

The Soul's Deliberations and Prayers¹

Francesco da Fognano

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Francesco Visani (+ 1579) who was born in Fognano near Brisighella, in the Province of Bologna, was one of the best examples of preachers of the second half of the sixteenth century in Italy. In the tradition passed on in by the Order's chronicles he was outstanding for his zeal for reform of morals, especially with regard to the curbing of luxury and provocative women's fashions, as well as in his assistance to the poor in time of famine by devising novel ways of helping them. He also collaborated in the reform of many monasteries of nuns and inspired and founded certain Sodalities, such as those of Weavers and of Mariners at Rimini. It is noteworthy that his only spiritual work was printed for the Sodality of The Lord's Body of Magdalene "in S. Donato Road", Bologna.

As we read in the Dedication, this work was intended to be "a way of practising a spiritual life that would teach you to direct your life in all the things that are most necessary for carrying on a Christian existence and which will promote divine life more strongly. The work will be understood better the more what is contained in it is put into practice."

Nevertheless Francesco da Fognano composed it out of ideas taken from his sermons for his personal use. After the manuscript had fallen into the hands of a "bookseller", named Girolomo Veneziano, he had it printed "for the special use of the Sodality", as we read in the publisher's caption on the cover, when Pellegrino Bonardo of Bologna published it. It is easy to conclude that if he offered it to The Sodality of the Body of the Lord, this "bookseller" would have been one of their most fervent and devoted members. This is also clear from what he wrote to "the brothers and sisters of the Sodality" when he presented the content of the book and its author: "... This spiritual work teaches how to enkindle love of Our Lord and of our neighbour, and prepares a person for all the virtues and how to avoid vices and sin and the pains of hell, and acquire eternal life. Here in a short time anyone who wants to be equipped with virtue and holy morals and who wants to know how to control his frail life can learn excellent and necessary things. Even more, this short and useful work ought to be embraced by all, especially those who want to live a Christian life, particularly members of Sodality of the Body of the Lord because it was written by a Capuchin Friar. It is known that these Friars definitely live a harsh life and set a good example to the world"

The work is comprised of 40 "deliberations of the soul", as the author expresses it, or forty topics for meditation, which, covering a wide range of considerations concerning being aware of God and His gifts, focus on the person of Jesus Christ and the mysteries of his life, his sayings and deeds as a teacher of virtue and holiness. The concluding meditations deal with love of neighbour and the spiritual life in practice,

¹ "Discorsi e orazioni de l'anima" di Francesco da Fognano, in Costanzo Cargnoni (ed.), *I Frati Cappuccini. Documenti e testimonianze del primo secolo*, Edizioni Frate Indovino, Perugia, 1991, vol. III/1, pp. 637-665,

above all with respect to sorrow for sin and the celebration of Confession and Communion which overcome all vice and sin.

The method of meditation is very affective and practical. The texts are divided into two parts: the first contains “the conversation of the soul”, which is set out in an affective style indicating various points on which the soul dwells in order to kindle love; the second part is made up of a prayer that summarises these thoughts.

Following the order set out in the work (as contained in the index), the pages that have been chosen here are deliberations: n. 3, 5, 13, 20, 26, 38, and 39. Note the author’s consummate familiarity with Sacred Scripture, which he quotes in very simple and plain and yet incisive words. The word of God flows out in tiny thoughts that are suitable for simple people and are effective in bring them to love Jesus Christ and the spiritual life.

The Deliberations of the Soul Concerning Her Lord

4253 My soul, how great is your Lord! You begin to know Him, and such knowledge comes from His many gifts, so that you are compelled by the weight of love and truth to acknowledge and adore Him as your Lord. Therefore speak like this.

1. First: My God, my Lord, sweet Jesus, gentle and merciful, I adore you² because of the brilliance of Your deity. Scripture says: *The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and him only shalt thou serve:* Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.³

2. Secondly: My God, my Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of the Virgin Mary, I adore You, I honour You, I respect you above all creatures in the entire world. Indeed I honour creatures for love of You in as much as You, O my Lord, are:

The light that shines on our darkness;⁴

The King who rules every will;

The law that teaches all justice;

The spring which cleanses every mark;⁵

The judge who examines all our actions.⁶

4254 Third: My God, my Lord, Jesus our judge and ruler, I fear You above everything with a fear that is holy and fitting, because You are God and I am your child by creation, restoration and redemption, and I fear Your majesty all the more the

² Compare with the *Devout Prayers* by Bernardino d’Asti. This page is contained on pages 7 – 10 of that work.

³ Dt 6, 13; Mt 4, 10; Lk 4, 8.

⁴ Ps 18, 9.

⁵ Ps 42, 2.

⁶ Is 33, 22; Ps 50, 6; 75, 8.

more I know and realise that You, my Lord, my God, do not change Your judgement because of words or appeals, since Your judgement is holy and perfect.⁷

You do not change⁸ Your right judgement because of gifts, but because of deeds,

You do not bow to the sinner, unless he means to do what is just,

You are not deceived by false witnesses, because You are Highest Wisdom who sees all.

You are not flattered by false and make-believe talk, since, my Lord, You know the heart of man.⁹

You are not deceived by false errors, since You are the light that brightens the whole world.¹⁰ In chapter 9 Daniel says correctly: *The Lord, our God, is just in all his works.*¹¹

4255 4. Fourth: My Lord God, Jesus Christ Son of God, I adore and love You completely because You are just and love justice above everything,¹² and justice is to be found in You:

Because you receive penitent sinners graciously,

Because You help those who trust in You,

Because You destroy the enemies of those who love You.

Because You punish those who offend,

Because You save those who do good works.

5. Fifth: My God, my Lord, Jesus Christ, my Redeemer, You are to be adored, embraced, loved and sought after above everything else, since You alone deserve honour, You deserve to be embraced, and loved, and You alone, my Lord, deserve to be sought after, since it is in You alone that there can be found:

The infinite power that sustains everything

The infinite wisdom that governs the universe,

The infinite goodness that helps all,

True justice without fault,

Generous mercy to all penitents. Scripture says in a most sacred manner:” *My God, his mercy shall go before me.*”¹³

⁷ Ps 119, 137.

⁸⁸ Mal 3, 6.

⁹ Jn 2, 25.

¹⁰ Jn 1, 9.

¹¹ Dan 9, 14.

¹² Ps 11, 7.

¹³ Ps 58,11 (*Vulg.*).

