

***THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST***

**BY**

**SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI**

THE POWER OF THE PASSION OF JESUS  
CHRIST  
TO ENKINDLE THE DIVINE LOVE IN  
EVERY HEART

FROM THE ASCETICAL WORKS OF  
ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

Volume II:  
*THE WAY OF SALVATION AND OF  
PERFECTION*

**WITH**

***A SERMON ON THE PASSION OF  
JESUS CHRIST***

FROM THE ASCETICAL WORKS OF  
ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI  
Volume XVII: *MISCELLANY*

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### **I. What the Passion of Jesus Christ has Done for God**

#### **and for Us**

[331] Father Balthasar Alvarez, a great servant of God, used to say that we must not think we have made any progress in the way of God until we have come to keep Jesus crucified ever in our heart. And St. Francis de Sales said that "the love which is not the offspring of the Passion is feeble." Yes, because we cannot have a more powerful motive for loving God than the Passion of

Jesus Christ, by which we know that the  
Eternal Father,  
to manifest to us his exceeding love for  
us, was pleased  
to send his only begotten Son upon earth  
to die for us  
sinners. Whence the Apostle says that  
God, through  
the excess of love with which he loved  
us, willed that the  
death of his Son should convey life to us:  
*For His exceeding  
love with which he loved us, even when  
we were dead  
in sins, has given us life together in  
Christ.*<sup>1</sup> And this  
was precisely the expression used by  
Moses and Elijah on  
Mount Tabor, in speaking of the Passion  
of Jesus Christ.  
They did not know how to give it any  
other description  
than an excess of love: *And they spoke of  
His excess,  
which He should consummate in  
Jerusalem.*<sup>2</sup>

When our Savior came into the world,  
the shepherds

<sup>1</sup> "Propter nimiam charitatem suam, qua dilexit nos, cum essemus mortui peccatis, convivificavit nos in Christo." Eph. 2.4.

<sup>2</sup> "Et dicebant excessum ejus, quem completurus erat in Jerusalem."

Luke 9.31. ["excessum" also means "departure" or "death" - Ed.]

[332] heard the angels singing, *Glory to God in the highest.*<sup>1</sup>

But the humiliation of the Son of God in

becoming man,  
through his love for man, might have  
seemed rather to  
obscure than to manifest the divine glory;  
but no; there  
was no means by which the glory of God  
could have  
been better manifested to the world than  
by Jesus Christ  
dying for the salvation of mankind, since  
the Passion of  
Jesus Christ has made us know how great  
is the mercy  
of God, in that a God was willing to die  
to save sinners,  
and to die, moreover, by a death so  
painful and degrading.  
St. John Chrysostom says that the  
Passion of Jesus Christ  
was not an ordinary suffering, nor his  
death a simple death  
like that of other men.<sup>2</sup>

*It has made us know the divine wisdom.*  
Had our  
Redeemer been merely God, he could not  
have made  
satisfaction for man; for God could not  
make satisfac-  
tion to himself in place of man; nor could  
God make  
satisfaction by means of suffering, being  
impassible. On  
the other hand, had he been merely man,  
man could not  
have made satisfaction for the grievous  
injury done by  
him to the divine majesty. What, then,  
did God do?  
He sent his very own Son, true God with

the Father, to  
take human flesh, so that as man he  
might by his death  
pay the debt due to the divine justice, and  
as God might  
make to it full satisfaction.

*It has, moreover, made us know how  
great is the divine  
justice.* St. John Chrysostom says that  
God reveals to us  
the greatness of his justice, not so much  
by hell in which  
he punishes sinners, as by the sight of  
Jesus on the cross;  
since in hell creatures are punished for  
the sins of their  
own, but on the cross we behold a God  
cruelly treated  
in order to make satisfaction for the sins  
of men. What  
obligation had Jesus Christ to die for us?  
*He was offered*

1 "Gloria in altissimis Deo." Luke 2.14.

2 "Non passio communis, non mors simplex, morti  
similis." *De Passione*,  
sermon 6.

[333] *because it was His own will.*<sup>1</sup> He  
might have justly  
abandoned man to his perdition; but his  
love for us would  
not let him see us lost; and so he chose  
to give him-  
self up to so painful a death in order to  
obtain for us  
salvation: *He has loved us, and delivered  
Himself up for  
us.*<sup>2</sup> From all eternity he had loved man:  
*I have loved you*

*with an everlasting love.*<sup>3</sup> But then,  
seeing that his  
justice obliged him to condemn him, and  
to keep him at  
a distance separated from himself in hell,  
his mercy urged  
him to find out a way by which he might  
be able to save  
him. But how? By making satisfaction  
himself to the  
divine justice by his own death. And  
consequently he  
willed that there should be affixed to the  
cross on which  
he died the sentence of condemnation to  
eternal death  
which man had merited, in order that it  
might remain  
there cancelled in his blood. *Blotting out  
the writing of  
the decree that was against us, which was  
contrary to us,  
He has taken the same out of the way,  
fastening it to the  
cross.*<sup>4</sup> And thus, through the merits of  
his own blood, he  
pardons all our sins: *Forgiving you all  
offences.*<sup>5</sup> And at  
the same time he spoiled the devils of the  
rights they had  
acquired over us, carrying along with  
him in triumph as  
well our enemies as ourselves, who were  
their prey. *And  
despoiling the principalities and powers,  
He has exposed  
them confidently in open show,  
triumphing over them in Him-  
self.*<sup>6</sup> On which Theophylact comments,  
"As a conqueror in

- 1 "Oblatus est, quia ipse voluit." Isa. 53.7.  
2 "Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis."  
Eph. 5.2.  
3 "In charitate perpetua dilexi te." Jer. 31.3.  
4 "Delens quod adversus nos erat chirographum  
decreti, quod erat  
contrarium nobis, et ipsum tulit de medio, affigens  
illud cruci." Col. 2.14.  
5 "Donans vobis omnia delicta." Col. 2.13.  
6 "Et expolians principatus et potestates, traduxit eos  
confidenter palam  
triumphans in semetipso." Col. 2.15.

[334] triumph, carrying with him the  
booty and the enemy."<sup>1</sup>  
Hence, when satisfying the divine justice  
on the cross,  
Jesus Christ speaks only of mercy. He  
prays his Father  
to have mercy on the very Jews who had  
contrived his  
death, and on his murderers who were  
putting him to  
death: *Father, forgive them, for they know  
not what they  
do.*<sup>2</sup> While He was on the cross, instead  
of punishing the  
two thieves, who had just before reviled  
him, *And they that  
were crucified with Him reviled Him,*<sup>3</sup> -  
when he heard  
one asking for mercy, *Lord, remember  
me when You shall  
come into Your kingdom,*<sup>4</sup> - overflowing  
with mercy, he  
promises him Paradise that very day:  
*This day you shall be  
with me in Paradise.*<sup>5</sup> Then, before he  
expired, he gave to  
us, in the person of John his own mother  
to be our mother:  
*He said to the disciple, Behold your*

*mother.*<sup>6</sup> There upon  
the cross he declares himself content in  
having done  
everything to obtain salvation for us, and  
he makes perfect  
the sacrifice by his death: *Afterwards*  
*Jesus, knowing*  
*that all things were now*  
*accomplished, . . . said, 'It is*  
*finished'; and bowing His head, He gave*  
*up his spirit.*<sup>7</sup>

And behold, by the death of Jesus Christ,  
man is set  
free from sin and from the power of the  
devil; and, more-  
over, is raised to grace, and to a greater  
degree of grace  
than Adam lost: *And where sin abounded,*  
says St. Paul,

1 Quasi victor ac triumphator circumvehens secum  
praedam et  
hostes in triumphum.

2 "Pater, dimitte illis; non enim sciunt quid faciunt."  
Luke 23.34.

3 "Et qui cum eo crucifixi erant, convitiabantur ei."  
Mark 15.32.

4 "Domine, memento mei, cum veneris in regnum  
tuum." Luke 23.42.

5 "Hodie mecum eris in paradiso." Luke 23.43.

6 "Dixit discipulo: Ecce Mater tua." John 19.27.

7 "Postea, sciens Jesus quia omnia consummata  
sunt . . . dixit :

Consummatum est. Et inclinato capite, tradidit  
spiritum." John 19.28.

