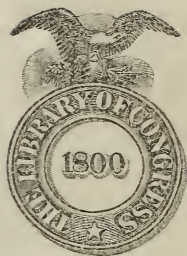


READINGS
AND
REFLECTIONS
FOR THE
HOLY HOUR
—
REV. F. A. REUTER



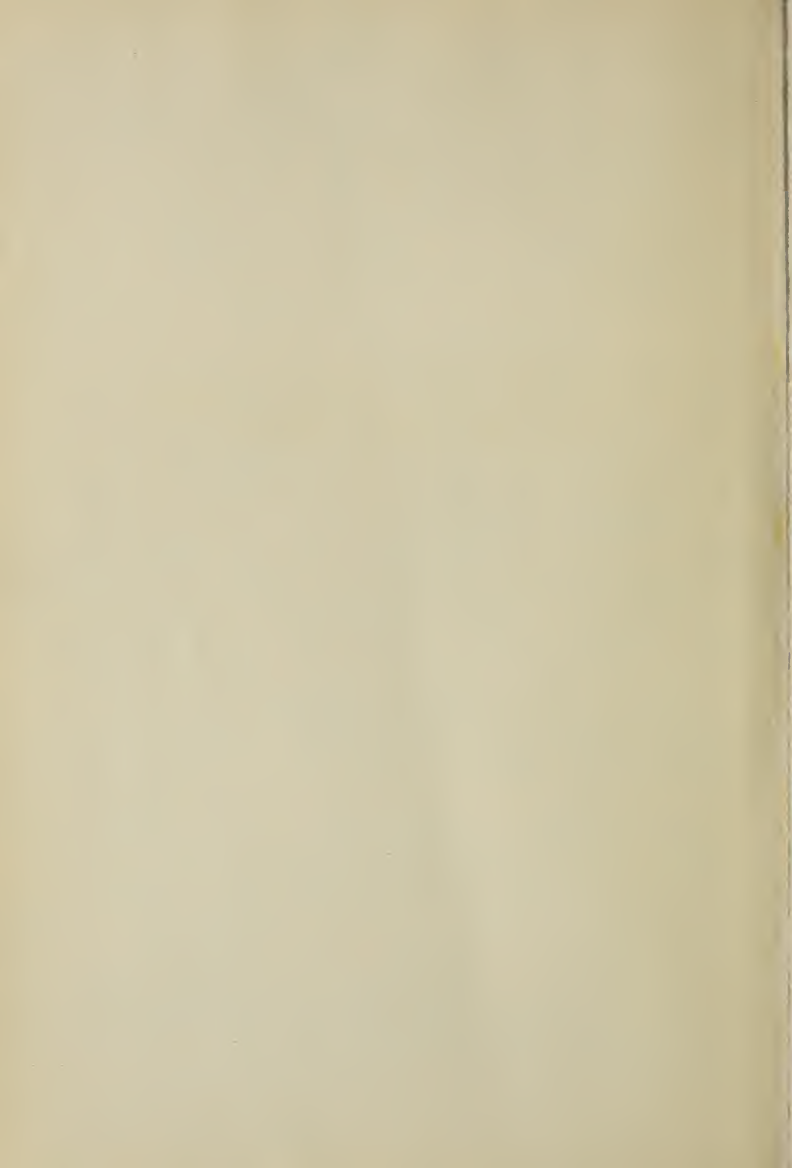


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READINGS AND REFLECTIONS
FOR THE HOLY HOUR



Iste est panis, quem Dñs dedit

vobis ad vescendum. Ex. 16.



Venite, Prov. 9. 5.



Panem caeli. Ps. 77. 24.



Jupe sacrye. Dan. 11.



In oiani loco. Mol. 1. p.

David et omnis domus Israël

ducebant arcam. II. Reg. 6.

Readings and Reflections for The Holy Hour

THE MANIFESTATIONS OF
THE DIVINE PRESENCE

BY

REV. FREDERICK A. REUTER

AUTHOR OF "SERMONS FOR CHILDREN'S MASS"



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Archbishop of New York.

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U. F. N. -
MAR. 26. 17.

TO THE VERY REVEREND
MONSIGNOR LUKE J. EVERS

RECTOR OF ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, NEW YORK CITY
WHOSE ZEAL FOR OUR EUCHARISTIC LORD HAS MANIFESTED
ITSELF IN ESTABLISHING FOR BUSY MEN AND WOMEN
A NOON-DAY HOLY HOUR;
A NOON-DAY MASS DURING LENT AND NOVEMBER;
AND A SUNDAY — "MIDNIGHT MASS"
FOR PRINTERS AND NIGHT WORKERS,

THIS VOLUME

AS A TOKEN OF ESTEEM OF A MOST WORTHY PRIEST
OF GOD IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY
THE AUTHOR

Oblation.

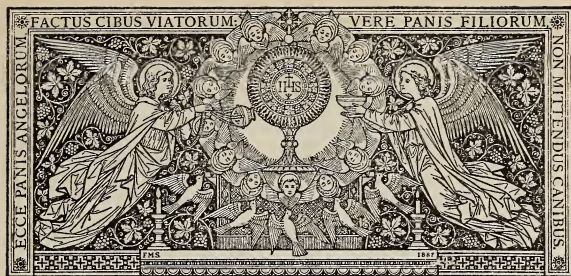
O Jesus, hidden beneath the sacramental veils, I offer Thee this book, I beseech Thee to take it into Thy divine keeping, that it may glorify Thine immeasurable Love and Thy divine bounty towards us unworthy creatures. Almighty Dispenser of graces grant to all who read these writings with humility, that they may be charmed with the sweetness of Thy Love and thereby desire to become more perfect, so that elevating their hearts towards Thee with burning love, they may be like so many golden censers, whose sweet odors shall abundantly supply all my shortcomings and defects.

Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament grant that all those who read this little book, may love thee, and furthermore, place in their hearts a little spark of the love with which thou dost love Jesus.

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INTRODUCTION

OF late years there has been a wonderful spread of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament of the altar among the faithful; there has been witnessed a happy rivalry between the clergy and the laity in their efforts to extend to our divine Lord in His Sacrament of Love every token of the deepest love and veneration. Next to the intimate union of our souls with the beloved Jesus in Holy Communion, the piety of the devout Christian has found another method by which he can approach his Lord in the Holy Eucharist, namely the Holy Hour. This beautiful service was suggested by real faith and burning love, of *Adoration*, *Thanksgiving*, and *Reparation*. The various Eucharistic Associations and Tabernacle Societies have introduced into parishes the weekly or monthly Holy Hour.

This little book goes forth, in a very humble way, to join the many other Eucharistic gems that are placed at our disposal to enhance the Holy Hour. These readings of the *Manifestations of the Real Presence*, taken from Christian authors of learning and piety, are intended to rouse the lukewarm, to bring sinners back to God, to inflame the pious with more ardent love for Jesus Christ, and to cause the unbeliever to reflect on the truths of our holy religion.

In compiling this work the author hereby wishes to express his gratitude to Rev. Father F. Gaudet, S.S.S., Editor of the "Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament," also to the publishers of "Tabernacle and Purgatory" magazine, and the Rev. Francis Xavier Lasance for valuable suggestions.

One word more. I pray the pious persons who will read this little book to have the goodness to remember me sometimes in their fervent communions, so that seated at the same table in this life, we may meet each other again in heaven. THE AUTHOR





NOTE

GOD in His goodness has frequently given to His children glimpses of His Divine Presence among them. Mere words can add nothing to the beauty of these manifestations which are themselves only the shadows of His invisible majesty, yet language will serve to bring into the lives of many the influence of these miracles which they themselves have not been privileged to witness. If unbelievers will not accept these miracles it is because they do not understand the far more wondrous love which induced the Creator to produce them.

Miracles have been permitted by God, in order that some special Providence with regard to His honor may be accomplished. In cases where the consecrated Host has been elevated in the air on the occasion of sacrilege or danger, the ministry of angels may be admitted.

Those who believe that God dwells corporeally amongst us, will accept the legends

in this book on the same evidence which makes the facts of history worthy of belief. The words of God display His Almighty Power even more so than His wonderful deeds, which will always be eloquent of Divine Truth and Love.

Our fathers in the faith found no difficulty in God's miracles, especially when those miracles were performed by means of the Blessed Sacrament. The learned Bossuet said: "Why do people wish to make it so laborious for the Almighty to work miracles?" "The bad," says St. Alphonsus, "are as ready to ridicule miracles as the good are to believe them"; and, he adds, "we believe the testimony of a Tacitus, a Suetonius, and can we deny it without presumption to Christian authors of learning and piety?" There is less risk in believing and receiving what is related with some probability by honest persons, especially when that which is related serves for the edification of our neighbor and has not been rejected by the learned, than there is in rejecting it with a disdainful spirit. St. Augustine admirably says, "When a miracle, however striking it may be, is made known, in the very place in which it hap-

pened, and by witnesses, it is at times disbelieved, because of man's incredulity and pride. Nevertheless, the fact is none the less true." "Though an approval of Catholic faith be denied them (miracles)," says Benedict XIV, "yet they deserve a human acquiescence according to the rules of discretion by which they are in all probability worthy of belief."

What is now often considered impossible was believed in the Ages of Faith, when the world was more worthy of the miracles which God was pleased to perform in it — when the angels and the saints of heaven loved to converse with a simple-hearted and innocent people, whose life spent in the sunshine of God's approval was divided between humble labor and the practice of holiness.

The Reflections contained in *Manifestations of the Real Presence* consist of a collection of passages from the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, each of which has won a place here by the beauty of its diction or the truth it teaches. The thoughts and words of the saints are as pearls, whose manifold gleams adorn the Venerable Mystery; the truth of the Mystery itself is the

light which gives them their radiance. The fervent language of the holy Fathers cannot but enliven the faith and inflame the devotion of Catholics.

No one who has experienced the sweetness, the peace, the joy that comes from union with the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion will find anything difficult of belief in the legends that follow.



READINGS AND REFLECTIONS
FOR THE HOLY HOUR



Prayer taken from an Irish Prayer-book

OH: most Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament, I beg and implore of you to grant me the grace of a happy death. And the same to my friends and my enemies especially those that committed sins through me, and pray for me and forgibe me for all the good promises I habe made and broken. Oh: good God habe mercy upon the poor suffering souls, especially those that may be detained there through me and the most forsaken souls.

Include us all, living and dead in all the Masses that will be said to the end of the world, all the Holy Communions, indulgences and prayers of devout souls now and forevermore. I beg of you to hear my poor prayer and grant me these requests, for none on the face of this earth needs these more than I.

My loving Lord, a thousand welcomes? O Son of Mary I love you, indeed I do. Who am I at all, that you should come next or near me? O God of heaben, make a little corner for me in your heart, and never while there is life in me let me lose my place there, and after death may I hide there. Amen.



First Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

AMONG the writings of St. Arsenius, we find the following account of an old man who had no faith in the doctrine of the Real Presence. Though an unbeliever himself, he had two fervent Christian friends who were imbued with an ardent devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Long and earnestly did they endeavor to make him a member of the one true Church, yet despite the fact that he was willing to be instructed his spirit of unbelief remained.

Finally they proposed that he should unite with them in prayer during the space of a week, that God might enlighten his mind to know and acknowledge the truth. And in His infinite Mercy, God deigned to listen to their petitions.

While they were assisting at Holy Mass the following Sunday, they saw the Host transformed into a beautiful child, and as the priest broke the sacred particle, they observed blood dripping into the chalice.

The time approached for the old man to receive Holy Communion. What was his amazement when raising his eyes to gaze at the sacred species, he noticed — not the familiar bread and wine, but real flesh and blood! In deep humility he cried out: “O Lord, I believe — I believe firmly that Thou art really present on the altar under these lowly appearances.” No sooner had he uttered these words when the Host resumed its usual color, and the now staunch believer received our Lord most worthily. His friends, overjoyed at his new profession of faith, afterwards assured him: “God understands that human beings would withdraw from living flesh; therefore, He gives Himself to the faithful under the pleasing appearance of bread and wine!”¹

. . .

¹ Miracles Eucharistiques, by Very Rev. Père Couet, S.S.S.; Acta S. Sanctorum. His Life, by St. Theodore the Studite. Blessed Sacrament Sentinel Vol. XVII No. 12.

The feast of Corpus Christi was not celebrated in the early days of the Church. In the primitive ages of the Church we find no traces of the feast of Corpus Christi. God himself indicated that the celebration of Corpus Christi would be acceptable to Him, and as He chooses that which is foolish in the eyes of the world in order to confound the wise, His wisdom here also pursued the same course. The first circumstance which led to the celebration of the feast of Corpus Christi was a vision granted to the Blessed Juliana, a nun of Liège. Her devotion to the Blessed Sacrament grew with her from the day she was admitted into the cloister. On the day when she communicated she withdrew from all intercourse with others, and spent her whole time in prayer and meditation. At the elevation she would fall prostrate, while her whole appearance indicated the interior love of her heart.

Being one day engaged in contemplation, she saw in spirit a vision of the moon at its full, a dark spot in which disfigured the clear shining thereof. After much prayer and fasting she was enlightened as to the meaning and signification of this apparition. God revealed to her that the moon repre-

sented the Catholic Church, and that the dark spot signified the want of a special feast in honor of the Blessed Eucharist. At the same time she received the command that she should induce the authorities of the Church to institute such a feast, in order that by a public and solemn adoration the insults offered to the Blessed Sacrament might be atoned for. The humble virgin was terrified at such a command, for she deemed herself unworthy. For a long time she did not dare communicate to others the revelation she had received, till finally, after much prayer, being convinced of the truth, she could no longer resist the promptings of her heart. In the year 1230 she disclosed the apparition to a few men equally renowned for piety and learning. These men declared the apparition to be of God, and induced Robert, Bishop of Liège, to institute in his diocese a feast of the adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

In the year 1246 Bishop Robert issued a command that every year, on the fourth day after the feast of the Most Holy Trinity, the feast of Corpus Christi should be celebrated in all the churches within the diocese of Liège. After his death Hugh, the former

Provincial of the Dominicans, who was already acquainted with the visions of Juliana, and had been created a Cardinal and Legate at Liège, found there the feast as it had been established by Robert; and conceiving a great devotion for it, he not only preached in its favor, but commanded the celebration in the entire district of his legation. The same course was continued by his successor, Peter Capoch. Several bishops following this example, the feast of Corpus Christi was introduced into many other countries, especially into Germany, where it was celebrated with the greatest solemnity. In the year 1261 James Pantaleon, Archdeacon of Liège, one of the first whose voice had decided in favor of the heavenly vision, was raised to the pontifical throne under the name of Urban IV. Thus the new Pope was happy, a few years later, in being able by a Bull to establish the feast of Corpus Christi all over the world. This ordinance was confirmed by Pope Clement V in the Council at Vienna, in the year 1311. Several Pontiffs granted special indulgences for this feast.

Reflection

When Jesus uttered the touching words,
“It is my delight to be with the children

of men," He had in mind the accomplishment of a great work: The small things of this world were to be transformed into the sacred; the simple were to be converted into the wonderful; the weak into the strong. Nay more, such strength was to be conferred upon these very small and simple things that the sanctification of our immortal soul would hereafter depend upon their reception. Here in the Sacrament of His love, Jesus, true God and true Man, conceals Himself under the appearance of bread and wine. And it is for that reason alone that we adore the Holy Sacrament.

"It is my delight to be with the children of men." Aye, truly, our Lord wishes to be with us. The love of a friend is proved by the frequency of his visits to our home, — by his heartfelt gladness on seeing us, — and his unsatisfied yearning for us when we are far away. But can the love of any friend be compared with the love of the great and all-holy God? He is in our every village, town and city, dwelling with us in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, — a sacrament instituted not merely to give us grace but to give us God Himself. If our Blessed Lord surrendered His royal

magnificence to assume this humble appearance once a year, or even in a lifetime, He would still have proven that His delight is to be with us — what then shall we say to His dwelling continually in our midst? To His being present in our tabernacles day and night, yea, every hour and every moment of our lives? Day after day, His priests perform the stupendous work of transforming bread into His sacred body, and wine into His precious Blood. Thus our Blessed Lord has so completely exhausted Himself in His divine Love, that although He is truly God He still can utter the sorrowful plaint: “What more could I have done for my vineyard that I have not done?”

“The Lord be with you,” says the priest to us in the Holy Sacrifice; this wish is realized in the truest and most wonderful manner in the Holy Eucharist.

Is He not truly with us, the merciful Savior imprisoned by His very love in our tabernacles, He who invites us to visit Him, who leaves the tabernacle either to bless us, or to give Himself to us, to repose in our hearts, to feed us with Himself, to make us become “flesh of His flesh, and bone of His bone”?

This earth is no longer a place of exile, for we possess here our father and our king. It is no longer the home of misery and tears, for He in whom are all the treasures of grace, and who makes the joy of heaven, dwells with us. It is no longer a desert, since here is the fountain of living water springing unto eternal life. It is no longer the land which was accursed on the day of the first sin, since He is there who has taken away every malediction.

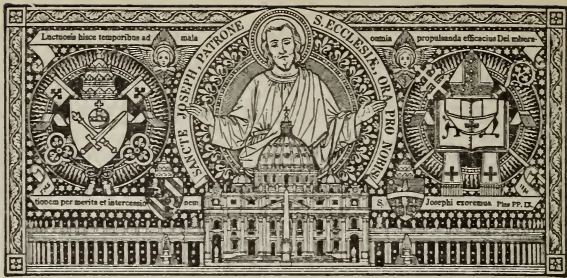
Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist is the Emmanuel of all the faithful, the Emmanuel of the child to whom He gives Himself so willingly, and whom He inundates with so sweet a joy; of the young man whom He strengthens by His presence against the world, the flesh, and the devil; of the man in ripe manhood with whom He labors in every good work; of the old man and those on the bed of death, whom He defends against the weaknesses of nature and the fear of death.

My dear Christians, we should make a return of love to Jesus for His boundless love of us, in order to appease in some measure His suffering Heart. In our veneration of the Most Blessed Sacrament, there

should be some real proof of our love and we should make of the Holy Hour a solemn homage of our adoration and reparation. As we pass His home, whether in the crowded thoroughfare of a great metropolis or the shady lane of a sylvan village, let us go in, if only for a moment, to tell Him that with all our frailties we are His, — and to offer Him every thought of our minds, every pulsation of our hearts in the long stretch of years still before us, so that united to Him here in the Blessed Sacrament of His Love, we may be united to Him throughout the long ages of eternity, Heart to heart forevermore!

“May He support us all the day long, till the shades lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done! Then in His mercy may He give us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last!”





Second Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

THE illustrious Saint Ignatius, founder of the famous Jesuit Order, after he had received the sacred order of Priesthood, resolved to pass a year in preparation for the celebration of his First Mass; and when this time had expired he still deferred the awful solemnity from month to month. At length, at the end of eighteen months, on the Feast of Christmas, in the chapel of the Crib of the Infant Jesus, he offered himself in union with this spotless sacrifice, as a freewill offering to the service of God. Two years afterwards he received from Pope Paul III the ratification of his Society, and he was chosen by his companions as their first general.

Saint Ignatius had learned by his own

experience the marvelous effects of worthy Communion. He required at least an hour for the celebration of his Mass, and frequently being in a rapture he would occupy a much longer time at the Most Holy Sacrifice. Father Nicholas Lannoy, who on one occasion was present at his Mass, observed at the *Memento* that a flame of fire hovered over his head. He was on the point of hurrying in order to extinguish it, but was suddenly arrested by the sight of the face of the Saint, which beamed with divine light, and the illuminated expression of his eyes, which appeared to be lost in the contemplation of the Almighty. The ardour of divine Love, which increased in every Communion, consumed the Saint to such a degree that it was not possible for him to say Mass daily.

One Christmas day, after having said the second Mass, he became so weak that it was necessary to carry him to his room, as he was believed to be dying. As he stood at the altar, the beating of his heart was audible. A stranger who happened to be present one day, and perceived the tears he shed, approached secretly to Father Strada, who had served the Saint's Mass, and said to him, "He who has just said Mass must be a

great sinner. Let us hope that God has forgiven him. He has wept enough.”

The room which the Saint occupied was separated from the church by a partition. He caused an opening to be made in the wall, over against the tabernacle, and here he passed his happiest hours. Saint Ignatius died with the holy Name of Jesus on his lips on the 31st of July, 1556.

. . .

Gaumé, a French author, writing on the miracle of the Blessed Sacrament, records a remarkable instance, illustrating how a doctor of modern times displayed his faith in the hidden God of the Eucharist.

Among the eminent physicians of Egypt, Clot Bey held the highest rank. One day, as he was standing with other doctors on one of the streets of Marseilles, where he spent the latter years of his life, it happened that a priest, bearing the Holy Eucharist to a dying person, passed along the street. No sooner did the doctor notice the man of God and his precious burden, than he quickly uncovered his head and bowed towards the ground in an attitude of homage. To the query of one of the younger companions who asked him the cause of his

adoring posture, he responded: "Do you not see Jesus? Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament is passing by." The other, with a cynical smile, said: "Is it possible, doctor, that a man of your learning and ability believes that the great God of Heaven could be contained in that tiny Host which the priest is carrying in his hand?"

"Yes," replied the physician, "it is precisely the crowning glory of my learning that I do believe it firmly. You people who speak of God's greatness realize His power, — but have you ever heard of His love?"

A sublime answer, indeed, full of hidden meaning. Whether the young inquirer acknowledged thereafter any belief or not, the doctor had surely made the most of his faith in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

St. Hedwig, the wife of Henry, Duke of Silesia, and the mother of his six children, led a humble, austere, and most holy life amidst all the pomp of royal state. Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament was the keynote of her life. Her valued privilege was to supply the bread and wine for the Sacred Mysteries, and she would attend each morning as many Masses as were celebrated.

St. Hedwig is honored as the Patroness of Silesia.

Reflection

Strengthened by this heavenly food, St. Lawrence braved the flames; St. Vincent, the rack; St. Sebastian, the shower of arrows; St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, the fury of the lions; and many other martyrs suffered every torture which the malice of the devil could invent, content only if they could but return their Savior love for love, life for life, death for death. They embraced the very instruments of their tortures: yea, they even exulted and glorified in them. Now this was the effect of the Holy Eucharist; this life-giving bread imparted to them the courage and joy which they manifested in the face of every conceivable pain and trial. For this very reason, in the early persecutions, all Christians, in order to be prepared for martyrdom, received the Blessed Sacrament every day; even carrying the Sacred Host to their homes that they might communicate in the early morning. Mary, Queen of Scots, during her captivity prepared for execution in the same way.

The holy and adorable mystery of the

Eucharist is one of the most extraordinary proofs of God's love for man, and an abridgment, as it were, of all the wonders He has wrought in our favor. If feelings such as these animated and strengthened the early Christians, to suffer courageously the terrible persecutions to which they were subjected, surely the angels in heaven might well have envied them. Nothing can confer a greater dignity on the children of the true faith than the legacy of this "supersubstantial bread" with which their heavenly Father is pleased to nourish them. In this mystery, the faithful soul is wedded to its celestial Spouse by a most intimate and inconceivable union; heaven is united to earth, and God to man. In the Eucharist, the enraptured soul is bathed in an ocean of unutterable sweetness, and amidst all the bitterness of this life is refreshed with the deepest draughts of holy joy.

Ceaselessly our Lord pleads our cause from His home on the altar; ceaselessly He recommends our feeble prayers to His heavenly Father. Close as He is to us, yet He is more hidden than any human friend who may for years have buried himself in a bleak desert away from human kind. The

veil that shrouds the sacred precincts is never lifted. Enter the Church, day or night, and it remains ever the same. No movement, no word, no uttered plea for companionship, ever tell us, that there in that little tabernacle Someone is dwelling and hungering for our society, poor, frail creatures though we are. Only the brightly glowing lamp of the Sanctuary reveals the home of the hidden God. Yet Jesus does not dwell with us here lifeless or inactive. In the fullness of His divine activity, He, the All-powerful Mediator abides, between Heaven and earth. Our Savior once, in years long past, He remains our Savior still,—pleading that all harm be kept from our lives and all unrighteousness from our hearts! He awaits our coming, listens to our petitions, and to our supplication. He adds His own power as a son in presenting our prayers to His heavenly Father. Little wonder that the gifts we receive are marvelous, for Jesus is our best Friend.

It is for this end our dear Lord has established His dwelling here with us. Not for His own pleasure is He here, but for our advantage! What no creature has ever done, what none could ever do for us, He

has done — given us Himself whole and entire! Let us then make some return to Him. The Holy Hour will be at least a feeble proof of our gratitude — a little reminder that we love Him and that, if home-duties did not prevent our coming, we would daily pour forth our hearts before Jesus in the tabernacle, repeating our simple prayers, over and over, in perhaps the same simple plainly worded way but with the good intention of one who loves.

Dear Jesus, we revere You in Your humble abode. We adore You as our “Bread of Life.” We beg of You to receive us as we are confident that our poor homage may recompense You, at least in a small degree, for the insults You so patiently suffer at our hands!

“My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready! I will sing and give praise with my glory.” Ps. cvii.

“Chained prisoner of love, Divine Jesus! Chain my poor heart to the foot of Thy Altars. Dearest Jesus, Thou hast made my heart for Thyself alone, hide it within Thine Divine Heart in the Tabernacle!”

“O Sacrament most holy! O Sacrament divine!

All praise and all thanksgiving be every moment
Thine!”



Third Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

THE venerable Catherine of Jesus was a discalced nun of the convent of Beatia in the Province of Granada. Whilst yet in the world, Catherine was powerfully drawn to the Divine Redeemer in frequent Communion. In proportion to her desire for this heavenly food, for which she prepared herself carefully by penance and acts of divine Love, were the graces she received. Once being occupied in the service of her neighbor, it was late when she arrived at the church of St. Ann at Seville. The gates were already closed, and Holy Communion seemed denied to her that day. Sorrowfully she went to the parish church, and besought the parish priest for the love of God to give her the Blessed Sacrament. The good man,

who well knew her virtue, hastened to grant her humble request; but on entering the church great was his surprise on finding the tabernacle open, and the candles on the altar lighted, although no one had been in the church for many hours. Soon, however, he perceived that it had been the work of angels, who in this manner had manifested how greatly God was pleased with the holy desire of His servant.

Another time she began very early in the day to prepare herself for Holy Communion, when, falling into an ecstasy, it was midday before she came to herself. At once she betook herself to the Carmelite Church, but found the doors closed. In great distress she turned her steps to another convent, which was known by the name "Our dear Lady of Victories," praying as she went that the Lord would provide her with the means of satisfying her spiritual hunger. Again she found the doors closed, but at the same moment a priest accompanied by many persons arrived, who, without being asked, opened one of the doors for her. On entering she perceived at the altar three religious, vested, and two ministers holding the Communion cloth, who apparently awaited her.

One of them, in fact, beckoned to her to approach the altar, and so with great joy she received the Body of the Lord. On her return home she again fell into an ecstasy when it was revealed to her that the ministers of the altar whom she had seen were angels sent by the Lord to satisfy her holy desire.¹

A certain woman who had always provided Pope St. Gregory with altar breads, began to entertain doubts about the Real Presence. It happened one day at the time of Communion when the Pope was about to administer the Blessed Sacrament to her, that, after he had said the usual "Corpus Domini nostri," she broke out into a most frivolous titter. The Pope, withdrawing his hand, placed the Host back on the altar; then, turning around, he addressed her in the presence of all the people and commanded her to explain the cause of her laughter.

Before all assembled, she openly proclaimed that she thought it was ridiculous to call the bread which she brought to the Pope, the Body of our Lord. St. Gregory at once prostrated himself on the ground, to pray

¹ Ott: Euch., page. 318. P. Franz von der hl. Maria, Geschichte von Karmel.

for the unbelieving woman. On concluding his supplications, he took the same Host, which by the power of God had assumed the form of a finger, and showed it to the woman. When the Pope had again prayed to God in her behalf, the Host resumed its former shape and he then gave it in Communion to the awe-stricken woman.¹

∴

A beautiful legend is related of the Blessed Imelda of Bologna. She was very young when she was received in the Order of St. Dominic, and from her tenderest years had shown an inexpressable longing to receive her Lord in Holy Communion. Being but eleven years of age her confessor withheld this privilege from her, and continued to delay her First Communion. Whenever she saw the Sisters go to partake of the spiritual Banquet, she wept most bitterly. She was once complaining aloud to the hidden Lord and asking Him why she alone was denied this great happiness, when suddenly one of the sacred Hosts was seen in the air hovering directly over her head. Those near her acknowledged this singular appari-

¹ Life of Pope Gregory by Paulus, diacon. Vol. 2, cap. 41; Ott Eucharisticum, page 153.

tion as a heavenly sign of God's will permitting her to receive Holy Communion at once. The priest immediately obeyed with all devotion; and the active love with which this child received her Lord for the first time was so deep, so fervent, that she sank to the ground, lifeless, her pure soul taking its flight to heaven to be forever united to the heavenly Bridegroom.¹

∴

In the life of St. Tharsicius, the first martyr of the Eucharist, we read that one day some pagan soldiers met him while he was carrying the Blessed Sacrament to his home, as was the custom in the early days of persecution. Immediately the soldiers seized Tharsicius and threatened to ill-treat him unless he made known to them what he was carrying. But the brave boy refused to betray his trust and was stoned to death. History tells us that although his persecutors searched his garments for the hidden treasure they could find no trace whatever of the sacred species. Thus, does God sometimes work miracles in behalf of His Saints.

¹ Savioli: *Annal Bolognesi*. *Eichsfeld Blatt*, No. 18, 1884.

One day St. Francis had some business engagement with the Viceroy of India. When the appointed hour arrived, a young student of the seminary, named Andrew, sought him in order to remind him of the time. He found him sitting on a low stool before the tabernacle, his hands folded across his breast, and looking upwards. Having observed him in silence for some moments, the youth spoke to him, but when the Saint did not answer, he left, fearing to disturb him. Two hours later the young man found him still in the same position and fearing to leave a duty undischarged called him again and again until the Saint finally gave heed to his importunity. When St. Francis learned of the long time which he had passed in contemplation, he hastened with all speed to the palace of the Viceroy. On his way thither, however, he fell into another rapture, and remained standing motionless until nightfall, when coming to himself, he returned to his dwelling. "My son," said he to his young disciple, "we must visit the Viceroy on another day; this day God has willed to reserve entirely for Himself."¹

¹ Ott; Eucharisticum, page 286.

Reflection

In the most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, the Catholic Church, obedient to the teachings of our Divine Lord, tenders Him the homage which is His due, for nothing less than divine homage and adoration is a fitting tribute to the Son of God. Like our Holy Mother 'the Church, we, too, should offer Jesus that special worship which He justly claims from us, his creatures. Angels and archangels are His bodyguards in the celestial kingdom, ever doing His Holy Will, — yet it was not for them that He lived and suffered and died: It was for us, simple as we are. In humble adoration, then, let us bend our knee before the tabernacle, and render homage with all our strength to our hidden God. The Church never ceases inviting us to draw near to the sanctuary, — a special tone of pleading entering into her voice particularly during the Holy Hour. Oh, let us not turn a deaf ear to her earnest solicitation!

Jesus is as near to us now as He was to the shepherds on the first Christmas night, as near as He was to St. Peter when that apostle walked to Him upon the waters,

as near as to Mary Magdalen as she knelt at His feet waiting for His word of forgiveness. Ah! if we bend the knee at the sound of Jesus' blessed name, how much more ought we to lie prostrate before God's altar? Jesus could have remained with us in all His infinite power and majesty till the end of time, striking fear into the hearts of the erring by the very strength of His appearance, yet what does He do? Out of consideration for His children He remains with us under the humble appearance of bread, bearing with our irreverence, our coldness and contempt and without a single word of reproof.

Listen, as He says to us from the altar: "Where your treasure is, there also your heart will be." He speaks to us in these words of love: "If I be your treasure, your heart will ever be with Me in the Holy Eucharist; and what treasure is there more precious than this? In the Sacrament of the Altar I am the delight of the angels, wonderful honey in the mouth, sweet canticle to the ear, heavenly nectar to the heart. In this Sacrament I love, I feed, I strengthen, I console, I direct, I heal my children. Those who taste Me are still hungry, those

who drink Me are still thirsty. O taste and see how sweet I am, and you will desire nothing but Me! Comprehend the height and depth of My love, and you will consider Me your greatest treasure, you will give Me your whole heart.”

Ah! Jesus, in the most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, fill our hearts with boundless love that this Sacrament may always be our delight and that we should be ever ready to spend ourselves for Thee and Thy service!

“How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul fainteth for the Courts of the Lord! My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God!” Ps. lxxxiii.

“Blessed art Thou, Lord, in the holy temple of Thy glory, on the throne of Thy kingdom, bearing the sceptre of Thy dignity. Blessed art Thou that beholdest the depths, and sittest upon the cherubim! Blessed art Thou in the firmament of Heaven! O ye angels of the Lord, bless the Lord! O ye heavens, earth and sea, bless the Lord! praise and exhalt Him above all forever.” Dan. iii.





Fourth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

ST. EUDOXIA was a native of Samaria and suffered martyrdom during the persecution of the Emperor Trajan. She was gifted with a clear understanding and great personal beauty, but unhappily she fell into evil ways, and in order to give herself more liberty, Eudoxia removed from Samaria to Heliopolis, where she became rich. God did not, however, abandon her. A holy monk, Germanus, by name, passing through Heliopolis, happened to rest for the night at a house which adjoined that of Eudoxia. At the usual hour for matins, Germanus arose, chanted the psalms, and read aloud the description of the pains of hell and the bliss

of heaven. The singing of the monk in the early hours of the morning awoke Eudoxia. She listened with as much attention as astonishment to every word of those mysterious truths of which until that moment she had known nothing.

The next morning she sent for Germanus, and for the first time heard the word of God. Without hesitation, she corresponded to the motions of divine grace within her, put herself under instruction, and received baptism. Then, distributing her wealth among the poor, she retired into a convent, in which dwelt a community of thirty consecrated virgins, who led a life of such severe penance that they were believed to have the gift of miracles.

Now it came to pass that Diogenes, the idolatrous and wicked governor of Heliopolis, desired to take as a wife Gelasia, one of Eudoxia's young converts, whereupon the girl fled to her in her convent for protection. Hearing this, Diogenes sent thither a band of soldiers, with orders to drag Eudoxia thence. To their surprise she offered no resistance. But before giving herself up, she visited the chapel; and, taking one of the Sacred Particles from the altar of the

Blessed Sacrament, concealed it in her bosom. It was night and very dark; but as they journeyed, there appeared to her a youth, clothed in white, who accompanied her all the way, carrying a torch. When brought before the governor, she formally confessed herself to be a Christian; and he, finding that no persuasion could move her to sacrifice to the gods, ordered her to be hanged on a high gallows.

Now, in making ready to carry out the sentence, there fell from the bosom of the martyr the Sacred Particle which she had taken from the altar. The executioner, not knowing what it might be, took it up, and carried it to the governor; but scarcely had the wretch put forth his hand to touch it, when, lo! the sacred Host changed into a flame of fire, scorching not only the hand of him who held it, but laying hold of the shoulder of the governor himself. Howling with pain, he called in vain upon his idols for help against the "enchantress" Eudoxia; for, his body being quickly wrapped in flames, he fell down dead. Upon witnessing this astonishing miracle, the family of Diogenes, as well as many soldiers, were converted to the faith. Eudoxia, however, was

only reserved for a later martyrdom; and in the year 147 she received by order of Vincentius, the successor of Diogenes, the crown she so ardently desired.¹

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In the life of King Louis of France, we read that Mass was one day celebrated in the absence of the king. The words of consecration had scarcely been pronounced, when a wonderful prodigy occurred: our Lord appeared visibly upon the altar, under the form of a beautiful child. Word was sent immediately to the king that he might witness the miracle God was working to prove His adorable Presence in the Blessed Sacrament. But Louis remained motionless. "I firmly believe already," he answered, "that Christ is truly present in the Holy Eucharist. Christ has said it and that is enough for me. I do not wish to lose the merit of my faith by going to see the miracle." And the holy king remained in his room content in his belief, — but he directed those of his courtiers who had the least doubt in the Real Presence to repair

¹ Bollanden, Mart., Tommi; Ott: Euch., page 101.

to the church, and witness the wonderful power of God.¹

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A gentleman was one day visiting an hospital which was under the care of the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul. He walked leisurely through the various wards, closely observing the good sisters' work and passing favorable comments on all he saw. It happened that a painful operation was in progress and the cries of the poor patient resounded throughout the building. Unable to stand the strain any longer, the gentleman hastened to leave the place. Yet the calm, serene aspect of the sisters in the operating-room attracted his attention. "How can these good sisters," he asked the superioress as he stood at the door, "remain so courageous, when even I, who have stronger nerves than they, cannot endure it." "Sir," she replied, pointing to the door of the tabernacle, "it is there they gain that courage and strength you so much admire; Jesus Himself bestows it upon them in the Holy Eucharist."

The Blessed St. Thomas à Kempis in his

¹ His life: Berger and Scholte. Acta Sanctorum.

legends of Mount St. Agnes relates the following miraculous interventions regarding the Real Presence of Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament.

“One day, a lay brother of our convent received Holy Communion at the altar of St. Agnes. For a long time previous he had been obliged to walk with the aid of crutches. After Holy Mass, however, he was so strengthened by the virtue of Christ and the help of St. Agnes, that he left his crutches and with ease returned to his place in the choir, filled with the greatest joy. One of the brothers asked him what he had done and what his prayers were during Holy Mass. ‘I considered,’ said he, ‘the words of the gospel, in which St. Luke relates of Jesus that “all the people sought to touch Him, for virtue went forth from Him, and healed them all.” Surely, then, I thought, a firm faith in the virtue of the Most Holy Sacrament, especially in union with the prayers of the saints, may even now be the means of healing both spiritual and corporal maladies.’”

“One day while saying Mass at the altar of St. Agnes, a brother was severely tempted to doubt the truth of the sacred mystery.

Full of bitter pain and weeping, he turned toward Jesus, in the tabernacle, when, lo! he heard a voice within his soul, saying: 'Believe, as did St. Agnes, St. Cecilia, St. Barbara, and other virgin saints who suffered death for Christ's sake, and doubted none of His words.' When he heard these words, all doubt at once fled from his mind, and the temptation vanished. Ever afterwards the brother repeated these words in all temptations against faith, saying: 'Believe as did St. Agnes, and never shalt thou sin against faith.'"¹

Reflection

"Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed," was the gentle reproof administered by our Divine Lord Himself to His incredulous apostle. How reassuring to us are the words: "Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed," for when we adore the most Holy Sacrament, we adore without seeing the object of our adoration, — aye, more, without even wishing to see it. We know full well that Jesus is present here, subject no more

¹ Ott: Eucharisticum, page 265; Bolland, Vol. III.

to suffering and death, but risen and glorified. We know it and believe it, though we see it not, for nothing can be truer than the words of Christ Himself. At the simple utterance: "This is My Body; this is My Blood," we surrender our poor human reason to the testimony of the all-holy God. Is that too much to surrender? Not only do we adore what we do not see, but we adore the contrary of what we see. And God is pleased with this, for in the Old Testament we read how He praised Abraham because He hoped even when He had no reason to hope. Surely, then, our heartfelt adoration of the Blessed Sacrament must be most meritorious in His eyes.

