

Quinquagesima Sunday: The Carnival Season

Then Jesus took unto Him the twelve and said to them: *Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man. For He shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked and scourged and spit upon: and after they have scourged Him, they will put Him to death, and the third day He shall rise again.* And they understood none of these things, and this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said. Now it came to pass, when He drew nigh to Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the wayside, begging. And when he heard the multitude passing by, he asked what this meant. And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying: Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. And they that went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace. But he cried out much more: Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus, standing, commanded him to be brought unto Him. And when he was come near, He asked him, saying: *What wilt thou that I do to thee?* But he said: Lord, that I may see. And Jesus said to him: *Receive thy sight: thy faith hath made thee whole.* And immediately he saw, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

The Gospel according to St Luke, XVIII:31–43.

Summary of the Morrow's Meditation

We will meditate tomorrow upon the three days on which we are about to enter, and we shall see that we owe: first, to Jesus Christ; second, to our neighbour; third, to ourselves, to make them three days of penance and mortification. We will then make the resolution: first, to pass these three days in a spirit of recollection and of prayer, and to make during the time they last several fervent visits to the Blessed Sacrament; second, not to yield to a worldly spirit during these three days, but, on the contrary, to practise on them some acts of penance and mortification. Our spiritual nosegay shall be the words of Our Lord to His apostles: *“Amen, amen, I say unto you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice, and you shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy”* (John XVI:20).

Meditation for the Morning

Let us adore Jesus Christ in the two facts which the gospel of the day places before us. On the one hand He predicts His Passion; on the other He gives sight to a man who was born blind. The recital of these two facts is very striking in its actuality, in these days of licence which show us on the one side the Passion of the Saviour renewed by the scenes of the carnival; on the other the world so blind to the things of God and of eternity. Let us make honourable amends to Jesus Christ for the licentiousness of the world, and do not let us allow Him to pass through these holy days without praying Him to enlighten and convert us. Let us fear, with St Augustine, to permit Him to pass without our becoming better.

WE OWE TO JESUS CHRIST TO MAKE OF THESE THREE DAYS THREE DAYS OF PENANCE AND MORTIFICATION

We shall never be able to conceive all the sorrow which the licentiousness of the world occasioned the Heart of Jesus during these three days when, from the Garden of Olives, He saw them distinctly in the course of the centuries to come. It would be necessary, in order to conceive them, that we should love God like Him, understand like Him the enormity of sin, which despises the power of God, braves His justice, outrages His holiness, scorns His goodness, disowns His benefits: a horrible injury which He sees multiplied by millions of men during these three days; it would be necessary to love men as He does, understand, as He does, the misery of those souls who will not save themselves and are determined to be lost, treading His blood under their feet, rendering His sufferings useless, His love fruitless, in order to cast themselves head foremost into hell. O overwhelming agony! His soul is sorrowful even unto death (Matt. xxvi:38). Now is it not the duty of friends to share in the sufferings of the friend whom they see is suffering, to console him and to visit him? Jesus Christ, exposed upon our altars, calls upon us to fulfil this great duty. We do not love Him if, neglecting to associate ourselves with His sorrows, we force Him to repeat the complaint which He breathed forth at an earlier period by the mouth of the prophet: *“I looked for one that would grieve together with Me, but there was none”* (Ps. LXVIII:21).

WE OWE IT TO OUR NEIGHBOUR TO MAKE OF THESE THREE DAYS THREE DAYS OF PENANCE AND MORTIFICATION

Alas, the men who are ruining themselves are our brethren, and shall we not have pity upon them? (Matt. xviii:33) Do we love them if the misery into which they are about to cast themselves, says nothing to our heart, if we do not pray and perform penance for them? If it were only the loss of one single soul which was in question, he would have a heart of iron, says St Augustine, a heart as hard as a diamond, if he could be insensible to it. What then ought we to feel, when we see so many who are ruining themselves? What ought we to feel, above all, in these days wherein a still greater number than usual enrol themselves beneath the banner of Satan? Oh, if we had true charity, if we loved our neighbour as ourselves, if we loved him as Jesus Christ loved us, according to the precept He has given us, what penances and mortifications should we not impose on ourselves during these three days for poor sinners! What are our dispositions, now that we are about to enter on these holy days?

WE OWE IT TO OURSELVES TO MAKE OF THESE THREE DAYS THREE DAYS OF PENANCE AND MORTIFICATION

Our Lord, in fact, attaches to this practice a promise of salvation and a guarantee of predestination. *O you, He says to His apostles, who remain faithful to Me in these days of tribulation and of trial, depriving yourselves of the pleasures of the world in order to bear in memory My cross, I promise to give you My kingdom, to make you enjoy the bliss of heaven, to establish you on thrones, where you will judge the twelve tribes of Israel* (Luke xxii:28–30). Elsewhere He promises those who are sad through love of Him, whilst

the world rejoices, that their sorrow shall be changed into eternal joy (John XII:20, 22). These are words which show us the portion of those who follow the world in these days of licence, and the portion of those who follow the Lord. The one set of men pass their time in worldly amusements, the other in tears and penitential practices, but soon their tears shall be followed by a joy that never ends. In this alternative, which side will we take? Can we hesitate for one moment?

Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.