

THE WORD TO A NOISEY LITTLE SISTER

1. God eternally thinks a Thought. With joy He utters that Thought which is His Word, His Son. And with that Word, anxious to share the joy its utterance brought Him, He fashioned our world. It was Good, for it was inseparable from that Thought, and that Thought was God. And of that Word we are syllables. O God, who is like unto YOU!

In Him is Life; apart from Him eternal death. He IS the Life, and the Way and the Truth. Yet human frailty, blindness, cannot begin to comprehend Him. Still the world knows that I am called a Christian, a witness of Christ. "I must shout the Gospel with my whole life," for others seek to believe through me. O unbearable responsibility, how I would wish to beg freedom from you. But I remember that He told us His grace is sufficient, and peace and grace descend together on my parched soul.

The Light I am not, and no one must notice me but find rest only when they have found the source of this Flame within my heart.

He dwells here within my heart; He has made that heart, yet it knows Him not. He has come a beggar at my door and though I've ministered to Him, I've given Him my food but not the only thing He asked, my heart. Yet He keeps hoping that some day I shall be a good little sister. He waits.

His Name is sung within my heart. He tells me to believe in His Holy Name, to love it, to whisper it in each thought and word, to sing it, to bow in adoration at the sound or thought of it. JESUS! To love it as Mother loves it, to make it mine. Little Virginia of Jesus. Often I wonder just where I find the audacity to use His Name with mine. It is surely good, for it reminds me of my sinfulness and in its light my ugliness is illuminated. Only because His Holy Name is there can Our Father love my name. His Name and His Mother's.

"And the Word was made flesh." Tremendous Lover of sinful man, it seems that You cannot bear to think of us apart from YOU! He comes to dwell in our midst, to become the lowliest of all men so that He may belong to everyone. Lovers always seem to be gazing upwards to their loved ones. So He permitted us to raise Him up at last that we might gaze upon Him Whom we've pierced and desire to be one with Him. Our flesh must become His, that He may reign today, full of grace and truth.

"Of His fullness we have all received." We need but recognize our nothingness to be filled with the Allness of God. Mother poured out self and was filled with grace. She shines forever, our moon, fostering divine romance in reflections of her Son.

"Grace for grace." God begs us to accept His Love, His Life. He is so eager to give us His happiness our mere reception of His grace prompts Him to immediately offer us more.

Grace and Truth come to us through Jesus; apart from Him we cannot receive them. Jesus shows us His Father; He takes us to Him. Our love of Mother and of Jesus is imperfect until it leads us to God the Father, to rest eternally in the bosom of His Love. Any other end is false.

"I am not the Christ...I am the voice of one crying in the desert." I am dryness, barrenness, emptiness. Please don't try to find Him here. Look further, little ones. He is in your midst, in your very own hearts. But you do not know Him! I am not worthy to serve you, to tell you of Him. But I belong to another. He will tell you. He knows Jesus. Let us listen together, and perhaps in our fused hearts we shall hear His Voice.

"Behold the Lamb of God!" Here He is in your midst, He for whom you've waited for centuries, He so little you didn't even know He stood among you, He so silent standing there among you, so abandoned your numbers have jostled Him and yet He stayed. Alone in your noisy crowds. And I did not know Him. Yet in revealing to you the Son of God have I found Him.

"Master, where do you live...Come and see." O but such poverty, hiddenness in your Nazareth. So silent. So much labor, Such obedience for a God. We love You; we stay.

O such joy. Run to tell our dear ones. "Come, come quick, we've found the Messiah!" Now Jesus looks upon us and calls us by His Name, calls us Christians. O but God, what do You expect of one so weak? "Do miracles for Me and I shall do them for thee."

"Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Can I form from my tear-filled, bitter, lonely past-Love? I conquer all, no, not I, but Christ.

Your heart bursts into song at the trees, the sunrise, the brook, the flowers, the beauty of souls in Love. "Greater things than these shalt thou see." Never, never underestimate the power of Christ. Only believe, and All is yours.

2. With what joy must the newly-weds have welcomed Mother to their marriage feast. St. John tells us, "Jesus too was invited." Perhaps simply because He was her Son. So little, so unknown, that only etiquette demanded His Presence. O Jesus, You are the Least of the little ones. True You've taken the very last place to be Your own forever. Yet with Charlie must I dare try to take it from You!

You brought Your friends. Often there are more than we've anticipated. So happy to be with You, they carelessly deplete my supplies. And it takes the constant concern of a Mother to whisper to You, "They have no wine." She states a simple truth, that's all. It seems a Mother could request. But this Mother knows she stands before Omniscience. Then she whispers something to us. What is it? I am too far away to hear. But the word is passed from one friend to another, and in their awe I hear it just as she said it. "Do whatever He tells you." This is a Mother's last message to her little ones. This is what she wishes most of us. This is what will make her most happy. What more of joy is there for a little child than that of pleasing his Mother?

He had told her that His hour had not yet come, and yet her confidence was so great she knew He would hasten that hour. She was asking that He hasten His immolation, hasten to plunge into the depths of her heart the sword that already was endlessly stabbing. It took a woman's love to begin His Passion. And in that love her suffering was intensified. Before that death she silently tells His murderers how to love Him. No more will we hear her voice, until we hear Christ.

"Fill the jars with water." And they filled them to the brim. Total, joyous, eager Obedience. Unquestioning, simple, childlike. And they took it to the chief steward. Jesus had told them to. That was enough, in silence. They did not hasten to explain. It was theirs, this secret joy. Perhaps in watching Mother they had learned to ponder God's words and deeds in their hearts. They remained alone and happy with Him.

Thus Jesus had first manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him. Little ones wait for Him today. It is for us to manifest His glory to them. They look to us who call ourselves Christians. O God! Must they look upon this poverty for YOU? O now I remember that Charlie passed to us what You told him. "Do miracles for Me, and I'll do them for thee."

"The zeal for Thy house has eaten Me up." O Jesus, do I truly understand that You are here? I love to be with You. Yet You know that such majesty as dwells within our tabernacles would frighten a child. And You become so small, a tiny piece of bread that our eyes may gaze upon You. It's alright that I am forgotten. It is good. But never do I wish to forget that You are there, waiting, long hours of waiting. O Love unrequited. And You wait in all souls. My Jesus, I adore.

"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." For years we toil. Such long years. Yet all our accomplishments are destroyed. And when we stand back to admire our edifice, it is a heap of ugliness. Only in Christ shall we rise in eternal beauty.

"Jesus did not trust Himself to them...He had no need that anyone should bear witness concerning Him." Only God knows my inmost desires. Only He need know me, for I belong to Him alone, and to all in Him. It is He Who will reveal Himself through Me. A reed through which God will pipe His song. But first I must be whittled. And silent.

3. Many times we must go to Jesus "by night", for the world will always scorn a man become childlike, docile, confident. It ridicules what it cannot understand. But it can never find us hidden in the depths of our hearts, waiting for Him, rejoicing at the sound of His Voice.

It seems Nicodemus' first words to Jesus are a protestation of faith in Him, And Jesus immediately tests that faith by telling him he must be born again. Of course, this was confusing. If we but listen further Jesus will explain. So it is with all He tells us. We must listen. When we try to learn in one day the lessons God will teach with a lifetime, we grow discouraged. Without the grade of God we remain ignorant. Yet today's grace is sufficient only for today's lessons. It's a bit unfair to expect more, and here is our ingratitude.

We must be born again of water and the Spirit, the cleansing waters of Baptism and the Spirit of God's Love that comes to dwell and grow within us. Jesus tells us not to be disturbed that we don't understand His words. We do not understand the earth from which we've been fashioned so it is foolish to wish to understand God Himself. He only asks that we accept the wonderful gift of Faith He offers.

"The Son of Man must be lifted up." He must be crucified, that those who believe may look upon the lifeless body of their God and feel eternal Life pulsing in their hearts.

"God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son." More than Himself God could not give; less than Himself He would not give. Such a tremendous Lover. So anxious that we return but the poverty of our self for His unrequited Love. He came begging for our hearts. O who can refuse His plea? Who can continue to live in darkness when eternal Light and Truth beg our claim?