Jesus in the Eucharist addresses us when He says: "Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed. I am invisible in the Eucharist except to the eye of faith. This divine virtue, which comes by the sense of hearing, supplies the deficiency of the other senses. I have said, that My flesh is meat and My blood is drink. Now Heaven and earth shall pass away but My word shall not pass away. Do not, therefore, presume to ask, like the unbelieving Jews, how I can give you My flesh to eat. No word shall be

impossible with God. I said, Let there be light and there was light; I spoke and all things were made; I commanded, and they were created. I say to you, in the Eucharist, which is the continuation of the last supper, '*This is My Body,*' and will your weak reason dare to say it is *not* My Body? I say, '*This is the chalice of My Blood,*' and you will presume to say it is *not* the chalice of My Blood? I add, 'My Body which will be delivered for you,' and will you assert that I mean only the figure of My Body? Was it not My Real Body that was delivered and broken for you on the cross? I also said, 'My Blood shall be shed for the remission of sins,' was it not My Real Blood, instead of only the figure of My Blood, that was poured out on Calvary? In the Eucharist, then, I distribute My Real Body that was crucified, and My Real Blood that was shed. I, the Eternal Truth, have declared it so at the most awe-inspiring moment, and in the most solemn manner. It is your duty to believe and to adore."

All our happiness here below consists in meriting heaven, not in enjoying it, — and merit is the reward of "things unseen" not of sight. Faith has its joys even in this

life, because by believing in God although we do not *see* Him, we thereby actually feel Him who surpasseth all knowledge, as we read in the book of Job.

Beloved Christians, approach the altar during the Holy Hour, fall upon your knees and adore your God and Savior really and truly present thereon. When you reflect that it is in the Blessed Sacrament that Jesus most deserves your homage, you must feel prompted to adore Him unceasingly. Pray then with unfaltering hearts: "I believe, O Lord; help my unbelief."

"Most adorable Body, I adore Thee with all the powers of my soul. O Lord, who hast given Thyself entirely to us, grant we may become entirely Thine."





Fifth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

THE irreligious Count Wittekind, a most formidable opponent of the Emperor Charles the Great, was at one time a prisoner of war in the enemy's ranks. One day desirous of personally inspecting the camp of the Emperor, Wittekind disguised himself as a beggar, thinking that by so doing he should be able to see more than if he went in state. It happened that the Easter festival being near, the Emperor and all his army were occupied in preparing for their Easter Communion. Wittekind crossed the river Oger in his disguise, and mingled with the crowd of beggars who came to receive the alms which the Emperor so munificently dispensed. When the time came for the

distribution of the alms, Wittekind also stretched out his hand in order to receive his portion. Having a crooked finger, he was recognized by the almoner, and being asked why he, a prince, should choose to take his place among beggars, Wittekind made no reply, but merely requested to be taken to the Emperor. This was on Easter day itself. The Emperor received him with the greatest friendliness, and merely asked him why he was not dressed in a manner more suitable to his state. "I thought," he replied, "to penetrate into your camp more easily in order that I might see everything." "And what hast thou seen?" inquired Charlemagne.

Whereupon Wittekind replied: "Two days ago, Emperor, I perceived that you looked morose and downcast, and I could not understand how anything could cause grief to such a sovereign as you. (As the day designated was Good Friday, the Emperor had been filled with sorrow at the remembrance of our Savior's sufferings.) Yesterday you still seemed sad and thoughtful; but to-day I was astonished beyond all measure to see your face beam with joy as you received from the richly vested priest

a Host in the form of a beautiful infant. The child seemed to smile as the minister of God approached some, while others were met with a frown. What all this means, I cannot understand." The Emperor replied: "Wittekind, you have received a great grace. God has manifested to you what He has hidden from us, — yea, hidden even from the priests of His Church." The good Emperor had the count instructed in the mysteries of the Blessed Sacrament. Wittekind besought the Emperor to give him a priest, in order that the Holy Sacrifice might frequently be offered in his presence, and the Emperor promised to send him even a bishop if he would give the prelate a suitable residence. Then Wittekind offered the ecclesiastic his fortress on the Weser, in which he said there was room enough for himself and the bishop too. The castle was called "Mein und Dein" (mine and thine, whence later on the name Minden, which is still in vogue), because Wittekind possessed it in common with the bishop. From that time a perpetual peace was maintained between Charlemagne and Wittekind. The latter faithfully served the Lord whom he had so wonderfully learned to know, died happily

in the year 807 and was buried at Minden in the church which he had built.¹

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The author of the "Following of Christ" gives an account of a man who was strongly tempted to disbelieve in the Blessed Sacrament. One day during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, this doubter asked God most fervently to strengthen his faith in the Holy Eucharist. His petition did not go unanswered, for the Lord appeared to him in the sacred Host as a beautiful child. Returning thanks to God for this saving grace, the man never afterwards doubted the Real Presence. The good priest at the altar was not aware of the miracle, nor was there any need for him to see, strong in grace and faith as he was. God only vouchsafed this miracle for the unbelieving man.²

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In Amsterdam, a church was once set on fire, and among those present was an old man, who rushed boldly into the flames to remove the Blessed Sacrament. Immedi-

¹ Bolland: Jan'y 7, 1850. Ott: Euch., page 159.

Tillemand: Lib. I collat., cap. I ex Hist. Eccl.

² Rodriguez: Christian Perfection, Vol. I, 357. Les Merveilles divines, Gaulie.

ately the flames divided before him, leaving a passage to the high altar. After taking down the Blessed Sacrament he carried it away without receiving the slightest injury. A painting representing this miraculous occurrence can still be seen in the church where it occurred.

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One day when St. Mechtilde had received Holy Communion after contemplating the Sacred Passion of Our Lord, He said to her: "Wouldst thou see in what manner I am in thee and thou in Me?" But she held her peace, considering herself unworthy. In the same moment she saw the Lord under the form of a transparent crystal, and her own soul like clear sparkling water flowing through the Body of Christ. As she marvelled greatly at the unspeakable goodness of God towards her, the Lord said: "Remember that which the Apostle Paul hath written: 'I am the least of the Apostles . . . but through the grace of God I am what I am.' Thou also in thyself art nothing, but whatsoever thou art, that through My grace art thou in Me."

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On another occasion when about to communicate she said to the Lord: "Write my name in Thy Heart"; and thereupon it seemed to her as though the Lord bore certain golden letters on His breast, which were adorned with seven precious stones; and she saw the first letter of her name, and understood the signification thereof, after which when she sought for the names of some whom she had recommended in her prayers, she found the first letter of their names also, adorned with the seven precious stones. (The first of these represented purity of heart; the second, steady contemplation of the Consecration; the third, humility; the fourth, increase in good work; the fifth, patience; the sixth, hope; the seventh, Divine Charity.) She understood therefore that one who would worthily communicate must be adorned with these seven jewels.

Reflection

Our Lord and God dwells night and day upon our altars, under the humble form of bread. What marvelous poverty does He not display in this Sacrament! Poorer than He was in the crib, where He at least retained His human form, He has here hidden both

His divinity and His humanity. Divesting himself of even the appearance of life, the Author of all life remains in a condition that seems to indicate death. A living body is here, yet there is no indication of life. The God of heaven and earth confines Himself within the limits of this motionless form! And what consequences does this not often bring to the Blessed Lord! Insults and profanations become the almost daily return of His rebellious creatures as a result of His very condescension, and yet, although in the Holy Eucharist He retains the full possession of His infinite omnipotence, the Prisoner of the tabernacle betrays not even the slightest sign of His displeasure. He is content to endure this unutterable poverty in order to be with us.

Our Lord speaks to us by the mouth of His prophet: "It is thus that I am wounded even in the house of those who love me." And as we draw nearer to the tabernacle we seem to hear Him say: "In the Eucharist I am still humbled for sinners, undergoing many more humiliations than the poverty of Bethlehem together with the anguish of Calvary. In my humble state at Bethlehem I even received more consola-

tions than which are denied Me now, the very angels sang My praises, a brilliant star pointed out My abode and I was adored by Joseph and Mary, by the humble shepherds and the sages of the East. In the Eucharist, I am born again and My adorable incarnation is renewed and perpetuated. I am placed in another Bethlehem where all is poverty and humiliation, where, having myself divested of all splendor, I descend from the glory in which I reigned with My Father and conceal it all under the appearance of bread and wine. Even amidst the ignominy of the cross all nature went in mourning for Me, and acknowledged Me to be its God ever, My very enemies confessing that I was 'truly the Son of God,' but in the Eucharist I suffer the most unheard-of outrages, and I suffer them in silence. I am exposed to continued insults; and turned into mockery. Heretics deride Me, wicked children of the true faith desert Me, insult Me, receive Me into their polluted hearts, and yet under these new insults nature does not mourn, the earth is not darkened, the rocks are not rent asunder, the graves do not send forth their dead. O faithful soul, wilt thou

not make some reparation to My wounded heart that thus suffers so much for thee?"

Indeed we should be filled with holy sadness, at the remembrance of the offences of man towards the adorable Eucharist. Prostrate before the altar let us deplore the sacrileges committed towards the Blessed Sacrament in the Church, and implore God's mercy. Let us shed our tears in the presence of God dwelling with us, He whose love is so shamefully outraged. True love strives to offer compensation for the injustice suffered by one beloved. Let us, then, show that we have a true love for Jesus Christ. Let us adore Him with all the powers of our being, accepting with resignation the sufferings of our lives, and let us offer these sufferings to Him with the intention of repairing in part at least the outrages He receives from men in His Sacrament of Love.

"O Jesus, unknown Love, Divine Savior, Who continuest Thy passion in the most Holy Sacrament, behold us at Thy feet endeavoring in our own weak way to make amends for the outrages of men, so many of whom, alas, have repaid Thy kindness with black ingratitude."

O Jesus, loving with an inexhaustible love the souls Thou hast redeemed, can we ever show our gratitude to Thee for all Thy heavenly favors? At least during the Holy Hour we can give Thee some proof of our attachment, some token of our love for Thee. We deplore the conduct of so many so-called Christians who neglect this opportunity of rendering Thee due homage, — but have we ourselves never been guilty of the same lukewarmness? It would ill become us to criticize others, dear Lord, since there is so much matter for condemnation within our own selfish hearts. Thou exhibitest such poverty in this Sacrament of Love, and we are hardly satisfied with the best that life can offer us.

“O Jesus, hidden Majesty, let us learn a lesson from Thee. Let us desire all through life to be content with the least, provided only that this may conduce the more to Thy honor and glory.”

“A fainting hath taken hold of me, on account of sinners who offend Thee, O Lord.”
Ps. cxviii.



Sixth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

SAINTE DOMINIC was one of the most fervent lovers of Jesus and Mary who ever lived, and he was also the well beloved of the angels. He received at their hands all kinds of help during those long watches of the night which he spent prostrate at the foot of the holy altar, pouring forth the affections and longings of his heart without restraint in presence of his good Master in the Most Holy Sacrament, and invoking with tears the protection of the Blessed Virgin. However wearied he might be, while he was journeying on the road, he was never tired of watching whole nights in prayer, and used his utmost endeavors that it should be before the Adorable Eucharist. The angels, enraptured with his indefatigable love, associated themselves with him. The

spirits of heaven took pleasure in accompanying this heavenly man. They were seen to bring lights, and take them to the room into which he had retired; open first the doors of the house and then of the church, whither they conducted him; and afterwards, when the time was come, they escorted him back in the same manner. The servants of a bishop with whom he lodged, having observed this marvel, mentioned it to the prelate, who watched the holy man about the time when the prodigy used to occur, and had the consolation of witnessing it, beholding with admiration the goodness of the heavenly spirits to men.¹

When, in the year 871, the Danes invaded England, King Ethelred went with a small army to meet them. But trusting more in the protection and assistance of God than in the valor of the army, he went first to hear Mass. While assisting at the Holy Sacrifice, messengers came to tell him that the Danes were quite near, and that he must prepare immediately for battle; but he answered that he would not go until he had received Holy Communion. So he

¹ Boudon, *Dev. to the nine Choirs*, page 49.

stayed in church till Mass was ended, and went forth with a lion's courage to attack his enemies. The Lord of armies was with him, and thus after a short conflict, the pious king succeeded in putting the enemies of his kingdom to a shameful flight.¹

On the 24th of May, 1608, a fire broke out in one of the chapels of the abbey church of our Lady of Faverney, in the diocese of Besançon, France, destroying the portable altar which had been used in one of the processions on that day. The altar linen, all the decorations, and even the very predella of the altar were soon reduced to ashes. Only the monstrance which contained the two consecrated Hosts remained intact, for, by miraculous intervention, it was seen suspended in the air for thirty-three hours, to the astonishment of more than 10,000 persons who came to witness the miracle.

It happened that a pastor from a neighboring town arrived to celebrate Mass. The elevation over, the monstrance lowered itself and rested on the corporal placed there for the purpose. It was then carried by

¹ Baronius.

the priest to the high altar. Fifty of the most prominent citizens of the town gave a written testimony of this stupendous occurrence, while the Bishop of Besançon, after thoroughly investigating the case, openly declared the miracle authentic.

One of the miraculous Hosts was carried to the church at Dolce, where it was received with great pomp. The people unanimously resolved to have a celebration every year, in which the most Holy Host would be borne in triumphal procession for the adoration of the faithful.¹

“The Lover of the Blessed Sacrament,” such was the title the Blessed Benedict Joseph Labre merited for himself. Whilst in Rome he visited all the churches in turn, because they were the dwelling-places of Him who was his All in all — his well-beloved Jesus.

When the All-Holy was exposed, especially on the occasion of the Adoration of the Forty Hours, he knew not how to tear himself away from his Savior in the Most Holy Sacrament, and people who would speak of him, not knowing what name to call him,

¹ Ott: Euch., page 416. *Les Merveilles divines*, 1865. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, VII, page 493.

would style him the "Poor man of the Forty Hours' Adoration." His demeanor before the Most Holy Sacrament was so devout, his body, his head, and his eyes, which were ever fixed on our Lord, were so motionless, that in the process of his canonization it was said of him that he used to resemble a statue; also, that it appeared to some that an adoring angel rather than a praying man was then wrapt in contemplation. In the presence of his beloved Savior the interior fire of his heart shone forth in his illuminated face, to the astonishment of everyone who observed him; for when he was not engaged in prayer it was colorless as a corpse, yet when before the Blessed Sacrament it was tinged with a roseate hue and he became altogether insensible to outer things. In this situation he would often remain in adoration for five or six hours; yes, even for a whole day, without giving the slightest nourishment to his emaciated body. One who saw him in the church of St. Anne from the early morning until sunset kneeling motionless in the attitude of the deepest rapture before the Most Holy Sacrament, on one occasion of the Forty Hours' Exposition, was filled with the greatest amazement. His astonishment was so great

that he called the attention of all the brethren of the Confraternity of the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament to the fact, and he maintained that the same thing might be remarked of Benedict in the other churches when the Blessed Sacrament was exposed for adoration.

One day, as he was praying in the church of Sta. Maria in Via Lata, towards midday, when no one was in the church, he permitted his sighs and loving aspirations to have free course. There were, however, two priests in the choir, which was entirely separated from the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, in which Benedict was praying. Now, when they heard these deep sighs, urged by a pious curiosity they approached the spot without noise, and then they perceived Benedict before the tabernacle, with outspread arms in the form of a cross, heaving such loving sighs that it was clearly perceptible how full his heart was of divine love. The priests left him with sorrow, at the same time that they united their own prayers with those of the poor beggar-man.

It was the same when he assisted at Holy Mass. Daily he was present at many with the greatest attention and devotion.

In order to prepare himself for the end,

which at length he perceived to be approaching, he began with greater fervor than ever to seek the sacrament of Penance and that of the Holy Altar. Two days before his death he communicated in the church of St. Ignatius, at the altar of St. Aloysius, with so great desire that the celebrating priest declared he had never felt such deep contrition himself, nor yet such inward consolation, as when he remarked the bright glow on the face of this servant of God. ¹

Reflection

Have you ever considered what a long and wearisome road our Blessed Lord had to journey over ere He could give Himself to us in the Holy Eucharist? Ask our Holy Faith to enlighten you and you will receive the answer: He had to live, to suffer, and to die!

His divine glory and majesty had to be sacrificed that He might be born in a stable; that he might dwell as a poor carpenter in Nazareth, toiling and laboring till His thirtieth year; that for three years He might go about Judea, poor and shelterless, enduring heat and cold, hunger, and thirst;

¹ Merveilles Divines dans la S. Eucharistie, 1.

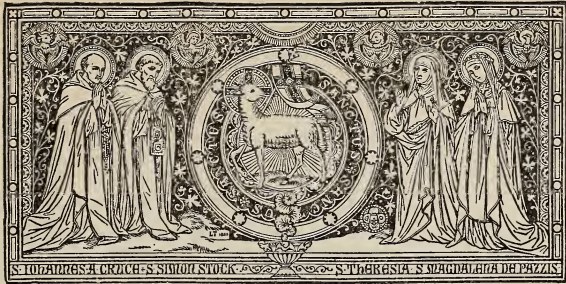
that He might be hated, calumniated, persecuted and, lastly, put to a cruel death! Thus the Blessed Sacrament is not merely the fruit of the *life* of Jesus; it is rather the fruit of His bitter passion and death. O! who ever heard of love like this?

“I was in the world, and the world was made by Me, and the world knew Me not. I came unto My own, and My own received Me not.”

Now during the Holy Hour, it is our privilege to give a little testimony of our gratitude to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Let us greet this hour as one of the most holy of our lives, and during our visits let us invite the different choirs of angels and all our patron saints to the feet of Jesus in the tabernacle.

“Down in adoration falling,
Lo! the Sacred Host we hail!
Lo! o'er ancient forms departing,
Newer rights of grace prevail;
Faith for all defects supplying,
Where the feeble senses fail.”





Seventh Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

A CERTAIN Cardinal of Rome was in the habit of saying Mass every day. But when his occupations became rather numerous and pressing, he easily omitted saying Mass in order to gain more time for the transaction of temporal affairs. No sooner had St. Cajetan of Naples, his bosom friend, learned this than he started without delay for Rome in spite of the extreme heat which endangered his life, in order to request the Cardinal to resume his former practice of saying Mass daily, and not deprive God any longer of so great an honor; the Blessed Virgin and all the saints, of excessive joy; sinners of the grace of conversion and forgiveness; the just of many

actual graces; the souls in purgatory of great relief in their pains; the Church of her great strength; and himself of so powerful a means of salvation and sanctification.

One day Father John Avila, S.J., made a long journey. Having a great desire to say Mass, he continued his journey in spite of extreme fatigue, in order to reach a convent where he might offer up the Holy Sacrifice. But at last he felt so overcome with fatigue, that he gave up all hope of reaching the convent and saying Mass. Suddenly Jesus Christ appeared to him in the guise of a pilgrim, and, showing him all His wounds, said: "When I received these wounds I was certainly more fatigued than you are now." Having said this our Divine Savior disappeared, leaving Father Avila full of courage to continue his journey, until he reached the convent to say Mass.

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One day St. Dominic was saying Mass in London, England, in presence of the king and queen and three hundred other persons. As he was making the memento for the living, he suddenly became enraptured, remaining motionless for the space of a whole hour. All present were greatly astonished,

and knew not what to think or make of it. The king ordered the server to pull the celebrant's robe, that he might go on with the Mass. The server attempted to do so, but became so terribly frightened that he was unable to comply with the order. After an hour's time, St. Dominic was able to continue the Mass, when, wonderful to relate, at the elevation of the Host, all who were present saw, instead of the Host in the hands of the priest, the Holy Infant Jesus, at sight of which they experienced great interior joy. Not only that, but, at the elevation of the chalice, every one saw above it a cross on which our Lord Jesus Christ was hanging in a pitiable condition, shedding His most Sacred Blood. After Mass St. Dominic ascended the pulpit and addressed the people in the following manner: "You have all seen with your own eyes and experienced in your own hearts the wonderful things Jesus Christ has done in the Blessed Sacrament. You have seen with your own eyes, and it has been given to you to understand, how Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world and the Son of Mary, has been pleased to be born anew, and to be again crucified for you. Now, if there be a spark

of Divine Love in your hearts, sentiments of gratitude in honor of this sacred mystery ought incessantly to ascend to God from your hearts.”¹

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Alphonsus Rodriguez, S.J., in his book, “Practice of Christian Perfection,”² relates the following: “A holy man was one day at Mass, which was being said by a priest who was rather worldly. What was his surprise, at the moment of Communion, to see a charming child, surrounded by luminous rays, reposing on the paten in place of the species of bread! He was more astonished afterwards, for he saw that when the priest went to take Communion, the child turned away his head, struggling with his hands and feet, as if to prevent the priest from receiving him into his mouth. The same saint had several other times the same vision, which gave him much thought. One day this priest was conversing with him and confessed that as often as he received the Body of our Lord at Mass he had great trouble in taking it, and knew not how that

¹ B. Alamos: Ex. lib. intit., par. 3, cap. 22. Drane: History of St. Dominic.

² Eighth Treatise, chap. 13.

could come. The servant of God was very glad of this confidence; he took occasion to tell the priest what he had himself seen, and advised him to make a thorough examination of his conscience, a good confession, and change his life. Touched by this kind admonition, and the warning he had received, the priest applied himself to become more edifying. Some time after, the holy man who had warned him, when assisting again at Mass, perceived the same child between the hands of the priest, at the time of Holy Communion, but saw him enter now into his mouth and his heart joyfully and eagerly, which proved the sincerity of his conversion.

. . .

Father Nascasen, an Armenian friar of the Order of St. Dominic, was living in his convent with one companion and was in the act of saying Mass, at which the other served, when the Turkish chief with fifty horsemen rode up to the door, and making his way into the church just as the Sacred Host was being elevated, rudely commanded Father Mathew to come and hold their horses. Mathew laid the Divine Victim again on the altar; then, turning round, he begged the chief to wait till he had finished Mass and

he would do his bidding. The Turks surrounded the altar, cursing and blaspheming, but did not touch him till he turned to give the last blessing, when the brutal commander struck his head against the corner of the altar so violently that his vestments were dyed in blood. "Dog of an infidel," he exclaimed, "wilt thou leave thy Mass and serve me?" "I will not leave the service of God for thine," firmly answered Mathew. As he said so, his enemy pushed him to his knees and struck off his head, so that his blood was sprinkled on the very altar on which but a moment before he had concluded the Holy Sacrifice, and beneath which his relics were afterwards interred.

Reflection

In the Blessed Sacrament our Lord does marvelous things for us. He was not content with living near us. No, He would come to us as our very food. With His divinity and humanity, with His adorable soul and body, with His flesh and blood, He chooses to visit our hearts, and oh, how often those wretched hearts are unworthy to receive Him! Who could explain the prodigies that the Lord's omnipotence works in this

Sacrament? "Who shall declare the powers of the Lord?" The wonders which were performed by Jesus during His life were performed in their own time and in their own particular place, but He renews the prodigies of the Holy Eucharist every day, every hour, and in an infinity of places. In the Most Holy Sacrament He changes the whole substance of the bread and wine into that of His body and blood, which reduce themselves to the narrow limits of the Host, and yet produce themselves countless times.

In the Most Holy Sacrament He is inclosed in a little Host, and in each particle of the Host He preserves the accidents without their substance, which is changed by the miracle of transubstantiation. He is at one and the same time in heaven, seated at the right hand of His Father, and on earth in millions of places, always the same and always entire. These are the daily miracles of His love for us, without speaking of several others which He has wrought from time to time to heighten the glory of this ineffable mystery. It is here that we are forced to cry out with St. Thomas: "My Lord and my God." None but a God could work such prodigies. None but a

divine love could trace a plan replete with so many marvels, in order that he might unite Himself to us.

Consider how He dwells with us in the guise of a prisoner and a slave. In that little tabernacle He submits Himself to a confinement such as our earthly prisoner endures. Why then should we not in return allow Him to make prisoners of our hearts? Why should we not say with tender gratitude: "Ah! my Lord, Thou hast done so much for me, and still Thou waitest through the long weary years for me to do something for Thee. Now is my turn. Take my life and make it Thine forever."

Let faith make its canticles of joy resound forever in the presence of this Sacrament of love; let charity send up to heaven the exultations of its happiness; let piety proclaim its blessings; let purity pour forth its songs of triumph and love!

"Sion, lift thy voice and sing;
Praise thy Savior and thy king;
See to-day before thee laid
The living and life-giving bread!
Theme for praise and joy profound!
The same which at the sacred board
Was, by our incarnate God,
Giv'n to His apostles round."

“Come, O adorable Host, place Thyself on my heart as a divine seal which will make me known as the servant of the Most High, and will promote my admission into the heavenly Kingdom.”





Eighth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

REVEREND FATHER MUELLER, priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, in his book, "Triumph of the Blessed Sacrament, or History of Nicola Aubry," relates the following miracle:

This miracle was wrought by Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament at Laon in France on the eighth of February, 1566. It occurred in the presence of more than a thousand people; in presence of all the ecclesiastical and civil authorities of the city, of Protestant and Catholics alike. It is indeed a remarkable fact that, as the devil made use of Luther, an apostate monk, to abolish the Mass and deny the Real Presence, in like manner God made use of his arch enemy, the devil, to prove the Real

Presence. He forced him publicly to profess his firm belief in it, to confound the heretics for their disbelief, and acknowledge himself vanquished by our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. For this purpose God allowed a certain Mme. Nicola Aubry, an innocent person, to become possessed by Beelzebub and twenty-nine other evil spirits. The possession took place on the eighth of November, 1565, and lasted until the eighth of February, 1566. Her parents took her to Father de Motta, a pious priest of Vervins, in order that he might expel the demon by the exorcisms of the Church. Father de Motta had tried several times to expel the evil spirit by applying the sacred relics of the Holy Cross, but he could not always succeed; Satan would not depart. At last, inspired by the Holy Ghost, he resolved to expel the devil by means of the Sacrament of our Lord's Body and Blood. Whilst Nicola was lying in this state of unnatural lethargy, Father de Motta placed the Blessed Sacrament upon her lips, and instantly the infernal spell was broken; Nicola was restored to consciousness, and received Holy Communion with every mark of devotion. As soon as Nicola had received the Sacred

Body of our Lord, her face became bright and beautiful as the face of an angel, and all who saw her were filled with joy and wonder, and they blessed God from their inmost hearts.

Here are some of the incidents previous to the miracle. On the arrival of the priest several of the non-Catholics went away — they had seen more than they wanted. Others, however, remained, and great was their terror when they saw how the devil writhed and howled in agony, as soon as the Blessed Sacrament was brought near her. At last the evil spirit departed, leaving Nicola in the state of unnatural trance. While she was in this state several of the preachers tried to open her eyes, but they found it impossible to do so. The priest then placed the Blessed Sacrament on Nicola's lips, and instantly she was restored to consciousness. Reverend Father de Motta then turned to the astonished ministers of the gospel, and said: "Go now, ye preachers of the new gospel; go and relate everywhere what you have seen and heard. Do not deny any longer that our Lord Jesus Christ is really and truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar."

After Nicola had been completely cured the people wept for joy and sang hymns of praise and thanksgiving in honor of God, and of our dear Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. On all sides were heard the exclamations: "Oh, what a great miracle! Oh, thank God that I witnessed it! Who is there now that could doubt of the Real Presence of our Lord in the Sacrament of the Altar!" Many a non-Catholic also said: "I believe now in the Presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament; I have seen it with my eyes; I will remain a Calvinist no longer. Oh, now I can understand what a good thing is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass!"

The Solemn Te Deum was intoned; the organ pealed forth, and the bells rung a merry chime. The whole city was filled with joy.¹

St. Bonnet, Bishop of Clermont, a great servant of Mary, betook himself one night alone to a church in order to give himself more leisure and devotion to prayer. At the moment when his affections were most enkindled, he heard a sweet and ravishing melody, and soon the whole church was

¹ Ott: Euch., Les Merveilles divines dans la Sainte Euch.

filled with light. He then saw the Blessed Virgin enter, accompanied by a great number of angels and saints, who walked in procession, chanting the praises of our Lord and His Holy Mother. Arrived at the altar, some of them asked who should celebrate Mass. Mary replied that her well-beloved Bonnet, bishop of the place, would celebrate. On hearing these words, the holy prelate was seized with fear, and so deeply penetrated with the sentiment of his unworthiness, that he sought to hide himself, and on retiring fell against a stone, which miraculously softened and received the impression of his body. His humility, however, but rendered him more worthy of the honor which he fled; he was constrained to obey. Being conducted to the altar some saints met him, and he celebrated Mass in the midst of this glorious assemblage, assisted and served by the saints. After Mass Mary gave him a white alb of a material so fine and delicate that the like was never before seen on earth. It was afterwards shown as a very precious relic.¹

¹ Bolanden, Vol. III.

St. Nicholas of Tolentino was born in answer to the prayer of a holy mother, and vowed before his birth to the service of God, he never lost his baptismal innocence. His austerities were conspicuous even in the austere Order — the Hermits of St. Augustine, to which he belonged, and to remonstrances which were made by his superiors he only replied, "How can I be said to fast, while every morning at the altar I receive my God." He conceived an ardent charity for the Holy Souls, so near and yet so far from their Savior; and often after his Mass, it was revealed to him that the soul for whom he had offered the Holy Sacrifice had been admitted to the presence of God. Amidst his loving labors for God and man, he was haunted by fear of his own sinfulness. "The heavens," he said, "are not pure in the sight of Him whom I serve, how then shall I, a sinful man, stand before Him?"

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St. Wenceslaus was educated in the true faith by his holy grandmother, Ludmilla, herself a martyr. It was by the efforts of this holy woman that he imbibed a special devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Wen-

ceslaus ruled his Kingdom as a brave and pious King, provided for all the needs of his people, and when his Kingdom was attacked by his wicked mother and his apostate brother, he overcame, in a single combat, the leader of an invading army. In the service of God he was most constant, and planted with his own hands the wheat and grapes for the Holy Mass, at which he never failed daily to assist. One night whilst praying before the Tabernacle, he received the death blow from his treacherous brother.

St. Wenceslaus teaches us that the safest place to meet the trials of life, or to prepare for the stroke of death, is before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Reflection

We must acknowledge that suffering for love's sake always solicits compassion and that the greater the sufferings for the person beloved, the greater the commiseration. Hear Jesus pleading from His prison of love: "I am alone and poor in the Sacrament of My love. Night and day I dwell among My children, yet they visit Me not. My temples are deserted. My altars abandoned.

No one comes to adore his God in the solitude and poverty to which he is reduced by love. I am often for whole days, and even weeks in the tabernacle, and no one comes to adore Me, not even one faithful heart to pour out its affections at My feet. I am poor; dwelling in poverty in ruined and deserted places, on altars destitute of all ornament. My body is often consecrated on soiled linens, and My blood poured into unclean vessels. There is no abode of wretchedness and misery upon earth into which I do not enter, through My love for men. Ah! wilt thou be so ungrateful as to leave Me in solitude? Wilt thou desert Me in thy ingratitude? Wilt thou not frequently visit Me, and enjoy My holy company? Wilt thou not relieve My poverty and testify thy grateful love by decorating My temples and altars?"

The offenses committed against our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament are inexpressibly great, but the saddest part of it all is that many of these offenses could be spared Him. Man's indifference to his lowly state in the tabernacle, — the Holy Eucharist so much neglected, so little loved, and so carelessly adored, is the cause of His greatest sorrow.

He is sad because we are so ungrateful to Him, — so heartless in our relations with Him! During the Holy Hour, let us say with fervor, “O dearest Jesus, may Thy Blessed Mother, together with the angels and saints, bless Thee in reparation for all the insults and offenses which Thy ungrateful creatures have committed or ever will commit against Thee to the end of time.” Offer this prayer in reparation for the cruel neglect that Jesus suffers in the Sacrament of His love; offer it for the sorrow of the outraged love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Prostrate before Thee, O Redeemer of men, we ask Thee to permit us during the Holy Hour to make Thee some reparation for all the injuries which men daily heap upon Thee. Divine Jesus, we offer Thee our hearts to console Thee by this homage for the guilt of those who will not know Thee, or knowing Thee will not love Thee. Bury us deep in Thy Sacred Heart where we shall find rest from the troubles of this life, peace at the hour of our death, and happiness for all eternity.

“Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament! Our Lady of the Sacred Heart!

Mother and Model of all adorers of the Blessed Sacrament, pray for us who seek Thy protection."

"The Prisoner of Love
'Tis Thou who reignest, mighty God! in majesty above,
Yet hidest in this holy shrine,
Love's Captive for MY SAKE,
Sweet Jesus, may my heart its home within Thy prison
make."





Ninth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

IN 1611, Mary Maximilian, sister of William V, Duke of Bavaria, was taken sick with acute pain in her breast. The physicians tried every remedy to procure some relief for her, but in vain. One day, the Duke spoke to his sister of the great wonders wrought by our Lord through a miraculous Host in the church of Holy Cross at Augsburg. On hearing an account of these wonders, Mary conceived great confidence in our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. She dismissed her physicians and caused herself to be carried from Munich to the church of the Holy Cross in Augsburg, where she asked our Lord in the miraculous Host to cure her. Her prayer was immediately granted, and unaided by anyone she rose up

perfectly cured. To show her gratitude to our Lord, she had this miracle published in all the Catholic churches of Bavaria, and requested the clergy and the people to join with her in giving thanks to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament for her miraculous cure.¹

. . .

In 1747, a poor man in Augsburg who had been dumb from his infancy, and was known by all in the city, prayed several times to our Lord in the wonderful Host for the gift of speech but he was apparently unheard. One day, however, he prayed for the same favor with more than usual confidence and with many tears. This time God had mercy on him and granted his request. Filled with joy he ran home to make known the miracle which our Lord had wrought in him. After the Bishop had sufficiently convinced himself of the miraculous fact, he had a solemn "Te Deum" chanted, and the bells of all the churches rang out in thanksgiving.

The miraculous Host has often been examined since, and every new examination furnishes additional proofs of the Real

¹ Rev. Michael Müller, C.S.S.R.: The Holy Mass, page 99. Ott: Euch., page 586.

Presence. All the bishops of Augsburg to the present day have venerated and adored our Lord therein, thus forming a chain of the most trustworthy witnesses of the great truth.¹

. . .

During the reign of King Louis XIV of France, we read an account about the Most Holy Eucharist in the Louvre at Paris.

A fire had broken out in one of the galleries which connected the Palace of the Tuileries with that of the Louvre, threatening a general destruction to all the famous works of art therein collected. Every effort to control the devouring element seemed to be in vain, especially as a storm of wind fanned the flames to the very height of fury.

Turenne, one of the king's bravest generals, who was never known to turn aside from any kind of danger, hurried at once to the scene of destruction, and proceeded to direct the men in their efforts to extinguish the flames. The learned Bishop Bossuet, who happened to be at the Palace, seeing the imminent danger, and following a divine impulse, hastened at once to Him "who commanded the winds and the waves, and they obeyed

¹ Rev. M. Mueller, C.S.S.R. The Holy Mass, page 100.

Him." Hurrying into the chapel of the palace, he took the ciborium containing the Most Holy Sacrament, and suddenly appeared with it at the opposite end of the burning gallery. The men understood the sound of the little bell, and, separating on either side with the deepest respect, allowed the Bishop to pass through the cloud of smoke which surrounded him. He pronounced a benediction over the flames, and at once the wind ceased and the fire withdrew, as in acknowledgment of His presence who commands the storms. The surrounding people, struck by the might and majesty of the miracle, fell on their knees and intoned the "Te Deum," while the great Turenne himself, subdued by the power to which he no longer offered any resistance, sank to the ground in adoration.

From that moment Turenne, who had been a staunch Calvinist, became a Catholic, joining in the chant of the "Te Deum," as the Blessed Sacrament was carried back to the tabernacle. This wonderful occurrence took place in the year 1667. From the moment that Turenne learned the truth, he loved and followed it, putting into practice the sentiments which he once expressed

previous to his conversion: "How happy are Catholics who believe in the Real Presence! But did they really believe it, would they not spend their whole lives at the feet of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament? For my own part, were I convinced of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, prostrate in the dust I would adore Him incessantly." From the day of his conversion he was always known to adore, with the deepest humility, devotion and faith, our divine Redeemer present in the Holy Eucharist.¹

. . .

In the annals of the Propagation of the Faith, it is related that during the persecution which raged against the Christians in the kingdom of Tong-Quin, the power of the Eucharist was strikingly manifested to the infidels. Though the courageous martyrs were scourged and their flesh torn from their bones with red-hot pincers the Holy Name of Jesus was ever on their lips. The mandarins, not understanding the cause of their fortitude and amazed at their sublime endurance, attributed it to

¹ *Fastes et Legendes par le Gaulie. Ott: Euch., page 509.*

the Heavenly Food of which the Christians partook in their gatherings. "This man," they would declare, "must have eaten of that enchanted Bread, which casts a spell upon the soul."

The saints who are now enjoying in heaven what they so much loved on earth, how did they not long for this Bread of Love?

St. Magdalen of Pazzi, from her earliest youth, felt herself burning with a desire to be united to her God by Holy Communion. Too young to receive this favor, she would draw near to her mother or to any one else who had the happiness of receiving our Blessed Lord, and enjoy the greatest delight in breathing near them the holy odor of the presence of our Lord. Her confessor, noticing this remarkable devotion to the Holy Eucharist, concluded to anticipate in her regard the time at which children were permitted to approach the Holy Table. Magdalen joined the Carmelite Order solely because she knew that the religious of that Order went to Communion every day. It was this saint who sometimes cried out in holy transports: "O love! love of my God! can it be that love will not be loved, not even by its own crea-

tures? O my Jesus! why have I not a voice loud enough to reach the ends of the earth? I would proclaim everywhere that this love ought to be known, loved, esteemed as the only true good, the one only good.”¹

Blessed Joanna of the Cross was watching in the church one Christmas eve. It had hardly struck twelve, when an irresistible longing seized her soul for the Blessed Sacrament, and she sent her maid to request her confessor to come and give her Holy Communion. He answered her summons at once, and when she had received the body of the Lord, her usually pale cheeks became aflame with a heavenly glow.

Reflection

Have we ever considered how much we contribute to the sorrows of Jesus by leaving Him so often alone in the Most Holy Sacrament? He has left heaven, where, surrounded by myriads of angels, He received ceaseless adoration, just to be near frail, mortal man. Why cannot men imitate the celestial spirits and stay forever near His altar-throne?

¹ Krebes: her Life, 1857. Ott: Euch., page 404.

To surround Himself by His creatures therein is His delight and His joy. But He is forsaken by His children and left lonely and desolate, — and that is how we solace Him in His longing! Yet, how easily men could accede to His wishes and spend at least a portion of their time in the seclusion of the sanctuary. Jesus, ever present in the tabernacle! How this very thought should make our churches a sweet abiding place for all! Your loneliness here, my God, is far greater than it was of old in the desert. There, at least, living creatures bore you company, — but here how often is the feeble light that burns before your tabernacle the only companion of your loneliness! In many churches its flickering beams are Your only worshipers in the busy hours of the day as well as the lonely watches of the night.

Strange it is that man has time for everything except the adoration of his God, strange that streets and theaters can ever be crowded, while the Church of the Most High remains empty. Weep, then, over Jesus, insulted in the Sacrament of His love more cruelly than He was ever insulted on Calvary. Weep over the negligence and crimes of those who

offend Him most, though perhaps they were once His favored friends. Ward off by your worship the dishonor brought to bear upon Him in His very temple by irreverence, profanation, yes, even by unworthy Communions.

During this Holy Hour, then, let us resolve to visit our Lord in the tabernacle oftener, that thereby we may make amends for those neglected Christians who have time for every one but for Him. Let us adore Him with humility and love, seeking by imposing some little penance upon ourselves to make reparation for our own as well as the negligence of others.

“I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy house, and the places where Thy glory dwelleth. I have walked in my innocence: Redeem me and have mercy on me. My foot has stood in the direct way: in the churches I will bless Thee, O Lord.”

“O sweet Jesus, may my heart be a burning lamp of love before Thy altar.”





