**St. Anthony Mary Claret**

# JACOB'S LADDER AND THE GATE OF HEAVEN

*La escala de Jacob y la porta del cel*

From the Spanish of the booklet

*English translation*

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## About this translation

Translated from *La escala de Jacob y la porta del cel, o sian súplicas a María Santíssima* (Vic, 1846; Castilian version, 1850–1851). **Incomplete**: the closing *Practical Method of Making a Good and Brief Confession* is not translated.

The notes give the references to Claret's sources and the notes he printed himself; the modern editors' commentary and the translator's own remarks are not reproduced.

## I. Mary, Jacob's Ladder and Gate of Heaven

We read, beloved Christian, in chapter XXVIII of the sacred book of Genesis, that Jacob, travelling from Beersheba to Haran, on reaching a certain place when the sun had already set, wished to rest; and in his rest he saw a ladder that reached from earth to heaven, by which the angels of God went up and down, the Lord leaning upon it and bestowing great blessings on him from there.[1]

You know, beloved Christian, that this ladder of Jacob is a figure of Most Holy Mary, whose excellence reaches from earth to heaven; that by her our supplications go up to the throne of the Most High, and from there come down, favourably granted \[*despachadas favorablemente*: literally "dispatched favourably", the language of a petition answered by a court\], from God our Lord who rests upon her; and that by her means we receive all the graces of God. You will know too that the most holy Virgin, in the Litany of Loreto, is called *Janua coeli*, gate of heaven. So we have it that Mary is not only a ladder but also the gate of heaven. In fact she is ladder and gate; we are poor little ones, wretched and unhappy, exiles in this valley of tears; and just as the poor are those who beg on the stairs and at the doors of charitable people, in the same way we must go to Mary. On this ladder we must beg, and at this gate knock, trusting that it will be opened to us and that what we ask will be granted, as Jesus Christ commands and assures us with these words: *Ask, and it shall be given you; knock, and it shall be opened to you*;[2] therefore whoever asks (at this gate which is Mary) obtains, and whoever seeks finds;[3] no one goes away disconsolate, though he be the greatest sinner in the world.

She, as St. Bernard says, makes herself all things to all; she opens the bosom of her great mercy, so that all may share in the fullness of her graces; through Mary the captive obtains freedom, the sick health, the sad consolation, the sinner pardon of his faults, the just the nourishment of grace, and the angel joy.[4] Let us go, then, to Mary for the remedy for ourselves, whatever our need may be, spiritual or bodily, and let us go also for others; for just as there are people who collect alms, some for the saints, others for the sick and others for prisoners, so we too must go to Mary and ask first for ourselves, who are poor; then for the just, who live holily, that they may persevere in grace; then for those who are in sin, *sitting in the shadow of death*;[5] and finally for the souls in purgatory. The poor, to be helped, do not use long speeches or studied phrases, but brief and heartfelt expressions; and if we cannot even say these, and find ourselves as if dumb in Mary's presence, we must not lose heart on that account; on the contrary, our confidence must be greater, for we see that poor mutes move charitable hearts more by their mere presence than those chatterers who annoy by so much talking. Because mutes are seen to be so wretched that they lack even speech, and must use sounds and signs to ask for what they need, they move people more to compassion and are helped more abundantly.

Even in the holy Gospel we find this truth borne out in those two men, the one a Pharisee and the other a publican, who went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee made a long prayer to God, with which the Lord was displeased, above all because of the pride with which he made it; on the contrary, the poor publican stood there so abashed and humbled that he did not dare to raise his eyes to heaven, nor could he say any words but these: *Lord, have mercy on this poor sinner*. This man, says Jesus Christ, went out of the temple justified, with the grace he asked for, but the other obtained nothing, because he asked wrongly.[6] Let us go, then, to Mary with brief and humble supplications, which are at the same time fervent and expressive, or with

ejaculatory prayers, as St. Philip Neri taught.[7]

## Remarks, and confirmation of what has been said

1. The supplications given here are not meant to be said all at once, but one or another in the manner of a Rosary, if one wishes, or in a fixed number, at a set time, until the desired grace is obtained, as the poor do, who repeat the same expressions until they obtain what they seek, and sometimes their persistence \[*impertinencia*: literally "importunity, pestering"\] is the reason they are helped. This is what we must do in prayer, as Jesus Christ teaches us in the parable of the friend who asked another for three loaves, who gave them to him because of the insistence with which he asked.[1] Let us always insist with the same words until what we wish to obtain is granted us; let us say to Mary: *Non dimittam te, nisi benedixeris mihi*: I will not leave you, O my Mother, until you have granted me what I ask of you.

