

### 38. *The deepest book*

I think you are wrong to read during your mental prayer. Rather than nourishing your prayer life, it flatters your taste—not to say your gluttony—for ideas. Why don't you put all books aside? Or better, you should be content with the "the deepest book," as the Curé of Ars called it one day when he was singing its praises.

This is what he said:

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"The cross is the deepest book anyone can ever read. Those who do not know it are ignorant, even if they should happen to know all other books. The only real scholars are those who love it, consult it, and deepen their understanding of it. Bitter as this book may be, we are never happier than when we drown in its bitterness. The more we follow its teaching, the more we want to continue following it. When reading it, time flies. We learn all we want to know, and we never have enough of what we discover in it."

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I can guess your answer. "The language of this book is foreign to me." It's up to you to learn it. A Christian has no right to be ignorant of it. It is the language of God. Look at all of the men and women of prayer, all the saints pictured for us in Christian iconography (engravings, colored prints, illuminated manuscripts, and paintings). They are shown at the foot of the Cross, or with a crucifix in their hands, engrossed in deciphering its message. Is it not obvious that from now on no book can possibly deter them from meditating on the Cross, "the Beloved's love letter to us"?