

THE SACRED HEART  
AND  
THE PRIESTHOOD



## DECLARATION

*We humbly lay each and every one of the following pages at the feet of the infallible Vicar of Jesus Christ, and we submit in advance to the judgement of the Holy Church and of the Sovereign Pontiff, to whom we offer our most filial, most respectful and most entire obedience.*

*Dedicated by the Translator and his Brother to the memory of their dear Parents.*

# THE SACRED HEART AND THE PRIESTHOOD



*By*

Mother Louise Margaret Claret de la Touche

*Translated from the French by*

Rev. Patrick O'Connell, B.D.

TAN Books

An Imprint of Saint Benedict Press, LLC  
Charlotte, North Carolina

IMPRIMI POTEST: ✚ JACOBUS  
EPISCOPUS FERNENSIS

NIHIL OBSTAT: JACOBUS BROWNE  
CENSOR DEPUTATUS

DIE 19A JUNII 1950

Originally published by Fr. Patrick O'Connell and the Irish members of "The Priests' Universal Union of the Friends of the Sacred Heart."

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 79-90487

ISBN: 978-089555-128-3

Cover design by Tony Pro.

Printed and bound in the United States of America.

TAN Books  
An Imprint of Saint Benedict Press, LLC  
Charlotte, North Carolina

2012

# Foreword to the First Edition

*The Sacred Heart and the Priesthood* was first written in French and published in Italy in 1910 during the reign of Pope Pius X. An Italian translation followed soon after. Subsequently it was translated into German, Polish, Dutch, Spanish, Croatian, Roumanian and Chinese. The present English translation was made in China at the same time as the Chinese translation, for the use of English-speaking priests in China and the Far East. This translation has been carefully revised and compared with the Italian version which was made during the lifetime of the author, and in case of doubt about the meaning, the Italian interpretation has been followed.

Mother Louise Margaret regarded herself as bound to convey the message of love contained in these books as simply as possible without any attempt at style. All translators are requested by those who hold the copyright to follow the original closely.

The first French edition was published anonymously for reasons explained below, but the intention of the author was that the origin of the book and all information that would help to make the message contained in it understood and appreciated should be furnished later on. This the translator has endeavored to do in the account of the author and her Mission which follows. For the full understanding, however, of both *The Sacred Heart and the Priesthood* and *The Book of Infinite Love*, the three volumes of the Intimate Notes published in French under the title *In the Service of Jesus Priest*, should be read. The translator has already prepared a translation of these three volumes and proposes to publish it as soon as circumstances will permit. He is indebted to many friends in China and in Ireland for kind assistance and valuable suggestions; to these he tends his sincerest thanks.

PATRICK O'CONNELL

1st September, 1947.

His Holiness Pius X sent a letter of introduction through His Cardinal Secretary for State, Merry del Val. *The Book of Infinite Love* was published in 1928 in the reign of Pius XI who also gave a letter of introduction through his Cardinal Secretary Gasparri. His present Holiness, Pius XII imparted a special blessing to the translator for the publication of these books. An Irish translation will appear as soon as possible.



# Foreword to the Second Edition

The First English translation of *The Sacred Heart and the Priesthood* has found its way to all parts of Ireland, England, Scotland, America, Australia and to far-off India and Africa, and the edition of 5,000 copies is already exhausted. Orders to hand for a further 5,000 copies have made this new edition necessary.

The first English edition was presented to His Holiness, Pope Pius XII and received a gracious letter of approbation, which we give on p. XXV.

This new edition is printed unchanged, except for the addition of a paragraph making clear a few points about the relations between the Priests' Universal Union of the Friends of the Sacred Heart and other clerical Unions namely: that the Priests' Universal Union is a separate organization with a special object of its own; that other clerical Unions that become affiliated with it do not come under its jurisdiction but only contract a spiritual bond; that members of affiliated Unions do not become thereby members of the Priests' Universal Union, but must join in the ordinary way if they wish to become so.

There was unavoidable delay in bringing out the edition in the Irish language which we promised, but we expect that it will be ready by the end of this year.

PATRICK O'CONNELL  
9th June, 1950.





# Table of Contents

Life of Mother Louise Margaret Claret de la Touche . . . . .	xi
Letters of Approbation . . . . .	xxiv
Preface . . . . .	xxviii
Prayer to Jesus, the Eternal Priest . . . . .	xxx
Introduction . . . . .	xxxi

## FIRST PART—THE PRIEST, THE CREATION OF INFINITE LOVE

CHAPTER I	1st	Lecture	The Priest, the Creation of Infinite Love . . . . .	3
CHAPTER II	2nd	Lecture	Jesus Teaching . . . . .	8
			The Priest Instructing Souls . . . . .	11
	3rd	Lecture	Difficulties of Teaching . . . . .	13
			Teaching by Example . . . . .	16
CHAPTER III	5th	Lecture	Jesus Pardoning . . . . .	19
	6th	Lecture	Magdalen and Zacheus . . . . .	23
	7th	Lecture	The Samaritan Woman . . . . .	26
	8th	Lecture	The Lunatic . . . . .	28
	9th	Lecture	The Priest Pardoning with Jesus . . . . .	31
CHAPTER IV	10th	Lecture	Jesus Consoling . . . . .	35
	11th	Lecture	Jesus Consoling the People . . . . .	38
	12th	Lecture	Jesus Consoling His Own . . . . .	42
CHAPTER V	13th	Lecture	Jesus Offering Sacrifice . . . . .	47
			Figures of Sacrifice . . . . .	47
	14th	Lecture	The Bloody Sacrifice . . . . .	50
			The Unbloody Sacrifice . . . . .	54

## SECOND PART—THE SACERDOTAL VIRTUES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

CHAPTER I	16th	Lecture	Jesus Christ, the Divine Model of the Priest . . . . .	61
CHAPTER II	17th	Lecture	The Spirit of Prayer, the First Sacerdotal	
			Virtue of the Heart of Jesus . . . . .	65
CHAPTER III	18th	Lecture	Devotedness, the Second Sacerdotal	
			Virtue of the Heart of Jesus . . . . .	69
CHAPTER IV	19th	Lecture	Zeal, the Third Sacerdotal Virtue of the	
			Heart of Jesus . . . . .	73
CHAPTER V	20th	Lecture	Meekness, the Fourth Sacerdotal Virtue of the	
			Heart of Jesus . . . . .	76
CHAPTER VI	21st	Lecture	Humility, the Fifth Sacerdotal Virtue . . . . .	80
CHAPTER VII	22nd	Lecture	Purity, the Sixth Sacerdotal Virtue . . . . .	85
CHAPTER VIII	23rd	Lecture	Mercy, the Seventh Sacerdotal Virtue . . . . .	90

