

PRAYER 13.

To stir up the soul to praise God.

NOW then, O my soul, and as many as have been redeemed by the precious Blood of Christ, come, and with inward compassion and fervent devotion, let us go up to the blessed palm-tree of the Cross, for it is all laden with the fairest fruit. Even as the busy bee, let us pass from wound to wound, for they are all full of honey. Let us search into and weigh with exceeding care, the sacred words of Christ, which He uttered on the Cross; for everything is medicinal and good which comes from this blessed tree. All our salvation, all our health, all our life, all our glory, are centered in the Cross of our Lord and Saviour; and as the Apostle said: "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him." And that we may not be found ungrateful for such immense benefits, let us stir up heaven and earth, and all things that are in them, and call them to our help, in order to praise and bless God, and give Him thanks. Let us invite them to come and gaze on this marvelous spectacle, and say: "Magnify our Lord with me, for He has done wonderful things. Praise and bless the Lord with me, for His mercy over us is great." O you angelic spirits, come up, I pray, with me, to Mount Calvary, and behold your King Solomon on His throne, and with the diadem which His Mother has crowned Him. Let us weep before the Lord Who made us, Who is Himself the Lord our God. O all mortals, and as many as are members of Christ, behold, I beseech you, with tearful eyes, your Redeemer, Who hangs on high. See if any sorrow can be compared with His sorrow. Acknowledge the cruelty of your sins, which required such satisfaction. Go to every part of Christ's Body, and you will find nothing but wounds and blood. Cry to Him with a mournful voice, and say: "O Jesus, our redemption, love, and desire, what mercy is this that has overcome You, that You should bear our sins, and suffer a cruel death, in order to snatch us from death, even death everlasting!"

And You, O God, the Father Almighty of heaven, look down from Your high sanctuary on Your innocent Son Jesus, sold, and wrongfully betrayed into the hands of blood-thirsty men, and given over to a shameful death. See whether this be Your Son's garment or not. Truly, an evil beast has devoured Him. The blood of our sins is sprinkled over His garments, and all the coverings of His good name and reputation are defiled thereby. See how Your holy Child has been condemned with the wicked, how Your Royal Son has been crowned with thorns. Behold His guiltless hands, which have known no sin, dropping with blood; His sacred feet, which have never turned from the path of justice, pierced with a cruel nail; His naked and helpless side transfixed by a sharp lance; His fair face, on which the angels desire to look, all utterly debased and devoid of all beauty; His blessed Heart, which no stain of unclean thought has ever touched, pressed down by inward woe. Behold, O loving Father, Your sweet Son, all stretched out on the harp of the Cross, and harping blessings on You with all His members. Therefore, I earnestly beseech You, O my God, to pardon me, for the sake of the Passion of Your Son; whatever sin I may have committed in my members. Look, O merciful Father, on Your only begotten Son, that, You may have pity on Your servant: As often as that red Blood of Your Son speaks in Your sight, so often wash me from every stain of sin; and as many times as You patiently behold the wounds of Your Son, so many times open to me the bosom of Your fatherly mercy. Behold now, O tender Father, how Your most obedient Son did not cry out: "Bind my hands and my feet, lest I should rebel against You;" but how of His own free will He stretched out His hands and His feet, and gladly allowed them to be pierced with nails. Look down, I pray, not on the brazen serpent hanging upon a pole for Israel's salvation, but Your only Son, hanging on the Cross for the salvation of all mankind. It is no longer Moses, who stretched forth his hands to heaven, that the thunder, and the lightning, and the other plagues of Egypt may cease, but it is Your beloved Son, Who lovingly stretched forth His bleeding arms to You, that Your anger may depart from the whole race of man. No longer do Aaron and Hur hold up the hands of Moses, that he may pray more perseveringly for Israel; but rough, rude nails have fastened the hands and feet of Your only begotten Son to the Cross, that He may wait with long-suffering for our penance, and that He may take us

back into His grace, and that He may not in His anger turn Himself away from our prayers. This, indeed, is that faithful David, who now tightened the harp strings of His Body, and made a sweet melody before You, singing to You the sweetest song that has been ever sung to You: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” This is that High Priest, Who by His own Blood bath entered into the Holy of Holies, to offer Himself a peace offering for the sins of the whole world. This is that guiltless Lamb, Who has washed us in His own precious Blood, Who never knew sin, but Who has taken away all the sins of the world.

From the treasury, then, of this Passion, I borrow the price of my debt, and all its merits I count out before You in payment of what I owe. For all that He has done, He has done in my nature, and for my sake. O gracious Father, if You weigh all my sins on one side of the balance, and place in the other the Passion of Your Son, the latter will outweigh the former. For what sin can be so great that the guiltless Blood of Your Son cannot wash away? What pride, or disobedience, or lust, is so unbridled and lifted up, that such lowliness, obedience and poverty cannot do away with? O, merciful Father, accept the actions of Your beloved Son, and pardon the wanderings of Your wicked servant; for the innocent Blood of our Brother Abel cries to You from the Cross, not for vengeance, but for grace and mercy, saying: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”