

The Month of the Precious Blood

A few weeks ago, I got a nasty cut on the top of my finger. I dropped a bottle of shaving lotion in the bathroom and a sliver of glass sheared my finger. Well, the blood kept pouring out of this small cut even after I put some medicine on it and a bandage. Finally, in desperation, I went to the doctor and he packaged the wound properly and I was able to get on with the day's activities. Everybody kept asking, "Hey, what happened to your finger?" Such a fuss over one little cut!

The thought came to my mind, how often we complain about the little "cuts" that we endure in this life while conveniently forgetting the "cuts" that Jesus endured and the blood He shed for us in His passion. The month of July that we are now in is dedicated to the precious blood of Christ.

I suppose that blood is not something we really advert to unless we are injured and are losing it. And yet, blood is the vital liquid for our bodies; if we lose too much of it we are in trouble! The precious blood of Jesus is a mystery of our faith that is well worth our reflection and consideration.

At each holy Mass that is celebrated when the priest consecrates the chalice, he utters the words of Jesus, "This is the cup of my blood which will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgive. Do this in memory of me." Let us think about those words for a moment. There is a definite connection between the shedding of blood and the forgiveness of sins.

In the Old Testament, the Jewish priests sacrificed animals so that the blood of these beasts would appease God and expiate sin. In the new order, Christ did not offer the blood of bulls or goats to take away sin. Rather He offered His body on the cross and it was that sacrifice that remitted our sins.

The blood that Jesus shed is indeed precious, and we can consider how He shed it in the various events of His passion—from the bloody sweat in the Garden of Gethsemane to the scourging and crowning with thorns and finally to the five wounds that He endured on the Cross at Calvary. Literally in His sufferings, Christ poured out every single drop of blood for the redemption of us all.

When the priest raises the chalice at Mass, we should offer ourselves up with it. In some old prayer books Catholics were instructed to look at the precious blood and say, "My Jesus, mercy!" That is something that should be brought back! Why? Because there are an infinite number of sins that are committed each and every day. By her prayers, the church teaches us the importance of reparation for all the sins and transgressions that occur in the world.

All of us are poor sinners and we need God's mercy. When we offer up that chalice at Mass we should ask the Lord to intercede for us and to have pity on us. The precious blood is a tangible symbol of the love that the Lord has for humanity. During this month of July dedicated to His blood, let us pray that we might ever value the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made for our redemption.

When we are tempted to complain about the small "cuts" we suffer in this life, let us think about the blood that Christ shed and cease complaining. May the precious blood of Jesus cry for mercy to the Father and deliver us from evil!

Sincerely in our Lord,

Fr. Jerome