2. In order to ask with more effect and perseverance, one should also note — and it is the teaching of St. Basil, St. Augustine and St. Thomas — that God our Lord has prepared from eternity all the graces that he wills to bestow on his creatures in time, provided that they ask him for them; and on this condition of praying depends the conversion of many souls and the profit and advancement of all. For this reason St. Augustine says that prayer is the key of heaven. Mary is its gate, and also the treasurer of graces; consequently, by means of prayer to Most Holy Mary the gate of heaven will be opened to us, and we shall receive all the graces we ask of her, if they are good for us. And to see this truth more clearly, let us use a comparison. Suppose there is a gentleman who has a garden, and in it a great reservoir of water to irrigate and fertilize it. If the gardener is diligent in opening the channel or aqueduct of that reservoir, thanks to the water new plants will spring up, and those already sprung up will grow; but if the gardener is lazy and negligent and does not bother to open the aqueduct, the garden will suffer a great drought; the plants will not come up, and those already up will die.

Now let us make the application. The world is this garden; God is the gentleman; the most holy Virgin is the great reservoir created by God to make the earth fruitful; for this reason he has made her *full of grace*,[2] full of the clearest waters; in her Jesus Christ deposited his merits, which are of infinite value. Prayer or supplication addressed to Mary is the aqueduct through which these waters of grace must pass; we are the gardeners. Consequently, if we take care to open this aqueduct, that is, to go to Mary, to water the earth, oh, how fruitful it will be! Every day conversions and new virtues will be seen, and those that already exist will be practised with new fervour and will grow more every day. But if we are lazy and neglect to go to Mary and entreat her, what great dryness will be suffered! Sinners will not be converted; virtues will not increase; on the contrary, those begun will be lost, and even the just will cease to persevere.

Oh, how great is our need to go to Mary! We can do this with great confidence if we consider that, just as Pharaoh made Joseph the keeper of the abundance of Egypt, wishing everything to pass through his hands, and when people asked Pharaoh for anything he answered them: *Ite ad Joseph*, go to Joseph,[3] so God our Lord says to us: Go to Mary, for in her I have deposited my merits and the graces that I wish to bestow on you. Let us all go, then, to her with the following supplications, or as seems best to each one.[4]

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[5] Cf. Gen 28:10–22.

[6] Mt 7:7.

[7] Cf. Mt 7:8.

[8] Cf. St. Bernard, *Dominica infra octavam Assumptionis B. M. V.*; in "*Signum magnum*", n. 2: PL 183, 429–430.

[9] Cf. Lk 1:79.

[10] Cf. Lk 18:9–14.

[11] Cf. *Aut.*, n. 317.

[1] Cf. Lk 11:5–8.

[2] Cf. Lk 1:28.

[3] Cf. Gen 41:55.

[4] ].

## II. Supplications to Most Holy Mary

## To obtain graces for oneself

1. Virgin and Mother of God: I come to you so that you may help me. You see that I am a wretch. I will not move from the door of your mercy until I have obtained some alms.

2. Most holy Virgin: you are not only Mother of God, but you are also mine; therefore, as so good a mother, I trust that you will have pity on your child and will favour me.[1]

3. My Mother: since your love for me is greater than that of all other mothers for their children, help me, and in this way you will show the love you have for me.

4. My Mother: a natural mother has not the heart to see and hear a child of hers weeping and sighing. And will you have the heart to listen to my tears and sighs without assisting me?

5. If a mother does not stop a child of hers from crying, it is because she cannot; but you, who can console me so easily, will you fail to do it?

6. My Mother: I am hungry; I thirst for your graces; help me, fill me, for the love of God. See, I am perishing of want.

7. Sweetest Mother: you are the consolation of the afflicted; console me in my afflictions.

8. Most powerful Mother: you are the protection of the forsaken; protect me, for the love of God.

9. Most prudent Mother: you are the Mother of providence; obtain for me right judgement and prosperity, if it is good for me.

10. Mother of mercy: obtain for me true sorrow for my sins, for I repent of having committed them.

11. Most clement Mother: I ask you for perseverance in the service of God; assist me always; never forsake me, my Mother.

12. Mother of the God of virtues: since you are Lady of the virtues, obtain for me the virtue of humility.[2]

13. My Mother: since you are most pure Virgin and most chaste Mother, obtain for me the virtue of chastity.[3]

14. Most loving Mother: since you are Mother of divine love, obtain for me a true love for God and for you.[4]

15. My Mother: you see that, like another prodigal son, I have gone away from you. I return to you poor and naked. I am not worthy to be called your child; but at least receive me as one of your servants.[5]

16. Most clement Mother: if you will not look on me as a child, nor accept me as a servant, deign at least to take me in as a poor unfortunate.[6]

17. Mother and relief of the sick: I am a poor man covered with sores from head to foot and full of miseries; at your door I stop, I faint and I die. Will you not help me?

