# PROCEEDINGS

## of the

## THIRD PRECIOUS BLOOD

## STUDY WEEK

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## TO THE LAMB

1.

#### WHO THROUGH HIS BLOOD

#### RECONCILED US

#### WITH THE FATHER

#### IN THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

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#### FOREWORD

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The solid beginnings of Christology, found in the utterances of Christ Himself, in the apostolic kerygma, and the faith of the primitive Church, proclaim that Jesus is the Son of the heavenly Father and the Son of Mary the Virgin. Centuries of discussion and error - led to the clear formula of Chalcedon, that Christ is one divine person in two natures, and centuries of theological reflection made plain that the lapidary formula of Chalcedon allowed for rich diversity of interpretation. From the long history of the dogma and its theology it is evident that each age, holding fast to the hard core of revealed truth, must view and accept Christ as its Savior with its own cast of thought, must view it from its own horizon, always adding some new wealth to the great and incomprehensible mystery. Stressed today is the Christ of salvation-history which embraces a vast evolving cosmos. Stressed is the dynamic Christ presence and the Christ action in a tremendous universe which was beyond the wildest dream of the Fathers or the scholastics.

We say that Christ is the center of the universe. We join with theologians of all time in asserting that Christ is the new Head of the whole race of men as its redeemer and sanctifier. But certain theologians of our time defend and proclaim — such is our view a broader and more sweeping Christocentrism which seems more in accord with solid dogmatic principles. We may also add that it gives us a splendid basis for our theology of the Precious Blood. We shall explain.

To our mind much of the Christology of the past made of Christ as *redeemer* part of an alternate plan in the mind of God. It places in the divine mind and will a certain before and after, a priority of divine decree. Say some, there was indeed to have been an incarnation in a sinless world. Only because God foresaw the sin did He decree the Christ of suffering and death. Or, say others, there was to be a sinless creation without incarnation. Only because God foresaw the sin did He decree the redemption through the suffering and death of His Son. This latter doctrine is graphically illustrated by the distinction which is still made in our text books (by many so-called Thomists) between the gratia Dei and the gratia Christi. Before the fall there was no grace of Christ because His merits did not extend to the state of original justice, nor essentially to the angels. There seems to be confusion in the very concepts involved; a world without sin is purely hypothetical, it is in no way this actual world. Moreover, we think Malmberg is entirely correct in denying any priority of decree in the divine mind, it has no before or after. Nor can any created cause have effect in the infinite simplicity of God.

Rather, by one infinite will-act God decreed this world with its sin — which is permitted for God never wills sin — and its redeemer. Christ is Head of the whole universe and all grace is *gratia Christi*. The center of the universe from its very conception in the divine mind and in its total existence is Christ the redeemer, with his Cross and its Blood. Through an eternal covenant — sealed in the Blood of His Son — God redeemed and sanctified the creature He had made to His own likeness. God could indeed have created a totally sinless world, a world of men and angels, but we know nothing about it.

Elsewhere this writer has attempted to explain this everlasting covenant in the Blood of Christ. All Precious Blood theologians are agreed that blood as used in the biblical sources is not to be taken narrowly, but that it stands for the shedding of the Blood. Above all does it stand for the sacrificial work of Christ through the bloody passion and death. Particularly the devotion to the Precious Blood must include the total work of Christ on earth (as death is the summation of all man's life), the mystical shedding of blood as center of the worshipping Church here on earth, and also the consummation in an eternal priesthood, for the priesthood of Christ

#### FOREWORD

centers in the shedding of blood in sacrifice. The one shedding on Calvary has an eternal consummation. May these Proceeding papers enrich our knowledge!

A deep debt of gratitude is owing the many co-workers who are responsible for the Third Precious Blood Study Week and the publication of these Proceedings. We ask God to bless all who share our labors. The list of names in our *Acknowledgements* is faint recognition for so noble a work.

> Precious Blood Institute Edwin G. Kaiser, C.PP.S., *Chairman* Raymond Cera, C.PP.S. Edward Joyce, C.PP.S. Joseph Lazur, C.PP.S. Alphonse Spilly, C.PP.S.

On the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy. May 24, 1969

#### WELCOME ADDRESSES

I shall address you as members of our own family of Christ, sons and daughters of Gaspar, daughters and sons of Blessed Mother Mattias, Mother Catherine and Mother Brunner. You are our welcome guests to the Third Precious Blood Study Week, guests who share with us the Chalice of Salvation, guests from many regions in which the societies of the Precious Blood flourish, sprinkled with the Blood of the Lamb of God.

We welcome by name Father Eric Kräutler and Father Emil Schuwey who bear us greetings from Father General and all the Precious Blood provinces of Europe. They bring us remembrances of people and places sacred to us, most of all of the tomb of Gaspar our Founder.

We welcome no less the Mother Superiors and Sisters of the Precious Blood who came to share our theological and pastoral concern in this Study Week.

If I may strike a note of cooperation and helpful suggestion for this assembly, it is that we look again to the noble models of our devotion: what so many have done quietly and without clamor, our Brothers and Sisters, our priests and students. They proclaim with lofty voices to all the world, as with a thousand tongues the praises of the Precious Blood.

Surely among these is Gaspar with his dedication unto death. He it is who with his great mission cross and his Madonna of the Chalice pointed to the firm bond between Mary and the Precious Blood. We add the name of Mother Mattias and Mother Catherine, noted for that sweet serenity in contemplation which is necessary in the pursuits of works of zeal. And Father Brunner with his restless obliviousness of consequences, whose mother gave him to us, as she herself gathered her flock of Precious Blood Sisters. These I place before you today together with all lovers of the Precious Blood from the days of Paul to our own times.

May God bless this work which is so evidently His own.

JOHN E. BYRNE, C.PP.S. Provincial of the Cincinnati Province

## ADDRESS READ TO THE ASSEMBLY BY THE VERY REVEREND ERICH KRAEUTLER VICE MODERATOR GENERAL, C.PP.S.

For months our Moderator General, Father Herbert Linenberger, had planned to attend this Third Precious Blood Study Week. He told me: "It will be better than a retreat. It has life, it motivates, and the resolves will take on a practical turn. In the new theological climate that prevails, surprises will surface that are bound to command respect."

Regretfully, his recent appointment to the Superior Generals' Commission for the revision of the Code of Canon Law For Religious, and the delays incidental to the preparation for the interprovincial commission meetings scheduled for St. Charles Seminary, July 2nd, forced him to remain in Rome a few weeks longer. He asked that I read this message to you.

Since July 8, 1959, when Pope John XXIII, in a papal audience attended by the Capitulars of the VIIIth General Chapter of the Society of the Precious Blood, publicly announced that from his youth he had a particular devotion to the Precious Blood, the Study Weeks held here at Collegeville have looked to him and his successor for encouragement. Pope Paul VI has sent his special Apostolic Blessing to Father Edwin Kaiser, director, and to all who attend the discourses. Father Erich Kräutler, Vice Moderator General, will bring my personal greetings and good wishes to you.

As you assemble for your first session I shall elevate the chalice at the altar of our Founder and Father, Saint Gaspar del Bufalo, petitioning him and Blessed Maria di Mattias to let their ". . . double spirit . . ." diffuse itself in you as you pursue your work in this and ensuing sessions. Their greatest legacy to us was their total dedication expressed in devotion to the Precious Blood. The deep meaning of our devotion lies in its reflection of the love of Jesus who gave Himself for us in obedient love for His Father. It was a love unto His death on the Cross. In this our Founder is the constant example of complete dedication.

On this occasion our devotion is also turned to the deep and rich theology of redemption through the Blood of Christ. Here perhaps we can suggest the exalted pattern for our exercises of the devotion in its study: the Venerable John Merlini, third Moderator General of our Society. In him we find the studious tranquility so necessary for reflective insights into the theology of the devotion.

This Third Study Week should set its sights high. It should be measured by the creative dynamism of current theology as exemplified in its truly great and orthodox theologians. We have a right to hope that it will contribute to what is a golden age of theology in Christology and Ecclesiology.

If our devotion should reflect Saint Gaspar's zeal, and its study the calm reflectiveness of Merlini, it should also be stamped with the pastoral spirit of John XXIII, whom we have affectionately called "The Pope of the Precious Blood." His splendid Apostolic Letter, *Inde a Primis*, is matched by the noble dogmatic Litany of the Precious Blood which he approved and the constant encouragement he gave to all who practiced our devotion. Pope John XXIII made our Second Study Week a command performance.

May Saint Gaspar, Blessed Maria di Mattias, Venerable Merlini and the revered John XXIII beg God's blessing upon this ambitious Third Precious Blood Study Week.

Rome, Italy, June 8, 1968.

#### HERBERT LINENBERGER MODERATOR GENERAL, C.PP.S.

# THE PRECIOUS BLOOD IN ITS THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

The sacred words of the consecration of the Eucharistic cup provide the key to our Precious Blood devotion and its theology. They deal with the mystery of man's redemption through the Blood of the everlasting covenant established between God and sinful man. Basically involved in this covenant are three profound mysteries: a) the divine Trinity itself, which is God's own intimate life; b) the incarnation-redemption by which God communicates Himself finally and ultimate-ly to creatures; c) the Christ-life of grace, which is man's sharing in the intimate life of the Trinity, given through the Spirit of Jesus in His Church. In broad outline the theology and devotion are concerned with the entire work of man's redemption, studied in the revealed light of the covenant in the Blood of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

In explaining our doctrine we lean heavily on current biblical and systematic theology which explain the

key concepts of the devotion and its theological foundation. These may be summed up as a study of *redemption in the divine plan*, which is concerned with three essential elements: first, the motive of the incarnation; second, Christo-centrism; third, the *covenant in blood*.

In the explanation and development of these concepts in our total doctrine of redemption we focus attention on the three great stages of God's redemptive work: first, the *earthly reality* in which God's covenant is proclaimed and carried out to its consummation on Calvary; second, the *mystical efficacy* in which the Christ-life is communicated to men in the covenanted sacramental-sacrificial Church; third, the *heavenly fulfillment* in an eternal priesthood. Through theological reflection on these stages of the redemptive work of Christ we develop the theology of the Precious Blood as the basis for the devotion and also point out its kerygmatic significance.

#### THE MOTIVE OF INCARNATION

In the light of all the ancient creeds by which we profess that the second person of the Trinity, the divine Word or Logos, became man, suffered and died for us sinners, theologians discuss what is usually, though not too aptly, called the *motive of incarnation*. Without exception they hold as evident from Scripture and tradition that — at least in this present state of mankind — the motive of incarnation is the redemption of mankind.

But theological reflection goes much further and deeper. It takes up the whole divine plan of grace for men and angels. In this study some theologians speak of a priority in the divine decree. They distinguish between what was prior in the divine mind, and what was subsequent. Thus, some writers maintain that first in the divine mind was the creation of a sinless world. Among these writers are men like Scotus who insist that in such a sinless world there would have been an incarnation without suffering, pain, and death of the God-man. Other writers are equally insistent that in this sinless world there would have been neither redemption nor incarnation. Among these latter we usually place Thomas Aquinas. In view of God's foreknowledge of man's melancholy fall, however, all these authors maintain that God actually decreed the present order

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of incarnation directed toward the redemption of man through suffering and death.

A further distinction on the basis of this priority of the divine decree is frequently made by many theologians called Thomists. These say that the graces given to man before his fall and all the graces given to God's angels are not strictly owing to the merit of Christ. They are rather called grace of God (gratia Dei), not grace of Christ (gratia Christi). This latter is the grace given to mankind after the fall.<sup>2</sup>

Though Thomas repeats the ancient dispute, he plainly says that it has little value: non habet magnam auctoritatem. He likewise holds that there can be no before or after in the divine decrees. These are rather in the created effects of God's will. Nor can any finite causality have influence or effect on God. In consequence, the noted Christologist, Felix Malmberg, brushes the old arguments aside very abruptly. He holds, and we think with excellent theological reasoning, that God - without any priority of before or after - by one supreme act of will decreed this universe of ours. It was not as though God looked before and, foreseeing the sin of man, decreed the redemption of the fallen, following a course different from that which He would have followed had there been no sin. He decreed to permit, not will, the sin, in a world to which the Son would be sent as its redeemer. In this explanation the motive of incarnation-redemption is the motive of creation itself. Thus the doctrine of the motive of incarnation enters into the heart of Christology, focusing attention as theology has never done before on Christ the Redeemer, center of the universe.<sup>3</sup>

#### CHRISTOCENTRISM

In the divine plan the God-man was to be the center of the universe of angels and men. All created being was to converge in him. The Cross with its bloody sacrifice was not an afterthought, not part of a second plan, but center of the one tremendous design. As the Father created the universe through the Son and in His Holy Spirit, so too He sent His Son to redeem it from sin in and through the same Spirit. In one grand design the mystery of Trinity is involved as is the mystery of incarnation and grace. The triune God is in the very heart of this great universe of men and angels.

All this is summed up in the Christocentric texts of Paul, of which we quote but one:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. For in him were created all things. All things have been created through and unto him, and he is before all creatures, and in him all things hold together . . . For it has pleased God the Father that in him all his fullness should dwell, and that through him he should reconcile to himself all things, whether on the earth or in the heavens, making peace through the blood of his cross (Col 1, 15ff).<sup>4</sup>

Basing his doctrine on the biblical evidence, the German dogmatician, Michael Schmaus, presents the doctrine of Christ's centrality very sharply:

That we exist at all has its basis in Christ. For we are to exist only as those who are called to salvation and sanctification in Christ. He it is from whom and unto whom all things exist.

This theologian also holds that "all creation is . . . Christologically conceived and built up." Jesus Christ is "the frame of reference toward which all things converge."<sup>5</sup>

Christocentrism, as we explain it, implies that all grace is grace of Christ, thus eliminating the old distinction between the *gratia Dei* and *gratia Christi*. Accordingly, the first graces given to man before the fall and all the grace granted the heavenly hosts of angels were given because of the God-man and the covenant in His Blood. The restoration of grace to fallen man was in the same order of grace of Christ. Again it is evident that Christ and the redemptive work is in the primary decree of God. It is not merely to adjust or repair what was originally a different work. In the striking words of Rahner:

Man only rightly understands his nature when he perceives that it is open to a divine ordering which transcends it, and that in such a way that this ordering is not something adventitious, a mere "accidental" modification of a nature already constituted, but is the one thing necessary for man, the bedrock of his salvation. If, therefore, ordination to the immediate possession of God is part of man's original constitution and remains after Adam's fall, then God must have ordained it with a view to the God-man, and it must be the grace of Jesus

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#### THE PRECIOUS BLOOD IN ITS THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Christ. For otherwise He who is the mediator and source of our grace would only be the restorer, and so the servant of an order that was conceived independently of Him. He would give us His grace, not to set up His own order but to re-establish the more original and comprehensive order of Adam. The order of Adam must already have been the order of Christ, which the Crucified restored as His own.<sup>6</sup>

Recent studies in theology now view divine revelation and God's intervention in salvation-history in a far broader perspective than in past decades. Particularly in view of the insights of Schell, Chardin and Mynarek, we now study the "Christian image of man" (*Chrisliches Menschenbild*) in the "framework of a dynamic-evolutionary cosmos."<sup>7</sup> We seek to build up a theological anthropology which is Christological: the whole course of nature centers in and culminates in man. And the entire race and each man is turned toward the Christ who was to come, and who has come. Man is not only that which God has created, but also that which He has become in the incarnation. In the striking words of Karl Rahner:

Christology, whether regarded from the divine point of view or the human, appears as the most radical and perfect recapitulation of theological anthropology.<sup>8</sup>

Though we refer here to recent studies, these current thoughts are in perfect harmony with the thought of St. Jerome:

Every dispensation, which had its beginning before the world as well as afterward in the world, whether of visible or invisible creatures, premissed the coming of the Son of God.<sup>9</sup>

Maximus the Confessor (died 662) says that because of Christ

all things were created. Looking to this end God produced the nature of things. He (Christ) indeed is the goal of Providence and of those things which are governed by Providence. According to Providence those things which were produced by God are gathered together in Him. This mystery transcends all the ages of time. And transcendently infinite and infinitely infinite, He persists beyond the ages of time, manifesting the great counsel of God (Eph 1, 10) whom He, the Word of God by essence, announced becoming man (Is 9,6) and Himself (if it is right thus to speak) manifesting the innermost depths

of the eternal goodness. And thus He revealed the end for which indeed the things which were made received their principle of being. For on account of Christ or the mystery of Christ all ages come into being, all the ages and those things which are the beginning and end of their being, come into being in Christ. For before the ages the Union was conceived: it was the end (of creation).<sup>10</sup>

We conclude that Jesus is, indeed,

the absolutely real presence of God in the world, that the work He has done as man is really the redemption of the world . . . the very incarnation of the divine Logos is God's supreme, historical, irrevocable self-communication to the world.<sup>11</sup>

This self-communication relates the intimate life of the Trinity to the work of incarnation-redemption. As the Father sends the Son, so Son and Father send the Holy Spirit whose coming is as significant as the incarnation itself. This is particularly evident in the Church, the mystical center of the Christ-presence and the Christ-action, which we shall take up later. Here we must refer to the grandeur of the redemptive incarnation in a biblical note.

#### A BIBLICAL NOTE

Saint Paul focuses attention on the utter contrast between God's omnipotence and man's frailty. The divine mercy condescends to human misery. Indeed by a tremendous paradox the power and wisdom of redemptive love is manifested in the weakness and folly of the cross. We, in turn, experience God most profoundly when He stoops to our lowliness. Paul's gospel is the gospel of the cross:

For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ be made void. For the doctrine of the cross is foolishness to those who perish, but to those who are saved, that is, to us, it is the power of God. For it is written,

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the prudence of the prudent I will reject.

... the Jews ask for signs, and the Greeks look for "wisdom"; but we, for our part, preach a crucified Christ — to the Jews indeed a stumbling block and to the Gentiles foolishness, but

to those who 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 (1 Cor 1, 17ff).

#### THE COVENANT IN BLOOD

#### THE EARTHLY REALITY

So basic is the concept and so frequent the reference to it in the Old Testament (286 times) that covenant must be considered an essential part of salvation-history. The entire history of mankind and "especially that of the Chosen People" is the "working out of a plan of salvation" through a "series of covenants" carried out by God and demonstrating "His constant grace and protection."<sup>12</sup> The Chosen People were the *People of the Holy Covenant* which constituted them and made them God's own. In this divine intervention the covenants with Noe and Abraham prepare the way for the great Sinaitic covenant which made the Israelitic tribes God's people. Related with it are the giving of the ten commandments, the enactment of extensive social legislation, and of course the great theophany (Ex 19-24).

Most significant for our theme is God's own establishment of the sacred blood rites as sacrificial seal of an everlasting covenant, a profound latreutic act completed by the sacred meal. Thus is established the sacred order and covenanted law for God's people. Clearly covenant and covenant blood lie at the very heart of salvation-history.

a) The New Covenant in the Blood of Christ

The New Testament is essentially the covenant fulfillment of the divine promises to the Chosen People.

The essential message of the New Testament regarding the divine covenant is this: In Christ God concluded the new pact of grace with mankind which was promised by the prophets. This covenant . . . fulfills positively and perfectly the salvific promises given in the Old Testament covenants . . . The New Testament is expressly proclaimed in the Last Supper accounts, and systematically explained in its relation to the Old Testament covenants in Paul and in the letter to Hebrews.<sup>13</sup>

The proclamation of the covenant in Christ's Blood is found in two sets of parallel passages — Matthew and Mark.

All of you drink of this; for this is my blood of the new covenant which is being shed for many unto the forgiveness of sins (Mt 26, 27f).

And taking a cup and 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 covenant, which is being shed for many' (Mk 14, 23f).

And Luke and Paul:

In like manner he took also the cup after the supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which shall be shed for you' (Lk 22, 20).

This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me (1 Cor 11, 25).

Note the resemblance (especially in the first set of parallels) to Exodus.

Then he took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, saying, This is the *blood of the covenant* which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words of his (Ex 24, 8).

The Blood in the cup fulfills the ancient promise of a new covenant (Jer 31, 31ff). Going beyond the words of the prophet, the Eucharistic formula indicates how the new order is to be established — through the sacrificial death of Jesus. The covenant established at the Last Supper is linked with Calvary and the death of Jesus for sinners. The Blood of Christ completed and perfected the ancient Sinaitic order with the new covenant of unbounded mercy.<sup>14</sup>

The grandeur of the new covenant is proclaimed by Paul, its Apostle, and by the author of Hebrews, who offers the most splendid commentary on its liturgy. Its superiority is evident from the contrast between the Law and Christian freedom, underlined by Paul. With its harshness the Law prepared us for justification which comes by faith in Christ. By this faith all men inherit the promises made to Abraham who himself was justified by faith. The promises made to Abraham and his offspring, Christ, are not annulled by

the Mosaic Law or covenant: such is the theme of Galatians 3, 15-29 and 4, 21-31.

Through the cross and the Blood of Christ the new covenant has abolished the Law, given peace to Jew and Gentile with access to the Father. If the Sinaitic covenant as Law worked to the condemnation of Israel, the new covenant in the Blood of Jesus fulfilled the promise of salvation for all mankind. The thought of Paul in Ephesians is magnificent:

You were at that time without Christ, excluded as aliens from the community of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the promise . . . But now in Christ Jesus you, who were once afar off, have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, he it is who has made both one, and has broken down the intervening wall of the enclosers, the enmity, in his flesh. The Law of the commandments expressed in decrees he has made void, that of the two he might create in himself the one new man, and make peace and reconcile both in one body to God by the cross, having slain the enmity in himself. And coming, he announced the good tidings of peace to you who were afar off, and of peace to those who were near, because through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father (Eph 2, 12ff).

#### b) The Letter to Hebrews

This letter is the revealed *conclusion* of our basic covenant doctrine. As *epistle of the covenant* it lays the foundation for the theology of Christ, mediator or redeemer. Its central theme, the superiority of the new covenant over the old, reflects the grand prophetic text of Jeremia on the new covenant with its law written in the heart (31, 31ff).

Essentially liturgical, the letter to the Hebrews contrasts the Sinaitic cult, priesthood, and sacrifice with that of the new covenant and the priesthood of Christ. Christ the priest offers the sacrifice in His own Blood. This priestly self-oblation assures us that the new covenant is vastly superior to that of Moses, as his priesthood is superior to that of Aaron.

The point is driven home by the allegory from Genesis: Christ is of the order of Melchisedech to whom the Old Testament priesthood (in its ancestor Abraham) paid tithes. Christ's priesthood, confirmed by God's own oath, is everlasting (Heb 7, 21ff). By contrast with the old covenant which was but "a shadow of the good things to come" (10, 1), imperfect and earthly (8, 6ff), obsolete and grown old (8,13), the new covenant is based on better promises (8, 6), is perfect and flawless (8, 7ff), and will continue forever (10, 14). The new covenant has come precisely because the old was imperfect (8, 7). We now have a more perfect ministry through the mediator of a superior covenant.

Incomparably greater is the spiritual efficacy of the new covenant, which really removes sin, even the sin of the Old Testament forever (10, 11ff). Whereas the former merely explated external sins by imparting legal sanctity (9, 9f), in the new we are truly sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ" (10, 10).

We are free to enter the Holies in virtue of the blood of Christ, a new and living way which he inaugurated for us through the veil (that is, his flesh) (Heb 10, 19f).

In the new covenant we come to the eternal inheritance through the death of Christ.

Only Jesus through His high priestly sacrifice wiped away the sins committed in the Old Testament (9, 11-15). In this passage the author uses the term *diatheke* in the profane sense of *testament*, insofar as he asserts that the dying of Jesus is the death which validates the testament (9, 16f). But in 18ff he reverts to the biblical use of the word which he adheres to elsewhere. . . As the first *diatheke* was not validated without the shedding of blood, because there is no forgiveness of sin without shedding of blood, so also the new *diatheke* was validated through the Blood of Jesus (9, 18ff). The Blood of Jesus is also covenant blood, the blood of the eternal covenant (13, 20).<sup>15</sup>

The new covenant in Christ, as end and fulfillment of the old divine covenant, is essentially God's work of grace and pardon. The Old Testament is now fulfilled in this New Testament covenant in Christ's Bood, through which God grants pardon and grace not merely to Jews, but to all mankind.

#### MEDIATION THROUGH JESUS' BLOOD

Thomas Aquinas sums up the redemptive work of Jesus in a few bold lines. Jesus wrought our salvation by means of merit, satisfaction, sacrifice, liberation, and efficiency. Here we can do little more than touch on these five modes of redemption.<sup>16</sup>

#### THE MERIT

By all His acts Christ — the mediator, the new Adam, head of our race — merited for us. All graces, all supernatural gifts and favors are the fruit of this merit. Their value is infinite, because He is the divine person whose human acts they are. According to Catholic doctrine this merit is attributed especially to the passion and death which are the primary redemptive work and the summation of the total life of Jesus our mediator.

#### THE SATISFACTION

All the suffering of Jesus throughout His life, and most of all His passion and bloody death, wrought our redemption through *satisfaction*. Thus Jesus atoned for our offenses, offered the heavenly Father reparation of infinite moral value which far more than counterbalanced the injustice done the infinite majesty of God.

#### THE SACRIFICE

The Church has always held as an essential element of the apostolic preaching that Christ offered a true sacrifice for mankind on Calvary. As eternal high priest of the new covenant He offered the most acceptable oblation, Himself. Thereby He fulfilled the Old Testament types, garnered all the fruits of sacrifice, bridged the infinite chasm between fallen man and God. In rendering infinite honor to God, as supreme priest representing all mankind, He reconciled sinners to God and restored the ancient order of love between man and God.

#### THE LIBERATION

As the Jewish tribes were freed from Egyptian slavery, so mankind was snatched from the slavery of sin and Satan through Christ. Sin is a sinister force which dominates fallen man, enslaves him and alienates him from God. Satan as the prince of this world (Jn 12, 31) has chained man (Lk 13, 16) and subjected him to his evil power (Acts 10, 38). Man thus fallen from grace, enslaved, is delivered from his vile condition by the restoration of

the grace of God. The Scriptures speak of a *price* paid for this liberation (1 Cor 6, 20). The price was the life of the God-man in and through the shedding of His Blood. We are now a purchased people, God's own acquisition (cf. 1 Pt 2, 9; Eph 1, 14; cf. also Ex 19, 5ff).

#### REDEMPTIVE EFFICIENCY

Under this heading we place the total work of redemption which is God's work through His incarnate Son. With the whole course of salvation-history as our background, we focus attention especially on all the redemptive acts of Jesus — His whole life, His passion and death, His resurrection-ascension — as the means through which the Godhead wrought our salvation. Here especially we have in mind the *objective redemption*, which continues in the Mystical Body of Christ and even throughout eternity in the heavenly glory, and the *subjective redemption*, which is the grace-effect of Christ's redemptive action in the redeemed. According to Cerfaux, we have here "an intervention of God in the world of men, a drama of which God is the author and in which Christ is the central figure."<sup>17</sup> Obviously, the redemptive efficiency centers in the bloody sacrifice of Calvary and includes all the redemptive merit, satisfaction, and liberation.

Accordingly, rather than separate these five modes of redemptive action, we view them largely as diverse aspects of what is basically one grand work wrought by God through Christ in His covenanted Blood.

#### THE COVENANT IN BLOOD

#### THE MYSTICAL EFFICACY

All that Christ wrought for the redemption of mankind is in the Church He founded. She is the continuation of the redemptive work *in sign*. All the great realities which are essential to the founding of the Church — the Last Supper, the sacrifice of Calvary, the Pentecostal confirmation of the apostolic mission these are all covenant events which form the people of God. Thus is the Church founded as the New Israel in and through an eternal covenant.

At the Last Supper the Twelve are united most intimately with their Master. Though marked for death, He does not forsake His own, but remains bound to them in the fellowship of the banquet in which they partake of the Body to be offered for them and drink the Blood to be shed for them. Later Paul was to explain how this bread, which is one, was to make of the many who partake of it "one body" (1 Cor 10, 17). And both Paul and Luke repeat, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (Lk 22, 20; 1 Cor 11, 25). The ancient prophecy is now fulfilled (Jer 31, 31).

The Last Supper in which Christ gave Himself to His apostles and thereby to the Church is sacramental anticipation of the submission on Calvary; here the seal is placed on the everlasting covenant. The Church therefore is the New Testament People of God, established in the Blood of the Covenant.

The Christ-action in the Church is effective because of His vital contact through presence, in the word, in the assembly, in the sacrament, and above all in the unifying, substantial Eucharistic presence. Thus constituted by sacrificial-sacramental sign and guided by His Holy Spirit the Church celebrates the passion and death of her *Kyrios* until He comes. She is always, in the noblest sense, the Pentecostal Church for the descent of the Holy Spirit in salvation-history is as important as the incarnation itself.<sup>18</sup>

#### THE HEAVENLY FULFILLMENT

The completion of the work of redemption centers in Christ, the priest, in His heavenly glory surrounded by the angels and saints. The Christ of glory, who guides the Church by an unseen hand, continues His priestly office in His everlasting priesthood: this is the final consummation of the whole redemptive mystery, in the eternal glorification of the blessed humanity.

This celestial priesthood — without real death, agony, or pain — consists, we think, in the perpetuation of the offering of Calvary. Christ perpetuates the offering of Himself as victim without the actual shedding of His Blood. But the sacrificial will and disposition with which He was immolated on the cross remain and make the sacrifice eternal. The epistle to Hebrews clearly indicates the reality of the celestial sacrifice as required by the nature of the priesthood of Christ, which is without end. The victim once immolated remains forever the victim, together with the sacrificial will of Christ the priest.

Particularly illuminating is the stress which Christian piety in all ages has placed on the sacred wounds. The inspired resurrection account and the Fathers make a special point of it. And yet nothing seems so futile and contradictory in a glorified body as the physical marks of suffering, unless they are to serve as eternal memorial of the shedding of blood, a memorial in the very victim of sacrifice. They must be the eternal sign of the Blood once shed, and they must be accompanied by an interior reality eternally present in the victim. Here we have far more than mere memory of the past; we have external sign of interior will and supplication.

The incarnate Word continues for man in the glory of eternity the sole way to approach the Father. He is eternally the revealer of the Father; it is through Christ as man, risen from the dead, that the mystery of the divine life is communicated, the very mystery of the Trinity in itself. The love-act of the Father giving us to the Son and giving Himself to us in His Son abides eternally. The Father reveals Himself and communicates Himself to us eternally in His Word. Through this supreme act of paternal love man finally encounters the divine paternity in itself. The vision of God is not solely the intuition of the infinite divine being, but as well the immediate perception of divine love. In this way the incarnation of the Word appears in the fulness of its meaning and salvific value. In Christ there is eternally realized the divine approach to man (God who reveals Himself communicates His inmost mystery) and the approach of man to the mystery life of God (beatific vision). In the undivided now of eternity in glory Christ is for men the supreme divine self-communication through which they come to the Trinity.<sup>19</sup>

#### THE THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

By its inmost nature and function Precious Blood theology derives from our penetration into the revealed word on the redemptive Blood of Jesus. It involves exposition of the rich and profound biblical-traditional redemptive thought, systematically formulated for the Christian life. Central is the grand concept of God's plan of creation-incarnation-redemption through the God-man, Jesus Christ, in three great stages of the universal mediation through the covenant in Blood. These we have called the *earthly reality* cul-

#### THE PRECIOUS BLOOD IN ITS THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

minating in the death of Calvary, the mystical efficacy in the Church, the heavenly fulfillment in the eternal priesthood. Important throughout are the key concepts, such as covenant, blood, mediation, priesthood, sacrifice, sacrament, grace, sin and pardon. Important also are the explanations of the nature of Christ's Church, the Christ-action and Christ-presence in the Church, and the relation of these to the redeemed People of God.

Precious Blood theology must lay the foundations, set the goals and bounds of the devotion, and establish the guidelines for the kerygma and exercise. It must justify its claim to special insights which enrich the whole of the divine science. In a sense it must offer a special synthesis in its theory and special spiritual value in its pastoral application.

The Precious Blood theology singles out the Blood of Jesus for its special emphasis in the infinitely adorable Sacred Humanity. This we adore and offer not as a reality divorced from Jesus, but as the most perfect manifestation of the supreme redemptive work. We might call the Blood the material or immediate object of adoration and oblation, and its shedding the formal object. But it is the Blood shed, the Blood in the redemptive work, the Blood of the God-man. In a true sense the Blood refers to the person of Jesus and His redemptive acts.

In our devotion the redemptive reality and value of Jesus' Blood awaken spiritual response in prayer and worship, in meditation and contemplation, in intensification of the loving acceptance of the Kyrios crucified and risen, the eternal priest. It also creates the powerful kerygma reflecting the preaching of Saint Paul with his deep love for Jesus crucified. The devotion has its great models for our imitation: Mary the Virgin Mother, Paul the Apostle, Gaspar the Missionary.

#### The Precious Blood Prayer

As the Precious Blood theology casts a new and penetrating light on theology as a whole, so the devotion affects the whole spiritual life in prayer and worship. It too must be Christ-centered. In his sincere practice of the devotion to the Precious Blood, the Christian is drawn to the Redeemer on the cross, whose death is

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our life, whose resurrection is our pledge of future glory. He unites himself intimately with Christ, priest and victim on Calvary and at the Last Supper. He makes his own the prayer-action of Christ and His Church. Mystically he is co-priest and co-victim in the sacrifice in which the Blood is shed in sign for the sins of men. And as he participates in the public prayer and worship of the Church, filled with the mystery of Jesus and the mystery presence in her sacraments, he looks with hope to the Second Coming. In the entire liturgy the Redeemer who sheds His Blood is the *object* of loving sacrificial adoration, and the *subject* who adores with Mary and all her children.

The Christian's *private* prayer is marked by the submission and obedience of Jesus in the agony of the garden and on the cross. With a true sense of covenant with God in Christ, particularly, in the recitation of such prayers as the *Seven Offerings* with all the motives of Christ's own prayer and that of His Church, the Christian's prayer will deepen his meditation, and his meditation will add to the fervor of his prayer.

The prayers of the Precious Blood communities should be recited in the spirit of the community and should be treasured by all the members. The progress in Precious Blood theology should increasingly influence the prayer forms. In the future we may stress the theme of Christ's priesthood, the intimate union with the glorified Lord in all areas of human life, with the earthly life of the Lord as ideal and source of wondrously varying graces.

#### A PATTERN OF MEDITATION ON THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

The fundamental method and approach to meditation for one devoted to the Blood of the Savior is Christocentric: the themes are pondered in relation to the life and death of Jesus. Even the most profound doctrine of Trinity (the *theologia*, to use an ancient term revived in our time) is mirrored in the incarnate Son and His Spirit (the *economia*); as the perfect image and revealer of the Father, He came forth from Him, and so returns to Him. As He came forth from God bringing the God-life to man, His humandivine life blesses all human activity with grace and mercy. In meditation — as in prayer — we link all the stages of Jesus' life to our own. We bear in mind the teaching of Thomas that

all that Jesus did and suffered is efficacious for our salvation. Christ's infancy sanctifies all infancy, His childhood all children, His manhood all men. His work blesses our work, His joy our joy, His tears our sorrow, His play and rest our play and relaxation, and finally His agony and death the agony of our dying.

This union with Christ rests not only on the redemptive efficacy but also on His Headship in His Church. We are indeed His members. God's whole plan is simply to unite everything in Christ, the head and source of all creation (Eph 1, 3-10). The hymn in the letter to Colossians simply states that everything is created through Christ and toward Christ. The whole constitution of the supernatural order takes place concretely in the creation of men in direction toward the *fullness* of Christ (Col. 1, 15-20). The gift of God's own life, which is the central reality of *grace*, is given to man in Christ Jesus. In a real, though mystical, way He is the whole of mankind. All our meditation on Christ must be based on this mystical identity.

This solidarity with Christ, which is the profound object of our meditation, must penetrate not only our prayer life, but the whole of our external activity. In some measure men have been conscious of this solidarity in all Christian culture. The inspiration of high drama, literature, music and art is a profound response in faith to the deep consciousness of the truth and beauty of Him who is the way, the truth and the life.

#### THE DYING CHRIST

As the pain and agony and death of Jesus are His supreme witness of loving submission to His heavenly Father, so too every Christian death bears final, ultimate witness to faith in Christ's redemptive passion and death. Death seals the Christian's faith, and his eternal destiny. Uniquely, the Christian martyr is identified with Christ in his death for Christ.

It was Saint Teresa who said that in mental prayer fervor is best aroused by concentration on some point of the life of Jesus. Surely, then, the meditation that is central to our whole life must be the life of Jesus, whose most central point is His passion and death, viewed in the glory of resurrection.

#### THE KERYGMA AND THE VIRTUES

The preacher who proclaims the Precious Blood devotion begins with the one source of the revealed Word: Jesus Christ, the Word incarnate who is the whole of revelation: tota revelatio Christus est. The preacher focuses attention on the passion and death with its climax in the glory of resurrection. The death of Christ is the sacrament of the whole world: mors Christi, sacramentum mundi.

The Christ who died and rose again — the whole Christ — was communicated in the apostolic kerygma. This is the most obvious justification for the Precious Blood kerygma. Christ has always been proclaimed as crucified and now risen from the dead. Paul preached Christ and Christ crucified — the cross — the Blood — the death. The Precious Blood preacher takes all this from the lips of Paul, and embraces and repeats the message.

In the light of Christ — His atoning Blood as pivotal point the preacher explains the whole Christian truth and the whole Christian law: the truth of Christ and the law of Christ, exploiting the rich sources of Scripture and tradition. A profound penetration of the biblical concepts with their redemptive significance is imperative: covenant, blood, reconciliation; mediation, priesthood, sacrifice; cross, death, Eucharist, Church; Christ, merit, grace. Throughout he must hold fast to the one Christ, the one priesthood, one redemption through blood, one Christ-presence and Christ-action.

The preacher has his task set for him: to study the rich sources of the Scriptures on the redemptive doctrine, the sources in tradition, above all the works of John Chrysostom, Doctor of the Eucharist and the Precious Blood. Among the medieval theologians Thomas, Bonaventure and Albert should not be neglected. Our present-day theology is in its golden age. Especially valuable are the profound insights of its Christocentrism which is intimately linked with ecclesiology. *Mediator Dei, Mystici Corporis,* the *Mysterium Fidei* are immensely important. The liturgy itself, *ipsissimis verbis,* is a primary source for preaching and meditating on the work of redemption.

Each devotion in the Church offers special or even unique values. It may stress what is common to all devotions, or focus at-

tention on elements which are strictly characteristic, special prayers, resolutions, ideas, preferences (these may be largely emotional) which may not be pertinent or especially meaningful in the others. Some pious uses or practices belong to one devotion rather than to another, and the same holds for feasts, shrines, works of religious art.

Though the supernatural anthropology or structure is essentially the same in all, diversity of intensification of certain virtues even in persons of great holiness is possible. We can in consequence, and we should, contrast this intensification. By way of example, we underscore in the Precious Blood devotion: in the theological virtues, *love unto death*, the martyr-love for Jesus in His passion; in the moral virtues, principally the virtue of *religion*, supreme submission to Jesus in His shedding of Blood, the spirit of sacrifice in union with the sacrifice of the cross. In the *liturgy* we stress the priesthood of Christ with its Christ-action and Christ-presence. Our current *aggiornamento*, to my mind, has not focused sufficient attention on priesthood as such.

Corresponding to these three areas — and others which we do not have space to treat — there are special prayers and exercises. Over and above all this, the Precious Blood devotion enriches the whole approach to divine truth, the whole spiritual life, the whole piety of action in the world.

#### The Models in the Devotion

The kerygma and the special virtues of Precious Blood devotion are reflected in many souls who have *practiced* the devotion to the point of heroism. Mary, the Mother of Jesus, is the model whose exercise of the devotion was exemplary and perfect. We may call her the Mother of the Precious Blood, because she is the Mother of the Church, Mother of the Redeemer and His redeemed. On the cross Christ gave His Mother to John, the beloved disciple, and to all of us:

It was she, the Second Eve who, free from all sin, original or personal, and always most intimately united with her Son, offered Him on Golgotha to the Eternal Father for all the children of Adam, sin-stained by his unhappy fall, and her mother's rights and mother's love were included in the holocaust. Thus she who, according to the flesh, was the Mother of our Head, through the added title of pain and glory became,

according to the Spirit, the mother of all His members. She it was who through her powerful prayers obtained that the Spirit of our divine Redeemer, already given on the cross, should be bestowed, accompanied by miraculous gifts, on the newly founded Church at Pentecost; and finally bearing with courage and confidence the tremendous burden of her sorrow and desolation, she, truly the Queen of martyrs, more than all the faithful filled up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ . . . for His Body, which is the Church (cf Col 1, 24); and she continues to have for the Mystical Body of Christ, born of the pierced Heart of the Savior, the same motherly care and ardent love with which she cherished and fed the Infant Jesus in the crib.<sup>20</sup>

Among the many other models of the exercise of the devotion in the long list from John Chrysostom to Pope John XXIII, we must single out Gaspar del Bufalo to whom many in our Precious Blood societies have looked with loving veneration. In a sense he symbolizes and articulates the holy lives of many priests and brothers and sisters and lay people in the world who practiced the devotion without clamor: *They pleased God quietly*.

Uniquely Gaspar directed our attention to the intimate bond between the Precious Blood, which he proclaimed with exalted fervor, and the Mother of the Redeemer. His followers cherish the image of Gaspar, missionary in Italy, with his huge crucifix and his Madonna of the Chalice. In the latter Mary bears in her arms the infant who offers men the chalice of the Precious Blood, Gaspar has taught us to love Mary because of her relation to the Blood of her Son. We feel that she herself taught him the devotion and made him her favorite son among all the members of the societies of the Precious Blood. The story of his love for her and for the Blood of her Son, running like a ruby thread through his life is summed up in his canonization picture: the crucifix is aloft above the chalice and the Blood draining from Christ's body flows into the chalice. To this Gaspar directs our attention. This was his life; not mere theorizing on the redemptive Blood, little writing on the Precious Blood, but the supreme self-giving in prayer, meditation, mortification, the draining of self in exhaustive zeal in the mission. For this we honor him as a saint, OUR GASPAR OF THE PRE-CIOUS BLOOD.

EDWIN G. KAISER, C.PP.S.

#### FOOTNOTES

- In this entire paper the writer avails himself of his own work on the Precious\_Blood, The Everlasting Covenant: Theology of the Precious Blood, Messenger Press, 1968.
- The distinction is explained in practically every handbook of dogmatic theology. The tendency in theology today is rather to stress the oneness of grace, the grace of Christ. Note citations below from Schmaus and Rahner.
- 3. Cf. Felix Malmberg, Ueber den Gottmenschen. The first part deals with the motive of Incarnation: Warum ist Gott Mensch Geworden? (Questiones Disputatae, #9), p. 9ff. As this author notes, Thomas proceeds very circumspectly in the whole matter. The basic principle regarding the problem of priority in the divine decree is stated in the Summa Theologiae: Deus autem, sicut uno actu omnia in essentia sua intelligit, ita uno actu vult omnia in sua bonitate. Unde sicut in Deo intelligere causam non est causa intelligendi effectus, sed ipse intelligit effectus in causa; ita velle finem non est causa volendi ea quae sunt ad finem, sed tamen vult ea quae sunt ad finem ordinari in finem. Vult ergo hoc esse propter hoc, sed non propter hoc vult hoc (I, q. 19, a. 5).
- 4. For further biblical reference, note the following: Jn 3, 16f; 1 Jn 4, 9f; Lk 19, 10; 1 Tm 1, 15; Gal 4, 4f; Rom 3, 24f; 1 Cor 8, 6; Heb chap. 1.
- 5. Michael Schmaus, Katholische Dogmatik, Bd. II, 1, p. 47.
- Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, art. "Original Justice," Theological Dictionary p. 328.
- 7. Teilhard de Chardin's influence on current theological thought is too well known to demand comment here. Only recently has there been a serious revival of interest in Herman Schell (died 1906) noted German dogmatician whose writings were in great part condemned during his life time. Of his deep religious faith there can be no doubt. As to his significance in the history of theology we note the appraisal of J. Hasenfuss:

Schell's work though checked in its immediate influence by condemnation is again effective in the midstream of scientific discussion. Many of his concerns are already realized today in the teaching and life of the Church. The thought of Schell presents a pattern for us in our practical task of constructing a truly Catholic synthesis between the traditional faith and life values and modern scientific consciousness. It is also a model for better relationship between Christian and non-Christian believers. With the insight of genius he combined the theology of existence with the theology of objective communication of truth and salvation, which is to say personalism with universal Catholicism of the Church. Thus he prepared the response both to the concerns of current existence theology and Church theology. (In *Lexikon für Theologie* 

und Kirche vol. 9, art. "Herman Schell," col 385. Cf. also article on Schell in the New Catholic Encyclopedia.)

The recent work of Hubertus Mynarek, "Der Mensch: Sinnziel der Weltentwicklung" (Muenchen, 1967) is described by F. Manthey in Koenigsteiner Blaetter in the following terms:

Teilhard de Chardin, such was his genius, sought to combine hominisation with the development of total creation. This work of the young Bamberg professor seeks to carry out such a plan comprehensively and systematically on the broadest theological, philosophical and scientific-empirical basis. The genesis of man is presented in the development of a cosmos fashioned by God in dynamic evolution. And on every page of the book we experience the fact that the Christian faith in the creation of a type of man constantly and progressively developing upward is something entirely different than the human as presented in monism. It differs from the "animalistic" theory of human evolution.

- 8. Theological Dictionary, art. "Anthropology," p. 27.
- 9. Comm. in Eph I, 10.
- 10. Quaestio 60, ad Thalassium.
- 11. Theological Dictionary, art. "Christology," p. 79.
- 12. Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible, c. 436.
- 13. Handbuch Theologischer Grundbegriffe I, art. "Bund," p. 202.
- 14. The first set of parallel passages may be said to represent a Petrine tradition. The shedding of blood for the many relating to the Servant of Yahweh (Isaia 53). The second represent the Pauline tradition. They seem to refer to the celebration of the renewal of the covenant. The cup as new covenant in (my) blood harks back to the new covenant in Jeremia 31, 31ff.
- 15. Lexikon fuer Theologie und Kirche, 2, art. Bund 777f.
- 16. For an explanation of the five modes of redemption, note the writer's work, The Everlasting Covenant: Theology of the Precious Blood (Messenger Press, 1968), chapter nine. Thomas states his doctrine in III, q. 48, art. 6. The doctrine of merit, satisfaction, sacrifice, liberation (redemption in the restricted sense) is found in all manuals of dogmatic theology. For the entire Thomistic teaching, see chapters nine to eighteen of The Everlasting Covenant: Theology of the Precious Blood.
- 17. Christ in the Theology of St. Paul (Herder and Herder, New York, 1959), p. 11.
- 18. Cf. p. 213f: The Everlasting Covenant: Theology of the Precious Blood.
- Juan Alfaro, "Christus Victor Mortis" in Gregorianum, No. 39, 2, (1958) p. 266.
- 20. The Mystical Body of Christ (NCWC pamphlet) #110, p. 42f.

"I see His Blood upon the rose, And in the stars the glory of His eyes, His body gleams amid eternal snows, His tears fall from the skies."<sup>1</sup>

Another generation marvelled at the works of creation and found their experience with God in the very beauty of the created world which God had fashioned.

The Christian today looks at the "rich resonance" of God within the community of men with whom he lives. He finds this a "fascinating focus." Christians look to Jesus and seek to add their love-laden "yes" to Christ's filial response to the Father.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of this paper is to evoke in the heart of the believer the response which a covenant-relation-

## PROCEEDINGS - THIRD PRECIOUS BLOOD STUDY WEEK

ship to the Father demands: "Everything the Lord has said, we will do" (Ex 19, 8). Within the framework of the covenant the Father has invited the people of God, the people of His own choice, to build up the city of God, which here on earth is very much the city of man.

## PREPARATION FOR THE PASCHAL MYSTERY

The Paschal Mystery is the keystone of the good news of salvation. It is the passion-death-resurrection event. It is the passing over of Jesus from this world to the Father in exaltation.<sup>3</sup>

The Paschal Mystery is largely concerned with the final events in the life of Jesus. But there was a preparation for these events. The mystery simply did not burst in upon Jesus' disciples as an event unheard of before those final hours in which the mystery was unfolded in limpid clarity.

#### PREDICTIONS OF THE PASSION AND RESURRECTION

All the synoptists relate how Jesus referred to His forthcoming suffering and glory.<sup>4</sup> Three times they relate how Jesus made the announcement during His public ministry (Mt 16, 13-23; 9, 18-22; 17, 22-23; 20, 17-19; Mk 8, 17-33; 9, 30-32; 10, 32-34; Lk 9, 43-45; 18, 31-34). Mark (8, 31-32) may be used as an example: "And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and Scribes, and be put to death, and after three days rise again. And what he said he spoke openly."

There is a "must" which characterizes the predictions of the death and resurrection. This means it has to be; the plan is fixed. This necessity stems from the will of the Father. God's plan for Jesus to embrace death and resurrection cannot be changed. Theological reflection perceives to penetrate this divine arrangement.

#### A LIFE OF SERVICE: MARK 10, 45

If Jesus insists that He must suffer and die, it is because suffering and death stress so strongly the life of service to which Jesus is dedicated.<sup>5</sup> In a context of the ambition of two of His apostles,

James and John (Mk 10, 35-40), Jesus "called his disciples to him and said: You know those who are regarded as rulers among the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you. On the contrary, whoever wishes to be great shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be the slave of all; for the Son of Man also has not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10, 42-45).

There is no doubt that Jesus is defining His life's work in terms of the Servant of Yahweh who pours out his lifeblood as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of the sins of those whom he represents (Is 53, 10-12):

"If he gives his life as an offering for sin . . . and the will of the Lord shall be accomplished through him . . . Through his suffering my servant shall justify many, and their guilt he shall bear . . . Because he surrendered himself to death and was counted among the wicked; And he shall take away the sins of many, and win pardon for their offenses."

## The Baptism with which Jesus must be baptized: Mark 10, 35-40

When the mother of John and James asked that her sons might have a high place in the kingdom of Jesus, asking that one might sit at His right and the other at His left, Jesus said: "You do not know what you are asking for. Can you drink the cup of which I am to drink?" When they agreed they could, Jesus replied: "Of my cup you shall indeed drink." He could not assure them, however, that they would have a great place in His kingdom (Mt 20, 20-23).

Mark has James and John asking the same question which their mother had asked. When Jesus asked them what they wanted, they like their mother asked for prominent places in the kingdom. But Jesus said to them: "You do not know what you are asking for. Can you drink of the cup of which I drink, or be baptized with the baptism with which I am to be baptized?" They assured him that they could, and Jesus then assured them that they would. But their ambition for prominence He could not guarantee (Mk 10, 35-40).

Luke (12, 50) also speaks of the baptism which Jesus has to endure: "I have a baptism to be baptized with and how desirous I am until it is accomplished." The context speaks of the distress and division which Christ has come to bring to the earth (Lk 12, 49-53).

In these narratives there is a double image: a baptism to be baptized with, and a cup that is to be drunk. Both indicate that the followers of Jesus share in His mission through suffering.<sup>6</sup>

#### THE TRANSFIGURATION: LUKE 9, 28-36

All three synoptists report the transfiguration (Mt 17, 1-8; Mk 2, 8; Lk 9, 28-36). The Greek word *metamorphosis* indicates a change of form and appearance. The revelation is made to Peter, James and John, the same recipients of the revelation of the agony in the garden.<sup>7</sup>

The context of the episode in the three gospels is after the first prediction of the passion. J. McKenzie notes that this position is meaningful: "It should be noted that it is the constant theme of the Synoptic Gospels that this clarification was not understood by the disciples before the resurrection. The change described in the appearance of Jesus suggests the change which is implied in the resurrection-narratives and which made it difficult for the disciples to recognize him. The transformation of the body into glory in the resurrection is also mentioned by Paul (1 Cor 15, 40-44); it is a change into the likeness of the glory of Jesus produced by the contemplation of his glory (2 Cor 3, 18). Light and glory in the Old Testament are elements of the theophany, the sensible presence of God. The whiteness mentioned in the passage is the luminous quality of glory; it belongs also to the Risen Christ (Apoc 1, 14). The cloud also is an element of the theophany of the Old Testament. The cloud and the formula of utterance of the Father are derived from the baptism of Jesus . . . The transfiguration is much more than a doublet of the baptism of Jesus or a misplaced resurrection-appearance. It is a statement that the Son of Man even in his earthly existence is the glorious Son of Man who is

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recognized in his glory after his passion and resurrection. Following upon the prediction of the passion, it is a revelation of the truth that glory follows the passion."<sup>8</sup>

## THE PASSION NARRATIVES

The three synoptists report the Paschal Mystery in detail (Mt 26-27; Mk 14-15; Lk 22-23). The passion-narratives are the oldest sections of the synoptic tradition. Naturally, Christians wanted to know everything possible about the life of Jesus. But their primary interest centered on the last moments of His life.

#### THE SYNOPTIC KERYGMA

All admit that the earliest record of apostolic preaching is found in the sermons of St. Peter in the Acts of the Apostles (2, 14-19; 3, 12-16; 4, 8-12; 5, 27-32; 10, 34-43; and the sermon of Paul (13, 16-41). At the center of the apostolic kerygma is the Paschal Mystery — the death and the resurrection of Jesus.<sup>9</sup>

This is the outline which the synoptic tradition follows. Matthew, Mark, Luke fill in the outline, by referring in particular to the agony in the garden, the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the journey to Calvary, the crucifixion.

How the apostles filled in the story of Christ's sufferings is left to our imagination. We have only one example: "O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been depicted crucified" (Gal 3, 1).

The lives of Jesus written a generation ago describe the horror of these sufferings in detail. A. Goodier, in *The Passion and Death* of our Lord Jesus Christ, comments on the method: "Still, as already pointed out, the Evangelists are our safest, indeed, they are our only guides; whatever scholars have contributed to the understanding of other parts of the Gospels, to the understanding of the Passion they have contributed singularly little."<sup>10</sup>

"We derive far more light for our purposes from the saints, and from those who have written in the spirit of the saints, such as Augustine, Ludolph of Saxony, Fra Thomas of Jesus and, in another sense, Catherine of Siena" (p. xi).<sup>11</sup>

We cannot conclude this list of saints without referring to Saint Gaspar del Bufalo, our Father and Founder who carried the mis-

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sionary cross, the image of Christ crucified, with him always on his missionary journeys. He knew that the picture of Jesus crucified would lead men to a new kind of life with God.

The whole way of the cross, from Gethsemane to Calvary, is stained in the Blood of the Savior. There are few events in the passion narrative which underline the significance of the suffering of Christ in His Blood more than the agony in the garden,<sup>12</sup> "Agony" is what it is called, and that it was.<sup>13</sup> It is reported by all three synoptists: Mt 26, 30-46; Mk 14, 26-41; Lk 22, 39-47. The three accounts generally agree, but it is Luke alone who reports the sweat of blood: "And his sweat became as drops of blood, running down upon the ground."<sup>14</sup>

The theology of the garden-agony has been explained by Carl J. Armbruster, "The Messianic Significance of the Agony in the Garden," *Scripture* 16 (1964), pp. 111-119. Messianic fulfillment is very much a part of the theology of the passion. The pericope of the agony in the garden joins its theology to this general purpose. They point to Jesus as the Servant of Yahweh and the Son of Man.

In considering the agony in the garden it is not enough to say that Jesus' humanity is the cause of the suffering. It is, however, a necessary condition.

Some would seek the agony of Jesus in His loneliness, His desire for companionship. Some prefer to speak of an accumulation of suffering, "horror of torments" caused by sin and ingratitude, and agree with Saint Thomas that Jesus' agony is caused by a natural repugnance to death.

It was this natural repugnance to death which O. Cullman found so attractive in explaining the agony. Jesus fears death itself, not just crucifixion and its circumstances. Death is radical isolation, a separation from God.

Generally his position is regarded to be insufficient because it ignores the messianic perspectives of the narrative.<sup>15</sup>

What is this messianic perspective? First, Jesus is the Suffering Servant of Yahweh of Isaiah 53. This Suffering Servant, as the prophet describes him, is a tragic figure. The Servant is handed over to suffer for men: "But the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all" (Is 53, 6). In the garden Jesus says: "Behold the hour is at hand when the Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of sinners" (Mt 26, 45).

In the narrative there is also a reference to the cup which Jesus must drink. The cup refers to the passion, the events in which His Blood will be spilled. According to Old Testament usage (Ps 10, 6) the cup is filled with God's wrath. The anger is not, of course, directed to Jesus, but He took it upon Himself. "A grave was assigned him among the wicked" (Is 53, 9).

The servant theme is also open to that of a glorified servant as well as suffering one (Is 53, 10-12).

This brings the theology of the agony in the garden so close to that of John 12, 23-28. John has Jesus saying: "Now my soul is troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour! No, this is why I came to this hour" (Jn 12, 27-28). The idea of Jesus glorified is joined to that of His suffering.<sup>16</sup>

On the threshold of the passion we see then the utter humanity of Jesus. Jesus recoiled before the cup, which contained not only the pain of the passion but also the bitterness of God's wrath. (This echoes Is. 53, 4.9.10.)

Mark (14, 35) links the agony with the "hour." The prayer of Jesus to be saved from this hour cannot be explained merely in terms of the submission of Jesus' human will to the divine will. It involves the whole salvific plan of God. Jesus willed to suffer to accomplish the salvific design. In doing so He submitted to drink the cup with all its bitterness.

Jesus felt the intense fear of death precisely because it was so closely related to God. There is more than a recognition, a registering of knowledge. In Jesus the interior life of His human intellect and will and emotions were very realistic.

Besides the Servant of Yahweh theme, the pericope of the agony also contains the Son of Man theme. "Son of Man" is a title that can simply stress the human, but it is also a name which refers to the transcendent eschatological figure of Dn. 7 and the book of Henoch. The fusion of the two ideas is traced to the creative work of Jesus. Both Matthew (26, 45) and Mark (14, 1) have Jesus using this title for Himself during His hour of suffering.<sup>17</sup>

## THE EUCHARISTIC WORDS OF JESUS

All three synoptists report the account of the last supper (plus Paul in 1 Cor 11, 23-25).<sup>18</sup> The following parallel columns will show at a glance the fourfold account:

Jn 6: 51-58 is based on a liturgical formula ultimately. By the use of form critical techniques it is possible to deduce other formulas of consecration used in the primitive church.<sup>5</sup> Even the New Testament formulas have their own emphases as a comparision of them shows:

1 Cor he took bread and giving thanks he broke and

Mk taking bread blessing he broke and he gave to them

Lk and taking bread giving thanks he broke and he gave to them

1 Cor this is of me the body for you

Mk and said take this is my body

Lk saying this is my body to be given for you

1 Cor do this in my commemoration in like manner and the cup after

Mk

the cup

Lk do this in my commemoration and the cup in like manner after

1 Cor eating

saying

Mk giving thanks he gave to them and he said to them

Lk eating

saying

and taking

1 Cor this the cup the new testament is in my blood Mk this is my blood of the testament

for many shed

Lk this the cup the new testament in the blood of me for you shed

All theologians admit that the apostolic didache is found in this fourfold account.<sup>19</sup> The "blood of grapes" (wine) holds the central place in the Mass, which re-presents the sacrifice of Calvary. The Precious Blood, which the wine becomes, is the very heart of the sacrifice of Jesus.<sup>20</sup>

## A SACRAMENTAL SACRIFICE

Bread and wine are the signs of Jesus' Body and Blood in the sacrifice of the altar. As signs, they signify a separation of the Body and Blood. This has to be their sign-value. On Calvary the Body and the Blood were actually separated.<sup>21</sup>

The Mass is an unbloody sacrifice because the bread and wine make Christ present as He is in heaven, in His glorified Body. Jesus can never again endure physical suffering.

But the Mass is a true sacrifice, though sacramental.<sup>22</sup> The separation of Jesus' Body and Blood is shown in sign. The bread signifies His Body and the wine His Blood. The Body and Blood appear under two distinct signs.

Yet the Mass is a real sacrifice. Jesus offers Himself with that same total submission to His heavenly Father as He did on Calvary and continues to do in the heavenly sanctuary. The cup of the "blood of grapes," changed into the Blood of Jesus, symbolizes the complete surrender of the Son to the Father, His self-giving to the Father for the atonement of sin. This makes Him the perfect Servant of Yahweh.

## A COVENANT SACRIFICE

The formula of the consecration of bread and wine speaks of a "new and eternal covenant." This is the covenant of Jesus established in His Blood on Calvary.

A covenant is a bond of friendship by which the contracting parties join themselves in intimacy that they really can be called blood-brothers.

The Sinai covenant was sealed with the blood of animals (Ex 24). This blood sprinkled on the altar and the people joins God and His people in a union of friendship.

The Mass is also a covenant-sacrifice. The Blood of the crucified Savior falls on the earth. In this heaven and earth are joined together. The redeemed became the "new people of God." In sign, the Blood of Jesus in the Mass flows like a torrent to touch the lives of the "people of God." This joins them to Jesus as His bloodbrothers.

#### A PASSOVER SACRIFICE

The Last Supper took place in the setting of a Passover meal. This meal made the Israelites remember their deliverance from the slavery of the Egyptians. The commemoration of the event each

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year through the sacrificial eating of the lamb recalled the lamb whose blood had been sprinkled on the doorposts of Israelite homes and had delivered them from the tenth plague, the death of the first born.

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The Mass is also a Passover meal and sacrifice. The Paschal Mystery — the death and the resurrection of Jesus — is re-enacted in sign.

## AN ATONEMENT SACRIFICE

Once a year the high priest offered a sacrifice of atonement (Lev 16). He entered the Holy of Holies with the sacrificial blood of animals to atone for his sins and those of his people.<sup>23</sup>

The consecration formula of the Mass also speaks of atonement, the forgiveness of sins. And the Mass is really and truly an atonement sacrifice. Christ, our high priest, stands at the altar and seeks the forgiveness of the sins of the "people of God." Yet, the atonement is once more signified in sign. The Blood is sprinkled on the people, that especially in Holy Communion.

#### A PASCHAL BANQUET

The Eucharist is a banquet as well as a sacrifice. It is the Paschal Banquet. It is a meal eaten in unity, whereby the blood brothers of the covenant all come to the same table to eat and drink the Body and the Blood of Jesus.<sup>24</sup>

A banquet or meal is a token of friendship. At the Last Supper Jesus talked long and lovingly to His followers about love. He had much to say about the love which should join them together. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: that as I have loved you, you should love one another" (In 13, 34).

The commandment is new because it thrills the "new people of God." The commandment is new because it is the commandment of the Paschal Mystery, the death and the resurrection of Jesus: "Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15, 13). "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that those who believe in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (Jn 3, 16). The command of Jesus is not just that we love one another as we love ourselves. His command is that we love each other more than ourselves.

ROBERT SIEBENECK, C.PP.S.

#### FOOTNOTES

- 1. Walter Burghardt, S.J., "The Future of Theology," *Guide* 220 (1967), p. 3, quotes this poem of O. Plunket and judges that one of the problems in contemporary Christian theology is that there are Christians who are insensitive to the insight of a poet like Plunket, "Christians who do not discover God in the things they see and hear and touch . . . A whole generation has grown up who do not look at the world and think the way of another generation. Today's theology cannot mouth yesterday's." It must be more authentically historical and biblical.
- 2. Ibid., p. 5. Gustave Martelet, S.J., Mystère du Christ et valeurs humaines," Nouvelle Revue Theologique 84 (1962), pp. 897-914, concludes: "Ainsi la conversion au Christ, par delà toutes nos déformations modernes sur les rapports du Royaume et du monde, est la grande necessité de la vie actuelle des chrétiens, comme elle le fut toujours. Les difficultés sont culterellement nouvelles, mais au fond, dans tous les âges, elles sont spirituellement identiques." Today the Church is heir to a "fermenté dogmatique." This is why those in the Church must become in our time "vivants témoins de sa splendeur."
- 3. John L. Sullivan, S.J., "The Paschal Mystery and the Glory of Christ as Redeemer," *Thought* 157 (1967), pp. 386-397, stresses that the Paschal Mystery is "essentially directed to Jesus' glorification as Redeemer. The glorification as Redeemer must consist in that totality of salvific events from the Passion to Ascension, his heavenly exaltation. The glory of Christ is concrete: Christ's possessing, as the fruit of his redemptive work, the power to give supernatural life to men, the power to communicate to them during this present life a participation through grace in his own glory as Son of God." The full fruits of this sharing are the beatific vision and the risen body.
- 4. Raymond E. Brown, S.S., "How Much Did Jesus Know? A Survey of the Biblical Evidence," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly 29 (1967), pp. 315-45, discusses at length the foreknowledge which Jesus had of his own passion, crucifixion, and resurrection (pp. 320-324). After examining the complexity of the problem, Father Brown concludes: "We are not suggesting that these remembrances of early predictions of death are necessarily historical some of them are not, and that is why, on the other side of the question, the Gospels do not prove that Jesus always knew he would be put to death. But it is clear from such passages that the evangelists were aware of no tradition that only later in his ministry did Jesus become aware that he must suffer and die. Scripture neither favors nor disapproves a theory that posits a psychological development of Jesus' knowledge of what lay in store for him" (p. 324).
- See my paper in Precious Blood Study Week Proceedings, Vol. II, 1960.
   O. A. Piper, under the entry of "Suffering and Evil" in the Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible 4 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 452, writes: "This is the mystery of the Passion that he, as Son of

God, should take upon himself the burden of mankind . . . From this interpretation of the Passion of Christ, the primitive Church approached its own suffering . . . By showing that suffering results, with equal necessity, from the sinfulness of mankind and from the missionary activity of God's people, the New Testament almost completely dismisses the question of the individual's fault for suffering . . ."

6. J. H. Bernard, "Notes and Studies," Journal of Theological Studies 28 (1926-27), pp. 265-270, also studies the references to the "cup" and "baptism" in Lk 12, 50 and its parallels. This is surely no baptism of blood and hence no reference to martyrdom. The meaning of the baptism-logion should be determined on the basis of the Old Testament image of water. There deep waters refer to a flood of persecution, not necessarily a violent death. Cup in the Old Testament refers to a cup of pain, appointed by God. Again, the idea does not evoke immediately the connotation of sudden and violent death.

A. Feuillet, "La coupe et le baptême de la Passion" *Revue Biblique* 74 (1967), pp. 357-391, shows that Lk 12, 50 (and parallels) cannot be a prediction of the future martyrdom of James and John. "Cup" and "baptism" are prophetic symbols. They refer to the Passion of Jesus, the voluntary victim of the sins of men.

7. Anthony Kenney, "Transfiguration and Agony in the Garden," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly 19 (1957), pp. 444-452, shows the relation of the two events indicated in the title. He then makes an interesting study of the parallel accounts. Finally he notes that Lk's account of our Lord's prayer in the garden bears resemblance to the Lord's Prayer. The parallel columns, printed below, are explained in detail.

#### Lk 11, 1-4

#### Lk 22, 41-46

#### Father

Hallowed by thy name Thy kingdom come (*Thy will be done* as it is in *heaven* so also on *earth*)

Give us this day our daily bread

Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us.

And lead us not into temptation.

Father

If thou wilt remove this chalice from me but yet not my will but thine be done and there appeared to him an angel from *heaven*, strengthening him. And

being in an agony, he prayed the longer.

And his sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the *earth*. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow. And he said to them : Why sleep you? Arise, pray,

lest you enter into temptation.

8. Louis Monden, Signs and Wonders (New York: Desclée, 1966), p. 113, notes: "The Transfiguration of Jesus on Mt. Tabor, that sudden manifestation of this divine glory in the midst of his human state, was a declaration of the coming glory of Easter and it strengthened the faith of the apostles against the dark hour of the Passion. What Jesus said in coming down from the mountain is a plain indication of this."

Pierre Miquel, "The Mystery of the Transfiguration," *Theology Digest* 11 (1963), pp. 159-164, interprets the synoptic narratives to conclude: In human history, the Transfiguration is primarily an apocalyptic event, a prophecy of the future transfiguration, in Christ, of all Christians.

*Ibid.*, p. 160. He notes: "The glory of the Transfiguration, in short, anticipates the Parousia (Mal 3, 1-2) when the just will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Mt 15, 45)."

Pierre Bernard, The Mystery of Jesus, 2 vols. (Staten Island: Alba House, 1966). Translated by T. Manning. In v. 1 (pp. 472) he comments on the significance of the transfiguration: "This episode is naturally one of the most significant in the life of Jesus. It has its equal grandeur only in that of the agony, which is also witnessed by the same men. The agony permits to be seen, in the mystery of Jesus, the lowest point of his abasement in the bosom of our human nature; the transfiguration permits the dawn of the restoration. Nothing could have contributed more than these two versions to make the three witnesses fully certain of the two natures of the divine envoy. The greatest elements in the past of Israel bow before Jesus Christ, and so to speak, come to support what he says of himself, of his going forth from this world. It is not only Moses in his writings, it is Moses in person, and living in the presence of God, who testifies in favor of Jesus and who encourages him to live and to die as God wills. It is not only Elijah living again in the spirit of John the Baptist, it is Elijah returning in person, to hail the Messiah of God. And behold, at the word proceeding from the Father, the entire ancient revelation vanishes to make place for Jesus alone. Thus appeared the superiority of Christ over the greatest servants of the house of God. He transcends them all in his quality as the beloved Son. In the light of the transfiguration, the whole future is enlightened."

9. The New Catholic Encyclopedia (1967) has tried to specify exactly the teaching of each of the evangelists. J. Finlan in "Matthew, Gospel According to" (9, p. 500), writes: "The general theological principle of this Gospel is that Jesus Christ in His Person, doctrine, and words fulfills the Old Testament." C. F. Ceroke in "Mark, Gospel According to," (9, p. 235) writes: "The theme of the fulfillment of prophecy binds the events of the Passion in the Ministry . . . The Passion narrative reaches a dramatic climax in the explanation of the centurion at the death of Jesus (15, 39). R. T. A. Murphy in "Luke, Gospel According to" (8, p. 1069) writes: "Throughout this

section (Passion) Luke manifests a much greater independence from Mark and has numerous points of contact with John." These contacts are then specified.

John L. McKenzie, S.J., *Dictionary of the Bible* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1965), specifies the theological preoccupation of each evangelist: "The ideal of fulfillment is basic in Mt and perhaps original with him, but it would be a misconception to understand fulfillment in terms merely of prediction of future events. Jesus fulfills the Old Testament by being the reality which is initiated in the OT, which, because it is the earlier phase of a single saving act, exhibits a community of character and traits with Jesus" (p. 555).

Mark wrote "carefully," "exactly." He wrote only "what he remembered." According to tradition Mark knew Jesus only from Peter and "Peter had arranged his instructions according to the needs of the audience and made no attempt to set the words of the Lord in order" (p. 543).

"While none of the synoptic Gospels can be called non-theological, Lk may be called the most theological . . . Alone of all the evangelists Luke uses the title Lord in the Christological sense of the early Christian community. Luke also conceives Jesus as savior . . ." (pp. 525-526).

Pierson Parker, "Luke and the Fourth Evangelist," New Testament Studies 9 (1962), pp. 317-336, discusses the completely different mentality of Luke and John. But he does not think that this factor alone explains their distinctive approach. He notes: "Luke despite his long acquaintance with Paul is much more elementary. Indeed Luke's Christology is in some respects lower, even than that of the Evangelist. In the latter, for example, Jesus' predictions of his death involve the whole range of his vicarious suffering . . . Luke misses all this." Yet there is a relationship between John and Luke: "There is one way in which the Luke-John relationship could have arisen . . . He must posit two evangelists, of quite variant temperaments, working long in the same areas, hearing the same words about their Lord, perhaps participating in the same discussions; then each, remembering these things in his own way and digesting them in his own way."

T. A. Burkill, "St. Mark's Philosophy of History," New Testament Studies 8 (1957), pp. 142-48, assumes that "the whole career of Jesus is a fulfillment of the purpose of God, but he is particularly anxious to emphasize that the shameful climax of the earthly ministry is an integral part of the divine scheme for human redemption; and after 8, 29 he can give free expression to this conviction in the form of an explanation of the fact of the Messiahship now made known to the evangelists" (p. 142). It would appear, therefore, that Mark distinguishes four principal periods in the historical realization of God's plan of salvation: 1) period of preparation which comes to an end with the removal of John the Baptist; 2) period of the public ministry, characterized by suffering and obscurity; 3) the post-resurrection

period when eschatological fulfillment is openly proclaimed; 4) period of eschatological fulfillment, initiated by the Son of Man at his still-awaited parousia.

J. H. Davies, "The Purpose of the Central Section of St. Luke's Gospel," Studia Evangelica II (Berlin: Akadamie Verlag, 1964), pp. 164-169, begins with Lk 9, 21. He gives the reasons which support his conclusion. Davies outlines four key passages in the journey narrative: a) 9, 5. Jesus' journey has a hostile aspect. The theme of the rejection of the Jews through the rejection of the Messiah runs all through Luke-Acts. b) 13, 31-35. This passage refers to the fact that Jesus must go to Jerusalem where all the prophets die. c) 18, 31-34. Here Jesus speaks of the goal of his journey in great detail. It is the insight of the Lord himself, interpreted first by Mark, then more elaborately by Luke. d) 19, 29-46. This is the earthly end of the journey. Luke sees the death and resurrection as the event which brings Jesus to his glory and Jerusalem.

John Wall, "Jesus Rose Again," *The Australasian Catholic Record* 44 (1967), pp. 107-112, concludes: "The immediate sign of the Kingdom's inauguration at the Resurrection was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit whom Christ had promised to send and whose arrival was again necessary . . . For us the Spirit in our work and life is a constant sign of the Kingdom and of the new life that burst the tomb of the Resurrection of him who conquered death and leads us to glory."

Otto Betz, "The Kerygma of Luke," *Interpretation 22* (1968), pp. 131-146, recalls that the "creating energy of the Spirit, manifesting itself in the lawful awareness of realized eschatology, in the prophetic word of continuing revelation and in other charismatic gifts, had to be checked by the pure doctrine of tradition, preserved by and reserved to the Apostolic Church." It is significant that Luke in his Gospel and Acts continues the deeds of the message of Christ.

The author concludes with the question: What has this to teach us about Luke's evaluation of Jesus? 1) The earthly Jesus was not the last prophet. The desire for an objective demonstration of his Messiahship is rejected. 2) Luke does not consider the coming of the Kingdom and the ministry of the Messiah to be two different apocalyptic ideas. 3) What is the ecclesial meaning of the kerygma? It is not restricted to the past, for with the preaching of the Church its second phase has begun.

The next part of the article outlines this second phase: "The Kerygma of the Church." Underscored should be the following statement: "It has become clear that the Christological Kerygma in the Book of Acts is based upon the Easter Faith of the early Christians, unfolding in the light of the Scripture . . . The Christian is free, for salvation has come to him; he knows through faith that the decisive battle against Satan has been won. But the struggle with the forces of evil is still going on, and he has to participate in it . . . The growth of the Church confirms the truth of the Heilsgeschichte as Luke has written it."

Luke emphasizes the common teaching of the Church, guaranteed by the Apostles, confirmed by the eschatological experience of seeing the risen Lord and receiving the Spirit, and won by an eschatological exegesis of the Old Testament. Luke has failed to understand the Pauline *theologia crucis* and the full implications of justification by faith, but his message of Easter is in agreement with that of Paul and pre-Pauline Christianity. The Christological meaning of Easter must have been formulated in a common creed by the early Church, but the existential meaning of Easter is less emphasized by Luke than by Paul. Moreover, the Spirit is the gift of the exalted Christ, but not the *Christus praesens*, as for Paul. Christian existence is not described as dying and rising with Christ.

- 10. The suffering and desolation of Jesus are described in many books. In particular attention should be called to the following: Ferdinand Prat, S.J., Jesus Christ II, translated by John Heenan, S.J. (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1950), pp. 308-526. Or there is The Life of Christ by G. Ricciotti, translated by A. Zizzamia (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1947) pp. 530-647. Alban Goodier, S.J. has devoted an entire volume to the topic of The Passion and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ (New York: Kenedy, 1933).
- 11. Jean-Marie Le Blond, "Sin and the Glory of God," The Way 2 (1962), pp. 28-35, refutes philosophers such as Sartre and Spinoza who fail to recognize the importance of repentance. Great stress is placed on St. Catherine of Siena "who saw herself as one of God's thoughts that had been given expression, a thought of love that became real simply through his having paused over it. She liked to think of herself also as purified in the blood of Christ and in the beginning of her letters she would greet her correspondent 'in the Precious Blood.' To her Redemption was as actual as the creation." (pp. 29-30).
- 12. Louis F. Hartman, C.SS.R., ed. Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), p. 864, explains that Gethsemane is the place on the Mount of Olives where Jesus prayed in agony and where he was taken prisoner. "No doubt it received its name from the 'olive press' (Aram. gat semoni). A church was built here at the end of the fourth century A.D. In front of the sanctuary of this church a section of the bare rock has been left exposed as the traditional spot on which Jesus prayed."
- 13. James Hastings, Ed., Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Scribners, 1952), p. 13: "Agony (Lk 22, 44) is not a translation but a transliteration of the Greek agonia, equivalent to St. Matthew's (26, 37) 'sorrowful and troubled,' and St. Mark's (14, 33) 'distressed and troubled.' the word does not mean 'agony' in the English sense. Agon was 'a contest,' and agonia the trepidation of the combatant about to enter the lists. Christ's Agony in Gethsemane was the horror which overwhelmed him as he faced the final ordeal."

- 14. Gerard Lutkemeier, C.PP.S., "The Authenticity of the Pericope of the Precious Blood," Nuntius Aulae 12 (1929), pp. 117-123, examines the story of the bloody sweat and the comforting angel (Lk 22, 43-44). Because of theological scruples there were some early writers who questioned the authenticity of these verses. But Father Lutkemeier concludes: "The presentation of the evidence of the Greek MSS, the versions, and the Fathers shows the authenticity of the study. The conclusion is still valid. R. T. Murphy in the New Catholic Encyclopedia, p. 107, comes to the same conclusion.
- 15. John Bligh, S.J., "Typology in the Passion Narratives: Daniel, Elijah, Melchizedek", The Heythrop Journal 6 (1965), pp. 302-309, indicates the typology for the passion narrative of the three figures indicated in the title. The same author in the same journal 1 (1960), pp. 142-146, has a note on "Christ's Death Cry." He observes: "So the Synoptics' account of our Lord's death furnishes a solid basis for the dogmatic thesis that Jesus in his public life claimed to be the Son of God... and was there in this very touching form: that Christ claimed to be the Son of God with his dying breath, and by the manner of his death provoked a Gentile bystander to accept and endorse his claim" (pp. 145-146).
- 16. Raymond Brown, S.S., "The Kerygma of the Gospel According to John," *Interpretation* 21 (1967), pp. 399-400, notes: "And certainly the synoptic Jesus, prostrate in the dust of Gethsemane, trembling in fear of death, is more subject to the human condition than John's Jesus."

J. Blenkinsopp, "The Hidden Messiah and His Entry into Jerusalem," Scripture 13 (1961) pp. 31-88; see also pp. 51-56, notes: "We have tried to offer a reading of this supreme moment in the human drama of our Lord and of the sequence of events which led up to it in the light, we might say of the lurid glow, of the political agonies and frustrations of that age." (p. 87). In a reported conversation with Ferre, Professor Whitehead declared of Christ: "His life was not an exhibition of overruling power. It has the decisiveness of a supreme ideal, and that is why the history of the world divides at this point" (p. 88). "For the Christian reader Christ is, indeed, and he so emphatically stated before Pilate, a king, *the* King, but as he rode into the city of the Great King he knew that he had already rejected the kingdom of this world which Satan had offered at the beginning, and the title over the Cross which caught the eye of the thief was to be fully vindicated within three days, and in the three days that followed."

17. Benjamin Willaert, "Jesus as the Suffering Servant," Theology Digest 10 (1962), pp. 25-26, writes: "The whole life of Jesus is redemptive, but we spontaneously and almost exclusively associate the idea of redemption with the final phase of Jesus' life... Still, the concept of redemption is especially linked with the passion and resurrection. Jesus himself closed his life of preaching with the revelation to his apostles that he is that Old Testament Son of Man who must fulfill the will of God, gaining his glorification through suffering and death." But there is a further theme. In these pages we show that the "Jesus-servant" connection was the theological perspective of Jesus himself clearly evinced in his own prophecies of his approaching passion. And this is the "reflecting history" of the synoptists also.

 John O'Rourke, "Some Speculations about the Mass," American Ecclesiastical Review (1967), pp. 258-265. The synopsis re-copied here is from this article (p. 259).

Edward Kilmartin, "A First Century Chalice Dispute," *Sciences Ecclésiastiques* 12 (1960) 403, believes the first century dispute can be traced to both the prejudice to fermented drink as well as a "deep seated fear of blood."

Robert Lodegar, "The Eucharistic Prayer over which it is Spoken," *Worship* 41 (1967), pp. 578-596, notes the basic respect for the transcendent. The words are highly poetic and they offer praise to God for what he has done. The bread and wine are signs "of God's presence in the universe and his ordering of it toward man . . . of self-emptying, redeeming love for man" (p. 594).

- 19. C. Tierney, "The Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Narratives of the Institution," Australasian Catholic Record 39 (1962), pp. 5-23, observes: "The Catholic Church has always understood, and taught, that at the Last Supper Christ offered his body and blood to the Father under the symbols of bread and wine, so that he might leave his church a visible sacrifice such as the nature of man requires." The article continues to show how these narratives must be interpreted in the context of the Passion. "But the full force of the symbolism lies in the separate elements of bread and wine, which express the separation of Christ's body from his blood in sacrifice."
- 20. Edward J. Kilmartin, S.J., "The Eucharistic Cup in the Primitive Liturgy," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly 24 (1962), pp. 32-43, investigates the biblical texts to conclude that there was actually an emphasis on the "cup of blessing." The main sources for the interpretation of the Eucharistic words of Jesus are the two books: a) Joachim Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus (New York: Scribners, 1964); b) Edward J. Kilmartin, The Eucharist in the Primitive Church (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1964).

