

# MEDITATIONS & READINGS

## ST. ALPHONSUS

VOLUME IV – PART I

AFTER PENTECOST

XI TO XVIII SUNDAY

*Edited by Rev. J. B. Coyle, C.S.S.R.*

VISITS TO THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT and TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, with Prayers for Mass, Preparation for Communion, Thanksgiving, etc. By ST. ALPHONSUS.

PRAYER. By ST. ALPHONSUS. Jubilee Edition.

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL SUCCOUR AND IRELAND. (ἡ ἁγία ἑπιφανεία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας). S. U. C., O'Connell's.

# Meditations and Readings

FOR  
EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR

Selected from the Spiritual Writings of  
**SAINT ALPHONSUS**

*Doctor of the Church and Founder of the Congregation  
of the Most Holy Redeemer*

VOLUME FOUR  
PART I.

FOREWORD

BY

HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF CASHEL

Edited by

JOHN BAPT. COYLE, C.S.S.R.



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FOR EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR

VOLUME IV.—PART I.  
AFTER PENTECOST  
(XI. TO XVIII. SUNDAY)

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PATRICK MURRAY, C.S.S.R.

*Superioris Generalis et Rectoris Majoris.*

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## FOREWORD

BY HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF CASHEL

I WELCOME with special pleasure "MEDITATIONS AND READINGS FOR EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR." These beautiful volumes provide the clergy and laity with salutary illustrations and inspirations. Immersed in affairs of the world we are in danger of forgetting the things that really matter. The lure of excessive amusement and the attractions of morbid literature create an unhealthy atmosphere. Our minds are turned away from heavenly thoughts and are coloured by the evil influences that surround us. In these "MEDITATIONS AND READINGS" we have the means of filling our minds with holy thoughts and our wills with fruitful resolutions that will enable us to live in a world of supernatural ideals.

The "MEDITATIONS AND READINGS" are selected from the spiritual writings of St. Alphonsus, Doctor of the Church, and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. In St. Alphonsus we have a guide whose spiritual outlook on life, wonderful gift of sane advice, and unquestioned supremacy in the sacred science are a guarantee of religious perfection. His writings have been models of spiritual instruction and have won many souls to the life of grace. Their publication in new form deserves high praise.

The "MEDITATIONS AND READINGS" are edited by Fr. Coyle, C.S.S.R., whose experience as a missionary has given him an insight into the needs of the day, and whose experience as an editor has fitted him for the

loving task of publishing the Works of the great Founder of his great Congregation.

I bless Fr. Coyle and his work. I hope that his "MEDITATIONS AND READINGS" will be widely known and properly appreciated. We are indebted to him for volumes that cannot fail to help us in the important and difficult task of saving our souls.

✠ J. M. HARTY.  
*Archbishop of Cashel.*

*Feast of the Blessed Oliver Plunket,  
11th July, 1930.*

LETTER FROM HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL LOGUE  
TO THE EDITOR.

ARA COELL,  
ARMAGH,  
16th March, 1924.

MY DEAR FATHER COYLE,

I have put off writing to thank you for your interesting and edifying volume, *Meditations and Readings for Every Day of the Year*, till I should find time to look through it. I have done so now, and I can congratulate you on undertaking a very useful work; and I hope you will be spared till you complete it.

The Ascetic Works of St. Alphonsus have done wonders in conveying solid instruction, nourishing piety, and exciting fervour among the people in every state and stage of life. They have been an ever enduring source of piety, especially in inspiring love of our Holy Redeemer and tender devotion to His Blessed Mother. It is a question whether his great Theological Works have contributed more to the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Hence it was not without regret I noticed that these Spiritual Works were not so common among the people as they were in my early days. They seemed to be giving place to more showy and more superficial modern works which are far from breathing the fervent spirit of the great Doctor and Saint. One of the chief fruits which I expect from the work you have undertaken is the redress of this serious spiritual loss.

You have commenced well, and I trust you will be

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able to continue till the Spiritual Works of St. Alphonsus are again as extensively circulated among the people as they were in the past. The scheme you have sketched out for yourself will familiarize the people with the beauty and fervour of St. Alphonsus' Works, and from using your volumes for casual reading they will be likely to drink more deeply of the source of fervour the Saint has opened up to them.

Wishing you every blessing and success in your useful work,

I am,

Dear Father Coyle,

Yours gratefully,

✠ MICHAEL CARDINAL LOGUE.

*HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL O'DONNELL wrote :*

It is a pleasure to me to subscribe my name to the beautiful letter written by my lamented predecessor, his Eminence Cardinal Logue, to commend Father Coyle's publications from the Spiritual Works of St. Alphonsus Liguori.

✠ PATRICK CARDINAL O'DONNELL,  
*Archbishop of Armagh.*

*Armagh, 20th February, 1926.*  
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*AS FOREWORD TO VOLUME III. PART II.  
HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF TUAM*

*wrote :—*

As a boy I read with great profit the popular spiritual works of St. Alphonsus Liguori. I am delighted to know that Fr. Coyle is having them republished in an enlarged edition and in the new form of "Meditations and Readings for Every Day of the Year."

I do not know of any religious books at once so sane, so spiritual and so adapted to the intelligence of the ordinary reader. They go straight to the root of normal spirituality. They are commonsense founded on the Truths of Faith. Such books were never so much needed as at the present day. We are living in an age of secularism. Never before did life offer so many attractions to divert the mind from the consideration of the Eternal Truths. Never before was there such an output of purely secular books, magazines, and newspapers, so smoothly written and so beautifully illustrated that the temptation to read them is universal and almost irresistible. Some of them are mere covers for sensuality, and others are hostile to the Faith, and all have a demoralising influence on the mind. To counteract the resulting influence we want a corresponding output of wholesome Catholic literature, including books that advertise the attractions of the spiritual life. We want books that will bring home to our youth that there is no happiness comparable to the humble joy of the good

Christian. We want books that will, with flashes from the Beyond, dissipate the spell that the prospect of sensual pleasure casts over the imagination of youth. We want books, too, that will terrorise the hardened sinner and confirm the struggling aspirant to the higher life in the grim determination to walk in the narrow way. Now such are the ascetic works of St. Liguori that Father Coyle is engaged in having re-published. From my heart I wish him success in this apostolic mission. From my heart I pray that these volumes may have a wide circulation.

It is recognised that St. Liguori was one of the greatest missionaries of all time. He was himself a great preacher of the Gospel. He founded the Congregation of the Redemptorists who have been in the thick of the fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil for well-nigh two hundred years, and who are only growing more vigorous with time. The Saint was a classical writer of Moral Theology. And while his Moral Theology holds the scales evenly between laxity and rigorism, his spiritual writings hold the scales between sentimental piety and cold ascetical teaching, with a like evenness, which attracts and converts the sinner, encourages the weak, and confirms the strong.

✠ T. P. GILMARTIN,  
*Archbishop of Tuam.*

ST. JARLATH'S,  
28th April, 1929.

*LETTER OF APPROBATION AND BLESSING FROM  
MOST REV. PATRICK MURRAY, C.S.S.R.,  
Superior-General and Rector Major*

J.M.J.A.T.                   SANT' ALFONSO—VIA MERULANA,  
ROMA,  
23rd October, 1923.

MY DEAR FATHER COYLE,

I am very glad to hear that you have the first part of your "Meditations and Readings for every Day of the Year from the Writings of St. Alphonsus" ready for publication, and I wish this and the succeeding Volumes every success. It is difficult to exaggerate the value of these "Meditations and Readings" as is seen from the following statements of two Popes :

His Holiness Pope Pius IX, in speaking of the writings of St. Alphonsus, wrote : "The works of this most holy and learned man, written with extraordinary tender piety and devotion, breathe in every page a great love for Jesus Christ and great confidence in His mercy and merits. They also inspire their readers with the most ardent devotion to the Virgin Mother of God and to the Saints, and they inflame the hearts of men with the desire of receiving the Sacraments, as well as furnish a most abundant supply of excellent admonitions, counsels and directions to those who labour for the salvation of souls."

Pope Benedict XV also wrote recently, on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Doctorate of St. Alphonsus, that the excellence and utility of his teaching are becoming every day more apparent, and that his writings are helpful, not only to Theologians and Professors of the

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Sacred Sciences, but also to the faithful of every condition of life, to whom he points out the way to solid virtue, and smooths for them the way to the highest Christian perfection. His Holiness adds that the Saint's one great ambition in all his writings was to make known to all men the infinite amiability of Jesus Christ.

It is unnecessary for me to add anything to these words of two Popes. I wish only to say that this infinite amiability of Jesus Christ is particularly well shown in the present volume, for, in addition to the Meditations and Readings on the Religious State and on other subjects, there are given about forty Meditations on the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, in which are contained some of the most beautiful and devotional pages written by the Saint. Moreover the division of the ascetic writings of the Saint into two Meditations and a Spiritual Reading for every day of the year, and this arranged in such a way as not to interrupt the sequence of any work of the Saint, will please many, both in the Cloister and in the world, who desire to know and follow in their spiritual life the teachings of this great Doctor of the Church and Director of Souls.

In conclusion, in the name of St. Alphonsus I bless you and these Meditations and Readings with the hope that they may be everywhere known and read and well thought on, so that all may know the infinite amiability and mercy of Jesus Christ and the unspeakable amiability and mercy of His Blessed Mother, and that they may thus seek and love and serve Them alone.

Your devoted servant and confrère,

PATRICK MURRAY, C.S.S.R.,  
*Sup. Gen. and Rector Major.*

REV. J. B. COYLE, C.S.S.R.,  
ST. JOSEPH'S,  
DUNDALK.

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## MEDITATIONS AND READINGS

### Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

#### Morning Meditation

#### I.—THE PASSING OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN OUT OF THIS WORLD.

Let us consider how holy Mary passed from this world by a sweet and happy death. Three things render death bitter—attachment to the world, remorse for sins, and the uncertainty of salvation. Mary died as she had lived, entirely detached from the things of the world; she died in the most perfect peace; she died in the certainty of eternal glory.

#### I.

Death being the punishment of sin, it would seem that the Divine Mother—all holy, and exempt as she was from its slightest stain—should also have been exempt from death, and from encountering the misfortunes to which the children of Adam, infected by the poison of sin, are subject. But God was pleased that Mary should in all things resemble Jesus; and as the Son died, it was becoming that the Mother should also die; because, moreover, He wished to give the just an example of the precious death prepared for them, He willed that even

\* A Novena of Meditations and Readings for the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary begins here.  
(1785)

the most Blessed Virgin should die, but by a sweet and happy death. Let us, therefore, consider how precious was Mary's death, on account of the special favours by which it was accompanied.

There are three things that render death bitter : attachment to the world, remorse for sins, and the uncertainty of salvation. The death of Mary was entirely free from these causes of bitterness, and was accompanied by three special graces, which rendered it precious and joyful. She died as she had lived, entirely detached from the things of the world ; she died in the most perfect peace ; she died in the certainty of eternal glory.

There can be no doubt that attachment to earthly things renders the death of the worldly bitter and miserable, as the Holy Ghost says : *O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his possessions!*—(Eccelus. xli. 1). But because the Saints die detached from the things of the world, their death is not bitter, but sweet, lovely, and precious ; that is to say, as St. Bernard remarks, worth purchasing at any price, however great. *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord*—(Apoc. xiv. 13). Who are they who, being already dead, die? They are those happy souls who pass into eternity already detached, and, so to say, dead to all affection for terrestrial things ; and who, like St. Francis of Assisi, find in God alone all their happiness, and with him can say : " My God and my All ! "

## II.

What soul was ever more detached from earthly goods, and more united to God, than the beautiful soul of Mary? She was detached from her parents, for at the age of three years, when children are most attached to them, and stand in the greatest need of their assistance, Mary, with the greatest intrepidity, left them, and went to shut herself up in the Temple to attend to God alone. She was detached from riches, contenting herself always to live poor, and supporting herself with the labour of her own hands. She was detached from honours, loving

an humble and abject life, though the honours due to a queen were hers, as she was descended from the kings of Israel. The Blessed Virgin herself revealed to St. Elizabeth of Hungary that when her parents left her in the temple, she resolved in her heart to have no father, and to love no other good than God.

St. John saw Mary represented in that woman, clothed with the sun, who held the moon under her feet. *And a great sign appeared in heaven : a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet*—(Apoc. xii. 1). Interpreters explain the moon to signify the goods of this world, which, like the moon, are uncertain and changeable. Mary never had these goods in her heart, but always despised them and trampled them under her feet ; living in this world as a solitary turtle-dove in a desert, never allowing her affection to centre itself on any earthly thing ; so that of her it was said : *The voice of the turtle is heard in our land*—(Cant. ii. 12). And elsewhere : *Who is she that goeth up by the desert?*—(Cant. iii. 6). Whence the Abbot Rupert says " Thus didst thou go up by the desert ; that is, having a solitary soul." Mary, then, having lived always and in all things detached from the earth, and united to God alone, death was not bitter, but, on the contrary, very sweet and dear to her ; since it united her more closely to God in Heaven, by an eternal bond.

## Spiritual Reading

TO THEE DO WE CRY, POOR BANISHED  
CHILDREN OF EVE.

I.—THE PROMPTITUDE OF MARY IN ASSISTING THOSE WHO  
INVOKE HER.

Truly unfortunate are we poor children of Eve ; for, guilty before God of her fault, and condemned to the same penalty, we have to wander about in this valley of

tears as exiles from our country, and to weep over our many afflictions of body and soul. But blessed is he who, in the midst of these sorrows, often turns to the comfortress of the world, to the refuge of the unfortunate, to the great Mother of God, and devoutly calls upon her and invokes her! *Blessed is the man that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates* — (Prov. viii. 34). Blessed, says Mary, is he who listens to my counsels, and watches continually at the gate of my mercy, and invokes my intercession and aid.

The holy Church carefully teaches us her children with what attention and confidence we should unceasingly have recourse to this loving protectress; and for this purpose commands a worship peculiar to Mary. And not only this, but she has instituted many Festivals that are celebrated throughout the year in honour of this great Queen: she devotes one day in the week, in an especial manner, to her honour: in the Divine Office all Ecclesiastics and Religious are daily obliged to invoke her in the name of all Christians; and, finally, she desires that all the faithful should salute this most holy Mother of God three times a day, at the sound of the Angelus-bell. And that we may understand the confidence that the holy Church has in Mary we need only remember that in all public calamities she invariably invites all to have recourse to the protection of this Divine Mother, by novenas, prayers, processions, by visiting the churches dedicated to her honour, and her images. And this is what Mary desires. She wishes us always to seek her and invoke her aid; not as if she were begging of us these honours and marks of veneration, for they are in no way proportioned to her merit; but she desires them, that by such means our confidence and devotion may be increased, and that so she may be able to give us greater succour and comfort. "She seeks for those," says St. Bonaventure, "who approach her devoutly and with reverence, for such she loves, nourishes, and adopts as her children."

The Saint remarks that Ruth, whose name signifies, "seeing and hastening," was a figure of Mary; "for

Mary, seeing our miseries, hastens in her mercy to succour us." Novarino adds that "Mary, in the greatness of her desire to help us, cannot admit of delay, for she is in no way an avaricious guardian of the graces she has at her disposal as Mother of Mercy, and cannot do otherwise than immediately shower down the treasures of her liberality on her servants."

Oh, how prompt is this good Mother to help those who call upon her! *Thy two breasts, says the sacred Canticle, are like two roses that are twins*—(Cant. iv. 5). Richard of St. Laurence explains this verse, and says, that as roses are swift in their course, so are the breasts of Mary prompt to bestow the milk of mercy on all who ask it. "By the light pressure of a devout salutation and prayer they distil large drops." The same author assures us that the compassion of Mary is poured out on every one who asks it, even should it be sought for by no other prayer than a simple "Hail Mary." Wherefore Novarino declares that the Blessed Virgin not only runs but flies to assist him who invokes her. "She," says this author, "in the exercise of her mercy, knows not how to act differently from God; for, as He flies at once to the assistance of those who beg His aid, faithful to His promise, *Asit, and you shall receive*—(John xvi. 24), so Mary, whenever she is invoked, is at once ready to assist him who prays to her. "God has wings when He assists His own, and immediately flies to them; Mary also takes wing when she is about to fly to our aid." And hence we see who the woman was, spoken of in the following verse of the Apocalypse, to whom two great eagle's wings were given, that she might fly to the desert. *And there were given to the woman two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the desert* — (Apoc. xii. 14). Ribeira explains these wings to mean the love with which Mary always flew to God. "She has the wings of an eagle, for she flies with the love of God." But the Blessed Amadeus, more to our purpose, remarks that these wings of an eagle signify "the velocity, exceeding that of the seraphim, with which Mary always flies to the succour of her children."

This will explain a passage in the Gospel of St. Luke, in which we are told that when Mary went to visit and shower graces on St. Elizabeth and her whole family, she was not slow, but went with speed. The Gospel says: *And Mary, rising up, went into the hill country with haste*—(Luke i. 39). And this is not said of her return. For a similar reason, we are told in the sacred Canticles that *her hands are skilful at the wheel*—(Cant. v. 14), meaning, says Richard of St. Laurence, “that as the art of turning is the easiest and most expeditious mode of working, so also is Mary the most willing and prompt of all the Saints to assist her clients.” And truly “she has the most ardent desire to console all, and is no sooner invoked than accepts our prayers and helps us,” St. Bonaventure, then, was right in calling Mary the “salvation of all who call upon her,” meaning, that it suffices to invoke this Divine Mother in order to be saved; for, according to Richard of St. Laurence, she is always ready to help those who seek her aid. “Thou wilt always find her ready to help thee.” And Bernardine de Bustis adds that “this great lady is more desirous to grant us graces than we are desirous to receive them.”

### Evening Meditation

#### CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

##### I.

The Prophet David predicted many circumstances, and in great detail, respecting the Passion of Jesus Christ. Especially in the twenty-first Psalm he foretold that Jesus would be pierced with nails in His hands and in His feet, and that they would be able to count all His bones. He foretold that before He should be crucified, His garments would be stripped from Him and divided

among the executioners. He spoke of His outer garments, because the inner vestment, which was made without seam, was to be given by lot: *They parted my garments amongst them, and upon my vesture they cast lots*—(Ps. xxi. 19). This Prophecy is recalled both by St. Matthew and St. John—(Matt. xxvii. 35; Jo. xix. 23).

David also foretold what St. Matthew relates respecting the blasphemies and mockeries of the Jews against Jesus Christ while He hung upon the Cross: *They that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads and saying, Vah, thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it, save thy own self; if thou be the son of God, come down from the cross. In like manner also, the chief priests, with the scribes and ancients, mocking, said: He saved others, himself he cannot save; if he be the king of Israel, let him come now down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God, let him now deliver him if he will have him; for he said: I am the Son of God*—(Matt. xxvii. 39-43). All this was in accordance with what David had foretold: *All they that saw me have laughed me to scorn; they have spoken with the lips and wagged the head. He hoped in the Lord, let him deliver him, let him save him seeing he delighteth in him*—(Ps. xxi. 8, 9).

##### II.

The Royal Prophet further foretold the great pains Jesus would suffer on the Cross in seeing Himself abandoned by all, and even by His own, except St. John and the Blessed Virgin; while His beloved Mother, by her presence, would not lessen the sufferings of her Son, but rather increased them through the compassion He felt for her, in seeing her thus afflicted by His death. Thus our suffering Lord, in the agonies of His bitter death, had none to comfort Him. This also was foretold by David: *I looked for one that would grieve together with me, but there was none; and for one that would comfort me, and I found none*—(Ps. lxxviii. 21). The greatest

suffering, however, of our afflicted Redeemer consisted in His beholding Himself abandoned by His Eternal Father, upon which He cried out, according to the prophecy of David : *O God, my God, look upon me; why hast thou forsaken me? Far from my salvation are the words of my sins*—(Ps. xxi. 2), as though He had said, “O my Father, the sins of men, which I call My own, because I have taken them upon Me, forbid Me to be delivered from these sufferings which are ending My life; and why hast Thou, O My God, abandoned Me in this My great agony?” To these words of David correspond the words which St. Matthew records as uttered by Jesus upon the Cross a little while before His death : *Eli, Eli, lamma sabachthani? that is : My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*—(Matt. xxvii. 46).

## I.

Peace of mind renders the death of the just precious. Sins committed during life are the worms that so cruelly torment and gnaw the hearts of poor dying sinners, who, about to appear before the Divine tribunal, see themselves at that moment surrounded by their sins, which terrify them, and cry out, according to St. Bernard : “We are thy works; we will not abandon thee !” Mary certainly could not be tormented at death by any remorse of conscience, for she was always pure, and always free from the least shade of actual or original sin ; so much so, that of her it was said : *Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee*—(Cant. iv. 7). From the moment that she had the use of reason, that is, from the first moment of her Immaculate Conception in the womb of St. Anne, she began to love God with all her strength, and continued to do so, always advancing more and more throughout her whole life in love and perfection. And all her thoughts, desires, and affections were of and for God alone ; she never uttered a word, made a movement, cast a glance, or breathed, but for God and His glory ; and never departed a step or detached herself for a single moment from Divine love. Ah, how did all the lovely virtues that she had practised during life surround her blessed bed in the happy hour of her death ! That Faith so constant ; that loving confidence in God ; that unconquerable patience in the midst of so many sufferings ; that humility in the midst of so many privileges ; that modesty ; that meekness ; that tender compassion for souls ; that insatiable zeal for the glory of God ; and, above all, that most perfect love towards Him, with that entire conformity to the Divine will : all, in a word, surrounded her, and consoling her, said : “We are thy works ; we will not abandon thee !” Our Lady and Mother, we are all daughters of thy beautiful heart ; now that thou art leaving this miserable life, we will not leave thee ; we also will go, and be thy eternal accompaniment and honour in Paradise, where, by our means, thou wilt reign as Queen of all men and of all Angels.

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## Monday—Eleventh Week after Pentecost

## Morning Meditation

II.—THE PASSING OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN  
OUT OF THIS WORLD.

Peace of mind renders the death of the just precious. Sins committed during life are the worms that so cruelly torment and gnaw at the hearts of poor dying sinners. But holy Mary could not be tormented at death by any remorse for she was always pure, and free from the least stain of sin. *Thou art fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee.*

## II.

The certainty of eternal salvation renders death sweet. Death is called a passage; for by death we pass from a short to an eternal life. And as the dread of those is indeed great who die in doubt of their salvation, and who approach the solemn moment with well-grounded fear of passing into eternal death; thus, on the other hand, the joy of the Saints is indeed great at the close of life, hoping with some security to go and possess God in Heaven. A nun of the Order of St. Teresa, when the doctor announced to her her approaching death, was so filled with joy that she exclaimed: "Oh, how is it, sir, that you announce to me such welcome news, and demand no fee?" St. Laurence Justinian, being at the point of death, and perceiving his servants weeping round him, said: "Away, away with your tears; this is no time to mourn." Go elsewhere to weep; if you would remain with me, rejoice, as I rejoice, in seeing the gates of Heaven open to me, that I may be united to my God. Thus also a St. Peter of Alcantara, a St. Aloysius Gonzaga, and so many other Saints, on hearing that death was at hand, burst forth into exclamations of joy and gladness. And yet they were not certain of being in possession of Divine grace, nor were they secure of their own sanctity, as Mary was.

But what joy must the Divine Mother have felt in receiving the news of her approaching death—she who had the fullest certainty of the possession of Divine grace, especially after the Angel Gabriel had assured her that she was full of grace, and that she already possessed God. *Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee!* And well did she herself know that her heart was continually burning with Divine love; so that, as Bernardine de Bustis says, "Mary, by a singular privilege granted to no other Saint, loved, and was always actually loving God, in every moment of her life, with such ardour, that St. Bernard declares it required a continued miracle to preserve her life in the midst of such flames."

Of Mary it had already been asked in the Sacred Can-

ticles: *Who is she that goeth up by the desert, as a pillar of smoke, of aromatical spices, of myrrh, and frankincense, and all the powders of the perfumer?*—(Cant. iii. 6). Her entire mortification typified by the myrrh, her fervent prayers signified by the incense, and all her holy virtues united to her perfect love for God, kindled in her a flame so great that her beautiful soul, wholly devoted to and consumed by Divine love, arose continually to God as a pillar of smoke, breathing forth on every side a most sweet odour. As the loving Virgin lived, so did she die. As Divine love gave her life, so did it cause her death; for the Doctors and holy Fathers of the Church generally say she died of no other infirmity than pure love; St. Ildephonsus says that Mary either ought not to die, or only die of love.

