

**THE PASSION AND DEATH
OF JESUS CHRIST**

THE PASSION AND DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

Translated from the Italian of

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By virtue of the authority granted me by the Most Rev. Nicholas Mauron, Superior General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, I hereby sanction the publication of the work entitled “The Passion and the Death of Jesus Christ,” which is Vol. V. of the new and complete edition in English of the works of Saint Alphonse de Liguori, called “The Centenary Edition.”

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

n the tranquil embrace of the eighteenth century, amidst the ever-changing currents of human history, there emerged a luminous figure whose life and teachings continue to resonate with profound wisdom and devotion even today. This monumental five book set you now hold is a tribute to the enduring legacy of a man who remains an exemplar of piety, scholarship, and spiritual insight—Saint Alphonsus Liguori.

Born on September 27, 1696, Saint Alphonsus Liguori, during his earthly sojourn, achieved remarkable heights that would shape the course of Catholic theology and spirituality for generations to come. His sanctity and theological acumen were recognized by the Church when he was declared Venerable on May 4, 1796, followed by his beatification in 1816, and ultimate canonization in 1839. In 1871, his intellectual contributions were further acknowledged when he was proclaimed a Doctor of the Church.

July 30, a date etched in the hearts of the faithful, marks the feast day of this Doctor of the Church. Saint Alphonsus Liguori earned the sobriquet “The Prince of Moral Theologians” for his profound insights into moral theology, a body of work that has served as a guiding light for countless souls seeking ethical and spiritual clarity.

This five book set showcases the richness and depth of Saint Alphonsus's theological and spiritual writings. His literary output, spanning over one hundred books, is a testament to his dedication to sharing the treasures of the Catholic Faith with the world. Through these pages, readers will have the privilege of delving into the profound wisdom of a man whose teachings have touched hearts and transformed lives for centuries.

Saint Alphonsus Liguori's singular devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary earned him the title of the "Marian Doctor of the Church." His works, such as *The Glories of Mary*, are a resplendent tribute to the Mother of God, illuminating her role in the Christian faith and her maternal intercession for all believers.

In addition to his theological contributions, Saint Alphonsus Liguori founded the Redemptorist Order, a spiritual family dedicated to imitating Christ's mission of proclaiming redemption to the most abandoned. His devotion to the Eucharist, explored in *The Holy Eucharist*, underscores the central importance of the Blessed Sacrament in the life of the Church and the believer.

This set also includes Saint Alphonsus's reflections on the passion and death of Jesus Christ, the incarnation, birth, and infancy of Jesus Christ, and *Preparation for Death*, addressing crucial aspects of Christian faith and the human experience.

As we embark on this literary journey through the works of Saint Alphonsus Liguori, may we be inspired by his unwavering faith, intellectual brilliance, and his deep love for Christ and His Church. May these volumes serve as a beacon of light, guiding readers towards a deeper understanding of their faith, a closer relationship with God, and

a more profound appreciation of the saintly legacy of Saint Alphonsus Liguori.

In the spirit of the saint himself, may these pages inspire us all to live lives of holiness, virtue, and unwavering devotion to Our Lord and His Mother, Mary.

—Conor Gallagher
CEO and Publisher of TAN Books

INVOCATION OF JESUS AND MARY



Saviour of the world, O Love of souls, O Lord most lovely of all beings! Thou by Thy Passion didst come to win to Thyself our hearts, by showing us the immense love that Thou didst bear to us in accomplishing a redemption which has brought to us a sea of benedictions, and which cost Thee a sea of pains and ignominies. It was principally for this end that Thou didst institute the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, in order that we might have a perpetual memorial of Thy Passion: "That we might have forever a perpetual memorial of so great a benefit," says St. Thomas, "He gives his body to be the food of the faithful,"¹ which St. Paul had already said. *As often as you shall eat this bread, you shall show the death of the Lord.*² Oh, how many holy souls hast Thou persuaded by these prodigies of love, consumed by the flames of Thy love, to renounce all earthly goods, in order to dedicate themselves entirely to loving Thee alone, O most amiable Saviour! O my Jesus! I pray Thee make me always remember Thy Passion; and grant that I also, a miserable sinner, overcome at last by so many loving devices, may return to love Thee, and to show Thee, by my poor love,

¹ "Ut autem tanti beneficii jugis in nobis maneret memoria, corpus suum in cibum fidelibus dereliquit."—*Off Corp. Chr.* 1. 2.

