

NOVENA TO THE HOLY FACE

(a series of meditations).

FIRST DAY

The Holy Face at Bethlehem.

At the commencement say :

Lord, I desire to seek thy Face; do not Thou repel me far from it on account of my sins; do not remove Thy Holy Spirit from me.

Let the light of Thy Face shine upon me; teach me in the way of Thy commandments.

Enter into the grotto at Bethlehem, consider the new born Child, laid in the cradle, wrapped in poor swaddling clothes. Mary and Joseph stand before him and contemplate him. You also gaze upon his sweet and radiant Face. It is the Face of the Emmanuel, of the Son of « God with us »; of the « most beautiful of the children of men ». During four thousand years the patriarchs and prophets had desired to see

it; they earnestly entreated for it as the « salvation » promised to the world.

« Lord, » they unceasingly exclaimed, « show us Thy Face, and we shall be saved. » Behold it here ! it shows itself at last ! See how ravishing and amiable it is ; how it already hastens to give you all the most precious things that it possesses.

I. It gives you *its first prayer* : for already in its cradle, it turns towards Heaven ; towards the sovereign Father of angels and of men ; the author of all things. It adores him in your name, it prays for you. « Behold me, » it says, « oh my Father, I come to fulfil Thy will. » Now, this will is to deliver you from eternal death, and to accomplish your salvation. When allowing itself to be seen for the first time, the face of Jesus is humble and suppliant ; associate yourself with his prayer ; determine to labour efficaciously for the great affair of your salvation, which is the object of his coming.

II. It gives you *its first tears*. Behold the innocent and delicate cheeks of the new born infant benumbed with cold, bathed

with the tears which are caused less by the sufferings of the body, than by the grief excited in his soul by the sight of the world. The sweet Face of the little child Jesus is already the victim of reparation, of justice and of expiation ; it suffers, it weeps, it satisfies for your sins. Gather up with reverence these holy tears, one alone of which possesses infinite value ; offer them to the Eternal Father for the payment of your debts towards him.

III. It gives you also one of *its first smiles*. It has already smiled on Mary, it has smiled on Joseph ; now from out the midst of its swaddling clothes, from out its tears, it turns towards you, it becomes sweetly radiant whilst looking at you, it gives you its infantine smile ; a smile of peace and love, a smile of heaven, which invites you, which calls you, which seems to say to you : « The face which smiles on you is that of a friend, of a brother, of a Saviour. Draw near, have confidence, I love you. »

Act of love. — If the child Jesus loves you, if his Holy Face gives you the proof of it, what is it that holds you back ? Render to him love for love.

Virtue to be practised. — Detach yourself, at least in heart, from all earthly things; let Jesus be your treasure!

Spiritual bouquet. — Dry that first tear; carry away with you that first kind smile of the Holy Face, lay it in the deepest part of your soul, as a ray of hope, as a spark of love, and say with the prophet: « The light of Thy Face has been shed upon us, oh Lord; Thou hast given joy to our heart. »

EJACULATIONS

I have called upon thy Face with my whole heart; have pity on me according to Thy promises.

Let the light of Thy Face shine upon me. Save me in thy mercy; Lord, I shall not be confounded because I have called upon Thee.

PRAYER. — God all powerful and merciful, grant we entreat Thee, that, venerating the Face of Thy Christ, disfigured in his Passion because of our sins, we may deserve to contemplate it eternally in the splendour of the glory of Heaven. Through the same Jesus Christ. Amen.

SECOND DAY

**The Holy Face in the midst
of the people of Judea.**

(Prayers at the commencement the same as for the first meditation, p. 108).

Follow our Lord during his public life, traversing the towns and villages of Judea, announcing the good tidings of the Gospel, curing sicknesses and infirmities, everywhere as he passed doing good. Observe what part the Holy Face took in this mission of teaching and of charity. As the Son of God had really united the whole of our nature to himself, he showed himself to men, with a human face, having its own individual features, and a physiognomy which caused him, at all times and everywhere to be known by the aspect of his countenance; for « man », says the prophet, « is known by the aspect of his face. » The people strove with all their might to see the Face of Jesus.

Admire the three wonders of grace, which the sight of the adorable Face produced upon all those who drew nigh to it.

