

THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

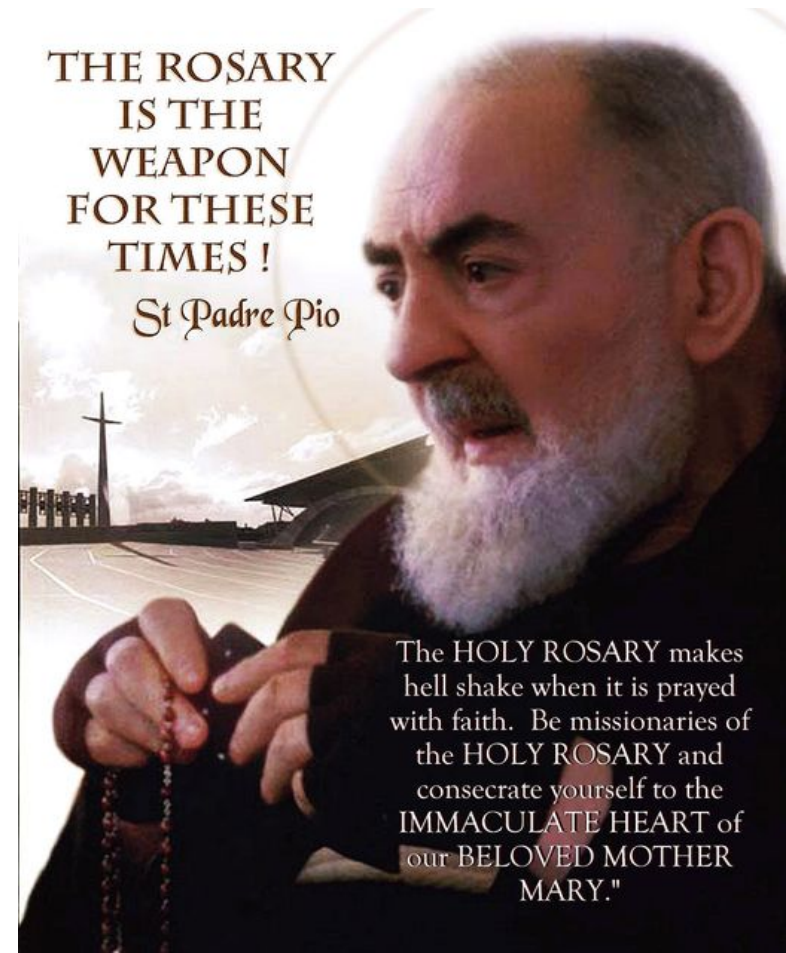


The Rosary, a Contemplative Prayer

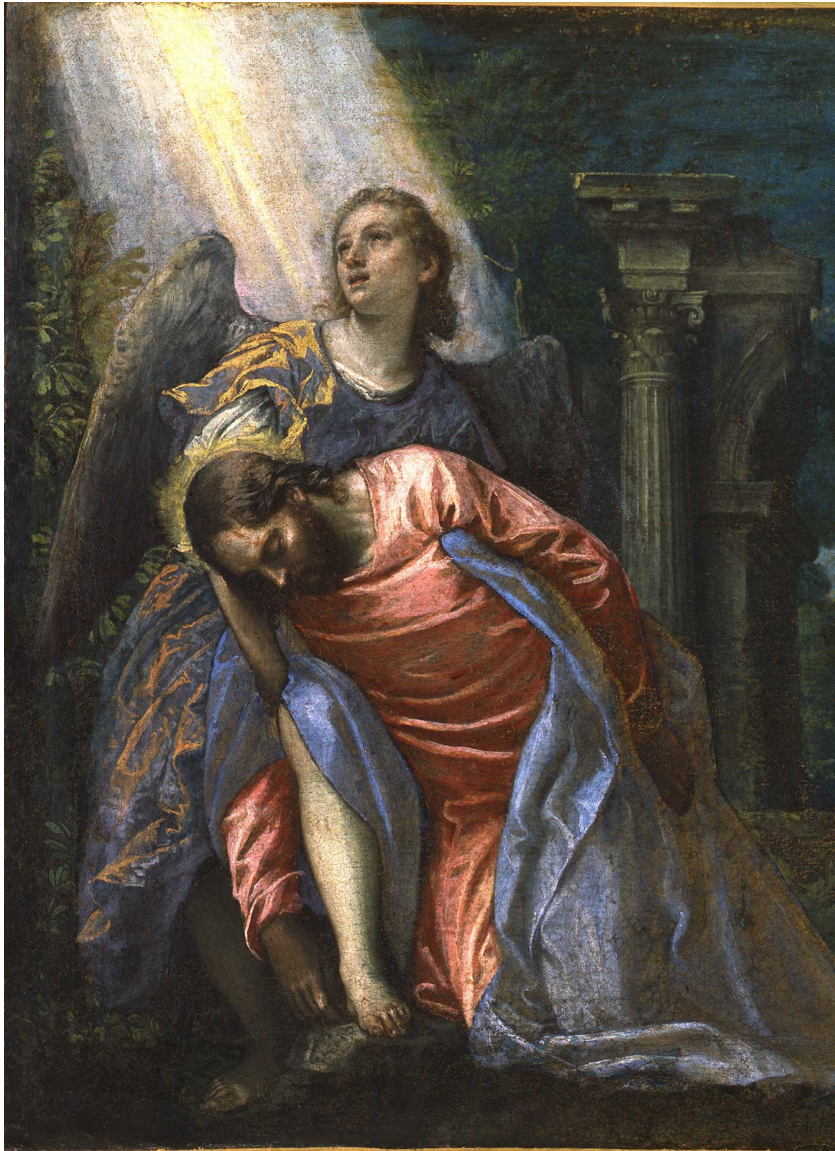
The Rosary, precisely because it starts with Mary's own experience, is an exquisitely contemplative prayer. Without this contemplative dimension, it would lose its meaning, as Pope Paul VI clearly pointed out: "Without contemplation, the Rosary is a body without a soul, and its recitation runs the risk of becoming a mechanical repetition of formulas, in violation of the admonition of Christ: 'In praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think they will be heard for their many words' (Mt 6:7). By its nature the recitation of the Rosary calls for a quiet rhythm and a lingering pace, helping the individual to meditate on the mysteries of the Lord's life as seen through the eyes of her who was closest to the Lord. In this way the unfathomable riches of these mysteries are disclosed". (Rosarium Virginis Mariae, St. John Paul II)

