LENT FOR CHILDREN

A Thought a Day

by A Religious of the Cenacle

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"We must go to HIM always as children, in innocence, in confidence, in love."

Foreword

Christ wishes us to remain as little children. Does that mean we must never grow up: never get taller and stronger: never stop going to school? No; it means we must go to Him always as children, in innocence, in confidence, in love. He knows each one of us, knows our faults, knows each thing we do and each thought we have. But He not only knows us; He loves us, and because of that love He can understand whatever we want to say to Him. He is eager that we go to Him, little children that we are: and the author of this booklet shows us how we may do so particularly during the Holy Season of Lent.

John J. Burke, C.S.P.

2: Thursday after the Ashes

Efforts

LENT is our time to *get ready* for Easter. Because Jesus went all alone into the desert for forty days to show us how to deny ourselves for our soul's good, we shall spend forty days *making efforts* to follow His lead.

We shall *make a program of what we decide to do*—like this:

- 1. I will deny myself some of the good things I could eat.
- 2. I will deny myself some of my usual amusements.
- 3. If possible, I will go to daily Mass and Holy Communion.
- 4. I will make more visits to the Blessed Sacrament.

Whatever we decide to do, we *must* do, or we would not be loyal. Will *your* program for Lent please the heart of Jesus?

Say often through the day:

Now is the time my love to show. O Jesus dear, Thy grace bestow!

Your Old Garment

When the priest put ashes on your forehead yesterday, he reminded you (in Latin) that you are made of dust. But your body of dust is the less important part of the REAL YOU. As though this body were an old garment, you put it off for a while and go alone to God. You will find God a loving Father if you loved Him and tried to please Him here; and some day you will put on again this same garment made gloriously new and beautiful.

Resolve today to show your love by spending a good Lent.

Say often through the day:

May I so live that I will be Ready, dear Lord, when you call for me.

3: Friday after the Ashes

Why?

When you make something all by yourself, don't you love it and take great care of it? We all love the things we make.

God loves us because He made us. Why did He make us? Because He wanted us to be happy in knowing Him, loving Him, and serving Him, and living in His company. What a blessing to understand *why* I am in this world, and what I have to do here!

Say often through the day:

I do not have to puzzle why I'm here, I know, dear Jesus, You have made it clear!

—6—

4: Saturday after the Ashes

Our War Song

Every army has its war song. In Lent, the Church so often reminds us that life is a battle! She gives us the 90th Psalm as a war song. This psalm tells us that God always looks after us when we are fighting for *Him*—when we are *His* soldiers: "He that dwelleth in the aid of the Most High, shall abide under the protection of ...God." "Under His wings thou shalt trust." "For He hath given His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."

Say often through the day:

Angels 'round me everywhere Please keep me in your loving care!

5: First Sunday of Lent

Loyalty

Satan was very bold with Jesus in the desert. He is bold with us, too. He suggests nasty, wrong things to us. He tells us no one will know if we do them. When He was tempted, Jesus replied: "Begone, Satan."

Jesus wants us to be quick in saying: "Begone, Satan—leave me alone—I belong to Jesus." When we treat the tempter so, we become dearer to Jesus than if we had never been tempted. He sees we are *loyal* to Him. Learning when to say NO makes our souls strong.

Say often through the day:

Begone! I'll say, when Satan bids me sin. And since I fight for Heaven, I shall win.



"Begone, Satan!"

6: Monday First Week of Lent

Little Instruments

Our Lord wants us to be saints. Saints are the instruments He uses to do great things for His glory. Don't you remember times when something quite small—a pin, perhaps—was ever so useful to you, just because it was the one thing you needed at that moment?

God may need to use us at any moment. Often tell Him that you have only one wish, to be a useful little *instrument* in His hands, and always ready to serve Him in any way He chooses.