CHAPTER IX	24th Lecture	Love, the Eighth Sacerdotal Virtue . . . . .	94
		Love of Jesus for His Father . . . . .	96
	25th Lecture	Love of the Heart of Jesus for the Virgin, His Mother . . . . .	98
	26th Lecture	Love of the Heart of Jesus for the Church . . . . .	101
	27th Lecture	Love of the Heart of Jesus for Souls . . . . .	104

THIRD PART—THE LOVE OF THE WORD INCARNATE  
FOR HIS PRIESTS

CHAPTER I	28th Lecture	Love of Jesus for His Priests before His Birth . . . . .	111
CHAPTER II	29th Lecture	Love of Jesus for His Priests during His Hidden Life and His Public Life. . . . .	115
CHAPTER III	30th Lecture	Love of Jesus for His Priests at the Last Hours of His Life . . . . .	119
CHAPTER IV	31st Lecture	Love of Jesus for His Priests after His Resurrection . . . . .	124
CHAPTER V	32nd Lecture	Love of Jesus for His Priests after His Ascension . . . . .	130
CHAPTER VI	33rd Lecture	Love of Jesus for His Priests at the Present Time . . . . .	135

FOURTH PART—MEDITATIONS ON INFINITE LOVE  
AND THE PRIESTHOOD

I	The Abysses of Infinite Love . . . . .	143
II	Love of God for Man and of Man for God . . . . .	145
III	Double Movement of Infinite Love . . . . .	149
IV	Divine Charity . . . . .	150
V	Infinite Love Humanized . . . . .	153
VI	The Blessed Eucharist and the Sacred Heart . . . . .	154
VII	The Priest, Another Jesus Christ . . . . .	156
VIII	The Mystical Heart of Christ . . . . .	157
IX	God Is Christ's, Christ Is the Priest's, the Priest Belongs to Souls . . . . .	159
X	The Dispenser of Infinite Love . . . . .	161
XI	The Intermediary between God and Man . . . . .	162
XII	The Blessed Virgin and the Priest . . . . .	163
XIII	"Feed My Sheep" . . . . .	165
XIV	Love and Justice . . . . .	166
	Appendix . . . . .	169
	Act of Consecration and Donation to Infinite Love . . . . .	184
	The Examen . . . . .	185
	A Prayer . . . . .	186

# Life of Mother Louise Margaret Claret de la Touche

## *Her Mission and Her Writings*

“‘GOD IS LOVE.’ (*John* 4:8). His great occupation is to love. He loves from eternity to eternity.”

“God loves, but He wishes to be loved; Love has need of a return, and if the very bosom of the Divinity, the Father, and the Word and the Holy Ghost give such a perfect return that They love each other with the same love which is Their essence and Their being, in like manner God wishes to find outside Himself a reciprocity, relative indeed and proportioned to the created being, but nevertheless real. The creature has received everything from God and is bound to return everything to God; it is what it is only by God; it should employ its whole being for God.” (From *Book of Infinite Love* by Mother Louise Margaret).

This is the very essence of the devotion to the Sacred Heart and indeed of all religion: to believe that God is Love, to believe that He loves all men, and to love Him in return with our whole heart—which of course includes that we love our fellowmen for the love of Him.

God is Love and He is immutable; He always acts by Love, the history of His dealings with man can be summed up in one word—‘Love.’ On the other hand, the history of man is one long story of ingratitude, of refusal to love, often even of hatred of everything good. Yet even when man’s wickedness went to the extreme, God, Who is love, overwhelmed it with love. When our first parents, created by God, endowed with a superabundance of His favors, and even made participators in His own divine nature, rejected God and the whole supernatural order, God’s reply was the Incarnation. The message of the Word Incarnate was a message of love; His life was a life of love; and having enunciated and explained by word and example the great mystery of the Love of God, He displayed His mangled body, nailed to the Cross, with His Sacred Heart pierced by a lance, as the final proof of the greatness of God’s love for men and His divine claim to be loved in return.

Could man ever again doubt of God's love or refuse to return it? Alas, in the course of centuries man's love for God grew cold, the crucifix lost its significance for him, he scarcely believed even that God loved him, not to speak of striving to love God in return. The reply of Our Saviour was to make a new revelation of love through St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. Our divine Saviour made this new revelation of love, not by words alone, but by displaying His Sacred Heart surmounted by a cross, surrounded with a crown of thorns, still showing the wound which was made by the lance, and burning with love for man like a mighty furnace that would consume the world, thus giving a living epitome of His life of love for man, and renewing His divine claim to be loved in return.

Although this devotion of love, the devotion to the Sacred Heart, has been propagated in every part of the world, not only is His loving appeal ignored by the multitude, but new depths of ingratitude and iniquity have been sounded, and the world in our time is turning completely from God. Once again it is by love that Jesus wishes to conquer. He selects another member of the order of the Visitation, Mother Louise Margaret, to be the bearer of His message of love to the priests of the world and through them to the faithful.

The message of love given to St. Margaret Mary was for all men and for all time. The content of this message has been most minutely examined by the Church, and the devotion to the Sacred Heart has received its fullest approval. Those who have practiced it have been visibly blessed by God, and Our Blessed Saviour has expressed through His new apostle how much His Sacred Heart has been consoled by the zeal of those who propagate it. Nevertheless, it remains true that new efforts are required on the part of His faithful servants to offset the tremendous activity of the powers of Hell in these last ages. It is still through devotion to His Sacred Heart that He wishes to renew the world; but He wishes His priests to study the devotion more deeply and to propagate it with greater ardor; and to help them in this work, He puts at their disposal all the treasures of His Sacred Heart. Through the bearer of His new message He says:

"I wish to conquer hatred by love. I will send my priests to diffuse love over the earth. I have given them My Heart in order that they may see the treasures of love that are in God, that, having drawn for

themselves, they may draw for the world. Tell them to go and dispense everywhere the treasure of love.”

“There are in this Sacred Heart parts still unexplored which He has kept for His priests; it is a domain which He has reserved for them. There are dwellings of love into which priests will enter, and where they will find all that they have need of to be faithful representatives of Jesus.”

