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**FROM
THE CENACLE
TO THE TOMB**



**A LENTEN COURSE
OF SIX SERMONS
ON THE
PASSION OF OUR LORD**

**By the
REV. M. S. SMITH**

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FROM THE CENACLE TO THE TOMB

I. GETHSEMANE—THE AGONY.*)

"Oh, all ye that pass by, attend and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow."—Lam., i, ii.

SYNOPSIS.—The Passion. Its cause—Love. Sin gave the occasion, but love it was that brought God to earth and nailed Him to the Cross.

See the proof of that love in the Garden—"My soul is sorrowful even unto death," "Could you not watch one hour with Me," "Father, if it be possible," etc., yet love triumphs, "not My will but Thine be done."

The bloody sweat, the mob led by one of His own. "Whom seek ye," "I am He," "Let these go their way," and when He permits, they bind Him and as a malefactor lead Him to the hall of the High Priest.

To anyone who gives even the most casual thought to the various devotions or rather forms of devotion as practiced in the Church, there is one fact that must be apparent, *viz.*, that in these forms of devotion she fulfills the wants, spiritual and physical, of man even as she satisfies the aspirations of his heart. Nay, she goes down into the depths of the human heart and understanding that for which it yearns, raises it up to the object of devotion, thus adding supernatural value to the natural impulses of heart and mind, and even to the actions of the body. Whether directing the mind to God as Father and Creator—as Son and Redeemer—as Holy Ghost as Sanctifier, or bidding it dwell as far as possible on the Triune God, or whether showing the relationship between God and man, and in that what has been done for man and what is expected in return, it is then she becomes satisfying and to man a true solace.

When, however, she brings, as it were, our God down to us, she becomes most satisfying. What heart is not grateful for Mary, a creature like unto ourselves in all but sin, yet one exalted not only

* In writing these sermons "From the Cenacle to the Tomb," the author has made special use of that admirable work, "The Watches of the Passion," by Rev. P. Galwey, S.J.

For the Sixth Sermon, "Mary's Participation in the Passion", "The Foot of the Cross", by Father Faber, gave not only inspiration but much assistance.

for her own sake but for ours, who can and who will aid us. What consolation to think of the saints, creatures of earth, who met the same obstacles, encountered the same difficulties and fought the same battles that we must meet, encounter and fight, whose example will encourage us and upon whose intercession we may rely for aid in the conflict.

But if these devotions are a source of consolation, who will fathom the depth of merit flowing from those pertaining to the sacred humanity of our Divine Lord, His infancy, Oh the sweetness of Bethlehem, His secret life with Joseph and Mary: "He went down with them to Nazareth and was subject to them"; His public life, He went about doing good, "and as a teacher" no one ever spoke as He, for He spoke as one having authority. Who may tell of the gratitude that should be ours for that grand devotion in our day established and so widely propagated, the devotion to His Sacred Heart. Wonderful indeed are these, yet they but lead us to the very font of sanctity, the Blessed Eucharist, wherein He is not only our spiritual food, but wherein, in the august sacrifice of the Mass, we are perpetually reminded of the price paid for our redemption. "This do in remembrance of Me" was His almost last request and should find a hearty response in the heart of every child of Holy Church; for no form of devotion can be more pleasing to God or prolific of grace than that which leads us to contemplate His passion and death. Here we learn what sin really is, since it demanded such a satisfaction; "redeemed," says the Apostle, "not by gold and precious stones, but by the Blood of the Son of man"; here, too, learn the love of God for man in understanding how willingly the sacrifice was made: "I have a baptism with which I am to be baptized and now I am constrained until it be accomplished."

Of the efficacy of this devotion no one may doubt, for even as our Lord Himself requested we find it practiced by his saints, and though this or that saint may be said to be the patron of this or that pious practice, we find all devoted to the Passion and the book, from which they learned those deep sentiments of piety that have thrilled the children of Church throughout all ages was the book of the Cross. To the crucifix they led their followers when they would teach them the enormity, the malice, the ingratitude of sin, while there too they bade them learn the love of God; for that bleeding portrait of charity is the type of the one, while it is the proof of

the other. Reason itself tells the efficacy of this devotion, for what heart is so hard as not to be affected when it remembers that all this was borne for man, aye for sinful man. Who then will doubt the utility, nay the very necessity, of devotion to the Passion? Remember Me, His dying request, and "as often as you eat of this bread and drink of this chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until He shall come," says St. Paul. For His sake, then, and above all for our own sake, should we meditate on His sufferings, for here will we not only learn the love of God for us, but here will we learn to love God. Love begets love says the axiom, and there is only one reason why our hearts are not burning with love for God, and that is "because there is no man who considereth in his heart," because we do not as we should bring before our minds the proofs of love that He has to the world given.

And yet how shall we meditate on the Passion? What mind can conceive, what tongue tell of His sufferings? His was a life of humiliation so deep, of suffering so acute, that had we not the assurance of Holy Writ, we could scarcely believe that the one could be endured, the other borne, and were we to meditate for all time we could not fathom the one nor understand the other. We, it is true, can in a measure realize the torture of body that was His, but who tell of the agony of mind? Not only during the Passion, but from the time He offered Himself to the offended Father as the victim of sin, did He suffer and was He humiliated. St. Paul gives us an idea of the humiliation when he says: "who being in the form of God thought it no robbery to be equal to God; but He humbled Himself, debased Himself, taking the form of a servant being made the likeness of man, and in shape formed as man. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even unto the death of the Cross." Behold the depth of His humiliation, and even as that was complete, so complete were His sufferings. No torture of body, no agony of mind that He did not endure. He was the victim of sin, and as man by sin prostituted every gift of body and mind, so in reparation would He suffer bodily and mentally all that could be endured.

The sacrifice was made, it would be complete, the demands of eternal justice would be satisfied and the just anger of the offended Father appeased. With all its cruelty, however, the Passion is a history of love, throughout its whole ordeal we find love in its every phase.

Hearken to the words of love as He enters that Upper Chamber: "With desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you before that I die," hence we truly say, though sin gave the occasion, love was the cause. While dwelling on that love we must ever remember that the Passion was a reality. Knowing He was God, we may be tempted to think He did not feel the pains as would an ordinary man. He felt them more keenly, for His Body, uncontaminated by sin, was far more sensitive than would be the body of an ordinary man.

With this thought in mind we can understand the agony of the scourging, the torture of the piercing of the crown of thorns, the pain endured in the nailing to the Cross, and the three hours of agony while hanging on the Cross; but who may tell of the suffering that was His when He cried out "my soul is sorrowful even unto death," when so great a flood of sorrow entered His soul that by right He should have died, and had not Divine power intervened death would have been His portion.

Go then, in spirit, into the garden and witness that sorrow of soul. Twelve sat with Him at the table, eleven only go with Him to the Garden of Olives, yet wonder not, the twelfth will soon appear. Would that this part of the history might not be written but it must be told as it is, alas! too true.

As the Gospel narrative relates, after instituting the Blessed Sacrament, He speaks to the twelve in manner most loving: "I have chosen you as My Apostles, and love is to be the badge of your apostleship. I will not leave you orphans. Ask in My name, have every confidence in Me, for the Father loves you because you have loved Me and believed in Me."

Since leaving the Cenacle He speaks not, and His followers, filled with awe at what they have seen and heard, walk with Him in silence. He enters the Garden, bids the eight remain at the entrance, while with Peter, James and John He retires a little and 'neath the shelter of a rock pours forth His soul in prayer. With Him these three had been on Tabor and had heard the words of the Father: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Now He would have them witness His agony. Yet not in its entirety, for they are but mortals and as yet have not been strengthened by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. From them he retires a few paces into the shadows, about a stone's throw, says Holy Writ, and casting Himself on the ground pours forth His soul in

prayer. They hear His mournful sighs and see Him prostrate on the earth but, filled with fear, dare not approach to lend the sympathy of their presence. "He began to be fearful, to be heavy with sorrow." Why this fear? Because He was man. Bossuet says: "He was so completely God that it was scarcely possible to believe that He was man, and, on the other hand, so completely man that it was scarcely possible to believe that He was God." As man He underwent this agony, and as man He prayed to the Father to let the chalice pass by; even as God-Man He made the sacrifice and accepted the chalice. He is filled with fear at the approach of death with its attendant torture, with sorrow at the sight of sin, sin past, sin present, and sin to come, and cries out: "if it be possible," but "not My will but Thine be done," even though the death be terrible, even though the sacrifice for so many will be in vain. In one moment He endures all that He will on the morrow suffer, and that wrings from His heart the cry "if it be possible." It was not, however, this vision of suffering that caused Him to cry out, but the fact that He was now the victim of sin.

The concupiscence of the flesh with its train of evils, its thoughts and desires, its horde of impurities cries out: lie prostrate, Oh spotless Lamb, that we may pass over Thee. The concupiscence of the eye with its retinue of followers, its thefts, frauds and all manner of injustices cries out "prostrate, Oh Thou of eternal justice that we ride over Thee." The pride of life with its consequences, its angers, revenges and vanities cries out: "grovel in the earth Oh ye of immaculate life that we may walk over Thee." Wonder not then at His cry, He who could stand before His enemies and ask: "which of you can convince Me of sin?" Wonder not that, now its victim, He asks that the chalice may pass by.

Again, in that awful moment there pass before Him, in procession, the souls of the damned, from the first that enters hell until the last that shall hear that terrible sentence: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting flames," and, viewing that almost countless number, He turns to the Eternal Father and says: "Father I am willing, anxious to die for man, but behold the number for whom the sacrifice will be in vain, nay, for whom it will be a condemnation, for they shall trample upon My Blood and thus accomplish their ruin. Why, then, the sacrifice? if it be possible, but charity triumphs; not My will, but Thine be done." Truly does St. Paul say obedient unto death, even the Death of the Cross.

He seeks His friends, and finds them sleeping. "Could you not watch one hour with me?" he says, not in anger but as one seeking sympathy, and adds, to excuse their poor human nature, "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak."

Again He returns to pray, and now asks not that the chalice pass by, but makes subjection to the will of the Father. "If this chalice may not pass by, Thy will be done." To send away the chalice would be to close the gates of mercy to those who will profit, and, though the number neither profiting nor accepting will be great, He bows in humble submission.

Once more He returns to the sleeping three, and again, with heart grown weary and halting steps, He resumes His prayer. This time He kneels not but prostrates Himself and stretches forth His Hand, takes the chalice and places it to His lips. The sacrifice is made, but in making it nature becomes convulsive, and trembling in agony of soul He groans in spirit, while from every pore of His immaculate Body drops of bloody sweat fall to the ground. Every pore becomes as it were an eye to weep, not tears of salt, but of blood, to weep for the sins of mankind. Conjure up, oh Christian soul, if you can, the agony of mind that would produce such a phenomenon of nature!

The midnight hour is approaching, with an effort He composes His spirit, awakes the three and with the others goes to the entrance of the Garden, where he is met by a mob led by one of His disciples. One of the twelve, one who had been an intimate companion, one to whom had been revealed the secrets spoken to the people in parables, now comes to greet his Master, and in greeting to betray Him. "Whom I shall kiss, hold ye Him," says Judas to the rabble. With this sign of friendship is Jesus met and given over to His enemies. How Jesus pleads for the heart of Judas: "Friend, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" even yet greeted as a friend. Not too late, Oh Judas, but the appeal falls on a hardened heart. True, a short time afterwards remorse enters the soul of the betrayer, yet not from proper motives, even though he casts the burning blood money into the faces of his tempters and in despair hangs himself. Willing are we to deprecate this unfortunate disciple, but would it not be well for us to scrutinize our own souls lest we too perhaps have betrayed Him? This we have done when, after receiving Holy Communion, we have committed

grievous sin, this they have done who have ever unfortunately received unworthily.

The chalice has been accepted, but before giving Himself over to His enemies He will give an evidence of His power. At the entrance to the Garden He calmly asks: "whom seek ye?" and when they answer: "Jesus of Nazareth," He answers: "I am He." Then a remarkable fact is recorded. He speaks but three simple words, speaks not in anger, yet behold the effects of His words. In consternation they fall back and dare not approach Him, much less lay hands upon Him. "I am He." I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I am the Creator and Ruler of the universe. I am the God of life and death, and you seek Me, not as a creature should seek his Creator, not as man should seek his God, yet "I am He." In fear and consternation they fall back and dare not lay hands on Him. What, Oh Christian soul, will be the effect when that same Jesus speaks on judgment day?

