

CHAPTER XV

Jesus our Savior, Bound as a Prisoner, is Dragged to the House of the High Priest Annas; what Happened on the Way, and what His Most Blessed Mother Suffered During This.

545. Worthy would it be to speak of the Passion, affronts and torments of our Savior Jesus in such vivid and efficacious words that they enter into the soul like a two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12), piercing with deepest sorrow our inmost hearts. Not of an ordinary kind were the pains He suffered, and there is no sorrow like unto his sorrow (Lam. 1:12), for his body was not like the bodies of the rest of men, nor did the Lord suffer for Himself, nor for his own sins, but for us and for our sins (I Peter 2:21). Hence the words and expressions by which we describe his torments and sorrows must not be of the common or ordinary kind. Yet woe is me, who cannot give sufficient force to my words, and cannot find those my soul seeks in order to manifest this mystery! I shall speak according to my capacity and as far as is given me, though my powers constrain and limit the greatness of what I understand, and my inadequate words cannot reach the secret concepts of the heart. Let then the vividness and force of the faith which we profess as children of the Church supply what is defective in my words. If our words are only of the ordinary kind, let our compassion and sorrow be extraordinary; let our thoughts be of the loftiest, our comprehension most real, our consideration of the deepest, our gratitude heartfelt, and our love most fervent; for all that we can do shall fall short of what the reality demands, and what we owe as servants, as friends, and as children adopted through his most sacred Passion and Death.

546. Having been taken prisoner and firmly bound, Jesus the most meek Lamb was dragged from the garden to the house of the high priests, first to the house of Annas (Jn. 18:13). The turbulent band of soldiers and servants, having been advised by the traitorous disciple that his Master was a sorcerer and could easily escape their hands if they did not carefully bind and chain Him securely before starting on their way (Mk. 14:44), took all the precautions inspired by such a mistrust. Lucifer and his princes of darkness secretly irritated and provoked them to increase their impious and sacrilegious abuse of the Lord beyond any bounds of humanity and decency. Since they were willing accomplices of Lucifer's malice they omitted no outrage against the Person of their Creator within the limits allowed them by the Almighty. They bound Him with a heavy iron chain with such ingenuity that it encircled as well the waist as the neck. The two ends of the chain which remained free were attached to large rings or handcuffs with which they manacled the hands of the Lord, who created the heavens, the angels, and the whole universe (Heb. 1:10). The hands thus secured and bound they fastened not in front but behind. This chain they had brought from the house of Annas the high priest, where it had served to raise the door of a dungeon. They had wrenched it from its place and provided it with padlock handcuffs. But they were not satisfied with this unheard-of way of securing a prisoner, for in their mistrust they added two pieces of strong rope; the one they wound around the throat of Jesus, and crossing it at the breast bound it in heavy knots all over the body, leaving two long ends free in front so the servants and soldiers could jerk Him in different directions along the way. The second rope served to tie his arms, being bound likewise around his waist. The two ends of this rope were left hanging free to be used by two other executioners for jerking Him from behind.

547. In this manner the Omnipotent and Holy One permitted Himself to be bound and made helpless, as if He was the most criminal of men and the weakest of those born of woman, for He had taken upon Himself all the iniquities and weaknesses of our sins (Is. 53:6). They bound Him in the garden, adding to the chains and ropes insulting blows and most vile language, for like

venomous serpents they shot forth their sacrilegious poison in abuse and blasphemy against Him who is adored by angels and men and who is magnified in heaven and on earth. They left mount Olivet in great tumult and uproar, guarding the Savior in their midst. Some of them dragged Him along by the ropes in front, and others retarded his steps by the ropes hanging from the handcuffs behind. In this manner, with a violence unheard of, they sometimes forced Him to run forward in haste, frequently causing Him to fall; at other times they jerked Him backwards; and then again they pulled Him from one side to the other according to their diabolical whims. Many times they violently threw Him to the ground, and since his hands were tied behind He fell upon his divine face and was severely wounded and lacerated. In his falls they pounced upon Him, inflicting blows and kicks, trampling upon his body and upon his head and face. All these deviltries they accompanied with festive shouts and opprobrious insults as was foretold by Jeremias (Lam. 3:30).