Spiritual jealousies spring from ignorance. God is the Giver of all gifts, and the End of all gifts. He gives Himself to all. John had come to herald the Bridegroom. But now He has come, and John is happy to slip unnoticed into the crowd and listen. "He must increase, but I must decrease," until Christ has become my very Self.

"He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for not by measure does God give the Spirit." Listen carefully, O my soul to the superiors God sends to you. Jesus tells you thus the way to everlasting life.

4. Jesus was tired. How kind of St. John to tell us this. He was TIRED. When it is evening and we have worked hard and our muscles ache and our brain has grown dull, how gentle the memory that Jesus was tired. And He sat down to rest.

It was noon. He sat there alone and smiled His benediction upon a little town taking its midday siesta. Perhaps we can sense that He does not sit idly gazing into the well. He glances toward the town often. He seems to be waiting for someone. Divine Patience had waited an eternity for the woman now bringing her jar to the well. Strange that she should come at this hour. The hour of rest. But no, she wished to go alone, to avoid the scorn and gossip of those who knew about her. And there she met One Who knew her heart better than she. But she didn't know Him.

Jesus spoke to her gently, kindly. Perhaps she had never been spoken to thus. Jesus ASKED something of her. Little Virginia, listen carefully to St. John. He tells us your Jesus asked. And there was no one but a stranger, a harlot, to fulfill His request. How joyfully surprised she must have been. He asked her, a woman, a samaritan, a harlot. Please, Jesus, let me never withhold the joy of giving from those who wait but to be asked. Perhaps it will be the first time they may grant another's request.

Jesus says if I but knew the Giver and the Gift He longs to give me I would never hesitate to make requests. If I can but truly recognize the Christ that dwells within the soul of every man I would run pleading for Love, and Life, For He truly dwells among us today, and begs us to believe He's here.

Though the divine secrets Jesus tells her are beyond her comprehension she yet believes, for she simply wonders how Jesus could give her this living water. But it seems we cannot receive this divine Life alone, for Jesus asks her first to bring her husband.

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But she told Him she had none. Jesus knew better, yet He didn't call her a liar. In fact, He remarked that it was merely a half truth. The woman then recognized that He was a prophet and posed THE question of her heart. Where are we to worship God? On the mountain where they spoke or in Jerusalem where the Jews flocked to the temple? Jesus replied that the Jews were God's chosen people, and that God had given them the laws of true worship. But all men are to worship God in spirit and in truth, with love in their hearts to sanctify the external requirements of the Law.

The woman expressed her hopes in the Messiah who would tell her all God wished her to know. And as she hoped so did she receive, for Jesus said to her, "I am He."

It was then that His disciples returned, a bit disturbed to find Him speaking with her. Had they perhaps heard rumors of her while they were buying the supplies in town? They silently looked at her, and wondered. And little could they dream that she had just encountered eternal TRUTH, and fallen in love with God.

But they watched her run back to town, joyfully, skipping almost as a child. Perhaps they called to her that she had forgotten her water-jar, but she didn't hear them. She ran to tell her people of Jesus. Strange that those who had scorned her now followed her. Perhaps they saw in her entire being a radiance that glows only in those who speak to God. A child's freedom that let her run to tell them of Him.

Meanwhile the disciples were trying to get Jesus to share the food they had bought in town. But Jesus seemed preoccupied with deeper thoughts. There is but one thing that will nourish Him, that will strengthen Him. "My food is to do the Will of Him who sent me." You are always anxious for the harvest. Open your eyes, little ones, for the fields are already white.

"The sower and the reaper may rejoice together." Yes, Jesus, a little co-missionary buries so many desires, waters them with her tears. But to see another come to pluck the flowers, another who looks so much like you, would be happiness enough, it seems. And yet in the prodigality of Divine Providence, this reaper stops now and then and stoops to place a flower in my hands so they remain not empty. O truly "Others have labored," yet we but open our hands to abundance. See Jesus, they wish always to be opened to You.

The people had flocked from the town, placing all their hopes in the words of the woman. And once they had heard His word they too knew Him, and the woman seems to disappear. She had led them to Him; that was enough. And she became lost in His Love.

How Jesus wished to be loved, instead of His miracles. So few loved Him. Thus He put the official's faith to a test. But perseverance in prayer won the Heart of Christ, and such faith taught an entire family to love Him.

LOVE

5. Jesus went to Jerusalem to keep the feasts with His people. It is good to see Him here, a God seeking not to exempt Himself from the celebrations of His creatures. The eternal Law-giver in humble subjection, every second of His Life forming the pattern into which our own lives must fall that they become divine, and human.

O to ponder the compassion of His Sacred Heart as He saw the mass of sick, blind, lame and cripples at the pool. They were waiting. They formed a composite of all mankind, waiting till the Word of God reverberates through our hearts. And we rush in to find Christ in silence.

Jesus went first to the poorest of these little ones. Only He could know what misery the years had thrown upon this tired soul. And yet it remained so patient, so abandoned. Jesus understood its suffering; He who wished to always make the last place His own gently cured first this little one He loved most, who most bore the image of God in his heart.

Often others wonder at our actions. Do we try to excuse ourselves, blame our youth, our ignorance? Do we blush to tell them Jesus wished this of us? Are we ashamed of Him, ashamed of following such a "useless vagabond?" Or, God forbid, are we ignorant of Him Who bestows upon us the riches of Divine Life?

Jesus' kindness is so quiet. But somehow if we but look for our Savior He will whisper, "It is I," that we may know and love Him. But we are too anxious to tell others of our Lover. We forget that they wait only to condemn. We wish to share our dreams, and in the sharing we hasten their death.

"The Son can do nothing of Himself." The humility of the Son begged that the people's love and admiration be not lavished upon His Human Nature. He is always pointing to Another, to the Father, to Whose bosom it is His ardent desire to lead us. I do His work; I call Him Father. And I am about My Father's business. You are too little to go to His Divine Majesty alone. So I have become least that I may lead you there. Come, follow Me; only believe what I tell you, please.

Only listen. Be silent. I will tell you of Him that you may believe, My little children, and in believing possess the eternal Life of God. Listen and live. I alone judge you, I Who know all things, I Who have borne your every infirmity. "Of Myself I can do nothing...I seek not my will." O Humility of Christ, permeate me!

Listen to your brothers and sisters today. They speak to you of Me. You love to hear your Fr. Keith speak to you of Love. You read joyously of this Love. Why do you not believe how much I love you?

I do not need your love, weak, human, faithless as it is. But still I long to fill you with My Love, with true Love. You seek others' love, but you so easily forget Mine. I do not condemn you; you condemn yourselves. Listen to your loved ones. For if you do not trust them you cannot trust Me Who live and love in their hearts.

LOVE

6. "There followed Him a great crowd, because they witnessed the signs He worked on those who were sick." His poor little sheep. Our Shepherd must often be saddened because we spend so much time admiring His gifts and forget to look into His beautiful eyes. But He simply asks His friends to sit with Him on the Mountain. Only He knows how many mountains we will climb, and the last one He will climb alone because we remain fearful of such heights.

So many little ones were with Him that day, tired, hungry, yet anxious to stay with Him. Jesus turned to Philip, and we almost detect a glitter in His eyes as Omniscience asks a finite mind how to care for them. And Philip humbly admits human helplessness.

But now why does Andrew speak? Does he know the solution? Why does he tell Jesus of five barley loaves and two fishes, a meal one little boy had brought for himself, and maybe his mother? Is this a confident request acknowledging the power of Christ? And in return for such faith, Jesus, kindly gazing upon His flock, tells them to rest. Divine Providence had anticipated this hour and had spread a blanket of soft grass there, for Jesus' little ones.

Jesus first gave thanks. God walked among us and was grateful to be here! O truly Jesus, You have desired to be the Least of little ones. For they YOU distributed Your gifts to us; in the abundance with which we would receive You gave. O God, grant me the humility to receive all this, the same humility that You portrayed in taking the role of our Servant. It takes great littleness to give much, and to receive much. Great as our desires are our gifts.

