



THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST—“Anyone who wishes to follow Me must deny self, take up the cross, and follow Me” (Mk 8:34).

THE IMITATION OF CHRIST

IN FOUR BOOKS
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CONTENTS

BOOK 1: USEFUL ADMONITIONS FOR THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
1. On Following Christ Our Model.....	15
2. On Having a Humble Opinion of Oneself	16
3. On the Teaching of Truth	18
4. On Being Prudent in What We Accept and Do	21
5. On the Reading of Holy Scripture.....	21
6. Concerning Inordinate Affections.....	23
7. On False Confidence and Arrogance.....	24
8. On Avoiding Too Much Familiarity.....	25
9. On Being Obedient and Submissive	26
10. On Avoiding Superfluous Words.....	27
11. On How to Acquire Peace and on the Desire to Improve	28
12. On the Advantage of Not Having Everything Our Own Way	30
13. On Resisting Temptation	31
14. On Avoiding Hasty Judgments	34
15. On Works Done from the Motive of Charity	35
16. On Bearing with the Defects of Others....	36
17. On the Religious Life	38
18. On the Examples Given by the Fathers	39
19. On the Exercises of a Good Religious	41
20. On the Love of Solitude and Silence	44
21. On Compunction of Heart	48
22. On the Consideration of Human Misery..	50
23. Meditation on Death	53

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
24. On the Last Judgment and the Punishment for Sins	57
25. On the Fervent Amendment of Our Whole Life	61

BOOK 2: CONSIDERATIONS FOR LEADING AN INTERIOR LIFE

1. On Interior Conversation	67
2. On Humble Submission.....	71
3. The Peaceful Person	72
4. On Purity of Mind and a Simple Intention	73
5. On Knowing Yourself	74
6. On the Joy of a Good Conscience	76
7. On the Love of Jesus above All Things.....	78
8. On the Familiar Friendship of Jesus	80
9. On the Want of All Comfort	82
10. On Gratitude for God's Grace	86
11. On the Small Number of the Lovers of the Cross	88
12. On the Royal Road of the Cross	90

BOOK 3: ON INTERIOR CONVERSATION

1. On the Way Christ Speaks Inwardly to the Soul	99
2. How God Speaks within Us without Sound of Words	100
3. The Words of God Are to Be Heard with Humility; Many Fail to Reflect on Them	102
4. We Should Walk before God in Truth and Humility.....	105

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
5. On the Wonderful Effect of the Love of God	107
6. On the Proof of a True Lover	110
7. How Grace Is to Be Kept Close through the Virtue of Humility	114
8. On the Lowly Esteem of Self in God's Sight	117
9. How All Things Are to Be Referred to God, Our Last End	118
10. On the Joy of Serving God and Aban- doning the World	120
11. On the Need to Examine and Moderate the Desires of the Heart	123
12. On Acquiring Patience in the Struggle against Concupiscence	124
13. On Humble Obedience after the Exam- ple of Our Lord, Jesus Christ	127
14. On Considering the Secret Judgments of God So That We Do Not Become Proud of Our Good Works	128
15. On How We Are to Conduct Ourselves in Our Desires	130
16. True Solace Is to Be Sought in God Alone	133
17. That All Our Cares Must Be Placed in God	134
18. That All Temporal Sorrows Are to Be Borne Patiently after the Example of Christ	136
19. On the Patient Suffering of Injuries, and Who Is Really Patient	137
20. On Acknowledging Our Own Infirmities and the Miseries of This Life	139

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
21. On How We Are to Rest in God above All Things	142
22. On Remembering the Manifold Benefits of God	145
23. On Four Things Which Bring Great Peace	147
24. On Avoiding Curious Inquiry into the Lives of Others	150
25. In What Consists Firm Peace of Heart and True Progress	151
26. On the Excellence of a Free Mind, the Reward of Humble Prayer Rather Than of Reading	154
27. Nothing Withholds Us from God As Much As Self-Love	155
28. Against Slandorous Tongues	157
29. How We Should Call Upon God and Bless Him in Time of Tribulation	158
30. On Asking the Divine Assistance and on Confidence of Recovering Grace	159
31. On Disregarding Creatures to Find the Creator	162
32. On Self-Abnegation and the Renuncia- tion of All Covetousness	166
33. On Inconstancy of Heart and the Directing of Our Intention to God	167
34. The Person Who Loves God Delights in Him above All Things	169
35. On the Lack of Security from Tempta- tion in This Life	172
36. Against the Vain Judgments of Humans....	173

