

Friday in the Third Week: The Five Wounds

Summary of the Morrow's Meditation

We will meditate tomorrow upon the devotion to the five wounds of Our Lord, which the Church presents to us as the object of our devotion, and we will consider: first, that nothing is more just than this devotion; second, that the most precious graces are attached to it. We will then make the resolution: first, to keep a crucifix before our eyes during our work, and to look at it lovingly, especially in our trials and temptations, and often to press our lips upon its venerable wounds, above all upon the wound in the sacred side; second, to practise some mortification in honour of the five wounds. Our spiritual nosegay shall be the words of Isaiah: "*He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins*" (Is. LII:5).

Meditation for the Morning

Let us prostrate ourselves before the cross of our Redeemer, and let us render our homage of adoration, thanksgiving, and love to the two wounds of His feet, to the two wounds of His hands, but above all to the wound of His sacred side. Oh, how worthy of veneration are these wounds, and how just that our hearts should be filled with love in contemplating them! O sacred wounds! I cannot honour you as much as I would, but I offer you the sentiments of Mary and St John at the foot of the cross. I have a right to do this, since Mary being my mother and St John my brother, their merits are a heritage of which I can dispose in my favour.

NOTHING IS MORE JUST THAN THE DEVOTION TO THE FIVE WOUNDS

A son would not be looked upon as a man but as a heartless monster who could behold with indifference and without any emotion of compassion, of gratitude and of love, the wounds which his father had received in order that he might save him from the greatest possible misfortune, and at the same time to procure him the greatest blessings. Such, and worse still, would be the Christian who would feel nothing but in difference for the wounds of the Saviour, because Jesus Christ received them to save us from hell and to open heaven to us; to offer us in them so many sources of salvation, whence we may derive grace, strength, and consolation (Is. XII:3).

Christian soul, exclaims St Bonaventure, how, at the remembrance of these wounds, canst thou contain thy transports? Our amiable Jesus makes a great wound in His feet and His hands in order to receive thee and thou dost not hasten to enter it. He has opened His side in order to give thee His heart, and thou dost not hasten to unite thyself heart to heart with Him. Ah! as for me, says the holy doctor, it is there that I delight to dwell (Matt. XVII:4), it is there that I will make three tabernacles, the first in the hands of my Jesus, the second in His feet, the third in His sacred side. It is there that I will take my rest; it is there that I will watch, that I will read, that I will converse. O most amiable wounds, the eyes of my heart will always be fixed on you; during the day from the rising of the sun to its going down, and at night as many times as sleep shall withdraw from my eyelids. I will above all keep myself within the opening of the sacred side in order there to speak to the heart of my Master and to obtain from it all that I desire. O Jesus, St Bernard says in the same

sense, Thy side is pierced to give us an entrance into Thy heart and to reveal to us by means of this visible wound the invisible wound of Thy love. I will apply my lips to it and I will suck from it the honey of love and the unction of divine consolation (Serm. III, *de Pass. Domini*). Should we be the children of the saints if, after such examples, we had not a tender devotion towards the five wounds?

GRACES ATTACHED TO THE DEVOTION TO THE FIVE WOUNDS

The soul finds in these wounds all that is necessary to salvation (St Bernard, *Collat.* 7). I have found nowhere else, says St Augustine, so efficacious a remedy for all the ills of the soul (*Manual.*, c. XII). Whatever may be our spiritual maladies, adds St Bernard, an assiduous meditation upon the wounds of the Saviour will cure them (Serm. LXII, *in Cant.* IV:7). Jesus Christ Himself says by His prophet: They shall look upon My wounds, and they shall be converted (Zach. XII:10). The heart of Jesus is an ocean, and His wounds are the channels through which flow the waters of grace and mercy (*In Cant.* LXI), St Bernard also remarks. It is, in fact, in these wounds that a lively faith is formed (John XX:27); it is there that confidence in God dilates (*In Cant.* LXI); it is there, above all, that charity is kindled as at its true source. By dint of considering the excess of love which opened these wounds for us, vile creatures and miserable sinners as we are, the heart is set aflame, and we can no longer live except by love. Therefore St Augustine called these sacred wounds his refuge in troubles, his asylum in tribulations, his remedies for the infirmities of the soul; it was therein that St Thomas Aquinas derived all his knowledge; there in that St Francis of Assisi, by dint of meditating upon them, became, through the seraphic ardour of his charity, a miracle of resemblance to the crucified Jesus; there that St Bonaventure filled himself with the spirit of piety which embalms all his writings—worthy disciple of St Francis that he was, and who wore out the feet of his crucifix by kissing them so often, and who never ceased to exhort the faithful to enjoy the ineffable delights and the delicious unction of piety attached to the devotion to the sacred wounds (St Bonaventure, *Stim. Am.*, c. I p. I). If you cannot, says the Imitation of Christ, raise yourself to lofty contemplations, remain humbly in the wounds of the Saviour; you will there find consolation and strength (II Imit. I:4), Are these really our dispositions?

Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.