



# KEEP ME COMPANY FOR 15 MINUTES

## Our Lady to Sr. Lucia, 10<sup>th</sup> December 1925

### First Saturday of the Month



## The Fifth Sorrowful Mystery

### Crucifixion and Death of Our Lord

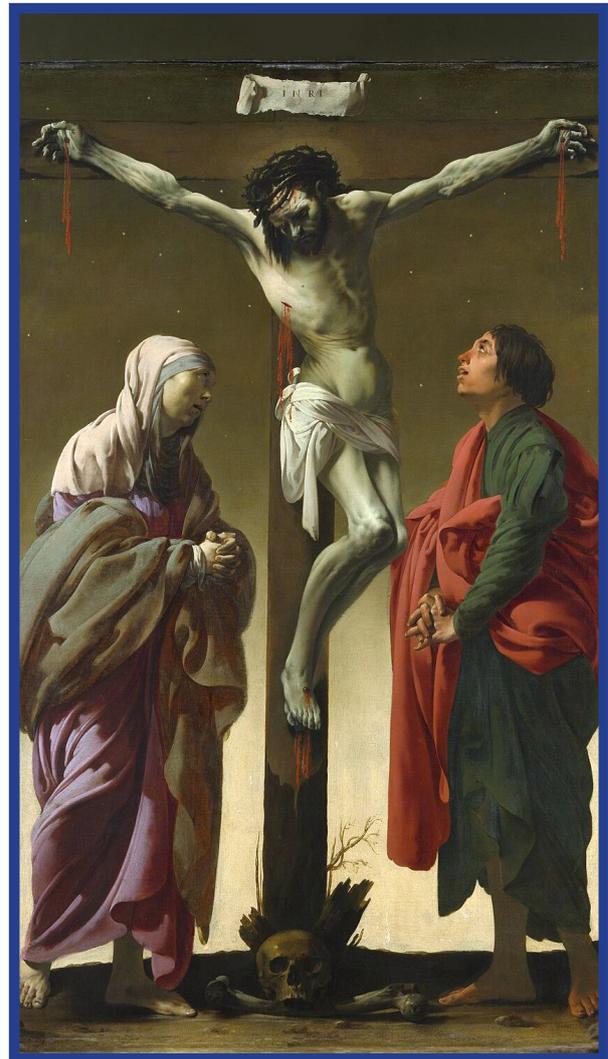
*Hail, O Cross, our only hope!*

#### Introduction

Our meditation concerns the 5th Sorrowful Mystery of the Rosary, the Crucifixion and Death of Our Lord. We must remember that, before Our Lord immolated himself on Mount Calvary for us, the cross was an instrument of humiliation and disgrace for the condemned. After Jesus' redemptive sacrifice, this instrument of punishment became a sign of triumph, the glorious symbol of Christians, the source of our hope and our eternal salvation. It is through the Cross that we come to the everlasting Light of Heaven.

#### Meditation Setting

For our Meditation setting, let us imagine the summit of Calvary after the Crucifixion of Jesus. The sky overhead is darkened. Only a few people are there, gazing in great sorrow at the Cross where the Redeemer was nailed. And let us then imagine that suddenly a bright ray of sunlight pierces through the heavy clouds and wonderfully illuminates the Saviour's Cross. With this image in mind, let us do our meditation.



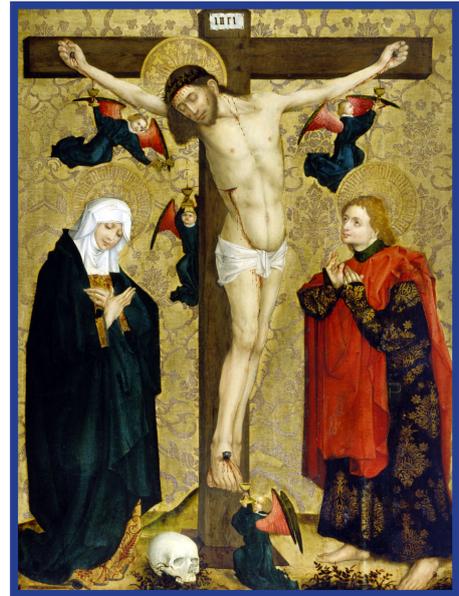
#### Preparatory Prayer

O glorious Queen and Lady of Fatima, turn to us your merciful mother's gaze and help us to make this meditation in a prayerful and pious manner. Intercede with your beloved Son, Jesus, for the necessary graces for us to reap from this meditation the fruits of conversion and sanctification that He offers us through His saving sacrifice on Calvary. May the infinite merits of Redemption enable us to follow His example, with each one embracing his own cross, following the path that leads us to Heaven. Amen.

### **Gospel of Saint John (3, 13-17):**

“At that time, Jesus said to Nicodemus: ‘No one has ascended to Heaven except the One who descended from Heaven, the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Indeed, God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.’”

## **I – THE CROSS OPENED THE GATES OF HEAVEN FOR US**



When Adam and Eve, because of sin, were for the Redemption. Mankind could weep over its guilt, but lamentations would be of no use in achieving eternal fellowship with God, because only an initiative from God himself, in Christ, could open Heaven to us again. And that is what happened when He became incarnate and died on the Cross for mankind.

### **1. A Prefiguration of Christ on the Cross**

In the Book of Numbers (21, 4-9) we find a prefiguration, or symbolic representation, of the Cross of Christ. The passage recalls one of the episodes during the passage of the chosen people through the desert to the Promised Land. Wearied and discouraged by hunger and thirst, the people began to murmur against Moses. Because of this, God punished the children of Israel by sending poisonous serpents to attack them, causing many deaths.

