



Visits to the
Blessed Sacrament
and Our Lady



Discover anew the wisdom and beauty of St. Alphonsus' classic work, *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady*, in this new English translation of the original Italian. Through daily meditations and prayers, kindle your love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and deepen your devotion to Mary through thoughtful reflections.

In this updated version of the timeless devotional, draw closer to Christ and his Mother. With meditations pertinent to all seasons of life, let St. Alphonsus help you grow in relationship and love with Jesus.

Esta edición incluye
Visitas al Santísimo y el Bendita Virgen María, San Alfonso María de Liguorio.

Visits to the
Blessed Sacrament
and Our Lady

Saint Alphonsus Liguori

A NEW TRANSLATION
FROM THE ORIGINAL ITALIAN



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Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady
by St. Alphonsus Liguori

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by Seán Cannon, CSsR, and Raphael Gallagher, CSsR.
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alphonsus Liguori was born in Naples, Italy, in 1696. A renowned doctor of canon and civil law, he left the legal profession to enter the priesthood. Ordained in 1726, he spent several years attending to the poor before founding the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (the Redemptorists) in 1732. During his lifetime, St. Alphonsus dedicated himself to preaching and writing. With 111 published works, he is the official patron of moralists and confessors. Saint Alphonsus died in 1787 and was canonized in 1839. He was declared a doctor of the Church in 1871, and patron of confessors and moral theologians in 1950.

ABOUT THE EDITORS AND TRANSLATORS

Fr. Seán Cannon, CSsR, was born in County Donegal, Ireland, in 1940. He joined the Redemptorists in 1959 and was ordained a priest in 1966. Awarded a doctorate in Canon Law by the Angelicum University in Rome in 1976, Fr. Cannon taught theology at the Alphonsian Academy in Rome (the Alphonsianum) for nearly forty years. He was also a canonical consultant to the General Government of the Redemptorists for many years.

Fr. Raphael Gallagher, CSsR, was born in County Cavan, Ireland, in 1943. He joined the Redemptorists in 1961 and was ordained a priest in 1969. He was awarded a doctorate in Moral Theology by the Alphonsian Academy in Rome (the Alphonsianum) in 1977. Fr. Gallagher taught theology in Ireland and the United States for a number of years, also becoming the Provincial of the Irish Redemptorists for six years, starting in 1987. He was an Invited Professor of the Alphonsianum from 1994 until his retirement in 2016.

DEDICATION

To Our Lady

My most holy Queen, I am about to publish this little work, which treats of the love of your Son. I dedicate it to you knowing that there is no one more worthy of such a dedication than you, my most beloved Mother.

More than anyone in the world, you are his greatest lover. This work has been written with the sole purpose of strengthening people more and more with the love of Jesus Christ. In making you this small offering, I hope to please you very much, since you desire to see him loved by everyone as he deserves.

To you, then, I dedicate this work, such as it is. Kindly accept and watch over it, not that I may receive human praise, but that all who read it may, for the future, correspond by their greater devotion and affection to the tender and undeserved love which our most lovable Savior has been pleased to show us in his passion and in the institution of the most holy sacrament.

Therefore, I place it in your hands and ask you to accept, as entirely yours, both the gift and the giver. I have long since placed all my hope in you, and wish and aspire always to call myself, and to rejoice in being, most gracious Lady, your most loving, though most unworthy, servant,

Alphonsus Liguori.

INTRODUCTION

Alphonsus Liguori (1696–1787), founder of the Redemptorists, had a lifelong love of the Eucharist and devotion to our Lady. *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady* was written in 1745 to spread this love and devotion. Saint Alphonsus composed *Visits* for laypeople, and it came to be particularly popular with them.

The Irish Redemptorists last published a translation of *Visits* in 1953. In the present edition, the editors have produced a modern-day translation based on the original Italian. Their aim is to remain faithful to what St. Alphonsus wrote, without being rigidly literal. Saint Alphonsus composed *Visits* for personal prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. The style of English in this new edition reflects that original purpose.

Love of the Mass was central for St. Alphonsus. He lived in southern Italy during the eighteenth century, where most people, especially poor folk in rural areas, had no opportunity to regularly attend Mass. Even when they were able to go, priests often belonged to a movement within the Church that presented God as a distant and controlling master.

The *Visits* of St. Alphonsus presents believers with a more loving, approachable image of God.

While St. Alphonsus understood that frequent Mass-going was not possible for many poor people, they could, however, visit a church. Making a church visit helped remind them how close and merciful God was. In the time of St. Alphonsus, receiving Communion was unusual. Through *Visits*, St. Alphonsus taught believers the importance of desiring to receive Communion spiritually, at the least.

Scripture quotations are a notable feature of this devotional. The translations here are mainly from the *New American Bible Revised Edition* (NABRE). There are also frequent references to saints and spiritual authors of the Church. In modern times, many are forgotten, but the names are retained here to highlight how knowledgeable St. Alphonsus was of Church tradition.

Italian does not translate easily into English. The effusive Italian used in southern Italy is good for expressing feelings but does not have the same appeal in English. The editors, conscious of this difficulty, have tried to choose simple and popular language to reflect the original style of St. Alphonsus.

The *Visits* of St. Alphonsus is in harmony with

the renewed practices of devotion to Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament. It is a practice that particularly encourages full participation in the Mass, where the plentiful redemption of Jesus is celebrated as the sacrament of God's merciful love for everyone.

