

## CHAPTER 4

### OF THE THREE ACTS THAT RELATE TO GOD

**124** The first three acts relate to God  
because they are addressed to Him  
and the mind, in making them, occupies itself  
either with God,  
or with His kindnesses  
or with graces we have received from Him.

These three acts are

1. An act of faith
2. An act of adoration
3. An act of thanksgiving

### #1 OF THE ACT OF FAITH: OF THE DIFFERENT WAYS OF PUTTING OURSELVES IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

**125** Immediately after impressing the mind with the thought of the presence of God  
by one of the six ways proposed above,  
or by attention of the mind mixed with a few  
reflections, or by simple attention,  
it is fitting to make an act of faith  
on this truth that God is present to us  
according to the way that was used  
to become imbued with this truth of faith.

**126** And to make this act of faith more alive and more moving,  
and to remain in this sentiment of faith for a longer time,  
we can profitably call to mind  
one of the passages spoken of above  
or some other  
that is related to the way according to which we will  
have placed ourselves in the presence of God.

And when we notice  
that the mind is distracted or is poorly attentive,  
we can repeat the passage and once more pay attention,  
in order to keep the mind  
more fixed and more settled  
on the presence of God.

Of the act of faith on the presence of God in the place  
where we are because He is everywhere

**127** This is how we may make this act of faith  
on the words of Jacob  
taken from Gen., Ch. 28:

How awesome is this place,  
truly the Lord is in this place,  
and I did not think of it.

Gn 28,16

- a. How frightening it is to be in this place  
without realizing God is there,  
without respect,  
without a deep realization  
of our nothingness before God,  
and without remorse  
at the thought of our sins.

- b. God is truly here,  
and I did not think of it.

Gn 28,16

I firmly believe, O my God, this truth  
that thou art here.  
It is possible that Thou shouldst be here  
and that I do not think of Thee?

cf. Gn 28,16

I believe, O my God, that this place  
wherever it may be,  
is the sanctuary of Thy divinity.

- c. This is that made Jacob afraid  
in the place where he was,  
in view of his sins,  
and it is that which should make a Christian have  
in great confidence in You.

Gn 28,17

**128** We can make another act of faith  
on these words of Jeremiah where God says:

I fill both heaven and earth.

Jer 23,24

- a. Thou art, O my God, in heaven.  
and Thou art there in all its vastness;  
Thou art also on earth  
which thou dost permeate entirely  
because it contains Thee  
and, rather Thou dost contain it within  
Thyself.

cf. Wis 1,7

- b. This I believe, O my God,  
that wherever I go I will find Thee,  
and that there is no place  
not honored by Thy presence;  
for as the Royal Prophet so rightly says, in Psalm 74;  
He is not distant from the Orient  
nor from the Occident,

nor from the mountains nor from the desert.  
Thus, wherever I may go,  
it is my happiness to be always with Thee,  
as the same prophet says,  
Psalm 72.

Ps 72,23-18

**ACT OF FAITH ON THE PRESENCE OF OUR LORD DWELLING IN THE MIDST OF  
THOSE WHO ARE ASSEMBLED IN HIS NAME**

**129** We may make an act of faith by considering,  
as St. Matthew says, Ch. 18,

Our Lord in the midst of us  
when there are several of us  
gathered together in His name.

Mt 18,20

Thus when making mental prayer  
this is how we can proceed:

a. I believe, O my God and Savior Jesus,  
that Thou art in the midst of us  
when we are making mental prayer  
together,  
because then we are really  
assembled in Thy name.

Acts 1,14;2,1

cf. Mt 18,20

b. Can we enjoy any greater happiness  
than to have Thee in the midst of us?  
For this is the means, if we so desire it,  
to possess Thy Spirit fully.

cf. Ep 3,19;1,1-23; Col 2,10

And this is what gives us a great facility  
to have Thee ever present  
and to have among us an intimate union in Thee  
and in Thy holy love.

cf. Jn 17,21

c. Grant us this grace, O my God, we beg of Thee.