Kilmartin compares the fourfold account and classifies the tradition as the "Fons Petrinus" (Matthew-Mark) and the "Fons Paulinus," (Luke-Paul). This latter he calls the Antioch-Palestinian account : "Paul and Luke are variations of a common basic narrative employed most probably in the early community of Antioch which can be dated around A.D. 40. However it was not formulated first in Hellenistic Antioch; rather the semitic form of expression indicates a Palestinian source" p. 35). Kilmartin judges that the double tradition contains also a double theological orientation. All the Evangelists portray the Last Supper as an important aspect of the Messianic work. The fact

that they all give it an important place in the Passion narrative is proof enough. Furthermore, in Luke 22, 14 the words of Jesus allude to an intimate connection between the Last Supper and the redemptive work: 'I have greatly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.' Perhaps of great significance in this matter is the use which Luke makes of the key Synoptic text identifying Jesus with the Servant of Yahweh. In Mark 10, 45 Jesus says . . . 'for the Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.' Luke 22, 27 records that Jesus said: 'For which is greater, he who reclines at table or he who serves?' These words indicate that Jesus as the Servant of Yahweh renders a service at table . . . Since this action involves a 'giving' by the Servant of Yahweh, the participants at the Last Supper must be receiving a share in the redemptive work of the Servant. The Messianic implications of the essential action of the Last Supper, consequently, are clear from the context of the Lukan narrative" (pp. 48-49).

While all the evangelists connect the Last Supper with the redemptive work of Jesus, their method of doing so is different. Kilmartin describes the theology of the Antioch-Palestinian account (Luke-Paul) thus: "The reader will recall that the prophet Isaiah describes the Servant of Yahweh as glorious vet called to suffering. His glory comes from the fact that Yahweh's spirit is upon him (Is 42, 1), that Yahweh establishes the covenant through him with all the people (42, 6; 49, 8), and gives him as a 'light to the Gentiles' (42, 6). At the same time the Servant is destined to suffer failure and physical abuse (52, 6), but this degradation is only temporary (53). The Servant is a man of sorrows, who has borne our sorrows, who is led like a lamb to the slaughter, who pours out his soul in death and allows himself to be counted with the transgressors. But since he has undertaken this passion for us in order to make intercession for sinful humanity, he will be rewarded. The time of his exaltation will come and he will see the fruit of his work and be satisfied."

The theological outlook of the Mark and Matthew account is said to have this orientation: "The result is a presentation of the redemptive death of Jesus as a cultic sacrifice. Jesus is depicted in the role of the new Moses who establishes the new covenant of the sacrificial offering of his own blood. The close link between body and blood evokes the idea of the Jewish cultic sacrifice in which flesh appears beside blood, but separate from it. In the sacrificial ritual of Israel, the flesh and blood of the victims were separated from one another to provide the material of sacrifice (Lev 17, 5-6; Dt 12, 27). Again the transference of all further explanation of body is directly related to the words spoken over the cup emphasizing the blood which is the all-important medium in cultic sacrifice. In this connection, the addition 'which is shed for you' alludes to the sacrificial blood poured out around the altar in the Mosaic liturgy (Lev 1, 5; 3, 2). Finally the change by which the blood is directly related to the covenant brings the statement of Jesus into conformity with Exodus 24, 8 which speaks of the 'blood of the covenant' that is, the blood of the victim of the cultic sacrifice which seals the covenant" (pp. 54-56).

In his interpretation of the words of institution Kilmartin has some interesting observations. On the use of the twin concept bashardam (flesh-blood): This twin concept, besides indicating the whole man in his transitory state (Sir 14, 12) is also employed to express the components of the body, especially of the sacrificial animal after it has been killed (Gn 9, 4). Therefore, it is an apt concept to express the redemptive death of Jesus, although the use of the twin concepts usually involves a close juxtaposition of the words or phrases involved" (pp. 57-58).

J. Jeremias in his work on the *Eucharistic Words of Jesus* follows a similar line of thought. In the first translation, based on the third German edition, the Qumran scrolls and the recent research on the Passover have been given special consideration.

The following observations are worthy of note: "And when it was evening he came with the twelve (Mk 14, 17). This meal of Jesus with his disciples must not be isolated, but should rather be seen as one of a long series of daily meals they had shared together. For the oriental every table fellowship is a guarantee of peace, of trust, of brotherhood. Table fellowship is a fellowship of life. Table fellowship with Jesus is more . . . This regular table fellowship with Jesus must have assumed an entirely new meaning for the disciples after Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi. From this time onward every meal with Jesus was for his followers a symbol, a pre-presentation, indeed an actual anticipation of the meal of consummation . . . The meal of Maundy Thursday nonetheless stands out as a special one among these Messianic meals. It is the Passover meal, the table celebration of the whole people of God, the highpoint of the year . . . The gravity of the hour in which the Twelve, the living symbol of the new people of God, celebrate the Passover with Jesus stands in sharp contrast with the normal elation of this festival. This is for them the final meal, the farewell meal, and what Jesus said and did at this last meal must be understood against the background of this contrast." (pp. 204-207)

"The cultic significance . . . is present in the twin concept in all three Greek forms: *kreas-aima* (flesh-blood) *sarx-aima* (flesh-blood) and (note the examples from Philo previously overlooked *somaaima* (body-blood). Only this second, cultic meaning comes into question when Jesus speaks of 'his flesh' and 'his blood.' He is applying to himself *terms from the language of sacrifice*, as is also the case with the participle *erchynnomenon* (poured out Mk 14, 24). Each of these two nouns presupposes a slaying that has separated flesh and blood. In other words, *Jesus speaks of himself as a "sacrifice"* (pp. 221-222).

By comparing himself with the eschatological paschal lamb Jesus describes his death as a saving death . . . The blood of the lambs

slaughtered at the exodus had redemptive power and made God's covenant with Abraham operative. As a reward for the Israelites' obedience to the commandment to spread blood on their doors, God manifested himself and spared them, 'passing over' their houses. For the sake of the passover blood God revoked the death sentence against Israel . . . The content of this gracious institution which is mediated by Jesus' death is perfect communion with God (Jer 31, 33-34) in his reign, based upon the remission of sins (Jer 31, 34ff)" (pp. 225-226).

"So if we wish to discover whom Jesus meant by the 'many' for whom his blood would be shed, we must first ask how the word rabbim in Is 52, 14; 53, 11-12 was understood at the time of Jesus. It is difficult to understand why it should be that the question seems only recently to have been raised. In answering it a distinction must be made between the views of the pre-Christian and the post-Christian writings of Judaism. With regard to the latter, the first thing to be considered is the paraphrase of Is 52, 13-53, 12 in the targum of the prophets. Here the 'many' are understood as : the house of Israel, many sinners, many peoples, many transgressions. Although the 'many' here are in part understood to be Jews and in part Gentiles, yet it is significant that in those cases where the reference is to the salvation wrought by the Servant for the many (Is 53, 11) the interpretation is limited to Israel" (p. 227). "But the words of Jesus are not only parable and instruction. They are probably more than that, for he says them over the unleavened bread and the wine at the very time when he offers them, both the bread and the wine, to be taken by the disciples . . . It is an ancient Oriental idea that a common meal brings the table companions into a table fellowship. This table fellowship is religious, and therein rests its obligation. Its violation is a particularly heinous crime (Ps 41, 10). And hence the deep grief felt by Jesus (Mk 14, 20) . . . There is furthermore the cultic aspect to be considered: 'Behold Israel after the flesh: have not they which eat the sacrifices communion with the altar' (1 Cor 10, 18) says Paul; and the subsequent verses show that he intends to say that the eating of sacrificial meat brings the priests and participants in sacrificial meals into a very close relationship to God. Especially instructive is a passage which positively ascribes an atoning effect to the cultic meal: Where (is it said) that the eating of the sacred sacrifices bring atonement to Israel? The Scripture teaches: 'And he (Yahweh) has given it (the sin-offering) to you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, . . . to make atonement for them before the Lord' (Lev 10, 17). How so? The priests eat, and for the masters (who provide the sacrifice) atonement is made" (pp. 231-235).

Speaking of the anamnesis command (Lk 22, 19), Jeremias writes: "After quoting the liturgical formula (1 Cor 11, 23-25) Paul continues 'For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes' (1 Cor 11, 26). We must first clarify the relationship between (v. 26) and the liturgical formula. Both the

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resumptive 'as often as' and above all the 'for' show that v. 26 is directly related to the preceding sentence, i.e. to the commandment . . . So everything depends upon how the 'proclamation' of the Lord's death is to be understood." It is a verbal proclamation. "At every celebration of the Eucharist therefore the community prays for the coming of the Lord, indeed it anticipates the blessed hour by greeting the returning Lord with the jubilant Hosanna, the cry of salvation at the parousia. With a similar intent, Luke speaks of the gladness, the eschatological jubilation, which ruled the mealtime of the earliest community (Acts 2, 46) (pp. 252-254). In commenting on the "Hallel" which concluded the passover meal, Jeremias observes: "In this way the manifold ideas combine into a very simple unity. This Messianic meal is distinguished from the series of Messianic meals which began with Peter's confession by the fact that it is the passover meal, and at the same time the Last, the farewell meal . . . In this situation all that Jesus says and does is directed toward one purpose, to assure the disciples of their possession of salvation. Everything is embraced in this one purpose of assurance . . . when he, in anticipation of the consummation, makes them partakers of the atoning power of his death by their eating and drinking, and in this way includes them already in the victory of the rule of God - all this is a pledge and an assurance, a summons to thanksgiving for the gifts of God" (p. 261).

21. Michael Ramsey, The Narratives of the Passion (1962) is a lecture (pp. 7-26) commenting on the passion. In this lecture, the following observations are worthy of note: "The death of Jesus was a sacrifice. In the apostolic writings 'the blood' was a vivid interpretative description: indeed 'the blood' was as much a part of the Christian vocabulary as 'the Cross' (cf. Rom 5, 9; Eph 1, 7; Col 1, 20; 1 Jn 1, 7). Especially was there a connection between the Passion and the Passover. 'Christ our passover is sacrificed for us' writes St. Paul (1 Cor 5,7). 'The Precious Blood as of a lamb' writes St. Peter (1 Pet 1, 19). Three aspects of this connection come into view. Jesus died at the season of the Passover; he gave to the Apostles a covenant rite which would supersede the Passover; and his death was the true passover-sacrifice fulfilling and superseding the old" (p. 9).

The lecture studies each of the passion narratives singly. The following summarizes his study excellently: "That gospel will be shown both as one of victory as Saint John presented it, and one of tenderness and compassion as Saint Luke presented it, but never without the awe and loneliness with which Saint Mark first described it. The Church which faces that awe will grasp more clearly the comparison and the victory: its power to be Lucan and Johannine will spring from the depth of its Marcan experience.

"In its faithfulness to the whole treasure which the passion narratives convey to it the Church will be watchful and not sleeping: watchful not to miss what the narratives can bring to the mind and

conscience, not to miss what the Lord may do and say in the contemporary hour" (pp. 25-26).

Alban Goodier, S.J., has published (1932) a meditation book on the Passion of Jesus, *The Crown of Sorrow*. In commenting on the pierced side, he concludes "that Jesus Christ is indeed the fulfillment of all prophecy; that he is the great Sacrifice, concluding in himself all that has gone before; that he has poured himself out, to the last drop of blood and water; that henceforth, for all time and for all eternity, the stream springing from Calvary shall flow on, preserving innocence in many, cleansing many more, so that the glory of heaven itself shall consist in being steeped in the Blood of the Lamb" (p. 133).

22. Carrol Stuhlmueller, C.P., "The Holy Eucharist: Symbol of Christ's Glory" and "The Holy Eucharist: Symbol of the Passion," Worship 34 (1959-60), pp. 195-205; 258-269, studies the Eucharist in these companion articles under the aspects of Jesus' death and resurrection. "There is not an exact time sequence that life comes first and then death, or that a person must die before he can live . . . Actually, both life and death exist together, like soldiers in mortal combat. When a person is succumbing to the blows of death, life is bursting forth" (pp. 196-197). These are well worthwhile articles, as they present clearly the relationship of the Eucharist to Jesus' death and resurrection.

H. Dieter Knigge, "The Meaning of Mark's Interpretation," *Interpretation* 22 (1968), pp. 53-70, notes that the Cross is the "hermeneutical key" to Mark. Already in 1892 Kähler called the gospel "a passion story with an extended introduction."

Knigge observes that Mark shows "how Jesus is not to be misunderstood — apart from his suffering and death." Jesus Christ can be understood only in suffering and death (15, 39). The discipleship of suffering is the paradox of God's action through Jesus, continued in the life of Christians (8, 27-33).

Joseph Dillersberger, The Gospel of Luke (Westminister: Newman, 1958). "Though the mystery of the Cross was surrounded by gloom, yet at this last moment in the light of the setting sun, and lit up with the light of God's eternal countenance it sends forth a ray of deathless beauty . . . Finally these words (Lk 23, 46-49) express the ultimate mystery of all creation and of God's work of redemption, as indeed was befitting on the occasion of that sacrifice which was to bring redemption to the world. All the works and externally directed actions of God, including the sending into the world first of all his Son and then of the Holy Spirit, have no other aims than the return of all things together into the Father's hands. This, too, therefore, is what the Son expresses in his last words on earth" (pp. 542-543).

Hans Conzelman, The Theology of St. Luke (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), translated by G. Buswell, remarks: "This transition from the activity in the Temple to the Passion is marked, as we have already said, by Jesus' going into the city . . . This fact forms the background of the sayings at the Supper, whatever may be one's

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view as to their origin and to the degree they have been adapted by Luke . . . Luke's account has in common with all the Gospels the fact that the suffering as such is not contemplated and described. There is in fact a tendency to abbreviate it. Mark already depicts the early arrival of death as a miracle, and Luke only underlines its miraculous nature. The fact that the death itself is not interpreted as a saving event of course determines the account given of it" (pp. 199-202).

Helmut Flender, St. Luke Theologian of Redemptive History (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), translated by Rand I. Fuller, concludes his study of the theology of redemption in Luke: "The redemptive event belongs to the past. As such it is the precondition of salvation in the present. Its importance is limited, but essential. The redemptive history effected by God in the past is fulfilled in the 'today' of Christ's presence. In the social structure, i.e., in the tradition meaning for Luke the Old Testament — Jewish history — the past extends into the present and indeed beyond it. It imparts historical continuity to the process of salvation in the present" (p. 166).

- 23. S. Lyonnet, S.J., "Scriptural Meaning of 'Expiation,'" Theology Digest 10 (1962), pp. 227-232, concludes: "For the writers of both the Old and New Testaments, then 'expiation' or 'propitiation' meant a merciful forgiveness, but a forgiveness that effectively changes the sinner and brings about his 'conversion to God.' And it is precisely by this action that the anger of God is appeased."
- 24. C. Tierney, op. cit., discusses "The Meal Context." He concludes: "The significance of the actions of eating and drinking at the Last Supper is well brought out by J. Dupont in "Ceci est mon corps, Ceci est mon sang," in Nouvelle Revue Theologique 80 (1958), p. 1038. Dupont reports: "The Eucharistic narratives in the light of their prophetic context reach these conclusions. The Eucharistic narrative is a prophecy in word and action. By the prophetic words of institution Christ places before the Apostles the body that will be broken and the blood that will be shed. The breaking of the bread is the central prophetic action by which Christ gives an image of what will happen on Calvary" (p. 19). It is prophecy in action, not merely in symbol.

Scott McCormick, Jr., The Lord's Supper. A Biblical Interpretation. (Westminister: Philadelphia, 1966.) Biblica 48 (1967), pp. 150-51, gives this book a short review. On the Blood of Jesus, J. Swetnam notes: "To Jews the consumption of blood was horrifying. The law absolutely forbade it on the grounds that life resides in the blood. But the conclusion from the Old Testament prohibition against drinking blood on the grounds that it contained life would seem to be just the opposite. It is precisely because blood, in the Jewish view, has life in it that a literal change from wine to blood becomes possible" (Jn 6, 52-53). For the primitive Christian drinking Christ's blood was done precisely because the blood had life in it.

# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD IN CONTEMPORARY PREACHING

True preaching is the Paschal Mystery. The dying and rising Christ are the subject and predicate in the words of the human instrument. Preaching is an extension of that first sermon in the Church, the address of Peter on Pentecost Sunday. In the Old Testament, all preaching had to be orientated to the horizon of "Someone is coming," or to the "Day of the Lord." In the New Testament St. Peter announces, on the Pentecostal morning, that the last day is now present. His own speech was a real experience of the giving of the Holy Spirit to his audience. The Spirit was dynamically present in Peter's preaching to teach and to console, to make present in the lives of the people the past event of Good Friday and Easter.

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The sermon today dare not be any different from Peter's homily for its truth, its message. No matter how much we preach today about virtue and vice — everything from open housing to civil rights — somehow our modern themes must flow from the death-resurrection of Christ. This is the difficulty of preaching, the application of all the levels of modern living to faith, hope, and love in the risen, living Christ.

Just the most casual look at the preaching and writing of St. Paul should tell the modern preacher that his sermon can be significant as a new creation. We are to face the "old Adam" of ideas and confusion in modern man, so that a decision for the "new man" in Christ will be effective. Preaching should be like that first day of creation as described in Genesis — how the word of God brings light and order to the darkness. We face in the art of preaching all the darkness of the human intellect, all the selfishness of midnight in the human heart, and through our sermons we hope the light of the creative Father, the blood-rich light of the redeeming Son, the purest light of the Holy Spirit breaks through all that darkness of mind in the human person.

With the thought of Saint Paul, this should be the "why" of every sermon in a priest's life.

Our duty it is to thank God at all times on your account, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God has chosen you as first fruits of salvation, through the sanctification by the Spirit and faith in trust, to which he has called you through *our preaching*, for an acquisition of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thes 2, 13-14).

All preaching should be a vision and a real experience of the kingdom of the risen Christ. Preaching should indicate our future, our freedom, to be a son of God the Father, in the brotherhood of Christ, always through the power of the Holy Spirit. Preaching should be Trinitarian.

## SOME SUGGESTED EXPLORATIONS

We all know that our Saint Gaspar was deeply affected by the Ignatian Exercises in his personal life and his preaching of missions. Our own mission band owes much to the Ignatian Exercises, even

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though we have given a certain C.PP.S. style to the American mission in the last years. I feel that in all honesty there are areas in modern theology that show some defects (historical marks of the time) in the format of the Ignatian Exercises.

I would like to see more thinking and criticism against the presentation of the *First Week of the Exercises*. Here we have such important themes: What is man? What is evil? What is hell, judgment, damnation? These topics have been the "meat and potatoes" for the typical mission. I feel that, perhaps, we can repeat today some of the negative aspects of the Exercises.

And the first aspect that I call negative is the tendency to stress the sternness of God as judge, the wrath and anger of God who is our Father. Such an image of God will somehow make the Blood a sacred thing of mere retribution, mere atonement. Popular preaching can easily present God as a demanding and angry Superperson calling for blood, for pain and crucifixion to satisfy some mysterious kind of justice. I say that the *Exercises of the First Week* could give that image of God.

Modern biblical studies, like the writing of Stanislaus Lyonnet, speak about blood as a sign of communion and friendship in the Old Testament. Lyonnet says that to talk about blood ritual as an appeasement to a God of wrath is not biblical. Even the Old Testament speaks of a God who loves His people. Wrath and anger are in man. To be selfish, to refuse the terms of the covenant, brings man his own judgment of wrath in his own heart. When we sin, we refuse a loving God, not a mean and angry God.

Perhaps modern preaching could do more in announcing a Father who is merciful, not wrathful. Perhaps the Precious Blood could be a key sign in history for the revealing of this overwhelming Fatherhood. It seems from the criticism of our lay people that some of the past missions were full of an impersonal bookkeeping God, not the giving Father. It seems that the Precious Blood was preached at times from the viewpoint of meeting an angry God in Christ.

Another area of exploration for preaching today would be to go more deeply into the meaning of suffering, the mystery of evil, as we experience all this in the modern predicament.

The day is over when we can glibly tell people in our preaching that suffering is allowed by God, so that better things can come

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in the future. This view is not deep enough for our times. We must be daring as Christ to meet the temptations of evil, not to back away from suffering with platitudes and superficial preaching. We must be convinced that the Precious Blood is the key event that gives the only explanation for suffering and death. It means, however, facing the tragedy of "Cain and Abel" in the decisions of modern life. We must study the lack of communion in social relations, and family bonds.

Saint Paul was not afraid to face the division of Jew and Gentile, slave and freeman, Greek and Hebrew, from the event of the Precious Blood. Paul spoke of the Blood breaking down walls between divided peoples, but, more important, he spoke of the Blood beginning a new synagogue, a new temple, a new community of faith, hope, and love in the risen Christ. The Blood not only dissolved the old, it revealed a new heaven and earth for men to live now.

Yet, the modern man will talk back to us arrogantly: "If the risen Christ is here — why still all the wrath of evil and death, and useless pain?"

If one does not preach truly the missions of the Son and Holy Spirit, then the mystery of evil will have no explanation for the man of the twentieth century. The Gospel says that evil starts in the inward man, in the abuse of man's inner freedom and thoughts. From the heart of man comes death and wrath and hate. Now we must challenge the inner decisions of man. We must take the whole Sermon of the Mount, not part of it. What the Sermon on the Mount says, the Blood of Christ does.

God the Father through Christ asks us for a depth in forgiveness. We are to be open, to give "mental absolution" even to our enemies. This is the removal of the force of all evil in the universe. We have to die to our judgments, our self-opinions in evaluating our neighbor's conscience. Somehow we must experience in a deep and real decision what Stephen prayed for Paul: "Lord, do not lay this sin against this man." When we are ready to be Stephen for another Saul in our day, then we have made a total *amen* to the message of the Blood. Forgiveness is the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit can transform our judgments into the mercy of the Father and Son. The Spirit can unite men together in a bond that is their own bond of what the Father is to the Son, and

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the Son to the Father. If the Father is total giving, I must be giving to, not taking from, my neighbor. And in humility I must receive and be open to his failures in the openness of Christ our Savior.

This will mean preaching all the commandments as devotion to the freedom and truth of the Precious Blood.

## THEMES OF ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL

As the gospel of Saint John was written to explain the living experience of sacramental liturgy in the Apostolic Church, so our preaching should be connected with the liturgy. We must explain the dying and risen Christ in the signs (word and action) of the liturgy. We must not develop this cold and mechanical ritual, this impersonal presence of people in community acts of Christ in His people.

The Christian preacher must explain that all life is a liturgy (awareness of God's presence in every sign of our day). All life is the first commandment. Yet, we cannot keep the first commandment without interpreting the second commandment as announced by Christ in the new law. I cannot live liturgy unless I sense the presence of Christ in persons everywhere. If I miss the living Christ in a human person, I will make an idol of myself, or in a futile way try to discover God in a system of things, adrift from living union with people.

John's gospel gives the life of Christ in terms of a judgment. Mankind is on trial in the life and actions of Christ. God is not a God of wrath; but man can be full of wrath in his selfishness. What Judas does in a wrath of selfishness, we can do today. Reflecting on John's gospel, I realize that I can be Judas, I can be Pilate, I can be the High Priest. I can annul the Blood and life of Christ with my judgment for self, with my decisions to abuse my neighbor, to use him as a thing. In this kind of living we are judged in our own decisions.

Just as Christ took the wrath of Judas, the sin of Pilate, today the risen Christ still redeems us in our wrath of selfishness. And when we accept this salvation, then we live the Kingdom of the Father now in this life. May we be convinced of our *amen* to the covenant cup of the Eucharist. Challenge the people to be forgiving people, to change hatred into love, their own daily life into the risen Christ.

Like the beautiful poem of Gerard Manley Hopkins, *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, let people see their own shipwreck, their own drowning, as the meeting point with the risen Christ. Blood is the suffering in the faces of my friend and enemy. As a Christian will I dare to pray and live to take suffering away, as Stephen prayed and lived to bring Saul to the risen Christ? If we dare not be Stephen, we have missed the total meaning of the Precious Blood speaking in our lives.

DONALD GREEN, C.PP.S.

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# HOMILIES

MONDAY — JUNE 10

A random review of the content of biblical history is always very revealing. Such a selection reveals matters most magnificent, on the one hand, while on the other, shows man often at his very worst. In gathering my thoughts in preparation for these remarks for the opening Mass of the Precious Blood Study Week, I thought how opportune it was to page through the Old and the New Testament, gathering evidence of the relationship between God and His creatures, a relationship most often quite expensive to God and rarely representative of man's capability of showing gratitude to God.

We could feast our eyes for hours on the mental images of the glory of God as these are reflected in the very plain and simple statements which express the desire of the Creator to share the magnificence of His Godhead with images and likenesses of Himself. We are immediately struck with the limitless generosity which characterizes the continuous gestures of aid and assistance performed by God in the interest of His creatures. Thinking of ourselves in the same situation of being called on to assist and to relieve our family and friends, we would readily state that there is a point beyond which we could not be expected to go in attempting to cement the family or friendly relationships with others. But not so God.

In fairness to some of the men and women in biblical history we must acknowledge that here and there an individual shone through with truly remarkable fidelity and perseverance in God's

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service. Some of the great prophets, speaking in behalf of God, marked heights of spirituality and godliness rarely achieved by humans. They were richly blessed by God, and they responded with admirable equity. Some others, equally blessed with fame and fortune, still demonstrated that their humanity took precedence over the sense of duty and obligation to God, even though He had, in a sense, paid them well for the work He expected of them. Still others are a portrait of pathetic preoccupation with the flesh. Their actions and their cities to this day constitute the terminology we use to describe the very depths to which individuals can and do sink.

The thing that strikes us most clearly in this casual review of biblical history is the regularity with which peaks and pits typify the level of man's performance, as he attempts to respond to the continuously divine level of assistance and protection which he received from his Father in heaven. The peaks mark what we might consider to be an acceptable level of human performance, understood and accepted by a benign father. The pits reflect the more frequently observed level of performance where man made it manifestly clear that he needed, over and over, to be snatched back from the brink of self-destruction — needed to be reclaimed after having become lost in the maze of his own self-indulgence, needed to be reinstated, so as to be eligible to make a new effort.

Two things seem to stand out in the repetitious cycle of man's need for God's intervention. The regularity with which the great prophets dramatized God's concern for His people remains a matter of great edification and education for us until this day. Without them races and nations, even God's Chosen People, might have thrown themselves into the depths of destruction. Had their voices not restored sanity and a wish for godliness in the minds and the hearts of the listeners, the process by which our heavenly Father provided for His family might have contained many additional chapters, with many other signs and symbols leading and serving people perfected through Christ.

Then there is the notion of sacrifice by which the God of gods conveyed to His people the precarious hope of maintaining acceptability in His sight through the offering of a vicarious victim. It was ended and it is the blood of the victim, shed in a godly sacrifice,

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which flows as a laver of redemption and salvation. Who will forget the drama in the sacrifice about to be offered by Abraham? Who can read the story of the deliverance of the Chosen People from the land of Egypt without seeing the essential function served by the blood of the lamb in identifying and delivering those who professed their faith and their love of God?

Indeed, it was the faithful repetition of this symbolism of deliverance that nurtured the Chosen People through many setbacks and reverses in their efforts to be God's people in that place and in that time of history which the Father of us all had planned. In spite of the fact that they were not free from their own weakness, nor from the temptation of the devil, there was something about this basic relationship epitomized by the shedding of the blood of the victim which maintained the delicate thread of relationship of God through times that were rarely peaceful and most probably precarious. What was it that seemed to capture their imagination, so that they could visualize for themselves the essential relationship which the blood of the victim produced between them and the heavenly Father? Surely there must have been something unique and distinct in this association of creature and creator which motivated them to loyalty, at least by some, that was fearless and persevering.

What was it that enabled them to develop an insight as to the crucial importance of never setting aside this sacrificial practice? To one less wise, like myself, I can speculate, I can read the experts, and all of them tell me very clearly that the shedding of the blood of a vicarious victim was graphically symbolic of the height, the depth and the expanse of the love which God had for each of His creatures. This was personal. This pertained to their separate allegiance to God who would have increased all of these momentous events had they alone been in need of them. This they understood. This dramatically eloquent profession of love they could accept and make their own. God had spoken to them in terms they knew, understood, and to which they could be most responsive.

In a sense man's loyalty to the concept of sacrifice, and his understanding of the redemptive effect of the victim's blood having been shed, maintained the eligibility of the human race for the eventual development in the drama of redemption. The immediate

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prelude to what we may call the new chapter of redemptive history reveals this same fidelity to these notions. We now see it not exclusively in the cleansing aspects, but also in the framework of developing and perfecting life. As blood is immediately identified with its life producing processes within the body, the transfer of this concept into the spiritual realm provided no difficulty for those who were concerned about realizing every possible opportunity of revising the desolate fate in the downward trend in the history of the Israelites.

The sincerity of Joseph and Mary and the community in which they were residents reflect a notable fidelity to the tradition of offering a sacrifice wherein the blood of the victim signified the process of justification, — signaled the beginning of growth and development in a greater fidelity to the God of all creation. Christ's own actions as a member of this family endorses the ancient Judaic tradition of using the temple to offer the humble victim to be sacrificed that its blood could be shed in behalf of those who may be offering.

There would seem, therefore, to be a clearly identifiable link between the previous stages of man's relationship to God through sacrifice with the ultimate realization of this symbol in the fact of Christ's own suffering and death upon the cross. The spilling of the Blood of the Messiah follows in sequence on the historical steps which are the lone life-giving tradition in the Israelite's desolate fate.

If all that the Old Testament reflects is understood as a preview of the promise of the New Testament, so too has the concept of the blood of a victim been expanded to its magnificent fulness in the actions of Christ, the Lamb of God. It is a tradition fully understood and accepted by Christ which becomes a lesson and a message taught by Christ, who Himself chose these same natural, understandable experiences as the master teacher conveying knowledge through parables. We view them as a dramatic development of the climax of Christ's life in the shedding of His Precious Blood on the cross as the sacrifice beyond compare as a manifestation of the inimitable, incomparable, supreme demonstration of the love of God for all His creatures, obedient and recalcitrants alike.

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How shall we ever thank God adequately for the completion of this promise of redemption in the separation of Christ's Body and Blood, a true sacrifice then and now? How shall we ever be able to fully grasp the complete and total rendering of one's self? Will we ever be able to grasp the dimension of the generosity of Christ in emptying Himself so completely of the substance of life, His Precious Blood in this most generous of acts? How shall we come to understand the endorsement which Christ gave to the superiority of the selfless spirit over the selfish flesh? Will we ever be able to appreciate that what we observe in the sacrifice of Christ is being accomplished with intense suffering, with great loss to Him who suffers, at supreme expense to Him who gives His all? Christ accomplished our salvation by the giving of His very life's necessity, not from His superfluities but of His very essence as the Son of man. Oh, the boundless dimension of the love of God for His creatures!

When we consider the realities of what has been accomplished through the salutary tradition of sacrifice in the Old Testament and the shedding of Christ's Blood in the New Testament, it is hard to believe that with the full and glorious tradition of this sacrifice we could fail to concentrate on it as our key to the gates of heaven. Considering the centuries that we have had during which to study this tradition — considering the growth in the intellectual grasp of things which man has enjoyed in such an increasing way — considering the increased ability to communicate these ideas to anyone and everyone, the fact of Christ's death, the memorial of His Precious Blood should have been sufficient to keep man faithful to, cooperative with, and adoring of his God.

In spite of the impressiveness of the evidence at hand, here we are in the familiar position of having our backs to God and our eyes feasting upon the baubles of life, our hands grasping for treasures that deteriorate as we touch them. It would seem that we must look again to the teaching of Holy Mother Church in the theology of the Precious Blood to find an existing relationship with our Father and our brothers. Let us consider in this our day, as others have successfully considered, the inestimable value which remains for us in preserving the life-giving tradition of the blood of a sacrificed victim.

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I need not sicken you with a recital of facts and figures which have supported a declaration that possibly man was never more estranged from his heavenly Father. We could spend considerable time in enumerating new highs and lows in the experience of creation — new highs in arrogance, pride and false self-sufficiency, new lows in evil, immorality, and self-indulgence. We must be ashamed to consider that this might well be the legacy we leave to the next generation. Is this the tradition, the value system, the tools with which we expect our heirs to wage a successful effort to redeem mankind? Isn't it strange how we develop such consummate skill for frustrating the plans of God? Isn't it a shame that we continue to be morally and spiritually adolescent, rebelling against the providential assistance of our Father simply to exert the right to resist?

May God protect us from the easy inclination to generalize. In referring to the illnesses of man's existence most of us easily fall into the habit of implying that there is no hope, no observable solution, no individual likely to respond to the crises at hand. May we never be unmindful of the fact that the redemptive act of Christ, the offering of Himself and the shedding of His Blood, was an achievement which has not yet realized its full potential in terms of souls to be saved and salvation to be completed.

There remains the necessity of utilizing to the fullest the basic ingredient of the salvation process in every generation which man will continue to live. It is incumbent upon us to maintain a balance in the thinking of those whom it is our privilege to teach and to lead, a balance that will enable them to face up to the evils of our time in a realistic fashion, but never to the point of generalizing a situation so as to create despair. It is of equal importance that we continue to define and to develop those processes of salvation, that deposit of faith which was meant to be applied, utilized and perfected according to the genius of every age. Let us not fail to see how the beautiful faith, which is ours, in the effectiveness of the Precious Blood of Christ continues to be one of our strongest supports in the pursuit of sanity and spirituality in these days. If we would but apply what we know with greater devotion, half of the task is accomplished. If we would but study, perfect, and apply with greater perfection the content of this theology, we will have accomplished a major share of the remainder.

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Are we concerned about the indifference, the coldness of people toward God and toward their neighbors? If so, let us develop human understanding of the manner in which the Precious Blood of Christ epitomizes warmth and concern that can penetrate the depths of man's being. If we are worried about a prideful, willful arrogance in the performance of God's creatures, let us portray for them the essence of humility and dignified obedience portrayed by the Lamb of God who literally emptied Himself that His Father's will be done. When we are incensed at the gross injustice being heaped upon many, let us dramatize the performance of Christ which brought justice to all mankind, reconstituted the relationship between man and God, and which set the tone for man's humanity to his fellowman. When our senses are sickened by the philosophy and the practice of immorality even in centers of people who are educated and allegedly cultured, may we never fail to understand how Christ set the list of life's priorities by the manner in which He yielded His life-giving Blood, showing for all time the relative insignificance of the flesh. If we are frightened on the one hand, or shocked on the other, by the shedding of blood in anger and violence, let us consider that the relationship of man to man in peace and harmony has been best purchased for us as a way of life by the peaceful, joyful shedding of the Blood of the Lamb of God.

So long as we are blessed with an identifiable group of God's servants who have chosen as their rationale the Precious Blood of Christ, we shall never be bereft of a blessed hope and a solid promise of greater things in the spiritual and in the physical order of man. I charge you, friends of the sacrificed Christ, to be faithful to the glorious tradition which is yours. I express to you my own concern for the needs of man and the manner in which the spirit, the tradition, the history of the Precious Blood continues to meet those needs. Exploit every moment of the time you enjoy here together in this Precious Blood Study Week, considering, speculating, restating and promulgating anew the richness of this beautiful manifestation of God's love for each of us particularly during the remainder of this Mass and all of the liturgical functions which are bringing you together during the remainder of this week.

Pray that we may all be transfused with the spiritual exemplification of the Precious Blood of Christ, that our bodily strength may be increased and perfected, that we may never grow weary in service to the Lord. Let the Precious Blood of Christ, our Savior, descend upon us as a laver of redemption renewing the image and likeness of God in which we were created, that we may continue to be worthy of the sacrifice of Christ — the sacrifice through which the Precious Blood has become a reality to all christendom.

MOST REVEREND RAYMOND J. GALLAGHER

## TUESDAY — JUNE 11

In both of the readings in today's liturgy, there appears the theme of fidelity to commitment — fidelity in spite of difficulty and persecution. In the first reading we heard how St. Barnabas urged the Christians at Antioch to remain firm in their commitment to the Lord. And our Lord Himself warns in the gospel, "Because of my name you will be hated." Still it is the man who bears things patiently to the end who will be saved.

The Church is involved in the process of a great renewal, which in the last analysis means renewal of the Church's commitment to the mission of Christ. As far as each individual is concerned, it consists of each member's renewal of his commitment to Christ in Baptism. The various religious communities within the Church are engaged in a process of renewal. According to the Second Vatican Council this process is to include a *constant return to the sources of Christian life*, especially the gospels, and to the original spirit of the institute. Therefore, the Council instructs religious communities to honor faithfully the spirit and special aims of their founders as well as their sound traditions.

Almost all of us here belong, or want to belong, to the Congregation of Missionaries of the Precious Blood, or to one or the other of the sixteen sisterhoods dedicated to the price of our re-

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demption. The constitution of each one of our communities is the basis upon which we were approved by the Church and is the reason for our existence. Each constitution does and should reflect the Founder's spirit and special aims that he set before the community. Therefore the constitutions of our communities, even with this renewal under way, must continue to emphasize the devotion to the Precious Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, according to the mind of the Founder. In Gaspar's plan, Precious Blood missionaries must be intent upon a devotion which embraces all other devotions - devotion to the price of our redemption. Mother Mattias emphasized the fact that the congregation bearing that glorious title of The Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ must therefore become itself a living image and reflection of that divine charity with which that Blood was shed and of which the same divine Blood is a sign, expression, measure, and pledge. Mother Catherine Aurelia of the Precious Blood urged us to live in order to glorify the Precious Blood or to die of the desire of seeing it known and loved. Her dying words were: "May they have an ever increasing devotion to the Precious Blood and great charity toward one another." Mother Brunner's great ambition was to worship the glorified, redeeming Blood of Christ and to petition Him to send forth worthy missionaries of this Blood that they might be successful in applying its merits to the souls of men.

A recent adaptation of their rule expresses this beautifully:

"A sister of the Precious Blood is a religious formed in perfect charity through adoration of the incarnate word of God under the aspect of his Precious Blood. And she spends herself in forming others into dedicated apostles so that not one drop of Christ's Precious Blood be shed in vain."

Now you know all of this. All of these statements take for granted real devotion to the Precious Blood of Jesus. Since we have been using this word *devotion*, I think we should remind ourselves what the devotion means. Some five years ago in a Christmas message, our provincial emphasized success in any endeavor consists not so much in new things but in a constant reaffirmation of our purpose. We are constantly reminding ourselves of our purpose. In fact, this whole spiritual life is nothing but a series of *new beginnings*. Devotion to the Precious Blood does not mean merely re-

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citing some prayers, such as, the Chaplet, the Seven Offerings, the Litany. To have devotion to the Precious Blood of Jesus means to be so dedicated, so consecrated, so taken up by this mystery of Christ's shedding of His Blood, that in the sacrificial shedding of His Blood we find the motive force for our service of God. The stronger that devotion is the more it will occupy our thought and our interest; the more it will move us to think of God, to worship God, to do everything in our religious life in the light of the great mystery of Christ shedding His most Precious Blood. As a consequence, this mystery will become the distinctive feature of our spirituality, the focal point about which our whole spiritual life will revolve, the point to which all the doctrines of faith and all the virtues will converge, like spokes to the hub of a wheel.

For a devotee of the Precious Blood, all the blessings of Christianity, all graces and all truth are the Precious Blood in another form. Jesus Christ, the fullness of grace and truth, is looked upon as the cluster of grapes pressed out in the wine press of the cross. Or as our Founder, Gaspar, said, "He is that mystical rock struck with the staff of the cross and from which comes forth a gushing fountain of life."

Therefore, every apostolic activity or action by which God's grace and God's truth is communicated to man is looked upon as an application of the Blood of Jesus Christ. Preaching and instructing is sprinkling with the Blood of Jesus Christ. Administering the sacraments is anointing with the Blood of the Lord. It is not only the treasures of grace and truth, which are communicated to us by the Church, that we owe to the Blood of Christ but we owe also the Church itself to the Blood of Christ. St. Paul told the bishops gathered before him that they were bishops of the Church of God which he had purchased with His own Blood.

Every doctrine of the faith will be seen in the crimson light of the Blood of Jesus, even the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. In the Godhead, the mutual love of the Son and the Father pours itself out in the production of the Holy Spirit who issues forth as it were from their common heart. In the Holy Spirit both surrender their heart's blood and give themselves completely as a pledge of their infinite love for one another. Therefore, since the Holy Spirit proceeds from the love of the Father for the Son, and through the Son is poured out upon the world, nothing is more appropriate

than that the Son, in His humanity as the head of all creatures, represent and effect the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the outpouring of His Blood, and that this outpouring of His Blood become the sacrament of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the world.

The devotion to our Blessed Lady is also to be seen in the light of the Blood of Jesus. She is the pure fountain of the Blood of Christ. Every one of her privileges is a glorious fruit of the Blood of Jesus. Her Immaculate Conception was granted in view of the purity of the Blood of Christ, and yet was merited by the greatest victory of the Blood of Jesus. That is why our Founder was so devoted to our Blessed Lady under the aspect of her Immaculate Conception.

Everything, therefore, is seen and interpreted in the crimson light of Christ's Blood. But such devotion is not easily come by. Such devotion to God in any one of his mysteries comes, as St. Thomas says, by meditation and contemplation. Father Faber says it beautifully when he points out that our best understanding of the Precious Blood is in the sight of what it has done, in the narration of its history. The Precious Blood has to be seen as the price of our redemption. The why and how of it must be dwelt on. The mind must steep itself in the Precious Blood; it must think and think and think on the background of this Blood. God decided that blood should be used because it was the symbol and bearer of life, the greatest gift that he gave. And the offering of it, therefore, was a sign that the people considered him, looked upon him as the Lord, the master of life and death. We must think about who shed that Blood; what caused Him to shed it; for whom did He shed it; and what are the effects of the shedding of that Blood.

On the occasion of the centenary of the extension of the feast of the Precious Blood to the universal Church, Pius XII wrote an apostolic letter to the General of the Society of the Precious Blood in which he emphasized this particular idea: "We trust that this celebration will have as its principal aim to bring men, too often forgetful of the favors that our Savior showered upon us in pouring out His life and His Blood, to meditate with a loving heart upon His boundless charity and make an appropriate application of it to themselves." He says further that everyone should 70

meditate on the mystery and after repenting of his failings should strive as far as he can to repair the injuries inflicted upon our redeemed and to embrace Him with a most ardent love which a renewed Christian life will testify to.

John the XXIII said that all the members of the Precious Blood families have a personal duty to spread zealously the love for the Precious Blood in the whole world. He said, "I have done what I can, now it is up to you." However, as we heard just lately, you can't give what you don't have. *Nemo dat, quod non hat, as a* former professor of ours used to say. And we get that — love, devotion, faith — only at the foot of the Cross.

Surely the Precious Blood of Jesus is the great sign of the risen life of Christ poured out to us in the giving of the Spirit, but this risen life of Christ was purchased for us by the pouring out of that Blood in the sacrificial death on the cross. St. Paul must have thought of that a lot. St. Paul says I live *in the faith* of my Savior who loved me and gave Himself up for me. It seems as if that is all that St. Paul had on his mind: "He loved me and gave himself up for me; *he loved me and gave himself up for me.*" And you can't have that kind of faith unless you steep your head and mind in the Blood of Christ at the foot of the cross.

This Study Week should play a big part in reviving our devotion to the Blood of Jesus. You know, theology would be a science to be especially impatient with if it rested only in speculation. Theology should be the best tool for devotion. Theology should make us catch fire. Theology of the Precious Blood should heat the furnace of our love seven times hotter than it was before. If a science is supposed to speak about God, about His love for man and yet does not make the listener's heart burn within him, it must follow that the science is either no true theology or that the heart which listens unmoved is either stony or depraved. In a simple and loving heart, theology should make that heart burn like a sacred fire.

We are encouraged in all of this by Pope John the XXIII who died and was buried only five years ago this month. He told us that this devotion is the devotion for our time. Isn't it strange that Gaspar said those same words? It is not really strange because we have, I think, reached a climax of the period which began with the en

lightenment of the French Revolution during which our Founder was born. That was the period which began to downgrade the supernatural and upgrade the natural man. This is major concern even of contemporary theology; and therefore the devotion to the Precious Blood is still the devotion of our time.

We were reminded of this in this afternoon's talk which dealt with Paschal mystery and the synoptics. When the structure of the gospels is studied, we begin to recognize the correctness of the assertion that the gospels are nothing else but passion narratives with an introduction. This is particularly true of the gospel of Mark. Six of his sixteen chapters are devoted to the final week in Jerusalem. But it's also applicable to the writings of the other evangelists.

How can you explain this disproportionate space allotted to these few days of the passion of our Lord? Recognizing that each gospel, as distinct from the separate unit from which it was composed, has a like setting in the early Church. We have to acknowledge the centrality of the cross of Christ and the Blood of Christ in the primitive teaching. We preach Christ crucified. "I am determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified," the Corinthians were told. And we heard this afternoon "O you Galatians! Wasn't Christ presented to you as the crucified Christ?" This attention to the passion in the gospels corresponds to its importance in the primitive teaching, for the gospels reflect the faith of the early Church.

Read the letter of Pope Clement, and the letters of Bishop Ignatius of Antioch who usually greets his people to whom he writes in the Blood of Jesus Christ. He tells them to warm their hearts in the Blood of Jesus Christ. In this way also it is a devotion for our times in that we have revived our Scripture studies, and our Scripture studies emphasize this point.

It is the devotion for our times because it emphasizes the transcendence of God. It emphasizes the finiteness and wretchedness of man and his need for redemption. The Precious Blood speaks to us better than the blood of Abel, and it tells us that the Lord is the supreme Lord to whom this supreme sacrifice of the Blood of the God-man was offered. Christ insists on this: "The Lord thy God shalt thou serve and him only shalt thou serve. I am the Lord thy God who led you out of the land of Egypt. Remember man you

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are dust and into dust you will return." The Blood of Jesus keeps reminding us that we are creatures and that we must not tempt the Lord our God. The Gospel story of the vineyard workers also brings out this truth. God is really our God, our supreme Lord. He is our Father in heaven who made us and redeemed us. He will preserve us, He will protect us, He will almost pamper us. But the Blood of Jesus keeps insisting that there is one thing He will not stand for and that is questioning His authority over us.

And yet this same Blood speaks to us of His love for us, because had it not been for His love we could not have the satisfaction of knowing that we can worship Him in a most perfect way, that we can in a most perfect way make up for our sins. The Blood of Jesus, therefore, emphasizes our littleness and our humility - that virtue which is so easy to talk about and so rarely practiced. It is a virtue much needed today when we are doing great things in the natural order - sending rockets into space, walking on the bottom of the ocean, and snooping around the surface of the moon. We have begun to think that we are something; whereas we are as little children engaged in an Easter egg hunt. We are finding things that have been placed there millions of years ago by our heavenly Father. It is the purpose of the Blood of Jesus to tell us that all these advances only skim the surface of reality and bring us no nearer to the questions of ultimate concern. What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world?

The devotion to the Precious Blood of Jesus is important for our days because it preaches to us the message of sacrifice and mortification that is so needed today. Sacrifice and mortification are very important elements in the Christian life, and it is precisely these elements that corrupt nature dislikes and resists. If it were enough just to have correct views, you know, or high feelings or devout aspirations, it would be easy to be spiritual. But the touchstone of all spirituality is sacrifice, mortification. Worldly amusements, domestic comforts, nice food, daily doing of one's own will all these, the Blood of Jesus tells us, are incompatible with sanctity.

This is especially so when these things became habitual and form the ordinary, normal current of our lives. Pain is necessary for holiness. Suffering is essential to the killing of self love. Habits of virtue

cannot be formed without voluntary mortification, voluntarily accepted crosses. Sorrow is necessary for the fertility of grace. If a man is not making constant sacrifices he is deceiving himself. He is not advancing in spirituality. The Lord said "Unless you take up your cross daily, you cannot be my disciple." That's why we still form one and the same mystical body with the saints, even though they have gone on to God. It used to be said: "To suffer or to die." If a man is not denying himself daily, he is not carrying the cross. These axioms offend our times, especially when striving for comforts and luxuries is so universal. But we repeat, it is comfort which is the ruin of holiness — that daily worship of comforts that distinguishes such a great bulk of the good quiet people of our day.

As a people especially dedicated to His most holy Blood, the Precious Blood of Jesus teaches us the sanctification of our suffering that we need today. We can take the suffering that comes upon us and breathe into it that spirit of loving submission that our Lord breathed into the dirty things of the crucifixion and thereby make of that suffering a sacrifice that can unite us to Christ's sacrifice and can redeem the world.

This is something that we challenge some of our social leaders to do. We challenge them to imitate Jesus Christ, and to ask the poor people to imitate Jesus Christ, and to offer up the sufferings imposed upon them by others for the redemption of those that are causing them that suffering as our Lord Jesus Christ did. He died for those who killed him: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do."

It is important for our days because it teaches us the sacredness of life which we need today. It teaches us the unity of the human race. The blood of Jesus teaches us that we are one naturally and one supernaturally through the Blood of Jesus Christ.

We need devotion to the Blood of Jesus in order to encourage us in perseverance in the faith and perseverance in our vocation. To shed blood means to give all you've got. To shed blood means to do something that cannot be taken back. Devotion to the Blood of Jesus means devotion to God which is complete, total. I give all that I have and I give it for keeps — to the end. PROCEEDINGS - THIRD PRECIOUS BLOOD STUDY WEEK

## WEDNESDAY — JUNE 12

Fellow adorers of the Precious Blood, I have a few thoughts to share with you on this occasion. They are based on the context of today's gospel. Specifically on this verse: "And all the crowd sought to touch him for power came forth from him and healed them all." The bloody love and death of our Lord is the very center of human history. This in the context and the homely words of today's gospel picture is Christ come down from the hills of heaven to the level places where the crowds could touch Him. The redemptive mystery of the Precious Blood is the very heart of our faith. Through His redemptive work Christ reconciles mankind to God and from the total giving of Himself through the outpouring of His Precious Blood divine life and holiness flows to all. St. Paul put it this way, "It was God's good pleasure to let all completeness dwell in him. Whether on earth or in heaven unto union with himself making peace with them through his blood shed on the cross."

The infinite power of the divine Blood reaches out across the lands and times of men. And we have something to do with this. Somehow, someway, the healing power of Christ must be available to the touch of the crowd, of the peoples of today's world. Their unclean spirits, their diseases, their emptiness, their hurts, their sins must be touched against His healing power. More correctly, somehow, someway all the proud must be made aware that Christ can be touched today and that power still comes forth from Him to heal all.

People contact this historic event of the mystery of the divine redemptive Blood by means of faith. As we read in the letter to the Romans: "God has offered him to us as a means of reconciliation in virtue of faith ransoming us with his blood." By the gift of faith which we share, we have been privileged to come in contact with the fullness of this redemptive mystery. We have done this in the reception of the sacrament. We have partaken of it and shared it more fully, if that's possible, in the holy sacrifice of the Mass. We are privileged. We know the power that goes out from Him. We

know more. We know Him. We have gone beyond His touch. He has loved us and healed us. And we personally know this.

And the point of this little homily would be this: Being thus blessed, it is our obligation, somehow, someway, to help bring it about that all the proud of today's peoples might have the opportunity to touch Him. They must know the healing power through us. Our deliberations here, our learned papers, our insights into the divine mysteries of the Precious Blood, as necessary and as praiseworthy and as efficacious as they must be for our individual lives, will never tell the crowd to be aware of the opportunity to touch Him. We simply must do more. We must show all the proud of the peoples of today's world that someone does care. Someone, some real person does care about their unclean spirits, their diseases, their hurts, their troubles and their mistakes. It must be that our concern be an evident concern. And we've heard it many times but maybe it hasn't meant enough; it must be a Christ-like concern. Our Christ-like concern will be for them, perhaps, the first glimpse of the real Christ. Our touch of concern could be, and in many cases will be, the first real touch of Him. And lest this observation become just another pious admonition, it might be well for us to take this as an obligation, and pray over it in the context of the doctrines of the mystical body of Christ and the communion of saints.

And there is yet another way we must bring all the crowd close enough to Christ to touch Him. And this is by our daily personal prayer. And more specifically, our daily prayers in honor of the Precious Blood. There is not a human hurt, a human sin, a human emptiness, in fact a human destiny, that is not recommended to the infinite mercy and wisdom of the Father through the Seven Offerings of the Precious Blood. And neither is there a personal need, nor a commonly-shared human need that is left without the healing power of the redemptive Blood of Christ in the repeated 'Save us' of the Litany of the Precious Blood.

And again I would recommend that in our daily prayer, daily praise — our prayers in honor of the Precious Blood — we recommend to the divine mercy and wisdom of God the human needs of our fellow men, and that we through prayer and thought make ourselves be alive to the doctrines and mystery of the mystical body

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of Christ and the obligations that the doctrine of the communion of saints imposes upon us. Therefore, I ask that after these days away from the crowd, here at our Precious Blood Study Week, we leave a place in our hearts, our prayers, our concern and our acts for God's little ones: the underprivileged, the hurt, the poor, the forgotten, the sick, the dying, and the uninstructed.

DANIEL SCHAEFER, C.PP.S.

## THURSDAY — JUNE 13

Nothing in all the world speaks quite so eloquently as blood!

A speeding car hits a pedestrian. Immediately a crowd gathers — curious, fascinated. Soon cries of pity and horror rise up as the onlookers see the victim in a pool of his own blood.

From a shabby rooming house a rifle cracks out in the evening stillness . . . Doctor Martin Luther King falls mortally wounded. A nation is shocked, as more blood flows in the streets.

A festive spirit prevails as an election victory is being celebrated . . . Suddenly there is gun fire, and Senator Robert Kennedy lies fatally wounded, his blood gushing forth in profusion.

We watch the news reports on TV from Vietnam . . . sickening sights of bloodied bodies of men and women and little children. And again we are horrified.

Blood is a symbol. Scarcely anything speaks so *eloquently* as blood. And the Blood of Christ speaks better. It is a better sign and symbol than all the blood of all creation. Christ's Blood speaks better than the blood of Abel, for Abel's blood spoke of vengeance. Christ's Blood spoke, in fact, is still speaking, not of vengeance, but of mercy, of love, of forgiveness.

Blood also speaks of *Life*. In a blood transfusion life itself, as it were, flows into a body . . . just as blood flowing from wounds in a body, means life is departing from that body.

In an age which has lost, to a great degree, the meaning of symbolism, we may miss the meaning of the symbolism of the divine Blood. Israel of old always connected *life* with both breath and blood. Both concepts run throughout the Old Testament. Because of the close connection between blood and life, the Israelites were very much aware that blood could be offered *only* to Yahweh, the sole Author and Ruler of life.

For the Israelites blood meant *life*. In their animal sacrifices, the immolation of the animal did not signify death, but life. If *life is in the blood*, then the release of the life of the animal signified life for the people. The death of the sacrificial victim was merely the condition for the release of life which made possible a return to Yahweh.

It is important to understand that the death of the victim is never considered as a penalty undergone vicariously for the offerer. Rather, death is only the condition for the release of blood. And it is with this release of blood that the offerer identifies himself.

Before Calvary, thousands upon thousands of sacrificial victims had been offered in sacrifice. The Epistle to the Hebrews makes it clear that Christ intervened to change everything: "He (Christ) entered once and for all into the holy place, taking with him, not the blood of goats and calves, but his own Blood, thus securing an eternal redemption" (Heb 9, 12). The release of Christ's Blood, of course, supposed His death . . . but the purpose of Calvary was not death but *life* . . . and through His resurrection He enters a new life . . . and through His Blood and death we are privileged to enter with Him — to become sharers of His own divine life.

His Blood is indeed precious for it is divine. But most importantly, also it is precious because it stands for obedience. "He was obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." And through His obedience we are made one . . . we are united . . . we are made brothers with Christ Jesus. We are made brothers one-with-another!

Surely, this should be one of the lessons all of us could well learn in these painful times of transition and renewal within the Church. There are bound to be differences of opinion, varieties of viewpoints. But our differences should never be divisive. Rather than dividing us, our differences should unite us.

As blood brothers in the Blood of Christ, may we never permit our differences to divide, but rather to bring us closer together. Daily in the Eucharistic Sacrifice we partake of the Blood poured out . . . the Blood that unites us, which increases our unity, joining us closer to Him, our Brother.

On this feast of Corpus Christi — 1968 — the Blood of Christ is still speaking, it shall continue to eternity. Pay attention to the voice of this Blood. It speaks of unity. It speaks of generosity. It speaks of obedience. It speaks of love.

Glory to the Blood of Jesus, Glory to this Blood . . . Now and Forever. Amen.

CLETUS FOLTZ, C.PP.S.

## FRIDAY — JUNE 14

St. John, in the second reading of today's liturgy, is reporting to the early Christian community the most violent act in history the crucifixion of the God-man. Central to Jesus' act of dying is His significant statement just before He breathed His last: "It is finished." The work which the Father had sent Him to do was completed. By the shedding of His Blood in His suffering and death, Jesus expressed perfectly His loving obedience to the will of His Father. For the first time, a human being gave himself completely to God.

If His work was finished, if His obedience to the Father's will had reached perfect fulfillment, His dying statement also implied the inauguration of the Kingdom. Now God's Kingdom has come on earth as it is in heaven. This was the passing through, of course,

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changing the whole meaning of death. It was no longer the end of life, but the beginning of a new life. The shedding of His Blood in death was the expression of total giving, total love, and so from it was born the new, glorified life that Christ lives today.

This is where we enter the picture. For the new life that was born in Christ's Blood-shedding-unto-death is not a life that Christ alone possesses, but a life He can share with all of us. At baptism we were brought into the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection. At baptism we died initially to sin, and rose to a share of the new life that Christ now lives.

But we know only too well that sin and selfishness are not completely dead in us. The death to sin and the rising to a new life are events that are continually being relived every day of our life. That is why every Mass is a memorial of this death of Christ and a further imparting of this new life.

Frequently throughout this Study Week references have been made to Christianity's inability to get in tune with contemporary man. The "God-is-dead" writers, who sometimes call themselves radical theologians or Christian atheists, would have us believe that Jesus meant it when He said it was all over, it *is* finished. They are cocksure that God has died in our time, or that His body is decomposing, or that churches are His tombs and monuments.

Oh, they find Jesus appealing and acceptable! Not so much for the ideas He taught, but rather the intention or direction of His life — His freedom, openness, devotion to others. Strangely, they find it possible to look on Him as the supreme ideal of what it means to be a man and, at the same time, to repudiate His own ideas about God.

Those of us who believe that God still lives can, if we like, make fun of the movement, for it is vulnerable to all kinds of ridicule. Or we can become angry and attack it as heretical and destructive. Or we can simply ignore it on the theory that, if we do not so much as mention it, the storm will blow over and things will return to normal.

It is interesting to observe that the Apostolic Church was up against a force every bit as challenging as contemporary man and his spokesmen, the radical theologians. The early Christians did not attempt to meet the pagan Roman Empire and organized Judaism head-on with a system of doctrine, still less a philosophy about God. It was a preaching of the good news of man's redemption through the shedding of Christ's Blood.

The new religion was originally called, very fittingly, "The Way." As a way of life, Christianity must continually prove itself by its fruits. The Gospel lays down the norm: "By their fruits you will know them." We must show in our lives that faith in God is still possible, necessary and productive of good results. Christianity in the first centuries was a practical demonstration of this: The love and the courage of Christians, derived from their faith, astounded the world.

God in Himself remains what He is, and nothing we can do adds to, or subtracts from, His reality. But so far as *men are* concerned, God can be alive or dead in the world. If we are spineless conformists, timid, selfish and gloomy, we fail to make God live. But if we are open and courageous, free and generous, God lives in us. If God is to live in the world through Jesus, His Church, the People of God, He needs witnesses whose lives are radiant with a dynamism and devotion which are not of this world.

A second-century Jewish Rabbi, Simon Bar-Yochai, put it strongly in a challenging sentence which he placed in the mouth of God: "If you are my witnesses, I am God, and if you are not my witnesses, I am, so to speak, no longer God."

When Moses erected an altar on Mt. Sinai which symbolized Yahweh, and built twelve pillars "for the twelve tribes of Israel," He splashed half the blood of the immolated victims on the altar, the other half he sprinkled on the people of Israel — and Yahweh and His people became blood-relatives participating in a common life. And the people responded enthusiastically: "Everything the Lord has said, we will do."

Every Mass is also a covenant-sacrifice. The Blood of the crucified Savior falls on the earth, on us, the "new People of God." In sign, the Precious Blood joins us to Jesus as His Blood-brothers. And our response, too, must be: "Everything the Lord has said we will do."

But just as the test of the Sinai-Covenant was not in the response on Mt. Sinai but in performance in the desert, so the test of our baptismal commitment is not in church at the Eucharistic banquet but "out there where the action is" — in our love for all our blood brothers in Christ, regardless of race, creed or color — in

our concerns for their ills, needs, oppressions and injustices in our eagerness to "go and make disciples of all nations" — in our deep awareness of what should be done in our world for human betterment — in our involvement in critical issues and problems of our times. In a word, we make God come alive through us, the People of God, Christ on earth, the Church. Humanity's concerns, sufferings and needs, the stuff of our human life are at the same time the stuff of the kingdom inaugurated on Calvary when Jesus said: "It is finished."

During these days, we have been enlightened, impressed and motivated to a deeper appreciation of our Christian commitment, and we have been intensely unified as brothers and sisters here at this altar in the "breaking of the Bread" and in the "drinking of the Blood." Let us go back to our worlds and show by our lives that *He lives*.

JOHN BYRNE, C.PP.S.

## THE ETERNAL PRIEST

"Let the interpreter then, and with all care and without neglecting any light derived from recent research, endeavor to determine the peculiar character and circumstances of the sacred writer, the age in which he lived, the sources written or oral to which he had recourse and the form of expression he employed."<sup>1</sup> Exegetical work of the past decade has made these words of Pius XII a guiding light. It is extremely important that we follow this same beacon as we attempt to enter the world of the master-theologian who is the author of the epistle to the Hebrews.<sup>2</sup> Though we cannot give the author a name, we do know that he was a highly educated and sophisticated person. In him we

## THE ETERNAL PRIEST

meet a man who in spirit was a devout Jewish Christian, who in mind was a skilled philosopher-theologian of the Alexandrian school. Because the author's relation to the Alexandrian school is of great importance we would like to elaborate on this point first.

The city of Alexandria, situated in Egypt in the Nile delta, was founded by Alexander the Great about 332 B.C. It became a major center of communications between East and West and a main seat of Hellenistic and Jewish science and learning. The Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, and the book of Wisdom were produced here. Later this city became the famed center of allegorical interpretation. Far and away the best known representative of this school of thought is the man known as Philo of Alexandria.<sup>3</sup> Basic to his attempt to harmonize the wisdom of the Jews and the philosophy of the Greeks was the Platonic idea<sup>4</sup> that all earthly reality is a copy ( $\mu i \mu \eta \mu a$  or  $\epsilon i \kappa \omega \nu$ ) of a higher reality ( $\pi a \rho a \delta \epsilon u \gamma \mu a$ ). This higher reality is the invisible, unchanging world of ideas which alone had true existence. The world we see around us is transient and imperfect. It is real only to the degree that it reflects an eternal model.

Commenting on Exodus 25, 40 "In making the tabernacle and furnishings follow exactly the pattern I show you," Philo insists "that every sense-perceptible image has at its origin an intelligible pattern in nature, Holy Scripture has said in this and many other passages as well."<sup>5</sup> Since our task is not an analysis of Philo but of Hebrews, suffice it to say that Philo, like Sacred Scripture, insists on this basic idea "in many other passages as well."<sup>6</sup>

What does concern us is the fact that the theology of Hebrews is constructed on the same philosophic foundation. C. Spicq has made a careful study of the relationship of Philo and our author. So great is the similarity in vocabulary, style, method of presentation, patterns of thought, elaboration of themes, and general spirit that he concludes the two men were personal friends, closely related as teacher and student.<sup>7</sup>

Even the most superficial reading of Hebrews reveals that there are good grounds for Father Spicq's position. Consider the vocabulary of the following passages of Hebrews. Speaking of the priest of the old law, the author states: "And these only maintain the service of a model ( $i\pi\sigma\delta\epsilon i\gamma\mu\alpha\tau\iota$ ) or reflection ( $\sigma\kappa\iota\dot{\alpha}$ ) of the

## PROCEEDINGS - THIRD PRECIOUS BLOOD STUDY WEEK

heavenly realities  $(\tau \hat{\omega} \nu \epsilon \pi o \nu \rho a \nu i \omega \nu)$ . For Moses, when he had the tent to build, was warned by God who said: 'See that you make everything according to the pattern  $(\tau \dot{\upsilon}\pi o\nu)$  shown you on the mountain'" (8,5). Not only does he use language typical of Philo, but he cites the same Old Testament passage. In 9, 9 the ceremony of Yom Kippur when the high priest entered the holy of holies, is described as "a symbol  $(\pi a \rho a \beta o \lambda \dot{\eta})$  for the present time." The ceremonies performed on the day, the author points out, have limited validity. "Obviously only the copies  $(i\pi o\delta\epsilon i\gamma\mu a\tau a)$  of heavenly things can be purified in this way." Christ entered no such man-made sanctuary "which was only a model (avtituta) of the real one" (9,24). Not only the sanctuary but the law itself is a reflection  $(\sigma \kappa i a \nu)$  of the good things to come and no finished picture ( $\epsilon i \kappa \delta v a$ ) (10, 1). In a most quoted passage the author observes that "only faith can guarantee the blessing that we hope for, or prove the existence of realities  $(\pi\rho\alpha\gamma\mu\dot{\alpha}\tau\omega\nu)$  that at present remain unseen" (11, 1). There can be little doubt that our author shares the idea that the material world is a reflection of the eternal.

This relationship of the visible and the invisible as copy and reality is elaborated in a theme that is all important both to Philo and to our author: the theme of permanence ( $\beta\epsilon\beta\alpha\iota\sigma\sigma\sigma$ ) and perfection ( $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\sigma\sigma\sigma$ ). In essence the thought is: only that which is eternal and permanent is perfect, or conversely that which is perfect is eternal. This is not proven, it is axiomatic.<sup>8</sup>

In almost every chapter the author of Hebrews hammers this home. Negatively he insists that the old covenant lacks permanence and is *therefore* imperfect. Thus, the revelation of the Old Testament was "at various times . . . and in various different ways" (1, 1); angels are imperfect because they are changeable (1,8); the earth itself is not our true home because it will pass away (1, 10). The very fact that the Levitical priesthood has been changed demonstrates its imperfection (7, 11; 8, 7), as does the fact that the sacrifices offered were not permanent but had to be offered every day (7, 27; 9, 9; 10, 2; 10, 11). Because the world is transient and imperfect, "there is no eternal city for us in this life, but we must look for one in the life to come" (13, 14).

In contrast, Christ is no mere shadow or sketch; He is the perfect copy of God's nature (1, 3).<sup>9</sup> As God never changes (1, 12),

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so "Jesus is the same today as he was yesterday and as he will be forever" (13,8). He has become for us a priest according to the order of Melchizedek, and forever (6, 20). The author emphasizes the word "forever" no less than ten times.<sup>10</sup> This notion is central to the entire argument.

In chapter seven the priority of Melchizedek's priesthood is *illustrated* in the fact that he accepted tithes from Abraham and blessed him. These acts, the author argues, were possible only because Melchizedek possessed a superior priesthood. This superiority came from the fact that he was without father, mother, or ancestry (7, 3); that, in a word, his was an eternal priesthood.<sup>11</sup> In the author's words: "This becomes even more clearly evident when there appears a second Melchizedek, who is a priest not by virtue of a law about physical descent but by virtue of an indestructible life" (7, 15).

The permanence, the eternity and, consequently, the perfection of Christ's sacrifice is brought out just as clearly and dramatically by the author's insistence that it was offered "once and for all." Representative of this is 9, 11: "He has passed through the greater more perfect tent, which is better than the one made by men's hands because it is not of this created order, and he has entered the sanctuary once and for all, taking with him not the blood of goats and calves, but his own blood, having won an eternal salvation for us."<sup>12</sup>

As though these assertions were not strong enough, the author emphasizes the fact that the new covenant established by the intercession of Christ is confirmed by God's oath. "The Law appoints high priests who are men subject to weakness; but the promise on oath, which came after the Law, appointed the Son who is made perfect forever" (7, 28). For the Alexandrian school nothing could be more permanent than an oath made by God since it is based on God Himself who is eternally unchangeable. A covenant founded upon such an oath, our author agrees, must be eternal and therefore perfect.

By this time I believe that we have sufficiently emphasized the point that the author of Hebrews belonged to the Alexandrian school of philosophic thought. We must now affirm that is not the entire picture.

The author's extensive use of the Old Testament,13 the thrust

of his arguments demonstrate that he was a convert from Judaism who brought with him profound reverence and deep love for the wisdom of Israel. If he uses Hellenistic philosophy, he is in no way a slave to it. He is a man of genius who has his own message to communicate, and does not hesitate to break with Philo where he feels that the latter is in error.<sup>14</sup>

Not only is the author steeped in the wisdom of the Old Testament, but he affirms that "the promise was first announced by the Lord himself, and is guaranteed to us by those who heard him. God himself confirmed their witness with signs and marvels and miracles of all kinds, and by freely giving the gifts of the Holy Spirit" (2, 3). However his approach might differ from the other New Testament writers, it is the meaning of Christ that concerns him, it is the Gospel tradition that informs him, it is the Holy Spirit that guides him.<sup>15</sup>

## ETERNAL PRIEST AND ETERNAL SACRIFICE

As one meditates on the message of Hebrews, the constant contrast of the sacrifice of Christ and all other sacrifices becomes a problem pounding like some huge piledriver. Abraham gave up his home land (11, 8), was ready to sacrifice his only son (11, 17); Moses "chose to be ill-treated in company with God's people rather than to enjoy for a time the pleasures of sin" (11, 25). The heroes of faith "were stoned, or sawn in half, or beheaded; they were homeless, and dressed in the skins of sheep and goats; they were penniless and were given nothing but ill-treatment. They were too good for the world and went out to live in deserts and mountains and in caves and ravines" (11, 37-38). Did Christ really do more? Had not these heroes "kept fighting to the point of death" (12, 4)? Christ shed his blood for us, but does not the blood of Abel still speak (11, 4)?

These musings are introduced to focus attention more sharply on the argument of Hebrews: The actions of Christ far surpass any others precisely because they are the deeds of an eternal priest. Before we can analyze this further, a few words on the author's general outlook are necessary. In his world view one might distinguish three perspectives: the cosmological, the axiological and the eschatological.<sup>16</sup>

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The term cosmological perspective designates a concern for the visible world around us. Certainly all is the work of God's hands (1, 10), created through the Son (1, 3). Other than these basic remarks the author spends little time treating of the world around us as such. The eschatological perspective views the culmination, the destiny of the world. Hebrews does state that the world will pass away (1, 11); that there will be a lasting kingdom (12, 18), but this kingdom will not be a renewed earth, it will be completely heavenly (11, 16; 12, 11). Other than these few statements the author tells us little that pertains to the area of eschatology.

It is the *axiological perspective* that permeates the major portion of the letter.<sup>17</sup> It is with the inner value, the dignity of things that the author is concerned. Perhaps the best way to avoid getting lost in the jungle of technical terms would be to consult diagram #1 printed on page 90.

For the ancients time appeared a cyclic thing with an orderly sequence of day and night, of growth and decline and growth again; all of this a constant reflection of the heavenly. The Hebrews were unique in their concept of time proceeding from the hand of God not merely in tedious repetition but with a definite goal. Our author combines these two concepts. There is at once a reflection of the eternal in time and the linear movement of time toward a determined goal. In the linear movement there is a past, a present, and a future. In the vertical perspective, the axiological perspective, there is only the present *now* of eternity, the "today" to which he refers in 3, 14.

In the person of Christ the eternal *now* has, as it were, invaded the constant change of time. Certainly the actions of Christ are historical actions that happened in the flow of time. But Christ's actions, all of them, have a profound meaning and worth because they are the acts of an eternal high priest. They begin and end in an eternal heaven.

To appreciate the axiological virtue of Christ's acts, then, we must share Hebrews' evaluation of Christ's person. Stated most simply: man and God, time and eternity meet in Christ. He is the one true mediator, the one perfect pontifex.

The author of Hebrews is insistent on the complete and per-

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fect humanity of Christ. Born in Israel (2, 16), of the tribe of Judah (7, 14), Christ lived the brief days of the flesh (5, 7) in every sense a man (2, 6). As man Christ is inferior to the pure spirits (2, 7; 9, 16) but is the brother of all men (2, 11-12.17) sharing the same body and blood (2, 14) and the same weaknesses (2, 14.17; 4, 15; 5, 2); He submitted to the universal law of death (2, 14; 5, 7-8). The reason for this insistence on the humanity of Christ is summed up in 2, 17: "It was essential that he should in this way become completely like his brothers; so that he could be a compassionate and trustworthy high priest of God's religion, able to atone for human sins."<sup>18</sup>

In one way only does Christ as man differ from His fellowman, His perfect innocence. "To suit us, the ideal high priest would have to be holy, innocent and uncontaminated, beyond the influence of sinners, and raised up above the heavens, one who would not need to offer sacrifices every day, as other high priests do for their own sins and then for those of the people, because he has done this once and for all, by offering himself."<sup>19</sup>

Complete innocence, however, does not endow the actions of Christ with the axiological value they must have. His human actions are of infinite worth because they are the action of an eternal person, the Son of God. It is because Christ is an exact reflection of the Father, possessing the same being (1,3) that He surpasses Moses (3, 1-6), the prophets (1, 1), all the levitical priests (7, 28), and even the angels (1, 4). It is because he truly joins divinity and humanity together in himself that he is our perfect mediator (8, 6).<sup>20</sup>

The principal function of this God-man mediator is that of priest.<sup>21</sup> This priesthood is attested by the Father (5, 10), the Son (10, 5), and the Holy Spirit (10, 15). Our author insists that the office of bringing sinful mankind to God can be performed only by a priest. So thoroughly does this thought dominate this epistle that a list of citations would be superfluous.

There is some question, however, as to when Christ assumed this office. On the basis of 8,4: "In fact if he were on earth he would not be a priest at all . . . " and 6, 20 where Christ enters beyond the veil "to *become* a high priest . . .," it has been suggested that it was only upon His return to heaven that He assumed this office. These passages are very important, and we shall return to

## THE ETERNAL PRIEST

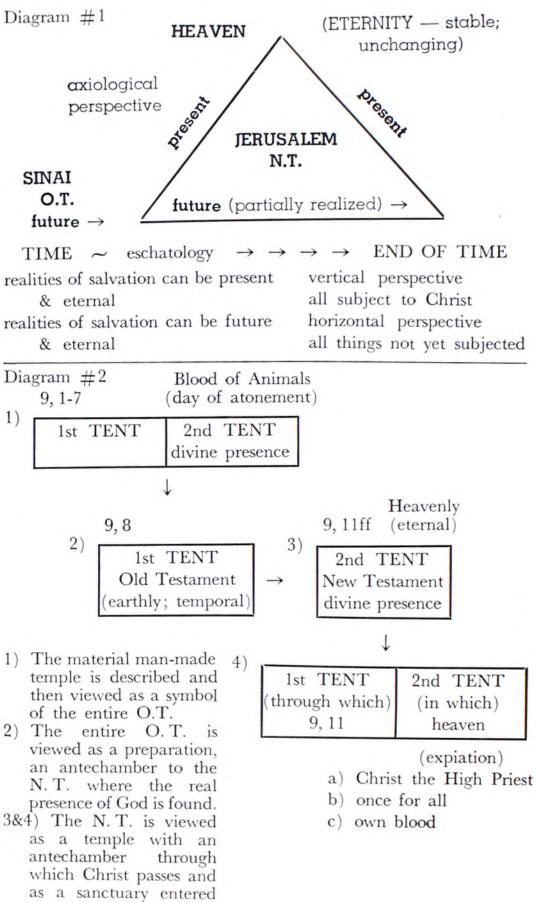
them, but we share the view that Christ became a priest at the moment of His incarnation, that all His acts are priestly, preparing for and culminating in His great sacrifice.<sup>22</sup>

This great sacrifice forms the doctrinal climax of the epistle in chapters 8 and 9. Here the author draws together the points he has made in the previous chapters to assure us that Christ is the mediator of a better covenant founded on better promises (8, 6). It is superior, as its priest, sanctuary and sacrifice are superior.

As he does throughout the epistle, the author proceeds in typical Alexandrian fashion arguing from shadow to reality, from imperfect to most perfect. In chapter nine particularly, some of the transitions are rather rapid. I have attempted to plot the changing images in diagram #2 (cf. page 90). In 9, 1-7, the material, manmade temple is described in its material reality and then presented as a symbol of the entire Old Testament. In 9, 8 the entire Old Testament is viewed as a preparation, an antechamber, to the New Testament where the true presence of God is found. In 9, 11 the image changes again. The New Testament becomes the antechamber through which Christ passes once and for all to enter the true and eternal holy of holies which is heaven.<sup>23</sup>

Throughout this section the author compares the saving actions of Christ to the ceremonies of Yom Kippur. According to the liturgy of this day, the high priest prepared the sacrifice outside of the holy of holies — the animals were sacrificed, the blood gathered. The essential part of the ceremony, however, was the entry into the holy of holies and the anointing with blood. In precisely the same fashion the author insists that Christ's death on the cross, the shedding of His Blood was a preparation for the complete work of atonement. This is the true meaning of the two texts we quoted earlier: "In fact if he were on earth he would not be priest at all" (8, 4); and 6, 20 where he states that Christ entered beyond the veil "to *become* a high priest."

Stated in another way, the work which Christ is to accomplish is the purification of man from  $\sin^{24}$  so that he can perform service for the living God (9, 14.17; 10, 11), to bring man to perfection which is found only in the eternal sanctuary (10, 9) in free access to God.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, if Christ has not entered the heavenly sanctuary we have no salvation.<sup>26</sup>



once for all.

## THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

The epistle to the Hebrews is often referred to as the epistle of the Precious Blood, but I have not yet said a word about the role of the Blood. Such an omission must seem all the more amazing when one gathers together the author's description of the role of the Blood. It purifies (9, 14), sanctifies (13, 12), expiates (9, 26), redeems (9, 21), merits the exaltation of Christ (13, 20), makes access to God possible (10, 19-20), delivers us from the fear of death (2, 14-15), inaugurates a new alliance with God (9, 15), and renders valid the inheritance of a testament or will (9, 16).

Reflecting on the role of the Blood Father Spicq has an interesting observation: "From the beginning of the epistle, the idea of the priesthood of Jesus was slanted towards the sacrifice which this pontiff must offer. The superiority of the sacrifice can be proven by an argument *ex communibus;* drawn either from the priesthood itself or from the New Covenant; these being superior, the sacrifice ought always to be superior. But this is only a general argument. In reality the author exploits this proof in terms of the singular nature of this sacrifice which is the blood of Christ himself in such a way that one can say that the whole theology and apologetics and exhortation of the Epistle to the Hebrews rest, in the last analysis, on the incomparable value of the Blood of the Son of God shed in behalf of the faithful."<sup>27</sup>

As beautiful as this passage is, and as great as is the authority of Father Spicq, I cannot help wondering, in the light of what we have already said, if the shedding of Christ's Blood as such is really the point of highest emphasis in the epistle. How, for example, does this accord with 8,1: "The great point of all that we have said is that we have a high priest of exactly this kind. He has his place at the right of the throne of divine Majesty in the heavens, and he is the minister of the sanctuary and of the true Tent of Meeting which the Lord, and not any man set up."

Lest I be misunderstood, let me point out immediately that the passage just quoted does continue: "It is the duty of every high priest to offer gifts and sacrifices, and so this one too must have something to offer." The logical question here would be what was it that Christ offered. Impressed by the passages cited above on the role of the Blood and impelled by our eager devotion to it, we would almost assuredly answer "His Precious Blood."

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With that response I have no argument except to ask if it tells the whole story. Are we perhaps overlooking another series of statements? In 7, 28 Christ is said to take away the sins of man by offering Himself. In 9, 12 the question appears: "How much more effectively the blood of Christ, who offered himself as the perfect sacrifice to God through the eternal Spirit can purify our inner self from dead actions . . .?" Consider such phrases as 9, 22 "does not have to offer himself again"; 9, 27 "to do away with sin by sacrificing himself; 9, 28 "Christ offers himself only once"; 10, 10 "And this will was for us to be made holy by the offering of his body made once and for all by Jesus Christ." It is certainly no novelty to suggest that when we seek a theology of the Precious Blood we must consider the total Christ and all His actions. This it seems to me is precisely what the author of Hebrews does.

Though the author of Hebrews speaks frequently and beautifully of the role of the Blood, there seems to be no notion in this epistle of the Blood as the price of our salvation. In fact, one could go further and say there is no specific analysis of the role of the Blood at all. The author gives no explanation of why the sanctification of worshippers, the removal of guilt, the expiation of his sin, the atonement of the soul to God should be made dependent upon the Blood of sacrifice. This necessity is something assumed; it is something given. It is a thing inseparable from the agelong history of grace in Israel, and the writer of the epistle who, like a multitude of others, had found his own approach to God so prescribed and who had come along the path to the foot of the cross does not feel it incumbent upon him to argue its sufficiency. The words of 9, 22 seem to reflect this attitude: "In fact, according to the Law almost everything has to be purified with blood; and if there is no shedding of blood, there is no remission." The author compares the redemptive work of Christ to the feast of the day of atonement. As the shedding of blood was an essential part of that ceremony, so it is an essential part of Christ's offering. No further proof of this is offered or felt necessary.

Am I saying then that there is no theology of the Precious Blood to be found in Hebrews? By no means! I am suggesting though, that we cannot go through the epistle, pick out the passages that please us, tie them together with speculative prose, and present it as the theology of the Precious Blood according to Hebrews.

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#### THE ETERNAL PRIEST

The author views the total activity of Christ as one saving action and he views it all in terms of Christ's eternity. Christ's humanity, His life, His death, His enthronement in glory all are indispensable. True, the author does speak of the glorification of Christ as a reward: . . . "but we do see in Jesus one who was for a short while made lower than the angels and is now crowned with glory and splendor because he submitted to death . . ." (2,9), but we have seen that the chief emphasis is on Christ's entering heaven to complete the work of salvation.

If we are to appreciate the role of the Blood in Hebrews, we must with the author consider the whole Christ, Christ human and Christ divine, Christ our brother and Christ our high priest, Christ in time, and Christ in eternity. It seems we have come a long way to say very little. Perhaps now, more aware of the author's basic assumption that only the eternal is perfect, we can understand a little better what the author tries to tell us: "Jesus Christ is the same today as he was yesterday and as he will be forever" (13, 8). Turning our thoughts to the sanctuary not made by hands, conscious of the "now" of eternity, the new "Today," perhaps we can better understand the author's insistence, in the present tense, that: "You *have come* to God himself, the supreme Judge, and been placed with spirits of the saints who have been made perfect; and to Jesus, the mediator who brings a new covenant and a blood for purification which *pleads* more insistently than Abel's."

