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A Newsletter from the Missions Office/Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States
Catholic Diocese of Columbus, Ohio

July, month of the Most Precious Blood of our Lord

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Thank you for your support!***

On behalf of His Excellency Robert J. Brennan, the Bishop of Columbus, and Very Rev. Father Andrew Small, OMI, the National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States, I would like to thank you for your prayers, sacrifices and financial support for the missions.

By tradition, the Catholic Church dedicates each month of the year to certain devotions. July is devoted to the Precious Blood of Jesus.

In the past, the Most Precious Blood of Christ was celebrated in July as confirmed by past popes and recalled by Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI in his speech after praying the Angelus on July 5, 2009. He made special mention of Pope John XXIII's apostolic letter "Inde a Primis" (dated June 30, 1960) which explained the devotion's significance and approved its litanies.

Sacrifice is the highest form of religious worship which man offers to God as an act of praise, thanksgiving, petition and atonement.

The most singular and pre-eminent sacrifice of the Old Law was the immolation of the Paschal Lamb which celebrated the sparing of Israel's first-born from the fatal sword of the Angel of Death in

Egypt at the time of Moses and Pharaoh.

The imagery of sacrificial blood from slain animals is made more vivid and meaningful if we recall Moses' words from the Book of Exodus, "And he took the blood and sprinkled it upon the people, and he said: 'This is the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you concerning all these words'" (Exodus 24:8).

The old sacrifice took a new form in the New Testament when the Immaculate Lamb of God offered Himself on the altar of the Cross to redeem mankind from sin and the slavery of Satan.

And during the Last Supper, Our Lord offered Himself in an unbloodied yet real sacrifice when He uttered the following words:

"For this is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins." (Matthew 26:28). Truly, this "shedding of blood" or, "pouring out of blood" took place and forms one of our glorious mysteries of our Faith.

In his book, Precious Blood, Father Frederick William Faber calls Saint Paul the doctor of the Precious Blood owing to the evident fondness to preach on It in his epistles (Rom. 3:25; Eph. 1:17; Heb. 9:12).

He recounts that the lives of the Saints are replete with devotion the

Precious Blood making special mention of Saint Chrysostom, Saint Austin, Saint Gertrude and Saint Catherine of Sienna whom he considered the Prophetess of the Precious Blood for putting emphasis on It as the solution to the ills of her times.

Father also remarks that the Precious Blood makes us appreciate more Christ's redemption of mankind, His sacrifice and Passion.

It also makes us comprehend the beautiful doctrine and the august realities of the Blessed Sacrament as we kneel in front of the tabernacle in humble adoration.

Over time the Church gave Her blessing to the devotion by approving societies like the Missionaries of the Precious Blood; enriching confraternities like that of Saint Nicholas Carcere, in Rome, and that of the London Oratory; attaching indulgences to prayers and scapulars in honor of the Precious Blood.

Pope Francis' July Prayer Intention:

We pray that today's families may be accompanied with love, respect and guidance.

The True Face of Love

“If you do not feel compassion before a needy person, if your heart is not moved, it means something is not right”. Pope Francis said in his reflection on the parable of the “Good Samaritan”.

“Let us not allow ourselves to get carried away by egotistical insensitivity.” The Pope said. “The capacity for compassion has become the touchstone of Christians, indeed of the teachings of Jesus. Jesus Himself is the Father’s compassion toward us”.

The Pope said that mercy towards human life in a state of need is the true face of love. This is how one becomes a true disciple of Jesus and the face of the Father is manifested: “Be merciful, even as the Father is merciful” (Lk 6:36). And God, our Father, is merciful because He is compassionate. He is able to have this compassion, to draw near to our suffering, our sin, our vices, our miseries.

“May the Blessed Mary”, Pope Francis said, “help us to understand and above all to experience ever more the unbreakable bond between God the Father, and His concrete generous love for us, and may she give us the grace to be compassionate and to grow in compassion. (from the Angelus, July 14, 2019).

We are not left with our Wonderings

“Let not the wise boast in their wisdom, nor the mighty on their strength, nor the rich on their wealth. Whoever boasts must boast in this: that He understands and knows Me” (Jer. 9: 23 - 24).

We cannot know Gustave Eiffel, the designer of the famous Eiffel Tower in Paris, France because he is dead.

But we can know the designer of the Grand Canyon, the human eye, the Milky Way galaxy. The designer of the Eiffel Tower is dead. But the Creator of Mount Everest is alive and well. And He invites us to know Him.

It is impossible to know the meaning of life if we do not know the Maker of life. The Maker of life is willing to be our teacher.

We have a teacher. His name is Jesus. He reveals wisdom and truth. We can know, not just facts about God, but His heart, His joy, His passion, His plan and His sorrows.

“Whoever”

“For God so love the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

“Whoever” is you and me. “Whoever” is everyone. But we humans are not prone to this “whoever” policy. We tend to build fences between rich and the poor; between the educated and the uneducated; between the old timers and the newcomers; between the conservatives and progressives; between Democrats and Republicans.

In Jesus’ time there was an impassable gulf between Jews and Gentiles. A Jew could not drink milk drawn by Gentiles, or eat their food. Jews could not aid a Gentile mother in her hour of need. Jewish physicians could not serve non-Jewish patients. No Jew would have anything to do with a Gentile. They were unclean.

An indication of the coming of a new order surfaced at a conversation with Jesus and a Gentile woman.

“I was sent only to help God’s lost sheep – the people of Israel”. Jesus told her.

“That’s true, Lord”, the woman answered, “but even dogs are allowed to eat the scraps that fall beneath their masters’ table” (Matt. 15: 24 – 27).

Jesus healed the woman’s daughter and made His position clear. He was more concerned of bringing everyone in than shutting certain people out.

A joke a priest can tell...

Two nuns were shopping at a grocery store. And they passed by a beer cooler. One of the nuns said to the other. “Wouldn’t a nice cold beer taste wonderful on a hot summer evening?”

“Indeed, it would Sister”, the second nun answered, “but I would not feel comfortable buying beer, since it would cause a scene at the checkout stand”. “I can handle that,” the other nun replied, and she picked up a 6-pack and headed for check-out.

The cashier had a surprised look on his face when the two nuns arrived with a 6-pack of beer. “We use beer for washing our hair,” the nun said. “Back in the convent we call it Catholic shampoo”.

Without blinking an eye, the cashier reached out under the counter. Pulled out a package of pretzel sticks, and placed them in the bag with the beer. He then looked the nun straight in the eye, smiled and said, “Curlers are on the house”.

***Sister Zephрина Mary, Director
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