**ACT OF FAITH ON THE PRESENCE OF GOD WITHIN US TO PRESERVE US IN BEING**

**130** We may make an act of faith considering that God is present  
within us to preserve us in being,  
as St. Paul says in the Acts of the Apostles, Ch. 17:

God is not far from us,  
for we have life  
and movement  
and being only in God. Acts 17,27-28

a. I possess Thee within me, O my God,  
since I have life

only because Thou  
givest me a share in Thine,  
and since Thou abidest in me,  
to communicate it to me.

b. It is Thou, also, who givest life to all my members  
thanks to Thy dwelling within me.

It is by Thee and in Thee  
that my mind thinks  
and my heart seeks and loves  
what is truly good.

c. Not only dost Thou give me being,  
but so great is Thy goodness  
that Thou dost continually  
preserve it in me,  
and all this Thou dost  
through Thy indwelling within me.

d. All this I believe, O my God,  
because it is Thou that hast revealed it to me.

e. Give me the grace to profit by this grace  
of having Thee constantly present  
to my mind.

cf. Ps 16,8

## **ACT OF FAITH IN GOD PRESENT IN US AS IN HIS KINGDOM**

**131** We make an act of faith in the presence of God  
because He reigns in us,  
as Our Lord says in St. Luke, Ch. 17, v. 21,  
and because, we are His temples,  
as St. Paul tells us 2 Co. ch. 6, v. 17  
and in 1 Co. ch. 7, v. 19

Lc 17,21

2 Co 6,16

1 Co 6,19

**132** Considering God as reigning in us by His grace,  
we may make an act of faith in this fashion:

a. If I am fortunate enough to possess Thy holy grace,  
I believe, O my God, and am fully persuaded  
that Thou art  
and reignest in me.

cf. Lc 17,21

b. Do Thou, then, rule over all my movements,  
both interior and exterior,  
so that I am not be master of any of them.  
It is for Thee, O my God,

since Thou established Thy reign  
within me  
to direct all of these movements,  
and not to allow a single one  
to escape from Thy control.

cf. Lc 17,21  
cf. Rm 8,12-15; Ga 5,25

It is only right that Thou, who reignest in my heart,  
shouldst be the master of all that takes place  
within it.

c. Permit not, then, that it should act of its own accord,  
or under the inspiration of any human motives;  
eradicate so completely from my heart  
all natural sentiments and affections  
that nothing but what is from Thee and for Thee may  
appear in it.

cf. Rm 8,1-14; Ga 5,13-25 Col 3,1-2

**133** Considering God in our body as in His temple,  
we may make an act of faith as follows:

a. What great purity should I not  
cultivate in my body, O my God,  
since it is Thy temple,  
and since Thou dwellest in it.

cf. 1 Co 6,15-19

Everything in it should proclaim  
the sanctity of the One who resides there,  
for, as St. Paul said:

2 Co 6,16

Know you not that your bodies  
are the temples of the Holy Spirit?

1 Co 3,16;6,19

b. I must, then, offer Thee my body,  
according to the words of the same Apostle,  
as a living victim, holy and agreeable in Thine eyes,  
rendering Thee rational and spiritual  
worship.

Rm 12,1

I must then, from this moment and in the future  
look upon my body  
as consecrated to Thee, and sanctified  
by Thy presence and Thine indwelling within it.

c. In view of this  
I must not allow in it any movement that does not  
tend to Thee;  
I must observe great restraint in the use of my  
senses  
out of respect for Thy holy present.

