

1. SPIRITUAL RESOURCES OF THE CHRISTIAN

All the means of salvation are to be found in the Church, where holiness and charity flourish. Don Bosco constantly invites adults and young people to cooperate with the action of grace, hope and charity, generously offering themselves through constant prayer, and by frequenting the sacraments but especially by imitating Jesus Christ in a virtuous life of charitable works.

266. Faith, hope and charity

Critical ed. in [Giovanni BOSCO], *Il cattolico provveduto per le pratiche di pietà con analoghe istruzioni secondo il bisogno dei tempi*. Torino, Tip. dell'Oratorio di S. Franc. di Sales 1868, pp. 87-91 (OE XIX, 95-99)¹⁰⁷.

St Paul the Apostle says that without faith it is impossible to please God: “*sine fide impossibile est placere Deo*” [Heb 11:6]. Let us then always keep the flame of faith alive in our hearts. We need faith to enlighten us throughout our lives. Faith must be the food that sustains us in spiritual life as Holy Scripture tells us: “*iustus ex fide vivit*”, the just man lives by faith. So that the faith we received from God at holy Baptism may not diminish in our hearts we should often stir it up. To do this we should often make acts of faith, protest with all our heart that we firmly believe the main truths of the Catholic religion and all that God wishes us to be taught by means of the Church. We do this by reciting the words of the act of faith.

But, dear Christian, faith is not enough for our eternal salvation, because we also need the virtue of hope by which we abandon ourselves into God's hands, like a child in the arms of its tender mother. We need to obtain many favours from God and usually God does not grant them unless we hope for them. How many sins we have committed! We therefore need God to show us mercy and forgive us. We constantly need the help of God's grace to live as holy people on this earth. Now, God wants to grant this mercy, this forgiveness, this help from his grace but only to those who hope for it. God has prepared a sea of delights for us in the next life but nobody will be there

¹⁰⁷ Don Bosco wrote this small work with Fr John Bonetti's help.

to enjoy that unless they have the virtue of hope. And for this we must make frequent acts of this virtue, reviving in our hearts a great trust in everything we will obtain from God's goodness through the merits of Our Lord Jesus Christ. To reawaken and keep this virtue alive in us let us devoutly recite the words of the act of hope.

Of all the virtues, then, charity is the greatest and the most excellent. The others could not obtain eternal salvation without it. But in what does this virtue of charity consist? It consists in loving God above all other things and our neighbour as ourselves for love of him. Love for God then, and for our neighbour must always be a flame burning in our heart. We must primarily love God with all our heart because He is a most perfect spirit, a being of infinite goodness, our highest good. We must also love Him because He has filled our lives with countless benefits. He created us out of nothing. He saw that we were born into the Catholic religion which is the only one that can lead us to the gates of salvation. Although we have offended Him so many times, He did not strike us dead as He could have done and as He has done for others who did not repent after sinning. Out of love for us He came down to earth from Heaven amidst sinners. He suffered a most terrible death for us. Out of an excess of love He left us the holy Eucharist as our food. And finally, He has prepared a wonderful place for us in Heaven for all eternity. And who, considering these cases of God's love for us, would not feel his heart burning with love for God?

But we must also love our neighbour as ourselves. Everyone in the world is our brother, children of the same father, who is God. They all have a right to be loved by us. Jesus Christ made a direct command of this, saying "*hoc est praeceptum meum ut diligatis invicem* [Jn 15:12], This is my commandment, that you love one another." We must not only love our friends but also our enemies. Our Divine Saviour gave us the example by forgiving and praying for those who crucified him. May the flame of this charity be always alight in us. This is why we make frequent acts of this virtue by reciting the words of the act of charity.

267. Jesus Christ, every Christian's model

Critical ed. in Giovanni BOSCO, *La chiave del paradiso in mano al cattolico che pratica i doveri di buon cristiano*. Torino, Tip. Paravia e Comp. 1856, pp. 20-23 (OE VIII, 20-23).

One day the Lord said to Moses: "Remember to carry out my orders well and do everything according to the pattern I showed you on the mountain." God says the same to Christians. Jesus Christ is the pattern or model to be copied by every Christian. Nobody can boast of belonging to Jesus Christ unless he makes the effort to imitate him. So in the life and actions of the Christians we should find the life and actions of Jesus Christ himself.

The Christian should pray, since Jesus prayed humbly, confidently in recollection upon the mountain.