O prodigality of divine Goodness, You beg that we waste not this abundance You give, but remember the poor You love so. When the people had witnessed Your power, they wished to force You to be their King. But alone You hid from them, saddened that they couldn't understand how You loved them.

That night You went to Your disciples, who were struggling in their boat against the storm. You know they are so helpless and cannot bear to leave them alone. They are surprised and fearful to see You walking upon the turbulent waters, but Your voice brings peace and joy. "It is I; do not be afraid." They throw open their arms and hearts to welcome You. And in that embrace they find they have reached their destination. For You are their Love, their God, their All.

When the people had found Jesus they desired an explanation of His Presence. They had found their God, yet they were still seeking. O God, grant us the simplicity that is Thyself! Our hearts are set so upon Your gifts we fail to find You, the Gift you long to give.

We asked that we might do God's Will; You told us only to believe. But we are so little. We don't understand, and in our foolishness we ask a SIGN. We've seen all this, yet we desire more! O God, forgive us.

"My Father gives you the true Bread from Heaven...Lord, give us always this bread." My Jesus, we beg this of You, and Your words drop as refreshing dew upon our parched hearts. "I am the Bread of Life. Come to Me; believe in Me. I am pleading for your love. You see and yet believe not. Come to Me, I beg you, little ones. I long for you.

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I come to do the Will of Him Who sent Me. He longs for you to be Mine, that I may raise you to see His Face. Only believe that I come to take you to Him."

But we murmur that this cannot be, that He is but the Son of a poor carpenter. We ponder; we try to understand but we cannot comprehend what He is trying to tell us. But Jesus begs us to be silent just a minute, to let divine grace accomplish withing the depths of our souls what we ourselves cannot begin. Only to believe in Jesus is to possess the everlasting Life of grace. He is the Bread of Life, and nourished in Christ our souls can never know death. And now Jesus tells us that the bread that He will give is His Flesh for the life of the world.

Poor little ones, this is so difficult to learn. But must you always ask God "HOW" Listen well. Jesus speaks with majestic force. "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you." Live in Me, and I shall live in you. Live because of Me, and desire to have no life without Me. Live eternally sharing this Sacred Banquet.

"Jesus, this is a hard saying," we complain. But He doesn't midify it. There is no altaring truth; He is Truth. He asks that we merely accept His word in utter simplicity. Our minds are whirling with such thoughts? Jesus speaks to our souls.

Jesus knew some did not believe. But He spoke these words to all. O how grievously His Sacred Heart called to all men, begging that they believe; Yet His lips were silent. And He watched His disciples leave Him. O unrequited Love, so silent, so eternal!

He turns to us. The sun kisses a tear on His cheek. "Do you also wish to go away?" Tremendous Love, and yet so tender. And Peter answers for us in the complete darkness of faith, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" And from the depths of Jesus' soul we hear a whisper, as He sighs that even one of His chosen Twelve is a traitor. O Jesus, would that I could console You. But I am a traitor who loves You.

7. Almighty God walked the face of the earth He had created and loved, and yet He had to avoid His creatures because they sought to kill Him! Of all on His earth, He loved these most, these He had made in His own Image. But the Love He wished to light in their hearts had been smoldered, and they knew Him not. Not even His own believed in Him. He walked among His sheep-alone.

His disciples, ignorant of the hearts of the rulers, begged Him to manifest His power that all might marvel. Jesus sent them ahead, saying "Your time is always at hand." NOW is your mission. They know you. Go to them that they may know Me, that they may find Truth in your hearts, Then will they know Me. And He secretly followed, to attend the Jewish feast of Tabernacles.

The crowd was whispering of Him, wondering where He was, if He'd come. Finally He arrived and began to share with them secrets of His Heart. He waited not for their faith in Him. Faith was God's gift. Divine grace stirred their hearts to unrest that He might come to bring them peace and His Love. It seems their hearts were still so very complicated they could not bear to listen long without wondering where Jesus had obtained His knowledge. They who held littleness in such contempt could not know the S^{implicity} of God.

Jesus answered, "My teaching is not My own." O truly, Jesus, You've kept nothing for Your own, but You've brought us the Allness of God. You ask that we desire only to do the Will of the Father and promise that thus we shall know Your teaching. "He who seeks the glory of the One Who sent Him is truthful."

A Lover's wounded Heart asks softly, "Why do you seek to put Me to death?" And His murderers mock and say He's imagining things. He begs them, "Judge not by appearances," but enter into the depths of your very selves to find Me there.

Some are surprised that He should be speaking of truth to those who plan to kill Him. He, the son of a carpenter, now tells them they do not know His Father. And He tells them they must learn of Him, that time is so short to tell them eternal Truth. They do not know Who it is Who is speaking to them.

And now He stands and cries out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink." Are you tired, little ones? Come, please come, to endless refreshment.

The poor, lost sheep were confused. They knew not Who He was. Only to go to Him and ask is to know. And those who had come to seize Him returned murmuring, "Never has man spoken as this man." They were ridiculed by the "wise" for associating with the crowd of little fellows. Nicodemus begs them to listen to Jesus. And those faltering leaders referred him to the Scriptures! There they knew not were Truth and Christ.

8. The others had gone home but Jesus went alone to the Mount of Olives. The world was His, yet there was no room.

At daybreak He arose. It had been good to spend hours alone in Love. Now He returned to the people that He might bring those hours to fruition. In the majestic splendor of the sunrise He went to them.

They waited for Him. They seemed so confident that morning, so sure of tripping Him up. When they stood aside there was their bait. A tired, pitiable woman was shoved to the fore. Would He punish her and thus forget His merciful gentleness, or would He free her, ignoring the Law God had given Moses? Calmly, almost apparently indifferently, Jesus stoops to draw little figures in the dirt.

They thought He was ignoring them. He lifted His majestic form and said, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to cast a stone at her." What did He continue to write? Truths eternal, truths beyond their endurance? But one by one the group diminished. Interesting that the eldest went first. And there the Sinless One remained with the adulteress. He did not condemn. He loved her. And He lifted her from the ground where they had thrown her, saying, "Go thy way, and from now on sin no more." He didn't send her by a different way. He loved HER. There was one change since she had met God. She would sin no more.

There in that beautiful morning all earthly splendor seemed to vanish, as Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."

But we wondered that someone could speak thus of himself. We didn't know the humble man would be the first to recognize his humility, his greatness, because he came face to face with eternal Truth.

"You judge; I judge no one." Yet only I am capable of judging justly. You keep inquiring so suspiciously of My Father. Yet, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you knew Me, you would then know My Father also."

"If you do not believe that I am He, you will die." Christ in His Love was pleading with these little ones, begging them to accept the life of divine grace. But still they knew Him not.

Our poor Jesus, weary of questions, of suspicions, of doubts, sighs, "Why do I speak to you at all!" Not until we've crucified Him and have taken even His Life from Him will we know and love the Son of Man, and recognize the Father. His conviction of His Father's Love for Him let Him rise above the taunts of men, men whom He loved infinitely.

In His rejection Jesus turned to those who yet followed. What a consolation it must have been to see these few there with Him. The gentle Master spoke. "If you abide in My word, you shall be my disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." But even they did not understand. Loving Heart of my Jesus, would that the poverty of my life might somehow console You!

Sin is slavery. We don't yet love Christ because we yet fail to understand what He is trying to tell us. We fail to understand that God is Our Father. We SAY that He is, but our hearts have not learned these words. "If God were your Father, you would surely love Me...Why do you not understand what I say?" O Jesus, You are Simplicity, yet we have not learned to listen.

"He who is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear is that you are not of God...I do not seek My own glory; there is One Who seeks and Who judges...If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing...Before Abraham came to be, I am." O my Jesus, we hated truth and prepared to stone Truth. Now You have hid Yourself and sadly left our hearts.

9. Jesus saw a blind man. He always seems to take special notice of the poor, the blind, the lame, the sinner. His disciples noticed these special attentions. Somehow those little ones knew He loved them most. His eyes spoke volumes.

