

**PROCEEDINGS**  
**OF THE**  
**FIRST PRECIOUS BLOOD**  
**STUDY WEEK**

**August 6 - 8**  
**1957**

**Saint Joseph's College**  
**Rensselaer, Indiana**

© Society of the Precious Blood 1959

Carthagen, Ohio

NIHIL OBSTAT:

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Rensselaer, Indiana  
February 2, 1959

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Provincial  
February 5, 1959

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John J. Carberry, Ph.D., J.C.D., S.T.D.  
Bishop of Lafayette-in-Indiana  
February 5, 1959

Printed by

The Messenger Press

Carthagen, Ohio

TO MARY, MOTHER OF THE RANSOM

AND

GASPAR ITS APOSTLE

EVER ADORING

THE LAMB IN ITS GLORY

WE EARTHLY PILGRIMS

OFFER THESE PAGES IN HOMAGE

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## FOREWORD

The plan for a Precious Blood Study Week was long in forming. The first suggestion came a number of years ago. But the plan seemed impossible because of a lack of theological and psychological preparedness and a great sense of the difficulties involved. It was recognized that splendid sources lay untapped in scripture and tradition, but their full implication was rather vague and confused: the "expolitio theologica" had scarcely begun. The more immediate literature available seemed sparse and weak by comparison with the variety, abundance, intensity, authority of that devoted to the Sacred Heart. Popular enthusiasm was not comparable. The vehicles of expansion and communication appeared weak. Intrinsic difficulties seemed insuperable, some going so far as to say the devotion would never be popular because of them. Difficulties loomed large even after the work was begun. This is clear from all the notes and minutes of discussion.

The actual acceptance of the plan for a Week dates from the eager welcome given the suggestion for special lectures on the Precious Blood to the sisters at our summer school of theology. This was but a step short of the resolution to go forward with the plan. Approval of the superiors, equivalent to an enthusiastic command, favorable response from every segment of the society, prompt willingness on the part of the men who were to prepare the papers, made the Study Week a certainty. Professors of St. Charles Seminary and St. Joseph's College were to bear the principal burden of research and doctrinal formulation, pastors, assistants, missionaries, chaplains to provide the practical illustration. The response from the sisters was most ardent.

The temporary committee which had taken up the plan became permanent, charged with preparing the Study Week for the summer of 1957 at Saint Joseph's College. One of its duties, beyond this preparation and contributing to it, was the gathering of all sources in any way related to the devotion. This was immediately begun. The historic research yielded astonishing treasures, witnessing to a long tradition in favor of our devotion. The vitality

of the devotion was attested by the liturgical and religious art, original and creative, of Sister Cephias and Sister Regina, of the societies of the Precious Blood, and of Anne Grill, noted Catholic artist of Chicago. The present volume gives only a sample of the wealth of materials thus gathered for the displays of the Study Week. The collection of these and abundant other sources justifies the claim that we have a true center for future work on the devotion.

It would be wrong to assume that everything went according to plan. Plans could not be laid out so carefully in this pioneer effort. One of the cherished ideals of all theologians is to obtain the "consensus theologorum" for doctrine or opinion. Optimistically the committee looked forward to the gathering of sources for further study and discussion through the materials furnished by theologians who had been asked for their opinions about our plans and the devotion to the Precious Blood. The responses were comparatively few. No rich fund is available as a result of a real "world-wide" effort. But some responses were most helpful. And the few negative ones, warning against "dividing Christ", against ignoring the "whole Christ", against splinter devotions (*Zersplitterung*), were carefully heeded. But one source outweighed all the others. Father Gaspar Lefebvre, O.S.B., noted liturgical authority, was a wise and constant counsellor. Our heart goes out to him in deepest gratitude!

As we published them, the proceedings are not merely or exactly a transcript of the papers and discussions. In many instances we now have the author's more careful study and revision. And there is also the unavoidable editing of some parts, notably the impromptu discussions. But throughout, the original thought had been faithfully adhered to. It was likewise deemed best not to print all the introductions, some of which were entirely of a passing interest. There is an even more compelling reason for the absence, from this volume, of others: they were not clearly recorded and are not available for printing.

Topically we may group the papers of the Week into four parts, 1) the introductory papers (two) giving historic backgrounds, the theme, definition of terms, basic dogmatic foundations; 2) the scriptural foundations; 3) the devotion in the Christian life, as revealed in biblical morality, liturgical piety, and spir-

itual growth; 4) the Precious Blood Apostolate, manifested in its heroic examples, Gaspar and Catherine, and in its application in mission, parish, convent, parochial school. Especially important was the study on the Pious Union.

The evening of the Study Week and the displays told the story of the Blood in history, liturgy, art, relics, popular manifestation and practice. Something of this appears in the present volume, but full justice to so many themes would require a work many times as bulky.

A deep debt of thanks is owing to the beloved prelates of the Church who graced the gathering with the charm of their presence and the dignity of their authority: Bishop Carberry, of the diocese of Lafayette, celebrated the opening pontifical Mass and opened the study week with a word of welcome and the blessing of Bishop Bennett who has since gone to his reward. Bishop Hodges, auxiliary Bishop of Richmond, bought words of appreciation for our society and the devotion we shall ever cherish. Bishop Marling, who preached the opening sermon on the Precious Blood, as we have it in this volume, shared with all of us the happiness and blessing of his own tenth episcopal anniversary in an unforgettable ceremony at Saint Augustine's, Rensselaer.

We are grateful to the Father General of our society, Father Herbert Kramer, who brought us the blessing of Pius XII of sacred memory. His jubilee sermon is part of this volume. To Father Oberhauser, for unfailing interest and support of the work of the Institute and his encouragement in the publication of the proceedings. We pray that the graces merited by the divine Blood bountifully repay what we can only acknowledge.

May God reward those who assisted the work by material benefactions or practical assistance in preparing the publication of the Proceedings: Fathers Celestine Freriks, Carl Gates, Andrew Pollack, Richard Baird, Edward McCarthy, James Hinton, Ernest Lucas, Raymond Cera, Aloysius O'Dell, and Messrs. Ronald Barans and Ralph Cappuccilli. The prayers of those who could not come for the Study Week, especially the Contemplative Spouses of Christ, are an inestimable boon!

It is the hope of the committee that the work will con-

tinue, the gathering of sources, the publication of literature, the preparation of Study Days and Study Weeks in the future. Available sources and materials now are truly overwhelming. If there is some great truth in the error of the ethic of the situation, it should apply here: the situation is a challenge calling for response. The divine Gift of the Blood is invitation and challenge calling for response from those who are dedicated to its service. If it is true — and it is — that “Gabe ist Aufgabe”, then the most priceless gift, the Precious Blood, bears with it the Task of appreciating it. It is God’s own way of saying Yes to God.

The committee:

Edwin G. Kaiser, C.P.P.S.

George Lubeley, C.P.P.S.

Charles Banet, C.P.P.S.

## INTRODUCTION

The Fathers of the American Province of the Society of the Precious Blood present this book of proceedings to the members of our societies and countless others, who in a special way pay homage to the Lamb that was slain for our Redemption. Fruit of many years of labor, this book on the Precious Blood bears the mark of that loving co-operation among brethren which is the effect of God's special grace. I join with the writers of these papers and all others who helped to carry the work forward to successful completion, in expressing the wish that the divine blessing be upon it and that it prove fruitful in the salvation of souls.

The more immediate preparation for a Precious Blood Study Week began three years ago. A group of professors at Saint Joseph's College approached the Provincial with the request that the subject of a Study Week, devoted to the Precious Blood be given serious consideration. Very shortly thereafter three questions were proposed: Should a study week be held? Where should it be held? When should it be held? The report sent to the Provincial suggested that a Study Week could and should be held, and that it should be held at St. Joseph's College in the summer of 1957. The Provincial Council approved the project and almost immediately plans were drawn up for the Study Week.

To provide for the continuity of effort in a matter of such importance it was thought advisable that a permanent center of activity be established, which was called the Precious Blood Institute. In this way the work of gathering sources continued and is continuing. The collection of materials in the center at Saint Joseph's College is very impressive. Only a small fraction of all this could be used for the present volume. Even the vast display in the college library, which evoked so much favorable comment during the Study Week, could not include all the materials gathered. The Fathers and Sisters are asked to encourage this work by their prayers and other active co-operation. Any sources in form of works of art, historical association, bibliography, liturgical references, will be welcomed at the Precious Blood Institute center at Saint Joseph's College.

We are most grateful to God for the blessings He showered upon us in the days of the Study Week. Our heart goes out to those who attended so faithfully, for it was indeed an arduous task to seek to absorb the rich abundance of thoughts on our great theme. Above all do we appreciate the blessing of the Sovereign Pontiff, recently gone to his eternal rest after one of the most fruitful pontificates in all the Church's history. We appreciate the presence of Father Herbert Kramer, our Moderator General, who brought us the papal blessing and who preached the closing sermon at the Pontifical Mass honoring Bishop Marling. We were edified by the faithful presence of Bishop Hodges, auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Richmond, Virginia, and thankful for his closing blessing. Particularly thankful are we that our own Bishop Marling could be with us on this occasion to give the opening sermon on the Precious Blood, and celebrate in the beautiful church of St. Augustine, his tenth anniversary as Bishop. This closing ceremony in Rensselaer is one of the unforgettable events of the Study Week. From the very beginning, Bishop John George Bennett, the first Bishop of Lafayette-in-Indiana, encouraged the work, as he had encouraged all the efforts of the Precious Blood Fathers in his diocese. It was a matter of profound regret that the beloved prelate could not be with us due to his illness. His blessings and good wishes were brought to us by Bishop Carberry, now bishop of the diocese, who opened the Study Week with Pontifical Mass and the introductory address.

To the Sisters of the Precious Blood societies we recommend this volume on the Precious Blood which they adore so ardently. The presence of the sisters at the Study Week was especially welcome, as was the representation of the contemplative groups. In the silent vigil of contemplative prayer they obtained for us those divine energies which vitalize all the work of the Mystical Body of Christ.

We hope and pray that this first of the Study Weeks will be truly the first, followed by many others, rich and bright with the reflected glory of the Precious Blood.

S. W. Oberhauser, C.P.P.S.  
Provincial.

Dayton, Ohio  
November 3, 1958

Dal Vaticano, July 1, 1957

Segreteria di Stato  
Di Sua Santità  
N. 405292

Very Reverend and dear Father General,

The Supreme Pontiff has been informed of the Study Week which the American Province of the Congregation of the Most Precious Blood is about to hold at Collegeville, Indiana, and He directs me to convey His paternal greetings to you and to all those assembled at this Conference.

His Holiness was pleased to note that the Study Week, dedicated to a profound study of the doctrine of our Redemption through the Most Precious Blood, has the praiseworthy purpose of spreading this devotion. He prays that your efforts may be crowned with consoling success, and He fervently invokes the enlightenment and guidance of the Holy Spirit upon the deliberations of the Study Week.

In pledge of that heavenly favor and in token of His paternal interest and benevolence, the Holy Father cordially imparts to you, to the Most Reverend Bishops and to all those taking part in the Study Week, His special Apostolic Benediction.

With sentiments of high esteem and cordial regard, I remain,

Yours sincerely in Christ,

A. Dell'Aqua  
Substitute

Very Reverend Herbert Kramer, C.P.P.S.  
Moderator General  
ROMA

CONGREGAZIONE DEL PREZIOSISSIMO SANGUE  
MODERATORE GENERALE  
VIA PO 11 - ROMA      TELEF. 80407

Feast of the Precious Blood  
July 1, 1957

Very Reverend Father,

From your kind letter of June 29 I learn with much satisfaction that, through the initiative of the Society of the Precious Blood, a Week of Study, devoted to the Mystery of the Precious Blood of Jesus, will be held the first days of August, at St. Joseph College, Collegetown, Indiana. Permit me to express my cordial endorsement, and my good wishes for abundant and worthwhile achievements from this enterprise, to which many theologians and devotees of this august devotion will bring the valuable contribution of their knowledge and piety.

It is a subject, which in so far as theology and sacred liturgy are concerned, remains for the most part "unexplored": like the ruddy rays on the horizon which rise and fall in mystery. Nevertheless, it is instructive and a rich source of consolation to devote the attention of the mind and of the transfigured soul thereto. To perfect the knowledge thereof is to draw ever more closely to the most Sacred Humanity of the Word made Flesh and Blood, and so to understand, in so far as possible, the sublime motives of the Incarnation and of the Redemption effected through the Blood of the Lamb; which, in the words of St. Albert the Great, is indeed, "the flower of creation, the fruit of creation, the fruit of virginity, the ineffable instrument of the Holy Spirit . . . the memorial of the eternal redemption effected by Jesus during the days of his mortal life . . . our ransom and purification."

Such a study will lead likewise to a better understanding of our dignity as redeemed and washed in the Blood of a God; to a keener appreciation of the sublime and stupendous work of the Church "which Christ, by His Blood, made his spouse" (Dante), so that she might be, through the centuries, "the eternal custodian of the undying Blood"; to a fuller understanding likewise of the exalted office of the Catholic priesthood, to which is entrusted the dispensation of the

Blood by means of the sacraments, above all through the Holy Eucharist, which reproduces and perpetuates both the reality (the Blood itself) as well as the marvelous fruits thereof; to a better understanding, finally, of the grave and pressing needs of the world today, which cannot find salvation, purification, or a bond of unity, except in the Blood of the new and eternal Testament. All of which clearly demonstrates the timeliness and the urgency of the subject proposed for study during this Week.

How fitting and impressive it would be to begin and to complete the work with the inspired prayer of St. Albert the Great: "In thee I place my trust, adorable Blood, our ransom and purification. Penetrate sweetly into the hearts that have gone astray and dissolve their hardness. Blot out, O adorable Blood of Jesus, blot out our stains, save us from the anger of the destroying angel. Replenish the Church: enrich her with wonderworkers and apostles; adorn her with saintly souls, pure and radiant with a divine beauty."

I am very happy, Very Reverend Father, to add my own humble expression of admiration for the apostolic work that is being accomplished by the worthy sons of the great Apostle of the Precious Blood, your illustrious Founder, St. Gaspar del Bufalo.

With renewed good wishes for the success of the Week of Study, I have the pleasure to be,

Your Reverence's devoted servant,

Fr. A. G. Card. Piazza  
Bishop of Sabina and Poggio Mirteto  
Sec. of the Consistorial Congregation





3339 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE  
WASHINGTON 8, D. C.

No. 364/38

THIS NO. SHOULD BE PREFIXED TO THE ANSWER

June 27, 1956

Reverend Edwin G. Kaiser, C. PP. S., STD  
Precious Blood Study Week  
St. Joseph's College  
Collegeville, Indiana

Reverend and dear Father:

I wish to acknowledge your letter of June 20th announcing the Precious Blood Study Week which you are holding on August 5 to 9, 1957 at St. Joseph's College, Collegeville, Indiana. I am grateful for your kindness in calling it to my attention and was pleased to hear of this meeting on so important a subject. The multiplicity of difficult questions involved in this study certainly requires the attention of expert theologians and I notice that you are seeking to obtain the opinions of such men throughout the world. This should assure the success of your noble endeavor.

When the date approaches for the meeting, I shall be pleased to send the Apostolic Benediction, if you will write me a reminder at that time.

With sentiments of esteem and every best wish, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*A. G. Cicognani*

Archbishop of Laodicea  
Apostolic Delegate

## CARDINAL PIAZZA

1884

1957

The Fathers of the Society of the Precious Blood treasure the memory of Cardinal Piazza whose letter appears in these proceedings. When the words of the great prelate were read publicly by the Moderator of our Society at the opening meeting of the Study Week, the thrilled audience accepted the message as second in importance to that of the Sovereign Pontiff. They were saddened to learn a few months later that the noble prelate had gone to his reward, to enter into the glory before the throne of the Lamb. In deep appreciation for his special interest in our devotion and the particular work of the Precious Blood Institute we present a few facts of Cardinal Piazza's life, together with the sublime message addressed to us for the Study Week, and beg of all who read, to bear his soul in mind in prayer.

Adeodato Giovanni Piazza was born in Vigo di Cadore (in Italy) on September 30, 1884. At the age of thirteen he began his studies for the priesthood under the Carmelites at Treviso. On December 19, 1908, he was ordained priest. His early priestly life was extremely active and full of promise for the Church. He was military chaplain during the period of the first world war. After fulfilling important duties in the city of Rome, where he was secretary general and later procurator general of his order, he was appointed archbishop of Benevento on January 29, 1930 by pope Pius XI. Five years later he was chosen for the important see of Venice, and soon thereafter made a cardinal. In 1948 he was made secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Consistory, one of the most exalted positions in the Church.

As Archbishop and Cardinal one of the sources of his great zeal was his devotion to the Precious Blood. Though this was manifested fruitfully in all his heroic pastoral zeal, it is most evident in his great pastoral letter, *Il Sangue Prezioso di Cristo*, of Lent 1938. Substantially, the letter furnished the matter for a splendid series of meditations on the Precious Blood. It is the hope of the committee for the Precious Blood Institute to make this beautiful pastoral message available in English.

May the Blood of his sanctification be to  
Cardinal Piazza source of eternal glory!

## SERMON AT OPENING SOLEMN PONTIFICAL MASS

When the Prophet Isaias was granted a vision of the Divine Redeemer, seven hundred years before the Word was made Flesh, he was moved to cry out. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra, this beautiful one in his robe, walking in the greatness of his strength . . . Why then is thy apparel red, and thy garments like theirs that tread in the wine press?" An answer, simple and direct, was given by the Lord Christ on the night before He died: "This is my Blood of the New Testament, which is being shed for many unto the remission of sin." And in this explanation why His apparel is crimson and His garments as if stained by wine, the Savior has sketched in one bold stroke the whole panorama of visible creation and particularly of its crowning glory, the human race — the coming into being of the creature man, his elevation to participation in the very nature of God, his fall from grace, and the infinite love of the Heavenly Father which caused Him to send His Son into the world to assume our nature, suffer bitterly in our behalf, and reconcile us to our Creator through the Blood of the Cross.

Our holy faith prompts us at all times to acknowledge the Savior, in St. Peter's accents, as the Christ, the Son of the living God. For He is to us, in the words of St. Paul, "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature" (Col 1,15). He is God, begotten in our flesh, with all its weakness, sin alone excepted. Therefore, He is worthy of profoundest adoration, of divine honor, of divine cult. And this is true not only of that substance which He shares so intimately with the Father and the Spirit in the bosom of the Holy Trinity. It is true likewise of His human nature, woven of Mary's pure flesh and vivified by a soul created by the Triune Godhead. It is true also of every part of that human nature because it was assumed and joined to the person of the Word in the marvelous manner that we have been taught to call the Hypostatic Union. This, then, is the simple explanation of the fundamental adoration, love and devotion, that we pay to the Precious Blood of our Divine Redeemer.

But it is customary and proper to ask why we single out the Blood of Christ for special homage and veneration. The reasons are clear and telling. It is not alone that the Precious Blood speaks so eloquently and emphatically of the basic truths associated with all human purpose and endeavor, though this fact should not be overlooked. The sight of the Savior's Blood is convincing proof of God's infinite love for man, overwhelming evidence of the unspeakable horror of sin, and a most incisive argument for the inestimable value of every human soul. To this should be added the thought so beautifully expressed by our present Holy Father that all human suffering has been ennobled and consecrated by our Divine Lord in the shedding of His Blood. Since pain is our common heritage we are then psychologically disposed and even drawn to this divine laver.

Nor do we pay such particular adoration to the Precious Blood merely because in describing all vital activity, human characteristics and relationships, blood is such a facile symbol, as our common speech and the language of all peoples betray in ways too numerous to detail. Life and death, virtue and vice, love and hatred are graphically expressed in terms of blood, as are national and racial traits and various bodily and mental accomplishments. Nor is this but the play of fancy, or the remnant of a less developed stage of human thought. The progress of biology and the great strides of medicine have unearthed nothing that contradicts the simple but solemn pronouncement of Sacred Scripture that "the life is in the blood."

We acknowledge then that the Blood of our Savior teaches us most forcefully the lessons that we need for our salvation, and that for this reason we speak so naturally of the pulpit of the Cross. We confess that nothing is more descriptive of the life that the Son of God led upon earth, and therefore, of the incarnation, than is the Divine Blood of Christ. But the Precious Blood makes its most powerful claim upon our love and affection, and gives most cogent support to our desire to adore it, because it was chosen from all eternity in the bosom of the triune Godhead as the price that must be paid for our salvation, the tribute that alone would satisfy Divine Justice, the coin without which would be impossible the bliss that is the beatific vision of God. We grant that this divine choice was not necessitated but, once expressed, mankind is doomed if that Blood be not shed. To achieve the purpose for which they were created, men

must, in the words of the Apocalypse, wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb (Ap 7,14).

To one familiar with Sacred Scripture all this is but obvious truth. The New Testament abounds, and particularly the Pauline epistles, in passages that attribute man's restoration to God's friendship, his rebirth to divine sonship, and his escape from eternal perdition to the fact that the God-Man shed His Precious Blood and offered it to the Eternal Father from the altar of the Cross. How expressive in this connection are the oft-repeated words of the Prince of the Apostles: "You know that you were redeemed from the vain manner of life handed down by your fathers, not with perishable things, with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pt 1,19). The inspired word of God makes clear likewise the manner in which mankind was prepared for the tremendous truth of redemption by the Savior's Blood, by the bloody sacrifices which God prescribed for the chosen people, and which He bade them carry out with such purity of intention and such attention to detail.

In the light of the Scriptural emphasis upon the cardinal role of the Precious Blood in God's master plan for men, it was inevitable that the Fathers of the Church would stress it and make it basic in their powerful moral pleas to the Christians of their age. At times the Precious Blood ransoms the race from the slavery of sin or the terrifying power of the Evil One. Again, it is the satisfaction paid to an offended and outraged Creator, diverting His wrath from the children of men. At other times, it is the leaven that affects the whole mass, raising men to that holiness which befits them as children of God. At least in germ, therefore, there is found in these stalwart pillars of the early Church, the distinction that later theologians would develop with such unction and skill. Redemption is twofold; it is a drama in two acts. The graces won on Calvary form the initial chapter. Their application until the end of time to men's souls is the consummation or crowning phase of God's unspeakable love. The Precious Blood was shed on the cross. But it has a role to play until the very end of the world, in reference to individual graces, restoring individual sinners to God's friendship, vitalizing the Church, and causing us, in the words of St. Paul, to "grow up in all things in him who is the head, Christ" (Eph 4,15).

We are gathered here this morning to open in solemn fashion

what is so properly called the Precious Blood Institute or the Precious Blood Study Week. For three blessed days devotion to the Precious Blood of Jesus will be studied and discussed from every angle — dogmatic, moral, scriptural, liturgical, devotional, historical, literary and artistic. And the aim will be to promote a wider knowledge and a deeper love of the Price of our Redemption among all who attend the deliberations, and among those who will come in contact with the sessions through the Proceedings. If we think only of the theological aspects of the devotion, we see how perfectly this Institute is in harmony with the mind of the Church. We know that Catholic dogmas do not change, in the sense that the revelation of Christ is fixed and immutable. Every truth was revealed to the apostles by Christ or the Holy Spirit, whom He asked the Father to send. There are no mutations, therefore, with regard to dogma, in the sense that it proposes nothing that was not taught the apostles, and by them handed over to the Church.

But there is a very definite sense in which dogmas grow and develop, as the history of theology testifies for every age. Thus particular propositions, implicit from the very beginning in more general truths, undergo a process of expansion and specification. Under the influence of theological analysis, devotional impulse, and even theological strife, they evolve in such wise that they are more clearly and explicitly understood, more universally accepted, and finally most solemnly defined by the infallible Teaching Voice of the Church, which all along had guided the process through the assistance of the Holy Spirit. We are not so rash as to expect that, as a result of our Institute, the old truths will develop mightily. Nevertheless, we glory in the thought that our undertaking is part of the very natural manner in which the Savior permits the mysteries of His Kingdom to unfold, and that, in our unswerving loyalty to the infallible Teaching Voice of the Church, we gain for ourselves the presence and assistance of the Holy Spirit.

It is very proper that this Precious Blood Study Week be sponsored by this renowned college, one of the major institutions of the Fathers of the Precious Blood. For devotion to the Divine Blood is something very vital to the Fathers, and of gravest concern to them. The Congregation was founded by the great apostle of the Precious Blood, St. Gaspar del Bufalo, with the specific charge to give glory, and spread devotion to the Price of our Redemption. The

record reveals that the Fathers have been true to this trust. In fact, the canonization of the holy Founder in 1954 was commonly accepted as a tribute to the loyalty with which the Congregation has clung to its primary objective. In a letter which he addressed to the Very Reverend Moderator in 1949, upon the occasion of the centenary of the establishment of the Feast of the Precious Blood, His Holiness, Pope Pius XII urged the Fathers to reflect upon the truths in connection with the shedding of Christ's Blood, and he added: "As often as the opportunity presents itself, propose them to others for their consideration." This Institute may also be seen, therefore, as an act of obedience to the Vicar of Christ upon earth.

Justice dictates that we express deep gratitude to those who have prepared the program of this Study Week for us. Even a hurried glance at it reveals their wisdom and foresight, the hours of toil they have given it, and, we may add, their personal love and devotion to the Blood of Christ.

And now it remains for us only to ask divine light and guidance upon the deliberations. May the Holy Spirit who caused the Precious Blood to be formed from the immaculate font that is the Heart of Mary, and who vivifies the Church and sanctifies its members by applying to them the merits of this crimson stream, lead us on to fuller knowledge and deeper love of the Blood that was shed to the last drop for the salvation of the world.

*MOST REVEREND JOSEPH M. MARLING, C.P.P.S.*

*WELCOME BY*  
*VERY REVEREND RAPHAEL GROSS, C.P.P.S., PH.D.*

At about this time two years ago the present committee in charge of the Precious Blood Study Week asked me to present a proposal for a Study Week to the Provincial and his board. Though at the time the plan seemed like a splendid dream, it was quickly approved and encouraged by all the authorities in our Society, by many bishops and noted theologians throughout the world. Today I am most happy to welcome you to this beautiful dream come true: the first Precious Blood Study Week. In the years of our expansion our beloved college has welcomed noted guests for many varied and notable purposes, but never any more noble and worthy than this group which I am honored to welcome today. I like to think that our interests here are most truly Catholic-universal, that they are noble and dear to God. In welcoming you today I do so in the name of that which is the very vivifying force of all things Catholic, the source of all that is supernaturally noble and dear to God, the Precious Blood of His Son. May it bring to all of us that which is dearest to the loving Heart of the Savior, the rich fruits of His Blood.

*THE DEVOTION TO THE PRECIOUS BLOOD  
IN THE CHURCH TODAY*

Our first thought today as we open this Precious Blood Study Week is one of gratitude to God. We thank Him for the opportunity He has given us to serve Him in studying the wonders of the work of redemption through the Blood of His Son. Most significant in all that has been done in the past two years of preparation for this event is the approval of the authorities in the Church. It is not so much that our work has been encouraged—though without such encouragement the tasks would have been impossible of achievement—but that the devotion to the Precious Blood has been in a singular manner approved for the faithful. The presence of our Moderator and our Provincial is witness to the approval of our Society of the Precious Blood. The special letters from the Papal Secretary of State and from the Cardinal Secretary of the Consistory give the assurance of the approval of the Sovereign Pontiff, our Supreme Teacher. To this we add the letter from the representative of the Vicar of Christ in our country, sent last year to encourage the work, and the many letters from the bishops of the country and from noted theologians throughout the world. Such approval marks a most significant milestone in the history of the devotion to the Precious Blood. Our gratitude awakens a great hope that all our efforts will be loving tasks performed in the Church *semper in sensu Ecclesiae*.

I

To present even a summary study of the devotion to the Precious Blood in the Church today, as a prelude to the papers and discussions of these three days, requires at least an outline survey of the past. It is important to remember that this devotion has its basis and center in the devotion to the God-man, our Redeemer, who delivered us from sin by the shedding of His Blood on Calvary and who brings to us the fruits of redemption in the Church, His Mystical Body. And thus we will relate our

whole study to two central and essential points: redemption through the Passion and death, and continuation of the work of redemption in the Church.

The devotion to the Precious Blood begins its history in the Old Testament with the colorful accounts of the prophecies, types, and sacrifices. Holy men inspired by God foretold the coming of the Deliverer. The Old Testament is a longing for Christ. Fulfillment is in the coming of the Redeemer and the execution of His mission through the Blood of the Cross. The glad tidings of the Gospel are the story of the salvation offered to man. The efficacy of the New Covenant is from the shedding of the Blood according to Peter, Paul and John. The Church which Christ founded with His Blood bears all its fruits. It is significant that the first and only feast of apostolic times was the feast of redemption, from which all the others have gradually developed. From the devotion to the redemption and from the Church's continuous offering of Calvary's sacrifice in an unbloody manner, there springs the whole devotion to the Precious Blood. As there has been a constant development of the doctrine of the Church, so there has been a development in her prayer and in her approved devotions.

The devotion to the Precious Blood has its own history and development, beginning with this devotion to the redemption and extending down to our own time, promising a more splendid flowering in the future. The grand lines in part run parallel to one another, and in part follow and succeed one another. First we have the devotion implicitly in the devotion to the Redeemer and in the feast of the Pasch or the feast of man's redemption. There are many striking references in the Scriptures to the Cross, the Blood of the Cross, redemption through Blood. And as well, to the Chalice of the Blood, the Blood in the sacrifice, etc. We find all this also in the early Fathers of the Church.

The theology of the Precious Blood likewise has its history, beginning with the gradual unfolding of the scriptural doctrine of the incarnation. The great councils of the East define the doctrine of the incarnation, the Fathers of the Church defend the truths of the incarnation and the validity of the divine tradition of the redemption. The greatest minds in the Church were concerned most of all with the mystery of how man was actually

redeemed, for in all instances the incarnation was essentially related to the redemption (a synthesis—still far from perfect—we find in Augustine with his doctrine of substitution and the paying of the price of ransom, and specifically of propitiatory sacrifice). The Fathers, especially John Chrysostom, exalt the eucharistic sacrifice and the mystic shedding of Blood. But we may not slight the importance of the early liturgical hymns and prayers which exult in the redemption of man through the Cross, e.g. *Vexilla Regis* and *Pange lingua*, and the blessing of the Paschal Candle. This early devotion to the Cross is most important for our devotion to the Precious Blood. It is especially significant in the light of the recent encyclical on the Sacred Heart, that the present Pontiff refers particularly to other devotions, and notably that of the holy Cross.

The profound scholastic exposition of the doctrine of redemption—and all the splendor of the doctrine of the incarnation—culminates in St. Thomas, who digested everything that had been taught before his time and laid down the lines which theologians have followed since. But historically the name of St. Anselm as the most worthy of scholastics preceding Thomas should not be passed over in silence.

Parallel to the scholastic study of the sacred humanity of Christ and the redemption, is the turn of popular piety. There are picturesque representations of the events of the Passion, for the piety of the faithful in the middle ages readily turns to the externals, to images, relics, instruments of the Passion, favorite shrines. It is quick to see miracles of Blood, not merely as coming from the Redeemer, but flowing from the Eucharist. There is a flowering of popular prayer, simple meditation, and love of pilgrimages. The Holy Grail literature is rich and beautiful, as are the hymns and sequences on the Precious Blood.

If the artists give us the angels catching the drops of Blood from the wounds, and the mystical wine-press and other graphic representations of the effectiveness of the Blood and also many manifestations of the suffering Christ to move us to tender sympathy, the great theologians and mystics, like Albert the Great, St. Bonaventure, St. Mechtilde, Gertrude the Great, and later St. Catherine of Siena find in the Blood inspiration for the most profound mystical love. Faber gives a sketch of the pertinent

history. The need for more particularized study and historic research is evident.

Studies in the devotion to the Sacred Heart have revealed how the medieval piety intimately associates the two devotions.<sup>1</sup> Critical acumen was not at all lacking in the period, but it did not turn to analysis of the material and formal objects. Such thinking suited the later and more skeptical age with a less simple acceptance of the Savior. The union of the two devotions and this simple approach not only suggests that the devotions belong together and in no way are opposites, but also that we must think of the whole Christ.

Though the popular piety is largely concerned with the external and visual, with what is called *Schaureligion*, we can readily discern the mind of the Church from the fact that the great shrines and their confraternities and all the religious activity connected with them have been centers and sources of devotion for centuries. Nor are they limited to one or the other country. All of Catholic Europe is conscious of the devotion to the Blood of the Savior in the form most suited to the age, the relics of the Passion and death and the marvels of the eucharistic presence. This vast popular participation, especially at such shrines as Bruges and Weingarten, represents truly the *sensus fidelium* which faithfully reflects the mind of the Church.

Though Father Faber speaks of Catherine of Siena as founder of the modern form of the devotion, we trace more directly the present-day movement to the saintly Albertini and St. Gaspar del Bufalo in the early nineteenth century. There is a certain crystallization of the devotion. An immense missionary effort centers on the mission Cross and the great truths of salvation. For many decades there is little of quiet scholastic study, but tremendous realization of its pious use. The pious union and the confraternity spread rapidly. Societies of the Precious Blood are founded to promote the love of the crucified, and it is significant that both active and contemplative religious seek the way of perfection through the devotion to the Blood of the Redeemer. July becomes the month of the Precious Blood and is observed throughout the world. The feast of the Precious Blood is solemnly celebrated everywhere. Possibly the culmination of all this is expressed in the Church's approval of the life and works of the great

Apostle of the Precious Blood, who was beatified in 1904 and canonized in 1954, and of the foundress of the Sisters Adorers of the Precious Blood, Mother Mathias, who was beatified in 1950.

The literature on the Precious Blood is not greatly varied nor expressly theological. Among the noted writers is the saintly Father Faber whose work on the Precious Blood is one of the classic books of spirituality. Only gradually do we come to an attempt to write a theology of the Precious Blood, after the pattern of the theological literature on the Sacred Heart, with a study of the material and formal objects, the method of its practice, its fruits, etc. The history is largely an unexplored field, though some research into the Fathers and scholastic doctors suggests vast possibilities. Even those practically interested in the spread of the devotion are scarcely conscious of the liturgical and artistic treasures which research into the history of the devotion would reveal.

Today as we take up the strands of the work in the past at this first Precious Blood Study Week, it is our task to do two things: first, to penetrate into the resources hidden in the Sacred Scriptures and the background covered by the word tradition taken in its most comprehensive sense; second, to appraise, develop and apply all that is contained in those sources. This development, in turn, is to be twofold: there must be the theoretic exposition and amplification as well as the practical application. Hence there is ample room for the theoretic study as well as for the devout use. No disservice to our devotion could be greater than a slighting of either. A practical "use" without doctrinal basis soon becomes sentimental, empty, vain, and even false. Theoretic study, without the application, only too readily becomes haughty and doctrinaire, a product of intellect without heart. We look upon this Study Week as only a beginning of a work whose vast proportions we can scarcely recognize at present.

The special studies of the devotion to the Precious Blood in the last fifty years must be appraised in the light of what has been achieved in other fields. There has been a spiritual rebirth in these decades under the Church's own leadership at Rome. Thomistic philosophy and Catholic arts and letters are basking in the bright sunlight of a second spring. Theology drinks deeply of its own divine fountains. With a real sense of freedom theologians pene-

trate the inspired word with warmth and love, losing nothing of the letter in embracing its most profound spirit. Rich use is made of comparative religion, archeology, history, psychology, sociology. And, as human science widens its frontiers, theology expands into a vast world of potential parts, while retaining its unity as science and wisdom. Profoundly the moral theologian studies the supernatural law in revelation, in the law of Christ and the imitation of Christ, in the virtues. Probably most important is the relation of all members of the Church to Christ in the Mystical Body. Popular piety flourishes and is fruitful in a noble lay apostolate nourished by the eucharistic sacrifice in the family of Christ. The very words open up vistas of splendor: devotion to Mary, the rosary, Lourdes, Fatima, devotion to the Sacred Heart, apostolate of prayer, Catholic action, lay apostolate, priesthood of the laity.

In the light of such achievement the study of our devotion will seem to many meager indeed. It is true that scarcely a book of dogma used in our schools so much as refers to it. Surely it is not prominent in the current literature of spiritual theology though recently there have been valuable Old Testament studies on the Blood and the Blood of the Covenant, and some excellent discussions on the meaning of Blood in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It has been suggested that its very closeness to the devotion to the Passion of our Lord and to the Mass may in some measure militate against dealing with devotion to the Precious Blood in particularity. It is so central and basic. However, there is surely much room for special studies. We hope that the Study Week will give a new impetus to such efforts.

## II

Preliminary to the systematic study of the devotion to the Precious Blood must be the clarification of certain terms and the enunciation of certain principles. These deal very largely with the concept of devotion and an explanation of the various uses of the term. Without attempting to present a history and completely documented synthesis of devotion and devotions, all of which may be found in such works as the *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, we shall explain the essentials of devotion and devotions.

For St. Thomas devotion is a singular relation of creature

to the Creator. It is based on recognition of God's transcendent supremacy. It falls under the virtue of religion and inclines man to offer God the worship which befits Him. Justice demands that we give to everyone that which is owing to him. We seek to give God His due, to offer Him the most perfect gifts. This includes both submission on the part of man to the higher power above him and also control of that which is under him. Man's service embraces all that is creature, all that is his, submitting all to God, since this is giving God His due.

The Angelic Doctor explains devotion as that unique promptness and readiness of will which submits to God our Creator and Last End. The will places itself and all that it possesses at the service of God. Above all it seeks to offer God the most perfect of gifts through sacrifice. Devotion belongs essentially to religion and underlies all true worship. It is the first act of religion. The principal cause of devotion is the divine goodness and bounty. Contemplation of this goodness arouses love, the proximate cause of devotion. In this loving contemplation, the realization of our own misery and the divine transcendence excludes presumption. But such is our lowliness that we have need of visible things when we approach God. The principal of these is the humanity of Christ. God has stooped to our lowliness by manifesting Himself through miracles and prophecies and most of all through the Incarnate Son, who was born of our flesh and dwelt among us.<sup>2</sup>

Beautiful is the prayer of the preface for the feast of the Nativity: "For by the mystery of the Word made flesh the light of thy glory has shone anew upon the eyes of our mind: so that while we acknowledge him as God seen by man, we may be drawn to the love of things unseen."

By prayer man offers his intellect to God. Through petition man not only admits his dependence on God, but also asks for help. If in prayer man subordinates his intellect to God, devotion must underlie prayer. Nothing could be so vain as to ask God for favors without submission to Him. But prayer with the submission of devotion becomes true cult. Through prayer and devotion both mind and will are made to serve God and are offered to Him. The liturgical prayer has its foundation in devotion and also stimulates devotion. All prayer must be devout, or it ceases to be prayer.

There is a spiritual adoration which is equivalent to devotion itself, but strictly adoration is the offering of one's body for the divine worship. Though it must be founded in devotion, it is manifested in bodily acts, which may be in the form of words or praise, or through the reverence of deeds, usually called honor. That there is a necessary sequence of sacrifice from devotion is evident from the very nature of man, who must submit himself and all he has to God through the unique worship of sacrifice. Only in this way can man truly recognize the divine supremacy over all created things and his own utter submission to God. Without this, without devotion, sacrifice becomes superstition and mockery of God.

In the present order of things, man's submission to God in sacrifice must be manifested in the Mediator between God and man, Christ, the God-man. By the shedding of Blood He offered the supreme sacrifice on Calvary. By our solidarity with Him, who is our Head, we were united with Him in that act of devotion, even though there was no action on our part. Deliverance was won without our active cooperation. But sin is removed from man individually, and grace is given only through union with the Church, wherein the supreme act of Calvary is continued in the mystic shedding of the Blood and the acceptance of the fruits of Calvary in the sacraments. In all this we share through the character of the sacraments, for the sacramental character is a priestly mark binding us firmly to the priestly humanity of Christ. The whole Mystical Body unites in this supreme act of devotion in and through Christ the Mediator. And this devotion is objective and essential for all.

From what we have said, it is apparent that devotion is interior submission to God and that this interior disposition may be expressed in acts of devotion or religion. We may also speak of devotion objectively in the sense of an ensemble of doctrine, method, appropriate acts of worship. As one passes from prayer to prayers, so one passes from devotion to devotions. Devotion dedicates the whole being to God; devotions are means to this end. Only if devotions become the end in themselves is there a reversal of the right order. Then service to God becomes self-service.<sup>3</sup>

Devotions, as little ways or means which respond to special needs of individuals or groups, offer special appeal in certain periods of history. In some instances they rise, spread, and then cease to interest men. The Church herself has varied her legislation, her liturgy, her whole pastoral approach throughout history, her very penitential discipline in the use of the sacraments themselves.<sup>4</sup> We should not be surprised, therefore, at the variety of devotions and their history in the Church. To condemn this variation is to overlook the wisdom of the Church guided by the Holy Spirit.<sup>5</sup> It is also to ignore the diversity of minds and spirits and the needs of men at various times in the Church.

We should make a sharp distinction between what may be called the basic devotion to God in obedience to the Church, which infallibly presents those devotions which are essential and which all must in some way practice, and the special devotions which are good and laudable, but which need be practiced only in so far as they are implicit in the ones the Church commands. However, no one may despise any devotion approved by the Church, even though one can never practice every devotion. Again we must note that some devotions by their nature are much closer to the necessary devotions, so as to be special aspects of them; others are very accidental. Some are only special observances or practices, or are bound to a certain place or relic, etc. These, of course, are far less essential than the more basic devotions.

### III

During these days we shall follow the sound practice of theologians, to be guided by the teaching and practice of the Church. Our effort is not a criticism of the past. It is rather an attempt to show how our devotion is steeped in the current life of the Mystical Body of Christ. We wish to relate it with the whole teaching and practice of the Church in this golden age of theology and spirituality.<sup>6</sup> It is very essential to coordinate our efforts with contemporary studies in theology, biblical, patristic, scholastic, liturgical; and to show how the devotion to the Precious Blood occupies a place of honor in the noble realm of Catholic action and spirituality for the laymen. This suggests our immediate object: participation in the profound contemporary movements

which have renewed the life of the Church in the last century. The result should be a more intimate contact with the sources of the Church's piety which will attract the people of our time. In this way, in the providence of God, men will be led to the center of Christian doctrine, life, and worship.

The task is not to be accomplished at once, for God's work always transcends our best effort. The vistas widen and lengthen as we scan them. At present we must be content with presenting the more basic doctrines as found in the bible and the theological explanation of the redemption. We are convinced that the devotion to the Precious Blood enters into the very heart of Christian life and worship. Its fruits can be applied practically to one's personal life and the apostolate. The method is indicated by the history of the devotion, by the prescriptions and prayers of the Pious Union, by the life of sanctity in many chosen souls. These lives are evidence of the soundness of their devotion to the Precious Blood. The panel discussions will show that it can be brought down to earth, as well as lead to heaven.

Our Study Week religious art display offers comprehensive evidence of a great and noble tradition of this devotion in the Church. This is of primary dogmatic significance, for we are not innovators but followers of a beautiful and correct tradition in the Church of God. The modern artistic designs show that piety is the Mother of the arts and that religious art through the beauty of things seen can lead the soul to the unseen beauty and majesty of God!

All our work is placed under the patronage of Mary, the Heavenly Queen, our Lady of the Precious Blood. We hope that future study weeks will show more fully her true place in our devotion.

Our Lady of the Precious Blood, Bless our Study Week.

(Introductory notes prepared by the Committee and  
read by Rev. Raymond Cera, C.P.P.S., M.A.)

1. Cf. K. Richstätter, *Die Herz-Jesu-Verehrung des deutschen Mittelalters* (Munich-Ratisbonne, 1924); J. Stierli, *Heart of the Savior* (New

York: Herder, 1958); *Ancient Devotions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus by Carthusian Monks of the XIV-XVIIIth Centuries* (London: Burns & Oates, 1926), 3rd edition, pp. 47-48, 91-95, 96-99.

2. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 82.
3. "Devotion," in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, column 755.
4. *Loc. cit.*, column 776.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Cf. R. Aubert, *La théologie catholique au milieu du XXe siècle* (Tournai: Casterman, 1954); J. Gautier, *La spiritualité catholique* (Paris: Le Rameau, 1953), pp. 263-285.

While using every resource of contemporary theology to deepen his appreciation of devotion to the Precious Blood, the serious student will not neglect the solid work of the pioneers in the theology of the Precious Blood: E. Kaiser, C.P.P.S., "Devotion to the Precious Blood," *American Ecclesiastical Review*, 83 (1930), 1-14; J. Rohling, C.P.P.S., *The Blood of Christ in Christian Latin Literature Before the Year 1000*, Washington, D.C.: Cath. Univ. Press, 1932; J. Marling, C.P.P.S., "The Precious Blood and the Mystical Body," *American Ecclesiastical Review*, 89 (1933) 1-13; C. Longanbach, C.P.P.S., "Life through His Blood," *ibid.*, 91 (1934), 16-24; E. Kaiser, C.P.P.S., "The Theology of the Precious Blood," *ibid.*, 105 (1941), 1-10; "The Precious Blood: Its Social Significance," *ibid.*, 107 (1942), 1-11; A. Pollack, C.P.P.S., *The Blood of Christ in Christian Greek Literature till the Year 444 A.D.*, Carthage: Messenger Press, 1956, with extensive bibliography.

*DOCTRINAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE  
PRECIOUS BLOOD DEVOTION*

The purpose of this paper is to present the doctrinal foundations of the devotion to the Precious Blood and to justify its use in the Church as a special devotion and a unique means in the divine worship to serve the living God. Our basic thought is found in the passage of St. Thomas Aquinas: "Christ freed us from our sins primarily through His Passion . . . and likewise by His Passion He initiated the rite of the Christian religion. 'Christ also loved us and delivered Himself up for us an offering and a sacrifice to God' (Eph 5,2). Hence it is manifest that the sacraments of the Church have their power especially from the Passion of Christ."<sup>1</sup>

For an understanding of these two basic essentials, redemption through the Blood of Christ and application of the fruits of that redemption, we must study the doctrine of mediation. The center of the whole economy of salvation is Christ. He is the Author of our salvation, the Initiator of our religion, the Chief and Model whom we follow. The central idea of Christianity is: God through Christ, the salvation of the sinful world. Through Christ we are redeemed. Through Him we worship. "He is object and end. He is Mediator and Priest. He adores and is adored. He intercedes and He pardons. With Him and at His example we render homage to God His Father. And He Himself in union with the Father and the Holy Spirit receives our submission of praise, our thanksgiving, our whole religious cult."<sup>2</sup>

The mediator joins two extremes. He is distant and distinct from both and yet in some way one with both. He unites both in a moral way, by love, by friendship, by satisfaction, but for the mediation of which we speak there must be more than a moral influence. True mediation demands a real ontological basis, a kind of solidarity with both extremes and a higher than mere moral efficacy.

Christ as God is one with Father and Holy Spirit, for He is the one same divine nature as the other two Persons. He is one with man, not merely in having specifically the same human nature as the rest of men, but also in a supernatural and unique solidarity with

the whole race as its Head, and with the members of the Church as Head of the Mystical Body.

Christ, as one divine Person, in two distinct natures, is distinct from God in His human nature, though identified in the divine. Possessed of human nature and Head of the race, He is also distinguished from all men through the splendor of hypostatic union and excellence of grace, knowledge and glory.

The Council of Trent has defined that we have one Mediator, "our Lord Jesus Christ, who reconciled us with God in His Blood."<sup>3</sup> And St. Paul writes to Timothy that "there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all (1 Tm 2, 5-6). And the letter to Hebrews refers to Jesus as "mediator of a new covenant," through "sprinkling of blood which speaks better than Abel" (Heb 12,24).

Man, raised to supernatural dignity in original justice, had fallen into sin. In a sense man had fallen below nature, for he was perverted from friend to enemy of God. Mediation between fallen man and God meant deliverance from sin. To fallen man God held out the agape of divine friendship which man was enabled to accept lovingly with the restoration of justice. The plan of God must be studied in the clear light of God's absolute freedom, to show mercy or to condemn, to condone entirely or in part, to demand full justice and in the demand of justice grant abundant mercy. There was mercy in pardoning the sin and offering grace to all, justice in the payment of absolutely condign satisfaction to the offended majesty of God. This plan explains the divine-human relation which we call the incarnation. God Himself became man. The Second Person was to assume human nature and atone for man's sin, mysteriously taking the place of man. In the very nature which had fallen there was to be the deliverance, written in the blood-stained letters of God's loving mercy for His fallen creature.

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. The divine Person, the Logos, was united with an individual human nature, so that homage could be offered to God in created nature, a homage of infinite personal value, the human submission of a divine Person. Human nature and all creation was exalted. All visible things centering in man, hypostatically united to Godhead, made its submission to God. The early councils of the Church, notably that of Chalcedon, set forth the exhilarating truth of the two natures in one Person in

lapidary terms: the union is without division, without confusion, and inseparable. It is immutable.<sup>4</sup> But the clearest abstract statement — though most profoundly correct — cannot exhaust this great truth. There remains for each age to find new riches in an eternally dynamic reality, and only at its own peril can any age, or any individual, neglect it. Our own age with its sense of history and concrete reality, spurred on by the current evolutionism, existentialism, and historicism, has stirred our theology to a restatement of the old doctrine with an almost ecstatically noble kerygmatic spirit.

We must view the incarnation concretely, not merely abstractly, with all its circumstances and existential realities. The Logos became man in time, born of the Virgin Mary, He suffered under Pontius Pilate, etc. Now the nature-substance-person category must be associated with the movements of history: incarnation-redemption is the tremendous fulfillment of the whole *Heilsgeschichte*. The eternal Logos entered into history. He stands at the center of countless ages, looking backward to periods of human history of which men formerly did not even dream, looking forward toward events that stagger mind and imagination. After ages of gradual revelation and providential preparation, God who had dimly announced His coming at the first sin and spoken of Him through the prophets and the Jewish religious history, came visibly to the world in Christ: and a tiny cry in a lonely cave was the voice of the eternal God. "God wanted to let Himself be found in Jesus Christ," says Karl Rahner, "and wanted us to seek Him in Christ."<sup>5</sup>

If all creation is recaptured in Christ, as St. Paul and the Fathers teach, if Christ is the prospective entelechy of all the world's history, then we cannot properly study or understand this created order — as it actually is and must be — without Christ.<sup>6</sup> If the whole becoming of mankind is related to the fulness of Christ, and the incarnation is the highest fulfillment of man, then we can no longer study mankind or man himself merely from the inferior or abstract point of view. We must formulate a theological anthropology and grasp ourselves as men from the Man who as such is the world-existent presence of God for us. Christology must then be the beginning and end of anthropology.<sup>7</sup>

Henceforth no reality, no human relation, no moral and social order, can be viewed merely as human, since God has so loved us as to become one of us. Because God loves us, He became man, and as

Man He meets Himself in us. We exist as those in whom as Man He can meet only Himself, because He loves us.<sup>8</sup>

Human nature is consecrated by the grace of union with the Logos, and with it the whole temporal order is potentially sanctified. The whole mysterious life of Jesus, His Passion and death, His resurrection, is infinitely exalted in its actual effectiveness. The very liberty of God to choose other ways to save us should point to the supreme wisdom and significance of the actual plan. One Christ, who is God, is man. We must study this fact as it took place in a real world. There is one hypostatic union in which only the Logos became man. He does not assume angelic nature. Yet He is Head of all creation including the angels.<sup>9</sup>

Even more significant is the concrete reality of the flesh and blood in which we men were redeemed. For because of us and our salvation He came down from heaven and became man. Like us in flesh and blood, He redeemed us in the very dimension in which we sinned. We must seek to grasp the mysterious headship of Christ in the whole fallen race. There is organic unity between all mankind and Christ, there is a true and real preeminence in governance, there is life-giving vitality. He is Head juridically and ontologically, and all men are one with Him morally, juridically, and really-mystically. We partake of the life, death, resurrection of Christ. He is Head of the Mystical Body. "Head and members are as one mystical person; and therefore the satisfaction of Christ pertains to all the faithful as His members."<sup>10</sup>

### *Mediation is Redemption*

The force of all we have studied thus far is that the incarnation is for the purpose of delivering man from sin. Incarnation is for redemption. "From Nicaea to Chalcedon there was concern not merely about the Person of the God-man, Jesus Christ . . . even in the thick of the most heated controversy about what Christ was, there was a sense of the meaning of man's salvation . . . the evangelical preaching of the ancient Church . . . stresses the primacy of the theology of salvation. In the grandeur of the work of salvation the mystery of the Person of the Savior is made to shine forth, as we note in St. Paul, in Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus, Athanasius. In his quarrel with Arianism Athanasius is definitely soteriological."<sup>11</sup> The

full truth of incarnation is defended on the basis of the purpose of redemption, by the Fathers. Christ must possess a perfect human nature, with all its parts, for our whole human nature has been saved through Him. He must have a soul, according to the synod of Alexandria, 363, "for He redeemed not only our bodies." "Today we should make this union of Christology and soteriology the basis of new life in theology."<sup>12</sup>

In answer to the tremendous challenge of modern life we must place the whole center of interest not in the Logos alone, but "in this man Jesus, who by union of divinity and human nature and in force of this union through His death and resurrection became our Mediator and Savior."<sup>13</sup> And with and through Him we must render God the Father the service due to Him, for the whole power of incarnation-redemption is continued in the society of the Redeemed, the Family of Christ, the Mystical Body, the Church. And the pastoral-individual-social life must be elevated and enriched through the doctrine and power and example of Christ-the-man, the perfect Mediator on the Cross through the shedding of Blood, Mediator also in the Sacramental-Sacrificial Society, His Church. In this light we study the long vista of mediation: incarnation: redemption: Mystical Body: Sacrifice-sacraments: Christian life: eternal glory.

In this very age the challenge of modern life has been accepted in the Church as never before in her history. The age of the most cruel persecution of the Spouse of Christ, it has been also the age of martyrdom for Christ. In every field of thought and action we might characterize our age as the golden age of the Church's history. Surely it is a golden age of theology. There has been a vast renewal according to the mind of Christ in the Mystical Body of Christ.

Incarnation points to redemption, and redemption to the bloody death. In the work of Christ there is the covenant with death, death in obedience to God. The result is salvation in and through Him and His Blood. Here we have the formal-action, the divine-human obedience of Christ, and the material-passion, the bloody suffering. We who are children of Adam have also a covenant with death because of our sin through him: disobedience severed us from God and our disobedience means the death of sin and bodily death as punishment for sin. Obedience for Christ also meant death, the death of the Cross with its blood and pain. And our obedience with Him means

death, but the death of salvation, in which bodily death loses its sting and is no longer punishment but portal to glory. "Hence death is the connatural manifestation of separation from God and also the connatural manifestation of union with Him and obedience to Him."<sup>14</sup>

But it was not merely death. It was the death through Blood that redeemed us. Substantially the doctrine of the Church is summed up in the draft prepared for definition, though not actually defined, by the Vatican Council: "The Son of God by His Passion and Death on the altar of the Cross wrought satisfaction for the sins of the whole world and merit for the Redemption of the fallen race . . . . In so far as in the First Adam, who is the pattern of the future, as in its Head, the whole human race has fallen, thus also one Mediator of God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, as Head of the same human race to be redeemed was made priest and victim and the price of Redemption for us, in order that one having died for all He should offer to God full satisfaction for the restoration of the order of grace through the blood of His cross . . . . This is the perpetual doctrine of the Church."<sup>15</sup>

### *A Question*

When we are confronted by the appalling agony and pain, by the prodigality of the blood-shedding, we often say — quite truly — that one drop would have been sufficient to redeem the world. But it would be a grave mistake to look upon this very prodigality as something incidental, something apart from the substance of our redemption. Concretely, in some unfathomable way, it was all necessary to accomplish that full purpose which God had in mind, though God was free to seek some other way.

It is one of the most important problems for the student of our devotion to attempt to explain in this actual existing order, why all the Blood was shed. Why this appalling agony?

St. Thomas says there was no other way more suitable to heal our misery than by the Passion. It was more befitting that we be redeemed by the death of Christ than by mere bounty of God's good will. And he reasons, in this way man knows how much God loves him and is moved to love God in return. Herein lies the perfection of our salvation, for "God commends his charity toward us, because when as yet we were sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5,8). He

gave us an example of obedience, humility, constancy, justice, and other virtues displayed in the Passion. These are requisite for our salvation. "Christ also has suffered for you, leaving you an example that you may follow in his steps" (1 Pt 2,21). The bitter agony and death is a warning to refrain from sin. We must bear in mind that we were redeemed by Christ's Blood. "You have been bought at a great price; glorify God and bear him in your body" (1 Cor 6,20). It redounds to the greater dignity of man; for as man was defeated and deceived by the devil, so it was man who overcame the devil. And as man deserved to die, so man by dying overcame death. Hence in 1 Corinthians we read: "Thanks be to God who has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (15,57).<sup>16</sup>

Beautiful is the thought of St. Augustine: God's Wisdom became man to give us an example in righteous living. A part of righteous living consists in not standing in fear of things which should not be feared. Some do not fear death itself, but stand in fear of the manner of death. In order that no kind of death should trouble the upright man, the Cross of Christ is set before him, because no death was more execrable, more fear-inspiring.

Edward Hugon, O.P., gives a forceful reason why Christ suffered so great a variety of tortures, rather than redeem man by one act of merit or satisfaction. He distinguishes between the personal value of the acts of Christ, all of which are infinite even though in themselves trivial, and the various circumstances which make some acts more significant than others, e.g., the acts in the Passion and death are nobler in object and end and are most exalted. God willed not only the personal value for which any act would be sufficient to redeem the world, but also that which has a kind of ultimate and infinite in objective value. So has Christ loved us to the end.<sup>17</sup> Passion and death therefore most fitly conclude a whole life of merit and satisfaction for sin.

To this we add the explanation of St. Thomas as to why the flesh of Christ was apt for sacrifice, applying with equal justice to the Blood. It is the Blood of human nature, and therefore fitting to be shed and offered for man and be taken by men in the eucharistic sacrament. It is passible and mortal and most suitable for immolation. It is entirely sinless and therefore possessed of the virtue and power to cleanse from sin. It is most acceptable to God, because it is manifestation of divine-human love, as we already explained.<sup>18</sup>

*The Subjective Redemption*

The death of pain and agony occurred once and merited redemption, but the fruits were not applied immediately. The graces earned in the physical shedding were to be given by what is usually called the subjective redemption. Here too Christ was Mediator in the Church which He established through His Blood. As God had come down to men through the Mediator who died on the Cross, so men were to turn to the Father through Christ in the Church.

“The way through Christ to the Father passes through the Society which the Lord formed in and through the Holy Spirit. The whole Church, the union of all the ‘holy,’ is, according to the New Testament, a ‘royal priesthood’ which partakes of the high priesthood of the Incarnate One, and is thus the bearer of grace and the dispenser (Mittler) of salvation. Such is the exact meaning of the ‘Holy Church’ of the Apostles Creed. This is the community sanctified and sanctifying. The same meaning is expressed in the general patristic concept of the ‘Ecclesia Mater,’ an example being the noted words of Cyprian, to ‘have God for a Father one must first have the Church for a Mother.’”<sup>19</sup>

The sacred humanity which was the instrument of the meriting of redemption through the Blood, now is the instrument of the channeling of all graces earned on Calvary through the Eucharist, sacrifice and sacrament, and the other sacraments. That supreme devotion to the Heavenly Father which reconciled us by the physical shedding of Calvary continues in the Mystical Body, where our own acts share in oblation and immolation. “The divine Redeemer,” says the *Mediator Dei*, “has so willed it that the priestly life begun with the supplication and sacrifice of His mortal body should continue . . . down the ages in His Mystical Body . . . . That is why He established a visible priesthood to offer everywhere the clean oblation which would enable men from East and West, freed from the shackles of sin, to offer God that unconstrained and voluntary homage which their conscience dictates” (*Mediator Dei*, n. 2).

It is the clear teaching of the encyclical that the priestly mission of Christ is continued mainly in the liturgy by the very will of Christ Himself. In this continuation of the redemptive acts of Christ Himself in the Mystical Body is found the necessary and essential homage to God. Here we find the necessary objective acts of devotion in

which all must in some measure partake. They share in the official worship or cult in varying degrees, according to the sacramental character imprinted on their souls by baptism, confirmation, and holy orders, which make them conform with the sacred priestly humanity of the Great High Priest.

“There is no hour of the day that is not hallowed by its special liturgy; there is no stage of human life that has not its part in the thanksgiving, praise, supplication and reparation of this common prayer of the Mystical Body of Christ, which is His Church” (*Mediator Dei*, n. 3 quoting *Caritate Christi*). All members of the Church share in this official offering of sacrifice, both as priest and victim, but always and only in conjunction with and through the official minister who has the sacramental mark of sacred orders. The Principal Priest and Victim is Christ.

“In the canon with the consecration as sacred oblation (*Opferweihe*), community of sentiment becomes unity of act with the cry, ‘*gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro.*’ In the ‘*communicantes*’ the whole assembly of the redeemed leans on the suffering, resurrection, ascension of Christ. The *communicatio* with the members becomes thereafter the *communio* of all with the glorified Head of this community. So the *communio* of holy things, the sacraments, leads to the union (*communio*) of the holy people, and the Eucharistic Body of Christ leads to the Mystical Body of Christ. Eucharist is function and offering of the whole Christ in Head and members. It is also the presupposition and operative power of the Church communion.”<sup>20</sup>

The spiritual coordination and the wealth of grace of the whole communion of saints is effective in and through the sacraments. They all flow from the Mystical Body and lead back to it. In the official canonical hours and in the whole coordinated worship of the Church year the community of God’s Kingdom on earth turns to Christ and His second coming. The Mediator assembles the people of God redeemed by His Blood. The revealed relation between Triune God, Incarnate Christ, and His Mystical Body is never lost in the Roman liturgy with which the praying Church, unconfused and unweakened, prays through Christ the Savior, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to the Father. The principle of Christ the Mediator is never lost.<sup>21</sup>

It is the doctrine of the *Mediator Dei* that, as the work of redemption through Christ centered in the Passion and death, so our

entire interior devotion and its manifestation also must center in the same mystery. All other acts of devotion must be in some measure related to this and receive from it their full force and beauty. "Since His bitter sufferings constitute the principal mystery of our Redemption," says the Pontiff, "it is only fitting that the Catholic faith should give it the greatest prominence. This mystery is the very center of divine worship, since the Mass represents and renews it every day and since all the sacraments are most closely united with the Cross" (*Mediator Dei*, n. 164).

### *The Special Devotion*

What we have said thus far deals with two aspects of our paper: God has come to us through Christ, the God-man, the Mediator, who redeemed us by His Blood; we come to God again through the graces of this same redemption given to us by Christ in the Church, His Mystical Body. All our devotion to God is through Him, for our whole service to God and submission to Him is through Christ, our Lord. We adore the Father, serve Him, sacrifice to Him, through His incarnate Son.

It remains for us to show how this central devotion is enriched in us through the particular or special devotion to the Blood of the Redeemer, as practiced by many devout souls and approved by the Church in various ways.

The very transcendence of the Redeemer and His work of redemption when confronting our frail mental powers suggests that we study this transcendent object under various aspects. There is a similarity to our study of the simplicity of God. Though God is infinitely simple we do form concepts of His goodness, His immensity, His eternity, His power, etc. The Church herself gives us the cue in her gradual expansion of feasts of the Lord. We study Him and honor Him in all of these under a special aspect. We honor His Conception in the feast of the Annunciation, His birth in the feast of the Nativity. We honor His Epiphany, His Transfiguration, etc. We also honor the various "parts" of the Sacred Humanity, His wounds, His Heart, His Blood.

We must always bear in mind that when we venerate a sacred part of the humanity, we honor the divine Person in and through this part. But we single out those parts which we have a special reason

to honor. Far from implying that we “divide” Christ or needlessly “multiply” devotions, we direct our special attention and love to the whole Christ under one special aspect. For this we have a very solid reason, founded in the Scripture, the tradition, the approval of the Church. In stressing a special part of the humanity, we may never “exclude” the other parts of the divine Person. Implicitly the entire human nature is honored.

There is a very special reason to honor the Blood of Christ. The unique importance of blood in the lives and minds and languages of peoples is stressed in all our discussions. Much is said of the relation of blood to life and to death. But we must note that the devotion is not necessarily bound up with any physiological or biological exposition of the exact function of blood in the human system. We do think scientific studies of this kind would be very enlightening and at least indirectly helpful to our theology. But here we abstract from all of this and limit ourselves to the certain truth that the Blood of Christ was the special sign and symbol of His sacrificial death, that it was intimately bound up with His physical death and His Passion, and that it was chosen by God with unfathomable wisdom for this tremendous role in the work of redemption.

We honor the Blood in a singular way not merely because it is a part of the sacred humanity, united with the divinity “inseparably,” nor merely because the Blood as such, according to the common teaching which is all but certain, is united hypostatically to the second Person. We honor the Blood most of all because it represents the tremendous reality of the redemptive mediation. In this sense it fixes our gaze on the whole divine-human life and its bountiful oblation in the supreme act of sacrifice, the physical, the mystical.

It is literally true and divinely revealed that we are redeemed by the Blood, the price of our ransom. Literally the Blood was shed and the act of shedding saved us. Blood, or perhaps it is better to say, Bloodshedding was sign and symbol of that interior obedience and love — we should call it devotion — which is the motive force of the whole work of redemption. Blood was physically that part of the humanity which was the special instrument of the redemptive act. We go beyond adoration of a part of the blessed humanity — though we do definitely adore the sacred part — and adore the whole Redeemer in the very mystery of His Bloodshedding.

This devotion carries the mind and heart to the very center of the Christian religion. As heart means love, so shedding of blood means sacrifice. Here we have the key to the whole doctrine of redemption. Heart is seat of Jesus' love, and shedding of blood is its manifest sign.

The most perfect manifestation of victim and destruction of victim is the agonizing death through shedding of blood. It expresses the stark devotion, prompt, utter, complete. As water means washing, anointing, strengthening; imposition of hands, giving power; so shedding of Blood manifests sacrificial surrender to God. It is not a mere sign, for it is infinitely effective: it wrought our redemption.

Not only is the Blood significant in the Passion and death on Calvary, it is significant in the mystic shedding. The special devotion also rests on this significance. This is indicated by the Church's own prayer in the Holy Mass: "Mindful therefore, O Lord, not only of the Blessed Passion of the same Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, but also of His resurrection from the dead . . . we, Thy ministers, as also Thy Holy People, offer unto Thy supreme majesty of Thy gifts bestowed upon us, the pure Victim, the Holy Victim: the holy Bread of life eternal and the chalice of unending salvation."

### *The Devotion in Its Particularity*

Our entire Study Week presents the materials of a theology of the devotion. It deals specifically with its use, its method, its exercises, its prayers. Much will be said of its virtues and its fruits. The approval of the Church has already been set forth. We should like therefore to take up here one of the special notes of the devotion. It is a summary or synthesis of the whole Scripture and all dogmas. The Old Testament, in types, prophecies, sacrifices, anticipates the coming of the Deliverer and prepares men for Him. The entire Old Testament is a covenant in blood anticipating the everlasting testament in the Blood of Christ. In the New Testament the gospel narrates the Great Fact and announces the glad tidings of salvation through the death of Christ. We die with Him; we rise with Him. St. John tells of the riven side with the Blood and the water, and sees in vision the Lamb that was slain. According to Paul, the Church is the Bride of Christ and His Mystical Body. Christ in glory still manifests His wounds and makes intercession for us.

The Blood of redemption implies the truth of the incarnation, of the one divine Person in the two natures. The Blood is offered to the Father who has been offended by original sin and all other sins of men. It is fruitful through the Holy Spirit in the Church. The Precious Blood tells of the graces earned for men, of the sacraments, of the Sacrifice.

The honor paid to Mary and the saints is honor paid to the price of man's redemption, whence is all grace and glory. How intimate the bond between Mary and the Blood of her Son! Through it she was conceived immaculate, pre-redeemed, made splendid with boundless graces, made the Co-Redemptress, Queen of Angels and Saints, Mediatrix of all graces. All this holds good without any acceptance of the old physiology by which Mary contributed some actual drops of blood to the veins of her Son in her womb. But even the physiological intimacy symbolized by such terms is significant.

The devotion sheds light on the whole realm of grace and perfection in the Apostles, the martyrs, confessors, virgins, on all the extraordinary supernatural gifts to men and angels. All grace is grace of Christ in a far richer sense than we are wont to explain! The glory of heaven is triumph; the horrors of hell, loss of the Precious Blood. It is rich in meaning for those who love the holy souls. Objectively the whole Christian law is the law of Christ the Redeemer; subjectively the whole supernatural order is implanted in the Blood of Christ. Subjectively or psychologically, perfection begins with devout meditation on the bloody Passion.

The theology of this devotion invites the most rewarding research into the divine truths and their development, e.g. the meaning of the incarnation-redemption in relation to our death and resurrection, to our pain and sorrow, to our divinization through grace and glory. The newer studies in Christology-soteriology reaching into every field of dogma and moral are themselves enriched by a more penetrating study of the Blood of redemption and its meaning in the divine plan. From all that we have said it is clear that this devotion is intimately bound up with the liturgy, with the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, with such semi-public devotions as that of the rosary and the way of the Cross. Briefly we point out the fruits of the devotion: increase in the virtue of religion, fortitude even to the shedding of blood, zeal for the faith, expiation for sin in union with all the purposes of the Mass. The devotion should pave

the way to a theology of the Cross, whose basis is identification with Christ, Priest and Victim. Sympathy with the suffering of Christ and the members of His Mystical Body is one of the noblest fruits. Those who practice the devotion should seek to supply what is wanting in the Passion of Christ by suffering with Christ.

### *Scholastic Exposition*

The ultimate and comprehensive object of all adoration and devotion is the triune God, whom we approach through the God-man our Mediator. In this specific devotion we look upon the material object as the Blood Itself, or rather the shedding of the Blood. This is the particular or partial material object. The total material object is the entire humanity united hypostatically to the divine Person. This we may also call the adequate material object. The formal object is the reason or motive why we pay adoration or devotion to the material object. We honor the Blood because it redeemed us. We honor and adore that inner devotion of Jesus who sacrificed His life for us. The formal object is the sacrificial devotion and homage of Christ paid to the Heavenly Father in the shedding of the Blood. This makes the Bloodshedding effective as sign and symbol of redemption.

If we wish to proceed further, we may say the formal object of our adoration of the whole sacred humanity as united to the divine Person is — narrowly — this same interior sacrificial devotion of Jesus, and more broadly the divine majesty of the Second Person Himself and comprehensively the majesty of the Trinity.

We may speak of immediate or direct adoration. This is paid to the Blood Itself, though indirectly and mediately we honor the whole sacred humanity, the Second Person, the triune God. We should “offer” the Blood, as we do in those singularly marvelous prayers, the Seven Offerings. We may call the devotion specially “cultal,” a devotion of offering.

The practice and method consist in: meditation of the mystery of redemption and sanctification; personal union with the purpose of the Bloodsheddings; self-identification with Christ as Priest and Victim, and with the Mystical Body in joys and sorrows; pious use of the Precious Blood sacramentally and eucharistically; practice of the virtues characteristic of the devotion. All this is expressed in a ten-

der attitude toward the suffering Christ and His Mystical Body. The special fruits are profound gratitude, sense of peace, tenderness toward sinners, ease in doing great things for God.

REV. EDWIN G. KAISER, C.P.P.S., S.T.D.

1. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 62 a. 5.
2. P. Galtier, "La religion du Fils," cited in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon* (Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1953), v.III, p. 290.
3. DB, 790.
4. *Ibid.*, 148.
5. Karl Rahner, "Chalkedon, Ende oder Anfang," *Das Konzil von Chalkedon* (Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1953), v.III, p. 4.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 34-35.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 46 sq.
10. *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 48, a.2, ad 1.
11. Franz X. Arnold, "Das Gottmenschliche Prinzip der Seelsorge und die Gestaltung der Christlichen Frömmigkeit," *Das Konzil von Chalkedon* (Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1953), v.III, p. 292.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 293.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Cf. Rahner, *loc. cit.*, p. 44. :
15. Quoted in Petrus Parente, *De Verbo Incarnato* (Rome: Marietti, 4th ed., 1947), p. 267.
16. *Sum. Theol.*, III, q.46, a.3; cf. q.47, 48, 49.
17. E. Hugon, *De Verbo Incarnato et Redemptore* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1920), p. 390sqq.
18. For a profound discussion of the "flesh" and its meaning in redemption, cf. Rahner, *loc. cit.*, p. 45-46.
19. Arnold, *loc. cit.*, p. 295.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 298 sq.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 299.

## BLOOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

### *Why the Old Testament?*

Because it is a favorite theme of the art of communities dedicated to the Precious Blood, the Ap vision most familiar to adorers of the Blood of Christ is the adoration of the Lamb by all creation (Ap cc. 4-5). This magnificent scene describes how St. John received the answers to the questions which tortured the Christian churches of his day: why did Christ delay His glorious coming? why must the powers of wickedness triumph? why should God's elect suffer persecution? what has happened to the faithful who died for the cause of Christ? The answers to these and many other questions were contained in the scroll, seven times sealed, which appeared in John's vision: the scroll that "no one in heaven, or on earth, or under the earth" could open. The seer graphically portrays the anguish of the churches by weeping bitterly at the prospect of further frustration. But he is quickly re-assured by one of the council of twenty-four elders or presbyters, the heavenly representatives of the Church, that "the lion of the tribe of Judah" has gained the victory necessary to open this book. What John saw next, however, was not a lion, but a lamb with the bloody marks of sacrifice shining like jewels. And the elders, the Church's ideal in heaven, proclaim in song the reason for Christ's exclusive power to open the scroll: though as God He is Master of history from all eternity, yet He is such also by a new title, the title of redemption. His bloody sacrifice has *fulfilled*, has brought to perfection, the Covenant of Sinai. There the people of Israel were proclaimed by God "a kingdom of priests" because as a nation they were the official mediator between Yahweh and the nations that knew Him not. But this "kingdom of priests" was only a faint foreshadowing of that which Christ would effect: by His Blood which Christians were to drink, they would share in a real manner in His priesthood and royalty.

The hymn which the elders sang was most probably not a hymn that St. John heard for the first time in the vision, or a hymn that he composed for insertion here. Rather, he simply incorporated a hymn that was sung in the churches at that time, the first Precious

Blood hymn. As we sing it on the feast of the Precious Blood and at votive Masses, what a thrill we must experience at the thought that centuries have hymned the mystery of the Blood in these same words:

Worthy art thou to take the scroll and open its seals;  
 For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us for God with thy  
     blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,  
 And hast made them for our God a kingdom and priests,  
     and they shall reign over the earth. (Ap 5,9-10)

In this paper we are interested exclusively in the "scroll" that Christ opened. What was it? Certainly, the book that contained the answers to the problems of the Christians of St. John's day. Can we be more specific? If we study the Ap itself and note that from beginning to end it is a skillfully woven fabric of Old Testament quotations and allusions, we shall be inclined to subscribe to the view of Origen, recently revived by Fathers Cerfaux and Cambier, that the scroll is the Old Testament.

Christ opens it, because if we read the Old Testament in the light of His redemptive work, we shall see that it has spoken not only of Jesus Himself, but also of the Mystical Christ, the Church. We shall become acutely aware that the Old Testament themes found in Ap are really eternal laws, the program of God that holds for all ages, not simply for the provisional period of the Old Testament. Only, the Old Testament must be read in the dazzling light of Him who is also the Way and the Life. The difference is not in the text, but in the readers. The Hebrews had to read with eyes partly veiled; we read with eyes fully open to the Light of Him who tore away the veil.

If it is true that the New Testament sheds definitive light on the Old, it is also true that the New cannot be understood without the Old. Catholics have often treated the Old Testament as if it were simply the tuning up of the orchestra, the last minute practicing by the musicians who are waiting for the late-comers to be seated so that the conductor can signal the beginning of the overture. No, the Old Testament is rather the opening movement of the great symphony of salvation which already introduces *all* the themes of the remaining movements. It is an integral, an indispensable part of the masterpiece.

That is why, if we would grow in knowledge of the mystery of

the Blood, we must contemplate what God has taught us about blood in the Old Testament.

If parts of this paper sound erudite or even pedantic, my apology is that I have tried to heed the admonition of our Holy Father, who urged Scripture students to use all possible resources in their study of the inspired word:

The interpreter must . . . go back wholly in spirit to those remote centuries of the East and with the aid of history, archaeology, ethnology, and other sciences, accurately determine what modes of writing, so to speak, the author of that ancient period would be likely to use, and in fact did use (*Divino Afflante Spiritu*, n. 35).

#### *Remote Centuries of the East*

The intimate connection between blood and life which primitive peoples posited was due to observation. It was noticed that the blood flowing from a mortally wounded person seemed to carry with it or actually seemed to be the life of the dying person.<sup>1</sup> The written records of Egypt, of various Semitic peoples (Akkadians, Arabs, Hebrews), of Rome and Greece, all witness the widespread conviction of the importance of blood. Homer speaks interchangeably of the Soul (*psyche*) and of the Blood escaping through the "stricken wound."<sup>2</sup> Virgil describes Rhoetus, into whose breast a sword has been plunged, "belching forth the purple soul."<sup>3</sup> Virgil's commentator Servius notes that the seat of the soul is in the blood.<sup>4</sup>

Several Babylonian poems presuppose the blood-life equation in their graphic portrayal of man's creation "in the image and likeness of God," as Gn 1,26 expresses it. The Akkadian epic, *Enuma elis* (dating probably from the early part of the second millenium B.C.), for example, records Marduk's determination to create man in these words:

Blood I will mass and cause bones to be.  
I will establish a savage, "man" shall be his name.  
Verily, savage-man [Lullu] I will create.  
He shall be charged with the service of the gods  
That they might be at ease!<sup>5</sup>

To obtain life-blood, Ea suggests that one of the gods who had rebelled against Marduk be sacrificed:

Let but one of their brothers [the gods] be handed over;  
He alone shall perish that mankind may be fashioned.

Since the god Kingu had incited Tiamat to rebel, he was chosen for the distinction:

It was Kingu who contrived the uprising,  
And made Tiamat rebel, and joined battle.  
They bound him, holding him before Ea.  
They imposed on him his guilt and severed his blood (vessels).  
Out of his blood they fashioned mankind.  
He imposed the service and let free the gods.<sup>6</sup>

However bizarre this story may sound to our ears, it presupposes the conviction that somehow man's life is a participation in divine life. It is preserved in Gn 1-2 in two forms: 1) The Priestly narrative divests the conception of what we should call materialistic language and safeguards Yahweh's absolute transcendence by God's decision to "make mankind as our image according to our likeness."<sup>7</sup> 2) The more primitive Yahwist account, however, had no scruples about a materialistic picture of the creation of man: "Then Yahweh Elohim formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (*nismat hayyim*), and man became a living being (*nepes*)."<sup>8</sup> To understand that Yahweh's breathing the breath of life into man's nostrils meant the same to the ancient Semite as giving man a god's life-blood, we must keep in mind some basic notions about the human composite, as the Hebrew saw it.

#### *Basar, Nepes, Ruah<sup>9</sup>*

The ancient Hebrew was not a dichotomist; he knew nothing of man as a composite of body and soul. If we read into the OT texts the Aristotelian soul-matter antithesis, we cannot appreciate the significance which the Hebrew attached to blood. "The Hebrew idea of personality is an animated body, and not an incarnated soul."<sup>10</sup> Or, as another author puts it: in the OT man is thought of synthetically as a "physico-psychical organism."<sup>11</sup>

Hebrew had no specific word for body. When the term "flesh" is applied to the body, it is by synecdoche (cf. Ex 30,32; Nm 8,7; Prv 14,30; in these texts CCD renders "body"), and no contrast with "spirit" or "soul" is implied. When a contrast to "flesh" is implied or expressed, it is question of flesh suggesting what is weak and

perishable in contrast with God, e.g., Gn 6,3: "Yahweh said, 'My spirit shall not remain in man forever, since he is flesh,'" Or Is 31,3: "Egypt is man and not God; its horses are flesh and not spirit (*ruah*)."<sup>11</sup> It is only in the latest OT books, in which Greek influences are at work, that we first observe the familiar body-soul antithesis.