The Christian should be accessible as was Jesus Christ to the poor, the ignorant, the children. He should not be proud, pretentious, arrogant. He should be all things to all people in order to win everyone over to Christ.

The Christian should take care of his neighbour since Jesus Christ took care of his followers. Therefore his dealings should be edifying, charitable, serious, kind and simple.

The Christian should be humble as was Jesus Christ, who knelt to wash his disciples' feet including Judas, even though he knew he would betray him. The true Christian considers himself less than others and servant of all.

The Christian should obey as Jesus Christ obeyed, be submissive as he was to Mary and St Joseph. He obeyed his heavenly Father until death, death on the cross. The true Christian obeys his parents, his employers, his superiors because he recognises God himself in them; they stand in for God.

In eating and drinking the true Christian should be as Jesus Christ was at the wedding feast of Cana in Galilee, and at Bethany, meaning sober, temperate, attentive to others' needs and more concerned with spiritual nourishment than with dishes that nourish the body.

The good Christian should be with his friends in the same way Jesus Christ was with St John and St Lazarus. He should love them in the Lord and out of

love for God; he should warmly confide in them the secrets of his heart, and if they should fall into evil he should make every effort to have them return to the state of grace.

The true Christian should be resigned in suffering privations and poverty as Jesus Christ suffered them, since he did not even have a place to lay down his head. He should know how to put up with contradictions and calumny as Jesus Christ tolerated them from the Scribes and Pharisees, leaving it to God to justify him. He should know how to put up with insults and slights, as Jesus did when they struck him, spat in his face and insulted him in a thousand ways in the Praetorium.

The true Christian should be ready to put up with sufferings of the spirit, as Jesus Christ did when he was betrayed by one of his own, denied by another and abandoned by them all.

The true Christian must be ready to patiently accept any persecution, any illness, even death, as Jesus Christ did. Crowned with painful thorns, his body lacerated from blows, his feet and hands pierced by nails, he consigned his soul peacefully into his Father's hands in heaven.

The true Christian should be able to say with the Apostle St Paul: "It is not I who live, but Jesus Christ who lives in me." Whoever follows Jesus Christ according to the pattern described here, can be certain of being glorified with Christ in Heaven one day and reigning with him in eternity.

268. Prayer

Critical ed. in [G. BOSCO], *Il cattolico provveduto...*, pp. 1-3, 7-13 (OE XIX, 9-11. 15-21).

Prayer means lifting up our hearts to God and engaging with him through holy thoughts and devout sentiments. Therefore every thought about God and every glance towards him is prayer when joined with pious sentiments. Whoever thinks of the Lord and his infinite perfection and feels a sense of joy, veneration, love, admiration, is praying. Whoever considers the great benefits received from his Creator, Father, the One who has preserved him, and feels a sense of gratitude, is praying. Whoever, amidst dangers to his innocence and

virtue, is aware of his own weakness and asks God to help him, is praying. And finally whoever is contrite of heart and turns to God, remembering that he has insulted his Father, offended his Judge and lost his greatest good, and then begs pardon and promises to amend his behaviour, is praying.

Therefore it is so easy to pray. In any place or at any moment, each one can lift up his heart to God by means of pious sentiments. Exquisite and especially refined language is not needed, just simple thoughts accompanied by devout inner feelings. Prayer that consists only of thoughts, for example a quiet admiration of divine greatness and omnipotence, is an inward prayer or meditation or contemplation. If it is externalised by words it is called vocal prayer.

One or other of these ways of praying should be dear to the Christian who loves God. A good child willingly thinks of his father and lets the affections of his heart flow freely. So how then could a Christian not willingly think of God, his most loving Father, and of Jesus Christ his merciful Redeemer, without showing outward signs of reverence, recognition, love and dear confidence, praying to him for help and grace? ...

For the prayer of the Christian to be fully acceptable to God and infallibly obtain its effect, certain conditions are needed:

1. Whoever prays must be in the state of sanctifying grace, meaning he must not have any mortal sin on his conscience that has not been cancelled through sacramental confession or through contrition. Because, as Scripture tells us, "The Lord is far from the wicked man, but hears the prayer of the just." (Pr 15:29). Despite that, whoever is in the state of mortal sin, if he at least has the desire to correct himself and prays with the intention of honouring God, although he has no right to be heard because he is not in God's friendship, nevertheless his prayer is highly useful and through the infinite divine goodness will not fail to obtain graces.

