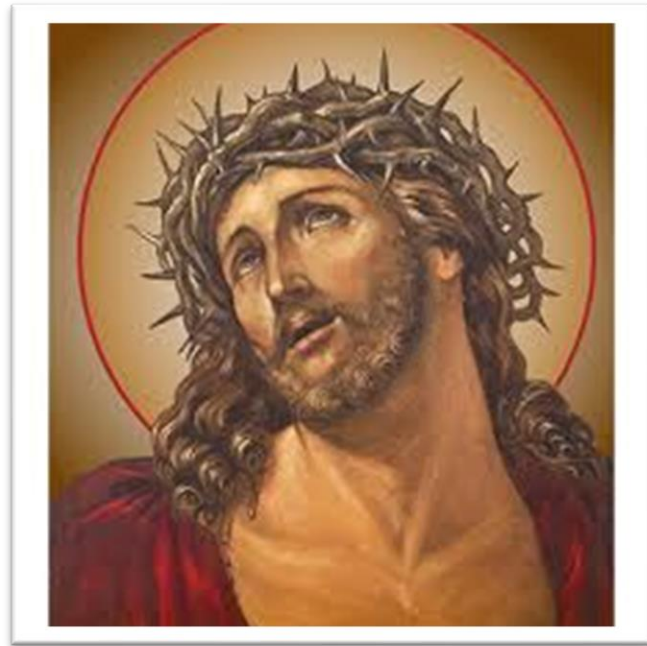


The Crowning with Thorns

No sooner did Sister Emmerich recommence the narrative of her visions on the Passion than she again became extremely ill, oppressed with fever, and so tormented by violent thirst that her tongue was perfectly parched and contracted; and on the Monday after Mid- Lent Sunday, she was so exhausted that it was not without great difficulty, and after many intervals of rest, that she narrated all which our Lord suffered in this crowning with thorns. She was scarcely able to speak, because she herself felt every sensation which she described in the following account: Pilate harangued the populace many times during the time of the scourging of Jesus, but they interrupted him once, and vociferated, 'He shall be executed, even if we die for it.' When Jesus was led into the guardhouse, they all cried out again, 'Crucify him, crucify him!' After this there was silence for a time. Pilate occupied himself in giving different orders to the soldiers, and the servants of the High Priests brought them some refreshments; after which Pilate, whose superstitious tendencies made him uneasy in mind, went into the inner part of his palace in order to consult his gods, and to offer them incense. When the Blessed Virgin and the holy women had gathered up the blood of Jesus, with which the pillar and the adjacent parts were saturated, they left the forum and went into a neighbouring small house, the owner of which I do not know. John was not, I think, present at the scourging of Jesus.



A gallery encircled the inner court of the guardhouse where our Lord was crowned with thorns, and the doors were open. The cowardly ruffians, who were eagerly waiting to gratify their cruelty by torturing and insulting our Lord, were about fifty in number, and the greatest part slaves or servants of the jailers and soldiers. The mob gathered round the building, but were soon displaced by a thousand Roman soldiers, who were drawn up in good order and stationed there. Although forbidden to leave their ranks, these soldiers nevertheless did their utmost by laughter and applause to incite the cruel executioners to redouble their insults; and as public applause gives fresh energy to a comedian, so did their words of encouragement increase tenfold the cruelty of these men.

In the middle of the court there stood the fragment of a pillar, and on it was placed a very low stool which these cruel men maliciously covered with sharp flints and bits of broken potsherds. Then they tore off the garments of Jesus, thereby reopening all his wounds; threw over his shoulders an old scarlet mantle which barely reached his knees; dragged him to the seat prepared, and pushed him roughly down upon it, having first placed the crown of thorns upon his head. The crown of thorns was made of three branches plaited together, the greatest part of the thorns being purposely turned inwards so as to pierce our Lord's head. Having first placed these twisted branches on his forehead, they tied them tightly together at the back of his head, and no sooner was this accomplished to their satisfaction than they put a large reed into his hand, doing all with derisive gravity as if they were really crowning him king. They then seized the reed, and struck his head so violently that his eyes were filled with blood; they knelt before him, derided him, spat in his face, and buffeted him, saying at the same time, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' Then they threw down his stool, pulled him up again

from the ground on which he had fallen, and reseated him with the greatest possible brutality.

It is quite impossible to describe the cruel outrages which were thought of and perpetrated by these monsters under human form. The sufferings of Jesus from thirst, caused by the fever which his wounds and sufferings had brought on, were intense.⁷ He trembled all over, his flesh was torn piecemeal, his tongue contracted, and the only refreshment he received was the blood which trickled from his head on to his parched lips. This shameful scene was protracted a full half-hour, and the Roman soldiers continued during the whole time to applaud and encourage the perpetration of still greater outrages.