

## Thursday in the Second Week: The Love of Suffering

### *Summary of the Morrow's Meditation*

We will consider tomorrow: first, that in the mystery of the Transfiguration is contained a great lesson upon the love of suffering; second, the source of the greatest blessing is found in suffering. We will then make the resolution: first, to suffer, without discontent and murmuring, all the contradictions and all the crosses we may meet with; second, not to listen to the effeminacy which, by means of too excessive care, endeavours to avoid everything which is disagreeable or inconvenient. Our spiritual nosegay shall be the words of St Paul to the Hebrews: "*Looking on Jesus the Author and Finisher of faith, who, having joy set before Him, endured the cross*" (Heb. XII:2).

### *Meditation for the Morning*

Let us adore Jesus upon Thabor conversing with Moses and Elijah, not respecting the glory with which He was resplendent, but the sufferings which He would endure on Calvary (Luke IX:31). The mouth speaks out of the abundance of the heart, and as His heart was filled with love for the cross, His mouth delighted to speak of it. Let us thank Him for the great lesson He gives us, and let us beg of Him grace to profit by it.

### THE MYSTERY OF THE TRANSFIGURATION TEACHES US LOVE OF SUFFERING

It seems to us as if Jesus, in the midst of His glory, might have given a truce, during a few moments, to the thought of suffering, but His heart sighed so ardently for the baptism of suffering which was to save the world, that even in the midst of the splendours of Thabor He seemed to be able to speak of nothing else. Jesus, Moses, and Elijah conversed together, says Holy Writ, on the terrible sufferings and the cruel death which He was to endure on Calvary. Oh, how well suited is this heavenly conversation to make us understand what we ought to love most on earth. In all circumstances, at all times, in all places, we ought to meditate upon, love, bear the cross, and often speak of it to our heart, as Jesus did upon Thabor to Moses and Elijah. St Peter, whom the Holy Spirit had not as yet enlightened respecting the excellence of the cross, thinks only of present happiness and exclaims: "*It is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah*" (Luke IX:33). But the Holy Spirit who recounts this saying immediately corrects the error contained in it, by observing that St Peter did not know what he was saying (Luke IX:33). He forgets that to enjoy is the portion of eternity, suffering the portion of this present life (Rom. VIII:17), that everything has its season; that, in order to be seated on a future day upon the throne we must attach ourselves here below to the cross; that, in order to have a share in the glory of the resurrection, we must first of all bear the semblance of death (Philipp. III:10-11); that, lastly, we must pass through many tribulations in order to arrive at the kingdom of heaven (Acts XIV:21). We should be inexcusable if we were to allow ourselves to fall into a similar error, we who behold this law of suffering written in characters of blood upon the very body of Jesus Christ (I Pet. II:21), we who have seen our divine Saviour surfeited, according to the saying of Tertullian, with the pleasure of suffering for us, and who have heard Him declare by His apostle that something would be wanting to His Passion if He did not suffer in all the members of His mystical body

as He Himself suffered in all the members of His natural body; lastly, we, in a word, to whom He has given birth in suffering, who are born by His wounds, and have received upon our heads grace flowing with His blood from His veins so cruelly torn. Children of blood, children of suffering, we cannot save ourselves in the midst of enjoyments. Let us pray to Jesus Christ to make us understand these austere truths and to give us strength to put them into practice.

#### SUFFERING IS THE SOURCE OF THE GREATEST GRACES TO US

First, suffering detaches from this world and obliges the heart to rise to heaven, by means of the discomfort which it makes it experience here below, and which proves to it that it is made for something better than the perishable enjoyments of this world, namely, for eternal bliss. Without suffering, our heart would be lost in the love of present things; suffering alone can break the deceptive charms which incline us towards the earth and make us recognise that God alone is the bed of our repose, that outside Him all is vanity and vexation of spirit. Second, suffering purifies virtue, disengages it from all alloy, and makes it enter into that blessed state where God alone is everything to the heart. This is why the more God loves a soul, the less He allows it to remain sleeping for a long time at its ease; He troubles it in its vain enjoyments, and does not permit its heart to be soiled by the current of the waters of Babylon, that is to say, by worldly pleasures. Third, suffering strengthens virtue and gives it the character of solidity which atone renders it worthy of God. As long as a soldier has not exposed himself to fire in the battle, his courage is open to suspicion. It is in the same way impossible to count upon an effeminate soul which has not been tried in the crucible of suffering. A contradiction, a loss, a want of the respect due to it, is sufficient to make it murmur and complain. It is a deceptive piety which is only a mockery of true piety, false gold which shines in the sun, but which cannot resist the fire and vanishes in the crucible. The soul which is tried by tribulation, on the contrary, is fashioned to suffering and contradiction, and is accustomed to sacrifice, remains calm amidst the trials of life, kisses the hand of God which strikes it, directs a glance of submission towards heaven, and rejoices even in its trials, in which it sees the guarantee of future happiness. Whatever our fantastic nature of human judgment may cause it to suffer, the inequalities of temper which oppose it, the deceptions of self-love, the disgust to or the fatigue consequent upon labour, it is firm and unshaken, and the more its heart is wounded and made to bleed through contradiction, the happier it is to be able to offer itself to God as a victim marked with the sign of the cross of His well-beloved Son. Are these our dispositions?

*Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.*