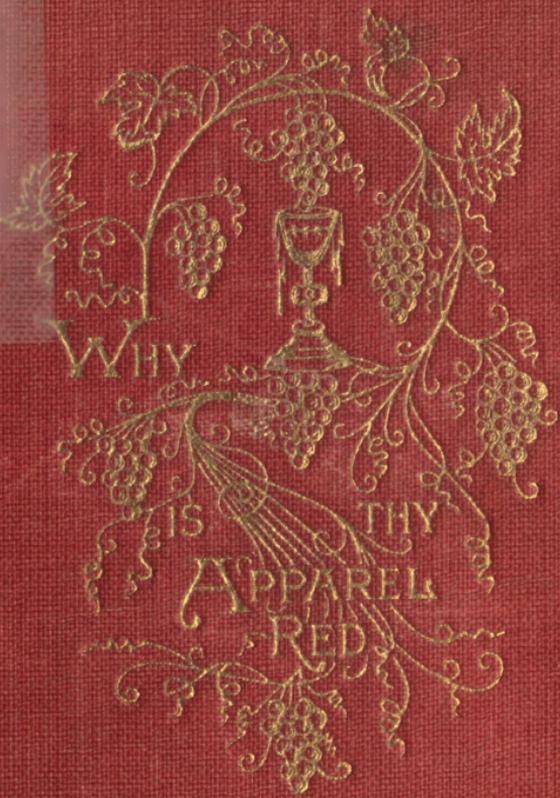


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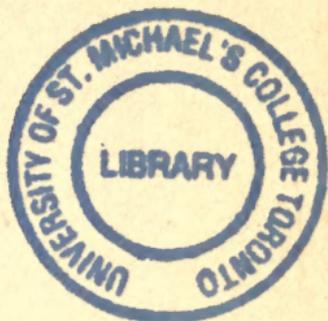
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WHY IS THY APPAREL RED?

OR

GLORIES OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

*"Who is this that cometh from Edom,
with dyed garments from Bosra, this
beautiful one in his robe, walking in the
greatness of his strength. I, that speak
justice, and am a defender to save.
Why then is thy apparel red, and thy
garments like theirs that tread in the
winepress?"* (ISAIAH LXIII)

BY

REV. M. F. WALZ, C. PP. S.



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1914

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To the
Immaculate Heart of Mary
The Fountain-Head
of the
Blood of our Redeemer
this little *Volume*
is *Affectionately Dedicated*
in the *Hope*
that by the *Oblation of this Blood*
Through Her Hands
to our *Heavenly Father*
in *Expiation for our Sins*
We all may Drink more Love
from the
Chalice of Benediction

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PREFACE



ST. CATHERINE of Siena bids us fill our memory with thoughts of the Precious Blood of Jesus. This the writer has attempted to do in the following pages.

Those who thirst for the love of God and for the salvation of souls, yet feel oppressed by the consequences of their sins, and are diffident about the efficacy of their prayers, will find in the devotion to the Blood of our Redeemer a source of consolation and encouragement altogether too little known and appreciated.

The Church elevates the chalice every morning at Mass for our adoration and as a propitiation for our sins, and her liturgical prayers are replete with invocations to the Precious Blood, to awaken our confidence in this Blood of the Atonement. "Having therefore, brethren, a confidence in the entering into the holies by the blood of Christ" (Heb. X, 19).

Our Eucharistic Lord is glorified in the Blessed Sacrament by the devotion to His Divine Blood, trampled under foot in the Passion, but now acclaimed with joy by us, the chosen people of the New Law, as the Price of our Redemption. His Blood be upon us and upon our children for the sanctification of our souls!

THE AUTHOR.

Patronage of St. Francis Xavier
March 12, 1914.

MORNING STAR AND AURORA



HE human race has existed here on earth about 6,000 years, but it is not quite 2,000 years that heaven is open to man. What had closed it upon us? Sin. And what has re-opened the heavenly paradise to us? The Precious Blood of our dying Saviour on the Cross. The fallen angels did not receive the promise of a Redeemer and cannot avail themselves of the merits of the Precious Blood. They are lost forever. We all deserved the same fate, but we poor mortals were "bought with a great price." *"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled, foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but manifested in the last times for you"* (I Peter I, 18-20).

When God said to the serpent in the garden of Eden, "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed," may we not conclude that He referred to the redeeming Blood of Jesus assumed from the Immaculate Virgin Mary? *"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb"* (Apoc. XII, 10, 11). Is

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not then the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary the morning star, and the Precious Blood of her Divine Son the aurora, of a new spiritual day? These are the two sweet recollections we love to entertain of paradise lost, the memories of which shed a tender luster over this accursed earth: the Virgin promised four thousand years before her birth, and the "Lamb slain from the beginning of the world;" one is the hope of the elect, and the other the salvation of the just.*

Fallen man must be restored to the image of God, and for this purpose the Son of God "*emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man*" (Phil. II, 7). But in the eternal wisdom of God it is decreed, that without the effusion of blood there was to be no remission of sin, no restoration of man to the sonship of God. Blood had been flowing over four thousand years at the express command of God as an acceptable homage to the Deity as well as an act of thanksgiving and expiation, but only as a type of the Blood of the Lamb of God; for nothing will

*It may be remarked here that the Immaculate Conception was declared a dogma of faith only five years after the feast of the Precious Blood was extended to the universal Church in 1849. The most ancient church in Rome bearing the title of the Immaculate Conception, and built by the celebrated Belisarius in the 6th century, is now in charge of the Missionary Fathers of the Precious Blood. This church is now called S. Maria in Trivio, and contains the relics of Bl. Gaspar del Bufalo, the holy Founder of the Community of the Precious Blood.

appease the Divinity but a Divine Victim. The Son of God then seeks a mother here on earth. He asks for blood from the veins of a daughter of Adam that he might belong to the human race. *"Therefore because the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner hath been partaker of the same"* (Heb. II, 14). The great Archangel Gabriel is sent as heavenly envoy to convey the message of this astounding mystery, and to whom? To a maiden who in the eyes of the world is simply the bride of a poor laboring man. *"Who is as the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high and looketh down on the low things in heaven and in earth?"* (Ps. 112.) But she was a virgin without spot, whom He has enriched with every grace, and whose soul is a reflection of the Divine Purity. The Holy Ghost infused more divine love and sanctity in Mary's heart than in the whole world of angels and men. The Blessed Virgin Mary is elevated to the dignity of Mother of God, not on account of personal merits of her own, but solely through the merits of the Precious Blood as the fountain of the plenitude of graces in Mary. *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of his grace"* (Eph. I, 7).

But the highest glory of the Precious Blood, as well as the greatest of the riches of His grace,

is the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary together with her consummate sanctity and exalted dignity. "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee." And Mary said: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to Thy word." And the Word was made flesh. "Bright as the blood of Adam, when the breath of God sent it sparkling through his veins, pure as the flesh of Eve, while standing yet in the mould of the Almighty's hands, as they drew it from the side of the slumbering man, were the blood and the flesh, which the Spirit of God formed into the glorious humanity, that Mary gave to Jesus."—*Wiseman*.

"The Precious Blood of Jesus flowing through His veins while an infant in His Holy Mother's womb was derived from Mary. He lived with her life. She furnished from her immaculate body the Precious Blood that Jesus shed for us. How close must have been the union of Jesus and Mary! Can we wonder at her surpassing holiness, when she not only carried her God within her womb, but furnished the very Body with which His Humanity clothed itself."

"We also find in this thought a fresh proof of Mary's unblemished purity. It is repugnant to our reverence for the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity to imagine Him dwelling in a womb that had ever been defiled with sin, and

much more to suppose that the Precious Blood that flowed in His veins and was the price of our redemption did not come from a source as pure as God could make it."

"We must also remember that Jesus' Blood was wholly Mary's. It was not as in the case of other children who have an earthly father. The Body of Jesus was formed in Mary's womb by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and naturally Jesus was altogether hers. In heaven, the Body that Jesus wears is still the Body derived from Mary, and this union is now closer than ever."—*Clarke, S. J.*

It is an article of faith that the Blessed Virgin Mary gave to the Son of God that most pure and Precious Blood which the Holy Ghost drew from her virginal veins as from the original source of man's redemption. This body of the Mother of God, in the order of nature, was purer than the rays of the sun, and in the order of grace, purer than the blessed Spirits. I am, Mary can say of herself, the mystic vine which produced the sweet and lovely grape from which that mysterious wine of salvation was pressed, the Blood of the new and eternal Testament. "*As the vine I have brought forth a pleasant odour; and my flowers are the fruit of honour and riches*" (Eccl. XXIV, 23).

Eve offered us the fruit of death. But Thou,

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O most holy Mother, didst give us the fruit of eternal life. How can I thank Thee enough for so sublime a gift? O my celestial Queen, how could I ever forget Thee? How could I but love Thee? Forever and ever thou shalt be to me "the mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope." The Precious Blood of Thy Son shall ever remind me that it was taken from thy blood; just as my devotion to Thee shall ever increase my devotion to the price of my redemption.

What is dignity? We increase in dignity and lay claim to greater honor from others in proportion as we approach the Deity. Now there can be no closer proximity between two living beings than there exists between the person giving and the person receiving that life. By her maternity as Mother of Christ, Mary obtained the nearest proximity to God imaginable. Hence her divine maternity procures for her a dignity beyond all comparison. In her relation to us, her maternity partakes also of the nature of a sacrament, in as much as she gave birth to the Author of the sacraments. These are called channels of grace, and in a similar sense Mary is to us a canal of all graces. But why should it be wrong in the eyes of our dissenting brethren, to obtain graces and favors through Mary if it is not wrong to receive through Mary the author of all grace?

It is true, Jesus Christ is the only Mediator of merit, but there is yet a mediation of intercession and thus we call Mary our mediatrix as the dispensatrix of all graces. Let us go to our Redeemer with childlike confidence, let us also bear in mind that we are approaching not simply God, but the God-Man, Who loves His Mother and whom He has been pleased to make the Mother of divine grace.—*Dilgskron, C. S. S. R.*

The Precious Blood is the fountain of the plenitude of all graces in Mary, but it is also the source of her power to help us. By her union with the Incarnate Word and by offering the Precious Blood in the temple and beneath the Cross in union with her Divine Son, she became the Mother of the Saviour and the Mother of those that wish to be saved in His Sacred Blood, the Blood which Mary nourished with her own substance and the fruits of which she thereby acquired a certain right to dispense. Such beautiful titles of the Blessed Virgin as Mother of our Saviour, Mother of divine grace, Mother of mercy, Virgin most powerful, Cause of our joy, Help of Christians, Queen conceived without original sin, are then founded primarily in the Blood of Christ.

Since our Divine Saviour constituted His Blessed Mother standing by the Cross the universal heiress of all the riches of His Blood, and

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since it is through her hands that we draw graces from the Saviour's fountains, is it not befitting that we should offer this same Precious Blood to God through the hands of His Mother for ourselves and for others? The Precious Blood must remind Mary that she is our Mother. As she offered it up when she saw it flowing from the Cross, so she will be willing to dispense it with a liberal hand when she sees it raised on high in the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

The Blessed Curé of Ars, who was beatified only a few weeks later than Blessed Gaspar del Bufalo, the great promoter of the Devotion of the Precious Blood, says, "Accustom yourselves to the following efficacious manner of prayer : Ask the Blessed Virgin to offer to the Heavenly Father her Divine Son all covered with blood and wounds for the conversion of sinners. This is a most excellent prayer. My children remember this well. I never failed to obtain any grace that I asked of God in this manner." We read in the life of St. Dominic that, as he was once preaching on the veneration of Mary, he saw the Blessed Virgin sprinkling his hearers with the Blood of her Son. At another time, while the same saint was saying Mass, three hundred persons saw the Blessed Virgin, at the elevation of the chalice, pour out the Blood over those present and over the entire Church.

Oh, what a powerful prayer, what a merciful and irresistible pleading, when the Mother of God offers by her immaculate hands, the redemptive Blood of Calvary, the Eucharistic Blood of the Mass, in our behalf and at our request for the conversion of sinners, for the propagation of faith, for the sick and dying, and for the souls in Purgatory! "*And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own*" (John XIX, 27). Every hour of the day we can offer the chalices consecrated at the Masses celebrated at that time somewhere in the world to the Heavenly Father through the hands of the Mother of Mercy, that with the Blood of the Redemption she might succor the suffering souls in Purgatory. When we retire at night for rest, we can ask our guardian angel to continue these oblations.

There are two feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in particular, by which we can honor also the Blood of her Son. The feast of the Immaculate Conception, the fountain-head of the Precious Blood, the pledge of our salvation; and the feast of the Seven Dolors of our Lady; since by her sorrow as Mother of God, she became co-Redemptress of the world, in the sense that she suffered for us in union with her Divine Son.

We honor the Immaculate Conception and the Precious Blood of Jesus by entertaining always a lively horror for sin, by constantly striving

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after purity of heart, and by carrying out a wholesome suggestion of Father Faber. "If every night before we go to sleep," he says, "we begged our dear Lady to offer up to God the Precious Blood of her Divine Son for grace to hinder one mortal sin somewhere in the world, during that night, and then renewed the same offering in the morning for the hours of daylight, surely such an offering, and by such hands, could not fail to win the grace desired, and thus each one of us might possibly hinder numbers of mortal sins every year."

To console our Sorrowful Mother in her sufferings and at the same time make atonement to the Blood of her Son, we should love to meditate on the Passion, accept sufferings cheerfully to render ourselves conformable to our beloved models, and to practice deep and lively devotion to the Precious Blood. Who could better imbue us with a love of the Blood of our Redemption than she whose heart-beats stimulated the growth of this Sacred Blood, who saw it shed seven times, who saw it rudely trampled under foot by Jew and Gentile, who saw it mixed with the dirt and mud of this accursed earth, whose lips were reddened by kissing the wounds of the Crucified? Burning with a God-like love herself, she understood with what an incomprehensible love her Divine Son shed all His Divine Blood for us

sinners. In her exalted sanctity and transcendent knowledge she realizes better than all the angels and saints the immeasurable value of every drop of this Divine Blood. As the Mother of our Saviour she is filled with more than apostolic zeal to see the Blood of her Son applied to our souls for our eternal salvation. How she must long to see the devotion to this Precious Blood spread over the entire world and reach every heart! With what love she must watch those who follow in her foot-steps in making atonement to the Blood of our Redemption.

Thy immaculate heart, O Blessed Virgin Mary and Mother of God, was the virginal source of the Precious Blood of my Redeemer. It is, then, the fountain-head of my salvation. On this same sacred heart, pierced with a sword, my beloved Saviour was refreshed and rested when as an Infant He drew the nourishment for His adorable Blood to become the Man of Sorrows. With what love, with what gratitude, with what confidence I shall say in future, "Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation!" Thy Immaculate Conception, O incomparable Queen of purity and holiness, shall ever appear to me as the morning star of God's infinite mercy and the visible pledge of His eternal and abiding love for me, as it is also the dearest and most glorious triumph of His Precious Blood.

THIS BEAUTIFUL ONE IN HIS ROBE



CLOTHED with the purple of His own Blood how beautiful Jesus Christ must have appeared to His Heavenly Father even at the very time when Pilate showed Him to the people with the words, "Ecce Homo"! *"He was clothed with a garment sprinkled with blood, and his name is called, the Word of God"* (Apoc. XIX, 13). His body covered with bleeding wounds and standing like a culprit about to be condemned to an ignominious death, Jesus is nevertheless the Son of the living God, of Whom He Himself said: *"Thou hast loved me before the creation of the world"* (John XVII, 24).

Immediately after Judas had gone out to betray our Lord, Jesus said: *"Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him"* (John XIII, 31). Like the waters of an impetuous stream His love and desire to shed His Blood for us can no longer be constrained, and He speaks of His impending sufferings in the most glorious terms as His glorification. And again just before going to Gethsemani to begin His Passion, *"these things Jesus spoke, and lifting up His eyes to*

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heaven, he said: "Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee" (John XVII, 1).

God is glorified by us in proportion as we come to know, love and adore Him. Christ came into this world to redeem all mankind in His Blood, and we honor Him by applying this Sacred Blood in the holy sacraments for the sanctification of our soul. But should not the price Christ paid for our redemption be extolled also in a particular manner? And should we not love to contemplate our bleeding Saviour in the very ardor and love of His redeeming us? It was thus the prophet must have seen Him in spirit when he exclaims: "*Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra, this beautiful one in his robe, walking in the greatness of his strength. I, that speak justice and am a defender to save*" (Isaias LXIII, 1).

With what exuberance of joy our holy Redeemer is hailed by the Father and the Holy Ghost and the whole choir of the angels and the elect upon His return to heaven as Man with the emblems of His victory, His glorious Five Wounds! "*And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the ancients; and the number of them was thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: 'The Lamb that was slain is*

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worthy to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and benediction' ” (Apoc. V, 11-12). The Precious Blood is glorified in heaven in “the Lamb that was slain.”

Looking upon devotion to the Blood of our Redeemer as founded in Sacred Scripture, we are at once amazed at the mystery of this Precious Blood, conveyed in the words of the Prince of the Apostles telling us that it lay in the mind of God from all eternity to redeem us by the Blood of Christ. *“Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold and silver, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled, foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but manifested in the last times for you” (I Peter I, 18-20).*

This is the mystery that fills us with awe: before the foundation of the world, before the air which we breathe, before the water which we drink, before the food which we eat, before Adam was created, it was ordained by the mercy of God, Who foresaw the downfall of our first parents with all the evil consequences of their sin inherited by the whole human race, that man should again receive his heavenly heritage, or the right and means to merit entrance into heaven, through the bloody passion and death of Jesus Christ on the Cross. The Precious Blood is the

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visible token and pledge of God's eternal love and mercy for fallen mankind, and going forth to accomplish this purpose Jesus is called by the Prophet Isaias "this beautiful one in his robe."

Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father, stands eternally before the throne of God as the "lamb that was slain from the beginning," as the "lamb that shall take away the sins of the world." As soon as this divine decree to redeem the world with the Blood of Christ was made known to the angels, the Precious Blood had to become to them an object of veneration. "The lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power and divinity." Lucifer and his followers who in their pride refused obedience and worship, were cast into hell. "*Michael and his angels fought with the dragon . . . and they overcame him by the blood of the lamb*" (Apoc. XII, 7-11).

When St. Paul writes: "*God chose us in him before the foundation of the world*" (Eph. I, 4), "*according to the eternal purpose which he made, in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Eph. III, 11), he, too, reminds us of this eternal decree of the Precious Blood as the price of our redemption, for he says distinctly: "*Without shedding of blood there is no remission*" (Heb. IX, 22). Hence, mankind participated from its creation, in some measure, in this pre-ordained world-redemption of the Cross.

Why Is Thy Apparel Red?

God accepted with complacency the sacrifice of Noe after the Deluge, but forbade him the use of blood. "*Flesh with blood you shall not eat*" (Gen. IX, 4). Moses received the same command and God gave him the reason for this prohibition of blood. "*I have given it to you, that you may make atonement with it upon the altar for your souls, and the blood may be for an expiation of the soul*" (Lev. XVII, 11). But why was blood held so sacred? How could the blood of animals offered on the altar become so pleasing to God? St. John Chrysostom answers: "God caused it to be held sacred and considered Himself honored by it, not simply because it was blood, but because it represented in type the Blood of Jesus Christ."

What else did God want to signify to the Patriarch Jacob by the words, "*He shall wash his robes in wine, and his garment in the blood of the grape*" (Gen. XLIX, 11), than that Jesus in His love would shed His Blood in order to cleanse His Church which He has chosen as the bride of His heart. With what enthusiasm the Prophets seem to point to the wells of salvation opened by our Saviour's five wounds: "*You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains*" (Is. XII, 3). Zachary saw this sacred spring well up in the true house of David, in the Church, where it flows from the altar in the

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Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, when he wrote: *“In that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem”* (Zach. XIII, 1).

Again it was the blood of the paschal lamb, which was a type of the true Lamb of God, that was chosen by God expressly as a pledge of His special protection to the Israelites in Egypt. *“And the blood shall be unto you for a sign in the houses where you shall be; and I shall see the blood, and shall pass over you: and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you”* (Ex. XII, 13).

Moses sealed the Old Covenant with sacrificial blood. *“He took the blood and sprinkled it upon the people, and he said: This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words”* (Ex. XXIV, 8).

“And all our fathers drank the same spiritual drink; (and they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ)” writes St. Paul (I Cor. X, 4). Regarding this text St. Thomas observes, in that water they saw the Blood of Christ typified which He shed in His Passion, and by virtue of their faith they had a spiritual foretaste of it.

If, then, we are struck by the prominence assigned by the Holy Ghost to the Blood of Jesus before it was really shed, by making it the subject

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of the types of the ancient law and by letting it appear in the visions of the Prophets, what honor and glory should it receive by us in the New Law, now that it has been shed by our Saviour in His bitter Passion and continues to flow mystically in His Church with so prodigal a love?

This Precious Blood, foreshadowed in the Old Law, taken from the Immaculate Virgin Mary, the life and warmth and love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus from which it flowed as the last expression of His love, shed at seven different times with inexpressible love for us, flowing daily through the channels of the seven sacraments, is the chosen means of our redemption and sanctification. One drop of this Blood is of infinitely greater value than all the streams of blood that flowed for hundreds of years from the altars of the tabernacles and synagogues.

Considering the Precious Blood in its earthly origin, Faith teaches us that it came from the bosom of the Immaculate Virgin Mary and flowed in the veins of Jesus during thirty-three years until it was all spilt on Good Friday for our salvation. The Son of God added to the flesh and blood assumed from the Virgin an infinite value by uniting it to His Divinity. But this flesh and blood is all His, not as an instrument in the hands of a workman, not as a garment to be put on and worn, and then cast off, but it is

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substantially united to His divine nature and will be His forever like His very Godhead. So much is this the case that, even during the three days that His body lay in the tomb, while His soul was in Limbo, His Godhead ever remained united to His sacred flesh, as much as before, when it was endued with life; because it was still His, and was to be rejoined to His soul in the Resurrection. For the same reason, no drops of His Precious Blood, wherever it might have been spilt during His Passion, lost its hypostatic union with His Godhead, even while separated from the rest of His body. Mary and the Angels adored it as the Blessed Sacrament itself. It was honored, not as the holy winding-sheet, nor as the garment which was stripped from Him at His crucifixion, but with substantially the same adoration as was from all eternity due Him in heaven, since it never ceased to be united to the Eternal Word, however separated from the rest of His sacred Humanity.

It is not, however, as severed from His body that the Precious Blood is now to be adored, but as it is at this moment within the living Jesus in heaven. For it must not be forgotten that on Easter morning the selfsame drops, of which His veins had been emptied for the love of us, were restored to His heart; and on Ascension Day it rose with Him to heaven, where it is now dis-

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tributed like floods of crimson light throughout His sacred Body.

“Miraculous Blood is not the Precious Blood. Neither is it like the unassumed Blood of the Passion, the Blood on the veil of Veronica, on the holy winding-sheet, on some portions of the Cross, and on the Thorns and Nails. For that had once been Precious Blood, and had only ceased to be so through the special will of our Lord, whereby He willed not to reassume it at the Resurrection. The Host has miraculously bled at Mass to reassure men’s faith or to cause a reformation in their lives. Crucifixes have sweated Blood to convert sinners, or to portend some public calamities, or to show forth symbolically the ceaseless sympathy of our blessed Lord with His suffering Church. But this is not Precious Blood, nor has it ever been Precious Blood. It has never lived in our Lord. It is greatly to be venerated, inasmuch as it is a miraculous production of God; and it appeals especially to the reverence of the faithful, because of its being appointed to represent in figure the Precious Blood.”—*Faber*.

Devotion to the Precious Blood is as old as the world, and the devotion to this redemptive and eucharistic Blood of Jesus is as old as the Church, “For this is the chalice of my Blood of the new and eternal Testament.” The Church will continue to go down the ages till the end

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of time holding aloft the chalice of Blood for our adoration and propitiation. “For as often as you *shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until He come*” (I Cor. XI, 26).

St. Peter reminds us of the eternal decree and inestimable value of the Precious Blood and the value of our souls by calling it the Price of our Redemption. St. John incites us to love and confidence in this Blood by holding it up as the sign of God’s love and mercy for us, and as the precious burden of the triumphant song of the elect. But St. Paul is called by Father Faber the Doctor of the Precious Blood, on account of the evident fondness with which he dwells upon its merits and fruits in his epistles.

Among the Fathers, St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine show great zeal for the devotion to the Precious Blood. The former thoroughly imbued with veneration and all aflame with love towards this sacred Blood, represents it to us as a stream that irrigates the entire earth and by its fertility produces a rich spiritual harvest. St. Ambrose calls the Blood of Christ true gold of inestimable value. St. Bernard speaks of the Precious Blood as of a trumpet that calls to heaven for mercy. St. Thomas designates it as the key that opens the heavenly treasures, just as it was the means by which heaven itself was

opened to us. St. Magdalen de Pazzi was all aglow with devotion to the Precious Blood and sees in this sea of mercy a magnet that attracts all hearts with sweet violence. St. Gertrude saw the Precious Blood issue from the Wounds of the Saviour as from living springs and their overflow fructify the entire Church, even as the rivers of Paradise irrigated that beautiful garden and kept everything fresh and green and filled with the sweetest fruits. *"I, wisdom, have poured out rivers. I, like a brook out of a river of a mighty water; I, like a channel of a river, and like an aqueduct, came out of paradise. I said: I will water my garden of plants, and I will water abundantly the fruits of my meadow. And behold my brook became a great river, and my river came near to a sea"* (Eccl. XXIV).

It was of St. Bonaventure that St. Francis de Sales said, he seemed in his writings to use no other ink than the Blood of Christ; but the expression might be applied with still more singular propriety to the writing of St. Catherine of Siena. She never began a letter without these words, "I write to you in the Precious Blood." This name was never absent from her lips; the one subject of her continual exhortations was that men should forget themselves and keep the vessel of their memory ever filled with the Blood of their Redeemer. She seemed to recognize all

This Beautiful One in His Robe

the attributes of God mirrored, as it were, in the sea of the adorable Blood. "I know Thee now, Abyss of charity," she exclaims, "O high eternal Trinity; now hast Thou manifested to me Thy truth and Thine inestimable charity in the Blood of Thy Son. It is there we see Thy power which was able to wash away our sins in that Blood, and Thy wisdom whereby Thou didst find a way to cover our humanity with the cloak of Thy Divinity and so take away the lordship of the devil over us; then we see also Thy love and charity, whereby Thou didst purchase us with that Blood, having no need at all of us." This Blood, she writes, takes away all pain and dispenses every joy; it deprives man of himself and causes him to be absorbed in God. This great saint, whose power over men was something wonderful and who accomplished so much in the Church, seemed to be inebriated with divine love, which she drew from the fountains of the Precious Blood and from which she invited all men to drink in the words of the Psalmist, "*O taste, and see that the Lord is sweet*" (Ps. XXXIII, 9).

It would lead us too far were we to quote all the saints who were especially devoted to the Precious Blood; a St. Gertrude, St. Bridget, St. Philip Neri, St. Alphonsus and, above all, Blessed Gaspar del Bufalo, the Apostle of the Precious Blood in the nineteenth century, of whom we

shall write a special chapter. Those saints who were so highly favored with the stigmata of our Lord and who in their own blood oozing from hands and feet and side, like St. Francis of Assisi, could so beautifully but with intense pain contemplate the Precious Blood flowing from the Five Wounds of Jesus, deserve special mention in connection with the history of the Precious Blood. This rare privilege of stigmatization goes to show also how much our Saviour prizes the Five Wounds in His own Sacred Body. We must not forget also that our Lord has presented Himself to numerous saints, as He had done on the Via Crucis to Veronica, all covered with Blood and that He still appears in our own day to saintly souls in His Blood, offering us thereby fresh and continual proofs of His love for the "dyed garments from Bosra," and reminding us again and again of the great debt we owe to the Price of our Redemption.

