



Seventeenth Hour: 9 to 10 AM

Jesus is crowned with thorns.
Presented to the people: “Ecce Homo!”
Jesus is condemned to death

My Jesus, infinite Love, the more I look at You, the more I understand how much You suffer. You are already completely lacerated – there is not one point left whole in You. The executioners, enraged in seeing that, in so many pains, You look at them with so much love; and in seeing that your loving gaze, forming a sweet enchantment, almost like many voices, prays and supplicates for more pains and new pains - though inhuman, yet forced by your love, make You stand on your feet. Unable to stand Yourself, You fall again into your own Blood, and, irritated, with kicks and shoves, they make You reach the place where they will crown You with thorns.

My Love, if You do not sustain me with your gaze of love, I cannot go on seeing You suffer. I feel a shiver in my bones, my heart throbs, I feel I am dying. Jesus, Jesus – help me!

And my lovable Jesus says to me: “My child, courage, do not miss anything of what I suffered. Be attentive to my teachings. I have to redo man in everything. Sin has removed the crown from him, and has crowned him with opprobrium and with confusion; so he cannot stand before my Majesty. Sin has dishonored him, making him lose any right to honors and to glory. This is why I want to be crowned with thorns – to place the crown on man’s forehead, and to return to him all rights to every honor and glory. Before my Father, my thorns will be reparations and voices of defense for many sins of thought, especially pride; and for each created mind they will be voices of light and supplication, that they may not offend Me. Therefore, unite yourself to Me, and pray and repair together with Me.”

Crowned Jesus, your cruel enemies make You sit; they place a rag of purple on You, they take the crown of thorns, and with infernal fury, they put it on your adorable head. Then, by blow of rod, they make the thorns penetrate into your forehead, and some of them reach into your eyes, into your ears, into your skull, and even behind your neck. My Love, what torment, what unspeakable pains! How many cruel deaths You suffer!

Your Blood pours down upon your Face, in such a way that one can see nothing but blood. But under those thorns and that Blood, your most holy Face appears, radiant with sweetness, with peace, and with love. And the executioners, wanting to complete the tragedy, blindfold You, place a reed in your hand as scepter, and begin their mockeries. They hail You King of the Jews, they beat You on the crown, they slap You, and say to You: "Guess who hit You!"

And You remain silent – You answer by repairing for the ambition of those who aspire to kingdoms, to dignities, to honors, and for those who, finding themselves in positions of authority and behaving incorrectly, cause the ruin of the peoples and of their souls, which had been entrusted to them; and their evil examples push others toward evil and cause the loss of souls.

With this reed You hold in your hand, You repair for so many works - good, but empty of interior spirit and also done with evil intentions. In the insults and the blindfold, You repair for those who ridicule the holiest things, discrediting them and profaning them; You also repair for those who blindfold the sight of their intelligence in order not to see the light of Truth. With this blindfold, You impetrate that the blindfolds of passions, of riches and of pleasures may be removed from us.

My King Jesus, your enemies continue with their insults. The Blood which flows from your most holy head is so much, that reaching your mouth, It prevents You from letting me hear clearly your most sweet voice, so I cannot do what You do. Therefore I come into your arms; I want to sustain your pierced and suffering head, and I want to place my head under those thorns in order to feel their pricks.

But as I say this, my Jesus calls me with His loving gaze, and quickly I embrace His Heart, and I try to sustain His head. Oh, how beautiful it is to be with Jesus, even in the midst of a thousand torments! And He says to me: "My child, these thorns say that I want to be constituted King of each heart; to Me belongs every dominion. Take these thorns and prick your heart; let everything that does not belong to Me come out, and then leave one thorn inside, as the seal that I am your King, and to prevent any other thing from entering into you. Then, go through every heart, and pricking them, let all the fumes of pride and the rottenness which they contain come out, and constitute Me King of all."

