



St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross

“Ave Crux, spes unica!”

SECOND READING, August 9th Office of Readings
From the spiritual writings of Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross
(Edith Stein Werke (Freiburg, 1987), 11:124-126)

“Ave Crux, spes unica!”

St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein) - The Office of Readings for August 9th

We greet you, Holy Cross, our only hope! The church puts these words on our lips during the time of the passion, which is dedicated to the contemplation of the bitter sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The world is in flames. The struggle between Christ and antichrist rages openly, and so if you decide for Christ you can even be asked to sacrifice your life.

Contemplate the Lord who hangs before you on the wood, because he was obedient even to the death of the cross. He came into the world not to do his own will but that of the Father. And if you wish to be the spouse of the Crucified, you must renounce completely your own will and have no other aspiration than to do the will of God.

Before you the Redeemer hangs on the cross stripped and naked, because he chose poverty. Those who would follow him must renounce every earthly possession.

Stand before the Lord who hangs from the cross with his heart torn open. He poured out the blood of his heart in order to win your heart. In order to follow him in holy chastity, your heart must be free from every earthly aspiration. Jesus Crucified must be the object of your every longing, of your every desire, of your every thought.

The world is in flames: the fire can spread even to our house, but above all the flames the cross stands on high, and it cannot be burnt. The cross is the way which leads from earth to heaven. Those who embrace it with faith, love, and hope are taken up, right into the heart of the Trinity.

The world is in flames: do you wish to put them out? Contemplate the cross: from his open heart the blood of the Redeemer pours, blood which can put out even the flames of hell. Through the faithful observance of the vows, you make your heart open; and then the floods of that divine love will be able to flow into it, making it overflow and bear fruit to the furthest reaches of the earth.

Through the power of the cross you can be present wherever there is pain, carried there by your compassionate charity, by that very charity which you draw from the divine heart. That charity enables you to spread everywhere the most precious blood in order to ease pain, save and redeem.

The eyes of the Crucified gaze upon you. They question you and appeal to you. Do you wish seriously to renew your alliance with him? What will your response be? Lord, where shall I go? You alone have the words of life. Ave Crux, spes unica!