

**[Question 4]**

**[On the sorrow of the blessed Virgin in the passion of Christ]**

It is asked whether the Virgin suffered so much in the passion of Christ that she experienced no joy in it, or conversely did she have more joy than sorrow?

{1} It can be argued that she had more joy.

{a} **First**, because of the object: If two objects are put before a person, one joyful the other sorrowful, the reasons for the person to rejoice incomparably exceed the reasons for being troubled over the sorrowful object. It is clear that such a person will rejoice incomparably more over a **pleasant object** than be sorrowful over a sad object. This was the situation of the Virgin at the time of the passion of Christ. The glory of the divinity of Christ, the glory of his soul in its higher part, the whole fruit of the redemption which included the salvation of the Virgin herself, the supreme honour of God and of Christ the man rising from his passion, and at the same time the power, effort and love in the enduring of such a passion, the most victorious conquest of the demons and of all evil achieved by the passion of Christ were to the mind of the Virgin purely and supremely things joyful and bringing joy.

{b} From the **point of view of suffering**, nothing sorrowful happened in Christ other than his passion, not because it was virtuous and meritorious, but because it afflicted the nature of Christ and destroyed his temporal life. Compared to these first points this was as nothing. Therefore, the sorrow of the Virgin was as nothing and hardly felt when compared to the joy.

{2} There is a **double reply** to this.

{a} **First**, the Virgin held the joys mentioned only by faith but she felt the suffering of Christ as a physical sensation and a visible event. A **physical experience** can elicit a feeling of joy or sorrow more than faith alone whether the object be joy or sorrow.

{b} **Second**, it was said that the **joy of the Virgin** over these joys in no way lessened the sorrow she suffered over the passion of Christ. This sorrow was not contrary to the joy, rather it was a source of joy

because she was pleased to suffer for this reason. These joys were directed towards different objects or towards the same object according to different aspects and reasons. The joy was in the higher part of the will where choices and connections are made, while sorrow is in the feelings and in the higher part of the will in so far as it is moved in a natural way by material objects or their opposites.

{3} It is argued as follows **against the first point**.

{a} Contemplatives receive to their utmost limits the highest joys and wonderful experiences of divine joy and sweetness incomparably transcending all earthly delights. It is clear that the contemplation of the Virgin exceeded to an incalculable degree the contemplation of all the saints of this life. Therefore, her experience of divine sweetness was stronger to an incalculable degree than any bodily experience felt in this life.

{b} It is argued as follows against the second point. In some martyrs there was such joy from the fervour of divine love, from the hope of a reward and from knowing the divine honour and virtue shining in the martyrs, that almost all their physical pain in their passions was absorbed. Moreover, according to Aristotle<sup>1</sup> and Avicenna,<sup>2</sup> sorrow and joy in their general definitions are opposed to one another; and so they say that of itself joy mitigates sorrow, and extreme joy makes sorrow almost unfelt and vice versa. From the natural connection between the powers of the soul we see that the movement of one has an effect on the other; hence joy and sorrow in the higher part of the soul have an effect on the lower and vice versa. When the mind is strongly attentive to and intent on an action and object of one power, then its whole attention is strongly held back from other actions and objects even of the same power; consequently these powers are held back from their actions unless a miracle intervenes. If, therefore, the mind of the Virgin was strongly intent on joys and pleasant objects, for that reason she herself and all her powers were strongly held back.

{4} **Second**, it is argued against the **main point** from the notion of a power of moving.

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<sup>1</sup> *Categoriae*, chs. 7-8, The Works of Aristotle, vol. 1, London: Oxford University Press, 1928, pp. 8<sup>a</sup>-9<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> *De anima*, pars IV, c. 5, reprint of edition of Venice, 1508, Louvain: La Bibliothèque S.J., 1961, p. 21.

{a} When a main and highest power of moving moves most strongly, an inferior power of moving is most weak and almost nothing when faced with the other. Therefore, if opposite or diverse powers of moving are in the same moveable object, then the movement determined by the impulse of the first power is incomparably greater than a movement created by the second power. In the Virgin the Holy Spirit was the main **moving power** whose action and impression was sweet and pleasant in her. She had a certain similarity to the one making the impression and moving; it made her cling to God and to feel and share with Christ; it moved her by love and choice. She was moved to sorrow over the passion of Christ only by her natural and physical nature. Therefore, her movement to divine joy was incomparably greater than her movement to sorrow.