"This beautiful one in his robe" is, then, the "lamb that was slain from the beginning" as an eternal decree; "the lamb that was led to the slaughter" on Mount Calvary; "the lamb that taketh away the sins of the world" in the Church; "the lamb that sitteth on the throne" in heaven; "*to the Lamb, benediction, and honor, and glory, and power, forever and ever*" (Apoc. V, 13).

WHY THEN IS THY APPAREL RED?



HERE are some, perhaps, who are more repelled than attracted by the very name and nature of the devotion to the Precious Blood. The idea of blood easily suggests to them that some cruelty has been committed and that consequently some life is ebbing out. "*The life of the flesh is in the blood*" (Lev. XVII, 11), and to see blood flow fills us instinctively with horror. When Jesus promised to give us His flesh to eat and His blood to drink, we know that "*Many therefore of his disciples hearing it, said: This saying is hard, and who can hear it? But Jesus, knowing in himself, that his disciples murmured at this, said to them: Doth this scandalize you? It is the spirit that quickeneth*" (John VI, 61-64).

It is true, the devotion to the Precious Blood does remind us that pain was inflicted and that a life was sacrificed; but we must not forget also that it was divine Blood that was shed and that it was the Man-God Who suffered and laid down His life for us. Let us confess, too, with deep compunction, we sinners have been the cause of the blood-shedding and death. Is this not the

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underlying reason why this devotion contains this element of wholesome fear? It was to wash away our sins that this adorable Blood was spilt, and in answer to the words of the prophet, "*Why then is thy apparel red?*" (Is. LXIII, 2) we may reply with the beloved Apostle, because "*He loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood*" (Apoc. I, 5). St. Bernard calls the Blood of the Passion the roses of divine love.

The devotion to the Precious Blood brings us face to face with two fundamental doctrines of our holy religion: fallen man in all his misery, shut out from Paradise and Heaven, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears; and Jesus, the Son of the living God, restoring the child of perdition to the dignity of a child of God and heir of heaven. An angel with a flaming sword guards the entrance of Paradise lost; but Jesus in the crimson garment of His Blood, all aflame with love, reopens the gate of Heaven for us.

A religion that is divorced from these basic truths is like a nut that lacks a kernel. In our age of luxury and religious indifference, men do not want to be reminded of moral regeneration, of the necessity of struggling against the flesh, the world, and the devil; they do not want to hear of their obligation to use the means of salvation and thus co-operate with God's grace. This effeminate world loathes a Church in which the Cross

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occupies a prominent place and in which the Crucified is adored and implored for mercy.

Solid piety, genuine and lasting devotion, however, must consist in the love of God, must be grounded on the dogmas of the Church, must be rooted in a spirit of sacrifice and self-abasement, must contain a great love of Jesus Christ and His Church, must be productive of practical charity, and must be willing to undergo sufferings in submission to Divine Providence; otherwise our devotions will easily become whimsical and evaporate into sentimentalism. *"They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water"* (Jer. II, 13). While Moses was upon the mountain praying and receiving the ten Commandments, the fickle-minded Israelites were dancing around the golden calf of their own making. The vagaries of men's minds can never replace the revealed truths of God; neither can the outward forms of piety be a substitute for real and practical religion.

He who is so fastidious in his religious tastes as to feel any aversion at contemplating or worshipping Christ in His Blood, clearly shows that he is wanting in true love of Jesus. *"The sweet serenity, the profound calm, the silence, interior suffering, the divine majesty of the Sacred Face"* of our Saviour in His Passion is ever to the

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devout soul an object of love and holy inspirations. *"We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness: but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men"* (I Cor. I, 23-25).

Is not the blood in our veins the source of life and joy and beauty? What fills the eye with brightness and lustre? What flushes our cheeks like the blush of the new-born day? What purples our lips with ruby gems? What gives us a feeling of youth imparting elasticity of limb and buoyancy of heart? Pure and rich blood. But pure and rich blood is secured by right and abstemious living, by simple and wholesome food, by timely and healthful exercise. In like manner, our piety, to be solid, must rest on a good moral life, must be nourished by frequent communion and attendance at Mass, must consist in the mastery over our will in bending it unceasingly in the practice of virtue. *"And they shewed the elephants the blood of grapes, . . . to provoke them to fight* (I Mach. VI, 34).

Should not the Blood of the Son of God, the Conqueror of Satan, the Hero of our salvation, fill us likewise with new spiritual life and hope and courage? The love of Jesus that crimsoned

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His Body seven times with the color of roses will quicken our eyes of faith, cover our cheeks with the glow of devotion, render our lips eloquent with the praises of God, warm our hearts with the fire of divine love and cause us to walk unflinching in the footprints of Jesus. Among those beautiful words with which St. Agnes, one of the most heroic and glorious of early martyrs, spurned the son of the proconsul and uttered her burning love for Jesus Crucified, are the following: "*Sanguis ejus ornavit genas meas.*" "His blood hath adorned my cheeks." To this illustrious bride of Christ the words of the Canticle might be applied: "*Thy lips are as a scarlet lace: and thy speech sweet. Thy cheeks are as a piece of a pomegranate besides that which lieth hid within*" (Cant. IV, 3).

O dear little Lamb of God, only eight days after Thy birth, Thou didst wish to begin Thy mission here on earth as Saviour, to redeem us in Thy Blood. But the Circumcision is only a pledge of Thy love which Thou wilt show us so profusely in Thy Passion. Our Lord begins His sufferings at Gethsemani bathed in the Blood from His agonizing Heart. "*And his sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground*" (Luke XXII, 44). "A simple view of the awful sweat of Blood of our Lord in the Garden of Olives suffices to occupy us, not only

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during one hour, but during many days," says St. Teresa. "All our prayers have their power from the prayer of our Lord in the Garden while under His bloody sweat."—Bl. Simon of Cassia. At the pillar Jesus is literally covered with a garment made of His own congealing Blood. But what torments this vesture hides! What love it reveals! What infinite merits it affords! At the crowning with thorns the Sacred Head of our Saviour becomes a living fountain of Blood. Truly a divine fountain at which we should love to gather to cool our proud and aching temples. On the way to Golgatha our Lord is marking with His Blood the royal road of the Cross. "*Hic venit per aquam et sanguinem,*" He comes to us by Blood, "this beautiful one in his robe, walking in the greatness of his strength." St. Camillus de Lellis loved to represent the Blood of our Redemption by an image of the Crucified with angels gathering the Sacred Blood of the dying Saviour on the Cross and offering this divine price to the Heavenly Father. Oh, the value of those cups containing the Blood of the God-Man! And to think that they were emptied over this accursed earth, that this Divine Blood was absorbed by the soil of Golgatha. "*O earth, cover not thou my blood*" (Job XVI, 19). The last token of our Redeemer's love on the Cross is the Blood issuing from the open wound in His side after His death.

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The bleeding Heart of Jesus which does so love men, is spending itself to the last drops of Blood. "*And of his fulness we all have received*" (John I, 16).

By representing to our minds Jesus as actually shedding His Blood for us, His love and His sufferings are brought home to us with a warmth and animation that is truly vivifying. Following the example of St. Teresa in her instructions on mental prayer, we can consider our Lord in our heart undergoing one of His Bloodsheddings, as His bloody agony, His scourging, His crowning with thorns, and then imagine His Divine Blood flowing into our sinful heart, filling it with true compunction, purifying and sanctifying it, and inflaming it with holy love. This manner of interior recollection will prove a fruitful source of meditation on the Passion. It will be a shower of love and benediction to our soul. "*Be still and see that I am God*" (Ps. XLV, 11).

In what then does the devotion to the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ consist? It does not now consist in the veneration of the material, corporal Blood separated from His body and sprinkled over His limbs, His garments, over the instruments of His Passion and as crimsoning the earth; although this Sacred Blood, as has been shown elsewhere, even when separated from the body, was adorable by reason of the hypostatic

union with the Divinity. The immediate object of this devotion is first and foremost Jesus Christ, Who has redeemed us with His Blood. "*Christum Dei Filium, qui suo nos redemit sanguine, venite adoremus.*" If we should turn away from the person of Jesus Christ and venerate His Sacred Blood without looking at Him Who shed it out of love for us, our devotion would be false and would lead us into all kinds of extravagances. In all such devotions, Jesus Christ Himself must be the central figure of all our thoughts and worship.

The same may be said of other devotions recommended by the Church; such as the devotions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus or Mary, to the Five Wounds of Jesus in general or to each one in particular. Owing to the fact, however, that our mind is very much limited and, in consequence, cannot fully grasp and vividly represent to us at once all that Jesus has done and suffered for us, nothing was more natural than that the faithful should select for meditation, one by one, this or that mystery, in which our Lord has manifested His immense love, and so, by increasing their knowledge of His sacred words and actions, they might arrive at a more ardent love of His adorable person.

In particular, the devotion to the Precious Blood consists in loving Jesus shedding His Blood seven different times for us amid intense suffering

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and with indescribable love, that we all might be partakers of a superabundant life. Moved by a devout contemplation of the love and power of this divine Blood, we firmly resolve to reciprocate the all-sacrificing love of Jesus; first, by loving Him with our whole heart and by consecrating every drop of our blood to His service, "*for the charity of Christ presseth us*" (II Cor. V, 14); secondly, by subduing our passions and by being prepared to die rather than to satisfy them or let up in our fight against sin, "*For you have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin*" (Heb. XII, 4); thirdly, by being willing to endure every suffering and sharing the ignominy of Jesus Christ. "*Wherefore Jesus, that he might sanctify the people by his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore to him without the camp, bearing his reproach*" (Heb. XIII, 12-13).

The third part of this devotion consists in making daily or frequent oblations to God of the Blood of the Redemption, especially during the holy sacrifice of the Mass, for all the needs and wants of our holy mother the Church, for the propagation of the faith, for the extirpation of heresy, for the union of all Christians, for the conversion of sinners, for those that are sorely tempted, for the sick and wretched and dying, and for the souls departed. Father Faber writes:

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“It is a special office of our Saviour’s Blood to plead. Its very existence is the mightiest of prayers. Its presence in heaven is a power which nothing but omnipotence exceeds. It was the power by which God redeemed man. It was the oblation of which, when actually offered, reconciled the offended Creator to His sinful creatures. It was the oblation, the mere foresight of which made God overflow the world with mercies, and the imitation of which, in the blood of animals, was once the accepted religion of the world. It is the oblation, in spiritual union with which all Christian oblations are now efficacious.”

From what has been said it is evident, that the devotion to the Precious Blood is threefold: its object is to stimulate us to love and glorify God more, to work with better success at the sanctification of our own soul, and to labor with more zeal and power for the salvation of others. This devotion is truly apostolic in its scope and in its results, and will prove a wonderful power of moral regeneration in a parish. What could give greater fecundity to souls created by God than the Blood of the Son of God? and what could produce in the soil thus fructified a richer harvest, than the divine rain of Christ’s Precious Blood? Once made known, this beautiful and fruitful devotion will recommend itself.

In the life of that most amiable little Servant

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of God, Soeur Thérèse, who died in the odor of sanctity, in the year 1897, we have a beautiful example of the efficacy of the Precious Blood to awaken in our heart a burning love for God and for souls. In her autobiography we read the following: "One Sunday, closing my book at the end of Mass, a picture of our Lord on the Cross half slipped out, showing only one of His Divine Hands, pierced and bleeding. I felt an indescribable thrill, such as I had never felt before. My heart was torn with grief to see that Precious Blood falling to the ground, and no one caring to treasure It as It fell, and I resolved to remain continually in spirit at the foot of the Cross, that I might receive the Divine Dew of salvation and pour it forth upon souls. From that day the cry of my dying Saviour—"I thirst," sounded incessantly in my heart, and kindled therein a burning zeal hitherto unknown to me."

"Was it not when I saw the Precious Blood flowing from the wounds of Jesus that the thirst for souls took possession of me? . . . I seemed to hear Our Lord whispering to me, as He did to the Samaritan woman: 'Give me to drink!' It was indeed an exchange of love: upon souls I poured forth the Precious Blood of Jesus, and to Jesus I offered these souls refreshed with the Dew of Calvary. In this way I thought to

quench His thirst; but the more I gave Him to drink, so much more did the thirst of my own poor soul increase, and I accepted it as the most delightful recompense!"

This devotion will be new to those who have not yet learned to contemplate Jesus shedding His Blood seven different times for us all with inexpressible love. It will be new to those who have not yet learned to apply the merits of this all-redeeming Blood to their souls, and have not yet experienced its power of intercession. It will be new to those who do not know its efficacy in staying the hand of God and averting great tribulations. Truly, those who have not yet invoked the Blood of Calvary and who have not yet come to love and adore Jesus in His Blood, do not understand what it means to be alive with good resolutions by a vivid meditation on the redemptive and eucharistic Blood of Christ.

Jesus Christ Himself showing us His five open wounds invites us to the fountains of salvation in the words: "Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you, for 'My Blood is drink indeed.'" The Church, the bride of the Lamb that was slain, teaches us in the holy sacrifice of the Mass and by her prayers what treasures, what power, the faithful will find in the divine and vivifying Blood of Christ. "*The chalice of benediction, which we bless, is it not*

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the communication of the blood of Christ?" (I Cor. X, 16). St. Peter reminds us that we are called "unto the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ;" hence the Church has ever made it her mission to preach to all nations the saving doctrine of the "*Sanguis pacis*," of the "Blood of Peace." We treasure so highly the blood of the martyrs kept in little phials beside their relics. Do we fully realize that we have the Blood of the God-Man on our altars every morning at Mass?

Come then, ye sinners all, do not abandon hope nor lose courage; "you are come to Jesus, the mediator of the new testament, and to the sprinkling of blood which speaketh better than that of Abel." "*The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin*" (I John I, 7). Come, ye just and innocent all, and behold Jesus clothed with a garment sprinkled with blood (Apoc. XIX, 13), that your hearts might become more and more inflamed with the fire of love that is burning in every drop of the Blood dripping from the Cross. Come, ye fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, come, ye sick and poor and wretched, and draw new life and superabundant grace from the flowing fountains of your Saviour.

Why then is Thy apparel red? Ah, my bleeding Love, I understand, because Thou art a "Spouse of Blood" and dost so love us unto

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death. Every pore of Thy sacred body must become an outlet for Thy love and every drop of Thy Blood must become a minister of Thy Sacred Heart to convey this love to all the world. Every morning during Mass we find the dew of Thy love in the chalice, which reminds us that Thou art with us in Thy crimson robe of love and will remain with us until the end of the world.

WITH DYED GARMENTS



THE devotion to the Precious Blood is a devotion not only for a pious few who want to accumulate particular merits, but it is a devotion which every soul that wants to be saved should cherish and practice with especial love and gratitude. Christ shed His Blood for all men, and hence there is not a human being that does not owe a debt of gratitude to this Price of our Redemption. If we reach heaven at all, it will be because we are clothed with the "dyed garments from Bosra," with the Blood of our Redemption. "*Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ*" (Rom. XIII, 14).

On account of the prominence assigned by the Apostles themselves to the Blood of Christ, as the instrument and price of our redemption, and as the cause of the triumphs of the Blessed in heaven, this devotion is preeminently called the "Devotion of the Elect." At the consecration of the chalice the priest uses these words: "For this is the chalice of my blood of the new and eternal testament, the mystery of faith: which shall be shed for you and for many, to the remission of sins." While Christ indeed died for all

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men that all men without exception may be saved, the words, "For you and for many," imply that the fruits of His Precious Blood are not applied to all, because all men do not reach out for them or co-operate with the proffered graces. In this sense we must also understand the prayer of our Lord: "*I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me, because they are thine*" (John XVII, 9).

"This is the chalice of my blood which shall be shed for you." For me? My beloved Redeemer, I want to belong to those for whom Thou dost shed Thy Blood every morning mystically at Mass; for by this Blood I have become Thine own. "*You are not your own, for you are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body*" (Cor. VI, 19-20). By venerating Thy Sacred Blood in a special manner I wish to become Thine own also in a particular manner and to participate in the fruits of the Redemption in a larger measure. "*Blessed are they that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb: that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city*" (Apoc. XXII, 14).

This devotion has not only a divine claim on every Christian, "*but now in Christ Jesus, you, who some time were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ*" (Eph. II, 13); it seems to

urge this claim by lending itself so easily to every other devotion, besides being a special devotion in itself. Just as the blood in the body circulates freely throughout its members, nourishing all its tissues and forming a medium upon which all the organs depend for their very life and functions; so, too, the Blood of Christ must naturally be traced in all the other devotions conveying supernatural life and grace, because the Blood of Christ underlies the whole plan of the Redemption and is the means of our sanctification in the sacraments. Let us follow up this characteristic of the Precious Blood devotion in some of the most prominent devotions of the Church.

DEVOTION TO THE HOLY NAME

When did our Lord receive the name of Jesus? It was when He shed His Blood the first time in the Circumcision as a pledge that He would save us, for He became our Saviour in His Blood. *“And He was clothed with a garment sprinkled with blood, and his name is called the Word of God”* (Apoc. XIX, 13). Again we find the holy name of Jesus appended to the Cross where our Saviour sheds His Blood the last time on Calvary. Hence the Prophet already coupled the Precious Blood with the Holy Name when he exclaimed, *“I will take the chalice of salvation;*

and I will call upon the name of the Lord” (Ps. CXV, 13).

The blasphemous cry of the rabble before Pilate: “His blood be upon us and upon our children!” is repeated today on our streets in the terrible profanation of the Holy Name. Those who habitually utter the name of Jesus Christ by way of cursing give unmistakable evidence that they are in the service of the Devil and that they are already doing now what the damned do forever in hell. Our language will betray whether we are a follower of Christ or a companion of Satan. *“Surely thou also art one of them; for even thy speech doth discover thee” (Math. XXVI, 73),* St. John heard the language of heaven. It is one of praise to the “Lamb that was slain,” therefore to Jesus Who redeemed us in His Blood. “O diabolical tongue,” exclaims St. Bernardine of Siena, “what urges thee to curse thy God Who created thee and Who redeemed thee with His Precious Blood?”

In the words of the Psalmist, let us take the chalice of salvation at Mass and offer up the Precious Blood of Jesus as an expiation for the horrible outrages committed against His divine majesty by those who reject His Precious Blood and revile His Holy Name. O Jesus, my Saviour, as I call upon Thy Holy Name, let Thy Blood cry to Heaven for me and obtain mercy and for-

givenness for me! How sweet and consoling Thy name will be to me in the hour of death when I remember the mercies of the Precious Blood! *"You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains: And you shall say in that day: Praise ye the Lord, and call upon his name"* (Is. XII, 3-4).

DEVOTION TO THE PASSION

To think of Jesus in His sufferings is to behold Him in His Blood. From Gethsemani to Calvary He is covered with the "dyed garments from Bosra." We should never have realized the intense agony of His Sacred Heart in the Garden, if Scripture did not tell us that "his sweat became as blood" issuing from every pore of His body. The principal bloodsheddings of our Saviour are the chief stations of His Passion. The Precious Blood has set forever in rubrics the love Jesus showed us in His sufferings. Our Lord Himself does not utter a complaint, but the "voice of His Blood" bespeaks the indescribable tortures of His body and the bitter anguish of His soul. In making the Way of the Cross let us represent our Redeemer to our mind in the livery of His Passion, all covered with Blood, and this thought will inflame our heart with greater love and devotion.

The bruises and lacerations of the flesh, the

ignominy and disfigurement of the Passion, are no longer visible in the glorified body of the Saviour, neither can He suffer after the Resurrection; but all this is commemorated at the holy sacrifice of the Mass, especially by the separate consecration of the chalice, at which mention of His death is made. It is, however, the same Blood of the agony, of the scourging, of the crowning of thorns, of the crucifixion, although now in a glorified state, that is mystically shed on the altar. In this eucharistic Blood we find the "riches of his grace" and therefore also the fruits of our Lord's Sacred Passion. The Precious Blood in the Sacrament is then a memorial of our Lord's Passion. "*This chalice is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of me. For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until he come*" (I Cor. XI, 25-26).

DEVOTION TO THE HOLY CROSS

The unbeliever looks upon the Cross as a sign of contradiction, as a symbol of senseless sorrow and suffering. To him it is merely a gibbet, an object of shame and scorn devoid of all religious sentiment. But to a Christian, the Cross becomes the emblem of faith, the test of fellowship with Christ, the banner of victory. This apparently

lifeless tree shorn of branches and foliage is saturated with divine Blood and endowed with divine power, and is therefore worthy of the deepest veneration. Darkness and despondency depart from it as it stands in the glory of the Resurrection. The Crucifix is the image of Him Who overcame the powers of darkness and opened to us the gates of heaven by redeeming us in His Blood. It is a tree of life eternal.

The Cross was the altar, the holy of holies, on which Christ poured out His Precious Blood and obtained for us eternal redemption. Hence the Cross occupies the most prominent place on every altar, where the same sacrifice of Calvary is renewed and the fruits of the Cross are daily dispensed in every Catholic Church throughout the world. How beautiful the chalice appears at elevation containing the vintage of the Cross!

"I thirst!" exclaimed Christ on the Cross. It was a thirst of love for souls. Thousands now kneel daily at the foot of the Cross, where they drink eternal love that is stronger than death from the living fountains of the Saviour. At the hour of death, while holding the Crucifix in our hand, let us try to remember that, as the priest anoints us with holy oil in the form of a cross, it is the Blood of Calvary that is wiping away the sins of our senses, "*making peace through the blood of his cross, both as to the things that are*

on earth, and the things that are in heaven”
(Col. I, 20).

DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

The Precious Blood was the life of Jesus here on earth. It was the life of His infancy at Bethlehem and of His childhood in Egypt and Nazareth. It was His life during the three years of His public ministry. It was the life which He poured out in His Passion. It was the life of His Resurrection and Ascension and it is the life of His eternal glory in Heaven. So it is also His Eucharistic life in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

“The Precious Blood is the human life of the Word. Beatitude is the natural life of God; and so joy is the natural life of the Precious Blood. In truth, is not joy the nearest definition of life that we can have; for is it not God’s first intention in the gift of life? In heaven and in the Blessed Sacrament the Precious Blood dwells, incomparably glorified in the veins of Jesus. Its beauty there is wonderful to see, wonderful to think of. The sight of it in our Lord’s translucent Body is an immense gladness to the Blessed. Earth has no beauty to which we can compare it; yet earth is not therefore poorer than heaven; for it has this very beauty in the adorable Sacrament. But

it is not only a joy to others. Its own life is an unbroken jubilee. As it goes and returns to and from the Sacred Heart it is filled with pulses of the most abounding gladness. It thrills with the exquisite delight of created life carried to its utmost ecstatic possibility. But over and above this, there is the undefinable, unimaginable ecstasy of the Hypostatic Union, which is felt in every particle of that Precious Blood. It throbs with such pacific tumult of immortal love, as no created life could bear without some miraculous union with the God-head."—*Faber*.

The life of the flesh is in the blood (Lev. XVII, 11), and *it is the blood that gives testimony* (I John V, 8), that is, bears witness to the sacred humanity of Christ. How often has it not happened in the Church that God made use of blood on the host or corporal, to convince the doubting of the Real Presence. By representing to ourselves the Blood of Jesus as pulsating in His arteries, we realize more vividly that it is not a phantom body, nor the body of Jesus as it was in the sepulcher, but the living Jesus as He appeared to His Apostles after the Resurrection, that is present in the Eucharist. An appeal to the Prisoner of Love, reminding Him of the love with which He shed His Blood for us, cannot but touch the Sacred Heart and bear abundant fruit.

DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART

“But the closest alliance of the devotion to the Precious Blood is with the devotion to the Sacred Heart. The Precious Blood is the wealth of the Sacred Heart. The Sacred Heart is the symbol of the Precious Blood; yet not its symbol only, but its palace, its home, its fountain. It is to the Sacred Heart that it owes the joy of its restlessness and the glory of its impetuosity. The Sacred Heart is the Heart of the Redeemer: yet it was not the Sacred Heart which redeemed us. It was precisely the Precious Blood, and nothing but the Precious Blood, which was the chosen instrument of our redemption. It is this singular reality, this unmated office, this unshared privilege, in which the grandeur of the Precious Blood resides, a grandeur which is also communicated to the devotion.”—*Faber*.

In our days there is a passion for excitement pervading all hearts that is leading away from God and is disturbing the peace and happiness of society. This morbid craving to quaff from the muddy streams of worldly pleasures is poisoning the springs of true and lasting joy within us. We must drink more from the fountains of eternal bliss in holy communion. “*You shall draw water with joy out of the Saviour’s fountains*” (Is. XII, 3). Good Samaritan, Thou Thyself didst

once say, "if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint in the way." See, Lord, how my soul is languishing for Thy love; oh, let the oil and wine of Thy consoling Blood flow into my aching heart and allay the tempest of my soul. Reclining on Thy bosom in daily holy communion, dearest Master, I shall imbibe from the open wound in Thy side the heavenly wine of salvation that will set my heart at rest and give it a foretaste of that happiness which the world cannot give. Blood of Christ, inebriate me. Fill my heart with divine love. Instill into it a love of suffering and a spirit of sacrifice. Inspire me with enthusiasm for Thy honor and glory, with the apostolic spirit. "My blood is drink indeed." Yes, Divine Saviour, from the well of Thy Sacred Heart give me to drink.

In the hour of death when my memory is tortured by my past sins, when my phantasy is haunted by the enormity of my guilt and the just judgments of God, let Thy expiatory Blood, O Jesus, fill my mind with Thy infinite mercies. When my limbs turn cold and my body lies helpless in agony, then O Sacred Heart of Jesus, send a stream of Thy Divine and vivifying Blood into my dying heart to animate it with hope and confidence, so that inebriated with Thy holy love, I may enter heaven as a victim of Thy Precious Blood and join in the triumphal hymn of the elect.

“Thou hast redeemed us, O Lord, in Thy Blood and made us a kingdom to our God.”

DEVOTION TO THE FIVE WOUNDS

The Five Wounds which the risen Lord retained are conclusive evidences that the body which He showed to His apostles after the Resurrection was the same in which He bore the ignominy and tortures of the Passion. *“Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing”* (John XX, 27). These Wounds, which but previously were the marks of suffering and the sure indications of death, have now become the visible signs of victory. They are the glorious proofs of our redemption that will shine like radiant suns for all eternity, while as a mighty prayer they plead incessantly for us at the throne of God. *“Offering one sacrifice for sins, forever sitteth on the right hand of God”* (Heb. X, 12). On the Day of Judgment these Wounds will be a source of joy to the elect, but a terrible reminder to the lost. *“They shall look on him whom they pierced”* (John XIX, 37).

A deluge of mercy poured forth from these reservoirs of salvation on Calvary. *“In that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for the washing of the sinner”* (Zach. XIII, 1). Thou-

sands of chalices are now being filled daily on our altars with the same Precious Blood that flowed from these Wounds. "A wound was received and a remedy was given us in return," says St. Ambrose so beautifully.

One day, it was during the feast of the Tabernacles, when the priest brought water in a golden vessel from the Pool of Siloam and poured it mixed with wine into a silver bowl on the altar amid great rejoicing by the people, "*Jesus stood and cried, saying: If any man thirst let him come to me, and drink*" (John VII, 37). As Jesus saw this ceremony in the temple and observed the joy of the people, was He perhaps thinking of the time when from our altars He would send forth unto all the world a similar cry that would be heeded with joy by millions of souls? How sweet and consoling those words of our Saviour sound now that we remember Him with His glorious Five Wounds.

"Behold, I have graven thee in my hands" (Is. XLIX, 16). Ah, yes, dearest Jesus, I see the handwriting in the flaming color of Thy Precious Blood; those seals of Thy love and mercy shall be a blaze of glory for all eternity. In these Wounds I fain would hide where thousands of saints have hidden for nineteen centuries. Thou Thyself didst love to hide from the world. O Jesus, I fear my evil inclinations, I fear the wicked

world, I fear the temptations of the devil. Within Thy Wounds hide me and permit me not to be separated from Thee.

DEVOTION TO THE MOTHER OF GOD

“The Precious Blood of Jesus,” says St. Bonaventure, “derives its origin from His most holy Mother. Jesus and Mary have prepared for my soul the sweetest and most refreshing potion.” St. Athanasius writes in a similar strain: “Jesus was nourished at the breast of His Mother that from His own side might flow the Blood of the divine testament, the drink of salvation.”