The term used most frequently in the OT to designate man's life-principle, or, more accurately, man as a living being, is *nepes*. Perhaps the primary meaning of *nepes* is throat (Is 5,14; Ps 44,26; Eccl 6,7; Jer 4,10; Ps 69,2; Jon 2,6), and its connection with breathing is derivative. It is this connection with breathing that explains the use of *nepes* to indicate what makes a man live. Since primitive man observed that as long as a person breathed he was still alive, he connected breath with life, just as he connected life with blood. When Rachel breathes her last, her *nepes* is said to depart (Gn 35,18; cf. Jer 15,9; Jb 11,20; 31,39). Elias prayed that the widow's son's *nepes* might return; its return meant that the child was restored to life (3 Kgs 17,21.22).

From this meaning of breath of life *nepes* comes to mean often life simply (e.g., 1 Sm 19,11; Ps 6,5), person (1 Sm 1,26; Nm 23,10; Ez 13,19), living being (Gn 1,20; Ex 1,5; Dt 10,22), or the equivalent of our personal pronouns (Jos 23,11; Ps 3,3; Jb 32,2).

A third term of man, which at first seems to be a mere synonym of *nepes*, is *ruah*, which means originally, "air in motion," "wind," and is often translated with "spirit." While often used in parallel with *nepes* and hence synonymously, it has one basic difference. To indicate the vital influence of God upon human beings, whether this influence be to our way of thinking natural or supernatural, the word *ruah* is used. As Van Imschoot puts it:

In OT psychology the *nepes* plays a role very similar and parallel to that of the *ruah*. Nevertheless it is bound up more than the *ruah* with bodily organs, the throat, blood, and more individualized than the *ruah*, so much so that *nepes* can designate the person itself, a meaning which the word *ruah* never has. Moreover, the *nepes* is said to live and to die, but never the *ruah*. *Nepes* conveys especially life; *ruah* rather strength, power, and even violence.<sup>12</sup>

#### Blood and Life

Observation, then, led the ancients to connect life with both breath and blood. Perhaps the two conceptions witness different

experiences or different cultures, but both have persisted in the OT, though breath was a less tangible and material sign of life than blood. Because of the connection between blood and life, blood must always be offered to Yahweh, the sole Master of life. It is on the occasion of these injunctions particularly that the relationship of blood to life is stressed. The older terminology simply equates blood and life:

In any of your communities you may slaughter and eat to your heart's desire as much meat as Yahweh your God has blessed you with; . . . Only you shall not partake of the blood, but must pour it out on the ground like water. . . . Make sure that you do not partake of the blood; for blood is life (*hanna-pes*), and you shall not consume this seat of life (*hannepes*) with the flesh. Do not partake of the blood, therefore, but pour it out on the ground like water. (Dt 12,15a.16.23-24)

The Priestly traditions, more recent in terminology, speak of life's being in the blood:

If anyone, whether of the house of Israel or of the aliens residing among them, partakes of any blood, I will set myself against the one (literally: against the *nepes*, *bannepes*) who partakes of blood and will cut him off from among his people. Since the life (*nepes*) of a living body (*habbasar*) is in its blood, I have made you put it on the altar, so that atonement may thereby be made for your own lives (*napsotekem*), because it is the blood, as the seat of life (*haddam hu' bannepes*) that makes atonement. That is why I have told the Israelites: No one among you, not even a resident alien, may partake of blood.

Anyone hunting, whether of the Israelites or of the aliens residing among them, who catches an animal or a bird that may be eaten, shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth. Since the life (*nepes*) of every living body (*kol basar*) is its blood, I have told the Israelites: You shall not partake of the blood of any meat. Since the life of every living body is its blood, anyone who partakes of it shall be cut off. (Lv 17,10-14; similar P texts: Gn 9,3-4; Lv 3,17; 7,27; 19,26)

That this prohibition to eat blood was very ancient among the Hebrews can be seen from the story of 1 Sm 14,32-34. After a fierce battle with the Philistines, the Israelites were so exhausted and famished that they slaughtered some of the cattle they had taken and devoured it without offering the blood. Apprized of this violation of the law, Saul at once ordered an altar set up and the cattle

slaughtered according to ritual so that the blood might be offered to God.

These texts leave no doubt that the OT interprets the prohibition to eat blood as a religious abstention. Since blood is life, or at least life is in the blood, it must be reserved to God, its Author. To eat blood is to arrogate to oneself the incommunicable prerogative of God as Creator of life. This religious motivation does not deny the view advanced by some authorities that originally the blood tabu was due to the fear that mysterious life-forces resided in the blood which might be dangerous, if absorbed by another. Or it may have been feared that since the blood of an animal was foreign life, eating it involved absorbing a foreign kind of life.<sup>13</sup> Again, since the emphasis is upon the literal shedding of blood rather than the actual killing, we may conclude that primitive man associated the danger with the release of the mysterious soul powers.

If the life of an animal belongs to God and consequently its blood must always be reserved to Him, *a fortiori* has man no right over the life of his fellow man. The ancient law (found in the earliest Pentateuchal Code, the Code of the Covenant), which prescribed death for the ox that mortally gored a man or woman, was not simply a measure of safety (Ex 21,28ff.), since the flesh of the ox might not be eaten. It was contaminated by this wanton contact with the life-powers of man. Here again we are interpreting the motivation of the law in its earliest form. The Priestly tradition states explicitly that the shedding of man's blood must be avenged because he is the image of God:

Surely I will require an account of your life's blood (*'et dimkem lenapsotekem*); from every beast I will require it, and from man; from every man I will require the life of his fellow.

Whoever sheds the blood of man,  
by man shall his blood be shed;

For as the image of God man was made. (Gn 9,5-6)

This text evidently refers to the widespread practice of blood revenge, still practiced by some Arab clans. It is first met in the Bible in the Yahwist story of Cain and Abel. "What have you done?" Yaweh asks Cain. "The voice of your brother's blood cries to me from the ground. And now cursed are you in the soil which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand."

(Gn 4,10-11) The picture of the blood's crying until it has been covered over by the blood of the murderer portrays graphically the insistence of the obligation of blood revenge. Blood shed had to be avenged by the nearest of kin's shedding the blood of the murderer. Whether the crying of the blood is to be taken simply as a metaphor, or as a reminiscence of the belief that the *nepes* survived and asserted itself after the blood left the body, is not clear. Some scholars<sup>14</sup> opt for the second alternative on the basis of texts like Jb 24,12; Hen 9,10; Ap 6,9. A number of OT allusions recall the obligation to cover shed blood with the earth (Jb 16,18; Ez 24,7; Is 26,21; Lv 17,13; Dt 12,24).

Blood revenge is taken for granted by all the Pentateuchal Codes: Ex 21,12 (Code of the Covenant); Lv 24,17 and Nm 35,16-19 (P); Dt 19,11-13. Because the members of the clan were regarded as a corporate personality with the same life-blood flowing in the veins of the individual members, the next of kin must cover over with the murderer's blood the blood which he released. "The same blood means the same life principle which transcends the individual and is confused with the life and soul of the tribe. To shed the blood of one of the members is to strike the community. From this reasoning flows the 'natural' law of blood vengeance and of the talion, which is merely a practical application of it."<sup>15</sup>

A word must be said about the Levitical law (Lv 15,19-27) which prescribed that a woman in her menses and after childbirth (Lv 12,1-8) was ritually or legally unclean. Evidently this ritual or legal impurity has no connection with morality. Actions that were good and praiseworthy, like burying the dead (Tb 2,1.9; 12,12) or childbearing (1 Sm 1,6), made one unclean (Lv 21,1-3; Nm 19,11). According to the primitive mentality, the unclean is that which is charged with mysterious and dangerous forces; it has striking analogies with the holy. The impure must be avoided because it might let loose these forces. Because of its connection with life, blood was one of these tabus. The loss of blood meant a loss of vitality for the person concerned, which had to be repaired by various rites which would re-establish contact with God, the source of life.

Finally, to illustrate the quasi-identity between blood and life which the Hebrew presumed, we may quote two texts in which blood is parallel to *nepes*:

From fraud and violence he shall redeem them (*napsam*),  
 and precious shall their blood be in his sight. (Ps 72,14)  
 These men lie in wait for their own blood,  
 They set a trap for their own lives (*lenapsotam*). )Prv 1,18)

### Blood in Sacrifices

Sacrifice as found in the OT may be described in these terms:  
 "A ritual action (ordinarily the destruction of an object or of a living being) by which man endeavors to enter into contact or communion with the divinity, in order to render Him homage, to propitiate and make satisfaction, or to protect the offerer from His anger and ward off dangerous or harmful influences."<sup>16</sup> Nowhere in the OT, however, is a theology of sacrifice to be found, or historical notices about its development, or even a generic term for sacrifices. Everywhere the usage is presupposed; numerous regulations are given about specific sacrifices, and the pre-exilic prophets often protest against a magic-mechanical attitude toward the efficacy of sacrifices.<sup>17</sup>

Today the apologist is in quite a different position from that of his brother of several decades ago in proving the Mosaic origin of the OT sacrificial ritual. Though all but die-hard conservatives now admit that Moses did not emphasize sacrifices to the extent that the Priestly legislation in the Pentateuch might lead one to believe, nevertheless a sacrifice-less worship would have been an anomaly to him and to the Hebrew people. As W. F. Albright puts it:

However the part played by animal sacrifice in Semitic religion was so vital that it may be doubted whether Moses could have omitted it from his system without seriously weakening its appeal to worshippers. Among the Semites of antiquity sacrifice was a means of bringing gifts to the deity and of paying him homage which was valid both for a single worshipper and for a group; it served to solemnize every important occasion in the life of a group; and as shown by Bertholet it brought the deity into dynamistic relationship to his worshippers, who became united in flesh and spirit with him by jointly partaking of the sacrificial flesh. Both the substitutional sacrifice, where an animal replaced a more primitive human sacrifice, and the ceremony of the scape-goat (found also in related form in Mesopotamia) emphasized a vital religious concept, that of vicarious atonement for moral transgressions which would otherwise have to be physically expiated by the people.<sup>18</sup>

Professor Albright accepts the prevailing view that in the OT sacrifice appears as a gift, a present (*minha*) offered to God.<sup>19</sup> In the East, the inferior did not present himself to his superior without a gift (1 Sm 10,27). Both the Code of the Covenant (Ex 23,15) and the Ritual Code (Ex 34,20) prescribe that the Israelite must not appear before Yahweh with empty hands (cf. also Dt 16,16 ff.). The ancient Semite gave in order to receive something in return and obtain a favor from his chief or king; and this no doubt is what Israel expected of sacrifices (cf. 1 Sm 7,9). But there is more: Sacrifice is not a simple *do ut des*, it is rather a *do ut possis dare*.<sup>20</sup> Because the gift binds the donor to him who receives, the donor gives it in order to attach himself to the beneficiary and vice-versa. Once Esau accepted Jacob's gifts, he felt himself bound to his brother (Gn 33, 12-16). For the ancients the gift was less an object offered than a "bit of oneself." "To give" was to externalize something of oneself in order to create a firm bond with another. As Pedersen puts it:

One honours the man by giving him gifts; one blesses him with one's gift, but, in any case, one strengthens the peace and the covenant through it. We know the basis of the value and power of the gift. It is not something material, but part of the psychic entirety of the man. Gifts are therefore always spiritual gifts. Like good words and good deeds they carry something from the soul of the one into the heart of the other; they not only bring tidings of good will, they bring good will itself, because they belong to the entirety of the soul. The gift is not an expression of sentiment; it is a necessary result of a real relation between men, and itself creates or strengthens a relation of this kind.<sup>21</sup>

However basic to sacrifice the notion of gift may be, it does not exclude development and the inclusion of other purposes. The gift was intended also to render homage (1 Sm 10,27) and express submission to God (Mi 6,6 ff.). Dt 16,16 ff. witnesses the Israelite's awareness that ultimately he makes a gift to Yahweh only of that which he has received from Him (cf. 1 Par 29,14; Os 2,7.10). Dt 26,1-11 shows that the offering of first fruits has been reinterpreted as a thanksgiving and a commemoration of the great events of Israel's history; this offering is less a gift destined to obtain Yahweh's favor than the expression of gratitude for the blessings granted by Him, especially deliverance from the bondage of Egypt.

Whatever purpose predominated in the offering of sacrifice at any specific period, it seems that the importance of blood did not

vary. To appreciate this fact we must study its significance in the context of the sacrificial ritual, which, in the case of bloody sacrifices, consisted of three main actions: (1) Imposition of hands; (2) Immolation of the victim; (3) Distribution of parts and burning.

### *Ritual of Sacrifices*

In presenting the victim to be offered, the Priestly Code states that the offerer shall "lay his hand on the head" of the victim (Ex 29,10.15; 3,2.8.13; 4,15; 8,14.22; 16,21). If the community offers the sacrifice, representatives (e.g., the elder, Lv 4,15) of the community, shall impose hands. Evidently, imposition of hands lends itself to a variety of symbolic meanings, but in the sacrificial ritual it certainly intends "to cause the victim to participate in the personality of the offerer."<sup>22</sup> "Man identifies himself with his offering in order to present by it to the Lord his adoration or expiation, his petition or thanksgiving. In the sacrifice for sin, the offerer undergoes by and in the victim the penalty for his falling."<sup>23</sup>

After the victim is immolated, its blood must always be given to God (Dt 12,16 ff.; 15,23; Gn 9,3-4; Lv 3,17; 7,26-27; 17,10ff.; 19,26). In the case of holocausts, the priests were to "offer up its blood by splashing it on the sides of the altar" (Lv 1,5.11; if the victim is a bird, "the priest shall snap its head loose and squeeze out its blood against the side of the altar," 1,15). The offering of the blood of "peace offerings" (communion sacrifices) is prescribed in the same terms (Lv 3,2.8.13).

The blood ritual for "sin offerings" (*hatta't*) was more elaborate. If the "anointed priest" or the "whole community of Israel" "inadvertently commits a sin against some command of Yahweh," the following ritual is to be observed:

When the bullock has been slaughtered before Yahweh, the anointed priest shall take some of the bullock's blood and bring it into the Meeting Tent, where, dipping his finger in the blood, he shall sprinkle it seven times before Yahweh, toward the veil of the sanctuary. The priest shall also put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense which is before Yahweh in the Meeting Tent. The rest of the bullock's blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of holocausts which is at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. (Lv 4,4-7. 15-18)

If the offender is a prince or a private person, the sprinkling toward

the veil of the sanctuary is omitted, and the horns of the altar of holocausts are daubed with blood instead of the horns of the altar of incense (Lv 4, 25.30.34).

We shall speak later of the Great Day of Atonement, but because of the similarity of the ceremony of the sprinkling of blood, we shall anticipate and quote the pertinent text here:

Taking some of the bullock's blood [which he offers for himself and his family], he [Aaron] shall sprinkle it with his finger on the fore part of the propitiatory and likewise sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times in front of the propitiatory.

Then he shall slaughter the people's sin offering goat, and bringing its blood inside the veil, he shall do with it as he did with the bullock's blood, sprinkling it on the propitiatory and before it. . . . When he has made atonement for himself and his household, as well as for the whole Israelite community, he shall come out to the altar before Yahweh and make atonement for it also. Taking some of the bullock's and the goat's blood, he shall put it on the horns around the altar, and with his finger sprinkle some of the blood on it seven times. Thus he shall render it clean and holy, purged of the defilements of the Israelites (Lv 16,14-16. 17b-19).

### *Significance of the Blood in Sacrifices*

It will clarify our explanation to distinguish according to the common types of sacrifice, holocaust, peace offering, and sin and guilt offerings.

The *holocaust* (Greek: "whole-burnt"; the Hebrew term, *cola*, is most probably derived from the verb meaning, "to ascend") seems to have been especially popular in the postexilic period. As the Greek term suggests, it was offered in its entirety to God and not shared by the worshippers in a sacred banquet. The whole victim, or at least its edible parts, was burnt on the altar; in some cases, the skin and entrails were burnt outside on another fire.

The holocaust was the ordinary sacrifice of the public worship. Every morning and evening a year-old lamb was offered as a holocaust (Ex 29, 38-42; Nm 28, 3-8), and the same kind of sacrifice was prescribed for a number of occasions. The earliest instances of holocaust are clearly acts of homage (Gn 22; Jgs 6,26; 3 Kgs 18,36). Noe's holocaust (Gn 8,20 [J]) is a thanksgiving sacrifice (cf. also

1 Sm 6,14ff.; 2 Sm 6,17), which has the effect also of appeasing Yahweh (Gn 8,21). Gn 22 suggests that the holocaust of an animal replaced human sacrifices, which were practiced by the Canaanites, Moabites, Phoenicians, and even in the historical period by the Hebrews, at least in times of crisis (Mi 6,7; 3 Kgs 16,34; 4 Kgs 16,3; 21,6; 23,10; Jer 7,30ff.; 19,5; Ez 16,20ff.; 20,26). Especially in the postexilic period the holocaust had also an expiatory purpose (Lv 1,4).

Although the entire victim is offered to Yahweh, the blood must first be shed and splashed on the sides of the altar, which represented Yahweh. The significance of blood as life was too important to be omitted. By it, too, communion between the offerer and Yahweh was effected. The destruction of the victim, reduced to smoke "before Yahweh," might well proclaim the nothingness of the creature before his Creator, the master of life and death, dispenser of all blessings and the end of all things<sup>24</sup>; nevertheless, the creature still desires to be united with Yahweh and that union is ritually realized through the blood splashed on the sides of the altar.

This note of union or communion with God is most accentuated in the ancient sacrificial banquets called *selamim* (CCD, "peace offerings"; many authors call them simply, "communion sacrifices"). These were joyful family sacrifices, attested in our most ancient biblical sources (1 Sm 11,15; Ex 20,24; 24,5 [E]; Am 5,22). Besides the blood, which was splashed on the sides of the altar, the fats and kidneys were burnt on the altar (1 Sm 2,15), because they were reserved to Yahweh and were called "the food of Yahweh's oblation" (Lv 3,11). This terminology preserves the ancient notion that the divinity actually consumed the victims or the parts offered to Him, although this was certainly not the attitude of the Priestly writers; their insistence upon Yahweh's transcendence is sufficient assurance that they understood the terms metaphorically.

The ancient conception of the peace offering as a meal with the divinity indicates also its purpose, communion with the divinity. Partaking of food together among primitive peoples establishes a mystic bond between them. Here there is question of partaking of food with Yahweh Himself. The blood has been given to Him as author of life. But it also establishes a sacred bond between Him and the worshippers, since all partake of the same sacred food.

Expiatory sacrifices, the purpose of which was to efface sin and

reestablish union with God, are attested in our earliest biblical sources (cf. 1 Sm 3,14; Os 4,8; 4 Kgs 12,17; Mi 6,6ff.). The Pentateuchal legislation on expiatory sacrifices is recent, of course, and indicates that in the postexilic period increasing emphasis was placed upon expiation. Lv 17,11 gives the impression that the reservation of blood to Yahweh is precisely for the purpose of making atonement and hence is present in every sacrifice: ". . . I have made you put it [the blood] on the altar, so that atonement may thereby be made for your lives, because it is the blood, as the seat of life, that makes atonement." Johannes Pedersen states this formally:

Whatever the view taken of sacrifice, it always contained germs of what developed into the idea of atonement. The worshipper purified himself and was sanctified by the sacrifice, he presented a gift to the God, he partook of a meal with the God; in all cases a new peace was created for him through the sacrifice, a renewal of harmony. But man could only be in harmony with God when he was "whole." The sacrifice removed whatever was wasting away his integrity, what was called sin. This was brought about by man being sanctified while at the same time God was induced to be lenient towards him.<sup>25</sup>

Lv mentions two kinds of expiatory sacrifices, the "sin offering" (*hatta't*) and the "guilt offering" (*'asam*), but it is practically impossible to distinguish them precisely because the terms seem to be interchangeable, at least in part.<sup>26</sup> What surprises us is the fact that in the case of the "sin offering" (cf. Lv 4,1.13.22.27; 5,2) and in some cases of the "guilt offering" (cf. 5,14.17) the failing for which the sacrifice is offered is inadvertent. Though we admit that the Hebrew often did not make the fine distinctions we make between intentional and unintentional failings, it is also true that the Hebrew conception has a parallel in our legislation to actions which are invalid when certain conditions are not fulfilled, even if the conditions are omitted inadvertently.

Although the Pentateuchal legislation speaks of expiatory sacrifices mainly with respect to ritual failings, we must not conclude that the OT had no notion of expiation for moral failings.<sup>27</sup> Jb 1,5; 42,7; Mi 6,7, suggest the contrary; the same may be said for the sacrifices of the Great Day of Atonement (Lv 16).

In the expiation for sin, blood plays a most important role. Only the blood of the murderer (Nm 35,33; Gn 9,6) or of his des-

cendants (2 Sm 21) can expiate blood that has been shed. If the guilty one is unknown, the blood of a heifer can be substituted, Dt 21,1-9. The ceremony described is not a sacrifice, since the blood is not given to Yahweh, but it clearly brings in the notion of substitution.

In expiatory sacrifices the shed blood of the victim substituted for the life of the sinner, who had identified himself with the victim by imposing hands. Even if the death penalty were not in question, the death of the victim would supply for any penalty incurred by the offerer. The shedding of the victim's blood vividly indicates this death, although the blood more directly suggests resumption of communion with Yahweh, interrupted by sin.

This point explains why in expiatory sacrifices it does not suffice to pour the blood against the altar, as in sacrifices in general. The blood of the victim represents the blood of the repentant sinner, anxious to renew with God the union compromised by his failing. As he humbly implores pardon the supplication becomes all the more urgent, in proportion to the dignity of the offender. The different sprinklings of the sacred objects were so many reparations for the outrage inflicted on God, so many protestations of submission and devotion, so many appeals for mercy, so many acts of love that tend in some way to self-immolation.<sup>28</sup>

Similar symbolism must be behind the blood rites in the consecration of priests and in the purification of lepers. After vesting Aaron with the high priestly vestments and anointing his head with oil (Lv 8,1-13), Moses offered a sin offering and a holocaust according to the usual ritual (8,14-21), and finally "the ordination ram," upon which Aaron and his sons imposed hands.

When he had slaughtered it, Moses took some of its blood and put it on the tip of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. Moses had the sons of Aaron also come forward, and he put some of the blood on the tips of their right ears, on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet. The rest of the blood he splashed on the sides of the altar (8,23-24).

After the ceremony which symbolized Aaron's power to receive the sacrificial materials from the people and offer them to Yahweh (8,25-29), the text continues:

Taking some of the anointing oil and some of the blood that was on the altar, Moses sprinkled with it Aaron and his vestments, as well as his sons and their vestments, thus consecrating both Aaron and his vestments and his sons and their vestments (8,30).

Here the blood has a twofold task to perform: to remove or repair whatever is profane in the priests and their vestments, and positively, to make them holy, to consecrate them, to make them participate as priests in the holiness of Yahweh. The daubing of the extremities with blood has a certain analogy with the daubing of the horns of the altar. In any case, the main purpose for singling out these members seems to indicate the consecration of the entire person of the priest.<sup>29</sup>

It may be surprising that the same ceremony is part of the ritual for the cleansing of lepers:

Then the priest shall take some of the blood of the guilt offering and put in on the man's right ear, the thumb of his right hand, and the big toe of his right foot (Lv 14,14).

Cazelles<sup>30</sup> notes that the rite re-integrates the leper into the community of Israel, which the Priestly writers regard as a "holy nation." We shall see later the role of blood in sealing the covenant. The legal impurity of leprosy sundered the covenant bond, which must be forged anew by the same blood rites as the basic covenant, Ex 24,8.

Cazelles also suggests, on the basis of the parallelism with Ex 21,6, that the anointing of ear, hand, and foot suggests the notion of service. This would seem to fit better with the priestly consecration, whence possibly the details of the rite were borrowed.

The first part of the purification rite may be recalled here because of preservation of some ancient ceremonies. The archaic character of the ritual enables us to go back far in the religious traditions of blood.

If the priest finds that the sore of leprosy has healed in the leper, he shall order the man who is to be purified to get two live, clean birds, as well as some cedar wood [symbol of incorruption; the stateliest of trees, 3 Kgs 4,33], scarlet yarn [demons were thought to fear red, the color of blood], and hyssop [used for sprinkling, Ex 12,22; Nm 19,6; symbolic of cleansing, Ps 51,7]. The priest shall then order him to slay one of the birds over an

earthen vessel with spring water in it. Taking the living bird with the cedar wood, the scarlet yarn and the hyssop, the priest shall dip them all in the blood of the bird that was slain over the spring water, and then sprinkle seven times the man to be purified from his leprosy [originally, probably, to drive away the demons responsible; later on, as a purification rite]. When he has thus purified him he shall let the living bird fly away over the countryside (Lv 14,3-7).

The dismissal of the bird has a parallel in the dismissal of the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement, as we shall see. Semitic popular religion associated sickness with the presence of winged demons. The birds in this ceremony are a kind of substitution. The blood of the one bird, being the *nepes* of the bird, is carried away by the spring water. Similarly, the ultimate expulsion of the other signifies, originally by a kind of sympathetic magic, the expulsion of the leprosy.

*Does Blood Signify Death or Life Released?*

Recently a lively controversy has divided Anglican divines on the precise significance of blood in the Bible. A. M. Stibbs<sup>31</sup> holds the great Bishop Brooke Foss Westcott responsible for what he considers a deviation from the correct theology of blood. After a brief survey of the pertinent OT texts (Dt 12,23; Lv 17,11, etc), Bishop Westcott concludes:

Thus two distinct ideas were included in the sacrifice of a victim, the death of the victim by the shedding of its blood, and the liberation, so to speak, of the principle of life by which it has been animated, so that this life became available for another end. . . . Death and life were both exhibited, death as the consequences of sin, and life made by the divine appointment a source of life.<sup>32</sup>

Sydney C. Gayford practically denies the symbolism of death in his comment on Lv 17,11:

. . . it is not the blood when being shed from the body that makes atonement, but the blood when applied to the altar; not a penal death, but the offering to God of a dedicated life. The 'blood' is in effect a 'risen life.'<sup>33</sup>

Similarly 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.<sup>34</sup>

That Gayford and Taylor overstate the case is clear from the presentation of the evidence for the symbolism of death.<sup>35</sup> Stibbs, Morris, and F. J. Taylor show that of the some 360 occurrences of the term blood in the OT, the vast majority show some connection with death. Especially impressive is the emphasis upon death in sacrificial blood, e.g., the death of the victim as a substitute for the death of the offerer. On the other hand, these scholars consider only one aspect of the pertinent texts, and overlook the instances where blood patently indicates communication of life and communion with the divinity. They also view all the texts on one level and make no allowance for the different periods of religious history and development represented by the different texts. With Lindsay Dewar, then, we conclude 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."<sup>36</sup> Both ideas are convincingly presented by Père Médebielle:

. . . It is not of itself, by the material elements of which it is composed, that the blood on the altar works with such efficacy, but because of the life of which it was the source in the body of the animal, of that life which it seems to carry away with itself when it leaves the dying victim, while it remains the symbol of this life, even after its separation from the victim. This life with which homage is paid to the Creator as with the most precious possession received from His hand, inclines Him to benevolence toward the offenders. This is what the maxim means, according to the context: "The blood, as the seat of life, makes atonement."

This, however, does not exhaust the meaning of blood. . . . The importance ascribed to the *nepes* of the animal, the intimate connection between the latter and that of man, the insistence upon the relationship of the blood with the human *nepes* and the reduction of this to a relationship with the *nepes* of the victim, the line of causality in virtue of which the blood is said to effect propitiation in favor of man only because it offers God the life of the animal, establish the most intimate union between the victim and the offerer: the life immolated answers before God for the life of man, the blood, which is identified with the

first, also represents the second, and a mysterious substitution is produced by which the life brought to the altar in the blood of the sacrifice becomes in some way the very life of the offerer.<sup>37</sup>

### *The Passover*

The history of the Hebrew Paschal feast, obscure as it is in many details, is still a fine illustration of the way Moses adapted existing usages and customs, transformed and purified them, and with their new meaning integrated them into the revealed religion of the covenant people. Quite commonly scholars judge that the Passover was a pre-Mosaic feast, distinct from the feast of Unleavened Bread, which was fused with it, perhaps after the settlement in Canaan. Both are spring festivals, but Passover is a pastoral celebration, Unleavened Bread agricultural. The distinctive rites of the Passover suggest that its original purpose had to do with the well-being of the flocks. The sacrifice was offered to insure the health and fertility of the flocks throughout the year. Pedersen reconstructs conjecturally the original feast as follows:

For the sacrifice which is the central incident of the feast [of Passover] is in good accord with conditions in pre-Canaanite Israel. It consisted of a lamb or a kid, that is to say, a Bedawin offering, and typically Israelitish, because the tribes were keepers of flocks. As in the case of the Arabian *'atira* festival, the feast is celebrated in the spring about the time when the young of the flocks have been born. Hence we may safely assume that the original nucleus of the festival was the sanctification of the flocks on whose increase the life of the wandering tribes depended.

In the special way in which the lamb or kid is to be prepared (not boiled, not raw, roasted whole, no bone broken) an ancient Bedawin custom is doubtless preserved. . . . All this is to preserve the body of the sanctified animal as intact and as near to the live animal as possible. The well-being of the flock in the year to come depended on the holy animal being protected from injury. The Israelites acquired an increased share in the holiness of the feast by eating the animal. But this must be done only on the holy evening of the festival. Leavings not eaten at once were to be destroyed that they might not be exposed to desecration, and thus perhaps become a source of incalculable harm.<sup>38</sup>

The Passover texts in our Pentateuch preserve different layers of tradition. The oldest layer is the so-called Yahwist tradition,

which we shall quote first. According to it, Moses asks Pharaoh's permission to go into the desert a three days' journey, presumably to celebrate the pre-Mosaic pastoral Passover: "The God of the Hebrews has sent us word. Let us go a three days' journey in the desert, that we may offer sacrifice to Yahweh, our God; *otherwise he will punish us with pestilence or the sword*" (Ex 5,3[J]). After the failure of the plagues to persuade Pharaoh, Moses announced, according to the same tradition, Yahweh's determination to slay every first born in Egypt at midnight (Ex 11,4-8). Later Moses transmits to the elders of Israel this injunction:

Go and procure lambs for your families, and slaughter them as Passover victims. Then take a bunch of hyssop, and dipping it in the blood that is in the basin, sprinkle the lintel and the two doorposts with this blood. But none of you shall go outdoors until morning. For Yahweh will go by, striking down the Egyptians. Seeing the blood on the lintel and the two doorposts, Yahweh will pass over that door and not let the destroyer come into your houses to strike you down (Ex 12,21-23 [J]).

This is the earlier tradition of the Passover that coincided with the Israelites' departure from Egypt. Since this tradition in its written form probably dates from the tenth century B.C., we may reasonably assume that it includes with the historical facts details that are taken from the feast as it was celebrated at the time of writing. This caution must be re-emphasized when we turn to the Priestly traditions and legislation on the Pasch, which were consigned to writing during the Exile (587-538 B.C.).

On the tenth of this month [the first month = Nisan, or, in the older terminology, Abib] every one of your families must procure for itself a lamb, one apiece for each household. If a family is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join the nearest household in procuring one and shall share in the lamb in proportion to the number of persons who partake of it. The lamb must be a year-old male and without blemish. You may take it from either the sheep or the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, and then, with the whole assembly of Israel present, it shall be slaughtered during the evening twilight. They shall take some of its blood and apply it to the two doorposts and the lintel of every house in which they partake of the lamb. That same night they shall eat its roasted flesh with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. It shall not be eaten raw or boiled, but roasted whole, with its head and shanks and inner organs. None of it

must be kept beyond the next morning; whatever is left over in the morning shall be burned up.

This is how you are to eat it: with your loins girt, sandals on your feet and your staff in hand, you shall eat like those who are in flight. It is the Passover of Yahweh. (Ex 12,1-11 [P]; further regulations in Ex 12,43-49[P]; 34,25 [J];Lv 23,4-8; Nm 9,1-14 [P]; Dt 16,1-8)

The pre-Mosaic Passover, therefore, was probably an impetratory sacrifice. The sprinkling of the victim's blood on the doorposts was doubtless part of the earliest ritual, and was intended to ward off harm from the household. Even today among some Arab tribes blood is smeared on the doors to repel the jinn and other evil influences. Some Bedawin sprinkle a new house or tent with blood to consecrate it. The earliest wording, however, favors the first alternative.

Yahweh used this same ceremony as a profession of the obedience of the Israelites, promising that they should not suffer the loss of their firstborn, as the Egyptians would. This particular Passover sacrifice, on the fateful night of their departure from Egypt, was latreutic in so far as it was a solemn acknowledgement of the Hebrews' belonging to Yahweh. It was also impetratory, because it pleaded for Yahweh's protection in the crisis that lay ahead. Finally, it must have been also a communion sacrifice, because the blood was certainly offered to Yahweh, though no other portion of the Paschal Lamb was reserved to God.

When the Hebrews celebrated the Passover as the commemoration of the deliverance from Egypt, they did so with a consciousness that the feast had a certain sacramental efficacy. After showing how the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread lost their original pastoral and agricultural meaning by being connected with the Exodus, Pedersen continues:

. . . The most natural supposition is that this connection, as recounted in the legend [sic], was due to some historical coincidence, but as to this we can form no independent conjecture. The new character given to the feast made it a commemoration feast, that is to say, a feast through which the people re-experienced the events on which their existence as an independent nation was based. In all the laws it is with this that the festival is concerned, and the Passover legend is based on it. It is the history of the people which is sanctified.

The re-living of this experience, and that is what is meant by "commemoration", is carried through by simple and forceful means characteristic of primitive folk, or those unaffected by modern European culture. The participants in the feast repeat the exodus by eating the meal in the greatest haste, with staff in hand, with sandals on their feet, and with girded loins (Ex. 12, 11). This is the essential feature which has been preserved, but doubtless there were others. . . .

All the actions of the feast acquire a fresh character adapted to its purpose, the commemoration of the exodus. The unleavened bread is eaten during the feast, because the people had to take hurriedly the unfinished dough with them in troughs carried on their shoulders, having no time to procure proper food for their journey (Ex. 12,34.39), a feature probably repeated in the ritual of the feast. Doubtless the bitter herbs are regarded as a reminder of Israel's bitter humiliation in the land of bondage. The lamb was not offered as a sacrifice to win sanctification for the flocks; the offering was concerned with Israel's fight against Egypt. The blood was to be sprinkled on the doors of the Israelites; when Yahweh went forth to smite all the first-born of Egypt, he would pass over (*pasah*) the houses thus marked. Thus the Passover (*pesah*) becomes a feast by which the Israelites are rescued and the offering saves their first-born.<sup>39</sup>

In the Pentateuchal legislation certain developments can be traced in the way the feast was celebrated. For example, Dt 16,1-8, in harmony with its program of concentrating and restricting the public worship to the one sanctuary of Jerusalem, requires all lambs to be immolated in this one central sanctuary. Hence, the smearing of the blood on the doorposts could not be carried out and is omitted in the directions for the feast.

In the postexilic period all sacrifices tended to become, at least partially, expiatory sacrifices. A hint of this trend is found in Ez 45, 21-24. Nothing is said specifically of the lamb, but a number of "sin offerings" are prescribed for the seven days of the festival (see also Nm 28,16-18).

### *The Sinai Covenant*

One of the most significant reactions in modern biblical studies to the skepticism of the nineteenth and early twentieth century has been the recognition that Israel's religious and political history cannot be understood unless we posit some great event, like the Sinai Covenant, which impressed itself indelibly on the consciousness of the

people and gave them a sense of solidarity with Yahweh and also among the tribes themselves. Recently Professor Albright wrote:

One point which I emphasized briefly in 1940-46 was the pre-Mosaic origin of the Covenant between God and His people, as illustrated by the word *berît* (*berith*) and its uses. Here, however, I failed to recognize that the concept of "covenant" dominates the entire religious life of Israel to such an extent that W. Eichrodt's apparently extreme position is fully justified. We cannot understand Israelite religion, political organization, or the institution of the Prophets without recognizing the importance of the "Covenant." The word itself appears as a Semitic loan-word in the fifteenth-twelfth centuries in Syria and Egypt and clearly goes back to the earliest times in Israel.<sup>40</sup>

Our insistence upon the historicity of the Sinai Covenant does not, however, entail the strict historicity of all the incidents narrated in Ex cc. 19; 20; 24. The fact that these cc. embody several variant traditions show that not every detail of the great event was transmitted. Moreover, it is possible that ceremonies with which the covenant was commemorated, either regularly or exceptionally, were retrojected back to the original happening in the traditions of the Exodus. We know that something similar happened in the description of the portable tent-sanctuary described in Ex cc. 25-29: where tradition had retained no specific detail, it was assumed that the Solomonic Temple was simply a copy of the original tent, and so to the tent was ascribed, *positis ponendis*, what the priestly writers saw in the Temple.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, the ceremonies that commemorated the Sinai Covenant may have been recorded here as samples of what must have taken place on Sinai.

The incident is all the more important for us because Jesus refers explicitly to the Sinai Covenant when He inaugurated the New Covenant with His own Blood at the Last Supper.<sup>42</sup>

Exodus records two traditions of the ceremony that sealed the Sinai covenant, though they may be complementary rather than distinct.<sup>43</sup> According to the Elohist tradition, an altar is erected which symbolizes Yahweh, and twelve pillars are set up for the twelve tribes. The blood of the sacrificial victims is splashed on the altar and sprinkled on the people to signify the covenant-bond: Yahweh and His people have become blood-relatives, participating in a common life:

When Moses came to the people and related all the words and ordinances of Yahweh, they all answered with one voice, "We will do everything that Yahweh has told us." Moses then wrote down all the words of Yahweh, and, rising early the next day, he erected at the foot of the mountain an altar and twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. Then, having sent certain young men of the Israelites to offer holocausts and sacrifice young bulls as peace offerings to Yahweh, Moses took half of the blood and put it in large bowls; the other half he splashed on the altar. Taking the Book of the Covenant, he read it aloud to the people, who answered, "All that Yahweh has said, we will heed and do." Then he took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which Yahweh has made with you in accordance with all these words of his" (Ex 24,3-8).

The covenant must be inaugurated with sacrifices; a covenant was hardly thinkable without them.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, the fact that the sacrifices were partly peace offerings (communion sacrifices) shows that a common meal was part of the ceremony. Pedersen has described the importance of the meal for covenants:

If it is a question of a more important covenant, it is frequently inaugurated by a *common meal*. The meal is the daily nourishment of the community among those related. Food gives life and strengthens the soul; the common strengthening makes common life. To eat with enemies would be inconceivable. He who is to maintain a special strength within himself, must not weaken it by eating with others (1 Kings 13). The common meal presupposes psychic community and strengthens it still further. . . .

When the covenant is inaugurated by a meal, it is presupposed to have begun. The souls are united, but now the union is confirmed and approaches kinship in strength. When Jacob and Laban, the two kinsmen, had been divided, but once more came together and made a covenant, Jacob offered a large common sacrificial meal. The kinship was confirmed once more, and the divine powers of the family were acting in the strengthening of the community.<sup>45</sup>

The Yahwist tradition also describes the covenant ceremony as a communion banquet in Yahweh's presence. Moses and Aaron, Nadab, Abiu, and seventy elders were invited to ascend the mountain as representatives of the entire people.

. . . and they beheld the God of Israel. Under his feet there appeared to be sapphire tilework, as clear as the sky itself. Yet he

did not smite these chosen Israelites. After gazing on God, they could still eat and drink (Ex 24,10-11).

The description does not mean that the elders enjoyed the beatific vision. Not even St. Paul had this privilege before death (2 Cor 12,3-4). The story simply wishes to describe as graphically as possible the intimacy of the covenant people with Yahweh. Perhaps an allusion is intended to the designation "kingdom of priests" by which they are known as the covenant people (Ex 19,6). "To see the face of God" is often used in the OT of visiting Yahweh's sanctuary (Ex 23, 17; Dt 16,16; 31,11; Ps 42,3).

We may conclude that according to both traditions of the Sinai Covenant blood plays a key role. In the sacrificial meal it symbolizes and effects, quasi-sacramentally, union of Yahweh and His people. This role, as we have seen, is common to all sacrifices. The special ceremony of sprinkling the people with the blood of the sacrificial victims emphasizes further this vital union.

#### *The Great Day of Atonement*

No explicit mention is made of *Yom hakkippurim* in the older Codes (the Covenant Code, the Deuteronomic Code) or in Ez. Furthermore, there is no allusion to it in the events narrated of pre-exilic Israel's history. Nevertheless, all scholars admit that the rite of the scapegoat must have been very ancient. These conflicting data are satisfactorily accounted for in the reconstruction of Van Im-schoot.<sup>46</sup> Various ancient rites, which were practiced occasionally and separately, to make expiation for the people (Lv 16, 8-10.21-22) or for the sanctuary (16,16-18), gave birth after the Exile to a solemn day of expiation, which ultimately was fixed at the tenth day of the seventh month (Tisri = October-November). After 538 the chosen people became increasingly conscious of their sins; the prophets' warnings, so often ignored during their lifetime, were remembered during and after the great chastisement which they had predicted, the Exile. So prominent did the Day of Expiation become that the tract of the Mishnah which treats of it is entitled simply "The Day" (*Yoma*).

We have already quoted Lv 16,14-16.17b-19, which prescribe

specific expiatory rites with the blood of the bullock and goat, especially the unique entrance of the high priest into the most holy place with the expiatory blood. (Other prescriptions in Lv 23, 26-32; Nm 29,7-11) For the sake of completeness, we add here the ritual of the scapegoat, although no blood rite is connected with it:

. . . From the Israelite he [the high priest] shall receive two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a holocaust. . . taking the two male goats and setting them before Yahweh at the entrance of the Meeting Tent, he shall cast lots to determine which one of them is for Yahweh and which one for Azazel. The goat determined by lot for Yahweh Aaron shall bring in and offer up as a sin offering. But the goat determined by lot for Azazel he shall set alive before Yahweh, so that with it he may make atonement by sending it off to Azazel in the desert. . . .

When he has completed the atonement rite for the sanctuary, the Meeting Tent and the altar, Aaron shall bring forward the live goat. Laying both hands on its head, he shall confess over it all the sinful faults and transgressions of the Israelites, and so put them on the goat's head. He shall then have it led into the desert by an attendant. Since the goat is to carry off their iniquities to an isolated region, it must be sent away into the desert (Lv 16,5.7-10.20-22).

We mentioned, when discussing Lv 14,3-7, the parallel between the scapegoat ceremonies and the dismissal of the bird upon which the leper's disease has been placed. The sins of the people are sent back, as it were, to the demon, Azazel, who like other demons was thought to live in deserts and ruins (Is 34,11; 13,21; Lk 11,24). He was imagined to look like a satyr (Lv 17,7). The ritual was not, evidently, a sacrifice to Azazel. Whatever development in angelology and demonology this rite supposes, it evidently presupposes some connection between the demon and sin: somehow, sins come from the demon, because they are sent back to him.

### *The Blood of the Suffering Servant*

The NT shows eloquently how Our Lord "fulfilled" the blessings promised the chosen people through the mediation of blood. This fulfillment is not a mechanical juxtaposition of OT prediction and NT realization. Thus far, we have seen no actual prediction of the function of blood in the New Dispensation. But prediction is not the only, or

even the more important, aspect of prophecy. The entire OT is a preparation for and anticipation of the blessings of the NT. Whatever is best there, whatever most perfectly realizes man's yearnings for union with God, is taken up by Christ and "fulfilled," i.e., raised to its ultimate perfection. The OT taught the Israel according to the flesh the meaning of blood in acknowledging God's dominion, in expiating sin, and especially in realizing man's greatest desire, union with God. Jesus showed us that the reality behind this OT teaching far exceeds the power of man to imagine or hope for. His blood would be given to us to pay God infinite homage, infinite expiation, and realize the most intimate union possible for creature with his God.

The OT, moreover, gives us a transitional prophecy that serves as a link between the types and their realization in Christ, the well known Fourth Poem of the Servant of Yahweh poems of the unknown prophet of the Exile whom we call Deutero-Isaiah because his prophecies are joined to those of Isaiah. These poems have been during the past hundred years subjected to the most minute study by hundreds of scholars of every shade of religious conviction. Dozens of different opinions have been advanced as to the identity of the Servant. If any trend today can be discerned, it seems to be in the direction of a return to the traditional viewpoint, namely, that the Servant of Yahweh is regarded by the prophet as a great person still to come, who will save His people by teaching and by vicarious suffering.<sup>47</sup> Much is to be said for the view that the Servant is pictured as a corporate personality, i.e., not only a representative of His people, but summing up His people by identification with them. In II-Is the Servant is now Israel, now an individual, just as in Dn 7, the Son of Man is described as a heavenly person, yet identified with the "people of the saints." One thing is certain: Our Lord revealed to us in unmistakable terms that the Holy Spirit intended to speak of Him in both sets of prophecies, those of the Son of Man and of the Servant of Yahweh. The real miracle of the fulfillment of prophecy is the realization in Christ of the seemingly disparate characteristics attributed in the OT to the Anointed One, the Royal Messiah, to the Suffering Servant, and to the Heavenly Son of Man.

The fact that the Servant has suffered not for His own sins, but for the sins of His people, is insisted upon with almost monotonous repetition. The speakers, who in the dramatic structure of the poem,

have witnessed His sufferings, assumed that He was being punished for His own sins. This was the position of traditional OT thought; this was the position that Job's friends tried to make him accept, in defiance of Job's conviction of his innocence.

Yet it was our infirmities that he bore,  
 our sufferings that he endured,  
 While we thought of him as stricken,  
 as one smitten and afflicted by God.  
 But no! it was for *our* offenses that he was pierced,  
 for our sins that he was crushed;  
 The chastisement that made us whole was heaped upon him,  
 by his wounds we were healed.  
 We had all gone astray like sheep,  
 each one of us in a different direction.  
 But Yahweh laid upon him  
 the guilt of us all (Is 53,4-6).

The speakers, however, see not only the Servant's cross, they glimpse also His future glory; they predict not only His death, but also the consequence of that death, His resurrection. They anticipate St. Paul's: "He humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even to death on a cross. *Therefore* God also has exalted him . . ." (Phil 2,8-9).

If he gives his life (*napso*) as an offering for sin (*'asam*),  
 he will see his descendants in a long life,  
 and the will of Yahweh will succeed through him.  
 Because of his affliction  
 he will see the light in fullness of days.  
 At the cost of his suffering, my servant will make the many just,  
 and their guilt he will bear.  
 Therefore I will give him his portion among the great,  
 and he will divide the spoils with the mighty,  
 Because he bared his soul (*napso*) to death  
 and was counted among the wicked.  
 Yet he will take away the sins of the many,  
 and implore pardon for their offences (Is 53,10-12).

The Servant's death is an *'asam*, an expiatory sacrifice. We saw the meaning of this technical term when discussing sacrifices, in which blood played more of a part than in sacrifices in general. Moreover, the prophet states that the Servant "bared his *nepes* to death . . ." For a Hebrew, this baring of the soul could mean only the shedding of blood, which is or in which is the *nepes*. Mowinckel

translates, "because he poured out his life in death,"<sup>48</sup> and the American Translation<sup>49</sup> is even more explicit:

. . . he poured out his lifeblood to the utmost, . . .

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1. H. Wheeler Robinson, "Blood," *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* 2 (New York: Scribner's, 1910), 714-719. Further references in C. Spicq, *L'épître aux Hébreux* 2 (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1953), 272, footnote 1.
2. *Iliad* xiv, 518: *Psyche de kat' outamenen oteilen esout' epeigomene*, "and his soul sped hastening through the stricken wound"; xvii,86: *errei d' 'aima kat' outamenen oteilen . . .* "and the blood was flowing down from the stricken wound." (Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939; A.T. Murray, tr.)
3. *Aeneid* ix,349: "Purpuream vomit ille animam."
4. *Aen.* v,79: "Ad sanguinis imitationem in quo est sedes animae."
5. Tablet vi, lines 5-8; E.A. Speiser, tr., in J.B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton University Press, 1950), 68.
6. *Ibid.*, lines 13-14, 29-34. In another Old Babylonian text, the god Enki proposes the formation of man (called Lullu, translated "savage-man" above; Lullu corresponds to Adam):  
 Let him *be formed* out of clay, be *animated* with blood!" . . .  
 Let them slay one god,  
 And let the gods be purified in the *judgment*.  
 With his flesh and his blood  
 Let Ninhursag [the mother goddess] mix clay.  
 God and man  
 Shall [. . .] therein, . . . in the clay!  
 Unto eternity [. . .] we shall hear (lines 15, 20-27; *ANET* 99-100).  
 The Chaldean priest and chronicler, Berossos (3rd cent. B.C.), preserves a similar account, in which Bel makes man from clay mixed with the blood of a god that had been put to death. A gloss explains that man participates in the divine intelligence. Text and commentary in J. Plessis, "Babylone et la Bible," *VDBS* 1 (Paris: Letouzey, 1928) cols. 723-26.
7. CCD reads here, translating the Hebrew literally, "in our image and likeness. . . ." P. van Imschoot, *Théologie de l'Ancien Testament* (Tournai: Desclée, 1956) II, 7-8, regards the *be* as *beth essentiae*; this interpretation is all the more probable because the second preposition used, *ke*, indicates that the resemblance is only partial.
8. The verb translated "formed" is that ordinarily used of the potter fashioning his vessel, cf. Is 29,16; 41,25; Jer 18,2 ff.: Ps 2,9, etc.

9. Van Imschoot, *op. cit.*, 11-38; C. Tresmontant, *Essai sur la Pensée Hébraïque* ("Lectio Divina" 12 [Paris: du Cerf, 1953]), 87-115; H. Wheeler Robinson, "Hebrew Psychology," in A.S. Peake (ed.), *The People and the Book* (Oxford, 1925), 353-82.
10. Robinson, "Hebrew Psychology," 362. See also Th. C. Vriezen, *Theologie des alten Testaments in Grundzügen* (Wageningen: Veenman, 1956), 171.
11. A.J. Johnson, quoted by van Imschoot, *op. cit.*, 35.
12. *Op. cit.*, 26.
13. Robinson, "Blood," 715-16; J. Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture* (Copenhagen-London), I-II (1926) 483; III-IV (1940) 339.
14. W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (London: Black, 1894) 417; Adolphe Lods, *Israel from its Beginnings to the Middle of the Eighth Century*, tr. S. H. Hooke (New York: Knopf, 1953), 226.
15. E. Dhorme, *L'évolution religieuse d'Israël* (Brussels, 1937) 51; Robinson, "Blood," 717f; Robertson Smith, *op. cit.*, 272 ff.
16. Van Imschoot, *op. cit.*, II, 133.
17. There is no need here to belabor the fact that independent critics have almost completely repudiated the old position of a sacrificeless Mosaic religion. G. Nagel, "Sacrifices A.T.," in J.J. von Allmen (ed.), *Vocabulaire Biblique* (Neuchâtel and Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1954), 264, is willing to contradict Amos on this point: "Les prophètes nous disent bien que même au désert, les Israélites n'ont pas offert de sacrifices (Amos 5.25), mais les textes anciens nous montrent clairement que des sacrifices ont été offerts et que la perspective historique des prophètes sur ce point est fautive." The comment on Am 5,25, of E. Osty, *Amos, Osée (SBJ; Paris: du Cerf, 1952)*, 44, is more nuanced: "Amos, comme Osée (2,16-17; 9,10) et Jérémie (2,23), voit donc dans les temps du désert l'époque idéale des relations de Yahvé et de son peuple (mystique du désert). Les conditions de la vie nomade et la législation rudimentaire ne laissaient alors au culte qu'une faible importance (cf. Jer., 7,22). On pouvait donc plaire à Yahvé avec un culte pauvre, mais sincère."
18. *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (2d ed.; Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957), 267. See also H.H. Rowley, "The Meaning of Sacrifice in the Old Testament," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 33 (1950) 74-110.
19. M. Leenhardt, "L'offrande et le sacrifice," in M. Brillant — René Aigrain (eds.), *Histoire des Religions I* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1953), 104-5, emphasizes the mutuality of the giving, as deduced from the attitude of the Hebrideans: "Lui et son dieu sont tous deux donateurs, tous bénéficiaires, tous deux participants à la potentialité de la pauvre nourriture offerte." Robinson, "Blood," p. 719, challenges the gift theory of sacrifice.
20. Leenhardt, *op. cit.*, 105.

21. *Op. cit.*, I-II, 296.
22. H. Cazelles, *Le Lévitique (SBJ)* (Paris: du Cerf, 1951), 21.
23. A. Médebielle, *L'expiation dans l'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament* (Vol. 1; Rome: Institut Biblique Pontifical, 1923), 151.
24. Médebielle, *op. cit.*, 44.
25. *Op. cit.*, III-IV, 359; cf. Vriezen, *op. cit.*, 250.
26. Van Imschoot, *op. cit.*, II, 325, finds the following differences, after cautioning that the distinction is not carried through consistently: the sin offering is prescribed for faults committed through error against one of Yahweh's commandments. The guilt offering is prescribed for the expiation of an infraction of the rights of God, committed through error, in the matter of sacred images, like tithes. G. Nagel, *op. cit.*, 266, suggests this distinction, after admitting that it will not always hold: The guilt offering is made when an injustice has been committed against one's neighbor in his property; besides restitution, a sacrifice is offered. The sin offering, on the other hand, is commanded whenever one has violated one of God's commandments.
27. Paul Heinisch, *Theology of the Old Testament*, tr. William Heidt (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1950), 208: "However only the sins committed through error or weakness were effaced by atonement sacrifices, not sins committed 'with uplifted hand' (Nm 15,30-31), i.e., with full reflection and malice. This limitation was a warning not to overestimate the efficacy of expiatory sacrifice."
28. Médebielle, *op. cit.*, 141.
29. C.R. North, on Lv 8,22-32, in *The Abingdon Bible Commentary*, F.C. Eiselen *et alii* (eds.) (New York: Abingdon Press, 1929), p. 284: "The point is not so much that ears, hands, and feet are especially consecrated, as that the whole body is consecrated by the application of the blood to these extremities." S.C. Gayford, however, *in loco*, in C. Gore, ed., *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), p. 108: "The ear to listen, the hand and foot to carry out the command (cf. 14,14): these mark the priest at the servant of God." Similarly A. Clamer, *Lévitique* (La Sainte Bible 2; Paris: Letouzey, 1946), 79-80.
30. *Op. cit.*, 71.
31. *The Meaning of the Word "Blood" in Scripture* (The Tyndale New Testament Lecture, 1947; London: Tyndale Press, 1948), 6-7.
32. *The Epistles of St. John* (Cambridge and London: Macmillan, 1886), 35.
33. *Loc. cit.*, 116.
34. *Jesus and His Sacrifice* (London: Macmillan, 1951), 54-55.
35. Stibbs, *op. cit.*, 9-15; F.J. Taylor, "Blood," in Alan Richardson, ed., *A Theological Word Book of the Bible* (New York: Macmillan, 1956), 33-34; L. Morris, "The Biblical Use of the Term 'Blood,'" *JTS* 3 (1952), 216-27.
36. "The Biblical Use of the Term 'Blood,'" *JTS* 4 (1953), p. 207.
37. *Op. cit.*, 133-34.

38. *Op. cit.*, III-IV, 398-99.
39. *Ibid.*, 401-2. Vriezen, *op. cit.*, 243, calls attention to the fact that this is the only known example of a "cult-drama" in Israel.
40. *Op. cit.*, 16. See also Walther Eichrodt, *Theologie des alten Testaments I* (ed. 2; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1939), 6-11; G. Ernest Wright, *Biblical Archaeology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957), p. 100: "It seems highly probable . . . that Israelite faith was given a framework which was borrowed from international treaties of the 2nd millennium B.C. By its means the people were enabled to interpret their life in terms of loyalty and devotion to the Lord who had done so much for them and who had bound them to himself by solemn pact, and also to view sin as disloyalty and rebellion." John L. McKenzie, *The Two-Edged Sword* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1956), p. 117: "The covenant rests on the belief that the Hebrews at Sinai perceived the present reality of God in a manner which surpasses the normal capacity of man; that God broke through the veil which hides Him from view and was perceived, however briefly and dimly, for what He is. The covenant was not a theological conclusion, but an experience which rent the soul and uprooted human wisdom as the storm rends rocks and uproots trees."
41. B. Couroyer, *L'Exode* (SBJ; Paris: du Cerf, 1952), p. 117.
42. See "The Blood of the Covenant," *American Ecclesiastical Review* 136 (March, 1957), 167-74.
43. Marcel Haelvoet, "La Théophanie du Sinai: analyse littéraire des récits d'Ex., xix-xxiv," *ETL* 29 (1953), 374-97, distinguishes five strata in the accounts, but his analysis does not alter the basic supposition of a twofold tradition.
44. Pedersen, *op. cit.*, III-IV, 334.
45. *Op. cit.*, I-II, 305; Robertson Smith, *op. cit.*, 269-75.
46. *Op. cit.*, II, 192.
47. See the bibliography in V. de Leeuw, "Le Serviteur de Jahvé: Figure Royale ou Prophétique?" in *L'Attente du Messie* (Recherches Bibliques; Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1954), 51-56; J. Lindhagen, "The Servant of Yahweh," *ExpT* 67 (1956) 279-83; 300-2.
48. Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, G.W. Anderson, tr. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1956), 199.
49. J.M. Powis Smith — Edgar J. Goodspeed, eds., *The Complete Bible: An American Translation* (University of Chicago, 1939), 677.

## THE PRECIOUS BLOOD AND SAINT JOHN

Because of St. John's attraction for the two concepts, life and light, they are said to summarize his thoughts on Christ and the Christian life. They greet the reader repeatedly with a kind of solemn monotony. In one bold stroke the evangelist combines them when he declares enthusiastically in the prologue to his gospel that in Christ "was life and the life was the light of men" (Jn 1,4). Christ is life and light. But the life and the light that belong to Christ He shares with Christians. The life of God that is His He communicates through grace and glory, and the light of God that is in Christ He diffuses through faith and vision.<sup>1</sup>

This traditional summary of John's theological presentation of Christianity under the concepts of life and light may be retained in a study of the Precious Blood in Johannine literature. For the Blood of Christ is a frequent symbol with John; its shedding is a symbol of the redeeming death of Christ, the means whereby the life and the light that are in Christ come to the Christian. That the Blood of Christ was a symbol dear to this apostle's heart may be gauged from the fact that it has found a place in three of his writings: his gospel, his first epistle, and the Apocalypse. Second Jn and 3 Jn are so brief and directed to take care of a particular problem; the failure to mention Christ's Blood in these epistles does not weaken the assertion that John cherished the symbol of the Precious Blood to such an extent that it habitually finds a place in his theological reflections on the Christian life.

### *The Blood from the Pierced Side*

It is not surprising that the Blood of Christ should have made such a marked impression on this sole apostolic witness of the crucifixion. John tells us how in that hour of Christ's dereliction he stood beneath the cross to see water and Blood flow from the side of the Savior. Apparently it is this Blood flowing from the pierced side of Christ which fastened itself in his memory more than any other aspect of Christ's sufferings. Among the evangelists he alone records

the fact as he tells us that when Jesus was already dead “one of the soldiers opened his side with a lance, and immediately there came out blood and water” (Jn 19,34). For John this was an event of capital importance as may be surmised from the fact that he takes time out to verify his statement with these solemn words: “And he who saw it has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knows that he tells the truth, that you may believe” (Jn 19,35). Whoever this witness is (John himself probably, but according to others,<sup>2</sup> God or Christ), it is evident that the evangelist wishes to announce that Blood and water really did flow from the side of Christ. The mode of expression which is used to describe the event permits us to affirm that water and Blood flowed in such a way that both could be clearly seen. Whether the Blood flowed first and then the water, or both water and Blood at the same time, whether the Blood and water flowed sparingly as in drops or abundantly as in a stream, are questions which cannot be given a precise answer on the basis of the gospel-description of the phenomenon.<sup>3</sup> What we are told with certainty, and that which John attests solemnly, is that both water and Blood were clearly seen coming forth from the side of the Savior.

The picture itself is not hard to visualize. The only problem associated with the fact is whether this flow of Blood and water was miraculous or not. Already Origen noted how extraordinary it was for Blood and water to flow from the side of a corpse and believed the phenomenon to be a miracle.<sup>4</sup> There are still those who show themselves partisan to this view and look to John’s solemn affirmation of the event to confirm its extraordinary, miraculous character.<sup>5</sup> It may be admitted readily that the solemn attestation attaches an importance to the flow of Blood and water. Whether we should seek that importance along physical or spiritual lines is not clear. The evangelist seems rather to think of a spiritual significance, for he adds immediately that two OT prophecies found their fulfillment in the event. Commentators are wont to remark these days, on the basis of the professional information from doctors, that the flow of blood and water from the body of a corpse is not physically impossible.<sup>6</sup>

Whatever the correct explanation of the physiological process at work be, miraculous or natural, it is certain that John was not taken up with this aspect of the flow of the Blood and water. He sees in the incident a deeper, more mysterious meaning. Two OT

prophecies are said to have been fulfilled. The first refers to the Paschal Lamb, and the evangelist observes that the soldiers refused to break the legs of Christ as in the case of the two who were crucified with Him, this in fulfillment of the legal prescription concerning the Lamb of the Passover sacrifice (Jn 19,36). This is John's way of telling us that the shedding of Christ's Blood was a sacrificial outpouring of His Blood. Moreover, glorification comes to Christ by reason of the flow of Blood and water because, according to the words of Zachary (Za 12,10): "They shall look upon him whom they have pierced" (Jn 19,37).<sup>7</sup>

Attaching a spiritual significance to an historical event in the life of Christ is not an uncommon procedure with John.<sup>8</sup> He is an historian of the life of Christ of quite a different mold than Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It is characteristically Johannine to record facts and at the same time to attach a deeper significance to those facts. This favorite method is at work here too in interpreting the significance of the Blood and water from the pierced side. The phenomenon symbolizes the completion of Christ's sacrifice and the triumph which came to Christ by reason of that sacrifice. We might let the matter rest here were it not for an array of tradition that can hardly be ignored in delineating the full spiritual significance of this incident of Christ's Passion to which the evangelist attaches such importance. Generally tradition is interested in defining more exactly the specific import of the water as well as the specific import of the Blood. It should be noted first of all that this desire to delineate more exactly is not opposed to John's manner of thinking. It is recognized that he leaves his symbols or representations open;<sup>9</sup> there is something vague and mobile about them because he does not always explain them fully. If we renounce our cherished mode of thinking, by which a symbol must be closed, representing but one thing, in favor of John's manner of thinking, by which a symbol can stand for a complex totality of things, we will be able to appreciate the patristic commentary on the event of the Passion immediately under consideration.

In reviewing the tradition, associated with the pierced side of Christ, the most obvious conclusion that forces itself upon us is that the Fathers in one accord were convinced that some proper significance belonged to the water as well as to the Blood. It is this common conviction which may be classified as the common denominator

of quite divergent views. The fluid commentary of the Fathers may be brought out through a survey of the pertinent patristic literature. Their interpretations have been reduced to three:<sup>10</sup> the water and Blood signify the water of baptism and the redeeming Blood of Christ (Ambrose); the water and the Blood stand for two baptisms, the sacrament and the martyrdom (Tertullian, Cyril of Jerusalem, Jerome, Rufinus); the water and the Blood symbolize two of the sacraments, baptism and the Eucharist, and ultimately the Church, which was born from the side of the Savior (John Chrysostom, Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, John Damascene). St. Thomas embraced this last view and his words are quoted favorably by Pius XII in his *Haurietis Aquas* when he writes: "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'" (*Haurietis Aquas*, n. 90). It must be admitted that of the patristic interpretations modern exegetes are more partial to the Baptism-Eucharist significance of the water and the Blood than any other.

Recent detailed study on the true reading of Jn 7,37-38, however, has shed new light on the problem. Jn 7,1-52 records Jesus' visit to Jerusalem for the feast of Tabernacles and the discourse He gave while there on that occasion. The liturgy of the feast included a libation of water to commemorate the miraculous flow of water from the rock which Moses struck in the desert. That ceremony may very well have evoked from Christ the cry: "If anyone thirst, let him come to me and let him drink whoever believes in me. As the Scripture says, 'From within him there shall flow rivers of living water'" (Jn 7,37-38). The punctuation of Christ's words that is followed here is really the earliest known punctuation and it would have the living waters flow from the side of Christ rather than from the side of the believer as we have been accustomed to read (cf. e.g., the Confraternity translation).<sup>11</sup> The context favors the proposed reading as the very next sentence speaks of believers receiving the Spirit; they are not presented as the source of the Spirit. Note that Christ says that it is according to the Scriptures that water will flow from His

side. The promise attaches itself to those many passages of the OT prophetic literature where flowing water plays a prominent role in the description of the messianic age (cf. Is 12,3; 44,3; Ez 36,25; 47,1-12; Jl 3,18; Za 13,1; 14,8). The water for John is a symbol of the Spirit even as it was for the Jews generally;<sup>12</sup> in this very place he adds, "He (Christ) said this, however, of the Spirit whom they who believed in him were to receive" (Jn 7,39).

The question may now be asked whether the water flowing from the pierced side of the Savior is not the fountain of living water which Christ said would flow from His side. Correlating Jn 7,37-39 with Jn 19,34 brings the plausible conclusion that it is.<sup>13</sup> As such it is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. What is the relation of the Blood to the water? The Blood is the means whereby the Spirit is given, poured out in the soul of the believer. Thus the Blood poured out in death releases life inasmuch as it is the source of life for the redeemed. It is properly a symbol of Christ's redemptive death as will be shown when we come to speak of the washing in the Blood and redemption through the Blood of Christ.

To have specified the water and the Blood which came forth from the side of the crucified Christ as symbolizing the Holy Spirit and the redeeming Blood respectively is probably to have captured John's thought. If elsewhere in his writings water and Blood have this significance, the identifications which have been made recommend themselves as following genuine Johannine thinking. Christ, already symbolized in Jn by the Temple, the Bronze Serpent, the Manna, appears now also as the Spiritual Rock from which Christians drink the profusion of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 10,4). The redeeming Blood of Christ is the effective means by which the Spirit of Christ is released for participation. As the staff of Moses brought forth water from the rock to sustain the life of the people of God, so also the Blood of the Savior brings forth the life-giving and life-sustaining water, the Holy Spirit who is the source of life and light. Everything that the Spirit brings, the Church, the sacraments, in short, all graces, have their beginning in the sacrificial flow of Blood from Christ's side. All those gifts which the Fathers saw in one way or another in the water and the Blood — the Church, Baptism, the Eucharist, martyrdom — may be retained as having a place and worthy of special mention when commenting on the pierced side of the Savior. Later in this paper, when treating the Blood of the

Eucharist, an attempt will be made to reconcile the view that the Blood and water signify the Eucharist and Baptism with what has been proposed.

There is no one who can fail to see how abundantly meaningful the Blood of Christ becomes in the interpretation which finds the water a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The Blood of the God-man is envisioned as opening a fountain of graces. It is true that the same truth is taught elsewhere in the Bible. That the redeeming Blood is the source of all graces is excellently demonstrated by Paul's method also. He chooses to enumerate the graces — redemption, justification, salvation, predestination — all of which are through the mediation of Christ's Blood. Either way, that of John or Paul, leads to the same conclusion. We must admit, however, that Jn 19,34 gives us a concrete picture to help us understand and retain the basic reason for associating every grace with the shedding of the Precious Blood. All the graces which Paul ascribes to the Blood of Christ, John epitomizes in the Holy Spirit under the symbol of water. To credit the profusion of the Spirit of Christ into the heart of the believer to the redeeming Blood is to insist that the beginning and the perseverance in the Christian life belong to this Blood. To attach the pouring out of the Spirit to the Blood of Christ is to say that this Blood brings all graces, for universally they come through the Spirit. The significance of the Blood takes on vast proportions. These proportions are wonderfully summarized by Pius XII in his *Mystici Corporis* when he includes the graces of teaching, governing, and sanctifying which belong to the Church in the fountain of divine gifts. He writes:

Just as at the first moment of the Incarnation the Son of the Eternal Father adorned with the fulness 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 in 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 (*Mystici Corporis*, n. 39).

To an already complex discussion on the water and the Blood from the pierced side of Christ may be added a final consideration for the clarification and at the same time confirmation of the thoughts already suggested. Some interpreters hold a view which is most attractive, namely, that the Blood and the water coming from Christ's side seal the New Covenant.<sup>14</sup> Ex 24,3-8 relates how the Old Covenant was sealed with the sprinkling of blood, but makes no mention of water. It is interesting, however, that the author of Heb (9,19), referring to the same event, speaks of Moses using water as well as Blood for the sprinkling of the people and the altar. Do the Blood and water from the side of Christ seal the New Covenant? Possibly that is their meaning. What has been proposed above fits in very well with this viewpoint. It is the Holy Spirit through the Blood of Christ who effects the union between God and man signified in the sprinkling of the blood of the covenant.

We turn now to that perplexing passage of 1 Jn, 5,5-10. It is considered here because it is hoped that the totality of concepts which have been associated with the pierced side of Christ will help to clarify these difficult words of John. In a context on the necessity of faith in Christ John writes:

Who is there that overcomes the world if not he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he who came in water and in blood, Jesus Christ; not in water only, but in the water and in the blood. And it is the Spirit that bears witness that Christ is the truth. For there are three that bear witness [in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth]: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three are one. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God which is greater, that he has borne witness concerning his Son. He who believes in the Son of God has the testimony of God in himself. He who does not believe the Son, makes him a liar; because he does not believe the witness that God has borne concerning his Son.

It should be pointed out first of all that we have in this text the

famous Johannine Comma, the words enclosed in the brackets above. It is quite certain that these words are a gloss.<sup>15</sup> Precise as the words are, they may be dismissed in determining what John wanted to say in this pericope, simply because they are not John's.

Jesus is said to come in water and Blood. And John is rather insistent about the Blood as he adds that it was not in water only but in the Blood also. It is believed by some<sup>16</sup> that John is attacking the error of Cerinthus who is claimed to have taught that the Son of God was joined to the man, Christ, at the time of His baptism in the Jordan and departed from Him on the occasion of His death. They see in the "water and the Blood" a reference to two events in our Lord's life, His baptism and death. Some commentators<sup>17</sup> have recourse to the voice from heaven at the baptism of Jesus: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mt 3,17) and to the testimony of the centurion on the occasion of Christ's death: "Truly he was the Son of God" (Mt 27,54). Both testimonies are understood as witnessing the divinity of Christ. This explanation is at least questionable because it has been shown with a certain amount of plausibility that the error of Cerinthus was not what this interpretation affirms it to have been.<sup>18</sup> Its point of departure is, therefore, somewhat shaky. Surely, John is combating false teachers in his first epistle, but the emphatic repetition of the word, blood (cf. 1 Jn 5,6), leaves us with the impression that he is just as much concerned with the humanity of Christ as with the divinity.

Along similar lines others<sup>19</sup> find the water and the Blood to be a reference to the public ministry of Christ, extending from His baptism to His death. Here again the water and the Blood stand for two historical events of Christ's life, His baptism and death. The formula, "in water and Blood," however, bears testimony in this case to the life which Christ lived in the service of men, which characterized His whole public ministry, and was especially apparent when He offered the supreme sacrifice on the Cross. It is hard to dismiss this interpretation as lacking all probability. It takes into consideration the connotation of the word, *came* (cf. 1 Jn 5,6). This word is best understood in relation to another, namely, *send*, which is used to refer to Christ when it is stated that He was sent by the Father (cf. Jn 3,17). The *sending* by the Father implies a mission which the Father gives to the Son. If now, Christ is said to come,

obviously it is because He has been sent by the Father. And who can deny that it was Christ's mission to live a life in the service of men as this view would express it? But it may be asked why this life in the service of men should be restricted to the public ministry. At any rate there is an alternative explanation that deserves a hearing.

In another place John has mentioned water and Blood in one breath, that is, in the gospel-narrative of Christ's death (Jn 19,34) which has already been considered. If he says now that Jesus came in water and Blood, this particular combination of words quite spontaneously makes us think of the pierced side of Christ.<sup>20</sup> Jesus comes because He has been sent by the Father to shed His Blood and thereby bring to the world the abundant gifts of the Spirit. The teaching here would correspond to that which has been suggested for the gospel-text. The observation is in place that the narrative on the piercing of Christ's side does say that the flow of Blood and water took place so that the Christian might believe (Jn 19,36). In the epistle we find ourselves once more in a context in which faith, the necessity of faith in Christ in this instance, is the apostle's chief preoccupation. If the water and the Blood from Christ's side have the value of testimony as John affirms in the gospel, one could hardly be more faithful to his thought than by asserting that he is proclaiming a second time in the epistle the extraordinary significance of the Blood and the water from the heart of the Savior. And again he affirms that the water and the Blood have the value of testimony to the believer. Correlating 1 Jn 5,5-10 with Jn 19,34-36 leaves us with the conclusion that the Blood in which Christ came is the sacrificial Blood of the Cross and the water in which He came is the Holy Spirit who is communicated to Christians in virtue of the shedding of the Blood. Through this Spirit Christians find it possible to believe in the Son of God. Thus John adds: "And it is the Spirit that bears witness that Christ is the truth" (1 Jn 5,6). The Spirit bears witness through the preaching of the apostles, but also and especially, as John himself would say it, through the anointing<sup>21</sup> of Christians by which the Spirit of Christ dwells in them and teaches them all things (cf. 1 Jn 2, 20.27).

The water and the Blood join with the Spirit to form a triple testimony in favor of Christ. They conspire together as witnesses to an identical truth, for the testimony of the three is one. It is easy to discern the reason for invoking the three witnesses; according to

the Mosaic Law (Dt 19,15) two or three witnesses were required for satisfactory evidence. But the truth which they accredit by their testimony is not so readily discernible. Is it the humanity of Christ or His divinity? It is around either of these alternatives that exegetes generally center their remarks, some favoring the divinity and some the humanity.<sup>22</sup> But must it be either of these? John himself says very explicitly in conclusion: "And this is the testimony, that God has given us eternal life; and this life is in His Son (1 Jn 5,11). There is reference to the work of redemption, effected by the God-man. And it is to this that the water, Blood, and the Spirit primarily bear witness. The Blood has a more immediate bearing on the humanity of Christ insofar as blood indicates human nature. The water, as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, may be viewed as stressing the divinity of Christ inasmuch as it presents Christ as the source of divine life. But it is not only the mystery of the Incarnation which John wants to define as the object of Christian faith. It is also, and especially, the great work of redemption, which John delimits as the object of that faith. This he does through the formula, "in water and Blood." If the water and the Blood are intended to recall the pierced side of the crucified Christ as has been proposed, the witness they bear must be to the redemptive death of Christ. Moreover, John wishes to inform his readers how they might gain the victory over the world (1 Jn 5,5). Hence he turns to the victory already won by Christ through the shedding of His Blood to tell Christians that they can win their victory by attaching themselves through faith to the victory of Christ.

Perhaps thinking along these lines will help to crystallize John's thought in this enigmatic passage. The only objection coming to mind immediately is that apparently the threefold witness is no longer present. If water is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, how is it distinct from the same Spirit who is mentioned by name as one of the witnesses? The objection might be answered by recalling that the Blood is a witness to the work of redemption because it is the means to the Spirit of Christ. The water, that is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is a witness to the work of redemption because the Spirit's presence and possession is the chief characteristic of the New Covenant which the shedding of Christ's Blood inaugurated. The Spirit is a witness to the work of redemption through His activity in the Church, especially through the sanctification which He brings to

believers. The *water*, therefore, represents the Holy Spirit as given, as capable of being received and possessed, whereas the *Spirit* represents the Holy Spirit as operative, manifesting His presence in the Church through His works.<sup>23</sup> Hence the three — Blood, water, Spirit — concur in their testimony because they are inseparable. The Blood is the means to the water, that is, causes the fountain of graces of the Holy Spirit to flow, and once the fountain has been opened, the Holy Spirit through His activity leads the Christian to drink. Or another way to express John's thought would be this: Blood attests the reality of Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of the world, water the fecundity of that sacrifice, and the Spirit the application of that sacrifice to the souls of men.

### *Symbol of Redemption*

The Blood of Christ has been named as the symbol of His redeeming death. That it is such may be judged from two other Johannine formulas: washing in Blood and redeeming with Blood. In one word, Blood, John summarizes the whole chain of events of Christ's Passion and Death, which together with the Resurrection are the cause of redemption. This manner of speech designates the Blood as the key concept of John's theological reflections on Christ's death for the salvation of the world. That the work of redemption had two phases cannot be denied. There is what might be called a suffering phase (Passion and Death) and a glorifying phase (Resurrection). Together they are the cause of redemption (cf. Rom 4,25). The word, Blood, for John embraces the whole series of redeeming acts of Christ, more immediately those which make up the suffering phase of the work of redemption, but also mediately those which constitute the glorifying phase. When one thing stands for something else, it has become a symbol. In this case the Blood can be said to be a symbol of the redeeming acts of Christ, or to single out the supreme act, His death.

Undoubtedly the best way to appreciate what meaning the phrases, washing in Blood and redeeming with Blood, have for John, is to understand his theology of redemption. It is well known that redemption has two elements: a negative one, the forgiveness of sins, and a positive one, the conferring of a new life. John is more devoted to the positive aspect. His gospel presents Christ as the fullness of

life and light, and of that "fullness we have all received" (Jn 1,16). The whole gospel is an heroic effort to show how this life and light are shared by those who believe in Christ. Only once in the entire narrative does John mention the forgiveness of sins, and that when quoting the Baptist who pointed out Christ as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (Jn 1,29). "John does not deny what Paul asserts so emphatically, but he places the accent differently, and this change of accent is indicative of his personal insight . . . In the Pauline letters the Christian life is a difficult mastering of sin and the flesh, a never-ending striving after perfection, a continual battle; the image of the Christian soldier is very dear to Paul. In John everything appears more serene; he maintains a peaceful superiority in inviolable possession. The believer enjoys even now eternal life . . ." <sup>24</sup> In appraising, therefore, the meaning of John's "washing in blood" and "redeeming with blood" we need not restrict ourselves to an examination of those texts in which these formulas immediately occur. They become so much more meaningful in the totality of Johannine theology.

An investigation of the particular passages in which these expressions appear reveals at once that John knows also of the negative side of redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Both words, washing<sup>25</sup> and redeeming,<sup>26</sup> look more directly to this effect, for washing is a cleansing, a purifying from sin, and redeeming is a liberation, a deliverance from sin. But it should be noted when reading and studying the texts that in every instance John leads us back to the positive element of redemption by attributing to the Blood something positive; some aspect of the life which the Christian has from Christ is explicitly mentioned. This is most noticeable in the victory and triumph associated with the washing in the Blood of Christ and also in the redeeming with Blood for God.

It has been suggested<sup>27</sup> that the flow of Blood and water from the side of Christ evoked John's statements in which he grants a cleansing power to the Blood of the Savior. As washing is ordinarily done with water, and as water flowed with the Blood when Christ's side was pierced, John could attribute the qualities of water to the Blood. The fact that they are inseparable makes the suggestion plausible. Whatever is responsible for the imagery, it is surely colorful and paradoxical: colorful because it portrays so picturesquely the purifying character of the Blood, paradoxical because usually men

look upon blood as something that soils or stains, not that which cleanses. What better way could there be to tell the Christian about the efficacy of Christ's Blood than to say that the Christian is continually immersed in that Blood to receive and to sustain the life of the Spirit.

On several occasions John uses this imagery of washing in blood or its equivalent. 1 Jn 1, 7 tells us that the "blood of Jesus Christ . . . cleanses us from all sin." Ap 1, 5-6 pays honor "to him who has loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood."<sup>28</sup> To these passages may be added that of Ap 7,14 which sings of those "who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."<sup>29</sup> There is no need of belaboring this imagery of the washing in the Blood of Christ. It is so obvious. Yet the words of Pius XII in his *Mediator Dei* are helpful because they present a concrete picture; he states: "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" (*Mediator Dei*, n. 77).

