

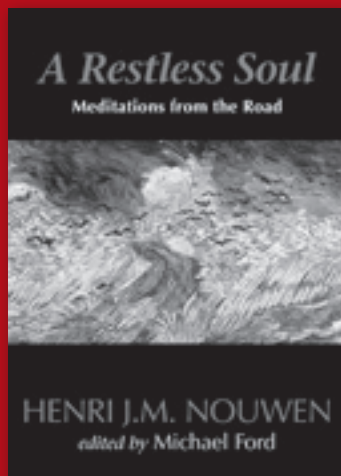
# SPIRITUAL BOOK NEWS

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SPIRITUAL BOOK ASSOCIATES

## FEBRUARY 2008 SELECTION



### A RESTLESS SOUL *Meditations from the Road* Henri J.M. Nouwen Edited by Michael Ford

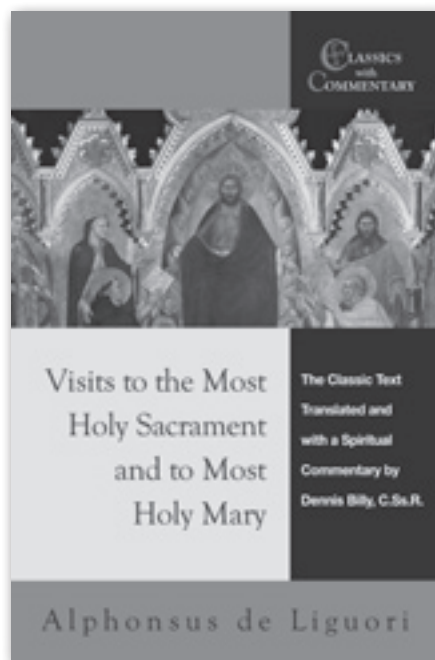
These engaging selections gathered from Henri Nouwen's travel writings offer new insights into the restless soul of a deeply spiritual man.

Whether Nouwen was describing the grim surroundings of post-Soviet Ukraine, mingling with senators in Washington, or meeting cocaine users in a South American prison, each situation tells a revealing story. Editor Michael Ford constructs an imaginary travelogue from actual places Nouwen visited that depicts Nouwen's world as one of striking contrasts—one minute rubbing shoulders with the affluent, the next walking through lands of poverty. At each destination, we discover a man whose endless search for intimacy and beauty resonates deeply with our own.

ISBN: 9781594711633 / 160 pages / \$11.95

## FEATURED SELECTION

### December 2007 Selection



### VISITS TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT AND TO MOST HOLY MARY ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI *The Classic Text Translated and with a Spiritual Commentary*

Dennis Billy, C.Ss.R.

The first complete and faithful English translation from its original Italian of *Visits to the Most Holy Sacrament and to Most Holy Mary*, a devotional classic by St. Alphonsus de Liguori.

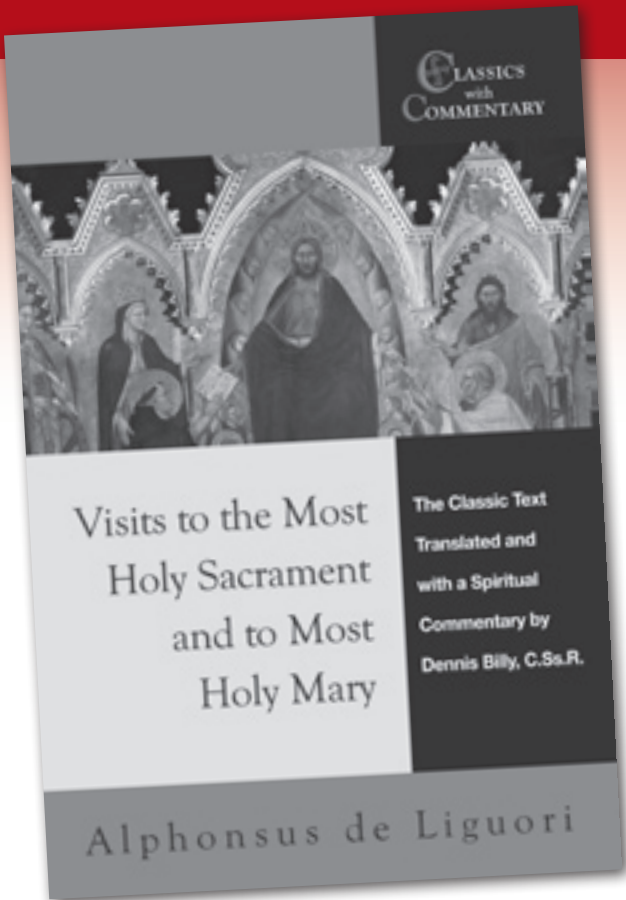
*"Father Dennis Billy has retrieved for us a spiritual classic with his insightful introduction, instructive commentary, and a clear and strong translation."*

—LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM

John A. O'Brien Professor of Theology,  
The University of Notre Dame

ISBN: 9780870612442 / 160 pages / \$15.95





# VISITS TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT AND TO MOST HOLY MARY

ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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- August 1<sup>st</sup> is his Feast Day
- Lived in Italy from 1696 – 1787
- Canonized in 1831 by Pope Gregory XVI
- Patron saint of moral theologians and confessors

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR/TRANSLATOR

**DENNIS J. BILLY, C.Ss.R.** is a teacher, writer, and poet. Ordained a Redemptorist priest in 1980, he is currently ordinary professor of the history of moral theology and Christian spirituality at the Alphonsian Academy of Rome's Pontifical Lateran University and the Karl

Rahner Professor of Catholic Theology at the Graduate Theological Foundation in South Bend, Indiana. He is the author of numerous books and articles, both popular and scholarly. Raised in Staten Island, New York, and educated there through high school in local Cath-

olic schools, he graduated from Dartmouth College and went on to receive four master degrees, as well as doctorates from Harvard University, The Pontifical University of St. Thomas, and The Graduate Theological Foundation.

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## PRAYER AT THE END OF THE DAY

Jesus Christ my God,  
I adore you and I thank you for all the graces you have given me this day.  
I offer you my sleep and all the moments of this night,  
and I implore you to keep me safe from sin.  
To this end I place myself in your sacred side and under the mantle of our Lady, my Mother.  
Let your holy angels surround me and keep me in peace;  
and let your blessing be upon me.  
Amen.

—*Alphonsus de Liguori*

# READER'S GROUP GUIDE

## RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST

Relationships are foundational to our lives. We human beings are relational beings at heart. We do not and cannot exist alone, isolated from other human contact. Relationships, good and bad, form us from an early age and continue to influence who we become throughout our lives.

Think about the key relationships in your life. Our earliest relationships, with parents, grandparents and other relatives, may have been rocky or nurturing. Regardless, these relationships set the stage for how we relate to others throughout our lives. We learn about the value of time and attention in a relationship. Without it, relationships wither and never become all that they could be. Consider what you have learned about forming healthy, fruitful relationships from your family.

The influence of parents slowly gives way to the influence of peers. These new relationships teach us new lessons about relationships with those to whom we are not related. We learn to navigate the waters of friendship and romance. Parents have been known to warn us against forming friendships with those who might influence us negatively or hurt us emotionally. As we mature, we learn to seek out relationships that nurture us and to deal with the painful or negative consequences relationships have. Consider what you have learned from friendships

and romantic relationships.

What we learn through relationships is much more than just how to be in a relationship. Everything else flows out of our connections with others. We have relationships of varying degrees with many people. We have public relationships, private relationships, friendships, romantic relationships, filial relationships—the list goes on. When we connect with others, we have the opportunity to learn about them and ourselves. The learning comes in our reflection on the relationship. If we do not stop to reflect, we do not fully learn and grow.