“The devotion to the Sacred Heart should not be, as too often happens, a vague, superficial, sentimental devotion, attached to the exterior object. Although very justly we may and ought to adore this Heart of flesh which is the real tabernacle of divine Charity, and most truly the Heart of God in virtue of the Hypostatic union, we should not, however, stop there but should penetrate by the opening of the Heart into the most profound mysteries of Infinite Love.

We should apply ourselves to this by a careful study of the holy Gospels, of the immortal Epistles of St. John and St. Paul, by the reading of the early Fathers and of the Catholic authors who have treated this admirable subject. We will thus acquire a true and solid devotion to the divine Heart and will be in a position to communicate it to the faithful who do not all yet understand the treasures of grace and regeneration which are there found.”

### *Life of Mother Louise Margaret*

Margaret Claret de la Touche, the author of *The Sacred Heart and the Priesthood* and of *The Book of Infinite Love*, was born at Saint Germain de Laye in France on March 15th, 1868. Her father died when she was seven years old. Her mother married again; her second husband being Mr. De Chamberet. In her childhood she met with an accident which affected her health for life. She writes: “The cross stood over my cradle: suffering was to be my lot, and to be the first sign of love given by Jesus to my soul.”

The family in which she was brought up was a practicing Catholic family but could hardly be called pious. She describes religious life in her home as follows: “I have never seen a member of the family miss Mass on Sunday or the abstinence on Friday, except in case of real illness; all approached the Sacraments four times a year, seriously, to

fulfill a duty. My mother got the Holy Sacrifice offered frequently for my father and for our deceased relatives; she gave large alms and urged us to practice charity; but for us God was only a just Master whom we must serve strictly, respect for His greatness, and leave alone in the heights of Heaven in the midst of His Angels and Saints.”

She did not receive her first Communion till she was about eleven years old—“a Communion,” she writes, “made in the innocence of childhood but without love.” Her mother aimed at developing in her a strong Spartan character on the old pagan models; but not a word was said about the early Christian martyrs.

She had a fine library at her disposal from which she read deeply. She had an innate aversion to books attacking the Church or its teaching. She was forbidden to read the *Life of St. Therese* or any book likely to turn her mind to the religious life.

In spite of her gay and worldly environment she made a vow of virginity after her first Communion with a promise to enter a convent, if God favored her with a religious vocation.

In the gay life in which she was obliged to take part she made herself respected by all for her reserve and modesty. Once in a moment of weakness she thought of yielding to the wishes of her mother and marrying a young officer for whom she had formed an affection. She was thinking of getting dispensed from her vow when the temptation was providentially removed.

She renewed her vow of virginity and wept over this passing weakness till the end of her life.

On the advice of her confessor, she decided to enter a convent of the Visitation, at Romans, in the south of France—the same Order to which St. Margaret Mary belonged.

Obstacles that to a person of lesser virtue would have seemed insurmountable were placed in her way, but her determination could not be shaken. As a preparation for her entry into religious life, she made a pilgrimage to Paray-le-Monial during which she consecrated herself entirely to the Sacred Heart. Soon after, on November 20th, 1890, she entered the convent of the Visitation at Romans in France. She became an exemplary Sister, without allowing anything to appear that would draw attention to herself. Her natural defects brought her many humiliations and caused her much suffering, while her great talents and

heroic sanctity were known of only by those whom God had given her to guide her. She received the white veil on October 17th, 1891, and was professed on the same date of the following year, being given the name in religion of Sister Louise Margaret.

Early in her religious life, she began to enjoy special favors from Our Divine Lord—favors like those of St. Margaret Mary. Her heroic fidelity to great graces received, and her willing acceptance of a life of suffering and contradictions, assured for her the continuation of those favors till the end of her life. As in the case of St. Margaret Mary, Our Lord sent her continuous bad health, frequent illnesses, humiliations, and contradictions to make her conformable to His own suffering life, and to fit her for the work for which He had destined her.

After her profession she enjoyed the constant presence of her divine Spouse in a manner similar to that in which St. Margaret Mary was favored. Like St. Margaret Mary, Our Lord allowed her also to share in a mysterious way in His own divine sufferings. Of this she writes as follows: "At prayer I suffered strangely. Our Saviour showed me a chalice which I must drink, so bitter that my human nature revolted against it with all its strength. I was as if in agony, but after a struggle, I accepted all; I consented to all and I abandoned myself to all." September, 1896: "Our Lord wishes that I be a victim immolated to His good pleasure and all consumed by the fire of His divine love. . . . My heart must be as an ardent flame burning my whole body without consuming it . . . . My divine Saviour gave me to understand that He chooses souls to continue His Passion in them, but as a human soul could not alone endure all His sufferings, He gives to each one a little part. He wishes to make me share in His state of painful crucifixion. His feet and hands were made fast: He was suspended without movement, suffering a slow and silent agony, no longer acting. He wishes that I remain thus under His action in the disposition to endure everything. . . . On the following morning, I awoke at 3 a.m. suffering inexpressible pains, and for more than an hour Our Saviour made me again share in His sufferings; I suffered acute pain in all my members, especially in my feet."

*Her Mission*

The ecclesiastical authorities have made no pronouncement as to whether or not she was favored with revelations from Our Lord ordering her to have a world-wide association of priests formed to promote devotion to the Sacred Heart, but they have given their "imprimatur" to books which publish these communications, subject to any decision that the Church may at any time make; furthermore, they have covered her message with the authority of the Church, and have sanctioned the association of priests to promote devotion to the Sacred Heart which, she states, Our Lord ordered her to get founded; and have adopted the statutes of the association which she, under obedience, drew up in conformity with what she believed to be Our Lord's wishes.

As has been already mentioned, Mother Louise Margaret felt, even from the time of her profession, that God had special designs on her soul. The nature of these designs was indicated to her, in a general way, in lights which she received in prayer during 1901.