My Love, my heart breaks in leaving You; therefore I pray You to deafen my ears with your thorns, that I may hear only your voice; cover my eyes with your thorns, that I may look at You alone; fill my mouth with your thorns, that my tongue be mute to everything that may offend You, and be free to praise You and bless You in everything. O my King Jesus, surround me with thorns, that they may hold me in custody, defend me, and keep me all intent on You. And now I want to dry your Blood and kiss You, because I see that your enemies take You to Pilate, who will condemn You to death. My Love, help me to follow your Sorrowful Way, and bless me.

Jesus once again before Pilate, who shows Him to the people.

My crowned Jesus, wounded by your love and transfixed by your pains, my poor heart cannot live without You, so I search for You, and I find You before Pilate, once again.

But, what a moving scene! The Heavens are horrified, and hell trembles with fear and rage! Life of my heart, my gaze cannot bear the sight of You, without feeling itself dying. But the enrapturing power of your love forces me to look at You, that I may comprehend your pains well; and I contemplate You, amid tears and sighs.

My Jesus, You are naked, but still, You clothe Yourself – I see You are clothed with blood, your flesh torn, your bones uncovered, your most holy Face unrecognizable. The thorns stuck in your most holy head reach into your eyes – into your Face, and I see nothing but blood which, pouring down to the ground, forms a bloody torrent behind your feet.

My Jesus, I can no longer recognize You because of the way You have been reduced! Your state has reached the most profound excesses of humiliations and spasms! Ah, I can no longer bear the sight of You, so sorrowful – I feel I am dying. I would want to snatch You from the presence of Pilate, to enclose You in my heart and give You rest. I would want to heal your wounds with my love, and flood the whole world with your Blood, to enclose all souls in it and conduct them to You, as the conquest of your pains!

And You, O patient Jesus, seem to look at me with difficulty through the thorns, and You say to me: “My child, come into these bound arms of mine, place your head on my breast, and you will see pains more intense and bitter, because what you see on the outside of my Humanity is nothing but the outpouring of my interior pains. Pay attention to the beats of my Heart, and you will hear that I repair for the injustices of those who command, for the oppressions against the poor and the innocents subordinated to kings, for the pride of those who, in order to preserve dignities, positions, riches, do not hesitate to break any law and to harm their neighbor, closing their eyes to the light of truth. With these thorns I want to shatter the spirit of pride of their lordships; and with the holes which they form in

my head, I want to open my way into their minds, in order to reorder all things in them, according to the light of truth. By remaining so humiliated before this unjust judge, I want to make everyone understand that only virtue is that which constitutes man king of himself; and I teach to those who command, that virtue alone, united to upright knowledge, is worthy and capable of governing and ruling others, while all other dignities, without virtue, are dangerous and deplorable things. My child, echo my reparations, and continue to be attentive to my pains.”

My Love, I see that in seeing You reduced so badly, Pilate shudders, and deeply impressed, exclaims: “How can there be so much cruelty in human breasts? Ah, this was not my will in condemning Him to the scourging!” And wanting to free You from the hands of the enemies - in order to find more convenient reasons, all humbled, removing his gaze from You because he cannot sustain your sight, too painful - he questions You again: “But, tell me, what have you done? Your people gave you into my hands – tell me, are you a king? What is your kingdom?”

At the storming questions of Pilate, You, O my Jesus, do not answer, and recollected within Yourself, You think about saving my poor soul, at the cost of so many pains!

Since You do not answer, Pilate adds: “Do you not know that it is in my power to release you or to condemn you?” But You, O my Love, wanting to make the light of truth shine in the mind of Pilate, answer: “You would have no power over Me, if it did not come to you from above. However, those who gave Me into your hands, have committed a sin graver than yours.”

Almost moved by the sweetness of your voice, irresolute as he is, with his heart in a tempest, thinking that the Jews would be more compassionate, Pilate decides to show You from the lobby, hoping that they may be moved to compassion in seeing You so tortured, so as to be able to release You.

