

**St. Vincent Ferrer, O.P. – Sermon on Good Friday  
John 18-19**

" We have a law; and according to the law he ought to die," (Jn 19:7).

This passage is found in John 19, and is recited today in the passion of the Lord. Daily through the whole week the passion of Jesus Christ has been represented and remembered, but much differently today than on the other days. It was represented before as something already past. And so at Mass we said, "At that time...", etc. But today it is recited like it is happening now, and we are eyewitnesses. And so today "At that time" is not said, but today we simply begin, "He goes forth," (Jn 18:1) in the present tense. And there is a reason for the difference, because a present thing moves the heart of men more than something past, like a fly stinging us now more than a sting from the past. And so that we might sense its sweetness and our souls might be compassionate with the death of Christ, it is represented today like something present. So the [divine] Office and sermons take place as if Christ is seen now to be on the cross, that we might perceive, according to what God says, "Remember my poverty, and transgression, the wormwood, and the gall," (Lamentations 3:19). Note: "poverty" because he was crucified naked. And the prophet responds in the person of the Christian people, "I will be mindful and remember, and my soul shall languish within me," (Lam. 3:20). "I will be mindful," namely of the past, "and remember," as if it were in the present. Therefore just as I said, we speak as if we are looking at Jesus Christ crucified now.

What about the sorrow of the Virgin Mary. You know that you do not greet [cheerfully] a grieving person, nor does one dare to say words of joy to a person drowning in sadness. So we shall not salute her in our usual way [with the Hail Mary], because it would cause her sorrows to increase. She would say, "Why do you say 'Hail,' because I am full of all grief and pain, bitterness and misery," etc. If we were to say, "The Lord is with thee," she would say, "The Lord is not with me, because they have taken him from me and crucified him." If we would say, "Blessed," she would say, "Why do you call me 'blessed,' because everyone speaks ill of me." And so we shall not salute her. But less we preach without devotion, let us turn to God hanging on the cross crucified saying, "We adore you O Christ and we bless you, because by your cross you have redeemed the world," etc.

"We have a law," etc. as above. For the declaration of the proposed text and the introduction of the matter for preaching, it must be known that in sacred theology there is this question: Whether some other work of Christ besides his death would have been sufficient to redeem mankind, or whether it was necessary that he should die? And this question is decided by the holy doctors of theology through two conclusions.

The first conclusion is, if we speak according to the dignity of the divine person and according to the holiness of his divinity and humanity, we say that any work whatsoever and any effort [taedium], even without death, would have been sufficient to redeem mankind. And the reason is because Jesus Christ, insofar as he is God, had in his actions infinite power. Same also because of the holiness of his humanity, to the extent that just one prayer or tear, or one drop of blood,

without death, would have sufficed to redeem humanity. And David understands this conclusion in Ps 138 which begins, "Lord, you have proved me, etc." in the verse where he says, "I will praise you, for you are fearfully magnified: wonderful are your works, and my soul knows right well," (Ps 138:14). David is speaking in the spirit of prophecy of the messiah king. And he says, "fearfully", and this because of the infinite power of divinity, and "magnified," because of his humanity.

The second conclusion is, if we speak of Jesus Christ according to the plan of God embedded [inserta] in the law of Moses and the prophets, then it was necessary that he should die, so that death might be redeemed by death, because, after man has been handed over to death because of the sins of a man, namely Adam, and after Christ wished to free mankind, it was necessary that he should die. Whence Christ by his death has freed us from a double death, namely from the spiritual death of the soul through baptism, and from the death of the body at the end of the world after resurrection. This God revealed to Moses in the book of Numbers 35, when he commanded that if one has killed someone by accident he should flee to a city of refuge -- which were six, three this side of the Jordan and three beyond -- and that there he could await the death of the high priest, and at his death he could then return a free man. In this it is seen that there was given a reason for desiring the death of the high priest. The text nevertheless says, "and he shall abide there until the death of the high priest, who is anointed with the holy oil," (Num 35:25).

One might ask who is this killer, and where are these cities of refuge, and who is this high priest? It must be said that the killer is every sinner. In the old testament, Ezek 18 says, "The soul that sins, the same shall die," (Ez 18:4). The sinner is a killer by accident, and not voluntarily, not deliberately, because he who sins with pride or commits other sins, does not intend to kill his soul, because no one deliberately acts for evil. But the sinner takes pleasure in sin, as for example in pride or another sin, from which sin the death of the soul follows by accident. This sinner is a killer, because he kills the principal part of a man, namely the soul. Therefore he cannot enter that city Jerusalem, our mother above, i.e. heaven, but he must flee to a city of refuge. And so all the dead after completing their penance went to limbo, and were not able to go to the city of Jerusalem, however good they might have been, until the high priest who is our Lord Jesus Christ would die. David says about him, "You art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech," (Ps 108:4). Heaven had been closed, for in Genesis 3 it is said that after the sin of the first man, God, "placed Cherubim before the paradise of pleasure, and a flaming sword, turning every way, to guard the way to the tree of life," (Gen 3:24).

Hence, St. Thomas, [Summa theologiae,] III Pars, q. 49, a. 5, where he pursues this image says at first that the ancient fathers through their good works merited to enter the kingdom of heaven through faith in the passion of Jesus Christ, according to Heb 11 "by faith conquered kingdoms, wrought justice," (Heb 11:33), through which they also would be cleansed of their personal sins, to the extent that it pertained to the healing of their own person. Not however did the faith or justice of someone suffice to removing the obstacle which was the condition of the whole human race. This was removed through the outpouring of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus before the passion of Christ, no one was able to enter or access the celestial kingdom by obtaining eternal beatitude which consists in the full enjoyment of God. Christ merited for us the entrance to the kingdom of heaven.

It is clear therefore that it was not absolutely necessary for Christ to die as says the first conclusion, which also St. Thomas says in III, q. 45, a. 1. He posits that because he could have freed men in another way. But according to his preordained plan, expressed through the prophets, and foreshadowed through figures in the old law, it was necessary that Christ die so that the scriptures would be fulfilled. And this is what Luke says in 22: "And the Son of Man indeed goes, according to that which is determined," (Lk 22:22). And Luke 24: "These are the words which I spoke to you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me," (Lk 24:44). And because it has been written, for that reason it was necessary that Christ suffer and rise from the dead. This St. Thomas has in the same place.

And therefore this sermon's theme is proposed not in the person of the Jews unjustly seeking the death of Christ, but it is proposed in the person of all the prophets who say, "We have a law," because in their written law a bronze serpent and paschal lamb were figures of the death of Christ, therefore that scriptures might be fulfilled, and the kingdom of heaven opened, Christ according to that law ought to die. The theme, therefore, is clear.

Now it is necessary to declare how the passion of Christ took place for our redemption and reconciliation. To understand this we should note that just as in the sin of Adam there were six circumstances or conditions, so in the passion of Christ there were six circumstances or conditions, corresponding to the sin.

First, there was a physical meal,  
Second, a binding of the person,  
Third, human condemnation,  
Fourth, social compassion,  
Fifth, dying for a time,  
Sixth, an earthly burial.