I. *It ravished the multitude.* — When Jesus appeared in public, the people surrounded him, eager to see and hear him; suspended on his divine lips, they said : « Never man spoke like this man ! » And they were plunged into ecstasy and astonishment. The reason is that, very different from Moses, the Man-God did not cover his Face with a veil; he revealed himself to every eye; he conversed with all indiscriminately, tempering, through the sweetness and charm of his humanity, the too dazzling rays of the divinity which dwelt corporeally in him. His Face was really the mirror of his soul, the outward expression of his heart, the visible manifestation of his internal feelings.

Is it surprising that his aspect ravished all beholders? — Come you also near, contemplate with avidity His Face at once human and divine, listen with reverence to the words of his mouth; delight to listen to it, to question it, to converse with it.

II. *It attracts the apostles.* — On a certain day, the Saviour passed near to a publican seated at his desk: « Follow me, » he said, and the man immediately arose and followed him; he became one of his apostles and his first evangelist. « It was, » says St. Jerome, « because at the same time that Mathew heard the voice of Jesus, he saw on his Face a ray of divine Majesty which enlightened him and stirred the very depths of his soul. » — On another occasion, Andrew brought him his brother. Jesus, casting a penetrating glance upon him, said: « Thou shalt be called Peter. » He transformed him, and made of him the chief of his apostles, the corner stone of his Church. — Walking beside the Lake, he perceives two fishermen, two brothers, who were mending their nets; he stops, looks at them: « Follow me, » he says. On hearing the imperative command and on beholding the splendour which illuminated the eyes and the face of him who called to them, they abandon their nets, their bark, their father, and immediately follow him. Are there not moments in which the Holy

Face enlightens you, urges you and touches you? Do not make any resistance or delay when you are thus attracted by it; let it work in you the change which it desires to do.

III. *It is compassionate and merciful towards all.* — Little children are the object of its embraces and its caresses. It gives to the prodigal son the kiss of peace and reconciliation. Inclined towards the ground in presence of the repentant sinner, it is raised again in order to look at her and to say: « Go in peace, and sin no more. » Attentive to the needs of the multitude in the desert, it raises its eyes towards heaven and calls down the blessing which multiplies the bread necessary for the subsistence of the hungry people. It sheds tears over the tomb of Lazarus and communicates to the four days corpse a miraculous resurrection, an image of the possible conversion of the most hardened sinner. Light, grace, pardon, life, flow like rays from the adorable Face; gather them up with avidity according to the needs and the different states of your soul.

Act of confidence. — Everywhere that it showed itself upon earth, the Holy Face blessed, pardoned, cured, did good. I will call upon it; wherefore should I not be heard?

Virtue to be practised. — Be docile to the impressions of grace; — a grace is a glance of the Face of Jesus which solicits and urges you. Give yourself up to its heavenly influence.

Spiritual Bouquet. — My beloved, show me Thy Face; make Thy voice resound in my ears; Thy voice is as sweet as Thy Face is lovely; I desire at the same time to see and to hear Thee. »

(Ejaculations and prayer, see p. 111).

THIRD DAY

The Holy Face on Tabor.

(Prayers at the commencement, see p. 108).

Ascend with our Lord on Tabor. He climbed the mountain with three privileged disciples, Peter, James and John, and he began to pray. Whilst he prayed, his Face was transfigured before them; his Holy Face became resplendent like the sun; his vestments were white as snow.

Jesus willed to give in this manner a free outlet to the rays of the divinity which was hidden in him; for the first time he caused to appear before mortal eyes his adorable Face with the splendour of the glory and the beauty which belong to it.

You will find in this mystery three subjects worthy of your attention :

I. *A spectacle to contemplate* ; — that of the Face of our Lord beaming with splendour and grace. The light which flows from his divine Face communicates to the raiment of the Saviour and to the whole of his person a virginal whiteness, incomparable in its purity. It is a light which casts its beams into the air, envelopes the whole mountain and ravishes the three disciples who are present, with admiration. They experience an ecstasy of happiness, a foretaste of the happiness of heaven, and Saint Peter exclaims : « It is good for us to be here, let us make three tabernacles ! » And yet it was only a passing ray of the eternal splendour, a drop of that ocean of felicity, of that plenitude of life of which the Face of the Lord is the source. What

will it be when you drink it in copious drafts and when you will have full possession and assured enjoyment of the very source itself?