[335] *grace did more abound.*<sup>1</sup> It remains  
therefore for us,  
writes the Apostle, to have frequent  
recourse with all confi-  
dence to this throne of grace, which Jesus  
crucified exactly



is, in order to receive from his mercy the  
grace of salvation,  
together with aid to overcome the  
temptations of the world  
and of hell. *Let us go therefore with  
confidence to the  
throne of grace, that we may obtain  
mercy, and find  
grace in time of need.*<sup>2</sup>

Ah, my Jesus, I love You above all  
things, and whom  
would I wish to love if I love not You,  
who are infinite  
goodness, and who have died for me?  
Would that I  
could die of grief every time I think how  
I had driven  
You away from my soul by my sins, and  
separated my-  
self from You, who are my only good,  
and who have  
loved me so much. *Who shall separate us  
from the love  
of Christ?*<sup>3</sup> It is sin only that can separate  
me from  
You. But I hope, in the blood You have  
shed for me,  
that You will never allow me to separate  
myself from  
Your love, and to lose Your grace, which  
I prize more  
than every other good. I give myself  
wholly to You.  
Do accept me, and draw all my affections  
to Yourself,  
so that I may love none but You.

## **II. What the Passion of Jesus Christ Requires of Us**

Does Jesus Christ, perhaps, claim too  
much in wish-  
ing us to give ourselves wholly to him,  
after he has  
given to us all his blood and his life, in  
dying for us  
upon the cross? *The love of Christ impells*  
*us.*<sup>4</sup> Let

1 "Ubi autem abundavit delictum, superabundavit  
gratia." Rom. 5.20.

2 "Adeamus ergo cum fiducia ad thronum gratiae, ut  
misericordiam

consequamur, et gratiam inveniamus in auxilio  
opportune." Heb. 4.16.

3 "Quis enim nos separabit a charitate Christi?"  
Rom. 8.35.

4 "Charitas enim Christi urget nos." 2 Cor. 5.14.

[336] us hear what St. Francis de Sales  
says upon these  
words: "To know that Jesus has loved us  
unto death, and  
even death on the cross, is not this to feel  
our hearts con-  
strained by a violence which is the  
stronger in proportion  
to its loveliness?" And then he adds, "My  
Jesus gives  
himself all to me, and I give myself all to  
him. On his  
bosom will I live and die. Neither death  
nor life shall  
ever separate me from him."<sup>1</sup>

It was for this end, says St. Paul, that  
Jesus Christ  
died, that each of us should no longer  
live to the world  
nor to himself, but to Him alone who has  
given himself

wholly to us. *And Christ died for all, that they who live may not now live for themselves, but for Him who died for them.*<sup>2</sup> He who lives for the world seeks to please the world; he who lives for himself seeks to please himself; but he who lives for Jesus Christ seeks only to please Jesus Christ, and fears only to displease him. His only joy is to see him loved; his only sorrow, to see him despised. This is to live for Jesus Christ; and this is what he claims from each one of us. I repeat, does he claim too much from us, after having given us his blood and his life?

Why, then, O my God! do we employ our affections in loving creatures, relatives, friends, the great ones of the world, who have never suffered for us scourges, thorns, or nails, nor shed one drop of blood for us; and not in loving a God, who for love of us came down from heaven and was made man, and has shed all his blood for us in the midst of torments, and finally died of grief upon a cross, in order to win to himself our hearts! Moreover, in order to unite himself more close-

ly to us, he has left himself, after his death, upon our altars, where he makes himself one with us, that we

1 *Love of God*, Bk. 7, ch. 8.

2 "Pro omnibus mortuus est Christus, ut et qui vivunt, jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est." 2 Cor. 5.15.

[337] might understand how burning is the love with which he loves us? "He has mingled himself with us," exclaims St. John Chrysostom, "that we may be one and the same thing; for this is the desire of those who ardently love."<sup>1</sup> And St. Francis de Sales, speaking of Holy Communion, adds: "There is no action in which we can think of our Savior as more tender or more loving than this, in which he, as it were, annihilates himself, and reduces himself to food, in order to unite himself to the hearts of his faithful."

But how is it, O Lord! that I, after having been loved by You to such an excess, have had the heart to despise You? According to Your just reproach, *I have nourished and brought up children, and they have despised me.*<sup>2</sup> I have dared to turn my back upon You, in order to

gratify my senses. *You have cast me  
behind Your back.*<sup>3</sup>

I have dared to drive You from my soul,  
*The wicked  
have said to God, Depart from us.*<sup>4</sup> I have  
dared to afflict  
that heart of Yours which has loved me  
so much. And  
what, then, am I now to do? Ought I to  
be distrustful  
of Your mercy? I curse the days in which  
I have dis-  
honored You. Oh, if only I had died a  
thousand times,  
O my Savior, rather than that I had ever  
offended  
You! O Lamb of God! You have bled to  
death upon  
the cross to wash away our sins in Your  
blood. O sin-  
ners! what would you not pay on the day  
of judgment  
for one drop of the blood of this Lamb?  
O my Jesus!  
have pity on me, and pardon me; but You  
know  
my weakness; take, then, my will, that it  
may never  
more rebel against You. Expel from me  
all love that  
is not for You. I choose You alone for  
my treasure

1 "Semetipsum nobis immiscuit, ut unum quid  
simus; ardentem  
enim amantium hoc est." *Ad pop. Ant. hom.* 61.

2 "Filiis enutrivisti et exaltavisti; ipsi autem spreverunt  
me." Is. 1.2.

3 "Projecisti me post corpus tuum." Ezek. 23.35.

4 "Qui dixerunt Deo: Recede a nobis." Job 21.14.

[338] and my only good. You are

sufficient for me; and  
I desire no other good apart from You.  
*The God of my  
heart, and God is my portion forever.*<sup>1</sup>

O little sheep, beloved of God (so used  
St. Teresa to  
call the Blessed Virgin), who are the  
Mother of the di -  
vine Lamb, recommend me to your Son.  
You, after  
Jesus, are my hope; for you are the hope  
of sinners.  
To your hands I entrust my eternal  
salvation. *Spes nos-  
tra, salve.*

### **III. A Sweet Consideration for Souls that Love God, at the Sight of Jesus Crucified**

#### **I. SUFFERINGS OF JESUS ON THE CROSS**

Jesus on the cross! O stupendous sight  
for heaven  
and earth of mercy and of love! To see  
the Son of  
God dying through pain upon a cross of  
infamy, con-  
demned as a malefactor to so bitter and  
shameful a  
death, in order to save sinful men from  
the penalty that  
was due to them! This sight has ever  
been, and will  
always be, the subject of the  
contemplation of the saints,  
and has led them willingly to renounce

all the goods of  
the earth, and to embrace with great  
courage sufferings  
and death, that they might make  
themselves more pleas-  
ing to a God who died for love of them.  
The sight of  
Jesus despised between two thieves has  
made them love  
contempt far more than worldings have  
loved the hon-  
ors of the world. Beholding Jesus  
covered with wounds  
upon the cross, they hold in abhorrence  
the pleasures of  
sense, and have endeavored to afflict  
their flesh in order  
to unite their sufferings to the sufferings  
of the Cruci-  
fied. Beholding the patience of our  
Savior in his  
death, they have joyfully accepted the  
most painful sick-  
nesses, and even the most cruel torments  
that tyrants

1 "Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in aeternum."  
Ps. 72.26.

[339] can inflict. Lastly, from beholding  
the love of Jesus  
Christ in being willing to sacrifice his life  
for us in a  
sea of sorrows, they have sought to  
sacrifice to him all  
that they had, possessions, children, and  
even life itself.

St. Paul, in speaking of the love which  
the Eternal

Father has borne towards us, in that,  
when he saw us  
dead by reason of sin, he willed to restore  
life to us  
by sending his Son to die for us, calls it  
too great a love.

*But God, who is rich in mercy for his  
exceeding love with  
which He loved us, has given us life  
together in Christ.*<sup>1</sup>

And in the same way ought we to call the  
love with which  
Jesus Christ has willed to die for us too  
great a love.

Hence the same apostle says, *We preach  
Jesus Christ*

*crucified, unto the Jews indeed a  
stumbling-block, and to  
the Gentiles, foolishness.*<sup>2</sup> St. Paul says  
that the death of

Jesus Christ appeared to the Jews a  
stumbling-block, be-  
cause they thought that he should have  
appeared on earth  
full of worldly majesty, and not indeed as  
one condemned  
to die like a criminal upon a cross. On  
the other hand, to  
the Gentiles it seemed a folly that a God  
should be will-  
ing to die, and by such a death too, for  
his creatures.

On this subject St. Laurence Justinian  
remarks: "We  
have seen Him who is wise infatuated  
through an excess  
of love."<sup>3</sup> We have beheld Him who is  
the eternal wis-  
dom itself, the Son of God, become a  
fool for us, by



reason of the too great love which he bore towards us.

And does it not seem a folly for a God, almighty and supremely happy in himself, to be willing of his own

1 "Deus autem, qui dives est in misericordia, propter nimiam charitatem suam qua dilexit nos, et cum essemus mortui peccatis, convivificavit nos in Christo." Eph. 2.4.