It is necessary to point out that John thought of many washings in the Blood of Christ. It is quite natural for us to think first of all of baptism, that bath of regeneration, by which sin is remitted. John, however, had more in mind. He would have his readers know that washing in the Blood of the Redeemer is an habitual affair. 1 Jn 1,5-10 definitely speaks of personal sins which are committed frequently. For example, John says: ". . . if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we acknowledge our sins, he (Christ) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all iniquity. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." First justification is outside the perspective here; John envisions a purification which comes to souls, who walk in the light but do not avoid all sin.<sup>30</sup> And it is in this context that we read: "the blood of Jesus Christ . . . cleanses us from all sin" (1 Jn 1,7).

A second observation that might be made about the texts which speak of washing or cleansing in the Blood of the Savior is that the note of triumph over enemies is associated with them. This is especially true of that expression, "make white," in the Blood be-

cause white is the color of victory and this victory is said to be possible through the Blood of the Lamb (Ap 10,12). If we speak of a victory associated with the Precious Blood we think first of all of that final victory over the enemy, which consists in the possession of eternal life. But there is also the daily victory over the enemies of salvation, which consists in sustaining the life of grace and growth in it. Both the final victory (cf. Ap 7,14) and the daily victory (cf. 1 Jn 1,7; Ap 1,5-6) have their origin in the Blood of Christ.

The Precious Blood, then, in which the Christian habitually bathes, purifies the soul, cleanses it from sin. The washing in the Blood not only brings supernatural life to the soul for the first time, but it also restores that life if lost and removes all those obstacles which stand in the way of the growth of that life. Once more we see how the Precious Blood is a means to life insofar as the soul is completely purified through it at every turn. It confers life not only on the individual, but it is likewise the source of that community of life between Christ and His members. The passages which contain the imagery of washing and cleansing in blood announce a "fellowship with one another" (1 Jn 1,7) and "the kingdom and priests to God" (Ap 1,6) through the Blood of Christ.

In a canticle which John puts on the lips of the saints, he has them sing of their redemption for God with the Blood of the Lamb (Ap 5,9). This is the only place where John uses the expression, "redeemed." The saints sing to Christ: "For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us for God with thy blood" (Ap 5,9). The fundamental meaning of redemption is deliverance, liberation.<sup>31</sup> The redemption which is ascribed to Christ is a liberation from sin. To get the full import of John's concept of redemption, and hence the full significance of the symbol of redemption, the Blood of Christ, it is necessary to review John's teaching on sin. For him sin means slavery to Satan: "Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin. But the slave does not abide in the house forever. If therefore the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" (Jn 8,34-36). What slavery to Satan implies may be ascertained from statements in which sin is defined as a lack of knowledge of God (Jn 8,55; 16,1) and a lack of love of God (Jn 5,32). If then the Blood of Christ redeems us, it restores us to a life for God; there is a transition from a life of slavery to Satan to a life of freedom for God. The life of freedom makes it possible once more to know God and to love God to whom man rightfully belongs. But

it is precisely knowledge of God through supernatural faith and the love of God in supernatural charity which bind the Christian to Christ in the unity of the Mystical Body,<sup>32</sup> and this in virtue of the Blood of Christ. That is why John, commenting on Caiphas' remark relative to the expediency of Christ's death for the nation, could add that the high priest had really prophesied the gathering into one of all the children of God through the Redeemer's death (Jn 11,52).

At other times John describes the condition of sin under the image of darkness, which is the symbol of the powers of evil, and mankind under the sway of evil (cf. Jn 1,5; 3,19-20; 8,12-13). To be redeemed means to be delivered from this state of darkness to that of light, the symbol of faith, charity and moral goodness generally. Thus the Blood of Christ attaches itself to that second dominant theme of John's writings, namely, light. If light symbolizes faith, charity, and moral goodness in its totality, and if man receives this light through the Redeemer's Blood, we may conclude that this Blood pervades or embraces the whole moral life of the Christian. As the entire moral life in John's mind is epitomized in the one law of fraternal charity (cf. Jn 13,34; 15,12.17; 1 Jn 3,16.23; 4,19-20), it is fitting to add that the togetherness in love by which John defines the moral life has its most powerful motivation in the redeeming Blood. For "greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15,13).

#### *The Blood of the Eucharist*

John's Christianity has its roots in the sacramental system.<sup>33</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that he records at length Christ's discourse on the promise of the Eucharist (Jn 6,22-59). If in his account of the Last Supper he omits the institution of the Eucharist, this omission is in keeping with the general tendency of his gospel to complete the synoptics rather than repeat them. Thus he reports the famous discourse at Capharnaum, which followed the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves. We have here again a fine example of that spiritualization of history to which we have already referred. The incident of the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes is given a deeper significance in the light of the Eucharist in which the miracle of the multiplication, despite its grandeur, is seen as a shadow. This sermon of Christ, promising the Eucharist, presents

the Precious Blood so clearly as the instrument of life. It is true that the Blood of Christ stands side by side with the Flesh of Christ, and this serves to stress the truly human character of that Blood for it is inseparably bound to the body. It is true too that the sermon speaks more often of the bread, the sign of the body of Christ, as being the source of life. This is readily appreciated in view of the request of the crowd that Christ reproduce the miracle of the manna which had fallen in the desert (Jn 6,31). As this had been the point of departure, it is natural to expect Christ's words to center around the idea of bread. But the element of drink is not forgotten entirely. Food and drink are found together in the words: "He who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst" (Jn 6,35). That which satisfies the hunger and thirst of him who comes to Christ is the Body and the Blood of Christ. The discourse on the promise of the Eucharist concluded with these memorable words: "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has life everlasting and I will raise him up on 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" (Jn 6,54-57). The preciseness of this statement, relative to the Eucharist as food and drink, as nourishment for the life which Christ gives, explains why every treatise of this sacrament treasures and clings to these words. The emphatic declaration is clearly stated and hardly needs explanation. Christ's Body is food from heaven and His Blood is drink from heaven. Perhaps, however, a word is in order concerning the total effect which is granted to the Eucharist in the text just cited. The Blood of Christ together with His Body is granted the sacramental efficacy of leading the believer to the glorification of his body as well as his soul. Christ says definitely that one who eats His Body and drinks His Blood He will raise up on the last day. Here we have the Blood of Christ in its fullest signification, fullness of life for eternity with God, and this fullness of life both for the body and the soul.

It should be noted also that the Savior's Blood as drink with His Body as food establishes an intimacy with the partaker which consists in union. "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood, abides in me and I in him" (Jn 6,57). Words like these serve to emphasize the grandeur of the supernatural life which the sacramental Body and

Blood confer. It is not only a higher life in God; it is a kind of life which consists in an intimacy of union.

In treating the Eucharist in John's writings it is necessary to return once more to the water and the Blood which flowed from Christ's side. One can hardly dismiss arbitrarily the view to which reference has already been made, namely, that the Blood and the water signify the Eucharist and Baptism respectively. Inasmuch as this interpretation has been enshrined in the tradition of the Church, the desire to reconcile it with the view proposed previously in this paper should be readily appreciated. Some way at least of connecting or relating the diverse elements in tradition is sought.

The pre-eminent role of the Eucharist in Thomistic thought may be used as a starting point; from it we may work backward to John to inquire whether or not his writings can be said to contain in germ later theological elaboration. It is well known that the Eucharist is central to the sacramental system as explained by St. Thomas. This sacrament is so basic to his thought that there are theologians who affirm that it is true Thomistic thought to say that the Eucharistic sacrifice is the source of all the sacraments as well as their end.<sup>34</sup> Not only are the sacraments ordained to the Eucharist but the efficacy that is theirs in virtue of the Blood of the Cross is applied by reason of the Blood of the Eucharist. And not only the sacraments, but also the sacramentals, the powers, ministries, in short, every grace in the Church, have their origin and end in the Eucharistic sacrifice. As St. Thomas himself puts it: "The common spiritual good of the whole Church is contained in substance in the sacrament of the Eucharist."<sup>35</sup> Through it all the graces of redemption are imparted to the believer. The fruit of the Blood of Calvary is objective redemption; in virtue of that Blood all graces come to man. The fruit of the Blood of the Eucharist is subjective redemption; in virtue of this Blood all the graces won by the Cross are applied to man.

With this theological backdrop there is a possibility of understanding how the Eucharist-Baptism signification for the water and Blood from Christ's side took such firm hold in tradition. The Blood of the Cross cannot be separated from the Blood of the Eucharist. The sacramental sacrifice prolongs the sacrifice of Calvary. As the Blood of the Cross was the means to the Holy Spirit, the source of all graces, so also the Blood of the Eucharist is the means whereby all graces are applied to man. Included is the grace of baptism, the

beginning of the Christian life. Baptism is the door to the Spirit as through it the Spirit of Christ is first received.

To return to John. Do the water and the Blood from the pierced side of the Savior carry a double signification for him? Does he see the Blood as the redeeming Blood of the Cross and the Eucharist, the water as the Holy Spirit and baptism? There can be no ready answer to a question placed so directly because there is no hard and fast formula in John's writings which tells us that this or that is his thought on the matter. In the last analysis all that can be done is to examine his words to see if there is some clew to answer the question that has been asked.

Over and beyond the identification of water with the Spirit (Jn 7,39), there is also in John's mind a close association between water and baptism. We need but recall the words of Christ to Nicodemus which John relates: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (Jn 3,5). This rebirth through water and the Spirit is Christian Baptism. Then too, granting that the Blood of the Cross occupies an extraordinary place in John's concept of salvation, we may show how he attaches a singular efficacy to the Blood of the Eucharist as well. There are in Jn 6,22-59 statements of a general kind which claim for the Eucharist the power of giving life to the world (Jn 6,33,52). These solemn affirmations, if given their maximum value, could be understood as granting the Eucharist a universal power, for the life of the world in its fullest sense would include all the graces which come to the world.

Before closing the discussion on the water and the Blood from the pierced side of Christ, it should be remembered that we are dealing here with the spiritual significance of an event which John himself did not declare with precision. We know from the pattern of thought which John generally follows that he does spiritualize historical events. The solemn affirmation in the gospel in favor of this event as well as tradition, interpreting the event, justify the attempt to find for it a significance which the words that record the incident hardly warrant. Ultimately it must be granted that there is no definitive argument to show just what or how much the evangelist wanted to signify by this circumstance of Christ's Passion to which he attaches such importance. Was John thinking only of the sacrificial death of Calvary, the fountain of all graces? Or was he thinking also of the Eucharistic sacrifice, by which the fountain opened by

the sacrifice of Calvary is made to flow abundantly into the hearts of those who come to Christ?<sup>36</sup> If he was not, the thought surely is in accord with the spirit of John, whose Christianity is sacramental. Among other sacraments which John knows is the Eucharist. He singled it out and spoke of its effects in generous terms: life of the world, life everlasting, bodily immortality.

### *The Blood of the Lamb*

It is customary for John to plunge his theological thought into the realm of eternity and to define eternal life as a prolongation of the supernatural verities of faith.<sup>37</sup> The Precious Blood too receives such a prolongation, that in the Ap under the symbol of the Lamb. The Lamb is an apocalyptic symbol; it is so called because John did not see a Lamb in heaven when he says he saw one there. What John saw in vision are those truths which he tries to convey through this picture. This is entirely consonant with the literary form, the apocalypse, which John employs. It is characteristic of this genre to express ideas through symbols. Thus the symbol of the Lamb is one among many in the Ap. But it occupies an extraordinary place; it pervades the whole book. By using the image of the Lamb often John was able to transmit the larger complex of his Christological and soteriological teaching through this one symbol. And it becomes such a convenient symbol to express the doctrine, relating to the Blood of Christ, because it is the Blood of the Lamb that gives to the Lamb its rich meaning.

John had been introduced to Christ in these words of the Baptist: "Behold the Lamb of God" (Jn 1,36). This title of introduction must have clung tenaciously in John's memory and ultimately this may be the explanation of his predilection for the image of the Lamb. Undoubtedly the meaning of the title matured in his own mind gradually,<sup>38</sup> but after the death of Christ the apostle surely realized its full import. In his narrative of Christ's death the evangelist noted carefully that not a bone of Christ had been broken (Jn 19,33.36). The obvious allusion to the Paschal Lamb specifies Christ as a sacrificial Lamb for the deliverance of man from the bondage of slavery and darkness.

This image of the Lamb by which John had come to know his Redeemer now became a fitting symbol to introduce Christ to his

readers. When the Ap was written, Christ had already been glorified; this is why John combines both the glory and the suffering of the Savior in one symbol. As a matter of fact, this is customary with John; all his notices on the suffering of Christ never present those sufferings as a humiliating experience. The death of Christ always moves in a realm of glory and exaltation. There are, for example, Christ's words which only John records and in which Christ compares Himself to the bronze serpent: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that those who believe in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (Jn 3,14-15). Or again John remembers the words of Christ to the crowd during his final ministry in Jerusalem: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself" (Jn 12,32). Even in recording the death of Christ John could not conclude without intimating that the death was the door to Christ's glory. Men, he wrote, would look upon Him in astonishment and admiration, this one whom they had pierced (cf. Jn 19,37). For John, then, the sacrificial death of Christ is a reality, but a reality which he refuses to consider apart from the glory coming to Christ through it. These two realities, the death of Christ and the glory of Christ, are joined inseparably as cause and effect. And the symbol of the Lamb too proclaims this double reality: the sacrificial death of Christ and the glory attached to it.

In the Ap it is always a grandiose vision in which the Lamb appears; the very pageantry suggests the enthronement of the Lamb.<sup>39</sup> In a vision of heaven John saw the Messiah as "the lion of the tribe of Juda" (Ap 5,5). No sooner has John identified the object of his vision when he shifts rapidly from the image of the lion to that of the lamb. In the court of heaven near to the throne of God he says he saw "a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" (Ap 5,6). It is impossible to visualize the picture that is presented here. It is inconceivable how a lamb can stand and look as if it is slain at the same time. If the picture is impossible, the ideas that it expresses are easily grasped. It must be remembered that apocalyptic symbols were intended to convey ideas; they were never meant to torture the imagination.

Like all the symbols of the Ap, that of the Lamb also has its roots in the OT and to some extent in the apocryphal apocalyptic

literature. To discover the significance of the Lamb, it is necessary to refer to that background. The Lamb *as slain* could have its origin in the sacrificial lamb of the Passover, but more probably it was directly inspired by the messianic prophecy of the Lamb in Is 53,7. That prophetic poet of the exile had presented the Servant of Yahweh as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, offering himself in sacrifice for the sins of His people. And this is what John wants to say about Christ when he pictures Him as a Lamb, as if slain. But this Lamb is standing, that is, it is triumphant. The triumph is expressed not only in that standing position but also in the seven horns which it bears. These horns symbolize power; there are seven of them and this means that Christ enjoys supreme power as the number, seven, was symbolic of completeness or perfection. This detail about the horns is drawn from an apocryphal work, the *Book of Henoch*. There the Messiah is presented as a Lamb with great horns as He leads the people of God to triumph. The Lamb also has seven eyes; this detail has been borrowed from Za 4,10 where the eyes of the Lord are said to range through the whole earth. The eyes are symbolic of God's omniscience and wisdom in His governing of the universe. John brings a further specification to this symbol, when he adds that these eyes "are the seven spirits of God sent forth into the whole earth" (Ap 5,6). The seven eyes symbolize, therefore, the Holy Spirit.<sup>40</sup> Bringing together all the ideas of this one vision by which John introduces the Lamb we have a triumphant, powerful, sacrificial Christ. Associated with Him is the Holy Spirit whom He sends forth into the world. And there is more, for in this same vision John has 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 triumphant power but it is also a symbol of the triumph of the saints.

How the victory of the saints attaches itself to the Blood of the Lamb is more directly stated in a second vision of heaven (Ap 7,9-17). This time John saw "a great multitude which no man could number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne of the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and with palms in their hands" (Ap 7,9). Those in white robes are identified as "they who have come out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Ap 7,14). The saints have re-enacted in their own lives the twofold

phase of the life of the Lamb. Their suffering is indicated in the great tribulations through which they are said to have passed; their victory is symbolized by the white robes and the palms which they bear. But it is in the Blood of the Lamb, not their own blood, that their robes have been made white. The multitude of saints without number recognize this as they sing: "Salvation belongs to our God and to the Lamb" (Ap 7,10).

There are other visions of the Lamb in the Ap; all of them are orientated to the triumph of Christ and His followers. In their totality they embrace all of John's reflections on the Blood of Christ; in this one symbol of the Lamb his teaching is summarized. We have seen that the Blood and water from the side of the crucified Christ represent His redeeming Blood and the Holy Spirit. That the Blood of the Lamb also signifies the redeeming Blood needs no proof, for the saints sing of a redemption for God with Blood (cf. Ap 5,9). And it is to the Lamb that they sing. That the redeeming Blood is the source of the Holy Spirit is indicated clearly in the inaugural vision of the Lamb, in which, as we have seen, the seven eyes symbolize the Holy Spirit (cf. Ap 5,6). The Lamb is pictured as the source of the sending of the Spirit of God. It is noteworthy also that in the Ap John returns to the image of the water when he describes the Lamb as leading Christians to the fountains of living water. When the grand vision of the elect of Ap 7,9-17 concludes, the Lamb in some paradoxical way has become the shepherd, and He is leading the saints to the fountains of the water of life (cf. Ap 7,17).<sup>41</sup>

The washing in the Blood of Christ and the redeeming with that same Blood are explicitly singled out in the canticles which honor the Lamb (cf. Ap 5,9; 7,10.14). Moreover, it has been pointed out that redemption signifies and effects a transition from a state of darkness to a state of light. In a description of the heavenly Jerusalem John tells us how wonderful this state of light is in its perfection when he writes: "And the city has no need of the sun or the moon to shine upon it. For the glory of God lights it up, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof" (Ap 2,23). The union which the Blood of the Eucharist effects in this life will also have found its completion, for in the heavenly city the marriage supper of the Lamb (Ap 19,9) celebrates the marriage of the Lamb and the redeemed (Ap 19,7).

In a study of the Lamb in the Ap a final observation of histori-

cal significance is in place. We may note that John calls the apostles, the "apostles of the Lamb" (Ap 21,14). That the Blood of Christ held a respected place in the primitive catechesis is abundantly clear from other NT writings as well as from John's. In them the title, "apostles of the Lamb," finds its full justification. And John together with the rest of the apostles were successful in their pleas that Christians honor the Blood of Christ. It is very probable that the hymns to the Lamb in the Ap were songs of the primitive Church.<sup>42</sup> John borrowed these hymns, that is, took them as they were and inserted them here and there in the Ap, putting them on the lips of the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant. This is a beautiful picture, the picture of the primitive Christian community at prayer, gratefully adoring the Blood of the Redeemer. The Christians of the first century sang: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us for God with thy blood . . . Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and divinity and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing' (Ap 5,9.12).

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1. J. B. Frey, "Le concept de 'vie' dans l'Évangile de St. Jean," *Biblica* 1 (1920), pp. 37-58; 211-39, studies the concept of life in the fourth gospel and shows that the life which comes to man from Christ is the grace of God, orientated to eternal life. Light, the other theme pursued so often by John, is related to life both as effect and cause at one and the same time. Light in man includes faith (cf. Jn 12,46) and charity (1 Jn 2,10). This light is the effect of life because it comes from Christ (cf. Jn 1,4) and the cause of life in man because it is the light of life (cf. Jn 8,12). Because of this causal relation light is itself a symbol of life. Ultimately, therefore, even the concept of light reduces itself to life. And the life that is in man is clearly asserted to be the fruit of Christ's Passion (cf. Jn 3,14-15).
2. If John relates that he saw the piercing of Christ's side and then speaks of one "who saw it," the obvious conclusion is that John is the one who saw. But some, cf., e.g., M. J. Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Jean* (Paris: Gabalda, 1925), p. 500; F. Prat, *Jesus Christ*, tr. J. Heenan (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1950), II, p. 394, object that John has insisted that no one can be a witness in his own favor (cf. Jn 5,31; 8,13ff) so that he would hardly resort to this method in the case at hand. Moreover, this impersonal speech ("he who saw it") may be studied in relation to other passages which use similar language (cf. 1 Jn 2,6;

3,5,7,16; 4,17) where the reference is always to God or Christ. While granting that these arguments leave room for hesitation, the view which names John as the witness here has in its favor the text of Jn 3,11 where Jesus is reported to have used similar words when verifying His own mission.

3. Cf. J. Knabenbauer, *Commentarius in Quatuor S. Evangelia* (CSS 48; Paris: Lethielleux, 1898), p. 552. A Vaccari, "Exivit sanguis et aqua," *Verbum Domini* 17 (1937), pp. 193-8, favors the reading, "water and blood," not "blood and water," as most mss. of Jn have. The order, "water and blood," is observed in many of the patristic writings as well as in several uncials and minuscules which add the notice of the piercing of Christ's side, borrowed from Jn, to Mt 27,49.
4. *Contra Celsum*, II,36.
5. Thus W. Leonard, "St. John," *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (London: Nelson, 1953), p. 1014; C. Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux* (Paris: Gabalda, 1953), II, p. 271; Prat, *op.cit.*, II, p. 399.
6. The most recent attempt to explain the physiological aspects of the flow of water and Blood from Christ's side is that by A. Sava, "The Wounds of Christ," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 16 (1954), pp. 441-3; *id.*, "The Wound in the Side of Christ," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 19 (1957), pp. 343-6. Previous explanations are examined and claimed to be inadequate, namely: 1) that the Blood and the water came from two different places, the Blood from the heart and the water from the pericardial sac; 2) that the Blood and water were caused by a spontaneous rupture of the heart which caused the Blood to decompose and flow into the pericardial sac. On the basis of his own experimentation Dr. Sava is of the conviction that the severe blows to the chest of Christ during the scourging caused a bloody effusion to form between the ribs and the lung. The blood globules of such an effusion gravitate to the bottom of the formation whereas the upper part of the formation appears as a clear and watery fluid. This effusion is what came forth from the side of Christ. And this is why John could clearly distinguish Blood and water.
7. John cites from Za 12,10. The present reading of the MT is: They shall look upon *me* whom they have pierced. But the third person of John's citation is probably the correct reading. Cf. *LSBJ*, p. 1272. In a context of a promise of salvation to the Jews Zacharias introduces the suffering and death of one like the Suffering Servant of Yahweh (cf. Is 52,13-53,12). Salvation depends on that suffering and death. John is able to specify exactly the full import of Za's words.
8. D. Mollat-F. M. Braun, *L'Évangile et les Épîtres de Saint Jean* (Paris: Cerf, 1953), pp. 13-14, point out that the title, "spiritual gospel," which Clement of Alexandria gives to the fourth gospel refers to that manner of presentation of John, by which he interprets the events of Christ's life (signs and parables), whose meaning is not immediately apparent, in their full and ultimate signification. If the signs and the

parables are in themselves somewhat mysterious and enigmatic, this is in accord with Christ's intention (cf. Jn 16,25). With John's gospel we are already in the second stage when the events are seen in the full light of the Spirit. That is why John can give the facts their true "spiritual dimension" (p. 49). C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1953), while observing the symbolic significance in Jn generally (pp. 133-42) remarks that it would be justifiable to try to find such a significance even when it is not given by John (p. 134). W. Grossouw, *Revelation and Redemption*, tr. M. Schoenberg (Westminster: Newman, 1955), p. 24, states that John intentionally does not designate the higher or hidden sense in every instance but leaves the reader to discover it because this method belongs to the very nature of a "true spiritual writer."

9. Grossouw, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17, gives the basic reason why symbols must be open; they are not concepts but images which represent a "complex totality" of ideas.
10. Cf. Prat, *op. cit.*, II, p. 400.
11. The proposed punctuation of Jn 7,37-38 was adopted by M. J. Lagrange, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-17, and was later well documented by the study of K. Rahner, "Flumine de Ventre Christi," *Biblica* 22 (1941), pp. 269-302; 367-403, who presented a detailed treatise on the double tradition, relating to the punctuation of Jn 7,37-38. The suggested punctuation is received favorably today. Cf., e.g., *LSBJ*, p. 1409; RSV suggests it as an alternative which *The Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1952), VIII, p. 588, declares to be the only punctuation which "makes sense."
12. Cf. Mollat-Braun, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-11. Because of the many references to water in the OT as the symbol of the effusion of the Spirit of God in the messianic age, the image, when applied to Christ, presents Him as the true temple, the spiritual rock, the true wisdom, the source of life.
13. The prophecy of Jn 7,37-38 is fulfilled in the pierced side of Christ. Thus K. Rahner, "Les Fondements Scripturaires de la devotion au Sacré Coeur," *Le Coeur du Saviour*, ed. J. Stierli, tr. C. Munier (Mulhouse: Editions Salvator, 1956), p. 49; D. Mollat-F. Braun, *op. cit.*, pp. 189; 230.
14. Cornelius à Lapide, *The Great Commentary of Cornelius à Lapide*, ter. T. Mossman (London: Hodges, 1892), p. 473, records this opinion and Spicq, *op. cit.*, II, p. 271, seems to embrace it.
15. Although the study of the mss. abundantly favors naming the Comma as a gloss, it is well to point out that the thought expressed by the Comma is not at all foreign to the text. There is a specific reference to the testimony of the three divine Persons, even apart from the Comma. There is the testimony of Christ (1 Jn 1,6), of the Holy Spirit (Jn 1,7-8), of the Father (1 Jn 1,9-11).
16. Thus E. B. Allo, *L'Évangile spirituel de Saint Jean* (Paris: Cerf, 1944), pp. 71-2.

17. Thus H. Wilmering, "The Epistles of John," *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (London: Nelson, 1953), p. 1188.
18. Cf. L. Venard, "Jean," *DTC*, VIII, cc. 560-1.
19. So Spicq, *op. cit.*, II, p. 279. see also F. Gigot, *The New Testament Westminster Version*; London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1924), IV, p. 145, who speaks of the public consecration of Christ at His baptism and the consummation of the work of redemption at His death; J. Bonsirven, *Épîtres de Saint Jean* (Verbum Salutis IX; Paris: Beauchesne, 1936), pp. 256-8, who refers the formula to Christ's baptism, when He received the first attestation of His transcendent dignity, and to the Blood, by which Christ fulfilled His mission.
20. E. B. Allo, "Jean," *VDBS*, c. 834; D. Mollat-F. Braun, *op. cit.*, pp. 189; 230; R. Eaton, *The Catholic Epistles* (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1937), p. 186; A. Charue, *Les Épîtres Catholiques* (La Sainte Bible XII; Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1946), pp. 550-1, interpret the water and Blood of 1 Jn 5,6 in the light of Jn 19,34.
21. The anointing of which John speaks certainly refers to a conferring of the Holy Spirit. Whether or not there is specific reference to the sacrament of Confirmation remains uncertain. *LSBJ*, p. 1607, interprets the word in light of OT texts (cf. Is 11,2; 61,1) which name the Spirit of God as anointing Christ. Christians partake of this anointing through the true knowledge which they have from the Holy Spirit.
22. Eaton, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-9, discusses the fluctuating commentary of the exegetes, relative to the testimony of the water and Blood. He himself believes that John is thinking of the whole work of redemption rather than of Christ's divinity or humanity in isolation.
23. B. Prete, *Il Sangue di Cristo* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1956), p. 90, explains that Christ's coming in water and Blood does not signify two effects but one, namely, purification. He conceives the expression as a parallelism of ideas; as water cleanses the body, so the Blood cleanses from sin. In confirmation of this proposal he invokes the expression of Mt 3,11 which speaks of baptism "with the Holy Spirit and with fire." Here there is not a reference to two realities, but fire, as a means of purification, specifies the activity of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps it would be well to carry this idea of Prete's a step further and understand the three witnesses — water, Blood, Spirit — as indicating the same reality, namely, the Holy Spirit. Blood specifies the means whereby water, the symbol of the Holy Spirit, flows. Thus F. M. Braun, *op. cit.*, p. 231, probably interprets. J. Bonsirven, *op. cit.*, p. 260, while interpreting the formula, "water and blood," differently, also observes the solidarity of the three witnesses. The Holy Spirit gives to the water and Blood their power of testifying. Without the activity of the Spirit in the Church it would not be externally apparent that the Blood of Christ redeemed man or that the Holy Spirit had been given to man.
24. Grossouw, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-90.
25. The words which John uses to describe the purifying effect of the

- Blood of Christ are: wash (Ap 7,14 and perhaps also in Ap 1,5); purify or cleanse (1 Jn 1,7); make white (Ap 7,14).
26. The word which John uses to express the concept of redemption is *agorazein* (cf. Ap 5,9). F. Prat, *The Theology of St. Paul*, tr. J. Stoddard (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1938), I, p. 432, declares this word a synonym for the typical term for redemption, *apolytroxis* (deliverance).
  27. Thus B. Prete, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
  28. The verb of Ap 1,5 is uncertain; some mss. have "washed" (*lousanti*) while others read "loosed" (*lysanti*). Both words say the same thing equivalently.
  29. Ap 22,14 reads similarly according to the Vulgate: Blessed are they who wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb. The addition, "in the blood of the Lamb," is not found in the Greek codices.
  30. Cf. Charue, *op. cit.*, p. 523.
  31. L. Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), discusses the etymological and at the same time real significance of the words used for redemption in the Bible (pp. 9-59), and concludes that redemption is not just any kind of deliverance, but a ransom, a deliverance by the payment of a price, which the NT specifies as the Blood of Christ (p. 58). This is especially apparent in the word which John uses, *agorazein*, because it basically carries the idea of purchase (pp. 50-2).
  32. Cf. St. Thomas, *Com. in Gal.*, c. VI, lect. 4.
  33. Cf. Grossouw, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-6; D. Mollat-F. M. Braun, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
  34. Cf. Y. Congar, *Esquisses du Mystere de L'Eglise* (Paris: Cerf, 1953), pp. 86-7; M. Philipon, *The Sacraments in the Christian Life*, tr. J. Otto (Westminster: Newman, 1954), pp. 92-3; N. Gühr, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass* (St. Louis: Herder, 1944), pp. 138-9.
  35. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 65, a.3, ad 1; cf. also III, q.79, a.7.
  36. Allo, *op. cit.*, p. 71; *id.*, *art. cit.*, *VDBS*, c. 834, finds that the two symbols of water and blood are capable of signifying a variety of things. Thus water as a symbol of light can signify faith or baptism or purification whereas blood as the symbol of life can stand for sacrifice or love or the Eucharist. Prat, *op. cit.*, *Jesus . . .*, II, p. 400 reduces the patristic view that water and Blood are symbols of baptism and the redeeming Blood to the other patristic opinion that they are symbols of baptism and the Eucharist because the Blood of the Redeemer and the Blood of the Eucharist are "but one."
  37. Cf. Mollat-Braun, *op. cit.*, p. 47. Historical events are seen as history but also as theology. These events, while taking place in time, extend themselves into eternity.
  38. Prete, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-109, studies the testimony of the Baptist, relating to Jesus: "Behold the lamb of God" (Jn 1,29.36) and concludes with Lagrange that the Baptist's testimony limits itself to the purity and the innocence of Christ. Only gradually did the disciples capture

- the sacrificial and expiatory character of the image. Surely in the Ap the symbol of the Lamb carries with it the idea of sacrifice and signifies primarily the work of redemption.
39. L. Cerfaux-J. Cambier, *L'Apocalypse* (Lectio Divina 17; Paris: Cerf, 1955), pp. 221-2, notes the double perspective of the Ap relative to the Lamb. On the one hand in some of the visions God holds the throne in inviolable possession; the Lamb is as close to the throne as possible. But there are other times when the Lamb is associated with the prerogatives of the throne. Thus Ap 22,13 speaks of the "throne of God and the Lamb"; Ap 21,22 makes God and the Lamb the temple of the heavenly Jerusalem. Or again Ap 14,1-5 grants a certain autonomy to the Lamb. This double perspective is entirely in keeping with the Christology of the Ap; Christ is a divine Person in a human nature.
  40. *Ibid.*, pp. 19; 47;223. The seven eyes are identified as the Holy Spirit. The initial vision of the Trinity speaks of "the seven spirits who are before the throne" (Ap 1,4). This is the Holy Spirit operative in His sevenfold gifts. In the Ap the Spirit is always conceived in relation to His gifts. If John says that the seven eyes are "the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth," the eyes symbolize the Holy Spirit. To Christ belongs the power of dispensing the Spirit. Cf. also C. Martindale, "The Apocalypse," *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (London: Nelson, 1953), p. 1199, who brings further precision to this vision of the Lamb insofar as he believes these symbols — the Lamb (Christ), the seven horns (fullness of Power), the seven eyes ((fullness of Wisdom) — are "not disconnected" but indicate the Trinity.
  41. See also Ap 22, 1-2. This last description of the life of the elect at the end of time, with its reference to the "river of the water of life" and the "tree of life" borrows its imagery from the account of the original happiness of man (cf. Gn 2,4ff).
  42. Cf. J. Bonsirven, *Théologie du Nouveau Testament* (Paris: Aubier, 1951), p. 193.

*THE PRECIOUS BLOOD IN THE EPISTLE  
TO THE HEBREWS*

Rhetorically, the epistle to the Hebrews is one of the finest compositions of Scripture; so remarkable that even St. Thomas had to note its singular character in the fine order of its words and thoughts.<sup>1</sup> This epistle, more than any other writing of the NT, speaks of the Blood of Christ. Within its tightly constructed framework, the thoughts on the Precious Blood (Heb 8,1-10,18) come as the climax of the doctrinal portion of the epistle. The build-up to this section leaves us with the impression that the thoughts about the Blood of Christ were very important to the author's mind; he deliberately employed them to serve his purpose. From that point on he feels that exhortations are in order, that he can now confidently convince his readers and spiritual children of the necessity of perseverance in their new-found faith.

But to better understand the place of the Blood of Christ in the epistle, we should look briefly at its whole plan. In the words of Father C. Spicq:

We can understand then all the force of the general argument of the epistle: the unique sacrifice of the New Covenant — and its cult — is greater than all the sacrifices of the Old Covenant. This sacrifice, in effect, is the work of the Incarnate Son of God, priest and victim. The shedding of His Blood, the offering of His life is sufficiently powerful to present and unite to God all humanity, purified and sanctified. The Blood of Jesus is the decisive factor of the perfection (*teleiosis*) of the New Religion.<sup>2</sup>

And so if we must search for the phrase that best indicates the theme of the epistle, we should select this one: the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, Priest and Mediator. As the author says: "Now the main point . . . is this. We have such a high priest . . . he is mediator of a superior covenant" (Heb 8,1.6).

*Blood in the NT Sacrifice*

We must keep in mind the audience of the writer, Jewish Christians who were suffering for their new faith in Jesus, and who

were being tempted to return to the more comfortable security of the Old Covenant of Moses. To set forth this theme of Christ's pre-eminence therefore, the author had to show the excellence of Christ's mediatorship, since the return to God was only by means of a covenant enacted by a mediator of God and man — as was Moses. "But now he has obtained a superior ministry, in proportion as he is mediator of a superior covenant, enacted on the basis of superior promises" (Heb 8,6). The burden of the first seven chapters is this: Christ is superior to the angels, Moses, and the Levitical priesthood through whom the Jews made expiatory contact with God. In c.8 he takes care of the superiority of Christ's sanctuary and His covenant — necessary elements for the Jews in approaching God.

Finally, in cc. 9-10, the writer reaches the climax of his theme with the most important function of a mediator or priest — the offering of sacrifice (cf. Heb 5,1; 8,3). Christ's sacrifice is superior to the sacrifice of the Old Covenant. Proceeding therefore from the theme of Christ's eminent priesthood, he has arrived at the eminence of the most important action of a priest — the offering of sacrifice. The writer then underlines and focuses attention upon that element of sacrifice which effects its end — blood, the shedding of blood. The shedding of animal blood, its offering to God and aspersion upon the altar and people, was the final act of sin-sacrifice enacted annually on the Day of Expiation, the Great Day of Atonement. The writer describes and evaluates the Precious Blood of Christ in relation to this sacrifice, and shows how much more effective and valuable is the New Covenant, sealed not with the blood of animals, but with the very Blood of Christ. In other words, the whole value of sacrifice has reached its perfection and grandeur in the shedding of the Eternal Priest's Blood, which has become the instrument and sign of the New Covenant between God and men: "But when Christ appeared as high priest of the good things to come, he entered once for all through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made by hands (that is, not of this creation), nor again by virtue of blood of goats and calves, but by virtue of his own blood, into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb 9,11-12).

Having entered the Holy of Holies "by virtue of his own blood," Christ draws in His train all those who choose to follow Him into the heavenly sanctuary. The assurance of entering the heavenly sanctuary was based on a triple certitude for the Jewish converts:

1) it was now accessible to them, 2) the way was cleared of obstructions, 3) Christ, Priest and Victim, had gone before them and had showed them the way. But there was a fourth reason that lifted their spirits, and that was the lavishness of the recompense made by Christ in their behalf. It was the very life Blood of Christ the Eternal High Priest, in the unselfish abundance of this redeeming Blood that they have confidently placed their trust.<sup>3</sup>

The concept of blood then played an important role in the New Covenant between God and Man, just as it played a primary role in the Old Law. But the note that gives all the grandeur to this New Covenant and which perfects the Old Law is the fact that the blood shed is the very life Blood of Christ the Eternal High Priest, the perfect Mediator. Hence the Precious Blood occupies a central position in the doctrinal development of the inspired author: "It is in his blood that Christ attains his 'perfection', entering the Holy of Holies; it is in his blood that we have remission of sins, it is in his blood that we have confidence regarding the efficacy of the entrance-way provided for us into the heavenly sanctuary; in approaching him we approach the Mediator of the New Covenant and a blood of sprinkling that speaks better than Abel; it is by his blood that he sanctifies the people."<sup>4</sup>

We have seen that an important development of the epistle to the Hebrews deals with sacrifice. And the outpouring of the Blood of Christ signifies the limitless value of that sacrifice in which Christ is both the Priest and Victim.

No explanation at all is offered why the sanctification of the worshipper, the removal of his guilt, the expiation of his sin, the atonement of his soul to God should be made dependent on the blood of sacrifice. That necessity is assumed. It is something given. It is a thing inseparable from the age-long history of grace in Israel, and the writer of this Epistle who, like a multitude of others, had found his own approach to God so prescribed and who had come along this path to the foot of the Cross, does not feel it incumbent upon him to argue its sufficiency.<sup>5</sup>

It will not surprise us then that blood plays such an eminent and paramount role in this supreme sacrifice of the New Law if we keep in mind the intimate relationship between the OT and the NT. The two covenants belong to one complete whole, showing the unity

of God's design as it leads from the Law to the Gospel. It is one continuous unbroken string, which is unravelled in the palm of God's hand.

There is a straight line between the two economies. The first economy is a preparation for the second; it is a teacher pointing the way to Christ. Its very insufficiency demands the era of accomplishments. But above all, the Old Testament prepares the New Testament in two ways: its prophecies, announcing the light, will serve to prove it — our epistle uses this prophetic argument very profusely; the figures, the shadows of the first revelation and the ancient institutions, serve to orientate Israel to the future and definitive realities, and also to instruct the beneficiaries of these latter on the meaning of their Christianity.<sup>6</sup>

Thus we can see the wisdom of God in His preparation of man, and the generosity of God in His fulfillment of what was foretold. Not to recognize this fundamental truth results in a disastrous misconception of the inspired word of God: "Never can the Church forget that the Rock on which she stands is embedded in the revealed wisdom of patriarchs and prophets and in the mighty events which dominate the history of the children of Israel."<sup>7</sup>

In the ancient rites of the Hebrew people as well as in the religious ceremonies of practically every nation of antiquity, blood was looked upon as something sacred and priceless. This was especially evident in the liturgy of Expiation Day which occurred annually in the liturgical cycle of Hebrew feasts. In this sacrifice, the rite that was properly expiatory was the shedding of blood, symbolizing for the Jews a sacrificial self-offering to the Most High. "Blood being the soul of animal life, God has reserved it to Himself for His altar, as a means of expiation for the souls and lives of men."<sup>8</sup> The Pauline conclusion is that this shedding of animal blood in sacrifice on the Day of Expiation was the foreshadowing of what was fulfilled in the sacrificial Bloodshedding of Christ who redeemed all men by pouring out even the last drop of His Precious Blood. "HOW MUCH MORE WILL THE BLOOD OF CHRIST,<sup>9</sup> who through the Holy Spirit offered himself unblemished unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb 9,14)?

Gathering together the various texts of the writer, we can summarize the content of this "how much more" in four characteristics: final, everlasting, efficacious, and superior.

Heb 10,10 tells us that: "It is in this 'will' that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Once for all! Here we have in the oblation of Christ the perfection of *finality*.

He contrasts the sacrifice of Jesus with the limited, local, impersonal, external and forever repeated rites of the Jewish religious system (ix, 24-25). Had the Saviour's sacrifice been impersonal and merely prophetic like the latter, it would have to be re-enacted again and again in the time-series. But just as the provisional and purely symbolic character of the Jewish rites comes out in the over-and-over-againness which cleaves as a necessity to their observance, so the perfection of the offering of Christ is expressed in the historical once-for-allness which belongs to it. It is not denied that the Saviour's Passion is eternal, but its eternity reveals itself in a single act which by the universality of its scope and the utter completeness of its intrinsic quality covers, represents, and supersedes forever all the shadow-sacrifices which have been offered since time began.<sup>10</sup>

By His one, bitter-sweet Bloodshedding, Christ effected what an infinite series of animal blood sheddings could never accomplish. In one offering He did away with all that stood in the way of man's salvation and at the same time merited all graces for the sanctification of all men. There was no need of further blood to be shed, nor the repetition of the same Bloodshedding. Christ's death was of infinite worth, satisfying all the demands of universal redemption. The author makes this clear: "For the Law, having but a shadow of the good things to come, and not the exact image of the objects, is never able by the sacrifices which they offer continually, year after year the same, to perfect those who draw near; . . . For by one offering he has perfected forever those who are sanctified" (Heb 10, 1.14).

Moreover, the sacrifice of Christ is far superior to the OT sacrifices in that it is *everlasting*. Christ, by His own Blood has obtained an eternal redemption (Heb 9,12b). The imperfection and transitory character of the Levitical priesthood and its sacrifice are clearly evident from the fact that Christ has come into the world as a priest like Melchisedech rather than as a member of the Tribe of Aaron — a priest not because of carnal descent, but "according to a life that cannot end" (Heb 7,17), that is, by His own divine life and power which are eternal. And just as Christ is the Eternal Me-

diator of the NT, so also is His Blood the Blood of a covenant which is new but also one that is definitive, permanent, and eternal.

In comparing the sacrifices and worship of the Old Law with that of the New Law, the author brings into sharp focus the pre-eminent *efficacy* of Christ's sacrifice. The value of the OT sacrifices was merely ceremonial. They could not pronounce a man clean except provisionally, that is, they could effect only a legal purification, "only the suppression of a liturgical incapacity, the command forbidding access to the Temple and the fulfillment of religious duties . . . the sacrifices as well as the other elements of the Mosaic institutions of cultus were only an inferior image of the Christian realities, which alone are fruitful (10,1; 8,5): they could not then realize their consummation which was reserved to the future economy, to the direct action of the Son of God . . ." <sup>11</sup> On the other hand, the value of Christ's sacrifice was a truly redemptive act, supremely spiritual, for it works "in the interior sphere of conscience." <sup>12</sup> Hence, the sacrifice of Christ, being supremely spiritual, transcends the OT sacrifices in value as the quality of the spiritual transcends the ceremonial. It is the Blood of a Person, willing, sinless, the Blood of the Son of God.

Finally, the *superiority* of Christ's sacrifice is brought out in the majestic overtones of Heb 9,13-14, where the sacred author in well calculated steps reaches the high point of the epistle: "For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkled ashes of a heifer sanctify the unclean unto the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the Holy Spirit offered himself unblemished unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" In this passage we see that even the majesty of the ritual of the day of Expiation proclaimed by Sirach (50,5-7) "is but a pale shadow in comparison to the glory of the Son of God officiating on the cross and in heaven in behalf of His people." <sup>13</sup>

From the beginning of the epistle, the idea of the priesthood of Jesus was slanted towards the sacrifice which this Pontiff must offer (1,1-3). The superiority of this sacrifice can be proved 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 (13,10-14).<sup>14</sup>

*The Effects of the Sacrificial Bloodshedding*

Throughout the epistle scores of references are made to the various effects which the writer attributes to the Blood of Christ: it purifies (9,14); it sanctifies (13,12); it expiates (9,26); it redeems (9,21); it merits the exaltation of Christ (13,20; 12,2; 5,9; 1,3); it makes possible access to God (10,19-20; 12,24); it delivers men from the fear of death (2,14-15); it inaugurates a new alliance with God (9,15ff); it renders valid the inheritance of a testament (9,15ff). However, when we examine these effects, we see that they are related to our redemption in either a negative way or a positive way, either purifying or sanctifying. We find the references to these two main effects couched in the legal terminology of the OT.<sup>15</sup>

The effect with which we are most familiar in relation to the shedding of the Precious Blood and the economy of salvation is that of purification, or more precisely, remission of sins. Yet the writer, in an attempt to buoy up the courage of his associates, is quick to point out and describe the positive gifts of sanctification — the elevation and re-union of man to God.<sup>16</sup> Although we shall speak of these two effects separately, they are in reality intimately connected. The Blood of Christ in taking away sin effects at the same time the re-union of the souls to God — in this sense, as when the writer says: “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) . . . having our hearts cleansed from an evil conscience by sprinkling, and the body washed with clean water” (Heb 10,19-22).

Looking then at the negative effect, we must bear in mind the technical significance which blood had in the OT and which is adopted by the author to bring his point home. To Semitic minds, the only possible way to effect a true expiation was through the sacrificial shedding of animal blood. And in the forefront of the epistle is seen this expiatory significance of blood which is described by the writer more as sprinkled to cleanse rather than shed to purchase —

which is a strong theme in other Pauline writings. The cleansing instrumentality of the blood is underscored by the writer: "The tabernacle also and all the vessels of the ministry he sprinkled likewise with blood; and with blood almost everything is cleansed according to the Law, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb 9, 21-22). He presumes that his readers understand this meaning of blood since it played a prominent part in liturgical offerings. By being sprinkled with blood, the people, though dead because of legal defilement, were revitalized externally.<sup>17</sup> Sacrificial blood of a slain animal for the Jews was symbolic of a death that releases life to be shared by the offerer.<sup>18</sup> The cleansing significance of blood is retained in the epistle and applied directly to the Bloodshedding of Christ on Calvary.<sup>19</sup> Yet the Pauline progression in this application is wonderful. The cleansing effected by Christ's Blood is much more abundant and expiatory; but more than this, the writer pictures Christ's Blood as sprinkled over all men and cleansing their souls, their consciences, the interior man. Christ's Blood, therefore, takes on a greater and truer value; namely, a real remission of sins because the Blood is the Blood of a God-Man, bringing men back from the mire of dead works to serve the living God. "Nor yet has he entered to offer himself often, as the high priest enters into the Holies year after year with blood not his own; for in that case he must have suffered often since the beginning of the world. But as it is, once for all at the end of the ages, he has appeared for the destruction of sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb 9,25-27).

Intimately connected with the remission of sin is another negative effect which Pauline thought ascribes to the redeeming Blood: "Therefore because children have blood and flesh in common, so he in like manner has shared in these; that through death he might destroy him who had the empire of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver them, who throughout their life were kept in servitude by the fear of death" (Heb 2,14-15). This bloody death of Christ divests the devil of his rights — the devil, master of death — and delivers men by the certitude of the resurrection from the fear of death which held them in a true bondage. This we can look upon as the divine answer to the age-long plea of the psalmist to preserve him from the silence and oblivion of Sheol where the dust of men stirs not to glorify the Lord above (cf. 87,5-13). This liberation from the fear of death is nothing more than a sweet preparation for

the re-union with God, and all is accomplished by Christ's Bloodshedding.

We may consider also the positive side of redemption as effected by the Blood of Christ.

It is noteworthy that the typology of the Days of Expiation . . . emphasizes especially entrance into the sanctuary. If Christ and the Israelite high priest on one hand, and the blood of animals and the Blood of the Savior on the other hand, are set in parallel or in contrast, it is in view of the entry into the Holy of Holies. The access to the sanctuary in the Old Covenant was rare and difficult, and was permitted only to the high priest; now the approach to God becomes free, without obstacle, and possible to all, because of the Precious Blood.<sup>20</sup>

In a general way, this sanctification of man is expressed as a "new and living way" (Heb 10,19), a road that can now be traversed, a way that is life-giving by which we are able to reach that glory into which Christ has already entered, because we are able to "serve the living God" (Heb 9,14).

But more particularly, it is expressly stated that Jesus sanctified us by His Blood: "Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people by his blood, suffered outside the gate" (Heb 13,12).<sup>21</sup> By His bloody death we have become the receivers of the "eternal inheritance according to the promise" (cf. Heb 6,12; 10,36). And even more than this, we have received the very power by which we may come at last to please God, those supernatural powers by which we may attain to our supernatural goal: "Now may the God of peace . . . 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 . . ." (Heb 13,20-21). In the epistle, therefore, we see that we have not only been freed from the bondage of sin, but also reunited to God through the power of the Blood of Christ. We are now able to "ascend to Heaven."<sup>22</sup>

The theme of reconciliation receives a stress in the epistle. The Blood truly atones for the offense against God and renders Him benign toward us. It effects our reconciliation and puts an end to the hostility which formerly separated man from an offended God.<sup>23</sup> We are the children of God cast out by sin, but by the merits of the Blood of Christ we become true children of God: "For it became him for whom are all things and through whom are all things, who had

brought many sons into glory (i.e., decreed from all eternity to bring many adoptive sons to eternal glory through Christ), to perfect through sufferings the author of their salvation" (Heb 2,10). God now deals with us as His loving sons, He who is the "Father of spirits" (Heb 12,9).

Our picture would not be complete however, if we did not mention that this power of the Blood of Christ in expiating for sin and sanctifying the believers here in this life is really orientated to a life of glory. It is true that the author touches on this but briefly and in snatches such as: "for here we have no permanent city, but we seek for the city that is to come" (Heb 13,14); and when he speaks of the "heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb 12,22). Yet the eschatological viewpoint in the epistle is important: "The second time with no part in sin he will appear unto the salvation of those who await him" (Heb 9,28), and He is the "high priest of the good things to come" (Heb 9,11). This glorification is first realized in Christ and included His entry into heaven. Christ as Priest and Victim, as a victorious Warrior, has conquered sin and has re-opened to us the heavenly gates of the heavenly Jerusalem. Those redeemed by this divine Blood look to the living Christ seated at the right hand of God in glory (Heb 1,3) and hope to partake of that resurrection merited by His Blood,<sup>24</sup> and of the glory to be manifested when He shall appear the second time.

Thus, the efficacy and value of the Precious Blood is seen in this, that man, alone and sin-laden, could never of himself take away his own sins nor be re-united to God as a member of His household. It was Christ alone who effected this: "The faith and righteousness of no one was sufficient to remove the impediment of the guilt of the whole human race. This was, indeed, removed by the Precious Blood of Christ. Consequently, before Christ's passion, no one could enter the kingdom of heaven . . . ." <sup>25</sup> We can see in all this the necessity of the Blood shedding of Christ in the economy of salvation. It was necessary to give the ancient sacrifices the efficacy they possessed and the fulfillment of what they prefigured; it was necessary that it secure for all who are called to the faith the means of attaining to eternal beatitude in heaven.<sup>26</sup> Without the shedding of Blood then, the gifts of redemption would not be man's. The Blood of Christ is a *sine qua non* for regaining what was lost. Without its sacrificial

shedding, man, in the economy of salvation decreed by the Father, would have yet been doomed.

*The Blood of Christ in the Christian Life*

The writer, in cc. 10-13 applies all that has been said about the Blood of Christ to the daily living conditions of his spiritual children. But before we consider this, we should again recall that he wrote the letter to Jewish converts who had followed Christ:

They are more conscious of what they have given up in the splendor of the Mosaic liturgy than what they have gained in their new manner of life (10:25; 13:10). They are ostracized, persecuted by their fellow Jews (10:32-34), and their feeling of inferiority is sapping the vitality of their faith. For a Jew accustomed to see divine favor in material prosperity such trials are an indication of God's abandonment (cf. 6:10) and some are ready even to give up their spiritual privileges for immediate tangible satisfaction.<sup>27</sup>

He wrote then to encourage them in their convictions and strengthen them in their faith. To do this he had to expose the insufficiency of their former belief in favor of that for which they were suffering. He showed them the inefficacy, the incompleteness, the lack of power of the Mosaic ritual. The necessity of this viewpoint and development had for the writer important and precious apologetical advantages:

Christ, His message, His mission, the economy which He inaugurates, are all accredited by the whole of the OT — by its literature and by its institutions, prophecies or figures of the New Order. In turn, Israel, its history, its beliefs, and its laws are explained: the profound sense of their obscure lines appears in the terminus toward which they tend; the deficiencies of its destinies and of its legislation are no longer a scandal, when one understands that they were but a preparatory stage. At the same time, the Mosaic rites are re-evaluated in retrospect: they served their purpose as types announcing the unique sacrifice; by their solidarity with this divine sacrifice, it is proper that we admit that they had their religious and supernatural value.<sup>28</sup>

Heb professes the necessity of profound knowledge and reflection on the truths of faith for perfecting the moral life as well as for perseverance in it. In discussing these truths, we have seen that the author had much to say about the Blood of Jesus. He reached the point of the liturgical action, the point where divine power and

human misery meet, where all are gathered to call upon God with the voice of animal blood: here the writer sees an immediate connection and common source of contact between the sufferings and trials of his children and the heavenly reality of Christ's utter superiority — the divine Blood. It is in His Blood that the excellence of Christ was seen, and now that same Blood of Christ offers the best motive for perseverance for the persecuted converts. This thought of Christ's sacrificial Blood lingers with the writer and becomes an element of motivation in the exhortations to perseverance.

Realizing this, the writer now feels confident in exhorting his people to hold fast to their faith, to the unwavering confession of their hope, and to charity with good works:

Since then, brethren, we have confidence to enter the Holies in virtue of the blood of Christ . . . let us draw near with a true heart in fullness of faith, having our hearts cleansed from an evil conscience by sprinkling, and the body washed with clean water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has given the promise is faithful. And let us consider how to incite one another to charity and good works; not forsaking our assembly as is the custom of some, but exhorting one another, and this all the more as you see the Day drawing near (Heb 10, 19-25).

Apostasy now becomes a terrible thing for Christians because it is a trampling upon the Blood of Christ and an insult to the Spirit of grace, for less than which the former law of Moses imposed a death penalty:

For if we sin willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there remains no longer a sacrifice for sins, but a certain dreadful expectation of judgment, and 'the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.' A man making void the Law of Moses dies without any mercy on the word of two or three witnesses; how much more worse punishments do you think he deserves who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant through which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace (Heb 10, 26-29)?

Constancy, peace, and holiness can now be counseled so that when Christians find themselves in trial, they will be ready. Christ has endured much more than they are asked to endure: "For you have not yet resisted unto blood in the struggle with sin" (Heb 12,4). The main advice, therefore, is that Christians should meditate and

reflect on the sufferings of Christ, upon the abundance of His Bloodshedding. The writer sums it all up when he invokes the blessing of God upon his beloved children in the faith: "Now may the God of peace . . . 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 be glory forever and ever" (Heb 13,20-21).

### *Conclusion*

The reflections on the Blood of Christ, as presented in the epistle to the Hebrews, are rooted in the liturgy of the OT, namely, the blood-sacrifices of the Old Covenant. Those sacrifices which had gone before and served only as a preparation are important in estimating the value and the efficacy of Christ's Blood and His sacrifice. For the immediate audience of the writer, Hebrews as they were, this presentation of contrasts and parallels between the OT sacrifices and the NT sacrifice must have made a great impression and must have served well as an excellent stimulant to solid devotion to the Blood of the Savior and Lord. Can the same be said for the Christian today? It may be objected that modern man simply cannot bear the manner of presentation by which a NT reality is explained or illustrated by comparing it to an OT reality. The objection is valid insofar as the modern man hardly appreciates the comparison because of his lack of knowledge of the reality of the Old Covenant. But the objection takes for granted that man, given a knowledge of OT sacrifices, could be moved in no way nor stimulated by this manner of consideration. The story of salvation is inseparably bound up with the past; the method which contrasts the present situation of man with his past condition cannot help but bear fruit. What is desired, therefore, in order that the thoughts on the Precious Blood in the epistle obtain their maximum effectiveness, is instruction on the sacrifices of the Old Law side by side with the sacrifice of the New Law. This is the way in which the author of Hebrews gave his instruction:

It is not surprising that a writing concerned with the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ has given such great importance to the effusion or sprinkling of Blood, to its effects of purification, sanctification, expiation, and propitiation. But it is remarkable . . . that Hebrews has revealed, in proportion to its argumentation, such an exact correspondence between the levitical ritual

and the immolation of the Cross; one prefiguring the other: or rather, that its theological elaboration of the role and power of blood in the OT and NT is so homogeneous. It is surely one of the most clear and most fruitful cases of the knowledge and the assimilation of the OT acting in the NT: all the bloody immolations of animals, in which the religious life of the people of God was expressed, come to an end in the sacrifice of the Cross, which alone gives an assured access to God. The blood of the victims of the Old Law signified and announced the Blood of Calvary. Since that was shed, the redemption of all generations of men — past, present, and future — has been achieved; the way of access to heaven was opened. From this we have devotion to the Precious Blood which is one of the characteristics of the epistle to the Hebrews. This essential object of faith (Rom 3,25) is one of the mysteries which will be most ardently contemplated by saints and mystics. And one cannot be a Christian without some knowledge of it.<sup>29</sup>

Theology Students  
St. Charles Seminary  
Carthagena, Ohio.

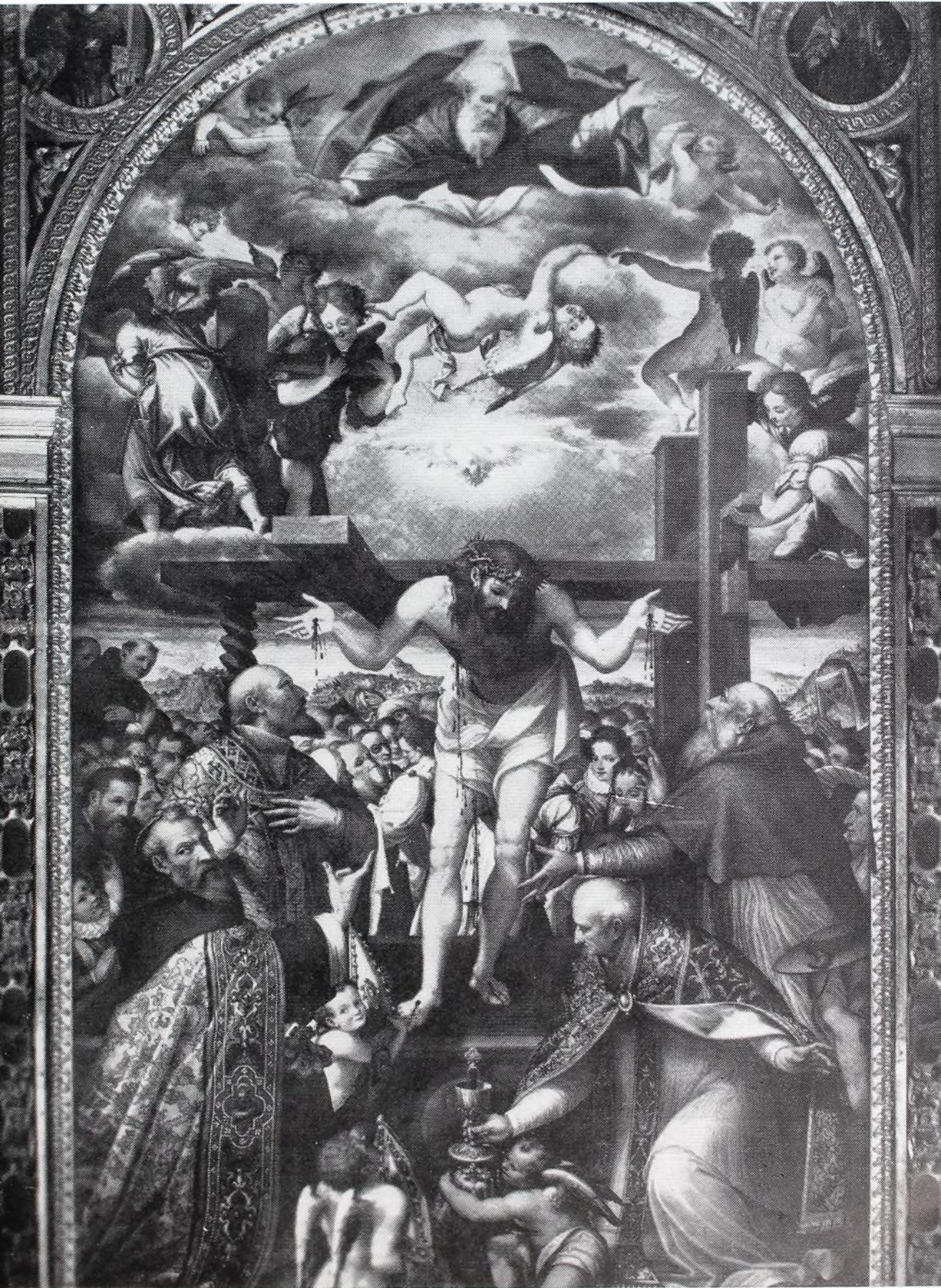
1. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Super Epistolas S. Pauli Lectura* (Rome: Marietti, 1953), II, p. 337.
2. C. Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux* (Paris: Gabalda, 1953), II, p. 283.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 315.
4. W. Leonard, "The Epistle to the Hebrews," *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (London: Nelson, 1953), p. 1157.
5. W. Manson, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Greenwich: Seabury, 1950), pp. 134-5.
6. J. Bonsirven, "Le sacerdoce et le sacrifice de Jésus-Christ d'après l'épître aux Hébreux," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 66 (1939), p. 644.
7. Oesterreicher, ed., *The Bridge* (New York: Pantheon, 1956), I, p. 9.
8. Bonsirven, *art. cit.*, p. 648.
9. Capitalization ours.
10. Manson, *op. cit.*, p. 141.
11. Bonsirven, *art. cit.*, pp. 647; 650.
12. Leonard, *op. cit.*, p. 1168.
13. Spicq, *op. cit.*, II, p. 280.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 281.
15. Cf. B. Prete, *Il Sangue di Cristo* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1956), p. 87: "The epistle to the Hebrews, more than any other writing of the New Testament, speaks of the blood of Christ. In the epistle in the legal terminology of the Old Testament, two new effects of the blood of

- Jesus: purification and sanctification, are indicated. The blood of Christ purifies and sanctifies those belonging to the new Israel." *Ibid.*, p. 80: "The remission of sins and the new covenant are the two ideas that accompany the remembrance of the sacrificial blood shed by Christ for the salvation of men. This twofold idea remains at the basis of the ultimate development of the doctrine of the blood of Christ . . ."
16. Spicq, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 274-5: "Israel undertook to observe the precepts of Yahweh, Yahweh guaranteeing His help and His rewards to the faithful. And this is why the blood is poured out half on the altar — substituting for God — and half on the people; it acts as a blood tie, if we might call it that, which unites them . . . The blood of Christ is the blood of a covenant which is not only new but also one that is definitive, permanent, and eternal 'in virtue of the blood of an everlasting covenant' (Heb 13,20). Thanks to this blood a new people, the holy Church, has been united and consecrated . . ." Cf. *ibid.*, where Father Spicq studies other biblical references in which blood is understood as sealing a union. There is the case of the circumcision of Moses' son. On that occasion Sepphora, the wife of Moses, declared: "You are a spouse of blood to me" (cf. Ex 4, 24-26). The blood is regarded as a symbol of union. Or again there is the rite, carried out on the occasion of the ordination of priests, the slaughter of a second ram (cf. Ex 29, 19-21; Lv 8,23-24.30). Some blood was put on the right ear of Aaron and the right ears of his sons, some on the thumbs of their right hand, some on the great toes of their right feet. The rest of the blood was splashed upon the altar; some of it was resumed and mixed with oil and then sprinkled on the priests and their vestments. "The blood on the ear symbolizes the docility of the priests to the word of God; the anointing of the hands signifies the practice of good works, and that on the feet the walking in justice. If the vestments themselves are sprinkled with blood, this is only because the entire person of the priest is, as it were, covered with divine grace."
17. *Ibid.*, p. 277: "While the holocaust and the peace-offerings were primarily sacrifices of adoration, of thanksgiving, and of petition, the sacrifices of expiation for sin or guilt (Lv 7,1-2) have as their end the remission of sins and re-entry into the grace of God. The ritual here gives blood a holiness and a privileged efficacy. It does not content itself with prescribing that blood be poured out upon the earth or upon the altar; it commands many aspersions. The ceremony is the same for the reparation of the sins of the high priest as for those of the people . . ."
18. Cf. the paper of E. Siegman, "Blood in the Old Testament," in these Proceedings.
19. G. Lefebvre, *Les Magnificences du Précieux-Sang* (Mont-Laurier: Monastère du Précieux Sang, 1946), p. 386: "The epistle to the Hebrews, taking up this word (sprinkling) calls the blood of Jesus 'the blood of the sprinkling' to indicate that it purifies our souls (Heb 12, 24)."

20. Spicq, *op. cit.*, II, p. 281.
21. The fact that Christ suffered outside the gates of Jerusalem is interpreted as a fulfillment of that ritualistic detail of the Mosaic legislation whereby the flesh of Jewish victims on the Great Day of Expiation was not eaten but burned outside the camp.
22. Spicq, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 275-6: "St. John said that the body of Christ was the bread descended from heaven; according to the Epistle to the Hebrews we might say that the blood of Christ makes man ascend to heaven (Heb 10,19)."
23. Bonsirven, *art. cit.*, p. 777: "Finally, the effusion of the blood and the death of Jesus inaugurate a new alliance, which will no longer have the defects of the old, but will be the measure of a complete intimacy with God, of a supernatural knowledge, of the definitive deliverance from sin . . ."
24. J. Steinmueller-K. Sullivan, "Blood of Christ," *Catholic Biblical Encyclopedia, New Testament* (New York: Wagner, 1950), p. 80: "As a reward for the blood which Jesus shed in establishing an everlasting covenant, the Eternal Father raised Him from the dead, and thus His bloody death on the cross merited for Him, as well as for us, a glorious resurrection."
25. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 49, a.5, ad 1.
26. C. Callan, *The Epistles of St. Paul* (New York: Wagner, 1931), II, p. 418, commenting on Heb 9,23, observes: "The writer is deducing a conclusion, and he wishes to say that, since by divine ordination it was necessary that 'the patterns of heavenly things, etc.' (i.e., the earthly Tabernacle and its vessels), should be cleansed and purified by the blood of sacrificial victims, so 'the heavenly things, etc.' (i.e., the ideal Sanctuary in heaven), require dedication by the Blood of a far more excellent victim, namely, Christ Himself. The heavenly Sanctuary cannot be said to need purification in itself but only by reason of its contact with sinful worshippers."
27. C. Spicq, "Contemplation, Theology, and the Moral Life according to The Epistle to the Hebrews," *Theology Digest* 1 (1953), p. 161.
28. Bonsirven, *art. cit.*, p. 786.
29. Spicq, *op. cit.*, II, p. 271

**THE MYSTIC WINEPRESS**  
Mainardi, Museum of Cremona. Late 16th Century.

# Precious Blood In Art



## THE PRECIOUS BLOOD IN ART

On the first evening of the Study Week an illustrated lecture on the Precious Blood in art was given. Without the line and color of the slides the lecture notes are incomplete. Yet the subject deserves more than a brief notice, for the art played a large part in the Study Week program.

Most of the pictures in this article were published originally in the Study Week guide. During the week, however, more pictures were on display in the library. The majority of these pictures were supplied by Mr. Maurice Vloberg about whom we shall speak later.

Besides the collection of Mr. Vloberg a portion of the exhibits was devoted to contemporary art works. Three artists were represented: Sister M. Cephas, C.P.P.S., Sister M. Regina, Ad.P.P.S., and Miss Ann Grill. Selections from each are included in this article.

The pieces selected from the work of Sister M. Cephas, C.P.P.S., of Regina Heights, Dayton, are representative of her complete series for the Sundays and major feasts of the Church year. The cover for these proceedings was produced for the feast of All Saints.

The statues pictured here are models of the larger statues Sister M. Regina, Ad.P.P.S., is carving for the new convent at Sacred Heart College, Wichita, Kansas. The whole new convent and chapel in fact are the dream of Sister Regina. These statues are to be life-sized figures carved from Kansas Silverdale stone. She is also carving seven medallions with symbols of the seven Blood-sheddings. These will be carved from red sandstone taken from the *Sangre de Cristo* mountains in New Mexico. They will be embedded in the white alabaster front of the main altar.

Miss Ann Grill is head of the Art Department at Barat College and teacher at the Chicago Art Institute. The art work for *Philosophy Today* is done by Miss Grill. The two samples presented are symbols she drew for the Study Week as abstract representations of the Precious Blood theme. The explanations are drawn from her own reflections on her efforts.



Sister Regina's Statues for Sacred Heart College

From the very beginning of the planning for the Study Week the Committee in charge of the program wished to give a large place to an art collection. Maurice Vloberg, Paris, France, was recognized as an authority on the Precious Blood in art<sup>1</sup> and the Committee sought his aid in these preparations. Mr. Vloberg's contribution has been considerable. Everything that he gathered was identified and classified according to iconographic themes. All of the material has been mounted. Some of it was on display during the Study Week. The following list is our arrangement of the iconographic themes that Mr. Vloberg would identify with Precious Blood art.

## I. EUCHARISTIC THEMES

1. Old Testament Sacrifices — prefigures of Christ's Sacrifice.
  - a. Abraham and Isaac
  - b. Melchisedech
  - c. Paschal Lamb
2. Crucifixions with chalices
  - a. Chalice at the foot of the cross
  - b. Chalice with angels
    - 1) Angels delivering souls from purgatory
    - 2) Angels without chalices
  - c. Church with chalice
    - 1) taking blood from the pierced side
    - 2) Church holding chalice alone
  - d. Chalice with other personages
    - 1) Adam
    - 2) St. John
    - 3) Joseph of Arimathea
3. Immolated or Mystic Lamb
4. Fountain of life
5. Mystic winepress
6. Eucharistic miracles
  - a. Profaned and bleeding hosts
  - b. Bloody corporals
  - c. Blood in chalice appears as living blood
  - d. Bleeding crucifixes
7. Mass of Saint Gregory — Man of Sorrows
8. Precious Blood and the Blessed Virgin
  - a. Our Lady of the Precious Blood
    - 1) Batz-sur-Mer, France
    - 2) Madonna of Saint Gaspar
  - b. The Virgin and the grapes
  - c. The Virginal milk, source of the Precious Blood
  - d. Double intercession

9. Liturgical symbols
  - a. Chalice
  - b. Pelican
  - c. Mass with chalice scene
  - d. Sacrifices
  - e. Last suppers
10. Legendary themes: Holy Grail

## II. PASSION THEMES

1. Agony and sweat of blood
2. "Price of Blood" — Judas and 30 pieces of silver
3. Scourging
4. Crowning with thorns
5. Crucifixions
  - a. Wound in the side
  - b. Piercing with the lance
  - c. Wounded heart
  - d. Bloody crucifixion scenes
6. Sepulchers — Pietas, etc. with Blood
7. Miscellaneous
  - a. Instruments of the Passion
  - b. Holy Face and Veil of Veronica
  - c. Holy Shroud
  - d. Seven Blood sheddings (Circumcision)
  - e. Bloody Christ of Spain
  - f. Our Lady of the Passion
    - 1) Co-redemption or compassion of Mary
    - 2) Stabat Mater, Pietas, etc.

## III. MYSTICAL AND SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATIONS

1. Christ crucified by the virtues
2. Blood falling on the skull of Adam
3. Cross, the altar of the sacrifice of the new law

4. Seven sacraments
5. Holy Trinity and the Crucified

#### IV. CULT OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

1. Relics and shrines of the Precious Blood
2. Holy Face
3. Holy Cards for devotion
4. Devotees of the Blood
  - a. Compassion of the Little Angels
  - b. St. John and the Virgin
  - c. St. Mary Magdalene
  - d. St. Dominic
  - e. St. Catherine of Siena
  - f. St. Gaspar del Bufalo
  - g. Blessed Maria de Matthias

A vast field of study, much neglected in the past, is suggested by this outline. It is our hope that it will arouse interest and make us all more conscious of the iconographic themes of the Precious Blood. In this way the work of the Committee in collecting and studying Precious Blood art will be greatly furthered.

The more familiar one becomes with the materials gathered by our collector, Mr. Vloberg, the more difficult it is to arrange each item precisely. Due to overlapping of subjects, the same theme will recur in more than one place. Some of the ideas may require repetition, because they are taken up separately and treated under different points of view. The same is true of the areas where the materials are so abundant as to require elaborate subdivisions, e.g. the piercing of the side of the Savior with the lance, the wound of the sacred side, the wounded heart.

The Committee is grateful to Mr. Vloberg not only for his assiduous gathering of materials, but also for his permission to use the fruits of his labors — the pictures, notes, and writings — in any way it found suitable for the Study Week. In the Guide to the Study Week a summary of the chapter on the Precious Blood taken from his work *L'Eucharistie dans l'Art* appeared.

It treated of the four major Eucharistic iconographic themes: The crucifixion with chalice, The Immolated Lamb, The Fountain of Life, and The Mystic Winepress. In the translation that follows will be found the material from the Study Week Guide with two additional themes also taken from his writings on Our Lady of the Precious Blood and the Man of Sorrows. We present these themes because they represent in the main the materials of the slide lecture of the Study Week.

### THE PRECIOUS BLOOD IN ART

Jesus himself defined and affirmed the consubstantial relationship between the Eucharist and the Precious Blood, when at the Last Supper "Taking the chalice, he said, 'This is My Blood of the new covenant, which is being shed for many.'" At the same time He manifested His will that the Blood of the Agony, of the Scourging, of the Crucifixion in the future should flow in the mystic sacrifice of the altar: "Do this in remembrance of me."

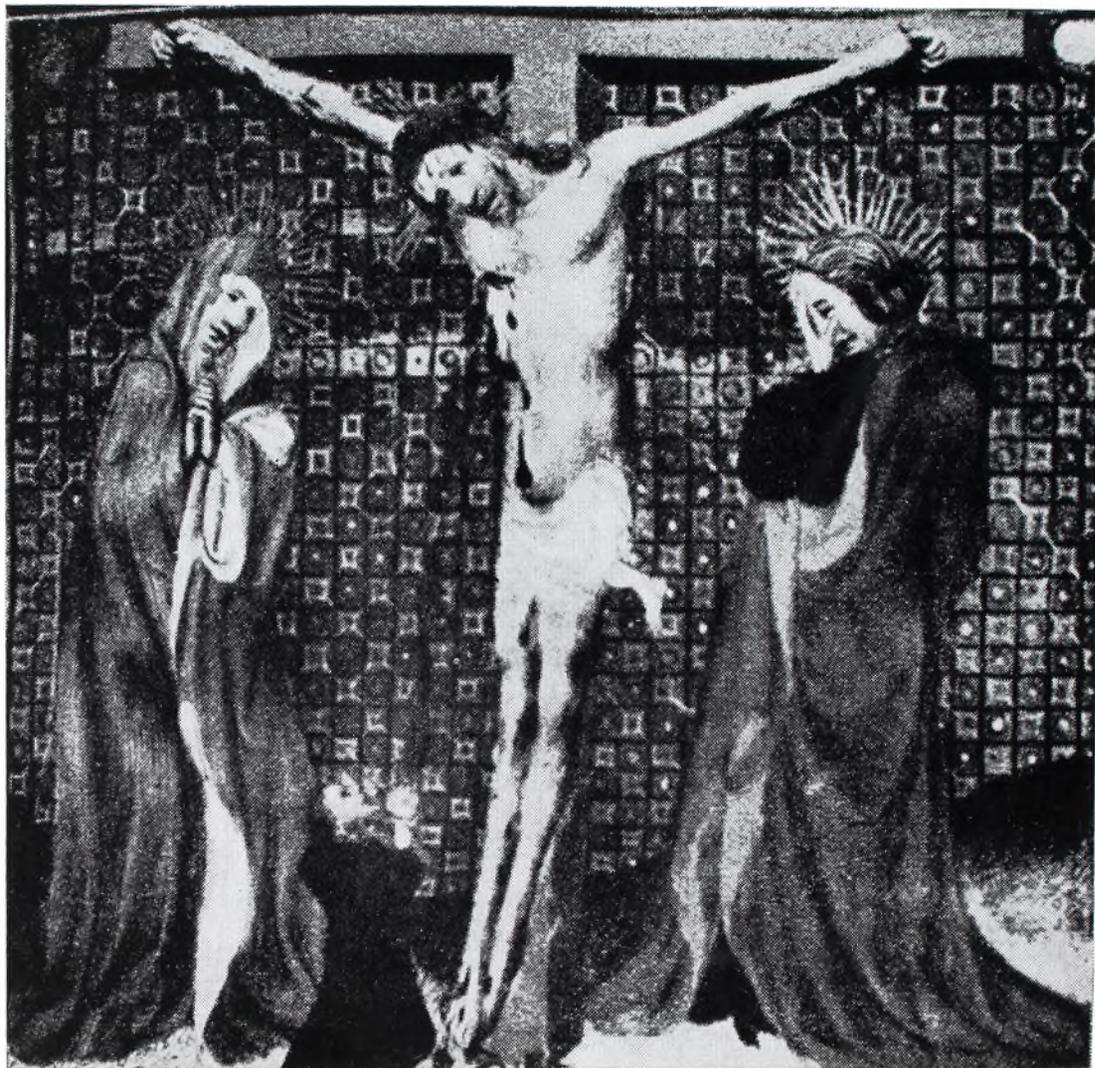
The scriptural statement needs no development, nor do we need to comment on the doctrine. We wish only to point out some of the commentary raised in literature and art.

The intimate association of the Blood of the Last Supper and the Blood of Calvary was romanced in the legend of the *Holy Grail*. It recounts how Joseph of Arimathea used the Cup of the Last Supper to receive the Blood from the wounds of Christ on Good Friday. The *Quest of the Holy Grail* furnishes the proof of the cult rendered to the Precious Blood during the 12th and 13th centuries.

The spirit which animated the Knights of the Round Table in their quest of the Holy Grail is not a myth. It was the spirit of the Crusaders.

To the sad loss of the Holy Land they sent the most coveted of its relics across the sea to their preferred churches. At Bruges, a chapel, a gem in stone, received the relic of the Blood which Thierry of Alsace bestowed on the town in 1148.

Legends and relics were consecrated by art. Different themes illustrate the mystery of the Precious Blood and its continuous shedding in the Eucharist.



JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA RECEIVES THE BLOOD OF CHRIST IN THE CUP OF THE GRAIL. Miniature from a Romance of Lancelot. Beginning of 15th century.

### *I. Crucifixion with Chalice*

The crucifix has always been the symbol of sacrifice. The theme is intensified when in the most ancient symbolic crucifixions a chalice emphasizes the identity with the sacrifice of the altar, where Christ renews and perpetuates the Divine Blood He shed upon the cross. Sometimes the chalice is placed beneath the feet of the Savior. At other times the Church extends the chalice toward the stream flowing from the Side of Christ.

*The Church*

The emblem of the chalice in the hands of the Church designates how as dispenser of the Precious Blood she is the source from whence it flows now in virtue of her priesthood. The attribute takes on a singular eloquence when this figure of the Church confronts the unfaithful Synagogue on Calvary. While the dethroned Synagogue turns away from the Victim, the Mystic Spouse turns herself toward the wounded side whence she came forth as Eve came from the side of Adam. The chalice which she holds under the bleeding side shows that she is born of this Blood. This is the meaning in some of the miniatures and ivories of the 9th and 10th centuries. The figure of the Church receiving the Precious Blood at its source is frequently found in crucifixions according to the mystic character of the 11th and 12th centuries. This symbolism is very pronounced in the Psalter of Bonmont, 13th century, which shows Jesus crucified by the very virtues of which He is the model. The Church armed with the Cross as a banner receives the Blood of Christ.

