

Till Death do us Join:

The Passion of the Divine Bridegroom



Opening Prayer

“Then the angel said to me, ‘Write this: Blessed are those called to the wedding feast of the Lamb.’” (Rev. 19:9)

Lord Jesus, Your Way of the Cross was about more than simply suffering; at its heart it was about love, the passionate love of You, the Divine Bridegroom, for Your Bride, the Church. You have invited us to the terrible and wonderful marriage of Calvary, where You laid down Your life in spousal love for each one of us. Though the world sees suffering as a curse, help us to realize that we are blessed to share in Your Passion. Draw us, beloved Savior, to return Your love by the total gift of ourselves, that one day we may rejoice with You at the eternal wedding banquet of Heaven.

I – Jesus is Condemned to Death

“I will betroth you to Me forever: I will betroth you to Me with justice and with judgment, with loyalty and with compassion; I will betroth you to Me with fidelity, and you shall know the LORD.” (Hosea 2:21)

As Pilate’s unjust sentence fell upon Your ears, Lord Jesus, You accepted the death that would unite You with Your bride. Countless billions of times, humanity has broken faith with You, and yet Your fidelity remains the same. Help us to see our own sufferings as our “betrothal” to You, the Suffering Spouse.

II – Jesus Takes up His Cross

“O mighty warrior, gird Your sword upon Your thigh; in splendor and state, ride on in triumph, for the cause of truth and goodness and right!” (Ps. 45:4-5)

Your Cross, Lord Jesus, is not a sign of shame and defeat. No, it is Your mighty weapon with which you slay the ancient dragon. You embrace the rough wood with resolve, thinking only of the Father You long to obey and the Bride You long to redeem.

III – Jesus Falls the First Time

“See! He is standing behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the lattices.” (Song 2:9)

Lord Jesus, the world sees You lying prostrate in defeat. But Your Bride sees you stooping down to her lowliness, disregarding the humiliation of such a descent, seeking to come to her even in her degradation of sin. Though she has walled You out, Your loving eyes see through her fearful defenses and beckon her to come to You in love and trust.

IV – Jesus Meets His Mother

“Behold King Solomon in the crown with which His Mother crowned Him, on the day of His marriage, on the day of the joy of His Heart!” (Song 3:11)

Lord Jesus, though both You and Your Mother suffer intensely, when your eyes meet you know the deeper joy of total self-giving. The Mother of Sorrows was called not only to witness her Son’s sacrificial death, but to *consent* to it. Only thus could she provide You with the bridal wreath of thorns that You longed to wear to Your mystical marriage.

V – Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus

“The friend of the Bridegroom, who stands and listens for Him, rejoices greatly at the Bridegroom’s voice. So this joy of mine has been made complete. He must increase; I must decrease.” (John 3:29-30)

Lord Jesus, every Christian, and especially every one of Your priests, is called to be a Simon, side-by-side with You in Your redemptive, spousal love for the Church. A priestly soul who truly embraces his vocation to victimhood with You will find himself more and more taken up into Your identity.

VI – Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

“How beautiful you are, My beloved, how beautiful you are! Your eyes are doves behind your veil.” (Song 4:1)

Lord Jesus, when Veronica reached out to help You, You gave her in return the precious gift of a bridal veil for Your Church. If Your Bride wishes to resemble You in glory, she must first resemble you in suffering; she must wear the veil of your bruised and bloody Face in this world, that she may behold your glorified Face in eternity.

VII – Jesus Falls the Second Time

“You have ravished My Heart, My sister, My bride, you have ravished My Heart with one glance of your eyes . . .” (Song 4:9)

Lord Jesus, You are a God madly in love, a God Who will do anything to win the heart of His beloved. So passionate was Your love for humanity that You chose to fall once again in weakness and humiliation, that You might be the closer to those who repeatedly find themselves far from You.

VIII – Jesus Speaks to the Women of Jerusalem

“Who is this coming up from the desert, like columns of smoke perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all kinds of exotic powders? See! It is the litter of Solomon . . .” (Song 3:6-7)

Lord Jesus, these women are weeping, but for the wrong reason. They see simply a just man condemned to death, and they offer You their pity. But You are so much more than meets the eye; You are the Royal Bridegroom lovingly advancing to give His life for His Bride. Therefore You redirect their attention, asking them not to weep *for* You, but to weep *with* You – because they and so many do not see the true meaning of Your Passion.

IX – Jesus Falls the Third Time

“I have come to My garden, My sister, My bride . . .” (Song 5:1)

Lord Jesus, this last fall brings You close to those whom the world sees as “lost causes.” They have fallen over and over again, and most have given up on them. But You, the faithful

Bridegroom, refuse to abandon them. You enter into their Gardens of Gethsemane and approach them in their agony, offering Your love and mercy as their last hope.

X – Jesus is Stripped of His Clothing

“The watchmen found me, as they made their rounds in the city; they beat me, they wounded me, they tore off my mantle, the watchmen of the walls.” (Song 5:7)

Lord Jesus, when sin and Satan stripped Your Bride of her dignity and beauty, You did not forsake her. No, You came to share her humiliation and shame, uniting Yourself with her even in her darkest hour. You offered Your own nakedness that she might be clothed with grace and love.

XI – Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

“See, upon the palms of My hands I have engraved you . . .” (Isaiah 49:16)

Lord Jesus, each of us laid a hand to the hammer that drove the nails into Your hands and feet. But by the ingenuity of Your love, our very cruelty became the means of our perpetual remembrance before the Father; in eternity, You show Him the Wounds that spell the name of Your Bride, asking Him to have mercy on the beloved You died to redeem.

XII – Jesus Dies on the Cross

“Beneath the apple tree I awakened you; there your Mother conceived you; there she who bore you conceived.” (Song 8:5)

Lord Jesus, as Your Mother stood beneath Your Cross, its once-barren wood brought forth a beautiful fruit. The anguish of the Sorrowful Virgin was her birth pangs as she brought forth her second-born, Your Bride, the Church. There on Calvary, the Queen of Martyrs helped You by her obedience to fashion a Bride “holy and without spot.”

XIII – Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

“Can the wedding guests fast while the Bridegroom is with them? As long as they have Bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But the days will come when the Bridegroom is taken away from them, and they will fast on that day.” (Mark 2:19:20)

Lord Jesus, the great marriage upon the Cross is over. The Bridegroom has given Himself to the last ounce of His blood, and His soul has departed to seek out and rescue His Bride from the realm of the underworld. His Mother and all those left behind begin the long vigil of fasting and waiting for His return.

XIV – Jesus is Buried

“Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above other kings; Your robes are fragrant with aloes and myrrh.” (Ps. 45:8-9)

Lord Jesus, those who buried You thought that the spices they brought would serve no purpose other than anointing Your dead body. Little did they know that, on the third day, those same spices would herald the coming of a risen King! Soon they would see the Bridegroom returning from His wedding chamber with His redeemed Bride at His side.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, how can we thank You enough for all You have done for us? You were not satisfied with merely redeeming us – no, You wished to make all of us a part of Your mystical Bride, destined to rejoice in union with You for all eternity. Help each of us us to keep our precious wedding garment pure and spotless, ready for that great day when You call out to us, “Arise, My beloved, My beautiful one, and come!” (Song 2:10)