

Maranatha scriptural way of the Cross

1st station: The night at Gethsemani

Word of God

After the Passover meal, Jesus led the apostles to the Mount of Olives. It is night. On arrival He said: "Pray that you may not enter into temptation". Then He withdrew from them (...)

He is now kneeling. He prays: "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." Then a messenger from Heaven strengthened Him. Jesus is in contact with Himself.

He prays more earnestly. His sweat, like great drops of blood, falls down to the ground. He rises and comes back to His disciples and finds them sleeping. He says to them: "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation." (Lk 22:39 – Mk 14:32).

Meditation

The Gospels are not journalistic reports as we would do today; they are documents of faith and catechesis and nothing was noted by chance. Everything corresponds to a specific intent in these stories. It is night notes John. It is not only the astronomical night which occurs after sunset. It is the night of our hearts, it is the night of the world prisoner of sin, and being aware of the darkness that darkens the world Jesus says: "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into

temptation.” Jesus goes away, because for now He alone lives this solitude and distress. We will follow Him later, and we will follow the way of the cross, but for now He is alone, facing His father, bearing alone the weight of the world. Kneeling, says Luke, who in his Gospel likes to temper everything excessive, fearing that it touches the divine image of Jesus. But, Mark acknowledges that Jesus is lying on the ground, full length, praying silently to a God who does not answer: “Abba, Father, take this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will.” Only Luke, very keen to humanize Passion, notes the comfort brought to Jesus by an angel from heaven.

What occurs there is a ght, the ght between light and darkness, love and hatred, sin and grace, a terrible ght, in Greek ‘*agôn*’, an *agony*. Jesus prayed more earnestly. Luke, who, according to the testimony of Paul was probably a doctor, notes that the sweat of Jesus, as can happen in a case of extreme anxiety, turns into drops of blood. Blaise Pascal noted in his ‘Mystery of Jesus’, that it is the only time in the whole Gospel that Jesus begs some comfort to men. Typically, it is He who comforts.

Here, He begs a little vigilance and prayer. Jesus, as Pascal said, beseeched the men, and was not heard. “*Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.*” Will we fulfill his prayer?

2nd station: The kiss of Judas

Word of God

A troop came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approaches Jesus and kisses him.

“Judas, you are betraying the Son of Man with a kiss!” Jesus’ followers say: “Lord, should we strike with our swords?” And, one of them struck the servant of the high priest. Jesus says: “No more of this!” and he touched the man’s ear and healed him. Then Jesus says to all who had come to get Him, “Am I a thief that you have come with swords and sticks? Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on Me. But now this is your hour, and the power of darkness.” (Lk 22:47).

Meditation

The four Gospels emphasize the loneliness of Jesus in the hour of his Passion and death, loneliness because one of the twelve, as described by the Gospel, betrayed him. And, by a summit of hardness, He was betrayed by a kiss.

Jesus did not make things easier for himself when he chose the twelve. We would have, perhaps, selected twelve similar apostles, thinking like us. Jesus chose very different men: a controller of service tax for Roman occupiers; shermen; a Zealot, a supporter of the armed struggle against the occupier; Judas, who according to the testimony of the Gospel of John, was very attached to money; he stole what they put in the common purse and was probably disappointed that Jesus did not correspond to the idea he had of a victorious Messiah. The others in some respects were no better: Peter, who denies; James and John looking through the ‘intercession’ of their mother to have good positions in the coming Kingdom.

What loneliness! Loneliness on which, in the last century, Teresa of the Child Jesus returns when she talks about the little love of which Jesus is the object from those she calls His friends, the successors of

the apostles, the priests. Heresa was marked by her pilgrimage to Rome. There were many priests, some good, some disappointing, and yet all His friends.

Loneliness of Jesus in the midst of his people, betrayed by one of the twelve. And the others do not react so much better. They want to resort to arms. "Should we strike with the sword?" And one of them, without waiting for the answer, strikes the servant of the high priest, and according to John he cut his right ear. Luke notes the healing performed by Jesus, he who is very keen to show, like John, that even in the bareness of the Passion, Jesus is the Lord. Betrayed by Judas, misunderstood by the others who react inappropriately and surrounded by a crowd which stops Him as if He was a robber, Jesus is alone.

Jesus had to be alone when he led the decisive battle against the one He called "the prince of this world" in the Gospel of John, and who is referred to here by Luke when speaking of the "power of darkness." Let us accompany Jesus in this solitude.

