



THE ARCHANGEL

St. Michael's School and Parish • Harts Lane • Burghclere • RG20 9JW

No. 39

April 2021

No Life without Death

Holy Week, with its three solemn and sacred days in which we commemorate and relive the passion, death, and burial of Our Lord, is an occasion to meditate on the inescapable cycle of death and life. We usually speak of "life and death." But this is to see things the wrong way round. Life does not end in death, it is death that ends in life. In other words, death is not a termination and a close, but a beginning and a dawn. Death conditions life. It is the ultimate medicine of eternal vigor.

The death-life cycle is the pattern and blueprint of the redeemed universe. Reality is molded and built according to its inescapable design. We will never be at harmony with ourselves nor with the world if we do not submit to the laws of its architecture.

In the beginning there was Life Eternal shared by the Three Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity. This life was first shared with the angelic world. Angels were created in the state of grace. Next, mankind came into being. Adam received not only life of the body, but also life of the soul. The grace given to him was the seed of eternal life. He possessed a divine gift which enabled him to call heaven his home.

Mankind was created for life. He was preserved from death by the gift of immortality. His existence was all about radiance, vitality, and delight. Eden was a place of earthly beatitude. But there also roamed the serpent.

Sin introduced death into the world. Just as sin constituted a rupture between the wills of God and Adam, so it brought about a breach in the glorious flow of life and light. Adam's soul became void of divine life. Created to serve as a receptacle and temple of divinity, it was now empty and cold. Thus human life lost its purpose and became destined to wither and die.

God in His mercy instantly promised us a Saviour. He determined to win back humanity's original destiny, by atoning for its sins. We all know the story.

It is admirable to see how God goes about His work. Satan had triumphed when he delivered life unto death. With the advent of sin, the life of both soul and body came to an abrupt and irremediable end. Man was permanently crippled. Satan was jubilant. In the symphony of creation, he had had the last word. The divine music had veered into cacophony.

In order to show not only His mercy, but also His enduring and indisputable sovereignty, God decides that He will not eradicate death. Rather He will turn death from an end into a means. It will no longer be the path to hell but a passage to heaven. Thus, Satan's cacophony becomes the prelude to a new symphony, more glorious than the first. Christ submits Himself to death in all its ugliness and ferocity, allowing its bite and poison to destroy His divine Humanity. Christ's death is the most painful of deaths, since He is robbed of the most vivacious of lives, but it is too much for life's enemy. To overcome such life, death has overreached itself.

Christ's personal contact with death is death's death-knell. The poison of life is poisoned by greater Life. Death dies. It is no longer the end of something; it is now a preparation and beginning. The very disease spread by Satan becomes its own cure. Christ's death was the means of His resurrection. It is also the means of our future resurrection, as living members of His Mystical Body

As we meditate on the Man of Sorrows, we should think of our own sorrows and pains and join them to Christ's in patient acceptance. Pain and sorrow will always hurt. Yet we must persevere. Not only must we carry our cross, we must also be ready to be crucified to it. Before we murmur against God's Providence, think of what He is trying to do with us. He is trying not to destroy us, but to vitalize us: *"Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."* (Jo. 12:24)

Fr. John Brucciani, Prior

Our Lady's Passion

At Fatima, on October 13, 1917, during the miracle of the sun, the children saw Our Heavenly Mother appear as Our Lady of Sorrows. In the Gospels, we read of Our Lady of Sorrows at the foot of the cross watching her Son die. If you wish to know and love Jesus more, get to know and love His mother more. St. Louis de Montfort says: "The more a soul is consecrated to Mary the more it is consecrated to Jesus!"

But who is Mary? This magnificent masterpiece of God's creation was Immaculate from the first moment of her conception. She was conceived without the stain of original sin upon her soul. She was never at any moment under the power of Satan. Her will was always in perfect union with the Will of God. How else could there be enmity between her, the woman, and the devil, between her seed and his seed as quoted in Genesis, "She shall crush your head"?

She is the Co-Redemptrix. She cooperated perfectly with our Lord for our redemption. Her great grief was watching her Beloved Son die on the cross and not being able to die instead of Him. However, Our Lady's greatest affliction is the ingratitude of men toward Our Lord's great sacrifice and death. She alone knows and understands completely what Our Lord endured for our salvation. She alone realizes and comprehends the horror of sin and how much one sin offends God, who is infinite goodness, love and mercy. She alone fully understands that God is the source of all goodness; that man, who was created out of nothing, can do no good on his own. All the good we do, all the grace we possess, comes from God. In order for that grace to work in us, we must cooperate with it.

