Meditations on the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Culled by F. A. Forbes from the writings of Juliana of Norwich

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Preface

Meditations on the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. From the writings of Julian of Norwich. By F ay Forbes. Westminster: May 23, 1920. Preface. This work may be described as a commentary on, or a series of passages illustrating, the invocations of the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, extracted from the rich mine of treasures to be found in the Revelations of Divine Love by Mother Juliana of Norwich, who lived in the fourteenth century. The theme of these Revelations is the love of Jesus, especially manifested in His Holy Passion and Death, which she sums up in the last chapter of her book in the following words:

"I desired oftentimes to learn what was our Lord’s meaning. And fifteen years after and more, I was answered in ghostly understanding. Saying thus: ‘Wouldst thou learn thy Lord’s meaning in this thing? Learn it well: Love was His meaning. Who showed it thee? Love.

What showed He thee? Love. Wherefore showed it He? For love. Hold thee therein and thou shalt learn and know more in the same. But thou shalt never know nor learn therein other thing without end.’ Thus was I learned that Love was our Lord’s meaning.

And I saw full surely that ere God made us He loved us; which love was never slacked, nor ever shall be. And in this love He hath done all His works; and in this love He hath made all things profitable to us; and in this love our life is everlasting. In our making we had beginning: but the love wherein He made us was in Him from without beginning; in which love we have our beginning. And all this shall we see in God, without end.

Again she writes:

Behold and see that I have loved thee so much, ere I died for thee I would die for thee; and now I have died for thee and suffered willingly that which I may. And now is all My bitter pain and all My hard travail turned to endless joy and bliss to Me and thee.

In the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the thing signified is the Love of Jesus which has met with ingratitude from men, and that which signifies or symbolizes this love is the living Heart of Jesus, united hypostatically to the Divinity, a Heart which suffered for us, which yearns for and craves after our love in return. As “love then also is the meaning” of the devotion to the Sacred Heart it is evident that the Revelations of Mother Juliana may very suitably provide thoughts and suggestions to illustrate the titles of the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

A litany is an easy form of prayer and readily lends itself to meditation or what is known as the Second Method of Prayer. The passages chosen by the Compiler from the writings of Mother Juliana will suggest many helpful and comforting thoughts and enable the soul to penetrate more deeply into the meaning of various titles. They are also full of sweetness and unction and possessed of a simplicity and directness that arrest attention.

It is to be hoped that those who use this book will be led to become familiar with the full writings of Mother Juliana, from the study of which they will derive much spiritual profit. Our Lord Himself has promised to crown with many blessings and favors all who practice and try to spread devotion to His Divine Heart. Wherefore we commend most heartily to all these meditations, which we are sure will make our Savior and His Adorable Heart more praised and loved.

John Berry Jaggar, S J.

The Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Heart of Jesus, Salvation of all who trust in Thee, Have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, Victim of Sin, Have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, Our Peace and Reconciliation, Have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, Infinite in Majesty, Have mercy on us. Heart of Jesus, Holy Temple of God, Have mercy on us. Heart of Jesus, Tabernacle of the Most High, Have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, House of God and Gate of Heaven, Have mercy on us.   
Heart of Jesus, Glowing Furnace of Charity, Have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, Abode of Justice and Love, Have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, Full of Kindness and Love, Have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, Abyss of all Virtues, Have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, Most Worthy of all Praise, Have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, King and Centre of all Hearts, Have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, Wherein are all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, Have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, Wherein abides the Fulness of the Godhead, Have mercy on us.   
Heart of Jesus, In which the Father was well pleased, Have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, Of whose Fulness we have all received, Have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, Desire of the Eternal Hills, Have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, Patient and abounding in Mercy, Have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, Rich unto All that call upon Thee, Have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, Source of Life and Holiness, Have mercy on us.

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Heart of Jesus, Pierced by the Lance, Have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, Source of all Consolation, Have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, Our Life and Resurrection, Have mercy on us.

Meditations on the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Heart of Jesus, Son of the Eternal Father, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. The Trinity is God, God is the Trinity. The Trinity is our Maker, the Trinity is our Keeper, the Trinity is our everlasting love, the Trinity is our endless joy and our bliss, by our Lord Jesus Christ and in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Second Reflection. The most fulness of joy that we shall have is this marvelous courtesy and homeliness of our Father that is our Maker in our Lord Jesus Christ, that is our Brother and our Savior.

Third Reflection. In man is God, and in God is all; and he that loveth thus, he loveth all.

