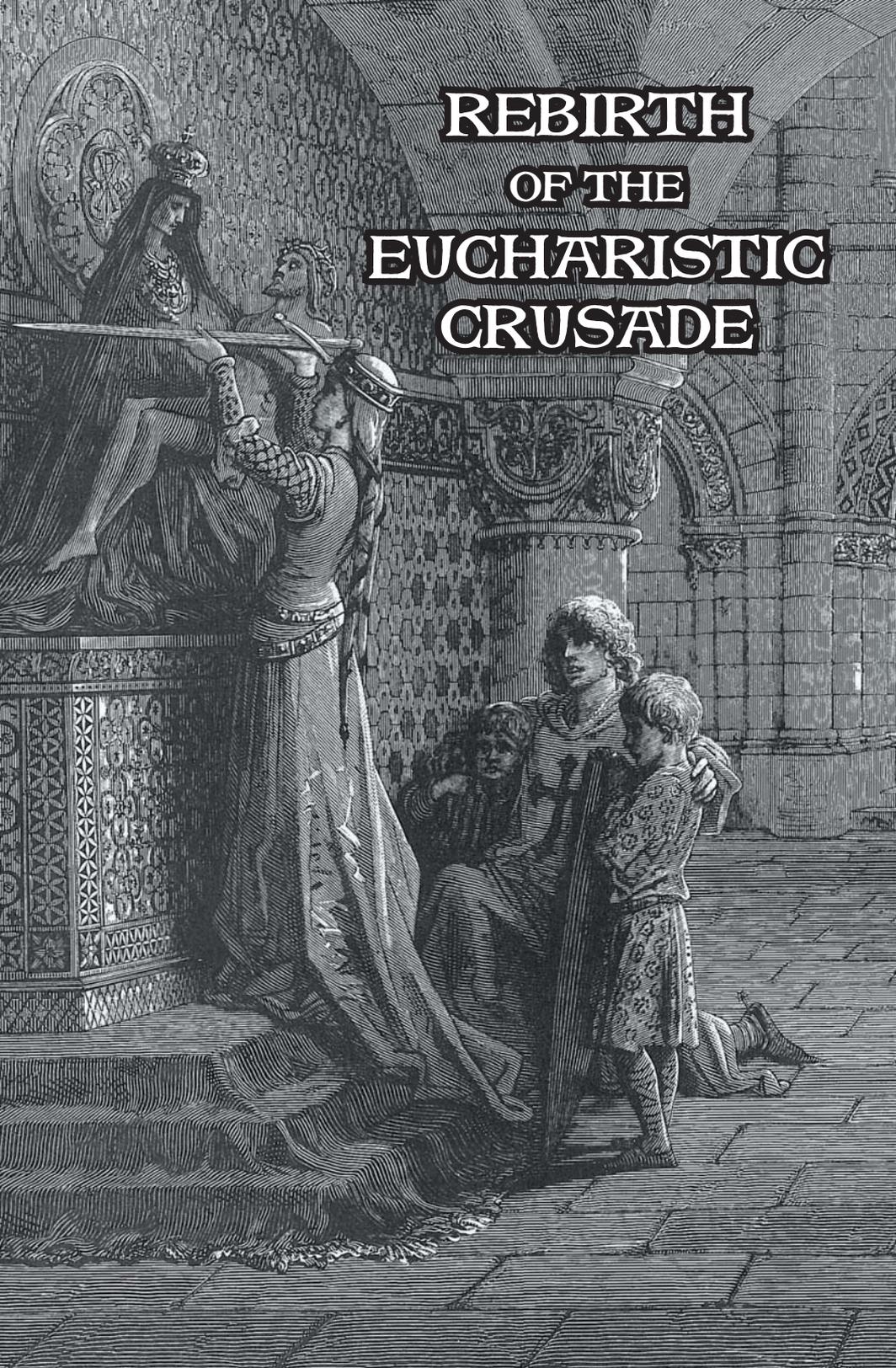
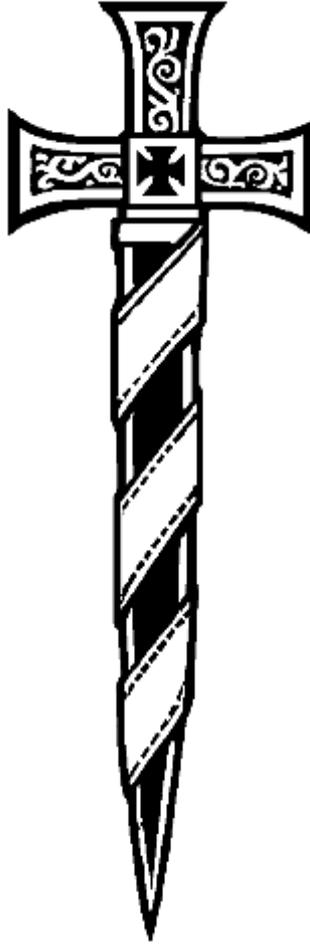


REBIRTH OF THE EUCCHARISTIC CRUSADE





Rebirth of the Eucharistic Crusade
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REBIRTH OF THE EUCCHARISTIC CRUSADE

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Translated by father J. Pazat



On the evening of August 19, 1914, the toll of St. Peter's announced to the Romans and to the world that Pope Pius X was dying. He was the Pope who opened the way of Holy Communion to children.

