



TEXTS IN SALESIAN SPIRITUALITY

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

The Spiritual Exercises

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APPENDIX - FREQUENT COMMUNION: PREPARATION & THANKSGIVING

1. As soon as I see a church, I will salute it with this verse of David: "I salute you, holy church, whose doors God has loved 'more than any dwelling of Jacob'" (Psalm 87:2). Then, I will consider the ancient temple, and will compare how much more venerable the least of all of our churches is than was the temple of Solomon, because on our altars the true Lamb of God is offered as a peaceful victim for our sins. If I cannot enter the church, I will adore from afar the Most Blessed Sacrament, and, if the church is near, I will even perform some exterior act such as removing my hat and genuflecting, without worrying about what my companions say.
2. I will go to Communion as often as I can, following the advice of my confessor. At the very least I will not let a Sunday pass without eating this unleavened bread, the true bread of heaven, for how could Sunday be a day of Sabbath and rest for me if I were deprived of receiving the author of my eternal rest?
3. The day before I receive Communion, I will remove all stain of sin by a careful confession. I will use all the diligence I have, so that I will not be troubled by scruples, while at the same time I will avoid the uselessness of anxious and curious examination.

4. If I wake up during the night, I will banish any anxious nocturnal thoughts by joyfully saying: "Why are you so downcast, O my soul? Why do you sigh within me?" (Psalm 43:5). Behold, your spouse, your joy and salvation, comes! Let us go out to meet him with a holy joy and loving confidence (cf. Matthew 25:6).

5. When morning comes, I will meditate on the magnificence of God and on my lowliness, and, with a heart filled with humbly joy, I will sing with the Church: "What a wonderful thing! The poor and unworthy servant gives lodging to the Lord and received him and feeds on his body." Then I will make acts of faith and confidence with the words of the holy gospel: "Whoever eats this bread will live forever" (cf. John 6:58).

6. After receiving the Blessed Sacrament, I will give myself entirely to him who gave himself entirely to me. I will abandon the affection for all things of heaven and of earth, saying: "What do I want in heaven? What remains for me to desire on earth, since I have God who is everything for me?" (cf. Psalm 73:25-26). I will say to him simply, respectfully, and confidently all that his love will suggest to me, and I will resolve to live according to the holy will of the Master, who nourishes me with himself.

7. Finally, when I feel dry and arid at Holy Communion, I will imitate the example of the poor when they are cold: because they have nothing with which to make a fire, they do exercises and walk in order to keep warm. I will increase my prayers and read some treatise on the Blessed Sacrament, which I adore very humbly and with a firm faith.