Say often through the day:

Jesus! I wish to be useful to You, An instrument tiny, but oh, so true! 7: Tuesday First Week of Lent

Patience

Sometimes we feel very lonely and all about us is very, very dark. We feel that nobody cares and that even when we pray, Our Lord does not hear us. Jesus on the Cross knew a sad time like that. He felt that His Heavenly Father had deserted Him. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He cried aloud. Then came the deep silence of His loving patience.

In our time of loneliness we should cry out to Our Heavenly Father and then wait patiently for His Divine Help.

Say often through the day:

God's holy Will be done in all, Will be my cry when shadows fall.

9: Thursday First Week of Lent

Searchlights

Lighthouses play them across oceans and harbors and rivers and bays lovely streams of purest light: Wouldn't you like to be a searchlight for Jesus in the night of this world—pointing by the glowing faith to the Heaven of His love?

"Yes, dear Jesus, I want Your light to shine through me. I know when I sin the light goes out and will not shine again till I am sorry. Please, Jesus, *help me to keep my searchlight shining.*"

Service

To do something to *help another* or others is a wonderful way of showing Our Lord that we love Him.

When we offer to go on an errand, to help with the dishes, to give up some of the time we had saved for reading or writing, and do this in the spirit of love for Him, Jesus smiles. His Sacred Heart is made happy. He knows we remember His own words. "Whatever you do for others, is done unto Me."

Say often through the day:

Oh, make me a little searchlight bright Shedding about Your Heavenly light.

Say often through the day:

O Jesus make me quick to see That service which is dear to Thee!

Hearts

Would you like to find God? Well, God is in your *own heart*—right inside your own soul. He waits for you to speak to Him, to think His Name—"Jesus!"—to call Him "Best of Friends"—"Sacred Heart"—Heart of Goodness"—"My Helper"—and every other sweet name your love can think of:

Every thought you give Him will cause Him to grow in you until the happy moment comes when you, too, can repeat St. Paul's words: "I live—now, not I—but Christ liveth in me."

Say often through the day:

My heart is Heaven for God and men— We there converse unceasingly.



"He waits for you to answer Him."

12: Second Sunday of Lent

Horse-Breaking

Did you ever watch a jockey trying to break in a young colt for the race track? How hard he works to subdue the wild antics of the stubborn animal! 'Round and 'round they go—battling with each other on the way. The horse must be made to obey.

Your body is like the young colt—your soul, the rider. *The body must be trained to obey the soul*. How? By not letting it have everything it wants. Are you the master of your body?

Say often through the day:

Little self-denials win God's grace And make my soul the leader of the race.

Happiness

Up into a high mountain Our Lord took three of His Apostles. He wanted to have them all to Himself, so that He could show them His glory. Then He became *Transfigured*. "His face shone as the sun and His garments became as white as snow." A voice was heart—yet, looking up, the wondering three saw no one, but *only* Jesus. When they saw Him as He *really* was, they cried in their exceeding joy: "Lord, it is good for us to be here."

That cry was an act of perfect happiness. It tells us that *happiness* is being with and possessing Jesus.

Say often through the day:

I have a secret, Lord, for Thee: Thou art all Happiness for me.

Gratitude

How sweet is the sound of the little "Thank you" which comes from baby lips! It makes the little one more loving and loved. Our Lord once cured ten lepers, but only one remembered to thank Him. The gratitude of the grateful leper delighted the Heart of Jesus.

Shall we not delight God's heart by often turning to Him in *gratitude* for all His goodness to us? Perhaps this Lent we could learn the "*Magnificat*"—Our Blessed Mother's song of gratitude!

Say often through the day:

O Jesus, I wish my life could be A hymn of Gratitude to Thee!



"Gratitude makes us loving and loved."

Obeying

"I am certain that God will give me my own way in Heaven, for I have never done my own will on earth." This was the Little Flower's way of saying: "I have always obeyed someone." Was it easy for her to obey? No, but it pleased Jesus. She kept thinking of how He obeyed in His Nazareth home for thirty years. And was the result? He grew in wisdom and grace.