Prayer

4256 My God, my Lord, I adore You because You are the only God who ought to be adored and so I adore Your infinite majesty with all my heart. You are one God in Three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. You alone are the Just Judge and Your justice can be seen in all Your works.¹⁴ You are also the one in whom all truth and holiness are to be found. Indeed. O my Lord, You are the one who makes known Your truth and holiness to others. All truth and holiness comes from You, O my Lord, who is always to be praised and honoured.

The Soul's Deliberations Concerning Jesus Christ's Great Love for Our Salvation

4257 My soul, my life, what basis you have for praising your Lord, who has not only shown you that He is your God, but has made known to you in addition that He loves you and does not regard you as a vile creature while He is the God of the universe. Thus, O my soul, your Lord demonstrates His infinite love.

1. My Lord, my God, Jesus Christ my love, You have shown me Your love by the sign of the Incarnation when You took human flesh for us. Holy Mother Church sings: *For our salvation he came down from heaven and was incarnate.*¹⁵

2. My Lord, my God, Jesus Christ Son of God, my love, by means of the sorrows that You endured for me You showed me your love. Isaiah says in chapter 53: *"Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows."*¹⁶

3. My Lord, my God, Jesus Christ my Saviour, my love, because You lived amongst people You showed me Your love as You condescended to live amongst people for our salvation. Baruch says in chapter 3: *"Afterwards he was seen on earth, and conversed with men."*¹⁷

4258 4. My Lord, my God, Jesus Christ my refuge, my love! By means of Your diligent preaching for our salvation You showed me Your love. By means of such preaching You taught the path of heaven, the path of virtue, to flee from sin and avoid hell. Oh how I am obliged to You, my Lord, because of Your preaching for our salvation!

5. My Lord, my God, my Saviour, my love, through the sign of Your sending Your disciples to preach to the whole world You have shown me Your love. My Lord, You did not only preach, but sent others to preach, because You loved me so much. In chapter 10 St Luke says: *"He sent them two and two into every city and place*

¹⁴ Ps 144, 17 (*Vulg*).

¹⁵ In the Creed. For this meditation see *Discorse e orationi* ..., 21-25.

¹⁶ Is 53, 4.

¹⁷ Bar 3, 38.

where he himself was to come.”¹⁸ Near the end of his Gospel Mark says: “Go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature.”¹⁹

6. My Lord, my God, Jesus Christ, my Saviour, my love, by the many miracles that You worked You showed me Your love. Oh how You love me, my Lord, for you make Your love for me known to me not only in words but by miracles. In chapter 15 John says: “If I had not done among them the works that no other man had done, they would not have sin.”²⁰

4259 7. My Lord, my God, Jesus Christ, my Saviour, my love, by means of the many demons that You chased out of human bodies and by the great drudgery which You undertook for me and for my salvation, either by preaching or by healing,²¹ as when You were so tired that out of weariness You sat at the well to heal the Samaritan woman You showed me Your love. O my life, why do you not exhaust yourself for your Lord, who threw Himself down at the well for you?²²

8. My Lord, my God Jesus Christ my Comforter, my love, through the death that You willed to die, You showed how much You loved me. Man holds nothing dearer than his life, and You, My Lord. Anyone who would not be grateful for such love would be²³ pitiless. Aware of this, Paul the Apostle says: “He that spared not his only Son, but gave him up for us all”.²⁴

9. My Lord, my God, my Redeemer, my love, through the reconciliation which You brought about between me and Your Father, and through the death which You died, You showed me Your love. Paul says in chapter 5 of his Letter to the Romans: “For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son: much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.”²⁵

4260 10. My Lord, my God, Jesus Christ, my life, my love, You showed me Your love through the institution of the sacraments and by taking men to heaven by means of them, and even more by having sent the Holy Spirit in visible form on the Apostles, making them certain of Your promises. O my Lord, I shall always call on You while I live. My heart melts when I think of Your great love and consider my poor love of You. Up to now I have not begun to love You.

11. My Lord, my God, Jesus Christ my beloved, my love, through Your continual encouragements with which You challenge me for having sinned horribly and bring about the remission of these sins through the institution of Confession, You show me Your love which not only gives me heart, but forgives the sin and teaches me the path

¹⁸ Lk 17, 1.

¹⁹ Mk 16, 15.

²⁰ Jn 15, 24.

²¹ Cf. Acts 10, 38.

²² Cf. Jn 4, 6.

²³ *Seria* in the text = *sarebbe*.

²⁴ Rom 8, 32.

²⁵ Rom 5, 10.

and how to cleanse myself. After I have repented, so that I may sin no more, You show me how great was the error of my sin. Oh, my heart, why are you not stirred by such great love?

12. My Lord, my God, Jesus Christ my teacher, my love, by the example which you gave us of all the virtues and perfections²⁶ including love, for our salvation and through Your way of praying, You showed us how You wanted us to pray to Your Father, thus demonstrating Your love. My Lord, You were obedient, poor, humble, zealous,²⁷ concerning Your Father's honour and our soul. My Lord, You have always set a good example. Your whole life is our guide and rule for living correctly.

The Soul's Deliberations Concerning Jesus Christ, Concerning Whom Everyone Should Rejoice because He came into The World For Us.

4261 My God, perfect comforter of all those who trust in You, and who are never misled by You, candid Lord, I come back to You, my Lord, declaring that not only did You accomplish the liberation of mankind, but also determined the right time for him to recognise Your wisdom appropriately, and in this happy event we recognise that when we see our healer and saviour on earth who is Your Son from heaven everyone is comforted and all may rejoice at His coming.²⁸

In so far as Jesus Christ is the ruler of the whole world.

Rector and governor of the whole world.

Judge of His people, because he is just.

Provider and perfect architect of our faith, because He cares about us.

Lover of truth, indeed truth itself.

Donor of grace, because He is all grace.

Rapture of all the brethren, because He has special love for us.²⁹

Defender of His mother, whom He loved so much.

One who held vanity in contempt because He was completely divine and heavenly.

Butcher of flesh, when He was born naked, and thus most worthy of imitation. He says: "*Learn from me.*"³⁰

One who excites³¹ the heart, because He is always working for our salvation.

²⁶ *Profettioni* in the text = *perfecioni*.

²⁷ *Celante* in the text = *zelante*.

²⁸ That is, all may be joyful because of His coming. The text of the present meditation is in: *Discorsi et orationi ...*, 79-83.

²⁹ *Ne* in the text = *ci*.

³⁰ Cf Mt 11, 29.

³¹ *Escitatore* in the text = *eccitatore*.

