

**Meditations before the Holy Mass,
intended for a prayer community**

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Meditations led by three people: **W**, **A**, and **M**.

Duration of meditations: about 40 min.

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Full text of St. Faustina's *Diary* at <https://www.saint-faustina.org/diary/>

W We now wish to prepare for the profound encounter with the Lord Jesus that we will have during the Holy Mass and the prayer following it. Let us first listen to a passage from the Book of Song of Songs, a passage composed of two parts. In the first part, we will hear a beautiful dialogue between lovers who are not yet married. In light of the words coming from the bride's heart, one gets the impression that her love for her bridegroom is mature, deep, and constant. The lovers' conversation from the Book of Song of Songs is a picture of the dialogue each of us can have with Jesus when we approach a priest giving Holy Communion. **(1:08)**

M **Bride:** Song 4:16 Arise, north wind! Come, south wind! blow upon my garden that its perfumes may spread abroad. Let my lover come to his garden and eat its choice fruits. **(0:19)**

A **The bridegroom:** Song 5:1 I have come to my garden, my sister, my bride; I gather my myrrh and my spices, I eat my honey and my sweetmeats, I drink my wine and my milk. Eat, friends, drink! Drink freely of love! **(0:23)**

W Invited by the bride, Jesus the Bridegroom comes with His friends, that is, with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, and probably also with the Immaculate Mary, with the saints, and with the angels, to savor a time of joy in the garden of her who is the Chosen One, of quiet conversation at a table set with food and drink, of rest in her company. Therefore, he says: **(0:41)**

A **The bridegroom:** Eat, friends, drink! Drink freely of love! **(0:07)**

W This idyllic scenery, outlined by the author of the Song, illustrates – as we will soon see – only the bride's idea of her great love for the Bridegroom. In the passage that now follows, the invited Bridegroom does arrive in the garden of his chosen one and, standing at the door of her home, announces that he is. Her response to his voice, however, is surprising. The truth about the gradual development of her love is revealed here – love must pass from the stage of imagination to maturity. Let us listen... **(0:56)**

M **The bride:** ² I was sleeping, but my heart kept vigil; I heard my lover knocking. **(0:10)**

A **The bridegroom:** "Open to me, my sister, my beloved, my dove, my perfect one! For my head is wet with dew, my locks with the moisture of the night." **(0:17)**

M **The bride:** I have taken off my robe, am I then to put it on? I have bathed my feet, am I then to soil them? ⁴ My lover put his hand through the opening; my heart trembled within me, and I grew faint when he spoke. ⁵ I rose to open to my lover, with my hands dripping myrrh: With my fingers dripping choice myrrh upon the fittings of the lock. ⁶ I opened to my lover—but my lover had departed, gone. I sought him but I did not find him; I called to him but he did not answer me. ⁷ The watchmen came upon me as they made their rounds of the city; They struck me, and wounded me, and took my mantle from me, the guardians of the walls. ⁸ I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my lover—What shall you tell him?—that I am faint with love. **(1:21)**

W The bride's love is subject to hesitation, not allowing her to receive the Beloved then, when he, responding to her beautiful invitation, came from afar, entered her garden, and, traversing the distance separating him from her home, finally stood at her door! The bridegroom, with a beating heart, speaks from the door of his chosen one, and she hesitates whether it is worth accepting him now... However, when she finally overcomes her inner heaviness and runs to open it for him, she no longer finds him there... he is now physically somewhere else... The suffering experienced by the bride is immense – so close it was the one she loves. It remains for her to sing him the song of love again, beckoning him to come... **(1:19)**

A Each of us seems similar to the bride from the Song of Songs. Here we are, almost every day, planning to attend the Holy Mass, and through this, we invite Jesus-Bridegroom to ourselves, to a house nestled in a garden. As the sacred celebration begins, He enters the garden of our souls with thankful love. As the liturgical action progresses, His closeness becomes more intense. (0:42)