The only gift that we own completely and can give to God is our free will, and Our Lady knows this. That is why in the gospels, when St. Elizabeth said, "Blessed art thou among women," our Heavenly Mother responded, "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Creator, for He that is Holy has done great things for me and Holy is His Name."

Her love for mankind is great because she loves us as God loves us. Her love for us is shown beautifully in her Seven Sorrows. Tradition says that Mary's heart was pierced seven times with seven swords of sorrow. These constitute her seven dolours. These seven swords were seven thrusts of one double-edged sword—the sword being Jesus Christ

Himself—one edge piercing His own Sacred Heart first and the other edge cutting into her Immaculate Heart. Love unites, and in their union, Mary suffered her Son's passion. Who is there who loves, who does not want to share the sorrows of the beloved? Mary could not wipe away the tears of her children unless she herself had been their fountain. She has rightly earned the title Mother of the Afflicted.

St. Paul tells us that we cannot be partakers of His Glory unless we partake in His crucifixion. Being the Mother of God has made Mary no less exempt from this law of sacrifice.

The seven swords that pierced the Immaculate Heart of Our Heavenly Mother are:

- 1) Simeon's Prophecy
- 2) The flight into Egypt
- 3) The three days' loss in the temple
- 4) Meeting Jesus with His cross
- 5) The crucifixion
- 6) Taking Jesus down from the cross
- 7) The burial of Jesus

Mary's heart was one with her Divine Son's Heart. Her sorrow was not for what she suffered, but for what He had to suffer. Love never thinks of itself. If Jesus belonged to the sinner, then so would she.



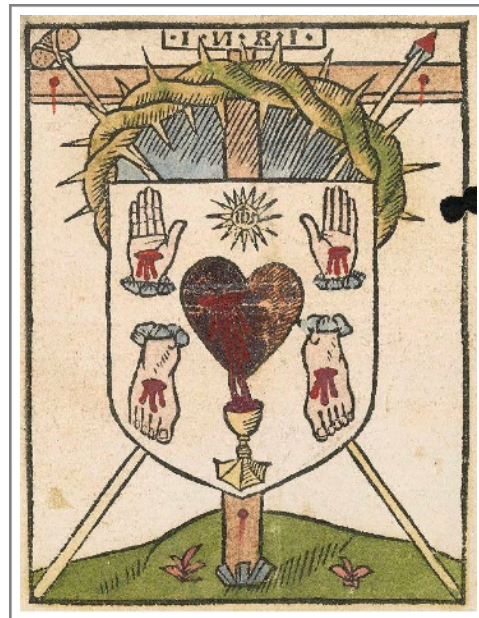
The Five Wounds

In his great book: *The Imitation of Christ*, Thomas à Kempis, speaks of resting or "abiding" in Christ's wounds. *"If you can not soar up as high as Christ sitting on his throne, behold him hanging on his cross. Rest in Christ's Passion and live willingly in his holy wounds. You will gain marvelous strength and comfort in adversities You will not care that men despise you. . . Had we but, with Thomas, put our fingers into the print of his nails and thrust our hands into his side! If we had we but known ourselves his sufferings in a deep and serious consideration and tasted the astonishing greatness of his love, the joys and miseries of the life would soon become indifferent to us."*

Devotion to the Five Wounds of Christ developed during the Middle Ages. Popular piety focused with increased intensity on the Passion of Christ and therefore held in special honor the wounds inflicted upon him in his suffering. Although many medieval mystics totaled these wounds at 5,466, popular devotion focused upon the five wounds associated directly with his crucifixion, namely the nail wounds on his hands and feet as well as the lance wound which pierced his heart, as opposed to the other numerous wounds received during Christ's scourging and by his crown of thorns. An image containing two hands, two feet, and disembodied wound served as a memory aid for such devotion.

Veneration of these sacred wounds is seen as early as 532 when St John the Evangelist was believed to have revealed to Pope Boniface II a Mass in their honour, later known as the Golden Mass. It was through the preaching of St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) and St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) that devotion to the Holy Wounds became widespread. For these saints, the Wounds pointed to the fulfillment of Christ's love because God, humbled himself by taking on vulnerable flesh and died to free mankind from death. The preachers encouraged Christians to strive to imitate this perfect example of love. There were many medieval prayers honouring the Wounds. Even the Cross of Jerusalem, or "Crusaders' Cross", was designed around the five wounds through its five crosses.