#### EPILOGUE

It is interesting that the author makes no reference to the Eucharistic services or the liturgy of his readers. It seems that he wanted to avoid anything that would detract from his principle concern, the heavenly liturgy and its true value. It seems that one area that might profitably be discussed is our modern approach to the liturgy. Are we so worried about making the Mass and the sacraments contemporary that we forget to make them eternal? Are we forgetting that our devotion to the Blood cannot stop at the cross, but must pass through the way now open to us to the eternal sanctuary. When we speak with reverence of the Blood through which we can enter heaven, do we forget that it was Christ, the eternal high priest who led the way?

Edward Joyce, C.PP.S.

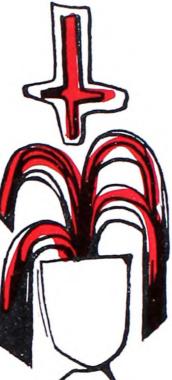
#### FOOTNOTES

- 1. Divino Afflante Spiritu, quoted from Rome and the Study of Sacred Scripture (Grail, 1953), p. 96.
- 2. As will become evident in the course of this paper we follow the opinion that Paul is not the author of this letter. The question of the author's true identity is treated extensively in a variety of commentaries; Cf. "The Epistle to the Hebrews" in New Testament Reading Guide, pp. 4-6; C. Spicq, O.P., L'Epître aux Hébreux, Vol. I, pp. 197-219; T. Welk, C.P.P.S., Nuntius Aulae (1968), pp. 145-160.
- Philo lived c. 40 B.C.-40 A.D. Cf. F. J. Bonnard, A.A., A Short History of Philosophy, trans. Edward A. Maziarz, C.PP.S. (Desclee Cie, 1955), p. 171.
- 4. Timaeus, 29b, 483.
- 5. Quaestiones et Solutiones in Exodum, ii :52.
- 6. "Celui-ci exploite, par conséquent, l'idéalisme et exemplarisme platonicien selon lequel le monde métaphysique des idées est le monde de l'essence qui seul a une valeur propre; le monde de l'expérience sensible et de la manifestation n'en est qu'une imitation imparfaite, et constitue un degré très inférieur de l'eschelle des êtres. Or Hébr. est certainment influencé par cette conception philosophique; il la met en oeuvre dans son argumentation apologétique." Spicq, op. cit., p. 72.
- 7. Op. Cit., p. 39-94. Note particularly pp. 49, 56, 58, 65.
- 8. In the past some have been reluctant to recognize Alexandrian philosophy as a vehicle worthy of an inspired author. This seems over-cautious, for the important thing is what the author intended to say, not how he says it. By way of comparison, the simple cosmology of the Old Testament writers does not impair their message.
- 9. Charakter tes upostaseos autou. The word Charakter signifies basically an imprint, a stamp. Used abstractly it came to designate a quality of soul. The meaning here is that Christ possesses God's nature, is "God's double."
- 10. Cf. 5, 6.10; 6, 20; 7, 3.18, 24.25.28; 9, 25; 10, 10.
- 11. Though the priesthood of Melchizedek is presented as an eternal priesthood, it too is an imperfect foreshadowing of Christ's priesthood. If it were of the same level of perfection, there would be no need for Christ's sacrifice. Cf. 7, 11. C. Spicq suggests that Hebrews' use of the Melchizedek argument, so strange to the modern mind, is typically Alexandrian and indeed borrowed from Philo himself. The author of Hebrews does not however follow Philo slavishly. For Philo, Melchizedek was a symbol of right reason that would lead man to justice and the joys of peace through truth. Hebrews sees him as a prefiguration of Christ, the true source of justice and truth.
- 12. Cf. 7, 26; 9, 25; 10, 11.
- 13. There are twenty-four direct quotations and some forty-seven references or illusions.
- 14. "On ne saurait trop souligner que l'auteur de Hébr. n'a rien d'un

psittaciste ni d'un plagiaire, qui reproduirait textuellement ou transposerait grossièrement les idées et la langue d'un modèle. C'est un maître qui a son style et sa pensée propres; . . ." C. Spicq, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

- For a detailed study of the relationship of Hebrews with the Synoptic tradition, Saint Paul, and especially with Saint John, cf. C. Spicq, op. cit., pp. 92-168.
- 16. A. Cody, O.S.B., Heavenly Sanctuary and Liturgy in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Grail Publications, 1960), pp. 77-86.
- The term axiological derives from the greek axios worthy, of value.
   We are more familiar with another derivative axiom.
- 18. 2. 17; cf 5, 1; Rom. 8, 3; Gal. 4, 4.
- 19. 7, 26; cf I Jn 2, 1; Jn 9, 31; 8, 46.
- 20. Cf. C. Spicq, op. cit., p. 295.
- In the rich Christology of Hebrews Christ is presented as creator (1, 3); guide of the world (1, 3); as king (7, 1-3); as prophet (1, 2; 3, 5). But it is his role as priest that chiefly concerns Hebrews: iερεῦs 5, 6; 7, 11. 14. 17. 20; 8, 4; ἀρχιερεῦs 2, 17; 3, 1; 4; 5, 10; 6, 20; 7, 26; 8, 1; 9, 11. To this aspect of the salvific activity of Christ we limit ourselves in the present study.
- 22. C. Spicq, op. cit., p. 293.
- 23. The phrase in 9, 11: "he has passed through the greater more perfect tent...not of the created order" has stumped interpreters. Some suggest that reference is to Christ's body; some see a reference to Mary; others consider it a reference to the eternal heavens, the antechamber to the presence of God.
- 24. In Hebrews there is no extended treatise on the nature of sin. It is mentioned only in terms of its expiation by Christ. For Hebrews sin is basically an attitude of soul that embraces the lie and rejects the truth. In the Old Testament God showed his people the way, but many grumbled and refused to follow because they lacked faith (12, 15). They were guilty of disobedience and would not reach the land God had shown them (3, 7); 4,6.11; 3, 18; 11, 31. This description of sin as straying from the path reflects the root meaning of one Hebrew word for sin hatah: to miss the mark, to lose the way (3, 12; 4, 2). The real sin is the refusal to accept Christ as sent by God as savior, the refusal to follow the way He has shown.
- 25. Cf. 4, 16; 7, 19.25; 10, 1; Rom. 5, 2; Eph. 1, 4; 3, 12; Col. 1, 22.
- 26. Compare Rom. 4, 25; I Cor. 15, 13.
- 27. C. Spicq. op. cit., p. 281.





# THE PRECIOUS BLOOD AND SANCTIFICATION

If a man were asked to describe himself as man, he would probably say that he is "rational" or "free." By such properties a man is adequately distinguished from his fellow creatures in the world. *Rational animal* was once considered the most precise definition and the highest encomium of man. *Freedom* seems to have displaced reason as the chief characteristic of contemporary man, or perhaps *spirit*.

What will be man's most telling trait in the future cannot even be conjectured, so vast is the potential of this self-creating being. There is nothing about him, it is true, but what is relative to his present, derived from

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his past and indicative of his future. At the same time he is neither encompassed nor exhausted by time — or any other dimension for that matter. Man is dynamic, evolving, autocreative, and hence self-surpassing. Man is a mystery!

God, on the other hand, is everything as being that man is not. Is man rational? God is truth! Is man free? God is love! Is man becoming? God *is*!

Yes, God and man are opposites, not in the sense of contradictories or contraries; for to be comparable beings must belong to the same genus. They are opposites inasmuch as they are incomparably different. The properties of man, at whatever stage of his evolution you consider him, are never properties of God. Conversely, the attributes of God are never attributable to man. That is why the past spoke of God as ineffable or indefinable — and perhaps why some today speak of Him as meaningless or dead. To biblical peoples, however, that is, to peoples nurtured on divine revelation rather than on mere human relevance, God is first and foremost HOLY!

## "THE HOLY ONE"

The theory of Rudolf Otto, that all religion is grounded in man's awareness of the *holy*, is widely accepted by students of comparative religion. What is thus seriously proposed by science is in fact a primary datum of biblical revelation. True, the God of Israel first appears in history as *El Shaddai* and *Yahweh Sebaoth*, the Warrior God. True, He is distinguished from other Semitic deities as the one who actually dwells with His people as Father and Spouse. True, also, that He is Lord of the universe, the forces of which are at His instant command, the treasures of which He has lavished on man who is created in His image, the wonders of which are signs of His mercy and fidelity. True are all of these affirmations, but behind them all is the obvious and emphatic difference between God and the world. They are separated by an unbridgeable abyss. God is simply He who is different, uncommon, transcendent, incomparable, unique. In a word, God is HOLY!

The Hebrews did not arrive at this attribute by the *via negativa* of philosophy, for they lacked both the mentality and the vocabulary. The negative attributes of God, for example His infinity, immensity, eternity, and the like, so precise and meaningful to philosophers, are not biblical terms. The nearest one comes to such concepts in the Bible is perhaps the following verse from the Psalms:

> For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past or as a watch in the night (Ps 90, 4).

To the Hebrews Yahweh was not simply unlike anything they experienced, nor yet a being they could know by way of contrast. No, the God of the Hebrews is neither similar nor dissimilar to anything in the world. He is simply and altogether different.

A second method of philosophy, the *via eminentiae*, which results in such expression as omnipotence, transcendence, everlasting, supernatural, and so forth, is just as foreign to the Bible as the former way. Deutero-Isaiah comes close to it in the following verse:

> For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts (Is 55, 9).

When the inspired authors speak of God it is always by straightforward predication: God is not just *not* . . . nor just greater *than* . . . God positively *is* . . . So simple and direct is the language of the Bible that its concreteness (God is my rock), and especially its anthropomorphisms (God was angry!), have aways been a source of embarrassment to Rabbi and to humanist alike. It were far better, did we not have to speak of God at all. As a Moslem mystic somewhere observes: "All men know that the majesty of the Lord is unutterable — yet who can withstand the desire to utter it?"

According to Judaeo-Christian belief, neither the name nor the nature of God is discovered by rational investigation. What we know about God has come to us through revelation, through selfdisclosure. This self-communication on the part of God is, to be sure, cast in human language, otherwise it would be unintelligible. But even here the accent is on "self" rather than on "communication," which shows that it is knowledge by way of recognition or awareness, rather than comprehension or insight. Now it is in the recognition of God as the "self" who is incomparably and uniquely "other" that the inspired authors seem to locate his holiness. Here is the world, they seem to say, but there is God; here

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the common, there the holy; here the profane, there the sacred (cf. Lv 10, 10). Thus the ground of God's holiness is His otherness.

Rooting God's holiness in His otherness poses a problem for many minds today. One who is totally and altogether other, is either foreign and hence unknown, hostile and hence hated, or aloof and hence irrelevant. Small wonder that God is dead to those whose only reality is personal meaning and whose only value is immediate relevance. In their search for identity the other seems to be a barrier. Alienation or indifference is their usual response. I am neither a psychologist nor a sociologist, but, if I may be permitted a judgment based on life on a college campus, this is one of the basic postures of modern youth. To many of them the holiness of God, indeed, reverence, silence, liturgy, and everything related to holiness, is judged ridiculous, and is, in fact, ridiculed. Last winter when one of our lay professors wished his class "a happy and holy Christmas," he was hooted with derision and obscenities.

Happily such is not the only reaction of the contemporary world to otherness. To the more thoughtful of our generation the other is indispensable to the self. The other not only does not alienate or threaten the self; it actually creates, sustains and fulfills the self.

In the terms of Martin Buber, the I is meaningless without the *Thou*. Or as Dean Martin sings it, "You're nobody till somebody loves you."

Yes, love is generally the great awakener to the truth, the value, the beauty, indeed, even the holiness, of the other. If I may be permitted another observation based on my campus experience, holiness may indeed "turn our young people off," but love definitely "turns them on."

To the contemporary mind, therefore, the other is ambivalent. He is seen now as *for* the self, at another time as *against* the self. These same attitudes are applied at the present time to God, to the Church, to society, in fact, to everybody and to everything. Through general use certain terms get attached to specific frames of mind. Perhaps this explains why in today's world holiness is hopelessly "out," while love is ecstatically "in."

This is more than a mere matter of semantics; it is a deliberate stance taken by modern man. Holiness is most widely seen as a wall that divides and sets the other against the self, that builds

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a barrier between God and man. It is rarely seen as the flower whose fragrance and color attract the self to the other. How this heresy came to birth is academic; that it continues to be propagated is tragic. For the God of the Old Testament, Yahweh, is the "the Holy One," and the God of the New Testament, the Father, is "love." And, as Yahweh and the Father are one, so holiness and love are in reality one.

## "SANCTIFY YOURSELVES"

Until modern times no Christian doubted that the redemption of the world by Christ was an historical fact. Christians may have argued over its meaning, but they never denied its historicity. What was true of redemption was also true of justification, understood as the application of redemption to individual men by faith. However they differed in explaining or preaching the mystery, Christians agreed that justification was an incident in the life of the individual believer. Christian unanimity on this essential belief is perhaps nowhere so eloquently expressed as in the sincere and concerned question of the Fundamentalist: "Are you saved, brother?" We can put it down as certain, therefore, that for the traditional Christian justification is identified with a momentous and hence conscious incident in a man's religious life.

The opposite pole of justification is, according to Paul, glorification. This too is an event in salvation-history. In the case of Christ, the Redeemer Himself, it is the counterpart of His passion and death, namely His resurrection and ascension into heaven. The total mystery of redemption consists thus in both the humiliation and the exaltation of the Lord Christ (cf. Ph 2, 5-11). Applied to those who have been justified by faith in Christ, glorification consists primarily in their final revelation as sons of God in the *parousia* (cf. Rm 8, 19). This again is an historical event, but one that lies in the future, namely the *eschaton*, when Christ "delivers the kingdom to God the Father . . . that God may be everything to everyone" (cf. 1 Cor 15, 24-28).

Between the moments of justification and glorification lies the time of sanctification by the Spirit (cf. 1 Pt 1, 2). Sanctification is essentially a temporal process, an eschatological movement, a growth to perfection. Applied to the Church in its entirety, to all the Pilgrim People of God, it is that which accounts for its progress

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in history. The signs of this progress are not always or immediately evident; for, like every community of Adam's children, it proceeds towards its goal by stops and starts, pulsates on the way amid routs and rallies, and is at all times subject to the vagaries of human acceptance, rejection, and indifference. At times, however, the workings of the Holy Spirit are so manifest that, to the eyes of faith at least, the progress of the Church is unmistakable. Of this the earliest Christians had not the slightest doubt, thanks to the profusion of the Spirit's charismatic gifts. A similar conviction is shared by many today, on account of the charisms of the Ecumenical Movement, which originated in the Protestant world, and the Second Vatican Council, which is in part the Roman Catholic response to that movement.

Generally, however, sanctification is understood in reference to the individual believer, therefore as a biographical growth instead of an historical process. From one point of view the Christian life on earth is, or ought to be, nothing but the logical outcome of justification. Once a believer has committed himself to Christ in faith, it remains for him only to fulfill that commitment. There is neither growth nor development; there is only the living out of this faith in the circumstances of daily life. The grace of justification merited by Christ and applied to the Christian in faith, is salutary in sum and substance. It can indeed be lost by sin, but it can be regained by repentance, because of the inexhaustive merits of our Savior and the infinite mercy of our heavenly Father. One has only to live in faith and righteousness to share in the glory that is to come.

From another point of view sanctification does not consist merely in being righteous, but in pursuing or securing righteousness. The former view looks back to grace received through justification; the latter strains forward to the final grace of glorification. The first sees grace as a "leaven" energizing the whole batch of dough; the latter as a "mustard seed" growing into the greatest of shrubs (cf. Mt 13, 32-33). Neither of these views is wrong; both are biblical. They are only different facets of the mystery of the kingdom of God. In last analysis it is this, I think, that has been the source of past conflict in theology, namely the failure of both Catholics and Protestants to safeguard and proclaim the process of sanctification as a mystery.

## "THE SPIRIT OF HOLINESS"

If the mystery of justification has been traditionally called "first grace," then "second grace" is an apt designation of the mystery of sanctification. The first is, according to the Synoptists, the inauguration of the "kingdom of God," according to Paul, a "new creation in Christ," and according to John, a birth to "everlasting life." The grace of justification was first given to the world in the Paschal Mystery (cf. 2 Cor 5, 15); it is applied to the individual believer in baptism (cf. Rom 6, 3-11). "Second grace," on the other hand, is the elaboration, development, evolution, maturation, or more simply, the growth of "first grace." Everywhere the New Testament bears witness to this process. Mark compares it to a growing seed:

The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed upon the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he knows not how. The earth produces of itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear (Mk 4, 26-28).

Paul uses a characteristic mixture of metaphors to describe the process:

But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift . . . for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ . . . Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love (Ep 4, 7-16); see also 2, 19-22).

John sees it, finally, as an on-going process in the world:

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come (Jn 16, 13).

The passages just quoted from John and Paul show that sanctification is properly the mission of the Holy Spirit. In trinitarian terms, the Father so loved the world that He gave His only Son (Jn 3, 16) — this is first grace. The Son, in turn, so loved the world that He gave His Spirit (Jn 16, 7) — this is second grace. Thus, He who is the Love of the Father and the Son becomes for us the Love that enables us to confess that "Jesus is Lord" (1 Cor 12, 3) and impels us to cry out, "Abba! Father!" (Rom 8, 15).

It is not without significance that the Gift of the Father and the Son is frequently designated in the Scriptures and invariably denoted in tradition as the "Spirit of Holiness" or the "Holy Spirit." If, as we saw above, the fundamental attribute of Yahweh is holiness and that of the Father is love, then the incomprehensible yet indubitable self-gift of God to man is most aptly identified with the Holy Spirit. He has other attributes, it is true, which reveal specific aspects of His mission to mankind, but that which has come to be seen as His special task has understandably become His name. And in this very name we see again the truth that holiness and love are one.

On a more practical level, the process of sanctification seems, in the Old Testament, to aim at transforming the children of Abraham into the people of God, and on the level of the person, at making him holy. This was the whole intent of the Law of the Covenant.

I am the Lord your God, who have separated you from the peoples. You shall therefore make a distinction between the clean beast and the unclean, and between the unclean bird and the clean  $\ldots$ . You shall be holy to me; for I the Lord am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine (Lv 20, 24-26).

This text shows that the rationale of the Law, that is, of the commandments and all the legal and ritual prescriptions of the Torah, was to "separate" God's people from all that was considered common, profane, elemental, secular — in a word, unholy. It was not a set of tabus, not even a norm of righteousness, let alone a restriction of liberty, but a precious gift, a generous grace, a treasure beyond compare.

He declares his word to Jacob, his statutes and ordinances to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any other nation; they do not know his ordinances. Praise the Lord! (Ps 147, 19-20).

But the Torah was much more than mere statute or ordinance; it was the fruit of Yahweh's subtle presence and influence among His people. In the form in which it has come down to us, the Torah is the mystery of Israel's exodus from the darkness of Egypt, his mortification (in the original sense of making as if dead) in the barrenness of the Desert, and his joyful passover into the light of the Promised Land. Thus the way of Israel is nothing else but the way of the Lord (*derek Yahweh*).

The prophets of Israel likewise saw holiness as the distinctive attribute of both God and His people. The implication of holiness in daily life, however, is spelled out mainly in terms of fidelity to the Covenant. Hosea was the first to describe the infidelity of Israel in terms of fornication and harlotry, therefore in terms of unfaithful love. In refusing to "love the Lord their God with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their might" (Dt 6, 4) Israel refused to be holy as God is holy. These same themes are found in the writings of the intratestamental period of Israel's history, but are caught up in the doctrine of Wisdom, which the Deuteronomist had already associated with holiness.

Behold (says Moses) I have taught you statutes and ordinances, as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land which you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them; for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? (Dt 4, 5-7).

Finally, in the deuterocanonical (or if you will, the apocryphal) book of Wisdom, it was pointed out long ago, the author's concept of wisdom is an anticipated theology of the sanctifying grace of God.

In the New Testament John says bluntly, "God is love" (1 Jn 4, 16). Jesus declares with equal bluntness:

A new commandment I give you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another (Jn 14, 34-35).

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This means that what truly distinguishes Christians from the rest of men, just as it really distinguishes God from the world, is love. It is not to be confused with human love, which, as *eros*, is instinctive, or as *philia*, is spiritual or rational. It is specifically *agape*, that is, the love of the Father, who "so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (Jn 3, 16), and of the Son, who "did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself" (Phil 2, 6-7). By human standards this a foolish, impossible, meaningless love. Jesus said as much in His Sermon on the Mount.

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Mt 5, 43-48).

The love, therefore, in which the Christian shares, which he is to imitate in this life (cf. Eph 5, 1), is nothing short of absolute, universal, infinite, perfect love.

Obviously it is impossible for anyone but God to define and understand this love. Yet, since it is revealed to us by God, it cannot be without meaning for us. If I read revelation correctly, it means that the absolute Self who is God sets aside, as it were, His inviolable and inviolate identity, and by an act of incomprehensible condescension becomes the Other in respect to man. Through His total Self-Gift, the divine Lover, though altogether self-sufficient and self-fulfilled in the Trinity, becomes the Beloved of mankind. In assuming the condition of His creatures, the Creator loses nothing indeed, nor does He acquire anything in the order of being or perfection.

What does happen is a change in the meaning of God, and this is not in Him but in man. God now means love, and love means self-abandonment. To the degree, therefore, that man loves as God loves, to that degree man is "separated" from all that is not

of God; to the degree that man imitates God in not counting the image of the divine Self in him a thing to be grasped, to that degree man becomes like God, wholly and holily other. Thus again we see that love and holiness are one.

# "THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT"

The ideas of *blood*, *life*, and *self* are inseparable in biblical tradition. The identification of blood with life has been amply documented in our previous Study Weeks; that of life with the person as a whole — not merely the soul — is commonly admitted by exegetes. It follows that blood is an apt symbol of the self.

In christological terms the Precious Blood is, therefore, not only because of the hypostatic union (if I dare interject a scholastic term) but also because of its biblical meaning, an appropriate metonym of Christ. From another angle the Bible sees man not only as an individual with a proper name, but as everything that the person is and has and does. Man is not fragmented by the East as he is by the West. Thus Israel is not only seen as Jacob, but most often as his twelve sons and all their descendants. Similarly Christ is not merely the God-Man Jesus, but His life in its entirety, His death and resurrection, all the members of His risen body, in brief, the whole mystery of redemption.

Furthermore those things which are outstanding in a man, as, for example, his distinctive trait, his principal mission, his greatest achievement, and so forth, are termed his "glory" in the Scriptures. By this glory of his he is usually memorialized and symbolized; in many instances it becomes his title or surname.

We need not search far for that which is precisely the glory of Christ; there is an entire book devoted to it, namely the Gospel of John. By Christ's own and frequent testimony, the "hour" of His glory is the moment of His exaltation on the cross (Jn 12, 23-33; cf. also 13, 31ff; 17, 1ff). I need not dwell on this point now, since it was in part the subject of my paper in our last Study Week. I wish only to recall the position I took then and still hold; namely, that Christ's victimhood effected by the shedding of His Blood is the most comprehensive and, at the same time, the most precise symbol of the mystery of redemption. Let us examine this proposition in terms of our present context.

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Jesus himself taught, "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15, 13). While this can be affirmed of true human love, Jesus was not in fact speaking of *philia*, but of *agape*. He did not mean the sacrifice of mere temporal life, but the surrender of life in the sense of self-surrender. He meant that absolute and all but incredible love which emptied God so that the emptiness of man might be "filled with all the fullness of God" (Ep 3, 19). Since blood is equated with life and self, it follows that the poured out Blood of the Savior is the providentially chosen symbol of divine love. It is, to be precise, the historical sacrament of God's Self-Gift to man.

That the Precious Blood is likewise the divinely appointed sign of holiness, is clear at every level of revelation in the New Testament. The spilling of that Blood on Calvary signaled the hour of Christ's passover from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God, as the Synoptists proclaim, or, in the rich terms of Paul and John, the passage from bondage to freedom, from the flesh to the spirit, from the old to the new, from darkness to light, from death to life. But this is not all. The immediate result of this transition is not mere separation or otherness, which is implicit in holiness, but both temporal and eternal opposition between the world and God. As Jesus clearly taught:

Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but the sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother . . . He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it (Mt 10, 34-39).

With gentle irony Jesus told His disciples:

I have said all this to you to keep you from falling away. They will put you out of the synagogues; indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. And they will do this because they have not known the Father, nor me (Jn 16, 1-3).

Finally, the Precious Blood, particularly as a living stream flowing from the Savior's riven side, is an apt symbol of the process

of sanctification. Dying to the world and rising to God, or what is the same thing, being "conformed to the image" of Christ (Rom 8, 29), has too often been represented as but a single moment in historical time. The truth is: Such a transformation is a dynamic, progressive event. This is brought out by Luke who portrays the mystery of redemption as a long, slow journey to Jerusalem. His great intercalation (9, 51-19, 27) begins with this significant observation: "When the days drew near for him to be received up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem." A couple chapters later Christ is quoted: "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished" (12, 50). If I may use a cliché, "He died a thousand deaths" before He could say from the cross, "It is finished" (Jn 19, 30).

Now what was true of the Shepherd was to be true also of His sheep. The warfare between the Church and the world is described in the book of Revelation as the persecution of the woman by the dragon.

And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had borne the male child. But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. (Thus frustrated) the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus (Rv 12, 13-17).

Just a few verses before the author had said of the woman's offspring:

And they conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death (Rv 12, 11).

In the classical tradition of mystical theology, the process of sanctification is described as a gradual purgation and illumination of the soul till it reaches the goal of transforming union. Finally, if there is truth in the insights of modern philosophy, which sees man as *becoming* rather than as *being*, then it follows that his sanctification by the Spirit is not instantaneous but progressive. This is, in fact, the heart of modern theology on death, which it sees as the seal of a man's whole life. Thus the Precious Blood is the sacrament

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of both the love and the holiness of God, as well as an appropriate symbol of man's sanctification by the Spirit. Indeed, some of the ancient Fathers of the Church saw it as the symbol of the Holy Spirit.

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I should like to conclude with two reflections on the contemporary scene. It is no secret that contemplative orders of religious are in trouble, if not in danger of extinction. Departures, exclaustrations, a dearth of vocations, even pressures from vigorous apostolic movements in the Church — these and many other factors are evoking a soul-searching on their part for identity and relevance. On the other hand, it is a well documented fact that many active religious are petitioning their chapters for a temporary cloister, so that they may follow the Spirit wherever He leads. They may be seeking no more than the divine Master provided for His weary disciples after their first trial mission: rest and leisure (cf. Mk 6, 30-32).

But the cloister is more than an occasional retreat or workshop; it is a stable form of witness to the self-abandonment of God in love and to His separation from the world in holiness. In imitation of the night life of Jesus (cf. Lk 6, 12), it is a vocation to prayer, to liturgy, to silence, to sacrifice, in a word, to what Aquinas long ago equated with holiness, namely religion. In my estimation it would be a dreadful mistake to extinguish this charism of the Holy Spirit in a world so alien as ours today to the true life of the night. Surely contemplatives have as much right to their cloister as does the militant apostle to his prison cell.

This brings me to my second reflection. If contemporary secularism says anything, it speaks of the glory of man by proclaiming the death of God. Self-involvement, self-fulfillment, self-identity are its slogans. How contrary to the advice of Paul!

There must be no competition among you, no conceit; everybody is to be self-effacing. Always consider the other person to be better than yourself, so that nobody thinks of his own interests first, but everybody thinks of the other people's interests instead. In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus, who . . . emptied himself (Phil 2, 3-7, Jerusalem Bible translation).

The hurly-burly of anti-poverty programs, of anti-racist parades, of anti-Vietnam protests, often match the hurry-scurry of business and industry, of science and technology, of war and destruction. It's not that these things are wrong or bad, for the blood of Abel will always cry out for justice, and creation will continue to groan in travail until it is redeemed, (cf. Rom. 8, 22-23). It's just that there is so much noise! To hear the Word of God silence is requisite, as we are reminded in the Christmas liturgy.

When peaceful silence lay over all, and night had run the half of her swift course, down from the heavens, from the royal throne, leapt your all-powerful Word (Ws 18, 14-15).

Silence is no less necessary to perceive the Spirit, for, as Jesus enlightened Nicodemus:

The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit (Jn 3, 8).

The needed remedy against contemporary secularism, it seems to me, is a renewed devotion (in the sense of self-abandonment) and a modern witness (in the sense of charismatic sign) to the loving, holy, life-giving stream of the Precious Blood, as it was manifested long ago in Paul:

Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith; that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Phil 3, 8-14).

RUDOLPH BIERBERG, C.PP.S.

# THE PRECIOUS BLOOD . AND JUSTIFICATION

I am grateful for the invitation to be with you, the more so because the concept of "the Blood," to which you are so dedicated, brings us to the very heart of our Christian faith. This is the source of the Church's power, life, and unity. To be talking about that is, I am sure, the highest privilege any theologian can have.

The topic suggested to me is "The Blood of Christ and Justification." I have taken the liberty to modify the assignment somewhat, and to concentrate my remarks on the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John, with occasional excursions into other parts of that gospel. The chapter opens with the gospel appointed for Laetare Sunday, the Feeding of the Five Thousand. I shall concentrate in particular on the climax of the discourse, the verses in which our Lord summons us to eat His flesh and drink His blood. Let me read that section (Jn 6, 47-58), according to the Revised Standard Version:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh."

The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever."

My paper falls into two parts: I) Understanding the Chapter (John 6), and II) Some Implications. In Part I, I begin by establishing some presuppositions, and then proceed to an interpretation.

## I. UNDERSTANDING JOHN 6

## A. Presuppositions

I am assuming that this chapter reflects and preserves the kind of conversation that went on very early in the Christian era, between the Jewish-Christian community and their Jewish brethren, and even within the Christian community itself. A dialogue of this sort occurred under the Spirit of the risen Christ, and in effect continued the conversation that originated within Jesus' own life and ministry. The distinctive feature of the post-resurrection dialogue is that the evidence is all in. The crucified Jesus has said "It is

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finished" (Jn 18, 30). God the Father has "set his seal" on Jesus, the Son of man, by raising him from the dead (Jn 6, 27). Thus the great "sign" which the Scribes and Pharisees had demanded of Jesus, according to the synoptic record (Mt 12, 38-40; 16, 1-4), has been given. In the synoptics it is called the "sign of Jonah." In John it is called the destroying and raising of the temple (2, 18-22), or the "lifting up" of the Son of Man, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness (3, 14-15). Though, on the face of it, our dialogue would seem to have its setting in the debate between Jesus and Judaism before that climactic event, that appears to be more a matter of literary form than of necessary historical reality. The Gospel of John is filled with signals that the event of Jesus' death and resurrection has occurred, is known by all parties, and is central to the debate. The Old Testament is over. It ended when Jesus died. Judaism is being summoned now to pass through the cross, and stand in the New Testament of Jesus' flesh and blood, with the disciples who confess His name and have seen His glory.1

That is the first presupposition. The second is that the discourse of our chapter, and indeed of much of the Gospel of John, is a development of a familiar, though uncited, Old Testament text.<sup>2</sup> It is the text which Jesus quotes in response to the first temptation (Mt 4, 4, Lk 4, 4), from Deuteronomy 8, 3).

And he (that is, Yahweh, the Lord) humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know; that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but that man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.

In the Hebrew the word translated "everything" is simply the adjectival-noun *kol*, meaning "all." The Septuagint, quoted in Matthew 4, 4 and Luke 4, 4, renders it as *rhema*, or "word." That seems to be the intention of the original, where God's "commandments" lie in the immediate context, though it is not impossible that the manna itself was also thought of as "proceeding from the mouth of God."

In any case, there are many indications that the argument in John 6 presupposes Deuteronomy 8, 3 as its text. First, there is the common reference to *hunger*. "The Lord let you hunger," says Moses. In our chapter Jesus implies that the multitude is hungry,

when he raises the question of human commerce, "How are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" and then feeds the people out of the little boy's lunch basket. The crowds seem to detect the analogy to the ancient history of the manna, for they first infer that Jesus must be the promised "prophet," like Moses (6, 14; Dt 18, 15), and then that He must be their messianic "king" (6, 15). Presumably they have in mind a zealotic king, who would lead Israel to victory in its ultimate, universal and eschatological war, as Joshua of old had led Israel in the conquest of Canaan, and as David, the anointed King, had completed and confirmed that conquest. The manna-feeding of old presages the eschatological fulfillment of Israel's ultimate hunger and hope for the kingdom of God.

Secondly, the concept of life is fundamental in both texts life not merely in terms of physical existence, but life with the quality of God Himself, and of a people who know and derive their life from Him. We must think of that old wilderness history as a kind of epitome of Israel's total history, like a little slide in a projector, about to be magnified on God's eschatological, end-time screen. In the past lies the bondage in and deliverance from Egypt, in the future the life God promises in the land He will give them (Dt 8, 1), but for the moment they are still in the wilderness. As that old promise was fulfilled, however (Jos 21, 43-45), so in Jesus' day God's people awaited the final fulfillment, when everything seen in its smaller but authentic form in the old fulfillment would be enlarged to the ultimate. "Life" under God in the land (Deut. 8, 1) is written large as "eternal life" on the eschatological screen, just as the miniature "land" or kingdom of David would ultimately extend "from sea to sea and from the river (Euphrates) to the ends of the earth" (Ps 72, 8; Zech 9, 10; Dan 7, 14). The theme occurs also in the synoptics, for example, in the lawyer's question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Lk 10, 25). Jesus' reply, "Do this, and you will live" (v. 28), draws on the "life" terminology in the old history, e.g., Lv 18, 5; Dt 5, 33. In John, of course, the concept of "life" or "eternal life" is far more prominent than the parallel concept of the "kingdom."

Thirdly, Jesus clearly confirms the point of Deuteronomy 8, 3, that "man does not live by bread alone." If all the people want from Him is more bread for their stomachs, or if all they want is

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the domination and glory they anticipate in the eschatological kingdom, they miss the whole point of God's dealing with them. Jesus will not be the servant of that kind of ambition, for this is not really the *life* God ultimately wants them to have. The wilderness story should make that clear. "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died" (Jn 6, 49. 58). Or if they have the notion, in their zealotic passion, that Jesus as Messiah might supply the logistical needs of food and drink in a long holy war against Rome, they just are not listening to their God. All they would get for such an enterprise would be death.

Fourthly, if the Jews addressed in John 6 really want eternal life, they must get it from the source to which Deuteronomy 8, 3 points them, "Man lives by all that proceeds *out of the mouth of the Lord.*" They must listen to what their God is saying. John 6, 45 quotes from Isaiah 54, 13:

"It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Every one who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me."

The source of the true life is the Word of God. They have it in the Scriptures (Jn 5, 39-40), and in Moses (Jn 5, 46-47), and now in the words of Jesus. "The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life" (Jn 6, 63). Peter's confession confirms the point, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (v. 68). The words of Jesus belong to "all that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord," by which "man lives."

Fifthly, the argument becomes even more profound. What the Lord says and teaches is not expressed merely in the words that Jesus speaks, but also in His person and work. God speaks in Jesus' encounter with Judaism, above all in the consummation of that encounter when Jesus is crucified, and when God sets His "seal" and verdict on that event by raising Him from the dead (Jn 6, 27).

Notice the word "proceeds" in Deuteronomy 8, 3: "Man lives by all that *proceeds* out of the mouth of the Lord." The Gospel of John applies that word to Jesus. "I *proceeded* and *came forth* from God" and again, "He *sent me*" (Jn 8, 42; compare also 17, 7). To reject Jesus, or to reject His words, is to reject God Himself and the life God wants His people to have from His mouth.

For out of God's mouth proceeds both His *Word* and His *Breath* or Spirit (6, 63; compare "the Spirit of truth, who *proceeds* from the Father," 15, 26). I suspect that all this Johannine terminology, with "the Word," or "Spirit," or "Person of Jesus" as subject, and with "proceed" or "come forth" or "sent" as the verb, has its fundamental root in the Christian exposition of Deuteronomy 8, 3, a text which, as Matthew 4, 4 suggests, meant a great deal to Jesus personally in His life and ministry.

Sixthly, against this background, it is altogether appropriate and meaningful that what "proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord" as the source of man's "life" shall now be designated "the true *bread from heaven*" which "my Father gives you" (Jn 6, 32). The fathers of old were to learn, through their hunger and the miracle of the manna, to receive their life as a gift from God alone. But if the manna sustained the fathers only for a while, the bread now given from heaven is the source of the eschatological "life" they have been longing for, the answer to the ultimate hunger and thirst, not only of Judaism but of the world (6, 33-35).

Seventhly, to introduce the metaphor of "bread" for the "Word" of God, however, immediately invites the further metaphor of "eating" for "believing." The argument now bridges the two clauses of the key sentence in Deuteronomy 8, 3: "Man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by all that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord." We get life from bread by eating it. We get life from the Word of God by believing what God says and promises, and in such faith serving and obeying Him. Thus the concept of "believing" is fundamental in John 6, as indeed, throughout this gospel. "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent" (6, 29). "He who believes in him should have eternal life" (v. 40). Yet when Jesus is called "the bread of life" (v. 35), which "comes down from heaven (that is, from God), and gives life to the world" (v. 33), the attendant metaphor of reception is that of "eating" (v. 35). Thus, John 6, 48-51:

"I am the *bread* of life. Your fathers *ate* the *manna* in the wilderness, and they died (for 'man does not live by bread alone'). This is the *bread* which comes down *from heaven*, that a man may *eat* of it and not die. I am the living *bread* which came down from heaven; if any one *eats* of this bread, he will live forever."

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Thus man *lives* by *eating* the *bread* which "proceeds out of mouth of the Lord," that is, which comes down from heaven.

Eighthly, this brings us to the climactic verses I read to you at the beginning. It becomes very clear now, that when Jesus in His own Person is referred to as "the bread of life," or even as "the Word made flesh" (In 1, 1-3, 14), such terminology is focused squarely on one single and narrow event, that of the cross (and with it, of course, the resurrection). The "glory" which the disciples beheld (1, 14), and to which they bear witness (3, 11-15), is concentrated in Good Friday and Easter, in the Son of Man cast like a seed into the ground, and lifted up from the earth so as to draw all men to Himself (12, 23-32). Not in the general awe of a "teacher sent from heaven" and doing great "signs" (3,2), not in the sentimental sweetness of the Christmas story, but in the blood and gore of the crucifixion, are we to hear the Word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord, or to eat the bread which is our life. Thus John 6 once again picks up the familiar demand of the Jews for a "sign from heaven" (v. 30), and it answers the demand by driving men to Golgotha, the place of the skull. There it is that the Word of God speaks loud and clear, first in judgment and wrath on the ungodliness of men, beginning with the ungodliness of God's own people! - and then grace and truth, sonship, freedom and life.

This is the point of the reference to "eating the flesh" and "drinking the blood" of the Son of Man. You wanted a sign? Here it is! Now *eat it*! God speaks and has spoken here. Will you not now *listen* and *believe* Him! You want eternal life, deliverance from wrath and death, the fulfillment of the eschatological promises. Here it is, in this "bread from heaven" which "proceeds from the mouth of the Lord." And you cannot evade it by asking "*How* can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (v. 52)

"Truly, truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me." (Jn 6, 53-57)

## B. INTERPRETATION

In a sense what I have done in the way of clarifying presuppositions, already belongs to interpretation. Now, however, it is necessary to develop as well as we can the full implication of this language about the "flesh" and the "blood," both for the disciples of Jesus who spoke this way to one another and to their Jewish brethren in Jesus' name, and for ourselves today.

Notice in the first place that the audience to which this discourse speaks includes both Jews and disciples. According to our first presupposition our chapter preserves significant elements of the continuing dialogue between Jesus' disciples (the post-resurrection Jewish-Christian community under apostolic leadership) and the *lews* (their brethren by race and election under the old covenant, who did not know or confess Jesus as "the Holy One of God," John 6, 69). The dialogue occurs in the synagogue of Capernaum (v. 59), where Jesus was very well known. What the Jews object to is recorded in verses 41-43 and 52. It is above all the cosmic dimension and meaning of the death and resurrection history. They understand the metaphorical language well enough. The problem and the mystery do not derive from any failure on their part to comprehend intellectually the claim which Jesus (in His Church, we are assuming) is now (v. 42b) making - namely, that He is "the bread from heaven," and that life both for Judaism and for the world (v. 51) depends on eating His flesh. We shall say more on this in a moment.

The problem is that they know Jesus well, know His parents, remember how He talked and what He looked like. They do not question the *fact* of His death, apparently not even the fact of His resurrection. But that *life*, their life and the world's, should depend utterly on Jesus' person and on that event, this they cannot see. Not only Jews, however, but even Jesus' own disciples have difficulty with this message. Disciples are mentioned in vv. 60 and 66. These are members of the early Christian community who sense fully and share the offense of the Jews at the drastic and uncompromising demand, that life is to be had only by eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man. "This is a hard saying," they complain (v. 60), and in the end many of Jesus' disciples retreat from it and walk no more with Him (v. 66).

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This brings us to the vital issue of our chapter. The heart of the Christian proclamation is the passion-history and its implications. No man, least of all the nation of Jesus' brethren by race and covenant, can be allowed to ignore or evade or escape from the moment of the cross as though it had not happened, or as though it were merely a passing episode, merely a regrettable tragedy. For the fact is that *God has spoken in that event*, and the voice of God must be heard. God is shouting a Word from heaven, in and through that person and history. God will not be silent. To hear Him is to live, to have eternal life! Not to hear, not to believe, is death, a death from which there can be no escape.

What, then, does the voice from heaven (the "bread from heaven," proceeding out of the mouth of God) have to say? Two things, and yet one. The Word is a word of judgment, and of salvation.

It is a Word of judgment, addressed to Jesus' own people, that is, to the whole of Judaism, still living in and by the Old Testament. To find judgment in the message, and to assert it, is not to be anti-Semitic. Once we know the story as it demands to be known, we shall see ourselves thoroughly in and under its condemnation (and salvation), alongside that Jew whom God is here first addressing. But the Jewish brother must know what he has done, as a committed participant in the law and theology of his people. For not just the few Jews who actually spoke and executed the sentence of death on Jesus in Jerusalem, but the whole system and theology of Judaism is exposed as demonic. The argument reaches a kind of climax at the end of John 8. The Jews who resist and reject Jesus cannot claim to be born of God, for they do not listen to the Word of God. Instead they conspire to silence Jesus (and the Church) by killing Him (Jn 8, 39-47).

Here too, as in chapter six, I take the "words of God" (8, 47) and the reference to Jesus' "glory" (8, 54) and "truth" (8, 32), to imply the message of the cross as the disciples, through the Spirit, proclaimed it. The Jewish audience, identified with the synagogue at Capernaum in John 6, 59, does not want to hear that message. They know full well that it will mean the death of their whole special heritage. They treasure their election, their circumcision, their fleshly birth and descent from Abraham, their city and temple, their law and obedience to it, the kingdom and the glory which is rightly their destiny. Yet the living Jesus, in the Church and by the Spirit,

insists that the titles "Son of Man" and "Son of God", once the heritage of all righteous Israel (Ex 4, 22-23; Dan 7, 13-18), now belong to Jesus alone, that He alone has been glorified and received the kingdom. "On him has God the Father set his seal" (Jn 6, 27).

Therefore Judaism must face up to the cross. The Jew must visit Golgotha, and be contaminated with its gore and death. For every Jew shares the identity of the priests and officers who cried "Crucify him!" (19, 6, 15), who passed on him the sentence of death under the law (19, 7), who sacrificed Him on the principle that "it is expedient that one man should die for the people" (18, 14; 11, 50). The flesh and blood are visibly exposed in Jesus' nakedness and death (19, 24, 34), like the flesh and blood of the paschal lamb. The language of John 6, 53-57 is terrible in its demand. It is not enough now just to look, as in John 3, 14: "Eat it! Eat that flesh, drink that blood!" Nothing could be more abhorrent. Who can eat that uncleanness? Not only is Golgotha already unclean as the place of the skull, outside the Holy City. To eat this flesh is the language of cannibalism! And to drink blood, the very suggestion is enough to send a shock and shudder of horror through the whole tradition of Jewish piety (Lv 17, 10-12).

Yet here is the demand, unequivocal, unrelenting, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you" (6,53). What irony! Jesus' accusers were so careful not to defile themselves when they brought Him before Pontius Pilate. They stayed out of the practorium, so that they "might eat the passover" (18, 28). Well, here is their passover, the lamb, they offered. Now see it through! Come out to Golgotha, outside temple and city, and eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood! Otherwise "you have no life in you" (6, 53). That is the sentence of excommunication against any Jew who refuses to face up to the cross, who will not hear the WORD which God speaks in that event, who still imagines that he can be a Jew, a member of God's holy people, and an heir of life on the old terms, who thinks he can escape and ignore the Word made flesh. For God has spoken. "Man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by all that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord." This is the living bread that came down from heaven. Eat it! This is God talking. Hear Him!

The great paradox, of course, is that in this horrible demand

lies *life* and salvation. "For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (3, 17). True enough, to submit to God's demand, to eat this flesh and drink this blood, is to die. By such eating the Jew leaves the Old Testament behind. He becomes unclean under the law, so that he may be cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Jn 1, 7). But he must do so, says Jesus. The old claims of Judaism will count for nothing.

"That which is *born of the flesh is flesh*," He tells Nicodemus the Pharisee (Jn 3, 6). It is not enough to invoke the doctrine of creation, as though being born in the flesh by God's creative act could qualify one for mercy and salvation. Nor is it enough to be born into the family of Abraham, as though the doctrine of election, sealed by the ability to recite one's genealogy all the way back to the father of the race, could be of any help any more. Only the cross can save, only the Son of Man lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness (3, 14-15). "Look here," says Israel's God, and nowhere else. Yet that is also the glory of the cross! The gore is the glory. The uncleanness is the cleansing. The event of the cross is not the Jew's event only, or Pilate's only, or humanity's only. It is God's act, God's word. It accomplishes and proclaims salvation.

That is why the passion-history is central to the Gospel of John, to all the gospels, and to the whole of the New Testament. Let us take a moment to review the drama of that history, especially from the perspective of John. A key text, to which I have already referred, is John 11, 48-50. The Sanhedrin is in session in Jerusalem, with Caiaphas as the presiding officer. After the raising of Lazarus these Jewish officials are very concerned for the safety of their people, city and nation. "This man performs many signs," they say. "If we let him go on thus, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation."

As these responsible officials assess the situation, a revolt is developing around Jesus. His enthusiastic followers believe that He is God's appointed leader to overthrow Roman authority, and to bring in the universal triumph of Israel. To the Sanhedrin any such revolt can have only tragic consequences. The Romans will crush it by a ruthless display of force. Jerusalem and its people will experience carnage and a bloodbath. The zealotic enthusiasts among Jesus' own disciples may expect legions of angels to help (Mt 26, 53), but the Sanhedrin sees only disaster for the nation.

Then comes Caiaphas' strategy. "You know nothing at all; you do not understand that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish" (Jn 11, 50).

It is wise enough counsel in its own right. Whether Jesus has encouraged such revolt or not, He is at the center of it. Better that He die, and the revolt with Him, than that the revolt explode with its dreadful consequences of slaughter against thousands of innocent people. Yet the evangelist notes that this was not just Caiaphas the political strategist talking. This was the High Priest prophesying, and in the prophecy expressing the very will and purpose of God! For it is ultimately not the Romans that threaten the nation, but God Himself with His holy eschatological wrath!

The strategy of Caiaphas is God's strategy, and God the Father summons His Son to consent to it also. Thus at the gate of Gethsemane Jesus says to those who come to arrest Him, "If you seek me, let these go" (Jn 18, 8). Though Peter draws a sword, he nevertheless goes free, at Jesus' word. "Shall I not *drink the cup* which the Father has given me?" He asks (Jn 18, 11). Thus Jesus does the will of the Father who sent Him (Jn 6, 38), even to the point of laying down His life for those whom He loves (15, 13).

The "cup" is that of Jeremiah 25, 15-29. Its content is "the wine of wrath" which the Lord God of Israel compels all nations to drink, beginning with Jerusalem. It is the end-time wrath which must destroy all sinners and all evil on the day the Kingdom of God comes. But now all the world has been revealed in its sin, not only the Gentiles, but also the Jews, and even Jesus' own disciples! Only *One* is righteous, and qualified to receive the kingdom promised to Israel. That is Jesus. Thus when He drinks the cup of wrath at His Father's command, salvation is accomplished for the whole world, and for all ages including our own. Here is the perfection of love, the Father's love and Jesus' own, withholding nothing, acting to save a world lost in its deceitful and blind ungod-liness. "God so loved the world that he *gave* his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn

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3, 16). "The bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh" (6, 51).

Therefore the crucifixion stands at the center of human history. It is a terrible Friday, yet we call it "Good." The cross is an instrument of sadistic torture, yet we glory in it. To eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man is a dreadfully offensive thing, yet it is the only way to *live*. The uncleanness of Golgotha and the grave is the new holiness of the Church. The gore is the glory. Everything is topsy-turvy, upside down. God will not be found any more in the laundered robes of the priests, or in their meticulous temple-service. The temple is "destroyed" (Jn 2, 19), or "forsaken and desolate" (Mt 23, 38), even though it still stands.

The place to know and find God is in the body of His Son, Jesus Christ, crucified and risen again (Jn 2, 21). He has received the triumph promised to Israel, and God has declared Him to be the source of life and resurrection, and of the knowledge of God. Therefore the Gospel of John rubs our noses in the blood, makes us eat and drink of the horror and the shame — yet not to destroy us but to make us children of God (Jn 1, 12-14), and participants in the life, hope, and Spirit of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

#### II. SOME IMPLICATIONS

In this section I shall discuss three issues: A) Justification; B) The Church, its Holiness and its Unity; and C) The Sacrament of the Body and the Blood.

#### A. JUSTIFICATION

I take up the question of justification now, not only because the title of my paper contains the term, but also because the concept, though not the terminology, is very much at issue in the sixth chapter of John.

The term which we Lutherans customarily render as "justification" is *dikaiosyne* in the Greek. In the Roman Catholic tradition it generally appears in English as "justice." No translation really captures the sense, however, for there is no term in English which would adequately express the concept without further amplification and definition.

In the Gospel of John the term *dikaiosyne* occurs only in chapter 16, 8-10, where the Revised Standard Version translates it as "righteousness." The passage reads as follows:

When he (the Counselor) comes, he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

Sin and righteousness are opposites. To be a "sinner" or "in sin" is to be an outsider, excluded from the people of God and from their hope. To be "righteous" means to belong to the people of God, and so to share in their promised destiny.<sup>3</sup> The Counselor (the Spirit poured out in and after the resurrection), therefore, forces the world to recognize what righteousness really means, namely, that there is only one insider, only one who belongs to the people of God and therefore enters upon Israel's inheritance in the presence of the Father. That one, of course, is Jesus Himself, who "goes to His Father" through His obedience to the death, through His resurrection, through His session at the right hand of God.

By contrast, the world is convinced of "sin" (John 16, 8-9; contrast 8, 48, "Which of you convicts me of sin?"), namely, of its exclusion and of its destiny of wrath (John 3, 36) — not because of its original fallenness, however, or even because of its participation in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, but because *now*, when the Word of God is proclaimed in all its fulness and truth, "they do not believe in me."

Once again the Gospel of John presses the theme that the response of men to the Word of the cross marks the difference between death and life, between sinnerhood and righteousness. Yet regardless of how men react, the truth of God is firm and clear. "The ruler of this world is judged." The power of Satan and of all ungodliness has been fully expended in the conspiracy against Christ. And the world survives and continues to exist only because God in His grace "gave His only Son."

Whatever terms are used, that is the content of "justification." How do we *belong to God?* How are we His children, under His grace and free from the threat of wrath and death? We belong by hearing His Word in the passion of His Son, by confessing our

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guilt at the unclean hill of the skull, by eating that flesh and drinking that blood, by "believing" in that Christ.

He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. (Jn 6, 56-57)

To "abide in" Jesus is to share fully in His identity and life. This is a powerful theme in the Gospel of John, particularly in the Upper Room discourses. He is the vine, we the branches (15, 1-8). The Holy Spirit takes what is His and declares it to be ours (16, 14-15). His death and His life become ours in this eating. That is God's great saving purpose, to have us sinners too as His children (1, 2). Thus when the people ask Jesus in John 6, 29, "What must we do to be doing the work of God?" Jesus' reply makes no reference at all to any "works" of the law. He says only, "This is the work of God, that you *believe in him whom he has sent*." That means that we "live" by this Word which has proceeded out of the mouth of God.

Once again, everything focuses on the cross. All familiar standards of human expectation and justice are done away. The Jews would say that the work of God which men ought to do consists in obeying their law. They love that law, for by their superior obedience to it they assume they have established a superior claim to righteousness and the kingdom. Those who disobey the law, the Pharisees would argue, forfeit or compromise their identity in Judaism, and can return only by doing more works of the law, by going through a period of trial and probation. Against that view comes the insistent testimony of Christ and the Church. The work of God is to "believe in him whom he has sent." The Spirit convinces the world of *sin*, "because they do not believe in me."

Consistent with this is the defiant sentence in John 6, 37, "Him who comes to me I will not cast out." The *ungodly* are justified, as St. Paul puts it in Romans 5, 6-11, the Gentile nations are gathered, the unclean are cleansed by the blood, the unworthy are made worthy. On the other hand, those who claim to be righteous, and yet will not "come" to Him, but evade and by-pass the cross as though that great event of divine judgment and mercy had not happened, they are now excluded as sinners.

John 8, 34-36 presents the issue under the imagery of the slave and the son. At the moment, slave and son are both still "in the house." Jew and disciple together are still associated with God's family. The great and tragic schism has not yet been finalized. But it is impending. To be the "son," and therefore "free indeed," is possible only by confessing Jesus as "the Son" who is the author of our own sonship and freedom. All who refuse to acknowledge Him may for the moment "continue in the house," but not forever. In reality they are slaves and not sons, and slaves have no part in the final inheritance.

Thus justification in the sense of belonging to God as His children, by sharing in the identity of Jesus Christ, is wholly a matter of God's grace in the cross, and of faith which believes the Word God spoke here. Such faith contradicts all natural piety of the law, and in defiance of the instinctive revulsion of the natural man, eats the flesh of the Son of man and drinks His blood in obedience to God's command. Yet such a faith is not dead, or passive. It establishes an identity, a freedom, a quality of life eternal, out of which flows an obedience to God and a love for the brethren corresponding to Jesus' own love. To live by the Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God is to be a different kind of person. The sons of God are active in doing the will of their Father. They bear fruit for Him, they endure hatred and persecution, they keep Jesus' and the Father's commandments. That is the theme of John 15 and 16. It is clear, however, that *life* has the priority, and holy works are possible only as they proceed from the identity and life conferred by the Word of God. That is the heart of the issue between Jesus and Judaism.

## B. THE CHURCH, ITS HOLINESS AND ITS UNITY

You have noticed, I am sure, that the proclamation in John 6 and in the whole of this gospel is stubborn and uncompromising. Because it is so unyielding, it creates, at first, not unity but division. It cuts sharply between the righteous and the sinner, between those who belong to God and those who do not belong, between true disciples and an ungodly world, between those who confess the name of Jesus and those who will not confess Him, between those who will eat the horrible meal of His flesh and blood and those

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who will not eat of it, between those who come to the light and those who prefer the darkness (3, 19-21).

It seems clear, therefore, that the Gospel of John is describing and itself contributing to a growing cleavage between the Church and Judaism. Two types of Jew seem to be in view, not only in this gospel but also in the Synoptics. On the one hand there are those who aggressively persecute the disciples of Jesus, who hate them as they have hated Jesus Himself. These are the subject of John 15, 18-16, 4. There are other Jews, however, who seek some sort of accommodation with the Christian community in their midst. These are represented by the Pharisee Nicodemus, who comes to Jesus by night, trying to mediate between what seem to be the extreme opposing positions of the disciples and their persecutors (In 3, 1-15). Notice that Nicodemus speaks in the first person plural in John 3, 2, and that Jesus lapses into the first person plural of His disciples in John 3, 11. It is likely that what is presented here is a fragment of the kind of dialogue that occurred between the disciples of Jesus, and the more moderate elements of Judaism,

Nicodemus offers a great concession. He is willing to acknowledge that Jesus is a teacher "come from God," whose works must in some sense be acknowledged as God's. The "signs" Jesus did, whether His miracles or perhaps even His death and resurrection as the Christians proclaimed it, do indeed answer the old Pharisaic demand for a "sign from heaven." That much he is willing to concede. Now, what will Jesus concede in return? Apparently nothing. The answer Nicodemus gets is totally uncompromising. Nicodemus must come all the way. He must do what Pharisaism most abhors (Lk 7, 30; Mt 21, 32), be baptized into the name of Jesus. Otherwise he remains an outsider, a "sinner."

"Unless a man is born anew of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (Jn 3, 5-6). We are not in the Old Testament any more, Nicodemus. The cross has happened, and cannot be evaded. You cannot enter the kingdom by parading your birth as a Jew, your fleshly circumcision, your racial purity, your obedience to the law. You have to start all over, tiny, naked, helpless, a baby in its mother's womb. You have to go through the washing, the same washing by which tax collectors and harlots and Gentiles qualify as forgiven sinners and sons of God. You have to write off your whole biography, even your whole ancestry, and start from scratch. The only past that counts now, is your identification with Jesus, your abiding in Him. You have to come into the New Testament.

That is the insistent demand the Jewish-Christian laid upon his Pharisaic brother. It appears also in the Synoptics, for example, in the exclusion from the wedding feast of the man who wants to participate in his old clothes, without wearing the wedding garment (baptism), Matthew 22, 11-14. The old garment is beyond patching. The old wine-skin is empty now, and cannot be refilled (Mt 9, 16-17). New garments, a new wine-skin are needed. But in the sixth chapter of John that same uncompromising position occurs in the demand that the Jewish brother eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man. You performed that sacrifice, or participated in its performance. Now eat it! But don't be afraid to eat it. It will not really kill you. It is the bread of life, the Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

From the reference to Nicodemus' participation in Jesus' burial (Jn 19, 39), we may infer that the early Church knew and remembered him as a Christian. Other mediating Jews, like the rich young ruler of Matthew 19, 16-22, went away sorrowful, for they were asked to give up more than they dared. The Church insisted on "the word of God" as God had spoken in the cross and resurrection of Christ, and would not yield an inch. Unless Judaism surrendered, it would be excluded as belonging to the "world," and not to the children of God. That is the story of division. "He came to his own home, and his own people received him not" (Jn 1, 11).

There are indications in John 6, however, that the insistent demand for surrender to Jesus and His cross alienated not only many a sympathetic Jew, but many within the Church as well. We feel the pain of a division within the community in John 6, 60. Jesus declares, "Unless you eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, you have no life in you." But for many of His own disciples, this is a little too much. They murmur, "This is a hard saying (*skleros estin ho logos houtos*). Who can listen to it." The "saying" or "Word" (*logos*) which proceeds out of the mouth of God, is terribly offensive. Many a disciple is sympathetic to the moderates in Judaism, and does not want to draw so sharp a line.

In His reply Jesus is patient, yet uncompromising. The ascension of the Son of Man belongs to the confession of the Church,

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His entering upon His inheritance and kingdom which God had promised to Israel (Jn 6, 62). That creates an *either* . . . or situation. Either the old or the new, either Jesus or Judaism. It is impossible to have a little of both. The Spirit which enlivens the Church is from Jesus. The Spirit too, like the Word, proceeds from the mouth of God (6, 63; 15, 26; 14, 26). That is the source of life. The old flesh of Judaism, the old claims of race, circumcision, obedience to the law, count for nothing. The question is whether you believe the Word of God or not. And some of you do not (6, 64).

That is the verdict, and it does not bend. It is impossible to pretend that the great eschatological act has not occurred, that the world has not been delivered, that God has not spoken. If, as a result, the Church itself must suffer schism, so be it.

The schism occurred. "After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him" (6, 66). Those who remained could take a certain comfort in the fact that such defection was not without precedent. Even among the original twelve whom Jesus had chosen, one was lost (6, 70-71). Yet it is a sad reality which the Church always has to face, whenever it is loyal to the Blood, to the central truth that creates our life. The liberals go their way. But Peter makes the confession in which we all join. In the face of the grief, Jesus asks, "Will you also go away?" We answer, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. And we have believed and come to know that you are the Holy One of God" (6, 67-69). There aren't two "Holy Ones of God," namely, Old Testament Judaism on the one hand, and Jesus Christ on the other. One cannot have both. So tight is the Christian faith and confession, so "narrow the gate, and hard the way that leads to life" (Mt 7, 14).

What does all this mean for the Church today? Surely it means that the Church must know her Lord. She must know the scandal of the cross, and not soften or compromise it. For that cross, with all its gore of flesh and blood, is our very breath (Spirit) and life. All theology proceeds from and returns to the passion and resurrection history. If Jesus is truly the Word (*logos*) made flesh, the cross is the moment at which we behold the *glory* of the reality of that identity of His (Jn 1, 14). We must not allow Jesus to be called the "Logos" by any who would merely confer transcendent glory on

Him, and thus evade the moment of the cross and what God in Christ did and said there. We must have and proclaim the scandal of the voice of God, speaking judgment and salvation, death and life, exclusion and incorporation on men, in terms of this single moment of human history. To betray this truth, neutralize it, liberalize it, compromise it, reduce it to mere myth or symbol or slogan, rob it of its meaning and scandal, would be to deny our Lord and to fall back again into wrath and condemnation. The Church stands or falls, lives or dies, by the event which gave it birth, the event of the flesh and the blood.

There is no other salvation. That is consistently the position of the Gospel of John, and of the whole New Testament. Let me illustrate by referring again to John 3, 14-15, and the analogy of the serpent in the wilderness (Num 21, 4-9). When the people in the desert were being bitten by the poisonous snake, it could not help them to invoke God's *creation*, as though comfort and mercy could be deduced from the fact that God had marvelously created both wilderness and people, and therefore must care for what He had made. At this moment God has marvelously created the serpents, and the death!

Nor could Israel then appeal to their election, as though to argue that the God who had brought them out of Egypt must now deliver them from this peril. The peril was upon them precisely as a judgment on their sin and unbelief, their murmuring against God. Nor could salvation be achieved then by any human strategy political, social, military. The people could not save themselves by banding together with clubs to kill those monsters, or by summoning biologists to discover the natural enemies of this breed of snakes. There was only one salvation, namely to look at the brass snake Moses had erected on that pole at God's command. Similarly at the moment of the cross of Christ, there is no salvation in the doctrine of creation, nor in Israel's election as God's people in Abraham, nor in any strategy of men. God insists that His people, and finally the whole world in all generations, look to the Son whom He lifted up on the cross, raised from the dead, and exalted to His own right hand. There is redemption, life, resurrection - and nowhere else!

If we in our respective churches could only be and remain clear on the narrow centrality of the Blood, then we would quickly realize also that nothing else dare be allowed to usurp that centrality. If the Blood divides the Church from the world, the Blood is paradoxically, also the ground of unity in the Church and ultimately of all mankind under the lordship of Christ.

In Romans 16, 17-18 St. Paul warns against those in the Church who create false divisions, dissensions and offenses (skandala) other than those which are necessary and implicit in the doctrine of the cross which the Christians in Rome had learned. It would be interesting to examine the causes of division in Christendom, both within my own Church and within yours, to see what the teachings have been which have usurped the centrality of the Blood and therefore divided what Christ by His death has made one. We cannot do that here. Yet we can make it our common task to cling to the heart of the matter, the cross and resurrection of Christ which defines our identity and distinguishes us from the world and all ungodliness; and then to watch for, detect, expose, and root out every divisive doctrine or concept that detracts from that center, the thousand false reasons for dividing the Church which Christ has purchased with His own Blood. That is the great ecumenical task which our ONE Lord lays upon us all.

## C. JOHN 6 AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

It is almost impossible to read about eating the flesh and drinking the Blood of the Son of Man in John 6, without thinking about the Eucharistic meal of the Church. Lutherans would recall the dispute of Martin Luther with Ulrich Zwingli and others on this text. Zwingli wanted to prove from John 6 that the words of institution, "This is my body" and "This is my blood," are to be understood symbolically, so that the body and blood are received by faith, while the bread and wine are literally eaten and drunk. Luther insisted the text of the words of institution will not allow such a spiritualizing of the "body" and the "blood," hence that John 6 is not really speaking of the Sacrament at all.<sup>4</sup>

Most commentators today take John 6, 51-58 as a conscious allusion to the Lord's Supper.<sup>5</sup> The argument is not persuasive to me, however. For once we recognize the role of Deuteronomy 8, 3 as the background text for the argument of our chapter, the strange language concerning eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the

Crucified is thoroughly meaningful without reference to the Sacrament. Jesus in His person, and particularly in the event of His passion, is the "Word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord," by which man lives. If man lives physically by eating bread, then he lives the qualitatively unique life of God by eating the Bread of Life, that is, the Word made flesh. This is what men must hear, and see, and eat. The reference to the flesh and the blood deliberately magnifies the offense (*skandalon*) of that demand, as we have seen.

I should like to suggest an alternative possibility, namely, that the scandalously gory language of John 6, together with the Church's awareness of the Passover context in which the offering of Jesus occurred (the innocent for the guilty), together with the concept of the new "wine" of eschatological joy and glory which Jesus created by His death and resurrection to replace the exhausted wine of Old Testament Judaism (Jn 2, 1-11; Mt 9, 17), provided all the necessary theological and terminological resources for the institution of the liturgical celebration we know as the Holy Supper.<sup>6</sup>

At first hand this is disturbing. I know it would be to many brethren in my own church. For it would suggest that the institution of the Lord's Supper did not occur literally at that last meal which Jesus celebrated with His disciples in the context of the Passover, before going to Gethsemane. That would seem to rob the Sacrament of its holy authority, to reduce it to a creation of the Church rather than literally of the historical Jesus.

I do not wish to pretend that the historical reconstruction I am proposing here is the last word on the matter. Any such historicizing on the basis of the biblical evidences is a subjective and precarious business. Nevertheless, this reconstruction seems to me to be reasonable and persuasive, for it answers many questions, while at the same time it enriches our appreciation of the Sacrament itself. Let me add a few observations, therefore.

First, it is not valid theologically, from the perspective of the Gospel of John as well as the other gospels, to make any distinction respecting authority, between words literally spoken by Jesus before His death, and words which He spoke subsequent to His resurrection, through the Spirit He breathed into His disciples

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(Jn 20, 21-23; 15, 26-27). As the apostles and evangelists carried on the mission of gathering which Jesus had begun, including the encounter with the opposing theology of Pharisaism, it seems not to have occurred to them that the words they spoke in the Spirit were not Jesus' own. Only this supposition can account for their freedom to place such conversations of theirs on the lips of Jesus, and to retroject them, perhaps without any awareness of historical distinctions, into the gospels as part of what appears on the surface to be pre-passion narrative and discourse. In effect, I am simply reaffirming here the first premise with which I began this essay. It follows, therefore, that the Lord's Supper also continues to bear the authority of Christ's own institution.

Furthermore, it becomes very clear now that the Sacrament was never intended to draw attention to itself, as though we should stand in awe of the mystery of our eating and drinking. The Sacrament rather takes us straight to Golgotha, to the cross and to Him who died there in gory shame. That is what St. Paul means when he declares, "As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you *proclaim the Lord's death* till he comes" (1 Cor 11, 26).

To concentrate on the "awe-ful mystery" of the elements, or to engage in long debates concerning the mode of the Presence, is to miss the original theological issue and drama. Such a focus of attention on the Sacrament as a thing in itself is like the grammarian's concentration on the structure of a sentence. We see the structure, or think we do, yet fail to hear what the sentence is saying.

The Sacrament is not intended for poetical or mystical admiration. It is intended to take us day by day, whenever we partake of it, to the gore and horror of the cross. It confronts us with what we sinners have done, in our vain effort to escape from God. We have joined in crucifying the Lord of glory. We were and are there, as members of that body of lost humanity which offered the Lamb of God as sacrifice on the hill of the skull, in order to save ourselves and be rid of Him. But now, says our God, we cannot escape. He rubs our faces in it. "Eat it, drink it," says the Christ whom we crucified! And the repentant Church answers, "Yes, I shall eat it, I shall drink it," this flesh and this blood of the Son of Man. I shall swallow the Word made flesh. For, in the mercy of God and by the surpassing love of His Son, that death is my salvation, my eternal life!

Most important of all, we must now ask, when was this Supper really instituted? When was this meal prepared for us, and by whom? The answer has to be, "on the night when He was delivered up" (1 Cor 11, 23), "handed over" not only by Judas Iscariot to the soldiers, not only by the soldiers to Caiaphas and by Caiaphas to Pilate and by Pilate to the squad who crucified Him. It was the Father who delivered Him up. It was Jesus who delivered Himself up for us all. He drank the cup of the wine of the wrath of God, freely, willingly. When He demands now that we drink the cup, He summons us to join Him on the cross, in swallowing the wrath that ought to destroy us (Mk 10, 38). Yet it does not destroy us, Hallelujah! It is the Body given for us, the Blood of the new covenant shed for us for the remission of sins. It is the flesh and the blood He has given for the life of the world (In 6, 51). The eating and drinking in the Sacrament belongs to the new wine-skin, replacing the old Passover, which alone can hold the new wine of eschatological joy and fulfillment (Mt 9, 17).

Once again, therefore, we are driven to the cross, the horror of the death, and the wonder of the eternal life, hope, sonship, and salvation that is ours by it. It will not do to escape the gore of the cross by concentrating on the resurrected Christ, or to retreat from the horror of eating and drinking the flesh and the blood of the One we crucified by speaking simply of His mystical "presence."

There are many in the church today who don't like Good Friday. They prefer to concentrate on the present moment, on the contemporary celebration. The cross is fine, we think, as a piece of jewelry. But we don't like the cross back there, the real one, dripping with the Blood of the One we nailed there to die, because we wanted to be rid of Him, because we wanted to justify ourselves. We don't like the Blood and the Flesh. Bread and wine, yes, nicely served to well-dressed people in artistically decorated churches from vessels of finely crafted silver and gold. But not the Flesh and the Blood. We sentimentalize the Sacrament — and we lose thereby both its gore and its glory. The real "Hallelujah" of the miracle of divine purpose and grace on Golgotha passes us by. All we care about is the sense of awe that is ours in the presence of the holy. We substitute mere religion for the cross, a feeling of piety for the Word of God made flesh, sentiment for faith.

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Well, the Sacrament itself does not consent to be so perverted and minimized. John 6, 51-57 is without a doubt one of the most offensive texts in all of Scripture. It intends to offend, to sting, to shock and horrify us, for we need to be so shocked and horrified. Yet that is precisely why the holy meal of the Body and Blood of our Lord is so rich and beautiful with life. "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you" (Jn 6, 53). Many may be offended at that saying, and walk no more with Him. But to those of us who confess His name with St. Peter, there is no desire to go away. "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God" (6, 68-69).

And so we respond in humble repentance, in simple confession and joy to our Lord's demand. "Very well then, Lord Jesus, my Bread of Life, give me life. Let me eat this horrible meal, this flesh of yours, and let me drink your blood — I, who with my whole natural flesh joined in crucifying you! Let me eat it! Thank God that it is given to me here, in the Sacrament, to eat and to drink, for it is my life. I do not wish to live by bread alone, for that is death to me. Let me live indeed, by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, by eating the living Bread that comes down from heaven."

Hallelujah, Lord Jesus! Amen.

PAUL BRETSCHER

#### FOOTNOTES

- 1. The assumption that the gospels do not always and necessarily present us with Jesus' own words (*ipsissima verba*), is associated with the method of *Formgeschichte*. Though the balance of the assumption set forth in this paragraph has points of affinity with commentators who stress the Jewish character and origin of this gospel, the stress on the death and resurrection of Jesus as the "sign" around which this chapter must be interpreted is, as far as I know, my own.
- C. K. Barrett, The Gospel according to St. John (London: S.P.C.K., 1965), pp. 24-25, cites other instances in which our Evangelist presupposes OT texts without citing them, e.g., "in the extended allegories of the Shepherd (10, 1-16) and the Vine (15, 1-6)" or in the accent

on love which seems clearly dependent on the texts explicitly cited in Mark 12, 29-33. The recognition of the role of Deuteronomy 8, 3 as the text behind the discourse of John 6 is my own, however.

- 3. The dimension of elected status and identity which I attribute here to the terms "sin" and "righteousness" is not generally recognized, yet seems clear enough in many texts, for example Matthew 9, 13, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners" (apostates from Judaism), or Galatians 2:15, where Gentiles are "sinners" simply because they are not Jews by birth. The question of identity, that is, what really constitutes membership in God's people and therefore qualifies one for participation in the promised inheritance, is the fundamental issue in the traditional Pauline term "justification." Thus more is involved in the term "righteousness" in John 16, 10 than merely "vindication" (so Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, tr. Kendrick Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), Vol. II, p. 31).
- For Luther on John 6, see Luther's Works, American Edition, Vol. 23 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), pp. 46, 116, 118; also in Vol. 37 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press), "That These Words of Christ, 'This Is My Body,' Etc., Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics," especially pp. 99-100.
  - 5. Bultmann, op. cit., p. 54, thinks the passage John 6, 51b-58 was inserted by an ecclesiastical editor, whose intention was to reinterpret the reference to Jesus as the "bread of life" as referring to the Lord's Supper. Friedrich Büchsel, Das Evangelium nach Johannes, Das Neue Testament Deutsch (Göttingen: Vandenboeck & Ruprecht, 1946), p. 89, thinks the Evangelist introduces this reference to the Sacrament here, so that the discourse concerning the bread of life and the church's celebration of the Lord's Supper may illuminate each other. Barrett, op. cit., p. 247, states that the sentence concerning eating the flesh and drinking the blood points unmistakably to the Eucharist. Edwyn Clement Hoskyns, ed. Francis Noel Davey, The Fourth Gospel (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1947), p. 298, argues that such physical eating and drinking as the text demands can be explained only if a conscious reference to the Eucharist is perceived.
  - 6. We would have to conclude also, that the kind of pre-sacramental argumentation preserved to us in John 6, is historically very early. It derives from the gift of the Spirit poured out upon those who had witnessed the history of Jesus from the beginning (John 14, 25; 15, 26-27; 16, 12-15; 20, 21-23). The essentials of New Testament theology, above all the recognition of the decisive turning point in human history accomplished by Jesus' death and resurrection, are the immediate effect of the event itself and of the Spirit not of extended reflection and theologizing.

## THE BLOOD OF JESUS IN PENTECOSTALISM

Perhaps the topic of this paper calls for an introductory word of explanation, since it differs somewhat from other papers presented at this and at the two preceding Precious Blood Study Weeks. The choice of topic is not altogether unrelated to my current address: the University of Notre Dame. During the past year the Catholic Press has carried a number of articles about a new and surprising outburst of Pentecostalism among Catholics, especially on university campuses — and especially at the University of Notre Dame. Although I am not personally a Pentecostal, I have taken more than a casual interest in the movement, particularly since I am rather close to a number of people — faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, townspeople in South Bend — who are quite active in it.

A few months ago some of these people began to tell me that in their prayer meetings they were experiencing a very strong attraction for the saving Blood of Christ. They were turning to the biblical passages that speak of the power of the Blood; they were meditating on and discussing the Blood; frequently their spontaneous prayer turned around the theme of the Blood. To my even greater surprise, they told me that this current of devotion to the Blood of Jesus is just as strong, if not stronger, among non-Catholic Pentecostals. Eventually some Catholic Pentecostals — theologians who knew about the planning for this study week — suggested that the participants might be interested in a paper on the Precious Blood in Pentecostalism. The more I thought about it the more attractive the idea sounded.

I am working on the assumption that most of the participants here have little familiarity with Pentecostalism, so I would like to start out with some generalizations about the history and ideas and practice of Pentecostals before turning my attention to the specific theme of the Blood. In both parts of the paper I shall, of course, be drawing upon the published literature about Pentecostalism; a bibliography appears at the end of this paper. But I am also going to draw upon personal observation of and conversation with Pentecostals in the South Bend area. I have attended prayer meetings of both non-Catholic and Catholic Pentecostals, and have also had some extended conversations with clergy and laity of both groups. It is my hope that such sources may contribute a measure of concreteness and vividness to the presentation.

Pentecostalism is a home-grown American product, starting in this country early in the 20th Century, though its roots lie deeper in the Holiness movements of the last century, movements which derived much of their inspiration from Methodism. But the Pentecostal movement rapidly became worldwide, generating large numbers of followers in Russia, Norway, Italy, France, and above all in Latin America, where they are far more numerous than traditional Protestants. It may be of special interest to some of the religious communities represented at this study week to know that in Chile alone one out of seven persons in the population is a Pentecostal.

Estimates of the total number of Pentecostals in the world vary

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from eight to twelve million, with about four million of these in the United States. One thing is certain: it is the most rapidly expanding body within Christianity today. Some researchers feel that at least in the United States many Pentecostals — perhaps a quarter of them — are never recorded as such by religious nose-counters, for the simple reason that they remain "hidden" within non-Pentecostal churches. At any rate, the sheer vitality and rapidity of the growth of this movement make it a force that the rest of Christianity cannot afford to bypass lightly.

What is the theology of Pentecostalism? What are its doctrines, its creed? To begin with, from the viewpoint of Pentecostals themselves, such questions are to a certain extent bad questions. What the movement offers to its followers is not primarily a set of conceptualizations and verbalizations articulated into a creedal confession but rather an experience, a transforming, soul-shattering experience of the Spirit of God working personally in them and through them in the here and now. Pentecost is not for them just an event that a Christian acknowledges to have happened two thousand years ago; Pentecost is the mystery of God's love breaking into a man's life at the present moment. Dogmas and confessional statements are matters for rational argumentation; you can debate whether a given formulation is orthodox or heterodox. But the personal experience of God entering my own conscious history makes argumentation irrelevant. Here is irresistible reality, naked fact, which makes the theological enterprise seem like a word game.

In actuality, of course, Pentecostalism does develop an ideology, a doctrine, however thin the doctrine may seem by comparison with that of the older Christian communities. Indeed, no religious group could long survive without a doctrine. But the Pentecostals keep coming back to the primacy of experience over doctrine, insisting that the experience itself must precede and control formulation of ideas. And they justify this insistence by pointing to primitive Christianity itself. The apostles did not start out with a doctrine of the Spirit. Rather, they first received and experienced the Spirit on Pentecost and only subsequently and in the light of that experience did they work out theoretical statements about the Spirit.

The starting point of Pentecostal ideology, therefore, is the reception of power from on high. The reception ordinarily takes place through a profound religious experience known as baptism in the Holy Spirit. It is a commitment experience, an experience of receiving the Spirit of God by one who accepts Jesus as his personal savior. Inwardly it is experienced as a huge dam of love breaking within oneself, wave after wave of love washing and purifying and transforming the inner man. Obviously in most cases this is a deeply emotional experience. The usual outward sign of baptism of the Holy Spirit is the gift of speaking in tongues, the gift of Pentecost itself, through which the believer ecstatically voices in strange words his praise of God and his thanksgiving to God.

It is the gift of tongues, or glossalia, that consistently arouses the most curiosity and controversy among non-Pentecostals, especially when they first begin to investigate the movement. They are usually either repelled or fascinated by the very idea; few remain neutral. Clearly it is bizarre behavior from the viewpoint of the historic Christian churches. But here again, the Pentecostals reply by appealing to the testimony of the New Testament, especially Acts and I Corinthians 12 and 14. If Jesus promised His followers the gift of the Spirit, they say, and if this promise was fulfilled in a very concrete and conscious fashion among early Christians, why should this same gift not be poured out in equally visible and audible fashion on other generations of Christians? Moreover, it should be noted that the gift of tongues is sought not merely for its dramatic quality. Rather, it is considered a true gift of prayer, a path to a deeper and more intense inner life of union with God, a greater sensitivity to His demands and to His working in human affairs.

Whatever one thinks of the gift of tongues — or for that matter of the other spiritual gifts (prophecy, interpretation of tongues, discernment of spirits, the power of bodily and spiritual healing, etc.), all of which receive varying degrees of emphasis in different Pentecostal bodies — the Pentecostals themselves are convinced that such gifts must result in a complete moral transformation, a life of genuine holiness, a life (as they say) that is Spiritfilled. Here their affinities with 19th-century revivalism and Holiness groups become most evident. Their ethical stance is usually that of classical Methodism: a life of high holiness rules out card-playing, drinking, dancing, smoking, movies, dominoes, and so on.

All this can seem almost hilarious to people schooled in Roman Catholic moral theology. Yet one should not overlook the fact that the radical perfectionism of the Pentecostals is a kind of judgment on the moral orientation of main-line Christianity. It has been a truism for decades that much contemporary Protestantism is strongly secularized, a truism that Catholics often gleefully shouted from the housetops during the 1940s and 1950s. But unless I completely misread certain tendencies today, much of the same sort of secularization is currently going on in Catholicism. The Pentecostal will have no part in paying lip service to the sublime ethic of the Gospel and adopting a quite different ethic for everyday living. He closes the gap between the ideal and real orders by making the Gospel ethic the operative one for everyday living. With a literalness that other Christians find embarrassing, and even downright fanatical, he insists that the followers of Jesus must be perfect even as their heavenly Father is perfect — for no better reason than that Jesus said so.

Equally disconcerting to traditional Christians are Pentecostal forms of worship. The observer is struck by their apparent lack of structure, their emphasis on the charismatic element, their spontaneity, their fairly high emotional content. The wording of the hymns is often simplistic and low in theological content, though the rhythm and the melody can be quite catchy. The sermon, which may readily last from half an hour to an hour, can sometimes reach a noisy emotional pitch and is not infrequently fundamentalist in its biblical exegesis. And, of course, there is always a good measure of freewheeling praying and singing in tongues on the part of the congregation, and sometimes weeping and prostrations take place. In responding to St. Paul's insistence on the need to balance the twin principles of freedom and discipline in public worship, the Pentecostals clearly do not overemphasize discipline.

Yet, before condemning such worship out of hand, the traditional Christian might ask himself whether the historic churches have sufficiently emphasized freedom. In fact our traditional Christian might reread I Corinthians, and then ask himself where St. Paul would feel most at home today: at a solemn Mass in St. Patrick's Cathedral or at a Pentecostal service in Spanish Harlem? One fact seems undeniable: it is increasingly difficult to attract people, especially young people, to our highly structured traditional liturgies, while Pentecostal worship is demonstrably an effective tool of evangelization, one of the important factors in explaining the unusual success of Pentecostal recruiting.