Inspiring Contemplation

The following pages contain Catholic art, excerpts from the scriptures and *The Mystical City of God*, and ten considerations (one for each Hail Mary) from an unknown author to feed one's soul and develop a *quiet rhythm and a lingering pace* to inspire contemplation.



THE FIRST SORROWFUL MYSTERY - THE AGONY OF OUR DIVINE LORD IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE



The Agony in the Garden - Paolo Caliari Veronese, 1852-53

Matthew 26:36-46

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsem'ane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I go yonder and pray." And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zeb'edee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, thy will be done." And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy.

So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."

THE FIRST SORROWFUL MYSTERY - THE AGONY OF OUR DIVINE LORD IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE



The Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane - Francesco Trevisani, 1740

The Mystical City of God by Venerable Mary of Agreda

The Thursday night of his last Supper having already advanced some hours, He chose to go forth to that dreadful battle of his suffering and death by which the Redemption was to be accomplished. The master of life, taking with Him saint Peter, saint John, and saint James, retired to another place where they could neither be seen nor heard by the rest. Being with the three Apostles He raised his eyes up to the eternal Father confessing and praising Him as was his custom; while interiorly He prayed in fulfillment of the prophecy of Zacharias, permitting death to approach the most innocent of men and commanding the sword of divine justice to be unsheathed over the Shepherd and descend upon the Godman with all its deathly force. In this prayer Christ our Lord offered Himself anew to the eternal Father in satisfaction of his justice for the rescue of the human race; and He gave consent, that all the torments of his Passion and Death be let loose over that part of his human being, which was capable of suffering. From that moment He suspended and restrained whatever consolation of relief would otherwise overflow from the impassible to the passible part of his being, so that in this

dereliction his passion and sufferings might reach the highest degree possible. The eternal Father granted these petitions and approved this total sacrifice of the sacred humanity.

This prayer was as it were the floodgate through which the rivers of his suffering were to find entrance like the resistless onslaught of the ocean, as was foretold by David. And immediately He began to be sorrowful and feel the anguish of his soul and therefore said to the Apostles: “My soul is sorrowful unto death.”

With this exhortation the Lord separated Himself a short distance from the three Apostles. He threw himself with his divine face upon the ground and prayed to the eternal Father: “Father, if it is possible, let this chalice pass from Me.”

In this prayer Christ offered, on his part, to the eternal Father his torments, his precious blood and his Death for all men as an abundant price for all mortals and for each one of the human born till that time and yet to be born to the end of the world; and, on the part of mankind, He presented the infidelity, ingratitude and contempt with which sinful was to respond to his frightful Passion and Death; He presented also the loss which He was to sustain from those who would not profit by his clemency and condemn themselves to eternal woe. Though to die for his friends and for the predestined was pleasing to Him and longingly desired by our Savior; yet to die for the reprobate was indeed bitter and painful; for with regard to them the impelling motive for accepting the pains of death was wanting. This was what the Lord called a chalice, for the Hebrews were accustomed to use this word for signifying anything that implied great labor and pain.

