

All the saints and mystics tell us that we must run after the cross and seek nothing else. Padre Pio wrote, “ I know only too well that the cross is the pledge of love, the down payment of forgiveness. Love that is not nourished and fed by the cross is not genuine love.”

Here are some beautiful words that Jesus revealed to an Italian mystic, Luisa Piccarreta:

“O please, O Cross, receive Me soon into your arms, I am impatient of waiting! Holy Cross, upon you I will come to give completion to all. Hurry, O Cross, fulfill the burning desire that consumes Me, to give Life to souls. Delay no more; I anxiously yearn to lay Myself upon you in order to open Heaven to all My children.

“O Cross, it is true that you are My Martyrdom, but in a little while you will also be My Victory and My Most Complete Triumph; and through you I will give abundant Inheritances, Victories, Triumphs and Crowns to My children.”

St Hannibal di Francia wrote a beautiful reflection :

“Crucified Jesus obeys His executioners. He accepts with Love all the insults and pains which they give Him. Jesus found in the Cross His bed of rest for the great Love that He felt for our poor soul. And we—do we rest in Him in all our pains?

Can we say that we prepare a bed for Jesus in our heart with our patience and with our love? While Jesus is being crucified, there is not one interior or exterior part of Him that does not feel a special suffering. And we, do we remain completely crucified to Him, at least with our main senses? When we find our enjoyment in a futile conversation or in some other similar amusement, then it is Jesus who remains nailed to the Cross.

But if we sacrifice that same taste for love of Him, then we remove the nails from Jesus, and we nail ourselves. Do we always keep our mind, our heart and all of our being nailed with the nails of His Most Holy Will? While being crucified, Jesus looks at His executioners with Love. And we, do we look with love at those who offend us, for love of Him? My Crucified Jesus, may Your Nails be driven into my heart, so that there may be no heartbeat, affection or desire that does not feel their pricking; and may the blood which this heart of mine will shed, be the balm that soothes all of Your Wounds.”

*Will you not watch one hour
with me?*



Dear Fellow Pilgrims

We now enter into this most sorrowful times – when the greatest drama the world has seen is going to be reenacted. Man is going to put his God to death. We are going to put our Jesus to death. But Jesus is going to put our sins to death, Jesus is going to put the “old man” to death. Jesus will rise so that we having put the old self to death can rise to a new life in Christ.

A question we might want to ask ourselves is are we friends with God? Jesus tells us that he no longer calls us slaves but friends. What does friendship mean but to wish to share everything. Lent hopefully has also shown us though how far at times we are from being Jesus’ friend. We can go to mass, we can pray but do we really want what Jesus wants? Do we really work at making sure that there is nothing in us that is hindering his work in us?

Bishop Varden on a podcast “Desert Fathers in a Year: Ep.14” quotes the desert father, Isaiah:

“Woe is me, for your name is all around me, yet I serve your enemies. Woe, indeed woe is me, for I do that which God abhors , and for that reason he does not heal me.”

Abba Isaiah, a man striving for holiness, realised how constant must be our repentance and our self-honesty. We must continually live with a “compunction” of heart. Bp Varden explains that compunction is closely related to “puncture;” we must allow ourselves to be emptied, humbled so that we are able to see ourselves as God sees us which will lead to tears of repentance. The gift of tears is a great gift for it contains within it not only honest sorrow and conversion but also a purification. Think of Mary wiping the feet of Jesus with the oil and weeping over them. A true realisation of our sinfulness and the need for grace can result in this powerful conversion experience.

We might from time to time experience such a call – to reorder our lives totally and it is a great grace but it also necessitates that we follow through on that and choose also the means to achieve this. Otherwise we just fall back into our old ways.

So what then can really help us to compunction of heart and to dispose ourselves to receiving this grace?

- Let us start by asking a question: What can we do for Christ this Lent? We turn ourselves to face him – reorientate ourselves to him as the centre of our lives. Nearly all our troubles come from the fact that most of the time we are looking in the wrong direction. Now is the time that he desperately needs our help:
- Christ is looking for souls to take a little sip of the bitter chalice that he had to drink. He wants us not only to meditate on his passion, not only to compassionate him but to enter into the very mystery. If as the Catechism says we are to participate in all Christ’s mysteries, this necessitates sharing in his passion – indeed we do that every time we receive communion. The great mystery is that by entering into his passion, we console him at the very time it was happening when everyone else had deserted him.
- How to keep him company?
 - Meditate on the Passion. Jesus revealed to Saint Faustina that an hour meditating on his passion was more than a year of rosaries. Meditate particularly on the Garden of Gethsemane.
 - Recall constantly his saving acts and words – keep revolving them around in our hearts – allow his words to transform us. Remember that he is always by our side.
 - Keep Silence – Listen – Remove the little world that surrounds us – thoughts of creatures, imagination , the voices that inundate us (worry, anxiety, control, fear) so that we can hear the voice of Jesus and so that he can enter freely into our hearts. Remove the little pebble of our will so that his can fill us – Jesus will do all the work.
 - Be aware that that we will be tempted not to do this – we will fear that God will ask too much of us; that he will crush us with pain and suffering, that we will be miserable. These all come to stop us from this great grace. After all when we were baptised, we were baptised into Jesus’ passion and death – we have already experienced this in our souls. When we go to mass we are also entering into these mysteries.
 - Lastly, we need to claim his graces and virtues – this is a work he wishes to do above all others in us – so claim his saving acts, make them your own. Every word, every action contains a lesson but also a power; e.g. the crowning with thorns tells us to guard our thoughts for it is there that sin starts but then we ask that through the grace of this mystery may God purify our thoughts – so that we only think, what he thinks.

