

KNOWING CHRIST:
HIS DEATH AND BURIAL
REFLECTIONS BY ST. THOMAS AQUINAS



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Caput 229 De morte Christi

Cum autem in Christo convenient in unam personam tres substantiae, scilicet corpus, anima, et divinitas verbi, quarum duae, scilicet anima et corpus, unitae sunt in unam naturam, in morte quidem Christi separata est unio corporis et animae. Aliter enim corpus vere mortuum non fuisset: mors enim corporis nihil est aliud quam separatio animae ab ipso.

Neutrum tamen separatum est a Dei verbo quantum ad unionem personae. Ex unione autem animae et corporis resultat humanitas: unde separata anima a corpore Christi per mortem, in triduo mortis homo dici non potuit. Dictum est autem supra quod propter unionem in persona humanae naturae ad Dei verbum, quidquid dicitur de homine Christo, potest et convenienter de Dei filio praedicari. Unde cum in morte manserit unio personalis filii Dei tam ad animam quam ad corpus Christi, quidquid de utroque eorum dicitur, poterat de Dei filio praedicari. Unde et in symbolo dicitur de filio Dei, quod sepultus est, propter hoc quod corpus sibi unitum in sepulcro iacuit, et quod descendit ad Inferos, anima descendente.

Est etiam considerandum, quod masculinum genus designat personam, neutrum vero naturam: unde in Trinitate dicimus, quod filius est alius a patre, non aliud. Secundum hoc ergo in triduo mortis Christus fuit totus in sepulcro, totus in Inferno, totus in caelo, propter personam, quae unita erat et carni in sepulcro iacenti, et animae Infernum expolianti, et subsistebat in natura divina in caelo regnante; sed non potest dici quod totum in sepulcro aut in Inferno fuerit, quia non tota humana natura, sed pars in sepulcro aut in Inferno fuit.

Chapter 229 The Death of Christ

In Christ three substances, the body, the soul, and the divinity of the Word, are joined together in one person. Two of these, the soul and the body, are united to form one nature. Accordingly at the death of Christ the union between body and soul was dissolved. Otherwise the body would not have been truly dead, since death of the body is nothing else than the separation of the soul from it.

But neither soul nor body was separated from the Word of God, as far as union with the person is concerned. Human nature results from the union of soul and body; hence Christ could not be said to be a man during the three days of His death, when His soul remained separated from His body by death. However, as was shown above, on account of the union of the human nature with the Word of God in one person, whatever is said of the man Christ can rightly be predicated also of the Son of God. Consequently, since the personal union of the Son of God both with the soul and with the body of Christ remained in death, whatever is said of either of them could be predicated of the Son of God. Hence the Creed asserts that the Son of God was buried, for the reason that the body united to Him lay in the tomb, and likewise that He descended into hell, because His soul descended.

We should also recall that the masculine gender designates a person, and that the neuter gender designates nature. Thus in speaking of the Trinity we say that the Son is another person (alius) than the Father, but not that He is another thing (aliud). Accordingly, during the three days of His death the whole (totus) Christ was in the sepulcher and in hell and in heaven, because of His person which remained united to His flesh reposing in the tomb and to His soul which was emptying hell, and which continued to subsist in the divine nature reigning in heaven. But we cannot say that the whole (totum) of Christ was in the sepulcher or in hell, because not the whole human nature, but only a part was in the sepulcher or in hell.

Caput 230
Quod mors Christi fuit voluntaria

Fuit igitur mors Christi nostrae morti conformis quantum ad id quod est de ratione mortis, quod est animam a corpore separari, sed quantum ad aliquid mors Christi a nostra morte differens fuit. Nos enim morimur quasi morti subiecti ex necessitate vel naturae, vel alicuius violentiae nobis illatae; Christus autem mortuus est non necessitate, sed potestate, et propria voluntate. Unde ipse dicebat, Ioan. X, 18: potestatem habeo ponendi animam meam et iterum sumendi eam.

