



This mystery of the Carrying of the Cross is very profound, and we will begin by focusing on an important passage: Jesus’ encounter with his Mother. After Jesus’s condemnation, the Blessed Virgin, accompanied by Saint John and the holy women, made her way through the crowd to stand at the foot of a house where the procession was to pass. Even before Jesus had reached them, human malice was unleashed against Mary, and Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich described the vision she was given as follows:



“The Mother of God was pale, her eyes red from weeping, trembling and barely able to stand. When the men carrying the instruments of torture approached with an insolent and triumphant air, the Mother of Jesus began to tremble and groan; she clasped her hands, and one of these wretches asked, ‘Who is this woman who is lamenting?’ Another replied, ‘She is the Mother of the Galilean.’ When these scoundrels heard these words, they heaped their mockery upon this sorrowful Mother; they pointed at her, and one of them took in his hand the nails that were to fasten Jesus to the cross, and presented them to the Blessed Virgin with a mocking air.”

What a despicable attitude toward She who is nothing but charity and love! This was the first serious direct offense committed against the Blessed Virgin by men. If we had been on that road to Calvary beside Mary, how would we have reacted? Would we have remained indifferent? Of course not. On the contrary, we would have done everything to protect her and make amends for these insults from the crowd and the soldiers. Well, today the situation is the same. The insults and blasphemies of the modern world toward Our Lady continue and are even worse than during the carrying of the cross. To make amends for them, the Blessed Virgin asked us at Fatima to make this small effort of the First Saturdays of the month. If we neglect her request, it is a bit as if we were on that road to Calvary beside her and decided not to support her in the face of the soldiers’ insults...

After the torments of the executioners, suddenly the Blessed Virgin finally catches sight of her Son: *“She looked at Jesus, clasping her hands, and, overcome with grief, leaned against the door to keep from falling, pale as a corpse and with blue lips.”* She who had gazed for thirty-three years upon the face of Our Lord, so radiant and so good, now saw him disfigured, crushed by suffering. At this sight, the sword prophesied by Saint Simeon at the Presentation in the Temple had just pierced her Mother’s Heart. It was then that Jesus, in turn, raised his eyes and saw her: *“His lifeless, bloodied eyes, beneath the horrible tangle of the crown of thorns, cast a sad and compassionate glance upon his sorrowful mother, and, stumbling under his burden, he fell for the second time to his knees and hands.”*

That first glance exchanged between Jesus and Mary must have been of indescribable intensity. Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich describes the scene from Mary’s perspective: *“Mary, overwhelmed by her grief, no longer saw the soldiers or the executioners: she saw only her beloved Son reduced to this wretched state; She rushed from the door of the house into the midst of the archers who were mistreating Jesus, fell to her knees beside him, and embraced him.”* Like Jesus, she falls on this road to Calvary, at his side. There they are, both on the ground, crushed by the wickedness of men. Their two Hearts become one in this sacrifice made out of love for us, for our salvation.

Father Perroy, in his book *The Ascent to Calvary*, describes the scene from Jesus’ perspective. *“He raised his blood-streaked head slightly and looked at Her [his Mother]. What a gaze! What silence! There are sufferings that cannot be expressed; words would distort them; everything is said in a glance and in silence. From the moment Jesus meets his Mother, a deep wound is torn in his Heart. (...) The sight of the beloved par excellence was the most piercing instrument of torment in the Passion: only those who have felt the sting of a similar pain will understand.”*

While the memory of His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane is still fresh, He now sees His own Mother’s agony beginning. He knows that He has drawn her into this madness of the world’s redemption. He could have spared her this if His legions of angels had intervened. But the Father’s will is different. He knows that by accepting His own sacrifice, He has brought about His Mother’s. What a burden for Jesus.

After bearing the sins of the world, He must now bear in His Heart the immense pain of His Holy Mother. But as in the Garden of Gethsemane, this new burden is once again endured in total submission to His Father's will. And knowing His Mother, He knows that this submission is shared by Her in perfect union of Heart with Him. This terrible ordeal unites them more than ever. A few seconds pass in this way, and Mary, pushed aside by the soldiers, disappears from His sight. Then, patiently, Jesus rises.

Let us continue along the Way of the Cross. Have we noticed that Jesus speaks only once? He addresses neither the Blessed Virgin, nor Saint Veronica, nor Simon of Cyrene. His only words are surprisingly directed at the daughters of Jerusalem who, amidst the indifference and cruelty of the crowd, at least have the merit of pitying His sufferings: *"Do not weep for me, but for yourselves and for your children."* (Lk 23:28) St. John Chrysostom explains that, through these words, Our Lord shows that He does not ask that we weep over His Passion, but over the sins that are its cause: *"Do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves; for it is not over me that you should lament, but over your own sins."* Indeed, the daughters of Jerusalem pity the consequence—Jesus' suffering—without discerning its cause: our sins.

Let us meditate on this passage, considering that Jesus is speaking to us today. Let us close our eyes and imagine: Jesus, his face bloodied, turns to me as I meditate at this moment and says: my friend, do not pity my fate, but weep for your sinful soul, which is the cause of my sufferings. The legitimate compassion we feel for Jesus walking toward Calvary must not be limited to a mere emotional response. It must be accompanied by a keen awareness that we are the cause of it. This is what St. Alphonsus Liguori reminds us: *"We must also observe that everything Our Lord suffered in His Passion, He suffered for each of us in particular."*

Let us therefore contemplate the sufferings of our good and gentle Jesus, but let us also throw ourselves down before Him, imploring His forgiveness for our sins. Weeping over Jesus burdened with His Cross is in vain if, at the same time, we weigh down that Cross by remaining indifferent to our own faults. To love Christ bearing His Cross is therefore this mixture of the physical pain we feel at His sufferings and the deep regret of being the cause of them; it is to admire this gift, this self-sacrifice of Jesus who gives Himself entirely to save us and make amends for my faults. Saint Alphonsus Liguori quotes Arnault de Chartres: *"Lord! You loved me, not as You love Yourself, but more than You love Yourself; for, to deliver me from death, You were willing to die for me!"*

The same is true of the sword that pierces the Heart of the Most Holy Virgin Mary when She sees Her Son bearing His Cross. This sword is thrust by each one of us, without exception. Oh! How we should be seized with dread upon realizing what we have inflicted upon Jesus and Mary! But let us not remain paralyzed by this reality. May this dread, on the contrary, drive us toward true repentance. Then, instead of falling into despair at the magnitude of our responsibility, we will be illuminated by the Mercy of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Finally, Jesus' words to the daughters of Jerusalem should also make us reflect on our attitude toward the collapse of the modern world. We readily lament the looming war and the evil spreading everywhere. But here too, do we question our own mediocrity, which is also one of the causes of all this evil? Indeed, just as our good deeds, through the communion of saints, bring good to all people without our seeing it, so too do our lukewarmness and our negligence contribute to the spread of evil on earth, including within the Church. Before we weep over the world, let us first weep over ourselves, Christ would say to us today.

The Blessed Virgin at Fatima told us exactly what She wanted to save the world: the Rosary and the First Saturdays of the month. Yet for a hundred years we have not done this—or have done so only rarely—and are therefore partly responsible for the world's dire situation. It is therefore urgent that we begin to faithfully observe the First Saturdays of the month, for as the Child Jesus said at Fatima: *"It is never too late to turn to Jesus and Mary."*

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