### Spiritual Reading

#### TO THEE DO WE CRY, POOR BANISHED CHILDREN OF EVE.

2.—THE PROMPTITUDE OF MARY IN ASSISTING THOSE WHO INVOKE HER.

The multitude of our sins should not diminish our confidence that Mary will grant our petitions when we cast ourselves at her feet. She is the Mother of Mercy; but mercy would not be needed did none exist who require it. On this subject Richard of St. Laurence remarks, "that as a good mother does not shrink from applying a remedy to her child infected with ulcers, however nauseous and revolting they may be, so also is our good Mother unable to abandon us when we have recourse to her, that she may heal the wounds caused by our sins, however loathsome they may have rendered us." This is exactly what Mary gave St. Gertrude to understand, when she showed herself to her with her

mantle spread out to receive all who have recourse to her. At the same time the Saint was told that "Angels constantly guard the clients of this Blessed Virgin from the assaults of hell."

This good Mother's compassion is so great, and the love she bears us is such, that she does not even wait for our prayers in order to assist us; but, as it is expressed in the Book of Wisdom: *she preventeth them that covet her, so that she first showeth herself unto them*—(Wisd. vi. 14). St. Anselm applies these words to Mary, and says that she is beforehand with those who desire her protection. By this we are to understand that she obtains us many favours from God before we have recourse to her. For this reason Richard of St. Victor remarks that she is called the moon, *fair as the moon*—(Cant. vi. 9), meaning, not only that she is swift as the moon in its course, by flying to the aid of those who invoke her, but that she is still more so, for her love for us is so tender that in our wants she anticipates our prayers, and her mercy is more prompt to help us than we are to ask her aid. "And this arises," adds the same Richard, "from the fact that the heart of Mary is so filled with compassion for poor sinners, that she no sooner sees our miseries than she pours her tender mercies upon us. Nor is it possible for this benign Queen to behold the want of any soul without immediately assisting it."

Mary, even when living in this world, showed at the marriage-feast of Cana the great compassion that she would afterwards exercise towards us in our necessities, and which now, as it were, forces her to have pity on us and assist us, even before we ask her to do so. In the Second Chapter of St. Luke we read that at this Feast the compassionate Mother saw the embarrassment in which the bride and bridegroom were, and that they were quite ashamed on seeing the wine fail; and therefore, without being asked, and listening only to the dictates of her compassionate heart, which could never behold the afflictions of others without feeling for them, she begged her Son to console them. This she did by

laying their distress before Him: *they have no wine*—(Jo. ii. 3). No sooner had she done so than our Lord, in order to satisfy all present, and still more to console the compassionate heart of His Mother, who had asked the favour, worked the well-known miracle by which He changed the water, brought to Him in jars, into wine. From this Novarinus argues that "if Mary, unasked, is thus prompt to succour the needy, how much more so will she be to succour those who invoke her and ask for her help?"

Should there be any one who doubts as to whether Mary will aid him if he has recourse to her, Innocent III thus reproves him: "Who is there that ever, when in the night of sin, had recourse to this sweet Lady without being relieved?"

"Who ever," exclaims the Blessed Eutychian, "faithfully implored thy all-powerful aid and was abandoned by thee?" Indeed, no one for thou, Mary, canst relieve the most wretched and save the most abandoned. Such a case certainly never did and never will occur.

"I am satisfied," says St. Bernard, "that whoever has had recourse to thee, O Blessed Virgin, in his wants, and can remember that he did so in vain, should no more speak of or praise thy mercy."

"Sooner," says the devout Blossius, "would Heaven and earth be destroyed than would Mary fail to assist any one who asks for her help, provided he does so with a good intention and with confidence in her,"

### Evening Meditation

#### CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

##### I.

It is clear how unjustly the Jews refused to recognise Jesus as the true Messiah because He died so shameful a

death. They do not perceive that if, instead of dying as a malefactor upon the Cross, Jesus Christ had died a death accounted honourable and glorious by men, He would not have been that Messias Who was promised by God and predicted by the Prophets, who, so many ages before, had foretold that our Redeemer should die loaded with insults : *He shall give his cheek to the smiter, he shall be overwhelmed with insults*—(Lam. iii. 30). All these humiliations, and all the sufferings of Jesus Christ, already foretold by the Prophets, were not understood even by His disciples until after His Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven : *These things his disciples did not understand at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of him*—(Jo. xii. 16).

In a word, by the Passion of Jesus Christ, which was accompanied by so great sufferings and so great ignominy, that which David wrote was fulfilled : *Justice and peace have kissed*—(Ps. lxxxiv. 11). They kissed each other, because, by the merits of Jesus Christ, men obtained peace with God, while, at the same time, the Divine justice was more than abundantly satisfied by the death of the Redeemer. We say, *more than abundantly*, because to save us, it was not actually necessary that Jesus Christ should endure so many sufferings and insults. One single drop of Blood, one single prayer, would have been sufficient to save the whole world; while, in order to strengthen our hopes, and to inflame our love, Jesus Christ thought fit that our redemption should not only be sufficient, but more than abundant, as David foretold : *Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plentiful redemption*—(Ps. cxxix. 6, 7).

O Jesus, Infinite Goodness, I deserved to continue blind, and Thou hast enlightened me with new light; I deserved to continue still more hardened, and Thou hast given me tenderness and compunction; wherefore I now abhor the offences I have committed against Thee more than death, and I feel a great desire to love Thee. These graces, which I have received from Thee, assure me that

Thou hast now pardoned me, and desirest to save me. O my Jesus, who could cease to love Thee henceforth, or could love anything apart from Thee? I love Thee, O my Jesus, and I trust in Thee; increase in me this confidence and this love, that henceforth I may forget everything, and think of nothing but loving Thee and giving Thee pleasure.

O Mary, Mother of God, obtain for me the grace of being faithful to thy Son and my Redeemer.

## II.

When speaking in the person of the Messias, Job said : *O that my sins . . . and the calamity that I suffer were weighed in a balance. As the sand of the sea this would appear heavier*—(Job vi. 2, 3). Here Jesus, by the mouth of Job, calls our sins His sins, because He had bound Himself to make satisfaction for us, in order to make His justice ours, as St. Augustine expresses it. On this account the *gloss* upon the text quoted from Job contains this remark : “In the balance of the Divine justice the Passion of Christ outweighs the sins of human nature.” All the lives of men would not have been sufficient to make satisfaction for a single sin; but the pains of Jesus Christ have paid for all our sins : *He is the propitiation of our sins*—(1 Jo. ii. 2). Therefore, St. Laurence Justinian encourages every sinner who truly repents to hope confidently for pardon through the merits of Jesus Christ, saying to them : “Measure thy sins by the afflictions of Christ the Sufferer”; meaning thereby to say : “O sinner, measure not thy guilt by thy contrition, for all thy works cannot obtain thee pardon; measure it by the pains of Jesus Christ, and from them hope for pardon, for thy Redeemer hath abundantly paid thy debt.”

O Saviour of the world, in Thy flesh, torn with scourings, with thorns, and with nails, I comprehend the love Thou hast borne me, and my ingratitude in having so injured Thee after such love; but Thy Blood is my hope, for, with the price of Thy Blood, Thou hast redeemed

me from hell as often as I have deserved it. O God, what would become of me through all eternity if Thou hadst not determined to save me by Thy death! Miserable man that I am, I knew full well that, by losing Thy grace, I condemned myself to live forever in despair, and far from Thee in hell; and yet I repeatedly dared to turn my back upon Thee. But still I will ever say, Thy Blood is my hope. Oh, that I had died and not offended Thee!

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## Tuesday—Eleventh Week after Pentecost

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### Morning Meditation

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#### III.—THE PASSING OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN OUT OF THIS WORLD.

After the Ascension of her Divine Son, Mary remained, indeed, willingly on this earth, knowing that such was the will of God, but she could not but feel the pain of being far from the sight of her beloved Son. Hence she was sending up continual sighs to her Lord, saying with the Psalmist: *Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly away and be at rest?*

#### I.

Let us now consider how Mary's blessed death took place.

After the Ascension of Jesus Christ, she remained on earth to attend to the propagation of the Faith. Hence the disciples of our Lord had recourse to her, and she solved their doubts, comforted them in their persecutions, and encouraged them to labour for the Divine glory and

the salvation of redeemed souls. She willingly remained on earth, knowing that such was the will of God, for the good of the Church; but she could not but feel the pain of being far from the presence and sight of her beloved Son, who had ascended to Heaven. *Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*—(Luke xii. 34), said the Redeemer. Where any one believes his treasure and his happiness to be, there he always holds the love and desires of his heart fixed. If Mary, then, loved no other good than Jesus, He being in Heaven, all her desires were in Heaven.

Tauler says that Heaven was the dwelling-place of the most Blessed Virgin Mary; for, being there with all her desires and affections, she made it her continual abode. Her school was eternity; for she was always detached and free from temporal possessions. Her teacher was Divine Truth; for her whole life was guided by this alone. Her book was the purity of her own conscience, in which she always found occasion to rejoice in the Lord. Her mirror was the Divinity; for she never admitted any representations into her soul but such as were transformed into and clothed with God, that so she might always conform herself to His will. Her ornament was devotion; for she attended solely to her interior sanctification, and was always ready to fulfil the Divine commands. Her repose was union with God; for He alone was her treasure and the resting-place of her heart.

#### II.

The most holy Virgin consoled her loving heart during this painful separation by visiting, as it is related, the Holy Places of Palestine, where her Son had been during His life. She frequently visited—at one time the Stable at Bethlehem, where her Son was born; at another, the Workshop of Nazareth, where her Son had lived so many years poor and despised; now the Garden of Gethsemani, where her Son began His Passion; then the Praetorium of Pilate, where He was scourged, and the spot on which He was crowned with thorns; but she

visited most frequently the Mount of Calvary, where her Son expired; and the Holy Sepulchre in which she had finally left Him: thus did the most loving Mother soothe the pains of her cruel exile. But this could not be sufficient to satisfy her heart, which was unable to find perfect repose in this world. Hence she was continually sending up sighs to her Lord, exclaiming with David: *Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?*—(Ps. liv. 7). Who will give me wings like a dove, that I may fly to my God, and there find my repose? *As the hart panteth after the fountains of water: so my soul panteth after thee, O God*—(Ps. xli. 1). As the wounded stag pants for the fountain, so does my soul, wounded by Thy love, O my God, desire and sigh after Thee.

Yes, indeed, the sighs of this holy turtle-dove could not but deeply penetrate the Heart of her God, Who indeed so tenderly loved her. *The voice of the turtle is heard in our land*—(Cant. ii. 12). Wherefore being unwilling to defer any longer the so-much-desired consolation of His beloved, behold, He graciously hears her desire, and calls her to His kingdom.

### Spiritual Reading

#### TO THEE DO WE CRY, POOR BANISHED CHILDREN OF EVE.

3.—THE PROMPTITUDE OF MARY IN ASSISTING THOSE WHO INVOKE HER.

To increase our confidence in Mary, St. Anselm says that “when we have recourse to this Divine Mother, not only may we be sure of her protection, but that often we shall be heard more quickly, and be thus preserved, if we have recourse to Mary and call on her holy name, than we should be if we called on the Name of Jesus our

Saviour.” And the reason he gives for it is, that “to Jesus, as Judge, it belongs also to punish; but Mercy alone belongs to the Blessed Virgin as a patroness.” Meaning, that we more easily find salvation by having recourse to the Mother than by going to the Son—not as if Mary was more powerful than her Son to save us, for we know that Jesus Christ is our only Saviour, and that He alone by His merits has obtained and still obtains salvation for us; but it is for this reason: that when we have recourse to Jesus we consider Him at the same time as our Judge, to whom it belongs also to chastise ungrateful souls, and therefore the confidence necessary to be heard may fail us; but when we go to Mary, who has no other office than to compassionate us as Mother of Mercy, and to defend us as our advocate, our confidence is more easily established, and is often greater. “We often obtain more promptly what we ask by calling on the name of Mary than by invoking that of Jesus. Her Son is Lord and Judge of all, and discerns the merits of each one; and therefore if He does not immediately grant the prayers of all, He is just. When, however, the Mother’s name is invoked, though the merits of the suppliant are not such as to deserve that his prayer should be granted, those of the Mother supply that he may receive.”

“Many things,” says Nicephorus, “are asked from God, and are not granted: they are asked from Mary, and are obtained.” And how is this? It is “because God has thus decreed to honour His Mother.” St. Bridget heard our Lord make a most sweet and consoling promise; for in the 50th chapter of the first book of her Revelations we read that Jesus addressed His Mother in the following words: “Thou shalt present Me with no petition that shall be refused. My Mother, ask what thou wilt, for never will I refuse thee anything; and know,” He added, “that I promise graciously to hear all those who ask any favour of Me in thy name, though they may be sinners, if only they have the will to amend their lives.” The same thing was revealed to St. Gertrude, when she heard our Divine Redeemer assure His Mother, that in His Omnipotence He granted her power

to show mercy, in whatever manner she might please, to sinners who invoke her.

Let all, then, say, with full confidence in the words of that beautiful prayer addressed to the Mother of Mercy, and commonly attributed to St. Bernard : "Remember, O most pious Virgin Mary, that it never was heard of in any age that any one having recourse to thy protection was abandoned."

We read in the Life of St. Francis de Sales that he experienced the efficacy of this prayer, the *Memorare*. When he was about seventeen years of age he was in Paris, pursuing his studies. At the same time he devoted himself to exercises of piety and to the holy love of God, in which he found the joys of Paradise. Our Lord, in order to try him, and to strengthen the bands which united him to Himself, allowed the evil spirit to persuade him that all that he did was in vain, as he was already condemned in the eternal decrees of God. The darkness and spiritual dryness in which God was pleased at the same time to leave him (for he was then insensible to all the sweeter thoughts of the goodness of God) caused the temptation to have greater power over the heart of the holy youth : and, indeed, it reached such a pitch that his fears and his interior desolation took away his appetite, deprived him of sleep, made him pale and melancholy ; so much so that he excited the compassion of all who saw him.

As long as this terrible storm lasted, the Saint could only conceive thoughts and utter words of despondency and bitter grief. "Then," said he, "I am to be deprived of the grace of my God, Who hitherto has shown Himself so lovely and sweet to me ! O Love, O Beauty, to which I have consecrated all my affections, I am no longer to enjoy Thy consolations ! O Virgin, Mother of God, the fairest amongst all the daughters of Jerusalem, then I am never to see thee in Heaven ! Ah, Lady, if I am not to behold thy beautiful countenance in Paradise, at least permit me not to blaspheme thee in hell !" Such were the tender sentiments of that afflicted, but at the same time loving heart. The temptation had

lasted a month when it pleased our Lord to deliver him by the means of that comfortress of the world, the most Blessed Mary, to whom the Saint had some time before consecrated his virginity, and in whom, as he declared, he had placed all his hopes. One evening, on returning home, he entered a church, and saw a tablet hanging on the wall. He read it, and found the following well-known prayer, commonly called the "Prayer of St. Bernard" : "Remember, O most pious Virgin Mary, that it never has been heard of in any age, that any one having recourse to thy protection was abandoned." Falling on his knees before the altar of the Divine Mother, he recited this prayer with tender fervour, renewed his vow of chastity, promised to say the Rosary every day, and then added : "My Queen, be my advocate with thy Son, Whom I dare not approach. My Mother, if I am so unfortunate as not to be able to love my Lord in the next world, Him whom I know to be so worthy of love, at least do thou obtain that I may love Him in this world as much as possible. This is the grace I ask and hope for from thee." Having thus addressed the Blessed Virgin he cast himself into the arms of Divine Mercy, and resigned himself entirely to the will of God. Scarcely had he finished his prayer, when in an instant he was delivered from his temptation by his most sweet Mother. He immediately regained the peace of his soul, and with it his bodily health ; and from that time forward he lived most devoted to Mary, whose praises and mercies he constantly extolled, both in his sermons and writings, during the remainder of his life.

### Evening Meditation

#### CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

##### I.

St. Paul says of Jesus Christ : *He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant* —(Phil. ii. 7). On this text St. Bernard remarks : “ He took not only the form of a servant, that He might obey, but that of a slave, that He might be beaten.” Our Redeemer, Who is the Lord of all, was willing not only to take upon Him the condition of a servant, but even that of a bad servant, that He might be punished as a malefactor, and thus make satisfaction for our sins.

It is certain that the scourging was the most cruel of the tortures that shortened the life of our Redeemer; for the great effusion of Blood (already foretold by Him, when He said : *This is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many*)—(Matt. xxvi. 28), was the principal cause of His death. It is true that this Blood was first poured forth in the Garden, and was also poured forth in the Crowning with Thorns, and by the driving-in of the Nails; but the largest portion was shed in the Scourging, which was also a cause of great shame and insult to Jesus Christ, because this was a punishment inflicted only on slaves. On this account, also, the tyrants who condemned the holy Martyrs to death scourged them after their condemnation, and then slew them; while our Lord was scourged before He was condemned to death. He had Himself particularly predicted the scourging to His disciples during His life : *He shall be given up to the Gentiles, and mocked and scourged* (Luke xviii. 32). Thus He signified to them the great anguish which this torture would inflict upon Him.

Behold me, O my Jesus, I am one of Thy most cruel executioners, who have scourged Thee with my sins;

have pity upon me. O my loving Saviour, one heart is too little with which to love Thee. I desire no longer to live for myself, I desire to live only for Thee, my Love, my All!

##### II.

It was revealed to St. Bridget that one of the executioners first commanded Jesus Christ to strip Himself of His garments. He obeyed, and then embraced the pillar to which He was bound, and was then so cruelly scourged that His whole body was lacerated. The revelation stated that the stripes not only struck Him, but ploughed into His most holy flesh. He was so torn open that, as the same revelation declares, His ribs were laid bare. With this agrees what was written by St. Jerome : “ The stripes cut the most holy body of God ”; and also what St. Peter Damian wrote, that the executioners exhausted themselves with fatigue in scourging our Lord. All this was already foretold by Isaiah in the words, *He was bruised for our sins*—(Is. liii. 5); the word bruised signifying the same as being broken to pieces, or as being pounded in a mortar.

O Jesus, I say to Thee, with St. Catharine of Genoa : “ O Love! O Love! Let there be no more sins! It is enough that I have already offended Thee so much! Now I hope to be wholly Thine, and with Thy grace I desire to be ever Thine through all eternity.”

Lord. He in His pure goodness chose me and made me His Mother. He now calls me to Paradise. I did not deserve that honour, nor do I deserve this. But since He is pleased to show in my person His infinite liberality, behold, I am ready to go where He pleases. *Behold the handmaid of the Lord!* May the will of my God and Lord be ever accomplished in me!

After receiving this welcome intelligence she imparted it to St. John. We may well imagine with what grief and tender feelings he heard the news; he who for so many years had attended upon her as a son, and had enjoyed the heavenly conversation of this most holy Mother. She then once more visited the Holy Places of Jerusalem, tenderly taking leave of them, and especially of Mount Calvary, where her beloved Son had died. She then retired to her poor cottage, there to prepare for death.

II.

During this time the Angels did not cease their visits to their beloved Queen, consoling themselves with the thought that they would soon see her crowned in Heaven. Many authors, such as Andrew of Crete, St. John Damascene, Euthymius, assert that, before her death, the Apostles, and also many Disciples who were scattered in different parts of the world, were miraculously assembled in Mary's room, and that when she saw all these dear children in her presence, she thus addressed them: "My beloved children, through love for you and to help you my Son left me on this earth. The holy Faith is now spread throughout the world and already the fruit of the Divine seed is grown up; hence my Lord, seeing that my assistance on earth is no longer necessary, and compassionating my grief in being separated from Him, has graciously listened to my desire to quit this life and to go and see Him in Heaven. Do you remain, then, to labour for His glory. If I leave you, my heart remains with you; the great love I bear you I shall carry with me and always preserve. I go to Paradise to pray for you."

Wednesday—Eleventh Week after Pentecost

Morning Meditation

IV.—THE PASSING OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN  
OUT OF THIS WORLD.

It is related that our Lord sent St. Gabriel, the same Archangel who announced to her that she was chosen to be the Mother of God, to announce now that her Divine Son would call her to Heaven. On this happy Annunciation, what could the most humble and holy Virgin do, but answer: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord!* Behold, I am ready!

I.

Nicephorus, Metaphrastes, and others relate that some days before her death, our Lord sent her the Archangel Gabriel, the same that announced to her that she was that blessed woman chosen to be the Mother of God: "My Lady and Queen," said the Angel, "God has already graciously heard thy holy desires, and has sent me to tell thee to prepare thyself to leave the earth; for He wills thee in Heaven. Come, then, to take possession of thy kingdom; for I and all its holy inhabitants await and desire thee." On this happy Annunciation, what else could our most humble and most holy Virgin do, but, with the most profound humility, answer again in the same words in which she had answered St. Gabriel when he announced to her that she was to become the Mother of God: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord*—(Luke i. 38). Behold, she answered, the slave of the

### Spiritual Reading

#### TO THEE DO WE CRY, POOR BANISHED CHILDREN OF EVE.

4.—THE GREATNESS OF MARY'S POWER TO DEFEND THOSE  
WHO INVOKE HER WHEN TEMPTED.

The Most Blessed Virgin is not only Queen of Heaven and of all Saints, but she is also Queen of hell and of all evil spirits; for she overcame them valiantly by her virtues. From the very beginning God foretold the victory and empire our Queen would one day obtain over the serpent, when He announced that a woman should come into the world to conquer him: *I will put enmities between thee and the woman . . . she shall crush thy head*—(Gen. iii. 15).

Who could this woman, Satan's enemy, be but Mary, who by her fair humility and holy life always conquered him and beat down his strength? The Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ was promised in the person of that woman, as is remarked by St. Cyprian. Therefore God did not say, "I place," but "I will place"; lest He might seem to refer to Eve. God said, *I will place enmities between thee and the woman*, to signify that the serpent's opponent was not to be Eve, who was then living, but would be another woman descending from her, and who, as St. Vincent Ferrer observes, "would bring our First Parents far greater advantages than those which they had lost by their sin." Mary, then, was this great and valiant woman, who conquered the devil and crushed his head by bringing down his pride, as it was foretold by God Himself: *she shall crush thy head*. Some doubt as to whether these words refer to Mary, or whether they do not rather refer to Jesus Christ; for the Septuagint renders them, *He shall crush thy head*. But in the Vulgate, which alone was approved of by the Sacred Council of Trent, we find *She* and not *He*; and

thus it was understood by St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and a great many others. However, be it as it may, it is certain that either the Son by means of the Mother, or the Mother by means of the Son, has overcome Lucifer; so that, as St. Bernard remarks, this proud spirit, in spite of himself, was beaten down and trampled under foot by this most Blessed Virgin; so that, as a slave conquered in war, he is forced always to obey the commands of this Queen. "Beaten down and trampled under the feet of Mary, he endures a wretched slavery." St. Bruno says "that Eve was the cause of death," by allowing herself to be overcome by the serpent, "but that Mary," by conquering the devil, "restored life to us." And she bound him in such a way that this enemy cannot stir so as to do the least injury to any of her clients.

### Evening Meditation

#### CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

I.

The Divine Mother revealed to St. Bridget that the Crown of Thorns surrounded the whole sacred head of her Son, as low down as the middle of His forehead; and that the thorns were driven in with such violence that the Blood gushed out in streams over all His countenance, so that the whole face of Jesus Christ appeared covered with Blood.

Origen writes that this Crown of Thorns was not taken from the head of the Lord until He had expired upon the Cross. In the meantime, as the inner garment of Christ was not sewed together, but woven all in one piece, on this account it was not divided among the soldiers, like his outer garments, but it was given by lot, as St. John

writes : *The soldiers, therefore, when they had crucified him, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part, and also his coat. Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said lots for it, whose it shall be—*(Jo. xix. 23, 24). As this garment, then, must have been drawn off over the head, many authors write with great probability, that when Jesus was stripped of it, the crown of thorns was taken from His head, and was replaced before He was nailed to the Cross.