Huius autem differentiae ratio est, quia naturalia voluntati nostrae non subiacent: coniunctio autem animae ad corpus est naturalis, unde voluntati nostrae non subiacet quod anima corpori unita remaneat, vel quod a corpore separetur, sed oportet hoc ex virtute alicuius agentis provenire. Quidquid autem in Christo secundum humanam naturam erat naturale, totum eius voluntati subiacebat propter divinitatis virtutem, cui subiacet tota natura. Erat igitur in potestate Christi ut quandiu vellet, anima eius corpori unita remaneret, et statim cum vellet, separaretur ab ipso. Huiusmodi autem divinae virtutis indicium centurio cruci Christi assistens sensit, dum eum vidit clamantem expirare, per quod manifeste ostendebatur, quod non sicut ceteri homines ex defectu naturae moriebatur. Non enim possunt homines cum clamore spiritum emittere, cum in illo mortis articulo vix etiam possint palpitando linguam movere: unde quod Christus clamans expiravit, in eo divinam manifestavit virtutem, et propter hoc centurio dixit: vere filius Dei erat iste.

Non tamen dicendum est quod Iudaei non occiderint Christum, vel quod Christus ipse se occiderit. Ille enim dicitur aliquem occidere qui ei causam mortis inducit, non tamen mors sequitur nisi causa mortis naturam vincat, quae vitam conservat. Erat autem in potestate Christi ut natura causae corrumpenti cederet, vel resisteret quantum ipse vellet: ideo et ipse Christus voluntarie mortuus fuit, et tamen Iudaei occiderunt eum.

Chapter 230
Voluntary Character of Christ's Death

Christ's death was like our death as regards the essence of death, which consists in the separation of the soul from the body. But in another respect the death of Christ was different from ours. We die for the reason that we are subject to death by a necessary law of nature, or in consequence of some violence done to us. But Christ did not die because of any necessity. He gave up His life by His power and His own will, as He Himself attested: "I have power to lay it [My life] down, and I have power to take it up again" (John 10:18).

The reason for this difference is that physical things are not subject to our will. But the joining of the soul to the body is physical. Hence the fact that the soul remains united to the body or that it is separated from the body, is not subject to our will, but must be brought about by the power of some agent. But whatever was physical in Christ as regards His human nature, was completely subject to His will, because of the power of His divinity, to which all nature is subject. Therefore Christ had it in His power that so long as He willed, His soul would remain united to His body, and that the instant He willed, the soul would depart from the body. The centurion standing near the cross of Christ felt the presence of this divine power when he saw Him expire with a loud cry. By this Christ clearly showed that He was not dying like other men, from the breaking down of nature. For men cannot send forth their last breath with a loud cry; in the moment of death they can scarcely move their tongue in a quavering whisper. Hence the fact that Christ died uttering a loud cry gave evidence of the divine power in Him. It was for this reason that the centurion said: "Indeed, this was the Son of God" (Matt. 27:54).

Yet we may not aver that the Jews did not kill Christ, or that Christ took His own life. For the one who brings the cause of death to bear on a person is said to kill him. But death does not ensue unless the cause of death prevails over nature, which conserves life. Christ had it in His power either to submit His nature to the destructive cause or to resist that influence, just as He willed. Thus Christ died voluntarily, and yet the Jews killed Him.

Caput 231
De passione Christi quantum ad corpus

Non solum autem Christus mortem pati voluit, sed et alia quae ex peccato primi parentis in posteros proveniunt, ut dum poenam peccati integraliter susciperet, nos perfecte a peccato satisfaciendo liberaret. Horum autem quaedam praecedunt mortem, quaedam mortem subsequuntur. Praecedunt quidem mortem corporis passiones tam naturales, ut fames, sitis, lassitudo et huiusmodi, quam etiam violentae, ut vulneratio, flagellatio et similia: quae omnia Christus pati voluit tanquam provenientia ex peccato. Si enim homo non peccasset, nec famis aut sitis aut lassitudinis vel frigoris afflictionem sensisset, nec ab exterioribus pertulisset violentam passionem. Has tamen passiones alia ratione Christus pertulit quam alii homines patiantur. In aliis enim hominibus non est aliquid quod iis passionibus repugnare possit. In Christo autem erat unde iis passionibus resisteretur, non solum virtus divina increata, sed etiam animae beatitudo, cuius tanta vis est, ut Augustinus dicit, ut eius beatitudo suo modo redundet in corpus: unde post resurrectionem ex hoc ipso quod anima glorificata erit per visionem Dei, et apertam et plenam fruitionem, corpus gloriosae animae unitum gloriosum reddetur, impassibile et immortale. Cum igitur anima Christi perfecta visione Dei frueretur, quantum est ex virtute huius visionis, consequens erat ut corpus impassibile et immortale redderetur per redundantiam gloriae ab anima in corpus; sed dispensative factum est ut anima Dei visione fruente simul corpus pateretur, nulla redundantia gloriae ab anima in corpus facta. Suberat enim, ut dictum est, quod erat naturale Christo secundum humanam naturam, eius voluntati: unde poterat naturalem redundantiam a superioribus partibus ad inferiores pro suo libito impedire, ut sineret unamquamque partem pati aut agere quod sibi proprium esset absque alterius partis impedimento, quod in aliis hominibus esse non potest.