18. Most tender Mother: the rich glutton \[*el Epulón*: the traditional Spanish name for the rich man of the parable, from Latin *epulo*, "feaster"\] ate and dressed splendidly, and had the heart to let Lazarus perish of want;[7] far be it from me to think such hardness of you, for I am in lively confidence that you will help me. Yes, my Mother, yes, in you I trust.

19. Most faithful Mother: it has never been heard that anyone who had recourse to you was forsaken; since, then, I have placed all my confidence in you, my Mother, I am sure that it will not be disappointed.[8]

20. Mother of divine love: I beg you for love; grant it to me and I shall be content. Amen.[9]

Hail, Mary, Daughter of God the Father; hail, Mary, Mother of God the Son; hail, Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit; hail, Mary, temple and tabernacle of the Most Holy Trinity; hail, Mary, conceived without stain of original sin; by all your titles, excellences and graces, have pity on me; and to oblige you the more, I will greet you with the Angel, saying: Hail Mary…[10]

## To obtain graces for sinners

1. Mother of Jesus: remember that you were conceived without sin because of you was to be born the One who was destined to take away the sins of the world; take them away too, by obtaining conversion for poor sinners.

2. Mother of Jesus: by the infinite dignity of being Mother of God, I ask you for the conversion of sinners.

3. Most holy Virgin: by that joy you had when the Archangel brought you the message, not only that you were chosen to be Mother of God, but also that the longed-for hour of the redemption of the human race had come, I pray you for the conversion of sinners.[1]

4. Most holy Virgin: by that joy you had in contemplating in your arms your Son newly born, I pray you for the conversion of sinners.[2]

5. Most holy Virgin: by that joy you had in seeing your Son adored by the shepherds and kings, I pray you for the conversion of sinners, and that, like them, they may come to adore you \[*adoraros*: here in the older sense of profound veneration; Tr.\], offering you their hearts.[3]

6. Most holy Virgin: by that joy you had on finding your Son in the temple, I pray you for the conversion of sinners, and that through the holy Sacraments you may find them converted in the temple.[4]

7. Mother of mercy: remember how compassionate you showed yourself to that bride and groom who lacked wine, and obtained it through your mediation. Come, then, compassionate Mother, have pity on poor sinners and win for them the grace of true repentance.[5]

8. Afflicted Mother: by that sorrow you felt on hearing from Simeon that a sword of sorrow was to pierce your motherly heart, I pray you for the conversion of sinners.[6]

9. Sorrowful Mother: by that pain you suffered in seeing your Son persecuted by Herod, I pray you for the conversion of poor sinners.[7]

10. My Mother: by that sorrow you experienced in the loss of your Son, I pray you for the conversion of poor sinners; let them be found and brought back to you.[8]

11. Mother and refuge of sinners: by that sorrow that pierced your tender heart on meeting your Son with the cross on his shoulders, I pray you for the conversion of poor sinners; see, Mother, they are going to the torment of hell if they do not obtain through your mediation the pardon of their wickedness.

12. My Mother: by that sorrow you suffered on seeing your Son nailed and dead on the cross, I pray you for the conversion of poor sinners; remember that Jesus entrusted them to you as children in the person of St. John.[9]

13. My Mother: by that sorrow that wrung your tender heart on seeing in your arms the body of your most holy Son drained of blood, with so many wounds and gashes, I pray you for the conversion of sinners.

14. Afflicted Mother: by the loneliness you suffered through the death of your most holy Son, I pray you for the conversion of sinners.

15. Mother of Jesus: by all your sorrows, and by the passion and death of your most holy Son, I pray you for the conversion of poor sinners.

16. Holy Mother, convert sinners; do you not see that with their sins they crucify Jesus again and pierce your motherly heart with the sword of sorrow?

17. Ah, Mother! If I could do what you can, no sinner would fail to be converted: convert them, then, you who can.

18. My Mother, do you not see that sinners with their iniquities, besides renewing your sorrows and the pains of Jesus, are hurling themselves into hell, where they will suffer for all eternity? If it were possible that you could look on such great evils with indifference without remedying them, I can assure you that I have not the heart for it; tell me, then, what I must do to remedy them.[10]

19. My Mother: remember that you are advocate and refuge of sinners; in the name of all I come to you, asking you for the grace of conversion. Obtain it for me for the love of God.