O my Jesus, what thorns have I added to this crown with my sinful thoughts to which I have consented ! Would that I could die with grief ! Pardon me, through the merit of the grief Thou didst then accept in order to pardon me. O my Lord, thus bruised and thus despised ! Thou hast loaded Thyself with all these pains and mockeries in order to move me to have compassion upon Thee, that, at least through compassion, I may love Thee, and no more displease Thee.

## II.

In the book of Genesis it is written : *Cursed is the earth in thy work ; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee—*(Gen. iii. 17). This curse was inflicted by God upon Adam and upon all his posterity ; and by the earth here spoken of we must understand, not only the material earth, but the flesh of man, which, being infected by the sin of Adam, brings forth only the thorns of sin. In order to remedy this infection, says Tertullian, it was necessary that Jesus Christ should offer to God in sacrifice this great torment of the Crowning with Thorns.

This torture also, besides being in itself most acute, was accompanied by blows and spitting, and by the mockings of the soldiers, as St. Matthew and St. John relate : *And plaiting a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And bowing the knee before him, they mocked him, saying : Hail, King of the Jews ! And spitting upon him, they took the reed,*

*and struck his head—*(Matt. xxvii. 29-30). *And the soldiers plaiting a crown of thorns, put it upon his head ; and they put on him a purple garment. And they came to him and said : Hail, King of the Jews ! and they gave him blows—*(Jo. xix. 3).

It is enough, O my Jesus ; cease to suffer more ; I am convinced of the love Thou bearest to me, and I love Thee with all my heart. But now I see that it is not enough for Thee ; Thou art not satisfied with thorns, until Thou findest Thyself dead with anguish upon the Cross. O Goodness ! O infinite Love ! Miserable is the heart that loves Thee not !

### Thursday—Eleventh Week after Pentecost

#### Morning Meditation

#### V.—THE PASSING OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN OUT OF THIS WORLD.

Who can form an idea of the tears and lamentations of the holy Disciples when holy Mary told them she was about to leave them, and they were to be separated from their Mother ! But the Blessed Virgin consoled them by saying : “ My children, I do not leave you to abandon you, but to help you still more in Heaven. Be at peace ! One day we shall meet again in Paradise never to be separated for all eternity.”

## I.

Who can form an idea of the tears and lamentations of the holy Disciples at the sad announcement that holy

Mary was leaving them, and at the thought that soon they were to be separated from their Mother? All then, weeping, exclaimed, "Then, O Mother, thou art already about to leave us. It is true that this world is not a place worthy of or fit for thee; and as for us, we are unworthy to enjoy the society of the Mother of God; but, remember, thou art our Mother; hitherto thou hast enlightened us in our doubts; thou hast consoled us in our afflictions; thou hast been our strength in persecutions; and now, how canst thou abandon us, leaving us alone in the midst of so many enemies and so many conflicts, deprived of thy consolations? We have already lost on earth Jesus, our Master and Father, Who has ascended into Heaven; until now we have found consolation in thee, our Mother; and now, how canst thou also leave us orphans without father or mother? Our own sweet Lady, either remain with us, or take us with thee." St. John Damascene makes the loving Queen speak sweetly thus: "No, my children, this is not according to the will of God. Be satisfied to do that which He has decreed for me and for you. To you it yet remains to labour on earth for the glory of your Redeemer, and to make up your eternal crown. I do not leave you to abandon you, but to help you still more in Heaven by my intercession with God. Be satisfied. I commend the holy Church to you; I commend redeemed souls to you; let this be my last farewell, and the only remembrance I leave you. Execute it if you love me, labour for the good of souls and for the glory of my Son; for one day we shall meet again in Paradise, never more for all eternity to be separated."

## II.

The Blessed Virgin then begged them to give burial to her body after death; blessed them, and desired St. John, as St. John Damascene relates, to give after her death two of her gowns to two virgins who had served her for some time. She then decently composed herself on her poor little bed, where she laid herself to await death, and

with it the meeting with the Divine Spouse, Who shortly was to come and take her with Him to the Kingdom of the Blessed. Behold, she already feels in her heart a great joy, the forerunner of the coming of the Bridegroom, which inundates her with a new and unaccustomed sweetness. The holy Apostles, seeing that Mary was already on the point of leaving this world, renewing their tears, all threw themselves on their knees around her bed; some kissed her holy feet, some sought a special blessing from her, some recommended a particular want, and all wept bitterly; for their hearts were pierced with grief at being obliged to separate themselves for the rest of their lives from their beloved Lady. And she, the most loving Mother, compassionated all, and consoled each one; to some promising her patronage, blessing others with particular affection, and encouraging others to the work of the conversion of the world; especially, she called St. Peter to her, and as head of the Church and vicar of her Son, recommended to him in a particular manner the propagation of the Faith, promising him at the same time her especial protection in Heaven. But more particularly did she wish St. John to come to her, who more than any other was grieved at this moment when he had to part with his holy Mother; and the most gracious Lady, remembering the affection and attention with which this holy disciple had served her during all the years she had remained on earth since the death of her Son, said: "My own John, I thank thee for all the assistance thou hast afforded me. My son, be assured of it, I shall not be ungrateful. If I now leave thee, I go to pray for thee. Remain in peace in this life until we meet again in Heaven, where I await thee. Never forget me. In all thy wants call me to thy aid, for I will never forget thee, my beloved son. I bless thee. I leave thee my blessing. Remain in peace. Farewell!"

### Spiritual Reading

#### TO THEE DO WE CRY, POOR BANISHED CHILDREN OF EVE.

5.—THE GREATNESS OF MARY'S POWER TO DEFEND THOSE WHO INVOKE HER WHEN TEMPTED.

Beautiful is the explanation given by Richard St. Laurence of the following words of the Book of Proverbs: *The heart of her husband trusteth in her, as he shall have no need of spoils*—(Prov. xxxi. 11). It says, applying them to Jesus and Mary: "The heart of her Spouse, that is Christ, trusteth in her, and He shall have no need of spoils; for she endows Him with those whom by her prayers, merits, and example, she snatches from the devil." "God has entrusted the Heart of Jesus to the hands of Mary, that she may insure it the love of men," says Cornelius à Lapide; and thus He will not need spoils; that is, He will be abundantly supplied with souls; for she enriches Him with those whom she has snatched from hell, and saved from the devil by her powerful assistance.

It is well known that the palm is a sign of victory and therefore our Queen is placed on a high throne, a sign of all the powers, as a palm, for a sign of the certain victory that all may promise themselves who place themselves under her protection. *I was exalted like a palm tree in Cadés*, says Ecclesiasticus—(Ecclus. xxiv. 18 "that is, to defend," adds Blessed Albert the Great. "My children," Mary seems to say, "when the enemy assails you, fly to me; cast your eyes on me, and be good heart; for as I am your defender, victory is assured to you." So that recourse to Mary is a most secure means to conquer all the assaults of hell; for she, says St. Bernardine of Sienna, is even the Queen of hell and sovereign mistress of the devils: since she it is who tames and crushes them, He thus expresses his thought

"The most Blessed Virgin rules over the infernal regions. She is therefore called the ruling mistress of the devils, because she brings them into subjection." For this reason Mary is said in the sacred Canticles to be terrible to the infernal powers as an army set in array—(Cant. vi. 3), and she is called thus terrible, because she well knows how to array her power, her mercy, and her prayers, to the discomfiture of her enemies, and for the benefit of her servants, who in their temptations have recourse to her most powerful aid.

*As the vine I have brought forth a pleasant odour*—(Ecclus. xxiv. 28). Thus does the Holy Ghost make Mary speak in the Book of Ecclesiasticus. "We are told," says St. Bernard on this passage, that "all venomous reptiles fly from flowering vines"; and as poisonous reptiles fly from flowering vines, so do devils fly from those fortunate souls in whom they perceive the perfume of devotion to Mary. And therefore she also calls herself, in the same Book, a cedar: *I was exalted like a cedar in Libanus*—(Ecclus. xxiv. 17). Not only because she was untainted by sin, as the cedar is incorruptible, but also, as Cardinal Hugo remarks on the foregoing text, because, "like the cedar, which by its odour keeps off worms, so also does Mary by her sanctity drive away the devils."

### Evening Meditation

#### CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

##### I.

The Cross began to torture Jesus Christ before He was nailed upon it; for after He was condemned by Pilate, the Cross on which He was to die was given Him to carry to Calvary, and, without refusing, He took it upon His shoulders. Speaking of this, St. Augustine writes: (p785) C

“If we regard the wickedness of His tormentors, the insult was great; if we regard the love of Jesus, the mystery is great; for in carrying the Cross, our Captain then lifted up the Standard under which His followers upon this earth must be enrolled and fight, in order to be made His companions in the kingdom of Heaven.”

St. Basil, speaking of the passage in Isaiah: *A child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulder*—(Is. ix. 6), says that “earthly tyrants load their subjects with unjust burdens, in order to increase their own power; but Jesus Christ chose to take upon Himself the burden of the Cross, and to carry it, in order that, leaving life to us therein, He might obtain salvation for us.” He further remarks that the kings of the earth founded their sovereignties on force of arms and in the heaping up of riches; but Jesus Christ founded His sovereignty in the insults of the Cross—that is, in humbling Himself and in suffering,—and on this account He willingly accepted it, and carried it on that painful journey, in order, by His example, to give us courage to embrace with resignation every cross, and thus to follow Him. Wherefore, also, He said to His disciples: *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me*—(Matt. xvi. 24).

## II.

Let us here meditate upon the beautiful expressions applied to the Cross by St. John Chrysostom:

He calls it *the hope of the despairing*; for what hope of salvation would sinners have were it not for the Cross on which Jesus Christ died to save them?

*The guide of the voyager*; for the humiliation of the Cross (that is, of tribulation) is the cause which, in the dangerous ocean of this life, gives us grace to keep the Divine law, and to correct ourselves after our transgressions, as the Psalmist says: *It is good for me that thou hast humbled me, that I might learn thy justifications*—(Ps. cxviii. 71).

The Cross is *the counsellor of the just*; because in

adversities the just learn wisdom, and gain motives for uniting themselves more closely to God.

The Cross is *the rest of the troubled*; for where can the troubled find relief but in beholding that Cross on which their Redeemer and God died of pain for love of them?

The Cross is *the exultation of the Martyrs*; because in this consists the glory of the holy Martyrs, that they were able to unite their deaths to the pains and death Jesus Christ suffered on the Cross; as St. Paul says: *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*—(Gal. vi. 14).

The Cross is *the physician of the sick*; and great indeed is the remedy of the Cross to those who are sick in spirit; tribulations make them repent, and detach them from the world.

The Cross is *the fount for the thirsty*; for the Cross, that is, suffering for Jesus Christ, was the desire of the Saints, as St. Teresa was wont to say: “Oh that I might suffer! Or that I might die!” and as St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi said, “May I suffer, and not die!” meaning that she would refuse to die in order that she might continue to suffer upon this earth, rather than go to rejoice in Heaven.

Finally, to speak of all alike, both the just and sinners, every one has his own cross. The just, though they enjoy peace of conscience, yet all have their vicissitudes; at one time they are comforted by visits of Divine mercy; at another they are afflicted by bodily vexations and infirmities, and especially by desolation of spirit, by darkness and weariness, by scruples and temptations, and by fears for their salvation. Much heavier are the crosses of sinners, through remorse of conscience, through the terrors of eternal punishment, which from time to time affright them, and through the pains they suffer when things go wrong with them. The Saints, when adversities befall them, unite themselves with the Divine will, and suffer with patience; but how can the sinner calm himself by the remembrance of the Divine will when he is living at enmity with God? The pains of the enemies of God are unmingled pains, pains without relief.

Wherefore St. Teresa was wont to say that "he who loves God embraces the cross, and thus does not feel while he who does not love God drags the cross and th cannot but feel it."

### Friday—Eleventh Week after Pentecost

(First Friday of August)

#### Morning Meditation

#### THE AMIABLE HEART OF JESUS.

The Heart of Jesus is all pure, all holy, all full of love towards God and towards us. Every perfection, every virtue reigns in this Heart. This is the Heart in which God Himself finds all His delight. O amiable Heart of Jesus, Thou dost well deserve the love of all hearts.

#### I.

He who shows himself amiable in everything necessarily make himself loved. Oh, if we only apply ourselves to discover all the good qualities by which Jesus Christ renders Himself worthy of our love, we should all be under the happy necessity of loving Him. And what heart among all hearts can be found more worthy of love than the Heart of Jesus? A Heart as pure, all holy, all full of love towards God and towards us; because all His desires are only for the Divine glory and our good. This is the Heart in which God finds all His delight. Every perfection, every virtue reigns in this Heart;—a most ardent love for God, His

Father, united to the greatest humility and respect that can possibly exist; a sovereign confusion for our sins, which He has taken upon Himself, united to the extreme confidence of a most affectionate Son; a sovereign abhorrence of our sins, united to a lively compassion for our miseries; an extreme sorrow, united to a perfect conformity to the Will of God; so that in Jesus is found everything that is most amiable.

O my amiable Redeemer, what object more worthy of love could the Eternal Father command me to love than Thee? Thou art the Beauty of Paradise, Thou art the Love of Thy Father, Thy Heart is the throne of all virtues. O amiable Heart of my Jesus, Thou dost well deserve the love of all hearts; poor and wretched is that heart which loves Thee not! Thus miserable, O my God, has my heart been during all the time in which it has not loved Thee. But I will not continue to be thus wretched; I love Thee, I will always continue to love Thee, O my Jesus. O my Lord, I have hitherto forgotten Thee, and now what can I expect? That my ingratitude will oblige Thee to forget me entirely and forsake me forever? No, my Saviour, do not permit it. Thou art the object of the love of God; and shalt Thou not, then, be loved by a miserable sinner such as I am, who have been so favoured and loved by Thee? O lovely flames that burn in the amiable Heart of my Jesus, enkindle in my poor heart that holy fire which Jesus came down from Heaven to kindle on earth. Consume and destroy all the impure affections that dwell in my heart and prevent it from being entirely His.

#### II.

Some are attracted to love others by their beauty, others by their innocence, others by living with them, others by devotion. But if there were a person in whom these and all good qualities were united, who could help loving him? If we heard that there was in a distant foreign country a prince who was handsome, humble, courteous, devout, full of charity, affable to all, who

rendered good to those who did him evil; then, although we knew not who he was, and though he knew not us, and though we were not acquainted with him, nor was there any possibility of our ever being so, yet we should be enamoured of him, and should be constrained to love him. How is it, then, possible, that Jesus Christ, Who possesses in Himself all these virtues, and in the most perfect degree, and Who loves us so tenderly, how is it possible that He should be so little loved by men, and should not be the only object of our love? O my God, how is it that Jesus, Who alone is worthy of love, and Who has given us so many proofs of the love that He bears us, should be alone, as it were, the unlucky One with us, Who cannot arrive at making us love Him; as if He were not sufficiently worthy of our love! This is what caused floods of tears to St. Rose of Lima, St. Catherine of Genoa, St. Teresa, St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, who, on considering the ingratitude of men, exclaimed, weeping: "Love is not loved! Love is not loved!"

O my God, grant that I may exist only to love Thee, and Thee alone, my dearest Saviour. If at one time I despised Thee, Thou art now the only object of my love. I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee, and I will never love any but Thee! My beloved Lord, do not disdain to accept the love of a heart which once afflicted Thee by my sins. Let it be Thy glory to exhibit to the Angels a heart now burning with love, a heart which hitherto shunned and despised Thee. Most holy Virgin Mary, my hope, do thou assist me, and beseech Jesus to make me, by His grace, all that He wishes me to be.

### Spiritual Reading

#### TO THEE DO WE CRY, POOR BANISHED CHILDREN OF EVE.

6.—THE GREATNESS OF MARY'S POWER TO DEFEND US WHEN TEMPTED.

In Judea victories were gained by means of the ark. Thus it was that Moses conquered his enemies, as we learn from the Book of Numbers. *And when the ark was lifted up, Moses said: Arise, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered*—(Num. x. 35). Thus was Jericho conquered; thus also the Philistines; *for the Ark of God was there*—(1 Kings xiv. 18). It is well known that this ark was a figure of Mary. Cornelius à Lapide says, "In time of danger Christians should fly to the most Blessed Virgin, who contained Christ as manna in the ark of her womb, and brought Him forth to be the food and salvation of the world." For as manna was in the ark, so is Jesus (of whom manna was a figure) in Mary; and by means of this ark we gain the victory over our earthly and infernal enemies. And thus, St. Bernardine of Siena well observes, when Mary, the ark of the New Testament, was raised to the dignity of Queen of Heaven, the power of hell over men was weakened and dissolved.

The infernal spirits tremble at the very thought of Mary, and of her august name, says St. Bonaventure. 'Oh, how terrible is Mary to the devils!' The Saint compares these enemies to those of whom Job speaks: *He diggeth through houses in the dark... If the morning suddenly appear, it is to them the shadow of death*—(Job. xxiv. 16, 17). Thieves go and rob houses in the dark; but as soon as morning dawns they fly, as if they beheld the shadow of death. "Precisely thus," in the words of the same St. Bonaventure, "do the devils enter a soul in the time of darkness"; meaning when the soul is in the obscurity of ignorance. They dig through the

house of our mind when it is in the darkness of ignorance. But then, he adds, "if suddenly they are overtaken by the dawn, that is, if the grace and mercy of Mary enters the soul, its brightness instantly dispels the darkness, and puts the infernal enemies to flight, as if they fled from death." Oh, blessed is he who always invokes the beautiful name of Mary in his conflicts with hell!

In confirmation of this, it was revealed to St. Bridget that "God had rendered Mary so powerful over the devils, that as often as they assault a devout client who calls on this most Blessed Virgin for help, she at a single glance instantly terrifies them, so that they fly far away, preferring to have their pains redoubled rather than see themselves thus subject to the power of Mary."

The Divine Bridegroom, when speaking of this His beloved bride, calls her a lily: *As the lily is amongst the thorns, so is my beloved amongst the daughters*—(Cant. ii. 2). On these words, Cornelius à Lapide makes the reflection: "As the lily is a remedy against serpents and venomous things, so is the invocation of Mary a specific by which we may overcome all temptations, and especially those against purity, as all find who put it in practice."

St. John Damascene used to say: "While I keep my hope in thee unconquerable, O Mother of God, I shall be safe. I will fight and overcome my enemies with no other buckler than thy protection and thy all-powerful aid." And all who are so fortunate as to be the servants of this great Queen can say the same thing. O Mother of God, if I hope in thee, I most certainly shall not be overcome; for, defended by thee, I will pursue my enemies, and oppose them with the shield of thy protection and thy all-powerful help; and then without doubt I shall conquer. For, says St. James the Monk (who was a Doctor amongst the Greeks), addressing our Lord: "Thou, O Lord, hast given us in Mary arms that no force of war can overcome, and a trophy never to be destroyed."

## Evening Meditation

### CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

#### I.

It was revealed to St. Bridget that when the Saviour was laid upon the Cross, He stretched out His right hand to the place where it was to be nailed. Executioners immediately nailed the other hand, and then His sacred feet; and Jesus Christ was left to die upon this bed of anguish. St. Augustine says that the punishment of the Cross was a most bitter torment, because, upon the Cross leath itself was prolonged, lest the pain should be speedily ended.

O God! what horror must then have smitten Heaven at the sight of the Son of the Eternal Father crucified between two thieves! Such, in truth, was the Prophecy of Isaiah: *He was reputed with the wicked*—(Is. liii. 12). Wherefore St. John Chrysostom, contemplating Jesus upon the Cross, cried out, full of amazement and love: "I see Him in the midst, in the holy Trinity! I see Him in the midst, between Moses and Elias! I see Him in the midst, between two thieves!" As though he had said: "I see my Saviour first in Heaven between the Father and the Holy Ghost; I see Him upon Mount Pabor, between two Saints, Moses and Elias; how, then, as it I see Him crucified upon Calvary between two thieves?" How could this come to pass, but through the Divine decree, that thus He must die, to satisfy by His death for the sins of men, and to save men from death, as Isaiah had foretold: *He was reputed with the wicked, and he hath borne the sins of many*—(Is. liii. 12).

#### II.

The same Prophet asks: *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra; this beautiful* (D785) C2

*one in his robe, walking in the greatness of his strength?* (Is. lxiii. 1). And he gives the answer: *I that speak justice, and am a defender to save*—(Is. lxiii. 1). The person who thus replies is, according to the interpreters, Jesus Christ, Who says: *I am the promised Messias, Who am come to save men, by my triumph over their enemies.*

Then, further, He is again asked: *Why is thy apparel red, and thy garments like theirs that tread in the wine-press?*—(Is. lxiii. 2). And He answers, *I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the Gentiles there is not a man with me*—(Is. lxiii. 8). Tertullian, St. Cyprian, and St. Augustine explain the wine-press to mean the Passion of Jesus Christ, in which His garments—that is, His most holy flesh—was covered with blood and wounds, according to what St. John wrote: *He was clothed with a garment sprinkled with blood; and his name is called the Word of God*—(Apoc. xix. 18). St. Gregory, explaining the expression, *I have trodden the wine-press alone*, says, “He trod the wine-press, and was Himself trodden.” He trod it, because Jesus Christ, by His Passion, overcame the devil; He was trodden, because, in His Passion, His body was bruised and broken, as the grapes are broken in the wine-press, and, as Isaiah expresses it in another text: *The Lord was pleased to bruise him in infirmity*—(Is. liii. 10).

## Saturday—Eleventh Week after Pentecost

### Morning Meditation

#### VI.—THE HOLY DEATH OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

The death of Mary is now at hand. Divine Love, with its vehement and blessed flames, had almost entirely consumed her, and the heavenly phoenix is already losing her life in the midst of this fire. Wrapped in the flames of Divine love, and in the midst of her sighs of love, Mary gave a last sigh of still more ardent love of God, and breathing forth her soul, expired.

#### I.

The death of Mary is now at hand; Divine love, with its vehement and blessed flames, had already almost entirely consumed the vital spirits; the heavenly phoenix is already losing her life in the midst of this fire. Then the host of Angels come in choirs to meet her, as if to be ready for the great triumph with which they were to accompany her to Paradise. Mary was indeed consoled at the sight of these holy spirits, but was not fully consoled; for she did not yet see her beloved Jesus, Who was the whole love of her heart. Hence she often repeated to the Angels who descended to salute her: *I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my Beloved, that you tell him that I languish with love*—(Cant. v. 8). Holy Angels, O fair citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, you come in choirs kindly to console me; and you all console me with your sweet pres-

ence. I thank you; but you do not fully satisfy me, for as yet I do not see my Son coming to console me. Go, if you love me, return to Paradise, and on my part tell my Beloved that *I languish with love*. Tell Him to come, and to come quickly, for I am dying with the vehemence of my desire to see Him.

But, behold, Jesus is now come to take His Mother to the Kingdom of the Blessed. It was revealed to St. Elizabeth that her Son appeared to Mary before she expired with His Cross in His hands, to show the special glory he had obtained by the Redemption; having, by His death, made acquisition of that great creature, who for all eternity was to honour Him more than all men and Angels. St. John Damascene relates that our Lord Himself gave her the Viaticum, saying with tender love: "Receive, O my Mother, from my hands that same Body that thou gavest to Me." And the Mother, having received with the greatest love that last Communion, with her last breath said: "My Son, into Thy hands do I commend my spirit. I commend to Thee this soul, which from the beginning Thou didst create rich in so many graces, and by a singular privilege didst preserve from the stain of original sin. I commend to Thee my body, from which Thou didst deign to take Thy flesh and blood. I also commend to Thee these my beloved children [speaking of the holy disciples, who surrounded her]; they are grieved at my departure. Do Thou, Who lovest them more than I do, console them; bless them, and give them strength to do great things for Thy glory."