When the child Jesus was forty days old, Mary offered the Divine Victim in the temple to His Heavenly Father. With five shekels, according to the law, she then redeemed Him Who afterwards redeemed the world with His Five Wounds. “O good Jesus,” exclaims St. Thomas of Villanova, “Thou belongest to us by a two-fold right; Thou wast given to us by the Father and purchased for us by the Mother.” But it was beneath the Cross that our blessed Mother made the offering of her Son in the most heroic manner.

Mary, is then, the rightful dispenser of the Blood of Jesus. Hence St. Anthony gives us these consoling words: “Certain access to God is assured us when the Mother stands before the Son and the Son before the Father.” Thus a

With Dyed Garments

powerful petition, written with the Blood of His well-beloved Son, can be presented every morning to the Father in the holy sacrifice of the Mass through the hands of the Blessed Virgin.

The Precious Blood flows, as it were, from the heart of Mary to the heart of Jesus through all the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary. As we meditate on the life of Christ, each bead, each Ave, is imbued with the Blood of the Redemption that circulated in His sacred Body from the time of the Annunciation until His glorious Ascension. In the joyful mysteries, we adore the Precious Blood in the tabernacle of Mary's sacred body, in the crib of Bethlehem and in the temple of Jerusalem. In the sorrowful mysteries, we contemplate and adore the Blood of Jesus in the garden, in the pretorium, in the streets of Jerusalem and on the hill of Calvary. In the glorious mysteries, we worship this same Precious Blood in the glorious body of our Saviour in heaven and on our altars.

The first token that God gave our first parents as a sign of reconciliation and the assurance of His protection, was a garment. Rebecca obtained the blessing that belonged to the first-born for her favorite son by means of a garment. The same Jacob gave his favorite son Joseph a coat of many colors, because he loved him more than the rest. Mary made for her Son Jesus a seam-

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less garment that is venerated to this day. Jesus impressed the image of His bloody countenance on the veil of Veronica, and this piece of garment is an object of great devotion.

And now, my dearest Mother Mary, I beseech Thee with confidence, obtain for me, although thy unworthy child, the blessing of God the Father by covering me with the merits of thy Son Jesus, that I may regain my eternal birthright in heaven. Clothe me every evening, Sweet Lady of Mt. Carmel, but especially on the eve of my life, with the "Dyed Garments" of the Precious Blood.

THE SPOUSE OF BLOOD

“Upon the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and wept, when we remembered Sion. On the willows in the midst thereof, we hung up our instruments. For there they that led us into captivity required of us the words of songs. And they that carried us away said: sing ye to us a hymn of the songs of Sion. How shall we sing the song of the Lord in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand be forgotten. Let my tongue cleave to my jaws, if I do not remember thee: if I make not Jerusalem the beginning of my joy” (Ps. 136). In these words, an exile returning from the Babylonian captivity expressed the intense grief of the children of Israel over their banishment from the Holy City. How great must have been their love of the divine worship in the temple, if they sat and wept when they remembered Sion! How ardent must have been their enthusiasm in speaking of the solemnity of the daily sacrifices offered at Jerusalem, since they were requested by those who had carried them away to sing a hymn of the songs of Sion! What fealty and attachment to their faith, if they would rather lose their right

hand and have their tongue cleave to their jaw than be a traitor to their holy religion!

The magnificent temple, the hundreds of priests and levites, the solemn rites, the beautiful songs, the thousands of victims, all this was inspiring, indeed. But what must have made the deepest impression on the faithful Israelites was, to see the priest who had charge of the temple service accept and slay the offering, carefully gather its blood, sprinkle with it him who offered the victim and then pour out the rest around the altar. This was a daily custom and lasted from the time of Aaron to the coming of Christ, excepting the time the Jews were in captivity.

What a grand spectacle, for instance, is presented to our vision by a description of the ceremonies of the Passover, the greatest feast of the Hebrews, by which they celebrated their escape from the angel of the passover and their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. In commemoration of these miraculous events, Moses commanded that at Eastertide a lamb was to be slain by every family and with its blood the doorpost to be sprinkled three times. In the days of Christ it was customary for every Jew to eat this paschal lamb at Jerusalem. The city itself was not large enough to contain the immense number of guests, who therefore put up tents

beyond the city limits. Josephus tell us that just before the destruction of Jerusalem 250,000 lambs were slain at one time for the feast of Easter; since no fewer than ten persons were required for every lamb, we can estimate the number of persons who took part in this grand act of sacrifice.

When we recall the manner in which these sacrificial lambs were immolated, the scene becomes still more spectacular. At three o'clock on the Thursday before Easter the temple priests blew great blasts on their silver trumpets, to tell the waiting multitude that they were ready for the sacrifice of the paschal lamb. Now could be seen hundreds of thousands of lambs carried hither and thither from the temple on the shoulders of the leader of each little band of pilgrims. Each lamb was then suspended on two sticks forming a cross. The longer stick was driven through the body and in the tendons of the hind legs; the shorter one caused the front feet to be extended. These supports were to be of wood. In this manner the lamb was roasted and placed upon the table. What a true image of our Lord upon the Cross! Think of the quarter million lambs extended on such cross-sticks. Picture to your mind the blood of these lambs on hundred thousand doorposts, between which the Jews passed, as between so many signs of God's merci-

ful promises. *"The blood shall be unto you for a sign in the houses where you shall be and I shall see the blood, and shall pass over you"* (Ex. XII, 13). Verily, Jerusalem was in that day a city of crosses and blood and sacrificial lambs! Thus was the feast of the Pasch celebrated for hundreds of years by the faithful Hebrews. Was there no special meaning or deep significance in all this?

The typical sacrifice of the Old Law consisted in the taking of the victim's life by the shedding of its blood. *"Anima omnis carnis in sanguine est."* *"Because the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you, that you may make atonement with it upon the altar for your souls, and the blood may be for an expiation of the soul"* (Lev. XVII, 11). It is by the blood that the soul vivifies the body, every particle of which is built and repaired by the blood, as the blood conveys all the elements throughout the body. Without blood life becomes extinct. Hence to shed one's blood is to yield one's life.

It was God who ordained that blood should form the covenant between Himself and His chosen people. *"When every commandment of the law had been read by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats with water, and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying: This*

The Spouse of Blood

is the blood of the testament, which God hath enjoined unto you. The tabernacle also and all the vessels of the ministry, in like manner, he sprinkled with blood. And almost all things, according to the law, are cleansed with blood: and without shedding of blood there is no remission' (Heb. IX, 19-22).

But the blood of animals had the power only of purifying from legal defilement, as a type of baptism and penance. If sins were forgiven by the sprinkling of blood, it was only because it disposed sinners for true repentance, through the merits of the Precious Blood of Jesus, The Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world. Hence, on Good Friday, when Jesus Christ, the true Paschal Lamb, shed His Blood for us on the Cross, the Old Testament with all its sacrifices came to an end. Even though lambs were still sacrificed the following year and thereafter, they had no value as sacrifices and no symbolic meaning. This is expressed in the words of St. Paul: "*Sacrifices and oblation thou wouldest not. . . . Then said I: Behold I come, that I should do thy will, O God: he taketh away the first, that he may establish that which followeth*" (Heb. X, 5-9).

*Et antiquum documentum
Novo cedat ritui.*

Let ancient rites resign their place,
To nobler elements of grace.

Why Is Thy Apparel Red?

It was the Blood of the Saviour that "taketh away the first" and "established that which followeth." *"This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you"* (Luke XXII, 20).

"We confess," says the Council of Vienne, "that the Divine Word in His assumed nature, did not only want to be nailed to the cross for our salvation and to die thereon, but also that, after giving up His spirit, He wanted His side pierced with a lance, in order to form from the water and blood flowing from this wound, the only and immaculate and virginal mother, the Church, the bride of Christ, even as from the side of the first man cast into a deep sleep, Eve, his wife, was formed." Speaking on these words of Genesis, "Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam," Mgr. Adalbert Huhn has this beautiful exposition on the Church and the Precious Blood.

"Divine Saviour on the Cross," he exclaims, "we understand Thee! Then the moment had come when God cast also upon Thee a deep sleep; and during this sleep Thy side was opened and from it was taken Thy bride, the Church. Taken from Thy substance and therefore Thine own and the product of Thy Heart and the outcome of Thy Love, that is the Church of Christ: founded in the Cross, taken from the Heart's Blood of

the Saviour. And only in this conception is it possible to understand the whole importance and the entire greatness of the Church of Christ. His Blood forms the substance of the Church and hence the remarkable inference: Christ and the Church are one, even as Adam and Eve were of one substance, as man and wife are one in marriage, or, if we may reach higher, as Father and Son are consubstantial, so also Christ and the Church. In this sense only can we understand the Divine Saviour's words to His Apostles: '*He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me*' (Luke X, 16).

"Oh, what a terrible error it is in these eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to differentiate in a spirit that is certainly not of heaven, between Christ and the Church, to presume to acknowledge the authority of Christ without acknowledging the authority of the Church. New and Eternal Testament, made between bridegroom and bride, between the second Adam and the second Eve! Whosoever abandons the one must renounce the other; because both are one. Her life element is His, her graces are no other than His, her truths are identical with His. The Church does not exist without Christ, because the bridegroom is true to His bride taken from His side in the hour when He was cast into the sleep of love."

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From these thoughts let us draw a second conclusion, not less important or less beautiful than the first.

“The marriage of Adam and Eve produced a numerous offspring; and from the union of the second Adam formed with His bride from His own Heart’s blood also many children are born for heaven. But they must all spring from this marriage, otherwise they cannot be His own. The bridegroom has no other children than those engendered with His bride, with His holy Church; and the children who would honor Him as Father must be received as the fruit of this union, in which there is question, not of flesh and blood, but of spirit and life. Therefore it is impossible to be a child of the Son of God without being a child of His holy Church, and hence whosoever wants to become His child must go to His bride and must seek her in the bond that exists between Him and her.”

This Divine Blood issuing from the Saviour’s sacred wounds on Calvary was destined to overflow the entire earth for all times to come through the Church which our Redeemer established in His Blood. God the Father sent a deluge of water to destroy all living creatures, but God the Son deluged the world with His Blood to save all living creatures. During Holy Week, the Church sings: “The earth, the sea, the stars, the whole

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world, have been washed in this flood. *Terra pontus, astra, mundus quo lavantur flumine.*" The Church also sings in her office, "The marvelous strength of love has washed the universe with this Blood. *Mira tandem vis amoris, lavit orbem flumine.*" More beautiful than the rivers of Paradise, this life-giving stream flows through the channels of the Mass and the Sacraments into millions of hearts, purifying, sanctifying, and glorifying souls. Every good thought and every holy desire that takes root in the heart and blossoms into fruit thrives so luxuriously because the soil is fructified by the Precious Blood.

"This Church of God has taken up her bridegroom's emblems of victory from Calvary's heights and has carried them throughout the world; for thus do I see the Church going forth over the earth, a valiant woman;—in her left hand holding high the Cross and in her right devoutly carrying the Chalice, the two symbols of redemption, of truth and of grace. Her face is that of a victor who can speak of great triumphs, but the image of her bridegroom, with whom she was espoused on the Cross, is ever reflected from her countenance. In the holy hour of death she was taken from His substance, and therefore the deep, earnest trait in her character, which is no sign of melancholy, of that spirit of depression which the world manifests,—was stamped upon

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her by the scenes of Good Friday. Beautiful as are the mysteries which she carries in her heart, they are contained in the Cross and in the Chalice of Blood, and by this is meant that all these mysteries have been bought at a great price, the price of the Precious Blood." *"He hath purchased the Church with His own Blood"* (Acts XX, 28).

"Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see the king in his diadem, wherewith he was crowned in the day of his espousals" (Cant. III, 11). Jesus Christ is king and His bride, the Church, is truly a queen. *"Thy head is like the purple of the king."* (Cant. VII, 5). *"This day shall be for a memorial to you; and you shall keep it a feast to the Lord in your generations with an everlasting observance"* (Ex. XII, 14).

The Church visible is the monument of the Precious Blood against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. Let us, then, love the Church, the greatest gift of the Precious Blood, *"as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered himself up for it . . . that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish"* (Eph. V, 25-27).

A LAMB STANDING AS IT WERE SLAIN



AS THE Old Testament which God made with His people through Moses was sealed by the blood of animals (*“And he took the blood and sprinkled it upon the people, and he said: This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words”*—Ex. XXIV, 8), so also did Christ establish the New and Eternal Testament in His own Blood at the Last Supper, the night before His Passion. *“And having taken the chalice, giving thanks, he gave it to them. And they all drank of it. And he said to them: This is my blood of the new testament which shall be shed for many”* (Mark XIV, 23).

True, Christ is called a priest according to the order of Melchisedech, who, against all customs of his time, offered, not the blood of animals, but bread and wine. This, however, is said of our Lord precisely because under the appearance of bread and wine He shows forth daily in an unbloody manner in the Mass the bloody sacrifice of Calvary.

According to some Commentators, our Lord Himself refers to the Mass when He says: *“But*

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the hour cometh, and now is, when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father also seeketh such to adore him . . . I am he, who am speaking with thee” (John IV, 23-26).

The Victim, as Bossuet remarks, must be discerned by the eyes of faith. The sword that separates body and blood is the divine word. The blood is mystically spilt and death is symbolically represented. But it is a sacrifice “in truth” because Jesus Christ is the Victim. The sacrifice of Christ, the Mass, must be something more than the sacrifice of Melchisedech, which was but a shadow, a type of something greater to come. In the first Mass at the Last Supper Christ had to immolate Himself in a mystical manner, before He could give His Apostles His flesh to eat and His blood to drink. “This is my body which is given for you.” “This is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins.” The food which He gave as well as the sacrifice which He made was spiritual.

“The Mass corresponds to the Commemorative Passover of the Jews: ‘For Christ our Pasch is sacrificed.’ Of all the typical victims of the olden time the Paschal Lamb was the most striking figure of the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world. Christ instituted the Christian

Passover at the Last Supper. The sacrifice of the Mass is no new sacrifice instituted by the Church, but the same sacrifice offered by Christ on the Cross; for Christ our Lord, who immolated Himself once only after a bloody manner on Calvary, is the same victim of the Mass, whose sacrifice is daily renewed on our altars in obedience to the command of the Lord: *'Do this for a commemoration of me'* (Luke XXII, 19). The Eucharist as a sacrament is perfected by consecration; but as a sacrifice, all its force consists in its oblation. Although we say of the ministers of the Mass that they offer sacrifice, yet, when they consecrate the body and blood of our Lord, they do not act in their own, but in the person of Christ, as is shown by the words of consecration. It is Christ the Lord Who offers His own Blood for us at the elevation of the chalice. *'You cannot drink the chalice of the Lord, and the chalice of devils: you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord, and of the table of devils'* (I Cor. X, 21). By the 'table of devils,' says the Catechism of the Council of Trent, must be understood the altar on which sacrifice was offered to them; so, also, that the conclusion proposed to himself by the Apostle may be legitimately deduced, 'the table of the Lord' can mean nothing else than the altar, on which sacrifice was offered to the Lord."

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“For by one oblation he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified” (Heb. X, 14). “But Christ being come an high-priest of the good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hand, that is, not of this creation: Neither by the blood of goats or of calves, but by his own blood, entered once into the holies having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of an heifer being sprinkled sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God” (Heb. IX, 11-14).

Commenting on the form used at Mass in the consecration of the Blood, “For this is the chalice of my blood of the new and eternal testament, the mystery of faith, which shall be shed for you and for many to the remission of sins,” the Catechism of the Council of Trent remarks that here, therefore, rather than at the consecration of His body, is appropriately commemorated the passion of our Lord, by the words, “which shall be shed for the remission of sins;” for the blood, separately consecrated, has more force and weight to place before the eyes of all the passion of the Lord, His death, and the nature of His passion.

We call the Blood of the Lord “the mystery

of faith," because, when faith proposes to our belief that Christ the Lord, the true Son of God, at once God and man, suffered death for us, a death designated by the sacrament of His Blood, human reason is most particularly beset with very great difficulty and embarrassment. For we must well understand that the Blood of Christ the Lord is not given under a figure, as was done in the Old Law, but that it is really and truly given to men, a prerogative which appertains to the New Testament.

"By a law of Holy Church it is forbidden that any one but the priests consecrating the body of the Lord in the sacrifice should receive the holy Eucharist under both kinds, without the authority of the Church itself. There are various and many reasons why the laity are not to communicate under both species. In the first place, the greatest caution was necessary to avoid spilling the Blood of the Lord on the ground, a thing that seemed not easy to be avoided, if the chalice ought to be administered in a large assemblage of the people. Besides, as the holy Eucharist ought to be in readiness for the sick, it was very much to be apprehended, were the species of wine long unconsumed, that it might turn acid. Moreover, there are very many who cannot at all bear the taste or even the smell of wine; lest, therefore, what is intended for the health of the soul should

prove noxious to that of the body, most prudently has it been enacted by the Church, that the faithful should receive the species of bread only. It is further to be observed that, in several countries, they labor under extreme scarcity of wine, nor can it be brought from elsewhere without very heavy expenses. In the next place, a circumstance most of all to the point, the heresy of those was to be uprooted, who denied that Christ, whole and entire, is contained under either species, and asserted that the body only without the Blood is contained under the species of bread, and the Blood only under the species of wine. In order, therefore, that the truth of the Catholic faith might be placed more clearly before the eyes of all, communion under one kind, that is, under that of bread, was most wisely introduced." Now that frequent and daily communion is more and more put into practice, the wisdom of the Church, in withholding the cup from the laity, is even more apparent. With two, four, and more masses on a Sunday morning, pastors with their assistants scarcely have time to distribute even the sacred Hosts to the throngs of the faithful.

The sacrifice of the Cross was the universal sacrifice of redemption and extended to the whole world; the sacrifice of the Mass is the application of the general sacrifice to particular persons and objects; just as the redemption made regeneration

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possible by the Blood of Christ, yet baptism applies regeneration, or this divine Blood, to individual souls. Baptismal water must be poured over the individual before this Blood becomes efficacious. Three-fourths of the earth is covered with water, which was created in the beginning; yet clouds must continually carry it hither and thither, distributing it over the earth and refreshing and fructifying the soil. On the Cross, the wells of salvation were dug and caused to flow: "*In that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem*" (Zach. XIII, 1). Every Mass, however, is a golden chalice that contains and offers this precious elixir of life. "*You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains.*" (Is. XII, 3). The sacrifice of Calvary, of infinite value, was offered once, the application of its fruits must be made every day till the end of time.

It must be unhesitatingly taught, says the Council of Trent, that the holy sacrifice of the Mass is not a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving only, or a mere commemoration of the sacrifice accomplished on the Cross, but also truly a propitiatory sacrifice, by which God is appeased and rendered propitious to us. If, therefore, with a pure heart, a lively faith, and impressed with an inward sorrow for our transgressions, we immo-

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late and offer this most holy Victim, it is not to be doubted that we shall "obtain mercy" from the Lord and "*grace in seasonable aid*" (Heb. IV, 16); for so delighted is the Lord with the odor of this Victim, that, imparting to us the gift of grace and repentance, He pardons our sins. Hence, also, this usual prayer of the Church: "As often as the commemoration of this Victim is celebrated, so often is the work of our salvation being done," that is to say, through this unbloody sacrifice flow to us these most plenteous fruits of the Bloody Victim.

What a grand spectacle in the sight of high heaven, looking down upon this sinful earth, to see not 250,000 sacrificial lambs and the bloody doorposts of the Old Law, but Jesus the Son of the living God, "*a Lamb standing as it were slain*" (Apoc. V, 6) on 250,000 altars every day the world over, pleading with His Five Wounds for us poor banished children of Eve! 250,000 chalices with Thy Blood, O Lord, the Blood of Gethsemani, of the Pretorium, of Golgatha, all the Blood poured out in Thy seven effusions! What love, what a bountiful redemption! "*Copiosa apud eum redemptio*" (Ps. CXXIX).

The Bollandists relate of the virgin, St. Colletta, that once on a Maundy Thursday, while the celebrant of the Mass, a bishop, was elevating the sacred Host after the consecration, she began to

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exclaim: "O my God! O merciful Jesus! O ye angels and saints! O Christians and sinners! Do come and behold this miracle, oh, listen to this intercession!" And she continued to cry aloud until her confessor was called and commanded her to be silent. After the service the bishop in company with his three priests went to the saint and asked her to explain the cause of all that disturbance. Coletta replied: "When you raised the Sacred Host at elevation, Rt. Rev. Bishop, I saw dear Jesus in living reality, covered with fresh and bleeding wounds and affixed to the cross with nails. At the same time I saw Him, with eyes raised to heaven, pleading most tenderly: O merciful Father look with favor down upon Thy beloved Son; behold My sufferings, My wounds, My blood, behold My obedience to Thy will, My zeal for Thy honor, My pity on unfortunate sinners! All this I offer Thee, that all sinners may find mercy and grace with Thee and serve Thee in love. O most holy Father, let not My sufferings endured for them, let not My blood shed for them, be lost to them; accept My vicarious satisfaction and sanctify them, that they may be saved and rejoice in Thee with eternal gratitude!" The bishop was deeply moved and said: "I believe with my whole soul that Jesus is ever pleading in the tabernacle as hostia (Victim) in the omnipotence of His utter abasement and with

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the compassionate Blood of His Wounds to obtain for us mercy and grace that we may not spend eternity in hell cursing the Holy Trinity, but praising it forever in heaven."

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself" (John XII, 32). But how wilt Thou draw us, O Lord? Ah, as the flower is inclined to the sun, as the hart is drawn to the running fountain. By the love of Thy Precious Blood leaping out from Thy Sacred Heart on the Cross and falling in profusion over us in the holy sacrifice of the Mass and flowing through the channels of Thy sacraments into our souls, thereby softening our hardened hearts and making our indifferent and drooping spirits revive like a plant after a refreshing rain. *"But now in Christ Jesus, you, who some time were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ"* (Eph. II, 13). *"The Blood of Christ is a magnet that draws souls unto itself and inclines God, the tree of life, to show us His mercy."*—*St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi.*

At this stream of Christ's Precious Blood, let us weep when we remember our Saviour's excessive love for us, as the Israelites did of old when they remembered Sion near the rivers of Babylon. Let our "right hand be forgotten," if we do not hang up our work-a-day instruments to make the holy sacrifice of the New Law "the beginning of

A Lamb Standing as It Were Slain

our joy," at least on the Lord's day. "Let my tongue cleave to my jaws," if I sound not Thy praise, O Lord, in Thy holy temple, where Thou, our King, dost offer worship to Thy heavenly Father in our behalf. For "*You are come to mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels and to Jesus the mediator of the new testament, and to the sprinkling of blood which speaketh better than that of Abel*" (Heb. XII, 22-24).

It is in the Mass that we come to Jesus the mediator of the new testament and to the sprinkling of blood. Here our souls are sprinkled with the Blood of the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world, even as Moses sprinkled the chosen people with the blood of animals and as the priest sprinkles the people on Sunday with holy water. And this divine Blood cries to heaven for us during the Mass with as many voices as there are drops of Blood in the chalice.

THE CHALICE OF BENE- DICTION



ARTICIPATION in His Blood, more active on our part, is what our Lord desires. This yearning we hear expressed in the words in which our Saviour offered His Blood to His disciples, and it can be read from His sacred countenance as He inclines His head on the Cross to the open wound in His Heart. It can be gleaned from the admonition of the Apostle: "*The chalice of benediction, which we bless, is it not the communication of the blood of Christ?*" (Cor. X, 16).

"The Mass you attend every Sunday is the representation of the Cross with a something else, namely, your presence, your share and part in the act of infinite religion. Jesus, your Priest and your Victim, is there acting divinely through His human minister; but Jesus should not be alone, offering and offered up on the Eucharistic altar. On the Cross He was alone; it was the original sacrifice giving birth to the Church. On the Eucharistic altar, the Church must be with Him, offering and offered up. The Mass is the Christian Sacrifice of the Christian community,

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the Sacrifice of the Full Body of Christ; the members we are, together with our mystical head." In these words, spoken during the Eucharistic Congress at Cincinnati by Archbishop Blenk, the necessity of a larger and more active participation in the holy sacrifice of the Mass is impressed upon us. It is by attending Mass that we have a greater share in the benefits of our Lord's redeeming Blood and honor it in the most efficacious manner.

Holy Scripture and the Church teach us that we have not only to ask God for what we want, but also continually to give Him something ourselves. Our worship of Him does not consist merely in petitions; we are called upon to "offer sacrifices to God," and in many ways to make oblation to Him. "My Son, give me thy heart." This duty of sacrifice is, of course, perfectly fulfilled in the Mass. But this is not enough. The spirit of the oblation must be continual; it must enter into all our prayers and our whole life. This is the kind of priesthood which all can exercise and to which all are really called. "*And hast made us to our God a kingdom and priests*" (Apoc. V, 10). We Catholics are, in the words of St. John, "purchased from among men, the first-fruits to God and to the Lamb," but as such we have the grave responsibility of being chan-

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nels of grace to the rest of the world, "*for if the first-fruit be holy, so is the lump also*" (Rom. XI, 16).

The Precious Blood has been given to us as "the treasure of the Church," as St. Catherine calls it, which we may offer again and again all day long both for ourselves and for others. What can we call more our own in Christ's sacred body than His Blood, which He let fall to this earth from the Cross as the priceless endowment of our souls?

Before the elevation at Mass, let us present our own bodies as a "*living sacrifice*" (Rom. XII, 1) by slaying our vices and dying to this world, but with hearts alive with faith and love offering all that we have to Him Who delivered Himself up for us. After elevation let us go forth to the Victim on Calvary "that he might sanctify the people by his own blood," "*by him therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise always to God*" (Heb. XIII, 12-15). The second duty we owe to God, and to satisfy which we should offer the Precious Blood, is to make expiation and reparation for sins committed. For this purpose the Precious Blood was spilt on the Cross and is consecrated in the Mass, "which shall be shed for you and for many, to the remission of sins." Then, again, we must make oblation of this Blood in gratitude for the numberless gifts and favors

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we receive at the hand of God and as the mightiest petition for further benefits.

There is no more efficacious means at our disposal to touch the heart of God and to obtain His grace and mercy than the oblation of the Precious Blood. This Blood of the Atonement appeased the wrath of the Father, opened Heaven to us and made us children of God. Ah, how great, then, must be its power of intercession! What we offer is worth infinitely more than what we ask for. God remains, as it were, our debtor; so great is the value of the Precious Blood. People often petition pious persons to pray for them. Have you ever asked our Lord, "*whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood*" (Rom. III, 25), to intercede for you at the holy sacrifice by offering His own Blood for you? Oh, let us not forget Him in Whom "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Just."

Jesus Christ is a member of the human family by the Blood flowing in His veins which He took from our race. "As such He falls under the wrath of His Father in our action and we escape from it in His action. He has satisfied for our sins and rendered our duty of worship and gratitude to God, not as acting apart from us and substituting His perfect service for our imperfect service, but by contributing His infinitely meri-

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torious service to the general fund of human merits and offering His to the Father as the first-fruits of all. So ours are sanctified, elevated and transformed and made fit to be offered to and accepted by God.”—*Bellord*.

One day, while in ecstasy, St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi exclaimed: “Every time a creature offers to God the Precious Blood with which he was redeemed, he presents Him with a gift of inestimable value.” Let us follow her example, who in her ecstasy was wont to offer the Precious Blood in the following manner: “O eternal Word of God! I will not leave this place before I see some soul illumined and converted by Thy grace. It is true, in my presumption I am not worthy to be heard. Harken therefore not to my voice, but to the voice of Thy Blood. I offer to Thee the Blood which Thou didst shed in the Circumcision, in Thy Agony, in the Garden, in the Scourging, and in Thy whole painful Passion and Death. I offer Thee all the works which Thou didst perform during Thy life of thirty-three years, together with all the sufferings Thou didst endure during all this time by foreseeing Thy most cruel death. I offer Thee, O Divine Word, that sweet and tender love which Thou didst feel for Thy most holy Mother Mary; as I also offer Thee that love which Mary entertained for Thee with all her merits and holy privileges. I offer

Thee, O Heavenly Father, all the blood of the martyrs in union with the Blood of Thy incarnate Son. I offer Thee all the wisdom, all the zeal and all the labors of the holy Doctors of the Church in union with the Blood of Thy incarnate Son. I offer Thee all the desires, tears, prayers, and pious exercises of the holy Confessors in union with the Blood of Thy incarnate Son. I offer Thee the innocence, purity and beauty of the Virgins in union with the Blood of Thy incarnate Son. Finally, I offer Thee all the merits, all the good and pious works of all Thy creatures; the humility, obedience, love, mercy and the virtues of all the elect in union with the Blood of Thy incarnate Son.”