20. Mother of the Saviour: I pray you for the conversion of pagans, heretics and Protestants. Obtain this grace for me for the love of God.

21. Mother of the Creator: I pray you for blasphemers and for those who use foul language. Obtain this grace for me for the love of God.

22. Mother of the Saviour: I pray you for the conversion of those who profane churches and feast days. Obtain this grace for me for the love of God.

23. Mother of all mothers: I pray you for the conversion of all \[unworthy\] children and unworthy parents. Obtain this grace for me for the love of God. \[*Tr.: the Spanish reads "todos los hijos e indignos padres", "all the children and unworthy parents"; "unworthy" probably governs both.*\]

24. Most meek Mother: I pray you for the conversion of the wrathful and vindictive. Obtain this grace for me for the love of God.

25. Mother of purity: I pray you for the conversion of the unchaste. Obtain this grace for me for the love of God.

26. Mother of mercy: I pray you for the conversion of the avaricious and of thieves. Obtain this grace for me for the love of God.

27. Mother of charity: I pray you for the conversion of liars and slanderers. Obtain this grace for me for the love of God.

28. Most holy Mother: by all your titles, by all your sorrows, and by the passion and death of Jesus, I pray you for the conversion of all sinners.

Hail, Mary, our Mother and advocate: by your divine motherhood and virginal purity, I pray you for the conversion of sinners; and to oblige you the more, I greet you with the Angel: Hail Mary…[11]

*Here say nine times:*

Holy, holy, holy Mary, Mother of God, Mother and advocate of sinners, heaven and earth are full of your glory.[12]

Glory to Mary, daughter of God the Father; glory to Mary, Mother of God the Son; glory to Mary, spouse of the Holy Spirit.[13]

## To obtain graces for the just

1. Most holy Virgin: I pray you for the perseverance of the just. Obtain this grace for me for the love of God.

2. My Mother: you know well the care a mother takes to keep her infant from falling to the ground; grant, then, that the just may not fall from the arms of your grace to the ground of sin.[1]

3. Sorrowful Mother: what would be the effect of the blood shed by Jesus, and of so many sorrows suffered by you, if for all that the just were to be lost? Grant, my Mother, that they may persevere in grace.

4. Sovereign Mother: you know the joy of a general over the prisoners taken from his enemy; no less, then, would be the devil's joy over each of the just souls he might seize from you. Ah, Mother, do not allow the devil to take possession of them.

5. Holy Mother: you see that the just must always fight against the enemies of the soul; do not allow them to be overcome.

6. Exalted Mother: you are queen of victories; grant all the just victory over their enemies.

7. Loving Mother: you know how great is a mother's care for her child as it comes out of an illness; you, then, who are mother of the just who have come out of the mortal illness of sin, help them not to fall back into it.

8. Loving Mother: you know that a mother rejoices to see her children healthy and growing; you, then, who are Mother of the just, obtain for them health and the increase of virtues.

9. Divine Mother: obtain for the just the holy fear of God.

10. Humble Mother: obtain for the just the virtue of humility; for, being humble, they will not fall into sin.

11. Most pure Mother: obtain for the just the virtue of chastity. I ask you this grace by your virginal purity and by the merits of Jesus Christ.[2]

12. Mother of fair love: obtain for the just this divine love. I pray you for it by the love God has for you.[3]

13. My Mother: assist the just always, now and at the hour of death. I ask it of you by your most blessed death.

14. Most holy Mother: it is certain that death will be as life has been. I pray you, therefore, that all may lead a holy life, persevering in it until death.[4]

15. Mother worthy of all praise: do not allow the just to blaspheme and utter bad words; rather, let them say *Ave María purísima* \[Hail Mary most pure\] when they hear others speak badly.[5]

16. Mother worthy of all devotion: do not allow the just to talk and be irreverent in church; on the contrary, let them by their modesty and devotion rebuke the profaners and the sacrilegious.[6]

17. Most obedient Mother: grant that the just may continue to respect their parents, and that parents may take care of their families. I ask it of you by the obedience Jesus had towards you, and by the care you had of him.[7]

18. Most loving Mother: grant that the just may not avenge the injuries they receive from their neighbour, but forgive their enemies, in imitation of Jesus and of you.[8]

19. Most chaste Mother: I pray you for the just, that the unmarried may keep chaste and the married keep faith. I ask you this grace by the chastity and fidelity with which you lived with your spouse St. Joseph.

20. Generous Mother: see that the just are charitable. I pray you for it by your charity and love.

21. Sincere Mother: do not allow the just to tell lies, and preserve them from falling into the snare of backbiting that Satan continually lays for them. I pray you for it by the charity and patience of Jesus.

