

## Day 40. Discernment

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This is the most searing of all sufferings, the suffering of the spirit. At his most tragic hour, Jesus experiences abandonment by God. Prior to that moment, he had never called the Father by his generic name, “God”.

To convey the impact of this, the Gospel also reports his words in Aramaic. These are the only words of Jesus from the cross that have come down to us in the original language. The real event is the extreme abasement, being forsaken by the Father, forsaken by God. We find it hard even to grasp what great suffering he embraced out of love for us. Jesus, in his abandonment, asks us to open our eyes and hearts to all who find themselves abandoned. For us, as disciples of the “forsaken” Lord, no man, woman or child can be regarded as an outcast, no one left to himself or herself. Let us remember that the rejected and the excluded are living icons of Christ: they remind us of his reckless love, his forsakenness that delivers us from every form of loneliness and isolation.

Brothers and sisters, today let us implore this grace: to love Jesus in his abandonment and to love Jesus in the abandoned all around us. Let us ask for the grace to see and acknowledge the Lord who continues to cry out in them. May we not allow his voice to go unheard amid the deafening silence of indifference. God has not left us alone; let us care, then, for those who feel alone and abandoned. Then, and only then, will we be of one mind and heart with the one who, for our sake, “emptied himself” (Phil 2:7). He emptied himself completely for us.

*Homily, Palm Sunday, 2023*