

"Father seriously offended...."

**INSTITUTE OF THE BETHLEMITE SISTERS
DAUGHTERS OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS
Holy Brother Pedro Province – India**



*"Heart of Jesus, afflicted,
but always gentle with men,
even with the most rebellious
and unknown" (MER)*

February 2017

Introduction

As part of the second year of preparation for the bicentenary of the birth of our Mother Incarnation, the celebration of April 9 will be the centre of the charismatic reflection of the year:

"MEN DO NOT CELEBRATE THE PAINS OF MY HEART"

Before reflecting each of the Lamp every month, it seems useful to offer a general introduction of the Lamps they present: the intimate history of the passion of Christ and his Church, because the passion of Jesus was and is for the disciples of that time and always, the most disconcerting fact to which it owes an answer.

The theology that underlies the devotion of the "10" lamps brings us into contact with Jesus, who with his passion demands great acts of love and reparation from the impoverished, disfigured, hungry, socially bound man. Our Mother Encarnacion, in each of the lamps expresses a passage of the passion of Christ. This devotion has a profound meaning for our faith. Let us read and interpret the passion from the suffering of men. The death of Jesus evokes no pain, no pious sentiments, but calls for the fight against the causes of suffering and death.

As Bethlemites, we are called, in the Church to live the Mystical aspect of the Lamps. What Mother Encarnacion has left us is not a new devotion to the Heart of Jesus, it is rather a particular aspect, intimate, we can only grasp if we understand the inner feelings of Mother, it was not an exaltation of her thought, and it is rather an intuition under the omnipresent action of the Spirit.

Mother Encarnacion, illuminated by the Spirit, has intuited a relationship between the Ten Commandments and unobserved ten historical moments of physical and intimate passion of the heart of Jesus and that not without reason. The rejection of the commandments is the rejection of love of God and neighbour and cause of evil and suffering for oneself and for the community. Mother Encarnacion sees in the Church the sufferings of the heart of Christ, derived from the non-observance of the Ten Commandments. Hence the meaning and value of the different intentions of prayer that she proposes in the Lamps.

Let us take for our reflection the Gospels which present us **the Agony of Jesus** that we are called to contemplate in **First Lamp** for this month:

Mt 26, 36-46

Mk 14, 32-42

Lk 22, 39-46

First, the suffering of Jesus was not only his humanity struggling with the physical agonies of the cross, but Jesus' divinity and humanity inseparably coming to grips with the awesome agony of Calvary. It is not Jesus' humanity which dominates this text, but the disciples' humanity. It is His divinity and humanity, dying for man that is in focus. It is supernatural suffering that is in view here.

Second, the measure of Christ's agony in Gethsemane is the measure of man's sinfulness and of its disastrous and painful consequences. We read the words, "the wages of sin is death," but these words take on a vastly deeper and more personal meaning in the light of Gethsemane.

Third, the measure of Christ's agony in Gethsemane is the measure of the suffering which Christ endured for the conversion of the sinners.

Fourth, the measure of Christ's agony at Gethsemane is the measure of the love of God for sinners, which caused Him to die that we might live. "What wondrous love is this ...?" It is, indeed, amazing love which caused the Son of God to voluntarily pursue the path of pain which led to the cross.

Fifth, this text makes it clear that what Jesus did for the salvation of men, He did alone. The disciples did not understand what Jesus was doing. They tried to resist it when it began to take place, by drawing the sword. They did not watch and pray with the Savior. They did not bear Him up in His hour of grief. Jesus suffered and died alone, unaided by men, even the closest of His followers. What Christ did, He did in spite of men, not because of them.

Sixth, the suffering of our Lord is the test, the standard, for all suffering. Let those who think they have suffered for God place their suffering alongside His, as described here. The writer to the Hebrews reminded his readers that they had not yet suffered to the shedding of blood ([Hebrews 12:4](#)). But whose suffering will ever begin to approximate His? The best that we can do in our suffering is to gain some meaning with Christ and His suffering, some minutely small sense of what He underwent for us (cf. [Philippians 3:10](#)). His suffering should surely silence our complaints of giving up much for Him.

Finally, we are reminded of the tremendous power of prayer. Prayer, in this text, did not deliver our Lord from suffering, but it did deliver Him through it. So often we pray that God might get us out of adversity, rather than through it. Prayer is one of God's primary provisions for our endurance and perseverance. His words to His disciples apply to us as well: "Pray that you will not fall into temptation."