548. During all this time Lucifer, while inciting these ministers of evil, watched all the actions and movements of our Savior. His patience he thus put to the test in order to find out whether Jesus was only a man, for this doubt and perplexity tormented his wicked pride above all others. Since he was obliged to acknowledge the meekness, patience and sweetness of Christ, his serene majesty without change or disturbance amid all these injuries and sufferings, the infernal dragon was only enraged so much the more, and one time like one crazed by fury he attempted to seize the ropes so he and his fellow demons could pull at them more violently than his human foes, and thus perhaps overcome the meekness of the Savior. But he was withheld by most holy Mary, who from her retreat by a clear vision saw all that happened to her divine Son. When She noticed this attempt of Lucifer, She made use of her power as sovereign Queen and commanded him to desist; all strength immediately left Lucifer and he could not proceed in his presumptuous intent. It was not appropriate for his malice to add to the sufferings and death of the Redeemer in such a manner. He was however given permission to excite all his fellow demons against the Lord, and these again were left a free hand to incite his mortal enemies among the Jews, since the latter had free will to consent or not. Lucifer used this freedom to its fullest extent, and thus said to the other evil spirits: "What Man is this who has been born into the world, who by his patience and works so torments us and destroys us? None ever maintained such equanimity and longsuffering in tribulations since the time of Adam until now. Never have we found among mortals such humility and meekness. How can we rest when we see in the world such a rare and powerful example, drawing others after Him? If this is the Messiah He will certainly open heaven and close up the highway by which we have so far led men into our eternal torments; we shall be vanquished and all our plans will be frustrated. Even if He is but a mere man I cannot permit such an example for the rest of mankind. Hasten then, ministers of my exalted power; let us persecute Him through his human foes, who obedient to my sway have conceived from me some of our own furious envy."

549. To all the merciless indignation which Lucifer aroused and fomented in that squadron of Jews the Author of our salvation subjected Himself, hiding the power by which He could repress or annihilate them so our Redemption could be more copious. Continuing to abuse Him they took Him to the house of Annas, and upon arrival presented Him as a malefactor worthy of death. It was the custom of the Jews to present thus bound those criminals who merited capital punishment, and they now made use of this custom in order to intimate his sentence even before the trial. The sacrilegious priest Annas seated himself in proud and arrogant state on the platform or tribunal of a great hall. Immediately Lucifer placed himself at his side with a multitude of evil spirits. The servants and soldiers brought before him Jesus bound and fettered, and said: "Now,

sir, we bring here this evil man, who by his sorceries and wicked deeds has disturbed all Jerusalem and Judea. This time his magic art has not availed Him to escape our hands and power.”

550. Our Savior Jesus was attended by innumerable Angels who confessed and adored Him, full of admiration for the incomprehensible judgments of his wisdom (Rom. 11:33) by which the Lord consented to be held as a sinner and a criminal. The iniquitous high priest pretended to be just and zealous for the honor of the Lord whose life he was seeking. The most meek Lamb was silent and opened not his mouth, as Isaias prophesied (53:7). Imperiously and haughtily the high priest asked Him about his disciples (Jn. 18:19), and what doctrine He was preaching and teaching. This question was put merely for the purpose of misinterpreting his answer if He would utter any word which gave such a chance. But the Master of sanctity, who directs and corrects the most wise (Wis. 7:15), offered to the eternal Father the humiliation of being presented as a criminal before the high priest, and of being questioned by him as a prevaricator and author of a false doctrine. Our Redeemer, with a humble and cheerful countenance, answered the question regarding his doctrines: *I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither all the Jews resort; and in secret I have spoken nothing. Why askest thou Me? Ask them who have heard what I have spoken unto them; behold they know what things I have said* (Jn. 18:20-21). Since the doctrine of Christ our Lord came from his eternal Father He spoke for it and defended its honor. He referred them to his hearers because those by whom He was now surrounded would not believe Him and wished to distort all He would say, and also because the truth and force of his teachings by their own excellence recommended and forced themselves upon the minds of his greatest enemies.