Heart of Jesus, formed by the Holy Ghost in the Womb of the Virgin Mary, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. Wilt thou see her? I know well that thou wilt see My blessed Mother; for after Myself she is the highest joy that I might show thee; and most liking and worship to Me, and most she is desired to be seen of all My blessed creatures.

Second Reflection. Wilt thou see how I love her? That thou might joy in the love I have in her, and she in Me?

Third Reflection. Wilt thou see in her how thou art loved? For thy love I have made her so high, so noble, so worthy: and this liketh Me, and so will I that it do thee.

Heart of Jesus, hypostatically united to the Word of God, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. He desires us to know that the noblest thing that ever He made is mankind; and the fullest substance and the highest virtue is the blessed soul of Christ.

Second Reflection. And furthermore He desires that we know that this dear worthy soul was preciously knit to Him in the making: which knot is so subtle and so mighty that it is united with God, in which uniting it is endlessly holy.

Third Reflection. Furthermore, He desires us to know that all the souls that shall be saved in Heaven without end be knit in this knot, and united in this uniting, and made holy in this holiness.

Heart of Jesus, Infinite in Majesty, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. Now standeth not the Son before the Father as a servant before the Lord, dreadfully clothed, in party naked: but He standeth before the Father even right richly clothed, in blissful largeness, with a crown upon His head of precious richness.

Second Reflection. Now standeth not the Son before the Father on the left side as a laborer; but He sitteth on the Father’s right hand in endless peace and rest.

Third Reflection. Now sitteth the Son; very God and very Man in His city in rest and in peace, which His Father hath prepared to Him of endless purpose; and the Father in the Son; and the Holy Ghost in the Father and in the Son.

Heart of Jesus, Holy Temple of God, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. I am that is highest. I am that thou lovest. I am that thou likest. I am that thou servest. I am that thou longest. I am that thou desirest. I am that thou meanest. I am that Holy Church preaches to thee and teaches to thee.

Second Reflection. Insomuch that Christ is our head, He is glorified and impassible: and insomuch His body, in which all His members be knit, He is not yet full glorified, ne all impassible: for the same thirst and longing that He had upon the roode-tree, the same hath He yet, and shall into the time that the last soul that shall be saved is come up to His bliss.

Third Reflection. Thus He hath pity and compassion on us; and He hath longing to have us; but His wisdom and His love suffer not the same to come until the best time.

Heart of Jesus, Tabernacle of the Most High, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. God began never to love mankind; for the same mankind hath been in the foresight of God, known and loved from without beginning.

Second Reflection. And by the endless intent and assent and the full accord of all the Trinity, the Mid Person would be ground and head of this fair kind, out of whom we be all come, in whom we be all enclosed, into whom we shall all go; in Him finding our full Heaven in everlasting joy, by the foreseeing purpose of all the Blessed Trinity.

Third Reflection. He is with us in Heaven, very man in His own person, us up-drawing. He is within us on earth, us leading. And He is with us in our soul, endlessly uniting, ruling and guiding us.

Heart of Jesus, House of God and Gate of Heaven, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. God is more nearer to us than our own soul; for He is ground in whom our soul standeth…for our soul sitteth in God in very rest, and our soul standeth in God in sure strength; and our soul is kindly rooted in God in endless love.

Second Reflection. And our kindly substance is enclosed in Jesu, with the blessed soul of Christ sitting in rest in the Godhead.

Third Reflection. And I saw full surely that it behooveth needs to be, that we should be in longing and in penance unto the time that we verily and truly know our own soul.

Heart of Jesus, Glowing Furnace of Charity, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. Our high God, the sovereign wisdom of all, in this low place He arrayed Him, and prepared Him all ready in our poor flesh, Himself to do the service and the office of Motherhood in all thing. This office we might nor could never none have done to the full but He alone.

Second Reflection. The mother may give her child to suck her milk, but our precious Mother Jesu He may feed us with Himself, and doth full courteously and full tenderly, with the Blessed Sacrament that is precious food of very life.

Third Reflection. The mother may lay her child tenderly to her breast; but our Mother Jesu He may homely lead us into His blessed breast by His sweet open side, and show us there in party of the Godhead, and the joys of Heaven with ghostly sureness of endless bliss.

Heart of Jesus, Abode of Justice and Love, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. In falling and in rising, we are ever preciously kept in one love. For in the beholding of God we fall not. And in the beholding of ourself we stand not.