3rd station: The trial of Jesus

Word of God

At Caiaphas' home, the high priest, the priests, elders and the teachers of the law are assembled. They seek a testimony to condemn Jesus to death. But witnesses contradict each other. Two of them declared, "We have heard this fellow say: 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.' (...)" . But even they do not agree with each other. en the high priest stood up at the meeting and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer?" . But Jesus kept silent: "By the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the

Son of God ?” Jesus replied: “It is as you say, and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One.” – “Have you heard the blasphemy? What do you think?” – “He is worthy of death (...) en, even the servants began to slap Him.”. (Mc 14:53 – Mt 26:57).

Meditation

When a trial is a travesty of justice all arguments are good and there is no stone unturned. To condemn Jesus a part of a speech he made is taken out of its context, making reference to the temple of his body, and they accuse him of saying: “I can destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days.” And, even these testimonies do not match. Then comes the decisive moment of Jesus' trial, when the high priest stands at the meeting and, upon the silence of Jesus, begs Him: “By the living God, are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” Jesus replies: “You said it.” Until then, he is not liable to condemnation, because the Messiah when he comes should well claim to be the Messiah. But, citing Daniel, Jesus adds: “You will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven at the right of the Power of God.” Jesus, through these solemn words borrowed from Daniel, claims to be of divine condition so He will be condemned for blasphemy. After that come the insults, slaps, and blows. John, always keen to stress that He who is thus accursed is the Son of God, notes the solemn and sovereign answer of Jesus to a servant who slaps Him: “If I said something wrong, testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?” Jesus is mastering the event where He is carried away again. In His first coming, his coming in humility and humiliation, Jesus was tried and condemned by men and when He will come in glory (“Come Lord Jesus!”) Jesus will come, as we say in the Creed, to judge the living

and the dead.

He, who has been judged, will be the judge of all men and of the whole History and the One we have condemned will come, if we allow him, to save us all.

4th station: The Denial of Peter

Word of God

At the high priest's residence, Peter was in the courtyard near the re. A maid comes forward: "You also were with Jesus, the Nazarene." Peter replies: "No, I don't know or understand what you're talking about". And he went out into the entryway. When the servant girl saw him there again, she said: " is fellow is one of them." Again Peter said "No." After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean." En Peter began to swear "I don't know this man!" At this moment, for the second time, a rooster crowed. Peter then remembered what Jesus said: "Before the rooster crows twice, you will disown me three times." Quickly, Peter goes out, weeping... (Mk 14:66).

Meditation

Peter did not appear very brave in this scene; however, he is more courageous than the other apostles who have ed altogether, since he is here even if he is remote and as incognito as possible. He who said, "Even if all others abandon you, I will not forsake you...With you, I will go to jail, to death," here questioned by a simple servant

he denies his master three times and with an oath: "No, I do not know this man. I do not understand what you mean. No." When the rooster crowed for the second time after the triple denial, Peter will understand what he has done and only Luke, always very sensitive to what is human and mercy in his Gospel, notes that at this time Jesus, during his trial passes, tied up, and his gaze meets that of Peter and it is only in this gaze that Peter will understand the reality, the gravity of his sin. And he went outside and wept bitterly. It is still the same for us when we meet the gaze of Jesus and that we understand our sin and, at the same time, the forgiveness which is offered to us: our misery and the mercy given to us ... all this in one glance.

At the end of the Gospel of John, we find Peter in the presence of Jesus, who will ask him three times: "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" And without mentioning the triple denial of the Passion, this triple question refers quietly Peter to his sin, repeating once more all the confidence that Jesus has in him, to entrust him all the sheep, provided that three times, he confesses his love to Jesus. Yes, Lord, you know everything; you know full well that I love you. Thus the Lord knows how to produce even more love from our mistakes, and from denials, knows how to make a renewed fidelity by His grace.

5th station: Jesus before Pilate

The Word of God

The governor asked Jesus: "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said: "It is you who say it." But to the accusations of the chief priests and elders, Jesus answers nothing. Pilate said to him: "You do not hear everything they witness against thee?" Jesus is silent. The governor is surprised.

As usual, there is one amnesty for Passover. "Who do you want me to release? Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ?" The crowd, influenced by the high priests and elders, began to shout: "Barabbas!" – "What would I do with Jesus?" – "Let him be crucified!" - "Why, what evil has he done?" – "Let him be crucified!" Pilate, facing the crowd, washed his hands: "I am not responsible for the blood, you see!" – "Let his blood be on us and on our children!" (Mt 27:11).

