

THE VOICE OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

You were not redeemed with corruptible gold or silver, ... but with the Precious Blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled.

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PUREST OF THE PURE.

*Pure as the snows, —we say. Ah ! never flake
Fell through the brooding air
One half as fair . . .
As Mary's soul was made for Christ's dear sake.
Virgin Immaculate !
The whitest whiteness of the Alpine snows,
Beside thy stainless spirit, dusky grows.*

*Pure as the stars ? Ah ! never lovely night
Wore in its diadem
As pure a gem
As that which fills the ages with its light.
Virgin Immaculate !
The peerless splendors of thy soul, by far,
Outshine the glow of heaven's clearest star.*

*Pure as the lilies ? Dearest Queen, forgive
The fond but feeble trope
Mother of hope,
Fair love and holy fear ! There doth not live
. . . Virgin Immaculate !
In all the grassy haunts where lilies blow
As white, as rare, as sweet a flower as thou !*

Pure as the Breath of God !—O clean of heart !
 These happy words can tell
 The miracle
 Of how divinely innocent thou art !
 Virgin Immaculate !
 Under thy shining cloak our vileness hide,
 Lest her own kindred should disgrace the Bride.

E. C. D.

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.

WE have now reached the last month of the year and, instead of speaking of the sufferings of our divine Lord as we have done during the previous months, we think we may fittingly close the year by considering the joys of which the Precious Blood was the source, even at the moment of Its most painful effusions. *Love is strong as death. . . . If a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing,* says Holy Scripture in the canticle of canticles. How then can we understand our Redeemer's mighty and infinite love since He gave for us, not the substance of his house, but the deluge of His Blood. This was loving His creatures not only to the end of life and beyond it, but to the utmost limit of love itself.

Love is the essential element of happiness, and it would be false to assert that any mortal could enjoy veritable felicity in complete solitude. God Himself created man for His own happiness. Intelligent creatures—the work of His hands, are the objects of His affection, and on seeing them endowed and embellished with a reflection of His own perfections He feels for them a love incomparably superior to all human sentiment.

To ransom His fallen creatures, to gain their love, the Word became flesh. This desire of winning the hearts of mankind has the greatest intensity in the Sacred Heart of Jesus whose ardent tenderness surpasses all human affections combined. Sacred writers have vainly tried to portray its strength and constancy ; for, since it is infinite,

human language cannot describe it, nor finite intellect understand it.

He who loves desires to benefit the beloved. According to a sublime definition of love, the sentiment does not consist in seeking our joy in others, but in forming the happiness of those we love. *It is more blessed to give than to receive.* This was the manner in which Jesus Christ proved His love for man. *Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friend.* To suffer death for another, and the most cruel and ignominious of deaths, is the strongest testimony of love. But so great was our Saviour's desire to give this proof of un-dying love that He speaks of being *strained* until it will be accomplished through His baptism of Blood. When dying amid inconceivable pains, our Lord exulted in the thought that men would know His mercy and tenderness, would be touched by His bounty and would respond to His affection. He thought also of the graces He would thus obtain for them and He found happiness in saying : " The more I suffer, the more Blood I shed, the greater will be the number of blessings and joys I will merit for the souls I love."

He thought of His Mother, the Immaculate one, so grand, so beautiful, so glorious in heaven and on earth. He rejoiced in suffering for her sake, because the shedding of His Blood was the principle of her dignity and privileges. He rejoiced also in thinking of the virgins whose purity and love would form His delight ; the martyrs who would shed their blood in return for His, the elect who would extol Him throughout the endless ages of eternity, because He had died for them.

All these fruits of His Passion filled His soul with consolation amid His sufferings, because He knew that it was through His Passion chiefly that he would gain our hearts.

Theologians tell us that this joy surpassed His sufferings. These great mysteries of faith stupefy, if we may so speak, our minds and hearts ; for when we see ourselves filled with sin and misery and yet remember that we are the object of that love, that delectation of Jesus Christ amid all His anguish, of that joy stronger than all the pains of death, how can we be otherwise than annihili-

lated by the weight of our gratitude and admiration of the divine bounty.

The christian who has resolved to follow His divine Master knows well that he must take up his cross and deny himself. Since Jesus Christ endured His Passion through love, we, His followers, should, in the same spirit of love, rejoice in our sacrifices, in our daily *Passion*. We should say : " the more I suffer, the better I prove my love of God." This thought should mitigate the pains of our lives : labor, fatigue, privations, austerities, endurance of our neighbor, in a word every effort we make to practise virtue.

RECOLLECTIONS OF VENERABLE GASPARD
DEL BUFALO, FOUNDER OF THE MIS-
SIONARY PRIESTS OF THE
MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD.

IN the year 1843 I was in Rome, writes a celebrated Prelate. While there, I had the happiness of seeing a holy man named Don Piaggio who died three years later in the odor of sanctity.

He was a priest and had given missions uninterruptedly in the Papal States, from 1813 till 1839, in company with that venerable servant of God, Gaspard Del Bufalo whom he had succeeded as Superior of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

Don Piaggio, speaking of the unbounded and marvellous confidence of Del Bufalo in the Blessed Virgin, related eight or ten evidently miraculous facts in which his trust had been visibly recompensed. They were quite certain and authentic, Don Piaggio himself having been a witness, and, sometimes, even an actor, in these impressive manifestations of grace.

Among other clearly supernatural events he gave the circumstantial account of his own sudden cure in the Holy House of Loretto, at the prayer of Venerable Del Bufalo.

Don Piaggio, then in his twenty third year, had reached the last stage of consumption and had been given up by all the doctors, but was instantaneously cured by re-

citing with the servant of God a single *Ave Maria* at the feet of the Madonna of Loretto. So perfect was the cure that he began that same day to preach a mission under the direction of his holy benefactor whom he never left from that time. Together they gave numerous missions which were blessed by God in an extraordinary way and were accompanied by frequent miracles.

One day, said Don Piaggio, we were both commencing a mission in a borough of the Marches of Ancona. In passing through a hamlet we heard cries of distress and saw people collected at a certain spot. The crowd was assembled around a well near which an unfortunate woman was tearing her hair in despair and writhing on the ground. Her child had just escaped her hold and fallen into the well which was exceedingly deep. He must necessarily be lost.