## II.

The life of Mary is now closing. The most delicious music, as St. Jerome relates, was heard in the apartment where she lay; and, according to a revelation of St. Bridget, the room was filled with a brilliant light. The sweet music, and the unaccustomed splendour, warned the holy Apostles that Mary was then departing. This caused them again to burst forth in tears and prayers; and raising their hands, with one voice they exclaimed: "O

Mother, thou already goest to Heaven! Thou leavest us! Give us thy last blessing, and never forget us miserable creatures!" Mary, turning her eyes around upon all, as if to bid them a last farewell, said: "Adieu, my children; I bless you; fear not, I will never forget you." And now death came; not indeed clothed in mourning and grief, as it does to others, but adorned with light and gladness. But what do we say? Why speak of death? Let us rather say that Divine love came, and cut the thread of that noble life. And as a light, before going out, gives a last and brighter flash than ever, so did this beautiful creature, on hearing her Son's invitation to follow Him, wrapped in the flames of love, and in the midst of her loving sighs, give a last sigh of still more ardent love, and breathing forth her soul, expired. Thus was that great soul, that beautiful dove of the Lord, loosened from the bands of this life; thus did she enter into the glory of the Blessed, where she is now throned, and will be throned, Queen of Paradise, for all eternity.

Mary, then has left this world; she is now in Heaven. Thence does this compassionate Mother look down upon us who are still in this valley of tears. She pities us, and, if we wish it, promises to help us. Let us always beseech her by the merits of her blessed death, to obtain us a happy death; and should such be the pleasure of God, let us beg her to obtain us the grace to die on a Saturday, which is a day dedicated in her honour, or on a day of a Novena, or within the Octave of one of her Feasts; for this she has obtained for so many of her clients, and especially for St. Stanislaus Kostka, for whom she obtained that he should die on the Feast of her Assumption.

O sweetest Lady and Mother, thou hast already left the earth and reached thy kingdom, where, as Queen, thou art enthroned above all the choirs of Angels, as the Church sings: *She is exalted above the choirs of Angels to the celestial kingdom*. We well know that we sinners are not worthy to possess thee in this valley of darkness; but we also know that thou, in thy greatness, hast never

forgotten us miserable creatures, and that by being exalted to so great glory thou hast never lost compassion for us poor children of Adam; nay, even that it is increased in thee. From the high throne, then, to which thou art exalted, turn thy compassionate eyes upon us, and pity us. Remember, also, that in leaving this world thou didst promise not to forget us. Behold us and succour us! See in the midst of what tempests and dangers we constantly are, and shall be until the end of our lives. By the merits of thy happy death obtain us holy perseverance in the Divine friendship, that we may finally quit this life in God's grace; and thus we also shall one day come to kiss thy feet in Paradise, and unite with the blessed Spirits in praising thee and singing thy glories as thou deservest. Amen.

### Spiritual Reading

#### TO THEE DO WE CRY, POOR BANISHED CHILDREN OF EVE.

##### 7.—THE GREATNESS OF MARY'S POWER TO DEFEND US WHEN TEMPTED

It is said in the Old Testament that God guided His people from Egypt to the Land of Promise, *by day in a pillar of a cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire*—(Exod. xiii. 21). This stupendous pillar, at one time as a cloud, at another as fire, says Richard of St. Laurence, was a figure of Mary fulfilling the double office she constantly exercises for our good: as a cloud she protects us from the ardour of Divine justice; and as fire she protects us from the devils. "Behold the twofold object for which Mary is given to us; as a cloud, to shelter us from the heat of the sun of justice, and, as fire, to protect us all against the devil." She protects us as a burning fire: for, St. Bonaventure remarks: "As wax melts before the fire, so do the devils lose their power against those

souls who often remember the name of Mary, and devoutly invoke it; and still more so, if they also endeavour to imitate her virtues."

The devils tremble even if they only hear the name of Mary. St. Bernard declares that in "the name of Mary every knee bows; and that the devils not only fear but tremble at the very sound of that name." And as men fall prostrate with fear if a thunderbolt falls near them, so do the devils if they hear the name of Mary. Thomas à Kempis thus expresses the same sentiment: "The evil spirits greatly fear the Queen of Heaven, and fly at the sound of her name, as if from fire. At the very sound of the word *Mary*, they are prostrated as by thunder."

Oh, how many victories have the clients of Mary gained by only making use of her most holy name! It was thus that St. Anthony of Padua was always victorious; thus the Blessed Henry Suso; thus so many other lovers of this great Queen have conquered. We learn from the history of the missions in Japan, that many devils appeared under the form of fierce animals to a certain Christian, to alarm and threaten him; but he thus addressed them: "I have no arms that you can fear; and if the Most High permits it, do whatever you please with me. In the meantime, however, I take the holy Names of Jesus and Mary for my defence." At the very sound of these tremendous names, the earth opened, and the proud spirits cast themselves headlong into it. St. Anselm declares that he himself "knew and had seen and heard many who had invoked the name of Mary in time of danger, and were immediately delivered."

"Glorious, indeed, and admirable," exclaims St. Bonaventure, "is thy name, O Mary; for those who pronounce it at death need not fear all the powers of hell"; for the devils on hearing that name instantly fly, and leave the soul in peace. The same Saint adds that "men do not fear a powerful hostile army as much as the powers of hell fear the name and protection of Mary." "Thou, O Lady," says St. Germanus, "by the simple invocation of thy most powerful name, givest

security to thy servants against all the assaults of the enemy." Oh, were Christians but careful in their temptations to pronounce the name of Mary with confidence, never would they fall; for, as Blessed Allan remarks: "At the very sound of these words, *Hail Mary!* Satan flies, and hell trembles." Our Blessed Lady herself revealed to St. Bridget that the enemy flies even from the most abandoned sinners, and who consequently are the farthest from God, and fully possessed by the devil, if they only invoke her most powerful name with a true purpose of amendment. "All devils on hearing this name of Mary, filled with terror, leave the soul." But at the same time our Blessed Lady added that "if the soul does not amend and wipe out its sins by sorrow, the devils almost immediately return and continue to possess it."

In Reichersperg, in Bavaria, there was a Canon Regular of the name of Arnold, surnamed the Pious on account of the sanctity of his life, who had the most tender devotion to our Blessed Lady. When at the point of death, and having received the last Sacraments, he summoned his Religious brethren, and begged that they would not abandon him in his last passage. Scarcely had he uttered these words, when, in the presence of all, he began to tremble, to roll his eyes, and, bathed in a cold sweat, with a faltering voice, he said: "Ah, do you not see the devils who are endeavouring to drag me to hell?" He then cried out, "Brothers, implore the aid of Mary for me; in her I confide; she will give me the victory." On hearing this his brethren recited the Litany of our Blessed Lady, and as they said "Holy Mary, pray for him," the dying man exclaimed, "Repeat, repeat the name of Mary, for I am already before God's tribunal." He was silent for a moment, and then added, "It is true that I did that, but I have done penance for it." And then turning to our Blessed Lady, he said: "O Mary, I shall be delivered if thou helpst me." Again the devils attacked him; but he defended himself with his Crucifix and the name of Mary. Thus was the night spent; but no sooner did morning dawn than

Arnold exclaimed with the greatest calmness, and full of holy joy: "Mary, my sovereign Lady, my refuge, has obtained me pardon and salvation." Then casting his eyes on that Blessed Virgin who was inviting him to follow her, he said: "I come, O Lady, I come!" and making an effort to do so even with his body, his soul fled after her to the realms of eternal bliss, as we trust, for he sweetly expired.

### Evening Meditation

#### CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

##### I.

And now behold this Lord, Who was fairest among men, appears on Calvary, His form so disfigured by torments, that it struck horror into all who saw it. Yet this deformity makes Him seem more beautiful in the eyes of souls that love Him, because these Wounds, these marks of the scourging, this lacerated flesh, are all tokens and proofs of the love He bears them; upon which the poet Petrucci beautifully sings, "O Lord, if Thou sufferest scourgings for us, to the souls who love Thee, the more deformed Thou art the more fair dost Thou appear."

St. Augustine says: "He hung in deformity upon the Cross, but His deformity has made us beautiful." And truly so, because this deformity of Jesus crucified was the cause of the beauty of our souls, which, when they were deformed, were washed with His Divine Blood, and became fair and lovely, according to what St. John wrote: *Who are these that are clothed in white garments? These are they who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their garments, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*—(Apoc. vii. 13, 14). All the Saints, as being children of Adam, were (with

the exception of the Blessed Virgin), at one time covered with a foul garment, and soiled with Adam's sin and with their own; but being washed with the Blood of the Lamb, they became white and agreeable in the sight of God.

## II.

Well, didst Thou say, then, O my Jesus, that, when Thou shouldst be lifted up upon the Cross, Thou wouldst draw everything unto Thee—(Jo. xii. 32); *and this he said, signifying by what death he should die.* Truly Thou hast left nothing undone to draw all hearts unto Thee. Many are the happy souls who, on seeing Thee crucified and dying for love of them, have abandoned everything—possessions, dignities, country, and kindred, even to the embracing of torments and death—in order to give themselves wholly to Thee. Unhappy they who resist the graces Thou hast gained for them with Thy great labours and sorrows. O my God, this will be their great torment in hell, to think that they have lost a God Who, to draw them to love Him, gave His life upon a Cross; that of their own choice they have perished, and that there will be no remedy for their ruin through all eternity! O my Redeemer, I have already deserved to perish through the sins I have committed against Thee. Alas, how often have I resisted Thy grace, which sought to draw me unto Thee, and, in order to cleave to my own inclinations, have despised Thy love, and turned my back upon Thee! Oh that I had died before I had offended Thee! Oh that I had always loved Thee! I thank Thee, O my Love, that Thou hast borne with me with so much patience, and that, instead of abandoning me, as I deserved, Thou hast repeated Thy invitations, and increased Thy lights and Thy loving impulses. *I will sing the mercies of the Lord forever—(Ps. lxxxviii. 2).* Oh, cease not, my Saviour and my Hope, to continue to draw me, and to multiply Thy graces upon me, that I may love Thee in Heaven with more fervour, remembering the many mercies Thou hast shown me, after all my offences against Thee. I hope for all, through that pre-

cious Blood Thou hast shed for me, and that bitter death Thou hast endured for me.

O holy Virgin Mary, protect me; pray to Jesus for me.

## Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

### Morning Meditation

#### VII.—THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY INTO HEAVEN.

It would seem that, on the day of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin into Heaven, the holy Church should invite us to mourn rather than rejoice, since our dear Mother has quitted this world and left us deprived of her sweet presence. But no: the holy Church rightly invites us to rejoice, for Mary is going to possess a kingdom and to be crowned Queen of Heaven. Let us therefore rejoice in the glorious triumph of our Mother.

## I.

It would seem that on the day of the Assumption of Mary into Heaven the holy Church should rather invite us to mourn than to rejoice, since our sweet Mother has quitted this world and left us deprived of her sweet presence. St. Bernard says "It seems that we should rather weep than rejoice." But no; the holy Church invites us to rejoice: "Let us all rejoice in the Lord, celebrating a Festival in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary." And justly so; for, if we love our Mother, we

ought to congratulate ourselves more upon her glory than on our own personal happiness. What son does not rejoice, though on account of it he has to be separated from his mother, if he knows that she is going to take possession of a kingdom? Mary is to be crowned Queen of Heaven; and shall we not keep it a festival and rejoice if we truly love her? Let us rejoice, then; let us all rejoice! And that we may rejoice, and be consoled the more by her exaltation, let us consider how glorious was the triumph of Mary when she ascended to Heaven.

After Jesus Christ our Saviour had completed, by His death, the work of Redemption, the Angels ardently desired to possess Him in their heavenly country; hence they were continually supplicating Him in the words of David: *Arise, O Lord, into thy resting-place, thou and the ark which thou hast sanctified*—(Ps. cxxxii. 8). Come, O Lord, come quickly, now that Thou hast redeemed men; come to Thy kingdom and dwell with us, and bring with Thee the living ark of Thy sanctification, Thy Mother, who was the ark Thou didst sanctify by dwelling in her womb. Precisely thus does St. Bernardine make the Angels say: "Let Mary, Thy most holy Mother, sanctified by Thy conception, also ascend." Our Lord was at last pleased to satisfy the desire of these heavenly citizens by calling Mary to Paradise. But if it was His will that the ark of the old dispensation should be brought with great pomp into the city of David—*And David and all the house of Israel brought the ark with sound of trumpet*—(2 Kings vi. 15)—with how much greater and more glorious pomp did He ordain that His Mother should enter Heaven!

## II.

The Prophet Elias was carried to Heaven in a fiery chariot, which, according to interpreters, was no other than a group of Angels who bore him off from the earth. "But to conduct thee to Heaven, O Mother of God," says the Abbot Rupert, "a fiery chariot was not enough;

the whole court of Heaven, headed by its King thy Son, went forth to meet and accompany thee."

St. Bernardine of Sienna says, that "Jesus," to honour the triumph of His most sweet Mother, "went forth in His glory to meet and accompany her." St. Anselm also says, that "it was precisely for this purpose that the Redeemer was pleased to ascend to Heaven before His Mother; that is, He did so, not only to prepare a throne for her in that kingdom, but also that He might Himself accompany her with all the blessed Spirits, and thus render her entry into Heaven more glorious, and such as became one who was His Mother." St. Peter Damian, contemplating the splendour of this Assumption of Mary into Heaven, says that "we shall find it more glorious than the Ascension of Jesus Christ; for to meet the Redeemer, Angels only went forth; but when the Blessed Virgin was assumed to glory, she was met and accompanied by the Lord of glory Himself, and by the whole blessed company of Saints and Angels." For this reason the Abbot Guerric supposes the Divine Word thus speaking: "To honour the Father, I descended from Heaven; to honour My Mother, I reascended there": that thus I might be enabled to go forth to meet her, and myself accompany her to Paradise.

## Spiritual Reading

TO THEE DO WE SIGH, MOURNING AND WEEPING, IN THIS VALLEY OF TEARS!

I.—THE NECESSITY OF MARY'S INTERCESSION FOR OUR SALVATION.

That it is not only lawful but useful to invoke and pray to the Saints, and more especially to the Queen of Saints, the most holy and ever blessed Virgin Mary, in order that they may obtain us Divine grace, is an Article of Faith, and has been defined by General

Councils, against heretics who condemned it as injurious to Jesus Christ, Who is our only Mediator. But if a Jeremias after his death prayed for Jerusalem—(2 Mach. xv. 14); if the Ancients of the Apocalypse presented the prayers of the Saints to God—(Apoc. v. 8); if a St. Peter promises his disciples that after his death He will be mindful of them—(2 Pet. i. 15); if a holy Stephen prays for his persecutors—(Acts vii. 59); if a St. Paul prays for his companions—(Acts xxvii. 24; Eph. ii. 16; Phil. i. 4; Col. i. 8); if, in fine, the Saints can pray for us, why cannot we beseech the Saints to intercede for us? St. Paul recommends himself to the prayers of his disciples: *Brethren, pray for us*—(1 Thess. v. 25). St. James exhorts us to pray one for another: *Pray one for another, that you may be saved*—(James v. 16). Then we can do the same.

No one denies that Jesus Christ is our only Mediator of justice, and that He by His merits has obtained our reconciliation with God. But, on the other hand, it is impious to assert that God is not pleased to grant graces at the intercession of His Saints, and more especially of Mary, His Mother, whom Jesus desires so much to see loved and honoured by all. Who can pretend that the honour bestowed on a mother does not redound to the honour of the son? *The glory of children are their fathers*—(Prov. xvii. 6). Whence St. Bernard says: "Let us not imagine that we obscure the glory of the Son by the great praise we lavish on the Mother; for the more she is honoured, the greater is the glory of her Son." "There can be no doubt," says the Saint, "that whatever we say in praise of the Mother is equally in praise of the Son." And St. Ildéphonse also says: "That which is given to the Mother redounds to the Son; the honour given to the Queen is honour bestowed on the King." There can be no doubt that by the merits of Jesus, Mary was made the mediatrix of our salvation; not indeed a mediatrix of justice, but of grace and intercession; as St. Bonaventure expressly calls her, "Mary, the most faithful mediatrix of our salvation." And St. Laurence Justinian asks—"How can she be other-

wise than full of grace, who has been made the ladder to Paradise, the gate of Heaven, the most true mediatrix between God and man?"

Hence the learned Suarez justly remarks that if we implore our Blessed Lady to obtain us a favour, it is not because we distrust the Divine mercy, but rather that we fear our own unworthiness and the absence of proper dispositions; and we recommend ourselves to Mary, that her dignity may supply for our lowliness. He says that we apply to Mary "in order that the dignity of the intercessor may supply for our misery. Hence, to invoke the aid of the most Blessed Virgin is not diffidence in the Divine mercy, but dread of our own unworthiness."

That it is most useful and holy to have recourse to the intercession of Mary can only be doubted by those who have not the Faith. But that which we intend to prove here is that the intercession of Mary is even necessary to salvation; we say necessary—not absolutely, but morally. This necessity proceeds from the will itself of God, that all the graces He dispenses should pass through the hands of Mary, according to the opinion of St. Bernard, and which we may now with safety call the general opinion of Theologians and learned men. The author of the *Reign of Mary* positively asserts that such is the case. It is maintained by Vega, Mendoza, Paciucchelli, Segneri, Poiré, Crasset, and by innumerable other learned authors. Even Father Natalis Alexander, who always uses so much reserve in his propositions, even he says that it is the will of God that we should expect all graces through the intercession of Mary. I will give his own words: "God wills that we should obtain all good things that we hope for from Him through the powerful intercession of the Virgin Mother, and we shall obtain them whenever (as we are in duty bound) we invoke her." In confirmation of this, he quotes the following celebrated passage of St. Bernard: "Such is God's will, that we should have all through Mary." Father Contenson is also of the same opinion; for, explaining the words addressed by our Lord on the Cross to St. John: *Behold thy Mother!*—(Jo. xix. 27) he

says : It is the same thing as if Jesus had said : As no one can be saved except through the merits of My sufferings and death, so no one will be a partaker of the Blood then shed otherwise than through the prayer of My Mother. He alone is a son of My sorrows who has Mary for his Mother. My Wounds are ever-flowing fountains of grace ; but their streams will reach no one but by the channel of Mary. In vain will he invoke Me as a Father who has not venerated Mary as a Mother. And thou, My disciple John, if thou lovest Me, love her ; for thou wilt be beloved by Me in proportion to thy love for her.

### Evening Meditation

## CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

### I.

Jesus upon the Cross was a spectacle which filled Heaven and earth with amazement—the sight of an Almighty God, the Lord of all, dying upon an infamous gibbet, condemned as a malefactor between two thieves. It was a spectacle of justice—the Eternal Father, in order that His justice might be satisfied, punishing the sins of men in the person of His only-begotten Son Who was loved by Him as Himself. It was a spectacle of mercy, when His innocent Son died a death so shameful and so bitter, in order to save His creatures from the punishment that was due to them. Especially was it a display of love, in a God offering His life to redeem from death His slaves and enemies !

It is this spectacle which ever was, and ever will be, the dearest object of the contemplation of the Saints, who have counted it little to strip themselves of all earthly pleasures and goods, and to embrace with desire and joy both pain and death, in order to make some return of gratitude to a God Who died for love of them.

Comforted by the sight of Jesus derided upon the Cross, the Saints have loved contempt more than worldly people have loved the honours of the world. At the sight of Jesus naked and dying upon the Cross, they have sought to abandon all the good things of this earth. At the sight of Him all wounded upon the Cross, while the blood flowed forth from all His limbs, they have learnt to abhor sensual pleasures, and have sought to afflict their flesh as much as they could, in order to accompany with their own sufferings the sufferings of the Crucified. At the sight of the obedience and conformity of will practised by Jesus Christ to the will of His Father, they laboured to conquer all those appetites which were not conformed to the Divine pleasure ; while many, though occupied in works of piety, yet, knowing that to be deprived of their own will was their most welcome sacrifice to the Heart of God, entered into some Religious Order, to lead a life of obedience, and subject their own will to that of others. At the sight of the patience of Jesus Christ, in being willing to suffer so many pains and insults for the love of us, they received with satisfaction and joy injuries, infirmities, persecutions, and the torments of tyrants. At the sight of the love Jesus Christ has shown to us in sacrificing to God His life upon the Cross for us, they sacrificed to Jesus Christ all they possessed,—their property, their pleasures, their honours, and their life.

### II.

How is it that so many Christians, although they know by Faith that Jesus Christ died for love of them, instead of devoting themselves wholly to love and serve Him, give themselves up to offending and despising Him for the sake of brief and miserable pleasures ? Whence comes this ingratitude ? It comes from forgetfulness of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ. And, O my God, what will be their remorse and shame at the Day of Judgment, when the Lord shall reproach them with all that He has done and suffered for them ?

Let us, then, never cease, O devout souls, to keep

before our eyes Jesus crucified, and dying in the midst of torments and insults through love of us. From the Passion of Jesus Christ all the Saints have drawn those flames of love which made them forget all the good things of this world, and even their own selves, to give themselves up wholly to love and please this Divine Saviour, Who has so loved men that it seems as if He could not have done more in order to be loved by them. In a word, the Cross, that is, the Passion of Jesus Christ, is that which will gain for us the victory over all our passions, and over all the temptations that hell will hold out to us, in order to separate us from God. The Cross is the road and ladder by which we mount to Heaven. Happy he who embraces it during his life, and does not put it off till the hour of death. He that dies embracing the Cross has that sure pledge of eternal life which is promised to all those who follow Jesus Christ.

O my crucified Jesus, to make Thyself loved by men Thou hast spared nothing; Thou hast even given Thy life in a most painful death; how, then, can men who love their kindred, their friends, and even animals from whom they receive any token of affection, be so ungrateful to Thee as to despise Thy grace and Thy love, for the sake of miserable and vain delights! Oh, wretched me, I am one of those ungrateful beings who, for things of no worth, have renounced Thy friendship, and have turned my back upon Thee. I have deserved that Thou shouldst drive me from Thy face, as I have often banished Thee from my heart. But I know that Thou dost not cease to ask my heart of me: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God*—(Deut. vi. 5). Yea, O my Jesus, as Thou desirest that I should love Thee and offerest me pardon, I renounce all creatures, and henceforth I desire to love Thee alone, my Creator and my Redeemer. Thou dost deserve to be the only object of my soul's love.

O Mary, Mother of God, refuge of sinners, pray for me; obtain for me the grace to love God, and I ask for nothing more.

## Monday—Trinity Week after Pentecost

### Morning Meditation

#### VIII.—THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY INTO HEAVEN.

Let us consider how Jesus Christ came forth from Heaven to meet His Mother. On first meeting her, and to console her, He said: *Arise! Make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come, for winter is now past*—(Cant. ii. 10, 11). Come, My dearest Mother, My pure and beautiful dove! Leave the valley of tears in which for My love, thou hast suffered so much! *Thou shalt be crowned*.

#### I.

Let us consider how Jesus Christ came forth from Heaven to meet His Mother. On first meeting her, and to console her, He said: *Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come, for winter is now past*—(Cant. ii. 10, 11). Come, My own dear Mother, My pure and beautiful dove; leave that valley of tears, in which, for My love, thou hast suffered so much. *Come from Libanus, my Spouse; come from Libanus, come: thou shalt be crowned*—(Cant. iv. 8). Come, soul and body, to enjoy the recompense of thy holy life. If thy sufferings have been great on earth, far greater is the glory I have prepared for thee in Heaven. Enter, then, that kingdom, and take thy seat near me. Come to receive that crown which I will bestow upon thee as Queen of the Universe. Behold, Mary already leaves the earth, at which she looks with affection and compassion:

with affection, remembering the many graces she had there received from her Lord; and with affection and compassion, because in it she leaves so many poor children surrounded with miseries and dangers. But see, Jesus offers her His hand, and the Blessed Mother already ascends; already she has passed beyond the clouds, beyond the spheres. Behold her already at the gates of Heaven. When monarchs make their solemn entry into the capital of their kingdom, they do not pass through the gates, for they are removed to make way for them on this occasion. Hence, when Jesus Christ entered Paradise, the Angels cried out: *Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates; and the King of glory shall enter in*—Ps. xxiii. 7). Thus also, now that Mary goes to take possession of the Kingdom of Heaven, the Angels who accompany her cry out to those within: "Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates; and the Queen of glory shall enter in."

