
Contemplating the Passion: The Frame of Prayer

- As always, I gather myself to be wholly present to God the Lord, and I ask Him to be pleased by my prayer.

- Then I remember for a moment that the events I am praying over truly happened. Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God, was crushed by His enemies.

- As I remember the events, I compose myself in the place where they happened, Gethsemani, the Praetorium, Calvary.

- Then I ask for what I want: I want to grieve over Jesus' sufferings and death. I want to be sad, and even to weep. I declare to God that I want to work at this, seriously, even if it be very arduous.

- The scripture passage: By now, I have my own way of praying through what Scripture tells us. Here, I try to enter into the events of Jesus' suffering and death. I allow myself to be there, perhaps walking with Jesus to the Garden, or even talking with Peter or with John. Always, I keep my gaze on the Master, my Friend.

- Several considerations: Besides contemplating, I need to consider three very important matters. These considerations open more completely Jesus' sufferings:

1. I watch how Jesus suffered as a human. A healthy man in the prime of His life, He is betrayed, imprisoned, tortured, falsely condemned, and executed. What does a healthy man go through in his mind and heart when he is treated this way? What angers and resentments test him? What bitterness? How did Jesus handle all this? I have to remember, too, that Jesus freely chose to go through all these dark agonies, and more.

2. For, second, Jesus could have retreated into His divine nature. He could have blocked off the psychological and even the physical tortures His humanity went through, and remained in infinite peace and calm. He could have used His infinite power and instantly destroyed His enemies or at least ended their carnage. He really did none of that; He "hid" His divinity.

3. And finally, I have to consider that Jesus did this for me, for a sinner, to save me from the destruction that I inflict on myself and on my life world. For to God, all events are present, so that my lies and self-deceptions and dishonesties stand before God even while Jesus cries out in anguish.

At the end of my prayer, I talk with Jesus the Lord. ♦