

This is a preliminary document. It does not yet have a nihil obstat or imprimatur.

Notes on the Catholic Orthodoxy of the Immanuel Prayer Method

by

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The Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to make some comments regarding the Catholic orthodoxy of the *Immanuel Approach Prayer Method* (Immanuelapproach.com), created by the psychiatrist Dr. Karl Lehman and further organized and simplified by Patricia Velotta, one of Dr. Karl's long-time clients, as the *Immanuel Practicum* (immanuelpracticum.com).¹ This document assumes a basic knowledge of the prayer and is not meant by any means to be exhaustive. We intend to raise the comfort level of Catholics with this prayer and also make certain theological points that clarify the use and misuse of this prayer. The primary reasons why such comments are both desirable and necessary is 1) the prayer method is Protestant in its genesis and merits proper integration into the Catholic faith and 2) the prayer method involves certain elements regarding the use of the imagination and the memory that many Catholics may need explained or clarified. Our desire is to remain substantially united with both Lehman and Velotta on the key elements of Immanuel Prayer with the exception of certain Catholic elements that they might find superfluous. Thus, I refer to the prayer as Catholic Immanuel.² Protestants and Catholics have our differences, but the sharing of the heart of Jesus Christ substantially unites us: "*And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd.*"³

¹ Patricia Velotta essentially summarized Dr. Lehman's method in her book entitled *Immanuel: A Practicum* (2011). Dr. Lehman wrote a book called *Outsmarting Yourself: Catching Your Past Invading the Present and What To Do About It* (2011), which provides a theoretical foundation for the Immanuel Approach. Later, Dr. Karl wrote a fairly exhaustive book himself on the method entitled *The Immanuel Approach for Emotional Healing and For Life* (2016). The basic four-step method organized by Velotta is as follows: 1) Remember Jesus, 2) Appreciate Jesus, 3) Locate Jesus, 4) Connect with Jesus. Dr. Lehman has publicly recognized that Velotta's four-step method is a faithful distillation of his method. It should also be noted that Immanuel begins and ends with special prayers written by Dr. Lehman. These prayers will be examined and slightly modified in another document.

² Dr. Lehman has given permission to use his materials and speak about the method but has not yet necessarily endorsed my specific comments on Immanuel.

³ John 10:16.

“Ite, Missa Est”: Unite the Mass with Life!

Our faith is not merely an intellectual exercise. It engages the whole human person – all our powers – his “whole heart, soul, mind, and strength.” The *Catechism* states: “Man’s faculties make him capable of coming to a knowledge of the existence of a personal God. But for man to be able to enter into real intimacy with him, God willed both to reveal Himself to man, and to give him the grace of being able to welcome this revelation in faith.⁴ We do not meet the Lord only in Scripture or at Mass. The Church, standing as she is at a crisis point in history, must constantly relearn that the Lord constantly offers an intimate, personal relationship with His Bride: “If a man loves Me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we we will come to him and make our home with him.”⁵ **We claim along with the mystics of the church that this lived, personal presence is possible and that Catholic Immanuel is a gift given to the Church as a prayer method that can help facilitate the mutual indwelling of God and man.**⁶ Structured as it with a coach and a receiver, Immanuel Prayer provides a unique way to engage in multiple powers of the soul in the context of a praying community in order to experience intimacy with the Lord.

Fundamental to Catholic theology is the blessing that the Bridegroom communicates Himself to the Bride while the latter travels in this valley of tears. Jesus’ final promise to the Bride is “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). The primary presence that the Lord has with us is His Real Presence in the Eucharist. In this particularly non-relational and non-communicative post-modern age we are faced with a tragic paradox: the Lord’s Eucharistic Presence seems insufficient for the union of Bride and Bridegroom.⁷ How can such a seemingly blasphemous statement be true? Though Jesus is absolutely present to us through the Most Blessed Sacrament, His bride who wanders after false lovers is often not present to Him. Pope Saint John Paul II wrote: “The celebration of the Eucharist, however, cannot be the starting-point for communion; it presupposes that communion already exists, a communion which it seeks to consolidate and bring to perfection.... Only in this context can there be a legitimate celebration of the Eucharist and true participation in it.”⁸ It has been the experience of many that the Immanuel Method, far from drawing the faithful away from closer

⁴ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), 2nd edition (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2012), #35.