Impulsive Peter is bidden sheath the sword. "Could I not ask the Father and would He not send legions of angels to protect Me?" He touches the wounded ear and it is miraculously healed. Will not this manifestation of power have some effect on those who came to apprehend Him? He has made the offering, has accepted the chalice and now gives Himself over to His enemies. He asks, however, that His followers be permitted to go their way and allows Himself to be bound and, as a malefactor, led to the house of the high priest. Seeing Him thus led on to trial, the Apostles all leaving Him, fled, while the midnight moon looks down upon this the first stage in the Passion of our and its Lord and Creator.

Will not the rocks, will not the olive trees of Gethsemane protest against this outrage by man, the noblest creature of God? "He is offered because He wills," and thus Omnipotence is bound, and Innocence led forth to trial.

If ever, Oh Christian soul, tempted to doubt the love of God, go in spirit to the Garden and gaze on your prostrate Saviour. Behold the ground saturated with His Blood, listen to His cry for sympathy, hearken as He bows to the will of the Father, and then, if you can, doubt His love for man. Remember too that all was brought on by sin; not merely the sin of the world, but our sins, and, remembering this, cast yourself down beside your prostrate

Jesus, mingle your tears of sorrow with His tears of blood, and from the depths of a contrite heart say: Mercy, my Jesus, mercy.

II. CHRIST IN THE HALL OF THE HIGH PRIEST; THE CON- DEMNATION.

"And they brought Jesus to the High Priest; and all the Priests and the Scribes and the Ancients were assembled together."—Luke, xvi, 53.

SYNOPSIS.—Bound, Jesus is led to the House of the High Priest, first to Annas then to Caiphas.

Annas was High Priest in reality but that year had been deposed by the Authorities at Rome. Was still held in respect by the people, who, though outwardly recognizing Rome, inwardly, especially in matters regarding religion, resented Rome's interference. Annas was glad to find Jesus in his power, and pleased to see Him thus humiliated.

Caiphas, son-in-law of Annas, acting High Priest, was weak and dominated by Annas, who was well versed in the Law, while both feared and had hatred for Christ who often found it necessary to rebuke them, even though He called upon the people to recognize their office. Caiphas had already passed judgment, "It is expedient that one should die that the nation might live."

Midnight council, they feared the people. All members of the Sanhedrim were not present.

Condemning Him even though the witnesses did not agree in their testimony, they handed Him over to their followers, who throughout the night mocked and reviled Him.

In the morning the judgment passed in the midnight session was reaffirmed, and, spitting in His face, they said, "He is guilty of death." They lead Him to Pilate to have sentence of death, which they cannot pass, pronounced against Him.

In our former meditation on the Passion, we saw the necessity of keeping two ideas in view, if we would dwell with profit on all that was done that man might be redeemed, *viz.*, that the sufferings were real, nay, that they caused Him more pain than the same ordeal would bring to an ordinary man; and that love was the cause, the love of God for man.

We heard the sigh from His sorrow-laden Heart as He entered the Garden. "My soul is sorrowful even unto death," harkened to the appeal to the Father, as He arose from the ground saturated with the drops a bloody sweat that poured from His Body: "If it be possible, let this chalice pass by," listened with awe to the triumphant voice of charity as He added, "Not My will, but Thine be done," and hearing and seeing this, could only marvel at the boundless love of God, that love of which the poet sang:

"Could you with ink the ocean fill
 Were the whole world a parchment made.
 And every single stick a quill;
 And every man a scribe by trade,
 To write the love of God
 Would drain the ocean dry,
 Nor would the scroll contain the whole
 If stretched from sky to sky."

Thus far we have not been brought to contemplate any physical suffering. In the first stage of the Passion, in Gethsemane, unseen spirits alone afflict His soul. He is now about to give Himself over to men that they too may inflict suffering on Him.

Before, however, going farther we might ask: was the Passion necessary? Could not the world have been redeemed without this excess of suffering? In His infinite mercy, God could have condoned the sin of man. If, however, reparation were demanded, man of himself could never have made it. Nay, should all mankind submit to all the torments that could be afflicted on man, aye even endure these sufferings for all time, such suffering and such endurance would not atone for even the slightest sin; for sin is an offence against God, and in its offensiveness partakes, in as far as an act of man can partake, the nature of infinitude. If satisfaction then be demanded, he who satisfies must have in his nature an equality with the one offended, and by whom satisfaction is demanded.

In the economy, then, of salvation, of redemption, the Incarnation became necessary, and this, in the case of fallen human nature was a humiliation; but was it necessary that Christ should suffer so much? He was God, God-Incarnate, hence one drop of His Blood, one sigh from His Heart, one tear from His Eye would have been sufficient to redeem not only the world but a thousand worlds, for that drop of blood, that tear, that sigh would have been of infinite value in the sight of the offended Father. Why then the excess? Simply on account of love. "What was sufficient to redeem the world," says St. Augustine, "was not sufficient to show His love for man, hence He poured out His whole Heart's Blood, and when the spear entered His side there came forth blood and water; first blood then water, to show the world that the last drop had been shed for the redemption of man."

The Passion, however, means more than the mere shedding of His blood and His death on the Cross; for, as we saw in our first meditation, the sacrifice was complete, most cruel, and offered in

the most ignominious manner, and its very excess fills with hope the mind of man, while it should inflame the heart with love to that God who has done so much to show His love for us.

With the bound Jesus, then, in spirit we will enter the hall of the High Priest. But first listen to the words with which He addresses the mob: "Are you come out as it were against a thief with swords and clubs? When I was daily with you in the Temple you did not stretch forth your hand against Me—but this is your time and the power of darkness. You did not apprehend Me when in the Temple or Synagogue I taught as no man before Me taught; you did not molest Me when I went about doing good; when I made the blind to see, the dumb to talk, the lame to walk and the deaf to hear; you did not arise against Me when I raised my hand and all manner of sickness gave way before My power; when I even went down into the grave and brought back the dead to life. You had no thought of binding Me when, in the desert, I fed the multitude, then you had no power over Me, and even now you would have no power did not the Father and I permit, 'but this is your hour.'"

To Annas they lead Him, for though deposed by Rome he was High Priest in reality, and as such was secretly considered by the Jewish people, though, as the Scripture says, Caiphas was acting High Priest that year. We must remember that while outwardly submitting to the yoke of Rome, inwardly the people resented the workings of the governing power, and, especially in religious matters, endeavored to conform to their own institutions. Hence to Annas they bring the captive Jesus. Annas was crafty, cruel and cunning. He was well versed in the law and on account of his learning, as well as from the fact that he was by right the man of office, really lost nothing of prestige in the estimation of the people in being deposed.

Caiphas was weak and vacillating, and, though nominally in power, depended on the stronger-willed Annas, his father-in-law, in matters brought before him for adjudication. He, it appears, was not naturally of a vicious mind, and had he not been influenced by others might have passed judgment according to the facts produced, not permitting his sense of right to be overcome by hatred or desires of revenge. Being wholly under the influence of his father-in-law, and so weak in nature as to be easily led and dominated by the other members of the Sanhedrim, and, when in council he learned how they were opposed to Jesus, to gain their favor,

said: "It is expedient that one should die that the nation may live," and did not know, as Scripture says, that he was uttering words of prophetic import. While we condemn the puerile weakness of Caiphas, on him nevertheless the odium of the deicide must be placed. On the judgment seat with Caiphas, when sentence was passed, were five others, all his creatures or relatives, and all, like himself, dominated by the stronger will of Annas, even as they were ruled by his superior learning.

Of them our Lord spoke in no uncertain terms, calling them a generation of vipers and warning the people against their manner of living, though bidding them listen to their teachings as they on account of their offices were, though most unworthy, the representatives of God.

The Sanhedrim, once so powerful, no longer recognized by the ruling government, still met in secret council and sighed in vain for the coming of the promised One, who, as they fondly hoped, would place their nation in the high station it once enjoyed among the countries of the world. When He came, born in obscurity and reared in poverty, they refused to receive Him, and would neither credit the miracles with which He proved His power, nor accept the doctrine by Him taught, though compelled to say that He spoke as one having authority.

They led Him first to Annas, and though he has no power to act in the case, yet is he gratified in seeing Jesus bound and in his power. He it was that promised the thirty pieces of silver to Judas and doubtless the betrayer insisted on the Captive being brought to the house of Annas in order that he might receive the promised reward. What took place in the house of Annas has not been definitely related, yet we can rest assured that many questions were put to the captive Jesus. Having satisfied the morbid curiosity of Annas, they lead Him to Caiphas, the acting High Priest, for he has the right to question, the power to act. With Caiphas and his associates in this midnight council, we find the leaders of the Scribes, the Pharisees, and others, who, though differing in many things, are united in their desire to bring about the death of Jesus. Why the midnight council? Because they feared the people, who believed in Him and revered Him as one who went about doing good, and had the session been called during the day they might force themselves into the hall and by their presence compel his self-constituted judges pass judgment according to the testimony adduced. All the

members of the Sanhedrim were not here, for some, like Joseph and Nicodemus, believed in Him and would not concur in their vicious designs.

Entering this court we find everything seemingly according to the rules laid down for this most solemn function. This is the supreme tribunal. Upon the judgment seat we see the High Priest in his full robes of office. Around him in a semicircle, on chairs a little lower than the dais on which he sits, are the members of the Sanhedrim. The flitting light from lamps hanging from the ceiling throws both light and shadows over the hall, while the wrinkled countenances of the sitting judges, brought into strong relief by their flowing beards of snowy white, present a vision of ominous gloom bespeaking nothing of justice or mercy. True, the law says "no trial shall be held at night, neither shall a culprit be summoned after the evening sacrifice nor on the eve of festal day." Behold the morrow will be the Paschal day, the sun has set and the fires of evening sacrifice have been quenched, yet must the ruin of this Galilean be accomplished, though every law and sacred custom be set at naught.

Before this assemblage appears the handcuffed Jesus. Calmly He stands before them, even though full well He knows that in this corrupt court neither mercy or justice will be granted Him. Why look for either, is not the presiding judge the same who has already adjudicated, the one who has passed sentence, passed it when he said: "it is expedient that one should die that the nation may live," and the one of whom he then spoke now stands before him awaiting sentence? He stands there as a malefactor, it is true, but did ever prisoner, by his very appearance, give such evident proof of innocence? In the dim light of the lamps we see a man of peerless beauty, pale, it is true, yet not in the least disturbed. Torn and disordered are his garments, disfigured with dust His countenance, bound as a criminal, yet His very appearance proclaims His innocence, and there is about Him a dignity that for a time perturbs His accusers and strikes them dumb.

With an effort the High Priest throws off the spell that the presence of the fettered Jesus cast upon Himself and his satellites and proceeds to question Him. Ardently does he long for a cause against Jesus, yet in his heart he recognizes that neither in His actions nor His sayings, neither in His life, public or private, can anything be legitimately brought against Him. Understanding, however, that

some accusation must be brought, he asks about His disciples and also asks regarding His doctrine. What answer can the Captive make to the first question? Where are the disciples? Some are hiding in the shadows of the olive trees in the Garden, no doubt, while others have sought refuge among friends or acquaintances. "All leaving Him have fled." By Him they were chosen, with Him they had spent three years, three years of the most sublime noviceship ever granted creature of earth; and behold the result: they have left Him to face His accusers alone. Unwilling to condemn them in this public court, not wishing to find fault with them, even though He might be justified in complaining of their desertion, He remains silent.

To the question, however, regarding His doctrine, He answers: "I have spoken openly to the world. I have taught in the Synagogue and have spoken in the Temple, whither all the Jews resort. From the mountain side have I proclaimed the truths of the Father, for they are My doctrines, and in secret have I spoken nothing. Why asketh thou Me, ask those who have heard what I have spoken, behold they know the truths that I have taught." What need of this man making known the doctrines proclaimed by Him, why make any defense of them? His creed is fully known, for it has been in public proclaimed. "And you, Oh High Priest, did you but understand the duties of your office; did you but recognize the obligations under which you are bound to look after and guard the teachings of God, and watch over His people lest false teachings be disseminated among them, you would ere this have taken cognizance of My teachings, examined My doctrines, and scrutinized My life; and had you done so, you would know that in all things I taught what was of God and in all acts did work that could come only from God. My teachings have been spread broadcast over the land; My actions have been performed in the broad, open light of the day. With Me there has been no secrecy; nothing have I done under cover of darkness, for I have nothing in common with the father of darkness or of the beings who work in secret. Go ask those who have heard Me. Question, ask, and see if there be even one who will dare assert that I ever uttered aught that needs an explanation or demands an apology much less calls for retraction. Search and find, if you can, anyone who will truthfully say that I ever taught anything contrary to the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. If I am to stand at your tribunal as a false teacher, it is not

for Me to make defense. Let those who have heard Me come forth and from them you may learn the purport of My doctrines." Looking not only at High Priest but at the assembled members of the Sanhedrim, he speaks in a tone both firm and dignified. A painful silence follows these words. The old priest is amazed and amazement gives way to embarrassment. The meek and humble man does not, it is true, absolutely defy him, yet the relationship of accuser and accused seems to change and for a time it seems as though the designs of the midnight council will come to naught.