This agony of Christ our Savior grew in proportion to the greatness of his charity and the certainty of his knowledge, that men would persist in neglecting to profit by his Passion and Death. His agony increased to such an extent, that great drops of bloody sweat were pressed from Him, which flowed to the very earth.

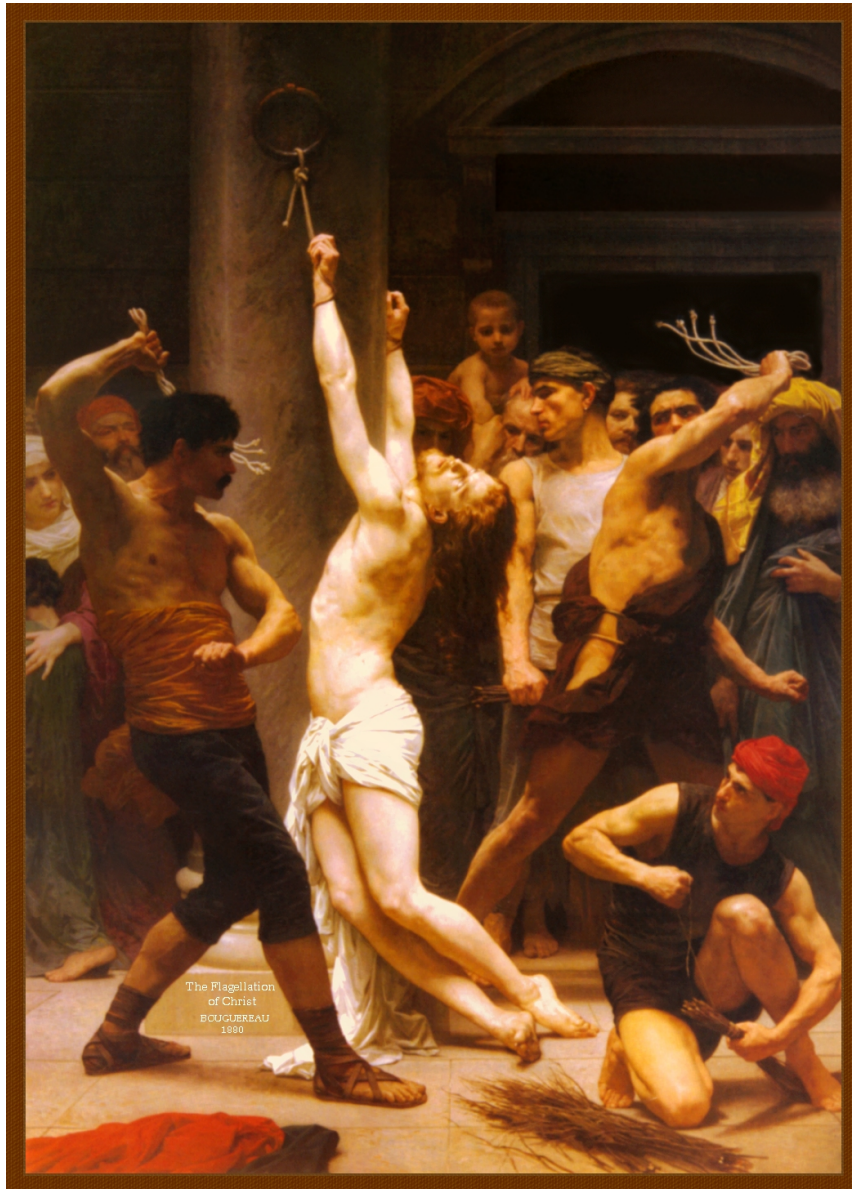
THE FIRST SORROWFUL MYSTERY - THE AGONY OF OUR DIVINE LORD IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE



The Agony in the Garden - Cavaliere d' Arpino, 1597–98

1. Our Divine Lord, accompanied by His Apostles, leaves the room of the last supper. The love with which He was inflamed in instituting the Holy Eucharist, still lights up His countenance.
2. As David fled from his son Absalom, so Jesus flees from His own ungrateful people. Passing over the brook Cedron and through the shadowy valley of Josaphat, He enters the Garden of Gethsemani. The night wind rustles through the dark olive trees.
3. Withdrawing to a solitary spot, Jesus kneels down to pray. He sees the cruel cross hovering before Him. He feels in advance all the sufferings of the coming Good Friday.
4. All the sins that the innocent Lamb of God must take upon Himself, assemble like horrible apparitions before the eyes of His soul. How hideous and how numerous are the sins that mankind have committed! What loathing did not my sins cause Jesus here in Gethsemani.
5. Jesus sees a great number of souls, whom He loves exceedingly and for whom He is ready to suffer so much, going to perdition through their own obduracy. They caused Him His greatest sorrow.
6. I look into the Savior's agonized face. I hear with how much resignation and heartfelt earnestness He prays ever anew to His Father: "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done."
7. Jesus seeks consolation from men. But even His most trusted friends are sleeping. The heart of Jesus endures the abandonment for our sakes. I will not be disconsolate when men forsake me. From my Father in Heaven, I shall obtain consolation.
8. Jesus suffers and prays on. His blood forces its way through the pores like sweat and trickles down upon the ground. Has anyone else ever had to suffer so much?
9. The Heavenly Father consoles Jesus through an angelic messenger, telling Him that He knows of His suffering and showing Him the future glorious fruits of His sacrifice. Mary also participates in the agony of her Son. The melancholy premonition, yes, the fore-knowledge of the Mount of Olives and of Golgotha wrings her maternal heart on this night. Now again she prays: "I am the handmaid of the Lord."
10. My resolution: In hours of anguish and of loneliness, I will go in spirit to the Mount of Olives and pray with a resignation like that with which Jesus prays.