Can we, this Lent, grow in grace by more perfect obedience at home and in school?

Say often through the day:

Jesus, obedient all Your life through, Oh, give me the grace to grow like You!

—20—

Airships

As we watch the planes soaring high up into the sky, let us think of how God's grace is the divine motor that lifts us high above the sin and noises of earth.

By His grace our plane—our soul—soars of its own accord and carries us with it up, up over the earth and all its shadows. "Who will give me the wings of a dove and I will fly away and be at rest?" sang the holy writer.

Say often through the day:

Thy grace alone will keep me high—Away from sin my soul must fly!

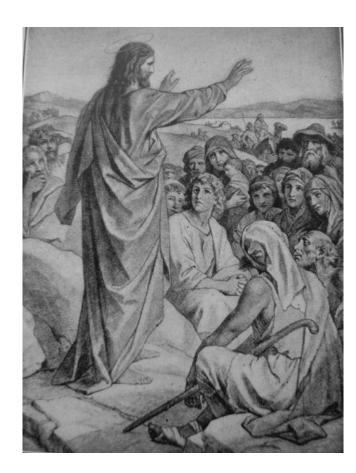
The Little Door

Our Lord tried so often to teach us that the entrance to Heaven is through a very *low* door. If we grow proud and important in our eyes, we cannot get through to His Paradise. "Unless ye become as *little children*, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."

How are we to remain children in His sight? There is only one way. By always keeping tight hold of our Heavenly Father and asking Him to show us all the stupid things we do and help us out of them.

Say often through the day:

As older I grow, my heart must remain Childlike and humble if Heaven I'll gain.



"Unless ye become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven."

18: Saturday Second Week of Lent

Separation

Up to the very last moment of my life, I am always in danger of losing Heaven by mortal sin—of being *separated* from Jesus forever. This separation is Hell.

If I commit a mortal sin, I put myself on the path that leads to Hell. The way to come back again to the path that leads to Heaven is to tell Jesus at once I am sorry. Then just as soon as I possibly can I will make my Confession, so that the priest can take away my sins.

When I have done this, I have got hold of Jesus' hand again. I am safe!

Reverence

Supposing we heard some one say of us: "That child has a reverent soul" The remark would make us quite happy. We would know we had succeeded in cultivating one of the most beautiful seeds in the garden of our soul—the seed of *reverence*.

Reverence places us in an attitude of loving respect before God and man. It is a most sweet and winning virtue, and the best reward that we can offer to those who have trained and watched over us.

Say often through the day:

Jesus, I was made for Thee— Never let us parted be! Say often through the day:

Through Church and Priests God speaks to me. Oh, may my reverence perfect be!

Returning

In yesterday's Gospel, Our Lord told us the story of the Prodigal Son—the young man who took his fortune and left his home to go with bad companions. He fell into sin and poverty. Oh! but that blessed moment in the boy's life when he made up his mind to go back to his father! What greeted him on arriving? Love—the love of a tender, forgiving father!

By Confessions, we *return to Our Father*. His kiss of peace is given. Once more He gathers us into His arms in a loving embrace.

Say often through the day:

O Jesus, give me true contrition; This today is my one petition.



Oh! that blessed moment in the boy's life when he made up his mind to go back to his father!

21: Tuesday Third Week of Lent

Enemies

What is the biggest thing I have to do in life? To win Heaven and God. "Winning" means effort and fighting.

There are evil spirits always struggling for the possession of my soul. But I have God's wonderful gift to me of free will—the power of choosing. I can choose to do the right or to do the wrong. If I choose the wrong I lose Heaven—I make myself the *enemy* of my own soul.

Say often through the day:

My soul should like a warship be— Ever on watch for the enemy.