**134** 3. Considering God in our soul as in His temple,  
we may make an act of faith as follows:

a. I believe, O my God,  
that Thou art the treasure of my soul,  
and that it enjoys the blessing of possessing Thee,  
since St. Paul assures us that:  
We are the temple of the living God,  
who dwells in us and converses with us. 2 Co 6,16

It is, then, to let me enjoy Thy companionship  
that Thou takest up thy dwelling  
in my soul  
as in Thy sanctuary  
to make it a place where Thou dost take Thy  
delights. cf. Ml 3,12; Jr 3,19

b. I adore Thee in my soul  
as in the place where Thou dost dwell,  
for it is in my soul that Thou wishest  
me to adore Thee in spirit. Jn 4,23

c. Inspire my soul with such total detachment  
from all created things  
that Thou mayest be well pleased there,  
and mayest fill me cf. 17,5  
with Thy blessings and Thy grace. cf. Ep 1,1-23

So that, being adorned  
as is proper for the place  
where Thou desirest to establish Thy  
dwelling, cf. Ps 93,5  
it will be worthy  
to welcome Thee  
and to shelter Thee within itself.

## ON THE ACT OF FAITH IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN THE CHURCH

135 We may make an act of faith  
in God's presence in the church  
because it is the house of God  
as follows:

a. When I am in church, O my God,  
I am in a most appropriate place to pray to Thee,  
because it is Thy dwelling and abode,  
and Thou thyself hast said Ap 21,3  
that it is a House of prayer. Mt 21,13

b. It is in this place that Thou dost promise  
to pour out Thy graces and blessings

on all who offer their prayers to Thee;  
and that  
here all will receive and will obtain from Thee  
whatever they ask of thee,  
because, Thou sayest, thine eyes  
will be open  
and thine ears will be attentive  
to the prayers of those who pray to Thee  
in this sacred place.

cf. 2 ch 7,15-16

May my prayer here be agreeable to Thee!  
Thy special presence in this holy place  
which is totally consecrated to Thee  
should incite us to pray there, O my God.

cf. 2 Ch 7,16

- c. Since I wish only to love Thee  
and desire only  
what can obtain for me this favor,  
give me in this holy place  
the graces that I beg of Thee  
in virtue of Thy holy presence,  
and because of Thy abiding presence here.

cf. 2 Ch 7,16

## **ACT OF FAITH IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT**

**136** Finally, we may make an act of faith  
in the presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ, residing in the  
church in the Most Blessed Sacrament  
as follows:

- a. O my God and Lord Jesus, it is truly here  
the place where Thou dost dwell  
in the most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

cf. Jn 20,18

In this sacred place  
I can, and most justly  
should recognize Thy presence,  
because Thou dost truly reside  
in this most holy and adorable Sacrament.

- b. How happy should I consider myself to be there often  
to keep Thee company  
and pay Thee my homage.

- c. And though Thou are hidden here hidden by a veil  
from my eyes,  
(still Thou art there)  
as great,

as powerful,  
as adorable  
and as lovable  
as Thou art in heaven;  
    for Thou art the same God,  
        and art truly present  
            in the one place as in the other.

d. But here

    you are in this place  
    sacrificed for us out of love,  
and so Thou art there for us  
    a loving God, a God of goodness.  
Thou art here to pour out open us  
    all the blessings of heaven,

cf, Ep 1, 3-6

provided we do not make ourselves unworthy of them  
    by our sins,  
    and by our lack of gratitude  
    for all Thy goodness.

## **REFLECTIONS WE MAY MAKE ON GOD'S PRESENCE**

**137** After making or eliciting an act of faith in the presence of God,  
it would be appropriate to reflect on this act of faith,  
(keeping in mind the method we used when placing ourselves in God's presence.)

**138** For instance, if we placed ourselves in the presence of God  
by considering Him in the place where we are,  
we might make some reflections like the following:

a. Is it possible, O my God,  
    that Thou shouldst be in all the places  
    where I go or where I am,  
    without my thinking of this?