*At the feet of the Savior*

The chalice placed at the feet of the Savior is just as frequently found in the crucifixions of the miniatures and ivories of about the same period. Notably in the Pontifical of Sherborne at the end of the 10th century. This theme passed with the miniaturists of the 13th and 14th centuries and is sometimes changed or offered in variations combined with other symbols. In connection with this theme we should consider the presence of the skull of Adam at the foot of the cross. Sometimes our first father rises from the tomb and holds his hands toward his redeemer. Sometimes miniaturists associate this with the sacramental drink which continues to save the world all the days and place the emblem of the chalice in the hands of Adam rising from the grave as in the 13th century missal from Mont-Saint-Eloi.

Byzantine art has likewise reinforced the eucharistic sense of this theme by some of its compositions. Numerous Greek and Slavic ikons are pictographs based on a text from the Sapiential Books: "Wisdom has constructed herself a temple." The temple is the divine Sophia represented as a basilica, at the center of which is prepared an altar. We have here an image of Calvary, with the Blessed Virgin and Saint



CHRIST CRUCIFIED BY THE VIRTUES. 13th Cent. Psalter of Bonmont library of Besancon.



ADAM RECEIVES THE BLOOD OF THE SAVIOR IN A CHALICE. Missal of Mont-Saint-Eloi, 13th century.

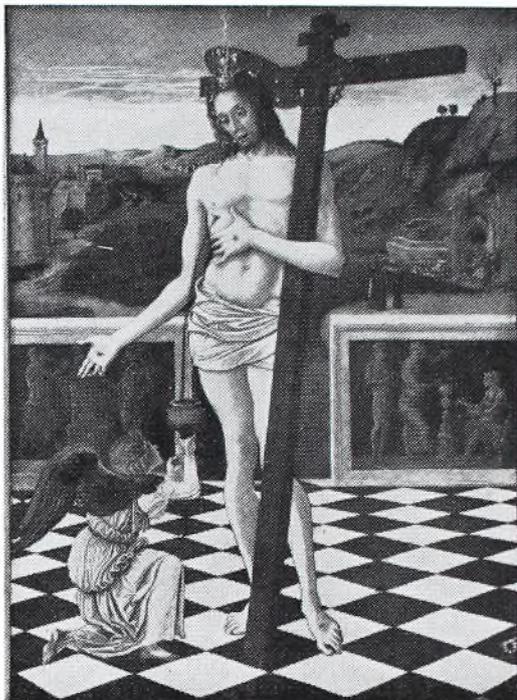
John on either side of Christ, whose Blood from the wounded side falls into a chalice placed on the altar.

The image is even more telling in the Holy Grail picture where Joseph of Arimathea receives the Precious Blood flowing from the wounds of the Crucified Jesus.

### *The Angels*

We have just seen that it might be the Church, Adam, or Joseph of Arimathea holding the chalice under the stream of the Precious Blood. The 13th century Italians and the 14th century French attribute this office to the angels.

Now and then the artists bring out more the role of the angel who received the Blood at Its source, the wound near the heart. This wound, of course, was the object of a special cult. Taste always improves on allegory, so one looks for some variants in this theme. The tableau of Jean Bellini, at the National Gallery shows the Christ of Sorrow, standing, his long cross placed against Him. He sheds the Blood of His wounds into a chalice which an angel holds.



**THE BLOOD OF THE REDEEMER.**  
Jean Bellini. National Gallery.

## *II. The Immolated Lamb*

The Immolated Lamb symbolizes Christ's Passion. Upon the sarcophagi and mosaics, the Lamb, raised upon a little hill surveys the pasture while other sheep come to drink of the Blood which is streaming beneath His feet. This source of salvation flows from the veins of the Lamb. *Agnus redemit oves*, sings the Easter liturgy. *Pascha nostrum immolatus est Christus*. The principal sacrament of the Old Testament was the Paschal Lamb. In the New it is

replaced by the Sacrament of the Eucharist, which recalls the Passion just as the Paschal Lamb prefigured the passion.

One can therefore see an allusion to the Blood of the chalice in these streams which flow from the open breast of the bleeding Lamb. In the miniature from the Pontifical of Paris we see the Lamb which has been struck by the blindfolded Synagogue. The blow was so violent that the lance was broken. Opposite is her antitype, the Church, who received the divine Blood in a chalice which she respectfully holds in covered hands. This is a 13th century work.

It is also a chalice which receives the Blood of the Lamb of the Apocalypse. The visionary of Patmos has described the divine Lamb in His permanent state of victim surrounded by the twenty-four elders, and the four living creatures who fall down before the Lamb and sing a new canticle:

“Worthy art thou to take the scroll and open its seals; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us for God with thy Blood.”  
(Apoc 5,9)

This vision tantalized the Carolingian artists. There are many worthwhile paintings, prints and tapestries depicting the Triumph of the Immolated Lamb by such artists as Dürer.

But all these works are eclipsed before the pictorial poem of the Van Eyck brothers in their altarpiece of the Mystic Lamb in the Church of Saint Bavo in Ghent. It is a most luminous paraphrase of the vision of the Apocalypse. A profound theological sense is present at the center of the Composition, as it is at the very heart of Christianity, the Immolation of the Lamb: to It come all the ages of the promise, for It continues the universal redemption, in Its triumph are joined the two Testaments. In the central plan, on either side of the Fountain of Life, two groups are balanced, those who have predicted and hoped for, the patriarchs and prophets, and those who have seen and were chosen in the new priesthood, the apostles, popes, bishops, and priests. In the distance, some valleys of the celestial Jerusalem come into view, to the left a cortege of confessors, to the right the virgins celebrating their mystic nuptials. These elect of all times, coming from every horizon, converge on the Prince and Author of their glory, the Lamb prepared at the altar where His Blood fills the chalice, the Blood which was poured out through the instruments carried by the angels as trophies.



**SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST AND THE LAMB, by Matthias Grunewald.**  
Detail from the Isenheim Altarpiece. Museum of Colmar.

### III. *The Fountain of Life*

Artists have frequently sought to illuminate the idea of Christian participation in the merits of Christ's sacrifice. From the Heart pierced by the lance, from the hands and feet pierced by the nails, from five wounds flows the inexhaustible source of grace. The source flowing from the Heart is the most symbolic, for it was shed mixed with water, a sign of the two more directly regenerative sacraments, Baptism and Eucharist. It is the Fountain *par excellence* from which flow the four rivers of Paradise. Such in brief is the sense of the theme of the *Fountain of Life*.

The theme was touched upon in Carolingian art. Here it was expressed as an actual fountain in the center of a flowering garden, but the 15th century forgot this primitive symbol and expressed the theme more realistically. Jesus is attached to a cross whose base is steeped in a large basin. The Precious Blood falls from the wounds into this basin, where the representatives of the Christian people come to draw out the Blood or to bathe in it.

### *Mystic Bath*

Among the many formulas and variations discovered by the artists, the *Mystic Bath* brings out the idea most forcefully. The Fountain of Life offers to all the Blood which cleanses and which heals. This theme seems to have arisen in a city or at a sanctuary renowned for its cult to the Precious Blood. Perhaps the image is native to Flanders, where the wonderful relic of Bruges is found. It surely has left many traces in the works of Flemish painters and engravers. Three of the most beautiful compositions on this subject were done by artists of that school: Bellegambe, David, and Horenbault.

For the Abbey of Anchin which preserved since 1239 some drops of the Precious Blood, Bellegambe painted the triptych now found in the Museum of Lille. (3) The whole painting presents some interesting features from a theological point of view. It is a moving exegesis of the scripture texts used as antiphons for the Vespers of the Office of the Precious Blood. These are inscribed on the scrolls: two are held by the angels, the third decorates the upper part of the cross:

“Quis est iste qui venit de Edom,  
Tinctis vestibus de Bosra.” (Is. 63,1)

“Quare rubrum est indumentum  
tuum et vestimenta tua sicut calcantium  
in torculari.” (Is. 63,2)

“Torcular calcavi solus et de gentibus  
non est vir mecum.” (Is 63,3)

Note in the reproduction of this painting accompanying this article that the sinners are bathing in the Blood of Christ. It is the Apocalyptic theme of “Those who wash their robes in the Blood of the Lamb.” This together with the three texts just quoted would make the picture significant in any study of the history of the Office for July 1. Note that the figures, aided by Charity and Hope, are remarkably energetic in their efforts to enter the saving flood.

All of the paintings of the Fountain of Life echo the praises of the Litany of the Monks of Fecamp, who exalt the divine Blood as the bath of Souls, Bathing Pool of the Languid, Source of Purity:

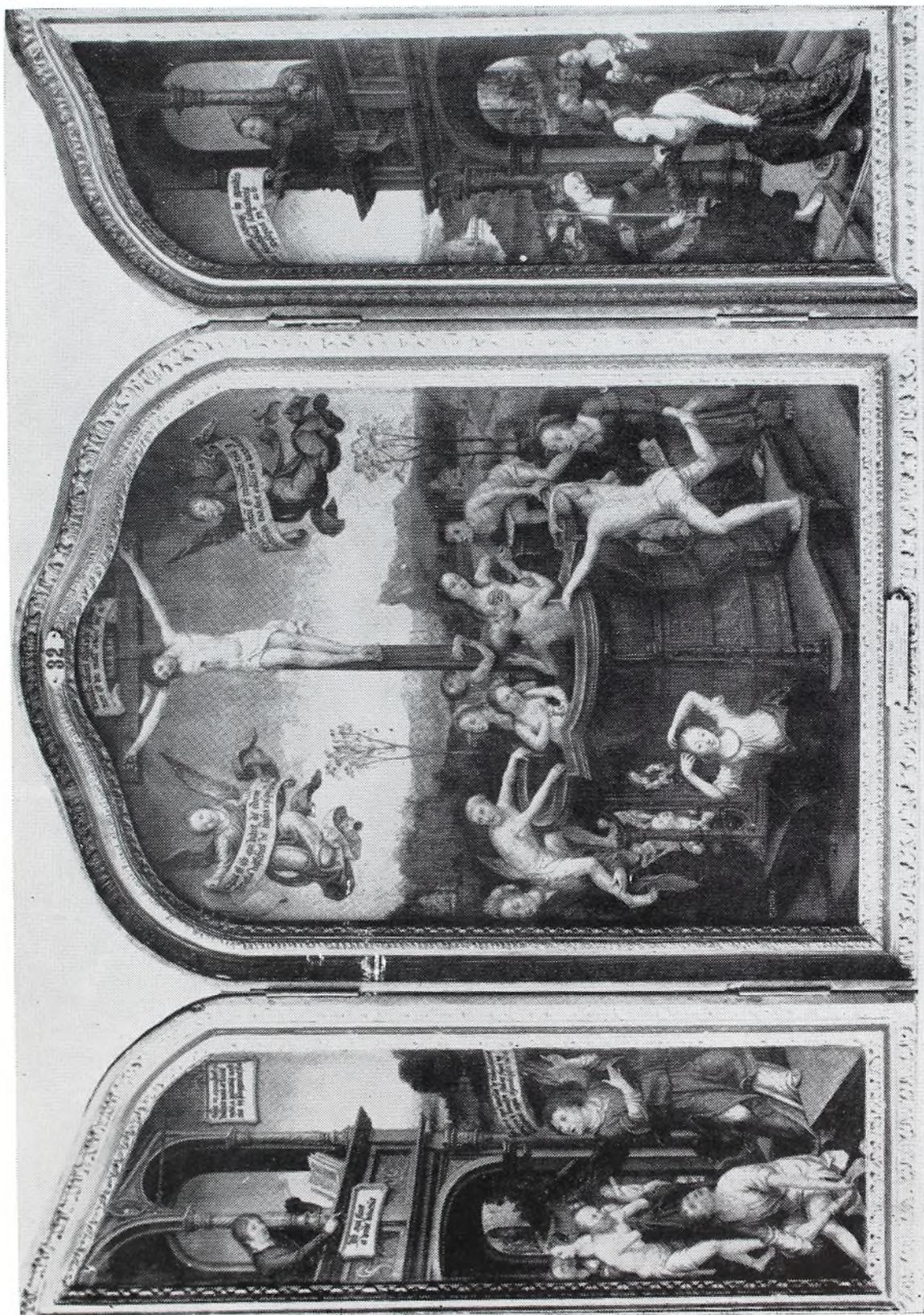
Sanguis, animarum lavacrum, lava nos.  
Sanguis, piscina languentium, salva nos.  
Sanguis, fons puritatis, irriga nos.

A variation of this theme shows the Blood of Christ flowing from the raised base for material things through four symbolic openings, the heads of the symbolic representation of the Evangelists. With some more or less notable variations this theme appears on stained glass windows of the 16th century.

#### IV. *The Mystic Winepress*

Even more clearly than the Fountain of Life does a connected symbol, the Mystic Winepress, place in relief the Eucharistic mystery. The theme is surely derived from the Fountain of Life. The Man of Sorrows is placed under a press, and His Blood, represented as pressed from the grapes, flows into a tub and fills it to overflowing. It shows that the Savior poured out His Blood even to the last drop that our redemption might be complete. The metaphor of the winepress was suggested since earliest times in the commentators on the Bible.

The plastic figuration of the theme appears in the course of the 12th century in a miniature of the *Hortus Deliciarum* of Herrad of Landsberg.



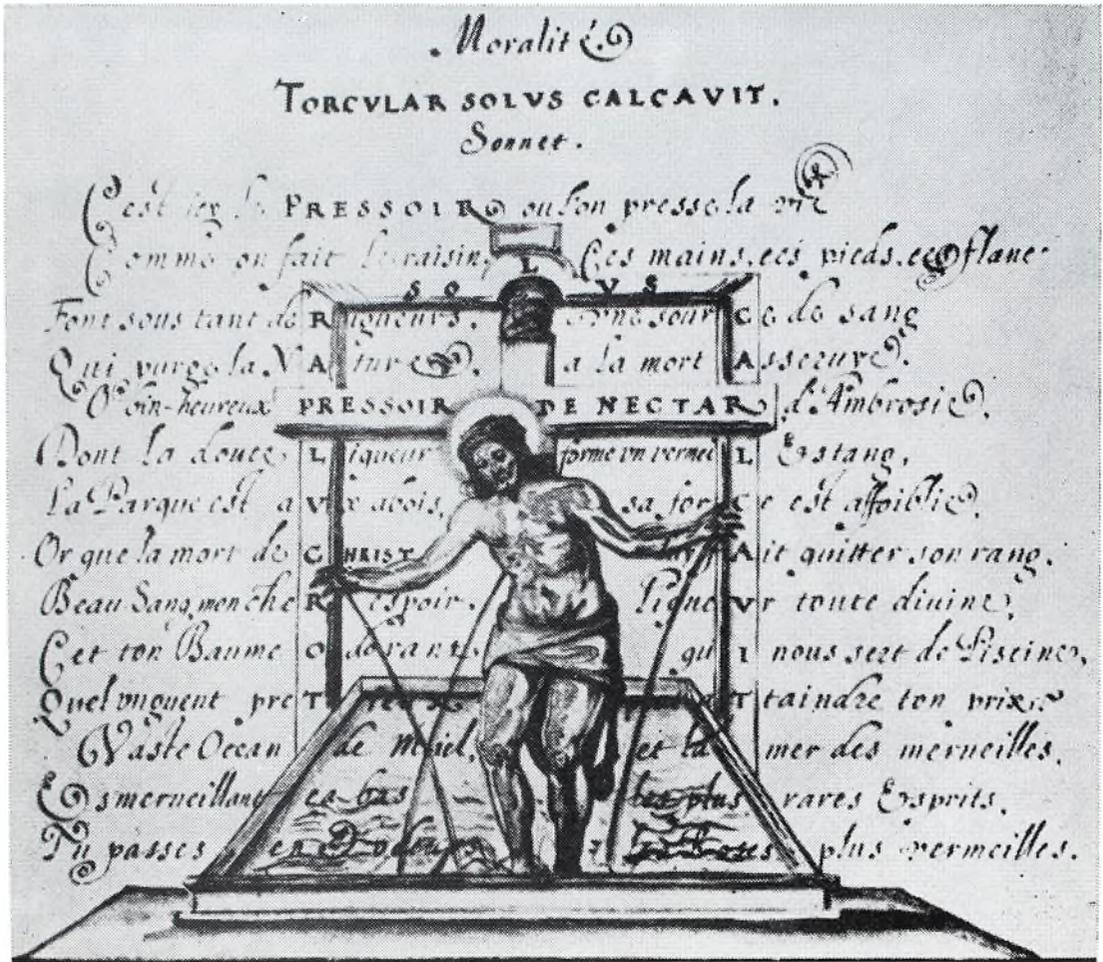
MYSTIC BATH OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD, by Jean Bellegambe (c 1470-1531) Museum of Lille.



**CHRIST IN THE WINEPRESS.** Miniature from the *HORTUS DELICLIARUM* of Herrad of Landsberg. 12th Century.

The theme of the winepress is such an eloquent symbol of the Eucharist that it had its place all marked out for it near some altars. Beyond the symbolism of suffering it also afforded a theme for some of the 16th century windows because of its warmth and the transparency of the red colors.

Certain motives vary this theme. The position of Jesus of-



THE MYSTIC WINEPRESS. Collection of designs and sonnets on the life of Jesus Christ. Middle of 17th century.

fers some variation: sometimes He is on His knees or standing or bent under the press that crushes Him. The formula of Christ standing comes closest to that of the Fountain of Life. The cross becomes the press and serves to crush the body of Christ, whose Blood flows from every part into a basin. Sometimes God the Father works the press, a precise and vigorous symbolism that can only inspire serious meditation on the mystery of the Precious Blood.

The theme of the Winepress where the end of the Middle Ages had placed some of its mystic fire, held some vogue until the 17th century. In the "Pressoir de Nectar", middle of the 17th century, the words have been chosen and placed in such a way that the letters

falling on the vertical of the two mountings of the winepress give one part of the Biblical text: *Torcular calavi*, while the word *solus*, which completes the text, was inscribed on the horizontal piece where it engages the vise.

#### V. *The Man of Sorrows*

According to legend Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) was offering the Holy Sacrifice in his monastery on the Coelian Hill when the Victim appeared to him, immolated as on Calvary, crowned with thorns, the hands and feet pierced, and around about as a garland of suffering are the instruments of the passion.

This legend was credited only in later times: it is not found in the ancient lives or in the *Golden Legend*. It was probably not developed before the 15th or late 14th century. The legend remained chiefly a pictorial tradition.

We find it as the *Mass of Saint Gregory* of which there are many artistic representations. The vision of Saint Gregory shows Jesus at the same time as sacrificer and victim. One might ask why Saint Gregory was chosen as beneficiary of this prodigy rather than some other saints? We might suggest some explanations. Notably the number, the strength, and the unction of his insights on the sacrifice of the cross renewed in the *Hostia altaris*, the immolation of Christ on the altar, or his innovations in the liturgy of the Mass are probably the origin of the imagined vision. The artistic representations between the end of the 14th to the 16th century can be divided into two groups according as they are complete or abridged formulas.

The abridged type gives the essence of the vision without the visionary. It reduces the picture to that of the sorrowing of the Crucified, rising half out of the tomb. His head is pierced with thorns and bent at the shoulders. The hands and chest show the stigmata of the Cross, along with the bleeding wound of the side. Sometimes He is standing, leaning against the cross. The divine Victim gives the impression of having revived, not in glory, but in all his suffering, in order to attest to the value of his suffering always present and infinite.

This theme of the Man of Sorrows was popular in Italy and

Spain. In the simple formula of the vision of Saint Gregory, the Italian masters accent frequently the mystic note and human in placing at each side of Jesus the two faithful acolytes of Calvary, the Blessed Virgin and Saint John. Sometimes they are seated, praying and weeping before the tomb whence emerges the Man of Sorrows. In the chief work of Jean Bellini at the Museum of Brera in Milan, the suffering of the Mother and of the disciple reflect the serenity of the divine face relaxed as in a dream.

The canvas of Bellini and the works of similar performance recall the sacrifice of the cross so exclusively that it is necessary to remind and inform ourselves to know that it represents the sacrifice of the Mass. The complete type of this theme places clearly before us the union of the two sacrifices: Calvary and the Mass.

#### VI. *Our Lady of the Precious Blood*

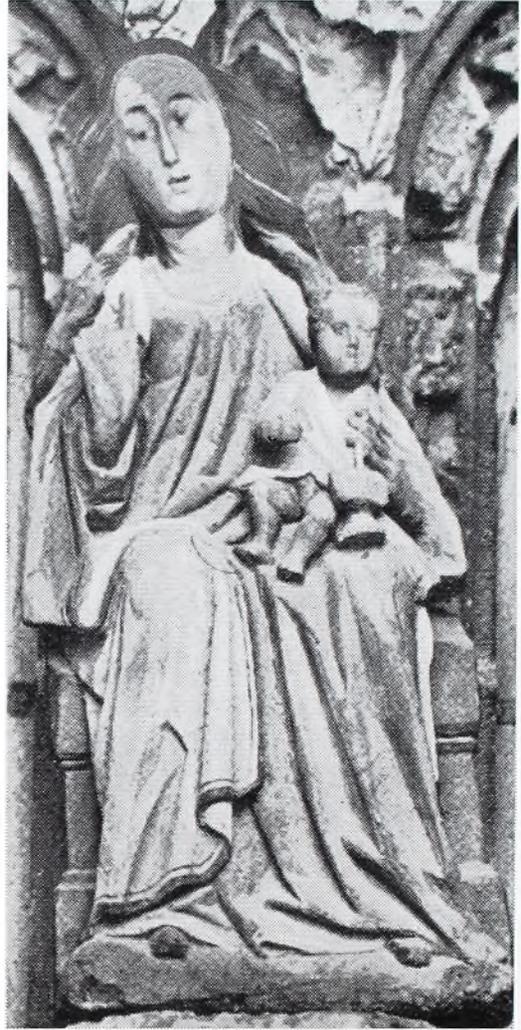
The two sources of life, the divine maternity and the Eucharist are joined as a single term of love and redemption. Theology explains while the liturgy sings the profound reasons which order these mysteries one to the other. The Eucharist extends the Incarnation, for under the form of Bread and Wine Christ is present in all places at all times — the same Christ born of the Virgin Mary as the hymn to the Blessed Sacrament salutes Him: *Ave, verum corpus, natum de Maria Virgine.*

Mary's eucharistic role is prefigured at Cana where she directed the miracle that prefigures the transubstantiation of the wine in the chalice. By the order she gave the servants Mary indicates to us that she is "the source of the Wine, the Fountain of Life, where all can quench their thirst," according to the beautiful thought of Adam of Saint-Victor.

In art the *cluster of grapes* in the hands of Mary or in those of the Infant frequently marks the connection between the divine maternity and the Precious Blood consecrated in the chalice. Or Mary is compared to the winestock whence comes the magnificent grape that is pressed out under the winepress of the Cross. This is the precise meaning we must give to the image of the Virgin of the Grapes associated with that of the divine winepress found in the popular painting of Mignard at the Louvre.

Through the grapes the artists signify both the sacramental drink and the origin of the vine, the *vitis frugifera*, as Saint Simon Stock has called our Blessed Mother. Mary is found giving the Child the grapes, which He crushes into the cup of the chalice.

In the *Notre Dame du Precieux-Sang* (Batz-sur-Mer), reproduced here, there is no recourse to the grapes as a symbol. The child rests on His mother's knees, a chalice in His left hand. His side is pierced at the heart, and from it Blood streams through the fingers of Mary into the chalice, as she appears to press the wound. Here the artist in this rather primitive statue associates the Blessed Virgin with the double sacrifice of Calvary and the altar. This same symbolism is that found in our modern representations of our Lady of the Precious Blood.



**OUR LADY OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.** (16th c.) Church at Batz-Sur-Mer.

There are several other iconographic themes relating Mary to the Precious Blood which are not precisely eucharistic. In the *Double Intercession* taken from a Book of Hours used at Macon in the 15th century, we find the scene in the court of heaven where the glorious Christ appeals to the wound in His side while Mary appeals to the breasts which nourished Him. The theme is theologically remarkable in that it associates Mary with her Son in the distribution of grace.



DOUBLE INTERCESSION, Book of Hours, (15th Cent.), Macon.

The picture furnishes a fine lead to those who look for ways to associate Mary with the devotion to the Precious Blood.

Another association of our Blessed Mother with the devotion can be found in Roger Van der Weyden's *Descent from the Cross* and several other similar paintings. In this painting we find the Virgin in a swoon. The unusual feature of the painting however is that the attitude of her body, frontal to the onlooker, is identical with that of the dead Christ. She becomes at once an independent center of attention nearly as important as her Son. The iconographic theme is *Co-redemption* dramatically presented. The picture recalls the words of Ernald of Chartres (ca. 1160) "*Omnino tunc erat una Christi et Mariae Voluntas, unumque holocaustum ambo pariter offerebant Deo: haec in sanguine cordis, hic in sanguine carnis.*" (*P.L.* CLXXXIX, col. 1727.)<sup>4</sup>

These themes on the Precious Blood, so interesting to art, are the beginnings of the witness to the devotion of the Middle Ages. Art has refined the symbolism and allegories. It frequently found some noble images, sometimes realistic, but it always treated them with respect, in order to make the unfathomable mystery more accessible.

Charles Banet, C.P.P.S., A.M.L.S.  
and  
Maurice Vloberg

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# The Sundays of the Year

All Sundays of the year are the most glorious days for the Precious Blood, since the Mass, which evokes and actualizes the passage of Jesus from death to life is obligatory for all Christians, and that to the end of time: "mortem Domini annuntiabitis donec veniat." That will be the eternal Sunday around the Lamb when we will acclaim to all at the banquet of the eternal wedding feast: "Happy are they who are called to the wedding feast of the Lamb. (Apoc.) What a joy to think that it is to Him whose name is Jesus and the Lamb who evokes His bloody Passion, which after having washed our robes and whitened them in His Blood during all our life, that we will all be united for all eternity. What a triumph then will it be for all those who have become Apostles of the Precious Blood. I seem to hear Saint Gaspar del Bufalo and all his sons & daughters already in heaven shout out: "The Lamb who has been slaughtered, is worthy to receive . . . honor, glory and benediction." (Apoc. 5)

July, 1957.

From a letter to Precious Blood Study Week written by Dom Gaspar Jesebvre, O.S.B.

L'Abbaye de Saint-André, Bruges

A genuine SYMBOL is occasioned by a spontaneous expression of an actual and particular spiritual condition. But at the same time, like works of art, it must rise above the pure individual plane. It must not merely express isolated spiritual elements, but deal with life and the soul in the abstract.

Romano Guardini, Sacred Signs

The Magister symbolorum, the Divine Teacher in symbols, as for instance the parable, has given us the example in this as in many other things. It is for this reason that "He taught them in many parables. Mark 4, 2. What a wealth of symbols Jesus used in order to make Himself and His doctrine known!

# Third Sunday after Epiphany

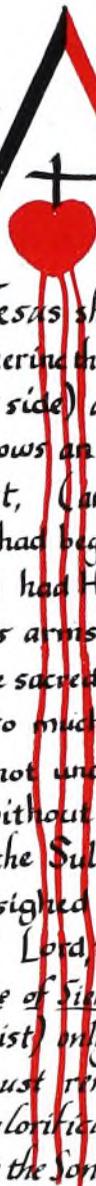
## The Blood of Christ in Holy Communion effects the Trinitification of the soul.

### Symbolism

The Pelican is a symbol of our Lord's atonement and also the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist. She is shown plucking open her breast and feeding the young with her own blood. In the legend of the pelican it is also told how the serpent's sting (sin) kills the young. The pelican lets her warm blood flow upon them, thus restoring them to life.

The Equilateral Triangle symbolizes the Holy Trinity. "As concerns the Trinity ... the oneness of substance and life existing between the Father & the Son is transmitted to us and reproduced in us most

perfectly in the Eucharist. In particular, the Eucharist is the agency that effects the real and perfect mission of the divine persons to the outer world." M. J. Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, p. 528.



### Gospel

"Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed." Matt. 8, 8. "The work of salvation profits those who approach the Divine Physician with the same faith as the Leper and the Centurion in today's Gospel. The Fathers see in the leper and the palsied servant a figure of sin which corrupts souls. Jesus delivers us and applies to us, notably by the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, the merits of His bloody death on the cross."

(Jesus showed Catherine the wound in His side) as a mother shows an infant the breast, (and not until Catherine had begun to weep for longing had He taken her soul into His arms and pressed her lips to the sacred wound, and I learned there so much of the nature of God, that I cannot understand how I can continue to live without my heart breaking for love! (Like the Sulamite of the Canticle, the young woman sighed): Lord, thou hast wounded my heart! Lord thou hast wounded my heart.

Torgenson, *St. Catherine of Siena*, p. 95. "We appreciate it (incorporation in Christ) only when we perceive that the glorification which man must render to God is a continuation & extension of that infinite glorification which God... as Father, receives within the Godhead from the Son who is equal to him in nature. . . The Eucharistic

Dom Gaspar Lefebvre,  
*Les Magnificence  
du Précieux-Sang.*  
p. 44.

presence and the union of the Son of God with us constitute the sole foundation and prerequisite of the worship and glorification which God expects from us.

Scheeben, *loc. cit.*



# Quinquagesima Sunday

Behold we are going up to Jerusalem. Luke 10, 3.

The Third Prediction of His Passion

## The Blood of Christ

will be shed for us.

### Gospel

By the prediction of the most material circumstances of His death, Jesus convinced the Twelve of the absolute voluntariness of His passion and resurrection. James and John get visions of His glory and want to share it. Jesus answers:

Of the cup that I drink, you shall drink, & with the baptism with which I am baptized you shall be baptized. Matt 10, 37-39, Mark 10, 32

The Blind Man of Jericho recovered His sight under the very eyes of the Apostles to strengthen their faith in the Divine Power.

To the Priests Letter 11, 1827

"But blessed we if at the foot of the Cross we acquire the life of the spirit, which is indeed the soul of every holy undertaking.

St. Gaspar del Bufalo

### Symbolism

Christ has redeemed us that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Christ Jesus. — St. Paul. Abraham offered his only son in sacrifice at God's command,

### Christ's Lenten Program

given after the first prediction of His Passion

If anyone will come after me

LET HIM DENY HIMSELF,

TAKE UP HIS CROSS

renounce his own will, goods, honor, reputation, life — for God's service

bear with patience and resignation,

all afflictions and sufferings as God sends them.

and allow me walk, carrying the cross by imitation of Christ's virtues, living by His Faith & keeping the Sacred Passion before one's eyes.

"For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father and then he will render to everyone according to his conduct.

Matt 16, 27.

the victim Isaac carried the wood on which he was to be sacrificed. His place was taken by a ram caught by its horns in the brambles, just as the Lamb of God had his sacred head surrounded by thorns. Isaac's miraculous deliverance from death, and in a sense restoration to life proclaims the resurrection (symbolized by the fire) of Christ after his passion on the altar of the Cross.



# Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

You cannot serve God and mammon. *Matt. 6, 24.*

You cannot drink the Blood of Christ  
and the cup of devils.



CF Saint Paul, 1 Cor. 10, 21.



**Gospel** "By the effusion of his blood upon the cross, Jesus delivered us from the slavery of sin and merited for us divine grace which makes us live virtuously. The bloody death of Christ is therefore in us a principle of struggle between two masters: God, the source of supernatural life, and the world at the service of the devil and his malice. And they who belong to Christ," writes St. Paul, have crucified their flesh with its passions & desires." *Epistle - Gal. 5, 24.*

"The great Doctor Saint Ambrose enlightens us again on this doctrine. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils. (1 Cor. 10, 21) [You cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord and the table of devils.]; you cannot, says the Lord, serve God and Mammon.

For he who drinks the chalice of demons outrages the chalice of the Lord, for it is to destroy the works of the devil that Christ let himself be put on the cross.

Dom Gaspar Lefebvre, O.S.B., p. 163.  
*Les Magnificences du Précieux-Sang*

## Symbolism The Winepress

To the Priests - Letter V  
1831

Let us examine (ourselves) in a spirit of profound humility before the adorable throne of the mercy of Jesus Christ, which is the Cross...

The wine-cellar is filled with a press for this purpose, to squeeze out the juice from the grapes in order to obtain from them those precious drinks of which we have spoken till now. And indeed was not the heart of Jesus which is typified in the wine cellar, put under the press of the most cruel suffering? And does not all the profit which comes from His sufferings flow thence into our souls?

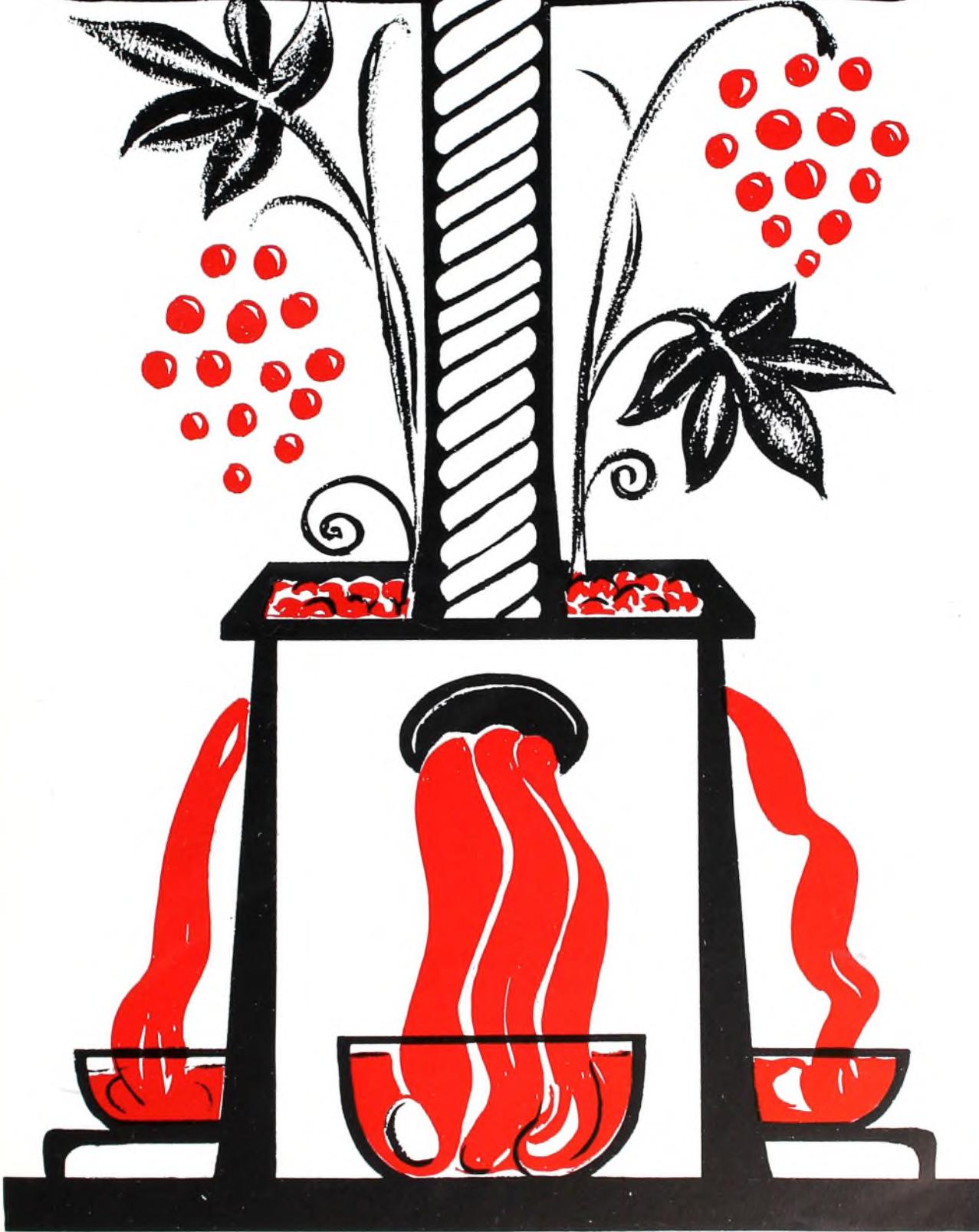
Let us remember that the nuptial bed of the pacific King is the cross; that our souls upon this nuptial bed yearn for the most tender embraces of affection towards Jesus, Who has redeemed us through love, Who in love hath shed all His Blood, and through Whom we have our mystical dwelling in His Heart.

St. Gaspar del Bufalo

"And the Church who completes Him in all things, and, therefore, continues through all ages His life of expiation & atonement - puts on her children the sublime task which the Apostle thus expresses: I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, by suffering in my flesh for His body, which is the Church. (Col. 1, 24)

Abbot Gueranger, O.S.B. 14th Sunday after Pentecost  
*The Liturgical Year, Book II.*

TORCULAR ECCLESIAE



# The Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Now there was standing by the cross of Jesus his mother:

John 9, 25.



Mary is the rightful dispenser of  
the **B**lood of **C**hrist



It is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, where the oblation of Calvary is renewed sacramentally, which associates us more fully with the Passion of Christ and with the Compassion of His Blessed Mother. This rite, essentially recalling the bloody death of the Saviour, reminds us of the anguish experienced by the maternal heart of the Virgin when at the time she saw bursting through all the wounds of the body of her well-beloved Son, the Blood of which she was formerly the source. And the Communion of that Body and Blood makes us participate, at one and the time, in the martyrdom of the Redeemer and of the Co-Redemptress."

**G**ospel "The Precious Blood is the fountain of the plenitude of all graces in Mary, but it is also the source of her power to help us. By her union with the Incarnate Word & by offering the Precious Blood in the temple and beneath the Cross in union with her Divine Son, she became the Mother of the Saviour and the Mother of those that wish to be saved in His Sacred Blood, the Blood which Mary nourished with her own substance and the fruits of which she thereby acquired a certain right to dispense . . . Since our Divine Saviour constituted His Blessed Mother standing by the Cross the universal heiress of all the riches of His Blood, and since it through her hands that we draw graces from the Saviour's fountains, is it not fitting that we should offer this same Blood to God through the hands of His Mother for ourselves and for others?" M.F. Walz, S.P.S., *Why is Thy Apparel Red* p. 15.

## Symbolism

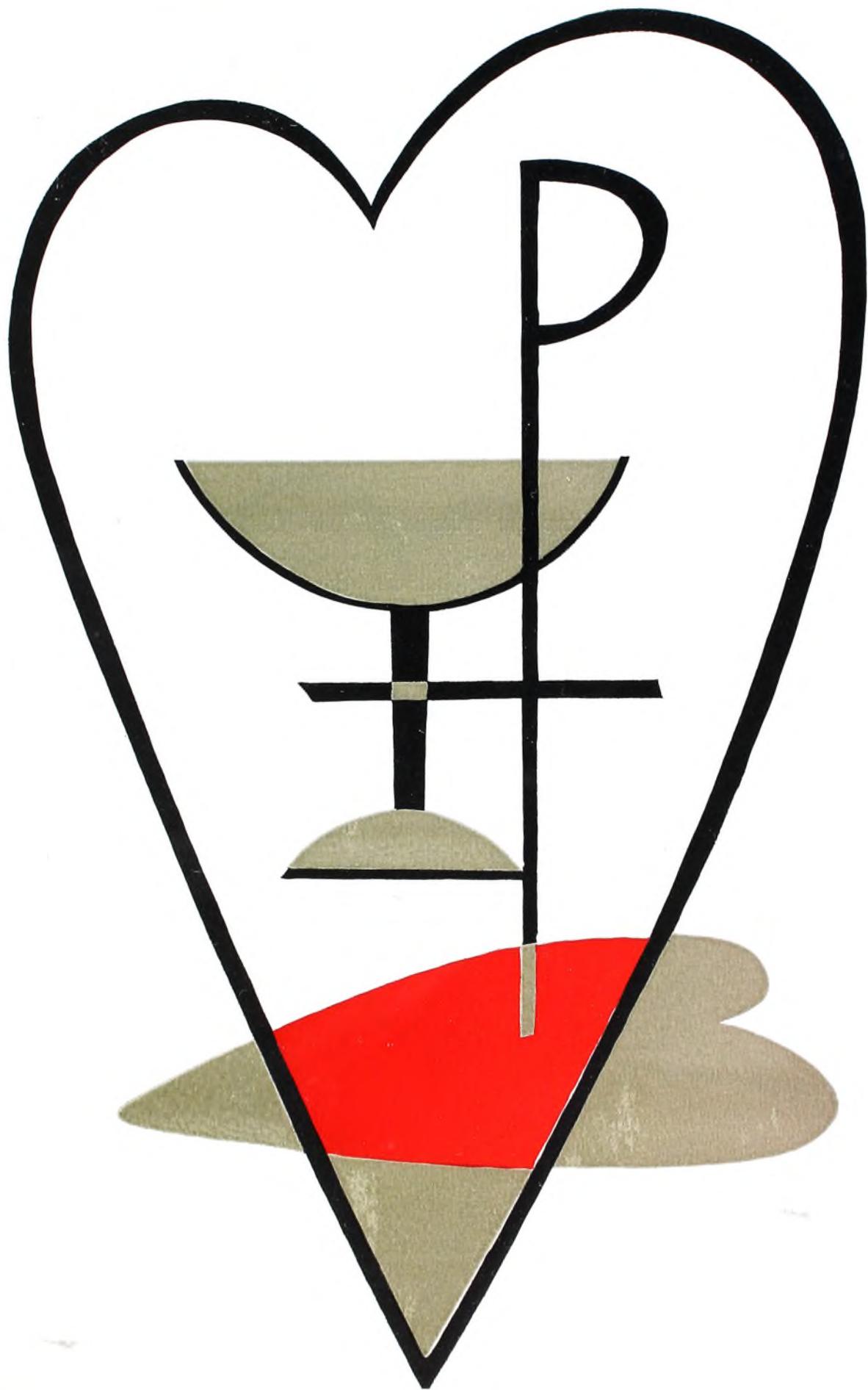
When the chalice is uplifted over the altar, the Blood of Jesus is there, whole and entire, glorified and full of the pulses of his true human life. The Blood that stained the crown of thorns and bedewed the Cross, the Blood that He drank himself in his own communion on the Mursay night . . . that same Blood is living in the chalice, united to the Person of the Eternal Word, to be worshipped with the utmost prostration our bodies and our souls. Faber, *The Precious Blood*, p. 35. "But it was beneath the Cross that our blessed Mother made the offering of her son in the most heroic manner. Mary is then the rightful dispenser of the Blood of Jesus." Walz, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

O Mother, we implore you by the tears which overwhelmed you, by the sad death of your Son and by the Blood of His wounds, imprint in our hearts the sorrow with which your heart is filled. Lefebvre, *loc. cit.*

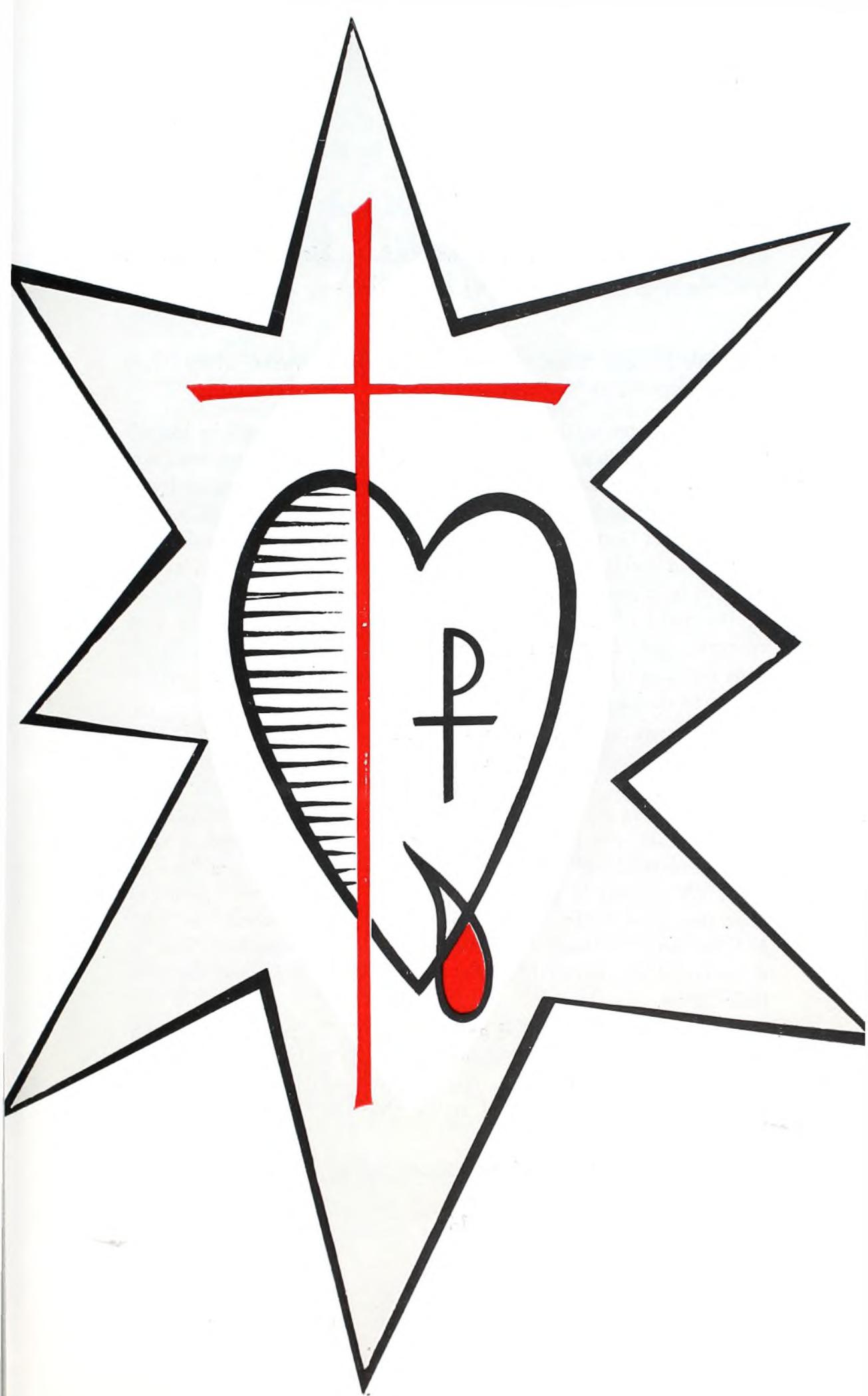


STABAT  
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+

Love is the all-embracing reality. This is symbolized by the large heart. Everything takes place at the interior of love and here finds its meaning. This love is the all-encompassing love of Christ, indicated by the *Chi Rho* in the heart. This charity of Christ is a sacrificial love. The horizontal line on the sacrificial symbol of the cross passes over into the chalice, the sign of the Mass. There is an identity between the sacrifice of the cross and the sacrifice of the Mass. The fruits of the loving sacrifice of Christ's Blood come to us through the Mass. The disposition demanded of us for this is submission to Christ as He submitted Himself to the will of the Father. This is manifested by the small heart, lying down. Submission of our heart to the heart of Christ is our imitation of His sacrificial act as shown by the cross resting on the humble heart. The humiliation of our heart is unto death, expressed by the Blood covering the part of our heart that is within the heart of Christ. This *incordination* with Him is the one-life that we live with Christ through sacrifice inspired by love.



God made us to share the splendor of His life which is glory. The shining, bursting, coruscating figure which includes all the design is this glory. Since original sin, the road to glory is the road of the cross. The law of life is the law of the cross. This road back to glory has been built for us because of the sacrificial love of Christ for us. We have these truths indicated by the large red cross with the heart and the *Chi Rho* in the background as motive. The sacrificial character of this love is indicated by the Precious Blood coming from the heart. The light which is background for these symbols plays a twofold role: the sacrificial love of Christ is the light which points out our way to a life of glory, and it also enlightens us as to the deep and surpassing love of God for us.



## HOMILY

Preached at the 8:00 A.M. Missa Recitata, Mass of the day: St. Cajetan, Aug. 7. Gospel reading: Mt 6, 24-33.

“We beseech Thee, therefore, help Thy Servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy Precious Blood.”

There is no explicit mention of the Precious Blood in today's Gospel reading. But devotees of the Precious Blood do not need any such explicit mention to direct their thoughts to the Blood of Jesus. They are so dedicated to it, so taken up with the thought of it, that they think of God and worship God and serve Him under this mystery. As a result of regular meditation and contemplation, everything in their lives converges in the infinite Price of our Redemption, as the radii of a circle converge in the center. They see and interpret everything in the crimson light of Christ's holy Blood. This morning's Gospel reading (Mt. 6, 24-33) gives us an opportunity to do just this.

“No man can serve two masters . . .” The implication is that man is by nature a servant, a slave, either under the rule of sin or under the rule of holiness. As St. Paul said to the Romans: “You were the slaves of sin . . . but now set free from sin and become slaves to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and as your end, life everlasting” (6, 21-22). So it seems that we are born to obey. We succeed in any field of activity insofar as we follow the rules that hold in that field. The invitation of the world, the flesh and the devil to break the bond of control and obedience and to do as we please, is merely a trick to get control of us and make us their slaves.

“You cannot serve God and mammon.” To be a slave of two masters is an impossible situation. We have to declare openly for one or the other. As Elias told the Jews: “How long do you halt between two sides? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him” (3 Kgs 18,21).

Since obedience is such a necessity for us, we should give it to

Him who has the right to it. "I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not have strange gods before me" (Dt 5,6-7). It rightfully belongs to Him who is the Author and Preserver of our being, to Him from whom comes every perfect gift (Jas 1,17), from whom we have everything that we have.

Devotion to the Blood of Jesus emphasizes this supreme dominion of God. In the Old Testament abstention from blood, the vehicle of God's most precious gift of life, acknowledged God's supreme dominion over life and paid tribute to His overlordship; offered in sacrifice, blood, the seat and symbol of life, proclaimed Him supreme Lord and Master of life, made atonement for sin, and was the concrete expression of the offerer's internal sentiments of adoration, love and repentance.

In the most perfect sacrifice of Calvary, the Divine Blood was shed for this very same purpose, and it was shed for mankind with such love for and obedience to the Heavenly Father, that that acknowledgement of God's overlordship, the honor paid to Him, was so great as to make up for all past and future offenses, free us from dominion of the devil, and merit all the graces from the fall to the end of time; in fact all the treasures of grace and truth which are communicated to us by the Church, even the Church herself we owe to the Blood of Christ, as our Holy Father Pius XII tells us in the encyclical on the Mystical Body.

Therefore, the Blood of Jesus emphasizes another source or title of God's dominion over us, besides that of creation and preservation, namely that of redemption. As St. John Chrysostom said: ". . . not only because He brought them into being, but also because when they were alienated, He won them again a second time, paying as the price, the blood of the Son" (In Ep. I ad Cor, Hom. XVIII, 3). The Son, he continues, "who . . . bought us with His precious Blood, who paid down such a price for us as no one would endure to pay for his own son, who shed His own Blood for us" (In Ep. ad Philemon, Hom. II, 4). This is only repeating St. Paul's admonition to the Corinthians: "Or do you not know . . . that you are not your own? For you have been bought at a great price" (1 Cor 6, 19-20). That price was not mammon, for "you know that you were redeemed . . . not with perishable things, with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pt 1,

18-19). So by shedding His Blood for us, Christ bound and subjected us to Himself for the purpose that dying to ourselves we may live for Him who purchased us.

Devotion to the Precious Blood means, among other things, a dedication to that spirit of heroic obedience and loving submission to the Divine Will, no matter how expressed, which characterized the shedding of that Blood, of which the shedding of His Blood was the visible sign. It means trying to be a worthy member of that thorn-crowned Head who said at His entrance into the world: "Behold I come — to do Thy will, O God" (Heb 10,7), and promptly submitted Himself to the Blood of the circumcision. Who during His life said: "My food is to do the will of him who sent me" (Jn 4,34); who began His passion with the bloody sweat and the words: "Not my will but thine be done" (Lk 22,42); who "humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even to death on a cross" (Phil 2,8); who "Son though he was, learned obedience from the things that he suffered; and when perfected, he became to all who obey him the cause of eternal salvation" (Heb 5,8-9).

" . . . for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will stand by the one and despise the other." It is not merely a question of one or the other, but also a question of all or nothing. This service which we owe God must be a loving and generous service. We are disciples of Generosity Incarnate who always used the "good measure . . . running over" (Lk 6,38). With the water to be made wine the servants were told to fill the pots "to the brim" (Jn 2,8). Enclosing "a great number of fishes . . . they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink" (Lk 5, 6-7). He multiplied bread to feed thousands so bountifully that "they gathered up what was left over, twelve baskets full of fragments" (Mt 14,21). Abundantly He shared His power with His apostles "to cure sickness and to cast out devils" (Mk 3,15). Profusely he praised the woman who poured the precious ointment on His head and feet (Mk 14,3-9). Lavishly He lauded the widow's mite (Lk 21,1-4). Unstintingly He gave His time, strength, thought and sympathy and love, and, at the last, though one drop of it would have saved us, He poured out His Precious Blood to prove His generosity. As Pope Clement VI put it: "He, the Innocent One, immolated on the altar of the Cross, is known to have poured forth, not just a small drop of Blood, which however,

on account of the union with the Word would have been sufficient for the redemption of the whole human race, but a copious, gushing torrent . . .” (DB, 550). And what drew Thee from the veins of my Savior, even to the last drop? It was love. O boundless love, which gave to us this saving balm! O Priceless balm, welling from the fount of immeasurable love! What would have satisfied Justice, was not enough for Love! So abundantly did He redeem us, that His devotion calls for similar love and service. With what measure He measured out, it should be measured back to Him. St. Paul kept reminding himself: “The Son of God . . . loved me and gave himself up for me” (Gal. 2,20). From frequent meditations on the Precious Blood we catch generosity by a kind of infection from the prodigality of the Precious Blood. We can hardly live in fire and not grow hot ourselves. If Jesus spent Himself, shed His Blood so generously for me, I must spend myself generously for Him, by doing what obedience demands in the best way that I can.

“Therefore I say to you, do not be anxious. . . .” It is more easy to be generous when we have come thoroughly to trust the object of our love. Service of God will be generous if it is free from anxiety. Father Faber says that the greatest defect in our worship of God is want of confidence in Him. Confidence is the genuineness of worship, and the tranquil plentitude of love. A striking example of this is the saint we are commemorating today: St. Cajetan, co-founder of the Congregation of Clerks Regular or Theatines. So great was his trust in God that he and his followers even refrained from begging alms and waited until the faithful brought them help. For this reason Mother Church prayed in the collect: “Grant, we pray You, that by His intercession and example, we may always trust in You,” and why this particular Gospel reading was chosen.

This idea of freedom from anxiety is the central idea of today’s Gospel reading. If the Creator cares so much for His creature, how much more the Father for His children. What can give us more confidence in God than the study of the Precious Blood? God surely does not want something that cost Him the Blood of His only-begotten Son to perish! “God commends his charity towards us because when as yet we were sinners, Christ died for us. Much more now that we are justified by his blood shall we be saved through him from the wrath” (Rom. 5, 8-10). The dignity of Christ’s Blood and circum-

stances under which the Blood of Jesus was shed, should convince us once and for all of "the love that God has in our behalf" (1 Jn 4, 16). And in return for His compassionate love and solicitude we give Him our exclusive, loving, generous and trustful service, confident of overcoming through the Blood of the Lamb.

"Now may the God of peace, who brought forth from the dead the great pastor of the sheep, our Lord Jesus, 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. Amen" (Heb 13, 20-21).

Rev. Andrew Pollack, C.P.P.S., S.T.D.

*THE LAW OF CHRIST  
AND  
DEVOTION TO THE PRECIOUS BLOOD*

Although the expression, "the law of Christ," occurs only twice in the Bible, (I Cor 9, 21; Gal 6, 2) it forcefully calls attention to the distinctive moral values of the Gospel. The morality of the New Law is immeasurably more noble than the positivist, secularist and atheistic moralities of our contemporaries. It is filled with an authority and a power which set it above every form of natural ethics, so that practical solutions to ethical problems on a purely natural level, though true, will always be inadequate. Indeed, the moral teachings of the New Testament surpass, in a way, even moral theology itself, for they are one of the sources in which theology must constantly nourish and renew itself. For all these reasons there is a deep contemporary interest in distinctively Christian morality.<sup>1</sup>

In the presence of this current interest, we may ask ourselves to what extent a modern, special devotion can be harmonized with the moral of the Gospel. Does the special practice compromise the integrity of the Christian life? The question may be raised, provided it be raised respectfully, with confidence in the authorization accorded to special devotions by the Church in past and present.

But it is not enough to ask what devotion to the Precious Blood does to biblical morality. We must also ask what biblical morality does to devotion to the Precious Blood. Although fully authorized by the living teaching authority of the Church, a special devotion, by the very law of its life, must constantly refresh itself with deep drafts from the Word of God. "Theologians must always return to the sources of divine revelation: for it belongs to them to point out how the doctrine of the living Teaching Authority is to be found either explicitly or implicitly in the Scriptures and in Tradition."<sup>2</sup>

In the interest of moral integrity, then, and as a loving contemplation of Catholic truth, we take up the question of the

harmony of the Law of Christ and devotion to the Precious Blood. Our reflections will center around the moral themes of biblical theology, which is nothing less than "the doctrine of God contained in Scripture, analyzed and systematized in biblical categories."<sup>3</sup>

#### THE LAW OF CHRIST: MORALITY OF REDEMPTION

Anyone who tries to express the master ideas, the general lines, of biblical morality is embarrassed by the abundance of themes. Which should be chosen as central, the focal point about which all the others are gathered? Biblical theology is, perhaps, too young a science to speak definitively, but we cannot be far from the truth in maintaining that the moral of the Gospel is a morality of redemption in Christ. We subscribe wholeheartedly to the judgment of Father Grail:

Two ideas, better two realities, appear to us as governing the whole: man is sinner, man is saved. The transition in giving assent to the faith, in the reception of baptism, brought about this conversion. From the preaching of the Baptist up to the last Johannine writings, this sense of "before" and "after" dominates the New Testament. The words "of old" and "now" are a constant Pauline thought. There is a break with the past at the basis of this moral: "Wherefore, bear in mind that once you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called 'uncircumcision' . . . Bear in mind that you were at that time without Christ, excluded as aliens from the community of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise; having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, you who were once afar off, have been brought near through the blood of Christ." (Eph. 2, 11-13) This break with the past goes to the very roots of one's being; one who is the object of this change becomes *a new creation*. He has access to the knowledge of God, he has access to salvation.<sup>4</sup>

Sinner and saved, Gentile and member of the community of the true Israel, stranger and member of Christ, these are the points of contrast and opposition. The passage from one to the other, the re-creation of man, is effected by the Blood of Christ. The theme deserves to be considered at length.

We must begin with the condition of man the sinner, without Christ, deceived and overthrown, contaminated to the roots of his being, and multiplying his transgressions. Among the Jews the

sense of sin, present from the beginning, became after the exile a veritable spirituality intensely lived.<sup>5</sup> The Gentiles were no less sinful, although less conscious of their guilt because they lacked the Law. In their hearts they had a law, which they transgressed. (Rom 2, 14) But the universal sinful condition of man, according to St. Paul, is more than a fact verified by experience. It is the result of the fall of Adam. This doctrinal precision is introduced by St. Paul's comparison of the "two Adams," (Rom 5, 12-21; Cf. 1 Cor 15, 45-49) by the doctrine of the solidarity of the human race in the first man and in Christ. The fault of the First Adam is not merely personal; it is essentially collective. "Through one man sin entered into the world and through sin death, and thus death has passed into all men because all have sinned."<sup>6</sup> Thus all men belong to a doubly sinful race, stained in Adam its head, disfigured by the personal transgressions of all its members. "For we have argued," says St. Paul, "that Jews and Greeks are all under sin, as it is written . . . 'There is none who does good, no, not even one.'" (Rom 3, 10-12)

What adds immeasurably to the misery of man, and to the religious character of biblical morality, is man's powerlessness to remove his sin. God must take the initiative in salvation through a work of love and power. The Old Testament is a record of God's preparation of mankind for the reception of his rule. At the summit of prophecy, He promised to send his Servant, who would suffer vicariously for our sins. (Is 53, 1-11) God would make a new covenant with his people, putting his law in the depths of their being, writing it in their hearts. (Jer 31, 31-34)

Jesus fulfilled the promises of the past in ways that pitch morality into an incomparably new and mysterious world. His morality begins with conversion, interior renewal. "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel." (Mk 1, 15) He preaches a message of God's pardon, which must be laid hold of by faith and baptism. One is thus freed from the servitude of sin and Satan, and introduced into a state of liberty and familiarity with God. In its most simple form this new state consists in an attachment to Jesus. But the service of Christ is not insisted upon for its own sake; it is the way to the Father, Who is to be worshiped in the spirit of adoption. Such intimacy with God is made possible through

the gift of the Spirit, Who is poured out upon the believer. This is the decisive and specifying event of Christian morality. From the Spirit proceed all good deeds. "The fruit of the Spirit is: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, modesty, continency." (Gal 5, 22-23) Truly New Testament morality is a morality of redemption, of a passage from sin to the Kingdom of God, from death to life in the Spirit, from darkness to the light of eternal life.<sup>7</sup>

We begin to understand the place of the Precious Blood in biblical morality when we appreciate the mystery of the redemption. To be sure, it is this mystery — the central mystery of the Bible — which must first be fathomed. No other study or meditation, no other interest or love, can be more meaningful or rewarding to the devotee of Christ's Blood. In his penetration of the doctrine he will find acquaintance with the Bible especially helpful. To savor the uniqueness of each step in God's unfolding of the mystery, from the hints of Old Testament prophecy, to the simple message of the Synoptic gospels, on to the grandeur of the development in St. Paul and St. John, is an indispensable pre-requisite to an appreciation of the place of the Precious Blood in the divine economy.<sup>8</sup> The vastness of the mystery will begin to appear: we are redeemed by the whole life of Christ, by his blessed Passion and Death, and by his resurrection from the dead — all this, because of our solidarity with Him, so that He becomes our ransom and our expiation, having substituted Himself for us and paid our debts.<sup>9</sup> And in the obscurity of the mystery the supremely luminous point is the Cross of Jesus. "As the Old Testament and the Gospels look forward to Christ's redeeming sacrifice, so St. Paul and St. John look outwards from it to the vast horizons of salvation, God's New Covenant, the Kingdom which the glorified Christ offers to the Father, the whole world consummated through him."<sup>10</sup>

In the light of the total history of redemption, which centers in the Cross and Resurrection, we will begin to appreciate the significance of the Blood of Jesus. The Blood is not purely and simply the symbol of the death of Christ.<sup>11</sup> It has a value of its own, though not independent of the interior dispositions of Christ nor distinct from his Person. Jesus' Blood has value in his sacrifice because It is his life or the seat of his life.<sup>12</sup> As such

It is intimately connected with the themes of Sacrificial Expiation, the New Paschal Lamb, the New Covenant, and the Mission of the Holy Spirit. Being the *Blood of Expiation*, It propitiates the Father, (Rom 3,25) purifies us from sin, (1 Jn 1, 7; Heb 9, 14) and sanctifies us. (Heb 13, 12; 10, 29) As the *Blood of the New Paschal Lamb*, (1 Pt 1, 17-19) It not only frees us from the slavery of sin, but also makes us for God a kingdom and priests. (Ap 5, 9-10; 1, 5-6) As the *Blood of the New Covenant*, It is the effective means and definitive sign of the elect's union with God. (Mt 26: Mk 14, 24; Lk 22, 20: 1 Cor 11, 25) We become God's exclusive possession, because He purchased us (Acts 20, 28) at a great price. (1 Pt 1, 17-19) In the same perspective of the New Covenant, the Blood of Christ makes peace with God, (Eph 2, 13-16) reconciling all things in heaven and on earth to Him, (Col 1, 19-20) and makes us fit for every good work. (Heb 13, 20-21) As the *Blood, mingled with water, flowing from the side of Christ*, It is the "river of living water," springing up to eternal life,<sup>13</sup> symbol and sacrament of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit into the Church and the soul of the believer.

It will be difficult to see how these themes of the Precious Blood belong to Christian morality only if we fail to appreciate that biblical morality is, in the first place, neither a natural ethic nor a code of laws, but an interior renewal through grace, a justification, begun in faith and baptism and brought to perfection through the Holy Eucharist. "Christ did not leave his morality in an abstract system. He enacted it himself on Calvary, and he set it in a concrete rite. . . . While the Commandments are the necessary substratum, we now see that Christian morality comes from Christ and the sharing of the Christian Mysteries. These will be primarily Baptism, the Mass, and their fruit, the Mystical Body."<sup>14</sup> As the Israelites were freed from the slavery of the Egyptians through the blood of the paschal lamb, so in baptism the Christian is freed from sin and the Old Law "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."<sup>15</sup> As the Israelites were united to God through the sprinkling of the blood of the Covenant, the Christian, in an immeasurably higher way, is united to God through the physical and mystical shedding of Christ's Blood in His sacrifice and through the disciple's reception of It sacramentally in Holy Communion.<sup>16</sup> Through

the Blood shed on Calvary, which destroyed the distinction between Jew and Gentile, reconciling all things,<sup>17</sup> the Mystical Body is formed, and through the reception of the same Blood sacramentally in Holy Communion, the unity of the Body is perfected.<sup>18</sup> Through the Blood and water pouring from the side of Christ, the Holy Spirit is sent into the Church to renew all men with the life of God.<sup>19</sup>

Thus sacramentally and interiorly renewed through Christ's Blood, the Christian must translate his new life into the exercises of daily Christian living. At this point the question of the harmony of the Law of Christ and devotion to the Precious Blood presents itself in a new manner. Is the Blood of Christ in some way the motive of all the Christian virtues? The answer can only be in the affirmative. The proof lies in the basic moral value of the New Law, Christian charity, in biblical language, *agape*.

#### THE LAW OF CHRIST: MORALITY OF AGAPE

When our Lord explained the morality proper to the Kingdom of God, He defined it in reference to the morality of the Old Law. The Sermon on the Mount insists upon radical generosity and deep interiority as characteristic of the Christian spirit, in contrast to the legalism of the past. The ancient formulae are not in the least destroyed, but they are filled to overflowing with love. (Mt 5, 17-48) In answer to the question of the doctor of the Law, "Which is the great commandment?," Our Lord uses the language of the past.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind." This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets. (Mt 22, 37-39)

But in deepening man's appreciation of God, in extending the notion of "neighbor" to include everyone, and by insisting on his own example, finally, in making all other moral regulations depend on love, Jesus gave his ethic its originality and fundamental unity.<sup>20</sup>

It is not, however, a mere analysis of the two commandments

of Christ, which will reveal the nature of this unique love and the manner of its influence throughout the Christian life. In fact, if we are to follow the approach of biblical theology, we must even lay aside, for the moment, our philosophical and theological discoveries, such as the nature of friendship and our notion of charity, the "form" of the virtues, in favor of the Bible's own modes of thought.<sup>21</sup>

*Agape, religious love of gratitude*

The announcement of the Kingdom of God does not begin with man the intimate and friend of God, but with man the sinner. If the sinner, who "hungers and thirsts for justice," (Mt 5, 6) enters the Kingdom by receiving it as a little child, (Mt. 18, 3) the reason is that he recognizes that God is a Father (Mt 5, 48; 6, 1, 4, 6, 9) and that he is to "trust" his Father's advances of love. The first truth of the Gospel is the revelation of a Father who sends his Beloved Son to "seek and save what was lost." (Lk 19, 10) Before all else, we are asked to believe that "God is love," and that "in this has the love of God been shown in our case, that God has sent his only-begotten Son into the world that we may live through him." (1 Jn 4, 8-9) From this faith of the saved sinner, and in proportion to his sinfulness, (Lk 7, 41-42) springs a love of gratitude, the basic quality of created charity, of *agape* in the heart of man.<sup>22</sup> "Let us therefore love," writes St. John, "because God has first loved us." (1 Jn 4, 19)

St. Paul's approach is no different. His teaching comes out clearly in the Epistle to the Romans, together with an insight into the way charity expresses itself in all the virtues of the Christian life. According to the Apostle of the Gentles, the converts have believed "in the power of God unto salvation," (Rom 1, 16) a power that, of itself, assures their salvation.

If God is for us, who is against us? He who has not spared his own Son but has delivered him for us all, how can he fail to grant us also all things with him? . . . Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or the sword? . . . But in all these things we overcome because of him who loves us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom 8, 32-39)

Such assurance of the Father's love can only flow over into a love of gratitude. And so, after having explained the merciful plan of salvation in the first eleven chapters of the letter, St. Paul begins his moral exhortation by presenting the Christian life as a sort of consecration and thanksgiving. "I exhort you *therefore*, brothers, in view of the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a sacrifice, living, holy, pleasing to God — such is the worship reason requires of you."<sup>23</sup> Such religious service is the logical conclusion of God's saving plan. "For the axiom of philosophy, *operatio sequitur esse*, revealed morality substitutes, *operatio sequitur caritatem divinam*."<sup>24</sup>

In effect, Christian charity spreads throughout life because it has both the dynamism of the love of gratitude and the force of a religious motive. It is not only affection. It is fidelity, adoration and service. In his preaching Christ insists that, "No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will stand by the one and despise the other." (Mt 6, 24) The disciple of Christ is God's property, "redeemed," "bought back," "set free," but indebted in a new way to his Redeemer. The slave is liberated, only to enter the service of a new Master, where he bears the sweet yoke of Christ. (Mt 11, 30) He must translate gratitude into action. "There is question here of the most authentic Christian spirituality, where love is the synonym of obedience, because it is total and religious consecration."<sup>25</sup>

As it approaches its summit, love of God takes on a mystical quality and morality becomes intimate, personal fellowship with God. But the mysticism never becomes sterile. It never loses its realism, its gratitude or its spirit of service — these, too, continue to grow.<sup>26</sup>

#### *Christ's charity and man's response*

The characterization of *agape* as a "religious love of gratitude" holds true for both the Old and the New Testaments. This continuity is merely another instance of the general truth, increasingly emphasized today, that the Bible is one story, and that a story of God's love. Christ certainly gave this love new dimensions by his own example and by his new commandment, so that tradition has always

spoken with predilection of *Christian* charity, "the law of Christ." The Father's affection for us is expressed in Christ, and our response to Him is through Christ, Head and members. But love in Christ remains religious and sacrificial. For this reason the Precious Blood enters the concept of *agape* and becomes a motive in the Christian life.

It should be apparent from what has already been said, that the Father's love for us is most clearly expressed in the sacrifice of his Only-begotten Son. "He who has not spared his own Son but has delivered him for us all, how can he fail to grant us all things with him?" (Rom 8, 32) The death of Christ is the most conclusive proof of the Father's love; from it one argues to confident expectation regarding the lesser manifestation of the Father's love. The Precious Blood is the most eloquent cry of the Father's heart for our unreserved, religious response.

But it is more the Son's love and its expression that concern us here. For if created charity is grateful adherence to God and spontaneous realization of his will, its perfect form is found in the heart of Christ and from the first moment of his existence. The most superficial acquaintance with his life shows his love was not only affection but service. On coming into the world, He cried, "Behold, I come to do thy will, O God." (Heb. 10, 5-7) Throughout his life his food was to do the will of Him who sent Him, to accomplish his work. (Jn 4, 34) Especially his bitter Passion and Death were undertaken, "that the world may know that I love the Father and that I do as the Father has commanded me." (Jn 14, 31) The sacrificial shedding of the Precious Blood is the clearest and highest expression of Jesus' love for his Father and the model of the quality of our own affection for God.

At the same time the Son's love reaches out to mankind. Throughout his life his fellows were the object of the tenderest affections of his heart. He wept over Jerusalem, (Mt 23, 37) had compassion on the multitudes when He beheld them tired and hungry; (Mk 8, 2) He greeted the traitor as his "friend;" (Mt 26, 50) amid the crushing weight of his own sorrows on the way to Calvary, He thought of the impending sorrows of his comforters. (Lk 23, 28) With longing He had longed to eat the final Pasch with the twelve before He suffered, (Lk 22, 15) and so give his Church the precious gift of the Holy Eucharist and share with men his priesthood. With thought-

fulness and generosity He gave his Mother to be men's own. (Jn 19, 27) But greater than all these gifts, according to his own testimony, was the surrender of his own life. "Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends." (Jn 15, 13) It is, no doubt, in this context of love that we must understand our Lord when, at the Last Supper, He speaks of "my blood of the new covenant." (Mk 14, 24) The Blood of the New Covenant has more than a juridical value, as part of the expiatory sacrifice in which Jesus suffered as head of the human race and in place of his sinful brothers. In Jesus' mind, filled with the consciousness of Old Testament figures and prophecies, the Blood of the Covenant has a moral value, as the overpowering proof of his love.<sup>27</sup>

This insistence on the ultimate manifestation of Christ's love for his Father and for us is neither a question of rhetoric nor an appreciation of the dramatic in his life. In reality the most formal aspect of Christian charity is at stake: Christ's love is a sacrificial love, and it is precisely as sacrificial that He holds it up for our imitation and inspiration.

Christian charity, then, takes the form of grateful response to the love of the Crucified. "I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me." (Gal 2, 20) This faith, penetrated with admiration approaching bewilderment that He should have died for us when we were still sinners, (Rom 5, 8) generates a grateful loving in return and ends in a life entirely consecrated to Christ. "For none of us lives to himself, and none dies to himself; for if we live, we live to the Lord, or if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and rose again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living." (Rom 14, 7-9) No doubt the Christian life will be an assimilation to Christ in all his states, a putting on his mind in all things; (Phil 2, 5; 2 Cor 4, 10) and love will always be at the origin of the conformity. But by its inner logic Christian charity will always find its highest inspiration and aim in union, identification, with Christ crucified. "The love of Christ impels us, because we have come to the conclusion that since one died for all, therefore, all died; and that Christ died for all, in order that they who are alive may no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and rose again." (2 Cor 5, 14)

Imitation of the Crucified becomes the ideal of the Christian life

to such an extent that St. Paul uses the sacrifice of Jesus as his supreme moral rule in his practical exhortations. "Walk in love, as Christ also loved us and delivered himself up for us an offering and a sacrifice to God to ascend in fragrant odor." (Eph 5, 2) Husbands are to love their wives, "as Christ also loved the Church and delivered himself up for her." (Eph 5, 25)

Although He did not refer explicitly to the example of his death at the beginning of his public life, this is quite likely in his mind when Christ insists upon the disciple's practice of renouncement of the most radical kind. "He who loves father and 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 up 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, 37; Lk 14, 26) Commenting on this passage of the Gospel, Father Spicq writes,

There are not only human affections to be sacrificed and natural bonds to be broken, but even more, sufferings to be accepted, a matter the Master calls carrying one's cross. (Lk 9, 23) Just as Jesus came out of love to give his life as a ransom for many, so the *agape* of his disciples goes all the way to a daily crucifixion. To hold back a part of love and of life as capital to be jealously hoarded, like the Pharisees who are quite virtuous in some ways, is to withdraw oneself from the totality of the gift required by charity and to risk one's eternal life. (Lk. 9, 24-26) The disciple of Jesus consequently cannot be pictured as well-poised, as practicing virtues controlled and directed by right reason; he is rather a person who has renounced all, because he has given all his love to Jesus.<sup>28</sup>

*Agape* is more than choice and preference; basically it is a sacrifice. Although assimilation to Christ is consummated in conformity to the risen and glorious Savior, it can be attained only through a participation in the sufferings of the Crucified, as Jesus himself could not attain his glory until He had passed through death. (Lk 24, 26) It is not difficult to see how the Precious Blood becomes the inspiration and the measure of our practice of renouncement.

#### *Fraternal charity*

Whether *agape* is held to be religious consecration, service, worship or sacrifice, the proof that it is such is found in its extension to

one's neighbor, an extension which is perhaps the most characteristic feature of New Testament morality.

This is true already of the Synoptics' teaching on charity, when they record the answer of the Master to the query as to which of the 613 commandments of the Law is the greatest.<sup>29</sup> Love of God, of course. But to this commandment another is immediately attached, love of neighbor, with the additional insistence that all morality depends upon these two precepts. The commands are connected because the motive for both is the same and because God and man have been singularly united in Christ. On the Last Day it will be clearly seen that all our works of mercy toward our neighbor have been so many acts of religious homage to Christ. (Mt 25, 31-46) Indeed, it is not necessary to wait for the Last Day; already the Sermon on the Mount speaks of Christian charity in sacrificial terms.

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you, pray for those who calumniate you. And to him who strikes thee on the one cheek, offer the other also; and from him who takes away thy cloak, do not withhold thy tunic also. Give to everyone who asks of thee, and from him who takes away thy goods, ask no return. And even as you wish men to do to you, so also do you to them. And if you love those who love you, what merit have you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what merit have you? For even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive in return, what merit have you? For even sinners lend to sinners that they may get back as much in return. But love your enemies; and do good, and lend, not hoping for any return, and your reward shall be great, and you shall be children of the Most High, for he is kind towards the ungrateful and evil. Be merciful, therefore, even as your Father is merciful. (Lk 6, 27-36)

The motive for the sacrifices required is — in this passage — the example of the Most High, the mercy of the Father, not yet the example of the Son. But this example is indicated later in the public ministry with the prediction of the Passion, (Mt 16, 21-26) and is emphasized by Sts. Paul and John, who can be called the theologians of fraternal charity.

The Apostle to the Gentiles sees fraternal love in connection with his favorite doctrine, the Mystical Body of Christ. Because there are many members of the one Body, not all have the same func-

tion. Hence there is need to work together. (Rom 12, 3-8) The unity of the Body is specifically the motive of truthfulness, (Eph 4, 25) of common sorrow and common joy. (1 Cor 12, 26) Indeed, so strongly are the members bound to one another in Christ through charity, that the life of liberty — certainly one of the characteristics of life in Christ — is compatible with a new servitude, the care of one's neighbor. "By charity, *serve* one another." (Gal 5, 13) "It is not sufficient to interpret this in the sense that the Christian should be devoted to his brother, aid him as much as he can, and foster his good. The accent is placed on a total belonging and a strict obligation. The disciple of Christ is, as it were, chained to his neighbor. It is not a question of the orientation of one or the other act, but of a fundamental attitude, of an entrance into the service (I Cor. 9, 19) of charity, as of a master and lord who commands his slave."<sup>30</sup> In this love the members of Christ imitate the example of the Father and of their Head. "Be you, therefore, imitators of God as very dear children and walk in love, as Christ also loved us and delivered himself up for us." (Eph 5, 1-2) "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered himself up for her." (Eph 5, 25) Here again, although only implicitly referred to, the Precious Blood is associated with *agape* and becomes the motive of the Christian life. In proportion as the Christian responds to this motive, he will fulfill the Law. (Gal 5, 14; Rom 13, 10; Col 3, 14)

Whereas St. Paul attaches fraternal charity to the Mystical Body, St. John sees it as flowing from the "new commandment" and from the very nature of God. At the Last Supper, after the institution of the Holy Eucharist and the warning of his approaching departure, Jesus expressed his last will and spiritual testament. "A new commandment I give you, that you love one another: that as I have loved you, you also love one another. By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (Jn 13, 33-35) His own example, absolutely speaking incapable of imitation, is the law. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends." (Jn 15, 12-14) The texts are so clear they dispense with any commentary and the application to the discussion at hand is self-evident.

In the first Epistle of St. John the motivation of fraternal

charity, founded on the nature of God, is more complicated and perhaps not as well known. God is Light, (Jn 1, 5—2, 17) Father, (2, 18—3, 24) and Love. (4, 1—5, 13) To have fellowship with the Light and with the brethren who walk in the light, the darkness of sin must be dispelled through the Blood of Christ. "If we walk in the light as he also is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin." (1 Jn 1, 7; 2, 1-2) As children of the same heavenly Father, we have Jesus Christ for our brother, who sets the most demanding example of fraternal love. "In this we have come to know his love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought likewise to lay down our life for the brethren." (1 Jn 3, 16) Finally, above all figures of speech and other analogies, God is love, self-sacrificing love, sparing not even His only-begotten Son, whose death is the propitiation for our sins. "If God has so loved us, we also ought to love one another." (1 Jn 4, 11) Thus, whether God is regarded as Light, as Father or as Love, He is the motive of sacrificial love: we must give up our sins, our life and our heart, and in the giving we shall find communion with God and with our neighbor, in short, eternal life.

