

Solemnity of the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ 1 July 2018

“...but one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side, and immediately there came out blood and water.” Jn. 19:34

The Servant of God, Fr. John A. Hardon, SJ in his book, *The Catholic Dictionary*, tells us of the significance of this feast: **“The blood of the living Christ is an integral part of human nature immediately united with the second person of the Trinity. It is called Precious Blood because, according to Pope Clement VI, ‘the value of the blood of Christ, on account of its union with the Logos (Word), is so great that one little drop would have sufficed for the redemption of the whole human race.”** (*Unigenitus Dei Filius*, Denziger, 1025). Hardon, p. 433. The Servant of God, Don Prosper Gueranger, in his book, *The Liturgical Year*, Vol. 12, comments on today’s solemnity: **“On Good Friday earth and heaven beheld all sin drowned in the saving stream, whose eternal flood-gates at last gave way beneath the combined effort of man’s violence and of the love of the divine Heart. The festival of Corpus Christi witnessed our prostrate worship before the altars whereon is perpetuated the Sacrifice of Calvary, and where the outpouring of the precious Blood affords drink to the humblest little one, as well as to the mightiest potentates of earth, lowly bowed in adoration before it.”** Gueranger, p. 368

The Price of our Redemption

In today’s *Epistle to the Hebrews* 9:11-15, St. Paul tells us that the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ was the price of our redemption: **“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),....by the virtue his own Blood, into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption.”** Heb. 9:11-12 Don Gueranger commenting on today’s Epistle comments: **“It was by his own Blood that the Son of God entered into heaven; this divine Blood continues to be the means whereby we also may be introduced into the eternal alliance. Thus, the Old Covenant, founded on the observance of the precepts of Sinai, had likewise by blood consecrated the people and the law, the tabernacle and the vessels it was to contain; but the whole was but a figure. ‘Now,’ says St.**

Ambrose, ‘it behoves us to tend to truth. Here below, there is the shadow; here below, there is the image; up yonder, there is the truth. In the law was but the shadow; the image is to be found in the Gospel; the truth is in heaven. Formerly a lamb was immolated; now Christ is sacrificed, but only under the signs of the mysteries, whereas in heaven it is without veil. There alone, consequently, is full perfection unto which our thoughts should cleave, because all perfection is in truth without image and without shadow.’ (Ambr. De Offe. I, 48) There alone is rest; thither, even in this world, do the sons of God tend; without indeed attaining fully thereunto, they reach nearer and nearer day by day; for there alone is to be found that peace which forms saints.

“O Lord God,’ cries out in his turn another illustrious doctor, the great St. Augustine, ‘give us this peace, the peace of repose, the peace of the seventh day, of that Sabbath whose sun never sets. Yea! Verily the whole order of nature and grace is very beautiful unto thy servitors, and goodly are the realities they cover; but these images, theses successive forms, bide only awhile, and their evolution ended they pass away. The days thou didst fill with creations are composed of morning and evening, the seventh alone excepted, for it declineth not, because thou hast for ever sanctified it in thine own rest. Now what is this rest, save that which thou takest in us, when we ourselves repose in thee, in the fruitful peace which crown the series of thy graces in us? O sacred rest, more productive than labour! The perfect alone know thee, they who suffer the divine hand to accomplish within them the work of the six days.’ (Aug. Confess. xiii 35-37)

“...The divine Blood has made us participators of Christ; it is our part not to squander, as though it were worthless, this immense treasure, this initial incorporation which unites us to Christ, the divine Head; but let us abandon ourselves, without reserve, to the energy of this precious leaven, whose property it is to transform our whole being into him. Let us be afraid lest we fall short of the promise referred to in to-day’s Epistle, that promise of our entering into God’s rest, as St. Paul tells us. It regards all believers, he says, and this divine Sabbath is for the whole people of the Lord. Therefore, let us make haste to enter in; let us not be like those Jews whose incredulity

excluded them for ever from the promised land.”
(cf. Heb. 3:4) Gueranger, 372-4

“...but one of the soldiers with a spear opened His side and immediately there came out blood and water.” Jn. 19:34

These words from today's *Gospel of John* 19:30-35, according to Catholic tradition, reveal not only the means of sanctification in the Church, the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Eucharist, but also the mystical marriage of Christ and His Church. Dom Gueranger comments on the contrast between the meaning of this passage on Good Friday and today: **“On Good Friday we heard for the first time this passage from the beloved disciple. The Church, as she stood mourning at the foot of the cross whereon her Lord had just died, was all tears and lamentation. To-day, however, she is thrilling with other sentiments, and the very same narration that then provoked her bitter tears now makes her burst out into anthems of gladness and song of triumph...the new Eve (the Church) is celebrating her birth from the side of her sleeping Spouse (cf. Aug. Hom. Diei, ex tract, cxx in Joan.); that from the solemn moment when the new Adam permitted the soldier's lance to open his Heart we became in very deed, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh (cf. Aug. Sermo II Nocturn). Do not be surprised if Holy Church see naught but love and life in the Blood which is gushing forth.”**

“And thou, O Soul, long rebellious to the secret touches of choicest graces, be not disconsolate; do not say: ‘Love is no more for me!’ How far away soever the old enemy may, by wretched wiles, have dragged thee, is it not still true, that to every winding way, perhaps even to every pitfall, the streamlets of this sacred fount have followed thee? ...Believe me, this is the whole secret of the bride—namely that whencesoever she may come she has no other course to pursue than this, if she would hear the answer to that yearning request expressed in the sacred Canticle: ‘Show me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou restest in the midday!’ Cant. 1:6 Indeed, by reascending the sacred stream, not only is she sure of reaching the divine Heart, but moreover she is ceaselessly renewing, in its waters, that pure beauty which makes her become in the Spouse an object of delight and glory in him (cf. First Antiphon in Vespers) Gueranger, p. 376-7

As a special grace of today's feast, as the Communion Prayer emphasizes, Dom Gueranger would want us to be filled with joy at the transformation that will take place in our souls: **“Inebriated with gladness as the Saviour's fountains, his sacred Wounds, let us pray that the precious Blood now empurpling our lips may remain unto eternity the living source when we may ever draw beatitude and life: (Communion Prayer) ‘Having been admitted to the holy table, O Lord we have drawn waters in joy from the fountains of our Saviour: may his Blood, we beseech thee, become within us a fountain of water springing up to eternal life....”** Gueranger, p.379 No wonder, Catholic tradition tells us that the Angels sprinkle us all with the Precious Blood of Christ at every Mass!

The First Friday, 6 July 2018

Now is a good time to continue (or begin) the devotion to the **“Nine First Fridays”** of the Month. The Sacred Heart of Jesus promised to St. Margaret Mary: **“I promise thee in the excessive mercy of My Heart that My all-powerful love will grant to all those who communicate on the First Friday in nine consecutive months, the grace of final penitence; they shall not die in My disgrace nor without receiving the Sacraments; My Divine heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment.”** There is no better way to honour the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus than doing the **“Nine First Fridays”** every month.

The First Saturday, 7 July 2018

Our Lady told Sr. Lucia in 1925 **“...I promise to assist at the hour of death, with all the graces necessary for salvation, all those who, on the first Saturday of five consecutive months go to confession and receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the Rosary and keep me company for a quarter of an hour while meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary, with the intention of making reparation to me.”** If only we would do what Our Lady asks, we would be assured of eternal salvation. Our Lady promises us all the graces necessary for our salvation if we keep ***The Five First Saturdays!*** Just think that when you are about to die the Blessed Virgin Mary will be there with you to help you get to heaven! **“Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen”** How many times have you said these words in your lifetime?