Ps 139,7-10

Gn 28,16

b. Enlighten me, O my God, with Thy divine light,  
    so that I may always be aware  
    of Thee, and recognize you  
    always present in every place,  
    so that the thought of Thy divine presence  
    may restrain me from offending Thee.

cf. Ps 4,7;36,10

cf. Ps 139,7-10

cf. Dn 13,23

c. How could I, depending as I do on God  
    for my very being and for every  
    blessing,

Ac 17, 27-28

(dare to sin)  
in the presence of my God?

Dn 13,23

How could I dare even to remain there  
without respect and without decorum?

d. What!

The presence of a king  
makes us restrain all the movements of our body and soul,  
so as not to perform a single action  
except with circumspection,  
because the prince in whose presence we are  
deserves this consideration,  
and we would dare to fail in this regard before God,  
in whose presence we are at all time,  
wherever we may be, and wherever we  
may go!

cf. Ps 139,7-10

e. O my God, give me this grace,  
that the thought of Thy holy presence may continually  
remain before my mind,  
so that,  
since I am always in Thy holy presence,  
I may not fail for a single instant  
to think of thee, etc.

cf. Ps 16,8

**139** When we begin to experience a certain facility  
in making reflections on these acts,  
we should  
use only a few words in these reflections  
and then try to pause for a few moments in an attitude  
of inner silence,  
in order to let the reflections we have just made penetrate  
our minds in a more interior manner.

**140** Using many words in speaking interiorly when praying thus  
tends  
to unsettle the mind  
and disturb the depths of the soul,  
rather than  
procure for us true awareness of God and  
attention to Him,  
(and to do this in an interior manner.)

On the contrary, such a multiplicity of words of the mind  
and heart  
shrivels the soul,

is only passing  
and often leaves it  
devoid of God  
and of spiritual and interior matters.

**141** Just these few words:

O my God,  
since Thou art always present before me  
how could I dare take the liberty  
of doing anything that might displease Thee?

Ps 16,8

Dn 13,23

Just these few words, I say,  
if they sink deep into the mind, and are reflected upon seriously  
give the soul a vivid grasp of this truth,  
which will then remain deeply engraved on it.  
and which later can easily  
(come back to the mind from time to time.)

**142** Even if it does not come back,  
the deep reflection which we made on it will often  
leave behind it

such an impression on the soul,  
such a yearning for God,  
such a horror for sin  
and for anything that displeases God,

that the soul will often be aware of God,  
will continue to hold sin in abomination.

Thus the soul will grow accustomed gradually  
to delight in God

and in all that leads to God,  
and to delight in what leads to God,  
only because it helps to possess God,  
and not as being in itself capable  
of attracting the soul,  
of causing the soul to cling to it,  
and to attach itself thereto.

**143** Some passages of Holy Scripture are often very useful  
to help the soul make reflections of this sort, in few  
words,

especially since, being the words of God  
as faith makes them known to us,  
they possess of themselves their own divine  
unction.

cf. 1 Jn 2,27

Of themselves  
they lead us to God,  
makes us delight in God,

and help us  
(to keep Him before our minds,)  
and preserve within ourselves a delight for God.

- 144** We can use these two types of reflections  
in all the acts of mental prayer.
- 145** After making an act of faith, and some reflections on it  
as mentioned above,  
we should next make an act of adoration, of God who is  
present,  
because the first duty  
a Christian owes God is to adore Him.

## #2 THE ACT OF ADORATION

- 146** We make an act of adoration  
by recognizing God as our Creator and our sovereign Lord,  
and remaining in profound respect in His holy presence,  
realizing  
our lowliness and nothingness,  
our dependence on God,  
our unworthiness  
to enjoy the advantage and happiness of being in  
His holy presence.