Second Reflection. Love and dread are brethren, and they are rooted in us by the goodness of our Maker, and they shall never be taken from us without end. The dread that maketh us hastily to flee from all that is not good, and fall into our Lord’s breast, as the child into the mother’s arms, knowing our feebleness and our great need, knowing His everlasting goodness and His great love, ever seeking Him for salvation, cleaving to Him with faithful trust; that dread it is kind and gracious and good and true.

Third Reflection. Desire we then of our Lord God to dread Him reverently, and love Him meekly, and to trust in Him mightily: for when we dread Him reverently and love Him meekly, our trust is never in vain.

Heart of Jesus, Full of Kindness and Love, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. He cometh down to us in the lowest part of our need. For He hath no despite of that He made, ne hath He no disdain to serve us at the simplest office that to our body longeth in kind, for love of the soul that He made to His own likeness.

Second Reflection. As the body is clad in the cloth, and the flesh in the skin, and the bones in the flesh, and the heart in the chest, so are we soul and body clad and enclosed in the goodness of God.

Third Reflection. He that is highest and mightiest, noblest and worthiest, is lowest and meekest, homeliest and courtestiest.

Heart of Jesus, Abyss of all Virtues, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. Our soul shall never have full rest till it come into Him, knowing that He is full of joy, homely and courteous, and blessful, and very life.

Second Reflection. God will be known, and He liketh that we rest us in Him. For all that is beneath Him suffices not us.

Third Reflection. For till I am substantially united to Him, I may never have full rest, ne very blisse; that is to say, that I be so fastened to Him that there be right naught that is made between my God and me.

Heart of Jesus, Most Worthy of all Praise, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. It is God’s will that we take His behests and His comfortings as largely and mightily as we may take them.

Second Reflection. And also He will that we take our abidings and dis-eases as lightly as we may take them, and set them at naught: for the lightlier that we take them, and the less price that we set at them for love, less pain shall we have in the feeling of them, and the more thank and reward shall we have for them.

Third Reflection. God will be known: for if we know Him and love Him, and reverently dread Him, we shall have patience and be in great rest. And it should bee great liking to us all that He doth.

Heart of Jesus, King and Centre of all Hearts, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. He is our Keeper while we are here, our way and our Heaven, in true love and faithful trust.

Second Reflection. Flee we to our Lord, and we shall be comforted, touch we Him, and we shall be made clean; cleave we to Him, and we shall be sure and safe from all manner of perils; for our courteous Lord will that we be as homely with Him as heart may think, or soul may desire.

Third Reflection. The blessed comfort that I saw, it is large enough for us all.

Heart of Jesus, Wherein are all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. See I am God: See I am in all things: See I never left My hands of My works, ne never shall without end: See I lead all thing to the end that I ordain it to, from without beginning, by the same might, wisdom and love that I made it with. How should anything be amiss?

Second Reflection. This is the cause which we be not all in ease of heart and soul: for we seek here rest in this thing that is so little, where no rest is in, and we know not our God that is all mighty, all wise, and all good, for He is true rest.

Third Reflection. God, of Thy goodness, give me Thyself, for Thou art enough to me, and I may ask nothing that is less, that may be fully worship to Thee, and if I ask anything that is less, ever me wanteth. But only in Thee I have all.

Heart of Jesus, Wherein abides the Fulness of the Godhead, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. He made man’s soul to be His own city and His dwelling place, which is most pleasing to Him of all His works.

Second Reflection. He loveth all that shall be saved, as it were all one soul; for in every soul that shall be saved is a godly will that never finally assenteth to sin, and never shall. Just as there is a beastly will in the lower party that may will no good; just as there is a godly will in the higher party, which will is so good that it may never will evil endlessly but ever good; and therefore we be that He loveth, and endlessly we do that He liketh.

Third Reflection. And this showed our good Lord in the fullness of love that we stand in His sight. Yea, that He loveth us now, as well as while that we be here, as He shall do when we shall be there before His blessed Face. But for failing of love in our party, therefore is all our travail.

Heart of Jesus, In which the Father was well pleased, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. He will we know that not only He taketh heed to noble things and to great, but also to little and to small, to low and to simple. He will that we know that the least thing shall not be forgotten.

Second Reflection. Desire we to be like to our brethren which be the saints in Heaven, that will right naught but God’s will. Then shall we only enjoy in God.