M For behold, first, we hear His voice in the liturgy of the word – in the Scripture readings and the homily. Then comes the liturgy of the Sacrifice: Transubstantiation and Holy Communion are the pinnacle of bestowal. He is now standing at the door of my house in the garden, standing and gently knocking. He desires to enter to enjoy an encounter with the one who loves Him... From inside the house, however, there is no answer... The deafening silence is the only witness to Jesus' love and longing for His bride... He leaves with a heart filled with pain... (1:01)

W Why, O Jesus, do You have to leave without deep and long encountering the one You love and who professed to love You? You must leave because almost immediately after the distribution of Holy Communion, the Mass ends, the priests take off their liturgical vestments, and it seems that this is the end of the encounter with You. You speak with love to the Bride: (0:40)

A The bridegroom: "Open to me, my sister, my beloved, my dove, my perfect one! For my head is wet with dew, my locks with the moisture of the night." (0:17)

W And to Your voice, she answers: (0:04)

M The bride: I have taken off my robe, am I then to put it on? I have bathed my feet, am I then to soil them? (0:12)

W Yes... The celebration is over; the robe is taken off, feet washed, no time for You now... Later, when the bride has already decided to start up and run to the door, having regained the inner ability to meet Jesus – this happens when she begins prayer at a time far from the end of the Holy Mass – she no longer finds Jesus physically present there! For the time of the sacramental, physical, bodily, substantive waiting of Jesus for love lasts only as long as the sacramental species of the Eucharistic Food last in the bowels of the chosen one. Moreover, by God's will, they are not imperishable; they are pretty quickly digested... Thus, if the bride never has time to pray immediately after the Holy Mass, she constantly experiences pain – she cannot fully meet her Bridegroom... Is not this why so many leave the Church... is not this why so many abandon their sacred vows?... (1:36)

M However, it can be the other way around: when Jesus, invited into the home's interior, finds the chosen one's love and openness to intimately be with Him precisely when He has physically arrived and is there for her. In such a situation, His physical presence does not end in the moment when the Sacred Host is digested. It lasts as long as it lasts their particularly intense time of love, a time of God's bestowing the grace and her responding to it, a time for which the Bible found a unique word in Greek: "kairos." St. Faustina of the Blessed Sacrament wrote about it this way: (1:04)

A 1302 Today, I understood a lot of God's mysteries. I learned that Holy Communion lasts in me until my next Communion. God's living and palpable presence persists in my soul; the awareness of this keeps me in profound recollection, without the slightest effort on my part... My heart is a living tabernacle in which the live Host is kept. I have never looked for God somewhere out there, far away, but in my own interior; it is in the depths of my being that I abide with my God. (0:52)

W It is worth taking up a reflection: does my repeated reception of Jesus in Holy Communion not resemble the story from the Song of Songs? Do I not run immediately after the end of the Holy Mass to other people, leaving the invited Jesus in front of a closed door? However, it may be otherwise: it is enough to arrange one's schedule in such a way that one always has time after the Holy Mass to feast with the physical – in Body and Blood – coming Bridegroom, to meet in the interior of one's soul's home or more broadly in the prayer community. (1:00)

M It is enough for a man not to immediately throw off the dress in which he receives the Holy Drink and Food. It is enough to remain in the robe of waiting to respond to the Bridegroom's voice by immediately standing at the wide open door... Is it not worth feasting in such a company? Is it not worth being the chosen one whose presence is a delight for Jesus, the Almighty Lord of history? (0:43)

W St. John shows the same problem of the maturity of the relationship to Jesus in his Gospel and Revelation. Let us first listen to two Gospel passages. The first reveals Jesus as the All-Powerful Lord of history, the Eternal Word by whose power all things were created. The second, on the other hand, shows the coming of Jesus to the bride. Let us hear... (0:39)

M Jn 1:1-5 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came to be through Him, and without Him nothing came to be. What came to be ⁴ through Him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; ⁵ the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (0:40)

A Jn 1:10-13 He was in the world, and the world came to be through Him, but the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to what was His own, but His own people did not accept Him. ¹² But to those who did accept Him He gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God. (0:42)