- 147** This act of adoration may be made as follows:

- a. Thou are adorable everywhere, O my God,  
since Thou dost fill heaven and earth. Jr 23,24  
There is no place where Thou art not  
present, cf. Pr 139,9-10  
or where Thou shouldst not be adored.
- b. I am Thy creature,  
and as such I must recognize  
in whatever place I may be  
Thine infinite greatness Jb 40,10  
and Thy sovereign majesty. Si 13,13  
I should abase myself profoundly  
in the sight of Thy infinite perfections.  
and of that which is within Thee  
that our minds cannot comprehend  
because we cannot understand  
what Thou truly art  
and the excellence  
of Thy divine Essence. cf. 1 Co 2, 6-16

c. O my God, I acknowledge Thee in this place  
as in a place consecrated to Thee,  
for Thy presence here  
consecrates it entirely  
and makes it a sacred place,  
sanctified by Thee.

cf. 2 Ch 7,16

d. I adore Thee, then, in this place  
as in Thy temple and sanctuary,  
for Thou dost impart to it  
a share of Thy holiness  
(by Thy abiding presence here.)

e. The Angels who accompany Thee everywhere  
adore Thee here;  
it is then very fitting that I, a miserable creature,  
should join myself to them in paying Thee my homage,  
trusting that Thou wilt find acceptable  
the worship I pay Thee,  
and which I unite with theirs.

cf. Is 6,2-3

### #3 THE ACT OF THANKSGIVING

**148** The third act to be made in the first part of mental prayer  
is an act of thanksgiving,  
(because after acknowledging God's infinite greatness,  
and paying Him the homage  
due Him because of His excellence  
and our dependence on Him,

it is only right

that we should recall to mind the goodness He shows and has always shown us,  
and that we should offer Him our very humble thanks, and in particular for having  
created us, cf. Col 1,15-20; Rm 6,22  
redeemed us  
and delivered us from our countless sins,  
for having protected us from the occasions of committing them again,  
and from the wickedness of the world cf. Jn 17,15  
by bringing us into the community,  
and for the innumerable graces  
He has bestowed on us  
from the moment of our existence  
especially for the grace He is giving us at this very moment,  
of maintaining us in His holy presence,  
and allowing us to converse with Him in mental prayer.

149 This act of thanksgiving may be made in this way:

a. I have received, O my God, so many blessings  
from Thine infinite goodness,  
that I would have to be very ungrateful  
if I failed to express to Thee  
my very humble gratitude.

cf. Ps 103,2

I owe Thee everything that I am;  
there is nothing good in me which I have not received  
from Thine infinite goodness.

1 co 4,7

b. Thanks to Thee

I have been redeemed  
and delivered from my many  
sins;

cf. Col 1, 15-20; Rm 6,22

and it is Thee that hast withdrawn  
from all the occasions of sin which I might have  
encountered,

and in which I might have committed many more sins.  
by withdrawing me from the world.

cf. Jn 17,15

(give me the grace,) O my God, I beg of Thee,  
never to forget

so great a favor,  
that I may thank Thee for it every moment of my life.

c. I should consider the advantage I have

of belonging to the community  
as my sovereign happiness on this earth.

For me, this is an anticipation of paradise,  
where I enjoy the blessing of possessing Thee  
as far as faith allows me to.

I am enjoying this blessing right now, O my God,  
for Thou are present to me,  
as truly as Thou art present to the saints in heaven,  
even though I am able to know  
and to delight in this privilege  
only as far as one can do so through faith.

Still, I consider this  
such a great favor

that I am constantly prostrate  
in mind and heart  
before Thee,

to assure Thee how grateful I am for this favor.

This constitutes all the bliss of the angels and saints  
although not in the same manner.

It is Thou, O my God, who art the object  
of their joy and happiness,  
as Thou art of that which I feel  
and enjoy within myself  
at this moment when I think of Thee.

d. Accept, I beg of Thee, O my God,  
the thought of Thee and the affection I have for Thee  
as my gratitude for the grace which Thou givest me  
of thinking of Thee at this moment,  
and of being taken up the thought of Thy holy  
presence,  
for this is an action which I can offer to Thee,  
that will be the most agreeable to Thee.”

cf. Ps 16,8