

Visit 1



Introduction

In this Visit, Alphonsus presents Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament as the fountain of grace and source of all good things. The saints did not hesitate to visit him and remain long hours in his presence to love him, praise him, thank him, and bring him their needs. Neither should we. The opening reflection uses scripture and the words of a Spanish Poor Clare, Anna Ponce de León (1527–1601), the countess of Feria and a disciple of St. John of Avila (1500–1569), to convey this point. The prayer that follows is a heartfelt invitation to Jesus to enter our hearts and take possession of us. The prayer to Mary uses references from St. Bernard of Clairvaux and St. Peter Chrysologus, bishop of Ravenna (406–ca. 450) to describe Mary as a fountain full of grace, who was highly favored by God not for her own benefit, but to bring salvation to all through her powerful intercession.



Text

Look at Jesus in the Sacrament, the source of every good, who says: “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me” (Jn 7:37). Oh what waters of grace have the saints drawn from this fountain of the Most Holy Sacrament. From there, Jesus bestows on us all the merits of his Passion. As the prophet foretold: “You shall draw waters with joy from the savior’s fountains” (Is 12:3). The Countess of Feria, that great disciple of the Venerable Father John of Avila, who afterwards became a poor Clare and was called the spouse of the Most Holy Sacrament because of her long and frequent visits to it, when asked what she did during the many hours that she remained before the Venerable Sacrament, responded: “I could remain there for all eternity. And is not the essence of God there, who will be the food of the blessed? Good God! What does one do before him? What does one not do? One loves, one praises, one gives thanks, one asks. What does a poor person do

before a rich man? What does a sick person do before a doctor? What does a thirsty person do before a clear fountain? What does a starving person do before a sumptuous table?"

O Jesus, my most gracious, most beloved, most delightful, life, hope, treasure, only love of my life, oh what has it cost you to remain with us in this Sacrament? You had to die so that you could remain with us sacramentally on our altars. And how many injuries have you had to suffer in this Sacrament so that you could assist us with your presence. The love and desire you have to be loved by us has conquered all.

Come then, O Lord, come and place yourself within my heart. Close the door forever, so that nothing else may enter to take the love you deserve which I wish to give entirely to you. May you alone, my dear Redeemer, rule over me. May you alone possess me. And if sometimes I do not obey you perfectly, correct me sternly so that I may be more careful in the future to please you as you desire. Grant that I may desire to seek no other pleasure than that of pleasing you, of visiting you often at the altar, of staying with you, of receiving you in Holy Communion. Let all who wish seek other goods. I do not love, do not desire, anything else than the treasure of your love. This alone do I desire to seek at the foot of the altar. Make me forget myself, so that I may only remember your goodness. Blessed Seraphim, I do not envy you for your glory, but for the love that you bear to your God who is also my God. Teach me what I have to do to love him and give him pleasure.

A brief exclamatory prayer follows immediately.

Exclamatory Prayer: My Jesus, I want to love you alone. You alone do I desire to please.

At the end, one makes an act of Spiritual Communion (see pp. 40–41).

Afterward, one makes a visit to Mother Mary before one of her images.

T O M A R Y

Another ever-joyful fountain for us is our Mother Mary. St. Bernard says that she is so rich in goods and graces that there is not a person in the world who does not share in them: "Of her fullness we have all received." Most Holy Mary was made full of grace by God, as the angel saluted her: "Hail full of grace." But St. Peter Chrysologus adds that she received that great depth of grace not only for herself, but also for us. She received it so that she might share it with all those devoted to her: "The Virgin accepted this grace so that she might in return give salvation to all."

Exclamatory Prayer: Cause of our joy, pray for us.

Visiting Jesus and Mary

- Alphonsus describes Jesus' presence in the Blessed Sacrament as a flowing fountain of grace. Do you agree with this dynamic image of Jesus' presence in the sacrament? If not, what image best describes your understanding of his presence there?
- Do you visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament? If so, what do you do there? What do you not do? What would you like to do? Do you love, praise, give thanks, and ask? How would you best describe the way you pray to Jesus when you visit him in the Blessed Sacrament?
- Do you pray to Jesus from the heart? Does this kind of prayer come easily to you or do you find it difficult? Are you in touch with your feelings? Are you able to share them with others? Are you able to share them with God? Are you able to share what you truly feel with Jesus in the Sacrament?
- Do you think of Mary as a powerful intercessor? Is she someone who takes an active interest in your life? Is she someone who has a great deal of influence with her Son? Do you pray to Mary? If so, how do you pray to her? What do you ask of her?