



The Seven Last Words

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“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34)

The first words that Jesus spoke after being nailed to the cross were ones of forgiveness. Jesus forgave those who mocked, scourged, tortured and nailed him to the cross. We remember Christ’s teaching: “Love your enemies.” (Matthew 5:44, Luke 6:27) Jesus thought not so much of the injuries He received from them, nor the death they inflicted upon Him, but upon the love which brought Him to die for them.

O Eternal Father, hear the prayer of Thy beloved Son, Who prayed to Thee to pardon us. We deserve not this pardon, but Jesus Christ has merited it, Who by His death has more than abundantly satisfied for our sins. I repent, O my Father, with all my heart, for having offended Thee, and through the merits of Jesus Christ I ask for pardon. And Thou, O my Jesus, Thou know that I am poor and sick, and lost through my sins; but Thou hast come from Heaven to heal the sick and to save the lost, when they repent of having offended Thee. Amen.



“Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:43)

Jesus said these words to one of the thieves who was crucified next to him. Christ taught us: “If your brother sins against you seven times in the day, and he turns to you seven times and says, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.” (Luke 17:4) In His goodness, God always gives us more than we ask for; the thief prayed that Jesus would remember him, and Jesus granted him his request. Thus, what God said through the prophet Ezekiel, that when the sinner heartily repents of his sins, God pardons him in the same way as if He had forgotten all the sins he had committed. St. Augustine said that God is ever prepared to embrace penitent sinners. Thus, it was that the cross of the wicked thief, being endured with hatred and impatience, became to him a precipice leading to Hell; while the cross endured with patience and goodwill by the good thief became to him a ladder to Paradise.

O my Jesus! Henceforth, I sacrifice to Thee my life, and I seek for grace to enable me, at the hour of my death, to unite the sacrifice of my life to that which Thou offered to Thy Father upon the Cross, and through which I hope to die in Thy grace, and loving Thee with pure love stripped of every earthly affection, to attain to love Thee through all eternity. Amen.



Jesus said to His mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” (John 19:26-27)

Just as Christ gave His mother to the disciple, He also gives His mother to us. Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life. No one can come to the Father except through Him. Mary, however, prays for us, intercedes for us, and brings us closer to Christ.

O suffering Mother! I have no hope of being saved, except by sharing the merits of the death of Jesus Christ; pray for me, that I may obtain this grace; and I pray thee to obtain it for me by the love of thy Son Whom thou saw bow His head and expire on Calvary before thy eyes. O queen of Martyrs, O advocate of sinners, help me always, and especially in the hour of my death! Even now I seem to see the devils, who, in my last agony, will strive to make me despair at the sight of my sins! Abandon me not when thou see me assaulted; help me with thy prayers and obtain for me confidence and holy perseverance. And because then, when my speech is gone, and perhaps my senses, I cannot invoke thy name and that of thy Son, I now call upon thee. Jesus and Mary, I commend my soul unto You. Amen.



“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46)

As Jesus spoke the opening verse of Psalm 22, He fulfilled its prophecy. Jesus predicted that like scattered sheep, His disciples will abandon Him. (Matthew 26:31, Mark 14:27) Even Simon Peter, who promised never to abandon Christ, not only abandoned Him but also denied Him three times. St. Leo the Great writes that this cry of the Lord was not a lamentation, but a teaching on the great wickedness of sin; because He had taken upon Himself to make satisfaction for our sins, Jesus was deprived of all sensible relief by which God comforts His faithful servants in their sufferings; He was left in darkness, fear, and bitterness, pangs which were deserved by us.

O Lord, remove not Thy help from Me and look towards my defense. (Psalm 21:20) O my Jesus, through the merits of Thy death, deprive me not of Thy help in that great struggle at the hour of my death. At that hour all things of earth will have deserted me; do not abandon me, Thou Who hast died for me, and can alone help me in that extremity. Grant that I should not be abandoned by Thy Divine grace, through the merits of the pains which Thou suffered in Thy abandonment. Amen.



“I thirst.” (John 19:28)

Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Psalm 69: “They gave me poison for my food; and for my thirst they gave me vinegar.” (Psalm 69:22) Severe was this bodily thirst, which Jesus endured on the Cross through His loss of Blood, first in Gethsemane, and afterwards in the hall of judgment, at His scourging and crowning with thorns; and, lastly, upon the Cross, where streams of His precious Blood gushed forth from the Wounds of His pierced hands and feet. But far more terrible was His spiritual thirst, that is, His ardent desire to save all mankind, At Jacob’s well, Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, “Give me to drink.” (John 4:9) More than just asking for a drink of water, Jesus expressed His thirst for souls by leading the Samaritan woman to believe in Him. As He hung upon the Cross, Jesus likewise expressed His thirst for souls. Indeed, Christ desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:4)

O my Jesus! Thou hast desired to suffer for me; while I, when my sufferings increase, become so impatient that I become intolerable both to others and to myself. O my Jesus! Through the merits of Thy patience, make me patient and resigned in the sicknesses and crosses which befall me; make me become like Thyself before I die. Amen.



“It is consummated.” (John 19:30)

At this moment, Jesus declared that all the sacrifices of the old law, all the prayers of the patriarchs, all the prophecies regarding Himself, His life and His death, all the injuries and insults which He would suffer have been accomplished. St. Augustine said, “What did He teach thee, Who, when He hung upon the Cross, would not come down, but that thou should be strong in thy God?” Jesus thought fit to complete His sacrifice even to death, in order to teach us that the reward of glory is not given by God except to those who persevere to the end, as He teaches us in St. Matthew: “He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved.” (Matthew 10:22)

O my Jesus! Thou hast placed me in the world that I might serve Thee and love Thee; Thou hast given me so many graces that I might be faithful to Thee; but, in my ingratitude, how often have I been willing to lose Thy grace and turn my back upon Thee! Oh, through Thy desolate death, which Thou didst accept for my sake, give me the grace to be grateful to Thee for all things. From this day forth I intend to drive from my heart every affection which is not for Thee, my God, my love, and my all. Amen.



“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” (Luke 23:46)

These were the last words Jesus spoke on the Cross. Jesus willingly gave up His soul to His Father in Heaven. Jesus has been perfectly obedient to His Father's will. Here, the Lamb of God was slain for our sins. By contemplating the seven last words of Christ, we can better appreciate Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

O Jesus, my Redeemer! I would not wait till death to commend my soul to Thee; I commend it to Thee now; suffer me not to turn my back upon Thee again. I see that my past life has only served to dishonor Thee; suffer me not to continue to displease Thee in my remaining days. O Lamb of God, sacrificed upon the Cross and a victim of love, grant by the merits of Thy death that I may love Thee with all my heart, and to be wholly Thine. Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit; Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth. Thou hast poured forth Thy Blood; Thou hast given Thy life to save me; suffer not that through my fault all should be lost unto me. O my Jesus, I love Thee, and I hope through Thy merits that I shall love Thee forever in heaven. In Thee, O Lord, I have hoped; I shall not be confounded forever. Amen.