Meditation

This is one of the most tragic scenes of the Passion, which reveals the baseness to which the human heart can sink, despite being capable of such lofty heights. Pilate takes things through politics, it is his mission, and he is the Roman procurator representative of the power of Caesar in this lost township of the Roman Empire. "Are you the King of the Jews?" Everything is misunderstood. No response may be appropriate. If Jesus answers, it will be subject to further misunderstandings. Jesus answered without answering. "It is you who say it," then he is silent. And it surprised the governor. A convict who said nothing in his defense! Pilate thinks he can get out of trouble by giving Jesus the grace he gives each feast of the Passover for Jews condemned. There is another famous convict this time, a foundling who went wrong and who, as children found at the time, was given a name that is not one, he was called the son of his father: Barabbas. If the Gospel notes this, it is to emphasize the derision of the choice, because Jesus is in the strongest sense, the Son of his Father. We choose the rioter and the murderer. Pilate, convinced of the innocence of Jesus, is still looking for a loophole, but he will yield to the shouting of the crowd especially to the political argument of the religious leaders of the people. They were convinced that Israel could only be a theocracy where God is the

master who has sole authority, but to get rid of Jesus they will say to Pilate: "We have no king but the Emperor of Rome," though they hate the Romans! That scene is a tissue of cowardice, a convergence of sordid interests, interweaving baseness, meanness and treachery: "I am not responsible for this blood, you see." And unconsciously, the crowd answered, "Let His blood be on us and on our children!" In this sordid fray emerges, solitary, the testimony of Jesus who, before Pilate who interrogates Him about His kingdom, replies: «Yes, I am King and I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to my voice.» » This is the only worthy word pronounced during the trial. Everything else is derision or baseness. Whoever belongs to the truth hears my voice.

6th station: Jesus is scourged and crowned with thorns

Word of God

Pilate had Jesus scourged. The soldiers of the governor take Jesus into the court surrounded by the whole troop. They take o His clothes, and put a scarlet robe on Him. With branches of thorns, they weave a crown and put it on His head, and in His right hand a reed.

Soldiers genu ect before him. They laugh at him, saying: "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spit on him and, taking the reed, they hit Him on His head. After mocking him, they remove the coat and give Him back His clothes. Then, they take Him out to crucify Him. (Mt 27:27).

Meditation

This scene is a strategy from Pilate with a hint of humanity. Hoping to move the crowd when seeing Jesus scourged, Pilate ordered to have Him scourged in order to release Him.

Scourging was a terrible ordeal. Normally, they limited the number of strokes to thirty-nine, one less than the rate provided to avoid premature death of the victim. The Shroud of Turin bears an exceptional testimony to the torment inflicted on the body of Jesus.

Until a few years ago, this holy relic was prematurely discredited, but further studies today show that this relic is trustworthy and that it started to be talked about 19 centuries after it was made otherwise than by the hand of man. When analyzing closely the image of the back of the Shroud, we can see traces on the back like little bones, these are small balls of iron from the whip that lacerate the flesh.

Once He has been scourged, there is a scene involving the troop of guards. They have fun with the convict. A soldier's cape serves as a royal coat, thorns are woven as a sort of crown that they drive in His head. They put a reed in his hand as a scepter and they genuflect before the king: "Hail, King of the Jews!" with sputum and bellows. Jerome Bosch has immortalized the scene in some of his paintings, where we see the grimacing faces that surround the holy face of the Lord.

And then, after mocking him abundantly, they removed the coat, they put His clothes back on, and took Him out to crucify Him.

It is worth it to linger, one by one, with scenes from the Passion. We hear these scenes, but all in a row, on Palm Sunday and Good Friday. It is worthwhile to detail them.

Who knows if one day, one of those scenes will not lead us to

conversion, as it was the case with Teresa of Avila, who was at the monastery of the Incarnation, a Carmelite very verbose, especially with the local gentlemen, a worldly Carmelite.

It is only at the age of 40, one day she stopped in the cloister before a statue that had always been there, but she looked at it for the first time, really, a statue representing Jesus who is outraged.

at glance, like the gaze of Jesus to Peter, touched her, turned her upside down and brought her nally, after years of Carmelite life, to conversion. "Forgive me, Lord," she said, "to have kept You waiting so long!" As Augustine had said before her: "Late, I loved you, beauty so ancient and ever new, late have I loved you!"