Feast of St. Alphonsus Liguori
August 1, 2023

HOW TO MAKE A VISIT

1.

Prayer before each Visit
.....

2.

Visit to the Blessed Sacrament,
corresponding to the date of the month
.....

3.

Act of Love
.....

4.

Prayer of Spiritual Communion
.....

5.

Visit to Our Lady,
corresponding to the date of the month
.....

6.

Act of Love
.....

7.

Prayer to Our Lady
.....

VISIT

1

PRAYER BEFORE EACH VISIT

My Lord Jesus Christ, because of your love for us, you remain night and day in the Blessed Sacrament, full of mercy and of love, waiting for, calling, and welcoming everyone who comes to visit you. I believe that you are present here on the altar. I adore you, and I thank you for all the graces you have bestowed on me; especially for having given me yourself in this sacrament, for having given me your most holy Mother, Mary, to plead for me, and for having called me to visit you in this church. I now speak to your most loving heart to thank you for this great gift and to make amends to you for all the insults given to you in this sacrament by your enemies, promising to adore you in all the places on earth in which you are present in the Blessed Sacrament and in which you are least honored and most abandoned.

My Jesus, I love you with my whole heart. I am very sorry for having refused your infinite goodness so many times. With the help of your grace, I resolve

never to offend you again. Unworthy though I am, I now consecrate myself to you without reserve. I renounce my own will, my affections, my desires, and everything that I possess. I give them completely to you. All I ask of you is your holy love, final perseverance, and that I may carry out your will perfectly.

I commend to you the souls in purgatory, especially those who had the greatest devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin Mary. I also pray to you for all poor sinners. Finally, my dear Savior, I unite all my desires with the desires of your most loving heart. I offer them to the eternal Father, and ask him, in your name and for love of you, to accept and grant them.

..... *Visit to the Blessed Sacrament*

Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the source of everything that is good. He says to us, "Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink" (John 7:37). What graces the saints have drawn from the fountain of the Blessed Sacrament. It is there that Jesus distributes all the merits of his passion, as the prophet Isaiah foretold: "With joy you will draw water from the fountains of salvation" (Isaiah 12:3).

The Countess of Feria, who afterward became a

Poor Clare nun, was called the spouse of the Blessed Sacrament because of her long and frequent visits. When she was asked how she spent the many hours passed in this way in the presence of the Holy of Holies, she replied, "I could remain there for eternity. The very essence of God, which will be the food of the blessed in heaven, is really present. And you ask me what I do in his presence? Why not ask me what I do not do there? I love him, I praise and thank him, and I appeal to him. What does a poor man do in the presence of a rich man? What does a sick person do in the presence of her doctor? What does a woman parched with thirst do when she comes to a clear fountain? What does a starving person do when he is sitting down for a delicious meal?"

My beloved Jesus, you who are my life, my hope, my treasure and the only love of my heart, what has it cost you to remain with us in the Blessed Sacrament? You had to die a shameful death in order to dwell spiritually among us. Because you wanted to help us by your presence on our altars, how many insults have you not had to endure since then? Your love for us, and the desire you have that we should love you, have triumphed over everything.

Come then, Lord, come into my heart. Close its

doors forever so that in the future, no creature may enter it to share the love which is due to you, that love which I desire to give entirely to you. Let you alone, dear Redeemer, lead me; let you alone possess my whole being. If ever I do not obey you perfectly, correct me firmly, that I may be more careful to please you in the future. Grant that I may never again seek any pleasure other than that of pleasing you, of visiting you often, of speaking with you, and of receiving you in holy Communion.

Let those who wish for them, seek other treasures; I want to remember only your goodness. Blessed Seraphim, I envy you, not for your glory, but for the love you have for our God. Teach me what I must do to love him and to please him.

ACT OF LOVE

*Jesus, I will love you alone;
you are the only one I wish to please.*

PRAYER OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I am unable now to receive you sacramentally, come at least

spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as being already there and unite myself wholly to you; do not permit me to be ever separated from you.

..... *Visit to Our Lady*

Our Mother Mary is another fountain from which we can also draw the waters of grace. Saint Bernard says that she is so rich in graces that there is no one in the world who does not benefit from them. The angel greeted her with the words, "Hail! full of grace!" The Blessed Virgin was filled with grace by God that she might afterward give it to all who are devoted to her.

ACT OF LOVE

Cause of our joy, pray for us.

PRAYER TO OUR LADY

Most holy Virgin Immaculate, my Mother, Mary, you are the Mother of my Lord, the Queen of the world, the advocate, the hope, and the refuge of sinners. I, who am most in need of mercy, come before you today. I offer you my respectful devotion, and I thank you for all the graces you have granted to me until now. In particular, I thank you for saving me

from hell, which I have so often deserved by my sins. I love you, most lovable Lady. Because of my love for you, I promise to honor you always, and to do all in my power to make sure that others also love you. In your hands I place all my hopes; I entrust the saving of my soul to your care. Accept me as your servant, Mother of Mercy; take me under your mantle. Since you have such power with God, save me always from temptations, or rather, obtain for me, until my death, the strength to overcome them. Of you I ask the grace of a perfect love for Jesus Christ. With your help I hope to die a happy death. My Mother, I beg you, by the love you have for God, to help me at all times, but especially at the last moment of my life. Do not leave me, I plead with you, until you see me safe in heaven, blessing you, and singing your mercy for eternity. Amen.

That is my hope. May it be so.