2. One should pray inspired by keen faith, *because without faith it is impossible to please God* (Heb 11:6) and where faith is lacking one does not pray in a heartfelt manner, and does not give honour to the goodness, wisdom and omnipotence of God as he demands of us.

3. One should pray with humility and feel both the need of grace and one's total lack of any merit or entitlement to receiving what is asked for, because *God opposes the proud and gives generously to the humble* (Jas 4:6).

4. The Christian must also reserve a certain order regarding the things asked for in prayer. "*Set your hearts on his kingdom first, and on his righteousness, and all these other things will be given you as well.*" (Mt 6:33), Jesus Christ tells us. Therefore we must first seek spiritual goods like forgiveness for sinners, enlightenment to know the divine will and our errors, strength, an increase and perseverance in virtue. After that we can also ask for temporal goods, health, the means for managing our life, heavenly blessings on our occupations, our affairs, our farms and our families, and that misfortunes, pains and afflictions may be kept far from us. This is what the fourth request in the *Our Father* teaches us as well as the example of Jesus Christ in the Garden of Olives. But the request must be made on condition that it is God's will and will not harm our souls. "*Father, let it be as you, not I, would have it.*" (Mt 26:39).

5. One needs to pray in the name of Jesus Christ, aware that no grace can be obtained from God except through the merits of our Divine Redeemer.

6. One needs to pray with the enlightened hope of being listened to. Whoever prays doubting that he will be heard is insulting God who assures us that we will be heard so long as we pray with a keen faith, that is with the firm hope that he will hear us and fulfil our request. So when we ask a favour of him, let us abandon ourselves to him as a child abandons himself into the hands of his dear mother, certain that she will help him. Prayer of this kind is all-powerful, and it has never been heard in this world, nor will it be heard, that one who has recourse to God in trust will not be satisfied.

Our Divine Saviour reassures us thus: "If you have faith, anything you ask for in prayer you will receive." The Apostle St James warns the Christian to pray without hesitating and doubting, if he wants to obtain what he asks for.

7. Our prayers should be united with the prayer and merits of our Blessed Lady, the angels and the saints in heaven, the souls in purgatory and all the just on earth.

8. Finally, one needs to persevere in prayer according to what Jesus Christ recommends to us. He says: “*You need to pray always, without ceasing*” and if we ask him how long we have to keep praying, he answers: “Until the end of your life.”

Many Christians think their prayers are useless either because they do not immediately see their effect or because they do not gain the specific graces they were asking for. But we need to know that God responds to our prayers in the way and at the time he sees it most opportune and convenient for the sanctification of our souls and the progress of his kingdom, without letting us know this way or this time. When we are in the other world we will clearly see that not one word of our prayers ever went without its effect. In fact any time our prayers lack result, the fault is ours for not praying with the correct attitude.

To conclude this brief instruction, note that one cannot pray well without preparation. Before praying, prepare your soul and do not be like the man who tempts God (Sir 18:23). Reflect on what an honour it is to come before the Lord, King of heaven and earth, and reflect too on what you want to ask God; choose the kind of prayer adapted to your circumstances and needs; put yourself in God’s presence and see that the words you say by memory or read from a book come from the heart. In this way you will pray in spirit and in truth.

Although you can pray devoutly in any position, it would still be good to choose one which gives the best outward signs of your inward faith and devotion. This is how we see the Divine Saviour, the Apostle Paul, the publican, Mary Magdalene, Moses, Solomon, Daniel, Micah praying, with hands joined, kneeling, looking up to Heaven as a sign of faith or to the earth in humility. When praying in church we must have an especially devout and respectful attitude, both out of respect for the Blessed Sacrament on the altar, where Jesus Christ is present, and to not give bad example to others whom we should edify through our outward approach.

269. The holy sacraments

Critical ed. in Giovanni BOSCO, *Il mese di maggio consacrato a Maria SS. Immacolata ad uso del popolo*. Torino, Tip. Paravia e Compagnia 1858, pp. 55-60 (OE X, 349-354).

1. The more we think about our holy Catholic Religion the more we see its beauty, grandeur and the more we see the goodness, wisdom and mercy of God who is its founder. This appears so outstandingly in the holy sacraments. It is a truth of Faith that there are seven sacraments, no more nor less; they were instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ while he was in this world. These sacraments are: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders and Matrimony. These sacraments are also sensible signs established by God to give our souls the graces necessary for our salvation, meaning the seven sacraments are like seven channels by which heavenly favours are communicated from the divinity to humanity.

