



The Passion of the Whole Body of Christ – Saint Augustine



Lord, I have cried to you, hear me. (Ps. 141:1) This is a prayer we can all say. This is not my prayer, but that of the whole Christ. Rather, it is said in the name of his body. When Christ was on earth he prayed in his human nature, and prayed to the Father in the name of his body, and when he prayed drops of blood flowed from his whole body. So it is written in the Gospel: *Jesus prayed with earnest prayer, and sweated blood* (Lk 22:44). What is this blood streaming from his whole body but the martyrdom of the whole Church?

Lord, I have cried to you, hear me; listen to the sound of my prayer, when I call upon you. Did you imagine that crying was over when you said: *I have cried to you?* You have cried out, but do not as yet feel free from care. If anguish is at an end, crying is at an end; but if the Church, the body of Christ, must suffer anguish until the end of time, it must not say only: *I have cried to you, hear me;* it must also say: *Listen to the sound of my prayer, when I call upon you. Let my prayer rise like incense in your sight; let the raising of my hands be an evening sacrifice.* (Ps 141:2)

This is generally understood of Christ, the head, as every Christian acknowledges. When day was fading into evening, the Lord laid down his life on the cross, to take it up again; he did not lose his life against his will. Here, too, we are symbolised. What part of him hung on the cross if not the part he had received from us? How could God the Father ever cast off and abandon his only Son, who is indeed one God with him? Yet Christ, nailing our weakness to the cross (where, as the Apostle says: *Our old nature was nailed to the cross with him*), cried out with the very voice of humanity: *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* (Mk 15:34)

The evening sacrifice is then the passion of the Lord, the cross of the Lord, the oblation of the victim that brings salvation, the holocaust acceptable to God. In his resurrection he made this evening sacrifice a morning sacrifice. Prayer offered in holiness from a faithful heart rises like incense from a holy altar. Nothing is more fragrant than the fragrance of the Lord. May all who believe share in this fragrance. Therefore, *our old nature* in the words of the Apostle, *was nailed to the cross with him, in order, as he says, to destroy our sinful body, so that we may be slaves to sin no longer.*

This reading is taken from St. Augustine's Commentary on the Psalms and is used by the Roman Church for the Office of Readings for Tuesday of the Second week in Lent. For an intro to St. Augustine visit and an overview of the Early Church Fathers visit www.dritaly.com

The Meaning of the Passion



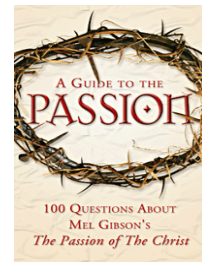
Mel Gibson's movie was released on Ash Wednesday for a reason. Lent is about remembering the consequences of sin and price that Jesus paid for our salvation. But as we ponder the movie and the events it depicts, we can't help but ask why it had to happen this way. Why did Jesus have to pass through such horrible torture to redeem us. Could not forgiveness and salvation have been obtained in some other way? Why does the Devil figure so prominently in the movie? And why does Mary play such an important role? This talk, a perfect complement to the film and The Guide to the Passion, will help you get the most out of the movie and the most out of the season. 45 minutes, followed by questions and answers.

Retail - \$8.00

Millions of people will soon see Mel Gibson's epic film The Passion of The Christ. This movie is not just another extraordinary Hollywood production—it's a personal call for each of us to encounter the person of Jesus Christ. Co-Authored by Marcellino D'Ambrosio, Ph.D. it answers 100 questions about Mel Gibson's Passion of Christ.

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