II. *A conversation to which to listen.* — Listen to the conversation which Moses and Elias have with Jesus in presence of the Holy Face thus transfigured. — The subject which occupies them is the work of the Redemption of the human race, which the Son of Man has come to accomplish; they speak of his « going out of the world », that is to say, of his Passion and death. The Face of the Redeemer, at that moment so radiant and so beautiful, will soon be wounded, bleeding, spit upon, outraged in a thousand ways. Lifted up upon an infamous gibbet, it will utter in the face of heaven a cry of pardon when expiring, and it will be the consummation of our salvation, the conquering signal of peace, the warrant of an entire reconciliation between God and man. In this mysterious conversation, the Face of Jesus offers itself to us under two very different aspects; it is at once the glorious and the

sorrowful Face. Tabor and Calvary approach each other and are united together; it was meet that it should be so; it is on Calvary, upon the Cross, by the sufferings and ignominy of the Passion concentrated in the Face of our Lord, that Redemption will be accomplished and that we shall merit together with the beatific vision, the delights of Paradise. Do not separate the idea of the sacrifice from that of the recompense; if the joys of Tabor are sometimes granted you, remember that it is to give you strength the better to follow Jesus to Calvary, and to bear the Cross with him.

III. *An order to receive.* — This order emanates from the Eternal Father, who, from the summit of the mountain, as from an awe inspiring tribune, desires to render, in the face of heaven and earth, a solemn homage to the Face of his Son. It is in fact the splendour of his glory, the figure of his substance, the most pure splendour of his eternal light, the spotless mirror of his justice and of his infinite perfections. He there enhances its glory, by surrounding

it as in a splendid frame, with a luminous cloud, which comes down from heaven, as the symbol of the Holy Spirit, from out the bosom of which issues a voice full of power and majesty: « This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him. » Such is the command which God gives to every creature. He glorifies the Face of his Word, he makes a solemn exposition of it on the highest mountain of the Holy Land, in order to show in it, to all people and to all centuries, the sign of salvation and the organ of truth. Look at it then, « and act according to the model which is presented to you on the mountain. »

Act of hope. — Yes, I know it; my Redeemer is living: I shall see him one day with my eyes, in his glory, myself and not another; this is the hope which is laid up in my bosom.

Virtue to be practised. — Fidelity in obeying the divine commandments. « Speak, Lord, Thy servant hearkens. »

Spiritual bouquet — « It is good for us to be here. » Say these words in presence of the Tabernacle, at the foot of the altar; there is your Tabor, for the immortal and glorious Face of Jesus is,

through the Eucharist, present to the eyes of your faith; make it the object of your delights and of your joys.

(Ejaculations and prayer, see p. 111).

FOURTH DAY

The Holy Face in the garden of Olives.

(Prayers at the commencement, see p. 108).

Follow Jesus going after the last supper to the mount of Olives, in order to prepare himself for his Passion. He kneels down apart in a solitary grotto; he prays for a long time, even during three hours. His soul is a prey to sorrow, to fear, to the anguish of death. From time to time he interrupts his prayer in order to go to his disciples and to seek from them a little support and consolation, and he meets with neither. « I have sought, » he says, « some one who would console me, and I have found none. »

You may here observe three things:

I. *The sorrowful state of the Holy Face.*

It reflects all the impressions of his soul ; it is sorrowful, desolate, quivering ; it sheds tears ; sorrowful sighs escape from its lips. See also, how, after having prayed on his knees, the Saviour, in order to give to his petitions more of intensity and fervour, prostrates himself with his Face to the ground. Contemplate his Divine Face abased to the dust, cleaving to the earth which, cursed through the sin of Adam and condemned to produce nothing but thorns, was purified by the kiss of peace, by the tears of the Holy Face. Our earth will henceforth behold its inhabitants produce a rich harvest of flowers and fruits of virtue ; but Jesus takes the thorns for himself and with them crowns his brow.

II. *The apparition of the angel.* — At that moment, the anguish of the Man-God is redoubled ; he experiences mortal anguish ; a mysterious sweat, a sweat of blood, bathes his Face, runs down from his brow and falls, drop after drop, upon the ground where he is prostrated. An angel appears in order to strengthen him ; reanimated by the heavenly aid, Jesus rises, accepts the

chalice offered to him by his Father, and lovingly drinks it down to the very dregs.

Angel of consolation, you give me an example; I envy you your destiny; I desire to put myself in your place; let it be my portion to raise that suffering and languishing Face, to compensate it by the tenderness of my love, and the generosity of my sacrifices; since it is for me that it suffers and that it is humiliated; it is for me that it resigns itself to drink the chalice presented to it by its Father.

