

The Third Word

by W.R. Inge

The sermon explores the depth of Mary's sorrow and grief at the Cross, and how her sufferings were added to Christ's, highlighting the weight of her woes and the impact of her inward death.

Scripture: Psalm 34:18, Psalm 69:20, Isaiah 53:3, Lamentations 1:12, Luke 2:35, John 19:25, Romans 8:18, Hebrews 4:15, 1 Peter 4:13

Topics: "The Cross", "Suffering Of Christ"

Description

W.R. Inge delivers a powerful sermon reflecting on the profound suffering of Jesus on the Cross and the excruciating anguish experienced by His mother, Mary. Inge explores how Mary's presence at the Crucifixion did not alleviate Jesus' suffering but rather intensified it, as her own heartache mirrored His pain. The sermon delves into the deep emotional and spiritual torment both Jesus and Mary endured, emphasizing the unique and unbearable agony of witnessing a loved one's crucifixion. Inge vividly portrays the shared suffering between Jesus and His mother, illustrating the immense weight of sorrow and grief they both carried.

Transcript

THERE stood also by the Cross of Jesus His most holy and ever-virgin mother Mary; not in order that His sufferings might thereby be lessened, but that they might be greatly augmented. For if any creature could have given consolation to the Lord while He hung on the Cross, no one could have done it so fitly as His blessed mother. But since it was God's will that Christ should die the most bitter of deaths, and end His Passion without any comfort or relief, but with true resignation, His mother's presence brought Him no consolation, but rather added to His sufferings, for her sufferings were thereby added to His, and this added yet more to His affliction.

Who then, O good Jesus can discover by meditation how great was Thy inward grief, for Thou knowest the hearts of all, when Thou sawest all the body of Thy holy mother tortured by inward compassion, even as Thou wast tortured on the Cross, and her tender heart and maternal breast pierced with the sword of sharp sorrow, her face pale as death, telling the anguish of her soul, and almost dead, yet unable to die. When Thou beheldest her hot tears, flowing down abundantly like sweet rivers upon her gracious cheeks, and over all her face, all witnesses to Thee that she shared in Thy sorrow and love; when Thou heardest her sad laments, forced from her by the weight of her affliction; when Thou sawest that same tender mother, melted away with the heat of love, her strength quite failing her, worn out and exhausted by the

pains of Thy Passion, which wasted her away; all this, truly, was a new affliction to Thee on the Cross; it was itself a new Cross.

For Thou alone, by the spear of Thy pity, didst explore the weight and grievousness of her woes, which to men are beyond comprehension. All this, indeed, greatly increased the pain of Thy Passion, because Thou wast crucified not only in Thy own body, but in Thy mother's heart; for her Cross was Thy Cross, and Thine was hers. O how bitter was Thy Passion, sweet Jesus! Great indeed was Thy outward suffering, but far more grievous was Thy inward suffering, which Thy heart experienced at Thy mother's anguish.

It was now, beyond doubt, that the sword of sorrow pierced her through, for the queen of martyrs was terribly and mortally wounded in that part which is impassible--that is, the soul; she bore the death of the Cross in that part which could not die, suffering all the more her grievous inward death, as outward death departed further from her. Who, O most loving mother, can recount or conceive in his mind the immeasurable sorrows of thy soul, or thine inward woes? Him whom thou didst bring forth without pain, as a blessed mother free from the curse of our first mother Eve, who instead of the pains of labour wast filled with joy of spirit, and who for thy refreshment didst listen to the sweet songs of the angels as they praised thy Son, thou hast now seen slain before thine eyes with the greatest cruelty and tyranny.

How manifold was that sorrow of thine, which thou wast permitted to escape at His birth, when thou sawest thy blessed and only Son hanging in such torment on the Cross, in the presence of a cruel and furious crowd, who showered upon Him all the insults and contumely and shame that they could think of; when thou sawest Him whom thou didst bear in thy pure womb without feeling the burden, so barbarously stretched on the Cross, and pierced with nails; when thou sawest His sacred arms, with which He had so many times lovingly embraced thee, stretched out so that He could not move them, and covered with red blood, His adorable head pierced with sharp thorns, and His whole body one streaming wound, while thou wast not able to staunch or anoint any of those wounds.

What must thy grief have been when thou sawest Him whom thou hadst so often laid on thy virgin bosom that He might rest, without anything on which to lean His sacred head; and Him whom thou hadst nourished with the milk of thy holy breasts, now vexed with vinegar and gall. O how thy maternal heart was oppressed when thou beheldest with thy pure eyes that fair face so piteously marred, so that there was no beauty in it, and nothing by which He could be distinguished. How did the wave of affliction beat against and overflow and overwhelm thy soul!

Truly, if even a devout man cannot without unspeakable sorrow and pity revolve in his mind the Passion of thy Son, what must have been thy Cross, thy affliction, who wast His mother and sawest it all with thine eyes? If to many friends of God and to many who love Him, thy Son's Passion is as grievous as if they suffered it themselves, if by inward pity they are crucified with thy Son, how terribly, even unto death, must thou have been crucified inwardly, when thou didst not only ponder and search into the outward and inward pains of thy Son in thy devout heart, but sawest them with thy bodily eyes?

For never did any mother love her child as thou lovedst thy Son. And if St Paul, who loved so much, could say, out of his ardent love and deep pity for thy Son, "I am crucified with Christ; and I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus," how much more wert thou crucified with Him, and didst inwardly receive all His wounds, being made, in a manner, an image and likeness of thy crucified Son?

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