2 "Praedicamus Christum crucifixum, Judaeis quidem scandalum, Gentibus autem stultitiam." 1 Cor. 1.23.

3 "Vidimus sapientiam amoris nimietate infatuatam." *Serm. de Nat. Dom.*

[340] accord to subject himself to be scourged, treated as a mock king, buffeted, spit upon in the face, condemned to die as a malefactor, abandoned by all upon a cross of shame, and this to save the miserable worms he himself had created? The loving St. Francis, when he thought of this, went about the country exclaiming with tears, "Love is not loved! Love is not loved!" And hence St. Bonaventure says that he who wishes to keep his love for Jesus Christ ought always to represent him to himself hanging on the cross and dying there for us. "Let him ever have before the eyes of his heart Christ dying upon the cross."<sup>1</sup>

Oh, happy is that soul which frequently sets before its eyes Jesus dying on the cross, and stops to contemplate with tenderness the pains which Jesus has suffered, and the love with which he offered himself to the Father, while he lay agonizing on that bed of sorrow. Souls that love God, when they find themselves more than usually harassed by temptations of the devil and by fears about their eternal salvation, derive great comfort by considering in silence and alone Jesus hanging on the cross, and shedding blood from all his wounds. At the sight of the crucifix, all desires for the goods of this world flee utterly away. From that cross exhales a heavenly breath, which causes us to forget all earthly objects, and enkindles within us a holy desire of quitting all things, in order to employ all our affections in loving that Lord who has pleased to die through love for us.

Isaiah foretold that our Redeemer would be a man of sorrows. *And we have seen him . . . despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows.*<sup>2</sup> Now let him who wishes

to behold this man of sorrows, foretold  
by Isaiah, look  
on Jesus Christ dying on the cross. There,  
nailed by his

1 *De perf. vit.* ch. 6.

2 "Vidimus eum . . . despectum, et novissimum  
virorum, virum  
dolorum." Isa. 53.2.

[341] hands and feet, he hangs, the whole  
weight of his  
body pressing on his wounds in all his  
members, which  
are every one of them torn and bruised.  
He suffers con-  
tinual and excruciating pains; whichever  
way he turns,  
so far from finding relief, his pain but  
increases more  
and more, until it deprives him of life;  
and thus this  
man of sorrows is condemned by the  
Father to die of  
sheer sufferings on account of our sins.

What Christian, then, O my Jesus!  
knowing by faith  
that You have died upon the cross for  
love of him, can  
live without loving You! Pardon me,  
then, O Lord!  
first of all, this great sin of having lived  
so many years  
in the world without loving You. My  
beloved Savior,  
the thought of death fills me with dread,  
as being the  
moment when I shall give an account to  
You of all the  
sins that I have committed against You;

but that blood  
that I see flowing from Your wounds  
causes me to hope  
for pardon from You, and at the same  
time the grace  
of loving You for the future with my  
whole heart, by  
virtue of those merits You have earned  
by so many  
pains. I give myself wholly to You; I will  
no longer be  
my own; I desire to do all; I desire to  
suffer in order to  
please You. I will die for You who have  
died for me:  
I will say to You, with St. Francis, "May  
I die for love  
of the love of You, who didst vouchsafe  
to die for love  
of the love of me."<sup>1</sup>

## **2. DEATH OF JESUS**

*Father, into Your hands I commend my  
spirit.*<sup>2</sup> These  
words, uttered by Jesus Christ upon the  
cross when he  
was on the point of death, bring great  
comfort to the

<sup>1</sup> Moriar amore amoris tui, qui amore amoris mei  
dignatus es mori.

<sup>2</sup> "Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum."  
Luke 23.46.

[342] dying, who find themselves  
engaged in that last  
combat with hell, and are about to pass  
into eternity.

My beloved Jesus, I will not wait for the moment of my death to recommend my soul to You. From this moment I recommend it to You. By that blood shed for me, permit it not to be separated from You. Hence forth I will be Yours, and all Yours without reserve. If You seest that I should ever turn my back upon You, as I have in times past, I beseech You, let me die in this moment in which I hope to be in Your grace.

*In You, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever.*<sup>1</sup> O faithful soul! lift up thine eyes, and look at the cross of your Redeemer, now dead for the love of you. Say to him:

O my Jesus! in Your flesh lacerated and torn by the scourges, the thorns, the nails, I behold the burning love You have borne me, and the ingratitude I have shown You; but Your blood is my hope. Wretch that I am, how often have I renounced Your grace, and have myself willed to condemn myself to hell. What would become of me if You had not chosen to die for me? I could die of grief every time I think of having

despised Your  
infinite goodness, and of having of my  
own accord ban-  
ished and separated You from my soul.  
But no; hence-  
forth, with the help of Your grace, I will  
leave all. Enough  
for me to be united with You, my God  
and my all!

O men, O men! how can you show such  
contempt for  
a God who has suffered so much for  
you? Behold him  
on that cross, how he sacrifices himself  
by death to  
pay for your sins, and to gain your  
affections. My  
Jesus, I will live no longer ungrateful for  
such goodness.

O wounds of Jesus, wound me with love!  
O blood of

1 "In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in  
aeternum." Ps. 30.2.

[343] Jesus, inebriate me with love! O  
death of Jesus, make  
me die to every affection which is not for  
Jesus! I love  
You more than myself, O my Jesus! and  
there is no pain  
that causes me more sorrow than the  
thought of having  
so often despised Your love. Accept me;  
in Your mercy  
reject me not, now that I give myself to  
You without  
reserve.

Behold, lastly, how our Savior,  
overwhelmed with suf-  
ferings upon the cross, bows his head,  
and breathes forth  
his soul: *And bowing His head, He gave  
up his spirit.*<sup>1</sup>

Eternal God, I, a wretched sinner, have  
dishonored You  
by my evil life; but Jesus Christ, in  
making satisfaction  
for me by his death, has abundantly  
restored Your honor.  
By the merits of Your Son, who have  
died for me, have  
pity on me.

O Jesus, my Savior! I see You now dead  
on this  
cross. You speak no more; You breath no  
more;  
because You have life no longer, having  
willed to  
lose it to give life to our souls. You have  
no longer  
any blood; for You have shed it all, by  
dint of tor-  
ments, to wash away our sins. In one  
word, You have  
abandoned Yourself to death through  
Your love for us.

*He has loved us, and delivered Himself  
for us.*<sup>2</sup> "Let  
us consider," writes St. Francis de Sales,  
"this divine  
Savior stretched upon the cross, as upon  
his altar of  
honor, where he is dying of love for us;  
but a love more  
painful than that very death. Ah, why,

then, do we not  
in spirit throw ourselves upon him to die  
upon the cross  
with him, who has willed to die there for  
love of us? I  
will hold him, we ought to say, and will  
never let him  
go. I will die with him, and be burned up  
in the flames  
of his love. One and the same fire shall  
consume this  
divine Creator and his miserable creature.  
My Jesus is  
all mine, and I am all his. I will live and  
die upon his

1 "Et inclinato capite, tradidit spiritum." John 19.30.  
2 "Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis."  
Eph. 5.2.

[344] breast; neither death nor life shall  
ever separate  
him from me."1

Yes, my sweet Redeemer, I embrace with  
tenderness  
Your pierced feet; and, filled with  
confidence in behold  
ing You dead for love of me, I repent of  
having de-  
spised You, and I love You with my  
whole soul. At  
the foot of Your cross I leave You my  
heart and my  
will. Do You Yourself nail it to this  
cross, so that it  
may never be separated from You, and  
henceforth may  
have no other desire than to please You  
alone.



### 3. FRUITS OF THE DEATH OF JESUS

St. John writes that our Savior, in order to make his disciples understand the death he was to suffer upon the cross, said, *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself. Now this he said, signifying what death he should die.*<sup>2</sup>

And, in fact, by exhibiting himself crucified and dead, how many souls has Jesus drawn to himself, so that they have left all to give themselves up entirely to his divine love. Ah, my Jesus! draw my soul to Yourself, which was one time lost; draw it by the chains of Your love, so that it may forget the world to think of nothing else but of loving and pleasing You. *Draw me after You by the odor of Your ointments.*<sup>3</sup>

My Lord, You know my weakness and the offences that I have committed against You. Draw me out of the mire of my passions; draw all my affections to Yourself, so that I may attend to nothing but Your pleasure only, O my God, most lovely! Hear me, O Lord! by the merits of Your death, and

make me wholly  
Yours.

1 *Love of God*, Bk. 7. ch. 8.

2 "Et ego si exaltatus fuero a terra, omnia traham ad  
meipsum." John 12.32.

3 "Trahe me post te in odorem unguentorum  
tuorum."