Del Bufalo made his way through the crowd and drew near the unhappy mother. I followed him.

"Let us trust in Mary," said he, in grave and gentle tones.

He knelt down, saying a Hail Mary aloud. Everyone was on his knees. The mother stifled her moans. He arose. His appearance became extraordinarily majestic. He called me.

"Brother," said he, "undo your cincture and give it to me."

I obeyed, presenting him the leathern girdle used for clasping my soutane.

"Lower it into the well."

Scarcely had I done so when I felt a weight on the end of my cincture.

"Draw up the child," said the man of God "and give him to his mother."

There was the child suspended to the girdle and apparently asleep. I handed him to the woman who was wild with joy. She fell at Del Bufalo's feet, kissing them in the transports of her happiness, while he, wholly absorbed in God, profited by the general emotion to speak in favor of the Blessed Virgin.

Don Piaggio related another supernatural occurrence, in which he was even more personally concerned.

We had both, said this holy priest, been several days

in a small city in the Marches of Macerata, engaged in preaching an important mission. One morning as I was making my meditation, my door opened and Del Bufalo, holding an open letter, entered the room. He handed it to me in silence. I read it. It was from my family, and announced to my superior that my mother was dying and longed ardently to see me.

“What is to be done?” I asked, totally overcome.

“Is it possible to interrupt the mission at this moment?”

“Let us pray to the Blessed Virgin,” he answered quietly.

He knelt down beside me, and, after a few minutes, arose.

“We will continue the mission,” said he; and he went out to say mass.

Despite my love for obedience, and notwithstanding my trust in the Most Holy Virgin and her devout servant, my heart was heavy with grief. While applying to the best of my power to the missionary work, I never ceased praying for my poor mother.

The city in which we were preaching was about twenty four miles distant from my parents' house; but the roads were bad. Daily I watched for news. None came. I did not know what to think of this silence.

Six days afterwards, I was again alone in my room at meditation, when Del Bufalo came in. Gentle and radiant joy beamed in his eyes and a happy smile was on his lips.

“See,” said he, again presenting me an open letter, “see, dear Brother, if it is not right to confide in the Blessed Virgin.”

I seized the letter. It was from one of my brothers and was in substance as follows :

“Dear Father,

“We thank you for having made the sacrifice of sending us our brother, Don Piaggio. He arrived in time. Mother was greatly consoled on seeing him and breathed her last in his arms. He has given the greatest edification to every one here.

Now that all is over, we hasten to let him return to you.”

I was stunned, as it were, said Don Piaggio, still deeply moved by the remembrance of the event. I read and re-read the letter. The fact, wholly inexplicable as it appeared, was none the less certain. At the prayer of the Venerable Del Bufalo, the most powerful Virgin had sent a heavenly visitant to personate and replace me at the bedside of my dying mother !

What a favour for her ! What a consolation for me !
“ But did you feel nothing, experience nothing ? ” I asked.

“ Nothing, absolutely nothing. The Blessed Virgin did it all for me who did not deserve such a grace.”

WAITING FOR CHRIST.

I thought upon the Saints of old,
And all their lives to me unfold,
The heartfelt longing that they hold.

I saw their eyes turned full of care
Upon the shadowed future, where
Christ's birth they waited unaware.

The misty future fold from fold,
At times a little backward rolled,
In longing in the days of old.

And then the gleam of hope grew bright
As when dark clouds that threaten night
Are parted 'neath an isle of light.

But days went by and years were told,
And many a winter swept the world
And many a hope in death lay cold.

Then came a day and saw a thing
Beyond Angelic choirs to sing,
Beyond all human fathoming.

For Saints who waited for the dawn
Of light upon the world forlorn,
Saw Bethlehem's star on Christmas morn.

Ah ! who can sing, ah ! who can tell
Their joy, who prayed so long and well,
On whom the pain of longing felt.

In life or death a triumph true
These heroes won, full well they knew
That this poor earth would Christ renew.

Then praised be God whose power controlled
And helped them in the days of old ;
Who wrought from doubts and hopes and fears
Our Christmas for eterna! years.

THE TREASURY OF TREASURES.

Seventy-seven Graces and Fruits to be derived from devout attendance at Holy Mass. (From " Cochem's Explanation of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.")

1. For thy salvation, God the Father sends His beloved Son down from heaven.
2. For thy salvation, the Holy Spirit changes bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.
3. For thy sake, the Son of God comes down from heaven and conceals Himself under the form of the Sacred Host.
4. He even abases Himself to such an extent as to be present in the minutest particle of the Sacred Host.
5. For thy salvation, He renews the saving mystery of the Incarnation.
6. For thy salvation, He is born anew into the world in a mystic manner whenever Holy Mass is celebrated.
7. For thy salvation, He performs upon the altar the same acts of worship that He performed when on earth.

8. For thy salvation, He renews His bitter passion, in order that thou mayst participate in it.

9. For thy salvation, He mystically renews His death and sacrifices for thee His precious life.

10. For thy salvation, He sheds His blood in a mystic manner, and offers it up for thee to the Divine Majesty.

11. With this precious blood, He sprinkles thy soul, and purifies it from every stain.

12. For thee, Christ offers Himself as a true burnt offering, and renders to the Godhead the supreme honour which is Its due.

13. By offering this act of worship to God, thou dost make reparation for the glory thou hast failed to give Him.

14. For thee, Christ offers Himself to God as a sacrifice of praise, thus atoning for thy omissions in praising His Holy Name.

15. By offering to God this oblation which Christ offers, thou givest Him greater praise than do the holy angels.

16. For thee, Christ offers Himself as a perfect sacrifice of thanksgiving, making compensation for all failures on thy part to render thanks.

17. By offering to God Christ's act of thanksgiving, thou dost make ample acknowledgment of all the benefits He has bestowed upon thee.

18. For thee, Christ offers Himself as the all-powerful Victim, reconciling thee to the God whom thou hast offended.

19. He pardons thee all thy venial sins, provided thou art firmly resolved to forsake them.

20. He also makes reparation for many of thy sins of omission which thou didst leave undone the good thou mightst have done.