⁵ John 14:23

⁶ For a discussion of mutual indwelling, see Basil Burns, “St. Thomas Aquinas’s Philosophy of Love: Mutual Indwelling (*Mutua Inhaesio*) as the Most Proper Effect of Love,” Ph.d. Diss, University of Dallas, 2013.

⁷ The Eucharist is absolutely sufficient *objectively*. Our point is that this objective sufficiency must be *subjectively appropriated*, as will be seen by the authoritative statements quoted.

⁸ Pope Saint John Paul II, the Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (April 17, 2003), #35.

communion with the Church, helps establish the “presupposed communion” of which Pope Saint John Paul speaks. Why are we not more radically transformed by the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist? It is because we have been crippled from our ability to be relational and communicative by personal sin, the deceptions of the world, and past tragedies that have malformed or covered over our likeness to Christ. These traumas and wounds keep us from being fully malleable and receptive to the superior grace of the sacraments. Much could be said about this, but let us allow the Church to address the issue: “*Like the passion of Christ itself, this sacrifice, though offered for all, **has no effect** except in those united to the passion of Christ by faith and charity.... To these it brings a greater or less benefit in proportion to their devotion.*”⁹ Immanuel Prayer is a devotion by which Christ Himself, “by faith and charity,” mediated by the presence of a coach, may make Himself spiritually present to heal His image within the soul. This causes a greater intimacy with Him, and thereby aiding in the healing of the soul’s powers.

What Sort of Prayer is the Catholic Immanuel?

Immanuel Prayer is not merely a psychological tool or coping mechanism meant for emotional healing. It is a meditative, coach-led prayer that has as its primary goal the removal of blockages between our heart and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. For this reason, I personally believe that this prayer could be a beautiful and reverent deepening of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus & His Divine Mercy.¹⁰ Dr. Lehman writes, “The primary most important purpose of emotional healing is to remove the blockages that are between our hearts and him [Jesus].”¹¹

We should not be afraid to actively engage in imagination and memory-based prayer. Other than liturgical prayer, these kataphatic (or image-based) kinds of prayers form the absolute foundation of the devotional life of our beloved Church: the rosary, the Stations of the Cross, Ignatian meditations on Holy Scripture – all of these prayers are highly incarnational and engage the senses, the memory, the imagination and desire. Please note the following passage:

Meditation engages thought, imagination, emotion, and desire. This mobilization of faculties is necessary in order to deepen our convictions of faith, prompt the conversion of our heart, and strengthen our will to follow Christ. Christian prayer tries above all to meditate on the mysteries of Christ,

⁹ Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* III, q79, a7, ad2, cited in Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction on Eucharistic Worship *Mysterium Eucharisticum* (May 25, 1967), #12.

¹⁰ This idea certainly deserves more prayer and study. I am certainly open to comment and criticism regarding the proper integration of this prayer with our traditional Catholic devotions.

¹¹ Lehman, *The Immanuel Approach for Healing & For Life* (Evanston: Immanuel Publishing, 2016), p. 58.

*as in lectio divina or the rosary. This form of prayerful reflection is of great value, but Christian prayer should go further: to the knowledge of the love of the Lord Jesus, to union with him.*¹²

Immanuel Prayer is entirely based on establishing this active intimacy with the Lord Jesus, and it does so through the active participation of a coach and a receiver.

