



Fifth Hour: 9 to 10 PM

First Hour of Agony in the Garden of Gethsemani

My afflicted Jesus, I feel drawn to this Garden as by an electric current. I comprehend that You, powerful magnet of my wounded heart, are calling me; and I run, thinking to myself: 'What are these attractions of love that I feel within me? Ah, maybe my persecuted Jesus is in such a state of bitterness as to feel the need of my company.' And I fly.

But – no! I feel horrified upon entering this Garden. The darkness of the night, the intensity of the cold, the slow moving of the leaves which, like feeble voices, announce pains, sadness and death for my sorrowful Jesus; the sweet glittering of the stars which, like crying eyes, are all intent on looking, reproach me for my ingratitude. And I tremble; gropingly, I go in search of Him, and I call Him: 'Jesus, where are You? You call me, and You do not show Yourself? You call me, and You hide?'

Everything is terror, everything is fright and profound silence. But I prick up my ears: I hear a labored breath, and it is Jesus Himself that I find. But what a dismal change! No longer is He the sweet Jesus of the Eucharistic Supper, whose face shone with radiant and enrapturing beauty; but He is sad, of a mortal sadness, such as to disfigure His native beauty. He already agonizes, and I feel troubled in thinking that maybe I will no longer hear His voice, because He seems to be dying. So I cling to His feet; I become more brave – I draw near His arms and I place my hand on His forehead in order to sustain Him, and softly, I call Him: 'Jesus, Jesus!'

And He, stirred by my voice, looks at me and says: "Child, are you here? I was waiting for you. This was the sadness which oppressed Me the most: the total abandonment of all. And I was waiting for you, to let you be the spectator of my pains, and to let you drink, together with Me, the chalice of bitteresses which, in a little while, my Celestial Father will send Me through the Angel. We will sip from it together, because it will not be a chalice of comfort, but of intense bitteresses, and I feel the need of a few loving souls

who would drink at least a few drops of it. This is why I called you– that you may accept it, share with Me the pains, and assure Me that you will not leave Me alone in such great abandonment.”

‘Ah, yes my panting Jesus, we will drink together the chalice of your bitternesses; we will suffer your pains, and I will never move from your side!’

And afflicted Jesus, assured by me, enters into mortal agony, and suffers pains never before seen or understood. And I, unable to resist and wanting to compassionate Him and relieve Him, say to Him: ‘Tell me, why are You so sad, afflicted and alone in this Garden and in this night? This is the last night of your life on earth; a few hours are left for You to begin your Passion. I thought I would find at least the Celestial Mama, the loving Magdalene, the faithful Apostles; but instead, I find You all alone, prey to a sadness which gives You a ruthless death, without making You die.

Oh my Good and my All, You do not answer me? Speak to me!’ But it seems You have no speech, so much is the sadness which oppresses You. But, oh my Jesus, that gaze of yours, full of light, yes, but afflicted and searching, such that it seems to be looking for help; your pale face, your lips parched with love, your Divine Person, trembling from head to foot, your heart, beating so intensely – and those heartbeats search for souls and cause You such labor that it seems that, any moment now, You are about to breathe your last – everything tells me that You are alone, and therefore You want my company.

Here I am, O Jesus, together with You. But I don’t have the heart to see You cast on the ground. I take You in my arms, I press You to my heart; I want to count, one by one, your strainings, and, one by one, the offenses which advance toward You, in order to give You relief for everything, reparation for everything, and to give You at least one act of my compassion, for everything.

But, O my Jesus, while I hold You in my arms, your sufferings increase. My Life, I feel fire flowing in your veins, and I feel your Blood boiling, wanting to burst the veins to come out. Tell me, my Love, what is it? I do not see scourges, nor thorns, nor nails, nor cross; yet, as I place my head upon your Heart, I feel that cruel thorns pierce your head, that ruthless scourges spare not even one smallest part, inside and outside of your Divine Person, and that your hands are paralyzed and contorted, more than by nails. Tell me, my sweet Good, who has so much power, also in your interior, as to torment You and make You suffer as many deaths for as many torments as he gives You?

Ah, it seems that blessed Jesus opens His lips, faint and dying, and says to me: “My child, do you want to know what it is that torments Me more than the very executioners? Rather, those are nothing compared to this! It is the Eternal Love, which, wanting primacy in everything, is making Me suffer, all at once and in the most intimate parts, what the executioners will make Me suffer little by little. Ah, my child, it is Love which prevails in everything, over Me and within Me. Love is nail for Me, Love is scourge, Love is crown of thorns – Love is everything for Me. Love is my perennial passion, while that of men is in time. Ah, my child, enter into my Heart, come to be dissolved in my love, and only in my

love will you comprehend how much I suffered and how much I loved you, and you will learn to love Me and to suffer only out of love.”