Tenth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

IN the life of St. Bernard of Clairvaux a miracle is recorded showing the power of the Real Presence over Satan. St. Bernard was commissioned by Pope Innocent II to restore order to the city of Milan, which had been desolated like the rest of Italy by the schism of the Antipope Anacletus.

One day, whilst preparing to say Mass in the Basilica of St. Ambrose, an old woman was carried into the church and placed near the altar. This old lady had been possessed by the devil for several years. Her persecutor continually choked her. His repeated attacks caused her to lose her hearing, sight, and speech. She gnashed her teeth. Her distorted face excited terror. When St. Bernard had looked upon this unfortunate crea-

ture, he understood that the demon was profoundly rooted and, as it were, incorporated in her; and that he would not easily leave a dwelling occupied by him for many years.

The man of God turned to the people who filled the Basilica, inviting them to pray fervently. Then, surrounded by the priests and religious, who remained near him at the foot of the altar, he ordered the woman to be brought to him and to be held fast. But she resisted. She writhed in horrible convulsions in the midst of her guards. She even struck the foot of the saint. But Bernard, calm and unmoved, ascended the altar and began Holy Mass. Whenever he made the sign of the Cross over the oblations, he turned toward the possessed woman and repeated the same ceremony. Satan testified, by an increase of fury and by howls, how keenly he felt the power of this weapon.

The Lord's prayer finished, St. Bernard prepared to attack the enemy still more closely. He took in his hand the paten on which he had placed the Sacred Body of the Lord and elevated it above the head of the unfortunate creature, saying: "Behold thy Judge, spirit of evil, behold the Almighty!

Resist now if thou canst. It is by the power of this terrible Majesty that I order thee, infernal spirit, to depart from the body of this servant of God and never return to it."

The demon, forced to surrender, wished at least, before acknowledging himself conquered, to display his fury and torment his victim with renewed violence. The holy abbot reascended the altar, continued the Holy Sacrifice, broke the Host, and gave the kiss of peace to the deacon, who communicated it to the whole assembly. At the same moment, calm and health were restored to the poor woman; for Satan fled with cries of rage, demonstrating by his defeat the efficacy and power of the Prisoner of the Tabernacle.¹

. . .

In the year 1239 a fearful war desolated Spain: the Moors, long masters of the kingdom of Valentia, disputed with the Catholics for the possession of that ancient conquest of the Koran. One day a multitude of these infidels attacked a small army of a thousand Christians who had taken refuge

¹ Liber Miraculorum. Herbert. Abbé Favre: Le Ciel Ouvert.

in a castle. The small number of the besieged left no doubt as to the issue of the battle. Without earthly hope, the heroic troop turned to heaven, desiring to arm themselves with the aid of the sacraments. But time was precious, the enemy was near, and priests were wanting to hear their confessions and distribute the Bread of heaven. Six of the principal leaders, therefore, were chosen to partake of the Blessed Eucharist in the name of the others, who kept armed watch ready to repulse an attack.

The six brave men confessed, and stationed themselves around the altar. Already had the priest consecrated the Hosts for Holy Communion, when the signal of the Moors' approach was sounded. The officers seized their arms and flew to the common defense. The priest, on his part, in order not to expose the Sacred Hosts, hurriedly folded them in the corporal and hid them under a stone. But our Lord did not refuse them the assistance they expected from His almighty arm. The enemy was put to flight. Filled with gratitude for their success the valiant officers returned to receive Holy Communion in thanksgiving. The priest hastened to bring the corporal from its hiding-place. But, O

wonder! unfolding it on the altar, he found the Sacred Hosts stained with drops of blood and adhering to the corporal. With one voice the people attributed their victory to this redeeming Blood.

The miraculous corporal was brought to Daroca, the city in which dwelt the priest who had consecrated the miraculous Hosts. Kings, princes, and great lords have gone there to render homage. Ambassadors were sent to Pope Urban IV charged to give him an authentic account of all these facts. The Pontiff granted numerous indulgences. Charles Fifth and Empress Isabella visited the spot after three hundred years had passed and found the Hosts still intact.¹

One day as Frederic IV, King of Prussia, was passing through the Rhenish Province, a certain cowherd approached the Royal carriage, and commenced playing as artistically as he could on his rude horn. The King, admiring the simplicity and token of honor of the cowherd, presented him with a piece of gold, to repay him for the loyalty he had exhibited towards his Sovereign. Now if this earthly Prince so readily re-

¹ Miracle Euch. Père Couét, S.S.S. Sentinel of the Blessed Sac. Vol. XIX.

warded this slight act of honor, how much more readily will not our Lord pour out His graces upon all those who come to honor Him, in the Blessed Sacrament, for ever so short a time.

Our Lord manifested this readiness to Blessed Balthasar Alvarez, when once kneeling before the altar. He showed Himself in the Sacred Host as a little child with His hands full of precious stones, saying: "If there were only some one to whom I might distribute them." Are you then in temporal want. Go to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. St. Norbert, who was of noble rank and rare talents, passed a most pious youth, and entered the ecclesiastical state. Commissioned by the Pope, he preached penance to the listening crowds in France and the Netherlands. In the wild vale of Prémontre he gave to some trained disciples the rule of St. Austin, and a white habit to denote the angelic purity proper to the priesthood. The Canons Regular renewed the spirit of the priesthood, quickened the faith of the people, and drove out heresy. A vile heretic, named Tankelin, appeared at Antwerp, in the time of St. Norbert, and denied the reality of the priesthood, and especially blasphemed the

Blessed Eucharist. The Saint was sent to drive out the pest. By his burning words he exposed the impostor and rekindled the faith in the Blessed Sacrament. Many of the apostates had proved their contempt for the Blessed Sacrament, by burning it in filthy places. Norbert bade them search for the Sacred Hosts. They found them entire and unimpaired, and the Saint bore them back in triumph to the tabernacle. Hence he is generally painted with the monstrance in his hand.

Reflection

“And where is the Christian,” says St. Gregory the Great, “who can doubt that at the words of the priest the heavens open, that the choirs of angels assist at the sacred mysteries in order to pay the reverence to Jesus Christ; that there is established an intercourse between heaven and earth, between the things above and the things beneath, that an ineffable union of the visible with the invisible takes place?”

“The angels,” says St. Leo, “venerate the body of our Lord, and protect the faithful who are present.” And these same angels have frequently appeared in a sensible form

to favorite souls. St. Nilus, speaking of St. Chrysostom, says: "That admirable bishop, the glory of the whole universe, saw almost continually the house of God filled with choirs of angels, but above all when he offered up the divine sacrifice, and he could not, even in his private conversation, conceal his admiration and joy on the subject." The holy doctor in his address to the faithful frequently reminded them that the angels adore and love the hidden God: — "When," says he, "the sacrifice is offered, heaven opens and the angels descend. Yes, behold the celestial spirits present in the sanctuary, where they sing hymns in honor of the great King enthroned upon the altar. The angels are there prostrate before our Common Lord, archangels are there who profit by the moment of offering to address their prayers to Him."

"Oh! do not allow your thoughts to wander upon earth, but keep yourself recollected by reflecting that although composed of flesh and bone, you are admitted to the society of the heavenly spirits to sing forever the praises of our universal Master."

During the Holy Hour the Church calls upon all Christians to offer their adoration to

Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, to praise Him, to thank Him, to express their love to Him. How surpassingly wonderful is the gift which our Lord bestows upon us in the Blessed Sacrament. He gives Himself to us whole and entire in His divinity, for did not Christ at the last supper say clearly and plainly to His Apostles: "This (which I have in My hand, which appears to you as bread) is My Body!"

Nowadays, people pervert the words of Christ by saying that there is nothing more wonderful in this Sacrament than in any other. But how far from the truth have they not wandered! That which you receive is our Lord Himself, the great God of heaven and earth.

"He loved them to the end." Truly, this one sentence is an abridgment of Christ's entire life. If he had not loved us, there would have been no abject poverty in the stable at Bethlehem, no common toil in the workshop at Nazareth, no unceasing activity after souls during the three years of His public life, and above all, no Sacrament of the altar, and no death upon the cross. Learn from all this the excessive love Jesus bears to every one of His children. He

would have us made one with Himself. Therefore, He has established this Sacrament of Love.

How sweet and how profitable it is to enter into the practices of devotion to the Holy Eucharist. What consolation and what treasures of grace the soul finds in her relations with God. How could we seek elsewhere the joys which our heart needs? It is there they exist, as the Saints experienced, and as we shall experience, if we have their devotion and zeal for the Most Holy Sacrament; if we share, for instance, in the admirable dispositions of St. Liguori when he says: "O Lord Jesus! enkindle in me an ardent desire to remain always in Thy presence, at the foot of Thine altars, to keep company there with Thee, to receive Thee into my heart. Oh, deign to attract me towards Thee by the perfumes of Thy sacred beauty and the infinite love Thou dost manifest in the Most Holy Sacrament."

Animated by these sentiments let us adore, love, and glorify the Divine Eucharist which shall be our strength, our peace, our joy, the whole time of our pilgrimage, and whose virtue will make us attain to eternal happiness.

“May the Heart of Jesus in the most Blessed Sacrament be praised, adored and loved with grateful affection, at every moment, in all the tabernacles of the world, even to the end of time.”





Eleventh Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

MAXIMILIAN I, Emperor of Germany, sometimes called the "Last Knight," for his chivalrous character, was in his youth remarkable for high courage and love of adventure, which at times led him to feats of rash daring. Among the many lands over which he ruled, none was so dear to him as the mountainous Tyrol, because hunting among the Tyrolese Alps was one of his chief pleasures.

On Easter Monday, in the year 1493, the young Emperor, who was staying in the vicinity of Innsbruck, rose before dawn for a day's chamois hunting. He took with him a few courtiers and some experienced hunters. At sunrise they were already high up on the mountain pastures, which are the

favorite haunts of the chamois: the valleys beneath them were still covered by a sea of white mist. Maximilian fixed a longing gaze on the rocky summits. "I wish," said he, "that I could gain today some spot where the foot of man has never trod before, and where no man should be able to follow. That would be the spot for the throne of the Emperor."

At this moment, one of the huntsmen gave notice that he had sighted some chamois; the whole party, guided by him, cautiously approached a rocky point, behind which the animal was grazing. On this point of rock stood a single chamois, its graceful head raised, as if to watch. Maximilian, on its track, had soon distanced his attendants. One moment he paused, then with a light spring gained the other side, while a shout burst from his astonished suite. He had leaped too far and in vain Max gazed around for some way to escape. And then his wish of the morning occurred to him. How literally it had been fulfilled! And how little could the Emperor exult in his lofty and airy throne! He merely felt with a shudder his own exceeding littleness in the face of the great realities of Nature and Nature's God.

Beneath, in the valley of Zierlein, a shepherd was watching his flock. He observed a dark speck moving on the face of the rock called St. Martin's Wall. "It's a man!" he cried; "what witchcraft has brought him there?" And he ran to tell the wonder to his neighbors. Soon a little crowd collected and stood gazing up at St. Martin's Wall. "God be with him!" was the exclamation of all. "He can never leave that spot alive — he must perish of hunger!" The Emperor's attendants gazed at the figure and at each other in horror. One of them had a speaking trumpet. He raised it to his mouth, and cried at the pitch of his voice: "If it is the Emperor who stands there, we pray him to cast down a stone." There was a breathless hush of suspense, and down came the stone, crashing into the roof of a cottage.

A loud cry of lamentation broke from the people and was echoed on every side among the mountains. For they loved their young Emperor. The sound of the wail reached Max's ears and raised his hopes. He drew from his pocket a small parchment book, tore out a blank leaf, and wrote on it with a pencil, then tied the parchment to a stone

with some gold ribbon which he happened to have with him, and let the stone fall down into the valley. A second and a third time he repeated the message — still there was silence. Max came to the conclusion that all hope must be over for him. If he was to die, he would die as became a king and a Christian — if this world were vanishing from him, he would lay firm hold of the next.

Again he tore a leaf from his book and wrote on it. And from that high and airy grave he threw the stone down among the living. It was found. The man who found the stone read the letter aloud to the assembled crowd, for the Emperor's messages were addressed to all Tyrol. And this was the last message:

“Oh, Tyrol, my last warm thanks to thee for thy love which has so long been faithful to me. In my pride I tempted God, and my life is now the penalty. I know that no help is possible. God's will be done. Yet, one thing, good friends, you can do for me. Send a messenger to Zierlein at once for the Holy Sacrament, for which my soul thirsts. And when the priest is standing by the river, let it be announced to me by a shot, and let

another shot tell me when I am to receive the blessing. And when I pray you unite your prayers with mine to the great Helper in time of need, that He may strengthen me to endure the pains of a lingering death. Max.”

Off sped the messenger to Zierlein, and in all haste came the priest. Max heard the shot, and, looking down, could see the white robe of the priest standing by the river, which looked like a little silver thread to him. He threw himself on his knees praying that he might be a spiritual partaker of Christ, though he could not receive in body the signs of salvation. Then the second shot rang on the air, and through the speaking-trumpet came the words of the blessing: “May God’s blessing be upon thee in thy great need — the blessing of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Whom heaven and earth praise forever.”

The Emperor felt a deep peace filling his heart as the words of the blessing were wafted to his ear. Beneath, in the deep-purple shade of the valley, the people all knelt and the Emperor could hear the faint murmur which told him that they were praying for him. Touched by their sympathy

he continued kneeling in prayer for the welfare of his subjects.

Suddenly a bright gleam flashed on his eyes, and a figure in a flicker, and a dazzle of light stood before him.

“Lord Emperor,” it spoke, “follow me. I know the mountains well, and every path in them.” Downward they went, miles and miles downward, till at last the ravine opened into a long, nearly flat-bottomed cavern, at the end of which the torch and bearer vanished. Max groped his way and at last he found himself in the valley of Zierlein, and afar off he heard the confused noise of an assembled multitude. He followed the sound till he reached the foot of St. Martin’s wall, and saw priest and people still kneeling in prayer for him. Deeply moved he stepped into their midst and cried: “Praise the Lord with me, my people! See, he has delivered me.”

The Emperor was never able to discover who had been the instrument of his wondrous rescue. A report soon spread among the people that an angel had saved him. Indeed, we may firmly believe that it was an angel of the Lord that saved the Emperor’s life. This great monarch had made a solemn

profession of faith in the Real Presence. Ah! how much has he not edified the whole world by this lively faith in the Real Presence.¹

St. Thomas à Kempis makes mention of a young man who was deprived of the sight of the Host during Holy Mass no matter how near he was to the sanctuary. As this state of things lasted for two years and as he was constantly tormented by scruples and qualms of conscience, he determined to consult a learned theologian on the subject. It developed that the young man bore inveterate hatred to a neighbor, and refused to be reconciled with him. Thereupon the confessor explained to him that our Lord was thus demonstrating that though he was present at Mass in person, he did not, on account of his want of charity, share in any of the spiritual benefits of the Holy Sacrifice. The young man, having pardoned his enemy and made his peace with God, was henceforth able to see the Sacred Host.

St. Catherine of Sienna burned with so great a desire to unite herself to her divine

¹ Eischsfd. Erbauungsstunden Nr. 25. Sendbt. D. goettl. Herz Jesu, Heft 12. 1880. Dauroltius, C. 3. lit 37.

Spouse in the Holy Eucharist, that she visibly wasted away, and appeared to have no other life than Jesus. Her only food during several lenten seasons was the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. Her confessor, having once refused, no doubt unjustly, to permit her to communicate, was punished for it during Mass. At the Communion of the Mass he was very much perplexed, for he found only half of the Host. "Do not trouble yourself," said the saint to the celebrant, when the Mass was over: "God has granted to me what you refused. The angel of the Lord communicated me with the particle of the Host which has disappeared." This was a severe lesson for her confessor, and after that he allowed the saint to go to Communion every day.¹

The Archduke Ferdinand and the Duchess of Hohenberg were both very pious and great lovers of the Blessed Sacrament.

Prince Ferdinand was one day at a country place in a little village on the confines of Marienbad. After registering at the hotel,

¹ Drane: History of Catherine of Sienna. Emile Chavin v. Malan: Her Life.

his next care was to go for a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. As it was already rather late in the evening, he found the door of the church closed. "Where does the sacristan live?" asked the Archduke of some children who were playing nearby. "You mean the Curé. . . . You have only to take the first street to the right," answered the children. Having secured the key from the village Curé, he returned to the little church where, alone before the Blessed Sacrament, he recited his evening prayer.

The Duchess, his wife, always most faithful in her assistance at the sacred services performed in her chateau, was not satisfied with piously hearing Mass herself, but took particular pains that her husband also fulfilled that great Christian duty.

A veterinary surgeon had been summoned on one occasion from Vienna to the Palace. His duties caused him some delay in returning that evening to his home. The next day being Sunday, the Princess had given orders to her chaplain to say Mass an hour before train time so that the doctor might comply with his religious duties.¹

¹ Tabernakelwacht, 1895.

Reflection

How beautiful is the love of Jesus, since He has not refused His holiest gift, the Blessed Sacrament, to those even who desecrate His law! He does not refuse it provided only they have been reconciled to Him in the Sacrament of Penance. And how easy it is for each one of us to receive both Penance and Holy Eucharist! It only requires a few steps to the nearest church, where we shall always find a priest ready to hear our heart-broken tale, and break for us the Bread of Life. Far easier is it for us to attain these great gifts than to acquire the enjoyment of worldly goods. What affliction does not the pursuit of the latter entail! What sleepless nights! What years of steady striving and weary waiting! Our Lord would have a perfect right to demand like trials of us in order to enjoy the precious boon of the Holy Eucharist, yet how differently does He act! And not only does He grant His greatest gifts to the holy ones of earth, but sinners too have a claim on His bounty and generosity. "He maketh His sun shine on the just and the unjust." He appears daily on the altar during Holy Mass, and He is often enthroned in the monstrance

to pour His Divine Benediction on all those who care to receive it. The greatest sinner comes here, and, though still in sin, may carry with him from Mass and Benediction the grace to be reconciled once more to his God. The Sacrament of Penance is offered to such with a wonderful love, the love of a devoted father to an erring son.

It is the preparation of love, above all, that the saints brought to the Holy Eucharist. They said to our Lord: "O only Son, O beloved of the Father, I acknowledge that Thou art the object most deserving of being loved! I desire to love Thee as much as Thou deservest, as much at least as a soul can love. I feel too well that I do not deserve that Thou shouldst come to me, but I know that Thou seekest my love, O God of goodness, and I hear Thee say to me, 'My son, give Me thy heart.'"

During this Holy Hour the invitation is extended to us to spend these precious moments before the tabernacle. O God of all love, accept my heart, and, in coming to reside there, change it, purify it, inflame it.

"I wish for Thee only, O my Jesus, and I take no repose but when I rest on Thy divine Heart in Holy Communion."



Twelfth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

ST. PAUL the hermit had received from God the gift of the penetration of hearts. By means of this gift he could discover the most secret thoughts of his fellow-man. On Sundays when the hermits went to hear Mass he often stayed at the entrance of the church, in order to tell those who in the state of mortal sin entered the house of God, to repent of and do penance for their evil deeds. One day he saw a man go to church whose face was quite disfigured, and who was followed by several evil spirits who kept him chained and pulled him to the right and to the left. His guardian angel followed at a distance, with great compassion for the unhappy man. At this lamentable sight the holy hermit commenced to shed

bitter tears; he struck his breast and greatly sympathized with the poor wretched sinner. But wonderful to relate, after Mass was over, he saw that great sinner come out with a bright countenance, and his guardian angel close by him. Full of joy he exclaimed: "O most inconceivable, O most wonderful mercy of God! Behold, my brethren, I saw this man enter the church with a black face and surrounded by several evil spirits; and now, on coming out, I see him beautiful and bright like an angel." Then turning to that sinner he said: "Give honor to God, and tell us in what state you entered the church." "I am a great sinner," said he; "I have spent many years in debauchery; but when I heard in the epistle of the Mass the words of the prophet Isaias, 'Wash yourselves, be clean, take away the evil of your devices from my eyes,' etc., 'if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow,' I entered into myself and said to God: 'O my Lord Thou who camest into this world to save poor sinners, save me, the most wretched of sinners.' These were the sentiments of my heart during Mass. I firmly resolved never more to offend Almighty God. I besought the Lord to forgive me and to receive

me once more in mercy. With these sentiments I left the church." Now, when the hermits heard this, they exclaimed: "Ah! how great is the mercy of God! He bestows the grace of conversion upon sinners in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and receives them again into His sacred embraces." ¹

A very pious virgin named Amelia Lautard of Marseilles was very sensitive to every outrage offered to God. There was, however, one at which she seemed to be more pained than at all the rest. This was the ingratitude of men and the cruel neglect of our Savior in His Eucharistic prison. During her solitary virgils before the altar, she conceived an ardent desire to make some reparation to the outraged love of Jesus Christ. The idea occurred to her of instituting a community whose mission should be to give thanks and console our divine Savior for the ingratitude of the world by perpetual adoration before the Tabernacle, and at the same time of getting up a regular service of thanksgiving among the faithful at large, to have short prayers appointed and recommended by the Church to their constant

¹ Lives of the Fathers of the Desert, Lib. V.

use, for the sole and express purpose of thanking God for His countless mercies to us all, but more especially to those among us who never thank Him on their own account. In order to carry out these suggestions more effectively, she went to Rome to obtain the authorization and blessing of the Pope. She received the most affectionate welcome, for the Holy Father had been long acquainted with her by name and knew the apostolic manner of life she led. He approved of her design, encouraged her to carry it out, and gave his blessing to the work. She was in the habit of recommending to her friends the use of the *Gloria Patri* and the ejaculation *Deo Gratias*, as having been particularly recommended to her devotion by the Holy Father himself.

An incident occurred to Amelia during her stay in Rome, which she often narrated as a proof of the extreme need we have of a service of thanksgiving. She went one morning to an audience at the house of a cardinal, and while waiting for her turn, she entered into a conversation with the superior of the Redemptorist Fathers in France. Always on the watch to gain an ally to the cause, she told him the motive of

her journey to Rome, and begged that he would use his influence in his own wide sphere to forward its success amongst souls. "Ah! madam!" exclaimed the Redemptorist, "it was a good thought to try and stir up men's hearts to a spirit of thanksgiving, for there is nothing more wanting in the world. I have been forty years a priest, and during that time I have been asked to say Masses for every sort of intention, but only once have I been asked to say a *Mass of thanksgiving*." ¹

The Rev. Anthony Urbanek, who, in the years 1847 and 1848, exercised the functions of the holy ministry in the city of Milwaukee, in the State of Wisconsin, gave the following account of a wonderful conversion wrought by the recital of the "Hail Mary": He frequently visited a Protestant family by the name of Pollworth, natives of Hanover, but then residing a few hours' drive from Milwaukee. After a short time Mrs. Pollworth joined the Catholic Church, but her husband remained obstinate, and would often say that he would never become a Catholic. He would not even allow his children to be baptized, although his wife resorted to every

¹ Catholic World, 1873.

possible means to obtain his consent. All who knew him used to say it would require nothing less than a miracle to make a Catholic of Pollworth. The priest continued his visits, and their conversation generally fell upon the truths of Catholicity. But every effort to convince Mr. Pollworth was in vain; he had always a thousand objections to present. On one of these visits, after having long and uselessly endeavored to open the eyes of his headstrong friend to the truth of the Catholic faith, Rev. Mr. Urbanek at last said to him: "I see well, Mr. Pollworth, that I can do nothing with you." At that moment the good priest was suddenly inspired with a feeling of extraordinary confidence in the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, and, continuing to address Mr. Pollworth, he added: "But you must, at least, promise me one thing." "What may that be?" asked his friend in the Low German dialect. "I will tell you after you will have promised it," answered Rev. Mr. Urbanek. "It is not difficult, and you can conscientiously do it." After a good deal of argument, Mr. Pollworth finally promised to do what might be asked of him. "Then," said the priest, "say on every Sunday henceforth one 'Hail Mary' for my

intention, and you will, in a short time, experience a great change in your feelings." Mr. Pollworth laughed at these words; but he kept his promise faithfully. About fourteen days after the promise was made, he suddenly accosted his wife thus: "I am going to Milwaukee now, to buy some new clothes for the children." The astonished wife asked: "But why at this time so particularly?" "Well, I have at last made up my mind to let the children be baptized," was his reply. The news spread like wild-fire through the entire neighborhood. "Pollworth has, at length, consented to have his children baptized," was in every one's mouth.

He, moreover, begged the Rev. Mr. Urbanek to have the ceremony performed with the greatest solemnity. The Rev. Pastor invited another Priest and two Clerics to assist at the baptism, which took place before High Mass. After Mass, the Most Blessed Sacrament was exposed and the hymn "Pange Lingua" sung by the choir. The newly baptized children stood close to the altar steps, and their father immediately behind them. During the singing of the hymn, it suddenly occurred to Mr. Pollworth to look at the Blessed Sacrament, but being

forced by the immense crowd that was pressing towards the sanctuary to stand, if he would not kneel upon his children, he feared lest a free glance at the Sacred Host might have the appearance of irreverence. However, he was not long able to resist the inclination. He looked towards the altar and saw the Sacred Host as it always is; but, it soon increased to the size of a millstone, and in the center of it there appeared the Good Shepherd with a lamb upon His shoulders. This sight did not perplex the man: he wished to convince himself of what he seemed to see. He accordingly closed one eye for a while and thus looked at the apparition, and then again with both eyes, until he was fully satisfied that there was no illusion in the matter. Besides, it was a clear noonday, and he was standing scarcely two steps from the altar. After the lapse of about five minutes, the vision disappeared, and the sacred host resumed its original appearance. On leaving the church, Pollworth asked some of his neighbors whether they had seen nothing singular during the divine service; but when he perceived that they knew nothing of the apparition, he said no more. The next day he invited the priest

to pay him a visit, and as soon as Rev. Mr. Urbanek entered the house, Pollworth said: "Now, indeed, is the lost sheep at last found, after its long straying among the briers. I wish to become a Catholic." A few days later he was received into the Church, and after he had made his Profession of Faith, he solemnly attested by oath to the truth of the vision above related. On the same day a bigoted Calvinist was baptized. Upon the simple assurance of Mr. Pollworth of what had taken place he had been converted. The Right Rev. Bishop granted to the congregation of the church, in which the wonder had taken place, the privilege of having, on every 16th of July, the day of the apparition, a solemn procession with the Blessed Sacrament, exactly as on Corpus Christi. Pollworth and his family always go to Holy Communion on this day.¹

How good and merciful is the Lord! He is the Good Shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine sheep in the mountains, and goes in search of the one that is lost. He follows it when it goes astray; constantly pursues its footsteps, and does not rest until He has found it and brought it back to His fold.

¹ Blessed Euch. Michael Muller.

During the time of St. Otto in England, some of the clergy are said to have reached such an unfortunate frame of mind that they doubted the Real Presence. Otto in his distress asked God to enlighten the unbelievers, and the Almighty was pleased to hear the saint's request.

One day in the cathedral at Canterbury, while St. Otto was celebrating Mass in the presence of the clergy, at the breaking of the Host after the consecration, all present saw two large drops of blood falling into the chalice. All who doubted were called to the altar by the Archbishop, and on witnessing the miracle were filled with gratitude that God had deigned to enlighten their blindness, and humbly asked pardon for their incredulity.¹

. . .

St. Theresa felt such a longing desire for Jesus in Holy Communion, whom she called her life and the beloved of her heart, that she would, as she says, have braved a thousand dangers to attain it. Her expressions are all fire when speaking of the Blessed Sacrament. The holy ardor which con-

¹ Juritsch: Geschichte des Bishofs Otto.

sumed the soul produced on her such supernatural effects that she was sometimes seen, at the time of Communion, all surrounded with light and as if already crowned with the glory she was to receive in heaven.

St. Catherine of Genoa, at the sight of the Host in the hands of the priest could scarcely contain her happiness. She envied the priest of God who had the great fortune to be so near the Blessed Sacrament, and, burning with desire, she was wont to say in her heart: "Hasten, Thou my God, quick, quick: let this heavenly Bread come without delay into the very depths of my soul; for it is all that I seek; it is my nourishment; my life."¹

Reflection

In the heart of Jesus there burned a love that would willingly sacrifice all for the beloved object, and this we see Him doing in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar. Like the faithful shepherd, ever anxious to be near His sheep lest any harm should befall them, so Jesus, pre-eminently the "Good Shepherd," has ordained that through all ages He shall

¹ Huguet: The Blessed Sacrament. Peter Lechner: Her life.

ever be close to His own. On that sorrowful night of the Last Supper there was still one desire of His heart unfulfilled, and so we see Him taking bread, and blessing, and breaking and giving it to His disciples. When Christ said: "This is My Body," He gave us not only His sacred living Body, but also His soul. With divinity and humanity He comes to us, thus raising the dignity of our poor fallen nature by its intimate union with the divine.

Because of His burning love, then, He is present with us in all places until the end of time. While He dwelt visibly among men, the laws of place and time both held dominion over Him. As man He was present only in one place at one time, but now, subject to no natural law, He is in all places with His entire humanity and divinity, — and for all time, until earth shall be no more!

To His Sacred Body in the Blessed Sacrament our Lord has transferred two of His divine attributes, His divine omnipresence and His divine omnipotence. And He has done this because it is His delight to be always with the children of men. Aglow with His divine love He tells us: "I am come to cast fire on the earth and what will

I but that it be kindled?" Thus would He provoke our love in return, for, "When God gives us great favors," says St. Basil, "He demands nothing from us in return except our love." Behold, then, what Christ exacts from us when He gives us Himself in the Blessed Sacrament: He desires only that *we* love Him as He *loves* us — surely, a trifling recompense for so priceless a boon!

With one accord, during this Holy Hour, let us beg this love of our dear Lord, for He only can bestow it upon us, and in petitioning for it we can use no better words than the sublimely beautiful ones of a dear Catholic hymn:

"Jesus, my Lord, my God, my All!
How can I love Thee as I ought?
And how revere this wondrous gift,
So far surpassing hope or thought?
Sweet Sacrament, we Thee adore,
Oh! make us love Thee more and more."





Thirteenth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

LIKE SS. Aloysius and Stanislaus Kostka, Blessed John Berchmans has been given to Christian youth for an example and patron. He would rise very early in the morning and hurry to church, where he would generally hear two or three Masses before school; upon his return, if he found his parents' house closed, he would enter the nearest church and say his rosary. His great joy was to hear sermons, and his dearest occupation to serve Holy Mass, and great were the graces which he drew from the divine Sacrifice. Already he entertained the most childlike veneration for the Blessed Mother of God, and the most glowing love for Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament.

He had just reached the age of eleven years when, on a certain high festival, it pleased God to awaken in him a great desire to make his first Communion; so he presented himself in all humility before the Superior of the Seminary, and begged for the grace to receive our Lord Jesus Christ in Holy Communion. For this he prepared himself so diligently that his Superior perceived plainly that not a natural, but rather a high degree of supernatural, fervor was at work in the soul of this favorite child of God.

At fourteen years of age he put himself under the instruction of the Jesuits, and after three years' preparation entered the Society of Jesus. It was the custom of Blessed John to visit our Lord seven times a day in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, and on quitting the presence of our Lord to beseech St. Aloysius and St. Stanislaus to keep watch during his absence. It was with incredible care that he prepared himself to receive Holy Communion. But when one of his companions inquired why, on vacation days, however great the feast might be, he always abstained from the Holy Mysteries, he replied: "Because on

days of recreation I cannot receive them with the recollection which is befitting so great a Majesty.”

Blessed John Berchmans had attained his twenty-second year when he was taken ill on the fifth of August, the feast of our Lady of Snows. By command of his superiors he went into the infirmary and took to his bed. On the Sunday after the feast he received Holy Communion, at his own express desire, by way of Viaticum. Before receiving it he begged the Father Rector to allow him to have his mattress laid upon the floor, in order that he might thus receive the Sacred Body of the Lord in company of as many of his companions as could be present.

The following morning he prepared to receive the Last Sacraments. After saying the *confiteor*, whilst Father Rector held the Host in his hand, he poured forth unexpectedly the following declaration: “I declare that there is here present the Very Son of God the Father Almighty and of the Blessed Virgin. I declare that I live and die as a true son of the Holy Catholic Apostolic Roman Church.” These unexpected words, spoken with such deep devotion, moved all present to tears. With his eyes fixed upon

his crucifix, his rosary and his rule in his hand, and the most holy names of Jesus and Mary upon his lips, he yielded up his guileless soul into the hands of his Creator.¹

Saint Peter of Alcántara was born in the city of Alcántara in Spain. As a boy he was always earnest and gentle, and the beauty of his soul reflected itself in his sweet countenance, so that even children called him the holy boy, although he never played with them. His great delight was to be in church. On one occasion he remained unusually long away from home; midday had passed, and yet he did not appear. On sending a servant in search of him his parents learned that he was found in the choir of the church, kneeling behind the organ, his face glowing like that of an angel; and so deep in devotion that it was with difficulty the messenger aroused him.

The holy and austere life of this beloved servant of God was in keeping with its beginning. His humility was such that the priesthood was forced upon him, and he accepted it only as an obedience after a long protest. But from the moment that he celebrated his first Mass, his union with God in

¹ Goldie: the Life of Blessed J. Berchmans.

daily Communion and the contemplation of the bitter sufferings of our Savior took such possession of him that he was almost constantly in the state of ecstasy.

Being himself at all times absorbed in the mystery of the cross, he desired that everyone should equally value the divine mystery. For this purpose he erected crosses in all the roads, lanes, and heights. He himself would assist in carrying these crosses up the mountain side, and after planting one, he would address in fervent language the kneeling multitude. "Fly from sin," he would exclaim, "for sin hath crucified the Lord Jesus Christ!"

But the Holy Eucharist was still more the object of his love and devotion, as it was the occasion of his most frequent ecstasies. The saint lost all consciousness of surrounding things, for his heart was one with the Beloved. He used to choose a dwelling close to the Adorable Sacrament and would cause a little opening to be made in his cell through which he could see the high altar. St. Peter of Alcántara died on the 18th of October, 1562.¹

In the year 1720, Provence, near the city of Marseilles, France, was visited by an

¹ Ott: Eucharisticum.

appalling pestilence which in the course of a few months carried off one half of the inhabitants. When all human means failed, the Bishop of Marseilles resolved to take refuge in our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament to appease the anger of God the Father by the merits of the Most Sacred Heart of His divine Son. He exhorted the faithful of his diocese to unite in the spirit with which he himself was animated, and on the feast of Corpus Christi, after a long procession, in which he had carried the Most Holy Sacrament in his hands, and with bare feet he dedicated himself and his whole diocese to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The prayers were heard. From that very day the evil began to diminish, and in a short time it disappeared. This fact was recorded by the magistrates of the city. But God had in reserve a still more striking mark of protection in reward for the zeal of the Bishop and his pious flock. In the month of May of the year 1722 the pestilence broke out afresh in the city, throwing all the inhabitants into the most frightful consternation. Death reaped a fearful harvest.

“All around me are laid low,” writes the good Bishop; “and of all the servants of God

who have accompanied me, none remains to me but my almoner. During the last eight days I have seen two hundred dead bodies in a state of decomposition round my house and under my windows. Every place is so full of filth that it is nearly impossible to know where to tread." Once more the prelate took refuge in the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. He collected the magistrates of the city and made a vow that every year on the Feast of the Sacred Heart they would go in solemn procession to the church of The Mother of God, to receive Holy Communion with suitable offerings; and this procession was vowed to take place annually. This vow was publicly proclaimed before the high altar of the cathedral by the chief magistrate in presence of the Most Holy Sacrament. The vow was heard. From that day the sick began to recover.¹

St. John Chrysostom says: "When you see the body of Jesus Christ on our altars, say to yourself: 'By means of this Body I am no longer dust and ashes; I am no longer a slave; I am free.' The sun could

¹ Rossignoli: *Les Merveilles dans la Saint Euch.*, 1865,

not behold this Body fastened to the cross without turning away its rays; the veil of the temple as well as the rocks were rent with grief, and the whole earth trembled. Do you wish to learn from other facts how far His power and His might extend? Ask the woman who was healed by touching, not His Body, but His garment; not even the whole garment, but simply the hem. Ask the sea which bore Him upon its waves. Ask Satan who gave Him a mortal wound? who stripped Him of His strength? who made Him a slave? He will answer you that it is this Body that crushed his head, and triumphed over his power. Ask death: who took from it its sting? who rendered it so contemptible to children, while it is so terrible to kings, and even to the just? Death will tell you that it is this Body that worked all these wonders. Then let us come from the Holy Table like lions, full of strength.”¹

Reflection

Only a love that was capable of overcoming all obstacles could give us this Most Holy Sacrament under the lowly form of bread.

¹ Tom. 1. III, de Sacerd. N. 4, 5, Naegle.

Thus did our Lord find a means whereby He might remain with us everywhere and at all times. Nothing seeming too much for His love, — He hides Himself under a form destitute of life, regardless of the injuries and insults heaped upon Him by reason of His very condescension and abandonment to our will.

How little do we consider the sufferings of the soul, the moral diseases we inflict upon it by our irregular lives, compared with the physical pains we sometimes endure. The souls of the martyrs tasted heavenly peace and joy, whilst their poor bodies were torn by wild beasts or cut to pieces in excruciating torture. The agony our Lord endured for our sins was far more bitter than all this, because He bore it while His soul was plunged into a sea of sorrow.

And yet, foreseeing all the indifferences of men, all their irreverences, all their unbelief, — His love for us was so great that He chose the Sacrament of the altar just to be with us. Despite the fact that He knows but too well that He will always be so little loved and so much wounded, He still remains. Oh! at least let us who try to be grateful to the hidden God by gathering here during the

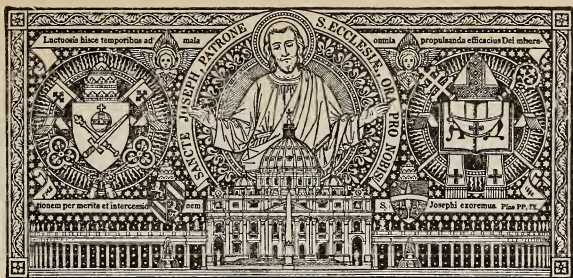
Holy Hour, where we may praise and exalt the infinite love of Jesus in this Sacrament! With tears of gratitude let us weep over the injuries we have inflicted on His most Sacred Heart; and let us purpose by this act of adoration to make reparation for all the offenses and insults which have ever been or ever will be committed against Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament till the end of time. Thus shall we begin and end our Holy Hour with a living faith and with sincere devotion adore our Eucharistic King.

“O Jesus, my Priest and my Victim, lend me Thy Heart to chant to my Sovereign Benefactor a hymn of the sweetest and the most heartfelt gratitude. Do Thou Thyself touch the strings of this divine lyre, and express to my great Benefactor fitting thanks for each of the benefits conferred on me and all mankind by the gift of Thy good and magnanimous Heart!”

“O Mary, our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament and my well-beloved Mother, thank the Heart of thy Son, my Priest and my Victim, for having loved me so far as to die for my redemption. Thank Him for having loved me so much as to remain here below under the lowly appearance of Bread in order

to give Himself to me in Communion and to apply to me Himself the merits of the sacrifice of His life. Teach me, dearest Mother, to fix on the heart of my Priest and my Victim, through the shadows of the Eucharistic Mystery, all the thoughts of my mind, all the affections of my heart.”





