

Novena
To Blessed Alphonse Marie
For the Salvation of the Souls

Biography of Blessed
Alphonse Marie Eppinger

Elizabeth Eppinger was born on September 9, 1814, in Niederbronn les Bains, a small town in the north of Alsace, where the Protestant and Catholic communities lived. The next day she was baptized. She was the first child of eleven, born to a young couple of modest peasants.

As a child and a young adult, she knew the traditional conditions of a poor family. Even though she was in fragile health, she did housework and fieldwork as well. As the oldest child of the family, she also had to watch over her younger siblings.

Elizabeth was very sensitive for religious education. She was deeply marked by Christian attitudes and the beliefs of her

family. As a child, she showed the desire to know God, and yearning to pray constantly. She was attracted to the Eucharist and the Mystery of the cross. One day during preparation for her first Holy Communion, she felt a desire to consecrate her life to God in religious order. At the age of 16, she told her parents about her wish. They could not accept her request because of the difficult family conditions. The spiritual crisis that fell on Elizabeth weakened her health. Yet, her desire to consecrate her life to God had not changed. On the contrary, it became more vivid.

Elizabeth, through her mystical experiences, about which she told her confessor, and through prayer, she became realized that she had to found a new congregation. She accomplished this idea in 1849 under the direction of Bishop Räss. He appointed her with a new name, Sister Alphonse Marie, as a Superior of the new Congregation of the “*Daughters of the Divine Redeemer*”.

The Congregation was founded to honor the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the

Immaculate Heart of Mary by “imitating their charity towards all those in need,” especially caring for the sick in their homes, responding to all situations of needs of people, and being present with those who are dying, regardless of religion. The Congregation rapidly grew and expanded to the dioceses in Germany – Wurzburg, Munich, Mainz, in Austria – Vienna, and in Hungary – Sopron.

Mother Alphonse Marie, Foundress of the Congregation of the Divine Savior (the origin title of the Congregation was changed to this title), gave of herself tirelessly to her daughters and the poor. She went to the periphery to alleviate suffering of people. Exhausted and seriously ill, she expired her last breath to her Creator on July 31, 1867, at the age of 53.

The life of Blessed Alphonse Marie is an eloquent testimony of the work of the Holy Spirit, who performs miracles in the hearts of those who, like the Virgin Mary, are fully open to His actions. The example left to us by Mother Alphonse Marie is a challenge to proclaim fully the Gospel of our Lord to the people of today. In the desire for God and

spirituality, which are so necessary today, we find in the legacy of Mother Alphonse Marie peace and firm support for our lives to be faithful to Christ and his Church.

Why Should We Pray for Nine Days? Why Should We Pray the Novena?

The word novena comes from Latin *novem*, which means nine. Its supporters say that this practice arose when Jesus was ascending to the heavens and commanded his disciples to pray for nine days. The Acts of the Apostles reminds us of the period after Christ's ascension that at His command the apostles returned to the upper room praying in the simple community, which was the first core of the Church (*cf. Acts 1:12-14*), "While meeting with them, he enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father. All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers" (*Acts 1:4.14*). The disciples prayed nine days and on the tenth day – on Pentecost – received the Holy Spirit.

Every year after the Ascension, the Church experiences this first novena – Novena to the Holy Spirit. The apostles

gathered in the upper room with Christ's mother and prayed that the promise given them by the resurrected Christ would be fulfilled. "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). This first apostolic Novena to the Holy Spirit is a model of every celebration in the Church: Veni, Creator Spiritus! "Come Holy Spirit....

This Novena to Blessed Alphonse Marie is an urgent plea for salvation of souls. She said the Lord, "My Divine Spouse, I do not want honor and respect for myself; I only want honor for you and salvation of souls." She highly recommended to her Sisters, "Do not hesitate; choose the opportune moment because the soul's salvation is in question." Why do we hesitate to embrace the cross and allow ourselves to be nailed on it when our reward is happiness for all eternity?

1

GRAVITY OF SIN

“The soul’s salvation is in question which then Jesus, the Divine Savior, redeemed.”