By divine inspiration, the saint offered up the Precious Blood fifty times a day for the living and the dead. On various occasions she saw the numerous souls whose conversion she had obtained, and others whom she had released from Purgatory. She would reproach the sisters of her community for not renewing the oblation of the Precious Blood with sufficient frequency, saying: “We shall have to give an account to God for many souls now burning in hell, for had you and I been more fervent in prayer and in offering the Blood of Jesus for **them**, perhaps, He would have been appeased, and they would not have been cast into those flames.”

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How many millions of sins are committed daily whereby the love and goodness of God is outraged! By offering up daily the Precious Blood of Jesus, consecrated on many hundred thousand altars, to save the sorely tempted from falling into sin, what untold honor and glory we should give to the majesty and holiness of God! If we truly loved God our zeal would prompt us to raise the chalice by making these oblations as a barrier to the perversity of the human will and to draw down the grace of God for the enlightenment of the sinner that he might not heap insults upon his Lord and Creator by his reckless sinning. This act of love and zeal would be, at the same time, a means of atonement for our own sins. What joy, what happiness, what merits in heaven we should prepare for ourselves by this simple but soul-saving practice.

It is estimated that over 90,000 persons die daily. How many of these are lost! Could you not clothe one of these, by your oblations, with the purple of Christ's redeeming Blood, thereby fulfilling the words of the Apocalypse: "*And he was clothed with a garment sprinkled with blood*" (Apoc. XIX, 13). Learned theologians teach that there are souls saved at the moment of death that could not even give a sign of repentance. One spark may cause a big explosion and a conflagration. And so God can send a flash of grace

over the soul of the dying sinner that will ignite the cinder of faith and love in his heart and cause him, if only in a mute and instant appeal, to make an act of contrition sufficient to save his soul from eternal perdition. *"The bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not quench"* (Is. XLII, 3). God worked a miracle of grace because the Blood of the dying Saviour offered by the hands of the Immaculate Virgin through the intercession of some pious soul pleaded and obtained eternal mercy for that sinner about to be lost. The practice of offering the Blood of Christ for this purpose should occupy your mind a few moments every morning at Mass after elevation. *"He must know that he who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins"* (James V, 20).

Christ shed His Blood for all men that all may be saved. And yet for want of missionary help there are hundreds of millions of human beings who have not yet received the Gospel message. How many there are in our own land, our very neighbors, whom we know and love, but who know nothing of the Price of our Redemption! The missionary field is pre-eminently the domain of the Precious Blood. Vocations for laborers in the uncultivated parts of Christ's vineyard must be developed by prayer. They are

especially cultivated and fostered by the devotion to the Precious Blood, by the reflection on the value of souls for which our Saviour paid so tremendous a price. The arduous and self-sacrificing labors of our missionaries must be sustained and encouraged by daily prayer. Even the necessary material assistance will not be forthcoming, unless the missionary spirit is awakened among our people and aroused to practical zeal.

Here, then, is a grand work for lovers of the Precious Blood. They have an immense treasure in their hands. Charity for the conversion of poor heathens, heretics and sinners, should be a characteristic of their zeal for the glory of the Precious Blood. A Christian who never prays for his unfortunate brother, is as bad as a man who never gives a cent for charity. What could be more pleasing to our Lord than to win back to Him souls for which He shed the last drops of His Blood? One of the principal reasons why Jesus was sorrowful unto death at Gethsemani, so that this intense grief made Him shed tears of Blood from every pore, was because He foresaw how many souls would be lost even after He had spilt for them every drop of His Blood.

Jesus is daily offering the best He has, His own Life-blood, by shedding that same Blood mystically on the altar that He poured out for us all on the Cross. With bleeding hands, as it

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were, He is admonishing us that the harvest is ripe, but that the laborers are few. The ransom Christ paid for our brothers and sisters yet sitting in darkness is there on our altars in abundance, but it must be applied to souls by prayer and ministrations. God wants our co-operation and, at our intercession, will bestow extraordinary graces through the merits of His Precious Blood upon the efforts of the missionaries without which they may labor in vain.

To how many a heathen child we could be mother and godfather with the Chalice of Benediction in our hands pleading for the salvation of our brethren in Christ. Their mute appeal for this service should stir our hearts and move our wills to unremitting activity. The honor and glory God will receive from these souls in heaven for all eternity, and the gratitude they will show to their benefactors, should rouse us to enthusiasm for the good cause. The very guardian angels of these converted souls will be our friends in this valley of tears. Mary and Joseph will help us to bring one child every day into the lap of Mother Church by the Blood of our Redemption. If we are to make to ourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity, how much more so with the Blood of Christ, that St. Ambrose calls the most precious gold.

By means of the Precious Blood, what valu-

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able aid we can all lend to our pastors in redeeming backsliders and sinners on the point of death; to our diocesan missionaries for Catholics and non-Catholics; to the heroic laborers among the Indian and Negroes; to animate and comfort the missionaries far away from home and brethren, toiling for the love of souls so dear to the Sacred Heart of Jesus; and to the noble work of the Catholic Church Extension Society, by daily oblations of the Blood of Jesus to His Heavenly Father for the return of those outside the true fold and for the spreading of Christ's kingdom! Faith is a divine gift and comes by prayer, and the Apostolate of the Precious Blood should be promoted everywhere, because Christ left us this priceless treasure in abundance to ransom souls.

Oblations of the Precious Blood, especially at the holy sacrifice of the Mass, cannot fail to hasten the fulfillment of the prayer, *Adveniat regnum tuum*. How comprehensive is the short and indulgenced prayer: "Eternal Father! I offer Thee the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ in satisfaction for my sins and for the wants of Holy Church!" What are the wants of Holy Church? In the words of Pope Pius X, "to restore all things in Christ." The Church is universal also in her prayers. This all-embracing charity she recommends and, under certain conditions, even enjoins on every one of us. Look

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into any authorized prayerbook, and you will find there the conditions for gaining a plenary indulgence. They are various, but none is more common than to pray for the Pope's intentions. These are explained as being the peace of all Christendom, the exaltation of our holy mother the Church, the welfare of all Catholic rulers, the extirpation of sin and heresy and the conversion of the world in the union of the faith. How dear to the Sacred Heart must be an oblation of the Precious Blood for the fulfillment of its prayer and ardent desire that there may be one fold and one shepherd!

“If I had gathered the Blood of Christ dripping from the Cross and had preserved it in a vessel of glass, ah, what sentiments would be awakened in me at this sight? More precious, however, than His own Blood is to us, are souls in the eyes of the Lord.”—*St. Bernard.*

MY BLOOD IS DRINK INDEED



IN THE tabernacle, Jesus Christ prays for us and by His sacramental existence leads a life of continual oblation for us sinners. On the altar during Mass, He immolates Himself as a Victim by shedding His Blood mystically for us as a propitiation for our sins. At the communion railing, He meets us to stay with us and become the guest of our heart and the nourishment of our soul.

Our Lord says in St. John: *“Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him.”* It is plain from these texts that our Lord wants us to partake of His body and blood, if we wish to have life in us.

We must never lose sight of the Catholic doctrine, however, that in holy communion Christ comes to us in person, and that the body of Christ is now, after the resurrection, inseparable from

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His Personality, from His Blood, His Soul, His Divinity, so that wherever the body is there also is Christ whole and entire. Nor do they receive the Blood of Christ in greater measure, who receive under the form of wine alone, because whoever receives under any form, receives not the body only nor the blood only, but Christ himself.

“With very good reason has it been ordained that two consecrations should separately take place in the Mass; first, to represent more effectually the passion of our Lord, in which His blood was separated from His body, wherefore, in the consecration, we mention the effusion of His blood; and secondly, because, as the sacrament was to be used by us to nurture the soul, it was most fitting that it should be instituted as meat and drink, which evidently constitute the perfect sustenance of the body. When, therefore, it is said in the words of the consecration: ‘For this is the chalice of my blood,’ these words are to be understood to mean: This is my blood, which is contained in this chalice. Rightly and appositely is mention of ‘*the chalice*’ to be made at the consecration of the blood, as it is the drink of the faithful; for the blood, were it not contained in some vessel, would not seem sufficiently to signify this sort of drink.”—*Catechism of the Council of Trent*.

But from the very fact that our Lord Himself

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so often mentions His Blood separately from the body, although contained whole and entire in the latter, it follows that His Blood is worthy of particular worship. This Precious Blood flowed in the heart and veins of Jesus during His earthly sojourn and was the bearer of His life, of His great love for us. But since Jesus has returned to heaven, it now dwells in His glorified and adorable body on the throne of the Most High. It is the glory of heaven, the delight of the angels and saints, the very life of Jesus, His splendor and His happiness. *“And the Lamb is the lamp thereof”* (Apoc. XXI, 23).

In the Sacrament of the Altar, this Blood is really and substantially present as it is in heaven. “We actually worship it every day in the chalice at Mass. When the chalice is uplifted over the altar, the Blood of Jesus is there, whole and entire, glorified and full of the pulses of His true human life, united in the Person of the Eternal Word, to be adored with the uttermost prostrating of our bodies and our souls. Here, too, hosts of angels bow down in profound adoration, even as they pay it their tribute of love in heaven with rapturous joy and holy admiration.”

“When the Blessed Sacrament is laid upon your tongue,—that moment and that act which the great angels of God look down upon with such surpassing awe,—the Blood of Jesus is

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throbbing there in all its abounding life of glory. It sheathes in the sacramental mystery that exceeding radiance which is lighting all heaven at that moment with a magnificence of splendor which exceeds the glow of a million suns. You do not feel the strong pulses of His immortal life. If you did, you could hardly live yourself. Sacred terror would undo your life. But in that adorable Host is the whole of the Precious Blood, the Blood of Gethsemani, Jerusalem and Calvary, the Blood of the Passion, of the Resurrection, and of the Ascension, the Blood shed and reassumed. The whole of the Precious Blood is in the chalice and in the Host. It is no part; it is the whole. We may well tremble to think what sanctuaries we are when the Blessed Sacrament is within us.—*Faber.*

In holy communion we are not merely sprinkled with the Blood of Jesus, we actually draw immediately from the fountains themselves, so that we can say with St. Cyprian: "We imbibe the Blood of our Lord, and press our lips upon the wounds of our Saviour." There was a time in the Church when the priest dipped his fingers into the species of wine and thus applied the Precious Blood to the lips of newborn children, for in this way they were able to receive the Sacrament. "*My blood is drink indeed.*"

In Thy Divine Blood, O Jesus, there is life

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and love, light and joy, for it replenishes the lamp of faith with divine oil, causing the fire of hope and love to flame up high in our hearts thereby reviving our waning courage and expanding our hearts so that we may run in the way of Thy commandments. "O Blood, to recall thee, is to restore light and heat to our cold and clouded souls! Hasten to melt our icy hearts, and enlighten our bedimmed sight."—*St. Catherine of Siena*.

In the Blood of Thy Sacred Heart, O Lord, is the hidden fire that consumes our imperfections. "In the Blood we find our mercy-source; in the Blood, clemency; in the Blood, fire; in the Blood, compassion."—*St. Catherine of Siena*.

"O loving Pelican! O Jesus Lord!
Unclean I am, but cleanse me in Thy Blood;
Of which sufficient were one drop alone,
For the whole world's transgressions to atone."

"He has need of our love—He has no need of our works. The same God, Who declares that He has no need to tell us if He be hungry, did not disdain to beg a little water from the Samaritan woman. He was athirst, but when He said: '*Give me to drink,*' He, the Creator of the Universe, asked for the love of His creature. He thirsted for love."—*Sr. Teresa*.

Dearest Lord, I repeat these same words now to Thee: Give me to drink! O ye angels and saints, "*tell my beloved that I languish with love*"

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(Cant. V, 8). My soul loathes the glittering cup which the Prince of this world swings before my eyes and into which he has pressed the three grapes of evil concupiscence; of the flesh, that appears sweet but is fraught with bitter consequences; of the concupiscence of the eyes, that is full and round with promise but contains little satisfaction; and the grape of the pride of life that intoxicates. "*Behold I have taken out of thy hand the cup of dead sleep—'calicem soporis,' the dregs of the cup of my indignation, thou shalt not drink it again any more*" (Is. LI, 22).

Lord, I hear Thee asking me: "Can you drink of the chalice that I drink of?" I understand, it is the chalice of suffering which Thou dost offer Thy favorite ones in this life. "*Behold they whose judgment was not to drink of the cup, shall certainly drink: and shalt thou come off as innocent?*" (Jer. XLIX, 12). Blood of Christ inebriate me, then I shall have the courage and fortitude of Thy Apostles and martyrs.

This Precious Blood we can cause to flow every hour, every moment of our lives, in spiritual communion by faith and ardent desire, and thus apply the merits of Christ more and more to our soul. O happy soul that has learned the secret of drawing from the fountains of the Precious Blood, the five wounds of Jesus in holy communion, "the wine that maketh virgins," the

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wine that exhilarates the soul and fills it with divine inspiration! Like a mystic tree watered by this stream of Paradise, such a favored soul, saturated, as it were, with this divine Blood, will bring forth fruits of courage, strength, wisdom, love, chastity, humility, meekness, obedience and all the other virtues, according to the words of the Royal Singer: "*And he shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruits, in due season*" (Ps. I, 3).

By imbibing the Blood of Jesus in holy communion, we enter into consanguinity with our Lord, we truly become children of God and heirs of heaven, a blood-relationship which is more valuable than if the blood of princes flowed through our veins, more intimate a relationship than that which exists between child and mother. It unites us to the saints in heaven and to the lowliest in society. It imparts to us the nobility of the King of kings. "*And the king shall greatly desire thy beauty*" (Ps. XLIV, 12).

The fountain from which the price of our redemption flowed was the most beautiful, the most attractive, the most amiable possible, namely the love of Jesus. In the last instance, it was not the executioners of our Lord, not the scourges, not the thorns, not the hammer, not the nails, not the lance that caused the Blood of our God

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and Redeemer to flow, but it was rather the purest, the most unselfish love, that pressed the Blood from the veins of His sacred body.

To shed tears on account of another is a sign and proof of love; for it is love that produces sympathy, it is love that softens the heart and fills the eyes with tears. When our Lord, therefore, wept at the grave of His dear friend Lazarus, the Jews who saw Him said rightly, "See how He loved him." From the tears they saw, they judged the love within His heart. Oh, yes, the tears, those precious pearls on the cheeks of my dear Saviour, how they speak of His love for me! Tears appear in the eyes of the Infant Jesus in the crib; tears trickle down the cheeks of Christ as He weeps over the unhappy city of Jerusalem; tears well up in the eyes of our Saviour as He seeks the mountains alone to pray; with a flood of tears He thinks of us when He prays to His Heavenly Father, "*Who in the days of his flesh, with a strong cry and tears, offering up prayers and supplications to him that was able to save him from death, was heard for his reverence*" (Heb. V, 7). These tears tell us that our Lord loves us most dearly and has written us in His heart.

But if tears are tokens of love, how much more is blood shed for the sake of another. The pouring out of one's blood is a proof of the strongest, the most powerful, the most perfect love. "The life of the flesh is in the blood."

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Hence, whoever shed his blood for us, gives his life for us, gives himself entirely to us. "*Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends*" (John XV, 13). Properly speaking, Christ did not die for any friend, but only for enemies, since all men being sinners, were consequently His enemies, the Blessed Virgin exempted. "*But God commendeth his charity towards us; because when as yet we were sinners, according to the time, Christ died for us: much more therefore, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from wrath through him*" (Rom. V, 8-9). Oh, who can fathom the depths of the love of Jesus? "He hath loved us and delivered Himself for us," says St. John. "*He loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.*" (Apoc. I, 5). The Apostle of love mentions this as the primary mark of the love of Jesus for us. Every drop of His Blood is a world of eternal love. It was with His Precious Blood that our Saviour raised that strong cry of love, *cum clamore valido*, with which He opened the gates of heaven.

And how our Lord longed to shed His Blood for us! The time seemed too long for him until He could bleed and die for us, until He could purify and sanctify our souls. "*And I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized: and how am I straightened until it be accomplished?*"

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(Luke XII, 50). O precious words from the lips of the God-Man that lift the veil from the beauties of the inner sanctuary of His Heart! O word of love that ignites in our hearts holy flames of love! O sweet Blood to which so much love clings! O Precious Blood that was shed every moment, in desire, during the thirty-three years!

Wheresoever the Divine Child sojourns, in Bethlehem, in Egypt, at Nazareth, at Jerusalem, the places of His Passion are ever before His mind's eye, and how He longs to make them stations of grace for us by the shedding of His Blood! Every step that our Saviour takes throughout the Holy Land, to preach His saving doctrines, is accomplished by the most ardent desire to exercise His office as High-priest and to offer His own Blood as a propitiation for our sins. If during the day His thoughts turned towards Gethsemani and Golgatha, how vivid must have been these places before His mind during the long sanctified hours of the night, when prostrate upon His knees in lonely places, upon the mountains. He offered His Blood to His Heavenly Father.—*Schneider*.

When St. Peter tries to dissuade our Lord from going to Jerusalem, to suffer there, Jesus rebukes him with holy zeal, saying: "*Go behind me, Satan, because thou savourest not the things that are of God but that are of men*" (Mark VIII,

33). And going up to Jerusalem, "*Jesus went before them and they were astonished; and following were afraid*" (Mark X, 33). O astounding desire of the Sacred Heart, O incomparable love! Men hanker after joys and pleasures, and Thou, O my dear Saviour, longest after suffering and the shedding of Thy Blood! "*I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me. And that I live now in the flesh; I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered himself for me*" (Gal. II, 20).

But, O God, how appalling and at the same time so touchingly appealing is the spectacle of the seven effusions of Thy Precious Blood, which we now apply so easily to our soul and taste so sweetly! "Amid great sufferings I shed My Blood, which you now drink with so much delight," said our blessed Saviour one day to St. Teresa. In the sweat of his brow, man must earn his earthly bread for the body: with His Sacred Blood, has Jesus earned the heavenly food and drink for our soul. Moses struck the rock with his rod, and water issued forth for the Israelites in the desert. How cruelly the springs in our Saviour's body were opened that we might drink at these fountains of grace, of mercy, of peace, of devotion, of love. "Drink ye all of this." It was shed that it might become the soothing potion of our soul's spiritual thirst.

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Our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, and by daily communion become living ciboriums. On the day of the Resurrection these bodies will be found by the angels, and the Blood of Christ, so often received in holy communion, will invest them with divine splendor, with the royal robe of a kingly and priestly people. This is what our Lord meant when He said: "*He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day*" (John VI, 55).

HIS BLOOD BE UPON US



NOTHING can give us so vivid an idea of sin and its consequences, of man's rebellion and ingratitude towards God, as the contemplation of the Son of God bathed in His Blood, a victim of the wrath of the Father, paying the debt of sin. And there is no means so powerful to show man the malice of sin, to lead him back to God, to imbue him with a sense of responsibility and gratitude and to fill him with a love of his Redeemer, as the Blood of Christ, the Blood of the Atonement. *"That you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the conversion of Israel, and strangers to the testament, having no hope of the promise, and without God in this world. But now in Christ Jesus, you, who some time were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ"* (Eph. II, 12-13).

Ever since St. Peter, having denied his Master, saw the blood-stained countenance of Jesus, and went out and wept bitterly, millions of hardened hearts have been softened into repentance by the bloody wounds in our Saviour's body. The saints imbibed their hatred of sin and their burning love of God from the flowing wells of salva-

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tion beneath the Cross. Blessed Gaspar del Bufalo, the Apostle of the Precious Blood in the nineteenth century, repeated over and over, that the most efficacious weapon in our times against sin and irreligion, was the devotion to the Precious Blood.

The power of the Precious Blood to combat the enemies of Christ and to draw down His mercies upon us, was foreshadowed in the Old Testament.

When Abel lay bleeding on the open field, the enormity of sin for the first time became suddenly apparent in all its hideousness. It was the first death. Abel had paid the first wages of sin. *“And the Lord said to Cain: What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth to me from the earth”* (Gen. IV, 9-10). But listen to St. Paul opposing the Blood of the Son of God appealing for mercy, to that of the son of Adam crying for vengeance: *“But you are come to Jesus, the mediator of the new testament, and to the sprinkling of blood which speaketh better than that of Abel.”*

Joseph had been sold into Egypt. But Reuben, one of his brethren, knew full well that they did not dare to appear in the sight of their father Jacob, without his favorite son Joseph. *“And they took his coat, dipped it in the blood of a kid, which they had killed,”* and to the father they

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said, "*see whether it be thy son's coat, or not.*" The father acknowledged it saying: "*It is my son's coat, a beast hath devoured Joseph*" (Gen. XXXVII, 31-33). How often have we sold our soul to the Israelites of this world for "spices and balm and myrrh?" In fact many sacrifice everything nowadays to the spirit of commercialism. Do we realize at all times that we dare not appear before our Heavenly Father without the wedding garment of His favorite Son impressed upon our soul, without the wedding garment of habitual grace? What shall we do, disfigured by sin as we are? Ah, let us look up to our Lord covered with Blood dripping from His thorn-crowned head, from His hands and feet pierced with large nails, from His side opened by a lance and exclaim, "See, Father, whether this be Thy Son or not." "*Why then is thy apparel red, and thy garments like theirs that tread in the wine-press?*" (Is. LXIII, 2). Jesus, the Lamb, was slain purposely that we might dip our garments in His Blood flowing in the sacraments and thus be made fit to be presented to God the Father. "And he was clothed with a garment sprinkled with blood." Our Heavenly Father might well say, a wild beast has indeed torn My child, sin has left its scar on My image and likeness, but it is covered with the purple robe of My Son in whom I am well pleased. "*Blessed are they*

that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb" (Apoc. XXII, 14).

Judas seemed to feel the malice of sin all the more when he remembered this Blood of love and mercy, as he cried out: "*I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.*" Pilate felt his guilt more deeply and quailed before this Blood of the Atonement, saying: "*I am innocent of the blood of this just man.*" But the wild mob before Pilate's court screamed with hatred towards the Blood of Christ, whose power they seemed to feel with crushing effect, when they exclaimed: "*His blood be upon us and our children.*" By this expression the Jewish race rejected the Blood of the New Testament, for which all antiquity had sighed by the voice of the Prophets. By our devotion to the Precious Blood we step into the breach, and proclaim ourselves true followers of Jesus Christ. When two currents of air of a high and low pressure meet, they produce rain: when the wave of Jewish hatred met the impulse of our Lord's love on the Cross, the fountains of mercy opened and poured forth the Blood of our Redemption.

The Precious Blood was trampled under foot all during the Passion by Jew and Gentile, and should not we, Christ's dearly bought children, want to offer reparation for the horrible desecration of the Price of our Redemption? Let us,

then, raise a counter cry to that of the Jewish people and say with profound veneration: "His Blood be upon us indeed and upon our children, but in grace and benediction!" There is not one soul who could not say with St. Paul: "He has loved me and has given Himself over for me." There is, then, no one who has not a special reason to venerate the Precious Blood and to make some atonement for his coldness and indifference towards this gift more precious than all the gold and silver in the world. "*Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled*" (I Peter I, 18-19).

Alas! outside of the true fold, how many so-called churches there are where this Precious Blood does not flow, where people come to meet, but not to worship, where they hear little or nothing about the Price of their Redemption, and where it is never applied to their souls. In our day, the very Divinity of Christ, and therefore the efficacy of His Divine Blood, is openly and publicly denied in books and from sectarian pulpits. Again, when we remember the indifference of men towards their salvation, which Christ purchased so dearly, when we see how vice and crime are on the increase and, like the blood of Abel, crying to heaven for vengeance, we might

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also hear our Lord complaining through the mouth of the prophet: "*Quae utilitas in sanguine meo?*" "*Of what use is my Blood?*" (Ps. XXIX).

"Father, whither art thou going without thy son? O holy Pontiff, whither art thou hastening without thy deacon? Never didst thou offer the holy sacrifice but I stood at thy side. Father, did I perhaps offend thee or has my zeal diminished? Try me now, whether thou hast chosen me as an unworthy servant to minister the Sacred Blood. Canst thou refuse me, who have drunk the Precious Blood with thee at the altar, to shed my blood with thee?" Such is the language of the great deacon, St. Lawrence, to Pope Sixtus II, who was being led to martyrdom on the Appian way. Whenever we are about to make the Way of the Cross and our eyes meet our Saviour, our Holy Pontiff, going to die for us, these sentiments of St. Lawrence will help us to make the stations in a spirit of atonement for our lack of filial attachment to our Divine Lord. As often as we attend the holy sacrifice of the Mass, let us commend to the mercy of God, revealed to us by the shedding of His Blood more than through anything else, our own coldness and indifference towards Jesus, our Leader, in the holy Eucharist.

On one occasion, our Divine Saviour presented Himself to Blessed Margaret Mary Ala-

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coque as He was when Pilate showed Him to the people, to excite their compassion, saying to them, "Behold the Man!" He appeared all torn with stripes and covered with wounds; His Blood flowed from every part; He bore upon His shoulders a heavy cross, and said with a sad and mournful voice, "Will no one have pity on Me and compassionate My grief? Behold the miserable state to which sinners reduce me now!" "Once," said the servant of God, "He presented Himself to me covered with wounds, His Body bleeding and His Heart torn with sorrow, He seemed as if intensely weary. I prostrated myself at His feet with great fear which was imprinted in me, not daring to speak to Him. He said to me: 'Behold the state to which I am reduced by My chosen people, that should have appeased My justice, and that instead persecute Me. If they amend not, I will chastise them severely. I will withdraw the just and the innocent, and immolate the rest in My just anger, inflamed against them by their sins.'"

Here, then, is a labor of love for devotees of the Precious Blood—daily communion and the Holy Hour as an act of Reparation. "*I looked for one that would grieve together with me, but there was none: and for one that would comfort me, and I found none*" (Ps. LXVIII, 21). "*Could you not watch one hour with me?*"

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(Math. XXVI, 40). With a feeling of compunction we can prostrate ourselves before the tabernacle and kiss the floor in spirit while we think of our Divine Saviour in the Garden of Olives lying on His sacred countenance, His bloody sweat mingling with the dust of this accursed earth, which He does not reject but embraces with tender mercy.

In spirit let us then join the Procession of the Precious Blood to Calvary. With Simon of Cyrene let us help carry the Cross of Jesus. Like Veronica, we can offer ourselves to wipe the Blood from the holy countenance of our dear Lord, in prayer and meditation, supplicating Him to give us also His picture in His Blood, as imprinted on the veil of Veronica, by impressing deeply upon our minds the memory of His Sacred Passion. With Mary Magdalen let us embrace the Cross and kiss the blood-stained feet of our Saviour and weep over our sins. With the penitent thief let us be zealous in defending the honor and glory of God, making amends for those who blaspheme Him, and in acknowledging Him as our King in whose kingdom we wish to reign forever. Beside the Sorrowful Mother let us stand beneath the Cross and offer the Blood of Jesus to His Heavenly Father for ourselves and for the whole world. With the Centurion let us strike our breast and proclaim the Divinity of

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the Precious Blood and claim it as the Price of our Redemption. Let us vow that our whole life as well as our death shall be an oblation to Jesus, our God, in honor of His Sacred Heart and His Precious Blood. O yes, the Sacred Heart and the Precious Blood, our love and our grace!

We can awaken in us, as an act of Reparation, a lively faith in the "Lamb that was slain" living in the Blessed Sacrament with His five wounds that shine like "five roseate suns in the hands and feet and heart of Jesus, suns whose exuberant radiance is causing unsetting day this hour in the farthest extremities of heaven." *"I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the ancients; and the number of them was thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and benediction"* (Apoc. V, 11-12).

