A Discourse on the Passion of our Lord J. C.

And there followed him a great multitude of people, and of women, who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning to them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. Words taken out of the 23d C. of St. Luke 13, 27th and 28th Vs.

Is not then the Passion of J. C. of which we this day celebrate the august but sorrowful Mystery, the most affecting object which ought to occupy our minds and excite our grief? Can our tears be possibly more holy and more profitably employed than in bewailing the death of a Man-God, and that a more urgent and a more necessary duty should suspend as I may say, the obligation which gratitude otherwise so justly imposes on us of compassionating with overfowling sentiments of Piety, the sufferings of our Divine Redeemer? Yet, my Friends, Jesus Christ, as a proof of...
the most generous and disinterested charity that ever was going to Mount Calvary to die for us, administered not to hew out his death, but to conceal a very different object. Not like here supreme red superiors, note A. Ambrose pronouncing the funeral oration of the Emperor Valentinian the younger. Thought that he had duly acquitted himself of his duty, and to the full satisfaction of his auditors, when he had exhorted them to testify by the tribute of their tears, what the owed to this incomparable Prince who had exposed his life and had as it were immolated himself for them. Solvamus bone Principi dependerimus laetnam et pro nostro etiam supersedium solvit. But I who am about to entertain you on the latter death and sufferings of a God Saviour of mankind instead of borrowing the words of A. Ambrose so opposite to my subject, find myself compelled on the contrary to say to you, My dear friends, give not your tears to your dying God, he does not require them, your tears are precious, be careful in the employment of them, a subject of greater importance calls for them. Jesus Christ does not only permit you not to bewail his death, but he even expressly forbid you of this should be an obstacle to your revealing an evil which more strictly concerns you and which effectively is more deplorable than even the death of the son of God. I am aware that all creatures became or appeared sensible thereat. The Sun was eclipsed, the earth trembled, the Veil of the Temple was rent, the rocks split asunder, the graves opened and the dead rose again; all nature was troubled: man alone I repeat it is dispensable from this duty, provided that he acquit himself of another which is indeed life tender in appearance but more solid in reality. Let us then leave to the luminary bodies and to the elements, or if you choose to associate with them intellectual creatures, let us leave to the blessed angels the care of honouring the funeral obsequies.
of Jesus Christ by the tokens of thine offering, the Angels of peace say Praise shall sweep e'er. But as for us, let us weep with Y. C. let us weep for what Jesus Christ wept: thus we shall sanctify our tears and render them voluntary to us.

An evil which in the idea of God is greater than the death of a Man: God in evil which is more deserving of our tears than all that the Son of God endured in his Passion, you are too enlightened my dear Friend, not to have immediately understood to be that of nothing among all possible beings sin. Nothing among all possible beings sin could claim our tears in preference to the sufferings of Jesus Christ and justify the words of God our Father, when he said to us with equal truth and charity: Weep not over me but weep for yourselves. Dost it be more super one, red super one.

To obey this command of our Divine Master and to profit of so important advice let our motive in considering the Mystery of this Holy Passion be to bewail the disorder of our sins at the cause of it. For if Jesus Christ had suffered independently of our sins, his Passion, however redemptive to him, would not be so dreadful to us; and if our sins had no connection with his sufferings, they would be less odious to us. This, therefore by sin that we are to measure the inestimable benefit of the Passion of the Son of God and by the inestimable benefit of his Passion to measure the preciousness of sin.

Behold the subject of our tears and of your pious attention.