7th station: Jesus takes up his cross

Word of God

Before going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside and said to them: "The Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn Him to death and will turn Him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified. On the third day He will be raised to life!" (Mt 20:17). 28

Jesus said to all of them: "If anyone wants to come with me, he must deny himself, pick up his cross every day, and follow me." (Lk 9:23). Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Hebrew is called Golgotha). (Jn 19:16-17).

Meditation

There is not much to say about this scene because when you get to the point, the word is too short. Words, our words, often belong to the broad way which Jesus speaks in the Gospel. The narrow way, the one that leads to life, is often inhabited by silence.

Jesus almost did not speak during the Way of the Cross. Yet it is not the noise around Him which is lacking. You have to imagine, in the narrow streets of Jerusalem, this noisy procession of people mostly indifferent. Like when, during a procession of the Blessed Sacrament, we go with the Lord in a crowd where only a few know He passes, while many others continue to drink their beer, standing at the edge the road, pull on their cigarette unaware of Whom is passing, not knowing what is happening.

Through indifference and the noise, the Word of God goes silently, spreading while carrying the cross. For if Jesus carries the cross, by carrying it it is the world that He carries. New Atlas carrying the world on his shoulders. And if the Synoptics note that a man will be required to carry the cross with Jesus, John was especially sensitive to the fact that Jesus, for a part of the way, carried it Himself, as he is keen to emphasize the divine sovereignty of Jesus, who even when He is crushed by the weight of the Passion, goes to reach the place called the skull by carrying His cross Himself.

From afar, as we can, in all humility, in silence, we follow Jesus where as yet nobody can follow Him.

8th station: Simon helps Jesus to carry his cross

Word of God

Having led Him out to crucify Him, they requisition a man to carry the cross. A man on his way in from the country, named Simon from Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. (Mk 15:20-21).

Jesus once said : “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Mt 11:28).

It is a duty for us, the strong, to bear the weakness of the weak instead of being satisfied with ourselves. Carry each other's burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Rom 15:1 – Gal 6:2).

Meditation

Simon had not expected to be requisitioned, he was taken by surprise. Like ourselves sometimes, we are caught by the Lord, by the skin of the back at a time unexpected, and we are carried away without having planned it, in his adventure.

But this gesture, placed by Simon who carried the cross of Jesus for a part of the journey, this gesture has borne fruit. Mark, writing for the Christian community in Rome, says without explaining it, who he is; Alexander and Rufus are two characters known to everyone in the Christian community of Rome. These are the two sons of Simon.

The requisition of that day has borne fruit, as in our lives a fruit, so far unknown, will be worn by generosity we have * extracted far

beyond what we had planned.

Simon helped Jesus carry the cross and Jesus invites us to carry the cross behind Him and He says, “every day.”

We carry the cross of Jesus, but it is so little compared to what he always carries in our lives. For it is He who is the Simon of Cyrene to all mankind, and it is because He carries all he can tell us: “*Take my yoke upon you and I will give you rest. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden is light,*” because any burden that we bear is first raised by him, relieved by him.

And, at the same time as Jesus carries our cross and we carry a little of His own, He invites us, through His Apostle Paul, to also carry the burdens of each other. Thus we fulfill the law of Christ: « Love one another as I have loved you.»

9th station: «Do not weep for me! »

Word of God

On the way to Golgotha, Jesus is followed by many ordinary people. Among others, women beat their breasts and lament over Him. Jesus turned to them and said: “Daughters of Jerusalem do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children (...) For if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?” (Lk 23:27,31)

To the crowds that came to him, John the Baptist said: “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance (...) Every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.” (Lk 3:8)

Meditation

There are tears that Jesus would not wish, those which are not engaging us to anything or serve just to console ourselves by giving free rein to our sensibilities.

There are tears, real ones that only Jesus and Mary can cry.

It is good that these women are moved in the crowd next to many others who are not moved, but Jesus wants to lead them to deeper and bitter tears: « Daughters of Jerusalem do not weep for me. » He will try to make them aware of their own real distress, the distress of all of us, rather than being moved by a convict who goes to the gallows: “Weep for yourselves and for your children. For if men do these things when the tree is green as I am, what will happen to you the dry trees, the unfruitful tree shoots which should be cut, and once cut wither to be burned?” These are harsh words, even if they are geared towards the good news of conversion and mercy.

