

## Points on Capuchin Meditations and Devotions.

**Punti di Meditazioni e devozioni Cappuccini. Translated by Patrick Colbourne  
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A cura di Costanzo Cargnoni. III/1 pp. 1538-1567.**

### Points on Capuchin Meditations and Devotions.

*These “reflections” are topics for meditations throughout the week and are set out according to the method of the “devotio moderna” and they involve the seven benefits that God gave to mankind “creation, authority, mercy, Incarnation, redemption, glorification and divine Love.” In order to assist the memory in meditating throughout the day, these are broken up one after the other into sections for each day of the week.*

*The first Capuchin instance of this method can be found in Giovanni da Fano. However, it was the method that was most traditional within the Order, being used continually and having been found valuable for maintaining recollection of mind.*

*The other topics are the seven sorrows of Mary on Calvary, the twelve instances when blood was shed, the seven sorrows of St Joseph, the ten degrees of humility and ten thoughts on the Sacred Host. They contributed substantially towards the cultivation of the spirit of piety and devotion that nourished Capuchin spirituality in the hearts and in the practice of the friars. We find that headings like these occur again in the small Capuchin devotional codices in the Sixteenth Century and at the beginning of the Seventh Century, for example, in the codex of the Dialogo which was revised by Giovanni da Fano (Li dolori di Santo Joseph, f. 129v; Sette dolori della Madonna, f. 130; Contemplatione per tutta la settimana, f. 130d; Consideratione dell’Ostia et insieme di se medesimo, f. 135r-v, etc), or in the printed editions of the Rule (cf. for example nn. 1550-1552) or the early vernacular Catechisms of the Order.*

#### 1. Reflections.

**5412 Monday.** The gift of creation in five steps, and when the reflection has ended with seven Our fathers and Hail Marys, implore the Lord to grant the seven petitions in the Lord’s Prayer.<sup>1</sup>

First, how he made you out of nothing.

Second, how he made you in his image.

Third, how he gave you what is good in nature to have in common with other creatures.

Fourth, how he gave you a share in good fortune.

Five, how he endowed you with moral good and virtue.

Six, how he endowed you with gratuitous good such as works performed through grace or merit.

Seven, how he made you capable of receiving the gifts of divine glory.

**5413 Tuesday.** Consider the gift of authority seven points.

First. How God preserves our existence.

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<sup>1</sup> In effect these reflections with their various points are connected to the meditation on the Our Father as set out in the meditation written by an anonymous Capuchin (cf. nn. 5437 ff).

Second, how he divided us into grades and states.  
Third, how he directs us by the appropriate means to the goal of salvation.  
Fourth, how he accompanies our works with his strength.  
Fifth, how he prevents all evils and yet allows some for our benefit.  
Six, how he directs all that is good but deprives us of some good out of justice.  
Seven, how he provides and gives to everyone whatever is fitting according to his method of distributive justice.

**5414** *Wednesday*. Consider the gift of mercy using seven points.

First, how we are annihilated as we deserve by the mercy of God.

Second, how he prepares us for penance out of his mercy.

Third, how he offers us mercy saying: *Turn to the Lord your God, for he is gracious.*<sup>2</sup>

Fourth, how he consoles us by means of mercy: *the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.*<sup>3</sup>

Fifth, how he pardons us by means of mercy, *I desire not the death of the wicked.*<sup>4</sup>

Sixth, how he saves by means of mercy, *He saved us because of His mercy.*<sup>5</sup>

Seventh, how he rewards us because of his mercy, *we have been crowned with mercy and compassion.*<sup>6</sup>

**5415** *Thursday*. Consider the gift of the Incarnation using seven points.

First, how God became man, so that we might share in the divine nature.<sup>7</sup>

Second, how the divine Majesty was made a slave.<sup>8</sup> So that we might become sons.

Third, how the Omnipotent assumed our defects so we might become strong.

Fourth, how the Highest Good assumed our wickedness so that we might become good.

Fifth, how he covered his glory with our poverty<sup>9</sup> so that we might become free in glory.

Sixth, how he clothed eternal life with death so that we might possess life.

Seventh, how he assumed our cursedness<sup>10</sup> so that we might become blessed and free from the hands of our enemies.