Chapter 231
The Passion of Christ as Regards His Body

Christ wished to suffer not only death, but also the other ills that flow from the sin of the first parent to his posterity, so that, bearing in its entirety the penalty of sin, He might perfectly free us from sin by offering satisfaction. Of these ills, some precede death, others follow death. Prior to the death of the body come natural sufferings, such as hunger, thirst, and weariness, and also sufferings inflicted by violence, such as wounding, scourging, and the like. Christ wished to endure all these sufferings, since they stem from sin. If man had not sinned, he would not have experienced the affliction of hunger or of thirst or of fatigue or of cold, and he would not have had to undergo the suffering caused by external violence. Christ bore these sufferings for a different reason from that on account of which other men endure them. In other men there is nothing that can resist these sufferings. But Christ had at His disposal means to withstand evils of this sort: not only the uncreated power of His divinity, but also the beatitude of His soul, which is so powerful that, as Augustine says [Epist. CXVIII, ad Dioscorum, 3], its happiness in its own way flows over into the body. Thus after the resurrection, by the very fact that the soul will be glorified by the vision of God in unrestricted and full fruition, the body united to the glorified soul will be rendered glorious, impassible, and immortal. Therefore, since the soul of Christ enjoyed the vision of God in the highest degree of perfection, His body should in consequence, so far as the power of this vision is concerned, have been rendered impassible and immortal by an overflowing of glory from the soul to the body. But divine wisdom so disposed matters that Christ's body would suffer at the very time His soul was enjoying the vision of God, with no overflow of glory from the soul to the body. For, as we have said, all that was physical in Christ's human nature was subject to His Will. Hence at His good pleasure He could prevent natural redundancy from His higher to His lower parts, and so could allow any part to suffer or do whatever would be proper to it without interference from any other part. This, of course, is impossible in other men.

Inde etiam est quod in passione Christus maximum corporis dolorem sustinuit, quia corporalis dolor in nullo mitigabatur per superius gaudium rationis, sicut nec e converso dolor corporis rationis gaudium impediēbat.

Hinc etiam apparet quod solus Christus viator et comprehensor fuit. Sic enim divina visione fruebatur (quod ad comprehensorem pertinet) ut tamen corpus passionibus subiectum remaneret, quod pertinet ad viatorem. Et quia proprium est viatoris ut per bona quae ex caritate agit, mereatur vel sibi vel aliis, inde est quod Christus quamvis comprehensor esset, meruit tamen per ea quae fecit et passus est, et sibi et nobis.

Sibi quidem non gloriam animae, quam a principio suae conceptionis habuerat, sed gloriam corporis, ad quam patiendo pervenit. Nobis etiam suae singulae passiones et operationes fuerunt proficuae ad salutem, non solum per modum exempli, sed etiam per modum meriti, inquantum propter abundantiam caritatis et gratiae nobis potuit gratiam promereri, ut sic de plenitudine capitis membra acciperent.

Erat siquidem quaelibet passio eius, quantumcumque minima, sufficiens ad redimendum humanum genus, si consideretur dignitas patientis. Quanto enim aliqua passio in personam digniorem infertur, tanto videtur maior iniuria: puta si quis percutiat principem quam si percutiat quendam de populo. Cum igitur Christus sit dignitatis infinitae, quaelibet passio eius habet infinitam existimationem, ut sic sufficeret ad infinitorum peccatorum abolitionem. Non tamen fuit per quamlibet consummata humani generis redemptio, sed per mortem, quam propter rationes supra positas ad hoc pati voluit, ut genus humanum redimeret a peccatis. In emptione enim qualibet non solum requiritur quantitas valoris, sed deputatio pretii ad emendum.

