

## Friday after Ash Wednesday: Jesus Crowned with Thorns

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

In conformity with the spirit of the Church, we will meditate tomorrow on the crowning with thorns, and we shall admire in this mystery: first, a mystery of suffering and humiliation; second, a precious lesson for our salvation. We will then make the resolution: first, heartily to accept the mortifications and humiliations which may present themselves to us; second, often to make acts of contrition for our sensuality and self-love. Our spiritual nosegay shall be the words of St Bernard: "*Let us be ashamed to be delicate members under a Head crowned with thorns*" (Serm. v, in Fest. Omn. SS., no. 9).

### *Meditation for the Morning*

Let us, with very profound reverence, adore Jesus crowned with thorns, after having been cruelly scourged, and then presented to the Jews with a reed in His hand by way of sceptre, and an old garment of purple upon His shoulders by way of a royal mantle. O my Saviour! by all this they wish to turn Thy kingdom into ridicule; but under this insulting exterior I recognise Thee to be my Saviour and my God. I honour Thee, I praise Thee, I bless Thee under this unworthy disguise, which Thy love for me has caused Thee to accept.

### JESUS CROWNED WITH THORNS A MYSTERY OF SUFFERING AND HUMILIATION

First, it is a mystery of suffering. For the thorns are strong and sharp; the soldiers drive them with heavy blows into the sacred head, which is the most sensitive part of the body, and they make the points pierce it so deeply that they make the little blood left by the scourging flow from it. From all parts the blood drops upon His adorable face, which is all disfigured by it. His holy humanity is thus wholly plunged in suffering; and the prophecy of Isaiah is literally accomplished: "*From the sole of the foot unto the top of the head, there is no soundness therein; wounds and bruises and swelling sores; they are not bound up, nor dressed, nor fomented with oil*" (Is. 1:6). He accepts with calmness and resignation these dreadful sufferings, offering them to His Father for the salvation of the world. What heroic self-sacrifice! What incomprehensible love! O Jesus, how shall we ever realise such great charity! Second, it is a mystery of humiliation. This great God is made a mock king and given up to public ridicule. A crown of thorns is placed on His head, to turn into ridicule the royal crown which He had a right to wear; He holds in His hand a reed as a sceptre; on His shoulders is a garment of purple instead of a royal robe; then they kneel down in His presence, and, mocking Him, they exclaim: "*Hail! King of the Jews*" (Matt. xxvii:9). From ridicule they pass on to cruelty: "*Away with Him, away with Him I crucify Him!*" (John xix:15) cries out the multitude. "*We will have no king but Cæsar*" (Ibid.). O my God, my true God! pardon these cries, pardon these sacrilegious mockeries! As for me, I will have no other king, no other God, save Thee (Ps. v:3).

## LESSONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THE MYSTERY OF JESUS CROWNED WITH THORNS

First, this mystery teaches us to weep over our past sins. On our knees, in presence of Jesus crowned with thorns, we ought to say to ourselves: Behold the work of my sins; behold what sufferings and what ignominies they have cost my God; and thinking thus, is it possible not to detest them, not to weep over them, not to wash them in our tears, mingled with the blood which flows from the adorable head of Jesus Christ? Is it possible not to join to grief for the past a firm resolution to lead a better and more Christian life for the future? Second, this mystery preaches mortification to us; for, as St Bernard says, it is a shame to be a delicate member of a Head crowned with thorns. It is a revolting contrast for the Saint of saints to be in suffering, and for me to be indulging in enjoyment; that Jesus should have His head crowned with thorns, and that I should seize every opportunity to procure myself pleasure when I can do so without committing a great crime. Third, this mystery teaches us humility. For the crown of ignominy which Jesus wears is the condemnation of that crown of pride and ambition which is the object of our sweetest dreams. In choosing for His portion a crown of humiliation, Jesus willed to show us that He reproveth the passion of wishing to make an appearance, to obtain notice and to rise above our fellows; how, on the contrary, He loves humble souls, who, content with God alone, do not seek to obtain favour in the eyes of the creature; who do good in secret, without noise, without thinking of renown, because virtue suffices them. Let us collect together these precious lessons in our heart, and let us conform to them our sentiments and our acts.

*Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.*