If what our Holy Faith this day represents to us be a thing most wonderful, in the order of nature; yea, a suffering God: I may confidently affirm that this prodigy astounding as it is, is surpass'd by that which the same faith discovers to us in the order of grace, when it places before our eyes a penitent God. Such is (O the depth of the Council of God)
such is the quality which the Saviour of the world has been pleased to take upon himself, and which he constantly bore during the whole course of his Passion. Such is the Mystery which we celebrate and which, according to the Holy Scripture, true piety consists in. Two things, contrition inspired by which we detest sin, and satisfaction by which it is atoned for, when by a penitent God, I mean a God affected with the most lively contrition for the sins of man, and in the strictest sense of justice for the sins of men. Substitution, which the Man-God Jesus, took upon himself from the first moment of his life, and which we are going to see in the exact way it is set forth in the day of his Passion. For this purpose, I mean to represent him to you in the garden of Olives and on Mount Calvary. In the garden as a witness before God feeling all the bitterness of sin on Calvary, where he expired that you may there contemplate in his person a God offering himself a victim in satisfaction for sin. Harken your attention, and let us begin by the interior pain of J. C. as we learn what ought ever to be the subject of our grief. No sooner had he entered into the garden and applied himself to prayer than he was so overwhelmed with grief that he declared to his Disciples that his soul was sorrowful even unto death. Sufferest thou to me argue a contentious he was seized with the greatest sorrow; he was oppressed with heavenly, infinite tender, so great was the conflict in his interior that he already suffered a kind of agony, a mixture of which from his sacred body by a sweat of blood. What is the meaning of all these things? Echos of stones in a God who is all power? What doth he fear? Why is he troubled? Why this discouragement in a soul which in other
respects, enjoying the clear vision of God
doth not cease to be gilled with the pure
joy of gratitude? Why this internal war
and this revolt of the passions in a mind
incapable of being moved by any other
springs than those of reason and reason
reason? Ah! My dearest, this is what
we ought well to meditate on for our
edification. For to say that the Saviour
of the world thus prized only at the sight of
dead, that the ignominy alone of the Cross
or the rigor of the torments with which they
were preparing for him caused him in him
these afflictions, these duress, these mortal
scares, would not be to have a sufficient
of the Passion of a God. To my brethren,
eloquently replies St. Chrysostom, this is not
what this great soul was the most afflicted
at. The Cross which I had chosen as the
instrument of our redemption did not
appear to him so terrific an object. The
Cross which was to be the cause of his
glory, did not become to him a subject of
shame. The Chalice which his Father had
given to him, and for which reason was
most precious to him, was not that bitter
Chalice for which he testified so great an
horror, and which forced from all the
members of his sacred body a sweat of
blood; it was not precisely the approach
of the Mysterious Baptism of this Death.
For however bloody was to be this Baptism
he had most earnestly desired it, he had
sought it with an holy eagerness; he had
said to his Apostles, I have a Baptism
wherein I must to be baptized; and Russia
forbade it until it be accomplished. St. Luke
iv. 37. There was then another cause besides
the presence of His death, that rendered
the soul of our Saviour thus sad and
distressed. It was sin as I have already
observed amongst all beings sin alone
was capable of causing this poignant grief
in the Man-God, and render the Lord of Glory
a suffering and repentant God. Pray yourself.
mind again. My dear Friend, above all human conceptions and by the light of Faith attentively consider this great Truth.

