

PASSION OF
JESUS

FROM THE MIRROR OF LOVE
BY SAINT ÆLRED, ABBOT

Source:
Liturgy of Hours
Office of Readings
February 23, 2024

Second reading

From the Mirror of Love

by Saint Aelred, abbot

“Christ, the model of brotherly love”

The perfection of brotherly love
lies in the love of one’s enemies.
We can find no greater inspiration
for this than grateful remembrance
of the wonderful patience of Christ.

He who is
MORE FAIR
THAN ALL THE SONS OF MEN
offered his fair face to be spat upon by sinful men;
he allowed those eyes that rule the universe
to be blindfolded by wicked men;
he bared his back to the scourges;
he submitted that head
which strikes terror in principalities and powers
to the sharpness of the thorns;
he gave himself up to be mocked and reviled,
and at the end endured the cross,
the nails,
the lance,
the gall,
the vinegar,
REMAINING ALWAYS GENTLE,
MEEK AND FULL OF PEACE.

In short,

HE WAS LED
LIKE A SHEEP
TO THE
SLAUGHTER,
&
LIKE A LAMB
BEFORE THE
SHEARERS
HE KEPT SILENT,
&
DID NOT OPEN
HIS MOUTH.

Who could
 listen to
 that wonderful prayer,
 so full of warmth,
 of love,
 of unshakeable serenity

—FATHER,
 FORGIVE
 THEM—

and hesitate
 to embrace his enemies
 with overflowing love?

FATHER,
 HE SAYS,
 FORGIVE
 THEM.

Is any gentleness,
 any love,
 lacking in this prayer?

Yet he put into it something more.
It was not enough
to pray for them:
he wanted also
to make excuses for them.

FATHER,
FORGIVE THEM,
FOR THEY
DO NOT KNOW
WHAT THEY ARE
DOING.

They are great sinners, yes,
but they have
little judgment;
therefore,

FATHER,
FORGIVE THEM.

They are nailing me to the cross,
 but they do not know
 who it is
 that they are nailing to the cross:

IF THEY HAD KNOWN,
 THEY WOULD NEVER
 HAVE CRUCIFIED
THE LORD OF GLORY;
 therefore,
 FATHER, FORGIVE THEM.

They think it is a lawbreaker,
 an impostor claiming to be God,
 a seducer of the people.
 I have hidden my face from them,
 and they do not recognize my glory;
 therefore,

FATHER,
 FORGIVE THEM,
 FOR THEY
 DO NOT KNOW
 WHAT THEY ARE
 DOING.

If someone wishes to love himself
he must not allow himself
to be corrupted
by indulging his sinful nature.

If he wishes to resist the promptings
of his sinful nature
he must enlarge
the whole horizon of his love
to contemplate

THE LOVING GENTLENESS
OF THE
HUMANITY
OF THE
LORD.

Further, if he wishes to savor
the joy of brotherly love
with greater perfection and delight,
he must extend even to his enemies
the embrace of true love.

But if he wishes to prevent
this fire of Divine Love
from growing cold
because of injuries received,
let him keep the eyes of his soul
always fixed on

THE SERENE PATIENCE
OF HIS

BELOVED

LORD

AND

SAVIOR.



RESPONSORY

Isaiah 53:12; Luke 23:34

He surrendered himself to death
and was counted among the wicked.
— He bore the crimes of many
and prayed all the while for sinners.

Jesus prayed: Father, forgive them;
they do not know what they are doing.
— He bore the crimes of many
and prayed all the while for sinners.



YOU HAVE
BEEN REDEEMED
BY THE
**PRECIOUS
BLOOD
OF
CHRIST,**
THE LAMB
WITHOUT
BLEMISH.

+

THIS BLOOD
WILL BE
A SIGN
TO YOU.

Exodus 12:7, 13; 1 Peter 1:18, 19