Fourteenth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

MARIE BERNARD BAUER, a Jewish convert, was the son of one of the wealthiest Jewish families in Vienna. His conversion to the Catholic faith dates way back to the year 1865. At an early age the young Jew, fiery and enthusiastic, and gifted already with singular eloquence, threw himself into the ranks of the Revolution, and became one of its most ardent emissaries. At eighteen he was intrusted with important missions, and considered a rising Freemason. But during his travels he became acquainted with a young Frenchman, a zealous Catholic, whose influence and friendship laid the foundations of his conversion. He visited his friends and his mother also, who by her example more even than by her exhortations

contributed to the work of grace begun in his soul by her son's solicitations. Bauer wore, by the request of these two, a medal of the Immaculate Conception. After being fully instructed in the faith, he required nothing but grace to believe. While at Lyons with several worldly acquaintances, he happened to be standing on a balcony, on the Feast of Corpus Christi; the procession of the Blessed Sacrament was to pass below, and they, with cigars in their mouths, and mockery in their hearts, were watching for the pageant. No change came over the young Jew until the canopy under which the priest carried the Divine Host was close beneath the balcony. The change at that moment was lightning-like. Faith entered his heart, or rather — as he himself afterwards declared — a conviction of the Real Presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament so absolute that it made itself felt throughout his whole being.

It was by means of this light of faith that he saw our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament more distinctly than if our Lord had appeared to him in some sensible manner. The same knowledge, so to speak, returned to him many times since while consecrating

at Mass, and he said he could not believe merely, in a matter of which he was so blissfully and unerringly certain. As Jesus passed, Bauer threw himself on his knees and professed himself a Christian.

It was in consequence of this most intimate conviction that he concluded one of his discourses in Paris, as follows: "And Thou, Lord Jesus Who art the Truth 'that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world,' let it not come to pass that one soul out of this great assemblage should return this day from the foot of this pulpit to the common turmoil of the world without bearing within itself the ineffable wound of a dawning conviction. And if, O Lord! Thou requirest unto this end the sacrifice of a human life, let this day be my last on earth, and this hour the last of my mortal pilgrimage." ¹

. . .

It is related in the life of St. John a Fancundo, O.S.A., that he was usually long in saying Mass, so that no one liked to serve it. The Father Prior told him that he should try not to be longer in saying Mass than the other Fathers of the convent. The

¹ Catholic World, May, 1873.

holy priest tried to obey, but finding obedience in this point so extremely difficult, he begged the prior to permit him to say Mass in the same manner as before. After hearing his reasons, the prior most willingly granted this permission. With Father John's leave, he told these reasons to the Fathers of the convent. "Believe me," said the prior to them, "Father John's Mass lasts so long because God bestows on him the grace of seeing the mysteries of the holy sacrifice, which are so sublime that no human mind can understand them. Of these mysteries he told me things so wonderful that I was overwhelmed with holy awe and almost beside myself. Believe me, Jesus Christ shows Himself to this Father in a most wonderful manner, converses with him most sweetly, and sends forth upon him from His sacred wounds a heavenly light and splendor so refreshing for both body and soul that he might live without any nourishment. Father John sees also the Body of Christ in its heavenly glory and beauty shining like a most brilliant sun. Now, considering how great and unspeakably sublime the graces and favors are which men derive from saying Mass, or from hearing it, I have firmly re-

solved never to omit saying or hearing Mass, and I will exhort others to do the same.”¹

. . .

A young man of Cologne, the son of a convert to Christianity, having approached the Holy Table during the Paschal time of 1153, carried off the Host with the intention of using it for sacrilegious purposes. Scarcely had he left the church when terror took possession of him. Not knowing what to do with the Sacred Species, he entered a cemetery and buried the Host in the ground. A priest was passing by the place at the moment. Informed by the unhappy young man of the sacrilege he had just committed, he removed the earth that covered the Holy Eucharist, and found the Sacred Host changed into a beautiful Child. He took it up reverently to carry it to the church, when suddenly a dazzling light surrounded the miraculous Child, who escaped from the hands of the priest and ascended toward heaven.²

In the year 1153, St. Bernard, by order of his superiors, was sent to Guienne, where William of Aquitaine, the powerful and

¹ Henschen, in Act. Sanct., ad xii. diem Junii.

² Jean de Gheest: Les Lettres, Louvain 1380.

haughty duke of that province, violently persecuted those who adhered to the true Pope, and had on that account expelled the bishops of Poitiers and Limoges. This William was a prince of high birth, immense wealth, gigantic stature and extraordinary ability, but full of the worldly spirit. St. Bernard took occasion to visit him and endeavored to reclaim him from his scandalous disorders. The Duke listened to him for several days, and appeared to be much affected by his discourses on the last things and the fear of God. Nevertheless he was not yet converted. St. Bernard, who had learned never to despair of the most obstinate sinners, finding he could not prevail upon him to restore the two bishops, at length had recourse to more powerful arms. He went to say Mass, the duke and other schismatics staying outside the door, as being excommunicated persons. After the Consecration, the holy Abbot put the Host upon the paten, and carrying it out, with his eyes sparkling with zeal, charity and devotion, and his countenance all on fire, spoke to the duke, no longer as a suppliant, but with a voice of authority: "Hitherto we have entreated you and prayed you, and you have

always slighted us. Now, therefore, the Son of the Virgin, the Lord and Head of the Church you persecute, comes in person to see if you will repent. He is your Judge, at whose name every, knee bends, both in heaven, earth and hell. He is the just revenger of your crimes, into whose hands this, your obstinate soul, will one day fall. Will you despise Him? Will you slight Him as you have slighted His servants? *Will you?*" The duke not being able to bear any longer, fell down in a swoon. The Saint lifted him up, and bade him salute the Bishop of Poitiers, who was present. The astonished prince was not able to speak, but went to the Bishop and led him by the hand to his seat in the Church, expressing by that action that he renounced the schism and restored the Bishop to his see. After this the Saint returned to the altar and finished the Holy Sacrifice. After a time the duke renounced the world and entering upon a penitential life, lived austere until God called him to eternal bliss.¹

In the process of the canonization of St. Francis Borgia, A.D. 1572, it was proved, as a continual miracle, that he never entered any

¹ Butler's "Lives," Aug. 20th.

church without having an interior consciousness of the place where the Blessed Sacrament was reserved. Whenever he could, he visited the Blessed Sacrament in the churches.

His continual and protracted illness and infirmities were a source of consolation rather than affliction to this holy man of God; Father Louis von Guzman, tells us that it was once his happiness to render some assistance to the Saint during a very severe illness. His sickness had this peculiarity — that he continually fell into a lethargy. Each morning there were two hours in which he was awake and cheerful. Of these he employed one in preparation for Holy Communion, and the other in thanksgiving, after which he sank again into his deathly lethargy, which lasted the whole day.

When still a layman, the Saint usually spent three days in preparation before Holy Communion, which may be the more readily understood, when we learn that such were the raptures which took place in his soul when he offered up the Sacred Mysteries, that the hour for vespers would frequently find him with the Holy Sacrifice still unfinished, on which account he seldom said Mass in public.¹

¹ Ott. Eucharisticum.

At Fécamp, in Normandy, a priest of great sanctity solemnly sang the Mass of the day on which was celebrated the Dedication of the Church of the Holy Trinity. At the moment of Holy Communion, the Host in the hands of the priest suddenly changed into a beautiful child. He made a sign to the deacon to call the Bishops present at the solemnity. By their order he transported the miraculous Host to a tabernacle, there to preserve it. This happened in the year 1182. Rev. Father Michael Mueller makes mention of this miracle in his work "The Blessed Eucharist."¹

Reflection

Father Faber in one of his works says: "The ways of visiting the Blessed Sacrament must be as various as the souls of men. Some love to go there to listen; some to speak; some to confess to Him as if He were their priest; some to examine their consciences, as before their judge; some to do homage to their king; some to study Him as their doctor and prophet; some to find their shelter as with their Creator. Some

¹ Chronicles of Vezelay and Tours, 1186. Die Hlg. Euchuristia. Huguët.

rejoice in His divinity, others in His sacred humanity, others in the mysteries of the season. Some visit Him on different days according to His different titles, — as God, Father, brother, shepherd, head of the Church, and the like. Some visit to adore, some to intercede, some to petition, some to return thanks, some to get consolation; but all visit Him to love, and to all who visit Him in love He is a power of heavenly grace, and a fountain of many goods, no single one of which the whole created universe could either merit or confer.”

Can we ever give fitting worship to the Son of God present on our altars? Here He is in all His infinite majesty, dwelling beneath a lowly form. His sacred Body, His precious Blood, His blessed soul, His adorable divinity are actually and truly present here before our eyes.

And all this had been done for our sake. So great is His love for us and His longing to be with us, that His unquenchable desire had induced Him to renounce all and conceal His divinity beneath these humble veils. His love was only satisfied when He put it in the power of each one of us “To taste and see that the Lord is sweet,” to feel Him in our

very soul, to become one flesh and blood with God Himself! Could Jesus have given us a greater proof of His love than this? No, we say it with all reverence, — in His infinite power even He could not discover anything more wonderful, more magnificent. It is God's miracle of miracles!

“I will sing praises to Thee in the sight of the angels; I will worship towards Thy Holy Temple, before the altar on which Thou deignest to dwell for love of me; I will give glory to Thy name, for the mercy Thou dost exercise towards us in deigning to dwell among the children of men, and for Thy Truth.”





Fifteenth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

CAESARIUS of Heisterbach, a pious and learned monk of the Cistercian monastery Heisterbach relates the following legend: A pious priest named Andrew, together with many other devout Christians, made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The vessel in which they were to return was to set sail on Easter Sunday morning. So all embarked on that day except the holy priest and sailed off. This good priest preferred to let his fellow-pilgrims start than to omit saying Mass. He went to the wharf to obtain, if possible, a small fast-sailing bark to overtake the other pilgrims. Wonderful to relate, a beautiful youth suddenly appeared before him on horseback, and said: "You preferred not to start with the other pilgrims rather than lose Mass; get then on

my horse with me and I will conduct you safely back to your own country." Andrew accepted the offer and soon fell asleep a little while. When he awoke, the young man, who was an angel of the Lord, said to him: "Do you know where you are?" "Kind sir," replied the priest quite amazed, "I can hardly trust my eyes; it seems to me I am in my fatherland; this is the street in which I live; this is my house; these are the houses of my friends and neighbors; but how is it possible that I could come home by land in so short a time?" "Nevertheless it is so," said the angel; "your way has been shortened because you said Mass." Thus the good priest was taken home in a few minutes, whilst his companions remained exposed to all the storms and dangers of a sea voyage for two months. It was thus that the Lord honored the holy priest, because he had been infinitely honored by him in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.¹

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The circumstances attending the death of St. Ephrem were very edifying. His confidence in the precious fruits of the Holy

¹ Dialogus Magnus.

Eucharist raised his hopes and inflamed his love, especially in his passage to eternity. In his "Necrosima" he thus expressed himself: "Entering upon so long and dangerous a journey, I have my Viaticum, even Thee, O Son of God! In my extreme spiritual hunger, I will feed upon Thee, O Repairer of Mankind. So it shall be that no fire will dare to approach me; for it will not be able to bear the sweet saving odor of Thy Body and Blood."

The Saint having ceased to speak, continued in silent prayer till he calmly gave up his soul to God. He died at a very advanced age. His festival was kept at Edessa immediately after his death. On this occasion, St. Gregory of Nyssa, delivered his panegyric, which he concluded with this address to the Saint: "You are now assisting at the Divine Altar, and, before the Prince of Life, praising the Most Holy Trinity. Remember us all, and obtain for us the pardon of our sins."

God rewarded the zeal of His servant St. Hugh by a miracle.

At the close of the twelfth century, the holy Bishop was one day in the manor of his domains, called Bukkdan. He was sur-

rounded by his priests who came to offer him their respects, but whose wealth and haughty spirit had more than once excited the indignation of the holy prelate. When about to begin the celebration of Holy Mass, the Bishop was detained by a delegation of Religious of a neighboring monastery who presented some rich vestments and a chalice of great value to be blessed. St. Hugh thought this a favorable opportunity to rebuke the priests who were with him. After consecrating the chalice, he went among the clergy and presented it for inspection so that they might admire the material, the shape, and the exquisite workmanship. In the eyes of the holy prelate nothing was more worthy of eulogy than the solicitude of the men, consecrated to the service of God, who believe that enough can never be done to decorate the altar and treat the divine Mysteries with honor. No words were too severe too stigmatize ecclesiastics who, notwithstanding their large revenues, left the House of God in a careless and dilapidated condition.

The Bishop, after convincing himself that he had taught his clergy a very salutary lesson, ascended the altar. God was pleased

to recompense the zeal of the saintly prelate by working a miracle during the consecration of the Mass. The mystic words which change the bread into the body of Christ had been pronounced when all present perceived that the saint held in his hands the Savior Himself under a human form. Christ appeared as a very small child, who, with arms raised to heaven, offered Himself to His heavenly Father for the salvation of the world. From His divine Person there shot forth rays of light of surpassing beauty. Continuing the Sacrifice, the Bishop again elevated the Host in order to break It, and the same prodigy was renewed. At the moment of Holy Communion, Jesus appeared for the third time in the hands of the Bishop.

In remembrance of this miracle St. Hugh is generally represented as holding a chalice, above which stands a little child encircled by luminous rays.¹

. . .

As St. Paschal was watching his sheep on the mountainside one day, he heard the consecration bell ring out from the church in the valley below, where the villagers were

¹ His life by Robert du Mont.

assembled at Mass. The saint had hardly fallen upon his knees, when there stood before him an angel of God, bearing in his hands a Sacred Host, and offering it for his adoration.

Learn from this how pleasing to Jesus Christ are those who honor Him in this great mystery of His love, and how the following promise is especially fulfilled with regard to them: "I will not leave you orphans, I will come unto you."

St. Paschal Baylon, whom Pope Leo XIII proclaimed in 1897 the Patron of the Eucharistic Congress, was a simple lay brother of the Franciscan Order, distinguished by an extraordinary devotion to the sacred mystery of the altar. While still in the world, he never suffered a day to pass without visiting, when possible, Jesus in the tabernacle, and later, as a religious, he was accustomed to spend hours at the foot of the altar, where he was often raised from the ground by the fervor of his prayer.¹

In the lives of holy priests we read how they were often visited with extraordinary favors during the oblation of the sacred mysteries.

¹ Ott: Eucharistium, page 376. Bolland, Tom. IV.

St. Herbert, the great and famous archbishop of Cologne, was touched with such devotion while saying Mass, that his face, which habitually bore marks of the virtues with which his holy soul was adorned, then became so luminous and resplendent that he seemed an angel rather than a man.

What were the transports of St. Lawrence Justinian? His body became, as it were, immovable, and had only sufficient motion to serve his soul, which was totally taken up with his sublime action; his face shone with angelic modesty, his eyes distilled tears, and his mind was transported by the force of ravishments.

John of Alvernia, while one day saying Mass, was so wrapped in a divine and ineffable sense of God that he was hardly able to proceed. After he had pronounced the words of consecration, he became, as it were, unconscious of himself, being wholly lost in the divinity of the mysteries which he was performing.

The Abbot Euthymius used to tell in private conversation that often while saying Mass he saw troops of angels standing round him.

Severus relates that while St. Martin was

saying Mass, a fiery globe used to appear above his head. St. Euthenius used to see a great fire and light coming down from heaven, and enveloping him and his assistant to the end of the Holy Sacrifice. In the same manner the Holy Ghost came upon St. Anastatius, and surrounded him in the form of a fiery flame while celebrating the Sacred Mysteries.

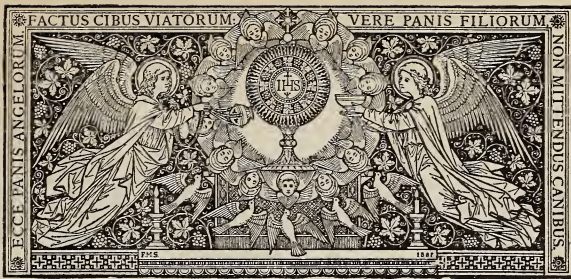
Reflection

How long has not this memorial of love — the Sacrament of the altar — been among men? Only once did Jesus change water into wine; only once did He enter the house of Zaccheus; only once did He appear on Mount Thabor, His countenance shining as the sun and His garments whiter than snow; but for upwards of eighteen hundred years, bread has not ceased to be changed into His Body, and wine into His Blood. The mighty words, "Do this in commemoration of Me," are still re-echoing throughout the Church and will be re-echoing till the consummation of the world. Wherever there is a priest the heavenly work goes on, and will go on without cessation throughout the ages.

Mary, our blessed Mother, was the first adorer of Jesus Christ. Therefore those who wish to know the intimate secrets of divine Love, and the hidden power of divinity hidden under humble veils, will best obtain this knowledge through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Let us always unite ourselves with her. She was with her divine Son during the most important incidents of His life, and she suffered with Him during His Passion; surely, then, she ought indeed to be the model of all adorers of the Blessed Sacrament.

“O Mary, for the glory of your divine Son in the Sacrament of His love, we beg of you above all to make Him known and loved. Raise up to Him Apostles of fire, and throughout the whole world multitudes of adorers, that Jesus therein guiding and nourishing our souls, we may live with you in everlasting glory.”





Sixteenth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

ST. BEDE in his Ecclesiastical History, relates the following fact which he received from the very lips of the one to whom it occurred.

King Egfried and King Ethelbert were at one time at war with each other, when it happened that a young man belonging to the former was left as dead on the battlefield. For a night and a day he remained there totally unconscious, till at last glimmerings of intelligence returned to him. Bracing himself, he bound up his wounds as best he could and proceeded to leave the scene of the engagement, when he was unfortunately discovered by the enemy and taken before King Ethelbert.

To save his life he misrepresented his identity and answered the monarch's query

with the words: "I am a poor peasant and have a large family. I came to bring provisions to the soldiers." Whereupon the king ordered his wounds to be dressed, but as soon as he had sufficiently recovered, the sovereign took care to have him shackled in order to prevent his escape. As soon as he was bound, however, the shackles loosened as if by a mysterious power.

Now it happened that the young man had a brother who was a priest, and abbot of the monastery of Tunacester. At the conclusion of the battle the clergyman inquiring of his brother's fate was told that he was slain. After a prolonged search, finding a body which he supposed to be his brother's, he had it conveyed to the monastery, where it was given Christian burial. For many days the holy man offered up the Holy Sacrifice for the repose of his brother's soul, and it was afterwards learned that it was at the very hour when Mass was celebrated that the shackles fell from the prisoner's limbs.

The king, hearing of the mysterious action of the shackles, asked the young man if he had recourse to incantations and spells. "O king," he replied, "I know nothing of these evil things. Only this I know, that I

have a brother a priest, and he, thinking that I was among the slain, had no doubt been offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for me. Were my soul in the other world, I know that during this Sacrifice it would be free from pain. Why then should it not have the power to loosen my fetters, imprisoned as I am?" The young man could no longer feign disguise, for his countenance, demeanor, and conversation betrayed that he was not a mere peasant. Thereupon, when the king promised that no harm would befall him if he would declare his identity, he revealed that he was a servant of King Egfried. Untrue to his word, Ethelbert immediately ordered him to be sold. A merchant of Friesland bought him, and again the galling fetters encircled his limbs, but some supernatural power rendered them useless as before. Stronger shackles replaced the others with the same result. All efforts to keep the young man in chains proving ineffectual, the purchaser at last gave him permission to procure his ransom. This he had but little difficulty in doing.

On arriving in his own country, he at once sought his brother and told him all that had happened. From the lips of the

priest he learned that Mass had been celebrated for him at nine o'clock every morning the very hour that the shackles had loosened and dropped from his limbs. Many other blessings had been showered upon him by reason of his brother's supplication. The people on hearing of these wonders became more fervent than ever in prayer, generously giving alms and having Masses said for their departed, being now fully convinced that the Holy Sacrifice procures the redemption of both soul and body.¹

In the life of Curé d'Ars, in his instructions for First Holy Communion we read the following: "A certain holy priest was praying for his friend who had departed this life. God had, it appears, made known to the priest that he was in purgatory; and accordingly he offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for his soul. When he came to the moment of consecration, he took the Sacred Host into his hand, and said: 'O Holy and Eternal Father, Thou hast the soul of my friend, who is in purgatory, and I have the Body of Thy Son, who is in my hand. Do

¹ Ecclesiastical History by Ven. Bede, Book IV, c. XXII, page 753.

Thou deliver my friend, and I will offer Thee Thy Son with all the merits of His death and Passion.' In fact, at the moment of the elevation, he saw the soul of his friend rising to heaven, all radiant with glory." ¹

Philip Augustus, a young man of princely extraction, knew how in the midst of the pleasures of the court to unite admirable piety and purity of life with the most brilliant courage. Some time after his coronation, in 1180, he assisted at Holy Mass at St. Leger, a very favored chateau of his realm. On this spot God wished to bestow upon him a mark of His predilection. At the elevation of the Sacred Host, the young monarch perceived in the hands of the celebrant a little child of striking beauty, encircled with light, around whom groups of angels were crowding in adoration before their mighty King. The Prince burst into tears at this spectacle, and prostrated with his face to the ground to return thanks to God, Who knows when it pleases Him how to reveal His secrets to those who live in accord with His divine Will.²

¹ His life by A. Monnin Neus, Schwarm.

² Examples by Dr. Herbest, Chap. 2, page 294.

About the year 1837, on the Feast of Corpus Christi, several of the citizens of Duren, near Aix-la-Chapelle, were sitting together in an inn fronting on the great market-place, when the solemn procession of the Blessed Sacrament passed by. Among those present was the son of the burgo-master. Now as the priest gave benediction with the Blessed Sacrament at the altar that had been erected in the square, this young man held up a silver dollar in his hand and mocked the sacred ceremony. In a few days the very arm with which he had committed this crime began to mortify. After a short time, the unhappy man died.¹

Reflection

“O beautiful sight,” says St. Liguori, “to see Jesus on that day when, tired and worn out, He sat down by the fountain, waiting for the sinful woman of Samaria to convert and save her. Does it not seem to be the same on our altars which are so many fountains of grace? Does He not there wait for souls? Does He not invite them to come to Him that He may draw them to His perfect love? O my Savior, who workest

¹ Tabernakelwacht, 1903,

here so many miracles, grant this one also, I beseech Thee, of drawing me wholly to Thyself."

Jesus loves us: Let us then say to Him with the pious Eustelle: "O Jesus, love of my soul, my heart would wish to possess You without end and without interruption. You are my life, my light, my joy, my peace and my all. O heavenly friend, the glances You cast on me attract all the inclinations of my heart towards You."

In His Eucharistic life, as in His natural life, Jesus Christ is employed in doing good. How admirable are the works He performs through the Holy Eucharist. Who could reckon the number of miracles He has wrought and still performs through life? How many blind see, how many lepers are cured, how many dead are raised to life through the virtue of His adorable flesh; that sweet Savior continues through the Holy Eucharist His merciful journey through the centuries, forgiving sins, casting out devils, and delivering us from our infirmities. To how many souls who are paralytic, has He not spoken from the interior of the tabernacle, saying: "Arise and walk." To how many blind has He not restored sight? How

many dead has He not, by the efficacy of the Sacrifice of the Mass, sent back living to the Church which was mourning their loss?

To every soul that calls on Him, He says: "Arise above thy miseries; I am here to enrich thee with many graces." How clearly He enlightens devout souls that have recourse to Him in their doubts. What consolations He makes those enjoy who are wholly devoted to Him. How thoroughly He communicates to them the flames of love which consume His divine Heart.

Surely we must admire Christ's bountiful goodness in giving us the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar in which He becomes our very food, for did He not say: "Take ye and eat, this is my Body." And this divine Food we may have as often as we wish to partake of it.

St. Denis tells us that all good is diffusive of itself. Now as God is infinitely good, His goodness must be infinitely diffusive, and so He has really shown Himself throughout the centuries by remaining with us in the Sacrament of His Love. Must we not then exclaim, "O infinite goodness of God, how unsearchable are Thy ways."

Christ's goodness and love towards His

creatures manifests itself most forcibly because He instituted the Blessed Eucharist the very night upon which He was betrayed, — yea, at the very moment when the executioners were preparing the nails and the cross for Him. Consumed with love for man, He transubstantiated the elements of bread and wine into His body and blood that men might partake of this heavenly food. Ah, truly, the love of Jesus can neither be fathomed nor understood. The Royal Prophet meditating on God's love for us exclaimed in wonderment: "Oh! how good is the God of Israel!" With how much more astonishment ought *we* not to cry out: "How surpassing good is the Lord our God reposing on our altars."

"Would, O my God," cries out Bossuet, "that I had the zeal of Thy angels and of all Thy blessed saints. But still it would not be sufficient were all creatures, animate and inanimate, changed into pure love, Thou wouldst not even then be loved as much as Thou deservest for Thy most amiable goodness." "Come and hear, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will tell you what things He hath done for my soul."



Seventeenth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

IN a monastery in Tyrol, about the year 1310, under the abbacy of Ruprecht as the chronicles of the Order record, a priest gave way to doubts while about to consume the Precious Blood during Mass. While these misgivings were harassing his mind, God in His infinite goodness performed a miracle to vindicate the word of His divine Son. In his very hands the wine in the chalice, which of course had retained its usual color and taste at the consecration, began to change into red blood. Part of this blood was preserved by order of the Abbot, and to this day is venerated in the abbey church, together with the purificator with which the chalice was purified.

After many spiritual favors had been granted to those who had visited the church,

Bishop George of Brixen caused a committee to investigate the miraculous event. Since that time the church has been extended and the altar has been removed, but a marble slab marks the spot where the miracle occurred.¹ . . .

Bolandus relates of St. Coleta that, one day, when she was hearing the Mass of her confessor, she suddenly exclaimed at the elevation: "My God! O Jesus! O ye angels and saints! O ye men and sinners, behold the great marvels!" After the Mass her confessor asked her why she had wept so bitterly and uttered such pitiable cries. "Had your Reverence," said she, "heard and seen the things which I heard and saw, perhaps you would have wept and cried out more than I did." "What was it that you saw?" asked her confessor again. "Although that which I heard and saw," she replied, "is so sublime and so divine that no man can ever find words to express it in a becoming manner, yet I will endeavor to describe it to your Reverence as well as my feeble language will permit. When your Reverence raised the Sacred Host, I saw our Lord Jesus Christ

¹ Exemplare by Bierman, cap. 11, page 508. Scherer: Bibliothek, d. Prediger, page 501.

as if hanging on the cross, shedding His Blood, and praying to His heavenly Father in most lamentable accents: 'Behold, O my Father, in what condition I was once hanging on the cross and suffering for the redemption of mankind.'"

Mrs. Hugh Fraser, in "Italian Days," gives us the following account of a miracle in connection with the Blessed Sacrament: "After the accession of Pius IX his brother, Cardinal Ferretti, a most wise and saintly man, acted as his Prime Minister for a time before the Revolution. His memory was greatly venerated in Rieti, where he was Cardinal Bishop. While he was there a terrible crime was committed. One of the churches was broken into at night, the tabernacle violated, and the pyx containing the Blessed Sacrament stolen. On learning of this frightful sacrilege the Cardinal called all his clergy together next morning and the entire assembly, with bare feet and ropes around their necks, went in procession to the public square. The city's inhabitants gathered around them while the Cardinal, standing bareheaded and barefooted under the noonday sun, preached a sermon, taking

for his text the cry of Mary Magdalen on Easter morning: 'They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.' When the sermon ended, the people were kneeling on the stones, sobbing like children. That night the door of the church was left open, and the pyx was restored, its sacred contents intact."

St. Aloysius, when not occupied at home, could always be found at the foot of the altar, while St. Francis Xavier and St. John Francis Regis often passed whole nights before the tabernacle, thus reposing on the heart of Jesus after the many toils performed on their laborious missions.

Father Salesio, of the Society of Jesus, felt the greatest consolation in even speaking of the Blessed Sacrament, and he never could visit it often enough. When summoned to the gate, when returning to his room, or passing from one part of the house to another, he made use of all those opportunities to repeat his visits to his beloved Lord, so that it was remarked that scarcely an hour of the day elapsed without his visiting Him. Thus, at length, he merited the grace of martyrdom at the hands of the

heretics, while defending the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament.

“The Manna with which the Jews were fed in the desert,” says St. Cyril of Alexandria, “did not bring the Eternal Life, but only a momentary refreshment: it was not the true bread, which cometh down from heaven. The Body of Jesus Christ, however, nourishes us not in a bodily way but to eternal life as our divine Savior Himself has declared. The Jews drank the water which flowed from the rock. What advantage did they derive from it since they are dead? That water was not the true drink; the true drink is the Blood of Jesus Christ, by virtue of which the empire of death is uprooted from its foundation, for it is the Blood of Him Who, united to substantial life, has become our life.

“O most amiable sweet Savior,” says St. Francis of Sales, “what other food can give eternal life, but Thy Body? A living bread was necessary to give life, a bread which had come down from heaven to give heavenly life, a bread which was Thyself to give immortal and eternal life. The manna, although a true figure of Thy Body, has not

the power. O holy and glorious life, it is in the communion of the Body and Blood of my divine Savior that I find the pledge of my happy eternity.”

“Thrown into prisons,” says Massillon, “shackled like criminals, they whom the world despised, chaste virgins, fervent souls, sacred ministers, all partook of the Bread of Benediction in their dungeons. What joy in their chains; what composure in those dark and frightful places; what songs of thanksgiving in those gloomy quarters where the eye rested on nothing but the sad picture of death and instruments of the most cruel sufferings. How often did they not say to Jesus Christ, present with them in the Adorable Sacrament: ‘Ah! we feel no misery, O Lord, because Thou art with us. Happy fetters which Thou deignest to uphold. Holy prisons which are consecrated by Thy presence. Agreeable gloom where Thou dost fill our souls with light. Cherished death which is about to unite us with Thee, and to tear asunder the veils which conceal Thee from our eyes.’”

“The Blood of Christ,” says St. Cyril, “falls upon our souls in Holy Communion

like a light dew, which refreshes and reanimates all that is drooping to earth. The soul no longer sees anything but heaven. Her virtue takes deep root, and grows like a cedar, which neither winds nor storm can break down. She resembles the olive tree in the fruitfulness of her good works, and the odor of her life pours itself out like that of the flower in spring.

Reflection

Christ's goodness and mercy to man manifests itself most remarkably in the Holy Eucharist by His remaining with us even to the end of time. He dwells continually on the altar, not in one consecrated Host but in all; not for a short time but to the end of the world. How wonderful and incomprehensible, then, is not Christ's goodness to us, remaining ever with His poor creatures, not in one place, or in one Host only, but in all places and in all consecrated Hosts throughout the world. We need not carry our household gods from one city to another as did the heathens of pagan Rome. No matter where we go, our only God is there in the tabernacle of the Catholic Church, ready to welcome us if we wish to come.

“As the eagles gather about the body,” says St. Ambrose, “so the faithful should gather about the Blessed Sacrament.” Here we can tender thanks to Christ for His bountiful goodness, here we can evoke acts of faith, humility, love, and other virtues.

During the Holy Hour, let our hearts admire and our hearts adore God’s supreme abasement in the Blessed Sacrament. Let us pour out our heartfelt prayer in some such words as these:

“Eternal praise and glory be to Thee, O my God and Savior, sole source of every good. But of myself, what am I that I should even dare to offer You my praise? Alas, I am but dust and ashes, a mere nothing in Thy sight. How then can I presume to praise Thee, my Lord and my God?”

“Mayest Thou be praised, O Lord my God, by Thine incomprehensible power, by Thine infinite wisdom, by Thine ineffable bounty; may Thine unbounded clemency, Thine inexhaustible mercy, Thine eternal virtue and divinity, together with Thy boundless love which Thou bearest Thy creatures, praise Thee, O my God, Who art the life of my soul.”

“Mary, my tender Mother, into thy maternal hands I place these ardent desires of my heart that thou mayest present them thyself to His divine majesty. Hasten the blessed hour in which all humanity prostrate at the foot of the tabernacle and the ostensorium, will with one voice raise this canticle of praise to thine own glory and to that of Thy Son: “I salute Thee, I adore Thee, O most Holy Body, born of the Virgin Mary.”





Eighteenth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

THE great miracle of Bolsena, Italy, A.D. 1264, at least vouched for as a legend, was one of the causes that prompted Pope Urban IV to institute the feast of Corpus Christi.

It happened that a very pious German priest made a pilgrimage to Rome about this time in order that he might be enlightened and freed from his doubts concerning the Holy Eucharist at the very fountain-head of Christianity. His faith in the Real Presence had been badly shaken, for he had misgivings about the transubstantiation of the wine. As he could not explain the mystery, he frequently had recourse to God to dispel his doubts, but all his prayers seemed to him in vain.

On his way to the Eternal City he stopped at Bolsena, Italy, and forthwith repaired to the church of St. Christina to celebrate Mass. Here God worked a miracle in behalf of his wavering soul to free him from affliction. At the words of consecration, when the mysterious change of the substance took place, the Sacred Blood in the chalice suddenly became agitated and trickled over the rim of the corporal under the appearance of blood. Trembling with fear and emotion, his first impulse was to conceal the incident, but as he was folding the linen to put it away, he noticed, to his surprise, blood stains on the marble altar table.

Now it was no longer possible for the priest to hide the miracle, and learning that Pope Urban IV was at that moment in the neighborhood of Orvieto, he hurried thither. Full of penitence, he related everything to his Holiness and was absolved. The Pope then commanded the blood-sprinkled corporal to be brought, and when convinced of the miracle had it carried with great solemnity to the cathedral. The marble stones upon which the blood had fallen were kept with great reverence in the church of St. Christina at Bolsena, where to this day they are ven-

erated by the people. In the year 1290 Pope Nicholas IV laid the foundation stone of a beautiful church in which the corporal is preserved to the present day. This church for grandeur and size bears comparison with any in the world. Raphael, the renowned artist, perpetuated the memory of the miracle by a mural painting in the Vatican.¹

. . .

St. Peter Damien, one of the great Doctors of the Church, recounts several Eucharistic miracles in his writings. The following happened in Italy, in the city of Amalfi, about the year 1050.

“In the presence of the Pope,” says the holy Doctor, “the Bishop of Amalfi has declared to us under oath that one day, while celebrating Mass, his mind was troubled with a thought against Faith. It seemed impossible for him to believe the Real Presence of our divine Lord in the Eucharistic Species. He had entertained this doubt at the very time when he divided the Sacred Host. To his utter astonishment the Eucha-

¹ De Ser. Dei Beatif., Benedict XIV, by Bonca. *Istoria et org. festa del Corpus Domini*, “Pelican,” No. 11, 1894. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XI, page 332, and XII, page 644.

ristic Bread was replaced in his hands by the visible flesh of the hidden Lord and his fingers were stained with blood. He fell on his knees in adoration, filled with repentance and faith, and the Host resumed its ordinary form. Such is the Sacrament of Love, so terrible to those who dare touch it with unworthy hands.”¹

Saint Francis Caracciolo in childhood shunned all amusements and instead loved to visit the Blessed Sacrament. As he grew older, and after he had been made General of the Order of Clerks Regular, he passed most of the night before the Tabernacle. In the presence of his Divine Lord, his face usually emitted brilliant rays of light, and he often bathed the ground with tears when he prayed prostrate on his face before the hidden Lord. Francis was commonly called “The Preacher of Divine Love.”

Philip II, King of Spain, on one occasion showed his untiring devotion towards the Blessed Sacrament by accompanying a priest who was carrying the Holy Viaticum to a sick person at a great distance. As the

¹ Der Heilige Petrus Damien, by Kleinermanns.

king walked all the way, the priest asked his royal highness if he were not tired. "Tired!" he replied; "my servants waiting on me day and night never complain of being tired. Shall I then plead fatigue when I am in the company of my Lord whom I can never sufficiently love and honor?"

An American lady, an Anglican, entered the Cathedral of St. Paul, Pittsburgh, Pa., for the first time one Sunday. Let us hear her own account of the visit:

"I knelt down mechanically, without much prayer, but perfectly quiet. That afternoon I returned and took a seat on the first bench facing the high altar, neither praying nor thinking much of anything, but peaceful and full of consolation, like a child resting on the bosom of its mother. I glanced carelessly at the faithful coming and going: young and old, men and women, boys and girls, the rich, the poor, — all represented in that procession of humanity, all coming to lay their cares, their chagrins, their hopes, their desires, in a word, all that troubled them, before the Friend hidden behind the tabernacle door always ready to listen to them.

"Soon a very positive and distinct thought

entered my mind. In what other church would one behold such a gathering? If the Real Presence should disappear from these precincts, would this incomparable procession continue? The shades of evening had fallen on the nave, the priests had quitted their confessionals, and the church was empty save for the presence of the Master who fills all things, — and then I lost consciousness of everything. Now I can say nothing more, explain nothing more, except that with the Blessed Mother, Mary, I caught myself saying: ‘Behold the handmaid of the Lord, may it be done unto me according to Thy word.’”

Some time after, the son of the lady, a pronounced Ritualist, was also converted by the Blessed Sacrament. His mother wrote to a friend: “I am sure that you will be glad to know that my youngest son is at this moment a Catholic, and charmed at being one. Like myself, it was the silent power of the Prisoner of the Tabernacle that converted him. As for myself, I limited my zeal to praying every day for his conversion. On Christmas morning I asked him whether he would like to come with me to Solemn High Mass with one of his Catholic

friends. He assented. In the afternoon he assisted at Vespers with the same young man. On his return he came to me and said: 'Ah well, mother, I have made up my mind.' 'Made up your mind to what?' I asked. 'To become a Catholic.' Oh, that miraculous surprise! It was much greater as he had often said to me: 'I will never become a Catholic.'"¹

. . .

The Reverend Father Vermot, says: "There is no Christian incapable of feeling the pleasure that is produced by the knowledge of what is contained in the Holy Eucharist. All that is necessary is to desire your salvation, to sigh after heaven, and to remember that this Sacrament is the source of all spiritual riches and the most efficacious means to satisfy all holy desires. Make the trial by receiving Holy Communion often. It corrects our faults without bitterness, it heals our wounds without pain, it purifies our heart without violence, it sanctifies without alarm and almost without a struggle. It withdraws us from creatures and unites us to God without agony. Try it, receive the Blessed Eucharist, receive it often."

¹ Tabernacle and Purgatory.

Reflection

In the Holy Eucharist we see our Lord's wonderful wisdom displayed for in the Sacrament of the altar He has contrived that His Body may be in heaven and on earth at the same time.

St. Augustine tells us that two loves were contending in Christ for the mastery when He was about to leave this world: one was persuading Him to ascend to heaven, the other to remain on earth. He saw that the Holy Ghost would not descend on the Church if He returned not to His Father, whereas He knew also how essential it was for Him to remain on earth to protect the Church against her enemies. His incomparable love, however, devised a method by which He could leave us and remain with us. He would stay with us sacramentally in the form of food, though at the same time ascending to His heavenly Father. Therefore did St. Thomas write: "Christ's Body is truly in heaven and truly on earth." This is the belief and teaching of our Holy Mother the Church that our Lord's Body is in the Eucharist just as it really was on the cross and as it is now in heaven.

How wonderful is the wisdom of Christ! He places His entire humanity and divinity in a small Host, even in the minutest particle of it, so that at one and the same time He is great and small, — great by reason of His infinite immensity, and small by reason of the space which He occupies. Though the saints of the Church have tried to explain this by similitudes, our minds are incapable of grasping its full significance. One holy writer remarks that just as the lofty figure of a tower or the vast orb of the sun can be seen by the eye, small as it is, — also the Body of Christ in its immensity is contained whole and entire in the smallest particle of the consecrated Host.

During this Holy Hour let us say: I thank Thee, O divine Savior, for having through love of me chosen to remain as if in a state of death in this new tomb of the tabernacle. I thank Thee for having accepted, in spite of all Thy rights to glory, the solitude, the forgetfulness, the state of a being who no longer counts among the living. I thank Thee, O my Savior, for all the holy thoughts that are formed before Thy new sepulcher: the adieu spoken to the world and its vanity, the heroic resolu-

tions of living more truly for God in the secret of His Sacramental Presence.

