

The Messiah had to suffer, so as to enter into His Glory

*From a discourse by Saint Anastasius of Antioch, Bishop
(Dissertation 4:1-2, PG 89. 1347-1349)*

After Christ had shown Himself, through His words and works, as true God and Lord of the universe, He was saying to His disciples, about to go up to Jerusalem: Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the Gentiles and the chief priests and the scribes, so that they scourge Him, mock Him and crucify Him.

This He said was in accordance with the predictions of the prophets, who had announced in advance the death that he was to suffer in Jerusalem. The sacred Scriptures had prophesied from the beginning the death of Christ and all that He would suffer before his death; as also what was to happen to His body, after death; with all this they predicted that this God, to whom such things happened, was impassive and immortal; and we could not have Him for God, if, in contemplating the reality of His incarnation, we did not discover in it the just and true motive to profess our faith in both extremes, that is, in His passion and in His impassivity; as also the motive by why the Word of God, for all else impassive, wanted to suffer the Passion: because it was the only way man could be saved. All of these things that only He knows and those to whom He reveals them; He, in effect, knows everything that concerns the Father, in the same way that the Spirit penetrates the depth of the divine mysteries.

The Messiah, then, had to suffer, and His passion was totally necessary, as He himself affirmed when He qualified those men without intelligence and short of understanding, those disciples who ignored that the Messiah had to suffer to enter into His glory. Because He, in truth, came to save His people, leaving that glory that He had with the Father before the world existed; and this salvation is that perfection which was to be obtained through the Passion, and this was to be attributed to the One who led us to salvation, as the letter to the Hebrews teaches us, when it says that it is He who guides us to our salvation, perfected through the medium of suffering and endurance.

And we see, in a certain way, how the glory that He possessed as the Only Begotten, and the same glory which He renounced for us for a brief time, is restored to Him through the cross in the same flesh that He had assumed. In effect, Saint John says in his Gospel, when explaining in what the water consists of; in that water which the Savior said would flow like a torrent from the breast of the one who believes in Him: This He said about the Holy Spirit, which was to be received by those who would be united with Him by faith, as the Spirit had not yet been given to them, because Jesus had not been glorified. This is why the Lord, in the prayer that He directs to the Father before His Passion, asks to be glorified in that glory that He had together with Him, before the world existed.

PRAYER

LET US PRAY,

Lord God, who has provided us with the remedy of our evils through the Paschal Mystery, fill your people with your heavenly gifts, so that they may attain perfect freedom and come to enjoy fully in the Heaven of joy that they have already begun to taste on earth. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit and is God, for ever and ever. Amen

The Risen Christ visits his Mother accompanied by the fathers of the church by Lorenzo Pasinelli (1629-1700); 1657; Certosa di San Girolamo, Bologna, Italy

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