² "Quotiescumque enim manducabitis panem hunc, et calicem bibetis, mortem Domini annuntiabitis."—1 *Cor.* xi. 26.


some mark of gratitude for the excessive love which Thou, my God and my Saviour, hast borne to me. Remember, my Jesus, that I am one of those sheep of Thine, to save which Thou didst come down on the earth and didst sacrifice Thy divine life. I know that, after having redeemed me by Thy death, Thou hast not ceased to love me, and that Thou dost still bear to me the same love that Thou hadst for me when Thou didst die for my sake. Oh, permit me no longer to lead a life of ingratitude towards Thee, my God, who dost so much deserve to be loved, and hast done so much to be loved by me!

And thou, O most holy Virgin Mary, who didst take so great a part in the Passion of thy Son, obtain for me, I beseech thee, through the merits of thy sorrows, the grace to experience a taste of that compassion which thou didst so sensibly feel at the death of Jesus, and obtain for me also a spark of that love which wrought all the martyrdom of thy afflicted heart. Amen.

“Let my mind, O Lord Jesus Christ, I beseech Thee, be absorbed in the fiery and honeyed sweetness of Thy love, that I may die for love of the love of Thee, who wert pleased to die for love of the love of me”³

³ “Absorbeat, quæso, Domine Jesu Christe, mentem meam ignita et melliflua vis amoris tui, ut amore amoris tui moriar, qui amore amoris mei dignatus es mori.”—*Prayer of St. Francis Assisi.*

TO THE READER

n my book on the *Glories of Mary*, I promised to write for you another that should treat of the love of Jesus Christ; but on account of my corporal infirmities, my Director would not permit me to keep my promise. I have been scarcely able to publish these short Reflections on the Passion of Jesus Christ. These Reflections, however, contain the gist of what I had gathered for my subject, withholding only what had reference to the Incarnation and birth of our Saviour, as I intended to compose from it a little work for the Novena of Christmas, which I shall afterwards publish, if I obtain permission. Nevertheless, I hope that the little work that I offer you to-day will be pleasing to you, especially since it will put before you, in regular order, the passages of Holy Scripture referring to the love that Jesus Christ showed us in his death; for there is nothing more apt to stimulate a Christian to the love of God than the word of God itself that is drawn from Holy Writ.

Let us, therefore, love Jesus Christ, who is our Saviour, our God, and our supreme good. This is the reason why I invite you to cast a glance at the Passion; for you will find therein all the motives that we can have to hope for eternal life and to love God; and in this our salvation consists.


All the saints cherished a tender devotion towards Jesus Christ in his Passion; this is the only means by which they

sanctified themselves. Father Balthasar Alvarez, as we read in his life, used to say that one should not think of having done anything so long as one has not succeeded in constantly keeping in one's heart Jesus crucified. His method of prayer consisted in placing himself at the feet of Jesus crucified, by meditating especially on his poverty, his humiliations, sorrows, and by listening to the lesson that our Lord made him hear from the height of the cross. You may also hope to sanctify yourself if you continue in like manner to consider what your divine Redeemer has done and suffered for you.