I have been trying to describe, in oversimplified and summary fashion, some important characteristics of the Pentecostal movement during the first half century of its existence. But the story is incomplete without referring to a new wave, often called Neo-Pentecostalism, that has been sweeping though Christianity since the late 1950s. Neo-Pentecostalism attracts people from a much wider range of educational and socio-economic backgrounds, including many well-educated and fairly affluent people: professional men, business men, educators, clergymen. Much of this development has taken place, not in new Pentecostal congregations, but within the confines of mainstream Protestantism. Interestingly enough, the first and biggest advances seem to have been made within the churches having a strong liturgical tradition, the Lutherans and Episcopalians, though Presbyterians and Baptists and Methodists have also been affected. These Neo-Pentecostals seem to have little inclination to break away from their own churches; they prefer to try to modify or revolutionize the spiritual life of the established churches from the inside. Generally, these Protestant Pentecostals seem to be less given to emotional excesses than Pentecostal Pentecostals, less fundamentalist in their approach to Scripture, less insistent on the charismatic gifts, though they continue to regard speaking in tongues as the usual sign that one has truly received the baptism of the Spirit, the basic Pentecostal experience.

Approximately a decade after its inception in Protestantism, the fire of Pentecostalism was ignited in Roman Catholicism. It began at Duquesne University during the 1966-67 school year. Some faculty members were concerned about a certain lack of vitality in their faith-life. These were apostolic-minded laymen much involved with the liturgical and ecumenical movements, with civil rights and world peace. Yet, despite all this, they felt something was lacking in their spiritual life; they yearned for greater depth in prayer and a stronger personal union with Christ. Daily they prayed that the Holy Spirit would renew in them the graces of their baptism and confirmation. Early in 1967 they started attending the prayer meetings of an interfaith group, where Christians would lay hands on one another and pray for an outpouring of the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. Within a few weeks their lives

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had been transformed. They had a new awareness of God's love, a new closeness to Christ, a new desire for and joy in prayer. They received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the charisms of the Holy Spirit, including the gift of tongues. Shortly thereafter the same remarkable phenomena occurred within a much larger group of Duquesne students who, together with these faculty members, were making a week-end retreat.

From Duquesne the movement spread quickly to faculty and students at Notre Dame and Michigan State University, and before long it was also flourishing at Holy Cross College, Iowa State, Purdue, Ohio State and elsewhere. After the 1967 Easter vacation the movement received considerable unsolicited notoriety as a result of what came to be known as the "Michigan State week end," when about forty Catholic Pentecostals at Notre Dame and St. Mary's College were joined by an equally large number from East Lansing for a weekend of prayer and discussion of their newly found life in the Spirit. The sheer size of the meeting give it a quasi-public character. Fantastic rumors started flying across the campus and the student publications had a field day. Soon reporters and photographers from the public press were on the scene, jotting down their notes and popping their flash-bulbs at large Pentecostal prayer meetings.

It would be easy to conclude from printed sources that Catholic Pentecostalism is primarily or even exclusively a university phenomenon. The conclusion seems unwarranted. Pentecostals at Notre Dame say they receive testimonies ranging everywhere between Massachusetts and Oregon from Catholic lay men and women, nuns, priests, brothers, stating that they have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I have heard for instance of a monastery where the majority of monks are Pentecostals. Or again, the delegates to the general chapter of a large community of religious women came as a group to Pentecostals to seek baptism in the Holy Spirit so that their chapter would be under divine guidance. And just recently about 150 persons were invited to the John XXIII Bergamo Center in Dayton, Ohio, to discuss for a few days the implications of what is now a national movement in Roman Catholicism.

I should, perhaps, apologize for spending so much time on Pentecostalism in general. Yet, if my assumption is correct that many of you have little familiarity with the movement, I really did

not know how to sketch the broad outlines of this rapidly growing and complex movement in just a few words. But let us at last turn our attention to the theme of the Blood.

After reflecting on some of the published literature of the Pentecostal Pentecostals, one is tempted to make the simple assertion that the Blood of Jesus is obviously very important to these people — and then stop. The reason for the temptation is the issue indicated earlier: there is so much emphasis on experience over ideas that it is exasperating to try to search out some coherent theological position.

As a reasonably typical example let us consider some of the literature of the Living Christ Center in Greenville, Texas, which has a congregation in South Bend, Indiana. Every new member of the congregation is given a booklet called *The Sure Foundation*, which he is expected to master thoroughly and to which he is expected to return again and again. The "foundation" means the foundation of the kingdom of God, and it turns out to be the familiar passage from I John 5, 6-8: "Jesus Christ is the one who came through water and blood, not in water only, but in water and in blood. And it is the Spirit that testifies to this because the Spirit is truth. Thus there are three who testify to this: the Spirit and water and blood, and these three are of one accord."

The whole booklet is built around these three witnesses: the Spirit, the water, and the Blood. As far as the Spirit is concerned, there is as one would expect a heavy emphasis in this section on praying in the Spirit, by which they mean praying in tongues. The section on the "water" as witness, by a farfetched bit of exegesis, actually is on the body or flesh of Jesus. The chief inspiration here seems to be the passage from Deutero-Isaiah (53, 4) about the servant of Yahweh bearing our infirmities and enduring our sufferings, and the section is filled with much warm exhortation to realize that all of our present anguish was crucified and destroyed with Jesus on His cross.

The final section of this booklet, fully a third of the total contents, is devoted exclusively to the Blood, the third part of the foundation of the kingdom of God. Like the two preceding sections it is heavy with scriptural quotations, pretty much the classical ones on the Blood with which we are all familiar, from Romans, Colossians, I John, I Peter, the Apocalypse, and above all the 9th chapter of Hebrews. The explanatory and hortatory material binding together these biblical passages seems to center around the theme that the Blood of Jesus is the source of certainty that one has been saved, that one is no longer unworthy before God — though I must confess that in dealing with such loose and repetitive material one wonders whether he has actually found a theme or superimposed it. At any rate, the text starts by raising the question about how a Christian can have clear assurance of fellowship with the Lord when he sees so many things still wrong in his life. All too many of God's children are tormented by feelings of guilt, condemnation, uncleanness. But we must not go on feeling this way, because it contradicts the word of God which says we are washed from our sins by the Blood of Jesus. We cannot make ourselves righteous by our dead religious works; all our righteousness comes from the Blood of Jesus. That Blood is a protective covering for our sins. God does not expect us to justify ourselves or to say that our sins are not really sins. All we have to do is realize that the Blood of Jesus does cover us and protect us from divine wrath. Hence God is satisfied with us; we stand justified in His sight.

I'm sure you find these ideas more than slightly reminiscent of the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith alone. And unquestionably, both in their writings and in their spontaneous praying, when Pentecostals speak of the Blood of Jesus they frequently use the image of being covered by the Blood and receiving a clean and innocent feeling from that covering. Yet there is other evidence, especially when they are treating the pursuit of holiness, that they are rather far removed from Lutheran anthropology. In fact, some of their insistence on human cooperation with divine grace smacks strongly of Pelagianism. How they reconcile these rather different theological positions I do not know. But the true Pentecostal might not even see it as a problem, but as another theological word game. The important thing is to *experience* the Blood.

Perhaps I can convey some measure of this emphasis on experience by a few direct quotations from the booklet I have been summarizing. Typical is the following passage: "Let's all just close our eyes now and confess, *I am washed from my sins in the Blood* of Jesus. Let's all confess this several times out loud and let that clean innocent 'feeling' be brought into our life by the 'Blood of Jesus Christ.'"

Later on we come across a similar exhortation: "Let's all just confess this out loud now that it might become a reality in our life, I am now justified by the Blood of Jesus. God is now satisfied with me because of the Blood of Jesus. Confess this over to yourselves several times until your faith is 'anchored' in the Blood of Jesus to keep you justified or righteous in the sight of God. I am justified by the Blood of Jesus !!!"

Pentecostal worship is of a piece with this sort of writing. References to the Blood, especially to personal experience of the power and presence of the Blood, fall naturally from the lips both of the preacher and of the members of the congregation in their extemporaneous praying and testifying. The hymnal of the Living Christ Church, *Songs of the New Life*, is also eloquent testimony of the importance they attach to the Blood of Jesus. Brief references to the Blood and the lamb and the cross abound, but in addition there is a considerable number of hymns concerned entirely with glorifying the Blood and rejoicing in it. A theological analysis of these simple songs is hardly warranted. Let me rather try to convey an attitude and an atmosphere through a personal anecdote.

Recently I dropped in on an evening Pentecostal worship service and sat down in a pew behind the rest of the congregation. During the opening hymn the minister, an acquaintance of mine, spotted me and then walked over and whispered something to the young woman accompanying the hymn on the piano. At the conclusion of the hymn the woman came to the lectern and told the congregation that they were privileged to have as a guest that evening a Divine Blood priest, Reverend Sullivan, and said she thought he might like to hear some singing about the Blood. So she began to lead them in a whole series of songs about the Blood. Incidentally, I was the only one who had to reach for a hymnal; everybody else knew the songs by heart.

As the singing waxed livelier and louder, the woman leader would occasionally cry out a rhetorical question, "Do you *See* that Blood!" "Can you *Touch* that Blood!" "Don't you *Feel* that Blood!" "Don't you feel it *Now*!"

When the singing was over the minister came to the lectern and asked them if they were happy about the Blood. Murmurs and nods indicated they were happy indeed. The minister went on, "Well if we're happy about something we make a noise, don't we? So The Blood of Jesus in Pentecostalism

let's hear it for the Blood of Jesus!" Whereupon the whole congregation broke into enthusiastic handclapping for the Blood and kept the applause going for at least a full minute.

By the way of conclusion, I would like to say that I don't have much to say by way of conclusion. This presentation has necessarily been exploratory and preliminary. There surely is need for much more theological investigation of Pentecostalism. However, much the movement has attracted the attention of behavioral scientists, theologians have given it scant attention, despite its dynamic growth. For the present I can only say that personally I have been rather amazed to discover that devotion to the Precious Blood of Jesus, a devotion which arose in specialized form in 19th-century Catholicism, is now flourishing mightily among people who have traditionally been as far removed from Catholicism as any group in the whole spectrum of Christianity. Is it perhaps an indication, in God's inscrutable providence, that devotion to the Precious Blood is perennially important for advancing toward the perfection to which all Christians are called?

FRANCIS SULLIVAN, C.PP.S.

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## REDEEMING TIME

Everyone is interested in time in its practical and human dimensions. Beyond that there is a philosophical, theological and biblical approach to time. Historians are involved with the passing of time. But time as a dimension of redemption is the opinion taken as the theme of this paper.

For time to be redemptive it should be made fruitful in the light of the Blood of Christ. Man's use of time must have some affinity with the self-sacrificing death of Christ. When man was renewed by the Blood of Christ he was not removed from his environment, nor was he caught up into eternity. He was still himself, living out his existence in his alloted time.

Man can choose to live out his time without regard to the redemptive act of Christ. Man can buck the renewal which this redemption brings through the action

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of the Holy Spirit. Whenever man sets his heart against one or both of these he misses a vital part of his existence. A concrete refusal of grace is obvious. But that redemptive grace can be missed in the run-of-the-mill activity is not as apparent. How this is actually done is told very pointedly by Michel Quoist in his meditation on "Time" from his book, *Prayers*.

I went out, Lord. Men were coming and going. Walking and running.

Everything was rushing:

cars, trucks, the street, the whole town. Men were rushing not to waste time. They were rushing after time. To catch up with time, to gain time.

Good-bye, sir, excuse me, I haven't time. I'll come back, I can't wait, I haven't time. I must end this letter — I haven't time. I'd love to help you, but I haven't time. I can't accept, having no time. I can't think, I can't read, I'm swamped, I haven't time. I'd like to pray, but I haven't time.

You understand, Lord, they simply haven't the time.The child is playing, he hasn't time right now . . . Later on . . .The schoolboy has his homework to do, he hasn't time . . .Later on . . .The student has his courses, and so much work . . . Later on . . .

The young married man has his new house;

he has to fix it up. He hasn't time . . . Later on . . . The grandparents have their grandchildren.

They haven't time . . . Later on.

They are ill, they have their treatments,

they haven't time . . . Later on . . .

They are dying, they have no . . . . . .

Too late! . . . . They have no more time!

These are the clichés people indulge in to tell God they

have no time. Yet God pursues them; they are in flight. God's saving action comes in every moment of time, but too human a viewpoint clouds up or detracts from the redemptive value these moments have. This is never a unique historical situation; the effect of Christ's redemption is a thread of hope that gets lost by each generation.

#### TIME AND THE HISTORY OF SALVATION

Some of that lost interest can be restored by placing a value on time in relation to redemption. Redemption is a theme that threads together all of man's time. The history of man is bound up with redeeming time. The culmination of that history is Christ with His Blood shed to redeem man.

Since Christ and His cross are at the apex of salvation-history, the human events that precede and follow it are important elements in the time process. The time before is one of preparation; the time afterward is one of continual realization. All time is redeeming time. Salvation history, in this sense, involves all the time of the Old and New Testaments.

The Old Testament shows man as the object of God's saving action from the time of creation. It relates all the sacred actions toward a people chosen to fulfill God's plan. Jewish history is based on these divine interventions through which God revealed Himself. The study of these actions was, for the pious Jew, the highest form of wisdom. This made history sacred to him. His interest lay not in the historical detail but in the interpretation of the divine acts. Through these he came to know God.

These same acts could be relived because they constituted a part of one saving plan that unfolded in time. Events were not merely commemorated or remembered, they were entered into anew with the hope that they would eventually be fulfilled. The final goal of history was founded on the divine promise: a new and decisive act by God to establish His kingdom. History would end in a paradise. The vicissitudes of history would yield to an untroubled, eternal reign.

History, for the Israelite, was a growth in time to a fullness and completion. God's saving actions were always efficacious. He has always been the master-builder through all time because His

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actions determine the destinies of man. Success as well as failure served His purpose.

Frustration came by reason of the blindness and stubbornness into which sin had plunged man. To revive man from this state, God had to continually deliver and redeem His people.

The Old Testament is, in part, the story of the times when God intervenes to liberate His people. The history of these interventions reaches its climax in the Messiah. He is the person toward whom all the action gravitates and the one in whom all the action is fulfilled. For the Jewish mind in general, this point of redeeming time still lies ahead. Not so for the Christian.

#### CHRIST AND SALVATION TIME

For the Christian the story of salvation is completed with the coming of the Messiah, i.e., Christ. If there is another segment of the story of salvation-history it can be only the application of the fruits of that unique event to individual men. Saint Paul, however, sees the arrival of Christ in a broader sense.

When the *fullness of time* had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law (Gal 4, 4-5).

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the *fullness of time* — to unite all things in him (Eph 1, 3; 1, 9-10).

The fullness of time establishes Christ as the high point in the order of salvation-history. Human time, on the other hand, is in no way changed in its structure and natural rhythms because of this. But a new approach is given to time now that the Eternal has entered into it and changed its meaning.

Christ does not belong to any era as its product, though He is the point from which each era is dated. Being the historical pivot and human nucleus, He shows to all men a perfect life lived divinely. His historical life was the expression and revelation of God's life. Christ is the manifestation of God to the world.

A manifestation of God usually comes quietly at an obscure time, but its nature is never without its purpose and climax.

Each manifestation is geared to alter man's path on his journey through time. Summing up that journey is Christ. He intervened in man's time, both as the new beginning and the culmination of that journey. He shows man the way back to God whom he had deserted. Not only that, He brings man back to His sacrifice on Calvary.

Christ's whole life is a unit directed to the goal of sacrificing all His Blood on the cross for man's salvation. There is no problem seeing this. But the years of public preparation and the years of life preceding it seem to be an unbalanced time arrangement relative to His mission. For Saint Paul this was no problem. He says that the two times form a single unit by reason of Christ's selfabandonment.

In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus. His state was divine, yet he did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave, and become as men are; and being as all men are he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross (Phil 2, 5-8).

What does this self-abandonment mean in the hidden life? Christ entered the community of Jews at Nazareth in a spirit of complete conformity to the human situation as He experienced it in each passing day.

Men are ignorant, blind, proud and stubborn. Christ came to this type of community life. In this He was humble because He showed a willingness to accept the human condition. At all times He was perfectly adjusted to the conditions of life in His surroundings. He accepted it as it was. No other approach would have made Him acceptable to the Nazarenes.

Were not this the case, Saint Paul would not have proposed Christ as the model to the community at Philippi. Paul tells them that humility is the overriding virtue needed to counteract any disruptive elements that might show up in the community. Christ is the exemplar in this. The humility of His hidden life was obvious enough: "He emptied himself . . . and became as men are."

This was one of the types of humility Jesus practiced. Paul goes on to say that Christ "was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross." It is the same person who lives the major part of His life in hidden self-renunciation and who sheds His Blood in death on a cross in the same self-offering. For no man can be on some great occasion what he has not been previously.

Reference to this great occasion in Christ's life is made by the liturgy for the octave of Christmas: "He gave himself up for us to redeem us from all iniquity" (Ti 2, 14). By its timing of thought, the liturgy wants to observe that this Jesus, whom we now glorify as a child, has the same self-renunciation that will be evident when He gives up His Blood to redeem man. Already in the beginning of the Church year reference is made to the supreme moment of Christ's life. His "hour."

The zenith of redeeming time is Christ's "hour" on the cross. The great sacerdotal prayer of Jesus places that "hour" at the pinnacle of the whole mystery of salvation.

In predicting that "hour" Christ includes the sequence of redeeming acts which open with the shedding of His Blood and end with the sending of the Spirit. Christ's "hour" becomes the fullness of time.

The Jerusalem Bible has it:

He (God) has let us know the mystery of his purpose, the hidden plan he so kindly made in Christ from the beginning, to act upon when the times had run their course to the end. (Eph 1, 9-10)

#### THE CHURCH AND TIME

God's hidden plan was manifested when the supreme instant of the death of Jesus arrived. A new covenant was made through the Blood of the Messiah. According to Saint John's testimony, the water and the Blood which flowed from Christ's side at the stroke of the lance gave birth to the Church. This fixes in historic time the foundation of the Church. The Church is Christ. Her task in time is to grow up into Christ.

The mission of the Church in cosmic time encompasses the era of the Holy Spirit. During this time of mission, the Spirit acts through the Church in the building up of the kingdom to the fullness Christ won for it. Not only does the Spirit operate through the Church to direct its mission, but He inhabits men's hearts to transform and renew them. Man's responsibility is to respond to the initiative of the Spirit, to be attentive at all times to the divine voice.

This is the new pursuit. Man still can choose to be in flight from this newness. Man accepts this invitation every time he yields up his whole being to glorify God in the mystery of the Eucharist. At each Eucharistic celebration, the mission of the Church is proclaimed and each one is sent out to announce the good news of salvation. This aspect of the liturgy is essential for understanding *redeeming time*.

#### THE LITURGY AND TIME

The events of salvation are unfolded in the Church's liturgical calendar. Feasts of the calendar are the visible signs man needs to remind him that time is to be used effectively for salvation. Through these signs the spiritual value of time is constantly proclaimed. Human time is renewed and upgraded by the reliving of the religious feasts. The annual cycle of redemptive feasts and the daily celebration of the sacrifice fuse human time with eternity.

In the Eucharistic sacrifice the past is made present. The historic event as a happening is past, but the substance of the action remains. The action is also future. The liturgy, while performed in time, enters into the great celebration taking place at the throne of the Lamb, where Christ still offers His Precious Blood to the Father.

The power of the Precious Blood is dramatized in this same offering by the liturgy of the word. The liturgy of the word recalls God's action of entering human time, redeeming it and fulfilling it from within. This action takes place on different time levels, singly and collectively. An examination of the liturgy reveals the action taking place on an historical plane, the plane of grace and the eschatological plane.

These three planes of action come together most prominently in the liturgy of the word for Advent. To a degree, the three levels of action are discernable in the Lenten liturgy. Through the year the texts are sometimes historical; often, and especially during the Easter season, the predominant reference is to eternal happiness.

This blending of the eternal and the temporal is portrayed in the setting of the changing season. The liturgical cycle stages a program of action based on the temporal life of Christ. Certainly every Mass reenacts Christ's redemptive work. But the annual

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feasts allow every phase of the story of salvation to be assimilated piecemeal in order to accommodate human frailty.

All the redemptive acts appear again in a time setting. Each year is not just another year, but a new cycle of redemptive grace. Every Mass is not just another event; it is the peak of redemptive time. All other time values have their roots here. The outstanding time is the time at which both the word and the action take place simultaneously. What is heard becomes matter for reflection. Reflection leads to action — action that makes all time redeeming time. This is *the mission*.

The time given to reliving and re-thinking each liturgical year will lead progressively to a full assimilation of the power of Christ's redemptive Blood. Participation in the mysteries, reliving the events of salvation, and reflection on them are not an end in themselves. While being bound to time within and without, the liturgical cycle always has as its purpose: fulfillment in the eternal time of God, the *parousia*.

#### THE PAROUSIA AND TIME

The parousia is not a temporal event which brings the whole world to an end with a bang. It is a mystery already present. It is being lived now. Time now is rooted in the eternal. Time is significant because it is the threshold of eternity. Time for the Christian begins but has no point of termination. The end of his life is a consummation — the time of grace for him is fulfilled. So too, the end of the world is its consummation, as death was Christ's consummation. His final coming is the consummation of the whole historical order. Christ is the end of history.

#### SANCTIFYING TIME

Christ's redemption opens up the final age. Man now has been effectively reconciled to God through the Blood of the Lamb. All his actions can become a part of this redemption if the choice is so made. Every moment is made for choosing or refusing God's Son. The ultimate meaning of human choice in time is derived from a response to God's desire to be a part of every living, concrete act. God is in pursuit; man can selfishly choose to remain in flight. It depends on how he uses his time.

Time is to be sanctified by the presence and action of Christ. If redeeming time is characterized by action then that action must be that of Christ's. Christ wishes to assimilate man into His life. Submission to that life and spirit makes man a son of God. Through these sons the divine plan of salvation is to grow in time to a fullness — the fullness Christ won with His Blood. So essential is this concept, that it constitutes the stage on which a vocation is acted out.

A Christian vocation is not actualized in a moment. It is a continuing event with all its peaks and valleys, its successes and failures. Within the context of one's vocation, time gets its unique direction toward God and neighbor. All these points of contact must have some relevance to the mission-command given at each Eucharistic sacrifice; to be filled with the spirit of Christ's selfoffering. Only in that spirit can one relate himself to God and the community now.

Danger lurks in the failure to recognize the power of the present moment. How often a power-packed moment goes unheeded because of blindness to its significance. How often an event is stacked on an event without meaning, except that time passes more easily to relieve boredom. There is peril also in wasting time, hoping that tomorrow or some future day will relieve the anguish of the moment. Undue eagerness and critical condemnation are at odds with the doctrine that the acceptable time is NOW!

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# THE PRECIOUS BLOOD IN MEDIEVAL THOUGHT

There are two pictures that may come to mind when we think of the Middle Ages and the Precious Blood — the first is recalled by scenes in Bergman's film, *The Seventh Seal*, in which the flagellants, thinking to emulate Christ, carry a huge penitential cross from town to town in the wake of the Black Death, as they scourge themselves and each other to blood and the crowds wail and moan in extravagant outbursts. That this is actually not typical of the Middle Ages is attested by the fact that the Church, both on the local level and through various papal decrees, made every effort to keep such displays under control.

#### THE PRECIOUS BLOOD IN MEDIEVAL THOUGHT

The other is a picture of a priest, celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, while above the altar appears the figure of Christ on the cross in the act of shedding His Blood for the redemption of man. This, I think, is a more typical picture, for it represents the manner in which the Church made its appeal to the spiritual sensitivities of young and old, poor and rich, educated and uneducated, the simple folk, as well as those endowed with great spiritual gifts. In other words, it represents how the Church displayed her pastoral concern for souls by instilling in them a regard for the redemptive act of Christ.

Father Durwell, in his book In the Redeeming Christ, asserts that any theology of spirituality must begin with the mystery of the redemption.<sup>1</sup> If we agree, as I think we do, we may assume a priori that devotion to the Precious Blood is there, at least implicitly, in every healthy spiritual movement. The mere statement of fact, however, tells us nothing of the relation of special acts and attitudes which prevailed from period to period, nor the special complexes that constituted both the individual and the collective responses to this object of devotion. This can only be achieved by a more thorough study of each period and the spiritual forces at work therein. What I herein propose is a very modest task — to show what is revealed when one scratches the surface, for it is certainly true that material exists for a deeper and more fruitful study.

The Middle Ages might be said to extend, at least for the present purpose, from Gregory the Great to shortly before the Council of Trent. Although it is difficult to parenthesize into a single period such a long span of time, one does find from the beginning to the end of the Middle Ages a consistent effort on the part of theologians, popular preachers and spiritual writers to preserve what they understand as the "total synthesis of Christian theology," and to set it against a background of Scripture studies and the Fathers, particularly Ambrose and Augustine.

For the man of the Middle Ages generally, the act of redemption had a here and now aspect. Christ had died and would die no more in a physical manner, but he himself, the man of the Middle Ages, was living now in an existentially constituted world, and heaven was possible only if he worked out his earthly existence and reached fulfillment through the merits of the Blood. He was a realist on the whole; therefore, he accepted the specific existential mode of accomplishing this redemption by the shedding of the Precious Blood as God's manner of identifying with the human race and the choice continued to be for him a marvel in his own repugnance to bloodshed and violence. Hence Daniel Rops characterizes the Middle Ages as one in which "the idea of intercession, of man's instinctive longing for a mediator with the Almighty Judge is an "essential mark of medieval piety" and the whole of the Middle Ages is for him one "dyed in the Blood of the Lamb."<sup>2</sup>

It is particularly fitting to begin with Gregory the Great. He was not only the embodiment of pastoral concern for succeeding ages, but also one of the most widely quoted writers. Those who have made a thorough study of his works assure us that the dialectic of the redemption from cross to resurrection runs through the *corpus* of his works. It is found in the hymns ascribed to him and in the sermons preached to the clergy and people of Rome. The great pastoral pope assumed that their sentiments were consonant with his own devotions to the cross and the Blood.

Hence, he is said to bridge the gap between the patristic age and the monastic culture of the Middle Ages. He accounts in part for the preservation of doctrine, the evangelization and the spiritualization of the western Church through monasticism well after 1150 and even beyond this time in various newly formed institutions such as the cathedral schools, the universities and the apostolic labors of the religious orders, and affected the secular clergy and lay folk as well. His teaching, in the words of Leclercq, is much more than a "simple empiricism," for he devotes a "profound structural reflection to the subject of Christian experience."3 He stressed the transmission and clarification of Scriptural texts, outlined the method and specified the fruits of the "lectio divina," and defined "compunction" as "knowledge through love" as opposed to pure speculation and literal interpretation. Hence it is through his insistence upon Scriptural study that we find the devotion flourishing in its proper form as imbedded in Scripture and "the Blood of Christ" is most frequently referred to, even in literary contexts, in the language of Scripture.4

The influence of Gregory becomes apparent first in the spirituality of the Irish monasteries and in the apostolic labors of the Celtic missionaries. According to Dom Gregory Dix, "The ancient conception of the Paschal feast had included in its scope the Ascension along with the Resurrection and the Passion."<sup>5</sup> Aside from the Scriptural texts, there seem to have been two other traditions that played a part in the development of devotion to the redemption of Christ. The first of these, the legend of the Holy Cross, which arose after the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross (commemorating the dedication of the basilica in Jerusalem) and that of the Finding of the Cross were accepted in the Celtic Church. The second was the account of the healing of the blindness of Longinus, the centurion purported to have pierced the side of Christ, when he made contact with the Blood of Christ left on the lance. This account was found in the *Apocryphal Gospel of St. Nicodemus*, which was widely circulated.

The Celtic rite, itself an amalgam of various other rites, predominantly Roman and Gallican, was also a source of inspiration, particularly in the Holy Week and Easter liturgy, as well as prayers and hymns contained in such depositories as the *Bangor Antiphonary*, the *Bobbio Missal* and a few other extant manuscripts.<sup>6</sup> Among the hymns of the *Bangor Antiphonary*, for instance, we find the beautiful "Sancti, venite, Christi corpus sumite," which invites all to drink "the holy Blood of our redemption." The hymn announces our salvation in Christ's Body and Blood and invites us to receive this Body and Blood in the Eucharist. Finally, we are told that we are "saved by the Cross and the Blood of Christ."<sup>7</sup>

The frequent stipulation of the Eucharist as the "sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ" leads one to believe that many more hymns and prayers could be found were the sources available. Hymns in honor of the Holy Cross with reference to the Precious Blood are also found in the *Book of Cerne*. The earliest illumination of the crucifixion, which uses the figure of Longinus, is found in the *Irish Gospel Book of St. Gall*, produced by *peregrini* on the continent. Celtic monks, probably based in Iona, planted the distinctive form of the Celtic cross as symbol of Christ's sacrifice and as a timeless and universal sign of salvation all over Ireland and Northern England. In extant copies of this cross, we often find the familiar figure of Longinus piercing the side of Christ and causing a stream of blood and water to flow.

The spirit with which the Celtic missionaries met the half-christianized and barbaric tribes was one of penitence and a deep sense of sin,<sup>8</sup> as they traveled throughout Ireland, Scotland, England,

France, Belgium, and across the Rhine into Thuringia and Bavaria in the seventh and eighth centuries. Among the Irish Penitentials9 we find this sense of sin, but in the perspective of the redeeming Blood of Christ. In the concluding canon of the Penitentials of St. Columbanus, for instance, the author concludes in a paraphrase of St. Paul to the effect that the Eucharist itself is the source of judgment. "For Christ's throne is the altar, and His Body and His Blood there judges those who approach unworthily."10 Significant also perhaps in the total context is the importance given to "blood" in the Canons of Adamnan, which prefigures the symbolic meaning given to blood in the later Middle Ages, as source of life. In the canons, the eating of meat with the animal's blood still in it is forbidden. Animals taken in traps, for instance, are not to be eaten, unless first drained, for "blood is the guardian and seat of life," and animals thus taken have "blood in which life has its seat" and it "remains clothed within the flesh."11

The first fruits of the Irish missionaries, after the evangelization of their own land, was Anglo-Saxon England. It is hard to summarize the spiritual culture of this land, but it seems to be one of spiritual simplicity and deep faith in spite of the sophistication which certain aspects of its culture betrays. The notion of "blood royal" runs through the chronicles, like a leit motif and is echoed in spiritual contexts, particularly the lives of the English abbots.<sup>12</sup> Here it takes on a connotation of incorporation in Christ, through which the soul is free to aspire to heavenly renown in the comitatus of Christ. It is also found in religious poetry, which is described in the Cambridge History of English Literature in the following manner: "It is in the personal relation of the soul to God the Father, the humanity of Christ, the brotherhood of man, the fellowship of saints, that the Celtic missionaries seem to have preached to their converts; and these doctrines inspired the choicest passages of Old English religious poetry, passages of which compare with some of the best of later ages."13

The poems of both the Cynewulf and the Caedmon cycle come to mind and rhythmical redactions from passages of the Bible, as well as various legends in prose and verse, both on the origin and the finding of the Holy Cross.<sup>14</sup> The loveliest poem of the period, is the famous "Dream of the Rood," in the West Saxon dialect, preserved in the *Vercelli Book*. One is tempted to quote at length from it, but let it suffice to say that it depicts the Cross, towering in the heavens, drenched with the Savior's Blood, which illuminates the universe. The streams of Blood change to jewels, not only symbolizing the pricelessness of the Blood of Christ, but its eschatological value.

In the Ecclesiastical History, Bede also recounts the legend of the Holy Cross in connection with Adamnan's visit to Jerusalem.<sup>15</sup> Other references are made in the form of a salutation in a letter written by St. Boniface, in frequent references to the Eucharist as "the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ" and particularly in Coelfrith's account of the celebration of the Easter liturgy, where he reminds us that "by His blood Christ rescued the world from the darkness of sin." It is also assumed that references occur in his homilies, particularly those for Lent and the two feasts of the Holy Cross, both of which were celebrated in Anglo-Saxon England as well as Ireland. St. Bernard and St. Aelred of Rivaulx apparently knew Bede's famous passage in his Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles,16 in which he develops his thought on the wounds of Christ, comparing them to clefts in the Rock where the soul might hide. To speak of Bede is to be reminded of another Anglo-Saxon homilist, who does not require a special occasion to speak of the sufferings of Christ. In a sermon for the feast of the Assumption, he brings us to the foot of the cross and in a manner which anticipates the *planctus*, a popular poetic form in the 14th and 15th centuries, recounts the sufferings of the Virgin at the sight of the bloodshedding of her Son.

Carolingian reform was also initiated and carried out under the impact of the "monastic spirituality" envisioned by Gregory the Great — the humanism whose touchstone is Christ Crucified, risen from the dead, who by His example and His grace makes us renounce evil in order to lead us to the heavenly city.<sup>17</sup> But the spirituality that manifested itself in this age was not confined to the walls of the monastery. Groups of penitents, oblates, fervent lay persons and the clergy were inspired by a love of the liturgy and a need for external penance. During this period the symbolism of the cross continued to yield devotional response. At this time, too, a start was made in the development of Scripture study which progressed to a high point in the twelfth century especially at St. Victor. Alcuin, Claudius of Turin, Rabanus Maurus and Walafrid Stra-

bo, to name a few, made advances in the study of Latin to further this development.<sup>18</sup> Creative energy was expended in the writing of liturgical poetry, eventually providing inspiration for drama of a paraliturgical form. The cult of the saint as fruit of the redemption was encouraged, especially the cult of the martyr who gave his blood for the Blood of Christ.

In consequence of the Eucharistic controversies that began in the ninth century and continued through the twelfth, the doctrine of transubstantiation was developed and a natural consequence was to link the study of Scripture with the Holy Eucharist. Paschasius Radbertus, for example, wrote his Liber de Corpore et Sanguine Domini against Scotus Erigena, in which he developed the idea of a parallel between the "exposition" of Scripture and the "consecration" of the host.<sup>19</sup> Similar controversies occurred over the question of the sonship of Christ. The "adorationists" assumed that Christ did not share the divine nature of the Father. Alcuin, among others, had recourse to the Scripture to refute Felix of Urgel and Elipandus of Toledo. Hence the study of Scripture from the ninth century to the tenth in the chapter school at Laon and into the Victorine school in the twelfth forms a continuing tradition in which the incarnation-redemption theme forms the high point in salvation history.

In the Carolingian period, which we are still discussing, as in the Anglo-Saxon period, the name of Jesus as indicating the office of redeemer was evidently honored. Hence we have Paul the Deacon using it as an incentive for the study of Latin: "Jesus, the name of our Redeemer, we love to render in accordance with Latin usage." "Lamb of God" is also a popular appellation in this period. The earliest dated manuscript illumination is one from Beatus de Liebana's *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, written and illustrated in Spain (926), entitled "The Adoration of the Lamb in Heaven." It is a full page miniature (New York Pierpont Morgan Library Ms 644, fol. 174 n) in which the Precious Blood issues from the cross above the Lamb and flows down upon it.<sup>20</sup>

Although we are inclined to regard Cluny simply as a system of monastic government, there is something distinctive about the Cluny spirit, with its awareness of the holiness of God, man's unworthiness in himself and his liberation through Christ and the Holy Spirit. With the help of exegetical studies of the Scriptures, and under the influence of Gregory's definition of "compunction" as "knowledge through love," Cluniac abbots and monks moved by a growing pastoral concern, left their monasteries to preach and to leave their individual mark. Hence the asceticism of a Peter Damian was based on a love of the passion of the cross. On the other hand, a desire to expend both money and resources on the adornment of their abbey churches was equally motivated by a love of the Precious Blood. Both St. Hugh and Peter the Venerable, among others, adorned the Church both physically and through the celebration of the liturgy, and if at times it seemed excessive to some, one must remember that to many Cluniac monks as to Peter the Venerable, the Church was the symbol of the heavenly Jerusalem.

In justifying his own expenditures for the building of the Abbey Church of St. Denis, Abbot Suger wrote: "If to fulfill an order from God manifested through the mouth of Prophets, golden chalices, vases and cups were used to receive the blood of goats, calves and the red cow of expiation, how much greater is our obligation to use, in order to receive the Blood of Jesus Christ, in perpetual service and with the utmost devotion, vases of gold, gems and everything that is considered most precious. Surely, neither we nor our worldly goods can suffice to serve such great mysteries."<sup>21</sup>

Thus we find in the churches constructed by the Cluny family of monasteries the origin not only of architectural features, but of much of the iconography of chalice and lamb and cross in the Gothic cathedrals. "Cluniac literature" also reflects this preoccupation with heaven, in the *de contemptu mundi* themes of Bernard of Cluny and Ezzo<sup>22</sup> and in the famous *Meditationes* of John of Fécamp,<sup>23</sup> ascribed at various times in turn to Augustine, Anselm and Bernard. It might also be well to mention that it was at Fécamp, the monastery on the English channel where John had been abbot, that a relic of the Precious Blood was housed and pilgrimage encouraged in its honor.<sup>24</sup>

Going back to England in the Twelfth Century, we find that some of the spirit of pre-Conquest piety still asserted itself, particularly in the form Bede's devotion to the passion and the wounds of Christ took. St. Aelred of Rivaulx invoked the Blood that flowed from the wounds of Christ in much the same manner as Bede in his

Speculum Caritatis, in which he asks Christ to let his soul rest "in the cleft of the rock, in the cavern of your wounds. Let it embrace you, the Crucified One; let it take from You the draught of the Precious Blood."<sup>25</sup>

Although St. Anselm conducts, as it were, an experiment in logical development in his Cur Deus Homo and in the Incarnation of the Word, in which he argues that the enormity of the crime of man against God required an infinite redeemer, we have reason to believe that a different Anselm emerges in the tone of his devotional and mystical works, which reflect his love for the cross and make him, with Aelred, heir, as Colledge puts it, "of many of their precursors in the Anglo-Saxon Church."26 And it is partly on his homilies on the passion and the cross that this reputation is based. He most fruitfully influenced the development of devotion to the humanity of Christ in England. Colledge gives as an example of his piety, some of the phrases from the Sermon of the Lord's Passion, which is in reality a vocalized meditation: "Make me a sharer in Your glory, You Who drank the bitter cup for me: Your pains torment my conscience, Your torments are my memory's cross, for the drink of which You have drunk I dreaded, the sins for which You suffered were mine, I was the disobedient slave, who earned the blows which You endured . . ."

Colledge also quotes from the opening of his famous Prayer Before a Crucifix; "Holy Cross, through which is brought to our mind the Cross on which our Lord Jesus Christ by His death called us back from that everlasting death to which we wretches were all bound, into that everlasting life which we by our sins had lost, I adore, I venerate, I glorify in you the Cross which you recall for us, and in the Cross Him, our merciful Lord, and those benefits which He in mercy gave to us through it. O Lovely Cross, in which we find our health, our life, our resurrection! O precious wood, by which we have been succoured and set free! O sign for us to venerate, which God has signed us with, a glorious Cross in which alone we should have glory!"<sup>27</sup>

Although it might seem like a footnote, we might also mention with Aelred and Anselm the name of St. Edmund Rich, who not only laid down directives for developing the contemplative spirit in young monks, in his *Mirror of the Church*, but also pointed out what sentiments should be developed toward the Precious Blood on Calvary in a beautiful poem which he quotes at length.<sup>28</sup>

St. Bernard, a contemporary of St. Aelred, is usually associated with devotion to the Blessed Virgin and to the infancy of Christ.<sup>29</sup> However, both of these devotions must be regarded in the light of the total context of the redemption. For one so thoroughly steeped in what Leclercq calls "monastic theology," in which "clear, orderly warm exposition of truth, serving to dispose the soul to prayer and contemplation" prevails, we could hardly understand a failure to respond to this central devotion of atonement theology. The fact of the matter is that he called the passion "mea subtilior, interior philosophia," and this philosophy stands forth in his sermons on the passion.

In his contemplative love for the Blood of Christ and his motivation to action, he prefigures St. Dominic. And Daniel Rops reports that in speaking on any subject he was filled with unction, "but when referring to Christ Crucified, his manner becomes stark; his anguished tongue can do no more than tell one by one the sufferings of Jesus: and he moves our imagination by the sheer simplicity of his account."<sup>30</sup> The same author sees in Bernard the source of the popular depiction of the heavenly Father, holding the Crucified in His outstretched arms, blood trickling from the latter's wounds, which was expressed in various art media after the twelfth century<sup>31</sup> and there is a sixteenth century woodcut which depicts Bernard worshipping Christ, showing his wounds from which the Precious Blood flows copiously.

If any figure in the Middle Ages deserves further study, it is St. Bernard. Even in his Christmas sermons the theme of the Precious Blood stands out. Each sermon contains references to Christ as the Lamb of God and as redeemer or to "the Blood poured out for our salvation" or to the "chalice of salvation." It is possible that among many other sources of the mystery plays in the fourteenth and fifteenth Centuries, the sermons of St. Bernard should be accounted, for there too the theme of the Precious Blood is found even in plays on the birth of Christ.

It is impossible to give an adequate idea of his use of the theme in a survey, but it might be well to cite a few instances. In the *Second Sermon for Christmas Eve*, which develops the theme of heaven, he makes it clear that heaven is "the fruit of the whole

life He (Christ) lived in the flesh," "bought by the price of His Precious Blood."32 The whole of the First Sermon for Christmas Day entitled "On the Fountains of the Savior," is a sermon on the Precious Blood. With his wonderful gift for accommodation, he uses several Scriptural texts to depict the wounds of Christ as fountains of grace. The Blood flowing from the first four wounds merit graces for us while we are still alive, for Christ received these wounds while He was still alive; that flowing from the fifth wound, inflicted after His death, was to gain us the grace of final perseverance and heaven. The peroration is typical of Bernard's absorption in the total scheme of the redemption. "But notice," he says, "while speaking of the mysteries of the Nativity, we have suddenly digressed in order to contemplate in the sacraments of the Passion those gifts which Christ brought us in His Nativity. For it was then that the treasury was broken open and He poured out the ransom, which was the price of our redemption."33

Similarly, in the Second Christmas Sermon for the day of Christ's Nativity, entitled "On the Three Principal Works of God and Their Three Elements," he creates a dramatic picture from the *Apocalypse* in which St. John weeps because there is no one to open the book. Then he addresses Christ, "Open the book, Lamb of God, Thou Who art meekness itself. Offer Thy hands and feet to the Jews to be pierced with nails so that the treasure of salvation, which lies hidden in them may flow out in plentiful redemption."<sup>34</sup> Christ is the physician, who heals us by his own pain, "So that with the precious balm of His Blood; He may cure my wounds."<sup>35</sup> In fact, the Precious Blood figures so keenly in the totality of his devotion that he must remind us that Christ not only came "to redeem us by His blood" but did it to give "us an example of every virtue."<sup>36</sup>

The subsequent ages needed no reminder, as we have seen, of Bernard's devotion and as we look at his place in history, we are tempted to ascribe his influence upon his own and later times to this devotion,<sup>37</sup> for the Precious Blood certainly was in his mind in drawing up the plans for the forming of a militant order like the Knights Templar, as well as in his desire to see the land where Christ's Blood was shed<sup>38</sup> won back for those who kept this memory and in the various reform movements he helped to initiate, eventually inspiring the spirit and works of spiritual leaders like Francis and Dominic and privileged souls like St. Gertrude and St. Catherine of Siena.

Victorine spirituality is often summarily dismissed as preoccupied with Scripture exegeses of the Old and New Testaments, both in its literal and its spiritual sense. However, such studies made their contribution to the study of salvation-history and there are hints of a richer field to be harvested here.

In Anselm of Laon, for instance, we find a serene and hopeful attitude toward the passion, since Christ like Joshua and unlike Moses entered the Promised Land by His sufferings.<sup>39</sup> He also exhibits a great devotion to the humanity of Christ. In Hugh of St. Victor, a great light in sacramental theology, we find a personal love for the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist, attested to by his brother.<sup>40</sup> In Richard of St. Victor, especially in his *Four Degrees of Passionate Love*, we find a description of the maturation of the spiritual life, which he ascribes to growth in compassionate love. This work had a profound influence on the English mystics.<sup>41</sup> In Adam of St. Victor we find a continuation of a tradition set by Venantius Fortunatus in the Seventh Century in which the theme of the Passion and the Holy Cross was used in hymns, tropes and sequences of a liturgical and paraliturgical nature.<sup>42</sup>

There are many asides we might include at this point — the founding of the Premonstratentian Order by St. Norbert to further devotions to the presence of Christ's living Body and Blood in the Eucharist, the establishment of various centers of devotion to the true cross and other relics of the passion,<sup>43</sup> as well as of authentic relics of the Precious Blood manifested in the Eucharistic celebration,<sup>44</sup> and in any more complete account these must be fitted into their proper places to give an adequate notion of the part they played in the manifestation of the devotion and its pastoral implementation.

We come now to the Thirteenth Century. Although, as Hughes states in his *History of the Church*, "we note a relinquishing of pastoral dedication in high ecclesiastical circles,"<sup>45</sup> this period is not one of the dormant spirituality and the legacy of Bede, Bernard and Richard of St. Victor continues to bear fruit. In fact, a new concept of spiritual life emerges, not entirely alien to the old, in the reinterpretation of the *lectio divina* for the purpose of preaching to the unenlightened, as well as to provide spiritual sustenance to

the advanced. This becomes evident as we study the popular sermon literature of the Franciscans, the Dominicans, the Carthusians and the Premonstratentians, as well as the spiritual classics of the late Middle Ages.

The spiritual exposition, however much it was practiced in the pulpit and in the schools, derived its vitality from religious experience in the cloister. It drew its sap through the roots of *lectio divina* from the soil of the old monastic tradition, the *consolationes*, the *Moralia in Job*, the *Sermones in Cantica* of St. Bernard. The abbot of Clairvaux was truly the last of the Fathers, unless we should include Richard of St. Victor and a Victorine mystic of the early 13th c, Thomas of Vercelli ... This in itself is significant, a change of attitude — a new conception of the spiritual life and of the place of *lectio divina* in that life was leading to a decline in the spiritual exposition ...<sup>46</sup>

St. Francis, the founder of the Franciscan order, bore the visible marks of his devotion on his body, but only after a lifetime of devotion, which Celano describes as a lifetime of testimony to "the humility of the Incarnation and the clarity of the Passion."47 His "Letters" and "Admonitions" abound in references to the "Lamb of God." to the "Body and Blood of Christ," and he had a deep respect for priests primarily because they are charged with the custody of the "holy Body and Blood" of Christ in the Church. In his Testamentum, he wrote: "In this world, I see nothing corporally of the most high Son of God, but His most holy Body and Blood."48 It is significant, as the article on "Franciscan Spirituality" in the New Catholic Encyclopedia points out, that so many of his sons were known for devotions related to his own: St. Bonaventure, to the Sacred Heart; Duns Scotus, the Kingship of Christ, Bernadine of Siena, the Holy Name; St. James of the Marches, the Precious Blood; and St. Paschal Baylon, the Holy Eucharist.

St. Bonaventure's devotion to the Sacred Heart is a natural outgrowth of his theological preoccupation and neither can be completely dissociated from the Precious Blood. In his incarnation theology, he devotes much thought to the perfection of the human nature of Christ and regards Christ pre-eminently as divine exemplar. This serves as the basis also for his admiration for St. Francis, who was an exemplar on a secondary level, simply by the fact that

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his whole life centered on the Cross.<sup>49</sup> In the shedding of His Blood, we find that Christ exhibited three hierarchical acts: He purged away guilt; He enlightened us by his living example; He perfected us enabling us to follow in His footsteps. One can recognize in these three acts, the traditional description of the purgative, illuminative and unitive way of the mystics, and with Bonaventure, as with other mystics, the highest mystical life begins with and progresses in union with the Crucified. Bonaventure notes without hesitation that any "decision of penetrating into the mysteries of the spiritual life must be purified in the Blood of the Crucified, must allow itself to be carried on by a burning love of the Crucified, must adore, contemplate and glorify the Crucified without ceasing."<sup>50</sup>

Bonaventure's contribution was also on a more or less popular level. He wrote Latin hymns on the subject of the passion and the cross, and a life of Christ entitled *Lignum Vitae*, which proved a source of meditation on the humanity of Christ.

It is surprising, however, that the *Meditations* on the Life of Christ, discussed at length by Male because of their influence upon popular devotion and art, would have been ascribed to St. Bonaventure. They are described as ones "in which the imaginative art of the writer developed above all else, the terrible reality of the human agony of the divine Redeemer."<sup>51</sup>

Another Life of Christ that proved influential was that of Ludolph of Saxony, first a Dominican who later became a Carthusian. His life was not a simple biography in today's terms, but a compendium of quotations from the Fathers, treatises on dogmatic and moral subjects and on spiritual instructions, besides meditations in the proper sense and vocal prayers centering around various aspects of Christ's life from his eternal birth in the bosom of the Father to His ascension. It too played an important part in the spread of devotion to the sacred Humanity of Christ under various aspects.

Duns Scotus is a name that can only be mentioned here, but one suspects that a deeper study is in order for a more complete account of devotion to the Blood of Christ in the Middle Ages, for Scotus insists strongly upon the reality of the humanity of Christ and these teachings played no little part in the formation of his own piety and that of his order. His ready acceptance and defense of the Immaculate Conception suggests that his was heir to pre-

Conquest English piety, in which this dogma was held unquestionably and further parallelization is hinted at in his devotion to Christ. Besides this, he is cited as a deep influence upon the lives and piety of such Franciscan saints as Bernadine of Siena, John of Capistrano and St. James of the Marches, all of whom had a great devotion to the passion and to the Precious Blood. The devotion he is most associated with is the Kingship of Christ, which Christ holds by virtue of the incarnation, for since God has become man, natural creation has value already in time.<sup>52</sup>

From the second half of the Eleventh Century on there was a significant output of sequences, tropes and lyric poetry generally on the topic of the Holy Cross. We have already mentioned the poetry of Adam of St. Victor and St. Bonaventure. Among others were Abbot Theofrid of Echternach, author of the *Salve crux sancta*, the Goliardic poet Hugh of Orleans, author of the sequence *Laudes Crucis*. Mystical verses on the passion were produced by the Franciscans and under Franciscan impetus. We might list among these John of Peckham, John of Garland and John of Hovedon, as well as the Cistercian abbot Arnulf of Louvain. The works of these men preceded the more widely known *Stabat Mater* of Jacopone da Todi. One might also mention the Conductus and motets for passiontide of Philip the Chancellor of the University of Paris, as well as the works of Thomas Aquinas, soon to be discussed.

In the Dominican tradition generally, the *Lectio divina* has a more intellectual cast than in the Franciscan, though both have a tradition of popular preaching. Yet, although Dominic himself went off to school, as his biographer Jordan of Saxony tells us, he accounted the Crucifix as his book *par excellence*. One can recognize in this statement an expression used by both Thomas Aquinas and Catherine of Siena. Jordan himself wrote in a letter to Diana of Andah: "This law undefiled, since it cleanses defilement in charity, you will find beautifully written, when you look on Jesus our Savior stretched out on the Cross, as a parchment written in purple, illuminated with the Holy Blood. Where, dearest, I ask you, can the *lectio* of charity be so well learned?"<sup>53</sup>

The power with which Dominic confronted heresy was the power of the Precious Blood and the particular heresy he confronted was as devastating if not as universal as any we find today. It undermined the causality of God, distorted the problem of evil and the relationship of body and soul in man. Dominic confronted his audiences with the lesson Christ came to teach — the fundamental dignity of man, his need for God to be found in the sacred humanity of Christ. Thus, says Father Reeves, speaking of the heritage of St. Dominic, "Dominican prayer is directed first and foremost to Corpus Christi, the Body and Blood of Christ" and this distinguishes Dominican art, theology and mysticism.<sup>54</sup>

The merging of the speculative and the devotional in Dominican spirituality is best illustrated by St. Albert the Great and St. Thomas Aquinas. Both doctors of the church challenge one to a deeper study than the present survey pretends to be, but one can be consoled that some study on the devotion to the Precious Blood in the lives and works of these eminent Dominicans has been made. In the case of St. Albert, there is a striking study made by Father Mario Ansaldi, *Il Sangue di Cristo in S. Alberto Magno*, which is awaiting translation into English. In this work, the author shows the advanced physiological knowledge Albert had of the function of blood in the life process. On this basis, Albert moves to the transcending role of the Precious Blood in the life of the soul through the Sacraments. In the treatises *De Incarnatione* and *De Corpore Domini*, his devotion betrays itself in the very theological process of moving from thesis to proof.

As Catherine of Siena who followed him, St. Thomas saw truth as a great light and a cleansing fire. The outlines for his devotion are therefore found in his theological treatises. St. Thomas viewed the Precious Blood in a five-fold aspect: a) as efficient cause of our salvation; b) as the meritorious cause of our salvation; c) as an act of satisfaction; d) as an act of redemption; e) as an act of sacrifice.55 In his poetry, Christ's Body and Blood in the Eucharist, as well as the Blood He shed in the act of redeeming mankind find an inevitable link with devotion to the Holy Cross. In his Pange Lingua for the Office of Corpus Christi, he chose the Pange Lingua of Venantius Fortunatus as a model. He links the Old and New Testament in terms of types of the Eucharist in the manner of the Scriptural commentaries of Hugh of St. Victor. The Adoro Te, if actually written by him, contains the often quoted lines that have inspired devotion to the Precious Blood, "To a single drop of which is given / All the World from all its sins to save." The Lauda Sion, describing the doctrinal aspects of the consecra-

tion as transubstantiation is a metrical copy of Adam of St. Victor's "Laudes Crucis." In the "Verbum supernum," the Precious Blood is man's food, the price of his redemption and the prize he will receive for a race well run. There is much more to be studied in the devotion of St. Thomas, for instance the role of the Precious Blood in his mystical theology, as well as the Precious Blood in his sermons.

Even the casual reader of the Dialogues of St. Catherine of Siena, another Dominican saint, cannot miss the impression that devotion to the Precious Blood also had a profound influence on her life, for she saw in it both creative and redemptive love. In fact a study of her devotion yields the impression of the great spiritual maturity to which the devotion can lead. Again, a survey cannot fully give support to a statement of this sort and Catherine's devotion certainly needs more profound study. However, in chapter 60, she notes: "By this Blood, they are enabled to know my truth, how in order to give them life, I created them in my image and likeness and re-created them to grace with the Blood of my Son, making them sons of adoption." This quotation, of course, is taken out of context, but in commenting both upon the passage and its context, Garrigou Lagrange writes: "This is what St. Peter understood after his sin and after the Passion of Christ; it was only then that he appreciated the value of the Precious Blood, which had been shed for our salvation, the Blood of Redemption."56 In other words, even to recognize the power of the Precious Blood requires a certain spiritual maturity.

We find the same spiritual maturity in some of the English mystics, particularly, Juliana of Norwich. She may have read the *Dialogues*; at least, an anonymous translation circulated freely in East Anglia during her lifetime and it is evident, in spite of her attestations of ignorance, that she read quite widely. In the *Revelations* there is something of the spiritual vision of Catherine and her theme is similar, God's love confronting us in the face of agonizing problems. For instance, in the 4th *Revelation*, while seemingly involved in the physical sufferings of Christ in the flogging, she writes:

The most precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is in truth both costly and copious. Look and see. The costly and copious flood of his most precious blood streamed down into hell, and

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burst the chains, and freed all there who belonged to the Court of Heaven. The costly and copious flood of his most precious blood overflows the whole of earth and is available to wash all creatures from their sin, present, past or future. The costly and copious flood of his most precious blood ascends up to heaven, to our Lord's blessed body itself and is found there in him, who bleeds and pleads for us with the Father — and that for as long as need shall require — Forever it flows through all heaven, rejoicing to save mankind, such as are there already and those who are yet to come, making up the number of the saints.<sup>57</sup>

In Richard Rolle's Amending Life, meditation upon the sufferings of Christ is viewed in the light of preparation for infused contemplation,<sup>58</sup> and in his *Meditations on the Passion* he includes a lovely poem in the form of a planctus on the shedding of the Precious Blood. The tone of the planctus is adopted also in Blessed Henry Suso's Book of Wisdom, in which he depicts the Virgin saying, "I kissed the Precious Blood that flowed from His wounds so that both my pallid cheeks and lips were all bloodied." Sertillanges points out the frequency of this image in English and continental poetry. For instance in the poem entitled "Solilogue sur la Misericorde de la Vierge Marie" there are several images that show Mary bloodied. "And I," she says, "I embraced the cross. I kissed the Blood which flowed from his wounds, and the pallor of my face was covered by it." "O Precious Blood, how you trickled down upon the breast from which you came." "Come, Virgins, weep over the Blood of Jesus, which bathes and covers the first Virgin of Paradise." "O Mary inconsolable, reveal to me the sorrow that you experienced when you embraced the Blood of your Son flowing in abundance down the length of the cross." Suso was also the author of a book of one-hundred "one-sentence" meditations on the Passion.59

After the Thirteenth Century a new hymnody under the influence of the Dominicans, Franciscans and Cistercians came into evidence. In the religious lyric poetry that abounded during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the theme of the Precious Blood as such becomes surprisingly more evident, especially in the vernacular. In the religious lyrics of England,<sup>60</sup> for instance, the theme was not relegated to songs for passiontide and lent. As in the sermons of St. Bernard, and as we shall see in the drama, the theme of the Precious Blood is found in the theme of Christ's birth and early child-

hood, for the purpose of His birth was to be a "redeeming gift" or to pay the price of our salvation with His Blood. As in the popular Victimae Paschali Laudes of Wipo, found in the traditional liturgy for Easter, the Blood of Christ is viewed in Easter songs as the means of Christ's coming into His triumph. In the lyrics, the shedding of Christ's blood is also alined with creation, for God is referred to frequently as "Creator and Redeemer." In the dialogue poem "Natura Hominis and Bonitas Dei," His Blood is mentioned among the gifts given by God to man, beginning with the creation. Besides these, there are numberless poems dealing specifically with the shedding of Christ's Blood. Among the hymns in English that seem to have circulated most widely is one referred to as "Richard of Caistre's Hymn." Whether or not it was actually written by him or merely promulgated is not important, but it was associated with the deep piety that seems to have manifested itself in East Anglia in the fourteenth century. We have already mentioned Juliana of Norwich and might mention also Margery Kempe and the prior of Mount Grace Charterhouse, whose Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ was influential. Colledge suggests that this piety might have been inspired in part by the existence of a local industry in Norwich which turned out scores of pietas and other art objects which found their way to local churches.<sup>61</sup> We might also add that the influence of St. Bridgit must also be allowed for. Not only were her Revelations available, but houses of her order, founded to honor the Passion, were established in England.

On the continent, two other inspirational works, among others, claim our attention, the *Revelations* of St. Gertrude and the *Imitation of Christ*. Three Gertrudes are actually to be cited to fully understand the tradition of intellectual activity that maintains itself through the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Germany.

The first, Blessed Gertrude of Aldenberg, abbess of the Premonstratentian Abbey, evidenced a great love for the Eucharist and introduced the observance of Corpus Christi into Germany in 1270 before it was extended to the universal church. The second is Gertrude of Hackeborn, later abbess of Helfta, who promoted the study of Scripture and the liberal arts in the cloister. Among her subjects was the third Gertrude, the author of the *Revelations*, who followed St. Bernard in his love for the wounds of Christ, especially the wound in the heart. In the Third Book of her *Revelations*, we find this devotion linked with devotion to the Precious Blood. The nature of her poetic gift is seen in such phrases as the following: "Oh that all the waters of the sea were changed into blood, that I might pass them over my head and thus wash away my exceeding vileness." "Thou didst utter with such amazing fervour when sweating blood in agony." "O most merciful Lord, engrave Thy wounds upon my heart with Thy most Precious Blood, that I may read in them both Thy grief and Thy love."

In these phrases, she reechoes also the sentiments of Catherine of Siena. This is still more striking in the following, in which she asks Christ to let her cleanse the "stains of carnal and perishable pleasures in the sweet bath of Blood and Water which thou didst pour forth for me," or greets Christ: "I offer it to Thee freely, beseeching Thee to purify it in the sanctifying water of Thy adorable Side and to adorn it with the Precious Blood of Thy sweetest Heart and to unite it to Thee by the odors of charity."

Whether or not Gerard Groote is actually the author of the Imitation of Christ does not concern us. He is the founder of what has come to be called the devotio moderna, which emphasized an effective devotion to the humanity of Christ. It is only in this capacity, that we will deal with it here, without attempting to evaluate the movement, the souls it influenced or any other manifestation of it. What has sometimes been overlooked is that the Imitation was not written as a manual of popular devotion.62 At least one author has alleged that Groote wrote it while he resided temporarily in a Carthusian monastery. His spiritual life was there guided by Master Henry of Kalkar and in this fervor, he jotted down his personal responses to instruction and his own prayer life. This he continued for a while even after he left the monastery. In the Imitation devotion to the Blood of Christ is anchored in his devotion to the Eucharist. The author uses Scripture liberally, but with some manifestation of accommodation and paraphrase. Thus he depicts Christ saying: "I will feed you with my Sacred Body and refresh you with My Blood." "No drink can quench your thirst better than the chalice of My Sacred Blood which flowed from my side for your salvation." "This Sacred Blood and water from my side is of such power that he who drinks of it shall not thirst forever." One cannot help remarking

the striking resemblance between the utterances of the Imitation and St. Gertrude.

Throughout the Middle Ages we find in the literature of the various countries a striking echo of the devotional piety of each age. Sometimes this echo is discernible in a matter-of-fact treatment of characters who attend Mass, receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist, show respect for the ministers of the altar, meet anchorites who shrive them or send them on pilgrimages. The Blood of Christ is the universal symbol of salvation. One of the places we might expect to find it used more explicitly is in the popular Grail legend, found in Welsh, French and German literature. The legend on the whole, however, makes little use of the theme even in the Parceval episode. The hero goes in search of the Grail and finds it. The Grail is purported to be the one Christ used to institute the Eucharist, which had been rescued and preserved by Joseph of Arimathea, but in the Fisher King episode the five drops of blood brought into the hall on a lance, as well as the silver platter might be construed in a less obviously Christian way, for chalices and bleeding lances and wounded kings have their origin in Celtic literature (e.g. Welsh Mobinagi of Peredur) and the context does not yield a specifically spiritual interpretation, except in the work of Wolfram of Eschenbach.63

More important is the use of the Precious Blood in dramatic literature. The origin of the drama, it has been pointed out, was ultimately the liturgy of the Church. This has been studied in detail by Carl Young and Hardin Craig.64 More immediate sources include the popular sermon literature and most seem to have been written by clerics for the purpose of giving a description of Christian living as a drama. The theme of the Precious Blood occurs in Nativity plays, in the so-called Processus Prophetarum, a dramatic form occurring alone or within another play, in which the prophets of the Old Testament foretold the life and Passion of Christ, as well as the Officium Stellae, a dramatic form in which a procession of holy Innocents, led by a boy carrying a lamb to signify the Lamb of God, gave testimony to the sacrifice of Christ, as well as their own. In the Passion plays, a frequent devise was the already cited Planctus Mariae, where Mary in a monologue, or with Christ on the Cross in dialogue spoke of the various ways in which the Precious Blood was shed.

#### The Precious Blood in Medieval Thought

One of the most fruitful studies might be made on a specific play in the Ludus Coventria cycle, condensed from the Hegge manuscript entitled "The Mystery of the Redemption."65 The theme, one might say, is salvation-history. It is a pageant with a number of scenes, in which the Precious Blood runs through as a leit motif, starting with the fall, in which the angel spells out for Adam and Eve the terms of redemption. In the procession of the prophets, Daniel and Roboam prophesy the birth and death of Christ in which the tree of Jesse becomes the tree of the cross, and Jonah prophesies the resurrection after "death and bitter bale." In the adoration of the shepherds, the third shepherd with spiritual perspicacity foresees the redemption to be won "through the child's wounds." The Kings make various offerings, referring to the "Babe's blood," which will pay the debt of sin, his priesthood which he will hold "through his own bright blood," his kingship, which is to be won by sufferings to be endured until "all His blood has run." In various scenes of the Passion, the Precious Blood is cited at every turn, particularly in the planctus in which the soul of Christ speaking after His death, recounts His sufferings. In His resurrection, Christ Himself reminds the audience, "The blood I bled appears," showing the function of His Blood in the restoration to life. Even the final judgment is enacted in terms of the Precious Blood for the souls who rejected it are condemned.

The theme of the Precious Blood in literature is a fruitful subject, which cannot be pursued here. The brief indications of its importance are shown in the discussion on drama. A more detailed study is still to be made on this subject. One might also point out that in other great works of the Middle Ages, the theme has great importance. In the Divine Comedy, for instance, traditional atonement<sup>66</sup> theology forms the basis of the symbolism in the Inferno and the Purgatorio. In the Inferno, the Precious Blood is conspicuous for its absence and so, in its place we have the "nitty gritty" of Florentine life, the blood sheddings, the slaughters, the river of blood, even the Tree of the Cross is inverted in the de-carnation of Pier delle Vigne. In the Purgatorio, Dante goes through successive purgations and is made aware of this by the cross traced in blood on his forehead, symbolizing the cleansing power of the Precious Blood. In the Paradiso, the Church Triumphant appears in the form of a radiant white rose, "which in His Blood Christ made His Spouse."

Two English works, possibly among many others, might be mentioned. William Langland's *Piers Plowman* contains in the Sixth Passus, a meditation of Christ appearing as the "Knight come to joust in Jerusalem."<sup>67</sup> In the final vision, Christ again appears "paynted al blody," but he wears His wounds triumphantly as a conqueror and as King of kings. In this role, he redirects the building of the barn to store the crops, which represents His Church and this is done through the Cross and the shedding of His own Blood. In the *Pearl*, blood is coupled with water to symbolize the Blood of Christ and the Waters of Baptism as basic references. "In the water and blood, liturgical symbols which are, again, drawn from the Bible, the poet imagines the connection between heaven and earth. The link is the saving Blood of Christ symbolized in the waters of baptism and the wine of the Eucharist."<sup>68</sup>

To what conclusion can this paper lead? First, I hope it leads to the conviction that a study of a more complete nature is still to be made on the Precious Blood in medieval devotion. Second, I have not come to any broad sweeping generalizations that the present stage of research would not warrant, yet, even in these few pages we can see that there are pastoral and spiritual implications in the devotion as it existed in those days. If as Von Balthasar says, spirituality may approximately be defined as "that basic practical or existential attitude of man which is the consequence and expression of the way in which he understands his religious or more generally his ethically committed existence, the way in which he reacts habitually to ultimate insights and decisions,"69 then we are confronted with the task of discerning the unique character of devotion in the Middle Ages in order that we may make our proper and distinct approach in our own Vatican II world, for the Precious Blood is today as then the price of our redemption. It is still our task to discover through what St. Thomas calls the analogia fidei70 or the analogy of faith that basic response which is prior to all differentiation, as well as the unique way in which different individuals can be approached today, according to the existential circumstances and needs of each. This is a tremendous challenge, but perhaps the Precious Blood and souls is worth it.

SISTER MARY DELPHINE, C.PP.S.

#### FOOTNOTES

- 1. F. X. Durwell, In the Redeeming Christ (Sheed and Ward, New York, 1963), p. x.
- Pierre Daniel Rops, Cathedral and Crusade: 1050-1350 (London, J.M. Dent and Sons, 1959), chapter 1-passim.
- Jean Leclercq, The Love of Learning and the Desire for God (Fordham Univ. Press, 1960), p. 31-32.
- Cf. Beryll Smalley, The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages (Philosophical Lib., 1952), for the continuity of Biblical studies established from the ninth to the twelfth century.
- 5. Dom Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy (Westminster, 1954), p. 388. Dix also points out the practice of borrowing feasts and texts between local churches and the writing of new "votives" to fit every occasion; hence, the origin of the Feast dedicated to the Holy Wounds celebrated in many localities in the Gaelic liturgy.
- 6. Ibid., p. 358.
- Joseph Connolly, Hymns of the Roman Liturgy (Newman Press, 1954), p. 131. The author is unknown but appeared in the Bangor Antiphonary in the late 7th c. It is an early example of a metrical communio.
- Cf. for example the Vita S. Fursei, cited in Joseph P. Furhman, O.S.B. Irish Medieval Monasteries on the Continent (Washington, Catholic Univ., 1927).
- Ludwig Bieler, Ed. Irish Penitentials (Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1963), p. 181. See also Sources of Christian Theology II, ed. Paul Palmer (Newman Press, 1959), p. 128, where prolonged separation from the Eucharist was considered as a means of wounding Christ. This notion is an echo of Faustus of Riez, d. 492.
- 10. Irish Penitentials, p.
- 11. "Canons of Adamnan" in Irish Penitentials, p. 181.
- Cf. Clinton Albertson, S. J. Anglo Saxon Saints and Heroes, (Fordham, 1967).
- 13. Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. I, 46-7.
- Ibid., Vol. I, 47. Bertram Colgrave and Ann Hyde, "Two leaves from Old English Manuscripts," Speculum (Jan. 1962), p. 60.
- 15. The account by Adamnan is not his own, but that of Arculfu's trip to the Holy Land and the book at Bede's disposal is a treatise entitled De locis sanctis. cf. New Catholic Encyclopedia I, 119.
- Eric Colledge, The Medieval Mystics of England, Charles Scribner and Sons, N.Y., 1961), p. 11.
- 17. Leclercq, loc. cit., 49.
- 18. Smalley, loc. cit., 37-38.

- 20. New Catholic Encyclopedia, III, p. 628.
- 21. Suger, Comment fut construit Saint Denis, as quoted by Leclercq, loc. cit, 307.

<sup>19.</sup> Ibid.

- 22. New Catholic Encyclopedia, VI, 389.
- 23. J. Leclercq and J. F. Bonnes, eds. Un Maître de la vie spirituelle aux xi<sup>e</sup>siècle: Jean de Fécamp, Paris, 1946. The influence of Fécamp 15 seen in Peter Damian's poem, "Glories of Paradise," in which he uses the Lamb theme. See also New Catholic Encyclopedia, VII, 1051.
- 24. New Catholic Encyclopedia, V, 869.
- 25. Colledge, loc. cit., p. 50.
- Ibid., p. 11-12. The most scholarly work on this subject is by Ignazio Bonetti, C.P.S. La Stimata della Passione: Dottrina e Storia della devozione alle Cinque Piaghe, Rovigo, 1952.
- 27. Ibid., p. 22-23.
- 28. The Survival of Anglo-Saxon liturgical piety is demonstrated in one case in which Edgar (959-975), held off his coronation until he had reached the canonical age for ordination. The coronation ceremony thence took on aspects of the liturgy for ordination and survived into the age of Edward the Confessor. This gave rise to a moral seriousness in the yielding of kingship and a notion of the priest in the kingly function. Cf. Bernard W. Scholz, "Canonization of Edward the Confessor," Speculum (Jan. 1961), p. 45.
- 29. New Catholic Encyclopedia II, 337 ff.
- 30. Daniel Rops, loc. cit., p. 9.
- 31. New Catholic Encyclopedia II, 337.
- 32. St. Bernard, The Nativity (Chicago: Sceptre Press, 1959), p. 15.
- 33. Ibid.
- 34. Ibid., 70-71.
- 35. Ibid., 70.
- 36. Ibid., 79.
- 37. Three Cistercians possibly influenced by Bernard include William of Thierry, his contemporary and friend who studied the cultivation of mystical life. Baldwin of Ford (Cf. Leclercq, *The Love of Learning*, p. 103): "In writing on the Eucharist, Baldwin takes the Last Supper as a point of departure, but to explain it he puts together a chain of texts borrowed largely from the O.T. and comments on each of them in succession. What takes place on the altar is the summit and resumé, the recapitulation of what had taken place on all the altars men have raised since their creation, of all that God had done for them and continues to do for them. The passage of time is only a divine pedagogical method by which humanity is taught progressively to take part in the Mass."

.The other is Blessed Guerric of Igny. Cf. Christmas Sermons, ed. by Merton, Abbey of Gethsemani, 1959. Guerric reflects the theme of Bernard without the explicit reference to the Precious Blood that we find in Bernard.

38. Daniel Rops quotes Routeboeuf, a contemporary of St. Louis, in a summons to the Crusades, in words applicable to the whole of medieval society — which, says Rops, "knew that God seeks man in everything, that Jesus is King of kings and that Everyman be he ever so wretched is dyed in the Precious Blood of Christ." (loc. cit., p. 33). The lines of the poet are:

"Now is the time God comes to look for us,

With arms outstretched; we are dyed in His Blood."

- 39. Smalley, loc. cit., 89.
- 40. Osberti Epistola de Morte Hugonis. Hugh's dogmatic synthesis De Sacramentis Christianae Fidei was written about 1134. It treats atonement theology among other matters. The method used is not dialectical, but an application of the lectio divina, which by the eleventh century had developed beyond its monastic implications of developing spiritual unction.
- 41. Richard of St. Victor, as a Scotsman, tempts one to seek a link between his work and Anglo-Saxon spirituality and to try to find a correspondence in Duns Scotus, as well as the English mystics who actually read him.
- 42. Among his hymns there are at least two devoted to the Holy Cross, "Maestae parentis Christi," and "Laudes Crucis Attolamus."
- 43. Shrines of the true cross seem to have abounded, where the Precious Blood was honored at least by implication. St. Croix near Poitier had been established by the Merovingian Queen Radegund, who employed Venantius Fortunatus to write the hymns that continued to be sung in the liturgy in its honor. Larger relics of the cross were continually broken into smaller pieces and shared. What was purported to be the crown of thorns continued to be honored at the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, after being removed from Sainte-Chapelle, which St. Louis had built for the purpose of housing it.
- 44. In 1229, at Sant' Ambrogi in Florence one of these took place at mass. At this time a drop of Precious Blood left in the chalice floated to the top of the ablution water and took on the accidents of blood. At Bolsena in 1264, a priest doubting the real presence, perceived blood flowing from the host, which stained the corporal and trickled from the altar. This particular miracle was closely scrutinized by St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas Aquinas at the request of Urban IV and declared authentic. It is possibly the one single incident that gave most impetus to the establishing of the Feast of Corpus Christi in 1245. We have already noted that at Fécamp a relic of the Precious Blood was honored in pilgrimages. It is not known what the nature of this relic was.
- 45. A History of the Church (Sheed and Ward, III), 119.
- 46. Smalley, loc. cit., p. 281.
- 47. Celano, Vita, Chapter 30.
- 48. Quoted by Hilarion Felder, O.F.M. Cap., The Ideals of St. Francis of Assisi (Benziger, 1924), p. 395.

Felder writes: "Anthony of Padua was the wonder worker, Berthold of Ratisbon preacher of the Eucharist, Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure and Duns Scotus, the luminaries of Franciscan science, became the theologians of the Eucharist, Paschal Baylon is the patron of the eucharistic works and societies. Joseph of Plananida or Ferno was the author of the 40 Hours devotion. The entire Franciscan Order, the defender and promoter of the Feast of Corpus Christi and the Eucharistic devotion (loc. cit., p. 55).

- 49. Cf. The Breviloquium for the analogy of the Scriptures and the Cross of the Universe, which suggests that Bonaventure knew the Dream of the Rood. *Works*, edited by Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure Univ., N. Y., p. 208.
- Felder, loc. cit., p. 395. For a selection of apposite passages from Bonaventure, Felder suggest P. Ephrem Longpré, O.F.M. La Théologie Mystique de S. Bonaventure in Archiv. franc. XIV (1921), 68-71.
- 51. Emile Male, Religious Art (Pantheon Press, 1949).
- 52. Hughes, loc. cit. III, 119.
- 53. John Baptist Reeves, O.P. The Dominicans (Macmillan, 1930), 65.
- 54. Ibid.
- Summa III, q. 48.
   Cf.: also J. W. Curran, "Thomistic Concept of Devotion" Thomist 2 (1940) 410-443; 546-580.
- 56. The Three Ways of the Spiritual Life (Newman, 1950), 33 ff. See also New Catholic Encyclopedia II, 260.
- 57. Revelations, in The English Mystics, Pelican Press, N.Y.
- 58. "I Sleep and My Heart Watches," Colledge, p. 150. In the Book of Privy Counsel as well as Walter Hilton's Scale of Perfection, the Passion is considered the "Door of devotion and the surest entrance into contemplation." Colledge, p. 85.
- 59. A.D. Sertillanges, O.P. What Jesus Saw From the Cross (Dublin: Clomore and Reynolds, 1937), p. 104.
- Carlton Brown, Lyrics of the 15th C. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), passim. For the French influence on English lyrics, see Russell Hope Robins, "The Authors of the Middle English Religious Lyrics," JEGP XXXIX (1940), 230 ff.
- 61. Colledge, p. 5.
- The Following of Christ, ed. by Joseph Malaise, S.J. (American Press, N. Y., 1937) Introduction.
- 63. The attitude of the Church was one of indifference to actual hostility because of underlying Pagan tones in the cycle. With the exception of one Cistercian chronicler and compiler named Helinandus, no cleric seems to have entertained any positive interest in it.
- 64. Hardin Craig, English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages (Clarendon Press, 1955); Carl Young, Religious Drama (Yale Univ. Press).
- "The Mystery of the Redemption," in Medieval and Tudor Plays, tr. by Roger Loomis and Henry W. Wells (New York, 1942, Sheed and Ward).
- 66. Dorothy Sayers, Introductory Papers on Dante, (Harper Bros.) p. 10.

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- 67. Morton D. Bloomfield, Piers Plowman as a 14th c. Apocalypse (Rutgers Univ. Press, n.d.) p. 13.
- W. S. Johnson, "Imagery and Diction of the Pearl," Middle English Survey, Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1965.
   See also Hamilton, "Meaning of Middle English Pearl," Middle English Survey, 93-113.
- 69. Hans Urs Von Balthasar, "The Gospel as Norm and Test of All Spirituality," *Spirituality in Church and World* (Concilium: Paulist Press, 1965), p. 7 ff.
- 70. See also Thomas Aquinas, De Veritate, 1, 2 c.; Paul, Romans, 12, 3 ff.

# THE WOMAN AND THE HOUR

## A STUDY OF MARY'S ROLE IN REDEMPTION ACCORDING TO THE JOHANNINE WRITINGS<sup>1</sup>

Any examination of Mary's role in the redemptive process must focus upon Calvary — Mary standing beneath the cross.<sup>2</sup> It is here that we see her most clearly as the Mother of the Messiah and the Mother of all the redeemed. It is her presence at the "Hour" of Jesus that most clearly demonstrates her participation in the sacrificial, saving act of the Bloodshedding.

In order to experience the full impact of this scene, and to understand its significance more fully, we must first turn our attention to other parts of the Bible that have a special relationship to this scene. Three narratives will be examined with regard to the background, context, and theology of each in order to determine — insofar as this is possible — the role of the Woman in each of the narratives and to show how they clarify Mary's role on Calvary.

## THE WOMAN AND THE HOUR

## GENESIS 3, 15

"Man's existence is characterized by suffering."<sup>3</sup> This is the common experience of every man. Men have tried to explain why this is so, and yet it fundamentally remains a mystery. The mystery of suffering. The mystery of the presence of evil in the world. The Yahwist author of Genesis 2-3 also attempts to give an answer. He strongly believes that God is good and the creator of all things. How then did suffering enter into man's life? The Yahwist answers: because man sins.<sup>4</sup> Sin, ignorance and suffering are all bound up together. This first book of the Bible attempts to trace the origins of many things that man finds in his life. Evil is traced back to a primal sin.

The result of man's sin is alienation — of man from mother earth, of man from the animals, of man from fellow man, of husband from wife, and especially of man from God.<sup>5</sup> This alienation is the common experience of every man, and the Yahwist author explains that alienation is not according to God's plan for man.

The narrative-structure of the punishments decreed by God follows the chronological order of the temptation and fall. The first to be punished is the Serpent (Gn 3, 14-15). It is in this immediate context that we find the so-called protoevangelium. The Woman's punishment involves her maternal role as well as her status as Man's companion (Gn 3, 16). The Man's punishment is in terms of his work (3, 17-19).

The cycle of genesis, degeneration, and regeneration occurs frequently in the Bible. What at first seems to be pessimism on the part of the Yahwist develops into an optimism. What at first is the despair of alienation and suffering develops into a hope for future salvation. The picture presented is one of continuing struggle between the descendants of the Woman and the descendants of the Serpent. There is no immediate and complete victory for either side.<sup>6</sup> After a long time, presumably, the Serpent will be definitively overcome by a descendant of the Woman.

What role does the Woman play in this narrative? Why are the offspring said to be of the Woman rather than of the Man? Children among the ancient Semites were usually named after their father. The accent here seems to be on the Woman's maternal role.

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The Yahwist author was often concerned about the role of woman in human life. It is the Yahwist who emphasizes in his creation-narrative that woman is equal to man.<sup>7</sup> The first role that he applies to the Woman is that she is to be a companion to Man (2, 18). Man does not invent Woman or choose her from the rest of creation for his companion. God gives Man the Woman as a helper, as a companion (2, 21). This implies no inferiority on woman's part, but emphasizes her vocation as a helper. Man's strength is a sign not of his superiority but of his vocation as a leader and a protector . . . Both vocations are fully and equally human; each fulfills and completes the other."<sup>8</sup>

Is this Yahwist emphasis on the equality of woman sufficient to explain why the Woman is singled out as mother rather than the Man as father in Genesis 3, 15? There is another possible explanation for this literary phenomenon.

The background for the Yahwist writing is probably the monarchy of the 10th century B.C. There are certain elements in chapters 2-3 of Genesis that are more fully understood in the light of this background.<sup>9</sup> For example, scholars point out that the serpentsymbol is used by the Yahwist — not merely because of man's natural aversion for snakes — but because the serpent was a frequent symbol in Canaanite religion. A symbol of life, fertility, and wisdom.<sup>10</sup>

The Yahwist emphasizes that fertility — and hence motherhood — is a gift of God. He warns against engaging in pagan rites to obtain fertility. He relates that Sarah, Rebecca and Rachel were barren (11, 30; 25, 21; 29, 31). Each prayed to God and bore a son. Eve, moreover, rejoiced at the birth of Cain because she had given birth to him with the help of Yahweh (Gn 4, 1). All four narratives can be seen as polemics against Canaanite fertility rites as well as the positive recognition that motherhood is a gift of God.

Moreover, the Yahwist is particularly interested in David and the Davidic dynasty. His intention in selecting certain stories for his narrative seems to be based on a desire to justify and explain the Davidic dynasty's rise to power. The queen-mother played an important role in the political life of Judah.<sup>11</sup> It is possible that the Yahwist's background of Genesis 2-3 includes not only a polemic against Canaanite religion but also a hope that the Davidic dynasty

#### THE WOMAN AND THE HOUR

will eventually be successful in overcoming the influence of pagan religious practices. The Woman then could take on the connotation of the queen-mother of Judah in a representative role.<sup>12</sup>

#### Apocalypse 12

We must now shift our attention from the beginnings to the very last book of the Bible, to the Book of Revelation.<sup>13</sup> In chapter 12 of the Apocalypse, the vision of the Woman protecting her offspring from the dragon has a number of parallels with the scene we have just considered.<sup>14</sup> First of all, there is an obvious connection between the Serpent of Genesis and the Dragon, who is also called the "primeval serpent . . . who had deceived all the world." Both represent anti-God forces who war against the children of the Woman. Secondly, both women bring forth their children in pain (Gn 3, 16; Apoc 12, 2). Thirdly, the antagonists are the same: the seed of the Woman and the Serpent. We meet the same *dramatis personae* in both passages.