4262 12. One who enlightens the mind, because He is the true light that enlightens the whole world.³²

13. Comforter of people, because He wishes to save everybody as far as he is concerned, and He helps everyone, listens to all, receives all and saves whoever He wants to save.

14. Our comforter, who always preaches to us about the path to heaven, holy virtues, to flee from sin and avoid hell.

15. Lover of people, when, as we see, He went through villages and cities,³³ mountains and hills, showing His divine love to all.

16. Liberator from eternal death. O Jesus Christ, my Lord, You have freed the whole world from eternal death, as much as You could, and have certainly bought this freedom at the cost of Your life, of Your death, of Your blood, of Your most glorious body.

17. God and our Creator. God because You are the Second Person of the Most Blessed Trinity, and our Creator, who was sent to earth by the Father Your God to establish new freedom, because we were slaves and servants of sin.

18. Ruler of all the heavenly, earthly and infernal bodies at whose command all things go on and from where they came.

4263 19. Honest custodian of all Your promises. O my most sweet Jesus, how very faithful You are in all Your Promises!

20. Strongest champion, who has overcome all trials and adversities to give us the victory of eternal life.

21. Best prize-giver, as I see it, my Lord, for the angels in heaven sing *Gloria in excelsis*³⁴ as if to say: "This is the prize-giver of the glory of heaven."

22. Our mediator, who made peace between mankind and the Father Your God, to such a degree that the angels sing saying: *et in terra pax*³⁵ and whoever seeks peace on earth this is real peace.

23. Instigator of every good deed. My Lord, I see You always ready at any hour to comfort all those who call upon You, and prepared to give them Your grace, with which they will accomplish marvellous things. You not only give them Your grace, but invite them to come to You and continually call them standing at the door of their hearts saying: "Open the door to me, and I will come in."³⁶ O my Lord, O my God, O my Christ Jesus, how happy I am over Your coming into the world. Clearly You have satisfied all who wanted You to come.

³² Cf. Jn 1, 9.

³³ Cf. Mt 9, 35.

³⁴ Cf. Lk 2, 14.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Cf. Ap 3, 20.

Prayer

4264 In tears I turn to the Infinite Majesty, which is filled with all gifts, because of my great ingratitude when I see my Lord above who has innumerable gifts which He bestows on the world only out of His infinite goodness and generosity. I, unhappy and ignorant as I am, have never thought of Him even though I saw myself completely surrounded with so many gifts. Everywhere I turned I saw good things provided for me when I wanted them. O my God, my Lord, my treasure, O holy, glorious Christ, God of paradise, Lord and patron of the universe, I thank You for so many gifts and beg pardon for my faults, and thank You for coming into the world so willingly and so beneficial for me. I offer to follow You all the days of my life, and thus, my Lord, accept me, your unworthy servant, because of Your kindness, to always serve purposefully according to Your holy law, living this way through Your divine grace.

The Soul's Deliberations Concerning Regarding How Jesus Taught How to Acquire Holy Virtues.³⁷

4265 My God, my Lord, Jesus Christ Son of God, Your are the one who is not only our rescuer but also our most worthy teacher, who with such love, charity and kindness of word teaches us the path and the road of virtue and who inflames the heart to perform many actions. O my soul, think about how your Lord taught you to acquire these holy virtues.1. Firstly. Jesus Christ taught us to acquire poverty. Matthew says in chapter 5: "*Beati pauperes spiritu, quoniam ipsorum est regnum caelorum*; Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall possess the kingdom of heaven".³⁸ Elsewhere he says: "*Vade et vende omnia quae habet et da pauperibus et habebis thesaurum in caelo*; Go sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven."³⁹

2. Secondly, Jesus Christ taught us to acquire meekness. Matthew chapter 5 says: "*Beati mites, quoniam ipsi possidebunt terram*; Blessed are the meek for they shall possess the land..."⁴⁰ Elsewhere in chapter 11 he says: "*Discite a me, quia mitis sum et humilis corde*; Learn from me, because I am meek and humble of heart."⁴¹

3. Thirdly, Jesus Christ taught us to acquire austerity. Matthew says in chapter 5: "*Paenitentiam agite, appropinquabit enim regnum caelorum*; do penance for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."⁴²

³⁷ *Discorsi e orationi...* 127-144.

³⁸ Mt 5, 3.

³⁹ Mt 19, 21.

⁴⁰ Mt 5, 4.

⁴¹ Mt 11, 29.

⁴² Mt 4, 7.

4266 4. Fourthly, Jesus Christ taught us to acquire mercy. Matthew says in chapter 5: “*Beati misericordes, quoniam ipsi misericordiam consequentur*; blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.”⁴³

5. Fifthly, Jesus Christ taught us to acquire justice. Matthew says in chapter 5: “*Beati qui esuriunt et sitiunt iustitiam, quoniam ipsi saturabuntur*; blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill.”⁴⁴

6. Sixthly, Jesus Christ taught us to acquire knowledge of our own defects. Matthew says in chapter 5: “*Beati qui lugent, quoniam ipsi consolabuntur*: blessed are they that mourn: for they will be comforted.”⁴⁵

7. Seventhly, Jesus Christ taught us to acquire purity of heart. Matthew says in chapter 5: “*Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt*; blessed are the clean of heart: they shall see God.”⁴⁶

8. Eighth, Jesus Christ taught us to acquire peace. Matthew says in chapter 5: “*Beati pacifici, quoniam filii Dei vocabuntur*; blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.”⁴⁷

9. Ninth, Jesus Christ taught us to acquire patience and endure injuries. Matthew says in chapter 5: “*Beati qui persecutionem patiuntur propter iustitiam, quoniam ipsorum est regnum caelorum*; Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake, for the honour of God, in order not to offend God, to acquire virtue, for wanting to suffer for the love of Jesus Christ, for theirs is eternal life.”⁴⁸

4267 10. Tenth, Jesus Christ taught us to acquire setting good example. Matthew says in chapter 5: “*Luceat lux vestra coram hominibus, ut videant vestra bona opera et glorificent patrem vestrum qui in caelis est*: let your light shine before men setting good example, that they may see your good works so that they may glorify your Father who is in heaven.”⁴⁹

11. Eleventh, Jesus Christ taught us to act and perform good works. Matthew says in chapter 5: “*Qui fecit et docuerit, hic magnus vocabitur in regno caelorum*; he that shall do and teach, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”⁵⁰

12. Twelfth, Jesus Christ taught us to acquire integrity. Matthew says in chapter 5: “*Si oculus tuus scandalizat te, erue eum et proice abs te*; if your eye scandalise you, and makes you lose your integrity, pluck it out and cast it *from* you, remain mortified and take care that looking back does not place you in danger again.”⁵¹

⁴³ Mt 5, 7.