[345] St. Leo tells us that he who looks  
with confidence  
upon Jesus dead upon the cross is healed  
of the wounds  
caused by his sins. "They who with faith  
behold the  
death of Christ are healed from the  
wounds of sin."<sup>1</sup>

Every Christian, therefore, should keep  
Jesus crucified  
always before his eyes, and say with St.  
Paul, *I judged not  
myself to know anything among you, but  
Jesus Christ,  
and Him crucified.*<sup>2</sup> In short, the Apostle  
says, that he  
did not desire any other knowledge in  
this world than  
that of knowing how to love Jesus Christ  
crucified. My  
beloved Savior, to obtain for me a good  
death You  
have chosen a death so full of pain and  
desolation!  
I cast myself into the arms of Your  
mercy. I see  
that many years ago I ought to have been  
in hell,  
separated from You forever, for having at  
one time de-  
spised Your grace; but You have called  
me to penance,

and I hope have pardoned me; but if  
through my fault  
You have not yet pardoned me, pardon  
me at this  
moment. I repent, O my Jesus! with my  
heart, for  
having turned my back upon You, and  
driven You  
from my soul. Restore me to Your grace.  
But that is not  
enough: give me strength to love You  
with all my soul  
during my whole life. And when I come  
to the hour of  
my death, let me expire burning with  
love for You, and  
saying, my Jesus, I love You, I love You,  
and thus con-  
tinue to love You for all eternity. From  
this moment I  
unite my death to Your holy death,  
through which I hope  
for my salvation. *In You, O Lord, have I  
hoped; I shall  
not be confounded forever.*<sup>3</sup> O great  
mother of God, you  
after Jesus are my hope. In you, O Lady,  
have I hoped;

1 "Qui intuentur fide mortem Christi, sanantur a  
morsibus peccatorum."

*In Jo. tr.* 12.

2 "Non enim judicavi me scire aliquid inter vos, nisi  
Jesum Christum,  
et hunc crucifixum." 1 Cor. 2.2.

3 "In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in  
aeternum." Ps. 30.2.

[346] I shall not be confounded forever.  
O devout souls,  
when the devil wishes to make us  
distrustful about our sal-

vation by the remembrance of our past sins, let us lift up our eyes to Jesus dead upon the cross, in order to deliver us from eternal death. After a God has made us know by means of the holy faith the desires he has of our salvation, having even sacrificed his life for us, if we are resolved really to love him for the remainder of our lives, cost what it may, we should be on our guard against any weakness of confidence in his mercy. After he has given us so many signs of his love for us, and of his desire for our salvation, it is a kind of sin against him not to put our whole confidence and hope in his goodness.

Full, then, of holy confidence, let us hope for every good from the hands of a God so liberal and so loving; and at the same time let us give ourselves to him without reserve, and thus pray to him: O eternal God, we are sinners, but You who are Almighty canst make us saints; grant that henceforth we may neglect nothing that we know to be for Your glory, and may do all to please You. Blessed shall we be if we lose all to gain

You, the infinite good. Grant that we may spend the remainder of our lives in pleasing You alone. Punish us as You will for our past sins, but deliver us from the chastisement of not being able to love You; deprive us of all things save Yourself. You have loved us without reserve; we also will love You without reserve, O infinite Love, O infinite Good. O Virgin Mary, draw us wholly to God; you can do so; do so for the love that you have for Jesus Christ.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Let us finish this little treatise with the prayer of St. Francis de Sales, saying: "O Eternal Love, my soul seeks You and chooses You for all eternity. Come, O [347] Holy Spirit! and kindle in our hearts the fire of Your love. To die and to love; to die to everything, in order to live eternally for the love of Jesus. O Savior of our souls, grant that we may sing forever and ever, Live, Jesus! I love Jesus. Live, Jesus, whom I love! I love Jesus, who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen!"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Love of God*, Bk. 12, ch. 13.

## **PART II. SERMON ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST\***

1. First scene: The garden of Olives
2. Second scene: The Pretorium
3. Third scene: Calvary

ALAS, what melancholy signs strike me  
in this tem-  
ple! I see the dark appearance, I notice  
the despoiled  
altars; I hear the melancholy chant! Ah! I  
understand:  
these are signs of the grief that the  
Church feels,  
lamenting the death of Jesus her Spouse.  
It is there-  
fore just that on this day we unite our  
tears to those of  
the Church, who is our Mother, and that  
we devote our-  
selves to the consideration of the death of  
our God, who  
after a life of pain wished to die for us on  
an infamous  
gibbet, in an abyss of shame and  
suffering.

Come, O holy cross! come and show  
thyself to this  
people; you are the fortunate Ark in  
which one can find  
salvation in the midst of the shipwreck of  
this world;  
you are the wonderful Rod that gives to  
men the  
strength to be able to become from

monsters of ini-  
quity flourishing rods of holy virtues;  
you are the  
brazen Serpent at the sight of which  
sinners, poisoned  
by sin, may recover health; you are the  
predestined  
and resplendent Tree chosen among  
thousands to sus-  
tain the members of the Redeemer; and  
you are, finally,  
the sorrowful Altar on which the Savior  
of the world  
wished to be immolated for our salvation.  
Give me the  
strength and all the help that I need to  
represent to  
these faithful souls the ignominies, the  
sufferings, and  
the anguish which Jesus Christ endured  
when upon  
you he left this world.

The whole life of Jesus Christ was full of  
sufferings  
and ignominies; but there are especially  
three sad scenes  
of his pains in which he gave us the  
greatest marks of

\* It is not known at what time St. Alphonsus  
composed this sermon;  
we think it belongs to the first period of his  
sacerdotal life. Nearly  
all that it contains is found in Volume V. Ed.

[299] his love for us: the first is the  
GARDEN OF OLIVES;  
the second, the PRETORIUM; the third,  
CALVARY.

The first of these scenes in which the Passion of our Redeemer began was hidden from the eyes of men, but not from the eyes of God and of the angels.

### **First Scene: The Garden of Olives**

Having on Thursday evening washed the feet of his disciples after giving himself to us in the sacrament of the altar as a pledge of his tender love for us, our amiable Savior arrived at the garden about midnight, and prostrating himself on the ground, he began to pray. Then he was assailed by great fear, great repugnance, and great sadness.

He began then to feel great fear of the death and of the pains which he was to suffer: *He began to fear.*<sup>1</sup> But how? did he not offer himself voluntarily to undergo these torments? *He was offered because it was His own will.*<sup>2</sup> Did he not ardently desire this time of his Passion according to what he had said to his disciples a little while before: *With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer.*<sup>3</sup> How, after this, was he seized with so great a fear of death that



he went so far  
as to ask his Father to be delivered from  
it: *My Father,*  
*if it be possible, let this chalice pass from*  
*Me.*<sup>4</sup> Ah!  
certainly our good Lord wished to die for  
us, and thus to  
show us the love that he bore us; but in  
order that the  
men might understand what cruel  
anguish and what  
deluge of evils he was going to undergo  
in his Passion,  
he allowed so horrible a fear to come  
over him: He  
began to fear.

1 "Coepit pavere." Mark 14.33.

2 "Oblatus est, quia ipse voluit." Is. 53.7.

3 "Desiderio desideravi hoc pascha manducare  
vobiscum, antequam  
patiar." Luke 22.15.

4 "Pater mi, si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste."  
Matt. 27.39.

[300] And to be heavy : He also began to  
feel great repug-  
nance at the sight of the pains that had  
been prepared  
for him. When one feels repugnance,  
even delightful  
things become painful. Hence with such  
a repugnance  
what punishment for the heart of Jesus,  
what horrible  
sight then presented itself to his mind of  
all the inte-  
rior and exterior torments which were to  
deprive him of  
life by afflicting so cruelly his body and  
his blessed soul!

He distinctly saw all the sufferings that awaited him, the mockeries, the outrages, the injuries, the buffets, the thorns, the cross, and above all that ignominious and desolate death which he was to suffer on an infamous gibbet, abandoned by every one, by men and by God, in an abyss of sorrows and opprobrium. This is what caused him so bitter a repugnance that he was obliged to ask his eternal Father for strength: He began to fear and to be heavy.

With this fear and repugnance Jesus felt at the same time great sadness and great affliction of mind: *he began to grow sorrowful and to be sad.*<sup>1</sup> But, O Lord! is it not You that have given to Your martyrs such a force in sufferings that they went so far as to despise torments and death and to submit to them with joy? How then does it happen that for Yourself, O Jesus! You have reserved Yourself to suffer by dying in so great sadness? Ah! I know the reason ; for at this moment there were presented to his mind all the sins of the world, the blasphemies, the sacrileges, the impurities, and all the other sins

that men were going to commit after his death. Each one of these sins came then as a cruel monster to tear his heart by its own malice. It seems that then in his agony our afflicted Savior was obliged to say: O men! is it thus that you respond to the immense love that I have borne towards you? Alas! after so many sufferings endured for you, to see so many sins! after so many

1 "Coepit contristari et moestus esse." Matt. 26.37.