The situation is changed in a manner that seems almost incredible. One of the servants of the High Priest gave Jesus a blow on the face, saying: "Answerest thou the High Priest so? Will the court permit this outrage to go unpunished?" Who thus strikes the prisoner? One authority says it was Malchus, whose severed ear Jesus a short time before cured. Surely a grateful return for the miraculous cure; others say it was one of the followers of the court, who a short time before was sent to apprehend Jesus, and who, on his return, said: "I could not lay hands upon Him, for never did man speak as this man speaks; He speaks as one having authority," and now, to regain the favor then lost, strikes Him and covers the insult with apparent solicitude for the honor due the High Priest. When Achab stretched forth his hand to save the Ark from falling, he was stricken because he dared touch that which was sacred to the priests. Does the hand wither which struck Jesus? Is the man rebuked? Will not any court assure protection to even the most depraved brought before it? Here the outrage goes unpunished, the perpetrator unrebuked, while Jesus calmly says: "If I have spoken evil give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou Me?"

Witnesses are brought, but unfortunately they, in their eagerness to convict, forgot one important factor. The witnesses did not agree among themselves as to the nature of the accusations they would bring against Him, and the testimony of the one contradicted that of the other. "Their evidence was not agreeing," says the record of the trial. In silence Jesus stands before them, and His calm demeanor irritates the High Priest, who irritably asks: "Answerest Thou nothing to all this?" and then determining to make Him speak, says: "I adjure you by the living God that Thou tell us if Thou be the Christ, the Son of the living God," and tradition

says he added: "blessed be His name." Jesus answers: "Thou hast said it," or, according to St. Mark, Jesus said, "I am."

To the accusations of the others He makes no response; why does He not speak? Because He recognizes the right of the High Priest to put that question, acknowledges his station and recognizes his authority. It is as though he would say to His questioner: "You, Oh High Priest of Israel, you who sit upon the chair of Moses, have the right to put that question, and when it is couched in such solemn terms as to adjure Me in the name of God, the query must not remain unanswered; and I say to you, 'hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Father and coming in the clouds of Heaven.'"

Hearing this, Caiphas, seemingly overcome with righteous indignation, rends his garments, saying: "He blasphemeth; what need have we of further witnesses, what think you?" And all passing before Him they did spit in His face and with one accord said: "He is guilty of death." According to commentators of the Talmud, the custom of spitting in the face of one condemned was in vogue, and in this case it was carried out, for the Scripture says, "they did spit in His face."

"What need of further testimony?" asks the corrupt judge. What testimony has been produced, did not one contradict the other? Is it solicitude for the honor of God that make the High Priest rend his garments? Nay, rather is it solicitude for revenge. Often were those in authority rebuked by Jesus for the lives of scandal, and now that the opportunity for retaliation presents itself we can feel sure they will make use of the occasion.

Condemned in the midnight court, they hand Him over to their satellites, to be brought forth again in the morning. During the remaining hours of the night He is subjected to all manner of insults and compelled to endure all kinds of humiliations. He is a fit object for sport of the underlings of the High Priest, for He is one condemned to death.

Recalling that He stood before the people as a Teacher, they mock Him, for now He has been deposed. Remembering that He proclaimed to be not merely a special messenger sent from on high, but asserted that He was the Son of God, that He was thus the Promised One, they blindfold Him, and striking Him, say: "Prophecy who it was that struck Thee." Every manner of contumely that their ignorant minds can conjure up is brought into

play and thus pass the remaining hours of the night. During all He never opens His lips, either to complain of their treatment or to ask for mercy.

In the morning He is once more brought before the Sanhedrim, for they would outwardly observe the provisions of the law, and again is the question put to Him: "Art Thou the Christ?" He answered: "You will not believe Me, and, if I shall also ask you, you will not answer Me nor will you let Me go." And they said: "Art Thou then the Son of God?" And He said: "I am." Once more the judge says: "You have heard Him blaspheme, what need of further testimony?" and the sentence passed at midnight is ratified, He is guilty of death.

Listen, Christian soul, to the sentence passed, but condemn not His judges, revile not the false witnesses; but conscious of the fact that you too have borne testimony against Him, that you too have passed sentence, go to Him now and with contrite heart say: My Jesus judged, my Jesus condemned, my Jesus who will one day be my Judge, have mercy, mercy, Jesus.

III. CHRIST BEFORE PILATE; THE TRIAL.

"And the whole multitude of them rose up, and led Him to Pilate."—St. Luke, xxiii, 1.

SYNOPSIS.—Having condemned Jesus, the High Priest and his associates find themselves in a quandary. Not having the power of life and death, they appeal to the Roman Governor to have the sentence put into execution.

For a time justice seems to prevail, and the Governor, caring not for their religious convictions, refuses to pass a sentence manifestly unjust.

To extricate himself from the predicament, he tries various ruses, such as sending Him to Herod, asking that Barabbas be put in His place and finally scourging Him.

Four times He is brought before the Governor, and, though proclaiming "that he finds no cause in Him" in the end, fearing the displeasure of Caesar, with which they threaten him, the vacillating Judge, washing his hands as a token of his innocence of the manifest crime about to be perpetrated "delivered Him unto them to be crucified."

In the midnight conclave, as we saw in our last meditation, the sentence of death was passed, the judgment spoken, and in the morning session the same has been ratified. The enemies of Jesus now find themselves in a new and embarrassing position. With one accord they have proclaimed Him deserving of death; but how can

the sentence be carried out? Though unwilling to acknowledge it, they are now under the dominion of Rome, and, without the sanction and approval of the hated Roman Governor, they cannot put into execution the sentence by their leaders passed. If they bring Him to the Roman Tribunal, it will be an acknowledgment of their subjugation. If they refuse to do this, they must perforce permit Him to go free, and this will prove that in persecuting Him they were prompted by any but proper and religious motives. They swallow pride of Nation and bow down in submission to Imperial Rome, and thus show how man, when inflamed by passion, forgets honor, and when urged on by vice loses self-respect.

What think you, said Caiphas; and answering they said, He is worthy of death. Shall we then hand the accused over to the proper authority, to Rome, that the sentence may be executed? Will it not suffice to send Him, bound as He is, to the Roman court? Nay, that will not suffice; what cares Pilate for the judgment passed by us? We will not send Him, but will bring Him: High priests, ancients, members of the Sanhedrim, all will go and perhaps our numbers will compel the Roman to bow to our wishes.

In the early morning they bring out the accused, and, recognizing the weakness of their cause, "the whole multitude of them rising up, led Him to Pilate, hoping that the multitude will prevail, where the case, left to itself, must fail." "They lead Him to the Hall but will not enter lest they be defiled, but that they might eat the Pasch," says the narrative. What hypocrisy. Desirous of perpetrating a manifest act of injustice, yet behold their apparent anxiety of observing the letter of the law. Wonder not that Jesus spoke of them as hypocrites.

If we read carefully the record of the Gospels, we will find that Jesus actually appeared four times before Pilate. The first time Pilate acquitted Him, saying: "I find no cause in Him; take Him and judge Him according to your own law." The second time he also proclaims Him innocent, yet sends Him to Herod to be tried. The third time, when Herod sends Him back, he says: "They have brought Him here through hatred. I will scourge Him and let Him go." And when He stands before the Governor the fourth time, scourged and crowned with thorns, Pilate, threatened with the displeasure of Caesar, still protesting both by word of mouth and by the washing of his hands, condemns Him to death.

The Governor knows full well that in the mob he has few if any

well wishers or friends, and can well understand that their hatred of the Man must be extreme when it leads them to come to the Hall at this unseemly hour that sentence may be pronounced. There stands Annas, the priest by him deposed; there, too, is Caiphas, and with him the leaders, both spiritual and civic, of the people, and doubtless among the crowd are relatives or friends of those slain a short time before by his soldiers in the Temple. He had heard too much concerning this new Prophet, had heard of His doctrine, in many things new not only to the Gentiles but even to the Jews; had heard of his wonderful works, had heard also of the hatred with which the rulers, especially within the past year, had persecuted this new Teacher; for, as Governor of the province, it was his duty to take cognizance of all these matters, hence is hardly surprised at the early morning meeting.

Standing at the entrance of the judgment hall, he raises his hand as a command that they should cease their clamoring, and when silence reigns, calmly asks, "What accusation do you make against this Man?" Surprised at the question, for a moment they are silent, and then, with one acclaim, cry out, "If He were not a malefactor we would not have delivered Him up to thee." No idea had they that the Procurator would delay over the preliminaries of a trial; they thought he would, without question, approve of the verdict by them rendered, and legalize the sentence by this court passed. Shall they tell that this Man has blasphemed? What cares he for the subtleties of their religion?

"You bring this Man before me, you clamor for His death, and most anxious indeed must you be that sentence be pronounced, as you are here, not only in such numbers, but so early in the morning. Before I pass sentence, I must know of what He has been accused. True, I stand before you as the representative of Rome, and, as the power of Rome is to-day recognized throughout the world as supreme, so too is my power in this territory supreme, yet I will not, I can not use that power arbitrarily; hence, before passing sentence, especially the sentence you demand, I must know, not only of what the prisoner has been accused, but whether or not the accusation has been proved against Him. Tell me, then, what custom has this Man disregarded, what statute broken or what law violated." What answer will they make? Shall they speak of the proceedings in the midnight council? The witnesses did not agree in their testimony. In frenzy they cry out, "If He were not a

malefactor, we would not have brought Him to thee. What evidence do you require? Do you not see before you the leaders of the nation; is it not sufficient that they demand His death?" "Take Him, then," said Pilate, "and judge Him according to your own law," seemingly a gracious condescension, in reality a veiled sneer and ill-concealed cut at their dependence on Rome. "It is not lawful, as you well know, for us to put anyone to death," say the discomfited rulers. What a prostitution of justice. No accusation being brought forth, is it not the duty of the Judge to dismiss the case? Yet, behold, he says, "I cannot convict; take Him and judge Him according to your law; perhaps you may be able to convict Him."

Then they all began to accuse Him, saying, "We have found Him perverting our nation; have heard Him saying it is not lawful to give tribute to Caesar; nay, we have heard Him say that He is the Christ, the King." Their accusations are general, their charges indefinite, and even in support of these no proof is brought forth.

Then Pilate leads Jesus into the Hall, and asks, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus answers, "Sayest thou this of thyself, or told it to thee of Me?" Notice the question: Pilate, unconsciously pays tribute to the Man, for he does not ask if He is a pretender as the Jews say, but Art Thou King of the Jews? Looking at the Man, the Judge feels that here there is no room for pretension, no place for pride, hence no pretension but a reality. Hence the query, "Art Thou King of the Jews?" Indignant at the question put by Jesus, Pilate angrily answers, "Am I a Jew?" He resents the imputation as an insult, and then, to justify himself, asks, "What hast Thou done, Thy own people have given Thee up? Why are they arraigned against Thee?" "My Kingdom is not of this world," says Jesus, and, becoming more mystified, Pilate says, "Art Thou, then, a King?" "For this was I born," replies Jesus, "to give testimony of the truth." "What is truth?" says the Judge, but without waiting for an answer he goes to the waiting mob and boldly declares, "I find no cause in Him." Was Pilate desirous of learning what truth is? Like many to-day he asks the question, but waits not for the answer; seeks it not where it may be found.

When the Judge proclaims that he finds no cause they are astonished, and, in a frenzy, cry out: "He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place." "What," says Pilate, "is this man a Galilean? Then it is the duty

of Herod to try Him, for he is Tetrarch of Galilee, and glad am I in being thus released from the necessity of granting what you unjustly demand. To Herod then He shall go, even though finding no cause in Him I know I should set Him free."

