

# Chapter VI

## Suffered, Was Crucified, Died And Was Buried

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### FOURTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried.

#### I. - SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE.

107. St. Palemon's Oil. - Meditation on the sufferings of Our Lord have always been of great assistance to the Saints in sanctifying themselves. I have read one instance of the kind which some of you may probably know, my little friends; it is taken from the life of St. Pacomius, who died about the year 348. One Easter day, the holy old man Palemon, whose disciple he was, said to him; "Since this festival is common to all Christians, make us ready something to eat." Pacomius, hastening to obey, took, contrary to his usual custom, a little oil, to which he added some salt, and a few herbs. Then he called St. Palemon: "Father," said he, "I have done what you commanded me to do." The holy old man, after saying the usual prayer, approached the table, and seeing the oil, he said, raising his hand to his forehead and shedding a torrent of tears: "My Master was crucified, and I would now eat oil!"

"No, I will not do it." So, notwithstanding all the entreaties of Pacomius, he would not taste it; but, taking some bread and salt, according to their custom, they sat down to table, and after Palemon had, as usual, pronounced the blessing and made the sign of the cross, they both eat and humbly returned thanks to God. These were men who meditated with fruit on the Passion of Our Lord. - MICHEL-ANGE MARIN, Vie des Peres des deserts.

108. The Three Pictures of a Chapel. - A German book, printed at Augsburg, in Bavaria, in 1841, relates the following story, closely connected with the Passion of Our Lord. A valiant knight, named Hildebrand, had been grossly insulted by Bruno, one of his companions in arms. He swore to take a terrible revenge, made his preparations long beforehand, and finally appointed the day and place which appeared to him the most suitable for the execution of his dread design. He arose by night, and repaired alone and well armed to a solitary spot, which he knew the knight Bruno was to pass. On the way, he found a little chapel open; he went in to await the dawn of day, and amused himself by looking at the paintings by the light of the sanctuary lamp. There were three pictures. The first represented the Saviour covered with the scarlet cloak and crowned with thorns; underneath was written in Latin: "He returned not insult for insult." The second picture recalled the sad scene of the scourging and bore these words: "When He suffered thus, He threatened not." The last represented Jesus on the cross, with these words: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." The successive sight of these three paintings touched the heart of Hildebrand; he fell on his knees and began to pray. By degrees his hatred vanished. He still awaited his enemy, but it was to forgive him

from the bottom of his heart and be sincerely reconciled to him. - SCHMID et BELET, Cat. Hist., I., 225.

109. The holy Crown of Thorns at Paris. - Perhaps you are not aware, my dear children, that Our Lord's sacred Crown of Thorns is still preserved in Paris; I have had myself the happiness of seeing and kissing it. This is how it came there: Baldwin the Second, Emperor of Constantinople, had come to France to solicit the king's aid against the Greeks, who were besieging that imperial city. The Greeks were, in fact only trying to right a terrible wrong when certain freebooters had subverted the fate of the fourth Crusade and turned against their fellow Christians of Greek origin. Baldwin thought he would gain the heart of King St. Louis by making him a present of the Holy Crown of Thorns. He was not mistaken; the king assisted with money and troops, the precious relic was withdrawn from the hands of the Venetians, - to whom the Greeks had given it in pawn, - and was brought to France. (These Venetian merchants had much to answer, as it was their venality and service of Mammon that had caused so much of the disruption of the authentic crusading spirit.) St. Louis went to receive it, five leagues from Sens, followed by his whole court and all his clergy; he accompanied it to Paris, with sentiments of compunction and humility, whereof his whole exterior presented sensible marks. Assisted by his brother, the Count d'Artois, both being barefoot, with heads uncovered, he himself bore the Holy Crown from the Church of St. Antoine des Champs, in one of the suburbs of Paris, to that of Notre Dame; it was afterwards deposited in the Chapel of St. Nicholas, attached to his palace. Having also received a fragment of the true cross, which the Venetians had obtained from the King of Jerusalem, he caused the Chapel of St. Nicholas to be taken down, and built in its stead in the same place the Holy Chapel (la Sainte Chapelle). He there placed the pious relics of the Redeemer's Passion, enshrined in gold and precious stones; he founded canons to sing the praises of God day and night in presence of these venerable remains, and had a particular devotion for the place. Every year, on Good Friday, he went thither, clad in his royal robes, the crown on his head, and exposed with his own hands the True Cross to the veneration of the people. - BAILLET, Vie des Saints, 25th August - Saint Louis.