Belonging

Every year thousands of people come to our land from other shores. They come to share the blessings of our dear country. They look forward to the day when the Government will accept their desire to be America's adopted children. Finally, as a proof and sign that they belong to these United States they are given what we call "naturalization" papers. Americans now, they share in all our rights.

Just so are we the "naturalized" children of God, sharing His nature, *belonging* to His country—Heaven.

Say often through the day:

O Thou art mine and I am Thine; Thy Cross is both my proof and sign.

Talking With God

There is a picture that we all love to look upon. Our Lord is sitting under the shade of a great tree. Little children are gathered about Him and His arms are extended in welcome and blessing. The little ones are talking to Our Lord. They are sharing secrets and telling their wishes.

We can be just as close to Our Lord as they were, if we will. We can *talk to Jesus* all the day long—sending little arrows of prayer from our hearts to His. His Heart is our "receiving station."

Say often through the day:

O, teach me, Lord, to talk to Thee—Transmitting praise unceasingly!



"Little children are gathered about Him, and His arms are extended in welcome and blessing."

24: Friday Third Week of Lent

Kindness

Supposing everyone was kind! Wouldn't this world be a happy place to travel through? Kindness speaks of Heaven and the joy of the life to be. If our hearts are not kind hearts, how can Jesus or anyone else love them?

To think well of everyone, to wish all well, to speak well, to do well—this is the happy mission of *kindness*. "Little deeds of kindness, little words of love, make this earth an Eden like to Heaven above." Our Lord has promised that He will reward our kindness to others *as though we had been kind to Him.*

Rain

Let us suppose it is a rainy day, and our windows open on a lovely garden. We see the trees, the plants, the grass, the flowers drinking in the welcome drops. When the rain stops and the sun shines again, the garden is lovelier than ever. The flowers look perky and fresh and happy.

When through "little visits," aspirations, and prayers, we hold our hearts up and open to God, the *rain of His grace* descends upon us. We are refreshed like the flowers of the garden.

Say often through the day:

O Jesus, make me very kind: With kindness fill my heart and mind! Say often through the day:

My heart is open, Lord, to Thee Pour in Thy grace abundantly.

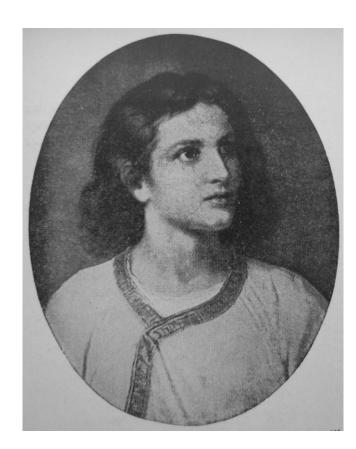
Growing

Have you ever watched God's gracious care in a garden, watched tiny buds unfolding? How warmly they are covered in babyhood! Then, little by little, they are prepared to weather wind and sun and rain. Slowly, oh, so slowly, one by one, the mantles are lifted—a little today, a little more tomorrow, until the blossoming of the flower.

Our souls are God's most precious buds! How tenderly He watches us *grow!* How lovely He was in His growing time! It is He who knows when we are ready to bear the strong sun of love, or the wind of difficulty, or the rain of sorrow.

Say often through the day:

While I am growing, Jesus, dear, Possess my heart and stay Thou near.



"How lovely He was in His growing time!"

Face to Face

Some day I shall behold Jesus as my Judge. His very glance will say "Passed"—or "Failed." Oh, the eternal pain of failing in His school!

When I go to Confession, it is as if Jesus placed my Life Book with its spotted pages in my hands, saying, "Child, erase the marks now!" O Jesus, help me to do this so carefully and sincerely that when in my last hour Holy Church in her parting prayer says "Go, I will hear Thy first loving word—"Come!"

Say often through the day:

O Jesus, when my life is ending, May You a "Welcome Home" be sending!