BLESSED ALPHONSE MARIE

In the Gospel according to Matthew we read, “While he was at the table in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat with Jesus and his disciples. The Pharisees saw this and said to his disciples, ‘Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ He heard this and said, ‘Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. Go and learn the meaning of the words, I desire mercy, not sacrifice. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners’” (*Mt 9:10-13*).

“The root of all sins lies in man’s heart. The kinds and the gravity of sins are determined principally by their objects” (*CCC #1873*).

“One must appreciate the magnitude of the gift God has given us in the sacraments of Christian initiation in order to grasp the

degree to which sin is excluded for him who has put on Christ. But the apostle John also says, ‘If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us’ (*1 Jn 1:8*). And the Lord himself taught us to pray, ‘Forgive us our trespasses,’ (*Lk 11:4*), linking our forgiveness of one another's offenses to the forgiveness of our sins that God will grant us” (CCC #1425).

Why did Jesus come to this world? How is he related to us – the sinners? The main mission Jesus received from his Father is to seek sinners. He is sent to help rebuild and establish relationships of man with God.

Blessed Alphonse Marie as little Elizabeth asked her mother, “*Why have they crucified our Savior?*” Her mother answered, “*Our sins did it.*” Elizabeth continued, “*And what is sin?*” Her mother responded with a language adapted to the understanding of a little girl that sin rests in insulting God. Then Elizabeth resolutely replied, “*Then I never want to commit sin.*” Through the meditation on Jesus’ Passion, she understood more and more the gravity of sin. Jesus’ suffering during the

scourging and crucifixion is the high price which He paid to redeem us from sin.

Therefore, Blessed Alphonse Marie advises us, “Put all your confidence in God only; expect and hope for everything from him. Never believe that He will abandon us. What God does to us, it is always the best for us, because He cannot do anything that would be harmful to us.”

Litany to Blessed Alphonse Marie
Prayer for the Canonization of Blessed
Alphonse Marie

2

RESISTANCE TO SIN, EFFORT FOR PERFECTION

“Hasten to the cross!”

BLESSED ALPHONSE MARIE

St. Luke says in his Gospel, “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost” (*Lk 19:10*).

“The movement of return to God, called conversion and repentance, entails sorrow for and abhorrence of sins committed, and the firm purpose of sinning no more in the future. Conversion touches the past and the future and is nourished by hope in God's mercy” (*CCC #1490*).

What is Jesus' priority? It is the soul and the forgiveness of sins. These He prefers. Then He heals the body. Jesus' forgiving love and mercy are the foundation. He is the Savior and Redeemer.

Blessed Alphonse Marie very early meditated on the Passion of our Lord and felt

extraordinary resistance against sin. She was an example of inner life and penance. She always obeyed God and his representatives. She let herself be led by the Lord, as He held her by the hand. Thus, in the love of the Divine Redeemer that he has toward people, she built the bridge of love towards the poor, the sick, orphans, and abandoned. Elizabeth's life points to her understanding that committing sin means doing wrong against God's will and it isn't appropriate for a person who tries to please God. She made a strong resolution to always obey her mother even though she was inclined to do her own will. She says, "*Since then, the desire to know what a person must avoid to not offend God grew in me, daily.*" Elizabeth realized that for a more effective fight against sin, she should deny some things.

Blessed Alphonse Marie advises the Sisters, "*The suffering will accompany you always. The way to Calvary is your way. We have to climb up to Calvary in order to achieve heaven. Why do we hesitate to embrace the cross and allow ourselves to be nailed on it when our reward is happiness for*

all eternity? Let us bear in mind that it is the cross, and only the cross, that leads to heaven. Only suffering will open to you the way to heaven.”

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3

FIGHT AGAINST SIN - SALVATION OF A SINNER

*“Salvation of a soul
is the most important matter.”*

BLESSED ALPHONSE MARIE

From the Gospel according to Luke, “When he saw their faith, he said, ‘As for you, your sins are forgiven.’ Then the scribes and Pharisees began to ask themselves, ‘... Who but God alone can forgive sins?’ Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them in reply, ‘What are you thinking in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk?’ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins ...” (*Lk 5:20-24*).