## II.

Behold, Mary already enters that blessed country. But on her entrance the celestial Spirits, seeing her so beautiful and glorious, ask the Angels without the gates, as Origen supposes it, with united voices of exultation: *Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her Beloved?*—(Cant. viii. 5). And who can this creature so beautiful be, that comes from the desert of the earth—a place of thorns and tribulation? But this one comes pure and rich in virtue, leaning on her beloved Lord, Who is graciously pleased Himself to accompany her with so great honour. Who is she? The Angels accompanying her answer: "She is the Mother of our King; she is our Queen, and the Blessed one among women; full of grace, the Saint of Saints, the beloved of God, the Immaculate one, the dove, the fairest of all creatures." Then all the blessed Spirits begin to bless and praise her; singing with far more reason than the Hebrews did to Judith: *Thou art the glory of*

*Jerusalem; thou art the joy of Israel; thou art the honour of our people*—(Judith xv. 10). Ah, our Lady and our Queen, thou, then, art the glory of Paradise, the joy of our country; thou art the honour of us all: be thou ever welcome, be thou ever blessed! Behold thy kingdom; behold us also, who are thy servants, ever ready to obey thy commands!

## Spiritual Reading

## TO THEE DO WE SIGH, MOURNING AND WEEPING, IN THIS VALLEY OF TEARS!

## 2.—THE NECESSITY OF MARY'S INTERCESSION FOR OUR SALVATION.

This proposition—that all we receive from our Lord comes through Mary—does not exactly please a certain modern writer,\* who, although in other respects he speaks of true and false devotion with much learning and piety, yet when he treats of devotion towards the Divine Mother, seems to grudge her that glory which was given her without scruple by a St. Germanus, a St. Anselm, a St. John Damascene, a St. Bonaventure, a St. Antoninus, a St. Bernardine, the Venerable Abbot of Celles, and so many other learned men, who had no difficulty in affirming that the intercession of Mary is not only useful but necessary. This same author says that the proposition that God grants no grace otherwise than through Mary is hyperbolic and exaggerated, having dropped from the lips of some Saints in the heat of fervour, but which, correctly speaking, is only to be understood as meaning that through Mary we received Jesus Christ, by whose merits we obtain all graces; for he adds: "To believe that God can grant us no graces without the intercession of Mary would be contrary to the Faith and the

\* This was the celebrated Muratori.—Ed.

doctrine of St. Paul, who says that we acknowledge *there is one God and one Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus*—(1 Tim. ii. 5).

But with his leave, and going upon his own admissions, *mediation of justice* by way of merit is one thing, and again, it is one thing by way of prayer is another. And that He will not, grant graces without the intercession of Mary. We willingly admit that God is the Source of every good, and the absolute Master of all graces; and that Mary is only a pure creature, who receives whatever she obtains as a pure favour from God. But who can ever deny that it is most reasonable and proper to assert that God, in order to exalt this great creature, who more than all others honoured and loved Him during her life, and whom, moreover, He had chosen to be the Mother of His Son, our common Redeemer, wills that all graces that are granted to those whom He has redeemed should pass through and be dispensed by the hands of Mary? We most readily admit that Jesus Christ is the only Mediator of justice, according to the distinction just made, and that by His merits He obtains us all graces and salvation; but we say that Mary is the Mediatrix of grace; and that receiving all she obtains through Jesus Christ, and because she prays and asks for it in the Name of Jesus Christ, yet all the same whatever graces we receive come to us through her intercession.

There is certainly nothing contrary to Faith in this, but the reverse. It is quite in accordance with the sentiments of the Church, which, in its public and approved prayers, teaches us continually to have recourse to this Divine Mother, and to invoke her as the "health of the weak, the refuge of sinners, the help of Christians, and as our life and hope." In the Office appointed to be said on the Feasts of Mary, this same holy Church, applying the words of Ecclesiasticus to this Blessed Virgin, gives us to understand that in her we find all hope. *In me is all hope of life and of virtue!*—(Eccclus. xxiv. 25). In Mary is every grace. *In me is all grace of the way and of the truth*—(Eccclus. xxiv. 25). In Mary, finally, we find

life and eternal salvation: *He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord*—(Prov. viii. 35). And elsewhere: *They that work by me shall not sin; they that explain me shall have life everlasting*—(Eccclus. xxiv. 30, 31). And surely such expressions as these sufficiently prove that we require the intercession of Mary.

Moreover, we are confirmed in this opinion by so many Theologians and Fathers, of whom it is certainly incorrect to say, as the above-named author does, that, in exalting Mary, they spoke hyperbolically and allowed great exaggerations to fall from their lips. To exaggerate and speak hyperbolically is to exceed the limits of truth; and surely we cannot say that Saints who were animated by the Spirit of God, which is Truth itself, spoke thus. If I may be allowed to make a short digression and give my own sentiment, it is, that when an opinion tends in any way to the honour of the most Blessed Virgin, when it has some foundation, and is not repugnant to the Faith, nor to the decrees of the Church, nor to truth, the refusal to hold it, or to oppose it because the reverse may be true, shows little devotion to the Mother of God. Of do I wish my reader to be, but rather of the number of those who fully and firmly believe all that can without error be believed of the greatness of Mary, according to the Abbot Rupert, who, amongst the acts of homage most pleasing to this good Mother, places that of firmly believing all that redounds to her honour. If there was nothing else to take away our fear of exceeding in the praises of Mary, St. Augustine should suffice; for he declares that whatever we may say in praise of Mary is little in comparison with that which she deserves on account of her dignity of Mother of God; and, moreover, the Church says, in the Mass appointed for her Festivals: "Thou art happy, O sacred Virgin Mary, and most worthy of all praise."

But let us return to the point, and examine what the Saints say on the subject. St. Bernard says that "God has filled Mary with all graces, so that men may receive

by her means, as by a channel, every good thing that comes to them." He says that "she is a full aqueduct, that others may receive of her plenitude." On this the Saint makes the following significant remark: "Before the birth of the Blessed Virgin, a constant flow of graces was wanting, because this aqueduct did not exist." But now that Mary has been given to the world, heavenly graces constantly flow through her on all.

### Evening Meditation

#### CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

##### I.

Pride was the cause of the sin of Adam, and, consequently, of the ruin of the human race. On this account Jesus Christ came to repair this ruin by His own humiliation, not refusing to embrace the shame of all the insults His enemies offered Him, as He had Himself predicted by David: *Because for thy sake I have borne reproach, confusion hath covered my face*—(Ps. lxxviii. 8). The whole life of our Redeemer was filled with shame and insults which He received from men; and He did not refuse to accept them, even to the extent of death itself, in order to deliver us from eternal shame: *Who, having joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame*—(Heb. xii. 2).

O God, who would not mourn for Jesus, and who would not love Him, if he would but consider what He suffered for the three hours during which His crucifixion lasted and in His agony upon the Cross? All His limbs were stricken and tormented, and one could not relieve the other. The afflicted Lord on that bed of pain could not move, being fastened with nails in His hands and feet; all His most sacred flesh was full of wounds, while

the wounds of His hands and feet were most painful, and were compelled to sustain His whole body; so that whosoever He rested upon that Cross, whether on His hands or His feet, there His pains increased. It may be truly said that in those three hours of agony Jesus suffered as many deaths as He passed moments upon the Cross. O innocent Lamb Who hast suffered such things for me, have mercy upon me! Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me!

Yet these outward pains of the body were the least bitter; the inward pains of the soul were far greater. His blessed soul was all desolate, and deprived of every drop of consolation and sensible relief; all was weariness, sorrow, and affliction. This He uttered in the words: *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*—(Matt. xxvii. 46). Drowned in this sea of inward and outward grief, our Saviour, so worthy of our love, thought fit to end His life, as He had foretold by the mouth of David: *I am come into the depths of the sea, and a tempest hath overwhelmed me*—(Ps. lxxviii. 3).

##### II.

Behold, at the very time that Jesus was in agony upon the Cross, and was drawing near to death, all they who stood near Him, priests, scribes, elders, and soldiers, never ceased adding to His pangs with insults and mockeries. St. Matthew writes: *They that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads*—(Matt. xxvii. 39). This was already prophesied by David, when he wrote, speaking in the person of Christ: *All they that saw me reviled me, they spoke with their lips, and wagged their head*—(Ps. xxi. 8).

They who passed before Him said: *Vah! Thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it, save thy own self; if thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross*—(Matt. xxvii. 40). Thou hast boasted, they said, that Thou wouldst destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. Yet Jesus had not said that He could destroy the material temple and raise it again

in three days; but He had said: *Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up again*—(Jo. ii. 19). With these words He indeed intended to express His own power; but He really (as Euthymius and others explain it) spoke allegorically, foretelling that, through the act of the Jews, His soul would be one day separated from His body, but that in three days it would rise again.

They said: *Save thyself*. O ungrateful men! If this great Son of God when He was made Man, had chosen to save Himself, He would not voluntarily have chosen death.

*If thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross*—(Matt. xxvii. 40); yet, if Jesus had come down, He would not have accomplished our Redemption by His death. We could not have been delivered from eternal death. "He would not come down," says St. Ambrose, "lest when He came down, I should die." Theophylact writes, that they who said this spoke by the instigation of the devil who sought to hinder our salvation which Jesus was about to accomplish by means of the Cross. And he adds that the Lord would not have ascended the Cross had He been willing to descend from it without accomplishing our Redemption. St. John Chrysostom also says that the Jews uttered this insult in order that Jesus might die insulted as an impostor in the sight of all men, and be proved unable to deliver Himself from the Cross, after He had boasted that He was the Son of God.

St. John Chrysostom remarks that the Jews ignorantly said: *If thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross*; for if Jesus had come down from the Cross before He had died, He would not have been that Son of God Who was promised, and Who was to save us by His death. On this account, says the Saint, He did not come down from the Cross until He was dead, because He had come down from Heaven for the very purpose of giving His life for our salvation. St. Athanasius makes the same remark, saying that our Redeemer chose to be known as the true Son of God, not by coming down from the Cross, but by remaining upon it till He was dead. And thus it was foretold by the Prophets that our Redeemer

must be crucified and die, as St. Paul wrote: *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written: Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree*—(Gal. iii. 13).

## Tuesday—Twelfth Week after Pentecost

### Morning Meditation

#### IX.—THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY INTO HEAVEN.

Consider how all the Saints in Paradise welcomed holy Mary on her entrance into Heaven, and saluted her as their Queen. And the Three Divine Persons, placing her throne on the right of that of Jesus, declared her Sovereign of Heaven and earth, and commanded the Angels and all creatures to acknowledge her as Queen and to serve and obey her.

#### I.

Consider how all the Saints then in Paradise welcomed holy Mary on her entrance into Heaven and saluted her as their Queen. All the holy Virgins came: *The daughters saw her, and declared her most blessed . . . and they praised her*—(Cant. vi. 8). "We," they said, "O most Blessed Lady, are also queens in this kingdom, but thou art our Queen; for thou wast the first to give us the great example of consecrating our virginity to God; we all bless and thank thee for it." Then came the holy

Confessors to salute her as their mistress; who, by her holy life, had taught them so many beautiful virtues. The holy Martyrs also came to salute her as their Queen; for she, by her great constancy in the sorrows of her Son's Passion, had taught them, and also by her merits had obtained them strength, to lay down their lives for the Faith. St. James, the only one of the Apostles who was yet in Heaven, also came to thank her in the name of all the other Apostles for all the comfort and help she had afforded them while she was on earth. The Prophets next came to salute her, and said: "Ah, Lady, thou wast the one foreshadowed in our prophecies." The holy Patriarchs then came and said: O Mary, it is thou who wast our hope; for thee it was that we sighed with such ardour and for so long a time." But amongst these latter came our First Parents, Adam and Eve, to thank her with the greatest affection. "Ah, beloved daughter," they said, "thou hast repaired the injury which we inflicted on the human race; thou hast obtained for the world that blessing which we lost by our crime; by thee we are saved, and for it be ever blessed."

St. Simeon then came to kiss her feet, and with joy reminded her of the day when he received the Infant Jesus from her hands. St. Zachary and St. Elizabeth also came, and again thanked her for that loving visit which, with so great humility and charity, she had paid them in their dwelling, and by which they had received such treasures of grace. St. John the Baptist came with still greater affection to thank her for having sanctified him by her voice. But how must her holy parents, St. Joachim and St. Anne, have spoken when they came to salute her! O God, with what tenderness must they have blessed her, saying: "Ah, beloved daughter, what a favour it was for us to have such a child! Be thou now our Queen; for thou art the Mother of our God, and as such we salute and worship thee."

## II.

Who can ever form an idea of the affection with which her dear spouse, St. Joseph, came to salute her? Who can ever describe the joy which the holy Patriarch felt at seeing his spouse so triumphantly enter Heaven and made its Queen. With what tenderness must he have addressed her: "Ah, my Lady and spouse, how can I ever thank our God as I ought, for having made me thy spouse, thou who art His true Mother! Through thee I merited to assist on earth the childhood of the Eternal Word, to carry Him so often in my arms, and to receive so many special graces. Ever blessed be those moments which I spent in life in serving Jesus and thee, my holy spouse. Behold our Jesus! Let us rejoice that now He no longer lies on straw in a manger, as we saw Him at His birth in Bethlehem. He no longer lives poor and despised in a shop, as He once lived with us in Nazareth; He is no longer nailed to an infamous gibbet, as when He died in Jerusalem for the salvation of the world; but He is seated at the right hand of His Father, as King and Lord of Heaven and earth. And now, O my Queen, we shall never more be separated from His feet; we shall there bless Him and love Him for all eternity."

All the Angels then came to salute her; and she, the great Queen, thanked all for the assistance they had given her on earth, and more especially she thanked the Archangel Gabriel, who was the happy ambassador, the bearer of all her glories, when he came to announce to her that she was the chosen Mother of God.

The humble and holy Virgin, then kneeling, adored the Divine Majesty, and all absorbed in the consciousness of her own nothingness, thanked God for all the graces bestowed upon her by His pure goodness, and especially for having made her the Mother of the Eternal Word. And then let him who can, comprehend with what love the Most Holy Trinity blessed her! Let him comprehend the welcome given to His daughter by the Eternal Father; to His Mother by the Son; to His spouse by the Holy Ghost. The Father crowned her by imparting His

power to her; the Son, His wisdom; the Holy Ghost, His love. And the Three Divine Persons, placing her throne at the right of that of Jesus, declared her Sovereign of Heaven and earth; and commanded the Angels and all creatures to acknowledge her as their Queen, and as such to serve and obey her.

### Spiritual Reading

#### TO THEE DO WE SIGH, MOURNING AND WEEP- ING IN THIS VALLEY OF TEARS!

3.—THE NECESSITY OF MARY'S INTERCESSION FOR OUR SALVATION.

The devil, like Holofernes, who, in order to gain possession of the city of Bethulia, ordered the aqueducts to be destroyed, exerts himself to his utmost to destroy devotion to the Mother of God in souls; for if this channel of grace is closed, he easily gains possession of them. St. Bernard says: "See, O men, with what tender devotion our Lord wills that we should honour our Queen, by always having recourse to her protection; and by relying on it; for in Mary God has placed the plenitude of every good, so that henceforward we may know and acknowledge that whatever hope, grace, or other advantage we possess, all comes from the hands of Mary." St. Antoninus says the same thing: "All graces that have ever been bestowed on men, all came through Mary." And on this account she is called the moon, according to the following remark of St. Bonaventure: "As the moon, which stands between the sun and the earth, transmits to this latter whatever it receives from the former, so does Mary pour out upon us who are in this world the heavenly graces that she receives from the Divine Sun of justice."

Again, the holy Church calls her "the happy gate of

heaven"; for, as the same St. Bernard remarks: "As every mandate of grace that is sent by a king passes through the palace-gates, so does every grace that comes from Heaven to the world pass through the hands of Mary." St. Bonaventure says that Mary is called "the gate of Heaven, because no one can enter that blessed kingdom without passing through her."

An ancient author, probably St. Siphronius, in a sermon on the Assumption, published with the works of St. Jerome, says that the plenitude of grace which is in Jesus Christ came into Mary, though in a different way; meaning that it is our Lord, as the Head, from Whom the vital spirits (that is, Divine help to obtain eternal salvation), flow into us, who are the members of His mystical body; and that the same plenitude is in Mary, as in the neck, through which these vital spirits pass to the members. The same idea is confirmed by St. Bernardine of Sienna, who explains it more clearly, saying, "that all graces of the spiritual life that descend from Christ, their Head, to the faithful, who are His mystical body, are transmitted through the instrumentality of Mary." The same St. Bernardine endeavours to assign a reason for this when he says that "as God was pleased to dwell in the womb of this holy Virgin, she acquired, so to speak, a kind of jurisdiction over all graces; for when Jesus Christ issued forth from her most sacred womb, all the streams of Divine gifts flowed from her as from a celestial ocean." Elsewhere, repeating the same idea in more distinct terms, he asserts that "from the moment that this Virgin Mother conceived the Divine Word in her womb, she acquired a special jurisdiction, so to say, over all the gifts of the Holy Ghost, so that no creature has since received any grace from God otherwise than through the hands of Mary."

Another author, in a commentary on a passage of Jeremias, in which the Prophet, speaking of the Incarnation of the Eternal Word, and of Mary His Mother, says that a woman shall compass a man—(Jer. xxxi. 22), remarks, that "as no line can be drawn from the centre of a circle without passing through the circumference, so no grace

proceeds from Jesus, Who is the centre of every good thing, without passing through Mary, who compassed Him when she received Him into her womb.,"

St. Bernardine says that for this reason, "all gifts, all virtues, and all graces are dispensed by the hands of Mary to whomsoever, whensoever, and, as she pleases." Richard of St. Laurence also asserts that, "God wills that whatever good things He bestows on His creatures should pass through the hands of Mary." And therefore the Venerable Abbot of Celles exhorts all to have recourse to this "treasury of graces," as he calls her, for the world and the whole human race have to receive every good that can be hoped for through her alone. "Address yourselves to the Blessed Virgin," he says; "for by her, and in her, and with her, and from her, the world receives, and is to receive, every good."

It must now be evident to all that when these Saints and authors tell us in such terms that all graces come to us through Mary, they do not simply mean to say that we "received Jesus Christ, the source of every good, but that they assure us that God, Who gave us Jesus Christ, wills that all graces that have been, that are, and will be dispensed to men to the end of the world through the merits of Christ, should be dispensed by the hands and through the intercession of Mary.

And thus Father Suarez concludes that it is the sentiment of the universal Church that, "the intercession and prayers of Mary are, above those of all others, not only useful, but necessary." Necessary, in accordance with what we have already said, not with an absolute necessity; for the mediation of Jesus Christ alone is absolutely necessary; but with a moral necessity; for the Church believes with St. Bernard that God has determined that no grace shall be granted otherwise than by the hands of Mary. "God wills," says the Saint, "that we should have nothing that has not passed through the hands of Mary"; and before St. Bernard, St. Ildelphonsus asserted the same thing, addressing the Blessed Virgin in the following terms: "O Mary, God has decided on commit-

ting all good gifts that He has provided for men to thy hands, and therefore He has entrusted all treasures and riches of grace to thee." And therefore St. Peter Damian remarks that, "God would not become man without the consent of Mary; in the first place, that we might feel ourselves under great obligations to her; and in the second, that we might understand that the salvation of all is left to the care of this Blessed Virgin."

St. Bonaventure, on the words of the Prophet Isaias, *And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root, and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him*—(Is. xi. 1, 2), makes a beautiful remark, saying: "Whoever desires the seven-fold grace of the Holy Spirit, let him seek for the flower of the Holy Ghost in the rod." That is, for Jesus in Mary; "For by the rod we find the flower, and by the flower, God." And in the twelfth chapter of the same work, he adds: "If you desire to possess this flower, bend down the rod, which bears the flower, by prayer; and so you will obtain it." The seraphical Father, in his sermon for the Epiphany, on the words of St. Matthew, *They found the child with Mary his mother*—(Matt. ii. 11), reminds us that if we wish to find Jesus we must go to Mary. We may, then, conclude, that in vain shall we seek for Jesus unless we endeavour to find Him with Mary. And so St. Ildelphonsus says, "I desire to be the servant of the Son; but because no one will ever be so without serving the Mother, for this reason I desire the servitude of Mary."

### Evening Meditation

#### CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

##### I.

St. Matthew goes on to relate other insults which the Jews offered Jesus Christ: *He saved others, himself he cannot save*—(Matt. xxvii. 42).

Thus they treated Him as an impostor, by referring to the miracles wrought by Him in the restoration of the dead to life, and by treating Him as one Who was unable to save His own life.

St. Leo replies that this was not the proper hour for Jesus to display His Divine power; and that He would not hinder the Redemption of man in order to confound their blasphemies.

St. Gregory also suggests a motive why Jesus would not descend from the Cross: "If He had then come down, He would not have shown to us the virtue of patience." Of course Jesus Christ could deliver Himself from the Cross and from these insults; yet this was not the time to display His power, but rather to teach us patience in our toils, in order that we may fulfil the Divine pleasure; and therefore Jesus would not deliver Himself from death before He had fulfilled His Father's will, that we might not be deprived of this great example of patience. "Because He taught patience, He laid aside His power," says St. Augustine.

##### II.

The patience Jesus Christ exercised in enduring the shame of all the insults offered Him by the Jews obtained for us grace to endure with patience and peace of mind all the humiliations and persecutions of the world. Therefore St. Paul, speaking of the journey of Jesus

Christ to Calvary when He carried the Cross, thus exhorts us to accompany Him: *Let us, therefore, go forth to meet him without the camp, bearing his reproach*—(Heb. xiii. 13). The Saints, when they received injuries, did not think of revenging themselves, nor were they disturbed; they were even comforted at seeing themselves despised, as Jesus Christ was despised. Therefore let us not hesitate to embrace, for the love of Jesus Christ, the very insults that were offered to Him, since Jesus Christ suffered those insults for love of us.

O my Redeemer, for the time past I have not done this. For the future I desire to suffer everything for love of Thee: give me strength to put my desires into execution.

### Wednesday—Twelfth Week after Pentecost

#### Morning Meditation

#### X.—THE GLORY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY IN HEAVEN.

Let us consider how exalted was the throne to which our Lady was raised in Heaven. "If the mind of man," says St. Bernard, "can never comprehend the immense glory prepared by God in Heaven for those who love Him, as St. Paul assures us, who then can ever comprehend the glory God prepared for His beloved Mother!"

##### I.

Let us consider how exalted was the throne to which our Lady was raised in Heaven.

"If the mind of man," says St. Bernard, "can never comprehend the immense glory prepared in Heaven by God for those who on earth have loved Him, as the Apostle tells us, who can ever comprehend the glory God prepared for His beloved Mother, who, more than all men, loved Him on earth; nay, even from the very first moment of her creation, loved Him more than all men and Angels united? Rightly, then, does the Church sing that Mary, having loved God more than all the Angels, "the Mother of God has been exalted above them all in the heavenly kingdom." *Exaltata est sancta Dei Genitrix super choros Angelorum ad coelestia regna.* Yes, she was exalted, says the abbot Gueric, above the Angels; so that she sees none above her but her Son, Who is the only-begotten of the Father.

Hence it is that the learned Gerson asserts that, as all the orders of Angels and Saints are divided into three Hierarchies, so does Mary of herself constitute a Hierarchy apart, the sublimest of all, and next to that of God. And, says St. Antoninus, as the mistress is, without comparison, above her servants, so is "Mary, who is the sovereign Lady of the Angels, exalted incomparably above the angelic hierarchies." To understand this, we need only know what David said: *The Queen stood on thy right hand*—(Ps. xliv. 10). And as an ancient author says, these words are explained as meaning that "Mary is placed at the right hand of God."

## II.

It is certain, as St. Ildephonus says, that Mary's good works incomparably surpassed in merit those of all the Saints, and therefore her reward must have surpassed theirs in the same proportion; for "as that which she bore was incomprehensible, so is the reward which she merited and received incomprehensibly greater than that of all the Saints." And since it is certain that God rewards according to merit, as the Apostle writes, *who will render to every man according to his works*—(Rom. ii. 6), it is also certain, as St. Thomas teaches, that the

Blessed Virgin, "who was equal to and even superior in merit to all men and Angels, was exalted above all the celestial orders." "In fine," adds St. Bernard, "let us measure the singular grace that she acquired on earth, and then we may measure the singular glory which she obtained in Heaven"; for, "according to the measure of her grace on earth is the measure of her glory in the kingdom of the Blessed."

