

Saint Gertrude of Helfta (1256-1301),
Benedictine nun Exercises, 7 (SC 127, p.285 rev.)

"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened"

You who have done such great, such wonderful things for me that I am bound to your service for ever, how shall I repay you for so many benefits? What praises and thanksgivings could I offer you even if I poured them out a thousand times over? Who am I, poor creature that I am, compared to you, my overflowing redemption? And so I offer wholly to you the soul you have redeemed; with all the love of my heart I will do you homage. Oh yes! convey my life into yours; bear me away wholly into you; make me completely one with you.

O Love, your divine ardour has opened to me my Jesus' most sweet heart. O heart, source of sweetness, overflowing with goodness; heart abounding in charity; heart from which kindness flows drop by drop; heart full of mercy... dearest heart, I beg you to absorb my heart wholly into you. Dearest Father of my heart, invite me to your life-giving feasts; pour for me your consoling wine... so that my spirit's ruinous state may be filled with your divine charity and the abundance of your love may make up for the poverty and misery of my soul.

O heart, beloved above all other things..., have mercy on me. I beg that your love's sweetness may give courage to my heart. Please let the bowels of your mercy stir in my favor since, alas!, my failures are without number, my merits non-existent. My Jesus, may the merits of your precious death, which alone had the power to acquit the whole world's debt, restore all that I have done amiss...; let it draw me to you so powerfully that, completely transformed by the strength of your divine love, I may find grace in your sight... And grant me, O sweet Jesus, to love you, you alone, in everything and above everything, to bind me fervently to you, to hope in you, and to set no limit to that hope.