

Taken from a commentary by Fr Dennis Billy CSsR on St Alphonsus' visits to the Blessed Sacrament.

Spiritual Communion

After his introduction, Alphonsus gives a brief description of the act of spiritual communion, one of the central features of a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. His intention here is simply to explain what it is and what its effects might be. To do so, he incorporates into his explanation the insights of a number of holy men and women. He refers to such saints as St. Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1224-1274) and St. Jane of the Cross (1666-1736), as well as other saintly figures such as Bl. Peter Faber (1506-1546), the Dominican nuns Paula Maresca (d. 1657) and Blessed Agatha of the Cross (1547-1621). All of these people had a deep devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and made frequent acts of spiritual communion. In offering us this array of witnesses, Alphonsus emphasises the importance of this practice as a way to holiness. He believes that a sincere act of spiritual communion can bear just as much fruit in the life of a believer as the actual reception of communion itself. It can be done at any time and at any place and without the period of fasting normally required for receiving Holy Communion. What is more, it should intensify our love for Jesus and increase our desire to receive him sacramentally.

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire to have you in my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally come, at least, spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as having already come and I unite myself and entirely to you. Never let me be separated from you.