{b} Likewise, God willed that Christ die simply by the desire called by Damascene<sup>1</sup> the will of the consequence; by the conditional will or the preceding will, God did not want Christ to suffer. But the will of the consequence is greater from the point of view of its effect and object, and with this it is pure joy. Therefore, this will affected and moved the will of the Virgin more strongly and joyfully **to wish for Christ to suffer**, than the conditional will influenced her not to want this. That God even more and from a will of the consequence wanted Christ to die is clear because Christ says: *Not what I want but what you want*; and: *Your will be done* [Mt 26:39-42]. And again: *For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life*; and *I have received this command from my Father* [Jn 10:17-18]. And Romans 8:32 says that God *did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us*.

{c} Likewise, the soul of Christ according to his elective will wanted this most strongly, and did it most powerfully; and this will was more dominant and much greater in his soul than the natural and physical attraction to flee from suffering and death. But the Virgin strongly **followed the will of the soul of Christ** and in some way was moved by it, at least as by something loved to the utmost; therefore, etc.

{5} After these points one can argue from the **point of view** of the disposition of the Virgin herself.

{a} The Virgin was much more attracted to what is **virtuous, divine and eternal** than to what is natural, human and temporal. The

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<sup>1</sup> *De fide orthodoxa*, l. 2, c. 29 (PG 94, 967-970).

things which then seemed to her to be sorrowful were natural, human and temporal; but what are eternal, divine and virtuous in themselves always seem to be pleasant; therefore, etc.

{b} Likewise, the more an object is willed the more it moves, and the will is at peace when an object is strongly willed; the desire to want the object more is very pleasing, and one tastes it as sweet all the more. But the Virgin **wanted Christ to die** far more than she wanted him not to die, just as did Christ himself, who so wanted this that he strongly blamed Peter who said to him: *God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you* [Mt 16:22]. It is certain that Christ laid down his life out of deep love for us. Therefore, the Virgin was far more pleased with the suffering of Christ than displeased; from which it follows that she was more joyful over it than sorrowful, because according to Augustine, *The City of God*,<sup>1</sup> sadness is nothing other than ‘a will disagreeing with something which occurs when it is not willed’; but when we are in agreement, enjoying what we will, it is called joy.

{c} Likewise, what is known most surely to be **brief**, imminent, and to be changed into the highest and eternal joy, is not accepted absolutely except as brief, and from the point of view of that joy as something minimal, almost nothing. But the Virgin most certainly held that the suffering of Christ would be brief and soon to be changed into eternal glory; therefore, etc.

{d} **Fourth**, one can argue from the point of view of the **martyrs** of Christ. It is sure that they rejoiced greatly in their own martyrdom and in that of their children and families; and the more they rejoiced over it the more were they reputed to love the more. Because the more a most difficult task becomes pleasant to the soul because of the good of virtue and the glory of God, the more the task is virtuous and perfect. Therefore, Christ and his Mother rejoiced incomparably more over his martyrdom than any other martyrs over their martyrdom.

{6} It has to be said to this question that although the Virgin wanted Christ to suffer with a most perfect will and love, because this passion was wanted by God and Christ as man, she did not think that she would be gladdened by the passion of her Son, rather **deeply grieved**, according to what was prophesied by Simeon, namely, *and a sword will pierce your own soul too* [Lk 1:35]. The passion of Christ

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<sup>1</sup> Book 14, ch. 6, vol. 14, *The Fathers of the Church*, Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1952, p. 358.

like a most sharp sword pierced and transfixed the heart of the Virgin; so at that moment she did not think she had any joy, at least joy which was such as could be felt by her heart.

This can be proved in many ways, and firstly from the point of view of God moving and governing her heart because it is sure that God did not move her heart to anything **improper** or in an improper way. But it would have been most improper for the Mother to be moved to some joy while Christ was so crushed and crucified; it would have been most improper had she not suffered with Christ with all her compassion, her innermost parts, strength, affections, feelings and thoughts, and had she not applied herself totally to suffer with Christ. Therefore, she was so moved by God. That the opposite of this would be improper is proved by seven points.

{a} **First**, from the **nature of love** which is not less proved and practised in suffering most bitterly for a friend than in rejoicing with a loved one. It is not less virtuous to persist equally firmly and intensely in something which is most difficult and troublesome without any consolation felt in it, than to stay in it with great and many consolations connected to it; in fact the more difficult it is in itself, the more, all other things being equal, is it atoning and meritorious.