Thanksgiving

O my God, sometimes I feel I just cannot stop thanking You. It makes me so happy just to keep repeating "I *thank* You. I want to *live* thanking You, and please let me *die* thanking You." I love to count up all the things I should be grateful for; and to please You by composing my own Litany of Gratitude.

Some of the favors are Your secrets and mine. This Lent I will keep thinking about them. I will look often at the crucifix. I will remember You were nailed to the Cross to save *me*.

Say often through the day:

O, I'd like to be a thanksgiving song, Singing to Jesus the whole day long!

Exchange

"Child, give me thy heart." Listen to Jesus pleading for your love, telling you He needs you for a little friend. If your Mother gave you everything but her love—pretty clothes, presents, parties—you would enjoy these things for a little while, but soon you would say, "But there is no love! I want my Mother to love me."

No gift will satisfy Jesus unless *you give Him your heart*. In exchange *He will give you His Heart*, His love, His joy, His peace.

Forgiving

"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do! I picture myself there on the hill of Calvary as Our Lord speaks His beautiful words from the Cross. "His tongue was all that was left Him free to use"—and He is using it to plead for me and for His enemies.

O Jesus, if only I could learn from You to forgive all who hurt and injure me! Please fasten Your words on my heart; then I shall remember to *forgive* and forget.

Say often through the day:

O Jesus! My heart is a poor gift indeed: I wonder that for it You constantly plead.

Say often through the day:

O Jesus, give me for my part A tender and forgiving heart!

The Good Shepherd

When I was baptized I entered the safe and happy fold of the Good Shepherd. You, dear Jesus, have determined to give me Your personal care and love. I know that no matter how willful and "runaway" I am, *You will always come looking for me*, still marked with your sign, pick me up on Your shoulder and tell me how unhappy and lonely You are when I wander far away from You.

It is sin that takes me away. But You will not rest until You *bring me back*.

Say often through the day:

O dear Good Shepherd, I love Your Name; For me—Your Lamb—to earth You came.



Oh the care and love of the Good Shepherd!

32: Saturday Fourth Week of Lent

Trust

"Lord, remember me," cried the Good Thief, as he saw how patiently Our Lord suffered on the Cross beside him. And immediately came the glorious answer to the poor robber's trustful prayer: "This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise!"

Can we think of this Heavenly little conversation on Calvary without having our poor, frightened hearts filled with *trust* and confidence in Our Lord's mercy? There is no limit to His goodness. One cry for help when our sins discourage us, and the King of Peace will lift us up into the Paradise of His love!

Remember

How wonderful will be that moment when we can thank Our Lord face to face for His gift to us of His most dear Mother. By His third word on the Cross, He gave us Our Blessed Mother who is our life, our sweetness, and our hope.

"Remember, O most loving Virgin Mother," we say to her when we need her help and we know well that "*Memorare*" (the Latin word for "remember") is all that we need to say in order to get her Heavenly aid.

Say often through the day:

"Remember *me*," dear Jesus. I hope, too, To be in Paradise some day with You. *Say often through the day:*

Oh Mary, thy mantle my refuge will be. I love you and thank you for caring for me.

The Divine Mender

Days there are when all things seem to go wrong. We make mistakes, we displease others, we get angry or pouty, and say and do things we are so sorry for afterwards.

Is there any way to mend mistakes we have made—to mend hearts we have hurt, to undo tangles and knots that nobody on this earth can undo for us? Yes, Our Lord is the *Divine Mender!* He mends even while we sleep. He loves to be asked to "*repair*" for us. Such miracles He will work for you if you show Him what needs mending!

Say often through the day:

Jesus, Repairer, repair for me, Mend my mistakes whatever they be!





"Jesus, the Divine Mender"

35: Tuesday of the Passion

Longing

"I thirst" was Our Lord's fifth word from the Holy Cross. We know what it is to suffer from thirst, and we know how the dying soldier on the battle-field must suffer. But we can only dimly *guess* how terrible was the thirst suffered by our dear Lord.