The three major prayer expressions of the Church are vocal prayer, meditative prayer and contemplative prayer.¹³ Immanuel Prayer can be defined as a meditative method of prayer that primarily seeks intimacy with Christ, the *fruits* of which is often some form of healing in the soul that is properly disposed. Just as in the monastic tradition, the meditative phase of the prayer can often lead into a contemplative phase. In the *Catechism*, meditation is defined as “above all a quest”¹⁴ that “engages thought, imagination, emotion, and desire. This mobilization of faculties is necessary in order to deepen our convictions of faith, prompt the conversion of our heart, and strengthen our will to follow Christ.”¹⁵ The *Catechism*, quoting St. Teresa of Avila, defines contemplation as “nothing else than a close sharing between friends.” The difference between meditation and contemplation is this: in meditation our own memories, imaginings and desires begin to give way to the presence of the Lord Himself. Again, quoting the *Catechism*, “In this inner prayer [contemplation] we can still meditate, but our attention is fixed on the Lord himself.”¹⁶ We find ourselves more confident in the Immanuel method considering that in nearly every case, it proceeds from vocal prayer to meditative prayer and then to contemplative prayer, finally grounding itself back in vocal prayer. Recall that the method first begins with an invocation and prayer to the Lord (vocal prayer), is then followed by some sort of positive memory along with related thoughts and emotions (meditative prayer), then proceeds to inviting a direct contact with the presence of Jesus Christ (contemplative prayer). The *Catechism* implies, however, that contemplation is more of a silent union with the Lord rather than a kind of image-based dramatic contact with Him, which is often the result of Immanuel Prayer.¹⁷ It is for this reason that we place Immanuel somewhere in the intersection between meditative and contemplative prayer.

¹² CCC, #2708.

¹³ CCC, #2699.

¹⁴ CCC, #2705. The other forms of prayer are vocal prayer and contemplative prayer. The Immanuel prayer makes use of vocal prayer and can certainly lead to contemplative prayer, which the *Catechism* defines as “

¹⁵ CCC, #2708.

¹⁶ CCC, #2709.

¹⁷ See CCC, #2724.

The Church has always proceeded with great caution regarding image-based prayer and private revelations. Like any other prayer, Immanuel Catholic Prayer must proceed with sober discernment. Dr. Lehman also agrees that discernment is vital. For example, he teaches that in order to distinguish an authentic experience of Jesus from a “contaminated” one, the receiver should 1) never accept anything outside of Christian Scripture and Tradition,¹⁸ 2) be able to experience observable and lasting positive fruit regarding emotional and spiritual changes, 3) be “surprised” by the experience such that it is not merely a psychological one but truly from a divine source and 4) be often followed by confirmations that support the Immanuel prayer experience.¹⁹ The rules of discernment formed by St. Ignatius of Loyola are also quite useful in further clarifying Immanuel prayer experiences. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “*Guided by the Magisterium of the Church, the sensus fidelium knows how to discern and welcome in these revelations whatever constitutes an authentic call of Christ or his saints to the Church.*”²⁰

The Presence of the Lord

There has been some confusion among practitioners of this prayer regarding what constitutes the precise mode of presence mediated by Catholic Immanuel. Dr. Lehman affirms the following three assumptions regarding inner healing:

- JESUS IS ALWAYS PRESENT.
- JESUS ALWAYS DESIRES TO BLESS US WITH LIFE-GIVING GIFTS.
- JESUS IS ALWAYS ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH THIS.

The confusion has been that our Tradition has consistently maintained that Jesus has many modes of presence and claiming that one prayer can visibly and perceptibly summon Jesus at will is a heretical teaching. Immanuel Prayer is not that proud. Dr. Lehman maintains that we must proceed with *humility* regarding these assumptions. He writes that “others initially experience confusing, disappointing, or frustrating results, but then eventually receive enhanced friendship with the Lord, transformative emotional healing, and other beautiful life-giving results as the facilitator [coach] helps them to identify and resolve blockages...if adequate troubleshooting is included.” Experiencing such blockages is also due sometimes to persistent bitterness, self-pity and rebellion.²¹ Though we

¹⁸ Being Protestant, Lehman does not include the concept of Tradition but it is implied.

¹⁹ See Lehman, *The Immanuel Approach*, pp. 441-442.

²⁰ Catechism, #67.

²¹ Lehman, *The Immanuel Approach*, p. 54. It should be noted that psychiatric professionals have far more resources to “deal with blockages” in a session. This is intermediate and advanced work. In the main, the beginner should simply refer the receiver to Jesus and if it becomes too

affirm with Dr. Lehman the above truths, we also affirm that our prayer – like the life of the Lord Himself – can be lived in a certain amount of darkness.²² It has been our experience that this darkness can dissipate to some degree when one faithfully forges forward with Catholic Immanuel along with engaging in the appropriate sacramental and devotional life.