They lead Him to Herod, and Herod was glad. Glad because of the recognition of the haughty Roman with whom he was at enmity because of a dispute regarding the boundaries of their respective territories, and he had to give way to the more powerful ruler. Glad was Herod, too, because he had heard much of this new Teacher, of His miracles and works, and now congratulates himself at having Jesus in his power, for, he says, doubtless He, to justify Himself, will give some evidence of His miracle working.

Herod questions Him in many words. "I have heard much of you in the past few years, of your changing water into wine at Cana, of your curing all kinds of disease, even leprosy, of your even going down in to the grave and bringing the dead back to life; now if you will give me a proof of your wonderful power, perform even a little miracle for me, I shall set you free." With these and kindred questions we can imagine Herod trying to ingratiate himself into the good graces of the Man before him.

To all Jesus answers nothing. No mark of disdain greater than to treat with silent contempt the efforts of one who by flattery would gain the good will of another. Keenly feeling this, Herod would turn the ridicule from himself, hence he says: "Why was this Man sent to me; if not an impostor, he is evidently a fool, and with Him I will not waste my time. Put on Him the insignia of a fool, lead Him back to Pilate that he who began the inquiry may finish it." Oh, Infinite Wisdom, is there any other degradation to which you may be compelled to submit? For the pride that caused the angel's fall you have now atoned.

Again He stands before Pilate, who has said he found no cause, who has sent Him to another Judge, a Jew by the way, who too was compelled to acknowledge His innocence, even though he chose to mark Him as a fool; what action will the Roman now take? To condemn, he knows, is most unjust, to set Him free is to court the threatened disfavor of Cæsar. What, then, will Pilate do? Ah, he thinks, I see a way out of the dilemma. On this festal day I have a privilege of granting freedom to anyone imprisoned. Surely they will not hesitate between this Man and the one I will propose for release. He speaks to them of the custom and asks: "Whom

shall I release, this Man of Barabbas?" You all know of Barabbas, of his record, how to many other crimes he has added that of murder. "Whom shall I release, Barabbas or Jesus, who is called Christ." To his astonishment they clamor for the release of Barabbas. Again thwarted, Pilate seeks another means of escape. Recognizing that it is on account of hatred that he cannot understand that they seek the death of Jesus, he thinks they will be satisfied if they see Him severely punished; hence says, "I will chastise Him and they will let Him go." Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. According to Roman law all criminals condemned to crucifixion were scourged. In this official scourging the stripes must not exceed forty, less one perish under them. But the scourging of which St. John speaks was not official, for Jesus had not as yet been condemned, hence the number of stripes may be reckoned only by the wish of the soldiers wielding the lash. In ordering this scourging, Pilate was prompted by a sense of humanity, for he reasoned that seeing Him thus punished they would be satisfied and would not clamor for His death. This was one ordeal of the Passion revealed to the Apostles when a short time before He said: "We go up to Jerusalem and the Son of Man shall be betrayed, He shall be mocked, spat upon, He shall be scourged and crucified." We have witnessed the betrayal, the mockery in the Hall of the high priest and greater mockery awaits Him. Now go into the yard of Pilate and view the scourging. We can imagine Pilate saying to the leader of the cohort: "You see the perplexing question that confronts me. I know this Man is innocent, yet listen as they cry out that He must be crucified: take Him then and chastise Him, not to death, but so thoroughly that their anger will be appeased, their hatred satisfied." Listen to the swish of the lash as, wielded by the brawny arms of the soldiers, it whirls through the air, and hear the sickening sound as it cuts into the tender flesh of the Immaculate Jesus. Pair after pair they take their places and vent their rage on Him as with Body bent He is lashed to the pillar. They marvel at His endurance and seem enraged at not being able to force a cry for pity from His lips or to cause Him to wilt or succumb from pain. Compelled at last to cease from very weariness they look with astonishment upon the lacerated, bleeding victim.

Of what crime has this Man been accused, says one of the soldiers, for surely if the punishment be proportioned according to the crime committed, His must have been most heinous? Have

you not heard? says another. This Man has proclaimed Himself a king. A king, forsooth, says a third, if king, then He should be decked with royal robes. Purple is the insignia of royalty; bring hither, then, the purple gown and place it upon His shoulders. No king, says a fourth, should be without a crown. Here is a diadem; it is not of virgin gold, nor does it glisten and scintillate with precious stones, yet it is a sign of royalty, a sign befitting this Man who would be a king. "And they plaited a crown of thorns and placed it upon His head." Is this all the paraphernalia of a king? No, the scepter, the wand of authority should be in his hand. "They put a reed in His right hand and bowing down in mockery they saluted Him: hail, King of the Jews, and taking the reed they struck Him on the head, and they spat upon Him."

Oh all ye holy Angels and Archangels; ye Thrones and Powers; ye Dominations and Principalities; ye Virtues; ye Cherubim and Seraphim; oh all ye Heavenly Court, come and gaze upon your King! Come, and bowing down, adore, not in mockery; salute, not in derision; cry out to the Heavens, proclaim to the earth—behold your King! King, not in regal splendor, but King of Love; for not even in His Kingdom of eternal glory will He give to man such a proof of love as is given here on His throne of mockery and under His garment of derision.

Clothed thus as a mock king, Pilate leads Him forth, and to the waiting mob says: "*Ecce Homo*," behold the Man! Imagine the scene. The mob anxiously waiting in the court called Lithostrotos. With voice hushed or breaking out only in rumbling murmurings they await the Judge and the Accused. The leaders circling among them speak here and there to assembled groups, cautioning them to be on the alert, for they still fear the power of this Man. The Judge, they say, vacillates, hence you must demand that the penalty be death, and with nothing less be satisfied.

"Behold the Man," says Pilate. "You have brought this Man to me for trial. I find no cause in Him. You have brought many accusations against Him, these I have examined and your charges remain unproved. But, even if He had been guilty of all you allege, behold the Man; has He not suffered enough?" Well have the chief priests performed their work. No voice is raised in sympathy, no tongue cries: hold, enough, but from every side the cry: Crucify Him, crucify Him.

"*Ecce Homo*," behold the Man! Behold the Sacred Head crowned

with thorns, you, Oh child of the Church; behold that Face furrowed by the lash, those half-closed Eyes whence tears flow, tears begotten, not merely of physical suffering, but brought out by the sins of mankind; behold those pallid Lips, the gasping Cheek, the bound Hands, Hands that were never raised but to call down a blessing on earth; behold this picture of sorrow, of humiliation, a picture that naturally should be repulsive, yet is not so, for over it there shines a majesty, which, like a ray of sunlight on a wreck, not only fills the heart with hope but should inflame the soul of every man with love. Will it not conquer every heart?

Hearing the repeated cry for vengeance, Pilate becomes enraged, and says: "Take Him, you, and crucify Him, for I find no cause in Him." And when they answer: "We have a law and according to that law He should die, because He calls Himself the Son of God," the Procurator becomes more mystified and is filled with fear. Turning to Jesus after entering the Hall, he says: "Whence art Thou?" Angered at receiving no reply, he says: "Speakest Thou not to me, knowest Thou not that I have power to release Thee as I have power to crucify Thee?" To this Jesus answers: "Thou shouldst not have power against Me unless it were given thee from above, and he that hath delivered Me to thee hath the greater sin." More mystified than ever, Pilate now determines to release Him. Standing at the entrance of the Hall he is about to speak, when the rabble cries out: "If thou release this Man, thou art no friend of Cæsar's: for whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar," and at this he is filled with fear.

Almost worn out, on one side urged by duty, on the other haunted by fear, he leads Jesus to the door of the Hall and says: "Behold your King." A wave of angry passion, a tumult of hatred seems to pass over the mob, and as with one voice they cry out: "Away with Him, crucify Him, crucify Him." "What," says the Judge, "shall I crucify your King?" This seems to stupify the rabble and they are silent until the circulating priests urge them to exclaim: "We will have no King but Cæsar, as to this Man, away with Him, crucify Him." Oh inconstant people, a few days before they greeted Him with Hosannahs, calling Him blessed as He came in the name of David, now their blessings are turned to cursings, and their Hosannahs to crucify Him, crucify Him. Then He was hailed as of the kingly line of David, now they will have no king but Cæsar.

Then Pilate, poor, weak, inconsistent Judge, seeing he prevailed

nothing, taking water, washed his hands, saying: "I am innocent of the Blood of this just Man, look you to it," while they, not content with calling down the wrath of God upon themselves, wish to leave it as a legacy to their children, cry out: "His blood be upon us and upon our children." No other nation so stamped in infamy, never before or since such madness recorded in history.

Judas, Caiphas, Annas and others had their share in the condemning, but without Pilate they could not have led Christ out to Calvary, hence, in our first written Creed, which we daily repeat as a cherished prayer, we profess our belief in Jesus Christ, the only Son of God—Who suffered under Pontius Pilate.

Wash your hands as you will, weak, vacillating Judge, for, "as you delivered Him up to them to be crucified," the stain of an unjustly rendered sentence will not out. You endeavored, it is true, to escape the ignominy of sentencing Him, but that endeavor lessens not your guilt, nay, rather makes it the more heinous inasmuch as it proves that you acted against your most certain conviction, aye, knowledge of His innocence.

Let us not remain content with condemning this Judge, let us rather remember that we too have often brought Jesus before the bar of justice and there condemned Him, there passed sentence against Him. This we have done as often as we have mortally sinned. In sorrow go to Him now, not as accusers, not as judges, but as accused, as those who are to be judged, and say to Him: My Jesus tried, my Jesus condemned, my Jesus led out to death, my Jesus who will be my Judge, aye, my Jesus truly my King, have mercy, mercy, Jesus.

IV. THE APOSTLES DURING THE PASSION; THE DESERTION; THE BETRAYAL; THE DENIAL.

"Then the disciples all leaving Him, fled."—Matt., xxvi, 56.

"And Jesus said to him: Judas doest thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"—Luke, xxii, 48.

"Again therefore Peter denied; and immediately the cock crew."—John, xx, 27.

SYNOPSIS.—*With Our Divine Lord, we have been in the Garden, and meditated on the agony of spirit that was His: we followed Him into the house of the High Priest, and there heard the words of condemnation; we heard the vacillating Judge, moved by fear of Caesar, pronounce the sentence of death; we witnessed the mockery, the scourging, the crowning with thorns, and other scenes of humiliation and suffering, and now ask: is there any other species of suffering to which He may be subjected? Enough has been done to satisfy for the sins of man, but, to fully understand the Passion, we must bring before our minds other scenes enacted and other sources of suffering brought home to Him.*

His enemies afflicted Him, His friends brought sorrow to Him and caused Him to suffer.

An injury by an enemy inflicted may be hard to bear, but to suffer at the hands of a friend is almost more than man can endure. We saw the sufferings brought to Jesus by unseen spirits in the Garden; we contemplated the pains borne and the humiliations brought to Him by men, His enemies; let us now consider the actions of His chosen friends, His Apostles, in this His time of visitation, and learn how even through them He was made to suffer.

"The Apostles all leaving Him, fled," says the narrative, and humiliating though this confession, by one of themselves, may be, satisfied would we be did the record of the twelve end here. But first we may be permitted to ask: who were these men that had been chosen from amongst men, to be His intimate companions in the days of His public life, and who were to carry to the end of the world the fruits of His work? Were they men who either by exalted virtue, deep learning, or heroic piety, showed themselves so superior to others as to merit this exalted station? Were they men, who, in the judgment of the world, would be looked upon as by nature fitted for this wonderful undertaking? Decidedly no. On the contrary, judged from a human standpoint they not only did not have, but actually lacked the qualifications the world would demand as necessary for the carrying out of such a stupendous work. From what men call the lower walks of life they came, being, as they say themselves, poor fishermen, while one at least, to become

a disciple, left a calling which was looked upon, at least, with suspicion.