THE SECOND SORROWFUL MYSTERY - THE SCOURGING OF JESUS



The Flagellation of Christ - William-Adolphe Bouguereau, 1880

John 18:33-40, 19:1

Pilate entered the praetorium again and called Jesus, and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?"

Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me; what have you done?"

Jesus answered, "My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship is not from the world."

Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?"

Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice."

Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again, and told them, "I find no crime in him. But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover; will you have me release for you the King of the Jews?"

They cried out again, "Not this man, but Barab'bas!" Now Barab'bas was a robber.

Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him.

THE SECOND SORROWFUL MYSTERY - THE SCOURGING OF JESUS



The Flagellation of Christ - Carracci 1585

The Mystical City of God by Venerable Mary of Agreda

The six torturers bound Him brutally to one of the columns in order to chastise Him so much the more at their ease. Then, two and two at a time, they began to scourge Him with such inhuman cruelty, as was possible only in men possessed by Lucifer, as were these executioners. The first two scourged the innocent Savior with hard and thick cords, full of rough knots, and in their sacrilegious fury strained all the powers of their body to inflict the blows. This first scourging raised in the deified body of the Lord great welts and livid tumors, so that the sacred blood gathered beneath the skin and disfigured his entire body. Already it began to ooze through the wounds. The first two having at length desisted, the second pair continued the scourging in still greater emulation; with hardened leather thongs they leveled their strokes upon the places already sore and caused the discolored tumors

to break open and shed forth the sacred blood until it bespattered and drenched the garments of the sacrilegious torturers, running down also in streams to the pavement. Those two gave way to the third pair of scourgers, who commenced to beat the Lord with extremely tough rawhides, dried hard like osier twigs. They scourged Him still more cruelly, because they were wounding, not so much his virginal body, as cutting into the wounds already produced by the previous scourging. Besides they had been secretly incited to greater fury by the demons, who were filled with new rage at the patience of Christ.

As the veins of the sacred body had now been opened and his whole Person seemed but one continued wound, the third pair found now more room for new wounds. Their ceaseless blows inhumanly tore the immaculate and virginal flesh of Christ our Redeemer and scattered many pieces of it about the pavement; so much so that a large portion of the shoulder-bones were exposed and showed red through the flowing blood; in other places also the bones were laid bare larger than the palm of the hand. In order to wipe out entirely that beauty, which exceeded that of all other men, they beat Him in the face and in the feet and hands, thus leaving unwounded not a single spot in which they could exert their fury and wrath against the most innocent Lamb. The divine blood flowed to the ground, gathering here and there in great abundance. The scourging in the face, and in the hands and feet, was unspeakably painful, because these parts are so full of sensitive and delicate nerves. His venerable countenance became so swollen and wounded that the blood and the swellings blinded Him.

The great Lord and Author of all creation who, by his divine nature was incapable of suffering, was, in his human flesh and for our sake, reduced to a man of sorrows as prophesied, and was made to experience our infirmities, becoming the last of men, a man of sorrows and the outcast of the people.