The tradition of the Catholic Church maintains that there are several modes of presence through which the Lord seeks to be intimate with His people that He might present his bride to the Father “without spot or wrinkle (Ephesians 5:27).” The presence of the Lord refers to a particular mode of Jesus “being there” whether He is perceptible or imperceptible. The Church affirms that the presence of Jesus may be found in the following modes:²³

1. in creation that images some attributes of God²⁴
2. in the individual baptized Christian through the Holy Spirit
3. (by implication) in our brothers and sisters, particularly in “the least” and poorest of them²⁵
4. (by implication) in the “co-incidence” of events and signs that the Lord orchestrates through Providence in the lives of His faithful²⁶
5. in the praying church and her works of mercy
6. in the priest
7. in the apostolic hierarchy
8. in the Word of God
9. in the sacraments (called “the highest kind of presence”)
10. in the *Real* Presence of the Eucharist (the highest of the highest)

complex end the session by referring and grounding the receiver in the original positive memory so that they do not finish the session on a traumatic note.

²² Please make note of the “Warnings and Repudiations” to follow.

²³ See Pope Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*, #35-39. Numbers 2, 5-10 are explicitly mentioned in that document. Numbers 1, 3-4, & 10 are either implied by the documents or noted elsewhere. I have not seen these modes gathered together in one place in this manner; thus it is an “original” list. I have found it quite spiritually helpful. It is as if we play a grand game of “hide and seek” with the Lord, and these are the various modes of hiding places where we might find the one who, paradoxically, is always seeking us.

²⁴ See Romans 1:20-21: “*Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse; for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened.*”

²⁵ Matthew 25:40: “*And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.’*” Mother Theresa has certainly taught this generation this lesson quite well.

²⁶ See Matthew 8:13: “*And to the centurion Jesus said, ‘Go; be it done for you as you have believed.’ And the servant was **healed at that very moment.***”

11. “Non-Present Presence:”²⁷ In the abandonment and suffering of the soul united to Jesus²⁸

Catholic Immanuel affirms that the mode of presence relevant to itself are #2 and #4. These modes themselves are underwritten by the promise of Jesus Himself, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them.”²⁹ We also recall St. Paul’s words, “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?”³⁰ Immanuel Prayer is essentially a personal prayer that is done in the context of a community (whether it is practiced either with a coach or in a group). It can be engaged in alone with some good fruit, but the lasting fruit has been found consistently in those sessions that are coached or communal.

Warnings and Repudiations

The Discernment Warning

Catholic Immanuel repudiates any person who claims that every Immanuel session is 100% successful in the sense that Jesus *always* establishes a sensible, interactive connection in every session.³¹ In other words, the Lord who is sovereign

²⁷ This is what our Tradition would call “The Dark Night.” The true dark night must be distinguished from sadness and depression insofar as it is a condition truly willed by Jesus to a holy soul whom He wishes to be further united to His passion and death.

²⁸ Josef Cardinal Ratzinger, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “A Letter to the Bishops on Some Aspects of Christian Meditation” (October 15, 1989), #9. “In my heart, in my soul, there is a dark night. My spirit has come up against an impenetrable wall that hides God from me. But this darkness is not of my doing. Strange indeed is this torture of which I fear to write in full. But even in this state, I am trying to be faithful to you, O my Jesus. Always and in all things, my heart beats for you alone” (Sister Faustina, *Divine Mercy in My Soul*, Notebook IV:1235).

²⁹ Matthew 18:20. Further, the context of this passage makes us call to mind a court of law in the Old Testament where “two or three” witnesses were needed (Deut 19:15). Remember that the context of the passage is Jesus speaking about correcting or healing an erring brother. Jesus is present in a particularly powerful and different mode when there is an agreement among several brethren regarding the correction and healing of a lost or wayward brother – this situation is certainly consistent with the Immanuel Prayer!

³⁰ 1 Cor 3:16.