Third Reflection. For the fulness of joy is to behold God in all; for by the same blessed might, wisdom and love that He made all thing to the same end, our Lord God leadeth it continually, and there to Himself shall bring it, and when it is time we shall see it.

Heart of Jesus, Of whose Fulness we have all received, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. Thus saw I that God is our very peace; and He is our sure Keeper when we be ourself at unpeace; and He continually worketh to bring us into endless peace: and thus, when by the working of mercy and grace we be made meek and mild, then we be full safe.

Second Reflection. Suddenly is the soul united to God when she is truly peaced in herself; for in Him is found no wrath.

Third Reflection. Thus is God our steadfast ground and shall be our full bliss, and make us unchangeable, as He is.

Heart of Jesus, Desire of the Eternal Hills, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. Thus I saw Him and I sought Him, and I had Him, and wanted Him, and this is and should be our common working in this life.

Second Reflection. He will that we believe that we see Him continually, though we think that it be but little, and in the belief He maketh us ever more to get grace; for He will be seen, and He will be sought, and He will be waited for,\* and He will be trusted.

Third Reflection. The continually seeking of the soul pleaseth God much; for it may do no more than seek, suffer and trust.

FOURTH REFLECTION. A soul that only resigneth him to God with very trust, either in seeking or in beholding, it is the most worship that he may do.

Heart of Jesus, Patient and abounding in Mercy, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. This is most wisdom in a creature, to do after the will and counsel of his highest sovereign friend. This friend is Jesu, and it is His will and counsel that we hold us with Him and fasten us homely to Him evermore in what state soever we be; for whether we are foul or clean, we are ever one in His loving.

Second Reflection. This is the remedy, that we be a-known of our wretchedness, and flie to our Lord; for ever the needier that we be, the more spiritual is it to us to touch Him.

Third Reflection. For the goodness of God is the highest prayer, and it cometh down to us in the lowest part of our need; it quickeneth our soul and maketh it to live, and maketh it to grow in grace and virtue; it is nearest in nature and readiest in grace.

Heart of Jesus, Rich unto All that call upon Thee, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. Ever a glad-giver taketh, but little heed at the thing that he giveth; but all his desire and all his intent is to please him and solace him to whom he giveth it.

Second Reflection. And if the receiver take the gift gladly and thankfully, then the courteous giver setteth at naught all his cost and all his travail, for joy and delight he hath; for he hath pleased and solaced him that he loved.

Third Reflection. We may ask of our Lover with reverence all that we will: for our natural will is to have God, and the goodwill of God is to have us: and we may never cease of willing ne of loving, till we have Him in fulness of joy.

Heart of Jesus, Source of Life and Holiness, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. It is His liking to reign in our understanding blessedfully, and to sit in our soul restfully, and to dwell in our soul endlessly, us all working into Him. In which working, He desires that we be His helpers, giving to Him all our intent, learning His laws, keeping His teaching, desiring all be done that He doth, truly trusting in Him.

Second Reflection. The flood of mercy, that is His dear worthy blood and precious water, is plenteous to make us fair and clean. The blessed wounds of our Savior be open and enjoy to heal us.

Third Reflection. It is His office to save us; it is His worship to do it; and it is His will we know it; for He will we love Him sweetly, and trust in Him meekly and mightily.

Heart of Jesus, Atonement for our Iniquities, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. We be not only His by His buying, but also by the courteous gift of His Father we be His bliss, we be His reward, we be His worship, we be His crown.

Second Reflection. I saw truly that as often as He might die, so often He would, and love would never let Him have rest until He had done it... For though the sweet manhood of Christ might suffer but once, the goodness of Him may never cease to proffer.

Third Reflection. And the cause why He suffereth is, for He will of His goodness make us the heirs with Him in His bliss... And the harder our pains have been with Him in His cross, the more shall our worship be with Him in His kingdom.

Heart of Jesus, Glutted with Reproaches, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. Of all pains that lead to salvation, this is the most, to see the Lover to suffer. How might any pain be more than to see Him that is all my life, all my bliss, and all my joy, suffer?

Second Reflection. Here I saw a great uniting between Christ and us, for when He was in pain, we were in pain, and all creatures that might suffer pain, suffered with Him. Thus was our Lord Jesu pained for us, and we stand all in this manner of pain with Him, and shall do till that we come to His bliss.

Third Reflection. I knew well that whiles I beheld the cross, I was sure and safe.

Heart of Jesus, Bruised for our Sins, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. For every man’s sin that shall be saved He suffered; and every man’s sorrow, desolation and anguish He saw, and sorrowed for kindness and love... As long as He was passible He suffered for us and sorrowed for us.