I thank Thee for all the benefits that I myself have drawn from it.

Mary, my loving Mother, help me to thank your Son as He deserves, this God who loves me so much. Help me to act in such a way that my own tomb may one day, like that of thy divine Son, inclose a victim of divine love.





Nineteenth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

ON Easter Sunday evening, 1795, Father Ligournais, pastor of Beauvais, in Vendée, was visited by a lady who said to him: "Father, old man Lambinet, who is eighty, hasn't eaten anything all day because he has been waiting for you to let him make his Easter duty." "Too bad!" exclaimed the priest, "I had forgotten all about your good old uncle. But I shall go at once."

A half hour later he set out, carrying the Blessed Sacrament in a silver pyx suspended from his neck. Eight or ten steps ahead of him was an altar boy, who, although only fourteen, had the height and the bravery of a man ever ready to face the patrol of the Blues (Revolutionaries) guarding the highroad. The priest and acolyte

cut across fields and bypaths to avoid any unbidden guest.

The priest walked on in silence. His whole mind was concentrated in a voiceless prayer of adoration. Thus they went on over the swampy ground, their shadows lengthening as the twilight drew near. Just before sunset, however, Father Ligournais raised his eyes, and saw before him a field, half green and half white, at the boundary of which the path terminated. The green portion was covered with a crop rather short or low; while the other bore a harvest of tall flowering stalks, waving gently in the breeze that came from off the sea.

“What’s that?” whispered the priest, whose eyes were a good deal dimmed by years. “On the right,” replied the boy, “there’s a field of flax; on the left, a field of beans in blossom. We’ve got to go across one of them, Father.” The priest made no answer; but when he reached the end of the path he noticed two farmers who had come to inspect their fields and estimate the coming crops. He recognized them, and said to himself: “Which of the two will be blessed for having loaned his land for the passage of the Lord?” Hardly had he men-

tally formed the question when the farmers answered it for him. The proprietor of the bean field came forward and cried out savagely: "Don't tramp through my crop, priest, or it will be worse for you."

Father Ligournais suppressed his indignation, and said nothing. The other farmer, who had drawn near and taken off his hat, exclaimed: "My flax is going to bloom very soon; but you and your servant, Father, are welcome to walk over it with the Blessed Sacrament." Big Father Ligournais, with head up now, walked along one of the little furrows; and as the shadows deepened, heard the barking of a dog, — the announcement that he had reached the thatch-roofed dwelling where the Easter communicant awaited him.

The light of the half-moon made the way clear enough when the pastor about ten o'clock set out to regain his humble presbytery. His altar boy walked by his side, with his lantern lit and swinging. When they reached the two fields they saw nobody in that of the flax; but at the entrance of the other, kneeling before the white-topped stalks, with his arms forming a cross, and his face toward them, was a man in tears. As they left the pathway to make their way

through the flax, he sobbed out: "Father, Father!" "What are you doing there?" asked the priest, "I've been weeping ever since you went through my neighbor's field.

"Father, let me beg you to go through my field this time, so that I may do some penance." Accordingly the priest and altar boy walked between the tall blossom-covered plants.

As a matter of fact several extraordinary things were noticed. The flax through which the Blessed Sacrament had passed grew thereafter so thick and so high that no one could recall the like. Thus was faith rewarded; but repentance was still more recompensed. Not only did the broken stalks recover in two days, but when harvest time came, instead of the little white bean, flat and spotless, they found a large number of more rounded beans.¹

All true virtue has for its foundation the nourishment of the Holy Eucharist. For St. Gertrude it was the furnace in which she kindled her fervor. All her actions before Holy Communion were a preparation for that ineffable reception, and all following it

¹ Ave Maria, May, 1913.

were offered to our Lord in thanksgiving for that appreciable benefit.

One day, less prepared than usual, at least so she thought, she said to herself regretfully: "Thy Spouse is calling Thee. How wilt thou go to Him so little prepared?" Then humbling herself deeply, she replied to her own thought, and she was right: "What good will it do to remain away? Hadst thou a thousand years, thou wouldst not be able to prepare thyself, having nothing of thyself to make that preparation. I will go to the Lord with humility and confidence, and He will apply the adornment that is wanting to me." She approached the Holy Table. Our Lord appeared to her full of sweetness and, in a symbolic vision, clothed her in a robe, the divers colors of which indicated humility, hope and love. Thus adorned, she received her Lord. At the moment of communicating, she put the following question to our Lord: "Lord, what art Thou going to give me?" The divine Master answered: "Myself, entire with all My divine essence, just as the Virgin Mother received Me at the Annunciation."¹

¹ Handbuch der Religion by Dr. Schuster, Vol. III, page 343.

Reflection

“Great moments of grace,” says St. Francis de Sales, “are the short moments of Benediction. Then we are in the very presence of God, we kneel at His sacred feet. The angels of heaven surround the illuminated altar, as on the holy night when they surrounded the manger at Bethlehem. The hour, the flowers, the lighted candles, the scent of incense, the sweet tones of the organ, all attune the heart and excite the mind to pious acts and holy aspirations. In these blessed moments we feel as if transported to heaven, uniting our prayers with the supplications of the saints, and our praises with the music of angelic choirs. Here, the high and the low, the learned and the illiterate, the sick and the weary, can find sympathy with Jesus, and manifold are those graces which come to us from the hands of our Blessed Savior at Benediction. Here we are strengthened in our weakness, enlightened in our doubts, and filled with a peace that is not of earth. We leave the church with an immoveable confidence in God, strong and willing to fight the battle of life. Just as the scent of incense lingers about

the sanctuary long after Benediction is over, so do the graces of this devotion sweeten our actions long after we have left the house of God to again take up our daily work.”¹

Like the three kings of old, we come during the Holy Hour to visit Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. As the crib and the swaddling clothes tested their faith, so the tabernacle and the form of bread, hiding the God-man from us, try ours. But like the Magi let us fall down and offer our homage to our hidden Savior. As the wise men recognized the feeble helpless child of the manger, the Almighty King of heaven and earth, so let us see with the eyes of faith all under the form of bread the consubstantial Son of the living God.

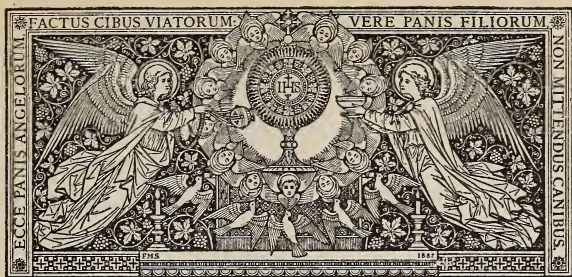
Let us adore and praise Him anew on our altars for the Holy Fathers of the Church call this the second birth of Christ. With what true devotion, ardent love, and strong conviction should we not approach this divine Sacrament. With Bouillierie we will exclaim: “O ye poor mortals: whosoever you may be, — how great soever may be your miseries or your desolation, your

¹ His life by Dr. Lager, page 609.

anxieties or your pains, your infidelities or your faults, — in the presence of the Holy Eucharist be consoled, be calmed, be reassured. In the tabernacle, Jesus Christ, the God-man, is hidden; here the heart of Jesus watches that this vigil may give you confidence; weak and sinful though you be, fear not — in the Eucharist the heart of God watches. Here is your strength. O my Jesus, grant that I may never be wanting in that confidence which Thou hast a right to expect from Thy faithful followers. O heart of Jesus, watch over me; enkindle in me the desire to love Thee more and more.”

“Be thou blessed, O holy Virgin, through whom we receive the heavenly bread that preserves and increases true life within us.”

“Through thee, Jesus comes to me. Oh, grant that through thee I may truly go to Him. Communicate to my poor heart the divine fires with which thine was inflamed towards me. O my loving mother, teach me and help me to adore Him, praise Him, love Him, and please Him; obtain for me that I may receive Him with fervor in the Holy Communion, retain Him in my soul, and unite myself to Him so intimately that nothing shall be able to break or weaken the union.”



Twentieth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

IN the year 1847, Herman Cohn, a very renowned pianist of Paris, was converted from the Jewish faith by means of the Blessed Sacrament. One evening, during the month of May, the devotions were to be carried out with great solemnity at the church of St. Valère. Singers in choirs and other friends of music had united to render a special program. The Prince of Moscow was leader of the choir. He extended an invitation to Herman Cohn, who then resided in Paris, to conduct the chorus. Herman took no part in the service, and even talked and laughed during the sermon, but when the moment arrived for Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament a peculiar feeling came over him. He himself says:

“Although I was not at all moved to bow the knee with the rest of the multitude, I felt within myself an inexplicable commotion. Without giving it a thought I bent my knee.”

From this time he was often seen at Benediction, and ere long he was in constant attendance at Mass, for in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, as he says: “A most consoling feeling came over me.” Just at this juncture, he was engaged to give a concert at Ems, but here, too, he managed to be present at the Holy Sacrifice. Though his friends remonstrated with him on this account, he nevertheless persevered in his good resolution.

On the 8th of August, God gave him a special grace, which he relates as follows: “I attended Mass as usual. The ceremonies of the Holy Sacrifice have always attracted my attention, but this morning I was carried away in spirit by the prayers and the hymns, and I felt the grace of God doing its work in me. At the elevation of the Host, I was filled with such compunction that my eyes grew moist, and in hot streams the tears coursed down my cheeks. Oh, what a moment! a moment never to be forgotten.

In the very depths of my heart I felt remorse of conscience for my past sins and making an open confession to God felt consoled in the knowledge that He had pardoned me. As I left the church at Ems I was conscious that I had already become a Christian.”

On his return to Paris, on the 6th of October, 1849, he received the habit of the Carmelite Order, with the name of “Augustine of the Blessed Sacrament.” His special request was that his cell should be as near as possible to the sacramental altar. All his mother’s entreaties that he should return to Judaism, the faith of his father, were of no avail. Ordained a priest, he was the means of converting his sister, who, on noticing him carrying the Blessed Sacrament in procession one day, was so moved by his piety and devotion that she resolved to enter the Church which counted her good brother as a member. His first sermon was on frequent Communion, and it was generally conceded that no one could preach better than he on the subject that had taken such possession of his soul.

“I have found the peace and joy of my heart,” he wrote, “a peace that the world cannot give or take away. With joy I kiss

the very walls of my cell that holds me so close to You, my Jesus, in the Blessed Sacrament. Here I am stripped of the load and burden of earthly goods that have constantly drawn me to earth. Like a dove I can now rise closer to the sun of justice and receive the warmth of His love. How empty are the riches, how sad are the pleasures, how humiliating the honors — the honors that I have hitherto sought. Now, since my eyes have seen, my hands have touched, — how I pity you as you are hunting after the pleasures that will not satisfy your heart. Come to this heavenly Banquet which has been prepared by the Eternal Wisdom. Come closer to your Lord. Cast aside those deceiving allurements of the world and ask reconciliation of Jesus that you may taste with a pure heart the true fountain of Love.”

“Believe me, that Jesus Who dwells in the tabernacle in our churches is willing to come down from His throne to give you more abundant grace than He has given me. Prostrate yourself before Him, give Him your heart and He will bless you, and rest assured that you will taste joys indescribable. O Jesus, my love, how much I would like

to show them the bliss and happiness which Thou hast given me and which I am enjoying now, if faith did not teach me that the joys of heaven are greater, I would almost say that this joy of loving you in the Blessed Sacrament is immeasurable. O what a sweet peace! What heavenly bliss! What great joy!"

The very cities of France and England through which Herman Cohn had travelled as an artist, and where he had entranced his audiences by his piano recitals, now witnessed him as a poor, barefooted Carmelite monk, known by the name of "Father Augustine, the preacher of the Blessed Sacrament."

Later, Cardinal Wiseman invited him to London to preach. Thus the Carmelite Order was established in his diocese.¹

The terrible persecutions in England during the reign of Henry VIII, and his youngest daughter, Queen Elizabeth, gave to the Catholic Church martyrs of the Blessed Sacrament.

A great number of brave confessors were

¹ Maerkisches Kirchenblatt, 1866. Tabernakelwacht, 1903. Ott: Euch., page 672. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. I, page 153.

dragged to their martyrdom because they assisted at the Sacrifice of the Mass in some place of concealment, or because they gave refuge in their homes to Catholic priests, or because they preserved the sacred vessels and vestments. Noteworthy, also, is the reply that many of them made when questioned before the court of justice. Although frequently persons of lowly birth and uneducated, their words as recorded in the archives testify to their constancy, their faith and that understanding they had of their religion, and in all this the women were as brave as the men.

In the parish archives of York, the capital of Northern England, it is recorded that during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Elizabeth Wilkinson, the wife of a miller, was taken before the city council. When she was asked why she refused to attend the state church she replied fearlessly, "Because there is no priest, no altar, no Blessed Sacrament there." John West, a laborer, being asked the same question gave this beautiful answer: "Because the church of the state is not the true church, and I don't want to be damned." Isable Bowman, who had to appear before the city council, gave

her reason for not visiting the church in these words: "Because the Blessed Sacrament is not there as it was formerly." These fearless replies brought many years of imprisonment and often a dreadful martyrdom.¹

"Faith," says Venerable Père Eymard, "is a pure act of the mind disengaged from the senses. Here the senses go for nothing, they have no action. Faith alone must act, for this is the kingdom of Faith. We must believe even against the testimony of the senses, against the very laws of nature, against one's own experience. We must believe on the simple word of Jesus Christ. There is only one question to be asked: 'Who is there?' — 'I,' answers Jesus Christ. Let us fall down and adore. And this faith pure and disengaged from the senses, free in action, unites us simply to the truth of Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament. The soul clears the barrier of the senses and enters into the admirable contemplation of the divine Presence of God under the species, sufficiently veiled for us to support His brilliancy, sufficiently transparent for the eyes of faith. . . . I

¹ Kirchenlexicon, Kessel.

thank Thee, O divine Savior, for having donned Thyself with a winding-sheet in the Eucharist, thus to give my faith a spur and encouragement."

"Ah, let nobody," exclaims St. Chrysostom, "come here with heartlessness, with lethargy, disinterestedness, or lukewarmness. Come with a soul filled with a burning, an insatiable desire. Come with more ardor than the thirsty stag runs to the fountain; come like one hungry to the table, like one benumbed with the cold to the blazing fire, like a child which throws itself on the bosom of its mother. Say with David, 'My soul languishes and is consumed. My heart and my flesh burn with ardor for the living God. O Lord, my King and my God, make Thy altar my dwelling place.'"

"O Lord Jesus," cries out St. Bonaventure, "let my soul languish for Thee. Let her hunger for Thee, bread of angels, food of holy souls, living bread which we should eat every day, and which contains all sweetness, all delights. Let my heart ever long for Thee, desirable bread, nourish it incessantly; fountain of life, let me thirst only for Thee. Be Thou my hope, my riches, my joy, my happiness, my salvation, my

refuge, my peace, my inheritance; and may the eternal repose of my soul invariably be placed in Thee."

Reflection

The religion which Christ taught is divine, consequently it ought not to seem wonderful to us that it should contain so many sublime mysteries, entirely beyond our comprehension. But our divine Lord has assimilated heavenly treasures with temporal goods that thus we may more easily understand celestial truths. Understanding well how He could elucidate the profoundest doctrines by the simplest parables, our Lord demonstrated His union with our souls by means of the parable of the vine and its branches. "I am the vine," He says, "and you are the branches." Everyone knows that if the branch is not deeply engrafted in the vine, it cannot bring forth good fruit, — therefore it is easily inferred that the Christian can do nothing profitable for eternal life unless united to his Savior.

At all times, then, let us praise and exalt the Blessed Sacrament, the very center of our existence.



Twenty-first Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Legenda

ST. GREGORY THE GREAT, who lived in the year 604, was penetrated with devotion, reverence, and love for the Holy Eucharist. His famous Missal, known as the "Sacramentary," gives ample proof of his great love for the hidden Lord. In his sermons he speaks also of the Holy Eucharist, and illustrates, by quotations of wonderful facts, the inestimable worth and the power of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

In his thirty-fifth Homily he relates: Not long ago it happened that a man was taken prisoner and carried far away. Now after he had been for a long time kept in prison without his wife knowing anything about it, she believed him to be dead, and caused every week, on certain days, the Holy

Sacrifice of the Mass to be offered for him. After a long time had elapsed this man returned home, and related to his astonished wife that on certain days of the week he was given more liberty than on others. In this way at length he succeeded in making his escape. Now when his wife inquired on which day of the week this favor was granted, she discovered that it was on those days upon which the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered for him.

In his dialogues, or conferences, upon the miraculous lives of the saints in Italy he relates in the fourth book the following occurrence: "Agatho, Bishop of Palermo, journeyed from Sicily to Rome. Upon the way he fell into the danger of being shipwrecked. A frightful storm arose, which well-nigh sank the vessel in which he took passage. No hope remained but in the merciful pity of Almighty God. Then all began to pray and to offer up petitions to Him that their lives might be spared. Whilst they were thus praying a certain sailor was occupied in steering a boat which was fastened to the ship, but which, through the violence of the storm, broke the fastenings and sank with the unfortunate man beneath the waves,

and Bishop Agatho reckoned him as dead. In the meantime the ship in which the Bishop sailed arrived, after many dangers, at the island of Ostika. Here the Bishop offered the Sacrifice of the Mass for the unfortunate sailor and, as soon as the ship was repaired, continued his voyage to Rome. When he landed he found the sailor, whom he believed to be dead, standing on the shore. Full of joy, he inquired how he had escaped the great dangers of so many days. The sailor then related how his little boat seemed continually on the point of capsizing, but always rose unharmed again to the top of the waves. "At length, suddenly," he narrated, "when I was quite prostrate and as it were out of my mind, I pronounced a short ejaculation to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, when my strength returned to me and soon after I was picked up by a ship and brought hither." When the Bishop learned the day on which this event took place he discovered that it was the same on which he had offered Holy Mass for the unfortunate man on the island of Ostika.

. . .

In the twelfth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we read about St. Peter being cast

into prison, and bound with two chains; how he was then delivered by an angel in answer to the "prayers" of the faithful, who, we know, "met daily from house to house" in order to "break bread."

The Annals of the Indian Missions relate this fact: "A pious Indian woman was preparing her daughter for her First Communion. When the happy day came, she dressed her with the greatest care, and led her piously to church. "After Holy Mass the happy girl entering her home ran to her mother. At the unexpected sight that met her eyes, the child exclaimed: 'O my mother, how beautiful you have made my little room!'

"'Ah, my darling child,' to-day, this little room must be your sanctuary, where you will spend your time in recollection and in prayer." Her mother then left her alone for some time.

"After many hours of calm and peace the mother sought her daughter in her room. Quietly she approached the kneeling form; it seemed to be motionless. She was quick to catch the meaning; Jesus had taken His little child to Heaven.

A young cleric once heard a missionary preach on the Real Presence and on the great love of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. The preacher spoke with as lively a faith as if he saw Jesus Christ with his own eyes, and the young man, being struck at this, said to himself: "O my Lord, what shall become of me? I too must one day preach on Thy presence in the Holy Eucharist; but how feeble will my words be in comparison with the words of this pious priest." The young man related this afterwards, adding that from that time forward he had always begged of Jesus Christ the gift of a lively faith in the Real Presence, and that he had done so frequently during Mass, particularly at the time of the elevation. By this means his faith became so strong that he afterwards besought our Lord *not* to appear to him in any sensible manner; and he could nowhere find so much joy and contentment of heart as in a church where the Blessed Sacrament was preserved.¹

. . .

St. Ephrem tells us, "When the eye of faith shines like a light in the heart of a

¹ "Pelican," 1900.

Christian, it beholds unveiled the Lamb of God, who has immolated Himself for us and given His holy and pure Body to be our perpetual nourishment. He who is gifted with the eye of faith perceives God with an intuitive clearness, and eats the Sacred Body and drinks the Blood of the Immaculate Lamb with a well-assured faith without prying into any curious scrutiny on this holy and divine doctrine. Why try to pierce the impenetrable? If you scrutinize through curiosity, you no longer deserve the name of believer, but rather that of curious. Be thou innocent and faithful.

“As for me, brethren, not being able to grasp by my understanding the sacrament of Jesus Christ, I dare not go any farther, nor endeavor to achieve the heights of these sacred mysteries. Even if I wished to speak rashly of them, I would not understand them any better but would be like a mad man, beating the air with my vain and fruitless efforts; for the air escapes on all sides, from its rarity and subtility, and so likewise are these holy, these venerable, these tremendous mysteries far above all the powers of my genius.”

Reflection

Centuries ago the Royal Psalmist incites the Chosen People of the Old Law in glowing terms to give the best part of every day to God, and yet he knew nothing of the inestimable blessings of Christianity. Had the graces of the New Law been revealed to him, how much more ardent a message would he not have addressed to the people of Israel. Had he known of the altar where the Son of God is actually present under the appearance of Bread, and could he have told them that everyone, young and old, rich and poor, had easy access to the throne of God, how ardently would he not have exclaimed: "Fall down and adore your God. Praise and exalt him above all forever."

Let us listen to the language which a bishop puts into the mouth of our Savior: "Heavenly spirits, tell the faithful soul that day and night I wait for him to come to the banquet which I have prepared for him. Tell him that I am hidden under the accidents of bread to nourish him and that I wish to contract with him a new and close covenant in his favor, that I may belong wholly to

him, and he wholly to Me. I have gone to an infinite expense to prepare this banquet, sparing nothing to give him proofs of my affection. I, in fact, provided for him at the Holy Table whatever is most delicious on earth or in heaven, and as often as he communicates I replenish him with my graces, I transfer to him My merits, I enrich him with My virtues.

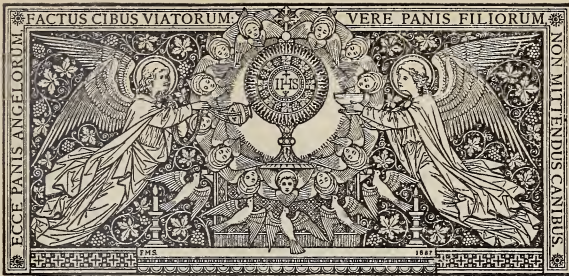
“Tell him that if he does not eat of this celestial bread, he will die of hunger, that he will have no health, strength, consolation, peace, nor life, that he will be strongly tempted and will even yield to those temptations. Tell him, if he continues to excuse himself and defers to eat at My table, he will never eat of it, neither in this life nor in heaven. Tell him that fear is good, but that love is better, and that in keeping at a distance from Me he despise Me; instead of honoring Me, that he thereby afflicts and offends Me.”

Who can listen to that language without answering: “O Lord, who commandest me to partake of Thy Holy Table, and who threatenest Me with Thine anger if I do not eat Thy flesh and drink Thy blood, I shall regard Thy wish rather than my unworthi-

ness, and will approach Thee with confidence since Thou invitest me with so much goodness.”

During this Holy Hour let us cry out with St. Augustine: “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and with all thy powers bless His Holy Name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and jealously guard the precious favors which He has showered upon thee. Let all His creatures bless the Lord; and do thou, O my soul, unite my voice with theirs in chanting His praises. Let us praise God whose glory the angels proclaim; whom the Dominations adore, before whom the Powers tremble, whom the Cherubim and Seraphim honor, prostrate in His presence, crying out with ceaseless voices, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy.’ Joining our voices with theirs, weak and feeble though they be, let us sound the praises of Him who is our Savior and the Savior of all.”

“Sound, sound His praises higher still, and come ye angels to our aid; “’Tis God, ’tis God, the very God whose power both man and angels made. Sweet Sacrament, we Thee adore, O make us love Thee more and more.”



Twenty-Second Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

THE great St. John Chrysostom, patriarch of Constantinople during the fifth century, has ever been regarded as one of the shining lights of the Church. Among the many conversions which he effected, the most remarkable was that of a heretic whom he had succeeded in bringing back to the true fold. The wife of the heretic, however, still adhered to her unbelief, and, though after much persuasion she seemed to sanction her husband's way of thinking, her heart nevertheless remained untrue. Finally she was induced to accompany him to church and even to seek forgiveness of God in the Sacrament of Penance. The next morning she received Holy Communion with apparent devotion, but instead of swallowing the

Sacred Host she took it from her mouth and placed it upon a piece of bread which she had about her person. Scarcely, however, had she attempted to eat the bread than it turned into a stone and almost choked her. But God in addition to His power is also merciful, and so He conferred upon the erring woman the grace of a contrite heart and sincere compunction.

Full of fear at the miracle, she at once sought the Bishop, confessed her crime, did penance, and was thoroughly converted. The miraculous stone bearing the imprint of her teeth was placed in the depository of the Cathedral Church of Constantinople.¹

During the French Revolution a noble lady was imprisoned in a gloomy dungeon at Paris. Her little daughter, twelve years old, remained under the care of a faithful old servant. The child's father was absent with the army of Condé. The little girl's one thought was to get admission to her mother's prison. At last she made the acquaintance of the jailer's wife; and the kind woman used to dress her in her own

¹ His Life by Stephen. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. VII, page 492.

child's clothes and send her to her mother's cell on various errands. For three months she used to visit her mother regularly, though only for a short time.

The mother told the child one day to go to a certain priest, and ask him to let her make her first Communion. The little one went to the priest, and he readily granted her request — and bade her return the next morning. When she went back on the following morning, he had just offered the Holy Sacrifice for her mother's intention, and reserved two Hosts.

“My child,” he said “I am going to trust you with a sacred mission. I am going to let you carry the Blessed Sacrament to your good mother, in this hour of direst need; and you shall make your First Communion at the same time.”

The child went in solemn joy to her mother, bearing Christ the Consoler. The jailer's wife left the two alone. They fell on their knees and adored the Sacred Hosts. The mother taking one of the Hosts in her hand, she received It as Viaticum, and then gave the child her First Communion.

The next day the little child went to the prison to see her mother; but the jailer's wife

said that her mother was no longer there. When advanced in years the girl used to say: "It happened seventy years ago."¹

There is kept on file in the archives of the church at Riedenheim, Bavaria, a letter written by the pastor recounting a miracle which happened on July 8, 1896.

"I am relating a miracle of the Blessed Sacrament which was witnessed by the whole parish. On July 8, 1896, the feast of St. Kilian, a patron of our diocese, a terrible storm arose at about 5 P.M.: we all thought our last hour had come. After the storm had raged for some time, suddenly two flashes of lightning, accompanied by deafening crashes of thunder, struck into barns that were filled with hay and grain, and in a moment three barns were in full blaze. A few minutes later several dwellings and stables, in addition to several smaller buildings, were burning. So rapidly did the fire spread that most of the cattle and nearly all the furniture fell a prey to it. The houses and barns on the west and east of the fire district had already been seized by the raging element, and the fierce wind from the northwest kept driving the flames

¹ Ave Maria. Vol. V, '16.

across the streets towards the buildings on the opposite side. In a short time they too would have fallen a prey to the consuming element, and then the whole village would inevitably have been lost. In this great danger and distress I hastened to the church, and, taking the monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament, I went to the place of the fire and gave Benediction. Everybody knelt down and adored their God concealed under the frail species of bread. All immediately witnessed how the suffocating smoke and flames suddenly changed their course, rolled up against the strong northwest wind, and gradually dispersed in fields and gardens.

“For hours the smoke and fire successfully forced their way through the wind that was blowing from the opposite direction. At the same time the fire blazing on the neighboring buildings was extinguished in an equally miraculous manner, and confined itself to its original starting place.

In this visible miracle of God’s protection I recognize a reward for the zeal with which my parishioners adore the Blessed Sacrament. On Sundays, from six o’clock in the morning to six in the evening, every hour, five or six persons adore the Blessed Sacra-

ment, and in the afternoon often twenty to thirty.”¹

“Whilst catechising the people,” said the saintly Curé d’Ars, “two Protestant ministers came to me who did not believe in the Real Presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. I said to them: ‘Do you think a piece of bread could detach itself and of its own accord place itself on the tongue of a person who came near to receive it?’ They replied in the negative. ‘Well, then,’ said I, ‘it is not bread.’” The holy priest then related the following fact: “There was a man who had doubts about the Real Presence. He said, what do we know about it since it is not certain what consecration is, and what takes place at that time on the altar? This man, however, wished to believe and prayed to the Blessed Virgin to obtain faith for him. Listen attentively to this. I do not say that it happened somewhere, but that it happened to myself. At the moment that this man came up to receive Holy Communion, the Sacred Host detached itself from my fingers, whilst I was yet some distance from the communion

¹ Tabernacle and Purgatory, page 199, Vol. 9.

rail, and placed itself on the tongue of the man.”¹

Our Lord has often indicated by miraculous signs the rewards meted out to the worthy communicants: St. John of the Cross during the celebration of the Mass was surrounded by a mysterious light; the face of St. Sylvanus, a pupil of St. Bernard, became as the sun whenever he officiated at the altar; St. Euthemius was surrounded by a pillar of light during the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice; the countenance of St. Venturine of Bergamo, while saying Mass, emitted rays of supernatural splendor and his people saw a burning torch in his mouth and his eyes shining with the brilliancy of stars whenever he read or sang the gospel; St. Peter Tolasansus, at the time of the elevation of both the Host and the chalice, always saw Jesus as a beautiful child.²

Reflection

Mons. Lecourtier, in his “Explanation of the Mass,” says: “Come all and see the

¹ Ott: Euch., page 676. His Life pub. Cologne, 1865. Andacht Z. Hl. Eucharistie, Huguet.

² Giovanne Maria della Croce by Weber, 1864, Regensburg.

work of God. He has restored life to my soul. I live now, but no, it is no longer I who live, it is Christ who lives in me. My darkness has been visited by His light, my misery by His strength, my mortality by His grace. Come, then, sinner, come and taste of this admirable life; you will then see, you will then feel, how consoling is this transition from the state in which you are, to the state in which Christ wishes to lead you; you will understand that man is dead if he enjoys only the material life which he shares with the brute, and that he really lives only when his soul, united to God, lifts itself up to its first beginning and its last end. In a word, man lives only in the soul; if the senses predominate, he is placed on the level with the beast. The soul, in its turn, lives but in God; beyond that, it finds nothing in reason, in science, in worldly affection but a most insufficient food. Now, it is particularly in the Holy Eucharist that this life of God is imparted to our soul. It is there that God becomes the soul of our soul, the heart of our heart. It is there that, living in His spirit, we draw from the divine spirit peace, joy and eternal life.”

“The Sacrament of the altar,” says St. Thomas Aquinas, “is the expression of the greatest love God could give us. Everything, in fact, speaks to us therein of the immense love of Jesus Christ towards men, the circumstances in which He instituted it, the sentiments which animated His divine heart, the excellence of the gift He has bestowed on us, His designs in instituting it, the state to which He is reduced. Everything therein reminds us of these words of St. John: ‘Jesus . . . having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.’ He loved men with a constant, generous love which nothing could weaken, with a love which showed itself greatest at the very moment when He encountered the most hatred and ingratitude.

“How great then is this love for us? Why is it not given to us to understand the sentiments of affection and tenderness that pierced His heart at the moment when He bequeathed to us the treasure of the Holy Eucharist, which is the testament of the new covenant?”

During this Holy Hour, therefore, let us thank Jesus for His infinite love for us: O Jesus, how great is Thy affection for us.

Thou sayest, I am dying of the desire to communicate myself to your soul and you soon add, while presenting to us the consecrated bread and wine: "Take . . . this is My Body. Drink . . . this is My Blood." O immense, incomprehensible, infinite love. A God gives Himself entirely to us. A God annihilates Himself through love of His miserable creatures. O Jesus, be my only love . . . No, I no longer belong to myself; I am Thine, wholly Thine.





Twenty-Third Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

A FRENCH publication of 1866, styled "The Annals of the Blessed Sacrament," gives the following account under the heading of "The Consecrated Hosts and the Golden Ciborium of Bezilla de la Rivière."

During the French Revolution, all the churches of France were pillaged and destroyed, but for some reason the church of Bezilla escaped molestation up to the fifteenth of September, 1793. The good people of the parish celebrated the octave of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary with their regular monthly procession and two days later the Holy Sacrifice was celebrated, for that was to be the last time. The adherents of the Revolution, forcing their

way into the little town on that day, compelled the priest, Father Berone, to flee for his life. Taking refuge in St. Julien on the river Jet, he had expressed the wish of returning to his parish for a short time that he might adjust matters about the church, but as the revolutionists were steadily gaining ground, he had surrendered his desires and fled to Spain for safety. Only after a seven years' exile was it possible for him to return to his own country.

A young girl from the town of Bezilla, Rose Florence by name, overhearing the remarks of the pastor, wondered much what was the cause of his anxiety. Then it suddenly dawned upon her that probably the good priest feared that a sacrilege might be committed with the Blessed Sacrament which he had been unable to remove before leaving. Immediately she began to plan how she might secure the Sacred Species to protect it from the insults of the mob. The undertaking was hazardous, for capital punishment was meted out to any one found entering a church that had been closed by the revolutionary tribunal. However, the eagerly sought opportunity at last came. Jean Bonof, one of Rose's friends, had just

been elected mayor and she had no misgivings in confiding to him her secret. The good man entered heart and soul into the work, and, on February 7th, regardless of his own peril, he sought the church with the girl and some other witnesses. Going to the tabernacle, he found a large Host in the monstrance and four Hosts in the ciborium, one of which was broken in two. Placing the small ones in an ablution cup and giving them to the girl for safe keeping, he took the monstrance to his own home.

From 1794 to 1800, Mayor Bonof kept this same monstrance locked in his cedar-trunk, before which his family would often kneel and pray. The small Hosts were placed by Rose's mother in a crystal receptacle and kept in a small cupboard, the door of which was opened only for daily prayers. During the six years the repository had been moved twice and then only when the revolutionists were inspecting the house.

After peace had been restored and the old pastor had returned to his parish, the Hosts were again removed to the church and placed in the tabernacle. An episcopal and civil investigation was forthwith made

to determine about the rescue and preservation of the Hosts, whereupon the following statement was drawn up: (1) That the consecrated Hosts were the identical ones that had been taken from the tabernacle in 1793; (2) that the investigation held on the third of May, 1801, showed that no change was found in the consecrated particles, and that they had remained intact during all these years.

Another fact, no less miraculous than the preservation of the Blessed Sacrament, was the change that took place in the crystal receptacle containing the four small Hosts. The little vessel, plain and without ornamentation, was found to be encircled with gold, when it again came into the hands of the priest on the fifth of December, 1800. After the Hosts had been removed however, only certain parts retained their original brilliancy. Several tests were made on the gold that remained, but not even the best jeweler could explain, either by scratching, or rubbing, or applying chemicals, why it would not be removed. It seemed to be imbedded in the very crystal itself. Since that time thousands upon thousands of pilgrims have examined this curious little

vessel. From the year 1848, the Sacred Hosts have been carried in solemn procession throughout the city on a particular feast, on which occasion the faithful visit the holy spot.

. . .

One day, whilst St. John Chrysostom was celebrating the holy Mysteries, soldiers were sent by the Empress Eudoxia to take him prisoner. Now, when they came to the church, they saw an angel standing at the entrance brandishing his sword to prevent the soldiers from entering, so that they were obliged to go home without having accomplished anything. Something similar is related by Ado, where he tells us that when the Saxons were about to enter sacrilegiously into a church which had been consecrated by St. Boniface, they found two young men of exquisite beauty and heavenly brightness standing at the entrance. They were angels of the Lord, who prevented them from entering the church, and put them to a shameful flight. Now this angel may be either the guardian angel of the priest, of the altar, or of the church, who assists the priest at the altar, in order that he may be enabled to celebrate the sacred Mysteries with greater

devotion and reverence. It is for this reason that the priest, after consecration, prays in every Mass in a posture of profound humility: "We humbly beseech Thee, Almighty God, that Thou wouldst command these to be carried by the hands of *Thy Holy Angel* to Thy sublime altar before the sight of Thy divine Majesty." Besides this guardian angel of the altar, of the church, there are also many other angels present at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. St. Euthemias, when saying Mass, used to see many angels assisting at the Sacred Mysteries in reverential awe. St. Guduvalus, Archbishop, often saw how the angels descended from heaven during Mass, chanting hymns of praise with unspeakably great reverence; but he himself would be standing at the altar like a majestic column of fiery flame whilst he was celebrating the Holy Sacrifice. St. Basil and St. Chrysostom testify to having seen at the time of the Mass many hosts of the angels in human form, clothed with white garments, and standing round the altar as soldiers stand before the king. But what was their attitude and deportment? Their heads were bowed, their faces covered, their hands crossed, and the whole body so pro-

foundly inclined as to express the deepest sense of their own unworthiness to appear before the divine Majesty.

O fathomless depths of the riches of God's graces, that are made manifest to us in the Most Blessed Sacrament!

Reflection

The saints were the apostles of devotion to the Holy Eucharist. And with what fervor did they not endeavor to propagate and revive it! With what love did they not proclaim its dignity and efficacy! With what zeal did they not invite people to sit down at the divine Banquet, saying to them, as did St. John Chrysostom: "Approach the Holy Table and your hunger and thirst will be appeased, your minds will be enlightened, and the wounds of your souls healed, for there is the heavenly food, the divine fountain, the true light."

Nothing so filled them with joy as to see the faithful crowd to the Holy Table, while nothing caused them more pain than the sight of the indifference or contempt of men in reference to the Bread of Heaven. Their souls were torn with grief, like the Blessed Margaret Mary's, at the thought

that Jesus is so little loved in His Holy Sacrament.

Whence comes the superhuman courage of the martyrs but from the supernatural Bread on which they feed.

“See,” says St. Augustine, “the beloved disciple who enters into the boiling oil. Whence comes his strength? From the cup from which he had drunk at the last supper. See St. Andrew who embraces his cross, whence cometh that joy? From the Blood of the Lamb which he offered up every day. See that victorious troop of the saints who tire the cruelties of the executioners by the firmness of their courage. What is it that infuses into all of them this invincible generosity, but the mysterious wine that makes martyrs, as well as virgins, become spouses of Jesus?”

The saints felt that Jesus was present everywhere, righting everything, vivifying everything, living through their hearts, speaking through their tongues, hearing through their ears, animating everything with His heavenly Life.

“O Bread of life, sweet Food,” cries out St. Lawrence Justinian, “delicious repast, of which the immaculate lamb and the

manna were but imperfect figures, who could receive you, who would praise you worthily, who could comprehend you perfectly, and form desires which could equal all that you contain? I almost swoon away when I think of you. Ah, where is the heart that would not melt into sweetest devotion when it feels its God united corporally to it, and it, in turn, to its God? The heart is not capable of conceiving the secret of so great a mystery, the tongue cannot express it, the human mind cannot enter into it."

With regard to the reception of the Holy Eucharist, our Lord places no restrictions regarding persons. Worthy and unworthy, if they present themselves at His holy altar, are alike the recipients of this divine Sacrament. St. Thomas asserts that He permits Himself to be handled by the hands of the wretches, and to be lacerated by the teeth of the unclean. It would have been great goodness on the part of our Lord if He had allowed only men of exceeding holiness to approach Him, but far more infinite is His condescension when He gives Himself even to the unworthy. How inexpressible is Christ's love for mankind!

In his wonderment the Royal Prophet

exclaimed: "O how good is the God of Israel!" Let us, overwhelmed with the excess of Jesus' goodness, cry out with still more ardor: "How good is Christ reposing in our tabernacle!"