This also accounts for the fact that during His passion Christ suffered most excruciating pain of body. For His bodily pain was in no way lessened by the higher joy of His rational soul, just as, conversely, pain of body did not obstruct the joy of His rational soul.

This reveals, too, that Christ alone was both a viator and a comprehensor. He enjoyed the vision of God, which characterizes the comprehensor, but in such a way that His body remained subject to sufferings, which characterizes the wayfarer. And since a wayfarer has power to merit, either for himself or for others, by the good works he performs from the motive of charity, Christ too, although He was a comprehensor, merited both for Himself and for others by His works and sufferings.

For Himself Christ merited, not indeed glory of soul, which He had from the first instant of His conception, but glory of body, which He won by suffering. For us, too, each of His sufferings and actions was profitable unto salvation, not only by way of example, but also by way of merit; owing to the abundance of His charity and grace, He could merit grace for us, so that thus the members might receive of the fullness of the head.

Any suffering of His, however slight, was enough to redeem the human race, if the dignity of the sufferer is considered. For the more exalted the person on whom suffering is inflicted, the greater is the injury judged to be; for instance, a greater outrage is committed if one strikes a prince than if one strikes a common man of the people. Consequently, since Christ is a person of infinite dignity, any suffering of His has an infinite value, and so suffices for the atonement of infinitely many sins. Yet the redemption of the human race was accomplished, not by this or that slight suffering, but by Christ's death, which, for reasons listed above, He chose to endure to redeem the human race from its sins. For in any purchasing transaction there is required, not only a stipulated amount of appreciable commodity, but also the application of the price to the purchase.

Caput 232

De passibilitate animae Christi

Quia vero anima est forma corporis, consequens est ut patiente corpore, et anima quodammodo patiat: unde pro statu illo quo Christus corpus passibile habuit, etiam anima eius passibilis fuit.

Est autem considerandum, quod duplex est animae passio. Una quidem ex parte corporis, alia vero ex parte obiecti, quod in una aliqua potentiarum considerari potest. Sic enim se habet anima ad corpus sicut pars animae ad partem corporis. Potentia autem visiva patitur quidem ab obiecto, sicut cum ab excellenti fulgido visus obtunditur; ex parte vero organi, sicut cum laesa pupilla hebetatur visus.

Si igitur consideretur passio animae Christi ex parte corporis, sic tota anima patiebatur corpore patiente. Est enim anima forma corporis secundum suam essentiam, in essentia vero animae omnes potentiae radican- tur: unde relinquitur quod corpore patiente quaelibet potentia animae quodammodo pateretur. Si vero consideretur animae passio ex parte obiecti, non omnis potentia animae patiebatur, secundum quod passio proprie sumpta nocumentum importat: non enim ex parte obiecti cuiuslibet potentiae poterat aliquid esse nocivum. Iam enim supra dictum est quod anima Christi perfecta Dei visione fruebatur. Superior igitur ratio animae Christi, quae rebus aeternis contemplan- dis et consulendis inhaeret, nihil habebat adversum aut repugnans, ex quo aliqua nocumenti passio in ea locum haberet.

Potentiae vero sensitivae, quarum obiecta sunt res corporeae, habere poterant aliquod nocumentum ex corporis passione: unde sensibilis dolor in Christo fuit corpore patiente. Et quia laesio corporis sicut a sensu sentitur noxia, ita etiam interior imaginatio eam ut no- civam apprehendit, inde sequitur interior tristitia etiam cum dolor in corpore non sentitur: et hanc passionem tristitiae dicimus in anima Christi fuisse. Non solum autem imaginatio, sed etiam ratio inferior nociva cor- poris apprehendit: et ideo etiam ex apprehensione in-

Chapter 232

The Passibility of Christ's Soul

Since the soul is the form of the body, any suffering un- dergone by the body must in some way affect the soul. Therefore in that state in which the body of Christ was passible, His soul was passible also.

We may note that the suffering of the soul is of two kinds. One kind of suffering arises from the body, the other from the object that causes suffering, and this can be observed in any one of the faculties. For the soul is related to the body in the same way that a part of the soul is related to a part of the body. Thus suffering may be caused in the faculty of sight by some object, as when vision is dimmed by an excessively bright light; suffering can also arise from the organ itself, as when vision is dulled because of an injured pupil.