## DINNER

First, in the passion of Christ there was a physical dinner. Before his passion Christ wished to eat with his apostles. Reason: for just as the sin [praevaricatio] of Adam began with eating, when Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, so Christ to show that he had come to reform the evil of Adam, wished to eat with his apostles. Practically speaking, note how the apostles, Peter and John, as Luke makes clear, ch. 22, said to him, "[Rabbi] Where do you wish that we prepare for you to eat the Passover?" (Mt 26:17). In that year the Passover of the Jews was on Good Friday, and the solemnity began on the evening before, when they ate the paschal lamb with bitter herbs. Thus they said to him, "Rabbi. Where do you wish that we prepare for you to eat the Passover?" He replied to them saying that they were to go to the city, Jerusalem, to the house of a certain good man, his secret disciple. "And he sent Peter and John," (Luke 22:8). Peter and John told the lord of the house that their master, Christ, had sent them to him. And he replied, "O blessed are you who are the disciples of the savior, and what do you wish?" They said, "You already know how our master, although he is the Lord of all things, nevertheless wishes to be poor. He sent us to say that he wished to celebrate the Passover in your house." The man was most grateful to God for such an honor, that the savior wished to celebrate the Passover in his house.

He showed them the large dining room which he had prepared for them saying, that he wished to pay for all the necessities and make the preparations. "And you should return to him and warn him lest he come by daylight, because the chief [priests] had issued a death sentence against him, and they wished to seize him."

So Christ arrived at a late hour and secretly entered the city. Think how that good man, the lord of the house, reverently greeted Christ when he arrived, thanking him, because it pleased him to come to his house. He wished to wait on Christ and offer water to wash his hands, but Christ refused. Then Christ gave the blessing of the table, "The eyes of all [hope in you, O Lord: and you give them meat in due season]," (Ps 144:15). [The traditional monastic prayer before meals.] And he sat down at the table with the apostles.

The evangelists did not report that the Virgin was in the room, but indeed they do say that she was present at the passion, so she was in Jerusalem on the day of the Passover, and also at the passion of Christ. The evangelists say this. Therefore, some devout contemplatives believe it to be likely that she also wished to be at the dinner with her son. He had withdrawn with the apostles to the city of Ephraim near the desert. The Virgin thinking that her son would be at the paschal feast in Jerusalem as he was accustomed to do, on the previous night had come joyfully to Jerusalem hoping to hear a sermon from her son on Passover day. She went directly to the house of Mary Magdalen to find out what was happening with her son. Magdalen said that he was in a citizen's house with his disciples. The Virgin Mary said, I would like to ask that we go to him. Magdalen however who knew the whole business, wished to keep her back until the next day, but the Virgin insisted on going. So Mary Magdalen, Martha, and Lazarus accompanied her to that house. Magdalen knocked at the door. Think how frightened that citizen was that the Jews were coming to arrest Christ. He said to Christ, "Your mother wishes to come in," He agreed. The Virgin entering said to her son, "O son, I wanted to see you very much." And she scolded John, her "grandson" [nepote] because he had not shared with her news of her son. He made an excuse, saying that they were in a different town.

Christ however invited his mother to eat with them. Christ knowing that his passion was approaching, at the end of the meal said farewell to his mother lest she be present. But she wanted by all means to remain with her son. Christ did not permit it. Then the Virgin invited him with the apostles to lunch the next day because she was throwing a big feast for Passover, and because on that day, namely Friday she had conceived him. Christ, knowing the "dinner" that was being prepared for him, did not explicitly tell his mother all that would happen on the next day, but responding gently said, "Mother you and I shall eat together tomorrow at the same table," namely of the passion of Christ, "and of the same food," namely of sorrow. But his mother did not understand this. Thoroughly comforted and content she departed. Think how Magdalen, who knew everything, was saying, "Lord tomorrow an evil meal awaits you and us." And if this is not told by the evangelists, it nevertheless is not contrary to the gospel, and the devout doctors and saints have written in this fashion of these things, so it ought piously to be believed. It is much like the things that were going to happen.

After his mother's departure Christ did four things. First he told his apostles about his passion, as Luke says, "And he said to them: With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you, before I suffer. For I say to you, that from this time I will not eat it, till it be fulfilled in the

kingdom of God. And having taken the chalice, he gave thanks, and said: Take, and divide it among you: For I say to you, that I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, till the kingdom of God comes...The hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. And the Son of man indeed goes, according to that which is determined: but yet, woe to that man by whom he shall be betrayed," (Lk 22:15-18, 22).

Think how the apostles hearing these words were sad and desolate and each was saying, "Is it I?" that is to say, "I should kill myself now, for I would have a lesser punishment." Christ however did not wish to reveal the sin of Judas publicly, which had been hidden, but secretly he revealed it to John who asked, "Who is he who shall betray you?" (Jn 21:20). Jesus said that he to whom he would give a portion of bread...saying, "The Son of man indeed goes, as it is written of him," (Mt 26:24) I say also to you more, that, "All you shall be scandalized in me this night. For it is written: -- by Zechariah (13:7) the prophet -- I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed." (Mt 26:31). Then Peter, more passionate than the others said, "Although all shall be scandalized in you, I will never be scandalized," (Mt 26:33). He believed he was speaking the truth, because at that time he had a good heart, but out of weakness later he sinned. To him Christ said, "Amen I say to you, that...before the cock crows, you will deny me three times," (Mt 26:34). Then Christ said to Peter comforting him, "I have prayed for you, that your faith does not fail," that is, in the end. Then Peter was consoled.

Second Christ rose from the table, as John (ch. 13) said, and put on an apron and poured warm water into a basin for washing the feet of the apostles. He came to Peter first. "Lord," Peter said, "do you wash my feet?" Jesus answered, and said to him: "What I do you do not know now; but you shall know hereafter," (Jn 13:6-7). Peter said to him "You shall never wash my feet. Christ answered him: If I do not wash you, you shall have no part with me," (v. 8). In which he shows that we ought to wash away the uncleanness of temporal affections. Then Peter said, "Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head," (v.9). Christ said to him, "He who is washed," i.e. through baptism, "needs only to wash his feet," i.e. of earthly affections, "but is wholly clean. And you are clean, but not all. For he knew who he was that would betray him; therefore he said: You are not all clean." (vv.10-11). And he washed the feet of all the apostles who were weeping, even of Judas, who he started with [after Peter], as some say, so that he might be inclined to repentance. Then he said to them, "You call me Master, and Lord; and you say well, for so I am," (Jn 13:13). "For I have given you an example," i.e. of humility, "that as I have done to you, so you do also," (v. 15).

Third he instituted the sacrament of the altar, wishing to put an end to the sacrifice of the old law and to institute the sacrifice of the new law. After the washing of feet, he returned to the table and took up a plate of unleavened bread and consecrated and first communicated himself, then the apostles. as the priest does, because first he communicates himself then others. The text of Mat 26: "And while they were at supper, Jesus took bread," and giving thanks, "blessed, and broke: and gave it to his disciples, and said: Take, and eat. This is my body." (v. 26), "which shall be delivered for you," (Cf I Cor 11:24). Peter asked him, "Lord this bread is your body?" Christ replied, "Peter, there is nothing left of bread. It is my body. Eat." After he ate he said, "O Lord it completely comforts me. Never has my soul found such sweetness in any food." All the other apostles received communion, and even Judas. Then the devil entered into him to possess him more fully, because he who unworthily receives communion, welcomes the devil. Jesus said

to Judas, "What you do, do quickly," (Jn 13:27). The apostles did not understand, believing that he was speaking to him about some task he had to do. Then Christ ordained the apostles and made them priests, saying, "As often as you do this, do it in memory of me," (Cf I Cor 11:24f). Likewise "taking the chalice," after they had eaten, " he gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying: "Drink you all of this. For this is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for [you and for] many...", " (Mt 26:27).

Fourth he proceeds to give the apostles some good lessons which John calls his testament, saying, "A little while, and now you shall not see me," (Jn 16:16), therefore bear with tribulations and persecutions patiently, because, "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you," (Jn 15:20). I send you the spirit of truth. (v. 26) And having finished speaking, he prayed for them saying, " I pray for them," (Jn 17:9). The apostles couldn't stop weeping.