{b} **Second**, from the goodness of **compassion** and its practice: the act of compassion is pious in its genus and it is due and pleasing when extended to a person to whom we are bound by a law of nature and of favours received; the greater the compassion, the more pious and pleasing it is. Nor is it less pleasing to a friend when another suffers with one in compassion, than when another joins in rejoicing when one is rejoicing; in fact in some ways one longs for compassion more than for consolation. People get more angry against those who hold back from offering compassion than against those who do not rejoice with another and so are thought to be more ungracious. It is sure that the experience of sorrow and compassion over divine hurts or sufferings is not less divine and virtuous than the experience of the joy of glory; if they are equally intense, they include an equal intensity of love and, what is more, compassion includes greater difficulty or pain.

{c} **Third**, from a **participation in the merits of the passion** of Christ: if Christ truly caused our redemption and restoration by his suffering and by his will to suffer, it follows clearly that the more one participates and joins in that will and suffering of Christ, the more one participates in the merit of the redemption. This merit is the most basic and important of all the merits of a redeemed person.

{d} **Fourth**, from the total **union of the Virgin with Christ**: this would not be unless from every point of view she had been crucified with Christ; so the more her glory exceeds that of all the saints, so much the more was her crucifixion with Christ greater and more bitter than all the sufferings of the saints.

{e} **Fifth**, from the final **fruit and efficacy of the passion** of Christ: this fruit was that the old self be totally rejected and crucified by his power, and that by his passion, as through a door of atoning justice, as through an atonement or intercession of divine grace, we, formerly guilty and exiles, might approach and enter into God, and be alive for God alone by the death of Christ who died for us. If this was to be fulfilled completely in the Mother of Christ, who like us was conceived in sin, she could in no way be brought to such singular glory other than by being put to death in a proportionate way through the cross and death of Christ. Hence, it is clear that before her assumption into heaven she had to experience on the cross of Christ his wonderful suffering and death.

{f} **Sixth**, by reason of her state and time: it is clear that she was in the state of a **pilgrim**, a state of hardship rather than happiness, which should conform more to Christ as pilgrim and subject to pain than to Christ as one who has finished the journey. The time of the passion of Christ was a time of judgment which he freely bore for us. Not only was he condemned to death by human beings, but also by God and God's justice, although not for his own guilt but for ours. Christ, according to the Apostle, is to be contemplated from this point of view, namely, that *he made him to be sin and cursed* [Gal 3:13; 2 Cor 5:21], as if I were to say, as damned for us by the justice of God. In this he was truly the judgment for our sins. So Christ, from the point of view that he suffered, seems to have been condemned by God and human beings, while from other points of view he may be seen as saviour and restorer.

{g} **Seventh**, because the treading underfoot of God for our sake has to be thought of in a way different from our being trod on for the sake of God. The oppression of God in its exact nature should be looked on with the utmost horror and sorrow, and much more so when we remember that we are its cause. Our being trodden on in itself is to be thought of as slight, in fact it is to be accepted as truly just and most fitting to our wickedness and nothingness; and when the cause is considered, namely, for the sake of God, then it should seem to us to be most joyful and glorious. And so the saints gloried in their

martyrdoms while they lamented and wept over the suffering Christ and contemplated him with sorrowful wailing.

For these seven reasons Christ arranged for his death to be recalled by us with compassion until his final coming, when he said at the supper<sup>1</sup>: ‘As often as you do this, do it in memory of me.’ The Apostle in 1 Corinthians 11:26 says: *As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.* In Lamentations we are told to remember: *The thought of my affliction and my homelessness is wormwood and gall* [3:19]. And speaking for the saints the author adds immediately: *My soul continually thinks of it and is bowed down under me* [Lam 3:20]. In the same work Christ expresses the wish: *Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow* [Lam 1:12].

{7.a} For the reasons listed above the Holy Spirit moved souls and the whole Church to Christ on that sixth day when he died for us. From all of which it is clear to all that the Spirit must have **moved the Mother of Christ** to wailing, especially when before her eyes Christ was pierced so shamefully and bitterly.

{b} **Second**, this is proven by the Mother **voluntarily moving** and applying herself to the necessary task. Just as it is shown in the seven reasons expressed above that she would have to be moved to sorrow, so by the same reasons it is proven that she had to move herself and concentrate with all her power on lament and a compassionate sorrow during the time when Christ was suffering.