Accordingly, if the suffering of Christ's soul is regarded as arising from the body, the whole soul suffered when the body suffered. For the soul in its essence is the form of the body, and the faculties, too, are all rooted in the essence of the soul. Consequently, if the body suffers every power of the soul suffers in some way. But if the suffering of the soul is considered as arising from an object, not every power of Christ's soul suffered, un- derstanding suffering in the proper sense as connoting harm. For nothing that arose from the object of any of these powers could be harmful, since, as we saw above, the soul of Christ enjoyed the perfect vision of God. Thus the higher reason of Christ's soul, which is im- mersed in the contemplation and meditation of eternal things, embraced nothing adverse or repugnant that could cause it to suffer any harm.

But the sense faculties, whose objects are material things, could receive some injury from the suffering of the body; and so Christ experienced pain of sense when His body suffered. Furthermore, just as laceration of the body is felt by the senses to be injurious, so the inner imagination apprehends it as harmful; hence interior distress follows even when pain is not felt in the body. We assert that suffering of such distress was experienced by the soul of Christ. More than this: not the imagination alone, but also the lower reason appre-

ferioris rationis, quae circa temporalia versatur, poterat passio tristitiae habere locum in Christo, inquantum scilicet mortem et aliam corporis laesionem inferior ratio apprehendebat ut noxiam, et appetitui naturali contrariam.

Contingit autem ex amore, qui facit duos homines quasi unum, ut aliquis tristitiam patiatur non solum ex iis quae per imaginationem vel per inferiorem rationem apprehendit ut sibi nociva, sed etiam ex iis quae apprehendit ut noxia aliis quos amat: unde ex hoc tristitiam Christus patiebatur, secundum quod aliis, quos ex caritate amabat, periculum imminere cognoscebat culpae vel poenae, unde non solum sibi, sed etiam aliis doluit.

Et quamvis dilectio proximi ad superiorem rationem quodammodo pertineat, inquantum proximus ex caritate diligitur propter Deum, superior tamen ratio in Christo de proximorum defectibus tristitiam habere non potuit, sicut in nobis habere potest. Quia enim ratio superior Christi plena Dei visione fruebatur, hoc modo apprehendebat quidquid ad aliorum defectus pertinet, secundum quod in divina sapientia continetur, secundum quam decenter ordinatum existit et quod aliquis peccare permittatur, et quod pro peccato puniatur. Et ideo nec anima Christi, nec aliquis beatus Deum videns, ex defectibus proximorum tristitiam pati potest. Secus autem est in viatoribus, qui ad rationem sapientiae videndam non attingunt: hi enim etiam secundum rationem superiorem de defectibus aliorum tristantur, dum ad honorem Dei et exaltationem fidei pertinere existimant quod aliqui salventur, qui tamen damnantur.

Sic igitur de eisdem de quibus dolebat secundum sensum, imaginationem et rationem inferiorem, secundum superiorem gaudebat, inquantum ea ad ordinem divinae sapientiae referebat. Et quia referre aliquid ad alterum est proprium opus rationis, ideo solet dici quod mortem ratio Christi refugiebat quidem si consideretur ut natura, quia scilicet naturaliter est mors odibilis: volebat tamen eam pati, si consideretur ut ratio.

hends objects harmful to the body; and so, as a result of such apprehension by the lower reason, which is concerned with temporal affairs, the suffering of sorrow could have place in Christ, so far as the lower reason apprehended death and other maltreatment of the body as injurious and as contrary to natural appetite.

Moreover, in consequence of love, which makes two persons, as it were, one, a man may be afflicted with sadness not only on account of objects he apprehends through his imagination or his lower reason as harmful to himself, but also on account of objects he apprehends as harmful to others whom he loves. Thus Christ suffered sadness from His awareness of the perils of sin or of punishment threatening other men whom He loved with the love of charity. And so He grieved for others as well as for Himself.