O my Jesus, since You call me into your Heart to show me what love made You suffer, I enter into It. But as I enter, I see the portents of love, which crowns your head, not with material thorns, but with thorns of fire; which scourges You, not with lashes of ropes, but with lashes of fire; which crucifies You with nails, not made of iron, but of fire. Everything is fire, which penetrates deep into your bones and into your very marrow; and distilling all of your Most Holy Humanity into fire, it gives You mortal pains, certainly greater than the very Passion, and prepares a bath of love for all the souls who will want to be washed of any stain and acquire the right of children of love.

Oh, Love without end, I feel like drawing back before such immensity of love, and I see that in order to enter into love and to comprehend it, I should be all love! O my Jesus, I am not so! But since You want my company, and You want me to enter into You, I pray You to make me become all love.

And so I supplicate You to crown my head and each one of my thoughts with the crown of love. I implore You, O Jesus, to scourge my soul, my body, my powers, my feelings, my desires, my affections – in sum, everything, with the scourge of love; so that, in everything, I may be scourged and sealed by love. Oh endless Love, let there be nothing in me which does not take life from love.

+ O Jesus, center of all loves, I beg You to nail my hands and my feet, with the nails of love, so that, completely nailed by love - love I may become, love I may comprehend, with love I may be clothed, with love I may be nourished, and love may keep me completely nailed within You, so that nothing, inside and outside of me, may dare to divert me and take me away from Love, O Jesus!

Reflections and Practices

In this hour, abandoned by His Eternal Father, Jesus Christ suffered such a burning fire of love as to be able to destroy all possible and imaginable sins, and to enflame with His love all creatures, even from millions and millions of worlds, and the lost souls of hell if they were not eternally obstinate in their evil. Let us enter into Jesus, and after we have penetrated into His whole interior, in His most intimate fibers, in those heartbeats of fire, in His intelligence which was as though enflamed, let us take this love and clothe ourselves inside and out with the fire that burned Jesus.

Then, coming out of Him and pouring ourselves into His Will, we will find there all creatures. Let us give the love of Jesus to each one of them, and touching their hearts and minds with this love let us try to transform them completely into love.

Then, with the desires, with the heartbeats, with the thoughts of Jesus, let us form Jesus in every creature's heart. And then we will bring to Him all creatures who have Jesus in their hearts, and we will place them around Him, saying: 'O Jesus, we bring You all creatures with as many Jesuses in their hearts to give You relief and comfort. We have no other way to give relief to your love other than to bring every creature into your Heart!' By doing this, we will give true relief to Jesus, since the flames that burn Him are such that He keeps repeating: 'I burn, and there is nobody who takes my love. O please, give Me relief, take my love and give Me love!'

In order to conform to Jesus in everything, we must go back into ourselves, applying these reflections to ourselves: in all that we do, can we say that there is a continuous flow of love running between us and God? Our life is a continuous flow of love which we receive from God; if we think, there is a flow of love; if we work, there is a flow of love. The word is love, the heartbeat is love; we receive everything from God. But do all these actions run toward God with love? Does Jesus find in us the sweet enchantment of His love running toward Him, so that, enraptured by this enchantment, He may overflow with us with more abundant love?

If we have not placed the intention of running together in the love of Jesus in all that we have done, we will enter into ourselves and ask Him forgiveness for causing Him the loss of the sweet enchantment of His love toward us.

Do we let ourselves be worked by the divine hands, as the Humanity of Jesus Christ let Itself be worked? We must take everything that happens within ourselves, which is not sin, as divine crafting. If we do not do so, we deny the glory to the Father, we make divine life escape, and we lose sanctity. Everything we feel within ourselves - inspirations, mortifications, graces - is nothing other than a crafting of love. Do we take those things as God wants? Do we give Jesus the freedom to work, or by taking everything in a human manner and as meaningless, do we rather reject the divine crafting, forcing Him to bend His arms? Do we abandon ourselves in His arms as though we were dead in order to receive all the blows which the Lord will dispose for our sanctification?

+ My Love and my All, may your love inundate me everywhere, and burn all that is not yours. Let my love run always toward You, to burn away all that may sadden your Heart.