{c} **Third**, this is proved from the point of view of the object. The object is what was first, more immediate, more present, noticeable and innate and so presented itself to the mind at once and more effectively. The God man, as a pilgrim who had been conceived, given birth to and nourished by the Mother, was later full of insults and sorrows. He offered himself first of all, more personally, humanly and naturally to the soul of his Mother, as if he were not a pilgrim but in a state of glory. The whole appearance of Christ as a sorrowful person more effectively impressed itself on the eyes and senses of the maternal mind than if his appearance had been joyful and giving joy. The degree to which this sight dominated over the other, to that extent was the Mother of Christ more affected and moved to sorrow rather than to joy.

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<sup>1</sup> From an older form of the Eucharistic Prayer. See *Missale Romano-Seraphicum*, Roma, 1953, p. 308.

From this I argue further: that object in its magnitude, effectiveness and effective presence is capable of absorbing and completely swamping the mind to which it is offered; it does not allow the mind to look elsewhere at least at anything which gives an opposite impression and inclines one to the opposite. But the passion of Christ and Christ's suffering are so immensely sorrowful and a reason moving one to compassion, that it was in the whole mind of the Mother like a large sea is to one cup and like the sun is to our eye. Therefore, her inner being was **totally absorbed in it**. Moreover, every object of its nature pushing one to be deeply involved and to be concerned and close in every detail, is never properly present unless it be present in the way described above. But Christ suffering and dying was such an object; therefore, etc.

{d} **Fourth**, it is proved from the nature of the **breaking apart** and separation of things joined together most strongly, closely and internally, something which causes intense sorrow; the stronger the union, the greater the sorrow. It is clear that Christ as a pilgrim and the Mother as a pilgrim had a most strong and wonderful bond between them which the most excellent influence of the Holy Spirit wonderfully wrought and confirmed, and according to the measure of the love of the Mother for Christ and the love of Christ for the Mother. Therefore, the violent and deadly breaking and separation of this bond was for them a reason for the deepest sorrow, a sorrow commensurate with the depth of their uniting love and bond.

In contemplative minds there is a double form of excessive love: one is by a joyful tasting of the sweet presence of the person loved, the other by a most bitter dullness and unpalatable taste from the loss of the person loved. Both had to be experienced and become a model in the Mother, so that she might be for all people the best example of both loves or of both ways of loving the person loved. But no time was more fitting for this to be expressed in the Mother than at the time of Christ's death; therefore, etc.

{e} **Fifth**, this is proven from the **crown and dignity of a martyr**, a crown of singular excellence. What is more glorious before God and a friend than to have offered oneself and been immolated with the deepest and deadliest sorrow for one who is loved? Since the Virgin was not martyred by a violent killing of the body, she was not able after Christ to have the full primacy of martyrdom, other than being absorbed and swamped in the heartfelt sorrow of Christ.

{f} **Sixth**, the exemplary **lesson of the lament for Christ** proves it. For if the risen Christ appeared first to Magdalene because she wept

more at his death, if Francis among others was sealed with the stigmata because he wept so copiously over the sufferings of Christ, it would be quite shameful to the Mother were she not an example in this lamenting; which could only be if her sorrow in lament was extreme.

{g} **Seventh**, it is proven from the **impossibility of extreme sorrow and extreme joy being together** unless miraculously and under the aspect of a double state, namely, of one who has completed a journey and yet is still a pilgrim, as was the case with Christ. That the two conditions just mentioned cannot be together in the same person is clear from the four reasons given above, in the first argument and in the second response.<sup>1</sup> It is clear not only for the reasons given but also from the words of Scripture and from the common belief of the whole Church, namely, that the Virgin had the deepest and greatest sorrow in the death of Christ. Therefore, she could have had only slight or no experience of joy in herself. Scripture says that she was greatly sorrowful: partly in explicit words, as in those of Simeon [Lk 2:34-35]; partly in actions, as when it is related that Christ on the cross especially was concerned as if for her alone, as for a Mother completely desolated and destitute, said: *Woman, here is your son*, etc [Jn 19:26]; partly from mystical words and deeds as in all the desolations and weeping of the people of God from the beginning of the world.<sup>2</sup> The Church professes this both in words and in weeping over her in what has been written and sung about her, and in ecclesiastical images and pictures.