⁴⁴ Mt 5, 6.

⁴⁵ Mt 5, 5.

⁴⁶ Mt 5, 8.

⁴⁷ Mt 5, 9.

⁴⁸ Mt 5, 10.

⁴⁹ Mt 5, 16.

⁵⁰ Mt 5, 19.

⁵¹ Mt 5, 29.

13. Thirteenth, Jesus Christ taught us to acquire fidelity which is also a beautiful virtue. . Matthew says in chapter 7: “*Omnis qui audit verba mea et facit ea, assimilabitur viro sapienti, qui edificavit domum suam supra petram*: every one who hears my words and does them, shall be like a wise man that built his house upon a rock.”⁵²

4268 14. Jesus Christ taught us to acquire right intention which is the direction in which our heart is tending. Matthew says in chapter 6: “*Si oculus tuus lucidus est, totus corpus tuum lucidum erit; si nequam fuerit, totum corpus tuum tenebrosum erit*,⁵³ if your eye is clear, if your intention is correct, your whole body will be enlightened, all you’re your actions will be simple and beautiful; if your intention is evil, all your actions will be bad and vile, because the intention establishes the aim of actions with respect to merit or demerit.

15. Jesus Christ taught us to acquire training for prayer, which is the unfailing safeguard for spiritual persons. Matthew says in *chapter 6*: “*Sic enim orabitur: Pater noster, qui es in caelis*: learn to pray from this and when you pray say: Our Father in heaven, may your name be held holy, may your kingdom come, may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us our daily bread and forgive our sins, as we forgive those in debt to us, those who have offended us and those from whom we should ask pardon, and do not let us fall into temptation and free us from evil”.⁵⁴

16. Jesus Christ taught us to acquire a longing for eternal life above everything on earth. This is the resolve to always do what is right. Matthew says in chapter 6: “*Primum quaerite regnum Dei et iustitiam eius, et haec omnia adiicientur vobis*: seek first the kingdom of God, and his justice, that is his zeal and what he desires, and all these things shall be added to you.”⁵⁵

4269 17. Jesus Christ taught us to acquire constancy, trust and a sense of balance in God. Matthew says in chapter 7: “*Petite et dabitur vobis; quaerite et invenientis; pulsate et aperietur vobis*: ask and you shall receive; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened.”⁵⁶ Oh what confidence, what a sense of balance, my Lord, should I have in You, because You have said these words to me, that I should knock and it would be opened; that I should ask and it would be given to me; that I should seek and I would find!

18. Jesus Christ taught us to acquire the virtue of fairness, which would bring peace to all. Matthew says in chapter 7: “*Omnia quae vultis, ut faciant vobis homines, ita et vos facite illis*: whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them.”⁵⁷ Do to others what you would wish them to do to you.

⁵² Cf. Mt 7, 24.

⁵³ Mt 6, 22-23.

⁵⁴ Mt 6, 9-13.

⁵⁵ Mt 6, 33.

⁵⁶ Mt 7, 7.

⁵⁷ Mt 7, 12.

19. Jesus Christ taught us to acquire being circumspect, prudent, and alert, which is a great virtue for gaining peace of heart and scrutinising exterior actions. Matthew says in chapter 7: “*Attendite a falsis prophetis. Qui veniunt ad vos in vestimentis ovium, a fructibus cognoscetis eos: Be on guards, be circumspect, be prudent with regard to false prophets, who will come to you as prelates and pastors, by their fruit you will know them.*”⁵⁸

20. Jesus Christ taught conformity of our will to his. Matthew says in chapter 7: “*Qui facit voluntatem patris mei, qui in caelis est, ipse intrabit in regem caelorum: Whoever does the will of my Father, who is in heaven, shall possess eternal life.*”⁵⁹ Conformity of our will to the divine will is a worthy, very worthy virtue.

4270 21. Jesus Christ taught us to begin to follow and imitate him which is something better than anything else in the world is so far as it is imitating Jesus Christ himself. Matthew says in chapter 8: “*Sequere me et dimitte mortuos sepelire mortuos suos: follow me and let the dead bury their dead.*”⁶⁰

22. Jesus Christ taught us to acquire prudence, which is an excellent virtue in managing everything. Matthew says in chapter 10: “*Estote prudentes sicut serpentes et simplices sicut columbae: be wise as serpents and simple as doves.*”⁶¹

23. Jesus Christ taught us to acquire constancy and firmness of soul, which is human prudance. Matthew chapter 10 says: “*Tradent enim vos in conciliis et in sinagogis suis flagellabunt vos et ad praesides et reges ducemini propter me in testimonium illis et gentibus; ne timueritis eos, sed potius eum timete, qui potest animam et corpus perdere etc.: they shall persecute you in their councils and synagogues, and you shall be taken before kings and judges because of my name as witnesses against them. Do not be afraid of all those who persecute you. You should fear him who has power over your body and soul: him you ought to fear.*”⁶²

24. Jesus Christ taught us to acquire perseverance, which is the crown of all our effort. Matthew says in chapter 10: “*Qui autem perseveraverit usque in finem, hic salvus erit: he that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved.*”⁶³

4271 25. Jesus taught us to acquire discretion in all matters, especially in persecutions, which is certainly the sign of a good and vigilant Christian. Matthew says in chapter 10: “*Cum autem persequentur vos in civitate ista, fugite in aliam. When they persecute you in the city where you are and preach, flee to another, replacing anger with tact.*”⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Mt 7, 15-16.

⁵⁹ Mt 7 21.

⁶⁰ Mt 8, 22.

⁶¹ Mt 10, 16.

⁶² Mat 10, 17-18, 28.

⁶³ Mt 10, 22.

⁶⁴ Mt 10, 23.