The scene opens with the Woman in glory among the wonders of heaven. Immediately, however, the circumstances change and she is said to be pregnant and crying aloud in the pangs of childbirth. The Woman gives birth to the male child who is saved from the Dragon and immediately exalted to the throne of God. This male child is called the king of all nations. Because of the extraordinary language and images in these first verses, some scholars have concluded that a physical birth is not referred to but rather a metaphorical one.<sup>15</sup> From biblical parallels in the Old Testament and the gospel of John itself, we can suggest that the birth referred to is the resurrection of Jesus whereas the birth pains are the crucifixion. This would explain the immediate exaltation of the "newborn king" to the throne of God.

The Johannine writings use the Old Testament extensively but in a different way from the Synoptics or St. Paul.<sup>16</sup> John seldom quotes the Old Testament directly or uses Old Testament prophecies as proof-texts. Moreover, several Old Testament passages often form the background for a single Johannine sentence or image. All of this is especially true of the Apocalypse. Genesis 3, 15 is not the sole influence on Apocalypse 12. The prophet Micah (4, 6-10; 5, 1-3) along with the trito-Isaiah (66, 7-9) also have a bearing on

this text.<sup>17</sup> In Micah, the Daughter Sion "like a woman in labor" gives birth to "the one who is to rule over Israel." The queenmother in this text is a collective, Israel or Jerusalem presented as Daughter Sion. The trials that await Jerusalem are compared analogically to birth pains.

It is significant that John himself refers to birth pains in the context of the Last Supper: "A woman in childbirth suffers, because her time (her hour?) has come; but when she has given birth to the child she forgets the suffering in her joy that a man has been born into the world" (Jn 16, 21).

Who is this queen-mother, this Woman of Apocalypse 12? Most scholars agree that she primarily signifies a collective — Israel, the Old People of God. It is Israel, and specifically the House of David, that gave birth to the Messiah. The birth referred to is not the physical birth at Bethlehem, but the metaphorical birth of the New Man, the new creation, at the resurrection of this Messiah.

The scene shifts abruptly once again to a battle between the Dragon and Michael, the protector of the People of God. In this struggle, Michael is successful. The victory song after the Dragon's defeat by Michael relates that the downfall of the primeval serpent is due to the Blood of the Lamb. This Blood has won the decisive victory over the Serpent and will ultimately achieve the full victory when the "persecutor of the brethren" has been brought down. The scene is not only Messianic but also eschatological.

The scene now shifts back to the Woman, who has fled to the desert where she is cared for by God Himself during the days of persecution and duress. Even after the decisive battle — after the resurrection — the Dragon makes war on the rest of her children. These are identified as Christians: "all who obey God's commandments and bear witness for Jesus." The Woman is understood here also as a collective — the New People of God, the Church.<sup>18</sup>

Although the Woman is primarily understood as a collective — as the People of God — John often uses an individual person as the basis for his symbolism. Collective figures in the Bible are often based on historical individuals.<sup>19</sup>

The Woman, representing the People of God, bridges the gap between the old covenant and the new covenant. The ecclesial dimension of this image is very clear in the Apocalypse. However, the author of the Apocalypse does not exclude Mary from this image.<sup>20</sup>

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In fact, as we shall see later in this paper, a comparison of Apocalypse 12 with John 19, 25-27 will help us to understand the ecclesial dimension of the scene at Calvary as well as the Mariological significance of the Woman in Apocalypse 12.<sup>21</sup>

Mary is Daughter Sion, the representative of Israel who gave birth to the Messiah. She is the queen-mother of this Davidic king who inaugurates a kingdom that is eternal, powerful, and universal. Alienation caused by sin gives way to peace, harmony, and love. Her role as queen-mother of the Messiah is most clearly seen at the "Hour" when the Messiah definitively reveals His glory — in His death-resurrection.

Mary is also the Mother of all Christians. She remains behind with and in the Church after Calvary and after the ascension. She is present at Pentecost. She represents the Church by her spiritual motherhood towards all believers.

## JOHN 2, 1-11

The third scene that will help us to understand Mary's role on Calvary is the marriage feast at Cana.<sup>22</sup> Although we have been concentrating on the role of the Woman, we should not lose sight of the fact that this is a secondary theme in each of these instances. Cana's primary motif is Christological and not Mariological. The purpose of the miracles or signs of Jesus in John's gospel is the revelation they make about the person of Jesus. His glory shines through in them. Cana reveals the glory of Jesus to His disciples and Mary's maternal role is a subordinate theological motif.

Mary and John are never directly named in John's gospel. John calls her "the mother of Jesus" and Jesus supposedly calls her "Woman." John is called "the disciple whom Jesus loved" or simply "the beloved disciple." Both are in representative roles in the gospel, and seemingly John does not want us to have a hangup on them as individuals to such an extent that we lose sight of their roles.

Past studies and writings have often approached this pericope from a psychological viewpoint. More recent studies on Johannine literary techniques and theological development have clarified the narrative considerably. John's gospel was written many years after the events which he himself had witnessed. After these many years of contemplation on the meaning of the events, John saw a deeper level of meaning in many of the things that Jesus had said and done. John's gospel then represents a series of theological write-ups of historical events. He aims at explaining the deeper level of meaning in this way. Without minimizing the historicity of John's accounts, we can say that John's primary purpose is not historical.

From the intensive studies made on the many details of this narrative, we will focus our attention on the following: the meaning of calling Mary "Woman," the significance of the "Hour" in Jesus' life, and Mary's role in this story.

In order to understand her role, we must concentrate on the brief dialog between Jesus and Mary. Reading it as a coherent, verbal exchange that actually took place between two intimate persons seems impossible. In trying to reconcile Jesus' actions with His words and His love for His mother, we often end up in contradictions and nonsense.

Michaud suggests that we read the dialog on two different levels.<sup>23</sup> On the historical level there are Mary's request and her remark to the servants. There is no reason to doubt the historicity of this. There is a sense of realism in the story, "an eye for character and for seemingly trivial detail."<sup>24</sup> However, this life-situation gives John the chance to introduce some theological themes into this dialog.

On this theological level, there are Jesus' calling Mary by a strange title, the statement about His Hour, and the surprising "What to me and you?"

First of all, there is no parallel in Hebrew or Aramaic of a son calling his mother "Woman," nor is there any precedent for this in Greek.<sup>25</sup> The significance is to be found rather in the context of Genesis 3, 15 and Apocalypse 12.<sup>26</sup> It refers to Mary's role rather than to her person. She is not merely the physical mother of Jesus, but the Woman.

Secondly, the statement of Jesus about His Hour does not fit into the historical context. John sees a Messianic meaning, however, in His presence at a marriage banquet. The messianic age was often described under this image, as it is, for example, in Apocalypse 19. Moreover there are illusions in the Old Testament to the Messianic wine or the good wine of the Messianic era. Mary's remark, "They have no wine" takes on added significance in this Johannine Messianic context.<sup>27</sup> The reply of Jesus makes it clear that the Messianic age will be fully inaugurated only at His Hour. The "Hour" of Jesus in John refers to His passion, death and resurrection the culmination of His mission with His glorification (Jn 2, 4; 7, 30; 8, 20; 12, 23-27; 13, 1; 17, 1).

Lastly the statement of Jesus "What to me and to you?" does not fit into the historical narrative in which Mary evidently does not understand these words as a refusal to do something and in which Jesus apparently proceeds to work a miracle. We should note that no emphasis is put on Mary's intercession. This is not the main thrust of the narrative. In fact her words could be deleted and the miracle would still be understandable.<sup>28</sup> However, she does take the initiative by introducing the problem. This is a favorite Johannine technique.<sup>29</sup> She could have, but seemingly did not, ask for a miracle. This involves another Johannine technique in which none of the miracles recounted in the Fourth Gospel corresponds exactly to the request.<sup>30</sup> Before He does perform a sign, Jesus (or John, more properly) denies a purely human or physical maternal role to Mary. Her true role is to be understood in terms of the Hour of Jesus.

In this appearance and at Calvary, Mary is associated with the disciples. At Cana her appearance comes at the end of a section dealing with the call of the disciples (Jn 1, 35-51).<sup>31</sup> The stress in Johannine writings is on Mary as a symbol of the Church rather than on her very person. Her role is one of spiritual motherhood. In the Cana narrative, Mary's faith is a model for the disciples. It is they who come to believe after the first of these signs (Jn 2, 11). This faith of Mary is stirred up in the disciples at the end of the Cana narrative. The point of the story, in fact, is not the wonder-working, but the faith which the miracle draws out of the disciples. Jesus does not refuse to work a miracle but calls for faith which has no need of miracles (Jn 20, 29).

On the historical level, Mary plays a secondary or accessory role. We see something of her confronting a life situation: her charity and goodness, her solicitude and concern, her delicacy in making a request, her discretion and humility. There is something of a mediary role here also.

But on the theological level, we find her true role just as we

find the real significance of the miracle-sign on this deeper level. Mary is the woman associated with the New Adam in the work of the new creation. This is her role at Calvary during the Hour of Jesus. Cana is a foreshadowing of that role.

John's prologue is not only an introduction to his gospel but also a summary of it. The key verse in the prologue is this: "But to all who did receive him and believe in him he gave the right to become children of God, owing their birth not to nature nor to any human or physical impulse, but to God" (Jn 1, 12-13).32 The original ending of the gospel also stresses faith: "Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe. There were many other signs that Jesus worked and the disciples saw, but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name" (Jn 20, 29-31).33 This is one of the main themes running through the gospel: those are born to a new life who believe in Jesus. The whole of the Fourth Gospel is framed between the words of the prologue and the conclusion just as the public life of Jesus is framed by Mary's appearances with Him at Cana and Calvary.34

Mary is not only the associate of the New Adam: she is the mother who gives life. In John it is by faith that one truly lives.<sup>35</sup> He presents Mary at Cana as the mother of the disciples, engendering faith in them. We are at the very foundations of her "spiritual motherhood." She is truly the New Eve, the real "mother of all the living," which her title indicates.

## John 19, 25-27

We are now ready to examine Mary's role in the events of Calvary. We may well wonder why Jesus waited until the last moment, when he could hardly speak, to provide for His mother. This was hardly a suitable time to be making arrangements for Mary's private future. She was not entirely alone. Her sister was there with her. Moreover the whole trend of John's gospel has pointed to this culmination of the life of Jesus.<sup>36</sup> This would be a strange time for him to be preoccupied with personal or family concerns. Furthermore, he addresses Mary first and entrusts John to her! Finally, He calls Mary by the strange title "Woman."

#### THE WOMAN AND THE HOUR

This section of John's passion narrative — the Calvary section — is composed of five short and distinct narratives.<sup>37</sup> Each is a carefully worked-out literary unit. These scenes were deliberately selected from John's many experiences for inclusion in this narrative. His reason for the choices seems to be: so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.<sup>38</sup> John recognizes the fulfillment of Scriptural prophecies in seemingly insignificant events on Calvary.

This particular unit (Jn 19, 25-27) is the third and central episode of the section.<sup>39</sup> It would be very surprising if this episode were inserted into this sacred and carefully structured context without having any relationship with the rest.<sup>40</sup> There is nothing in the account itself, at first sight, that suggests a Messianic implication. The very next verse, however, says: "After this, Jesus knew that everything had now been completed . . ." Evidently John wants to say that Jesus considered "everything" accomplished only after He had said, "Woman, This is your son" and to the disciple, "This is your Mother."<sup>41</sup>

These very words are reminiscent of other Johannine formulas: "This is the Lamb of God," (1, 29.36) "Here is the Man" (19.5) and "Here is your king" (19.15). All of these are proclamations under various images of the role of Jesus in God's plan of salvation.<sup>42</sup> The simple but solemn words of Jesus to Mary and John seem to announce to all their new role in this saving mystery.

A study of the over-all context as well as the style of the passage itself reveals that these words are not only of human concern but Messianic as well.<sup>43</sup> This seemingly insignificant interchange is at the very summit of Jesus' work.

On the historical level Mary and John are present on Calvary. Subsequently John seems to have made a place for her in his home. He did this because Jesus indicated that he should. On this level we have an example of filial piety — Jesus taking care of His mother and providing for her future.

However, it is significant that He addresses Mary first. There must have been some reason for doing so, but at first its import escapes us. If He wanted to console Mary, would He have called her "Woman" rather than "Mother"? Did he simply want to make it clear that she ought to show maternal affection for John? This would not seem to be necessary and certainly would not have been very tactful.

By waiting until the last moment, Jesus made it clear that this motherhood of Mary was intimately connected with His very death and that there is a question here of an entirely new relationship between mother and son. The use of the title "Woman" is a key to the deeper meaning of this event. Mary is called "Woman" here as at Cana to signify her spiritual maternal role.

After many years of reflection on this scene in the light of the resurrection-faith, John must have recognized the relationship between the Woman of Genesis 3, 15 and the woman standing with him beneath the cross. Perhaps an earlier write-up of this is to be found in Apocalypse 12 where the Woman is identified as the mother of the Messiah and of all Christians.<sup>44</sup> What is Mary's role on Calvary on this theological level of the narrative?

First of all Mary is the Daughter Sion.<sup>45</sup> She realizes in her presence on Calvary the metaphorical maternity of Sion as announced by the prophets. Through her pain-filled maternal role beneath the Cross, the wonderful promises of consolation are finally accomplished. The Hour of the Woman who must give birth to the Messianic people coincides with the Hour of Jesus. The New People of God is born through the passion.<sup>46</sup>

Secondly, Mary is the New Eve. John presents Jesus as the New Adam in the passion narrative. For example, John alone notes that the passion begins and ends in a garden, (18, 1; 19, 41) reminiscent of the Garden of Genesis 2-3.<sup>47</sup> John sees the salvific activity of Jesus as a New Creation. Mary is not only the associate of this New Adam in His saving work, but the "Mother of all the living." As such she represents the Church through whom men come to believe in Jesus and receive the new life of the new creation through her sacraments.

Mary's presence on Cavary, for John, is not simply an indication of her motherly concern for her son. She is present as the companion of Jesus, as His associate in this work of the New Creation. But the full meaning of the scene strikes home only when we recognize her universal, spiritual maternal role with regard to all believers.

Mary is there at the foot of the Cross, giving birth in her grief to faith in the promises of Christ. . . . By faith she is completely

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the Daughter of Sion who gives birth to hope even in grief, the Church believing and faithful even to the end. By faith in the Crucified who will rise again, in her grief as a mother and as a believer, she is truly the type of the Mother Church of the faithful. It is as such that Jesus regards her and speaks to her: "Woman, behold your son." The beloved and faithful disciple is the true son of the Church of which Mary is the type in the sharing of the suffering of the Crucified, in her faith and in her hope in the Resurrection.<sup>48</sup>

Lastly Mary is present on Calvary as the queen-mother of the royal Messiah. Jesus is presented in the Johannine passion narrative as a king.<sup>49</sup> In fact Jesus is hailed as the Son of God and King of Israel at the very beginning of the Fourth Gospel (1, 49). Jesus explains to Pilate that His kingdom is not of this world when it becomes obvious that He is on trial for "being a king" (18, 36-37). John sees special significance in the crowning with thorns, the wearing of a (royal) purple cloak, and the mocking, "Hail, King of the Jews" (19, 2-3). Immediately before passing sentence, Pilate introduces Jesus to the mob with the proclamation "Here is your king" (19, 15). The climax comes with the inscription which Pilate refuses to change, "Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews" (19, 19-22). This is the first of the five episodes in the Calvary narrative.

The entire expectation of the Jewish people had been directed towards a Messiah who would fulfill Nathan's prophecy to David (2 Sm 7). Jesus is most clearly seen as inaugurating His powerful, eternal kingdom characterized by peace on the throne of His cross . . . "making peace through the blood of the cross" (Col 1, 20). The queen-mother of the People of God, the representative of all believers, is present at His side.

John thinks of Mary against the background of Genesis 3: she is the mother of the Messiah; her role is in the struggle against the satanic serpent, and that struggle comes to its climax in Jesus' hour. Then she will appear at the foot of the cross to be entrusted with offspring whom she must protect in the continuing struggle between Satan and the followers of the Messiah. Mary is the New Eve, the symbol of the Church; the Church has no role during the ministry of Jesus but only after the hour of his resurrection and ascension.<sup>50</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

What are the implications of this Johannine theology for Marian devotion and preaching about Mary?

1) By approaching these narratives from a psychological or purely historical point of view, we risk missing their full significance in Johannine thought. By having a hang-up on the historical level, we risk misunderstanding or missing altogether John's theology.

2) If we understand something about John's techniques and theological developments, we will not be content with merely cataloguing Mary's virtues and proclaiming her as a model of Christian virtue. Mary's role in the redemptive process is not limited to being an exemplar of a virtuous life.

3) We might well take St. John's approach as our own. He does not concentrate on the person of Mary but on her role. From all that has been said in this study, we can hardly accuse St. John of neglecting Mary by not mentioning her by name or by not concentrating on her person. On the contrary he presents her in the most faithful way when he shows us her role in the redemptive process. In her role according to Johannine theology, she points beyond herself. In reflecting upon her role in salvation, we are led to reflect upon the Church. By reflecting on her role, we are led to a deeper appreciation of her Son, Jesus. Our devotion and preaching about Mary should not end with her, but must go beyond her to her Son just as He Himself leads us on to the Father. In this way, we can demonstrate what we mean when we call her the "mother of all the living."<sup>51</sup>

ALPHONSE SPILLY, C.PP.S.

#### FOOTNOTES

- 1. The *Precious Blood Messenger* has carried many articles on Mary and the Precious Blood in the last several years. Father Aloys Dirksen wrote a series of seven articles for the 1954-55 issues. Father Daniel Raible wrote an article entitled "Mary, Queen Through the Precious Blood" (66, 1960, 290-294). For many years Father Joseph Rohling has written extensively on this topic.
- 2. By focusing on Mary's role on Calvary, I do not mean to exclude or to minimize her role in the incarnation itself. The original plan called for a study of the Lucan infancy narratives as well as Johannine

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passages. Because of a critical lack of time as well as the space-limitations in a paper of this sort, I decided to concentrate on Mary's role on Calvary.

- 3. Henricus Renckens, S.J., Israel's Concept of the Beginning: The Theology of Genesis 1-3. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1964), 291.
- 4. "All the ills that humanity is forever experiencing are not the effect of the divine will or divine powerlessness; they come exclusively from a deliberate sin on the part of the creature." Andre-Marie Dubarle, O.P., The Biblical Doctrine of Original Sin (New York, Herder and Herder, 1964), 48. Cf. also Renckens, op. cit., 159-160.
- 5. Cf., e.g., Genesis 3, 16,18-19.22-24; 4, 1-12.17-18.
- 6. Dubarle, op. cit., 77. We should note with regard to this text that it is "not the intention of God to foretell primarily a complete victory of the seed of the Woman, but rather a total defeat of the serpent." Antonine DeGuglielmo, O.F.M., "Mary in the Protoevangelium," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 14 (1952), 105. He bases this conclusion on a study of the literary structure of the passage itself and concludes that this is "not a prophecy standing by itself or on its own."
- 7. This follows from his positioning man at the head of all creation. Cf. Renckens, op. cit., 222: "For as the status of the man is raised above that of the rest of creation, so is that of the woman along with him. In the narrative, the dignity of the woman is linked indissolubly with that of the man."
- 8. Ibid., 226.
- 9. "The narrative is . . . intended first and foremost as a religious exposition and explanation of the present concrete reality. It is entirely in function of this present reality that the sacred author elaborates his account of the past. The important thing is that we should not lose sight of the fact that the object of this account is to throw light on *the present* religious situation. It is a fundamental mistake, still all too common, for the narrative concerning the primal state of things to be considered in isolation, and for it then to be assumed that the essential question is that concerning the corresponding historical state of affairs." *Ibid.*, 291.
- 10. Ibid., 280.
- 11. On the queen-mothers of Israel, cf. Roland de Vaux, Ancient Israel, Vol. 1, 117-119. We know the names of all the queen mothers of Judah except two — those of Joram and Achaz, both wicked kings. We have only two references, on the other hand, to the queen-mothers of the kings of Israel.
- 12. The Yahwist may have been influenced in this by 2 Sm 7 which contains God's promise to David through Nathan the prophet that his dynasty would last forever. This is usually interpreted as a royal Messianic prophecy. The king (and presumably the queen-mother also) was often considered to be a corporate personality. He represented or summed up in himself the whole nation. Adam and Eve are also corporate personalities according to the Semitic mind. I have not felt

it necessary to enter the discussion on whether or not there is a distinctly Marial interpretation to be given to the protoevangelium. Before the 7th century most of the Fathers of the Church did not connect Genesis 3, 15 with the divine Redeemer or His mother. Renckens notes: it would be hard to deny that there is indeed a certain Marial element in the text. But it also needs to be said that an exegesis which would connect the Marial sense with the text of Genesis in a satisfactory manner has not yet been achieved, either according to the literal meaning or by the way of typology." (302). Renckens, *op. cit.*, 302. The protoevangelium is included in this paper because it plays a role in shaping Johannine theology.

- 13. For further light on the significance of Genesis 3, 15, Renckens suggests that we turn to Apoc 12: "Among the sources from which further light on this matter will no doubt come, we have Apocalypse 12, in which the main figures of Genesis occur once more in New Testament guise . . . With the independent style which is so typical of the New Testament, and in which the Apocalypse goes particularly far, St. John uses the biblical figures of the first, primeval conflict in his depiction of the last great apocalyptic struggle." *Ibid.*, 303.
- 14. This Woman of chapter 12 is contrasted with the harlot of chapter 17. The latter represents a pagan nation, Rome. The Woman's maternal role is contrasted with the occupation of a prostitute. Cf. J. Edgar Bruns, "The Contrasted Women of Apocalypse 12 and 17" Catholic Biblical Quarterly, 26, (1964), 458-463.
- 15. Cf. Bernard J. Le Frois, S.V.D., The Woman Clothed with the Sun (Rome: Orbis Catholicus, 1954), 146: "In such a grandiose picture, a mere reference to physical pangs of childbirth is inadequate and out of place. One is strongly reminded of the spiritual rebirth of Is 26, 16-18; Mi 4,9-10; Gal 4,19." Cf. also Andre Feuillet, Johannine Studies (Staten Island: Alba House, 1964), 263.
- 16. ". . . the Evangelist had a wide knowledge of the O.T., but he used it, not in the primitive Christian manner of citing proof-texts, but as a whole. He used it . . . in a manner analogous to his treatment of the Synoptic tradition. For him the O.T. was itself a comprehensive unity, not a mere quarry from which isolated fragments of useful material might be hewn. It was not (in general) his method to bolster up the several items of Christian doctrine and history with supports drawn from this or that part of the O.T.; instead the whole body of the O.T. formed a background, or framework, upon which the new revelation rested." C. K. Barrett, "The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel," JTS, 48 (1947), 168.
- 17. "The woman of the Apoc appears . . . to have the same essential characteristics as the ideal Sion of which the prophets dreamed and sang: glorified, brightened by a divine radiance, giving birth to messianic salvation." Feuillet, op. cit., 263. The author gives basically the same viewpoint in The Apocalypse (Staten Island: Alba House, 1965), 115. This is also fundamentally the view of J. Edgar Bruns, op. cit., 460.

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- 18. Feuillet, Johannine Studies, op. cit., 280: "The woman nourished by God in the desert is the Christian Church, which God nourishes and protects during its earthly wandering, as it awaits the Parousia. The eschatological banquet in the NT is a prelude to the heavenly banquet of the Parousia."
- 19. Feuillet, The Apocalypse, op. cit., 116-117.
- 20. Le Frois thinks the Woman refers primarily to Mary but also to the Church. His argumentation, however, is not convincing.
- 21. "As a matter of fact, in our opinion, the strongest justification for the Marian context of Apoc 12 seems to be its relationship to John's account of Mary at the foot of the cross." Feuillet, Johannine Studies, op. cit., 285. The same author adds the following, however, in The Apocalypse, op. cit., 115: "... the application of the text of Apocalypse 12 to Mary is far from being the oldest explanation of the passage; neither is it the best attested explanation; furthermore it is replete with difficulties. We should state here clearly, once and for all that the only incontestable exegesis of the passage ... is that which sees it in an ecclesial sense .... The application of the passage to Mary thus is not as obvious as it may seem at first glance, although we also think that it is probably correct."
- 22. For the relationship of Jn 2, 1-11 to Apoc 12 and Jn 19, 25-27, cf. Feuillet, *Johannine Studies, op. cit.*, p. 36: "The Hour of Jesus is the Hour of the Church and of the sacraments, and is also the Hour of the Woman (Mary), in her messianic role . . . And at Cana, as in Apoc 12, Mary (the Woman) and the Church are intimately associated in their soteriological function . . . Cana announces in advance the scene of 19, 25-27, and presupposes that this last scene of farewell between Christ crucified and His mother is much more than a gesture of filial piety."
- 23. In this section on Jn 2, 1-11, I have extensively used Jean-Paul Michaud, "Le Signe de Cana dans son contexte johannique," Laval Théologique et Philosophique 18 (1962), 239-285 and 19 (1963) 257-283. C. H. Dodd agrees that the story must be read on more than one level: "The story, then, is not to be taken at its face value. Its true meaning lies deeper. We are given no direct clue to this deeper meaning, as we are for some other semeia. It must be sought from a consideration of the general background of thought presupposed in the first readers." Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel (Cambridge University Press, 1958), 297. Although one can distinguish sapiential and sacramental motifs in this pericope, they will not be treated in this study.
- 24. Ibid.
- Raymond E. Brown, S.S., The Gospel According to St. John: i-xii. The Anchor Bible. (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966), 107.
- 26. Michaud, op. cit., 263.
- 27. "Jesus' response brings to mind the wine of the new covenant which He is charged by God to inaugurate. In the Scripture, of course, wine is

a figure of the benefits which will flow from the Messianic covenant." (Feuillet, Johannine Studies, op. cit., p. 31). Others see a deeper significance to the wine. C. H. Dodd, for example, in Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel (Cambridge University Press, 1958), says: "That our evangelist intended a eucharistic reference can hardly be doubted, but this has not entered into the form of the narrative" (224). Brown, op. cit., 109-110, discusses this possible Eucharistic interpretation, and, whereas he exercises a general caution with regard to Johannine sacramentality, admits that a Eucharistic interpretation is possible here.

- 28. Cf. Feuillet, Johannine Studies, op. cit., 35.
- 29. E.g., 4, 46-53; 5, 1ff; 6, 5ff; 9, 1ff; 11, 20ff.
- 30. E.g., 4, 47; 11, 3.21.32.39.
- 31. The Cana narrative completes the first "week" of John's Gospel during which the call of the disciples is emphasized (1, 35-51). For a discussion on this, cf. Brown, op. cit., p. 108.
- 32. "... it is 1,12-13 which forms the hinge of the entire construction and is the key verse of the entire hymn ... The prologue, like the Gospel which follows it, reaches its peak in a vision of the community of all those united with God in Jesus and living through his life." Dominic Crossan, O.S.M., "Mary and the Church in John 1, 13," TBT 20 (November 1965), 1320-1321.
- 33. "The first episode of the gospel closes with the seeing and believing of the disciples, precisely as does the last and supreme sign, by which faith becomes a far wider possibility (20, 29) . . . Faith is indeed the purpose of the signs (20, 31)." C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According* to St. John (Staten Island: Alba House, 1964), 161.
- 34. Cf. Paul Hinnebusch, O.P., "Cana and the Paschal Mystery," *TBT* 20 (November, 1965), 1328: "Her involvement here is a symbol of her involvement in the total work of Christ. John indicates that Mary has a true role to play in Christ's Messianic task, for he shows her present at its beginning and at its end; the whole of Christ's work is, as it were, framed between these two presences of Mary, at Cana and at the foot of the cross."
- 35. Cf. Dodd, Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, op. cit., 186: "Eternal life is the knowledge or vision of God . . . to see the Father in Christ, to see His glory, was and always is the part of faith."
- 36. Dodd in *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, op. cit.*, 438, explains that John's passion narrative treats the passion and death as a sign (*semeion*) to be recognized and interpreted by all that has preceded it in the fourth Gospel: "Guided, then, by the pointers which the evangelist has provided, we find in the story of the arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus Christ a *semeion* on the grand scale, to whose significance each detail contributes: Christ's self-surrender in the Garden, the transference of His case to the Roman, His *apologia* upon the charge of claiming kingship, the way He died, and the efflux of blood and water from His body after death. Each of these details calls up by association a chain of ideas already expounded in the course of

the earlier parts of the gospel and concentrates them upon his crucial event."

- 37. I: 19, 17-22, crucifixion and title on cross; II: 19, 23-24, division of Christ's garments; III: 19, 25-27, Jesus and His mother; IV: 19, 28-30, Jesus' thirst and death; V: 19, 31-37, the piercing with the lance.
- 38. Cf. 19, 24.28.30.36-37.
- Besides works already cited, I am especially indebted in this section to the following: Andre Feuillet, "Les Adieux du Christ à sa mère (Jn 19, 25-27) et la maternité spirituelle de Marie," NRT, 86 (1964), 469-487 (also available in English summary in TD, 1967, 37ff.); Max Zerwick, S.J., "The Hour of the Mother — John 19, 25-27," TBT, no. 18 (April, 1965), 1187-1194; and Robert T. Siebeneck, C.PP.S., "The Precious Blood and St. John," Proceedings of the First Precious Blood Study Week (Carthagena: The Messenger Press, 1959), 65-92.
- 40. Dodd points out that this pericope stands apart from the other sections of the narrative. "It breaks the unities of time and place, since we are obliged for the moment to leave the scene of Golgotha on Good Friday afternoon and place ourselves at the home of the Beloved Disciple in the time following; and it shows an interest in the subsequent fortunes of subordinate characters." (*Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel, op. cit.*, 127-128). Elsewhere he says the episode is "peculiar to the Fourth Gospel. Whatever its motive, it does not seem to be dictated by the Johannine theology." (*The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, op. cit.*, 428). Against his view is the evidence that follows in this paper.
- 41. Of special import is the recurrent *tetelestai* of 19, 28.30. Dodd points out that this verb does not occur elsewhere in John's gospel, but is a virtual equivalent of *teleioun* which is used of the completion of the work of Jesus in 4, 34; 5, 36; and 17, 4. "The form *telein* is perhaps chosen because of its use for the due completion of rites of sacrifice and initiation, since the death of Christ is conceived as both sacrifice and initiation." (*Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel, op. cit.*, 124.)
- 42. Cf. 1, 29.36; 19, 5; 19, 15.
- 43. Cf. Feuillet, Johannine Studies, p., cit., 287 and Zerwick, op. cit., 1188. Dodd, however, concludes that this pericope was not "part of the form of the Passion narrative which reached our evangelist through oral tradition." (Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel, op. cit., 128.) He sees no theological import to the passage.
- 44. Cf. Zerwick, op. cit., 1192.
- 45. Feuillet, Johannine Studies, op. cit., 288, sees the bond of union between Jn 19 and Apoc 12 in the texts of Is 26, 17 and 66, 7-9 which refer to the ideal Sion and are quoted in Jn 16, 21-22 and in Apoc 12, 6-7.
- 46. On the role of the Spirit in the Johannine Passion narrative, cf. Siebeneck, op. cit., as well as L. Legrand, M.E.P., "Fécondité Virginale selon l'Esprit dans le N.T." NRT, 84 (1962), 785-805.
- 47. Cf. Brown, op. cit., 107-109. Feuillet, on the other hand, denies that

there is the slightest trace of Gen 3, 15 in the Fourth Gospel. (Johannine Studies, op. cit., 288). Whereas we would agree that a background in Genesis 3, 15 is not overwhelmingly clear, we agree with Brown that "the death of Jesus is in the framework of the great struggle with Satan foretold in Genesis 3, at least as that passage was interpreted by Christian theology."

- 48. Max Thurian, op. cit., 162.
- 49. Cf., e.g., Dodd, Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel, op. cit., 122: "The effect of all this is to concentrate the reader's attention upon the idea of the kingship of Christ, and this carries on an emphasis which, as we have seen, is characteristic of the Johannine account of the trial. That it serves John's theological tendency is evident. He presents the crucifixion as the hypsosis, or enthronement, of Christ the King."
- 50. Brown, op. cit., 109.
- 51. Saint Gaspar del Bufalo often carried a picture of the Madonna of the Precious Blood on his missionary travels. In this picture there is a representation of Mary in her maternal role, holding her infant Son. Jesus is holding a chalice which recalls not only the Eucharist, but "the entire mystery of redemption." (Cf. Charles H. Banet, C.PP.S., "Our Lady and the Precious Blood in Art," Proceedings of the Second Precious Blood Study Week, Carthagena, The Messenger Press, 1962, 358-360.) Without being distracted by the mere physical features of the picture, we can use it to recall Mary's role on Calvary. It can help us to reflect, with Max Thurian, that "the whole ministry which she exercises is marked by this characteristic of spiritual motherhood." (op. cit., 174).

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## THE PRECIOUS BLOOD IN CONTEMPORARY ART

The Art Committee agreed to share the work of the panel by presenting their own individual personal creed or art manifesto, together with a statement regarding its relation to our devotion to the Precious Blood.

I sincerely believe that the art exhibit and the music demonstrations held here at the Study Week have already made it clear that we consider art forms as extremely important mediums for the development of our spirituality for our times.

Vatican II in *The Church Today* (Par. 59) states:

"The Church recalls to the mind of all that culture must be made to bear on the integral perfection of the human person, and on the good of the community and the whole of society. There-

#### THE PRECIOUS BLOOD IN CONTEMPORARY ART

fore the human spirit must be cultivated in a way that there results a growth in its ability to wonder, to understand, to contemplate, to make personal judgments, and to develop a religious, moral, and social sense."

From the very start of plans for the art section of the Precious Blood Study Week, we determined to communicate not only through our works but through words also, something of our aims and inspiration. The art exhibit booklet fulfilled this aim in large part. Trying to explain an art form is very difficult for obvious reasons. Perhaps the greatest difficulty lies in the fact that any form of art can be explained only to a certain point or aspect of it.

I believe that what is most fundamental to understanding a painting or work of art is that it exists in its own right. It is a creation, not an imitation or likeness of something else. It is an avenue or way, even a way of life. I like to think of art as a door or window, a crack or even a knothole that the artist creates to open himself and the viewer to something of divinity or infinity or presence that could be done in no other way.

Pope Pius XII once said: "The function of all art lies in providing a window on the infinite for the hungry soul of man." And Pope Paul VI, speaking to a group of artists in 1964 said: "You have the prerogative that in the very act of rendering the world of the spirit intelligible and accessible, you preserve for this world its ineffability, its transcendence, its aura of mystery." Speaking to Jean Guitton, the philosopher, the Holy Father in 1965 concluded: "May art not close itself against the wind of the Spirit! This world in which we live needs beauty lest it collapse in despair. Beauty, like truth, is what puts joy into men's hearts, it is the precious fruit which resists time's ravages, which unites generations and makes them intercommunicate in admiration."

I think that this means that the artist can give only a glimpse and does not translate completely to anyone (not even to himself) what he can only babble with the help of his God-given gifts.

But before a person can communicate his best intuitions he must have them; and before he can have them he must open himself to them. In other words, he must dispose the highest resources of his mind toward the task of apprehension.

If this is true for the artist it is equally true for the observer of art. The observer must feel form to attain the best enjoyment of

any art. He must spread his appreciation gradually, patiently, and then at least a glimmer of what is meant by form will come to him and what is meant by contemplative seeing and the silence necessary to it. If you look at art and talk art even in the most casual way you cannot help being conquered. Trust rather your intuition than knowledge. Live without conscious hostility or prejudice with art works richly form-endowed. Then you can come to a friendly, quiet, profound enjoyment of all kinds of art.

How then does a person look at a work of art? I believe I would rather say that a person *contemplates* a work of art and in this act of contemplation experiences presence.

"But it isn't beautiful," you might say. "It repulses me. It jars my sensibilities and I hate it because I don't understand it." If this happens to you, I would say it is a perfectly normal reaction and has as much to say of eternal things as something you warm up to. The artist intends this. Contemplating a picture is much like prayer. You came to it with your whole personality. To do this is difficult because for most of us our perceptions are geared to actions. We scarcely really look at things. We are satisfied merely to identify them.

But as we *really* look, things take on an unutterable rightness. The experience of the beautiful brings a sense of growth in the direction of integration, to the quality of wholeness and relatedness.

We have to remember that modern art movements reflect the staggering shocks that have recently come to the human spirit. If you do not understand the shocks, you certainly will not understand the art. A contemporary artist and audience must achieve a capacity for thinking, seeing, feeling, acting with the standards made available by mature minds and personalities. Therefore if we wish to be creative either as artist or observer or audience, we have to be on the move, evolving, growing.

What does the creative experience have to do with the Precious Blood? For the artist as well as for those who teach. The creative experience and the Precious Blood as the deepest expression of love are closely related. Character and creativity go hand in hand. Maturity of mind and spirit is achieved only by the exertion of man's best powers in obedience to the Spirit, and a sense of beauty is one of maturity's highest rewards. Courage is needed to attach oneself to more spontaneous ways of being. It takes courage to be original.

The painter, John Sloan, said: "It is not necessary to paint the American flag to be an American painter. As if you didn't see the American scene every time you opened your eyes." By the same token, you don't have to paint the Precious Blood or even themes of the Precious Blood (although you certainly may) to be a Precious Blood painter or artist. That is all contained in our life situation; so I take it that every integrated creative experience can and does glorify Christ in His entire redemptive mystery.

Seeing whole and living in the conviction of this more total vision, brings us the gift of joyful being, of understanding life as prevailingly beautiful rather than ugly, ordered rather than chaotic. And it inspires us toward the only kind of morality that can possibly operate and pertain to such a life of truth. It leads us toward the highest art of all, the art of being, the art of yes-saying, the art of knowing the timeless beauty of life and so living it.

SISTER EILEEN (CEPHAS) TOMLINSON, C.PP.S.

There have been many thematic and biographical relationships drawn between artwork and religious devotions. These are external to the real work of both devotion and artwork though. Devotion, when actualized through sincere and intense practice, and artwork, when actualized through sincere and intense meditation, both lead to what is called the *religious experience*. Both are methodologies of the soul for the purpose of communicating with the Ultimate. Both of these are ways in which we hone ourselves into channels of the Holy Spirit.

We are probably familiar with devotion and how it works, so I will limit myself to speaking about artwork and the artist and what they do.

How does artwork bypass external personality fabrications to bring the soul face to face with today's world? The forms, colors, lines, and notes that different artwork uses are "soul-vocabulary." They are *words* that have their basis of meaning only in the resonances which they evoke in the soul. Conventional language, whether it is in the form of words, representation, or music, can never have a place in artwork because they are rooted in conventionally contrived rationality and not in the ultimately fashioned soul rationality. Artwork language must be deeply rooted in the soul so as to be able to bring what is uniquely us to face the existence that we are called to actualize.

Today artists are trying to bridge the "understanding-gap" that exists between them and their contemporaries. The gap has always been there, but today the artist feels that he must be understood more quickly than he has in the past because epochs move faster now than they did in the past. The artist must find the shapes that ultimate values are to take before contemporary man discards them as irrelevant to his existence. The artist must make ultimacy ring relevant if contemporary man is to listen.

In our contemporary society there is a higher premium on our efficiency than there is on our humanity. We have come to 'measure' value in terms of duration, number, weight, and other quantified material experiences. Our value standards have become horizontal in nature, in terms of our material temporal existence (rather than vertical, in terms of our spiritual existence). Our culture portrays the "full-life" as the soft-life. We shy away from ultimate commitment and unhesitant sincerity, because they have a way of giving us roots and the inability to drift with the crowd. We have a way of fabricating a "no-problem-land" of mediocrity to smooth over the deeper anguishes and conflicts in life. We glorify trivia such as sports, physical beauty, comfort, and possession in order that our banal lives might seem valuable. It is this type of personality which will never know the art of its own times. Art and devotion must be worn with deep sincerity and courageous personal commitment to insight, or they will be little more than decoration and superstition. We must drop our "put-ons" and become present as "real-people."

To bring our sincere unique being, without pretense, to the reality of everyday living is our "coming to presence." We are making present the channel which God created as us for the salvation of our world. We become channels of the Holy Spirit. We become theophanies.

Sometimes this channel of the Holy Spirit is called "other." God is the "Wholly Other." He is Love; and He is always "Presence." It is man's role to realize that God is present. We start to realize God's presence (the holy) by sincerity and commitment to the Ultimate in the "here and now." We become present, and in so doing bring our creator, whose mark we are, to the "here and now." We slice through our horizontal personality fabrications to the "Other." The power of the Other, to evoke us to find ourselves in Him, lies in love. Love with its urgent disposition towards ultimacy "grips" the person to the courage that is necessary to foresake the convenient for the ultimate.

Our devotionalism and our theology have been called irrelevant for today's world. Perhaps the charge is justified because our theology is not present in the world today. Or, in other words, perhaps the charge is justified because we don't even hold our theology strongly enough to live what we preach. Then again, perhaps the charge is true because men no longer find the way in which we present our theology meaningful to them in today's world.

If we are to help men evolve into theophanies, our tools for doing such must be sharply pertinent to their everyday lives and deeply rooted in the contemporary soul. Our concern is to help build the mystical body by helping each other to evolve "the Christ who is in each person." Christ is a "whole" person and cannot be conjured up by bits of theological rationalization and memorized repetitions. Christ has to be called by a "whole" person. Christ has to be lived into the present. But the ultimacy of our living and the wholeness of our personality is constantly threatened by the horizontal.

We are in constant need of bolstering our vertical commitment by vertical methodologies such as artwork and devotion. It has always been the province of the artist to formulate a contemporary communication about today's problems (not yesterday's) for today's man. The artist is the priest of communication. He hammers out channels between the present and the ultimate so that man might travel them. It belongs to the artist to fashion the new wineskins for the new wine so that God may be present in our times through us.

MR. THOMAS RATERMAN, C.PP.S.

In the time allotted for my presentation I must presume that we share some agreement about the artist and his art. And, I must dismiss many avenues of art awareness which could serve real value for this group. Considering the possibility of enlarging the relevancy-gap by making this assumption, I shall try, rather briefly, to explore one question which I believe is pertinent to the intentions of this 1968 Precious Blood Study Week — How does art serve theology of the Precious Blood today?

To answer this question I must of necessity offer a comment on what I have already presumed. Namely, the points which must serve as our basic agreement about the artist and his art. Our basic agreements must include these:

# a. We must agree that the role of the artist in society today is charismatic.

There is only one charism in the church. The charism of the Spirit. Within this one charism we find categorical listings which include prophecy, ministeries (i.e. preaching and teaching), healing, etc. When the artist applies his talents to the service of theology he is, by that very fact, participant in the charism of the Spirit. The artist's charism comes under the heading of "ministeries" or teaching. Teaching is a matter of mediating in the experience of another. Therefore, the function of the artist's charism is to mediate.

# b. We must agree that the work of art is but an extension of the artist's charism.

All genuine works of art are but extensions of the psyche. An authentic art expression must be based upon the individual or collective experience of contemporary man. To admit the charismatic character of the artist is, therefore, to admit that his art expressions (architecture, sculpture, or paintings) are extensions of his charism.

# c. We must agree that the significance of a work of art is deeper than subject matter or mere representation.

The essence of art is not to be found merely in a message or in the subject, but in the interrelation of lines, colors, forms, etc. The work of art is a symbol of spiritual realities and, as such, signifies spiritual realities. Therefore, representation and mere technical rendering are of secondary importance to the work of art.

## d. We must agree that works of art, when put to the service of theology, must aid man in his worship of God.

Art through the ages has always been considered the "handmaiden of theology." The service of art has always been determined by the particular tempo of a historic context. Today, the contemporary tempo demands that art serve for communication. The work of art, as symbol, bridges the relevancy-gap.

Having established this basic reference of agreement, I may now proceed to answer the original question — How does art serve theology of the Precious Blood today? The points we have in agreement serve as a partial answer and I need only offer additional comment.

The relevancy of blood as central to contemporary experience of man poses some problems to both theology and to art. The relevancy-gap, however, is not the result of a blood symbol. Nor, is the problem necessarily bound to theology or art. Blood is understood like truth, beauty, and goodness. These are understood insofar as they relate to one's understanding. Because these are transcending realities we cannot grasp their essence with an earthbound mentality.

Relevancy is a creative continuum which places upon us the obligation to invest all our experiences with meaning — with Christo-centric values. In his book, *The Secular City*, Harvey Cox provides a scriptural basis for our approach to the relevancy-gap. In this book, Mr. Cox refers to the Genesis story in which God commands Adam to name the creatures of the world. This was a command to invest things with their particular meaning. So, if blood is to serve as a life-giving symbol, it will be so determined by our understanding.

Christian iconography must be reconsidered, if it is to serve current theology. Contemporary man is on a different level of experience than that of former ages. In past ages the *Sacred Icon* was rendered according to certain artistic canons. The traditional icon, for example, presented a "typical" Byzantine Christ-image.

Christ, Judge and Teacher is always shown holding a book of the Word of God in His left hand, His right hand is held in blessing. He wears a tunic with open neck; around his waist, the himation, a sarong with the end over His back and left shoulder. The *iconic* representation is always the same. It is to lead you to a contemplation of the theme which is one of the divine presence, mercy, justice, responsibility, God-man, the Anointed, The Word of God in human form.

Contemporary man finds relevancy on an in-depth level of communication. The inflexible Byzantine icon which reflects an inflexible Church attitude no longer belongs to the contemporary dimension of experience. Theology today is "man-centered as well as God-centered." If we are to have an art appropriate for this realization, the artist must be given greater freedom for expression of this central theme. The artist, today, can more effectively communicate the rich nuances of theology of the Precious Blood in its pastoral application, if he has freedom to use the pure symbolism of non-objective, abstract-expressionism, or figurative art. The mode of expression should be left to the determination of the artist, because he understands which "style" is best suited to re-present *iconic* analogies to deep theological truth.

Perhaps a final comment which pinpoints the basic idea I have proposed as the answer to the question of how art serves theology of the Precious Blood may be summarized in a quotation from Marshall McLuhan. In quoting him, however, I will substitute the words *theology* and *art* in place of his word *environments*. Theology and art . . . "are not passive wrappings. They are active processes." Theology is a "redemptive process." Art, by reason of its function as mediation, communicates the "redemptive process." Relevancy is determined by our participation in this "active process."

#### SISTER MARIELLA, AD.PP.S.

## MASS SERVICE ON THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

For

CANTOR, CONGREGATION AND ORGAN (plus other arrangements)

Special Texts By REV. RONALD MOORMAN, C.PP.S.

> Music By RALPH C. VERDI, C.PP.S.

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## PREFACE

The Mass Service on the Blood of Christ was designed to accomplish the following purposes:

- 1. To provide attractive material for liturgical use by employing fresh and meaningful texts, and by utilizing flexible music idioms to assure both practicality and authentic enthusiasm;
- 2. To provide some variety in musical arrangements by means of judicious scoring;
- To demonstrate the feasibility of using many different music idioms in liturgy, and more specifically, within the scope of one liturgical service.

It is hoped that the different arrangements employed (use of descants congregation hymns, etc.) will enable any director of liturgy to provide his (her) congregation with different Mass-programs, even if only with regard to the repeated use of this Mass Service.

For the most effective use of hymns scored for Cantor and Congregation, it is suggested that the Cantor first intone the entire antiphon (with accompaniment) *before* the Congregation enters into song. Thereafter, the Congregation would repeat the antiphon after each verse sung by the Cantor.

The respective hymns and their music idioms listed below were included to attract a broad compass of tastes:

1. Jesus Christ, Our Blood-H	Born Brother Light-Blues Style
2. One In Each Other	
3. To Him Who Has Loved Us Blues-Modality	
	(Phrygian transposed)
4. Prayer of the Faithful	Composed-Folk Idiom
5. May We Never Forget	"Cool-School" of Jazz (Polychordal)
6. Come, Let Us Adore	Twentieth Century Conventional
7. This Blood of Christ	

A special note of thanks is due to Father Ronald Moorman, C.PP.S. for the very inspiring and noble texts. Without his kind cooperation and efforts this work would not have been accomplished.

Ralph C. Verdi, C.PP.S.

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MASS SERVICE ON THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

## MASS SERVICE ON THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

#### - 1 -

## JESUS CHRIST, OUR BLOOD-BORN BROTHER

R. Moorman, C.PP.S.

Ralph C. Verdi, C.PP.S.

With optional descants for Voice and/or B<sup>b</sup> Trumpet Congregation and Organ

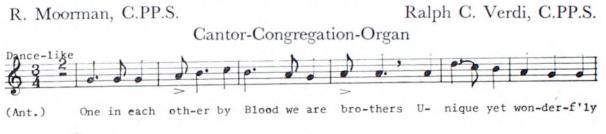


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PROCEEDINGS - THIRD PRECIOUS BLOOD STUDY WEEK

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#### ONE IN EACH OTHER





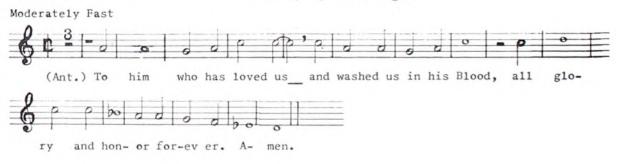
Verses: (Cantor)

1. One in each other By Blood we are brothers Unique yet wonderf'ly same. A world is awaiting Alive and sincere For the sound of Christ's real name. (Antiphon)

- 3. Jesus Christ, our brother and friend 4. Glory to God, our Father, Has told it just like it is. Yes, no more strangers, living alone, For the world is wonderf'ly his. (Antiphon)
- 2. The poor and the suff ring The happy and glad Clasp hands in freedom's embrace. For Christ is alive To open men's hearts And show true brotherhood's face. (Antiphon)

To Christ, our brother and friend. Shout praise to the life-giving Spirit, The warmth of love, our God-send. (Antiphon)

- 3 -TO HIM WHO HAS LOVED US Text and Music: Ralph C. Verdi, C.PP.S. Cantor-Congregation-Organ



#### Cantor:

- The Word of God has come to us, the everlasting Truth. The Lamb of God has brought us life, and we have but to receive. (Antiphon)
- The gift of knowing God is ours. We have his pledge of love. The Scriptures tell the name of the Lord; his name is: Word of God. (Antiphon)
- All praise to Christ, the Living Word, the same forevermore. All glory, honor, thanks to the Lord forever. Amen. (Antiphon)

#### - 4 -

## PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

## Text and Music: Ralph C. Verdi, C.PP.S. Cantor-Congregation

Directions: Cantor sings phrase by phrase; Congregation repeats each phrase *immediately* after the Cantor.

- 1. Open up our hearts, Lord, to receive your Word. Open up our hearts, Lord, to receive your love.
- 2. Make us one with you, Lord. Make us one in mind. Keep us in your love, Lord. Make us one in heart.
- 3. Guide the Holy Father. Bless him with your strength. That he may serve you always, and all your Holy Church.
- Strengthen all your bishops. Bless all your priests. Grant to all religious fidelity and love.
- Increase all your people. Make them ever grow.
   Fill up all the earth, Lord, with your saving Truth.
- 6. Grant peace to our nation. Make our rulers wise. Bless all their actions. Make them just and right.
- For all the departed grant pardon, O Lord. Give them life-eternal, life forevermore.
- Come, Lord Jesus! Come very soon! To take away all evil, to spread the Father's love.
- 9. Praise to the Father! Hosanna! to the Son. Give thanks to the Spirit. All three are one.

FINALE: Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen.

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PROCEEDINGS — THIRD PRECIOUS BLOOD STUDY WEEK

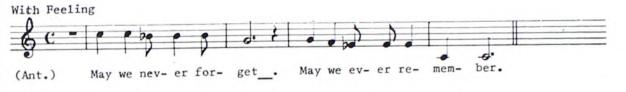
- 5 -

## MAY WE NEVER FORGET

R. Moorman, C.PP.S.

Ralph C. Verdi, C.PP.S.

Cantor-Congregation-Organ



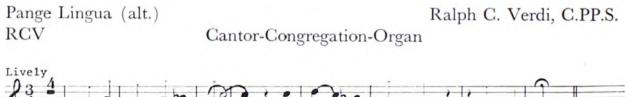
Cantor:

1-4. May we never forget or ever cease to remember:

- 1. the price of people, the pain of people. (Antiphon)
- 2. what Blood has bought and Sweat has sown. (Antiphon)
- 3. that humanity came from endless yearning. (Antiphon)
- 4. the eternal ache to share God's wonder of love. (Antiphon)
- 5. Great is the Father, Truth is the Son. Love is the Spirit. All three are one. (Antiphon)

#### - 6 -

#### COME, LET US ADORE





Cantor:

1. Sing of the Savior's glory, his triumph far and wide. Cry out the won'drous story; his Body crucified. (Antiphon)

- The Lord has risen from the grave, his Body glorified. His heart, his love, his life he gave, and were purified. (Antiphon)
- Sing the mys'try of his Flesh, the saving gift of his Blood.
   Our faith he will renew, refresh; the price: his own life-blood. (Antiphon)
- Glory to the Father! Hosanna! praise the Son! To the Spirit, Love of the Father, our thanks will never be done. (Antiphon)

MASS SERVICE ON THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

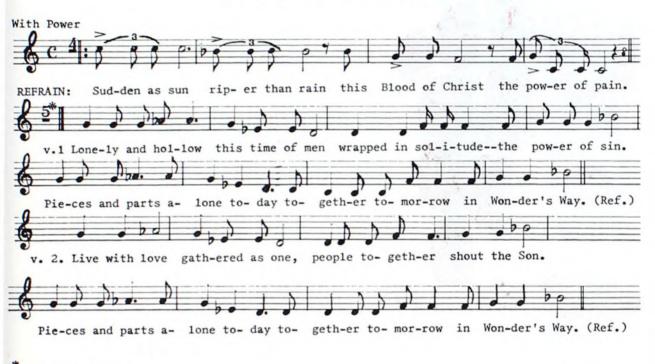
.. 7 -

#### THIS BLOOD OF CHRIST

R. Moorman, C.PP.S.

Ralph C. Verdi, C.PP.S.

Congregation and Organ



Last time only

## SUGGESTIONS FOR CHOICE OF HYMNS AT MASS

Entrance: 1, 2, 4, 6, 7. Scriptural Response: 3, 5. Prayer of the Faithful: 4. Offertory Rite: 2, 3, 4, 5, 7. Communion Rite: 1, 2, 5, 6, 7. Recessional: 1, 2, 3, 7.

## THE PEOPLE OF GOD: WASHED IN THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB

The mystery of salvation is manifested in the Scriptures in the context of historical events, in relationship to persons, places and time.<sup>1</sup> The theological basis for the devotion to the Precious Blood, as it is understood today, is rooted deeply in Sacred Scripture in symbol, sign and reality. In *symbol* as a promise, a prefigurement and preparation, in *sign* as an enactment in history of an event containing (in some way) a more perfect reality, and finally in *reality* as fulfillment in the Father sending His Son, the Word made flesh, who by His life, death, resurrection-ascension is the unique symbol, sign and reality of humanity's guarantee of redemption through and communion with the Triune-God.

Our supreme spiritual concern today is to make Christ relevant to our current needs and aspirations. The cross and resurrection, central to all the universe, must be brought to us as current reality and presence, not merely as past action and memory. This Paschalmystery-event of cross and resurrection is truly a memorial - ever present today - here and now. This continuous relevancy of the cross and resurrection is through the living People of God who were formed and fashioned in the Blood of Christ. They are the continuation of the mystery of salvation throughout the ages of time and into heavenly glory. The scars of Jesus' wounds are with Him in eternal glory. This emphasizes that Jesus risen in glory retained these scars as a sign of the permanence of His redemptive love. In the Word made flesh we have the final definitive communication of the life which is His in the Father. It is communicated to humanity — fallen and scarred — through the continuous reality of the cross and resurrection - in eternal relevancy in the People of God. For Jesus, the Christ, the Anointed One, is today, yesterday and forever. The scars of the suffering redeemer are forever present in glory. Jesus is Kyrios, who experienced kenosis unto the death of the cross. He took the signs of His sacrificial life-giving suffering and death to an eternal existence as signs of the permanency of His love and that of His heavenly Father. Through this action-event Jesus offers peace, hope and fellowship.

The inspired texts indicate the breadth of this revelation and the gradual development throughout the history of salvation. The following texts, of course, are not exhaustive, but they clearly indicate the significance of blood in relationship to salvation-redemption, and with particular emphasis on the part its role plays in the mystery-mystical relationship of God and man.

Therefore, if you hearken to my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my special possession, dearer to me than all other people, though all the earth is mine. You shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation (Ex 19, 5-6).

This is the blood of the covenant which Yahweh has made with you (Ex 24, 8).

Be holy, for I, Yahweh your God, am holy (Lv 19, 2).

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It was not because you are the largest of all nations that the Lord set his heart on you, for you are really the *smallest* of all nations (Dt 7, 7).

Though he was harshly treated, he submitted and opened not his mouth; like a lamb led to slaughter or a sheep before the shearers, he was silent and opened not his mouth (Is 53, 7).

Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom my soul delights (Is 42, 1).

He despoiled himself, by taking on the Servant's character, becoming similar to mortal man. And looking outward like any other man. He carried self-abasement, through obedience, right up to death, death by the Cross. Therefore, did God in turn immeasurably exalt Him (Ph 2, 6ff).

You, however, are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people. . . (1 Pt 2, 9).

For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us for God with thy blood (Ap 5, 9).

And I saw . . . a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits God sent forth into all the earth (Ap 5, 6).

These remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers. The many miracles and signs worked through the apostles made a deep impression on everyone. The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed. They went as a body to the Temple every day but met in their houses for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly and generously; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved (Ac 2, 42-47).

These are the people who have been through the great persecution, and because they have washed their robes white again in the blood of the Lamb, they now stand in the front of God's throne and serve him day and night in his sanctuary; and the One who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them (Ap 7, 14-15).

Obviously these texts manifest a wide spectrum of theological thought (from the Exodus-event to the Apocalyptic visions of

#### The People of God

John); therefore this paper will be restricted to these basic points: The People of God as 1) elected (chosen), 2) acquired (purchased), 3) cultic (holy), 4) messianic (prophetic).

#### PEOPLE OF GOD: ELECTED-CHOSEN

God's redemptive love is revealed in the Old Testament in three stages of salvation-history: the Exodus, the Sinai Covenant and the entrance of the People of God into the Promised Land. These form but one mystery-event of the Passover — the Paschal Mystery — paralleled in the New Testament by Christ's life, suffering and death, resurrection-ascension.<sup>2</sup> In other words, the coming forth of the Word from the Father and the return of the Word-Son to the heavenly Father with whom all creation has an eternal covenant.

The initiative and predilection of God in the historical event of the covenant is attested to by the entire Old Testament as well as the New Testament in the person of Jesus. In every covenant narrative it is Yahweh who says: "You will be my people and I will be your God" (Lv 26, 13; Ezk 37, 27). "I will espouse you to me forever; I shall espouse you in fidelity, and you shall know the Lord" (Os 2, 21ff). In Scripture "to be elected" or "called" implies more than a privilege, it always carries with it the concept of service and mission. This is true not only of individuals but especially of the entire nation. If we dare to single out one word to describe (characterize) the relationship of ancient Israel and her God-Yahweh, it is the word "personal" - to know and to love. This relationship, therefore, is a reciprocal encounter - God knows and loves His people and His people know and love their God. This personal relationship brought with it the deep conviction of total dependence upon God, as expressed in Deuteronomy: "It was not because you were the largest of all nations that the Lord set his heart on you, for you are really the smallest of all nations" (Dt 7, 7).

#### PEOPLE OF GOD: ACQUIRED-PURCHASED

Through this covenant God founded a nation and a community, which is consequently, "God's people," people of the Holy One, hence, "a holy nation, a royal priesthood" (Dt 4, 7; 6, 12;

32, 3; Ex 19, 4-7). In her response to the call Israel becomes holy as her God is holy. As the "acquired" people, Israel is now consecrated; and in this consecration she is dedicated to his *praise*, to his *witness*, to his *service*. The reason for Israel's existence is for Yahweh and for Him alone — to glorify Him and to help others to glorify His name (cf I Pt 2, 9).

"People of God" is strikingly expressive of the union of God with the community of believers. It is an utterance which does not relate to any one individual culture or civilization, but rather is a common denominator of *all* culture and civilization. It is a title which indicates an *essential* relationship, a relationship of *being* — an encounter between the divine and the human. It enunciates a very *personal* relationship between God and the human race.

#### PEOPLE OF GOD: CULTIC-HOLY

It is a relationship externalized and ratified by sacrificial blood. The People of God are both bound, *united* to God and consecrated to his *service*. The covenant-sacrifice of blood is *witness* to the election of Israel as the People of God, *testimony* to her awareness of being God's special possession and the *sign* of her call as a cultic community dedicated to the service of the true God.

Then redemption of Israel from the slavery in Egypt is commemorated by the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb — a sacrifice of expiation, reconciliation, purification and sanctification. The cultic action of the covenant-sacrifice and the passover-sacrifice have in common, that *blood* is the sign of *expiation* and *sanctification.<sup>s</sup>* The blood sprinkled on the altar and the Lamb eaten at the festive banquet establish a *personal* union between God and His people.

## PEOPLE OF GOD: MESSIANIC-PROPHETIC

"This messianic people, although it does not actually include all men, and may more than once look like a small flock, is nonetheless a lasting and sure need of unity, hope, and salvation for the human race."<sup>4</sup> By proclaiming the good news to all nations the People of God carry out a mission of salvation. This is a *prophetic* mission because the entire People of God witness to the power of the gospel in baptism and faith. The testimony of Christ's

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life and the power of His words are continually fulfilled in the prophetic role of the People of God. The People of God become, in union with Christ, the heralds of faith - communicating the "Word of the Lord which endures forever" (Is 40, 8). It is this messianic, prophetic, eschatological kingdom of God which transmits the covenant in cosmic proportions in truth and serves God in holiness. This is in response to the call: "Everything the Lord said, we will do" (Ex 19, 8). "All that the Lord has said, we will heed and do" (Ex 24, 7). Or again in Hebrews: "I come to do your will" (Hb 10, 7). This is in fulfillment of the words of Jeremiah: "See, the days are coming - it is the Lord who speaks - when I will establish a new covenant. . . There will be no further need for neighbor to try to teach neighbor or brother to say to brother 'Learn to know the Lord.' No, they will all know me, the least no less than the greatest, since I will forgive their iniquities and never call their sins to mind" (Jer 31, 31-34).

## Servant-Theology of Isaiah

#### THE LAMB

Old Testament theology reaches a new height in the servanttheme of deutero-Isaiah. In deep reflection the prophet looks back and re-evaluates his people's encounters with Yahweh in terms of salvation-history. The innocence and purity of the sacrificial Lamb and its function in redeeming and restoring man's relationship with God are identified with the Suffering Servant in Isaiah. The Servant is at times identified with the entire nation though at other times he is presented as an individual.5 The holiness which is required as a mark of the People of God is the sign of identity for the servant-lamb of deutero-Isajah. Although the Paschal Lamb of the liturgical texts of the Old Testament stresses the goal (atonement for the sins of the people), and the Lamb of the servanttheology places emphasis on the means (voluntary, vicarious suffering) by which the goal is reached, in both the pure blood of the Lamb is cultic and effects a personal bond between God and His People.<sup>6</sup> In the servant-theology, however, we meet the theme of universal salvation and an identification between the servantlamb and the Messiah. Through his call, mission, consecration and service, the Servant brings a new covenant to all nations and

through his life, his suffering, his death and final glorification universal salvation is realized for the People of God in cosmic proportions. In his voluntary acceptance of victimhood, he is a priest. Through blood-sacrifice he brings about redemption of the nations and through blood of expiation he initiates reconciliation of all creation with the one true God. "His affliction was a divine event. It was unfolded in Yahweh's purpose . . . God was identified with, involved in, the servant's voluntary sacrifice (Ho 11). God Himself was active in the servant's career. The servant's sacrifice was an activity within the activity of God."<sup>7</sup> Just as Israel's divine election necessarily demanded *service* to God, so the servant's entire call and life, from his mother's womb to death and glorification, are a *vocation of service*. Just as Israel was the least of nations, so also the servant was the humblest — humble in origin, afflicted and identified as the least of men.

#### NEW TESTAMENT REFLECTIONS

The themes of the covenant, the People of God, the Lamb, and the Servant are very graphically fulfilled and transformed in the new covenant. The divine promises to the Chosen People center in the covenant fulfilled in and through Christ by the shedding of His Blood. "And taking a cup and 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 covenant, which is being shed for many" (Mk 14, 23). "It is covenanted blood validating forever the new order of salvation. The shed for many points to the fulfillment of the prophecy of the vicarious death of the Servant of Yahweh found in Isaiah 53. Note also, in Mk 10, 45, that the Son of Man has come to serve, 'and to give his life as a ransom for many.'" "The new covenant in Christ as end and fulfillment of the old divine covenant is essentially God's work of grace and pardon. The Old Testament is now fulfilled in this New Testament (Covenant) in Christ's Blood, through which God grants pardon and grace not merely to Jews, but to all mankind." The Blood of Jesus is Covenant-Blood. Through this Blood is established the definitive and eternal union of man with God. The sacrificial death of Jesus is explained in the New Testament writings in terms of the ancient covenant but now in terms of fulfillment and perfection. The cov-

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enant of Jesus is sealed through and in His Blood. He is the priestvictim offering His life on the cross in a blood-sacrifice which brings expiation, atonement, reconciliation, sanctification and redemption to the New People of God. "Behold the lamb who takes away the sins of the world" (Jn 1, 29). The superiority of this covenant is attested to in the Epistle to the Hebrews (7, 22ff).

The "priestly messianism in a Christian sense is here (Hebrews) indistinguishable from priestly Christology, and servant messianism from servant Christology."8 The messiah-priest-servant theme as presented by the Apostolic Church (Ac 3, 13-26; 4, 27-30; 8. 32-35; 1 Pt 2, 21-25) shows that Jesus is the fulfillment of both the royal Messian and servant figures and also his priestly office. All believers share these in some way in Christ. "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the Blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near. . ." (Heb 10, 19-22). The People of God are called to service and to cultic action - to worship and in that worship are made holy. The central theological reflection in Hebrews is very concisely stated by J. R. Schaefer ". . . entry into the divine presence requires: 1) a covenant with God (Hb 8, 6-13); 2) ablution in blood (Hb 9, 1-22); and 3) sacrifice (Hb 9, 23-10, 18). Thus, Jesus mediates a new covenant (Hb 8, 6) which renders the old obsolete (Hb 8, 13). Further, he enters the divine presence with His own blood (Hb 9, 12) which is efficacious for the cleansing of consciences (Hb 9, 14). Finally, He willingly makes a sacrifice of His body which becomes the once for all sacrifice ending all others (Hb 10, 5-14)."9

It is mainly through the Suffering Servant theme and that of the Lamb sacrifice that we find the New Testament writers expressing the mystery-event of the establishment of the People of God presented as redeemed for the Father. Although there is no direct identification of the Suffering Servant of the Old Testament and Christ, the use of the Servant of Yahweh theology clearly indicates that the New Testament writers did in fact identify the two,<sup>10</sup> with the added note, however, that with Christ we have *fulfillment*. Jesus is the redeemer, the Messiah, who brings salvation and inaugurates the "Last Days" — the Messianic era (Ac 2, 42-47).

Of the many texts of the New Testament which reflect the belief that Jesus is the Suffering Servant, one in particular summarizes his mission in this regard, namely, the Christological Hymn in Phillipians 2, 5-11:

Who, while He kept His character as God. Did not consider His divinity equality Something to be proudly paraded. No, He despoiled Himself, By taking on the Servant's character, Becoming similar to mortal men. And looking outwardly like any other men, He carried self-abasement, through obedience, Right up to death, yes, death by the Cross. Therefore did God in turn immeasurably exalt Him. And graciously bestow on Him the Name, Outweighing every other name; That everyone, at Jesus' Name, Should bow adoring: those in heaven On earth, in the infernal regions, And every tongue take up the cry, "Jesus is Lord," Thus glorifying God His Father.<sup>11</sup>

These words describe Christ as the Suffering Servant of God, humiliated even to the Blood poured out in the agony of the cross. The Blood of submission to the divine will begins with the suffering and death but brings forth glory to Jesus and to all who identify themselves with Him. Suffering, humiliation and even death itself are no longer viewed as punishment from God but rather voluntarily accepted in imitation of Christ - the gentle, kind and innocent Lamb. "I come to do your will, O God" (Hb 10, 7). Therefore, in the preaching of the early Apostolic Community identification with Christ in suffering and death is also identification with Him in glory. In His humiliation Christ identifies Himself with the Israel of Old - the smallest of all nations and voluntarily accepts through His obedience the role of service before God. When Jesus expressed His mission as service or a gift in favor of many, He was identifying Himself also with the Suffering Servant. The theology of the "remnant" has deep implications here in terms of the New Israel as the smallest (least) of all nations brought to full growth in the prophetic-messianic era.

"In so doing He wished to affirm that in giving His life He is also offering an expiation sacrifice which issues in atonement. Without blood there is no expiation (Hb 9, 22). Hence, Jesus is stating equivalently that He ransoms, that is, that He liberates man from the slavery of sin through His *Blood of sacrifice*. As such His Blood is the *Blood of expiation*. He has come for no other purpose than to redeem man, and that by His Blood offered in sacrifice for the sins of man."<sup>12</sup>

"Jesus as the Servant exercises a representative role. . . . Jesus was really offering the blood of all mankind, made acceptable to God only because of the innocent Blood of the representative. The principle of *solidarity* rather than that of substitution guarantees the efficacy of the sacrifice in favor of man . . . it is only in His innocence that He separates Himself from those whom He liberates from the slavery of sin. That is why the Servant-poems underscore so heavily the capacity of the Servant's suffering."<sup>13</sup>

The biblical theme of the People of God reaches new heights in St. Peter's First Epistle. Christians are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of God's possession (1 Pt 2, 9). The tremendous theological implications of this verse lies in the fact that it is a collage of Old Testament theological themes placed together as summary of the theology of the People of God. The New Israel enjoys the prerogatives of the People of God because the Blood of Jesus has established a new covenant. In baptism a new birth — they are chosen, elected, consecrated holy (cultic) and messianic-prophetic to be identified with the Blood of Jesus. They share in His kingship and priesthood because they belong to Him who is *the* King and *the* Priest and through the Blood of Jesus God has acquired them for Himself as His special possession sealed in a Covenant-sacrifice.

But there is more. Christians are not only the chosen, acquired, royal and cultic People of God, they are also His *Messianic* People, for they are the People of the "last times." All Christians share not only the suffering of the Servant but also His glory. We have been "redeemed by the precious Blood of the Lamb without blemish" (1 Pt 1, 18ff). Through baptism the People of God are now able to share in the Eucharistic Cup, and through this participation there is an identification with Christ, the *new* Adam, the *new* David, the *new* Servant. In other words, through the principle of solidarity with Christ we are the Messianic People of God — washed, purified, nourished, sanctified and redeemed in and through the Blood of the Lamb. The Israel of old answered the call of Yahweh in the ten "words" of the decalogue — the covenant response; now the New Israel responds with a more perfect answer summed up in ONE word — that of LOVE. Now there is but one commandment — Love.

In the earthly pilgrimage the People of God remain weak and depend upon God just as the Servant, until final glory is realized. However, in the here and now the People of God have the task which can be summarized in the three words: *witness, ministry* and *fellowship*.<sup>14</sup>

The Christ of the Apocalypse is King and Priest (1, 12-16). He is Lord of lords and King of kings (17, 14); He is the "great God and Savior" of the Christians, and He is "the Lamb, who stands, as if slain" (5, 6). Bringing together the main themes of this particular vision in which John introduces the Lamb, we see the Lamb as "a triumphant, powerful, sacrificial Christ." Associated with Him is the Holy Spirit whom He sends forth into the world ... the saints proclaim why the Lamb has been given power in triumph. They sing: "For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us for God with thy blood" (Ap 5, 9). The Blood is the source of the Lamb's triumph, but it is also the symbol of the triumph of the saints." To one of the elder's question: "Who are they clothed in white robes?" the answer is given: "These are they who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb" (Ap 7, 13-14).<sup>15</sup> This theme is brought out most incisively by André Feuillet:

Paradoxically enough, he is at one time both the Lion of the tribe of Juda (5, 5) and the Lamb who was slain (there are 29 occurrences of the Lamb who was slain, in the Apocalypse), who appears to the Seer "as if slain" (5, 6) bearing the marks of his sacrifice (the victory over death comes to him only because of Calvary). We might quote the words of Victorinus, ad devincendum mortem leo, ad patiendum vero pro hominibus tamquam agnus ad occisionem ductus est. Similarly the author of the fourth Gospel (20, 20. 21. 25. 27; cf. also Luke 24, 20), emphasizes that the risen Christ retains the scars of His wounds forever. The meaning of these wounds is the same in the Apocalypse and the Gospel, i.e., the scars

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are a sign of the permanence of Christ's redemptive love. In other words, faithful Christians have nothing to fear; every moment in the Church, the redemptive love which brought about Calvary, is available to them, to give them life.<sup>16</sup>

All that has been stated thus far is intensified in the *fulfillment* and *completion* of redemption. The redeemed People of God around the throne with the Lamb offer the eternal sacrifice. In the cultic, messianic setting of the heavenly Jerusalem the People of God are now united to the Father with the Lamb in the glory of the Spirit. The rich fulfillment of eternity envisioned in the Apocalypse causes a prayer to rise from the heart of the People of God: "Come, Lord Jesus" (Ap 22, 20) COME!

#### JOSEPH E. LAZUR, C.PP.S.

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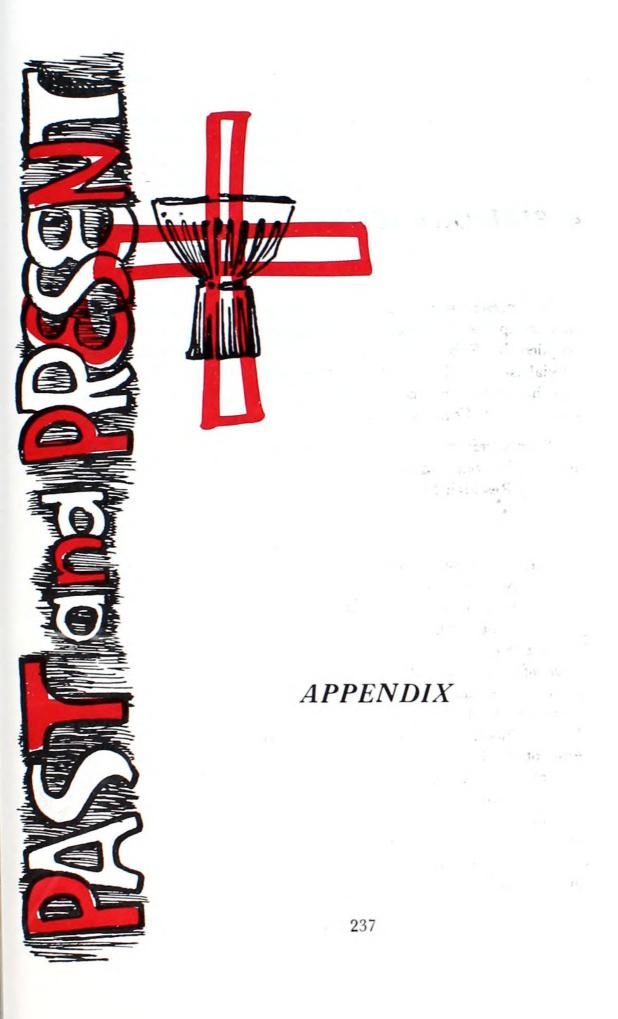
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<sup>13.</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

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#### APPENDIX

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#### APPENDIX

Blood of Jesus signifies the personality of Christ, the God-man, in the act of His sacrifice, both physical and spiritual. It has an intrinsic and necessary connection with Christ's perfection in His triumph from the resurrection to the parousia.

The same author presented a doctoral thesis to the Pontifical Biblical Institute (Rome, 1960): *Hic Calix Novum Testamentum Est in Meo Sanguine* (I Cor 11, 25b). The subtitle specifies the theme: "Exegetical Study of the Pauline Form of the Eucharistic Cup in the Light of the Blood of Christ and the New Covenant" (pp. 461, mimeographed). The thesis contains an extensive, up-to-date bibliography.

Part I examines the biblical concepts of the "blood of Christ" and the "new covenant." Part II analyzes I Cor. 11, 25b to determine its doctrinal content.

Among other conclusions the thesis proposes: 1) The Pauline Eucharistic formula represents the entire personality of Christ, His salvific work in the passion and resurrection, and its consummation in the parousia; 2) The Eucharist is the New Testament *in actu;* also in its community aspect the Eucharist constitutes the Church; 3) The Church is "one body" through the "one blood."

Mario Ansaldi, Il Sangue di Cristo in S. Alberto Magno, studies the theme of the Precious Blood in the works of the Universal Doctor. The dissertation has been published in the quarterly "Il Sangue Prezioso della Nostra Redenzione" (Rome: Missionaries of the Precious Blood, 1961).

Sister Angelita Myerscough, Ad.PP.S., presents a doctoral dissertation on "The Precious Blood in the Spirituality of Maria De Mattias" in her book entitled *Redemptive Encounter* (Ruma, Illinois: Sisters Adorers of the Precious Blood, 1963).

#### CHRISTIAN FORMATION PROGRAM

The Precious Blood Christian Formation Program, sponsored by the Sisters of the Precious Blood, Dayton, Ohio, under the direction of Edward J. Kalmanek, C.PP.S., published the Good News of Salvation Series from 1962 through 1968. The series offered guidelines for study, discussion and practical action on the themes found in the Sunday Gospels of the Church's liturgical year. A Newsletter accompanying the series served to emphasize Precious

Blood themes for the benefit of teachers and promoters of the Formation Program.

In addition, Father Kalmanek compiled four booklets published by the Formation Program: The Pious Union of the Precious Blood and the Little Office of the Precious Blood (1961), The Mystery of Faith, Book I (1963), Book II (1965), and Precious Blood Bible Services (1966).

#### ARTICLES

Edwin G. Kaiser, C.PP.S., has published a number of articles on the Precious Blood in *American Ecclesiastical Review* (Cf. 1930, pp. 1-14; 1941, pp. 1-10). His most recent article in this review (1961, pp. 190-200) is reprinted in these *Proceedings*. In the same review is an article by Edward F. Siegman, C.PP.S. (1957, pp. 167-174), also reprinted in these *Proceedings*.

John E. Steinmueller, "Sacrificial Blood in the Bible" *Biblica* (1959, pp. 556-557), summarizes the biblical conclusions on the meaning of blood in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The Journal of Theological Studies contains the most recent writing on the controversy concerning the significance of blood. Does it signify death or life? The article of L. Morris, "The Biblical Use of the Term 'Blood'" (1952, pp. 216-227), insists that the biblical meaning of blood is death. L. Dewar in an article of the same title (1953, pp. 204-208) replied that the death-life antithesis set up by Morris in blood-theology is a false one.

Edward F. Siegman, C.PP.S. in the *Proceedings of the First Precious Blood Study Week* (pp. 49-51) sketches the history of this debate among Anglican divines, offers a complete bibliography of it, plus an evaluation.

While teaching at St. Charles Seminary (1963-64) Father Siegman compiled a set of mimeographed notes on "Blood in the Old Testament." In the notes he calls attention to footnote 13 (pp. 31-32) appended to his article in *Proceedings of the Second Precious Blood Study Week* where he revised his position concerning the idea of "substitution" in sacrifice. In this second article he completely rejects the idea.

In the mimeographed notes he also indicates a firmer position in the controversy relative to the significance of blood, that is, whether it signifies death or life. He wrote:

#### APPENDIX

"Our foregoing discussion seems to take for granted that the basic meaning seen in blood by the ancients was *life released*. Recent studies have tended to emphasize this point. For example, Luigi Moraldi devoted a chapter of his dissertation on expiation to a comparative study of the significance of blood among Greeks and Romans, Hittites, Assyro-Babylonians, Egyptians, Arabs, and Canaanites. He found that the principal aspects are four: (a) Blood has a life-giving or fortifying power; (b) it has a quasi-sacramental power of union, e.g., in blood covenants; (c) it has a purifying and apotropaic power, i.e., to ward off evil influences, as in use of blood in the pre-Paschal sacrifice, as we shall see; (d) a nutritive power, as we have seen, in nourishing the gods, or the dead, or demons.

"In my paper read at the First Precious Blood Study Week (1957) I opted for the compromise opinion of Lindsay Dewar who thinks that the "antithesis between death and life in blood-theology is a false one. Both ideas are essential for a right understanding of the biblical idea of sacrifice.

"The subsequent study which went into my paper read at the Second Precious Blood Study Week (1960) especially the contributions of Lyonnet and Moraldi have won me over to what today seems to be most widely accepted. It was stated as follows by Vincent Taylor:

" 'The victim is slain in order that its life, in the form of blood, may be released, and its flesh is burnt in order that it may be transformed or etherialized; and in both cases the aim is to make it possible for life to be presented as an offering to the Deity. More and more students of comparative religion, and of Old Testament worship in particular, are insisting that the bestowal of life is the fundamental idea in sacrificial worship.'"

The Priest has published two articles by Edwin G. Kaiser, C.PP.S.: "The Priest's Devotion to the Precious Blood" (1961, pp. 590-592) and "The Litany of the Most Precious Blood" (1961, pp. 786-793).

The Sentinal of the Blessed Sacrament (July 1961 through July 1962) featured a series of articles by Daniel C. Raible, C.PP.S., explaining the invocations or supplications of the "Litany of the Precious Blood," approved by Pope John XXIII in February of 1960.

Cross and Crown carried three articles of Sister Mary Celine, R.A.P.B., on the Precious Blood. They are reprinted in these Proceedings.

#### PRECIOUS BLOOD MESSENGER

The Precious Blood Messenger, a Catholic family magazine, was published monthly by the Society of the Precious Blood as part of the Society's efforts to promote devotion to the Precious Blood.

