

Good Friday

This is what Blessed Raymond of Capua, a dear friend and biographer of Saint Catherine of Siena, remembers about her theology of the passion of Christ [Raymond of Capua OP, The Life of Catherine of Siena, 1395]:

There was another thing, too, about the passion, which I learned from her, for she often spoke of it. She said that the physical sufferings which the Son of God and Man endured for our salvation were so searching that any other man would, if it were possible, have died several times over in the course of them.

Just as the love which he bore us, and which he bears us still, is beyond all measure, so too the suffering which that love prompted and constrained him to endure for us was beyond all measure. It was not limited by nature's capacity to endure, nor by the capacity for wickedness which his tormentors possessed, but went far beyond both.

Who would think, for example, that the thorns of the crown would pierce the bone of the head right through to the brain? Or that the bones of a man could be dragged apart, and he would still live? For the Scripture says, "they numbered all my bones."

One thing alone there is that can account for his enduring all this: his transcendent love. It was that surpassing love that drove him to seek out surpassing sufferings in order to bring home to us beyond all doubt how immense it really is.

This was, indeed, one of the principal reasons of his passion: to manifest the immensity of his most perfect love for us, a love that could find in no other way its adequate expression. It was not the nails that held him to the cross, but love. And it was not the savagery of men that overcame him, but his own love.