See here the physical dinner for our reformation, just as there had been one in the sinning. And so the prophecy of Moses was fulfilled about this meal saying, " And they shall eat the roasted flesh that night," (Ex 12:8). "They shall eat," namely Christ and the apostles, "the flesh," etc.

## BOUND

Second, in the passion, Christ was personally tied up, when he was arrested and bound in person in the garden. Reason: because just as in the sin, after Adam ate there was a binding through sin in the terrestrial garden of paradise, where before they had been free with original justice, so too Christ, to show that he came for the reforming of the sin of Adam, wished to be arrested and bound. Practically, now having sung a hymn of thanksgiving, specifically, "I will praise thee, O Lord, " (Ps. 110:4) [the traditional monastic prayer after meals], he expressed his gratitude to the master of the house, because Christ is not ungrateful, saying that he should persevere in good works, and that he would receive him in the house of his glory, and then "he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron," (Jn 18:1). so named from the cedar trees there. Note that the valley of Josaphat is between the Mount of Olives and Jerusalem. And down the middle of the valley of Josaphat passes the brook of Cedron. He entered the garden where he had gone often. The moon was full -- according to the law, Ex 12, the Passover was always at the time of the full moon. Mark says that "he began to fear and to be heavy." (Mk 14:33). This was to show his true humanity which naturally flees from death. Seeing this the apostles said to themselves, "O Lord, what is happening?" Christ said, "My soul is sorrowful even unto death," (v.34), and this because of the flight of the apostles, because of the sorrows of his mother and for the destruction of the Jews, and so he said this, "My soul is sorrowful..." The remedy is to pray. So, "Watch, and pray that you enter not into temptation," (v. 38), because I am going to do the same.

And so distancing himself a stone's throw away (Lk 22:41) he prayed three times for the three intentions. "Father, all things are possible to you: remove this chalice from me," (Mk 14:36). In this prayer Christ shows himself to have true humanity which naturally flees from death, but Christ was ready for death giving us an example that in tribulations we should conform ourselves to the divine will. Second he asked for his resurrection saying, Father, "Let this chalice pass from me," i.e. of the measured passion from God the Father, may it pass, i.e. last only three days, and his glorious resurrection might come. And so he says "Father, let it pass from me." About this Hilary says, "He does not seek that it not come, but that it pass from him to the martyrs, so

that the courage and patience of his martyrdom would pass to the martyrs and they would become courageous and patient in enduring martyrdom for him. Because of this prayer, the holy martyrs, Lawrence, Vincent, Catherine, Agnes and others were brave in patiently enduring martyrdom."

Luke then says, "And being in an agony," (Lk 22:41) not of sensuality against reason, because such struggle was never in Christ—it is only in us—but the agony was of sensuality against the object of the passion. Christ saw clearly [principaliter] all the sufferings of his passion which his sense nature was shunning. So his veins were so pressured from the memory of the passion they began to exude blood.

Then angels came to comfort him, not that he needed it, because he was stronger than the angels, but the angel paid him the honor that he ought to show to his Lord, like a shield-bearer comforting his much stronger lord before he entered battle. He said to Christ according to the mind of devout holy doctors, "Lord this passion is not contrary to your will. You yourself have planned it with the Father and the Holy Spirit for the salvation of believers and obedient followers. Therefore the holy fathers joyfully await you in limbo. From this passion a great glory is prepared for you. Because of this you shall be the universal judge over all creatures."

After the angel left Christ came to his disciples and "found them sleeping for sorrow," (Lk 22:45), and he said to them, "Arise, let us go," (Mt. 26:46). "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh weak," (Mt 26:41).

And the Jews came with swords and clubs. Then Peter asked Christ, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" (Lk 42:29). Christ replied that we should not defend ourselves with weapons, but with patience. Then the traitor Judas, who had given them a cue, lest they arrest James, who looked like Christ, in place of Christ, said to Christ, "Hail, Rabbi. And he kissed him," (Mt 26:49), for Christ was accustomed to kiss his disciples when they first returned to him. But Christ turned his face and said to Judas, "Judas, do you betray the Son of man with a kiss?" (Lk 22:48), which is to say, "Wretched man [miser], think of the damnation prepared for you today."

He approached the Jews and asked "Whom do you seek?" (Jn 18:4). They answered: "Jesus of Nazareth," (v. 5). Wishing to humble them he said, "I am he," [Ego sum] which is the proper name of God. And upon hearing that name all the Jews fell down on the ground. This is how Christ showed that they could not arrest him unless he wished to be arrested. Think how the apostles were rejoicing when the Jews fell down, saying to themselves that Christ would not be arrested. Chrysostom says, "Consider Christian how much power is in Christ about to be judged, that the one to be judged, has so much power by a single word." Therefore he says, "No one takes my soul from me," namely unwilling (Cf Jn 10:18). With Christ's permission they got to their feet. Christ again asked them: "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am he. If therefore you seek me, let these go their way." (Jn 18:8).

Then "they laid hands on Jesus, and held him," (Mt 26:49). Christ said to them, " You have come out as it were for a robber, with swords and clubs, to apprehend me. I sat daily with you,

teaching in the temple, and you did not lay hands on me." (Mt. 26:55), "but this is your hour, and the power of darkness." (Lk 22:53).

Then Peter, as if desperate, wishing to die for Christ, drew his sword and wanted to kill one of this servants. He ducked his head, and Peter cut off his right ear. Christ said to him, "Put up thy sword its scabbard. The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (Jn 18:11). "How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled?" (Mt 26:54). He restored his ear to him.

Then the apostles seeing Christ arrested and bound, fled, fearing that they too would be arrested. Think how each was saying to himself: "O wretched one, now is fulfilled the scandal which he had predicted. O wretched one, I so deny my master and without a blow I desert him." "O wretched one," John says, "what shall I say to your mother?" And he returned to Christ. Peter, seeing that John was returning, also returned and followed at a distance to witness the end. Some say that when Christ, arrested, entered through the gate of the city of Jerusalem, the stone images of the roman emperors which were sculpted there bowed down to Christ, saying, "Lord, rational men bound you, and we insensible ones adore you."

See here, the binding of Christ. And the prophecy was fulfilled (Lamentations 4) in the person of the prophet of old, "The breath of our mouth, Christ the Lord, is taken in our sins: to whom we said: Under your shadow we shall live among the Gentiles," (Lam 4:20)

## CONDEMNATION

Third, in the passion of Christ there is human condemnation. Before four judges Christ was condemned, namely before Annas, Caiaphas, Herod and Pilate. Reason: because the sin of Adam mankind was condemned to corruption under the four elements, for if Adam had not sinned, fire would not have harmed us, nor would air convey bad impressions, nor would there be storms against us, nor would water drown us, nor would earth harm us as we worked or traveled on it.

So Christ to make satisfaction for us, so that after the day of judgment we would be free from these corruptions of the elements, wished to be condemned before four of the aforesaid judges. Practically speaking, Christ, arrested and bound, was lead, first before Annas the priest who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year, a most intense enemy of Christ. Fortunately John was known to them, because he used to bring him orders of fish. John's father would send him. Because the wicked judge freely received that service, so the door maid allowed John to enter. He also got permission for Peter to come in with him. The door maid said to Peter, "Are not you also one of this man's disciples?" (Jn 18:17). He denied him out of fear of arrest. Then he approached the fire with the rest.