³¹ Lehman defines an “interactive connection with the Lord” as follows: “...when I perceive his presence in some way, and it feels true that we are having a living, real-time, mutual, contingent interaction. When I am experiencing an interactive connection, it feels true that the Lord sees, hears, and understands the emotions and thoughts I am experiencing and communicating, and it also feels true that he is offering contingent responses to my emotions and thoughts.” (See Lehman, *The Immanuel Approach*, p. 714.)

will not always grant a perceptibly clear audience into his throne room. The privileged place we possess any such summons is in the consecration of the Eucharist where Jesus humbles himself to obey the words He Himself instituted. St. Ignatius, in his 9th rule of discernment of spirits, writes:

There are three principal reasons why we find ourselves desolate. The first is, because of our being tepid, lazy or negligent in our spiritual exercises; and so through our faults, spiritual consolation withdraws from us. The second, *to try us and see how much we are and how much we let ourselves out in His service and praise without such great pay of consolation and great graces.* The third, to give us true acquaintance and knowledge, that we may interiorly feel that it is not ours to get or keep great devotion, intense love, tears, or any other spiritual consolation, but *that all is the gift and grace of God our Lord, and that we may not build a nest in a thing not ours, raising our intellect into some pride or vainglory, attributing to us devotion or the other things of the spiritual consolation.*³²

We should make note that two of the three reasons that St. Ignatius offers are due to God's initiative rather than ours. The Lord sometimes wishes us to look for him in *other modes of his presence* rather than particular prayer forms like Immanuel. Pope Benedict XVI writes specifically of those heresies that seek to identify the Holy Spirit with his psychological presence in the soul that they

“incite [man] to try and overcome the distance separating creature from Creator, as though there ought not to be such a distance; to consider the way of Christ on earth, by which he wishes to lead us to the Father, as something now surpassed; to bring down to the level of natural psychology what has been regarded as pure grace, considering it instead as ‘superior knowledge’ or as ‘experience.’”³³

Catholic Immanuel claims the soul is capable of being a temple of His presence, but that there are certainly other modes of Christ's presence that must balance this truth. Catholic Immanuel also affirms that, as stated above, the Lord sometimes withdraws his perceptible presence for His own mysterious purposes.

We might add that *in an Immanuel session the Lord usually DOES establish a connection with the soul.* Our aim is to provide the theological reasons why he might *not* do so. Dr. Lehman affirms the first point of St. Ignatius's first rule by

³² Translated by Father Eldan Mullen, S.J (The Ninth Rule).

³³ Ratzinger, #10.

maintaining, “complex blockages can cause the recipient to lose her connection with the Lord for extended periods of time (IA, 59).” Considering early heretics who identified the presence of the Holy Spirit as His psychological presence in the soul:

These false fourth century charismatics [Messalians] identified the grace of the Holy Spirit with the psychological experience of his presence in the soul. In opposing them, the Fathers insisted on the fact that the soul's union with God in prayer is realized in a mysterious way, and in particular through the sacraments of the Church. Moreover, it can even be achieved through experiences of affliction or desolation. Contrary to the view of the Messalians, these are not necessarily a sign that the Spirit has abandoned a soul. Rather, as masters of spirituality have always clearly acknowledged, they may be an authentic participation in the state of abandonment experienced on the cross by Our Lord, who always remains the model and mediator of prayer.³⁴

If one proceeds in good order, Immanuel prayer cannot be accused of this heresy. Please also note the very humble admission of Dr. Lehman regarding feeling abandoned sometimes by the Lord:

“I often encounter difficult, frustrating, disappointing situations without getting triggered, *even when I ask the Lord for help and do not perceive any tangible response*. Instead of feeling triggered, hopeless, overwhelmed, abandoned by the Lord, alienated from the Lord and bitter toward the Lord, now what usually feels true is: ‘I don’t understand why you’re allowing this mess, and it’s really hard; but I know that you’re with me, and because of who you are, that’s enough.’³⁵

The Imagination Warning

Catholic Immanuel repudiates any person who claims that one must *clearly see Jesus in one's imagination*, though this is often helpful. In other words, we repudiate those who might claim that a receiver is “doing it wrong” if he or she only perceives a more vague divine presence. One’s ability to establish this kind of interaction with Jesus is based on many complex factors. Dr. Lehman clearly states that even a vague sense of the Lord’s presence is enough for a fruitful session to move forward. He writes “My faith in the Immanuel Approach process helps me

³⁴ Ratzinger (cited above), “Letter to the Bishops on Certain Aspects of Christian Meditation,” #9.