21. He removes many of the imperfections attaching to thy good deeds.

22. He forgives thee the sins unknown or forgotten which thou hast never mentioned in confession.

23. He offers Himself as a Victim to make satisfaction for a part at least of thy debts and transgressions.

24. Each time thou hearest Mass thou canst do more

to pay the penalty due to thy sins than by the severest works of penance.

25. Christ places to thy credit a portion of His merits, which thou mayst offer to God the Father in expiation of thy offences.

26. For thee, Christ offers Himself as the most efficacious peace—offering, interceding for thee as earnestly as He interceded for his enemies on the cross.

27. His Precious Blood pleads for thee in words as countless as the drops which issued from His sacred Veins.

28. Each of the adorable wounds His sacred Body bore is a voice calling aloud for mercy to thee.

29. For the sake of this propitiatory Victim, the petitions proffered during the Mass will be granted far sooner than those that are proffered at other times.

30. Never canst thou pray so well as whilst present at Mass.

31. This is so because Christ unites His prayer to thine, and offers them to His Heavenly Father.

32. He acquaints Him with thy needs and the dangers to which thou art exposed, and makes thy eternal salvation His particular concern.

33. The angels also, who are present, plead for thee, and present thy poor prayers before the throne of God.

34. On thy behalf the priest says Mass, by virtue of which the evil enemy will not be suffered to approach thee.

35. For this and for thy everlasting salvation he says Mass, and offers that Holy Sacrifice to God Almighty.

36. When thou hearest Mass thou art thyself in spirit a priest, empowered by Christ to offer Mass both for thyself and others.

37. By offering this Holy Sacrifice thou dost present to the Blessed Trinity the most acceptable of all oblations.

38. Thou dost offer an oblation precious indeed, of greater value than all things in heaven and earth.

39. Thou dost offer an oblation precious indeed, for it is none other than God Himself.

40. By this sacrifice, thou dost honour God as He alone is worthy to be honoured.

41. By this sacrifice, thou dost give infinite satisfaction to the Most Holy Trinity.

42. Thou mayst present this glorious oblation as thine own gift, for Christ Himself gave it unto thee.

43. When thou hearest Mass aright, thou dost perform an act of highest worship.

44. By hearing Mass, thou dost pay the most profound reverence, the most loyal homage to the sacred Humanity of Our Lord.

45. It is the best means whereby to venerate the passion of Christ and to obtain a share in its fruits.

46. It is also the best means of venerating the Blessed Mother of God and increasing her joy.

47. By hearing Mass, thou canst give greater honour to the angels and saints than by reciting many prayers.

48. By hearing Mass devoutly, thou canst also enrich the soul more than by aught else in the world.

49. For in this act thou dost perform a good work of the highest value.

50. It is a signal exercise of pure faith which will receive a great reward.

51. When thou dost bow down before the Sacred Host and the Sacred Chalice thou dost perform a supreme act of adoration.

52. For each time that thou dost gaze reverently upon the Sacred Host thou wilt receive a recompense in heaven.

53. Each time thou dost smite thy breast with compunction thy sins are remitted to thee.

54. If thou hearest Mass in a state of mortal sin, God offers thee the grace of conversion.

55. If thou hearest Mass in a state of grace, God gives thee an augmentation of grace.

56. In Holy Mass, thou dost spiritually eat the Flesh of Christ and drink His Blood.

57. Thou art privileged to behold with thine eyes Christ hidden under the sacramental veil, and to be beheld by Him.

58. Thou dost receive the priest's benediction which is confirmed by Christ in heaven.

59. Through thy diligence in hearing Mass, thou wilt also obtain corporal and temporal blessings.

60. Furthermore, thou wilt be preserved from many misfortunes that would otherwise befall thee.

61. Thou wilt also be strengthened against temptations which would otherwise have vanquished thee.

62. Holy Mass will also be to thee the means of obtaining the grace of a holy death.

63. The love thou hast shown for Holy Mass will secure for thee the special succour of angels and saints in thy last moments.

64. The remembrance of the Masses heard in thy lifetime will be a sweet solace to thee in the hour of death, and inspire thee with confidence in the Divine mercy.

65. They will not be forgotten when thou dost stand before the Strict Judge, and will incline Him to show thee favour.

66. Thou needst not fear a long and terrible purgatory if thou hast already to a great extent atoned for thy sins by frequently assisting at Holy Mass.

67. One Mass devoutly heard will do more to mitigate the pains of purgatory than any act of penance, however difficult of performance.

68. One Mass in thy lifetime will be of greater service to thee than many said for thee after death.

69. Thou wilt attain a high place in heaven, which will be thine to all eternity.

70. Thy felicity in heaven will, moreover, be increased by every Mass thou hearest on earth.

71. No prayers offered for thy friends will be as efficacious as a single Mass heard and offered on their behalf.

72. Thou canst amply recompense all thy benefactors by hearing Mass for their intentions.

73. The best help, the greatest consolation, thou canst afford the afflicted, the sick, the dying, is to hear Mass for them.

74. By the same means thou canst, even obtain for sinners the grace of conversion.

75. Thou canst also earn for all faithful Christians saving and salutary graces.

76. For the suffering souls in purgatory thou canst procure abundant refreshment.

77. And, if it is not within thy power to have Mass said for thy departed friends, thou canst by devout assistance at the Holy Sacrifice release them from the tormenting flames.

What dost thou now think of Holy Mass, O Christian ? Can it be supposed that in the whole world there is any other good work whereby so many graces and fruits are placed within our reach ? It is no longer possible to question the truth of the words of Father Sanchez " If Christians only knew how to profit by Holy Mass they might acquire greater riches than are to be found in all the things God has created." We have indeed a precious storehouse in the Mass ; happy he who can earn treasures so great at the cost of so little labour ? Who would willingly miss Mass ? Who would not delight in hearing it ? Let us resolve never to lose an opportunity of hearing Mass, provided the duties of our state of life do not prevent us from doing so.

To omit hearing Mass daily merely from carelessness or indolence would be a proof that we were either ignorant of, or indifferent to, the Divine treasures it contains. God grant that those who read this book may in future appreciate more fully this pearl of great price, value it more highly, seek it more diligently.

THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL.

Our readers may not all be acquainted with the origin of the celebrated medal of the Immaculate Conception, commonly known as the miraculous medal, and which is now scattered by millions throughout every part of the world.