III. *What you have to do.* — It is to offer yourself to it and to imitate it. Adorable Face, Thou didst not refuse the succour offered by another and the consolation of an angel. Permit me, spite of my unworthiness, to draw nigh to Thee, and to render Thee the like service. Permit me to compassionate Thy sorrow, to raise Thee from the ground and to hold Thee reverently in my arms. It is for me to prostrate myself to the ground, to annihilate myself in a spirit of reparation; I associate myself with Thy humiliations and Thy sufferings; like Thee I accept the chalice of suffering,

and I give myself up to the divine will, saying: « Behold me, Lord, I come to do Thy will. Thy law shall be engraved for ever in my heart. Thy will and not my own be done; not what I will, oh Lord, but what Thou willest! »

Act of abandonment. — Offer yourself wholly to God in order never to do aught save his adorable will; make the offering in union with Jesus praying in the garden.

Virtue to be practised. — Do penance; excite yourself to contrition for your own sins and for those of others; accept, in a spirit of expiation the trials of life and the bitter sorrows it may please God to send you.

Spiritual bouquet. — My food, that is to say, my joy and my delight, are to do the will of my Father who is in heaven.

(Ejaculations and prayer, see p. 111).

FIFTH DAY

The Holy Face in the house of Caiphas.

(Prayers at the commencement, see p. 108).

It is the night of the Passion, Jesus, after a derisive judgment, has been disdain-

fully sent, with his hands tied, to the house of Caiphas.

I. *Outrages.* — He is at the mercy of a band of servants and of soldiers, who make it a cruel sport to load him with outrages and insults of every kind. His Holy Face is their target. The whole night, it has to suffer the most humiliating insults which can be invented by the malice of men and the rage of devils. They outrage him by blows, they wound him and cover him with blood by giving him cuffs with their hands, they soil him with spits, a kind of insult particularly felt by the Saviour. He complains of it by the mouth of the prophet : « They were not afraid to spit in my Face, » and when predicting to his apostles the Passion which he was about to undergo at Jerusalem, he specified the spits which would be given him : « The Son of man shall be spit upon. »

II. *Conversion of Saint Peter.* — In the midst of this ignominious treatment, what patience on the part of the Saviour ! what serenity ! what sweetness ! he does not complain, he does not murmur ; he prays,

he loves, he expiates and repairs the outrages which our sins have inflicted and still inflict on the majesty of his heavenly Father. At the very culmination of his ignominies his sorrowful Face finds means to perform an act of mercy and of ineffable charity; it casts its eyes on the prince of the apostles and raises him up after his fall. Peter was there, at some distance from him, an unfaithful disciple, mingling in the crowd of the enemies of his master, he had shamefully denied him, no less than three times. All at once he encounters the divine eyes fixing upon him a look of gentle reproach, of compassion and of love. It is enough. The sight of that sorrowful Face, of that ray of light which issues from those sad eyes pierces the heart of the apostle; penetrated with shame and repentance, he turns aside and weeps bitterly.

III. *Application to yourself.* — Oh divine Face who raisest up and transformest wandering souls, cast Thine eyes upon me, have pity on me, I have not, after having offended God, responded to the attractions of Thy grace, or, if I have shed

a few tears, they have only been the result of a passing feeling of humility, of a sadness in which self love had a larger part than true repentance. Since Thou art, oh adorable Face, a sun of justice, able to soften our souls and to purify our consciences, burn and consume in me all that is contrary to the purity of Thy love; may Thy heavenly rays inflame me, and make me weep secretly over my past offences; I also, I am an unfaithful disciple, or rather, I have been, but will no longer be one! Thou hast been so merciful as to forgive me my revolts and to turn away Thine eyes from my sins. No, my Jesus, whatever may happen, and whatever it may cost me, I will not renounce Thee any more; I will, on the contrary, glorify Thee by my penitence and my good works.

Act of contrition. — Lord, turn away Thy Face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. I detest them and desire to make reparation for them.

Virtue to be practised. — Have the courage of your faith, do not fear the eyes and the words of men, when there is a question of a duty to be fulfilled or of a fault to be avoided.

Spiritual bouquet. — « Jesus looked at Peter, and Peter wept bitterly. »

(Ejaculations and prayer, see p. 111).

SIXTH DAY

**The Holy Face at the prætorium
of Pilate.**

(Prayers at the commencement, see p. 108).