Twenty-fourth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

ST. LEONARD of Port Maurice, who on account of his innumerable missions has received the title of the Apostle of Rome and of Italy may most justly be called the Apostle of the Most Holy Sacrament and of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. At the age of twenty-one he entered the Franciscan Order, already far advanced in virtue and knowledge. Being ordained priest he fell ill, and could find no means of recovery. At this juncture he turned to the Blessed Mother of God, and with most fervent prayer he promised her to devote his life entirely to missionary work if she would obtain of her Son for him the gift of restored health. His prayer was granted. In a short time after he became so strong and healthy that he was able to undertake any work, however difficult.

For forty years he traveled through all villages, cities, islands, even the entire kingdom of Italy. He passed through the roughest country amidst snow and rain, and even to the latest years of his life, with naked feet. Innumerable were the conversions which, by the grace of God, he effected. He used to say, "My only deadly foe is mortal sin." It was as a special means of resisting and overcoming this great enemy of man's salvation that he regarded the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. This devotion he had practiced from his tenderest years.

When he commenced his missionary career he made this Sacred Mystery to be the aim and center of all his endeavors, and strove to honor it on every occasion by inward and outward acts of faith and love, and to further this devotion by every means in his power in the hearts of others. His first visit when he arrived at any place was to the Blessed Sacrament. Daily he offered Holy Mass with such devotion that all present who assisted thereat were edified. In order to prepare himself most worthily for this function he confessed every day. Every morning he heard as many Masses as his work per-

mitted, and at the elevation it was his custom to make an intention of being present at all the Masses offered that day throughout the world, in order to present them to the Divine Majesty.

Holy Mass he called the sun of Christendom, the soul of the faith, the central point of the Catholic religion, towards which all the customs, ceremonies, and the other Holy Sacraments tend. He never approached the altar without offering to the Eternal Father three and thirty times the Precious Blood of Jesus, in honor of the three and thirty years of his life, in order to gain the grace of purity of heart which should never be stained by the smallest spot. In all his missions he impressed with fiery word of zeal upon his hearers the duty of attending the Blessed Sacrament with the greatest possible solemnity when being carried to the sick. At Ancona his exhortations had such effect that from that time the burgesses hurried in couples to follow the procession whenever the All-Holy was being carried to the sick. On some occasions five hundred wax lights might be counted in these processions. Also at Minerbio, in the Province of Ferrara, the whole people turned out of doors, carrying

wax lights, in order to accompany the Blessed Sacrament to a poor person whose hut lay ten minutes walk from the church. In the same way he carried his point at Ochiobello in Ferrara, where he induced bishops and other persons of rank to accompany the Blessed Sacrament.

Nearest to his heart was the devotion of the Perpetual Adoration, which was already founded in Rome, and in other places besides. Before his death he had the satisfaction of seeing Perpetual Adoration introduced in one hundred and thirty parishes. In short, from his earliest childhood until his dying day our saint was full of unbounded love for Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament.¹

In the days of St. Philip Neri there lived at Naples, in the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception, a nun of extraordinary piety, named Ursula Benincasa. This sister had a very great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. When she received It her heart was so dilated that its palpitations could be distinctly perceived by the movement of her dress. It was the Blessed Sacrament that gave her strength to support with invincible patience extreme bodily sufferings. When

¹ *Leben d. sel. Leonhard. Heithausen und Gehlen.*

in great pain it frequently sufficed for its alleviation that the priest, who had just celebrated Holy Mass, should lay his hands on her head by way of blessing; and although her stomach would refuse all food, yet she was never known to be unable to receive the Bread of Heaven.

The Holy Father, Pope Gregory XIII, being anxious to ascertain the reality of her piety, desired St. Philip to put it to a test. He therefore forbade her to receive Holy Communion. Ursula obeyed and for months contented herself with Spiritual Communion. Her desire for Holy Communion became so intense that she fainted from exhaustion and the doctor announced that she could not live. One of the sisters suggested that she be allowed to receive Holy Communion as a means of recovery. No sooner did the priest appear with the Blessed Sacrament than she again breathed, her strength returned, and after receiving the Bread of Life she entirely recovered.

. . .

For the saints the Blessed Sacrament was heaven on earth. Therefore Blessed Crescentia of Kaufbeuren often said: "Two

things constitute my heaven here on earth, the will of God and the Blessed Sacrament.”

Venerable Maria of Escobar, on one occasion when receiving Holy Communion, saw the heavens open and countless angels looking down upon her, marvelling at God's goodness towards man. To St. Gertrude our Lord said: “If a person free from mortal sin receives Me, I incline towards him in so gracious a manner, that all in heaven, on earth, and under the earth receive the inestimable benefit of my grace.” Our Savior revealed to St. Mechtildis that if man were capable of realizing the benefit he might draw from Holy Communion, he would die of joy. The Blessed Curè d'Ars was indebted to the Holy Eucharist for all his virtues, his inspirations, his power and his gifts. He said: “One Holy Communion suffices to detach the soul from this earth and inflame it with the love of God. He relates the following incident: “Not long ago a nobleman received Holy Communion here. What was the result? He possessed a fortune of 300,000 francs and of this he gave 100,000 to the poor, 100,000 for the building of a new church, and the remainder he left to his relatives. He then became a Trap-

pist. A very learned lawyer followed his example and after a worthy Holy Communion renounced all earthly possessions and entered the Dominican Order.”

Reflection

Our dear Lord has given us His precious Body to be our food, yet that body never diminishes nor is it consumed, it remains always whole and entire. St. Thomas, commenting on the wonderful miracle of the multiplication of the loaves, says: “Why cannot God preserve His Body so that when eaten it is not diminished or consumed?” We fail to appreciate the wisdom of God and His benefits, as we do not take time to reflect what He has accomplished for us, and what He is continually doing before our eyes. Solomon, the great king of old, cried out: “Is it then to be thought that God should dwell upon earth?” In like manner let the consideration of these truths find fruit in our hearts: Is it then to be thought that Christ, although He is in heaven, still remains with us here upon earth in the Blessed Eucharist? Is it then to be thought that Christ has humbled Himself to such an extent as to place His immensity within the

limits of a small Host? Is it to be thought that Christ desires to give us always His Body to eat, and still preserves it entire? Aye, not only to be thought but actually known to be the case.

This is what the Church teaches us in the hymn of the Blessed Sacrament, "He who receives the Body of Christ does not bruise it, does not break it, does not divide it, receives it whole and entire, and does not divide but makes only a separation of the signs and accidents." "O illusion of the senses," exclaims St. Jerome, "the accidents with which Thou appearest to our senses to be clothed, are broken, but Thou, O Lord, remainest whole and entire. It seems to our senses that we chew Thee between our teeth, but we never do so to Thee. Thou remainest always whole and entire, without any division, without any corruption, in even the least particle. Who can conceive the power manifested in the august Sacrament in such a variety of ways. Thousands of places holding the Sacred Body at the same time, God in one Host the same as in a million, God in a million of hearts each moment, and two millions, and ten, and a hundred.

We may exclaim here with the Psalmist: "Who shall declare the power of the Lord? Who shall set forth all the wonders of His works?" The Blessed Eucharist is truly a memorial of His wonderful works.

How much, then, should we not admire the wonderful inventions of Christ's wisdom in the Holy Eucharist, and His bounteous liberality in becoming the food of our souls. With hearts filled with gratitude, therefore, let us never weary of repeating:

"Down in adoration falling, lo, the Sacred Host we hail.
Lo, o'er ancient forms departing newer rites of grace
prevail;
Faith for all defects supplying, where the feebler senses
fail."





Twenty-fifth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

A PIOUS Jesuit missionary was traveling the wildest regions of North America to win souls for Christ; he stopped at the principal villages, and often found there savages whom grace brought to him from a considerable distance. He instructed and baptized those whom he thought well disposed, and then went on his way to other places. A savage one day presented himself to him, whose fervor appeared to be something extraordinary; as soon as he was well instructed in the mysteries of our holy religion, the missionary administered baptism to him, and also gave him Holy Communion, which this good Indian received with the most lively transports of love and gratitude.

The missionary then went on other apostolic excursions. A year after he returned to

the place where dwelt this Indian convert. As soon as the latter was aware of the missionary's arrival, he ran to throw himself at his feet and bathed them with tears; he knew not how to express the joy he felt in seeing again him who had begotten him to Jesus Christ. He soon entreated the Father to grant him once more the happiness he had made him enjoy the year before. "Of what happiness do you speak?" asked the missionary. "Ah! my Father do you not know? — *the happiness of receiving within me the Body of my God!*" "Willingly, my child, but first you must go to confession. Have you examined your conscience well?" "Father, I examined it every day, as you charged me to do last year." "In that case, kneel down and declare me the faults you may have fallen into since your baptism?" "What faults, Father?" "Why, the grievous faults you feel you have wilfully committed against the commandments of God and the Church." "Grievous faults," answered the savage, all amazed; "can anyone offend God after they are baptized, and especially after they have received *Communion*? Are there anywhere Christians capable of such ingratitude?" Saying these words, he burst

into tears, and the missionary, on his side, wept too, blessing God for having prepared for Himself even in the forests of America such worshipers, who may, indeed, be called worshipers in spirit and in truth.¹

The yearning for solitude, and to break away from a world sunk in idolatry and wickedness, was felt and carried out, first in the deserts of Egypt, whence it spread into Arabia and Syria; and those vast expanses of silence and solitude became peopled with thousands of pious souls, who had abandoned everything in order to be alone with God.

A great number dwelt in caves in the surrounding mountains, and these were wont to come daily to the churches, in order to receive Holy Communion, and to rest content, satisfied with this heavenly Food, until the following day.

The Holy Eucharist was the life-giving Food of all those holy solitaries; they could not have lived as they did without it. We read of the saintly Abbot, Paphnutius, that at ninety years of age he took a journey of three leagues every Saturday and Sunday to the nearest church. St. Arsenius dwelt

¹ Dubussi, *Nouv. Mois de Marie*, 135.

thirteen leagues from any church, yet he visited in order to communicate.

Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus, the celebrated Church historian, who has recorded many beautiful examples from the lives of holy solitaries and monks of the desert, related of Maris, the holy solitary who had dwelt thirty years in a dilapidated little hut (at a place called Netis) not far from Cyrus, and was then ninety-nine years of age, that, being on one occasion allowed to visit him in his cell, he was entreated by the old man to permit him once more to assist at the celebration of the Divine Mysteries. Theodoret complied. The sacred vessels being brought, as there was no table in the poor little hut, he offered the Most Holy Sacrifice on the hands of his deacons, in order to satisfy the pious longings of the venerable old man.

St. Basil relates that where the distance was too great for such constant visits to the church, they were permitted occasionally to take the Holy Eucharist back with them to their cells. It is said of St. Simon the elder, an anchorite, that having carried out a resolution of eating nothing during the long fast, he was found by the Priest, Bassus, lying on the ground apparently without life.

Bassus moistened his lips with a sponge, and placed the Blessed Sacrament in his mouth. Quickened by the heavenly Food, he arose from his death-like swoon, and thenceforth received Holy Communion daily. When, later on, he ascended the pillar upon which he spent the remainder of his life in prayer, Bishop Domnus used to ascend a ladder to communicate him. Another anchorite, Simon the younger, who also for many years lived on a pillar, and received the Holy Eucharist miraculously, was ordained and said Holy Mass upon the pillar.

St. Onophrius lived in the very depths of the desert for seventy years, receiving the Holy Eucharist every Sunday at the hands of an angel. Thus do the pious dwellers in the desert, in those earliest days of the history of the Church, bear witness that the Holy Eucharist is the life-giving Food of soul and body, and a Sacrifice for the salvation of the world.

. . .

Alphonsus Rodriguez, an author of spiritual treatises, relates in one of his books the story of a certain gentleman living in a German province who, after having lost the greater part of his fortune, was tempted to commit suicide. He was advised by a pious

clergyman to confide his troubles to our good Lord, and to make the promise to hear Mass daily that he might thus rid himself of his temptation. A priest was therefore engaged by the man to say Mass in his private chapel. It happened one day that the chaplain went to a neighboring town. The man who had engaged the chaplain, fearing that he might lose Mass, hurried after the priest. Meeting a peasant on the way, he was told that the Holy Sacrifice was already over. On hearing this he gave way to tears, saying in his despondency: "Alas, this may be the last day of my life." The peasant, being told the cause of his discomfiture, answered: "Do not be troubled; I will give you all the graces I received by attending Mass this morning if you will give me your cloak." The man went on his way rejoicing. Nevertheless he sought the church and there made urgent supplication to God. As the gentleman returned from church he found the peasant suspended from a tree, dead.

. . .

"Ah, where are we?" exclaims St. John Chrysostom: "heaven has nothing, absolutely nothing more than earth; the earth has become a new heaven. It is indeed the same infinite God, the same

all-powerful Creator of worlds, the same loving Redeemer, who only desires to be Emmanuel, or God with us, but a hidden God only, a God humbled through love, a lamb full of divine meekness, a victim of propitiation for our sins.”

Reflection

The first birth of Christ in the stable of Bethlehem was truly wonderful, since the Son of God took upon Himself the form of a servant and became like unto us all save sin. Yet his second birth in the Blessed Sacrament is not the less wonderful, that birth by which He becomes present to us in the form of bread. And the greatest aspect of the marvel is that this is accomplished by the word of mortal man, a priest. God does not speak the word, nor do His angels. A poor creature like ourselves utters but a short sentence and the greatest miracle of nature and grace takes place, in which the substance of bread and wine is changed entirely at the sacred time of consecration, — changed into the Body and Blood of Christ.

By the word of God the heavens were created and the earth called into existence;

the word of the same God also uttered by the lips of a frail human being, the Blessed Sacrament of the altar becomes what it is. O marvelous, thrice marvelous word of God!

Hail, sacred tabernacles, to which Thou, O Lord, dost descend at the voice of a mortal! Hail, mysterious altar, where faith comes to receive its immortal food! Oh, I love Thy temple, it is an island of peace in the ocean of the world, a beacon of immortality. Thou art near to hear us. Is there a tongue equal to the ecstasy of the heart? Whatever my lips may articulate, this blood which circulates, this bosom which breathes in Thee, this heart which beats and expands, these bathed tears, this silence, — all pray in me. So swell the waves as the rising of the king of day, so revolve the stars, mute with reverence and love, and Thou comprehendest their silent hymn. Ah, Lord, in like manner comprehend me; hear what I pronounce not for silence in the highest voice of a heart that is overpowered with Thy glory.

During this Holy Hour let us publicly confess with St. Augustine: "Yes, my Lord, I solemnly acknowledge that I do not understand how Thou canst be so completely enshrouded, Thou splendor of divine maj-

esty. But I do know that Thou canst do greater things than I can understand. And I believe that Thou hast done this: I believe in Thy love for me, a sinner worthy of punishment. Thou goest so far as to forget Thyself and to work this great miracle in order to be with us.

“Therefore, at all times let us praise and bless Thee, sweet Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. May all the angels and saints unite with us in praising Thee. May the whole court of heaven aid us, increasing the fervor of our prayer as we cry out:

“O Godhead hid, devoutly I adore Thee,
Who truly art within the form before me;
To Thee my heart I bow with bended knee,
As failing quite in contemplating Thee.”





Twenty-sixth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

IN the life of St. Ludwina, who was sick for thirty-eight years uninterruptedly, we read that, in the beginning of her sickness, she shrunk from suffering. By a particular disposition of God, John Por went to see her, and perceiving that she was not quite resigned to the will of God, he exhorted her to meditate frequently on the sufferings of Jesus Christ, that by the remembrance of His Passion she might gain courage to suffer more willingly. She promised to do so, and fulfilled her promise, but she could not find any relief for her soul. Every meditation was disgusting and unpleasant, and she began again to break out into her usual complaints. After a while her director turned to her and asked her how she had succeeded in meditating upon our

Lord's Passion, and what profit she had derived from it. "O my Father," she answered, "your counsel was very good indeed, but the greatness of my suffering does not allow me to find any consolation in meditating on my Savior's sorrows. He exhorted her for some time to continue this exercise, no matter how insipid soever it might be to her; but perceiving at last that she drew no fruit from it, his zeal suggested another means. He gave her Holy Communion, and afterwards whispered in her ear: "Till now I have exhorted you to the continual remembrance of Christ's sufferings as a remedy for your pains, but now let Jesus Christ Himself exhort you." Behold! no sooner had she swallowed the Sacred Host than she felt such a great love for Jesus, and such an ardent desire to become like unto Him in His sufferings, that she broke out into sobs and sighs, and for two weeks was hardly able to stop her tears. From that moment the pains and sufferings of her Savior remained so deeply impressed upon her mind that she thought of them all the time, and thus was enabled patiently to suffer for Him who, for the love of her, had endured so many and so great pains and torments. Comforted by

the example of Jesus Christ, she not only praised God and gave thanks to Him for all her sufferings, but even vehemently desired to suffer still more; nay, by meditating on the Passion of Jesus Christ, she was so much inflamed with love that she used to say, "It was not she who suffered, but her Lord Jesus Christ who suffered in her."¹

The venerable Ida of Louvain from her tenderest years gave herself entirely to the love of Jesus. As she grew older, and never sought or desired aught but Jesus, that heavenly Bridegroom gave her such a plenitude of His Presence, that her happiness resembled that of the most chosen of His saints. She became so united with Him in daily communion that she lived altogether a supernatural life. The very dumb animals obeyed her. She assisted with the deepest recollection at the Holy Mysteries; and so ardent was her desire that her beloved Lord should receive the adoration of His creatures, that, seeing her prayers and invitations were disregarded by others, she used to call the little birds to follow her, and in their stead adore the Lord in the Holy Sacrifice of the

¹ Surius: Vita St. Ludwinae, I. c. 14.

Mass. And, lo! the doves and the pigeons followed her into church, where they would remain standing round her until the conclusion of the Sacred Mysteries, after which they all returned whence they came.¹

One Christmas night, according to a pious legend, Walthin, the holy Abbot of Melrose, in Scotland, was offering up the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with great piety and devotion.

When he had pronounced the sacred words of consecration he saw in his hands a little Boy more beautiful than anyone he had ever seen. The Child was immaculately white; and with His little hands He was fondly caressing him.

Walthin's heart was filled with heavenly rapture as his eyes were fixed on those of Jesus. Yielding to the desire that came into his mind, he reverently kissed the Sacred Host, while the tears of joy that fell from his eyes flowed down his cheeks.²

. . .

In the writings of St. Thomas of Villanova we find the confession of a young Israelite convert. The saint, believing that this extraordinary fact would give additional glory

¹ Ott: Euch., page 233; Heiligen Lexicon, iii. Band.

² Les Veillés des adorateurs du S. S.

to our divine Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, published the circumstance after the death of his friend, who had communicated it to him. The young man when in danger of death related the following incident to the saint:

“My Father, you are the father, the consoler, and the guide of my soul; I have requested you to pay me this visit in order to disclose to you in return a great secret that I have not told anyone. One day I was walking with a young Jew of my own age, while going to attend to some business for my father in a specific locality. On our way we discussed the Messiah, whom in our vague conception as Israelites we were still expecting, and as we talked we experienced an ardent desire to see Him, saying from our heart: ‘Ah, how fortunate we should be if He would come in our time, that we might behold Him with our own eyes.’ And as we continued our conversation on this subject our desires became more and more inflamed, and we noticed, it being already night, a light in the sky so brilliant that it seemed to us the heavens must be opened. Recollecting that my father had once told me that sometimes the

sky opened and that on such occasions we could ask God some favor with the hope of obtaining it, we fell on our knees with all possible devotion, asking the Lord to manifest the Messiah in our day and to permit to us to see Him whom we so earnestly expected.

“Whilst pouring out our hearts in fervent prayer in the sight of the brilliant light upon which our eyes remained fixed, we saw suddenly quite near us a sparkling chalice with a Host above it, of the shape that Catholic priests use at Mass. It is needless to say that this vision alarmed us exceedingly. Soon we overcame our fear, however, for an interior light penetrated our soul, opened the eyes of the mind, and banished from it all obscurity. We now felt convinced that the glorious Messiah whom we so ardently desired was surely in the Host, that no other was to be expected, and that the Christian religion was the only true religion. We returned thanks to God for having cured our blindness in so miraculous a manner. After my return home I availed myself of the first opportunity to become a Christian and to receive Baptism. Ever since I have faithfully observed, as

you know, Father, the laws of God and His Church.”¹

St. Nicephorus of Constantinople tells us: “Our tabernacle is holier than the Holy of Holies, yea, than the ark itself, for it contains the most sacred and life-giving flesh of our Savior.” And St. Peter Alcantara continues: “The Spouse wished to leave to His beloved a companion, that she might not be lonely during His long absence. He therefore left her Himself in the Holy Sacrament, as the best companion for her.”

“Here in the Holy Sacrament,” says Lallemand, “he abides day and night as a living victim before the eyes of His Father, appeasing His anger and satisfying His justice, communicating the life of grace and the seed of the life of glory to those who approach Him worthily.”

Reflection

Jesus holds inclosed in the Most Holy Sacrament all the infinite treasures of grace, because He is the Author of all grace, and these treasures He shares with us in all their fullness. After Baptism and Penance, the

¹ Tabernacle and Purgatory.

Holy Eucharist is the real Sacrament of Salvation, since it raises our soul to a spiritual life, and thus strengthens us on our journey to heaven. It therefore provides for us the necessary help for salvation.

Jesus, after having done for us all that love could possibly invent, wills that in a certain sense His adorable Body should daily be born for us, so that we may ceaselessly receive new strength and grace. The apostle says: "He has made Himself poor that we might be rich." Coming to us, He dwells with us in reality, working His greatest miracles solely to remain with us. Therefore, let us make some return to Him for His infinite love, let us beseech all God's friends, in heaven, on earth, and in purgatory to unite their adoration with ours in the sweet words: "Blessed be the Most Holy Sacrament forever." With hearts glowing with love, O Jesus, let us praise Thee, let us thank Thee, let us love Thee more and more and forever.

O Jesus, brightness of the Father, Who art pleased to descend even to me, grant by Thy grace that I may receive Thee in a heart well disposed and that I may render to Thee, as far as possible, worthy homage

of gratitude and love. Come, O adorable Host, that Thy presence may sanctify my soul, and be my light, my strength, my life. Yes, come, O my divine Master; and when Thou shalt have come, I will say to Thee: "Stay with me, and may nothing henceforth separate me from Thee."





Twenty-Seventh Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

MANY miracles have been wrought at the famous shrine dedicated to the Blessed Virgin at Lourdes, France. Some of these miracles have been worked through the intercession of our good Mother, others through the adoration paid to the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar. In the words of His Holiness Pius X: "Lourdes is the center of worship to Mary, and at the same time, the most glorious throne of the Eucharistic Mystery in the entire world."

The great crowds of devout pilgrims crowding about the holy shrine are not satisfied with simply telling their beads in the grotto; they assist also at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and, until midnight, prostrate themselves before the Blessed Sac-

rament. Thus they offer their homage to both our Savior and His Holy Mother.

Nowhere on earth are there so many Masses celebrated or so many processions of the Blessed Sacrament. At no other spot on earth do the faithful prepare themselves more worthily for the reception of the Eucharist or communicate in so great numbers. Here in truth is verified the old truism: "Through Mary to Jesus," for Mary offers to her Son all the honor that is paid to her, and thereby wins salvation for us.

In the month of August, 1888, there are said to have been fifteen thousand pilgrims praying before the grotto day and night, but in spite of their great devotion none of the sick seemed to be healed; then they began to pray in a body with outstretched hands, but without success. A holy priest, however, conceived the idea of carrying the Blessed Sacrament in procession among the rows of the sick, a procession in which more than five hundred clergymen carried lighted tapers. The infirm, stretched on couches, raised their hands imploringly to our Lord as He passed in His triumphal march. Piteous appeals of: "Jesus, if it be Your

wish, "You can help me," were heard here and there. More than one helpless soul cried out: "O Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof, but speak only one word and make me whole." United by the bonds of charity in their dire need, with one voice the assembled multitude sent up to heaven their pathetic supplication: "Lord, help us lest we perish. Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us. Blessed is the name of the Lord. Hosanna to the Son of David." And lo, Jesus, passing by, beheld the suffering of His children, for many of the sick arose from their beds of pain, and with joyous acclamation joined in the procession. During the entire night, the priests continued the adoration before the Lord exposed on the altar and since that occasion the procession is repeated yearly, the people making invocations and the sick returning home cured.

In the year 1893, from the twentieth to the twenty-seventh day of August, not less than twenty-five thousand pilgrims, among whom were fifteen hundred priests, were present at this shrine. All the clergy took part in the procession. The confraternity of Perpetual Adoration carried the emblem

of the monstrance suspended from their necks while the rest of the priests held lighted torches. A special train brought more than a thousand crippled, who believed with a firm faith that they would return to their homes cured. These were stationed along the road on couches and rolling chairs, awaiting the coming of the Lord. It seemed as though the old days of Judea and Galilee were being repeated, when the expectant multitude ranged the sick along the road-side for the healing touch. On the approach of the Sacred Host, borne in a monstrance by a Syrian Bishop, the diseased, weepingly and with indescribable emotion, recited the pathetic petitions mentioned above. No sooner had the Bishop raised the monstrance and given Benediction than a large crowd of the incurables rose from their beds, rejoicing. For three successive evenings the procession was repeated with the same wonderful results.

Out of the twenty-eight cures pronounced as miraculous by the Medical Censor Board, we shall cite only the following:

A fourteen year old boy, by the name of Guy, a native of Montpellier, was suffering from paralysis of the left hand; the muscles

were entirely impaired and without power of receiving sensations. At the very moment when the Blessed Sacrament passed the boy, he felt life returning to the diseased member, and, immediately loosening the bandage, was able to use the limb. The hand was entirely healed. An eleven year old girl, named Leonilda Clement, a resident of Orleans, had received her First Communion at Lourdes on her sick-bed. From July, 1892, she had been unable to walk, as she was afflicted with tuberculosis of the spine, as a result of which an open wound had constantly been discharging putrid matter. During the procession she arose from her bed perfectly cured.

Anna Schaefer, twenty-eight years old, suffering from kidney trouble for seven years, also regained her health as Jesus passed by. Louise Delhaie was to undergo a serious operation on account of liver complaint, but she anxiously longed to go to Lourdes for her cure. During Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament she was suddenly healed.

All these miracles surely testify, if we need any testimony, the presence of our Lord in the Holy Eucharist and the kind

intercession of His Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary. Although many of the sick were not cured, still that is no reason for complaint, as the Blessed Virgin and our divine Lord have the perfect right to reserve to themselves the bestowal of any grace. Sickness and death will always remain with us, and those who suffer patiently have more merit than those who are in good health.¹

Saint Alphonsus lived in the year 1787. The name alone of this blessed saint brings to mind the thought of the Blessed Sacrament. His life was absorbed in it. It was, so to speak, the very life of his soul. No saint ever loved Jesus more dearly in the Blessed Sacrament, none ever prayed to Him with more fervor, none sought Him more frequently in His tabernacle; and as though he would multiply himself in visits to the Most Holy Sacrament, he wrote that little golden treatise called "Visits to the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar"; thereby to urge numbers, like himself, to bring their love to their Lord and their God dwelling therein.

¹ Frieberg Kirchenblatt No. 20, 1882. "Pelican," 1893. *Histoire et Critique de Lourdes*, by Betrimn.

Saint Alphonsus gave himself the task of spreading the devotion of Corpus Christi, and with this object in view, whenever he held a mission, he brought to bear the beautiful custom of a daily visit to the Blessed Sacrament. In order to facilitate the public adoration of the Most Holy in poor parishes, he provided candles at his own expense, and by words and example he excited the people to zealous adoration. "One thing is certain," he wrote, "that, next to Holy Communion, no act of worship is so pleasing to God, and none is so useful as the daily visit to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament."

In his extreme old age, when sickness and weakness deprived him of the power of saying Mass, he endeavored as long as possible to compensate for his great privation by assisting at it in the church. After he had heard Mass and received Holy Communion in his oratory in the early morning, he caused himself to be carried into the church and placed on the steps of the altar, where he spent many hours in prayer and assisted at five or six Masses.

Fortified with the Bread of Angels, he entered sweetly into the joy of his Lord on the first of August, 1787.

Reflection

All the works of God are wisely done. Fulfilling precisely the object for which it was created, each work of the divine Hand is great and perfect. Being a revelation of God Himself, His works are a mirror in which His rational creatures may see His hidden beauty.

The Holy Ghost calls the Blessed Sacrament the remembrance of the wonderful works of God. Hence it is the masterpiece of the Almighty. In revealing His perfections, it stands alone. The Blessed Sacrament is that unique work by which God manifests His divine attributes to us. Why do we come to the Holy Hour? Why do we celebrate the Forty Hours with such predilection if it is not to enliven our devotion to Jesus in the Sacrament of His love and how magnificently does not the Blessed Sacrament reveal the divine Goodness? The great God of heaven and earth dwells among the poor as well as among the rich; He abides in the noisy city as well as in the quiet country; He rests as happily in the poorest way-side chapel as in the grand cathedral rearing

its lofty spires to the skies. And all this for love of us.

The Prisoner of the tabernacle says: "In the Holy Eucharist I am light to the blind, strength to the weak, health to the sick, and life to the dead. I am a heavenly remedy for all your spiritual miseries, renewing here all the mysteries of My incarnation, My life, death and resurrection. I am spiritually born in the faithful soul, I live in it, and it lives in Me, I suffer with it, and it suffers with Me, and unites its sufferings and intentions with Mine. I die with it, and it dies to its sins. Through the participation of My immortal Body it arises gloriously from the grave of sin. I have come that the sinner who is dead may be restored to life, and that the just who possess life may have it more abundantly, may advance in grace, and pass from virtue to virtue."





Twenty-eighth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

IN the Acts of the Saints by Bollanden we read of a certain wealthy Catholic who resided near the city of Milan, and who constantly gave hospitality to St. Peter of Verona during his apostolic missions in that section of the country. One evening the Reverend Father arrived worn with fatigue. This time he found his reception rather cold. The host, who ordinarily had been so respectful, so attentive, almost closed the door on him. He could not fathom the reason of this change. In the course of the conversation St. Peter learned why his friend had acted so unusual. He had become a Manichean heretic and on that account began to reproach his guest as the "enemy of truth." "Come," he added, "I

shall show you the Blessed Virgin, who will say more to you." The saint yielded to curiosity and accompanied the heretic to the meeting of his followers. A most attractive lady appeared on the altar, carrying her son in her arms: "My son," she said, "thou art in error, thou seest that the truth is here, and not with Catholics. I, the Mother of Jesus, I tell you this."

These words, on a former occasion, had influenced the wealthy Catholic to renounce his faith and follow the Manichean heresy.

Saint Peter, very much incensed at this imposition, said: "Go tell the man who spoke thus to you that I also will become a Manichean, if he shows me the Blessed Virgin." The host hastened to inform his new friend, who gladly accepted the challenge. The saint passed the night in prayer. Next morning he reserved a consecrated Host, which he inclosed in a pyx and placed respectfully on his breast. Thus armed, he went to the Manichean congregation. He who discharged the office of *medium* made the attractive lady appear on the altar, and she publicly denounced the newcomer as the "enemy of truth." Then Peter, elevating the Sacred Host, said to the apparition:

“If thou art truly the Mother of God, adore thy Son!” At these words the phantom disappeared in black smoke, leaving the hall filled with horrid odor. The devil had taken flight at the presence of his Master.¹

It is well known to all who were acquainted with St. Catherine of Sienna that she entertained profound respect and devotion for the Body of our Lord in the Blessed Eucharist. It was publicly rumored that Catherine communicated every day, and that she could live without taking any other nourishment. Such was the vivacity of her desires that, on the days in which she was deprived of Holy Communion, her body suffered in the same manner as one that had undergone a violent malady. Her confessor used every possible effort to obtain the consolation she so much desired; she was conscious of this, and when she sighed for the Bread of Angels she used to say: “Father, I am hungry; for the love of God, feed my soul.” Therefore the Sovereign Pontiff, Gregory XI, by a special Bull, gave her permission to have a priest and a portable altar, so that she could, everywhere and

¹ Bolland: tom. III, April, p. 701. The Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament, Vol. 20.

always, without any permission, hear Mass and receive Holy Communion.

On the festival of St. John the Evangelist, when the confessor arrived at Catherine's house, the hour of tierce had already passed. She turned to him and said: "Oh, Father, did you but know how hungry my poor soul is!" The priest understood her meaning, and rejoined: "The hour of saying Mass is nearly elapsed, and I am so fatigued that it is very difficult for me to prepare myself for it." She remained silent a moment; but soon, unable to restrain the expression of her desire, she said to the priest again: "I am famished." The confessor then consented to yield to her request, and repaired to the chapel in her house to say Mass."¹

In a forest of Germany, a robber once held sway, attacking unwary travellers whose ignorance of the locality led them to the spot. One day he was making his usual preparations for a marauding trip, when he heard in the distance the faint tinkling of a little bell. He listened and waited. What could it be? Soon he saw from his hiding place that it announced the approach of a priest carrying

¹ B. Raymond of Capua; Her life.

the Viaticum to the dying. An acolyte, as was the custom of the country, preceded, bearing in his hand a lighted taper and praying aloud: "Praised and blessed be the Most Holy Sacrament." Would he rob this holy man? No, his heart was not yet so depraved that he had forgotten all the lessons he learned at his mother's knees, and he murmured in wavering syllables the act of contrition.

The priest and acolyte passed on, but the robber followed, repeating with the server: "Praised and blessed be the most Holy Sacrament." He even sought the bedside of the sick man, and when the priest had finished his ministrations prostrated himself before God's minister and, in accents of unfeigned sorrow, pronounced the contrite words: "O priest of God, know that I am a wicked man and a robber. As you passed through the woods I was standing on the roadside, ready to make you my victim, but the grace of God touched my heart and I could not help but be sorry for my sins. Through the mercy of that God you serve, help me." Then the priest bending over the prostrate form of the now penitent thief said: "Jesus Christ has not rejected you:

neither will I reject you. He came here to the woods because you would not go to Him. He forgave the thief on the cross, and can He hesitate then to forgive you? Come, follow me." Together the two directed their steps to a nearby monastery, where the penitent robber made his peace with God. His ill-gotten goods were restored, he began to lead a new life, and, till his dying day, attributed his conversion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.¹

. . .

"O inconceivable prodigy," exclaims a pious author, who seems to have no life, thought or sentiment but for the adorable Eucharist, "O miracle of love, to love beyond death, to love even to the end of time, to love for the sole good of the object beloved, to love in spite of a thousand outrages, to love so far as to give Himself to be their food, to love so as to annihilate Himself, reproduce Himself at every instant. . . . Behold what He has done for us, He, before whom the stars, the sun, empires and the heavens are but dust and darkness."

"That great King," says St. Teresa, "is

¹ Perpetual Adoration, No. 5, 1902.

concealed under the appearance of bread and wine in the Holy Eucharist: He has thus veiled His majesty, to give us the courage to draw nearer and with more confidence to His divine Heart.”

Reflection

Our faith in the Holy Eucharist must be such as to admit not even the slightest thought of unbelief. So steadfast must we be in our convictions, that we would rather lose our lives than our faith. False religions have entirely subverted the words of our divine Savior, but the Catholic Church still holds to them in their entirety. She believes exactly what the words signify. If the Blessed Sacrament is nothing else but bread, and that bread merely a remembrance of Jesus, then it is easy to understand there is no mystery whatever connected with the Eucharist. But if we grant that God, having once loved us, continues to love us “to the end,” then there must be something greater than a fragment of bread left as a memorial of Himself. The words of our Lord are clear, plain and perfectly comprehensible. Why would we change them to suit our own vagaries? In the Holy

Eucharist we must firmly believe that we possess the Sacred Body of the Lord, something that is entirely supernatural, something heavenly and holy, — aye, of all things the holiest. The living Body of Jesus Christ, entire but veiled, is hidden under the lifeless form of bread. Surely, then, in the Blessed Sacrament the omnipotence of God shines forth most gloriously.

During this Holy Hour let us devoutly repeat: “How delicious is the sweetness of your heavenly Bread, O Jesus, how admirable the peace and tranquillity of the soul that receives Thee, after having deplored and sincerely confessed her offences. Be blessed a thousand times, O my Jesus. Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, burning with love for us, inflame our hearts with love for Thee.”

“Thou wilt receive us; Thou wilt come to us and into us. Yes, we hope, O Lord, that Thou wilt communicate Thyself to us until such time as we shall be able, without a veil, and face to face, to see and possess Thee in a happy eternity.”



Twenty-Ninth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

IN the year 1388, a small town in Bavaria was besieged by the Dukes of the country and during the siege some of the soldiers went to the neighboring village of Sulzbach. Entering a church of that village, they broke open the tabernacle and carried away with them the ciborium containing the Blessed Sacrament. One of the soldiers concealed the Sacred Host, carrying it at one time under his vest, at another in his sleeve. He sold the little silk veil that covered the sacred vessel to a woman for a small sum of money, and this he spent in sinful pleasures. Suddenly, however, the sinful man lost the power of his limbs and, trembling with fright, crawled into a thicket behind a rock, (where the high altar erected

to perpetuate the event now stands), and buried the Sacred Host. Then he dragged himself to the camp and on his way met the woman to whom he had sold the veil. He asked her what she had done with it, whereupon she told him that she had given it to the officers for safe-keeping. The culprit then disclosed to her his sacrilegious deed for which God so severely punished him. Overcome with fear, the woman immediately betook herself to the Franciscan Father who was chaplain of the regiment and made known to him the soldier's evil deed.

The priest, wishing to know where the consecrated particle had been hidden, at once ordered some of the soldiers to bear the impious man to the spot, since the latter was unable to go without support on account of the punishment God had meted out to him. But the search was without avail; the offender was not worthy to designate the spot where rested the Sacred Host. Another search, in which many of the prominent citizens took part, was instituted, and it resulted in the finding of the ciborium in a deep hole. The court-chaplain, Albrecht, accompanied by many pious people, bore the Sacred Host to the nearest church at Woerth.

But what became of the unhappy soldier? God's visitation was upon him and he died soon after in terrible convulsions, while his two companions, who were accessory to his sin, also met with a sudden death, the one being drowned in the river Danube, the other killed in a private brawl. When the news of this sacrilegious deed and its dreaded punishment spread throughout the country, a frame hut was erected to mark the spot sanctified by the Holy Eucharist. Later on, in 1389, when peace had been restored, a chapel, dedicated to St. Salvador, was built on the site. Here many miracles were wrought and many favors granted.

The renown of the little place continued to grow until the Reformation, and even that period of havoc did not entirely destroy devotion in it. At the present day there are two pilgrimages held there; on these occasions thousands of pilgrims visit the chapel and study the mural paintings perpetuating the account of the robbers and the punishment of the profaners.¹

. . .

Towards the close of the sixteenth century there lived in Naples a certain noble-

¹ "Pelican," No. 12, 1894.

man — Horatio Grannopoli by name — who made it his constant care to promote the adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament. He devoted a portion of his patrimony to the erection of beautiful altars and the adornment of the tabernacle. He did not disdain to beg from door to door in order to collect a sufficient amount of capital, the interest of which should furnish all poor churches with fitting ornaments and wax candles. Disregarding his high birth, and with the honor and glory of God only in view, he traversed the whole city. Great personages, bankers, captains, were visited by him, and his first words invariably were: "Praised be the Most Holy Sacrament." He then asked for an alms for the altars of the Lord in His poor churches.

One morning he observed a well-dressed man who was a stranger to him, pass out from a neighboring palace. At once he accosted him, and begged an alms in the name of the Blessed Sacrament. The gentleman replied with a derisive smile: "Thou hast surely mistaken me for some other person. I am an Englishman, and my name Thomas Acton; my religion is not like thine, and I will take good care that no alms of mine

shall be used for the worship of a piece of bread." Filled with compassion, Grannopoli bowed courteously to the Englishman and moved away; but the latter, calling him back, begged that he would not be pained by his reply, assuring him that the beauty of the processions fill him with admiration, but that it was quite impossible for him to believe that God could be present in a Host. He then presented him with a purse containing fifteen golden crowns, with the injunction that it should not be employed in the glorification of the Blessed Sacrament, but in supplying his own necessities.

