

The Octave Day of Easter - Low Sunday

Morning Prayers

Evening Prayers

Annunciation Novena

Low Sunday: Interior Peace

Now, when it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut where the disciples were gathered together, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you. And when He had said this He showed them His hands and His side. The disciples, therefore, were glad when they saw the Lord. He said, therefore, to them again: Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent Me I also send you. When He had said this He breathed on them, and He said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples, therefore, said to him: We have seen the Lord. But he said to them: Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe. And, after eight days, again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the door being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. Then He saith to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither, and see My hands, and bring hither Thy hand, and put it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing. Thomas answered and said to Him: My Lord and my God. Jesus saith: Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed. Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, you may have life in His name.

The Gospel according to St John, xx:19–31.

Summary of the Morrow's Meditation

We will consider tomorrow in our meditation: first, what is the peace which the risen Jesus wishes His apostles every time that He appears in the midst of them; second, what is the necessity of this peace; third, what is its excellence. We will then make the resolution: first, to watch over our interior, so as not to allow it to be invaded by hasty and impetuous movements; second, when we perceive that we are in a disturbed state of mind, to pause for a few moments, placing ourselves in the presence of God, in order that we may be re-established in peace. Our spiritual nosegay shall be the words of the Apostle: "*Have peace, and the God of peace and of love shall be with you*" (II Cor. xiii:11).

Meditation for the Morning

Let us transport ourselves in spirit to the cenacle; let us listen reverentially to Jesus saying to His apostles: "*Peace be to you*" (John xx:19), and let us adore Him with St Thomas as our Lord and our God (Ibid. 28).

In what the peace which the risen Jesus wished his apostles consists

It consists in the tranquillity of a heart which is always in possession of itself, and which is its own master, without ever being troubled or hurried. It consists in an empire over the passions, the haste, the impetuosity, the excited movements of nature, in order to moderate them, direct them, and prevent them from troubling us. It consists in that sweet liberty of the spirit, which, doing everything at its proper time, with order and wisdom, applies itself to its object without entertaining any regret for the past, without feeling any attachment to the present, without having any anxiety for the future. It consists, lastly, in that calmness of the soul, which, communicating itself to the exterior, impresses on all the actions of the body a certain inexpressible reserve, gentleness, and moderation which is edifying; which is peaceful without being given to slowness; prompt without being hurried; which does not agitate itself, like Martha, with that excessive activity which exhausts the strength, but is tranquil like Mary, listening to Jesus and placing her action in the very repose with which she listens. All its movements are gentle, its operations moderate, its efforts without contention or discomfort: exterior objects do not rouse in it any excited or anxious emotions; or, if sometimes they take it by surprise, it pauses and waits for calmness to return; it is the image of God, who is never troubled any more in the outrages which He receives than in the great works which He performs.

The necessity of internal peace

Wisdom, says the Holy Ghost, dwells in calmness and repose, not in agitation and tumult (I Kings xix:11). I am ready and am not troubled, said David to the Lord, that I may keep Thy commandments (Ps. cxviii:60). I have held my soul in my hands, so that I may not forget Thy law, he again says (Ibid. 109); thereby signifying that he has freed it from its agitations, and calmed it in its troubles; that otherwise he would have been lost, because trouble is the element of evil, haste the ruin of virtue. The soul which has lost its peace is a prey to all the passions; joy intoxicates and transports it, sorrow casts it down and discourages it; in prayer it is distracted; in recreation it is frivolous; in walking it does not discover either the false steps it makes or the precipices to which it exposes itself; even in the good which it performs it is nature which acts, and not grace. It is incompatible with the Holy Spirit, of which the action, which is always calm, cannot harmonise with thoughtless haste, and whose voice cannot be heard in the midst of tumult. And what will become of the soul thus abandoned by its guide and given up to its troubles? If a vessel cannot be guided in a time of calm, who shall answer for it in a time of tempest? Peace of soul is the essential secret and the fundamental stone of the whole interior life. It is the precious peace which must be bought at the cost of all which we possess. The soul which has found it is richer than if it possessed the whole world. Have we until now understood the necessity of internal peace? Do we labour to establish and to keep our soul in this holy state?

The excellence of internal peace

Internal peace, says St Paul, surpasses all understanding (Philipp. iv:7); and, in fact, it must be something very excellent, since it is the blessing Our Saviour wished His apostles on the eve of His death (John xiv:1); the blessing which He left them in His testament (Ibid. 27), and which He brings them after His resurrection every time He shows Himself to them (Luke xiv:36; John xx:21, 26). Lastly, it is the blessing He charged them to bear everywhere throughout the world (Luke x:5). This peace is indeed beyond all price; the soul which possesses it hears the slightest sound made by the tempter, and repels it with a strength which is all the greater because it is calm. It observes in its interior all that is not in its proper place, that it may reduce it to order; all that is defective, to correct it; all that is good, to render it better. It has a marvellous facility in prayer, great wisdom in acting, and not less prudence in counselling; in its case, progress in virtue goes on without effort (I lmit. xx:6). It fixes itself wholly in the pure love of God, and finds there, as it were, its bed of repose (Aug. *Manual.*, xxix). All its interior is calm and tranquil; it is like a beautiful sky, in which God delights to make His sun shine; it is like a silent solitude, wherein He loves to speak to the soul; He calls it, and it comes; He draws it, and it runs (Ps. lxxxiv:9); and it tastes the truth of the words said to St Arsenius by a heavenly voice: Retreat, silence, and peace. Behold the means whereby to become perfect. Do we employ these means? Do we avoid all that distracts, troubles, and agitates us, and do we apply ourselves to interior and exterior recollection?

Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.