26. Jesus Christ taught us to confess His holy name faithfully, which is worthy of being praised, proclaimed and being preached beyond anything else. Matthew says in chapter 10: “*Omnis qui confitebitur me coram hominibus, confitebor et ego eum coram Patre meo*: Every one that shall confess me before men, I will also confess before my Father who is in heaven”.⁶⁵

27. Jesus Christ taught us to acquire continuous mortification, which is a control on sin entering us and staining our soul. Matthew says in chapter 10: “*Qui non accipit crucem suam et sequitur me, non est me dignum*: he who does not take up his cross by mortifying himself and follow me, learning from me according to his strength and virtue, is not worthy of me, or of eternal life.”⁶⁶

28. Jesus Christ taught us to acquire evangelical perfection which is the quick and easy path to heaven for whoever wants this. Matthew says in chapter 11: “*Tollite iugum meum super vos; iugum enim meum suave est et onus meum leve*: Take up my yoke upon you, because my yoke is sweet and my burden light.”⁶⁷

4272 29. Jesus Christ taught observance of divine law, without which there certainly is no salvation. Matthew says in chapter 19: “*Si vis ad vitam ingredi, serva mandata*: If you wish to enter life, keep the commandments.”⁶⁸

30. Jesus Christ taught us to acquire humility, which is the basis for safeguarding all of the virtues. Matthew says in chapter 18: “*Nisi qui se humiliaverit sicut parvulus ista; non intrabit in regum caelorum*: Unless you humble yourself like a pure little child, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.”⁶⁹

31. Jesus Christ taught us to acquire compassion towards our neighbour, because this is required in order to win merit and for you to act with charity. Matthew says in chapter 18: “*Si peccaverit in te frater tuus, vade et corripue eum inter te et ipsum solum*: if your brothers offend against you, go and rebuke him between you and him alone”.⁷⁰

32. Jesus Christ taught us to acquire fraternity and union, which gives consolation to the heart. Matthew says in chapter 18: “*Si duo consenserint ex vobis super terram, de omni re quacumque petierint, fiet eis a Patre meo*: If two of you shall consent upon earth, concerning anything that is useful, necessary and valuable for the soul, when you ask, my Father shall grant it to you.”⁷¹ If they are in union with me they would not ask for anything that is disgusting or perverse. You shall obtain everything that you ask for when you are united with me in peace and charity.

⁶⁵ Mt 10, 32.

⁶⁶ Mt 10, 38.

⁶⁷ Mt 11, 29.

⁶⁸ Mt 19, 17.

⁶⁹ Mt 18, 3.

⁷⁰ Mt 18, 15.

⁷¹ Mt 18, 19.

4273 33. Jesus Christ taught us to acquire continence, which is honouring the body, beautifying the soul and expressing zeal for God. Matthew says in chapter 19: “*Sicut eunuchi qui se castraverunt propter regnum caelorum.*”⁷² There are some who practise continence and observe chastity of the body for the sake of the kingdom of heaven,” in order to remain neat and clean and to avoid the occasion of sin and what promotes it.

34. Jesus Christ taught us to acquire contempt for the world, which is a good way to flee from sin because it fosters perfection. Matthew says in chapter 19: “*Si vis perfectus esse, vade, et vende omnia quae habes et da pauperibus et habebis thesaurum in caelo; et veni et sequere me:* If you want to be perfect, go sell all that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven.”⁷³ Oh what holy advice is this, that You have given, my Lord, concerning contempt for this wretched world!

35. Jesus Christ taught us to acquire being of service to our brother, which is preserving charity at the same time as being a sign of compassion. Matthew says in chapter 20: “*Quicumque voluerit maior inter nos fieri, erit minister vester:* Whoever wants to be first among you shall be your servant”.⁷⁴

4274 36. Jesus Christ taught us to flee from the company of bad and evil men which is a sure way to enjoy peace and tranquillity of heart with all those who live together with us. Matthew says in chapter 21: “*Jesus relictis phariseis obiit foras extra civitatem, ibique mansit:* Departing from the company of the evil Pharisees, he went out of the city and remained there”,⁷⁵ that is in Bethania.

37. Jesus Christ taught how to render their due to everyone, which is the sign of a just and virtuous man and everyone who renders to all what is their due is praised in the world. Matthew says in chapter 22: “*Reddite quae sunt Caesaris caesari, et quae sunt Dei Deo:* render to Caesar that things that are Caesar’s; and to God the things that are God’s.”⁷⁶

38. Jesus Christ taught us to acquire true love, which is the image and assurance of eternal life. Matthew says in chapter 22: “*Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex tota mente tua:* Love the Lord your God with your whole mind”,⁷⁷ in a stable manner and firmly not veering from that love for any creature, nor because of any torment whatsoever.

4274 39. Jesus Christ taught us to acquire reverence, which is demonstrated by a person’s devotion and conduct. Matthew says in chapter 23: “*Super cathedram Moysi*

⁷² Mt 19, 12.

⁷³ Mt 19, 21.

⁷⁴ Mt 20, 27.

⁷⁵ Mt 21, 17.

⁷⁶ Mt 22, 21.

⁷⁷ Mt 22, 37.

sederunt scribi et pharisei; quae dixerint vobis, facite et servate, secundum opera eorum nolite facere; The scribes and the Pharisees sit on the chair of Moses; whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and carry out what they say to when they sit on that chair, but do not do as they do.”⁷⁸ We should show reverence to all who speak to us about the divine law as if it was being said from the chair of Moses. However, do not imitate their life, if it differs from this law.

40. Jesus Christ taught us how to be cautious and diligent which is the way of avoiding many evils in ourselves and in others. Matthew says in chapter 24: “*Videte ne quis vos seducat:* Take heed, be alert and diligent, that no man seduces you”.⁷⁹

41. Jesus Christ teaches us how to prepare ourselves during life, which brings consolation to our conscience and steadiness at the time of death. Whoever is well prepared need have no fear. Matthew says in chapter 24: “*Estote parati, quia quae hora non putatis filius hominis veniet:* Be ready, because at what hour you know not the Son of man will come.”⁸⁰ You should not be asleep when it is time to be awake. Let us not sleep in sin, but keep watch in divine grace.

4276 42. Jesus Christ taught us how to acquire watchfulness and mortification of the body which safeguards spiritual life and conduct. The more spiritual a person is the more he knows himself and is vigilant and acknowledges his unworthiness. Matthew says in chapter 25: “*Vigilate et orate, quia nescitis diem neque horam:* Watch, therefore, because you know not the day nor the hour of your death.”⁸¹

43. Jesus Christ taught us to think about our judgement which brings about a lot of good and virtue and stops us committing many sins. Matthew says in chapter 25: “*Separabit oves a haedis, oves a dextris, haedos a sinistris:* He shall separate the sheep from the goats, the sheep to the right, and the goats to the left.”⁸² O, what consolation is this! It certainly makes the sinner’s heart quiver, and consoles the just and whoever wants to be just. It makes the sinner repent. It makes the just more watchful about their conduct.⁸³

44. Jesus Christ taught us to exert ourselves. Exerting ourselves is certainly correct and brings about the removal of many sins especially sloth which ruins the soul, and is the root of many evils such as laziness in prayer, reading, visiting the poor, giving alms, going to Mass and saying the Divine Office, making peace and doing good and applying more physical energy in a prudent manner to help those in need of help. John says in chapter 4: “*Iesus fatigatus ex itinere, sedebat hic supra fontem:* Being wearied from his journey, Jesus, sat on the well.”⁸⁴ Jesus my Lord you became tired for my salvation, why do I not exert myself for love of you by performing works of charity for myself and for my neighbour?

