

Wednesday in Holy Week: Jesus on Calvary

Summary of the Morrow's Meditation

We will tomorrow accompany Jesus Christ: first, when He ascends the Mount of Calvary; second, when He is crucified there. Our meditation on these two mysteries will make us take the resolution: first, cheerfully to bear all the crosses of life, second, to renew within us the love of Jesus crucified. Our spiritual nosegay shall be the words of a saint: "*My Love is crucified.*"

Meditation for the Morning

Let us adore Jesus Christ condemned to death at the tribunal of Pilate; let us, in this mystery, admire a mystery of love. Men thought that they were only carrying out their own hatred; they were carrying out the designs of God; they were seconding the love of the Father, giving up to death for us His well-beloved Son; they were seconding the love of the Son, who was glad to die, first, in order to save us; second, to teach us, by His example, to maintain meekness and equanimity amidst the unjust judgments of the world of the trials sent us by Providence. Thanks, O Jesus, for this great lesson! The Jews cried out that Thou didst merit death; that Thou shouldst live no longer (Matt. xxvi:66; John xix:15). It is to me, O my Saviour, it is to my vanity, to my sensuality, that these words are applicable. Yes, these passions deserve death; they must live no longer. O Jesus, make them die in me, so that I may love Thee and henceforth live only for Thee!

JESUS ASCENDING CALVARY

Hardly had the sentence of death been pronounced before the cross was presented to the Saviour, and He was ordered to take it upon His shoulders and carry it to Calvary. Who can express the love with which He seized it: that cross for which He had sighed for so long a time; that cross which was about to save the world and to reconcile earth with heaven; that cross which was about to teach the whole human race patience under trials and the road to Paradise! O cross forever lovely! I see my Saviour bow down His shoulders under thy weight, and set off for the place of execution; I rise and follow after Him, and I say to myself: Could I, after that, drag along my cross impatiently and ill-humouredly? Could I do otherwise than bear it cheerfully, with out murmuring and complaining? O cross! whatever you may be, sufferings of the body or sufferings of the soul, come, come to me; I accept you cheerfully; I will bear you henceforth with courage and resolution; I will even add voluntary mortifications, in order more perfectly to resemble my Jesus bearing His cross. It was in meditating upon this mystery that the saints fell in love with the cross; a St Paul to the extent of calling it a precious grace (Philipp. i:29); a St Peter to the extent of saying, Rejoice when you bear the cross with Jesus Christ (I Pet. iv:13); a St Andrew exclaiming, when he beheld the cross on which he was to die, "O good cross, so greatly desired" (*Vita S. And.*); a St Teresa, who cried out, "*Either suffer or die*"; a St Catherine of Siena, entreating, "*Not to die yet, but to suffer longer.*" Jesus, during His progress to Calvary, meets: first, Mary, to teach us to have recourse to her in all our troubles; second, Simon the Cyrenian, to teach us to remember that every Christian may alleviate the weight of the cross of Jesus, whether by diminishing the faults which weigh so painfully upon His heart, whether by bearing in a Christian manner all the crosses

which make but one with His; third, the daughters of Jerusalem, who weep at seeing the sad state to which He is reduced. "*Weep not for Me,*" He says to them, "*but weep for yourselves*" (Luke xxiii:28). It is thus, O Saviour, that Thou dost forget Thyself to think only of us; whilst we, alas! so little know how to pity either Thy sufferings or the sufferings of our neighbour. We think only of ourselves, and forget all the rest. May we profit by the lesson Thou didst give us here.

JESUS CRUCIFIED

Arrived at the summit of Calvary, our adorable Saviour is divested of His tunic. This tunic adhered closely to His bleeding body, and in tearing it violently away from Him all His wounds are opened afresh. O mystery of suffering! Behold Him naked like a worm in the face of the whole of the people, who scoff at Him. O mystery of ignominy! He is told to lie down upon the cross, and He places Himself upon that hard bed, whilst blessing His Father that the hour of the sacrifice has come. He is told to stretch out His hands, and then His feet, and He allows them to be transpierced with nails, to expiate the abuse we have made of our hands and our feet, of our affections and our deeds. O mystery of obedience! Then He is raised upon the cross, which is fixed in the ground; the shock renews all His sufferings, the weight of His body enlarges the wounds in the feet and hands; during three hours He remains suspended between heaven and earth. It is the Eternal Father who offers this sacrifice for our salvation; it is the Supreme Master who, from the height of this new chair, teaches the world detachment, poverty, humility, obedience, patience, and resignation or conformity to the will of God. O mystery of love! It is love which immolates itself, which demands in return all the love of our hearts (Prov. xxiii:26). O Jesus, be hold the poor heart which Thou dost ask for; I give it to Thee; fasten it to Thy cross, so that I may say with the Apostle: "*With Jesus Christ I am nailed to the cross*" (Gal. ii:19). Thou hast said, "*If I be lifted from the earth, I will draw all things to Myself*" (John xii:32); accomplish Thy word, O Lord, draw me to Thee; draw there all my heart (Cant. i:3); may it henceforth live only for Thee, may it be Thine alone, in life and at death.

Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.