

FEBRUARY 15
 SAINT CLAUDE LA COLOMBIÈRE
 PRIEST
 MEMORIAL

Claude was born in France at Saint-Symphorien d'Ozon in 1641, and entered the Society in 1659. After his ordination in 1669 he taught rhetoric, and was then applied to the ministry of preaching. He gave effective support to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in spreading devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Sent to London as preacher of the Duchess of York, he suffered insults, imprisonment, and banishment. He died in France at Paray-le-Monial in 1682. Beatified by Pius XI in 1929, he was canonized by John Paul II in 1992.

THE OFFICE OF READINGS

Second Reading:

(From the spiritual notes of St. Claude La Colombière, written in London in 1677. [*Oeuvres complètes du Ven. P. Claude La Colombière*, t. 6, Grenoble, 1901, pp. 115-116. Trans. {except first paragraph} William J. Young, S.J., in his trans. *Perfect Friend*, Georges Guitton, S.J., Herder, St. Louis, 1956, pp. 159].)

A man can do anything if he completely distrusts himself and places all his trust in me.

My God, if only I could travel all over the world and proclaim in every country what you require of your servants and friends! When God revealed his will to this person [Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque], and she had communicated it to me, I told her to put it down in writing. I have no scruples about copying the words into my retreat journal, for it is God's will to use me in this cause. These are the holy woman's words:

“Being in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament one day of the octave [of Corpus Christi], I received from God

excessive graces of His love. I was moved by the desire of making some return and of giving love for love, and He told me: 'You could not make me a greater return than to do what I have so often asked of you.'

"And showing me His divine heart: 'Behold the heart which has loved men so much that it has spared nothing, even to exhausting and consuming itself, to prove its love to them. And as thanks I receive from the greater number only ingratitude, because of the disregard, the irreverence, the sacrilege, and the coldness which they have for Me in this sacrament of love. But what is still more offensive is that these are hearts which are consecrated to me. That is why I ask that the first Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi be dedicated as a special feast to honor My heart by making a reparation of honor, by an *amende honorable*, by receiving communion on that day to repair the indignities which it has suffered during the hours it was exposed on the altars. And I promise that My heart will expand to pour out with abundance the graces of its divine love on those who will render it this honor.'

"'But, dear Lord [she answered], to whom are you applying? To a wretched creature, a poor sinner whose very unworthiness would be capable even of preventing the accomplishment of Your plan? You have so many generous souls to carry out your purpose.'

"'Ah, poor innocent that you are [Christ replied], don't you know that I make use of the weakest subjects to confound the strong, that it is ordinarily the smallest and the poor in spirit to whom I make my power visible with greater brilliance, so that they will not attribute anything to themselves?'

“‘Give me, then,’ I said to Him, ‘the means of doing what you command.’

“It was then that He told me: ‘Turn to my servant N. [Claude La Colombière] and tell him from Me to do all he can to establish this devotion and to give this pleasure to My divine heart. Tell him not to be discouraged by the difficulties he will meet with, for they will not be lacking. But he must learn that he is all-powerful who completely distrusts himself to place his trust in Me alone.’”

Responsory

R. I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was your gracious will.

V. God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever. Yea, Father, . . .

Concluding Prayer

Lord and Father of us all, you spoke to Blessed Claude, your faithful servant, in the silence of his heart, so that he might be a witness to the riches of your love. May your gifts of grace continue to enlighten and console your Church. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.