W The Book of Revelation presents the same issue of man's relationship to the coming Bridegroom in a slightly different way: it shows Jesus as the Beginning of creation, while the state of the soul is represented this time through the person of Jesus' friend. This friend deludes himself into believing that he is in total spiritual maturity. Jesus questions the value of his spiritual wealth and spiritual sight. Fortunately, Jesus does not stop there – He shows to the friend whom He loves despite his immaturity the prospect of feasting together. Let us listen... (1:02)

M Rev 3:14-22 “To the angel of the Church in Laodicea, write this: The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the source of God's creation, says this: ¹⁵ I know your works; I know that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either cold or hot. ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷ For you say, I am rich and affluent and have no need of anything, and yet do not realize that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. ¹⁸ I advise you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich, and white garments to put on so that your shameful nakedness may not be exposed, and buy ointment to smear on your eyes so that you may see. ¹⁹ Those whom I love, I reprove and chastise. Be earnest, therefore, and repent. ²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, (then) I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me. ²¹ I will give the victor the right to sit with Me on My throne, as I myself first won the victory and sit with My Father on His throne. ²² Whoever has ears ought to hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” **Let us now sing the song:** “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in unto him, and will supper with him, and he with me.” (2:24)

W One must be able to fight for love. Jesus says He will give the victor to sit on His throne. Let us, therefore, fight! Let us fight by His power against our inner sluggishness and against the erroneous views that have been accepted in our environment as the norm of behavior toward Jesus, although Pope Pius XII rebuked them¹. It is worth realizing what a fascinating perspective of a new quality of relationship with God He reveals to us. One can find significant information on this subject in the lives of the saints who have already sat with Jesus on His throne. For example, this is what St. Edith Stein wrote about St. Teresa the Great, the restorer of the Carmelite Order:² (1:14)

A “The mystical nuptials were accompanied in the Saint by an imaginative vision. ‘It was a moment after receiving Holy Communion. The Lord stood before her with great brightness, grace, and majesty, such as He had risen from the dead and said to her: It is time for you to take my affairs as your own, and I will have charge of yours’” (*Inner Fortress*, VII, 1, 10-2, 1) (0:41)

¹ Cf. Pope Pius XII's rebuke of theologians, which he wrote in his Encyclical “*Mediator Dei*” of 20.11.1947 on the Sacred Liturgy, No. 123: “When the Mass, which is subject to special rules of the liturgy, is over, the person who has received holy communion is not thereby freed from his duty of **thanksgiving**; rather, it is most becoming that, when the Mass is finished, the person who has received the Eucharist should recollect himself, and in intimate union with the divine Master hold loving and fruitful converse with Him. **Hence they have departed from the straight way of truth, who, adhering to the letter rather than the sense, assert and teach that, when Mass has ended, no such thanksgiving should be added, not only because the Mass is itself a thanksgiving, but also because this pertains to a private and personal act of piety and not to the good of the community.**”

² Stein, Edith – St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross OCD, *Autoportret Edyty Stein w jej twórczości. Wybór pism duchowych [Edith Stein's Self-Portrait in her Works. A Selection of Spiritual Writings]*. Translated by M. Immakulata Adamska OCD (Poznań: Flos Karmeli, 1999), 158.

W One day, after receiving Holy Communion, Teresa received a special grace coveted by every human longing for union with God: Jesus entered a mystical marriage with her, thus crowning the long journey of her spiritual maturation into love. It is the perspective that is before those who allow themselves to be drawn to unhurried prayer after receiving Holy Communion! The same was also true in the life of St. Padre Pio – he, too, while praying after Communion, received the grace that St. Teresa received. Let us listen to two excerpts, the first of which recounts St. Pio’s experience in 1912, from the stage of the road to the summit of perfection, and the second from 1918, when that summit, thanks to God’s grace and cooperation with it, is reached by him: (1:23)

A **Thanksgiving did not end with the end of the Holy Mass.** Padre Pio would first kneel for a long time in the sacristy and then go to his place in the choir. He wrote to Fr. Augustine in a letter: ‘**After the Holy Mass, I stayed with Jesus in thanksgiving.** What a heavenly conversation it was! Jesus’ heart and my heart merged into one. There were no longer two hearts beating, but only one. My heart disappeared like a droplet absorbed by the ocean’ (18.04.1912)”.³ (0:51)