In the year 1830 a Sister of Charity received from God's infinite bounty a most precious favor. This holy soul was in adoration before the Most Blessed Sacrament, in the mother house of the Daughters of Saint Vincent of P. L. She had remained for some time in peaceful and profound recollection when, raising her eyes to look at the Tabernacle, a spectacle as unexpected as celestial, met her gaze. The chapel had disappeared in the splendor of dazzling radiance in the midst of which a woman of superhuman beauty was standing with hands lowered and outstretched towards the earth. Her hair flowed loosely over her shoulders. A gorgeous mantle of azure

hue fastened at the bosom, half concealed her arms and fell gracefully behind her like a royal vestment. Her dress was white and, as it were, luminous. Her uncovered feet crushed a serpent's head and rested on a large globe emblematic of the earth. Bright rays, symbolic of an effusion of grace streamed from her hands. A crown of twelve stars, more brilliant than the dazzling background on which they were defined, encircled her head. This heavenly apparition was surrounded by a resplendent inscription the words being plainly visibly : *O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to Thee.*

The Immaculate Virgin, for it was she, told the Sister to have a medal struck representing what she had seen, without changing anything. She added that this medal would be an exhaustless source of grace for the Church and the world.

At first there were many difficulties to contend with owing to opposition on the part of influential persons. The Sister was treated as a visionary and had to undergo a specie of persecution. At the end of five years however, all opposition was withdrawn and the Miraculous Medal appeared before the world.

The goldsmith to whom was offered the contract of striking a large number of them accepted it through piety alone. His devotion was rewarded. His earthly prospects were at their darkest when the sudden and astonishing diffusion of this little medal brought him a fortune. In the year 1870 it was estimated that more than a hundred millions of these medals had been spread over the world.

Among the thousand and thousand prodigies of which it has been the instrument, the following is perhaps one of the most beautiful and striking. Mgr. De Segur relates it in detail. He says—I myself was acquainted with the principal personages.

A young Israelite banker named Alphonse Ratisbonne came to Rome as a tourist, intending to pass some weeks in the city. However he became intensely bored and lonely almost immediately. Devoid of religion and indifferent to all he saw, he naturally felt out of place.

He had been recommended to the friendship of Baron De Bussières, an excellent man and fervent catholic. The

latter, desiring to show the young Jew some good specimens of christian Rome, introduced him to the noble family of De La Ferronnays. In this house a young child of angelic piety had coaxed M. Ratisbonne to accept and even wear a Miraculous Medal. The guest did not like to refuse a child, so he even promised, though unwillingly, to say the short prayer "O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee."

At this time, the young tourist, like the majority of wealthy and worldly youths, was frivolous and light. He was ignorant of almost everything relating to religion, and believed in nothing.

During the night of the 19th and 20th of January, he saw several times in a dream an unknown sign which he afterwards discovered to be the exact representation of the reverse side of the Miraculous Medal, that is, an M. surmounted by a cross and surrounded by twelve stars. He was mystified, but was far from suspecting that it was the prelude of the prodigy to be enacted for his salvation.

He passed the forenoon in a café. M. De Bussières went there in a carriage, as they intended driving together to the Forum, Coliseum and other celebrated monuments. They stopped for a moment before the unpretentious church of saint André delle Fratte as the Baron wished to make arrangements for the funeral of Count De La Ferronnays who had died quite suddenly the day before.

"Wait for me in the carriage, my young friend," said he to his companion. "I will be back in a minute." And, springing out, he went into the church.

The young Jew soon grew tired waiting. At the expiration of two or three minutes, he alighted in turn, curious to see if the church contained no old paintings or works of art. He entered. The church was empty. At a glance he scanned the insignificant and badly kept walls and then carelessly sauntered up the right side when, behold ! pavement, walls, church and everything vanished from his sight. In the second lateral chapel, to the left, a dazzling vision effaced all earthly objects : a woman, majestic and incomparably brighter than the sun, clad in white, a sky blue mantle on her shoulders, extended arms, open hands, the whole apparition beaming with heavenly sweetness. Without knowing how it happened,

the young Jew found himself at the other side of the chapel, kneeling on the marble railing at the feet of the Immaculate one. He tried to raise his face, but the Virgin elevated her right hand twice and laid it upon his head obliging him to bow it. He could however see her naked feet which seemed to rest on the altar, and her open hands lowered to him and emitting rays of ardent and living light.

Meanwhile M. de Bussières, who was in the sacristy, having regulated everything for the ceremony next day, returned to the church. He walked rapidly, for he felt uneasy having made his companion wait so long.

As soon as I put my foot in the church, said he afterwards, I felt a singular impression. I said to myself : "Something extraordinary has happened here !" Although I am very near sighted, I saw a man on his knees in front of the second chapel. It looked to me like Ratisbonne ; the white paletot was the same. "Folly !" I said to myself at the thought. All the same, I went a little nearer. Imagine my surprise or, rather, my stupefaction. It was indeed he—Ratisbonne. There he was kneeling, motionless. I approached closer, touched him lightly on the shoulder and called him by name. He did not move. I went still nearer and looked at him.

His face, was pallid and wet with tears.

"Ratisbonne" said I hurriedly, what is the matter, my friend, what has happened, what are you doing here ?

Raising his head, he recognized me and cast himself into my arms.

"Take me to a priest," said he with emotion. "Take me quickly and I will tell you all. I saw Her. It was She. She spoke no words, but I understood everything !"

We entered the carriage. He was totally overcome, and I was nearly as deeply moved as he. We drove to the Convent of the Gesu where I left him in the room or rather in the embrace of the excellent Father De Villefort. When he had somewhat regained his self control, he disclosed all, repeating : "I understand everything necessary and want to be baptized."

In effect, his religious instruction—the direct work of the Blessed Virgin,—was already complete. As he listened

to the explanations of the truths and mysteries of faith, he would say : " Yes, I know that. She did not tell me, but I understand all."

By order of the Holy Father, Gregory XVI, the solemn baptism of the young Jewish convert took place eight days afterwards, in the midst of an immense affluence. The Cardinal Vicar, representing the Supreme Pontiff, baptized and confirmed the happy recipient of the Immaculate Virgin privileges and favors—Alphonse Mary Ratisbonne—who soon after said adieu to the world and became a priest and religious.

