

Meditations

We all know, more or less deeply, Cardinal Newman's apologetic and philosophic writings. His devotional works are too little read, and it is in them we find the inner man. Let us linger a while this week over a few passages from his *Meditations*. Take the pages on Christ's Mental Suffering: Here is a thought on the beginning of the Passion:

"An evil temper of murmuring and criticism is spread among the disciples. One was the source of it, but it seems to have been spread. The thought of His death was before Him, and He was thinking of it and His burial after it. A woman came and anointed His sacred head. The action spread a soothing, tender feeling over His pure soul. It was a mute token of sympathy and the whole house was filled with it. It was rudely broken by the harsh voice of the traitor, now for the first time giving utterance to his secret heartlessness and malice. *Uti quid perditio haec!* 'To what purpose is this waste?' The unjust steward with his impious economy making up for his own private thefts by grudging honor to his Master. Thus in the midst of the sweet calm harmony of that feast at Bethany, there comes a jar and discord: all is wrong: sour discontent and distrust are spreading, for the devil is abroad.

"... Judas having once shown what he was, lost no time in carrying out his malice. He went to the chief priests and bargained with them to betray His Lord for a price. Our Lord saw all that took place within him; He saw Satan knocking at his heart, and admitted there, and made an honored guest and an intimate. He saw him go to the priests and heard the conversation between them. He had seen it by his foreknowledge all the time he had been about Him, and when He chose him. What we know feebly affects us far more vividly and very differently when it actually takes place. Our Lord had at length felt, and suffered Himself to feel, the cruelty of the ingratitude of which He was the sport and the victim. He had treated Judas as one of His most familiar friends. He had shown him marks of closest intimacy: He had made him the purse-keeper of Himself and His followers. He had given him the power of working miracles. He had admitted him to a knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. He had sent him out to preach and made him one of His own special representatives, so that the Master was judged of by the conduct of His servant. A heathen, when smitten by a friend, said *Et tu, Brute!* What desolation is in the sense of ingratitude! God who is met with ingratitude daily cannot from His Nature feel it. He took a human heart, that He might feel it in its fulness. And now, O my God, though in Heaven, dost Thou not feel my ingratitude towards Thee?"

Christ Struck by the Soldiers

"I see the figure of a man, whether young or old I cannot tell. He may be fifty, or He may be thirty. Sometimes He looks the one; sometimes the other. There is something inexpressible about His face which I cannot solve. Perhaps, as He bears *all* burdens, He bears that of old age too. But so it is: His face is at once most venerable, yet most childlike, most calm, most sweet, most modest, beaming with sanctity, and yet with loving kindness. His eyes rivet me and move my heart. His breath is all fragrant and transports me out of myself. Oh, I will look upon that face for ever, and will not cease.

"And I see suddenly some one come to Him, and raise his hand and sharply strike Him on that heavenly face. It is a hard hand, the hand of a rude man, and perhaps has iron upon it. It could not be so sudden as to take Him by surprise who knows all things past and future, and He shows no sign of resentment, remaining calm and grave as before: but the expression of His face is marred: a great weal arises, and in a little time that all-gracious Face is

hidden from me by the effects of this indignity, as if a cloud came over It.

"A hand was lifted up against the Face of Christ! Whose hand was that? My conscience tells me: 'thou art the man.' I trust it is not so with me now. But, O my soul, contemplate the awful fact. *Fancy* Christ before thee, and *fancy* thyself lifting up thy hand and striking Him! Thou wilt say, 'It is impossible: I could not do so.' Yes, thou hast done so. When thou didst sin wilfully, then thou hast done so. He is beyond pain now: still thou hast struck Him, and had it been in the days of His flesh, He would have felt pain. Turn back in memory, and recollect the time, the day, the hour, when by mortal sin, by scoffing at sacred things, by profaneness, or by dark hatred of this thy Brother, or by acts of impurity, or by deliberate rejection of God's voice, or in any other devilish way, known to thee, thou hast struck The All-holy-One."

To realise all the beauty and perfection of those sentences they must be read aloud and slowly. At his prose one can only wonder: it is inimitable: it has the qualities of a great work of art: we look at it as we have looked at the Apollo Belvedere, at Giotto's Campanile, at San Marco; we listen to it as we listened to *Lohengrin*, to Antonelli singing *E Lucevan le Stelle*, to John McCormack singing that lovely ballad of Yeats'. Perhaps John Morley, a *maestro di color chi sanno* in such matters, said the right word when he pronounced Newman to be the most winning writer of English that ever lived. But the beauty is not merely formal: it penetrates deeply: it is of the heart, because from the heart. What sympathy, what insight, what spirituality there is in those few passages of devout meditation on the mental pain of Christ! The more one reads the more one admires and marvels and feels. And it is but a page taken at random from so many similarly beautiful pages of a wonderful and intimate book.

DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN

His Lordship the Bishop officiated on Monday morning at an ordination ceremony in the chapel of Holy Cross College, Mosgiel, when Rev. Hugh O'Neill was raised to the diaconate, and Rev. P. O'Meehan to the subdiaconate.

At an ordination ceremony to be held in St. Joseph's Cathedral at the nine o'clock Mass on next Sunday, his Lordship the Bishop, Right Rev. Dr. Whyte, will confer the Order of priesthood on Rev. Hugh O'Neill, and the diaconate on several other students of Holy Cross College.

The Sisters of Mercy, South Dunedin, desire to acknowledge the gift of a parcel of clothing from the members of St. Joseph's Sewing Guild. By their self-sacrifice and the labor of their hands the good ladies of the guild provide many useful garments for the orphans. Such charity will bring its own reward.

Addressing the congregation at St. Joseph's Cathedral on last Sunday evening, Very Rev. Father Coffey, Adm., taking for his theme the life and works of St. Vincent de Paul, the observance of whose feast occurred during the week, delivered an impressive discourse on the example set by the great apostle of charity. The needs which appealed to St. Vincent de Paul and his companions in their day were equally evident in our time (Father Coffey reminded his hearers), and a duty devolved upon each and every one of us to assist the poor and distressed which must not be ignored. He appealed eloquently for many more active members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, which had over so many years done such magnificent work in this city.

The Feast of St. Vincent de Paul, patron of the institution, was observed as a holiday by the inmates of the girls' orphanage, South Dunedin. At the 7 o'clock Mass in the Basilica the children received Holy Communion in a body, and in the evening assisted at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in the convent chapel. As in former years everything possible was done to make the day an enjoyable one for the orphans. In the afternoon, greatly

Jack Metcalfe

Hairdresser & Tobacconist, ST JAMES ST.,
Our Specialty **RAZOR SETTING** ::
IS RECOMMENDED TO THE CATHOLICS OF DUNEDIN ::
DUNEDIN
SUPPORT YOUR ART