However, although the love of our fellow men pertains in a certain way to the higher reason, inasmuch as our neighbor is loved out of charity for God's sake, the higher reason in Christ could not experience sorrow on account of the defects of His fellow men, as it can in us. For, since Christ's higher reason enjoyed the full vision of God, it apprehended all that pertains to the defects of others as contained in the divine wisdom, in the light of which the fact that a person is permitted to sin and is punished for his sin, is seen to be in accord with becoming order. And so neither the soul of Christ nor of any of the blessed who behold God can be afflicted with sadness by the defects of their neighbors. But the case is otherwise with wayfarers who do not rise high enough to perceive the plan of wisdom. Such persons are saddened by the defects of others even in their higher reason, when they think that it pertains to the honor of God and the exaltation of the faith that some should be saved who nevertheless are damned.

Thus, with regard to the very things for which He was suffering in sense, imagination, and lower reason, Christ was rejoicing in His higher reason, so far as He referred them to the order of divine wisdom. And since the referring of one thing to another is the proper task of reason, we generally say that Christ's reason, if it is considered as nature, shrank from death, meaning that death is naturally abhorrent, but that if it is considered as reason, it was willing to suffer death.

Sicut autem in Christo fuit tristitia, ita etiam et aliae passiones quae ex tristitia oriuntur, ut timor, ira et huiusmodi. Ex iis enim quae tristitiam praesentia ingerunt, timor in nobis causatur, dum futura mala existimantur, et dum aliquo laedente contristati sumus, contra eum irascimur. Hae tamen passiones aliter fuerunt in Christo quam in nobis. In nobis enim plerumque iudicium rationis praeveniunt, interdum modum rationis excedunt. In Christo nunquam praeveniebant iudicium rationis, nec modum a ratione taxatum excedebant, sed tantum movebatur inferior appetitus, qui est subiectus passioni, quantum ratio ordinabat eum debere moveri. Poterat igitur contingere quod secundum inferiorem partem anima Christi refugiebat aliquid, quod secundum superiorem optabat, non tamen erat contrarietas appetituum in ipso, vel rebellio carnis ad spiritum, quae in nobis contingit ex hoc quod appetitus inferior iudicium et modum rationis transcendit. Sed in Christo movebatur secundum iudicium rationis, inquantum permittebat unicuique inferiorum virium moveri proprio motu, secundum quod ipsum decebat.

Iis igitur consideratis manifestum est quod superior ratio Christi tota quidem fruebatur et gaudebat per comparisonem ad suum obiectum (non enim ex hac parte aliquid ei occurrere poterat quod esset tristitiae causa); sed etiam tota patiebatur ex parte subiecti, ut supra dictum est. Nec illa fruitio minuebat passionem, nec passio impediabat fruitionem, cum non fieret redundantia ex una potentia in aliam, sed quaelibet potentiarum permetteretur agere quod sibi proprium erat, sicut iam supra dictum est.

Just as Christ was afflicted with sadness, so He experienced other passions that stem from sadness, such as fear, wrath, and the like. Fear is caused in us by those things whose presence engenders sorrow, when they are thought of as future evils; and when we are grieved by someone who is hurting us, we become angry at him. Such passions existed otherwise in Christ than in us. In us they frequently anticipate the judgment of reason, and sometimes pass the bounds of reason. In Christ they never anticipated the judgment of reason, and never exceeded the moderation imposed by reason; His lower appetite, which was subject to passion, was moved just so far as reason decreed that it should be moved. Therefore Christ's soul could desire something in its higher part that it shrank from in its lower part, and yet there was no conflict of appetites in Him or rebellion of the flesh against the spirit, such as occurs in us owing to the fact that the lower appetite exceeds the judgment and measure of reason. In Christ this appetite was moved in accord with the judgment of reason, to the extent that He permitted each of His lower powers to be moved by its own impulse, in keeping with propriety.

In the light of all this we see clearly that Christ's higher reason was completely happy and full of joy in respect to its proper object. On the part of this object, nothing that might engender sorrow could arise in Him. But on the part of the subject it was full of suffering, as we indicated in the beginning of this chapter. Yet that enjoyment did not lessen the suffering, nor did the suffering prevent the enjoyment, since no overflowing from one power to another took place; each of the powers was allowed to exercise the function proper to it, as we mentioned above.