Twenty eight years afterwards he was still living in Jerusalem at the head of a fervent community of converted Jews.

O Mary conceived without sin pray for us who have recourse to thee.

REFLECTIONS.

It is better to be obliged to account to God for too much gentleness than too much severity.

Life is an inn in which we must always keep our knapsack packed.

Night is as brilliant as day when God is in our hearts, and day is dark as night when He is absent from us.

Nothing can equal in merit the offering of our sorrows to Him who saved us by His own.

Meekness, gentleness of heart and evenness of temper, like the oil of a lamp, feed the flame of good example, for there is nothing so pleasing to others as charitable kindness.

We shall soon be in eternity and then we shall see how unimportant were all the concerns of this world, and

how little it mattered whether they were accomplished or not. Yet we are as anxious about them now as if they were things of great importance.

The sting of honey bees is much more painful than that of other bees ; so the malignity of a friend is exceedingly hard to bear, but we must submit to it and, in the end, love it as a precious cross.

SAINT FRANCIS OF SALES.

Let us always hold tightly to the thread of God's holy will ; it will enable us to traverse the labyrinth of life and will lead us safely to the centre which is none other than God Himself. :

DE RAVIGNAN, S. J.

Daily invoke the Blessed Virgin, to obtain her sure assistance at the hour of death. Saint John of God when in the last extremity, having had recourse to that mother of goodness, heard these gracious words, " John, I do not abandon my servants at this hour."

TO SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER.

As sunlight on thy native hills
 Is changed to amber wine,
 So light of friendship in thy heart
 Enkindled love divine.

Loyola touched to ardent flame
 Thy eager, restless heart,
 And kept alive thy burning zeal
 By love's own artless art.

And thou didst bear that holy fire
 To far-off India's strand,
 Thy crucifix a talisman
 In thy uplifted hand.

And there, 'neath palms and balsam trees
 And budding mango sprays,
 Thy words enkindled faith's bright torch
 To light earth's sin-dark ways.

Do thou, O gentle Saint, we plead,
 Touch our hearts into flame,
 That, with a zeal like thine, our lives
 May glorify God's name !

A NICOMEDIAN MAIDEN.

TOWARDS the third century a child was born in remote Nicomedia. The offspring of pagans, she was nevertheless to be brought to the true faith and to have a wonderful and very high destiny.

It is asserted that the celebrated Origen was one of her preceptors and that it was through him she was instructed in the truths of faith and received baptism. Jesus Christ was to reign as sovereign master in this innocent heart which was never to know worldly love.

At baptism she had received the name of Barbara and, as a proof of her gratitude to God for the immense favor of being withdrawn from the darkness of idolatry, she solemnly chose Jesus Christ as her spouse.

She was so beautiful that even her pagan father considered it unsafe to allow her to be seen in public, for he loved her exceedingly and wished all to respect her. He accordingly shut her up in a high tower to which no one had access save by his permission. What a strange proof of fatherly love, some may say. And surely it was, but then Dioscorus was a benighted pagan and a terribly bitter one, as we will see further on.

Although so well hidden in her tower the maiden was not forgotten. Suitors came asking her in marriage, but, at the mention of their desires, she showed such aversion to that state that her father urged her no more just then hoping that with time she would relent. As he intended leaving the city for a journey, Barbara asked him to have

windows built in her tower, to which he readily agreed ordering his workmen to make two large windows. His daughter, however, had three made in honor of the Blessed Trinity. She also had a cross raised near or over her tower.

This brought on the beginning of her persecution. At his return her father asked the meaning of the three windows and the signification of the cross, and hearing her explanations, delivered with such conviction, the irate pagan would have slain her on the spot had she not escaped miraculously. The interview took place outside the tower, and, as the enraged pagan drew his sword, Barbara, to spare him such a shocking crime, fled. Her flight was however arrested by an immense rock which, through the interposition of Providence, opened at the moment of her father's approach, allowing her to pass through and emerge on the other side. Here she found a cavern which she entered, and thus escaped immediate death.

Nothing, however, could soften the flinty heart of Dioscorus. He had witnessed the cleaving of the rock and had seen his once loved child carried by an impetuous wind to a place of safety. But he remembered his shattered idols, thrown down during his absence by his daughter's command; and then had he not seen everywhere throughout his mansion that sign of the Christians he detested—the Cross?

The saint's retreat was discovered by a shepherd who gave Dioscorus the greedily craved information of his child's hiding place. We pass over the brutal treatment inflicted by the heathen on his daughter. Let it suffice to say that, after giving full vent to his rage, he dragged her home and flung her in a dungeon there to await further cruelties.

Her divine Spouse did not forsake the poor sufferer. He sent an angel to assure her of His care and protection.

“Fear not,” O christian maiden, ” said the heavenly visitant; “God will remain with thee in thy struggles; He will protect and support thee.”

The future martyr knelt on the damp ground of her gloomy cell. There she offered her blood and her life to Him she had chosen as her Spouse. She had already

taken the first steps in the bloody arena of the martyrs. She had still to suffer two days longer to complete the number three which she had chosen out of devotion to the Blessed Trinity.

Barbara was soon dragged before the President who, at sight of this young and modest christian, blamed the father for his severity towards her and commanded her fetters to be removed. But blandishments were of no avail, and the president, at last growing irritated to excess, by her determination, cast aside all restraint and ordered his satellites to inflict the most unheard of and atrocious cruelties on the unoffending girl. She was scourged till the blood flowed in streams over the pavement. The pagans themselves, witnesses of the sickening sight, could not keep back their tears.

The desire of martyrdom had burned in her heart ever since her conversion. She now joyfully hailed its approach. Jesus Christ appeared to her on the eve of the consummation of the sacrifice ; He comforted and consoled his willing victim, and, on leaving, healed the terrible wounds which had been inflicted on her.

