

Prayer to St. John, Apostle and Evangelist

*"Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God;
everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God."*

(1 Jn 4, 7)



Introduction

St. John, Apostle and Evangelist. Son of Zebedee (Mk 1:20; Mt 4:21), brother of James the elder (Lk 5:10), and disciple of John the Baptist (Jn 1: 35-41), was among the first to follow Jesus. He is the beloved disciple who at the Last Supper placed his head on Jesus' chest (Jn 13: 23-25). Witness of the transfiguration (Mt 17: 1) and of the Lord's agony (Lk 14:33), he is present at the foot of the cross, where Jesus entrusts his Mother to him (Jn 19: 26-27). Together with Peter he saw the empty tomb and believed in the resurrection of the Lord (Jn 20: 1-9). Evangelist theologian, he deeply penetrates the mystery of the Word made human, full of grace and truth (Jn 1: 1-14). In the first letter, the summit of wisdom theology, he gives us the highest definition of divinity: God is love (1 Jn 4: 8). Exiled to the island of Patmos, he was caught up in ecstasy on the day of the Lord (Rev 1;9-10) and had the visions described in Revelation, the last book of the New Testament. His memory on December 27 is mentioned in a Syrian "Breviary" from the end of the 4th century, and in the Hieronymian martyrology (6th century). Fr. Dehon wrote: "Saint John was formed as a model of the Priests of the Heart of Jesus especially in the Upper Room and on Calvary. On the burning Heart of love of his divine Master and under the cross, John became a victim of the Heart of Jesus, a victim of love and reparation". (DSP 1919, 107)

Gospel: Jn 19: 25-37

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I thirst." There was a vessel filled with common wine. So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to his mouth. When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, "It is finished." And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit.

Now since it was preparation day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath, for the sabbath day of that week was a solemn one, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken and they be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out.

An eyewitness has testified, and his testimony is true; he knows that he is speaking the truth, so that you also may [come to] believe. For this happened so that the scripture passage might be fulfilled: "Not a bone of it will be broken." And again another passage says: "They will look upon him whom they have pierced."

Meditation

“The Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph and St. John are, after the Sacred Heart of Jesus, our main patrons. St. John, being the apostle of love, the apostle of the Sacred Heart, is necessarily the patron and model of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. He was the beloved disciple of the Heart of Christ. Since he heard the *Sequere me*, Follow me, he attached himself to Jesus. For three years he listened to his words and his lessons. He witnessed his miracles, his power, and his mercy. He received from Jesus special proofs of his love, of his goodness, and of his benevolence. When John had tasted the happiness of the personal presence of his divine Master for three years and after having received from him countless manifestations of his compliance, his goodness, his solicitude, he understood a second *Sequere me*, an invitation to follow Jesus in the garden of agony, on the way to Calvary, right under the cross, on Golgotha. It will always be the same for us, for the work (the congregation) in general and for each of us in particular. Crosses must follow the lights and consolations, as proof of our love and to give us the grace of immolation” (P. Dehon, DSP 1919, 103-104).

Prayer: Union with the Heart of Christ

My God, my Savior,
I adore Thy Sacred Heart,
for that heart is the seat and source
of all Thy tenderest human affections for us sinners.
It is the instrument and organ of Thy love.
It did beat for us.
It yearned over us.
It ached for us, and for our salvation.
It was on fire through zeal,
that the glory of God might be manifested
in and by us.
It is the channel through which has come to us all
Thy overflowing human affection,
all Thy divine charity toward us.
All Thy incomprehensible
compassion for us,
as God and Man,
as our Creator and
our Redeemer and Judge,
has come to us, and comes,
in one inseparably mingled stream,
through that Sacred Heart.
O most Sacred symbol and
Sacrament of Love,
divine and human, in its fullness,
Thou didst save me by Thy divine strength,
and Thy human affection,
and then at length by that wonder-working blood,
wherewith Thou didst overflow. Amen.

(Saint John Henry Cardinal Newman, 1801-1890)