A year had passed when Thomas Acton was taken ill of a fever, which brought him nigh to death's door. One morning this news reached the ears of Grannopoli as he was accompanying the Blessed Sacrament to the sick. He at once sought the parish priest of St. Joseph, in whose parish the sick Englishman dwelt, and besought him for the love of God to undertake the conversion of this poor heretic. The priest first took counsel of the archbishop, who commanded him to use every means in his power to draw Thomas Acton into the Catholic Church. The first attempts were very discouraging

and the good priest left the bedside of the patient quite hopeless.

In the meantime the dying man became daily weaker, and his death drew visibly nearer, all those around him thought him dead till one day he fell into a swoon, and for many hours gave no signs of life. The sick man rallied and, sending for the priest, on his entrance at once addressed him, saying: "My good Father, I am resolved to follow your advice and become a Catholic." Surprised and overjoyed at this marvelous change, the servant of God at once questioned the newly made convert about religion and the principal Mysteries of the Faith; and, finding him sufficiently instructed, received him into the Catholic Church. He begged for Holy Communion, saying, "I believe with my whole heart in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, and I regret that I have so long rejected this belief." Then, with deep devotion and lively faith he received Holy Communion.

The sick man told the priest that while he had been in the swoon he distinctly heard a voice saying, "If thou wouldst enjoy true happiness, thou must return to the Catholic

Church." "I resolved, and I promised God at once to become a Catholic."

So spake the dying Thomas Acton, his words being often interrupted by acts of contrition, desire for heaven, and the love of God. In these pious dispositions he died.¹

Reflection

If we fail to acquire solid virtue by the reception of the adorable Eucharist, it is all our own fault. In that case tepidity must be at the bottom of our preparation. It is all-important that we understand the pressing motives which urge us to communicate with fervor. It is the Body of our Savior that we are about to receive, — that Body that was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, that was scourged, crowned with thorns, and finally nailed to the cross. And not only that, but in the Holy Eucharist the adorable soul of Jesus Christ is present in all the perfection of its virtues, hypostatically united with the Blessed Trinity. Jesus Christ, the Lord of Lords, the Savior of the world, the Judge of the living and the dead,

¹ Les Merveilles divines, lii., Jos. Soli menus de comitat Eucharist, 1. 2, c. vi.

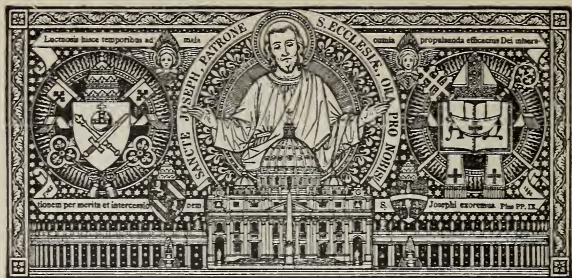
is there present, — He at whose name every knee shall bow in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.

“When My friend Lazarus was dead,” thus speaks Jesus from His Prison of love, “I shed tears of love at his tomb; and many of the Jews who saw me cried out: ‘Behold, how He loved him.’ Oh, if the Jews could perceive My love for thee in the Eucharist, how would they not be affected? I have poured out for thee not a few tears, but every drop of My Precious Blood. I administered My Body and Blood to the unhappy disciple who had conspired to betray both. While I was offering the sacrifice of my life, I prayed that My murderers might partake of its merits. Every day the Sacrifice is renewed, and I am offered up as a victim of propitiation for the sins of my enemies. When such are My dispositions in the Eucharist to those who hate me, how great must not be My love to those who love Me.”

During this Holy Hour let us unite in saying: “O Sacrament of Love, whether Thou givest Thyself in Holy Communion or remainest on our altars, Thou drawest towards Thee with Thine divine attraction

all those hearts which enamored of Thy love burn for Thee and ever think of Thee." I will, therefore, dear Jesus, henceforth dispose myself for a worthy Communion by detachment from sin and the occasions of it, and by interior acts of those virtues which I ought to exercise before, during, and after Holy Communion. I will spare no pains to profit by my intimate union with You, endeavoring to watch over myself, to avoid all wilful faults, to do all with a will to please you, to be faithful in my religious exercises and courageous in restraining and conquering myself, for these are the real fruits of a good Communion. "I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength." Ps. xvii. 2.





Thirtieth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

AFTER the example of the saints, St. Francis Solano was continually found in deep contemplation and prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. He communicated frequently and with the deepest devotion, so that his example became contagious, and he drew the hearts of many pious youths to the love of a similar devotion. He could not offer the Holy Sacrifice without shedding abundant tears. His brethren of the Order strove among themselves as to which of them should serve his Mass, and each thought himself happy who might do so. The President of the Royal Council of the Indies and Vice-King, De Valesco, frequently served the saint at the altar, in order that

he might have the happiness of being near him and to be strengthened by his heavenly devotion.

It repeatedly happened that this holy servant of God was so wrapt in God during the holy offering of the Mass that he would break forth into singing the praises of our Lord Jesus Christ and of His Blessed Mother, causing the pious Prince de Valesco to weep for devotion.

Now because of his childlike obedience to God, and that his spirit had obtained a perfect dominion over his flesh, Nature herself obeyed him, and he ruled over her in such a manner that the wildest beasts harkened to his will. At his call came the birds and sang with him the praises of God, and during the sickness preceding his death, which took place on the 14th July, 1610, they were always gathered near him singing the sweetest songs. Some days before his departure the Saint gave witness, after a strange manner, to the extraordinary love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. The feast of Corpus Christi drew nigh. On this day the saint was always full of holy joy. On the night prior to this feast, while the servant of God lay in great pain upon his poor little bed, his

confessor, Father Francis de Mendoza, desired to visit him. On opening the door of his cell he heard the saint singing in a loud voice. He was singing the *Invitatorium* of the Breviary, *Venite adoremus, et procidamus ante Deum*, and whilst so singing his hands were reaching forth towards the corner of the cell, where the tabernacle was situated; it seemed as though he saw there the Divine Majesty in bodily form.¹

St. John of the Cross, who lived about the year 1591, took the vows of the priesthood under obedience; but who dares describe the holy devotion with which he prepared himself to celebrate his first Mass? Before the awful words of consecration he paused, and with earnestness prayed for the grace to spend life without mortal sin, and also that of doing perfect penance for all that was past. When he raised the Most Holy Host after consecration, he heard in the depth of his soul a voice which said, "I grant thee what thou desirest of Me." Upon this his heart rose full of thankful love towards his God and Master; and so great was the sense of his union with Christ for a length of time he sought complete solitude, in which

¹ Acta S. S.

he entertained a desire to become a Carthusian and thus entirely to die to the world.

His great delight was meditating before the Most Holy. Did any one come to him on business when thus engaged, he would say, "Leave me alone; here is my blessedness and my rest." The most wonderful graces were imparted to him there. Once a nun saw him through the trellis of the choir extended before the Most Holy, and his face glowing with joy. It came into her heart to ask the reason of his joy; and he without hesitation, but in the transport of his soul, replied: "Shall I not be full of joy, seeing that I have adored and seen my Lord? O my daughter, what a good God we have! O how good He is."

Always wrapt in God, he said Holy Mass. Once, at the request of a nun, he said a votive Mass of the Most Holy Trinity. At the consecration he was allowed to see a glimpse of this astonishing mystery. "O, how I thank thee, daughter," said he afterwards, "for giving me an occasion to say the Mass of the Most Holy Trinity! O what splendor, what great good we shall enjoy in the Beatific Vision!" So speaking he fell into an ecstasy which lasted half an hour. But in order

to hide this extraordinary favor, he said afterwards, "Did you not perceive what a sound sleep took possession of me?"

On one occasion a student saw him at the conclusion of Holy Mass entirely radiated with light, so that he was dazzled thereby. This appearance made such an impression on the young man that he quitted the world and entered into the Order of St. Dominic.

It happened once, when he was sojourning in the lonely little convent of Pennuela, that a lay brother kindled a fire in a stubble-field near the monastery. On a sudden the wind changed, and the flames bore down in the direction of the building. Finding it impossible to divert the flames or to save the building, he rushed frantically to warn the brethren, who, seeing the hopelessness of the case, gave themselves up to tears and lamentations. John, however, hurried to the spot, and perceiving that the fire had already attained the place where the wood and hay were stored, he called to the brethren, and with a voice full of ardent faith, "My brothers," said he, "let us go to the Most Holy Sacrament. It will help us." All accompanied him to the church, whence, after offering a fervent prayer, he returned forti-

fied with holy water. He then sprinkled the place, kneeling between the fire and the building. Unmoved he continued to pray until the flames turned back; and when the smoke was cleared away the monks perceived their brother lost in contemplation and prayer. When danger was over John returned to his brethren without the smallest injury. At once they returned to the church and thanked God for their miraculous preservations.¹

It is related that while Bishop Durier was visiting part of his diocese he met in British Columbia a sweet little girl of nine years, who repeatedly asked him to admit her to Holy Communion. The prelate always postponed it. After having received so many rebuffs, she determined to "tell our Lord" on the Bishop. Kneeling down before the altar she began in childish accents: "Dear Jesus, my own dear Lord, our Bishop tells me that I do not know You, but listen: You are the Son of God, who came down from heaven and was born in Bethlehem. You rested in the arms of Your Holy Mother. You lived at Nazareth. You were lost, but Mary found You in the temple. You gathered twelve

¹ Lives of the Saints. Butler.

Apostles around You. You died on the cross and the third day You arose again from the dead. Surely now, dear Lord, I know You and all about You. Please tell the Bishop that I know You very well." But a well-known figure down the dimly-lighted aisle had heard the heartfelt prayer, and a strange mist encircled his kindly eyes, as the little one tripped out of the church, confident that at least Jesus had listened kindly to her petition. Not many months after, the dear child spent "the happiest day of her life," — the day of her First Holy Communion. "I am in Paradise," she exclaimed, little realizing that even such joy is only the merest foretaste of the Land of the Blessed.

. . .

"Ah, Christians," exclaims St. Chrysostom, "why these useless wishes? In the Eucharist, have you not the same Jesus Christ? Does He not renew each day the same love, the same tenderness? Oh, if I only had the happiness to see Him, to touch the hem of His garment! You see Him, You touch Him; do not then envy anything of Magdalen, of Martha, the Apostles, Joseph or Mary. How happy is

the Christian nation! A God comes to them to fill them with delights. I am not surprised that all the saints, that all Christian souls, should approach with such avidity to this ineffable Sacrament."

Reflection

Jesus Christ dwells in the Eucharist, not attired in royal magnificence but veiled under the appearances of bread, to be given as ordinary food to man. He subjects Himself to a condition that would deprive Him of life were He not immortal. Are we not astonished to think that only five words pronounced by a priest, though he may be a sinful man, suffice to reduce Him, the great Lord of heaven, to such apparent incompetence? Every time and every place the priest of God utters these words in accordance with the regulation of the Church, Jesus Christ obeys the call. Thus, totally deprived of His heavenly splendor, He remains under the Sacred Species until they are consumed. There the great Lord of heaven and earth lies helpless and exposed to the injuries and sacrilegious outrages of Jews, heretics, infidels, and bad Christians.

O my God, how overwhelming is Thy goodness in having instituted this Sacrament for me. Thou, Lord Jesus, art content to come down from heaven to place Thyself within the consecrated Host, and to dwell within the tabernacle in order to exercise continuously Thy love towards me, and to shower graces upon me, undeserving as I am.

“O Jesus, let me know myself, let me know Thee,
And desire nothing else but Thee.
Let me hate myself and love Thee,
And do all things for sake of Thee.”





Thirty-first Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

A GERMAN edition of the Sacred Heart Messenger, published in the year 1881, makes mention of the following remarkable incident. The scene of the occurrence was at Albany, New York, and it bases its claim to authenticity on the fact that the Venerable Madam Jones, Superioress of the Sacred Heart Convent, narrated the event to the Messenger.

It happened that in that summer, so the record runs, a priest was summoned to the bedside of a sick person living at a great distance from the city. As is usually the case, he took the Blessed Sacrament with him lest there should be immediate danger of death. After riding for several hours

the good Father found that it would be impossible to pursue his journey further, the roads having been rendered impassable by the ravages of a recent storm. The traveler was forced to put up at a wayside hotel. Strange to say, a messenger from the bedside of the sick man had stopped at the same place, and, on meeting the minister of God, told him the invalid had rallied a little. Relieved from anxiety by the information, the holy man considered that, as the night was already far advanced, it would be better for him to remain there until morning. Accordingly, he sought repose, but before doing so carefully placed the pyx containing the Blessed Sacrament in one of the drawers of the bureau of his room.

The ensuing dawn beheld a refreshed world. As the storm had completely subsided, the good priest renewed his journey. Scarcely, however, had he ridden three miles from the place, when he recollected that the pyx containing the Blessed Sacrament had entirely escaped his mind. Troubled at heart he immediately turned his horse, and spurred the animal to its utmost speed. Having arrived at the hos-

telry, he hastily inquired from the landlord whether anyone had occupied the room in which he had slept the night before, but, to his utter wonderment, he received the answer: "Why, Reverend Sir, we cannot even open the door, although the key is on the outside, and further, when we looked through the keyhole, we saw a bright light illuminating the room." Then the good priest understood the marvel. Followed by the landlady and her children, he ascended the stairs, and before them all, without the slightest effort, opened the door that had resisted all their energies. Then entering the room he fell on his knees before the tabernacle of the Most High.

After securing the pyx, the holy man spoke with words of unction and inspiration to those who were present. He reminded the innkeeper of the signal blessing with which God had visited his house and pointed out to him that it was his duty to return thanks to the Almighty for manifesting His glory in his humble home. As a consequence of the miracle, the landlord and all his family became members of the Catholic Church.

The superioress of the Sacred Heart Convent received from the priest's own lips, the statement of the wonderful occurrence.¹

• • •

After the Johnstown flood at Johnstown, Pa., the Associated Press gave to the world the following account:

“The Johnstown Flood occurred May 31, 1889, by the bursting of a huge reservoir, thus completely destroying the town, and engulfing in its waters no less than sixty thousand people. In its sad passage the water descended about two hundred and fifty feet with a velocity of nearly fifty miles an hour, and, as it swept on its course, lordly trees of the forest that had withstood storms and tempests for well-nigh fifty years were cut down like stalks of mullein. Immense edifices swayed and tottered and finally succumbed to the onrush of the flood. Throughout the vast extent covered by the work of destruction, one building alone remained partially intact — a Convent of the Sisters of Divine Providence.

“Having received the intelligence of the

¹ Messenger of the Sacred Heart, No. 7, 1881.

terrible disaster befalling their town, the good Sisters immediately betook themselves before the tabernacle; they invoked God's mercy and compassion on the unfortunate victims of the disaster. What was the answer to their fervent supplications? They were saved. The lower part of the Convent, it is true, was completely destroyed, yet, amid all the ruin around, the building remained standing on a few upright beams.¹

. . .

“O holy martyrs, O generous brothers,” exclaims a preacher of our day, “you who have preceded us in the combat, and who await us in glory, tell us where you went to draw that charity which made you live and die for your God. And, in the days of persecution, where did you go each morning to prepare for the sacrifice? Before the sun shed its light over Rome, the amphitheatre, the executioners, and the victims, you were seen hurriedly quitting your dwellings. One might have thought you were going to your death, but the satellites were not yet there. You went to the extremity of the city, to seek an unknown temple, where you might

¹ New York World, June 2, 1889.

pray to God, and learn from Him how to die.”

“Jesus Christ, hidden in the catacombs, and constrained,” as Bossuét says, “to seek other veils and other darkness than the veils and mystical darkness with which He covers Himself in the Eucharist, called you to His table, and not one among you failed to answer His call. There in the dark was raised the altar of Him who made the sun; a priest, bearing the marks of the tortures he had endured, offered in sacrifice the Victim of the world, and you, victims designed for the tyrant’s sword, you came to offer yourselves with it, and to learn, in receiving your God, to give your lives, as He had given His. Go, now, the sacrifice is over; return to the light of day, and to your dwellings, where, perhaps, the executioners are awaiting you. What matter? You have received your God. Fear nothing, He Himself will support you in the dungeon and at the stake. He will fight for you against the fury of the wild beasts and the rage of men; and if you fall in the arena, He will crown you.”

“All courage, all strength, all charity, all consolation, all life, all happiness is given to us in the Holy Communion. The hour that

we spend in the morning at the foot of the altar — that heavenly moment, when the Bread of Angels is given to us — gives us strength for the whole day; and when we can only commune by desire, the days on which we are deprived of this angelic Food seem to us, it is true, hard to bear; but the simple desire in itself sustains, fortifies and encourages us. Yes, the Blessed Sacrament of itself would make us able to bear much more, for it is there that we find the sacred fire that consumed the martyrs, and which can make lions of weak men.”

Reflection

In the Holy Eucharist the omnipotent God, who stands in need of nobody, conceals Himself under a mystic veil, not for His own interests, but for ours. He is there to prove His love for us and to beg for ours in return. Oh, what a depth of mercy is this, that God, the almighty God of heaven and earth, should deem our poor frail love so precious as to want it for Himself. Thus would He make us participators in His kingdom. Thus would He manifest to the entire universe that He delights to be with the children of men. Withdrawing into the

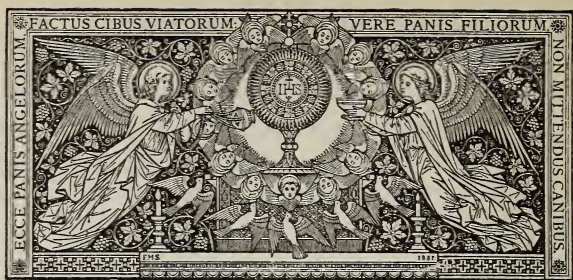
sacred obscurity of the tabernacle, He remains there ever ready to hear the sighs of the afflicted, to be the protection of the unfortunate, the support of the tempted soul, the Physician of the sick, and the bounteous benefactor of all who seek His mercy. And to do all this, He withholds the dazzling splendor of His glory, concealing the magnitude of His power, lest we should fear to approach Him. Can we hesitate then to believe that He will be our viaticum when dying? Not content with having given up His life once for His sheep, this good shepherd goes still farther: He leaves that life with us that we may actually live by the reception of His sacred flesh and blood. And yet, though we believe all this, we waste our time in disgraceful tepidity. There is no whole-hearted love for God in our work or we should not be so careless and indifferent. We believe all this, yet we make no return, save the blackest ingratitude, for God's matchless tenderness. We know and believe, O great God, that Thou art present on our altars, yet, culpable as we are, we sin in every possible way against the honor that is due Thee. Angels and archangels tremble in Thy presence, princes

of the celestial court bow down in reverential awe, and we alone, poor children of men, dare to appear before Thy majesty in an unbecoming posture. Nay, more, Thou invitest us to Thy adorable banquet, but we, desirous only of perishable food, refuse to partake of the Bread of Angels.

O Lord, change our hard, unrepentant hearts. Imbue them with Thy love so that, united to Thee, we may rest in Thy companionship for all eternity.

“O King of angels, who can tell Thy worth? The angels around Thy tabernacle know how far too short eternity will prove to exhaust the wonders of Thy Sacrament of Love.”





Thirty-Second Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

ONE of the most remarkable cures ever effected through the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament took place in the city of Metz, Germany, in the year 1865.

In that year a thirteen year old girl, by name of Anna Clery, was an inmate of the Sacred Heart Convent there. Her father was an attorney-general in Algiers, but the warm climate of that country not agreeing with her mother's health, the young girl prayed that she might suffer in her stead, and her prayer was granted. On Holy Thursday, 1858, the young girl was obliged because of sickness to leave school and return to her mother. From this time on, she was practically paralyzed, for it was only with the greatest difficulty that she

was able to walk at all. Even eating became a burden to her, so much so, that after meals she often swooned away. On Whit Sunday she communicated, but as soon as she received the Blessed Sacrament, she fainted. As time went on, her condition became much worse, and nine years of intense suffering was her share of our Blessed Lord's cross.

Her family physician recommending a change of air, the sick child was sent to Clappeville, where her grandparents resided. Frequently recurring spells of fever, however, left her speechless and stiffened her limbs until she could not even hold her head erect. Her relatives and acquaintances were astonished that she could still subsist. Cold baths, injections of strychnine, and red-hot irons were applied, but so fatiguing was the treatment to the child that the mother forbade any further applications. In the spring of 1859 she was taken to the celebrated baths of Saxony, but to no avail, and when she was even brought to Paris, a recognized medical authority there pronounced her incurable. This constant journeying from place to place increased the child's sufferings to a great extent. In

1859 her feet began to curve backward and to become atrophic. The muscles contracted and a large growth formed beneath the knee, a growth which a physical culture specialist pronounced so hardened that further treatment was useless.

Her good mother, at the advice of an eminent physician, abandoned the hope of an entire cure and now devoted herself only to the alleviation of her daughter's pains. Being scarcely able to digest any food, the poor child became more and more emaciated. Most excruciating headaches two or three times a week added to her sufferings, while her nerves were at such a high tension that she would scream at the least move. But though human remedies seemed of no avail, God's mercy and power never forsake those who confidently trust in Him.

Amid all her trials, Anna was always resigned to God's holy will. She ascribed her perseverance and steadfastness in bearing her heavy cross to prayer, while, among all her devotions, she chose that of the Holy Eucharist as her favorite. Every week for many years she received Holy Communion from the hands of the priest, and on these days she always seemed most cheerful and

happy. Her greatest pleasure was to make artificial flowers for the altar; flowers which she asked the pastor to place as near as possible to God's tabernacle. "I feel such exceeding comfort during this work," she said, "and very often the thought recurs to me that I shall be cured through the Blessed Sacrament."

It happened that Perpetual Adoration was instituted in her parish church on the 12th, 13th, and 14th of June, 1865. On account of being confined to her bed, Anna was unable to go to church on the first two days of the adoration, but on the third day, in spite of her weak and infirm condition, she insisted on being brought there that she might adore the Lord. Wednesday morning, June 14th, she received Holy Communion despite her sickness. In the afternoon, her nurse carried her to church in her arms like a little infant. The poor girl was by this time twenty-one years old. Anna's mother, accompanied by the nurse with the girl in her lap, knelt in the back of the church that Anna might behold the figure of our Lord as He passed them in procession. All were wrapped in profound devotion, quite ignorant of the great event that

was soon to happen. The girl herself seemed to be more devout than any. As our divine Lord passed her in the monstrance, she passed a pitiful glance toward Him and, in heartrending accents cried: "O Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me whole." Hardly had she finished her ejaculatory prayer when a piercing pain shot through her limbs, so that it took all her strength to suppress a cry of anguish. With an effort, the girl managed to get down on her knees as she whispered to her mother and her nurse: "Pray, pray, I am getting well." Entirely overcome at the sudden change, Mrs. Clery led her daughter from the church into the garden. There to convince herself, she examined the limb and found to her amazement that the hard growth at the knee had entirely disappeared.

Yes, Anna was cured. And God has done His work well, for the cure was perfect. Not only the paralysis had left her, but all her weakness had also gone. From that time she became stronger day by day. When Anna was convalescing, she determined that her first visit would be to the House of God, and so it was. On Sunday within the Octave of Corpus Christi, she

took part in the procession, walking for two hours with the other young ladies, without experiencing the slightest fatigue. The news of this wonderful cure spread far and wide. Those who visited Anna in her sickness now left her side rejoicing, praising and thanking God. The doctor, after his first meeting with the girl, expressed himself thus: "God is more powerful than man."

The pastor of the church of St. Martin in Metz, where the wonder occurred, hands down the following statement: "Since the memorable day of the fourteenth of June, 1865, Anna Clery has not experienced the least inconvenience from her former ailments. She is able to take any kind of food, can walk, or ride by train or car, and in fact can do anything that healthy people are accustomed to do. Her headaches are a thing of the past, while the reddish streak about her eyelids has completely disappeared. Without any support whatever, she is now able to carry her head erect, and her limbs are strong and steady. No sooner did her cure take place than she could wait on herself, a thing it was impossible for her to do before that, and laughingly she said: 'The good Lord told the paralytic in the gospel to take up his bed and walk. He has

done more for me: He has given me strength sufficient to make my own bed.'”

The Bishop of Metz published the following letter: “Having considered the foregoing narrative to be as edifying as we know it to be strictly conformable to truth, we have approved of its publication. It is scarcely possible to imagine anything more likely to awaken in the hearts of the Christians earnest sentiments of faith, trust, and love of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, and to increase among us devotion to the institution of the Perpetual Adoration, than this simple recital of what took place in the church of St. Martin during the religious services of that time. It would seem as if our Blessed Lord had wished to show by a signal favor how acceptable is this homage to His divine heart, and that He has chosen for that token the sudden and miraculous cure of a young girl whose faith had led her to fall at His feet, to cry out with lively faith and humble confidence: ‘Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me whole!’

At Metz, 8th September, 1865.

“PAUL,
Bishop of Metz.”¹

¹ Kath. Missionsblatt, No. 24, 1884. Letters of the Pastor, June 14, 1866.

Reflection

St. Chrysostom says: "Let us always believe God; neither must we resist Him, although what we say might appear absurd to our senses and thoughts. Let His words surpass our sense or reason, particularly in everything which we do in the mysteries; not only looking at the things which lie before us, but also adhering to His words, for by His words we cannot be deceived, but our senses are easily deceived. The former cannot be false; the latter are frequently so, and are frequently deceived. Therefore since He has said, 'This is my Body,' let no doubt possess you; but let us believe it, and behold it with the eyes of our understanding. He was not satisfied being made man; with being scourged, etc., but He has reduced us, if I may use the expression, into one mass with Himself, and this not by faith only, but in very truth He makes us His own body. What, therefore, should be cleaner than he who partakes of such a sacrifice? What solar rays ought not those hands exceed in brightness, which divide this flesh, that mouth which is filled with

spiritual fire, that tongue which is purpled with this tremendous blood?"

St. Augustine teaches that God who can do all that He wills in heaven and on earth and can create a thousand worlds more beautiful, more admirable than this universe, cannot, however, give us a greater gift than that of the Holy Eucharist. "His wisdom," says he, "has found nothing more precious than this and despite His infinite riches, this is the first of all His treasures and the one which in itself contains all."

"Heart of Jesus, inflamed with love of us, inflame our hearts with love for Thee."

"Heart of Jesus in the Eucharist, sweet companion of our exile, I adore Thee."





Thirty-Third Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

ALMOST parallel with the case of Miss Clery of Metz, the account of which was edited from Miss Fullerton in England, there happened a similar miracle in one of the convents in London. Although the latter is not as prominent as the one above mentioned, yet it has been substantiated and attested by witnesses. A letter dated the tenth of January, 1866, and written by an abbess of the Poor Clares to Father Galway, a member of the Jesuit Order, and approved by the archbishop of Westminster, gives the following account of the miracle.

“Reverend Father: It gives me great pleasure to relate and to publish a miracle which our divine Lord was pleased to work

in our convent on the anniversary night of His birth.

“We have in our community a member who bears the name of Rose. For the past nine months she had been so paralyzed in her limbs that she was completely helpless. By her own will power she could not make the slightest movement, but had to be assisted from place to place in a rolling chair. Importuned by her entreaties, the doctor had at last permitted the poor Sister the use of crutches. Nor was paralysis the only affliction to which she was subject. For ten months she had hardly taken any food. At times she was so weak that for days she could scarcely speak. Daily she seemed to grow more emaciated before our eyes.

“Her physicians were powerless, yet they were unable to alleviate her sufferings. Two days before the feast of Christmas, our invalid was in a weaker condition than ever before. On Christmas eve her nurse begged me not to allow her to attend midnight Mass, but when the patient sufferer made her own supplicating petition I had not the heart to refuse.

“At ten o'clock that Holy Night, Sister Hyacinth took her to the choir. After the

singing of the Te Deum, the little Christ-child was brought in procession to the chapel and placed in the crib. As Sister Rose expressed an earnest desire to make a visit to the Babe in the manger, Sister Hyacinth and I lifting her in our arms managed to take her there. The poor Sister, though she had made an almost superhuman effort to kneel, could hardly do so for more than two minutes. When we assisted her back to her seat she sank in a state of supreme exhaustion. One of the Sisters, impelled by some mysterious feeling, took her crutches and placed them before the crib. In fact, the entire community seemed to have a presentiment that God would do something wonderful that very night.

“On the stroke of twelve, the solemn Midnight Mass began. At the Communion Sister Rose went to the railing as usual on her crutches, but it seemed more difficult for her to do so than ever before. As she received the Sacred Host her earnest prayer was: “O Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me whole; but if it is to Your greater honor that I remain as I am I shall bear the cross most willingly for the rest of my life.”

A flood of happiness inundated her soul when she had made this act of resignation.

“After a half hour had elapsed, I gave Sister Hyacinth a sign to conduct Sister Rose back to the infirmary. As the latter took up her crutches to repair to the sick-room, an inner voice seemed to whisper to her: ‘Why do you take your crutches, you incredulous child? You do not need them any more.’ But not expecting such a signal favor to be worked in her behalf, Sister Rose heeded not the inner voice, and used her crutches as before.

“Hardly had she reached the corridor, however, when she felt that her limbs were cured. Stopping for a moment, she placed her feet on the floor to test her strength. To the astonishment of her companions, she threw her crutches away, and stood erect without support. Then she fell on her knees in adoration before a crucifix hanging in the corridor. After this she arose and went to the chapel, where she prostrated herself at the feet of our Blessed Lord in the monstrance. Imagine our surprise, if you can, when we saw her walk up the aisle without any assistance.

“The cure, too, was a complete one. Out

of joy and thanksgiving, we then chanted the Te Deum, after which Sister Rose returned to the infirmary. At five o'clock she went with us to breakfast. Her appetite was very good, and she herself declared that she felt well.

“From day to day we became convinced that we all had been an eyewitness to an extraordinary supernatural favor. Sister Rose’s health was completely restored, for with her cure, her stomach trouble had entirely vanished. Immediately after Christmas she left the infirmary, and the stairs which for nine months she ascended with the greatest difficulty she now mounts with ease. May the Most Holy Sacrament and the Infant Jesus be praised and adored forever.

Sister M. Seraphim van Biervliet,
Abbess of the Poor Clares.”¹

. . .

A corporal stained with the Blood of Jesus Christ at Brussels has the following history the truth of which is vouched for by the Bishop of Cambrai.

The Right Reverend Henry de Berges, Bishop of Cambrai, published a letter on

¹ Messenger of the Sacred Heart, Vol. 8, 1866.

the first of May, 1493, in which he writes as follows:

“The curé and rector of the Church of Notre Dame called ‘De la Chapelle’ at Brussels, in our diocese, have informed us that for many years they have venerated in said church a corporal stained with the Blood of Jesus Christ and preserved in a vase of silver. They add that a priest, during the secret Memento after the consecration and elevation of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, had entertained doubts about the substantial change of the white wine mixed with water, into the Blood of the divine Body of our Savior; that by accident and through inadvertence he upset the contents of the chalice on the corporal; and that the whole corporal was stained with it. This corporal is in the said church an object of great veneration to the faithful. For a long time it has been the custom to expose it publicly on the Feasts of the Invention and Exaltation of the Holy Cross. During the religious uprisings of the sixteenth century the corporal disappeared.”

A similar miracle to the above mentioned gave rise to the Confraternity of the Blessed

Sacrament at Maubeuge, in French Hainault. A priest at the altar suddenly saw the Blood of Jesus Christ, fresh and ruddy, rise bubbling in the chalice and overflow on the corporal, which was saturated. The whole city was astir at this wonder. In order to perpetuate this event the Bishop gave orders that the precious linen, purpled with the Blood of the Savior, should be inclosed in a silver casket. A sanctuary was built as a shelter for this treasure and a Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament established. Every year the members of the Confraternity, clothed in red mantles and torches in hand, take part in the procession held in honor of the miracle.¹

Reflection

Why does the Church enact a law that several or at least one lamp should perpetually burn before the Blessed Sacrament? It is because she wishes to honor our Lord. In our public festivals do we not use an array of brilliant illuminations? So, too, citizens make use of dazzling lights when they pay a public tribute to honor the president, king, or emperor. The same cus-

¹ Tabernakelwacht, 1898.

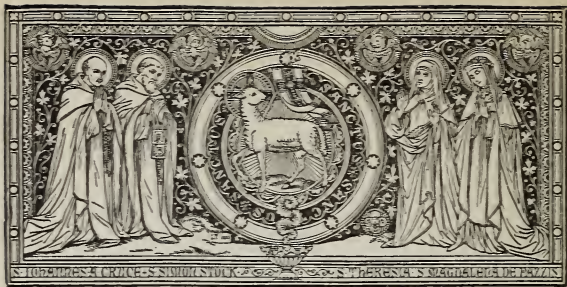
tom has also prevailed in sacred history. So also the Church wishes to honor the King of Kings by having several or at least one lamp burning before Him in the places where He has chosen to make His abode and where He delights to dwell. This mark of respect is eminently pleasing to our Lord. As a proof of this, Pope Gregory I relates that one day, when there was no oil to supply the lamp in the sanctuary of St. Paul's Church at Rome, the sacristan filled the lamp with water and lighted the wick; by a miracle of God's love it burned as if it had been really supplied with oil. St. John Chrysostom also affirms that many sick persons were suddenly cured after being anointed with the oil taken from the sanctuary lamp.

As the star shone over the lonely crib of Bethlehem that the shepherds might know where the infant Jesus lay, so the light shines before the tabernacle to point out to the Faithful that here, too, is the same Savior whom they also should come to adore.

The light is symbolic of Christ, "who is the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world." It signifies

that Christ is the light of the world, that He is the Way, the Truth and the Life, the unspotted mirror of God's majesty. The flames represent the love with which Christ burns for souls, therefore which He came to cast upon the earth and that He wishes to see enkindled in every human heart, while the oil is symbolic of the sweetness and mercy of Jesus in the Eucharist. The sanctuary lamp tells us that our lives should be consumed in the service of God, and bids us to love Him in the secret sanctuary of our hearts. It is related of a saintly priest that, when he saw the lamp, he was wont to exclaim: "Oh, that I could participate in the nature of the oil in order that I might be consumed before the Blessed Sacrament."





Thirty-fourth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

THERE are on record numberless favors granted by Jesus to those who pray to Him in the Blessed Sacrament. Cardinal de Noailles, Archbishop of Paris, relates in his Pastoral of August 10, 1725, the following cure of Mme. Anne de la Flosse, which took place on the feast of Corpus Christi in 1725. This lady had been suffering for twenty years from an incurable issue of blood. She had become so weak, that she was no longer able to walk even with the aid of crutches, and it very often happened that she fainted from sheer exhaustion. After she was compelled to leave her bed on account of pains in her side, and when out of bed had to be carried from one place to another. Sixty most

trustworthy witnesses testified to the fact that Anne de la Flosse was in this pitiable condition mentioned at the approach of the feast of Corpus Christi. It happened that about this time she felt strongly inspired by Almighty God to beseech our Lord to cure her at the moment when the Blessed Sacrament would be carried by her house in the solemn procession of the feast.

She was taken down and placed before the door where she waited patiently and prayed most fervently until our Lord was carried by. On being told, "Behold, there is the Blessed Sacrament," she knelt down to adore, and being too weak to remain in a kneeling posture, she threw herself on the ground and cried in a loud voice, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me whole, for I believe that in the Blessed Sacrament there is the same Lord who one day entered triumphantly into Jerusalem; forgive me my sins and I shall be cured." Then she tried to advance with the procession by dragging herself with her hands and knees, constantly crying out, "My Lord, Jesus Christ, if Thou wilt Thou canst cure me." Many of the people were perfectly astonished at her behavior, while others took her

for a drunken or a crazy woman and insisted that she retire and keep silence. She would not be intimidated, however, but continued crawling after our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, saying, "Let me follow my Lord and my God." This great faith of hers could not go unrewarded. Suddenly she felt the strength returning to her limbs. Filled with holy joy she rose up, but fearing that she might not be strong enough to walk to church, she cried still louder than before, "Lord, let me enter Thy temple and I shall be cured." She then requested her two companions to allow her to walk unassisted and to the astonishment of all she proceeded without any support as far as the parish church, whither the Blessed Sacrament was being carried. As soon as she entered the church, she felt perfectly cured of the issue of blood, and so strong as to be able to walk about with ease. After spending a considerable time in thanking, praising, and blessing our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist for the immense benefit He had bestowed upon her, she returned home accompanied by a great crowd of people. Many who had witnessed her intense suffering for years now came to

behold the great miracle which Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament had wrought upon her. To make sure that she was perfectly cured, they requested her to walk up and down in their presence, which she did with the greatest delight, in order thus to give honor and glory and thanks to her divine Benefactor in the Blessed Sacrament.¹

...

The same year, 1725, witnessed a no less remarkable incident in Chambry, France. This miracle was brought about by the prayers of a little child, not more than eleven years old, who had a wonderful devotion to our hidden Lord of the tabernacle and who could often be seen in church praying most devoutly before the altar.

One day her father was stricken with a fatal sickness. With tears in her eyes the child ran to the priest, uttering this sorrowful plaint: "O Father, come, help us. Make my father well again!" "My child," answered the priest, "of myself I can do nothing, but I will bring our dear Lord in

¹ Explication de priers et de ceremonies de la Messe by Le Brune, tom. 3. Fastes et legendes par le Gaulie et Deharbe.

the Holy Viaticum to your father. Pray that Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament may make him well." Following the priest's advice the good child prayed long and fervently before the tabernacle, but to her dismay, when she returned home she found her father unimproved. Again the little one sought the priest: "Father," she said, "I have prayed so earnestly, but it is all of no avail." "Pray again and more fervently, my child," advised the holy man. Once more the little one knelt before the tabernacle. She returned only to find her father sick unto death. With tearful eyes she again sought the priest: "Dear Father, I have done everything but the good God will not hear my prayer." Again she repaired to the church and knelt before Jesus in the home of His love. Her eyes brimming with tears, she thus framed her petition: "O Jesus, if Thou wilt Thou canst help my father!" Minutes passed into hours and still the little one knelt on, repeating again and again her heart's petition. Suddenly the church door opened and a manly figure entered a pew back of the kneeling child. Her prayers ended, the little one arose to hasten home to her sick father, when lo,

there behind her knelt her father, fully recovered through her angelic prayers. Filled with joy and gratitude, both gave thanks to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.¹

• •

In the city of Eichfeld, Germany, the following favor, wrought through the prayers of two children, is recorded.

The wife of an officer in the Belgian army, a baroness by birth, had been by a paralytic stroke deprived of her voice and the use of her left arm for many years. In consequence of her infirmity, she was obliged to entrust the education of her children to her husband. As soon as their little daughter was prepared to make her First Holy Communion, the father took her to a nearby academy, where she was admitted as a member of the First Communion Class. Before the great day approached, the little girl on one occasion said to her mother: "Sweetest mother, just be patient till my First Communion Day, then our divine Lord will surely give you your speech again."

The joyful event was now at hand, and slowly and reverently the dear child made

¹ Eichsfeld Volksblatt, No. 24, 1884.

her way to the altar railing to receive her Lord in her little heart. But one face was absent from among her relatives, for her poor mother was compelled to remain home on account of her infirmities, and thus had to forego the pleasure of seeing her daughter make her First Communion. But behold, our divine Lord did not allow the child's faith and confidence in His mercy and power to go unrewarded. Who can describe the joy of the whole family, when, on their return home from church, the mother greeted them, the first words she had spoken for years.