It was on the Feast of the Sacred Heart 1902 and during the seven following days, now the Octave, that she received what she believed to be definite commands and definite instructions from Our Lord concerning her mission. These He ordered her to write down. The following is her account, written under obedience, of what took place during that Octave:

"Yesterday, on June 6th 1902, the Feast of the Sacred Heart, I was alone before the Most Blessed Sacrament. I was in that weary and painful state of mind in which I had been for some weeks, when Jesus made His presence felt. I adored Him, being sweetly consoled by His presence, and praying to Him for our little novitiate, I asked Him to give me some souls I might form for Him. He replied: 'I will give you souls of men.' Being profoundly astonished by these words, the sense of which I did not understand, I remained silent, endeavoring to find an explanation, till Jesus said: 'I will give you souls of priests.' Still more astonished I asked Him: 'My Jesus how wilt Thou do that?' He replied 'It is for My priests that you will immolate yourself; I wish to instruct you during this Octave. Write down all that I shall tell you.' "

"I did not wish to write any more, but I obeyed Jesus. Yesterday evening He said to me: 'My priest is My other self, I love him, but he must



be holy. Nineteen centuries ago, twelve men changed the world, they were not men merely, but they were priests. Now, once more, twelve men could change the world.'

"On June 7th He said: 'Margaret Mary has shown My heart to the world, do you show it to My priests and draw them all to My Heart.'

"On June 8th, He showed me the greatness of the priest. Chosen from among men he reaches even up to God; he is placed between man and God, a mediator like Jesus, and with Jesus. He has been, so to speak, transubstantiated into Jesus, and he enters thus into His divine offices and His divine prerogatives. With Jesus he is sacrifice, expiation, victim. From this state of special union with Jesus all the acts of the priest acquire an incomprehensible excellence."

On June 10th she wrote: "After Communion I said to Jesus, 'My Saviour, when our Blessed Sister (Margaret Mary) showed Thy divine Heart to the world, did not Thy priests see It? Does not that suffice?' Jesus replied: 'I wish now to make a special manifestation to them.' Then He showed me that He has a special work to do, which is to enkindle the fire of love again in the world, and that He wished to make use of His priests to accomplish it. He said this with such a touching and tender expression that tears came to my eyes. 'I have need of them,' He said, 'to do My work, to extend the reign of love; they must be full of it themselves and it is to My Heart that they must come to draw it.' And He added: 'If anyone has the right, the duty, to drink out of My Heart, is it not My priests who each day bring the chalice of the altar to their lips? Let them come to My Heart and let them drink there.' "

Next day she wrote again: "All day yesterday I saw, as it were, a special group of priests around the Heart of Jesus: an organization exclusively for priests; I do not know whether I am deceived. When by myself I wish to think on what He communicates to me, I cannot do so, nothing clear or precise comes to my mind; on the contrary, as soon as He speaks or touches my soul with His divine impressions, everything is clear, luminous and definite.' "

Again, on the following day she writes: "This morning I thought that a special branch of the 'Guard of Honor' might be formed for priests. Jesus said: 'No. I do not wish that priests be merely adorers of My Heart. I wish to form an army of priests who will fight for the triumph of My Love. Those who will form part of this army will

undertake, among other things, to preach Infinite Love and mercy, and to be united among themselves, having but one heart and one soul, and never impeding one another in their activities.’ ”

On June 25th she wrote: “I saw the priest as the most perfect image of the Word Incarnate. I saw the loving delight which the Three Persons of the most Blessed Trinity take in him. I saw the ineffable complacency of the Father contemplating in him the traits of His Son. I saw the complacency of the Son recognizing Himself in him. I saw the complacency of the Holy Ghost considering in him one of His finest masterpieces. Then I saw the return of love and service which the Most Blessed Trinity expects.

“The priest should not love God merely in a general way, as do the faithful; he should have a special sentiment of love for each of the Three Persons; for the Father, a love of adoration and filial respect, similar to the love of Jesus for His Father; for the Son, a love of union which keeps him in continuous relation with Him; for the Holy Ghost, a love of dependence, of docility and of recourse.”<sup>1</sup>

### *The Publication of The Sacred Heart and the Priesthood*

Mother Louise Margaret committed to writing the lights which she received and the commands given to her, and submitted them to her religious superior and to her director, Father Charrier, S.J. This Father Charrier was designated to her by Our Lord as the person who was to help her to carry out her mission. In his humility, he thought himself unworthy to take part in such a great work. For thirteen years he received from her a written account of all the lights and graces with which she had been favored. For seven years he had in his possession all the material for the book on *The Sacred Heart and the Priesthood* which

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1. As time went on, the details of the divine plan were communicated to her. In 1910, she herself summarized this plan as follows: “A worldwide Priests’ Union of the Friends of the Sacred Heart was to be formed. The object of this Union was: 1) to group the priests of the world around the adorable Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ in order to array them as an elite body against the errors and corruption of our time; 2) to procure the personal sanctification of its members by a true and practical devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Tabernacle of Infinite Love; and the sanctification of the faithful through the development and good direction of the apostolic zeal of the clergy; 3) to restore and develop the family spirit of solidarity in the sacerdotal body . . . and draw them in a close and filial union around their bishop.” (From *The Book of Infinite Love*).

she had sent to him, requesting him to put it in order and have it published without allowing her name to appear.

Father Charrier hesitated, not because he doubted the fact that Mother Louise Margaret, as she asserted, had received communications from Our Divine Lord, but because he himself had been named as the person that was to aid in carrying out this great work. The hesitation of Father Charrier caused her much suffering, for she felt herself urged by Our Lord to have His message conveyed to His priests. In January, 1908, she wrote to him: "A few days ago at prayer, Our Lord communicated to me the immense desire which He has to be loved by His priests whom He Himself loves as His dearest members. *He wishes that they should all know that He has given them His Heart*, and it seems to me that He demands that you should write, or get someone to write, a little book which would contain all the desires He has for His priests and all His effusions of tender love for them, with a view to the foundation of this organization which is intended to group them around His Sacred Heart and in His Infinite Love."

On receipt of this letter, Father Charrier sent all the writings of Mother Louise Margaret to Father Hamon, S.J., an author who was well-known for his writings on devotion to the Sacred Heart. Father Hamon's reply was that "a little book should be composed from the writings of Mother Louise Margaret which would spread abroad the ideas contained in them." Father Charrier commenced the book in February, 1908, but he was kept so occupied with his priestly duties that at the end of a year he had written only the first eight pages of the proposed book.

In April, 1909, Mother Louise Margaret again wrote to him as follows: "It seems to me that Our Lord is not pleased with me. It is seven years since He said to me: 'Show My Heart to My priests': seven years since, on the Feast of the Sacred Heart and during the seven following days, He communicated to me what He desired from His priests, and told me of the treasures of love which He has in His divine Heart for them. . . It seems to me that Jesus is saying to me interiorly: 'I have entrusted you with a treasure, the treasure of My Infinite Love, and you have buried it in the ground.'"