110. The Wounds of Our Lord. - It is related in the chronicles of the Order of St. Francis that a man who was very rich and had been bred up in all the delicacies of the world became a religious in that Order. The demon, vexed at this change of life, and determined to oppose it with all his might, began to torment him, continually representing to him the austerity of the community into which he had entered. For, instead of the delicate table, splendid dress, magnificent furniture, and all the luxuries he had in the world, he found in religion only some badly-cooked vegetables, a rough tunic, a little straw to lie on; in a word, great poverty in all things. The devil made all these privations still harder to bear by bringing them incessantly before his eyes and soliciting him to leave them and return to the world. At last the temptation became so strong that the poor man resolved to leave the monastery. In doing so he had to pass through the chapter room; there, kneeling before a crucifix, and having commended himself to God with much fervour, he was ravished in spirit: Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin appeared to him, and asked him why he was going away. He answered with much respect that, having been delicately nurtured in the world, he could not bear the great austerities of religion. The Saviour then raising his right arm, said, showing him the wound in his side: "Put your hand hither, and dip it in the blood that flows from this wound, and as often as the austerities and pains you have to endure shall present themselves to your mind, refresh it with this blood, and the most painful things shall appear sweet and easy to you." The novice being returned from his ecstasy did as the Lord had commanded him. At each temptation of sensuality and impatience wherewith he was assailed, he recalled to his mind the Saviour's Passion,

and immediately the bitterness of mortification was converted into sweetness. Let us employ the same means, my dear young friends! when we suffer, let us think of Jesus Christ suffering, let us contemplate our Crucifix and we shall be comforted. - RODRIGUEZ, Christian Perfection, III., 133.

111. The Mirror of a Holy Priest. - Our Lord's face is often painted such as it was in His Passion. The head is crowned with thorns, the forehead and cheeks are covered with dust and drops of blood the eyes dim with tears. This is the figure which is called the Ecce Homo. That word, by the way, recalls to my mind a very curious story. A priest of Florence, in Italy, named Hippolito Galleatani, had a fine Ecce Homo painted, and magnificently framed to place in his chamber. Every day he went to contemplate it during his meditation, and always found in it numerous subjects for reflection. Opposite his window, on the other side of the street, dwelt a lady who unhappily lived but for the world, and spent whole hours decorating herself before a mirror. Having several times remarked the pious ecclesiastic before his Ecce Homo, she took it into her head that that picture was a very large glass, in which he used to admire himself. She went to pay him a visit, and spoke of his handsome mirror. Galleatani left her to believe that it really was a glass; he much extolled its beauty, and told her it even enjoyed a property which all mirrors have not. "You know, madam, ordinary mirrors reflect our faces just as they are, but mine has the curious property of effacing by degrees the spots, defects and imperfections which one may have, provided they contemplate it every day." The lady, more and more bewildered, asked to see this extraordinary mirror. Galleatani continued the conversation a little longer, then conducted her to the famous mirror. Imagine the astonishment of that worldly lady. The good priest then made her so sensible that all he had said was true - not for the face, which the slightest accident may disfigure, but for the soul, that she changed her sentiments, led a most Christian life, and died a holy and a happy death. - SCHMID et BELET, Cat. Hist., I., 228.

## II. - WAS CRUCIFIED.

112. The Crucifix is a Book. - I remember having read, under this title, a beautiful story in Christian Perfection; it relates to St. Bonaventure. At the time when he was in great repute, teaching theology in Paris, and attracting general esteem and admiration by his works, St. Thomas Aquinas went one day to see him, and requested him to show him what books he used for his studies. Then St. Bonaventure, conducting him to his little chamber, showed him some very common books that were on his table. But St. Thomas gave him to understand that he desired to see the other books from which he derived so many marvellous things. The Saint then showed him a small oratory, with nothing in it but a crucifix: "There, Father," said he, "is all my other books. This is the principal one from which I draw all I teach, and all I write. Yes, it is by throwing myself at the foot of that crucifix, and begging of Him whose image it bears, the enlightenment of my doubts, and assisting me at Mass, that I have made more progress in the sciences, and have gained more true fights than I should have done by the reading of any books whatsoever." Well! my young friends, you did not suspect this, that whilst men study much and know but little, the Saints content themselves with their crucifix, and attain to the most sublime genius! - RODRIGUEZ, Christian Perfection, III., 189.