{8.a} It can be said **against the first** that **divine and joyful objects** can be understood by the mind as God presenting them in a double way: first, according to the reason for which they are pleasing to the mind; second, in so far as they induce more compassion for Christ, and add further to the humility and dignity of his passion. They are offered to the Mother in this second way rather than in the first way; and so all pleasant things came to her as sorrowful. So we see that evil is sometimes present as good, and good as evil. It is true, as has been said, that only the passion of Christ appeared to the Mother to be sorrowful. This of itself and absolutely, together with everything connected with it, received under it and with it, appeared to her as sorrowful or as inciting to compassion. It has been said that only the

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<sup>1</sup> Above, page 30.

<sup>2</sup> See Gen 23:2; 59:10; Lev 10:6; 1 Sam 25:1; 28:3; 30:4; 2 Sam 1:12; 3:31-34; 1 Kings 13:29-31; 14:13-18; Esth 4:3; I Macc 2:70; 4:39-40; 9:20; 13:26; Lk 8:52; 23:27; Acts 8:2.

passion afflicting the body of Christ appeared to the Mother as sorrowful, but this is false, because, as shown elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> there were

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<sup>1</sup> As can be seen in *On Matthew*, ch. 26 where one can read the following on this point: ‘So that you might see more clearly the causes of such great sadness, note there was in him extreme sorrow both from the point of view of the objects or motives, and from the point of view of the disposition of his faculties. From the point of view of the objects there was a sevenfold sorrow in him:

1. From all the offences made and to be made against God. The measure of this sorrow was according to the size of the burden and detestation of these taken together. The measure of the detestation came from the greatness of the love in the soul of Christ; the measure of the offences came from his knowledge of the greatness of the divine majesty and the nature and extent of all sins. And this sorrow, I believe, was in Christ to a greater degree than in anyone else.

2. From the loss of souls and persons: Christ as man, as head of the human race, as the one who came as redeemer, as a person who is truly our creator, necessarily had to experience extreme sorrow in his human affections over such a loss in the human race and in the great work of God.

3. From asking pardon, grace and glory for us by his wonderful supplications and humiliations before the Father, by his intercessions for us to God, intercessions which were wonderful, lamenting and leading to lament, and which he had from the moment of conception but showed more on the cross.

4. From offering himself to torment, and also in some way even to what was impossible, for his will in some way pushed him to strive for the impossible.

5. From all the sufferings and torments of his elect, and especially of his most pious Mother; all of whom with their individual sufferings, trials and dangers he carried in the deepest parts of his heart and felt that he rather than any other was to carry and support.

6. From the ingratitude of all those who would be ungrateful to him and to the elect in the future, for he looked on all of them as if they were present to him.

7. From the actual suffering of death and bodily torments which he not only bore as coming from others but also as arising in many ways from the inner sorrows already mentioned.

From the point of view of his faculties he had in his understanding the utmost clarity for appreciating all the sorrowful objects. In his feelings there was a rightness which led to a total detestation of all evil. His imagination and sensual appetites were in complete agreement with the two faculties just mentioned and because of them fully flexible. In his freedom there was maximum power and dominion for controlling his nature in suffering. In the relation of the soul to the body there was love, not only to the body of a man or to a soul, but to the body of a divine person; and so the separation from such a body for this person was far more painful than for others’ (codex Laurentiano *Plut. 10 dext. 4. f. 99ab*). And in *On John*, ch. 19, 33: ‘Four reasons can be given why he died so quickly and before the others ... The fourth is his

many other sufferings of Christ incomparably worse than the pain coming from the injury to his body.

{b} It can be said **to the second** that although the Holy Spirit is pure sweetness, it does **not** follow that **every movement of the Spirit produces joy** in the mind. The likeness of the Holy Spirit is not univocal but analogous; the Spirit does not always move one to a joyful object, in fact sometimes to a sorrowful object, as is clear when the Spirit makes us weep over sins and fear punishment. Although holy sorrow in some ways is dissimilar to the Holy Spirit, as long as it is right, holy and comes from a pure love it is quite similar to the Spirit.

{c} It can be said **to the third** that, although what God wills is in itself joyful, it does not follow from this that whomever God affects will be **affected in a joyful way**; otherwise God would not be able to impress some person with a sense of fear and of his angry rigour and fury. Further, it has to be kept in mind that although God willed the passion of Christ in so far as it was good because of the love of Christ and in so far as it contained in itself grounds for satisfying justice, nevertheless God did not will it in so far as it was evil. Because the passion of Christ was completely evil in itself, it was good only from some points of view connected with it. A complete willing is one which concerns something in itself and completely, and in this sense the passion of Christ was against the will of God.

