

DAY 23.

A prayer to Jesus Crucified.

JESUS, Paradise of delights, Key of David, that shuts and no man opens, and opens and no man shuts, stretch forth the arms of Your divine mercy and grace, and take me, Your wretched creature, that flies to You in his trouble. Moaning and trembling like some poor sheep, when surrounded on all sides by many and savage wolves, I come to You, the Good Shepherd, who has laid down Your life for Your sheep. Open to me Your sacred Wounds, that I may lie hidden therein, and be concealed from the fiery darts of the enemy. Embrace me, even as a poor mother is used to embrace her sick child, in the depth and arms of Your mercy, since You have willed, out of pure love for me, to be so fearfully stretched upon the Cross, and so fastened there with nails, that all Your bones were torn out of their joints, and so disturbed out of their proper seat and place, that they might all easily be numbered; and thus were You fastened hand and foot to the Tree of Life with horrible pain, that You might blot out, by Your own innocent Blood, the handwriting of the old debt, which our first parents had contracted by stretching forth their hands towards the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; and that You might fasten sin to the Cross and utterly destroy it. Kill, also, within me, all the desires of the flesh, and whatever I have of self-will, or of pride, or of vicious leaning. Extinguish in me all vice, and whatever is displeasing to the eyes of Your holiness, and stir up anew within me a good and firm spirit, and a desire of practicing all virtues. Raise up all the powers of my soul by love, that I may love, praise, thank, and honor You, O God, my Maker and my Saviour, and that not even one of my members may cease to bless and magnify Your holy Name. Re-make and repair me as Your own instrument, which I myself have destroyed, and make me so subject to You, and obedient and yielded, that You may be able to work in me as freely and pleasantly as You have ever worked in any creature. For since we have drawn into ourselves the vein of corruption from the root of the sin of our

first parents, we have become prone to all wickedness. Nor can this poison of the old serpent and vicious propensity be cured, except by the divine mystery of the Holy Cross. But if, O Eternal Wisdom, human nature, when it was still in its first dignity, and abiding in itself, could not remain stable, but fell; how much less shall I, who are already corrupt and vicious, be able, by my own power, to lift myself above myself? I cannot, indeed, without Your great mercy, be restored to my first innocence, but I shall be as one born out of due time, brought forth by his mother with continual pain, and all the labor and pain of the birth will be borne in vain.

O tender Jesus, if You have so loved me when I was lost, as to redeem me by Your Precious Blood, and to undergo for my sake a most shameful death; how much more now will You, in never allowing me to perish, or all Your labor and pain to be of no effect in me. O merciful God! behold, I desire to serve and obey You with my whole strength. But You, Who have given me this good will and desire, must also grant me the effect of good works. For from You is all our good, and not only You give to will and to work, but also You prepare the heart to desire to have this good will. For what have I of myself? What have I been able to draw from the inheritance of original sin, save all corruption and propensity to every evil? Therefore, if there ought to be anything else in me, this is Your work, O Lord! and it comes from You, the source of all good, Who are just and holy in all Your works.