22. Mother all love: just as a mother rejoices to see her children in peace and union, grant, our Mother, that all the Christian faithful may live united here on earth, so as afterwards to reign in heaven for all eternity.

23. Mother, dispenser of all graces: I pray and ask you for the grace that each one, in his craft, trade, state and profession, may fulfil his obligations without intrigues, frauds or envy.

24. My Mother, you who are a tender and compassionate Mother, have pity on travellers; preserve them from robbers and from all harm.[9]

25. My Mother, you who are Mother of mercy, of pity and clemency, have pity on seafarers; you know well how many dangers they are exposed to; free them from shipwreck and from all harm, and grant that they may happily reach the desired port.[10]

26. Mother of providence: just as a good mother does not neglect to provide her children with food and clothing, grant, loving Mother, that we may not lack what is necessary, both for the body and for the soul, so that, after having loved and served you in this world, we may love and serve you in heaven for all eternity. Amen.

Hail, Mary, consolation and protection of mortals: by your most blessed death I ask for the just the gift of holy perseverance until death, and that they may obtain eternal salvation; and to oblige you the more I will greet you with the angel, saying: Hail Mary…[11]

*Here say nine times:*

Holy, holy, holy Mary, Mother of God, most precious jewel for just souls, heaven and earth are full of your glory.[12]

Glory to Mary, daughter of God the Father; glory to Mary, Mother of God the Son; glory to Mary, spouse of God the Holy Spirit.[13]

## For the souls in purgatory

1. Mother of pity and clemency: have compassion on the souls in purgatory.

2. My Mother: when a fire breaks out in a house, help is called for at once; this, then, I ask of you, to put out the fire that torments the souls in purgatory.[1]

3. Holy Mother: when there is a fire, the first thing done is to look for water to put it out. To you I come, my Mother, to put out the blaze of purgatory; to you, who are the fountain of the crystal waters of all graces.[2]

4. Compassionate Mother: the souls in purgatory suffer the pain of loss and the pain of sense; have compassion on them, then, you who know well what the pain of loss is, through having lost Jesus, and the pain of sense in the sorrows you suffered, for which you are called Queen of martyrs.

5. Afflicted Mother: by the pains and death on the cross of your Son, have compassion on the pains that the souls in purgatory suffer.

6. Sorrowful Mother: by the sorrows you experienced, have compassion on the pains that the souls in purgatory suffer.

7. Blessed Mother: by the glorious Resurrection and wonderful Ascension of your Son, I beg you that the souls in purgatory may leave that prison and go up to heaven.

8. Glorious Mother: by your most blessed death, resurrection and assumption into heaven, grant that the souls in purgatory, leaving those prisons, may go up glorious to heaven.

9. Mother and queen of all the Saints: grant that they may pray and intercede for the souls in purgatory.

10. Mother and queen of the Angels: send them to purgatory to bring out of those pains the souls who are suffering there.

Hail, Mary, consolation of the disconsolate and protection of the afflicted: by the great joy you had on seeing yourself taken up to heaven by the ministry of the Angels, I pray you that the souls in purgatory, by means of these same Angels, may go up to the heavenly homeland and praise there eternally your divine mercies; and to oblige you the more, I will say to you with the angel: Hail Mary…[3]

*Here say nine times:*

Holy, holy, holy Mary, Mother of God and advocate of the souls in purgatory, heaven and earth are full of your glory.[4]

Glory to Mary, daughter of God the Father; glory to Mary, Mother of God the Son; glory to Mary, Spouse of God the Holy Spirit.[5]

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[6] *Aut.*, n. 270.

[7] Cf. *Aut.*, nn. 340–356.

[8] Cf. *Aut.*, nn. 95–98.

[9] *Carta a un devoto del Corazón de María*: EC, II, p. 1499

[10] Cf. Lk 15:11–32. *Aut.*, n. 43. The text of Rodríguez alluded to is in *Ejercicio de perfección y virtudes cristianas* (Barcelona 1861), part I, p. 47.

[11] Cf. the previous note.

[12] Cf. Lk 16:19–21.

[13] The *Memorare*.

[14] Cf. *Aut.*, n. 447.

[15] Lk 1:28.

[16] Cf. Lk 1:26–38.

[17] Cf. Lk 2:1–7.

[18] Cf. Lk 2:8–20; Mt 2:1–12.

[19] Cf. Lk 2:46–50.

[20] Cf. Jn 2:1–11.

[21] Cf. Lk 2:33–35.

[22] Cf. Mt 2:13–18.

[23] Cf. Lk 2:41–45.

[24] Cf. Jn 19:25–27.