THE SECOND SORROWFUL MYSTERY - THE SCOURGING OF JESUS



The Flagellation of Christ - Caravaggio, 1607

1. The Divine Holiness stands before a human court, the Eternal King before the dust of earth. Although the innocence of Jesus is known and recognized, yet He is cruelly condemned to be scourged. Let this unjust sentence serve as a rebuke to me when I consider myself wronged.
2. The soldiers snatch the garments from His body and bind Him to the column of the flagellation.
3. Behold how the executioners carry out their bloody work on Jesus!
4. How torn and mangled is the body of Jesus after the scourging! "From the soles of His feet to the crown of His head, there is no soundness in Him."
5. How much more wretched and disconsolate than ever is His soul, the noblest and most sensitive of all the souls of men.
6. O endless patience of Jesus! Not a single word of complaint escapes thy lips! O Jesus make me patient and resigned like Thee!
7. My softness found a stern retribution at the column of the flagellation. From this day on, I must faithfully practice acts of renunciation and mortification. Else I am no true disciple of the Master.
8. O what a sword of sorrow pierces the heart of the onlooking Mother! Every stroke of the scourge inflicts on her an answering pain.
9. O self-sacrificing Jesus! No suffering is too great for Thee, where there is question of my soul's salvation. Grant that I may use violences on myself to gain possession of Thy Heavenly Kingdom!
10. Tough hands and hard hearts have accomplished this unheard of spectacle - the scourging of the Son of God. From now on my hands shall be active only in charitable works, my heart filled only with love for my fellowmen.

THE THIRD SORROWFUL MYSTERY - THE CROWNING OF JESUS WITH THORNS



The Crown of Thorns - Giandomenico Tiepolo, 1772

Matthew 27:27-31

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the praetorium, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe upon him, and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on his head, and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they spat upon him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe, and put his own clothes on him, and led him away to crucify him.

John 19:2-26

And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple robe; they came up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck him with their hands. Pilate went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing him out to you, that you may know that I find no crime in him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no crime in him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God." When Pilate heard these words, he was the more afraid; he entered the praetorium again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore he who delivered me to you has the greater sin."

Upon this Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend; every one who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar." When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement, and in Hebrew, Gab'batha. Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

THE THIRD SORROWFUL MYSTERY - THE CROWNING OF JESUS WITH THORNS



The Crowning with Thorns - Anthony van Dyck, 1618–1620

The Mystical City of God by Venerable Mary of Agreda

They took Jesus to the pretorium, where, with the same cruelty and contempt, they again despoiled him of his garments and in order to deride Him before all the people as a counterfeit king, clothed Him in a much torn and soiled mantle of purple color. They placed also upon his sacred head a cap made of woven thorns, to serve Him as a crown. This cap was woven of thorn branches and in such a manner that many of the hard and sharp thorns would penetrate into the skull, some of them to the ears and others to the eyes. Hence one of the greatest tortures suffered by the Lord was that of the crown of thorns. Instead of a scepter they placed into his hands a contemptible reed. They also threw over His shoulders a violet colored mantle, something of the style of capes worn in churches; for such a garment belonged to the vestiture of a king. In this array of a mock-king the perfidious Jews decked out Him, who by his nature and by every right was the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Then all the soldiers, in the presence of the priests and pharisees, gathered around Him and heaped upon Him their blasphemous mockery and derision. Some of them bent their knees and mockingly said to Him: God save Thee, King of the Jews. Others buffeted Him; others snatched the cane from his hands and struck Him on his crowned head; others ejected their disgusting spittle upon Him; all of them, instigated by furious demons, insulted and affronted Him in different manners.

The most innocent Jesus opened not his mouth in those great and many injuries. Nor was the furious wrath of the Jews appeased, either by the mockery and derision of the divine Master, or by the torments added to the contempt of his most exalted Person.

THE THIRD SORROWFUL MYSTERY - THE CROWNING OF JESUS WITH THORNS



The Crowning with Thorns - Caravaggio, 1607

1. Herod and the Jews have already mocked Jesus as a false king. Once more but more cruelly, the Roman soldiers perpetrate this outrage. Now the cruel spectacle proceeds in the courtyard of the Petorium, with Jesus seated upon a broken pillar.
2. The soldiers rend the clothing from the body of Jesus. With a soldier's red mantel they cover His wounds.
3. They place a reed in His hand for a scepter.
4. From sprays of long, sharp-pointed thorns, they weave a terrible crown of torture, then forcing it down upon the head of Jesus, they drive the thorns deep into His scalp. How His temples throb with the pain of those thorns!
5. In mockery, they pay Him homage. They kneel down before Him, spit upon Him, and strike Him in the face. They beat His thorn-crowned head with the reed. They surround Him like horrors from hell.
6. How patient and humble Jesus remains to the end! How courageously He endures it all for me! In this way, He atones for all pride, all anger, all rebellion, all wicked thoughts.
7. Pilate then exhibits Jesus to the people. Ecce Homo! Behold the wretched man! I will meditate profoundly on the Savior here. I will gaze long into His loving heart, which is enduring so much for me.
8. Bowed down with painful wounds, but with a heart overflowing with love, Jesus gazes down upon the people, awaiting their compassion. But the crowd alas! Is egged on by wicked leaders. Into the heart of the Son of God pierces their savage demand, born in hell: "Crucify Him". What a bitter disappointment does not Jesus experience here, as so often in individuals and peoples of later times.
9. Mary, His Mother, also sees Jesus in this condition. What pain did not this sad spectacle cause her! I will promise her that from now on, only thoughts of love, humility, and purity shall be harbored in my mind.
10. Of thy own free will, O Jesus Most Gracious, thou wast so deeply humbled, in order that thou mightest raise me up. Therefore my afflicted Savior, thy mantel of scorn shall be exchanged for royal vesture; this reed shall become the scepter of the world; Thy crown of thorns shall be Thy crown of glory as Christ the Eternal King. Whereas rough soldiers knelt before Thee in scorn, all peoples of the earth shall come and adore thee.

