

GOSPEL OF JOHN 19 D (25-34)

25 Now there had stood by the Cross of Jesus His Mother, and His Mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene.

Saint Chrysostom: "Women stood by the Cross, and the weaker sex appeared then the manlier; so entirely henceforth was everything transformed."

Bp. Gerasimos: "The real love of people who truly love and are loved becomes apparent at the difficult times of life."

²⁶Then Jesus, having seen THE (not His) Mother and the disciple whom He loved standing by, said to THE (not His) Mother, "Woman, behold your son." ²⁷Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your Mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into *his own home*.

Fr. Behr: "Jesus' words to the two are not simply the discharge of a filial duty. The two exhortations, 'Women behold your son! And to the disciple, 'Behold your mother!' speak instead of the disciples' adopted identity in, *and as*, Jesus."

Origen: "For if Mary had no son except Jesus...and Jesus says to his mother, 'Behold your son.' And not, 'Behold, this man also is your son,' he has said equally, 'Behold this is Jesus whom you bore.' For indeed everyone who has been perfected no longer lives, but Christ lives in him (Gal. 2:20) and since Christ lives in him, it is said of him to Mary, 'Behold your son, the Christ.'"

Fr. Behr: "And at this point Christ hands over the Spirit to 'the mother' (19:26; again, there is no 'his') and the beloved disciple standing at the foot of the Cross...Elevated above the earth, Jesus hands down the Spirit from above, to the women and the disciple standing at the foot of the Cross, His throne, enabling the disciple to put on the identity of a son of God, born by the Spirit 'from above' and as a son of 'the woman.'"

Fr. Behr: "Who, then, is this 'woman'? ... Hippolytus identifies 'the woman' (¹*And a great sign appeared in the heaven: A Woman having been clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; ²and being with child she was crying, travailing in childbirth, and being tormented to bring forth. Rev. 12:1,2*) with the Church, who, he says, will never cease 'bearing from her heart the Word that is persecuted by the unbelieving in the world, while the male child she bears is Christ, God and human, announced by the Prophets, and 'whom the church continually bears as she teaches all nations.'"

²⁸After this, Jesus, knowing that all things now have been accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst." ²⁹A vessel therefore full of vinegar was set; and they filled a sponge *with* vinegar and put around *it* hyssop, and brought *it* to *His* mouth.

Fr. Behr: "... the identification of Jesus as the Paschal lamb...is made explicit. The hyssop branch upon which the sponge of water is given to Jesus probably alludes to the hyssop used to smear the blood of the lamb on the lintel of the door of the Israelite houses ("Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. None of you shall go out of the door of your house until morning. Exod 12:22)."

³⁰Then, when Jesus took the vinegar, He said, “It has been finished (perfected).” And having bowed His head, He delivered up the (not His, RSV) Spirit.

Fr. Behr: “...the reception of the life-giving Spirit requires that the creature die, with Christ, to receive the life given in Christ, through the Spirit bestowed from the Cross (19:30) and so become living human beings (pg. 204).”

Fr. Behr: “The particular project of God, to create a human being in His image and likeness, is not accomplished simply by a divine fiat (a command) (God says, ‘Let *us* make’ a human being can only be accomplished with our consent, our desire to ‘let it be so.’)...it depends, rather, upon the fiat of Christ (He freely, voluntarily lays down His life) and those...who, in Christ, give their own, ‘let it be.’ (pg. 212).”

Saint Chrysostom: “‘Having bowed *His* head, He delivered up the spirit’; that is, He died. Yet to expire does not come after the bowing head, but here, on the contrary, it does. He did not, when He expired, bow His head, as it happens with us. But when He had bent His head, then He expired. By all these, the evangelist has shown that He was Lord of all.” [Hom. 85, P.G. 59:507 (cols. 462, 463).]

³¹The Jews therefore, since it was *the* preparation, in order that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath—for great was the day of that sabbath—asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. ³²Then the soldiers came and indeed broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. ³³But when they came to Jesus and saw *that* He was already dead, they did not break His legs. ³⁴But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and straightway blood and water came out.

Fr. Behr: “Irenaeus, who identifies the wine that his mother, symbolizing the Church, desired to partake before the time, as the ‘cup of recapitulation’, the cup that is filled with the blood that flowed, together with the water, from Christ’s side, and which alone cleanses us from all sin (pg. 142).”

Fr. Behr: “...both Adam and Jesus were ‘asleep’ when a rib was removed from the former, to be fashioned into a woman (Gen 2:21-22), and blood and water came out from the latter’s side when it was pierced, Tertullian comments: ‘As Adam was a figure of Christ, Adams’ sleep sketched out the death of Christ, who was to sleep a mortal slumber, so that from the wound inflicted on his side might be figured the true Mother of the living, the Church...the Church which is really ‘the mother of those living,’ for whereas all those born to Eve die, those, on the other hand, who are born, through death (by baptism or martyrdom) in the Church, are living (pg. 187).”

Fr. Behr: “The flowing of blood and water, often taken...as symbolizing baptism and Eucharist, alludes backwards to the image we have seen several times before of Ezekiel’s eschatological temple (as God’s Kingdom) with the water flowing from its side (Ezek 47: 1-2).”

Fr. Behr: “Christ’s life-giving death upon the Cross, although understood by others as an atoning death for sin (Rom 4:25), is not understood by John as a response to sin but rather as principally deriving from the love that God is (1 John 4:8) and has for the world (John 3:14-16).