#### THE LAW OF CHRIST: LAW OF LIBERTY

The preceding sections of this paper have contemplated the Precious Blood against the background of the basic realities of New Testament morality. The harmony of the special devotion and biblical moral is assured. And yet there remains, perhaps, a lurking suspicion that in practice the special devotion compromises the integrity of the Christian life. This inquietude will be set at rest, if we recall that Christian morality is a law of liberty.<sup>31</sup>

The initial preoccupation of Jesus at the beginning of his public life was to situate his religious movement in relation to the morality of the past. While retaining and demanding respect and observance of the Mosaic Law, He strove to free the Law from the formalism that had come to surround it in the course of the centuries, and to fill it with a new spirit. (Mt. 5, 1 - 7, 29)<sup>32</sup>

The perfection Christ brought to the Law was not merely through the addition of new objective precepts; He also transformed its manner of acting. St. Paul and St. John understood this perfectly. What is more, their reflection and teachings on the Law

hold also to some extent for all law. They teach on the one hand the inefficacy of the exterior law, which kills rather than vivifies, and on the other hand, insist upon the efficacy of the interior law, the law of the Holy Spirit.<sup>33</sup> Under the New Law, and in proportion as he lives it, man no longer feels the weight and constraint of obligation. He possesses the liberty of the Spirit. Yet here on earth, an exterior law always remains necessary. There must ever be a balance between the letter and the spirit.<sup>34</sup>

At bottom there is question here of the most basic problem of any ethic, the relation of the interior and exterior, the objective and the subjective, objective devotion and personal piety. Every devotion must face the problem of what might be called the "law of integrity" and the "liberty of the spirit."

Let us begin by stating that devotion to the Precious Blood is not the whole Christian life. It is a specialization. It is a certain style given to the Christian life, a style that comes from attachment to the person of Christ in the mystery of the redemption. We have, it is true, the liberty of the Spirit in singling out this aspect of the Christian religion as our special love. But the law of integrity must be respected. Interests in other mysteries and efforts in other practices must be retained. It is a mistake, one made sometimes by beginners, to think that one can immediately view all of life from the exclusive position of devotion to the Precious Blood. Not all our prayers can be nourished exclusively on the object of this devotion. Not all our sermons can center on this one theme. Even a retreat on this one subject would be a delicate matter to handle and would require a very special type of audience. We must stress, for instance, certain ontological characteristics of asceticism, namely, the need for ascetical practices based on the nature of man as creature.<sup>35</sup> These motives for mortification and self-mastery are distinct from the motives of the Passion and the Precious Blood and deserve a response for their own value. The liturgy, likewise, must not be approached — at least in the beginning — with too personal an interest. It is necessary to accept the piety of the Church as it stands and to drink deeply from it.

But these cautions do not become hesitations. As the soul grows in the devotion its visions broaden. The most exacting efforts to stay within the letter of the Word of God, for instance, have their re-

ward in a wide liberty of spirit. According to the Bible, the Blood of Jesus belongs to only one mystery, the redemption, but this is the central mystery of the preaching of the apostles.<sup>36</sup> Even in regard to this mystery, the affirmations of the Scriptures regarding the Blood are limited in number, yet they touch on every one of the central themes of salvation: expiation, redemption, reconciliation, sanctification, solidarity in Christ, the New Paschal Lamb, the New Covenant, Baptism and the Eucharist, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, *agape* and every good work of the Christian life, finally, the fruit of all this in the next world, eternal glory. Having a thorough acquaintance with explicit references to the Blood of Jesus in Holy Writ, the soul will not fail to discover implicit references there.<sup>37</sup> The Christian most sensitive to the integrity of God's message can follow his attraction for the Blood of the Savior and he will never stray from the demands of the divine economy. He is permitted the liberty of the sons of God. He may create his own spirituality. It will respect all the demands of the Christian order.

The Blood of Jesus is so much at the center of the Christian faith that it will be possible for a saint to organize the Christian life, found a spirituality, soar to the heights of mysticism, on the strength of the Price of Salvation. St. Catherine of Siena is the supreme example. It has been said that the animating idea in her doctrine is faith,<sup>38</sup> which leads to the knowledge of God and of self. But despite its intellectualism, Catherine's doctrine is not socratic. Original sin and self-love stand in the way of truth. Only a miracle can alert human ignorance: the miracle of Jesus and His Blood. Once the miraculous cycle has begun, it continues in the logic of charity. "Man is so made that he wants to be loved and immediately loves in return one who has loved him first. Thus it is that the love of God is born in the heart of man."<sup>39</sup>

It is in the blood of the Redeemer that we know the truth in the light of the most holy faith, which enlightens the eye of the intelligence. Thereupon the soul is inflamed and nourishes itself in the love of this truth. And for love of the truth it would prefer death to the forgetfulness of the truth . . .<sup>40</sup>

Certainly one could not desire a more perfect corroboration of the second part of this paper on the Precious Blood and *agape* than this passage of the Saint. Commenting on these passages of Catherine, Maxime Gorce writes:

In her *Letters* the saint often repeats that the resume of the doctrine whence love springs, the resume of the origin of love, is the *blood* of Jesus. It is also the *mercy* of Christ. In one way or another it is this which is symbolized in the *Agnus Dei*. As to the development of this doctrine, is it not the same as that of the celebrated *Dialogue*? The other title of this work appears to be very suggestive in this regard: *The Book of Mercy*. Catherine makes no pretention of reducing all dogmas (which all have their own mystery and irreducible wonder) to one sole dogma, which would be for example that of the redemption by Jesus Christ. But it is especially around this dogma that her piety is organized, loving in Jesus the Sacred Heart bent over human misery and bleeding for mankind. The dogmas of the Eucharist, those of the Holy Spirit and the Trinity, come to take their place in their turn in meditation and in life, in proportion as the loving contemplation of the *blood* of Jesus discerns other wonders, and progresses on each of these subjects.<sup>41</sup>

There is, then, in Saint Catherine — and precisely on the subject of the Precious Blood — an admirable balance between the law of integrity and the liberty of the spirit.

The same balance might be detected in the soul which cultivates the devotion to the Precious Blood in the objective piety of the liturgy. One will approach the sacred mysteries with disinterestedness and with no forcing of the texts; yet he will find the theme of the Blood of Jesus explicitly recurring in every season and in each day's liturgy. The discovery of the theme is, for him, not a game or a curiosity; it is the quiet awareness of the loving mind and the enlightened heart, detecting even the hidden allusions to his love. Certain words, certain figures, certain prayers take on a special interest from one end of the year to the other. To take but an example or two from Advent, there is the longing for a Redeemer in sacrificial terms, mixed with thoughts of power and peace: "*Emitte Agnum, Domine, Dominatorem terrae.*"<sup>42</sup> Or again, "*Virgo Israel, revertere ad civitates tuas: Usque dolens averteris? Generabis Dominum Salvatorem, OBLATIONEM NOVAM in terra: Ambulabunt homines in SALVATIONEM. In CARITATE PERPETUA dilexi te: ideo attraxi te MISERANS tui.*"<sup>43</sup> Almost every word here is colored by devotion to the Person who shed his Blood in the new oblation, so that we might walk more and more in salvation. He assures us that this love of the Cross is perpetual, and so — despite our failings — He draws us to Himself in mercy. To say that devotion to the Precious Blood is not engaged

here is to miss the point horribly. It is the Blood, the memory of It, lying at the bottom of one's consciousness that infuses this text with fire. It gives the text a glow and an affective overtone that only one devoted to the Blood can catch. But such a person does not argue or prove. The experience in the liberty of the spirit, based on the theological virtues, begets its own conviction, before which other proofs fade into insignificance.

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It is one of the afflictions of modern man that he carries his critical spirit even to his prayers. If these prayers are humble and are founded on the texts of God's Word there is not any doubt that he will find his hesitations removed and replaced by the conviction that devotion to the Precious Blood is in perfect accord with the nature and practice of Christian morality.

Rev. George J. Lubeley, C.P.P.S., S.T.L.

1. For the history of this movement consult B. Häring, C.S.S.R., *La Loi du Christ*, Tournai, 1955, Vol. I, 79-92. Outstanding theological works of the movement are: F. Tillman, *Handbuch der katholischen Sittenlehre*, 4 vols., 4th ed., Düsseldorf, 1950; E. Mersch, S.J., *Morale et Corps Mystique*, 2 vols., 3rd ed., Brussels, 1949; G. Gilleman, S.J., *Le Primat de la charité en théologie morale*, Brussels, 1952; *Initiation Théologique*, Vol. 3, Paris, 1952; B. Häring, C.S.S.R., *Das Gesetz Christi*, Freiburg-im-Breisgau, 1954; *Morale chrétienne et requêtes contemporaines*, Tournai, 1954; T. Deman, O.P., commentary on *Summa Theologiae (Die Deutsche Thomas-Ausgabe)*, Bd. 14, II-II, 106-114, Heidelberg, 1955; R. Guindon, O.M.I., "Le caractère évangélique de la morale de saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa*, (1955), 145\*-167\*; *Supplément de la Vie Spirituelle*, no. 17, 1951. For some of the more important Scriptural studies see footnote 3. For an introduction to the subject in English see the brief summary in J. Ford, S.J. — G. Kelly, S. J., *Contemporary Moral Theology*, Vol. I, 60-79; S. Pinckaers, O.P., "The Revival of Moral Theology," *Cross Currents*, 7 (1957), 56-67; G. Sloyan, "The Springs of Morality," *Worship*, 31 (1957), 188-199.
2. Pius XII, "Humani Generis," par. 21; N.C.W.C. trans., p. 10.
3. R. A. F. MacKenzie, S.J., "The Concept of Biblical Theology," *Proceedings of Catholic Theological Society of America*, 10 (1955), 49. Among the general studies of biblical theology dealing with New

- Testament moral are the following: F. Prat, S.J., *The Theology of St. Paul*, 2 vols., London, 1933-34; J. Bonsirven, S. J., *Théologie du nouveau testament*, Paris, 1951; L. Cerfaux, *Le Christ dans la théologie de saint Paul*, 2nd ed., Paris, 1954; R. Schnackenburg, *Die sittliche Botschaft des Neuen Testaments*, (*Handbuch der Moraltheologie*, Bd. 6), Munich, 1954; M. Bévenot, S.J. — Dom R. Russell, "Christianity in Apostolic Times," *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, pars. 629a-662e, London, 1953; A. Descamps, "La morale des Synoptiques," *Morale chrétienne et requêtes contemporaines*, Tournai, 1954, 27-46; Ceslas Spicq, O.P., "La morale paulinienne," *ibid.*, 47-70; F.-M. Braun, O.P., "Morale et mystique à l'école de saint Jean," *ibid.*, 71-84; *Lumière et Vie*, no. 21, mai 1955, "Grandes Lignes de la morale du Nouveau Testament;" C. Spicq, O.P., "New Testament Morality," *Theology Library*, Vol. III, Chicago, 1956, 2-23 (with excellent bibliography); C. Spicq, O. P., *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, Paris, 1947, Excursus, 2, 6, 7, 9-11, 13, 14, 17; Dom R. Russell, "The Bible," *Springs of Morality*, New York, 1956, 25-43.
4. A. Grail, O.P., "De la morale du Nouveau Testament," *Lumière et Vie*, No. 21 (mai, 1955), 10-11.
  5. J. Schmitt, "La révélation de l'homme pécheur dans le piétisme juif et le Nouveau Testament," *ibid.*, 13-34.
  6. Rom 5, 12. Cf. S. Lyonnet, S.J., "Le sens de EPH HO en Rom. 5: 12 et l'exégèse des Pères grecs," *Biblica*, 36 (1955), 436-457; summary in *Theology Digest*, 5 (1957), 54-7.
  7. For a more adequate development of the ideas of this paragraph consult J. Giblet, "Condition et vocation du chrétien selon le Nouveau Testament: l'homme sauvé," *Lumière et Vie*, *ibid.*, 35-64; Dom R. Russell, "The Bible," *op. cit.*, 28-43.
  8. For a good summary of the doctrine see Dom R. Russell, "Christianity in Apostolic Times," *op. cit.*, pars. 642a-649g. For a more complete treatment see F. Prat, S.J., *op. cit.*, II, 180-213 and J. Bonsirven, S.J., *op. cit.*, 72-79; 110-125; 292-308; 407-411; L. Cerfaux, *op. cit.*, 17-148.
  9. The biblical concept of the redemption is considerably broader than any single theological system devised to penetrate the mystery. It would appear that in the past devotion to the Precious Blood has not been sufficiently aware of this point; more attention must be given to the Resurrection.
  10. Dom R. Russell, *ibid.*, par. 642a.
  11. Gianfranco Nolli, "Il Sangue nel Nuovo Testamento," *Fonti Vive*, 1958, (219)-(222). "Jesus now gives his own blood as sacrifice of the New Covenant, not merely as sign but as real mediatorial cause," Dom R. Russell, *ibid.*, par. 644h.
  12. "One may object that many effects of Redemption through Christ in the N. T. are attributed to the "death" and not to the "blood." In fact it is inexact to say that in the principal texts (Mt 27, 24; Acts 5, 28; Heb 12, 4; Apoc 19, 2) the term "blood" refers to death;

on the contrary it means "life." The greater number of the redemptive effects are connected with the "blood," and if at times the sacrifice of the Redeemer is expressed solely with the word "death," it appears that this is done in concert with the resurrection or because the positive aspect of the blood is presumed. If the death and the resurrection of Christ are never separated from one another, this dual aspect of death and of life is found in Paul in the term "blood," as already in the levitical sacrificial system (where the blood is life), with the major emphasis on the positive aspect of life." Gianfranco Nolli, *op. cit.*, (221). We are greatly indebted to this article, especially for its exceptional arrangement of biblical texts on the Precious Blood according to various themes, pp. (216)-(220). See also Nolli's article, "Il Sangue nel Vecchio Testamento," *ibid.*, (185)-(209). — Only recently Father S. Lyonnet, S.J., published an excellent study of St. Paul's concept of redemption in which extensive attention is given to the role of the Precious Blood. Father Lyonnet's arrangement of the themes with which the Blood is associated closely parallels Nolli's; but whereas Nolli sees the value of Christ's sacrifice as coming from both the bloody immolation and the interior dispositions of the Victim, Lyonnet seems to see the value as rooted only in the latter. The difference should not be overemphasized; but it points to the need of a full study of St. Paul's concept of the Precious Blood in the Redemption. Cf. S. Lyonnet, S.J., "Conception paulinienne de la rédemption," *Lumière et Vie*, 7 (no. 36, 1958), 35-66.

13. Jn 7, 37-41 with 19, 34. Cf. footnote 19.
14. Dom R. Russell, "The Bible," *op. cit.*, 33-34. The entire passage should be read. Above all in St. Paul we have a moral doctrine founded on grace, the sacraments and the Mystical Body. Consult on this point C. Spicq, O.P., "La morale paulinienne," *op. cit.*, 47-70.
15. 1 Pt 1, 17-19. On the baptismal significance of this text on the Blood of Christ consult M. E. Boismard, O.P., "Une liturgie baptismale dans la Prima Petri," *Revue Biblique*, 63 (1956) 182-208, notably page 193. Cf. also the same author's article, "Le Christ-Agneau, Rédempteur des hommes," *Lumière et Vie*, 7 (no. 36, 1958), 91-104.
16. For the meaning of the words of the institution of the Holy Eucharist consult E. Siegman, C.P.P.S., "The Blood of the Covenant," *American Ecclesiastical Review*, 136 (1957), 167-174; P. Benoit, O.P., "The Holy Eucharist," *Scripture*, 8 (1956), 97-108; 9 (1957), 1-14. On sacrifice of Christ see C. Spicq, O.P., *L'Épître aux Hébreux*, Paris, 1953, Vol. II, 271-285, excursus on "The Theology and the liturgy of the Precious Blood." "The blood of Jesus Christ is the decisive factor of the *teleiosis* (the consummation) of the new religion. This divine mystery is also the summit, the crowning achievement of the entire religious history of humanity. If beginnings and preparations are divined and clarified by the end

attained, the blood of all the victims immolated in ages past has no meaning, has no value, except in the measure that it is in some way connected with the blood of the Cross. . . . It is a pure, royal, sacerdotal blood, of a victim entirely free and perfect. It was poured out with *eulabeia* (reverent fear, Heb 5, 7) most pleasing to God. The worship of the Church cannot be anything but the sacramental offering of this cup of the Precious Blood. Whoever drinks of it will share this life and will have the pledge of his entrance into heaven." (pp. 283-284)

17. Col 1, 19-20. Dom Jacques Dupont, *La réconciliation dans la théologie de saint Paul*, (Analecta Lovaniensia Biblica et Orientalia, Ser. II, Fasc. 32), Bruges, 1953. Part four, "Reconciliation by the Blood," (pp. 39-50), develops the thought that by the destruction of sin and the restoration of peace between God and man, men themselves are drawn into unity, all this being the work of love.
18. The unifying effect of the reception of the Body of Christ is expressly affirmed by St. Paul, 1 Cor 10, 17. It is only implied in the reception of the Precious Blood.
19. Jn 7, 37-41 with 19, 34. The exegesis of these texts and their interpretation by the Fathers of the Church has been brilliantly handled by Father Hugo Rahner, S.J., in J. Sterli (ed.), *Heart of the Saviour*, New York, 1958, 25-57.
20. F. Prat, S.J., "La charité dans la bible," in the article "Charité," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, II, première partie, cols. 510-512.
21. In this section we are especially indebted to the excellent studies of Father C. Spicq, O.P., *Prolégomènes à une théologie néotestamentaire de l'Agape*, Louvain, 1955; "La morale de l'agape selon le nouveau testament," *Lumière et Vie*, 21 (mai, 1955), (383)-(402); "L'agape de 1 Cor 13, un exemple de contribution de la sémantique à l'exégèse néo-testamentaire," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* :, 31 (1955), 357-370; "New Testament Morality," *Theology Library*, III, 1-23. The article of Father Prat, S.J., (Cf. footnote 20), cols. 508-523, was also very helpful, and the Scriptural portion of B. Olivier's study, "Charity," in *Theology Library*, IV, 130-154.
22. "Founded on the goodness of the Heavenly Father toward his children, it (charity) takes the form in their case of a manifestation of gratitude. God and man are not on the same level. Man is always the debtor in relation to God. If God alone properly speaking is able to have charity toward man, because — by definition — charity is "first," has all the initiatives of preferential love and of giving (Cf. 1 Jn 4, 10), the nuance in men's love toward God is reciprocity, thanksgiving. The Christian life, in the total unfolding of its virtues, is nothing less than a way of saying thanks to God." C. Spicq, O.P., "La morale de l'Agape selon le nouveau testament," op. cit., (384)-(385).
23. Rom 12, 1. Translation by Kleist-Lilly, *The New Testament*, Milwaukee, 1952.

24. C. Spicq, O.P., *ibid.*, note 10, p. (399).
25. *Ibid.*, p. (388).
26. St. John's writings present a doctrine where mysticism and morality are perfectly balanced. F.-M. Braun, O.P., "Morale et mystique à l'école de saint Jean," *op. cit.*, 71-84.
27. We are thinking especially of Jer 31, 31-34. "See, the days are coming — oracle of Yahweh — when I shall make a new covenant with the house of Israel. Not like the covenant I made with their fathers on the day I took them by the hand and led them from the land of Egypt. That covenant — My covenant! it is they who have broken it. . . . Here is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel. . . . I shall put my law in the depths of their being, and write it upon their heart. Then I shall be their God and they will be my people. . . . For I am going to forgive their crime and remember no more their sin." Commenting on this passage in relation to Our Lord's words at the consecration of the cup, Father Benoit writes: "The return to the true knowledge and love of God thus promised is nothing other than the kingdom of God, that kingdom whose imminent coming Jesus preached, and which he even said had arrived in his own person, and which he is now going to establish definitively. Since a covenant needs blood, he will give his own; not, indeed, to appease a stern and angry God, but to give that proof of love whereby the God of love desires the rehabilitation of his fallen creatures. For this it was that God sent him, to be the 'Servant' who sacrifices himself in place of his brethren. This, too, Our Lord's words suggest." "The Holy Eucharist," *Scripture*, 8 (1956), 104.
28. "La morale de l'Agape selon le nouveau testament," *op. cit.*, (392).
29. Mt 22, 36. Cf. A. Jones, "St. Matthew," *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, par. 713c.
30. C. Spicq, O.P., *ibid.*, p. (396).
31. See M. E. Boismard, O.P., "La loi et l'esprit," *Vie et Lumière*, no. 21 (1955), (345)-(361); S. Lyonnet, S.J., "Liberté du chrétien et loi de l'Esprit selon saint Paul," *Christus*, 4 (1954), 6-27.
32. M. E. Boismard, O.P., *ibid.*, (345)-(351).
33. *Ibid.*, (351)-(357).
34. S. Lyonnet, S.J., *op. cit.*, 7.
35. B. Geiger, "Outlining a Theology of Asceticism," *Christian Asceticism and Modern Man*, London, 1955, 121-148.
36. "The kerygme, according to the Twelve Apostles and their disciples, characterizes Christian missionary preaching as a *public proclamation of the salvation offered by God in Christ to every man who believes in it.*" P. Hitz, C.S.S.R., *L'Annonce missionnaire de l'Évangile*, Paris, 1954, 77. See the entire chapter: "La prédication missionnaire type: le Kérygma des Apôtres," 67-136.

37. Gianfranco Nolli, "Il Sangue nel Nuovo Testamento," *op. cit.*, (218), note 6.
38. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., "La foi selon sainte Catherine de Sienna," *Vie Spirituelle*, (1935), 237.
39. Th. Deman, O.P., "La vie théologique chez Catherine de Sienna," *Vie Spirituelle, supplement*, (1934), 8.
40. Saint Catherine to Cardinal Peter de Luna, quoted in Maxime Gorce, "Catherine de Sienna," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, II, cols. 343-344.
41. Maxime Gorce, *ibid.*, col. 344.
42. *Breviarium Romanum*, Second antiphon of Lauds, second schema, feria IIIa ante Vigiliam Nativ. Domini.
43. *ibid.*, Responsory for the third lesson, feria IIIa infra hebdomadam IVam Adventus.

## THE PRECIOUS BLOOD AND THE PASCHAL MYSTERY

The bloody passion and death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the very center of human history, the very heart of our faith. Through His redemptive work Christ reconciles mankind to God; from the outpouring of this sacred Blood divine life and holiness flow to men. As St. Paul tells us, "It was God's good pleasure to let all completeness dwell in him, and through him to win back all things, whether on earth or in heaven, into union with himself, making peace with them through his blood, shed on the cross" (Col 1,19).<sup>1</sup> This astonishing mystery of divine love was accomplished once and for all. Christ dies now no more; the infinite value of His one bloody sacrifice is sufficient for all men of all times. The infinite power of this divine Blood reaches down through time and out through space to contact every one of us.

How do we enter into contact with this historic event by which we are redeemed and sanctified? Christianity has always known only one answer: only through faith and the sacraments of faith do we drink at this divine fountain. In the first place, then, it is by *faith* — by a faith made alive and active through love — that we enter into union with our Savior and His redeeming sacrifice. "God has offered him to us as a means of reconciliation, in virtue of faith, ransoming us with his blood" (Rom 3,25).

But it is also part of the divine plan that our faith and love should find outward expression in visible signs. These are the sacraments, outward signs which testify to our inner faith, signs which are efficacious channels bringing to us the power of Christ's redeeming Blood. The Christian sacraments symbolize, make present, and apply to us the riches of Christ's sacrifice. It is with some aspects of this sacramental order that the present paper is concerned. By sacramental order is meant chiefly the seven sacraments instituted by Christ, but also the rich texture of prayers and ceremonies in which the Church has enshrined these saving signs, the better to bring out their full meaning. In a word, we are concerned with the Blood of Christ in relation to the Christian liturgy.

Obviously, so wide a topic demands limitation. Though all the

sacraments, whenever they are received, signify and apply to us the bloody passion of Christ, we are limiting ourselves to the two chief sacraments of Christian initiation: baptism and the eucharist, particularly as these are found in their paschal setting, the liturgical celebration of Holy Week and Easter. We know the tremendous importance the early Church attached to the celebration of these paschal mysteries. And the recent restoration of the Holy Week liturgy shows us how anxious Pope Pius XII is to have the paschal sacraments again be a prime source of spiritual nourishment for Christians, "for whom Christ instituted the paschal mystery through His Blood."<sup>2</sup> We are concerned, therefore, with the meaning of the paschal liturgy in relation to the redeeming Blood of Christ. A little more precisely, we are asking ourselves the question, how does the celebration of baptism and the eucharist, as understood in their original liturgical setting in the primitive Church, signify or symbolize the Precious Blood? To answer this question, let us turn to the explanations of the sacramental rites given by the Fathers of the Church, particularly in their instructions to the neophytes during the Easter season, where they offer a detailed exposition of the meaning of all the sacramental rites of the paschal vigil.

We notice immediately that their explanations largely take the form of a biblical catechesis. Gradually, indeed, elements of symbolism from Greek culture also find their way into these explanations of the sacraments, but above all the Fathers tell us that, to understand the sacraments, we must turn to the Bible. To appreciate what the sacraments do for us, they say, we must look to the types, the foreshadowings, of these sacraments in the pages of Sacred Scripture. So much is this the case that the basic orientation of the present paper may seem to be biblical. That, however, is not quite true. More precisely, our viewpoint is liturgical: we are seeking the Church's understanding, as mirrored in the explanation of the Fathers, of the rites of the sacraments in relation to the Precious Blood — though it is true that that understanding is largely in terms of biblical types.

A word about sources. For ideas about and quotations from the Fathers, I have been much helped by the doctoral dissertations of two of my colleagues, that of Fr. Rohling<sup>3</sup> on the Precious Blood in the Latin Fathers and that of Fr. Pollack<sup>4</sup> on the Greek Fathers. Also, I am indebted in a very special way to the splendid work of

Fr. Jean Daniélou, S.J., *The Bible and the Liturgy*,<sup>5</sup> both for the general idea of the sacramental-biblical approach and for the principal lines of development. Indeed, the present paper consists largely in disengaging and studying separately the theme of the Precious Blood as it is found in this extraordinarily rich book.

In approaching patristic thought on the paschal mystery, we notice in the first place that the Fathers place a very special emphasis on the Jewish Passover as a type of the Christian sacraments. That, of course, is altogether natural. Christ underwent His sacrificial passion and death at the time when the Jews were celebrating their passover. It was within the framework of a paschal meal that He gave us the eucharist, the greatest of the sacraments, the one that above all others brings to us the fruit of His passion. Now if we look at the Jewish Passover as a whole, we see that it is really made up of two series of events, each of which may be considered a type of our reception of the paschal sacraments. First there is the slaying of the lamb, the sprinkling of its blood on the doorposts, and the eating of the lamb with unleavened bread — the events described in the second scriptural reading of the Good Friday liturgy. Secondly, there is the crossing of the Red Sea and the provision of special nourishment by God in the wilderness. Let us turn our attention to the first of these two series of events.

The eating of the paschal meal is a fairly obvious symbol of the eucharist. Just as the Jews received nourishment for their journey from eating the immolated lamb, so we are nourished for our earthly pilgrimage by the Body and Blood of Christ. What might not be so obvious to us, however, is the close relation the early Christians saw between the blood of the lamb and baptism. Just as the Jews had to put the lamb's blood on the doorposts before eating the paschal meal, so the neophyte had to be baptized before partaking of the eucharistic meal. And the blood on the doorposts was interpreted as a prefiguration of one of the highlights in the baptismal liturgy: namely, the ceremony of signing or sealing the candidate for baptism with the sign of the Cross.

By way of preliminary, we should note the importance attached to this signing of the candidates for baptism with the sign of the Cross. It appeared in different places in the various baptismal liturgies, which is perhaps the reason why we find it repeated a number of times in our present, rather telescoped, rite of infant

baptism. But no matter where it occurred, the Fathers always took pains to point out its deep significance. Sometimes they compare the cross signed on the forehead to the mark imprinted on sheep or on soldiers in the ancient world. Through baptism a person becomes a member of Christ's flock, a soldier in Christ's army. He now definitely belongs to Christ and can be recognized as such. By showing this sign to the demons he can put them to flight when they try to reassert the hold they once had on him. Not infrequently the Fathers compare this signing with the rite of circumcision in the Old Testament. Circumcision was a reminder of God's covenant with the Jews; it left them with a mark or sign by which they were recognized as members of God's chosen people. When the sign of the cross is imprinted on the candidate's head at baptism, he is reminded of the new and wonderful covenant God freely and lovingly made with us in Christ; he is given a permanent mark showing that he is now a member of Christ.

What is of particular interest to us is, as we noted a moment ago, that so frequently the Fathers say that this signing was prefigured by the anointing of the doorposts with the blood of the lamb. The lamb's blood prefigures Christ's Blood, which marks the Christian in a way analogous to the marking of the Jewish houses.

When the destroying angel saw the blood of the lamb smeared on the houses, he passed them over. So also will devils be put to flight when they see the mark of Christ's blood on his followers.

Already in St. Justin we come upon this typology:

The blood of the passover, which was smeared on the side posts and transoms of the doors, saved those fortunate ones in Egypt who escaped the death inflicted upon the first-born of the Egyptians. The passover, indeed, was Christ, who was later sacrificed . . . Now, just as the blood of the passover saved those who were in Egypt, so also shall the blood of Christ rescue from death all those who have believed in Him. Would God have been mistaken, then, if this sign had not been made over the doors? That is not what I say, but I do say that He thus foretold that salvation was to come to mankind through the blood of Christ.<sup>6</sup>

The same analogy we find in more developed form in an Easter sermon which, at least in substance, goes back to Hippolytus. In vigorous language he insists that Christ's Blood must be "rubbed"

into our souls in the same way that the Jews rubbed the lamb's blood on their doorposts:

The blood as a sign is the bloody mystery of Christ's seal. [Let us note in passing that Christ's seal means the sign of the cross.] The sign is not yet the reality, but a sign of coming reality. For all who bear the sign of the marked blood and rub it on their souls as on houses — all these the exterminating plague will spare . . . The blood, then, is a sign, a phylactery, for souls as for houses . . . This is the cosmic and universal mystery of Easter.<sup>7</sup>

Nor are the Latin Fathers any less emphatic about this figure of the sign of the Cross in baptism. St. Augustine, for instance, is quite explicit about this ceremony in his catechetical instruction:

With the sign of his passion and cross, you today are to be signed and sealed upon your forehead, as it were upon a doorpost; and so are all Christians signed and sealed.<sup>8</sup>

But it is not only these events that took place before the Jews left Egypt that prefigure Christian initiation. In the *Exsultet* on Holy Saturday night we not only sing that this is the paschal feast on which the true lamb is slain whose Blood hallows the doorposts of the faithful, but we also cry out that this is the night on which God first caused our forefathers to go dry-shod through the Red Sea. Here, then, is another series of events that are a happy type of Christian baptism and the eucharist. And indeed, it is St. Paul himself who suggests this analogy by telling (1 Cor 10, 1-6, 11) us that the Israelites' passage through the Red Sea and their special nourishment in the desert prefigure the baptism and spiritual sustenance which Christians receive. The passage through the Red Sea is a type of going through the baptismal pool — baptism being conferred by immersion in the early Church. And the manna God wonderfully provides is a figure of the eucharistic bread, which Christ himself calls "the real bread from heaven" (Jn 6,32). But then, the Bible says, Moses follows God's command to strike the rock of Horeb with his staff, and a marvelous stream of water flows out to slake the thirst of God's people. Not infrequently this flow of water is considered as another symbol of baptism; and no doubt it is in this sense that we should understand the reference to the water from the rock in the preface for the blessing of the baptismal font in the Easter vigil.

But there is also solid patristic backing for hewing closer to the lines indicated by St. Paul and seeing in the event a type of our drinking the Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. Thus, for instance, St. John Chrysostom:

(Paul) says: "And they all drank the same spiritual drink." Just as, he says, you come up from the pool of water and hasten to the table, so they too came up from the sea and went to a new and wonderful table, i.e., the manna. Or again, just as you have a wonderful drink, the Savior's Blood, so they also had a marvelous sort of drink: they came upon neither springs nor running water, but got water in abundance from a hard dry rock.<sup>9</sup>

St. Ambrose is still more detailed in working out the parallel between this event of the Old Testament and our drinking Christ's Blood — perhaps almost too detailed for our modern tastes. In the Mass the priest represents Moses; the divine words he says over the chalice are Moses' staff; the Blood flowing into the chalice is the water streaming from the rock:

What is the meaning of the figure given us at the time of Moses? Because the Jewish people were thirsty and unable to find water, God ordered Moses to touch the rock with his staff. He touched the rock, and the rock poured out water in abundance; as the Apostle says, "They drank from the rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ." It was not a stationary rock, for it followed the people. Do you also drink, so that Christ will follow you. Behold the mystery. Moses is a prophet; his staff, the word of God. The priest touches the rock with the word of God; water flows and God's people drink. The priest touches the chalice; water flows in the chalice, springing up into life everlasting. There is drink for God's people, those who have obtained God's grace.<sup>10</sup>

But let us pass from these events in the Exodus to still another Old Testament figure of our sacramental participation in the Savior's Blood, the 22nd psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd." If we stop to consider the liturgical use of this psalm, we cannot but see an invitation from Mother Church to read a eucharistic meaning into its verses. Thus, for instance, this is the first of the psalms to be sung during the distribution of Communion on Holy Thursday, the feast commemorating the institution of the eucharist. It is likewise sung at Matins on the feast of Corpus Christi as well as on the feast of the Precious Blood. Modern piety goes further and finds

a eucharistic application in its recitation at Prime every Thursday, since today we like to think of Thursday as a particularly eucharistic day. This, however, is of later origin; Thursday was an a-liturgical day in the primitive Church. Finally, we should note the way the wording of this psalm has influenced the account of the institution of the eucharist in the Roman Canon. The psalm speaks, in the Vulgate known to the Latin Fathers, of the cup being an "excellent" one: "My inebriating cup, how excellent it is" — "*quam praeclarus est.*" The author of our Canon took this expression to describe the eucharistic cup at the moment of consecration, saying that Jesus took into his holy and venerable hands "this excellent chalice" — "*hunc praeclarum calicem.*"

When we consider the fashion in which the Fathers of the Church explained this psalm to the neophytes, we see that for them it is really a sort of synopsis of the whole ceremony of Christian initiation. Almost every verse can be interpreted to allude to some element in the paschal sacraments. Thus, for instance, not uncommonly the green pastures into which the Lord leads the soul are taken to refer to the nourishing words of Holy Scripture that are expounded during the catechumenate. The refreshing waters refer to baptism, as do also, in some writers, the words about walking in the shadow of death, since baptism involves our death to sin. The oil that the Lord pours on the psalmist's head is a type of the sacrament of confirmation, while the table he prepares refers to the eucharistic bread.

In the light of this development, it is quite natural to interpret the concluding words of verse 5 — "my inebriating cup, how excellent it is" — as referring to our drinking the Blood of Christ in Holy Communion. With remarkable boldness, the Fathers develop the symbolism of the wine, the visible sign signifying the Blood of Christ. They formulate the idea of "sober inebriation." Ordinary wine leaves a man intoxicated. Drinking the Blood of the Savior, however, leaves a man sober. But it still produces a kind of inebriation, a rapturous intoxication with God and the things of God. Thus for instance St. Ambrose:

As often as you drink you obtain remission of sins and intoxication in the spirit. Hence the Apostle says, "Do not be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit." A man intoxicated with wine staggers and reels; a man intoxicated with the spirit is solidly

grounded on Christ. What a wonderful intoxication this is, then, which begets sobriety of soul.<sup>11</sup>

But it is St. Cyprian who takes up this idea of "sober inebriation" and really exploits it to the fullest. His ideas are found in a letter protesting against the use of water only in the celebration of the eucharist. Among the many reasons he gives for condemning such a practice is the fact that thereby the symbolism of the sacraments is destroyed. Water simply cannot signify the marvelous spiritual effects produced by drinking the Blood of Christ. This leads him to describe these effects in detail. In moving and poetic language he pictures the wisdom and the peace and the joy experienced by the soul that drinks Christ's Blood:

I wonder very much whence has originated this practice, that, contrary to evangelical and apostolical doctrine, water is offered in some places in the Lord's cup, which water by itself cannot express the blood of Christ. The Holy Spirit also is not silent in the psalms on the sacrament of this thing, when he makes mention of the Lord's cup, and says, "Thy inebriating cup, how excellent it is!" Now the cup which inebriates is assuredly mingled with wine, for water cannot inebriate anybody. And the cup of the Lord in such wise inebriates, as Noe also was intoxicated drinking wine, in Genesis. But because the intoxication of the Lord's cup and blood is not such as the intoxication of the world's wine, since the Holy Spirit said in the psalm, "Thy inebriating cup," he added, "how excellent it is," because doubtless the Lord's cup so inebriates them that drink, that it makes them sober; that it restores their minds to spiritual wisdom; that each one recovers from the flavour of the world to the understanding of God; and in the same way, that by that common wine the mind is dissolved, and the soul relaxed, and all sadness is laid aside, so, when the blood of the Lord and the cup of salvation have been drunk, the memory of the old man is laid aside, and there arises an oblivion of the former worldly conversation, and the sorrowful and sad breast which before was oppressed by tormenting sins is eased by the joy of the divine mercy; because that only is able to rejoice him who drinks in the Church, which, when it is drunk, retains the Lord's truth.<sup>12</sup>

Our final example of the biblical type of the role of the Precious Blood in the sacraments is taken from the New Testament, the miracle of Christ's changing water into wine at the wedding feast of Cana (Jn 2,1-11). Once again, our sources will be the explanation that the Fathers of the Church give of the symbolism in this episode.

However, we might mention in passing that, from a strictly exegetical point of view, one of the exciting new perspectives that Scripture scholars are opening up to us today is that of the sacramental character of St. John's Gospel. It may well be that in this instance the primary meaning of the scriptural passage is not far removed from what is sometimes regarded as the unduly allegorical character of patristic interpretation.<sup>13</sup>

St. Cyril of Jerusalem tells us that by working the miracle of converting water into wine Christ prepared our minds for the still greater wonder of changing wine into his own Blood. But he also goes on to mention the significance of this miracle taking place at a wedding feast. The earthly wedding is a type, a figure, of that mystical union of Christ and the soul that is so effectively accomplished by eating His flesh and drinking His Blood. In a passage from his catechetical instructions (formerly read in the breviary on the octave day of Corpus Christi) he says:

Of old in Cana of Galilee, he changed water into wine of his own will. Is he less worthy of credence when he changes wine into blood? Called to an earthly marriage he performed that amazing miracle. Shall we not, then, confess all the more that on the children of the bridal-chamber he has bestowed the enjoyment of his own body and blood?<sup>14</sup>

But once more it is to St. Cyprian that we must go for the fullest development of this imagery. He not only finds in the episode an allusion to the eucharistic banquet, but more precisely he sees in the conversion of the water into wine a figure of the rejection of the Jews and the call of the Gentiles to this banquet. The Jews were the Lord's vineyard, but they did not have the right spiritual dispositions for becoming the Lord's wine. Hence the Gentiles, signified by the water, will be brought into union with God through participation in the sacramental cup. The passage we are about to quote is taken from the same epistle mentioned previously, where Cyprian is refuting the error of using only water in the eucharistic celebration:

How perverse and how contrary it is, that although the Lord at the marriage made wine of water, we should make water of wine, when even the sacrament of that thing ought to admonish and instruct us rather to offer wine in the sacrifices of the Lord. For because among the Jews there was a want of spiritual grace,

wine also was wanting. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts was the house of Israel; but Christ, when teaching and showing that the people of the Gentiles should succeed them, and that by the merit of faith we should subsequently attain to the place which the Jews had lost, made wine out of water; that is, he showed that at the marriage of Christ and the Church, as the Jews had failed, the people of the nations should rather flow together and assemble; for the divine Scripture in the Apocalypse declares that the waters signify the people, saying, 'The waters which thou sawest, upon which the whore sitteth, are peoples and multitudes, and nations of the Gentiles, and tongues,' which we evidently see to be contained also in the sacrament of the cup.<sup>15</sup>

This symbolism of the water representing the people and the wine representing Christ leads St. Cyprian to see still further meaning in the use of these two elements at the marriage feast of Cana. We have here, he tells us, a type of one of the important accessory rites in the eucharistic celebration: the mixing of some water with the wine in the eucharistic cup. As the water is changed into wine, so the Christian people are entirely transformed into Christ by partaking of the eucharistic cup. Thus Christ and his Church are united in the most intimate embrace of love:

In the water is understood the people, but in the wine is showed the blood of Christ. But when the water is mingled in the cup with wine, the people is made one with Christ, and the assembly of believers is associated and conjoined with him in whom it believes; which association and conjunction of water and wine is so mingled in the Lord's cup, that the mixture cannot any more be separated. Whence, moreover, nothing can separate the Church — that is, the people established in the Church, faithfully and firmly persevering in that which they have believed — from Christ, in such a way as to prevent their undivided love from always abiding and adhering. Thus, therefore, in consecrating the cup of the Lord, water alone cannot be offered, even as wine alone cannot be offered. For if anyone offer wine only, the blood of Christ is dissociated from us; but if the water be alone, the people are dissociated from Christ; but when both are mingled, and are joined with one another by a close union, there is completed a spiritual and heavenly sacrament. Thus the cup of the Lord is not indeed water alone, nor wine alone, unless each be mingled with the other.<sup>16</sup>

This concludes our examination of the four biblical types chosen from patristic explanation of our sacramental participation in

the divine Blood. In the sacramental world outward signs have the astounding power actually to produce what they signify. To understand their effects, we must understand what they signify. And the Fathers of the Church teach us that this signification is to be sought primarily in the Books inspired by God himself. There is continuity in God's dealings with man. Earlier biblical events typify the Incarnate Word and His redemptive work. But there are also types of the sacramental order, by which this redemption is re-presented in the worship of the Mystical Body. As far as the Savior's redeeming Blood is concerned, we were definitively sealed with this Blood when the sign of the cross was marked upon us in baptism, as the homes of the Jews were marked with the lamb's blood. But it is especially in partaking of the eucharistic cup that this Blood transforms us and sets us on fire. Far more than the water from the rock of Horeb, this Blood is a breath-taking manifestation of God's generosity and loving kindness. Now the words "inebriating cup" take on new meaning: this divine drink sweeps us off our feet into a kind of spiritual intoxication; we are beside ourselves from this ecstatic embrace of divine love. Like the water changed into wine, through this sacred Blood we are completely transformed into Christ, so that it is no longer we that live, but Christ lives in us.

A fitting conclusion to this paper is the vesper hymn the Church sings at Eastertide, which so happily brings together a number of the themes we have been discussing:

"The lamb's high banquet we await,  
In snow-white robes of royal state,  
And now, the Red Sea's channel past  
To Christ our Prince we sing at last.

Upon the altar of the cross  
His body hath redeemed our loss:  
And tasting of his roseate blood,  
Our life is hid with him in God.

That paschal eve God's arm was bared:  
The devastating angel spared;  
By strength of hand our hosts went free  
From Pharaoh's ruthless tyranny.

Now Christ our paschal lamb is slain,  
 The lamb of God that knew no stain,  
 The true oblation offered here  
 Our own unleavened bread sincere.<sup>17</sup>

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1. Scripture citations in this paper are from the Knox translation.
2. Final prayer (taken from the Gelasian Sacramentary) after Communion on Good Friday in the restored Holy Week *Ordo*.
3. Joseph H. Rohling, *The Blood of Christ in Christian Latin Literature Before the Year 1000* (Washington: Catholic University, 1923).
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10. *De sacramentis (Sources chrétiennes, vol. 25)*, ed. by Bernard Botte (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1950), pp. 88-9.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 92-3.
12. "Epist. 62," in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (New York: Scribners, 1925), vol. V, p. 361.
13. The exegesis of this passage along sacramental lines is given by Oscar Cullman, *Early Christian Worship* (Chicago: Allenson, 1955), pp. 68-71, and C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1953), pp. 297-9.
14. *St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Lectures on the Christian Sacraments, IV, 2*, ed. by F. L. Cross (London: Macmillan, 1951), p. 68.
15. *Ante-Nicene Fathers, loc. cit.*, p. 361.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 362.
17. *The Roman Breviary*, tr. by John, Marquess of Bute (London: W. Blackwood & Sons, 1908), vol. II, p. 401.

## *THE PRECIOUS BLOOD A REMEDY FOR SIN*

The spiritual life of the man baptized into the death of Christ is a life marked by death unto sin (Rom 6,6). Just as the physical death of Christ terminated one phase of His redemptive work — the events of His Passion — and inaugurated another — His glorious victory over death and sin — so the sacrament of baptism terminates the phase of each man's life in sin and inaugurates his life in grace. Baptism itself, then, is the sacramental sign of the new life which the recipient is progressively to corroborate and develop by the acts of faculties elevated by grace and activated by the infused virtues. This does not mean that the change wrought by baptism is guaranteed to endure. By deliberate and free choice man can default and lose the divine orientation of his new state of being. He can commit personal sin.

We generally think of entrance into religious life as the beginning of the road to spiritual perfection, a road mapped in three broad stages: purification from sin, advancement in virtue, mystical union with God. This generally accepted notion should in no wise prejudice us against the scriptural teaching that every baptized follower of Christ has some measure of obligation to seek spiritual perfection, to advance in the newness of life given him through Christ.<sup>1</sup>

In religious life this general obligation becomes much more demanding and exclusive. The dedicated ideal of religious life is the earnest striving for perfection in the love and service of God. In all cases the ideal is concretized in the practice of the evangelical counsels, and in most cases is expressed in the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The perfection sought is always and inevitably of benefit to the one who seeks it, yet it is not in this sense that perfection is primarily understood. The primary purpose and goal of religious life is the perfection of knowledge and love of God for what He has revealed Himself to be, that Infinite Goodness of which we and others are by grace participators. In this life that perfection of knowledge and love manifests itself in interior or exterior service to God.

The three stages of the spiritual life already mentioned are not exclusive periods of time, marked by exclusive graces and efforts of soul. They are rather three degrees of proficiency or attainment in grace and charity by which the earnest soul marks more or less progress at any point in the spiritual life.<sup>2</sup> A predominant concern and effort towards the goal of loving union with God characterizes one or the other stage. Our immediate interest is in the first stage, where the principal task is purification from sin.

### *The Nature of Sin*

It is important for the person who is striving for perfection, in religious life or in the world, to grasp the notion and the reality of the thing from which he wishes to be purified. Without the realization of the object of his efforts, he is little likely to see the full necessity of his purpose or the adequate means to it.

The principal object of purification is moral fault, which we usually designate by the word "sin." A moral fault by its nature implies an act and, since we are concerned with humans, a human act. To be a moral fault or sin a human act must be deficient in some necessary quality: its reasonableness, its measure of due proportion in object, circumstances and end with human reason. Lacking this due proportion, a human act is deprived of its perfection of being what it should be. It is thus deprived of its formal goodness, which is found in the accord with reason of the constituent elements of the act: its object, circumstances and end. Yet, although this deprivation may be the ultimate evil of sin, Catholic theology is agreed that it does not formally constitute a human act a sin. A natural action is evil by deprivation of a natural form of perfection of being due it. A voluntary action, such as the human act, is evil because of *contrariety to the good of reason*, which is an intelligible form, not a natural form. Considered naturally, a sinful act has all the natural integrity that a good act has. Considered morally, however, the act is contrary to reason. This contrariety to the rule of reason is seen not merely as a deprivation of good but as the contrary of good, something positive, so to speak, the something which makes a morally bad human act formally a sin and provides the moral distinction between one kind of sin and another.<sup>3</sup>

Not content with this rather philosophical notion of sin, Catholic

theology goes further. Human reason is only the immediate and derived rule of moral action. Its principle, in turn, is the Eternal Law of God, the sovereign and absolutely primary measure of human action. An action which is contrary to reason is at the same time contrary to the Eternal Law;<sup>4</sup> lacking the form which reason imposes, it lacks a form which bears the imprint of the highest and ultimate norm, the Eternal Law. Sin thus touches upon the divine order of things. By sin man not only compromises himself in his higher nature, but he interjects disorder into the eternal plan of things. Indeed one may say that sin is more opposed to the Eternal Law than to reason, since reason is the rule of human actions only because of its participation in the Eternal Law. In the final analysis sin is a gesture against the Eternal Law, a blow to its operation in human affairs where reason expresses and defends the Eternal Law.

Beyond the law we must see the Lawgiver. Sin does more than jeopardize the divine order of things. It offends the Person who establishes that order. Far from being an impersonal disorder, sin partakes of the nature of a personal offense against God, whose wise disposition of things provided by the Eternal Law sin tends to impair. God is not indeed offended directly and formally by each and every sin, as He is, for example, by hatred or contempt directed against Him. But He is offended in the Wisdom by which the divine order of things is established in the Eternal Law, against which sin directly offends. Sin offends God by its nature, or more correctly it offends God by the fact that it is morally evil. It is the evil in sin which offends, and the offense is a condition necessarily attached to the commission of an act that is morally evil. It is true that God suffers nothing from the offense contained in sin. He is not injured or damaged in His infinite dignity and attributes. But this fact is due only to God's immutability. Sin in itself, the sin which I, a human person, commit tends to deprive God of His infinite prerogatives. It is not due, then, to the sinner and his sin that the person of God is not affected by sin, but only to the fact that God's infinite perfection cannot suffer any diminution of itself.<sup>5</sup> The *tendency* of the active offense of sin to introduce a passive offense in the Infinite Person offended brings to our notice something of the infinite magnitude of sin. The aspect of a divine offense makes sin at once more real and more detestable.

*Mortal Sin*

There is yet another aspect of sin which will make it clear that while what I have up to now stated applies to both mortal and venial sin in some sense, yet in the full and perfect sense it can apply only to mortal sin. This aspect is the distinction between mortal and venial sin, the basis for which, according to St. Thomas, is the effect each has on charity, the infused virtue.

Every sin merits punishment, either eternal or temporal. It merits eternal punishment, if it takes away the principle of the moral order; it merits only temporal punishment, if, while offending God, it still retains and safeguards this principle.<sup>6</sup> The principle is simply adherence of the will to the true ultimate end of man, which is God. Man clings to God by the preservation of charity within the union of grace which charity supposes. If an act of man means the will abandons its adherence to man's ultimate end, that will places itself in a state of eternal disorder, from which only the infinite mercy of God can release it by granting forgiveness.<sup>7</sup> There are certain objects of human actions which are of such a nature that for man to turn to them by the choice of his will is to turn from his true ultimate end, God, who is at the same time the ultimate principle of the moral order.

Which objects, when deliberately and freely chosen, turn man from God, man's ultimate end and the principle of the moral order? It is obvious that any act directly contrary to divine charity (such as hatred or contempt) directly and formally turns man from His ultimate end. And since divine charity includes one's neighbor loved for God's sake, any act contrary to love of neighbor also turns man formally from his ultimate end.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, we have seen that the Eternal Law of God is the absolute and primary determinant of the reasonable and moral good. This law may be more immediately expressed in the natural law or in positive law. Because law serves to direct man's acts to the ultimate end of man's life and to maintain his adherence to that end in the various intermediate and proximate ends of life, there is a correlation between law and man's ultimate end and this end is comprised in the very definition of law. Accordingly, only those precepts which are necessary to the preservation of the relation of man's acts to the ultimate end merit in the full sense the name of law and are primary. Those laws which are not necessary

to this purpose are secondary laws. Hence, only those acts which are contrary to law in the full sense take away adherence of the will to man's ultimate end, God, and only they are mortally sinful, that is, only they withdraw man from the principle of moral order, which in the economy of salvation is at the same time the principle of supernatural life and of charity.<sup>9</sup> Take away the principle of divine life and man cannot live in the supernatural sense, and, if he cannot live, he cannot love in the supernatural sense, for the love of charity is the principal operation of the will in divine life.

To point out how coextensive is the violation of law with the loss of charity we should note that in the present order of things charity unites all other virtues under itself,<sup>10</sup> so that a violation of one of the other virtues materially brings divine charity into contempt, whether the violation directly affects God, our neighbor or ourselves.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the love of God includes adherence to the divine will in its precepts, so that acts contrary to the latter become materially contrary to the love of their Author.<sup>12</sup> And finally, as God has established a hierarchy of superiors and subjects, transgression of the precepts of superiors is transgression of the will of God whom they represent. Thus supposing a precept or prohibition in grave matter and imposed by the superior to oblige gravely, its violation implies a violation of the love of God and His will.<sup>13</sup>

### *Venial Sin*

If mortal sin distinguishes itself by the fact that it ruptures man's relation of love and friendship with God, his ultimate and supernatural end, venial sin characterizes itself by the fact that it leaves that relation intact. This is true not only of those sins which are venial by reason of some imperfection in the act (imperfect knowledge, inadvertence, imperfect consent) although dealing with matters of themselves serious, but also of those sins which are venial by reason of the relatively insignificant quantity of grave matter involved (e.g., a petty theft) or by reason of an object relatively insignificant in itself (e.g., so-called white lies). A venial sin does not cause the loss of divine charity, does not turn man from his ultimate end, either because its imperfection as an act prevents it from being a determined and definite choice, or because its disorder involves matters that are not necessary for the preservation of the

law's essential orientation to the ultimate end. In a word, venial sin is only *relatively contrary* to law itself and to the ultimate end which law guarantees.<sup>14</sup> Venial sin is an act containing a moral disorder, but the disorder is not of the kind which unequivocally interrupts and reverses man's habitual orientation by grace and charity to his ultimate end, God Himself. Man remains habitually orientated to God; he retains the principle of supernatural life; he preserves divine charity.

But what he does is bad enough. Venial sin is still a disorder, an offense to God. It is an act which is deprived of that perfection which the virtue of charity would give it, namely, the perfection of being an act ordered by habitual charity to the ultimate end of all good acts, God. Venial sin does not diminish essential charity, that is, the virtue of charity (which is infused), but it does constitute a diminution of the *fervor* which charity expresses in its acts.<sup>15</sup> There is, furthermore, a sad consequence to all venial sins, particularly those which are deliberate or habitual. Although no number of venial sins, however great that number may be, can ever result directly in the loss of grace and charity, there is an indirect connection with such loss — and it is most real — through the disposition to mortal sin which such disordered acts tend to produce.<sup>16</sup> Habitual or deliberate venial sin develops an attitude of moral carelessness and convenience. Such an attitude can only imperil the observance of the law in more essential things, especially in times of emotional stress, in sudden temptation, or when too great sacrifice seems to be demanded.

To determine precisely which precepts of the law, human or divine, contain a necessary relation to the ultimate end and which acts, when done deliberately and freely, are contrary to this relation to the ultimate end pertains to moral theology. My only purpose here was to show how sin ruptures or at least tends to rupture man's relation to his ultimate end, a Personal Being, the Author of the order of reason and the order of grace. In showing this I have hoped to give a better appreciation of the intrinsic evil of sin and of the necessity of purification from sin.

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#### *Redemption from Sin*

Previous papers have already shown the proper role of the Precious Blood of the God-Man in the drama of redemption. We need

only call to our attention that in the divine plan the material Blood shed by Christ in His Passion and Death shares instrumentally in the physical causality not only of the death of Jesus but of the redemptive effect which that suffering unto death had as a work of obedient and religious love which is vicariously meritorious and satisfying to divine justice. The physical Blood of Jesus is, therefore, both material instrument and symbolic sign of the redemption.<sup>17</sup> This is true both of objective and of subjective redemption. By objective redemption I mean the redemption which Christ effected apart from us, the vicariously redeeming act which He alone performed and by which He liberated all men causally (or, as we might say, *in actu primo*) from the guilt of original and personal sin and from its immediate effect, eternal banishment from God. By subjective redemption I mean the *application* of objective redemption, that is, of Christ's redemptive act, to the individual man, the liberation from sin effected in the individual through the reception of sanctifying grace as the intrinsically vivifying principle of supernatural life and through the activation of the infused virtues and gifts. In the case of objective redemption the Blood of which we speak is the Blood of the Sacrifice of Calvary offered once for all for the redemption of all men. In the case of subjective redemption, or the application of Christ's redeeming merits, the Blood referred to is that of the same unique Sacrifice, now however rendered present and effective for each one of us in the sacramental Sacrifice and in the other sacramental channels of grace.

I should also call attention to the fact that devotion to the Precious Blood does not stop short at the material Blood which is directly honored and worshipped, even though this Blood is that of a Divine Person and hence rightly called Divine Blood. As yet the redemptive role and significance of that material Blood has not been expressed. Devotion to the Precious Blood must of necessity, therefore, include the love and obedience which motivated Christ's supreme act of religion, His Passion unto the death of the Cross. This sacrificial love, this consecration and dedication which extended to the total sacrifice of Himself is symbolized most perfectly by the Divine Blood pouring itself out drop by drop in the heroic death of the Cross, as an act redemptive of man because fully satisfying to divine justice. Love cannot go further; it cannot express itself more eloquently. Devotion to the Precious Blood will, then, emphasize the

aspect of consecrated and unselfish love, sacrificial love, for the will of God in redeeming men, including first of all oneself.

*Purification from Sin*

Purification of the soul from sin is but a part of redemption itself. The subjective aspect of redemption is developmental and manifested in the growth of charity, both intensively and extensively, here on earth. Its final consummation is eternal union with God in the Beatific Vision. Although it is the focus of effort at the beginning of the spiritual life, it never in fact diminishes with progress but grows into the full flower of solid virtue and the mystical gifts. As part of subjective redemption it depends on the fruits reaped by the Precious Blood on Calvary and made effective in the sacramental life of the Mystical Body. It would be a mistake, however, to see subjective fruitfulness of the redemption in a passive receptivity to sacramental grace. Grace itself and its inseparable accompaniments of the virtues and gifts (and especially charity) do not vivify and actuate the supernatural man inserted into the Mystical Body of Christ, unless they, as it were, erupt spontaneously and naturally into those affective and effective acts which are the necessary collaboration of the soul with grace and charity in its own purification.

The purification from sin demanded of the sincere beginner in the spiritual life will not neglect the foremost means of all, sacramental absolution and penance. Humbly prepared for and conscientiously used, the sacrament of penance ought to produce the most salutary effects, not only of forgiveness and satisfaction but of an effective detestation of sin and purpose of amendment. Purification will not stop there, however. It will continue in all the acts one performs and especially in prayer and voluntary penance and mortification. A pervasive sense of the awfulness of sin — personal sin — is the first requirement for any approach to God, whether in prayer or these other acts. Without this sensibility to one's unworthiness before the God of all holiness — an unworthiness inherent in the lowliness of the creature and painfully emphasized by the personal sin of that creature — little real progress can be made in the task of purification. Without this sensibility access to the Savior, Christ, is greatly impeded. He needs to become not just the Savior of the world, not just the Victim for an original sin of Adam, but *my* Savior and

the Victim of *my* sin. Where the humble soul struck by its own unworthiness comes into the presence of God, it speaks with the words and in the tone of the publican: "O God, be merciful to me the sinner!" (Lk 18,13). In seeking what it most needs — God's mercy — that soul is already purifying itself and making itself ready to pursue all the means to further purification, including the offering of adequate satisfaction for past faults and the gaining of control over the appetites and their disorderly concupiscences, which still endanger the soul too freely and too easily. Not that purification is merely a self-appointed and self-resolved task; without the antecedent and concomitant grace of God nothing could or would be done of redemptive value.

#### *Devotion and Purification*

Nothing can assist the soul more in the task of its own purification than a profound devotion to the Precious Blood, and this in several ways. Spiritual writers are agreed that serious and fruitful *meditation* is a most important preamble and accompaniment to this task. They direct the beginner to ponder well the basic truths of God's infinite holiness, one's own unworthiness as a sinful creature, and the deplorable consequences of sin.<sup>18</sup> When the soul places itself in the presence of its Redeemer bleeding on the Cross and recalls the extreme obedience and love which transfigures His act of atonement for sin, the soul is better disposed to do its part. When it contemplates the awesome Sacrifice of Blood willed by God to satisfy infinite justice, the soul must see the horror of sin's disorder and offense and be ready to complement Christ's redemptive suffering in itself through satisfactory and atoning suffering borne in a humble, contrite way. When it contemplates the suffering exacted by the shedding of Christ's Blood, the soul must conceive a detestation of sin that is the most effective deterrent — together with the interior grace which is the fruit of the same Blood — to future falls, whether from deliberateness or weakness.

Devotion to the Precious Blood should also motivate, especially through previous meditation and prayer, an effective program of voluntary penance and mortification.<sup>19</sup> This will not be undertaken solely to satisfy and repair for offense already committed but will manifest an intense desire to control and place under proper sub-

jection unmortified and unruly appetites and dispositions, the inheritance of original sin and in some cases of personal sin also. It would be foolish to think that one can stifle concupiscence or the passions or that such a thing would even be desirable. A man who never feels the attraction of things that delight the senses is an oddity and not a marvel of grace. Not extinction but control is needed, a control that is supernaturally motivated and calmly but effectively exercised. True, habitual control of one's appetites and tendencies will not only eliminate deliberate offenses but reduce to a minimum lapses of weakness from the initial wave of passion or concupiscence. I am not speaking here of lapses that cut one off from God, mortal sins. They can of course occur, but the occurrences would be rather isolated events. The sincere beginner would quickly rise again and arouse in himself profound and enduring repentance. Mortification will extend to the exterior and interior senses and to the intellect and will, all of which powers and faculties need to be subject to reason enlightened by faith and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, the struggle to eradicate the *capital sins* will play an important role in reducing many specific disorders of soul. The beginner will see the source of his strength in the merits of Christ's Blood transmitted to him through the Sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacraments. He will motivate his efforts with reciprocated love for Christ's own redemptive love. He will easily detect the offensive odor of his own pride and be moved to the humility of the publican by reason of the sinful results of pride. Where is there greater humility than on the cross? Can a sinner retain an attitude of self-righteousness in the face of his Redeemer's humiliation and rejection by men, often perhaps by himself? And how shall anger express itself, when it confronts Christ meekly suffering the insults of the scourging or crowning with thorns? How can avarice defend itself in the presence of Christ stripped of all earthly possessions and clothed in the raiment of His own Blood? And sloth — what excuse for the many sins of omission it encourages? It sleeps with the Apostles while Christ's sweat becomes bloody drops in the fearful ordeal of the Garden. Envy must condemn itself when it views the bloody fruits of the envy and hatred of the Scribes and Pharisees. Lust and gluttony turn to ashes of remorse and shame before the picture of the God-Man suffering prolonged, agonizing physical pain and the un-

speakable torture of thirst, the result of many wounds and the loss of Blood.

In conclusion, the writer of this paper feels that he has done a very incomplete job on his subject. Of the many ideas that might present themselves he has treated very few. But he has tried to preserve the principal feature of the "purgative way" and to apply to it a devotion at the heart of redemption. And finally this note. Purification from sin can appear and be taken as a task of pure self-interest rather than of disinterested love of God. It may be so, but it should be remembered that a reasonable love of self, especially in spiritual matters, is part of the second of the two great commandments and not opposed to the first but appended to it. The love of God includes the love of all that God loves. One does not expect perfect and disinterested love in all acts or even in most acts from the very beginning.

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1. A. Tanquerey, *The Spiritual Life* (2d ed. rev.; Tournai: Desclee, n.d.), pp. 176 ff.; J. de Guibert, *The Theology of the Spiritual Life* (New York; Sheed & Ward, 1953), p. 100.
2. Cf. de Guibert, p. 258.
3. Th. Deman, "Peché," *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1933), vol. XII-1, cols. 148-53.
4. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q.71, a.2, ad 4; a.6c.
5. Deman, *art. cit.*, col. 158.
6. *Sum. Theol.*, I-II, q.88, a.1.
7. *Ibid.*, q.87, a.3; q.72, a.5.
8. 1 Jn 4, 20.
9. Deman, *art. cit.*, col. 234.
10. *Sum. Theol.*, II-II, q.23, a.8.
11. *Sum. Theol.*, I-II, q.88, a.2, ad 1; II-II, q.24, a.12.
12. *Sum. Theol.*, II-II, q.24, a.12.
13. *Ibid.*, q.25, a.4.
14. Deman, *art. cit.*, col. 234.
15. *Sum. Theol.*, III, q.79, a.4, ad 1 et ad 3; *De Malo*, q.7, a.2, ad 14.
16. *Sum. Theol.*, I-II, q.88, a.3.
17. G. Lefebvre, *La rédemption par le sang de Jésus* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1944), p. 158.
18. Cf. St. Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, part one, especially cc. 8-12; St. Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises*, Exercises of the First Week.

19. The terms "voluntary penance and mortification" usually evoke thoughts of more or less traditional, external practices, like fasting, hairshirts, or other bodily discomforts imposed upon oneself. As a matter of fact, it has long been recognized that less perceptible forms may often be the more fruitful. Ordinary life in the world or in religion offers many opportunities for penance and mortification, often the better because not chosen by the individual but imposed upon him by his state, his superior, or by special circumstances. They become voluntary by being accepted as opportunities for penance and mortification and by being used as such. It takes a Therese of Lisieux to utilize them to the full. And not without reason did St. John Berchmans say, "My greatest penance is community life."

## *THE PRECIOUS BLOOD AND THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST*

It is through the example of and by virtue of the life and death of Christ that we are enabled to press on toward our goal, as St. Paul says, "to the prize of God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus" (Phil 3,14). Christ died and shed His Blood not only to give us new life but also to teach us how to live.

From Apostolic times Christians have endeavored to heed the invitation of Christ to take up their cross and follow Him. Through the course of the centuries this endeavor has fluctuated in intensity. At times it has been very intense; at other times it has been comparatively weak — both in the case of individuals and as a world-wide movement. At the present time there are certain signs which point to a more universal interest in living the full Christian life, modelled after the life of Christ Himself. Witness the movements that are all-embracing both among religious and among the laity. Among the laity we see this interest evidenced in Catholic action groups, the lay apostolate, the Lay Retreat Movement, the formation of secular institutes, and so forth. Among religious also there is this increased interest in living a more complete spiritual life. This is manifested by the religious congresses that have been held in recent years — in the Institutes of Spirituality that are being sponsored and so well attended — in the inauguration of the pastoral formation of religious priests, and in the Sister Formation Movement. These and other activities can be cited to show the direction of Christian mentality today.

I think it opportune that we consider at this time the relation of our devotion to the Precious Blood to this more intense spiritual life lived in closer union with Christ. In this paper we are concerned with two general areas in which there must be advancement if we are to draw closer to Christ in friendship, namely, prayer and the practice of virtue.

We take up first the matter of prayer. In regard to prayer, we ask two questions: 1) How can we unite our prayer life more intimately with our devotion to the Precious Blood? and 2) How can devotion to the Precious Blood help to make our prayer

life better? Now, there are two kinds of prayer, vocal and mental. We shall try to indicate how we might profit both in vocal prayer and mental prayer by considering certain aspects of each in relation to devotion to the Precious Blood.

In all our prayers of petition we cannot do better than to keep in mind the power of intercession which the Precious Blood possesses. It is the special office of our Savior's Blood to plead. Its very existence is the mightiest of prayers. Its presence in heaven is the power of omnipotence. It is the power by which God redeemed man. It is the power by which man prevails with God. Our individual prayers are efficacious because they are joined to the prayer of Christ, our Head. Christ, the Head, prays as each member of the Mystical Body prays. Thus, it is always Christ, the whole Christ, who prays. So we can in a beautiful way associate our prayers with the Precious Blood of Christ, pleading for us before the throne of God. Awareness of this will stimulate our confidence as nothing else could. And may we not believe that our Lord retains His stigmata in order to give greater power to our prayers offered in honor of His Precious Blood? How can the heavenly Father refuse our prayers addressed to Him in the name of His Divine Son resplendent in the glory of His sacred wounds?

Prayers for the conversion of sinners naturally seek their efficacy in the offering of the Precious Blood. The Precious Blood was shed for their conversion. That is its principal occupation still. Such prayer becomes more than intercession — Father Faber calls it at once the prayer and the answer to the prayer.<sup>1</sup>

Likewise, our love for the faithful departed will prompt us to pray for them through the merits of the Precious Blood. The pictures which represent the angels holding chalices at the wounded side of Christ and then emptying those chalices into the fires of Purgatory vividly portray how Christians formerly associated the Precious Blood with relief for the souls in Purgatory.

However, even more than in our vocal prayers, we can associate the Precious Blood with our mental prayer. In mental prayer we strive through considerations and reflections to come to make acts of adoration, thanksgiving, love. In reality there is no true prayer until the soul starts making these "acts" or affec-

tions. The basis of these acts or affections is the formation of ideas and convictions.

In the midst of the distractions of modern life, we find it difficult to pray and reflect. Life itself presents an obstacle to us rather than an inducement to meditation. Television along with many other modern advancements of science has served to destroy a taste for reading, which is essential to our prayer life. If, in olden days when there were fewer distractions, spiritual reading was found to be an indispensable preparation for mental prayer, it is even more necessary for us today. Spiritual reading is the foundation of a life of prayer; it is the best preparation for it. We look to spiritual reading, and the consequent informal reflection to which it leads, for the formation of those ideas and convictions that are sought by systematic meditation. Without constant spiritual reading, not only can there be no progress in prayer, but there is not even hope of perseverance in the spiritual life. Since we all have a very limited time to allot to formal mental prayer, spiritual reading assumes greater importance. By reason of a background of reading, we can more quickly pass on to the expression of affections, which is the heart of prayer.

Now, as we turn our thoughts to the association of the Precious Blood in our mental prayer, a difficulty seems to present itself. Have we available for spiritual reading sufficient material on the Precious Blood? I suppose it has seemed to most of us that such material is very limited. But I think it is only a superficial observation which leads us to this conclusion. As is evidenced from the wide range of topics on the program for this study-week, there appears quite an assembly of sources which we may have previously failed to consider. It is my hope that one of the fruits of this study-week will be the compilation of a new bibliography on the Precious Blood.

There are first of all books and articles which treat professedly of the Precious Blood. Material can also be found in associated mysteries, for example, the Passion, the Mass, the Redemption, the Eucharist. The liturgy, art, devotions of the Way of the Cross, etc., all furnish us with reflections on the Precious Blood. When we are studying theology, when we read Sacred Scripture and the Fathers of the Church we might keep an eye open for passages on the Precious Blood.

Every consideration of the Mystery of the Precious Blood has power to stir our minds, to enkindle our hearts and arouse our devotion into a living flame of zeal and sacrifice. The goodness of God toward mankind is eloquently portrayed in all the steps of redemption. Significant is the fact that every phase of His Sacred Passion is linked with one of His Bloodsheddings; every episode falls within the radius of its sacred purple. Eliminate these Bloodsheddings and the story of the Passion falls apart. One cannot look upon such a manifestation of love without adoring and praising God for His goodness and proffering love in return. And so, the view of the physical and mental sufferings of Christ as evidenced in the shedding of His Blood brings one quickly to affective prayer. We are so forcefully struck by the love of our Savior shedding His Blood, that our mental prayer becomes more a series of acts of love than a consideration of truths. Prayer is at its best not in the reflections and considerations, but in the acts which follow them — in love, humility, adoration, sorrow and the like, animated by love. Meditation on the mysteries of the Precious Blood will necessarily bring us to embrace Christ with love. Pius IX, in establishing the Feast of the Precious Blood, said that it was done “that the hearts of the faithful may be inflamed and uplifted more and more by *love* towards this Price of our Redemption” (*Redempti Sumus*).

Let us consider now under what varied manner we may turn our thoughts to the Precious Blood in order to be thus inflamed and uplifted. We have, of course, the several Bloodsheddings which draw us in a wonderful way to Christ. I have heard individuals express the fear that considerations and thoughts of the Precious Blood might be repulsive to people. I think we have rather imagined such repugnance than experienced it ourselves. It is true that we shrink from gruesome scenes of bloody tortures and fearful accidents. However, the thought of pouring out blood for others voluntarily is not itself repulsive. Certainly in this age when we are so familiar with blood-banks and blood transfusions, when so many of us have personally donated blood for these purposes, it is a needless fear — that many are apt to be repelled at the thought of the Precious Blood. In past ages too, we see how people were attracted to the Precious Blood rather than repelled at the thought of it. Witness the pictures that rep-

resent sinners bathing in the Blood of Christ. And recall the quotation from Apocalypse which was so familiar to the martyrs — Blessed are they who “have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb” (Ap 7, 14).

The symbol of the pierced side of Christ, out of which flowed Blood and water, adds something further for our considerations. It is the sign of the effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the Church. For out of the side of Christ was the Church born, the Sacraments have their efficacy, all graces flow.

The symbol of the Lamb is another beautiful association. There is the Lamb in figure, recalling the saving of the Hebrew people from the hand of Pharaoh. It is the Lamb of Sacrifice, giving His life for ours. There is also the Lamb of Glory, showing forth to the Heavenly Father the eternal marks of His love. The Lamb of the Apocalypse pleads incessantly for us, suffering no longer, but resplendent in the glory of His sacred wounds. St. John, in his vision, records that the book sealed with seven seals is opened by the Lamb, who thereupon receives adoration and praise from the heavenly hosts, who sing His praises: “Worthy art thou to take the scroll and to open its seals; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us for God with thy blood. . . .” (Ap 5, 9). And the refrain is taken up: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and divinity and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing ” (Ap 5, 12).

The Mass and the Holy Eucharist bring us in daily contact with the Precious Blood. We adore the Precious Blood present in the Blessed Sacrament. That Precious Blood is being constantly shed in a mystical manner for us. At Mass especially, we are brought forcefully face to face with Calvary and the bloody sacrifice.

We have likewise the symbol of the mystic wine press, so abundantly used in medieval art, and also the symbol of the pelican drawing blood from its own breast to feed its young. These symbols portray graphically for us the immolation of Christ.

All the forms and images and associations of the devotion to the Precious Blood are or can be instruments of graces which will bring us closer to Christ. They may even belong to the series of graces which form us in our vocation, as was the case in the life of the Little Flower. Perhaps you recall the incident in her

life which she describes as firing up her vocation, arousing her to the apostolate for souls. She relates how first the passion to save souls was begotten in her heart.

One Sunday, closing my book at the end of Mass, a picture of our Lord on the Cross half slipped out, showing only one of His Divine Hands, pierced and bleeding. I felt an indescribable thrill, such as I had never felt before. My heart was torn with grief to see that Precious Blood falling to the ground, and no one caring to treasure It as It fell, and I resolved to remain continually in spirit at the foot of the Cross, that I might receive the Divine Dew of Salvation and pour it forth upon souls.<sup>2</sup>

On that Sunday in July, 1887, as Therese closed her book after Mass and got ready to go out of the church a new grace filled her soul. Our Lord from that moment united her to Himself in His work of redemption. Henceforth a burning zeal for souls filled her heart, and would continue to grow unceasingly with the increase of her love of her Crucified Savior. It is interesting to note how her apostolate starts — with a holy picture in a church on an ordinary Sunday morning. The Holy Spirit might have used any other apparently insignificant circumstance to initiate the development of her apostolate for souls. But it is in harmony with divine Providence that God, in this instance, did choose a picture of the Precious Blood to form a part of the chain of events that make up the whole history of redemption.

Mentioned so far are direct means to foster thoughts of the Precious Blood and of bringing us to fervent acts of the will in love, adoration and thanksgiving. There are also things which may be used indirectly. We may use things which at first seem to have no association with the Precious Blood. For instance, there is holy water which we can associate with the Precious Blood. This sacramental has special power of cleansing through the prayer of the Church. In the use of holy water then, may we not express the wish to be cleansed through the power of the Precious Blood — to be washed from our sins. There is the following ejaculation which many use as they sign themselves with holy water: "May the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ wash me of all sins. In the Name of the Father, and . . ."

The contemplation of scenes in nature can serve also as

a means to stimulate our devotion to the Precious Blood. That this is possible can be seen from the pious reflections of Father Faber.

I was standing on the seashore and my heart filled with love it knew not why. The dawn lighted up the faces of the ivory cliffs, which the sun and sea had been blanching for centuries of God's unchanging love. The miles of noiseless sands seemed vast as if they were the floor of eternity. Somehow the daybreak was like eternity. The idea came over me of that feeling of acceptance which so entrances the soul just admitted into Heaven. To be saved, I said to myself, to be saved. Then the thoughts of all the things implied in salvation came in one thought upon me. I said nothing, but I looked at the sinking sea as it reddened in the morning. Its great heart was throbbing in the calm; and methought I saw the Precious Blood of Jesus in heaven throbbing that hour with real human love for me.<sup>3</sup>

The things we have mentioned thus far are means of perfecting our prayer life through devotion to the Precious Blood. We said earlier that we must draw closer to Christ in friendship through prayer and the practice of virtue. There remains then the consideration of Christ as the Model of all perfection. He is our Model in His Person as perfect God and perfect Man. He is our Model in His works and virtues. Pius XII has told us in *Mediator Dei*:

Thanks to the shedding of the Blood of the Immaculate Lamb, now each might set about the personal task of achieving his own sanctification, so rendering to God the glory due to Him. . . . 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 . . . to obtain the salutary fruits produced by Him upon it (*Mediator Dei*, n. 1 & 78).

All virtues are exemplified in the life of Christ, but especially are they exemplified in the shedding of His Blood. St. Thomas tells us:

Consider Christ who bore such contradiction on the part of sinners . . . and in no matter what tribulation, you will find the remedy in the cross of Jesus. You will find in it the example of all the virtues. As St. Gregory the Great says, if we recall the passion of our Savior, there is nothing

so hard and so painful that we cannot bear it with patience and love.<sup>4</sup>

During this Study Week we have had on display the wonderful 13th century picture, depicting Christ being crucified by the virtues. It was the virtues of Christ which kept Him nailed to the Cross. Charity is shown lancing His side, while obedience, mercy and humility nail His hands and feet. Considerations on the Precious Blood will set before us the virtues of Christ for our imitation.

That some order might be followed, let us consider briefly how our devotion to the Precious Blood will prompt us to the practice of the theological and moral virtues.

Faith, the first of the theological virtues and the pillar upon which rests the edifice of our spiritual life, has its source in Christ, in His coming to earth, in His bloody death on the Cross. Christ first of all merited for us by the shedding of His Blood the gift of faith and the grace of all the infused virtues. Faith is the basis of justification, for it makes us know the supernatural end toward which we must tend. St. Paul says eloquently in the Epistle to the Hebrews that in trial we should look to the Cross in a spirit of faith and thus overcome the difficulties of reaching our goal. "Therefore . . . let us run with patience to the fight set before us; looking towards the author and finisher of faith, Jesus, who for the joy set before him, endured a cross, despising shame, and sits at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb 12, 1-2). The more the spirit of faith grows in us, the more we grasp the sense of the mystery of Christ, who came into this world for our salvation. From the point of view of faith God appears in the mysteries of the life and Passion of the Savior. In the light of faith we see our neighbor differently. Through faith we see, even in those who are naturally not congenial to us, souls redeemed by the Blood of Christ, who are part of His Mystical Body and perhaps nearer to His Sacred Heart than we are. Thus our spiritual gaze, looking upon the Blood-stained Savior, manages to pierce the opaque envelope of flesh and blood which prevents us from seeing the souls that surround us.

Regarding hope, St. Ambrose tells us: "Our hope and our patience is Christ, He became our Redemption, He is our hope."

The hope of reaching our eternal destiny and of obtaining the means thereto, rests upon God's omnipotence and His fidelity to His promises. That God has willed to save us — that He has fulfilled His promise with prodigality is evident to all who look upon the bleeding Savior, His Only-begotten Son. God has not spared His only Son but delivered Him up for us. Surely, He cannot but will our everlasting happiness. He continues to apply to us the merits of His Divine Son, particularly through the Church established by His Blood. The reason or motive of our hope, therefore, lies in the Blood of Christ. God has promised us eternal life and the pledge of His word is in the shedding of Christ's Blood. St. Therese of the Child Jesus stated that her immense confidence in God did not come from the knowledge of her innocence, but from the thought of the infinite mercy and infinite merits of the Savior.