“In the Our Father, the object of the first three petitions is the glory of the Father: the sanctification of his name, the coming of the kingdom, and the fulfillment of his will. The four others present our wants to him: they

ask that our lives be nourished, healed of sin, and made victorious in the struggle of good over evil (*CCC #2857*).

The regular confession of our venial sins helps us form our conscience, fight against evil tendencies, let ourselves be healed by Christ and progress in the life of the Spirit. By receiving more frequently through this sacrament the gift of the Father's mercy, we are spurred to be merciful as He is merciful: "Whoever confesses his sins is already working with God. God indicts your sins; if you also indict them, you are joined with God. Man and sinner are, so to speak, two realities. When you hear "man" - this is what God has made. When you hear "sinner" - this is what man himself has made. Destroy what you have made, so that God may save what He has made. When you begin to abhor what you have made, it is then that your good works are beginning, since you are accusing yourself of your evil works. The beginning of good works is the confession of evil works (*CCC #1458*).

Jesus wasn't looking for the sick. They came to him or they were brought to him. When they lowered the sick person through

the tiles, Jesus did not heal him, but said, “Your sins are forgiven” (*Lk 5:21*). Let us consider how Jesus treats sinners: He looks for them, he does not hesitate to go and be with them for their sake, to sit with them, even to follow them into the desert. He comes to them with forgiveness and dines with them. “Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (*Rom 8:39*) if we condemn sin and love the sinner.

Blessed Alphonse Marie very early began to fight against sin. She desired to love God more and more and did not want to offend Him. Her sensitivity to sin was increasingly subtle. She considered herself as the instrument of God’s mercy: she worked to show all people the goodness of God the Father and to glorify his name; she desired to know and understand God’s will in order to give herself completely to Him; she offered herself along with Christ crucified for the salvation of souls.

She did not ask God only for the forgiveness of her own sins. She was very

sensitive to sins of others. She was tortured by many offenses against God. When she saw ingratitude people had toward God who so loved them that He gave his life for them, it caused her pain and she bitterly cried. She repeated often, *“I love sinners as children of God and as my brothers. I would give my life and my blood for their salvation. Pray often for the conversion of sinners; pray with confidence. God will not reject your prayer. As you know, the mercy of God has no limits.”* She prayed for the grace of repentance for the priests, who lives unworthy of their status. Even though she suffered for their sins, she loved them. When Father Busson asked her about her feeling for sinners, especially for those who fight with embarrassing passions, she answered, *“I am not able to tell you how much compassion I feel for them. I feel love for them. Their sins disappear before my eyes. I see in them only God’s creation, the object of love of my Divine Spouse. I love them as His children, as my brothers and sisters. I would like to pour out my blood and lay down my life for their salvation.”*

She encourages her Sisters, “*God has chosen you to be an instrument of the conversion of sinners. Give Him thanks for this grace that you didn't deserve.*”

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Prayer for the Canonization of Blessed
Alphonse Marie

4

SUFFERING FOR SIN

*“Meditate for whom and why
the Son of God died.”*

BLESSED ALPHONSE MARIE

The Evangelist John writes, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might have eternal life” (Jn 3:16).

“The man of the Old Testament lives his sickness in the presence of God. It is before God that he laments his illness, and it is of God, Master of life and death, that he implores healing. Illness becomes a way to conversion; God's forgiveness initiates the healing. It is the experience of Israel that illness is mysteriously linked to sin and evil, and that faithfulness to God according to his law restores life, ‘For I am the Lord, your healer’ (*Ex 15:26*). The Prophet Isaiah intuits that suffering can also have a redemptive meaning for the sins of others” (*CCC 1502*).

Suffering, repentance, and sacrifice are words which evoke negative feelings in man. Surely, they are inextricably linked to the lives of people.

