

Tuesday in Passion Week: The Cross the Salvation and Consolation of the Christian

Summary of the Morrow's Meditation

We will meditate tomorrow upon how we ought to love the cross: first, because it is our salvation; second, because it is our consolation in the troubles of life. We will then make the resolution: first, to keep ourselves habitually in spirit at the foot of the cross during these holy days, and often to press our lips to it; second, to have recourse to the cross in all our trials. Our spiritual nosegay shall be the words of St Paul: "*With Christ I am nailed to the cross*" (Gal. 11:19).

Meditation for the Morning

Let us prostrate ourselves at the feet of Jesus on the cross; let us lovingly kiss His sacred feet. It is there that the Christian abundantly finds salvation for eternity and consolation in the present life; that is to say, happiness in heaven and happiness upon earth. To Jesus crucified be adoration, love, thanksgiving, and benediction.

WE OUGHT TO LOVE THE CROSS BECAUSE IT IS OUR SALVATION

There are two kinds of crosses the cross of Jesus Christ, upon which He died, and our personal crosses, which are our daily trials. Now, these two kinds of crosses merit all our love, because both the one and the other are the cause and the instrument of our salvation.

First, the cross of Jesus Christ, because without it, children as we were of wrath and slaves to the devil by our birth, we were lost everlastingly, and by it Jesus Christ cast down the infernal powers, tore away from their hands, says St Paul (Coloss. 11:14), the sentence which condemned us, effaced it with His blood, and nailed it to the cross, in order that no hand might take it away. He chained to His cross, as to a triumphal car, the inimical powers; He despoiled them and led them away captive, so that now everyone may be saved who desires to be saved. The cross makes to flow throughout the whole Church, by means of the sacraments, by the holy sacrifice of the Mass, by holy thoughts and pious emotions, all the graces of which it is the source and the inexhaustible ocean; it offers to all pardon for the past, courage for the present, confidence for the future. Is not this enough to merit all our love?

Second, we ought to love our personal crosses, because the cross of Jesus Christ has raised them to the distinguished honour of being the most efficacious means of perfection, and the warrant of our eternal hopes. Patience, which endures the cross, says St James, is perfection, and solid perfection, because it has been proved in the crucible (James 1:4). It is, according to St Paul, the crown of faith (Philipp. 1:29). It is the warrant and the joy of hope. For a moment of light suffering, an immense weight of glory (II Cor. 14:17); after trial, the crown of life (James 1:12). It is one of the beatitudes proclaimed by Jesus Christ: "*Blessed are they that suffer*" (Matt. 5:10). It is a special grace which God sends to His best friends; it places them on the royal road to heaven: It suffices to have only a little faith in the words of the Saviour to esteem a good cross more than all riches; a good affront borne in a Christian manner more than all honours; humiliations, even

the most mortifying, more than all crowns; ignominy more than all applause; confusion more than all kinds of praise. Therefore the Gospel says: **Receive crosses not only with patience, but with gladness** (Matt. v:12). And St James adds: Receive them with every kind of joy, that is to say, with the joy of the poor who receive immense riches, with the joy of the man chosen amongst the people to receive a crown, with the joy of the labourer who gathers together a rich harvest, with the joy of the merchant who amasses a great gain, the joy of the general who obtains a great victory (James I:2). Thus, also, thought the saints; St Paul, when he said, I abound with joy in all my tribulations (II Cor. vii:4), and St Andrew, when at the sight of the cross he cried out lovingly, “Oh, welcome, good cross, welcome, and ever longingly desired!” Are these our sentiments?

WE OUGHT TO LOVE THE CROSS BECAUSE IT IS OUR CONSOLATION IN THE TROUBLES OF LIFE

A heathen guessed this truth when he said that *by accepting trials cheerfully they are softened* (Horace). Before him the Holy Spirit had said: “*Whatsoever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad*” (Prov. xii:21). What is it then under the New Law, where Jesus Christ crucified presents Himself to the afflicted soul, to say to it, poor soul, be consoled, I pity thy trials; I know what suffering costs thy nature; I have passed like thee through trials; and if, to console thee, thou requirest a friend who understands suffering, I possess in a supreme degree the character of a true consoler. In past times a great monarch and his minister, taken in war, were stretched by a cruel conqueror upon burning braziers. The minister uttered loud cries, and I, said the monarch to him, am I on a bed of roses? I can hold the same language to thee, O afflicted soul! Behold My head, crowned with thorns, My whole body torn, My whole person a victim to ignominy; I have suffered all this from love for thee; wilt thou not be willing to suffer infinitely less from love for Me? When I drank the chalice down to the dregs, wilt thou refuse to taste at least only a few drops? Courage, have patience; thou shalt reign one day with me; come to the throne by the same path. Unite thyself with me who am thy God and suffer from love for Me (Sirach II:3). Thanks, O my God, for this precious balm with which Thou anointest my wounds. Ah, Thou art indeed the Consoler of the afflicted soul. O holy crucifix! I take you in both my hands! I press you to my heart and to my lips, and I feel myself consoled!

Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.