Ask him, without ceasing, to give you his love; and this grace you should never weary to ask from your Queen, the Blessed Virgin, who is called the Mother of beautiful love. And when you ask this great gift for yourself, ask it also for me, who have desired to contribute to your sanctification in offering you this little work. I promise to do the same thing for you in order that, one day, in paradise, we may embrace each other in a holy charity, and may recognize each other as devoted servants of our most amiable Saviour, finding ourselves united there in the society of the elect to see forever, face to face, and love for all eternity, Jesus, our Saviour and our love. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

HOW USEFUL IT IS TO MEDITATE ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST

he lover of souls, our most loving Redeemer, declared that he had no other motive in coming down upon earth to become man than to enkindle in the hearts of men the fire of his holy love: *I am come to cast fire on earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?*¹ And, oh, what beautiful flames of love has he not enkindled in so many souls, especially by the pains that he chose to suffer in his death, in order to prove to us the immeasurable love which he still bears to us!

Oh, how many souls, happy in the wounds of Jesus, as in burning furnaces of love, have been so inflamed with his love that they have not refused to consecrate to him their goods, their lives, and their whole selves, surmounting with great courage all the difficulties which they had to encounter in the observance of the divine law, for the love of that Lord who, being God, chose to suffer so much for the love of them! This was just the counsel that the Apostle gave us, in order that we might not fail, but make great advances in the way of salvation: *Think diligently upon Him who endureth*

¹ “Ignem veni mittere in terram; et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur?”—*Luke*, xii. 49.

*such opposition from sinners against Himself, that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds.*²

Wherefore St. Augustine, all inflamed with love at the sight of Jesus nailed on the cross, prayed thus sweetly: "Imprint, O Lord, Thy wounds in my heart, that I may read therein suffering and love: suffering, that I may endure for Thee all suffering; love, that I may despise for Thee all love."³ Write, he said, my most loving Saviour, write on my heart Thy wounds, in order that I may always behold therein Thy sufferings and Thy love. Yes, because, having before my eyes the great sufferings that Thou, my God, didst endure for me, I may bear in silence all the sufferings that it may fall to my lot to endure; and at the sight of the love which Thou didst exhibit for me on the cross, I may never love or be able to love any other than Thee."

And from what source did the saints draw courage and strength to suffer torments, martyrdom, and death, if not from the sufferings of Jesus crucified? St. Joseph of Leonesa, a Capuchin, on seeing that they were going to bind him with cords, for a painful incision that the surgeon was to make in his body, took into his hands his crucifix and said, "Why these cords? why these cords? Behold, these are my chains—my Saviour nailed to the cross for love of me. He, through his sufferings, constrains me to bear every trial for his sake." And thus he suffered the amputation without

² "Recogitate enim eum, qui talem sustinuit a peccatoribus adversum semetipsum contradictionem, ut ne fatigemini, animis vestris deficientes."—*Heb.* xii. 3.

³ "Scribe, Domine, vulnera tua in corde meo, ut in eis legam dolorem et amorem: dolorem, ad sustinendum pro te omnem dolorem; amorem, ad contemnendum pro te omnem amorem."

a complaint; looking upon Jesus, who, *as a lamb before his shearers, was dumb, and did not open His mouth.*⁴

Who, then, can ever complain that he suffers wrongfully, when he considers Jesus, who was *bruised for our sins*? Who can refuse to obey, on account of some inconvenience, when Jesus *became obedient unto death*? Who can refuse ignominies, when they behold Jesus treated as a fool, as a mock king, as a disorderly person; struck, spit upon on his face, and suspended upon an infamous gibbet?

Who could love any other object besides Jesus when they see him dying in the midst of so many sufferings and insults, in order to captivate our love? A certain devout solitary prayed to God to teach him what he could do in order to love him perfectly. Our Lord revealed to him that there was no more efficient way to arrive at the perfect love of him than to meditate constantly on his Passion. St. Teresa lamented and complained of certain books which had taught her to leave off meditating on the Passion of Jesus Christ, because this might be an impediment to the contemplation of his divinity; and the saint exclaimed, "O Lord of my soul, O my Jesus crucified, my treasure! I never remember this opinion without thinking that I have been guilty of great treachery. And is it possible that Thou, my Lord, couldst be an obstacle to me in the way of a greater good? Whence, then, do all good things come to me, but from Thee?" And she then added, "I have seen that, in order to please God, and to induce him to grant us great graces, he wills that they should all pass through the hands of this most sacred humanity, in which his divine majesty declared that he took pleasure."⁵

⁴ "Et non aperuit os suum."—*Isa.* liii. 7.