Day after day His disciples had watched Him walk through suffering humanity. They had witnessed the misery that flocked to His feet. WHY, they had wondered; HOW could a God of goodness be so cruel? Surely the evil of sin had merited this. That was the only possible answer. And they asked Jesus if this man was suffering for his own crimes or those of his parents. And Jesus gave the world's most beautiful excuse for handicappers. The works of God are to be made manifest in us! Then the sweet urgency that must fill all our hearts escaped His lips. NOW is the time to accomplish Our Father's business. Night comes so quickly. In the glorious light of His Presence we can do all things.

With dirt and spit Jesus caked the man's eyes in mud. And the man stood before Him in humble submission, the joy of blind faith coursing through his veins. With what prompt obedience did he stumble to the pool. And he jubilantly returned to gaze upon the face of Christ.

Those who once knew Him some who had given him ulms, others who had scoffed at him, now were alarmed at the change in him, even doubting his identity. He smiled, "I am he." What a beautiful smile it must have been.

He didn't mind their question; he understood their confusion. His explanation was filled with beautiful simplicity. "And I see."

There was nothing to hide. He patiently repeated his story for the Pharisees to whom he was taken. This beautiful story jarred them. Some were angered, others amazed. They asked the man his opinion of Jesus. He answered, "He is a prophet," for he knew Christ manifested the power of God.

Even yet these poor doubters searched. All they had seen and heard wasn't sufficient. So the man's parents were called and questioned. They were good, faithful Jews, and they were afraid. They must have longed to express their gratitude to Jesus and their love of Him. But to do this would be to cast oneself from the temple, from all that had ever given meaning to their life. So they referred these plotters to their son. He would tell them of the beautiful Face he had seen.

The man was clever in his responses. By this time he must have grown tired of their interrogations. So he expressed concern at their interest and asked, "Would you also become His disciples?" The Pharisees were shocked that he should mention it and boasted, "We are disciples of Moses." They knew that God had spoken to Moses, but they knew not that He walked in their very own midst. And simply the man said, "If this man were not from God, He could do nothing." He spoke of mankind. And the "wise men" of God's chosen people thought themselves too great to listen to one THEY considered a sinner. Poor, stupid wise men. They drove a saint from the house of God.

The man was lost and confused and alone. And Jesus searched until He found him. He but asked an act of faith. And the man spoke an eternally beautiful prayer. "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?" Jesus placed His slender hand upon His breast. The man spoke with every power that was in him, "I believe, Lord," and he fell to his face and adored his God.

But soon Jesus' soul wept over the Pharisees before Him. He had shown them Divine Love, yet they had not noticed. They were blind, and God was helpless. He had torn the scales from their eyes, but they would not look upon His beauty.

10. Only Christ can lead us to eternal bliss. We must learn to recognize, and ignore, those thieves who flaunt their own miserable glory, who boast of having found another more beautiful path to which they would lead us. Holy Mother Church, to whom Christ has given the keys of His Kingdom, joyously opens the gates of Heaven that Christ may come to us. Through Her we hear His voice. His intimate love thrills each heart, as He amiably calls each of us by name. And He leads us forward, and upward, to the summit of Calvary, and Glory. He leads us. He blazes the trail, that little ones may climb more safely. Sometimes we lose sight of Him. But we continue to follow, for we know His voice. That is enough.

Once more we do not understand. Our minds are too filled with vain knowledge to comprehend Truth itself. But again, slowly, patiently, gently, Jesus speaks.

"The thief comes only to steal, and slay, and destroy. I come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly."

"I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd lays down His life for His sheep...I know Mine and Mine know Me...Other sheep I have that are not of this fold. These also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd." Surely when we hear these words of Christ spoken to us today, we may smile because we have seen this Shepherd. For we lived during the reign of Pope John XXIII.

"I lay down my life, that I may take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself." So joyously eager is our Shepherd. He lays His life at our feet and seems to plead that we accept it. Our Creator has become a divine Beggar. But we do not understand His blessed request.

Jesus had gone to the Temple to celebrate the feast of the Dedication. The Jews surrounded Him and demanded that He reveal His identity. And Jesus, so weary yet so anxious to make them understand, answered, "I tell you and you do not believe." We have seen His works; these were more than sufficient proof. But His greatest treasure, His Divinity, we can't see. We can but beg for faith that we may rejoice in this also. "I and the Father are one." And we prepare to stone Him.

He pleads with us. WHY are we so filled with hatred? All He does is good, which of these kindnesses do we consider worthy of death? But we shout that He has blasphemed, that He, a mere man, has called Himself God. He urges us. If we cannot turn our hardened hearts to Him, we can at least love the goodness of His creatures. But our angry cries let us not even hear Love begging for love. And our tremendous Lover silently leaves us to our angry babble.

He wanders to the spot where John once baptized, Perhaps His unrequited Love wishes to remember that His Father was "well pleased." It is soothing to hear the echo of those words. Many little ones find Him here, and they remember all the wonderful things John said of Him. Now He has come, and they believe in Him. Perhaps He smiles a benediction upon this, His flock.

11. Martha and Mary send to TELL Jesus of Lazarus' illness. That is enough. To believe in His Love is to be completely confident, and to believe that even in such heartaches "The Son of God may be glorified." Love does not require continuous explanations.

Jesus waits two days. What must this delay cost Him. How He must long to immediately release those He loves so from this suffering. Yet He suffers Himself, bearing all with and in His friends.

When at last the Divine Plan indicates it, He anxiously urges His disciples to accompany Him once more into Judea. But we forget that He is our good Master. We dare to caution Him, overcautious followers that we are. If we have hurt Him by our hesitation, He doesn't exploit His pain. He simply invites, urges, pleads with us to follow Him that He may brighten the path that leads us Home.

He tells us that Lazarus is sleeping. We go to wake him that he may be delighted by his beloved Jesus' Presence. But we, pretending to be considerate yet only cringing in cowardice, wish to let him sleep on.

Then because we do not listen well enough to hear beyond words the utterance of His heart, Jesus tells us plainly that Lazarus is dead. And He rejoices! Though His dear one is gone, and the exquisite tenderness of His human Heart is plunged into loneliness, yet He seems to be rather "hard" as He moulds from the depths of His sorrow a gift for us. He never forgets us, is never too preoccupied to remember those to whom He has spoken His eternal, "Come, follow Me." Let's go, that He may not die alone.

Lazarus has been in the tomb four days already. Many are gathered here in Bethany to comfort his two sisters. When word comes that Jesus is approaching, Martha rushes out to meet Him, to find in His Presence strengthening consolation.

"If You had been here, Jesus, he wouldn't have died. I know. But still all my hopes remain firmly established in You." Jesus assures this dear one, "He shall rise." "I know," she replies. Then to ease the pain in Martha's heart, Jesus tells her of the joyous promise He makes to all His loved ones. "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he who believes in Me shall never die. Dost thou believe this?" And the immediate response, "Yes, Lord, I believe."

Then so silently Martha goes to tell her sister Jesus is calling for her. She remembers that He is her Life and smiles to whisper to herself, "No, not I but Christ." Mary accepts the invitation immediately and goes to meet Him who alone will bring rest to her bereaved soul. This tender Heart understands. Jesus knows of human grief, experiences it far beyond the degree the hardness of our hearts will permit. "And Jesus wept." O thank you, beloved disciple, for showing us Almighty God and Man with tear-stained cheeks, weeping with us. Surely He has made all that is ours His in becoming Ours Himself.

He rises, His erect figure so filled with majesty, and commands that the stone at the door of the tomb be removed. Martha, perhaps thinking Him mad with grief, reminds Him that her brother has already decayed. But Jesus simply asks for her faith and proceeds. He prays aloud that all may understand the Omnipotence of His Father.

"LAZARUS, COME FORTH!" calls the Voice that commands all. And there stands His friend before Him in adoration. Many witnesses believe, because of this miracle. Yet many hearts are so hardened they rush to Jerusalem to plot His death, and the High Priest, in his rage, shouts a prophecy he cannot understand. "It is expedient for us that one man die for the people, instead of the whole nation perishing." Jesus waits in a desert place till the hour for this prophecy to be accomplished. Here among the bare realities, He is consumed with longing for His Hour, and mine.