[25] Cf. *Aut.*, nn. 8–9; 15; 157–163.

[26] Cf. Lk 1:28.

[27] Cf. Is 6:3.

[28] Cf. note 12 above.

[29] Cf. *Aut.*, n. 211.

[30] Cf. note 4 above.

[31] Cf. note 5 above.

[32] *Aut.*, n. 205; *Arte para saber bien morir*: EA, pp. 624–626.

[33] *Nuevo viaje en ferrocarril*, LR \[Barcelona 1863\], p. 95.

[34] Cf. note 27 above.

[35] Cf. Lk 2:51–52.

[36] Cf. Lk 23:34.

[37] Cf. *Aut.*, nn. 123–126.

[38] Cf. *Aut.*, nn. 131–132. Cf. *Aut.*, nn. 504–505. Cf. *Aut.*, n. 590.

[39] Cf. Lk 1:28.

[40] Cf. note 29 above.

[41] Cf. note 12 above.

[1] Cf. *Aut.*, n. 14.

[2] Prov 8:34–35.

[3] Cf. Lk 1:28.

[4] Cf. note 29 above.

[5] Cf. note 12 above.

## III. Delights that the Faithful and True Devotees Should Take in the Greatness of Mary

1. Virgin and Mother of God, you are full of graces;[1] I delight in it and congratulate you on it \[*os doy la enhorabuena*: literally "I give you the good hour", the ordinary Spanish phrase of congratulation\].

2. You were conceived without original sin,[2] adorned with all the virtues and honoured with all the excellences and prerogatives; I rejoice and give the Lord the most heartfelt thanks for having so exalted you.

3. You are, most holy Virgin, Daughter of God the Father, Mother of God the Son and Spouse of God the Holy Spirit.[3] Well and good \[*sea en buena hora*\], then; besides rejoicing exceedingly, I take a particular delight and joy in seeing my Mother so honoured and exalted.

4. You are virgin of virgins and immaculate mother; I rejoice, my Mother, and give thanks to God for the great privileges with which he has enriched you.

5. You are the purest, most chaste, most loving and most admirable virgin there is in heaven and on earth. Ah, my Mother, how glad I am that you are what you are!

6. You, most holy Virgin, are the most prudent, the most clement and faithful; you are the one who unites all the virtues in a heroic degree, and you surpass all the matrons of antiquity. Ah, my Mother, great is my joy at this.

7. You are, most holy Virgin, mirror of justice and throne of eternal wisdom; I rejoice at all this, my Mother.

8. You are, most holy Virgin, the fountain of paradise,[4] the ark of Noah,[5] the ark of the Covenant,[6] the rod of Aaron,[7] the city of Zion,[8] the tower of David,[9] the temple of Solomon,[10] the throne of ivory[11] and the rose of Jericho.[12] Since all these things were figures of you, may you, my Mother, be praised by all creatures, for all is owed to you.

9. You are, most holy Virgin, the rod of Jesse,[13] the cedar of Lebanon,[14] the cypress of Zion,[15] the palm of Kadesh,[16] the fair olive of the fields, the plane tree watered by the waters, the most fragrant myrrh,[17] the fleece of Gideon[18] and the mysterious little cloud of Elijah;[19] may you, my Mother, be praised by all things, for you are Queen and Lady of them all.

10. You are, most holy Virgin, bright as the morning star,[20] fair as the full moon, and chosen as the sun;[21] I rejoice, my Mother, and give thanks for this to the Most High.

11. You are, most holy Virgin, queen of the Seraphim, queen of the Cherubim, queen of the Thrones, queen of the Dominations, queen of the Virtues, queen of the Powers, queen of the Principalities, queen of the Archangels and queen of the Angels. Ah, my Mother! What great joy I have in contemplating you as queen honoured, served and attended by all the angelic choirs!

12. You are, most holy Virgin, queen of the ancient Patriarchs and Prophets, queen of the Apostles and Evangelists, queen of the Martyrs, Pontiffs and Confessors, queen of Virgins and of all the Saints; I rejoice, my Mother, I am glad and delight in it.

13. You are, most holy Virgin, the help of Christians, the protection of the forsaken, the consolation of the afflicted, the health of the sick and the refuge of the poor. Congratulations on being what you are \[*seáis enhorabuena lo que sois*\]; I rejoice greatly at it and give thanks to the Most High for having honoured you with such titles and offices, for no one could fulfil them so well as you.

14. You are, most holy Virgin, the delight of the whole most holy Trinity and the channel through which all graces come to us;[22] I rejoice and cannot help offering the Lord the greatest and most affectionate signs of gratitude for so many benefits as he has bestowed on you and on all of us.

