



THE THIRD SACRED WORDS (for March 10 Zoom Discussion)

***"Jesus said to his mother: "Woman, this is your son."
Then he said to the disciple: "This is your mother."***

John 19:26-27

Overview. Jesus spoke 7 times during his agony on the cross. Each weekly reading during Lent will address one or more sets of those 7 sacred, final words. In each 3-4 page reading, you'll find a discussion of the relevant Gospel(s) as well as Lenten insights from featured writers and talented artists. The current reading will be attached to each weekly St. Richard's E-Mail during Lent. You may also pick up hard copies in the St. Richard's Church Office. The readings have visuals as well as words.

We will discuss the 3rd set of sacred words (John 19) during our **Summoning the Divine Zoom session on Wednesday evening March 10** (6:30-7:30 p.m.). We'll also welcome anything else you'd like to discuss. It would be great if you have time to do the reading, but don't worry if you can't get to it, you can still be an active participant. Dates for the coming Wed. evening Zoom discussions are Wednesday March 10, 17, 24, & 31.

THE VIRGIN MARY, APOSTLE JOHN, AND THE SUFFERING JESUS

It would be impossible for us to fully comprehend what it would've been like at foot of Cross. The soldiers had taken Jesus' seamless woven tunic, but to cast lots for it rather than tear it. John, Jesus most beloved disciple, is the only "official" disciple present. Mary Magdalene is also present; she may well have been a disciple. Also near the cross were also the Virgin Mary and Mary, the wife of Clopas (perhaps, Joseph's brother).

What must the Virgin Mary felt meeting her Son as he carried the Cross on the Via Dolorosa (the Sorrowful Way)? She had to watch him being nailed to the Cross. Imagine her anguish and bravery. "When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, 'Woman, here is your son,' and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' From that time on, this disciple took her into his home" (John 19:26-27). John fully accepted Jesus asking him to care for his mother.

Interesting thought. The terms *brother* and *sister* in Hebrew or Aramaic at that time could mean either a biological sibling, cousin or kinsman, or a spiritual brother or sister. Now if James, Joseph and Judas and Simon were also natural sons of Mary, Jesus would not have been called the "son of Mary," but rather "one of the sons of Mary." **Source:** jesuschristsavior.net/Words.html.

Mary was an "older" woman. We assumes Joseph has died. John's gospel certainly suggests it. If Jesus were the only son, commanding one of his closest disciples to care for her makes sense. Even if he had brothers, they were not present at his crucifixion and were not believers in Jesus' divinity (see John 5:7). Jesus entrusted Mary to John, who was a devoted believer.

The care Jesus had for His mother reflects Jesus caring for and respecting widows and all those underserved. Luke offers the remarkable account of Jesus raising a young man presumed dead. **"Jesus** said to the **dead** man, 'Young man, I say to thee, arise!' And

he who was **dead**, sat up and began to talk, and **Jesus** gave him back to his mother (Luke 7:11-17). James, who may have been the half-brother of Jesus, would later call such care for widows "pure religion." "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" (James 1:27)

The foretelling of Jesus' crucifixion is implicit when Mary and Joseph present young Jesus at the Temple. There we meet the devout Simeon. The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that "he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah." Simeon says to Mary: "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too" (Luke 34-36). **Sources:** gotquestions.org/Jesus-Mary-John.html; christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-83/mary-at-cross.html; jesuschrist Savior/ words.html.

T. S. Eliot, Poem & Prayer: *Ash-Wednesday* (1927) & *Anima Christi* (1927)



Introduction. Eliot insisted on the importance of the hyphen in *Ash-Wednesday* since that specific Wednesday presents an ultimate moment of crisis and change. Eliot, age 39, became a British citizen in 1927. That same year he was baptized and confirmed in the Anglican Church.

He had produced the revolutionary poetry collections that confronted the struggling human condition emerging from First World War (1914-1918). Clearly, Eliot never imagined that Christian religious belief, or the behavior which that belief entails, makes life or the acceptance of one's self any easier. His poem *Ash-Wednesday* represents his personal struggle with faith and lack of faith. He ardently attempts to rise to the demands of belief as he makes his painful way through Lent. He concludes with his appeal: *Suffer me not to be separated and let my cry come until thee*. This 'cry' is the prayer coming out of Eliot's suffering. Such was Eliot's faith.

