

Friday in the Fourth Week: The Precious Blood

Summary of the Morrow's Meditation

We will meditate tomorrow upon the Feast of the Precious Blood, which the Roman Church celebrates tomorrow, and we shall see: first, the gratitude due to Jesus Christ for the gift which He has made us of His blood; second, the practical consequences which result from this ineffable gift. We will then make the resolution: first, to love more and more Jesus Christ, who has so loved us, and to serve Him with more generosity than ever; second, to place all our confidence in the merits of His blood, and never allow ourselves to yield to discouragement or mistrust. Our spiritual nosegay shall be the words of St John, "*Jesus Christ hath washed us from our sins in His own blood*" (Rev. 1:5).

Meditation for the Morning

Let us adore Jesus Christ making us a gift of the whole of His blood, down to the last drop; let us thank Him for this ineffable gift; let us love Him for so much love, and ask of Him to profit by it.

GRATITUDE DUE TO JESUS CHRIST FOR THE GIFT WHICH HE MAKES US OF HIS BLOOD

If a man were to give another man the whole of his fortune, it would be, doubtless, a great gift, above all if it were considerable. What would it be, then, if he were to give him his blood, and shed the whole of it for him? It would evidently be love carried to its most extreme limit. Now, this is what Jesus Christ has done in regard to us; and here let us observe, first, the value of His blood. It infinitely surpasses the value of any human blood, because it is the blood of a God, by virtue of the hypostatic union, blood, consequently, of an infinite value. This blood is offered by a God in every sacrifice offered to the Divine Majesty; and the dignity of a God-Priest offering the blood of a God-Victim communicates to it a fresh degree of infinite value. Let us observe, second, the marvellous effects of Christ's blood. It extinguishes the fire of divine justice, irritated by our crimes (Rom. v:9). It is the host of expiation for our sins (Rom. III:25). It is the price of our redemption (Eph. 1:7). It is the bath which purifies our conscience (Heb. IX:14). It is the seal of peace between heaven and earth (Coloss. 1:20). It opens heaven and closes hell under our feet (Heb. IX:12). Far from crying out for vengeance, like the blood of Abel, each drop of this blood cries out for mercy (Heb. XII:24). Let us remark, third, that this blood, so great as it is in value, is given to us not with an avaricious hand, but with incomparable generosity. Although a single drop of it would have sufficed to wash away the sins of a thousand worlds, Jesus Christ gives the whole of it, and He even gives it to those whom He foresees will be but little worthy of it; He gives it, not once only, but millions of times. He begins to shed it eight days after His birth, beneath the knife of circumcision; He sheds it in the Garden of Olives, where a sweat of blood inundates the ground; He sheds it at the flagellation, at the crowning with thorns, at the crucifixion, at the opening of the sacred side; He offers it every day at the holy sacrifice over the whole surface of the globe, and gives it to us to drink in the Holy Communion; He keeps it in all the tabernacles of the world; and in them His blood ceaselessly begs for grace for us. Lastly, He applies the merits of it to us in the sacraments,

which are as so many channels by which this adorable blood is communicated to souls. What gratitude, then, do we not owe the Saviour for this prodigality of His blood towards poor sinners like ourselves!

PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES FROM THESE CONSIDERATIONS

First, there must be great generosity in the service of Jesus Christ. When a God gives His blood, are we not inexcusable if we refuse Him the sacrifice of our will, our actions, and our pleasures? When we possess in our bosom the blood of Jesus Christ, when we are of such noble and divine blood, we must be generous in spirit and must be inspired by the noble sentiments to which nothing is so dear as sacrifice. Second, we must honour this precious blood by assisting devoutly and frequently at the holy sacrifice, by often approaching the sacraments, by correspondence to the interior and exterior graces which are the fruits of it; by the often reiterated offering of our actions and of our heart in a spirit of gratitude. Third, we ought to have an unlimited confidence in the merits of the divine blood. Let those be troubled and be wanting in confidence who do not know the price of the blood of the Saviour; but when we know by faith that Jesus Christ has left at our disposition all the merits of His blood, with the faculty to apply them to ourselves by prayer, by the sacraments, and by the holy sacrifice, we are inexcusable if we are wanting in confidence. With our crucifix in our hands our courage ought never to fail. It is true, O Jesus, I cannot say, "*I am innocent of the blood of this just Man*" (Matt. XXVII:24), since it is my sin that has delivered up this innocent blood, but I will say, animated by another spirit than that which animated the Jews: May His blood fall upon me (Matt. XXVII:25) to wash away my iniquities and preserve me from the exterminating angel, like the blood of the paschal lamb on the doors of the houses of the ancient people. Am I faithful in deriving these fruits from the Passion of the Saviour?

Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.