

II. — Thanksgiving.

God the Father demanded this terrible suffering, and Jesus embraced it "in order to suffer more," says a profound commentator of the Holy Scriptures. To suffer in his filial tenderness, to assume the odious appearance of a heartless Son, to suffer from her faithful and constant presence as He did from the absence of the friends that had abandoned Him, to endure, in reality, two Passions — His own and that of His Mother — this was the aim of Jesus in Mary's dolors. "In olden times," says an ancient author, "it was not lawful to immolate a sheep on the day they had taken away its lamb, but Thou, O God, O Father, didst sacrifice on the same day the Son with the Mother ! The love they have for each other is the executioner that carries out Thy sentence ; and that nothing may be wanting to their sorrow, they are tormented at the sight of each other. Blessed forever be the excess of Thy mercy toward sinners !" The sufferings so generously embraced by the Son of God prove the measure of His love for us ; the excess of His Passion reveals to us the excess of His love !

III. — Reparation.

Jesus willed to endure the pain of making His Mother suffer the most genuine sorrows and weep the holiest of tears, in order to expiate the sins committed by children against the duties of filial devotedness, and who cause their poor mothers scalding tears. Without having been a bad child, who is he who, at certain times, has not saddened his mother by his caprices, his pride, or his idleness ? But how numerous the children who, by their ingratitude and disobedience, their precocious impiety and immodesty, by the danger of eternal death which they incur and in which they remain, bow down the aged head of their mother under the weight of dishonor, torture her tender heart with mortal anguish and inconsolable desolation. Insensible to the grief, the tears, the sighs of those gentle and loving mothers, treading under foot the law of nature and the precept of the Lord : — "Forget not the groanings of thy mother," they bring upon them premature old age and hurry them to the tomb.

O Christ, the best, the most obedient, and the most loving of sons, expiate the crime of these parricides, and endure in Thy filial love the sufferings Thou dost impose on Thy virginal Mother !

Hear, again, the lamentation of that other Mother, the Holy Church, who weeps over the ingratitude and disobedience of so many of her children who pitilessly persecute her. To repair this new crime, O Jesus, sacrifice, immolate Thy Heart under the wine-press of the dolors of Thy own Mother, which flow back upon Thee !