12. The Passover is quickly approaching. Who can know the rendezvous the entire Being of our Master at once longs for and fears? He has tried to prepare us, His wandering flock, but we've been too busy grazing in selfish indifference to compassionate with the Lover Who cries for someone to care.

We wander with Him to His dear ones' home at Bethany. How dear to Him must be this humble little home with its door always open wide to receive Him, to feed and shelter Him after others more lovely have displayed too much dignity to accomodate a useless Hobo. Martha happily prepares a meal for Him and Lazarus, Who sit cahtting together. What happy songs she must sing as she listens to the two of them. It seems that now whe goes about all her little tasks just as before, yet in her memory is Jesus and in her heart a prayer such as Mary might have whispered at His feet.

Mary-where is she at this happy scene? Here she comes, carrying a pound of precious ointment. She kneels before Christ. All eyes are upon her, yet she sees only His loving gaze. She stoops to pour her treasure upon His calloused feet, and with her flowing hair she wipes them dry. She need not look at Him now to hear His sweet Voice whispering in the depths of her soul. Silently she rises and leaves the room, unconscious of all who try to stop her, completely wrapped in memories of Him eye has not seen.

The house is filled with sweet odor. Yet theywho live not in the eternal Present of God experience nothing but anger. "This could have been sold and much given to the poor," we cry, mocking that charity Jesus has been trying to teach us, we thieves who would take the honor paid to Christ for ourselves. But Jesus quietly urges us to respect this woman who served Him for us who in our cowardice will run fearfully, leaving Him in His hour of loneliness, forgetting even the poor, so wrapped in the ugly little shell of self-love.

Upon learning that he is there, great numbers gather to catch a glimpse of Him and of the man He has raised form the dead. This miracle has had such overwhelming effects among the people the chief priests plot to kill Lazarus also, trying desperately to escape the realities they refuse to accept.

Word is circulated that Jesus is coming. O joyour excitement! Little ones, with their parents, run to gather palm branches and hurry to greet Him. They sing a song of greeting to their King, Who in His triumph comes to them seated upon a little donkey, the Least of these little ones. Only children can sing to such a little King. And the "wise men" mumble in their agitation, "The entire world has gone after Him!"

His Hour has come. Jesus' troubled Heart cries aloud, yearning that we comprehend Its anguish. O lonely Heart, so ignorant are we who yet follow. You speak of Death, and Eternal Life. You invite us once more to follow. You beg to be gaved from this Hour, yet in the same breath and from greater depths of Your Heart, You thank Our Father for this Hour that He may be glorified. Then the thunder of the Voice of God vibrates within our hearts, an assurance to His little flock.

"I, if I be lifted up, will draw all things to Myself." Listen well little handicapper. Do you hear what your Jesus says? He lives within the poverty of your heart. And they who must lift youlift him also. Be a joyous burden, that you may draw all to His Sacred Heart.

Now Jesus goes into His last retreat, His one desire to take me for His own. All that He must endure becomes secondary to my Beloved. O when will all but He flee from my desires? But I who love this worldly nothingness treat my Love as something of shame and hide Him lest I be ridiculed. O God forgive!

All my days may I shout His words of joyous hope with my life. "I have come a Light into the world...I have come to save the world..." May His words fall upon the happy freedom of our hearts that His promises may grow there.

13. Jesus' Hour has come! Soon He will return to His Father. He has loved us, His own little flock, and He will pursue us to the end, yearning to tell us of a tremendous Love far beyond our comprehension, a Love That our unsuspecting hearts have named God.

We've come to a supper and calls the Last, forgetting a table spread this very minute and the Christ Who bends over it. What is our good Master doing? He's risen from the table and carries a basin in which He gently washes the feet of those with Him at table. But, but this all seems so backward, so embarrassing.

Ah, there's Peter to voice the protest while I remain speechless. "Thou shalt never wash my feet!" Now, that's what should have been said. But Jesus doesn't seem pleased. His tremendous Love longs to serve, yet we merely flaunt our independence, deny Its' expression. How can we claim His Friendship with such actions? Then Peter, in his sweet eagerness, adds, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands, and my head!" Jesus smiles at such extravagance. "This is sufficient." His sad eyes find each of our faces. "Not all of you are clean, He murmurs, but we have returned to our idle chat and notice not His tear. Already He's alone, and we too, though we know it not.

Now He's returned to His place at the table and He asks, "Do you know what I have done to you?" No, Jesus, we've failed to understand. Please explain. How I long for the day when I will truly know You, experience You, follow You. How patiently You once more explain what I've failed to comprehend. Again and again You tell me. "I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you also should do...No servant is greater than his master." Our Master has become the Least among us. What then are we who wish to follow? O God, we are Your little nothings! In this realization, happy shall we be.

Such anguish fills the Heart of Jesus, and we barely hear Him sigh. "He who eats bread with Me has lifted his heel against Me."

He seems to be searching for our attention. He looks at each of us gathered here. "He who receives anyone I send receives Me." O my sweet Jesus, how refreshing to Your little hobo. Thank You. Though You suffer such anguish this evening, yet You pause to lighten my wee load.

Pain seizes Your facial features as You say aloud what we would not listen to in silence. "One of you will betray Me." O God forgive us for looking at one another.'

We become so confused, so saddened. Then it is that we beckon to him whom Jesus loves. It is he who is not ashamed of his love Jesus, who shouts the good news of Jesus' Presence with his whole life, who in Love's freedom leans his head on Jesus' bosom and rests there in the silent murmurings of the Sacred Heart. And he is our comrade, so easy to approach, so simply will he approach Jesus with us. He whispers of our concern, "Lord, is it I?"

Without ostentation, quickly, silently, Jesus dismisses His betrayer, letting us believe he is going on an errand of mercy for our Master.

Now is the Hour God's eternal yearning has sought. Jesus calls us His "little children." He has much to tell us before He finishes this meal with us, yet only if we possess the childlike docility He's shown us can we understand. So anxiously He begins, "A new commandment I give you." Only one. Long ago there were ten, then two, but now only one, that little children may remember well. "Love one another, as I have loved you!" The tremendous Lover has spoken. How can we know what He said? How can we begin to fathom? Wait but a few more hours. He will SHOW us His love, and this very Love that consumes Him He will give to be ours, to be the standard His followers will bear that all men may know we are His.

We beg to follow, and He replies, "You shall follow Me later." Then once more our impetuosity argues, "Why can I not follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thee." Jesus smiles sadly at us. "Will you? My poor little weak child, this night your confidence will turn to cowardice at the first sight of danger and you will deny that you've ever known me."

14. O soul of such a noisy little sister, hush your restless murmurings that you may keep each of these words to ponder in your heart that what is now so shallow may expand and deepen and become ever more like the throbbings you hear when you lean on your Mother's breast. Jesus is speaking, so anxious to impart these sweet consolations before He Himself endures an agony such as we shall never know. It is ours by right, yet quietly and so willingly He takes it from us for His very own, and for those who love Him so they beg to make it theirs, in becoming one with their Jesus.

"Don't worry." His Voice is soothing, quiet, strong. "Just believe in Me. Heaven is waiting for you, and I am going to make all in readiness for your arrival. I'll return for you, and then the sorrows of parting will never wound Us again. You know the Way. Follow Me."

"But Lord, we have no idea where heaven is, so how can we know how to get there?" O how He desired to make us understand. "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. But give Me your Fiat, and I am your Everything. I bring all that are Mine to My Father, that He may be yours. And I bring Him to you."

"Peace!" Not that of the world, in which your hearts remain troubled and afraid. I shall be your Peace; I shall remain with you. I give you Myself, My Body, My Blood, My soul, My Divinity, that you may never fear again.

"I will no longer speak much with you. Your ears will strain to hear My Voice as before, and you find not a sound but that which your own nothingness makes in its confusion. Arise, poor little soul. Let Us go from here. It is dark, and the way is steep, but what can keep Us from Our rendezvous!"