**5416** *Friday*. Consider the gift of Redemption, using seven points.

First, how great was the Redemption in which God used all His power, wisdom and generosity, His grace, justice, mercy and love; and yet it says: *I have redeemed.*

Second, it is we who were the children of wrath,<sup>11</sup> who have been redeemed. So it says *us*.

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<sup>2</sup> Joel 2, 13.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor 1, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ezechiel 33, 11; 18, 23.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Pt 1, 3; Tit 3, 5; Ps 108, 26 (*Vulg.*).

<sup>6</sup> Ps 102, 4 (*Vulg.*). The text has *sixth* instead of *seventh*.

<sup>7</sup> 2Pet, 1, 4.

<sup>8</sup> Phil 2, 6-7.

<sup>9</sup> *Debiti = debiti*.

<sup>10</sup> Gal, 3, 13-14.

<sup>11</sup> Eph 2, 3.

Third, Consider the Redeemer, who was not an Angel, or a human being, but God made man. So it says: *Lord God*.

Fourth, Consider with what we were redeemed, His precious blood. So it says, *in your blood*.

Fifth, Consider from what were we redeemed, from and hand of the devil, from a death of ignorance and slavery. So it says, *out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation*.

Sixth, Consider the value of the redemption which was the acquisition of the Kingdom, of grace and of glory. So it says: *He has made us to our God a kingdom*.

Seventh, Consider the aim of Redemption, *and we shall reign on the earth*,<sup>12</sup> if we suffer with Christ; so it says: *if we suffer we shall also reign with him*.<sup>13</sup>

**5417** *Saturday*, consider the gift of glorification using seven points.

First, how we have been predestined to receive grace and glory: to grace so that we may become collaborators, to glory [so that] we may receive the reward of our work.

Second, how we have been chosen to become holy and immaculate in his sight,<sup>14</sup> holy in our soul, immaculate in our body.

Third, how he calls us to his Kingdom in company with his Son,<sup>15</sup> by means of his pity and fidelity.

Four, how he granted us the bonus of being free from Original Sin by Baptism and free from mortal sin by the Sacrament of Penance.

Fifth, exalted us by means of gifts, virtues and commandments of perfection and love.

Sixth, how he glorifies us by his presence in this life and by possessing him in the next.

Seventh, how he makes us conform to his Son<sup>16</sup> in this life by means of grace and in the next by means of glory.

**5418** *Sunday*, consider the gift of divine Love using seven points.

First, how he loves us with eternal and divine love<sup>17</sup>

Second how his love is at work<sup>18</sup> so that all his works are performed out of love.

Third, such love works in such a way that that it is not calculated, but comes about entirely by means of charity<sup>19</sup> so that everything comes about through charity.

Fourth, how such love is unique so that he loves us more than all creatures and above all creatures.

Fifth, how such love unites and transforms in uniting all creatures and transforming them.

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<sup>12</sup> The Biblical quotation, which has been broken up in the various verses, comes from Ap 5, 9-10.

<sup>13</sup> 2 Tim 2, 12.

<sup>14</sup> Eph 1, 4.

<sup>15</sup> Col, 1, 13; 1 Thes 2, 12.

<sup>16</sup> Rom 8, 29.

<sup>17</sup> Jer 31, 3.

<sup>18</sup> Jn 5, 17.

<sup>19</sup> Eph 5, 17.

Sixth, how such love is pleasing and fulfils desire in as much as God takes pleasure in what is good for us and, out of love, desires all that is required for our salvation.

Seventh, how he loves us with a love that is strong,<sup>20</sup> definitive and abundant. It is strong because it is not deterred by our ingratitude; definitive, in that it is to the fulfilment of our salvation; superabundant, in that it is more than we deserve etc.

2. *The seven sorrows of the cross of the Madonna.*

5419 First, when she saw Christ stripped.<sup>21</sup>

Second, when she heard the sound of the hammer as he was being crucified.

Third, when she saw him raised up on the cross between two thieves.

Fourth, when she saw his bloodstained clothes and saw that they were being divided and saw the stains on his tunic.

Fifth, when she heard the seven words that the Lord spoke.<sup>22</sup>

Sixth, when she saw him die.

Seven, when she saw his side opened.

Or each sorrow say an *Our Father* and a *Hail Mary*.<sup>23</sup>

3 *The shedding of blood.*

5420 First, at the circumcision.

Second, at the prayer in the garden

Third, at the scourging.