15. Ah, my Mother! If it were in my power to convert all the Moors and Jews, all the heretics and Protestants, in a word, all the sinners in the world, so that not a single one would offend God or you, but on the contrary all would love you, I would gladly shed the blood of my veins and give a thousand lives, if I had them.[23] Mother, grant that all may love you and no one offend you, that all may be saved and none be lost. Amen.

Hail, Mary, full of graces, of prerogatives and of excellences; by that great joy you had on seeing yourself crowned by the whole most holy Trinity, and proclaimed by all the Angels and Saints queen and empress of heaven and earth and advocate of sinners, I pray you to obtain for us those graces that you know are necessary for us to love and serve God and you with all fidelity here on earth and afterwards in heaven for all eternity; and to oblige you the more, I will say to you with the Angel: Hail Mary…[24]

*Here say nine times:*

Holy, holy, holy Mary, full of grace and honoured with all those titles with which God can honour a pure creature, heaven and earth are full of your glory.[25]

Glory to Mary, Daughter of God the Father; glory to Mary, Mother of God the Son; glory to Mary, Spouse of God the Holy Spirit.[26]

*Gaude, Maria Virgo, cunctas haereses sola interemisti in universo mundo.*

*Dignare me laudare te, Virgo sacrata.*

*Da mihi virtutem contra hostes tuos.*

**Oremus.** *Concede, misericors Deus, fragilitati nostrae praesidium: ut, qui sanctae Dei Genitricis memoriam agimus, intercessionis ejus auxilio a nostris iniquitatibus resurgamus. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.*

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[1] Cf. Lk 1:28.

[2] Cf. section II, note 12.

[3] Cf. section II, note 12.

[4] Cf. Gen 2:6.

[5] Cf. Gen 6:13–22; 7:1–24; 8:1–22.

[6] Cf. 2 Sam 6:2–11.

[7] Cf. Ex 7:8–12.

[8] Cf. Mic 1:13; 4:10.

[9] Cf. Song 4:4.

[10] Cf. 2 Chr 6–8.

[11] Cf. Song 7:4.

[12] Cf. Song 7:5.

[13] Cf. Sir 24:14.

[14] Cf. Is 10:15.

[15] Cf. Ps 91:13; Song 5:15; Sir 24:17; 50:13.

[16] Cf. Sir 24:17; 50:11.

[17] Cf. Sir 24:19–20.

[18] Cf. Judg 6:36–40.

[19] Cf. 1 Kgs 18:44.

[20] Cf. Sir 50:6.

[21] Cf. Song 6:9.

[22] Cf. St. Bernard, *On the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (8 September): "On the aqueduct", in *Obras completas*, BAC (Madrid 1953), vol. I, p. 741. Ducos, *Le pasteur apostolique* (Paris 1861), vol. I, p. 443.

[23] Cf. *Aut.*, nn. 467, 573; *Apuntes de un plan para conservar la hermosura de la Iglesia*, Imprenta de la Esperanza (Madrid 1857), p. 30.

[24] Lk 1:28.

[25] Cf. section II, note 29.

[26] Cf. section II, note 12.

## IV. Formula for a Whole Family to Consecrate Itself to Most Holy Mary

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Most holy Mary, Mother of God, most pure and immaculate Virgin, queen of Angels and of men, sure refuge of poor sinners, here I am, prostrate before your presence \[*ante vuestro acatamiento*: literally "before your reverence", an old courtly phrase\] with all my family; I venerate you \[*os adoro*: here in the older sense of profound veneration; Tr.\] and choose you this day as my sovereign lady, my mother and advocate with God. Although we know that you are queen of the universe, and that all the creatures of heaven and earth are subject to your rule, nevertheless, wishing, as far as lies in us, to extend your dominion and increase the number of your subjects and devotees, we here make you a voluntary offering of ourselves, consecrating ourselves to your service; and if we were not your subjects, as in fact we are by so many titles, we declare that we would be so now, in time and in eternity, by virtue of the consecration we now make to you of all that we are, have and can do. For this same reason we all gladly offer ourselves as members of your noble Society against blasphemy, and we will try to root out of the earth this monstrous sin vomited forth by hell. To this end we will fulfil with all exactness the conditions that this Society prescribes, using every means suggested to us by the zeal we have for the greater honour and glory of God and of you, and the good of our neighbour.