Sorrowful Jesus, my heart faints in seeing You follow Pilate. You walk with difficulty, bent over, under that horrible crown of thorns. Your Blood marks your steps, and as You go out, You hear the tumultuous crowd anxiously awaiting your condemnation. Imposing silence, in order to call the attention of all and to be heard by all, Pilate, with repugnance, takes two hems of the purple which covers your chest and shoulders. He lifts it, so that all may see how You are reduced, and says in a loud voice: “Ecce homo! [Here is the man!] Look at him – he no longer has the features of a man. Observe his wounds – he can no longer be recognized. If he has done evil, he has already suffered enough - or rather, too much. I already regret having made him suffer so much; therefore, let us set him free.”

Jesus, my Love, allow me to sustain You, because I see that, unable to stand under the weight of so many pains, You stagger. Ah, in this solemn moment, your destiny is decided.

At the words of Pilate, all become silent – in Heaven, on earth, and in hell! And then, as though in one single voice, I hear the cry of all: “Crucify Him, crucify Him – we want Him dead at any cost!”

My Life, Jesus, I see You tremble. The cry of death descends into your Heart, and among these voices, You recognize the voice of your dear Father, which says: “My Son, I want You dead, and dead crucified!” Ah, You hear also your Mama who, though pierced and desolate, echoes your dear Father: “Son, I want You dead!” The Angels, the Saints, hell – everyone, in one voice cries out: “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” There is not one soul who wants You alive. And – ah, ah! to my deepest blush, sorrow and horror, I too feel forced to cry out, by an irresistible force: “Crucify Him!”

My Jesus, forgive me if I too, a miserable sinful soul, want You dead! But, I pray You to make me die together with You.

In the meantime, O my tormented Jesus, moved by my sorrow, You seem to say to me: “My child, cling to my Heart, and take part in my pains and in my reparations. This moment is solemn: either my death or the death of all creatures must be decided. In this moment, two currents pour into my Heart. In one there are all the souls who, if they want Me dead, it is because they want to find life in Me; and so, by my acceptance of death for them, they are released from the eternal condemnation, and the doors of Heaven open to receive them. In the other current there are those who want Me dead out of hatred and as confirmation of their own condemnation; and my Heart is lacerated, and feels the death of each one of them, and the very pains of hell!

Ah, my Heart cannot bear these bitter pains; I feel death at each heartbeat, at each breath, and I keep repeating: ‘Why will so much blood be shed in vain? Why will my pains be useless for so many?’ Ah, child, sustain Me, for I can take no more. Take part in my pains; may your life be a continuous offering for the salvation of souls, so as to soothe pains so excruciating for Me!”

My Heart, Jesus, your pains are mine, and I echo your reparations. But I see that Pilate is astonished, and he hastens to say: “How can this be? Should I crucify your king? I find no guilt in him to condemn him.” And the Jews cry out, deafening the air: “We have no other king but Caesar, and if you do not condemn Him, you are not a friend of Caesar. Insane, insane - crucify Him, crucify Him!”

Not knowing what else to do, for fear of being deposed, Pilate has a bucket of water brought to him, and washing his hands, he says: “I am not responsible for the blood of this just one.” And he condemns You to death. But the Jews cry out: “May His Blood fall upon us and upon our children!” And in seeing You condemned, they make feast, they clap their hands, they whistle and shout; while You, O Jesus, repair for those who, finding themselves

in high positions, out of vain fear and in order not to lose their places, break the most sacred laws, not caring about the ruin of entire peoples, favoring the evil and condemning the innocent. You repair also for those who, after sin, provoke the divine wrath to punish them.

But while You repair for this, your Heart bleeds with sorrow in seeing your chosen people, struck by the malediction of Heaven, which they themselves, with full will, have wanted, sealing it with your Blood which they cursed! Ah, your Heart faints; allow me to sustain It in my hands, making your reparations and your pains my own. But your love pushes You higher and, impatient, You already look for the Cross!