You might say: therefore, how could something actually happen which was evil, namely, the malice of guilt, and against the will of God? The answer to this is clear: God is said to allow many things by a permissive will, that is God simply permits them to happen, even though in themselves they are totally displeasing to God, as is clear in all the sins which God permits; God willed the passion mindful of its purpose and of all the virtuous circumstances joined to it on the part of Christ. It is not always true that the decision to accept a consequence of a thing willed is greater than the decision to accept it beforehand. God willed Adam no less at the time he was created and destined for the honour and glory of God, than when God willed that he be punished after he sinned. God does not desire the damnation of the damned, except in so far as they have rejected the good things which God willed and laid down.

great mental sorrows which, as I have shown in *On Matthew* were multiple and immense.' (codex Laurenziano *Plut. 10 dext. 8. f. 88d*).

From the forgoing argument one can conclude that our opinion is supported rather than its opposite, because in so far as God wanted more that Christ suffer than not suffer, so much the more did God want Christ to be sorrowful and not joyful; and in so far as God moved the will of the Virgin to accept the passion of Christ, so much the more did God impress on her the sorrow of Christ, and so much the more did God make her heart dwell in something most bitter to her.

{d} It can be said **to the fourth** that since the passion of Christ was a passion of such a person, it was something most divine; nor was the Virgin's compassion directed to the suffering itself, but to the person and nature suffering. It must be remembered also that things divine and eternal can be presented to the mind in a double way, namely, as honoured in the assumed nature, or as despised and trampled upon by our actions. In this way all **divine things came to the Virgin in utmost excess**, namely, in the humiliation and death of Christ who was as far as possible cast down, trampled upon and killed; in this way they were not experienced as joyful, but rather as punishments, not because of her, but because of the oppression in which they were experienced.

{e} It can be said **to the fifth** that when an **object is willed only for some aspects** of the object, but not willed simply for the thing itself which is totally bitter and not wanted, then it is not fitting, even though the thing be willed for some aspect rather than for the thing itself, that for this reason one may rejoice more over it than feel sad. This is clear in many experiences of people wounded or suffering with fever who courageously bear medicines and bitter cauterizing because of their love of health; but of course no one says to them at that time to rejoice. So Aristotle, *Ethica Nichomachea*,<sup>1</sup> when speaking of the virtue of fortitude, says it is not fitting that in every virtue there be a task which is pleasing, except in so far as it achieves the purpose, because a strong person who suffers sadness and dangers for the sake of virtue becomes that much stronger.

When it is said that the more we want something the more it pleases us and we are more restful with it, then it has to be said that to please is equivocal applying to three acts of the will specifically different: namely, to love, to desire something not possessed, and to delight over something which was desired and is now possessed. To rest is equivocal referring to being held to someone by love or desire

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<sup>1</sup> Book 3, ch. 9, vol. 9, The Works of Aristotle, Oxford: University Press, 1915, p. 117<sup>a</sup>.

as towards a final object, and also referring to a tranquil, peaceful and pleasant delight in that person. The words of Augustine in the reference quoted below,<sup>1</sup> are to be understood correctly. Sadness is not a dissent of the will from those things which we do not want but which happen to us: otherwise the displeasure or dissent which God and the angels have over our sins would be sadness. The words of Augustine are to be understood not of every dissent, but of a dissent which brings with it an experience of bitterness. He speaks of 'those things which happen to us when we do not want them', that is, to us disturbed by them so that in not wanting them is included a certain resistance coming from a repugnance to those things.

It is said that to want more strongly or that an object wanted more ought to cause more delight than the sorrow caused by a weaker not wanting. However, delight is not caused by a higher willing, nor by the object being more desired; beyond this there is needed an actual and experiential joining between the things wanted and the will. Otherwise the more one desired something absent which cannot be had, the more the person should be delighted; but we see the contrary, namely, the person is saddened. Perhaps this is the reason why hunger, thirst or a thirsting desire for sexual love when the objects desired are not present, bring with them much sadness and disturbance. Therefore, the passion of Christ had more effect on the Mother as it was something present and experienced, so that the reason or final fruit for which the Mother wanted the passion of Christ caused her more sorrow than joy.

