Holy Week Mediations for the Consecrated Virgins

Dear Consecrated virgins and those preparing to receive the consecration,

With Holy Week just days away, striving to follow the directive from the Homily, ‘Imitate the Mother of God,’ I bring before you these simple meditations from book Meditations on Mary. May your walk with her, pondering in your heart, bring forth new life.

In the Heart of Jesus, Mary and St Joseph,

Barb

Pondering Palm Sunday with Mary

O Mary, as you see your Son mount the small donkey do you think of your travel by donkey, through the hill country, to visit and assist your cousin Elizabeth, carrying within your womb the Savior of the world? Do you think of your journey on the donkey, returning to Nazareth after the birth of St. John the Baptist, Our Lord ‘s presence beneath your heart, pondering all that happened over the months before? Do you ponder again the journey by donkey so near to the time of His birth, to Bethlehem, the City of David, the House of Bread? Do you remember the donkey ride in the hurried flight into Egypt, in the dark of night holding your Treasure close to your heart, this new born King of the Jews? Do you ponder all the little trips on the donkey, holding the young Jesus on your lap, and His riding alone as He grew older?

And now, He mounts the donkey of His own free will. To do the Father’s will is the reason He came. The fullness of time… The Hour has come… The final ride…

Wednesday of Holy Week

Waiting with Mary. It is Wednesday of Holy week. Our Lady knows the fullness of time has come. She ponders the suffering servant passages again in her heart. She continues to ponder and treasure in her heart the moments with Jesus these past days. There was Palm Sunday, her Son’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem, which touched her deeply. What moments of love Our Lord learned from His mother over the years. Her joy in His Divine presence, her humility being chosen by the Father, her obedience and fidelity, her charity reaching out to those in need.

All these had influenced His arrival into the Holy City. She sees His dignity as God with His profound humility. She hears the cries of Hosanna! Hosanna to the Son of David! She ponders and prays, supporting her Son in all things. She remembers the cries of the past, a contrast to the cries of the Holy Innocence, a contrast to the silence of the Holy Family’s flight into Egypt. She ponders the silence of their thirty years together. She ponders the Word of God silent on their ordinary entries into Jerusalem for the Passover. She ponders the year He was twelve. She and St. Joseph found Him in the temple after three days’ search. Doing the Father’s will… How she treasures these happenings. Now the prophets’ words have come to pass. The branches, the cloaks, the shouts of hosanna, then comes the night. FAITH with HOPE and LOVE - the Father’s will. The deafening silence of the dark night of faith. All things in the fullness of time. The words of the Old Testament coming to fruition. The Messianic prophecies now being fulfilled. Morning comes. Waiting comes. She remembers: Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel, He has come to His people to set them free, free to worship Him without fear, holy and righteous in His sight. For you will go before the Lord to prepare a way - the way of the cross, the way of suffering with love -to give His people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins. Through the tender compassion, compassion and mercy of our God, OUR GOD who longs to have us one with Him, the DAWN FROM ON HIGH shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death and to guide our feet into the way of peace, the way of love, the way of Christ, the way of the Father.

She waits.

Prays.

Accepts the Father’s will.

Return from Calvary (A meditation for Good Friday)

“It is finished.” Mary now beholds the son, John, entrusted to her by Jesus, her Son, the Son of God. Jesus, her Son, taken down from the cross, now buried in a tomb in a garden nearby. Her soul waits. Her heart keeps vigil. She ponders anew. She knows the Scriptures. All this was foretold by the prophets. All this was foretold by Jesus, Himself. He chose to come among us. He chose to suffer and die. They come away from the garden and retrace their steps.

Down the hill His words penetrate her heart: “Father, forgive them. They know not what they do.” She as mother repeats these words in her heart, soul, mind, and will. These words touch the point of mercy within her womb. The Church has burst forth from the open side of her Son. She is its mother.

She walks past the places -where her Son was nailed to the cross O sacred tree which held our salvation -where He was stripped of His clothes O divine Son, your dignity as Son remains -where the solders cast lots. “Father forgive them.”

Now they come to the place. Jesus had fallen here for the third time. She pauses. She remembers His love. He pressed forward when it seemed humanly impossible to go forward. Though His nature was divine he did not deem equality with God something to be grasped. Rather he emptied Himself… His love, His mercy prevailed.

He struggles to His feet

He teaches: Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus Who endured the cross heedless of its shame.

Continuing the journey from Calvary they come to where Jesus met the women. He spoke words of encouragement, Teaching words: Do not weep for Me. Weep for yourselves and for your children. Her Son teaches even in the midst of pain and suffering. He brings the fidelity to the Father’s will to those along the way of the Cross. She remembers. She ponders.

Here is another place. He had fallen here the second time. Each of these places is precious to her. Each place He loved without measure. He taught. She ponders His example to persevere, His example to love without limit. She remembers the agony. She remembers the pain. She remembers the words of the prophet.

She prayed Him forward.

Then there was Simon. At first he was reluctant to help her Son. Then their eyes met. She remembers the tug of the heart. She remembers the look of mercy. She remembers her prayer. She remembers asking the Father for the grace for Simon: Please reach out and help my Son. Simon responded to the needs of her Son. Though forced into service, Love carried him forth. His mercy endures forever.

Oh, Veronica. Here is where you loved. Here is where you stepped out to comfort her Son. Here is where your compassion was a reflection of the love and mercy you received from the Lord, from Jesus. Veronica, you remembered His teaching; your courage, your love overcame all fear.

Mary, here you finally were able to break through. Here you met Him. Here your eyes met. Here you encouraged Him with your heart. Your presence. Your reassurance you’d be there to the end.

This is the Father’s will

You remember the first yes, fiat, “Be it done unto me.” That yes included this final surrender, this total emptying of self. O Holy Spirit, You overshadowed Mary for her first encounter with her Son. You overshadowed them both with the Eternal Love. That love, that Holy Spirit, drove you both forward for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. That silent encounter. That silent pondering. That silent presence. Amidst the throngs of jeers, shouts, cruelties, all accepted as the Father’s will, all endured for love.

She and John near the place where they were to stay. The place where she will await His return. She ponders, she prays, She remembers….

Where Mary was at the trial, the brutal scourging, crowning with thorns.

We do know, as Mother she was near, praying and supporting Him.

Returning from Calvary, Returning from the fulfillment of the Father’s plan, Returning from the cross of glory, Retracing the way from the cross with her back to the city, let us resolve not to take the sufferings of others lightly. Let us resolve to unite them with her Son. Let us resolve to be there for others. Let us resolve to be that convincing sign of the Kingdom of God in our daily lives to which we are called as consecrated virgins.

O Mary, Mother of Our Savior, and our Mother, pray for us.

Shadows of Surprise (Easter Reflections)

Shadows are made from the encounter of light with darkness. As consecrated virgins, Christ our Light brings to our daily lives, if we are watching, waiting , and open to surprise, shadows of His Resurrected glory in our times of darkness.

Ponder His Light.

Ponder His glory shining through your cross united to His, for the salvation of souls.