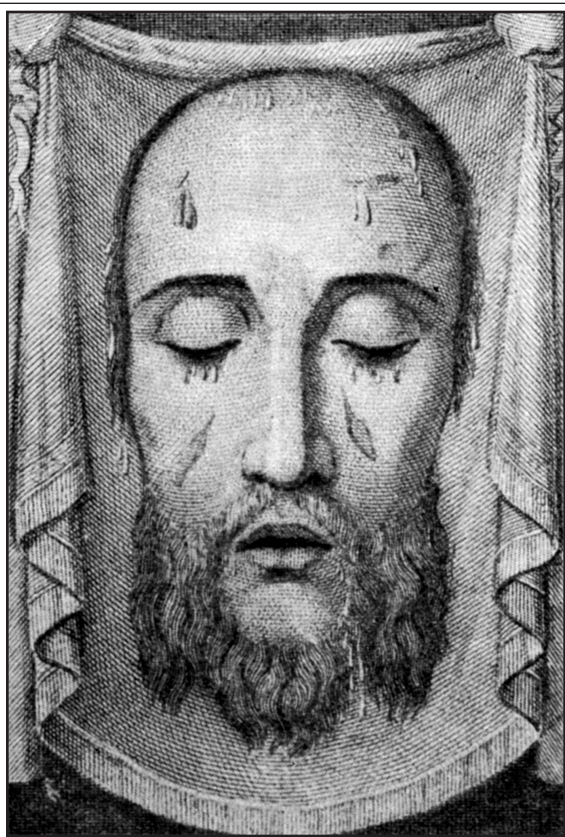


DEVOTION TO THE HOLY FACE

*“Behold, O God our protector: and
look on the face of thy Christ. For
better is one day in thy courts above
thousands.”*

—Psalm 83(84):10-11



O Jesus, Who in Thy cruel Passion didst become
“the Reproach of men and the Man of Sorrows,”
I worship Thy Divine Face.

—St. Therese of the Child Jesus

DEVOTION TO THE HOLY FACE

*“Convert us, O God: and show us
thy face, and we shall be saved.”*

—Psalm 79(80):4

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ETERNAL Father, we offer
Thee the Adorable Face of
Thy Well-Beloved Son for the
honor and glory of Thy Holy Name
and for the salvation of all men.

—Blessed Pope Pius IX

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Chapter 1

Merits Derived from Meditating On the Passion of Christ

THE devotion to the Passion of Our Lord and Saviour is, of all forms of Catholic devotion, the most ancient, the most venerable, the most universal. Jesus Himself has written the remembrance of His Passion deep into the hearts of His faithful. In order to imprint most deeply in our souls the remembrance of His Sacred Passion, Christ instituted Holy Mass, the unbloody renewal of the Sacrifice of the Cross.

For what reason did Jesus leave the impression of His bloody and disfigured Countenance on the cloth that Veronica presented to Him? Why did He take care to have the instruments of His Passion preserved, such as the Cross, the nails, the crown of thorns and the winding sheet? Was it not that we should keep vividly before us the remembrance of His bitter Passion?

Tauler, one of the great mystics of the Middle Ages, says: "Once when a venerable servant of God asked Our Lord what a man merited who exercised himself devoutly in meditating upon His Passion, Christ answered: 'By such meditation he merits:

1. To be cleansed from his sins.*
2. To have all his negligences supplied by the merits of My sufferings.
3. To be strengthened so that he will not easily be overcome by his enemies.
4. That My grace will be renewed in him as often as he reflects on My sufferings.
5. That I refuse him nothing that is profitable, if he earnestly ask for it.
6. That I lead him to perfection before his death.
7. That I assist him in his last hour, protect him against his enemies, and give him an assurance of salvation.'"

Fruits of Meditation on the Passion

It cleanses us from our sins. It is impossible for a soul who takes Our Lord's

* Mortal sins, however, must be confessed.

sufferings seriously to heart, to continue offending God willfully, especially by mortal sin.

St. Alphonsus impresses this upon us by affirming: "A soul who believes in the Passion of Jesus Christ, and frequently thinks thereon, will find it impossible to go on offending her Saviour."

It strengthens us against temptation.

Frequent and devout meditation on the sufferings of Our Lord has the wonderful power to enable us to overcome our passions. St. Augustine writes in his *Confessions* that whenever he was tempted by the demon of impurity, he resisted Satan successfully by meditating on the Wounds of Jesus. "As often as I am tempted," he says, "I seek refuge in the Wounds of Jesus. I fly into the Heart of the mercies of my Lord!"

It will lead us to perfection before our death. One of the principal sources of our sanctification is the tender and compassionate remembrance of our Saviour's sufferings. St. Bonaventure addresses these words to the soul seeking perfection: "If thou, O man, wouldst advance from virtue to virtue, if thou wouldst lead a perfect life, then meditate daily on the Passion of

Christ. Nothing else can so powerfully urge the soul to holiness. The painful Wounds of our Saviour's body penetrate even the hardest of hearts and inflame the coldest of souls with love."

It gives us the assurance of a happy death. St. Alphonsus Liguori says, "Souls that are tormented by the devil and tremble for their eternal salvation will feel great consolation in withdrawing their eyes from the outward world and fixing them on the Cross where Jesus hangs, bleeding from every wound."

It insures for us a special glory in Heaven. This was revealed to St. Gertrude. Once on the feast of St. John the Evangelist she beheld how this beloved Apostle enjoyed a special bliss in Heaven because he had always begun his contemplations with the remembrance of our Saviour's Passion, of which he had been an eye witness.

Moreover, we should love to meditate upon the Passion because therein our Saviour makes His virtues shine forth with great brilliance. He possesses every virtue in His soul, but the occasions of manifesting them especially arise in His Passion.

His immense love for His Father, His charity for mankind, hatred of sin, forgiveness of injuries, patience, meekness, fortitude, obedience to lawful authority, compassion—all these virtues shine forth in a heroic manner for our imitation. Jesus in His Passion is our Divine model in suffering. If, therefore, we frequently contemplate His sufferings and strive to imitate His virtues, we shall receive special graces which will transform us little by little into His likeness and prepare us to share in His glory in Heaven.



In reward for Veronica's sympathy,
Jesus impressed His Sacred Face upon her veil.