

Monday in Holy Week: What Christ Suffered from His Apostles

Summary of the Morrow's Meditation

We will meditate tomorrow on what Christ suffered from His apostles during His Passion; that is to say, first, from Judas who betrayed Him; second, from St Peter who denied Him; third, from the other apostles who forsook Him. We will then make the resolution: first, to mistrust ourselves and to confide in God only; second, patiently to bear all the trials which may be inflicted on us by creatures, even by our best friends. Our spiritual nosegay shall be the complaint of Job applied to Our Saviour: "*My kinsmen have forsaken me*" (Job XIX:14).

Meditation for the Morning

Let us adore Jesus Christ whose heart was so full of love for His apostles, so patient to their faults, so generous in the favours He heaped upon them, and yet, notwithstanding so much kindness, betrayed, denied, and forsaken by them. Let us adore His mercy, let us praise and bless His indulgence towards human weakness.

JESUS BETRAYED BY JUDAS

Our Lord had overwhelmed Judas with His kindnesses; He had made him His apostle and His friend, He had honoured him with the power of working miracles at the Last Supper, He had washed his feet, He had given Himself entirely to him in the Holy Communion, and behold, instead of being grateful to Him for so many benefits, the miserable wretch sells Him to the Jews for thirty pieces of silver, walks at the head of His enemies who come to take Him, and gives Him the perfidious kiss which was the signal agreed upon to point Him out to the soldiers who were to arrest Him. Oh, how sad was this treachery to the heart of Jesus! If it be painful, when we love, not to be able to make ourselves loved, what is it, then, to receive in return for our love nothing but perfidy and malice? Our Lord willed to suffer this trial in order to console those who are tried by ingratitude or treachery, and to teach them how to behave in the like circumstances. He meets treachery with nothing but kindness and meekness. *My friend*, He said to Judas. It was as much as to say to him, if you do not love me any longer, I still love you, and I am as ready to give you pardon as to receive the injury you are doing Me without a cause; and it is as much as to say to us, never to be angry, even with those of whom we have most cause to complain; to have compassion, rather than indignation, for every man who sins, and never to lose confidence in the divine mercy, since Jesus Christ calls Judas His friend even after his crime. "*Wherefore art thou come?*" (Matt. xxvi:50) the Saviour adds. How much is contained in this! Wherefore! wherefore, O Judas? For thirty pieces of silver and the malediction of God, for a little temporal gain and eternal damnation! What folly! Wherefore, O Christian soul, such anxieties, such earnest solicitude to satisfy pride, ambition, cupidity? What will you gain from it all? Wherefore such pusillanimity in the service of God, tepidity in prayer, time lost in useless conversations, in reading frivolous books? What will you gain from it all? Wherefore your whole life? Wherefore each one of your actions? What is the object of them? What is the fruit of them? Oh, what unreasonableness there is in the man who

sins, in the man who proposes to himself any other end except God, whether it be as regards what he does or what he proposes to himself.

JESUS DENIED BY ST PETER

Let us leave to the silence of meditation to show us what, on this occasion, was the sorrow of the heart of Jesus; and let us meditate on that most useful lesson taught us by the fall and the conversion of the apostle.

First, his fall instructs us. It teaches us, first, to mistrust ourselves. St Peter fell because he presumed on his strength; and thus all who are presumptuous fall when they count upon their own virtue. It teaches us, second, not to separate ourselves from Jesus Christ by mingling too much with the world or by dissipation of thought. St Peter followed the Lord only from afar, says the Gospel. It teaches us, third, to avoid all occasions of sin; St Peter stopped to talk with the servants. It teaches us, fourth, to fortify ourselves by watchfulness and prayer: Jesus Christ had recommended these two means; St Peter had slept in the Garden of Olives. It teaches us, fifth, to rise promptly after the first fall; because unless we do so we fall from abyss to abyss. St Peter said at the first assault, "*I know not this man;*" at the second, he confirmed this wretched falsehood by an oath; at the third he confirmed his oath by imprecations (Mark XIV:71). Thus we fall from one depth into another when we do not hasten to rise.

Second, the conversion of St Peter instructs us no less than does his fall. It teaches us, first, how good Our Lord is; with a single look He pierces the heart of His apostle and converts him. O loving glance! Peter does not seek Jesus; it is Jesus who makes the first advances towards him. Powerful glance! It raises the courage of Peter and makes him shed a torrent of tears. Glance full of sweetness! It spares Peter the shame of his crime, and cures the ulcer without touching it. Generous glance! Jesus forgets His own sufferings in order to occupy Himself with the conversion of His apostle; He comes back to His slave after having been outraged by him. Happy those who, understanding the power of this divine glance, know how to show Him their wounds and open to Him their heart! The conversion of St Peter teaches us, second, to weep over our sins, not from fear, but from love, to weep over them bitterly (Matt. XXVI:75), to weep over them always. Peter wept until his death over the misfortune of having denied his Master; and his cheeks bore, as long as he lived, traces of the river of tears which flowed from his eyes. Let us collect together in the bottom of our hearts all the lessons offered us by the sin and the conversion of the apostle and let us profit by them.

JESUS ABANDONED BY THE WHOLE OF HIS APOSTLES

The apostles, who had so ardently protested that they would die for Jesus Christ, lost courage in presence of the danger, and they all abandoned Him. Let us learn from hence: first, how weak and miserable man is of himself, and how little is required to make us fail in our best resolutions; how much, consequently, we ought to mistrust our own strength, nor count upon ourselves, nor expose ourselves to occasions of sin, but watch and pray without ceasing, in order to call to our aid His grace, which alone can enable us to live well. Let us learn, second, not to count upon the friendships of the world, or to allow ourselves to be disconcerted when they fail us. The apostles had all of them promised Jesus Christ that they would never abandon Him, and at the first signal of danger they all took flight. If Jesus Christ bore this abandonment, let us, following

His example, bear to be forsaken by even those on whom we imagined we had the most right to depend; let us be content with having God, who will never abandon us, He will remain with us, and He suffices us.

Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.