May the Lord lead us, through this way of the cross, to real tears of repentance, tears expressing less our feelings than God's or Mary's suffering or the world's distress.

10th station: Jesus is crucified

Word of God

When they arrived at the place called the Skull, they crucified Him and two criminals. One on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

The soldiers divided up his clothes by casting lots. The people stood watching. The rulers even sneered at him: “He saved others; let Him

save Himself if He is the Christ of God, the Chosen One!"

(...)e soldiers too mocked him. ey approached him, presenting wine vinegar and said: "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself." (Lk 23:33-37). "He trusts in God. Let God rescue Him now if He loves him, for He said: 'I am the Son of God.'" (Mt 27:43)

Meditation

"O Virgin Mary, He whom the world cannot contain enclosed himself in thy womb by becoming a man!" And now, just three nails placed with art, are enough to humanly reduce to impotence the Almighty, God's Word made esh now cruci ed.

Jesus on the cross is practicing the fth demand of the Our Father: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." On our behalf and in our place, He said the rst part, and for Himself He speaks and lives the second: "Forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Around Jesus, besides the small group of women with a disciple, which will be discussed later, there are those who look on mocking while the soldiers continue their work and share the garments, casting lots, as foreseen in Psalm 22.

To the invitations sent to him, then as now, to intervene before the hour, with power - "Save yourself!" - "Come down from the cross," Jesus responds with his impotence, because it is the time of the impotence of God, until the time set.

And just as Caiaphas had unwittingly prophesied, saying: "It is better that one man should die for all the people," in the same way, those who sco cite: "For he said, I am the Son of God," without

recognizing the true dignity of the person who is crucified.

11th station: The good thief

Word of God

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Christ? Save yourself and us!” But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong. (...) Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Jesus answered him, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.” (Lk 23:39-43).

Christ died for sinners. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. We were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! (Rm 5:6-10).

Méditation

The good thief as we say!

First, he was a thief, that is to say, a robber, who became good at that time, whose life has been turned in a moment, seeing that the other condemned on his side, knowing nothing about Him, but His behavior affected him. This leads him to say to the other, the third: «Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same

sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.» He is about the only one in all the way of the cross, to say that Jesus has done nothing wrong.

St. Augustine, in a moving sermon, asks the good thief: "But how could you understand who Jesus was when there were the doctors of the law, the scribes? Did you secretly study the scriptures? How did you understand? " And Augustine puts on the lips of the good thief this response: " Jesus looked at me and in his eyes, I understood everything."

He understood what no other did understand at that time. He realized that He who was dying here, sentenced as himself, with the punishment reserved for slaves (in Israel the condemned were stoned, not crucified, and in Rome too, Roman citizens were not crucified, it was only for slaves and foreigners), he understood that He who was dying there beside him, crucified, was king.

“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom!”

He is the first canonized in the history of the Church, He who, a minute before, was a thief.

“I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.”

He is the beloved patron of all prisoners, especially those who expiate heavy sentences in prisons and, who by looking at the good thief, understand that every life can be saved, nothing is lost for God, and as everyone of the Child Jesus said, for God time is nothing and in an instant God can make a soul bloom. This is what he did for the Good thief.

“Today you will be with me in paradise.”

And He is propelled, catapulted in a minute, from the gibbet to the kingdom, from the cross to the glory of God who has mercy.

12th station: Mary at the foot of the cross

Word of God

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. (Jn 19:25-27).

Meditation

This is the second time in John's Gospel we hear Jesus speaking to Mary and every time saying "Woman." In both circumstances, the wedding at Cana and at the foot of the Cross, Mary is more than Mary.

At Cana, during the wedding where the wine ran out, Jesus is presented as the true Spouse of another wedding where the wine will never fail, the Spouse of the marriage between Himself and His Church and ultimately all humanity. And Mary at Cana is not only the mother of Jesus, but she is the woman, the new Eve who in advance represents the Church, which is the bride of Christ, the true bride of the wedding of Cana. And when Mary asks Jesus to intervene, he replied, thinking of the marriage for which he actually came: "Woman, my time has not yet come." For the hour of the wedding will be the hour of the Cross, it will be the time that St.

John calls in the Gospel simply, the Hour, with a capital H. It is where the wedding will be sealed in the bloodshed. And even if the marriage is not yet concluded, He already offers the wedding wine.

