

DEDICATION

To the divine Essence, one true God, I dedicate this little book of devotions, to honor the three distinct Persons who exist in you, who by nature are in you and are called the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The three Persons are God, but the fact that the three are God does not mean that there are three gods. The three are the one and only God, whom I adore, love, praise, glorify, exalt and bless. I serve, worship and pay all the homage I owe to my God, Lord and Master, acknowledging in the three distinct Persons the only God whom I must serve, for the three distinct Persons are the one divine Essence.

My only Lord and Master! When faced with your greatness it seems only just that I should not dare to move but should tremble with fear and respect. But although I wish to adopt this attitude, nevertheless I feel coming to life in the innermost parts of my soul the love of a child for the most true and most loving Father of all fathers. And this, far from frightening me, fills me with such a vast confidence in you that I can find nothing great enough to compare with this great confidence.

Now, most loving Father, as a child speaks and asks, so I want to tell you, most sweet and lovable Father, the great sorrow my heart feels and the ardent desire that my soul has cherished for so many years. My sorrow is that the third Person, whom we all call the Holy Spirit, is not known; and my ardent desire is that all men should know him, because he is unknown even to those who serve you and are consecrated to you.

Send him to the world again, most loving Father, for the world does not know him. Send him as a light to

enlighten the minds of all men; send him as a fire and the world will be renewed.

Come, holy and divine Spirit! Come as light and enlighten us all. Come as fire and set all hearts aflame, that they may all burn with divine love. Come, make all men know you, that they may all know and love the one true God, for you are the only thing worth loving. Come, holy and divine Spirit. Come as a tongue and teach us to praise God unceasingly. Come as a cloud and enfold us all in your protection and aid. Come as plentiful rain and quench in us all the fires of our passions. Come as the sun and as soft rays of light to warm us, so that those virtues, which you yourself planted in us on the day we were reborn in the waters of baptism, may blossom forth. Come as life-giving water and quench the thirst for pleasure that occupies all hearts. Come as a Teacher and teach us all your divine doctrines, and never leave us until we leave behind our ignorance and coarseness. Come and never leave us until we are in possession of everything your infinite goodness wished to bestow on us before we came to be, when you were so eager to bring us into existence.

Lead us to the possession of God through love in this life and then to that other possession of him that is to last for ever and ever. Amen.

Divine Essence, accept this book that I dedicate to you; let it be for the benefit of souls, a glorious aim, for in that you have your greatest honor and glory. And because you are God and infinite in kindness I ask you, Lord, to grant me the consolation of seeing you loved by me and by all creatures, in time and in eternity, and that your holy and divine Spirit may be known by all men.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

TO THOSE WHO WISH TO GET THE FULL BENEFIT OF
THIS TEN-DAY DEVOTION.

1. My first remark is that, in writing this book of devotions—which I have dedicated to God, the divine Essence—my intention has been to write it and offer it as a proof of the affection, esteem and admiration I have for all those people who, with great eagerness of soul, desire nothing, seek nothing and wish nothing but to give pleasure and joy to God in all things and who wish, whatever it may cost, to sanctify themselves in order to ensure the possession of God for eternity. It is for those people that I have written this book.

2. Whenever I meet, see or speak to people who aspire to holiness but do not know the sure way that leads to it, my soul becomes sorrowful, and I suffer greatly on this account.

To help them to achieve what they aspire to with that ardent desire of their souls, I am going to tell them what was taught and given to me by a most wise Teacher, who is the source and fountain of all wisdom and knowledge.

He exercises his function as a Teacher in the center of our souls, and the object of all his teaching is to make us see what true holiness consists of, what ways and means we have to acquire it and to protect it once it is acquired.

It is most consoling to attend this school and see how we learn our lessons, however stupid we may be. There we feel full of vigor and strength to undertake without hesitation even the most difficult and exacting tasks, whatever it may cost to carry them out, and whatever we may meet on the way.

We can achieve all things, we can learn everything, with the help of this clever Teacher and the skillful way he has of teaching. How clearly he shows us the ruses and tricks of our enemies, and how he teaches us to overcome them! So, come and join this school, which means living an interior life, where you will learn to know yourself and to know God. And afterward, from your own experience, you will see that what I say is true in everything I am going to tell you in this book.

3. The day before you begin this ten-day devotion, which is the eve of the glorious Ascension of our divine Redeemer, you must prepare yourself, by making a firm resolution to live an interior life and, once you have begun, never again to abandon it.

Do not ask yourself how much this is going to cost you; look only at how much it is worth. It has always been true that what is worth a lot costs a lot. And what is the effort we put into knowing ourselves when we compare it with the great benefits we derive from it?

Oh, how glorious it is to die to ourselves and live only in God! We cannot even imagine what it is to live in God, what it is to be deified! Words cannot express it; we feel, we taste, we experience, we touch, we possess, but no word can express what all that means! However, let us not think about the joys that loving nothing but God brings. An eternity of joys is being even now prepared for us. To suffer in order to achieve those joys, we have only the present short life; so let us make the best of it and suffer now for Christ Jesus, our divine Redeemer, as much as we can. How much he had to suffer, and how dearly it cost him to love us, simply because he wanted to make us happy for the whole of eternity! So whatever it may cost our nature, let us sanctify our soul and give joy to God in all things. Amen.