The hour of triumph, but also of supreme suffering, had now come, for if the martyr's palm was waving within her reach, how fierce the struggle by which it was to be won ! The spouse of Christ was, alas ! to be whipped naked through the city before being decapitated. This was the shocking and barbarous sentence which weighed her soul down with grief. The pains inflicted on her body were nothing compared to this outrage on her modesty. " Lord," she cried in her anguish, " Thou who dost cover the sky with clouds, who dost robe the flowers in their beauty, and dost envelop the earth with impenetrable darkness, come to my aid in this critical hour. In the name of Thy infinite bounty, veil Thy servant !

This trustful and fervent prayer was answered on the spot. A long robe and a vast mantle of dazzling splendor concealed the Virgin from all eyes and spared her the mockery of the crowd.

Reaching the summit of the mountain, on which the sentence was to be executed, the Saint, feeling, by her own experience, how painful it is to be deprived of the assis-

tance afforded by the last sacraments, knelt down and asked God that all those who would honor her martyrdom might, at their last hour, receive the sacraments with holy dispositions. A heavenly voice was heard on the instant saying :

“ Come, beloved of God, come and enjoy everlasting rest in the Father’s bosom ; come to receive thy crown ; heaven’s gates are open to thee. All thou hast asked is granted.”

Filled with heavenly consolation the Saint exclaimed : “ Father into thy hands I commend my spirit,” and the headsman—her wretched father—dealt the blow which gave a glorious martyr to heaven.

As her old chronicler says : while her blood was streaming and was soaking the earth, the angels, who were waiting for her deliverance, took her soul and bore it to paradise.

Saint Barbara is represented with a ciborium or chalice surmounted by a host, as if carrying Holy Viaticum to those who invoke her. In effect, her power, in similar cases, has often been experienced. It will be remembered that, in the miraculous incident recorded in Saint Stanislaus’ life, when he received Holy Communion during a grave illness, the angel who carried him the Blessed Sacrament was accompanied by Saint Barbara.

The Saint is also represented at times leaning on a tower with three windows, in allusion to her profession of faith in the Blessed Trinity.

She is invoked against lightning and sudden death, her executioners having been killed by fire from heaven while descending the mountain after her martyrdom. Her feast is kept on the 4th of December.

Grant, O almighty and eternal God, that, through the intercession of Saint Barbara, I may not die a sudden or unprovided death, but that I may beforehand repent of my sins and do penance for them. Grant also that I may love Thee with my whole heart, receive the last Sacraments worthily and thus be prepared to enter into eternal life. Through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

THE CRIB AT GRECIO IN 1223.

Love, burning love for Jesus Christ as the Babe of Bethlehem and the Bleeding Victim on Calvary was the characteristic of the Seraph of Assisi; and we learn that a place among the highest seraphim was his reward. Happy they who were privileged to follow this great Saint during his lifetime, and to witness his generosity and zeal in the service of God. Surely they too were blessed in the miraculous favors conferred on him.

One of his historians thus recounts how Saint Francis prepared to commemorate Our Lord's birth. While still in Rome, whither he had gone on account of matters relating to his Order, the Saint resolved to celebrate the festival of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ at Grecio with all possible solemnity, in order to awaken the devotion of the faithful in that vicinity. He wrote to his friend, John of Velita, begging him to prepare everything; and that there should be no room for censuring what he was about to do, he spoke of it to the Holy Father who approved highly of this pious ceremony and granted indulgences to those who would assist at it.

Having reached Grecio, Saint Francis found all things already prepared by his friend Velita. A crib had been made in the woods, also a representation of the nativity of Our Saviour. Straw had been placed in it and, towards evening, they led thither an ox and an ass. Many Friars Minor had collected there from the neighboring convents, and the people of the surroundings came in crowds to the ceremony.

It was the first time the festival was celebrated in this way. At nightfall the wood was lit up by numerous torches and resounded melodiously with the music of a thousand voices singing God's praises for the gift of a Redeemer. Saint Francis, full of holy joy, knelt before the manger, above which an altar had been placed. He was deacon at the Mass which was celebrated at midnight, and after singing the Gospel, he preached on the birth of the newborn King, to whom, from a sentiment of great affection, he gave the name of the Child of Bethlehem. During

this devout ceremony a most beautiful Infant, new-born and apparently asleep, was seen lying in the manger. Saint Francis, his eyes bathed in tears, clasped It to his heart and covered It with caresses.

There is all the more reason for believing this marvel, that he, who relates it as having been an eye witness of it, was a most saintly man, and that it was confirmed by other miracles.

The straw on which the Child lay had the virtue of curing disease ; and, what is still more wonderful, those who visited the spot, however tepid and indevout they might have been, were inflamed with the love of God.

After the Saint's death a chapel was erected on the spot with an altar over the manger in which Our Lord had appeared as a sleeping Babe.

A CHRISTMAS MASS.

IT was on a fast mail train, bound for Chicago. Christmas morn had once more descended on the land. Daylight was just beginning to break through a pile of snow clouds that hung in the eastern sky. Field and forest, house and hamlet were passed in rapid succession. In one of the cars, with the aid of a number of lights that were turned low, you could distinguish tons upon tons of mail matter, piled up between the stall posts. The crew of worn out and drowsy postal clerks were gathered around their chief, giving, one after another, a detailed account of their long, tedious night's work. A look down the aisle of the mail-laden car could not fail to impress you with its order. The numerous sharp corners which protruded from the canvas sacks, told the experienced mail-tesser, that Christmas gifts constituted the main bulk of to-day's delivery. And so the "flyer" sped onward in its rapid course towards the western metropolis, bearing the many tokens of friendship and affection which should gladden the hearts of thousands on this ever joyful Christmas morning.

The staff of the mail car was composed of five staunch

Catholic lads, who had resolved, the night before, to hear Mass and go to their Christmas duty at the earliest possible moment, after "registering in" at the end of the run. But, alas! away back at Prairie Lodge the chief had received the message, the contents of which all were dreading. It ran thus—"Take your crew back on No. 25 a. 6 p. m. Report for duty at car, at 2 p. m. sharp."

These orders brought consternation to our mail clerk.

"Well," said one bright young fellow, the "baby" of the crew, "what are we going to do about it? You know, chief, it will never do to miss Mass on a Christmas morning. I never did it in all my life."