But here we are at the time of Jesus, and Mary is at the foot of the cross with three other women, with her sister, whose name is not known, with Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. Three times "Mary" at the foot of the cross, the Immaculate, the sinful Mary Magdalene and the other Mary belonging to the middle-class humanity, between the Virgin Mary and the great sinner. It is the little remnant of Israel, of whom the prophets had spoken. The people of the first alliance is as summarized in these few women and one disciple at the foot of the cross and the remnant of Israel is, at this time, becoming the Church, the new Eve, the Bride of Christ. Just as the first had been taken from the open side of the first Adam in a deep sleep, here is the new Eve emerging from the side of Jesus that will be opened at the time of falling asleep in death.

Mary here is more than Mary.

She is the Church being born - She is the eternal bride of the Beloved, this is why Jesus did not call her "Mom", He calls her "Woman", she is the new Woman, she the new Humanity. "Woman, behold your son."

And from this time we become sons and daughters of the mother of Jesus: "Behold your mother." Now we can turn to Mary who is not only the mother of Jesus, but the mother of the Church, mother of us all, and like St. John, since that time, we take her with us to be with us.

13th station: Jesus dies

Word of God

At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” —which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” When some of those standing near heard this, they said, “Listen, he’s calling Elijah.” One man ran, lled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and o ered it to Jesus to drink. “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to take him down,” he said. With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. (Mk 15:33-37).

The apostle Paul wrote one day: “When I came to you, bro- thers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I re- solved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him cruci ed”. (1 Cor 2:1-2).

Meditation

Great is the mystery of faith: We proclaim your death, O Lord Jesus, and we profess your Resurrection until you come again in glory!

Nothing is recorded in the Gospels* by chance or anecdote. The darkness that covered the earth between 12:00 to 15:00 is not rated to report an eclipse or a particularly dark time. It is mentioned to express externally the darkness of Jesus abandoned and the darkness of the sins that He carries. Similarly, the earthquake recorded by the Gospels when Jesus died is not mentioned by concern for seismology, but because this shock expressed externally a great upheaval, the largest in the history of the world: the shaking of the

death of the Prince of life, Who will soon lead to resurrection and the world will switch from death to life. When the Gospel notes that the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom, this is to indicate that the first alliance was replaced by the new one and that now access is open to the Holy of Holies.

Nothing is noted at random.

The cry of Jesus on the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" was so impressive that it was reported by Mark and Matthew in the language Jesus used: "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabaqtani?" The people could be Jews who no longer knew Hebrew well, or foreigners who did not know Aramaic. They misunderstood, however, what they heard: "Eloi, Eloi!" and thought that He was calling Elijah to His rescue. There are three more words of Jesus on the cross. Two further reported by John: "I thirst!" the source of life, which springs in eternal life, full of thirst! "It is finished!" And the last word retained by Luke, always striving for humanity and gentleness: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."

And then this word which is no longer a word, this great cry, this great clamor that Jesus expelled when He gave up His Spirit, when He already exhales the Holy Spirit, when Passover will start to shine and where Pentecost is announced: he gave the Spirit. A source that will never stop flowing and which in its deep waters will carry the salvation of the world.

14th station: The entombment

Word of God

As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb. (Mt 27:57-16).

Meditation

Before the burial, there were the spear and the open side of the heart. Then begins to flow the source of the paschal life, destined to become this huge river mentioned in Chapter 22 of the Apocalypse, which sows life forever in its path.

Evening comes when everything ends.

Chapter 53 of Isaiah, which speaks of the suffering servant, wrote: "He found his tomb among the rich." And it is a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea, who secretly became a disciple of Jesus, who offered a new tomb for Jesus and wrapped Him in a shroud that has not stopped since then to accompany us. We went a little too fast, a few years ago, when it was declared prematurely* that the Shroud of Turin was a forgery made in the Middle Ages. New and very thorough studies* made in recent years tend to fully restore the authenticity of the Shroud with traces so precise from the Passion of Jesus, so consistent with the physical reality, which paradoxically is only

being talked about since a century ago through photography.

The face of Jesus on the Shroud, the face of a dead man, is extraordinarily full of serenity. When we get to our last day and we contemplate for the first time the face of Jesus in glory, it will be the same face we have known for a century on the Shroud, but whose eyes are opened to see us, to welcome and love us for eternity. Jesus is laid in the tomb on the evening of Friday, but it is in the hope and expectation of His blessed Resurrection and ours, one day following him.

Such will be our hope forever!