

Luke 23:26-31

CHRIST IS LED AWAY TO BE CRUCIFIED

30. (Verse 26). *And as they led him away*, etc. After describing Christ's condemnation, the Evangelist depicts here *the leading away of the condemned*. In this section there are four considerations: *Christ's being led away to the gibbet; the lamentation of the women; the rebuke of those lamenting; and the prediction of imminent disasters.*

So first, with regard to *Christ's being led away to the gibbet* the text says: *And as they led him away, they laid hold of a certain Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, and they laid the cross upon him to carry after Jesus.*⁶⁵ – But contrary to this statement seems to be what is said in John 19:16-17: "They took Jesus and led him away. And bearing the cross for himself, he went forth to the place called the skull." – However, there is no contradiction, for both deal with the same event. John makes explicit what Luke is silent about. So the Glossa comments: "First, the Lord carried the cross, but afterwards it was imposed on Simon, whom they met as they went out."⁶⁶ – Now Luke painstakingly expresses this on account of the mystery of its signification. This Simon, by reason of his name and country, because he was from Cyrene, designates *the obedience of the Gentile peoples* to take up the cross after Christ.⁶⁷ So the Glossa ob-

serves: "Since Simon was not an Israelite, but a Cyrenean, the Gentiles are designated by him."⁶⁸ The Gentile peoples carry the cross, when, having left behind their pagan rites, they obediently embrace the footsteps of the Lord's passion. And to such Peter speaks in 1 Peter 2:21: "Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example," etc.⁶⁹ And to such Paul writes in Hebrews 13:12-13: "Christ suffered outside the gate. Let us, therefore, go forth to him outside the gate, bearing his reproach."⁷⁰ – Now Simon was compelled to carry the cross, as it is said in Mark 15:21: "They forced a passerby, Simon of Cyrene." So by reason of *compulsion* Simon designates *hypocrites* who carry the cross for the sake of human praise. So Gregory states: "Simon, who carries the cross out of compulsion, is that person who labors for human praise. For men and women are subject to this labor when the fear or love of God does not compel them."⁷¹ Or Simon designates *the slothful*, who carry the cross with mur-

by him. They were formerly pilgrims and strangers to the covenants, but now by being obedient to the faith, they have become citizens and members of God's household. And as it is said in another place, they are indeed heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. Whence Simon is superbly interpreted to mean obedient, and Cyrene to mean heir." Bede refers to Acts 2:10, Ephesians 2:19, and Romans 8:17.

⁶⁵ On p. 572 n. 11 QuarEd state that this is the *Glossa Ordinaria* (from Bede). See the previous note.

⁶⁶ The Vulgate reads *Christus passus est pro vobis* ("Christ suffered for you"). Bonaventure's "etc" hides the ending, "that you may follow in his footsteps," that ties this quotation to the previous sentence.

⁶⁷ The Vulgate reads *Iesus* ("Jesus").

⁶⁸ On p. 572 n. 14 QuarEd refer to Book VIII c. 44 n. 72 of Gregory's *Moralia*, where this same opinion is expressed, but in other words. They also point to Homily 32 n. 3 of GGHG where Gregory interprets Simon's carrying of the cross. See PL 76:1235A: "For those who abstain, but are proud, indeed afflict their bodies through abstinence. However, they are living for the sake of the world through their desire to be praised for their abstinence." The editors further state that this interpretation is contained verbatim in the *Glossa Ordinaria* on Mark 15:21 where it is attributed to "Jerome."

⁶⁵ On p. 572 n. 7 QuarEd rightly mention that the Vulgate reads *illi* ("upon him") while Bonaventure has *ei* ("upon him").

⁶⁶ On p. 572 n. 9 QuarEd refer to the *Glossa Ordinaria* (from Bede, who borrows from Jerome). See CCSL cxx, p. 399.