⁵ Life, chap. 22.

For this reason, Father Balthasar Alvarez said that ignorance of the treasures that we possess in Jesus was the ruin of Christians; and therefore his most favorite and usual meditation was on the Passion of Jesus Christ. He meditated especially on three of the sufferings of Jesus,—his poverty, contempt, and pain; and he exhorted his penitents to meditate frequently on the Passion of our Redeemer, telling them that they should not consider that they had done anything at all, until they had arrived at retaining Jesus crucified continually present in their hearts.

“He who desires,” says St. Bonaventure, “to go on advancing from virtue to virtue, from grace to grace, should meditate continually on the Passion of Jesus.”⁶ And he adds that “there is no practice more profitable for the entire sanctification of the soul than the frequent meditation of the sufferings of Jesus Christ.”⁷

St. Augustine also said that a single tear shed at the remembrance of the Passion of Jesus is worth more than a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, or a year of fasting on bread and water. Yes, because it was for this end that our Saviour suffered so much, in order that we should think of his sufferings; because if we think on them, it is impossible not to be inflamed with divine love: *The charity of Christ presseth us*,⁸ says St. Paul. Jesus is loved by few, because few consider the pains he has suffered for us; but he that frequently considers them cannot live without loving Jesus. “The charity of Christ

⁶ “Si vis, homo, de virtute in virtutem, de gratia in gratiam proficere, quotidie mediteris Domini passionem.”

⁷ “Nihil enim in anima ita operatur universalem sanctificationem, sicut meditatio passionis Christi.”

⁸ “Charitas enim Christi urget nos.”—2 *Cor.* v. 14.

presseth us." He will feel himself so constrained by his love that he will not find it possible to refrain from loving a God so full of love, who has suffered so much to make us love him.

Therefore the Apostle said that he desired to know nothing but Jesus, and Jesus crucified; that is, the love that he has shown us on the cross: *I judged not myself to know anything among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*⁹ And, in truth, from what books can we better learn the science of the saints—that is, the science of loving God—than from Jesus crucified? That great servant of God, Brother Bernard of Corlione, the Capuchin, not being able to read, his brother religious wanted to teach him, upon which he went to consult his crucifix; but Jesus answered him from the cross, "What is reading? what are books? Behold, I am the book wherein thou mayst continually read the love I have borne thee." O great subject to be considered during our whole life and during all eternity! A God dead for the love of us! A God dead for the love of us! O wonderful subject!

St. Thomas Aquinas was one day paying a visit to St. Bonaventure, and asked him from what book he had drawn all the beautiful lessons he had written. St. Bonaventure showed him the image of the Crucified, which was completely blackened by all the kisses that he had given it, and said, "This is my book whence I receive everything that I write; and it has taught me whatever little I know."

In short, all the saints have learned the art of loving God from the study of the crucifix. Brother John of Alvernia, every time that he beheld Jesus wounded, could not restrain his tears. Brother James of Tuderto, when he heard

⁹ "Non enim judicavi me scire aliquid inter vos, nisi Jesum Christum, et hunc crucifixum."—1 *Cor.* ii. 2.

the Passion of our Redeemer read, not only wept bitterly, but broke out into loud sobs, overcome with the love with which he was inflamed toward his beloved Lord.