Suggestions for Reflection

All of us have experimented, throughout our life painful situations, moments filled with darkness, fears, anxiety. We have fear towards pain, destruction, suffering...We have fear of solitude, of isolation, of not being loved.....All these experiences appear in our life in one or other occasion and in different forms..... How do I live this experience of the Agony of Jesus in these moments of our life?

FIRST LAMP

“Pray for the conversion of sinners....”



“The Heart of Jesus is ready to suffer innumerable pains for each one of us.” (MER)

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First Lamp: *“Let us meditate the Agony of Jesus in the garden of Olives. Let us offer our prayer for the conversion of sinners, because with their sins they have offended the Eternal Father who is just.”*

In this 1st Lamp Mother Encarnacion presents us the terrible Agony of Jesus which suppress the heart of Christ in Gethsemane and his tenacious adhesion to the will of the Father, his painful vigil of prayer in front of the deep sleep of his disciples and his resolution to face with maximum fidelity the consequences of “his hour” of his choice.

The fidelity to God is reaffirmed from the 1st Commandment: “I am the Lord, your God: you will not have other God’s before me.” (Dt.5,7). God makes us free, gives us fullness of life and invites us to believe in his words, do his will of love and wants that we place all our trust in Him, our Father. When we don’t find the courage for a decisive faith and trust or we confide in ourselves and in our idols, then we go away from god, and we avoid to place our interest in him and to search for Him. It is here then the pain of Christ: the Father seriously offended.

The Decalogue and the First Commandment (Ex 20, 2-6)

Before giving Law, God reveals Himself: I am the Lord your God "(Duet 5: 5-6) God is not a thing, is not an idea, is not an abstraction, as Greek philosophy affirmed, is rather a "person", a "you" who inclines towards men and wants to be a close God, a friend of men, rich in help: "your God." Living in communion with him; this is important. This is the mystic of the Law.

The unity and uniqueness of God for man excludes not only idolatry, but also, all inner division of oneself: man is one, as God is one. Thus all human life is unified in the worship of the one God and nothing can escape this worship. "You will not have other God" does not admit that man can target different purposes or on his way to meet other goal other than God.

In the first commandment God asks for faith as man's response to Him, which is revealed and given. Faith is not an occasional act; it is rather a fundamental attitude that sums up all of man's religious attitudes towards God. Faith is the "Yes" said to God is to say: "Amen," with all its consequences; is to take God without reservation. Faith is a relationship to God that embraces all man, both in his external behaviour and in his intimate life. In the faith man opens himself to the living God, to his existence, to his love, to his promises and to his demands.

"Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me" (Mt 26, 39) The biblical metaphor of the chalice expresses participation in prosperity or suffering. Here this imagine signifies the physical and moral sufferings of the passion of Jesus.

It is not the sin of Jesus but our sin that is always before him as an insult. With greater reason it must be present before each of us as our true, unique, substantial enemy. Every sin increases the bitterness of the agony of Jesus in Gethsemane an agony continues also in our time: "Christ is in agony until the end of the world in the Church" (Pascal).

And the starting point of our consolation as Bethlemites called to live the 1st Lamp should be to fight against sin and bear the sins of others, by repairing up to the spiritual participation in the "inner crisis" (agony) of Christ.: No crisis of ours can be strange to that of Gethsemane; and ours crisis of yesterday, today and tomorrow are but a memory, an echo and part of it.

The agony of Christ is repeated and prolonged in the drama of those who struggle for the cause of God, who is identified with the cause of man and living their faith consistently. Each believer in each era revives the agony of Gethsemane, more or less intensely and with more or less positive success: "fixed eyes to Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith" (Heb 12, 2)

In Gethsemane Jesus has reduced to obedience his human nature: he has harmonized the flesh with the spirit, the human will with the divine will. But this harmony may not have been possible without prayer: And being in an agony, he insisted more in prayer "(Lk 22, 44). It is the irreplaceable weapon for the agony of the spirit.

To Reflect:

As Bethlemites we have a loving and painful legacy to REPAIR THE PAINS OF CHRIST.

- How do you live this charismatic dimension of reparation?
- Do you feel that you share the pain of Christ present in today`s reality and try to find remedy?
- How do you express in your life faithfulness to the plan of God?
- What meaning has in your life as Bethlemite: to interiorize the meaning of THE AGONY OF JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF OLIVES.

Let us pray:

Most sorrowful Sacred Heart of Jesus, for your agony in Gethsemane and for the pain you felt when you saw the Father gravely offended (for our sins, especially for those of atheism and secularism); I beg you to offer my prayer united to your sufferings, in reparation (and my adhesion of faith and love to his will) for the conversion of sinners. Amen.

Our Father