Father Charrier finding that want of time made it impossible for him to compose the book, finally renounced the idea, and sent all the

writings back to Mother Louise Margaret. She sent them to Father Poletti, the superior of the Priest-Adorers of the Blessed Sacrament, asking him to compose the book. He replied to her saying that “the book could not be the work of any other hand or heart but of the person who had received these communications from her divine Spouse.” Father Choupin, S.J., was also consulted and he gave the same decision. Finally her bishop, Monsignor Filipello, having been informed of the whole matter, put Mother Louise Margaret under obedience to compose the book.

She obeyed. With infinite care she classified her notes and recast them into the beautiful form in which we find them in *The Sacred Heart and the Priesthood*. She herself was fully persuaded that there was not a single idea of her own in the book, but that all was from her divine Master. She always referred to it as “His Book.” When it was published, she wrote to Father Charrier (April 9th, 1910): “Truly the divine Master Himself takes care of the interests of the little book. And it is right and just: *He is the Author of it.*” During her retreat of 1912, we find in her notes: “I have got the little book which Thou hast dictated to me published, I have poured into the heart of my bishop all that Thou hast given to me for Thy priests. What more can I do except pray and suffer?” When, after hesitating for seven years, Father Charrier, S.J., sent the manuscripts of Mother Louise Margaret to Father Poletti, he wrote: “It is indeed true that I do not pass judgment on the divine origin of the communications received by Mother Louise Margaret. But the sole reason is because I have not the right to do so; only the authority of the Church can pronounce on so delicate a matter. It nonetheless remains true that, as a private individual, I believe in this origin, because I have always found in the manner in which these communications have taken place, and in the nature of the communications themselves, such marks as, after long hesitation, have enabled me to reassure the Sister and sustain her.” As we shall see later on, all the writings of Mother Louise Margaret were submitted to the Congregation of the Council and she herself was examined personally, with the result that her whole scheme—The Priest’s Universal Union and the new convent of Sisters to serve as spiritual foundation for it—were approved of by this Congregation and received the support and blessing of His Holiness, Pope Pius X.

Nevertheless, it was thought advisable both by Mother Louise

Margaret and Father Charrier that nothing should be said in the book that would indicate its supernatural origin, and that no mention should be made in it of the proposed Priest's Universal Union. The book was intended for all priests, religious and pious lay people, with, however, the special purpose of preparing the way for the Priest's Universal Union and of serving as a handbook for it when it should be founded. In writing to Father Charrier, who was composing the preface, she said: "Do not put anything in it that would suggest a spiritual origin. If this little book, of which Jesus is the sole Author, makes its way in souls, we shall see about giving more information in subsequent editions."

When the book was completed, it was presented by Monsignor Filipello to His Holiness, Pope Pius X, who had been previously informed of the circumstances under which it was composed. His Holiness replied through his secretary for State, Cardinal Merry del Val, who in a letter to Father Charrier wrote: "*The Holy Father, while praying Our Lord to bless this little book, and crown it with precious fruit, sends the author a special blessing as a pledge of abundant heavenly favors.*"

Besides Cardinal Merry del Val, who wrote on behalf of Pope Pius X, several other Cardinals and Bishops sent their approbation and warmly recommended the book. When the book was finally published, it was well received everywhere. It was translated into most of the European languages during the lifetime of the Author, without her name or anything about the supernatural origin of its contents being known.

She was elected Rev. Mother for a second term in the May after the publication of *The Sacred Heart and the Priesthood*. During this period her bishop, Monsignor Filipello, examined all her writings carefully, questioned her orally and got from her a written statement about their origin. He was convinced that the communications which she received were from Our Lord, and that it was really His wish that a world-wide organization of priests for a more intense propagation of the devotion to the Sacred Heart should be formed. The result of his investigations was that he decided to recommend the foundation of this organization to the Holy See, and ordered her to prepare for him a draft of the statutes according to the lights which she received.

Providence arranged that she should be sent to Rome where everything concerning her writings and her mission was examined into by the Congregation of the Council. The Holy See, without pronouncing

on the supernatural origin of her writings, declared them to be in conformity with the teaching of the Church, and sanctioned the organization for priests and the statutes for it which, by order of her Bishop, she had drawn up; under the name of “the Priests’ Universal Union of the Friends of the Sacred Heart.” She was entrusted with the foundation of a new monastery of the Visitation which after her death was made an independent Sisterhood called “Bethany of the Sacred Heart.”

When she had completed this foundation, God called her to an early crown on May 14th, 1915. It had been her desire that she should die when her mission was completed in order not to be an obstacle to the spread of the work.

After her death two auxiliary associations were formed according to her wishes, one for men to cooperate with the priests of the Universal Union, the other for women to offer their prayers and sacrifices in union with those of the Sisters of Bethany of the Sacred Heart. Thus four associations have been formed to promote the work of spreading devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, branches of which are already found in most countries of the world. These four branches are:

1) The Priests’ Universal Union of the Friends of the Sacred Heart, intended for all the bishops and priests of the world whether religious or secular;

2) Bethany of the Sacred Heart, a new Contemplative Order, the members of which devote themselves to a life of prayer and self-immolation for priests;

3) The Associates of the Priests’ Universal Union composed of clerical students, Brothers of all Orders, and laymen in the world who engage to cooperate with the priests of the Priests’ Universal Union;

4) The Faithful Friends of Bethany of the Sacred Heart, composed of Sisters of all Religious Orders, and women living in the world, who are united to Bethany of the Sacred Heart by a spiritual bond of prayer and sacrifice for the promotion of the object of the Priests’ Universal Union—to enkindle again in the world the fire of divine love.<sup>2</sup>

The first steps towards having the cause of her canonization introduced have already been taken and an Ecclesiastical Tribunal has been

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2. For more detailed information about the Priests’ Universal Union and its three branches see Appendix, page 169.

set up to deal with evidence in its favor. A number of spiritual and temporal favors attributed to her intercession have been published in the Bulletin of the Priests' Universal Union of the Friends of the Sacred Heart.

*The Sacred Heart and the Priesthood*

Instaurare omnia in Christo. (*Eph.* 1:12).

(PARIS GABRIEL BEAUCHESNE)

119 RUE DE RENNES, 1920.

Visto per delegazione della Curia Vescovile d'Ivrea; nulla osta alla stampa. Nihil obstat.

