

## Inspiration and Meditation through Art and Literature

Pope Benedict XV's Encyclical on Dante "IN PRAECLARA SUMMORUM" (April 30, 1921) stated that "Among the many celebrated geniuses of whom the Catholic faith can boast who have left undying fruits in literature ... highest stands the name of Dante Alighieri..." [IPS, 1] Dante's Divine Comedy is organized on the basis of the number seven - the seven circles of Inferno; the seven terraces on the mountain of *Purgatorio*; and, the seven spheres of *Paradiso*. Three pictures from The Doré Illustrations for Dante's Divine Comedy are included for each of the Seven Visits. The first picture is from *Purgatorio* and reflects on the particular vice we wish to eliminate. The next two pictures from *Paradiso* are one artist's interpretation of the beatific vision - God's promise of eternal life. Pope Benedict XV further said that while the *Divine Comedy* "uses various symbolic images and records the lives of mortals on earth, it has for its true aim the glorification of the justice and providence of God who rules the world through time and all eternity and punishes and rewards the actions of individuals and human society." [IPS, 4]

*"When you look at the crucifix, you understand how much Jesus loved you. When you look at the Sacred Host you understand how much Jesus loves you now."*  
St. Teresa of Calcutta



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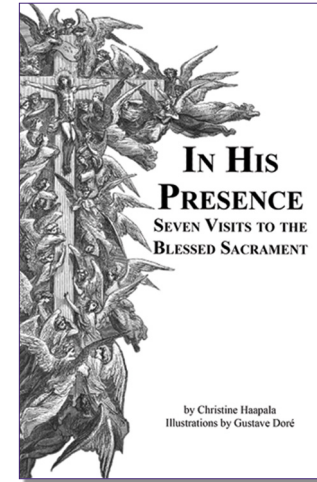
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*"Reawaken in us the joy at his presence ... Without adoration, there is no transformation of the world."*  
Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

## In His Presence

*Seven Visits to the Blessed Sacrament*



by Christine Haapala

Illustrations by Gustave Doré

64 pages,  
21 Illustrations  
5 ½ by 8 ½"

**\$7.00**

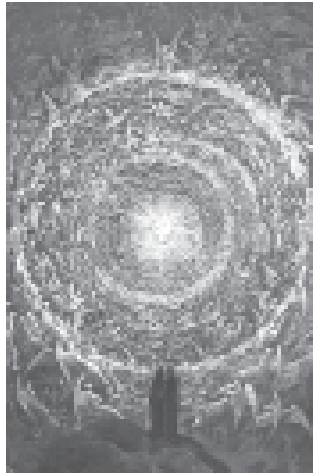
This Scriptural meditation book outlines SEVEN VISITS to the Blessed Sacrament, which reflect on the seven vices and seven virtues with illustrations from The Doré Illustrations for Dante's Divine Comedy.

This prayer book can be used in one evening, such as, during the Holy Thursday Seven Church Pilgrimage. It can be used for seven consecutive days for a special prayer request. And, it can be used periodically, whenever you can spend time visiting Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

May this meditation book open your heart to spend more time in Eucharistic Adoration.

## Planning a Holy Thursday Seven Church Pilgrimage

- Invite friends, family, and parishioners on this unique spiritual journey. Ask who might be interested in driving.
- Identify the starting church, generally your home parish. Select six additional parishes (short driving distances) that would generally make a circular route from home church to the other six parishes and return to home parish by midnight for closing prayer service.
- Verify the seven churches have all-night adoration. Double check the location of adoration as it may be in a side altar or chapel. This will prevent wasting time looking for the adoration location or being disappointed because a parish is not participating in Eucharistic Adoration.
- Two people should test drive the seven visit route. Ensure there is sufficient time to make the circular route and return by 11:50 p.m. Make any necessary alterations to the travel route and have map directions printed for each vehicle. Alternatively, give all drivers the addresses of the churches so they can pre-load them into their GPS system.
- Following Holy Thursday Mass, gather outside the church to begin your seven church visits. A two to three car caravan works the best. Decide which will be the “lead” car so all cars arrive about the same time at each church. Designate a “navigator,” to help the driver efficiently drive from church to church. Select a “timekeeper” at the church so you don’t lose track of time and fail to complete



the seven visits. You will generally have about 10 – 15 minutes in each church for prayer and adoration. This will vary with travel times between churches.

- Larger youth groups can participate in this spiritual journey and travel from parish to parish in buses.
- Be respectfully quiet when entering and exiting as a group from the adoration room. “Group” prayer is discouraged since it will disturb the reverent silence.
- Bring a prayer book or journal. We highly recommend In His Presence as the meditations were inspired by this seven church visit.
- Pray the Rosary or Chaplet of Divine Mercy, as you travel from church to church. Or, socialize with the other passengers and share thoughts about this spiritual experience. Passengers can switch between the cars and get to know one another.
- This church pilgrimage can also be completed in a very small group (a couple of friends, mother/daughter or husband/wife) with only one car. If you live in a city, the churches may be within walking distance and you could plan this seven church visit pilgrimage on foot.

The celebrations of the Sacred *Triduum* — Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil — are the most solemn of the liturgical cycle. No time in the year reaches the heights that these days do. While we celebrate in every Mass the Paschal Mystery, the *Triduum* allows the Church to linger over the events of the last days of Christ’s earthly life and the beginning of the New Creation in the Resurrection. ... The celebration of the Sacred *Triduum* is too awesome, too dense to understand unless we take time to ponder and consider it. One tradition associated with the pondering of the mystery of the Sacred *Triduum* is the custom of visiting the altars of reposition on Holy Thursday. ... The faithful go together from church to church, retracing symbolically the path of the Apostles as they descended from Mount Zion to the Garden of Gethsemane.

by Father Elias Carr, Society of St. Leopold from “Night with Christ” article in In His Presence