Then Annas questioned Christ about two matters, namely about his teaching and his disciples. saying, "Is not the teaching of Moses sufficient? It seems that you are wiser than God," etc., and, "You wish yourself to be the captain of the people, why so?" Christ replied to the first question about his teaching saying, "I have spoken openly to the world: I have always taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, where all the Jews gather; and in secret I have spoken nothing. Why do you ask me? Ask them who have heard what I have spoken unto them," (Jn 18:20-21). And he replied to the second question, but just then the servant of the priest "struck Jesus a blow,



saying: Do you answer the high priest so?" And he knocked him to the ground. After he had gotten up Jesus said to him, "If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why do you strike me?" (Jn 18:23), which is to say you do not know whom you strike, but you will know on judgment day.

Peter seeing how Christ was struck, wept. They said to him, "Are not you too one of his disciples?" (v. 25). He denied it, and said: "I am not," (v. 26). One of the servants of the high priest (a relative of him whose ear Peter cut off) says to him: Did I not see you in the garden with him?" (Jn 18:25-26) Then Peter not only denied Christ but also swore and cursed saying that he did not know him. O Peter, where are the words of the promise which you made? I am prepared to be jailed with you and to go to my death. And if it is necessary that I die with you I shall not deny you, etc. "Although all shall be scandalized in thee, I will never be scandalized," (Mt 26:33). O how badly you have kept your promise. And the cock crowed. And Christ turning, gazed on Peter, which is to say, "Peter, you have denied me." Then Peter "Going forth, wept bitterly," (v. 33). The Master of History (Peter Comestor) says that Peter hid himself in a certain tomb, and whenever a cock crowed Peter would always weep. So he always carried a towel. He denied Christ only because of fear. What about you who deny him and rebel out of malice?

Then Annas having seen that the cock crowed, considering that it was late night, passed sentence that Christ should be led before Caiaphas, and so it happened. Think how Christ was received there, where his enemies were gathered, saying, "Wise guy [Ribalde], how often did you confound us in your sermons!" They brought forward many false witnesses against him. The judge said to him, "Listen, they present so much adverse testimony against you." Jesus however did not respond. Reason: because when suffering from lying testimony it is better to remain silent than to say anything. Again the judge said, "Why do you not speak? I demand that you, under oath, tell us if you are the Christ." Then Christ, out of respect for the name of God said, "You have said it—supply, the truth—because I am the son of God and the messiah, the savior of the world." "Nevertheless hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven," (Mt 26:65) "Then they all said: Are you then the Son of God? He said: You say that I am," (Lk 22:70). Hearing this Caiaphas, signaled blasphemy by rending his garments, saying, "He has blasphemed!" (Mt 26:65), "Have you heard the blasphemy? What does it seem to you?" And he condemned him saying he deserved to die. "Then they spat in his face and struck him blows," (v. 67), and so held him through the whole night.

And today, in the first hour of the morning, they led him to Pilate, handing him over to the secular jurisdiction for the death sentence, accusing him and saying, "We have found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding [people] to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he is Christ the king." (Lk 23:2). "Pilate asked him, saying: Art you the king of the Jews? But Christ answering, said: You say it." (v. 3) –supply, "the truth." "And Pilate said to the chief priests and to the scribes: "I find no cause in this man". But they were more earnest, saying: "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place." Then Pilate asked if the man were from Galilee? And when he understood that he fell under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him away to Herod, who was also himself at Jerusalem, in those days," (Lk 23:2-7).

Herod was pleased. For a long time he had desired to meet Jesus and to witness his miracles. He hoped to see some sign from him, not out of devotion, but as amusement. And he had a number of questions for Christ to answer. First he said to him, "I have heard that you know how to change water into wine; so do it in front of me." He had a large jug of water brought in saying, "Change it." But Christ said nothing to him. Rather he looked down on him like a fool. Then Herod said, "I have heard that you know how to multiply loaves of bread. Do it for me." He did nothing. Again, "I have heard that you can walk on water. Do it for me." But Christ said nothing to him. Herod said to him, "Don't you know that I have the power to free you?" Christ said nothing to him. "And Herod with his guard treated him with contempt, and mocked him, put a white garment on him, and sent him back to Pilate. And Herod and Pilate became friends with one another, that very day; for they were enemies before. (Lk 23:11-12).

"And Pilate, calling together the chief priests, and the magistrates, and the people, said to them: You have presented this man to me as one who perverted the people. Having examined him before you, I find no cause in this man, in those things wherein you accuse him. No, nor Herod either. For I sent him to him. Look, nothing worthy of death is found in him," (Lk 23:13-15).

The devil, seeing Christ's great patience, and the joy of the holy fathers in limbo, and wishing to thwart the passion of Christ appeared in a dream to Pilate's wife, still in her bed sleeping, so that through the woman's intervention our redemption might be impeded. She was threatened. She had to persuade her husband so in no way would he kill that good and just man. Then Pilate, as much out of love for his wife, as also because he knew that they had handed him over out of envy, worked to free Christ, all the while striving to keep the good will of the Jews.

He wished to free him for four reasons. First because of his innocence, which he had determined by his private meeting with Christ. When he asked if he had forbidden tribute to Caesar, Christ replied "No." Moreover he had said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's," (Mt. 22:21). Again, when asked if he were the king of the Jews, Christ replied, "My kingdom is not of this world." (Jn 18:36). "The Jews wanted to make me king after the meal which I had provided for them, but I fled." Then Pilate said to the Jews, "I find no reason for a death sentence for this man. But they cried out saying, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

Second, Pilate wished to free Christ using the exemption which the Jews had from a privilege granted by the Emperor, that on the Passover they were able to set free one prisoner, whomever they asked for. Reason: because on that day the people of Israel were freed from slavery in Egypt, and so in memory of that liberation they had obtained this privilege. Pilate was arranging for Christ to be freed using this privilege, saying, "But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover; do you wish, therefore, that I release the king of the Jews to you? Then they all cried out again, saying: Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber," (Jn 18:39-40), and a murderer.

Third, he wished to free Christ out of compassion. Pilate knew that he was arrested out of envy and malice of heart, out of the misery of those beset with envy. Thus Pilate said to Christ, "I see that the whole people have turned against you out of envy, so I shall have you scourged, so that their malice for you may be transformed, lest you die." Christ replied, "Do whatever you wish." Then Pilate took Jesus and bound him naked to a column, according to the Master of

History, so tightly that one hand does not touch the other hand, for the space of two palms, but wrapped and tied by cords. He was whipped so fiercely, that from the soles of his feet to the top of his head no part of his blessed body was unmarked, except only his tongue, which would pray and bear witness for sinners and the thief on the cross. And so scriptures were fulfilled which had predicted that the Son of Man would be handed over to the people and whipped and spit on.

According to some, there were four soldiers whipping him,. The first two, according to Jerome in the Gloss, had prepared switches with thorns and sharpest brambles by which to puncture his skin. When these two were tired, the other two would take up whips, at the tips of which there were nodules with sharp points attached for ripping his holy skin. The other two had chains with hooks at their ends, to tear out flesh. Hence Eusebius and Chrysosom on this text, "The discipline [i.e. whipping] of our peace was upon him. They say that Christ was wounded by this discipline in a triple way, namely hard, because of rods and thorns, and harder because of the nodules on the whips, and hardest because of the iron chains. Since, according to doctors, there are 276 bones in the human body, Christ was so whipped that each bone received a triple blow, one from the rods, another from the whips, the third from the chains.