[301] proofs of my love, to see so much ingratitude! It is that which afflicts me, makes me sad even unto death, and makes me sweat blood: *And his sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground.*<sup>1</sup>

O my tender Jesus! I do not notice in this garden scourges, thorns, nails, which wound You; yet I see You bathed in blood from head to foot. My sins therefore were the cruel pressure which, by the violence of the affliction and of sadness, forced so much blood from Your heart. I have myself been one of Your most cruel executioners.

But should we stop here in conversing with Jesus

when he is already hurrying to meet his  
Passion which  
he so much desires? In fact, there is  
Judas, who is ac-  
companied by a troop of Jews and  
soldiers, and who is  
coming to seize Jesus in the garden.  
Jesus sees him  
coming, and what does he do? Yet  
bathed in blood,  
with his heart all inflamed with love of  
us, he rises, and  
says to the three disciples who were with  
him: *Rise up,*  
*let us go. Behold, he that will betray me is*  
*at hand.*<sup>2</sup>  
Come let us meet the enemies who are  
coming to arrest  
me.

When Jesus was in their presence, Judas  
advanced, ex-  
tended his arms and gave him a kiss. This  
kiss was the  
sign of treason: on this account Jesus  
addressed this  
word of reproach to the traitor: *Judas,*  
*betrayest you the*  
*Son of man with a kiss?*<sup>3</sup> O Judas! is it by  
a kiss that  
you betrayest the Son of man? He  
afterwards asked  
the Jews whom they were seeking:  
*Whom do you seek?*<sup>4</sup>  
They answered: Jesus of Nazareth. After  
this they  
brutally seized him, and bound him like a  
criminal: *They*

1 "Et factus est sudor ejus, sicut guttae sanguinis

decurrentis in terram."

Luke 22.44.

2 "Surgite, eamus: ecce, qui me tradet, prope est."

Mark 14.42.

3 "Juda, osculo Filium hominis tradis?" Luke 24.48.

4 "Quem quaeritis?" John 18.4.

[302] *took Jesus and bound him.*<sup>1</sup> Alas! a  
God bound  
like a criminal! "O King of kings!" cries  
out St. Bernard,  
weeping, "what have You to do with  
chains?"<sup>2</sup> Chains  
are for malefactors, and not for You who  
are innocent,  
the Saint of saints. "Look, O man!" says  
St. Bonaven-  
ture, "at these dogs dragging him  
along."<sup>3</sup>

Jesus then bound, in the midst of this vile  
soldiery, is  
pushed out of the garden, and led to  
Jerusalem before  
the Prince of priests. And where are his  
disciples? do  
not at least they accompany their Master  
in order to de-  
fend him? No, all left him: *Then his  
disciples, leaving  
him, all fled away.*<sup>4</sup>

He then enters Jerusalem during the  
night. At the  
noise that so many people make in their  
march, those  
that are in the houses awaken and,  
approaching the win-  
dows, ask what prisoner they are leading  
away. They  
answer that it is Jesus of Nazareth, who

has been found  
out to be an impostor, a seducer.

He is presented to Caiphas, who was  
expecting him;  
this proud high-priest is sitting, and Jesus  
is standing  
before him, having his hands tied like a  
criminal, hold  
ing his eyes cast down, all humility and  
meekness. The  
high-priest interrogates him on the  
doctrine that he  
taught; Jesus answered that he had  
spoken publicly be  
fore every one, and that the witnesses  
present who had  
heard him knew what he had said: *I have  
spoken to the  
world; . . . Behold, they know what things  
I have said.*<sup>5</sup>  
After an answer so just and so moderate,  
an executioner  
advances and gives him a severe blow on  
the cheek, say-

1 "Comprehenderunt Jesum, et ligaverunt eum."  
John 18.12.

2 "O Rex regum! quid tibi et vinculis?" *De Passione*,  
ch. 4.

3 "Intuere, homo, canes istos trahentes eum." *De vita  
Christi*, ch. 75.

4 "Tunc discipuli ejus relinquentes eum, omnes  
fugerunt." Mark 14.50.

5 Ego palam locutus sum mundo; . . . ecce hi sciunt  
quae dixerim ego."  
John 18.20.

[303] ing in his fury: *Do you answer the  
high-priest thus?*

How could an answer so humble merit so  
gross an insult

in the presence of this assembly? The high-priest, however, instead of rebuking his insolent servant, remains silent, and by his silence approves of his conduct. But then Jesus said to the servant: *If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why do you strike me?*<sup>2</sup>

Then Caiphas commanded Jesus in the name of God to say whether he was the Son of God: *I adjure You, by the living God, that you tell us if You be the Christ the Son of God.*<sup>3</sup> Our Lord then, asked in the name of God, confessed the truth, saying: *I am;*<sup>4</sup> and one day you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the Father, and coming on the clouds of heaven to judge the world. At these words, Caiphas, instead of falling prostrate on his face to adore the Son of God, rends his garments and exclaims: *He has blasphemed!*<sup>5</sup> Then addressing the other priests, he asked their counsel and said: Now you have heard the blasphemy. What think you? And all answered: *He is guilty of death.*<sup>6</sup> Yes, my Jesus, You deservest death, since You have wished to make satisfaction for the sins of men.

Then the executioners seized him, and treating him as a man already condemned to death, they began to spit in his face and to buffet him: *Then did they spit in his face, and others struck his face with the palms of their hands.*<sup>7</sup> Then having bandaged his eyes, and mocking him as

1 "Sic respondes Pontifici?" Ibid. 22.

2 "Si male locutus sum, testimonium perhibe de malo; si autem bene quid me caedis?" Ibid. 23.

3 Adjuro te per Deum vivum, ut dicas nobis, si tu es Christus Filius Dei." Matt. 26.63.

4 "Ego sum." . . . . 5 "Blasphemavit!" . . . . 6 "Reus est mortis!"

7 Tunc expuerunt in faciem ejus, et colaphis eum ceciderunt; alii autem palmas in faciem ejus dederunt." Matt. 26.67.

[304] a false prophet, they said: *Prophecy unto us, O Christ, who is he that struck You.*<sup>1</sup>

When the morning was come, they conducted Jesus to Pilate in order to have him condemned to death. Pilate, finding no reason to condemn him, declared him innocent: *I find no fault in him.*<sup>2</sup> However, as the Jews insisted, he sent him to Herod to be judged by him. Herod was delighted to see Jesus in his court, because he hoped that our Lord would perform some miracles



about which he had heard others speak.  
He then proposed many questions to him, but Jesus remained silent.  
Then this proud tyrant ordered him to be clothed with a white garment as if he were a fool, and he sent him back to Pilate after having exposed him to the mockery and contempt of his entire court: *And Herod with his army, set Him at nought; and mocked Him, putting on Him a white garment, and sent Him back to Pilate.*<sup>3</sup>  
O Son of God! O Eternal Wisdom! You wouldst submit even to the ignominy of being treated as a fool!

Pilate, in order to avoid condemning an innocent man, seeing that he was not successful in sending Jesus to Herod, devised another means. As the people had a right of asking the Roman governor for the liberation of a prisoner at the Paschal solemnity, Pilate proposed to them to choose between Jesus Christ and Barabbas, who was a wicked man, a homicide; but the people, instigated by the hatred of the priests, who wished the death of Jesus Christ, began to cry out that they preferred Barabbas: *Not this man, but*

*Barabbas*.<sup>4</sup> This is  
what he does that commits a mortal sin:  
it is then pro-

1 "Prophetiza nobis, Christe, quis est, quite  
percussit." Matt. 26.68.

2 "Ego nullam invenio in eo causam." Luke 23.4.

3 "Sprevit autem illum Herodes cum exercitu suo, et  
illusit indutum

veste alba; et remisit ad Pilatum." Luke 23.11.

4 "Non hunc, sed Barabbam."

[305] posed to him to choose between  
Jesus Christ and the  
sin that he wishes to commit, as the sin  
of revenge, of a  
certain pleasure, etc.: when he gives his  
consent, it is as  
if he said: Not this man, but Barabbas; I  
prefer Barabbas  
to Jesus Christ.

After having proposed Jesus Christ and  
Barabbas to  
the choice of the people, and seeing that  
this means was  
unsuccessful, Pilate thought of having  
him scourged  
and then set at liberty: *I will chastise  
Him, therefore, and  
release Him*.<sup>1</sup> Here we are then at the  
second scene of  
the sufferings of Jesus Christ: *Then,  
therefore, Pilate took  
Jesus and scourged Him*.<sup>2</sup> O how much  
less would he  
have suffered if Pilate had had less  
compassion for him,  
and if he had without delay condemned  
him to the  
death of the cross! All this served but to  
increase the

sufferings and humiliations of our Savior.