113. The Red Crosses of Louis XII. - Those amongst you, my young friends, who have studied the history of France, are aware that Louis XII. succeeded Charles VIII. in 1498. When he was consecrated at Reims, he had a list prepared for him of all his enemies, especially those who had been opposed to him when he was only Duke of Orleans. In going through this list, he marked with a red cross a certain number of those names, and particularly of those lords of whom we have just

spoken. Those who had had the misfortune of displeasing him were much alarmed on learning that they had been thus marked in red ; they doubted not but that they were soon to perish, and endeavoured to escape from the court, some by one way, some by another. The king, apprised of the motive of their retreat, could not help laughing, and called them all back. Their fears increased still more, but Louis XII. said to them: "I am surprised, my lords, at your precipitate flight, and the reasons you assign for it. I never intended to do you harm; the King of France has nought to do with the private quarrels of the Duke of Orleans. Furthermore, the red cross which I have placed at each of your names, very far from exciting me to revenge, moves me, on the contrary, to clemency. Yes, I am bound to forgive you whatever wrongs you may have done me, as Christ on the cross asked pardon of His Father for those who had crucified Him." There, my dear children, is what we may call speaking and acting as a Christian. - GABOURD, Historie de la France, X.

114. The Ruffian in Presence of a Crucifix. - Speaking of Our Lord dead on the Cross for our sins, I remember a story of a crucifix which I will tell you with pleasure. A missionary had gone to a prison in Turin, or some other Italian city, to prepare a criminal who was under sentence of death. He found him kneeling on the floor of his cell, a crucifix in his hand, crying and sobbing to such a degree that the zealous minister of Christ, do what he would, could not console him. At length, however, restraining his tears by a great effort, the unhappy man turned towards the missionary, and said: "Perhaps you think, Father, that I weep because of the death and torment that await me, but that is not the cause of my trouble. I weep because for forty years I have been the inveterate enemy of this crucifix, and now I find nothing else but it to keep me company. Forty years have I turned my back on the crucifix to run after friends who have been the cause of the crimes for which I die to-morrow, and now they have all abandoned me; for fear of being set down as my accomplices, they all pretend not to know me. I am deserted by my kindred, who are ashamed of being connected with a malefactor; in short, I have none now to comfort me but Jesus Christ, He whom I have done nothing but offend all my lifetime." He died in these sentiments, furnishing yet another proof that the very sight of the crucifix can change a villain into a just and righteous man. - DEBUSSI, Nouveau Mois de Marie, (New Month of Mary,) 65.

115. All is Safe When We Look at the Cross. - Perhaps, children, you already know the following story; nevertheless, I will tell it to you now, because it is so full of interest: A young lady of distinguished birth, but whose name I forget, desired to enter a very austere order. To try her vocation, the Superior gave her a frightful picture of the rigors of the cloister, and conducting her in spirit to every place in the community, she everywhere showed her objects repulsive to nature. The young postulant appeared shaken; it seemed as though her resolution was giving way. She remained silent. "Daughter," said the Superior, "you do not answer me." "Reverend Mother," replied the young lady, " I have but one question to propose to you : Are there any crucifixes in your house? Shall I find a crucifix in that narrow cell, with the hard bed of which you speak? in that refectory, where the food is so coarse and unpalatable? in that chapter, where one is so harshly reprimanded?" "Oh! yes, daughter, there are crucifixes everywhere." "Well, Mother, I hope I shall find nothing difficult, since I shall have a crucifix near me wherever I am, and whatever I may have to suffer." - DEBUSSI, Nouveau Mois de Marie, (New Month of Mary,) 263.