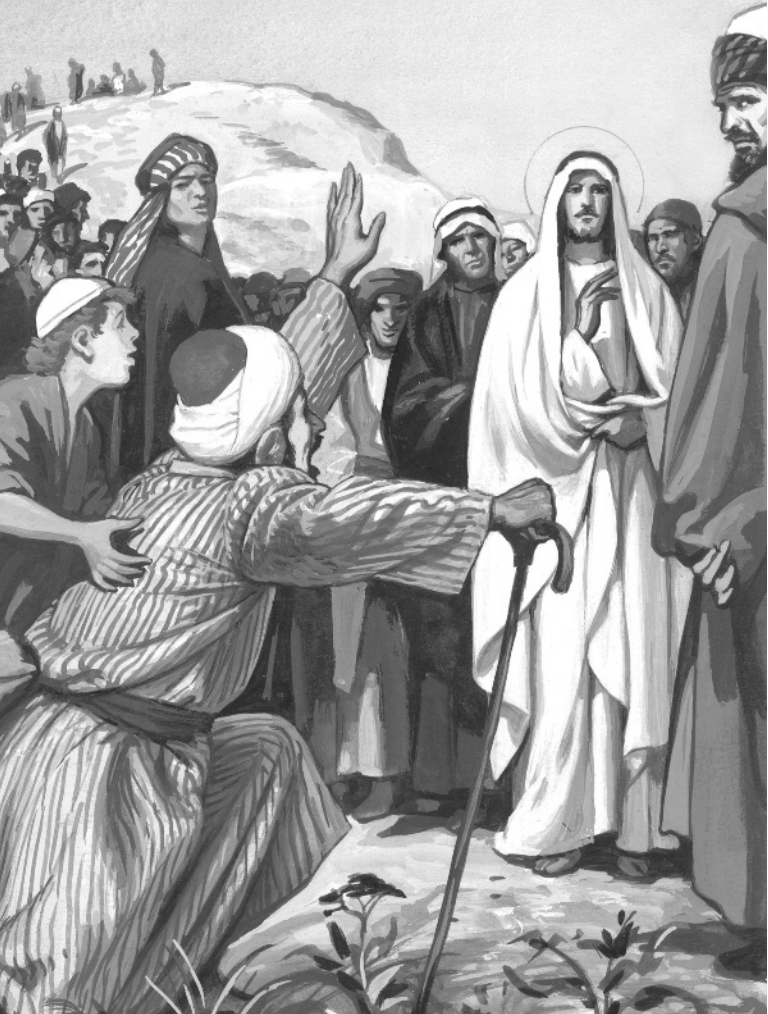
<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
37. On Self-Renunciation to Obtain Freedom of Spirit.....	176
38. On How to Govern Ourselves and on Having Recourse to God in Danger ...	178
39. On Prudence in Worldly Affairs.....	180
40. We Have No Good in Ourselves and Can Glory in Nothing.....	182
41. On the Contempt of All Temporal Things	184
42. Our Peace Must Not Depend upon Human Beings	185
43. On the Vanity of Worldly Learning	186
44. On Not Drawing to Ourselves Exterior Things	189
45. On Not Being Too Credulous Knowing How Easily We Offend in Speech	190
46. On Putting Our Trust in God When Evil Words Are Spoken against Us	194
47. All Grievous Things Are to Be Borne for the Sake of Eternal Life	196
48. On the Day of Eternity and the Troubles of This Life	199
49. On the Longing for Eternal Life and How Great Are the Joys Promised to Those Who Fight to Gain That Life ...	202
50. How Persons Who Are Desolate Ought to Offer Themselves into the Hands of God	206
51. On Exercising Ourselves in Humble Works When We Cannot Attain to the Highest	210

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
52. That Persons Ought to Think They Do Not Deserve Consolation But Punishment	211
53. God's Grace Is Incompatible with the Love of Worldly Things	213
54. Opposition between Nature and Grace ...	216
55. On the Corruption of Nature and the Power of God's Grace	220
56. That We Must Deny Ourselves and Bear the Cross with Christ	224
57. That People Should Not Become Dejected When They Fall into Some Defects ...	226
58. That People Should Not Search into the Unfathomable Judgments of God	229
59. That All Our Hope and Confidence Is to Be Placed in God Alone	234

BOOK 4: ON THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AND DEVOUT EXHORTATIONS FOR HOLY COMMUNION

1. The Great Reverence with Which Christ Should Be Received	237
2. On the Great Goodness of God Shown Human Beings in the Bl. Sacrament	243
3. On Advantage of Frequent Communion .	246
4. On the Many Benefits Bestowed on Those Who Communicate Devoutly ...	249
5. On the Dignity of the Sacraments and on the Priestly Office	252
6. On the Question of Proper Preparation before Communion	254
7. On the Examination of Our Conscience and Firm Purpose of Amendment	255