⁷⁸ Mt 23, 2.

⁷⁹ Mt 24, 4

⁸⁰ Mt 24, 44.

⁸¹ Mt 25, 13.

⁸² Mt 25, 32-33.

⁸³ In the text *ad epare* instead of *ad operare* is evidently a printing error.

⁸⁴ Jn 4, 6.

4277 45. Jesus Christ taught us to desire to do the will of God.⁸⁵ There is nothing more necessary for a person than that he always wish to do God's will by observing all that God wants and commands and to plan and want to fulfil entirely in word and deed by the grace of God what God wants. John says in chapter 4: "*Meus cibus est ut faciam voluntatem Patris mei qui in caelis est: My food, my meal is to do the will of my Father, who is in heaven.*"⁸⁶

46. Jesus Christ taught how to lift up the mind, which brings peace of heart, which is the food of the soul, the relief of a person during tribulation, the desire to endure, contempt of the world and the wish to die in order to be united more closely with his God. John says in chapter 4: "*In spiritu oportet eum adorare: It is necessary to adore him in spirit, in lifting up the mind.*"⁸⁷

47. Jesus Christ taught us how a sinner might acquire the desire for salvation, which is an act of charity and a divine precept, and something which adorns a person in this world and makes him act in a meritorious manner removing all that is against his neighbour from his heart and preparing him to do everything possible that is conducive to his salvation. John says in chapter 4: "*Ego alium cibum habeo manducare, quem vis nescitis: I have meat to eat which you know not,*"⁸⁸ namely the salvation of the sinner. Blessed is he who has this desire in his heart!

4278 48. Jesus Christ taught how to flee from temporal honours which will be the death of the soul for someone who is not prudent. They are the cause of many evils and dangers for oneself and for others. When they are deserved and not bought or sought they are of merit to a person who bears them with patience, regarding himself as nothing and as being under increased obligation and as being judged more severely than others. With respect to Christ John says in chapter 6: "*Iesus fugit, cum turba vellet eum facere regem: Jesus fled when the crowd wanted to make him king over them.*"⁸⁹

49. Jesus Christ taught how to become informed concerning our neighbour, and to exchange such information with one another so as to bring about peace within ourselves and with others. Such information provides truth and union for those who converse together. John says in chapter 13: "*Exemplum dedi vobis, ut quemadmodum ego feci vobis, sic et vobis faciatis: as I have done to you, so you do also.*"⁹⁰

50. Jesus Christ taught how to love one another, nothing better than which can be found in this world for it makes⁹¹ us avoid sins and imperfections. John says in chapter 13: "*In hoc cognoscent homines, qui estis mei discipuli, si dilectionem ad*

⁸⁵ *Profigere* in the text is a Latinism for *fissarsi, abbandonarsi, mettersi*.

⁸⁶ Jn 4, 34.

⁸⁷ Jn 4, 24.

⁸⁸ Jn 4, 32.

⁸⁹ Jn 6, 15.

⁹⁰ Jn 13, 15.

⁹¹ *Ci feci* in the text = *fa*.

invicem habueritis: by this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”⁹²

4279 51. Jesus Christ taught how to acquire peace, which is the way to heaven, the union of the soul with God, the guardian of the heart, the custodian of conduct, the rule of conversation and charity in all actions. John says in chapter 14: “*Pacem relinquo vobis, pacem mean do vobis*: peace I leave you, peace I give you.”⁹³

52. Jesus Christ taught how to ask things from God, which is our help in all tribulations and infirmities, whoever turns to God in tribulation will be consoled in everything. John says in chapter 17: “*Sublevatis Iesus oculis in caelum dixit: Pater clarifica me*, when Jesus had raised His eyes to heaven He said: Father, glorify me.”⁹⁴

Jesus Christ taught many other virtues, O my soul, which you can consider in His whole life and in all His holy sermons.

Prayer

4280 My Lord, my Jesus, my Love, Jesus my Teacher, I am indebted to Your Divine Majesty not only because You have loved me, but also because You have shown me proof of this love, as you, my good Jesus, have taught me the path of holy virtue through which I am acceptable to You and can praise and render You thanks in all that involves You in a virtuous manner.

O my Lord, when You find me disturbed, persecuted, injured, afflicted and unhappy and I look to You, I see in You a mirror of all virtues, and in my every need, You instruct me how to manage my soul and body.

O my God, this is what makes me happy in the midst of so many evils and makes me content in every adversity and so I gain the strength to discover good in evil. I thank You, O my Lord, for all Your virtues, which You have demonstrated to me, and continue to show me, and I look to You with all my heart. *Amen*.

The Soul’s Deliberations Concerning How We Generally Love Any Neighbour, and How Seven Points Are To Be Observed.⁹⁵

4281 In this slanderous world which is full of all kinds of weakness, there is need to strengthen the spiritual life so that it is not exposed to the danger of offending God through ignorance or negligence which are shunned by those who are careful and conscientious of spirit and who continually fortify themselves by means of the most necessary and useful remedies. O my soul, because I desire that you follow the safest path, I wish that you understand how you have to love your neighbour with comprehensive love, and how this love is to be directed, since you are with your neighbour all day, and so this is indispensable.

⁹² Jn 13, 15.

⁹³ Jn 14, 27.

⁹⁴ Jn 17, 1.

⁹⁵ *Discorsi e orationi...* 179, 183.

Thus you should know that there are seven things that can teach you how to love all your neighbours comprehensively, and they are:

1. First, compassion that you feel towards your neighbour in all that he does and that you believe that unless the generosity of the divine Lord had assisted you, you would have done the same or worse. Paul says in the twelfth chapter of his Letter to the Corinthians: “*Si quid patitur unum membrum, compatiuntur omnia membra*; if one member suffers anything all the members suffer with it”.⁹⁶

4282 2. Second, congratulating your neighbour, when you rejoice with your neighbour, lifting the weight off his soul as long as such rejoicing is according to God and not against Him. Paul says in chapter twelve of his Letter to the Romans; “*Gaudete cum gaudentibus*; rejoice with those who rejoice”,⁹⁷ showing that their good fortune gives you joy.