2. By means of Baptism we are welcomed into the bosom of holy Mother Church, cease to be slaves of the devil, become in fact children of God and therefore heirs to heaven. In Confirmation we receive the fullness of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and become perfect Christians. In the Eucharist Jesus gives us his Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity under the species of consecrated bread and wine. This is the divine power's greatest miracle. By an act of immense love for us, God found a way to give our souls spiritual food in the right proportion, giving us his very divinity. In Penance the sins we committed after Baptism are forgiven. In Extreme Unction or the holy oils, God came to help the sick and by means of holy anointing gives us the graces necessary to cancel our sins, giving us the strength to patiently bear our illness, die a good death when God decides to call us into eternity, and also to give us bodily health if this would be good for the salvation of our soul. In the sacrament of Orders or Ordination God gives his sacred ministers the graces needed to acquire the degree of holiness they need. Also to be able to guide and instruct faithful Christians in the truths of the Faith, fleeing vice and practising virtue. Finally, Matrimony is the sacrament that gives spouses the grace to live in peace and charity between themselves and to bring their children up in the Faith when God in his infinite mercy decides to grant them.

3. So, good Christian, here in brief are the means that Jesus Christ has instituted for our salvation. He gained great benefits for us through his incarnation, but all these benefits are communicated through his holy sacraments. In the meantime if you are not careful to make use of these means of salvation according to the state you find yourself in, you will not participate in the great mystery of redemption and therefore cannot save your soul. Pause for a while and consider how you have corresponded to these great signs of divine love. If your conscience accuses you of some sin try to apply the remedy as soon as possible especially by preparing yourself to make a good confession and a good communion.

Example - In the lives of the Fathers we read one fact that demonstrates how much piety helps us in our spiritual and temporal interests. Two cobblers were living in the city of Alexandria in Egypt; one had a large family, but while working to support it he also very much looked after matters of the soul, following the advice of Christ who said: "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his justice, and God will provide the rest." He attended church regularly, that is he went willingly to listen to God's Word, and was frequent with confession and communion and other exercises of Christian piety. It seemed that God increased his temporal goods. The other did the opposite, meaning he was concerned about temporal matters, not worrying about attending church and looking after his soul. His business affairs also went to ruin and although he was alone, without a family and worked more than his friend, nonetheless he struggled to earn enough to keep himself. Looking at his neighbour who seemed to be maintaining his family with less effort, he began wondering and felt envious of him. One day he could not resist saying to him: "How is it with all this - I work much more than you and still I don't earn enough to keep myself while you work less and can look after yourself and your family?" At this question, wanting to get his friend to go to church, he answered thus: "You know, my brother, that I go to a certain place where there is money, and that's why I am rich. If you would come with me I will call you each day and we can go half and half in whatever we find." "Gladly," the other said and went with him to church every day. God was pleased with this and he soon became rich and well off. Then his friend said to him: "Now you see,

my brother, how much good it has done to you going to church! You know that you find God's grace here, the best treasure in the world, and as you have experienced yourself, if one cares about God, then God cares about him. So continue as you have started, go to church and God will not fail you." Christians often seek their fortune in a sinful way, living as enemies of God, not going to church, not praying, not going to the sacraments, not keeping Sundays holy and meanwhile they want God to make them prosper and make them happy. Fools! Do they not know that sin is what makes people miserable and unhappy? "*Miseros facit peccatum.*" (Pr 14).

Prayer: Jesus, Lord who redeemed us / the sacraments lead me to heaven.
// Virgin mother of love, / kindle the flame of faith in me.

270. Confession

Critical ed. in G. BOSCO, *Il mese di maggio...*, pp. 124-129 (OE X, 418-422).