Blessed Alphonse Marie saw in some meditations how terribly Christ must suffer for the sins of some people. It means that Christ continues to suffer for the sins of people. Therefore, to the question, “When will you finally know your sins?” she answered, “*After you will devote yourselves to meditation on Jesus’ suffering.*”

According to the same witnesses’ opinion and experience, Blessed Alphonse Marie had extraordinary gifts, the gift to see the future. Therefore she was called the “Ecstatic of Niederbronn”. She also had a gift of discernment of spirits and a gift of counsel. So, united with the Christ crucified and surrendered to his Sacred Heart, she sacrificed herself for the salvation of souls. She asked nothing for herself, except to know God’s will. She obediently let herself be led by God, who called her to an unusual experience.

She prayed for the dying and the poor souls in purgatory. She imparted this attitude to her spiritual daughters, “*A person who contributes to the salvation of a soul is thereby assured the salvation of their own soul. Bear with joy whatever is unpleasant, for you can thereby make reparation for a great number of sins.*”

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5

MEETING OF A SINNER WITH JESUS – SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

“Have courage!”

BLESSED ALPHONSE MARIE

The Evangelist Luke writes, “Simon said in reply, ‘Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets.’ When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come to help them. They came and filled both boats so they were in danger of sinking. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, ‘Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man’” (*Lk 5:5-8*).

The behavior of the persons in the Gospel would probably stop us and we will ask ourselves: Is it normal to emphasize our unworthiness? We rather speak of our

qualities, unique nature, and professionalism. Thus it is evaluated by us, who have a tendency to beautify, extol, and emphasize our qualities. But let's be honest; is it possible to do it before God? Certainly not! God knows us better than we do ourselves. He sees into the most secret places of our hearts and knows all our secrets. Yet, the wonderful thing is that He still calls us as we are. How shall we answer his offering? Let's open ourselves to him and show gratitude for everything we receive, because everything is from him. St. Paul wrote about it nicely, "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me has not been ineffective" (*1 Cor 15:10*).

"Reconciliation with God brings about a true spiritual resurrection, restoration of the dignity and blessings of the life of the children of God, of which the most precious is friendship with God" (*CCC #1468*).

"'Individual, integral confession and absolution remain the only ordinary way for the faithful to reconcile themselves with God and the Church, unless physical or moral impossibility excuses from this kind of confession.' There are profound reasons for

this. Christ is at work in each of the sacraments. He personally addresses every sinner: ‘My son, your sins are forgiven’ (Mk 2:5). He is the physician tending each one of the sick who need him to cure them.⁹⁷ He raises them up and reintegrates them into fraternal communion. Personal confession is thus the form most expressive of reconciliation with God and with the Church” (CCC #1484).

“Individual and integral confession of grave sins followed by absolution remains the only ordinary means of reconciliation with God and with the Church (CCC #1497).

In the Exhortations of Blessed Alphonse Marie we read, *“Knowing that we offend God by our sins, for which we are responsible, it makes us feel sorry. Let’s confess and sincerely repent our sins. This leads us to bravely accept trials which God sends us and to participate in Christ’s suffering.”*

She encourages her Sisters, *“Let the world think of us what it will; let us always go to assist those that might be tempted by the evil enemy. Our zeal shall repel fear and*

human respect when it is a question of the salvation of a soul. What consolation, what joy for you, my children, when in heaven God will show you the souls that you have won through your care, your dedication, your sacrifices, and your night vigils.”

In the heritage of Blessed Alphonse Marie, God’s honor and the salvation of souls are united like the love toward God and our neighbor are united. Salvation of our neighbor is – according to personal experience – salvation of the whole person starting with his weaknesses, and his physical and spiritual diseases, as well. Illness and loneliness are privileged moments, so that saving grace could penetrate the soul. She loved the sick and the poor, especially poor children, and sinners. She wanted to bring all of them to God the Savior.

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6

JOY OVER ONE SINNER

*“Looking at the dying Savior
you shall know the price of souls.”*

BLESSED ALPHONSE MARIE

In the Gospel of St. John we read, “Jesus sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who has been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle. They said to him, ‘Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?’ They said this to test him so that they could have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger. But when they continued asking him, he straightened up and said to them, ‘Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.’ Again he bent down and wrote on the ground. And in response, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders. So he was

left alone with the woman before him. Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, ‘Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?’ She replied, ‘No one, sir.’ Then Jesus said, ‘Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin anymore’” (*Jn 8:3-11*).