The third theological virtue associated with the Precious Blood is charity. St. Francis de Sales says that every love that does not have its origin in the Savior's passion is frivolous and dangerous. The death of Jesus, the supreme expression of His love for us, is the strongest incentive to our love of Him. Nothing satisfies our hearts as does the love of Jesus Christ, by the way of perfect spoliation which unites the soul very closely to the divine Will.<sup>5</sup> "Great Thou art, O Lord," says St. Augustine, "and therefore Thou must be loved without measure by those whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy Precious Blood." Pondering on the bloody Passion and Death of Christ, begging the grace of God through the Precious Blood, may we continue to love God more and more all our lives until we are united with Him in the most perfect love when we see Him face to face in heaven. This is the final fruit of the Precious Blood.

Not only love of God but also love of neighbor is the fruit of devotion to the Precious Blood. We are united one to the other because Christ is the Brother of us all, our Blood-Brother, Who redeemed us by His Blood. The lives of the saints show that they understood the Master's words: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 15,12). Christ loved us even to the death of the Cross; the saints loved their brethren even unto giving the testimony of their blood. Such is

fraternal charity, the extension or radiation of the love we should have for God.

The Precious Blood is the symbol of sacrificial love and calls for sacrificial love in return. And since this Blood was shed for souls, the immediate effect upon us will be zeal for those who have been bought at such a price. This zeal was evident in the Apostles after Pentecost, in the Christian martyrs through the ages, in all who have consecrated themselves to the service of God even to immolation. The work of religious dedicated to the salvation of others is the reaping of the fruits of the sufferings of Christ. Christ has willed that through them His Blood might be invested in the souls of others. The predominant virtue of the Savior was zeal, the ardor of charity, as He Himself says: "I have come to cast fire (of charity) upon the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled" (Lk 12,49)? Throughout His life Christ continued to carry the Cross of His desire for the salvation of souls. He said at the Last Supper: "I have greatly desired to eat this pass-over with you before I suffer" (Lk 22,15). And then in instituting the Eucharist, He said: "This is my body, which is being given for you. . . . This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which shall be shed for you" (Lk 22,19-20). Christ desired with a great desire the accomplishment of His mission by the perfect sacrifice of Himself, by the most complete gift of self.

The suffering that accompanied this burning desire ceased with His bloody death, but His thirst for our salvation still endures. He is living always to make intercession for us (Heb 7,25).

And now, taking up the moral virtues, let us consider first that of prudence. Faith directs us toward our supernatural end, but supernatural prudence inclines us to choose the most apt means in every instance to attain our final goal. Worldly and human prudence would choose temporal goals and counsel means which tend toward our ease and advantage. Such prudence tries to avoid every inconvenience. Supernatural prudence, on the other hand, brings to mind our supernatural goal and makes demands that contradict worldly and human prudence. Charting our course toward heaven and choosing means to that goal, makes harsh demands on human nature. Only a deep appreciation of the bloody death of our Savior and a realization that we must take up our cross and follow Him will help us reject the prudence of the flesh.

By remembering the Cross of Christ we learn not to satisfy passion, nor to seek wealth and honors. Through the Blood we see that such pleasures have only temporal and no eternal value. It is a part of Christian prudence to recall the Bloody death and to apply its lessons to all the acts of our life. Then we become truly prudent and wise.

Our Lord on the Cross and in the Tabernacle is a most prudent Counsellor. Through the ages men and women have taken counsel with Him. Today the prudent Christian continues to take counsel before the image of his Crucified Savior or before His Eucharistic Presence. Josaphat of old said: "As we know not what to do, we can only turn our eyes to thee" (2 Par 20,12). We thus rely on the Precious Blood in the matter of prudence. The divine 'folly' of the prodigal shedding of Christ's Blood defies the world's wisdom and teaches us to strive after true heavenly wisdom.

Second among the moral virtues is that of justice. Can we associate the rigors of justice with the Precious Blood? Does it not seem that the Sacrifice of Calvary shows mercy rather than justice? The loving mercy of God is certainly evident on Calvary's heights, but His justice is also present. There from the Cross satisfaction is given — payment is made. After man had sinned and fallen from original justice, God demanded adequate satisfaction. He demanded the price of His Son's Blood in payment. It is justice that demands satisfaction. Therefore, when Christ bought us with the price of His own Blood, He satisfied the justice of God. "For just as by the disobedience of the one man the many were constituted sinners, so also by the obedience of the one the many will be constituted just" (Rom 5,19). Christ died once for our sins, the "just for the unjust."

Justice in us demands that we render to everyone his due. We recognize our neighbor as possessing rights and we respect those rights. We do so because all have been bought at the same price, the Precious Blood. This Price of Redemption is the source of all true brotherhood, the foundation of true human dignity, the source of our hope for true progress here on earth even in material things, the promise of eternal glory.

Of the cardinal virtues it would seem that the most difficult is that of temperance, for this virtue moderates and controls

those appetites and passions in man, which most frequently lead to his ruin. It is the common experience of men that the delights of the taste and touch and of the lower senses readily lead to the excess of sin. The struggle never ceases as long as man is encased in this mortal flesh. In striving to practice the virtue of temperance it is well to study its relation to the Precious Blood, to make use of the Blood of Christ as the most efficacious means to aid us in the stupendous struggle.

Christ died and shed His Blood; we too must die unto ourselves so that we might live unto God. This is the eternal paradox that Christ presents to us: "Whoever tries to save his life will lose it; and whoever loses it will preserve it" (Lk 17,33). The Precious Blood teaches us not to love the life of this world but to seek the true life of heaven. It is thus that we are led to the practice of temperance which requires, as St. Paul says, that man chastise his body and bring it into subjection (1 Cor 9,27).

The wild and unruly passions are best cured by acts of mortification, indulgence by abstinence, anger by patience, hatred by love. Pain is necessary to holiness. Suffering is essential to the killing of self-love. Habits of virtue cannot by any possibility be formed without voluntary mortification. If a man is not making constant sacrifice, he is deceiving himself in thinking that he is advancing in spirituality. "Sacrifice is peculiarly the Christian element of holiness and it is precisely the element which corrupt nature dislikes and resists."<sup>6</sup> In this matter of sacrifice and mortification it is of the greatest advantage to think constantly of the Precious Blood, the source of all supernatural life, the sign and symbol of mortification.

Lastly, we come to the virtue of fortitude. Fortitude is likewise called courage or strength of soul because it strengthens us both to undertake and to endure difficult things.

Our Lord warned His disciples that they must be prepared to suffer and die for Him. The early Christians looked ahead and strengthened themselves for the persecutions that were to come. Christians of all ages have need of the virtue of fortitude. All must look ahead and prepare for heroic struggle if necessary. This is so because Christian life demands of us heroism of virtue. We must all be prepared, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to accomplish heroic acts when circumstances shall require them. To be a

Christian means that we would rather suffer death than deny our faith or commit a mortal sin. If we habitually fulfill our duties, we can hope that the Holy Spirit will grant us the strength to remain faithful even in tortures, should we have to undergo such trials.

When we think of fortitude we almost automatically think of the martyrs. The martyr literally followed Christ to the very shedding of blood. Ever resounding in his ears were the words of Christ: "Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15,13). The martyrs received their courage from the example of Christ shedding His Blood. This was to the total gift of self in love. Such, the Blood reveals better than anything else, was the love of Christ. Such must be the response of His followers.

The important element in the acts of the martyrs was not their physical death but death to self. It was this death to self which gave the martyr's death its meaning. When the end of the persecutions came the Christians could no longer suffer physical death for their faith. However, because they had learned the supreme importance of death to self, they were prepared to express the totality of their love in another way. When actual death was no longer possible because persecutions had ceased, then a life of complete dedication to the service of the Lord was the next ideal. Through the ages succeeding the persecutions we see the virtue of fortitude manifested in the lives of dedicated virgins, men and women who vowed themselves to the complete service of God. Truly do the virgins and martyrs practice the virtue of fortitude. Aided by the gift of fortitude they receive their strength from the Precious Blood of Christ. The Blood exemplifies most impressively the fortitude of Christ — His strength of soul, His strength of character and spiritual vigor. The example of Christ, therefore, furnishes for us the motive of fortitude. "Christ also has suffered for you," says St. Peter, "leaving you an example that you may follow in His steps" (1 Pt 2,21). The valiant example of Christ should encourage us all, because we are Christians only in so far as we follow His footsteps and imitate Him. It is principally by the courage of Christ in going to His bloody death that we will be led to the practice of fortitude.

We seem justified in concluding that the Precious Blood is closely associated with the life of every Christian. The sincere

follower of Christ is enabled to grow in the life of prayer and virtue through his devotion to the Precious Blood. The mysteries contained in the Precious Blood have a profound meaning and effect upon our spiritual life. It is all-embracing. It does not concern itself with just one phase of our life. Its distinguishing mark, its predominant characteristic is "totality." It did not ask of Christ merely a measure of love. It does not ask of us a little or even much. It demands all. Did not Christ shed His Blood to the last drop in order to offer God all honor and glory and to bring to us all graces?

The Precious Blood presents to the sincere soul who wishes to follow Christ a compelling example, attracting it toward holiness. Thus it is that the very beginning of the supernatural life, its progress to maturity and the full fruits of sanctity may be ascribed to the operation of the Precious Blood in our souls.

Lawrence S. Cyr, C.P.P.S., S.T.L.

1. F. W. Faber, *The Precious Blood* (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., n.d.), p. 347.
2. *Soeur Therese of Lisieux, The Little Flower of Jesus*, ed. by T. N. Taylor (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1927), p. 72.
3. Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 240.
4. *Commentary on the Epistle to Hebrews*, 12, 3.
5. *Treatise on the Love of God* (Westminster: Newman, 1942), Bk. IX, c. 16.
6. Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 337.

## THE PRECIOUS BLOOD AND THE PERFECTION OF CHARITY

### I. *The Perfection of Charity in God*

*Deus caritas est*, God is love! In these three simple words Saint John, who learned the secrets of love at the breast of incarnate Wisdom, sums up the whole of mystical theology. By identifying charity with the divine essence he tells us that God is at once lover, beloved, and the bond of love between them. What are three distinct things among creatures, is actually one and the same thing in God. We, indeed, can love and be loved, but we cannot be lovers and beloved in the same respect; and under no consideration can we be identified with love itself — absolute, substantial love. This can be true only of Him in whom there is no defect whatever, in whom is all being, and in whom all being is eternal, immense, and infinite. In the first and absolute sense of the words, therefore, God Himself is the perfection of charity.

Now, while all the attributes of God are identical, they are not all synonymous. Each reveals a new and different aspect of the supremely simple Godhead. What then are we to learn from Saint John's revelation of God as love? What are the properties or features most characteristic of divine charity?

First of all perfect love is pure, holy. It is altogether without defect. This means, in the context of Sacred Scripture, that divine charity is opposed to both the world and the devil and is unspotted by that which they spawn, namely darkness and sin. This is the principal theme of the first epistle of Saint John, which, like "The Song of Songs" in the Old Testament, is specifically devoted to the theme of divine love. The beloved disciple warns his little children: "He who commits sin is of the devil; because the devil sins from the beginning . . . . Whoever is born of God does not commit sin; because his seed abides in him and he cannot sin. . . . In this the children of God and the children of the devil are made known" (1 Jn 3,8ff.). Regarding the world he advises them: "Do not love the world, or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; because all that is in the world

is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; which is not from the Father, but from the world" (1 Jn 2,15 f.). Holiness or purity of love, therefore, is from God, and it is the first characteristic of perfect charity. It is to be noted, however, that the evangelist attributes this property of love to God the Father, who is the innascible and virginal source, not only of the Word and the Holy Spirit in the Trinity, but also of all creation. Hence His love cannot but be pure and, in regard to creation, purifying or sanctifying.

In the second place, perfect love is communicative. This property immediately calls to mind the theological maxim, *bonum est sui diffusivum*, the good tends to communicate itself. Now the good, according to Saint Thomas Aquinas, is not so much the object as it is the source of perfect charity.<sup>1</sup> This is clearly true of divine love: for God cannot pursue, as an end, the goodness which is His very essence; but He can and does diffuse His goodness in creation, and His mercy still more wondrously in the restoration of creation. It is likewise evident and true of the charity of the blessed: for they no longer pursue the universal good as their end, because they have already attained it; but they are compelled by the sweet force of their love — *caritas urget* — to pour forth an endless hymn of praise in heaven and a ceaseless prayer of petition in the communion of saints. That perfect charity is essentially communicative is unquestionably the teaching of the disciple whom Jesus loved: "In this is the love, not that we have loved God, but that he has first loved us, and sent his Son a propitiation for our sins" (1 Jn 4,10). The Angelic Doctor helps us to see the truth of this doctrine by distinguishing between love as desire and love as fruition.<sup>2</sup> By reason of the former God is sought and possessed; in the latter he is enjoyed and communicated. Perfect charity, therefore, is essentially and necessarily communicative.<sup>3</sup>

This second characteristic of divine love is associated by Saint John with the mission of the Son by the Father.<sup>4</sup> In so loving the world as to give it His only-begotten Son, a gift than which none greater is possible to Omnipotence itself, the Father revealed the absolute fullness of His love. For "to as many as received him he gave the power of becoming (themselves) sons of God" (Jn 1,12). But there is another, more fundamental reason for relating perfect charity to the mission of the Son. The latter is the Word of God, divine Wisdom itself. Now, although wisdom normally precedes love,

there is a certain kind, namely experimental knowledge or mystical wisdom, that is born of charity by what Saint Thomas calls a con-naturality of the lover with his beloved. To love the Father is to be in some way connatural with Him and hence to know His word. Nor must we overlook the truth that for us the beatific vision is the fruit of a life of charity made perfect either by merit here on earth or by fire in Purgatory. Perfect love, therefore, is not only communi-cative but also and especially illuminative: like a flame of fire, it gives both warmth and light.

The third and final property of perfect charity is that which makes it unitive. Union, says the Angelic Doctor, is the proper effect of love.<sup>5</sup> That Saint John agrees with this is obvious from the com-mentary he adds to his basic principle: "God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him" (1 Jn 4,16). Further-more, he attributes this feature of charity to the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity: "In this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit" (1 Jn 4,13). Let us examine this doctrine more closely; it is of utmost importance to our subject.

The night before He began to shed His blood for us and for many unto the remission of sins, Christ prayed to His heavenly Father:

that all may be one, even as thou, Father, in me and I in thee; that they also may be one in us . . . I in them and thou in me; that they may be perfected in unity, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and that thou hast loved them even as thou hast loved me (Jn 17,21 ff).

Nor was His prayer long in being answered. For on Golgotha, when Blood and water issued from His riven side, the Mystical Body of Christ was born, in which we are all one with one another and with God, in which the Spirit of Love, who unites the Father and the Son in the Trinity, takes us also into this everlasting embrace. We do not indeed become substantial love; but we begin to dwell in love, and love to dwell substantially in us. Thus the Church is the *coetus caritatis*, the assembly of love, as well as the "Great Sacrament" of love.

Now what is true of the whole, is true also of the part. If the Spirit of Love is the soul of the Mystical Body, then He is also a new soul to each of its members. By His indwelling we are so united to

God that each one of us becomes a son or daughter of the Father, a brother or sister of the Son, and an intimate of the Holy Spirit. Our relation to God is now no longer merely collective or corporate, but intensely personal. This is the truth that captured the minds and enraptured the hearts of the medieval mystics, that inspired the treatises of Dionysius, the sermons of Bernard, the revelations of Gertrude, the dialogue of Catherine, and countless other hymns of love. It lies also at the heart of modern mystical theology, particularly as expounded in the lives and writings of John of the Cross, Teresa of Jesus, and the Little Flower.

## *II. The Perfection of Charity In Man*

Turning our gaze from the splendor of perfect love that is God, we are brought face to face with the horrible fact of sin. "If we say that we have no sin," writes the Apostle of love, "we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us . . . . If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 Jn 1, 8ff.). How then can we be made partakers of divine charity? Saint John answers: "But if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just; and he is a propitiation for our sins, not for ours only but also for those of the whole world" (2,1 f.). And how, precisely, is this propitiation effected? "In this we have come to know his love," replies Saint John, "that he laid down his life for us" (3,16); for "the blood of Jesus Christ, his (God's) Son, cleanses us from all sin" (1,7).

Once this cleansing has taken place in us, and we have learned to "keep his commandment and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (3,22), then we ourselves become essentially perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect. We have passed through the purgative and illuminative ways to the unitive stage of life; we have grown from spiritual childhood through youth to Christian maturity. This is a key point of Saint John's epistle: "No one who is born of God commits sin" (5,18); "No one who abides in him commits sin" (3,6); "he who keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him" (3,24). Thus the Precious Blood purges us from sin, illumines us with all the gifts of grace, and unites our wills with that of God. This is the perfection of Christian life on earth, the habitual state of charity.

We must not conclude, however, that such union of human and divine wills is the end of spiritual growth. Quite the contrary. It is only the beginning; only the essential work has been done. We have done nothing but rid ourselves of the defects that are incompatible with divine love and strengthen our natures against future and possible loss of this inestimable prize. In the language of Saint Paul, we have only died to sin and risen to a new life; it remains for us to "walk in newness of life" in Christ (See Rom 6, 1ff.). It may even be that at times we have drunk the Blood of the Lord unworthily, and so have fallen under the Apostle's judgment of the Corinthians: "This is why many among you are infirm and weak, and many sleep" (1 Cor 11,30). One thing is clear: until we are entirely free from sin and all its bitter fruits, whatever good is in us is mixed with evil.

To this seemingly harsh doctrine one might legitimately object, "Who then can be saved?" This was, in fact, the question put to our divine Master by his disciples as he discoursed on the subject of perfection. And he answered them: "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Mt 19,25 f.). Nor is our Lord's teaching any harder to accept than that of right reason. Commenting on the doctrine of the unity and nature of man as conceived by the Angel of the schools, a modern philosopher points out:

though by nature man is a whole human being, he is not thereby a complete human being. To become complete, he must live; he must spend a number of years growing up both physically and mentally until he has acquired the physical maturity, the intellectual culture, and the moral development that go to make a full human being.<sup>6</sup>

In other words, just as a man is not judged to be man by the behavior of an infant or a youth, both of whom are essentially rational; so a Christian is not considered a true one until he lives without sin, whether habitual or actual. Perfection, then, must not be watered down: for Saint Thomas, as for Christ, perfection is synonymous with goodness — total, unmixed goodness.

Here then is a paradox. On the one hand we are perfect once our wills are habitually united to God's; but on the other we have only begun to be perfect. In so far as we are mature we are truly perfect, but maturity does not exclude all imperfection or defect. The problem is solved somewhat as follows. Up to this point the life

of the Christian has been characterized by activity according to the standards of human reason. Aided by God's grace, he has attained the human ideal proposed by the great philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome. He is consistently rational in his activity; his nature is perfect. At the same time his life is truly and properly supernatural or Christian, because it is impregnated by grace, founded on faith and hope, and inspired — albeit imperfectly — by divine charity. Yet the manner of his living is no more than human. He is beset with all the faults and failings to which man is heir, first, by reason of original sin, and secondly, by the limitations of his created nature. What is required is a new purification of nature, a new illumination of mind, and a total assimilation of heart to the all-perfect God. Since these effects are altogether beyond the capabilities of created causes, the Christian is powerless by nature, as well as by what theologians call ordinary grace, to achieve them. If they are to be attained at all, his mode of life must be altered to one of passivity or complete docility to the promptings of the uncreated Spirit of Love. To this end he has been endowed with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, the chief purpose of which is to adapt him to the divine principle of activity. The life of the perfect Christian, therefore, is a life that is more divine than human, because it is no longer he that lives, but Christ lives in him.

We may summarize the matter as follows. When by grace we have turned from sin to serve the living God, He begins to dwell in us by charity; when we have rid our lives of sin and all our virtues are habitually informed by charity, we have become perfect or mature Christians; and finally, when the Father himself has purified us of our remaining defects, illumined our minds with His own Wisdom, and united our hearts to His own Spirit, then we have attained to the perfection of charity. Thus mystical theology distinguishes two kinds of spiritual perfection: first, the perfection of Christian *life*, which is achieved at the end of the purgative and illuminative ways when all activity is informed by charity; and second, the perfection of Christian *love*, which is brought about by the assimilation of created charity to uncreated charity in the unitive way.

### *III. The Precious Blood, Instrument of Perfection*

In "The Spiritual Cantic" Saint John of the Cross, "among Catholic writers, the most sure and most illuminating guide in those dark

and sometimes agonizing ways that lead to the divine union,"<sup>7</sup> outlines the process by which the habitual charity of the Christian is brought to relative perfection on earth. It consists of three ways or steps. First is the way of purgation, called by Saint John the "dark night," by which the mature Christian is made to participate in the purity or holiness of the Father's love. Second is the illumination of the Christian's mind by the communication of divine Wisdom, which the Mystical Doctor designates as the "spiritual betrothal" of the soul to the divine Bridegroom. The last step is the perfection of charity, which is the "transforming union" or "spiritual marriage" of the Christian with the indwelling Spirit of Love. Beyond this lies the ineffable beatitude of seeing and delighting in God forever.

Now these effects are wrought by means of the same instrument that cleanses us from sin and infuses our natures with the grace of the virtues and the gifts, namely the Precious Blood of Christ. Being an instrument hypostatically joined to divine charity, it not only symbolizes and shares in the properties of this substantial love, but also produces them in those Christians who are privileged and willing to drink Christ's cup to the very dregs. Let us consider each of its mystical effects in greater detail, that we may more clearly see how devotion to the Precious Blood cannot but aid in bringing about the transformation of the mature Christian into an embodiment of perfect charity, indeed, into a kind of sacrament of love.

#### *A. Mystical Purgation, Assimilation to the Father*

There are in the mystical system of Saint John of the Cross four different kinds or phases of the dark night or spiritual purification: namely, the active and passive nights of both sense and spirit.<sup>8</sup> The two active nights need not detain our attention, as they are commonly understood to be purgations of mind and heart wrought by the ordinary grace of God and a rigorous program of self-denial and virtue in the ascetical ways of life. The two passive nights, on the contrary, are essential phases of the mystical life. Their purpose is to root out the last traces of original and actual sin, which are the sources of the many faults that still mar the life of the adult Christian, and to free his finite nature from all the imperfections which limit the operations of divine charity and prevent it from manifesting itself as the divine attribute it really is. Of all Christians who

have passed through these nights it can be said, and indeed, will be said, in the words of the inspired seer: "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Apoc 7,14).

In the first of these passive nights, namely that of sense, the Christian is denied all clarity of imagination and instinct, and despoiled of all desire for particular goods, whether corporal, spiritual, or even supernatural. This is nothing less than radical surgery — a surgery, someone has said, that is performed by God without the benefit of anesthesia. But its result is that the Christian is liberated from all attachments to the world and rendered immune to the sensible enticements of the devil. His body becomes a veritable temple of love, and his exterior activity, a liturgy of love. The passive night of the spirit, on the other hand, is experienced in the depths of the Christian's being or personality, or in mystical language, in the center of his soul, in its innermost mansion. There he is made aware of all those defects that have escaped his consciousness, that lie far beyond the insights of modern depth psychology: his firmest convictions, his forgotten memories, his deepest longings, his most intimate possessions. In brief, the Christian undergoes a total purgation of intellect, memory, and will, which is nothing short of death to all that is not of God. Saint Paul's words are literally fulfilled in him: "You have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Col 3,3).

Now such a radical purgation necessarily involves intense suffering. Of this Saint John of the Cross leaves not the slightest doubt:

So great are the trials, and so profound the darkness, spiritual as well as corporal, through which souls must pass, if they will attain to perfection, that no human learning can explain them, nor experience describe them. He only who has passed through them can know them, but even he cannot explain them.<sup>9</sup>

This text, which occurs in the prologue of his very first work, is amplified on nearly every page of the Mystical Doctor's writings. Time forbids further citation, though this paper would be incomplete did it not make reference to his vivid descriptions of the passive night of the spirit, wherein the soul has the feeling of being "suffocated," the conviction that "God has abandoned it . . . as an abominable thing," the sense of being an "object of contempt to all, especially

to its friends," and, at times, such torments that it "seems literally to suffer the pains of hell . . . and to have its purgatory in this life."<sup>10</sup>

With such terrifying ordeals staring him in the face, one rightly wonders how even the mature Christian can enter into this dark night, let alone persevere to its end. The answer is, of course, that of himself he cannot, for it is opposed to every natural as well as selfish inclination of his being. It can only be the work of a supernatural agent. All the Christian can do is signify his willingness and dispose himself to become a victim of love. To do even this he needs a pattern and a motive. It is here that devotion to the Precious Blood can be, as it has been in the history of spirituality, a powerful means of disposing the Christian to endure the purifying effects of the Father's love.

Devotion to the Precious Blood is inseparable from meditation on the Passion of our Blessed Savior, which, by universal teaching, is the very foundation of the mystical life. Meditations on the Way of the Cross and the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary have, since the time of their inspiration, supplied all Christians with a model in suffering; and such devotions as those to the Sacred Wounds and the instruments of the Passion, so popular in the Middle Ages, have moved and strengthened countless Christians to endure the cost of perfection. Of particular force is the thought of the universal efficacy of our Savior's Bloodshed. Listen, for example, to Blessed Julian of Norwich:

The dearworthy blood of our Lord Jesus Christ as verily as it is most precious, so verily is it most plenteous. Behold and see! The precious plenty of his dearworthy blood descended down into Hell and burst her bands and delivered all that were there which belonged to the Court of Heaven. The precious plenty of his dearworthy blood overfloweth all Earth, and is ready to wash all creatures of sin, which be of good will, have been, and shall be. The precious plenty of his dearworthy blood ascended up into Heaven to the blessed body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and there is in him, bleeding and praying for us to the Father — and is, and ever shall be as long as it needeth.<sup>11</sup>

But doubtless more efficacious than all these devotions is the participation of all Christians in the renewal of Christ's sacrifice, the Mass. If there is no actual shedding of Blood therein, there is certainly the oblation of Blood to the Father in heaven. But oblation

is meaningless without either the accomplished fact or at least the resolution to implement it in fact. Appreciation of this truth has throughout history begotten in Christian hearts the consuming desire to shed one's blood, by martyrdom, if need be, or by a sacrificial life, so as to become with Christ "a pure Host, a holy Host, a spotless Host," worthy of the Father's glory. Such are the sentiments we find in all the great literature of the Church, from the celebrated letter of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, who desired "to be ground by the teeth of wild beasts that I may end as the pure bread of Christ";<sup>12</sup> to the compelling exhortation to the laity in Pius XII's encyclical, *Mediator Dei*, to participate more fully in the priesthood and victimhood of Christ at Mass (*On the Sacred Liturgy*, nn. 80-111).

The Precious Blood, therefore, is both an exemplary and a final cause in effectively disposing the Christian to enter into the dark night of mystical purgation. It offers him not only the strongest motive for attaining complete purity of love, but also the pattern of purification demanded and achieved by perfect charity, so that he may be fully assimilated to the supreme holiness of God the Father. To one who is proximately called to contemplation, we can perhaps do no better than suggest this devotion; it will certainly encourage him to plunge into the stream of love that flowed from the Heart of his Savior.

#### B. *Mystical Illumination, Assimilation to the Word*

If the Mystical Doctor's teaching on the dark night seems to leave the Christian with *Nada*, "nothing," that is because we have considered only one aspect of it. From the opposite point of view, which is equally true, the dark night fills the Christian's whole being with *Todo*, "the All." The reason is this. According to theologians, the remission of sin and the infusion of grace are in reality one and the same thing: they are merely two sides of the same coin.<sup>13</sup> In actual fact, therefore, purgation and illumination are identical in the spiritual life.

To this conclusion Saint John of the Cross gives explicit assent. "By the dark night," he says, "I mean contemplation."<sup>14</sup> In this he is followed by all those theologians who trace their doctrinal ancestry back to Dionysius, or pseudo-Denis, the "Prince of Mysticism." Here, for example, is an incomplete list of expressions equivalent to

contemplation taken at random from the latter's works: "a ray of darkness," "sublime ignorance," "supernatural . . . luminous . . . mystic darkness," "the mysterious light of divine obscurity," etc. If such language strikes us as vague or even scandalous, then we need but call on the sober authority of Aquinas, whose mystical wisdom was always tempered by the severe demands of speculative wisdom. Thus he describes revelation — and contemplation is a species of revelation — as *quaedam cognitio obumbrata et obscuritate admixta*, a certain clouded awareness mixed with obscurity. As a modern theologian explains: "he argues that its quality as prophetic insight into the divine is in inverse ratio to its quality as clear and distinct knowledge. In its most typical forms, it is everything of which the controlled, orderly, logical and scientific reason is most suspicious."<sup>15</sup>

These considerations show us why the attempt of theologians to explain contemplation further is doomed to frustration. A few things, however, can be set down as certain. First, contemplation is a substantial rather than an accidental mode of cognition: that is, its object is not grasped by means of concepts but is immediately present to the intellect. We might say that God, who resides in the depths of our souls, who is indeed closer to us than we are to ourselves, takes hold of our faculties and floods them with his ineffable light and warmth. Thus contemplation is knowledge by embrace rather than by vision or abstraction. Secondly, the experience of darkness derives not from a lack, but rather from an excess of light. Our intellects are blinded, as it were, by the infinite Wisdom of God, somewhat as our bodily eyes are blinded by the brilliance of the noonday sun. And lastly, though contemplation remains in essence an act of enlightened intellect, it is the offspring of charity rather than of faith. This is why adult Christians have always preferred to speak of it in terms of experiencing or sensing the object of their love, and have delighted in describing it in bold and intimate terms of marital bliss.

From what has been said it should be evident that purgation and illumination do not take place all at once. Contemplation begins as a simple, unconscious light in what Saint Teresa of Avila calls the Prayer of Quiet. Its development is ordinarily slow and gradual. For those who persevere in it, however, a moment comes when, according to the system of Saint John of the Cross,

the soul has a vision and foretaste of abundant and inestimable riches, and finds there all the repose and refreshment it desired; it attains to the secrets of good, and to a strange knowledge of Him, which is the food of those who love Him most; it is conscious of the awful power of God . . . tastes of the wonderful sweetness and delight of the Spirit . . . drinks deeply of the wisdom of God . . . rejoices consciously in the estimable banquet of love which confirms it in love.<sup>16</sup>

This is the day of spiritual betrothal to the Word of God. Now begins the time of mystical courtship, in which the contemplative Christian receives periodic and ecstatic infusions of divine Wisdom. Yet, great as these gifts are, the contemplative is far from perfect; he has still to pass through the awful night of the spirit. As Saint John of the Cross explains:

Though the bride-soul has great joy in these visits of the Beloved in the state of betrothal, still it has to suffer from his absence, to endure trouble and afflictions in the lower part, (which), except in the state of spiritual marriage, never loses its imperfect habits, and its powers are never wholly subdued.<sup>17</sup>

Now we have already seen that the Precious Blood is both an exemplary and a final cause of mystical purgation for the beginner in the unitive way. Since illumination is identical with purgation, it, too, looks to the Precious Blood as its model and motive. The proficient, however, see it more clearly as the efficient, instrumental cause of their graces. This view throws an entirely new light on devotion to the Precious Blood. Let us examine it further.

Instrumental causes are of two kinds: namely, moral or physical. The moral or meritorious causality of the Precious Blood is eloquently attested by the constant reliance of Christians on the intercession of the "blood which speaks better than Abel" (Heb 12,24) — a confidence that is born and nourished in the Holy Eucharist. The same belief is beautifully depicted in much of medieval art, especially in the Madonna of Saint Guenole in Batz-sur-Mer and that magnificent miniature of the 15th century in which the Virgin offers the milk of her breast and Christ the Blood of his side to the Father in heaven.<sup>18</sup> Nor is the idea of intercession absent from the evangelist's revelation of the "Lamb standing, as if slain" (Apoc 5,6), and envisioned by Blessed Julian of Norwich as "bleeding and praying for us to the Father . . . as long as it needeth." Finally, belief in the

meritorious efficacy of the Precious Blood is the basis of what is perhaps our most cherished devotion, the "Seven Offerings."

But it is especially with the physical instrumentality of the Precious Blood that Christians have been most taken up. Already at the turn of the first century we find the greatest of the apostolic mystics and martyrs, Saint Ignatius, writing to the Christians of Rome:

Only the living water speaks within me saying: Hasten to the Father. I have no taste for the food that perishes nor for the pleasures of this life. I want the Bread of God which is the flesh of Christ, who was of the seed of David; and for drink I desire His Blood which is love that cannot be destroyed.<sup>19</sup>

Many of the Fathers of the Church understand the water and Blood that flowed from the heart of Christ on the Cross to refer to the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist, of which in turn the Mystical Body is born and nourished.<sup>20</sup> One of the most popular and frequent themes of medieval art is that of the "mystic winepress," in which Christ is depicted as being crushed under His cross, so that His Blood may become for us a bath of redemption as well as a wine of nourishment.<sup>21</sup> A similar picture is drawn by our Holy Father in *Mediator Dei*:

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 (*On the Sacred Liturgy*, n. 77).

So deeply was this image engraved on the mystical mind that we find many pious practices based upon it, as, for example, the suggestion of Henry Suso cited by Abbot Blosius: "Whilst he refreshes his body with food and drink, (the spiritual man) should endeavor to dip each morsel, by devout affection, into the most pure Blood of Jesus, and drink each draught from his crimson wounds."<sup>22</sup>

From these examples it is clear that the Precious Blood operates in the sacramental system of the Church. Whether it acts as a physical instrument outside it is not immediately evident. From the general tenor of mystical literature such would seem to be the case. Consider Saint Catherine's view:

This food strengthens little or much, according to the desire of

the recipient, whether he receives sacramentally or virtually. He receives sacramentally when he actually communicates with the Blessed Sacrament. He receives virtually when he communicates, both by desire of communion, and by contemplation of the Blood of Christ crucified, communicating, as it were, sacramentally, with the affection of love, which is to be tasted in the Blood which, as the soul sees, was shed through love.<sup>23</sup>

Renewed studies of our mystical union with Christ in his Church, a subject Pius XII urges theologians to study more deeply (*Mystici Corporis*, n.78ff.), seem to indicate the same conclusion. If, on the other hand, all sacerdotal activity is eucharistic, as a recent theologian attempts to show,<sup>24</sup> then the central role of the Precious Blood in our sanctification is undoubted.

Enriched, enlightened, and inflamed by divine charity through the instrumentality of the Precious Blood, those who are betrothed to the Word of God delight therefore to enter by contemplation into the "spiritual garden" of the Church, where they hold loving converse with the "Bridegroom of the Soul," and to visit the "mystic wine-cellar" of the Eucharist, where they slake their thirst at the breast of the "loving Pelican." But "why is it that so few ever attain to this state?" asks Saint John of the Cross. And he answers sadly: "The reason is that, in this marvellous work which God Himself begins, so many are weak, shrinking from trouble, and unwilling to endure the least discomfort or mortification, or to labour with constant patience."<sup>25</sup> For such, surely, as for all tepid souls, devotion to the Precious Blood is the needed remedy.

### C. *Mystical Transformation, Assimilation to the Holy Spirit*

To grasp the final fruit of the Precious Blood, and this seems to me to be the heart of both the doctrine and the devotion, we must penetrate more deeply into the nature of instrumental causality. An instrument is unique in that it is, in a given order, a part of both the cause and the effect. In relation to the principal cause or agent it is a part of the total effect; and in relation to the specific effect it is a part of the total cause. Like the perfect Christian, therefore, the Precious Blood needs to be purified and illuminated by divine charity; like divine charity, on the other hand, it is both purgative and illuminative of the Christian. An instrument, however, does not lose its proper nature or form, even though its autonomy is restricted,

when made to serve as a bridge between cause and effect. This implies that the purification and illumination of the Precious Blood itself need not, and indeed, could not, have been accomplished in the same way or for the same reasons that they take place in the perfect Christian. The Precious Blood receives its purity and light in its hypostatic union with divine charity, and thus becomes one subsistence with them.<sup>26</sup> The purity and light of the perfect Christian, on the contrary, can never be more than accidental participations in these substantial properties of divine charity. Thus the perfect Christian is rightly said to be purified and enlightened, but the the Precious Blood is itself purity and light.

If an instrument does not lose its proper nature when employed by a cause, then it must contribute something of its own perfection to the effect. Now the specific character of the Precious Blood is its victimhood, for it was the actual material object of Christ's redemptive sacrifice. It follows, then, that the Precious Blood confers the status of victimhood upon all to whom it is applied. By washing away our sins and infusing our natures with grace it makes us sacrificial lambs along with the Lamb of God. We are called, in the language of Saint Paul, to fill up the sufferings that are wanting in Christ, with Him to be "nailed to the cross," to "die" and be "buried" with Him, to "bear the marks of the Lord Jesus" in our bodies, and so to be a "sacrifice, living, holy, pleasing to God." This is true indeed of all Christians. But only those who have suffered the purgations of the dark night and received the illuminations of the spiritual betrothal reveal the character of victims in real life. This assimilation to the Lamb of God we may call the sacrificial effect or fruit of the Precious Blood. It spells death to the "old man" in us.

Returning to our analysis of instrumentality, we continue: since an instrument shares in the perfection of the principal cause, and since the primary property of love is that which makes it unitive, the Precious Blood, as its redemptive instrument, is able to unite all Christians with each other and with God in immediate intimacy. Indeed, it is in the Precious Blood itself that our union with God and with each other takes place. This truth is explicitly noted already by Saint Ignatius of Antioch: "For there is one flesh of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and one chalice that brings union in His blood."<sup>27</sup> Unity, then, is the final fruit of the Precious Blood and may be spoken of

as its sacramental effect. But union implies life, and indeed, in de la Taille's theory of the supernatural, is life itself.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, as the Precious Blood spells death to the "old man," so to the "new creature" it gives everlasting life.

It is with these last two effects, though not so universally attributed to the Precious Blood as to divine charity,<sup>29</sup> that mystical theologians and writers are mainly taken up. Let us consider first the sacramental effect. The final perfection of love in the mature Christian on earth is most often designated as the "transforming union," which Saint John of the Cross describes as follows:

Finally, all the motions and acts of the soul, proceeding from the principle of its natural and imperfect life, are now changed in this union with God into motions divine. For the soul, as the true child of God, is moved by the Spirit of God . . . . The substance of the soul, though it is not the substance of God, because inconvertible into Him, yet being united to Him and absorbed in Him, is by participation God.<sup>30</sup>

Elsewhere the Mystical Doctor calls this union the "spiritual marriage" of the soul with the divine Bridegroom. Here again are his own words:

When the soul has lived for some time as the bride of the Son, in perfect and sweet love, God calls it and leads it into His flourishing garden for the celebration of the spiritual marriage. Then the two natures are so united, what is divine is so communicated to what is human, that, without undergoing any essential change, each seems to be God — yet not perfectly so in this life, though still in a manner which can neither be described nor conceived.<sup>31</sup>

Once this state of perfection has been attained, the Christian no longer seeks God, for now he possesses Him. True, he does not yet enjoy the beatific vision, but perfect love has so transformed his intellect and wed it to divine Wisdom, that its mode of action is analogous to vision. The Christian's faith is now a continuous experience of God and an intuition into the things of God, rather than a mere acceptance of formulae or a discursive consideration of them. His love, too, like that of the blessed in heaven, is now no longer a desire of God, but rather the repose and fruition of that desire. He is completely assimilated to the Holy Spirit; he shares in the Kiss of the Father and the Son. Finally, his actions, once the means of per-

fecting his charity, are now an expression and an overflow of perfect love. In brief, Christ and he have become "two in one Spirit."

This last thought leads us to consider the sacrificial effect of the Precious Blood, which is its primary and fundamental effect. Having been transformed into the Spirit of Christ, the love of the perfect Christian begins to behave exactly as it did in Him, who, "having loved his own who were in the world, loved them to the end" (Jn 13,1). This is the whole message, principle as well as conclusion, of Saint John's first epistle: "In this we have come to know his love, that he laid down his life for us; and we likewise ought to lay down our life for the brethren" (1 Jn 3,16). It is likewise the substance of Christ's last discourse to his disciples: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15,12 f.) It is, finally, the whole reason for all the perfect Christian endured and experienced on the way to his consummation. For what had been the purgation of his love has now become an apostolate of love; what had been the illumination of his mind has now become a light to the world; what had been death to his sinful and natural self has now become life for his fellow men. As the anonymous author of the "Letter to Diognetus" summed it up in the early days of the Church, "what the soul is to the body, Christians are to the world . . ." <sup>32</sup>

Like the Lamb of God, therefore, indeed "by him and with him and in him," the perfect Christian has become an everlasting victim of the sacrifice of redemption and salvation. This is why martyrs shed their blood, why holy men lived as witnesses of the light, why holy women vowed their virginity to divine love — that by mingling their blood with Christ's their merits would avail others in the communion of saints. The phenomenon of stigmatization, it would seem, is a revelation of this truth in flesh and blood; for it is the stamping of a worthy lamb of Christ with the marks of His victimhood in testimony of their mutual love for mankind. Lastly, there seems to be no other explanation than this for the insatiable thirst of the saints for suffering and death, so pithily expressed by the motto of Saint Teresa of Avila, *aut pati aut mori*, to suffer or to die, and still more trenchantly in the twist given it by Saint Mary Magdalene dei Pazzi, *non mori sed pati*, not to die but to suffer!

Participation in the victimhood of Christ is also, in last analysis, the explanation of God's masterpiece, the "Mystical Rose." Im-

maculately conceived and full of grace from the first moment of her existence, she stood in no need whatever of purgation or illumination. Rather, like divine charity, whose virginal Daughter, Mother, and Spouse she is, she participates to the highest degree, next to the Precious Blood itself, in its purgative, illuminative, and unitive properties. Indeed, it can be said that she lived but for one purpose: to be at once Virgin, Mother, and Spouse of the Precious Blood. As Virgin of the Blood, she was the symbol of its pure source in uncreated love; as Mother of the Blood, she was the fount whence it rose as incarnate love; and as Spouse of the Blood, she was the river-bed through which it coursed into the sea of humanity as redemptive love. Nor is there an end to this mystical course with its precious torrent. For if we believe that the Church was born of the Blood of Christ on the Cross and of the maternal labors of Mary at its foot, then we must also believe that, as she is its co-redeemer and the co-mediator of all its graces, so she is also a co-victim of the Lamb of God on the altar of the new Jerusalem.

May we, who are favored among her children to be specially dedicated to the Precious Blood of her Son, be favored also with the final beatitude of Holy Writ: "Blessed are those who wash their garments in the blood of the Lamb; so they will have access to the tree which gives life, and find their way through the gates into the city (of God)" (Apoc 22,14, Knox translation).<sup>33</sup>

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1. See his *Compendium of Theology*, translated by Vollert (Saint Louis; Herder, 1947), c. 165.
2. *Compendium*, c. 106.
3. Thus is explained, in last analysis, the famous dictum of Saint Thomas: *Majus est contemplata aliis tradere quam solum contemplari*, it is greater to communicate to others what one has contemplated than merely to contemplate. It is love alone that makes it so. (See *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, 186, 6, Resp.).
4. The divine mission of the Son is one of the key points of the evangelist's theology, for it occurs about seventy-five times in his Gospel alone.
5. See *Compendium*, cc. 45, 214.
6. Anton C. Pegis, "Catholic Education and American Society," an address circulated in pamphlet form under the title of "Disputed Questions in Education" by Doubleday & Co., 1954, p. 12.

7. Steuart, *The Mystical Doctrine of St. John of the Cross*, an abridgement made by C. H. (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1944), p. xxiii. Note: all subsequent references to Saint John of the Cross are to this work.
8. "Ascent of Mount Carmel," in Steuart, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
10. See "The Dark Night of the Soul," in Steuart, *op. cit.*, pp. 117 ff.
11. *Revelations of Divine Love*, edited by Hudleston (Westminster: Newman, 1927), p. 25.
12. *To the Romans*, c.4. See *The Apostolic Fathers* (New York: Cima-Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1947).
13. See *Compendium*, c. 144.
14. "The Dark Night of the Soul," in Steuart, *op. cit.*, p. 96.
15. Victor White, "St. Thomas's Conception of Revelation," *Dominican Studies*, I (January, 1948), p. 7.
16. "The Spiritual Canticle," in Steuart, *op. cit.*, p. 191.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 194.
18. Cf. C. Banet, "The Precious Blood in Art" pp. 130-131.
19. *To the Romans*, c. 7.
20. See e.g., the lessons of the Office for the Feast of the Precious Blood.
21. Cf. C. Banet, *ibid.*, pp. 124-128.
22. Abbot Blossius, *A Book of Spiritual Instruction*, tr. by Wilberforce (Westminster: Newman, 1955), pp. 37 f.
23. *The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena*, tr. by Thorold (Westminster: Newman, 1950), p. 160.
24. Hill, "The Eucharist in Relation to the Threefold Power of the Church," *Proceedings of the 11th Annual Convention of the CTSA*, 1956, pp. 117 ff.
25. "The Living Flame of Love," in Steuart, *op. cit.*, p. 146 f.
26. See *Compendium*, c. 214.
27. *To the Philadelphians*, c. 4.
28. See *Created Actuation by Uncreated Act* (West Baden College Press, 1952).
29. Compare, e.g., *The Revelation of St. Gertrude* (Westminster: Newman, 1952) with *The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena*: what the former attributes to the body of Christ the latter associates with His Blood. Saints Teresa of Jesus and John of the Cross, on the other hand, rarely refer to these as instruments of perfection, but prefer to attribute their effects to the principal cause itself, namely the Holy Spirit of Love.
30. "The Living Flame of Love," in Steuart, *op. cit.*, pp. 148 f.
31. "A Spiritual Canticle," in Steuart, *op. cit.*, p. 203.
32. See *The Apostolic Fathers* (*op. cit.*), "Letter to Diognetus," c. 6.
33. Could the "gates into the city" refer in any legitimate sense to the "Gate of Heaven?" *Ad Jesum per Mariam!*

*TRIDUUM MORTIS AND THE RELICS OF THE  
PRECIOUS BLOOD*

Perhaps Father Kaiser will be slightly disappointed in the first sentences of this paper, because two years ago he came to the rectory of St. John's and said that we were going to have the first Precious Blood Study Week. For the research of this paper I came across a statement which reads, at least in paraphrase, as follows: "We might say that the First Precious Blood Study Week was originated by Pope Pius II about 500 years ago; for in that year, 1462, the pope, his cardinals and his theologians went into council for three or four days to settle a controversy between the Dominican inquisitor James of Brescia and the Franciscan Minorite James of the Marches. The dispute centered around the theological problem of whether the Blood of Christ, shed and reassumed after His resurrection, was united to the divine Person during the *triduum mortis*, or in other words, during the three days when Our Lord rested in the tomb.

This was not a new issue. For a century earlier, during the reign of Pope Clement VI, in 1351, Francis Bajuli, guardian of the Minorites, preached publicly that the Blood shed in the Passion was separated from the divinity and therefore not worthy of the adoration of latria. Pope Pius and his theologians promised to come to a final decision, but to this very day Rome has never spoken definitely upon this problem. However, since the Council of Trent, practically every theologian has held that not only the Body of Christ, but also His divine Blood was united hypostatically to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity during the three days that He rested in the tomb.

This paper will concern itself with an explanation of this problem and also the corollary, the relics of the Precious Blood.

To answer the question of the manner or the type of this union during the *triduum mortis*, we must first come to some conclusion as to the type of the union that existed between the living Blood of Christ that flowed through His veins while He lived upon this earth. Is this union the same as the union of the body and the human nature of Christ? Is this union, namely, a hypostatic union, or is it something less than that? And what is the reason for the answer?

Many older theologians argued that blood was not part of the human nature — not part of the human body — that it was just the nourishment for the body. Therefore it was not informed by a human soul. In one passage St. Thomas says that the blood is a potential part of the body. Suarez and other theologians say that the blood retains the substantial form of food until a substantial change takes place. As you can see, with such faulty notions of the nature of the blood, some theologians were led to say that Christ's Blood was only indirectly united to the divinity, and not hypostatically and immediately as the body was. As a result the union of the Blood with the divinity would be comparable to the union of Christ's tears to the divinity — only as parts contained in a nature which was hypostatically united to the divine Person. St. Thomas did make a distinction between nutritional and natural blood. However, he did not apply this distinction to this particular question.

The modern Thomistic school, however, took up this distinction and applied it to this problem, pointing out that the natural blood is essentially and properly blood, and as such pertains to the integrity of the human nature. Therefore, for these theologians the natural Blood of Christ was hypostatically united to the divine Person while He lived upon this earth. Suarez and Lugo admitted that the blood was necessary for an integral and perfect human being, and that, in the case of the Blood of Christ, it was hypostatically united to the divine Person. But neither of these theologians admitted the distinction of the nutritional and the natural blood.

It is quite evident that the lack of scientific and biological knowledge of the role of the blood in the human body presented a difficulty to these theologians. Today physiologists consider the greater part of the blood as living matter, and not food. Blood is therefore part of the human body and is informed by the rational soul. In the case of Christ it is therefore united immediately and hypostatically to the Word.

Now that we have come to a definite conclusion as to the type of union between the living Blood of Christ and His Divinity, we can proceed to a discussion of whether the shed Blood of Christ which was reassumed remained immediately and hypostatically united to the Person of the Word during the three days that he rested in the tomb. Every modern theologian answers this question in the affirmative. However, as one writer states, it is not easy to demon-

strate that, like the soul and inanimate body, the Blood which the Savior shed on the Cross remained hypostatically united with the *Logos* during the three days which elapsed between His death and His resurrection.

Scripture and Tradition clearly teach that the union of the body with the divinity and the soul with the divinity was never broken. The reason is, of course, being that the Word was united immediately to Christ's complete human nature. Therefore the dead body of Christ deserved the cult of latria.

St. John Damascene wrote: "We say that to the whole human nature was united the whole substance of the divinity; for in none of these things which God planted in our nature was the Word lacking from the beginning. But He took a body, and a rational soul, an intellect and other properties." In this passage and in many other passages from the Fathers, the words body and flesh mean a perfect and integral human nature. Therefore they include the Blood also. For the Fathers, I believe, it is their implicit teaching at least to include the word Blood in the word body and thus preserve the hypostatic union between the Blood of Christ and His divinity. A proof of this doctrine lies in the fact that the Eucharist could have been consecrated during the *triduum mortis*, as all theologians today teach. By the force of the words there would have been Blood in the chalice which would be worthy of the cult of latria. Therefore it must have been united to the divinity.

The most forceful argument is perhaps in the words of the Council of Trent: "In the Eucharist the Body is present under the species of the bread, and the Blood under the species of the wine, and the soul under each species by reason of that natural concomitance and connection with which the parts of Christ the Lord, who rose from the dead no longer to die, are united together." If the re-assumed Blood is part of Christ, it must subsist in the uncreated subsistence of the Word. Almost all Catholic theologians today, since the council, hold that the shed Blood of Christ remained immediately and hypostatically united to the Word during the three days that Our Lord rested in the tomb.

After this sort of discussion of the *triduum mortis*, it is only proper that we ask the question, "Did any of the Precious Blood shed by Christ remain upon this earth?" Or, in other words, do we have relics of the Precious Blood of our Lord? In the answer rests,

at least in part, the historical basis or foundation of the devotion to the Precious Blood as a distinct devotion in the holy Catholic Church.

As we know, all peoples, no matter what their religious beliefs might have been, preserve the remains of their heroes and their great leaders. The veneration of the bodies and the possessions of the saints has always been approved by the Catholic Church. This belief is found in the words of the Council of Trent: "Through these bodies many benefits are bestowed by Almighty God on men, so that they who affirm that veneration and honor are not due to the relics of the saints, or that these and other sacred monuments are uselessly honored by the faithful, are wholly to be condemned as the Church has already long since condemned and also now condemns them."

It is not surprising, therefore, in view of the interest in and the devotion paid to the remains of the saints that there should also arise an even greater search for and interest in the possible relics of the Precious Blood of our divine Savior. Historically speaking, there are some twenty-three shrines in Europe containing relics of the Precious Blood. But while it is true that these are considered by the pilgrim in his devotion as relics of the Blood of Christ, can a theologian answer that question of the relics of the Precious Blood in the affirmative?

First of all, it is obvious that the Blood of Christ which remained on the stones of the garden of olives, on the pillar of the scourging, in the streets of Jerusalem and upon the Cross on Calvary, was not a relic of the Precious Blood. The reason lies in the fact that during this time, during the time of the separation from the Body of Christ until the resurrection, or in other words during the *triduum mortis*, the Blood was still united to the divine Person of Christ. Not only the body, but also the reassumed Blood of Christ shared in the glory of the resurrection.

We agree with the common opinion of theologians that the Blood of Christ was not left on earth but was taken up and is glorified in heaven. However, we do not agree with those who hold that absolutely no drop of Christ's Blood could have been left upon earth as a true relic of His divine Blood, which would awaken in the faithful a deep and inspiring devotion to the Precious Blood of the Son of God.

This last statement has been the source of much controversy. In the words of one author: "As soon as we bring up the question of

any relic of Christ, we find that the atmosphere grows warm with controversy." Of course no one will deny that there can be relics of the Passion of Christ, such as the particles of the true Cross or His crown of thorns. But many writers have strenuously defended the doctrine that there cannot be any relics of Christ, of His Body and His divine Blood. So hot did the dispute become, that the Church was obliged to step in and declare that no one should be accused of heresy if he maintained the existence of relics of the Precious Blood of Christ. However, the Church did not find it wise at that time to make any further declaration but left the matter to the wisdom and the prudence of her theologians who might consider and discuss it, provided they observe the cautions laid down by her.

Therefore, accepting at least the possibility of a true relic of the Precious Blood, we must hold that the divinity is not united to such drops of the divine Blood, but only to the Blood that was actually reassumed to the Body. Our veneration of these drops of Precious Blood would not be that of adoration but rather that of honoring relics once united to the sacred divinity and sacred Body of our divine Lord. And therefore our veneration of these relics would be classified technically as veneration of *relative latria*, the greater honor being paid to the relics of Christ, as compared to the *relative dulia* which is directed to the relics of the saints.

Included in this type of relic of the Blood, namely that which claims to be the actual Blood shed in the Passion, are the vials containing Blood in Bruges, Belgium, in St. Maximim, France, and the drops on the instruments of the Passion, such as the Cross, the nails and the lance.

Under a second classification of the relics of the Precious Blood we can group the various crucifixes and images which miraculously began to bleed, as for example the image of the Savior at Bayreuth and also the sacred chalices or hosts which gushed forth Blood as in the famous incident of the priest saying Mass at Bolsena who doubted the real presence. These relics cannot claim to be relics of the proper Blood of Christ, but rather they are symbols of the Blood shed upon Calvary. The veneration given to these relics rests on their marvelous character and the approval of the Holy Catholic Church.

It is never to be forgotten that the veneration given to these relics, as to all relics, is a relative veneration, a veneration that rests

in Christ, and not in the relic itself, rests in the saint, and not in the relic of the saint. For this reason we need not be disturbed if a relic is proved to be false. Our devotion went further than the relic. It went to the person.

“If I be lifted up, I will draw all things to myself.” These words spoken by Our divine Savior as recorded for us in the Gospel of St. John, His beloved disciple, receive a new dimension, so to speak, when we hear them in the light of the centuries of devotion to the Precious Blood of our divine Savior. Indeed, Christ hanging upon the Cross, redeeming the human race with His divine Blood, has drawn us together into a community devoted to the Precious Blood. The Precious Blood of Christ is the food and divine drink of the members of His Mystical Body. May His Precious Blood bring fruit to us as a community, bring fruit to the lives of the entire world, to people who do not know Him, that He may be known, that He may wash them from all of their faults, that His Blood might redeem them.

Rev. Joseph Lazur, C.P.P.S., A.B.

*THE PRECIOUS BLOOD RELIC  
AT WEINGARTEN*

When the Benedictine Monastery of Weingarten celebrated its 900th anniversary in 1956, its most famous treasure was given special honor and publicity. For the monks themselves graciously concede that the monastery has been famous through the centuries primarily because of this single treasure — the relic of the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord.<sup>1</sup> The history of the relic corresponds to a great extent with the history of the monastery itself. And, indeed, the whole spirit of Western Christian culture is bound up with the history of the veneration of this precious relic.

The beginnings of the story are obscure. Legends and facts, times and places, kings and queens, popes and beggars, marvelous events and historical incidents are woven together in the best traditions of Medieval pietistic lore.<sup>2</sup> And our modern minds, schooled only for scientific facts, may become perplexed trying to sift the true and historical from the legendary. But there is an enviable complacency in the Medieval attitude that could simply accept all the details of a story without question, as long as they were consistent with the purpose of the story-teller. I wonder if the science of modern historiology must necessarily always destroy such a child-like complacency. But, at any rate, my immediate purpose is to relate as accurately as possible the details of this story of the relic of the Precious Blood at Weingarten and indicate the lines that a scientific study must take.

The Roman soldier Longinus<sup>3</sup> was among those sent by Pilate to hasten the death of the three crucified on Calvary. Finding Christ already dead, Longinus ran his spear through the right side of Our Lord, and, according to St. John, "immediately there came out blood and water" (Jn 19,34). Now Longinus is said to have suffered from weak eyesight, but the Blood from the side of Christ instantly and completely restored his sight.<sup>4</sup> In wonder and appreciation, the soldier gathered up some of the Blood spilled below the Cross and revered it all his life as a priceless treasure. In due time Longinus became a Christian and a missionary. While he was at Mantua in Italy the persecution of Nero broke out. Fearing for the sacred relics of the Precious Blood, he hurriedly buried them and fled to Cappadocia,

where he "sealed his loyalty to Christ with his own blood."

Other versions of the story differ in details. Some would have it that Longinus brought the relic with him to his own death. Then later, both his own bones and the relic were taken to Mantua. With the invasion of the Longobards in the sixth century all the treasures of Mantua were buried, and for centuries the relic of the Precious Blood was lost.<sup>5</sup> Its discovery, quite by accident in 804, aroused great interest at the courts of Charles the Great and Pope Leo III, who seemingly accepted it as genuine.<sup>6</sup> The relic brought great renown to Mantua, where it was still highly honored as late as 883. But then the Hungarian and Norman invasions began to plague Europe. In 921 Mantua was plundered. To save the relic, it was buried again — and lost.

Over a century later peace had returned and the entire Medieval Christian culture began to form itself. In 1048 Bishop Martianus (also Martialis) of Mantua with funds from the imperial family<sup>7</sup> began the construction of St. Andrew's Cathedral. In the excavation for the new building the relic of the Precious Blood and the bones of St. Longinus were rediscovered. Such was the interest and enthusiasm aroused throughout Christendom at the event, that in 1053 Pope Leo IX and the Emperor Henry III came to Mantua to pay public honor to the relic. After the consecration of the Cathedral by the pope, the precious relic was divided into three parts. One was taken back to Rome by the pontiff to be enshrined in the Lateran Basilica.<sup>8</sup> One was given to the emperor. And the third remained at St. Andrew's Cathedral at Mantua.<sup>9</sup>

Though the chronicles of the day give us this history, such a popular event had to be garnished with miracles and wonders, and there is a long and colorful story of the second finding of the relic. According to the legend, there lived in Mantua a saintly blind man named Adalbero, to whom St. Andrew appeared and prophesied the finding of the relic of the Precious Blood. After the third vision, the search was continued and the holy relic was found with Bishop Martianus present and an immense throng of people. The whole heavens became illuminated, the blind man Adalbero received his sight, and scores of miracles and wonders took place.<sup>10</sup>

But our immediate concern is with the portion of the relic given to Emperor Henry III. He treasured it highly all his life and on his death-bed gave it to Count Baldwin V of Flanders, who in turn gave

it to his daughter, Judith. Judith was married into a noble family of England, but in the battle of Hastings, 1066, lost her husband. Five years later, in 1071, Judith married Welf IV of the noble and historically important Welf family of Bavaria. She brought with her from England and Flanders all her wealth and royal treasures, the chief of which was the relic of the Most Precious Blood.<sup>11</sup>

Now it was the Welf family that had founded the Benedictine Monastery at Weingarten in 1056,<sup>12</sup> and in 1090, the Countess Judith presented the precious relic to the monks for the safe return of her husband from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.<sup>13</sup> The monks cherished this gift dearly from the beginning.<sup>14</sup> Princely gifts were bestowed on the Monastery of Weingarten because of the relic, which soon became the object of widespread devotion to the Precious Blood.

Weingarten became one of the most important and most famous pilgrimage places of Europe. Not only the pious countryfolk, but noble and royal families and church dignitaries sought protection and help in their needs from the power of the Blood of Christ. In this early medieval period popular piety was much attracted to externals. There was a great veneration for the Eucharist and for the human nature of Christ enriched by every kind of pious fancy. In accordance with the love for external worship and simple faith, there was great devotion to relics of Christ and the saints.<sup>15</sup> Holy shrines attracted countless pilgrims who sought to gain indulgences through external works of piety and charity. In this period of the crusade the devotion to the way of the Cross and the instruments of the Passion were devotion to the Precious Blood. Nothing could be more suitable to this spirit of piety than veneration of a visible relic of the inestimable Price of our Redemption. Soon devotion to this relic at Weingarten took on the dimensions of a popular pageant.<sup>16</sup>

The three important feasts of the year for Weingarten were on March 12, the anniversary of the finding of the relic at Mantua; June 23, the anniversary of the consecration of the old basilica; and on the Friday following the feast of the Ascension. The most important by far was this last, the famous "Blood Friday." It was on this day that the Countess Judith is said to have given the precious relic to the monastery. Over the centuries the celebration of *Blutfreitag* grew into an enormous demonstration of popular enthusiasm.

The most characteristic and most famous element of the "Blood Friday" celebration was the procession called the "Blood Ride,"

*das Blutritt*.<sup>17</sup> Thousands of pilgrims flocked to Weingarten from miles around. In 1753 over seven thousand men on horseback took part in the *Blutritt*. Many thousands more followed on foot or stood around and watched. Horses and riders were decked out in the finest colors, each local group trying to outdo every other in color, poise and horsemanship. The many native costumes of the peasants added to the color of the feast. The horse carrying the priest (or abbot) with the holy relic was resplendent in braided mane and gold and silver trappings. Six special knights on horseback guarded the *Blutreiter* and four others with distinctive standards accompanied him. In the pageant there were represented Longinus with his spear, and, at times, the Countess Judith and various other historical personages. Military bands, drums and trumpets, church bells, guns and artillery lent a holiday air to the procession as it wound its way slowly and prayerfully over the countryside. On this day of solemn thanksgiving to God for all spiritual and earthly favors of the past, the priest lifted the holy relic over the thousands of kneeling pilgrims and the thousands more on horseback, and the fields and valleys and crops, so that God would continue to bless their fields and crops, and to bless them all.<sup>18</sup>

Over these centuries the Catholic life in this part of southern Bavaria was never seriously threatened. The Reformation of the 16th century made little impression there. The discipline of the monks of Weingarten never seriously declined.

The pilgrimages to the shrine of the holy relic of the Precious Blood increased with its fame and the spread of its spiritual and material blessings. Many miracles have been reported through the centuries.<sup>19</sup> And the popes have repeatedly granted rich indulgences for the pilgrims.<sup>20</sup>

At the beginning of the 18th century a complete reconstruction of the monastery was begun. The work was finished in 1722 and the monastery of Weingarten still stands today as one of the most outstanding examples of the florid and colorful Baroque style of architecture in all of Europe.<sup>21</sup>

The 18th century may be termed the Golden Age of Weingarten. During this time the huge new buildings were completed, the world famous organ was installed, the library and art rooms were set up and enriched. The new basilica of the Precious Blood with its beautiful Precious Blood altar was consecrated. The holy relic itself

was enshrined in a huge, golden reliquary, studded with 26 rubies, 15 sapphires, 37 emeralds, 3 amethysts, 1 hyacinth and 100 diamonds.<sup>22</sup> The pilgrimages and over-all devotion to the relic of the Precious Blood reached its zenith in this period.

But by 1802 Europe was rocked with revolutions and the old order gave way to a new. The rationalistic anti-clericalism of the philosophers had taught the statesmen of the era the policy of secularization of religious houses. Their greed saw the advantages of the policy. And in this wave of revolution and of secularization the monastery of Weingarten fell into the hands of Napoleon. In 1808 the monks were released; by 1810 the judicial proceedings were completed whereby the monastery was entirely and officially in lay hands.

The kitchen utensils were sold, the library and archives were disposed of, the golden reliquary of the Precious Blood, worth 70,000 guldens was replaced by one, still in use today, worth 175 guldens.<sup>23</sup> The monastery was converted into soldiers' barracks for a regiment of infantry, while the abbey church served as the parish church of the town of Weingarten.<sup>24</sup>

All external religious display was curtailed and carefully restricted under the direction of the state. The *Blutritt* was forbidden; *Blutfreitag* was to be observed by a procession on foot. But the local pastors constantly resisted the civil authority and the enthusiasm of the people could not be easily stifled by laws and decrees. By the middle of the century the pilgrimages had regained their former size and the *Blutritt* was restored as the climax of the *Blutfreitag* celebration. By 1867 two thousand riders took part in the holy ride on horseback.<sup>25</sup> In 1879 the old altar of the Precious Blood was taken down and replaced with an altar of genuine marble, with a golden tabernacle, and a crucifixion scene of silver.<sup>26</sup>

Finally on May 14, 1922 the Benedictine monks, with a deep sense of gratitude, returned to their dear monastery of Weingarten. It was a joyful and peaceful resurrection for the hallowed halls, dead and defiled for over a century. With the return of the regular monastic discipline the monastery was renovated, its library and art treasures restored, and all its former glory returned. Now, as before, the monks and the countryside gave due credit and thanks to the chief treasure of Weingarten, their special means of protection, the relic of the Most Precious Blood.

In 1956 the monastery celebrated the 900th anniversary of its original foundation in 1056 by Welf IV. For the occasion the monks themselves published an attractive volume of 462 pages with a series of beautiful illustrations. The German secular picture magazine, *der Feuerreiter*,<sup>27</sup> a Catholic family-mission magazine, *Stadtgottes*,<sup>28</sup> the international bi-lingual periodical, *The German Review (Deutschland Revue)*<sup>29</sup> all featured the monastery of Weingarten. The articles contain a synopsis of its history and some very interesting pictures of the monastery itself, and most interesting for us, a series of pictures of the celebration of the *Blutfreitag* with the long procession of mounted horsemen winding over the countryside and the priest, also on horseback, holding high the precious relic.

All through the centuries there has been a popular, enthusiastic and true devotion to the relic of the Most Precious Blood at the monastery of Weingarten. And today, more than ever, that devotion of the people, with all its color and with all its faith and sincerity, is still offered to the price of our redemption, the Blood of Our Savior. The history of Weingarten and its relic is an integral part of the history of our devotion to the Precious Blood. It bears evidence that the devotion is solidly founded in a venerable tradition of true piety in the Church.

Rev. Ernest W. Ranly, C.P.P.S., M.A.

1. Adalbert Nagel, "Das Heilige Blut Christi," *Weingarten: Festschrift zur 900-Jahr-Feier des Klosters, 1056-1956* (Abtei Weingarten, 1956), p. 188. This is a beautiful volume, written and published by the monks themselves to commemorate the 900th anniversary of their founding. It contains over twenty long, documented essays by the monks of the monastery, giving a detailed history of the monastery and a cultural, artistic and devotional study of its own treasures. This study on the relic of the Precious Blood by Father Nagel is a masterpiece. It consists of 41 huge pages, very carefully documented with 135 footnotes and eleven full pages of beautiful, clear, glossy illustrations. This essay of Father Nagel's is one of the chief sources of this present study.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 188-9.
3. The historicity of the entire Longinus story is weak. That the soldier be called Longinus is suggested by the Greek word for lance, *LOGKE*. A Syriac manuscript, illuminated in 586, preserved in the Laurentian Library of Florence, contains a miniature scene of the incident of the opening of Christ's side with the name Longinus inscribed above the

soldier with the lance. And so this whole legend is at least as old as the 6th century. Longinus is also identified with the centurion of the Gospel who gave such wonderful testimony of the divinity of Christ. The account of his death is quite fantastic and untrustworthy. See: Alban Butler, *The Lives of the Saints*, rev. ed. (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1931), Vol. III, pp. 259-60. Herbert Thurston, "The Holy Lance," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1910), Vol. VIII, pp. 773-4. A different version of the martyrdom is given by P. Winfred Ellerhorst, *Die Geschichte des Heiligen Blutes zu Weingarten* (Württemberg: Martinus-Verlag Weingarten, 1937), pp. 5-7. The Bollandists give a whole series of different Acts. Cf. *Acta Sanctorum*, Martii, Vol. III, p. 376-90.

4. This account is repeated in all the legends, and, as was pointed out, these are as old as the 6th century. There is a minor disagreement in the description of the actual miraculous cure: a) Some would have it that the Blood spurted out from the Savior's side upon the face of Longinus. b) Some accounts have the Blood flowing down the lance upon his face. c) Some picture Longinus constantly rubbing his weak eyes, and at this time, his hands had been bloodied by his cruel work, and the Blood like a salve, healed his failing eyes.
5. Ellerhorst, *op. cit.*, p. 8. Or else, other legends have it that the actual martyrdom occurred at Mantua. Butler, *op. cit.*, p. 260. Cf. *Acta Sanctorum*, Martii, Vol. III, pp. 376-90 for detailed variations of the history. A note here about this work of Father Winfred Ellerhorst: It is a small volume containing 124 pages and seven pages of illustrations. The monk Ellerhorst writes his story of the holy relic to edify and convince, yet he does maintain a firm balance of history and scholarship. His 87 footnotes, though not perfectly exact and accurate, do reveal a long and loving study. The chief asset for the present study is the first-hand information which Father Ellerhorst gives of the celebration and feast days of the Precious Blood, replete with details.
6. We have a definite reference to this finding of the relic of the Precious Blood by Abbot Einhardt, a contemporary. Abbot Einhardt was the Head Chaplain and Chancellor of Emperor Charles the Great and teacher of Lothar, the son of Louis the Pious (Ellerhorst, *op. cit.*, p. 9). He is the co-author of an *Annales* entitled *Vita et Conversatio gloriosissimi imperatoris Caroli Regis Magni*. The pertinent passage of the chronicle follows: ". . . per Baioariam ire volentem, deduci fecit usque Tavennam. Causa adventus eius haec erat: Perlatum est ad imperatorem aestate praeterita (the year is 804), Christi sanguinem in Mantua civitate fuisse repertum, propter hoc misit ad papam, petens ut huius famae veritatem inquireret. Qui accepta occasione exeundi, primo in Langobardiam, quasi pro inquisitione praedicta profectus est, indeque arrepto itinere, subito ad imperatorem usque pervenit. Mansitque apud illum dies octo, et sicut dictum est, Romam repedavit." PL, 104, 464-5. Father Ellerhorst also quotes a 14th century chronicle of Antonius Nerli (Ellerhorst, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11).

7. The occasion for the imperial endowment was the birth of the Countess Malthilda of Boniface and Beatrice of Mantua. Beatrice was the only sister of Emperor Henry II.
8. Ellerhorst, *op. cit.*, p. 20, gives the subsequent history of this relic. "The Precious Blood was still extant in the Lateran Basilica in the year 1832. It was preserved in an oval crystal which was inserted in a silver vessel with golden wires and was bound around with a red silk band. The relic was allowed to be set out in every church and chapel. So reads a report of August 13, 1723. Today it seems, as far as one knows, there is nothing more said about this holy relic. (His footnote here is: Haensler, Basilius, O. Cist., *Die Heilig-Blut-Reliquie zu Weingarten* (Dorn: Ravensburg, 1905.) In 1933 there was shown to the author (Ellerhorst) in a chapel near the sacristy of the Lateran Church a very old, artistic Gothic reliquary with a relic of blood but it could not be established whether this was the relic from Mantua."
9. The subsequent history of the relic at Mantua is given in some detail by Ellerhorst, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-32. Various histories of the city of Mantua and of its Cathedral corroborate this account.
10. Ellerhorst, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-19. The author has copied several versions of the legend. They are typically medieval in spirit, and also typical in so far as the contemporaries cite them and relate them in the course of their chronicles.
11. This sequence of events within the noble families is well attested by numerous old chronicles, but as to be expected, there are minor discrepancies. Cf. esp. Ellerhorst, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-7 and Nagel, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-90.
12. Very briefly, the history of the founding of the monastery is this: Shortly after 900 Henry Welf founded a nunnery at Altdorf (near Ravensburg, Württemberg). Later the nuns were replaced by canons, but the nuns returned in 1036. Then in 1047 Welf III exchanged the nuns for the Benedictine monks of Altomuenster. Six years later, in 1053, this monastery at Altdorf was destroyed by fire, but Welf III immediately turned over to the sons of St. Benedict his castle on the neighboring hill. The foundation of this new monastery, according to tradition, took place in 1056 (so that 1956 was its 900th anniversary). It received its name from the original castle and hillside which had an abundance of vineyards. Its Latin title is *Monasterium Vinearum, ad Vineas, or Weingartensis*.
13. Her husband actually did die while returning from this long and dangerous pilgrimage. According to his own wishes, his body was brought back to rest at Weingarten. The body of Countess Judith too, since her death in 1094, lies buried at Weingarten.
14. Ellerhorst, *op. cit.*, p. 38. The fourth Abbot of Weingarten, Walicho, was abbot at this time. At this time a part of the relic was given to another Welf foundation, that of Etico, to the chapel of Ammergau. This place, too was a pilgrimage place of the Precious Blood until

- 1703 when Austrian soldiers robbed and plundered the chapel of its treasures. Cf. Ellerhorst, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
15. Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origin and Development (Missarum Solemnia)* tr. by Francis A. Brunner (Cincinnati: Benziger, 1950), Vol. I, pp. 119-24. In this tradition is the entire legend of the Holy Grail.
  16. Nagel, *op. cit.*, pp. 202-3. Father Nagel describes at length the unusual custom that had arisen by which the pilgrims came to the shrine and actually drank wine or water which flowed through the reliquary in a pipe.
  17. The first record extant describing the *Blutritt* of *Blutfreitag* is of the year 1480. But already then it has all the proportions of an old, traditional pageant, and Father Nagel seems correct in concluding that it must have existed already for centuries. Nagel, *op. cit.*, 203 ff. Ellerhorst, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-2.
  18. Nagel, *op. cit.*, pp. 202-23. Ellerhorst, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-97. The colorful descriptions of the *Blutritt* make fascinating reading. Ellerhorst gives in detail the activities of the pilgrims as they arrived on Thursday, tells how they billeted for the night, and even gives the prescribed order that the 28 or more groups must take for the procession. Nagel emphasizes the religious spirit of the feast day. Many squadrons had the rule that all their men must receive the sacraments before they could participate in the *Blutritt*. Over the centuries the popes had granted rich indulgences to those taking part in the pilgrimage-procession. And thousands came to drink and gather the Precious Blood water and wine.
  19. Ellerhorst, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-71, lists in some detail 28 of the more authenticated miracles.
  20. Fragmentary listing of the many indulgences and privileges granted by the Holy Father is given by Ellerhorst, *op. cit.*, p. 37, and Nagel, *op. cit.*, pp. 203, 205-6.
  21. Franz Beer drew up the plans for the church. It is Italian-German baroque style. Michael Ott, "Weingarten," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appellton Company, 1910), Vol. xv, p. 576.
  22. Ellerhorst, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
  23. *Ibid.*, pp. 44-5.
  24. Ott, *loc. cit.* This was the state of affairs at the time when this article was written.
  25. Nagel, *op. cit.*, p. 218.
  26. *Ibid.*, p. 221.
  27. "Klosterjubilaeum in Weingarten," *Der Feuerreiter, Köln* (23 Juni 1956) 32. Jahr. Nr. 13, pp. 6-7 II.
  28. P. G. Spahr, "900 Jahre Abtei Weingarten," *Stadtgottes: Katholische Familienzeitschrift zugunsten des Missionswerkes, Kaldenkirchen, Rheinland* (Juli 1956) 79. Jahr. Nr. 7, pp. 198-9 II.
  29. "Der Blutritt von Weingarten," *Deutschland Revue, Hamburg*, Jahr. 1956, Heft 2, pp. 28-9 II.

## RELIC OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD AT BRUGES

*The second portion of the evening program was a filmstrip and commentary on the Sanguis Christi the Holy Blood play presented every five years in the city of Bruges. This year of 1957 the play was presented during the very period of the Study Week. The following pages are not the commentary of this evening's presentation, but are offered as a summary of the facts concerning the relic at Bruges.*

An ancient tradition, coming down through the ages, tells us that Longinus for one, and Joseph of Arimathea for another, gathered Blood from our Divine Lord. We have already learned that the Blood of Weingarten is a remnant of that of Longinus. The Blood of Bruges came from Joseph of Arimathea. Several traditions recount how Joseph of Arimathea gathered the Blood from the side of Christ in the Grail used at the Last Supper. This Blood was given to Mary for preservation. When she left Jerusalem with Saint John she confided it to Saint James.

In 1148 Baldwin III of Jerusalem wished to reward the bravery of Thierry (Dietrick) of Alsace, Count of Flanders, in the second crusade. Since worldly goods did not seem to be a worthy recompense, Baldwin and the Patriarch of Jerusalem decided to present Thierry with some of the Holy Blood.

On Christmas Day, in the midst of a vast crowd of witnesses, the Patriarch Fulk opened the vial which contained the Holy Blood, and transferred a portion of it to an octagonal vial. This vial was sealed, placed in a crystal tube, which in turn was sealed and fitted at each end with a golden rosette.

Thierry accepted the relic, but confided this sacred relic into the keeping of the town of Bruges. He charged the Abbot of Saint Bertin of Saint Omer to carry out the mission of delivering it to the town of Bruges.

In 1150 the Precious Blood was carried to the town. Thierry himself made a solemn entry in an imposing procession through the streets, fluttering with flags, and adorned with triumphal arches, to the sound of trumpets. It was placed in the ancient central chapel of

the Burg. The relic has never since left the town of Bruges. Through wars and persecutions it has remained to be the safeguard of the city.

In 865 Baldwin, first Count of Flanders, settled in Bruges. He built a castle which had a chapel dedicated to Saint Basil. This chapel still exists and is now the crypt beneath the chapel where every Friday the Holy Blood is exposed. When Thierry arrived in Bruges the relic was kept in this chapel. The chapel suffered during the Iconoclast revolution in 1578, but in its restored state it is essentially the same. And it is the resting place still of the Holy Blood.

The Holy Blood has been so well integrated into the life of the city that the history of its intimate life cannot be understood without its presence. There are two occasions especially when the city celebrates its priceless relic. On Monday after May 2nd each year, takes place the Procession of the Holy Blood. This is the most beautiful day of Bruges when the renowned procession of the Holy Blood progresses through the flagged streets in festival. It is a religious pageant which bears the mark of the Holy Blood. The first part of the procession is the representation of the Holy Blood as related in the Old Testament. The second part gives a picture of Christ's life stressing His redeeming work. The third part retells the history of the relic's coming to Bruges. As a glorious climax to the celebration a shrine containing the precious relic is carried in procession through the streets followed by prelates and magistrates, ecclesiastical and civil authorities. The most impressive moment is the blessing with the Holy Blood from the Burg.

The second occasion on which the city celebrates its relic is the presentation of the Play of the Holy Blood. The play *Sanguis Christi* was composed by Father Joseph Boon, C.S.S.R. as a popular play to glorify the relic of the Precious Blood. The first presentation of the play took place before the Belfry in the market place in August and September 1938. It was the civil authorities who decided unanimously to make the presentation of the play. It was again presented the following year. Since then it has been given every five years. This year, 1957, the sixth presentation took place from August 3 to 19.

The play was composed by Father Boon, the music and direction of the orchestra and choir belong to Arthur Muelemans, while the decorations, costuming and all stage direction is charged to Anton Van de Velde. The play is performed by 2500 citizens of Bruges.

The *Sanguis Christi* is a moving song that the city of Bruges sings before its treasure. The play is at once the tragedy of Christ and the history of the city that has received His redemption.

The basic theme of the play makes its point of beginning the legend of the Grail. The medieval legend held that Lucifer, the prince of the Archangels, when he was cast from the heavens lost one of the precious gems from his crown. This gem fell to earth and a Grail was cut from the stone. This was in the chalice in which was consecrated the Divine Blood at the Last Supper. It then tells the story of our redemption and particularly how Joseph of Arimathea went with it to Calvary and gathered from the angels the Blood shed during the passion. According to the tradition this holy relic was preserved at Jerusalem. The story continues the whole theme of the history of relic coming to Bruges. It recalls the tragic pages of Bruges' history and the presence of the Divine Blood which has sustained the people in their struggle for their life and faith.

