

# Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus

## 79.—The Journey to Calvary.

1. Pilate, seeing he could not prevail upon the people, at last passed sentence of death upon Jesus. Then the soldiers took Him, and, placing a heavy cross on His wounded shoulders, led Him forth to Calvary. This was the usual place for the execution of criminals.

2. As Jesus passed through the streets, His strength failed and He fell several times. His executioners, seeing He could not carry the cross any further, compelled Simon the Cyrene, whom they met on the way, to take it up and carry it to Calvary. Together with Jesus, two thieves were also led forth to be crucified.

3. Amongst the crowd that accompanied Jesus were many women, weeping and lamenting. Turning to them, He strove to console them, and, in the kindest words, bade them not weep for Him, but for themselves and for their children.

4. What a sublime example of patience Christ gave in His Passion! Condemned unjustly, He nevertheless, without a murmur, takes His cross; treated with the utmost cruelty and inhumanity, He complains not. So ought we to act when trials are sent to us, or men persecute us.

## 80.—Jesus is Nailed to the Cross.

1. When Jesus reached Calvary the soldiers offered Him wine mixed with gall. This draught helped to render the agony of crucifixion less keen, by deadening the feeling of sense. But Jesus refused to drink, being determined to suffer unshrinkingly all His Father had decreed.

2. He was then stripped of His garments and nailed to the cross. On each side of Jesus was crucified one of the thieves that had been led forth with Him. The soldiers divided His garments amongst them, but for His coat they cast lots.

3. This coat of Our Savior was a figure of His Church. Woven from top to bottom without seams: so is the Church without division—one and indivisible.

## 81.—Jesus on the Cross.

1. At length Jesus was raised up, and hung suspended by His wounds. How cruel were his torments, whilst His blood ran in streams to the ground! But the Jews remained unmoved; nay, they even mocked Him, and, in derision, cried out, "Vah! You, who said You could destroy the Temple of God, and in three days rebuild it, come down from the cross, if You be the Son of God." The only answer Jesus made was a prayer for their forgiveness: "Father," said He, "forgive them, for they know not what they do."

2. One of the thieves who was hanging at His side also began to blaspheme, and, chiding, bad Him, if He were the Christ, to save Himself and them. But the other thief remonstrated: "We," said he, "suffer justly, but this man unjustly." Then he turned to Jesus and asked to be remembered by Him. Jesus said, "This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise."

3. In this history of the penitent thief we have one of the best examples of the power of prayer—one repentant word, and he is saved. In the desert, Moses set up a brazen serpent, upon which those who were bitten looked and were cured; on Calvary, Jesus hung upon the cross, that those who look upon Him in faith and love may be cured of the wounds of the soul.

## 82 —Mary at the Foot of the Cross.

1. Whilst Jesus was hanging upon the cross, Mary, His mother, and John the apostle, came and stood at its foot. When Jesus saw then He said to His mother, "Woman, behold thy son!" then He said to John, "Behold thy mother!" and from that hour John took the Blessed Virgin under his care.

2. As formerly the heroic mother of the Maccabees stood encouraging her seven sons to die bravely for their religion, so did Mary stand at the foot of the cross. Then indeed was Simeon's prophecy fulfilled: truly, a sword of sorrow pierced her heart. In John, every Christian was given as a child to Mary

### 83.—Jesus Dies upon the Cross.

1. About noon of the day on which Christ was crucified, the whole earth was covered with darkness. This continued for three hours. In the midst of this general gloom, and as life was ebbing away, Jesus, seeing that God had withdrawn His consolations from Him, cried out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

2. After this Jesus said, "I thirst." A soldier dipped a sponge in vinegar, and, putting it on a reed, gave Him to drink. When Jesus had tasted the vinegar, He said, "It is consummated," and, bowing down His head, died.

3. At the moment Christ died, nature shook to her centre; the earth trembled, the rocks were split, the graves were opened, and the dead arose; the veil of the Temple was rent from the top to the bottom. When the centurion and the guard of soldiers that stood round the cross saw this, they cried out, "Indeed this was the Son of God." The multitude returned to Jerusalem, striking their breasts, and wondering at what they had seen.

4. At length man's redemption is accomplished; Christ has triumphed. His extended arms show the extent of His love, and His wounds are the fountains from whence grace flows to pay the debt of sin. With Christ's death ended the law of Moses; hence the veil of the Temple, which had heretofore separated the people from the sanctuary, was torn, as a sign that Christ had opened the way to heaven. The bloody sacrifices of Moses had passed away,—the shadow was gone,—and in their stead was substituted the only true and real sacrifice, Jesus Christ.

### 84.—Jesus is Laid in the Tomb.

1. Christ was crucified on the eve of the Sabbath. That the bodies of the criminals might not remain exposed to view during the Paschal solemnities, the soldiers broke the legs of the two thieves, that they might die the sooner. But when they came to Jesus, He was already dead; so they did not break His legs, but one of them opened His side with a spear. Immediately there ran forth blood and water.

2. Towards evening, Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the great Jewish council, but a secret believer in Christ, came to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate having granted his prayer, Joseph and Nicodemus came and took the body from the cross. They then embalmed it with precious perfumes, and, wrapping it in white linen cloths, laid it in a sepulchre. This sepulchre was cut in a rock, and situated in a garden near Calvary.

3. The chief priests and Pharisees, though they had apparently conquered, were not at ease. They remembered well that Jesus had foretold His death, and how He would rise again on the third day. Fearing that, possibly, the apostles might steal the body and declare that He had risen, they came to Pilate and asked him to place his seal upon the tomb, and set a guard to watch it. He did so.

4. Eve, the mother of mankind was taken from Adam's side; so the Church, our spiritual mother, came forth from the side of Christ. It was forbidden to break the bones of the Paschal lamb; neither were the bones of Jesus Christ, the true Paschal Lamb, broken. In all things, even the smallest, we see the fulfilment not only of the prophecies, but of the types and figures that foretold the life and death of Christ.