“Jesus invites sinners to the table of the Kingdom: ‘I came not to call the righteous, but sinners’ (*Mk 2:17*). He invites them to that conversion without which one cannot enter the kingdom, but shows them in word and deed his Father’s boundless mercy for them and the vast ‘joy in heaven over one sinner who repents’ (*Lk 15:7*). The supreme proof of his love will be the sacrifice of his own life ‘or the forgiveness of sins’ (*Mt 26:28*)” (*CCC #545*).

Jesus tenderly waits to free every one of us from sin. He is a realist; He isn’t naive. He did not humiliate or shame a woman whom they brought to him. God regrets no effort to find a sinner. It is simply Jesus; He will never humiliate or embarrass us. He waits, teaching us that we ourselves condemn

and hate sin, which will bring us the joy of God's children. God's forgiving love is greater than our sin.

Blessed Alphonse Marie asks, "*O my Jesus, grant that all may acknowledge your love, especially your servants at the altar: confessors and pastors, to whom you entrusted the guidance of souls.*"

In sickness, offenses, sufferings and tepidity, she was meek and entrusted herself to God's hands as a child. Thus she struggled. She also taught her Sisters how to drive away an evil spirit. This virtue was shown in her especially when the honor of God and the salvation of souls was in a question, as well as her desire that God's name would be glorified throughout the earth. Her strong will helped her to be persistent.

She said about her heart during the ecstasies, "*My heart is constantly filled with tender love for God and for men. In fact I don't even feel any indignation toward sinners. I feel compassion, mercy and the desire that they be converted and forgiven; these are the only sentiments I feel.*" What did she feel after

ecstasies? She answers, “*After each, there is a sensation of love and of gratitude toward God, often, an unspeakable happiness, and at times, a vivid and even vehement pain when I have seen my divine Spouse suffering, or when it is his will, that by suffering I make reparation for sinners in general, or for a particular person.*”

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7

GOD FORGETS OUR SINS

“God’s glory, fulfillment of God’s will, and salvation of the souls are the only thoughts which shall occupy our mind.”

BLESSED ALPHONSE MARIE

The Evangelist Luke says, “A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.’ So the father divided the property between them. After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any. Coming to his senses he thought, ‘How many of my father’s hired workers have

more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers’” (*Lk 15:11-19*).

How did the father act, when he saw his prodigal son coming back? He did not reproach his son, but he showed joy and forgot his son’s sins. Joy is God’s attribute, because it is pure and unworldly. It is shown, when the son began his confession, that the father interrupted him. God is always prepared to forgive, forget, and rejoice with us again. It is important for us to ask for it. Ultimately, this parable brings us the knowledge that the conversion of every person, and everyone of us, is God’s grace. The Father always enters into this spiritual process which ends up in the common joy from retrieval and a new life. Experience joy from the retrieval of the immortal soul. As brothers and sisters, can we enjoy it together? Are we happy when our neighbor is successful?

The process of conversion and repentance was described by Jesus in the parable of the prodigal son, the center of which is the merciful father (*Lk 15:11-24*): the fascination of illusory freedom; the abandonment of the father's house; the extreme misery in which the son finds himself after squandering his fortune; his deep humiliation at finding himself obliged to feed swine, and still worse, at wanting to feed on the husks the pigs ate; his reflection on all he has lost; his repentance and decision to declare himself guilty before his father; the journey back; the father's generous welcome; the father's joy - all these are characteristic of the process of conversion. Only the heart of Christ, who knows the depths of his Father's love, could reveal to us the abyss of his mercy in so simple and beautiful way" (*CCC #1439*).

Blessed Alphonse Marie is a bearer of great confidence, founded on the endless mercy of the Redeemer. She says with confidence, "*Pray continually for the conversion of sinners and recommend them, in a particular way, to the beloved Mother of*

God. Your prayers will be heard.” She also calls for hope especially for those who suffer, doubt, the sick, the poor, and mainly sinners. Many visitors witnessed that she told them about God’s goodness and mercy; this touched their hearts. She brings this hope to the bed of the one who dies and tells him that God sees him as a Father does.