Grand indeed their vocation "you have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you," wonderful their novitiate, three years in intimate converse with Jesus, "to you it is given to know the secrets of Heaven, to others in parable," inexhaustible the love lavished on them, a love so absorbing that never, while He was with them, did they manifest the least solicitude for themselves or their own affairs. "To whom shall we go, Thou hast the words of eternal life," yet they wavered, they fell, fell even when danger threatened them not. "I am He," let these go their way, and even though the severing of the ear of Malchus might have called attention to them, the mob that came to apprehend Him scarcely regarded them. They fell when love and loyalty should have brought them forward; fell after being warned, fell after repeated protestations of fealty, aye, fell just after receiving their first Holy Communion, as fell the highest angel, as fell the first man, and in their fall gave to us a proof of the frailty of man and his utter dependence on God. While that fall was deep, while its contemplation, in a sense, may be humiliating, it should not be without its practical value to all mankind; for it should teach man that in depending upon himself he depends upon a frail reed, and that his trust and confidence must come from the helping grace of God. "Without Me," says Christ, "you can do nothing." Remember, too, that though many graces had been showered down upon the Apostles, they had not as yet experienced the salutary effects of Pentecost.

Had the desertion of the disciples been the only fact to be recorded regarding them, it alone would be sufficient to show the sorrow brought by them on the Master, but besides this, two of them are destined to add to His sorrow and to bring greater grief to His already overburdened soul. One betrayed Him, and this, humanly speaking, is the most melancholy episode in the Passion. We can understand the hatred of the leaders of the Jews for Him. They would not acknowledge Him because of His humble birth, and they were filled with envy because the people followed Him; but that one so intimate with Him as was Judas should turn against Him seems almost incredible; yet a moment's consideration will show that his fall could be the only sequence of his life. Judas carried the purse, and, scanty though it was, it begot in him the spirit of avarice, and this led to his fall.

Herein we see the manner in which Satan accomplishes the ruin of a soul. A pure soul is never asked to commit a mortal sin, that would be startling. First he brings to the soul a coldness in spiritual things, then a spirit of lethargy in matters of devotion, to which is added a feeling of nausea in prayer, followed by neglect and a gradual turning from things of God to those of the world. Now comes trust in self, less reliance on grace; but even yet the horror of mortal sin is found in the heart. Defects are followed by lighter transgressions, these by venial sins, and then is verified the saying of the Holy Ghost: he that condemneth small things shall fall by little and little, for the inevitable end is mortal sin. But Oh how that first mortal sin disturbs the soul. No peace, no rest until reconciled; but in too many cases, and unless special grace is sought, the tempter finds his second entry into the soul more easy than the first, and his subsequent attacks meet with lessening vigor until, in the end, the unhappy mortal seems in greatest security while really in gravest danger, for the act repeated becomes customary, this begets habit, and habit formed becomes second nature, and thus the ruin of the soul is certain unless, indeed, wonderful grace is received.

Judas had lost faith in the Master. What his ideas were when he joined the band we of course cannot determine, yet it seems almost certain that he was led more by the thought of earthly preferment than by the hope of eternal reward. Others, as we learn from the sacred writings, had the same idea. When our Lord performed some wonderful miracle, or when the populace showed Him any special honor, the faith of Judas grew stronger, but when seeming reverses came that faith wavered and the unfortunate disciple doubted.

When, in the Synagogue of Capharnaum, the day after the feeding of the multitude with the few loaves and fishes, the promise of the feeding of the world with the Body and Blood of the Son of Man was made, some of those who walked with Him, we are told, refused to receive this promise and walked with Him no more. Others, doubting, some regarding the promise, namely as to whether it was to be taken literally or not, some not, perhaps, understanding its full import, and trusting to time for this understanding, remained members of the band.

Peter, when in answer to the question, "shall you also go?" he said: "to whom shall we go, Thou, Lord, hast the words of eternal life," may indeed have intended speaking for the twelve, but, while

he thus expressed the convictions of the others, we feel assured he could not vouch for the faith of Judas, who remains, it is true, yet murmuring, doubting, nay, not believing. This is the opinion of all who have written concerning this unfortunate Apostle. Why does he still follow Jesus? Because though he has lost faith in Him as the promised One, he still recognizes His power and fondly hopes that this power will be used not only for the Master Himself, but for those associated with Him. The spirit of avarice now dominates him. Listen as he complains when the Magdalen anoints Jesus: "Why the waste, could not this balm be sold and the proceeds given to the poor?" Not, says St. John that he cared for the poor, but because he held the purse.

"What will you give me if I deliver Him up to you," he says to the High Priest; and Annas, though even while making the bargain despising him, offers the paltry sum of thirty pieces of silver, thirty sheckles, the price of a slave.

How the Sacred Heart of our Lord yearned to save Judas. At that Last Supper He endeavors to move the heart of the disciple. In sorrow rather than in anger He says: "One of you shall betray Me." This terrible secret He now reveals for the first time, and in the course of the banquet He speaks of it three times, and in His speaking pleads, begs Judas to put his trust in Him and even yet all will be well. Hearing Him say that one of them would betray Him, they are filled with wonder, and in sorrow one other asks: "Is it I, Lord?"

We can almost hear the impetuous Peter exclaim: "One of us? We know, Master, that having all knowledge, to You the secrets of the heart are like unto the pages of an open book, but surely here there must be some mistake; for how could anyone, knowing You as we know You, be so base to betray You?" Then knowing the weakness of human nature, the same Peter anxiously cries out: "Is it I, Lord?" and adds, "save me from such an abomination."

Even yet unwilling to expose the traitor, Jesus merely says: "He that dippeth his hand with Me into the dish, but woe to him by whom the Son of man is betrayed, it were better for him had he not been born." Woe to him, not now; for even yet he may draw back, even yet I look upon him as friend, but woe to him if he persist. Will not this reading of the secrets of his heart affect Judas? The warnings are unheeded, and the sorrow that afflicts the Heart of the Master has no effect on Judas.

All are now troubled, and John leaning on the bosom of His Lord at a sign from Peter asks: "Who is it?" No longer may the secret be kept. "He to whom I shall reach the dipped bread." And with the morsel Satan entered the heart of Judas, and he went out after hearing the words "that which thou hast to do, do quickly," but of the others none knew to what these words referred.

Judas leaves the Cenacle to meet the Master at the Garden gate. The sign is given "whom I shall kiss," and knowing the power of that Master, he adds, "hold you Him," for doubtless the unfortunate disciple is filled with fear as to what may happen to those who dare lay hands upon Him and to himself who is to prove false. In a voice trembling both with fear and emotion he salutes Jesus: "Hail Rabbi," and fain would free himself after implanting the traitorous kiss on the Cheek of the Master, but Jesus, holding him in loving embrace, will not notice the treachery, softly whispers: "Poor friend, why art thou come? Judas, doest thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?" Still friend, yet the heart will not melt. The money is earned, but follow Judas and learn the fate it brings him. He follows Jesus to the Hall of the High Priest. His faith in Jesus as a teacher and leader has been lost, but he still remembers His wonderful power and no doubt fondly hopes he will by it free himself from the clutches of his enemies. Hearing the sentence of condemnation he is filled with consternation, yet consoles himself with the thought that if Jesus will but make use of the power that is evidently His, He can easily escape from His enemies. Anxiously then he waits for the end, and seeing Him led out in the morning to be brought to the Roman Governor that the condemnation may be ratified and sentence of death pronounced, he gives way to despair. Hurrying to the Hall of the High Priest, he says: "What have I done, I have sinned—take back your blood money, for I have sinned in betraying innocent blood. You may proclaim Him guilty, the Roman may sentence Him as one that is guilty; but I say that He is innocent. Am I not capable of testifying—have I not been with Him during all his time as a public teacher—yea, with Him in most intimate companionship, and I say, and wish to say it with all the emphasis of which I am capable, He is innocent." To this appeal, an appeal that evidently springs from the heart, the cringing priest simply says: "Look you to it. His innocence or guilt is nothing to us, all we wish is to have Him removed, and that we will accomplish." Then, in despair, Judas hanged himself.

Poor Judas, scorned by his tempters he is now and will be for all time an object of scorn for all men, yet he gave the most magnificent testimony of the innocence of His Master, while his bold defiance, in throwing the bribe in the face of the corrupt priest, and declaring "I have sinned in betraying innocent Blood," is a proof to the world that Jesus was unjustly condemned. Did he truly repent? Yes, he repented his act, yet his was not the soulful sorrow that asks forgiveness for the crime because it was a sin in the sight of God. In the eyes of the world, at least, the crime of Judas was less detestable than that of those who lured him on, and then laughed in scorn at his remorse. As to his fate eternally; ours not to judge, ours to take warning, ours to live in wholesome fear lest we too abuse grace, as grace was evidently by him abused.

Great was the anguish brought to Jesus by the treachery of Judas, but far greater, far more intense the grief caused by one other of His chosen band; by none other than Peter, the leader of that band, who not only denied Him, but confirmed his threefold denial with an oath. At the very moment when our Lord was appealing to the testimony of His own in saying to the High Priest: "Go ask those who heard Me preach," Peter, the chief of His Apostles, said to the inquiring maid: "I know Him not."

The fall of Judas was gradual, not so the sin of Peter. When bidden by the Master in the Garden to sheath his sword like the others, Peter became terrified, and deserting Jesus, fled. He evidently did not leave the Garden, for the Scripture says, that as Jesus was led bound to the Hall of the High Priest "Peter followed Him afar off," as did another, who, though not named, is believed to have been St. John, by whom the fact, together with what afterward occurred, is recorded. They go to the Hall where one, being known, is permitted to enter, while the other is refused. He that was known obtains the coveted permission for the entrance of the other, and, in view of what took place, can we not believe that John regretted the favor thus obtained for Peter?

Scarcely has Peter entered the portals when he is met by a servant with the question: "Art not thou one of this Man's disciples?" to which, without a moment's hesitation, seemingly without reflection, he answers: "I am not." He goes to the fire where others are sitting, where another maid, looking at him, says to those present: "This man was also with Him." Again he replies: "I neither know nor understand what thou sayest." He enters into conversa-

tion with those at the fire, and one says: "Surely thou art one of them, for thou art a Galilean for thy speech does betray thee." And a bystander said: "I saw you with Him in the Garden," and this man was a relative of Malchus, whose ear was severed by Peter. Then Peter began to curse and to swear that he knew Him not. We understand from the Sacred Writings that before Pentecost Peter was most impulsive. What a proof of this we have in what took place at Cesarea Philippi towards the end of the second year of our Lord's public life. To the twelve who had often mingled with their fellowmen, Jesus said: "Whom do men say that I am?" and they all began to tell what they had heard men say of him. "Some say you are Elias returned to earth; others claim that you are John the Baptist risen from the grave, while others say you are a great Prophet." Without hesitation they tell the different opinions that they have heard expressed concerning Him. When, however, He asks: "Whom do you say I am, you who have been so intimately associated with Me, I would have your opinion of My personality?" they in embarrassment are silent until Peter boldly steps forward and says: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The first public profession of faith in the Divinity of Christ made by man! What opinion the others had formed we know not; but Peter left no doubt as to his belief. Hear him, a few days later, rebuke Jesus when told of what would take place at Jerusalem. Who but one governed by impulse would have cast himself into the lake when he saw the Master walking upon the waters? Listen as He speaks on Tabor, where James and John dare not raise their voice. "It is good for us to be here, etc." Hearken to His protestation when told that all shall be scandalized in Him and shall desert Him. He resents the imputation. There may be some doubt he seems to say as to how the others may act, but as for me, I will follow Thee even unto the death.

Such the protestation, how different the action! He hastily answers the inquisitive maid, passes through the gate, but in passing denies his Master. No need to give answer, he could have ignored the question or at least could have turned back and not entered the Hall, but he wished to know the end, and no doubt imagined he will not be farther molested, hence goes to the fire and there is compelled to deny a second time. Having satisfied the curiosity of those two servants he feels secure and enters into conversation with those about the fire. He likely asks them what they think will be

the outcome of the trial taking place in the next room. Being followers of the High Priest, they may be able to give an idea as to the verdict that will be rendered. In his anxiety he speaks freely, and in his excitement his speech tells of the place whence he came. Behold proof of the fact that he must be a follower, he is from Galilee, and to this is added the testimony of one who not only saw him in Gethsemane, but who is deeply interested in him inasmuch as a kinsman suffered from his impetuosity. In the face of all this mere denial will be of no avail, hence Peter confirms his denial with an oath. While his vehement denial is being considered by those about him, the warning voice a second time is sounded, and hearing the cock crow, Peter recalls the words of Jesus: "Before the cock crows twice, you shall deny Me thrice," and his soul is flooded with horror at his fall. Just then the door between the two rooms is thrown open, and those in the outer chamber hear the verdict: "He is guilty of death." Peter, with those about him, turns his eyes toward the open door, and there stands the Master. He looks at Peter, and Oh the depth of meaning in that look. Eye meets eye, only a glance, but Oh the reproach in that passing glance. A reproach, yet one of infinite tenderness, the sin must be rebuked, but in that rebuke there is a something that will not harden the heart of Peter from fear, but will rather cause it to melt with tender sorrow for the pain the denial has given this most loving Master. Oh the eloquence of that one glance, the superabundance of grace in it contained, and it was not lost on the disciple. The crowing of the cock was not heeded, but the vision of his Lord bound as a criminal and the glance of tender reproach are not lost on the disciple. "Peter," that look seems to say, "what is this I hear, 'You know Him not.' Peter, it is I. Recall the words you spoke at Cesarea Philippi, you, the first of the children of man, proclaimed your faith in Me. Remember what took place on Tabor. From the clouds you heard the voice of the Eternal Father: 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him.' It is I, Peter, who explained for you the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven; I who only a few hours ago fed you with My Body and gave you to drink My Blood, and yet you say: 'I know Him not,' you swear 'You know not the Man.'" The heart of Peter melts in tenderness, and filled with true contrition "he went out and wept bitterly." We hear not of him again until he with John goes to the Tomb to verify the story of Magdalen that the Body is not there. Shall we censure the Apostles?