Final Passage, *Ash-Wednesday*

Blessèd sister, holy mother,
Spirit of the fountain,
Spirit of the garden.
Suffer us not to mock ourselves
with falsehood
Teach us to care and not to care.
Teach us to sit still.
Even among these rocks, our peace
in His will.
And even among these rocks
Sister, mother and spirit of the
river,
Spirit of the sea, suffer me not to
be separated.
And let my cry come unto Thee.

Anima Christi. Eliot offers a poetic prayer with some lines often attributed to St. Ignatius of Loyola (Jesuit priest, 1492-1556)

T.S. Eliot, *Anima Christi* (Soul of Christ), 1927

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O Good Jesus, hear me.
Within your wounds hide me.
Permit me not to be separated from you.
From the wicked foe, defend me.
At the hour of my death, call me
and bid me come to you

That with your saints I may praise you
Forever and ever. **Amen.**
[Inspired by Prayer attributed to St. Ignatius of Loyola)

Sources: I've added my insights to University of Sydney Professor Barry Spurr's excellent essay.
franciscanmedia.org/franciscan-spirit-blog/anima-christi-a-mystical-prayer.ignatianspirituality.com
/ignatian-prayer/prayers-by-st-ignatius-and-others/anima-christi

YOU ARE MINE (Sung by David Hass)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sgm9IkTNQmc> **4:53 Min.**

Songwriters: Peter De Angelis / Bob Marcucci

1. I will come to you in the silence.
I will lift you from all your fear.
You will hear my voice.
I claim you as my choice.
Be still, and know I am near...

2 I am hope for all who are hopeless.
I am eyes for all who long to see.
In the shadows of the night,
I will be your light.
Come and rest in me.

REFRAIN

*Do not be afraid, I am with you
I have called you each by name
Come and follow Me
I will bring you home
I love you and you are mine.*

3. I am strength for all the despairing
Healing for the ones who dwell in shame
All the blind will see, the lame will all run
free
And all will know My name

REFRAIN

4. I am the Word that leads all to
freedom.
I am the peace the world cannot give.
I will call your name, embracing all your
pain.
Stand up, now, walk, and live!

REFRAIN (repeated twice)

Christ on the Cross with the Virgin Mary & St. John (c. 1457-1460)

Rogier van der Weyden (c. 1399-1464), Belgium

This Flemish artist was among the most profound and influential painters of the 15th century. He was internationally famed for his natural detail and expressive pathos. Although he was apprenticed to an older artist for a few years beginning in 1427, van der Weyden soon surpassed his master. In 1435 he was named painter to the city of Brussels. His eldest son Corneille attended university and then entered the Carthusian Order. In 1450, van der Weyden travelled to Rome. He also worked for the Duke of Burgundy and for foreign princes as well as for the city and church. He eventually gave Christ on the Cross with Virgin and St. John painting to the Carthusian monastery. In return, the Carthusians said Mass for his soul and his wife's on the anniversary of their deaths. The bold red cloth of honor heightens the emotional effect Notice that the three figures form a triangle. Christ looks down at Mary, who is weeping while John with hands raised is silently praising Christ.

The Painting is on the next page.

Comment on Painting. In this painting, van der Weyden creates "living" figures that mirror the aspect of statues. Their uniform, white garments emphasize the purity and sanctity of Jesus with this white loin cloth and Mary and John in their white robes. The color white also represent the white habits of the Carthusian Order. Notice that the 3 figures form a triangle: weeping Mary, Jesus looking down...exhausted, and John's hands

raised in prayer and praise. The sides of a triangle are often used to reflect the three parts of the Trinity. (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). In this instance, we have the godhead Christ, the deeply loving Holy Spirit (Mary) and the "new" son St. John.

St. John & the Virgin also represent two complimentary images of pain: Mary is turned inward while John looks up. The suffering Jesus down look but seems almost ready ascend.

This sumptuous, yet stark painting and its blood-red, cloth walls represent the blood of the sacrificed Christ for humanity. In this profound crucifixion moment, the painter includes only Jesus, Mary and John. All the furor, shouts, and people--even those who appear at the Cross in John's gospel are absent. This is the hour of lead.....but it is also the hour of coming salvation.

Details: Here are 2 detailed cut outs from the painting. The single nail piercing Christ's feet is so real & horrible. The skull and bones are at the bottom of the cross. The skull and bones would be evident in the actual, complete version of this painting.



Sources: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christ_on_the_Cross_with_Mary_and_St_John; visual-arts-cork.com/famous-paintings/descent-from-the-cross-veyden.htm; nationalgallery.org.uk/artists/rogier-van-der-veyden.