3. Third, patient endurance, when you support your neighbour with patience, having compassion for his weakness, never having words with him, but supporting him in everything, thinking that Jesus Christ has done this and does it for you and will continue to support you. Paul says in chapter four of his Letter to the Ephesians: “*Estote invicem benigni*: be kind one to another”,⁹⁸ support one another out of holy charity.

4. Fourth, kind conversation: when you speak kindly with everyone, being humble with all of them, so that your conversation is not picky with some and loving with others, rather speak kindly to everyone, speaking and listening to all with the same kindness. Oh what a life is that of a person who does not quarrel with anyone, but who is sweet, loving, affable, kind to all supporting one and all. Paul says in chapter four of his Letter to the Ephesians: “*Estote invicem benigni*: be kind one to another”.

4283 5. Fifth, humble reverence: when you conduct yourself with humble reverence towards everyone according to their state or condition, and respect all, not hurting those who are beneath you or more contemptible than you, nor ingratiating yourself with those above you regarding yourself as their equal, rather be reverent and humble towards all and you will be regarded as virtuous in everything and in all circumstances. Paul says in the twelfth chapter of his Letter to the Romans: “*Honore invicem praevenientes*: outdo one another in showing honour”,⁹⁹ setting a good example for your brothers both present and future.

6. Sixth, heartfelt union: when you are united with everyone, at peace with all, in charity with all, in union with all, being at peace with all people. Paul says in

⁹⁶ 1 Cor 12, 26.

⁹⁷ Rom 12. 15.

⁹⁸ Eph 4 32.

⁹⁹ Rom 12, 10.

chapter twelve of his Letter to the Romans: “*Si fieri potest cum omnibus hominibus pacem habentes: as much as is in you, cultivate peace with all men*”.¹⁰⁰

7. Seventh, offer yourself lovingly to all: when you are ready and prepared to help everyone, as far as you are able, and thus offer your assistance lovingly, however small your willingness to help and assist might be, let it be always motivated by the salvation of your soul and the honour of God. John says in chapter 15: “*Maiorem caritatem nemo habet ut animam suam ponet quis pro amicis suis: greater love than this no man has, than a man lay down his life for his friends*”.¹⁰¹ O my soul, Jesus Christ did this for you; so may you lay down your soul for His infinite Majesty and the good of your neighbour.

Prayer

4284 Words cannot express the amount of joy and consolation I feel in my soul as I see and know what I have never realised so well. The better I realise it the more I begin to understand it according to my weak strength. O my Lord, I know and see that You are God whom I comprehend now with greater insight than I ever did and I can see that You stand with open arms to inflame me with this love.

However, my Lord, while coming to You to do this I remember my neighbour for whom I have not had the love that I should have had. My Lord, now that I have been instructed through Your generosity, make me better than I have been in the past. Because I have offended You with respect to my love for my neighbour, by not observing these rules, I am upset about this and resolve to amend my life by observing these beautiful rules concerning the love of neighbour to give You praise, O my Lord, to aid my soul and to set a good example for my neighbour. *Amen.*

The Soul's Deliberations on How a Person Should Prepare for Holy Communion.¹⁰²

4285 Once the inner man has been renewed and totally strengthened with grace in the sacramental bath of holy and sanctifying confession, which purifies our heart, cleanses our soul, frees it from the infernal enemy, destroys hell and wipes out punishment - Oh, holy glorious confession, not only do you produce these marvellous effects but in addition you prepare and order the soul to receive her Lord! -, O my soul when you wish to receive your Lord this is what you are to do.

1. First: think about your lowliness and wretchedness and the exaltedness and magnificence of your God, who condescends to come to you.

2. Second: prepare your house adorning it with the beautiful virtues of humility, purity, good conscience, fervent charity, constant faith, living hope, honourable bodily conduct.

¹⁰⁰ Rom 12, 18.

¹⁰¹ Jn 15, 13.

¹⁰² *Discorsi et orationi....*, 253-258.

3. Three: abstain from all worldly occupations and, out of reverence for such a great Sacrament, those who have such obligations should remain continent for at least two or three days, or at the least for a day.

4286 4. Fourth: flee from the conversation of people, superfluous talk, looking here and there, going from place to place.

5. Fifth: contemplate this great Sacrament and, as Jesus Christ did at His last supper with His disciples, think of this great Sacrament as being in memory of His life and death and for our redemption.

6. Sixth: consider that Jesus Christ is inviting you to His meal with these words: “*Qui manducat meam carnem et bibit meum sanguinem, in me manet et ego in eo*; he who east my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him”.¹⁰³ Oh the love of my good Jesus, what love it is! My Lord, You give me Your flesh and Your blood, and then You invite me to receive this most exalted gift!

7. Seventh: examine your conscience well with sighs. Paul says: “*Probet autem se ipsum homo*, firstly let a person examine his conscience well,”¹⁰⁴ so that, as far as it is possible for frail human nature, he may receive his Lord well.

8. Eighth: offer fervent prayers, speak with all the choirs of angels, with all the saints, and rejoice with all the saints over such a great gift and grace, that the Son of God wishes to come to live with us by us receiving His most holy body and blood.

4287 9. Ninth: arrange not to speak, so that the body may be well controlled and occupied, humble and completely contrite, clean and tidy of all concerns and impediments, with which it is often soiled and weakened.

10. Tenth, think that the One we wish to receive is the King of the world, the Creator of the world, the glory of the angels and the joy of the apostles, the crown of martyrs, the triumph of true Christians and Catholics, the bread of angels, sweet manna and every delight.

11. Eleventh: remain prepared in the place designated to receive your Lord with your mouth opened devoutly, on your knees on the ground while in your heart thinking of the happiness of the blessed and the devotion of many good people who devoutly receive the Sacrament.

12. Twelfth: as you speak invite all the angels and saints to share the jubilation and contentment that you are experiencing from your Lord and ask them to pray for you that you may never lose the taste of this holy Sacrament.

Prayer

4288 My God, my Lord, my heavenly Father, at Your command all creatures exist and are preserved in existence. The earth is set out so marvellously just by Your word. The vast and spacious heavens were adorned at a nod from You. By means of Your

¹⁰³ Jn 6, 57.