### **Second Scene: The Pretorium**

Having arrived at the pretorium, our loving Jesus, obedient to the executioners, strips himself of his garments, embraces the column, and then lays on it his hands to have them bound. My God, already is begun the cruel torture! O angels of heaven! come and look on this sorrowful spectacle, and if it be not permitted you to deliver your king from this barbarous slaughter which men have prepared for him, at least come and weep for compassion. And ye, Christian souls, imagine yourselves to be present at this horrible tearing of the flesh of your beloved Redeemer; look on him how he stands, your afflicted Jesus with his head bowed, looking on the ground, blushing all over for shame, he awaits this great torture. Behold these barbarians, like so many ravenous dogs, are already with the scourges attacking this innocent Lamb. See how one

1 "Emendatum ergo illum dimittam." Luke 23.16.

2 "Tunc ergo apprehendit Pilatus Jesum, et flagellavit." John 19.1.

[306] beats him on the breast, another strikes his shoulders, another smites his loins and his legs; even his sacred head and beautiful countenance cannot escape the blows.

Ah me! already flows that divine blood from every part; already with that blood are saturated the scourges, the hands of the executioners, the column and the ground.

"He is wounded," mourns St. Laurence Justinian, "over his whole body, torn with the scourges; now they twine round his shoulders, now round his legs streaks upon streaks, wounds added to fresh wounds."1

Ah, cruel men, with whom are you dealing thus? Stay stay; know that you are making a mistake. This man whom you are torturing is innocent and holy; it is we who are the culprits; to us, to us, who have sinned, are these stripes and torments due. O eternal Father! how canst You behold Your beloved Son suffering thus, and not interfere in his behalf? What is the crime that he has ever committed, to deserve so shameful and so severe a punishment? *For the wickedness of My people*

*have I struck Him.*<sup>2</sup> I well know, says the eternal Father, that this my Son is innocent; but inasmuch as he has offered himself as a satisfaction to my justice for all the sins of mankind, it is fitting that I should abandon him to the rage of his most cruel enemies.

Ye barbarians, are you not yet satisfied? No; they are not yet satisfied. After having thus scourged him, these executioners wish to treat him as a mock king. What do they do? They make him sit upon a stone, put upon his shoulders a scarlet cloak in imitation of the purple, and into his hand a reed for a sceptre, and upon his head for a crown a bundle of thorns which covers it entirely from the forehead to the neck; and in

<sup>1</sup> "Caeditur, totoque flagris corpore dissipatur ; nunc scapulas, nunc crura cingunt ; vulnera vulneribus et plagas plagis recentibus addunt."

*De Tr. Chr. Ag.*, ch. 2.

<sup>2</sup> "Propter scelus populi mei percussi eum." Matt. 27.30.

[307] order that the thorns might sufficiently enter the head, they took a reed and beat with all their might the cruel crown into the head of Jesus: *They took the reed and struck His head.*<sup>1</sup>

It is not yet enough: bending the knee  
before him,  
they mocked him, saying: We salute you,  
O king of  
the Jews! Then rising, they laugh at him,  
mock him,  
and buffet him: *And bowing the knee  
before Him, they  
derided Him, saying, Hail King of the  
Jews;2 and they  
struck Him.3*

Approach, devout souls, and  
acknowledge him as your  
Savior, while his enemies are maltreating  
and mocking  
him. Yes, he is a king; but at this moment  
he is the  
king of sorrows: he is, however, a king of  
love, since  
for the love of you he suffers all these  
pains.

After having thus scourged him and  
crowned him  
with thorns, they seized him as he was,  
all covered with  
wounds and blood, and led him to Pilate.  
The latter,  
seeing him reduced to a state so worthy  
of compassion,  
thought it would be sufficient, in order to  
pacify the  
Jews, to show them such as he was. He  
therefore led  
him forth before them, and exhibiting  
him to the people,  
said to them: Behold the man. *Pilate  
went forth again*

*to them, . . . and said to them, Behold the man;*<sup>4</sup> as though he would have said: Behold the man whom you feared wished to make himself your king; see him reduced to such a state that he cannot live any longer. Let him go and die in his own house; he has but a short time to live; see him reduced to such a state that he has scarcely the appearance of a man. Permit him,

1 "Acceperunt arundinem, et percutiebant caput ejus." Matt. 27.30.

2 "Et genu flexo ante eum, illudebant ei, dicentes : Ave Rex Judaeorum!" Matt. 27.29.

3 "Et dabant ei alapas." John 19.3.

4 "Exivit ergo iterum Pilatus foras, . . . et dicit eis : Ecce Homo."

[308] therefore, to be set at liberty, your anger against him being sufficiently appeased. If, notwithstanding, you ask that I should condemn him to death, I declare to you that I cannot do so, because I find no reason to condemn him: *I find no fault in Him.*<sup>1</sup>

As Pilate from the balcony showed Jesus to the people, so at the time the same eternal Father from heaven showed us his well-beloved Son, by saying, Behold the man: Behold this man, who is my only begotten Son,

whom I love with the same love with  
which I love my-  
self! *This is My beloved Son, in Whom I  
am well pleased.*<sup>2</sup>  
Behold the Man, your Savior, him whom  
I have prom-  
ised, and for whom you were anxiously  
waiting. He  
has become a man of sorrows. Behold  
him, and see to  
what a pitiable condition he has reduced  
himself through  
the love that he has borne towards you.  
Oh, look at  
him, and love him! and if his divine  
qualities move you  
not, at least let these sorrows and  
ignominies which he  
suffers for you move you to love him.

But did the words of Pilate satisfy the  
cruelty of the  
enemies of Jesus Christ? On the contrary,  
the chief  
priests raised their voices, and cried out:  
*Away with  
Him! away with Him! crucify Him!*<sup>3</sup>  
Pilate, however,  
still resisted, and refused to condemn  
Jesus. Then they  
threatened to accuse him as an enemy of  
Caesar if he re-  
fused to pronounce sentence: *If you let  
this Man go,  
you are no friend of Caesar's.*<sup>4</sup> They thus  
succeeded in  
obtaining the desired condemnation; but  
before pro-  
nouncing it, Pilate washed his hands,  
declaring himself



innocent of the death of this just man: *I am innocent of*

1 "Ego enim non invenio in eo causam." John 19.6.

2 "Hic est Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi bene complacui." Matt. 17.5.

3 "Tolle, tolle ; crucifige eum." John 19.6.

4 "Si hunc dimittis, non es amicus Caesaris." Ibid. 12.

[309] *the blood of this just Man; see to it yourselves.*<sup>1</sup>

O injustice unheard of in this world: the judge declares the accused to be innocent, and at the same time he condemns him to death!

Unhappy Jews, you then said: *His blood be upon us, and upon our children.*<sup>2</sup> You have prayed for the chastisement; it has already come; your children bear to the end of the world the punishment due to the shedding of that innocent blood.

The unjust sentence is read: Jesus accepts it in expiation of our sins: *He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*<sup>3</sup>

After the publication of the sentence Jesus is again clothed in his garments that he might be recognized, disfigured as he is by such bad treatment. The cross is

presented to him; Jesus embraces it, it is placed upon his shoulders, and he begins to walk towards Calvary:

*And bearing His own cross, He went forth to that place*

*which is called Calvary.*<sup>4</sup> The condemned criminals now

come forth from Pilate's residence, and in the midst of

them there goes also our condemned

Lord, carrying him

self the wood upon which he is to die. O

heavens! this

Messias, who a few days before, on Palm

Sunday, was

received with the acclamations and

benedictions of the

people: *Blessed is He who comes in the*

*name of the*

*Lord!*<sup>5</sup> See him now in the same streets,

bound, execrated

by all, moving along to die the death of a

criminal. What

a spectacle to see a God led to execution!

The appearance

1 "Innocens ego sum a sanguine justi hujus ; vos videritis." Matt. 27.24.

2 "Sanguis ejus super nos et super filios nostros."

3 "Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis." John 19.15.

4 "Et bajulans sibi crucem, exivit in eum, qui dicitur Calvarias, locum." Matt. 21.9.

5 "Benedictus, qui venit in nomine Domini!" John 19.17.

[310] of Jesus in this journey was so

pitiable that it made

all those shed tears that saw him: *And*

*there followed Him*

*a great multitude of people, and of women  
who bewailed*

*and lamented Him.*<sup>1</sup> Ah! look at him also,  
you who love  
Jesus Christ; see his torn flesh, his  
dripping blood, the  
crown of thorns upon his head, the heavy  
cross upon  
his shoulders; and while one of the  
executioners drags  
him violently along by a rope, see how  
painful is his  
walk, see his body bent double, his  
trembling knees, so  
that it seems as if he would expire at  
every step.