Fourth, at the crowning with thorns.

Fifth, when he was carrying the cross on his shoulder.

Sixth, when he was stripped.

Seventh, when he was taken down from the cross.

For each time blood was shed say an *Our Father* and a *Hail Mary*.<sup>24</sup>

4. *The sorrows of Saint Joseph.*

5421 First, when he saw that the Blessed Virgin was pregnant by the Holy Spirit, and he was sorry to be her husband as he thought that he was unworthy.<sup>25</sup>

Second, when Jesus Christ was born he cried with grief because he could not pay him the honour that he deserved and he was consoled by Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Fourth, when in Egypt he cried when he saw the food served in this foreign land.

Fifth, when he returned to Nazareth he was afraid to go to Judea.

Sixth, when he heard about the deaths of the Innocents.

Seventh, when Jesus was lost.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Song 8, 6. – Compare these points with the meditation by Silvestro da Rossana (*n.* 4236).

<sup>21</sup> *Vedde = vide.*

<sup>22</sup> That is when she heard the Lord utter his last seven words on the cross.

<sup>23</sup> It is useful to compare these sorrows with those mentioned by Bernardino da Balvano (*n.* 4236).

<sup>24</sup> It is also useful to compare these with those of Bernardino da Balvano (*nn.* 4238-4241).

<sup>25</sup> This interpretation is interesting in that it gives a more human and realistic idea of the character of St Joseph which is quite different with the usual interpretation which is based on law.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Giovanni da Fano, *Arte de la unione* (*nn.* 3989-3990). – Note that the anonymous copyist omitted the third sorrow of St Joseph, which was the circumcision of Jesus.

5. *The degrees of humility of St Bernard.*

- 5422** First. Regarding yourself as less than you think that you are.  
Second. Regarding yourself as unworthy of God's gifts.  
Third. Regarding yourself as deserving of evil.  
Fourth. Regarding yourself as deficient in doing good.  
Fifth. Regarding yourself and a useless servant.  
Sixth. Turning away from honours.  
Seventh. Not seeking praise.  
Eighth. Not praising oneself.  
Ninth. When you are praised not raising yourself up in importance.  
Tenth. Having patience when you are ridiculed and offended.<sup>27</sup>

6. *The circumstances of the Sacred Host.*

**5423** Firstly, on the one hand it can be seen, although there is no image and it signifies the divine nature, that is the Deity, which is made evident by the Spirit, but cannot be depicted by any created object and is completely invisible, *non videbit homo* (man shall not see me).<sup>28</sup>

Second. What is represented by either the scourging, the crown of thorns or the crucifixion is a certain image of Christ and this represents his humanity, by means of which he was made manifest as man and which was subsequently symbolised by the sufferings which he endured for us as man, *habitu inventus ut homo* (being made in the likeness of man).<sup>29</sup>

Third, it is circular, and with respect to both natures this signifies the eternity of divine sonship which is eternal, and that sonship in time is circular and perfect, *perfectus Deus et homo* (he proclaimed himself God and man).<sup>30</sup>

Fourth, the host is light and this represents the weightlessness of being innocent of sin. I say weightless in both natures which were without the weight of any sin, *qui peccatum* (who did no sin).<sup>31</sup>

Fifth, it is completely snow-white which is a symbol of the brightness of his virtues and the glory of heaven, *candidus et immaculatus* (white and immaculate).<sup>32</sup>

Sixth, it has a flavour which signifies divine grace, the most flavoursome taste of all that is divine including his sufferings. *Gratia salve estis* (by grace you are saved).<sup>33</sup>

Seventh, it has an odour and this signifies the odorous merits of his life which always gave off the fragrance of the sanctity of everything. *In odorum unguentorum* (the odour of your ointments).<sup>34</sup>

Eighth, the parts of the host are united and this signifies the union of the faithful with Christ, all of whom are united in the Sacrament of Faith.

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<sup>27</sup> These are also mentioned in the Capuchin booklets of the Rule, but in a very different manner. (Cf. vol I *nn.* 1550-52).

<sup>28</sup> Ex, 33, 20; 1 Jn 4, 12.

<sup>29</sup> Phil. 2, 7.

<sup>30</sup> Jn, 10, 33.

<sup>31</sup> 1 Pet 2, 22.