The *Sanguis Christi* recalls that the life of the city cannot be understood without the presence of the Holy Blood. It reminds the city of its holy vocation to give to the world an image of a city fortified in grace by the merits of the Holy Blood and judged worthy to receive the Divine Blood and to live through it.

The international press has acclaimed this as the most evocative and stirring open air play ever presented in Europe. In an article in the *National Geographic* Mr. Luis Marden has written: "I can only say that I was overwhelmed by the spectacle. . . . It is the flow of movement, with groups coming and going from side streets, appearing at one side or even behind the spectators . . . that give the play such evocative power and realism."<sup>1</sup>

It is enacted in the medieval market square, which, with the soaring Belfry, is incorporated into the scenery of an immense stage. The prologue of a dream-like loveliness is delivered by hundreds of angels, who appear in the topmost battlements of the tower to the stirring melodies of the music and choir.

The first part of the play recalls the Passion of our Lord at Golgotha, with intensely moving scenes during the way of the cross and the death of Christ. The might and splendor of medieval Bruges are revived in the second part. The Flemish crusaders return to the city from the Holy Land, bringing with them the relic of the Holy Blood. Words cannot describe the procession which then sweeps

past. Music and singing, decor and action, light and color turn the great square into a kaleidoscope of fantastic beauty and animation.

The last part depicts the sufferings of the people in their age-long struggle to preserve their most precious treasure. In the closing scene of the majestic apotheosis, when more than a thousand players are on stage, the triumphant bell rings out over an unforgettable spectacle.

CHARLES BANET, C.P.P.S.

1. Luis Marden, "Bruges, the City that the Sea Forgot," *National Geographic Magazine*, CVII (May, 1955), 656.

## *HISTORY AND PRESENT STATUS OF THE PIOUS UNION OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD*

During the past two days we have enjoyed learned papers and animated discussions regarding the devotion to the Precious Blood from the viewpoint of dogmatic theology, moral theology, ascetical theology, mystical theology, Sacred Scripture and tradition, particularly as expressed in pictorial art, in the paschal liturgy, in the veneration of certain relics, and in the popular interest in certain shrines.

This morning we turn our attention to some of the more practical aspects of the devotion. We might very appropriately concern ourselves first with a study of the religious institutes of men and women approved by the Church whose members dedicate their lives to works of piety and charity under the banner of the Precious Blood. But for the time being we shall abstract from these religious institutes of priests, brothers and sisters, and study the history and present status of the Pious Union of the Precious Blood, an approved means of propagating this special devotion, not only among those who have received a special vocation from Almighty God, but also among the hundreds of millions of the faithful in general. Special devotion to the Precious Blood is not to be restricted to any select group or groups in the Church. It is a devotion for all the faithful. It is a truly Catholic devotion, for this Blood was shed for all; it is present in every consecrated Host for all; it is offered in every Holy Mass for all. One approved means of propagating the special devotion to all is the Pious Union of the Precious Blood.

### *I. HISTORY OF THE PIOUS UNION OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD*

It will be helpful, in the first place, to define a few terms. Formerly the words "pious union," "sodality," "confraternity," and others were not always used in the strict technical sense. Sometimes they were used more or less interchangeably even in official documents, with the result that occasionally some uncertainty and con-

fusion has arisen. Since the Code of Canon Law, we have the definitions which it gives in canons 707 and 720.

A pious union, according to the Code, is an association of the faithful, established for the performance of some work of piety or charity. If the pious union is constituted as an organic body, it is a sodality (*sodalitium*); if the sodality is established for the furtherance of public cult, it is called a confraternity (canon 707); if a pious union has the right to aggregate to itself other associations of the same kind and communicate its indulgences and other communicable privileges to them, it is called a primary pious union; if a confraternity has this right, it is called an archconfraternity (canon 720). The generic term is association (canon 700). Only those associations are recognized by the Church which have been established, or at least approved, by competent ecclesiastical authority (canon 686).

Therefore, a pious union of the Precious Blood is an association of the faithful, established by competent ecclesiastical authority, for the practice of special devotion to the Precious Blood. It is not established as an organic body. A primary pious union of the Precious Blood has the right to aggregate other pious unions of the Precious Blood to itself. A confraternity of the Precious Blood is established as an organic body. An archconfraternity of the Precious Blood is one that has the right to aggregate other confraternities of the Precious Blood to itself. Actually there is question of only one Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood and one Primary Pious Union of the Precious Blood, although there may be many confraternities and many pious unions, the former being aggregated to the Archconfraternity and the latter to the Primary Pious Union, both in Rome. So much for the definition of terms. Now let us look at the history.

As Father Frederick William Faber points out in his famous work entitled *The Precious Blood*, "In one sense, and a very notable sense, the whole history of the Church is a history of the devotion to the Precious Blood." He refers to Sacred Scripture, Fathers of the Church, individual saints down through the centuries, shrines with relics of the Precious Blood and places of pilgrimage, and then adds: "There is no surer sign of the growth of a special devotion in the Church than the erection of a confraternity, representing and em-

bodying it. There was an ancient confraternity of the Precious Blood at Ravenna. Another was erected in Rome in the pontificate of Gregory XIII which was confirmed by Sixtus V. It was afterwards merged in the confraternity of the Gonfalone. Its members were priests who took upon themselves the obligation of preaching missions." There have also been some confraternities of the Precious Blood in Spain, but it seems little is known about them.

The greatest epoch in the history of the special devotions to the Precious Blood began early in the nineteenth century. During the first half of that century we witness the eminently apostolic activity of St. Gaspar del Bufalo, the establishment of the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood in Rome, the birth of the Society of the Precious Blood and of at least three sisterhoods of the Precious Blood, and the institution of the universal feast of the Precious Blood. During the second half of the century we witness the growth and development of these organizations, and the foundation of more sisterhoods. As Father John Behen, C.P.P.S., writes in a booklet just published, *Religious of the Precious Blood*:

It will be a surprise to many to learn that there are at least *fourteen* distinct religious communities in the Church dedicated to the Precious Blood of Our Lord. Such has been the appeal of devotion to the Precious Blood in the last 150 years, that at the present time there are over 8000 religious serving Christ in these various congregations. Most of these communities are quite independent of one another in their foundation and in their subsequent development. In fact, it may be stated without hesitation that many of these religious are unaware of the very existence of some of the other groups.

In another place Father Behen writes:

The fourteen communities already listed are Precious Blood communities in the strict sense of the word, that is, they have been dedicated to the Blood of the Savior from their very foundation. Furthermore, each is a complete religious society in itself, with its own constitutions, not a branch of a larger religious family. There are, however, other religious groups in the Church dedicated to the Precious Blood which follow the rule of one of the older religious orders or congregations.

He mentions and describes three of these in addition to the fourteen listed before. But we must pass over all these in this paper. We

are concerned with the origin, growth, development and multiplication of the pious unions of the Precious Blood.

St. Gaspar was ordained to the priesthood on July 31, 1808. Already during the first year after his ordination we find him associated with his spiritual director, the saintly Francis Albertini, some years his senior in age and ordination, at this time a canon of the Church of St. Nicholas in Carcere in Rome, where a relic of the Precious Blood was venerated. Both were outstanding devotees of the Precious Blood and both exhorted the crowds gathering at St. Nicholas to show special love and veneration to the price of redemption. The chaplet of the Precious Blood and the Seven Offerings were composed and introduced at this time and were recited by the faithful during Mass at St. Nicholas, as they meditated on the seven Bloodsheddings.

On December 8, 1808, the time had come to inaugurate an association of the faithful at St. Nicholas to foster and practice the special devotion. St. Gaspar preached a very stirring sermon on the occasion. Three months later, on February 27, 1809, that the undertaking might be more firmly established and the devotion more widely spread, the pro-Vicar of Rome, Cardinal Depuig, canonically erected the Confraternity of the Most Precious Blood in the Church of St. Nicholas in Carcere. Its members were to think often of the sufferings of the Divine Redeemer and to offer His Precious Blood to the Eternal Father for the expiation of their own sins, for the needs of the Church, for the conversion of sinners, and for the relief of the suffering souls in purgatory. The devotion was to be a timely and practical spiritual aid in the disorders due to the wars of revolution and conquest that caused so much human suffering and shedding of human blood. By means of this devotion hearts were fired with love for Jesus, whose great love for men prompted Him to shed His own Blood even to the last drop for their salvation.

The times were ominous. Storm clouds were gathering fast. During that same year, 1809, Napoleon was to annex the Papal States, and a year later arrest the Holy Father himself and exile the priests loyal to him, including St. Gaspar and Canon Albertini, who were not permitted to return till four years later, in 1814. In the meantime the faithful must have kept up their devotion to the Precious Blood, offering it for the welfare of the Church, the Pope and

the clergy, for shortly after the return of the priests we find new developments at St. Nicholas in Carcere.

Soon after his release from captivity, Pope Pius VII, also a devotee of the Precious Blood, enriched the Confraternity with many indulgences on September 22, 1815. Four days later, on September 26, 1815, he raised it to the rank of an archconfraternity "cum omnibus et singulis praerogativis, juribus, honoribus et praeeminentiis solitis et consuetis," thus granting it the faculty of aggregating to itself other associations of the Precious Blood and communicating to them its spiritual favors. After this the devotion was spread rapidly. Halusa, in his *Die Herrlichkeiten des Kostbaren Blutes*, p. 19, makes the almost incredible statement that by 1830, that is, fifteen years later, the Archconfraternity had affiliated as many as 150 Confraternities of the Precious Blood and that about 1000 priests were active as promoters and registrars.

Simultaneously St. Gaspar del Bufalo was busy prevailing upon zealous priests of various dioceses to join him in promoting devotion to the Precious Blood especially by preaching missions and retreats. The ties between these priests and the Confraternity were very close. In fact, until 1832 they were known as "Sacerdotes Missionarii Archconfraternitatis Pretiosissimi Sanguinis," and St. Gaspar signed himself as the "Director Generalis Sacrarum Missionum Venerabilis Archconfraternitatis Pretiosissimi Sanguinis Domini Nostri Jesu Christi," and the Archconfraternity spoke of them as "Our missionaries."

However, while St. Gaspar was the human moving spirit in both projects and while their interests and objects had much in common, the Archconfraternity and the Society of Missionaries founded by St. Gaspar were always regarded as distinct. After 1833 he no longer used the title mentioned above. From then on the Missionaries were called "Congregatio Pretiosissimi Sanguinis." After the approval of the rule of the Society of the Precious Blood in 1841 the distinction between the priests of the Archconfraternity and the Missionaries of the Precious Blood was very clear, so much so that for the erection and aggregation of associations in honor of the Precious Blood the Missionaries had to have recourse to the authorities of the Archconfraternity.

This arrangement must have been a source of inconvenience to

the Missionaries, for in a meeting of the General Curia of the Society on July 8, 1851, it was decided "to petition the Holy See for an emancipation from the Archconfraternity." There may have been reasons for this which are no longer apparent to us. It seems that one of the reasons may well have been the fact that the Confraternity, being an organic body, was not sufficient to satisfy the zeal and object of the Society, namely, to lead all the faithful to pay special honor to the Precious Blood, for it was too difficult to induce vast numbers of the faithful to enroll in an association constituted as an organic body; whereas it would be much easier to enroll them to gain the spiritual benefits in a pious union sponsored by the Missionaries. In any case, the General Curia petitioned the Holy See for the erection of a pious union that would be independent of the Confraternity at St. Nicholas in Carcere in order that the devotion to the Precious Blood might be spread more easily and more widely.

The result of the petition was a brief dated July 29, 1851, in which Pope Pius IX granted permission for the erection and constitution of a *sodalitium* under the title of the Most Precious Blood in the principal (primary) church of the Society. This *sodalitium* was to be under the direction of the General of the Society, and, although independent of the Archconfraternity of the same title in the Collegiate Church of Saint Nicholas in Carcere, it was to share and participate in all the faculties, privileges, indulgences, and all the spiritual favors which the Holy See had already granted or would grant in the future to the said Archconfraternity, "compos tamen ac particeps sit omnium facultatum, privilegiorum, indulgentiarum ac quorumlibet bonorum spiritualium, quae ab hac S. Sede eidem Archconfraternitati concessa sunt, vel in posterum concedantur." From the subsequent practice of the General Curia it is clear that they interpreted this grant as meaning a Primary Pious Union with the right to aggregate other Pious Unions of the Precious Blood and to communicate to them the indulgences and other communicable spiritual favors.

At this time the principal church of the Society was San Salvatore in Campo (given by apostolic brief dated July 27, 1851). Later, on January 28, 1854, by a rescript of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, Pope Pius IX gave to the Society, the church, and the adjacent convent of Santa Maria in Trivio. This convent was not vacated until May 1858. On July 15, 1858, in a

meeting of the General Curia, Venerable John Merlini, Moderator General of the Society, declared: "as of this date, this Pious Union (granted by the Apostolic Brief of July 29, 1851) is to be considered as transferred to Santa Maria in Trivio, as the principal (primary) church of the Society, to the altar of Jesus the Nazarene."

Favored by the generous grants of the apostolic brief of July 29, 1851, the Pious Union of the Precious Blood spread rapidly, not only in Rome, but also in the rest of Europe and in America, so that during the century following over 800 pious unions of the Precious Blood were aggregated to the Pious Union existing in the principal church of the Society of the Precious Blood in Rome.

We noted earlier in this paper that the terminology used in referring to these associations before the Code of Canon Law was not always consistent even in official documents. The association at St. Nicholas in Carcere was correctly called a confraternity, and later an archconfraternity, because it was constituted as an organic body with officers and a special garb, etc.; whereas the association under the direction of the Moderator General of the Society of the Precious Blood was never an organic body. According to the usage since the Code of Canon Law, it is properly called a Pious Union, or a Primary Pious Union. Yet we find it called a *sodalitium*, or a confraternity, as well as a Pious Union. However, we repeat that, since it was never an organic body, it should be called a Pious Union, or a Primary Pious Union. The Confraternity and Archconfraternity at St. Nicholas in Carcere on the one hand, and the Pious Union and Primary Pious Union in the principal church of the Precious Blood Fathers on the other, were always distinct in fact, even if the terminology used at times might be misleading and confusing.

During the century and more of its existence its list of indulgences was revised or re-approved more than once. The most recent list was approved by the Sacred Penitentiary on December 2, 1949 (N. 5798/49). On the occasion of this revision certain points were called to the attention of the Moderator General which led to the decision that a set of statutes should be drawn up and approved by competent authority in order to settle or prevent any doubts about the nature of the Pious Union. Up to this time it had been regulated by a number of decrees of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences, issued prior to the Code of Canon Law. Accordingly, a set of statutes,

made up for the most part of the grants previously conceded to the Pious Union by the Holy See, was prepared and submitted to the Sacred Congregation of the Council for its consideration and approval. An investigation of the history of the Pious Union by this Sacred Congregation raised two questions regarding the establishment and the nature of the Pious Union:

- 1) Whether the brief of July 29, 1851, was ever executed, since the brief says: "Auctoritate Nostra Apostolica facultatem concedimus atque impertimus, ut in Ecclesia primaria memoratae Congregationis Sodalitium sub titulo P. Sanguinis *erigi potest.*" There seems to be no extant document recording the execution of the brief.
- 2) Granting that the brief was actually executed, was the Pious Union in question erected as a *primary* Pious Union, since in the brief of July 29, 1851, only the church is called primary and not the Pious Union?

The Moderator General replied very ably to both questions, basing his arguments on the statements and practice of the officials and their evident understanding and interpretation of the grants from the beginning and during the intervening hundred years. However, since one or more doubts remained in the minds of some of the officials on the Sacred Congregation of the Council, the Holy Father Pope Pius XII saw fit to issue another brief (N.242/51) dated July 14, 1951, in which he declared the Pious Union in question to be a Primary Pious Union now and granted a *sanatio* for any previous irregularities. After this, on October 15, 1951, the Statutes of the Pious Union of the Most Precious Blood were duly approved. Hence, whatever the basis for doubts in the past, they are definitely settled now and forever. If there were any irregularities in the past, they have been healed.

At this point a few statistics might be added. Up to January 30, 1957, there were 860 pious unions aggregated to the Primary Pious Union in Rome. Of these, 577 are in Italy; 122 in the U.S.A.; 27 in Germany; 23 in France; 21 in Canada; 10 in Spain; 9 in Austria; 8 in Holland; 7 each in Argentina and Chile; 6 in Switzerland; 5 in Mexico; 3 each in Brazil, Ceylon, Malta and Poland; 2 each in Columbia, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Hungary, Ireland and Yugoslavia; 1 each in Africa, Belgium, Bolivia, China, Cuba, Egypt, England, India, Liechtenstein, Oceania, Palestine, and Uruguay.

## II. PRESENT STATUS

The present status of the Pious Union will be apparent from a study of its Statutes and Privileges.

### *Statutes of the primary Pious Union of the Most Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ*

(Taken verbatim from the approved English translation of the Statutes published in 1952.)

#### *I. Nature and purpose of the Primary Pious Union*

Art. 1 — The primary Pious Union of the Most Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is an association of the faithful for fostering devotion to the Most Precious Blood of our redemption and for communicating spiritual favors to those enrolled.

Art. 2 — This Primary Pious Union has been established in the church of *Sancta Maria in Trivio* in Rome at the altar of “Jesus the Nazarene.”

#### *II. Director of the Primary Pious Union*

Art. 3 — The director of the Primary Pious Union is the Moderator General of the Congregation of the Most Precious Blood who is empowered to delegate his authority.

Art. 4 — The director enjoys the power of founding Pious Unions and of aggregating them according to articles 5-8. He can likewise appoint others to inscribe the names of the faithful in the Pious Union.

#### *III. Founding of the Pious Union*

Art. 5 — The Pious Union of the Most Precious Blood can be established in any church, public or semipublic oratory, either by the local Ordinary or by the Moderator General with the consent of the local Ordinary.

Art. 6 — The Pious Union must be established at an altar designated in the decree of foundation and aggregation. At the same time no other similar association may have been established at this particular

altar. This altar, where the Pious Union has been established and aggregated to the Primary Union, by this very fact becomes a privileged altar, *quotidianum et perpetuum*.

Art. 7 — If the Local Ordinary founds a Pious Union, it must be aggregated by the Moderator General to the Primary Pious Union established in the church of *Sancta Maria in Trivio* in Rome. Otherwise it will not enjoy the privileges, indulgences and other spiritual favors of the Primary Union.

Art. 8 — According to canon 686, n. 3, the Moderator General before establishing a Pious Union must obtain the written consent of the local Ordinary. The consent of the local Ordinary to establish a religious house of the Congregation of the Most Precious Blood carries with it the permission to establish a Pious Union in that house or in the church annexed to it.

Art. 9 — A Pious Union, which has been established by the Moderator General, by that very fact is aggregated to the Primary Union.

#### IV. *Directors of Pious Unions*

Art. 10 — The director of a Pious Union is *ipso facto* the pastor or rector of the church, or the chaplain of a religious house, where the Pious Union has been established unless another person has been specifically designated by the Moderator General.

Art. II — It is the duty of the director to take care of the register containing the names of the members. The names must be entered in the register by the director himself or at least be acknowledged by the signature of the director at the bottom of each page of the register.

Art. 12 — As long as the director remains in office, he has the faculty of blessing for the members, according to the prescribed form, chaplets, scapulars, cords or cinctures and votive garments of the Most Precious Blood.

Art. 13 — For a reasonable cause the director can delegate for a time another priest to inscribe the names in the register and to bless for the members the objects mentioned in articles 12.

### V. Registrars

Art. 14 — Any priest designated by the Moderator General as a registrar can enroll the faithful in the Pious Union by inscribing their names in his own private register. Those so inscribed enjoy all the privileges of the Pious Union. The priest-registrar has the further obligation of sending the names within a year to some Pious Union so that these names may be inscribed in the register of that Pious Union.

Art. 15 — All the priests of the Congregation of the Most Precious Blood, as long as they are members of the Congregation, *ipso facto* are registrars of the Pious Union.

Art. 16 — All registrars have the faculty of blessing for the members the objects mentioned in article 12.

### VI. Members

Art. 17 — For a person to be admitted validly to the Pious Union it is necessary and sufficient that his name be entered in the register with his knowledge and consent.

Art. 18 — Members, including postulants and novices, of the Congregation of the Most Precious Blood, Sisters Adorers of the Most Precious Blood, directors and registrars of the Pious Union are *ipso facto* members of the Primary Union provided they are aware of the fact they have been registered. This membership is not lost if later they leave the Congregation or cease to hold one of the aforesaid offices.

Given at Rome, October 15, 1951

S. Cong. of the Council

J. Card. Bruno, Prefect

F. Roberti, Secretary

### PRIVILEGES OF THE PIOUS UNION

Pious Unions receive their indulgences and other communicable privileges by being aggregated to the Primary Pious Union of the Precious Blood in Rome. By aggregating them the Primary Pious Union communicates to them the indulgences and other communicable

spiritual favors which it has received or will receive from the Holy See (canon 722).

Historically the privileges possessed by the Primary Union were not all granted at the same time. Some were granted already to the Confraternity erected at St. Nicholas in Rome on September 22, 1815; others were added as time went on. On January 19, 1850, the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences recalled all the indulgences previously granted and approved a new list, to which other privileges were added later on. From the moment the Pious Union in Rome came into being, according to the brief of July 29, 1851, it possessed all the indulgences possessed by the Archconfraternity. On July 4, 1878, the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences published a complete *summarium* of indulgences possessed at that time. Since then a few more favors were added.

The latest *summarium* dates from December 2, 1949. On that day the Sacred Apostolic Penitentiary by virtue of the faculties granted to it by His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, after review and consideration, approved this present *summarium* taken from authentic documents, and declared that this must be regarded as the only authentic collection of indulgences and other spiritual favors pertaining to indulgences that have been granted to the Primary Pious Union of the Most Precious Blood up to this time. It also granted permission to print and publish the *summarium*.

The indulgences that can be gained by the members are conveniently listed in the Manual of the Pious Union. We shall not repeat them here, but merely summarize them very briefly:

#### *I. Plenary Indulgences:*

- 1) One on the day of enrollment;
- 2) Once a day on about 35 of the principal feasts each year;
- 3) Once each month on the day of one's choice;
- 4) On any day of the year by devoting oneself to mental or vocal prayer in memory of the Passion of Our Lord and the Sorrows of Mary, for the space of one hour.
- 5) At the moment of death.

#### *II. Partial Indulgences:*

- 1) Ten years on about 35 feasts;
- 2) Others on any day and any number of times a day, such as,

seven years for certain specified acts, and 100 days for other specified acts; and one year for any work to propagate devotion to the Precious Blood.

III. *Other Privileges:*

- 1) Privileged Altar (local): The altar on which a Pious Union is erected (after it has been aggregated) is privileged daily and perpetually;
- 2) Privileged Altar (personal): Any priest delegated to admit members enjoys a privileged altar once a week.
- 3) Bless articles: As long as the director of a Pious Union remains in office he has the faculty of blessing for the members according to the prescribed form chaplets, scapulars, cords or cinctures, and votive garments of the Most Precious Blood.
- 4) Priests C.P.P.S.: All the priests of the Congregation of the Most Precious Blood, as long as they are members of the Congregation, *ipso facto* are registrars of the Pious Union.
- 5) Registrars: All registrars have the faculty of blessing for the members the objects mentioned above.

IV. "*Grand Privilege*": In a Rescript (S. C. Indulg., Sept. 30, 1852), Pope Pius IX "Graciously granted that all the faithful of both sexes who had been enrolled in any sodality of the same Most Precious Blood, and who would be enrolled in the future, should share in the individual good and satisfactory works which are performed by the members of both sexes of all the Orders or Congregations of Regulars."<sup>1</sup>

Some have thought that this privilege was withdrawn since it is not mentioned in the summarium of indulgences which contains the statement quoted above, namely, "This must be regarded as the only authentic collection of indulgences and other spiritual favors pertaining to indulgences." However, it seems that this conclusion is not correct. It has not been withdrawn. In a letter addressed to me, July 28, 1957, Father John Behen, Secretary General of the Society of the Precious Blood, assures me that the privilege was actually granted in 1852 at the request of the Congregation of the Most Precious Blood to all those who had already been enrolled or would in the future be enrolled

in any sodality of the Most Precious Blood (“omnes utriusque sexus Christifideles cuicumque Sodalitati ejusdem Pretiosissimi Sanguinis adscripti, ac in posterum adscripturi”). It seems there can be no doubt that the members of the Pious Union enjoy this privilege. The privilege was granted “in perpetuum.” The original document is in the archives of the Motherhouse in Rome.

The reason for thinking that the privilege has been withdrawn is the fact that it is not mentioned in the new Manual of the Pious Union printed in 1952. Father Behen says it was not included in the *summarium* of indulgences because this privilege does not pertain strictly to indulgences. Admittedly, there is some difficulty in determining just what the privilege means. (Perhaps we can have a paper on this some time in the not too distant future.) However, whatever it means, we still have it! Nothing has been withdrawn. We have what we had before. I referred the question to the Very Reverend Moderator General as recently as yesterday evening, and he authorized me to say that this is also his understanding of the status of the privilege; that is, that nothing was withdrawn. We still have all we ever had in this grant of September 30, 1852, sometimes called the “Grand Privilege.”

#### *Aims of the Pious Union*

*Die Quelle des Lebens, Lehr — und Gebetbuch für die Verehrer des kostbaren Blutes* by P. W. Schardt, Schellenberg, 1918, p. 83 ff., summarizes the aims of the Pious Union as follows:

The Pious Union has a general aim and a special aim.

- A) The general aim is the grateful and loving veneration of the Divine Blood of the Redeemer:
- 1) through frequent meditation on the bloody suffering and death of our Lord, and through devout prayer to the bleeding Savior in order to awaken dispositions of Christian virtue and obtain the graces necessary for their practice;
  - 2) through the worthy reception of the sacraments in which the strengthening Blood is applied to the soul and it is incited and empowered to lead a fruitful life of virtue;

- 3) through the frequent intercessory offering of the Blood of Christ, and through other works of piety and neighborly charity which have as their purpose more and more to extend the kingdom of the Blood of Christ and to apply the Divine Blood of the Redeemer to the souls of the living and the dead;
  - 4) through works of penance and charity to make reparation to the Blood of the Redeemer for the coldness and irreverence shown it by mankind.
- B) The special aim is the fervent veneration of the seven Bloodsheddings of Christ which He suffered for our salvation:
- a) in the painful circumcision;
  - b) in the dreadful agony in the garden of olives;
  - c) in the exceedingly painful scourging at the pillar;
  - d) in the gruesome crowning with thorns;
  - e) in the death march to Calvary;
  - f) in the inhuman crucifixion;
  - g) in the mystery-laden opening of the Sacred Side.

Our veneration of the Precious Blood should be under the guidance of the Sorrowful Mother of God, whose great sorrows we always have before our mind's eye and through whose pure hands we offer to the Blessed Trinity the innocent Blood of the Lamb of God for the greater honor of God and the salvation of immortal souls.

No specific prayer is prescribed. It is urged however that one recite the "Glory be to the Father" seven times in honor of the seven Bloodsheddings of Christ, or some other appropriate prayer in honor of the Precious Blood, even if it be only an ejaculation. It is well to combine some specific prayer in honor of the Precious Blood with the morning and evening prayer, or to recite it at the time of common family prayer, or with the table prayer.

*Pointers for the Members (cf. Manuale Piae Unionis, pp. 16,17)*

The faithful enrolled in the Pious Union are not held to the daily recitation of any prescribed prayers, but in some way that suits them best, they should strive to manifest their piety and love for the great price of redemption, at least by internal aspirations, or by short

prayers called ejaculations, and especially by the daily recitation of the "Glory be to the Father" seven times in honor of the Precious Blood.

Rosaries and scapulars of the Precious Blood need not be distributed to those enrolled in order that they might share in the indulgences. However, since these are signs of the devotion to the Precious Blood, they are recommended for members and should be blessed and distributed in accordance with their piety and devotion.

By its nature, a Pious Union is not constituted as an organic body. Nevertheless, for the purpose of stirring up and increasing devotion to the price of redemption and of serving the holy Church of God more efficaciously, nothing prevents the more ardent members from being more closely united with one another, holding meetings, admitting members in a more solemn manner, and performing special works of piety or charity or of the apostolate.

Indeed, the devotion to the Blood shed for us incites one to undertake great things for God. Especially recommended is the private hour of adoration in accordance with the counsel and practice of St. Gaspar del Bufalo, so that every day one or more be present to offer the Precious Blood to the Eternal Father for the extirpation of heresy and schism, for the propagation of the Catholic Faith, and for the other needs of the Holy Church of Rome.

Never, however, may these works of supererogation be demanded, because to enjoy the privileges and indulgences, it is sufficient that one be inscribed in the register with one's knowledge and consent.

*"Where there is a will there is a way"*

If we are inspired and thrilled by the papers we have heard, or in any case, if we have a deep love and appreciation of the Precious Blood, we shall be impelled to practice the special devotion ourselves, and to lead others to do likewise.

One way, and an approved way, is by means of the Pious Union. It may be regarded as the common meeting ground for all the religious institutes serving under the banner of the Precious Blood, but what is still more important — every institute and every member of every institute in his or her own way, can be instrumental in fostering and propagating the Pious Union, so that many more hundreds

and thousands may be led to honor the Precious Blood, and on earth to join with those in heaven in the hymn of praise and thanksgiving to Jesus, the Lamb of God.

“Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us for God with thy blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Ap 5,9). “Blessing and thanksgiving be evermore to Jesus, who with His Blood has saved us.”

Rev. Joseph Rohling, C.P.P.S., S.T.D.

1. Pius IX: “Clementer indulset, ut omnes utriusque sexus Christifideles cuicumque Sodalitati ejusdem Pretiosissimi Sanguinis adscripti, ac in posterum adscripturi, *participes sint de singulis bonis ac satisfactoriis operibus*, quae ab alumnis utriusque sexus omnium et singulorum Ordinum seu Regularium Congregationum peraguntur.”

*SAINT GASPAR: EXEMPLAR OF DEVOTION  
TO PRECIOUS BLOOD*

These few reflections on Saint Gaspar, you will readily understand, can in no way be a systematic presentation of the life of our beloved Founder, nor are they in any way an exhaustive statement of the many relations we might find between his life and devotion to the Precious Blood. Rather, I would have you think of them as I thought of them when jotting them down, as an adventure in the application of some of the things we have heard in the past two days. Think of them, perhaps, as a loosely constructed reflection, an indication and example of what we might all do for ourselves as we leave here with the new insights and new perspectives on the Precious Blood that have been opened up to us during these days. We should end up by feeling more "at home" with the Precious Blood, break through all devotions and practices and find its deepest meaning on that level we are all seeking, the level of sanctity — that level where sanctity is not something we do but simply a manner of existing before God. To do this we need to think a bit about sanctity, about Saint Gaspar and about the Precious Blood.

The saints are the incarnation of the Gospel. In their own way they are a continuation of God's revelation in the Church, a manifestation of it in a living context. Holy Mother Church gives us saints that we might look into their faces and there find Christ. In the great diversity of their lives we find, suited to our particular needs, living examples of the perfections of our Blessed Savior. In this respect we have been fortunate in our day. There has been a healthy effort to "humanize" the saints. This is a reaction against the saint of pious exaggeration, a reaction against the pale and lifeless saint. But we must beware. We cannot be content to limit ourselves to an appreciation of the saint simply as a human personality. If our only goal is to "feel at home" with a saint, then we are going to miss the most important aspect of his life. When we come face to face with a saint, it is like discovering a new dimension of life, a divine dimension. And before this dimension, all biography, all history and all psychology are insufficient. Only the light of spiritual theology can reach the

divine character of the saint's life. It is true that many of them lived out their lives amid the same daily trivialities as ourselves. But one thing they have in common is that they so definitely broke through these, transformed them and transcended them.

We know well enough the definition of sanctity: it consists in the perfection of charity and the practice of heroic virtue. But the direction we are taking here is toward the discovery of the deep orientation of the very being of a saint's life which makes these possible. Then we shall consider a few instances in the life of Saint Gaspar which express these deep orientations of sanctity. And, finally, how can we understand these orientations of his life in terms of the Precious Blood?

The life of every Christian is lived out against the background of eternity and the love of God. But it is just in the life of the saint that this background becomes the foreground, the very stuff of his life. It is this that transforms his least gesture. We call it a practical hold upon eternity and the love of God. The saint is the truly God-intoxicated man [filled with the Pentecostal enthusiasm we talked about yesterday], completely taken up with the fact that only one thing is necessary. This is the root of that inner life of the saint before which we stand in awe: that utter consecration, that dedication, that perseverance, that generosity, that crucifying perfection in the smallest things, hour after hour, day in and day out. Giving himself without counting the cost. Squandering one's self for God. We say that the saints have fallen in love with God. We say that they take seriously that most tremendous of all commands given to us — love the Lord thy God above all things, with thy whole heart, with thy whole mind, with thy whole strength.

Underlying all this is an acute awareness in the saint that his whole being is turned toward God, and this is the whole meaning of his life. There is no other. And secondly that God's name is Love. This knowledge is not an idea in his head. It is not a simple intention or good resolution that touches him in some accidental fashion. These do not make saints. It is, to state it more exactly, a mode of existence, a manner of life. This knowledge is a living burden that weighs upon the saint's whole being and gives him no rest. A burden that stretches his life toward God and eternity like those strange figures in the paintings of El Greco. They stand as living symbols reminding us of the claims of God. And our life has no other pur-

pose. The saint is a great adorer. The structure of his thought and life is essentially religious, giving to God what is His due. He has a thirst unto death for the fulness that is God.

For most of us the real world is first of all in the world of things around us, in the experience of our senses and intellect. God is real too, but in some shadowy, must we say, secondary way. The standpoint of the saint is just the opposite of this. For him, as by some new dimension of experience, God is the first reality. God is quite literally for him ALL, EVERYTHING. We touch here upon the threshold of that thorny problem for philosophers and theologians — of what value to give created things when we confront them with God the creator. Speculatively we are always careful at this point to give God all that belongs to Him and still not to disturb one grain of the metaphysical structure of creation by denying its reality. But speculatively we are not very successful in throwing light on this mystery. The language of love and the language of life are more bold. They simply declare that God is all and by comparison all else is nothing. God alone is sufficient and by fascination with God we shall not deny but simply neglect and forget everything else.

This is rather unsatisfactory for speculation, but here is an authentic thread that runs through the life of every saint. Here is the *Todo y Nada* of Saint John of the Cross. Here is an absolute position that accounts for the fact that every saint is an uncompromising lover. Here is the pearl of great price. Here is the treasure in the field for which we sell all. Here is God who loves us, for whom we give all and count it as nothing, regretting only that we have nothing else to give. Here is the basis of the Gospel morality which refuses all compromise, of that fire which Christ lit in the world. That fire which leaves our souls restless, unsatisfied, knowing that we have never done enough. All that is not God is nothing, the author of the *Imitation* tells us. "I am; you are not," our Savior tells St. Catherine of Siena. "Do not attach yourself to the gifts of God but to the God of gifts," St. Francis de Sales writes. And we know the beautiful summary of this classic and common teaching by St. Thomas: when Our Blessed Savior asked him, "What dost thou want, Thomas." "Nothing but Thyself, O Lord." Here is one authentic ingredient in the life of every saint. With Jeremias he can say: after experiencing God I looked at the earth and it was empty. He possesses nothing but God. And even this language is not adequate. The position and the

vocation of the saint is better understood if we say that God possesses him.

Some such reflections might prepare us for what we find when we look upon the face of Saint Gaspar. We find there — many lights, many mysteries, many truths. Defender of the Church. Missionary thrice-loyal to the Holy Father. Stumbling block of tyrants and heretics. Preacher of the Word of God without equal. But the title that interests us, and which we know was the one of his choice is *Apostle of the Precious Blood*. We want to find the one thing in his life that is the foundation of this title.

He has left us no finished treatises, theological or otherwise, on the doctrine of the Precious Blood. And while he preached hundreds of sermons on the Precious Blood we have scarcely any written record of them. In examining his sermons and letters we are somewhat disappointed in finding so few references to the Precious Blood. But even so, we must go beyond such references to find the source of his love for the Precious Blood, the symbol, expression and the summing up of his life. We know the zeal with which he spent his life for the glory of the Precious Blood. To understand this we must look at the very fabric of that life. And this should not surprise us. These days we are fast becoming aware how close the doctrine of the Precious Blood is to the very center of all revelation and all theology. If, then, on the practical level we find that the Precious Blood is the meaning of St. Gaspar's life, to understand this we must reach to the very heart and center of that life. We are no longer on the surface where biography and psychology hold sway. We are where the disposition of a soul before God, where the special manner of his response to God's love, gives us what we are looking for. We are where facts bear witness to the meaning of a life before God.

If there is one thing that is easy to point out in the life of Saint Gaspar, it is the all or nothing position we have been discussing as characteristic of the existence of the saints. His was a life that knew no compromise when there was question of the claims of divine truth. His was a life of integrity before God.

Gaspar belongs to that group of saints who were vessels of election from childhood. We think of St. Thérèse of Lisieux in our day. From his earliest days he was reserved for God and for God alone. Because of differences of nationality, time and cultural background, the manner in which this expressed itself might sometimes puzzle us.

But through it all, the thing that we cannot miss from one end of his life to the other is that God was his portion and God only. This choice dictates his every thought, his every word, his every act. In one of his letters to the community he tells us that such a dedication is absolutely necessary if we are to carry on the apostolate without losing the substance of our own spiritual life. From the very beginning his life was a total dedication. The fundamental note was *vocation*. And by his personal response he consecrated his whole life, holding nothing back.

Upon this naturally follows the extraordinary singularity of purpose with which he pursued, amid so many difficulties, but with a tranquil heart, the path God traced out for him. He was keenly aware of a mission from outside himself which had an absolute claim upon him. How well we are acquainted with that dramatic scene where Olivetti had demanded that Father del Bufalo take the oath of loyalty to Napoleon. His integrity and courage overcame all natural fear and timidity, and his words have inspired the community down through the years. "I would rather die or suffer any evil than take such an oath. I cannot, I will not, I must not."

As we look at one event after another, his life is a series of unbroken dedications, never deviating. His zeal for souls and the missions is legendary. How many examples we have of his unswerving love for the Church and devotedness to the Holy Father. He adhered fully and absolutely without question to the Church at a time when such absolute loyalty meant exile, suffering and sometimes death. To obey or die. We know his words in time of crisis in the community to Pope Leo XII: "If your holiness commands me to close all the houses of the institute, I am ready to obey. At a word from you we are all willing to fall gladly at your feet." Not only all personal attachment must be sacrificed for the good of the Church, but Gaspar saw what is more difficult to discern: that the community itself has a right to exist only if it is completely and totally fashioned after the will of the Holy Father and subordinated to the good of the universal Church.

It follows naturally from such dedication that Gaspar saw clearly and spoke often of the fact that suffering must be the normal thing then. The law of life is the law of the cross.

We know of Saint Gaspar's devotion to the Precious Blood as the price of our redemption. And it is in no way to detract from this

truth if we follow in our reflections another line of thought in indicating how naturally the Precious Blood harmonizes with the deepest orientations of his life which we have been considering. *Christ in the very act of shedding his Blood is the mysterium* — what we might call the sensible symbol, the living action — around which Saint Gaspar organized his life. And this symbol not only gives meaning to the deepest tendencies and movements of his life. It also communicates to him the divine plan and makes known the incomprehensible depths of God's love.

At the heart of St. Gaspar's life of absolute dedication — of this totality — there is the superabundant love of God for us and our responses to that love. This is the world of absolute commitments. This is where love gives and promises all. And for both of these, the love of God for us and our response, the symbol of the Precious Blood, Christ shedding His Blood, is the unique and privileged symbol and sign. The shedding of blood is the only thing love has to bear witness to its deepest meaning. Everything else falls short.

In Christ's shedding his Blood, He manifested in a *definite* way, in practice, God's love for men. It is a mark of love that cannot be misunderstood. And among all marks of love, Christ Himself tells us, it is the greatest. Further, God always remains for us a hidden God. But at no time has that hidden love in its depths been more clear to us than at the moment when Christ shed His Blood. Here is a deep penetration of the mystery of God's love in a living context. It takes us to the most hidden center of the heart of God. No other action, no other symbol, can penetrate here as can the sign of the Precious Blood. It takes us into the recesses of God's being where He is most unlike the world we know and most unlike the sentiments of our own hearts — where his name is essentially Love. The Precious Blood speaks to us on this level. It is the perfect means for expressing what is hidden in God. What is beyond understanding we touch across the living action.

So, too, in our response to this knowledge of the heart of God. Here we imitate Christ in the shedding of his Blood. This is to imitate Him in the most formal expression of his mission as Redeemer. And the shedding of blood is the only language that can give an adequate and fitting response to God's love for us. It is the language of the absolute. It is the language of martyrs. With the shedding of blood it is not possible to say less than everything. There is no

possibility of half-measures here. Further, the giving of one's blood is an *irrevocable* sign. The one act that cannot be taken back, cannot be undone, cannot be changed. For this reason, it is the exemplary cause of all commitments and all consecrations, of any giving where we must say ALL and FOREVER. And we know that ALL and FOREVER are the only words love knows.

From all this we understand why the Precious Blood is unique, because it is the common treasure held between God and ourselves. It is the common treasure which both God and ourselves find as the only adequate expression of our love for one another. We know that our whole life is but a dialogue of love with God. And the Precious Blood is the unique means we share with God for telling what is in our hearts.

*Robert Lechner, C.P.P.S., Ph. D.*

*ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA AND THE  
PRECIOUS BLOOD*

I speak to you this morning on several aspects of devotion to the Precious Blood as found in the mystical writings of St. Catherine of Siena. With your most gracious indulgence, and particularly that of our committee head, I am going to speak rather than read, because God did not give to every man the talent to read aloud.

The word devotion was used advisably in the preface to my talk, because in the case of St. Catherine that is precisely what we are dealing with, devotion. She was trying to establish in the particular human soul that specific relationship whereby the individual surrenders himself to God. And that is devotion.

I think in the case of St. Catherine, as in the case of no other saint, it is necessary to make a few observations about her personal life in order to understand what she wrote and why she wrote it.

First of all St. Catherine lived in the fourteenth century. It was a very difficult time, a time when the world was passing from mediaeval feudalism to the great city-states of the Renaissance. It was a time when there were great family feuds and petty wars. It was a time when unity in Christian thought and activity was most difficult to accomplish.

God gave to this very young, insignificant girl a great vocation in life, an impossible vocation. It was her duty to bring the Pope back from Avignon in France to the ancient see of Peter in Rome. According to the sociological conditions of the time, this could really only be accomplished by a man of high birth, great education, at least in the field of politics, and a person of tremendous influence. The God who often uses the weak and insignificant things of this world to accomplish His ends, did not choose such an individual but rather chose Catherine Benincasa of Siena, a girl without noble birth — and in the first place, a girl.

She lived at a time when a woman's only two possible vocations were either to rear a very large family or to be cloistered in a community of nuns. This thing of carrying out a public apostolate was

preposterous to the minds of the time. Certainly she was only of the middle class family, and she had no education.

I am not going to enter into the much disputed question of where St. Catherine got her great doctrine. But I am going to say a few words about what she considered the sources of her spiritual formation. St. Catherine was blessed by God with wonderful confessors of the Dominican order who were professors of theology in the seminary. It was through them that she learned St. Thomas and really worshipped at the shrines of St. Thomas Aquinas. And apart from this great influence, her other greatest influence was St. Paul. The mode of her life was certainly patterned after St. Agnes of Montpulciano. And it was primarily from these three that the whole order of her life was made up.

There is an area that we do have to consider in regard to St. Catherine. And that is the area of mystical phenomena, which seem to have accompanied her every time she made a move. And it is because of her ecstasies, her visions, her levitations, and all this extra-ordinary happening that occurred so often in her life, that we of the twentieth century shy away from her and indeed close the door of our minds to interest in her. But I wish to point out a theory that I hold: it is not unreasonable to assume that all this wonderful mystical phenomena had its point in the fourteenth century world in which St. Catherine lived. It was perhaps God's way of compensating for her lack of nobility and education. It was God's way of giving to her a key that would open the doors to the kings and the queens and the princes and the cardinals and the popes that she was to deal with. And I do not think that we find the true St. Catherine in this mystical phenomena. We can abstract from it and look for her truly in her letters.

It is only natural that a person who is called to such an extraordinary vocation, as was she, would look for something that would give her strength and courage. And she found this thing in devotion to the Precious Blood, because it was the strongest, the most virile, the most inspiring thing that she could hang on to through the long years of difficult work that were before her. And she conceived so strongly that devotion to the Blood of Christ was not only an inspiration to courage but even very necessary to the salvation of any Christian soul, that she wrote on one occasion that "no man can enter

into the joy and the beauties of God in the depths of the Trinity without passing through the narrow gate of Christ crucified.”

This devotion inspired her, and she was always amazed when on different occasions other individuals did not derive the same inspiration. And she usually retaliated with very strong and brusque statements. We are astounded when she can write to the pope himself: — “Your unworthy and miserable daughter Catherine writes to you in the Precious Blood, strengthening you in the Precious Blood of Jesus, wishing to see you delivered from timorous fear, for fear paralyzes your good resolutions and brings your efforts to nothing.” Imagine any of us writing that to the pope.

An even more amazing thing — or another amazing letter — was written to her mother, where she writes, “My dearest mother, I have long desired to see you the mother of my soul rather than my body. Rid yourself of this sensitive self-love that wants you always about me when I am out working for the glory of God and the salvation of the Church. And hide yourself in the wounds of Christ, and bathe yourself in His Blood.”

That she could write these things to other people can prove undoubtedly that she derived almost heroic inspiration from these thoughts.

It is only natural, then, that we can look to her book, *The Dialogue*, or *The Providence of God* as it sometimes is called, and through her letters, and ask ourselves if we can find there a system of spirituality that is based upon devotion to the Precious Blood. Did she teach her disciples a way of life around this one particular focal point? And the answer is yes. St. Catherine taught that there were essentially three ideas which a successful Christian must gather together. The first is an appreciation of the human soul. The second is a knowledge of self. And the third, the knowledge of God.

She had said so many times that we are created out of love and recreated out of the Bloodsheddings of Christ, that we are the products of His infinite mercy, and that our souls, recreated in His Blood, are so beautiful that we should rather die a thousand deaths than even to spend a day in purgatory, let alone losing our souls in the depths of hell. And she writes the tyrant of Milan at the time: “You have asked me, ‘Is there any city in this world that will last?’ ” And she said, “I say yes, there is a city — our soul. And this city is so strong

that neither man nor devil can conquer it, because Christ in His blood has made it strong and has saved us."

And again she says, "The soul is like a castle. It is like a city. And outside the castle is the watchdog, which is the conscience of man. And what does the watchdog eat and drink? He eats the fire and he drinks the blood, the fire of the Holy Spirit and the Blood of Christ."

Once an individual has gathered together this wonderful and beautiful picture of the value of the human soul, she tells the individual to build for himself two mystical cells in which he is to spend his whole life. One cell is the cell of self-knowledge; the other, the cell of the knowledge of God. In the cell of self-knowledge, we are confronted with our own nothingness. And she repeats over and over again a concept that was given to us in the Book of Exodus, of which St. Thomas Aquinas made very much (and, in fact, it is the inspiration for his whole metaphysical system), that God is He Who Is and we are they who are not. We have a real relationship to God because we are totally dependent upon Him for our existence; God only has a logical relationship to us because He created us out of love and sheer gratuity. We are therefore nothing of ourselves. And I am certain that this one particular thought that runs through St. Catherine has indeed been derived from the teachings of Thomas Aquinas.

Once we have grasped the fact that we are nothing, then we suddenly become aware of the fact that we have iniquities and sin, that we have failures, that we have pride. And once we have grasped these things, we are overwhelmed. But here is the amazing thing: Catherine, perhaps because of her great innocence, did not want any man to be overwhelmed by the thought of his iniquities or his sins, and dependency on such a subject was insufferable to her. She taught from the beginning to the very end that love is the greatest purifying agent that we have, and love transcends penance, and love certainly transcends remorse. And thus it was that she was able to write: "I hide my iniquities in the wounds of Christ and I bathe myself in His Blood, and so shall my iniquities be consumed — they are gone."

On another occasion, to a disciple of hers who was overcome with despondency, she writes very strongly and very pointedly, "I will that this devil of despondency be put to flight by trusting in the

Blood of Christ. Raise your eyes to the wounds of Christ and trust in His Blood that this despondency might vanish and be destroyed."

After we have grasped our nothingness, our sinfulness, and have been reconciled to God, we then embark upon a vocation in life, and St. Catherine was the greatest do-er in all this world. She had a great work to do, and to her it was necessary that every man use his God-given talents that he might edify the Church and save his soul. And again on one occasion she writes, "I will that you no longer slumber in your slothfulness. It is time now that you rise up with burning and ardent fire and love, and that you work." And again she says, "Nothing could give me greater joy than if I could give my blood for the love of the Blood of Christ for the Church, for the salvation of souls."

And then she deals with another very human problem. When we discovered our nothingness, our sinfulness, and realized we must work, we are suddenly confronted with suffering, with difficulty, and that is very severe for all of us. But St. Catherine simplified this in a very wonderful way; in fact she didn't even see it as a problem. She said, "Let us rush like men out into the field of battle and shed the milk teeth of fear and grow the teeth of love and hate, love of what is good and hate of what is evil, carrying before us the standard of Christ crucified, inspired by His wounds and His Blood. For Christ our Savior was clothed in the garment of suffering, and He who is God and Man certainly chose the most beautiful garment that any man could be clothed with." And so she dispenses with all our ridiculous fears and prompts man to do his work despite all of these difficulties.

"It is then in the mystical cell of self-knowledge," she tells us, "that the cross of Christ is raised on high and we find the Precious Blood, and we realize that Christ hangs on the Cross not by three nails but by the will of His own love. And through the Crucified we pass from the mystical cell of self-knowledge to the mystical cell of the knowledge of God. And it is here that she experiences what I am afraid is denied to most of us — a wonderful awe of the Crucified. She is completely overcome by the fact that we are created out of love and re-created in the Blood of Christ. And she marvels that God could come down and take His place among us, where she says, "Out of mercy have you redeemed us in Your Blood, and out of mercy have You desired to talk to Your creatures. Oh loving Mad-

man, was it not enough to become incarnate, that You should also die?" And God was to her everything.

To the soul who has successfully lived in the mystical cell of self-knowledge and the knowledge of God, there is awarded the greatest treasure of all in this life — a happy and successful death. And it is only natural that in St. Catherine we find some wonderful thoughts on death and blood, for she says again, "The soul at the moment of death realizes the value of time and the jewels of virtue. But this is not an afflictive pain; rather it is profitable, because the soul casts herself before the mercy of the Blood and gains pity. And the devil, seeing that the soul has entered into the Blood, stands afar off in awe and does not dare to draw near. And the soul, passing suddenly, drowned in the sea of Blood, enters through the gate of Christ Crucified into the sea of peace, the Eternal Trinity." And there was awarded certainly to St. Catherine a death of which she wrote or certainly would have desired. When she herself was passing out of this world just shortly before she passed into a coma she was heard to say, "I come to you not through my merits, but through the mercy of Your Blood." And she was heard to call out several times the single word "Blood."

This, in its briefest form, would be what St. Catherine would suggest to each and every one of us. How to live, how to pattern our life around devotion to the Blood of Christ.

And I wish to make this one, single observation, that I think the most wonderful thing about St. Catherine is that she learned how to avoid two very difficult things in devotion to the Blood of Christ. There are two pitfalls awaiting us. Either we are going to be concerned with the hyper-realistic, distracted with how Christ was physically crucified, distracted about the pain in His feet and in His hands and in His head and the number of thorns and all that sort of thing, and miss completely that redemption is a theandric act — it is the God-man who redeems us — and miss completely the whole transcendence of this devotion. The other pitfall is that of sentimentality. If this devotion does not spur us on to activity, wholesome activity, and the using of our God-given talents, this devotion is worthless, and St. Catherine felt very strongly on this subject.

There was living in the area of her town at the time a certain man by the name of William of Fleet, who was an Englishman who had come to be a Benedictine. William of Fleet was a self-styled

mystic. He felt that he was totally above the orders and the commands of his superiors, and there were, around his monastery, lovely woods in which he spent all day, wandering around reading books. And St. Catherine writes very pointedly, "When are you going to come out of your silly woods and do something for the Church?"

And so, unless we are inspired to activity, wholesome and good, we have fallen into a ridiculous species of romanticism or sentimentality.

In conclusion to this very short paper, I wish to quote a passage from St. Catherine which I think is so typical of her very passionate Italian soul. She says, "Eternal Godhead, Eternal Trinity who gives value to the Blood of Jesus, You are a deep sea into which the more I enter the more I find, and the more I find the more I seek. You are an immense abyss, in which no human being is satisfied. And I desire to see You with the light of Your own brilliance."

*Father David Van Horn, C.P.P.S.*

## USE OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD IN OUR DEVOTIONS

Let me stress a preliminary caution in speaking about our religious exercises. Our prayers, our sacraments and even Holy Mass in a way, are not an end in themselves. They can be and perhaps are used occasionally in a pharisaical manner. A person can pride himself as our Savior warned — “the Pharisee stood and began to pray thus within himself: ‘I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I possess.’” (Lk 18, 11-12). Thus also a Catholic can pride himself on attending daily Mass and Holy Communion and be indeed a deeply religious person and yet be not very saintly because of his religious exercises. They may be performed, in other words, as mere formalism, a Sunday coat put on and off for self-gratification.

Secondly, Catholics often make the mistake of departmentalizing their religious exercises. At a stated time they recite perfectly that pious prayer or perform that religious exercise, and after it is finished, show no effect in their manner of living, respect for God or love for their neighbor. At a stated time they pull out a drawer, take their breviary and say it, put it back in the drawer and shut it up. At a stated time they make their meditation, “put it back in the drawer” with no effect. At a stated time they go to Mass and Holy Communion, but it has no effect on the rest of the day. There is no unity between their life and their devotions. St. Thomas says that devotion means a promptness of the will in the service of God, so one might conclude that a religious exercise unproductive of virtuous living was not devout. Sad experience of performing many religious exercises without a corresponding saintliness is common.

Now the use of the Precious Blood in our spiritual exercises is of that peculiar and happy nature which prevents the two faults mentioned—pharisaism and lack of unity in the devotee, because the Precious Blood is not only the price of our redemption and our salvation but also of our holiness. The Precious Blood not only merits salvation and purifies from sin but motivates all that is saintliness from humility unto the perfect love of God. When an individual prays, he talks with God. All your

spiritual exercises in use of the Precious Blood comfort Christ with the Blood on Him. And that, mediately, not only tells you but invites you: "Please, give me your sins, your bad conscience." The Precious Blood keeps you from formalism and lack of unity in your spiritual exercises.

*Use of Devotion to the Precious Blood in Retreats*

The subject assigned to me—the use of the Precious Blood in our devotions—is so wide and deep that I cannot begin to treat it exhaustively, even regarding one of the religious exercises that I want to call to your attention. Let me first express some thoughts in regard to the Ignatian method of retreat that St. Gaspar specifies for our Society in giving retreats. There are two points of emphasis, the foundation or end of man and that of making an election of reform or choice of state of life.

May I beg your pardon at the outset for trying to add anything to the wisdom of St. Ignatius or of St. Gaspar, especially in view of the praises that the Popes have bestowed upon the Ignatian method. But our method of giving short retreats today of four, five, eight days lends itself so readily to the use of the Ignatian method that we usually, toward the end of the retreat, insert a meditation on the Precious Blood and another on the Blessed Virgin and call it finished. May I make the plea to the Precious Blood Fathers to base the whole retreat on the Precious Blood — make each conference center around this theme. It's not only that we priests tire of the method. The nuns too — God bless them — have told me personally, "I'm getting tired of that Ignatian method."

St. Ignatius says, "Man was created to praise, reverence and serve God our Lord and by this means to save his soul." Our catechisms do the same in one of the first questions, "Why did God make me?" And it is needful that they do so for many reasons. However, for retreats to people who are not beginners in the life of perfection as are the laity, but in the second degree, proficient, or in the unitive stage, as nuns and priests should be, let me suggest that we begin by saying: "Man was bought with the Precious Blood of Christ to praise, to love and serve God, our Father and by means of this same Blood to save his soul, to be-

come a saint." Let me repeat the text: "Man was bought with the Precious Blood of Christ to praise, to love and serve God." I purposely said love first, then serve — that's the psychology of the Precious Blood. To love, to serve God, our Father, and by the means of this same Blood to save our souls and become saints. By using this text as a foundation one does not skip the Old Testament and begin with the New Covenant in the Blood of Christ — we cannot get away from the fact that God made us — but it does immediately leave the realm of creation and plunges us into the depth of the riches of the Blood of Christ and life in that Blood as God intended.

The first exercise of St. Ignatius is easy to present and to understand: 1) the fact of creation, 2) the circumstances of my creation, 3) the reason for my creation, 4) the reverence and service due to God because of my creation, which obtains my ultimate destiny.

The second exercise according to St. Ignatius falls easily into place. That is the meditation on the *et cetera*, or the purpose of creatures and the holy indifference we must have toward them. Past ages have proven the wisdom of the great saint, through the untold numbers of conversions due to the thorough understanding of these foundations of our creatureliness as basic for a retreat. They make the presence of God intelligible even to a child. You remember when you were six or seven years of age — just from your catechism, or from the words of the retreat master, if you made a retreat before your First Communion — how conscious you were of the great presence of God simply because God must be where He acts. You were conscious that He made all things, holding them in being by His powerful goodness. Certainly we have need of being taught that again and again. But for proficient in perfection, as nuns and priests should be — must be, let me suggest the foundation of the Precious Blood, the redemption instead of the creation.

But since the time our Savior shed His Blood for us, our heavenly Father sees the whole of His creation in a rosy light it did not have before in His sight. St. Bonaventure and Father Faber tell you better than I can how ruddy and rosy the world is now. What the great St. Peter and St. Paul told the pagans I do not know, but their letters to the early Christians tell how

they insisted that the Christians came from God as new creatures, belonged to God in a peculiar way they did not have before in belonging to Him, and they were going back to God because Christ gave His Blood for them.

St. Ignatius truly does confront the retreatant with Christ with terrific force in the meditation on the two standards. And his whole method is so adaptable as to time and dispositions of the retreatant and to the directions of the retreat master, that you might ask why change anything? But the world is changing. We're growing in the Church. The feast of the Precious Blood is just a little over a hundred years old. Our modern acquaintance with procedures in the learning process, valid intelligence tests, new investigations in the development of character and personality, put things in a different light. And most important, Holy Mother Church has approved devotion to the Precious Blood by establishing the special feast in honor of the Divine Blood. I think that we ought to take our cue from that. I do wish that our experts in the realms of education would formulate, not only the theology of conversion but also its psychology, tracing the steps most people take in being converted from a sinner into a saint today.

It is the very nature of the Precious Blood not only to be instrumental in our redemption from sin but to be purposive in our life. Why do we make a retreat? Certainly the retreat master must, with the help of God's grace, try to produce a readiness to conversion or to change. Then the empire of sin and of evil must be destroyed in the heart. Secondly the reign of the good must be established. Thirdly, the reign of the good must be consolidated and made durable by recognition of the obstacles to success and an understanding of the means of removing them. Fourthly, the crowning of such a life with hope and love.

Let me give you an example: If God would give you omnipotent power to renovate China today, what would you do? First thing, you would expel the Communists. But that would leave China without a government. Second thing, you would establish a good government, for the people, not for the benefit of the government. Third thing, you would consolidate this government. Not only would you establish schools with Sisters in them everywhere, but above all, you would have to establish a priest

in every village; wherever there were 2000 Catholics, a pastor and two assistants, so they could give honor and glory to God. All right, you have omnipotent power. Which of these is the hardest: to kick the Communists out? put in a good government? get that many churches with that many priests in the whole of China? You're omnipotent, do it! But a like process takes place in our souls by virtue of the Precious Blood.

For a sinner to become a saint, he will first have to learn to sin no more. Secondly, take the cross and follow Christ. Thirdly, he must have not only an earnest desire of eternal life but a love for Jesus that I may describe by the word "touchiness" about the interests of Jesus within him and in the world about him.

Now in the first step—a readiness to change, the challenge of the Precious Blood calls the sinner's attention to the desolation of his own soul. Christ confronts him. Not only is there the conviction of guilt, but also the challenge of the Blood of Christ, "Come out! Get out of this boat and walk on the water with Me." A new life in the Blood. He gets the sweetest and the rosiest view of the soul-life that he would have if he would change. But that's not enough. He must *make* the change.

The second step is part of contrition itself. A sinner conscious of guilt will have remorse, possibly as Judas did in despair. He may imitate Macbeth, show remorse, even an agony of conscience, but may be unwilling to confront our bleeding Savior to plead for forgiveness. He may say, "Out blood, out blood! But it will not out." What's the matter with him? There is a mental block, a psychological block, a block to grace that prevents him from seeing the bleeding Christ. To make his contrition valid, the sinner sees the justice of God that he's violated, and he knows the justice of God is eternal. God can't simply just forgive a sin; sin needs atonement. God simply cannot forgive a sin and ignore the satisfaction for that sin.

But as he can be made to see the bleeding Christ he will much more readily see the uselessness of remorse without a desire of being forgiven by God. Christ has atoned for his guilt and satisfied for the punishment. Suddenly he is truly contrite. By grasping the Blood of Christ through faith and hope he quickly arrives at contrition and even comes to perfect sorrow, because

the Blood is almost irresistible in its pleading for a complete return of love.

We usually say that there is no bad Catholic, unless he refuses to go to confession. That is very true. But that still leaves the empire of good to be invigorated and consolidated. The conversion must tend toward complete union with Christ through the sacred Blood transfusion until the last day when all change ceases.

#### *Use of the Precious Blood in Our Devotion at Mass*

Our second religious exercise is the greatest and most important one in our lives. It is our devotion to the Precious Blood in attending Holy Mass.

St. Thomas composed a prayer to be said before Holy Mass. In it he requests to receive "the Bread of angels, the King of kings and the Lord of lords with such reverence and humility, such contrition and devotion, such purity and faith, such purpose and intention as shall most aid the salvation of my soul." (Most of you know it by heart in Latin, Fathers; pardon me for translating it for you.) The framers of the text of the Council of Trent possibly had the prayer of St. Thomas in mind, when they used almost the same words in their teaching on the propitiatory element in the sacrifice of the Mass—quote: "The holy council teaches that this sacrifice is truly propitiatory, so that if we draw near to God with an upright heart and true faith, with fear and reverence, with sorrow and repentance, through the Mass we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (*The Church Teaches*, n. 749).

Not to have these six qualifications when attending Holy Mass is simply to lose the propitiatory effects of this spiritual exercise, our greatest religious act as Catholics. It is in acquiring these qualifications that the devotion to the Precious Blood before Holy Mass and at its beginning is very efficacious. Since the Eucharist is the sacrament of Christ's Passion, in the measure in which we are made perfect in union with Christ who suffered (St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 73, a. 4, ad 3), our participation is manifested by the symbolism of the bread and wine in the offertory, recalling vividly the agony of Christ.

The agony of Christ. Let me explain. Our Savior prepared

Himself to die in the garden of agony. And you know how wheat is threshed, ground in the mill—bran and middlings are separated to leave the pure white flour. How the good nuns bake the flour with water and heat to give us those fine altar breads. God bless them for this loving care. They are preparing the material that is changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. You know too how the ripest grapes are crushed, the juice is carefully clarified—left in a warm place to slowly ferment to give us the fine altar wine. Now we usually apply this symbolism to our needed dispositions of being crushed by contrition, made into a new paste, made into new wine, adaptable to use for consecration. But it symbolizes Christ's preparation for death and sacrifice too. Watch Jesus in the garden sweating Blood. No one strikes Him. No one wounds Him. He is before His Father, yet to show to all of us what was needed in His sacrifice, "his sweat became as drops of blood running down upon the ground" (Lk 22, 44). Sorrow, sadness for sins of men, anguish for the offence to His Father, a fear and reverence for His Father's offended will! And there is an uprightness in His mind, human mind! There is that complete surrender of His will, that which the Council of Trent calls for. Our Savior does it. And He makes an abject surrender of His own will to the heavenly Father evident to all of us by sweating Blood—baring His NEPES.

What do we do at Holy Mass? We join the priest in offering ourselves with the Body and Blood of Jesus to the heavenly Father for others. We join the priest at the offertory at the offering of the host, watching the priest pour that wine. If only we Fathers, priests, would pour out our life when we take that cruet—we do it ourselves, unless the deacon does it for us—with that willingness of prepared paste and new wine—that willingness. Our Savior does it; we should do it.

What do we do at Holy Mass? We join the priest in offering ourselves with the Body and Blood of Jesus to the heavenly Father for others. The *Mediator Dei* tells us how necessary it is to join the priest because he is the *Alter Christus* at Mass, and He alone can consecrate. But we should and can offer ourselves. For a Catholic, Holy Mass is the biggest and sweetest act of love he can make. Though we usually call it an act of religion, there is an intimacy between the virtue of religion and the virtue

the Blood is almost irresistible in its pleading for a complete return of love.

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What do we do at Holy Mass? We join the priest in offering ourselves with the Body and Blood of Jesus to the heavenly Father for others. The *Mediator Dei* tells us how necessary it is to join the priest because he is the *Alter Christus* at Mass, and He alone can consecrate. But we should and can offer ourselves. For a Catholic, Holy Mass is the biggest and sweetest act of love he can make. Though we usually call it an act of religion, there is an intimacy between the virtue of religion and the virtue

of love when it comes to Mass that is almost self-evident. That offering means a surrender to the Father with the Shepherd who gives His life for His sheep. It is a commitment with divine love to the care of the Father. By the word commit—we use it in the sense of committing someone to jail—here I want to say that we put ourselves completely into the hands of our heavenly Father with the Blood of Christ. To love is to give oneself in a certain sense to the one we love. When we have charity as an act, it is more loving than to be loved. And it's the loving that we do that is what counts. But the sinner trying to offer himself to God—he must do it, but alone he can't do it—must unite with the Blood of Christ.

Our separated brethren, Protestants, are being stirred up in New York today to make “decisions for Christ,” to “accept Christ as their Savior,” and I do hope that it does mean for them what St. Thomas says, “One can be changed into Christ, and be incorporated in Him by mental desire, even without receiving this sacrament (the Eucharist—*Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 73, a. 3, ad 2). God help them in whatever they are sincerely trying to do. But for us Catholics, who know that to offer sacrifice is of the natural law, who know that to offer the sacrifice of Mass is of divine law—our decision for Christ, our “taking of the chalice of salvation” has a meaning, is a loving duty, has an efficacy at Mass, because the Blood is actually present. The injunction we priests received from our ordaining prelate at our elevation to the priesthood—“Imitate what you offer”—tells all.

But the sad fact is that too many Catholics today are attending Holy Mass in the state of mortal sin. I need not prove that to you. If they make an act of contrition at Mass, they do not go to confession for weeks and months afterwards. If they're not in the state of mortal sin, and haven't eaten breakfast, haven't eaten anything for three hours, why don't they go to Holy Communion? You know what that means. Whose fault is it that this custom is prevalent?

We have contracted a special obligation in membership of our Society of the Precious Blood to spread devotion to the Blood of Christ. It is our duty to keep the Blood of Christ from being misused. If people misuse or neglect our holiest Sacrifice of Blood by not knowing the six conditions that the Council of

Trent specifies, it is on the conscience of lovers of the Blood of Jesus.

Let us stimulate ourselves with holy zeal, therefore, first to preach the six conditions for the proper attendance at Mass that the holy council demands. The Blood of Christ urges us. Secondly, get the question of "what do we do at Holy Mass?" into the catechism. The answer is: at Holy Mass I join the priest in offering myself with the Body and Blood of Jesus to the Eternal Father for others. And when Johnny comes home from Mass on Sunday morning his Mother asks him, "Johnny, what did you do at Mass?" "Mother, I joined the priest in offering myself and the Body and Blood of Jesus to the Eternal Father for you." And he can kiss her with a real love. And the non-Catholic asks any of our Catholics, "What did you do at Church?" "I attended Holy Mass." "What did you do?" "I joined the priest in offering myself to the Eternal Father with the Body and Blood of Jesus for you." The Blood of Christ urges us to get that back into our catechisms, that question and that answer. Thirdly, let us shout from the housetops to all our non-Catholic brethren the good news that we Catholics have a way of making our surrender to God at Holy Mass, so consoling, so full of joy that we are sure that the heavenly Father accepts us, because the Blood of Jesus is there on our altars. The Blood of Christ urges us to shout it from the housetops to those who do not know.

*Use of the Devotion of the Precious Blood in Receiving  
Holy Communion*

Now the third spiritual exercise is our Communions, the reception of Holy Communion and the devotion to the Precious Blood.

Our Communions are productive of grace in our souls according to our dispositions when receiving. These dispositions are perfected by the remote preparation of the sacrament of penance and the immediate preparation we make at Mass before the consecration, or at least before the Pater Noster. The more this immediate preparation is effective in reproducing within us the sentiments of Christ in His Passion, that complete surrender to the will of His Father, that complete giving Himself over to

the care of His Father—body and soul—that utter gift of Himself in love as expressed in His dying, shedding all of His Blood—“imitate what you offer”—the more beneficial to us and pleasing to the Master will be our reception of His Body and Blood in Holy Communion. Then His merits may be called ours as well as His. His satisfactions are not so much His treasures as they are ours.

And then comes the thanksgiving that I want to inform you about. The use of the Seven Offerings of the Precious Blood are so appropriate as a post communion prayer as to need almost no explanation. They are nicely addressed to the heavenly Father, as Jesus Himself would want them to be. They recall so many of the things we want to say to our heavenly Father when we have the Blood of Jesus in our hearts. They repeat almost in the words of the Apocalypse the praise of the Lamb that was slain. They give all of the glory to the Triune God.

May I say to you that it is not good manners to tell what two lovers, Jesus and you, should say to one another when in Holy Embrace of Holy Communion. But if your mind should be blank after receiving or just want something really worth-while to say to the Master, remember that Mary Magdelene just said “Rabboni,” when she met Him on the resurrection day. Possibly your heart is so full that you cannot say anything, and it would be almost impudent to suggest to you to say anything. If so, you need not be told what to say. But just try a slow recital of the Seven Offerings of the Precious Blood after Holy Communion.

This paper is getting long enough, and I could not begin lauding the use of the Precious Blood in your spiritual exercises enough anyway. Only this one thing—Lord Jesus, by Thy Precious Blood make us love Thee more!

Father Roman Schwieterman, C.P.P.S.

Panel A: *DEVOTION TO THE PRECIOUS BLOOD  
IN PARISH AND MISSION*

*(Father Diller Presiding)*

*Father Diller:*

A few words by way of introduction should direct our thought to the purpose of our discussion this afternoon, with one eye on the clock, for we must be finished by 3:30. First, why are we — priests and priests-to-be — here? Because we are the instruments or the means of passing on to the faithful what has been said and done here, with something of the inspiration that has moved us. With this mission in mind, Bishop Marling in his opening sermon pointed to you and me with the words, "We live by the Blood, and through the Blood of Christ's sacrifice, our acts and words and especially our sacrifices have value." If we ourselves, as instruments of Christ, are deeply conscious of the meaning of the Precious Blood, we can influence others. We can make them better Christians, more truly Christ-like, united with Him in all the purposes for which the Precious Blood was shed. This is the first and basic point of our discussion.

The second is more specific. As Father Roman Schwieterman told us this morning, we must begin with a readiness and willingness to sacrifice. The sacrifice of what we are and what we do! The sacrifice of the morning which is His — Christ's and ours really — must be carried through the whole day. With it we must unite our individual effort. Christ's sacrifice gives it value and meaning. Our devotion to the Precious Blood, which includes every act of reverence, love, adoration of the price of redemption, is ideally suited to the purpose of our sanctification through the union of all our efforts with the holy sacrifice, the mystic shedding of the Divine Blood. We shall return to this point when we speak more in detail of the holy sacrifice of the Mass, the eucharistic Calvary in which the act of redemption is continued in time for you and me.

But now I think we should take up the topic which has been suggested as the first for our detailed discussion. It is meditation.

Since this was suggested by Father Andrew Pollack, I am asking him to come forward and lead in the discussion.

*Father Andrew Pollack:*

Father Diller has mentioned the reason for placing meditation first in our discussion. As members of the Society of the Precious Blood who have a special devotion to the Blood of our Redeemer, it is our duty to spread this devotion among the faithful. Now if we are devoted to something, the object of our devotion must occupy our minds and fill our hearts. We have a special interest in that object, a special attachment to it. But we cannot have this interest and attachment unless we know much about it. We cannot appreciate a thing unless we know its value. And for this we must think about it. This means we must meditate upon it.

It would be regrettable if we should leave this Study Week with the notion that we could encourage the faithful to practice devotion to the Precious Blood by merely making an announcement. It would be unfortunate if we thought we could turn on the devotion as we turn on a mechanical spigot. Merely telling the people to say the Seven Offerings, or actually reciting them, is not enough. As some one mentioned yesterday, it is not very easy to introduce the Nine Fridays if one comes to a parish where they have not been practiced. A mere announcement from the pulpit to the effect that there is such a devotion in the Church in honor of the Sacred Heart is not sufficient. To arouse permanent interest will take a long time, perhaps years of persevering exhortation on the part of the pastor and assistants. And only a man who is himself in love with the devotion and practice will be persevering in encouraging the people. Only a man who really possesses the devotion will be able to communicate a love for it to others. Devotion begets devotion.

Devotion, however, means preoccupation with the thing, willingness to sacrifice everything for it, all of which implies a deep understanding of its value. This is possible only if we constantly have the object before us, meditation on it. And this is not merely my idea. St. Thomas clearly teaches that devotion to God is aroused through meditation on the greatness and goodness of God. Our Holy Father says the very same thing in the beautiful letter, which I think should be read often and widely, the letter to our Father General on the occa-

sion of the hundredth anniversary of the Feast of the Most Precious Blood: "The devotion to the Precious Blood has 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 on His boundless charity, and to make an appropriate application to ourselves. 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 opportunity presents itself, propose them to others for consideration."

St. Gaspar, our founder, was of the same mind. Even in boyhood days he often meditated on the Blood of redemption. So much was this theme the basis of his constant meditation in his priestly and missionary life that he was convinced one could meditate daily on the Precious Blood. He once remarked to a group of the Fathers that he thought they always did so. And when one of the missionaries suggested that he could hardly imagine how one could make this one theme the constant topic of meditation day after day, he waxed eloquent and expanded his thought into a beautiful discourse. Daily, he explained, the missionary should meditate on the Blood of Christ, on the Passion and death. There may have been something of the exaggeration of the saints in this, for though Gaspar was convinced that the material on the Passion was inexhaustible, his own director, Father Albertini, had to restrain his fervor on this point. Albertini limited Gaspar to fifteen minutes, to avoid, it seems, an undue extension of meditation time in one whose whole existence was taken up with spiritual reflection.

Here we have ample evidence of the need and value of meditation on the Precious Blood, the word of the Holy Father, the teaching and example of Gaspar our founder. Surely, if we do not meditate exclusively and constantly on the Precious Blood, we should do so frequently. And we should often propose the theme to those whom we seek to lead to holiness. And now I think we should start the actual discussion.

*Father Diller:*

Thank you, Father. As you made the last statement a variation of an old axiom, often used by Father Othmar Knapke, came to my mind. It seems to be part Latin and part German: "Nemo dat quod

non hat." We can't expect everyone to meditate on the Precious Blood without some good sources. Have we any suggestions from the floor regarding books or pamphlets written meditations on this topic? Father Banet!

*Father Banet:*

The first work I suggest is the classic of Father Faber. Though the style is not quite contemporary, this book is our most noted source for meditation on the Precious Blood. The second work is a translation, now available in English, of the conferences given to the cloistered Sisters Adorers of the Precious Blood. The title is *Meditations on the Passion and the Precious Blood*. There are also two or three books entitled *Devotion to the Precious Blood*, which are not in English, but which might be translated. There are many pamphlet sources, such as that of Father Clark, though they are not extensive enough for continued meditation. But I should place Faber first and then the other two or three referred to. Every priest in the Society should have them. The materials are there, even though the form and style may not suit every temperament.

*(There was some discussion about the possibility of having a reprint of Faber's work on the Precious Blood. Father Diller suggested that an English publisher had been asked for the permission to publish it, but had refused. Father Hunnefeld then referred to Father Lefebvre's work, suggesting that some of it had been translated.)*

*Father Banet:*

We have that book completely translated. Though it is not technically a meditation book, there are meditation topics, thoughts for each day on holiness of life, or for each Sunday of the Church year. They are excellent for devout reading. The seminarians here at Xavier Hall have completed a translation of one of Father Lefebvre's works, but it is far from ready for publication. Father Lefebvre gave us permission to translate and publish his book entitled, *La Redemption par le sang de Jesus*. Father Edward Maziarz has already translated this book and Newman Press will publish it. In fact we wanted to have it out for this Study Week, but the Work was not completed soon enough.

*Father Bosch:*

There is another work in English, Father Digby Best's *The Blood of the Lamb*. But it is no longer available. It would be good if we could have this work reprinted and published.

*Father Pollack:*

A Notre Dame Sister has composed a series of meditations on the Precious Blood, which I am sure will be well received by all who love the devotion. Likewise, after all that we have heard in this Study Week, we should be able to turn to the scriptures as to a handbook of meditation with the papers read here as background and guide.

*Father Diller:*

Do you mean the Proceedings?

*Father Pollack:*

I mean the bible itself as a book of meditation, but with the help of the papers read and what we have learned from them.

*Father Linneman:*

Right there, I would suggest that we select from the many pages of the scriptures those passages which pertain to the Precious Blood. We should have the texts of St. John and St. Paul, and other texts also, and put them together in a certain order suitable for meditation.

*Father Diller:*

The man who read the papers on the scriptures should be able to do a fine job in selecting and arranging the texts, giving something of the background and a little explanation, so that we all would profit from their knowledge. The papers showed how wonderful the bible is as a source of meditation on the Precious Blood.

*(One of the Fathers suggested that something like this had already been done. Father Ryan referred to a compilation of biblical texts on the Precious Blood made by Fathers O'Brien and Raible. Finally, Father Raible explained that this was a class project done*

*under Father Kaiser's direction when they were students at the seminary. The little book was printed by the Messenger Press but is long since out of print.)*

*Father Diller:*

Such a little work should be helpful in preparing sermons on the Precious Blood or even parts of sermons referring to the Precious Blood.

*Father Pollack:*

I am reminded of what the Provincial said about "tooting one's own horn." "He who does not toot his own horn, it shall not be tooted." In about a week — or it may be a couple of weeks — my dissertation will be published. I try to do exactly what has been suggested as useful and practical in the matter of biblical texts on the Precious Blood. I try to put in a summary of about forty pages the scriptural teaching on the Blood, incorporating quotations from the scriptures, from Genesis to Apocalypse, as introductory to the statements of the Fathers of the Church on the Precious Blood.

*Father Lazur:*

Referring to fostering aids to meditation, perhaps the Fathers who have written sermons might be willing to have them all collected. Then some one could arrange them, or at least the materials, according to a definite plan. Even though they may not all be original, they would represent much personal study and reflection. We would then have the fruits of the meditation of many of our priests available to all of us.

*Father Cyr:*

What would you think of a gathering of the articles on the Precious Blood which appeared throughout the years in the *Nuntius Aulæ*, the *Messenger*, the *American Ecclesiastical Review*? Here we have the fruit of much theological study and meditation by members of our community also.

*Father Longanback:*

I know that Father Pire and I have composed at least seven

meditations on the Bloodsheddings for retreats. They are the substance of an eight day retreat for nuns. We would be happy to share these efforts with the Fathers, if they want them. (*Applause*)

*Father Uhrich:*

The *Story of the Blood* by Father Kaiser is excellent for meditation, though it may be out of print.