O divine Lamb! have You not yet Your  
fill of suffer-  
ings? How dear did it cost You to make  
me compre-  
hend the love which You have for me!  
Oh, grant me  
those aids to love You which You have  
merited for  
me by so many sufferings! Bestow upon  
me that sacred  
fire which You didst come to enkindle  
upon earth by  
dying for us. Be ever reminding me of  
Your death that  
I may never forget to love You.

Isaiah predicted that our Lord would  
carry the cross  
upon his shoulders as a mark of his reign:  
*Upon His*  
*shoulder dominion rests.*<sup>2</sup> The cross, says  
Tertullian,  
was precisely the noble instrument

whereby Jesus Christ  
made acquisition of so many souls; since  
by dying  
thereon he paid the penalty due to our  
sins, and thus  
rescued us from hell, and made us his  
own: *Who Him-  
self bore our sins in His body upon the  
cross.*<sup>3</sup>

Thus, O my Jesus! if the eternal Father  
burdened  
You with all the sins of men, *The Lord  
laid upon Him  
the iniquities of us all.*<sup>4</sup> I with my own  
sins added to the  
weight of the cross that You did bear to  
Calvary.

1 "Sequebatur autem illum multa turba populi et  
mulierum, quae plangebant  
et lamentabantur eum." Luke 23.27.

2 "Factus est principatus super humerum ejus." Is.  
9.6.

3 Qui peccata nostra ipse pertulit in corpore suo  
super lignum." 1 Pet. 2.24.

4 "Posuit Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium  
nostrum." Is. 53.6.

[311] My sweetest Savior, You did even  
then foresee  
all the wrongs that I should do to You;  
yet, notwith-  
standing, You did not cease to love me,  
or to prepare  
for me all the merits that You have since  
employed  
towards me. If then to You I have been  
dear, most vile  
and ungrateful sinner as I am, who have  
so much  
offended You, good reason is there why

You should  
be dear to me. Ah, would that I had never  
displeased  
You! Now, my Jesus, do I know the  
wrong that I  
have done You. O you accursed sins of  
mine, what have  
you done? You have caused me to  
sadden the loving  
heart of my Redeemer, that heart which  
has loved me  
so much. O my Jesus! forgive me,  
repenting, as I do,  
of having done evil to You. Henceforth it  
is You who  
are to be the only object of my love. I  
love You, O  
infinite loveliness, with all my heart; and  
I resolve to  
love none else but You. O Lord! pardon  
me; I say  
to You with St. Ignatius: "Give me Your  
love only  
together with Your grace, and I am rich  
enough." 1

### **Third Scene: Calvary**

Here we are at the third and last scene of  
the tor-  
tures that of Calvary, which brought  
death to Jesus  
Christ. They immediately tear off his  
garments, stick-  
ing to his wounded flesh, and throw him  
down upon  
the cross. The divine Lamb reaches forth  
to the execu-  
tioners his hands and his feet to be  
nailed, and offers

up to his eternal Father the great sacrifice  
of his life  
for the salvation of men. After the nailing  
of one of  
his hands, the nerves shrink so that they  
had need of  
main force and ropes to draw the other  
hand and feet  
up to the places where they were to be  
nailed; and this  
occasioned so great a tension of the  
nerves and veins,  
that they broke asunder with a violent  
convulsion, as

1 "Amorem tui solum cum gratia tua mihi dones, et  
dives sum satis."

[312] was revealed to St. Bridget: "They  
drew my hands  
and feet with a rope to the places of the  
nails, so that  
the nerves and veins were stretched out  
to the full and  
broke asunder;"<sup>1</sup> insomuch that all his  
bones might  
have been numbered, as David had  
already predicted:

*They pierced My hands and My feet, they  
numbered  
all My bones.*<sup>2</sup>

St. Augustine says that there is no death  
more bitter  
than that of the cross. "Among all the  
different kinds  
of death, there was none worse."<sup>3</sup>;  
Because, as St.  
Thomas<sup>4</sup> observes, those who are  
crucified have their

hands and their feet pierced through,  
parts which being  
entirely composed of nerves, muscles,  
and veins, are the  
most sensitive to pain, and the very  
weight of the body  
itself, which is suspended from them,  
causes the pain to  
be continuous and ever increasing in its  
intensity up to  
the moment of death.

But the pains of Jesus were far beyond  
all other  
pains; for, as the Angelic Doctor says,  
the body of Jesus  
Christ, being perfectly constituted, was  
more quick and  
sensitive to pain than that body which was  
fashioned for  
him by the Holy Spirit, expressly with a  
view to his suf-  
fering, as he had foretold, as the Apostle  
testifies: *A body  
You have prepared for Me.*" Moreover,  
St. Thomas says  
that Jesus Christ took upon himself an  
amount of suffering  
so great as to be sufficient to satisfy for  
the temporal  
punishment merited by the sins of all  
mankind.

My soul, behold your Lord, behold your  
life hanging upon  
that tree: *And your life shall be, as it  
were, hanging*

1 "Manus et pedes cum tunc trahebant ad loca  
clavorum, ita ut

nervi et venae extenderentur et rumperentur." *Rev.* 1, ch. 10.

2 "Foderunt manus meas et pedes meos, dinumeraverunt omnia ossa mea." Ps. 21.17.

3 "Pejus nihil fuit inter omnia genera mortium." *In Jo.*, tr. 36.

4 *S.T.* III. q. 46. a. 6.

5 "Corpus autem aptasti mihi." Heb. 10.5.

[313] *before you.* 1 Behold how on that cross of pain, fastened by those cruel nails, he finds no place of rest. Now he leans his weight upon his hands, now upon his feet; but on what part soever he leans, the anguish increases. He turns his afflicted head now on one side, now on the other; if he lets it fall towards his breast, the hands, by the additional weight, are rent the more; if he lowers it towards his shoulders, the shoulders are pierced with thorns; if he leans it back upon the cross, the thorns enter the more deeply into his head.

Ah, my Jesus, what a death of bitterness is this that You are enduring! O my crucified Redeemer, I adore You on this throne of disgrace and pain. Upon this cross I read it written that You are a King: *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.* 2 But apart from this title of scorn, what is the evidence that You give of being



a king? Ah, these hands transfixed with  
nails, this head  
pierced with thorns, this throne of  
sorrow, this lacerated  
flesh, make me well know that You are a  
king, but a  
king of love. With humility, then, and  
tenderness do I  
draw near to kiss Your sacred feet,  
transfixed for love of  
me. I clasp in my arms this cross, on  
which You, being  
made a victim of love, were willing to  
offer Yourself in  
sacrifice for me to the divine justice:  
*being made obe-*  
*dient unto death, the death of the cross.*<sup>3</sup>  
O blessed  
obedience, that obtained for us the  
pardon of our sins!  
And what would have become of me, O  
my Savior,  
had You not paid the penalty for me?

Contemplating one day the love of Jesus  
in dying  
for us, St. Francis of Paula, rapt in  
ecstasy and raised  
in the air, exclaimed three times in a loud  
voice: "O  
God, love! O God, love! O God, love!"  
You

1 "Et erit vita tua quasi pendens ante te." Deut.  
28.66.

2 "Jesu Nazarenus, Rex Judaeorum." John 19.19.

3 "Factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem  
crucis." Phil. 2.8.

[314] also, devout souls, look on your  
divine Savior on

this painful cross; see how he remains  
fastened by those  
three nails, so that the pierced hands and  
feet had to  
sustain the weight of the entire body; on  
whichever side  
he wishes to rest his pains are increased.  
Alas! our af-  
flicted Savior finds no place of rest.

Behold the King of heaven, who,  
hanging on that gib-  
bet, is now on the point of giving up the  
ghost. Let us,  
too, ask of him with the prophet: *What  
are those wounds  
in the middle of Your hands?* Tell me, O  
my Jesus, what  
are these wounds in the middle of Your  
hands?<sup>1</sup> The  
Abbot Rupert makes answer for Jesus:  
"They are the  
memorials of love, the price of  
redemption."<sup>2</sup> They  
are tokens, says the Redeemer, of the  
great love which  
I bear toward you; they are the payment  
by which I set  
you free from the hands of your enemies,  
and from eter-  
nal death.