But above all, during the Holy Hour, let us strive to excite in us such acts of love and gratitude that will stop short of nothing but a complete immolation of self, so that our heart with all its affections and emotions may be like a holocaust of love in the sight of the Prisoner of Love. No act of Reparation is so pleasing to our Lord, as a heart burning with love of Him Who loved us to the end. O Jesus, I long, I

yearn to love Thee with the transports and the outbursts of love with which those souls love Thee that are at this moment entering heaven. O Jesus, communicate Thyself to me now in spiritual communion as Thou art giving Thyself to them in heaven!

O rose-colored Blood, what recollections cling to Thee! What flames of love proceed from Thee! Thou leadest me, more than anything else, into the Heart of my God and lettest me taste of heavenly sweetness. Oh, how love has crimsoned our Lord with the color of roses. *“Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra, this beautiful one in his robe?”* (Is. LXIII, 2). Everything that surrounds us reminds us of the love of God, because “every best gift is from above,” but the rose-colored Blood in the Sacred Body of the God-Man speaks to us in the most convincing manner the language of love.

“All you that thirst, come to the waters: and you that have no money make haste, buy and eat: come ye, buy wine and milk without money and without any price” (Is. LV, 1). It was indeed a corporal thirst that consumed our Lord on the Cross, when He exclaimed: “I thirst!” but it was also a spiritual thirst after souls; it was a longing desire that all might drink from the fountains of salvation that exuberance of spiritual graces promised us in the words of Isaias.

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O Sacred Blood, that flowed so copiously seven times for my salvation, I love Thee, I praise Thee; I adore Thee with the deepest feeling of gratitude! The purest fountain from which Thou didst flow, makes Thy memory so sweet. O Precious Blood, with trumpet tones Thou speakest to me of the love of my God and Redeemer! How I deplore my coldness and indifference towards Thee! Now, at last, I wish to return love for love, blood for blood, if necessary. As often as my pulse beats, it shall beat for Thee, O my bleeding Jesus; every drop of blood that passes through my heart shall greet Thee, *dulcis hospes animae*, Thou sweet Guest of my soul, and shall return to the arteries warmed and purified by Thy love. As long as the blood courses through my veins, it shall flow only for love of Thee; it shall circulate only for Thy interests and it shall turn cold and stand still only because I am about to love Thee in eternity. Oh, let this stream of Thy love flow through every heart and inebriate them with holy joy!

TREADING THE WINE-PRESS



IT IS an indisputable article of Faith, that, to be cleansed from sin, whether original or actual sin, we need the application of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, in which alone we are justified and freed from the anger of God. *“Almost all things, according to the law, are cleansed with blood: and without shedding of blood there is no remission”* (Heb. IX, 22). *“Christ died for us; much more therefore, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from wrath through him”* (Rom. V, 9).

Although the merits of the Precious Blood have been applied to our soul in the holy sacrament of Baptism, by which we were washed from the stain of original sin in the lustral water which derives its efficacy solely from the Blood of Christ, still our inordinate concupiscences and evil inclinations remain in us, so that it is necessary for us to have recourse to the laver of Christ's Precious Blood again and again, to be cleansed from actual sins, from our daily faults, and to be healed more and more from the effects of sin and from dangerous attachments and baneful tendencies. Hence St. Fulgentius, one of the Fathers of the

Church, says that the application of the Precious Blood to every Christian is indispensable from the time of his birth to old age, that is, until death.

Another undeniable truth that shows forth the necessity of applying the Precious Blood to our soul, is the doctrine that nothing defiled can enter the kingdom of heaven. Since the fall of Adam, man is a vessel of defilement and must be washed in the Blood of the Lamb before the gates of heaven will be opened to him. No one will become a citizen of the abode of the elect unless marked by the Blood of Christ. *"Blessed are they that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb: that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city"* (Apoc. XXII, 14). The Abbot Rupert expresses this doctrine of the Apostles in these words: "Nobody will see God unless he is sprinkled with the Blood of Christ."

For this reason our Lord has left us in His Church many means by which His Precious Blood is applied to our soul. The Holy Eucharist is, as a sacrifice and as a sacrament, the heart of the activity of the Precious Blood, but the other sacraments are the vessels, the veins through which this life-giving stream of grace is conducted from the Heart of Jesus into our soul for our purification and sanctification. The sacra-

ments are a continuation of the earthly life of our Divine High-priest going about doing good. They are wonderful inventions and dispensations of His divine love and mercy, disclosing the supernatural in natural forms, as they are visible signs of the invisible graces of the Precious Blood. To make light of the sacraments or to treat them with indifference, is an insult and a base ingratitude towards the Price of our Redemption.

What would happen to us without the constant activity of the Precious Blood in the Church? The tyranny of sin would become intolerable; there would be no striving after the things that are above, and we should relapse into the worst form of heathenism. But the Precious Blood exercises a constant warfare against evil and raises a mighty bulwark against the inroads of sin. It is to us a source of light and warmth and strength in our daily trials and combats. In death, when all lights go out, the Precious Blood offers the anxious soul its only light and hope and courage.

The Blood of Christ shed and renewed daily for sins! Do we realize the enormous iniquity of sin, with which men sport and jest and which many drink like water? O terrible necessity of the Blood of Jesus, which alone is efficacious in wiping out sin! Sin frustrates the designs of God and destroys, as much as it can, the merits

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of our Redeemer's Blood. The sinner sees the Blood of his Saviour flowing and by his sins helps to widen and deepen His wounds. But what could inspire the penitent sinner with more confidence in God than a deep devotion to His Precious Blood? Who could lose faith in Jesus when he sees Him bleeding for us? "My daughter," writes St. Jane Frances de Chantal, "often consider how it is said in the Gospel that Jesus Christ loved us, and washed us in His Blood, and observe that He did not wait to love us until we were washed from our impurities; but He loved us when we were vile and impure creatures, and then washed us."

The Sacred Body of our Redeemer covered with Blood is an eloquent and irresistible proof that God does not wish to condemn us, but wants us to be saved for all eternity, if only we accept His proffered graces. The prophet Micheas foretells the deluge of the Precious Blood when he writes: "*He will cast all our sins into the bottom of the sea*" (Mich. VII, 19). Every drop of this Blood is a voice that proclaims: "God doth not want the death of a sinner but that he be converted and live." In a vision St. Mechtilde saw and heard our Divine Saviour Himself encourage despondent sinners to have recourse to His Precious Blood.

In the holy Sacrament of Penance, Jesus

Treading the Wine-press

Christ has prepared for us a laver of His own Blood, to which we have free access to cleanse our soul from every defilement and to which Isaias already urged us to go: "*Wash yourselves, be clean*" (Is. I, 16), and to which the Church invites us in these words taken from her divine office:

*Venite, quotquot criminum
Funesta labes inficit;
In hoc salutis balneo,
Qui se lavat, mundabitur.*

Come, bathe you in that healing flood,
All ye who mourn with sin opprest,
Your only hope is Jesus Blood,
His Sacred Heart your only rest.

The Precious Blood of Jesus, the Blood of His sorrowful, suffering, agonizing Heart at Gethsemani, will help us to excite in our hearts acts of lively contrition. All sins, as our Lord Himself says, originate in the heart; therefore He wanted to expiate our crimes in His Heart first before He carried them in His Body to the Cross on Calvary. As the grape in the wine-press yields its juice to the heavy weight placed upon it, so the Blood of Jesus flowed from His Sacred Heart under the weight of sin and the intense agony of His soul. From this precious grape of the Sacred Heart the purple wine of salvation was pressed. "*I have trodden the wine-press alone*" (Is. LXIII, 3).

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Since from the heart proceeds all evil and since the heart is the battle-ground of our spiritual combats, the remedy must be applied to the heart. The first and essential parts of penance, therefore, must be the penance of the heart, or contrition. The heart must be detached from all bonds that connect it with sin and bad habits. "A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit: a contrite and humbled heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

Come, then, all you children of Adam driven out of the Garden of Eden and behold your Saviour in the Garden of Olives! My God, where art Thou? I behold Thee prostrate on the ground, Thy sacred countenance in the dust, Thy body weeping tears of Blood from every pore, expiating my sins and paving the way to the Garden of Paradise that I might reign with Thee there forever! Down, down in the dust, O sinner, beside your Saviour. Here begin your confession by making an act of contrition, and the bleeding, agonizing Heart of Jesus will supply what is wanting in your sorrow for sin, if only you have a good will and a sincere desire for a hearty contrition.

But "*you have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin,*" as St. Paul admonishes us (Heb. XII, 4). A true detestation of sin must be accompanied by a firm purpose of amendment to sin no more. As contrition is the penance of

the heart, so a good resolution is the penance of the will. It is certainly not from a want of sufficient knowledge, nor even out of malice, that we so easily relapse into our bad habits, but from a weakness of the will enervated by sensuality. The Blood of the Atonement is the most powerful antidote to the allurements of pleasure, and devotion to this Blood cannot fail to strengthen the will against the seductions of sin. The Blood of Christ is honored and glorified by the fruits of a good will in the Sacrament of Penance, because in this sacrament it can unfold and display its purifying power and sanctifying activity. *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto himself: according to the purpose of his will: unto the praise of the glory of his grace, in which he hath graced us in his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of his grace"* (Eph. I, 3-7).

By a contrite confession of our sins followed by the absolution of the priest, we cause the Blood of Jesus to flow from His Sacred Heart into our own soul for our purification and sanctification. In sacramental absolution that yearning of the Royal Penitent for the cleansing effect of the Precious Blood is fulfilled: "Thou shalt sprinkle me with

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hyssop, and I shall be cleansed: thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow." When the priest raises his hand to absolve the penitent sinner, he sprinkles him, so to speak, with the Blood of Christ. "*Making peace through the blood of His Cross, both as to the things that are on earth, and the things that are in heaven*" (Col. I, 20). St. Magdalen de Pazzi once saw in a heavenly vision a fiery stream of the Blood of our Redemption poured out over the soul of one of the nuns in her convent the moment the priest pronounced absolution over her, and this Blood she saw imparting to her fellow-sister such enchanting beauty that the saint could not but exclaim with joy and desire, "Also upon me, O Lord, let this Precious Blood flow!"

The Precious Blood of Jesus which is poured out over the sinner in confession imparts to the humble and contrite soul an indescribable beauty, and fills it with such courage and strength as to enable it to resist temptations and preserve its nobility and royal beauty. What is the beauty of the human soul? Behold a dead body, how hideous, how gruesome it is! It does not see, it does not hear, it does not feel, it moves neither hand nor foot; the forehead is cold as marble, the mouth overflows with nauseating matter, the lips are black and the whole body emits such pestilential odors as to fill those who approach it with

loathing and drive them away in horror. What makes the dead body so hideous? The soul has fled. This is a picture of the soul in mortal sin when the Holy Ghost withdraws from it. Now, if the body owes its charm and beauty to its vivifying principle, to the soul in its natural state, what splendor and glory must this same soul possess in its supernatural state of sanctifying grace? The sun is so beautiful, so brilliant, that its departing rays, shining upon the broken windows of an old dilapidated house in the distance, converts even that shack into a palace of shimmering gold. But St. Bonaventure assures us, that if God should destine the soul in habitual grace, instead of the sun, to illuminate the world, it would diffuse more light and splendor than the sun. The reason for all this is, because the soul in the state of grace is the temple of the Holy Ghost; God dwells in it and communicates to it as much of His own glory as the creature can bear, and thus, in a measure, as St. Thomas teaches, deifies it. Now, sanctifying grace, the highest gift of the soul, is the fruit of the Precious Blood and a reflection of its beauty.

Sacramental confession and absolution may also be called the formal and expressed renewal of the holy covenant made between God and the penitent soul and signed by the Blood of Christ, as foreshadowed in the testament between God

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and the people of Israel. *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"* (I John I, 7-9). Every worthy confession is a realization of the words of consecration at Mass: "This is my blood of the new testament which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins."

All satisfaction intended as an expiation for sin and as a reparation to the outraged justice and majesty of God, has its satisfactory value from the Blood of the Atonement. This divine Blood liberates us from the slavery of our bad habits, ransoms us from the thralldom of Satan, and makes us children of God and heirs of heaven. *"God the Father hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins"* (Col. I, 13-14). "Making peace through the blood of his cross." In this holy Sacrament of Penance, says St. Bonaventure, that feeling of sadness and depression caused by sin is driven out of the soul by the Blood of the Redeemer, which is a purveyor of heavenly peace and happiness. *"Sanguis Christi sanat poenam tristitiae corda fidelium consolando."*

INTO THE HOLIES BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST



WE ALL seem to be imbued with the idea, and to feel instinctively, that unhappiness is the common state of man in this life; so much so that when we see a person exceedingly happy or laughing heartily we are wont to exclaim: "Something is going to happen to that person." A pagan philosopher has said that no man is so unfortunate as he who has never been unfortunate.

Père Laurent has given us an admirable treatise on "The Mission of Pain." Pain is everywhere; it overtakes every human life at some time in its course. It comes to us all as a chief part of our inheritance and can be traced back to the origin of the world as the consequence of an overthrow at the beginning of things; it is the chastisement of a fault which upset the order of things established at the creation. Man is a sinner expiating the guilt of his first parents. Now this chastisement is neither blind nor brutal; Christianity has taught us that it provides a means of intelligent and soul-redeeming atonement.

Pain, being a consequence of original sin, its mission must be, first of all, expiatory in char-

acter. Beneath the harsh envelope of the word, expiation, something sacred is divined, and, as it were, a consoling and godlike function is felt to underlie the painful thought it awakens. Expiation is made up of sufferings and alleviations, of smiles and tears, of dolorous lamentations, and solace administered. It galls our self-love, and crushes our offended pride, and yet we do not call down imprecations upon it, because we feel that it has within itself a secret of moral grandeur which it alone possesses; because by it we are rehabilitated in our own eyes. It unmans us, but at the same time it increases our spiritual growth; it humiliates us, but only that we may be given the right to behold ourselves without being ashamed.

St. Paul expresses the same ideas in these words: "In all things we suffer tribulation, but are not distressed: we are straitened, but are not destitute: we suffer persecution, but are not forsaken: we are cast down, but we perish not. For which cause we faint not: but though our outward man is corrupted, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."

Since the mission of pain lies chiefly in atonement, what better aid could the sick employ in their sufferings than the devotion to the Precious Blood, which was shed precisely for the remission and expiation of sin? Your present suffering

Into the Holies by the Blood of Christ

may not have been sent to you on account of your own actual sins, yet all earthly misery is a consequence of sin. Now, as we were ransomed from sin by the Blood of Jesus, can we not be healed of the effects of sin by the same Price of our Redemption? Jesus is the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world and "*in whom we have Redemption through His blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which hath superabounded in us in all wisdom and prudence*" (Eph. I, 7-8). The Blood of our Redemption not only wipes out the stains of sin, but imparts to us along with sanctifying grace other spiritual and temporal favors.

After you have been cleansed from sin by Christ's Precious Blood in the sacrament of penance, go to the sacred fountains flowing in holy communion with even more confidence than the afflicted had while awaiting the angel to put the waters of Bethsaida in commotion. Hear our Lord inviting you especially: "Come hither all ye that labor and are burdened and I will refresh you." You will find here that wonderful pool having five porticoes, the five wounds of our Saviour. Nor need you await an angel to stir these waters, the Blood of Jesus is always in motion by the ardent love of His sacred Heart and these flowing wells are ever open to you. "*In that day there shall be a fountain open to*

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the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (Zach. XIII, 1), and "*you shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains*" (Is. XII, 3). "*Every living creature that creepeth whithersoever the torrent shall come, shall live: and there shall be fishes in abundance after these waters shall come thither, and they shall be healed, and all things shall live to which the torrent shall come*" (Ezech. XLVII). These waters are to be understood mystically of the Blood of Christ, and in this Blood we find "the riches of His grace" as applied by the holy sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacraments.

A special confidence in the power of Christ's Divine Blood and an ardent devotion to it cannot fail to draw upon the sick and suffering soul a larger portion of this plentiful redemption. As our bodies are nourished, purified and repaired every minute by the blood flowing in our veins, so may we be strengthened, sanctified and healed more and more from the effects of sin by the Divine Blood of Jesus received daily in holy communion. In bringing comfort to our Saviour in Gethsemani, the consoling angel is represented to us holding a chalice in his hand.

Pain, as beautifully described by Père Laurent, not only respects the past, that is, it is not only expiatory in character, but is one of the finest signs of God's mindfulness for us in the present

as well as for the future. We are afflicted that we may be saved, and the hand that wounds is also the hand that heals. New spiritual life is born from this partial destruction of our being by suffering. God allows jealous rivalries, cruel disappointments, unexpected humiliations to accomplish this aim; here he shatters a fortune, there He humbles a pride; dissipates this man's dreams for the future, strikes that man in his affections; maybe for another all earthly happiness will be swallowed up at a blow. In all this lies the mission of pain.

It is a force that brings God nearer to us and raises us up to God. *Ego venio et curabo eum.* "I myself will come down and heal him." It detaches us from this sinful world, and our sinful habits, even as a log is raised to the skies by applying fire to it and letting it go up in flame and smoke. Our sufferings ascend to heaven like sweet incense. Pain enlightens the mind by bringing home to us the true meaning of life and death and inspiring us with a desire for blessed immortality. "He who has not suffered what does he know?" It is a great leveler and makes us all akin. "*In passione socii.*" It is an ordeal that fortifies the will. Sound virtue and indomitable will-power can be attained only by him whose spirit has been tempered by sacrifice and subjected again and again to testing blows in the

forge of life. It mellows our character. It is a grace which sanctifies the soul. By pain a sort of mystic union is effected which unites the life of the suffering soul to the very life of the suffering God-Man, and in this contact of the soul with God, pain is transmuted into power of redemption. Such as are patient and resigned to the will of God, acquire a likeness to their Divine Master and take on the lineaments of the Crucified, especially if their sufferings are, in a measure, undeserved. They are identified with Jesus Christ as victims of His special love to be an expiation for this wicked world and thus become a part of the vast scheme of atonement. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission," said St. Paul. It matters little, whether it be the blood of bodily wounds, or tears which are the blood of the soul. "The good God," says the Curè of Ars, "asks not for the martyrdom of our body, but asks for the martyrdom of our heart and will."

Suffering for the love of Jesus and in union with Him as members of His mystical body is one of the best ways to honor and glorify the Precious Blood. There is an apostolate of suffering, as well as an apostolate of prayer and labor. "*For whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his son*" (Rom. VIII, 29). Jesus Christ continues to

make reparation through those whose mission it is to suffer with Him for this effeminate world. This is what St. Paul meant when, persecuted like His Master, he said of himself, "I fill up these things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ."

What consolation in all this for nervous persons—and neurasthenia or "psychasthenia" is fast becoming the terrible scourge of our age—who feel like the outcasts of men and often consider themselves abandoned even by God. Their past sins and even their smaller faults weigh heavily upon them. They imagine that God has forsaken them on account of their mistakes in life and the offenses against Him, and that they will receive neither forgiveness nor happiness either in this life or in the next. Such spiritual despondency in responsible persons is a sin against hope and an insult to our Lord's Precious Blood, the Price of our Redemption. Our hope in the Lord must be based, not upon our past record, whether good or bad, but simply on the goodness and mercy of God. We must confidently expect forgiveness, grace and happiness, because "with the Lord there is merciful forgiveness," and "with Him there is plentiful redemption." Look up to the Cross, despondent soul, who share in the bitter abandonment of your dying Saviour, and listen to the words of the Beloved Disciple, "He has loved

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us and washed us in His blood." He loves us now as much as He did then.

"Oh sweetest Blood, that can implore
Pardon of God, and heaven restore,
The Heaven which sin has lost.
While Abel's blood for vengeance pleads
What Jesus shed still intercedes
For those who wrong Him most."

"Behold how he loved him," the Jews said when they beheld Jesus weeping at the grave of Lazarus. If the tears of Jesus were a sign of His love, how much more the Blood flowing from His five wounds on the Cross. Keep on imploring Jesus for mercy through His Precious Blood, and this Divine Blood will infuse new life and hope into your life-blood, and, like St. Stephen, even in your bitter anguish, you will see the heavens open to your eyes of faith, and by and by you will again realize that in the end all good things are still before you, that there is a life awaiting you with endless happiness.

For neurasthenics at a certain stage of their despondency the future has naught in store but gloom and despair. "And I wept much," writes St. John of what he saw as a pilgrim in Heaven, "because no man was found worthy to open the book, nor to see it." To this book, by which is meant the history of the fall and redemption of mankind, or the triumph of Christianity over Paganism and Judaism, which St. John saw in

the hand of God the Father, may be likened the future of our own life, which is a sealed book to us, and a most perplexing riddle full of anxieties and fearful uncertainties, especially for nerve-racked persons. *“And one of the ancients said to me,”* continues St. John, *“weep not; behold the lion of the tribe of Juda hath prevailed to open the book, and loose the seven seals thereof. And I saw a lamb standing as it were slain and he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne, and when he had opened the book they sang a new canticle, saying: Thou art worthy, O Lord, to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; because thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, in thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us to our God a kingdom and priests, and we shall reign on the earth”* (Apoc. V, 1-10).

Weep not, therefore, dear despondent souls; the Lamb that was slain but rose again on the third day as the Lion of the tribe of Juda, will lead you also safely through your labyrinth of gloom and despair, if only you cling to Him by the virtue of hope. The Lamb that was slain becomes the Lion of the tribe of Juda. Christ is the victor because He became a victim. *“Ideo victor quia victima,”* says St. Augustine. How closely these two ideas are brought together! In

the Lamb that was slain we see the Precious Blood flowing from the five wounds, and victory. Be then a willing victim as long as it should please God. Devotion to the Blood of the Atonement will give you courage to say with the Royal Prophet: *"If I walk in the midst of death I will not fear. Thou hast anointed my head with oil; and my chalice which inebriateth me, how goodly it is!"* (Ps. XXII). It will inspire you with a love for Jesus that will be willing to make any sacrifices for Him. "As even the hardest bread is made soft and eatable by soaking it in water, so the greatest and most painful sufferings are rendered endurable by the Blood of Christ."—*St. Catherine of Siena*.

You will emerge from this seeming destruction of your being, a new person in heart and character, your soul purified and sanctified and worthy to sing a new canticle of life. *"These are they who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall rule them and shall lead them to the fountains of the waters of life, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes"* (Apoc. VII, 14-17). In the light of our future glory, our present tribulations should seem light and momentary indeed.

The Blood of Christ is truly a balm for the

sick and a consolation for the dying. To the penitent thief dying so near the Blood of Jesus dripping from the cross, our Lord said: "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise." Devotion to the Blood of your Saviour will strengthen you against the assaults of Satan and console you in your last moments and plead for you before the judgment seat of God.

The sacrament of Extreme Unction is, as it were, the vessel containing the Precious Blood of our Redeemer. What bitter anguish and excruciating torments it cost our Saviour to fill this vessel for us with the true balm of Gilead! He emptied His Heart to keep it replenished for us. And this Divine Blood is applied to the wounds of our body and soul by the holy oils, which are a symbol of His Blood.

The devotion to the Blood of Jesus would seem to have this wonderful distinction, that it dispels the fear of death and fills us with hope and confidence to meet our Judge. "*Having therefore, brethren, a confidence in the entering into the holies by the blood of Christ*" (Heb. X, 19).

"The Blood of Jesus Christ," says St. Bernard, "speaks with trumpet tones, not of the judgments of God, but of His mercies." The great St. Thomas Aquinas calls the Precious Blood the key to the heavenly Paradise. How

consoling the words of St. John Chrysostom: "This Blood has the power to drive away the evil spirits and to draw to our side the good angel, aye, the King of angels, and to blazen the way to heaven. Ah! the saints knew so well the wonderful power of the Blood of the God-Man! "O Blood of Jesus," exclaims St. Francis Carraccioli at the hour of death, "shed for love of me, thou belongest to me. I ask it of Thee, O Lord! Thou canst not refuse it to me, because it is mine." Then he kissed the five wounds of the Crucified devoutly and repeated over and over: "Blood of my Jesus, thou art mine and only with thee and through thee I hope to be saved."

Not merely by faith but in very truth, by receiving the Holy Viaticum, our soul, sprinkled with the Precious Blood of our Redeemer, appears with the robe of royalty before its Judge.

"And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying: Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; because the accuser of our brethren is cast forth, who accused them before our God day and night; and they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb" (Apoc. XII, 10-11).

BY THE BLOOD OF THY TES-
TAMENT SEND FORTH THY
PRISONERS



HAVING performed the service of the Ritual at the coffin of a young man, who received the grace of conversion on his deathbed in a town entirely Protestant, and seeing the large number of mourners listening attentively to the priest reciting the *De Profundis* and the *Miserere* over the dead and sprinkling the corpse with holy water, the priest improved the occasion by explaining what he had just prayed and done for the deceased, and tried to impart to the gathering, that he knew to be densely ignorant of Catholic doctrine, at least a crude idea of Purgatory.

“Let us suppose,” he said, “you were invited to a reception which you knew to be very exclusive, where none but the very best and noblest people would be admitted, and you had traveled there with a lot of luggage on a ‘bum’ train, as we say, the soot and cinders flying through the open windows, soiling your face and hands and clothes and lodging in your eyes, ears, nose, hair and neck, certainly making you feel very uncomfortable and totally unfit to be presented to the

élite of society in evening dress and bedecked with jewels. Where is there a sensible and decent man or woman who would want to enter that brilliantly lighted hall in such a condition, with dirt and luggage? Why, you would naturally inquire for a place where you could lay aside your 'duds' and wash and 'brush up.' To offer a room for such purposes is a common courtesy shown by even ordinary people. The members of high society require a long time to arrange their toilet. "Now," continued the priest, "most of us arrive at heaven, when we die, after having traveled on a 'bum' train, our life time, namely in our corrupt nature and sinful bodies, encumbered with the luggage of bad habits and covered with the soot and cinders of numerous imperfections, *'for in Thy sight no man living shall be justified'* (Ps. CXLII, 2). Appearing before the judgment seat of an all-holy God, in whose sight even the angels are not pure (Job XV, 15), the soul cries out from the depths of its misery in the words of the Psalmist: 'Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my iniquity, and my sin is always before me.' It realizes that it is about to be ushered into the highest society possible, into the society of the angels and saints, whom St. John saw in white garments; that it will be presented to the Immaculate Queen, the lily without spot; in a word,

that it will be introduced to the court of the King of kings. *'There shall not enter into it anything defiled'* (Apoc. XXI, 27). A soul, therefore, with the slightest imperfection in Heaven would be an object of horror to itself and to others. Hence, when it has departed this world contaminated and saturated, as it were, with its own wickedness, it naturally longs for a place to be cleansed from every defilement, where it 'shall be made whiter than snow.' Such a place, my dear friends, we Catholics call Purgatory.

"In Heaven there is no place for preparation. It is an immediate reward for perfection already attained. We often hear people say that if this or that person is admitted to Heaven they do not want to go there. Even we, who are fully aware of our faults, would be unwilling to put up in Heaven with the imperfections of others. With how much greater right must not God, Who created Heaven for the perfect enjoyment of the elect, demand that we be perfect before we enter Heaven. 'Be ye perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' Which is more unlike a Christian and harder to believe, that all those persons whom we dislike or with whom we would not associate, will go to Hell to suffer eternally, or that they will go to Purgatory to suffer for a time, and prepare for an eternity of blessedness?

"Again, we are enjoined not only to be per-

fect, but 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind.' This is a commandment, and we cannot enter Heaven until we have fulfilled this commandment. But where is he who, at the hour of death, can say he has done this? Is not rather the sentiment, 'this world is good enough for me,' commonly entertained and often expressed? How few really hunger after justice and seek the things that are above and therefore deserve the title of blessed? It is true, to see God is to love Him. But we must love Him before we can see Him and love Him with our whole heart before we can enjoy His perfections in heaven. What manner of love would that be and what satisfaction to God, if He had to force us at the moment of death to love Him? Freed from all earthly attachments, which it now realizes did not fully satisfy it, the soul in Purgatory yearns with an intense longing after the presence of its Maker and Redeemer and with a love of God that, in the words of St. Francis de Sales, 'gives birth to cruel sufferings.' " After this rather homely exposition of the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory, those benighted people remarked that the Catholic idea of the matter was "all right."