Rather let us remember that we too have deserted and betrayed and denied, for all these things have we done when we committed sin. Conscious then of our adding to His sufferings let us in sorrow approach Him and ask two things, strength to serve faithfully, and consciousness of our frailty, for it was the want of this last that caused the fall of the Apostles; being warned, they did not ask for strength, but depended on self and failed.

Yes, they failed, and their failure taught them as it should teach us that with diffidence in self we must have trust and confidence in God. They recognized their failure and for it made amends, first by true and heartfelt sorrow and then by giving themselves without reserve to the work for which they were destined when chosen to be His Apostles. The Scripture says of Peter that "he went out and wept" for his sin, and his contemporaries tell us that he never forgot that he had fallen, and that the tears by him shed wore furrows down his cheeks. To him first of all the risen Lord appeared, thus assuring him that his denial had been forgiven. May not this evidence of weakness have been permitted, then, to be for His representatives a constant reminder of poor human nature and that they, when called upon to exercise their prerogative of judging in the Tribunal of Penance, should temper justice with mercy?

While thus looking on the fall of the Apostles as a constant warning, let us commiserate our Suffering Saviour in the sorrow brought Him by His friends, and, that we may prove to be His friends not only in times of peace and happiness, but in times of trial and adversity, let our never-ceasing prayer be: My Jesus, my God, my Love—my Jesus by sin betrayed, by sin denied, through sin deserted, have mercy, Jesus mercy!

V. MARY'S PARTICIPATION IN THE PASSION

"Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother."—John, xlx, 25.

SYNOPSIS.—While it is true that "THE PASSION" refers only to the suffering and Death of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ; and while man was redeemed, as St. Paul says, "With the Blood of Christ," yet, to understand thoroughly this Divine Tragedy, we are logically brought to consider the sorrows of the Mother even as we meditate upon the sufferings of the Son.

Mary, it is true, did not contribute directly to the redemption of man. Indirectly, however, she participated in the Passion for she furnished the victim, and, in seeing her enveloped in a cloud of sorrow, His mental sufferings were increased. As Father Faber tersely puts it, "She suffered in Him and He suffered in her."

That the Church wishes us to consider her sorrows even as we contemplate His sufferings, is evident from the fact that twice during the year, she celebrates feasts of the Sorrows of Mary, on the Friday of Passion Week and on the 15th of September. Our reason also bids us dwell on the sorrows of Mary as a means of bringing us the better to appreciate the sufferings of Mary's Son; for, while we may not be able to enter, as we would wish, into the excess of suffering of the God-Man, we can assuredly, not only fully understand but appreciate the sorrows of the mother, a creature like unto ourselves in all but sin.

We have been with our Lord, in spirit, from the Cenacle to the Hall of Pilate, and, in our limited way, have contemplated the sufferings that have been visited upon Him; torture of body and agony of mind, and now will dwell on another phase of the Divine tragedy, a human phase, if you will, *viz.*, Mary's participation in the Passion. Throughout the whole ordeal we have seen love and suffering contending; the one that it may shine the more brightly, the other that it may draw men the more securely. The suffering was acute, the disfigurement brought on by it appalling, and the humiliation begotten of it most deep; yet the love of which it was the offspring shone out so brightly that it effaced the humiliation, blotted out the disfigurement and made glorious the suffering. With Him throughout the ordeal have been sympathizing friends, whose hearts were sore and whose souls sorrowed because they could not give Him aid in this His time of trial. How the Magdalen must have been bowed down in sorrow when she was not permitted to approach Him, not allowed to wipe the blood and dust and spittle from His face, nay, even forbidden to show in any way that her heart beat in sympathy with His in its suffering and humiliation.

But if this grieved Magdalen and the other weeping women, what

must have been the feelings of that one who was closest to Him of all others? Let us with eyes of tender love and of living faith look into the immaculate heart of Mary that we may see therein reflected the Passion of her Divine Son.

Holy Church wishes us to consider the sorrows of the Mother even as she tells us it is necessary that we should bring home to ourselves the sufferings of the Son. Twice during the year she celebrates a feast recalling the sorrows of Mary: on the 15th day of September and on the Friday of Passion Week. In the twofold celebration there is a distinction. The feast in September is a feast of the Blessed Mother herself, in as far as any feast of hers may be held without direct reference to her Son. On that day she asks us to remember the seven great sorrows in her life, the enduring of which gained for her the title of Queen of Martyrs; and they are: The Prophecy of Simeon—The Flight into Egypt—The Three Days' Loss—The meeting of the Son and Mother on the way to Calvary—The Foot of the Cross—Jesus Dead in her arms and The Burial of Jesus. On the Friday of Passion Week she brings us to the foot of the Cross and bids us contemplate the Mother gazing on her Son as He dies on the hard bed of the Cross.

Her sorrows then were not confined to the time of the Passion, but began with the presentation of the Child in the Temple and ended only with her death. It is, however, in connection with the Passion that we shall consider her sorrows, that we may learn from them, not only as affecting her but as afflicting the heart of her Son, another proof, an intensely human proof, if you will, of the love of God for man, and a true idea of sin which could exact such a proof.

We might, however, ask: why did Jesus permit His Mother to pass through this ordeal? Did He not love her as a mother, and would it not have been better to have permitted her to pass away as was permitted St. Joseph, and thus be spared the necessity of being a witness to His agony? Would not this have been better, as she was not to have the privilege of assisting Him in any way in His time of suffering? She was not to have the right to approach Him, to soothe with those consoling words that can fall only from a mother's lips, to assuage by those tender touches that can be prompted only by the maternal heart. All denied her, all forbidden

Him! She could only stand by and in agony know that her presence but added to His sufferings, while He realized that every wound lacerating His Body made a far deeper scar upon her maternal heart, every sigh that fell from His swollen lips brought forth a deeper groan of anguish from her breaking heart, while every twinge of pain that racked His nerves drove the sword of grief deeper and deeper into her sorrow-laden soul. Why permit this?

Father Faber, from whose "Foot of the Cross" we have not merely sought inspiration, but from which as from a perennial font we have drawn both ideas and expression, gives the answer thus: Simply on account of love, the great love He had for her.

We can readily understand why He would suffer for the redemption of man. He knew the value of an immortal soul, knew how in the court of Heaven it was looked upon as a priceless treasure. "What," He asked, "will a man give in exchange for his soul?" Nothing that might be conjured up even in the highest flight of imagination can equal it in value. Not even, in exchange, would the whole world make recompense for one soul. Who then can compute the value of the souls of all mankind? This it was what made the Passion a reality. But why draw the Mother into this sea of suffering? The same law that encompassed Him, says Father Faber, must surround her, and the law of the Incarnation, of the Redemption, was a law of humiliation and of suffering. That He gave as one requisite of discipleship, "if you would be My disciple, take up your cross and follow Me," and as no being could come so close to Him as did His mother, so none will suffer as she suffered. When the angelic messenger made to her his announcement, he gave her to understand that she would be raised not only above all creatures of earth but above even the highest angel in Heaven; but at the same time she realized that with the dignity and honor would come suffering; for, in the economy of salvation, after the Fall reconciliation was to be affected through suffering, hence, when she gave her "fiat" to one, she accepted the other.

And why does He permit her to suffer for our sake? She is to become the mother of the afflicted, the mother to whom poor, fallen man will look for comfort and consolation, and, that her heart may sympathize with us in our distress, she will undergo every suffering except that brought on by sin, which man may be called

upon to endure. Can we not also say that she suffers in order that we may have greater confidence in time of tribulation and temptation? True, contemplation of the sufferings of the Son should give this confidence; yet we must admit that it is not so. Is it not a fact that in thinking of the Passion, when we find preeminent the thought that the Victim was God, and of this truth we must never be forgetful, is it not a fact, I say, that this very truth in some way causes us to have less human compassion, less sympathy with the Victim? God suffered, God died for us, wonderful truth, even though at times it makes us less able to enter into His sufferings as we would. Now, however, we see a creature like unto ourselves share in the suffering, through her we can bring ourselves to realize what they mean.

He permits her to suffer also that her merit may be the greater. As the angel said, the plenitude of grace rested in her immaculate soul, and, though the grace of the maternity could not be merited in the usual acceptation of this term, yet, on account of her absolute submission to the Holy Will of God, of the perfect conformity of her will with His, she can be said to have merited grace, even as other children of Adam may merit it, and her merit came from a life of suffering, and this we fondly call "Her participation in the Passion."

While it is true that from the record in the Bible we cannot get a clear or definite account of the extent of the Blessed Mother's companionship during His public life, we can reasonably conclude that they were never separated for any length of time. The Son and the Mother, or to speak in our human way, the Mother and Son, together in Bethlehem, in Nazareth; oh, the sweetest of those nineteen years, from the time He went out of the Temple, after surprising the doctors by the depth of His questions and the wisdom of His answers, and "went down to Nazareth and was subject to them" until He enters on His public life. It was at her request that He performed His first miracle; performed it even before the time set by the Eternal Father for His entrance into His public life. "My time has not yet come." We can then rest assured they never remained long separated.

Mary was not with her Son in the Garden, yet she tells us in her revelations that in spirit she followed Him throughout all His agony, and while He was lying prostrate bleeding from every pore

of His Body, she was so filled with compassion that it seemed that her heart was bleeding drop for drop. We are told that with the ever faithful Magdalen she went to the door of the High Priest but was refused admittance. St. John leads her to the upper chamber where the Last Supper was eaten and there she waits for morning. The beloved Disciple goes to the Hall to witness the mockery and hear the condemnation to learn, if possible, what will be the end. In the morning he returns and with her and the three faithful women goes to the Hall of the Roman Governor whither her Son, bound as a malefactor, has been led. Her heart rejoices when the Judge proclaims: "I find no cause in Him," but is immediately filled with fear when she hears the cry from all sides: "away with Him, crucify Him—we will have no king but Cæsar," and notes the hatred manifested especially in the Priests and Rulers of the people. She witnessed the scourging, counting the strokes; for she revealed to St. Bridgit the fact that the lash fell more than five thousand times on the lacerated back of her Son. This may seem like an exaggeration, like the over-zealous desire of a pious and sentimental soul to impress upon the minds of others the depth of the suffering endured in the yard of Pilate; yet there is no reason to doubt it, much less deny its truth. Remember this was not the scourging sanctioned by law (forty stripes less one), but was prompted by the desire to satisfy the enemies of the accused, hence might be as brutal as possible; while on the other hand He did not succumb to the torture simply because His Divinity, while in no way mitigating it, lent to His humanity a power to suffer far beyond its natural endurance.

Imagine the feelings of the mother as she looks upon her Son dressed as a mock king, and hears the derisive salute "Hail King of the Jews." Follow her back to the Hall and stand beside her as surrounded by the jeering mob she sees her Son as the Judge presents Him, saying: "Behold the Man." These words may have little or no meaning for the people; but oh the world of meaning they have for Mary. "*Ecce Homo, Mater*: Mother behold the Man: behold your Son." He is disfigured, it is true, where congealed blood does not besmear His Face there dust and spittle distorts that loving countenance. Yet, oh Mother, it does not hide the beauty of your Jesus, your Son from you. Your heart sickens at the sight, you hear the cry "away with Him," and it is almost with a sigh of

relief that you hail the end even though that end shall be His death on the Cross. With the cry: "On to Golgotha, on to Calvary," ringing in her ears, she goes back to the Cenacle to await the coming of John with whom she will go even to the fateful hill, there to remain until the end.

