**GOOD FRIDAY MEDITATION [29th March, 2013]**

THEME:THE CRUCIFIXION: SPIRITUAL VACCINATION

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In view of the Good Friday-Easter celebrations, a journalist confronted me with the question: ‘What would you say to those who think that the death of Jesus Christ was not necessary?’ Beloved this question is similar to what St. Paul was confronted with about 2000 years ago: the question of the meaninglessness or foolishness of the cross of Jesus Christ. To this, St. Paul responded: ‘the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those who are being saved it is the power of God. … We preach ***Christ crucified***, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called Jews and Greeks [Africans and Europeans, Americans and Asians], ***Christ*** [***crucified***] **is the power and wisdom of God’ to save us**(1 Cor. 1:18, 23-24).

Beloved I would like to use **vaccination** to illustrate the meaning of the crucifixion of Christ: the power and wisdom of God to save us. The discovery of the use of vaccines has helped us a lot. Most of us, since childhood, have been vaccinated several times – e.g. vaccinations against polio, yellow fever, chicken pox, hepatitis.But for such vaccinations many of us would have been very sick, disabled or would have even died already.

Vaccines are made from the virus or germ that causes the disease (e.g. polio). The virus or germ is taken through a process by which it is weakened or killed, and then used to produce the vaccine, with which one is injected. One’s body then develops immunity against the disease (e.g. polio).

Sin is the cause of our eternal death, for scripture says, ‘the wages of sin is death’. So we could see ***sin*** *as the* ***virus*** *or* ***germ*** *of our suffering and death*. And Jesus, to take away this **virus (sin),**had to take it upon himself and nail it to the cross of Calvary (*cf.* Col. 2:14). In other words, by his death and resurrection Jesus has weakened or **destroyed the potency of sin – the virus of suffering and death**. The **spiritual vaccine** that Jesus has produced,through his crucifixion and resurrection, is the **grace** of salvation; and it is by **faith** that we are injected by this vaccine: ‘even when we were **dead in sins**, God made us alive through Christ …. For by **grace** you have been saved **through faith’** (Eph. 2: 5-8).

You may, however, ask that if we have been vaccinated against suffering and death, why do we still suffer and die? In the normal medical vaccination, the body system may take a while to adjust to the vaccine; sometimes some people even have reactions like fever. Similarly, if we are suffering today, it is just the initial fever, alerting us that our souls are adjusting to the **spiritual vaccination**.

In other words, Jesus, the Divine Physician, who has vaccinated us through faith, cannot err. So every bodily sickness or pain or suffering we experience is an assurance that our souls are adjusting well and our spiritual immune system is getting stronger and stronger.

So, I pray that every sickness or suffering you and I experience would make our souls healthier for heaven and that our death will prove that we have been eternally immunized against the fires of hell! Amen!