord Jesus Christ, pierce my soul with your love so that I may always long for you alone, who are the bread of angels and the fulfillment of the soul's deepest desires. May my heart always hunger and feed upon you so that my soul may be filled with the sweetness of your presence. May my soul thirst for you, who are the source of life, wisdom, knowledge, light and all the riches of God our Father. May I always seek and find you, think upon you, speak to you and do all things for honor and glory of your holy name. Be always my only hope, my peace, my refuge and my help in whom my heart is rooted so that I may never be separated from you.

## DEDICATED TO JESUS

*St. Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556)*

Lord Jesus Christ, take all my freedom, my memory, my understanding, and my will. All that I have and cherish you have given me. I surrender it all to be guided by your will. Your love and your grace are wealth enough for me. Give me these Lord Jesus, and I ask for nothing more. Amen.

## SERMON CXLVI

*John Donne (1572-1631)*

Surely the Lord is in this place and this is none but the house of God and the gate of heaven. And into that gate they shall enter and in that house they shall dwell, where there shall be no cloud nor sun, no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light; no noise nor silence, but one equal music; no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession; no foes nor friends, but one equal communion and identity; no ends nor beginnings, but one equal eternity.

## LOVE

*George Herbert (1593-1632)*

Love bade me welcome, yet my soul drew back,  
Guilty of dust and sin.  
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack  
From my first entrance in,  
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning  
If I lack'd anything.  
“A guest,” I answer'd, “worthy to be here”;  
Love said, “You shall be he.”  
“I, the unkind, the ungrateful? ah my dear,  
I cannot look on thee.”  
Love took my hand and smiling did reply,  
“Who made the eyes but I?”  
“Truth, Lord, but I have marr'd them; let my shame  
Go where it doth deserve.”  
“And know you not,” says Love, “who bore the blame?”  
“My dear, then I will serve.”  
“You must sit down,” says Love, “and taste my meat.”  
So I did sit and eat.



## PRAYERS FOR A VISIT TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

*Saint Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787)*

My Lord Jesus Christ, who for the love which You bear us, remain night and day in this Sacrament full of compassion and love, awaiting, calling, and welcoming all who come to visit You, I believe that You are present in the Sacrament of the Altar. I adore You from the abyss of my nothingness, and I thank You for all the graces which You have bestowed upon me and in particular for having given me Yourself in this Sacrament, for having given me Your most holy Mother Mary as my Advocate, and for having called me to visit You in this church. I now salute Your most loving Heart; and this for three ends: first, in thanksgiving for this great gift; secondly, to make amends to You for all the outrages which You receive in this Sacrament from all Your enemies; thirdly, I intend by this visit to adore You in all the places on earth in which You are present in this Sacrament and in which You are the least reserved and the most abandoned. My Jesus, I love You with all my heart. I grieve for having hitherto so many times offended Your infinite goodness. I purpose by Your grace never more to offend You for the time to come. And now, miserable and unworthy though I be, I consecrate myself to You without reserve; I give You renounce my entire will, affections, my desires, and all that I possess. Henceforward, dispose of me and of all that I have as You please. All that I ask of You and desire is Your holy love, final perseverance and the perfect accomplishment of Your will. I recommend to You the souls in Purgatory, and especially those who had the greatest devotion to the most Blessed Sacrament, and to the most Blessed Virgin Mary. I also recommend to You all poor sinners. Finally, my dear Saviour, I unite all my affections with the affections of Your most loving Heart, and I offer them, thus united, to Your Eternal Father, and beseech Him in Your name to vouchsafe for Your love, to accept and grant them. Amen.

## THE WRECK OF THE DEUTSCHLAND

*Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889)*

Thou mastering me  
God! giver of breath and bread;  
World's strand, sway of the sea;  
Lord of living and dead;  
Thou hast bound bones and veins in me, fastened me flesh  
And after it almost unmade, what with dread  
Thy doing: and dost thou touch me afresh?  
Over again I feel my finger and find thee.

## VISIT TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT BEFORE MEDITATION

*John Henry Cardinal Newman (1801-1890)*

I place myself in the presence of Him, in whose Incarnate Presence I am before I place myself there. I adore You, O my Saviour, present here as God and as man, in soul and in body, in true flesh and blood. I acknowledge and confess that I kneel before that Sacred Humanity, which was conceived in Mary's womb, and lay in Mary's bosom; which grew up to twelve, wrought miracles, and spoke words of wisdom and peace; which in due season hung on the cross, lay in the tomb, rose from the dead, and now reigns in heaven. I praise, and bless, and give myself wholly to Him, who is the true Bread of my soul, and my everlasting joy.

## PRAYER TO CHRIST, LORD OF THE WORLD

*Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955)*

O Glorious Christ,  
Influence secretly diffused in the heart of matter,  
And dazzling centre  
In which the countless number of fibres  
Of the multiple come together,  
Power as implacable as the world  
And as warm as life.  
Your forehead is of snow and your eyes are of fire,  
Your feet more sparkling than gold in fusion  
And your hands imprison the stars.  
You are the first and the last,  
The one who died,  
The one who lives,  
And the one who rose again.  
You gather together in your exuberant unity  
All charms and all tastes,  
All forces and all states.  
It is you to whom my being called out  
With a desire as vast as the universe.  
You are truly  
My Lord and my God.



## SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

*Pope John XXIII (1881-1963)*

O Living Bread, that came down from heaven to give life to the world! O loving shepherd of our souls, from your throne of glory whence, a “hidden God”, you pour out your grace upon families and peoples, we commend to you particularly the sick, the unhappy, the poor and all who beg for food and employment, imploring for all and every one the assistance of your providence; we commend to you the families, so that they may be fruitful centers of Christian life. May the abundance of your grace be poured over all. Amen.

## FOOD FOR SERVICE

*Pope John XXIII (1881-1963)*

O Jesus, present in the Sacrament of the altar, teach all the nations to serve you with willing hearts, knowing that to serve God is to reign. May your sacrament, O Jesus, be light to the mind, strength to the will, joy to the heart. May it be the support of the weak, the comfort of the suffering, the wayfaring bread of salvation for the dying and for all the pledge of future glory. Amen.

## MY GOD AND MY GLORY

*Eric Milner-White (1884-1963)*

Behold the Body and Blood of my Saviour and Lord!

Behold whence Love comes forth,  
whence cleansing,  
whence lowliness of heart,  
whence desire and power of oblation,  
whence delight, whence wisdom,  
whence joy,  
whence glory and life everlasting –  
from Him who never ceases to give  
all that he has and is;  
yet reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit,  
God for ever and ever.

## ON SILENCE

*Mother Theresa of Calcutta (1910-1997)*

We need silence to be able to touch souls. The essential thing is not what we say, but what God says to us and through us. All our words will be useless unless they come from within—words which do not give the light of Christ increase the darkness.

## ON CLERGY

*Monica Furlong (1930-2003)*

I am clear what I want of the clergy ... I want them to be people who can dare, as I do not dare, and as few of my contemporaries dare, to refuse to work flat out (since work is an even more subtle drug than status), to refuse to compete with me in strenuousness. I want them to be people who are secure enough in the value of what they are doing to have time to read, to sit and think, and who can face the emptiness and possible depression which often attack people when they do not keep the surface of their mind occupied.

## A PRAYER

*Madeleine L'Engle (1918-2007)*

Whether I kneel or stand or sit in prayer,  
I am not caught in time nor held in space,  
but thrust beyond this posture I am where  
time and eternity come face to face;  
infinity and space meet in this place  
where crossbar and high upright hold the one  
in agony and in all Love's embrace.  
The power in helplessness that was begin  
when all the brilliance of the flaming sun  
contained itself in the small confines of a child  
now comes to me in this strange action done  
in mystery. Break me, break space, O wild  
and lovely power. Break me: thus am I dead,  
am resurrected now in wine and bread.

## ST. THERESA'S BOOKMARK

Let nothing disturbs you,  
Let nothing dismay you,  
All things pass:  
God never changes.  
Patience attains  
All that it strives for.  
He who has God  
Finds he lacks nothing.  
God alone suffice.

## HOST

*Ian McDowell*

Poor president  
I am lightest only when you lift me,  
Brightest when your words are mine  
And more than bread.

Between your finger and your thumb  
(Drum of blood, divining edge)  
I am the eclipse's sudden flare,  
A pulse of prayer,  
No longer dead.

## IN SINU JESU

*By A Benedictine Monk*

Spend less time at the computer and more time in My presence. I wait for you here. I long to see you before Me. I want to give you all the signs of My friendship that My Heart has destined for you and for no other, but for this you must come to Me. Follow the promptings of My grace.

## A REFLECTION

*Adrian Leak from "Archbishop Benson's Humming Top"*

One day St John Vianney, the Curé d'Ars noticed a peasant sitting in church, silently looking at the tabernacle in which the Blessed Sacrament was reserved. When the saint asked what he was doing, the peasant replied, 'I look at him and he looks at me.'

The 'prayer of simple regard', a silent stillness in the presence of our Lord, is hard to achieve in an overactive life, but it is one to which all of us must aim. Words and lists, petitions and intercessions, that much overused form of prayer, can be just busy distractions from the silent prayer of simple regard. Just as initiatives, programmes, targets and action plans can be no more than symptoms of panic in a church that sees to have lost its faith.

'In returning and rest ye shall be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be your strength.' Those words were first uttered in ancient Israel by Isaiah in his sermon to an anxious and faithless people. They are true for our church today.

## LOVE'S CHOICE

*Malcolm Guite*

This bread is light, dissolving, almost air,  
A little visitation on my tongue,  
A wafer-thin sensation, hardly there.  
This taste of wine is brief in flavour, flung  
A moment to the palate's roof and fled,  
Even its aftertaste a memory.  
Yet this is how He comes. Through wine and bread  
Love chooses to be emptied into me.  
He does not come in unimagined light  
Too bright to be denied, too absolute  
For consciousness, too strong for sight,  
Leaving the seer blind, the poet mute;  
Chooses instead to seep into each sense,  
To dye himself into experience.

## MAUNDY THURSDAY

*Malcolm Guite*

Here is the source of every sacrament,  
The all-transforming presence of the Lord,  
Replenishing our every element  
Remaking us in his creative Word.  
For here the earth herself gives bread and wine,  
The air delights to bear his Spirit's speech,  
The fire dances where the candles shine,  
The waters cleanse us with His gentle touch.  
And here He shows the full extent of love  
To us whose love is always incomplete,  
In vain we search the heavens high above,  
The God of love is kneeling at our feet.  
Though we betray Him, though it is the night.  
He meets us here and loves us into light