

## “Lord, help me”

These are the unmistakable signs of the true Cross of Christ: serenity, a deep feeling of peace, a love which is ready for any sacrifice, a great effectiveness which wells from Christ's own wounded Side. And always - and very evidently - cheerfulness: a cheerfulness which comes from knowing that those who truly give themselves are beside the Cross, and therefore beside Our Lord. (The Forge, 772)

If you want to learn from the experience of a poor priest whose only aim is to speak of God, I will tell you that when the flesh tries to recover its lost rights or, worse still, when pride rears up and rebels, you should hurry to find shelter in the divine wounds that were opened in Christ's Body by the nails that fastened him to the Cross and by the lance that pierced his side. Go as the spirit moves you: unburden in his Wounds all your love, both human and... divine. This is what it means to seek union, to feel that you are a brother to Christ, sharing his blood, a child of the same Mother, for it is She who has brought us to Jesus.

Be eager to adore, yearn to make reparation, suffering quietly and calmly. Then Jesus' words will come alive in your lives: 'he who does not take up his cross and follow me, is not worthy of me'. Our Lord becomes more and more demanding with us.

He asks us to make reparation, to do penance, and the time comes when he makes us experience a fervent desire to want ‘to live for God, nailed on the Cross with Christ’. But ‘we have this treasure in vessels made of clay’, which is fragile and brittle, ‘to show that the power that shines through us is not ours but God’s’.

‘We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not without hope,’ or sustenance; ‘we are persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; we carry about continually in our bodies the dying state of Jesus.’

We may even imagine that Our Lord does not hear us; that we are being deluded, that all we hear is the monologue of our own voice. We find ourselves, as it were, without support on earth and abandoned by heaven. Nevertheless, we have a real and practical horror of sin, even venial

sin. With the stubbornness of the Canaanite woman, we go down on our knees as she did, adoring him and imploring ‘Lord, help me.’ The darkness will vanish, vanquished by the light of Love. (Friends of God, 301-303)

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(19/02/2026)