Caput 233 De oratione Christi

Quia vero oratio est desiderii expositiva, ex diversitate appetituum ratio sumi potest orationis quam Christus imminente passione proposuit dicens, Matth. XXVI, 39: pater mi, si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste: verumtamen non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu. In hoc enim quod dixit, transeat a me calix iste, motum inferioris appetitus et naturalis designat, quo naturaliter quilibet mortem refugit, et appetit vitam. In hoc autem quod dicit, verumtamen non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu vis, exprimit motum superioris rationis omnia considerantis prout sub ordinatione divinae sapientiae continentur. Ad quod etiam pertinet quod dicit, si non potest, hoc solum fieri posse demonstrans quod secundum ordinem divinae voluntatis procedit.

Et quamvis calix passionis non transivit ab eo quin ipsum biberit, non tamen dici debet quod eius oratio exaudita non fuerit. Nam secundum apostolum ad Hebr. V, 7, in omnibus exauditus est pro sua reverentia. Cum enim oratio, ut dictum est, sit desiderii expositiva, illud simpliciter oramus quod simpliciter volumus: unde et desiderium iustorum, orationis vim obtinet apud Deum, secundum illud Psal. IX, 17: desiderium pauperum exaudivit dominus. Illud autem simpliciter volumus quod secundum rationem superiorem appetimus ad quam solam pertinet consentire in opus. Illud autem simpliciter oravit Christus ut patris voluntas fieret, quia hoc simpliciter voluit, non autem quod calix ab eo transiret, quia nec hoc simpliciter voluit, sed secundum inferiorem rationem, ut dictum est.

Chapter 233 The Prayer of Christ

Since prayer manifests desire, the nature of the prayer Christ offered when His passion was upon Him may be gathered from the different desires He expressed. In Matthew 26:39 He begs: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You wilt." In saying, "Let this chalice pass from Me," He indicates the movement of His lower appetite and natural desire, whereby all naturally shrink from death and desire life. And in saying, "Nevertheless not as I will, but as You wilt," He gives expression to the movement of His higher reason, which looks on all things as comprised under the ordinations of divine wisdom. The same is the bearing of the added words, "If this chalice may not pass away" (Matt. 26:42), whereby He showed that only those events can occur which take place according to the order of the divine will.

Although the chalice of the passion did not pass from Him, but He had to drink it, we may not say that His prayer went unheard. For, as the Apostle assures us in Hebrews 5:7, in all things Christ "was heard for His reverence." Since prayer, as we have remarked, is expressive of desire, we pray unconditionally for what we wish unconditionally; and so the very desires of the just have the force of prayer with God, according to Psalm 9:17: "The Lord hath heard the desire of the poor." But we wish unconditionally only what we desire with our higher reason, which alone has the power of assenting to an undertaking. Christ prayed absolutely that the Father's will might be done, for this was what He wished absolutely. But He did not thus pray that the chalice might pass from Him, because He wished this, not absolutely, but according to His lower reason, as we have stated.

Caput 234 De sepultura Christi

Consequuntur autem hominem ex peccato post mortem alii defectus et ex parte corporis, et ex parte animae. Ex parte corporis quidem, quod corpus redditur terrae, ex qua sumptum est. Hic autem defectus corporis in nobis quidem secundum duo attenditur, scilicet secundum positionem, et secundum resolutionem. Secundum positionem quidem, inquantum corpus mortuum sub terra ponitur sepultum; secundum resolutionem vero, inquantum corpus in elementa solvitur, ex quibus est compactum.

Horum autem defectuum primum quidem Christus pati voluit, ut scilicet corpus eius sub terra poneretur. Alium autem defectum passus non fuit, ut scilicet corpus eius in terram resolveretur: unde de ipso Psal. XV, 10, dicit: non dabis sanctum tuum videre corruptionem, idest corporis putrefactionem. Huius autem ratio est, quia corpus Christi materiam sumpsit de natura humana, sed formatio eius non fuit virtute humana, sed virtute spiritus sancti. Et ideo propter substantiam materiae subterraneum locum, qui corporibus mortuis deputari consuevit, voluit pati: locus enim corporibus debetur secundum materiam praedominantis elementi. Sed dissolutionem corporis per spiritum sanctum fabricati pati non voluit, quia quantum ad hoc ab aliis hominibus differebat.

Chapter 234 The Burial of Christ

In consequence of sin, other defects, both on the part of the body and on the part of the soul, overtake man after death. With regard to defects on the part of the body, the body returns to the earth from which it was taken. This defect on the part of the body has two phases in the case of ourselves: it is laid away and it corrupts. It is laid away, inasmuch as the dead body is placed beneath the earth in burial; and it corrupts, inasmuch as the body is resolved into the elements of which it was composed.