15. The beloved disciple of Jesus seems so reluctant to close this scene of the first Holy Mass, that blessed event that will rock all Christendom and at the same time stabilize it. He seems to retrace the entire scene in his memory and longs to share with us each precious word he can remember coming from Jesus' Blood stained lips.

"I am the Vine." Once more Jesus searches for an object. One His little ones may find in their exile and remember their Home. Here on the table is the wine which we've been sipping throughout our meal, the purple blood spilled by the grapes that man may be comforted through their sacrifice. "My Father is the Vine-dresser, removing the fruitless branches and cleansing the others that their fruit may be even more abundant. His tool is My word, and by it has He cleansed you. Live in Me; let Me be your Life; let Me make your heart My abode, that I may be always among the children of men, pursuing them to the very end. Alone you bear nothing. You are dead. You shrivel into ugliness. You are My branches, and in the divine Life that courses through Me flourishes your fruit. Without Me you are completely dead, yet in My Love your life flourishes in bursts of nourishment for all who pass your Way. O please do not refuse this divine Life I bring you. For you will be severed from Me to be burned. O painful separation!

"Strengthen with My Life, My words reflected in the purity of your fruits, may you approach My Father, and so pleased will He be to grant your desires. This is the joy, the glory, the coming of His Kingdom, the blessed fruit of My friends. With the Love wherewith He embraces Me eternally do I embrace you. Please stay within My embrace, you whom My Heart desires for Its own. But do as I have asked. That is all. I've told you these longings of My Soul that My joy may fill the yearning of your soul.

This is what I ask of you; LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU. There is no greater love than this, giving one's all, one's life. Do as I ask, that Our Friendship may be established forever. No longer do I call you servants. They are as puppets, never free to speak with their Master, to share His joy in the growth of His Kingdom. You are MY FRIENDS, sharing all that is Mine. I have chosen you. From all Eternity I've longed that you should be My friends that in My Love your fruits may flourish forever. How can I refuse the request of one I love so? But ask for all things in My Name and they are yours. ALL is yours because I am yours, you ALL. Only remember My commandment to love one another in the dignity My tremendous Love has brought to each heart with My Coming.

"Many will hate you. Remember that they have hated Me. If you bend to worldly standards you will be respected by those of the world. But I have raised you to Myself, and these stand gaping upward and despising what they cannot touch because they cling to vanities below. Don't be disturbed, nor even surprised, that you've lost their respect. See how they have treated Me and know that you certainly deserve no more respect. Rejoice, for they treat you thus because they know that you are Mine.

"If I had not told them of My Love, had let It remain a secret, then surely their ignorance would have excused them. But I've come, I've told them, I've shown them, I've begged them to believe in Me. And they've returned hatred. O God, forgive them!

"Still I long to manifest My Love in them. Never shall I end My pursuit till time be no more. I'll send the Spirit of Truth, that He may enkindle in their hearts the fires of divine Love. And I'll send you too, to sing of My Life among you, within you, to bring it within their souls."

18. Now we follow Jesus to the Garden of Gethsemane, in little groups, our chatting subdued as we walk along trying to understand all that He has told us this immortal evening, our minds a maze in which His Voice rings clear over those words, that have created a darkness only the promised Paraclete can dispel.

Often have we come here with Him, to listen, then to fall asleep as He kept vigil, His mortal Body prostrate in adoration, His immortal Soul flying to the bosom of His Father while He yet remained in exile, awaiting the Hour for which He has come, that NOW that in the same heartbeat shakes His entire Being with anguish and with joy.

John is kind to spare us the account of the Agony in this garden. Perhaps the anguish in his own heart at the mere mention of this scene he witnessed will not permit him to write of it. But as in all Scripture, his silence is eloquent, the scene is darkened from our eyes and only if we keep watch with Him, conquering our drowsiness, can we enter into the mysterious Agony here, can we understand a bloodstained rock, an already scarlet robe and eyes in which one finds Innocence darkened in terror-and submission and joyous anticipation.

Awake, my sleepy soul; Jesus is gently beckoning. Already, His friends yet here, He is lonely. Already we've forgotten Him. What's that noise? The clatter of lanterns, torches and weapons, the subdued voices of the cohort, friends of the chief priests and Pharisees, surround Us. He Who silently dismissed His betrayer at supper now stoops to receive from his twisted lips the kiss of one anticipating thirty pieces of silver, so wrapped in the profit he cannot see the Creator of all things begging to give him All, forever.

Jesus steps closer, His Face and theirs, the brightness of God and the dark of Satan, flickering in the lights they carry. "Whom do you seek?" "Jesus of Nazareth." Strange they don't look for the Babe of Bethelhem, of Egypt, the Wonder-worker of Capharnaum, for Him Who cured the sick, raised the dead, fed the people, spoke of a new Kingdom. Instead, they search a poor carpenter who is building a Kingdom in the hearts of the people, where their swords can't destroy. His answer is that which we make each time the world goes in search of Goodness to destroy It and in the end finds itself destroyed. "I am He." Our words confuse the, floor them, and as they stare we tell them again, remembering St. Paul's "For me to live is Christ." I AM HE?" And we beg that we be taken, if only our little ones be not harmed.

Here's Peter again, so anxious to DO SOMETHING. His impulsive love grabs his sword to destroy with a puny human gesture the mighty forces of hell. Jesus asks him to replace it. Will he take from his Master that which He has come to accomplish? Will he who only a little while ago argued that Jesus should not wash his feet now prevent his own Redemption? No, when one knows God one no longer boasts of his own independence.

Now our Jesus is seized and bound. He Whom legions of angels might assist chooses to remain alone, man's self made chains jingling as He is shoved on by the mob to the home of Annas.

John and Peter trail Him. John is acquainted with the high priest, as he enters the courtyard, speaks a few words to the portress and obtains entrance for Peter also. But the maid, squinting in the night lights, asks Peter if he's not one of Jesus' disciples, and he answers, "I am not." What do the flames of the coal fire reveal in the face of this man as he stands there with the servants and attendants? Anxiety? Fear? Confusion? Look well into your own heart, your own denials, my soul, and you will know.

The high priest is questioning Jesus, but He Who has spoken to them, pleaded with them, in their synagogues has answered their questions again and again. Surely they know His doctrine. But His answer displeases a nearby attendant who slaps Him, and the Lamb of God asks, "Why dost thou strike Me?" He will ask another one day, "Why persecutest thou Me?" He will ask another one day and centuries later His Heart will say to a world yet mad, "Why dost thou throw Me in prison, brainwash Me, even try to kill My Soul? and the same answer will be given. Mute, because hearts have become too hard to hear the bleat of a Lamb.

Here's Peter yet bending over the coals, confusedly watching the mob lead his Master out to Caiaphas. Do those around the fire with him notice his disturbance? Once more he's asked and once more denies that he is one of Jesus' disciples. But now a relative of Malchus says, "Did I not see thee in the garden with Him?" Again denial, and the crow of a cock and exit and bitter tears from a broken heart.

By now it is early morning, and Jesus has been led to the praetorium, His feet dragging from fatigue and the taunts His captors have heaped upon Him all night. Pilate doesn't seem anxious to get involved, yet the crowd insists, holding unspoken threats against him.

Pilate flees to the comfort of his room and sends for Jesus. He is filled with questions. Strange that Jesus should condescend to answer them. This poor, bewildered man mumbles, "What is truth?" and here stands Truth before him. Surely God's mercy cries for this groping soul. He returns to our crowd to announce Jesus' innocence. The custom of releasing a prisoner during the Passover brightens his hopes and he offers to give us back our King. But we refuse Him and scream for the release of a robber, a killer, in exchange for Him Who has come to give us Life, abundantly. O God, here I am shouting for another, running, always running from You. Pursue, tremendous Lover, even yet pursue me!

19. Why is Pilate having Jesus scourged? Is it that he thinks he can pacify the blood-thirsty mob with this lesser violence, lesser sacrilege? Does he know of the soldiers' games, that they will play them to the hilt with a little Lamb standing silently in their midst, taking whatever He is offered? There is no one here to pity Him. No one to call a halt to their tortures, to beg these abuses averted from Jesus to himself, not one. All His friends have hidden, and here He is alone with those who hate because I myself have set boundaries to my love.