Of those making that "First Way of the Cross" there are some who sympathize with the Cross Bearer and His Mother, but most of those in that procession are either manifestly indifferent or filled with hatred. "There followed Him a great multitude," says Holy Writ. With St. John and the three faithful companions, the sorrowful Mother goes to a place that the procession must pass so that she may meet her Son on His way to death. They have not long to wait. Bowed down by the heavy weight of the Cross, He appears before her. Only a few days before she saw a procession of which He was the head, then she heard the voices of the people raised in exultation as they sang: "Hosannah to the Son of David, blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord." Then she saw them spread their garments on the ground that the beast He rode might walk over them, saw the branches of the palm-tree strew the ground so that as a conquering hero He might enter the City.

Now what sound falls upon her ears? "Away with Him, crucify Him; we will have no king but Cæsar." At last He comes, rather staggers, to the place where the mournful Mother waits. Mother, behold your Son! See Him as He endeavors, by winking, to wipe the clotted blood and dust from His eyes that He may look on you. Your heart was filled with sorrow at the three days' loss; your mind was never at rest when separated from Him; now you are in His presence. Oh that look between Mother and Son; each heart, already filled with anguish, but adds to the grief of the other. His, because He brings sorrow to her, and hers because she may not go to Him and in His troubles relieve Him. She will, she must approach. Is she not His mother, has she not a mother's right, a right that none may gainsay, much less deny? But no, "Mother, this sacrifice we will make. Veronica may assuage my suffering to some extent by presenting the handkerchief; Simeon may aid by assisting in the carrying the Cross, but you, Mother, with Me will cooperate and we shall drink the chalice even to its bitter dregs."

The strain becomes too much and He falls to the ground. It seems that tired nature can withstand no more, and those around

Him think that death has come. Three times He falls, and when, at the last fall, He seems unable to rise, the Sorrowing Mother breathes a sigh of satisfaction, thinking merciful death has come to His relief. "Ah no, Mother, Calvary's summit is almost reached, there we shall see the end; but not until My sufferings have been increased and your agony made greater than human heart could naturally bear."

Who has not been filled with wonder at the outward calmness of a loving mother as, kneeling at the bedside, she ministers to a dying child. Other members of the household, distracted in their grief, seem unable to do anything but give vent to their sorrow. The mother, her heart torn with anguish, never ceases those little attentions that only a mother's heart can suggest. Now she endeavors to cool the fevered brow, now, by a drop of water, she assuages the burning thirst, again she arranges the pillow, and though tears would rush down her cheeks, and sobs rake her bosom, she bids nature await the end ere she give way to her maternal feelings; for, must she not restrain herself, lest she add pain to the child whose life is ebbing out? Who may tell the heart-burnings of Mary as she stands by and witnesses the death of her Son?

Through His sacred hands, crunching the flesh and tearing the sinews, the cruel nails are driven. With blow after blow of the hammer, the nail passes through His feet into the hard wood of the Cross. All this the Mother sees, and to her it is more excruciating than if the hammer were falling upon her living flesh, or the nails tearing her heart asunder. Truly it is said:

<p>"O! quam tristis et afflicta Fuit illa benedicta Mater Unigeniti."</p>	<p>"Oh, how sad and sore distressed Now was she, that Mother blest Of the Sole begotten One."</p>
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Truly afflicted, sorely distressed, yet never during the whole ordeal does she lose consciousness, never turn her eyes from the hard bed of her tortured Son. This excess of suffering on the part of both may not in justice be demanded, but in love is given. Now the Cross, with its Victim, is lifted up, and with satisfaction, the leaders of the people look upon the hanging Jesus. To some she may be known, and in some hearts there may be a spark of pity for the mother thus distressed, but to most she is merely the unfortunate mother of this condemned Son, and, if the Priests look

her way it is with a glance of piteous contempt. No tongue upbraids her, no hand is raised against her, but every wound inflicted on the Son makes a corresponding wound in the heart of the Mother:

“Holy Mother, pierce me through;
In my heart each wound renew
Of my Saviour crucified.”

For almost three hours she is kept at a distance from the Cross, though every detail of the awful tragedy is keenly made manifest to her. Amid the voices of the scoffers she hears the Son appeal to the Father, not for vengeance but for mercy. “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” She hears Him cry out that He is burning with thirst, but cannot moisten His parched lips with even one drop of water. She listens as He again and again speaks; but in all of His words not one of reproach, nothing but absolute submission to the Will of the Eternal Father.

At last, she is permitted to come even to the foot of the Cross. A dark pall envelopes Calvary. The voices of the scoffers are hushed, and a silence that infuses a fear into the heart of the boldest ensues. Singly and in groups, the Chief Priests and their retainers leave the hallowed spot. “And the sun was darkened”; veiling its face, the sun refuses to look upon the dying agony of its Creator.

“Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary, His Mother,” says the Evangelist. We need not the assurance of the Recorder to know that when permitted she would come as close as possible to the Cross. By the Cross stood Mary, His Mother. 'Tis well she is not there to lessen His sufferings, to dress His wounds or in any way assuage His pains, rather does her presence increase His agony, for well He knows that she suffers in Him even as He finds increase of torment in knowing her sorrow.

Now is fulfilled the prophecy spoken at the dawn of creation to the first woman and through her to the tempting serpent: “I will put enmity between thee and the serpent, and thy seed and her seed, and in the end her foot shall crush thy head.” In the shadow of the Cross, the Virginal Mother crushes the head of the serpent and with her Son gains victory over sin and the consequences of sin. She stands there to concur in the sacrifice.

The Victim is the Son of the Eternal Father and by the Father is sacrificed. He is also the Son of Mary and by her is offered as a sacrifice. "She stands," as St. Bernardine says, "at the foot of the Cross, both living and dead, she lived in dying, she was dying but still lived. She could not die, though alive, she was dead."

She stands there on our account. It was in this awful moment that Jesus gave us to her as her children even as He infused into her heart a love for us greater than any earthly mother had or could have for earthly child. "Woman behold thy Son; Son behold thy mother," were almost His last words, and think you she will ever forget them?

She stands there until the spark of life had fled, and when the Body is taken down from the Cross, she, with her own hands, prepares it for burial and follows it to the tomb.

"Eia Mater fons amoris,
Me sentire vim doloris
Fac, ut tecum lugeam."

"Mother fount of charity,
Let me share thy agony
Make me weep with thee."

sings the author of the hymn of sorrows, as with soul-grieving pen he writes the plaintive heart-throbs of the Dolorous Mother, and will not we, her children, mingle our tears with hers, will not our prayer be:

"Juxta crucem tecum stare,
Et me tibi sociare
In planctu desidero."

"Let me stand where thou
hast stood
Mourning with my motherhood
By the holy rood."

Stand, Christian soul, at the foot of the Cross, and learn the love of God for you and the hatred you should have for sin. When tempted to sin, look to the dying Son, and if that be not enough to keep you from sin, then look to the sorrowful Mother at the foot of the Cross; then sin if you will; sin if you can; sin, but in sinning remember that you not only nail the Son to the Cross but that you drive the sword of sorrow deeper and deeper into the heart of Mary, the Mother of God, your own loving Mother.

VI. THE CRUCIFIXION

"He went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha, where they crucified Him."—John, xlx, 17-18.

SYNOPSIS.—In few and simple words the Evangelists record the most sublime and at the same time the most awful and loving tragedy the world has ever witnessed: The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus Christ.

Calvary, in Hebrew called Golgotha, was reputed to be the burial place of the skull of Adam. It was not, however, for this reason that it was chosen; but because here the worst criminals were put to death, and here all might see Him die.

Calvary, though hardly of sufficient eminence to be called a hill, is now known throughout the world as Mount Calvary, a name that gives hope to the sinner even as it brings satisfaction to the just.

He carried His Cross to Calvary, carried it, though so weak He could scarcely walk, and when the journey ended, He was nailed to the cross. Whether three or four nails were used is of little consequence; all we need remember is: Through His sacred hands and feet nails were driven into the wood of the cross. For three hours He hangs in agony. During that time His enemies reviled Him; yea there was blasphemy in the shadow of the cross. There, too, was made an act of Faith. "Indeed, this man was the Son of God," said the Centurion.

From the cross, He speaks but few words, no word of reproach, yet how highly these few words are treasured.

He bows His head, thus giving death permission to come to Him, and dies. Who dies? God. For whom? For man. He is taken down from the cross, when all is consummated, and placed in the Tomb.

"They crucified Him." "Behold," says Father Galwey, in that admirable work, "The Watches of the Passion," "the few and simple words with which the Inspired Chronicler records this, the most awful yet most sublime and loving tragedy the world has ever witnessed." Only a few words, continues this zealous writer, but, like that other short sentence, "Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him," what depths of meaning contained therein, and what an excess of cruelty and torture expressed.

A tragedy it is indeed, not only of earth but of Heaven, not only affecting time but eternity: for, as its fruits are to be gained in time, its consequences shall be recognized through all eternity. It was, as we have seen in our former meditations, conceived in envy, begotten of hatred and carried out in the most barbarous way. Withal, it was a tragedy most loving and merciful; for it manifested the loving mercy of God for man; the Creator for the creature, aye for the creature who has not only disobeyed the commands of his Creator, but has trampled upon His precepts; laughed to scorn His counsels, and defied His most solemn threats. It is

also most sublime, for here we see not only God suffering death at the hands of man, but dying for the sake of those whose hearts are inflamed with hatred towards Him and whose hands are red-dened in His blood.

Scarcely will you find a man willing to give up his life for a just man, says the Holy Ghost, but here we see the God-Man laying down His life, laying it down willingly, "with desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you before that I die," not only for the just, but, mercy of mercy, for sinners.

We might ask: How could Jesus of Nazareth endure the tortures that thus far have been inflicted upon Him? Simply because His Divinity aided His humanity. In saying this we do not intimate that the Divine Nature made the suffering less hard to bear, rather that it made the human nature able the more to suffer. By right He should long since have died. "My soul," He said, "is sorrowful even unto death." Yet the Divinity, without in any way mitigating the suffering, sustains the humanity. Hence, though suffering only in His human nature, we truly say: God suffered, God died for man.

The place to which they lead Him is of historic interest. It was here, according to tradition, that the skull of Adam, given by Noe to one of his sons, was interred, hence the name Golgotha, which, being interpreted, means Skull. Where then rests all that on earth remains of the first Adam who, by his sin, brought misery into the world, there shall the second Adam, by His atonement, blot out that sin, and, by the graces here merited, change that misery into blessings and again reconcile man with his God.

It was not, however, on account of this tradition that the place was chosen, but rather to add odium to His death, for here common criminals were executed, and, wishing to brand Him as such, the cry is "On to Golgotha." How the malicious designs of man are frustrated! Golgotha, or Calvary, from being a term of reproach, has become synonymous with all that is grand and glorious, is of infinite mercy and boundless love. In itself so insignificant as scarcely to merit the name of hill on the map of the world, it is now known as Mount Calvary, and its very name gives hope to the soul laden with sin, while to the just it brings increase of joy and consolation; for the graces there merited give to man a right to Heaven, a right none may gainsay, much less deny.

The first journey to Calvary was made with difficulty and in torture, in deep humiliation and in sorrow; now, that the way has been marked, traced by the blood of the Victim, we can make the way in peace, springing from the blessings of hope. Three times He fell on the way and it would seem at times that worn-out nature would protest and the hill of Calvary never would be reached.

Now, however, that the journey has ended, will they bring about His death quickly and, as far as may be, painlessly? Even into the valley of the shadow will hatred follow Him. "They crucified Him," says the narrative, and it is left to man to dwell on this mere statement and from it draw some idea of the pain and, above all, the humiliation of the death.

