

“Justice For Laura” Novena - 9 Days of Prayer

Day Eight



Scripture Reading: “The Crucifixion of our Lord”

“And when they came to the place which is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on the right and one on the left. And Jesus said, “Father forgive them; for they know not what they do.”..... One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done no wrong.” And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” And he said to him, “Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.” -LUKE 23:33-43

Meditation:

Our Lord has ascended the Cross as a sort of pulpit from which He will deliver His last sermon. Beaten, bruised, bloodied, scourged, crowned with thorns, abandoned by all but

his most devout followers, and exhausted from carrying His own Cross all the way to the place of His death, our Lord speaks to us. His words are few, spoken through the asphyxiation of being crucified, yet His sayings are among the most important words we sinners can ever hear in our lives. Let us beg God for “ears to hear.”

“Father forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

If we did know what we were doing when we crucified the Son of God then we probably would not have very much hope of salvation. Indeed, if we were aware of the malice of even one seemingly small sin, we would break down and weep... The magnitude of an offense is in direct proportion to the dignity of the one offended; in the case of sin, God is the One offended, and, as His is an infinite dignity, even a “small” sin constitutes an infinite offense against the Most High God. We cannot fathom the great majesty of the Holy Trinity Whom we so often offend, but we can and do catch a glimpse of the immensity of His mercy when He Himself takes our place on the cross, and cries out in anguish from that most exalted place, “Forgive them!” The boundless mercy of God exceeds the boundaries of our hearts and minds, so darkened by sin... Our Lord appeals to His Father (we can call Him “Our Father” only by the magnanimous gift of incomprehensible grace) on behalf of all those individuals who are actively crucifying Him: the ones who drove in the nails and crowned Him with thorns and mocked him; those who cast lots for His garments and scoffed at Him, saying, “If you are the Christ, come down off that cross!” Our Lord forgives them all and prays for them, knowing that they are ignorant... Didn't WE drive nails into His feet, fastening Him to the cross every time we strayed from “the way”? Didn't WE crown Him with thorns and make Him a mock king and ridicule Him every time we praised His Name with our lips but then in our actions railed against Him and His Church, even consciously justifying our sins because they were so “small” and “insignificant”? Didn't WE drive the spear into His side – into His Sacred Heart – with all of our idolatrous false loves, seeking God's uncreated Love and satisfaction in the created things of this world?

Amen, Amen, if we only knew the scorching furnace of Love that we were offending every time we sinned then we would agonize and weep to have hurled such blasphemous insults at the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We would feel such a compassion for so great a God that we would yearn to be crucified with Him for our sins – recognizing that for us crucifixion would not be even a small sacrifice, but only justice for the venom which we have so often offered Him, even under the mask of praise. We feel as though we ought to be the thief being crucified at His side, in atonement for our many sins, and we proclaim with that thief that our crucifixion is “the due reward of our deeds.” We look upon the God whom we ourselves have nailed to a tree and we cry out for forgiveness, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom!” We own and acknowledge our sin, and our just punishment, and all we can do is turn to God and beg Him for mercy, knowing full well that we do not deserve nor could we ever merit the

pardon which we seek... We surrender everything knowing that we are entitled to nothing....

And it is RIGHT HERE, prostrate before our crucified God - Whom WE crucified!! - that we discover the unfathomable depths of mercy and the inexhaustible treasures of Love contained in the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

“Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

He died FOR us. WE should have died. WE should have been nailed to that tree and beaten and scourged and spat upon and mocked. HE took OUR place. WHY?!?! After we had offended Him so many COUNTLESS times why in heaven or on earth would God die for us? So that we could have the chance to be with Him in paradise!! That's the whole reason He made us in the first place!! The only reason why we are even breathing at this moment is because God loves us so much and desires for us to spend eternity with Him – absorbed into and participating intimately in the eternal exchange of love between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: that EXPLOSION of Trinitarian, life-giving, perfect and utter “gift-of-self” love-bomb that is God! GOD IS LOVE!!!

“Jesus, remember me when you enter into your kingdom!” Such a simple and humble prayer. A recognition of guilt and a plea for mercy.... and paradise opens.

Laura's murderer is the thief on the cross. He very may well be living a sort of crucifixion even now, so cut off from and starved for love... And all he needs to do is recognize his guilt, confess it to the Lord and cry out for mercy, and the ocean of Love that overflows from the Heart of Christ will engulf even him, and the gates of paradise will open to him.

“Lord, give him eyes to see.”

And we pray for Justice For Laura.

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Abba, Father,

You have revealed Yourself as the God of Love Who desires all Your children to be saved, and Who will run to embrace any soul who sincerely turns back to You.

We lift up the soul of Laura's killer, Your beloved child who has wandered in a far away land squandering the inheritance which You, his most Loving Father, have bestowed upon him. We beg the Holy Spirit to sing Your song of Love into his heart. Speak to his soul of his dignity and beauty as Your child, and give him the confidence to turn back to You in trust and repentance.

We ask this through the infinite merits of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Divine Mercy

Whose compassion knows no bounds.

Amen.

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