He "was the Pope of the Blessed Sacrament in our times... If we were to remain silent, the multitudes of children today and yesterday will stand to praise the one who lowered the barricades that kept them away from their friend of the Tabernacle... If we were to remain silent the altars of the Blessed Sacrament themselves will raise their voices to witness the exuberant blossoming of sainthood in innumerable souls for whom the frequent and daily Communion became the fundamental rule of Christian perfection, thanks to this Pontiff's actions."

—Pope Pius XII, June 20, 1951



Y HIS DECREES, *Quam singulari*, about the Communion of children (July 8, 1910), and *Sacra Tridentina synodus* (December 20, 1905) about daily Communion, St.

Pius X laid the foundation of what became an impressive Church organization by its spiritual influence and its extension: the **Children's Eucharistic Crusade**.

Therefore, in homage to the holy patron of our Society, we would like here to tell briefly the story of that marvelous crusade.

During the following four years a world gone mad destroyed what was left of Christian civilization in blood, fire and hatred. St. Pius X saw his urgent calls for peace ignored: the conciliatory attempts of his successor Benedict XV were treated the same way. His memorandum for peace (July 1, 1917) was unanimously rejected by the nations at war and even some priests. Some even protested against the initiative of the Pope. His Holiness, disgusted with "man's wisdom," decided from then on to put his trust only in God's folly, which is the preaching of the Cross and in God's predilection towards children. On June 20, 1916, Benedict XV prescribed to all the bishops of the nations at war that all the children of their dioceses receive Communion in the most solemn manner for the intentions of the Pope on July 30, 1916. On that day, these nations saw thousands of children receive Holy Communion and unite their sacrifices to the Sacrifice of Our Lord for the conversion of the world.

At the end of that memorable day, Benedict XV in the presence of all the children of the parishes of

Rome who had answered his call, pronounced a famous speech which became the charter for the Children's Crusade. *"Fearing for the salvation of mankind,"* said the Pope, *"we look for solace in the thought that the innocence of children will be more pleasing to God than the penance of adults. Looking at the children who received Communion today throughout the world, we see the power of your prayers. A power that comes directly from your innocence. Because in God's presence, the supplication of a pure heart is much more efficacious than the one of a penitent heart. A power generated by your lack of human strength, because it is the custom of the Almighty to confound the deluding strength of this world by accepting only what the world considers as weakness. In this kind of power we have found repose when in a day of sad memory we invited you to the Eucharistic Table. For two years now we have exhorted and we have prayed; all in vain. That is why, as a life-saver in a shipwreck, we decided to have recourse to the help of God through the powerful intercession of your innocence. Maybe God, Who is not yet appeased by the hard chastisement visited upon His sons, Who always forget about Him, will be appeased by the innocent lament of the children, because it is a lament of the just, a lament according to the heart of His Son, the Redeemer of the world. One child only, by the splendor of his grace, moves the heart of God; would not it be true then, that thousands and thousands of children will move the Sacred Heart of Jesus?"*

The spirit of the future Crusade being given by the Pope, received a confirmation from Heaven. The very same month, July 1916, in Portugal, an angel interrupted the games of three children from Fatima: *"What are you doing? Pray! Pray very much... keep offering sacrifices and prayers to God."* A few days later the same angel gave them Holy Communion: *"Receive and drink*

the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ Who is offended by the ingratitude of men. Repair for their crimes and comfort your God.”

The call for the mobilization of the children by Benedict XV did not go unheard. Already, in 1915, in a school of Bordeaux (France) under the direction of Father Bessieres, S.J., students began to write down daily, the sacrifices that they would offer for the end of the war and the salvation of the soldiers killed in action. The idea circulated from school to school at a speed denoting God’s blessing. Cardinal Andrieux, Archbishop of Bordeaux, on Holy Thursday 1916, gave them their first rules and regulations. Within a few months, approved by over twenty cardinals and bishops, this Crusade spread over sixty-five French dioceses and in several other countries. It would be by the millions that the Crusade would count sacrifices and prayers for the triumph of the Peace of Christ.