Collegio Francesa di Botlenga—Ivrea (Prov. de Torino) 10 Marzo 1910.

L. CHOUPIN, S.J.

*Letters of Approbation*

SEGRETERIA DI STATO,  
DI SUA SANTITÀ.

No. 45032.

DAL VATICANO, July 1st, 1910.

MY REVEREND FATHER,

The Holy Father (Pius X) has received with particular favor the homage of the book entitled *The Sacred Heart and the Priesthood*, furnished with the approval and the encouragement of ecclesiastical authority.

The subject matter of the book is worthy of the deepest interest. It contains an exposition of the sublime relations of intimacy and love between the Heart of Jesus, and the heart of the priest, of the touching harmonies between the Heart of Jesus and the Priesthood; it recounts all that the divine Master has done for those whom He calls "His Friends"; it lays before the priest the necessity of forming his heart and inspiring his life by this ineffable model of the Heart of Jesus.

Sacerdotal souls, as well as souls exercised in the interior life and formed in solid piety will find in these pages edifying and salutary considerations.

The Holy Father, while praying Our Lord to bless this little book and to crown it with precious fruit, sends the author a special blessing



as a pledge of abundant heavenly favors.

I unite my sincere thanks for the copy of the book which has been graciously offered to me, and I pray you to accept the expression of my devoted sentiments in Our Lord.

R. CARDINAL MERRY DEL VAL.

SEGRETERIA DI STATO

DI SUA SANTITÀ.

N. 193857/SA.

DAL VATICANO, February 15th, 1949

DEAR FATHER O'CONNELL,

I have the honor to convey to you the expression of the Holy Father's cordial gratitude for the copies of your translations of the two books by Mother Louise Margaret Claret de la Touche, namely, "The Book of Infinite Love" and "The Sacred Heart and the Priesthood," which you forwarded some time ago for His acceptance.

His Holiness is well aware that your labors in translating and editing these works in English were motivated by your ardent zeal for the sanctification of priests and for the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ in the hearts of men—that same apostolic zeal which sustained and strengthened you in your long years of devoted toil on the missionfield. It is the Pontiff's earnest prayer that your praiseworthy efforts in that noble cause may be blessed with consoling success, and in pledge of that celestial favor He lovingly imparts to you His paternal Apostolic Benediction.

I gladly avail myself of this occasion to express to you my deep gratitude for the copies of the books which you sent to me. With sentiments of high esteem and cordial regard, I remain,

Yours sincerely in Christ,  
J. B. MONTINI.

REV. PATRICK O'CONNELL,  
ST. COLUMBAN'S,  
NAVAN, CO. MEATH.

TO REV. FATHER CHARRIER, S.J.

BISHOP'S HOUSE, IVREA. IVREA, Feb. 2nd, 1910

I have read with genuine satisfaction and, I trust, with special profit for myself, the little volume entitled *The Sacred Heart and the Priesthood*. It contains simple and sober pages which are at the same time vivid and very elevated, full of sweet and strong unction which double its value. For my part, I should be very happy to see this work translated into our language (Italian) and published, for I am persuaded that pious meditation on these pages would be very advantageous to my venerated Confreres in the Priesthood. It will bring them a great abundance of lights, affections and teachings capable of raising them in the knowledge of this divine love with which the Sacred Heart of Jesus is inflamed for His ministers, and it will excite them to a more faithful correspondence with and imitation of this same love.

✠ MATTHEW,  
*Bishop of Ivrea*

ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE,  
TURIN.

TURIN, April 12th, 1910

The Cardinal Archbishop of Turin joins his prayers to those of His Lordship the Bishop of Ivrea that the divine blessings may descend in abundance on these pious pages, that priests may draw from the reading of this work an increase of faith and love for Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

✠ AUGUSTIN CARD. RICHELMY.

APOSTOLIC CHANCELLERY. ROME, June 30th, 1910

The author of these golden pages is worthy of all praise. They will certainly contribute to keep up solid piety in all the souls who feel the emptiness of worldly ambitions, and they will provide useful instruction for the clergy and will incite them to make themselves always more worthy of the high mission which the Eternal Father has confided to them by His grace.

While occupied in preparing myself for the Eucharistic Congress of

Montreal, I received most opportunely the beautiful book entitled *The Sacred Heart and the Priesthood*. It contains lofty considerations on the infinite love of Jesus for the human race, and the continuation of the work of redemption by means of the Priesthood and the Eucharistic Sacrifice. I believe that I shall have occasion to make use of it at this Congress. What excellent spiritual reading it provides especially for priests . . . . I shall be happy to recommend this dear little book.

✠ VINCENT CARDINAL VANUTELLI.  
ROME, June 30th, 1910

To the blessings and congratulations which the author of the beautiful pages: *The Sacred Heart and the Priesthood* has already received, I, very willingly unite my own. At the same time I pray fervently that the sacred ministers of the Altar, by making this book the subject of their pious reading and meditation, may always imitate more closely the sublime example of their divine Master, and that being inflamed with holy and apostolic zeal they may spread on this earth the light of truth and the fire of charity, in which the high mission of the clergy may be summed up.

M. CARDINAL RAMPOLLA

# Preface

WE have finally succeeded in realizing one of our dearest desires. When the meditations which we publish today were first communicated to us, we thought that they were destined to serve only for the edification and spiritual advancement of some sacerdotal souls who, having become impregnated with the truths and the light which they contain, would transmit them to the world by word and example.

But some sure friends, priests and religious of different Orders, theologians of value as well as of approved piety, were of the opinion that this light should no longer be left hidden under a bushel. Indeed why deprive our brethren in the priesthood of the consolations and instruction which have come to us through these writings? We have then decided to publish this volume. The sweet doctrine of Infinite Love radiates from each of its pages; it will enlighten the mind and strengthen the will, while warming the heart.

The little book which we present to the public is divided into lectures which might be utilized for the exercises of the month of the Sacred Heart. It would thus furnish excellent meditations for sacerdotal retreats. Candidates for ordination and young priests will find in it precious instruction. . . .

The work comprises three parts. The first part shows us the priest, the creation of Infinite Love, providing for all the spiritual and moral needs of humanity; the second treats of the conformity which the priest should have with Jesus Christ, his Divine Exemplar; the third invites us to meditate on the love of Jesus Christ for His priests, manifesting itself from the first beats of His Sacred Heart and pouring itself out over all time with increasing liberality.