The most important relationship, which is foundational to all our lives, is with God. Reflection on that relationship is what we call prayer. Prayer is how we develop a deeper relationship with our Creator; it is how we grow in God's love. As we mature in faith, we seek out a still deeper, more expansive relationship with God. We learn to see more clearly God's love reflected in the relationships with those around us. We learn to see Christ in all people. Consider how your relationship with God has grown and developed.

All of these relationships are connected. Through God, we are all connected. We are one in Christ. Christians are called to love and live as Christ did, to see Christ in all people. For whatsoever we do for

the least, we do for Christ. When we begin to see Christ in each person we encounter, we cannot help but grow in love. Christ's love then infuses all our relationships.

Alphonsus de Liguori presented to us advice and prayers to facilitate spiritual communion—that burning desire for Jesus in the sacrament and the loving embrace of Christ. Consider what this spiritual communion means for our relationship with Christ the Son and God the Father. What wonderful graces we can receive through the Eucharist and through adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. And how shall we respond to these received graces? We should let them deepen not only our relationship with God but also our relationships with all people. God dwells in the Blessed Sacrament in a unique way, and God dwells in each of us. Allow God to use the sacrament, received or adored, to further the kingdom of God on earth.

Society is based on public relationships—we all relate to other humans in the public sphere. Think about how we relate to others in the church community for building the reign of God. Could this be related to Eucharistic adoration? Could connecting with Christ in the sacrament connect us to Christ in others, and could that be part of bringing the reign of God on earth?

### WHEREVER TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED...

### SUGGESTIONS FOR GROUP USE

Use questions—*Visiting Jesus and Mary*—at the end of each section as you see fit, either in your faith-sharing group, in your personal journaling, or with your spouse or friend. Groups should not neglect their use in journaling; a journal can be a useful tool for those in groups as well as for those reading on their own.

This book is well suited for those who participate in Eucharistic adoration;

members can use the prayers individually at adoration, and the fruits of the prayers can be discussed in another venue among those who participate. We typically think of Eucharistic adoration as a form of individual piety, but fruitful prayer is meant to be shared for the benefit of all. We can and should support each other on our spiritual journeys. Consider meeting periodically for communal prayer and fellowship.

Groups discussing this book should make sure leaders have these questions or others ready for group discussion and sharing. All are encouraged to pose questions of themselves and others to make the discussion more meaningful. Deeper faith is always a goal of faith sharing groups—let it be your guide for discussion.



## SUGGESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION OR DISCUSSION

This book is not just a collection of texts written by a saint; it asks something of you, the reader. Dennis Billy's commentary in the *Introduction* of each chapter gives useful historical information as well as sets the stage for

the text to follow. This historical and spiritual context makes connections for us with other saints, spiritual forbearers, and religious writings that Liguori was drawing upon.

Take adequate time to reflect. As you

read, interact with the text: write in a prayer journal, let the reflections enter into your prayer, share with a friend.

Using the discussion questions at the end of each chapter, you can delve more deeply into your own spiritual journey.

## WEBSITES OF INTEREST



[www.newadvent.org/cathen/01334a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01334a.htm)

An extensive biography of Alphonsus de Liguori from the New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia.



[www.cssr.com/english](http://www.cssr.com/english)

The official website of the Redemptorist general government.



[www.redemptorists.com/english](http://www.redemptorists.com/english)

The website of the Redemptorists in North America, including links to the provinces and information on their founder Liguori, his take on prayer and Mary. Includes a Virtue of the Month section.



[www.savior.org](http://www.savior.org)

A website offering online Eucharistic adoration with a live image of the Blessed Sacrament.

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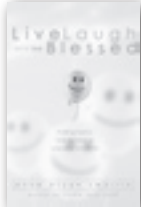
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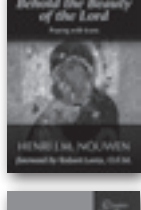
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