Purgatory is a school of perfection, but it is also a school of pain, that is, of punishment and suffering. As such it is characterized by our

Lord, who calls it a prison. "*Thou shalt not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing*" (Math. V, 26), and by St. Paul who defines the state of that prison, "*but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire*" (I Cor. III, 15). According to St. Augustine, St. Thomas, St. Bernard, and other Fathers of the Church, the pains of Purgatory exceed in intensity all earthly torments. "I do not think," says St. Catherine of Genoa in her treatise on Purgatory, "that any joy can be found to be compared with that of the souls in Purgatory, unless it be that of the saints in Paradise. And this joy is augmented every day, thanks to the influence of God on these souls, which constantly increases in proportion as the hindrance to its action on them diminishes. . . . At the same time, they suffer such an exceeding great pain that no tongue can describe it; and no intellect could understand it in the very smallest degree, if God did not make it known by a special favor. In short, the souls in Purgatory unite two things which seem to us irreconcilable: they enjoy an extreme pleasure and at the same time suffer cruel torments; and these two effects do not neutralize each other."

This statement of St. Catherine will be better understood by those who are well versed in the science of the saints; as we find a similar relation

of pain and joy in the lives of the saints here on earth. After her heart had been pierced with a dart of love by an angel, St. Teresa says: "The pain thereof was so intense, that it forced deep groans from me; but the sweetness which this extreme pain caused in me was so excessive, that there was no desiring to be free from it; nor is the soul then content with anything less than God. This is not a corporal but a *spiritual* pain, though the body does not fail to participate a little in it, yea, a great deal. I could not understand how it was possible that pain and joy could be united; that corporal pain and spiritual joy were compatible, I knew very well; but that so excessive a spiritual pain should be compatible with so extraordinary a spiritual joy, did quite astonish me."

"Poor Souls, indeed," exclaims St. Leonard of Port Maurice, "whose earthly banishment is at an end, but forbidden to enter the promised land. They have claim to heavenly riches, but suffer extreme destitution. They are kings and queens every one, but in bondage. Glorious victors all, but yet uncrowned. Companions of the angels, yet tormented by evil spirits. Citizens of heaven, yet in the bowels of the earth. God is their spouse, but as yet their judge, who 'delivered them to the torturers.'"

These prisoners are powerless in the purifying

flames of Purgatory, but what copious means we have at our disposal to help them by reason of the communion of saints according to the doctrine of vicarious satisfaction as expressed by good works, indulgences and the oblation of the Precious Blood. The mercy of God manifests itself by multiplying the means of pardon and the opportunities for help. Thus the Church has endowed the Confraternity of the Precious Blood with extraordinary indulgences, and all these indulgences are applicable to the suffering souls in Purgatory, so that its members can, by merely making the intention, convert it into one of the richest confraternities for the Poor Souls. By so doing, we apply all the satisfactory merits of these indulgences and good works to these needy souls, while the meritorious value of such charitable acts is inalienable and always remains ours as a reward in Heaven. "In Jesus Christ we lose nothing by helping others, grace increases in proportion as we give and the crock of oil emptied by charity into the vessels brought to her filling, overflows the more for what it pours out."—Peter of Blois. We liberate God's dearest children from prison and make them our advocates in Heaven, where they will succor us in our temporal and spiritual needs. Giving alms to the Poor Souls is an act of mercy that will obtain for us mercy and insure for us a hundredfold reward and our own

speedy deliverance from Purgatory. How beautiful is this doctrine of the communion of saints.

There is no one so helpless, so desirous of the Precious Blood, as the suffering souls in Purgatory; and there is no means at our disposal so efficacious in helping these souls as the Precious Blood. If we had our garments all stained or besmeared with paint, it would certainly take us a very long time to cleanse them without some specific means to do it. In fact, we should despair of ever rendering them perfect, even if we had a hundred years to accomplish the task. The Precious Blood in the holy sacrifice of the Mass offered for the souls in Purgatory can purify these souls from the stains of sin and remove the penalty for past offenses more readily than the pains of Purgatory themselves. Our charity towards the Poor Souls should, in a measure, correspond to the love and prodigality with which Jesus shed His Blood. "He withholds not one drop of His Blood."

It is related of Blessed Henry Suso, that he entered into a compact with another member of the Dominican order, that the one who survived the other should say a Mass in honor of the Passion of our Lord every Friday and offer a Mass for the departed every Monday during an entire year. Hearing of the death of his friend, Henry did not fail to offer many prayers and good works

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for the repose of his soul, but neglected to say the masses stipulated in the agreement. One day the deceased appeared to him and complained bitterly of his unfaithfulness to his promise. Henry replied that he never omitted to recommend his soul to God. "But the sacred Blood of Jesus is wanting," said the departed, "where are the masses that afford us so much relief?" By fulfilling his promise, Blessed Henry soon had the happiness of seeing his friend released from Purgatory.

Ah! how these suffering souls now realize the immense value of this divine Blood! How they would offer it, in expiation for their sins, if their time to do so were not passed. Like holy mendicants, they surround those who are wont to offer the Precious Blood for them at the holy sacrifice of the Mass. They see there this holy well overflowing on our altars into thousands of souls: "*In that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem*" (Zach. XIII, 1), and they hear the words of St. John: "*Blessed are they that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb*" (Apoc. XXII, 14); but like the poor man at the pool of Bethesda, they must wait for an angel to put this sacred pool in commotion for them.

The angels ever adoring the Blessed Sacrament are willing and only await our bidding to

be the ministers of our mercy; for this adorable Blood is ours, ours to receive, ours to dispose of. The Archangel Michael is mentioned in the Office and Mass of the Church, as the guardian of the souls of the just. "Michael, my Archangel, I have established thee prince over all souls that are to be received into My kingdom." Bowing down with his hands joined and placed upon the altar shortly after the elevation, the celebrant of the Mass says: "We most humbly beseech thee, Almighty God, to command these things to be carried by the hands of thy holy angel to the Altar on high, in the sight of thy divine Majesty, that as many as shall partake of the most sacred body and blood of thy Son at this altar may be filled with every heavenly grace and blessing."

It is estimated that there are at present about 350,000 masses said daily, and at every Mass there are angels present. Now, let us imitate the priest and invite these angels the world over, to take these 350,000 chalices with the Sacred Blood from the altar and bring them to St. Michael, the guardian of Purgatory, that he might present this priceless argosy to the Heavenly Father for the relief and release of the suffering souls. These, then, when liberated from their prison, will represent us in Heaven to perform there the great work of loving, praising and glorifying the "Lamb that was slain," and

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to greet for us our heavenly Mother, who is in a particular manner the Queen of the holy souls in Purgatory. What a grand procession of angels with the Holy Grail hastening at our command from earth to Purgatory, to succor the Poor Souls, while our Redeemer is offering Himself on 350,000 altars! What acclamations of delight when this tide of divine Blood overflows the earth and the refreshing flood reaches the flames of the truly banished children of Eve! What a grand array of purified souls leaving the land of woe and in company with their guardian angels flying to the realms of eternal bliss! *“And they sang a new canticle, saying: Thou art worthy, O Lord, to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; because thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, in thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us to our God a kingdom and priests, and we shall reign on earth”* (Apoc. V, 9-10).

What untold happiness this daily offering of the Precious Blood after elevation to the angels throughout the world is capable of producing in Purgatory, in Heaven, and on earth! The suffering souls whom we have made blessed spirits in this manner, truly become “priests” in Heaven, and “reign on earth,” according to the words of the Apocalypse, by ministering to our needs through their intercession at the throne of God.

Why Is Thy Apparel Red?

If in the language of our Saviour you should "make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings," how much the more should you employ the precious gold of Christ's divine Blood in making for yourselves special and everlasting friends in Heaven.

All the faithful here on earth can also become "priests" of the Precious Blood by offering the Blood of Jesus in behalf of the Poor Souls, and thus make a continual oblation of the holy sacrifice of the Mass for their alleviation. St. Magdalen de Pazzi was wont to offer it fifty times a day for the suffering souls and it was revealed to her how great the number was she thus liberated. Following her example let us often say: "O Eternal Father, I offer Thee through the hands of the Sorrowful Mother the Precious Blood of Thy Son for the Suffering Souls in Purgatory."

Oh, how anxious the holy souls must be to see this devotion propagated! Therefore, while we are zealous in promoting the devotion to the Precious Blood here on earth, let us be still more so in releasing members from Purgatory to adore this divine Blood of our Redeemer in Heaven. "*Thou also by the blood of thy testament hast sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water*" (Zach. IX, 11).

REDEEMED IN THY BLOOD



WEEKS before the tidal wave of green sweeps upward from the South, the sap that produces vegetation has been flowing unseen in root and trunk and branches, that now under the warm sun unfold a world of beauty and disclose a land of promise. So also the divine sap of Christ's Precious Blood had been flowing from those sacred springs on Mount Calvary through the arteries of the infant Church before its fruits blossomed forth under the warmth of fiery tongues. This vital fluid has ever been the divine life of the Church from the moment of its creation. Throughout the centuries and in every part of the globe, from the Catacombs to the Rocky Mountains and over the wide expanse of the Pacific Ocean, it circulates through the channels of the sacraments in the veins of the mystical body of Christ. Hence the Church is a living organism with the divine life of the Precious Blood and the Holy Ghost insuring its indefectibility and indestructibility.

Once our Lord sat at the well of Jacob and said to the Samaritan woman: *"If thou didst know the gift of God, and who is he that saith to*

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thee, give me to drink; thou perhaps wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water" (John IV. 10). Here natural water was drawn from the earth to slake the thirst of the body. Now Jesus in the Tabernacle is sitting at a thousand wells of salvation in His Church and offering us drink from the soul-nourishing stream of His Sacred Heart. "*But the water that I will give him, shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting*" (John IV, 14). And immediately after these words Jesus said to His disciples: "Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and see the countries; for they are white already to harvest." It was the land irrigated by the mystic waters of the sacraments, the countries converted by the Apostles, saturated with the blood of the martyrs, bedewed with the tears and sweat of the missionaries of all times, that our Lord saw in spirit as the rich harvest of His Precious Blood.

Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever, continues to live in His Church both as Shepherd and Lamb. As Shepherd, He watches over His flock and carries the lamb on His shoulders; as Lamb, He lays down His life for His own and offers His own flesh and blood to his followers.

So, too, the ministers of the Church have ever proven themselves both shepherd and lamb. And the blood of her martyrs has always been the seed

of Christianity. The members of the Church are often victimized that they may become victorious. This sort of victory does not appeal to a sensual world. But it is the quality of loss and gain, of annihilation and resurrection, that our Lord impresses upon His followers. Many are called, but few are chosen, because they will not stoop to conquer. According to the divine plan we must become lambs, we must become 'as little children, before we are made heroes. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Christ came to conquer; but He conquered by becoming a Lamb and by shedding His Blood for us, then He arose as the Lion of the tribe of Juda. His wounds and His Blood became the panoply of His beauty and His strength, as the prophet Isaias had foretold: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra, this beautiful one in his robe, walking in the greatness of his strength" (Is. LXIII, 1).

The triumph of the Blood of Jesus consists in sanctifying and saving souls. For this purpose alone it was shed. We must not be scandalized in Jesus Christ, or allow ourselves to be dispersed like sheep, when the enemy shall strike the shepherd. "Blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me." The magnificent procession of the Precious Blood in the holy sacrifice of the Mass around the globe every twenty-four hours is one

continual triumph of the Blood of Calvary; and the refulgence of the Precious Blood from 350,000 chalices is far more beautiful to the Most High than the golden sunset is to us here on earth. It is so consoling to see that this adorable Blood has not been shed in vain, that it is truly raised on our altars *in remissionem peccatorum*, for the remission of sin. For who can recount the triumphs of the Precious Blood in the confessional? Who can conceive their number and greatness? They are partially revealed at the communion railing. What glorious fruits of the Precious Blood can be observed in every successful mission! At every Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament, at every Forty Hours' Devotion, we come to invoke the Blood of love and mercy upon us and to proclaim that we want to be the children of Jesus, Who was so ignominiously rejected by the Jews when they cried: "His blood be upon us and upon our children."

The principal part of the divine work of the Precious Blood is hidden in the secrecy of souls, and there are countless triumphs of truth and grace which will never be known till the day of judgment. The very greatest sacrifices we have to make are hidden from the gaze of an admiring world. Those have always been the heaviest crosses which we must drag along unseen by human eyes. The most painful struggles ever

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endured are fought out in the stillness of the heart. Fiercer battles have been fought, and greater heroes are to be found in the spiritual and hidden life of Christians, than the world's history ever recorded. But every divine inspiration is like so many dew-drops of the Precious Blood, and oh! the happiness and love they instill in the heart!

These are triumphs of the Precious Blood. They will come to light on the day of judgment. This day will see the rich harvest of the Blood of Calvary. Our Saviour will appear with His radiant Five Wounds, and the bodies of the just will reflect the glory of their Redeemer. *"But the Lord shall rise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee"* (Is. LX, 2). The transfiguring of all glorified bodies into the likeness of the Body of Jesus is due to the merits of the Precious Blood. Oh! what honor, what glory, what ecstasy of joy to belong to that interminable array, that countless phalanx of patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs, virgins and confessors, of holy souls and glorified bodies, after the final judgment leaving this earth forever, the place of their trials and struggles, singing pæans of praise, and following our Lord and His Blessed Mother and the angels into everlasting happiness! St. John saw this final triumph of the Precious Blood when he wrote: *"Thou*

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hast redeemed us, O Lord God, in thy blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation; and thou hast made us to become a kingdom unto our God" (Apoc. V, 9).

This is the burden of the song of triumph of the elect in Heaven: "Thou hast redeemed us, O Lord God, in thy blood." They have become "kings," because they have conquered the world and hell, or the kingdom of Satan, "*and they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb*" (Apoc. XII, 1); and they refer all the glory of heaven to the merits of the Blood of the Lamb. "The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and benediction." Devotion to the Precious Blood will burst forth in all its glory in Heaven from "harp" and "golden vials" and in "new canticles" and with "loud voices" "*and the number of them was thousands of thousands*" (Apoc. V, 8, 9, 11). Glory be to the Blood of Jesus now and forever and throughout all ages, for it was not shed in vain!

"I saw great multitudes which no man could number." These are the fruits of the Precious Blood, these bear witness to its infinite mercies. "Of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne, and in the sight of the Lamb," but now they shall all speak one language, because as "priests" they all sing

the praises of the "Lamb" in the Church of the New Jerusalem. "Clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." White is the emblem of purity and holiness; palms are the signs of victory. But all the palms that the Blessed carry in their hands grew along the stream of the Precious Blood; all the crowns that adorn their heads were made from the Cross saturated with the Precious Blood; all the glory in which the elect shine in Heaven and all the happiness in which they live, is a reflection of the Precious Blood. *"And he said to me: These are they who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb"* (Apoc. VII, 14).

St. John here bears testimony that no one enters Heaven unless he has come out of great tribulation here on earth; in other words, without cross, no crown. We often hear persons remark: "No one knows how much I suffer." Ah, your sufferings are not only known and understood in Heaven, but they are openly proclaimed as the cause of your joy. "These are they who are come out of great tribulation." But we must also observe what follows: "And have washed their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb." This they have done by the laver of holy Baptism, then by the Sacrament of Penance, and the garments thus made white they have

beautified still more by frequent Holy Communion and the reception of the other sacraments. "Therefore," continues the ancient speaking to St. John in Heaven, "they are before the throne of God. The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall rule them, and shall lead them to the fountains of the waters of life, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Here on earth they "sat and wept when they remembered Sion." Near the stream flowing from the Seven Bloodsheddings they wept over their sins when they recalled the love of their Redeemer in His Sacred Passion. Now they shall drink from the torrent of delights flowing from the fountains of salvation.

"And the city hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon, to shine in it. For the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof" (Apoc. XXI, 23). Having seen the "bride of the Lamb" which is the throng of the elect, St. John then describes the holy city and the Lamb that rules it. There must be a particular significance attached to the word *Lamb* in this passage, writes Mgr. Adalbert Huhn, that St. John did not simply mention Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as forming the centre of light of the heavenly Jerusalem. "The Lamb that was slain," that died and rose again as "the lion of the tribe of Juda" with the marks of death in

His Five Wounds radiant with glory, the Lamb as the symbol of life and death, as the emblem of the Precious Blood standing for victim and victory, this is the deep meaning underlying the word Lamb in Scripture. Isaias speaks of the Saviour not only as a "*lamb that shall be dumb before his shearer*" (Is. LIII, 7), but also as a conqueror, "send forth, O Lord, the Lamb, the ruler of the earth" (Is. XVI, 1). St. John the Baptist points out our Saviour by the name of *Lamb*; "Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world." But how does the Lamb take away the sins of the world? By His Blood. "*This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ*" (I John V, 6). Our holy mother, the Church, always in closest touch with the Scriptures, has taken this name from the lips of the great prophet Isaias and from the two Johns, so near and dear to our Lord, and with this endearing name addresses her divine Spouse at Mass before Communion: "Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, have mercy on us, give us peace," or "grant them eternal rest." It is also the appellation we give our Lord in all the litanies. The Lamb of God, of His own free will shedding His Blood for us, is the greatest proof of God's love and mercy for us; the Lamb of God enthroned upon our altars with the holy and ever memorable Wounds characteristic of His

death will forever occupy the throne of the Most High in Heaven as the greatest living memorial of the Holy Trinity for mankind redeemed. The Five Wounds are our Lord's greatest ornaments in Heaven and like five brilliant suns they illuminate the eternal mansions.

"Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Apoc. XIX, 9). There they shall find the Holy Grail, the living Chalice of the Precious Blood that fills the earth with grace, hearts with peace and consolation, the graves with hope, and heaven with glory. There all shall be filled with the delights of the "Chalice of Benediction," which was here on earth already "a communication of the Blood of Christ." *"They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure. For with thee is the fountain of life; and in thy light we shall see light"* (Ps. XXXV, 9-10).

Although still mourning and weeping in this valley of tears, with St. Paul I shall repeat over and over, now I have *"confidence in the entering into the holies by the blood of Christ"* (Heb. X, 19). The words of St. Augustine shall inflame my heart with lively hope and confidence of attaining this supreme happiness. "Say not, I cannot reach heaven. You have the Blood of Christ in your hands. If we already have that

in our hands which is of a greater value, how much more confidently may we hope to obtain that which is of less value." "*Behold I have graven thee in my hands*" (Is. XLIX, 16). "And wherewith hast Thou engraven me in Thy hands?" asks St. Augustine, and he replies: "With the Blood of Thy sacred Wounds." Then he continues confidently. "See, O Lord, come and read this handwriting and let me enter into Thy glory."

Merciful Jesus, Thou didst not withhold from me one drop of Thy Divine Blood, how couldst Thou then refuse me entrance into heaven? The mercy of Thy Precious Blood endureth from generation to generation. By the bloody sweat of Thy agony grant, I beseech Thee, the grace of a perfect contrition. With the liquid fire of Thy Sacred Heart consume all my iniquities and wipe out all my hidden sins. Let me die a victim of Thy love that I may sing Thy mercies forever and ever.

AN APOSTLE OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD



HE illustrious Apostle of the Precious Blood, Blessed Gaspar del Bufalo, beatified by Pope Pius X, December 18, 1904, was born at Rome on the feast of the Epiphany, January 6, 1786.

AS A CHILD

During the first and second years of his childhood, the little boy, of frail constitution, was twice threatened with serious ailments. But God, Who disposes all things for the good of the elect, made use of the child's weakness to bestow upon him special favors. At this early age he was confirmed and thus received the fullness of the divine Spirit. It is attested, that he never lost his baptismal innocence nor grieved the Holy Spirit by one greivous sin. A severe attack of the measles affected his eyes to such an extent that it was feared he would remain blind for life. In her dire distress, his pious mother Annunziata had recourse to St. Francis Xavier, who seemed to have taken the little boy under his special protection, and obtained from him an almost instant cure. Later on, when Gaspar could realize the favor received from his benefactor, he chose

the saint as his special patron and his whole life was inspired by the deeds of the Apostle of India.

AS A BOY

Already before his twelfth year, Gaspar astonished his parents, Antonio and Annunziata del Bufalo, by his deep and fervent piety; so that his good mother often complained, that this child puts her to shame. He trembled at the mere shadow of sin and was then heard to exclaim: "My love, my love, no more sins, help, help!" He was frequently found on his knees before his little altar spending the night in prayer. Every Thursday night, and also during the novenas to the Holy Ghost and to the Blessed Virgin, he slept on the bare floor. He even fasted and wore a belt made of little pieces of tin, which he fastened around his tender body by a wire so tightly as to draw blood. When he was told that it was unlawful to do this without the permission of his confessor, he at once ceased wearing it. But he did not neglect to practice interior mortification, which is a surer test of sanctity. When assailed by his fiery temperament that sent the blood rushing to his head, he would try to conquer his anger, by doing such violence to himself that he changed color and held his breath, or he would cover his face with his hands and exclaim: "O Mary, my dear mother!" He was

usually called the little Aloysius. Three years he prepared himself constantly for Holy Communion. His ardent desire for the food of angels became in him a veritable fever. Often he would ask a companion returning from church, "What did our Lord tell you today in Holy Communion?" Gaspar was eleven years old when he received his first Holy Communion in the chapel of St. Aloysius of the Collegium Romanum.

AS A STUDENT

Even before he went to college, our little apostle was wont to gather around himself the children of the street and to imbue them with a hatred of sin and the love of God. As a student at the Collegium Romanum, he would invite his comrades to his house for spiritual conferences. Later on when he had received the minor orders, he gave catechetical instructions to the poor people of the market-place. In this manner God prepared him for his missionary career.

AS A PRIEST

Gaspar del Bufalo was ordained priest July 31, 1808, and was at once made one of the canons of San Marco, Rome. But he was engaged also in many other charitable works. Napoleon was just then in the zenith of his glory, and in 1809 sent Gen. Miollis to invade Rome and annex the

papal states. Excommunicated by Pius VII, he ordered the Pontiff taken into exile along with the most notable of the clergy. Called upon to swear allegiance to the invaders, del Bufalo resolutely replied: "I cannot, I dare not, I will not." He was 24 years old when led into exile.

IN EXILE

Nearly four years he had to suffer the greatest hardships in captivity. A severe sickness brought him also to the point of death. He was crushed, so to speak, tried by our Lord in the furnace of tribulation. The seed of his future greatness and his glorious labors had been placed in the soil. Divine Wisdom now sent a saintly priest, Don Francesco Albertini, to water and nurture this seed with the Precious Blood of Jesus.

Albertini approached the dying Gaspar del Bufalo and told him that his earthly career was not yet over and, to prove his mission, communicated to him a prophecy which he had received from a saintly nun, Mary Agnes Schiavi, who had died the same year in the convent delle Paulette and to whose sanctity and supernatural gifts persons of the highest standing had testified. The prophecy was as follows: "You will find in a small church a young priest, who is full of zeal for the honor of God; when the enemy oppresses and torments you, then you shall enter into close

friendship with him and become his spiritual adviser; a characteristic feature of his is a special veneration for St. Francis Xavier, and he is destined to become an apostolic missionary; he shall also establish a new congregation of Missionary Fathers under the invocation of the Precious Blood, for the reformation of the people and as a model to the secular clergy; he shall awaken the nations from their indifferentism and infidelity and arouse all to a love of the Crucified. He will be the trumpet of the Precious Blood, and in evil times terrify sinners and sectarians." Together these two holy men now began to practise the devotion to the Blood of Jesus, and to write regulations and prayers for spreading this devotion. Gaspar obeyed his spiritual father in all things, even after they were separated by their political enemies.

FOUNDER OF A NEW COMMUNITY

Four Years, from 1810 till 1814, Gaspar del Bufalo suffered in prison. Napoleon had spilt enough human blood; his world-empire had not been realized, his tyrannical sway came to a sudden end. Another army of the Precious Blood with del Bufalo as their leader, was now to take the field and conquer all things for Christ, and to help extend the empire of the Precious Blood over the universe.

An Apostle of the Precious Blood

At this time the Jesuit Order was restored by Pius VII. Gaspar del Bufalo applied to the Jesuit General for admission to the Order. Having been promptly admitted, he returned home to make the necessary preparations. The next day, however, he received a summons to appear before Pius VII, who gave him orders to devote himself to the missions. God had now spoken through the voice of His Vicar on earth, and Gaspar bowed immediately to His holy will, saying to the Pontiff: "I am at your service, Holy Father, I will do as you desire."

Gaspar del Bufalo laid the foundation of his new community, "The Missionary Fathers of the Precious Blood," August 15, 1815. It was never Gaspar del Bufalo's intention to establish a regular religious order. His was to be a community of secular priests, banded together under a common rule by canon law, chiefly for the purpose of giving diocesan missions and spiritual retreats. Their simple and ordinary mode of living free from all vows and any particular austerities, was to serve as a model to the secular clergy. The members should not only practice and preach, but also spread, the devotion to the Precious Blood as an essential part of their mission.*

* The Motherhouse of the Fathers C. PP. S., in the United States, is at Carthagena, Ohio, where also the Provincial resides.

AS A MISSIONER

During the next twenty-three years, until his death, the Apostle of the Precious Blood labored with his band of missionaries, many of whom died in the odor of sanctity, with astounding success; he himself dividing his time between his missions and the task of organizing and developing his new society. Del Bufalo could preach two hours without becoming fatigued, although a constant sufferer from stomach and nervous troubles. He would often preach six times a day on the same subject; many doubters who had followed him purposely to convince themselves of the fact, declared with astonishment that he really uttered new thoughts every time. His axiom was, to preach Jesus Christ Crucified, and he did it with such results that the greatest sinners were converted by him almost at sight.

FRUITS OF HIS MISSIONS

At Benevento, fifteen young students who had become atheists, came weeping to the missionary, discarded their errors and mended their ways. At Camerino, a peasant came to him to confession sobbing aloud and crying, "mercy!" This man afterwards testified, that he attended a sermon of Del Bufalo's, and that he understood nothing of the sermon except the word "Paradise," but that the fervor and the voice of the preacher terrified

him. At one mission in Ancona, twenty-five large baskets of forbidden books were burned in public. The churches were often too small to contain the crowds that came to hear him speak, and all the priests of the neighborhood were at times not sufficient to help hear the confessions of the people. Whenever he appeared upon the elevated platform erected in the open air, the vast concourse burst forth spontaneously: "Ecco il Santo!" ("Behold the Saint!") Even Bishops followed him in admiration, and some laid aside their crosier and mitre, to join him in giving missions. He was truly a wonderful speaker. Ven. Bishop Strambi gave him the title of "Spiritual Earthquake." When the Bishop of Todi heard him conducting spiritual exercises for his clergy, he exclaimed publicly: "This is truly a man sent by God."

TRUMPET OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

Our Lord once told Blessed Angela of Foligno that the word of the Gospel went with power to the soul only when it passed over the lips stained with His Precious Blood. Evidently, Gaspar's singular eloquence received its impetus and its efficacy from the Blood of Jesus flowing from the Cross; that same Blood, which, from its pulpit on Calvary, caused the rocks to split, the earth to quake, and the dead to rise. He was in truth

“the Trumpet of the Precious Blood,” as a saintly nun had prophesied.

He bound himself by a vow to spread the devotion to the Precious Blood, and everywhere on his missions he established the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood.

Maria de Mattias, who founded the community of Sisters for the perpetual adoration of the Precious Blood, and who was favored by God from her early youth with extraordinary graces, received her first impulse toward this grand and noble project by attending the sermons of Blessed del Bufalo. He lent her every possible assistance in her heroic undertaking. Later on he entrusted her to the direction of the saintly Merlini, who led her on to great sanctity. She died in 1866. Her body was still preserved in 1897. By a decree of Pius X, the process of her beatification was introduced in the year 1903. There are several provinces of the Sisters C.P.P.S. in the United States and Canada.