THE FOURTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY - THE CARRYING OF THE CROSS

Luke 23:17-32

Now he was obliged to release one man to them at the festival. But they all cried out together, “Away with this man, and release to us Barab’bas”— a man who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection started in the city, and for murder. Pilate addressed them once more, desiring to release Jesus;

but they shouted out, “Crucify, crucify him!”

A third time he said to them, “Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no crime deserving death; I will therefore chastise him and release him.”

But they were urgent, demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified. And their voices prevailed. So Pilate gave sentence that their demand should be granted. He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, whom they asked for; but Jesus he delivered up to their will.

And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyre’ne, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus. And there followed him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning to them said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never gave suck!’ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us’; and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him.



Christ Carrying the Cross - Vicente Juan Masip

THE FOURTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY - THE CARRYING OF THE CROSS



The Crowning with Thorns - Ilya Ovcharenko

The Mystical City of God by Venerable Mary of Agreda

The sentence of Pilate against our Savior having been published in a loud voice before all the people, the executioners loaded the heavy Cross, on which He was to be crucified, upon his tender and wounded shoulders. In order that He might carry it they loosened the bonds holding his hands, but not the others, since they wished to drag Him along by the loose ends of the ropes that bound his body. In order to torment Him the more they drew two loops around his throat. The cross was fifteen feet long, of thick and heavy timbers.

But alas, the pity of our most ungrateful forgetfulness! That the Jews and ministers of the Passion should be ignorant of this mystery hidden to princes of this world, and that they should not dare touch the Cross of the Savior, because they considered it the wood of ignominy and shame, was their own fault and a very great one. Yet not so great as our own, since its mystery being already revealed to us, we spend our indignation only on the blindness of those who were persecuting our

Lord and God. For, if we blame them for being ignorant of what they ought to have known, how much should we blame ourselves, who, knowing and confessing Christ the Redeemer, persecute and crucify Him by our offenses? O my sweetest Love, Jesus, light of my intellect and glory of my soul! Do not, O my Lord, trust in my sluggish torpidity to follow Thee with my Cross on thy way! Take it upon Thee to do me this favor; draw me after Thee, to run after the fragrance of thy sweetest love of ineffable patience, of thy deepest humility, that I may desire for contempt and anguish, and seek after participation in thy ignominy, insults and sorrows.

The executioners, bare of all human compassion and kindness, dragged our Savior Jesus along with incredible cruelty and insults. Some of them jerked Him forward by the ropes in order to accelerate his passage, while others pulled from behind in order to retard it. On account of this jerking and the weight of the Cross they caused Him to sway to and from and often to fall to the ground. By the hard knocks He thus received on the rough stones great wounds were opened, especially on the two knees and they were widened at each repeated fall. The heavy Cross also inflicted a wound on the shoulder on which it was carried. The unsteadiness caused the Cross sometimes to knock against his sacred head, and sometimes the head against the Cross; thus the thorns of his crown penetrated deeper and wounded the parts, which they had not yet reached. To these torments of the body the ministers of evil added many insulting words and execrable affronts, ejecting their impure spittle and throwing the dirt of the pavement into his face so mercilessly, that they blinded the eyes that looked upon them with such divine mercy. Thus they of their own account condemned themselves to the loss of the graces, with which his very looks were fraught. By the haste with which they dragged Him along in their eagerness to see Him die, they did not allow Him to catch his breath; for his most innocent body, having been in so few hours overwhelmed with such a storm of torments, was so weakened and bruised that to all appearances He was ready to yield up life under his pains and sorrows.

THE FOURTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY - THE CARRYING OF THE CROSS