¹⁰⁴ 1 Cor 11, 28.

infinite will the waters, fire and air were all filled with wonderful properties. Out of Your love you sent your blessed Son to free the whole human race from the eternal curse that Adam incurred because he did not obey the divine command. O eternal Father, Your blessed Son came into the world and worked for us and our salvation by preaching, teaching, healing the sick, raising the dead, giving sight to the blind and paying honour to His Father before the whole world and liberating His people whom He consoled by word and deed. He did this so that He might appropriately console us by arranging in a short space of time to share with His beloved disciples such a wonderful sacrament during the last supper, forever leaving us, to the end of time, His body and blood, which I, a wretched creature, propose to receive in the morning for the salvation of my soul. O my Jesus, O my God, O my life what could I ever do to make myself worthy of receiving such a gift?

4289 The memory fails in trying to remember, the intellect cannot grasp, the will desires but fails to reach such heights. It can only desire what God intends in this matter. You, O Lord, want and, what is even more, invite me to receive this gift. I desire and accept this but cannot find myself worthy of such a gift. If indeed I receive you. O Lord, You will be the one who, out of Your love, prepares a dwelling within me. I give this dwelling to You alone and off myself to You totally repentant of my sins. I shall try, with Your help, not to sin again and to be obedient to Your sacred law, longing for You, loving You and not feeling content without You.

Therefore, O my Lord, open our hearts and move my lips to receive You in my heart as You come to me with divine grace and make my heart a source to cleanse my soul forever and purify it by this grace. Bring this about not only for me, O my Lord, but for everyone who loves You and desires You from their heart, and out of Your mercy melt hardened hearts so that they may come to know and do the same. *Amen.*

Deliberations of the Soul on what are the Doors through which we Enter Heaven.¹⁰⁵

4290 Looking up to heaven from earth I find myself filled with longing to know the path that leads to heaven, because I can find nothing that is permanent on earth, and can see that my life goes on and I do not know how to find the way since I lack determination. He who came down from heaven paved the road to go above and opened the gates to enter. However, it does not seem to be like this for many since on earth they are beset by many sorrows and their human tongue is silenced because they do not know how to talk about such things, which is a pity beyond all sorrow. Nevertheless such sorrow leads to the joys of heaven.

O my soul, think carefully and you will discover that there are twelve doors that are open to you and waiting for you to enter.

1. First: the door for those who are poor in spirit, who do nothing but praise their Lord in everything. In chapter 5 Matthew says: "*Beati paupers spiritu, quoniam*

¹⁰⁵ *Discorsi et orationi ... 258-262.*

ipsorum est regum coelorum: Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven".¹⁰⁶

4291 2. Second: the door for those who are meek, who behave kindly in this world. Matthew says in chapter 5: "*Beati mites, quoniam ipsi possidebunt terram viventium: Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land of the living.*"¹⁰⁷

3. Third: the door of those that mourn with longing for heaven or over their sins, who here are filled with tears or sighs at the thought of the sins that they have committed and of how much good they have lost. In chapter 5 Matthew says: "*Beati qui lugent, quoniam ipsi consolabuntur*".¹⁰⁸

4. Four: the door of those who hunger for justice, who want to suffer so as not to lose their soul and the Lord's friendship and wish to grow in virtue. In chapter 5 Matthew says: "*Beati qui esuriunt et sitiunt iustitiam, quoniam ipsi saturabuntur. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill in eternal life*".¹⁰⁹

5. Fifth: the door of those who are merciful, who show mercy to their neighbours and to their souls. In chapter 5 Matthew says: "*Beati misericordes, quoniam ipsi misericordiam consequentur: Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy*".¹¹⁰

4292 6. Sixth: the door of peacemakers, who love peace, keep the peace and promote peace. Matthew says in chapter 5: "*Beati pacifici, quoniam filii Dei vocabuntur: Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called children of God*".¹¹¹

7. Seven: the door of the clean of heart, who are quiet, steady and stable and who not wish to have anything unclean in their heart and are without stain to their purity either of mortal sin or venial sin as far as possible. In chapter 5 Matthew says: "*Beati mundo corde quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt: Blessed are the clean of heart: they shall see God*".¹¹²

8. Eight: the door of persecutions which are endured for love of Jesus and for the sake of justice, in imitation of our Saviour. These people do not complain when they suffer. In chapter 5 Matthew says: "*Beati qui persecutionem patiuntur propter iustitiam, quoniam ipsorum est regum coelorum: Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of eternal life*".¹¹³

¹⁰⁶ Mt 5, 3.

¹⁰⁷ Mt 5, 4.

¹⁰⁸ Mt 5, 5.

¹⁰⁹ Mt 5, 6.

¹¹⁰ Mt 5, 7.

¹¹¹ Mt 5, 9.

¹¹² Mt 5, 8.

¹¹³ Mt 5, 10

4293 9. Nine: the door of patience, which leads the soul to heaven, cleanses sin and appeases God. In chapter 4 Matthew says: “*Poenitentiam agite, appropinquat enim regnum coelorum*: Do penance, for the kingdom of God is at hand”.¹¹⁴

10. Ten: the door of humility, which overcomes everything, copes with everything, appeases God, acquires grace and preserves what has been acquired and multiplies good works. In chapter 23 Matthew says: “*Qui se exaltaverit humiliabitur et qui se humiliaverit exaltabitur*: Whoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled: and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted”.¹¹⁵

11. Eleven: the door of observance of the law, which is the road to heaven, to peace of soul, to the stability of eternal life. In chapter 19 Matthew says: “*Si vis ad vitam ingredi, serva mandata*: If you wish to enter life, keep the commandments”.¹¹⁶

12. Twelve: the door of holy prayer, which is the faithful guardian of our heart, the ship that bring us to the harbour of eternal life, by which God is appeased, the soul cleansed, sins put to flight, virtues acquired, the spirit grows, the divine will observed and a spiritual person is consoled in the difficulties encountered for the love of God. When you wish to pray, say the *Our Father* or any other prayer that you wish devoutly.

Prayer

4294 My Lord, my God, Jesus Christ my love, how great is the good which You have done for me! How many benefits and how much grace! My Lord, the great abundance of the good things which You have done for me renders me speechless. Let them speak for me; let them say it for me. Although I would still like to speak I am unable to express it properly since I am full of ignorance and ingratitude.

You, my Lord, my God, my Jesus came down from heaven and opened the road, came into the world and paved the way to go to heaven and provided the doors that were opened for us.

O my God, O my Lord how profoundly I am obliged to love and thank You! If I do not want or am unable to enter by one door, You, my Lord, have opened twelve when one was enough for me.

What a marvellous thing! Whoever enters by one will enter through them all. O immense goodness, grant to me and to all Your faithful that we may enter Your happy homeland through these doors. *Amen*.

¹¹⁴ Mt 4, 17.

¹¹⁵ Mt 23, 12.

¹¹⁶ Mt 19, 17.