

THE
KEY OF HEAVEN:
OR,
82/7
A MANUAL OF PRAYER.

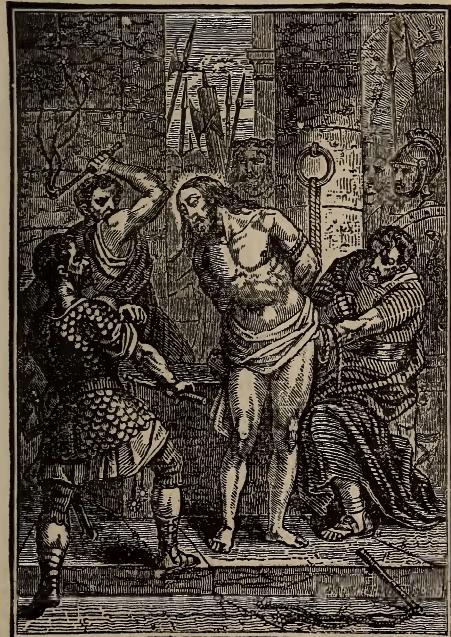
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WITH THE APPROBATION OF
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Instructions and Devotions
for the Sick.



 F attacked by any serious illness, let it be your first care to send for your spiritual director, and settle the state of your soul; which is much better done at the beginning than afterwards, when the violence of the disorder, or the quality of the remedies, may render you incapable of performing so great a work. Sickness is frequently the punishment of sin, and therefore a sincere repentance and confession is often a more effectual means of recovery than any other.

2. If your Will be not already made, as in prudence it ought, let this also be done in the beginning of your sickness, that so having settled your *temporal concerns*, you may apply your soul without disturbance to your *spiritual ones*.

3. Engage your best friends to give you timely notice whether your dis temper be dangerous, and not flatter you with the hopes of life, when there

are little or no grounds for hope. Make the best use possible of that time, which perhaps is to be your last. Admit but of few visits, nor of any other discourse but such as may be for the profit of your soul.

4. Be careful also to discharge your debts, and all other obligations incumbent upon you, at the beginning of your sickness: forgive those who have any ways injured you, and ask pardon of those whom you have injured.

5. Receive your sickness as coming from the hands of God, with a perfect resignation to his holy will, and as a just punishment of your offences. Frequently offer yourself up to him, and beg that he would grant you patience, sanctify your sufferings, and accept of them in union with those of Jesus Christ your Saviour, in satisfaction of the punishment due to your sins.

6. Procure some friend to read to you such prayers as are most affecting and proper for your condition: such as the Penitential Psalms, the Litanies,

Acts of the Love of God, of patience, resignation, &c.

7. Place a crucifix, or figure of Christ crucified, always before your eyes, in order to think often upon his passion : hide yourself in spirit in his wounds, and embrace his feet with the utmost affection of your soul.

8. Endeavor, as much as possible, to acquire a penitential spirit during your sickness ; call often on God for mercy, and make frequent acts of contrition for your sins. St. Augustin used to say, that no Christian, however innocent his life might have been, ought to venture to die in any other state than that of a penitent.

A Daily Prayer in Time of Sickness.

FORD Jesus Christ, behold I receive this sickness, with which thou art pleased to visit me, as coming from thy fatherly hand. It is thy will it should be thus with me, and therefore I submit : *thy will be done on earth as*

it is in heaven. May this sickness be to the honor of thy holy name, and to the good of my soul. For this end, I here offer myself with an entire submission to thy appointments; to suffer whatever thou pleasest, as long, and in what manner thou pleasest. For I thy creature, O Lord, have most ungratefully offended thee, and as my sins have long since cried aloud to heaven for justice, how can I now complain of thy chastisements? No, my God, thou art just in all thy ways; I have truly deserved thy punishment, and therefore can have no reason to complain of thee, but rather of my own wickedness.

Rebuke me not, O Lord, in thy fury, nor chastise me in thy wrath; but have compassion on my weakness. Thou knowest my frailty, and that I am nothing but dust and ashes. Deal not with me, therefore, according to my sins, nor punish me according to my iniquities; but according to the multitude of thy tender mercies have compassion on me. May thy justice, O Lord, be tempered

with mercy; and let thy heavenly grace come to my assistance, to support me under this illness. Enable me with strength from above to bear all the uneasiness, pains, and difficulties of my sickness with Christian patience, and to accept them with cheerfulness, in just punishment of my offences. Preserve me from all temptations, and be thou to me a tower of strength against the assaults of the enemy, that in this illness I may no ways offend thee. And should it be my last, I beg of thee so to direct me by thy grace, that I may neither neglect nor be deprived of those helps which thou hast, in thy mercy, ordained for the safe conduct of my soul in its passage to eternity; that being perfectly cleansed from all my sins, I may believe in thee, hope in thee, love thee above all things, and, through the merits of thy death and passion, be admitted into the company of the blessed, where I may praise thee forever. Amen.