W That heavenly conversation between St. Padre Pio and Jesus after Holy Communion in 1912 was not yet a spiritual marriage with Jesus. The spiritual marriage would become six years later – again during prayer after the Holy Mass. It was then, on 20 September 1918, that St. Padre Pio received the grace of reaching the pinnacle of inner perfection, and the sign of this was the stigmata he received at the time. A month later, Padre Pio described this event to his spiritual director as follows: (0:54)

M “On the morning of the 20th of last month, in the choir, after I had celebrated Mass I yielded to a drowsiness similar to a sweet sleep. All the internal and external senses and even the very faculties of my soul were immersed in indescribable stillness. Absolute silence surrounded and invaded me. I was suddenly filled with great peace and abandonment which effaced everything else and caused a lull in the turmoil. All this happened in a flash. While this was taking place I saw before me a mysterious person similar to the one I had seen on the evening of 5 August. The only difference was that his hands and feet and side were dripping blood. This sight terrified me and what I felt at that moment is indescribable. I thought I should die and really should have died if the Lord had not intervened and strengthened my heart which was about to burst out of my chest. The vision disappeared and I became aware that my hands, feet and side were dripping blood. Imagine the agony I experienced and continue to experience almost every day. The heart wound bleeds continually, especially from Thursday evening until Saturday. ... I am dying of pain because of the wounds and the resulting embarrassment I feel deep in my soul. I am afraid I shall bleed to death if the Lord does not hear my heartfelt supplication to relieve me of this condition. Will Jesus, who is so good, grant me this grace? Will he at least free from the embarrassment caused by these outward signs? I will raise my voice and will not stop imploring him until in his mercy he takes away, not the wound or the pain, which is impossible since I wish to be inebriated with pain, but these outward signs which cause me such embarrassment and unbearable humiliation.”⁴ (3:08)

W Despite this fervent request, with which many stigmatics successfully turned to God, Padre Pio was not answered. God’s will was different for him: the stigmata were visible until the end of his life. Let us listen now to the complaint of the Lord Jesus, recorded in the “Diary” of St. Faustina of the Blessed Sacrament. (0:35)

A **1288** 19 September [1937]. Today, the Lord told me, “My daughter, write down how hurt I am when religious souls receive the Sacrament of Love only out of habit, as if they did not know that this nourishment is special. I can see neither faith nor love in their souls; I’m most reluctant to come to such souls, it would be better if they did not receive Me.” **1289** Sweetest Jesus, set me on fire with love for You, and transform me into Yourself; divinize me so that my deeds should be pleasing to You; may the power of Holy Communion that I receive every day accomplish this. How I long to be transformed completely into Yourself, O Lord. (1:09)

³ Cf. *Vox Domini* No. 1-2 (1998), 8–9, published online, where there are quoted excerpts from the book: Czesław Ryszka, *Winnica Padre Pio [Padre Pio’s Vineyard]* (Wrocław: 4K, 1988), 133–135 (“Kapłan” [Priest]) and 142–150 (“Za ołtarzem” [Behind the Altar]).

⁴ See the letter of St. Padre Pio about the mystical nuptials with Jesus ← [click here, please!](#) See also the blog concerning this event ← [click here, please!](#)

M Prayer: Jesus, Divine Savior! I believe that when I receive You in Holy Communion, it is then that I touch the most painful wounds of Your Heart and Your mortally wounded Body. Out of love for me, Your Heart carries the burden of being abandoned by Your disciples while dying in Gethsemane and the suffering of being captured, interrogated, beaten and spat upon, crowned with thorns and mocked in Your royal dignity, the burden of accepting terrible death sentence, the burden of going up to the Hill of the Skull, the burden of submitting to the executioners nailing Your hands and feet to the cross, the burden of feeling abandoned by the Father, the burden of sins for which You shed Your human blood to the last, the burden of hearts insensitive to Your love to the end, the burden of hearts complacent, the burden of hearts indifferent, the burden of hearts sinking into despair, the burden of hearts rejecting God... the weight of our hearts, plunged into the madness of not loving God and each other... (1:50)