Whilst the Chief Priests and Pharisees were holding Council at the House of Ciphar against Jesus Christ and were preparing to oppress him by false accusations and judicious crimes, Jesus Christ in the garden humbly and prostrating himself before his Eternal Father considered himself without however and prejudice to his innocence, loaded with real crimes and according to the Prophecy of Isaiah, which was shortly literally verified in him: Permit me iniquitatem omnis nostrae. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:6. Now in consequence of God having transferred our iniquities upon his adorable Son, this just one who was incapable of sin, found himself loaded with the sins of all nations that were of all ages, the sins of all states and conditions: yes with all the sorrows that ever would be committed and of which he had a distinct knowledge; with all the blasphemies that would be uttered against Heaven, with all the scandal and abominations that would be spread over the whole universe. All these iniquities rushed like a torrent upon him and were to him as so many executioners. Circumdecentem dolores, oneris, saith he, et torrentis iniquitatis conturbaverunt me. The sorrows of death surrounded me: and the torrent of anguish troubled me. These words of the Prophecy I say are those of J. C. for according to the interpretation of St. Augustine, they ought to be personally understood of him. I was then at this happy moment for my bitterest dolorous to Jesus Christ that the Prophet Jeremy justly said to him: magna est velox mare contritio tua. Ah! Lord your sorrow is like unto a vast ocean for its fathom fathomless depth and its inmeasurable immensity. I was to increase and swell this sea that all the sins of mankind as the holy Scripture mentions entered as so many rivers into the soul of the Son of God for it is also of his passion and of the depth of his sorrow.
that this passage is to be understood Solomon saith for
this quoniam intriciumaque uigas ad animam
meam. With this difference however that the Hebrew
which grow into the sea become it hindered and
interrupted there with that the one cannot be
distinguished from the other whereas in the
Abys of sin, in this sea of Salvars, in which
the Soul of our Saviour was immersed the
dearly discerned and distinguished every
specie of sin and those of every individual
person. Can it then be surprising that this
immense multitude of crimes which
according to the Metaphor of the Holy Ghost
having formed a deluge of waters in His
Blessed Soul, it should be as it were
swallowed up thereby? Or in the excess
of sadness and grief proceeding from
his zeal for his Father's glory and his
Charity for us, that this deluge of water
should be followed by a sweat of blood?
Fractus est sudor ejus sicut guttae laqueus
Behold what I call the contrition of a God
and the first act of his penance. We will
at present pass over the purity of Judas,
and innumerable other outrages, indignities
and sufferings of Jesus Christ and proceed
to Mount Calvary where he expired,
there contemplating in spirit this
 Crucified God, the Author and Finisher of
our Faith, who according to the exclamation
of the Apostle Heb. 12. Having joy proposed
to him underwent the Cross, suffering
the most cruel and ignominious death.
Why was the most innocent of men
 treated as the most criminal and
delivered up to unmerciful execution?
Ah! My Friends, this death was the
punishment due to our sins, and
what ever horror we may conceive
for what passed on Mount Salvars,
we must acknowledge was justly ordained.
and boldly and divinely executed. For we are not this day to consider the Saviour of the World as to what he is in himself, but as to what he voluntarily chose to be for the love of us. We are not to regard his passion with respect to the Jews who were only the instruments of it, but with respect to God who was therein the principal agent and sovereign Disposer. Jesus Christ in himself was the Holy of Holies, he was the well beloved of His Father; the Object of His complacency, the Head of the Elect, the Source of all Blessings and incarnate Sanctuary. But on Mount Calvary, these qualities were, as I may say, eclipsed; he made himself a curse for our sakes, bearing pro nobis malcontentum and became the propitiation for our sins; propitiatio pro peccatis. John 3:18. Now having charged himself with our sins, there were no punishments that were not due to Jesus Christ, humiliations, affronts, whips, scourges, nails, thorns, and the Cross, for all these were merited by our sins. Considering him in this point of view, did he suffer too much? No, his Charity says. St. Bernard was just and abundant, but it was not lavished. If he is called the man of sorrows, it is in a name, says Tertullian; most applicable to him since he is the man of sin, we behold him bruised and torn with blows and scourges, but between the number of strokes and the multitude of crimes which he atones for, there is but too great a proportion. He is abandoned to a wicked, cruel and barbarous rabble, who add to the sentence of death all that their fury can suggest; but although they add to the sentence of Pilate, they add nothing to that of God. Whilst then this Divine Lamb is immolated by His Father, instead of your minds being propugnated with