When he was untied, Christ wished to put on his own garments, but they wouldn't permit it. The soldiers taking Jesus, led him from the whipping post into the atrium where they gathered the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a rough, old purple garment, as a sign of royal majesty, for kings wear purple. Shaping a crown of marine [marinis] thorns, which have sharper and longer spines than other thorns, they pressed it on his head, cruelly wounding it in 72 places. It was shaped like a cap [ad modum pilei] so that wherever it contacted the head, the spines penetrated to the skull. These contacts, according to Isidore, were concave on the inside drawing up the blood of Christ. They put a reed in his right hand like a royal scepter, and they mocked him and began to genuflect before him and to salute him in derision saying, "Hail king of the Jews," which is to say, "You call yourself king of the Jews, Now you are crowne." And spitting on him they struck him at will. For this reason the church, when praying for them, does not have us genuflect, as with the prayers for the pagans and for others.

And then Pilate went out again and said, "Look, that you may know that I find no cause in him, I bring him forth to you (Jesus therefore came forth, bearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment.) And [Pilate] said to them: Behold the Man, " (Jn 19:4-5). Which is to say, "Here is the man who says he is your king, as you allege. It is enough for you that such abominable contempt be laid on this man for this accusation," etc. When the priests and ministers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify, crucify him!" which says, "That punishment was not sufficient. We ask that he be crucified," and "We want no other death but crucifixion," since, according to Chrysostom, crucifixion was so ignominious that one crucified would be remembered only as cursed. And that David bewails saying, "I am poured out like water," (Ps 21:15), because the smell of every liquid remains in the empty jar, except for water. They wanted his name to be forgotten, as St. Thomas says on this text, therefore they sought that he be crucified.

Pilate however said, "Take him yourselves, and crucify him: for I find no cause in him. The Jews answered him: We have a law; and according to the law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore had heard this saying, he feared the more," (Jn 19:6-8), not the law, because he was a Gentile, but lest by chance, according to Jerome, it was

true that he had a divine origin, and so he would have committed an enormous crime by whipping him.

Pilate wanted even more certainty. Again he entered the pretorium with Jesus and said to Jesus, "Where are you from? of divine or human generation?" Jesus did not reply because of the difficulty of the question, for Pilate was not sufficiently ready to accept the answer. "Pilate therefore said to him: Do you not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to crucify you, and I have power to release you?" With these words Pilate condemned himself. "Jesus answered: You should not have any power against me, unless it were given you from above. Therefore, he who has delivered me to you, has the greater sin," (Jn 19:11) Augustine says that whoever sins from avarice, sins more than he who sins from human fear. "From henceforth," i.e. from this case, "Pilate sought to release him," (v. 12), as a clever man seeing that he had cleared him of sin, and lest he should kill an innocent man, he was seeking an opportunity to dismiss him, as he had done before.

"But the Jews," seeing him, "cried out, saying: If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. For whosoever makes himself a king," etc. "Now when Pilate had heard these words, he brought Jesus forward, and sat down in the judgment seat, in the place that is called Lithostrotos, and in Hebrew Gabbatha. And it was the preparation day [parasceve]...", that is, the first solemn day on which they prepared food for the Sabbath. On the Sabbath itself it is not permitted to prepare food because of the solemnity, but only on the preceding day, Friday, therefore every Friday was called the evening of the Passover [parasceve], "at about the sixth hour," (Jn 19:13f). Because on the sixth day man was created. And Pilate said: "Behold your king. But they, "as if hysterically, "cried out: Away with him; away with him; crucify him! Pilate said to them: Shall I crucify your king? " which is to say, "Indeed, from this shall be generated great shame, when it is told that you crucified your king." The priests replied: "We have no king but Caesar," (v. 15). Then Pilate realizing that he was incurring the indignation of the people, and of Caesar, granted them their petition.

"And as he was sitting in the place of judgment, his wife sent [a message] to him, saying: Have you nothing to do with that just man," (Mt 27:19). I have endured much this night because of this holy and just man. Then the devil recognized the fruit of the passion of Jesus Christ from the joy of the souls awaiting in limbo which from many prophets were hoping that they be redeemed. Pilate seeing however that he was making no progress, but a great riot was breaking out, taking water washed his hands before the people saying: "I am innocent of the blood of this just man; look you to it. And the whole people answering, said: His blood be upon us and our children " (Mt 27:19). O what a terrible legacy did these stupid people leave. The heritage remains to this very day. For, as a sign of this claim, when Jewish boys are born, of the race which cried out such, they have their right hand full of blood positioned on their heads.

So Pilate, shaken with fear released Barabbas the murderer to them. Jesus, however, scourged, he handed over to their will, to be crucified, contrary to the law of justice. Pilate's sentence of Jesus read: "Jesus, seduced the people, blasphemed God, calling himself Christ, to be the king of the Jews, judged and condemned to be nailed to the cross." And because today is offered the  $\alpha$  [alpha] and  $\omega$  [omega], the beginning and the end, therefore on these days the church omits the usual beginnings and endings of the hours [of the Divine Office].

## COMPASSION

Fourth in the passion of Christ is social compassion, because not only Christ endured the passion and the sorrows of the heart, but also the Virgin Mary his mother, and many others. Reason: because Adam did not suffer the evils of his sin alone, but also Eve.

The sentence of death was issued. Next they mocked him. They clothed him in purple and dressed him in a way that would make it more recognizable that he was going to his death, so he would be jeered at all the more. And then, without doubt, Christ experienced afresh extreme pain, because that purple garment had become encrusted, and deeply embedded in the wounds of the scourging. It could not be ripped off without excruciating pain. You can imagine, especially when his tunic was torn away, that all his wounds were reopened, and this was a harsher penalty than scourging, or even the crown. Fresh bleeding began, and his whole body was coated in red. And laying the cross on him, they led him out of the city.

Because the glorious passion of Christ extends itself not only to the Jews but also to all, as a sign of this, he wished to suffer outside of the city. O how many good things the blessed Jesus always did for this city. For all these things, to disgrace him more, they laid the cross on his own shoulders to carry. St. Bernard: "O silent [inauditu] spectacle, never heard, seen or done, that some thief or malefactor would be forced to do this, that he carry his own yoke, only the savior, so the passage of Isaiah was fulfilled: 'and the government is upon his shoulder,'" (Isa 9:6).

This was prefigured in Isaac, who when he went to be sacrificed by his father, carried the wood on his own back (See Gn 22:6). There we find that the Lord said to Abraham: "Abraham, Abraham. And he answered: Here I am. He said to him: Take your only begotten son Isaac, whom you love, and go into the land of vision: and there you shall offer him for a holocaust upon one of the mountains which I will show you. So Abraham rising up in the night, saddled his ass: and took with him two young men, and Isaac his son: and when he had cut wood for the holocaust he went his way to the place which God had commanded him," (Gn 22:1-3) This was a figure of the passion of Christ, because Abraham signified the Father in divinity, who offers his only begotten Son on the altar of the holy cross in redemption for all us miserable sinners. And just as Isaac, the son of Abraham, obedient to the will of his father, carried on his own shoulders the wood of the holocaust, so the Son of God, our savior Jesus, patiently like an innocent lamb, carried the yoke of the holy cross laid upon his shoulders.

And because the Jews had so weakened him with blows, strokes, and mockeries, not to mention the scourgings and crowning, he was not able to carry the cross very long or very far, because he was totally spent and exhausted. So he fell under the cross. No wonder, from the blood shed from all his veins, which flowed from the wounds of the scourging and thorns, and the immensity of the cross which was fifteen feet high and ten feet across. Going out to the place they call Calvary, as he was being led there, he found he could not continue. They picked out a man, Simon of Cyrene by name, coming from the village, father of Alexander and Rufus. They seized him and forced him to carry his cross. They, not moved by mercy, but that they might more quickly get on with the execution, had him carry the cross after Christ. Nor should anyone judge this to be contrary to the perfection of Christ, as true God and true man. The divinity of Christ yielded to his humanity suffering from all the human weaknesses, not wishing to favor

itself in anything which would alleviate his punishment. The condition of human weakness demanded that the man Christ would fail under such a burden, so exhausted by the whole night, and weakened by the outpouring of blood. No surprise, because when even under lesser stress, think of the journey elsewhere [through Samaria], when he sat down to recover his strength [at the well] on the mountain, Jn 4.

Learned doctors believe that this news, that Christ her son had been condemned to death, was first told to the Blessed Virgin Mary, who was then at the home of Mary Magdalen. With how much heartfelt pain and anxiety of the soul did she receive this news. The faithful mother pondered it all in her heart. Nevertheless she never did anything indecent to her modesty or deflecting from her virginity. Nor is that fable true, by which the wicked would seem to injure the glorious Virgin, which says that the Virgin ran here and there from house to house like a hysterical woman, to where Christ was being taken, and as a sign of her anxiety she tore her hair out, peering through windows, wringing her hands, and wailing pitifully. There are many other such tales, all of which are false and frivolous. Reason: otherwise many women would have been more perfect than the Virgin Mary, namely Sophia, the mother of the seven sons, and many other such. But since there are three manners of weeping. Some express excessive sorrow in exterior works, like Eli, (1 Kgs 4) who hearing that the ark [of the covenant] was captured and his two sons killed, fell over backwards, and died of a broken neck. Some suffer nothing harmful, yet because of a certain honesty they let out a cry of pain like the cry of some animal, like young women at the death of her misshapen babies, and old women [ut iuvenulae de morte virorum deformium et vetulorum]. But both afflict themselves in vain. The first, without inordinate emotion, is thought well of by all. The second, the more insanely they act, the less faith they show. So the Virgin mother discovered the third human way, which with bitter taste of sorrow in her heart, did nothing wrong or indecent, neither forgetting her catholic faith, and virginal modesty. In her alone remained faith in the resurrection of her son. So she moderated the incomparable pain, and she did nothing that was undisciplined. Origen in a certain sermon on the passion says: All the pain conceived in the Blessed Virgin by the passion of Christ, she so kept within the cloister of her soul, that neither excessive impatience or exterior sign of something inordinate came from her, unless insofar as a flow of tears from her maternal eyes which revealed her crushing anxiety. Hence she had the maximum compassion with Christ.

Bernard described the lamentable procession saying, "When, he says Christ was so led forth, there was a crowd of people following him, just as when thieves and malefactors are led to death. Some went laughing, others mocking, others throwing dirt on him. Looking up, he sees the yoke laid on his shoulders, pressing heavily on him. Looking behind, he sees his mother with the great crowd of people and of women who follow, who wept and lamented him out of their great compassion. "But Jesus turning to them, said: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me," (Lk 23:28). "Because I freely choose to die, and because of the divine plan, which ordains that I die in such a way, and because of the utility of my death, that by dying I destroy death." He commands [them] to weep for past and future sins, the cause of the passion, which makes Christ suffer in the order of justice. It is necessary that he suffer these sorrows for our salvation. This Bernard. "But weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold, the days shall come, wherein they will say: Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that have not borne, and the breasts that have not given suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains: Fall upon us; and to the hills: Cover us." (Lk 23:28-30). He was speaking of the assault of the Romans by Titus and

Vespasian, princes of Jerusalem in the year 42 after the ascension of the Lord [70 AD], destroying it to the ground, when so great a slaughter occurred, that the blood of those killed flowed like a river through all parts of the city. And the city was taken on the day of Passover, and all the Jewish officials killed. And thirty were sold for one denarius. And in the siege of the city 1,100,000 died from famine and the sword, and 80,000 sold to slavery or dispersed. And so was verified that curse which they had said to Pilate: "His blood be upon us and our children," (Mt 27:25). Christ wept for that disaster on Palm Sunday. The famine was such at the time of the siege, that mothers were eating their children, as Josephus says, who was actually there, although he had hidden in the clefts of the rocks until the persecution ceased.

Jesus was also speaking of the final judgment, when, out of fear "they begin to say to the mountains: Fall upon us; and to the hills: Cover us over." For he adds the clause. "For if in the green wood they do these things," that is, in me. Christ is said to be green wood, because, [he is] green in the root of his divinity, in the stem of his humanity, in the branches of his virtues, in the leaves of his words, in the fruit of good works. "In the dry," that is the sin which lacks the moisture of grace, the fruit of justice, the healthy growth of constancy, "what shall be done?" (Lk 23:31), that is, "How much punishment do you think they deserve?" The compassion of his mother and the women are clear from this.

## DEATH

Fifth in the passion of Christ is temporal death, because he wished to die on the cross. Although the other sufferings of Christ would have been sufficient to redeem mankind, nevertheless he yet wished to die. Reason: because from the sin of Adam we not only have troubles, sorrows and sufferings, but also death, Gen. 2: "For on the very day you shall eat of it, you shall die the death." (Gn 2:17). And this manner is more convenient. Hence the holy doctors and especially St. Thomas III, q 46, a. 2 says there indeed were for God other possible ways of redemption, absolutely speaking, because Luke 1 says, "Because no word shall be impossible with God," (Lk 1:37) and Isaiah 59 saying, "Behold the hand of the Lord is not too short that it cannot save," (Isa 59:1). And so there were many other ways possible to God, as Thomas says at the third argument. If God had freed man without any satisfaction from sin, it would not have been against justice, because the sin was committed against him, and so he acted with mercy. But it would not have been a more convenient manner, as Thomas says in the same place, same question, article 3, because Augustine says in XIII De Trinitate: "There was no other more suitable way of healing our misery" than by the Passion of Christ. "Hence absolutely it was not necessary that Christ should die, but out of necessity of the end," as he says in the same question, in article 1. And this can be understood in two ways. First from our part who through his passion have been liberated according to that in John 3: "So must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believes in him, may not perish; but may have life everlasting," (Jn 3:14-15). Second on the part of Christ himself who through the humility of the passion merits the glory of his exaltation, and through this it is clear what Luke says, last chapter: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?" (Lk 24:26).

[Here Vincent quotes the entire body of article 3 from St. Thomas' Summa, ]

"But in this that man was delivered by Christ's Passion, many other things besides deliverance from sin concurred for man's salvation.

In the first place, man knows thereby how much God loves him, and is thereby stirred to love Him in return, and herein lies the perfection of human salvation; hence the Apostle says: "God commends His charity towards us; for when as yet we were sinners... Christ died for us," (Rom 5:8).

Secondly, because thereby He set us an example of obedience, humility, constancy, justice, and the other virtues displayed in the Passion, which are requisite for man's salvation. Hence Peter says: "Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps." (1 Peter 2:21)

Thirdly, because Christ by His Passion not only delivered man from sin, but also merited justifying grace for him and the glory of bliss. We have....confidence in the entering into the holies" i.e. of the faithful, " by the blood of Christ," (Heb 10:19).

Fourthly, because by this man is all the more bound to refrain from sin, when he thinks himself redeemed by the blood of Christ from sin, according to that in I Cor 6: "For you are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body," (I Cor 6:20).