"No use, boys" replied the chief quietly, but firmly: "I order each and every one of you to go to bed at once after we unload. There isn't a priest in the United States who would tell you, that you had to hear Mass in a case like this—and I positively forbid it." But, all the same, the chief issued these orders with a heavy heart and a perceptible toggling at his throat. "I'm going back to the buffet," he continued, "and get some breakfast now, to save time; there is no use of fasting longer, if we are to be beaten out of our Communion."

And two more of the crew followed him, evidently of the same mind. Charley, the porter, was already up and busy blacking shoes.

"Guess I bettah wake up dat young pries'," said he: "for he say to be suuah and call him eahly."

"What's that, Charley, a priest aboard?"

"Yes, chief," answered the conductor, just coming up. "It's Father K—, of C—, he is just returning from a mission."

"Where's his berth?"

"Over there in No. 4."

"Come, on boys," called the chief, "this is our chance. No doubt, he has his chalice, vestments and all the necessary outfit with him, and, if so, we'll have a Christmas Mass that will be an event in the history of this crew."

"What are you going to do now, chief?" inquired the conductor; but the chief was already pulling aside the berth curtains to call the half-wakened priest.

“Come on, Father, get up; you must say Mass in a queer chapel this morning. The chance is too good to let it go by. I’ll be bound—”

“Wha--what?” inquired the priest with surprise. But the boys had already laid hands tenderly on his valises, and were eagerly awaiting to take up the march forward to the postal car. In a few moments the priest had donned his cassock and followed in amazement.

As we reached our own car a clear ringing voice struck up the beautiful Christmas processional, “Adeste Fideles,” and, involuntarily, all of us, including the priest, who, by this time, had been enlightened as to our situation, joined in the chorus.

In the farther end of the car we found a pile of mail bags, some of them registered, whose aggregate value of contents amounted to thousands of dollars, if not more. And on this strange, improvised altar, the priest prepared to offer the Holy Sacrifice! It was perhaps the first and only one of the kind ever erected. No need to go back to the awful days of the Irish persecution, nor to the time of the Roman catacombs for a church romance. Imagine for a moment, if you can, the scene in the mail car on that memorable Christmas morning. The faintest light from without, the lanterns of the conductor and brakeman, added to the lamps within, and the three candles borrowed from Charley, the porter, partially and barely enough illuminated this strange miniature chapel where the Sacrifice of Calvary was renewed in a bloodless manner during that early Christmas hour. Five grimy, hungry and sleepy postal clerks in their overalls, and the conductor and brakeman were the only worshippers, kneeling apart, one by one, and making their confessions to the young priest, who was so suddenly and strangely called to exercise his priestly powers!

And that Mass! It is, indeed, doubtful if ever a priest at the altar was served by a man, wearing instead of altar garments, a suit of overalls and one of “Uncle Sam’s mail slinger” uniforms; a choir composed of three more in the same regulation garb—young fellows who had seen “volunteer service” in more than one choir during their younger days—their clear, sonorous voices contend-

ing with and rising above the rumble and roar of the wheels as these clicked off fifty miles or so an hour ! And the conductor and brakeman kneeling on either side of our little altar, holding it up to keep it from toppling over with the sway of the train. Nay, at times, we would fairly have to steady the priest to keep him on his feet. Oh, what a thrill went through us, as the boys repeated the angel's hymn, "Gloria in Excelsis Deo !" No time to stop for a sermon, and, indeed, it was doubtful, if our priest could have composed himself to deliver one. It was a race against time. And as the solemn chant "Sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth" resounded through the car and the sacred moments of consecration arrived, our hearts swelled with joy, that in spite of our life amidst the din and tumult of an uproarious railway, we could, this blessed Christmas morning, unite with the priest in offering up our prayers of thanksgiving for the gracious birth of the Prince of Peace, the Redeemer of His people.

We still recall with pleasure the look of triumph that lighted up our good priest's countenance as he turned towards us at last to distribute Holy Communion to the crew.

After Mass, with brimming eyes, he gave to each his blessing, and as all the boys slyly pressed their "Christmas offering" into his unwilling hand, he could no longer restrain his feelings. Throwing his arms about us he gave each the kiss of peace.

Such was the Christmas Mass arranged by a brave railroad crew, and as our informant well remarked, "probably it was the only one ever said in a post-office on wheels."

SAGITTA.

OBITUARY.

On Saturday, the 9th of October, at the Monastery of the Precious Blood, Mount Olivet, Toronto, Sister Mary Aloysius, in the world Annie Elizabeth Harris, succumbed to a long illness.

The deceased religious entered the Community more

than five years ago, pronouncing her Vows as a Sister of the Precious Blood, Feb. 16th 1894. Since then all aspirations were merged in the one aim of a religious soul called to follow Jesus Christ in the path of perfection—the attainment of a resemblance to the Pattern of the elect. Talent and strength, while it lasted, were employed generously in laboring for God's glory through the extension of the Devotion of the Institute. Death, which was to her the gentle call of the Beloved inviting her to receive the reward of her short life, found her surrounded by devoted Sisters and sustained by all the succors which religion so freely imparts to the departing soul.

Sister Mary Aloysius was the third and dearly loved daughter of Mr. C. Harris of Toronto, and was in her twenty fifth year.

While applying to her the words : “ Blessed are they who have washed their robes in the Blood of the Lamb,” we still solicit a prayer from our readers for the repose of her soul.

A HUMBLE HERO.

A beautiful instance of the filial devotion which often, thank God ! sweetens the lives of the poor was brought to light last month in Belgium. For many years a young man supported himself and his widowed mother on his slender earning as a street-sweeper. The widow was old and sickly ; and her son, eager to secure for her some of the little comforts which her age and the state of her health required, worked doubly hard, and deprived himself, unknown to his mother, of many of the actual necessities of life.

The excessive labor and privations soon told upon his health, and he was compelled to go to the Hospital of Bon Pasteur, in one of the suburbs of Brussels. He grew worse rapidly, and when he felt his end approaching begged to be taken home to his mother. The doctors assured him that the removal would only hasten his death ; but the poor fellow renewed his request, adding : *Ik wil bij moeder sterven* “ I want to die near my good mother.”

He was tenderly removed in a carriage to his mother's home, and died the very same day.