It was this sweet study of the crucifix which made St. Francis become a great seraph. He wept so continually in meditating on the sufferings of Jesus Christ, that he almost entirely lost his sight. On one occasion, being found crying out and weeping, he was asked what was the matter with him. "What ails me?" answered the saint. "I weep over the sorrows and insults inflicted on my Lord; and my sorrow is increased when I think of those ungrateful men who do not love him, but live without any thought of him." Every time that he heard the bleating of a lamb, he felt himself touched with compassion at the thought of the death of Jesus, the Immaculate Lamb, drained of every drop of blood upon the cross for the sins of the world. And therefore this loving saint could find no subject on which he exhorted his brethren with greater eagerness than the constant remembrance of the Passion of Jesus.

This, then, is the book—Jesus crucified—which, if we constantly read it, will teach us, on the one hand, to have a lively fear of sin, and, on the other hand, will inflame us with love for a God so full of love for us; while we read in these wounds the great malice of sin, which reduced a God to suffer so bitter a death in order to satisfy the divine justice, and the love which our Saviour has shown us in choosing to suffer so much in order to prove to us how much he loved us.

Let us beseech the divine Mother Mary to obtain for us from her Son the grace that we also may enter into these furnaces of love, in which so many loving hearts are

consumed, in order that, our earthly affections being there burned away, we also may burn with those blessed flames, which render souls holy on earth and blessed in heaven. Amen.



PART I

REFLECTIONS AND
AFFECTIONS ON
THE PASSION OF
JESUS CHRIST

CHAPTER I

THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST IN
BEING WILLING TO SATISFY THE
DIVINE JUSTICE FOR OUR SINS

I.



We read in history of a proof of love so prodigious that it will be the admiration of all ages.

There was once a king, lord of many kingdoms, who had one only son, so beautiful, so holy, so amiable, that he was the delight of his father, who loved him as much as himself. This young prince had a great affection for one of his slaves; so much so that, the slave having committed a crime for which he had been condemned to death, the prince offered himself to die for the slave; the father, being jealous of justice, was satisfied to condemn his beloved son to death, in order that the slave might remain free from the punishment that he deserved: and thus the son died a malefactor's death, and the slave was freed from punishment.

This fact, the like of which has never happened in this world, and never will happen, is related in the Gospels, where we read that the Son of God, the Lord of the universe, seeing that man was condemned to eternal death in

punishment of his sins, chose to take upon himself human flesh, and thus to pay by his death the penalty due to man: *He was offered because it was His own will.*¹ And his Eternal Father caused him to die upon the cross to save us miserable sinners: *He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.*² What dost thou think, O devout soul, of this love of the Son and of the Father?

Thou didst, then, O my beloved Redeemer, choose by Thy death to sacrifice Thyself in order to obtain the pardon of my sins. And what return of gratitude shall I then make to Thee? Thou hast done too much to oblige me to love Thee; I should indeed be most ungrateful to Thee if I did not love Thee with my whole heart. Thou hast given for me Thy divine life; I, miserable sinner that I am, give Thee my own life. Yes, I will at least spend that period of life that remains to me only in loving Thee, obeying Thee, and pleasing Thee.

II.

O men, men! let us love this our Redeemer, who, being God, has not disdained to take upon himself our sins, in order to satisfy by his sufferings for the chastisement which we have deserved: *Surely He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows.*³

¹ "Oblatus est, quia ipse voluit."—*Isa.* liii. 7.

² "Proprio Filio suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum."—*Rom.* viii. 32.

³ "Vere languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit."—*Isa.* liii. 4.

St. Augustine says that our Lord in creating us formed us by virtue of his power, but in redeeming us he has saved us from death by means of his sufferings: "He created us in his strength; he sought us back in his weakness."⁴

How much do I not owe Thee, O Jesus my Saviour! Oh, if I were to give my blood a thousand times over,—if I were to spend a thousand lives for Thee,—it would yet be nothing. Oh, how could any one that meditated much on the love which Thou hast shown him in Thy Passion, love anything else but Thee? Through the love with which Thou didst love us on the cross, grant me the grace to love Thee with my whole heart. I love Thee, infinite Goodness; I love Thee above every other good; and I ask nothing more of Thee but Thy holy love.