*Acts of the most necessary Virtues to
be made in Time of Sickness.*

LORD, I accept this sickness from thy hands, and resign myself entirely to thy blessed will, whether it be for life or death. Not my will, but thine be done: thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

I offer up to thee, O Lord, all that I now suffer, or may hereafter suffer, to be united to the sufferings of my Redeemer, and sanctified by his passion.

I adore thee, O my God and my All, as my first beginning and last end; and bowing down all the powers of my soul in thy presence, desire to pay thee the best homage I am able.

I desire to praise thee, O Lord, without ceasing, in sickness as well as in health: and to join my heart and voice with the whole Church in heaven and on earth, in blessing thee forever.

I give thee thanks from the bottom of my heart for all the mercies and blessings bestowed upon me and thy

whole Church, through Jesus Christ thy Son; and, above all, for his having loved me from all eternity, and redeemed me with his precious blood. O let not that blood be shed for me in vain!

Lord, I believe all those heavenly truths which thou hast revealed, and which thy holy Catholic Church believes and teaches: thou art the sovereign Truth, who neither canst deceive nor be deceived: and thou hast promised the Spirit of Truth to guide thy Church into all truth. *I believe in God the Father Almighty, &c.* In this faith I resolve, through thy grace, both to live and die: O Lord, strengthen and increase my faith.

O my God, all my hopes are centred in thee, from whom I hope for mercy, grace, and salvation, through the passion and death of my blessed Redeemer. In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust: O let me never be confounded.

O sweet Jesus, receive me into thy arms in this day of my distress: hide

me within thy wounds, bathe my soul in thy precious blood.

I love thee, O my God, with my whole heart and soul, above all things: at least, I desire so to love thee. O! come now, and take full possession of my soul, and teach me to love thee forever.

I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.

When, O Lord, will thy kingdom come? When wilt thou perfectly reign in all hearts? When shall sin be no more?

I desire to embrace every neighbor in the arms of perfect charity, for the love of thee. I forgive, from my heart, all that have any ways offended or injured me, and ask pardon of all whom I have any ways offended.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy; and according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my iniquities.

O! who will give water to my head, and fountains of tears to my eyes, that night and day I may bewail my sins!

O! that I had never offended so good

a God ! O that I had never sinned ! Happy those souls that have preserved their baptismal innocence.

Lord, be merciful to me a sinner ; sweet Jesus, Son of the living God, have mercy on me.

I recommend my soul to God my Creator, who made me out of nothing ; to Jesus Christ my Saviour, who redeemed me with his precious blood ; to the Holy Ghost, who sanctified me in baptism. Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

I renounce from this moment, and for all eternity, the devil and all his works ; and abhor all his suggestions and temptations. Suffer not this mortal enemy of my soul, O Lord, to have any dominion over me, either now, or at my last hour. O let thy holy angels defend me from all the powers of darkness.

O holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for me a poor sinner, now, and at the hour of my death. O all ye blessed angels and saints of God, pray for me a poor sinner.

It may also be proper to read some part of the Meditations on the Passion of Christ, the Miserere, or other penitential psalms, devout acts of contrition, &c., but not too much at a time, lest it might fatigue the sick person.

A Daily Preparation for Death.

MY heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready: not my will, but thine be done. I resign myself entirely to thee, O Lord, to receive death at the time and in the manner it shall please thee to send it.

2. I most humbly ask pardon for all the sins I have committed against thy sovereign goodness, and repent of them all from the bottom of my heart.

3. I firmly believe whatsoever the holy Catholic Church believes and teaches; and by thy grace I will die in this belief.

4. I hope to possess eternal life through thy infinite mercy, and the merits of my Saviour Jesus Christ.

5. O my God, my sovereign good, I desire to love thee above all things, and to despise this miserable world. I desire to love my neighbor as myself, for the love of thee, and from my heart to forgive all injuries.

6. O my divine Jesus, how great is my desire to receive thy sacred body ! O ! come now into my soul, at least by a spiritual communion. O ! grant that I may worthily receive thee before my death ! I desire to unite my communion to all the worthy communions which shall be made in thy holy Church, even to the end of the world.

7. Grant me the grace, O my divine Saviour, perfectly to efface all the sins I have committed by any of my senses, by applying daily to my soul thy blessed merits, the holy unction of thy precious blood.

8. Holy Virgin, Mother of God, defend me from my enemies in my last hour, and present me to thy divine Son. Glorious St. Michael, prince of the heavenly host; my angel guardian, and bles-

sed patrons, intercede for me, and assist me in this my last and dreadful passage.

9. O my God, I renounce all temptations of the enemy, and in general whatsoever may displease thee. I adore and accept thy divine appointments with regard to my soul, and entirely abandon myself to them as most just and equitable.

10. O Jesus, my divine Redeemer, be to me a Saviour. Save me, O my God, hiding myself with an humble confidence in thy dear wounds. I deliver my soul into thy divine hands; receive it in the bosom of thy divine mercy. Amen.