his merit, his sanctity, and his virtues, consider him as the victim for your sins. If you represent him to yourselves in this view charged with all our debts, that flagellation to which he was condemned will no longer appear so offensive to you; those thorns that tear him will no longer wound the delicacy of your piety; those nails that pierced his hands and feet will no longer excite your indignation. My eyes, you will supervise yourselves there is no desire of all this pain, and since Jesus Christ has taken them all upon himself, he must suffer all the punishment due to them. Wherever on this consideration, the Eternal Father, by a conduct so admirable as it is rigorous, forgetting (as I say) he allowed them expressions forgetting that he is his Son and regarding him as his Enemy, declares himself his persecutor or rather the chief of his persecutors. The Jews made their hatred for him serve as zeal for religion, to inflict upon his sacred Body all that cruelty could invent; but the cruelty of the Jews did not suffice to punish a man like unto this, a man loaded with all the crimes of the human race. It was necessary, says St. Ambrose, that God should have a share therein. Yes, my Friends, it was God rather than the Counsel of the Jews that delivered up Jesus Christ. It was a scene of the Divine Wisdom that the just one, as though guilty, was delivered into their hands as St. Peter had told them. Definito consilio et praevisione Dei traditione histis. This one the Pharisees and Doctors of the Law persecuted Jesus Christ unto death.
but it was not as holy David, divinely inspired, said till after the Lord had struck him. They have persecuted him whom they hast written: Domine quemuperint persecutum. Untill then, they had respected him; until then, howsoever much they were incensed against him, they had not dared to offer violence to his sacred person. But no more had they A God vented their just wrath against him, than thou gavest them a recompense and thy fall upon the innocent prey reserved for their fury. But why whom was he reserved if not by thee O Lord who, in their sacrilegious vengeance didst effect thy own which was most holy? Long didst thou wait for this victim; it was necessary that thy glory should be repaired, and thy justice satisfied. This then hadst in view; but seeing in the world no other than weak men and criminal subjects whose sufferings could be of no merit in thy sight, thou didst find Thyself in a kind of inability of avenging Thyself. This day thou canst do it: For behold a victim capable of atoning for the sins of a thousand worlds, such a Victim as they desired, and as thou deservedst. This sacrifice fastened to the Cross is the Subject whom thy rigorous justice had itself prepared. Strike then O Lord, strike, he is ready to receive the strokes of thy just wrath, regard him not as thy anointed, but cast thine eyes upon him only to remind thee that he is our first or victim, and that in immolating him thou mayest satisfy that Divine hatred which thou hast for Him. But God is not
satisfied with striking him but he abandons him in the midst of his sufferings to so great interior desolation that he crieth: Dextra mea, Deus meus, ut quid de me liquisti? My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Matt. 27.) He does not however use these words that he may be delivered from his sufferings but he hereby shows us the rigour of the Divine Justice which required that he should suffer such excessive moments. Now in all this procedure of God there can be nothing but what is perfectly consonant with the Rules of Equity. Sæpe sith St. Augustin there never was a death more just and at the same time more unjust than that of our Redeemer: more unjust with respect to men who were the executioners and more just with respect to God who passed the sentence.

Behold, My dear Friends, what sin has cost our blessed Lord. Reflect how great is the difference between his sorrow and satisfaction for it and ours: that he was innocent and we are the guilty and you will see with how great reason he says to us: WEEP NOT OVER ME BUT WEEP FOR YOURSELVES. Let us then, in consideration of the sufferings of our Dear Redeemer, conceive the greatest horror and sovereign hatred and detestation for sin which was the cause of them. Let us willingly accept of whatever crosses and afflictions God may require of us in satisfaction for them. If he were to exact of each of us what He did of His beloved Son we should have no cause to complain.
But of infinite Mercy and Bounty of our God! Almost all the punishment is inflicted on His adorable Son, and favours are heaped upon us. His blood is shed, ours is not required, we have only to offer up His and apply it to us by the means of the Holy Sacrament which He has established, unite ourselves to Him, be diligent in the holy exercise of prayer, resignedly receive the light afflictions which the Divine Providence may please to send us, and the penance which the Church and Religion enjoins us, in union with the sufferings of our Blessed Redeemer: and through his merits we shall come to the possession of that glory which He purchased for us at such an immense price. A happiness which I sincerely wish. In the Name of the Father, &c.