⁶⁷ On p. 572 n. 10 QuarEd cite Bede. I translate CCSL cxx, p. 399: "And since this Simon is not a Jerusalemit, but is shown to be a Cyrenean – for Cyrene is a city of Libya according to what we read in the Acts of the Apostles - the Gentile peoples are fittingly designated

muring, as a punishment and something they are forced to do. Against people of this kind Bernard says: "Woe to those who carry the cross, not as the Savior did who carried his own, but as that Cyrenean, who carried someone else's."⁷² For a contrary view, Luke 9:23 above states: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily," etc., for each day the love of doing penance must be renewed in us.⁷³

31. (Verse 27). Second, with respect to *the lamentation of the women accompanying him* the text reads: *Now following him was a great crowd of the people and of women, who were bewailing and lamenting him.* And the crowd was following to gawk, but the women to show compassion. So the Glossa states: "Evil people are following, so that they may be happy when they see him die. The women are following, so that they might weep over him whom they wanted to live, but who was now about to die, was dying, and would soon be dead."⁷⁴ So after his death it is said of Magdalena in John 20:11: "Mary was standing outside weeping at the tomb." Now this lamentation over Christ was done by women, not by men, not because women were more fervent or more steadfast in their love of Christ, but because they are

⁷² Through n. 15 on p. 572 QuarEd have led me to Bernard's *Apolo-gia ad Guillelmum Abbatem* I.2. See SBOp 3.82 for the exact same wording as Bonaventure has. Hugh of St. Cher, p. 267v,o also has the identical wording. This is impressive when one considers that both Hugh and Bonaventure have quoted just this one sentence from a work that is twenty-seven pages long.

⁷³ Bonaventure interprets Simon to signify three groups of people. Hugh of St. Cher, p. 267v, o gives a sixfold moral interpretation of the carrying of the cross: Jesus and Simon have two interpretations each; the thief on the right and the thief on the left one each. For Hugh the thief on the left is the "hypocrite" while Simon is "slothful." It seems that the tradition was still very much in flux.

⁷⁴ On p. 573 n. 1 QuarEd indicate that this is the Glossa Ordinaria (from Bede). See CCSL cxx, p. 399.

more prone by nature to tears and more compassionate by nature. As it is said of Anna in Tobit 10:4: "But his mother wept disconsolately." And of Hannah, the mother of Samuel, 1 Samuel 1:10 reads: "While Hannah had her heart full of grief, she prayed to the Lord, weeping copiously," etc. Finally, the women did this because they could do it with greater impunity. Therefore, the Glossa comments: "So the text says that the women only were weeping and says nothing about men also weeping, for the female sex, the more contemptible as if were, could more freely show what they felt against the high priests who were present."⁷⁵ So what Isaiah 32:11-12 has can be said: "Gird your loins. Mourn for your breasts, for the desirable country." But the *desirable* one was he who was over all the kings of the entire world.⁷⁶ And therefore, this weeping and this lamentation could be designated by the lamentation over Josiah according to what 2 Chronicles 35:24-25 says: "All Judah and Jerusalem mourned over Josiah. But especially Jeremiah, whose lamentations for Josiah all the male and female singers repeat . . ." Now great lamentations of this sort were sung and foretold about the Savior, and therefore are read during his Passion.⁷⁷ Christ's death and the destruction of Jerusalem are mourned at the same time.

⁷⁵ On p. 573 n. 4 QuarEd state that this is the Glossa Ordinaria (from Bede). See CCSL cxx, p. 399. Hugh of St. Cher, p. 267v, a comments: "And although many men were weeping over the death of the Lord, such as Nicodemus and Joseph, nevertheless they didn't dare to weep as publicly and manifest their sorrow before the priests, as the women, who were lamenting openly before everyone. This was a sign of a more steady and greater love. For true love, like fire, cannot be hidden without manifesting itself when necessary."

⁷⁶ On p. 573 n. 6 QuarEd refer to a possible parallel in 2 Chronicles 9:22-23, which speaks of Solomon.

⁷⁷ On p. 573 n. 8 QuarEd rightly point to the First Nocturn of Matins during the Sacred Triduum of Holy Week when some of Jeremiah's Lamentations are read or sung.