

from Thee, O my God, I should surely have succumbed. That help I now, more than ever, claim from Thy goodness. I feel my heart ready to deliver itself to the ephemeral joy of creature love, my revolting senses imperiously demanding the guilty, or at least the frivolous, pleasure. In spite of them, make me follow the way of mortification Thou hast taught me in Thy flagellation. The open wounds of Thy Flesh are like so many blood-stained lips that say to me: "Mortify thy senses!"

Inspire me, O Jesus, with a profound and salutary horror for all those shameful and abominable pleasures that make so many slaves of this earth! Grant me to flee from impure joys which so easily glide into the heart, destroying the virtues in their germ, and leaving behind only desolation, ruin, and death.

I wish to combat in my soul all softness, all inclinations to sensuous delicacy, eagerness for pleasures and the enjoyment of the senses and taste, also the seeking of my own ease. I wish to live constantly under arms and, by a struggle without truce or mercy, to curb my senses under the yoke of faith. Make me understand ever more clearly, O Jesus scourged, that there is no virtue, no perfection possible without mortification of the senses. Teach me that henceforth their cannot be between Thy conduct and mine so great a contradiction.

I will say to my eyes: Ye shall not see! —to my ears: Ye shall not hear! —to my sense of smell: Thou shalt not inhale! —to my palate: Thou shalt not taste! to my hands and the other members of my body: Ye shall not touch! And if, through surprise, through negligence, or malice, my command is not obeyed, after the example of the saints, I will arm myself with the avenging discipline, I will strike my flesh, I will make it tremble under the blows of flagellation until it learns to submit. Every fault shall be punished according to its gravity. What the saints have done, why shall I not do with Thy help, O Jesus? To what heroism were they borne in their struggles against the senses! Fasts, watches, macerations, hair-cloth, disciplines, iron instruments of penance, all that hatred of the flesh and the love of Jesus could devise to torment the senses—behold what is met on every page of their life!