551. He said nothing concerning the Apostles because it was not necessary on this occasion, and because they were not reflecting much credit upon their Master by their present conduct. Though his answer was so full of wisdom and so well suited to the question, nevertheless one of the servants of the high priest rushed up with raised hand and audaciously struck the venerable and sacred face of Jesus, saying (Ib. 22): *Answerest Thou the high priest so?* The Lord accepted this boundless injury, praying for the one who had inflicted it, and holding Himself ready, if necessary, to turn and offer the other cheek for a second blow according to the doctrine He had himself inculcated (Mt. 5:39). But so the atrocious and daring offender could not shamelessly boast of his wickedness, the Lord replied with great tranquility and meekness (Ib. 23): *If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why striketh thou Me?* O sight most astounding to the supernal spirits! For this is He, at the mere sound of whose voice the foundations of the heavens tremble (Job 26:11) and ought to tremble, and the whole firmament is shaken! This is the Lord of whom Job says (Ib. 9:4ff.): *He is wise of heart and mighty in strength; who hath resisted Him and hath had peace? Who hath removed mountains, and they whom He overthrew in his wrath knew it not; who shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble; who commandeth the sun and it riseth not; and shutteth up the stars as it were under a seal; who doth things great and incomprehensible, whose wrath no man can resist, and under whom they stoop that bear up the world;* this is He who for the love of men suffers an impious minister of evil to wound Him in the face by a slap!

552. By the humble and effective reply given by His Majesty the sacrilegious servant was left in confusion; yet neither this confusion, nor that which the high priest should have experienced, who in his presence permitted such criminal contempt, moved either him or the other Jews to moderate their conduct toward the Author of life. While this abuse of the Lord was going on, St. Peter and the other disciple, who was none other than St. John, arrived at the house of Annas. St.

John, as being well known there, readily obtained entrance, while St. Peter remained outside. Afterwards the servant maid, who was an acquaintance of St. John, allowed also St. Peter to enter and see what was happening to the Lord (Jn. 18:16). The two disciples remained in the portico adjoining the court hall of the priest, and St. Peter approached the fire which the soldiers, because of the coldness of the night, had built in the enclosure near the portico. The servant maid, on closer inspection, noticed the depressed bearing of St. Peter. Coming up to him she recognized him as a disciple of Jesus and said (Ib. 17): *Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?* This question was asked by the maid with a certain scorn and reproach, at which St. Peter became ashamed with great weakness and cowardliness. Overcome by fear he answered: *I am not his disciple* (Ib.). Having given this answer he slipped away to avoid further conversation and left the premises. But he soon afterwards followed his Master to the house of Caiphas, where he denied Him again at two different times, as I shall relate farther on (567).

553. The denial of Peter caused greater pain to the Lord than the slap which He had received, for this sin was directly opposed and abhorrent to his immense charity, while pains and sufferings were sweet and welcome to Him since He could thereby atone for our sins. After this first denial of Peter, Christ prayed for him to his eternal Father and ordained that through the intercession of most holy Mary he would obtain pardon even after the third denial. The great Lady witnessed all that passed from her oratory, as I have said (493). Since She contained in her own bosom the propitiatory and sacrifice of her Son and Lord in sacramental form, She directed her petitions and loving aspirations to Him, performing most heroic acts of compassion, gratitude, adoration and worship. She bitterly wept over the denial of St. Peter, and ceased not until She perceived the Lord would not refuse him the necessary helps for effectually rising from his fall. The purest Mother also felt all the pains of the wounds and torments of her Son in the same parts of her virginal body in which the Savior was injured. When His Majesty was bound with the chains and ropes She felt in her wrists such pains that the blood oozed from her fingernails as if they had been truly bound and crushed; in the same manner the other wounds also affected her body. Since to these tortures were added the sorrows of her Heart in seeing Christ our Lord suffer, She shed miraculous tears of blood. She felt also the slap in the same way as if that sacrilegious hand had struck at the same time her Son and Herself. At this wicked affront and blasphemous insult offered to the Lord She called out to her holy Angels to join Her in magnifying and adoring their Creator in compensation for the injuries offered Him by sinners, and in many most sorrowful lamentations She conferred with the Angels concerning the cause of her affliction and mourning.

