

Remembering Christ's Passion

Taken from The Sacred Passion Prayer Book

It is a truth of our Holy Religion, and one which we all believe, that our Lord Jesus Christ underwent untold sufferings in His Passion; that He endured those sufferings for us, and for each one of us individually as though there were no one else in the world. Thus He did not save us in crowds or mobs, but soul by soul. Nor did He save us on terms easy to Himself, or at a price that cost Him little or nothing. He deliberately submitted Himself to all the sufferings of which His human nature was capable, and bore them longer than any ordinary man could. For our sakes He shed His Blood: "You are not redeemed with corruptible things, as gold or silver, but with the Precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb unspotted and undefiled." (1 Peter 1:18)

In view of this truth, how strange is the conduct of the vast majority of those who call themselves believers in Christ. What a disheartening thought to anyone who passes through the world and really believes that a

God died for the multitudes of those whom he meets hurrying through the streets on business or pleasure, or standing idly at the street corners; buying or selling in shops; gathered at race-tracks, resorts of amusements, sports, banquets, balls — a God died for all these and they are every moment thinking of anything or everything but Him! Am I one of these thoughtless and thankless?

To our dear Lord many of us must appear like the Roman soldiers who crucified Him.

When they had finished their barbarous work of nailing Him to the cross, they indifferently sat down at the foot of it. These rough men had no thought, much less love, for Him who hung above them in anguish and agony. They sat there beneath Him, their whole attention given to casting dice for the poor garments that had covered Him. They sat there watching His life ebb away, waiting for Him to die, that they might be free to return to the city. They were eyewitnesses of the most stupendous event of all history:



On the Fatima Center chapel Crucifix, Christ's eyes are depicted as welled up with tears and begin to stream down His cheeks. Read more on page 54.

but for them it had no meaning. They looked, and saw nothing but a dying Jew; and at night they tramped back to their barracks utterly ignorant of what they had been doing.

Our Lord is still on this cross — “Jesus Christ hath been set forth crucified amongst you.” (Gal. 3:1) Look up at Him. What meaning has His cross for you. The Roman soldiers did not know who that Lonely Sufferer was: *you* do know.

We should live daily in the remembrance of Christ's Passion. For it is not too much to expect that we for whom our Savior died such a death should

not live as though He had not died. The kind mother who wore her life in caring and toiling for her child might well think that that child would sometimes come and stand by her grave and remember her living kindness and dying words. And when we but try to think of what our Savior has done for us by His life, but above all by His dying; when we feel how impossible it is for us to understand and realize what He has suffered for us: when we think that every hope of Heaven that ever gladdens our heart was won for us by His Death on the cross, it is surely only natural that we should think often and gratefully of His Passion.

The least return we can make to one who has done us a favor is to say “Thank you!” Surely our Crucified Savior has done us the greatest of favors, “Greater love than this no man hath, than that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13)

No one else has the claim on our love that He has. No friend, or parent, or wife, or husband, or child has been crucified for us. In grateful appreciation, then, say frequently: “O my Jesus, I thank Thee for having died on the cross for my sins.” This is an indulgenced way of saying “thank you” to our Blessed Lord. We can say it repeatedly during the day — at our work, going out and returning home.

The thought of Christ’s Passion should affect all our views and actions. How sad to think that we spend many an hour as though our Savior had not died for us. It is not that we ought to be, or can be, always directly thinking of Christ’s death; *that* is impossible: we must think of many worldly matters. But the remembrance of Christ’s dying should be latent in our hearts and, even unconsciously, color all other thoughts. At certain times, especially, should it flare up into strong and vivid life, and be “a lamp to our feet and a light to our

path.” When we think of sin, let us see it in the light of Christ’s Death, and hate it because it nailed Him to the tree; and when tempted to sin, let us call up before our memory the pale, drooping figure on the cross — anguished, bleeding, dying — and let us think that *there* is the proof of what sin is, and what God thinks of it. And thus, as a safeguard against temptation and the snare of the devil, let us hear about the remembrance of Christ’s Dying.

In suffering and affliction, do not rebel against the will of God, rather remember the servant should not fare better than the Master; that as a Christian you are a professed cross-bearer, since “whosoever doth not carry his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.” (Luke 14:27) When you feel the hardships of poverty, think of Jesus Who became poor for your sake. When you are harassed by pain and sorrow, think of Him, Whose “soul was sorrowful unto death.” When despised, or affronted, or insulted, or made light of, think of Him, Who was treated as a fool, and Who was jeered at and mocked in His death agony.

If in reviewing our past lives, we be startled at our many sins and offenses against God,

and are tempted to doubt and despair; rather let us think of His infinite mercy, so visibly written in the countenance of Our Lord as He looks down upon us from His cross: — “He loved me and delivered Himself for me.” “He came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief.”

It is in the salvation of sinners, just such as we are, that Our Lord is one day to see the reward of His bitter Passion.

What a comforting thought that, in a certain sense, our salvation is of greater importance to Jesus Christ than it is to ourselves. This does not mean that He will save us without our own help; that because He is merciful, He is not just; that because He is long-suffering, we may weary His patience; that because He loves sinners, we may continue willingly in sin.

But it does mean that, as He died for each of us, He takes a personal interest in our salvation; that, however sinful our life has been, there is pardon for the truly repentant; that, in His own words, “there shall be joy in Heaven over one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance.” It was a tender devotion to the Passion

that brought consolation to the saints in their last hour of supreme conflict. Saint Paul, the Apostle, ever longed for death, because during life he had known nothing save Jesus Christ and Him Crucified. Saint Philip Benizi on his death-bed called for his crucifix to read once more the message of love and forgiveness graven in the wounds of Our Lord. Saint Paul of the Cross, who had learned wisdom in the wounds of Christ, who was strengthened in his labors by the Blood of Christ, who had led multitudes to penance by preaching the Passion of Christ, went forth gladly at the appointed hour to receive from the pierced hands of Christ the crown of Life Eternal.

Well will it be for us if during life, we have kept close to the cross, and have lived within its shadow: if, day by day, we grow more familiar with the story of Christ’s Sorrow; if we think constantly of that Body which was mangled for us, of that Blood which was spilt for us, of that love which bound Christ to the cross! Then, in that hour, He will not be a stranger to us when we need His friendship most.

He shall accompany us through the midst of the shadows of death; and we will not fear, for He shall be with us. 