Christ wished to be subject to the first of these defects, namely, the placing of His body beneath the earth. But He did not submit to the other defect, the dissolving of His body into dust. Thus Psalm 15:10 says of Him: "Nor will you let your holy one to see corruption," that is, decay of the body. The reason for this is plain: although Christ's body received matter from human nature, its formation was accomplished not by any human power but by the power of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, the substance of His matter being what it was, He wished to be subject to the place beneath the earth usually given over to dead bodies; for that place which is in keeping with the matter of the predominant element in bodies is rightly assigned to them. But He did not wish the body that had been formed by the Holy Spirit to undergo dissolution, since in this respect He was different from other men.

Caput 235
De descensu Christi ad Inferos

Ex parte vero animae sequitur in hominibus ex peccato post mortem, ut ad Infernum descendant non solum quantum ad locum, sed etiam quantum ad poenam. Sicut autem corpus Christi fuit quidem sub terra secundum locum, non autem secundum communem resolutionis defectum, ita et anima Christi descendit quidem ad Inferos secundum locum, non autem ut ibi poenam subiret, sed magis ut alios a poena absolveret, qui propter peccatum primi parentis illic detinebantur, pro quo plene iam satisfecerat mortem patiendo: unde post mortem nihil patiendum restabat, sed absque omni poenae passione localiter ad Infernum descendit, ut se vivorum et mortuorum liberatorem ostenderet. Ex hoc etiam dicitur quod solus inter mortuos fuit liber, quia anima eius in Inferno non subiavit poenae, nec corpus eius corruptioni in sepulcro.

Quamvis autem Christus descendens ad Inferos, eos liberavit qui pro peccato primi parentis ibi tenebantur, illos tamen reliquit qui pro peccatis propriis ibidem poenis erant addicti: et ideo dicitur momordisse Infernum, non absorbuisse, quia scilicet partem liberavit, et partem dimisit.

Hos igitur Christi defectus symbolum fidei tangit, cum dicit: passus sub Pontio Pilato, crucifixus, mortuus et sepultus, descendit ad Inferos.

Chapter 235
Descent of Christ into Hell

On the part of the soul, death among men is followed, in consequence of sin, by descent into hell, not only as a place, but as a state of punishment. However, just as Christ's body was buried beneath the earth regarded as a place but not with respect to the common defect of dissolution, so His soul went down to hell as a place, not to undergo punishment there, but rather to release from punishment others who were detained there because of the sin of the first parent for which He had already made full satisfaction by suffering death. Hence nothing remained to be suffered after death, and so without undergoing any punishment He descended locally into hell that He might manifest Himself as the Savior of the living and the dead. For this reason He alone among the dead is said to have been free, since His soul was not subject to punishment in hell and His body was not subject to corruption in the grave.

When Christ descended into hell He freed those who were detained there for the sin of our first parent, but left behind those who were being punished for their own sins. And so He is said to have bitten into hell but not to have swallowed it, for He freed a part and left a part.

The Creed of our faith touches on the various defects of Christ when it states: "He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; He descended into hell."



California

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Thomas Aquinas College was founded in 1971 in California to reestablish genuine Catholic liberal education. In the years since, it has developed a solid reputation for academic excellence. With a growing demand for its unique program, the College opened a second campus in New England in the fall of 2019. On both campuses, students pursue the same, fully integrated curriculum. Instead of reading textbooks, they engage firsthand with the greatest minds in Western civilization – the authors of the Great Books. And rather than listening passively to lectures, they engage in rigorous classroom discussions with their peers in all the major disciplines: mathematics, natural science, literature, philosophy, and theology. The academic life of the college is conducted under the light of the Catholic faith and flourishes within a close-knit community, supported by a vibrant spiritual life.



New England

Genuinely committed to upholding civic virtue and leading lives of service, Thomas Aquinas College graduates enter a wide array of fields, where they are a powerful force for good in the Church and in the culture. Well-versed in rational discourse, they become leaders in law, medicine, education, journalism, public policy, business, technology, and military service. In addition, a steady 10 percent of alumni go on to the priesthood or religious life.