

# The Last Seven Words from the Cross

## Points for prayer

### Composition of Place

[from SpEx 53] *Imagining Christ Our Lord before me on the cross, make a colloquy asking how it come about that the Creator made Himself man, and from eternal life came to temporal death, and thus to die for my sins.*

### Preparatory prayer and Grace

I prepare myself by concentrating on the Passion of our Lord, recognising the dissonance between the enormity and greatness of the love and the horrific suffering that the giver had to go through. I approach the Lord on the cross with reverence, sorrow and gratitude.

[from SpEx 203] *For grief with Christ in grief, to be broken with Christ broken, for tears and interior suffering on account of the great suffering that Christ endured for me.*

### Points

I listen to the words of the Lord on the cross, feeling how He speaks to us, heart to heart.

1. Luke 23:34 – ‘Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.’
  - I feel how Jesus, even in utmost suffering, forgives the very people who inflict it on him. I see the scene around the Lord and reflect on how I might have participated in all this. I seek forgiveness and closeness with the Lord.
2. Luke 23:43 – ‘Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.’
  - Amidst the tragedy of the Passion, I feel a glimmer of hope. Despite my sins and shortcomings, the Lord is there to forgive and bring me to salvation.
  - I feel the Lord speaking to me, giving me hope in my sorrow and suffering. I seek to respond to him and tell him my own hopes.
3. John 19:26-27 – ‘Woman, here is your son.’ ‘Here is your Mother.’
  - I remember the community that I pray with, where I come from and the people who have supported me and accompanied me. I realise that I cannot be a disciple on my own and pray for the who, like me, gather at the foot of the cross. I pray for them and with them
4. Mark 15:34 – ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’
  - I remember the times where I have felt abandoned, empty. I realise how much I need the salvation that the Lord offers and seek to embrace this salvation even more.
  - I am not abandoned as the Lord is there, with be and before me. Even in His feeling of abandonment, the Father was there for Him, just as He is there for me.
5. John 19:28 – ‘I am thirsty.’
  - The incarnation meant that Jesus became human for our salvation and became human for me. I remember the humanity of the Lord, God and man, who understands me in my own humanity.
  - I offer my human frailties, weaknesses and needs to the Lord, knowing that He would have felt the same in His earthly life. I sense the closeness and understanding.
6. John 19:30 – ‘It is finished.’
  - Bl. John Henry Newman wrote ‘God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission.’ The Lord completed His mission on the cross and in so doing gives us ours. I reflect on my mission as one who was sent from the foot of the cross to the world.
7. Luke 23:46 – ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.’
  - I remember the sending of the Son during the contemplation of the incarnation [101-109] and see how the Son returns to the Father after having completed His mission. I marvel at the intimacy that exists in the Trinity and pray for the same with the Father, Son and Spirit.

### Colloquy

I say my few words to the Lord on the Cross. And I stay with Him.

## Retreat in Daily Life – Week 3.3

*At the foot of the Cross*

### Theme and Texture

Feel the inner silence that grows the closer one gets to the cross. One realises that amidst the clamour and noise that surrounds the Lord on the last steps towards Calvary, there is a silence that emanates from the Lord, a silence that speaks volumes and one that we too seek to take in in our following of Him during this time.

### Grace

For grief with Christ in grief, to be broken with Christ broken, for tears and interior suffering on account of the great suffering that Christ endured for me.

### Reminders and Recognition

- As we move from the way of the cross towards the last moments of the Lord's earthly life at Calvary, we try our best to stay with the Lord, to accompany Him as He does the same with us.
- Reminiscent of the time before Jesus on the cross in the 1<sup>st</sup> week, we focus on the time Jesus spoke from the Cross to us. What do these mean to us here and now and what movements do they elicit from us as we meditate on them? What could our response be?
- As the week draws to an end, it would be salutary to contemplate the Passion as a whole, pausing at places that draw our attention and where we feel most moved.
- One spends at least a day in (interior) silence, following the contemplation of the Passion. In the silence, one contemplates the absence of the Lord on Holy Saturday, the silence of creation that awaits the coming of the Saviour in glory.

### Scripture passages

1. Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12 – The Suffering Servant
2. The Last 7 Words of Jesus.
3. Repetition of the Last 7 Words
4. Contemplation of the Passion as a whole
5. John 20:38–42 – Deposition and burial
6. Day in silence, contemplating Loss

#### Sources:

Michael Ivens, SJ. *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*. Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing, 1998.  
Joseph Tetlow, SJ. *Choosing Christ in the World*. St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1989.  
John Veltri, SJ. *Orientalisms Vol 1 and 2*. Guelph: Loyola House, 1979/1981.

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