1. We have a wonderful sign of God's mercy towards sinners in the Sacrament of Confession. If God had said that he would forgive our sins only through Baptism and would no longer forgive those committed after we have received this Sacrament, how many Christians would certainly go to perdition! But knowing our great misery, God established another sacrament with which sins committed after Baptism are remitted. This is the Sacrament of Confession. This is how the Gospel speaks: "Eight days after his Resurrection Jesus appeared to his disciples and said to them: peace be with you. As the heavenly Father sent me, so I am sending you, with the faculty given me by my heavenly Father that whatever you judge to be for the salvation of souls, I give to you. Then the Saviour breathed on them and said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.'" Everyone understands that the words 'retain' or 'not retain' mean giving or not giving absolution. This is the great faculty given by God to his Apostles and their successors in the administration of the holy Sacraments. From these words of the Saviour comes an obligation for the sacred ministers to hear confessions, and at the same time there is an equal obligation for the Christian to confess his sins so that we may know

when to give or not to give absolution, what advice to suggest to make up for the evil done, in short to give all the fatherly advice judged necessary to make reparation for the evils of one's past life and no longer commit them in the future.

2. Nor was confession only practised at a certain time or in a certain place. As soon as the Apostles began preaching the Gospel, they began to practise the Sacrament of Penance. We read that when St Paul was preaching in Ephesus, many of the faithful who had already embraced the faith came to the feet of the Apostles and confessed their sins. "*Confitentes et annunciantes actus suos*" [Acts 19:18]. From the time of the Apostles until now the practice of this great Sacrament has always been observed. The Church has always condemned as heretics those who had the foolhardiness to deny this truth. Nor has it ever advised anyone that they can be dispensed of the need for it. Rich and poor, servants and masters, kings, monarchs, emperors, priests, bishops, the supreme pontiffs themselves, all must kneel at the feet of a sacred minister to obtain pardon for the sins they have committed after baptism. But alas! How many Christians so rarely or so badly profit from this Sacrament! There are those who come without examining themselves, others who confess nonchalantly without sorrow or good resolutions, and others who keep silent about important things in Confession or do not fulfil the obligations imposed by the confessor. These are taking the most holy and useful of things and using it for their own ruin. St Teresa had a fearful vision about this. She saw souls falling into hell like snow falling on the mountains. Terrified by such a revelation, she asked Jesus Christ for an explanation and received the answer that they were lost because of the bad confessions they had made in life.

3. Courage, O Christians, and let us profit from this Sacrament of mercy, but let us profit from it with the appropriate dispositions. First we make a diligent examination of our faults, and then we confess them all, what we are certain of, what we are doubtful about as we know it, but with great sorrow for having committed them. And let us promise never to commit them again in future. But especially, let the results of our confessions be seen through the improvement in our life. God tells us in the Gospel that we shall know the goodness of the tree from its fruits, and so from the improvement in our

lives the value or otherwise of our confessions will be seen: “*ex fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos*” [Mt 7:20].

Example - A young man from Montmirail in France had lived as a good Christian until he was fifteen, when he had the misfortune to fall in with bad companions. Improper conversations, reading bad books left him wallowing in the depths of lack of belief and loose living. His parents tried to guide him to better things, but unable to succeed, they went to church on the evening of the Immaculate Conception (December 8, 1839) and recommended him to the prayers of the members of the Sacred Heart of Mary Sodality. On that very same evening, the young man returned home, and without saying anything, which was not usual for him, he went to bed. He wasn't thinking about Mary, he was thinking about himself. On December 10, almost beside himself, he called on his father and said: “Father, I am unhappy and suffering so much. I have neither eaten nor slept for thirty six hours. I am like an angry lion and know neither what to say nor what to do; I have to go and see the priest.” He left, went to the parish priest, and his conscience all filled with remorse, he begged him to hear his confession. “Please,” he begged the priest, “hear my confession immediately. I cannot live in this state any longer.” The parish priest encouraged him, comforted him and then soon heard his sorrowful confession. When he had received absolution, he immediately felt his heart filled with such consolation that he could not keep it to himself. As soon as he arrived home he explained to his father the grace he had received and the heavenly peace he was experiencing. What he still felt so bad about was seeing those whom he had drawn into sin through his scandal. Filled with Christian courage, and with no further care about what his old friends might say, he told them what had happened to him, the consolation he felt after his confession and what he could to get them to do the same. So to put things in a few words this new result of Mary's mercy did as the penitent David did when he tried to win over souls for God to make reparation for the scandal he had given. “*Docebo iniquos vias tuas*” [Ps 51:13].

Brief prayer: Obtain for me from God, Mother of love / real sorrow for my sins.

271. Holy communion

Critical ed. in G. BOSCO, *Il mese di maggio...*, pp. 139-144 (OE X, 433-438).