*Father Charles Herber:*

Father Provincial has some very fine sermons on the Precious Blood. Could they be shared with the rest of us?

*Father Diller:*

I shall repeat to him the suggestion just made about a general invitation to share our sermons on the Precious Blood.

*Father Mullen:*

I think Father Max Walz's book, *Why Is Thy Apparel Red?* is excellent, and I think it is still in circulation.

*(Father Uhrich suggested the use of the chaplet as a rich source of meditation material. Then Father Diller called on the Moderator General for comment on what had been said on meditation on the Precious Blood.)*

*Father Herbert Kramer:*

The need for a good systematic book of meditation on the Precious Blood is surely felt by all, and the many suggestions that we have heard here are very encouraging. I have considerable misgiving, however, regarding the accumulation of materials from various sources. I think that if we want a good meditation book, we must have one individual to work at it, organize it, give it final form, in a way to make it useful for all of us. Even if we should think in terms of a composite work in the sense of having a group of authors or collaborators, ultimately one man must contribute the unity and form that will make it useful.

I know of one good work which appeared just last year. It is in Italian, written by two Dominican Fathers. The first part is largely theological, but has valuable applications to one's own spiritual life.

The second part is especially rich in meditation sources. It deals with the seven Bloodsheddings in a very solid and practical way. So impressed were our Fathers in Italy with this work that they approached the Dominicans with the plan of expanding and amplifying the book. The result would be a very valuable source for our meditation. I should likewise add that if this Study Week eventually leads us to a good book of meditation on the Precious Blood, we could congratulate ourselves on having found the best means of making the fruits of the Week really effective and permanent.

*Father Diller:*

Now, I think we should immediately take up our second subject of discussion, the holy sacrifice of the Mass. I turn to Father Longanback with his own words as most appropriate for an introduction: "Our purpose is to convince the faithful of the powerful activity of the divine Blood in their lives. There is no better way than through the Mass." Father Longanback, will you lead the discussion?

*Father Longanback:*

I shall not make a formal speech, for the very notion of a panel is free and informal discussion. We might say it means "kicking ideas around." And to use the same slang expression, if we do not like them, "we kick them out."

We are challenged today by an alarming defection from the Church. Father Fichter, a Jesuit sociologist, made the statement at Notre Dame: "One third of the baptized Catholics of this country have fallen away from the Church." If we accept the fact, the first question we ask is: Why? Though there must be many factors involved, I sometimes ask myself if it is not basically due to a neglect of instilling the fundamentals, the fundamental realization of man's relationship to Almighty God.

I wonder how many of our Catholics who attend Mass Sunday after Sunday go just because it is mortal sin to miss the Mass, as they have been taught from childhood. But the deeper positive motivation is lacking. There is not the conviction that they depend upon God utterly and completely for every breath they take, for every thought they think, that they are on the verge of nothingness, held in existence only by the continuing creative will of God. They hard-

ly realize that God is supreme, that He owns them more absolutely than they own their cars or homes or anything else they possess. God is their Ruler, all Being, upon whom they depend. And they must freely acknowledge their dependence upon Him. All this is to be shown by sacrifice, the bearing of gifts. This idea of sacrifice — brought out so beautifully these days — must be instilled into the hearts of our people, the idea of sacrifice, and specifically the idea of Calvary and Eucharist.

Sacrifice of Calvary and sacrifice of the Mass are one and the same sacrifice. The Mass is the sacramental extension of the sacrifice of Calvary, which is present, always and forever. It is an eternal act. We are joined with Christ in the Mass and therefore united in offering perfect worship to God. Beautifully Father Schwieterman stressed the point that we submit ourselves totally with Christ, because Christ submitted Himself totally by the pouring out of His Blood on the altar of the Cross, and that Blood-pouring is shown again sacramentally in the holy sacrifice of the Mass. These basic thoughts must be brought to the people, to awaken a real love of the Mass in their hearts.

But how shall we preach about the Mass in the missions? We know the missions are to be a carrying out of the purpose of Calvary's sacrifice, the cleansing from sin. And the Mass is applying the work of Calvary. So the mission is to bring the Blood of Calvary and the Mass to the people, to cleanse them from sin and unite them with God in the newness of life won for us by the shedding of Blood. Our sermons must make all this clear. When we preach on confession or on the divine mercy we must show how the Blood is the instrument of mercy and in this way awaken a deep motivation for a complete forsaking of sin.

The sinner makes his decision for Christ, not in Madison Square Garden, but in the confessional. He contemplates the Blood which is given him in every grace, to live a life of charity, a life of union with God. In all the talks in the mission, on the state of life, on marriage and purity, etc., I try to show the tremendous power of the Blood — shed for us, winning grace for us, obtaining the courage and ability to live the life of grace, the supernatural life. If these basic truths are brought to the people we cannot doubt that their devotion, in the Thomistic sense of giving honor and cult to God, of being real living members of the Mystical Body, will be real.

*Father Diller:*

Thank you, Father.

And now I should like to ask some of the pastors who have encouraged their people to a love for Holy Mass to tell us something of their method of awakening this love. How did you get them to take part in the Mass? What were your methods. Father Lochtefeld, could you take up this discussion?

*Father Lochtefeld:*

If I may, I should like to approach this sacred topic from the standpoint of dealing with converts. I was told yesterday that we were to have something here about the Precious Blood and conversions. During my twenty-six years as a priest, there were twenty spent in the negro apostolate. In this time we baptized or saw baptized about five or six thousand converts. Many noble men cooperated in the grand work, but from the very start we learned that the Mass and the Precious Blood were the keynote of the whole effort. The priest or missionary can make no converts unless he is convert-minded, and this means to be all on fire with love for the Mass, by which the Precious Blood is brought to us from Calvary.

In this connection I like to stress a special point in connection with the work among negroes and the thought of the shedding of the Blood in the Passion. Some think it is more difficult today to speak of the suffering of Christ than it was years ago when so many of the people would be in want, lacking food and clothing. But as our men are being sent into our bigger parishes, where the colored population is pressing in, they will find this very thought of the shedding of blood and the suffering of Christ to be significant for the colored people. In the classrooms, on the playground, in the convert instruction, anywhere when dealing with these groups, the Precious Blood in the Passion and in the Mass is especially meaningful. These people understand suffering because they must feel it in their own lives. When a child comes to school without breakfast because there is no food at home, when a child comes scantily clothed in winter and his tiny body is shivering in the cold, he knows what suffering is. Some of our white children don't even see suffering anymore. The sick from their homes are rushed out of their sight to the hospitals, not to say anything of the sedatives and pain-killing drugs. And still

we must bring to them too the Passion and the shedding of the Precious Blood, and the need of sacrifice in their lives.

We have a new catechism approved by the hierarchy intended to be used for our colored people. In this the very second lesson is on the Mass. If we deal with converts — the catechism is intended especially for them — we do not plan to ignore the importance of the Passion and death of Christ. We introduce this thought in the very beginning of the instruction and point out that the Mass is a continuation of sacrifice on Calvary in which Christ died for them. And I do want to emphasize that our colored people are deeply interested.

The children are very much interested in the pictures and slides showing the Mass. We used these constantly throughout the years of my work among the colored, and their rapt attention is beyond words. Wherever it may be, in the classroom or in the hall or anywhere else, the results are always the same: a tremendous interest in this presentation of the story of the Mass. It is the thought of the shedding of the Blood of Jesus for souls that attracts them. And it is this same thought that keeps the priest at the trying work. As for myself, that is the only reason I can give for twenty years in this apostolate.

Let me remark, incidentally, for the benefit especially of the zealous young men who have just entered the apostolate, that the Precious Blood is not merely for all races, it is for all souls. Nothing is so important to bear in mind as this when we strive for converts. And we never should be satisfied with the results. Do not be satisfied with five converts: try for ten the next year. Use different methods, use every method, but always hold your sights high. And of course, those who are already Catholics must learn to become saints. And the means is exactly the same.

Before I close I want to mention just one more point about the feast of the Precious Blood. The feast and the month of the Precious Blood were altogether special for my colored people. We always had a Eucharistic Procession. Though it was summer time, the children all came. The men and the women and the girls and boys were there in the procession in honor of the Precious Blood. And the little girls strewed flowers, after the manner of the bible account about David and the ark. We might say they danced before the Holy Eucharist, and they kept perfect time. Few others would

care to imitate them, and few could really do all this so beautifully. Here we have an instance of the importance of external worship and a deep sincere devotion to the Precious Blood.

How deep and sincere that devotion was is evident from the converts. The feast of the Precious Blood was the day of their baptism and their first Holy Communion. The most impressive events in my years as pastor were in this way bound up with the devotion to the Precious Blood. If there is a secret of success in the colored apostolate, as far as I knew it, it is the secret of the power of the Precious Blood.

*Father Diller:*

Now the time is short, and we must take up the other topics of discussion. First we want to treat of the specific attempts to spread the devotion to the Precious Blood. Father Uhrich, would you take up the discussion on the use of the devotion to the Precious Blood as you find it in the parishes on the mission? What progress are we making in the spread of the devotion in the places in which we care for souls?

*Father Uhrich:*

I regret that I cannot be optimistic. In some of our parishes there is hardly any mention of the devotion except during the mission. Very little is made even of the Seven Offerings. These and the rosary of the Precious Blood should be used for the private holy hour in honor of the Precious Blood. It is a common experience that the devotion has proved fruitful when we asked devout souls to offer it for the conversion of sinners. We should attempt to make this practice very common in our parishes. Then there is the matter of externals, already referred to. There is the cord of the Precious Blood, with a special ritual blessing for it. These cords are easily made, and the Sisters have already volunteered to make some for us if we wish to use them. When we visit the sick and ask them to offer their sufferings in union with the Precious Blood and the purpose for which it is shed, such little external means are very helpful. There are also the little cards of the Sisters at Manchester, New Hampshire, which are placed above the doors. They are like the Paschal Lamb to bring blessing and shield us from harm. I recommend the use of them in our parishes and in our convents.

*Father Charles Bauer:*

I want to warn against the pessimistic view that the Precious Blood devotion is generally neglected. I have found the holy hour in honor of the Precious Blood in many parishes. And there are also novenas. In fact, I think, that we as sons of Saint Gaspar, direct all our work to the honor of the Precious Blood. But, when there is question of special prayers and devotions, we have to follow the directives of the local ordinary. But I think that the Seven Offerings are very commonly recited in our parishes.

*Father Diller:*

I only hope that in both large and small parishes we spread the devotion. But now I must call upon Father McNicholas for the suggestions to which we referred yesterday. Unfortunately, our time is short and we must all be very brief.

*Father McNicholas:*

In order to spread devotion to the Precious Blood we should have a sign or symbol, something that catches the eye and brings to mind what our devotion means. It should refer to the object, the Blood, or more strikingly, to the Blood of the Lamb, and this presented visually. I suggest a Lamb, a Cross as background, with a chalice below. The Lamb is Christ, the Lamb of God referred to by John the Baptist and also by John the Evangelist, the beloved disciple. Christ is both Priest and Victim in the Mass as He was on Calvary. If the Cross refers to Calvary, the chalice refers to the Mystical Calvary, the Mass.

The chalice is rich in symbolical meaning. The pure body of Mary was a chalice in which Christ dwelt with Body and Blood. The Church herself is a chalice holding the Precious Blood. In a sense we too are chalices which receive the Blood in Holy Communion. All of this is suggested by the chalice.

In all this I want to stress the need for a symbol that brings to mind the meaning of our devotion in a very graphic way. It should be something striking, calling attention to the shedding of the Blood and its great meaning, the freeing of men from sin. It should make it easy for us to pray: "Spare, O Lord, spare Thy people, whom Thou hast redeemed by Thy Precious Blood." In our love for the devotion

to the Precious Blood we think of God become man, led to slaughter as a Lamb for the sins of men. And that is the Cross. And we think of the work of the Cross continuing in the Mass. And that is the chalice.

*Father Diller:*

We have but a few moments left, and I wish to express my thanks to all of you. I regret that we cannot call upon the students who are here, to get their impressions of the Study Week and possibly some of their ideas. But I shall have to be satisfied with expressing my appreciation for their presence. May I say you have been a fine audience.

And now as we conclude I want to draw attention to one of the Society's best friends, Bishop Hodges of the diocese of Richmond, Virginia. Many of our priests have come into contact with him throughout the years he has been auxiliary bishop in that part of the Church's vineyard. All of us are grateful that he has been with us, without missing a single session. Bishop Hodges, will you favor us with a few words as a conclusion of this panel on the Precious Blood?

*Bishop Hodges:*

Members of the Congregation of the Precious Blood Fathers. I'm very glad that you "tooted your own horn" and that you gave me the privilege of listening. Back in 1941, in an article in the *American Ecclesiastical Review*, Father Edwin Kaiser spoke of certain doctrines of revelation as basic and central in theology. Theologians used them to show the relation to all the other divine truths. But regarding the doctrine of redemption by Blood, such development was lacking. And that we need. I am glad that in this Study Week you have laid solid foundations for a better understanding, appreciation, and use of this basic doctrine in all its ramifications. The value of the devotion to the Precious Blood in our work among non-Catholics cannot be stressed too much. For about ten summers my task was the charge of our own Virginia diocesan mission band. We did trailer work in the country. We looked for something that would form a bond between us and them. Of course we considered the bible as providing this entry and bond, for we were in the "bible belt," white and colored. But I think we would have done

better if we had stressed the theme of the Precious Blood, which surely is found in the bible.

I am reminded of an incident which illustrates the point. One day we had to drive ten miles over the mountains to a neighboring town to get something a little better than our own cooking. The waitress at the restaurant where we stopped, in order to impress us with something appropriate from the juke box, turned on *Washed by the Blood of the Lamb*. Hilly-billy, definitely, but the thought was there. Here was a means of contact. The Precious Blood has the power, not only for the priest in his work among Catholics, but also to break in on the non-Catholic. It is the power of grace, to convert, to make saints of those who already have the faith.

I want to express my appreciation that one not of "the fold" of your Society has been permitted to join with you in these deliberations. I am grateful that I could receive more than I was able to give. As I mentioned, a bit humorously indeed, to one or the other of your Fathers, I came to find out what made the Precious Blood Fathers "tick." We have had them down in our diocese, doing good work. I think I found the answer to the question in my mind here during this Study Week. I hope to make use of the information myself. Now I know what makes them "tick."

We are grateful in our own diocese for what work the Precious Blood Fathers have done. When I was assistant in a parish that covered seven counties, 4000 square miles with only 400 Catholics, these Fathers came in and helped us. They relieved us of at least one corner of that territory. And likewise they took over territory from other parishes. We have seen their excellent work, in mission parishes and in the more populated areas. We know their work well, and understand the spirit which motivates it. Again, I wish to tell you how grateful I am, and how much I wish this work of the Precious Blood Study Week to continue and grow. May God bless you all.

*(The meeting closed with prayer led by Bishop Hodges.)*

*Our Father.*

*Hail Mary.*

*Bishop Hodges: St. Gaspar, Apostle of the Precious Blood!*

*All: Pray for us!*

Moderator: Rev. Harold Diller, C.P.P.S.

Panel B: *DEVOTION TO THE PRECIOUS BLOOD  
IN CONVENT AND SCHOOL*

*SISTERS' PANEL*

*(Father Linenberger presided and opened the meeting with prayer.)*

*Father Linenberger:*

If I were to offer a criticism of the program prepared by the committee for the Precious Blood Institute it would be that no one of the distaff side was represented in the entire general program. We would very much like to have heard one of the Sisters or someone representing the Sisters of the Precious Blood. Now we are privileged to hear the Sisters, though the Fathers and students will not have the opportunity of attending, since they have a panel of their own.

I shall proceed immediately to introduce the respective speakers of the five groups that have been prepared for our panel program. The first speaker is Mrs. Esther Morgan, who is to read a paper prepared by the Mother Superior of the Precious Blood Cloistered Sisters at Lafayette, Indiana.

*Mrs. Morgan:*

Father Moderator and other Reverend Fathers, dear Sisters. The Cloistered Nuns of the Sisters Adorers of the Precious Blood send you all their loving and prayerful greeting. They're represented at this panel by Sister Mary Ursula. Sister Mary Ursula is their touriere, or as we know, the Sister that goes outside the cloister and meets the people.

This paper is the representation of the cloistered order, and it was written by Mother Mary Agnes to offer to you what the cloistered nun is doing in the propagation of this great devotion to the Precious Blood of Jesus. And this is the paper:

“Through Him and with Him and in Him . . . .”

This is the ecstatic climax of the bride's ascent to God. In the grace of union with Jesus, she has passed out of herself and exclaims in the inebriation of holy joy: “Through Him and with Him and in

Him be unto Thee . . . all honor and glory!" If this is the ultimate in the soul's approach to God, it can be reached only by those "little ones" who begin by believing Jesus when He says: "Without Me you can do nothing."

The liturgical formula of the Church becomes the personalized program for all who aspire to a perfect life; it has the appeal of a mother's counsel for the Sisters Adorers of the Precious Blood whose foundress, Mother Catherine Aurelie, repeatedly proposed to her daughters the indispensable condition of union with Jesus: "Like Jesus, through Jesus, in Jesus, we must pray . . . (*Sitio*, p. 4).

The Sister Adorer's vocation is one of union with Jesus in the shedding of His Precious Blood. The soul, seeing herself loved by God to the shedding of His Blood, longs to rise to the level of her Lover's Gift of Self. Like the Sacred Object of its love, the soul would reserve nothing of its being or faculties. Indeed, a deepening faith has resolved the complexities of former needs into one great desire: The glory of the Blood! Therefore the Adorer lovingly tends to the recollection of the circumstances surrounding the shedding of the Precious Blood.

Their day begins with the midnight hour of reparation. The undertone of sacrifice necessarily runs through the whole composition of the vocation whose central theme is adoration of the Precious Blood. As the order of the day calls from meditation to Mass, to work, to divine office, back to work, then again to community prayer, the great unifying force at work in the souls of the Sisters is the God-given spirit of their vocation: Glory to the Blood!

Daily perpetual adoration of the Precious Blood is maintained in the large monasteries of the Institute. The Sisters replace one another at the hour all through the day. This uninterrupted homage to the Precious Blood is an offering of love for the inestimable benefit of redemption. But the work of adoration is by no means confined to the precious moments spent in the sacramental presence of Our Lord: the incense of praise and thanksgiving must ever rise mystically from the hearts of those who have been chosen to render to the Sacred Price of salvation some little human return of that Divine Love wherewith it was shed. This Institute is not yet one hundred years old, but it seems to have been given providentially to this

materialistic age that a special glory might be paid to the Divine Price of eternal happiness. Dissolving the barriers of time and space, the Sisters spread out in spirit over the world in search of souls who need the Precious Blood. They are inspired by the impetuosity of the Blood which is so eloquent in Our Saviour's words: "I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized . . . !" Their plan of life is traced out in Blood-red letters: They will pursue the conquest of souls by the same strategy: the irresistible power of love and sacrifice and suffering. This universal crusade is fruitful when undertaken by souls who have found heaven in their own inmost depths. In the words of their foundress, Mother Catherine Aurelie, "If they be true contemplatives, God will give divine wings to their souls that they may fly, like angels, wheresoever the interests of their Beloved call them" (*Sitio*, p. 6).

You may be sure that the prospect of these days devoted to the study of the Precious Blood has been a great source of joy to the Sisters ever since they learned of this project. The rule of cloister prevents their personal attendance. But in the true spirit of their vocation, they feel themselves commissioned to support the entire undertaking and all those who have been engaged in it with the penetrating power of their prayers and sacrifices. It is the fervent desire of the Sisters that you may experience more than ever before Our Divine Saviour's thirst for souls. May He inflame you all with the spirit of apostles in their zeal for the glory of His Blood!

*Father Linenberger:*

Thank you, Mrs. Morgan. At a preliminary meeting held last evening members of this panel agreed that each one was to read a prepared paper, and questions were to be invited from the floor after the papers were finished. The reason for this was given that it is likely that a second or a third paper might handle the situation that was brought forth in the first. For in this fashion we might be able to save some time.

The second paper has been prepared by Sister Mary Angelita of the Motherhouse of the Precious Blood Institute, Ruma, Illinois, and it is entitled, "The Ideals of the Religious Communities as Expressed in the Purposes and in the Aims of the Constitutions." I present to you Sister Mary Angelita.

*Sister Angelita:*

Reverend Father, dear Sisters in the Precious Blood. Now that we have heard something of the ideals of the contemplative life of Sisters dedicated to the Precious Blood, we turn to the active sisterhoods, of which all of us here present, I think, are members.

The Church, as you all know very well, when she approves of the title of a religious community, naturally expresses her desire also to approve of the ideal that is expressed in that title. And it's understood that such an ideal will appear in the constitutions. In all our congregations dedicated to the Precious Blood we expect the ideal of the Precious Blood to be present. Now in preparation for this paper I asked the committee, "Should I try to get copies of all the other Sisters' constitutions and make a sort of analytical study?" And the committee replied, "No, follow your own as typical, and probably the others will be more or less along the same line." So that's what I've done, Sisters.

In our constitutions, so far as the form is concerned, we have a special chapter dealing with the devotion to the Precious Blood, and then throughout the constitutions there are various other references to devotions and other references particularly to the mystery of the redemption as the motivating force of our devotion to the Precious Blood.

But if we search for the fundamental characteristic of this devotion to the Precious Blood in our constitutions — and I think it would be true of the others — we find it readily; and we find that it represents something so profound and so vast and so fundamentally important in the Christian life that in it are contained and given meaning and integrated the whole of the constitutions.

In number 166 of our constitutions we read this statement: "This devotion must consist, primarily, in an ardent and generous love of the Divine Blood of Jesus Christ which was shed amidst a thousand torments." (It is the only point, I think, in our very matter-of-fact rule which is just a little bit lyrical.) So *love* then, an ardent and a generous love, is the fundamental ideal and aim of our devotion to the Precious Blood.

The idea of generosity in that love certainly makes us think of the many times that that notion has been repeated. Particularly in the magnificent talk on St. Gaspar this morning, the notion of the

Precious Blood was connected with the totality of our dedication to God and the totality of our love.

It is not difficult to know why love should have the primacy in our special devotion; certainly the learned papers we have been listening to these days and our own ponderings on our suffering Savior and on the mystery of the redemption give us the answer. St. John wrote it out for us in the Apocalypse when he wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: "He has proved his love for us," he said, "by washing us clean from our sins in his own blood, and made us a royal race of priests, to serve God, his Father" (Ap 1, 5-6; Knox translation). Christ proved His love by pouring out His Precious Blood for our salvation, and the only fitting response, as we have heard repeatedly during these days, to such love is love, a love which is ardent and generous as was His love for us, the kind of love that would make us resist, as the author of the Hebrews suggests, even "unto blood" (Heb 12,4).

How is this fundamental ideal of *love* carried out in the constitutions? Well, we know from our experimental knowledge of what human love is that love tends to manifest itself in words and, more important still, in deeds. And I think in that concept we can integrate the whole ideal and all the aims of the constitutions of Sisters dedicated to the most Precious Blood. "Love in words" — here we have the *worship* of the Divine Blood, sketched for us in the constitutions. And here I might make a reference to what Father Lubeley said in his paper yesterday morning when he defined the concept of love as found in the New Testament rather than in Aristotle. It is the reverent love of gratitude — is that it Father? This is the idea that I have in mind when saying worship, the virtue of religion, is an expression of love. Love indeed includes all our efforts to make the Precious Blood of our Lord efficacious; first of all in our own souls, and there we have all our personal striving for sanctity; and in the souls of others, and there we have the works of our apostolate. Let's see how this works out in our constitutions.

The *worship* of the Precious Blood is outlined for us, in my Congregation, in chapter xi, although specific prayers and practices are mentioned elsewhere.

Number 166 tells us that the devotion is to be carried out by "a continual remembrance of the intense sufferings endured by Christ in the effusion of His Blood." This points to the worship, if

we can use that term, the worship of the *mind*, through meditation and recollection. There are various prescribed devotions, such as the stations, and on occasion the Precious Blood chaplet, the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary, special observance during the month of July, solemn celebration of the feast of the Precious Blood — all these are intended as an aid toward the “continual remembrance” of our Savior’s sufferings, and make it penetrate and permeate the day of a Sister of the Precious Blood. The habit we wear — and I think that is true of all the habits that the Precious Blood Sisters wear — in some way also is a constant reminder of that love of our Lord in shedding His Precious Blood for us.

The worship of the mind naturally would lead to a worship of the *will* in true acts of latria. And that same number of our constitutions that I quoted before follows this line of development. It says, “This remembrance must excite in the hearts of the Sisters sentiments of adoration, praise, benediction.” All three of those words point to the highest possible kind of prayer, adoration, which is directed toward the Person of our Lord, who has redeemed us with His Blood. Certainly assistance at Holy Mass, the supreme act of worship of God and the greatest act of devotion to the Precious Blood, is prescribed daily for our Sisters (No. 176), as I’m sure it is for all the others. And the rule says we are to assist “with the greatest possible devotion” (No. 176). And then in our congregation, second only to Holy Mass, we have as our characteristic observance” (No. 178) a special daily “hour of adoration of the Most Precious Blood” that is to be “held in common” (No. 178).

Besides adoration, our constitutions prescribe gratitude toward the Precious Blood. The fittingness of the prayer of thanksgiving in our worship of the Divine Blood is so obvious that it needs no comment. Very prominent in the prescriptions on devotion to the Divine Blood is the note of atonement and reparation. The same point of rule speaks of sentiments of “compassion and the most intense sorrow for the sins that caused” (No. 166) our Savior’s sufferings. And another number (No. 168) directs us to “offer the Precious Blood in reparation for offense against the Divine Honor, in atonement to God’s justice, and in supplication for grace and divine forgiveness for the world.”

And finally, the prayer of petition finds its rightful place in our worship of the Divine Blood — our love in words. Another number

(No. 167) of our constitution reads thus: "The Sisters should have an unlimited confidence in the Divine Blood, having recourse to it in all their needs, adversities, and temptations, imploring God to grant through its infinite efficacy all the graces necessary for themselves and others." And of course, the papers that we have listened to during these days certainly give us a deeper understanding of the reason that underlies such a statement in the constitutions, why we should have the unlimited confidence when we see the tremendous importance of the Precious Blood in the whole scheme of God's dealings with man and man's with God.

And so then that's just a very, very brief summary of how the love of the Divine Blood expresses itself in these prescriptions for worship of the Divine Blood.

Now we turn to love in deeds. We know of course that it would be very foolish of me to attempt at all to analyze how the constitutions set forth the ideal of striving for personal holiness as a means of glorifying the Precious Blood within each Sister's own soul. All congregations have that, of course, as their primary end. And almost all have the same fundamental means — as far as the religious life is concerned — the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and likewise the two great sacraments of daily life which we can certainly call the sacraments of the Precious Blood. The whole of this phase of devotion to the Precious Blood, that is our personal striving to cooperate with the graces that were earned for us by our Lord through the shedding of His Precious Blood, is best summarized, I think, in our constitutions in the sixth number, which says. "The spirit that the Sisters . . . must cultivate is that of striving unceasingly and with all their strength for a perfect imitation of Jesus Christ and, in a special manner, endeavoring to honor and glorify His Most Precious Blood." No Precious Blood Sister can doubt that the way of honoring the Divine Blood that most pleases our Lord is precisely her own personal striving to be faithful to those graces merited for her through that Precious Blood, and particularly being always ready for whatever sacrifices such fidelity entails. For if there is any single quality that should be characteristic of the spirituality of the love of a Precious Blood Sister, it certainly is — should be — a generous willingness to offer sacrifice. "She must not," in the words of Pius XII in *Mediator Dei*, addressed to the whole world but certainly very particularly to ourselves, "She

must not be unwilling to follow in the bloodstained footsteps of our King" (*Mystici Corporis*, No. 122).

Beyond this, every Sister who truly loves our suffering Savior will be desirous of doing all in her power to make efficacious in as many souls as possible the merits of the redeeming Blood of our Lord. And that ideal is expressed for us in our constitutions. I'm sure that other Sisters' constitutions have this, probably also in the very first number, as does ours which says: "The special end is co-operation in the great work of the redemption by exercising the greatest possible zeal for the salvation and sanctification of others . . ." (No. 1). The Sisters' co-operation in bringing the benefits of redemption to their contemporaries lies, I think, in the work of disposing souls for grace. (The direct imparting of grace, of course, through the sacramental system is the ministry of the priesthood.) As Father Roman Schwieterman was speaking this afternoon of the Sisters preparing the hosts, it occurred to me that there we have a beautiful metaphor of what our work can be insofar as the mystery of redemption (the subjective redemption) is concerned. The Sisters in very many places bake the hosts and make other preparations for the holy sacrifice, helping the priest who consecrates and brings our Lord to the altar. So I think that's an image of what we are doing when we are engaged in our apostolic works. The imparting of the sacraments, the great channels of the Precious Blood, is the work of the priest, but we are to prepare the materials to a certain extent at least.

And this work of disposing souls for grace in the active apostolate lies in two directions. We help first by our example. And secondly by our works, which condition souls for receiving and being faithful to grace. By the simple showing forth of the charity of Christ in the world that we live in, we exercise the apostolate of good example. It is an apostolate for us because in our very work as active religious we do appear before others, and in that very appearance before others, carrying out the work of our Lord, I think we have a distinct apostolate. And certainly the Holy Father in his address in 1950 to the World Congress of Religious underscored that particular phase of our work as active religious. The constitutions again give us a particular point on that, but there's no point in quoting it.

Among the apostolic works of our Community, the one in which

the greatest number are engaged is that of education: both in the schools and in the catechetical apostolate. As you know very well, Sisters, through the daily contacts with children and youth, from kindergarten through college, the Sisters are able to form minds and hearts, and in that way attune them to God's grace. I can't ever forget something that I heard Father Aloysius Heeg, the Jesuit catechist, of whom perhaps most of you have heard, say at one time: "The Sisters cannot absolve children from their sins; that is the work of the priest. But it is their opportunity to save them from ever committing sin."

Care of the sick represents another very important phase of the active apostolate of our Congregation. It is a work in which, in a very special way, the Sisters show forth toward suffering men today the charity of our divine Redeemer. The contacts which hospital Sisters have with patients is often the means God chooses to bring about repentance of sinners and conversion of those who are outside the Mystical Body. Our constitutions give the following directive to those engaged in the care of the sick which bears directly on this point: "Whilst caring for the physical infirmities of their patients, they shall also fulfill with a holy zeal their most noble mission of curing the ills of the soul, especially of the souls of those who have become indifferent or embittered towards religion. A kind word spoken at an opportune moment, a good book, above all a prayer and the spirit of sacrifice and self-denial of a Sister have great influence upon souls" (No. 533).

I think it would serve little purpose to describe the other works in which our Congregation is engaged, and I think perhaps the other Sisters also are engaged in these same works. I shall merely mention them; care of orphans, of homes for the protection of working girls, of homes for the aged. We direct pious associations and clubs, arrange retreats, do domestic work in our own houses and in seminaries and ecclesiastical colleges. And lastly, perhaps most important of all is the work of the foreign missions, which is so obviously a means of co-operating in the great work of redemption. Our own Congregation has a very flourishing mission in the Amazon Valley conducted by our Sisters of the Province of Rome. Our own province's China missions are temporarily — I hope it's temporarily — suspended by the Communists over there.

In carrying out the various apostolic works the underlying spirit

of the Sisters, according to the constitutions (ours), is to be that which animated our Blessed Savior in His work of redeeming the world through the shedding of His Precious Blood. Point 500 says: "The Adorers of the Most Precious Blood shall engage in all works proper to the Institute and assigned them by obedience, with that spirit of sacrifice in which Jesus Christ performed the great work of redemption."

Certainly that phrase, "spirit of sacrifice," synthesizes the ideals that inspire every Precious Blood Sister in her apostolic work, no matter what her congregation. The "continual remembrance" of the sufferings of Our Lord in shedding His Divine Blood, which inspires her to respond to His infinite love by manifesting her own love in *worship* of the adorable Price of our Redemption, inspires her also to dedicate all her womanly capacities ennobled by virginal consecration, to the great work of making the Divine Blood effective for her own contemporaries. She knows that the effectiveness of this work of co-operating in the continuing redeeming of individual souls will be largely conditioned by the "spirit of sacrifice" and love that characterizes her personal striving to make fruitful in her own life the merits of the Precious Blood of our Lord.

The aim of each Congregation and of each individual Sister of the Precious Blood, if we can put it this way, should be a loving reversal of the curse that the Jews called down upon themselves. It should be a prayer for blessing for ourselves and those whom God has entrusted in some way to our care to save: "His Blood be upon us and our children."

*Father Linenberger:*

Thank you, Sister Mary Angelita.

There are, as we have learned, fourteen communities of Sisters of the Precious Blood. We may perhaps wonder why so many, since the ideals of all are practically the same. From the panel that we have prepared for you, you will notice the different phases of the active apostolate are featured in the respective religious communities of the Precious Blood. When we go to O'Fallon, Missouri, we will notice that emphasis is placed upon the prayer life, similarly as it is done by the Benedictines in the liturgical life among the men. I call upon Sister Mary Pierre, who is presently a high school teacher

at Assumption High in O'Fallon, Missouri, to speak on the application of the ideals of the communities of the Precious Blood in the prayer life. Sister Mary Pierre.

*Sister Mary Pierre:*

Reverend Father and Sisters in the Precious Blood. It goes without saying that a community best expresses its ideals in its prayer life and from that prayer life draws the strength to achieve its common purpose. The common purpose of the Sisters of the Adoration of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, Missouri, as stated in their constitutions is "the honor of God, the glory of the Most Precious Blood, the sanctification of each member, and the salvation of souls."

Since 1933 the Community has been privileged to recite daily in common "at least the Day Hours of the Roman Breviary." The divine office is an entering most intimately into the mystery of Christ in the official praise of the Church. The psalms are the songs of Christ, the voice of the Mystical Body, and hence they are also the source and expression of love for Christ and of growth in Him. As Pope Pius XII said in *Mediator Dei*: "By assuming a human nature, the Divine Word introduced into this exile a hymn which is sung in heaven for all eternity. He unites to Himself the whole human race and with it sings this hymn of praise to God."

With that brief introduction, permit me to lead you through one day — say a ferial Friday — with a Sister of the Most Precious Blood in order to see how she shares in this hymn of praise to God.

As she hears the sound of the bell in the morning she tries to rekindle the eager love with which she answered the "Venite Filiae" of the Bishop on the morning of her profession. Her first action is the Godward movement of heart and voice in the ejaculation "Glory be to the Precious Blood of Jesus."

Having gathered with her Sisters about the altar, she begins in union with the entire Church the morning prayer of praise — lauds. Immediately she is confronted with the awe-inspiring holiness of God, before whom three times in Psalm 98 she is called upon to prostrate herself. How much more intimately God is present to her than He was to the Jews of old as He rested upon the golden Cherubim on the Ark of the Covenant. Contrasting her own sinfulness with the justice

that God loves, she sees the need of the redemptive power of the Most Precious Blood as she prays Psalm 142. In it she says, "My soul thirsts for thee like parched land." Earnestly she pleads that God's mercy may bring her out of the distress caused by her sins. It is always with full confidence that she prays — a confidence that is increased in Psalm 84. The joy of the exiled Jews returning from Babylon had quickly been turned to deep dejection when they saw that it would be utterly impossible ever to rebuild the former glory of their kingdom. Into that depth of helplessness God sent a Messianic prophecy. How expressive this psalm is of the many times that her helplessness has also been the occasion of salvation for her because it brought her closer to God in prayer and God closer to her in answer. Truly God is a hidden God; His designs are not always discernible. In the Canticle of Isaiah the Sister is assured that just as a remnant of the Jewish people was saved in order that they might bring the Messiah into the world, so she too is daily saved in order to bring Christ into the world. Her mission is to radiate Christ! No wonder, then, that she breaks forth in Psalm 147 into a hymn of praise to God who has been gracious to Jerusalem, that is, to the Church and to her own soul. How appropriate, then, is the exhortation of the chapter and the sentiment of the hymn to cast off the works of darkness and to put on ever more the armor of light.

The climax of lauds is reached in the *Benedictus*, in which the Sister thanks God for His daily visitation of the Orient from on high. Each day He visits her in Holy Mass, in her prayers, works, joys and sorrows, in her co-Sisters, in her students. By each visitation He continues the work of redemption in her and in turn makes her more effective as a herald of salvation to everyone she meets.

A period of mental prayer follows lauds; the Sister spends it in loving colloquy with her Spouse devoutly pondering some subject in "keeping with the feastday or the liturgical season." The concluding affections of the assembled community are gathered up and presented to God in the beautiful words of the *Christum Dei*.

Naturally the zenith of the Sister's devotion is reached in the unbloody renewal of the sacrifice of Christ at which, as the constitutions direct, "she daily assists with greatest reverence and devotion as is becoming a Sister of the Most Precious Blood." Here she gives the greatest honor to God, and the greatest glory to the "price of our redemption" (Collect, July 1). In the Mass, too, she makes as cer-

tain as possible the salvation of her own soul in “the enjoyment of the everlasting fruits of the Most Precious Blood in heaven” (Post-communion, July 1). Holy Mass is also the surest means of saving souls, for the “sprinkling of Christ’s blood pleadeth better than that of Abel” (Secret, July 1).

The holy sacrifice, then, is the grand focal point of her life, the radiant center around which every natural and spiritual activity of her life revolves. Here she truly enters with Christ into the Holies, not indeed with the blood of oxen or of heifers but with His own Blood to share daily more deeply in the eternal redemption that He has won.

The fulness of this eternal redemption is not given all at once, but in God’s providence it depends in no small part on one’s good deeds (*Mystici Corporis*, No. 46), and hence she asks God in the hour of prime to “bless all the deeds this day shall see” (hymn of prime). In Psalm 21 she sees an almost play by play account of the Passion of her Savior. As His spouse she lovingly and gratefully compassionates Him. As His member she is aware that He makes up in her those things that are still wanting to the marvelous fruits won by the Most Precious Blood.

In mid-morning at the hour of the Holy Spirit, she pauses to pray tierce. In it she begs her Shepherd and Leader, in Psalm 79, to protect His chosen vine, the Church. She too is a chosen vine whom the Lord has first transplanted from the Egypt of sin to the promised land of grace in baptism, and later he again transplanted her from the world to the convent. Now she prays that the spirit of the world may not ravage the supernatural life within her and, in Psalm 81, that the wicked judges may not again put Christ to death in her soul.

At the sixth hour, the hour of sext, when Christ ascended the altar of His Cross to complete His great sacrifice, she prays Psalm 83, which expresses the intense longing of the faithful soul for the temple and its sacrifice. Psalm 86 is a Messianic vision of all peoples coming into Jerusalem as to their mother and fatherland. The New Jerusalem, the Church, is the spiritual mother of even the worst of her foes. Her power has ever been the power of conversion. Thus she has conquered the world. The Sister is eager to share in this spreading of Christ’s kingdom. Hence after sext she prays for the needs of the universal Church in those wonderful Seven Offerings of the Most Precious Blood.

At the ninth hour, about three o'clock, in the office of none she prays, "I will sing the mercies of the Lord forever." In Psalm 88 she thus expresses her gratitude for the redemption which has resulted from what was apparently the greatest failure of history. In the little chapter of none she is again reminded of the fact that she "was not redeemed with corruptible things such as gold and silver, but with the Precious Blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted."

In the life of a Christian, individual prayer cannot be missing. Already in the morning mental prayer the Sister has heeded Christ's admonition, "Pray to the Father in secret." Again very often during the day she raises her mind and heart to God in brief, fervent aspirations, in snatches of phrases from the psalms, the seasonal responses, or the favorite Community aspiration, the "Eternal Father." She loves to visit the church or chapel to pray in the Eucharistic presence of Him who is in the tabernacle as "a memorial of His sacrifice and passion" (Pope's allocution at Assisi). The rosary is a favorite devotion. By reason of its simplicity and the pure evangelical atmosphere of its mysteries it is an easy way of extending the spirit of liturgy throughout the day. In the Way of the Cross she sees her Savior with "dyed garments from Bosra walking in the greatness of His strength," as He treads the winepress alone.

When the shadows have lengthened and the sun is about to dip behind the western horizon, she gathers again with her co-Sisters about the altar to offer the incense of the evening sacrifice of praise — vespers. This time it is chanted in its entirety, for "to sing befits the lover," says St. Augustine. And Pius X, in his *Motu Proprio*, says, "The chant both adds to the decorum of the sacred function . . . and also provides a means by which [the Sisters] may be moved to devotion and be better disposed to receive in themselves the fruits of grace proper to it." She has lived this day with God; now, in Psalm 138, she prays not indeed in the abstract terms of Thomistic philosophy, but in expressions that bespeak the most intimate personal relationships. "Thou knowest me, thou knowest when I sit down and when I stand up." "Thou didst create my inner being." But there are enemies whom she hates. She begs God not to let her walk in the crooked way, but that He lead her in the way of old — that is, in the way of grace before the fall. This is Friday evening. Appropriately then in the last three of the five vesper psalms she once

again enters with the Savior into His struggle with the powers of darkness. In Psalm 139 she prays that those who have "poison under their tongues" may be destroyed as were the false accusers of Christ. As the Savior, taunted by the jeers, "Come down from the cross," realized in the words of Psalm 140 that it is better to be chastised by the just than to be flattered by evildoers, so she too, lest worldliness overcome her, prays, "May the wicked fall into their own nets, while I pass by in safety." She knows that her prayer is effective because the inspired word of God is God's own response in her. Hence it is with the most penetrating awareness of union with Christ that she prays in Psalm 141, "The Lord is my portion in the land of the living," and she experiences a new foretaste of the resurrection.

Full of gratitude to the "Father of mercies and the God of all comfort," she chants the vesper hymn to the Lord who marvelously created man on the sixth day and on the sixth day also mercifully redeemed him. The Cantic of Our Lady, the Magnificat, adequately expresses the Sister's praise and thanksgiving for the eternal redemption which in His mercy God has granted from "generation to generation to them that fear Him."

As she comes to the end of the day and is about to retire, compline, a more personal night prayer, is in order. There is sorrow for the day's transgressions and deep, deep gratitude for the graces that have been like a living fountain springing up unto eternal life. There are expressed again in Psalms 76 and 85 those two elements of human life, namely, one's sense of congenital helplessness, one's sense of sin, and also salvation from God. "Now thou canst dismiss thy servant, O Lord, in peace, for my eyes have seen thy salvation." As the author of the epistle to the Hebrews says in 9,22, there is no salvation without the shedding of Blood. So she commends her spirit into the hands of the Lord, asking Him to send His angels to guard her in peace. With the final salute to Mary, the official prayer is completed. In her heart of hearts once more she adds, "Eternal Father, I offer Thee the most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ in satisfaction for my sins and for the wants of Holy Church."

*Father Linenberger:*

Thank you, Sister Mary Pierre. We will now have a few minutes intermission.

*Father Linenberger:*

The next paper will emphasize the apostolic works as they are found in the various sisterhoods dedicated to the devotion to the Precious Blood. This paper has been prepared and will be delivered by Sister Mary Irenaea, who is a high school teacher at Regina High, Cincinnati, Ohio. Sister Irenaea.

*Sister Irenaea:*

Father Linenberger, the Reverend Fathers present, and my fellow Sisters in Christ. In this paper we shall try to point out how the ideals of our community are expressed in apostolic works. And according to the outline that was submitted to me, specifically through organizations established and methods employed to promote these ideals. After being assigned this paper, we felt the need of enlisting the aid of other Sisters of the community in determining just how active we have been in promoting devotion to the Precious Blood through lay organizations. Accordingly, we rather hurriedly submitted to them a questionnaire. My talk will be based on the interpretation of the results of this survey.

The special object of our community is the adoration of the Precious Blood in the most holy Sacrament of the altar. We are, therefore, dedicated to the ideal of making the Precious Blood fruitful in souls. How have we tried to realize these objectives? Through organizations engaged in apostolic works. The organizations that come to mind are the Archconfraternity and the Pious Union. Father Rohling explained the difference between these associations this morning, and he also gave us the history and present status of the Pious Union. I will not enlarge on what he said, but I feel obligated to tell you that from the results of the questionnaire that we sent out — and we sent out about 200 of them — only two of those that were returned indicated that students had been encouraged to join the Pious Union. I'm afraid all of us said *mea culpa* and very shamefully hung our heads. For we have to admit that we haven't done very much in the line of encouraging joining the Pious Union. However, most of the Sisters indicated that although they did not specifically advocate joining the Pious Union, they did endeavor to promote the idea of dedication to the Precious Blood through mission activity. Mission units are established and are

active in most of our schools, both elementary and secondary. The students in these units study, pray and sacrifice for the missions, and do this with the idea of making the Precious Blood fruitful in souls. One Sister explained that she had formed a club of junior apostles of the Precious Blood in her classroom. The children wrote letters asking to join the club, and by their little sacrifices and mortifications they helped in the salvation of souls for the glory of the Precious Blood. Some of the projects of this junior apostle group, I believe, are on display in the reading room of the library. At each meeting, Sister used some time to explain the mysteries of the chaplet. Now there is no doubt that the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade and the junior apostle clubs are excellent in themselves. But wouldn't it be wonderful to have these young missionaries and apostles also enrolled in the Pious Union, thereby enabling them to gain all the spiritual privileges which could be applied to themselves as well as to other souls? As we know, the members of the Pious Union impose no formal obligation on themselves. But surely their love of the Precious Blood would induce them to cultivate the virtue most fitted to its honor; mortification, the acceptance of all crosses in atonement for sin and in reparation for the ingratitude shown by sinners. This virtue which specially honors the Precious Blood is one needed in your missionary work.

As to the methods used in promoting the devotion to the Precious Blood, for teachers there is no question at all that the holy sacrifice of the Mass offers *the* opportunity. From primary grades on, the children are taught that the Mass is the renewal of Calvary, not an actual Bloodshedding, since the living Christ can die no more, but a mystic shedding of the Precious Blood. How easy to teach the children to offer to God each day their little sacrifices by immersing them in the chalice of the Precious Blood and presenting them to the Father in union with the sacrifices of Christ. And surely I think that the reverend Father who spoke this afternoon, Father Schwieterman, gave us all the inspiration to go back and teach our children *why* they go to Mass. In teaching the missal, how perfect an opportunity to point out the many references to the Precious Blood in the common and in the propers. From the beginning of the Mass, at the foot of the altar, until the close, the faithful are included in the offering of the Body and

Blood of Christ, as is shown by the plural form of the prayers. At the offertory, when water is mingled with wine, the people are united to Christ. It is in the immolation of ourselves and our talents and our ambitions, our affections, with Christ's Precious Blood that we fill up those things that are wanting in the sufferings of Christ in our flesh for His Body which is the Church. The epistles and gospels, which most teachers prepare with their students for Sunday Mass, are a rich source of references to the Precious Blood.

Do we stress the part that the Precious Blood plays in the conferring of grace when we teach the sacraments? The Precious Blood, which by nature contains and gives life to Christ's Body, through the hypostatic union also signifies and confers grace on souls. The Precious Blood is the living sacrament of divine grace for all of us. Grace is given by God only through the merits of Jesus Christ. And these merits of Christ are due to the shedding of His Precious Blood. What an opportunity to foster devotion to the Precious Blood is given in teaching the doctrine of the Mystical Body, both in religion classes and in high school sociology classes. We are the Blood-brothers of Christ. Theologians sometimes speculate whether there would have been an incarnation without sin. Some hold that without sin the incarnation would have led directly to our incorporation into Christ. But after the fall of Adam, the shedding of Christ's Blood was necessary. Only the Blood of a God could satisfy divine justice. And only the Blood of a man could satisfy for men.

The Blessed Eucharist is the heart of the Mystical Body. In its reception, the Head and the members become one vital organism. Here is our incorporation into Christ and our con-corporation with each other. What wouldn't an understanding of this doctrine of the Mystical Body do for our own country today in its controversies over such things as segregation?

All the Sisters indicated that Lent is a fruitful time to foster devotion to the Precious Blood. Meditation on the Passion, the making of the Stations of the Cross, all fill the minds of the children with the immensity of the love of Christ and a desire to make up to Him for all that He has done for us. During Lent too, children are encouraged to make little sacrifices in gratitude to Christ for shedding His Blood for us. This is an opportune time to inculcate some little practices such as the one advocated by Father Faber of begging our Lady to offer to God the Precious Blood for the

grace to hinder one mortal sin somewhere during the day or night. From the results of this survey, we find that even though we did not encourage — or we have not, I should say, encouraged joining the association, it is evident that we do foster devotion to the Precious Blood. But is this merely the fruit of an implicit intention? Or are we really on fire to use consciously every opportunity that presents itself? Could we not, in our Catholic action groups, sodality groups and mission units really endeavor to form zealous apostles of the Precious Blood? Do we help youth understand the need of a deep spiritual life of grace won through the Blood of Christ in order to make their Catholicism a living force that will be effective in winning others to the faith? Could not those of us attending the Study Week be instrumental in pointing our congregations towards the adoption of a regular practice of devotion to the Precious Blood obligatory in all of our schools? And on this I hope we will find many suggestions from the floor.

But the work of the apostolate, to be fruitful, must be an outgrowth of a deep spiritual interior life. We as Sisters of the Precious Blood must make our own devotion to that Blood the vital element of our interior life. Another outcome, therefore, of the Study Week, should certainly be the forming of a personal, intense resolution, renewed each morning, to use every opportunity possible to spread devotion to the Precious Blood. We will do this only if that devotion is the very life-blood of our religious and spiritual life.

*Father Linenberger:*

Thank you, Sister Irenaea. Sister Mary Loretta of the Adorers of the Precious Blood, presently a teacher at Sacred Heart Academy in Wichita, is to deliver the next paper, which will outline for us the participation in the activities that are centered about the devotion to the Precious Blood, classroom activities, visual materials, etc. Sister Mary Loretta.

*Sister Mary Loretta:*

Reverend Fathers and fellow Sisters. I am happy to learn from the other Sisters on the panel that most of you who have come here to the institute are teachers, because this little paper is going

to be, as Father Cera, I believe, mentioned at the beginning, very much down to earth. We'll just go on with that now and consider with you teachers "Participation in Classroom Activities Centered about Devotion to the Precious Blood."

The aim of every Sister of the Precious Blood is to stimulate this devotion in the hearts of those with whom she comes in contact. Now the classroom teacher who is imbued with a love of the Precious Blood has countless opportunities for implanting this ideal in the hearts of her students.

Since devotion is an ideal, it is something that has to be learned; it cannot be taught. That is, it cannot be taught by any method of direct instruction. No teacher, regardless of how enthusiastic she may be, can offer a course in devotion.

What the teacher can do through direct instruction is to teach the doctrine so that an understanding of the part it plays in the lives of the students will become their possession. And the devotion to this price of our redemption will then be a direct result.

Now just as religion serves as the great integrating force in our whole curriculum in our Catholic schools, so too can we make the Precious Blood the core around which we build our religious instructions. In his book on the Precious Blood, Father Faber states that "every doctrine in theology is a call to the Precious Blood." He says that "every sermon that is preached is an exhortation to the use of it," that "every ceremony in the Church speaks of it," that "every sacrament is a communication of it." Saint, sinner, and common Christian, all in their own ways, need the Precious Blood every moment of their lives. Now, if we as teachers can lead our pupils to understand this relationship and the role that the Precious Blood plays in their lives, devotion to this price of our redemption will be a direct result.

Devotion belongs to the classification of appreciation, and like all appreciation subjects, the participation technique must be used rather than the problem technique. Now this participation technique can employ a multiple-sense appeal. Truth is taught through the senses, not, of course, that it will remain there, but because man is both spiritual and material, and the senses are the ordinary channels of the spiritual forces. Father Cunningham, in his Catholic philosophy of education entitled *Pivotal Problems*, states that knowledge

of necessity will arouse students to activity and intrigue them to continue active until learning outcomes have been achieved.

Our aim then, as Sisters of the Precious Blood, is to outline all these possibilities and enrich our curriculum with prayers, poems, activities and projects based on this devotion. Now to cite specific examples of activities is rather a precarious thing to do because those which work very well in one situation may prove to be absolutely valueless in another. However a few examples may stimulate thinking along these lines or suggest related projects that can be adapted according to the variables in the situation in which one is operating.

By means of a survey that we took among the teachers in our own Community, we found out that the chaplet, the Seven Offerings, the short Eternal Father, and the ejaculation beginning "We beseech Thee, O Lord," rank highest as the prayers most commonly used in the schools. Now in parishes where the Precious Blood Fathers are pastors, the children grow up hearing these prayers recited by the congregation. In other parishes, they have to be taught first in the classrooms. Now in order to be effective, the prayers, just like every other recitation, cannot be a mere repetition of something learned. All of us who are teachers find that many times a student can give you a perfect recital of words, but the conception corresponding to that recital can be totally wrong.

Now the survey that we took brought out many interesting examples of what teachers can do to wed the words to the meaning within the capacity of the learner. We have found that the Seven Offerings are used by many of the teachers for lenten study. Already during the pre-lenten season, they divide their students into seven committees. Each committee will choose one of the Seven Offerings to work on for a bulletin board display during the successive weeks of Lent. Then each Monday morning the little committees get up and give their own explanation of the prayer as they depicted it on the bulletin board. That proves to be interesting sometimes.

We all know that students interpret in the light of their own experiences. And it's always interesting on Monday morning, then, to find out how they interpret such phrases as "the extirpation of heresy," or "the ministers of the sanctuary," or "the prosperity of her visible head."

Now one seventh grade group illustrated the extirpation of

heresy by showing a chalice of the Precious Blood with streams of grace flowing down from it and brain-washing the words of heresy from the mind of the heretic. This might be modern, but I think it is thought-provoking.

Another group had nicely portrayed the cardinals and bishops and pastors of souls, and then became all-inclusive in their portrayal of the ministers of the sanctuary by showing two little servers in one picture and, mind you, two little nuns with dust mop and broom cleaning the sanctuary in the other. But even this, I believe, is good. If nothing else it will lead to further discussion on such things as the ascending hierarchy of values in the ministrations of the sanctuary.

Having the pupils illustrate prayers in this way not only brings out the meaning of the words for the students, but gives them an idea of the tremendous scope of the petitions contained in the "Eternal Father's."

Now another practice that had a high frequency of occurrence in the survey was that of designating the intention for which the Precious Blood would be offered for that particular day. And the most common way of doing this was to have a picture, fixed permanently in the corner of the blackboard, of a chalice being raised by the hands of a priest, and over this picture the words: "Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ for . . . ." And then each day, the students would take their turns writing in the intention for the day for which the Precious Blood would be offered. The intentions would include such diverse ideals as the conversion of sinners, peace, reparation for sins, personal sanctification, victory in a football game, success in an examination, and many others depending a great deal upon the level of students being taught. Now this device brings home to the students the fact that the offering of the Precious Blood is not something that merely took place 1900 years ago, for by offering the Precious Blood repeatedly during the day in this way they realize that they too can have a share in offering the Precious Blood in the holy sacrifices of the Mass throughout the world. And in this way they have at their disposal this Infinite Treasure to offer to the Eternal Father for their own particular intentions.

Now book marks with ejaculations and symbols of the Passion were made in many of the art classes. Mottoes and posters with

invocations from the litany were made and put on the display boards. Other art activities consist in murals and dioramas of the stations, the seven Bloodsheddings and the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary.

A number of upper grade teachers have found that the students enjoy writing short meditations to be read at the beginning of religion classes on Fridays or during Lent. Some collected these meditations in notebooks as a lenten project and had students make appropriate designs for borders on each page. Others added to the notebooks pictures, symbolisms, prayers, verses, themes, in fact, anything the students could formulate in their own language to show their understanding of the sufferings of Christ.

Older students also enjoy designing their own silhouettes of the Madonna of the Precious Blood or their own symbols of the Passion. One of the Sisters who is here at the Institute with us was kind enough to collect examples or samples of these various devices that I have mentioned or these art projects. And we will be happy to share the ideas with anyone who might be interested, after this panel.

As we surveyed the teachers to discover what had been done to stimulate devotion to the Precious Blood through programs, we found that the Chaplet has served as the basis for several. The general idea has been this: A movie screen is placed in the center of the stage and bordered with either palms or evergreen branches. On both sides of the screen stand students in choral robes. As pictures of the mysteries of the chaplet are flashed on the screen with an opaque projector, a narrator behind the screen reads the story of the mystery, the Bloodshedding of Christ or a meditation based upon it. Then the choir on one side, while he is reading, will softly hum the hymn "Glory Be To Jesus," and the choir on the opposite side repeats the words of the five Our Fathers. These two choirs then blend together to form a pleasing echo background for the words of the narrator. Then between the mysteries, the two choirs join in singing the single line from the hymn, "Praise, O Praise the Precious Blood."

Now on some of the smaller missions the Sisters were not fortunate enough to have an opaque projector, so a couple of them had to find a substitute — and I suppose some of you might be in the same predicament. All they did was hang up a sheet instead of a screen. And then behind the sheet they would pose students, accord-

ing to the mystery that they wanted to depict, and then from behind put a bright red spotlight on them. Then viewed from the audience it produced an effective silhouette of the mystery.

This type of activity can serve well as a Parent-Teacher program during Lent or for high school assemblies. It was suggested that if such a program be given for an adult group, the PTA or the like, that there should be available leaflets containing the mysteries for distribution afterwards. Because if the lighting, the speaking, and the singing are all effective, they will elicit an appeal for the chaplet.

Now this same type of program can be worked out for the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary during the month of October.

Many of these activities which I have so sketchily outlined in the time allotted are carried on outside the period designated for religion. But by using the Precious Blood as the core around which we build our religious instructions, the students get the understanding of the role the Precious Blood plays in their lives. Then by enriching the curriculum with various related activities and displaying its many-sided wonders, we hope, at least, that the children will form a devotion that will be a talisman for life.

The success of our efforts at present can be measured only in terms of the co-operation and the enthusiasm that we can observe in these various classes and activities. But if we lead our pupils to appreciate by participation, we feel that our work will be a success when tried in the after years.

We begin with the present — the offering of the Precious Blood in the holy sacrifice of the Mass as a daily experience in the lives of the pupils. And we go back to the past for an appreciation and background as Scripture reveals the stories of the sheddings of the Precious Blood, and then we return again to the present to make the best use of this mystery of faith in our daily lives. Thank you.

*Father Linenberger:*

Thank you, Sister Loretta. We have only a little time for the question part of our afternoon panel. In panel discussion we look for group participation. Our constitutions present the bold outlines, but we as members of the respective religious families may and can implement them through our own individual and group effort. Beyond what has already been said, the response to questions should

be very fruitful in creating interest and suggesting ways for this effort. First I shall ask Sister Pierre about the more personal or private prayers in honor of the Precious Blood in relation to the more basic and essential in the Mass itself.

*Sister Pierre:*

The purpose of the devotion surely is directed to the whole Christ in His great mystery of love in shedding the Precious Blood. In the Church's official presentation of the Precious Blood in the mystery of the Mass, the whole worship of the Church year, the divine office, one enters most intimately into that. But certainly the use of the chaplet or any of the other beautiful prayers is not to be cast aside, because they add very much to one's personal devotion and can most readily be connected with the adoration in the Mass and with the reception of Holy Communion. In a sense they do not have a separate existence, apart from this offering (and receiving) of the Precious Blood. These prayers are a part of the main stream of our whole worship of God through the Precious Blood.

*Father Linenberger:*

The next question refers to the threefold manifestation of love with which Sister Angelita's paper dealt. Is there any overlapping in these three?

*Sister Angelita:*

I should say that there is a necessary unity and interaction throughout. Our worship of the Divine Blood is also sanctifying, for the grace of God flows into our souls at prayer. And our striving for personal holiness is a means of helping other souls as well as our own. Offering the Precious Blood is certainly one of the means of helping to make the Divine Blood efficacious in other souls. And likewise the apostolic works by the very nature of the case, if they are performed in faith and charity and the other virtues that should go with them, are very, very sanctifying.

*Father Linenberger:*

The next question is concerned with the problem of making the Precious Blood the core or center of our religious instruction. How

shall we relate the precious Blood to the difficult doctrine of creation, or the doctrine on the attributes of God?

*(The answer was given by one of the panelists:)*

It is true that we can show the relation more easily when we speak of the commandments, the sacraments, the Mass. The doctrine of creation requires more study. I think Father Faber has expressed his teaching in a very helpful way regarding this very point, when he said that redemption was not an afterthought of God. When He created the world and looked down and said, "It's good," He looked at it in its entirety. In other words, everything was present to God. As Father Faber holds, He saw everything through the mist of the Precious Blood. He cites a very poetic example taken from our love of nature. If we view nature in the afternoon, let us say, it's beautiful. But when we look at the world against a crimson sunset, it's more beautiful.

He also speaks of redemption as re-creating us in the eyes of God. I think that when we instruct others on the attributes of God, we can show the thread of the Precious Blood. Through the Blood of redemption from sin we understand more than ever the loving mercy of God's forgiveness.

*Father Linenberger:*

There is a question directed to Father Lubeley regarding the statement that the devotion to the Precious Blood is not the whole Christian life.

*Father Lubeley:*

If the devotion is not the entire Christian life, it nevertheless gives a certain style to the Christian life. This leads to the important question: what particular characteristics might students who have come under our influence manifest in their lives?

In answer, let me begin by saying that I do not think this discussion could have taken a more happy turn than it has up to the present, for all the questions come down precisely to this point. The answer must start from a principle, enunciated for us very clearly in the *Mediator Dei* in the very first section, dealing with objective

and subjective piety. That whole problem of the relation between our need to conform to the totality of Christianity, to the entire Christian religion, and yet preserve a certain liberty, has been worked out for us most adequately, most perfectly and satisfactorily by the Holy Father. By way of a bibliographic note, the article *Devotion* in the *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* has worked out this same relationship very well. I don't know of any work that is so much concerned precisely with the tension of which I spoke yesterday, without being able to enlarge upon the point — as is this particular article. So much for the principle.

As to what we should expect from those who have come under our influence, I think it should be a special attraction for the devotion and for the mystery of redemption in its totality. There should be a desire to fill up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ, to pray for the conversion of sinners — but I think a special attraction for the mystery of redemption covers the case quite well. It would mean a wonderful devotion to the liturgy. I think it is part of the trial of our age to seek a balance. Our discussion can suggest particular things that we might do.

*Father Linenberger:*

The question is concerned with the devotion in relation to the divine office.

*Sister Pierre:*

The divine office as official prayer of the Church is intimately connected with the mystery of redemption. It is a most fruitful source of glory to God. It provides a very rich variety of prayers which reflect the needs of the human heart. Now the chief constituent part of the divine office is from the inspired Scriptures and points to Christ and our redemption. Similarly the mysteries of the Church year are essentially bound up with the central mystery of redemption and the Precious Blood.

*Father Linenberger:*

The next question is an inquiry into the Precious Blood Cord and its use.

*Sister Mary Ursula:*

We have a little cord of the Precious Blood, especially blessed for the use of the sick. It has a special little prayer. Though it is especially blessed for the sick, it could be used by anyone who wishes to wear it. We wear this red cord as a girdle and a cincture. (*One of the Sisters inquired: "Do you have reference to the red cord?"*)

*Father Linenberger:*

The *Roman Ritual* has a blessing for a cord, but we have never popularized its use in this country. I do not know why there has been so little interest, but perhaps the inquiry here may lead to greater interest as time goes on.

Since there seem to be no other questions from the floor, I should like to ask about the associations of alumnae which would assure continuance of interest in the devotion to the Precious Blood which was cultivated in school. Could anyone here answer this question?

*(In response to this question it was pointed out that an association of alumnae similar to that of the Federation of Alumnae of the Sisters of Notre Dame should be formed by the Sisters of the Precious Blood. As this federation is concerned with keeping alive a devotion to the Blessed Mother, the organization of the alumnae of the schools of the Sisters of the Precious Blood would seek to encourage a continuance to the devotion to the Precious Blood.)*

*Father Linenberger:*

There is a final question placed before Sister Angelita, which is rather personal. It is concerned with her experience on the *Andrea Doria*, and the tragedy of its sinking some time ago.

*Sister Angelita:*

Sister is asking a very personal question. She recalls an incident connected with my experience on that occasion. I do remember that after the crash had occurred and my cabin companion had reawakened me and alarmed me with the dreadful news of the danger, I dressed as fast as I could amid the screams of excitement and

terror. But as I was ready to dash out of the cabin, with the thought of death very real in my mind, it suddenly occurred to me: "The red sash, the symbol of the Precious Blood. If this is it, I want to die with that sash on." And it took some time to put it on.

*(The concluding words of Father Linenberger were omitted because of the lack of time, but they are placed here because they most aptly express the attitudes of all who attended the panel discussion.)*

*Father Linenberger:*

The scholarly papers on the theology of the Precious Blood have animated us with the desire to re-dedicate ourselves to the apostolate that dispenses God's love to His human family. The theme of that apostolate is expressed by St. Paul: "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not the sharing of the blood of Christ" (1 Cor 10, 16)? St. Gaspar, our Father, was filled with this spirit of the apostolate when he exclaimed: "For this am I a priest, to apply the merits of the Precious Blood."

All priests have the duty, from their very office as priests, to share the Blood of Christ with others. Ample opportunities are available as they daily stand at the blessed spot where heaven and earth meet, to tap the fount of mercy and apply its healing balm to all who seek it.

By our espousal to our own religious family of the Precious Blood, all of us likewise become dispensers of the merits of the Blood of the Lamb. But in the course of years the initial fervor of our consecration to the Blood of Christ may have dimmed, and we may have become weary of the yoke of Christ. The concentrated study of this week stirred us anew. We now are resolved to redouble our efforts to proclaim the glory of the Blood of our Redeemer. We will attempt to carry out the chief tasks of religious, who according to the *Sedes Sapientiae* of Pius XII should seek God, cling to Him, meditate on His mysteries, teach Him to others.

St. Thomas captured the truth of all this and expressed it succinctly in the phrase, *contemplata tradere*: that which you have hived up by laborious study and work is to be parcelled out to others. We

can never forget that the purpose of our consecrated existence is to lead others to heaven.

The more the fire of our devotion to the Precious Blood is fed with knowledge, the more will that devotion be active, intense and fruitful. The historical presentation of the shedding of the Precious Blood in the Gospels necessarily produces an intelligent and supernatural hatred for sin.

To you, Sisters, God has given the uncanny faculty, denied to us men, to direct and to promote simple projects that are so meaningful. As long as you remain within the framework of the well-delineated areas of sound teaching presented to you by the theologians, your talented patience will go far in engendering a thirst for the supernatural which can be satisfied only by drinking of the blood of the Lamb.

My closing thought is from St. Paul, who writes to the Christians recently converted from Judaism: "But now in Christ Jesus you, who were once afar off, have been brought near through the blood of Christ" (Eph 2, 13). We were afar off before this study; we now have been brought near. Our resolve: to bring others near to the heart of Christ through His Blood.

I shall now ask Bishop Hodges, who has been such an edifying spectator during these days to become an active participant of our program by bringing our panel to its conclusion.

*Bishop Hodges:*

I was asked to come for the close of this meeting and give the blessing, but I am happy to make a few remarks. Today the catechism is the subject of much discussion both as to material and method. One of the special points of concern is the presentation of the divine truths with life-giving force. The living Christ is the center and source, the very life of this instruction. The great doctrine of redemption by Blood in all its riches should impart this vitality. It should truly enrich the whole body of the Church's teaching. The divine Blood should be the source of supernatural life to you and to those whom you teach. It will be in every way life-giving, especially if you carry away with you from this Study Week the deep realization of the meaning of your mission as Sis-

ters of the Precious Blood. Your teaching and all your work should have a vigor, a spirit, a value, which it never had before.

I appreciate your company and your inspiration. I told the Fathers I am not of the fold, not a member of the societies of the Precious Blood, but I have been made to feel like one of you and altogether at home. If I made the criticism that the program demanded a great deal of work, I also learned that with some effort we could assimilate what was placed before us. Much that we gathered here will have to be pondered throughout the coming years, until there is another opportunity for spiritual refreshment, another Study Week. God bless you.

*Father Linenberger:*

Will you give us your blessing, Bishop Hodges?

*(Bishop Hodges gave his blessing to the assembled group, and the meeting was adjourned.)*

Moderator: Very Rev. Herbert Linenberger, C.P.P.S., J.C.D.

*SERMON AT PONTIFICAL MASS  
BISHOP MARLING CELEBRATING*

In all seriousness we might ask ourselves tonight, what more can be said, or what can be added to the fine effort of these three days devoted to the study of the Precious Blood? We have heard the encouraging paternal message of the Holy Father bearing his blessing for our task. We have enjoyed the enthusiastic patronage of a Prince of the Church, of the Local Ordinary of our Diocese of Lafayette, and of our own Bishop Marling. We have pondered the learned treatises of our theologians dealing with the profound and beautiful mystery of the Precious Blood and admired the fine exhibit of art, dedicated to the Blood of the Lamb of God, and likewise discussed the practical phases and uses of the devotion to the Blood. After all of this we ask what can be added, what can be suggested by way of conclusion to a task so well performed?

The Study Week has been a glorious success, and yet, would it not be a grave error to assume that the achievements of these days are perfect, complete and final? Rather they must be considered a beginning, an impressive and a challenging beginning, to be sure; one which makes us the more aware of the vastness and importance of the task that remains to be done.

In the first chapter of the *Imitation of Christ* we read: "Indeed it is not learning that makes a man holy and just, but a virtuous life makes him pleasing to God." This must not be interpreted as an unqualified censure of learning. Rather it suggests the highest purpose that learning can serve. It brings out the truth that learning is not an end in itself, but finds its true and only worthwhile service in leading the heart and the will to God. If it fails to do that, it is at the best useless; more often harmful, in that it leads man farther away from God.

The flame of inspiration and enthusiasm for the Precious Blood that has burned so brightly during this week, of itself will soon burn out. It must be diligently tended, nourished, directed to warm the heart and move the will, if it is to generate the fervor of charity which makes man pleasing to God.

In a mosaic studio in Vatican City I once had an opportunity to

observe, constructed upon the floor, a large image of Christ, intended for the apse of a church. The artist explained that he had worked for months, selecting, fitting, arranging one by one the pieces of colored marble, until the desired effect had been achieved. But his work was by no means complete. There remained the second and arduous task of transferring the thousands of pieces of marble from the studio floor to the wall of the Church and of fastening them firmly and permanently in exactly the same order in which they lay upon the floor. Only after this had been done would the image become an object of veneration, an effective means of exciting piety in the hearts of the faithful.

No matter how perfect technically a newly designed airplane may be, before it is of practical use it must be transferred from the drafting board to production — a long and costly process; it must be tried and tested. A similar task awaits each of us. The sublime truths expounded during this Study Week must be transplanted into the heart, become the sustenance of the spiritual life, if they are to bear worthy fruit. By testing, exercising them, the truths themselves will mature.

The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius possess a thoroughness and practicality that bear the seal of long years of personal, intimate experience. St. Francis of Assisi, St. John of the Cross, and St. Teresa of the Child Jesus could formulate a sound and yet realistic form of spirituality, because they had lived it, in its fullness, first of all in their own lives. A biographer of St. Thomas Aquinas writes that "purity of mind and body contributed in no small measure to clearness of vision; and his spirit of prayer, his great piety and devotion drew down blessings upon his studies." If one would penetrate profoundly into the inner depths of the mystery of the Precious Blood, and make it fruitful, there is need for more than learning and inspiration, there must be love and dedication in one's personal spiritual life.

And why should this not be? The Precious Blood provides man, in an eminent degree, with those factors which are essential and efficacious in generating holiness.

Chosen from all eternity by the Father to be the means of redemption, actually shed over a period of a few hours by the Son of God, through the action of the Holy Spirit it exerts a saving influence upon the Church that will continue for all time and be manifest

for all eternity. From eternity to eternity, therefore, it exercises its power before God and man.

It exerts its power, in the first place, upon the minds and hearts of men, to move them to love and to serve God; it offers a potent and efficacious motive for holiness.

Sanctity consists essentially in the love of God. That love is the normal response to goodness has been demonstrated in the highest as well as in the most graphic manner in the Precious Blood.

God's goodness in creation is beyond our power of comprehension. And yet, in that instance God bestowed His gifts upon creatures who were at least indifferent to them. In redemption through the Precious Blood God repaid evil with good, to the very ones who had rebelled against Him.

Man, created to the image and likeness of God, destined to be happy with Him forever, spurned that priceless heritage, disobeyed his Supreme Lord and Master, and justly brought upon himself complete and eternal ruin. Moreover, he was absolutely helpless to repair his tragic condition. Full of mercy and love the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity came to his rescue. By His bloody death upon the Cross He not only restored man to his former friendship with God, but raised him to an even higher supernatural state and destiny, the dignity of brotherhood with Christ. In the words of St. Peter, we are a "chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (1 Pt 2,9). For offense and hatred God returned even greater love.

Lest the greatness of this love and mercy escape us, God deigned to manifest it in a manner best understood by mortals. He spoke in the language of blood. Human sacrifice fills us with horror, but we cannot fail to see therein an effort to offer up to the deity the very best that man possesses. Blood, the fountain of life, is man's greatest natural possession. When blood and life are gone, man is no more. It is for this reason that blood speaks with such dramatic and powerful effect. Its sudden appearance on hand or garment leaves us perplexed until we have reassured ourselves that the life of the blood is not in danger. A pool of blood fills our imagination with the horror of a violent death. The blood of a warrior is eloquent testimony of his courage and loyalty. Similarly, the Divine Redeemer, covered with Blood, the voluntary scapegoat of sinners, cannot fail to stir up in our minds a keen realization of the boundless love of God for man. St. Paul writes: "For scarcely in behalf of a just man

does one die; yet perhaps one might bring himself to die for a good man. But God commends his charity towards us, because when as yet we were sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5,7-9).

The Precious Blood, therefore, speaks eloquently, forcefully of God's infinite love and mercy. It offers us the highest, purest motive for loving God and sanctifying ourselves. Would that we heard its voice!

The Precious Blood, however, is more than a final cause, a motive that inspires us to do good. It is an efficient cause, an active agent, as well, in our salvation and sanctification.

Its first efficacious action took place on Calvary, when it paid in full once and for all the ransom of sin; not only of original sin, but of every sin, for countless souls, past, present and future. In addition, it purchased for all the means necessary for salvation, sufficient to enable all men to live lives of heroic virtue, to become saints.

Nor was its active, efficacious role completed on the first Good Friday. It continues to be an ever active force in the life of the Church. St. Paul, in fact, points out that it is even more efficacious now: "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved by his life" (Rom 5,10).

Through its merits prayer is efficacious, good works are meritorious, the sacraments produce their effects. Though all grace has been merited by the real and physical shedding of the Precious Blood, it is dispensed to us and made fruitful principally through the mystic shedding of the Eucharistic Blood in the Mass. As the Blood of the Cross is our strength, so the chalice of the Blood is our joy. In every Holy Mass the identical, priceless Blood of the Cross is offered anew, is placed into our hands, a choice, unblemished Victim of sacrifice, absolutely pleasing to Almighty God, to be offered to the Holy Trinity, as truly and as efficaciously as it was on Calvary, and with the same infinite fruits. These we make our own in the measure in which we unite ourselves with Christ, the priest and victim, during the Holy Sacrifice. The greater our spirit of love and sacrifice, the more effective will the union be.

Pope Pius XII wrote in the encyclical *Menti Nostrae*: "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 become in truth, mediators of justice, 'in the things which appertain to God' (Heb 5,1), and that we may deserve to have our prayers accepted and obtain a superabundance of graces which may refresh and make more fruitful the Church and the souls of all men" (NCWC translation, 36).

In a letter written to the Society in 1949, the centenary of the Feast of the Precious Blood, the Holy Father stated: "We trust that the centennial celebration will have as its principal aim to bring men, so 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 appropriate application thereof to themselves . . . . You especially, whose Society is dedicated to this devotion, should reflect upon these things with a serious and loving heart."

The special letter of the Pontiff approving and blessing the work of our Study Week makes plain how praiseworthy it is for us who meditate upon the Precious Blood to spread the devotion among others.

The Constitutions — and I speak for all the Communities dedicated to the Precious Blood — remind us of the same duty. We are distinguished from other religious institutes by our dedication to the Precious Blood. Without that, there is no valid reason why we should exist as a distinct community. Moreover, the aim of every religious society, that which we share with all others, is the sanctification of the individual. As we have seen, in the Precious Blood we have an eminent and powerful means to that end. In the chalice of the Divine Blood, therefore, our highest and our particular purposes blend perfectly. Our work, from whatever standpoint, is honoring the Precious Blood.

A grave anxiety which oppresses the heart of the Vicar of Christ today is the growing materialism and godlessness in the world, in the Christian world, even in the Catholic world. Repeatedly he has pointed out how great is this evil. The Pontiff never fails to suggest means and urge action to counteract it. In 1951 he called for a crusade to rebuild a "*mondo migliore*," a better world. His most recent appeal is contained in an encyclical in June to the Bishops of France for the centenary of the apparition at Lourdes.

"The Blessed Virgin Herself," he states, "issues a cry of alarm

to a world that wants to win a universe at the price of its soul and is running headlong to destruction . . . we are above all convinced that she urges us to listen to the spiritual lessons of her apparitions, and to follow the path which she has so clearly marked for us . . . . The world, which in our days offers so many just motives for pride and hope, is (also) experiencing a formidable temptation of materialism, often denounced by our predecessors and by ourselves. This materialism exists not only in that condemned philosophy which governs the economy of a part of mankind," but it penetrates the inner fabric of Christian living. It is evident in the greed for money, the excessive quest for comfort, the shunning of austerity, discipline and obedience; the unrestrained search for pleasure, the selfish disregard of the rights of others, in a word, in the concept of life which arranges everything with a view to material satisfaction and earthly prosperity.

The enemy within our ranks, the wolf in sheep's clothing, is a more treacherous danger than the host clearly drawn up in battle array. If someone were to accuse us, seriously, of being "fellow travelers" or "fifth columnists" our indignation and anger would rise. And yet, that is what the Holy Father says, by implication, of Christians who are worldly, indifferent. It is thus that the Vicar of Christ interprets and applies to our present situation the words of Christ: "You cannot serve God and mammon" (Mt 6,24), "He who is not with me is against me" (Lk 11,23). It is a challenge directed particularly to us. Our Savior covered with Blood is the symbol and the model of everything that is opposed to worldliness: mortification, self-denial, obedience, charity. We, therefore, should be in the very forefront, carrying the banner in the crusade for a better world. The Holy Father concludes: "Who is there who cannot do still more for the cause of God, wherever providence has placed him?"

The Vicar of Christ points out the way. The Church offers every encouragement. Ours is a choice portion of the vineyard of the Lord, the priceless treasure of the Precious Blood. Will we prove worthy of so exalted a trust? To correspond to that vocation calls for the very best effort on the part of every single individual: priest, student, brother, sister consecrated to the Divine Blood. The consultations of this week have expanded our horizon, have deepened our love of that sublime mystery. Each one now returns to his respective task with new ideas, higher inspiration. The final benefits, however, will

be measured in terms of increased fervor and good works, honoring the Precious Blood.

A little over a month ago, an American priest holding a position of responsibility in Rome expressed to me his joy and satisfaction at the evidence of a spiritual outlook in the activities of St. Joseph's College. This individual was well aware of the material and academic progress that has taken place during recent years. In his estimation, however, only the first merited particular comment.

If further evidence is sought, it is found in abundance in the achievements of this week. You are the object of esteem, of envy on the part of the rest of the Society — a laudable envy that will stimulate them to a wholesome and profitable rivalry. This reawakened interest, in my opinion, is the outstanding favor that St. Gaspar has obtained for his beloved Society since his final glorification in heaven.

To St. Joseph's College which sponsored this project, to the officials of the American Province who supported it, to all who have contributed by their labors to the success of the Study Week, above all to the committee which planned and labored for two years to assure its success, belong the highest praise and commendation. You have made a noteworthy contribution to the work of the Society, have erected a new milestone along the way of its progress. May these efforts, through the blessing of God, grow, bear fruit, to the glory of the Divine Blood and to the benefit of our Society and the whole Church.

*VERY REVEREND HERBERT KRAMER, C.P.P.S., S.T.D.*

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