

## Tuesday after Septuagesima: Jesus in the Garden of Olives

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

In order to conform ourselves to the Roman liturgy, which honours Jesus tomorrow in the Garden of Olives, we will meditate on this mystery, and we shall learn from it: first, to avoid sin; second, to sanctify the trials of life. We will then make the resolution: first, to recall Jesus Christ to ourselves in the Garden of Olives that we may be excited to compunction for our sins, whether in the evening at the examination of our conscience, or whilst preparing ourselves for confession; second, to foresee every morning the trials awaiting us during the day, in order to encourage ourselves to support them in a Christian manner and without complaint. Our spiritual nosegay shall be the words of Our Lord in the Garden of Olives: "*Father, if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from Me, but not My will but Thine be done*" (Luke XXII:42).

### *Meditation for the Morning*

Let us transport ourselves in spirit to the Garden of Olives; let us there contemplate the Saviour of the world prostrate on the earth before the majesty of His Father, all bathed in the blood which flows out of His veins through sorrow for our sins and the love He bears us. Prostrate in spirit beside Him, as though to gather up the drops of this precious blood, let us adore Him in His anguish, and let us unite our sorrow with His, our tears with His blood (St Bernard, *Serm. III in Nativ. Dom.* no. 4).

### JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF OLIVES TEACHES US TO AVOID SIN

If we sin, it is because we do not fear sin enough: hence the facility with which we commit it; it is because we do not detest it enough after having committed it: hence the defects in our contrition, hence the little fruit we derive from our confessions and perhaps the sacrilegious abuse of the sacrament of penance; it is because we do not fight enough: hence our relapses. Now Jesus Christ, in the Garden of Olives, remedies these three great evils. First, He teaches us to fear sin. His holy soul saw sin, even venial sin, under quite a different aspect from what we do; He understood what God is with His infinite love, and how dreadful it is to offend Him; what hell is and how fearful it is to fall into it; what heaven is and what unhappiness it is to lose it; what a soul is and how much it is worth; what grace is and how terrible it is to abuse it. And these great prospects, joined to the thought of all the sins of the world which He beheld before Him cast Him into mortal fear (Mark XIV:33). Oh, if we were but to look in the same light at all the sins to which we attach so little importance: thoughts of self-love, ambitious desires and vanities, our calumnious words and ill-tempered ones, our culpable actions, our eternal search after comfort, our numerous omissions—how much more should we fear sin! Second, the gravity of sin being thus understood, Jesus teaches us how to weep. His soul is sad even to death (Matt. XXVI:38). He weeps with all His members, and sheds tears of blood (Luke XXII:44). He sinks under the weight of grief, and it is necessary that an angel should come down from heaven to sustain Him; which recalls to us, at the same time, that our troubles are known to heaven, and that from heaven alone can come our true consolation (Ibid. 43). What a beautiful model of contrition! Third, Jesus in the Garden of Olives teaches us how to fight against sin: He feels in Himself

the greatest repugnance to the opprobrium, the torments, and the death which await Him; He struggles generously against this repugnance, and in spite of nature which murmurs, He rises and says, Arise, let us go where God calls us. Thus we must always serve God, in spite of everything, do violence to our tastes and our aversions, and bend beneath the divine will, remembering that the revolts of nature against grace, and of the flesh against the spirit, can do us no harm as long as our will remains attached to God. Is it thus that we fear sin, that we detest it, that we struggle against it?

#### JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF OLIVES TEACHES US TO SANCTIFY THE TRIALS OF LIFE

Jesus, in the midst of the severe trials which assailed Him, had recourse to three means: First, Prayer. He withdraws from His apostles and prays. Twice, through charity, He interrupts His prayer; twice He resumes it, and the more His anguish augments, the more He prays (Luke xxii:43). In our troubles, we seek our consolation from creatures, we complain to them, and we derive nothing from it but more bitterness. Let us have recourse to God, and we shall be consoled (Ps. lxxvi:3, 4). Second, Jesus conforms His will to the will of God; He does not ask for His deliverance, but for the accomplishment of the adorable will (Matt. xxvi:30). All sufferings, if they are not accompanied by this perfect abandonment to the divine good pleasure, not only lose their merit, but are converted into occasions of sin, by our impatience and our murmurings. Oh, why is it that we do not then say: "God is our Father; let Him afflict us, let Him strike us as much as He will, it can only be for our good." Third, Jesus, in the midst of His trials, bears peacefully the indifference of His apostles. Twice He finds them asleep, although He had counselled them to watch and to pray; and without being angered, He only reproves them gently, excuses them, and exhorts them anew. What, you could not watch even one hour with Me? He said to them: "*Watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation*" (Matt. xxvi:41). Thus He teaches us never to make others suffer on account of our own troubles, not to complain of their indifference, and to excuse their wrongs towards us. Do we not often do the contrary?

*Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.*