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J.M.J.

DEVOTIONS FOR THE ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR BIRTH

—*Saint John Eudes*



I. CONCERNING THE RIGHTFUL HOMAGE YOU OUGHT TO HAVE RENDERED TO GOD AT THE MOMENT OF YOUR BIRTH IF YOU HAD THE USE OF REASON.

I can never tell you enough, nor should you grow tired of hearing and considering (so important is it) that Jesus Christ, who is your Head and whose members you are, passed through all the stages of human life, through which you are passing. He did almost all the things that you do, and performed not only His outward acts but also all His interior actions for Himself and for you. Therefore, Christian sanctity and perfection consist in ceaselessly uniting yourself to Him as His members, and in continuing to do what He did, as He did it, to the best of your ability, uniting yourself with His dispositions and intentions. It likewise consists in consenting and adhering to what He did for you in the presence of His Father and in ratifying it. So, too, it consists in performing all your in war actions not only for yourself, but also for the whole world, in imitation of the Son of God, and especially for those with whom you have some special connection with respect to God. This Christian devotion inspires similar acts of union and imitation

proportionately, towards the Blessed Virgin, never separating the Mother from the Son. But you will gain a clearer idea of this from reflecting upon the devotion you should have paid Him from the very first moment of your life and at the instant of your birth on earth, if you had enjoyed the use of reason.

II. PRAYER TO JESUS FOR THE ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR BIRTH.

1. O Jesus, I adore Thee in Thy eternal birth and Thy divine dwelling for all eternity in the bosom of Thy Father. I also adore Thee in Thy temporal conception, and in Thy presence in the sacred womb of Thy most pure Mother, for the space of nine months, and in Thy birth into this world at the end of that time. I adore and revere the great and admirable occurrence of all these mysteries. I adore and honor the holy dispositions of Thy Divine Person and Thy holy soul in these mysteries. With my whole heart I adore, love and bless all the acts of adoration, love, oblation Thou didst render to the Eternal Father, and all the other divine acts and practices offered Him in these mysteries.

2. Again I adore and glorify Thee, O

Good Jesus, as performing all these things for Thyself, for me and for everyone in the world. On this anniversary of my birth I give myself to Thee, O my Dear Jesus, that I may now repeat the acts Thou didst perfect while dwelling from all eternity in the bosom of the Father, and for nine months in the bosom of Thy Mother. I unite myself to Thee to perform this duty as Thou didst perform it, in union with the love, humility, purity, and other holy dispositions of Thy adorable soul. Since Thou didst perform this act for Thyself and for me and for all men in the world, I also desire to exercise this present devotion, not only for myself, but for all the men in the world.

I now desire, O my Saviour, to render unto Thee as far as I can, with the help of Thy grace, all the rightful homage I should have paid Thee if I had been gifted with the use of reason, from the first moment of my life. So, too, I desire to pay Thee all the due need of adoration, praise, and love, which should have been given to Thee at that same time by all my friends, and by all people who ever were, are, or shall be in the world; and even that which should have been rendered to Thee by the evil angels at the moment of their

creation. I give myself again to Thee, my Lord Jesus. Enter into me, and unite me to Thyself in order that in and by Thee I may fulfil these desires for Thy pure glory and satisfaction.

3. In union, therefore, with the devotion, love, humility, purity and sanctity, and all the other sublime dispositions with which Thou didst honor, bless, love and glorify the Eternal Father in Thy eternal and temporal birth, and in Thy dwelling from all eternity in the bosom of Thy Father, and during nine months in the bosom of Thy Mother: I acclaim Thee; I adore, love, bless, and glorify Thee together with the Father and the Holy Spirit as my God, my Creator, and Sovereign Lord. I adore, love, and glorify Thee also on behalf of all creatures-angels, men, animals, plants and inanimate things. I wish I could possess in myself the totality of their being, all their strength and all their actual or potential capacity to glorify and love Thee, that I might now use it all in paying Thee this homage for myself and for them, especially those for whom, before Thee, I have both the obligation and desire to pray with special zeal.

4. I give Thee infinite thanks, O my God, on behalf of myself, all creatures, and especially my

IV. PRAYER TO THE ANGELS AND SAINTS WHOM YOU WERE IN DUTY BOUND TO HONOR AT THE TIME OF YOUR BIRTH.

Having acquitted yourself in the above manner of your rightful tribute of homage to Our Lord and His Blessed Mother, you should offer your salutations and pay your respects to the holy guardian angel assigned to you by God when you were born; to the guardian angels of your father and mother, of the house, the place, and the diocese where you were born; to the order of angels with whom God plans to associate you in heaven; also to the saints of the day, the place, and the district where you were born. You should thank them for their helpful favors, offer yourself to their honor all your life long according to God's holy will. You should ask them to offer you to Our Lord, to use you as an instrument for His glory, and to render to Him all the due tribute of homage you should have paid Him at your birth. Invoke these devoted guardians frequently to obtain by their prayers fresh grace and new strength for you to begin a new life, which may be totally consecrated to their glory and the glory of the God of angels and saints.

III. PRAYER TO THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN.

O Mother of Jesus, I honor thee, as far as I am able, in the moment of thy holy conception, and in the instant of thy birth into the world. I honor all the love, all the adoration, praise, oblations, and blessings thou didst offer to God at that time. In union with thy love, purity, and humility as thou didst adore, love and glorify Him, and didst refer thy being and thy life to Him, I adore, bless, and love my God, with thee, my Mother, with my whole heart. I consecrate and sacrifice to Him forever my life, my being, and my whole self.

