

and which have torn Thee so frightfully ! Grant me the grace rather to die than to add one more to the cruel crown I have had the misfortune to weave and lay upon Thee !

IV. — Prayer.

One day when Saint Catherine of Sienna, discouraged under the pressure of calumny, was offering her tears and prayers to Our Lord, and intrusting to Him the care of defending her, the Divine Saviour appeared, holding in His hand two crowns. one of gold and precious stones, the other of thorns. He said to her : " My beloved daughter, thou must wear either the one or the other. Choose ! If thou takest the crown of thorns for this life, I will keep the precious one for the other. But if thou choolest the crown of gold, thou shalt bear this thorny one after thy death." " Long ago," replied the saint, " I renounced my own will. I have, then, no choice to make. But if Thou dost wish for an answer from me, I will say that in this life I desire to be conformed to Thy Passion, and that my joy will be always to suffer for Thee ! " With these words, Catherine took the crown of thorns in both hands, and placed it upon her head with so much force that the thorns penetrated on all sides. She ever after felt their wounds, thus sharing, as she had desired, in the sufferings of her Divine Spouse.

Jesus pre ents me at this very moment as He did to Saint Catherine, a crown of gold and a crown of thorns, that of earthly joys, and that of suffering and contempt of honors, and He says to me : " Which of the two wilt thou choose ? " Left to myself, a slave to my sensual nature, I should, without doubt, choose a life of pleasure and satisfaction. But with Thy grace, in which I can do all things, I wish, O my Saviour, to walk after Thee bearing the Crown of thorns. Enlighten me, O Jesus, and make me understand that humiliation is a jewel of inestimable price. Seeing it shining so brilliantly upon Thy forehead crowned with thorns, and upon Thy whole Divine Person in the Blessed Sacrament, could I refuse to recognize its price and celestial beauty ? Thou art my Head, and I am Thy member. Thy august head was crowned with thorns, bound with a diadem of