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
8. On the Offering of Christ on the Cross, and the Resignation of Ourselves.....	257
9. We Must Offer Ourselves and All That Is Ours to God, and Pray for All People	259
10. That We Must Not Lightly Refrain from Holy Communion	261
11. The Body of Christ and Holy Scripture are Most Necessary to the Faithful Soul	264
12. On How We Should Prepare to Receive Christ in Holy Communion	268
13. A Devout Soul Should Long with the Whole Heart to Be United to Christ in the Blessed Sacrament	271
14. On the Ardent Desire Some Devout People Have for the Body of Christ	272
15. That the Grace of Devotion Is Obtained by Humility and Self-Denial	274
16. That We Should Reveal Our Needs to Christ and Ask His Grace	276
17. On a Burning Love and Eager Desire to Receive Christ	277
18. That People Must Not Curiously Search into This Sacrament, But Be Humble Followers of Christ, Always Sub- mitting Their Senses to Holy Faith	279
PASSAGES IN THE IMITATION OF CHRIST, suitable to the different states of life and spiritual necessities of the faithful	282
PRAYERS	285



JESUS OPENS OUR EYES TO FOLLOW HIM—“Jesus said to [the blind man], ‘Receive your sight. Your faith has made you well.’ Immediately, he received his sight and followed Jesus” (Lk 18:42f).



BOOK 1

USEFUL ADMONITIONS FOR THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

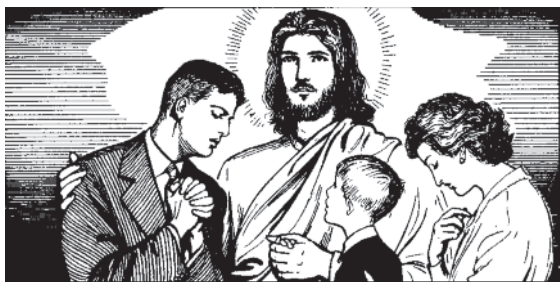
CHAPTER 1

On Following Christ Our Model

NO ONE *who follows Me will ever walk in darkness* (Jn 8:12). These words of our Lord counsel all to walk in His footsteps. If you want to see clearly and avoid blindness of heart, it is His virtues you must imitate. Make it your aim to meditate on the life of Jesus Christ.

2. Christ's teaching surpasses that of all the Saints. But to find this spiritual nourishment you must seek to have the Spirit of Christ. It is because we lack this Spirit that so often we listen to the Gospel without really hearing it. Those who fully understand Christ's words must labor to make their lives conform to His.

3. To be learned and able to discuss the Trinity will get you nowhere if you do not have humility, and therefore displease the Holy Trinity. Lofty words neither save you nor make you a Saint;



BOOK 3

ON INTERIOR CONVERSATION

CHAPTER 1

On the Way Christ Speaks Inwardly to the Soul

“**I** WILL hear what the Lord God will speak *within me*” (Ps 85:9), says a devout soul. Blessed is that soul who hears the Lord speaking within, and from His lips receives the words of comfort.

Blessed are the ears that heed the inner whisperings of the Lord, and pay no attention to the deceitful murmurings of this world; and blessed indeed are the ears which do not listen to the loud voices from outside, but instead are attentive to Him, Who inwardly teaches the truth. Blessed also are the eyes which are closed to things outside, but gaze intently on things within.

Blessed are they who acquire virtue and labor, by spiritual and corporal works, to receive daily more and more God’s inward inspirations and teachings. They also are blessed who determine to serve God alone, ridding themselves of every hindrance from the world.

Listen, O my soul, to what has been said, and close the door of your senses that you may hear inwardly what the Lord Jesus speaks within your soul.

2. This is what your Beloved says: I am your salvation, your peace, and your life; keep close to Me, and in Me you will find peace. Abandon the love of passing things and seek those that are everlasting. What else are the things of time but deceptive? And how can any creature help you if your Lord abandons you?

Therefore, leaving all creatures and worldly things behind you, do your best to make yourself pleasing to Him, so that after this life you may come to life everlasting in the kingdom of heaven.

CHAPTER 2

How God Speaks within Us without Sound of Words

DISCIPLE: *Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening* (1 Sam 3:9). *I am Your servant and beg You for the understanding to know Your commandments* (Ps 119:125). *Incline my heart to follow Your holy teachings* (Ps 119:36), *that they may seep into my soul as dew seeps into the grass* (Deut 32:2).

In ancient times the Israelites said to Moses: *“Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but do not have God speak to us or we will die”* (Ex 20:19).

But, Lord, this is not the way I pray; rather, with the Prophet Samuel, I humbly implore You: *Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening* (1 Sam 3:9).