1917 was the year in which the Children’s Eucharistic Crusade truly flourished. The unification of all the crusaders came about through the publication of the first number of their bulletin, Hostia, by Father Bessieres which gave its readers an idea of the importance of their mobilization and the height of the ideals for which they offered their sacrifices.

1917 was also the year of the apparitions of Our Lady of the Rosary at Fatima, asking three poor children, not yet in their teens, to pray and do penance for the annihilation of the Russian Revolution. Here is a good example of God’s folly, which is wiser than man’s wisdom.

After four years of war which left Europe in ru-

ins, God answered the prayers of the little crusaders. Would that be the signal to disband the little crusader's army? No, by no means! As the leader of the children's crusade, Father Bessieres reminded them, "*After man's peace the Eucharistic Crusade will have to obtain God's victory and the official admission of Jesus Christ's rights over the world. Only that would bring to our naturalist societies a true and lasting peace. This is our only way to salvation. Fight for it through your prayers, your sacrifices and your Holy Communions. Fight for the coming of Christ's Social Kingship*" (Hostia, October 1919).

After the war, children by the hundreds of thousands joined the ranks of the Crusade. The Crusade found in the Apostolate of Prayer Organization the necessary support for its propagation throughout the world. The Apostolate of Prayer was a pious association whose goal was to pray for the salvation of souls and the glory of God. It was founded by Father Ramieres and in the 1930's it numbered over thirty million members for whom, each month, the Pope assigned a general intention. Their diocesan directors did their best to propagate the Crusade in places in which it did not exist: Egypt, China, the Philippines, Japan, etc. Every country had its Crusade. Unceasingly, the priests in charge said to the new members: pray, receive Communion, make sacrifices, be an apostle. This advice became the motto of the Crusade.

The Children's Eucharistic Crusade was recognized canonically by Pope Pius XI on August 6, 1932. It had three million members then. Every month, a treasure was composed by the total number of sacrifices made and carefully recorded by the children. It was then sent to the Pope. Here is an example: in September of 1934 the intention was for priests and seminaries;

695,585 Masses were offered, 509,585 Communion, 3,785,529 visits to the Blessed Sacrament, 4,939,544 sacrifices, etc. (Le Croisé, October 1934).

One of the characteristics of the Crusade, besides the fact that it was made up of children is its emphasis on the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. The child, by his Communion, offered himself in sacrifice with the Supreme Sacrifice, the Mass. It is no wonder that one of the consequences of the Crusade was the birth of multitudes of vocations as anyone reading the bulletins of that time clearly saw.

The Eucharistic Crusade continued through World War II with a renewed spirit of self-sacrifice, remembering the words of St. Pius X: “*Brandish the Cross of Jesus and bestow it upon mankind as the only and unique source of peace and salvation.*”

On January 6, 1958, Pope Pius XII gave a solemn and permanent approval. It was, although no one knew it at that time, the swan song of the Crusade...

The Modernists wanted to destroy the Crusade. It was still alive in the early 50's, but barely. Very soon, new chaplains with new methods were assigned to reform what they called with derision “*that religion of little papers*” (making allusion to the sheets of paper in which the treasures were collected). The name of the bulletin was changed from Hostia to Sharing: a whole new program! The final stroke was given by John XXIII. In 1960, on the occasion of the Crusade's pilgrimage to Rome, he was made to believe that the name of Crusade and Crusader “*reminded certain countries of painful memories*” and the Crusade's name was changed to Youth's Eucharistic Movement. The whole spirituality of Chris-

tian struggle and sacrifice was thrown out under the appearance of a simple change of name. The Crusade was destroyed in the name of ecumenism. It was the beginning of the Council. Where would we be today if it hadn't been so? If from the four corners of the world the sacrifices of these little souls would have continued to ascend to heaven? These same little souls who carried daily a small part of the Cross of the Church?

In our struggle against the self-destruction of the Church and for the restoration of the rights of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Society of St. Pius X feels more than ever the need of the support of the prayers of thousands of children who regularly attend Mass in our priories and chapels. They are the future generations of the Church.

This is the reason which has moved priests and seminarians of the Society to restore the Children's Eucharistic Crusade. This multitude of new Crusaders, united to Our Lord in a life of self-sacrifice, will bring the Divine Mercy upon the Church and the Society of St. Pius X.

“The Children's Eucharistic Crusade is aimed at innocence... at tenderness... placing itself immediately at the supernatural level, it will greatly contribute to the defeat of naturalism. Like in the past, innumerable children will be fortified in the Catholic Faith, will grow in charity... being prepared thus for their future tasks in the Church or in the world...” (Letter from the Superior General to the Headquarters of the Crusade).

