

DAY 10.

Mary followed Jesus her Son.

LET us see now, where God's tender Mother had gone, and whether she will ever appear in public, or whether, perhaps with the apostle she had forsaken her Son. In truth, although the apostles staggered in faith, grew cold in love, and wavered in hope; although fear had scattered the sheep far away from the Shepherd, and cut off the branches from the Vine, yet one branch remained whole and unhurt, and that was the Blessed Virgin Mary, who was indeed full of the sap of faith. For it was not possible that Christ's Mother should fall into doubt, as to whether Jesus was the Son of God, since she knew that she herself had conceived Him by the Holy Ghost, without contact of man; nor could she in her wisdom forsake Him, with Whom she had been made one spirit in God. Indeed the Spirit of God, of Whom she was full, bore witness in her concerning the Son of God, that it required Him thus to suffer for His Father's glory. For as St. Paul said: "He who cleaves unto God is one spirit." Therefore it is altogether probable, that the Holy Ghost had gathered into His embrace all the powers of the soul of God's Virgin Mother, and had claimed with all power the allegiance of her whole will, and understanding, and love and affections, lifting up her created spirit to the glory of the Father, and rendering subject to the law and the other Scriptures, in all that concerned her Son. Hence, even as Christ sought not His own Self, but to do His Father's gracious will, and work out the salvation of souls, so also Mary spared not her only-begotten Son, but herself offered Him cheerfully for all that Passion, which God the Father required Him to bear. Nor did she take heed of the sword, which was to pierce her heart, nor consider the treasure beyond price, of which she was to be deprived, nor dwell even for one hour on that dear Son of hers, or on all the joy and comfort from Whom, and from which she was to be torn away. But she resigned her whole self, with all the powers of her soul, to do God's gracious will, ready to bear all the distress, affliction, and grievous torment that might come

upon her, as if she too in the spirit of her Son had said: “If this chalice cannot pass from me, except I drink it, O Lord, Your will be done!” But to no one can it appear doubtful, that that blessed Mother, and our Lady was inflamed with such love towards God and all mankind, and so thirsted for the salvation of souls, that most gladly would she have undergone the death of the Cross, if so it had seemed good unto God Almighty. And because that could not be, she inwardly underwent so cruel a cross and sorrow, that she was unable to bear it without her heart breaking. And even as our Lord Jesus Himself, although ever united with His Father’s will, nevertheless in His Humanity, feared and dreaded death, so that at the thought of His Passion hanging over Him, He became sorrowful even unto death, and His sweat was of blood, falling in thick drops upon the ground. So also it could not be, but that the Mother’s Heart was pierced by the sharpness of a sorrow beyond all understanding.

In truth, it would have been for her a far more pleasant thing to die with Him, than to live without Him, and to behold with her own eyes His bitter death. For how should she not love with exceeding vehemence that loving Lord and God of hers, Who in form was beautiful and fair above the sons of men, Who had folded her heart to His bosom, and utterly melted it in His own love, and Who had chosen her from among all women, and had raised her high above them all, and had honored, and blessed, and praised her! How should she not love Him, Who possessed in Himself, and Who had deified all the powers of her soul, her will, and understanding, and memory, and love, and, together with herself, had transformed them into Himself, so that she rejoiced at the thought of His Godhead, and at the sight of His Manhood, with joy beyond all understanding, and listened to His sweet sayings with delight unutterable? For what was not Jesus, ever to her a cross? and therefore to suffer all poverty, and affliction, and persecution, and contempt for His sake, and with Him was to her an inward joy, and an exceeding great delight. Oh! surely no mother ever embraced her son with so much love, as the Blessed Virgin her only Son, nor did ever mother grieve for her son’s leaving her, like this Mother. But because the Eternal Father could bestow upon His only-begotten Son no more excellent or noble gift than that of His Cross and Passion,—for after Himself this is the most gracious

and blessed gift He can give His dearest friends—therefore it was that He bestowed the same gift upon the Virgin who knew no stain. And as Christ was obedient unto the Father, even unto the death of the Cross, so also the most Blessed Virgin Mary was ready to obey God even unto the same death; for the suffering which her dear Son bore in His Body, she in her compassion bore in her heart. Therefore, after the Name of Christ, Almighty God has exalted her name above every name, and has blessed her above all creatures. And as she had been chosen by God to cooperate in the new birth of the human race, so it was His will that she should also cooperate in the Passion; that as she had been to us our Mother, in bringing forth our Savior, so too she might be our deliverer, by inwardly bearing with her Son the Cross of His Passion, and by feeling within her heart the exceeding sharp sword of sorrow. For as the Father of heaven offered His only Son on the altar of the Cross, a living Sacrifice, and still offered Him in the Holy Sacrament for the salvation of man, that He may be an everlasting Mediator between Himself and men, so also He allowed His elect daughter, the Blessed Virgin Mary, to suffer hard things, and He accepted her offering as a grateful sacrifice for the advantage and salvation of the whole human race; that she too might become an everlasting mediatrix between God and men, and offer herself with all her sorrow and all her virtues in the sight of God, for all who shall call upon her, so as to turn, through the merits of her afflictions, the wrath of God into His mercy, and that standing beneath the wood of the Cross in her exceeding sorrow, and gazing in bitterness on the fruit of the tree of life, she might cooperate in man's redemption.

Moreover, He had here stored up an almost infinite treasure-house of merits, from where He might help before God all who are in wretchedness, and might so fill her own heart with spiritual virtues, as to become to all men a most faithful Mother, overflowing with mercy beyond measure.

O Mary, fountain of grace, chief of all the martyrs! This was not the beginning of your calamity; this was not the beginning of your torments; this was not the first renouncement of yourself under

obedience to God; but just as Christ your Son had subjected Himself from the beginning to His Father's gracious will even unto death, and all His life long had, of His own free will, undergone poverty, persecutions, condemnation, and contempt; so you too, O our sweetest Lady, give yourself wholly to God, when you consented to become the Mother of God's Son, and did say: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to Your word." Moreover Christ was born that He might die. As then you did offer yourself for the generation of the Son of God, so you also resigned yourself unto His death and Passion. At the Nativity you were the happiest of all mothers that have ever been, so at the Passion you were the most sorrowful; and you, who brought forth your Son escaped all pain and anguish, during His Passion were bowed down beneath the whole bitter heap of affliction. O most tender Mother, how faithfully you took your cross upon your shoulders, and followed your dear Son, and bore in your heart all His bodily and outward Passion. For His Cross was yours, and yours was His. And as Eve rashly took off the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and thus caused all men's loss in Adam, so you took upon you, sorrow from the tree of the cross, and when you have eaten more than enough of its bitter fruit, together with your Son, redeem man.

O Mary, mother of grace! how overflowing were your blessed breasts, when you underwent, together with your dear Son, such cruel torments for your children! And who can count up all the cares and burdens, all the poverty, and affliction, and trouble of these three-and-thirty years which you suffered with your Son? In truth, whatever persecution and affliction your only One underwent at the hands of the Jews, all this you, His most tender Mother, have borne. For by a certain marvelous love drawing you within Him, your soul lived in Him; and so no trouble or sorrow could come upon Him, when you were looking on, without your soul being at the same time tormented by all that He suffered in His body. Every man who is truly devout to you, and who holds your great sorrows in veneration, may here still more carefully and deeply meditate and think upon these things in his own heart.