The young street-sweeper had been a great favorite among his friends and neighbors, and it was determined to give him a grand funeral. A popular subscription was made, and the body of the hero was arranged in a beautiful coffin and surrounded with lights and flowers. Three hundred persons kept watch by turns beside the body, and the burgomaster of the town delivered a public eulogy. Then the first magistrate of the Commune and all the street-sweepers of the city followed the hearse to the cemetery. The cheery voice of this humble hero is heard no more on the streets ; but the memory of his virtues hovers like a blessing over the city, to cheer and ennoble the lives he left behind.

Ave Maria.

NOTES, ETC.

Some weeks ago our esteemed contemporary, the "Sacred Heart Review," published a favorable and encouraging notice of the "Voice of the Precious Blood."

It gives us pleasure to express our appreciation of this act of courtesy.

THINGS CATHOLICS SHOULD KNOW.

The various nations of Europe are represented in the list of Popes as follows : English, 1 ; Dutch, 1 ; Swiss, 1 ; Portuguese, 1 ; African, 2 ; Australian, 2 ; Spanish, 5 ; German, 6 ; Syrian, 8 ; Greek, 14 ; French, 15 ; Italian, 197. Eleven Popes reigned over twenty years ; sixty-nine from ten to twenty ; fifty-seven from five to ten, and the reign of 116 was less than five years. The reign of Pius IX. was the only one exceeding twenty-five years. Pope Leo XIII. is the 258th Pontiff in regular succession from St. Peter. The College of Cardinals is 70 when full,

namely, 6 Cardinal Bishops, 50 Cardinal Priests and 14 Cardinal Deacons.

Henneberry.—The Very Rev. P. Henneberry, C. P. P. S., one of the best-known missionary priests on the Pacific Coast, died Sept. 12 in Virginia City, Nev. He was stricken with paralysis while conducting a mission in Virginia City. Father Henneberry was one of the most zealous, most self-sacrificing and most successful of missionaries. He was a member of the Society of the Precious Blood, and was superior of the house in Alton, Cal. There is not an English-speaking country where his voice has not been heard preaching the Gospel. Father Henneberry was born in the parish of Mooncoin, County Kilkenny, Ireland, in 1830. He left home in 1847 and entered the Congregation of the Precious Blood in Ohio. His wonderful talent for acquiring languages specially fitted him for the missions. He could preach in many Indian dialects and in African and Asiatic tongues, with most of the modern European languages. A few excerpts from his notebook will show the vastness of his labors. He records that he gave 126 missions in Australia alone, administered the sacraments to and pledged 22,730 in New Zealand, 2,100 in Tasmania, 14,490 in Queensland, 800 in Wagga, 1,300 in Bathurst. To reach this grand total of 41,420 souls he had to travel 26,593 miles. This is but one page from his notes and but a very small portion of his labors. Father Henneberry leaves three relatives on the coast, two sisters—Mrs. John Moran, of Virginia City and Mrs. Rollins, of Oakland, and a niece, Sister Alicia of the Dominican Order, San Leandro. The fatal attack came upon him whilst he was celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Requiescat in pace !

PRAYERS SOLICITED.

1. To obtain that the rich be heartily attentive to the prayer of the poor begging assistance, and that, in return, the prayer of the poor may call down upon the rich treasures of grace and mercy. 2 For every kind of misery—both spiritual and temporal—claiming our prayers and sacrifices.

LET US PRAY FOR THE DEAD particularly, for : The Rev. M. POTHIER, curate at Warwick ; Sr. M. ANTRA, of the Institute of the Blessed Mary, at Hamilton, Ont. ; Sr. M. EUPHROSQUE of the Sisters of St-Joseph's, Toronto ; for MM. Vital Cyr, Principal Normal School, deceased at Fort-Kent ; Silas Chevall, at Oregon ; Marc Berard, at St-Francois-Xavier de Shefford ; Patrick Kelly, at Buffalo ; Francois Parent, at Casselman ; Frank Leonard, at Wickham ; Felix Joyal, at St-Francois du Lac ; Euclide St-Amour, at Acton-Vale ; Toussaint Paquet, at St-Theodore d'Acton ; Georges Turgeon, at Cohoes ; Francois Lecours, at Ste-Sophie d'Halifax ; Honore Seguin, at St-Paul l'Ermite ; Louis Jacques, at Woonsocket ; J. L. Vincent, at Longueuil ; Pascal Houle, at Manchester ; Cyrille Choquette, at St-Damase ; Francois Leclerc, at St-Hyacinthe. For Mrs Delia Covey, at Lawrence ; Mrs Widow Francois Ferland, at Ste-Marie de Beauce ; Mrs David Vanasse, at St-Guillaume ; Mrs Mary Morrison, at St-Gabriel de Brandon ; Mrs Celina Labranche, at New-Market ; Mrs Jos. Beauregard, at Ste-Angele ; Mme Paul Lamarche, at St-Isidore ; Mrs J. B. Lemay, at St-Jude ; Mrs William and Mary Carr, at Central Falls ; Misses Hermine Fredette, at St-Ours ; Clementine Leduc, at St-Stanislas de Koska, etc.

For all these persons and intentions, let us say, morning and night :

We pray Thee, O Lord, help Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy Precious Blood.

(100 days ind. for members of the Confraternity of the P. B.)

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, enlighten us, assist us, save us. Amen.

200 days ind. once a day.

Leo XIII. 20, June, 1892.

THANKSGIVINGS

FOR FAVORS OBTAINED THROUGH PRAYER TO THE
MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD.

“ After having suffered for almost two years with my throat I now experience great relief, through a novena made in honor of the Sacred Heart and the application of the league badge and also through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin I now desire to fulfil my promise. Please publish in the “ Voice of the Precious Blood.”

“ I beg you to publish in the “ Voice of the Precious Blood ” the following. I have received so many favors both spiritual and temporal through the Novena to the Precious Blood and the intercession of Saint Anthony, Saint Joseph, and Saint Expedit that I wish to thank God publicly and pray you to make another Novena in my intention in honor of the Precious Blood.”

Toronto. A lady wishing to obtain a situation made a novena, promising that, if successful, she would publish her thanks in the Voice of the Precious Blood. The position was obtained.

Thanksgiving to Saint Joseph, and Saint Anthony of Padua.

Many other favors, conversions, cures, etc., have been obtained, through novenas to the Most Precious Blood.