I. *The sufferings of the Holy Face.* — The lashes which the executioners inflicted on Jesus did not spare his sweet and amiable Face. It is furrowed in every direction, wounded, bleeding, lacerated by scourges. Then, seeing that Jesus was condemned to death, because he had called himself « King », the soldiers turn this title into a subject of bitter derision and of sacrilegious mockeries. They cast upon his shoulders a purple robe; instead of a sceptre, they place a reed in his hand, and by an incredible refinement of malice they fashion a crown for him out of thorns which they interlace together, and which they fas-

ten on his brow with great blows. The long, hard, sharp thorns entering deeply into the head of the Saviour caused him dreadful suffering, and inundated his Holy Face with streams of blood.

II. *Humiliations of the Holy Face.* — It was in this pitiable state Pilate presented Jesus to the people, hoping thereby to excite their compassion and to deliver him. « Behold the man ! » he said. The sight only inflamed their fury. « Crucify him, crucify him, they exclaimed. — Shall I crucify your king ? — We have no other king than Cesar, we will not have this man to reign over us. » The enemies of the Saviour triumphed. Amongst the crowd there were many whom he had overwhelmed with blessings, who perhaps, in secret, called themselves his disciples and friends ; yet not one amongst them raised his voice in order to declare himself in his favour, and to defend him ; not one of them dared to recognise him for his king and his God. This miserable, cowardly abandonment, joined to the other outrages inflicted on the Holy Face, was a sorrowful

martyrdom for Jesus. « My people, what have I done to you? Why do you outrage the Face of your Saviour? Why have you surrounded it with a diadem of thorns? »

III. *Honour due to the Holy Face.* —

There is a profound mystery contained in the crowning of the divine Face; it was destined to reign. The soldiers, though unconscious of it, attest the royalty of Jesus Christ, as well as Pilate; without being aware of it, they enter into the designs of God, who wills that his Son should be recognised as King and under that title, should receive the homage of all creatures. — Yes, Oh Jesus, by the diadem which crowns Thy Face, Thou hast acquired the right of reigning over my heart; Thy diadem of ignominy and of suffering is a crown of expiation and of love. Many times I have cast dishonour upon Thy royalty by despising Thy holy law and Thy divine teachings; many times I have caused the blood to flow down Thy august Face through my reiterated sins, which have driven ever deeper into Thy flesh the thorns which transpierce Thy brow; I have run after

the joys of this world, and I have crowned myself with roses; I have longed after the luxurious delights of an easy and pleasant life, not remembering that I am the subject of a king crowned with thorns.

No, adorable Face, I will not allow Thee any more to suffer the thorns of my iniquities; I desire that Thou shouldst rejoice in my homage; that thou shouldst be crowned with the flowers of my virtues, and that Thou shouldst triumph in me by a generous love worthy of Thee.

Act of offering. — Oh Jesus, my king and my God, behold my mind with its thoughts, my heart with its affections, my will with its tendencies, behold my soul and my body; I put them wholly and entirely under the empire of Thy Holy Face, reign over me for evermore.

Virtue to be practised. — Make all the desires and ill regulated movements of your heart and mind which may offend the holy Face and renew its sufferings, to die in you by means of mortification.

Spiritual bouquet. — Can a member be fastidious and sensual under a Head that is crowned with thorns?

(Ejaculations and prayer, see p. 111).

SEVENTH DAY

The Holy Face on the path to Calvary.

(Prayers at the commencement, see p. 108).

Behold Jesus ascending the mount of his sacrifice, laden with the weight of his Cross. After the painful and humiliating fall which he has had, his adorable Face is soiled with dust, with sweat and with blood. The spectacle excites the contempt of the crowd and the mockeries of the executioners.

I. *Reparation offered to the Holy Face.*
— In this state of abandonment and of opprobrium, the Saviour, all at once, receives a mark of devotion and of tenderness which compensates and consoles him. A courageous woman, Veronica, has been touched with compassion. Listening only to her faith and her love, she makes her way through the crowd, puts aside the executioners, and, filled with reverence and emotion, draws near to Jesus. Then she takes the soft white veil of fine egyptian

linen which covers her head; she spreads it over and gently applies it to the bleeding and wounded Face of the Man-God! she wipes it and raises it; it is a real service which she renders to him, and which for a moment relieves his sufferings and re-animates him. As a recompense, Jesus immediately leaves the impression of his Holy Face upon the linen of which she had made use for the performance of this heroic act.

