THE HEART OF JESUS AS THE GATE TO HEAVEN

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Beloved in Christ the Lord. When we gather on this feast of the Most Sacred Heart of the Lord Jesus, when we hear the account of what happened on Good Friday on Calvary, we may feel somewhat surprised. A surprise due to a certain discord, to the difference between what we imagine and the way Saint John describes it, who was present as the only apostle on Good Friday at the foot of the Cross. For with the eyes of the soul we see the Roman centurion, who holds a lance in his hands and drives that lance into the side of the Lord Jesus, wounds His Most Sacred Heart. And Saint John the Apostle saw the very same thing, but he described it in words. He used two verbs which somehow do not fit all this, for what we hear in the Gospel of John is that afterwards, when the Lord Jesus had died, one of the soldiers opened His side with a lance, and immediately there came out blood and water. What do you mean, opened? What do you mean, came out?

My dear ones, Saint John, in describing this Good Friday scene, sets before our eyes a supernatural reality, and we need to open wide the eyes of our soul, to use our reason, so that we may understand what Saint John is conveying to us. How is it possible that a soldier opens the Heart of the Lord Jesus? My dear ones, the Heart of the Lord Jesus is a gate. A gate which, as a result of the fall of our first parents, Adam and Eve, was closed. The gate of heaven, which on Good Friday, after Christ the Lord offered Himself as a propitiatory sacrifice, is opened anew. A gate through which we have the possibility of entering into eternal bliss in heaven. The Heart of Jesus is the only gate that leads to heaven. The only gate through which man can reach eternal bliss. There is no other entrance to heaven than this Heart, which on Good Friday is truly opened.

And in the second part of the sentence we hear: "And immediately there came out blood and water." It did not flow out, it did not gush forth. There came out blood and water. Blood and water, which symbolise the sacraments of the Church. The power which the Lord God bestowed upon the seven sacraments of the New Covenant. Seven sacraments through which God's grace is imparted to us. And truly, on Good Friday this grace of God comes out into this world through the gate of the Heart of Jesus. Blood and water. Blood and water, without which there is no salvation. For only he who is washed in the blood of the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, only he who is washed in the waters of holy Baptism, can attain salvation. The sacraments come out into this world, they come out to fallen man, so that God's grace may lift us up and so that, with the help of God's grace, we may pass through the gate of the Heart of Jesus and enter into the joy of the Kingdom of Heaven.

And this is the supernatural reality which Saint John presents to us, which at first glance we may fail to notice, may fail to understand. The words which Saint John chose are no mistake, they are no accident. The Heart of Jesus was opened on Good Friday as a gate. Through this Heart of Jesus grace goes out into the world. Grace which can bring us to pass through the gate of the Heart of Jesus, into eternity with God in the one Holy Trinity.

REPARATION FOR INGRATITUDE

My dear ones, on this feast of the Most Sacred Heart of the Lord Jesus, gazing at the opened Heart of Jesus, we desire from the depths of our hearts to give thanks for the work of redemption. We desire to thank our Lord Jesus Christ that He did not hesitate to stretch out on the tree of the Cross His holy and venerable hands in order to tear us from the claws of the devil. So that we might obtain God's grace, sanctifying grace. So that we might save our souls from eternal damnation.

On this feast, my dear ones, we become aware at the same time how great, how inconceivable is human ingratitude and indifference toward God's love. How great, how inconceivable, how loathsome is human

indifference toward the Most Blessed Sacrament, toward God's grace, toward God's desire to save man. And on this day we desire to console the Lord Jesus. We desire to console the divine Heart. We desire to apologise, to make reparation for the enormity, the inconceivable enormity of human ingratitude and indifference. The ingratitude and indifference which Christ the Lord beheld on Holy Thursday, when He prayed in the Garden of Olives. Then the Lord Jesus saw all the sins of all the people who ever lived, and at the sight of the enormity of evil He began to sweat blood. In His human nature He experienced fear, fear of the approaching Passion, of approaching death.

On this day's feast, my dear ones, we need to understand, if only a little, what the Lord Jesus feels, what He goes through on Holy Thursday, in that night from Holy Thursday to Good Friday. We see, my dear ones, so many blasphemies and sacrileges, which outrage us. We hear things which we would probably prefer never to have heard, such as Communion being given to dogs. But look, my dear ones, we see only a tiny droplet, which is nothing in comparison with that ocean of evil which Christ the Lord beheld on the night of Holy Thursday. And we must, my dear ones, place before our eyes this evil which led to the Passion of the Saviour, so that we may learn to have compassion for our Lord Jesus Christ. This is what the Catholic religion ought to teach us. This is what our participation in the Holy Mass ought to teach us. Compassion for the Saviour. So that we, my dear ones, may understand, if only a little, what Christ the Lord had to carry on His shoulders. Does this little bit of evil around you frighten you? Then imagine what an enormity of this evil Christ carried to Calvary. How great was the pain of the divine Heart at the sight of so many sins, so great an ingratitude and human indifference, that ingratitude and indifference which is, unfortunately, our daily bread.

SACRIFICE, MEEKNESS AND HUMILITY

Beloved in Christ the Lord, we desire to make reparation to the Lord Jesus for so many insults, blasphemies, ingratitude. Today, after Holy Mass, we shall fall upon our knees, and let a prayer rise up to heaven. Let a prayer of atonement rise up. Let us learn, let us form in ourselves a spirit of sacrifice, for this is something that contemporary Catholics are tremendously lacking. A readiness to make sacrifices, to bear self-denials for the Most Sacred Heart of the Lord Jesus.

A Catholic, my dear ones, is one who takes part in Holy Mass and professes the Catholic faith, and Holy Mass becomes for him a school of the Cross. He who comes, who kneels at the altar, becomes a pupil in the school of the Cross. He learns to take up small acts of self-denial for our Lord Jesus Christ. He learns to accept suffering, tears, hardships, vexations, persecutions, in order to offer them as reparation to the Most Sacred Heart of the Saviour. And we desire to be diligent pupils. We desire today to fall upon our knees and ask our Lord Jesus Christ to make our hearts after the pattern of His Heart, to help us in forming a spirit of sacrifice, for unfortunately contemporary Catholics do not have such a spirit. They think that everything is owed to them. They think that they are the wisest, the best, the most pious. Where today, my dear ones, can one still find souls of sacrifice? Souls that are humble, meek and humble. Such was the Heart of Jesus.

Let us therefore learn from our Lord Jesus Christ the meek and humble carrying of the cross of every day, for this is the only way that will lead us to heaven. The way that will lead us through the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, through this gate, to eternal bliss. And may we, my dear ones, become with each day ever more humble, meek, ever more ready to sacrifice, people living in a spirit of reparation, of atonement, for our sins, for the sins of our loved ones, for the sins of so many sinners who today do not wish to do any penance. This is what our Saviour desires to teach. He desires that we should burn with the fire of love for God and for our neighbours.

Heart of Jesus, burning furnace of charity, have mercy on us.

Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Praised be Jesus Christ.

(*The faithful:* Forever and ever. Amen.)