From its beginning in 1894 to its cessation in 1968, some 500 articles on some phase of devotion to the Blood of Jesus appeared in the pages of the "Messenger." A complete bibliography may be found in the provincial archives of the Society of the Precious Blood, St. Charles Seminary, Carthagena, Ohio. See the Appendix of these *Proceedings* for a summary of poetic contributions appearing in the magazine.

Besides the articles and poems, each issue from 1953 through 1968 carried a monthly "Pious Union Page" to aid Pious Union members in their dedication to the Blood of the Savior.

#### NUNTIUS AULAE

The Nuntius Aulae (1917-1969) was the publication of the major seminarians of the Society of the Precious Blood of St. Charles Seminary, Carthagena, Ohio. Its prose contributions on the Precious Blood are some forty in number. A complete bibliography may be found in the provincial archives at St. Charles Seminary. Articles appearing before 1949 are listed and summarized in the Nuntius Aulae (1949, pp. 231-235). The following have appeared since then:

Paul Wellman, C.PP.S., offers a collection of "Novena Sermons on the Precious Blood" 34 (1951, pp. 38-54). The format followed for each sermon is that of stating the topic, giving a brief outline, and concluding with a development of the topic.

James Bender, C.PP.S., "Devotion to Our Lady of the Precious Blood" (1951, pp. 7-28), aims to determine under which particular title the Society of the Precious Blood should honor Mary to conclude that it should be "Our Lady of the Precious Blood;" 2) the ways in which this devotion can be put into practice.

David Van Horn, C.PP.S., "Every Heart a Calvary" (1952,

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pp. 83-88), summarizes the devotion to the Precious Blood in the life of St. Catherine of Siena.

James Fitzgerald, C.PP.S., "Devotion and Devotions" (1958, pp. 152-174), examines the nature of devotion in general and makes a specific application to the devotion of the Precious Blood.

Joseph Hinders, C.PP.S., "Unity and the Precious Blood" (1960, pp. 5-8), defines person as "one who possesses just to give." He analyzes biblical texts referring to the Blood of Christ and shows that they point to the Precious Blood as the unifying principle, as the sign of unity of man with God, and of men with one another.

Paul Fettig, C.PP.S., "The Blood in Glory" (1963, pp. 71-82) studies the heavenly liturgy as portrayed in the Apocalypse and the Letter to the Hebrews, and finds that the heavenly liturgy, like the earthly liturgy, pays tribute to the Blood of Jesus.

John Tierney, C.PP.S., "Blood of Grapes" (1964, pp. 41-48), examines the manifold meanings of the biblical metaphor "blood of grapes." He finds its Eucharistic significance the most important.

John Franck, C.PP.S., "Blood of Christ and Sacramental Wine Symbolism" (1964, pp. 49-57), studies the varied use of wine in the daily life of the Hebrews to show why wine is such an excellent symbol of joy.

Michael Volkmer, C.PP.S., "St. Gaspar — the Church's Witness to the Precious Blood" (1965, pp. 6-11), explains how devotion to the Precious Blood was for Gaspar more than an "individual practice of piety." He saw this devotion as "intimately connected with the salvific mission of the Church." For him it was a devotion that "belonged to the Universal Church." The author notes, too, that Gaspar anticipated the "spirit of community" — so much a part of contemporary spirituality.

#### OTHER PROVINCES

The Italian Province of the Society of the Precious Blood has also sponsored several study weeks on the Precious Blood. The *Proceedings* have been published in the quarterly *Il Sangue Prezioso della Nostra Redenzione*. The Italian Province also publishes *La Voce del Sangue Prezioso*, a popular periodical for the members of the Pious Union.

The Teutonic Province also publishes a monthly magazine — Herold des Kostbaren Blutes (Pankofen, Niederbayern, Germany).



MOSAIC AND ALTAR — ST. CHARLES SEMINARY CHAPEL

# THE HEAVENLY-EARTHLY LITURGY

On the occasion of the Centenary Celebration of St. Charles Seminary, Carthagena, Ohio, the motherhouse of the Society of the Precious Blood, the chapel renovation there had been completed. Central to the renovation was the mosaic as the backdrop of the altar. Father Aloys Dirksen, C.PP.S., worked with the artist to produce this inspirational mosaic.

At the time of the celebration in 1961 mimeographed notes had been prepared to explain the mosaic's meaning. During the following years Father Edward Siegman, C.PP.S., and Father Robert Siebeneck, C.PP.S., collaborated in a manuscript which specifies more in detail the deep theological overtones of the mosaic. What is here printed represents their joint effort. See also Paul F. Fettig, C.PP.S., "The Blood in Glory," *Nuntius Aulae* 45 (1963), pp. 71-82.

The mosaic, which forms the backdrop of the altar of the chapel of the Assumption at St. Charles Seminary, Carthagena, Ohio, visualizes dominant themes on the Precious Blood from the epistle to the Hebrews. This letter is often called the "Theology of the Precious Blood," because it stresses the Blood of Jesus in His work and in the life of the Christian. Through the Precious Blood shed by Christ in death and eternally offered to the Father the Christian is born anew with God's own life, grows and matures to perfection, and finally reaches his eternal destiny of giving glory to the Blood of the Lamb.

The particular text which the mosaic enshrines is Hebrews 12, 22-24:

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You have come to Mount Sion,
to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,
to the company of many thousands of angels,
and to the Church of the Firstborn, whose members are enrolled in the heavens,
to God, the judge of all,
to the spirits of the just made perfect,
and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant,
to a SPRINKLING WITH BLOOD,
which speaks better than Abel.

Mount Sion, upon which the temple of Jerusalem was built, Jerusalem itself, "the city of the living God," and the heavenly Jerusalem all refer to heaven. Early in Christian thought the capital of the Jewish Church was used symbolically of the Church of Christ and its consummation in heaven, because the followers of Christ realized that everything in the old covenant was simply a preparation for the new covenant, in which former realities found their fulfillment and perfection.

By this reference to Jerusalem and its synonyms the author of Hebrews reminds Christians on earth that even now they are citizens of heaven, their true and lasting dwelling place. The heavenly Jerusalem has its initial earthly phase in the "Church of the Firstborn," the Church on earth founded by Christ, who makes us His members when we become members of the Church. It is clear, however, that there is no real separation between the Church on earth and heaven; the Church on earth joins that in heaven in a truly festive assembly: God, the angels, "the spirits of the just made perfect," that is, the saints in heaven. All are gathered around Jesus to contemplate the mystery that enabled them to be part of this assembly, the SPRINKLING WITH BLOOD.

God had made a first covenant with the Hebrew people on Mt. Sinai. It was solemnly ratified when Moses took the sacrificial blood of animals offered and sprinkled it both on the altar (which represented God) and on the people, thus indicating that the covenant made them "blood relatives" of God Himself (Heb

9, 18-21). Covenant blood is *blood of union*; it effects a relationship even more intimate than friendship.

The new covenant between God and all mankind which Jesus ratified at the Last Supper and on Calvary was also inaugurated with blood: the blood not of animals, but that of a Victim of infinite price, His own Blood, which He sprinkled on the altar of the cross and the new people of God. The SPRINKLING WITH BLOOD which brings together God, the angels, the saints in heaven and the Church on earth is the sacrifice by which Jesus established the new and eternal covenant that united God and man in the most intimate relationship possible, since it made men "blood brothers" of the incarnate Son of God. Hence in the mosaic attention is focused on the Savior shedding His Blood.

The tableau of Heb 12, 22-24, therefore, shows the Precious Blood as the bond of union between God on the one hand, and angels, saints, and Christians on earth on the other hand. Even in their life and worship here below Christians celebrate a heavenly liturgy, which Heb 9, 11-12 describes in recalling how Jesus in His ascension into heaven "entered once for all through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made by hands (i.e., heaven) ... by virtue of his own blood into the Holies (i.e., the presence of God), having obtained eternal redemption." Having entered heaven with His Blood shed in sacrifice and now glorified, the Savior offers this Blood as the ever-enduring act of His eternal priesthood. One with the sacrifice on Calvary, this celestial sacrifice prolongs the bloody sacrifice by applying to individuals the merits won for man on the cross.

The epistle to the Hebrews, then, pictures the heavenly liturgy as Christ's action of offering His Blood continually before the throne of God. Our High Priest has entered "into heaven itself, to appear before the face of God on our behalf" (Heb 9, 24). When Christians unite with Christ in the Mass in offering His Blood, the liturgy of earth joins the liturgy of heaven most perfectly. Since Jesus through the hands of the priest offers His Blood in sacrifice on the altar, which represents God, the altar is integral to the mosaic. When Christians gather around the altar of sacrifice to prolong the sacrifice of Calvary, they are doing exactly what the citizens of heaven are doing: they identify themselves with Jesus in offering His own saving Blood to the Father.

Again, on the altar God makes Himself present on earth, since the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of the Son of God. Even after the sacrifice, Jesus remains on the altar in the tabernacle under the form of bread. This presence of the Son of God in the tabernacle is a further bond that closely unites Christians here on earth with the saints and angels in heaven, as they make up one great chorus, praising God for the gift of His Son's Blood: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and divinity, wisdom and strength, honor, glory, and blessing" (Ap 5, 12). Thus they anticipate the joy of heaven in that they dwell with God even on earth, just as saints and angels enjoy the eternal bliss of living with God: "Behold God's dwelling with men; he shall dwell with them, and they will be his people, for God himself will be with them as their God" (Ap 21, 3).

The mosaic surrounds the tabernacle with a luminous gold setting as a perpetual reminder of the divine presence on earth. The glittering gold insert recalls God's manifestations to His people in the old dispensation. While he proved that He was among them in many ways, it was especially through the manifestation of His glory, a radiation of light, a kind of fire with unbearable brightness, that He indicated His presence. Gathered around Mount Sinai, the people saw this glory as a consuming fire on the mountain top (Ex 24, 17). From the fire they heard God speak to them, though they saw no form (Dt 4, 11). At the time of the temple's dedication (1 Kgs 8, 11), the sacred splendor, reflected in the appearance of radiant light, rested in the Holy of Holies and filled the entire edifice. The Jews emphasized the reality of God's glory, present in His sanctuary as well as in heaven, by calling it simply, "the dwelling," Shekinah. The Eucharistic presence of Jesus is, however, a far more perfect dwelling with us than was the Shekinah, since the Son of God is present in His humanity, inseparable from His divinity, under the appearance of bread and wine.

The profound meaning of the text from Hebrews which inspires the mosaic is captured through the altar and the tabernacle permanently associated with it. It is on the altar that the liturgy of heaven is re-enacted and made permanent. Hence it is the center of the festive gathering which the text describes. Yet without the Precious Blood the altar would have no meaning. It is by the Blood that the triumphant Jesus, whose image is central, effects

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the fusion of heaven and earth which the mosaic conveys. Jesus belongs to heaven and to earth. His Blood, the covenant-blood which He has sprinkled on the new people of God, has joined God and man together in a bond of friendship and community of life.

Among the ancients blood was not only the symbol of life, it was thought to be synonymous with life or at least to be its bearer. That is why, in the Old Testament sacrifices, the shedding of the blood of the victims occupied the all-important place in the material aspect of sacrifice. By imposing his hand on the victim the offerer symbolically made himself one with it. The victim's blood, its life stream, was poured on the altar, which represented God, to portray the flow of life between the worshipper and God. Blood-life was offered to God only to be returned to the offerer in the form of divine energy, divine life. Similarly Jesus' Blood establishes a blood relationship between God and man.

In a sense, the Blood itself is the essential mediator because its very symbolism and real effect is the intercommunication of life between God and man. Just as the blood in the body flows from one member to another and unites the body into one living organism, the blood ritual in sacrifice stands for the flow of life between God and man. Thus the Precious Blood is the link between divine mercy and human misery, and so heaven and earth jubilantly make up one assembly of praise to the Blood.

At the apex of the mosaic are seen a hand and a dove.

The "right hand" is a standard Biblical phrase for God's power and guidance, since the hand symbolizes activity. While God has shown His hand on many occasions when He intervened powerfully in men's affairs, never did He do so in so wondrous a way as when He gave His Son as a gift to mankind. In His plan to save man was the provision that His Son should appear in the form of man with flesh and blood, which must be sacrificed for the salvation of the world.

At Jesus' baptism the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove. Perhaps He appeared in this way because occasionally in the Old Testament the people of God, as Yahweh's bride, is called a dove. Thus the thought would be suggested that through the Holy Spirit the new people of God becomes the bride of the Savior. The Holy Spirit, given to man through the sacrifice of the Divine Blood

(Acts 2, 33-34; Jn 19, 34) joins Christians to Christ in a union comparable in intimacy to the love of husband and wife.

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The angels, suggested by the wings appearing along with the series of trumpets in the mosaic, are the privileged courtiers of the Blessed Trinity. They join the saints in heaven and Christians on earth in proclaiming the glory of the Blood. The trumpets, in turn, stress the festive character of the assembly, as they remind us both of the important role they played in the Old Testament liturgy and of their symbolism in summoning together all mankind for the last judgment.

Two Old Testament saints, Abraham and Melchisedec, chosen because the epistle to the Hebrews and Christian tradition generally associate them with the priesthood of Christ and His sacrifice, represent the "spirits of the just made perfect." To the left is Melchisedec. Jesus' eternal priesthood is said to be "according to the order of Melchisedec": "Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedec" (Heb 5, 6; 6, 20; 7, 17.20-25, quoting Ps 110). Hebrews also tells us how our Savior, in the days of His earthly life, offered Himself in reverent submission to His Father's plan that He redeem man through His Blood (Heb 5, 7-9). It was as the eternal priest that He offered and still offers His sacrifice of Blood.

When Melchisedec is first mentioned in the Old Testament, he is introduced abruptly; he seems to come from nowhere, then disappears from the scene just as mysteriously. This literary presentation of Melchisedec in Genesis 14, 19-20, which describes His meeting with Abraham, suggests to the author of Hebrews a foreshadowing of the heavenly eternal priesthood of Christ. Since Melchisedec is portrayed as "without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but likened to the Son of God, he continues a priest forever" (Heb 7, 3).

Like Melchisedec, a king-priest (Gn 14:18), Jesus is both king and priest. Moreover, the name Melchisedec in Hebrew can be popularly translated "king of justice." He was king of Salem, an ancient name for Jerusalem, which — again in popular translation — means "peace." This datum the author of Hebrews also exploits in showing the parallels between Melchisedec and Christ: "First, as his name shows, he is King of Justice, and then also he is King of Salem, that is, King of Peace" (Heb 7, 2).

Finally, the parallel reminds us of the Eucharistic sacrifice by which the sacrifice of Jesus' Blood is offered sacramentally here on earth. When Melchisedec met Abraham, he brought out bread and wine (Gn 14, 18), and the two chieftains sat down to eat and drink together in a spirit of friendly fellowship. The Roman liturgy has enshrined the Christian tradition which looks to this bread and wine as a foreshadowing of the Eucharistic sacrifice of bread and wine. In one of the prayers after the consecration the Church prays that our sacrifice may be acceptable as was that of Melchisedec.

"According to the order of Melchisedec, then signifies that Jesus is an *eternal* priest, a *royal* priest who brings mankind justice and peace, and the *Eucharistic* priest who offers His Body and Blood sacramentally under the appearance of bread and wine.

These thoughts all center around Jesus' Blood. As a priest He offers His sacrificial Blood: "When Christ appeared as high priest of the good things to come, he entered once for all" into heaven before the throne of God "by virtue of his own blood" (Heb 9, 11). Not only as God is Jesus king; He is king also in His humanity by title of redemption, i.e., because of the shedding of His Blood: "Appearing in the form of man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even to death on a cross. Therefore God also exalted him and has bestowed upon him the Name (Lord) that is above every name, so that at this name of Jesus every knee should bend of those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (Phil 2, 7-10).

Again, Jesus is a king of peace, for through His Blood He brings man peace, which in Hebrew thought includes all of God's blessings, especially salvation: "It has pleased God the Father that in Him all his fullness should dwell, and that through him he should reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in the heavens, making peace through the blood of his cross" (Col 1, 19-20).

Moreover, Jesus is a king of justice, i.e., in the Hebrew sense of that saving justice by which God makes man just or holy. For the grace of justification, which effects man's return to his Creator from whom he has been estranged by sin, comes through the Precious Blood: "They are justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth as a propitiation by his blood through faith, to manifest his saving justice" (Rom 3, 24-25).

Finally, Jesus is the priest of the Eucharistic rite which re-presents the sacrifice of Calvary by means of bread and wine. In the Mass the priest acts in Christ's place. The words he uses at the Consecration, "my body" "my blood" leave no room for doubt. It is the Body and Blood of Jesus that is offered, and is offered by Jesus Himself.

The image of Melchisedec intends to recall, therefore, the sublime truths of revelation concerning Christ's sacrifice of Blood and His priesthood. The cup which the priest-king of Jerusalem holds aloft casts the Eucharistic aspect of Jesus' priesthood into strong relief. But all the other ideas associated with Melchisedec's name are also in the picture. The eternal priesthood of Jesus with its ever-continuing action of offering His glorified Blood to the Father may be discerned in the image of Jesus rising to heaven to present His Body and Blood to the Father in an eternal sacrifice. The royal priesthood is conveyed by the triumphant posture of Jesus' body. The Blood which is dominant in the figure of the body reminds us that Christ's kingship has its title in His redemptive work. This redemption by Blood which issued in the supreme manifestation of God's saving justice and in peace for mankind may be observed in the total atmosphere of friendship and intimacy which the entire mosaic breathes.

To the right, Abraham is arrested in the sacrificing of his son Isaac. Genesis 21, 1-19 tells how the patriarch understood that God commanded him to immolate his long-awaited son and only lawful heir. Without hesitation Abraham prepares for the sacrifice. He would have gone to the limit and shed his son's blood, but he is stopped by divine intervention from completing the sacrifice. His generosity in totally submitting himself to God's will has now been sufficintly demonstrated. And this is what God wished of him: the total surrender of the patriarch's will, not the life of his boy. "Do not lay a hand on the boy; do nothing to him," a voice from heaven calls out; "I know now that you fear God, since you have not withheld your only son from me" (Gn 22, 12). A ram caught in a bush nearby is pointed out to Abraham, who offered it as a holocaust. The ashes to which the animal was reduced proclaim graphically the nothingness of the creature before the Creator, his total subjection to God. The sacrificial smoke, drifting upward, expresses the worshipper's desire to ascend in spirit before the throne of God.

Christian tradition has always been fascinated by Abraham's sacrifice and has associated it with the sacrifice of Christ. For some early writers, Isaac, carrying the wood for the sacrifice up the hill to which his father led him (Gn 22, 6), is a type of the Savior carrying the wood of the cross up the hill of Calvary whither His Father directed Him. But more often it is Abraham offering the sacrifice who is appealed to as throwing light on the priesthood of Jesus. The patriarch's action underscores the fact that what is placed on the altar does not make the sacrifice; Isaac bound upon the stones demonstrated rather the spirit which underlies the external act. His father was ready to give his will to God, and he proved this by his readiness to immolate Isaac, his dearest possession.

Total self-surrender is the heart of Jesus' priesthood. In coming into this world He proclaimed His willingness to fulfill the Father's will: "Behold I come . . . to do thy will, O God" (Heb 10, 7). A body was given Him which in His high priestly capacity He might offer sacrificially for sinful man. God wills for His priest a life devoted to the service of mankind. From the first, Jesus consented to fulfill His mission of atoning sacrifice. In all His words and deeds, in His every move He was secretly and quietly, yet confidently dedicated to the purpose for which His Father sent Him. In whatever He said or did, He showed Himself harmoniously attuned to the divine plan. So perfect was His obedience to this divine purpose that it would culminate in the pouring out of His Blood on Calvary. It was because of His "reverent submission," His "obedience" that His bloody immolation was accepted by God as "the cause of eternal salvation" "to all who obey him" (Heb 5, 7-10).

Abraham's sacrifice has further significance in that it was his grandest act of faith. While the narratives of Genesis 12, 1 - 25, 18 call attention again and again to the patriarch's faith inasmuch as he believed that God would fulfill almost incredible promises, the inspired author presents the sacrifice of Abraham as the climax of his faith, just as the epistle to the Hebrews does: "By faith Abraham, when he was put to the test, offered Isaac; and he who had received the promises (to whom it had been said, 'In Isaac thy seed shall be called') was about to offer up his only- begotten son, reasoning that God has power to raise up even from the dead" (Heb 11, 17-19). In the roll call of Israel's heroes of faith (Heb 11, 4-40)

Abraham occupies the highest place (Heb 11, 8-19). His name stands for faith; he is the man of faith.

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Even in this life faith unites Christians to God, since it assures the possession, incomplete and insecure as it may be, of heavenly realities. The invisible world of heaven is the object of Christian hope. Faith realizes this hope because it convinces the follower of Christ of the real existence of the invisible world. What is more, faith imparts a certain visibility to the invisible world: "Now faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that are not seen" (Heb 11, 1). On earth heavenly blessings are partially possessed. The epistle to the Hebrews sees a visible manifestation of the invisible world in the Blood of Christ painted in the grand tableau of Heb 12, 22-24 already explained.

Abraham, then, is pictured as an example of *faith* in the divine promises and of *total surrender* to God. As with Melchisedec, so here also, our line of thought must be focussed on the center of the mosaic and be pinpointed in the Blood of Jesus. The total self-surrender which accounts for the perfection of Abraham's sacrifice also explains the infinite excellence of Christ's sacrifice. Jesus' Blood is priceless because it graphically proves that He was willing to submit His will to His Father, to God's way of redeeming the world. This is the essence of His priesthood, the heart of His bloody sacrifice. Total self-surrender, total dedication to God's plan is nowhere more admirably manifested than in the shedding of blood, even unto death. By portraying the blood flowing freely the mosaic conveys this conviction.

Faith enables the Christian to live as a citizen of heaven even while here on earth, because he possesses partially those heavenly realities which are promised for his full and permanent enjoyment in heaven. The Christian's union with God and with heaven, which faith partially effects, is suggested in the mosaic by the Blood of Jesus flowing to the earth. This stream of life between heaven and earth can be entered by the Christian who through faith establishes contact with this stream of Blood.

Nevertheless, men of faith, while remaining here below, recognize that they are "pilgrims and strangers on earth" (Heb 11, 13), that they "seek after a better, that is, a heavenly country" (Heb 11, 16), since they are not yet in full and permanent possession of the realities of heaven. That is why the lower center of the mosaic

must direct our thoughts to earth. It shows Mt. Sinai and highlights the two tables of stone, which are said to be written by the finger of God because they express His will with regard to His people. From the radiant light on the top of the mountain the people heard God speaking to them. The ten commandments specified what God demanded of His people when He made the covenant with them through the mediation of Moses. They form also an integral part of the new covenant which Christ has entered into with all mankind. For Christians, too, Jesus promulgated them as the basic expression of the divine will. Like all covenants, the new covenant between God and man in the Precious Blood makes certain demands of the new people of God who are joined to Him in a bond of friendship. While the whole Christian message details these demands, Jesus Himself summed them up in the one commandment of the love of God and the love of neighbor (Lk 10, 25-27). Love of God is spelled out in the three commandments on the first stone table; love of neighbor, in the seven commandments on the second table. These tables, then, represent what is God's will for Christians and what their response to the Blood of Jesus must be.

That God's will is absolute, that His commandments must be obeyed, He suggested by giving Moses the decalog in an awe-inspiring theophany: "There were peals of thunder and lightning, and a heavy cloud over the mountain . . . Mount Sinai was all wrapped in smoke, for the Lord came down upon it in fire" (Ex 19, 16-18). As soon as the people saw the fire, symbol of the divine presence, and heard the accompanying storm, their hearts were struck with fear (Ex 20, 18-19). By means of the fire, then, associated with the two stone tables, the mosaic tries to recapture the theophany of Sinai in all its awesome character.

The sense of familiarity with God which the Precious Blood engenders and nurtures must not allow the Christian to lose that consciousness of reverential awe before the great God whose gift it is. Even after one has come to a partial possession of the gifts of the divine Blood through faith, it is still possible to trample under foot the blood of the Son of God (Heb 10, 29).

A threat, however, cannot be the Precious Blood's last word. Hence, the eyes are directed once more to the image of a compassionate, merciful Savior, whose body is drenched with Blood. "We are free to enter the Holies" (God's presence in heaven) by virtue

of the blood of Jesus . . . and since we have a high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in the fullness of faith, having our hearts cleansed from an evil conscience by sprinkling, and the body washed with clean water" (Heb 10, 19-22).

This clean water which washed us clean of sin is the water of baptism by which the Blood of Jesus was sprinkled on us. In the full assurance of faith we have free access to the heavenly sanctuary where our high priest exercises His ministry on our behalf, since He enjoys supreme authority over the house of God, the Church. Standing before the throne of God with the offering of His own Blood, He exhorts us to "put away every encumbrance and the sin entangling us, to run with perseverance the race that is set before us" (Heb 12, 1-2). In face of the effort and the suffering demanded of us, we need "not grow weary and lose heart," because unlike Jesus our forerunner we "have not yet resisted unto blood in the struggle with sin" (Heb 12, 4).

What Jesus' Blood means for us the epistle to the Hebrews summarizes when it calls our Savior the high priest of the "good things" (Heb 9, 11). The rich fullness of these "good things" which He grants is highlighted in the blessing that closes the letter: "Now may the God of peace, who brought forth from the dead the great pastor of the sheep, our Lord Jesus Christ, in virtue of THE BLOOD OF AN EVERLASTING COVENANT, fit you with every good thing to do his will; working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom is glory forever and ever" (Heb 13, 20-21).

This glory, which belongs to Jesus eternally, is best given at the Eucharistic table, where the faithful on earth may join Him and all the citizens of heaven in offering to the Father the Precious Blood: "Through him (Jesus), therefore, let us offer up a sacrifice of praise, always to God, that is, the fruit of lips, praising his name" (Heb 13, 15).

The text inscribed on the mosaic is Heb 12, 22-24. Hence the theology of this letter has been stressed.

It should be noted too that St. John knows the same heavenly liturgy in the Apocalypse. In vision he saw Christ offering Himself in sacrifice before the throne of the Father. John sees Jesus under the image of the Lamb slain, yet standing victoriously. The Lamb is the center of the heavenly liturgy and the earthly liturgy. In the

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The stream of water and blood from the heart of the Lamb is given special prominence in the mosaic. For John this stream flowing from the temple of Jesus' body is full of mystery (Jn 19, 34-37). In his gospel water is a symbol of Jesus' teaching, of baptism, of the Holy Spirit.

The water which flows from the pierced side of the Savior need not be restricted in meaning. Obviously John thinks most of all of the Holy Spirit, for previously he recorded the promise of Jesus that "rivers of living water" would flow from Him (Jn 7, 37). John adds: "He said this, however, of the Holy Spirit whom they who believed in Him were to receive" (Jn 7, 38).

But John's symbols are open. They signify many truths at the same time. The water recalls at once all that water signified for the apostle — the Holy Spirit, Baptism, the wisdom of Jesus. The Blood of Jesus is, therefore, the source of the Holy Spirit given in baptism. Through His Precious Blood we know the teaching of Jesus, more especially the mystery of love, the heart of redemption. There is the Father's love: For God so loved the world that he gave His only-begotten Son (Jn 3, 16) and the Son's love: "Greater love than this no man has, that one lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15, 13). John assigns the Lamb the right to open the scroll, reveal the secrets of God, precisely because He was slain "and redeemed us for God with His blood" (Ap 5, 9).

Through the sacramental worship the Blood of Jesus offered in sacrifice causes the gifts of His blood to flow into the hearts of the faithful gathered around the altar.

The mosaic is especially appropriate for the seminary, for here new apostles of the Precious Blood are being formed. St. John calls the apostles the "apostles of the Lamb" (Ap 21, 14). This is to say equivalently that they are heralds of the Precious Blood.

St. John collects all his thinking on the Blood of Jesus around the image of the Lamb. In a vision of heaven he says he saw "a lamb standing, as if slain" (Ap 5, 5). The Lamb is standing. The standing position signifies the triumph of Jesus. The lamb is as slain. This refers to Jesus pouring out His blood in sacrifice. Because Jesus has been slain, has shed His blood in sacrifice, He is triumphant.

But the Precious Blood is the source of the triumph of all the redeemed. St. John presents the saints in heaven as proclaiming their triumph through the Blood of the Lamb when he puts this song on their lips: "For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us for God with thy Blood" (Ap 5:9). The Blood of the Lamb is named as the cause of triumph for the saints because the Blood of the Lamb is constantly at work in the Christian life as it "cleanses us from all sin" (1 Jn 1, 7).

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## THE PRECIOUS BLOOD AND POPE JOHN XXIII

An article in the Proceedings of the Second Precious Blood Study Week of 1960 (pp. 3-9) summarizes the efforts of the magisterium with regard to devotion to the Precious Blood. (See also "Precious Blood, III, Devotion to" in the New Catholic Encyclopedia, reprinted in this appendix.)

Special emphasis is placed on the work of Pope John XXIII. His apostolic letter *Inde a Primis* of June 30, 1960 is printed in full in the *Proceedings* indicated above (pp. xx-xxvi). His approval that the invocation "Blessed be His Most Precious Blood" be inserted in the Divine Praises and that the Litany of the Precious Blood be approved for public and private recitation are remembered in particular. The enthusiastic support which this pontiff gave to the devotion to the Precious Blood is further reported in the account of the audience he had with the General Curia in Rome on July 4, 1960 (see *Gasparian* 23 (1960) pp. 39-41). His reference to *our* cult and *our* Congregation is remembered with affection. He said:

I recite it every day (viz. the Litany of the Precious Blood). The devotion to the Most Precious Blood is always the most important. It must be considered among the primary devotions of the Church. In fact there are three principal devotions: The Holy Name of Jesus, The Sacred Heart and the Most Precious Blood; but both the Holy Name and the Sacred Heart have value only through the Precious Blood.

Now it is up to you to diffuse the devotion of the Precious Blood.

I am at your disposal to assist you as much as possible to propagate OUR cult and to help OUR Congregation.

Now it is up to you to do a good job to increase the devotion to the Precious Blood. (Bene! e allora fatevi onore nel far sempre aumentare la devozione al Preziosissimo Sangue.)

He continued throughout his pontificate to highlight devotion to the Precious Blood. On June 30, 1961 he gave a discourse at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls [see *Gasparian* 24 (1961) p. 87]. Among other things, he said:

The praise which St. John Chrysostom has for the Letters of St. Paul could carry us away. The studies that have already been published about the Holy Name of Jesus, His Heart and His Blood fill our minds with such light and our hearts with such savor that we get a veritable distaste for all other literature. These studies should awaken again in the children of our day the desire which has always sparked the true formation of young people called to accept the responsibilities of a future apostolate.

The following words of Pope John on the Precious Blood were spoken on the occasion of the Roman stational observance for the Third Sunday of Lent (March 25, 1962). As the Holy Father indicates at the beginning of his address, the stational procession for that day was to have begun at the Church of the Precious Blood at the Generalate of the Sisters Adorers in Rome and concluded at the Church of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament and the Canadian Martyrs. The procession was cancelled because of inclement weather, and the observance was held at the latter church. The speech was published in *L'Osservatore Romano* on the following day.

This afternoon we had planned to begin this Lenten procession at the church dedicated to the Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, the weather has made this procession of clergy and faithful impossible. In spite of that, our first words at this gathering will be about the Precious Blood. In Christian thought and teaching, this is the source of infinite value from which the grace of Christ continues to flow ever more abundantly.

Every one knows that one of the devotions promoted by the present Pope from the very beginning of his pontificate has been the devotion to the Precious Blood of our Savior. He has urged the faithful to do the same and make this de-

votion the object of their special concern. The devotion already existed, but it was necessary to give it new emphasis so that the basis of the devotion might be understood as well as its intimate relation with the other truths of the faith. At the same time, and for the same reasons, the devotions to the Holy Name and the Sacred Heart of Jesus were also stressed.

We admire and glorify Jesus. We call upon Him and sing the praises of His Holy Name. It is our wish to love Him ever more, placing our heart next to His which beats with infinite love for us. It follows then that we also pay tribute to that which flows directly from this divine heart and from the sacrifice and goodness of which this heart is the center, namely, the Blood which He shed for the welfare of the world and which continues to be given for the salvation of souls.

You can see then what a joy it would have been for the Holy Father to visit a church specially dedicated to the Precious Blood of our Savior, a church where consecrated souls dedicate themselves to spreading the knowledge of this important devotion. The Bishop of Rome has not forgotten them. And so with holy joy he begins his talk today by recalling that the devotion to the Precious Blood ought to have a place of primary importance in the spiritual life, for the Precious Blood constitutes the very substance of Christian thought and action. The better we are able to render due homage to this priceless treasure given to us by the Savior, the more we deserve to have been chosen by Him, the more we deserve the mercy and goodness of God's Son.

On June 2, 1962, John said:

"Today's joyous-sounding audience renews in our heart sentiments of soul-stirring pleasure. It is always a source of great consolation for Us to receive pilgrims and visitors from every part of the world; and the sound of your applause is a sign that this is mutual. To all of you we extend a hearty welcome.

"Two pilgrimages offer Us the opportunity of speaking words of encouragement which are also meant as a fatherly instruction for all the others who are here present.

"First of all, we turn our attention to the pilgrimage of the family which takes its name from the Most Precious Blood of Jesus, namely, the Missionaries, the Sisters Adorers, as well as the members of the Pious Union of the Most Precious Blood. It is good that this audience, to which we have all looked forward, is taking place in the Vatican Basilica in the presence of numerous groups of the

faithful. Thus we have the opportunity of proclaiming far and wide the profound meaning of the devotion to the Most Precious Blood, as we have been doing since the beginning of our pontificate. On another very solemn occasion, the close of the First Roman Diocesan Synod, January 31, 1960, it seemed to Us such a natural thing to mention in the same breath the three devotions, namely, to the Name, the Heart, and the Blood of Jesus, in order to call attention to and encourage the forms of devotion which we owe to our divine Redeemer.

"Your title, beloved sons of the Society of the Most Precious Blood, distinguishes you from other institutions. However, every Christian is your brother, because he belongs to the heritage of Christ who redeemed all in His Blood (Ap 5, 9). In the loving message which you sent to Us you called attention to those three documents of Ours which dealt with the Most Precious Blood, namely, the promulgation of the Litany on February 24, 1960, the Apostolic Letter *Inde A Primis* of June 30, 1960, and the insertion on October 12, 1960 of the ejaculatory prayer *Blessed be His Most Precious Blood* into the Divine Praises recited after Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament. By means of these documents it seems to Us that We not only gave evidence to the faithful of Our own personal devotion, but We really wanted to give that impetus, which, as the Bishop of the Universal Church, We feel we should give, to religious piety of this kind.

"Today We are happy to come back to this same theme. It is well known that the Church has a great respect for individual and group expressions of popular devotions, provided they flow from the springs of the Liturgy and of the Sacred Scriptures, and bear the approval of the hierarchy as well as of the qualified and recognized experts on dogmatic doctrine. It is clear, however, that an affectionate recognition of the various devotions cannot go to the extreme of risking a dilution of religious worship, excesses and discrepancies such as sometimes give bishops just cause for complaint.

"On the eve of the council, We would like to suggest to Our sons to make the content and form of (their) prayer more universal, and to hold in check such emotional demonstrations as can be the source of some of the above-mentioned failings. One should

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not give the impression that the aggrandizement of one's country, or diocese, or of one's own religious family is the ultimate goal of any private devotion. Always, in everything, and by all, there should be manifested above all the idea of the catholicity and universality of the faith as well as of worship. If he holds fast to the teaching of the catechism which has prepared him to become an adult in the Church, if he lives in the light of Catholic teaching, if he clings to the norms of liturgical piety, that poem of sublime inspiration and perfect education; and if he adheres to the documents which are circulated by the Church, then the good Christian will never go wrong in this matter. Before his mind's eye, suffused with a mysterious light, there will ever be present that twofold truth of faith which Jesus Christ set before the world, namely, that the Triune God encompasses us completely with His power and His love, and that the Son of God became man in order to bring men back to their dignity as adopted sons of God. It is from here that the devotions to the Name, the Heart, and the Blood of Christ spring as from their primary source. It is always He who occupies the spotlight, as He does in the apses of the basilicas. He, known and loved, became man that we might be able to know and love Him. His name sums up the mystery of His birth and of His death; His Heart proclaims the twofold commandment of love of God and love of neighbor; His Blood is the crowning point of His redeeming sacrifice which is mystically renewed in the Holy Mass and gives the meaning and direction to the life of the Christian.

"This the whole message then, namely, to diffuse the light of the infinite love of the Savior, which is proclaimed by the Name, symbolized by the Heart, and rendered eloquent by the Blood. These are not complicated or difficult ideas, nor are they extraneous adjuncts which clutter the beautiful symmetry of the whole picture. In this picture everything occupies its proper place, including the devotion to our Lady. The Mother of Jesus and our mother takes her place in this tableau just as the prophets and apostles, martyrs and doctors, confessors and virgins have their places. This sound and beautiful doctrine leads the Christian to participate ever more perfectly in the divine mysteries of the altar, and to conform to it his personal conduct and his apostolate of personal testimony and of social duties. This is the aim of the devotion to the Most

Precious Blood; this is the way to an ever more intelligent Christian piety.

"This, beloved sons and daughters, is the meaning of your existence in the Church; this is the character which your service in the bosom of the Church must assume: to spread the devotion to the Most Precious Blood in the light of this teaching. Our prayer will follow you on your chosen way of generous, humble and hidden service, and will encourage you to continue with all fervor." [This discourse is reported in *The Gasparian* 25 (1962) pp. 50-51.]

#### PREVIOUS PONTIFFS AND THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

It was not Pope John alone who promoted the devotion to the Precious Blood. His immediate predecessor in the Apostolic See, Pius XII, the great theologian, wrote to Very Reverend Herbert Kramer, C.PP.S., then Moderator General of the Society of the Precious Blood, on the occasion of the centenary of the Pious Union of the Precious Blood (May 10, 1949):

"We trust that the centennial celebration will have as its principal aim to bring men, too often forgetful of the favors that our Savior showered upon us in pouring out His life and His Blood, to meditate with a loving heart upon His boundless charity, and to make an appropriate application thereof to themselves. Let everyone reflect that this Price of our Redemption was offered to the Eternal Father that we might be freed from the captivity of the devil and be reinstated as adopted children of God. Whence, everyone, after repenting his failings, should strive, in so far as he can, to repair the injuries inflicted upon our Redeemer, and to embrace Him with the most ardent love, which a renewed Christian life will testify. Since Christ in the shedding of His Blood has consecrated human suffering, let all learn from Him how to bear with patience and with supernatural motives the adversity and suffering that is their lot, mindful of the divine injunction: "He who does not take up his cross and follow me, is not worthy of me" (Mt 10, 38). Just as our Savior through His most bitter sufferings wished to allay and to soothe our sorrow, so through His example all should learn to alleviate the difficulties and the suffering of others, and to offer them comfort and relief according to their means.

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"This, in a measure, is the lesson of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, shed not only from His bodily wounds, but also offered daily for us all in the Eucharistic Sacrifice as a satisfactory oblation. You, therefore, especially, whose Society takes its name from this devotion, should reflect upon these things with a serious and loving heart; and as often as the opportunity presents itself, propose them to others for consideration. Then, without doubt, the coming centennial will be productive of wholesome fruits."

In his encyclical letters Pius XII referred frequently to the theme of the Blood of Jesus. In *Mystici Corporis* (1943) he wrote:

"Just as at the first moment of the incarnation the Son of the Eternal Father adorned with the fullness of the Holy Spirit the human nature which was substantially united to Him, that it might be a fitting instrument of the divinity in the sanguinary work of redemption, so at the hour of His precious death He willed that His Church should be enriched with the abundant gifts of the Paraclete in order that dispensing the divine fruits of the redemption she might be, for the Incarnate Word, a powerful instrument that would never fail. For both the juridical mission of the Church, and the power to teach, govern and administer the sacraments, derive their supernatural efficacy and force for the building up of the Body of Christ from the fact that Jesus Christ, hanging on the Cross, opened up to His Church the fountain of those divine gifts, which prevent her from ever teaching false doctrine and enable her to rule them for the salvation of their souls through divinely enlightened pastors and to bestow on them an abundance of heavenly graces" (n. 31).

In referring to the birth of the Church, Pius XII wrote:

That Jesus "completed His work on the gibbet of the Cross is the unanimous teaching of the holy Fathers who assert that the Church was born from the side of our Savior on the Cross like a new Eve, mother of all the living. 'And it is now,' says the great St. Ambrose, speaking of the pierced side of Christ, 'that it is built, it is now that it is formed, it is now that it is . . . moulded, it is now that it is created . . . Now it is that arises a spiritual house, a holy priesthood. . . . But if our Savior, by His death, became, in the full and complete sense of the word the Head of the Church, it was

likewise through his blood that the Church was enriched with the fullest communication of the Holy Spirit, through whom, from the time the Son of Man was lifted up and glorified on the Cross by His sufferings, she is divinely illuminated" (nn. 28-31).

Later in his letter, he adds: "Moreover, Christ proved His love for His spotless bride not only at the cost of immense labour and constant prayer, but by His sorrows and His sufferings which He willingly and lovingly endured for her sake. 'Having loved his own . . . he loved them unto the end.' Indeed it was only at the *price of His Blood* that He purchased the Church. Let us then follow gladly in the blood-stained footsteps of our King, for this is necessary to ensure our salvation." (n. 106).

Pius finally concludes with the role of Mary in the work of our redemption: "Within her virginal womb Christ already bore the exalted title of Head of the Church; in a marvelous birth she brought Him forth as the source of all supernatural life, and presented Him, newly born, as Prophet, King, and Priest to those who from the Jews and Gentiles were first to come and adore Him. Furthermore, her only Son, condescending to His mother's praver in and of Galilee, performed the miracle by which His disciples believed in Him. It was she, the second Eve, who free from all sin, original or personal, and always most intimately united with her Son, offered Him on Golgatha to the eternal Father for all the children of Adam, sin-stained by his unhappy fall, and her mother's rights and mother's love were included in the holocaust. Thus, she who, according to the flesh, was the mother of our Head, through the added title of pain and glory became, according to the Spirit, the mother of all His members. She it was who, through her powerful prayers, obtained that the Spirit of our divine Redeemer, already given on the Cross, should be bestowed, accompanied by miraculous gifts, on the newly founded Church at Pentecost; and finally, bearing with courage and confidence the tremendous burdens of her sorrow and desolation, she, truly the Queen of Martyrs, more than all the faithful 'filled up those things which are wanting of the sufferings of Christ . . . for his Body, which is the Church'; and she continues to have for the Mystical Body of Christ, born of the pierced Heart of the Savior, the same motherly care and ardent love with which she cherished and fed the infant Jesus in the crib." (n. 110).

#### Appendix

In his letter *Mediator Dei* of 1947 Pius XII has these things to say about the Precious Blood:

"It is easy, therefore, to understand why the holy Council of Trent lays down that by means of the Eucharistic sacrifice the saving virtue of the cross is imparted to us for the remission of the sins we daily commit.

"Now the Apostle of the Gentiles proclaims the copious plenitude and the perfection of the sacrifice of the cross, when he says that Christ by one oblation has perfected forever them that are sanctified. For the merits of this sacrifice, since they are altogether boundless and immeasurable, know no limits; for they are meant for all men of every time and place. This follows from the fact that in this sacrifice the God-man is the priest and victim; that His immolation was entirely perfect, as was His obedience to the will of His eternal Father; and also that He suffered death as the head of the human race: "See how we were bought: Christ hangs upon the cross, see at what a price He makes His purchase. . . . He sheds His blood, He buys with His Blood, He buys with the Blood of the Spotless Lamb, He buys with the Blood of God's only Son. He who buys is Christ; the price is His Blood; the possession bought is the world."

"This purchase, however, does not immediately have its full effect; since Christ, after redeeming the world at the lavish cost of His own Blood, still must come into complete possession of the souls of men. Wherefore, that the redemption and salvation of each person and of future generations unto the end of time may be effectively accomplished, and be acceptable to God, it is necessary that men should individually come into vital contact with the sacrifice of the cross, so that the merits, which flow from it, should be imparted to them. In a certain sense it can be said that on Calvary Christ built a font of purification and salvation which He filled with the Blood He shed; but if men do not bathe in it and there wash away the stains of their iniquities, they can never be purified and saved.

"The cooperation of the faithful is required so that sinners may be individually purified in the Blood of the Lamb. For though, speaking generally, Christ reconciled by His painful death the whole human race with the Father, He wished that all should approach and be drawn to His cross, especially by means of the sacraments

and the Eucharistic sacrifice, to obtain the salutary fruits produced by Him upon it. Through this active and individual participation, the members of the Mystical Body not only become daily more like to their divine Head, but the life flowing from the Head is imparted to the members, so that we can each repeat the words of St. Paul, "With Christ I am nailed to the cross: I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me." We have already explained sufficiently and of set purpose on another occasion, that Jesus Christ "when dying on the cross, bestowed upon His Church, as a completely gratuitous gift, the immense treasure of the redemption. But when it is a question of distributing this treasure, He not only commits the work of sanctification to His Immaculate Spouse, but also wishes that, to a certain extent, sanctity should derive from her activity." (nn. 76-78).

In his letter Haurietis Aquas of 1956 (promoting devotion to the Sacred Heart) Pius wrote:

"The mystery of the divine redemption is first and foremost a mystery of love, that is, of the true love of Christ for His heavenly Father, to whom the sacrifice offered on the Cross in loving obedience renders most abundant and infinite satisfaction for the sins of mankind. By suffering out of love and obedience, Christ gave more to God than was required to compensate for the offense of the whole human race. It is, moreover, a mystery of the merciful love of the august Trinity and the divine Redeemer for all mankind. Since men could in no way expiate their sins, Christ through the incalculable riches of His merits which he acquired for us by shedding His Precious Blood, was able to restore and perfect the bond of friendship between God and men severed first in paradise by the pitiful fall of Adam, and later by the countless sins of the chosen people (n. 44).

"Even before He ate the last supper with His disciples, when He knew that He was going to institute the sacrament of his Body and Blood by the shedding of which the new covenant was to be consecrated, He felt His heart stirred by strong emotions, which He made known to the apostles in these words: 'I have greatly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.' These same emotions were even stronger, without doubt, when 'having taken bread, he gave thanks and broke it and gave it to them saying: This is my Body which is being given to you; do this in remembrance

of me. In like manner, he took also the cup after the supper, saying: 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which shall be shed for you' (n. 82).

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"Therefore, from the wounded Heart of our Redeemer, the Church, the dispenser of the Blood of the Redeemer, was born. From this wounded Heart, the grace of the sacraments, from which the children of the Church draw supernatural life, flowed most profusely, as we read in the sacred liturgy: 'From the pierced Heart, the Church, joined to Christ, is born . . . who pourest forth grace from thy Heart.' By reason of this symbol, which was not, indeed, unknown even to the ancient Fathers of the Church and ecclesiastical writers, the common doctor, as if reechoing these same sentiments writes: 'Water flowed from Christ's side to wash us; blood to redeem us. Wherefore blood belongs to the sacrament of the Eucharist, while water belongs to the sacrament of Baptism. Yet this latter sacrament derives its cleansing virtue from the power of Christ's Blood.'" (n. 90).

Pius IX, in extending the feast of the Precious Blood to the universal Church, wrote:

"We have been redeemed by the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who cleanses us from all stain. Therefore blessed are those who wash their garments in it. For if the houses in Egypt were made safe by the mere sprinkling with the blood of a lamb, how much more can those who venerate and worship with special devotion and service the Blood of our Savior flee this wrath and be filled with graces and mercies.

In a letter (July 20, 1915) to the Moderator General of the Society of the Precious Blood, Benedict XV wrote:

"You profess to have as your special purpose the furtherance of the devotion of the Precious Blood. That means you have a purpose which can never be surpassed in its usefulness, especially at the present time. What is the main reason why the world is afflicted today with so many miseries and calamities? It is because men have forgotten Jesus Christ by Whom they were bought with a great price and given the freedom of children of God; they have turned their thoughts to the things of earth, and thus have called down upon themselves the punishments of the Father. The minds of men must be redirected to a love and imitation of the Crucified

One, if there is any real desire to placate heaven's wrath. There can be no firm and lasting tranquility in human affairs except through Him in Whom the Father reconciled to Himself all things, whether on the earth or in the heavens, making peace through the blood of His cross. Indeed, Jesus hanging from the cross communicates all the norms which should guide man's life, by means of the shedding of His Blood which He uses as His voice! His principal message is this: man's salvation was regained by means of His love accompanied by suffering. How then can they have a share in this salvation who do not follow the Christ of love and of suffering. We see that the twofold aberration of our age is this: people are guided not by the norms of Christian charity but by immoderate self-love, and they are extremely unwilling to suffer any pain because of an absorbing craving for pleasures. Therefore, do your best to fulfill your purpose to spread diligently devotion of the Divine Blood; thus you will be ever working hard for the welfare of souls and of human society."

ANDREW POLLACK, C.PP.S.

## THE PRECIOUS BLOOD IN POETRY

There is no doubt that theology develops. And there is no doubt that the expression of theological truth changes. Yet, no matter what the development and change of expression, a core doctrine remains. Such a fundamental doctrine is the saving power of the Blood of Christ. Though this truth has been recognized from the earliest times of the Church, new insights have constantly enriched the doctrine. Some of these reflections, arising from deep theological study, are profound. Others, the result of devotion and meditation are personal and popular. All contribute in some way to Precious Blood theology.

No matter how advanced the theology of the Precious Blood is today, no one should abandon the efforts of the past. They may seem antiquated and unoriginal, yet they reflect a living devotion to the Precious Blood. One of the forms of expression which men of the past have taken is poetry. In this article recognition is given to those who have contributed poetry to the *Precious Blood Messenger* (1895 - 1967) and to the *Nuntius Aulae* (1918 - 1966). The language and style of these poems may seem strange to men of today. No apology need be given, for the core doctrine remains sound and their testimony inspires admiration.

Due recognition will not be achieved by a mere reprinting of the poems. Nor is it possible to quote every poet. The complete bibliography may be found in the archives at St. Charles Seminary. Hence representative ideas have been gathered together under certain topics. The topic headings do not follow any logical develop-

ment, but are rather a listing of the many and diverse ways in which the value of the Precious Blood was perceived by those poets. Unavoidably, some of the topics overlap and some of the poetry could well be placed in several categories. Nevertheless, the overall effect will be readily apparent.

#### REDEMPTIVE PRICE

Much of the poetry deals with the role of the Precious Blood in man's redemption. Sin has made man an enemy of God, which for man is a bond of slavery. The ransom price is the very Blood of the God-man, Jesus Christ, poured out on the Cross.

The Father of bliss accepts His bleeding The stains of Blood lave guilt away And death in His death defeat its heeding, His Blood the ransom God must pay.<sup>1</sup>

Living Chalice of the Precious Blood Ransom of the tainted race<sup>2</sup> We love to contemplate that gracious price that freed our souls from sin and death.<sup>3</sup> The Precious Blood . . . poured out upon the cross to make repair for man's great loss

And all our sins efface<sup>4</sup> Love of him who gladly buys With His Blood salvation thine, With His Blood upon the cross.<sup>5</sup>

It is a cleansing, purifying Blood which Christ poured out. As water washes out dirt, the Blood of Christ washes away sin.

Purple brooks, the joy of Paradise, Descend to heal our sin-begotten woe, Preparing us for bliss, undreamed of man, Our scarlet garments washing white as snow.<sup>6</sup>

Saints of the snow-capped peaks of the North . . . Why wear you robes of infinite worth? List to the angels stirring refrain: Washed in the blood of the Lamb.<sup>7</sup>

To lave the soul God made this precious sea of Blood that trickled from the Savior's veins; And they who wash their robes in it are free.<sup>8</sup>

By its power the Spirit washes me from sin, Bestowing on me grace.<sup>9</sup>

Blood brings forth the strong-song Hurrah, Christ Jesus! hung high like the world's wash the price of man's dry cleaning Are you washed in the Blood of God's good Lamb shook out, strung up, shouting Glory Hallelujah!<sup>10</sup>

The power of the Blood to ransom and to cleanse makes it precious. Its great value derives from the fact that it is the Blood of the God-man, Jesus Christ. The blood-shedding manifests the love and obedience of Jesus, qualities which make the Blood pleasing to the Father.

A thousand worlds cannot compare in value to the smallest part of streamlets pure . . . Each drop is infinite in love.<sup>11</sup>

Upon the Crucifix I plainly see The love that caused his Blood to shed for me.<sup>12</sup>

Oh, Precious Blood, with water sent, To show that every drop was spent<sup>13</sup>

Above all things red is that rich warm Blood Through which we are reborn and live again: For God gave us His Blood in one great flood, From veins that throbbed so eagerly to drain That last and final drop He gave for me Too great that Price — it is Infinity.<sup>14</sup>

One poet sings of the precious heavens, the precious Eden, the precious temple, the precious blood of the martyrs, and concludes:

Precious all these, but a thousand times more yet Precious the Blood of the Sacrificed Lamb: Through it redeemed were we mortals and sinners never by gold or the blood of a ram.<sup>15</sup>

#### LIVING WATER

Other poets use the image of living water, borrowed from prophetic literature. Christ has come as Messiah to distribute blessings. For the prophets, living water flowing from the Temple in Jerusalem symbolized the outpouring of divine blessings. The Blood of Christ can be seen as the source of these gifts, the realization of the prophetic hope for that never-ending font of God's goodness.

Through five deep wounds the living waters flow .... to bring goodness back, to heal its woe. .... and they that drink therefrom shall thirst no more.<sup>16</sup>

Hail, O Stream, by prophet seen, Exultingly foretold . . . The desert like the lily blooms Where thy red waters flowed.<sup>17</sup>

(from the Cross) ... springs forth a river that shall never dry ...<sup>18</sup>
A crimson stream flows fast to save a race ...
Man's final blow, — they pierce that Sacred Heart and lo! a ruby stream. Love's font overflows.<sup>19</sup>

More specifically, water is an Old Testament symbol for wisdom. As the sages of Israel insist, true wisdom consists in knowing and serving the living God. The fulfillment of man's desire for true wisdom is God's own Word-made-flesh. Hence the bloodshedding of Christ is easily associated with new Wisdom.

It (the Cross) is signed by the Blood of the Savior shed for men.

And stands as the mark of our gain or loss;

The knowledge it bore is turned to wisdom's ken;

For the Tree we love is the Christian Cross.<sup>20</sup>

Behold the Savior lifted up As Precious Blood flows free What truths sublime were spoken that day In bitter mockery.<sup>21</sup>

#### UNIVERSAL EFFICACY

An aspect of Precious Blood meditation, closely related to its redemptive quality, is its universal efficacy. In the old dispensation, blood rites formed part of a penitential liturgy. Yet the blood of animals poured out had no value in itself. The rites could only dispose a man to receive the gift of union. The Blood of Christ, on the contrary, has an efficacious power within it; it can cleanse and

purify of itself. Moreover, this efficacy does not apply to a particular assembly or a particular nation, but extends to the whole universe. Men in every place and in every age are brought to peace through the Blood of the Lamb.

No ocean is thy limit and no zone, No city, though its walls of heavy stone Can bar thee — and thy glorious domain to heaven reaches and to earth again.<sup>22</sup>

His Blood is everywhere . . . Lo! upon the world it overflows.<sup>23</sup>

All over the earth there pours The sunshine in a golden flood, So over hearts in showers of grace There falls the saving Precious Blood.<sup>24</sup>

But lo! His Blood, by faithful hands Is borne away to many lands, His love and mercy to proclaim.<sup>25</sup>

Red is no color, for the might of God Has tinged the world with His own Precious Blood.<sup>26</sup>

Abel Sanguis super terram Ultionem Dei merum Fusus clamat omnibus . . . . Christi, autem, pretiosus Fusus gratis, fructuosus Sanguis dat miseriam.<sup>27</sup>

#### DRINKING THE BLOOD

In fulfilling the promise of living water, the Blood of Christ brings life and vitality to hearts parched with sin and death. Man's condition of sin is akin to a thirsty desert, which longs for the fruitful rain. The Blood of Christ, poured out on the cross, fructifies the soul. It is not surprising that the poets look on the crucified Christ as the chalice from which comes the drink of eternal life. That drink is of such incomparable worth that nothing should be spared in procuring it.

As cloudbursts break on land, engulfing all, So from the Cross it flowed a quenching thrall.<sup>28</sup>

The wine of God divinely let.29

O tasty Blood, delicious Wine! what love Has prompted you to go this further length? . . . give life, give love, yea, sell your very soul To buy that drink . . . Alone it can console.<sup>30</sup>

Oh, how different the stream of our Savior's Blood, That once formed at the feet of the Crucified's rood! For much sweeter than nectar or wine from the Rhine Are the drops of the Blood that resplendently shone . . .<sup>3</sup>

Purple are the streams, of love they speak To those who walk their lily-mantled shore, O happy are the souls who see the waves And they that drink therefrom shall thirst no more.<sup>32</sup>

Ah Christ, the sight of that red Blood is blinding So precious is its sight, so freely it flows, That in its depths I flounder, and am wholly drunk. To taste such precious sweetness To tremble with similar love, I cannot.<sup>33</sup>

Pagina scripta libelli et ultima, Vitae itinere facto ad termina Prope ad finem perducta hac fabula Pugna in terris instante novissima Nos, Jesu Domini Sanguis, inebria.<sup>34</sup>

The poets see an intimate connection between the Blood of the cross and the Eucharistic Blood. The same wonderful redeeming power of the Blood continues to be available to men. The divine Wine manifests the never-ending love of God, a love which gives life itself.

The wine becomes your Blood; Your Blood, my Food My life is changed to yours.<sup>35</sup>

Forget we that The Blood need be spilled, Ere precious chalice Could be filled.<sup>36</sup>

Come, let us adore the Saviour of mankind! He who on the Tree His Precious Blood has shed, Now on His altar throne forever do we find.<sup>37</sup>

The clust'ring grapes that yield when crushed The sparkling crimson flood — O Christ! to think they may become Thine own redeeming Blood.<sup>38</sup>

Eyes flash, heart gleams, A soul shines with white integrity, As if it had drunk fire.<sup>39</sup>

Blood of God of love . . . And his cup Will fill me up, Will fill me up with love, and love's red wine.<sup>40</sup>

In the glorious chalice that's lifted on high By the priest, for the dead and for those who will die, O a thousand times blessed, salubrious spring Of perpetual happiness, Blood of our King.<sup>41</sup>

#### MAN'S RESPONSE

If man is to benefit from the super-abundant bloodshedding of Christ, he must respond. He must let himself be washed in its blood; he must drink deeply of the divine Wine; he must carry the gospel of blood to the corners of the world. The task falls upon each man, for each man is personally a recipient of the Blood's saving power.

He has shed in rich profusion All His Precious Blood for me.<sup>42</sup>

This heart was pierced for thee.43

Our thoughts should turn with that Heart Which for us all its lifeblood shed.<sup>44</sup>

The first response the Blood must call forth is praise and worship. Pitifully sinful man, realizing his own unworthiness to receive such a gift of love, can only stammer its praise.

With heart and soul I worship thee, With all my love I thee adore.<sup>45</sup>

Kneel adoring beneath the Cross Behold the ever bleeding Heart and pray.<sup>46</sup>

Good Christ, give me the gift of a thousand tongues With which to glorify your Blood.<sup>47</sup>

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While we worship the Blood which Christ . . . Sheds forth from many wounds, We, recalling this, ought at least to shed our tears.<sup>48</sup>

Ransomed saints . . . pilgrims . . . martyrs . . . Let us join your songs of gladness Let us hail redemption's flood Christians cleansed from sin and sadness Praise, O Praise the Precious Blood.<sup>49</sup>

So that sin will not prevent him from God's friendship, the poet calls for the Precious Blood to cleanse him.

O Jesus, truly do I yearn That now your Blood might flow on me,

That I, corrupt and all, might be Forever cleansed; that I might learn No more to burden you with sin.<sup>50</sup>

Mercy is sought through the offering of the Blood:

(His Blood) I offer thee, my God, with trusting heart That in Thy mercy I may hold a part.<sup>51</sup>

Fidelity to the Blood of Christ brings the Christian joy.

Fountain of perpetual happiness Daily gushing for us forth.<sup>52</sup>

Blood brings forth the strong-song Hurrah, Christ Jesus!<sup>53</sup>

Finally, that Blood becomes the pledge of everlasting life.

Pledge of happy life eternal, Solace me when death is near.<sup>54</sup>

In Thee alone my heart finds rest Blood-sprinkled Spouse, what need I more?<sup>55</sup>

Let us ever cling to his loving embrace, Ask his pity and help in all desolation . . . To obtain the great favor His pathway to trace Through the Precious Blood, our Eternal salvation.<sup>56</sup>

#### SUFFERING

Many of the poets hope to evoke a response by a graphic portrayal of the sufferings of Jesus. Forsaken, a subject of scorn and derision, He suffers mental anguish. Bitter physical pain siezes his whole body as he is scourged, crowned with thorns and nailed to the cross. Three long hours of pain and agony on the cross are borne with heroic love.

Alone, He trod the Wine Press.57

Amidst the solitude of dark Gethsemane For sinners prayed in heart-felt Agony.<sup>58</sup>

On Mount Cal'vry forsaken and dying Hung the bleeding Redeemer of might.<sup>59</sup>

At Gethsemane the bloody sweat pouring from Christ's veins shows the depths of Christ's mental anguish.

He kneels, and lo, what ruby beads Fall from His sacred Head. Bold pours the sweat, a ruddy stream, Flushed like the crimson rose. The Blood of Jesus, drawn by love For sinners, gently flows.<sup>60</sup>

The scourges tore into His flesh, making the Blood pour out.

Hail! pleading Blood that oozed from out each pore, Whilst cruel scourge His virgin body tore.<sup>61</sup>

How many lashes the naked Jesus endures in the praetorium! How many drops of Blood from His wounds The torn skin everywhere lets Blood ooze forth.<sup>62</sup>

Hail! priceless Blood that stained His palled face, Each thorn producing points of healing grace!<sup>63</sup>

The beautiful forehead — O cause for grief! — A wreath of thorns pierces;<sup>64</sup>

It is especially the suffering on the cross that draws the compassion of the poets. The Savior is derided, mocked and cursed. His wounded, beaten body hangs in agony. He is thirsty and in pain. What else but deep sorrow could this tragic picture evoke?

Love draws deep pools from Brow, Hand, Feet and Side — Those gaping Wounds my sins have riven wide. Blood of those Feet . . . Hands . . . Side . . . Move Thou my halting heart.<sup>65</sup>

I see you hung exposed to view, Reviled and cursed with mock and jeer — My King and Lord thus crucified.<sup>66</sup>

For every bitter gibe, for every cruel sneer; For every thoughtless work, a deep and fervent prayer.<sup>67</sup>

Riven hands, in love extended Wounded feet, in love extended.<sup>68</sup>

Christ's dying words have made it plain; Revealed His agonizing pain;<sup>69</sup>

Two hands have haunted me today — Two hands of slender shape — All crushed and torn, as in the press Is bruised the purple grape.<sup>70</sup>

Carne secta multis plagis Cum flagella tolleret, Obtulit eas pro nobis Caelum nobis ut esset; Ad recrudescendum Regis Culpam quis adhinc aget.<sup>71</sup>

What truths sublime were spoke that day In bitter mockery. Derisive shouts: "He others saved; Himself He cannot save."<sup>72</sup>

Upon the cross outstretched and nailed In agony and direst pain, In scorn as kind and Savior hailed, He writhes and asks for drink in vain.<sup>73</sup>

Upon the cross that day He hung; No drink to cool His thirsting lips.<sup>74</sup>

#### MARY AND THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

Mary is seen to have a very special relationship to the Precious Blood. She and she alone is the source of the human Blood of Jesus:

Source of Jesus' Blood divine Mary full of grace sublime! Gladly we our voices raise Our Redemption's price to praise.<sup>75</sup>

Hail Jesus! Hail! who for my sake Sweet Blood from Mary's veins didst take<sup>76</sup>

Born with Him in you Mary, Mother true, May your blood in His be mine!<sup>77</sup>

But Mary's role went further than this. She was one who stood beside Christ during his childhood and finally in his death. She joined her sorrow to that of her Son. She, the Mother of Sorrows, invites all mankind to join her at the foot of the cross.

I with Mary take my station 'Neath the Cross, life's fruitful tree.<sup>78</sup>

Thou didst stand beneath the Cross When He suffered for our loss.<sup>79</sup>

"Dear Lord," we say, "could we have stood With Thy sweet Mother . . . beside Thy Cross . . .?"<sup>80</sup>

In contrast to the jeering crowd, Mary adored the Savior on the Cross:

The rabble of faithless souls attending Are mocking His sorrow and woe; With Mary the faithful few are bending And blessing the grace that they know.<sup>81</sup>

Yet it was with tears and agony that she saw her Son crucified:

As night doth follow after day She the price 'neath a cross did pay; Suffered in silent agony To see Him hang there on a tree.<sup>82</sup>

Rubies are drops of the Precious Blood Shed at Gethsemane; And entwined about them, lustrous pearls — Her tears on Calvary.<sup>83</sup>

The beating of her heart's like heavy thud Of cruel blows, that nail Him to the tree, While from His wounds, the flow of crimson blood Imbues her soul with grief indelibly.<sup>84</sup>

Despite her deep sorrow, Mary fully consents to the will of her Son:

So she who bore Him in her virgin womb, Who wrapped and laid Him in a manger then, This day, must see Him laid in silent tomb — The handmaid of the Lord consents again.<sup>85</sup>

As a reward for her loving co-operation, Mary shares in Christ's role of redemption:

I saw beneath a rugged Cross, The fairest Dove of all, In anguish, co-redeem mankind, From Adam's sinful fall.<sup>86</sup>

Finally, Mary's role is seen to be a continuing one. She is the one who beckons men to come and drink of the Blood of the chalice. She is the Madonna of the Precious Blood who invites men to constant refreshment.

There is the Madonna . . . Holding her little child, Helping Him grasp an awful symbol, A chalice of crushed grapes Turn God through the blood Of the Crimson Madonna.<sup>87</sup>

I can only offer to the Eternal Father, This great, this Precious Blood. By Its power the Spirit washes me from sin, Bestowing on me grace At the hands of Mother Mary.<sup>88</sup>

For Mary beckons to the sinners all to come, To take that Chalice from her Baby's hand — To drink therefrom And show their love . . .<sup>89</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

This brief and very sketchy cross-section of poetry leaves the reader with no profound revelations. That was not the intent. The poet hopes to evoke a feeling, a mood, an impression. Seldom does he seek to instruct. Admittedly, many of the poems are the works of amateurs. Yet no one expects them to be great master-

pieces of literature. They are authored by men with a deep devotion. If their only value is an external manifestation of their love for the Precious Blood, the efforts are worthwhile.

We conclude this anthology with the poem of Father Paul Speckbaugh, which appeared in the *Precious Blood Messenger* (1934, p. 79).

#### EBONY, IVORY, AND CRIMSON

A tawny sky means naught to me, and just So little those clouds, long-sweeping to the sea; The heaviness of air, pregnant with doom, Can touch me not, for in my soul there burns One thing: a Cross that sways so starkly on A Hill, Where meets the stretch of two cross-beams Of ebony, and etching digs its way With acid to my soul. In two jet lines There touch far opposites: All Life and Death -The paradox of slow-hewn ebony. And fastened there, a slender Sword of pale Thin ivory, unsheathed form of God, In Victim's mold, quivers, is still. O touch This blade and see how Beauty only then Is richest when it bears the chiseled lines Of pain. But dearer still - there cling upon His Feet two crimson sandals closely wove; Each finger wears a gem incarnadine; And ever Love binds Him to earth with taut And scarlet ropes, which He may never loose.

This survey on *The Precious Blood in Poetry* was made by Fathers Timothy Dillon, Lawrence Eiting, Dennis Keller, Emil Labbe, Joseph Uecker, and Michael Volkmer during the school year of 1967-68, when they were deacons.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Titus Kramer, "The Precious Price," PBM, 24 (1918), p. 195.

- 2. Roy Grotenrath, "Christus Puer," NA, 10 (1927), p. 37.
- 3. Titus Kramer, "The Precious Blood," PBM, 34 (1928), p. 65.

- Eugene Wuest, "The Precious Blood of Jesus," PBM, 29 (1923), p. 208.
- Fr. George, "The Sign and the Avenging Angel," PBM, 13 (1907), p. 195.
- 6. John Kostik, "Living Waters," NA, 1 (1918), p. 97.
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- 8. Titus Kramer, "Blessed Gaspar's Vision," PBM, 31 (1925), p. 463.
- Edward Maziarz, "Gaspar Prays: 'Sanguis Ejus Fiat Nobis'," NA, 20 (1937), p. 173.
- 10. Ronald Moorman, "A Strong-Song," NA, 46 (1964), p. 39.
- 11. "The Blood of the Lamb," PBM, 3 (1897), p. 194.
- Sr. Mary Limina, "Offering of the Precious Blood," PBM, 52 (1946), p. 147.
- 13. Louis Barga, "The Precious Blood," NA, 36 (1953), p. 117.
- 14. Raymond Halker, "Red Glory," NA, 16 (1933), p. 4.
- 15. Fr. George, " The Most Precious Blood," PBM, 18 (1912), p. 195.
- 16. John Kostik, "Living Waters," NA, 1 (1918), p. 97
- 17. John Kostik, "O Blood of Christ," PBM, 28 (1922), p. 195.
- 18. Titus Kramer, "The River of Life," PBM, 29 (1923), p. 195.
- 19. Joseph Marling, "The Seven Blood-Sheddings," NA, 7 (1924), p. 100.
- 20. Titus Kramer, "Exaltation of the Cross," PBM, 39 (1933), p. 280.
- 21. Verla Mooth, "Sacrificial Love," PBM, 67 (1961), p. 137.
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- 23. Marcellus Foltz, "His Blood Is Everywhere," NA, 12 (1929), p. 147.
- 24. Titus Kramer, "The Precious Blood," PBM, 34 (1928), 65.
- 25. August Halter, "Christ's Victory," NA, 1 (1918), p. 115.
- 26. Raymond Halker, "Red Glory," NA, 16 (1933), p. 4.
- Charles Robbins, "Vox Clamantis in Terra Sanguinis," NA, 38 (1955), p. 56.
- 28. Titus Kramer, "The Precious Blood," PBM, 34 (1928), p. 65.
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- 31. Fr. George, "The Precious Blood," PBM, 15 (1909), p. 195.
- 32. John Kostik, "Living Waters," NA, 1 (1918), p. 97.
- Edward Maziarz, "Gaspar Prays: 'Sanguis Ejus Fiat Nobis'," NA, 20 (1937), p. 173.
- Lawrence Heiman, "Nos, Jesu Domini Sanguis, Inebria," NA, 22 (1939), p. 125.
- 35. Sr. Mary Francelyn, "Alchemist," PBM, 61 (1955), p. 164.
- 36. Verla Mooth, "The Given Chalice," PBM, 65 (1959), p. 198.
- "The Precious Blood," Trans. by Mary Mannix, *PBM*, 36 (1930), p. 202.
- 38. Sr. Mary Alicia, "Corpus et Sanguis Domini," PBM, 43 (1937), p. 41.
- 39. Robert Lechner, "Redemption," NA, 27 (1944), p. 22.

- 40. Edmund Binsfeld, "Blood Song," NA, 19 (1936), p. 115.
- 41. Fr. George, "The Empire of the Precious Blood," PBM, 16 (1910), p. 195.

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- 42. Xavier Jaeger, "My Salvation," PBM, 9 (1903), p. 172
- 43. "Pierced for Thee," PBM, 27 (1921), p. 195. partition of the providence of the p
- 44. "The Precious Blood," *PBM*, 2 (1896), p. 144. 45. "The Precious Blood of Jesus," *PBM*, 20 (1914), p. 278.
- 46. John Kostik, "Living Waters," NA, 1 (1918), p. 97.
- 46. John Kostik, "Living Waters," NA, 1 (1918), p. 97.
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- 48. "Festivis Resonent," NA, 32 (1950), p. 226.
- 49. "The Precious Blood," PBM, 2 (1896), p. 144.
- 50. Victor Ranly, "Oratio ad Sanguinem," NA, 20 (1937), p. 107.
- 51. Sr. Mary Limina, "Offering of the Precious Blood," PBM, 52 (1946), p. 147. vound at
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- 55. "The Precious Blood of Jesus," PBM, 20 (1914), p. 278.
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- 57. Carl Loganback, "Alone, He Trod the Wine Press," PBM, 39 (1933), p. 108.
- 58. John Bernard, "The Five Sorrowful Mysteries," PBM, 36 (1930), p. 116.
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- 60. Sylvester Ley, "Gethsemani," NA, 3 (1920), p. 97.
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- 63. John Bernard, "The Five Sorrowful Mysteries," PBM, 36 (1930), p. 116.
- 64. "Salvete, Christi Vulnera," NA, 32 (1949), p. 263.
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- 66. Victor Ranly, "Oratio ad Sanguinem," NA, 20 (1937), p. 107.
- 67. "The Precious Blood," Trans. by Mary Mannix, PBM, 36 (1930), p. 202.
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- 77. Edmund Binsfeld, "Blood Song," NA, 19 (1936), p. 115.
- 78. Xavier Jaeger, "My Salvation," PBM, 9 (1903), p. 172.
- 79. Sr. Mary Laurentia, "Jesus' Blood Be Praised Through Mary," PBM, 27 (1921), p. 218.
- 80. Fr. Edmund, "Juxta Crucem," PBM, 6 (1900), p. 101.
- 81. Titus Kramer, "The Precious Blood," PBM, 34 (1928), p. 65.
- 82. Verla Mooth, "Mother of the Word," PBM, 66 (1960), p. 78.
- 83. Audrey Bruck, "Our Lady's Jewels," PBM, 45 (1939), p. 295.
- 84. Verla Mooth, "Mother of Sacrifice," *PBM*, 71 (1965), p. 338. 85. Verla Mooth, "Mother of Sacrifice," *PBM*, 71 (1965), p. 338.
- 86. Verla Mooth, "Mourning Dove," PBM, 65 (1959), p. 334.
- 87. James Froelich, "Crimson Madonna," NA, 33 (1950), p. 44.
- 88. Edward Maziarz, "Gaspar Prays: 'Sanguis Ejus Fiat Nobis'," NA, 20 (1937), p. 173.
- 89. John Hamme, "Madonna of the Precious Blood," NA, 19 (1936), p. 1.

# THE PRECIOUS BLOOD IN THE WRITINGS OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Saint John Chrysostom had a great appreciation for the Blood of Christ in the redemption of man. Posterity may well have christened him "golden-mouthed" because he first compared the Blood of the Eucharist to liquid gold covering the tongue.

Since St. John Chrysostom draws so much from the notions of blood prevalent at his time, it is necessary for us to examine these notions in order to come to a better understanding of his writings. Two great forces merge to form the cultural background of the age in which St. John Chrysostom lived. The one springs from the Jewish traditions which Greco-Christianity had borrowed and made its own. The other force is represented by the rich classical culture of the Greeks with which the saint was quite familiar. St. John Chrysostom knew and quoted in his homilies and treatises Homer, Sophocles, Demosthenes, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and many other philosophers, historians, and dramatists of Greece's past. The ideas that these men had about blood greatly color John's teaching on the Blood of Christ. It is these Greek ideas on the meaning and function of blood that will be taken up first.

#### BLOOD IN THE GREEK WORLD

The works of Homer were among the foremost studied in the Greek schools attended by Saint John Chrysostom in his native Antioch. For Homer, blood was intimately linked with the *thymos* 

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or life-principle of the body. When one man killed another man he was said to have snatched away the *thymos* of the murdered man, for example Hector killing Patroklus. The picture suggested is the blood streaming from the dying warrior, bearing with it the vital principle. Homer does not equate the life-principle with the blood, but rather that the blood is the bearer of the life-principle. In his *Odyssey* Homer portrays the souls of the underworld as being athirst for blood. And when they receive it, they become animated once again and able to function as conscious beings, whereas before they existed in a state of stupor.

The Greek world also had many attempts at a philosophical medical explanation of the role of blood. Two general tendencies of life and blood can be discerned: one is rooted in the philosophical tenet of Anaximenes of Miletos which taught that *air* was the first principle and source of all things. The second view stems from the Heracletean notions that *fire* is the animating principle of all living things.

Those who followed the first view (air) held that vital air permeates the body by being transported with the blood through the veins. When a great amount of air was in the blood it would be thin and the body would be greatly animated, and this would be manifested by great intellectual and mental activity. Lack of air meant thick blood and dullness.

For those who followed the Heracletean school, blood was the bearer of the vital fire found in the innermost parts of the body. If this fire passes from the blood moderately, the body falls into a state called sleep; when there is a complete cooling of the blood, fire has left completely and death is the result. Plato is one of the philosophers who followed the principle that fire as contained in the blood is the elemental principle of life. For Plato blood was responsible for all the functioning of the body, even substituting the blood vessels as nerve fibers.

However, one of the most prominent men to follow the principle of fire as contained in the blood to be fundamental to life was Aristotle. Fire or heat in the blood contains the secret of life, the spiritual soul. Of itself the soul cannot function without the medium of the connatural heat which is essential for the life of the organism. This vital heat is located principally in the heart, which is likewise the source of the blood. But there is also a vital heat in the

body, and it is this which is responsible for the production of blood. And from the blood the vital heat in turn received its own nourishment and growth. For just as the food is changed into blood through boiling of the food, a process which is started by the vital heat, so too further "cooking" of the blood, especially in the heart, causes it to give rise to a vapor from which the vital heat of the body receives growth and increase. This "evaporation" of the blood is as a *pneumatiosis*, i.e., an exhalation of *pneuma*. And so for Aristotle we have something similar to what was the case with those philosophers who followed the principle of air. Namely that the thicker the blood the less heat it had and the lower the type of life. And the opposite is then also true: the thinner the blood the more vital heat it contained, and the higher the form of life.

A Greek philosophy which had great influence on all of Christian thought was *Stoicism*. In the several centuries before and after the coming of Christ, Stoic thought was a dominant force in the intellectual world of the time. Its theories of life and blood deserve brief mention for an understanding of the early Christian culture. In a general way, Stoic notion on life and blood carried on the theories of air as the vital principle. The vapor rising out of the blood gave life to the soul, the *pnuema*. Hence the vapor rising from the hot blood became the nourishment and bearer of the vital *pneuma*.

Looking at the teaching of St. John Chrysostom we see that he explicitly denies an identity of the soul with the blood of man. But this does not mean that he excludes the connection completely. His view on blood follows the established doctrine of the natural philosophers who assign to it the important role of vital activity of the body. To what extent did Chrysostom consider the blood a constitutive element of the body? For him the body was the instrument of the soul, which was the ultimate principle of life. According to the analogy of the heart as the source of life, the life principle for the body must be especially centered there. According to the same analogy, the blood has its source in the heart. Therefore, it would seem that Chrysostom considered the blood to be the most immediate organic instrument of the soul or life-principle.

One last question to be considered with regard to the role of blood among the Greeks is the aspect of sacrifice. The blood-andlife theme underlies much of the sacrificial cult of the ancient

Greeks. Sacrifices were offered either to the dead or to the deities in order to preserve life in the present world or advance it in the next. Sacrifices were surrounded with elaborate ceremonial.

The meaning of the bloodshedding is especially of interest in the manner it compares with the Hebrew attitude. After the animal had been felled by a blow of the axe, its head and neck were immediately turned in such a way that when the throat was cut the blood would spurt skyward, toward the Olympians who dwelt on high. The blood was then allowed to run in a ceremonial vessel and poured on the altar, the particular place to which the deity was attracted. The god was thought to partake of the blood which was his special delight. After the ceremony of the pouring of the blood, the victim was dismembered, and some parts were burned as an offering to the gods, while other parts were cooked and consumed in a communal meal.

Why was blood so pleasing to the gods? It appears that blood was practically identified with life. It contained life "ready-made," and therefore would seem on that account to have been especially desirable to the gods. It appears that the Greeks, by their blood offerings, did not so much seek to be united with the gods but rather they use the offerings as a means of appeasing the wrath of the gods athirst for blood.

But there was among the Greeks another large class of bloodsacrifices those offered to the dead, the heroes and chthonic deities. Propitiation was the prime motive for these offerings. This was especially the case when the offerer in some way felt that he was responsible for the death of a particular person. Blood sacrifices offered to heroes were carried out in the manner similar to those offered to gods, for the Greek heroes were considered to be semidivine. Here the blood was allowed to run into a hole in the ground; the hero was invited to consume this blood to refresh himself. This brought back to the departed at least temporarily a certain measure of the life which they had lost in passing from the world of living men. In this regard the Greeks are very much different from the Hebrews who were forbidden to drink blood.

There is another example of this (here there is an actual consuming of the blood on the part of the living) in the Thracian worship of Dionysos. In this ritual the beast selected as a victim was tore limb from limb, and it was of great importance to hurriedly

eat the raw flesh and drink the hot blood. This was done in order that the divine spirit might be consumed before it could escape. Since the blood was the seat of the soul and life, the most immediate contact with the life of the 'divine' victim was effected through eating the warm and bloody flesh. In this way the participant attained to a communion with the living deity, and thus was assured of an immortal existence when the soul left the body.

#### MEANING OF BLOOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

For the Hebrews blood was above all the vehicle whereby contact might be made between the offerer and Yahweh. And this was based on the strong, natural belief that blood was the primary physical force behind the mysterious phenomenon of life. In order to understand their view of blood as the seat of life, we must first determine what is meant by life.

What we have expressed in the Bible by "soul" or "life" is designated in the original text by the word *nepesh*, which in its most fundamental meaning refers to "breath." *Nepesh* is the vital principle which underlies the vegetative and affective life of the living organism, animal or human. The *nepesh* is the life of the body, and its passing means death. And it is the blood which contains this *nepesh*; thus when the blood passes from the living animal or human being, it carries with it the *nepesh* and so the creature will die. Thus the use of blood is very limited, being reserved only for sacrifice. Blood as such is not immediately taboo, but only immediately in that it contains the life of the animal or man who has died. And since the life that was in man (and in animals?) was the breath of God, it was regarded as sacred and held in deep awe and reverence. This blood must be returned to God.

At first it was hard to determine whether the soul was identical with the blood or the blood was merely the seat of the soul, but it seems to become clearer later on that the blood was the seat of the soul or *nepesh*, and not the *nepesh* itself. This is like Homer's notion of the *Thymos*. The *nepesh* was identical with the blood vapor which manifested itself rising from warm, freshly shed blood. The distinction between the blood and the *nepesh* is brought out in Lev 17, 11: "The life of the flesh is in the blood."