"But how is this?" continues St. Augustine. How is it possible, O Saviour of the world, that Thy love has arrived at such a height that when I had committed the crime, Thou shouldst have to pay the penalty? "Whither has Thy love reached? I have sinned; Thou art punished."⁵

And what could it then signify to Thee, adds St. Bernard, that we should lose ourselves and be chastised, as we well deserved to be; that Thou shouldst choose to satisfy with Thy innocent flesh for our sins, and to die in order to deliver us from death! "O good Jesus, what doest Thou? We ought to have died, and it is Thou who diest. We have sinned and Thou sufferest. A deed without precedent,

⁴ "Condidit nos fortitudine sua, quæsit nos infirmitate sua."—*In Jo. tr.* 15.

⁵ "Quo tuus attigit amor? Ego inique egi, tu pœna mulctaris."—*Medit.* c. 7.

grace without merit, charity without measure.”⁶ O deed which never has had and never will have its match! O grace which we could never merit! O love which can never be understood!

III.

Isaias had already foretold that our blessed Redeemer should be condemned to death, and as an innocent lamb brought to the sacrifice: *He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter.*⁷ What a cause of wonder it must have been to the angels, O my God, to behold their innocent Lord led as a victim to be sacrificed on the altar of the cross for the love of man! And what a cause of horror to heaven and to hell, the sight of a God extended as an infamous criminal on a shameful gibbet for the sins of his creatures!

*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): that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ.*⁸ “He was made a curse upon the cross,” says St. Ambrose, “that thou mightest be blessed in the kingdom of God.”⁹

⁶ “O bone Jesu! quid tibi est? Mori nos debuimus, et tu solvis? Nos peccavimus, et tu luis?—Opus sine exemplo, gratia sine merito, charitas sine modo!”—*Apud Lobn. Bibl.* tit. 110, § 3.

⁷ “Sicut ovis ad occisionem ducetur.”—*Isa.* liii. 7.

⁸ “Christus nos redemit de maledicto legis, factus pro nobis maledictum, quia scriptum est: Maledictus omnis qui pendet in ligno; ut in gentibus benedictio Abrahæ fieret in Christo Jesu.”—*Gal.* iii. 13.

⁹ “Ille maledictum in cruce factus est, ut tu benedictus esses in Dei regno.”—*Epist.* 47.

O my dearest Saviour! Thou wert, then, content, in order to obtain for me the blessing of God, to embrace the dishonor of appearing upon the cross accursed in the sight of the whole world, and even forsaken in Thy sufferings by Thy Eternal Father,—a suffering which made Thee cry out with a loud voice, *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*¹⁰ Yes, observes Simon of Cassia, it was for this end that Jesus was abandoned in his Passion in order that we might not remain abandoned in the sins which we have committed: “Therefore Christ was abandoned in his sufferings that we might not be abandoned in our guilt.”¹¹ O prodigy of compassion! O excess of love of God towards men! And how can there be a soul who believes this, O my Jesus, and yet loves Thee not?

IV.

*He hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.*¹² Behold, O men, how far the love of Jesus for us has carried him, in order to cleanse us from the filthiness of our sins. He has even shed every drop of his blood that he might prepare for us in this his own blood a bath of salvation: “He offers his own blood,” says a learned writer,

¹⁰ “Deus meus! Deus meus! ut quid dereliquisti me?”—*Matt.* xxvii. 46.

¹¹ “Ideo Christus derelictus est in pœnis, ne nos derelinquamur in culpis.”—*Lib. xiii. de Pass. D.*

¹² “Dilexit nos, et lavit nos a peccatis nostris in sanguine suo.”—*Apoc. i. 5.*

“speaking better than the blood of Abel: for that cried for justice; the blood of Christ for mercy.”¹³

Whereupon St. Bonaventure exclaims, “O good Jesus, what hast Thou done?”¹⁴ O my Saviour, what indeed hast Thou done? How far hath Thy love carried Thee? What hast Thou seen in me which hath made Thee love me so much? “Wherefore hast Thou loved me so much? Why, Lord, why? What am I?”¹⁵ Wherefore didst Thou choose to suffer so much for me? Who am I that Thou wouldst win to Thyself my love at so dear a price? Oh, it was entirely the work of Thy infinite love! Be Thou eternally praised and blessed for it.