Theologically, the wounds were the channels through which Christ's blood was spilled. This "precious blood" sealed for Christians a new covenant to replace the old covenant of Moses. Whereas once a sacrificial lamb was offered to God in atonement for sins, now divine blood from the only victim pure enough to atone for all of humanity's transgressions was offered. Thus, Christ's death was a perfect sacri-



fice that destroyed the power of sin, and therefore death, over humanity. Particular significance is given to the lance wound from which flowed blood and water. The blood is linked with the Eucharistic blood received at Masses and the water with the cleansing of original sin at baptism (the two sacraments believed to be necessary to achieve eternal life). Thus, just as Eve issued from the side of Adam, the Church is considered to be mystically born of Christ's wounds via the sacraments. The blood of Christ's sacrifice will wash and therefore purify and redeem the Church.

The image of the Five Wounds is well known thanks to the famed and tragic *Pilgrimage of Grace* of 1536. The *Pilgrimage of Grace* was the most substantial uprising of Henry VIII's reign. Originating in Yorkshire, it spread to other parts of Northern England, rallying tens of thousands of common people and also many of the lesser nobility. The uprising demanded a halt to the dissolution of the monasteries and a return to the old religious ways so attacked under Henry and Cromwell. The gathering adopted the image of the Five Wounds of Christ for its banner and badge.

It may seem strange to some that we venerate specific parts of our Saviour's bruised body. Yet, this devotion is not only rooted in Tradition, it is also theologically correct. Just as we venerate our Lord's Most Sacred Heart, we also pay honour to the other parts of His Sacred Body which bore the burden of our sins. It is the body of God, divine and therefore worthy of adoration. Devotion to our Lord's Heart, Head or Hands is just another way of honoring the mystery of the Hypostatic Union and the Incarnation, when "the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us".*

THANK YOU!

... for your recent generosity. Here are the totals collected last month for various good causes.

- SPUC White Flower Appeal: £355
- Priory Bathroom fittings: £1015 (4 givers)
- Cake sale: £260 (13 sold)

THANK YOU!

... also to our chapel cleaners who silently and discreetly keep the chapel clean and tidy. Some might think that the angels look after the cleaning. They do.

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Please note: The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed from 11:30 to 16:00 on 12th April. This is part of the SSPX's worldwide daily adoration. Bookings will be made available via the noticeboard to help us ensure that the Blessed Sacrament is watched by sufficient numbers.

MARRIAGE BANNES

Paul Smeaton of Leckhamstead, formerly London, and **Genevieve Degeorge** of London, formerly Chartres, plan to be married. Any persons knowing of an impediment to this marriage should contact a priest without delay.

5th Precept: Providing for the needs of the Church

Maintenance and upkeep of priests and priory



For alms deliver from all sin, and from death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness.

The community of priests and brothers wish you all a happy and blessed Easter. Thank you for all the prayers. We assure you of our daily prayers.

Liturgical Calendar and Mass Times - April

1	Maundy Thursday	See schedule
2	Good Friday	See schedule
3	Holy Saturday	See schedule
4	Easter	7:30
	2nd Collection for District Seminary Fund	9:00, 11:00
		No Benediction
5	Easter Monday	7:30
6	Easter Tuesday	7:30
7	Easter Wednesday	7:30
8	Easter Thursday	7:30
9	Easter Friday	7:30
10	Easter Saturday	7:30/12:00
11	Low Sunday	6:30, 7:30
		9:00, 17:00
		18:00 Benediction
12	Feria - Adoration Blessed Sacrament 11:30 - 16:00	7:15
13	St. Hermenegild, Martyr	7:15
14	St. Justin, Martyr	7:15
15	Feria	7:15
16	Feria	7:15
17	Saturday of Our Lady	7:30/12:00
18	Good Shepherd Sunday	6:30, 7:30
		9:00, 17:00
		18:00 Benediction
19	Feria	7:15
20	Feria	7:15
21	St. Anselm, Bishop, Confessor & Doctor	7:15
22	Ss Soter & Caius, Popes & Martyrs	7:15
23	St. George, Martyr	7:15
24	St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen, Martyr	7:30/12:00
25	Third Sunday after Easter	6:30, 7:30
		9:00, 17:00
		18:00 Benediction
26	Ss Cletus & Marcellinus, Popes & Martyrs	7:15
27	St. Peter Canisius, Confessor & Doctor	7:15
28	St. Paul of the Cross, Confessor	7:15
29	St. Peter of Verona, Martyr	7:15
30	St. Catherine of Siena, Virgin & Doctor	7:15
1	St. Joseph the Workman	7:30/12:00

MASS ATTENDANCE REMAINS REGULATED.

Please use the noticeboard booking system to ensure that everyone is spread out across all the Masses. Please also observe as best possible the hygiene requirements of these strange times, out of respect for others.

<https://noticeboard.sanctusmichael.com/stmichaels/>