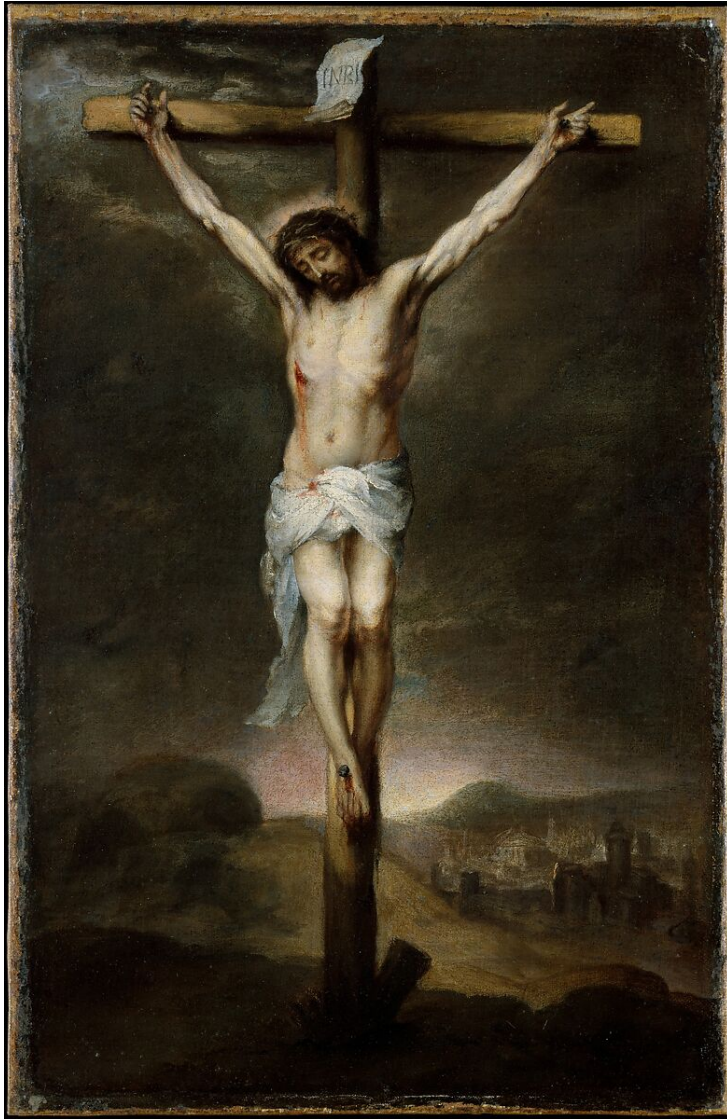


Christ Carrying the Cross - Scipione Pulzone, 1598

1. The innocent Savior is condemned to die the death of a common criminal. For my sake Jesus willingly accepts the death sentence.
2. Filled with dismay but also full of resignation to the will of His Father and of love for us, Jesus shoulders the heavy burden of the cross. Hail, Holy Cross! Thou art the instrument of our eternal salvation!
3. Outraged in body and in soul Jesus carries the heavy cross on His wounded shoulders. He falls. My sins have borne down oh! So heavily upon that cross.
4. St. Veronica renders Jesus a small but courageous service. She offers our Lord a towel. So grateful was He for this kindness, that he wrought for her His last miracle. He leaves the impress of His wounded face upon the cloth. No less generously will Jesus reward me for the smallest loving service.
5. Exhausted unto death, Jesus staggers on under the cross. His enemies fear they may never see Him crucified. Simon of Cyrene they constrain to help Jesus carry His cross. He lends his assistance at first perforce but afterwards with the greatest love towards Jesus. I likewise enjoy the greatest love towards Jesus. I likewise enjoy the privilege of assisting Jesus carry His cross whenever I accept my own sufferings with resignation.
6. The pious women come out to meet Jesus. He directs their attention away from His own sufferings to the temporal and eternal woes of the sinner. Following this warning that Jesus thus gives me in the last hours of His life, I shall weep in good time over sin and hell.
7. Jesus falls repeatedly under the cross. Thus He reminds me of my relapses into sin, especially of my habitual sins.
8. What a great sorrow does it not all mean for Mary, the afflicted Mother, to see her most dearly loved Son so cruelly outraged and forsaken! No one could suffer more in sympathy with Jesus than she. Hence, hers is the honor of being the first and most perfect follower of Jesus in the way of the cross.
9. Behind the Savior burdened with the cross follow two thieves carrying their crosses. After them come a great crowd of people. In the spirit I see all men following Jesus in the way of the cross since all men have a cross to carry. To those who carry it with Jesus, the cross becomes a blessing, to those who do not, a curse. May my cross be my eternal salvation!
10. My resolution: I will be a disciple of Jesus. I will deny myself, take up my cross daily and follow Him.

THE FIFTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY - THE CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH OF CHRIST

John 19:16-30



The Crucifixion - Bartolomé Estebán Murillo, 1675

Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Gol'gotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.

Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the cross; it read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. The chief priests of the Jews then said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'"

Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus they took his garments and made four parts, one for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was without seam, woven from top to bottom; so they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was to fulfill the scripture, "They parted my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." So the soldiers did this.