So also, acclaiming thee, O Blessed Virgin, as Mother of God and consequently as my Sovereign Lady, I refer to thee, after God, the whole state of my being and my life. I implore thee most humbly to offer to God, for me, all the love, the glory, and rightful homage thou didst render to Him at thy birth, by way of satisfaction for my faults, and to cause, by thy prayers and merits, all the phases, actions, and sufferings of my life to pay undying homage to all the phases, actions, and sufferings of thy Son's life and thine own.

particular friends, for the gift of life, and the capacity to know and love Thee. I thank Thee for having preserved our existence and allowed us to be born alive to receive Holy Baptism. If we had died before being delivered from original sin by the grace of Holy Baptism, which has been the misfortune of many souls, we should never have seen Thy divine face, and we should have been deprived forever Of Thy holy love. May all the angels and saints bless Thee forever for this most special favor Thou hast accorded us.

5. Omnipotent Creator, Thou didst give me being and life solely that I might employ them in Thy love and service. Therefore, I offer my life to Thee. I consecrate and sacrifice it altogether to Thee, together with the being and life of all the angels, all men and all creatures, in testimony that I desire no longer to, live save to serve Thee with all the perfection Thou dost ask of me.

6. O my God, what a source of humiliation and pain it is for me to think that, during the first months of my life, I was Thy enemy and under the power of Satan, in a continual state of sin that infinitely displeased and dishonored Thee! For this I most humbly beg Thy forgiveness, O my

Lord, and in satisfaction for the dishonor I gave Thee while I remained in the state of original sin, I offer Thee, O Father of Jesus, all the glory given Thee by Thy immaculate Mother during the time she dwelt in the blessed womb of St. Anne, her mother.

7. O my Jesus, in honor of and in union with the love with which Thou didst accept and bear all the crosses and sufferings that were permitted by the Heavenly Father to attend Thy temporal birth, I offer Thee all the trials and afflictions I have suffered since my birth, and those remaining for me to suffer until the end of my life, accepting and loving them for love of Thee, and begging Thee to consecrate them to the homage of Thy own sufferings.

8. O Most Kind Jesus, I offer Thee all the circumstances of my birth, and I implore Thee by Thy very great mercy to wipe out all that displeases Thee in the first part of my life. Deign to make up for my faults, giving to Thy Father and to Thyself all the honor I ought to have given Thee at that time, if I had been capable of honoring Thee; and mayest Thou grant that the earliest phase of my life may render an undying homage and glory to the divine state of Thy

dwelling in the bosom of Thy Father and in the womb of Thy Mother, and to Thy eternal and temporal birth.

9. Such, O my Lord, is the rightful homage I ought to have rendered to Thee, had I been able, at the moment Of my birth, and indeed from the first moment of my life, that I now endeavor to render to Thee, although very tardily and imperfectly. But what gives me infinite consolation, O my Dear Jesus, is that I know Thou didst atone for my deficiencies by Thy temporal birth. Then Thou didst render all this just homage to God the Father, performing in a most holy and divine manner all these acts and devotions for Thyself and for me. Thou didst refer and consecrate to His glory all Thy being and Thy entire life, present and to come, and together with it all my being and every state of my life, and of all creatures that ever were, are, or shall be, all the past, present, and future state of created things being just as vividly present to Thee then as now. Thou didst look upon every life as Thine own, as something given to Thee by the Father, according to Thy blessed words: *Omnia mihi tradita sunt a Patre meo* (Matt. 11, 27). Thou wast consequently obliged, by thy profound love for Him and Thy zeal

for His honor, to refer and give and sacrifice everything to Him. And this Thou didst do most excellently.

Thou didst also offer to Thy Father the holy and divine state of Thy dwelling in the sacred womb of the Virgin, all filled with glory and love for Him, in satisfaction for the dishonor that was to be rendered to Him by myself in the state of original sin. And at the same moment when Thou didst accept and offer to Thy Father all the crosses and sufferings of Thy whole life, Thou didst offer Him also all the past, present, and future trials and afflictions of all Thy members: for it is the function of the head to act for himself and on behalf of all his members, because the head and the members are but one, and also because all that pertains to the members belongs to the head, and conversely all the attributes of the head belong to the members.

And so, O divine Head, Thou hast turned my whole being and the whole condition of my life to meritorious purpose. In Thy temporal birth, Thou didst render for me to Thy Father all the rightful homage I should have rendered Him at my own birth, and Thou didst then practise all the acts and exercises of devotion that I should have practised. Be Thou

blessed for ever! How willingly I consent and adhere to all that Thou didst do at that time for me! Indeed I ratify it with my whole will, and would gladly sign that ratification with the last drop of my blood. I also endorse all Thou didst do for me in all the other phases or actions of Thy life, to compensate for the faults Thou didst know I was going to commit.

In imitation of Thee, O my Jesus, in honor of and in union with the same love which led Thee thus to accomplish all things for Thyself and for all Thy brothers, members, and children, and for all creatures, I henceforth desire in all my functions and activities to render to Thee all the honor and glory I can, for myself and for all Christians, who are my brothers, and members of the same Head and Body. I desire to honor Thee on behalf of all men and all other creatures that are, unworly or incapable of loving Thee, as if all of them put together had entrusted me with their duties and obligations towards Thee, and had charged me to love and honor Thee on their behalf.