## Spiritual Reading

### TO THEE DO WE SIGH, MOURNING AND WEEPING IN THIS VALLEY OF TEARS.

#### 4.—THE NECESSITY OF MARY'S INTERCESSION FOR OUR SALVATION.

St. Bernard says that "as a man and a woman co-operated in our ruin, so it was proper that another man and another woman should co-operate in our Redemption, and these two were Jesus and His Mother Mary." "There is no doubt," says the Saint, "that Jesus Christ alone was more than sufficient to redeem us; but it was more becoming that both sexes should co-operate in the reparation of an evil in causing which both had shared." Hence Blessed Albert the Great calls Mary, the "helper of the redemption"; and the Blessed Virgin herself revealed to St. Bridget, that "as Adam and Eve sold the world for an apple, so did she with her Son redeem it as it were with one heart." This is confirmed by St. Anselm, who says that "although God could create the world out of nothing, yet, when it was lost by sin, he would not repair the evil without the co-operation of Mary."

Suarez says that "Mary co-operated in our salvation in three ways; first, by having merited, by a merit of congruity, the Incarnation of the Word; secondly, by having continually prayed for us whilst she was living in

this world; thirdly, by having willingly sacrificed the life of her Son to God. For this reason our Lord has justly decreed, that, as Mary co-operated in the salvation of man with so much love, and at the same time gave such glory to God, so all men through her intercession are to obtain their salvation.

Mary is called "the co-operator in our justification"; for to her God has entrusted all graces intended for us; and therefore St. Bernard affirms that "all men, past, present, and to come, should look upon Mary as the means and negotiator of the salvation of all generations."

Jesus Christ says that no one can find Him unless the Eternal Father first draws him by the means of Divine grace: *No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me, draw him*—(Jo. vi. 44). Thus also does Jesus Christ address His Mother, says Richard of St. Laurence: "No one comes to Me unless My Mother first of all draw him by her prayers." Jesus was the fruit of Mary, as St. Elizabeth told her: *Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb*—(Luke i. 42). Whoever, therefore, desires the fruit must go to the tree; whoever desires Jesus must go to Mary; and whoever finds Mary will most certainly find Jesus.

When St. Elizabeth saw that the most Blessed Virgin had come to visit her in her own house, not knowing how to thank her, and filled with humility, she exclaimed: *And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?*—(Luke i. 43). But, we may ask, how could this be? Did not St. Elizabeth already know that not only Mary, but also Jesus, had entered her house? Why then does she say that she is unworthy to receive the Mother, and not, rather, that she is unworthy to receive the Son, Who had come to visit her? Ah, yes, it was because the Saint knew full well that when Mary comes she brings Jesus, and therefore it was sufficient to thank the Mother without naming the Son.

## Evening Meditation

### CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

#### I.

The Jews, not satisfied with the injuries and blasphemies they had offered to Jesus Christ, reproached Him with the Name of His Father, saying: *He trusted in God, let him now deliver him, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God*—(Matt. xxvii. 43). This sacrilegious expression of the Jews was already foretold by David, when he said in the Name of Christ: *All they that saw me laughed me to scorn . . . saying: He trusted in God, let him deliver him, let him save him, seeing he delighted in him*—(Ps. xxi. 8, 9). These very men who thus spoke were called bulls, dogs, and lions by David in the same Psalm: *Fat bulls have besieged me . . . Many dogs have encompassed me . . . Save me from the mouth of the lion*—(Ps. xxi.). Thus, when the Jews said: *Let him now deliver him if he will have him*—(Matt. xxvii. 43), they truly showed that they were these bulls, dogs, and lions foretold by David.

These very same blasphemies, which were one day to be spoken against the Saviour and against God, were already foretold by the Wise Man with even more exactness: *He boasteth that he hath the knowledge of God, and calleth himself the son of God . . . He glorieth that he hath God for his father . . . If he be the true son of God he will befriend him and will deliver him from the hands of his enemies . . . Let us examine him by outrages and tortures that we may know his meekness and try his patience. Let us condemn him to a most shameful death*—(Wis. ii. 13-20).

The chief priests were stirred up by envy and hatred against Jesus Christ thus to insult Him; but, at the same time, they were not exempt from the fear of some great

punishment, as they could not deny the miracles wrought by our Lord. Wherefore all the priests and chiefs of the Synagogue continued disturbed and in terror, and therefore desired to be present at His death, in order to be freed from this fear which tormented them. Seeing Him then fastened upon the Cross, and that He was not delivered from it by His Father, they proceeded with increased audacity to taunt Him with His helplessness and His saying He was the Son of God. They said: "He gloried that He had God for His Father; why, then, does not God deliver Him if He loves Him as His Son?" But these malicious men were in grievous error, for God did truly love Jesus Christ, and loved Him as His Son; and He loved Him on this very account, that Jesus was sacrificing His life upon the Cross for the salvation of men, in order to obey His Father. This Jesus Himself had said: *I lay down my life for my sheep . . . therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life*—(Jo. x. 15, 17). The Father had already destined Him to be the victim of this great sacrifice which would bring Him infinite glory—the Sacrifice of the God-man Himself—and which would ensure the salvation of all men; but if the Father had delivered Him from death, the sacrifice would have been imperfect, and then the Father would have been deprived of that glory, while men would have been deprived of their salvation.

## II.

Tertullian writes that all the insults that were offered to Jesus Christ were a secret remedy for our pride; for these injuries, which were unjust, and undeserved, were nevertheless necessary for our salvation, and becoming a God Who chose to suffer so much to save man. And then, speaking of the reproaches laid against Jesus, he adds: "Of Him they were unworthy, but to us they were necessary, and, for that reason, they were worthy of God, because nothing is so worthy of God as the salvation of man."

Let us, therefore, who glory in being disciples of Jesus

Christ, be ashamed of angrily resenting the injuries we receive from men, because the God Who made us, suffered the same for our salvation with so much patience. And let us not be ashamed of imitating Jesus Christ in pardoning those who offend us, for He Himself declares, in the Day of Judgment He will be ashamed of those who in this life have been ashamed of Him.

O my Jesus, how can I grieve over any insults I may receive, who have so often deserved to be trodden under foot by the devils in hell! Oh, by the merit of all the insults which Thou didst suffer in Thy Passion, give me grace to suffer with patience all the insults which may be offered to me, through love of Thee, Who hast embraced so many for love of me. I love Thee above all things, and desire to suffer for Thee, Who hast suffered so much for me. I hope for everything from Thee, Who hast bought me with Thy Blood. And I also hope in thy intercession, O my Mother Mary.

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**Thursday—Twelfth Week after Pentecost**


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**Morning Meditation**


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**XI.—THE GLORY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN  
MARY IN HEAVEN.**

"As the splendour of the sun exceeds that of all the stars united," says St. Basil of Seleucia, "so does Mary's glory surpass that of all the Blessed in Heaven." The greatest glory of the Blessed is, after the vision of God, the presence of Heaven's most beautiful Queen.

## I.

“As the splendour of the sun exceeds that of all the stars united,” says St. Basil of Seleucia, “so does Mary’s glory exceed that of all the blessed.” St. Peter Damian adds, that “as the light of the moon and stars is so entirely eclipsed on the appearance of the sun, that it is as if it was not, so also does Mary’s glory so far exceed the splendour of all men and Angels that, so to say, they do not appear in Heaven.” Hence St. Bernardine of Sienna asserts, with St. Bernard, that the Blessed participate in part in the Divine glory; but that the Blessed Virgin has been, in a certain way, so greatly enriched with it, that it would seem that no creature could be more closely united with God than Mary is: “She has penetrated into the bottom of the deep, and seems immersed as deeply as it is possible for a creature in that inaccessible light.” Blessed Albert the Great confirms this, saying that our Queen “contemplates the Majesty of God in incomparably closer proximity than all other creatures.” St. Bernardine of Sienna, moreover, says that as the various planets are illumined by the sun, so all the Blessed receive light and an increase of happiness from the sight of Mary. And in another place he also asserts that when the glorious Virgin Mother of God ascended to Heaven, she augmented the joy of all its inhabitants. For the same reason St. Peter Damian says that the greatest glory of the Blessed in Heaven is, after the vision of God, the presence of this most beautiful Queen. And St. Bonaventure says that, “after God, our greatest glory and our greatest joy is Mary.”

O great, exalted, and most glorious Lady, prostrate at the foot of thy throne we worship thee from this valley of tears. We rejoice at the immense glory with which our Lord has enriched thee; and now that thou art enthroned as Queen of Heaven and earth, ah, forget not us, thy poor servants. Disdain not, from the high throne on which thou reignest, to cast thine eyes of mercy on us miserable creatures. The nearer thou art to the source of graces, in the greater abundance canst thou

procure those graces for us. In Heaven thou seest more plainly our miseries; hence thou must compassionate and succour us the more. Make us thy faithful servants on earth, that thus we may one day bless thee in Heaven.

## II.

Let us, then, rejoice with Mary that God has exalted her to so high a throne in Heaven. Let us also rejoice on our own account; for though our Mother is no longer present with us on earth, having ascended in glory to Heaven, yet in affection she is always with us. Nay, even being there nearer to God, she better knows our miseries; and her pity for us is greater, while she is better able to help us. Is it possible, O Blessed Virgin,” asks St. Peter Damian, “because thou art so greatly exalted, thou hast forgotten us in our miseries? Ah, no, God forbid that we should have such a thought! So compassionate a heart cannot but pity our so great miseries.” “If Mary’s compassion for the miserable,” says St. Bonaventure, “was great when she lived upon earth, it is far greater now that she reigns in Heaven.”

Let us dedicate ourselves to the service of this Queen, to honour and love her as much as we can; for, as Richard of St. Laurence remarks, “she is not like other rulers, who oppress their vassals with burdens and taxes; but she enriches her servants with graces, merits and rewards.” Let us also entreat her in the words of the Abbot Gueric: “O Mother of mercy, thou who sittest on so lofty a throne and so near to God, satiate thyself with the glory of thy Jesus, and send us, thy servants, the fragments that are left. Thou dost now enjoy the heavenly banquet of thy Lord; and we, who are still on earth, as dogs under the table, ask thy mercy.”

On thy Assumption into Heaven, O Mary, when thou wast made Queen of the universe, we also consecrate ourselves to thy service. In the midst of thy so great joy console us also by accepting us as thy servants. Thou art, then, our Mother. Ah, most sweet Mother, most amiable Mother, thine altars are surrounded by many

people; some ask to be cured of sickness, some to be relieved in their necessities, some for an abundant harvest, and some for success in litigation. We ask thee for graces more pleasing to thy heart; obtain for us that we may be humble, detached from the world, resigned to the Divine will; obtain for us the holy fear of God, a good death, and Paradise. O Lady, change us from sinners into saints; work this miracle, which will redound more to thy honour than if thou didst restore sight to a thousand blind persons, or didst raise a thousand from the dead. Thou art all-powerful with God, for we know that thou art His Mother, His beloved one, His most dear one, filled with His grace. What can He ever deny thee? O most beautiful Queen, we have no claim that thou shouldst show thyself to us here on earth, but we do desire to go to see thee in Paradise; and it is thou who must obtain us this grace. For it we hope with confidence. Amen, amen.

### Spiritual Reading

#### TO THEE DO WE SIGH, MOURNING AND WEEP- ING IN THIS VALLEY OF TEARS!

5.—THE NECESSITY OF MARY'S INTERCESSION FOR  
OUR SALVATION.

*She is like the merchant's ship, she bringeth her bread from afar—(Prov. xxxi. 14).* Mary was this fortunate ship that brought us Jesus Christ from Heaven, Who is the Living Bread that comes down from Heaven to give us eternal life, as He Himself says: *I am the living bread, which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever—(Jo. vi. 51, 52).* And hence Richard of St. Laurence says that "in the sea of this world all will be lost who are not received into this ship; that is to say, all who are not protected by Mary";

and therefore he adds: "As often as we see ourselves in danger of perishing in the midst of the temptations and contending passions of this life, let us have recourse to Mary, and cry out quickly: *O Lady, save us, we perish!* Remark that this writer does not scruple to address

these words to Mary: "*Save us, we perish!*" as does a certain author already noticed, who asserts that we cannot ask Mary to save us, as this belongs to God alone. But since a culprit condemned to death can beg a royal favourite to save him by interceding with the king that his life may be spared, why cannot we ask the Mother of God to save us by obtaining us eternal life? St. John Damascene scrupled not to address her in these words: "Pure and immaculate Virgin, save me, and deliver me from eternal damnation." St. Bonaventure called Mary "the salvation of those who invoked her." The holy Church approves of the invocation by also calling her the "salvation of the weak." And shall we scruple to ask her to save us, when "the way of salvation is open to none otherwise than through Mary," as a certain author remarks? And before him St. Germanus had said the same thing, speaking of Mary: "No one is saved but through thee."

But let us now see what else the Saints say of the need in which we are of the intercession of the Divine Mother. The glorious St. Cajetan used to say that we may seek for graces, but shall never find them without the intercession of Mary. This is confirmed by St. Antoninus, who thus beautifully expresses himself: "Whoever asks and expects to obtain graces without the intercession of Mary endeavours to fly without wings"; for, as Pharaoh said to Joseph: *the land of Egypt is in thy hands*, and directed all who came to him for food to go to Joseph: *Go to Joseph—(Gen. xli. 55)*; so does God send us to Mary when we seek for grace: "Go to Mary"; for "He has decreed," says St. Bernard, "that He will grant no graces otherwise than by the hands of Mary." "And thus," says Richard of St. Laurence, "our salvation is in the hands of Mary; so that we Christians may with much greater reason say to Mary than the Egyptians to

Joseph : *Our life is in thy hands*—(Gen. xlvii. 25). The venerable Raymond Jordano speaks in the same way of Mary : "Our salvation is in her hands." Cassian speaks in still stronger terms. He says absolutely, that "the salvation of all depends on their being favoured and protected by Mary." He who is protected by Mary will be saved; he who is not, will be lost. St. Bernardine of Sienna thus addresses this Blessed Virgin : "O Lady, since thou art the dispenser of all graces, and since the grace of salvation can only come through thy hands, our salvation depends on thee."

Therefore Richard of St. Laurence had good reason for saying that, "as we should fall into the abyss if the ground were withdrawn from under our feet, so does a soul deprived of the succour of Mary first fall into sin, and then into hell." St. Bonaventure says that "God will not save us without the intercession of Mary." And that "as a child cannot live without a nurse to suckle it, so no one can be saved without the protection of Mary." Therefore he exhorts us "to thirst after devotion to her, to preserve it with care, and never to abandon it until we have received her maternal blessing in Heaven." "And whoever," exclaims St. Germinus, "could know God, were it not for thee, O most holy Mary? Who could be saved? Who would be preserved from dangers? Who would receive any grace, were it not for thee, O Mother of God, O full of grace?" These are his own beautiful words : "There is no one, O most holy Mary, who can know God but through thee! No one who can be saved or redeemed but through thee, O Mother of God! No one who can be delivered from dangers but through thee, O Virgin Mother! No one who obtains mercy but through thee, O thou who art filled with all grace!" And in another place, addressing her, he says, "No one would be free from the effects of the concupiscent of the flesh and from sin, unless thou didst open the way to him."

## Evening Meditation

### CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE SOLEMN WORDS OF JESUS ON THE CROSS.

#### I.

*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!*  
—(Luke xxiii. 34).

O loving tenderness of Jesus towards men! St. Augustine says that when the Saviour was injured by His enemies, He besought pardon for them; for He thought, not so much of the injuries He received from them, and the death they inflicted upon Him, as upon the love which brought Him to die for them.

But some ask : Why did Jesus pray to the Father to pardon them, when He Himself could have forgiven their crimes? St. Bernard replies that He prayed to the Father, not because He could not Himself forgive them, but that He might teach us to pray for them that persecute us. The holy abbot says also in another place : "O wonderful thing! He cries : *Forgive!* They cry : *Crucify!*" Arnold of Chartres remarks that while Jesus was labouring to save the Jews, they were labouring to destroy themselves; but the love of the Son had more power with God than the blindness of that ungrateful people. St. Cyprian writes : "Even he who sheds the Blood of Christ is made to live by the Blood of Christ." Jesus Christ, in dying, had so great a desire to save all men, that He made even those enemies who shed His Blood with torments partakers of that Blood. Look, says St. Augustine, at thy God upon His Cross; see how He prays for them that crucify Him; and then deny pardon to thy brother who has offended thee!

## II.

St. Leo says that it was through this prayer of Christ that so many thousands of Jews were converted by the preaching of St. Paul, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles. And St. Jerome says that God did not will that the prayer of Jesus Christ should continue without effect, and therefore at the very time He caused many of the Jews to embrace the Faith. But why were they not all converted? I reply that the prayer of Jesus Christ was conditional, and that that they who were converted were not of the number of those of whom it was said, *You always resist the Holy Ghost*—(Acts vii. 51).

In this prayer Jesus Christ included all sinners, so that we all may say to God :

O Eternal Father, hear the prayer of Thy beloved Son, Who prayed to Thee to pardon us. We deserve not this pardon, but Jesus Christ has merited it, Who by His death has more than abundantly satisfied for our sins. No, my God, I will not be obstinate like the Jews; I repent, O my Father, with all my heart, for having offended Thee, and through the merits of Jesus Christ I ask for pardon. And Thou, O my Jesus, Thou dost know that I am poor and sick, and lost through my sins; but Thou didst come from Heaven on purpose to heal the sick and to save the lost who repent of having offended Thee. The Prophet Isaias said Thou wouldst *heal the contrite of heart*—(Is. lxi. 1). And of Thee St. Matthew writes : *The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost*—(Matt. xviii. 11).

## Friday—Twelfth Week after Pentecost (First Friday of September).

### Morning Meditation

#### THE COMPASSIONATE HEART OF JESUS.

O my Jesus, Thou dost pardon penitent sinners, and Thou dost not refuse to give them in this world everything in Holy Communion, and in the next world everything in eternal glory. Where, then, is a heart to be found so amiable and so compassionate as Thine, O my dearest Saviour?

## I.

Where shall we find a heart more compassionate or tender than the Heart of Jesus, or one that has greater pity for our miseries?

This pity induced Him to descend from Heaven to this earth; it made Him say that He was that Good Shepherd Who came to give His life to save His sheep. In order to obtain the pardon of our sins, He would not spare Himself, but would sacrifice Himself on the Cross, that by His sufferings He might satisfy for the punishment due to us. This pity and compassion makes Him say even now : *Why will ye die, O house of Israel? Return ye and live*—(Ezech. xviii. 31, 32). O men, He says, my poor children, why will you damn yourselves by flying from Me? Do you not see that by separating yourselves from Me you are hastening to eternal death? I desire not to see you lost; do not despair; as long as you wish to return, return and you shall recover your life : *Return ye and live*.

O compassionate Heart of my Jesus, have pity on me. Most sweet Jesus, have mercy on me. I say now, and beseech Thee to give me the grace always to say to Thee : "Most sweet Jesus, have mercy on me !" Even before I offended Thee, my Redeemer, I certainly did not deserve any of the favours Thou hast bestowed upon me. Thou hast created me, Thou hast given me so much light and knowledge; and all without any merit of mine. But after I had offended Thee, I not only did not deserve Thy favour, but I deserved to be forsaken by Thee and cast into hell. Thy compassion has made Thee wait for me and preserve my life even when I had offended Thee. Thy compassion has enlightened me and offered me pardon; it has given me sorrow for my sins, and the desire of loving Thee; and now I hope from Thy mercy to remain always in Thy grace.

## II.

This compassion even makes Jesus say that He is that loving Father Who, though He sees Himself despised by His son, yet, if the son returns a penitent, He cannot reject him, but embraces him tenderly and forgets all the injuries He has received : *I will not remember all his iniquities*—(Ezech. xviii. 22). It is not thus that men behave; for though they may forgive, yet they never the less retain the remembrance of the offence received, and feel inclined to revenge themselves; and even if they do not revenge themselves, because they fear God, at least they always feel a very great repugnance to converse or entertain themselves with those persons who have injured them.

O my Jesus, Thou dost pardon penitent sinners, and dost not refuse in this world to give them everything in Holy Communion during their life, and everything in the other world in eternal glory, without retaining the slightest repugnance towards being united for ever to the soul that offended Thee so often. Where, therefore, is to be found a Heart so amiable and compassionate as Thine, O my dearest Saviour?

O my Jesus, cease not to show Thy compassion towards me. The mercy which I would implore of Thee is that Thou wouldst grant me light and strength to be no longer ungrateful towards Thee. No, O my Love, I do not expect that Thou shouldst again forgive me if I again turn my back against Thee; this would be presumption, and would prevent Thee from showing mercy to me any more. For what pity, O Jesus, could I expect from Thee if I were so ungrateful as to despise Thy friendship again, and to separate myself from Thee. No, my Jesus, I love Thee and I will always love Thee; and this is the mercy which I hope for and seek from Thee : "Permit me not to be separated from Thee ! Permit me not to be separated from Thee !"

And I beseech thee, also, O Mary, my Mother, permit me not to be ever again separated from my God.

## Spiritual Reading

## THE COMPASSION OF CHRIST.

*His father saw him and was moved with compassion, and running to him fell upon his neck and kissed him.*

What sinner can be so hardened as not to go instantly and cast himself at the feet of his Saviour, when he knows the tender compassion with which Jesus Christ is prepared to embrace him, and carry him on His shoulders, as soon as he repents of his sins?

The Lord has also declared His tenderness towards penitent sinners in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. In that Parable the Son of God says that a certain young man, unwilling to be any longer under the control of his father, and desiring to live according to his caprice and corrupt inclinations, asked the portion of his father's substance which fell to him. The father gave it with sorrow, weeping over the ruin of his son. The son departed from his father's house. Having in a short time

squandered his substance, he was reduced to such a degree of misery that, to procure the necessities of life he was obliged to become a swine-herd. All this is a figure of the sinner, who, after departing from God, and losing Divine grace and all the merits he has acquired, leads a life of misery under the slavery of the devil. In the Gospel it is added that the young man, seeing his wretched condition, resolved to return to his father; and the father, who is a figure of Jesus Christ, seeing his son return to him, was instantly moved to pity. *His father saw him, and was moved with compassion*—(Luke xv. 20); and, instead of driving him away, as the ungrateful son had deserved, *running to him, he fell upon his neck and kissed him*. He ran with open arms to meet him, and, through tenderness, fell upon his neck, and consoled him by his embraces. He then said to his servants: *Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him*. According to St. Jerome and St. Augustine, *the first robe signifies Divine grace, which, in addition to new celestial gifts, God, by granting pardon, gives to the penitent sinner. And put a ring on his hand*. By recovering the grace of God, the soul becomes again the spouse of Jesus Christ. *And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry*. Bring hither the fatted calf—which signifies the Holy Communion, or Jesus in the holy sacrament mystically killed and offered in sacrifice on the altar; let us eat and rejoice. But why, O Divine Father, so much joy at the return of so ungrateful a child? *Because, answered the Father, this my son was dead, and he is come to life again, was lost and is found*—(Luke xv.).

This compassion of Jesus Christ was experienced by the sinful woman who cast herself at the feet of Jesus, and washed them with her tears. The Lord, turning to her with sweetness, consoled her by saying: *Thy sins are forgiven . . . thy faith hath made thee safe; go in peace*—(Luke vii. 48, 50). Child, thy sins are pardoned; thy confidence in Me has saved thee; go in peace! The tender compassion of Jesus Christ was experienced also by the man who was ailing for thirty-eight years, and

who was infirm both in body and soul. The Lord cured his malady, and pardoned his sins. *Behold, says Jesus to him, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee*. The tenderness of the Redeemer was also felt by the leper who said to Jesus Christ: *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean*. Jesus answered: *I will: be thou made clean*. As if He said: Yes, I will that thou be made clean; for I have come down from Heaven for the purpose of consoling all. Be healed, then, according to thy desire. *And forthwith his leprosy was cleansed*—(Matt. viii. 2-3).