Blessed Alphonse Marie gives advice, *“Bear with joy whatever is unpleasant, for you can thereby make reparation for a great number of sins. Even if our sinfulness were ever so great, we would find forgiveness of God at Mary’s feet. If we offend God, Mary will always mediate the grace for us. She will be with us, particularly at the hour of death to comfort us. O happy death! How mild and easy you are when Virgin Mary stands by us! This last fight is not hard or bitter, but pleasant and nice because Mary stands by us.”*

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8

CONVERSION OF A SINNER

*“Do you not know that God does everything
for the sanctification of souls?”*

BLESSED ALPHONSE MARIE

In the Gospel according to *Luke* we read, “[Jesus] came to Jericho... and Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man, was seeking to see who Jesus was...He climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house.’ And he came down quickly and received him with joy. When they all saw this, they began to grumble, saying, ‘He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner.’ But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, ‘Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house because this man too is a descendant of

Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost” (Lk 19:1-10).

The desire to meet and see Jesus is great. The desire for absolution is great in everyone of us. We would like to hear Jesus say, “Today salvation has come to your house.” Jesus is knocking on the door of every human heart. He knocked on Zacchaeus and he opened his heart to Jesus. This is the Sacrament of Reconciliation and we can assist many to approach it. The better we use time and day, the better we defend ourselves against sin. There will be less chance to commit sin.

Blessed Alphonse Marie began very early to form her own prayers to express her fear of sin, compassion with the suffering Christ, desire for perfection, and desire for conversion of sinners. Her desire of having a share in Christ’s suffering for the reparation of sins was great. Through asceticism and patience in illness and trials, she wanted to make reparation for the sins of others and do penance for the sinners.

She recommended to her Sisters, *“Pray often for the conversion of sinners; pray with confidence. God will not reject your humble prayers. It can happen that He does not hear you immediately because He tries your perseverance in prayer or by this delay he prepares a grace of repentance for a sinner. Do not cease to pray. Pray with confidence. The One who chose us and to whom we gave our hearts is our God, the Mighty one, to whom nothing is impossible and who promised to give us what we ask of him. He cannot reject our prayer for the salvation of souls when we turn to him with confidence.”*

Blessed Alphonse Marie prayed, *“My God, I believe that through your grace I obtain forgiveness of all my sins and after my death an eternal happiness. You promised it, you who are Almighty, infinitely faithful, good, and merciful.”*

She reminded her Sisters, *“We should only keep before our eyes the honor of God, the glorification of his name, and the salvation of souls. We shouldn't desire*

anything else except for the grace to completely submit ourselves to his will.”

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9

EUCCHARIST - FOOD FOR SINNERS

*“Eucharist is for me
an irreplaceable strength of life.”*

BLESSED ALPHONSE MARIE

St. John writes, “When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into boats and came to Capernaum looking for Jesus. And when they found him across the sea they said to him, ‘Rabbi, when did you get here?’ Jesus answered them and said, ‘Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him the Father, God, has set his seal. So they said to him, ‘What can we do to accomplish the works of God?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in the one he sent.’”

So they said to him, ‘What sign can you do that we may see and believe in you? What can you do? Our ancestors ate manna in the desert, as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ So Jesus said to them, ‘Amen, amen, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’ So they said to him, ‘Sir, give us this bread always.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst’” (Jn 6:24-35).

“In the Eucharist Christ gives us the very body which he gave up for us on the cross, the very blood which he ‘poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins’ (Mt 26:28)” (CCC 1365).

Holy Communion separates us from sin. The body of Christ we receive in Holy Communion is ‘given up for us,’ and the blood we drink ‘shed for the many for the

forgiveness of sins.’ For this reason the Eucharist cannot unite us to Christ without at the same time cleansing us from past sins and preserving us from future sins: For as often as we eat this bread and drink the cup, we proclaim the death of the Lord. If we proclaim the Lord's death, we proclaim the forgiveness of sins. If, as often as his blood is poured out, it is poured for the forgiveness of sins, I should always receive it, so that it may always forgive my sins. Because I always sin, I should always have a remedy” (CCC 1393).