<sup>32</sup> Song 5, 10.

<sup>33</sup> Eph 2, 8.

<sup>34</sup> Song 1, 3.

Ninth, the host is consecrated which signifies the effect it has on those who receive communion, *Mens impmetur gratiae* ) the mind is filled with grace).<sup>35</sup>

Tenth, the host is made of unleavened bread which nourishes us for eternal life because being unleavened it takes away the taste of sin and the carnal sweetness of the present life.

Eleventh, it is lifted up and then broken into three parts and then taken in communion; this signifies charity which lifts out hearts up high and gives three things, grace to the living, mercy to the dead and glory to the beatified.

*What this means for us.*

**5434** First, within ourselves we ought to be clean, pure and sincere of spirit, free from all hypocrisy and malice.<sup>36</sup>

Second, with regard to our public life, we ought to live in conformity to the life of Christ and portray his image.<sup>37</sup>

Third, with regard to encompassing everything our heart ought to reach out to what is good and perfect without attending to the four passionate tendencies: hatred, love, fear and false hope.

Fourth, we ought to be unburdened by sin and rejoice in confessing.

Fifth, we ought to shine with purity, a taste for grace and the blessings of the Sacrament.

Seventh, we should possess the odour of good living. *Simus bonos odor* (we are the good odour).<sup>38</sup>

Eighth, we ought to share all our merits and share in those of our neighbours.

Ninth, we ought to be gracious in good works.

Tenth, we ought to be the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth,<sup>39</sup> with which one nourishes the soul.

Eleventh, we ought to exercise uplifting charity so as to raise ourselves up to God in charity.

Twelfth, we ought to exercise three kinds of justice, towards God, towards our neighbour and towards ourselves. These are the conditions for receiving communion.

**5425** Then say this prayer.

My Lord, I am contented, I acknowledge and I am happy<sup>40</sup> that your Majesty has instituted this Sacrament, which is so exalted, and which shares in what is divine and human by nature, in what is eternal and temporal perfection, and possesses such innocence and heavenly splendour, has quite the savour of grace and the odour of merits, such union with the elect, such nourishment of virtue, such properties of grace, such charity, through which the living, the dead and the blessed are united, by the Sacrament which contains your living person. I thank you, Lord, and thus admit that it is my fault that I am unworthy of such a Sacrament because I do not possess and inner spirit, nor conform with you exteriorly. I do not have a will that is perfectly steadfast,

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<sup>35</sup> From the Eucharistic hymn *O sacrum Commercium*.

<sup>36</sup> 1 Pt 2, 1.

<sup>37</sup> Rom 8, 19.

<sup>38</sup> 2 Cor 2, 15.

<sup>39</sup> 1 Cor 5, 8.

<sup>40</sup> Francesco da jesi, Silvestro da Rossano etc. also uses these phrases in the act of love of God. (cf. *nn.* 3798).

but I give in to what is totally passionate, seriously sinful and clouded by malice. I have no awareness of grace or sense of life. At all hours<sup>41</sup> I am incapable of sharing in the goodness of your faithful people. I am not made of the yeast of sincerity and truth, but am phony. I do not possess uplifting charity, nor even a fraction of what is due to you out of justice, my God. to my neighbours and to myself. However I beg of you through the merits of this Sacrament and through the love that caused you to institute Sacrament that you would wish to forgive all me failings, and grant me the grace to receive communion filled with faith, hope and charity so that all the benefits of this Sacrament may be conferred on my soul and on all who receive communion today, and for whom<sup>42</sup> I am bound to pray. Lord, grant your mercy to your poor creature in this reception of communion so that in receiving this Sacrament that contains so many of your divine gifts the good Spirit<sup>43</sup> may come upon us, conformity to you life and that we may be without sin, exercise good will, be clean of heart and mind, know how to savour your grace, and have a feel for life that allows us to share in the merits of all your saints, with truth, sincerity, charity and justice and live completely in you in this life and be with you in glory. *Amen.*

*Laus Deo Virginiq̄ue Mariae*  
(Praise be to God and the Virgin Mary.)

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<sup>41</sup> *Ogni ora* (every hour) has ben added between the lines in the manuscript.

<sup>42</sup> *Per che* here means *per i quail* (for whom).

<sup>43</sup> Lk 11, 13; Ps 50, 12 (*Vulg.*)