*O all ye that pass by the way, attend and see if there be any sorrow like to My sorrow.*¹⁶ The same seraphic Doctor, considering these words of Jeremias as spoken of our blessed Redeemer while he was hanging on the cross dying for the love of us, says, “Yes, Lord, I will attend and see if there be any love like unto Thy love”¹⁷ By which he means, I do indeed see and understand, O my most loving Redeemer, how much Thou didst suffer upon that infamous tree; but what most constrains me to love Thee is the thought of the affection which Thou hast shown me in suffering so much, in order that I might love Thee.

¹³ “Offert sanguinem melius clamantem quam Abel; quia iste justitiam, sanguis Christi misericordiam interpellabat.”—*Contens.* l. 10, d. 4, c. 1, *sp.* 1.

¹⁴ “O bone Jesu! quid fecisti?”

¹⁵ “Quid me tantum amasti? quare, Domine, quare? quid sum ego?”—*Slim. div. am.* p. 1, c. 13.

¹⁶ “O vos omnes qui transitis per viam! attendite, et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus.”—*Lam.* i. 12.

¹⁷ “Imo, Domine, attendam, et videbo si est amor sicut amor tuus.”

V.

That which most inflamed St. Paul with the love of Jesus was the thought that he chose to die, not only for all men, but for him in particular: *He loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.*¹⁸ Yes, he has loved me, said he, and for my sake he gave himself up to die. And thus ought every one of us to say; for St. John Chrysostom asserts that God has loved every individual man with the same love with which he has loved the world: "He loves each man separately with the same measure of charity with which he loves the whole world."¹⁹ So that each one of us is under as great obligation to Jesus Christ for having suffered for every one, as if he had suffered for him alone.

For supposing, my brother, Jesus Christ had died to save you alone, leaving all others to their original ruin, what a debt of gratitude you would owe to him! But you ought to feel that you owe him a greater obligation still for having died for the salvation of all. For if he had died for you alone, what sorrow would it not have caused you to think that your neighbors, parents, brothers, and friends would be damned, and that you would, when this life was over, be forever separated from them? If you and your family had been slaves, and some one came to rescue you alone, how would you not entreat of him to save your parents and brothers together with yourself! And how much would you thank him if he did this to please you! Say, therefore, to Jesus:

¹⁸ "Dilexit me, et tradidit semetipsum pro me."—*Gal.* ii. 20.

¹⁹ "Adeo singulum quemque hominum pari charitatis modo diligit, quo diligit universum orbem."—*In Gal.* ii. 20.

O my sweetest Redeemer! Thou hast done this for me without my having asked Thee; Thou hast not only saved me from death at the price of Thy blood, but also my parents and friends, so that I may have a good hope that we may all together enjoy Thy presence forever in paradise. O Lord! I thank Thee, and I love Thee, and I hope to thank Thee for it, and to love Thee forever in that blessed country.

VI.

Who could ever, says St. Laurence Justinian, explain the love which the divine Word bears to each one of us, since it surpasses the love of every son towards his mother, and of every mother for her son? "The intense charity of the Word of God surpasses all maternal and filial love; neither can human words express how great his love is to each one of us!"²⁰ So much so, that our Lord revealed to St. Gertrude that he would be ready to die as many times as there were souls damned, if they were yet capable of redemption: "I would die as many deaths as there are souls in hell."²¹

O Jesus, O treasure more worthy of love than all others! why is it that men love Thee so little? Oh! do Thou make known what Thou hast suffered for each of them, the love that Thou bearest them, the desire Thou hast to be loved by them, and how worthy Thou art of being loved. Make Thyself known, O my Jesus, make Thyself loved.