Minds have been satiated with worldly pleasures that we might not notice the inkling of human pity that yet remains our distinction among the beasts. This, the precious Body He has given into our keeping, we tear apart, bit by bit, and we watch the Precious Blood He gave us to drink trickle upon the ground. We watch. If we but knew what we were about we would lick the dust!

IS this not enough? Does our indifference not mock Him enough? Must we take unkindnesses, plait them into a crown of thorns to be set upon His Sacred Head? And why O why must we howl, shouting praises our hardness turns to cockeries, with each cruelty, almost unconscious of what we are about, pounding this crown further into His throbbing skull to make Him more and more a King? And we slap His Face. Well might we wander the rest of our lives mumbling, "Out, out damn spot!" till we learn that it will be erased only by our complete immersion in His Precious Blood.

Pilate brings Him once again before our rabble to announce that no guilt can be found in Him. Jesus is dragged before us, shaking with pain, weak, His mutilated Body cloaked in a regal robe, and upon His Head the crown from which scarlet jewels dangle and fall to bed themselves in His hair. Here He is, the composite of all that evil can effect upon a living being, and Pilate, standing in the presence of Truth, almost as another Baptist, prophesies, "Behold the Man!" NOT the God, the King, the Prophet, but the Man, imprisoned by those less than He. Who would not weep, strike his breast, fall upon his face and beg worthiness to gaze upon this sight? But instead a bunch of cowards call, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

Our shouts send the cringing Procurator back to the security inside the Praetorium with his Prisoner of Love. Again he questions Jesus, but the Prophet needs say no more. Pilate wonders at His silence, reminding Him that He stands before the man with power to either crucify or release Him. Now a few brief words as Jesus reminds him he can do nothing without permission from the God from Whom all power proceeds. It almost seems that Pilate has become Jesus' prisoner, and frantically he battles to release Jesus and himself. But we throw him yet deeper into his confusion by reminding him that should he release Jesus, to continue gathering the little ones into His Kingdom, he will be acting directly against the interest of the mighty Caesar, whose benefits he rather enjoys. Our threats bring him before us once more, and Jesus.

Pilate mounts the judgement seat above the Lithostrotos on which the Prisoner stands. He looks down upon the bowed Head of Jesus. He wants to love Him, if only it didn't cost so much. "After all, I've got to protect my name," he mumbles. Once more he attempts to do something for this lovable Stranger. He motions, "Behold your King!" But we close our eyes and cry, "Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him!" Then a bit of sarcasm, "Shall I crucify your King?" But the chief priests suddenly find politics most advantageous. They who have continually denounced Roman rule shout, "We have no King but Caesar." And with this Pilate quits, surrenders, hands this poor little Lamb to the roaring crowd and returns to comforts he couldn't enjoy in the gaze of a bleeding God.

At last Jesus has been surrendered to our mob. Now His eyes, His arms, rise to receive joyfully the altar on which He will be sacrificed. He embraces it, letting its ruggedness find a pillow in His raw shoulder. The bared nerves in His wound scream for mercy, as all the forces of evil come into contact with Goodness Itself. Who can guess this burden? But He draws it yet closer, yearning to feel its entire weight, and as we follow He bears all. He asks but that we follow Him.

Once more John spares us the length of this journey, the falls and the struggles to rise again, and he says, "They crucified Him." He's told us many names, Judas, Malchus, Annas, Caiphas, Pilate, but now he says THEY crucified Him. and here we are lost in the multitude, a hammer in our hand.

Pilate wrote the inscription to be place above His Head. Because of the feast there are many passers-by to read and wonder at this "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." The chief priests went to Pilate to request that he change this inscription, but he who had let them use him all through this crime finally made an attempt to halt his retreat. With authority and finality he sighed, "What I have written I have written...He's a King, but I've yet to discover the subjects of His Love."

The soldiers have divided the clothing of our Master among themselves, and cast lots for His tunic. Here hangs Almighty God, Creator of all things, naked, in agony, dying a criminal, His only crime that He loves us so!

How could I continue reading this narrative did the next sentence not appear? I've run frantically through this wild mob, looking for her, Only to see her, to stand near her is all I want. Mother! I shout, trying to raise my cry above the jeers of the rabble. I'm afraid, But now John tells us, "There was standing by the Cross of Jesus His Mother." How could I have thought to look elsewhere? Since Jesus left Nazareth she has followed, silently, mixed in with the others. Often she was shoved so far back she could not see Him, could receive His Gospel only on the whispers of the crowd. It almost seems that He's forgotten her, but she followed always and He knew she was there for Him and drew strength in this knowledge. She was content that He knew. But now is His Hour, and hers, and all have stepped aside to let her stand there with Him. To STAND there, motionless, for three hours. Not only her Immaculate Heart, but her entire body had endured martyrdom His Martyrdom, with Him.

Jesus speaks! He Who all this time has been whispering Psalms that poured the depths of His Love before the throne of God now has something to say to us. Listen well, my heart. His is weak, His Voice so soft, yet it is the Voice of a King that whispers, "Behold thy Mother!"

O God, she is looking upon me and extends her hand that I might take it. Now He is stripped of everything, and she has heard Him on Whom her entire life has been centered now give her away. NOW is the martyrdom of her Heart as she looks down upon me standing here holding her limp hand. But she is strong, and I feel her hand strengthen and lift me and clasp me to her heart; I've become as a sword!

All prophecies having been accomplished, Jesus' parched lips are yet begging for our love. "I thirst." He Who has endured to Love's infinite excess knows that His work has been accomplished and whispers, "It is finished." Bowing His Head, He is on His way to burst through Heaven's gates in triumph with those who await Him there...

Those who have come to Jerusalem for the feast are indignant at the prospect of the crucified bodies' defiling their Sabbath. Here is all they've demanded; He is crucified, yet they would have one more sacrifice?

But Jesus has expired. Why O why then pierce His Heart? Mother stands here yet. Is this wound another in the martyrdom of this Woman, the one in which she too sobs, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" because this is her very own wound, He isn't there. O Jesus, please send Your Spirit to take possession of my heart, that when she looks down to find me here and remembers I am here, she may recognize Another and receive consolation in her bitter loneliness. Please forgive me that I must be the one after the only One has gone. Let my smile become as a sanctuary lamp for her, that she may remember Your promise to be with us always.

Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate to request permission to bury this precious Body. No longer will He hide his love for Jesus. The Commandment of Love here demonstrated has ushered in the Life of Christ in the New Testament, Through His friends Jesus lives on. Silently, hurriedly, that Body is taken from Its altar and tenderly wrapped. She who once, long ago, wrapped Him in swaddling clothes now watches Him take a stone slab for His resting place. Silently she retraces His Way back to the city to find there rest, quiet. She is tired.

20. All is hushed. Once in the quiet of night God's almighty Word leapt forth, and now Jesus' glorious splendour brings yet more of darkness to our human night, as with Him we leap forth into the blinding glory of GOD.

It is before dawn this Sunday mornigg. With Mary Magdalene we tiptoe to the Holy Sepulchre to adore, to rest, in loneliness leaning upon a stone, longing, confused, weeping. But what is this? The stone has been removed from the entrance! O Jesus, they have stolen You from us.

Such a forgetful Little Sister am I to run with Mary to tell Jesus' loved ones, "They've stolen our Master!" Here we announce yet another sorrow, not comprehending that the only sadness is that because our eyes saw not the joyous significance of Calvary we're not capable of rejoicing today.

Immediately Peter and John hurry off to the tomb. Young John, more swift of foot, arrives first, and stooping sees the linens lying there. O how he must desire to gather these cloths stained in his Beloved's Precious Blood to carress them to his heart, these scarlet reminders of his Jesus. But he waits at the door for Peter. What must this hesitation/ have cost him? He doesn't tell us. He watches Peter enter and kneel before these precious relics, especially the one folded and lying aside from the others, that which cradled the jewels of His crown. Now, silently, we enter with John and kneel. Though we don't understand, Faith's light dazzles us, and we return to the life outside, wondering.