To these three parts some detached pages have been added; meditations on Infinite Love. *This work may be considered as a gift of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to His priests to whom He wishes to reveal the doctrine of Infinite Love.*

What time could be more propitious for this publication? Persecution has broken out on all sides and under every form. The priest is an object of hatred and calumny; Hell is in rage against him and is doing all

possible to terrify him, to discourage him and to conquer him.

May these pages be then, in the midst of the tempest, as the voice of Jesus saying to His Apostles: "It is I, be not afraid." (*John* 6:20). Infinite Love is watching over you.

A. CHARRIER, S.J.

APRIL 26TH, 1910

## Oratio Ad Jesum Sacerdotum Aeternum

**O** JESU, Pontifex aeternae, divinae Sacrificator, qui, ineffabili erga homines fratres tuos dilectione impulsus, Sacerdotium christianum e sacratissimo Cordis tui fonte emanare indulsisti, vivificas infiniti Amoris undas in sacerdotum tuorum corda indesinenter fundere velis.

Ipse in eis vivas; eos in Te immutes; sancta tuarum miserationum instrumenta eos gratia tua faciat; in eis et per eos agere ne desinas; divinas virtutes tuas constanter imitantes, et Te semper induentes, in Nomine tuo et in virtute Spiritus tui, eadem quae Tu pro mundi salute operatus es et ipsi operentur.

O divine Redemptor animarum, intueri quanta sit in errorum tenebris dormientium multitudo; infideles pauperulae oves ad os aeternae abyssi pergentes quam multae sint computa; pauperum, esurientium, rudium, debilium, flebiliter derelictorum turbas considera.

Ad nos per tuos sacerdotes redi! Vere Tu in eis semper vivens, per eos operari digneris; per mundum, eorum ope, iterum transiens, doce, condona, solare, sacrificare, et sacra Amoris vincula inter Cor Dei et hominum corda denuo necte. Amen!

# Introduction

“**I** AM come to cast fire on the earth,” said Jesus Christ, “and what will I but that it be kindled.” (*Luke 12:49*).

It is to the priest that Christ has confided the task of spreading abroad and keeping alive the divine fire of Charity; and to render him capable of his sublime mission, He has opened to him, more than to any other, the treasures of His indefectible love. He has united him intimately to Himself by making him participate in His eternal priesthood. The priest is, with Jesus-Priest, pontiff, mediator, advocate, intercessor; he is, with Him, offering, expiation, victim.

From this state of special union with Jesus Christ, all the acts of the priest draw an incomprehensible excellence. The priest, precious gift of Jesus to men, helper chosen by the divine Master to continue on earth His work of love, by his sacerdotal action, labors without intermission to spread everywhere the flames of divine Charity.

In the course of centuries this Charity having grown cold in the world, Jesus Christ resolved to make a new effusion of love in favor of His creatures. He manifested His Heart overflowing with mercy: “Behold,” said He, “this Heart which has so loved men!” He invited all, especially those souls paralyzed and frozen by neglect and indifference, to come to this furnace of love that they might find warmth and life.

But it is to priests especially that the Sacred Heart wishes to manifest Itself; to His priests called by Him to rekindle and render operative on earth the fire of His Charity. In His ineffable goodness He deigns to have need of them to do His work. What He could effect directly in souls by His grace, He usually does through the mediation and by the cooperation of His priests.

Ah, if the priest knew the treasures of tender love stored up for him in the Heart of Jesus, with what ardor would he not go and draw from that divine source, to fill himself with love to overflowing! Jesus Christ, by showing His Heart to the world, wishes to warm it, to enlighten it, and to save it. By showing It more intimately to His priests, He wishes to induce them to form their hearts after His, and to identify themselves more and more with Him. He wishes above all to reveal to them

His incomparable love, and by that to inflame them with more ardent charity towards Himself, with more active, more generous and tender devotedness for the salvation of their brethren. He wishes to communicate to His priests a superabundance of divine, supernatural life, in order that they themselves may be able to vivify souls.

That is the plan of Jesus in manifesting His Heart, and those are the thoughts which we wish to express in this humble volume. May these pages strengthen the souls of priests in the love of their sublime vocation, and unite them more than ever to Jesus Christ, the eternal Priest! May they make the faithful who read them have greater confidence in, and more religious and filial respect for, the orders of the sacred hierarchy! May they develop always more and more the knowledge of Infinite Love and the worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, King and centre of all hearts!



✠ **PART I** ✠

*The Priest, the Creation of Infinite Love*



## CHAPTER I

### FIRST LECTURE

# The Priest, the Creation of Infinite Love

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*A*LMIGHTY GOD reigned from all eternity in the peaceful possession of His sovereign happiness; but feeling Infinite Love overflow from His being, He willed to create. After drawing incomparable marvels from nothing by the power of His Word, He formed man, the king and centre of creation.

Who will ever be able to enumerate the myriad graces which the Eternal Being, conferred on this privileged creature? Infinite Love assumed all forms; it was liberal and magnificent like the love of God; it was tender, delicate and profound like the love of a mother; it was provident and wise, like the love of a father. Man was enriched with all gifts, with all graces, with all kinds of beauty. But Infinite Love did not stop there. It continued to flow with inexhaustible profusion on all creation. In different circumstances it got different names, but it was all these things at the same time: thus it was a restoring, preserving, vivifying love, a protecting, pardoning, patient love: a love which redeems, purifies and saves.

And behold! after long ages, the Word of the Father, Incarnate Love, the Redeemer of the world, Jesus Christ, came on earth. Living the life of man, He experienced the weakness of man, understood his wants and restored the work of creation; but above all He loved. He passionately loved this fallen humanity to which He had intimately united Himself.

And, one day, He felt Infinite Love overflow from His Heart; and, wishing to create a being who could continue His work, came to the relief of man in all his wants; a being who could help man, sustain him, enlighten him and bring him nearer to God—He created the priest.

To the priest, the creation of the Infinite Love of His heart, Jesus gave a participation in His power; He infused into his heart the devotedness, zeal, goodness and mercy which filled His own. He poured into it humility and purity; He filled it with love; finally, He confided to him four great functions corresponding to the four great needs of the human creature.