Second Reflection. The love in Him was so strong which He hath to our soul, that willingly He chose it with great desire; and mildly He suffered it with great joy.

Third Reflection. He that is highest and worthiest was foulest condemned, and utterly despised; for His Passion is to think and to know that He is God that suffered.

Heart of Jesus, Made obedient unto Death, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. It is a full lovely meekness of a sinful soul, wrought by mercy and grace of the Holy Ghost, when we will wilfully and gladly take the scourging and the chastising that our Lord Himself will give us, and it shall be full tender and full easy if we will only hold us pleased with Him, and with all His works.

Second Reflection. We should meekly and patiently bear and suffer that penance that God Himself giveth us, with remembrance of His blessed Passion; for when we have remembrance of His blessed Passion with pity and love, then we suffer with Him, like as His friends did that saw it.

Heart of Jesus, Pierced by the Lance, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. There He showed a fair and delectable place, and large enough for all mankind that shall be saved and rest in peace and in love. And with the sweet beholding He showed His blessed Heart cloven in two; and showed to my understanding... The endless love that was without beginning, and is and ever shall be.

Second Reflection. And with this our good Lord said well blessedfully: “Lo, how I love thee,” as if He had said: “My darling, behold and see the Lord thy God that is thy Maker and thy endless joy. See thine own Brother, thy Savior. My child, behold and see what liking and bliss I have in thy salvation; and for My love enjoy with Me.”

Third Reflection. This shewed our good Lord to make us glad and merry.

Heart of Jesus, Source of all Consolation, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. Feeling of well being is gracious touching and lightening, with true certainly of endless joy: the feeling of woe is of temptation, of heaviness and weariness of our bodily living, with ghostlie understanding that we be kept also truly in love, in woe or in well being by the goodness of God.

Second Reflection. It is spiritual to some souls to feel on this wise. Sometimes to be in comfort, and sometimes to fall and to be left to themself; God will that we know that He keepeth us ever alike sure, in woe and in well being.

Third Reflection. It is not God’s will that we follow the feeling of pains in sorrow and mourning for them; but suddenly pass over, and hold us in the endless liking that is in God.

Heart of Jesus, Our Life and Resurrection, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. Thou art my Heaven. I desire no other Heaven than Jesu, which shall be my bliss when I come there.

Second Reflection. I knew well that He that bound me so sore, He should unbind me when He would.

Third Reflection. Mightily, wisely and willfully I chose Jesu to be my Heaven.

Heart of Jesus, Our Peace and Reconciliation, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. It is the most worship to Him of anything that we may do, that we live gladly and merrily for His love in our penance; for He beholdeth us so tenderly that He seeth all our living here to be penance.

Second Reflection. For natural longing in us to Him is a lasting penance in us, which penance He worketh in us, and mercifully helpeth us to bear it.

Third Reflection. For this penance cometh never from us till what time that we be fulfilled, when we should have Him to our reward. And therefore He will that we set our hearts in the overpassing; that is to say, from the pain that we feel into the bliss that we trust.

Heart of Jesus, Victim of Sin, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. Sin is the sharpest scourge that any chosen soul may be smitten with. Full preciously our good Lord keepeth us when it seemeth to us that we be near forsaken and cast away for our sin, and for we see that we have deserved it.

Second Reflection. For our courteous Lord will not that His servants despair for oft failing, ne for grievous falling, for our falling preventeth not Him to love us.

Third Reflection. And this is a sovereign friendship of our courteous Lord that He keepeth us so tenderly while we be in our sin; and furthermore He toucheth us full secretly, and showeth us our sin by the sweet light of mercy and of grace.

Heart of Jesus, Salvation of all who trust in Thee, Have mercy on us.

First Reflection. Full glad and merry is our Lord of our prayer; and He looketh thereafter, and He will have it; for with His grace it maketh us like to Himself, in condition as we be in nature\*, and so is His blessed will.

Second Reflection. For the reward and the endless thank that He will give us, therefore is He covetous to have us praying continually in His sight.

Third Reflection. God accepteth the good will and the travail of His servants, howsoever we feel; wherefore it pleaseth Him that we work in prayer and in good living by His help and grace.

FOURTH REFLECTION. We know the fruit and end of our prayer; that is to be united and like to our Lord in all thing. This is our Lord’s will, that our prayer and our trust be alike large.

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