1. Do you understand, Christian, what it means to go to Holy Communion? It means approaching the table of the angels to receive the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, given as food for our souls under the species of consecrated bread and wine. At Mass, when the priest says the words of consecration over the bread and wine, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. The words our Divine saviour used when he instituted this Sacrament are: “This is my body, this is my blood”, “*hoc est corpus meum, hic est calix sanguinis mei*” [Lk 22:19-20]. These are the very words the priest uses in Jesus’ name in the sacrifice of the holy Mass. Therefore when we go to communion we receive Jesus Christ himself in his Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, that is, true God and true Man, alive in heaven as he is. It is not an image of him, a representation like in a statue or crucifix, but it is Jesus Christ himself as he was born of the Immaculate Virgin Mary and as he died for us on the cross. Jesus Christ himself assures us of this real presence of himself in the Eucharist when he said: “This is my body, given up for you”, “*corpus, quod pro vobis tradetur*” [Jn 6:51]. “This is the living bread come down from Heaven”, “*hic est panis vivus, qui de caelo descendit.*” “The bread that I will give is my flesh. The drink that I give is my true blood. Whoever does not eat of this body nor drink of this blood, has no life within him.”

2. Having instituted this Sacrament for the good of our souls, Jesus wants us to approach him often. Here are the words he invites us with: “Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened and I will give you rest, *venite ad me omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos*” [Mt 11:28]. Elsewhere he tells the Hebrews: “Your fathers ate the manna in the desert and died; but the one who eats the food that the manna represented, the food that I give, the food that is my body and blood, he will never die. The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I in him; my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink.” Who could oppose these loving invitations from the Divine Saviour? To respond to these invitations Christians in early times went daily to listen to God’s word and went to communion each day. It is in

this Sacrament that the martyrs found their strength, virgins their fervour, the saints their courage. And how often do we approach this heavenly food? If we examine what Jesus Christ wanted and our own need we should go to communion very often. Since manna was the daily bodily food for the Hebrews all the time they were in the desert, until they reached the promised land, so Holy Communion should be our comfort, our daily food amidst the dangers of this world to lead us to the promised land of Paradise. St Augustine says thus: “If we ask God for bread for our bodies every day, why do we not try to feed ourselves daily with spiritual bread through holy Communion?” Saint Philip Neri encouraged Christians to go to confession each week and go to communion more often according to the advice of their confessor. And finally, holy Church manifests its keen desire for frequent communion at the Council of Trent where it says: “It would be a most desirable thing for each Christian faithful to be in such a state of conscience as to be able to go to Holy Communion each time he attends Mass.” Pope Clement XIII granted the following favour to encourage Christians to go frequently to confession and communion: “Christian faithful who have the praiseworthy habit of going to Confession weekly can gain a plenary indulgence whenever they go to Holy Communion.”

3. Someone might say: “I am too much of a sinner.” If you are a sinner, try to return to grace through the Sacrament of Confession and then go to Holy Communion and you will have much help. Another might say: “I go to communion rarely so I can be more fervent.” He is fooling himself. Things done rarely are mostly done badly. If your needs in other things are great, then so must you seek frequent help for your souls. Some might add: “I am spiritually sick and do not dare go to communion often.” Jesus Christ answers: *“those who are well have no need of a doctor”*, so those who have greater woes, those are the ones who should go more often to see the doctor. So courage, Christian, if you want to do something more glorious for God, the most pleasing thing for all the saints in heaven, the most effective for overcoming temptations, the most certain thing to do to persevere in doing good, is certainly Holy Communion.

Example - a young lad called Dominic Savio, out of a keen desire to please Mary, prayed to her daily but every Saturday he went to Holy Communion in her honour. He called her his dearest mother. In 1856 he celebrated Mary's month with such fervour that his friends were all edified. Every day he asked Mary to take him from the world rather than he should lose the virtue of purity. On the final day he asked for just one grace: to be able to make a good Communion before dying. The holy Virgin heard his prayer. Nine months later (9 March 1857) he died at fifteen years of age after receiving holy Viaticum with great tenderness and devotion. In the moments between receiving Viaticum and his death, he kept repeating: "O Mary, you listened to me, I am so rich. I ask nothing else of you than that you help me in these final moments of my life and accompany me from this life into eternity." Almost as soon as he had said these words, his soul flew to heaven certainly, accompanied by Mary to whom he was so devoted in life.

Brief prayer: I adore you at every moment, / living Bread from heaven, / great Sacrament.