116. Gustavus and His Crucifix. - A youth who was endowed with an excellent disposition, and whose mildness and amiability endeared him to all who knew him, was sent by his parents to a house of education, in order to perfect himself in the different branches which his condition required. He had been scarcely six months in this establishment, when he was suddenly taken ill,

and his malady declared itself with the most alarming symptoms. The parents are promptly apprised of his danger ; they set out immediately, and the father, arriving first, hastens at once to visit his son. Alas! he finds him in a desperate condition, almost at his last hour, it would seem, and scarcely able to recognize him. Having remained with him some time, he left him, overwhelmed with grief, saying, with tears in his eyes: "To-morrow, my son, I will see you again." When to-morrow came his son was no more! It was a hard task to break the news to him, and to the poor mother, who had just arrived, and asked to be taken to her son's bedside. Two priests were charged with this painful office. After having prepared the minds of the parents as well as time would permit - "Madam," said they, "you must make an act of submission to the Divine will." "My God!" cries the mother, "I understand you - Gustavus is dead. Alas! alas! my dear Gustavus!" "Madam," said the ministers of the Lord, who knew her faith, "we forgot to tell you that you have still one source of consolation - Gustavus' crucifix!" "Oh! my dear son's crucifix! Oh, give it, give it to me!" It was brought accordingly. As soon as she had it in her possession, she pressed it to her heart, then to her lips, and watered it with her tears. Suddenly she felt herself consoled, and the violence of her grief assuaged. "This," said she, "shall be henceforth the sole object of my love; nothing can ever more attach me to this earth, but this sacred image shall replace my son; it will be my all in this world!" - Recompenses hebdomadaires, (Daily Rewards) XXX., 5.

### III. - DEAD AND BURIED.

117. Finding of the Holy Cross. - When the Emperor Constantine became a Christian, his pious mother, St. Helena, although nearly eighty years of age, undertook a journey to Jerusalem, to honour, in a fitting manner, the places sanctified by the Passion of Our Lord. She went direct to Calvary, where Christ died. Her heart was oppressed with sorrow on seeing the abominable profanations which the pagans had committed there, in order to lessen, if not entirely to efface, the veneration of the place by Christians. The place of Our Lord's sepulture had been so changed and disfigured that the faithful themselves could no longer recognize it. But, following the directions of an aged Jew, St. Helena caused the statues of the false gods to be thrown down, the Temple of Venus razed to the ground, and enormous quantities of rock and clay, which had been piled on the natural soil to a great height, to be cleared away. Thus it was that the Holy Sepulchre was at length discovered; in the course of their excavations, the workmen came in due time to three crosses nearly alike - that of Jesus Christ and those of the two thieves. As it was not easy to distinguish them one from the other, St. Macarius, patriarch of Jerusalem, had them all three touched by a sick person, whom the doctors had given up. Nothing came of touching the two first, but the first touch of the third immediately restored the dying person to health. By this means they ascertained that the cross was really that of Our Lord. - FILASSIER, Dictionnaire d'Education, II., 373.

118. St. John Gualbert Disarmed at Sight of the Cross. - We should always have about us, my dear children, a crucifix, or small cross; the very sight of it would often restrain us from evil. Apropos to Good Friday, here is a fact that will prove it: John Gualbert, a young Italian gentleman, burned to avenge the death of his brother, who had been basely murdered. His father urged him on still more by frequent exhortations. In this frame of mind he chanced to meet the murderer, a neighbouring gentleman. The lonely place, the narrow road, all favoured his design; he raises his arm to strike his enemy. The unfortunate man, being wholly unarmed, falls on his knees, his arms crossed, without saying a single word; it was Good Friday. Reminded by that simple act, of the Saviour's death, John Gualbert throws away his sword, raises his enemy, and mildly says: "I cannot refuse you what you ask of me in the name of Jesus Christ; I not only grant you your life, but forgive you from my heart.

Pray to God that He may forgive me my sin!" And he embraced him tenderly. The intended victim himself was now a perfect example of a repentant sinner. After this victory obtained over his own heart, John enters a church, prostrates himself at the foot of the crucifix, and God makes known to him, by a prodigy, how pleasing to Him was that act of sublime charity. Subsequently John Gualbert entered a religious order, and became a Saint, whom the Church honours on the 12th of July. - GODESCARD, Vies des Saints, 12th July (St John Gualbert).

