

MEDITATIONS FOR EVENING PRAYER IN LENT

BY

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I. THE FIVE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

The Agony in the Garden

In this mystery let us think of what our Lord suffered in his mind and his soul. 'Not my will, but thine be done.' He forced his human will to conform perfectly to the will of God; and to do that does not lessen suffering but may rather increase it. Yet he did it out of love for us. Let us never shirk the giving up of our own will, out of love for him, both in the big and important affairs of life and also in little things.

The Scourging at the Pillar

For the first time in his Passion our Lord is made to suffer chiefly in his body; there will be no end now to this suffering until he dies. 'Be not afraid', he had said, 'of them that kill the body and then have nothing more that they can do.' Let us then never be afraid of bodily pain, for he will always give us strength to bear it: let us put up willingly with small discomforts, for love of him.

The Crowning with Thorns

In this mystery let us think how our Lord submitted to every sort of indignity and insult. The soldiers stripped him, and dressed him in a scarlet cloak, put a crown of thorns upon his head, and a rod in his right hand; they blindfolded him and struck him on the face, and took the rod and beat him over the head with it; they spat upon him, and knelt before him in mockery, saying: 'Hail, King of the Jews'. And Pilate took him out and showed him to the Jews, saying: 'Look, here is your King'. Lord Jesus, help us always to be humble and serene, no matter what others may think of us, or say about us, or do to us.

The Carrying of the Cross

Until now our Lord has been passive in the hands of the soldiers; now they compel him to do something himself. It is his opportunity; it is the beginning of fulfilment. He has pledged his word to his Father; now he is to carry it out. He takes the weight of the Cross and staggers up the rough

and stony ways that lead to the hill of Calvary. 'If any man has a mind to come my way, let him renounce self, and take up his cross, and follow me.' Let us never shirk what God calls us to do, whatever it may be, however difficult it may seem.

The Crucifixion and Death of Our Lord

The climax and consummation have come at last. This is the mystery of how God died. God became man for love of us, he lived a man's life for love of us; now God is nailed to the Cross, he is to die on the Cross, for love of us. He has done everything, and it is more than enough. Now there is nothing left but for him to endure to the end. He gave himself up to death for us; let us love him and give ourselves up entirely to him. Let us by every action preach Christ, and him crucified.

II, MEDITATIONS FOR A HOLY HOUR

A. *O Sacrum Convivium, in quo Christus sumitur, recolitur memoria passionis ejus, mens impletur gratia, et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur.*

O Sacred Banquet, in which Christ is taken and eaten, and the memory of his Passion is renewed. . . .

Lord, give us always this bread. . . .

In your house, O Lord Jesus, every meal is a banquet, for it is you yourself whom we receive as our food and drink. This Sacred Host which we adore on the altar, which we lift up and carry in procession, is your Body, and our food. 'Take ye and eat, this is my Body.' And this Holy Eucharist can never fail to remind us of your Passion, for it is both sacrifice and sacrament. It is the offering anew to God of your sacrifice made once for all on the Cross; it is the fruit of your sacrifice, the constant reminder of what you did for us out of love. 'This is my Body which is given for you, this is my Blood which is shed for you.' 'It is my Flesh, given for the life of the world.' The mystery of this sacrament is beyond feeling, beyond imagination, beyond thought: BUT IT IS TRUE. In these few moments of prayer let us not try to realise it but simply to believe. Teach us, O Lord, to pray now with simple faith, to pray perhaps with few words, or no words at all; to give you simply our attention and our love, content just to be in your presence, to be with you.

Lord, increase our faith. I do believe; Lord, help my unbelief.

B. *Mens impletur gratia* . . . The soul is filled with grace . . .

Lord Jesus, give us grace. It is through grace that you give us life: real life, supernatural life, a participation in your own divine life. And it is through the Holy Eucharist above all that you give us grace, for it is the sacrament we receive more frequently than any other. And in this sacrament, as in no other, you yourself, your Body and your Blood, are our very title to grace. It is the sacrament of your life in us, and of our life in you. 'I am the bread of life.' 'He who eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood, lives continually in me, and I in him.' Through this sacrament, O Lord Jesus, make us grow in grace; let your grace make us grow into your likeness; let it develop in us that divine life which you allow us to share, so that your life in us may shine out upon others. Make us grow up in your grace and in your service.

Lord Jesus, give us grace.

C. *Et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur.*

And a pledge of future glory is given to us.

Lord, give us always this bread . . .

No, not always, for this sacrament itself is your pledge to us that some day we shall have no need of sacraments. 'He who eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood enjoys eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.' In faith we receive you now under the sacramental species; it is through love that we hope one day to see you face to face in glory. The glory we hope for is no mere glorification of ourselves: it is the fulfilment of love. Through love you gave yourself for us; grant that through love we may find ourselves in you. Meanwhile this Holy Eucharist is at once the proof of what you did for us, and the pledge of its fulfilment in heaven; let us never cease to thank you for it. Through this sacrament, O Lord Jesus, stir up our love for you, that it may be the mainspring of all our actions now, and so bring us to you at the last. Our way may seem long, and the road rough, but you are with us. In this sacrament you give us food and drink for our journey, power to persevere and overcome every obstacle, and a pledge that you will be there to welcome us at the end.

O Sacrum Convivium, in quo Christus sumitur, recolitur memoria passionis ejus, mens impletur gratia, et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur.