

WAY OF THE CROSS

Good Friday

On that Good Friday, Jesus the giver of life chose to give up His own life. Through it, He revealed how strong is love, how powerful it is, far more than the idols of human construction, the idols that can invade our souls and try to seize that throne that only God can occupy within us

*These idols “are silver and gold,
the work of men’s hands.
They have mouths, but do not speak;
eyes, but do not see.
They have ears, but do not hear;
noses, but do not smell.
They have hands, but do not feel;
feet, but do not walk;
and they do not make a sound in their throat.
Those who make them are like them;
so are all who trust in them.” (Ps 115:4-8)*

Just as He had done through the plagues that battered Egypt, God would face down the idols that have arisen within the tortured hearts of men, and, in the dying of Jesus, would reveal their deceit, and their death-dealing treachery. Where the people of Moses’ day turned to worship lifeless images of bull-calves, or Baals, suns, moons, or kings, in our day those preferred idols are much closer to home – money, power, pleasure, self-will, the obedience and admiration of men – but they remain equally lifeless and sterile. And slowly, man comes to resemble the gods he worships – he becomes lifeless and sterile in himself: with a mouth that can no longer speak the praises of God, hands that lose their sensitivity, ears that he prevents from hearing the truth, eyes that refuse to see.

It is to save man from the tyranny of the idols he has crafted for himself that the Son of Man allows Himself to be lifted high on the cross. With each step, Jesus returns to man the voice that has been lost, the strength of his hands that have become weak, a new sharpness of hearing with which to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, a clarity of vision that lets him see once again his bright destiny. If we enter once more into His death, it is our slavery that He enables us to leave behind us in the tomb.

FIRST STATION Jesus is condemned to death.

(Sung) We adore you O Christ, and we bless you, **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

*“Their idols are silver and gold,
the work of men’s hands.
They have mouths, but do not speak” (Ps 115:4-5)*

*“O Lord, open thou my lips,
and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.” (Ps 51:15)*

In the court of Pilate, it is not God who speaks, but man. Filling the courtyard, the priests and people raise their voices to demand death. The Roman Governor opens his mouth to set questions before the Divine Word. So much talk, so much noise – waves of violence, cruelty, and blind anger. These mouths have no longer any interest in truth, in giving voice to the honour and praise of God – and yet this is the high purpose for which they have been given to human beings. For all the noise they make, they have become mute – they are silent about the blessings they have received from their Father, silent about the Bridegroom who has come for his bride, silent about the Spirit who calls them to recognise the lover of their souls in their midst.

How easy it is to become slowly mute in the language of love of God, to become no more than a gong booming, or a cymbal clashing, to become an image no longer of Jesus but of the carved images of pagan idols – impressive in appearance but ultimately dumb.

Loosen the ligament of my tongue, O condemned Jesus, so that I may speak words worth hearing, sounds that magnify you, that draw people to you – and mute in me the voice that would speak just noise, sound that injures, or strikes down those who hear it.

*“Because thy steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise thee.
So I will bless thee as long as I live;
I will lift up my hands and call on thy name.” (Ps 63:3-4)*

SECOND STATION Jesus takes up his Cross.

(Sung) We adore you O Christ, and we bless you, **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

*“Their idols are silver and gold, ………
They have hands, but do not feel;” (Ps 115:4,7)*

“Jesus said, “No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”” (Lk 9:62)

Jesus reaches out to take the cross that is prepared for Him. He reaches out for it and takes it – it is not forced into his hands. He chooses it, because it is the instrument of His gift to man. Its feel is familiar to Him because He has been preparing for this all His life. He grasps it, and grips it – not because they make Him, but because He would have it no other way. In this moment, once more, He is choosing to lay down His life. Nothing will persuade Him to set the cross aside, to take His hand away from the plough.

How different are the hands of our idols. They feel nothing. They will never move us to grasp any cross, no matter how small. They urge us to take, to seize but only in order to have, to own. Pride will tell us that it is our due, what rightfully belongs to us already. Anger tells us that we have been wronged. Greed cries out for more, and more. And slowly, they drain

all feeling from our hands until we are unable to hold onto the cross any longer, and we lose our grasp on the will to love at all.

Strengthen my hold, Lord Jesus, on my desire for you. Give new feeling to my hands so that I never release my grip, or grow tired of clinging to you. Increase the sensitivity of my heart so that I may love more simply, more honestly, more passionately.

*“O my Strength, I will sing praises to thee,
for thou, O God, art my fortress,
the God who shows me steadfast love.” (Ps 59:17)*

THIRD STATION Jesus falls the first time.

(Sung) We adore you O Christ, and we bless you, **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

*“Their idols are silver and gold,
the work of men’s hands.
They have feet, but do not walk;” (Ps 115:4,7)*

*“Thus says the Lord, “I will make my abode among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be my people.”
(Lev 26:11-12)*

Blocks of wood and stone, no matter how intricately carved, cannot will themselves into movement. Static, frozen, they simply remain. Thus are man’s idols, and thus does man become, the more he hands himself over to them. They slow down his walk towards God, eventually bringing man to an absolute halt. They dry up his desire to grow more generous in mercy, in truthfulness, in patience, or in warmth. They sap man’s interior will to move upwards, and replace it with self-satisfaction – he becomes comfortably numb.

The Father gently guides our eyes towards Jesus. He is crumpled under the cross, momentarily stopped in his tracks, but from exhaustion of the body only. Within Him, His sacred heart beats with undiminished love for you. He tires, but only in his muscles – he has not tired of man, nor grown cold and hard. Patiently, he gives time for his battered limbs to recover their strength – because he will not stop here. Nothing will stop him. Nothing will drain his compassion for the souls he holds so dear.

O my Jesus, when the strength of my faith and my love weakens, then I take smaller steps towards you, until at last I hardly move at all. You are the God who gives me love – as you rose to your feet on the path to Calvary, renew my will to stand up again, and give myself to you again.

“Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.” (Hebr 12:13)

FOURTH STATION Jesus meets his Mother.

(Sung) We adore you O Christ, and we bless you, **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

*“The idols of the nations are silver and gold,
the work of men’s hands.
they have eyes, but they cannot see” (Ps 135:15,16)*

*“I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Go, and say to this people:
‘Hear and hear, but do not understand;
see and see, but do not perceive.’
Make the heart of this people fat,
and their ears heavy,
and shut their eyes;
lest they see with their eyes,
and hear with their ears,
and understand with their hearts,
and turn and be healed.” (Isaiah 6:9-10)*

The eyes of the Immaculate Mother take in everything. She sees with the eyes not only of her human compassion, but with the deep insight of her supernatural love. She see bridegroom and lamb, she sees shepherd and king; she sees high priest and almighty God. She has awaited the sword that would pierce her holy heart, knowing this moment would come. How easy it might be just to close those eyes, and see it no more – to shield herself for a moment. But she is not going to give her Lord less on the very day he gives humanity everything. All around her, in the crowd, are the blind – men who have closed their own eyes to the truth of what they are doing – but she won’t be drawn away.

Mary, my mother, my sight is narrow, and my willingness to see is inconsistent. When I look away from your beloved Son, my vision becomes less and less clear – and there grows in me a resistance to seeing more clearly. I ask of you, today, this twofold grace – to love your Son as you have done, so that I never take my eyes off Him; and to see ever more clearly how beautiful His grace has made your soul, so that I may be unafraid to place myself in His hands.

Blessed, O Mother, are your eyes because they see, your ears because they hear (cf Mt 13:16)

FIFTH STATION Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry the Cross.

(Sung) We adore you O Christ, and we bless you, **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

*“Their idols are silver and gold,
the work of men’s hands.
They have ears, but do not hear;” (Ps 115:4,6)*

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD; and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart;” (Deut 6:4-6)

Do Our Lord’s executioners call out for a volunteer to help Jesus carry the cross – or do they simply seize the nearest man? Over the noise of the jeering crowd, the insults of the Sanhedrin and the people, did Simon even hear the command to take up the cross on the first occasion that the soldiers barked at him? If we are to love the Lord our God with every ounce of strength, then we will have to give the same concentration and focus to the quiet tone of the Lord’s voice as He speaks to us. We will have to sieve through all the competing noise that is generated by our own wills, by our plans and the ambitions of our hearts. Filled with sound and fury, these voices truly signify nothing and emptiness – but they can drown out and smother “the voice that speaks of peace” (Ps 85:8).

As He spoke to subdue the violence of the storm, so He speaks to the soul *“Quiet now. Be still”* (Mk 4:39). Come, Holy Spirit, to unblock my ears, that I may listen for the voice of my Lord.

“And taking [the deaf man] aside from the multitude privately, he put his fingers into his ears ... and looking up to heaven, he sighed, and said to him, “Eph’phatha,” that is, “Be opened.” And his ears were opened” (Mk 7:33,34)

SIXTH STATION Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.

(Sung) We adore you O Christ, and we bless you, **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

*““Their idols are silver and gold,
They have hands, but do not feel;” (Ps 115:4,7)*

“Jesus said, “The scribes and the Pharisees bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not lift a finger to help them.”” (Mt 23:2,4)

In the middle of the noise and bloodshed, the soldiers’ tramping sandals, and the under the blazing eyes of the crowd, the holy woman Veronica steps forward to clean the face of Jesus. She risks being roughly pushed aside, and mocked for her act of mercy. But there is one thought in her mind – the face of Jesus has become hidden behind the blood, the sweat and the dust. She would see that holy face again, restore a measure of its peace and dignity. Lifting her hands, she raises a cloth and traces His bruised features.

Around her are so many others, but their hands have no feeling. As their hearts have turned inwards, serving their own interests, they have slowly lost all passion for the service of any other. Not so for Veronica – she would see the face of her Lord once more in this damaged piece of human nature before her. Her act of compassion is renewed each day when our

hands are lifted to help another to come before Jesus in the sacrament of confession, when the image of God in the soul is cleaned and restored through absolution.

Holy Veronica, by your intercession, may my hands never lack the strength, nor my heart the desire, to bring souls before the One who can restore their holiness.

And [Jesus] stretched out his hand [to the leper] and touched him, saying, "I will it; be clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed." (Mt 8:3)

SEVENTH STATION Jesus falls the second time.

(Sung) We adore you O Christ, and we bless you, **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

*"Their idols are silver and gold,
the work of men's hands.
They have mouths, but do not speak" (Ps 115:4-5)*

*"Behold my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
He will not cry or lift up his voice,
or make it heard in the street" (Is 42:1,2)*

The contrast is unmistakable. Jesus, the eternal Word, collapses to the ground without a sound, while the crowd calls out loudly, mocking and ridiculing Him. His ears are assaulted by the din, and yet, in the middle of that raucous cacophony there is an ominous silence, for which one of them has raised the interior voice of prayer to the Father? In spite of the noise he generates, man has too often stricken himself dumb in his soul, refusing or neglecting to lift up his voice in prayer, in appeal to the Lord, in honour of His holy name.

The Lord's Chosen One, the spoken Word of the Father, is never silent within the soul of His sacred humanity. Always, He is speaking to His beloved Father, adoring Him, willingly submitting to Him, offering Himself again and again. In this fall, the voice of the Saviour is not heard ringing through the streets – but it is heard by the One who sent Him.

My praying Jesus, by the merits of this fall, may my soul never lose its voice, its appeal to you for strength, its offering of adoration – most especially at those times when I feel the weight of suffering dropping me to my knees. Then, more than ever, may I lift up the voice of my prayer to you, to my holy Mother, to my Guardian Angel, and to all the Saints.

*"Now thus says the LORD,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.
When you pass through the waters I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,*

*and the flame shall not consume you.
For I am the LORD your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.
Because you are precious in my eyes,
and honoured, and I love you,” (Is 43:1-3,4)*

EIGHTH STATION Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.

(Sung) We adore you O Christ, and we bless you, **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

*““Their idols are silver and gold,
the work of men’s hands.
They have ears, but do not hear;” (Ps 115:4,6)*

“The LORD said [to Moses], “I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them” (Ex 3:7-8)

Somehow, through the continuous rumble of the crowds, and the jeering of the people, the sound of the weeping of these holy women of Jerusalem reaches the ears of Jesus. Has their sorrow even been noticed by the mass of people surrounding them? Singly intent on their purpose of crucifying Our Lord, have they themselves heard the grief of these women among them? And what would they make of these tears – how could they understand them? Better to be ignored, a distraction that is none of my concern.

But Jesus hears. Even though their numbers are few, Jesus hears them. Even though He is close to death, and bent double with the weight of the cross he carries, he hears. He always hears. The appeal of the heartbroken pierces the surrounding din. Jesus stops, and prolongs the duration of his agony, because His merciful heart is drawn to them.

Even if the rest of the world has become deaf to the voice of your own sorrow, and your struggle, the face of the Lord is turned towards you. What rests in your soul that you need to pour out to Him?

*“The LORD is near to the brokenhearted,
and saves the crushed in spirit.
Many are the afflictions of the righteous;
but the LORD delivers him out of them all.” (Ps 34:18-19)*

NINTH STATION Jesus falls the third time.

(Sung) We adore you O Christ, and we bless you, **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

*“The idols of the nations are silver and gold,
the work of men’s hands.
they have eyes, but they cannot see” (Ps 135:15,16)*

*“But Zion said, “The LORD has forsaken me,
my Lord has forgotten me.”
Can a woman forget her sucking child,
that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb?
Even these may forget,
yet I will not forget you.
Behold, I have graven you on the palms of my hands” (Is 49:14-16)*

He is so close to the summit of Calvary now. He sees, ahead, the executioners who wait for his arrival. He sees the instruments of his own death – ropes, hammers, nails, ladders – all carefully prepared before Him. Before He can take the last few steps, his knees weaken again, and He crumples to the earth. Now, his eyes are filled with the smallest detail, with the specks that cover the ground, the objects that lie there unnoticed by everyone else. The yellow-grey pebble lying beside his prone hand, a wisp of straw that has been carried on the gusts of the breeze, a fragment of cloth torn by thorns from someone’s tunic as they passed by, the smallest leaf of tiny plant appearing above the ground, already bleached by the heat of the sun.

No one else has noticed these things – they are too small, too insignificant, for those who bustle along these roads. Jesus sees them. Nothing is too small for his attention, for His interest and His care. No experience of yours is trivial to Him. No movement of your soul towards Him, no matter how small, is overlooked by Him. No act of patience or encouragement, of forgiveness or humility, is wasted in Him. He sees, and He accepts with great joy, the offerings of your heart, especially when they pass unobserved by all others. He has been right down into the dust, amongst the smallest things, and these matter to Him. What small act of love for Him will you give that only He will see?

“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father knowing it. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.” (Mt 10:29-31)

TENTH STATION Jesus is stripped of his garments.

(Sung) We adore you O Christ, and we bless you, **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

*“Their idols are silver and gold, ………
They have hands, but do not feel;” (Ps 115:4,7)*

“Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself” (Phil 2:5-7)

The cross is pulled out of Jesus' hands, which now fall limp to his sides. His fingers, after all their exertion, their straining to hold on to the cross – how much do they feel now? Do they shake from the exhaustion that his muscles feel? These fingers have brought healing to lepers by a single touch. They have pulled Jairus' daughter from death into life. They have held bread and wine as His holy words transformed them into His sacred body and blood. *“It is through the finger of God that I cast out devils”* (Lk 11:20) He had said to the Pharisees – from these fingers had flowed the very power of God, the power of creation itself.

Where the hands of God are raised to give, the hands of man are now interested only in taking. Where God has moved always to restore man's integrity, his honour and dignity, now man turns on his own Lord and tears from Him what little dignity He has been permitted to retain. Rough hands, unaccustomed to gentle gestures, pull off what remaining garments He wears. The Lamb is prepared for sacrifice, shorn of his clothing, leaving Him completely exposed. The same pattern will be repeated wherever a soul resists the touch of Jesus' grace – it will be moved to strip away the honour and dignity of any it can reach, God and man alike. Filled with fury, it will take the good name, even the peace of mind and soul, of all around it.

By the passion of Jesus, by His holy humiliation at the side of the cross, may we be moved to build up and restore the honour and dignity of each soul we encounter, clothing them in the grace of Christ Himself.

“Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. You have put off the old nature with its practices. Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”
(Col 3:5,7,12)

ELEVENTH STATION Jesus is nailed to the Cross.

(Sung) We adore you O Christ, and we bless you, **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

*“Their idols are silver and gold,
the work of men's hands.
They have feet, but do not walk;”* (Ps 115:4,7)

*“The Lord God said to the serpent, “I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your seed and her seed;
he shall crush your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”*

Who but God Himself had been able to see this beforehand? Through the centuries, man had been promised that the ancient serpent would be defeated, that his overthrow would be so complete that his head would be crushed beneath the feet of the Son of “the Woman”.

Who could know that in order to crush the skull of the serpent, first, those feet must be pinned, motionless, to the wood of the tree of life. Lifted high, like the serpent in the desert, it is the God/man who has become the sign of life, even in his dying, and has crushed the dragon, the ancient serpent. In this moment, He draws all humanity to Himself, because it is here that love reveals its strength.

We place under the feet of Jesus our idols of pride and self-will that He may crush them, together with the serpent, and in his turn may unlock within us a greater capacity to love more generously.

“Jesus said to his disciples, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you.” (Lk 10:18-19)

TWELFTH STATION Jesus dies on the Cross.

(Sung) We adore you O Christ, and we bless you, **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

*“Their idols are silver and gold,
the work of men’s hands.
They have mouths, but do not speak” (Ps 115:4-5)*

“The beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words; it opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven.” (Rev 13:5,6)

God the Son is surrounded by the taunts of those who have engineered His crucifixion. Their words, boastful and haughty, are vacant. They have mouths, but they cannot speak the truth. Without the truth, man’s words are turned into weapons, to inflict harm wherever possible.

But from the mouth of the One who *is* the Truth, there pours, now, a stream of benediction and of mercy – *“Father, forgive them for they know not what they do”*; *“Woman, behold your son”*; *“Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise”*. These words, truly, are spirit and they are life. In them, God the Son pleads for us; He binds us to Our Lady as children to their mother; and He declares the opening of the gates of Heaven to the poor banished children of Eve – blessing upon blessing pouring down from the cross, unstoppable. As Samson toppled the image of Dagon in his own temple and surrounded by the whole host of its worshippers, so with even greater effect Jesus devastates the dominion of the devil in the moment He hangs His sacred head in death. *“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.”*

There is no part of Himself that He has withheld from His Father, that He has not offered so that we might be forgiven, might be restored. In His dying He desires to pull down any idol that has appeared in our souls, any obstacle that prevents His glory from glorifying us. My dying Jesus, topple the idol in me that would resist forgiving those who have injured me.

“And a voice came out of the cloud, “This is my beloved Son; listen to him.” (Mk 9:7)

THIRTEENTH STATION Jesus is taken down from the Cross.

(Sung) We adore you O Christ, and we bless you, **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

*“Their idols are silver and gold,
the work of men’s hands.
They have ears, but do not hear;” (Ps 115:4,6)*

*“For while gentle silence enveloped all things,
and night in its swift course was now half gone,
thy all-powerful word leaped from heaven, from the royal throne,
into the midst of the land that was doomed,” (Wis 18:14-15)*

Over thirty years earlier, the eternal Word of the Father had leaped down from heaven to adopt human nature in the womb of the most blessed Virgin. In the silence of that night, the first human arms to wrap themselves around Jesus had been those of His Mother. Now, outside Jerusalem, at the place of the Skull, in the darkness of the blotted-out sun, the Word descends even further, into the realm of the dead, while the sacred Body is lowered down from the height of the cross – and, as if in echo of that first night in Bethlehem, it is returned for an interval to the arms of His holy Mother. She heard with joy the first words from his mouth as a child, and now she has listened to the last words He has spoken from the cross before His death.

The Blessed Virgin has always listened. She won’t allow anything to blot out His voice or hide Him from her. His life is gone, and she holds in her hands the inescapable and relentless evidence of that – and yet He hasn’t left her. Does she hear now, echoing in her soul, the voice that said, not so long before, *“My Father is working still, and I am working”* (Jn 5:17). Most holy Mary, rescue me from falling into the darkness of believing that my Jesus has withdrawn from me.

“For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will ... Truly, truly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.” (Jn 5:21,25)

FOURTEENTH STATION Jesus is placed in the tomb.

(Sung) We adore you O Christ, and we bless you, **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

*“Their idols are silver and gold,
the work of men’s hands.
They have feet, but do not walk;” (Ps 115:4,7)*

“The Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and

I have power to take it again; this charge I have received from my Father.” (Jn 10:17-18)

The journey from the place of the cross to the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea is only a few short steps, but the feet of the One who brings Good News are unable now to carry Him. With great gentleness, the sacred Body of the Lord is carried down into the earth. In the shocking reality of those moments it is difficult for the remaining disciples to remember Jesus’ words “*that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he said this plainly*”, so speaks St Mark (8:31-32). That He should stand again, as Lazarus had done, and Jairus’ daughter, and the son of the widow of Nain, seems beyond the possibility of hope to all but one. She has not allowed a single word He has spoken to drop lifeless to the ground. It has taken root within her – and, for a time and a time and a half, there and only there will it find a home. She will grieve, but not like those who have no hope. She will not prepare herself to return to anoint the body when the Sabbath is at last over. She will wait for Him for as long as is necessary, for as long as her Father asks her to wait. She will trust His word above all else. From this moment she will live exactly as He had taught:

“Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the marriage feast, so that they may open to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes; truly, I say to you, he will gird himself and have them sit at table, and he will come and serve them. If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those servants!” (Lk 12:35-38)

My holy Mother, grant me a heart that will draw its strength not from my own efforts, or my own certainties but from the faithfulness of your Son. A heart that has learned constancy, even when all else around me has proved to be changeable; a heart that has learned to fix itself to a single point of reference; a heart that has no room for any idol; a heart that belongs to Jesus, as yours does, and that longs for Him above all others.

I love you, Jesus, my love above all things. I repent with my whole heart for having offended you. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will. (St Alphonsus)

Fr Guy de Gaynesford STL