INSTRUCTION GIVEN ME BY THE GREAT QUEEN AND LADY OF HEAVEN.

554. My daughter, to great works art thou called and invited because of the divine enlightenment thou dost receive concerning the mysteries of the sufferings of my most holy Son and of myself for the human race, and because of the knowledge which thou hast obtained concerning the small return made by heartless and ungrateful men for all our pains. Thou livest yet in mortal flesh and art thyself subject to this ignorance and weakness, but by the force of truth thou art now roused to great wonder, sorrow and compassion at the lack of attention displayed by mortals toward these great sacraments, and at the losses sustained by them through their lukewarmness and negligence. What then are the thoughts of the angels and saints, and what are my thoughts, in beholding this world and all the faithful in such a dangerous and dreadful state of carelessness, when they have the Passion and Death of my divine Son before

their eyes, and when they have me for their Mother and Intercessor, and his most pure life and mine for an example? I tell thee truly, my dearest, only my intercession and the merits of his Son, which I offer to the eternal Father, can delay the punishment and placate his wrath, can retard the destruction of the world and the severe chastisement of the children of the Church, who know his will and fail to fulfill it (Lk. 12:47; Jn. 15:15). But I am much disobliged to find so few who condole with me and try to console my Son in his sorrows, as David says (Ps. 68:21). This hardness of heart will cause great confusion to them on Judgment Day, since they will then see with irreparable sorrow that they were not only ungrateful but inhuman and cruel toward my divine Son, toward me, and toward themselves.

555. Consider then thy duty, my dearest, and raise thyself above all earthly things and above thyself, for I call thee and choose thee to imitate and follow me into the solitude in which I am left by creatures, whom my Son and I have pursued with so many blessings and favors. Weigh in thy heart how much it cost my Lord to reconcile mankind to the eternal Father (Col. 1:22) and regain for them his friendship. Weep and afflict thyself that so many live in such forgetfulness, and so many labor with all their might to destroy and lose what was bought by the blood of God himself, as well as all that I have from the first moment of my Conception sought to procure and am procuring for their salvation. Awaken in thy heart the deepest grief that in his holy Church there are many followers of the hypocritical and sacrilegious priests, who under cover of a false piety still condemn Christ; that pride and sumptuousness with other grave vices are raised to authority and exalted, while humility, truth, justice, and all virtues are so oppressed and debased, and avarice and vanity prevail. Few know the poverty of Christ, and fewer embrace it. Holy faith is hindered and is not spread among the nations due to the boundless ambition of the mighty of this world. In many Catholics holy faith is inactive and dead, and whatever should be living is near to death and to eternal perdition. The counsels of the Gospel are forgotten, its precepts trodden under foot, charity almost extinct; my Son and true God offers his cheeks in patience and meekness to be struck and wounded (Lam. 3:30). Who pardons an insult for the sake of imitating Him? Just the contrary is set up as law in this world, not only by the infidels but by the very children of the faith and of light.

556. In recognizing these sins I desire thee to imitate me in what I did during the Passion and during my whole life, namely practice the virtues opposed to these vices. As a recompense for their blasphemies I blessed God; for their oaths I praised Him; for their unbelief I excited acts of faith; and so for all the rest of the sins committed. This is what I desire thee to do while living in this world. Flee also the dangerous conversation with creatures, taught by the example of Peter, for thou art not stronger than he, the Apostle of Christ; and if thou fall in thy weakness, weep over thy fault and immediately seek my intercession. Make up for thy ordinary faults and weaknesses by thy patience in adversities; accept them with a cheerful countenance and without disturbance no matter what they may be, whether sickness, or the molestations coming from creatures, or whether they arise from the opposition of the flesh to the spirit (Rom. 7:23), or from the conflicts with visible or invisible enemies. All this must thou suffer and tolerate in faith, hope, and magnanimity of heart and soul. I remind thee there is no exercise more profitable and useful for the soul than to suffer, for suffering gives light, undeceives, detaches the heart from visible things, and raises it up to the Lord. His Majesty goes forth to meet those who suffer, for He is with the afflicted, and He helps and delivers them (Ps. 90:15).