Do you, then, O faithful souls, love your  
God, who has  
had such love for you; and if you do at  
any time feel  
doubtful of his love, turn your eyes, says  
St. Thomas of  
Villanova, to behold that cross, those  
pains, and that

bitter death which he has suffered for  
you; for such  
proofs will assuredly make you know  
how much your  
Savior loves you: "The cross testifies, the  
pains testify,  
the bitter death that he had endured for  
you testifies  
this."<sup>3</sup> And St. Bernard adds that the  
cross cries out,  
every wound of Jesus cries out, that he  
loves us with a  
true love: "The cross proclaims, the  
wounds proclaim,  
that he truly loves."<sup>4</sup>

While hanging on the cross Jesus looked  
in vain for some-  
one to console him: *I looked for one that  
would grieve*

1 "Quid sunt plagae istae in medio manuum  
tuarum?"

2 "Sunt monumenta charitatis, pretia redemptionis."

3 "Testis crux, testes dolores, testis amara mors,  
quam pro te sustinuit."

*Dom. 17. p. Pent. conc. 3.*

4 "Clamat crux, clamat vulnus, quod ipse vere  
dilexit."

[315] *together with me, but there was  
none.*<sup>1</sup> On the

contrary, he heard those around him  
uttering blasphemies:

*If you are the Son of God, come down  
from the cross.*<sup>2</sup>

*You who will destroy the temple of God,  
and in three days*

*rebuild it, save yourself.*<sup>3</sup> *He saved  
others, himself he can-*

*not save.*<sup>4</sup> Why should they care to afflict  
by insults and

derision one that is already expiring on  
the cross?

And Jesus, while these are outraging  
him, what is he  
doing upon the cross? Is he perhaps  
praying to the  
eternal Father to punish them? No, he is  
praying to  
him to pardon them: *Father, forgive  
them, for they know  
not what they do.*<sup>5</sup> Yes, says St. Thomas;  
to show forth  
the immense love which he had for men,  
the Redeemer  
asked pardon of God for his crucifiers:  
"To show forth  
the abundance of his love, he asked  
pardon for his  
persecutors."<sup>6</sup> He asked it, and obtained  
it; for, when  
they had seen him die they repented of  
their sin: *They  
returned beating their breasts.*<sup>7</sup>

Ah, my dear Savior, behold me at Your  
feet; I have  
been one of the most ungrateful of Your  
persecutors;  
pray likewise for me to Your Father to  
pardon me.  
True it is that the Jews and the  
executioners knew  
not what they were doing when they  
crucified You;  
but I well knew that in sinning I was  
offending a  
God who had been crucified, and had  
died for me.  
But Your blood and Your death have

merited even for

1 "Et sustinui . . . qui consolaretur, et non inveni."  
Ps. 68.21.

2 "Si Filius Dei es, descende de cruce."

3 "Vale, qui destruis templum Dei, et in triduo  
reaedificas; salva te ipsum."

4 "Alios salvos fecit, seipsum non potest salvum  
facere." Matt. 27.40-42.

5 "Pater! dimitte illis; non enim sciunt quid faciunt."  
Luke 23.34.

6 "Ad ostendendam charitatis suae, veniam pro  
persecutoribus postulavit."  
*S.T.* III. q. 47. a. 4.

7 "Percutientes pectora sua, revertebantur." Luke  
23.48.

[316] me the divine mercy. I cannot feel  
doubtful of being  
pardoned after seeing You die to obtain  
pardon for me.

The sorrowful Mother stood at the foot of  
the cross

with some pious women: *There stood by  
the cross of Jesus*

*His mother.* 1 O God! who would not pity  
a mother

standing beside the cross on which a son  
dies before

her eyes? Consider Mary, standing  
beneath the cross,

contemplating the pains in the midst of  
which her well-

beloved Son was expiring: She desired to  
give him

some alleviation, and she saw, on the  
other hand, that

her presence increased the grief of this  
same Son, who

was full of compassion for his tender  
Mother. This

was a terrible affliction for Mary, a

torture that made  
her the Queen of Martyrs.

Seeing himself, then, abandoned by  
every one, all  
men trying to make his death more  
painful, Jesus raised  
his eyes to his eternal Father to obtain  
some consola-  
tion. But seeing him laden with all our  
sins, for which  
he wished to satisfy the divine justice, his  
Father also  
abandoned him. Then it was that our  
Savior, crying  
out with a loud voice, said: *My God, My  
God, why have  
You forsaken Me?*<sup>2</sup>

But our Savior, so full of love, is on the  
point of  
expiring. Christians, look at the cross.  
Behold those  
dying eyes, that face so pale, the sacred  
body which  
is abandoned to death. Before expiring,  
Jesus uttered  
these words: *It is finished.*<sup>3</sup> It is as if he  
had said:  
O men, love me; I have done all that I  
can do in order  
to save your souls and gain your love.  
See the painful  
life that I have led during thirty-three  
years for love of  
you. I wished then on your account to be  
scourged, to

<sup>1</sup> "Stabant autem juxta crucem Jesu Mater ejus. . . ."  
John 19.25.

2 "Deus meus! Deus meus! ut quid dereliquisti me?"  
Matt.. 27.46.

3 "Consummatum est." John 19.30.

[317] be crowned with thorns, to be  
struck, to be covered  
with wounds from head to foot. What  
more was needed?  
Should I die for love of you? Well, then!  
I wish to die. Come,  
O death! I permit you to come; take away  
my life, in order  
that my sheep may live. *And Jesus,*  
*crying with a loud*  
*voice, said, Father, into Your hands I*  
*commend My*  
*spirit.* 1 My Father, he then said, I die for  
Your glory  
and for the salvation of men; I commend  
my soul into  
Your hands. Behold, then, Jesus dies. O  
angels of  
heaven, come, come to be present at the  
death of your  
God. And you, O sorrowful Mother!  
approach nearer  
to the cross; look at him more  
steadfastly, for he is  
about to expire.

And you Christians, behold him in his  
agony; see him  
amid the last respirations of life. Behold  
his dying  
eyes, that face so pale, that feebly  
palpitating heart,  
that body already wrapped in the arms of  
death, and  
that beautiful soul now on the point of  
leaving that  
wounded body.

The sky shrouds itself in darkness; the  
earth quakes;  
the graves open. Alas, what portentous  
signs are  
these! They are signs that the Maker of  
the world is  
now dying.

Behold, in the last place, how our Lord,  
after having  
commended his blessed soul to his  
eternal Father, first  
breathing forth from his afflicted heart a  
deep sigh, and  
then bowing down his head in token of  
his obedience,  
and offering up his death for the  
salvation of men, at  
last through the violence of the pain  
expires, and de-  
livers up his spirit into the hands of his  
beloved Father:

*And crying out with a loud voice, He said  
Father into  
Your hands I commend My spirit;<sup>1</sup> and  
saying this He  
gave up his spirit.<sup>2</sup>*

1 "Et clamans voce magna, Jesus ait : Pater! in  
manus tuas commendo  
spiritum meum." Luke 23.46.

2 "Et haec dicens, exspiravit." Ibid.

[318] All those that were present looking  
at him with at-  
tention see him expire, and observing  
that he is motion-  
less, they exclaim, 'He is dead he is  
dead!' Mary hears  
this from all the bystanders, and she also



says, 'Ah, my  
Son, You are dead!' He is dead! Ah, who  
is dead?  
It is the King of heaven; the Creator of  
the world, a  
God, who wished to die for us poor  
sinners.

### **Act of Contrition while showing the Crucifix**

Come sinners; here is Jesus Christ who  
has stretched  
forth his arms to embrace you. Can you  
fear that he  
will not pardon you, when he gave  
himself up to death  
in order to pardon you?

Do you perhaps fear that you will not  
obtain pardon  
because you find yourselves unable to  
perform the pen-  
ance that your sins deserve? Console  
yourselves; for  
you here see the penance that Jesus  
Christ has himself  
performed for you on the cross; it is  
sufficient if you  
sincerely repent of having offended him.

Look at him; see where you can find any  
one that has  
loved you more than Jesus Christ has  
loved you. Love  
him then, since he died in order to be  
loved by you.  
Say to him: Ah, my sweet Savior! whom  
should I love  
if I do not love a God who has died for

me?

O sorrowful Mother! through the sorrow  
that you  
did experience in seeing your divine Son  
expire, obtain  
for me holy perseverance and a true love  
of my divine  
Redeemer.

### **Prayer**

My Jesus, by the pain You did endure  
when Your  
left hand was pierced with the nail, give  
me a true  
sorrow for my sins.

My Jesus, by the pain You did endure  
when Your  
right hand was pierced with the nail, give  
me perseverance  
in Your grace.

My Jesus, by the pain You did endure  
when Your  
left foot was pierced with the nail, deliver  
me from the  
pains of hell.

My Jesus, by the pain You did endure  
when Your  
right foot was pierced with the nail, give  
me the grace  
to love You eternally in heaven.

My Jesus, by the wound that was made in  
Your Sacred  
Heart, give me the grace to love You  
always in this life  
and in the next.

Have mercy on us, Jesus, our Love.  
Pray for us, Mary, our Hope.

