

O God, come to our aid. O Lord, make haste to help us. Glory be ...

O come and let us sing to God our hope, God's mercy is forever! O come and let us sing to God our hope, God's mercy is forever!

The Imitation of Christ

You show me to myself, what I am, what I have been, and what I have come to; for I am nothing, and I knew it not. If I am left to myself, behold I am nothing, and all weakness, but it is very wonderful that I am so quickly raised up, and so graciously embraced by you.

It is your love that effects this, freely preventing me and assisting me in so many necessities; preserving me also from grievous dangers, and, as I may truly say, delivering me from innumerable evils.

Story of a Soul

Our Lord knew that I was too weak to be exposed to temptation; I would have burnt my wings in the flame of this world, so I was not shown its deceptive light. Where strong souls find happiness, yet deny themselves out of fidelity, I find only suffering. What merit, then, can I claim for not having fallen a victim to such attachments, when it was the mercy of God that prevented me? Without him I could have fallen as low as St Mary Magdalen, and his grave words to Simon the Pharisee stir me to the depths of my soul. I know that *to whom less is forgiven, he loves less* (Luke vii, 47), and yet I have been forgiven more than was St Mary Magdalen.

It is difficult to explain what I mean, but the following example will help: supposing the son of a clever doctor stumbles over a stone on the road and breaks a limb. His father hastens to him, lifts him up lovingly and attends to his injury, making use of his medical skill. When cured, his son will show his gratitude, having every reason to love so kind a father. Here is another example: the father, knowing there is a dangerous obstacle in his son's path, goes on ahead and, unseen by anyone, removes it. The son, not knowing what he owes to his father's foresight, naturally does not express his gratitude, and loves him less than he would if cured of a serious injury. If, however, he comes to hear of it, he will love his father more than before.

I am the privileged child of God's loving Providence, of the Father who sent His Word *not to call the just, but sinners* (Luke v, 32). He expects me to love Him, not because He has forgiven me *much*, but because He has forgiven me *all*. Before receiving any proof of my love such as St Mary Magdalen gave, He let me know how much He had shielded and loved me, that I might love Him with my whole heart in return. I have often heard it said at retreats and at other times that no innocent soul loves more than a repentant one, but I long to prove this untrue.

God is forgiveness, dare to forgive and God will be with you. God is forgiveness, love and do not fear.

(Silence)

Our Father

Intercessions

Response: Kyrie, Kyrie, Eleison. Kyrie, Kyrie, Eleison

(a time for brief spontaneous personal intercessions. Each intercession is followed by the Kyrie, sung by all.)

Concluding Prayer

Christ Jesus, even when you were overwhelmed with trials, you did not threaten anyone; you forgave. We too would like to be capable of forgiving, while remaining in great simplicity of heart.

Salve Regina

Salve, Regina, Mater misericordiae
vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve
ad te clamamus, exsules filii Evae
ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes
in hac lacrimarum valle

Eia, ergo, advocata nostra,
illos tuos misericordes oculos
ad nos converte;
et Iesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,
nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.
O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.

Hail, Queen, Mother merciful
life, sweetness and hope of ours, hail
to you we cry, exiles, children of Eve
to you we sigh, mourning and weeping
in this tearful valley

Quick, then, advocate of ours,
those your merciful eyes
to us turn
and Jesus, blessed fruit of your womb,
unto us, after this exile show.
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.