We have also a proof of the tender compassion of the Son of God for sinners in His conduct towards the woman taken in adultery. The scribes and pharisees brought her before Jesus and said: *This woman was even now taken in adultery. Now Moses, in the law, commands us to stone such a one. But what sayest thou?* And this they did, as St. John says, tempting Him. They intended to accuse Him of transgressing the law of Moses, if He said that she ought to be liberated; and they expected to destroy His character for meekness; if He said that she should be stoned, says St. Augustine. But what was the answer of our Lord? He neither said that she should be stoned nor dismissed: *but, bowing himself down, he wrote with his finger on the ground*. The interpreters say that, probably, what He wrote on the ground was a text of Scripture admonishing the accusers of their own sins, which were, perhaps, greater than that of the woman charged with adultery. *He then lifted himself up, and said to them: He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her*. The scribes and pharisees went away one by one, and the woman stood there alone. Jesus Christ, turning to her, said: *Hath no man condemned thee? Who said: No man, Lord. And Jesus said: Neither will I condemn thee. Go, and now sin no more*—(Jo. viii. 8-11). Since no one has condemned you, fear not that you shall be condemned by Me, Who have come on earth, not to condemn, but to pardon and save sinners. Go in peace, and sin no more.

Jesus Christ has come, not to condemn, but to deliver

sinners from hell, as soon as they resolve to amend their lives. And when He sees them obstinately bent on their own perdition, He addresses them with tears, in the words of Ezechiel : *Why will you die, O house of Israel?*—(Ezech. xviii. 31). My children, why will you die? Why do you voluntarily rush into hell, when I have come from Heaven to deliver you from it by death? You are already dead to the grace of God. But I will not your death : return to Me, and I will restore to you the life you have lost. *For I desire not the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God : return ye and live*—(Ezech. xviii. 32). But some sinners, who are immersed in the abyss of sin, may say : Perhaps, if we return to Jesus Christ, He will drive us away. No; for the Redeemer has said : *And him that cometh to me I will not cast out*—(Jo. vi. 37). No one that comes to me with sorrow for his past sins, however manifold and enormous they may have been, shall be rejected.

Behold how, in another place, the Redeemer encourages us to throw ourselves at His feet with the certain hope of consolation and pardon. *Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you*—(Matt. xi. 28). Come to Me, all ye poor sinners, who labour for your own damnation, and groan under the weight of your crimes; come, and I will deliver you from all your troubles. Again God speaks : *Come and accuse me, saith the Lord; if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow; and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool*—(Is. i. 18). Come with sorrow for the offences you committed against Me, and if I do not give you pardon, accuse Me. As if He said : Upbraid Me; rebuke Me as untruthful; for I promise that, though your sins were of scarlet—that is, of the most horrid enormity—your soul, by My Blood, in which I shall wash it, will become white and beautiful as snow.

Let us, then, O sinners, return at once to Jesus Christ. Let us immediately return, before death overtakes us in sin and sends us to hell, where the mercies and graces of the Lord shall, if we do not amend, be so many swords to lacerate the heart for all eternity.

### Evening Meditation

#### CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

##### I.

*Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise!*

St. Luke writes that of the two thieves who were crucified with Jesus Christ, one continued obstinate, the other was converted; who seeing his miserable companion blaspheming Jesus Christ : *If thou art the Christ, save thyself and us*, turned and reproved him, saying that they were deservedly punished, but that Jesus was innocent. Then he turned to Jesus Himself and said : *Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom*; by which words he recognised Jesus Christ as his true Lord and the King of Heaven. Jesus then promised him Paradise on that very day : *Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise*—(Luke xxiii. 39-43). A learned author writes that, in conformity with this promise, the Lord, on that very day, immediately after His death, showed Himself openly, and rendered the repentant thief blessed, though He did not confer on him all the delight of Heaven before he entered there.

Arnold of Chartres, in his treatise on the Seven Words, remarks upon all the virtues which the good thief exercised at the time of his death : “He believed, he repented, he confessed, he preached, he loved, he trusted, he prayed.”

He exercised Faith when he said, *When thou comest into thy kingdom*; believing that Jesus Christ, after His death, would enter into His glorious kingdom. He believed, says St. Gregory, that He Whom he saw dying was about to reign.

He exercised penitence together with the confession of

his sins, saying : *We indeed justly ; for we received the due reward of our deeds.* St. Augustine observes that before his confession he had not boldness to hope for pardon ; he did not dare to say *Remember me*, until, by the confession of his guilt, he had thrown off the burden of his sins. On this St. Athanasius exclaims : O blessed thief, thou hast stolen a kingdom by that confession !

## II.

This holy penitent also exercised other noble virtues ; he preached, declaring the innocence of Jesus Christ, *This man hath done no evil.* He exercised love of God, receiving death with resignation, as the punishment due to his sins, saying : *We receive the due reward of our deeds.* Hence St. Cyprian, St. Jerome, and St. Augustine do not scruple to call him a Martyr ; and Silveira says that this happy thief was a true Martyr, as the executioners broke his legs with increased fury, because he had declared the innocence of Jesus ; and that the Saint willingly accepted this torment for the love of his Lord.

Let us also in this circumstance remark the goodness of God, Who always gives us more than we ask for, as St. Ambrose says : "The Lord always grants more than we ask ; the thief prayed that Jesus would remember him, and Jesus said : *To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.*" St. John Chrysostom further remarks that no one merited the possession of Paradise before this thief. Thus is confirmed what God said by Ezechiel, that, when the sinner heartily repents of his sins, God pardons him in the same way as if he had forgotten all the sins he had committed. And Isaias gives us to understand that God is so urgent for our good, that when we pray He instantly hears us. St. Augustine says that God is ever prepared to embrace penitent sinners.

And thus it was that the cross of the wicked thief, being endured with impatience, became to him a precipice leading to hell ; while the cross endured with patience by the good thief became to him a ladder to Paradise.

Happy wert thou, O holy thief, who hadst the fortune to unite thy death to the death of thy Saviour.

O my Jesus, henceforth I sacrifice to Thee my life, and I seek for grace to enable me, at the hour of my death, to unite the sacrifice of my life to that which Thou didst offer to God upon the Cross, and through which I hope to die in Thy grace, and, loving Thee with pure love stripped of every earthly affection, to attain to love Thee with all my powers through all eternity.

## Saturday—Twelfth Week after Pentecost

### Morning Meditation

#### THE CLEMENCY AND COMPASSION OF MARY.

" I am called the Mother of Mercy," said our Blessed Lady to St. Bridget, " and truly God's mercy hath made me thus merciful. " What, then," says St. Bernard, " can ever flow from a source of compassion but compassion itself ?"

## I.

St. Bernard, speaking of the great compassion of Mary, towards us poor creatures, says that " she is the land overflowing with milk and honey promised by God." Hence St. Leo observes that " the Blessed Virgin has so merciful a heart that she deserves not only to be called merciful, but to be styled *Mercy* itself." St. Bonaventure also, considering that Mary was made Mother of God on account of the miserable, and that to her is committed

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the charge of dispensing mercy; and considering, moreover, the tender care she takes of all, and that her compassion is so great that she seems to have no other desire than that of relieving the needy; says, that when he looks at her, he seems no longer to see the justice of God, but only the Divine mercy, of which Mary is full. "O Lady, when I behold thee I can only discern mercy, for thou wast made Mother of God for the wretched, and then intrusted with their charge: thou art all solicitude for them; thou art walled in with mercy; thy only wish is to show it."

The compassion of Mary is indeed so great towards us that the Abbot Guericc says that "her loving heart can never remain a moment without bringing forth its fruits of tenderness." "And what," exclaims St. Bernard, "can ever flow from a source of compassion but compassion itself?"

Mary is called an olive-tree: *As a fair olive-tree in the plains*—(Eccclus. xxiv. 19). For, as from the olive, oil (a symbol of mercy) alone is extracted, so from the hands of Mary graces and mercy alone proceed. When we go to this good Mother for the oil of her mercy, we cannot fear that she will deny it to us, as the wise virgins in the Gospel did to the foolish ones: *lest perhaps there be not enough for us and for you*—(Matt. xxv. 9). Oh, no! for she is indeed rich in this oil of mercy, as St. Bonaventure assures us, "Mary is filled with the oil of compassion." She is called by the Church not only a prudent Virgin, but most prudent, that we may understand, says Hugo of St. Victor, that she is so full of grace and compassion, that she can supply all, without losing any herself. "Thou, O Blessed Virgin, art full of grace, and indeed so full, that the whole world may draw of this overflowing oil. For if the prudent virgins provided oil in vessels with their lamps, thou, O most prudent Virgin, hast borne an overflowing and inexhaustible vessel, from which, the oil of mercy streaming, thou replenishest the lamps of all."

## II.

But why, I ask, is this beautiful olive-tree said to stand in the midst of the plains, and not rather in the midst of a garden, surrounded by walls and hedges? Hugo of St. Victor tells us that it is in the plains, "that all sinners may see her, that all may go to her for refuge"; that all may see her easily, and as easily have recourse to her, to obtain remedies for all their ills. This beautiful explanation is confirmed by St. Antoninus, who says: "All can go to and gather the fruit of an olive-tree in the midst of a plain; and thus all, both just and sinners, can have recourse to Mary to obtain her mercy." He then adds: "O how many sentences of condemnation has not this most Blessed Virgin revoked by her compassionate prayers, in favour of sinners who have had recourse to her?" "And what safer refuge," says the devout Thomas à Kempis, "can we ever find than the compassionate heart of Mary? There the poor find a home, the infirm a remedy, the afflicted relief, the doubtful counsel, and the abandoned succour."

Wretched indeed should we be had we not this Mother of Mercy always attentive and solicitous to relieve us in our wants! *Where there is no woman, he mourneth that is in want*—(Eccclus. xxxvi. 27), says the Holy Ghost. "This woman," says St. John Damascene, "is precisely the most Blessed Virgin Mary, and wherever this most holy woman is not, the sick man groans." And surely it cannot be otherwise, since all graces are dispensed at the prayers of Mary; and where this is wanting, there can be no hope of mercy, as our Lord gave St. Bridget to understand in these words: "Unless the prayers of Mary interposed, there could be no hope of mercy."

O Mary, thou art clement with the miserable; compassionate towards those who pray to thee; sweet towards those who love thee; clement with the penitent; compassionate towards those who advance; and sweet to the perfect. Thou art clement in delivering us from chastisement, compassionate in bestowing graces, and sweet in giving thyself to those who seek thee!

### Spiritual Readings

#### I.—“WHEN I WAS A LITTLE ONE I PLEASED THE MOST HIGH.”

Mary was born a Saint, and a great Saint; for the grace with which God enriched her from the beginning was great, and the fidelity with which she immediately corresponded to it was great.

But to form an idea of the greatness of Mary's sanctity, even at this early period, we must consider, first, the greatness of the first grace with which God enriched her; and secondly, the greatness of her fidelity in immediately corresponding to it.

To begin with the first point, it is certain that Mary's soul was the most beautiful God had ever created: nay more, after the work of the Incarnation of the Eternal Word, this was the greatest and most worthy of Himself that an Omnipotent God ever did in the world. St. Peter Damian calls it “a work only surpassed by God Himself.” Hence it follows that Divine grace did not come into Mary by drops as in other Saints, but *like rain on the fleece*—(Ps. lxxi. 6), as it was foretold by David. So the soul of Mary, like the fleece, imbibed the whole shower of grace, without losing a drop. St. Basil of Seleucia says that “the holy Virgin was full of grace, because she was elected and pre-elected by God, and the Holy Spirit was about to take full possession of her.” Hence she said, by the lips of Ecclesiasticus: *My abode is in the full assembly of saints*—(Ecclus. xxiv. 16); that is, as St. Bonaventure explains it, “I hold in plenty all that other Saints have held in part.” And St. Vincent Ferrer, speaking particularly of the sanctity of Mary before her birth, says “that the Blessed Virgin was sanctified” (surpassed in sanctity) “in her mother's womb above all Saints and Angels.”

The grace that the Blessed Virgin received exceeded

not only that of each particular Saint, but of all the Angels and Saints put together, as the most learned Father Francis Pepe, of the Society of Jesus, proves in his beautiful work on the greatness of Jesus and Mary.

And he asserts that this opinion, so glorious for our Queen, is now generally admitted, and considered as beyond doubt by modern Theologians (such as Carthage, Suarez, Spinelli, Recupito, and Guerra, who have professedly examined the question, and this was never done by the more ancient Theologians). And besides this, he relates that the Divine Mother sent Father Martin Gutierrez to thank Father Suarez, on her part, for having so courageously defended this most probable opinion, and which, according to Father Segneri, in his *Client of Mary*, was afterwards believed and defended by the University of Salamanca.

But if this opinion is general and certain, that other is also very probable, namely, that Mary received this grace, exceeding that of all men and Angels together, in the first instance of her Immaculate Conception. Father Suarez strongly maintains this opinion, as do also Father Spinelli, Father Recupito, and Father La Colombiere. But besides the authority of Theologians, there are two great and convincing arguments which sufficiently prove the correctness of the above-mentioned opinion.

The first is that Mary was chosen by God to be the Mother of the Divine Word. Hence Denis the Carthusian says that as she was chosen to an order superior to that of all other creatures (for in a certain sense the dignity of the Mother of God, as Fr. Suarez asserts, belongs to the order of hypostatic union), it is reasonable to suppose that from the very beginning of her life gifts of a superior order were conferred upon her, and such gifts as must have incomparably surpassed those granted to all other creatures. And indeed it cannot be doubted that when the Person of the Eternal Word was, in the Divine decrees, predestined to make Himself man, a Mother was also destined for Him, from whom He was to take His human nature; and our infant Mary was to be this Mother. Now St. Thomas teaches that “God gives

every one grace proportioned to the dignity for which He destines him." And St. Paul teaches us the same thing when he says, *Who also hath made us fit ministers of the New Testament*—(2 Cor. iii. 6), that is, the Apostles received gifts from God, proportioned to the greatness of the office with which they were charged. St. Bernardine of Sienna adds that it is an axiom in Theology that when a person is chosen by God for any state, he receives not only the dispositions necessary for it, but even the gifts he needs to sustain that state with decorum. But as Mary was chosen to be the Mother of God, it was quite becoming that God should adorn her, in the first moment of her existence, with an immense grace, and one of a superior order to that of all other men and Angels, since it had to correspond to the immense and most high dignity to which God exalted her. And all Theologians come to this conclusion with St. Thomas, who says, "the Blessed Virgin was chosen to be the Mother of God; and therefore it is not to be doubted that God fitted her for it by His grace"; so much so that Mary, before becoming Mother of God, was adorned with a sanctity so perfect that it rendered her fit for this great dignity. The holy Doctor says that "in the Blessed Virgin there was a preparatory perfection, which rendered her fit to be the Mother of Christ, and this was the perfection of sanctification."

### Evening Meditation

#### CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

##### I.

*He saith to his Mother: Woman, behold thy Son!*  
*After that he saith to the disciple: Behold thy Mother!*  
We read in St. Mark that on Calvary there were present many women, who watched Jesus on the

Cross, but from afar off, among whom was Mary Magdalen. We believe also, that among these holy women was the Divine Mother also; while St. John says that the Blessed Virgin stood, not afar off, but close to the Cross, together with Mary of Cleophas and Mary Magdalen—(John xix. 25). Euthymius attempts to reconcile this discrepancy, and says that the Holy Virgin, seeing her Son drawing near to death, came from among the rest of the women close up to the Cross, overcoming her fear of the soldiers who surrounded it, and enduring with patience all the insults and repulses she had to suffer from these soldiers who watched the condemned, in order that she might draw near her beloved Son. Thus also a learned author, who wrote the Life of Jesus Christ, says: "There were His friends, who watched Him from afar; but the Holy Virgin, the Magdalen, and another Mary stood close to the Cross with John; wherefore Jesus, seeing His Mother and John, spoke to them the words above mentioned. Truly she was a Mother who, even in the terror of death, deserted not her Son. Some mothers fly when they see their children dying; their love does not suffer them to be present at their death when they have not the power of relieving them; but the holy Mother, the nearer her Son approached death, the nearer she drew to His Cross."

The afflicted Mother thus was standing close to the Cross; and as the Son sacrificed His life, so she offered her pangs for the salvation of men, sharing with perfect resignation all the pains and insults which her Son suffered in His death. A writer says that they who would describe her fainting at the foot of the Cross dishonour the constancy of Mary. She was *the valiant woman*, who neither fainted nor wept. "I read of her standing, but not of her weeping," says St. Ambrose.

##### II.

The anguish the Holy Virgin endured in the Passion of her Son exceeded all the pain a human heart can endure:

but the grief of Mary was not a barren grief, like that of other mothers who behold the sufferings of their children; it was a fruitful grief, since through the merits of her great grief, and through her love, according to the opinion of St. Augustine, as she was the natural Mother of our Head, Jesus Christ, so she then became the spiritual Mother of us who are His faithful members, in co-operating with Him by her love in causing us to be born, and to be the children of the Church.

St. Bernard writes that upon Mount Calvary both of these two great Martyrs, Jesus and Mary, were silent, because the great pain that they endured took from them the power of speaking. The Mother looked upon her Son in agony upon the Cross, and the Son looked upon the Mother in agony at the foot of the Cross, all wounded with compassion for the pains He suffered.

Mary and John, then, stood nearer to the Cross than the others, so that they could more easily hear the words and mark the looks of Jesus Christ in the midst of so great a tumult. St. John writes: *When Jesus then saw his mother and the disciple standing, whom he loved, he saith to his mother: Woman, behold thy son*—(John xix. 26). But if Mary and John were accompanied by other women, why is it said that Jesus saw His Mother and the disciple, as if the others had not been perceived by Him? St. John Chrysostom writes that love always makes us look more closely at the object of our love. And St. Ambrose in a similar way writes: It is natural that we should see those we love before any others. The Blessed Virgin revealed to St. Bridget that in order that Jesus might look upon His Mother, who stood by the side of the Cross, He was obliged first to compress His eyebrows in order to remove the blood from His eyes, which prevented Him from seeing.

Jesus said to her: *Woman, behold thy son!* with His eyes turned towards St. John, who stood by His side. But why did He call her *woman* and not *mother*? He called her *woman*, we may say, because, drawing now near to death, He spoke as if departing from her and saying: *Woman, in a little while I shall be dead, and*

thou wilt have no Son upon earth; I leave thee, therefore, John, who will serve and love thee as a son. And from this we may understand that St. Joseph was already dead, since if he had been still alive he would have been still the guardian of the Mother.

## Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

### Morning Meditation

#### THE HOUSE OF ETERNITY.

We err in calling the place where we now dwell our home. After a little while the grave will be the home of our body until the Day of Judgment, and the home of our soul will be the House of Eternity, in Heaven or Hell for ever!

#### I.

We err in calling the place where we now dwell our home. After a little while the grave will be the home of our body until the Day of Judgment, and the home of our soul will be the House of Eternity, in Heaven or Hell for ever, *because man shall go into the house of his eternity*—(Eccles. xii. 5). At our burial our corpses do not go to the grave of themselves; they are carried there by others; but the soul goes to the place which awaits it, either of eternal joy or eternal woe. *A man shall go to the house of his eternity.* According as a man lives well or ill, so he goes to the home prepared, in Paradise or in Hell, which he shall never change.

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Those who live on this earth often change their home, either to please themselves or because they are compelled. In eternity the habitation is never changed; where we enter the first time, there we abide forever. *If the tree fall to the south or to the north, in whatever place it shall fall, there shall it be—(Eccles. xi. 3).* He that enters into the South, which is Heaven, will be ever happy; he that enters the North, which is Hell, will be ever miserable.

He, then, who enters Heaven, will be always united with God, always in company with the Saints, always in the profoundest peace, always abundantly contented; because every blessed soul is filled and satisfied with joy, nor will he ever know the fear of losing it. If fear of losing their happiness could enter among the Blessed, they would be no longer happy; for the mere thought of losing the joy they possess would disturb the peace they enjoy.

On the other hand, whoever enters into Hell will be forever far from God. He will ever suffer in the fire of the damned. Let us not think that the pains of Hell will be like those of earth, where, through the force of habit, a trouble continually grows less; for, as in Paradise, delights never cause weariness, but seem ever new, as though they were for the first time enjoyed, which is implied by the expression of "the new canticle" which the Blessed are ever singing; so, in Hell, the pains never grow less through all eternity. Long custom will never diminish their torment. The miserable beings who are damned will feel the same anguish through eternity that they feel the first moment they experience its pangs.

## II.

St. Augustine says that he who believes in eternity and is not converted to God has either lost his senses or his Faith. Woe, cries St. Cæsarius, woe to sinners who enter eternity without knowing it, through having neglected to think upon it! And then he adds: "But, oh, double woe! They enter it and they never come forth!" It is a

double woe, the first will be to fall into that abyss of fire; the second, that he who falls into it will never come forth: the gates of hell open only to those who enter, not to those who would depart.

No; the Saints did not do too much when they went to hide themselves in caves and deserts, to eat herbs, and to sleep on the ground, in order to save their souls. "They did not do too much," says St. Bernard, "because, where eternity is in question, no security can be too great." When, then, God visits us with any cross of infirmity, poverty, or any evil, let us think of the hell we have deserved, and thus every sorrow will appear light. Let us say, with Job: *I have sinned, and indeed I have offended, and I have not received what I have deserved—(Job, xxxiii. 27).* O Lord, I have offended Thee, and many times betrayed Thee, and I have not been punished as I deserved; how, then, can I lament if Thou sendest me tribulation—I, who have so often deserved hell?

O my Jesus, send me not to Hell, to the Hell in which I could no longer love Thee, but should hate Thee forever. Deprive me of everything—of property, health, life; but deprive me not of Thyself. Grant that I may love Thee and praise Thee forever; and then chastise me, and do with me what Thou wilt. O Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me.

## Spiritual Readings

### 2.—"WHEN I WAS A LITTLE ONE I PLEASSED THE MOST HIGH."

St. Thomas says that Mary was called *full of grace*, not on the part of grace itself, for she had it not in the highest possible degree, since even the habitual grace of Jesus Christ (according to the same holy Doctor) was not such that the absolute power of God could not have

made it greater, although it was a grace sufficient for the end for which His humanity was ordained by Divine Wisdom, that is, for its union with the Person of the Eternal Word. Although Divine power could make something greater and better than the habitual grace of Christ, it could not fit it for anything greater than the personal union with the only-begotten Son of the Father, and to which union that measure of grace sufficiently corresponds, according to the limit placed by Divine Wisdom. For the same angelic Doctor teaches that the Divine power is so great that, however much it gives, it can always give more; and although the natural capacity of creatures is in itself limited as to receiving, so that it can be entirely filled, nevertheless its power to obey the Divine will is unlimited, and God can always fill it more by increasing its capacity to receive. "As far as its natural capacity goes, it can be filled; but it cannot be filled as far as its power of obeying goes." But now to return to our proposition: St. Thomas says that the Blessed Virgin was not filled with grace, as to grace itself, nevertheless she is called full of grace as to herself, for she had an immense grace, one which was sufficient, and corresponded to her immense dignity, so much so that it fitted her to be the Mother of God: "The Blessed Virgin is full of grace, not with the fulness of grace itself, for she had not grace in the highest degree of excellence in which it can be had, nor had she it as to all its effects; but she was said to be full of grace as to herself, because she had sufficient grace for that state to which she was chosen by God, that is, to be the Mother of His only-begotten Son." Hence Benedict Fernandez says that "the measure whereby we may know the greatness of the grace communicated to Mary is her dignity of Mother of God."

### Evening Meditation

#### CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

"Behold thy Son! . . . Behold thy Mother!"

##### I.

All antiquity asserts that St. John was ever a virgin, and especially on this account was he given as a son to Mary, and honoured in being made to occupy the place of Jesus Christ; on which account the holy Church sings: "To John, a virgin, He commended His Virgin Mother." And from the moment of the Lord's death, as it is written, St. John received Mary into his own house, and assisted and obeyed her throughout her life, as if she had been his own mother. Jesus Christ willed that this beloved disciple should be an eye-witness of His death, in order that he might more confidently bear witness to it in his Gospel, and might be able to say: *He that saw it hath given testimony*—(Jo. xix. 35). And on this account the Lord, at the time when the other disciples abandoned Him, gave St. John strength to be present until His death in the midst of so many enemies.