II. *Veronica our pattern.* — Congratulate Veronica; look upon her as an admirable model, learn from that generous woman to make reparation to the suffering Face of your God. Impiety renews, in these our days, the outrages he endured on Calvary. His Holy Face is especially insulted and spit upon by all the horrible blasphemies which hell vomits forth against his divinity. The Saviour complains; he seems to say to those who know him and who love him: « I have sought around me for consolers, and I have found none. » Let your heart answer: « Behold me, Lord; I am Thine, ready to do Thy good pleasure.

Must I oppose my faith, my adoration, my example to hatred and contemptuous impiety? I am ready. »

III. *A good inspiration to follow.* — Divine master, Thou hast said in Thy Gospel: « Whoever shall glorify me before man, I will glorify him in my turn, before my Father who is in heaven. » At the present day, perverse and sacrilegious sects outrage Thy adorable Face; I desire to glorify it by my expiations, by my praises, by all the fervour of my love. Animate me with the spirit with which Veronica was inspired upon the ascent to Calvary. What signify to me the raillery of the world, and the rage of hell? I will listen to the voice of the Church, I will follow the inspirations of my heart, I will go to Thee, oh sweet Face of my Saviour; I will wipe away the tears with which it is inundated; I will soothe the wounds which make it suffer, I will efface the ignominious blemishes with which wicked men have attempted to soil it. In Thy turn, inspire me with the rays of Thy grace, and engrave in my heart the celestial impress of Thy virtues.

Act of charity. — Love the Holy Face and have compassion on the outrages it was made to suffer; love your wandering brethren, and pray to God to spare and convert them.

Virtue to be practised. — Let zeal for reparation inflame you; exercise it by communions, by your prayers, by your words, by your example, by all the means with which the sight of evil committed ought to inspire you.

Spiritual bouquet — « I want Veronicas, » said our Lord to Marie de Saint Pierre. — « My daughter, take my Face as a precious coin wherewith to pay to my Father the debts of His justice. »

(Ejaculations and prayer, see p. 111).

EIGHTH DAY

The Holy Face on the Cross.

(Prayers at the commencement, see p. 108).

Upon the Cross, where it is placed as upon an altar of propitiation between heaven and earth, the Holy Face acts as our intercessor and our mediator.

I. *The pardon of the Holy Face.* — Raising its eyes bathed in tears towards the heaven-

ly Father, it entreats our pardon : *Pater, dimitte illis*. Oh Father, remit the debt of these sinners ; give back to them Thy friendship. Then turning towards us, it inclines itself lovingly, as though to offer us the kiss of peace and of reconciliation. Oh ! how touching, at that moment, is the aspect of the sorrowful Face of the Redeemer ; what sufferings upon that bed of anguish ! what a prolonged agony ! and what patience also ! what gentleness, what an ineffable serenity in its movements and its words !

As often as seven times the divine Face, giving a truce to its sufferings, opens its blessed lips ; each one of its words is a lesson, a grace, and as it were, a reiterated and supreme adieu which it addresses to the world. It does not murmur ; it is not irritated ; it prays, it pardons, it blesses ; at last it utters a loud cry and expires.

II. *The appeal made to divine mercy*. — Oh God, our Creator and our Father, we dare not raise our eyes towards Thee ; for we have sinned ; we have abused Thy innumerable blessings ; we are guilty in the

highest degree, we deserve the blows of Thy divine justice. But, Lord, behold Thy Christ on the Cross, look at his merciful and compassionate Face which implores Thee. Listen to the voice of its prayer. Behold its tears, the thorns of its crown, the blood with which it is inundated. Behold it mute, inanimate, growing cold in the death agony. It is given up to death for us, oh Father; it has taken our place before Thee, it has deserved to disarm Thy anger. Look, look at the Face of Thy well beloved Christ, in the state to which it has been reduced. Pardon us, oh most merciful Father, and save us.