W **Prayer:** I believe, O Dearest Jesus, that I, a weak man, can console so painfully burdened Loving Heart of my Savior **during the prayer of the union after Holy Communion.** I believe that this immensity of suffering, which you endured with great patience out of love for us, can find solace and consolation in the love of my heart... I believe I can soothe this immensity of suffering that filled You **two thousand years ago** – I can do it through the love of my heart **in the time following receiving Holy Communion, thanks to the grace of our sacramental union over the centuries, union with You being in the state of immense suffering.** (1:09)

A Prayer: I believe that the mysterious simultaneity of which Blessed Pope John Paul II wrote in the Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (5 b, 21 b, 59 a) is a gift of Your heart, which thirsts for consolation from me. Although I am, a man of the 21st century, temporally distant from the moments of Your earthly self-abatement, it is by virtue of this gift, this sacramental “mysterious simultaneity,” that I am with You in Your time, which from my human perspective has already passed irrevocably. Let us listen to the words of St. Pope John Paul II, who poignantly wrote in the Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*: (1:08)

A 5. “*Mysterium fidei!* – The Mystery of Faith!”. When the priest recites or chants these words, all present acclaim: “We announce your death, O Lord, and we proclaim your resurrection, until you come in glory”. In these or similar words the Church, while pointing to Christ in the mystery of his passion, also *reveals her own mystery: Ecclesia de Eucharistia.* By the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost the Church was born and set out upon the pathways of the world, **yet a decisive moment in her taking shape was certainly the institution of the Eucharist in the Upper Room.** Her foundation and wellspring is the whole *Triduum paschale*, but this is as it were gathered up, foreshadowed and “concentrated” for ever in the gift of the Eucharist. In this gift Jesus Christ entrusted to his Church the perennial making present of the paschal mystery. With it he brought about **a mysterious “oneness in time”** between that *Triduum* and the passage of the centuries. (1:44)

M The thought of this leads us to profound amazement and gratitude. In the paschal event and the Eucharist which makes it present throughout the centuries, there is a truly enormous “capacity” which embraces all of history as the recipient of the grace of the redemption. This amazement should always fill the Church assembled for the celebration of the Eucharist. But in a special way it should fill the minister of the Eucharist. For it is he who, by the authority given him in the sacrament of priestly ordination, effects the consecration. It is he who says with the power coming to him from Christ in the Upper Room: “This is my body which will be given up for you. This is the cup of my blood, poured out for you...”. The priest says these words, or rather *he puts his voice at the disposal of the One who spoke these words in the Upper Room* and who desires that they should be repeated in every generation by all those who in the Church ministerially share in his priesthood. (1:47)

W 6. I would like to rekindle this Eucharistic “amazement” by the present Encyclical Letter, in continuity with the Jubilee heritage which I have left to the Church in the Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* and its Marian crowning, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*. To contemplate the face of Christ, and to contemplate it with Mary, is the “programme” which I have set before the Church at the dawn of the third millennium, summoning her to put out into the deep on the sea of history with the enthusiasm of the new evangelization. (0:58)

A **To contemplate Christ** involves being able to recognize Him wherever He manifests

himself, **in His many forms of presence, but above all in the living sacrament of his body and his blood. *The Church draws her life from Christ in the Eucharist***; by him she is fed and by him she is enlightened. The Eucharist is both a mystery of faith and a “mystery of light”.⁵ Whenever the Church celebrates the Eucharist, the faithful can in some way relive the experience of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus: “their eyes were opened and they recognized him” . **(1:00)**

M The Holy Mass begins... it begins a time to open our eyes and hearts to Jesus-Bridegroom. Lord, we ask You to help us, the entire community gathered in the Upper Room, to love You especially intensely during the Eucharist and in the prayer of sacramental union with You immediately after it. **(0:32)**

⁵ Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* (16 October 2002), 21: AAS 95 (2003), 19.