But let us examine more deeply the reason why Jesus called Mary *woman*, and not *mother*. By this expression He desired to show that she was *the woman* foretold in the Book of Genesis, who would crush the serpent's head: *I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel*—(Gen. iii. 15). It is doubted by none that this *woman* was the Blessed Virgin Mary, who, by means of her Son, would crush the head of Satan—if it be not more correct to say that her Son, by means of her who would bear Him, would do this. Naturally Mary was the enemy of the serpent, because Lucifer was haughty, ungrateful, disobedient, while she was humble, grateful, and obedient. It is said, *She shall*

*crush thy head*, because Mary, by means of her Son, beat down the pride of Lucifer, who lay in wait for the heel of Jesus Christ, which means His holy humanity, which was the part of Him which was nearest to the earth; while the Saviour by His death had the glory of conquering him, and of depriving him of that empire which, through sin, he had obtained over the human race.

O suffering Mother, thou knowest that I have deserved hell; I have no hope of being saved, except by the merits of the death of Jesus Christ. Thou must pray for me, that I may obtain this grace; and I pray thee to obtain it for me by the love of that Son Whom thou sawest bow His head and expire on Calvary before thine eyes. O Queen of Martyrs, O advocate of sinners, help me always, and especially in the hour of my death!

## II.

God said to the serpent: *I will put enmities . . . between thy seed and her seed*. This shows that after the fall of man, through sin, notwithstanding all that would be done by the Redemption of Jesus Christ, there would be two families and two posterities in the world, the children of Satan signifying the family of sinners, his children corrupted by him; and the children of Mary, signifying the holy family, which includes all the just, with their Head Jesus Christ. Hence Mary was destined to be the Mother both of the Head and of the members, namely, the faithful. The Apostle writes: *Ye are all one in Christ Jesus; and if ye are Christ's, then ye are the seed of Abraham*—(Gal. iii. 28, 29). Thus Jesus Christ and the faithful are one single body, because the Head cannot be divided from the members, and these members are all spiritual children of Mary, as they have the same spirit of her Son according to nature, who was Jesus Christ. Therefore, St. John was not called John but *the disciple* beloved by the Lord, that we might understand that Mary is the Mother of every good Christian who is beloved by Jesus Christ, and in whom Jesus Christ lives by His Spirit. This was expressed by

Origen: "Jesus said to Mary: *Behold thy son!* as if He had said: This is Jesus, whom thou hast borne, for he who is perfect lives no more himself, but Christ lives in him."

Denis the Carthusian writes that in the Passion of Jesus Christ the breast of Mary was filled with the blood which flowed from His Wounds, in order that with it she might nourish her children. And he adds that this divine Mother by her prayers and merits, which she especially acquired by sharing in the death of Jesus Christ, obtained for us a participation in the merits of the Passion of the Redeemer.

O my advocate, Mary, even now I seem to see the devils, who, in my last agony, will strive to make me despair at the sight of my sins. Oh! abandon me not then, when thou seest me thus assaulted; help me with thy prayers, and obtain for me confidence and holy perseverance. And because then, when my speech will be gone, and perhaps my senses, I shall not be able to invoke thy name and that of thy Son, I now call upon thee—*Jesus and Mary, I recommend my soul unto you!*

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## Monday—Thirteenth Week after Pentecost

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### Morning Meditation

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#### OUR BLESSED MOTHER'S BIRTH-DAY.

Other children are born into this world, not only deprived of grace and reason, but infected with sin and children of wrath, condemned to misery and death; but holy Mary came into this world a babe, it is true, in age,

but great in merit and virtue. She was sanctified in her Mother's womb above all Saints and Angels, and was born a Saint, and a great Saint.

## I.

Men usually celebrate the birth-day of their children with great feastings and rejoicings; but, indeed, they should pity them rather and show signs of mourning and grief when they reflect that their children are born, not only deprived of grace and reason, but worse than this,—they are infected with sin and are children of wrath condemned to misery and death. But it is right to celebrate with festivity and universal joy the birth of our holy infant Mary. She saw the light of this world, a babe it is true in age, but great in merit and virtue. She was born a Saint and a great Saint.

Speaking particularly of Mary's sanctity before her birth, St. Vincent Ferrar says that "the Blessed Virgin was sanctified in her mother's womb above all Saints and Angels." For as Mary was chosen to be the Mother of God, it was becoming that God should adorn her, in the very first moment of her existence, with an immense grace and one of a superior order to that of all men and Angels, since her grace had to correspond to the immense and most glorious dignity to which God exalted her. The measure whereby we may know the greatness of Mary's graces is her dignity of Mother of God.

And not only was Mary the predestined Mother of God, but she was destined to be the universal mediatrix of the world's salvation, the mediatrix of all the graces conferred on men and Angels. The holy Church wishes us to understand this when she honours the Divine Mother by applying to her the words of Ecclesiasticus: *In me is all grace of the way and of the truth. In me is all hope of life and of virtue*—(Eccles. xxiv. 25). "Magnify the finder of grace," says St. Bernard, "the mediatrix of salvation, the restorer of worlds—this am I taught by the Church proclaiming it; and thus also does she teach me to proclaim it to others." And Richard of

St. Victor says: "By Mary every creature is repaired; by her the ruin of the Angels was remedied; and by her the human race was reconciled." "By this holy Virgin all creation has been restored and reinstated in its primitive condition," says St. Anselm.

O holy and heavenly infant, thou who art the destined Mother of my Redeemer, and the great mediatrix of miserable sinners, have pity on me! Behold now at thy feet another ungrateful sinner who has recourse to thee seeking thy compassion. It is true that for my ingratitude to God and to thee I deserve that God and thou should abandon me, but thou dost not refuse to succour all who recommend themselves to thee with confidence. Receive then the supplication of a sinner who places in thee the whole hope of his salvation.

## II.

Let us be convinced, then, that our heavenly child Mary, as the appointed mediatrix of the world and the destined Mother of the Redeemer, received at the very beginning of her existence graces exceeding in greatness that of all the Saints together. How delightful a sight, therefore, must the beautiful soul of this happy child have been to Heaven and earth, even while yet in her mother's womb! She was the most amiable creature in the eyes of God, because already laden with grace and merit she could say: *When I was a little one I pleased the Most High*. And she was at the same time the creature who, above all others the world had ever known, loved God the most; so much so, indeed, that if she had been born after her most pure Conception, she would have come into the world richer in merits and more holy than all the Saints together. Oh, how much greater must her sanctity, then, have been at her Nativity, coming into the world, as she did, with all the merits she acquired during the whole of the nine months she remained in the womb of her mother.

Let us, then, rejoice with our beloved infant Mary, who was so holy, so dear to God, so full of grace! And

let us rejoice not only on her account, but also on our own, for Mary was born full of grace for her own glory, but also for our good. For what St. John says of Jesus, *And of his fulness we have all received*, the Saints say of Mary “of whose plenitude we all receive.”

O most exalted of all creatures in the world, O Saint of Saints, O holy Mary! O abyss of charity, full of grace, succour a miserable sinner who by his own fault has lost the Divine friendship! O Lady, do this for the love of God Who has made thee so great, so powerful, and so compassionate. This is my hope. Amen.

### Spiritual Reading

#### 3.—“WHEN I WAS A LITTLE ONE I PLEASSED THE MOST HIGH.”

It was not without reason that David said that the foundations of this city of God, that is, Mary, are planted above the summits of the mountains: *The foundations thereof are in the holy mountains*—(Ps. lxxxvi. 1). Whereby we are to understand that Mary, in the very beginning of her life, was to be more perfect than the united perfections of the entire lives of the Saints could have made her. And the Prophet continues: *The Lord loveth the gates of Sion above all the tabernacles of Jacob*—(Ps. lxxxvi. 2). And the same king David tells us why God thus loved her; it was because He was to become man in her virginal womb: *A man is born in her*—(Ps. lxxxvi. 5). Hence it was becoming that God should give this Blessed Virgin, in the very moment that He created her, a grace corresponding to the dignity of Mother of God.

Isaias signified the same thing when he said that, in a time to come, a mountain of the house of the Lord (which was the Blessed Virgin) was to be prepared on

the top of all other mountains; and that, in consequence, all nations would run to this mountain to receive the Divine mercies. *And in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it*—(Is. ii. 2). St. Gregory, explaining this passage, says: “It is a mountain on the top of mountains; for the perfection of Mary is resplendent above that of all the Saints.” And St. John Damascene, that it is a mountain in which God is well pleased to dwell—(Ps. lxxvii. 17). Therefore Mary was called a cypress, but a cypress of Mount Sion; she was called a cedar, but a cedar of Libanus; an olive-tree, but a fair olive-tree; beautiful, but beautiful as the sun; for as St. Peter Damian said: “As the light of the sun so greatly surpasses that of the stars, that in it they are no longer visible; it so overwhelms them that they are as if they were not; so does the great Virgin Mother surpass in sanctity the whole court of Heaven.” So much so that St. Bernard beautifully remarks that the sanctity of Mary was so sublime that “no other Mother than Mary was becoming a God, and no other Son than God befitted Mary.”

### Evening Meditation

#### CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

*Eli! Eli! Lamma sabachthani? My God! My God!  
Why hast thou forsaken me?*

#### I.

St. Matthew writes that Jesus uttered these words with a loud voice. Why did He thus utter them? Erthymius says that He thus cried out in order to show us His Divine power, inasmuch as, though He was on the point of expiring, He was able thus to cry aloud, which

would be impossible to dying men, through their extreme exhaustion. Also, Jesus thus cried out in order to show us the anguish in which He died. It might, perhaps, have been said that as Jesus was both God and man, He had by the power of His divinity, diminished the pains of His torments; and in order to prevent this idea, He thought fit in these words to declare that His death was more bitter than any man had ever endured, and that while the Martyrs in their torments were comforted with Divine sweetness, He, the King of Martyrs, chose to die deprived of every consolation, satisfying the utmost rigour of the Divine justice for all the sins of men. And therefore Silveira remarks that Jesus called His Father *God*, and not *Father*, because He was then regarding Him as a *Judge*, and not as a son regards his father.

St. Leo writes that this cry of the Lord was not a lamentation, but a doctrine, because He thus desired to teach us how great is the wickedness of sin, which, as it were, compelled God to abandon His beloved Son to die without comfort, because He had taken upon Himself to make satisfaction for our sins. At the same time, Jesus was not abandoned by the Divinity, nor deprived of the glory which had been communicated to His blessed soul from the first moment of its creation; but He was deprived of all that sensible relief by which God is wont to comfort His faithful servants in their sufferings; and He was left in darkness, fear, and bitterness, pangs which were deserved by us. This deprivation of the sensible consciousness of the Divine presence was also endured by Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemani; but that which He suffered on the Cross was greater and more bitter.

O Eternal Father, what offence had this Thy innocent and most obedient Son ever given Thee, that Thou shouldst punish Him with a death so bitter? Look at Him as He hangs upon this Cross, His head tortured with thorns, hanging upon the three iron nails, and supported by His own wounds! All have abandoned Him, even His own disciples; all deride Him upon the Cross and blaspheme Him; and why hast Thou aban-

doned Him, Who hast so greatly loved Him? We must understand that Jesus had taken upon Himself the sins of the whole world, although He was Himself the most holy of all men, and even Sanctity itself; since He had taken upon Himself to satisfy for all our sins, He seemed the greatest of all sinners; and having thus made Himself guilty for all, He offered Himself to pay the price for all. Because we had deserved to be abandoned forever in hell to eternal despair, therefore He chose to be given up to a death deprived of every relief, that thus He might deliver us from eternal death.

## II.

In his commentary on St. John, Calvin blasphemously asserts that Jesus Christ, in order to appease His Father, experienced all the wrath which God feels towards sinners, and felt all the pains of the damned, and particularly that of despair. O blasphemy and shocking thought! How could He satisfy for our sins by committing a sin so great as that of despair? And how could this despair, which Calvin imagines, be reconciled with the other words which Jesus uttered, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*—(Luke xxiii. 46). The truth is, as St. Jerome and others explain it, that our Saviour uttered this lamentation to show not despair, but the bitterness He endured in a death without consolation. And, further, despair could only have been produced in Jesus Christ by a knowledge that He was hated by God; but how could God hate that Son Who, to obey His will, had offered Himself to satisfy for the sins of men? It was this very obedience in return for which the Father looked upon Him, and granted Him the salvation of the human race, as the Apostle writes: *Who in the days of his flesh, with a strong cry and tears, offering up prayers and supplications to him that was able to save him from death, was heard for his reverence*—(Heb. v. 7).

Further, this abandonment of Jesus Christ was the most dreadful suffering in all His Passion; for we know

that after suffering so many bitter pangs without complaining, He lamented over this, and cried with a loud voice, and with many tears and prayers, as St. Paul tells us. Yet all these prayers and tears were poured forth in order to teach us how much He suffered to obtain the Divine mercy for us; and to enable us at the same time to comprehend how dreadful a punishment it would be for the guilty soul to be driven from God, and to be deprived forever of His love, according to the Divine threat, *I will cast them forth out of my house, I will love them no more*—(Osee ix. 15).

St. Augustine also says that Jesus Christ was troubled at the sight of His death, but that it was so for the comfort of His servants, in order that if they should find themselves disturbed at the hour of their own death, they should not suppose themselves reprobates, or abandon themselves to despair, because even He was disturbed at the sight of death.

Therefore, let us give thanks to the goodness of our Saviour for having been willing to take upon Himself the pains which were due to us, and thus to deliver us from eternal death; and let us labour henceforth to be grateful to this our Deliverer, banishing from our hearts every affection which is not for Him. And when we find ourselves desolate in spirit, and deprived of the sense of the Divine presence, let us unite our desolation to that which Jesus Christ suffered in His death. Sometimes Jesus hides Himself from the souls He most loves, but He does not really leave their hearts; He aids them with His inward grace. He is not offended if, in such an abandonment, we say, as He Himself said in the Garden to His Divine Father: *My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me*. But at the same time we must add: *Yet, not as I will, but as thou wilt*—(Matt. xxvi. 39). And if the desolation continues we must continue the same acts of conformity to the Divine will, as He Himself repeated them for the three hours during which He prayed in the Garden. St. Francis de Sales says that Jesus is as worthy of love when He hides Himself as when He shows Himself. Further, he

who has deserved hell, and finds himself out of it, should say only: *I will bless the Lord at all times*—(Ps. xxxiii. 2). O Lord, I do not deserve consolations; grant that through Thy grace I may love Thee, and I am content to live in desolation as long as it pleases Thee! If the damned could thus in their pains unite themselves to the Divine will, hell would be no longer hell to them.

*But thou, O Lord, remove not thy help to a distance from me; look towards my defence*—(Ps. xxi. 20). O my Jesus, through the merits of Thy desolate death, deprive me not of Thy help in that great battle which, in the hour of my death, I shall have to fight with hell. At that hour all things of earth will have deserted me and cannot help me; do not Thou abandon me, Who hast died for me, and canst alone help me in my extremity. Do this through the merits of those pains Thou didst suffer in Thy abandonment, by which Thou hast merited for us that we should not be abandoned by the Divine grace, as we have deserved through our sins.

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## Tuesday—Thirteenth Week after Pentecost

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### Morning Meditation

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#### THE VANITY OF ALL EARTHLY THINGS.

*What is your life?* St. James answers: *It is a vapour*. After death the rich man is carried out of his palace to return no more! His servants accompany him to the grave, and leave him there to be devoured by worms! *Why is earth and ashes proud?*

## I.

*What is your life?* St. James answers: It is only a vapour which appears for a little time and then is seen no more! For what is your life? *It is a vapour which appeareth for a little while, and afterwards shall vanish away*—(James iv. 15). The vapours which arise from the earth and are raised into the air and surrounded by the rays of the sun appear brilliant and beautiful; but the least wind disperses them, and they are seen no more. Such is the grandeur of this world. Behold that prince; to-day he is feared, attended upon, and honoured by thousands; to-morrow he will be dead, despised and hated by all. In a word, honours, pleasures, and riches must all end in death.

O my God, make me sensible of the immensity of Thy goodness, that I may love nothing but Thee.

Death deprives man of whatever he may possess in this world. What a sad sight, to behold a rich man, after death, carried out of his palace, to return thither no more! How sad to behold others taking possession of the estates he has left, of his wealth, and of whatever else he so lately enjoyed! His servants, after having accompanied him to the grave, abandon him, and leave him there, to be devoured by worms; no one esteeming him, no one flattering him. Formerly everyone obeyed his nod, but now no one takes the least notice of his orders.

How wretched have I been, O Lord, in having, for so many years, gone after the vanities of the world, and left Thee, my sovereign Good! But from this day forward I desire to possess Thee as my only treasure, as the only love of my soul.

## II.

*Why is earth and ashes proud?*—(Ecclus. x. 9). O man, says the Almighty, seest thou not that in a short time thou wilt become dust and ashes? And on what dost thou fix thy thoughts and affections?

Reflect that death will soon rob thee of everything, and separate thee from the whole world. And if, when thou givest in thy account, thou be found wanting, what will become of thee for eternity?

I give Thee thanks, my Lord and my God. Thou speakest thus to me, because thou desirest to save me. Let Thy mercies now prevail. Thou hast promised to pardon such as repent of their offences against Thee. From the bottom of my heart do I repent: grant me therefore pardon. Thou hast promised to love those who love Thee: and I now love Thee above all things. Wherefore do Thou love me also, and hate me not any more, as I have deserved. O Mary, my advocate, in thy protection is my hope.

## Spiritual Reading

4.—“WHEN I WAS A LITTLE ONE I PLEASED  
THE MOST HIGH.”

The second argument by which it is proved that Mary was more holy in the first moment of her existence than all the Saints together, is founded on the great office of Mediatrix of men, with which she was charged from the beginning; and which made it necessary that she should possess a greater treasure of grace from the beginning than all other men together. It is well known with what unanimity Theologians and holy Fathers give Mary this title of Mediatrix, on account of her having obtained salvation for all, by her powerful intercession and her merit of “congruity,” thereby procuring the great benefit of Redemption for the lost world. I say by her merit of congruity, for Jesus Christ alone is our Mediator by way of justice and by merit, “de congruo,” as the Scholastics say, He having offered His merits to the Eternal Father, Who accepted them for our salvation. Mary, on the other hand, is a Mediatrix

of grace, by way of simple intercession and merit of congruity, she having offered to God, as Theologians say with St. Bonaventure, her merits, for the salvation of all men; and God, as a favour, accepted them with the merits of Jesus Christ. On this account Arnold of Chartres says that "she effected our salvation in common with Christ." And Richard of St. Victor says that "Mary desired, sought, and obtained the salvation of all; nay, even she effected the salvation of all." So that everything good, and every gift in the order of grace, which each of the Saints received from God, Mary obtained for them.

And the holy Church wishes us to understand this when she honours the Divine Mother by applying the following verses of Ecclesiasticus to her: *In me is all grace of the way and of the truth.* *Of the way,* because by Mary all graces are dispensed to wayfarers. *Of the truth,* because the light of truth is imparted by her. *In me is all hope of life and of virtue.* *Of life,* for by Mary we hope to obtain the life of grace in this world, and that of glory in Heaven. *And of virtue,* for through her we acquire virtues, and especially the theological virtues which are the principal virtues of the Saints. *I am the mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope*—(Ecclus. xxiv. 24-25). Mary, by her intercession, obtains for her servants the gifts of Divine love, holy fear, heavenly light, and holy perseverance. From which St. Bernard concludes that it is a doctrine of the Church that Mary is the universal Mediatrix of our salvation. He says: "Magnify the finder of grace, the mediatrix of salvation, the restorer of ages. This I am taught by the Church proclaiming it; and thus also she teaches me to proclaim the same thing to others." St. Saphronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, asserts that the reason for which the Archangel Gabriel called her full of grace—*Hail, full of grace!*—was because only limited grace was given to others, but it was given to Mary in all its plenitude: "Truly was she full, for grace is given to other Saints partially, but the whole pleni-

tude of grace poured itself into Mary." St. Basil of Seleucia declares that she received this plenitude that she might thus be a worthy Mediatrix between men and God: "Hail, full of grace, Mediatrix between God and men, and by whom Heaven and earth are brought together and united." "Otherwise," says St. Laurence Justinian, "had not the Blessed Virgin been full of Divine grace, how could she have become the ladder to Heaven, the advocate of the world, and the most true Mediatrix between men and God?"

### Evening Meditation

#### CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

I thirst!

I.

St. John writes: *Afterwards Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: I thirst!*—(Jo. xix. 28). Scripture here refers to the words of David: *They gave me gall for my food, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink*—(Ps. lxviii. 22).

Most severe was this bodily thirst which Jesus Christ endured on the Cross through loss of Blood, first in the Garden, and afterwards in the Hall of Judgment, at His scourging and crowning with thorns; and lastly upon the Cross, where four streams of Blood gushed forth from the Wounds of His pierced hands and feet as from four fountains. But far more terrible was His spiritual thirst, that is, His ardent desire to save all mankind and to suffer still more for us, as Blossius says, in order to show us His love. On this St. Laurence Justinian writes: "This thirst came from the ardour of His charity."

O my Jesus, Thou hast thus desired to suffer for me;

and I, when my sufferings at all increase, become so impatient that I am insupportable both to others and to myself. O my Jesus, through the merits of Thy patience, make me patient and resigned in the sicknesses and crosses which befall me; make me like unto Thyself before I die.

## II.

Jesus, drawing nigh unto death, said : *Sitio—I thirst!* Tell me, Lord, says Leo of Ostia, for what dost Thou thirst? Thou makest no mention of those immense pains Thou dost suffer upon the Cross; but Thou complainest only of thirst : “ Lord, what dost Thou thirst for? Thou art silent about the Cross, and criest out about the thirst.” “ My thirst is for your salvation,” is the reply which St. Augustine makes for Jesus. O soul, says Jesus, this thirst of Mine is nothing but the desire I have for thy salvation. Yes, the loving Redeemer, with extremest ardour, desired our souls, and therefore He panted to give Himself wholly to us by His death. This was His thirst, wrote St. Laurence Justinian : “ He thirsted for us, and desired to give Himself to us.” St. Basil of Seleucia says, moreover, that Jesus Christ, in saying that He thirsted, would give us to understand that He, for the love which He bore us, was dying with the desire of suffering for us even more than what He had suffered : “ O that desire of His, greater than the Passion !”

O most lovely God, because Thou lovest us, Thou dost desire that we should desire Thee ! “ God thirsts to be thirsted for,” as St. Gregory says. Ah, my Lord, dost Thou thirst for me, most vile worm that I am? And shall I not thirst for Thee, my infinite God? Oh, by the merits of this thirst endured upon the Cross, give me a great thirst to love Thee, and to please Thee in all things. Thou hast promised to grant us whatever we seek from Thee : *Ask, and ye shall receive*—(Jo. xvi. 24). I ask of Thee but this one gift—the gift of loving Thee. I am, indeed, unworthy of it; but in this has to be the glory of Thy Blood,—the turning of a heart into

a great lover of Thee, a heart which at one time, so greatly despised Thee; to make a perfect flame of charity of a sinner who is altogether full of mire and of sins. Much more than this hast Thou done in dying for me. Would that I could love Thee, O Lord infinitely good, as much as Thou dost deserve ! I delight in the love that is borne Thee by the souls that are enamoured of Thee, and still more in the love Thou bearest towards Thyself. With this I unite my own wretched love. I love Thee, O Eternal God; I love Thee O infinite Loveliness. Make me ever to increase in Thy love, repeating frequent acts of love of Thee, and striving to please Thee in everything, without intermission and without reserve. Make me, wretched and insignificant though I am, make me at least to be all Thine own.

## Wednesday—Thirteenth Week after Pentecost

### Morning Meditation

#### THE END OF MAN.

You have not come into this world for the sake of enjoyment, to grow rich and powerful; to eat, to drink, to sleep like irrational animals, but solely to love your God and work out your eternal salvation. And is this the object I have had hitherto in view?

## I.

Consider, O my soul, that the being you enjoy was given to you by God : He created you to His own