But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Mag'dalene. When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the scripture), "I thirst." A bowl full of vinegar stood there; so they put a sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished"; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

THE FIFTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY - THE CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH OF CHRIST



The Mystical City of God by Venerable Mary of Agreda

One of the executioners seized the hand of Jesus our Savior and placed it upon the auger-hole, while another hammered a large and rough nail through the palm. The veins and sinews were torn, and the bones of the sacred hand, which made the heavens and all that exists, were forced apart. When they stretched out the other hand, they found that it did not reach up to the auger-hole; for the sinews of the other arm had been shortened and the executioners had maliciously set the holes too far apart, as I have mentioned above. In order to overcome the difficulty, they took the chain, with which the Savior had been bound in the garden, and looping one end through a ring around his wrist, they, with unheard of cruelty, pulled the hand over the hole and fastened it with another nail. Thereupon they seized his feet, and placing them one above the other, they tied the same

chain around both and stretched them with barbarous ferocity down to the third hole. Then they drove through both feet a large nail into the Cross. Thus the sacred body, in which dwelled the Divinity, was nailed motionless to the holy Cross, and the handiwork of his deified members, formed by the Holy Ghost, was so stretched and torn asunder, that the bones of his body, dislocated and forced from their natural position, could all be counted. The bones of his breast, of his shoulders and arms, and of his whole body yielded to the cruel violence and were torn from their sinews.

It is impossible for human tongue or words of mouth to describe the torments of our Savior Jesus and what He suffered on this occasion. On the last day alone more will be known, in order that his cause may be justified before sinners and the praise and exaltation of the saints may be so much the greater. But at present, while our faith in this truth gives us occasion and obliges us to apply our reason (if such we possess), I ask, implore and beseech the children of the holy Church, each one for himself, to study this most venerable sacrament. Let us contemplate it and weigh it with all its circumstances, and we shall find powerful motives to abhor and firmly resolve to avoid sin, as the cause of all this suffering to the Author of life. Let us contemplate and look upon his Virgin Mother, so afflicted in spirit and overwhelmed by the torments of her purest body, in order that through this gate of light we may enter to see the Sun that illumines our heart. O Mistress and Queen of virtues! O true Mother of the immortal King of ages become man! It is true, O my Lady, that the hardness of our ungrateful hearts makes us very unfit and unworthy of suffering thy pains and those of thy most holy Son our Lord; but through thy clemency make us partaker of this favor, which we do not deserve. Purify and free us from this deadening lukewarmness and gross neglect. If we are the cause of these sufferings, what propriety or what justice can there be in visiting them only on Thee and thy Beloved? Let the chalice pass from the lips of the Innocent, in order that it may be tasted by the guilty who deserve it.

THE FIFTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY - THE CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH OF CHRIST



The Crucifixion With the Two Thieves - Jan Snellinck

1. Arrived on Calvary, Jesus is again deprived of His garments. His scourged body bleeds afresh and His spirit mourns. He will do no more than taste the stupefying drink. He wills to suffer and to die for me in the full possession of His faculties.
2. Jesus is stretched out on the cross. Rough nails are driven one by one through His right hand, through His left hand, through His feet. There lies my Savior as pale as death, bespattered with His own blood, gasping pitifully from the unspeakable torture. Not a word of complaint comes from His lips, but only the fervent prayer: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."
3. The cross of Christ is raised aloft and sheds its glory of the first time over the earth. This is the most solemn moment in the history of the world.
4. Now our Redemption is actually being accomplished on the cross. As Jesus, graciously concealed under the forms of bread and wine, speaks daily at the consecration, so visible here in the terrible crucifixion, He says also: "This is my body, which is being offered for you. This my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant, which is being shed for you and for many unto the remission of sins."
5. I also stand under the cross of Jesus. I perceive how the wounds of His hands and feet get wider and wider. I see His breast heave. I see the pallor of death spread over His face. I see His breaking eyes turned towards me. I hear His lips murmur: "I thirst" - for the salvation of souls.
6. The enemies of Jesus are gathered around Him and blaspheming, the thief is mocking, the soldiers are dividing His garments. But in the heart of Jesus dwells only love and forgiveness. No one can doubt the genuineness of Jesus' love. He is the Divine Love amid the hate of the world. I will be His disciple.
7. The sun is veiled in darkness. In abandonment and pain Jesus suffers on. The Heavenly Father has withdrawn from Him consolation.
8. Mary, the dearest of Mothers, stands beside the death-bed of the most beloved of sons. The strokes of the hammer, every pain and every outrage like relentless steel pierce her maternal heart. Thus she is offering sacrifice, she is suffering thus for me. Even amid the pains of death Jesus is concerned for His Mother. In St. John, He gives her another son; in us, other children.
9. Jesus is dying. Exultantly He cries out: "It is finished." His last word on earth is addressed to His Father: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!" The suffering of the cross is over. Jesus is dead.
10. O Jesus, let not thy sufferings and thy blood-sheddings be for me in vain. Forsake me not in the hour of my death! Have mercy on those who shall die this day.