Whenever Bl. Gaspar preached on the Precious Blood, his face was flushed with enthusiasm, he was all fire and flame and filled his audience with awe and astonishment; he then appeared to them like a supernatural being and they would sob aloud and drown his voice. It was at such times that he conquered the hearts of the most obstinate sinners. “It is the Precious Blood,”

he wrote, "that destroys sin, saves souls and lends power and fruitfulness to the word of the missionary, *per sanguinem salvi facti sumus.*" He once wrote to a nun: "I feel the devotion to Mary the Blessed Virgin increase in me, but my devotion to the Divine Blood is something inexpressible. Oh, that I could spread this beautiful devotion with my own blood." And again: "Would that I had a thousand tongues to fill every heart with a love towards the Most Precious Blood of Jesus, and nothing do I desire more than that souls might be imbued with it." When he saw the great army of irreligion and sin with united forces taking the field against the Crucified, he fairly burned with a desire to see the Blood of his Redeemer honored and glorified. "Devotion to the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ is the weapon of our times," was a favorite saying of his, quoting the words of the Apocalypse, *et ipsi vicerunt draconem per sanguinem agni.*

HIS VIRTUES

Prominent among the many shining virtues of Bl. Gaspar was his angelic purity. A contemporary of his testified, that he seemed to be a son of Adam in his innocence rather than in his fallen state. Pope Leo XII. publicly called him an angel. Public opinion of him accorded with what he confided to his father confessor: "With the grace

of God I have never wilfully done anything against this virtue, rather would I die; from the beginning I have ever entertained the greatest horror for the opposite vice."

His deep humility was his constant safeguard against popular praise and applause which followed him everywhere on his missions. Often he would repeat the words of St. Paul: "When I am weak, then I am powerful." That this virtue was a settled conviction with him, is evinced by the fact, that at one time when he thought himself entirely alone, he was overheard saying: "I am doing nothing good." When the Fathers returned from their missions, he would kiss their hands, and repeatedly attempted to kiss their feet. Although founder and superior of the Community of the Precious Blood, he considered it his privilege to perform the most menial services in the household.

Mention has already been made of his intense love of God and the Blessed Virgin; of his flaming zeal for the honor of the Precious Blood and for the salvation of souls. At the altar or in the pulpit, whether kneeling before a crucifix or holding it up to the people in a sermon, he seemed to be like a pillar of fire. When he came in sight of a church, he recited with his missionaries the *O Sacrum Convivium*, and before the Blessed Sacrament he would kneel like one ecstatic, with-

out taking notice of what took place about him. The things of this world had no interest for him. His whole life was spent in the love of God. Once or twice a year he would go into retreat with the Passionists or Capuchins.

HEAVENLY SIGNS

Time and again the people were witnesses of the visible assistance and signal favors God bestowed upon his apostolic servant. Once during a sermon, a bright dove was seen to hover around his head. It was testified under oath, that towards the end of one of his sermons on the last judgment, a flash of lightning, on a bright and cloudless day, entered through one window and with a flare lit up the entire church, leaving at another window. The audience was terrified and cried out loud, but there was not the slightest damage done.

At the process of his beatification abundant testimony was received to the effect, that he possessed the gift of bilocation, that he appeared to preach in the open air and at the same time hear confessions in the church. A shepherd heard him preach three miles away and was so profoundly moved by the extraordinary event that he left the world and entered a monastery. At one mission, a luminous cross was seen above

his head; at another, a fiery ball; at Spello, the entire congregation together with the Bishop of Foligno beheld three brilliant stars above him; at Gaeta, he was seen to hover in the air while he was preaching; and he was understood by persons who did not know a word of Italian.

CROSSES

Gaspar's apostolate was tested also by such extraordinary trials and tribulations, even from sources least expected, that any other but a saint would have succumbed to discouragement and failure. He once wrote to the papal treasurer: "I live by bread watered with my tears. The sufferings of soul I am enduring this year have undermined my former cheerfulness and health and have ruined my nerves, although I have left everything over to our Lord." It was in the year 1830, when his sufferings were at their height, that God consoled him in a wonderful manner. While saying mass, Jesus showed him two golden chains that rose from the chalice, wound themselves around his body, and carried him up to heaven. His zeal was untiring. He often expressed a wish to die in the pulpit. In one of his letters to Cardinal Crisaldi we find these words: "If it is already so consoling to labor for God, what sweet repose must it be to rest in God."

HIS GLORIOUS DEATH

Much could be written of his heroic virtues and austere penances; of the gift of prophecy which he possessed and manifested on numerous occasions; and of his many miracles, both before and after his glorious death, which he foretold and which occurred at Rome, December 28, 1837, the day on which the first young martyrs shed their blood for Christ. He died, it may be said, as a victim of his holy apostolate, in the fifty-second year of his age. He made a *“libation, and offered of the blood of the grape. He poured out at the foot of the altar a divine odour to the most high Prince”* (Eccles. L, 16-17). Don Vincenzo Pallotti and Giovanni Merlini, who themselves died in the odor of sanctity and are awaiting the honors of the altar, assisted Gaspar del Bufalo in his last moments here on earth. To them he remarked, that he had now become as a little child. His first sermon as a young levite was on Divine Providence, and his last words were an expression of resignation to the holy will of God, “May the great will of God be done.” “Yes, yes.” “His face was radiant with joy and wore the expression of so sweet a peace, that I felt a desire for such a death struggle myself,” says Pallotti. At the moment of Blessed Gaspar’s departure from this life, Pallotti raised his hands and eyes towards heaven and

exclaimed: "O happy Soul!" He afterwards confided to Merlini that he saw his soul in the form of a luminous star taking its flight to heaven and our Lord Jesus Christ coming to meet His servant.

The same saintly Pallotti made the following deposition at the cause of Blessed Gaspar: "I know, that in the last night of the servant of God here on earth, a nun in Cori, who is now dead, saw Canon del Bufalo in surplice and stole singing psalms with his missionaries and then ascend towards heaven; to the sister relating all this, another nun remarked, 'Today, Canon del Bufalo is going to die,' as he really did. I was told also that another nun outside of Rome, who was in the choir at the moment of his death, beheld Canon del Bufalo and St. Francis Xavier coming to meet him."

Seven days after his death, when his body was laid to rest, his tongue was still red and moist and his eyes as fresh as those of the living. His body showed no signs of decay and emitted a remarkably sweet odor. His remains are now preserved in the little church of S. Maria in Trevia, near the famous Fontana di Trevi, Rome. His feast is celebrated in the churches of his Community, December 30, and in the city of Rome, February 3. His beautiful soul is now among that throng of which St. John speaks in

An Apostle of the Precious Blood

the Apocalypse, "*who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb,*" and it is inebriated with the "*water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb*" (Apoc. XXII, 1). May he intercede at the throne of God for the members of the Congregation and Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood to continue his holy work here on earth.

BRANCHES OF THE VINE



O one likes to be burdened with debts. He who does not care to pay his bills is considered an undesirable member of the community. After meeting all his just obligations squarely, every man is desirous of bettering his condition in life, is bent on acquiring a home and laying aside a competency for the future. This is the rule of every-day life. "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light."

Coming from the confessional, where the guilt of sin has been taken from you and the eternal punishment forgiven, and feeling that peace and happiness which the world cannot give, has it ever occurred to you that you are still in debt? Unless the penitent elicits an act of contrition sincere and intense enough to equal the malice of his sin, the obligation of satisfying divine justice by some temporal punishment, to be undergone in this life or in the next, generally remains. The small penance imposed and faithfully performed is usually not sufficient to discharge this debt, which goes on increasing from confession to confession, from year to year.

Adam obtained forgiveness for his sin, but what punishment did it not entail upon him and his posterity, even after he had confessed to God and expiated it by tears of real contrition! Moses, who received the ten commandments from God and was so zealous in inculcating their observance, whose holiness shone from his countenance and struck terror into the hearts of the Israelites, was refused entrance into the promised land because of his mistrust in God. We all are on our way to the promised land of heaven; are we not concerned about the mountains of temporal punishments which our sins are heaping in our way? At the very time David was assured of pardon for his sin, he was also reminded that he would yet have to endure a heavy punishment for that sin.

The penitential discipline, or the ancient practice of canonical penance in the Church, imitating the example of St. Paul, is ample proof of the truth which St. Augustine expresses in these words: "Thou leavest not unchastised, O Lord, the sins of even those whom Thou hast pardoned." The very admission to canonical penance in the early Church was considered already a great benefit. "Sin," wrote St. Ambrose to the Emperor Theodosius the Great, after the massacre of Thessalonica, "is effaced only by tears; no angel, no archangel can remit it on any other condition.

Why Is Thy Apparel Red?

The Lord Himself forgives only those who do penance. I advise, entreat, warn thee to submit to it.

Does the Church not continue to proclaim her penitential seasons and insist upon the necessity of practicing penance according to the words of Christ: "Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish?" Did not Mary, the Mother of Mercy, as late as 1858, in one of her apparitions to Bernadette at Lourdes, exclaim, while looking over the world with an expression of intense sadness: "Penance, penance, penance?" How our weak human nature shrinks from the mere mention of penance. But our holy mother, the Church, is ever at our side with her consoling doctrines of mercy and pardon.

All our good works, done in the state of grace and for the love of God, possess a twofold benefit: the merit of sanctity and the consequent right to a higher degree of glory in heaven; and the merit of satisfaction, whereby we can offer them to God as a compensation for the punishments due to our sins. *"I am the vine; you are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing"* (John XV, 5).

The merit of the work belongs properly and exclusively to its author. It is inalienable, because on this merit depends the reward of each

deed; hence St. Paul says: "And every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor." But the satisfaction may be transferred; wherein lies the difference between this and the two other acts of penance, contrition and confession, which cannot be transferred to our neighbor's profit. "Nobody," says the Catechism of the Council of Trent, "can have contrition or make confession for another; but those who are in the grace of God can pay off in another's name the debts owing by that person to God; and thus, in a certain way, we are able to bear one another's burdens." There is no need, for the carrying out of this vicarious satisfaction, that the real debtor should be unable to pay what he owes: the only thing required is that the debt itself should be fully paid, and in such a way as to amply satisfy justice. It must be carefully noted, however; that no act of satisfaction, as a remedy, can be vicarious; for, as St. Thomas remarks, "My flesh is not subdued by my brother's fasts." Hence nobody must be allowed to do penance for another except in as far as the satisfaction is intended to be expiatory and not remedial. The possibility of transferring our satisfaction to others is incontestible. It is a natural consequence of the article of the Creed by which we profess to believe in the Communion of Saints.

Eusebius of Cæsarea, the "Father of Ecclesi-

astical History," tells us how St. John the Apostle brought into Christ's fold a robber, whose life had been one long catalogue of crimes, and, when the poor man despaired of obtaining mercy from God, how the saint encouraged him by saying: "Fear not, my son; thou mayest yet hope for salvation: I will satisfy Jesus Christ for thee, I will gladly undergo death for love of thee, as the Lord endureth it for us. I will give my soul in the place of thine." Thus did St. John pass on the satisfactions gained by himself to that poor sinner.

The martyrs did in like manner. From the depths of their prisons, which they were on the point of leaving to give their lives for Christ, they often made a solemn deposition (of course at that time lacking the official sanction of the Church) by which they transferred to any Christian who should humbly recommend himself to their prayers, the satisfaction of their present and future torments. This satisfaction was to take the place of the penances which the suppliant would have had to perform according to the discipline of the Church. Excommunicated apostates, impelled by remorse of conscience and supported by the hope of pardon, sought admission to the prison and threw themselves on their knees before the martyrs, entreating these friends of God to grant them a share in the merits they had

won and thus help in opening the doors of heaven to them. The confessors only too glad to act the part of advocates in behalf of their fallen brethren, gave them a small paper, or ticket, known by the name of *Libellus Martyrum*, or *Libellus Pacis*, which was to be handed to the Bishop. He examined it, and, if he judged it expedient, readmitted the penitent sinner to communion with the Church. These libelli took effect only after the confessors had actually died as martyrs for the faith.

Thus the martyrs became surety for the penitents. They actually offered their own merits in payment for the debts of the lapsed, and the Church consented to accept the substitution out of respect for the noblest and most illustrious portion of her flock. "Filling up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in the flesh of her children, for his body," which is none other than herself, the Church dispensed the deserters from going through the whole of their penance and received them as prodigal sons back to her arms.

The Fathers of the Church held as certain that the debt due to God was paid for when the canonical penance itself was remitted. Thus St. Cyprian, speaking of the lapsed who had come to their last moments without having ended their penance, expresses full confidence that, owing to

the martyr's intercession, "after having received the imposition of hands unto penance, they will go immediately to God in peace." "That peace," he adds, "which the martyrs, by their letters, told us that they desired to have granted to them."

We find a very similar thing in the lives of those servants of God who have specially devoted themselves to the conversion of sinners in the Sacrament of Penance, as St. Raymond of Penafort, St. Philip Neri, or St. Alphonsus Ligouri. They used at times to impose very light penances on great sinners, and supply, by their own mortifications, what was wanting in the satisfaction of penitents. St. Francis Xavier also affords a striking example of this kind of vicarious satisfaction. He was accustomed to scourge himself pitilessly for the expiation, as far as lay in his power, of the sins that had been confessed to him. We read again that St. Catherine of Siena obtained from God the immediate entrance of her father's soul into heaven, on condition that she herself should bear his whole purgatorial chastisement. She actually never ceased, for the rest of her life, suffering a sharp pain in her side.

This transference of satisfactory merits may be made also by any small community of the faithful bound to one another by a tie of the same

religious profession or of a common life, such as the members of a religious order, or persons of the same parish. For example, a group of pious people may arrange together that they will offer some penitential practices for an individual's benefit; or again, the superior of any community, e. g., of a religious order or a particular parish, may apply the merits of his subordinates to such an object, with the explicit or tacit consent of the latter. Instances of this second kind of application abound. They are especially frequent in religious orders, where the superiors often grant to noted benefactors, in recognition of their liberality, "certificates" of participation in all good works of their subjects.

Keeping in mind these explanations on the value of vicarious satisfaction, as taken from the excellent work on Indulgences by Lepicier, Consultor of the S. Congregation of Indulgences at Rome, and based on faith according to St. Paul, "*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ*" (Gal. VI, 2), we are now prepared to understand and appreciate better one of the chief benefits derived by becoming a member of the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood.

The members of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood have the extraordinary privilege of partaking, in a special manner, in all

the good works, such as prayers, divine offices, perpetual adorations, communions, masses, also acts of penance or evangelical labor, performed by the members of all the religious orders and communities of the Catholic Church.

Satisfactory merits are here applicable to the members of the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood, not by an individual or a community of individuals, nor even by an entire religious order, but by the Sovereign Pontiff, the head of the Church. (Rescript of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences of Sept. 30, 1852.) There are about 150 religious orders, male and female, such as the Benedictines, Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits, Redemptorists, Passionists, Holy Cross Fathers, Missionary Fathers of the Precious Blood, etc., Carmelites, Visitation Nuns, Ursulines, Sisters of Charity, of Mercy, of Notre Dame, of the Precious Blood, etc., many of these orders having numerous convents and many thousands of members.

How many prayers, of which you are a special partaker, therefore, ascend daily to the throne of the Almighty from God's dearest children! Manifold are the good deeds and spiritual exercises performed by these millions of religious, of which you as a member of the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood receive a special share. Think of the privations and hardships of

our missionaries at home and abroad, where they often suffer persecutions and martyrdom. Bear in mind the works of mercy and self-sacrifice in our charitable institutions beside the sick and wretched; the patience and labors of the school-room; the vigils and nocturnal adorations; reflect again on the thousands of holy masses and on the millions of holy communions received daily, in which you participate. The benefits donated in this extraordinary privilege are so great that even priests are filled with astonishment, especially when told that they can be obtained so easily without incurring any obligations whatsoever, under the sole condition that the names of the members be enrolled by a duly authorized priest. But let us bear in mind that Christ was liberal in shedding His Precious Blood for us—*Sibi nihil reservat sanguinis*,—"He withholds not one drop of His Blood," and the Church is liberal in applying its merits. This prodigality should fill us with love and veneration and gratitude towards the Precious Blood of Jesus. What consolation the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood offers to us poor sinners!

Our past life is to us a constant source of remorse and worry; and justly so, for "*be not without fear about sin forgiven*" (Eccl. V, 5). Great is the mercy of God, but great also is the multiplicity of sins, the number of sinners that

call for mercy. How many sins have we committed as children, at home, on the street, and in school, by our disobedience, anger, obstinacy, vanity, by wanton and growing sensuality. Then come the many, many sins of our youth! pride, insolence, levity, concupiscence and inordinate desire for pleasure. Every kind of sin seems to take root in the heart of the young and sprout like rank weeds; and when we have grown up to man's estate these sins bring forth fruit a hundredfold, they grow more obnoxious and infectious. Even in old age, a volcano of vices often seethes beneath a hoary head. There is scarcely a place where we have been that we have not sinned. There is hardly a member of our body, eyes, ears, tongue, hands and feet, hardly a faculty of our soul, memory, will and understanding with which we have not sinned. There is hardly a commandment that we have not transgressed. Sum up the repetitions of only one sin you were in habit of committing every day for twenty years, and you will have to admit that you resemble the servant in the Gospel who owed his master ten thousand talents. Now think of the thousands and thousands of sins of thought, desire, words, deeds and omissions; let the imperfections and negligences in co-operating with God's graces, countless as the Egyptian plague of flies, rise up in your mind, and you will ex-

claim, how shall I pay this enormous debt, how shall I atone for these numberless offences? Expiate them I must, either in this world or in the next." How many, on entering Purgatory, behold their sins yet to be expiated like a huge mountain which must be consumed by a slow fire. It is indeed terrible to fall into the hands of the living God. And yet "*there is none that doth penance for his sin, saying: What have I done?*" (Jer. VIII, 6).

The Church teaches us an expiatory and indulgenced prayer which we should say every day: "Eternal Father! I offer Thee the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, in satisfaction for my sins and for the wants of Holy Church."

"For all have sinned, and do need the glory of God. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption, that is in Jesus, whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to the showing of his justice, for the remission of former sins" (Rom. III, 23-25).

CLOTHED WITH A GARMENT SPRINKLED WITH BLOOD



F a member of the Church, according to the principle of vicarious satisfaction and the doctrine of the Communion of Saints, as explained in the foregoing chapter, can transfer his satisfactory merits to another in payment of that person's temporal punishments due to sin, how much more may we expect of Christ, Who is the head of that mystical body of which we are members.

Now, let us suppose Our Lord said to you, "My child, if you practise some little devotion and perform some small penance, I will suffer again the agony of Gethsemani in atonement for your sins, I will again undergo the torments of the Scourging, of the Crowning of Thorns, I will again carry My Cross to Calvary, in payment of the debt which you cannot cancel of your own resources, while you are making those exercises of devotion." What an astounding offer, what self-sacrificing generosity this would be! Who would not want to avail himself of this complete vicarious satisfaction on the part of Christ? But does not our Lord promise us as much, speaking to us through the voice of the Church when she grants us an indulgence?

Clothed with a Garment Sprinkled with Blood

In receiving an indulgence from the Church, is it not Our Redeemer Himself Who is paying our debt with his Most Precious Blood? "*Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled*" (I Peter I, 18-19).

Vicarious satisfaction as applied by one individual or a community of individuals to another, is not a true indulgence; not only because such good works are of limited merit, but especially because the transfer is not made by the Church. "An indulgence is the remission of a debt contracted towards both God and the Church, to which the sinner is liable even after having received the pardon of his sins. This remission is made in virtue and by means of the application of the superabundant merits of Christ and His saints, by the authority of the lawful pastors, who grant it for a just and reasonable motive. Hence we conclude, that an indulgence is at the same time a payment, *solutio*, and a remission, *absolutio*. It is a rigorous payment of the debt contracted by the sinner, for the whole penalty is exacted to the last farthing; it is a remission, because the sum paid does not come from the sinner's own funds, he being destitute of any, but from the inexhaustible treasure of the Church."

What a treasure of satisfactions,—infinite sat-

isfactions, since He was truly God—did not Christ, the “high-priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily (as the other priests) to offer sacrifices first for his own sins and then for the people’s,” heap up for us by His Sacred Passion, especially in the seven principal Bloodsheddings! Mary, the Mother of God, never committed the slightest imperfection that could dim the light of grace on her soul, yet what trials that Mother of Sorrows had to bear throughout her life, and what a perfect agony of suffering she endured when she stood by that cross where hung her Son! What abundant merits and satisfactions must she not have amassed by the time Jesus called her to be crowned in heaven!

And now what have the superabundant satisfactions of Jesus Christ Himself and those of His Holy Mother and all the saints availed? Should we dare to say that they have been of no practical use, have had no real effect, have served only to show how much Christ and the saints could suffer when subjected to the extremity of pain? Such a belief would be utterly inconsistent with our own conception both of the wisdom of God and His infinite justice.

From all this it appears that there must exist a treasure of superabundant satisfactions in the

Church, out of which it must be possible to draw what may be necessary to cover a man's spiritual debt. However, vicarious reparation is not limited to this case of superabundant satisfactions only. Indeed, we may make over to others even those satisfactions which might be necessary for our own selves; but it is only in the case of satisfactions drawn from the superabundant treasure of the Church that an indulgence properly so called takes place.

Indulgences are granted, and to a certain extent reckoned, according to the rules of ancient canonical penances, or canons, which counted by days, by periods of forty days, (Quarantines), and by years. But it would be inaccurate to assert that indulgences are nothing but the remission of canonical penances that would have been imposed on the sinner according to ancient discipline; for, as St. Thomas observes, such a doctrine expressly derogates from the privilege granted by Christ to St. Peter in the words, "*Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth it shall be loosed also in heaven*" (Math. XVI, 19).

Indulgences have in the eyes of God the exact value set forth in the granting of them by the Church. "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven;" but temporal punishments due to sins forgiven exclude from the kingdom of heaven; hence, the Church has the power to

remit temporal punishments; in other words, to grant indulgences, and we may rest assured that the indulgence is accepted by God in that quantity which the Church establishes; otherwise it would be useless to speak, for instance, of indulgences of one hundred or two hundred days as of distinct grants. If the Church has the power to dispose of Christ's Precious Blood in the forgiveness of sin, it is quite fitting that she should be able equally to dispose of its merits for remitting the lesser debt, the punishment. This is that "plentiful redemption" of which the Psalmist sings. Did not our Lord grant to the penitent thief on the cross this bountiful redemption when He said: "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise?" St. Paul also grants to a sinner who has given sufficiently strong proof of repentance a solemn remission of the penance imposed upon him (II Cor. II, 10-11).

From all this it is clear, that an indulgence does not mean a pardon of sin; it rather supposes, on the contrary, that sin has been forgiven in the sacrament of confession. Much less does it mean a "license to commit sin." These are monstrous notions of Protestants and need not be refuted here. To gain a plenary indulgence it is necessary, (1), to be in a state of grace; (2), to have no attachment to venial sin; (3), faithfully to perform certain appointed works. An indulgence

does not even deliver the sinner, though repentant and even pardoned, from the consequences implied in the very idea of a sincere repentance; e. g., from the obligation of restoring stolen goods, of retracting calumnies, or avoiding occasions of relapse. It is difficult to understand how Protestants can profess to reject the Catholic conception of indulgences, and yet believe, as most of them do, that after death there will be a "general indulgence," when all sins will be forgiven both as to guilt and penalty.

The explanation of Lepicier on Indulgences are so luminous and satisfactory that we cannot refrain from quoting this eminent divine at length in this article, which we consider important on account of the many indulgences to be gained in the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood, and on account of the general indifference towards indulgences among the faithful. "We pass over indulgences," says Bl. J. M. Vianney, "as we walk over a cornfield after the harvest. At the end of our lives we shall rue this very much."

It might be objected that if indulgences have in the eyes of God the exact value set forth in the granting of them, they dispense us too easily from our obligation of doing penance for our faults, and that thus they may tend to make us careless in this life, and may expose us to the

temptation of enjoying this world's goods as fully as possible whilst yet hoping to go straight to heaven when we die. But the reply to this is easy. Indulgences do not abrogate the law of penance. They do not dispense the faithful either from bearing their cross in the footsteps of our Lord, or from taking all necessary means for avoiding sin in the future. On the contrary, indulgences are a stimulus to love God more, to take up the cross and follow Him. Their very use imbues one with a spirit of self-denial and mortification. In short, every possible moral and spiritual activity is promoted by indulgences. Moreover, is not the very trouble that the faithful take in gaining the indulgences in itself a wholesome satisfaction?

Certain persons appeal to the ancient usage of the Church in granting only small indulgences, for even really painful practices; and they conclude from this that the indulgences of our own day are of no use unless accompanied by sufficient penance. We reply to them that the discipline of the Church has varied with different times. And if the earlier Christians had full confidence in indulgences, whatever they were, not on account of works performed, but because of their firm persuasion that the Church cannot lead to error, why should the Christians of today not have an exactly similar confidence in the abun-

dant indulgences distributed to them by the very same Church? The Church has not ceased to be a faithful mother and the incorruptible guardian of the deposit of faith. The Church grants indulgences to those only who are truly repentant and have confessed their sins,—a clear proof that the indulgence does not dispense from contrition and confession but takes the place of satisfaction. It is because of their poverty that the faithful, anxious to satisfy divine justice as quickly as possible by effacing all their debt, have recourse to the infinite treasure left them by Jesus Christ expressly to supply their need. Thus do they show clearly how they value the possessions won for them by Him at the cost of all the torments He endured.

By gaining indulgences, we appreciate properly the Price of our Redemption. “You have been bought with a great price.” Indulgences apply the merits of the Precious Blood to our souls. They are sentences of mercy and pardon from the “Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of the world.” As long as we are not free from temporal punishments due to sin, we cannot enjoy the beatific vision in heaven. If we die with this debt, although in the state of grace, God will have to cast us from Himself into the flames of Purgatory. Therefore, if we truly love God with our whole heart we will strive to

remove everything already in this world that may stand between us and our Lord, so that He can press us at once to His loving heart without being obliged to send us into a painful exile. With this unpaid debt against us we feel as if our Lord should say to us: "Touch me not until you have risen completely from the grave of sin and glorified yourself with my Precious Blood by the use of indulgences or penance."

"To become a saint it is sufficient to gain all the indulgences possible."—St. Alphonsus de Ligouri. "Indulgences are such excellent things that I feel unable to praise and exalt their value sufficiently. The only thing left for me to do is to beg and exhort you all, by the love and respect you owe to God, to esteem them highly, and to seek to profit by them with all possible care."—St. Ignatius de Loyola. Our Divine Lord told St. Bridget, "Go to Rome: there the streets are all golden paved and bedewed with the blood of martyrs; there, because of the Indulgences their merits have won, the road to Heaven is shortened."—*Chandlery, S. J.*

"Indulgences, and particularly those attached to certain prayers, are a great means of arousing the faithful to recollection of Almighty God's presence, to union with Him, and to humble submission to His will; in short, of fostering a spirit of prayer. How many prayers are said, through-

out the Catholic world, owing to a desire for gaining indulgences, which might otherwise not be said at all, but which draw many favors upon the sinful world! Many of these are but short ejaculatory prayers, yet full of depth and meaning in their brevity. Take, for instance, St. Francis' favorite ejaculation, "My God and my all!" or the one so often used by St. Leonard of Port Maurice, and now so common with the sick and dying, "My Jesus, mercy!" What good must not such words, constantly on the lips, do to the heart! And, again, how ready must God be to bestow grace on those who address Him with such an invocation as this one: "In all things may the most holy, the most just, and the most lovable will of God be done, praised and exalted above all for ever!"

"If indulgences had no other effect than that of turning men's hearts to God and so making them realize their utter dependence on Him, their own nothingness and His greatness, that would be enough to prove them living fountains of spiritual favors to the faithful. There are yet other practical effects, however, of the use of indulgences, and one of these is to nourish in souls that most necessary of all divine gifts, the constant fear of God. We mean that chaste and filial fear which is "the beginning of wisdom," which makes the saints tremble at the very

thought of the smallest sin and which gives joy to the heart and peace at death. Indulgences keep alive in us this righteous fear, because they constantly remind us that every debt we have must be paid to the last farthing. Hence they make us dread the suffering that must be endured in Purgatory for even the lighter faults that we have not expiated here below, and oblige us therefore to keep our conscience pure and undefiled."

