

## Holy Saturday: The Burial of the Saviour and His Descent into Limbo

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

We will meditate tomorrow upon the two great mysteries of the day of which we make profession in the Apostles Creed: first, the burial of the adorable body of Our Lord; second, the descent of His holy soul into limbo. We will gather together the lessons which this double mystery teaches us, and we will make the resolution: first, to prepare ourselves today with special fervour for holy communion tomorrow; second, to imitate the spirit of humility and detachment preached to us by the burial of Our Lord. Our spiritual nosegay shall be the words of the Apostle: "*You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God*" (Coloss. III:3).

### *Meditation for the Morning*

Let us unite in the devotion with which Mary and the beloved disciple, Mary Magdalene and the holy women, received in their arms the body of Jesus Christ, when Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had taken it down from the cross. With what loving emotion Mary looked at His bruised body, contemplated His dislocated limbs, and kissed His wounds! And the beloved disciple, how he cast himself upon the sacred side on which he had reposed the night before, and seeing it open how he longed to enter into it! And Mary Magdalene, how she embraced His sacred feet where she had obtained her pardon, how she washed them with her tears and dried them with her hair! Let us share in the pious sentiments of these holy souls.

#### THE LESSONS TAUGHT US BY THE BURIAL OF OUR LORD

This mystery teaches us, first, how we ought to communicate. After the adorable body was taken down from the cross, Nicodemus brought a hundred pounds of a precious perfume composed of myrrh and aloes to embalm it; Joseph of Arimathea offered a white shroud in which to wrap it and a new sepulchre hewn in the rock wherein to bury it, a sepulchre in which no one had yet been laid; then the entrance to the tomb was secured by a stone, which was sealed with the seal of the public authorities, and soldiers were placed in front of it to guard it. It is thus that, when the body of Our Lord comes to us in holy communion, we ought to embalm it with the perfume of holy desires and the aroma of good works; we ought to present to Him a heart shining with the beauty of innocence, symbolised by the shroud without spot; a resolute will to practise what is right, like the stone of the rock; a conscience renewed by penance; and after holy communion we ought to shut the entrance into our heart as with a stone and a seal, by means of holy recollection, and place there modesty, discretion, watchfulness over ourselves, as vigilant guards, to hinder the precious treasure we have received from being taken from us. Is it thus that we act?

This mystery teaches us, second, what are the three characteristics of the spiritual death to which all Christians are called, according to the words of the Apostle: "*Do you also reckon that you are dead*" (Rom. VI:11); "*You are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God*" (Coloss. III:3). The first of these characteristics is to love the hidden life, to be, as it were, dead in regard to all that is said or thought of us, without seeking either to see the world or to be seen by it. Jesus Christ in the darkness of the tomb teaches us this great lesson:

Let the world forget us, let it tread us under foot, it matters not to us. We ought not to trouble ourselves any more about it than a dead man would trouble about it. The happiness of a Christian soul is to hide its life with Jesus Christ in God. Our evil nature may spend itself in uttering remonstrances, in desiring to be approved, loved, distinguished, we may let it say what it likes; the more its sensitiveness with regard to being esteemed by others is extreme, the more unworthy is it of it, and the more need is there for it to be deprived of it. Let our reputation be destroyed, let us be esteemed as of no account, let us be spared nothing, let us be held in horror, let it be as Thou willest, O Lord! The second characteristic of the spiritual death is, whilst making use of earthly goods through necessity, not to attach any importance to them, not to take any pleasure in the luxuries or comforts of this life, or in the enjoyments of the table, or in the satisfaction of curiosity, which desires to see and know everything, to be, in a word, dead with respect to the pleasures of the senses. To this second characteristic we must add the abandonment of our whole selves to Providence, an abandonment which makes us as though we were a corpse, permit everything and anything to be done to us, without arguing, without willing or desiring anything, indifferent to all kinds of positions and to all kinds of occupations. When shall I have reached this point, O Lord; when shall I cease to love myself, when will all be dead in me, in order that Thou mayest live in me?

#### THE LESSONS WHICH THE DESCENT OF THE SOUL OF JESUS CHRIST INTO LIMBO TEACHES US

This mystery teaches us, first, the love of Jesus for man. When He issued from His sacred body, His holy soul might have withdrawn into the bosom of God, to repose there after all its sufferings; but His love for man inspired Him with the resolve to descend into limbo to console the patriarchs, and to announce to them that in forty days He would take them with Him into Paradise. It is thus that the love of Jesus knows no repose. After His death, as well as during His life, He does men all the good He can. Thanks, O Jesus, thanks a thousand times for this eagerness to do us good! This mystery teaches us, second, the love which ought to attach us to Jesus. At the sight of this holy soul the just who were detained in limbo could not restrain their transports; they burst forth into canticles of praise, of gratitude, and of love, and their heart gives itself wholly to God, their liberator. Behold our models! Why should we feel less gratitude and love, since Jesus died for us as well as for them, since He loves us as He loved them, and promises to us Paradise as He did to them?

*Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.*