Further, it has to be remembered that the affections operate in two ways: some affections can be chosen; some however are felt by touch or taste. Some also at times are exercised with keen and evident attention of the heart; at times however with only a hidden attention or intention, as is clear, according to Augustine, in *The Trinity*,<sup>2</sup> of a person who recites the Psalms but is attentive to other things so that he or she is not aware of the Psalms; later the person may doubt whether the Psalms have been said. The Virgin at that time willed with an affection of choice the passion of Christ, but of this her intention was not clearly aware. By an intention which is felt or rather with a choice causing reaction she did not will the passion of Christ, but to this affection of choice and its object her intention was most vehemently and evidently attentive; and so because of the strength of her intention, the strength of her choice or the impact of her affections, it was stronger for causing sadness than the other type of choice, even

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<sup>1</sup> See page 41.

<sup>2</sup> Book 11, ch. 8, n. 15, vol. 45, *The Fathers of the Church*, Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1963, p. 337.

though this type of itself was higher and superior and could cause delight.

{f} It can be said **to the sixth** that in the passion of Christ eternity was presented under a triple sorrowful aspect

{i} First, because the person suffering was **eternal** and eternity itself. For this reason in Christ the whole eternity of God and of divine things in a certain way suffered and was trampled upon.

{ii} Second, because the mind of Christ mentally and virtually came in contact with almost everlasting sufferings. Christ could see as present **all the evil** of future times and the whole eternity of our guilt and punishment for which he was suffering and for which he was sorrowful and made satisfaction.

{iii} Third, because the death of Christ, in so far as death by its nature and by the force of the nature of the person suffering was eternal and irreparable. According to its nature then it affects the feeling of one loving and makes it bitter as irreparable and eternal.

Also it must be said that when an object is present and in so far as it is present, it completely absorbs the attention and affection, and then the mind is made almost insensible and completely inattentive to what comes later or to the passing of this object. Hence we see that intense pain in one's teeth, heart or head, although known to be brief, nevertheless strikes the internal senses and affections as impossible to bear and as of almost never ending duration.

{g} **To the seventh** it can be said that, as is clear from the preceding, the passion of Christ is **unlike the passion of other saints**. Beside the reasons given in the first part of the main answer,<sup>1</sup> it is clear that the Holy Spirit demands of us and makes us consider with compassionate tears the martyrdom of the saints by an applause of congratulations, song and precise remembering. The reason for this comes partly from Christ and partly for our benefit. It is useful for us in many ways to feel the passion of Christ by a sigh of compassion; and the sufferings of the saints with a sense of their joyful triumph, eternal reward and love of God.

On the part of Christ there is a threefold reason.

{i} The first is because the highest Lord suffered great indignities for the **sake of the servants** who inflicted the indignities. Just as the

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<sup>1</sup> See above pages 32-35.

relation of Lord to servant is a relation of opposites as is the relation of servant to Lord, so their sufferings in this regard have opposite aspects.

{ii} The second reason is the reason of **reparation**. Christ truly suffered to make reparation for us to God. Because Christ suffered for us we should above all number ourselves with him and as it were be with him. He was and had to be there as one thrown into disorder, sorrowing, dying and finally as dead as was demanded by the nature of reparation; and so we in that death ought to be thrown into disorder, embittered, humiliated, dying and as dead persons.

{iii} The third is the **type of suffering**. God willingly accepts two kinds of suffering. One of these includes no feeling of consolation or glory in it, but rather the opposite; this was the suffering of holy Job, and such, I think, will be the suffering of some Christians who are to be made like Job and Christ in this. The other is accompanied with wonderful signs, with bold, joyful applause and triumphal struggle; such was commonly seen in the martyrs of Christ under idolaters and pagans. But Christ took on the first kind, both because it is more difficult, so much stronger; more effective for making reparation; also because he was to be made to suffer by his own people and by the high priests who were held above all others as the representatives of the person of God on earth. This was a kind of blasphemy against God and contrary to the Law and to the worshippers of God.

But if you say that the Virgin rejoiced greatly at least over her own sorrow, it has been seen that for her to act in this way was completely proper and suitable, yet it has to be said that the Virgin was then so totally attentive to the Son and so absorbed and embittered in him that little and almost nothing was left to her as a place for attentive reflection on him, especially under any pleasing aspect and in a pleasing way.