

which purifies souls, restores innocence, confers grace, beauty and everything that constitutes new life.

Jesus, being God, could have dispensed Himself from this painful rite imposed on the Jews ; but He preferred, for our instruction, to comply not only with the law but with the pious customs of His people ; consequently, on this day He assumed His Name—Jesus, when shedding His Blood for the first time.

Circumcision was the seal of the covenant which God had made with Abraham ; it also formed a distinctive mark separating the children of that holy Patriarch from all other nations of the earth ; it was, lastly, a pledge of the blessings promised in his person to all who would be faithful in obeying God's ordinances. Its most salutary effect was the remission of original sin, not by its own virtue, but through faith in the Passion of Our Lord of which it was a figure.

Saint Epiphanius, who was born in Palestine and was thoroughly acquainted with the sacred traditions of his country, says that Our Saviour was circumcised in the stable of Bethlehem. What would be the feelings of the Blessed Virgin on seeing His Blood flow beneath the knife ! She knew It was of infinite value, and we may feel sure that she offered those priceless Drops to God the Father in satisfaction for the sins of the world. This was the "morning sacrifice" of our dearest Saviour, to be followed in after years by the "evening sacrifice" on Calvary.

With Mary and Joseph, with all the inhabitants of heaven and earth, and with all ages, let us on this day contemplate the August victim of our sins and those of the world. While adoring His greatness, let us not refuse to assist in spirit at His first immolation. As we look upon His infantine grace and beauty, unconsciously before our eyes rise the dread scenes of the Passion, when, by the outpouring of His Precious Blood, He will again establish His claim to the sacred name of Jesus. We see the prostrate Blood drenched Form in the Garden of Olives ; the lacerated unrecognizable figure at the pillar ; the thorn-crowned Man of Sorrows—"the outcast of the people"—the Just One ascending slowly and painfully the