Here's poor Mary, weeping by the tomb. It's hard to believe. She stoops to look again, and there, one at either end of the slab where her Jesus was laid, sit two angels in flowing, radiant white garments. They who are filled with such rejoicing are amazed at a creature so desolate and ask, "Woman, why art thou weeping?" Someone has taken her Jesus, she explains. She now feels someone's presence behind her and turns round to find a young man who kindly asks her again why she is crying. She thinks he might be the gardener and begs that if he's removed her beloved Master he tell her where he has laid Him that she may give His sacred remains a worthy burial. But the young man speaks only her name. "Mary."

It is He! That Voice, the same that held her and an entire multitude in rapt stillness stop a moment one day, it lives again and calls her to follow. "Master!" she cries in joyous surprise, throwing herself upon the ground to kiss the wounds in His feet, now gloriously beautiful wounds. But He asks her to be content with the vision of Him and the sound of His Voice. Soon, so soon, she shall possess Him entirely. But now she is sent to His dear ones to spread the glad tidings. Jesus ascends to His Father and our Father, to His God and our God, for He has broken all walls that distinguish divinity and humanity. He has become human, He has conquered evil, and now what is human shall be made divine. She runs to the Disciples, still gathered in fearful remembrance of the Master's terrible end, and of the suspicion that must follow all who are His. And she almost sings, "I have seen the Lord." In her smile is strength to convince all who will but look.

Now it is late. Once more the sun has sought its rest, and darkness blankets the city. The Disciples have secured all the doors of the little room that shelters them and they speak in hushed tones. One raises his eyes, then tries to focus them upon the figure that stands here turning little candle flickers to nothingness. Silently, unannounced, Jesus has come to us. We stare, We mutter something to ourselves. We really don't know what to do. But Jesus quiets us, "Peace be to you." We've forgotten to welcome Him. It is He, returned to us as He promised. Should we be so surprised? He told us He'd come, our faithful Friend.

He extends His hands, like He is offering us something, And when He opens them, there before our eyes the indelible marks of our Redemption. And in His side our secure shelter. Rejoice, for it is He! Joy, and Peace. Now feel the warmth of His breath on our foreheads and receive the Holy Spirit of His Love to fill our hearts. And O listen to the gift He promises now. To His Apostles, to His priest forever, to Fr. Keith, He gives that which belongs to God alone. One in Him, they may absolve the sins of man, to make that which is dead in sin alive with the Life of God, to call the soul to live the Glorious Mysteries with Him. Jesus, thank You!! Never forget a missionary to whom You've given the powers of Your Holy Priesthood, and remember his wee little sister when he puts a drop of water into his wine. Let that drop not make it less Your Blood, but let the wine completely consume a little nothing. Only let me be there, to love, to shout the Gospel with his whole life. To offer Holy Mass, to die, with him, in Jesus.

Poor Thomas was out at the time of Jesus' visit. How anxiously we rush to inform him of the blessed event. He demands proof! So zealous for truth, yet so incredulous of fairy tales. Truth has lived among us, he'll finally see, and believe. But ~~who~~ would wait eight days if he might have a peek at Heaven NOW? through the eyes of Faith?

Jesus returns, gives us His peaceful greeting and turns to Thomas. Is he astonished? Jesus beckons him closer, invites him to place his finger where a nail once bedded and to feel His side, the gate through which was born His Church. But Thomas falls upon his face before Jesus and confesses, "My Lord and my God!" The Good Shepherd rejoices that His little black sheep is with Him once more, and, remembering all those who will follow, He tosses over His shoulder this promise, "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed."

St. John reminds us that he hasn't written all that Jesus did, but enough that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we may have life in His Name. *Moi, une toute petite sœur de Jesus, je crous!* or, as the little girl in "The Miracle of 34th Street" put it, "I believe, I believe. It's silly, but I believe." Thank God for fairy tales!!!

21. Here gather Peter and others of the Disciples, confused, restless, at the shore of the sea of Tiberias. In his idleness Peter's thoughts grow more uncertain, frightful, and suddenly he decides, "I'm going fishing." We follow our leader into his boat. All night we wait, yet there is nothing to satisfy our hunger.

We're so tired as we turn our little craft to shore. There is a flame dancing on the beach. What is it? A torch? Are we being sought? we find a beautiful young man who asks, "Have you any fish?" O how we long to give this gentle vagabond something, But our nets are empty; our poverty makes itself keenly felt.

He gently bids us cast the net to the right of the boat, where we're to find some fish. All night we've brought up empty nets, yet here by the shore, in the shallowest of the waters, we're told to gather fish? It's foolish, He knows nothing about fishing. We're baffled, yet in Holy Obedience we cast the net. Look! All the fatigue from our vigil has fled as we struggle together to bring this miraculous catch ashore. The beloved Disciple, a peaceful joy radiating from him as he recognizes his precious Master, whispers to Peter, "It is the Lord." O how consoling to hear from the lips of those most dear to Jesus this consolation, "It is He."

Dear, dear Peter, you're still so like your noisey, ambitious little sister, yet I know, I'm so sure, that Jesus smiles as we toss ourselves into the water, scampering to embrace Him all wet and bedraggled, while in no time the others reach Him calm, and much more presentable than we, their nets full. Yet I believe that He is pleased to see all of us, our kind Master.

But look, a warm fire and already a fish and bread prepared for us. But He was waiting for us, and He bids us bring some of the fish WE'VE caught. O what God is this that makes Himself dependent upon man that He may give His gifts? Who knows that to love Him and yet have nothing to give our Beloved would frustrate His poor little ones? So He places beautiful gifts in our hands that we may raise them to Him. Our Creator accepts a piece of His creation and fills the void with Himself. Now the Servant, always a Servant, offers breakfast to us. Does anyone's heart object, "Thou shalt never serve me!" No, in the presence of the risen Christ our accipio, our nothingness, is made manifest, and His Allness fills us.

Our meal is completed, and we sit around the warmth of the fire, unaware of the early morning's damp chill. Jesus turns to Peter. "Do you love Me more than these others?" he asks, Peter is pierced. It's obvious, and he softly answers, "You know I love You, Lord." Jesus says, "Feed My lambs." Let My Love live and grow within you that they not die of malnutrition without the Bread of Life.

Again, He asks, "Do you love Me?" O little tears that fill Peter's eyes that Jesus should have to ask, that his actions alone do not express that which he wishes to do for his Master. "You know I love You, Lord." Again Jesus' "Please feed them."

But now a third time, "Do you love Me?" Peter turns away, He thinks he sees, through these tears, the suffering Christ, and in the distance there is the crow of a cock. "Lord, You know all things. You know that I love You." Yes, He knows, and He commands us to feed His sheep, to bring His tremendous Love to all men. that they may love Him Who love them, to death, and resurrection.

Listen well, little one, How specifically He speaks to you. "When you were quite young you clothed yourself and walked wherever you desired. But now another must take your hand, and care for you, and you must go wher he wishes. Be abandoned; be Mine, and I shall take you to Myself, My own little martyr each day. For Mine will be the hands that serve you. Please let Me serve."

Here stands the beloved Disciple of Jesus, and we ask, "Lord, what about this man?" What shall become of him who loves You so much more than the rest of us? I've seen his amicitia manifest again and again, and I know what a joy he must be to Your Heart. You are his Joy. What about this man? You see, Lord, I live for him. Your Mother asked that that I be his. Yet what I give is too poor to be a gift for any man. Why O why must it be for him? It's painful to live for another, painful because he already possesses the Allness of God, he is aflame with divine Love, and I fear that I might dampen that Flame. But Our Mother has asked, and I accept this martyrdom because he too accepts. O how I long for the day when there will no longer be an I nor he but JESUS. And in this longing He lives, the risen Christ, and we adore. Now I end this pecking. It's been foolish, I know. But I tried to do as Jesus wished. It ~~is~~ time for rest. I aly in the cradle fo my Mother's arms and hear in her heartbeat words no book has contained. I love to be here. And when all is consummated may I yet be found here, learning of Jesus.

December 1, 1963