This brings us to the question of blood revenge. As is seen above, for the Hebrews blood was the mysterious bearer of life. Deprivation of the life-blood through violence left a startling, striking impression on the malefactor. The blood seemed to have a personal nature which would continue to haunt the one responsible for the shedding of this particular individual's blood. The blood which had been shed would continue to cry out for revenge; the blood become personified. And it is the surviving kin of the murdered person who must lay to rest the cries of anguish of the murdered person by shedding the blood of the murderer. But when a man was justly slain for some crime, his own blood was called down upon his head, fixed there as it were to assure the executioner that he would be safe from any recrimination on the part of the spirit of the evil-doer.

### The Blood Covenant in the Old Testament

Because of the association between blood and life, whether this life be identified with the blood or the blood only being the seat of life as is more likely the case, blood became the basis of important social and religious institutions. Among these the blood-covenant and blood-sacrifice were the most important. On a "natural" level, the bond which united individuals into a clan or relationship was the fact that each one shared in the same life-blood of a common ancestor. To share in the same life-blood was to participate in the same life. Among the ancients we see many practices growing out of this. There are many examples of an outsider being admitted into the clan by having him either drink the blood of someone from the clan or having some of the blood mixed with his own by opening a vein. However, this developed into the more refined practice of initiation through a covenant meal. From the idea of relationship through blood there developed the notion of relationship by participation in a common meal. Now bread was a means of nourishment of the blood immediately. To break bread together, to eat, was to nourish the blood by the same source, to share the same life-imparting elements, to become in a sense, bloodbrothers (Smith, The Religion of the Semites.)

If such a close bond of friendship was fashioned through the ordinary meal, all the more binding and sacred was the contract of

friendship negotiated in a religious banquet. In the communal eating of the victim just offered to the divinity, one received from the god himself the food (and blood) which united the parties into a fraternal relationship. And if there was no eating of the victim, the two contracting parties would pass through the halves of the severed victim to assimilate, as it were, the life which had been the unifying principle of the victim.

When man wishes to express his thoughts and sentiments to God he quite naturally employs the signs and symbols through which he converses with his equals. Among the ancient Semites, blood was the most expressive medium of communication with their gods. For the Israelite there could have been no question of being united with Yahweh physically through blood, for Yahweh was so profoundly imbued with grandeur and majesty that he could not be personified in His pure being. If the Israelites offered the blood of covenant, it was not that they might negotiate with him as an equal, or that they might share with Him the same blood of the animal immolated, but they merely wished in the most expressive language possible to show themselves filially devoted to their Lord God and that they shared His interests. And it was Yahweh freely accepting this offering that established the covenant. "I will be your God; you will be my people."

One of the most significant offerings of blood to Yahweh is seen in the covenant established on Mt. Sinai between the Israelites and Yahweh. Here we see the blood sprinkled on the altar, which represented Yahweh, and then on the people. This blood pleaded for union with Yahweh, and Yahweh freely accepting this meant that he would make these people His own, and shower blessings on them if they remained faithful to Him. When a covenant was made between two parties, they assumed the responsibility of protecting each other from harm as far as possible.

This brings us to another event connected with the covenant on Mt. Sinai, the smearing of the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of the houses of the Israelites in Egypt. The blood was a sign to the angel of the Lord that these people belonged to Yahweh and were thus to be "passed" over when the plague came.

In chapter 17 of Leviticus we find some strict regulations regarding the use of blood. The profane use of blood is forbidden first of all because it contains life; secondly because it was to be used

for expiation at the altar. The blood expiates not of itself, as if by some magical power, but solely because of the will of God who has chosen blood as a fit instrument of expiation. "Expiate" here means to procure divine favor, and it is through sacrifice that the offerer is made worthy of God's favor, both material and spiritual. Above all the Israelites wished to be blessed with a long and abundant life, and this was climaxed by the pouring out of the life-blood of the victim in sacrifice. This was the highest expression of surrender to Yahweh, done through the mystical representation of the life-blood of the sacrificial victim. By means of the bloody victim the offerer acknowledged his dependence on Yahweh the supreme Lord and Benefactor of all good things. He endeavored through the presentation of that which was valuable to him — the victim — to fasten the ties of friendship with Yahweh or to renew the bond when it had been severed by transgressions of the law.

## The Blood of Christ in Prophecy

Since there are found so many references from the prophets in Chrysostom's writings, it is necessary for us to examine these in order to understand more clearly what he was trying to explain.

One of the foremost of the prophets to speak of the vicarious suffering of one individual for the sake of many is Isaiah. In Isaiah 53, 7 we read: "He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter." The words do not expressly describe a sacrifice in blood, but they most certainly do so implicitly. For to die as a slaughtered sheep is to die as a result of the loss of blood sustained by a lethal wound. But more important than the prophecies of word are the prophecies of fact. And of these there are many in the Old Testament. More important of these are the sacrifice of Abraham, the paschal lamb, the Levitical sacrifices of the old law. All of these are living, concrete figures and types of the bloody sacrifice of Christ on the cross. This they did precisely because of the character of their bloody immolations.

Reading over some of Chrysostom's commentaries on different sacrificial rites as practiced by the Israelites, one can get the distinct impression that he was opposed to these and considered them evil. He did this for a very particular reason; along with the ancients he thought blood to be the drink of demons. The idols thirsted

after the blood of human sacrifice, and demanded that their altars be stained by the blood of human sacrifices, and like dogs they waited to lap it up. The demons thirsted after human blood especially, and they worked it in such a way that men felt compelled to shed human blood to satisfy the thirst of these demons.

We must remember, however, that Chrysostom's disparaging statements concerning the bloody sacrifices of the Jews and pagans were polemical in motive. He had to combat the infiltration of pagan thought and institutions into the Christian community. He was forced to combat a lively proselytizing activity on the part of the Jews. But the intrinsic reason behind his attitude toward blood sacrifices was the fact that blood was regarded by the ancients as well as by the early Jewish Christians as something *precious in itself*.

In several of his works the saint points out that it is above all the disposition of the offerer that is important. It is not merely the gift of the blood in itself that is important, but the offering of the individual. And if this proper disposition were not present, the sacrifice would not mean very much and be quite similar to the bloody rites of the pagans. And so, far from being honored, as He ought to have been by the rite of bloody sacrifice, God was really being insulted. In other words, Chrysostom's hatred for the idolatrous, blood-thirsty pagan sacrifices colored his dislike for the weak, formalistic character of the Jewish bloody sacrifices of the old law.

This negative criticism of bloody sacrifices is merely one aspect of St. John Chrysostom's teaching. His positive views present the traditional and more balanced teaching on Old Testament sacrifices. He admits that while God indeed merely permitted sacrifice to the Chosen People as a concession to their weakness toward idolatry as the lesser of two evils, yet he did make them the instrument of much good. And one must also remember that many of the saint's condemnatory outbursts against Old Testament sacrifice are often exaggerated and not to be taken at face value; they are keeping with the style of the "golden mouthed" orator.

His positive views regarding the shedding of the blood of animal sacrifices is especially brought out in his commentaries on the paschal lamb. For Chrysostom no blood-figure of the Old Testa-

ment more strikingly paralleled the Blood of Christ than the blood of the paschal lamb. The blood of the paschal lamb is a type of the redeeming Blood of Christ as well as the Blood of the Eucharist. It foreshadowed the Blood shed on the cross which liberated mankind from sin. Its smearing on the door posts of the Israelites prefigured the Eucharistic Blood of Christ which anoints man's soul and wards off the attacks of the evil one. But Chrysostom is careful to point out that in no way did this Blood work in a magical or superstitious way, such as the ancient Assyrians and Egyptians attached to blood.

The power of the blood of the paschal lamb came from its function as a type of the Blood of Christ. The Blood of the new Paschal Lamb has far greater efficacy than that of the old lamb of the paschal celebration. The Blood of Christ brought about salvation by its divine power; the blood of the paschal lamb only did this in virtue of its anti-type.

As to manner of operation, the Blood of Christ, received in the Eucharist, permeates the recipient's entire being even to his very soul and protects the soul from its enemies. The effects of the Eucharistic Blood anointing the soul flow from and are one with the benefits merited by Christ's redeeming Blood. For the destroying angel saw the blood of the paschal lamb and "thought of the death of the Lord." By the same token he knew that the power which stayed his word emanated from the cross, the Blood of Christ. Finally, Chrysostom holds out the Blood of Christ as a powerful motive for trust and confidence: if the blood of the lamb instilled such trust in the Israelites, how much more ought we to trust, we who have received the Blood of Christ?

#### CHRIST'S SACRIFICE IN HIS BLOOD

That Christ's death was a real sacrifice, Chrysostom has not the slightest doubt. He speaks of the cross as "that aweful sacrifice." Christ's death is a "universal sacrifice," because it is offered for the whole world. And it is clear from all of his writings that he does not speak of Christ shedding His Blood figuratively. His language is like that of the New Testament, particularly the Letter to the Hebrews, namely sacrificial. There are many references to Christ pouring out his Blood on the cross.

St. John Chrysostom views the bloody sacrifice of Christ from the double aspect of His priesthood and His status as a victim. These two are inseparably joined in the sacrifice of Christ. And it is because of the sublimity of His priesthood that the Blood has such inestimable value. Chrysostom emphasizes Christ's total sharing of human nature "in all things." Christ was born, lived, grew, suffered, and died as all other men. And being both God and man, Christ could take unredeemed, fallen humanity, and raise it up, offer it unblemished through his suffering and death to His Father in heaven. Thus the excellence of Christ's priesthood is especially brought out in the exercise of His office by His death on the cross.

Chrysostom brings out a striking comparison between the Blood of Christ shed on the cross and the typical blood of animals offered by the Jewish high priest in the Holy of Holies on the great annual Day of Expiation. This day of all the days of the year was set aside for reconciliation of the people with God. Most significant of the solemnity of the occasion was when the high priest entered into the Holy of Holies and offered the blood of the victim sacrificed. But this was only an imperfect approach to union with God. Christ entered into the Holy of Holies, into the very presence of God Himself. In this lies the superiority of Christ's sacrifice. The Jewish high priest approached God indirectly through the symbolic blood of a creature; Christ approached God directly through the offering of His very own Blood. This more than sufficed to merit forgiveness for all men and open the gates of heaven.

Looking back at the ancient notions of blood with which Chrysostom was familiar, as was brought out in the first part of this paper, we can see his own estimation of the Blood of Christ. Blood was to the people of his time the awe-inspiring symbol of life, the bearer, sustainer, nourisher of the *pneuma*, the life-principle the very cause of life. Moreover, the blood was especially the physical medium (together with the brain) of thought-life, the bearer of the will's impulses. Produced mainly in the heart which was the source of vital warmth, the blood bore life to every part of the physical organism. It was the "cause of life," the divine Blood, His spiritual Blood — formed by the Holy Spirit — which Christ offered in sacrifice to God in the place of man's own sinful blood, which deservedly should have been shed to expiate his own sins (blood revenge). Christ's Blood as shed was not merely the symbol of the

oblation of Himself, but it was in reality an offering of the divinehuman life that was His inasmuch as the divine Blood was the "cause of life" in Christ. And since in some causative way that Blood contributed to His thought-life, volitional life, and to His purely physical life, when Christ shed His Blood He surrendered Himself a total oblation for men.

One point not considered yet in this paper is whether blood is a symbol of death. It appears that Chrysostom uses it both ways. "It is the symbol of death and the cause of life." We see that both notions are strongly engraved on the mentality of the ancients and this twofold phase of the blood must be kept in mind constantly if we are to understand fully the significance attached to blood in ancient Christian and pagan times. Blood was feared by the ancients, Greeks and Jews, as a symbol of death, particularly by him who has shed blood unjustly, or violently.

But we also know that blood was used for healing purposes. From ancient writings we know that blood was supposed to be an effective means of curing epileptics. Blood has an altogether mysterious potency, and its use was called upon when many other means of healing had failed. Blood was the cause of life.

We see this same idea employed in the Old Testament sacrifices. The raison d'etre of the ancient covenant was that the contracting parties were to share in each other a communion of life, of fortune, of friendship. Blood either mixed, consumed, or sprinkled played an important function here. The life of the one was pledged through his blood to the life of the other and vice versa. The blood was shed not as the end in view, but as a prerequisite for the actual exchange, being shed as a pledge of life for the other. And so when the Israelites wished to be united more intimately with Yahweh, they adopted the blood-covenant custom to His service. The blood of the victim was shed and offered as a pledge of repentance and friendship to God who in turn accepted the offering and pledged His divine friendship toward the offerer. Hence it was not so much the "taking of life, but the giving of life" which is fundamental.

We might associate blood with death in the sense that it is through the death of the victim that the blood is liberated, and through the liberation of the blood the life-principle is also set free and becomes available for another end, which, in the majority of cases in Israelite sacrifices, was for atonement.

Applying this now to the Blood shed in the sacrifice to inaugurate the new covenant, we see here also this death-life element. Christ, indeed, had to undergo death in the shedding of His Blood, but this in order to establish life for us. As mediator between God and men, Christ shed His own life-blood for the life-blood men ought to have surrendered as a penalty for sin. He offered His own Blood to God as an expiation for sin. It is this offering of the blood for expiation of sin that we might term the death-aspect of blood. The return of life because of this is the life-aspect. And it was God accepting the Blood of Christ that resulted in the new covenant being established, whereby friendship was now restored between God and man. This is what Saint John Chrysostom had in mind when he wrote concerning the abolition of the decree of death which stood against men.

When, therefore, Chrysostom says that blood is the symbol of death, he means to say a life-giving death. Christ's Blood was the symbol of His death, but also the cause of our supernatural life. His Blood shed in death was an essential condition of the new covenant — severe indeed — but the rewards of that covenant are life in God for men.

And Christ did all of this of His own free will. Chrysostom emphasizes this point, though in several places he excoriates the Jews for putting Christ to death. This willing offering of His Blood is a sign of God's great love for man.

We find the two ideas of the Precious Blood and God's love frequently joined in Chrysostom. He writes: "For there is nothing that can equal God's shedding of His Blood for us. That He did not spare even His Son is greater than the adoption of sons and all other gifts. It is a great thing indeed that sins should be remitted, but far greater that they should be remitted through the Blood of the Lord." (In Ep ad Eph. Hom V, 4 PG 62 14). The worth of the Blood of Christ is greater than anything mind or reason could estimate, and hence it is precious. So Chrysostom writes:

The price which He (Christ) expended for all of us was His Precious Blood . . . Though He purchased wicked and ungrateful slaves, Christ paid the price demanded for the best. More than this, He paid a higher price, so high that neither mind nor reason can grasp its magnitude. For He gave not heaven

and earth and sea, but He poured out that which was more precious than all of these, His own Blood. And thus did He redeem us (Ad Illuminandos Catechesis, II, 5 PG 49 239).

Chrysostom uses the expression "Precious Blood" some fifteen times. St. Peter already used the same expression in his first epistle (1:18-19). It is not unlikely that Chrysostom borrowed the term from the Scriptures and found in it perhaps the most adequate expression of a thought that to him was all but inexpressible — the salvation of men by the shedding of the Blood of the Son of God. The notion of "precious" implies a comparison of values or goods, and a choice of that which has worth in itself. Thus we can see that Chrysostom's use of this term is a very valid one.

The Blood is precious also because it redeemed men, taking away sin — that which is the only real evil in the world and therefore the only impediment to real peace and happiness. It was Christ in giving up His divine-human life to His Father in heaven by the shedding of His divine-human blood who now enables us to participate in God's life if we so wish. St. John is very careful to emphasize this aspect of the blood — it is in the blood that life is to be found, and by joining ourselves to this life of Christ offered up to the Father by His death on the cross that we too will have life everlasting.

This summary of the notes of John Samis was compiled by THOMAS WELK, C.PP.S.

# THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT

When we study or meditate upon the Last Supper, we often ask the question: "Did the apostles understand the words and actions of Jesus, as He instituted the Eucharist?" Was it all mystery to them when they observed that the Master was deviating from the customary Passover ritual to give them the broken unleavened bread and the cup of wine with the words: "Take, this is my body. ... This is my blood, [the blood] of the covenant, which is being shed for many" (Mk 14, 22-24).<sup>1</sup>

They could, of course, no more comprehend the mystery of the real presence and the sacrifice of the Mass than we can. But they were well prepared to recognize several aspects of it, even if we suppose with an increasing number of Catholic scholars that they were fully aware of Jesus' divinity only on Easter Sunday. Their schooling included not only more than two years' intimate association with Jesus, whose miracles and words gave them each day new insights into His power and wisdom; it included centuries of revelation which pointed to Christ and familiarized the chosen people with various aspects of His mission. Recent study in the Gospels has shed brilliant light on a number of the incidents of Jesus' life by investigating their Old Testament background and discovering their inner relationships. One phrase of the words of institution which the apostles readily recognized will illustrate the fruitfulness of this study, "my blood of the covenant."<sup>2</sup>

The Vulgate text with which we are familiar inserts the adjective *novi* (from I Cor 11, 25) into the formula: "Hic est [enim] sanguis meus novi testamenti . . ." (Mt 26, 28; Mk 14, 24). St. Paul (or the tradition of the institution-words that he records) added it by way of allusion to Jer 31, 31-33:

The time is coming, says Yahweh when I will make a *new* covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Juda. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. That covenant with me they broke, although I was their Lord, says Yahweh. But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel in the future: . . . I will put my law within them and write it upon their hearts, so that I will be their God and they shall be my people.

Even if textual evidence would indicate that Jesus said, "new covenant," instead of "covenant" simply, His meaning would not be different. While the biblical adjective "new" implies a contrast with the "old," it does not mean something numerically *different*. "The new covenant does not replace the old, but rather grows out of it and is related to it as fulfillment to promise."<sup>3</sup> There is *organic continuity* between Sinai and the cenacle. Jesus insisted that He had not come to "destroy" the Law or the Prophets, but to "fulfill" (Mt 5, 17). The chosen people broke the Sinai covenant by sin, but God did not break it. He carried it out by promising a "renewal" of the covenant in Messianic times. The promise is fulfilled in Christ.

"Blood of the covenant" could not fail to remind the apostles of the Sinai covenant that gave birth to the people of God. Since a covenant is a pact with mutual rights and obligations, the terms were formulated exactly. God freely chose the Hebrews to be His special people, in consideration of which they were to be unswervingly faithful to Him: "If you hearken to my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my special possession, dearer to me than all other people, though all the earth is mine. You shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation" (Ex 19, 5-f.). As the priest is intermediary between God and the people he represents, so Israel is a "kingdom of priests," intermediary between God and the rest of the nations. They alone knew the true God and hence had to offer Him the worship that other nations in their ignorance failed to give.

As examples of the laws which the covenant-people agreed to observe, the Exodus-account here includes the Decalog and the

so-called "Book of the Covenant."<sup>4</sup> But the mere acceptance of these obligations, however solemn it might be, could not have been sufficient; a covenant must be ratified by ceremony, by sacrifices, by the shedding of blood to portray that Yahweh and His people are "blood-relatives." If there was to be community of life, it could be symbolized in Hebrew eyes only by commingling of blood.<sup>5</sup>

We must guard against oversimplification by presuming that there was no development in Hebrew psychology. The same conceptions do not necessarily underlie the terminology of earlier and later books of the Bible, however similar that terminology be. Probably the equation blood = life was established by the primitive observation that life departed when blood was shed. Even when it was realized that this equation did not take into account all the facts, the Hebrew clung to his conviction that blood is connected with the very essence of man. In the Apocalypse, for example, John sees "under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God" (6, 9). By this symbolism he doubtless wants to suggest that the martyrs' death was sacrificial, united to Christ's sacrifice; hence their blood is pictured as spilled on the altar, as sacrificial blood must be spilled. But the blood is somehow the vehicle of the "soul," and that is why the "souls" of the martyrs are seen under the altar of heaven.

In evaluating the force of the biblical statements about blood, we must be aware of the differences between our psychology and that of the Bible. The Hebrew did not know of the body-soul dichotomy. Translations of the Bible often use the term soul to translate the Hebrew term nephesh which really is more comprehensive and complex a concept than soul. "According to the specifically Semitic tendency to a synthetic rather than analytic conception, a man's nephesh is a totality with a definite stamp."6 Hence the same term is used in contexts where we must translate differently in each case, e.g., by "will" or "appetite" or "life" or simply by the corresponding pronoun. With this background we can more accurately estimate the axiom, ". . . the [nephesh] of every living body is its blood . . ." (Lv 17, 14). Because God is absolute Master of life, shed blood must always be offered to Him: "Since the life [nephesh] of a living body is in its blood, I have made you put it on the altar [i.e., offer it to God], so that atonement may thereby be made for your own lives, because it is the

blood, as the seat of life [nephesh], that makes atonement" (*ibid.*, 17, 11).

Exodus records two traditions of the ceremony that sealed the Sinai covenant, though they may be complementary rather than distinct. Both traditions include sacrifice and hence shedding of blood. According to the "E" tradition, an altar is erected which symbolizes Yahweh, and twelve pillars are set up "for the twelve tribes of Israel." Half the blood of the victims immolated is splashed on the altar, the other half is gathered into bowls. As Moses sprinkled the blood on the people, he cried out: "This is the blood of the covenant which Yahweh has made with you, in accordance with all these words" (Ex 24, 8). Thus Yahweh and His people became blood-relatives, participating in a common life.

The "J" tradition describes the covenant ceremony as a "communion banquet" in Yahweh's presence. This banquet was the climax of the sacrifices in which part was offered to Yahweh (especially the blood), and part consumed by the offerers.

Covenants, especially more important covenants, were often sealed by a common meal among ancient Semitic tribes. Since food gives and nourishes life, it was natural to make community of food symbolize community of life. To eat with enemies was unthinkable.<sup>7</sup> In the Exodus story, Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abiu, and seventy elders were invited to ascend the mountains as representatives of the entire people. There "they beheld the God of Israel," enthroned above the firmament, which 'appeared to be sapphire tilework, as clear as the sky itself." It was axiomatic that no man can see God and continue to live (Gen 16, 13; 32, 31; Ex 33, 20-23 [all "J" probably]; Jgs 6, 22; Is 6, 5).

Yet here was an exception: "Yahweh did not smite these chosen Israelites. After gazing on God, they could still eat and drink" (Ex 24, 9-11). There is no question, of course, of the elders having seen the beatific vision; not even St. Paul enjoyed this privilege before death (2 Cor 12, 3-f.). The narrative simply wishes to describe as graphically as possible the intimacy of the covenantpeople with Yahweh. Perhaps an allusion is intended to the concept of "kingdom of priests." "To see the face of God" is often used in the Old Testament of visiting God's sanctuary. (Ex 23, 17; Dt 16, 16; 31, 11; Ps 41 [42], 3). For the Israelite this worship flows naturally from the terms of the covenant.

"Blood of the covenant," therefore, as spoken over the cup at the Last Supper must have suggested to the apostles the sacrificial character of the rite that Jesus was performing. Blood that was shed had to be offered to God in sacrifice, as acknowledgement of His absolute dominion. It must also be a sacrifice of atonement (Lev 17, 11), and so Matthew's addition, "for the forgiveness of sins," makes explicit what is latent in the institution formula.

The apostles must have realized, further, that the "covenant" is now "fulfilled." What Yahweh had done on Mt. Sinai was a beginning, a first aspect of the perfect covenant-act to be realized in the future. What in a sense began amid the convulsions of Sinai is brought to its climax in the peace and intimacy of the cenacle. The people of Christ's covenant will henceforth be "the kingdom of priests" (I Pt 2, 5-10; Ap 1, 5; 5, 9-10) in virtue not of the "blood of goats and calves," but in virtue of Christ's blood (Heb 9, 12).

In the third place, the covenant fulfilled must mean *community* of life. It is inaugurated by blood that is shed, like the Sinai covenant, but with the important difference that the victim is also the "fulfillment" of the victims offered under the old dispensation. Since Jesus says, "my blood," He Himself is the victim, and shares His life with the apostles, the representatives (like the elders of the Exodus account) of the new Israel. It is a common conviction with the Fathers and theologians that Jesus Himself partook of the sacred species.<sup>8</sup> By this communion He "fulfilled" the rite of spilling the blood on the altar. Again, the fact that He instituted the Eucharist at the Passover meal carries through the analogy of the banquet as the covenant ceremony. Both analogies and correspondence are evidently most perfect if we believe that it was really the body of Jesus that the apostles ate and His blood that they drank.<sup>9</sup>

It has often been pointed out that John, who omits the account of the institution (possibly because of an incipient *disciplina arcani*<sup>10</sup>), compensates by allusions in the discourse after the Last Supper (chapters 13, 31 to 71), which in part, at least, is made up of words spoken on different occasions.<sup>11</sup> If we keep in mind the covenant-concept of the Last Supper, we can readily understand why John should record here the descriptions of the Christian's intimacy with the Blessed Trinity (Jn 14, 3, 15-17; 17, 24-26). Or the touching little dialogue between Philip and Jesus:

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"Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us." "Have I been so long a time with you, and you have not known me? Philip, he who sees me sees also the Father" (14, 8f). Or finally, the sublime allegory of the vine. It also has covenant overtones. Israel of old was "the vine . . . transplanted from Egypt" (Ps 79 [80], 9; see also Is 5, 1-7; Os 10, 1). Jesus is the *true vine*.<sup>12</sup> In John's Gospel the words "true" and "truth" consistently have a nuance of fulfillment and perfection. Christ fulfills and perfects the old covenant, uniting men to Himself as "blood" brothers and thus to the Father: "I am the true vine . . . I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he bears much fruit. . . . In this is my Father glorified, that you may bear very much fruit, and become my disciples" (17, 1; 5, 8). And it is worth noting that it was the fruit of the vine that was chosen to be changed into "the blood of the covenant."

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#### FOOTNOTES

- 1. Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, tr. Arnold Ehrhardt (New York: Macmillan, 1955), pp. 106-115, makes a strong case for the view that the earliest text of the words of institution is identical with the text of Mark.
- 2. Jeremias, op. cit., 132-135, casts some doubt on the originality of the word "covenant" in the Eucharistic formula. Jesus may have said simply, "This is my blood." In this case tes diathekes would be "an early exegetical gloss which (with the help of Ex 24, 8 and Jer 31, 31-34) explains Jesus' atoning death as the covenant sacrifice to in-augurate the eschatological order of redemption" (pp. 134-135). He admits, however, that the gloss must have been added in the first decade after the death of Jesus, and the possibility that the word "covenant" represents Jesus' own idea. Reginald H. Fuller, The Mission and Achievement of Jesus (Studies in Biblical Theology 12; London: SCM Press, 1954), pp. 69-72, cogently answers the objections raised to the phrase, "of the covenant," and shows that the awkward Greek is best accounted for on the supposition of an Aramaic original. He concludes that the "interpretative addition" represents the "mind of Jesus, if not his ipsissima verba" (p. 72). See also J. Coppens, "Eucha-

ristie," Dictionnaire de la Bible Supplément II (Paris: Letouzey, 1934), col. 1178.

- 3. R. A. Harrisville, "The Concept of Newness in the New Testament," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 74 (1955), p. 74. He adds: "The announcement of Jeremiah implies that the divine purpose and plan will have their further unfolding in the form of a new covenant, hence, that the divine activity is now about to propel man and history further along towards the goal which God had planned for them from the very beginning. The element of continuity in the two covenants lies in the fact that both have their origin in and are an expression of the same divine will."
- 4. "The present writer believes that the federation of tribes can be understood and explained only on the assumption that it is a conscious continuation and re-adaptation of an earlier tradition which goes back to the time of Moses. The covenant at Sinai was the formal means by which the semi-nomadic clans, recently emerged from state slavery in Egypt, were bound together in a religious and political community. The text of that covenant is the Decalogue." George E. Mendenhall, Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East (Pittsburgh: The Biblical Colloquium, 1955. Reprinted from The Biblical Archaeologist 17 [1954], 26-46; 49-76), p. 5. The Code of the Covenant (Ex 20, 22-23, 19), which the redactor of the Pentateuch placed here to give further examples of covenant-laws, was probably promulgated by Moses just before the Israelites entered Canaan, according to H. Cazelles, Etudes sur le Code de l'Alliance (Paris: Letouzey, 1945), pp. 168-183.
- 5. P. van Imschoot, *Théologie de l'Ancien Testament*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Desclée, 1954), pp. 240-241, mentions blood-rites among Arabs and other peoples, e.g., sucking blood from incisions or plunging hands into a basin of blood, that accompanied the making of covenants.
- D. T. Asslin, "The Notion of Dominion in Genesis 1-3," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly 16 (1954), p. 281.
- 7. J. Pedersen, Israel: Its Life and Culture, I-II (London-Copenhagen, 1954), p. 305.
- F. Prat, Jesus Christ: His Life, His Teaching, and His Work, tr. J. J. Heenan (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1951), II, 276-277.
- 9. Vincent Taylor in his admirable work, Jesus and His Sacrifice: A Study of the Passion-Sayings in the Gospels (London: Macmillan, 1951), pp. 114-139, has an excellent appreciation of Mk 14:22-25. He is embarrassed, however, by the fact that his exegesis almost involves him in transubstantiation: "If we now have regard to the saying as a whole, it becomes clear that by His action and word Jesus intends the bread to be a means whereby the disciples may participate in the power of His surrendered life. There is no suggestion of any intention to transform the bread into a quasi-material or mystic 'food of the soul.' Materially, it is unchanged; spiritually, it becomes a means for

the communication of life, because it is invested by Jesus with new meaning and power. The life is His own, offered for men and made available for them" (p. 124; see also pp. 122-123).

- 10. Jeremias, op. cit., pp. 72-87.
- For various views, see J. Huby, Le Discours de Jésus après la Cène (Paris: Beauchesne, 1942), pp. 8-10. Huby himself thinks that cc. 15-16 represent a discourse spoken by Jesus before the Last Supper.
- 12. Jesus here speaks in terms of "corporate personality" which T. W. Manson describes as follows: "This term is a convenient expression of the fact that in the Semitic mind there is a constant occillation between the conception of the social group - family, clan, tribe, nation - as an association of individuals in the plural or as a single living social organism about which one can more properly speak in the singular. Where the tendency to think of the social group as a single social organism (one flesh) is powerful, there is often also a strong tendency to see the corporate personality as embodied or expressed in an individual. The king is apt to be thought of as embodying the corporate personality of his subjects. It is at this point that the transition from Son of Man as a name for the people of the saints of the Most High to Son of Man as a Messianic title becomes possible" (The Servant-Messiah: A Study of the Public Ministry of Jesus, Cambridge, 1953, p. 74.) He refers to Daniel 7, where "Son of Man" refers to both the Messianic Israel and the Messias. Probably the same corporate personality is to be recognized in the famous Servant of Yahweh Songs in Second Isaias.

# THEOLOGY OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

In three official decisions, each of tremendous significance for the Church's worship, Pope John XXIII calls attention to the devotion to the Precious Blood: approval of a new litany, issuance of the Apostolic Letter, *Inde a Primis*, and insertion of the invocation *Blessed Be His Most Precious Blood* into the Divine Praises. These official acts have been accompanied by a very personal private and semi-private encouragement of the devotion on the part of the pontiff in his audiences.

As to the *Litany of the Precious Blood*, he remarked to the Superior General of the Fathers of the Precious Blood, "It is shorter than the existing litanies . . . obsolete phrases were discarded. . . . I recite it every day." The Apostolic Letter was not left to subordinates: "Ordinarily I leave such matters to the vicariate of Rome, but I want to make the devotion to the Precious Blood a very special thing." For the pope this devotion is "our devotion," "a solid devotion," "a primary devotion, which I shall do everything in my power to spread." To the amazement of his auditors the pontiff asked the Superior General of the Fathers of the Precious Blood to furnish copies of the litany for the pope to have at hand for his visitors.<sup>1</sup>

Official approval of the new litany adds a magnificent public prayer to the liturgy. In her litanies the Church solemnly adores God and beseeches his help for her special needs. She chants them in pomp and splendor in Eucharistic adoration. Through them she begs humbly on Rogation Days. She is never so profoundly suppliant as when her prelates implore the help of all the saints of heaven before the imposition of hands in ordination to sacred order.

A litany is whispered over the dying. Mary's litany usually concludes her rosary. Jealously the Church guards the list of litanies and limits its extension to the decision of the Roman Pontiff.<sup>2</sup> Of the many existing litanies of the Precious Blood (we know of no less than eight), none was selected, but a new one was composed. Its simple, lapidary form and structure and profound dogmatic content exclude all subjective effervescence, which is not absent in certain prayers of a previous generation. It has warmth and dignity matching the stately liturgical forms in use for centuries. Its insertion into the Ritual with its rich indulgences reflects the faith of the Church.<sup>3</sup> It is the stamp of solemn approval on the devotion to the Precious Blood.

The instruction and admonition of the *Inde a Primis* explicitly confirms what the litany implies. For all its official character, it is an intimate personal document flowing from the paternal heart of a pope who recalls the practice of the devotion in the home of his early childhood. Though it is not, as such, an infallible pronouncement, in the opinion of this writer it does decide one doctrinal point: the devotion to the Precious Blood may no longer be considered "secondary." It must rank with the devotion to the Sacred Heart and the Holy Name. The pope makes a sharp distinction between devotions which are *fundamental* and more likely to promote holiness and those which are described as "*peculiares.*"<sup>4</sup>

In the audience referred to above, the pope specifically asserted, "The devotion to the Precious Blood is always most important. It must be considered among the primary devotions of the Church. In fact there are three principal devotions, to the Holy Name, to the Sacred Heart, to the Precious Blood: but both the Name and Heart have value only through the Precious Blood." Though made in a private audience, these statements clearly indicate the intent of the teaching contained in the Apostolic Letter.<sup>5</sup>

By approval of the invocation *Blessed Be His Most Precious Blood*, the Church manifests her desire that the devotion be spread among the faithful. These praises are usually chanted or recited after Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, which Pius XII finds most appropriate for the conclusion of "many exercises of piety, customary among the faithful." The new invocation expresses adoration for the Blood of Christ in the Eucharist and gratitude

for the favors granted to those "whom the Immaculate Blood of the Lamb has redeemed." $^{6}$ 

#### THE SOURCES

The Apostolic Letter clearly indicates the need for a study of the sources, the first of which is the Magisterium of the Church. Paradoxically, the literature expressly dealing with the devotion is not extensive at all, whereas the most cursory inquiry into the sources suggests an immensity of materials which only years of research could exploit. Scriptural studies in this area have had a most auspicious beginning. The area of the "piety of the faithful" manifested in legend, art, drama, and other popular forms reveals the depth and warmth of a widespread "*Schaureligion*." Dismissing all irreverence we may say that the devotion is a "natural" for truly religious art. Precious Blood art does exist as a deep expression of true liturgical piety.<sup>7</sup> But the absorption of sources through theological exposition and synthesis and likewise the general acceptance seems to be historically "tardy."

By analogy with the development of other devotions (to St. Joseph, for instance) we might seek an explanation in the life of the Church herself. The devotion to the Precious Blood as suited to our times most especially is intimately bound up with recent doctrinal and liturgical developments. Its doctrine and practice could not flourish in our modern age before the great historical movements inaugurated by St. Pius X and brought to a climax in the *Mystici Corporis*, the *Mediator Dei* and the new Paschal liturgy. In this same period the study and practice of the devotion have been immensely enriched through fruitful development of three doctrinal areas. These in turn have profited from deeper insight into the doctrine of the Blood of Redemption.

Our age has witnessed a renewed study of Christology (and Mariology), historically, dogmatically, spiritually. There has been a more fruitful penetration into the mystery which is the sacramental-sacrificial Church, or Christ operative in the Church. And the approach has been, in the most magnificent sense of the word, eschatological. As never before, we today see Christ in His history (scripture-tradition), in His Mystical Body, in His glory. And all of this in the light of the Redemption through the Blood!

In the divine Trinity, the Logos or Second Person is the eternal image and manifestation of the Father. Through Him all things were created, all things exist as patterned after Him. "All things were made through him" (Jn 1, 3). "He is the image of the invisible God. . . . All things have been created through and unto him" (Col 1, 15f). The hypostatic union of the eternal invisible image with visible human nature is the incarnation of the eternal image. God made man according to His own image. And this image or pattern of man is in the eternal Son, the perfect likeness of the invisible God. On the basis of this Scriptural truth, the dogmatic theologian Matthias Scheeben says:

indeed this very relation of the two images joined with the immense diversity is the more basic reason why in the incarnation the one image could be and should be united with the other. For the incarnation is . . . the penetration of the inner image of God into the external image, manifesting and communicating in and through it the entire inner divine glory externally. . . . And conversely this external image of God is drawn to the internal. Thus the external image of God, which is man, is perfected and crowned through the inner image of God.<sup>8</sup>

Some writers hold that God would have sent His Son even had there been no sin. In this event the Christ of history would have suffered no agony or pain. There would have been no bloody death. However, we are not concerned with this attractive hypothesis, nor with the cognate problem of the source of the grace of angels and man before his fall. The present order centers in the suffering Christ who restored us after the fall. Even thus He enjoys the primacy over all creation: "For it has pleased God the Father, that in him all his fullness should dwell, and that through him he should reconcile to himself all things, whether on the earth or in the heavens" (Col 1, 19f). Christ Himself says: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me" (Jn 14, 6).

God spoke the eternal Word in the incarnation, offering loving mercy to man. Mankind responded through Mary who joyfully consented to become the Mother of the God-man. In and through her, mankind accepted its mediator, its new head supplanting Adam the sinner. Now He who spoke to man as the Word of the Father turns to God with Mary and a united mankind speaking

in the name of all to the Father in truly human words and signs. Here we have the supreme dialog, which is the basis of all religion. The response made to God is the act of ultimate devotion. In the name of the race, the incarnate Word offers to God His total submission in an act of supreme love which sums up His entire interior and exterior life. It is expressed in the supreme human sign of submission to God: the *shedding of Blood*. It has infinite value, the value of merit, satisfaction, redemption, efficacy, sacrifice, in adoring submission. Submission, because He is man! Infinite, because He is God! Thus for the first time in human history God is worthily adored and man is saved. And all other worthy adoration of God centers in this one act of sacrifice through the shedding of Blood. Man is remade in the divine image. Through the incarnate Son men again become sons of God, "partakers of the divine nature" (1 Pt 1, 4).

#### THE OBJECT OF THE DEVOTION

Consistently, theology and instruction dealing with the Precious Blood have proclaimed the devotion as a special cult paid to the Blood as the price of man's redemption. The Blood was singled out as worthy of singular honor as a part of the blessed humanity adorable in all its parts, since adoration of the human nature was directed to the divine person in the hypostatic union.<sup>9</sup>

Though this position is unexceptionable, it seems to the writer that the devotion must include more than adoration of the Precious Blood. In the light of the recent developments in the life of the Church and the theology just referred to, we should look upon the devotion to the Precious Blood as essentially cultal. Traditionally, one of the most significant of prayer forms used in the Church is the *Seven Offerings of the Most Precious Blood*. Of equal significance is the prayer, "Eternal Father," in which the Blood is offered in atonement for sin.<sup>10</sup> The entire prayer of the Church in which priest and laity participate centers in the mystical offering of the Blood in the Eucharistic sacrifice.

The Church herself is essentially the Society of Cult. Purchased by His Blood, she issued from the Riven Side.<sup>11</sup> Such is the profound meaning of the Blood and Water (Jn 19, 34 ff). As sacramental-sacrificial society, she alone worships the Father in spirit

and truth. The Christ of glory is her supreme high priest, upon whom all the ministers of the Church essentially depend. It is the clear teaching of theology that Christ in glory offers the sacrifice, administers the sacraments, gives grace to souls, as the principal minister. He imparts supernatural life to the whole Mystical Body.<sup>12</sup> Going beyond the mere juridical concept of the Church (though never rejecting it), noted theologians today present the Church as the sacrament of Christ, visible sign of all graces and spiritual gifts, as Christ Himself is the sacrament of God in His marvelous incarnation. Accordingly the Church contains His mysteries, His effective presence, and above all His sacrifice. Veiled and shrouded they are, for we still move in the shadow of sacramental order, but the signs are truly effective through the divine power and divine contact.

The fulness of redemptive grace merited by the shedding of Blood is brought to us through the glorified humanity as the instrument joined to divinity the sacrament of the Word, effectively contacting the members of the Mystical Body (and even going beyond actual membership) principally through the sevenfold instrumentality of the sacraments in the basic sacrament, which is the Church.<sup>13</sup> The sacraments are not incidental to the Church. They are of her very sum and substance, part and parcel of the Mystical Body, the most exalted prayer to God in adoration and petition.

Thus we share in the fruit of the Blood shed on Calvary's height. "The passion of Christ is extended to the end of the world," says Leo I.<sup>14</sup> "I find you in your mysteries," says St. Ambrose.<sup>15</sup> Always one, the Church and Christ, Augustine can speak of her as the "one Christ loving Himself." Our love for the Church is affectionate embrace of the Spirit of Christ, who in the flesh is the love of the eternal Father for His children. Again Augustine, "In so far as one loves the Church, does he possess the Holy Spirit."<sup>16</sup> This identification is aptly expressed in the words, "He who beholds the Church beholds Christ."

As the Church is one with Christ, so we are one with Him through the Church. The prayer of the Church and our own prayer mingle with the prayer of Christ. Most effective is the Eucharistic prayer in which there is the communion and communication of men with God through Christ. All the faithful partake, the priest through official sacred order and indelible sign of ordained priesthood, and the laity through the sacerdotal sign of baptism and con-

firmation, which link every member of the Church with Christ the Priest. Though all the sacraments belong to the order of worship, these three are sacraments of perpetual priesthood, deriving all their meaning from the High Priest who forms the Church in its supreme duty of offering worship to God the Father through Him.<sup>17</sup> The bond is sealed in Blood: the bond between Christ and the Church, the bond between the High Priest and the ministers, between the ordained priest and the members of the Worshipping Society; the bond is the Blood of sacrifice. It follows, therefore, that devotion to that Blood is fundamental and essential in our relation to God. It is clearly the sacrificial, the priestly devotion, the devotion of worship.

## THREE PHASES OF THE DEVOTION

We adore the Blood as an important *part* of the humanity united to the Logos, hypostatically. In a sense this is only the first stage of the devotion. Perhaps we could term it the static stage. But we must go beyond this stage. The devotion must be concerned with the "shedding" of the Blood, with the redeemer who saves us through Blood, with our offering of the Blood in cooperation with Christ the priest. In this vastly comprehensive sense there are three phases of the devotion. First, the earthly which culminated in the bloody death and which is now historically concluded. The object of unending love and reverence, it is profoundly present through divine operation and contact in the second phase. This is sacramental-sacrificial, centering in the Eucharist and embracing the whole life-worship of the Church on earth. Finally, there is the celestial phase in which the community of the blessed unites more firmly than ever with Christ the eternal priest and honors the Lamb that was slain (Ap 5). The Lamb has always been considered one of the most significant symbols of the devotion to the Precious Blood.

If this doctrine is correct, we must conclude that the devotion to the Precious Blood goes far beyond earnest meditation on the passion and death, necessary as this may be, far beyond the sad and plaintive liturgy of Lent and Holy Week with all its profound significance in the divine worship. Climax of Good Friday, culmination of Christ's merit, satisfaction, sacrifice, is the glorious resurrection.

Through resurrection-ascension Christ has become the life-giving Spirit bestowing the Christ-life of grace on man. Purchased by His Blood, men are now God's possession, freed from slavery and the tyrannical clutch of the evil spirit. Now begins the efficacious action of Christ in glory through the Church, His Mystical Body, centering in the Eucharist. We choose to follow noted theologians who teach that it will continue in the Church Triumphant in the celestial sacrifice of the eternal priesthood. Christ's redemptive action continues in the distribution of the fruits of Calvary even after the veils of the sacraments and the Eucharistic sacrifice are lifted in eternal vision. But again, all derives from the Shed Blood of Calvary, now eternally offered. This, it seems, is the rich full meaning of the "everlasting priesthood."<sup>18</sup>

The celestial priesthood is also clearly indicated in the vision of the Lamb before the throne, depicted in the Apocalypse.<sup>19</sup> Recent inquiry has opened up vast possibilities of study in this entire area dealing with the eschatological and apocalyptical significance of the sacrificial Blood. Our devotion helps to see in depth and order and full implication the revealed truths of the resurrection-ascension and our own resurrection in glory; the saving efficacy of Christ's work in the Church; the celestial priesthood and sacrifice in its endless vistas; the congregation of the blessed in union with Christ. All are essentially bound up with the Blood of sacrifice. Theological study of the devotion thus progresses with the enrichment of theology in other areas. Enrichment is mutual!<sup>20</sup>

Pope John stresses three devotions united by an unbreakable bond. It follows that we should study the devotion to the Precious Blood in relation to the Sacred Heart and the Holy Name. And these in relation to the Precious Blood! Obviously there is no room for party spirit, neither in theology nor in spiritual instruction. Christ is not divided! The devotions are most intimately connected. If the "whole human race can find room in His Heart," it is for the simple reason that the love of His Heart embraces all who are redeemed by His Blood, the entire race and each man in his concrete and total individuality.

Repeating a thought of Pascal we may say the Savior presses the last drop of His Blood from His riven side with the words, "I shed this last drop for you." We may also say that He calls us each by name with all the love of His Heart, offering the graces

merited by His redemptive Blood: the last drop is to fill the cup of His sacrifice to overflowing. He shed it all for us. And when He calls us by name with the love of His heart and the graces of His Blood, we must respond. His call, His gift, demand the response of total commitment to the Christ whom we invoke by the redemptive Name of Jesus. In no other name can we be saved. This Name is "above every name" (Phil 2, 9). The Litany of the Holy Name has no invocation of the mere "name of Jesus," Jesus Himself is invoked, the Redeemer is called by His Name of Redeemer. Far from being the Great Unknown, He is known to us as "the Christ, the Son of God," and believing in Him we "have life in his name" (Jn 20, 31). We shall invoke Him with love even in the glory of eternity!

We have every reason to look upon the concern of the sovereign pontiff for the spread of the devotion to the Precious Blood as providentially suited to the needs of our age. In this devotion men can find unity and peace in a secure bond with God the Father, "For it has pleased God the Father that through him he should reconcile to himself all things, making peace through the blood of his cross" (Col 1, 19f.).

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## FOOTNOTES

- Cf. Gasparian, July 16, 1960. This is the semi-official bulletin of the American Precious Blood Fathers. The Pontiff's words in Italian: "Io sono a vostra disposizione per tutto quanto possa occorrere e per la propagazione del nostro Culto."
- 2. Canon 1259, #2.
- 3. Cf. AAS, LII (1960), 412-413.
- 4. Cf. AAS, LII (1960), 545 ff.
- 5. Cf. Gasparian, loc. cit.
- Pius XII, Mediator Dei, par. 135. The invocation was approved on October 12, 1960, for the universal Church, although it had long been in use in churches and chapels of the societies of the Precious Blood. Cf. AAS, LII (1960), 987.
- 7. Cf. Proceedings of the First Precious Blood Study Week (Carthagena,

Ohio: Messenger Press, 1958). Historic research into the devotion gives evidence of a great popular love for the Precious Blood manifested in many shrines and "relics." The latter number as many as 250. Whatever their form, the true object of this extensive devotion is the Blood of Redemption. Unerringly the "sensus fidelium" is concerned with the true object of the devotion, whether the material object be a bleeding crucifix or a sacred Host or a relic of the passion.

- 8. Scheeben, Dogmatik, III Buch, p. 147, n. 356. Cf. Lother Speyer, Das Christus Bild und die Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts, p. 14.
- 9. This doctrine is found in many sources. Cf. Edwin G. Kaiser, C.PP.S., "The Devotion to the Precious Blood," *AER*, 83 (1930), 1 ff. In this paper the writer sought to explain the basic theology of the devotion entirely on the basis of the "adoration due to the Precious Blood."
- 10. The prayer reads: "Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ in atonement for my sins, in supplication for the holy souls in purgatory, and for the needs of holy Church."
- 11. Cf. Acts 20, 28. This doctrine of the purchase by Blood is stressed in the encyclical, Mystici Corporis, par. 102, 122; it also points out that the Church flows from the Riven Side, par. 29.
- Pius XII, Mystici Corporis, par. 55: "He [Christ] selects, He determines, He distributes every single grace to every single person 'according to the measure of the giving of Christ.' "Cf. also par. 31, 68.
- 13. St. Thomas teaches that the humanity of Christ is the cause of grace instrumentally (efficiently) through the very acts of the passion, the resurrection and the ascension. They are the instruments of the divine power even though the effect produced is distant in time and space. They are effective in the order of sign. This divine power "presentialiter attingit omnia loca et tempora; et talis contactus virtualis sufficit ad rationem huius efficientiae" (III, q. 56, a. 1, ad 3). As divine act personalized, the death on the Cross has a mystery content which transcends time. It exists now in the living Christ, Based on the divine act it has a perennial content which was and still is directed to us. Cf. Henry Schillebeeckx, "Sakramente als Organe der Gottbegegnung," in Feiner, Trütsch, Böckle, Fragen der Theologie Heute (Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1957), p. 391. - Similar is the thought of Karl Rahner, S.J., Heilige Stunde und Passionsandacht (Freiberg: Herder, 1949), p. 15: "Your childhood is past, but you are now eternally One who experienced that childhood, and only because you once were a child. Your tears are wiped away. But now you are uniquely the One who has wept and whose Heart can never forget why He wept. Your trials and sorrows are over. But the Man who was shaken to His depths is Eternal. Your earthly life and death are past, but the meaning and value they held is eternal in you, and therefore is present among us. Present eternally here is the courage of your life which triumphed over all obstacles, the love which formed and transformed this life. Eternally present is your Heart, which gave unquestioning assent to

the unfathomable designs of the Father. Present is your obedience, fidelity, meekness, love for sinners. . . . What you were, what you experienced and suffered is therefore present to us."

- 14. Leo I, De Pass., XIX, c. 383.
- 15. St. Ambrose, Apol. Prophetae David, 58.
- 16. St. Augustine, In Ev. Joan, tr. 32, n. 8.
- 17. In his moral theology, Haering shows that the entire Christ an life is rooted in the priestly and sacrificial: cf. Bernard Haering, Gesetz Christi (5th edition, 1959), p. 785 f.: "Precisely because the Christian life has its roots in the Sacrifice of Calvary it also reflects the splendor and dignity of priesthood. Union with the Crucified means bond with His priesthood and the supreme sacrificial act on the Cross. To follow Christ on the way to the Cross for the consummation of His priestly Sacrifice, to be partner with Him on this priestly path, we must be ingrafted in His sacrificial power and sacrificial dignity through holy baptism. The baptized Christian who humbly and loyally accepts his cross day by day, submits freely to the spirit of sacrifice and merges his sentiments with the sacrificial sentiments of the High Priest Jesus Christ. He is united with the High Priest of Calvary for the fulfillment of the priestly assignment which flows from assimilation to Him, particularly through the sacramental character of baptism, confirmation and holy order. . . . The imitation is imitation in Christ's priesthood; it is following the priestly way, the way of the cross, the way of utter love. This is to say that our bond with Christ is the bond of worship of the heavenly Father, of divine cult. This implies partnership in offering, in being offered, partnership with the High Priest and the Sacrificial Lamb, Jesus Christ."
- 18. Cf. Heb 7, 24f. For a bold and lofty explanation of the celestial priesthood and the eternal sacrifice in its relation to the glorified humanity and the community of the blessed, cf. Juan Alfaro, S.J., "Cristo Glorioso, Revelador del Padre," and Teodorico da Castel S. Pietro, O.F.M. Cap., "Il Sacerdozio celeste di Cristo nella lettera agli Ebrei," in *Gregorianum: Christus Victor Mortis*, XXXIX (1958), 222-270, 319-334.
- 19. Cf. Burkhard von Neunheuser, O.S.B., "Gedanken zu einer Theologie des Lammes," *Enkainia* (Dusseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1956), 123 ff.
- 20. In the absence of official decisions of the Church and the guidance of a body of theological thinking, the individual theologian must proceed very cautiously, with deep respect for the sincere and informed criticism of others. And above all for the authority of the Church! With all this in mind, we note the following regarding the object of the Devotion to the Precious Blood: it is concerned with the Blood of Christ as an important part of the blessed humanity which in all its parts is worthy of divine cult. But more specifically we are concerned with the Blood *as shed*, with the Blood shedding, whether really or mystically. This we call the immediate object. (Perhaps we could

call the Blood itself the physical or material object.) The Blood shedding is the sign and symbol, the most perfect and effective sign and symbol, of the whole work of Redemption, which is the adequate object of the devotion. Ultimate object of this and any other devotion is the Triune God, whom we approach through the Incarnate Redeemer. The formal acts of the devotion are adoration and sacrificial offering. These, we think, constitute the cult of the devotion: the Blood is adored in its shedding and offered to God. In this "shedding" we include the historic, mystical, the celestial. If the latter involves the theologian in difficulties, we must bear in mind that limiting the object of the devotion to the earthly life of Christ and the present sacramental-sacrificial order also creates a problem. The ultimate and celestial triumph of the eternal priesthood should in some manner be considered a truly "sacrificial priesthood." - By way of one practical conclusion from all this, it is but one among very many, we should not make the Passion and Death of Christ the exclusive (or almost exclusive) object of certain spiritual exercises, such as the rosary. Should the Spirit of God guide certain souls to a very special concentration on the Passion and Death, these still do not constitute the entire devotion to the Precious Blood.

# RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF BLOOD

"Blood" is from a Germanic root with the basic meaning of "bloom." The Greek term aiµa, in the sense of something which "arouses awe or reverence," belongs much more closely to the vocabulary of religion (see "Blut," Reallex Ant Chr 2: 459).

IN MYTHOLOGY. In Norse myths, the skalds characterize blood as an intoxicant on the basis of the myth of Odin's drink of the poets (Edda, Skaldskaparmal 27). Blood itself is not personified, probably because, unlike water, it did not appear prominently as a great natural force or power. However, it was brought into numerous mythical relations with other things, and especially with the sun. In Egypt Ra (the Sun) was said to have originated from drops of blood. The association, blood and fire, is self-evident, but in Mexico it plays an especially significant role in Aztec religion. On the other hand, the blood of menstruation turned the imagination to the moon. The Bambuti, for example, call menstrual blood "moon-blood" [P. Schebesta, Die Bambuti. Pygmaen 4 v., Brussels, 1938-50) 3: 190]. Practically the same idea is present in the Egyptian hieroglyph signifying the blood of Isis. Since this blood was shed to restore the dead Osiris to life, there is a clear association here of blood and life. The ideas of the connection between blood, fertility, and earth are firmly anchored in ancestor-worship. A Papuan group has a myth in which this combination is associated with that of blood and fire. Belief in the vampire is not found in this complex. It has perhaps a special origin, being found to some extent perhaps in animism. E. Rohde made animism the basis for his detailed exposition of the relations between blood and the soul in Greek religion (see E. Rohde, Psyche, Eng. tr. H. B. Hillis, Lon-

don 1925). In totemism, the blood of circumcision is regarded as a totem, at least in isolated instances [see Zeitschrift für Ethnologie 76 (1951) 63].

SOCIOLOGICAL, CULTIC, AND MAGICAL ASPECTS. Incest is generally forbidden even in preethnic groups, the prohibition being based on a feeling of fear or dread. At the same time, in all such groups the duty of blood revenge is already in evidence. It originated out of the barbarous experiences of wanton bloodshed in the kinship group. An extension of the kinship group by the mingling of the blood of men of different family origins — a procedure that may be described as a kind of primitive peace ritual (see König, Rel Hdbch. "Friedensritualien," 263) — is realized through the blood brotherhood.

The blood dance of the Bushmen has less of the religious in itself than the practice of sprinkling themselves with their own blood found among the Pygmies and the Pomo, for this procedure approaches the central concept of sacrifice. But in such practices, even if animals are killed to secure blood, as among the Yukaghirs, there is not yet question of a cultic act. It is only when such killing is thought of as an essential part of worship that blood sacrifice, including human sacrifice, especially to the sun, enters upon its development. Blood magic likewise enters only at this stage. It serves especially to give greater strength or power to implements, vessels, actions, or persons, playing a special role in bier ordeals.

Alois Closs

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# RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF BLOOD IN THE BIBLE

The Biblical significance of blood is summed up in Lv 17, 11: "The life of a living body is in its blood." This basic principle governs the Biblical theology of blood. Life belongs to God, and so blood belongs to Him. This explains both the moral and the cultic practices in which blood has a part. Some texts that refer to blood evoke also the idea of death. Hence, some scholars make blood the symbol of death. But blood is a sign of death only when it is poured out. This is precisely how blood came to stand for life. Once blood has gone out of a body, death follows. Because of this symbolism, the Biblical concept of blood affected the moral and cultic life of the Israelites.

MORAL LIFE. Men were forbidden to eat the blood of animals (Lv 3, 17). Although the prohibition may have had its origin in hygienic considerations of the ancient world, the Mosaic Law assigned it a religious context. Because all life belonged to God, the blood of slain animals had to be poured on the altar, given to God (Lv 17, 11). Those who lived too far from the sanctuary expressed their faith in God as the sole Lord of life by pouring the blood on the ground and covering it with earth (Dt 12, 24; Lv 17, 13).

Men are forbidden to shed the blood of other men. Those "who shed the blood of the innocent" incur bloodguilt, a crime punishable by death (Nm 35, 16-34). A "brother's blood" shed unjustly cries to heaven for vengeance (Gn 4, 8-16). "Men of blood," i.e., men who unjustly shed blood, are wicked, and the anger of God falls on them. The punishment of the offender rests with the avenger of blood (Nm 35, 19; see BLOOD VENGEANCE) and with the whole community (Dt 21, 8-9). God demands the punishment of

the murderer because no one but God has the claim on blood, the life of another.

CULTIC LIFE. Blood held the central place in animal sacrifice. It signified the flow of life between God and man. Poured out on the altar (representative of God), it joined the offerer to God because he had placed his hand on the animal and had become one with it. The blood was not a substitute for that of the offerer but a ritual expression of the total surrender to God. God received the blood and returned it to the offerer in the form of divine life. Thus the desired effect of sacrifice, communion with God, was achieved.

The covenant sacrifice of Sinai was especially significant in underlining blood as the sign of a flow of life between God and man. See COVENANT (IN THE BIBLE). There God set up a special bond between Himself and His people. Moses took the blood of the sacrificial victims and sprinkled it partly on the altar and partly on the people, declaring, "This is the blood of the covenant" (Ex 24, 8). The blood ratified the covenant and expressed externally what had happened. God and man had been joined together in an agreement of friendship, and the blood sprinkled on the altar and the people was a forceful expression of the union that had taken place.

Closely associated with the covenant of Sinai was the slaying of the Passover lamb and the sprinkling of the doorposts with its blood (Ex 12, 1-13, 21-23). The blood of the lamb saved the Israelites from the death of their firstborn (Ex 12, 26-30). The sacrifice of the lamb on the feast of the Passover became a ritual reminder that the people had been redeemed by the blood of the lamb. Thus blood entered the theology of redemption. It became a symbol of liberation (from slavery) and of acquisition (by God). The blood of the paschal lamb was witness to the faith that God does enter into contact with man to bestow the divine favor that the blood ritual signified.

Another significant sacrifice was that of the Day of Atonement (Leviticus ch. 16). The blood rite was especially elaborate on this day. The high priest entered the Holy of Holies and sprinkled the propitiatory (the top of the ark) with blood. The altars of incense and of holocausts also were sprinkled. These rites underlined the special power of blood in expiating sin. In fact, its special value in expiatory sacrifices generally came to be high-

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lighted: "It is the blood, as the seat of life, that makes atonement" (Lv 17, 11). The blood of the victim should not be viewed as a punishment for sin. It forgave sins because it liberated life. The life poured out on the altar was received by God, who returned it to the repentant sinner in the form of divine life. This restored him to a state of friendship with God.

The blood rite illumines the vocabulary of expiation — propitiation, atonement, justification. Blood is a propitiation for sin because it makes God propitious to the sinner. He looks favorably on him because the blood poured out symbolizes so well the broken heart of the sinner. Blood achieves the justification of the sinner because it makes him just or holy by bringing God's own life to him. Because it restores a relationship of friendship with God, it is blood of "atonement"; the sinner is set "at one" with God. *See* EXPLATION (IN THE BIBLE).

Sacrificial blood played a large part also in the ordination to OT priesthood. The blood was used to anoint the ear, hand, and foot of those ordained (Ex 29, 20). The anointing of these extremities of the body together proclaimed that the whole man was dedicated to God. Surely this is the meaning of the final anointing in which the blood mixed with oil was sprinkled on the priests and their vestments. This made them "sacred" (Ex 29, 21). The blood was the bearer of God's life to the priests. Ordination made them holy because they were totally immersed in God's own life. See ORDINATION.

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# PRECIOUS BLOOD IN THE BIBLE

The term Precious Blood is traditionally used of the blood of Christ in keeping with the words of 1 Pt 1, 18-19: "You were redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ," i.e., the blood that was the price of our Redemption.

The NT writers are anxious that Christians should see the excellence of Jesus' sacrifice. It surpasses the bloody sacrifices of the Old Law because blood is no longer merely a sign or symbol of the flow of life between God and man. The blood of Jesus is divine blood and bears the life of God in itself. It is the cause of the divine life that it brings to those in whose favor it works.

While the NT writers stress the preeminence of the sacrifice of Jesus, at the same time they develop a theology of the Precious Blood according to the sacrificial theology of the Old Testament. The Apostles' teaching enters three areas: the salvific death and Resurrection of Christ, the Eucharistic liturgy, and the heavenly liturgy.

John recalls how blood and water flowed from the heart of the Savior (Jn 19, 34; 1 Jn 5, 6-8), assuring us that the Spirit of God, whom the water symbolizes, flows to us through the sacrifice of Jesus' blood. Peter, in a passage of great power, proclaims our Redemption through the Precious Blood (1 Pt 1, 18-19). Paul assigns our Redemption (Eph 1, 7) and justification (Rom 5, 9) to the saving blood. Through it we are brought near to God (Eph 2, 13). It has given us peace (Col 1, 20) and "has been put forward" (i.e., displayed publicly) as a propitiation for our sins (Rom 3, 25). The "great price" with which we have been bought (1 Cor 6, 20; 7, 22)

is the blood of Christ (Acts 20, 28). All the rich theology here is easily understood by referring to the theology of blood in the Old Testament [see BLOOD, RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF (IN THE BIBLE)].

The bloody sacrifice of Jesus is reenacted sacramentally in the Eucharist [see EUCHARIST (BIBLICAL DATA)]. When Jesus instituted the Eucharist and declared, "This is my blood of the new covenant" (Mk 14, 24), He was resuming the words of Moses (Ex 24, 8) by which the Sinai covenant had been inaugurated. Jesus' blood is the blood of the covenant because it effectively sets up a bond of friendship with those upon whom it is sprinkled. The Church repeats the Eucharistic action according to Christ's command, and the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus. The sacrificial blood of each Mass renews the covenant of Calvary. It effects a real union with God because the body and blood of Jesus are given to the redeemed as their food and drink. This banquet is the pledge of eternal glory for body and soul (Jn 6, 54-58). In the resurrection of the body the total life-bearing efficacy of the Precious Blood is realized. Paul reminds us that the blood of the Eucharist joins us to one another as well as to Christ. The "sharing of the blood of Christ" (1 Cor 10, 16; 1 Jn 1, 7) makes Christians one.

In heaven the blood of Jesus remains the eternal bond joining the redeemed to the throne of the Father. Through it the saints have been victorious (Ap 7, 14; see also 1, 6), and they continuously proclaim the glory of the blood of the Lamb (Ap 5, 9-13). The picture that Hebrews presents of Jesus entering the heavenly sanctuary with His own blood (Heb 9, 11-14; 10, 19-22) shows how acceptable the sacrifice of Jesus was. By His eternal priesthood He offers the sacrifice of His blood in glory (Heb 7, 24-25). The tableau of the festive assembly of those in heaven and on earth gathered around the "sprinkling of blood" brings together the earthly and the heavenly liturgy in a tribute to the blood of Jesus (Heb 12, 22-24).

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# THEOLOGY OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

The theology of the Precious Blood deals with the mystery of Redemption through the Blood of Christ in all its phases: the real shedding on Calvary as summation of the whole earthly redemptive work of Jesus, the mystic shedding in the central action of the sacramental Church and focal point of the life of grace, and the final consummation in the celestial liturgy and the eternal priesthood. It is the special function of this theology to explain the mystery in relation to the devotion to the Precious Blood. In both the basic concern is the whole work of Redemption: totum opus redemptionis.

This work is divine redemptive action on the part of the triune God offering mercy to man, wrought through Christ, the priestmediator between fallen mankind and God. It is accomplished through the Incarnation of the Logos, the Second Person in the Holy Trinity, all His acts (called objective Redemption) bringing grace (and glory) to man (called subjective Redemption).

WHO AND WHY. The mystery of Redemption by Blood properly involves the mystery of the *why* (motive) and the *who* (Person) of the Incarnation. Was the Incarnation eternally decreed because of the Redemption through the Blood? All agree that in this present sinful order it was. But some theologians (Thomists) maintain that had there been no sin, there would have been no Incarnation at all; others (Scotists), that there would have been an Incarnation without pain or Blood. Still other writers reject this ancient dispute as purely hypothetic and in no way dealing with the present world. The dispute, they say, assumes an order of priority in the divine decree. They hold that God, by one simple decree (with no interior

order of priority), determined to create this universe in which sin would be permitted (not caused) by God and the sinful creature redeemed. A world redeemed, they contend, gives greater glory to God than a sinless world not in need of Redemption. In this view the Blood of Redemption is central in the universe, the source of grace to Adam in his innocence and to the angels (F. Malmberg).

As to the who in the Incarnation, faith teaches that only the Second Person became man, though St. Thomas holds that either God the Father or Holy Spirit could have become incarnate, giving striking arguments *ex decentia* for the Incarnation of the Logos. But, it is being asked, is there not a more profound cogency to his argument? Perhaps the very order of origins in the Trinity makes it impossible that the Father eternally unborn be born in time; perhaps only the Son born from eternity in the Godhead could be born in time. This bold linking of the *oikonomia* (God's work outside the Trinity) with the *theologia* (the Trinity itself) would relate the work of Redemption to the very heart of the inner life of God.

Whether one accepts or rejects these insights (they are not presented as certain at all), there is a special significance (which no one denies) in the Second Person's being the image of the Father and His becoming man, having the created image of God, patterned on the Logos in whom all things were made.

Indeed this very relation of the two images . . . is the more basic reason why in the Incarnation the one image could be and should be hypostatically united with the other. For the Incarnation is . . . the penetration of the inner image of God into the external image, manifesting and communicating in and through it the entire inner glory externally. . . . And conversely, this external image of God is drawn to the internal. Thus the external image of God, which is man, is perfected and crowned through the inner image of God. [M. Scheeben, *Dogmatik* 3. 147 (No. 356).]

The image is the Word, the Logos, eternally uttered in the bosom of the Godhead and uttered in time in the incarnation. Through Mary mankind responded and accepted its mediator (*see* FIAT OF MARY). Now He who spoke to man as the Word of the Father turns to God with Mary and a united mankind, offering homage of obedience and love to an offended majesty in the one sign and symbol that is the supreme act of submission, the loving 332

acceptance of death in the shedding of Blood. It was merit, satisfaction, Redemption, efficacy, and sacrifice: it was death because the giving of one's life for friends is the most exalted act of love. It was death because Christ chose to share human existence and experience, a kind of life that is marked by death. In human existence all one's life acts receive their impress and definitive integration in death (A. Grillmeier).

CALVARY AND THE CHURCH. Calvary was death, but it was bloody death, the death unto life. The climax of Good Friday, the culmination of Christ's merit, satisfaction, sacrifice was the glorious Resurrection of Christ. Through the Resurrection-Ascension Christ has become the life-giving Spirit bestowing the Christ-life, the Godlife of grace on man. Now man redeemed, purchased by Blood, is God's possession, no longer slave given to death: death has erased death and given immortality.

This divine life is given to men under the veil of sign, as all Christ's actions in the flesh are sacrament, grace-producing. He is the Sacrament of God, visible sign of salvation (see JESUS CHRIST, THE GREAT SACRAMENT). And the Church that flowed from His riven side in the symbol of blood and water is His sacrament, for it is the sign of all His grace (see SACRAMENT OF THE CHURCH). In union with it men are one with Him, men's prayers mingling with those of the Church and His. In the Eucharistic prayer there is communion and communication with God through Him. All partake, the priest through official sacral order and indelible sign of priesthood, the laity through the sacerdotal signs of Baptism and Confirmation that link every member of the Church with Christ, the Priest. Though all the Sacraments are in the order of worship, these three are Sacraments of perpetual priesthood, deriving their meaning from the High Priest who forms the Church in its supreme duty of offering worship to the Father through Him and thereby sanctifying men. The bond is sealed in the Blood of covenant-love, between the Church, between High Priest and ministers, between ordained priest and members of the Society of Worship: the bond is the bond of Calvary's Blood.

HEAVEN. Awaiting the Second Coming of its Lord, the Church celebrates the memorials of His Passion and death under the sacramental veils. When He removes the veil, the Church will celebrate with Him the celestial liturgy. It seems preferable to follow the

theologians (e.g., J. Alfaro) who place the resurrected Christ, resplendent in His Wounds in the very center of the blessed congregation who adore the Lamb that was slain (*see* WOUNDS OF OUR LORD, THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF). This glorified humanity (as subjective disposing cause, not as a medium) prepares the blessed for the vision of God. Thus the redemptive action continues forever in eternal fruition, the work of the everlasting priesthood. The term itself, consecrated in theology, would have little meaning were the priesthood to end on the day of final judgment, and the wounds in glory to be merely a memory.

In explaining the devotion to the Precious Blood, theology goes far beyond the adoration of the blessed Humanity infinitely adorable in all its parts. It must embrace the totum opus redemptionis. The shedding of Blood is sign and symbol of that total work. Progress in this study parallels the progress in Christology, Mariology, ecclesiology, and the liturgical movement inaugurated by St. Pius X, attaining its climax in Mystici corporis, Mediator Dei, and the liturgical constitution of Vatican II. As never before, because of the progress of theology, one today understands better Christ in His history (Scripture-tradition), in His Mystical Body, in His glory — and all this in the light of the Redemption through His Blood. The decisions of the Church through John XXIII, Pope of the Precious Blood (Inde a primis, a new Litany of the Most Precious Blood, the addition of "Blessed be His Most Precious Blood" to the Divine Praises), are official recognition of the importance of the devotion and its proper theology.

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# DEVOTION TO THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

Devotion to the Blood of Christ is the Christian's response of love and gratitude to Jesus who offered His Blood for man in atoning sacrifice. Christ Himself spoke of it as the Blood of the new covenant shed for many unto the forgiveness of sins (Mt 26, 28). With it He purchased the Church (Acts 20, 28). It is precious (1 Pt 1, 19). By it we are justified (Rom. 5, 9), cleansed (Heb 9, 14; 1 Jn 1, 7), washed from sin (Ap 7, 14, 22, 14), and redeemed for God (Ap 5, 9). Jesus called it "my blood" (Mk 14, 25) and invited His followers to drink it that they might have everlasting life (Mt 26, 28; Jn 6, 54-57).

The Fathers reecho these statements of Scripture in both the East (see Pollack) and the West (see Rohling) and not infrequently add some devotional sentiment in their commentaries and sermons, especially when speaking of the Redemption or the Eucharist. Of the Fathers, St. John Chrysostom is the most eloquent. The liturgical devotion has its deepest roots in the celebration of Christ's triumph at Easter and in the offering of the Eucharistic Sacrifice together with the reception of the Holy Eucharist under the species of both bread and wine.

The devotion became more explicit as the minds of the faithful gradually emphasized the sufferings of Christ preceding the triumph of His Resurrection. Relics of the Precious Blood (not hypostatically united) were venerated at Mantua as early as 553, at Weingarten since 1090, and at Bruges since 1158. The many (supposed) relics that the crusaders returning from the Holy Land brought back to Europe tended to focus the attention of the faithful on the humanity of Christ, particularly on His sufferings and bloodsheddings.

While artists produced graphic representations of the effectiveness of the Precious Blood, medieval theologians and mystics, such as St. Albert the Great, St. Bonaventure, St. Mechtilde, St. Gertrude, and St. Catherine of Siena, found in the Blood the inspiration for the most profound mystical love. There is evidence of confraternities honoring it in Spain in the 17th century. Benedict XIV approved a Mass and Office in its honor in 1747. The greatest epoch in the history of the special devotion began early in the 19th century, which witnessed the remarkable missionary activity of St. Gaspar del Bufalo in the Papal States and the founding of the Society of the Precious Blood (C.PP.S., 1815), the establishment of the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood in Rome (1815), and the founding of several sisterhoods. The feast (previously celebrated only in the Society and in certain localities in Lent), at the suggestion of Don Merlini, third moderator of the Society of the Precious Blood, was extended (1849) by Pius IX to the whole Church, to be celebrated on the first Sunday of July. Since 1917 the feast has been celebrated on July 1. The Pious Union of the Precious Blood, erected in the principal church of the Society in Rome (1851), was declared a Primary Pious Union in 1951. In 1963 besides the Society of the Precious Blood, composed of priests and brothers, there were at least 13 distinct sisterhoods with a combined membership of more than 8,000 serving Christ under the banner of the Precious Blood. To commemorate the 19th centenary of the Redemption, Pius XI raised the feast to the rank of a first-class double in 1934.

The devotion received its most explicit and official approval from John XXIII in 1960. He not only approved the Litany of the Precious Blood for private and public recitation throughout the world and ordered the ejaculation "Blessed be His Most Precious Blood" inserted in the Divine Praises, but even wrote an apostolic letter, *Inde a primis*, to the bishops of the world (June 30, 1960), urging them to foster and promote the devotion. Among other things, he wrote:

We judge it most timely to call our beloved children's attention to the unbreakable bond that must exist between the devotions to the Most Holy Name and the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus . . . and the devotion to the Incarnate Word's Most Precious Blood "shed for many unto the forgiveness of sins." The devotion to the Most Precious Blood, which owes its

marvelous diffusion to the 19th-century Roman priest, St. Gaspar del Bufalo, has rightly merited the approval and backing of this Apostolic See.

Later in the same document he wrote:

Such surpassing love [which Jesus manifested in pouring out His Blood for us] suggests, nay demands, that everyone reborn in the torrents of that Blood adore it with grateful love. The Blood of the new and eternal covenant especially deserves the worship of latria when it is elevated during the sacrifice of the Mass. But such worship achieves its normal fulfillment in sacramental communion with the same Blood indissolubly united with Christ's Eucharist Body.

See WORSHIP (THEOLOGY OF). Speaking of the devotion to the Archconfraternity in Rome, June 2, 1962, he said that "the infinite love of the Savior is announced in His Name, is symbolized in His Heart, and is made eloquent in His Blood."

JOSEPH ROHLING, C.PP.S.

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# THE PRECIOUS BLOOD: DOCTRINE AND DEVOTION

The devotional life of the Church is a marvel of spiritual beauty, astonishing diversity, organic conformity, divine intimacy, and supernatural fecundity. Yet, underlying all this variety and profusion, there is the solid soil, the *terra firma*, of revealed truth. Every genuine devotion stems from the mother earth of doctrine, and from it alone. Hence, to understand aright any devotion, to practice it profitably and fervently, some knowledge of its doctrinal foundations is needed. And the more the fire of our devotion is fed with this substantial food, the more will it be active, intense, and fruitful. In other words, the more faith, hope, and love will increase in our souls, for true devotion is simply an effect of the activity of the theological virtues.

The lives of the saints may seem to contradict this statement as regards theological instruction, and none so emphatically as that of St. Catherine of Siena. However, the truth is that in her case the gift of infused knowledge supplied for what she had had no opportunity to acquire. Certainly, her extraordinary devotion to the Precious Blood was simply the effect of her supernatural knowledge, about the mysteries of faith, in particular the central dogma of redemption. Equally certain is the fact that this devotion was the most conspicuous, intimate, and compelling influence in her spiritual life.

Besides the great Dominican tertiary there have been countless souls, as hagiography shows, whose devotion to the Price of our Redemption has led them to heroic sanctity. Yet it remains true that the prominence and significance of the Precious Blood in the Christian religion are not easily recognized, and hence are often

overlooked and underestimated even by the learned and the holy. What is the explanation? More than any other, this devotion requires a sound doctrinal basis, prayerful study, and especially faith. The formula used at the consecration of the wine calls the Precious Blood "the mystery of faith." Profound words! Indeed, devotion to His Blood cannot be produced by the feelings, imagination, or reason; though they may have part in it. It must stem from a virile, living faith, be sustained by meditation and, if possible, mature into contemplation. This is why the mystics are the most ardent lovers and devotees of the Precious Blood.

In the following pages we shall try to uncover the doctrinal foundations of this devotion, where they lie concealed in the fertile soil of Sacred Scripture. This examination will lead to the further discovery, probably a surprising one, that the devotion to the Blood of Christ is not "just another devotion." Apart from the worship of the ever-blessed Three-in-One, there is nothing more "meet and just, right and helpful unto salvation always and everywhere, than the love, praise, and glorification of the adorable Blood which has redeemed us."

## IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The promise of a redeemer made to our first parents in the earthly paradise contained implicitly at least the promise and prophecy of the Precious Blood as the instrument predestined to accomplish the redemption. As the ages of human history rolled along, the hope of redemption, divinely planted in the human heart, was perverted in the crude, degrading rites of pagan religions, where bloody sacrifices formed a prominent part. Finally dawned the day of revealed religion, made known by God to His chosen people through the mediation of Abraham and Moses. By divine ordinance the daily offering of bloody sacrifices became the central, most important act of the Mosaic ritual, because in them the idea of oblation, of dependence was most realistically expressed.

What was their purpose and value? The sacrificial cult of the Old Testament was intended to offer God the worship due to Him, at the same time maintaining in the minds of the people a consciousness of sin and the necessity of repentance. It fostered a deeper union with Yahweh by manifesting ritually the perfect oblation of oneself, which is the heart of true religion.

This was the spirit which animated sacrificial worship among the Israelites and sharply differentiated it from similar rites among their pagan contemporaries. The intricate ceremonial and multiplied blood-sheddings were designed by God to instruct and impress upon His people the truth that the guilt of sin can be removed only by the shedding of blood, accompanied of course with interior contrition. Hence the many "atonement" sacrifices prescribed by the Law not only for moral, but even for legal offenses. "If they make atonement, they shall be forgiven."<sup>1</sup> Since the old covenant was intended preeminently to prepare and prefigure the new law of grace, this emphasis on sacrifices of blood had a significance not to be ignored. At the very least it indicated that the shedding of blood would have a paramount part in the Christian dispensation, the completion and fulfillment of ancient types and prophecies.

As to the value of these repeated immolations of animals, we know from St. Paul that 'the Law, having a shadow of the good things to come . . . by the selfsame sacrifices which they offer continually . . . can never make the comers thereunto perfect."<sup>2</sup> The Jewish sacrifices were powerless of themselves to remit sin or offer satisfaction. Their efficacy was entirely in view of the future bloodshedding of Christ. And so, our Lord once spoke to St. Catherine of Siena: "The Law is now imperfect, but with My Blood I will make it perfect, and I will fill it up with what it lacks, taking away the fear of penalty, and founding it in love and holy fear."<sup>3</sup>

Paramount among these expiatory sacrifices was that of the paschal lamb. Its typical significance and importance as prefiguring Christ, the true Lamb of God, are pointed out by St. Thomas: "Though various animals were offered up under the Old Law, yet the daily sacrifice, which was offered up morning and evening, was a lamb. . . . By which it was signified that the offering up of the true lamb, i.e., Christ, was the culminating sacrifice of all."<sup>4</sup>

The consciousness of guilt and its remission only through bloodshedding was so deep-seated in the minds of the Jews that gradually the yearly "day of atonement" (familiarly known as *Yom* Kippur) became the most sacred and solemn feast of the year. It was consecrated to public prayer, fasting, and the confession of sin. The most important liturgical rite was the sprinkling of the Holy of Holies with the blood of the immolated animal, while prayers for forgiveness ascended to Yahweh on the clouds of incense. The

flesh of the animal was then burnt so that the sacrifice might be complete. Meanwhile the high priest, having publicly acknowledged the sins of the people, placed his hands on a goat and symbolically transferred them to the animal, which was driven into the desert.

This festival, which united the entire nation in a corporate act of atonement for their sins, might justly be called the Good Friday of the old covenant. It graphically prefigured that true Day of Atonement when Christ, shedding His Precious Blood as a victim of expiation on the cross, outside Jerusalem, assumed the entire debt of sin and made superabundant satisfaction to His Father.

Hence it may be conceded that, even in pre-Christian times, the devotion to the Precious Blood already existed in the heart of the faithful Jew in a real, though restricted, manner. He believed and outwardly professed that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission." Moreover, his faith, hope, and charity were directed not only to the Lord Almighty, the great Jehovah, but also to His Anointed One, the promised Messiah and Savior of His people. Shining behind the cloudy obscurity of figure and prophecy, like a brilliant light, is the Precious Blood of the Word incarnate. It illumines these shadowy regions of the Old Testament with the crimson glow of truth and beauty; it enlivens them with divine meaning and efficacy.

## IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Here the mystery of the Precious Blood stands out clearly in the luminous sunshine of revealed truth. Like a precious gem, it sparkles with a thousand facets of heavenly light and splendor, illuminating unsuspected depths in the infinite perfections of God, in His inscrutable but all-loving designs, particularly in His dealings with us who are chosen and predestined to be His adoptive children "in Christ Jesus." Here lies unfolded the divine plan for the restoration of our race, which the Old Testament had only promised and prefigured; and through this heaven-designed "blueprint" the Blood of the Redeemer runs like a scarlet stream, tinging every person, place, and event with its sacred purple. It occupies a place of unshared privilege and singular preeminence, "the crowned king of all God's decrees."

Of the New Testament writers, the Evangelists describe the realistic aspect of the mystery; that is, the historical, factual ac-

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count of the sheddings of the Precious Blood. But, for us to stop here would be to miss the reason behind these external manifestations of suffering. We must also consider the teachings contained in the epistles and the Apocalypse; all of which together constitute the dogmatic basis of our devotion to the Precious Blood of Christ.

The central truth on which hinges all the scriptural theology on the Precious Blood and from which radiates its unique glory, is that it was the chosen instrument of our redemption. We are saved through the Blood of Jesus, and there is no other means by which we can be saved. The wisdom of God beheld innumerable fitnesses in this mysterious choice, which we can adore, although unknown to us. His decree is unalterable, for the old and new covenants alike: "Without shedding of blood, there is no remission."<sup>5</sup> Thus the sacrifice on Calvary confirmed and fulfilled the repeated types and prophecies of the Old Law, especially its expiatory sacrifices. In effect, what did this fulfillment entail?

