



The True Spouse of Jesus Christ: Or The Nun Sanctified by the Virtues of Her State (Volume 1)

St Alphonsus M Liguori CSSR

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The saint himself tells us that his book is suitable not only to nuns, but also to all members of the religious state, in that which refers to the observance of the vows, regular discipline, and the perfection of their state. As for the practice of Christian virtues, the work will be found highly useful even for seculars. We add that this volume should with greater reason be serviceable to ecclesiastics, especially to those that are charged with the difficult task of directing souls in the spiritual life; they may draw therefrom lights that may not perhaps be found as clear and as sure elsewhere. CONTENTS THE APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION 6 NOTICE 7 THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE 10 CHAPTER I. - THE MERIT OF VIRGINS WHO HAVE CONSECRATED THEMSELVES TO GOD 11 1. They become like the Angels, and are the Spouses of Jesus Christ 11 2. How much more Happy are Virgins than Married Women even in this Life 13 3. Excellence of Virginity 16 CHAPTER II. THE ADVANTAGES OF THE RELIGIOUS STATE 26 CHAPTER III THE RELIGIOUS SHOULD BELONG ENTIRELY TO GOD 41 CHAPTER IV. THE DESIRE OF PERFECTION 55 CHAPTER V. THE DANGER TO WHICH AN IMPERFECT RELIGIOUS, WHO IS BUT LITTLE AFRAID OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF HER IMPERFECTIONS, EXPOSES HER SALVATION 68 CHAPTER VI. CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT 78 CHAPTER VII. INTERIOR MORTIFICATION, OR ABNEGATION OF SELF-LOVE OBEDIENCE 89 I. Necessity of combating Self-love. Practical Rules 89 II. Detachment from Self-will 98 III The Merit of Obedience 105 IV The Obedience Due to the Superiors 110 V. The Obedience due to the Rule 118 FIRST EXCUSE 119 SECOND EXCUSE 121 THIRD EXCUSE 122 FOURTH EXCUSE 124 VI. The Four Degrees of Perfect Obedience 131 THE FIRST DEGREE 131 THE SECOND DEGREE 133 THE THIRD DEGREE 134 THE FOURTH DEGREE 136 CHAPTER VIII. EXTERIOR MORTIFICATION 142 I. Its Necessity and Advantages 142 II. The Mortification of the Eyes, and Modesty in General 150 1. MORTIFICATION OF THE EYES 150 2. MODESTY IN GENERAL 155 III. The Mortification of the Appetite 159 IV. The Mortification of the Sense of Hearing, of Smell, and of Touch 169 CHAPTER IX. RELIGIOUS POVERTY 173 I The Vow of Poverty, the Perfection of Poverty, and Community Life 173 II. The Degrees and the Practice of Perfect Poverty 182 FIRST DEGREE 182 SECOND DEGREE 183 THIRD DEGREE 188 FOURTH DEGREE 190 CHAPTER X. DETACHMENT FROM RELATIVES AND OTHER PERSONS 193 I. Detachment from Relatives 193 II. Detachment from Seculars, and even from the Sisters. 200 CHAPTER XI HOLY HUMILITY 208 The Advantages of Humility 208 II. The Humility of the Intellect or of the Judgment 214 III. Humility of the Heart or of the Will 221 IV. Continuation of the Same Subject, and especially Patience, in bearing Contempt 229 CHAPTER XII FRATERNAL CHARITY 240 The Necessity of this Virtue, and its Practice in our Thoughts and Sentiments 240 PRACTICE OF CHARITY IN OUR THOUGHTS AND SENTIMENTS 243 II. The Charity to be Practised in Words 246 III. The Charity to be Practised in Works, and towards Whom it is to be Practised 254 CHAPTER XIII. PATIENCE 263 Patience in General 263 II. Patience in Sickness, Poverty, Contempt, Persecutions, and Spiritual Desolation 273 I. PATIENCE IN SICKNESS 273 2. PATIENCE IN POVERTY 276 3. PATIENCE IN CONTEMPT AND PERSECUTIONS 278 4. PATIENCE IN SPIRITUAL DESOLATION 279 5. A FEW PRACTICAL COUNSELS 281 III. Patience in Temptations 283 CHAPTER XIV. RESIGNATION TO THE WILL OF GOD 292 I. The Merit of Resignation to the Divine Will 292 II. In what Things we Ought, in a Special Manner, to Resign Ourselves 298 CHAPTER XV. MENTAL PRAYER 306 CHAPTER XVI. SILENCE, SOLITUDE, AND THE PRESENCE OF GOD 324

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