

Wednesday in Passion Week: The Cross the Strength and Glory of the Christian

Summary of the Morrow's Meditation

We will consider tomorrow that we ought to love the cross, because we find in it: first, our strength; second, our glory. Our resolution shall be: first, to remember the cross in our seasons of weakness or discouragement, in order to revive our courage; second, no longer to have any care for the vain glory of the world, and to attach ourselves solely to the solid glory of the cross. Our spiritual nosegay shall be the words of St Paul: "*God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Gal. VI:14).

Meditation for the Morning

Let us prostrate ourselves in spirit before the cross of the Saviour, and let us offer to it the homage of our most fervent piety, of our adoration, love, and praise (Ps. XCIV:6).

OUGHT TO LOVE THE CROSS BECAUSE IT IS OUR STRENGTH

Man is feeble of himself, and, on the other side, he is in such critical positions, he has faults and passions which are so difficult to overcome, virtues which are so painful to practise, that it is necessary that a supernatural strength should come to the succour of human weakness. Now, it is in the cross that this strength is to be found. We find in it an example which puts to shame our pusillanimity and excites our courage; a guarantee of our immortal hopes which, raising our heart to heaven, renders it stronger than the whole earth; a grace which sustains, a love which provokes our love and inspires devotedness; lastly, the seal of the elect, which invites us to walk in the same path as they did in order to reach the goal which they have attained. St Paul attached himself to the cross (Gal. II:19), and leaning upon it he esteemed himself to be stronger than all kinds of temptations and trials (Rom. VIII:37). The martyrs and the confessors in their torments thought of the cross, and found therein a strength which rendered them invincible. I suffer greatly, said one of them, but what is it compared with what Jesus suffered on the cross? Let us imitate these beautiful examples. Are we tried by reverses of fortune, even to the extent of suffering the most extreme poverty, the nakedness of Jesus on the cross will render privation dear to us, and will make us exclaim courageously with St Jerome: I will follow naked Jesus Christ naked. Are we afflicted in our body by infirmity and suffering, the wounds of Jesus Christ on the cross will make us cherish suffering, and enable us to say with St Bonaventure: "*I will not live without suffering when I see Thee suffering;*" or with St Teresa: "*Either suffering or death!*" I have a horror, said this great saint, of enjoyment and comfort, of sensuality and effeminacy. Are we a butt for calumny, to want of consideration, to contempt; the opprobrium suffered by Jesus on the cross will destroy our illusions in respect to the love of esteem and of praise. We henceforth have no longer any desire for them; for how can we have any respect for the esteem of a world which has so ill appreciated eternal wisdom? How can we desire to be treated better and to be more honoured than a God? Lastly, have we interior troubles to suffer, a character to reform, self-will to overcome, the meekness and obedience of Jesus on the cross will

render us meek and docile, simple and obedient. Thus, in whatever position we may be, whatever may be the troubles in us or around us, the cross will be our strength; with it we shall triumph over all difficulties, with it we shall be happy in the midst of suffering, rich in poverty, content amidst contradictions.

WE OUGHT TO LOVE THE CROSS BECAUSE IT IS OUR GLORY

The cross and sufferings are so great an honour that our sins deserve that we should be deprived of them, and that we should be condemned to the riches, the honours, and the pleasures of the world, against which Our Lord pronounced this terrible anathema, “*Woe to you that are rich, for you have your consolation*” (Luke VI:24). The soul on which God bestows these false positions ought to be humiliated and confounded, and ought to fear condemnation at the day of judgment. The soul, on the contrary, that is favoured by God with the gift of the cross ought to be afraid of indulging in pride, because then it is treated like a God, assimilated to Jesus Christ, the true God, and, like Him, fed with sufferings, opprobrium, and poverty. The world, which entertains false ideas respecting glory, does not at all understand this language; nevertheless what is there which is clearer? According to the world, glory consists in the nobility of an illustrious blood; but the cross gives to the Christian a nobility higher than all earthly nobility; by means of it the Christian is a child of God, with a right to say to God: Our Father, who art in heaven; he is the brother of Jesus Christ and co-heir of the heavenly kingdom. According to the world, glory consists in the possession of vast domains; but the cross assures to me heaven for my inheritance, a throne on which I shall judge the world (Eph. II:6), and infinite benefits compared with which the whole world is as nothing. According to the world, glory consists in the superiority of mind by which so many sages of past days were distinguished; but in comparison with the hidden mystery of the cross all the wisdom of the world is nothing but folly (I Cor. I:20). According to the world, glory consists in heroic courage; but what greater heroes are there than those disciples of the cross who are called apostles and martyrs and saints? Lastly, according to the world, glory consists in being admitted into the intimacy of the great and of monarchs; but the cross admits me into the intimacy of God, of Jesus Christ His Son, of all the angels and all the saints. So is it not incomparably more glorious? Honour, then, to the cross! May it be welcome every time that it presents itself. Honour to crucified souls! They are the favourites of God, His special friends, who wear the liveries of the great King Jesus. Is it thus that we appreciate the cross? Do we not perhaps entertain quite different sentiments, even to the extent of murmuring and complaining when we see it approach?

Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.