God required from the Word incarnate, in His redemptive mission, the maximum that even He could give. Although any gift, a secret yearning of His heart, or a whispered prayer would have had infinite value to expiate sin and restore grace to men, yet He must offer nothing less than Himself entirely. He was predestined to become not only the high priest of all creation, the mediator between God and humanity, but the victim of His own sacrifice. By the shedding of His lifeblood unto death, He must become the supreme, supernal gift of men to God, of God Himself to the adorable Trinity. This is the key to the mystery of redemption, the clue to the full significance of the Precious Bood.

"If the idea of sacrifice is to be perfectly realized, the victim and the offerer must be joined in one person, so that one and the same person may be both the offerer, through his spiritual disposition, and the victim, in that part of his being which is actually immolated."<sup>6</sup> Sacrifice hereby becomes the most efficacious expression of worship; because the exterior act is not only the symbol and reflection of the inner dispositions, but their real, concrete manifestation and consummation. Such an ideal could be realized only in the person of the God-man; it was realized actually by the shedding of His Precious Bood unto death on the cross.

St. Thomas maintains that it was most fitting that Christ should be a priest, because "through him gifts are bestowed on

men"<sup>7</sup> and also because "He reconciled the human race to God."<sup>8</sup> In other words, He fulfilled the priestly office in its highest, fullest sense. Likewise it was equally fitting that He should be a victim of sacrifice, the true Lamb of God, offered to His Father in a most literal and complete manner on the cross. Hence, His sacrifice is the most perfect act of divine worship that could be offered to the Trinity, infinite in value because the priest is of infinite dignity and the victim is of infinite worth.

Such is the doctrine expounded by St. Paul in his letter to the Jewish converts in Palestine. Having contrasted the priesthood and sacrifices of the Jewish religion with those of Jesus Christ, the Apostle concludes: "But Christ, being come an high priest of the good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle . . . by his own blood, entered once into the holies, having obtained eternal redemption."<sup>9</sup> Christ is both high priest and victim; through this sacrificial oblation of Himself He accomplished the work of redemption, offering atonement for sin, obtaining forgiveness and supernatural life for men. "By this blood," said the Eternal Father to the mystic of Siena,<sup>10</sup> "they are enabled to know My Truth, how in order to give them eternal life, I created them in My image and likeness and recreated them to grace with the blood of My Son, making them sons of adoption."

In Scripture the terms "victim" and "lamb" are synonymous. They specify the concept of redemption, of atonement for sin, through the shedding of blood; a truth which is clearly affirmed and supported by the apostolic writers. Because Jesus came primarily as a victim, John the Baptist called Him "the lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world."<sup>11</sup> St. Paul described Him as the paschal sacrifice, "Christ our passover, has been sacrificed";<sup>12</sup> St. Peter, as "a lamb unspotted and undefiled. Foreknown, indeed, before the foundation of the world";<sup>13</sup> and St. John sees Him in a vision as "a Lamb standing, as it were slain."<sup>14</sup> What the Pasch was for the Jews, Christ sacrificed is for us: He is the sacrifice of our deliverance from the triple servitude. Through His oblation, the types are fulfilled, the shadows have disappeared, and we enter the promised land of spiritual realities.

How have we been redeemed? Not with brains, not with brawn, but with blood. Is it not a startling fact? Hence would it not constitute a grave loss, a fundamental error, were we to ignore or

undervalue this truth in our conscious profession of faith or our private life of piety? Let us beware of forgetting or depreciating the truth that we "were redeemed not with perishable things [no matter how valuable or beneficial] but with the precious blood of Christ."<sup>15</sup>

However, we would greatly err in our estimation and penetration of the mystery of the Precious Blood were we to confine ourselves to the exterior aspect of Christ's sacrifice, His crucifixion unto death. According to the New Testament, the shedding of the Redeemer's blood on Calvary not only constituted a true sacrifice, it was above all a voluntary act, freely accepted by Jesus Himself, in which love was the supreme motive power. "Jesus Christ delivered Himself up to death; He delivered Himself up in order to save us; and He delivered Himself up through love: this is the epitome of His active part in the tragedy of Calvary."<sup>16</sup>

Even a cursory reading of St. Paul shows a repeated insistence on the love which actuated the self-oblation of the Word made flesh. His love for the whole human race: "Christ also hath loved us and hath delivered himself up for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God."<sup>17</sup> His love for the Church: "Christ also loved the Church, and delivered himself up for it, that he might sanctify it."<sup>18</sup> His love for each individual soul: "I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and delivered himself for me."<sup>19</sup> Could stronger proof be found that the Savior's blood is par excellence the pledge, the test, the measure of His love?

Moreover, though His oblation was free and deliberate, it was an act of obedience to the will of His Father. He declared: "I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me."<sup>20</sup> In fact, the Pauline epistles show that the command of the Father and the obedience of the Son are both an equal and sovereign manifestation of love. "He that spared not even his own son but delivered him for us all."<sup>21</sup> And again, "God commendeth his charity toward us; because when as yet we were sinners, Christ died for us."<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, it is "by the obedience of one, many shall be made just."<sup>23</sup>

In the outpouring of the Savior's blood on Calvary, we cannot fail to recognize the outpouring of a love which knows neither length nor breadth, neither height nor depth; which is indeed unfathomable and infinite. There we behold this activity of love "un-

to the end," reaching to the limits of divine power and ingenuity, so as to give all, to sacrifice all, even to the emptying of its heart's chalice of the last drops of life. "I wished thee to see the secret of the heart, showing it to thee open so that thou mightest see how much more I loved than I could show thee by finite pain. I poured from it blood and water, to show thee the baptism of water, which is received in virtue of the blood. . . . The blood is steeped in and kneaded with the fire of divine charity, because through love it was shed."<sup>24</sup> Thus did Christ Himself explain this great truth to His ardent lover, St. Catherine.

## IN THE GOSPELS

Let us now turn to the Gospel story, which records the factual history of the Precious Blood with such vividness and pathos. Father Faber says that "our best understanding of the Precious Blood is the sight of what it has done, the enumeration of its deeds, the narration of its history."25 This is a preeminent aim of the four evangelists; it is likewise a foremost purpose in the liturgy of Holy Week. If the apostolic letters contain the doctrinal basis of devotion to the divine Blood, the Gospel story of the passion gives us the concrete manifestation of these truths, their actual occurrence and visible expression in letters of flesh and blood. These soul-stirring records reveal unquestionably the moral, subjective value of our redemption through the shedding of the Precious Blood, and it is incalculable. By this we mean the power of these mysteries of suffering to stir our minds, to enkindle our hearts and arouse our devotion into a living flame of zeal and sacrifice. The sufferings of Jesus speak to our hearts, our feelings, our sensibilities, our inmost souls with a conviction and eloquence that no theological dissertation can ever equal. How many saints, heroes, and heroines, have been formed, enlightened, and perfected at the foot of the crucifix, in the contemplation of our dying, bleeding Savior!

Here is found operating in its highest potency what St. Thomas terms the exemplary causality of the incarnate Word. It is especially during His passion that Jesus is the model of that perfection which we must strive after; it is there that His example becomes most attractive, forceful, and effective. Significant is the fact that every phase of His sacred passion is linked with one of His blood-

sheddings; every episode falls within the radius of its sacred purple. Eliminate these blood-sheddings, and the story of the passion falls apart. The same may be predicated of the interior sufferings of our Redeemer. Probably they far surpassed His physical tortures, and unlike the latter, they were lifelong. Yet there is nothing concerning them in the Gospels until the moonlit agony in Gethsemane, when anguish and terror forced the crimson life-stream through the surface of His body, and "His sweat became as drops of blood trick-ling down upon the ground."<sup>26</sup> This first disclosure of His interior suffering is also the first blood-shedding of the Passion. The same connection may be traced through all the sorrowful mysteries.

Certainly it is in itself a profound mystery that the bloodsheddings of Jesus were so frequent, so copious, so cruel, and so humiliating. "This is the meaning of its indiscriminating profusion. It has but one law: it must flow. Anywhere, everywhere, always, it must flow. It is the one mission of the Precious Blood, to be shed."<sup>27</sup> Are we tempted to characterize these sorrowful outpourings as a waste, an excess, a prodigality neither fitting nor necessary? That is the language of reason and common sense. But how differently the saints thought and talked! "Thy mercy," cries the Saint of Siena, "had been unwilling that the spotless Lamb should atone for humankind with but a single drop of blood, neither with the suffering of a single member only; but rather with the suffering and blood of His whole body, so that He might make satisfaction for the whole of humanity which had offended Thee."

This prodigality of the Precious Blood is conspicuous in the history of the passion. It is commensurable and comparable with nothing except the immensity of His love. Christ was so sparing in His words, His works, even His span of life. But in the shedding of His Blood, how prodigal He was, how lavish, how magnanimous! "I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized: and how am I straitened until it is accomplished!"<sup>28</sup>

Does not His very eagerness to shed it vividly reflect the divine eagerness to communicate His life to men? Does not His lavish generosity in its shedding mirror forth the unstinted munificence and liberality of our heavenly Father, the ever-flowing stream of His blessings and benefits? "Thou, eternal Word," exclaims our saint, "didst will to be raised on high, whence Thou didst demonstrate love in Thy very Blood; in that same Blood hast Thou shown Thy

mercy and Thy bounty. In that Blood, too, Thou didst prove how grievous and weighty is man's offense against Thee; with that Blood Thou hast cleansed the image of Thy spouse, the soul."

## IN THE APOCALYPSE

The final book of the New Testament sings a continual hymn of praise and jubilation to the eternal glory of the Lamb, victim on Calvary through the shedding of His Blood. For the Seer of Patmos, this single symbol of "Lamb" fittingly sums up all the titles, functions, and prerogatives of the incarnate Word. He combines and associates it with all other types of Christ. The Lamb is "Lord of lords, and King of kings."<sup>29</sup> He is the "Alpha and the Omega," "the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star."<sup>30</sup> He is also the divine warrior, "faithful and true," "clothed with a garment sprinkled with blood."<sup>31</sup> Even the lion of the tribe of Judah becomes the Lamb opening the sealed scroll.<sup>32</sup>

The victory of the faithful over their enemies is always attributed to the Lamb, and to the Blood of the Lamb. "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb."33 "These shall fight with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, . . . for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings, and they that are with him are called, and elect, and chosen."34 In the scene depicting the heavenly triumph of virgin souls, the Lamb holds the central place: "Lo, a Lamb stood upon mount Sion and with him a hundred forty-four thousand. . . . And they sang as it were a new canticle, before the throne . . . for they are virgins."35 Likewise the songs of victory, hymned by all the saints in the celestial courts, are always offered to God and to the Lamb: "I saw a great multitude which no man could number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and in the sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb.' "36

So too, the new Israel, the mystical Christ, the heavenly Jerusalem, the Church of eternity, becomes in the Apocalypse "the bride of the Lamb." "Come, I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb . . . the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God."<sup>37</sup> Did not the Bridegroom redeem her in His Blood and wash her from every stain? The

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throne of eternity, high altar of creation, is not only the throne of the Trinity; it is "the throne of God and of the Lamb."<sup>38</sup> The sacred humanity is adored and glorified together with the three divine persons. It too is the light and life of the heavenly city: "The glory of God hath enlightened it and the Lamb is the lamp there-of."<sup>39</sup> "And he showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb."<sup>40</sup>

It is evident from these considerations that the one enduring devotion throughout eternity, besides that to the Holy Trinity, will be the devotion to the Precious Blood, to the Lamb that was slain on Calvary. For, as St. Thomas<sup>41</sup> teaches, "although Christ's passion and death are not to be repeated, yet the virtue of that victim endures forever, as it is written: 'By one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified.' "<sup>42</sup> Through the endless ages of eternity, that one sacrificial blood-shedding on the cross will be the overflowing fountain-head of all the glory and beatitude that transforms and deifies the countless number of the elect. Even when sin and sorrow and death have been conquered, the saints in heaven will still need the Precious Blood as much as ever they did on earth. Why? Again St. Thomas is our authority, when he explains that "having expiated, they will need consummation through Christ Himself, on whom their glory depends."<sup>43</sup>

All the joy and triumph, the glory and jubilee of our celestial fatherland flow in never-ceasing torrents from the throne of the Lamb into the limitless expanse of redeemed humanity. "These are they who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb. . . . They shall no more hunger nor thirst, neither shall the sun fall on them nor any heat. 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."<sup>44</sup>

### THE EFFECTS OF REDEMPTION

Let us now consider the effects of Christ's blood-shedding as expressed by the writers of the New Testament. These are of two kinds: objective and universal, personal and individual. Regarding the former, we have first the words of our Savior at the Last Supper, repeated in almost identical terms by the synoptics and by St. Paul. "This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you."<sup>45</sup> "This is my blood of the new testament which shall be shed for many."<sup>46</sup> "This is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins."<sup>47</sup> "This chalice is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of me."<sup>48</sup>

These texts show what was paramount in the mind of Jesus as He consecrated the first chalice of sacramental wine on the eve of His death. It was true that His Blood was to be the basis, the bond, the guaranty of a new and eternal covenant between God and men. His Blood was to be the instrument of a new alliance, a new order, a new kingdom and a new status for mankind. Something unprecedented and unparalleled was about to be inaugurated, and His Blood will be the guaranty for its endurance everlastingly.

The old covenant was primarily the compact established between God and the Hebrew people through the mediation of Abraham and Moses, whereby they promised to keep the commandments and observe the Mosaic ritual. On His side, God chose them as His own nation, promised them temporal prosperity, victory over their enemies, and the land of plenty. But, as St. Paul often insisted,<sup>49</sup> the Old Law was defective, incapable of producing holiness, and of its nature only temporary and preparatory. It must be supplanted and perfected by another, as both Jeremiah and Isaiah had predicted.<sup>50</sup>

Jesus fulfilled these prophecies by establishing an efficacious, everlasting "covenant," which He merited and vouched for with His own Blood. Nothing less than this sacred and precious lifestream was the seal and sign, the price and pledge of that new relationship, that supernatural status, that undeserved dignity and divine intimacy to which the merciful and almighty God invites all the guilty children of men. The "new and eternal covenant" meant the beginning of a new world order, the announcement of a cosmic revolution, the dispensation of the mystery hidden from eternity in God.

The same truth is expressed by St. Paul under a different aspect. "It hath well pleased the Father . . . through him to reconcile all things unto himself, making peace through the blood of his cross, both as to the things that are on earth and the things that are in heaven."<sup>51</sup> And also, "Now in Christ Jesus you, who some

time were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ."<sup>52</sup> Both these passages refer to a previous state of enmity and disruption; to the termination of hostilities and the reconciliation of opposing parties through one person, a mediator, by a sacrificial oblation. Here the Blood of the Redeemer becomes the instrument and bond which pacifies and finally reunites those who were hostile and estranged from one another: on the one side, God His offended Father and, on the other, man, His rebellious creature. The Dominican mystic has graphically expressed this truth by a metaphor: "I know no other way than that which Thou hast paved with the true and genuine forces of the fire of Thy charity. Thou, eternal Word, hast beaten that path with Thy Blood; it is the way"; that is to reconciliation and reunion between divinity and humanity.<sup>53</sup>

Hence it is the Blood of His Son which appeases the divine wrath and renders God propitious toward mankind, because it offers to Him something so inexpressibly pleasing and holy: the sacrificial oblation of His beloved Son. Provided that man on his part responds and cooperates, he will become the recipient of divine favors, instead of the object of punishment and reprobation.

However, these are not the only effects of redemption, the sole fruits of the Precious Blood of Christ. Let us again consult the sacred text. We find St. Paul telling the Romans that "we are justified by his blood";<sup>54</sup> that is, we are made holy, infused with divine life, personally and individually. The Precious Blood is not only the instrument and pledge of God's forgiveness and benevolence toward the whole race; it is also the principle of divine life in each soul. With God's pardon, it restores to us His adoptive sonship. To its operation may be ascribed both the beginning of supernatural life (regeneration through baptism) and the full fruits of consummate sanctity. This is in accordance with Christ's own words: "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He that . . . drinketh my blood hath everlasting life. . . . he abideth in me and I in him."<sup>55</sup>

"Atonement or redemption from sin, taken in itself, may by no means be looked upon as the most important effect which this sacrifice [of the cross] has procured for creatures. . . Those who are exclusively concerned with this element do not reflect that by the same price of blood by which Christ paid our debt and bought

us off from the slavery of sin, He has also purchased our admission into the sonship of God. . . . To purchase for us the supernatural, divine life of the children of God, Christ offered to His heavenly Father His Blood and His natural, corporal life."<sup>56</sup>

Furthermore the Blood of Jesus is the "peace-maker" not only between God and man, but among men themselves: "He is our peace . . . who hath made both one, and breaking down . . . the enmities in his flesh."<sup>57</sup> Thence it becomes the seal and bond of union among the souls whom it has reconciled and sanctified. This is the Apostle's teaching when he exclaims, "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not the sharing of the blood of Christ?" Because of their common participation in the Eucharistic Blood, men are united far more closely than by the ties of nature, friendship, or nationality; they are bound together in a supernatural fellowship, whose vital principle is the supernatural life, contained in and communicated through the divine Blood; whose goal is eternal beatitude. Using the vivid expression of St. Catherine, we may say they are "cemented together in the Blood of Christ Crucified."

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, these manifold effects are summarized under four terms. The first two are negative, the expiation of sin and the purification of the soul: Christ "hath appeared for the destruction of sin by the sacrifice of himself."58 Having annihilated sin and appeased God's anger, the Precious Blood purifies souls: "Much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works."59 On the other hand there are the positive effects of sanctification and perfection. It is "the blood of the [new] covenant through which [we] are sanctified."60 In fact, it was "that he might sanctify the people by his blood,"61 that Jesus suffered His cruel death. Lastly, by the one sacrificial offering of His blood "He has perfected forever them that are sanctified."62 Here is outlined the entire process of redemption, sanctification, and glorification, shot through and through with the brilliant crimson of the Savior's Blood. "And whereas indeed he was the Son of God he learned obedience from the things that he suffered; and being consummated, He became to all that obey Him the cause of eternal salvation."63

It is interesting to note that St. Thomas arrives at these same conclusions. He states that "Christ Himself as man was not only

priest, but also a perfect victim," because by His sacrifice on the cross He obtained for men the three requisite effects of sacrifice: 1. the remission of sin;<sup>64</sup> 2. the grace of salvation;<sup>65</sup> and 3. the perfection of glory.<sup>66</sup>

Let us, therefore, have boundless and unalterable hope that "the God of peace [made gracious to us] in virtue of the Blood of an everlasting covenant, [will] fit us with every good thing to do His will," and will accomplish in us that perfection which is pleasing to Him. Again, we are reminded of the words of the eternal Father to the saint of Siena: "I desire nothing but her sanctification, which is certified to her in the Blood of My Son."<sup>67</sup>

## The Devotion to the Precious Blood

In the preceding pages we discussed, briefly and inadequately to be sure, the principal scriptural teachings in regard to the Precious Blood.<sup>68</sup> Several facts are noteworthy: the preeminence given to it in the sacred writings, as contrasted with other parts of Christ's sacred humanity; the repeated, emphatic references to it, and its specific and singular role in the divine economy of salvation.

Hence we seem justified in concluding that the Precious Blood of the God-man is a determining factor, a characteristic element, a pivotal mystery of Christianity. It gives to our religion, as it were, an intrinsic warmth and color, depth and beauty, deep significance. Without the Blood of Jesus Christ we might have had an incarnation, a Church, a sacramental system, but Christianity would have been different. For the Precious Blood realizes and summarizes love at its most generous maximum: the highest, the greatest that God Himself can achieve outside the Trinity.

Truths such as these should have a profound meaning and effect in our spiritual life, and these are most admirably expressed, and easily attained through the devotion to the Precious Blood. The devotion itself is best explained by its distinguishing mark, its predominant characteristic. Is it love or generosity or sacrifice or repentance? It includes and yet transcends all of them; let us call it "totality." "All for all" is the watchword and epitome of this devotion. It does not ask for much; it demands all. Was not this Blood shed to the last drop in order to offer God all honor and glory, and to obtain for men all good things?

As we stated above, it was neither brains nor brawn that redeemed us; not intellectual genius, physical prowess, or material strength. It was blood. And if blood is synonymous with life and health, it also connotes sacrifice, suffering, and death: whatever is painful and repugnant to human nature. Thus the Precious Blood presents to the sincere soul an irrefutable argument, a compelling example, an irresistible force, attracting and impelling it toward holiness. This triple influence combines three essential dispositions for sanctity, namely, hatred of sin, love of the cross, and a spirit of confidence.

The irrefutable argument to be learned from the bleeding Christ on Calvary is the heinousness of sin, every willful sin, no matter how slight it may appear. In proving the malice of sin, there is no debate, no dissertation comparable to the sight of this bloodstained figure of the Son of God, dying in agony. His bleeding wounds are as many open mouths crying out to all who will listen that sin demands an infinite reparation. Real devotion to the Blood of Christ necessarily produces an intelligent and supernatural hatred of sin.

Moreover, this Blood demonstrates the justice, holiness, and sovereignty of God just as forcibly as His mercy, wisdom, and love, as St. Paul declared to the Romans: "God has proposed [Christ] to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to the showing of his justice."<sup>69</sup> This divine procedure is being repeated today in the mystical body of Christ for the same reasons that the heavenly Father delivered His Son to crucifixion and death. God is now permitting His Church to be persecuted, almost tortured to death so as to prove again to a pagan society the reality of His justice, His holiness, and His sovereign rights. There is no more appalling evil in the modern world than its attempt to deny sin and ignore the moral law. There is no more powerful means in the Church to restore this consciousness of sin and guilt than devotion to Christ's Blood.

Secondly, this Blood presents so compelling an example of sacrifice and of total self-surrender that well-disposed souls have ever found it irresistible. "Sacrifice," writes Father Faber, "is peculiarly the Christian element of holiness and it is precisely the element which corrupt nature dislikes and resists. . . . If it were enough

to have correct views, or high feelings, or devout aspirations, it would be easy to be spiritual. . . . There is a smoothness in the mere lapse of a comfortable life which is fatal to holiness. Now all the forms and images and associations . . . of the devotion to the Precious Blood breathe sacrifice. Their fragrance is the odour of sacrifice. Their beauty is the austerity of sacrifice. . . . In time they infect us with a love of sacrifice."<sup>70</sup>

That is why the saints are formed at the foot of the cross. The more the all-sufficient, all-inclusive sacrifice of Christ enters into their lives, the more they participate and unite themselves to it, the more they become with Him the true saviors of humanity and the real heroes of our race.

Thirdly, the Blood of Jesus contains in itself the divine force and energy needed to attain holiness. This must be so for two reasons: 1) This Blood, hypostatically united to the person of the Word, is literally the Blood of God. Hence, as St. Thomas would say, it is an efficient cause of grace.<sup>71</sup> 2) As the sole ransom for sin, the only means of reparation, it is the source of pardon and grace under yet another title, i.e., the "meritorious" cause of our salvation. These truths supply the soul with an inexhaustible fountain of hope and confidence, in spite of the obstacles, trials, or temptations that beset its path. The power of intercession possessed by the divine Blood is nothing less than omnipotent, for it not only pleads in mercy as a suppliant, but it pays in justice as a sovereign.

Hence, what graces should we not expect from and through it? With St. Paul, let us assert unhesitatingly, "He that spared not even his own Son but delivered him for us all, how hath he not also, with him, given us all things?"<sup>72</sup> Nothing can dampen this spirit of joyful confidence, because it is not based on one's own worth or merits, but solely on the superabundant satisfaction of Christ's Blood. This truth also urges the soul to a mighty effort of impetration and reparation in behalf of others, which, as Father Garrigou-Lagrange explains, "is an apostolate willed by God to render abundantly fruitful the doctrinal apostolate by preaching."<sup>73</sup> No devotion eradicates so directly and effectively that self-centeredness which infect and retard otherwise fervent souls. Love of the Church, zeal for the conversion of sinners, these are as the breath of life to those who have penetrated the mystery of redeeming love on Calvary.

This same love inspires and fortifies them to become other victims in deed and in truth; i.e., to make the prerogative bestowed on all baptized souls a practical, living reality in their daily lives. By their prayers, voluntary penances, and loving acceptance of suffering in whatever form, they cooperate in the redemptive mission of the Son of God; they make His redemptive power and work effective in the Church and in souls. Likened to their Mother, the immaculate Virgin, in sorrow, compassion, and love, they keep perpetual watch on Calvary, not to stop the flow of the Precious Blood, but to prevent its waste.

"This," continues Father Garrigou, "is perfect configuration to Jesus Christ; it is, in the life of reparation, the transforming union which has become fruitful and radiating. It is the participation in the state of Jesus as victim and, even in saints who have not received the priesthood properly so-called, it is a very close union with the eternal Priest."<sup>74</sup>

Divine Blood is not to be accepted or denied, taken or refuted, just as men please. No. God has been infinitely honored and glorified by the Blood of His Son, and He will not tolerate that it should be despised, repudiated, or ignored. For this reason, men are relearning through cruel, bitter experiences their profound need of its saving grace.

On the other hand, let us who have been so singularly favored and so bountifully enriched through this sacred stream of life, let us recognize and utilize our immense spiritual wealth. Instead of standing by idly while millions starve and perish spiritually, let us heed the urgent plea of the Father of Christendom, Pius XII: "We hold in our hands a great treasure, a precious pearl, the inexhaustible riches of the blood of Jesus Christ; let us use them even to prodigality, so that, by the complete sacrifice of ourselves offered with Christ to the eternal Father, . . . we may deserve to have our prayers accepted and obtain a superabundance of grace for the whole Church and for the souls of all men, that they may be strengthened and refreshed."<sup>75</sup>

## SISTER MARY CELINE, R.A.P.B.

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#### FOOTNOTES

1. Lev 4, 20; 5, 13; 9, 7. 2. Heb 10, 1, 11. 1.01:00 0:00 8:00 3. Dialogue, p. 175. 4. Summa theol., IIIa, g. 22, a. 3. 5. Heb 9, 22. 6. The Mysteries of Christianity by Scheeben, p. 435. 7. Cf. II Pt 1, 4. 8. Col 1, 19f. 9. Heb 9, 11. 10. Op. cit., p. 126. 11. Jn 1, 29. 12. I Cor 5, 17. 13. I Pt 1, 19 f. 14. Apoc 5, 6. 15. Pt 1, 19. 16. The Theology of St. Paul, by Prat, S.J., p. 185. 17. Eph 5, 2. 18. Ibid., 5, 25. 19. Gal 2, 20. 20. Jn 6, 38. 21. Rom 8, 32. 22. Ibid., 5, 8. 23. Ibid., 5, 19. 24. Dialogue, p. 155. 25. The Precious Blood, p. 162. 26. Lk 22, 44. 27. Faber, op. cit. 28. Lk 12, 50. 29. Apoc. 71, 14. 30. Ibid., 22, 13, 17. 31. Ibid., 19, 11. 32. Ibid., 5, 5-8. 33. Ibid., 12, 11. 34. Iibid., 17, 14. 35. Ibid., 14, 1-4. 36. Ibid., 7, 9f. 37. Ibid., 21, 9f. 38. Ibid., 22, 3. 39. Ibid., 21, 23. 40. Ibid., 22, 1. 41. Summa theol., IIIa. q. 22, a. 5. 42. Heb 10, 14. 43. Summa theol. ibid. 44. Apoc. 7, 14-17. 45. Lk 22, 20.

- 46. Mk 14, 24.
  47. Mt 26, 28.
  48. I Cor 11, 25.
  49. Heb 7, 19; 8, 6f; 9, 9; 10, 1.
  50. *Ibid.*, 8, 8-12; Isa. 59, 20f.
  51. Col 1, 20.
  52. Eph 2, 13.
  53. *Dialogue*, p. 280.
  54. *Rom* 5, 9.
  55. Jn 6, 54-58.
  56. Scheeben, *op. cit.*, pp. 452, 454.
  57. Eph 2, 14.
  58. Heb 9, 26.
  59. *Ibid.*, 9, 14.
  60. *Ibid.*, 10, 29.
- 61. Ibid., 13, 12.
- 62. Ibid., 10, 14.
- 63. Ibid., 5, 8f.
- 64. Rom 4, 25.
- 45 Ush 5 0
- 65. Heb 5, 9.
- 66. Ibid., 10, 19; Summa theol., IIIa, q. 22, a.2.
- 67. Dialogue, p. 133.
- 68. Other rich sources of this devotion are the liturgy, dogmatic theology, and the lives of the saints.
- 69. Rom 3, 25.
- 70. Op. cit., pp. 276-78.
- We already indicated how the Precious Blood may be considered an exemplary cause of grace.
- 72. Rom 8, 32.
- 73. The Three Ages of the Interior Life, Vol. II, p. 497.
- 74. Op. cit., p. 502.
- 75. Encyclical, Menti Nostrae.

# PRICE OF OUR REDEMPTION

The devotion to the Precious Blood is as many-sided, and profound and extensive as the doctrine from which it stems. A deeper consideration of its doctrinal basis, then, will show how rich in inspiration, how prolific in implications for our spiritual life, is this devotion to the sacred Blood of Jesus Christ.

Since the Precious Blood is an adoration as well as a devotion, the object of our worship is of primary importance. What is the object offered to our worship in this devotion? It is twofold: the one sensible and material, the other invisible and spiritual. The material, visible object of worship is first the Blood itself, as it flowed in scarlet streams down the lacerated, wounded body of the Savior, as it pulsates now with incredible joy and superhuman energy through His glorified body, as it is contained in the chalice of consecrated wine or circulates in the consecrated host.

This blood — every single drop of it — is worthy not merely of our respect and veneration, worship in the ordinary sense; but of the highest kind of worship, that of latria, which is offered to none but the eternal Godhead. This Blood demands our deepest adoration, the utmost prostration of our souls and bodies. For when it was shed on Calvary, it was not given up by the Son of God; rather it was directly assumed by the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, not mediately or concomitantly with His body. As the predetermined price of our redemption, it is united immediately with the divine Person of the Word; so it enters substantially, not accidentally, into the hypostatic union. It is precious beyond our power to estimate, and adorable as belonging to the very Son of God.

Here is a startling difference between the Precious Blood and other human blood. The latter is not directly united to the person to whom it belongs, but only concomitantly as part of the body. When separated from the body, it ceases to belong to that individual: witness the common process of blood transfusion. But the case is entirely different in regard to Christ. When His Blood was separated from His body during the passion and burial, it still belonged to Him and remained united to His divine Person. And if it were possible for His Blood to exist apart from His body — as it appears to be in the chalice of consecrated wine — it would be just as worthy of adoration as the entire humanity, or rather as the Son of God Himself. That is why we can and should adore the blood itself: because it truly enshrouds the divinity. God is there! The divine Person of the Word is as really present in every drop of Blood as He is in the bosom of the eternal Father.

But in worshipping the Precious Blood we worship also the sacred humanity of which it is an integral and necessary part. A living human body requires blood; and the body of the Word incarnate is as human as that of any man, it is kept alive by the rich, red Blood which pulses through His veins. The Blood cannot be separated from the sacred humanity in which it flows, nor from the divine Person to whom it belongs and to whom it is hypostatically united. Hence, in worshipping His Blood we worship Jesus Christ Himself, true God and true man, our Savior, our King, our mystical head.

In addition, this fount of mercy provides us with such manifold and cogent reasons for loving Jesus, for thanking Him and trusting in Him, that the sight of it or the mere thought should add fresh fuel to the fire of our love.

The spiritual object of our worship is first the love of which the Precious Blood is the proof, the test, the measure, and the pledge. Here, the material object becomes the token and symbol of that invisible, spiritual outpouring of divine mercy with which the blessed Trinity inundates all creation.

He who once, in righteous vengeance, Whelmed the world beneath the flood, Once again in mercy cleansed it, With the stream of His own blood.<sup>1</sup>

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The flowing Blood typifies the activity of love, which seeks to give and sacrifice itself for the sake of the beloved. "In this we have come to know his love," St. John declares, "that he laid down his life for us." So the eternal Father spoke to St. Catherine of Siena: "By love I have created her, in order to give her eternal life. For this indeed is the truth and I have shown it forth to you in the blood of Christ crucified."

This saving stream is not only the token and symbol of Christ's boundless love for His Father and for us; it is also the price of our redemption. Hence, in worshipping the Blood of Jesus, we pay homage to the ineffable mystery of our redemption with all that it involves. Since all the effects of the redemption may be attributed to the Savior's Blood as to an all-sufficient meritorious cause, it may be said that all religion is included in its worship. The whole supernatural order falls within the orbit of its vitalizing, divinizing influence. Indeed, even the material creation has felt its invigorating touch, to such an extent that the earth is now more beautiful and more lovable in the eyes of its Creator than the terrestrial paradise would ever have been.

Blest with this all-saving shower, Earth her beauty straight resumed; In the place of thorns and briars, Myrtles sprang and roses bloomed; Flowers surprised the desert waste, Wormwood lost her bitter taste.<sup>2</sup>

The devotion to the Precious Blood is directed in a particular way to Jesus in the very act of His redemption of us, in the offering of His supreme Sacrifice on Calvary and its daily renewal on our altars. Just as the whole life of our Redeemer, all His labors, prayers and sufferings — even His preaching and teaching — all converged towards His death on the cross and there found completion and fulfillment, so too it may be said that the devotion to His Sacred Blood explains and summarizes all that Jesus is to us and has done for us, and all that we owe to Him in return.

To summarize this section: the object of our worship in this devotion is unsurpassed in dignity and excellence, its own intrinsic worth being simply infinite. It is also unsurpassed in the holiness of its origin, for the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mother

was the guarantee of its pristine purity. Lastly, it is unsurpassed in its lofty destiny, for the mission entrusted to it and the end achieved have no parallel in all creation.

## THE PRECIOUS BLOOD AS A SPIRITUAL DRAUGHT

"The Blood of Jesus is twofold," wrote St. Clement of Alexandria. "The one is bodily Blood, whereby we were redeemed from ruin; the other is spiritual Blood, whereby we have been anointed. And to drink of the Blood of Jesus means no less than to share in the Lord's incorruption. For it is the Spirit that gives vitality to the Blood, just as the Blood conveys energy to the body."<sup>3</sup> By "incorruption" is meant supernatural life, or, in the words of our Lord Himself, "everlasting life."

What do we mean by the expression to drink the Precious Blood spiritually? It may be said that the soul drinks of this saving stream spiritually when it is supernaturally refreshed, enlightened, or enkindled by any interior exercise having the sacred Blood as object. This might be called a spiritual contact with it, as distinct from sacramental contact in the Eucharist. The Gospels relate examples of persons who were cured of their bodily diseases by merely touching the Savior with faith and humility. No word was exchanged, no sign given, no ceremony performed. The spiritual draught of the Blood of Jesus is analogous to this: light, vigor, joy flow into the soul from its contact with this divine life-stream.

Where are we to drink the divine Blood spiritually? Primarily it may be drawn from the wounds of the Crucified, i.e., the sorrowful mysteries of His life, His passion and death.<sup>4</sup> If the spiritual draught of the Precious Blood is found especially in His sufferings and death, it is because, as St. Cyprian explains, "we would not be able to drink the Blood of Christ, unless Christ was first crushed and pressed."<sup>5</sup>

There are many types of this spiritual drink in the Old Testament. According to St. Paul, it is prefigured by the miraculous water which gushed from the rock in the desert: "All drank the same spiritual drink (for they drank from the spiritual rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ)."<sup>6</sup> Isaiah was doubtless foretelling it when he prophesied: "You shall draw waters with joy out of the savior's fountains."<sup>7</sup>

#### Appendix

Assuredly, this was the spiritual draught promised by our Savior Himself: "If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink."<sup>8</sup>

The purpose of this spiritual drink is that the divine Blood may be poured over the three powers of the soul, the will, memory, and understanding; in other words, that these faculties may be nourished and invigorated by supernatural food enabling them to operate supernaturally.<sup>9</sup> Just as the muscles of the body need substantial nourishment in order to move and work easily and vigorously, so these spiritual powers require a super-substantial food to elevate their activities to a supernatural level. How is this effected? By feeding the intellect with the truths and mysteries of faith, by filling the memory with the recollection of them, by enkindling the will with love.

We stated in a former article that both the beginnings of the supernatural life and the full fruits of consummate sanctity are to be ascribed to the operation of the Precious Blood in our souls. Hence the soul, made fruitful by this divine draught, is filled with the sweetness of grace and the merits of virtues and good works. She may be called the paradise and garden of God, a term often used in the inspired writings to describe one who has reached great holiness. In the New Testament also we find that grace or sanctity is often described by the word "fruit." St. Paul employs such expressions as "fruits of justice," "fruit unto sanctification," "fruit unto God." Our blessed Savior declared at the Last Supper: "He who abides in me, and I in him, he bears much fruit."<sup>10</sup>

This spiritual outpouring of the divine Blood over the powers of the soul produces the fruits of great devotion, a holy life, and sweet amiability. The first brings joy to oneself, according to the Apostle's words: "The fruit of the light is in all goodness and justice and truth."<sup>11</sup> That is, goodness, justice, and truth are possessed and enjoyed as delicious fruits by the soul nourished by the sap of divine blood. A holy life is the second effect of this spiritual draught and it rejoices the heart of God; thereby we "walk worthily of God and please him in all things, bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God."<sup>12</sup> The third effect is to give joy to our neighbor, because "the fruits of the Spirit are charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, modesty, continency."<sup>13</sup>

Thus is fulfilled the promise of the divine Spouse: "If any man listens to my voice and opens the door to me, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me."<sup>14</sup> Not only does our Lord sustain, refresh, and delight the soul with the energizing draught of His divine Blood, but He in turn feeds on the soul and takes delight in it. That is, He transforms it into Himself, after it is prepared by the fruits of virtues, gifts, and perfections. Knowing this, the bride in the Canticle says of Him: "My beloved is gone down into his garden; . . . to feed in the garden and to gather lilies. I to my beloved, and my beloved to me, who feedeth among the lilies"; i.e., among the virtues and graces she now possesses.<sup>15</sup>

In the work of our sanctification this spiritual draught of the Precious Blood is a most efficacious means. Progress in the spiritual life is impossible without daily spiritual exercises, whether private or liturgical; and the mysteries of Christ's sufferings, as portrayed in the Gospels, the liturgical year, and various practices of devotion, are an inexhaustible source of spiritual increase.

### The Precious Blood and Reparation

Reparation is another distinctive feature of the devotion to the Precious Blood, and truly inseparable from it. In accordance with the manifest designs of heaven, reparation has become a foremost characteristic of present-day spirituality. In two of the greatest revelations since the apostolic age — that of the Sacred Heart at Paray le Monial and that of the Immaculate Heart of Fatima the need and obligation of making reparation was reaffirmed and emphasized. However, this is no reason for concluding that reparation is something new in Christian life and asceticism.

A careful reading of the New Testament shows that this basic doctrine of atonement for sin was a prominent part in the apostolic teaching. As stated previously, the Jews themselves were thoroughly convinced of the reality of sin and of their consequent obligation to offer reparation to the divine majesty. Likewise the pagan nations, though entangled in idolatry and superstition, accepted and professed this belief by their propitiatory sacrifices. It is an historical fact that atonement for sin is a fundamental practice in all religions, whether of human or divine origin. Only modern times have popularized the error that man can sin with impunity; only modern times

have dared to deny openly the reality of divine law, divine sanctions, divine justice.

The duty of explaining sin has been incumbent on every human being since the fall of Adam and will continue to burden each of his descendants. But despite the fact that this onerous duty weighs on every man by the very fact of his fallen humanity, all earth's teeming millions together are incapable of discharging it. No effort on our part would have been great enough to explate the faults of men if the Son of God had not assumed human nature in order to redeem us. That is the central, essential fact in the whole doctrine of reparation: "the explatory value of our acts depends solely on the bloody sacrifice of Christ, which is renewed without interruption on our altars in an unbloody manner."<sup>16</sup>

This statement, of course, is amply confirmed by the apostolic teaching contained in the New Testament. St. Peter wrote to the converts of Asia Minor that Jesus "himself bore our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died to sin, might live to justice; and by his stripes you were healed."<sup>17</sup> St. John and St. Paul will preach the same fundamental truth of Christianity.<sup>18</sup>

Reparation was the lifework of Jesus Christ, the Word incarnate. He came in human flesh to repair, to make over — or rather to make anew — the original design and the original creation which the free will of man had chosen to frustrate and destroy: Every morning at the holy Sacrifice, the Church reminds us of this divine re-creation in her prayer: "O God, who hast established the nature of man in wondrous dignity and even more wondrously has renewed it . . ."<sup>19</sup>

Of all great and noble works ever accomplished by God or man, the reparation effected by Jesus Christ, the God-man, is by far the greatest, the noblest, and most divine. It far surpasses all that the Creator had achieved in the beginning by the natural and supernatural worlds of angels and of men. For it gives back to God more glory than He had been deprived of by sin; in fact, it renders Him infinite honor, praise, and glory. "Through Him, with Him and in Him is to Thee, God the Father almighty, in union with the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory."<sup>20</sup>

But just as the reparation offered by Christ has infinitely compensated the divine majesty for the sins of humanity, so it has also superabundantly enriched and benefited man himself. It is not

merely a question of restoring to the human race the prerogatives forfeited in the terrestrial paradise. That, it seems, did not satisfy the munificence of God, our Redeemer; nor would it be an equitable return for the infinite offering which was its purchase price. Hence, because of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary, God has been infinitely glorified and man has been immeasurably enriched, far in excess of his primeval loss.

From the consideration of these profound and illuminating truths several conclusions may be drawn. 1) Although the heavy burden of reparation rests on each of us because of our membership in a fallen race, of themselves our acts of expiation are worthless before God and fruitless for others. 2) Christ is the only mediator and the one acceptable victim of reparation, and our acts of expiation are valuable only because of our union with Him in His mystical body. 3) By contemplating His sacrificial death on the cross, the difficult and onerous duty of reparation becomes for us an enviable privilege.

We may say of the Precious Blood of the Redeemer: that it not only contains the principle and source of all reparation and provides the highest and most cogent motives for its practice, but it also manifests the best means to be employed. These means consist both in the interior dispositions and the acts that accompany them. Assuredly, it is the contemplation of Christ crucified, rather than the consideration of evil, however universal and malicious, that moves the Christian "to offer himself whole and entire to the will of God and strive to repair the injured majesty of God by constant prayer, by voluntary penances, by patient suffering of all those ills which shall befall him; in a word, . . . so organize his life that in all things it will be inspired by the spirit of reparation."<sup>21</sup>

## THE PRECIOUS BLOOD AND THE CHURCH

Inseparably linked with the doctrine of reparation through the Precious Blood is that of the mystical body of Christ, His Church, which embodies all the fruits of His reparatory mission and embraces all the trophies won by His Blood. "Christ also loved the Church, and delivered himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, cleansing her in the bath of water by means of the word; in order that he might present to himself the Church in all her glory,

not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she might be holy and without blemish."<sup>22</sup> Through His Blood, the Church is purified, sanctified and beautified in this world, and by its divine power she will be transformed and glorified, in the world to come.

The first thing to be noted about the relationship between the Church and the Precious Blood is that they were indissolubly united in the eternal decrees of the Almighty which planned the divine masterpiece of redemption. "He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish in his sight in love. He predestined us to be adopted through Jesus Christ as his sons . . . In him we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of his grace."<sup>23</sup> We might say that they took birth simultaneously in the bosom of infinite love, long before the universe became an actuality.

The Precious Blood was predestined to its unique office only in view of the Church. On the other hand, the Church has become the most cherished portion of God's creation, the object of His predilection and choicest gifts only because of the copious outpourings of that sacred stream. "The Church," writes Father Faber, "is God's creation within His own creation, a creation called into being with a specialty of love, created with the miraculous toil and human bloodshedding of the Omnipotent. It is His own life, His own created life, in creation. . . . The world is His creation as Creator, and our wretchedness did not find its prodigality of love sufficient. The Church is His creation as Redeemer; and it lies in furnaces of divine love heated seven times hotter than the furnaces of creation."<sup>24</sup>

That the Church is truly the masterwork and the purchased possession of the Precious Blood is affirmed by universal testimony. St. John calls her "the spouse of the lamb."<sup>25</sup> St. Paul warned the clergy in Ephesus: "Take heed to yourselves and to the whole flock in which the Holy Spirit has placed you as bishops, to rule the Church of God, which he has purchased with his blood."<sup>26</sup> St. Peter calls the early Christians "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people;" "redeemed . . . not with perishable things, with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ."<sup>27</sup>

Pope Pius XII states several reasons why "the Church which He founded by His blood" is said to be born from His pierced side like a new Eve, to be the spiritual mother of men. First, because it was by the death of Christ that the Old Law was abolished and replaced by the new covenant. Secondly, it was by His Blood shed on the cross that God's anger was removed, and that all the heavenly gifts, especially the spiritual graces of the New and Eternal Testament, could then flow from the fountains of our Savior for the salvation of men. Lastly, it was likewise through His Blood that the Church was endowed with the fullest of communications of the Holy Spirit.<sup>28</sup>

Although the Church owes all that she is and all that she has to the outpoured Blood of her Victim Spouse, the Precious Blood, on the other hand, is also indebted to the Church. Marvelous to state, though this stream of life is itself as powerful as omnipotence, it still needs the Church to make fruitful its shedding, to complete its triumph, to fill up the incredible measure of its happiness by a reciprocation of love.

"In carrying out the work of Redemption," writes the Sovereign Pontiff, "He wishes to be helped by the members of His Body. This is not because He is indigent and weak, but rather because He has willed it for the greater glory of His unspotted Spouse. Dying on the cross He left to His Church the immense treasury of the Redemption; towards this she contributed nothing. But when those graces come to be distributed, not only does He share this task of sanctification with His Church, but He wants it in a way to be due to her action."<sup>29</sup>

Hence our Savior has confided to the Church, and to her alone, what is dearest to Him in this world: the conversion, sanctification and salvation of immortal souls. For this cause, the overflowing treasury of redemption has been entrusted to her disposal. Just as on the cross He retained not a drop of Blood in His tortured body but had it drained entirely of that precious life-stream, so now He keeps from His mystical body nothing of the limitless wealth His Blood has purchased. Little or much may be had for the asking.

Since the Church is the product of the Savior's Blood, it is not surprising to find that they possess many characteristics in common, something akin to an hereditary likeness. For instance, there is a striking similarity between the facts that the Precious Blood was shed for the whole race of Adam, and that the Church is universal in her mission, excluding no race or nation from her apostolic activity. "The Church is not one society or one church alongside

many others; nor is she just a church among men; she is the church of men, the church of mankind. It is this claim that gives her action its persevering determination and its grandeur."<sup>30</sup>

Again, just as the Precious Blood is an all-sufficient instrument of our redemption, so the Church is the ark of salvation. For the very reason that the Blood of Christ is universal in its effects, it is also unrivalled in its efficacy. The Church likewise is at once catholic and exclusive; on the one hand, she is destined to embrace all mankind in her sanctifying activity; on the other, she is the one and only Bride of Christ.

The Church and the Precious Blood have also an identity of interests, as is evident from all that has preceded. They maintain a similar relationship to God, to souls, and to the world. To God, they offer adoration, praise, and reparation. To souls they bring forgiveness, grace, and salvation. To the world they give liberation from the dominion of Satan and elevation to the supernatural order. However, there are certain phases of the Church's life and activity in which she more closely reflects and relives the mystery of the Precious Blood; namely, in the offering of the august Sacrifice of the Altar and in the sacrificial lives of her children.

Just as truly as the sacrifice of the cross is reenacted in every holy Mass, so likewise the victim of the cross, Jesus Christ, prolongs and renews His suffering life in His mystical members. For it is a supernatural law that the life of grace takes root and grows only in the shadow of the cross. Suffering, sacrifice, a species of death are necessary in order that divine life may expand in individual souls and in the Church at large. There are no other means by which to continue the work of redemption than those by which it was begun, namely, the passion and death of Christ.

"The wheat seed bursts in the earth, not because moisture disintegrates it, but because its fecundity distends it. . . It is beneath the pressure of what it is that it is broken; the seed is not itself, it is not seed, except in causing itself to spring forth. *Nisi granum frumenti* . . . So with Jesus, the seed of divine wheat: He has never been so magnificently Himself, so fully Man-God, *in actu ultimo et perfecto*, as in bursting forth to attain His fullness, as in opening Himself out through obedience and love in order to go to the Father and to go to men."<sup>31</sup>

This process, if we may call it so, inaugurated by the Son of God on Calvary, has become a law of the supernatural world; it is the law of redemption. His passion and death are still actual and operative, for they are constantly perpetuated in the lives of His mystical members. Otherwise, the active apostolate would be fruitless and unavailing. And so, in His insatiable desire to save souls, to enrich them with the glorious fruits of His blood-shedding, the divine Redeemer is ever seeking for those who will freely and generously associate themselves with His cross. All Christians are called to share in the priesthood of Christ and in His state as victim by the mere fact of their membership in His mystical body through baptism. And therefore, as Pius XII teaches, "it is our duty so to transform our hearts that every trace of sin may be completely blotted out, while whatever promotes supernatural life through Christ, may be zealously fostered and strengthened even to the extent that, in union with the Immaculate Victim, we become a victim acceptable to the eternal Father."32

However, there are souls who are consumed by a more ardent love for their Redeemer — souls fired by a burning zeal for sinners and impelled by a self-sacrificing generosity — to whom He communicates more fully and intimately of His spirit as a victim of love for God and men. But this communication between Jesus and His co-victim is not accomplished by mere desires and promises, by fleeting emotions, nor even by embracing a certain vocation in life. Long and arduous labor, by which the soul is transformed into the state of victim, is required for it to participate intimately in the sacrifice of Christ.

In reality this state of victimhood is nothing more than a deepening, strengthening, and purifying of whatever in the soul is essentially Christian and supernatural. It is a *spirit* which animates the virtues, rather than a particular or additional virtue in itself. In short, it is the quintessence of the Christian life and the Christian spirit.

In this process we may distinguish two aspects or phases, which are themselves inseparable and simultaneous. There is first the "negative" gesture, which involves renunciation, mortification, and sacrifice; and this is completed by a positive movement of dedication, which leads to union and transformation. In other words, the victim-life is truly a "pass-over," of which the paschal sacrifice was

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also the type. It is a passage, an ascent from vanity to truth, from obscurity to light, from death to life, from the natural to the supernatural, from our human selves to a divine life in God through Christ.

It remains true, however, that in this world the essential element of sacrifice is the most conspicuous and valid test of the victimlife, because it was paramount in the life of our Redeemer. The absolutely vicarious character of His sacrifice is also communicated to the sufferings of His victim members. These cease to be simply purifying and sanctifying for the individual; they become in a true sense "redemptive," and in a certain measure they produce the same effects as the infinite oblation of Jesus. In what manner? Because through the power of love, their sufferings form one and the same sacrifice with His; supernaturally, they have neither value nor existence apart from His redemptive sacrifice.

Thus, we find ourselves once more at the foot of the cross on Calvary; there where everything meets to be reconciled and reunited, there where everything issues forth to purify a sin-stained creation. Again, His dripping Blood becomes the seal of unity, the pledge of fruitfulness, the measure of love.

#### A HIGH PRIEST, HOLY, INNOCENT, UNDEFILED

Finally, let us examine the devotion to the Precious Blood in relation to Jesus Christ Himself. What does it reveal to us about Him? In all truthfulness, we may claim that this devotion shows Him to us in all His divine majesty and grandeur, in all His human tenderness and beauty, in His full stature as Son of God and Son of Man, Savior of the world, Mystical Head of the Church, twicecrowned King of angels and of men. It places Jesus at the very summit of creation, as the supreme high-priestly Mediator between the triune God and the entire universe, both spiritual and material.

We recall that the devotion to the Precious Blood stems from the mystery of the priesthood of Jesus Christ. Now what constitutes the priesthood of the Savior? What is its source? According to St. Thomas and the majority of theologians, it flows from the hypostatic union; it follows from the very fact that He is the God-man, from the mystery of the incarnation. It is the wholly ineffable and gratuitous grace of the union of His human nature with the Word

which makes Christ in His humanity the High Priest of creation. He is priest by being what He is, i.e., God made man. "The Man-God, that is the whole thing: what He is, is the resumé of all He does. What else is He but the assumption of a human nature in a divine person, the unheard of condescension of a God who has wished to be only one with man, the most total of flights towards God in the most complete of descents of God towards man, that is to say, what else is He but the priesthood itself, the priesthood perfectly and divinely realized?"<sup>33</sup>

This fact also guarantees the infinite worth of His sacrifice, as we have already explained. Because He was Himself the victim, His sacrifice is infinite in every dimension. "Others have had some participation of the priesthood: He has it in its entirety, or rather, He does not so much have it as be it. He is all the priesthood, the priesthood supereminent and personified, because He is the double oblation both of man to God and of God to man, and He is these two oblations so totally that they meet in His unity."<sup>34</sup>

It is the priesthood of Christ which places Him at the very apex of the created universe, both visible and invisible. In His priesthood we find the summation of His entire work and Person. Assuredly, there are no more attractive and appealing portraits of our dear Lord than as the Good Shepherd in unwearied search of the lost sheep; or the humble carpenter toilfully earning His daily living; or the indefatigable, wayside preacher, patiently instructing human ignorance on the way to salvation. Yet these are only certain aspects of His mission and His personality. They do not reveal Him, whole and entire, for what He is. As Father Garrigou-Lagrange appositely observes: "To be priest and universal mediator, the offerer of a sacrifice of infinite value, means more than to be head of mankind. In the state of innocence Adam was mankind's head, but he had no power as priest and mediator to offer a sacrifice of infinite worth."<sup>35</sup>

Because of the sublime mystery of this personal union of His humanity with the Word, Christ is the supremely real bond which marvelously reunites the most widely separated opposites; the fallen race of men and the ever-blessed Trinity. This may be called His substantial mediatorship which, like His priesthood, consists in His being simply what He is: the Word made flesh. For as St. Thomas explains, "we may consider two things in a mediator; first, that he

is a mean; secondly, that he unites others. Now it is of the nature of a mean to be distant from each extreme: while it unites by communicating to one that which belongs to the other.<sup>36</sup> In His own Person, Jesus Christ elevates the human race — and in it the whole visible creation — to the closest proximity and most intimate union with His heavenly Father. On the other hand, He extends to creatures and embraces them in that union with the Godhead which He enjoys by natural right. By His incarnation, we are incorporated in Him as a truly divine race, we share in the Son's relationship to the Father and in the divine prerogatives which He enjoys.

Such are the effects of His substantial mediatorship; but it is not thereby exhausted. In fact, it is supplemented and perfected by an active mediatorship of which it is the basis, and which consists, according to the Angelic Doctor, in "communicating to men both precepts and gifts, and offering satisfaction and prayers to God for men." In other words, there is a twofold activity: first, an activity of God with regard to men; and second, an activity or response of men towards God.

As regards the former, since Christ came as the personal representative of the Godhead, emerging from the bosom of the Father, His mission is most exalted and extraordinary. Himself anointed with the fullness of the divinity, He was appointed to be the mediator-prophet of supernatural truth, the mediator-priest of supernatural life, the mediator-king of a supernatural kingdom. In other words, He is to communicate to men out of His own infinite riches.

But Jesus Christ is also the representative of men, and of creation in general, before the majesty of His Father. In this capacity, according to St. Thomas, "He must offer satisfactions and prayers to God for men." He must render to the divine majesty adequate worship in the name of mankind, and He must also qualify men themselves to join Him in His acts of adoration, praise, thanksgiving, and reparation. Consequently His functions as mediator are really summed up in His priesthood; the two offices coincide. For it was by His sacrifice on the Cross that this twofold mediatorial activity was chiefly exercised and perfectly realized. There, His office as priestly mediator became an actuality; He became the focal point of creation, the center of gravity of the supernatural world, by attracting all creatures to Himself, through the irresistible force of love, in order to lift them up to participation in the trinitarian

life. His outpoured Blood seals an indissoluble covenant between God and men. "He who was Himself the Bridge," writes the mystic of Siena, "moistened the mortar for its building with His Blood. That is, His Blood was united with the mortar of divinity and with the fire of love."<sup>37</sup>

Now, as we have said, devotion to the Precious Blood concentrates especially, though not exclusively, on Jesus in the very act of redeeming us, in the offering of His supreme sacrifice on Calvary and its daily renewal on our altars. Jesus immolated, Jesus victim, Jesus crucified, is the central figure to whom is offered our homage. To appreciate what this means we must appreciate His sacrifice: we must understand simply and unconditionally that it is the greatest thing that has ever happened or could ever happen in this created universe.

"What the Incarnation does in the order of finite natures, this oblation does in the order of finite activities: the center, the summit, the whole; it is the full expression of the Incarnation, the perfect and actual entering into possession of all humanity by the God who became man. As all creation is summed up in the Man-God, so all created action is summed up in the Act, the absolute and preeminent Act, the Act in which the Man-God acts to the maximum as Man-God."<sup>38</sup>

It is this act of blood-shedding unto death that Jesus realizes all His potentialities, attaining the full stature of His incomparable destiny. He can never surpass this supreme manifestation of what He is. What, then, does the Precious Blood contribute to the twofold activity of Christ, as the mediator-pontiff of humanity? As an offering of infinite worship to God, the Precious Blood renders His sacrifice concrete and total. His blood-shedding makes His oblation the most realistic and complete expression of His interior dispositions, uniting His soul and His body in a perfect holocaust for the supreme glorification of the blessed Trinity. As a sacrifice of expiation and impetration on behalf of men, the Precious Blood is the guarantee of God's forgiveness and favor, an undeniable argument convincing us of the divine mercy and liberality in our regard. And, strange to say, man needs to be convinced! He is reluctant to believe in the "unfathomable riches of Christ." And since he will not accept the testimony of His word, God had pledged Himself in the blood of His Son.

#### Appendix

Dominus regnavit a ligno, sings the Church in her liturgy. Unlike the kings of earth, He reigns not by right of inheritance, nor by martial conquest, nor yet by the divine and incontestable rights of creation; for His subjects had denied and repudiated them. No, His kingdom was won by Blood, and His royalty is inseparably linked to a diadem of thorns. Surely we may claim that the devotion to His Precious Blood reveals Him in the maximum expression of His love and of His power!

"To him who has loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us to be a kingdom, and priests to God his Father — to him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."<sup>39</sup>

SISTER MARY CELINE, R.A.P.B.

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#### FOOTNOTES

- 1. Hymn at Matins, Office of the Precious Blood.
- 2. Hymn at Matins, Office of the Precious Blood.
- 3. Paedagogus, II, 2; PG, 8, 409.
- Cf. De Venerabili Sacramento Altaris (a spurious work of St. Thomas Aquinas), c. 31.
- 5. Epistle 63; PL, 4, 378.
- 6. I Cor 10, 4.
- 7. Is 12, 3.
- 8. Jn 7, 37.
- 9. Cf. De Venerabili Sacramento Altaris, c. 31.
- 10. Jn 15, 5.
- 11. Eph 5, 9.
- 12. Col 1, 10.
- 13. Gal 5, 22.
- 14. Apoc 3, 20-21.
- 15. Cant 6, 1-2.
- 16. Pius XI, Miserentissimus Redemptor, AAS, XX (1928), 165.
- 17. I Pt 2, 24.
- Cf. I John 2, 1-2; Col 2, 4; Rom 3, 23-25. Similar texts could, of course, be endlessly multiplied.
- 19. Roman Missal, Offertory of the Mass.
- 20. Ibid., Canon of the Mass.
- 21. Pius XI, op. cit., AAS, XX (1928), 165.

- 22. Eph 5, 25-27.
- 23. Eph 1, 4-7.
- 24. The Precious Blood, p. 252.
- 25. Apoc 21, 9.
- 26. Acts 20, 28.
- 27. I Pt 2, 9; 1, 18-19.
- Mystici Corporis, AAS, XXXV (1943), 193 (N.C.W.C. trans., pp. 19-20).
- 29. Ibid., pp. 27-28.
- 30. Karl Adam, The Spirit of Catholicism, p. 167.
- 31. Emile Mersch, S.J., Morality and the Mystical Body, p. 146.
- 32. Mediator Dei, AAS, XXXIX (1947), 582.
- 33. Emile Mersch, S.J., op. cit., p. 140.
- 34. Emile Mersch, S.J., op. cit., p. 141.
- 35. The Love of God and the Cross of Jesus, II, p. 309.
- 36. Summa theol., IIIa, q. 26, a. 2.
- 37. St. Catherine of Siena, op. cit., p. 69.
- 38. Emile Mersch, S.J., op. cit., p. 147.
- 39. Apoc 1, 6.

# OUTPOURING OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

Our knowledge of the Precious Blood would be incomplete were we to neglect its role in the sacred liturgy. Conversely, it may be said that we can neither wholly appreciate nor most fruitfully participate in the liturgical ceremonies without a knowledge of the outpouring of the Precious Blood as it is continued in the sacramental mysteries. In an attempt to deepen our knowledge of the interdependence of the liturgy and the Precious Blood, we shall examine briefly the doctrinal foundation for their mutual relationship and illustrate its actuality by a consideration of the sacrifice of the Mass and our Eucharistic participation in that sacramental sacrifice.

Pius XII spoke of this doctrinal basis in relation to the liturgy when he wrote: "The sacred liturgy is the public worship which our Redeemer as Head of the Church renders to the Father as well as the worship which the community of the faithful renders to its Founder, and through Him to the heavenly Father."<sup>1</sup>

The central truth, therefore, on which rests the whole structure of Christian worship, as well as our redemption through the Precious Blood, is the mediatorship of Jesus Christ, the Word incarnate. Man cannot obtain reconciliation and union with God by his own power, or through any prayer, labor, or merit of his own. Nothing he can do is of any avail to re-establish the supernatural relationship between him and his Creator. He can and must do so through Him whom the Father has made our eternal High Priest and Mediator, Jesus Christ.

The purpose of any religion is to facilitate man's approach to God by reconciliation and reunion. This double process is indicated in its liturgical rites by the expiatory sacrifice and the sacrificial banquet. Consequently, the value and efficacy of a religion must be judged by its power to achieve this union between divinity and humanity. The Church established by the divine mediator is thus the true, final, and perfect religion because, as we shall later point out in detail, it accomplishes this objective absolutely and completely through the sacrifice of the Mass and the Eucharist, the sacrament of union with God.

Because Jesus Christ, through the shedding of His Precious Blood, is both priestly mediator and our victim of sacrifice, the liturgy of the true Church of Christ is infinitely superior to the rite of every other religion. It is in fact divine. The value of our religious rites and its application to us of the merits of the Blood of the Savior rests upon the mediatorship of Christ, the Word incarnate.

Another doctrine upon which the relation of the liturgy and the Precious Blood rests is the fact of sin, both original and personal. Through original sin mankind entered into a fundamentally false attitude towards his Creator. This basic derangement tore asunder the bonds of their supernatural friendship and left man a disowned, disorderly being. It deprived him of the privilege of God's adoptive sonship, and with it those supernatural and preternatural gifts which made him incline so easily and respond so readily to divine things. Having descended from the dignity of a son of God by grace to the status of a mere creature, he succumbed ever more rapidly to a self-glorification which violates even the rational law of his being. Down the road of self-sufficient human progress he staggered under a burden of inherited evil, which he was powerless to throw off.

At last, "in the fullness of time" and the outpouring of His mercy, God sent His Son to conquer this world of "anti-God," to rescue mankind from its clutches by His sacrificial death on Calvary. His outpoured Blood became the sign and the seal, the pledge and proof of a new covenant between divinity and humanity, which, if it did not restore all his primeval prerogatives, gave mankind instead a higher status and a loftier destiny as the mystical body of

the Word made flesh. Through the liturgy, particularly in the Mass, this covenant is renewed and reaffirmed by us. Again the Father pledges us His grace, His love, His eternal benediction in the mystical shedding of the Blood of His beloved Son.

The third basic truth proclaimed with equal emphasis by the liturgy and by devotion to the Precious Blood is man's elevation to the supernatural order, or, more precisely, his restoration to that order after the humanly irretrievable loss of original justice. Indeed, the modern world is surely learning the truth of man's inadequacy even in mundane affairs once he has been separated from the divine. It is facing the truth that "the likeness of man cannot be kept inviolate by the powers of natural man: it postulates the spiritual man."<sup>2</sup>

It has already been indicated that the multiple effects of Christ's redemptive sacrifice always involve supernatural realities and values.<sup>3</sup> His mission was not concerned with the things of this world, primarily or immediately; it did not aim at restoring the paradise of pleasure or man's original innocence. Nor does the redeeming grace merited on Calvary eradicate all the consequences of sin in the natural order, such as ignorance, concupiscence, sickness and death; nor the innumerable social evils which afflict mankind as a result. Such is not God's plan. The Precious Blood obtained for men directly the restoration of their supernatural privileges: participation in the divine life through grace, adoptive sonship through incorporation into Christ, and the right to eternal beatitude. In fact, what distinguishes the true Church of Christ from every other religion is the supernatural life which it is empowered to bestow.

This is not to maintain that the bestowal of divine life frees us from the belief in definite dogmas or the observance of laws. Assuredly, besides the sacred liturgy conferring the divine life upon us, both creed and code are essential to the Christian religion; but they are the dispositions for the reception of the grace of God. They are, in the New Law, of secondary importance.<sup>4</sup> Intrinsically, Christianity is a mystery of divine life communicated and received; obtained through the mystery of the Precious Blood and communicated through the liturgical acts, principally the Mass and the Eucharist.

## THE PRECIOUS BLOOD AND THE MASS

The doctrinal unification of the Precious Blood and the liturgy becomes a living reality in the summit of Christian worship, the Sacrifice of the Mass. Our absolute need of a divine mediator to restore us to God finds its most practical and explicit acknowledgment in the prayers of the Mass. There we publicly profess that only "through Him, with Him, and in Him" can we offer our worship to the triune God and from Him await divine help. Yet no such act of divine worship would exist if the Blood of Christ had not flowed on the cross. Doubtless, without this shedding the Church would have had a priesthood and sacrifice, for without them there can be no true religion, without them religion degenerates into a code of ethics fringed by private piety.

But, we insist, if Christ had redeemed us in another way, by another kind of death than by His bloody sacrifice on Calvary, the Church could not now offer to the adorable Trinity "the holy bread of life eternal and the chalice of unending salvation."<sup>5</sup> Her sacred ministers could not pray: "Accept, most holy Trinity, this offering which we are making Thee in remembrance of the passion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ our Lord."<sup>6</sup>

Why is this? Because there could be no mystical renewal of His death in the Mass by the separate consecration, if there had been no actual, physical separation of His Body and His Blood by crucifixion. The consecration of the bread alone could, doubtless, render present the person of the Savior; but it is in conjunction with the consecration of the wine that His sacrifice is renewed or re-presented.

The Mass is exactly that: the making present again of the *opus redemptionis*, accomplished by the shedding of Blood on Calvary, in order "that men should individually come into vital contact with the sacrifice of the cross, so that the merits which flow from it should be imparted to them. In a certain sense it can be said that on Calvary Christ built a font of purification and salvation which He filled with the Blood He shed; but if men do not bathe in it and there wash away the stains of their iniquities, they can never be purified and saved."<sup>7</sup>

Hence, the Holy Mass is a commemorative sacrifice: "As often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show

the death of the Lord, until he come."<sup>8</sup> Not merely do we return in respectful, affectionate remembrance to an event of the distant past, but we proclaim it, we manifest it, we make it a living reality in the present.

The Mass is an act, as the canon affirms; it is an act accomplished here and now, an enactment of the life and death of Christ in the sacramental order. The very words of consecration indicate as much. As the mouth piece of Jesus, the eternal High Priest, His minister does not say — as might have been expected — when consecrating the wine: "This is the chalice of My Blood, which *was shed* for you." No; but he declares: "This is the chalice of My blood . . . the mystery of faith, which shall be shed for you and for many unto the forgiveness of sins." The act of sacrifice still continues; the sacred blood of the victim still flows, not physically, but mystically, mysteriously, sacramentally.

This is only to say that in the Mass the Blood of the Redeemer continues the same divine work, of glorifying God and saving souls that it accomplished on the cross. The Blood in the chalice is as powerful and efficacious in worshipping His Father and sanctifying souls as the Blood of the crucifixion. Indeed, on the side of heaven, there is nothing to obstruct or prevent the outpouring of divine blessings: the floodgates of pardon, mercy, and peace are opened wide. Where does the fault lie? Nowhere but with ourselves.

"The cooperation of the faithful is required so that sinners may be individually purified in the Blood of the Lamb," writes Pius XII.<sup>9</sup> "They are strictly required to put their own lips to the fountain, imbibe and absorb for themselves the life-giving water, and rid themselves personally of anything that might hinder its nutritive effect in their souls."<sup>10</sup> A purely theoretical, academic knowledge of the mystery of the Precious Blood as contained and revealed in the liturgy would be unprofitable to our spiritual life. Our effort and cooperation are nowhere more evidently necessary or more plentifully fruitful.

In the holy Sacrifice of the Altar, this active or ascetical response of the faithful is adequately and admirably summarized in their duties as priests and victims with Christ. In order to attain union of mind and heart with our high priest, Jesus, the faithful must be familiar with the dispositions of His most holy soul. Where are these more truly manifested than in the shedding of His Precious

Blood? The Precious Blood is indeed a fount on whose surface are mirrored all the perfections, virtues, and sentiments of His interior life. In a profound text to the Phillipians, St. Paul indicates how the "mind of Christ" is best revealed in the mysteries of His sufferings, His "self-emptying" even unto death: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who . . . emptied himself . . ., being made in the likeness of men. . . . He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to death on a cross."<sup>11</sup>

## THE PRECIOUS BLOOD AND THE EUCHARIST

Our participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice would be incomplete without the reception of Holy Communion. Through it we "may obtain more abundant fruit from this most holy sacrament," according to the teaching of the Council of Trent. Our present discussion also, must, for its completion, consider our reception of the Eucharistic Blood.

We have already shown how necessary to us was the Blood, shed in pain upon the cross, and how equally necessary is the chalice of Blood daily offered in the Holy Sacrifice. But, is there any necessity to receive this divine life in Holy Communion? Since the Church permits the faithful to communicate under one species only, we must not conclude that therefore the Blood of Christ, signified by the wine, is superfluous, a sort of spiritual luxury, as far as the sacrament is concerned. On the contrary, it is precisely because the Blood is already present in the living body of Christ in the host, and to avoid any error and irreverence regarding it, that the Church has so decreed.

In fact, if by an impossibility, the Blood were not present in the consecrated host, the faithful also would be obliged to receive the consecrated wine. Otherwise, how could they comply with the express command of Christ: "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you."<sup>12</sup> St. Thomas assures us that the divine Blood is as profitable and as sweet when received with His body, as when taken sacramentally from the chalice.

Another proof of the necessity of communicating in the Precious Blood is the fact that, as a sacrament, the Eucharist is essentially a banquet. This fact is shown by Christ's own words in in-

stituting it: "Take and eat. . . . All of you drink of this." It is a spiritual banquet by which we participate most fully in the divine fruits of the sacrifice. It is the nuptial banquet of Jesus and His spouse the Church, and it anticipates, not in figure but in reality, the eternal nuptial feast of heaven. Even the poorest and scantiest meal includes both food and drink; whereas at a banquet there are served the choicest viands and beverages that the host can provide. What, then, should we expect at a divine banquet, provided by the Lord of heaven and earth and preluding that of heaven? Would it not be obviously incomplete were the divine nectar of Christ's blood lacking or denied to us, who are the guests? And that Blood we receive when, under the appearances of bread, we receive His body with which it is truly united.

#### EFFECTS OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

The double nourishment, for soul and body, contained in the Blood of Christ is tersely but beautifully expressed by St. Clement of Alexandria: "The Word is a cluster of grapes, pressed out for us." How truly His Blood heals and sustains the whole nature of man is shown by the effects attributed to it in Sacred Scripture under the symbols of water and wine.

Like a draught of living water, the divine Blood produces three effects in the well-disposed communicant: it purifies, moistens, and refreshes. All of these operations are directed against sin and its consequences. Since these consequences reside in the body as well as in the soul, it is also helped and sanctified. Always, we may say, the Savior's Blood is at war with sin, the enemy of God. Always, it is fighting and conquering it. Always, it is striving to restore to the Creator His rightful dominion over His creatures, which sin has dared to dispute and even to usurp.

The Psalmist compares the just man to a "tree planted beside streams of water, that yields fruit in due season, whose leaves do not wither." These streams assuredly typify the graces which flow from the vivifying fount of the Precious Blood. On the other hand, the sinner is "like chaff which the wind scatters." He is dried up by the heat of passion and scorched from drought, caused by his deliberate abstention from that life-giving stream. Hence, temptations easily scatter his strength and drive his thoughts, desires, and affections into sin.

Water not only cleanses and moistens, but cools and assuages the fevered body; so the divine Blood we receive tempers the heat of the passions. As "water quenches a flaming fire," so this heavenly drink quenches the fire of anger, avarice, envy, lust, and so forth.

Sadness, distress, and remorse are the bitter fruits of revolt against our sovereign Good; for them also the saving Blood provides an effective remedy. For, as Scripture says, it is the wine which gladdens the heart and comforts the soul. "I have inebriated the weary soul: and I have filled every hungry soul."<sup>13</sup> "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. . . . Eat that which is good, and your soul shall be delighted in fatness."

## EFFECTS OF SPIRITUAL DELIGHT

This spiritual delight causes the fervent communicant to despise worldly pleasures, to be consumed with longing for God, and to overflow with fraternal love.

These truths are admirably expressed in the liturgy: "Having been filled with Thy food of spiritual nourishment . . . through our reception of this sacrament, teach us how to spurn earthly goods and to love those of heaven."<sup>14</sup> Again we ask: "May Thy gifts, O God, free us from the fascination of earthly things and ever give us new strength,"<sup>15</sup> to live a wholly supernatural life.

Secondly, the soul that is inflamed and inebriated by the Blood of the divine Spouse is consumed with longing for God. How often the sacred writings describe this holy hunger and thirst, this divine yearning for the possession of the sovereign Good! "As the deer longs for the streams of water, so does my soul long for Thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God."<sup>16</sup> The bride in the Canticle is restless and disconsolate until she has found her beloved: "I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him and found him not. I will rise and will go about the city; in the streets and the broad ways I will seek him."<sup>17</sup>

This desire becomes so poignant as to seize the senses also: "My soul thirsts for thee," cried David, "my flesh longs for thee like a dry and parched land without water."<sup>18</sup> Truly, in the sacramental feast we find the literal fulfillment of the prophecy: "They that eat me shall yet hunger, and they that drink me shall yet thirst."<sup>19</sup>

Neither does the liturgy ignore this holy thirst of the soul, sure sign of its spiritual health. Hence we plead: "Having been fed with Thy food of heavenly delight, . . . may we ever hunger after those things by which we truly live."<sup>20</sup> And again: "Grant, almighty God, that we who celebrate the giving of the Holy Spirit may burn with heavenly desires and thirst for the waters of life."<sup>21</sup>

A tender and overflowing love for one's neighbor is the third effect produced by this spiritual banquet. Indeed, it might be considered the fairest, most delicious fruit of the life-giving Blood, for according to St. Thomas the union of the mystical members of Christ is the very reality signified and effected by the sacramental elements. Where this supernatural charity is lacking practically in one's daily relationships, it is evident that the Eucharistic union has not been entirely efficacious. It has not produced "communion," because there is wanting that holy inebriation which detaches the soul from itself to unite her completely to Christ in His mystical members.

Here again, the sacred liturgy is our guide. On Easter Sunday, the greatest feast of the cycle, we plead that "the spirit of love may make us of one mind and heart," who have been fed with the paschal mysteries. Yet another prayer asks that "the reception of Thy sacrament obtain for us both purity of heart and unity with one another."<sup>22</sup>

This truth of neighborly charity is deduced also from considering the nature of the sacrament. Where would we expect to find more genuine mirth, sincere cordiality, and mutual goodwill than at a wedding feast? There, at least, sadness, sourness, enmity, and discord are banished. The guests are in perfect accord, and the atmosphere breathes union, harmony, and joy. Now, as stated above, the holy Eucharist is truly a nuptial banquet. This is the common teaching of the Fathers in their interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures. "By eating the flesh of the Bridegroom and drinking His Blood, we attain to nuptial union with Him."<sup>23</sup> Though all the sacraments unite us to Christ and infuse or increase divine charity in the soul, the Eucharist is the sacrament of love and union par excellence. It perfects and consummates the union already initiated in baptism and further developed in confirmation, and extends it to embrace the entire mystical Christ.

Hence, the graces contained in Communion are ordered to the highest state of perfection. They are divinely intended and empowered to lead the soul to the fullest mystical union with the heavenly Bridegroom and through Him with all the members of His body, the Church. If, in so many cases, the sacrament fails to achieve this sublime objective, this mystical union, the fault lies entirely with ourselves. Perhaps, we receive the divine food corporally, but do not feed upon it spiritually, we do not utilize the infinitely vital energies of life, knowledge, and love that it contains.

## FORETASTE OF ETERNAL BLISS

A final consideration of the Eucharistic mystery will show its distinctly "futuristic," heavenly element and character. Just as through it we participate in the mysteries of Christ's earthly life as present realities, so do we also anticipate, here and now, the future life of glory. For the Eucharist is the type, the pledge, and the prelude of that supernal replenishment of our souls and bodies at the eternal banquet table of heaven.

Did not our Lord Himself teach us that "the kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who made a marriage for his son?"<sup>24</sup> Again, on the eve of His passion, He told the chosen twelve: "I dispose to you as my Father hath disposed to me a kingdom: that you may eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom."<sup>25</sup> In yet another text He promises us: "Behold, I stand at the gate and knock. If any man shall hear my voice and open to me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."<sup>26</sup>

What is this divine supper here but the Eucharistic feast where the heavenly Guest becomes Himself the supersubstantial food of the communicant who opens to Him the door, i.e., the faculties, of the soul. He feeds the soul with His Body and Blood, while the soul in loving surrender to Him gives increase of strength and beauty to His mystical body. Later, after the toils and sufferings of this life, the soul will be fed and delighted with the divine substance itself at the heavenly table. For just as truly as corporal food enters the body and becomes one with it, so the divine essence is united to the soul to transform and deify it. Hence, there ensues in the glorified soul the immediate possession and fruition of the three divine Persons, communicating to it divine perfection and beatitude.

Let us see how the liturgy teaches us these same sublime truths

## Appendix

in its terse but pregnant phrases. "Grant us, O Lord, to be filled with the eternal enjoyment of Thy divinity, which is prefigured here in this life by the reception of Thy precious body and blood."<sup>27</sup> And in another prayer: "May Thy sacrament, which we have received, give us life and . . . prepare us for Thy everlasting mercies."<sup>28</sup>

In a striking metaphor the Psalmist describes the heavenly beatitude: "They are satiated with the abundance of thy house, and thou givest them to drink of the torrent of thy delights. For with thee is the fountain of life, and in thy light we see light."<sup>29</sup> The liturgy too, with magnificent brevity, combines both the present and future enjoyment of divine delights: "Admitted to Thy holy table, O Lord, we have drawn waters with joy from the Savior's fountains. May His blood, we beseech Thee, become within us a fountain of water springing forth unto eternal life."<sup>30</sup>

If only we could realize that every time we approach the Eucharistic table, we are preparing, rehearsing for, and really anticipating the eternal marriage feast of heaven! How this truth would revive our fervor! No shadowy, ephemeral, transitory act is this, our daily Communion, but the veritable commencement of an ineffable and eternal embrace. Then, if our dispositions merit it, we may even experience a foretaste of that heavenly bliss.

Devotion to the Precious Blood, then, portrays graphically all those hidden truths that are contained sacramentally in the liturgy. It shows them to us with all the realism of time, place, and circumstances which appeals so strongly to our complex nature. They are impressed on our hearts, minds, and memories with a vividness at once convincing and ineffaceable. Nothing is so capable of energizing our faith, hope, and charity as this reflection on the sufferings of our Savior. Nothing, then, is more helpful in penetrating the meaning and value of the Mass and the sacraments, and in disposing us to profit by them. For the liturgy embodies the mystery of the Precious Blood in its superabundant fullness and pristine efficacy. On the other hand, in this devotion the faithful find an unfailing source of that interior spirit which the Holy Father declares is "the chief element of divine worship."

Assuredly, amid the multiplicity of devotions in the Church, there is not one so closely associated with the liturgy as the Precious Blood, for it ushers us into the very heart of the liturgy, the undying sacrament of Christ. And both liturgy and devotion find their cen-

ter and their climax in this oblation, offered once on the cross in Blood and sorrow, offered sacramentally on the altar unto the end of time. Both stem from the same basic truths of Christianity; in fine, they cannot be separated, for they admirably illumine, clarify, and supplement each other.

#### SISTER MARY CELINE, R.A.P.B.

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#### FOOTNOTES

- 1. Pius XII, Mediator Dei, AAS, XXXIX (1947), 521; Vatican Library translation, 32.
- 2. The End of Our Time, by Nicholas Berdyaev, p. 34.
- 3. Cf. Cross and Crown, June, 1951, pp. 130 ff.
- 4. Summa theol., Ia IIae, q. 106, a. 1.
- 5: Canon of the Mass.
- 6. Offertory of the Mass.
- 7. Mediator Dei, 77.
- 8. I Cor 11, 26.
- 9. Mediator Dei, 79.
- 10. Phil 2, 5-8.
- 11. Mediator Dei, 118.
- 12. Jn 6, 54.
- 13. Jer 31, 25.
- 14. Postcommunion for Second Sunday in Advent.
- 15. Postcommunion for Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany.
- 16. Ps 41, 1f.
- 17. Cant 3, 1f.
- 18. Ps 62, 1.
- 19. Ecclus 24, 29.
- 20. Postcommunion for Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany.
- 21. Sixth Prophecy for the Vigil of Pentecost.
- 22. Postcommunion for Ninth Sunday after Pentecost.
- 23. Theodoret, In Cant., chap. 3.
- 24. Mt 22, 2.
- 25. Lk 22, 29f.
- 26. Apoc 3, 20.
- 27. Postcommunion for Feast of Corpus Christi.
- 28. Postcommunion for Third Sunday after Pentecost; cf. Postcommunion for first Tuesday in Lent.
- 29. Ps 35, 9f.
- 30. Postcommunion for the Feast of the Precious Blood.

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# ABBREVIATIONS:

N.T. — New Testament O.T. — Old Testament PB — Precious Blood PBD — Precious Blood Devotion

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