III. *Christian pardon.* — Most holy Face of Jesus on the cross, what a lesson Thou givest to me! Thy charity has reached even to the extent of pardoning Thy executioners and praying for them. It is, above all, for those who struck Thee, wounded Thee, dealt Thee blows, covered Thee with spittle, that Thou saidst: « Forgive them, Father, they know not what they do. » When they struck Thee, Thou didst endure them, gently and in silence. Now, Thou raisest

Thy voice to excuse and defend them, to obtain pardon for them; in offering for them Thy blood, Thou givest them the greatest proof of Thy love. Teach me this Thy endurance of our neighbour and this Thy generosity in pardoning even our most cruel enemies. Yes, I forgive, for love of Thee, all who have offended me. With you; I pray for the sinners who outrage Thee, for the wretched men who blaspheme Thee; I beg of Thee their conversion and their salvation. Let them but turn to Thee, oh most Holy Face, let them invoke Thee; it is enough! Whoever looks on Thee, oh blessed Face, with faith and repentance, will escape the sting of the serpent and will find life.

Act of generous love. — My God, I forget the injuries which have been inflicted on me; I pardon all those who have offended me in any way whatever; I love them sincerely, I pray for them, and I entreat thee to save them.

Virtue to practise. — Bear the injuries inflicted on you and the coldness shown you by your neighbour, accept all that is painful in them to your heart and mind in reparation for what the Holy Face has suffered.

Spiritual bouquet. — God our protector, cast
Thine eyes upon the Face of Thy Christ.

(Ejaculations and prayer, see p. 111).

NINTH DAY

**The Holy Face on the day
of the Resurrection.**

(Prayers at the commencement, see p. 108).

On the day of his resurrection, our Saviour showed himself several times to his holy mother, to the holy women and to his Apostles. He came forth from the sepulchre, endowed with a spiritual and incorruptible life, shining with glory and immortality. In this state, that which above all attracted attention, was the beauty and triumphant splendour of his Holy Face.

I. *Glory of the Holy Face after the Resurrection.* — Look at it yourself in spirit and with the eyes of faith. What celestial fire in its eyes! What serenity on its brow! What harmony in its features! What a smiling and majestic countenance! During

his Passion we beheld the Face of Jesus bleeding and full of grief; at this moment, joys beams forth from it; it overflows with consolation in proportion to the sufferings and ignominies it has suffered. Oh adorable Face of my Saviour, it is meet that victorious now, over death and sin, you should appear dazzling in strength and splendour. Show what Thou art; shed all around in softened majesty, the rays of honour and glory with which Thou art crowned; advance and reign over all hearts. *Prospera procede, et regna.*

II. *Joy which it communicates.* — The first time that the apostles, when they were assembled together in the cenacle, saw the risen Face of their divine Master, they were thrilled, says the Evangelist, with great joy; his smile, his sweet gaze, his kind and paternal words, the breath of his lips which he shed upon them, inundated them interiorly with a delicious peace which they had never before experienced.

What will be the joy of the elect, when they shall behold, in its full splendour, without a cloud and without a shade, the

glorious Face of the Incarnate Word. The sight will enable them to penetrate as through a most pure mirror, into the secrets of the divine essence, where they will find perfect beatitude and the sovereign good. They will see it even as it is, that most Holy Face, and they will become like to it; perfection of soul and of body will be theirs through the light of its glory with which they will feel themselves to be penetrated.

III. *Its praises throughout eternity.* — Lord, permit me « to behold Thee », permit me to see Thy Face in its pure and real glory; when Thy glory shall thus appear to me, then my heart will be satiated with joy. Being then, says Saint Augustine, free and disengaged from all cares, « we shall see, we shall love, we shall praise; » we shall see the Face of the divine King so ravishing and so beautiful; we shall love the Face of the Man-God, of the Son of Mary so sweet and so amiable; we shall praise the Face of the Redeemer, so victorious and so powerful. We shall behold it for ever, we shall love it without distaste;

we shall praise it without weariness, with transports of ever reviving, ever renewed joy, for ever and ever. Amen.

Act of desire. — When shall I go and appear before the Face of my God? When shall I see him face to face?

Virtue to be practised. Detach yourself, little by little, from the deceptive and passing joys of this world; seek the treasures of Heaven where the risen Jesus awaits you.

Spiritual bouquet. — May I expire thirsting with an ardent thirst to see the desirable Face of our Lord, Jesus Christ. (Last words of Mr Dupont.)

EJACULATIONS

I have entreated Thy Face with my whole heart; have pity on me according to thy promise. Make the light of Thy Face to shine upon me; save me in Thy mercy; Lord, I shall not be confounded, because I have called upon Thee.

PRAYER. Almighty and merciful God, grant, we beg of Thee, that whilst venerating the Face of Thy Christ, disfigured in the Passion because of our sins, we may merit to contemplate it eternally in the splendour of its heavenly glory. Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.