



Cavanis Lay Fraternity  
Sacred Heart House, CAVANIS INSTITUTE  
Via Col Draga - Possagno (TV)

# INVISIBLE MONASTERY

04.2024

Dear friends,

When we unite in prayer to renew the bonds of invisible communion that bind us to one another and all together to the beloved Congregation of the Schools of Charity, we will already be in the light and joy of the Lord's Passover, but now, as I write to you, my heart lingers on the dramatic narrative of the Lord's Passion entrusted, on this Palm Sunday, to the voice of Mark. The narrative is simple, bare, essential; the facts are disconcertingly presented in their nakedness. The pace of the narrative is relentless and the episodes follow one another in a relentless progression, almost like a tragic game that proceeds relentlessly toward its inescapable conclusion. Mark, in order to bring out his theology, does not need to rely on lengthy speeches, nor does he need to introduce too many personal interventions in the course of the text: it is enough for him to put the reader before the eloquence of the images and facts. The paradox of the cross is brought

*Padre, perdona loro perché non sanno quello che fanno. Prima era taciuto, ma in croce è un maestro celeste che c'istruisce. Sembrava quello il momento da far spalancare la terra ond'ingojasse quegli empio, ed egli prega. ( ... )*

*P. Antonangelo Cavanis, Passione di Gesù Cristo (parte III), in Scritti inediti per gli Esercizi Spirituali, AICV, B. GO, pp. 139-148 (trascritti da P. Antonio Vilasboas e riveduti da P. Aldo Servini).*

out in all its evidence simply by the dramatic force with which individual events are unfolded. The events speak for themselves for those who know how to listen... A typical feature - common to the four evangelists - of the Passion narrative is the abundant space given to scriptural references, largely taken from the book of Psalms. In this regard, it is emblematic that the very rare times when Jesus' feelings are meant to be made manifest, quotations from Psalms are almost exclusively used (at Gethsemane Jesus expresses his mortal sadness in the words of Ps 42-43; on the cross he cries out his abandonment in the words of Ps 22). For the early Christian communities, it was important to find meaning in the scandal of a crucified Messiah, and this could only be done by

questioning the Scriptures, trying to discern God's plan in them. How could the scandal of the Cross fit into God's saving plan? The faith of the early Christians found light in the pages of the First Testament, especially where they reveal that God's success often comes through the failure of his chosen men, that his plan always comes to fruition through failure. Thus, the persecuted righteous, of whom the Psaltery overflows, become transparent figures through which to view the drama of the persecuted Righteous One par excellence. So, the mysterious character of the Servant of the Lord also (of whom the prophet Isaiah tells us) becomes a figure capable of illuminating the painful and unfathomable story of the Son of Man "delivered into the hands of sinners." From the earliest chapters of his gospel, Mark had prepared us for the possibility of the Master's violent end. Now the moment has inexorably arrived and Jesus sets out alone, betrayed and abandoned by all toward the place where his passion will be consummated. The question that surfaces several times in the course of the second gospel ("Who then is Jesus?") finds here a definitive answer: Jesus himself, responding to the high priest who asked him whether he is the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One, declares, "I am!"; and under the cross it will unexpectedly be a pagan who will recognize in that agonizing man the Son of God: "Truly this man was the Son of God" (15:32). We can say that precisely in the extreme "emptying," the extreme "humiliation," the extreme "lowering" of an infamous and cursed death, the true identity of Jesus is revealed to the eyes of faith. That very death (and manner of dying) lifts the veil on the mystery of his person, makes manifest the secret long kept silent. The silence of the cross is more eloquent than many words, the darkness of that death is brighter than many lights... Let us ask the Lord to know how to read in this light even our failures, our structural weaknesses, as individuals but also as an association, and let us invoke the grace of the Holy Spirit to learn how to get back up and start again with renewed energy. Happy Easter to all!



**From the book of the prophet Isaiah (50, 4-7)**

The Lord God has given me  
the tongue of a teacher,  
that I may know how to sustain  
the weary with a word.  
Morning by morning he wakens—  
wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught.

The Lord God has opened my ear,  
and I was not rebellious,  
I did not turn backward.

I gave my back to those who struck me,  
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;  
I did not hide my face  
from insult and spitting.

The Lord God helps me;  
therefore I have not been disgraced;  
therefore I have set my face like flint,  
and I know that I shall not be put to shame.

# **Fr. Antonangelo Cavanis, Passion of Jesus Christ (Part III), in Unpublished Writings for the Spiritual Exercises, AICV, B, GO, pp. 139-148**

(transcribed by Fr. Antonio Vilasboas and revised by Fr. Aldo Servini)

"As for Jesus speaking on the Cross:

**Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.** He was silent before, but on the cross is a heavenly teacher instructing us. That seemed the time to make the earth wide open for him to swallow up those ungodly ones, and he prays. ( ... )

**Today you will be with me in heaven.** The sinner who is stubborn is lost; the sinner who is repented is saved. The good thief recognizes Him and asks his forgiveness, and Jesus, without any other answer, promises him Heaven. ( ... )

**Here is your son, O woman; here is your mother, O John.** Having benefited the thief, benefited us again by leaving us Mary for mother. She becomes our refuge if we want to be followers of Jesus Christ. ( ... )

**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?** His Father let him suffer without comfort. He tells us this because, if we cannot conceive the greatness of His sorrows, we understand it from His mouth.

**I am thirsty.** It is thirsty for souls and torment. But many will be converted through the Apostles' preaching; yet thirsty. So many through founders of religious orders; yet thirsty. Millions will be martyrs; yet he thirsts. He wants therefore also those who are still sinners. ( ... )

**Everything is fulfilled.** He had all done as much as he had come to do; there was nothing left for him but to die. However, first he says: everything is fulfilled. He had obeyed the Father and redeemed the world. What more could he do?

**Father into your hands I commend my spirit.** Jesus teaches us to die. Indeed, then he was silent and demanded attention by sending out a high cry, to teach us to die. What are you doing now? Do you wait for him to speak? He speaks no more. You speak: arise, prostrate yourselves."