Bearing in mind that indulgences are a means by which the Precious Blood of Christ wipes out our debt of temporal punishment and remembering that there is no Confraternity in the Church that offers us a larger appropriation of satisfactory merits and few richer in indulgences than the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood, the members of this Archconfraternity will be alert every Sunday in looking over their leaflet or their Manual for the indulgences to be gained during the week, just as a business man is quick to look up the market quotations every morning in his daily paper.

I SHALL SEE THE BLOOD AND PASS OVER



NOT only does God punish individuals for their sins, either in this life or in the next, even after the guilt of sin has been remitted by contrition and confession, as has been shown in the preceding chapters, but He sometimes extends these chastisements over entire generations. "I will visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the fourth generation." Whole communities and nations are thus visited with the divine judgments for the sins of the people. This is a truth strikingly established by abundant scripture texts from the Old and the New Testaments and borne out by the facts of history.

The curse upon Cain and his descendants, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrhah, the Deluge, are lessons to this effect, which every Catholic child knows. The history of the chosen people of God shows us the working of Divine Providence behind human events. The vicissitudes of war and government by which the Jews were humbled from time to time, the religious persecutions and subjugations by other nations, the fiery serpents, famine, drought, pestilence,

plagues, were scourges of God for the sins of the people. "*Jerusalem, city of God, the Lord hath chastised thee for the works of thy hand*" (Tob. XIII, 11). In vain did the prophets constantly warn the people against their impending ruin. Our Lord Himself wept over the city of Jerusalem and cried out: "If thou hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes." When He was cast out of the unhappy city, covered with blood, and laden with the heavy cross, He told the women not to weep over Him but over themselves and their children. In the year 70 His terrible prophecy was fulfilled: "They shall beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee; and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone: because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation."

The judgments of God, which were inflicted upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the Jewish people, have come and will come upon all nations as well as individuals, that do not know the time of their visitation. The connection of calamities with the sins of which they are the punishment is not always apparent, but to the eye of faith much is clear which others cannot see; and even with our limited vision we often discern that temporal afflictions or disasters are the result of sin. Did not our Lord Himself say to the man

languishing thirty-eight years at the pond called Bethesda, "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee."

The description of the seven vials of wrath poured out by the seven angels over this earth, as we read in the Apocalypse of St. John, that favored disciple of Christ, who, in his last days, generally spoke of nothing but love, is a terrible reminder of the temporal punishments of sin. And to what does he, the Evangelist and Prophet, ascribe those frightful calamities which he saw in the vision? The streams of blood, the heaps of the slain, the devastated countries? He saw the air darkened by terrible storms, he saw islands go under, mountains disappear, volcanoes opened and whole provinces destroyed. It is not to the position of the planets, nor to any other natural cause, that he attributes these calamities, but to the powers of darkness let loose upon sinful man. War, sickness, pestilence, famine, earthquake, fire, floods, storms, are poured out in the seven vials of wrath upon those who have the sign of the beast upon them, which is sin. The very heathens looked upon their plagues as coming from their gods, who had to be placated by sacrifices. Must God always send His avenging angel visibly among us before we believe in His chastisements? *"Therefore is the wrath of the*

Why Is Thy Apparel Red?

Lord kindled against his people, and he hath stretched out his hand upon them, and struck them. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still' (Isa. V, 25).

But in all this it is the hand of mercy that is raised above us. The dead alone are punished by justice; the living are warned by the mercy of God, because their time of penance is at hand. "*My son, neglect not the discipline of the Lord, neither be thou wearied whilst thou art rebuked by him. For whom the Lord loveth, he chastiseth; and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth'*" (Hebr. XII, 5-6). It is therefore a sign of renewed grace if God does not cease to visit Israel with His chastisements. And if He should withhold His scourges until the other world, what shall we gain by our present impenitence or immunity from punishment?

We hear so-called "calamity howlers" on all sides bemoaning some impending loss on account of crop failures, political disturbances, financial reverses, social upheavals, or other temporal damages; but who is there who takes to heart or bewails the evil consequences that must sooner or later follow in the wake of the appalling conditions of vice and crime as are brought to light, from time to time, by committees of investigation, especially in our larger cities, where untold iniquity, like the blood of Abel, cries to heaven for

vengeance? *“Cursing and lying and killing, and theft, and adultery, have overflowed, and blood hath touched blood”* (Osee IV, 2). *“But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob, neither hast thou laboured about me, O Israel. But thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thy iniquities”* (Isa. XLXII, 22-24).

As in the time of Noe, there are always those who are inclined to belittle God's judgments upon man. This pleasure-seeking world does not like to hear that it deserves punishments. But God-loving souls, who realize the enormity of sin and know that the words of our Lord, “Do penance or you shall all perish,” obtain for our own times as well as for all ages, will continue to implore the mercy of heaven upon this sin-laden earth. Many a time, no doubt, the anger of God is appeased and averted from some city reeking with vice on account of the prayers of pious souls, because ten or twenty just can be found in a convent or monastery who make it a duty to expiate the sins of others.

We all remember the illustration in the Bible History of our school-days, showing the Israelites marking the entrance of their houses with blood, while the exterminating angel with drawn sword is passing overhead. It was a terrible night in Egypt. The Lord was about to send the tenth plague upon Pharaoh and his people by striking

down every first-born of man and beast in the land. But God told Moses He would spare the Israelites on condition that they should take of the blood of the paschal lamb "and put it upon both the side posts and on the upper door posts of the houses, wherein they shall eat it." *"And I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and will kill every firstborn in the land of Egypt both man and beast: and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be unto you for a sign in the houses where you shall be: and I shall see the blood, and shall pass over you: and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I shall strike the land of Egypt"* (Ex. XII, 7-13).

Now if the blood of an animal, as a figure of the Blood of the Lamb of God, had the power to ward off the angel of death from the houses of the children of God, what protection may we not expect from the Blood of Jesus, which is shed for us in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and with which we sprinkle our very lips in holy Communion? Will not this Precious Blood on the door posts of our soul drive away the angel of darkness, and preserve us from spiritual death, from the plague of mortal sin? St. John Chrysostom commenting on this passage of Exodus, says, "If the angel withdrew when he saw the blood of the

type, how much more will the enemy take to flight when he sees the lips of the faithful, who are the temples of God, red with the real Blood of Christ?"

But a special veneration of the Precious Blood will merit for us also a special protection against the punishments of sin, against the terrible judgments with which God from time to time visits this sinful earth. When these divine visitations come, and we do see them come on all sides, those especially shall obtain mercy who foster devotion to the Precious Blood, as the Apostle of the Precious Blood in the nineteenth century, Blessed Gaspar del Bufalo, frequently assured his contemporaries. He himself, time and again, experienced the efficacy of the Precious Blood, in staying the hand of God and appeasing His anger; as, for instance, in the year of his death, 1837, when he is said to have stopped the cholera by his devotions to the Precious Blood. On this occasion he distributed to one priest alone one thousand leaflets to get members for the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood. Twelve years later, Pope Pius IX. was driven from Rome by the French Invaders, and at the time it seemed doubtful if the Sovereign Pontiff ever would be permitted to return to the Eternal City. It was after the Holy Father had promised

to extend the celebration of the feast of the Precious Blood over the entire world that his return to Rome was unexpectedly effected.*

The decree issued by him begins with these words: "We have been redeemed by the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ," and it proceeds to explain that, as the Israelites who sprinkled the door posts of their houses with the blood of the paschal lamb, were spared by the avenging angel, so they can protect themselves with far greater security against the anger of God, who venerate the Precious Blood of Jesus in a special manner. What a powerful invitation from the saintly Pontiff to join the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood.

St. Clare is said to have warded off the Sara-

* Pope Pius IX. was then in exile at Gaeta, where he was approached by the III. General of the Society of the Precious Blood, Don Giovanni Merlini, who told him that if he wanted to regain the States, he should make a vow to extend the glorious feast of our redemption, which hitherto had been celebrated in an especial manner only by the Missionary Fathers of the Precious Blood, over entire Christendom. The Holy Father, before coming to a determination on that point, wanted to give the matter further consideration. After a short time, on June 30, 1849, he had one of his prelates, Mgr. Joseph Stella, write to the General, who was already famed for his sanctity, as follows: "His Holiness has resolved not to make a vow, but to introduce the feast at once for the entire Christian world. When, behold! on the very same day, June 30, 1849, the French gained an entrance through one of the gates of Rome, the Revolutionists capitulated without further resistance and the shedding of blood, and in a short time the friends of the Holy See were in possession of the entire city. That was the day before the first of July, the Sunday, or feast, of the Precious Blood. Pius IX., mindful of this signal favor from heaven, issued a decree on August 10, 1849, declaring that the feast of the Precious Blood should be celebrated everywhere on the first Sunday in July. All this is vouched for by D. Giovanni himself, the process of whose beatification is well under way. The decree of Pius IX. and the writing of Mgr. Joseph Stella are kept in the archives of the Congregation of the Precious Blood Fathers in Rome.

cens from scaling the walls of her convent by having recourse to the Precious Blood in the following prayer: "We beseech Thee, O Lord, help Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy Precious Blood." Through the Prophet Ezechiel God complained that He had sought in vain for one to stand in the gap before Him in favor of the land that He might not destroy it. Our Divine Saviour makes a similar plea for reparation to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque: "My justice is irritated and ready to punish secret sinners by manifest chastisements if they do not penance. I wish to have thee know when My justice will be ready to deal its blows upon those criminal heads. It will be when thou wilt feel the weight of My sanctity upon thee. Thou oughtest then to raise thy heart and hands to heaven by prayers and good works, to present Me continually to My Father as a victim of love immolated for the sins of the world, and place Me as a rampart between the divine justice and sinners in order to obtain My mercy."

The community of saints to which we all belong, creates amongst us a common responsibility in virtue of which both the good and the evil done by one are in a certain sense imputed to the rest. This is why, more than once, entire communities have been saved because they contained just one holy soul, known to God alone, as in the case of

Putiphar, whose house received abundant blessings only for the sake of Joseph. How often, again, has not the whole mystic body of Christ had to suffer cruel persecutions through faults committed only by certain perverse members, but for which all were to a certain degree jointly answerable.

On the other hand, we must be very reserved when there is question of deciding on the punitive character of a divine visitation in the case of individuals, as well as of entire communities, in order not to expose ourselves to the risk of passing unjust and sinful judgments; for it is a consoling fact, that not all God's visitations are necessarily chastisements in the sense of punishments. *"And Jesus passing by, saw a man, who was blind from his birth: And his disciples asked him: Rabbi, who hath sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered: neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him"* (John IX, 1-3). Suffering and persecution have ever been the badge of true Christianity, and the greatest saints were subjected to the greatest trials, to give them an opportunity of becoming more like their Master and of treasuring up for themselves greater merit. A time of severe tribulation is often intended by God as a preparation for extraordinary graces or

favours. "Consider it certain that a person or a Congregation that does not suffer and is applauded by all the world, is near a fall."—*St. V. de Paul*.

How can we better qualify ourselves to fulfill the law of expiatory responsibility than by joining the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood? Its members the world over present themselves in answer to the call of the Lord to appease His wrath, and by their continual oblations of the Precious Blood cause our Saviour to appear with His radiant Five Wounds of mercy forming a magnificent rainbow of promise.

"O to be sprinkled from the wells
Of Christ's own sacred Blood, excels
Earth's best and highest bliss:
The ministers of wrath divine
Hurt not the happy hearts that shine
With those red drops of His!"

While in the Old Dispensation God dealt out to His people speedy and terrible retribution, now unknown and unsuspected temporal calamities are daily driven away like clouds before the wind, by the oblation of the Precious Blood in the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

One day, while in a state of ecstasy, Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, was heard to exclaim: "Every time a creature offers this Blood, by which it was purchased, it offers a gift of infinite value which nobody can replace."

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This practice was revealed to her by God when He complained to her that little effort is made to stay His hand directed against sinners. At another time, this same saint saw all the patrons of her native city, Florence, in company with an innumerable host of other heavenly citizens, before the throne of God pleading for poor sinners, but their petitions were not heard. After these, the guardian angels of the poor sinners interceded for these persons, but even their prayers remained unanswered. The angels were succeeded by the throngs of the happy elect who raised their cries in behalf of their fallen and miserable brethren on earth. But while pleading for mercy, they at the same time offered the Precious Blood for these poor earthly creatures and on account of this sacred Blood they were heard.

“Most Precious Blood of Jesus, our Lord, cry for mercy for us to Thy Divine Father, and deliver us from all evil.”

“Spare, O Lord, spare Thy people whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy Precious Blood.”

“Eternal Father, sign us with the Blood of the Immaculate Lamb, as Thou didst sign the dwellings of Thy people.”

“Being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from wrath through him” (Rom. V, 9).

THE ARCHCONFRATERNITY OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD



IN the church of St. Nicola in Carcere, at Rome, there is a precious relic of the Blood of Christ, the veneration of which rests upon the following tradition. An ancestor of the ancient Savelli family of Rome is said to have been sojourning at Jerusalem for political reasons at the time of the death of our Lord, and that he was present at the crucifixion, as a spectator, when a drop of blood issuing from the body of Jesus, fell upon his garment. At that moment he recognized the divinity of Christ, and carried the garment with the precious treasure to Rome, where it was preserved in the house of the Savelli family until the year 1708, when it was placed in the church of St. Nicholas by the Prison. This relic* is still exhibited to the

* Above the altar where this relic is preserved, may be seen the miraculous crucifix that is said to have spoken to St. Bridget. This church of St. Nicholas, of which mention is made already in the eighth century, is remarkable also for the fact that it was built on the massive substructions of two ancient temples before Christ. The one was called *Pietas*, or Piety, and the other *Spes*, or Hope. The vaults of this structure beneath the surface served as a prison in those days. A prominent clergyman of Rome told the writer of these lines a remarkable story related in connection with this prison. Here the Romans confined an old man with the purpose of starving him to death. No one but his daughter was allowed to visit him, and she was strictly prohibited from carrying any food with her. Much to the surprise of the wards, the man did not succumb to starvation. The daughter had kept her father alive with her own milk. This story suggests the beautiful emblem of the pelican that nourishes its young with its own blood.

faithful for veneration in this church, and was approved in 1905 by the Commission appointed to examine the authenticity of Relics in the churches of Rome during the Apostolic Visitation commanded by Pius X.

Whatever opinion we may hold concerning the genuineness of this relic, it is a fact, that just one hundred years after this church had received this great treasure, the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood was there established, although the coincidence may have been merely accidental.

When God in His goodness and mercy wants to dispense special graces in His Church at some particular time, He usually moves by signs and exterior circumstances souls favored with piety and zeal to carry out His designs. In this manner, the feasts of Corpus Christi and the Precious Blood, as well as the devotions of the Holy Name and the Sacred Heart, originated. It is, however, always the same Jesus, our Lord and God, our Love, Whom we venerate, love and adore, everywhere and at all times. Besides the verbal profession that we are saved by the Blood of Christ, the Church presents that Blood to us today as a special object of veneration, and encourages us in the practice of a peculiar oblation of it to God, knowing that by that which purchased our redemption we can scarcely fail to purchase all we need.

The Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood

Devotion to the Blood of the Redeemer is as old as the Church, and, as prefigured by the bloody sacrifices of the Old Law, as old as the human race. But it developed into a special devotion in the form of confraternities and knight-hood in the sixteenth century. The chronicles of the times mention a confraternity of the Precious Blood at Ravenna, at Rome, and in Spain. A convent of Cistercian Nuns at Paris practiced a particular devotion to the Precious Blood and called themselves Daughters of the Precious Blood. It appears also that this devotion was fostered in a special manner in some Carmelite monasteries. In the year 1608, a spiritual order of knights was established at Mantua to act as a guard of honor over a relic of the Precious Blood preserved in that city.

Since the year 1708, a special devotion to the Precious Blood of Jesus was always practiced in the church of St. Nicholas, as stated above. A pious priest at Rome, Francis Albertini, whom we have mentioned in a previous chapter and who died as Bishop of Terracina in the odor of sanctity 1819, gave a new impetus to this devotion by formulating prayers to be recited in his church of the Tullian Prison in honor of the Precious Blood. Foreseeing, as it were, the many oppressions which the Church would have to endure and wishing to pacify heaven as much as lay in his

power, he had recourse to prayer, fasting, and many mortifications to forestall these evils. It is related of him that while he was engaged in composing the Chaplet and Seven Offerings of the Precious Blood in solitude, he encountered the hardest fights with Satan, who is ever on the alert to frustrate the good about to be accomplished by saintly men.

In the convent of the Paulottine Sisters, where Albertini was a father confessor, there lived at this time a saintly nun, Sister M. Agnes, who was signally favored by Heaven with extraordinary gifts, such as foretelling hidden and future events. One day he happened to meet this saintly nun, when she surprised him with these words: "Oh, what a beautiful gift you are bringing me, Reverend Father!" "What gift?" Albertini asked. "The little Rosary of the Precious Blood which you have with you," she replied, without having received any previous knowledge of the rosary. She added that his Archconfraternity would produce a band of secular priests who would spread the devotion to the Precious Blood. This was seven years before Gaspar del Bufalo founded the Community of the Missionary Fathers of the Precious Blood.

Thus in a short time the devotion to the Precious Blood spread rapidly throughout Italy and in other countries. Everywhere the faithful were

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inflamed with a desire to honor more and more the Blood of Christ.

When he saw how pleasing the devotion to the Precious Blood must be to God, judging from the happy results it quickly produced, D. Albertini established in his church of St. Nicholas a pious union, with the approbation of Pope Pius VII., to foster the devotion of the Precious Blood in a particular manner. This pious union was begun December 8, 1808, and on this occasion Bl. Gaspar del Bufalo preached an enthusiastic sermon. Two years later, both Albertini and del Bufalo were sent into exile by the French invaders, and were dragged, on account of their staunch faith, from one prison to another. The good work, however, which they had auspiciously begun at home, was continued in banishment.

As soon as peace was restored to the Church, Albertini thought of elevating his pious union to the dignity of a confraternity. It was Pope Pius VII., himself a great devotee of the Precious Blood, who had the Confraternity of the Precious Blood canonically erected by the Cardinal-Vicar, February 27, 1809. He enriched it by a Breve of September 22, 1815, with numerous indulgences and honored it by a later Breve of September 26, of the same year, by constituting it an Archconfraternity. Hence, the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood and the Community

of the Missionary Fathers of the Precious Blood were established the same year, 1815. The holy Congregation of Indulgences recalled all the old indulgences and approved of a new list January 19, 1850, which was again ratified July 4, 1878, by Pope Pius IX. By a Breve of July 29, 1851, the General of the Congregation of the Precious Blood at Rome was empowered with all the rights of the Archconfraternity.

The name, "Precious Blood," must have seemed to Cardinal Cristaldi very apt and beautiful, for he writes to Blessed Gaspar del Bufalo, February 28, 1815, as follows: "The wish of the good Canon Albertini is also my wish; namely, that the Congregation of the Missionaries be erected under the title of 'The Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ.' That Blood which blots out sin, that Blood which saves souls, that Blood which gives power to the divine word, to the voice of the preachers, the missionaries, and which renders their labors in the vineyard of the Lord and for the salvation of souls so efficacious." The last words of the saintly bishop, Francis Albertini, were: "Lord, for the sake of Thy Precious Blood let me hear those words which Thou didst speak to the penitent thief, 'This day thou shalt be with me in paradise.'"

Once the Archconfraternity was canonically established at Rome with the power to aggregate

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other confraternities, it begun its triumphal march over the world and everywhere, like a refreshing rain, produced new spiritual life and growth in holiness and inflamed with divine love souls purchased with the Blood of Calvary.

There are now over 900 affiliated confraternities erected canonically in various countries of the globe with millions of members, as is shown from the list of the Archconfraternity at Rome. The Oratory, Brompton Road, England, has alone over 50,000 members enrolled. The Sisters Adorers of the Precious Blood of Canada, with their Motherhouse at St. Hyacinth, have over 225,000. The Fathers of the Precious Blood, with headquarters at Rome, Via Poli No. 1, Italy, and Carthagena, Ohio, U. S. A., count nearly 200,000. This sum does not include the members inscribed in registers kept in secular parishes where the Archconfraternity has been canonically erected. The Sisters of the Precious Blood, Maria Stein, Ohio, have about 10,000 received by their chaplain.*

Not to mention the many indulgences to be gained and other benefits to be derived, the members of the Archconfraternity of the Precious

* Certificates of membership in the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood can be obtained *gratis* by making application in writing to

THE FATHERS OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD,
CARTHAGENA, OHIO.

The full baptismal name (not initials or Mrs. *John* Smith, for instance) must be sent in.

Blood enjoy a privilege that is truly astonishing in its liberality. They have a *special* share in all the good that is done by all the religious orders and communities in the Church, of which there **are about** 150. (Pius IX., September 30, 1852). For the import of this great privilege, see the chapter on "Branches of the Vine." It will be consoling to the members of the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood to remember that even after death, should they have to linger in Purgatory, they are benefitted by all the prayers and works of satisfaction performed by the many hundred thousands of members of the Archconfraternity.

While the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood is one of the richest in the Church, on account of its spiritual benefits, it is one of the easiest to join. No further obligation of any kind is incurred by its members, except that they be enrolled by an authorized priest, and that they venerate the Precious Blood in some manner. There are no special or daily confraternity prayers to be recited in order to be entitled to the benefits. The members are exhorted, however, to recite the "Glory be to the Father" daily seven times, or the "Seven Offerings of the Precious Blood," in honor of the seven principal Bloodsheddings of Jesus. It is the aim of the Archconfraternity to stimulate in the hearts of

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the faithful a special devotion to the Most Precious Blood of Jesus by holding out to them the great treasure of extraordinary graces and privileges which the Church opens to the members with the hope of bringing home to them the power of *sanctification, expiation, protection, and intercession* of this Divine Blood and to increase in them the virtues of faith, hope and charity.

In other words, the end to be obtained is:

1. The Adoration and Glorification of this Divine Blood.

2. Thanksgiving to Jesus for having paid so precious a price for our redemption.

3. Reparation for the insults offered to this Blood in the Passion, and to this day by our coldness and infidelity.

4. Invocation of this redemptive and eucharistic Blood to plead for us that we might obtain pardon and mercy and an increase of love.

5. Oblation of the Precious Blood for the wants of holy Church and for the suffering souls in Purgatory.

When St. John of the Cross was asked what satisfaction could be offered to the Triune God in expiation for the offenses and insults of the children of men, he replied: "I can give nothing else in satisfaction but the Blood and merits of Jesus Christ." In our day of alienation and defection of the masses from God, we children

of the Church should have special recourse to the Blood of Calvary, to the Price of our Redemption, to the Blood of Reconciliation, to the Chalice of Benediction, for "by his bruises we are healed."

There is more than one road leading to a city, and we employ various vehicles as a means of transportation. The army and navy do not consider one mode of defense sufficient to protect the country; various and numerous weapons are at hand for the purpose. One kind of medicine in our drug stores would not meet the requirements of the many ailments of the body; some systems respond to one treatment or remedy more readily than to another? We are not satisfied with one style and color of raiment; we like to gratify our individual tastes in our wearing apparel. We want to place our money in different investments, and insure our lives and property in different companies. We take a lively interest in various social organizations, and take out membership in different clubs and fraternities having more or less the same object in view.

But such as believe in all this are often the very persons to object to the many confraternities in the Church. Are the interests of the Church and the confraternities so highly approved by her head to promote them, of less importance than the fraternal orders that are meeting everywhere with hearty co-operation in their well-

directed activities? Is the inner life of the soul to be neglected, while the outward propagation of the faith is being pushed? The seed must be cast abroad, but the soil must also be fertilized. Money is necessary to accomplish results in church extension, but prayer is no less essential to the spiritual success of the undertaking. Confraternities are a leaven that raises the masses to a higher spiritual life and causes prayer and virtue and charity to flourish. *“Christ died for all; that they also who live, may not now live to themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again”* (II Cor. V, 15).

Our Blessed Redeemer did not content Himself with sweating Blood at Gethsemani, He wanted to shed it seven different times for us in the Circumcision, in the Agony, at the Scourging, at the Crowning with Thorns, on the Way to Calvary, in the Crucifixion, and by the Wound of the Sacred Heart; although we were redeemed, strictly speaking, alone by the Blood of our dying Saviour on the Cross. One drop would have been sufficient for our salvation, but it did not satisfy His love for us. And we should be so ungenerous with our love? Should there be in our day no Knights of the Holy Grail, no Guards of Honor of the Blessed Cup containing the Divine Blood of our Redemption!

We must guard against a spirit of utilitarian-

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ism, so prevalent and pronounced in our country. The material progress of the Church absorbs almost all our interests. We are more concerned about the outward growth of religion than the interior life of the soul. Numbers and surface display often count for more than depth of piety and intensity of fervor. Active and loyal societies, it is true, are the making of a parish and, under proper federation, are a bulwark to the Church in any country. As such they cannot be too warmly recommended or too enthusiastically supported. Public demonstrations as an open profession of faith and as an act of reparation, are laudable signs of religious activity. Systematic co-operation is necessary to accomplish practical results; but organization, although a manifestation of a spiritual awakening, can never fill the inner wants of the spiritual life of the soul, which has struggles of its own for which it needs interior training; it has yearnings that can be satisfied only by supernatural food and communion with God. In our altruism, we must never forget that religion is a tie between God and man, not between man and man, and that this bond of union requires that we love God with our whole heart, and with our whole soul, and with our whole mind, and with our whole strength and that this love of God is expressed by prayer, meditation and the reception of the

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sacraments no less than by practical charity, or social activity.

Our Lord Himself has once for all emphatically spoken for the "better part." St. Teresa says, he who possesses humility and mortification can combat against all hell united together, against the world and all its attractions. A spiritual writer has said, that which saves society is what touches its depths in a fruitful silence. Recently there appeared an article in one of our magazines containing this apt and timely warning: "Our own personal sanctification will always be the measure of our usefulness, and the lowest degree of purity of conscience and progress in pure love will be more acceptable to God than all the zeal for souls or exterior works undertaken for the good of others.

Our holy Mother Church, which Christ purchased with His Blood, has taken the lead in the devotion to the Precious Blood, by establishing two feasts in honor of the Precious Blood; one is observed on the Friday before Passion Sunday, and the other is celebrated on the first Sunday in July. She has set apart an entire month for this devotion in particular. She has erected an Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood and endowed it as one of her favorite institutions. She has approved of the Missionary Fathers of the Precious Blood and beatified their founder. She has

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blessed the many Sisterhoods who have consecrated their lives to the Precious Blood. The Chaplet, the Seven Offerings, the many beautiful prayers so richly indulged by the Church, are so many proofs of love towards her "Spouse of Blood."

"The charity of Christ presseth us" to resolve that the Blood of Our Saviour shall not have been shed in vain. The triumphs of our Eucharistic King in our day must include a devotion to His Sacred Heart and His Precious Blood. The Blessed Sacrament is a memorial of the Passion of Our Lord, a memorial of the Blood of Calvary. The *Bleeding* Heart of Jesus must render fertile the vineyards laid waste by the evils of our times, must inflame our cold hearts with the burning fire of His love. The "*Vox Sanguinis*," as St. Paul calls the throbbings of this Heart of Love, is ever pleading for mercy and with a strong cry, "*clamore valido*," opening the treasures of heaven for us.

The clergy who drink the Blood of the New Testament daily by offering the holy sacrifice of the Mass, should show their gratitude for this chalice of benediction by fostering a special devotion to the Precious Blood, and thereby making it more fruitful in the souls of the faithful. The laity, who are deprived of this privilege but nevertheless receive Christ whole and entire,

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Body and Blood, for where Christ is, there is also His Blood, will find in this devotion an outlet for their holy aspirations. *“Blessed are they that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb: that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city”* (Apoc. XXII, 14).

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