"I third" expresses the desire of Jesus to atone for sin. "I thirst" also voices His *longing* for our personal love. Let us answer by giving Him our love, and b asking Him to increase our love for Him.

Say often through the day:

O Jesus, loving from the first, For Thee my longing soul doth thirst!

Life's Closing

It is only when we do something hard for the One we love that we taste the joy of loving. When Our Lord said "It is finished," he meant that He offered a perfect sacrifice for us. He gave His very life to show us how far His love would go,

Since we are so very dear to Our Lord, we must expect that He will give us many opportunities to bear hard things for Him. If we bear them well, we will know *joy at life's closing*.

Say often through the day:

Jesus! immensely good to me, I want to live and die for Thee!

A Winner

"Which of the twelve Apostles is your man?" asked a Sister of a little boy to whom she had been explaining a picture of the Last Supper. "Peter," came the ready answer. "He lied about Jesus, but he was sorry on the spot. He drew a big sword to defend Jesus in the Garden; and he jumped into the sea when he saw Jesus walking on the water. 'Lord, save me!' he cried. And Jesus made him the rock on which He built the Church."

"Sorrow and love always win," said Sister. "If we have these in our hearts, Jesus will build on us, too."

Say often through the day:

Jesus! I need Thy holy grace To help me every day and place.





"Lord, save me!"

In a Garden

In a garden our dear Lord began His Sacred *Passion*. It was the vision of our sins that caused Him to cry, "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice of suffering pass from Me—but Thy will, not Mine, be done." For Our Lord trusted His Heavenly Father, and accepted all that He sent Him.

When sorrow comes to *you*, as it surely will, remember your loving Father sent it, and He makes no mistakes. He sends, always in love, the thing that is best for you.

Say often through the day:

"Thy will be done," I'll quickly say, As soon as sorrow comes my way.



"Father, Thy Will, not mine, be done!"

Mother of Sorrows

Today we look at someone we love standing in sorrow at the foot of the Cross. It is the feast of Our Lady of Dolors. We see Our Mother sharing the torments of Jesus, embracing His dead body, kissing Him, adoring Him.

Oh, let us hasten to her with pure and loving hearts. Under her lovely blue mantle let us hide for a moment of prayer. This *lovely remembrance of* her *Sorrows* will be precious and sweet to Mary, who is waiting in Heaven to "show us Jesus."

Say often through the day:

O Mother of Sorrows, I grieve with thee, And beg forever thy child to be!



"Loving remembrance of her sorrows is precious and sweet to Mary."

40: Palm Sunday

Chains

No one would be so foolish as willingly to let any one take him away to be a slave! Yet if we are not watchful, *bad habits* will carry us away from our good selves and make us their slaves! Bad habits form links in a great chain that will bind us tight.

Let us ask Jesus to save us from forming links in the chains of our bad habits. If we have already formed them, let us ask Jesus to *break the chain* for us!

Changing Scenes

How dreadfully foolish it is to be entirely taken up with this fleeting world—where everything is changing and moving on. It is all passing away just as quickly as the pictures on the movie screen. Palm Sunday reminds us that *human hearts change* too. Those who on Sunday hailed Our Lord as King and greeted Him with glad hosannas, were the very ones who, four days later, mocked and abused Him and cried: "Crucify Him!" There is only One Heart that *never changes* and *always loves*, and that is the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Say often through the day:

Jesus! I need Thy grace all days To free me from my evil ways. Say often through the day:

Oh Sacred Heart, *I place my trust in Thee!* I know that always You will care for me!

Loving

Our Lord said of St. Mary Magdalen, "Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much." What a thrill of joy must have shot through the heart of this great penitentsaint as the words fell from His Divine lips! Now she cared no more for wrong things: she wanted "only Jesus." "What shall I do for Him Who has done so much for me?" was her daily love-song.

Can we not make that *our* love-song too?

Say often through the day:

Jesus! You've done so much for me, I'm in Your debt eternally!



"Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much."

43: Wednesday of Holy Week

Surrender

Oh, the sweetness of Our Lord's very last prayer from the Cross: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit!" What a beautiful night prayer for us as we pillow our tired heads for God's wonderful gift of sleep!

Every night's sleep is a rehearsal for our last falling asleep—into life everlasting. In our waking hours a little prayer of *self-surrender* to Jesus will help us to taste the sweetness of giving ourselves up to Him in childlike confidence.

Bargaining

"What will you give me for Him!" was the dreadful question on the lips of the Apostle Judas as he bargained with the Chief Priests for Jesus.

The devil is always asking us to betray Jesus. Do we answer, "What will you give me if I disobey?"—if I lie, if I keep impure thoughts?" Do we believe his answer when he whispers: "I will give you happiness?" The devil is the father of lies. How can we be happy if we betray Jesus? There never was such an unhappy man as Judas.

Say often through the day:

Into Thy Hands I commend my soul Jesus my Love, my Life, my God!

Say often through the day:

Jesus! Give me a loyal heart Where sin will have no smallest part.

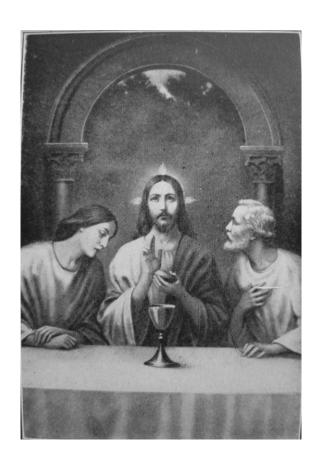
His Gift

On this Holy Thursday let us give Our Lord acts of perfect love for these precious anniversaries: The Last Supper—the Cenacle—the first Mass—our First Communion! We will visit at least one "altar of repose," to adore Jesus hidden under a veil of bread, to thank Him for giving us the Blessed Sacrament and becoming the very Food of our souls.

"Oh Jesus, I thank you with all my heart for this gift of the Blessed Sacrament."

Say often through the day:

You knew I'd hunger, Lord, for Thee, So you found a way my Food to be!



"Oh, Jesus, we thank You for this gift of the Blessed Sacrament."

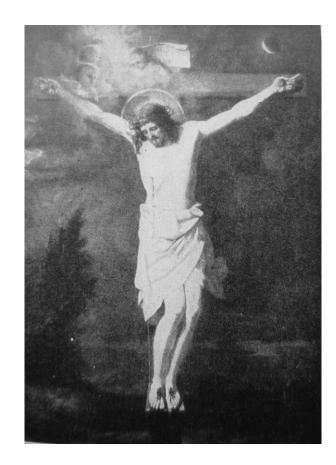
The Greatest Love

O Jesus, on Good Friday the soldiers who nailed You to the Cross, afterwards sat and watched You, to mock You. What can I do today but kneel and watch You, to love You—for giving Your life for *me!* Oh, those three long hours of terrible suffering! They were the price you paid to open Heaven for me.

Now what shall I do for You, my dearest Jesus? I will *love You immensely*—more than I love anyone else. And every day I will kiss Your Sacred Feet, nailed to the Crucifix, as a sign that I will cling to You, and hold You, and never let You go.

Say often through the day:

I love You, Jesus, on that Tree Where lovingly You died for me.



"Lovingly You died for me."

Expecting

When someone whom we love very much has been away and we know the time of their return, how eager we are for the happy hour to arrive! We see that everything is ready, we prepare surprises, we wait at the window or watch at the door, full of joy because soon we will again look on the face of our dear one.

Today we picture Our Blessed Mother *expecting Jesus* in the dawn of the Resurrection. Have we, by a good Confession, *got ourselves ready* to meet Jesus tomorrow?

Say often through the day:

Dear Jesus and Mary, I love you so— Oh, be there to greet me when home I go!