I speak to you, most holy Virgin, in the name of all the persons who make up this my family. Deign, Mother of mercy, to admit us all into the number of your children and devotees; fix your merciful eyes on my family, which from this day forward will be yours; deign to take it into your care and protect it. Give us all, most holy Virgin, your blessing, and do not allow any of those who are here prostrate at your feet ever to become unworthy of your protection and your favours. Assist us in all our needs; console us in our afflictions; help us in all dangers; and grant that our devotion and confidence may be every day more lively and more affectionate. Protect us in life, and particularly at the hour of death, so that in this way we may increase the number of your faithful servants in the happy homeland of eternal glory, through the mercy of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

## V. Another Formula for Each One to Consecrate Himself to Most Holy Mary in Particular

Most holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God, our life, our consolation and, after God, all our hope. I, N. N., though unworthy to be your servant, trusting in your mercy and moved by a great desire to serve you, choose and take you this day, in the presence of the whole heavenly court, as my sovereign Lady, my beloved Mother \[*mi adorada Madre*\] and my advocate; and I make a firm resolution to honour, love and serve you faithfully for all the rest of my life, never to say or do anything contrary to the respect and honour due to you, and never to allow any of those in my charge to say or do anything that might displease you. And as a member, which I am, of your noble Society against blasphemy,[1] I will take pains to fulfil faithfully all the

conditions of that Society;[2] and not only will I try to root out of the earth that monster of blasphemy, but I will also strive to remove, correct and amend that vile and coarse way of speaking and singing indecently; for, since you are virgin and most pure mother, this language, so filthy, vile and brutish, taught by the devil, cannot but be most hateful to you.

I pray you, Mother of mercy, and beseech you by the most precious blood that your beloved Son shed for me, to receive me into the number of your children and of your humblest devotees; assist me in all my needs; obtain for me all necessary graces and helps; and above all, do not forsake me at the hour of death, but rather help me then, my Mother, in a particular way, as you are accustomed to do with your devotees. Free me from temptations; drive Satan far from me; send the holy Angels to my aid; inspire in me the theological virtues, and grant me help to make many fervent acts of faith, hope and charity; grant me a humble patience and a holy resignation to the will of your Son. I accept from now all the pains and trials of my last illness, even death itself, in penance for the sins I have committed. I give my body to the earth, to be corrupted and eaten by worms, in punishment for having offended your beloved Son and you. Let this body of sin die;[3] let it be consumed and turned to dust; let my soul live eternally. Therefore I place it in your hands and in those of your most worthy spouse, the glorious patriarch St. Joseph, whom I invoke from now for that hour, and I say with all the affection of my heart:

Jesus, Joseph and Mary, I give you my heart and my soul.

Jesus, Joseph and Mary, assist my soul in my last agony.

Jesus, Joseph and Mary, may my soul rest in peace with you.

Amen.

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[1] Cf. section IV, note 1.

[2] Cf. section IV, note 2.

[3] Cf. Rom 6:6.

## VI. Counsel on True Devotion to Mary

Jesus Christ says in the holy Gospel: *Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God*.[1] We must try to have this cleanness if we wish to attain perfection and to see, at last, the Lord and the most holy Virgin in the heavenly homeland. For this reason we must go carefully so as not to commit faults; but if we have the misfortune to commit one, we must not be frightened or lose courage on that account, but humble ourselves, repent and cleanse ourselves in the healthful bath of the sacrament of Penance, it being well understood that the power of this Sacrament is so effective that it not only destroys the sin committed but also helps it not to be committed again, provided that it is received as it should be. For this reason many saints, in order to attain and keep this purity of heart, had the custom of going to confession every day; so did St. Catherine of Siena, St. Bridget, Blessed Colette, etc., and the same was done by St. Charles Borromeo, St. Ignatius of Loyola, etc. St. Francis Borgia was not content with once only, but went to confession twice a day.

And this is not to be wondered at, for if lovers of the world would be ashamed to appear before the persons they love with some stain on their face, what wonder is it \[*¿qué mucho que…?*: an idiom, "is it any wonder that…"\] that souls who love God and Most Holy Mary should try to purify themselves ever more and more, so as to make themselves in this way more lovable to their beloved Lord and Lady? For this reason I would wish that those who truly desire to love God and the most holy Virgin should go to confession twice, or at least once, every week, or at the latest every month. I see well that, as the number of the truly converted increases every day (by the great mercy of the Lord), the little flock of Jesus Christ is multiplying,[2] and since the number of priest confessors is not increasing, but rather diminishing, a day will come when what I have just advised can hardly be put into practice. For this reason, then, I have thought of arranging a practical

method for spiritual persons who aspire to perfection and to true devotion to Most Holy Mary to make a good and brief confession.[3]

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[1] Mt 5:8.

[2] Cf. Lk 12:32.

[3] Cf. *Colección de opúsculos*, LR \[Barcelona 1851\], vol. IV, pp. 52–59.