119. The Little Saint Crucified. - You know, my dear children, that it was often said that it was the Jews who crucified Our Lord. In Reality Christ died for our own sins, so it is truer to say that WE crucified Our Lord. Moreover, the immediate responsibility must fall on certain leaders of the Jews at the time, along with the Roman civic authorities and their minions in the Roman army. Well! some sinful and fanatical men, who claimed descent from Abraham, were so blinded because of what they had termed their ancestors deicide, that they sought several times to renew the awful scene in all its sad details. (It seems they had developed peculiar, semi-kabalistic notions of the occult power of such an act.) Such a notion is absurd, of course, for while Christ is truly God, it is impossible to remove his power from the universe. Thus, Christ died for us sinners, Jews and Gentiles alike, and should never be considered as a passive victim of some deicide. In the 15th century, it seems that a most strange and fanatical sect took root among the otherwise devout and peaceable followers of the law of Moses. The Church honours on the 24th of March a St. Simon who was thus crucified in 1472. The Jews of the town of Trente assembled on Holy Tuesday in their synagogue and somehow this fanatic minority were able to terrorize the remainder into silent acquiescence, and formed the horrible project of crucifying a young Christian on the following Friday. One of their physicians, a member of this fanatic coterie, undertook to provide the victim. On the following day, Wednesday, when most of the inhabitants of the town were at the celebration of the Tenebrae (or candle) liturgy in the main church, he took the opportunity of seizing a little child of three years old, Simon by name, who was sitting on the threshold of a door, coaxed it to go with him, and brought it to his murderous co-religionists and fellow fanatics. In awed terror, those Jews who had been unable to hide from this band of thugs were forced to look on. These other so-called Jews then commenced their atrocious ceremony on Thursday night, about mid night. They tied a handkerchief on the mouth of the little Simon, cut him in several places and caught his blood in a basin. They held the poor child stretched on a table with his arms extended in the form of a cross. After piercing his whole body with awls and bodkins, as it were to represent the scourging and crowning with thorns, they had the bloody satisfaction of seeing him expire in their hands. They then began to dance around the little corpse, shouting like Savages - "That is how we treated Jesus, the God of the Christians!" These wretches failed not to be discovered, and were condemned to undergo the supreme penalty of the law in punishment of their atrocious crime. The relieved and God-fearing Jews of the town were greatly comforted to know that this fanatic group was no longer to interrupt their pursuit of the ancient religion of the covenant. As I told you a little while ago, this innocent victim has been deservedly placed amongst the Saints. Let me remind you once more that even though the Jewish authorities of Our Lord's time, and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ, neither all Jews indiscriminately at that time, nor Jews today, can be charged with the crimes committed during Christ's passion. - GODESCARD, Vies des Saints, March 24th. (St Simon)

120. The Rocks of Calvary Rent Asunder. - It is related in the Gospel, my young friends, that at the death of Christ, the rocks were rent asunder. That split is still to be seen, and the sight of it alone has sufficed to convert unbelievers. A learned English traveller relates an adventure of this kind which

occurred to one of his countrymen. He was one of those professed 'free thinkers', who only admit as true what they see themselves, would have others believe them on their word, but yet refuse to believe any one. Travelling in Palestine, with a mind full of prejudice, he made a jest of everything he saw, and laughed immoderately at stories he heard of relics and miracles. He was told of the fissures in the rock of Calvary, and must needs see them, promising himself additional themes for the exercise of his wit and pleasantry. But when he had regarded for some moments those enormous fissures, when he saw that instead of following the natural division of soils, as is usual in other convulsions of the earth, they followed, on the contrary, the most oblique directions; when he had considered all that, he was staggered, he began to believe in Religion, and even cried aloud in his conviction, "I begin to be a Christian! I have made a profound study of mathematics and physics, and I am satisfied that the rents I now see were not produced by an ordinary or natural earthquake. I see, on the contrary, that they are the pure effort of a miracle, and I thank my God for having brought me hither to contemplate this monument of His power, which proves in so striking a manner the Divinity of Jesus Christ." - MGR. MISLIN, *Les Saints Lieux, (The Holy Places.)* II, 265.

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