Blessed Alphonse Marie felt that she was an instrument of God’s mercy. With Jesus she sacrificed herself for the sinners and the salvation of souls. She desired that all people would know God’s mercy and glorify his name. For herself she asked nothing except to understand God’s will and to entrust herself to his Sacred Heart. She constantly asked, *“My Jesus, help me at all times to meditate about your love in the Eucharist more and more and receive you with a pure heart.”*

She advised her Sisters, *“Your only wish in the conversion of a sinner should be the triumph of God’s mercy over his hardened heart and God’s honor which flows from it. If God uses you as his instrument, give him thanks for this grace. It is a sign of his great and undeserved favor. Let your constant desire and all your wishes direct you to make all people to honor Jesus in the Eucharist and to know him better. The greatest grace, which God granted to us in his sufferings, is the Institution of the Most Holy Eucharist and the priestly ordination, by which priests can administer the Sacraments.*

Litany to Blessed Alphonse Marie
Prayer for the Canonization of Blessed
Alphonse Marie

LITANY TO BLESSED ALPHONSE MARIE

Lord, have mercy. *Lord, have mercy.*
Christ, have mercy. *Christ, have mercy.*
Lord, have mercy. *Lord, have mercy.*

God the Father of heaven, *Have mercy on us.*
God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
God the Holy Spirit,
Holy Trinity, One God,

Holy Mary, *Pray for us.*
Blessed Alphonse Marie,
In everything, always, and everywhere seeing
only God,
Faithful bride of the Divine Spouse,
Tireless distributor of God's love to all
suffering,
Fearless messenger of God's love to the poor
and the sick,
Meek instrument of the plan of God's love,

Loving God's presence,
Living deeply mystical unification with Jesus,
Radiating the fruits of the Holy Spirit,
Faithful apostle of the Gospel,
Tirelessly looking for God's will,
Instrument of God's mercy,
Child of the Church,
Determined to suffer with Christ,
Testifying to authentic Christian love,
Determined to avoid sin,
Seeing Jesus in every poor and needy human
being,
Flamed to save immortal souls,
Constantly praying for the parish,
Loving simplicity,
Loving mortification,
Accepting her poverty and misery,
Asking for grace of perseverance in good,
Taking care of the weak and the poor, who are
the Christ's body,
Caring that every person's life be an invitation
for our neighbor to faith,

Jesus, our Redeemer, through the intercession
of Blessed Alphonse Marie
- have mercy on the dying,

We beseech you, hear us.

- shelter the poor and the suffering in their body and spirit,
- look upon the sick and innocent children,
- be merciful to all sinners,

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,

Spare us, o Lord!

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,

Graciously hear us, o Lord!

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,

Have mercy on us!

Pray for us, Blessed Alphonse Marie,

That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

LET US PRAY

God, the Father of mercy, you gave Blessed Alphonse Marie the strength to participate in the work of the Redemption through serving those who suffer. Grant us the grace that through her intercession we may be

transformed by the love of Christ the Redeemer, and our lives may be a witness of your great love before all people. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE CANONIZATION

Heavenly Father,

You gifted Mother Alphonse Marie with the grace of being powerfully attracted to the mystery of the Cross, even in her most tender years. In this mystery she perceived Your merciful love for all Your children. You inspired her to found a Congregation to manifest that love through serving those who suffer in body or in spirit. Through the Eucharist You gave her the strength to participate in the work of the Redemption.

May we be transformed by the love of Christ the Redeemer, even as she was; and may our lives be a witness of Your great love to all those we encounter. Hear the prayers that we present through her intercession ... and if it be Your will, grant that we may soon venerate Blessed Alphonse Marie as a Saint throughout the Church. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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Please send acknowledgement of answered prayers to:

Postulácia blahoslavenej Alfonzy Márie

Nám. SNP 470/11

811 06 Bratislava

Slovak Republic

e-mail: gensdr2@gmail.com

www.alfonza-maria-eppinger.com

Nihil obstat:

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