My Life, I will follow You, but for now rest in my arms; then, we will reach Mount Calvary together. Therefore, remain in me, and bless me.

Reflections and Practices

From 9 to 10, crowned with thorns, Jesus is mocked as king and subjected to unheard-of insults and pains. He repairs in a special way for the sins of pride. And we - do we avoid sentiments of pride? Do we attribute to God the good which we do? Do we consider ourselves inferior to others? Is our mind always empty of any other thought in order to give rise to grace? Many times we do not give rise to grace by keeping our mind filled with other thoughts. Then, since our mind is not completely filled with God, we ourselves cause the devil to bother us, and maybe we even foment temptations.

When our mind is filled with God, as the devil approaches us, not finding the place toward which to direct his temptations, confused, he flees. In fact, holy thoughts have so much power against the devil that, as he is about to approach us, they wound him like many swords, and cast him away.

Therefore, we lament unfairly when our mind is bothered and tempted by the enemy. It is our poor surveillance that pushes our enemy to assault us. He is spying on our mind in order to find little gaps, and attack us. Then, instead of relieving Jesus with our holy thoughts and removing the thorns from Him, ungrateful, we push them into His head, making Him feel the pricking more sharply. In this way, grace remains frustrated, and cannot carry out the crafting of its holy inspirations in our mind.

Many times we do even worse. As we feel the weight of temptations, instead of bringing them to Jesus, making of them a bundle to be burned by the fire of His love, we worry, we become sad, and speculate on those very temptations. Therefore, not only does our mind remain occupied by evil thoughts, but all our poor being remains as though soaked with

them; and so it would almost take to say: "Ah, my child, you yourself do not want to cling to Me. If you had come soon to Me, I would have helped you to free yourself from the bothers which the enemy brought into your mind, and you would not have made Me sigh so much for your return. I asked for help from you in order to be freed from thorns so sharp; but I waited in vain, because you were occupied with the work that your enemy had given you. Oh! how much less tempted you would be, if you came soon into my arms. Fearing Me, and not you, the enemy would leave you immediately."

+ My Jesus, may your thorns seal my thoughts in your mind, and prevent the enemy from causing any sort of temptation.

When Jesus makes Himself felt in our mind and in our heart, do we reciprocate His inspirations, or do we place them into oblivion? Jesus is mocked as king. And we - do we respect all the holy things? Do we use all the reverence which befits them, as if we were touching Jesus Christ Himself?

+ My crowned Jesus, let me feel your thorns, so that I may understand from their pricks how much You suffer, and I may constitute You as King of my whole self.

Showed from the lobby, Jesus is condemned to death by those people who had been loved and who had benefited so much from Him.

Loving Jesus accepts death for us, in order to give us life. Are we ready to accept any pain to prevent Jesus from being offended and from suffering? Our pain must be accepted so as not to make Jesus suffer. Since He suffered infinitely in His Humanity, and since we have to continue His life on earth, we must reciprocate the pains of the Humanity of Jesus Christ with our own pains.

How do we compassionate the pains which Jesus suffers in seeing many souls being snatched from His Heart? Do we make His pains our own so as to relieve Him from all that He suffers? The Jews want Him crucified, so that He may die like a criminal, and that His name be erased from the face of the earth.

Do we strive to let Jesus live on earth? With our acts, with our example, with our steps, we must put a divine mark in the world, so that Jesus may be recognized by all, and so that, through our works, His life may have a divine echo, heard from one end of the world to another.

Are we ready to give our own life so that beloved Jesus may be relieved of all the offenses, or do we rather imitate the Jews, people so much favored - almost like our own souls, which are loved so much by Jesus - and shout like them, "Crucifigatur" (let Him be crucified)?

+ My condemned Jesus, may your condemnation be my own, which I accept for love of you. And in order to console You, I will pour myself continuously in You, to bring You into the hearts of all creatures, to make You known to all, and to give your life to all.