

Passion Sunday

Patience in Suffering

“They took up stones to cast at Him” (John, 8:59)

Today we begin the solemn period of the Church year known as Passiontide, which will last until the glorious feast of Our Lord's Resurrection on Easter. The violet drapes that cover the crucifix and the statues in the church are indicative of the spirit of penance for sin, that should be in the heart of every practical Catholic as he recalls the account of the final days of Christ's mortal life, filled with suffering and pain, portrayed so vividly in the scriptural account of the Passion.

Today's Gospel relates an incident that occurred shortly before Our Saviour's death. He was reproving a group of the Jewish people for not accepting His teachings, even though they were confirmed by miracles. Angered by His words, his hearers began to insult Him, and some even took up stones to cast at Him. It must have been a source of keen suffering to the gentle Heart of Christ to be treated with such ingratitude, after all He had done for His people. Yet, as always, He bore this sorrow patiently. He could have used His divine power to punish these malicious persons; but instead He left the temple and hid Himself for a time until the anger of His enemies had somewhat subsided.

This same spirit of patience continued to be manifested by Our Divine Redeemer throughout the remaining days of His mortal life. He was called on to endure every form of suffering both in soul and in body. Yet, He never complained, but rather expressed His willingness to suffer whatever might be inflicted on Him, since such was the will of His Father. He could have destroyed those who stood around the cross and taunted Him: “If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross,” but instead He prayed: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

From Our Blessed Lord we should learn to be patient in trials and sufferings, especially when we have to suffer insult or injustice from others. This is particularly painful when those who treat us harshly are persons whom we have befriended. One who is sensitive feels such treatment much more keenly than he would physical pain. But we should strive to follow the example of Jesus Christ who was so patient in suffering, even to the death on the cross.

Practical Application

In the course of the next two weeks let your thoughts turn frequently to the sufferings of Our Divine Lord. Promise Him to endure with patience whatever pains of body or soul God may will to send you.