³⁵ Lehman, *Immanuel Approach*, p. 257.

to trust that faint, subtle, vague experiences are valid connections with God unless proven otherwise.”³⁶

The Gnostic Warning

Catholic Immanuel repudiates any person who claims that this prayer form constitutes some kind of superior knowledge or provides superior spiritual experience for all who practice it. The one way of prayer is the Lord Jesus Christ and there are many ways to His Heart. It is our experience that Immanuel Prayer provides a better spiritual experience for some in the sense that we are able to see positive, lasting fruit of the Holy Spirit when we regularly engage in it.

The Orthodoxy Warning

Catholic Immanuel repudiates any person who claims that the private revelations received in a session in any way overturn or negate Catholic teaching. It should go without saying that we can regard any revelation as delusional that is contrary to Scripture or Tradition.

The Schismatic Warning

Catholic Immanuel maintains that those who are *moving forward in proper order with Immanuel Prayer* will only find themselves *more intimately connected* with the Catholic community and with the sacraments, and thus repudiates any persons or groups of persons who claim that they no longer need the Catholic community or the sacraments because of something they “learned” or “experienced” in Immanuel Prayer.

The Deception Warning

Catholic Immanuel repudiates any person who claims that deception is not possible during an Immanuel session. Minor deception is, in fact, likely; but when we proceed in proper order and responsible discernment, its effects are greatly minimized. The self can deceive and we must go beyond the self and relate to God and community in order to minimize deception.

There is no doubt that in prayer one should concentrate entirely on God and as far as possible exclude the things of this world which bind us to our selfishness. On this topic St. Augustine is an excellent

³⁶ Lehman, *Immanuel Approach*, p. 255.

teacher: if you want to find God, he says, abandon the exterior world and re-enter into yourself. However, he continues, do not remain in yourself, but go beyond yourself because you are not God: He is deeper and greater than you. □¹

Lehman writes, "...everybody has trouble with minor counterfeit and/or contamination. Nobody is able to perceive the Lord's presence or guidance with perfect, 100 percent accuracy.... This is why we need to remain humble with respect to any content we receive in the context of Immanuel Approach (IA, 421)." In short, deception is always possible but it is minimized by relation. It is precisely because this devotion is practiced in relation with another that it has a unique power.

The Unity Warning

Catholic Immanuel strongly recommends that those regularly participating in this devotion make efforts to benefit from the wisdom of a spiritual director. Spiritual *direction* assumes that one has had spiritual *experience*, and Immanuel provides such experience. Experience in turn assumes a direction for it. It is assumed that Catholic coaches are in the state of grace and following the precepts of the Church.

Conclusion

There is much more to explore, but allow us to conclude with this statement of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith specifically on the question of delineating the difference between Christian and non-Christian forms of prayer:

Christian prayer is always determined by the structure of the Christian faith, in which the very truth of God and creature shines forth. For this reason, it is defined, properly speaking, as a personal, intimate and profound dialogue between man and God. It expresses therefore the communion of redeemed creatures with the intimate life of the Persons of the Trinity. This communion, based on Baptism and the Eucharist, source and summit of the life of the Church, implies an attitude of conversion, a flight from "self" to the "You" of God. Thus Christian prayer is at the same time always authentically personal and communitarian. It flees from impersonal techniques or from concentrating on oneself, which can create a kind of rut, imprisoning

the person praying in a spiritual privatism which is incapable of a free openness to the transcendental God. Within the Church, *in the legitimate search for new methods of meditation* it must always be borne in mind that the essential element of authentic Christian prayer is the meeting of two freedoms, the infinite freedom of God with the finite freedom of man.³⁷

We maintain that Immanuel Prayer is an excellent way to both separate and thereby unite those two freedoms in an intimate and responsible way in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ.

AUTHOR'S STATEMENT: If anything is found in this prayer that is inconsistent with the Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church, we will submit these judgment to her wisdom and hope that any inconsistencies can be remedied by humble dialogue.

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This is a preliminary document. We fully recognize our understanding of these things will mature with experience, prayer, criticism and study.

³⁷ Ratzinger (quoted above), Letter to the Bishops on Certain Aspects of Christian Meditation, #3.