1) *Man is profoundly ignorant.* Even after the grace of Baptism, the shadows of original sin still darken his intellect; his personal sins daily intensify these shadows; and his unenlightened mind, plunged in darkness and uncertainty, rushes, almost without noticing it, to eternal perdition. *And the priest teaches.* He gives truth to the human intellect; he shows the way which leads to God; he reveals to souls the luminous horizons of the Faith; his mission is to dispel darkness and to display in all their splendor to every eye these lofty and divine truths which are, with love, the life of the human soul.

2) *Man is a sinner.* The fall of our first parents has left in his nature indelible marks and a strong tendency towards evil; a sort of weakness which makes itself increasingly felt both in his intellectual faculties and in his senses, and in spite of the grace which raises him up, and Infinite Love which draws him from on high, he nevertheless sins again. Being constantly sullied, he has need of being purified again. *And the priest absolves.* Trustee of the Blood of Jesus Christ, the priest applies this divine remedy to the wounds caused by sin; he draws from the infinite treasure of the merits of Jesus Christ, and gives to the purified soul new strength and new help.

3) *Man is unfortunate.* Banished from Heaven, he passes his days on earth in labor and sorrow; suffering presses upon him from every side. Today his body is broken by sickness; tomorrow his heart is rent by treachery or the loss of loved ones; and how often is his soul shaken by fear, remorse or doubt! *But the priest is the consoler.* He makes known to souls the value of suffering; he makes man hope for an eternity of happiness in return for passing sorrow (2 Cor. 4:17); he opens the abysses of Infinite Love to afflicted and abandoned hearts; he raises up despairing souls by revealing to them the divine mercies, and, spreading light and love over the earth; he consoles all sorrow and dispels all fear.

4) Finally, *Man cannot do without God.* His weakness must lean on divine strength; his poverty cries out for the treasures of Heaven; his

nothingness has constant need of getting near to the source of all being. And nevertheless, sinner that he is, he shrinks away from divine holiness; God is so great, so pure, so exalted in the inaccessible heights of truth and of justice! A mediator between God and man is needed; that Mediator is Christ, but between Christ and man, so great is man's misery, another mediator is necessary, and *that mediator is the priest*.

*And the priest offers sacrifice.* He takes the divine Victim in his consecrated hands; he raises Him to Heaven, and God, at this sight, inclines towards the earth; mercy descends; Infinite Love gushes forth more abundantly from the bosom of the Eternal Being. The Creator and His creature are brought together; they have embraced in Christ; they have become united in love.

These are the august functions which the priest exercises for the benefit of man; he teaches, he absolves, he consoles, he offers sacrifice. Jesus, the eternal Priest, had exercised them before him, and with what sublime perfection! He would have wished, if it were possible, to continue exercising them directly by Himself. Nevertheless, it was fitting that Christ, after passing through suffering, should enter into His glory.<sup>3</sup> In His loving mercy He then formed the priest in whom He perpetuates Himself and lives again unceasingly His life of love for men, His brethren. It is by the priest that He continues to instruct, to purify, to console and to bring back again to God all the generations of men that succeed one another on this earth.

In the painful phase through which the world is now passing, poor deluded humanity lured away from God feels more than ever its immense needs. More than ever it demands to be nourished by truth, to be delivered from evil, to be consoled in its sadness, to be brought back to God, and to be warmed by His love.

Jesus Christ should, it would seem, return once more to this earth. But no; His risen Humanity can remain in its glory. He has provided for all the needs of man; He has left him the Blessed Eucharist and His priesthood.

By the Blessed Eucharist, man can nourish his soul on eternal Truth and infinite Love, and, in a manner, divinize his weak flesh and his senses inclined to sin. In the priesthood, he can find those helps which

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3. *Luke* 24:26.

are continually necessary for him in the course of his life of misery and trials.

Though in the Blessed Eucharist Jesus is always the same, eternally living, in the priest, His divine life varies in intensity, not that He does not give Himself with equal abundance to all, but because the priest draws more or less from this abundance. In order that Jesus may live again in the priest, it is necessary that the priest live by Jesus.

Infinite Love pouring itself forth from the divine Being created man; this same love, issuing from the Heart of Jesus, has created the priest; and just as man can find his true life and perfection only by returning to God, his eternal principle, so it is only by going to the Heart of Jesus that the priest can attain to the plenitude of life and the perfection of his sacerdotal being. That is the reason why, at this hour when the holy functions of the priesthood are so necessary to the world, Jesus calls His priests to His Heart. It is in order that they may draw new graces from this divine source and, by immersing themselves again in this ocean from which they have come forth, they may find a renewal and an increase of sacerdotal life.

Oh, let the priest go to Jesus, let him keep near Him; the priest whose mission is so great and whose action can be so fruitful! Let him consider the actions of this divine model, let him listen to His words, let him penetrate into His thoughts, let him follow Him step-by-step in the holy Gospel, let him learn from this adorable Master how to perform worthily the sacred functions of the priesthood. Jesus has exercised these functions before him; the priest has only to follow His divine footprints. To be clothed with Christ means to imitate Christ, to reproduce His adorable virtue, His holy actions, even His divine gestures. And if anyone ought to be clothed with Christ, is it not above all the priest whose duty it is to give Christ to the world?

#### ✠ PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

O, Jesus eternal High Priest, divine Offerer of Sacrifice, Who, in an incomparable transport of love for men, Thy brethren, didst allow the Christian priesthood to issue from Thy Sacred Heart, deign to continue to pour out on Thy priests the life-giving streams of Infinite Love.

Live Thou in them, transform them into Thyself; render them by

Thy grace the instruments of Thy mercies; act in them and through them, and grant, that, having been completely clothed with Thee by the faithful imitation of Thy adorable virtues, they may perform in Thy Name and by the strength of Thy Spirit, the works which Thou Thyself hast accomplished for the salvation of the world.

Divine Redeemer of souls, see how great is the multitude of those who still sleep in the darkness of error; count the number of those unfaithful sheep that are walking on the edge of the eternal abyss; consider the crowds of the poor, the hungry, the ignorant and the weak, who are groaning in their state of abandonment. Return to us by Thy priests, live again in very truth in them; act through them and pass again through the world teaching, pardoning, consoling, offering sacrifice, renewing the sacred bonds of love between the Heart of God and the hearts of men. Amen.<sup>4</sup>

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4. Indulgences: 300 days once a day. A plenary indulgence on usual conditions, if recited daily for a month. (Pius X Rescript in his own hand March 3, 1905. *Raccolta* 1937).