Fifthly, because it redounded to man's greater dignity, that as man was overcome and deceived by the devil, so also it should be a man that should overthrow the devil; and as man deserved death, so a man by dying should vanquish death. as it says in I Cor 15: " Thanks be to God, who has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," (v. 57) It was accordingly more fitting that we should be delivered by Christ's Passion than simply by God's good-will. This St. Thomas q. 46, a. 3.

Practically speaking this is how they led Christ with the cross which he was carrying on his shoulder. Two other criminals were led with him to be executed on the hill of Calvary. And when they arrived there they said to him, "Get undressed," and he did it. The soldiers "took his garments, (and they made four parts, to every soldier a part,) and also his coat. Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They then said to one another: Let us not cut it, but let us cast lots for it, [to see] whose it shall be; that the scripture might be fulfilled, saying: They have divided my garments among them, and upon my vesture they have cast lots," (Jn 19:23-24). Then, "They crucified him, and with him two others," (v 18).

Think when they crucified him as the Virgin was witnessing the hammering of the nails, how they pierced her heart. And when the cross was raised, the people backed away. Then the Virgin with John and Magdalen approached the foot of the cross, and drops of blood from her son were falling on the head of the Virgin. Think of the pain of Christ and the compassion of his mother. Then Christ prayed for his crucifiers, saying, "Father, ignore [ignosce] them, because they do not know what they do." The Virgin Mary hearing her son, raised her eyes and beheld him bloodied from head to feet. The thief who was hanging on a cross to Christ's right, seeing that Christ was praying for his executioners, and considering the patience of Christ, found faith in Christ and contrition in his heart for his sins, and said tearfully to Christ, "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom," (Lk 23:42). "I do not say that you spare me now, because I



am not worthy, but afterwards I shall be in purgatory, then remember me." To whom Christ replied, "Amen I say to you, this day you shall be with me in paradise." (v. 43).

Question: Why one of the two thieves crucified with Christ was converted and not the other?  
Reason: some allege that it was the shadow of his arm which fell upon him and converted him.  
Authority: From the lesser reference to the shadow of Peter, as is clear from Acts 5. No wonder then that the shadow of Christ saved the soul of the thief.

The Virgin seeing her son speaking to the thief said, "O son, you have spoken to the thief and you say nothing to me who am dying here with you?" Then Christ wishing to comfort his mother, nodded to John with his head and said, "Woman, behold you son." And to John, "Behold your mother," honor her and serve her as your mother. (Cf Jn 19:26f). The Virgin might have replied, "O son, what kind of comfort, what kind of exchange is this, to give the son of the Creator for the son of a fisherman, the son of God for a son of Zebedee. O my son, now it is fulfilled the prophecy of Simeon saying, 'your own soul a sword shall pierce,'" (Lk 2:35). Then Christ began to say, "Eli, Eli, that is My God, my God," look on me, "why have you forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46), that my friends have deserted me, the apostles and disciples. And if someone had asked of him, "O Lord where are the blind whom you gave sight to, where the sick whom you cured? where the possessed, where the lepers whom you cleansed? where the dead whom you raised? where the apostles whom you honored?" He would have answered, "All have abandoned me."

And when all things were fulfilled, it was the ninth hour, and he cried out: "I thirst," (Jn 19:28). The Virgin replied, "O son, I have only the water of my tears." Then someone with a sponge stuck on a reed gave him vinegar mixed with gall. And when he tasted it he said: "It is consummated," (v. 30) namely the work and the mystery of human redemption. The Virgin replied, "O son, my sorrows are complete." Then Christ with a loud voice cried out, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit," (Lk 23:46). And bowing his head, as if bidding farewell to his mother, gave up the spirit.

It is a wonder that the Virgin Mary did not drop dead, but immediately there followed consolations and comforting remedies, because darkness fell over the whole land, because the sun removed the bright clothing of its clarity and put on darkness, and there was an earthquake and rocks were split open, and many bodies of the saints who were sleeping arose. And the centurion was converted saying "Truly this was the son of God," (Mt 27:54). And the people were striking their breasts saying, "O misery, what have we done." These fruits of the passion which the Virgin was seeing consoled her.

See here his temporal death, because he wished to die that he might free us from eternal death, and would give us glorious life according to the prophet Isaiah 53: "He has delivered his soul unto death, and was reputed with the wicked: and he has borne the sins of many," (Isa 53:12).

## BURIAL

Sixth in the passion of Christ is an earthly burial. Reason: because from the sin of Adam mankind was not only condemned to death but also to the tomb and dissolution and corruption. Gen. 3: "for you are dust, and into dust you shall return " (Gn 3:19). So Christ wished to be

buried but not corrupted, according to that of David: "Nor will then give your holy one to see corruption," (Ps. 16:10).

Because it was Passover, the Jews, did not wish his body to remain on the cross on the sabbath. It was a feast, and they have the commandment of God in Lev. 23:6ff. Therefore lest their feast day be dishonored, and the solemnities begin on the evening of that day—that sabbath was a great feast day—Pilate commanded that their legs be broken so that they might die more quickly. Because this festival of unleavened bread is entirely joyful, and for these seven days men and women lead processions around the circuit of Jerusalem singing the Cantic of Moses, "Let us sing to the Lord: for he is gloriously triumphant," (Ex. 15:1-19), in remembrance of the time when he freed them from slavery to the Egyptians and to Pharaoh, drowning his army in the Red Sea. Therefore lest such a solemnity be spoiled by the spectacle of the corpses near the city, they asked that they be taken down.

"The soldiers therefore came; and they broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him. But after they came to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers., "who according to Isidore was called Longinus, according to the Master of History, and was not able to see whether Jesus was dead, because he had cataracts on his eyes, took his lance and plunged it into the heart of Christ," and immediately," miraculously, "there came out blood and water," (Jn 19:33-34), and running down the shaft of his spear touched his hand. Immediately upon contact he received perfect sight, and having converted to the faith lived for 28 years as a monk. When a persecution of Christians arose, having become a bishop, he was crowned with glorious martyrdom, and so ascended to heaven. This soldier did this with good intentions and out of compassion. And so God interiorly and exteriorly illuminated him, since he was blind.

This wound, according to Alexander of Hales, was not thrust into Christ in that part in which there might be a bone, namely a rib, but it was below, into the soft flesh and between the ribs and the arms, and so thrusting up it struck the heart. Reason: because Christ was hanging on high and the soldier was standing on the ground. So if the lance had struck around the ribs, it would have broken a rib because of the size of the lance. But according to John, who saw it and bore witness to it, and his testimony is true: "For these things were done, that the scripture might be fulfilled: You shall not break a bone of him. Exod 12," (Jn 19:36), "And again another scripture says: They shall look on him whom they pierced," (v.37).

Why is it portrayed in that way? It must be said that pictures are the scriptures of the laity. Therefore so that more expressly for the laity, the lance pierces the heart of Christ, as a sign, that out of the heart our sins are forgiven to us through his death. These two miracles happened after death, namely the flow of blood and the cure of the blind soldier. Blood in a dead man coagulates, but not in Christ, so that it might be shown that he had power in his body even without his soul.

And there are three opinions about soul, that it would be in the blood, in the head and in the heart. The first opinion holds that when the blood flows out of the body, the soul is accustomed to flee the body. But the second, because the soul seems to show a greater force of its powers in the head. Others however because they have seen the heart of a man first living and ultimately

dying. And so they look effectively in these three places, although Christ did not sense this wound, because he was already dead. All these things happened at the ninth hour. Thus the church sings Nones [Divine Office for the afternoon] to give thanks.