²⁰ "Peæcellit omnem maternum ac filialem affectum Verbi Dei immensa charitas; neque humano valet explicare eloquio, quo circa unumquemque moveatur amore."—*De Tr. Chr. Ag.* c. 5.

²¹ "Tories morerer, quot sunt animæ in inferno."—*Rev.* l. 7, c. 19.

VII.

I am the good shepherd, said our Redeemer; *the good shepherd gives his life for his sheep.*²² But, O my Lord, where are there in the world shepherds like unto Thee? Other shepherds will slay their sheep in order to preserve their own life. Thou, O too loving Shepherd, didst give Thy divine life in order to save the life of Thy beloved sheep. And of these sheep, I, O most amiable Shepherd, have the happiness to be one. What obligation, then, am I not under to love Thee, and to spend my life for Thee, since Thou hast died for the love of me in particular! And what confidence ought I not to have in Thy blood, knowing that it has been shed to pay the debt of my sins! *And thou shalt say in that day, I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord. Behold, God is my Saviour; I will deal confidently, and will not fear.*²³ And how can I any longer mistrust Thy mercy, O my Lord, when I behold Thy wounds? Come, then, O sinners, and let us have recourse to Jesus, who hangs upon that cross as it were upon a throne of mercy. He has appeased the divine justice, which we had insulted. If we have offended God, he has done penance for us; all that is required for us is contrition for our sins. O my dearest Saviour, to what have Thy pity and love for me reduced Thee? The slave sins, and Thou, Lord, payest the penalty for him. If, therefore, I think of my sins, the thought of the punishment I deserve must make me tremble; but when I think of Thy death, I find I

²² "Ego sum Pastor bonus. Bonus Pastor animam suam dat pro ovibus suis."—*John*, x. 11.

²³ "Et dices in die illa: Confitebor tibi, Domine! . . . Ecce Deus Salvator meus; fiducialiter agam, et non timebo."—*Isa.* xii. 1.

have more reason to hope than to fear. O blood of Jesus! thou art all my hope.

VIII.

But this blood, as it inspires us with confidence, also obliges us to give ourselves entirely to our Blessed Redeemer. The Apostle exclaims, *Know you not that you are not your own? For you are bought with a great price.*²⁴

Therefore, O my Jesus, I cannot any longer, without injustice, dispose of myself, or of my own concerns, since Thou hast made me Thine by purchasing me through Thy death. My body, my soul, my life are no longer mine; they are Thine, and entirely Thine. In Thee alone, therefore, will I hope. O my God, crucified and dead for me, I have nothing else to offer Thee but this soul, which Thou hast bought with Thy blood; to Thee do I offer it. Accept of my love, for I desire nothing but Thee, my Saviour, my God, my love, my all. Hitherto I have shown much gratitude towards men; to Thee alone have I, alas! been most ungrateful. But now I love Thee, and I have no greater cause of sorrow than my having offended Thee. O my Jesus, give me confidence in Thy Passion; root out of my heart every affection that belongs not to Thee. I will love Thee alone, who dost deserve all my love, and who hast given me so much reason to love Thee. And who, indeed, could refuse to love Thee, when they see Thee, who art the beloved of the Eternal Father, dying so bitter and cruel a

²⁴ "An nescitis quoniam . . . non estis vestri? Empti enim estis pretio magno."—1 *Cor.* vi. 19.

death for our sake? O Mary, O Mother of fair love, I pray thee, through the merits of thy burning heart, obtain for me the grace to live only in order to love thy Son, who, being in himself worthy of an infinite love, has chosen at so great a cost to acquire to himself the love of a miserable sinner like me. O love of souls, O my Jesus! I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee; but still I love Thee too little. Oh, give me more love, give me flames that may make me live always burning with Thy love! I do not myself deserve it; but Thou dost well deserve it, O infinite Goodness. Amen. This I hope, so may it be.