This caused the people to come to Moses and say, “We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people, and God, infinitely merciful, heeding Moses’ pleas, took pity on them. He said to the prophet: “Make a bronze serpent and set it up as a sign on a pole; whoever is bitten and looks at it will live” (Num 21, 8). This bronze serpent on a pole was a prefiguration of Jesus on the Cross.

### **2. The True Brazen Serpent**

It is important here to consider that this revolt of the Jewish people is an image of our own revolt against God, whom we offend with our faults, our complaints, and our despair in the face of the trials and pains of this life. When we sin or when we do not accept the setbacks allowed by Providence, we are, deep down, rebelling against God.

Just as the venomous snakes spread through the camp of the Hebrews, evil spread over the face of the Earth through the sin of Adam. And so, there is no better salvation for mankind in this state of disobedience and sin than to look at the true “brazen serpent”,

The prefiguration of Christ in the brazen serpent, however, is nothing compared to what happened on Calvary, because reality is always much richer than the symbol. Our Lord not only forgave mankind’s guilt, so that we could have a happy eternity, but, in addition to healing us of sin, he also offered us the possibility of participating in his

own divine life, which we could never have obtained through our own efforts. We are invited to believe in Him, and accept everything that He given us, including His doctrine and His grace, as received through the Sacraments.

## **II – CHRIST CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN TO EMBRACE THE CROSS**

God forgave the chosen people in the desert, just as he forgives us today because of the infinite love he has for mankind. So immense is this love that he gave his only begotten Son to the world, so that all may have life and “have it to the full” (Jn 10:10).

But what was the path chosen by God to consummate the salvation of the world? The most perfect of all but one which causes us astonishment: the sacrificial death of Christ on the Cross!



### **1. Our Lord wanted to embrace the cross to save us**

If Jesus had offered the Father a simple gesture, a word or an act of His will, it would have been enough to expiate our sins. However, as St. Paul teaches (Phil 2, 6-11), “Jesus Christ (...) emptied himself, taking the form of a slave and becoming equal to men. Found in human appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the Cross.”

Being God, the Son possesses eternal joy and felicity, and his human life on earth could have been full of delights. But instead, the God-Man embraced being nailed to the Cross and dying on it, thus fulfilling the will of the One who had sent Him (cf. Jn 5:30) so as to save mankind from eternal death.

### **2. The Saint and Christ's sufferings on Calvary**

In the Gospels, the sufferings of Christ are described in a restrained way – there was no need to go into details for the first generation of Christians, who were all too familiar with the terrible brutality of crucifixion.

But for the saints, this was not enough and they were eloquent in their description of what Christ endured. We can sum up their thoughts in these words from St Louis de Montfort:

Among all the motives impelling us to love Jesus Christ, the Wisdom incarnate, the strongest, in my opinion, is the sufferings he chose to endure to prove his love for us.

“There is,” says St Bernard, “one motive which excels all others which I feel most keenly and which urges me to love Jesus. It is, dear Jesus, the bitter chalice which you drank for our sakes, and the great work of our Redemption which makes you so loveable to us.

Indeed this supreme blessing and incomparable proof of your love makes us want to return your love. This motive attracts us more agreeably, makes most just demands upon us, moves us more pressingly and influences us more forcibly.” And he gives the reason in a few words, “Our dear Saviour has laboured and suffered much to accomplish our redemption. What pain and anguish he has endured!”

### 3. The central role of the Cross in human history

It was with the intention of saving us that the Holy Trinity sent the Son into the world. From all eternity, the Cross had been in the mind of God, as the instrument for achieving the Redemption of human race.

Given this scenario, it is even possible to understand why God allowed sin. From the viewpoint of the plan of creation, the supreme glory was not the non-existence of this evil, but rather the immense love of Christ in allowing himself to be, scourged, crowned with thorns and crucified out of love for us.

## III – THE CROSS, SOURCE OF GLORY

The Cross, once a sign and reality of the worst possible disaster and disgrace, a symbol of ignominy, agony and dishonour for so many criminals, is today exalted by the Church because Our Lord Jesus Christ through his sufferings and death, identified himself with it. It is “the sign of the Son of Man” (Mt 24, 30) and He transformed it into a sign of triumph! That is why the Cross crowns cathedrals and churches and is the distinctive sign of true Christianity.

### 1. Through the Cross, we reach the Light

The Cross is the way to glory—In Latin, there is a saying: “Per crucem ad lucem,” that is, “Through the cross to the light!”

And so, if we want to achieve holiness, nothing is as central as knowing how to suffer, how to embrace the Cross. The decisive moment of our perseverance is not when a sensible grace touches us and empowers us to act virtuously, but rather the hour of trial, when temptations assail us, and we experience our weakness.

Being tempted is inevitable due to our fallen nature after original sin, and is part of God’s providential plan. When it happens we must resist, embracing the cross, certain that our only hope is found in it, “Ave Crux, spes unica!” (Hail, O Cross, our only hope).

### 2. Teach us how to carry our own Cross

When we commit a fault or our interior life seems ineffective, giving us the impression of not being loved by God, let us remember that this feeling is contrary to the revelation made by Our Lord in the Gospel. Let us believe that God loves us so much that the Son would have been incarnated and suffered the Passion of the Cross to save each one of us individually. Therefore, let us celebrate with great joy the sign of our salvation and the guarantee of our future resurrection. Let us always know how to carry our own cross with love and veneration, just as our Saviour did on the Way of the Cross.

## CONCLUSION

Through the purest hands of Mary Most Holy, let us exalt the Holy Cross of Christ in our thoughts, words and actions. O Holy Cross, you strengthen the confidence of the poor and the sinner, you confirm our hope on our often difficult path to the Lord. In the shadow of your arms, the Church endures. Through your eternal embrace, the Father welcomes us. Amen.