After this had happened, it was already late, i.e. the evening hour. There was a nobleman by the name of Joseph of Arimathea, a city in Judea, who was a captain, and wealthy, a good and just man, from the fact that he was a disciple of the Lord, secretly however because of fear of the Jews. He had not agreed with the decision and the deeds of others, because he awaited the kingdom of God. He boldly went in and approached Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus, that he might take it. The evangelists report all these things to express the goodness and reverence of this Joseph. Heaven had arranged that he be rich, so that he would be able to pay for the Lord's tomb. That he be a nobleman and a captain, i.e. in charge of ten soldiers, so he could approach the procurator. Just and good, so he would be worthy to receive the body of Christ. A disciple, but not one of the twelve, since all believers in the early church were called disciples. Boldly, because he did not fear the Jews. And they believed that he did this not just because he was a disciple, but out of devotion.

He asked for the body of Jesus, because it was not permitted to bury the bodies of condemned criminals without the permission of the prefect. Pilate however wondered if he had already died. His wonder, according to John, proceeded from levity and vanity of heart. No one else wondered with Pilate why Jesus had died quickly, while the thieves were still alive, because he had endured many cruelties through the whole night and morning, while the thieves were left undisturbed. And summoning, i.e. calling, the centurion, he questioned him if he was already dead. When he had understood from the centurion that he was, he gave the body of Jesus to Joseph.

He came and took the body of Jesus. He came, and also did Nicodemus who first had come to Jesus by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. They received the body of Jesus and wrapped it in clean linens with spices, and they wrapped it in a clean shroud which had been newly purchased, in the manner of Jewish burials. This ointment, by its bitterness, protected the cadaver from worms and corruption, and decay. From which it is clear, according to Chrysostom, that these two did not yet have full and perfect faith, not understanding that Psalm, "Nor will then give thy holy one to see corruption," (Ps 15:10). Hence if the body of Christ had lain in the tomb to the last day, it would not have been burned, or decayed, because it was embalmed with divinity.

This burial according to Bede and Origen was done in the presence of his mother Mary, who with her arms, sweetly embraced the body of her son, as piously believed, and kissed his wounds with an outcry of inexplicable maternal affection. Jesus however for the consolation of his mother was so glorified that no wounds or bruise appeared in his body except the five wounds of his hands, feet and side which he kept, not because of his inability to heal them, but so that he might show to the apostles and especially to Thomas, Judas, and to confound wicked Christians in the final judgment in the sight of the Father and for rejoicing the blessed by the vision of his redemption. These wounds did not dishonor the glorified body, for they shone forth brighter than the sun in the firmament of heaven. And because the body had been wrapped in linens, so in the church, the custom grew that the altar be covered [consecratur] not with lace or textured gold, but with a clean white linen cloth [sindone].

Thus although this anointing of Christ was done with honor, and reverence by friends and those who loved him, nevertheless, taken by itself it was exceedingly miserable task, because namely the Lord of such nobility, was handled like a corpse, although Christ because of the divine person's presence [suppositum] was not a corpse. The crown of glory lies prostrate. As a sign of this to give thanks the church instituted the saying of Vespers [Evening Prayer].

"Now there was in the place where he was crucified, a garden; and in the garden a new tomb, wherein no man yet had been laid," (Jn 19:41), and it was carved out of stone. This monument was Joseph's. In a garden the Lord was arrested, in a garden he now is buried, to show that in virtue of his passion we are freed from the sin which Adam had committed in the garden of delights. According to the divine plan he was placed in "a new tomb, wherein no man yet had been laid" lest his resurrection would be ascribed to another who was placed there first. Just as in the Virgin's womb no one was conceived before him, or after him, so according to Augustine, no one before him or after was buried there. "Therefore, because of the preparation day [parasceve] of the Jews, because the tomb was near at hand, they laid Jesus [Christ]," (Jn 19:42). Friday had come to an end and Saturday was beginning. According to Jerome, the Jews begin to count the following day from the preceding evening. So, because it was late, they could not bury the body farther away, fearing the arrival of the Sabbath. Not disrespectfully but honorably the Jews bury their dead, because according to the prophecy of Isaiah 11: "And his tomb shall be glorious," (Isa 11:10).

*[Another lengthy borrowing from St. Thomas' Summa theologiae]*

So, St. Thomas III, q. 51, a. 1 Whether it was fitting for Christ to be buried.

First, to prove the truth of his death. No one is placed in a tomb unless already the truth of his death is certain. Therefore Pilate before he gave permission that Christ be buried, with a diligent inquiry learned that he was already dead, as is clear from Mark 15.

Second, because the hope of resurrection is given through him to those who are in the tomb.[Cf Jn5:25ff]

Third, as an example of those who through the death of Christ spiritually die to sins, namely who are hidden from the "turmoil of men." [Cf Ps 30:21] Whence it is said in Colossians 3: "For you are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God," (Col 3:3). Hence the baptized who through the death of Christ die to sins, are as if they are buried with Christ through immersion, according to that in Romans 6: "For we are buried together with him by baptism into death;" (Rom 6:4). This Thomas.

"And Joseph rolled a large stone to the door of the tomb," and withdrew (Cf. Mk 15:46). And the women, who had come with him from Galilee, followed after, seeing the monument and seeing how and where the body of Jesus was placed. They were sitting opposite the tomb. In the group were Mary Magdalen and the other Mary, who diligently, and with great affection planned how they could reverently to enter the tomb, once the sabbath was over, to thoroughly anoint the body of Jesus a second time with prepared ointments. It is manifestly clear that they too were doubting in faith, because they believed that he would not rise. The Blessed Virgin Mary in

whom was true and certain faith, did not come with them for the anointing. For this reason the church devotes Saturdays throughout the whole year to a special devotion to her.

On the day after the preparation day, the high priests and the Pharisees met with Pilate saying: "Lord, we have remembered," (Mt 27:63). It is noteworthy that the Jews acknowledged Pilate as their lord, reduced to the service of foreigners, even by flattering him so that they might more easily seek his favor, said, "Lord, ...the seducer said," – amazing, that their envy had not yet ceased. "Seducer," rightly they were calling him by that name, according to Jerome, but they did not intend in the correct way. There is an evil seduction, from virtue into error. They tried to label Christ so, but they lied falsely. There is another meaning, from falsity into truth, from vices into virtues, in this way Christ was the seducer of the faithful. "After three days I will rise again. Command therefore the tomb to be guarded until the third day: lest perhaps his disciples come and steal him away, and say to the people: He is risen from the dead; and the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said to them: You have a guard; go, guard it as you know. And they departing, made the tomb sure, sealing the stone, and setting guards," (Mt 27:64-66). The guard by gentile soldiers was not sufficient for them, even though they had affixed the stone over the tomb entrance with their seals and chains. In memory of this tomb the church instituted Compline [night prayer of the divine Office].

Since on the cross Christ handed over his spirit to the Father, he soon went to hell, that is to the limbo of the fathers, for their comfort, and for the confusion of the demons. And on the third day he rose from the tomb. The Jews gave the soldiers a considerable sum of money so they would testify that he was stolen by his disciples. (Cf. Mt 28:12-13) But after they had taken the money, they still told what had happened. Soldiers are not able to remain silent. For they confessed that they had seen a choir of angels, and that they had accepted money from the Jews. Vincent [of Beauvais] in his *Speculum* tells that Joseph of Arimathea that very evening when he buried the Lord, was jailed by the Jews, but the Lord freed him.

From these words it is clear the reason, the manner and the order of the whole series of events of the Lord's passion according to the intention of the evangelists, in order and according to the letter, which I have followed entirely, and I have described them according to the sequence of true facts. May Jesus grant us that through our grieving at his passion we might arrive at the glory and joy of the blessed resurrection. Amen.