They offer Him wine mixed with gall. To the condemned wine was given to fortify them and thus enable them the better to endure the pain about to be inflicted. Behold how even this act of mercy was charged with malice. According to custom, the wine is tendered but mixed with gall; and the Scripture says: "He would not drink," not, say the Commentators, on account of the bitterness, but because He would not alleviate His sufferings even by the merest drop of wine. Stripping Him of His garments they place Him on the hard bed of the Cross and fasten Him to it with nails driven through His Hands and Feet. The soldier places the nail in the palm of the right Hand and with heavy hammer drives it through the flesh into the wood of the Cross. No bone is broken, for it was said: "of Him a bone you shall not break"; but the sinews are torn as through the Hand the nail finds its way. That Hand which with the Father united in the creation of the world; that Hand which during His sojourn on earth was raised so often to call down blessings on man; behold it now extended, and for what? That it may be grasped in thankfulness and in gratitude for the many times it was raised to call down favors on man? No; but to receive the cruel nail.

The right Hand fastened, they come to the left and then to the Feet, and now His enemies feel a certain amount of satisfaction, for they see Him on His bed of death and from it He cannot rise as He is fastened with nails.

How many nails were used in fastening Jesus to the Cross? This question has never been definitely settled. Some contend that four were used, one to each Hand and two to the Feet, while others main-

tain that He was fastened to the Cross with but three nails. Tradition, as manifested in the crucifix in the general usage sanctioned by the Church, favors the latter opinion. The question, however, is of little moment; all we need know is: that, nailed to the Cross, our Jesus in love expiated our sins and reconciled us with the offended Father.

They drag the Cross to the place prepared for it, and, with much jeering and with shouts of exultation, it is lifted up and, with a rude shock, falls into the hole made for it. The shock almost tears His Hands and Feet from the fastening nails, and would have done so had they not taken the precaution of securing Him with cords and ropes, which, though preventing the Body from falling from the Cross, in no way mitigated the pain caused by the nails. The shock draws a moan of anguish from the Sufferer that finds a responsive sigh in the heart of the sorrowful mother. Now the Cross stands erect and around it circle the priests and rulers. At first sight of the Victim thus tortured they stand aghast; the suffering seems too terrible even for their hatred towards Him. Then one, more callous than the rest, cries out: "Behold Him now; look upon the man who dared denounce your priests; He spoke of us as whitened sepulchres, as blind leaders of the blind, for us He had no words but words of censure. Gaze upon Him now and ask: who is the false teacher, who the seducer of the people?" "Oh, yes," they say, "He is a king; behold His crown," for they had placed the crown of thorns on His head. "Gaze upon His throne; it stands on high that all may see it, all view the king. No danger of Him losing His throne; for, behold, we have fastened Him to it with nails."

Even the most degraded and depraved are softened at the approach of death, and it is only the most savage that will not do all in his power to assuage the agony of the dying. How act the persecutors of Jesus? The people stood beholding and the Rulers with them deride Him, saying: "He saved others, let Him save Himself." And mocking they say: "If He be king of Israel, let Him come down from the cross and we will believe Him." Boldly they pass and repass in front of Him, challenging Him and calling on Him now to prove that He is the Son of God. "Come down from the Cross," they say, "and we will believe you." Proof after proof have they had of His wonderful power. "He hath done all things well," had been the verdict of those who had witnessed His works.

Again and again the people said: "His words, like His works, are evidently from God, for no man ever spoke as He speaks." Hearing the people thus speak of Him, the Priests were filled with envy. Will they then believe in Him if He should give the proof they now ask if He come down from the Cross? Well does He know the perversity of their hearts, and fully does He understand that even if He should give this last proof they would still repudiate Him. What an insult in being compelled to hear them thus boasting. "Do you hear, oh Jesus of Nazareth—do you mark our words, oh Galilean; come down from the Cross and we will believe in you, nay, we will lead all the people to you, and in you shall all Judea believe. Where is now your boasted power; you, who said: 'destroy this temple and in three days I will built it?' You a miracle worker? yes, a miracle worker among the ignorant. Now satisfy us, the Rulers; satisfy us by a miracle, by one that shall redound to your own benefit; come down from the Cross and we, Priests and leaders of Israel, will become your disciples, and your followers shall be limited only by the confines of Israel, for we will compel all to acknowledge You." "Vah," they say, "He said He was greater than Abraham, more powerful than Moses, and proclaimed Himself more than a prophet. Let Him give evidence of that power, give proof of that greatness and we will believe Him."

Truly was there blasphemy in the very shadow of the Cross. "They that passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads." "He spoke of His trust in God; let God now deliver Him and we will believe," they cry out. To the taunts of the priests are added the insults of the soldiers, who, in derision, say: "If thou be the king of the Jews, save Thyself." No taunt more stinging than that which glories in failure, either real or fancied; and how they rejoice in the apparent failure of this Man, how sarcastically they remind Him of the power of which He seemed to boast, and of His present helplessness.

Behold, in the midst of their exultation, the Priests receive a humiliation. Pilate has ordered that the cause of His death be proclaimed; has ordered that an inscription be placed above Him on the Cross. In Latin, Greek and Hebrew it is written, the three principal languages of the time. And what do they read? "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." "No, no," say the Rulers, "not this; write that He said He was King of the Jews." "What I have written, I have written." In other words, "it shall remain as in-

scribed," curtly answers the Governor, and thus they are compelled to acknowledge that they have crucified their King. "We will have no King but Cæsar," they cried out in the Praetorium, and now, on Calvary, they must perforce acknowledge Him as a lineal descendent of the Royal House of David. While protesting against this and while circulating about the Cross belching forth insults and blasphemies, the Priests are amazed on hearing His voice on the Cross.

Have you ever reflected on the silence of Jesus during the time of His suffering? From the Hall of Judgment until He reaches Calvary He speaks only to the weeping women He met on the way. In all His tortures He asks neither for surcease of suffering, nor appeals for sympathy, and His words to the weeping women are more in the nature of an encouragement to them than a begging of consolation for self. At last He breaks the silence, and what is the purport of His words? Will He now sue for clemency? "Hearken," say the bystanders, "He speaks"; and they hear the voice of the Son of Man appealing to the Eternal Father and asking, what? That He would visit upon His persecutors the vengeance their crime merits? No. Can it be possible? "Father! forgive them, they know not what they do," the sweet voice of the dying Jesus on the Cross floats down the hill of Calvary, and those within hearing are filled with astonishment. Will not this supreme act of clemency, this unheard-of voice of charity have some effect on His prosecutors? Even one dying with Him is not moved, but, in blasphemous derision, says: "If Thou be the Son of God, if Thou be the Christ, save Thyself and us." The other reviles not, but rebukes his companion by saying: "We die justly, this Man unjustly." He turns to Jesus and adds: "Lord remember me when Thou shalt enter into Thy Kingdom." And oh, the reward for this act of sympathy! "This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." Seven words, that is, seven times according to spiritual writers, He spoke from the Cross. Without trying to follow these words in sequence, we shall briefly consider them as found in the Gospels.

Looking down from the Cross, He sees His sorrowing Mother and the beloved Disciple. To the Mother He says: "Woman, behold thy Son," and to the disciple: "Son behold thy Mother." At that moment, as we saw in our last meditation, He infused into her heart a mother's love for each and every child of earth, a love more

tender than earthly mother could have for earthly child. Think you she will ever forget this which may be termed the last Will and Testament of her dying Son? A dark cloud now envelops Calvary, and filled with fear the Priests and many of the people, singly and in groups, leave the hallowed spot.

From out the darkness the voice of the dying Lord is heard: "Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabacthani," which being interpreted is: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Many interpretations are given of these words, which, the Scripture says, were uttered in a loud voice. Knowing as we do that by the Incarnation the two natures, Divine and Human, of our Lord are hypostatically united, and that not even by death can the Humanity be separated from the Divinity, we can only listen to these words and admire them. According to some commentators He speaks merely as man, and as man suffered this abandonment; even as we heard Him last night in the Garden cry out: "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass by; yet not my will but Thine be done." In what did the abandonment consist? In the fact that He not only, at that moment, though innocence itself, felt the weight of the sins of the world, and as one bearing these sins experienced the torments of the damned; but, in a manner no tongue may explain, the Divinity allowed the humanity to undergo the pain of loss that comes to the soul when it hears those awful words: "Depart from Me ye accursed, etc." Whatever the import of the words, we know they were wrenched from a soul plunged into the deepest abyss of suffering. Thinking He called Elias, one standing by said: "Let us see if Elias will come to His aid," while others, some friendly, many unfriendly, awaited with bated breath the next scene in this awful drama.

Once more the voice of the Sufferer is heard, as consumed with agony He cries out: "I thirst." We wonder not that His pain-racked and fevered Body was tortured with thirst. Neither food nor drink had been given Him from the time He left the Cenacle the night before, and during that time He had lost much blood and poor human nature had been worn out by the trials to which He had been subjected. This, however, was not the thirst of which He complained; rather, the thirst for souls, especially the souls of those who encompassed His death as well as of those who by that death would not profit. It was also to atone for the sins we com-

mit in indulging our sensual appetites. One of the soldiers dips a sponge in vinegar and, placing it upon a reed, lifts it to the swollen lips of the Victim on the Cross.

When Jesus had tasted the vinegar, He said: "It is consummated."

"It is consummated." The work for which I came to earth is finished, the work of the Eternal Father. The redemption of man is now effected; nothing remains to be done; hence, saying in a loud voice: "Father into Thy hands I commend my spirit," He bows His head and gives up the ghost. "He bows His head," says a holy writer, "thus giving death permission to approach and dies." "It is consummated." Some time before He had said to His disciples: "I have a baptism wherein I am to be baptized, and how I am constrained until it be accomplished." This is the baptism of which He spoke, and mark how it has been accomplished; baptized in His own blood, shed freely, shed willingly for the redemption of the world. Now the absolute reign of sin is at an end and the desolation brought on earth by man's rebellion in the Garden of Eden is changed into the reign of grace by the consummation of the sacrifice which began in the Garden of Gethsemani. Not merely has justice been satisfied; not only has the debt incurred by sin been paid; not only has the reconciliation of man with God been effected, but enough has been done to draw the hearts of men to their God, and to infuse into those hearts a hope and a security, a certainty of salvation that the powers of evil can never dim, much less take away from man. Crying out with a loud voice, a voice heard not only on Calvary, but heard throughout the world, heard throughout Heaven, heard even in the uttermost depths of hell, He bows His head and gives up the Spirit. A cry, says another Holy Writer, of pain and a cry of joy. Of pain, because of death; for though, on account of the hypostatic union, the Divine nature will never be separated from the human nature (death is the separation of the soul from the body), yet death did separate the Divine nature from His manhood that is from His composite human nature—from His Body and Soul united. Hence St. Thomas says: "During the time of death He was not a man; during His days in the grave He was not God-Man." To understand this mystery, which is one of the five principal mysteries of our Holy Religion, we must remember that death is not a separation of the two natures of Christ, but is the separation of the soul from the body. On account of this hypo-

static union of the two natures we, as we have seen, truly say: God died for man.

A cry of joy because victory has been gained and in that victory both Heaven and earth rejoice. "It is consummated," and the first fruit of that consummation is found in the act of faith made by the Centurion at the foot of the Cross: "Indeed this was the Son of God."

Now behold all nature protests against the outrage perpetrated by man on nature's God. The sun was darkened, the earth trembles, the veil of the Temple is rent in twain, and graves are opened, from which many of the saints who were at rest came out and after the Resurrection appeared to many in Jerusalem. His enemies, solicitous for the letter of the law, go to Pilate and "that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the Sabbath Day" ask permission to cause the deaths of the three crucified. They break the legs of the two; but when they come to Jesus, the Centurion (Longinus) says: "You shall not in your hatred pursue Him farther. Can you not see that He is dead? You have had your wishes to the full." To satisfy them, rather than to save the Body, He opens the side with his spear and thence comes blood and water. First blood, then water, to show that the last drop of His Blood had been shed for the redemption of man.

With Pilate's permission the Body is taken down from the Cross and placed in a grave, made for the burial of Joseph of Arimathea, so that, even for His last resting place on earth, the dead Jesus depends on the charity of another.

With Jesus we have now been during the time of His Passion, and having witnessed in spirit all that has been done for us for our redemption, we might ask: what shall we do to show our appreciation of this manifestation of love? What does He ask? Simply that we return love for the love that He has shown. This we do not only by sympathizing with Him in His sufferings, but by hating, detesting and avoiding sin; for, as we have seen, though love was the cause, sin gave the occasion for the Passion, not merely the sins of mankind, but our sins. With feelings then of reciprocal love we will go to Calvary, and gazing on that bloody portrait of charity we will bewail our sins, and from hearts burning with love will say: "Mercy, My Jesus, mercy!"