Yet the good woman was still afflicted with another evil, for her arm remained as powerless as ever. This time her little boy came to her aid. "Mother," he said one day, "when I make my First Holy Communion, I shall ask our dear Lord to cure your arm." Not only had this particular limb been powerless, but after a thorough examination, an eminent physician had affirmed that a cancer had set in and that the mother's death was only a question of time.

The month of April, 1871, saw the young boy making his First Holy Communion. In

spite of her feeble condition, the afflicted mother was brought into the church. At the Communion of the Mass, filled with lively faith and confidence in God's mercy and power, she rose from her seat and cried out in pitiful accents: "O my Lord and my God, do not do Your work by halves." To the astonishment of all, her own prayer together with that of her son obtained for her the gift she craved: she had the entire use of her arm once more. Both children joined the happy mother in rendering thanks to God.¹

Reflection

In the Eucharist we receive the infinitely good and merciful God who has not only the power but the will to bestow all blessings upon us, for He loves us with an infinite love, and His heart yearns to enrich us with His gifts and graces, if we place no obstacle in the way.

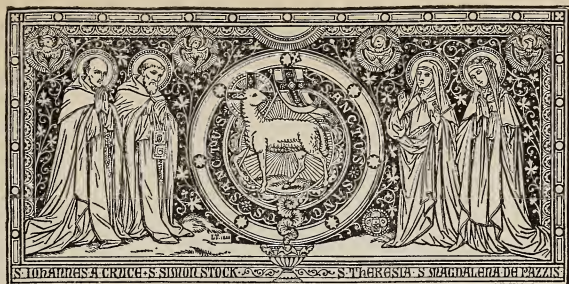
Hence it is that the Fathers of the Church affirm that one single communion, made with the requisite dispositions, suffices to reform a sinner into a saint. And why not? At the Holy Table do we not approach the

¹ "Pelican," 1893.

source of all sanctity? Do we not receive there the very author of sanctification? How we ought to rejoice in this our faith! This God of ours is willing and able to make us holy, and if we seriously desire it He will accomplish this design of His love.

And why should all this be impossible? If the hem of Christ's garment healed an inveterate disease, if the shadow of St. Peter walking through the streets of Jerusalem restored health to the sick, what cannot He, who is the Lord of life, effect in those who receive Him? It is common teaching that we may become holy by living in intimacy with one who is holy. Why should not we who receive the Holy of Holies into our very hearts be more favored than Zaccheus who entertained the Holy of Holies in His own home?

O good Shepherd, do Thou calm all my sorrow; do Thou heal my wounds; do Thou feed me often with the "Food of angels," that nourishes my soul and gives it life eternal.



Thirty-Fifth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

IN the year 1870, a soldier, severely wounded, happened to be an inmate of an infirmary in charge of the Jesuit Fathers of Metz. Imbued with the prevalent but erroneous idea that if he received the Holy Viaticum he would surely die, he persistently refused any spiritual assistance. As he grew worse from day to day, the doctors finally gave up all hopes of his recovery. When the soldier became aware of his imminent danger, he humbly asked for the priest, and with sentiments of true contrition, received the last sacraments. No sooner had he made his thanksgiving after Communion than he fell into a deep sleep. The doctors, who had agreed upon an amputation of the soldier's wounded arm, visited

the patient while he was still sleeping. Examining the member, one of them said: "Who has healed this patient? What a happy change for the better." "This morning," the brother infirmarian replied, "he received Holy Communion." The soldier awoke while they were conversing. Hearing of the wonder wrought in his favor, he resolved with feelings of the deepest gratitude and contrition to receive the Holy Sacraments often. The unexpected happened. The man, whose death was only a question of time, recovered, and was soon able to leave the hospital, perfectly cured. True to his promise he was thereafter a fervent communicant.¹

. . .

Church history furnishes us with many examples of wonderful cures wrought by the power of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

St. Gregory Nazianzen, when pronouncing a funeral oration over the death of his saintly sister, recounted the following:

"At one time in her life my sister was afflicted with a terrible malady, so that the

¹ St. Benedicts Stimmen No. 12, 1881.

doctor had given up all hopes of her recovery. But this good sister of mine, nothing daunted, left her bed one night and sought the church. There, in front of the tabernacle, she prostrated herself and thus communed with our hidden God: 'O Lord, once during Your mortal life here on earth, a woman sorely afflicted with a serious disease touched the hem of Your garment and was instantly cured. And have You become less powerful now? Is Your kind-heartedness never again to be displayed in behalf of the sick? Are Your love and omnipotence limited? O Lord, look down upon me, a poor sinner, here prostrate before Your tabernacle where Your immeasurable love for creatures keeps You a prisoner. I protest that I shall not leave this spot till I am cured.'" ¹

Sister Mary Gabriel, the subject of this little sketch, was of noble birth. Her tender

¹ Schweiz. Kath. Sonntagsbl. No. 38. 1886. Saint Greg. de Nazianze by Benoit.

piety exalted her still more than her rank and fortune, for in her very youth, the participation of the Holy Eucharist was her greatest delight. After the death of her mother, closing her eyes to the golden prospects which lay within her grasp, she left her father's princely mansion, that in the seclusion of a cloister she might oftener and more worthily approach the Sacrament of Love.

When her novitiate was finished, after some trial her confessor and superiors allowed her to communicate several times a week, increasing the privilege to daily communicate a year after she pronounced her vows. Who can describe the transports of our holy Mary Gabriel? Who can tell of the delight and joy which filled her soul on being allowed to receive her God and Savior every day? A thousand times she blessed that divine hand which had withdrawn her from the world with all its vanity and deceit. Every moment she could spare she spent before the tabernacle of her Beloved, and not satisfied with her leisure moments of the day, like the dove whose amorous complaints is interrupted by night, she prolonged her visits even after the community had retired to rest.

Inebriated with celestial sweets, this holy creature might well complain with St. Anthony that the sun rose too soon for her, since often when its rays began to gild the horizon she could still be found with the dear object of her love. This did not surprise the community, knowing, as they did, Mary Gabriel's great devotion to the Holy Sacrament, and the solidity of her virtue, which did not consist in extraordinary transports alone, but in the constant practice of humility, patience, mortification, exact fidelity to the rules, and divine obedience.

But our Lord seldom finishes the work of sanctification on Thabor, He leaves it to be consummated on Calvary. This Mary Gabriel experienced, for she grew very ill, and was only able to approach the Holy Table occasionally. Nevertheless she bore this sensible privation in a most edifying manner.

However, the privation of her most longed-for treasure increased her malady so that her health rapidly declined, and she was reduced to a mere shadow. Still she continued to edify her religious sisters by her pious resignation, which she practiced in the greatest

perfection, though her extreme desire for communion often caused her to exclaim: "Alas, Mary Gabriel, where is now thy God? Are, then, the happy days in which He fed you with His own flesh at the table of His Love fled forever? O Jesus, my King, my Love, I love You and my inability to receive You so often is the greatest pain I endure."

One day in which she made an effort to visit the Holy Sacrament, her weakness became so great that they were obliged to carry her from the choir to the infirmary. She soon became much worse, and the superioress thought it would be advisable to have the Blessed Sacrament administered to her if possible. Nothing could give the poor invalid more joy than the happy news that she was soon likely to enjoy her God. "Ah, mother," said she to the superioress, "from the moment I entered this holy house I felt no desire save that of possessing my Jesus in His Sacrament, and of enjoying Him in heaven. Now the hour has arrived, and this God of love is about to console and visit His child and His spouse surrounded by the shades of death. Will you, dear Reverend Mother, tell my religious sisters

to ask our Lord to send His Blessed Mother and the angels, that they may form such a court as He has in heaven, and give Him a suitable reception when He comes to me.”

After these pious transports, the superior directed the nuns to strew the church, the corridors through which the Holy of Holies was to pass, and the infirmary with roses, carnations, jessamines, and the most fragrant flowers. When all was ready the whole community, garbed in their habits and bearing lighted tapers, accompanied the divine Sacrament in grand procession, mingling their solemn chants with the gentle tinkling of the bell.

At the approach of the thrice Holy Visitant, Mary Gabriel, whose love rendered her superior to her weak state, got out of bed, and received the Last Sacrament with a fervor truly angelical. On account of her extreme weakness, however, they were soon obliged to make her return to bed and she died shortly after. After her death they found on her neck a medal with this inscription: It is for Jesus I live, and for Him I die.¹

¹ Les Merveilles de Sainte Eucharistie, 1890.

Reflection

Let us draw closer to Jesus in the tabernacle and hear Him say: "Many kings and prophets wished to see what you behold, and have not seen it. During four thousand years, the just continually sighed for my coming. All the worship, ceremonies and the sacrifices of my faithful people were typical of Me, and prefigured Me. The expectation of My future reign on earth cheered the patriarchs and prophets in all their tribulations. Abraham, your father in the faith, saw My day in spirit — he saw it and rejoiced. Jacob consoled his children on his death-bed by promising that I, 'The expectation of nations,' would come. David's soul thirsted for Me as the weary stag thirsts after the fountain of water. He declared He would be satisfied only when My glory would appear. Isaias wished that I would break through the heavens and come down. What they desired so much thou dost enjoy. What they wished to see thou canst behold every day. Thou canst not only behold Me, but receive Me into thy heart, and be entirely transformed into Me."

In the words of St. Thomas, the Blessed

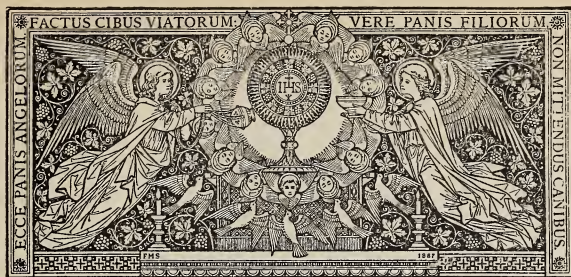
Sacrament is an august memorial of divine omnipotence. It is, further, an admirable compendium of God's greatest gifts and miracles. When the Almighty assumed human nature He elevated man to the throne of His divinity, and admitted Him to the bosom of His infinite charity. Here everything is changed, God's majesty abases itself to our nothingness, His immensity conceals and imprisons itself within the narrow precincts of our hearts. In the incarnation, one man alone was an ineffable bond personally united to the word in the Eucharist; the Word by an excess of love united Himself to one of us by an alliance so noble that after the hypostatic union it is impossible to conceive anything more admirable.

Jesus Christ merited some particular grace for us by each of the actions of His life. In the other sacraments we receive heavenly gifts drop by drop, as it were, but in this, our soul is submerged in the fountain of graces. O God, how truly magnificent art Thou in Thy dwellings, with Thy poor creatures. O inestimable Treasure, Thou couldst indeed make us an object of envy to the angels, if envy were possible to heavenly beings.

During this Holy Hour let us say: O Lord, who will recount all Thy blessings? No tongue can express, no mind conceive, what Thou bestowest in Thy mystery on those who love Thee. Thou givest to the faithful soul the Food of Angels, the Bread of heaven, containing in itself all sweetness.

“Now, O Lord, Thou dost dismiss Thy servant in peace, because mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.”





Thirty-Sixth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

THERE has been found in the archives of the church of the Franciscans a letter written December 22, 1714, by Mgr. de Belsume, Bishop of Marseilles, which treats of a miracle in connection with the Blessed Sacrament.

“On Friday, September the 21st of this year, the Most Blessed Sacrament was exposed in the church of the Franciscans of this city. Shortly before Benediction, about three and a half in the evening, the weather being very cloudy and rainy, there appeared before the whole congregation in the monstrance above the tabernacle a figure in relief. It represented Jesus Christ at half-length. The Savior’s head showed a medalion struck on the Host. The face was

luminous and the eyes full of life. The witnesses cannot say precisely what was the color of the face, hair, beard or clothing. They certify only that they remarked all these things, also the features of the face, and that from afar, as well as near, they saw the same thing and with the same ease. The face of the Savior appeared to them rather long and of inexpressible beauty and sweetness.

“The Brother Sacristan and some others, being the first to perceive it, called to a religious who was passing. This religious, surprised and believing at first that there was some trickery in it (these are his own words), wished to examine the apparition more closely. Several times he changed his position for that purpose. He retired to a distance, he approached the altar, but from all these different points, whether near or remote, he saw the same figure looking at him. Not satisfied with approaching as near as possible, he mounted and knelt on the altar, his face pressed against the monstrance, on the glass of which he still beheld the likeness of the Savior. Then he took a lighted wax-taper which was near, and turning around the crystal of the monstrance,

he saw the same thing. This religious-priest, being a painter, at once thought of his art. He desired to engrave the likeness on his mind in order to sketch it. But when he tried to examine the eyes, he was unable to support their glance. He remained, as it were, immovable. They were obliged to take the candle from his hand and assist him to descend from the altar, around which the people were gathered in holy admiration.

“The Father Guardian, informed of what had transpired, and following the example of St. Louis, did not desire to see the prodigy nor to inform his religious in their choir stalls of what had taken place. No one thought of sending to notify my Grand Vicars, for I was in my country home in Aubagne. He even ordered them without further delay to give Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The priest who gave it, informed by the religious-priest, beheld the same wonder on taking down the monstrance from the niche. He saw it until the monstrance was placed on the altar, and then, like the others, he beheld only the Sacred Host as usual.

“More than sixty persons, among them five or six Franciscans, persons of all ages

and professions, and all worthy of belief, say they saw the same thing under the same circumstances. There was no disagreement among those whom I have interrogated in the ordinary forms and with the closest attention. I forgot to mention that a little child called loudly to its mother to look at what was so beautiful. But before proceeding with the juridical examination of the witnesses, I commenced by going to the Franciscan Church accompanied by my Grand Vicars, Promotor and Secretary. Then I visited the so-called miraculous Host. I found it like the others. They had examined it after the Benediction at which the prodigy took place, and replaced it in the ciborium only after having scrutinized both sides. The empty monstrance remained as usual on the altar. It could be easily seen that it held nothing capable of producing such an effect. I had the monstrance brought to me. I found the glass thick, slightly obscure, and all cut in facets like a diamond, so that any image placed opposite to it would have been reflected as many times as there were facets. It did not appear that any reflection of light could have been employed. I ordered

an unconsecrated host to be put into the monstrance, the latter placed in the niche, and candles lighted as on the feast of St. Matthew. I made them draw and open the curtains of the church. I examined whether any picture had been placed in such a way as to cast on the crystal of the monstrance the face which had been seen there. It all appeared impossible to me as there was not in the whole church a picture of the Savior except an *Ecce Homo*, crowned with thorns, poorly executed, but venerable as being the work of King René, Count of Anjou and Provence. Finally, Sir, we all concluded, after mature and deliberate examination, that there could not be anything natural in what had occurred, and that they might proceed with the hearing of the witnesses to the miracle. This apparition lasted more than a half hour.”¹

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Graverolles, a hamlet on a small island of the Seine, was inhabited by about forty families. It boasted of a small church where the Holy Sacrifice was offered several times a week by the assistant priest of Rigny. The

¹ Pastoral Letter, Dec. 22, 1714, by Mgr. de Belsunce. Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament, Vol. XV.

little Mass-server, Peter Hureau, was a bright boy of eleven, and a child of unusual piety. He was preparing for his First Holy Communion, which he hoped to receive in the coming month of May, 1910. On the morning of January 28th, as little Peter crossed the bridge on his way to school at Rigny, he noticed the water had risen since the day before. Yet, as the hamlet was much higher than the stream and he had often heard it said that there was no danger of an overflow of the Seine, he did not worry.

At four o'clock in the evening on his way homeward, Peter noticed the Seine had risen considerably since morning. In the distance the meadows were under water, presenting a broad, grey surface covered with tiny waves, here and there broken by protruding tree-tops. The little lad admired the spectacle, but felt no fear. Graverolles, he thought, was beyond danger. Thus he quietly turned aside from the ordinary road and ascended a by-path, to the edge of a small wood, where stood a statue of the Blessed Virgin. A half-hour walk brought him to the spot. Although it was now twilight he nevertheless knelt there a long time, praying most fervently for

the grace to receive a worthy First Holy Communion, before starting home. But when he arrived at Graverolles, he found the water nearly as high as the bridge and, thoroughly frightened at last, he hastened his steps homeward.

In a short time he reached his parents' house, but it was deserted, as were the neighboring houses also. By this time the river had broken through its boundaries in several places, and now threatened the entire hamlet with destruction. The people had fled, Peter's parents evidently hoping to meet him on his way from school, but unfortunately this particular evening he had taken another path. He decided, therefore, to return to Rigny with all possible speed. As he passed the chapel, his attention was attracted by the perpetual light burning before the Blessed Sacrament. Doubtless the chaplain was ignorant of the high water and, moreover, he was not expected to return before morning. By that time the chapel would certainly be flooded. What was to be done? Guided by divine inspiration, Peter, without further reflection, resolved to carry the ciborium with him to Rigny.

But, alas! the sacristan had put away the tabernacle key. He searched for it in the twilight for a long time. Meanwhile the howling wind and roaring waters waxed louder. At last, however, the key is found. The boy hastens to the chapel, up to his knees in water. Fortunately the chapel is a few steps higher than the street. He enters. The flood, rising every minute, presses in after him. He runs to the tabernacle, opens it and takes out the ciborium. As he steps again into the street, he finds himself waist-deep in water. Vainly he struggles to move forward. The water is too deep and he can scarcely stand erect. With great difficulty he returns to the chapel: he is locked in, a prisoner with his God. He places the ciborium upon the altar and kneels down at the railing. Suddenly dreadful fear seizes him: if the flood should rise, he must perish here alone. But Jesus is here. However, he cannot receive Him, he must die without having made his First Holy Communion. His eyes fill with tears. He prays. . . . "My God, my God, do not abandon me." An hour passes in this state of dread. He prays. . . . But the flood rises and reaches the communion rail. Peter mounts the

upper altar step. Another hour passes. He prays . . . the water is still rising. "My Jesus, forgive me if I seek refuge near Thee." He climbs upon the altar. Ever higher and higher rises the water. A wave sweeps over the altar table, Peter seizes the ciborium, and climbs higher upon the projecting shelf and then upon the tabernacle into the niche where so often the monstrance had rested. He presses the sacred vessel close to his bosom. A thought suggests itself. "If the water keeps on rising I shall drown; I can't mount any higher. But might I not give myself Holy Communion before I die?" He ventures not to answer this question.

The chill grows more severe, and he shivers from head to foot. Fever now makes itself felt. He sits down on the narrow space which is still untouched by the water, and leans back against the wall. His lips still move in prayer, while the ciborium is closely pressed to his heart. He feels his strength gradually leaving him, dullness and sleepiness creep over him and his head sinks forward upon his breast. The water rises no higher; it surges about the tabernacle and the sleeping child — a living monstrance.

When morning dawned, a small boat could be seen carefully plying its way through Graverolles. It was occupied by two men and a priest and they rowed in the direction of the chapel. As they enter the open door what an amazing spectacle meets their eyes, the boy white as a ghost, his head bowed forward, immovable upon the tabernacle.

“Peter,” called the chaplain, but there was no reply. They rowed up closer and as they carefully lifted the boy down they saw the ciborium in his hands. As he was laid in the boat, he slowly opened his eyes. “Peter,” said the priest, “are you chilled?” He smiled as he answered, “No.” “Peter, are you hungry?” Again a faint smile, and “Yes,” fell softly from his lips. “Would you like a little bread and wine?” Faintly he shook his head. “What do you wish, my dear child?” With a weak gesture the little hero pointed to the ciborium. The priest, deeply moved, looked heavenward, his eyes glistening with tears.

“Yes, my dear Peter,” he said, “yes, you have deserved your Jesus since you have rescued Him.” Taking a Sacred Host and saying in a low voice: “Behold the Lamb

of God," he placed It as Viaticum upon the boy's tongue. Little Peter smiled gently, closed his eyes, and began to pray.

"Let us return at once," the priest said to the two men. "We must row back immediately to Rigny, where his parents are weeping and mourning his loss."

The boat moved out slowly, gliding through the ruins. The sun had risen bright and shed its rays upon the awful disaster. Some of its first beams played about the child and he began to move. Then a slight trembling, a sigh, and Peter's soul ascended to heaven.¹

Reflection

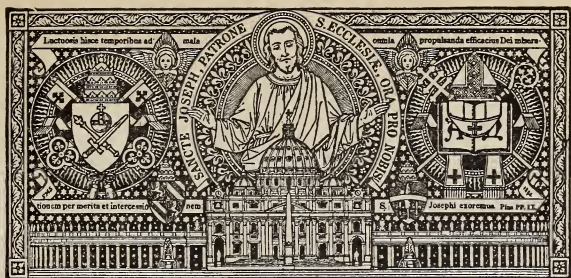
We read in the Old Testament how Elias, strengthened by material food, walked forty days and nights to Mount Horeb, the Mountain of God. How much more easily cannot we, sustained by a divine nutriment, ascend to the summit of the heavenly Jerusalem? If the Paschal Lamb by the impress of its blood on the door-posts of the houses of the Israelites protected them from the exterminating angel, what power should not the Eucharistic Lamb have to preserve us from

¹ Tabernacle and Purgatory, Vol. XI, page 71.

death? O blessed a thousand times be this ineffable mystery! Who can fail to recognize in the adorable Eucharist the throne of grace, the fountainhead of all good?

During this Holy Hour let us draw near the tabernacle and contemplate Him under the Eucharistic veils. What annihilation, what uninterrupted silence! Yet He assures us: "Be not deceived, for the more I annihilate myself, the more I love you; the greater My silence, the better I listen to your every petition; the more I conceal Myself, the more I discover Myself heart and soul to you. Verily, 'I sleep, but My heart watches.'"





Thirty-seventh Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

IT once happened that St. Bonaventure was permitted to suffer an extraordinary anxiety which kept him back from the Holy Table. The presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament filled him with fear. He was consumed with longing to receive Him in Holy Communion, but the consciousness of unworthiness held him back. Thus was he languishing between love and fear, when the Lord Himself took compassion on his suffering. As he was one day assisting at Holy Mass, absorbed in contemplation of the Passion of Christ, a portion of the Consecrated Host which was in the hands of the priest, placed itself upon his lips. Upon this he was filled with inexpressible joy; his anxiety was dispelled; confidence and joy took possession of his soul, and from that

time every Communion became to him a fresh source of joy.¹

Blessed Ida of the Cistercian Order, once accompanied the Prioress and several sisters of the community into the country in order to gather in the harvest. Here she was not able to communicate so frequently as she did in her convent. But whenever she heard the elevation bell, an ardent longing for the Bread of Life took possession of her. It happened that a certain very aged woman who was dying in that neighborhood desired Viaticum. The nuns were present on this occasion. Now when the priest placed the Sacred Host upon the tongue of the dying woman, it was found that she was unable to swallow It, and his dismay was great when obliged to remove It, from her mouth. This untoward circumstance, which so troubled the priest, filled the pious sister with a blessed hope. "O my Father!" cried she, "be not troubled! Let me have the body of my Lord!" Thus the holy maiden received Holy Communion and was so overcome with love and joy, that for some time she lay on the ground rapt out of her senses.²

¹ Ott, *Eucharisticum*, page 217.

² *Les Veilles des adorateurs du S.S.*

In the life of St. Thomas Aquinas it is related that one day a frightful storm raged around the monastery in which he lived. Overcome by fear the monks fled into the cloister to seek a refuge. The angelic Doctor, however, sought refuge before the tabernacle of the Eucharist; leaning his venerable head against the Prison of Love, he awaited in silence the end of the terrific storm.

Amid the storms of the world and of the passions, amid calumny, persecutions, and troubles which may rise up against us, let us seek refuge with the God of Hosts and we shall find a shelter and a tower of might against the furious onslaughts of the enemies of our soul.

St. Bridget writes: "One day, whilst a priest was celebrating Mass, I saw how all the powers of heaven were set in motion; I heard at the same time a heavenly music most harmonious. Numberless angels came down, the chant of whom no human understanding can conceive, nor the tongue of man can describe."¹

On the accession of St. Malachy to the archiepiscopal See of Armagh, the state of

¹ In Chron. aetat. 6, anno 774. De Sacerd. Lib 6, c. 4.

religion in Ireland was at a very low ebb. The saint, knowing that without Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament he could not bring his people to practice their religion and lead a God-fearing life, sought in various ways to bring them to more frequent Communion. He took pains to make the service of God as grand and as imposing as possible, so as to create the greatest possible reverence for the Holy Sacrament of the altar. Nor was He less careful for the welfare of the dead, but prayed incessantly for the holy souls in purgatory and offered the Sacrifice of the Mass for their relief.

Now it happened that the archbishop's sister died. During her life she had often upbraided him for condescending to visit personally the poor sick and for this she received due punishment. For thirty successive days St. Malachy offered the Holy Sacrifice for the repose of her soul. God, by a special grace, made known to the saint in a dream the sad condition of his sister, for at the expiration of the thirtieth day he thought he heard a pitiful voice and, looking, he saw her, clothed in mourning, standing under the porch of the church awaiting her deliverance through his help.

The next morning, therefore, St. Malachy again offered the Sacred Mysteries for the relief of his sister. That same night she appeared to him with a sorrowful countenance for the second time. She had, however, approached a few steps nearer to the church. For some days the saint continued to offer the Mass for his sister with special devotion, when one day she appeared to him clothed in a fair white garment. She now entered the church, but could not approach the altar. Consoled by this apparition, Malachy continued to offer the Holy Sacrament for her, until at length she appeared to him with a radiant countenance, clothed in a white robe. She was now able to approach the altar. The saint was given to understand that his sister came to return thanks to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, before entering into eternal glory.¹

. . .

A chapel in the diocese of Vannes, France, was on one occasion destroyed by fire. So quickly had the flames spread that it was impossible for anyone to secure the Blessed Sacrament. When the conflagration was

¹ Lives of the Saints, Nov. 3.

over, however, although the priest found the tabernacle entirely charred, the ciborium rested unharmed on the corporal. In spite of the fact that the veil covering the ciborium was singed, the corporal itself, although it was made of linen was intact, while the consecrated Host looked fresh and white. The account of this miraculous occurrence, which took place in 1880, may be read in a paper called "Northburg."¹

. . .

St. Gregory the Great tells us of a deceased contemporary near Rome, who appeared to a holy priest earnestly begging him for prayers. For a whole week the priest offered up the Sacrifice of the Mass for the deceased, and thereby knew by supernatural enlightenment that the soul had been released through the efficacy of the Mass. St. Gregory also makes mention of a monk of the monastery of St. Andrew, who, after a number of Masses had been offered for him, appeared in the light of glory and expressed gratitude for his deliverance.

Louis the Lion had to endure inexpress-

¹ Ott: Euch., page 177.

sible torments in purgatory and conjured his son to obtain relief for him and to aid him to attain the glories of heaven. His son immediately forwarded large sums of money as alms to all the monasteries of his kingdom with the petition that Holy Masses should at once be said for the soul of his father. Soon afterward the deceased appeared and joyfully announced to his son that he had been delivered.

St. Peter Damien relates the following occurrence of his time: Pope Benedict VIII appeared several days after his death to three Bishops and told them that it had been made known to him that the mercy of God would grant him deliverance from purgatory, if Odilo, the venerable abbot of Cluny, would make intercession for him. This communication was taken to the abbot, who at once summoned all his monks to pray for the deceased Pontiff, and they began a novena of Masses for the repose of his soul. Near the close of the novena, the Pope appeared in a transfigured state, thanking Odilo for the prayers and Masses.¹

¹ Manual of Christian Doctrine by Dr. J. Schuster, page 673. Ott: Euch., page 155.

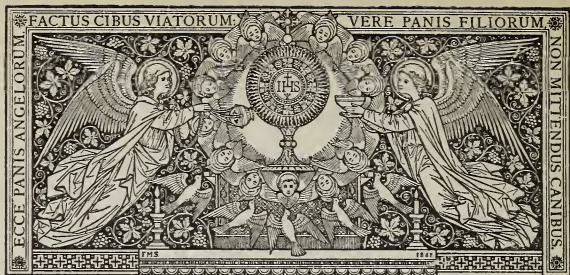
Reflection

One day as St. Gertrude was meditating on the great love which makes the Lord and King of heaven find His delight in the society of men, our Savior illustrated what seemed to her so incomprehensible by the following comparison: The son of a king is surely much higher and greater than the children who run about the streets. He has in his father's palace everything that can delight and gratify him, yet if you give him his choice, either to go out and play with the children on the street or to stay at home amid the splendor of his father's court, he will certainly prefer the former. "Thus, I too," said the Lord, "find my pleasure in going with you and having instituted the Blessed Sacrament for this end, anyone who prevents a soul from receiving Me, deprives Me of a great pleasure." He also said to St. Mechtildis, "Look at the bees and see with what eagerness they seek the honey-flowers, yet know that my desire to come to you in Holy Communion is far greater." He even declared to St. Margaret of Cortona that He would reward her confessor richly for having advised her to receive

Holy Communion frequently; and Father Antonio Torres, as we read in his life, appeared, shortly after death, in great splendor, to a certain person, and revealed to him that God had increased his glory in heaven in a special manner for having recommended frequent Communion to his penitents.

During this Holy Hour let us repeat this beautiful prayer: "O most amiable Jesus, when will you take away my foul heart from me and bestow upon me your own? Or when will my heart be filled with the odor of your virtues, and entirely inflamed with the love of heavenly things? Ah, sweetest Jesus, inclose my heart in yours, that you alone may dwell in it, and possess it, that by the dignity of Your heart mine may be enobled and adorned."





Thirty-Eighth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

AFTER the battle of Leibnitz in which the Salesians lost over 30,000 men, including their General, Prince Henry, King Wenceslaus I. of Bohemia conferred the leadership of the army on Jareslaus, the valiant knight of Sternburg. With twelve thousand men he settled down at Olmitz to defend the capital city.

On the third day the Tartars, who had been so successful in the past, made their appearance. Day by day they approached closer to the city. Attacking first the Premonstratensian monastery, they ransacked it and burned it to the ground with terrible carnage. Having massacred the soldiers and the inmates of the monastery, they severed the heads from their bodies

and tied them to the tails of horses which they drove within the walls of the city to intimidate the people. This dastardly and barbarous act served only to make Jarislaus and his men more determined to conquer their brutal enemy. But though his army pressed him to the conflict, the prudent warrior deferred action. Regarding such as a sign of fear, the enemy entertained the greatest hope of being victorious, and in anticipation of their triumph, gave themselves up to dissipation and feasting. Jarislaus, on seeing this, realized that the opportune time was at hand, but being fully aware that an undertaking of such a nature demanded more than valor and intrepid courage, he considered that his first and sacred duty was to call upon God for assistance. It was on the 24th of June, the feast of St. John the Baptist, and Jarislaus and his officers repaired to the church to receive the Sacrament of Penance and Holy Eucharist, the remainder of the army following their example. Then the brave leader, encouraging his men by friendly words and, reminding them of their sacred duty to their homes, gave orders that the attack should be made on the following night.

As the shades of evening descended, the soldiers impatiently awaited the signal for the conflict, but it was not till a little before daybreak that Jarislaus with his brave men advanced to the Tartar camp. When near the city gates all dismounted, and kneeling on the ground, besought God's blessing on their undertaking. The valiant Jarislaus himself vowed, that if through the assistance of the Blessed Mother he was victorious, he would erect a church in her honor. After reciting a "Hail Mary," the men took up their arms and advanced in the name of the Lord.

Although their number was small, it was with the greatest enthusiasm that they pressed forward. Jarislaus, not satisfied with going only in the name of the Lord, wanted the Lord Himself to lead the army. He therefore ordered that five particles of the Sacred Host which had been left over after the distribution of Holy Communion on the previous morning should be placed in a costly receptacle, which was carried before the army by the parish priest seated on a war charger.

Then the battle began. Baruch, the leaders of the Tartars, was slain by Jaris-

laus himself, after which the ranks of the enemy began to give way, for with the death of their leader their valor and courage diminished. As a result, the cities of Olmitz and Mehern were saved and the Christian army delivered from the army of the Tartar.

As if to show how the victory should be ascribed primarily to the power of the Sacred Host, the edges of the five particles assumed a brilliant red color. Thus did Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament come to the aid of His own.¹

...

A publication in Canada called "The Messenger," in the year of our Lord 1883, narrated the following remarkable incident.

A young man almost twenty-five years of age, suddenly became sick at the place where he was working. It had been the custom among the men employed there to recite the rosary in common every day and this particular youth, although a Protestant, did not hesitate to join the others in their prayers. Now, however, his well-known voice was missing as hour by hour he approached his last agony. Realizing

¹ Ott: Euch., page 193.

his danger he called for a priest, but his friends, thinking this was a mere fancy of the dying man, were reluctant to fulfill his request. Furthermore the nearest priest was five miles away, and a heavy snowfall had made travelling perilous. The sick man, however, persisted. "Bring me a priest," he begged, "I want to become a Catholic so that I may die a happy death." Noticing their hesitation, he summoned strength enough to say: "Why, you Catholics are wavering. Do you want me to die without a priest? For God's sake go and bring me one. I may not live till he comes." Struck by his earnest words the men immediately started on their wearisome journey. Five miles of hard driving through snowdrifts and embankments, brought them to the pastor's residence. As soon as the good priest learned the meaning of their errand he hurried back with them to the bedside of the sufferer.

The patient seemed almost in the throes of death, but revived sufficiently to receive the necessary instructions. Eagerly he listened to every word and obeyed every injunction of the priest. After his abjuration when the waters of Baptism had flowed over

his head, he grew quieter. Then the man of God, before giving him Holy Communion, addressed him thus: "Son, this is your First Holy Communion, and it may be your last. Ask our divine Lord now for two favors, either that you may die a blessed death or that you may be spared to your family if it is His Holy Will." Fervently did the poor sufferer receive his Lord, so much so that the priest testified he had never seen such faith and such reverence. A moment after receiving the Holy Viaticum, he opened his eyes and in an earnest voice cried out: "I am healed," and to the astonishment of all gathered around the bedside, he arose and united with them in a prayer of thanksgiving.

The miracle was not without its own results. Not only was the sick man completely restored to health, but the restoration caused the conversion of a man who had long been living the life of a tepid lukewarm Catholic. Immediately after the miracle he acknowledged before all: "This wonderful occurrence was necessary to rouse me from my indifference. It has brought me good luck. Back to the Catholic Church I go to-day."

“The following morning after prayer and breakfast,” writes the priest, “I gave the young man further instructions. He is now with his family and his good example is the means of gaining souls for heaven.”¹

. . .

“One day,” says St. Liguori, “Jesus Christ will sit on a throne of majesty in the valley of Jehosaphat, but here in the Most Holy Sacrament, He sits on a throne of love. He is a most loving and generous friend to us in this valley of tears. We can converse with Him, we can open our hearts to Him, we can ask for graces, we can treat with Him on the interests of our soul in the strictest confidence and in the greatest intimacy.”

“In our churches the Lord dwells with His angels, who are going continually from us to Him, and returning from Him to us. Here are truly the House of God and the Gate of Heaven, for the God of Abraham here shows Himself to His servants and encourages, strengthens, and blesses them.

“Christian churches, sanctuaries of the adorable Eucharist, abode of the happiness

¹ Messenger of the Sacred Heart, 1883, page 449.

of the faithful soul, how is it possible to express your greatness, and your titles to our affection. Does not the Son of God come down from heaven and become incarnate there in the hands of the priest? Does He not there renew His birth, His life, His death and His burial? Yes, we possess truly in our sanctuaries the divine Child, the teacher of nations, the Lamb sacrificed for the redemption of the world, and there He instructs us, feeds us with Himself, and continues to shed His blood for us. 'I have chosen and have sanctified this place that My name may be there forever, and My eyes and My heart may remain there perpetually.'"

Reflection

The Blessed Sacrament is truly the remembrance of the wonderful works of God. Although at the moment of consecration the substance of the bread is completely changed, yet, everything seems to remain unchanged, that is to say, the appearance of bread is there without that which in other circumstances is necessary to sustain it — namely the bread itself.

What a great, what a mighty miracle is

this, a miracle that stands alone. We must consider that ordinarily when a substance is changed, something is always changed in its appearance. From the outward appearance we recognize that a change has taken place in the thing itself. Here in the Blessed Sacrament, however, though it is no longer bread, the appearance remains the same. Further, this unique miracle does not take place now and then, or in certain places: it exists everywhere from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, even to the end of the world. Our Lord in His love for us is not satisfied with exerting the fullness of His power upon His creatures; His love urges Him to the extreme limit of possibility. Truly, God has in this Sacrament left us a memento of His wonderful works.





Thirty-ninth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

IN the year 1668, on the Saturday within the octave of Corpus Christi, a wonderful phenomenon occurred in a church at Ulm, Germany. Just as the priest was chanting the words, "Verbum caro, panem verum," in adoration of the divine Sacrament, the figure of a person appeared in the monstrance. This miraculous occurrence lasted more than a quarter of an hour, not only over the tabernacle where the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, but also when the priest removed the monstrance to the altar table the apparition continued. A white silvery cloud enveloped the monstrance previous to the vanishing of the figure, after which the Host appeared as usual.

The Bishop of Ange, Rt. Rev. Henry Arnould, published a pastoral letter on this supernatural incident which is preserved in the archives of the cathedral.¹

. . .

In the year 1885 a remarkable cure was effected in a small village in France through the power of the Blessed Sacrament.

It was on the eve of Corpus Christi. Throughout the village young and old were striving with each other to make the various altars bowers of beauty. The whole city was astir with preparation. and over it all hovered a spirit of holy joy.

One house, however, the finest in the town, contributed nothing to the general excitement, for sorrow and grief reigned within its walls. A child of scarce twelve summers, the pride and hope of its parents, lay prostrate from a malady for which the doctors knew no remedy. It was the child of Count C.

¹ Tabernakelwacht, 1903. Ulms dio. Angers, 1868. Pastoral Letter dated June 25, 1668, by Bishop Henry Arnould.

As evening fell on the eve of the great feast the church bells rang forth their joyous peals, and brought their message to the slumbering child. "Mother," he said drowsily, "why are the bells ringing?" "Those are the church bells, my child," she answered, "ringing in Corpus Christi, to-morrow's feast." "Ah, the feast of Corpus Christi," he murmured, "how beautiful. Do you remember, mother, last year you gave me permission to join the procession? It was the day after my First Holy Communion. I was well and happy then, but now —"

There was a pause as the child recalled each detail of that joyous day. Then, as a new thought came into his mind, he turned to his father and said pleadingly: "Papa, won't you take me to the window to-morrow, so that I can see the procession?" "Yes, my child, I will," answered he, "but now it is better for you to rest. Try to go to sleep again." "Ah," continued the child, as if he were musing to himself, "God can cure me if he wishes; I am going to ask Him to-morrow!"

With these words he fell back again on his pillow, quite exhausted. As soon as he

was once more resting quietly the count addressed his wife, saying: "I have the fullest confidence in God that our boy will be cured. Let us build an altar before our home," and so it was done.

The next day dawned bright and glorious. Fleecy clouds dotted the heavens and the sun brightened every dark corner with its brilliant rays. The village seemed a veritable fairyland. Here and there the streets were carpeted with flowers, and music's soft melody dispelled all sadness.

At four o'clock in the afternoon the procession started on its course and within a short time turned into the street fronting the count's residence. There shone the altar sparkling with gold and agleam with lights and above all blazed an inscription: "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me whole." The sick child rested in an arm-chair, supported by his parents. Tears filled their eyes as they saw the procession in the distance and noticed the faces of the children beaming with joy. But the father, a man of faith, though heart-sore and troubled on account of the boy, cast his care aside for the moment and with lighted torches went with his servants to meet our

divine Lord. The sick boy dressed in his First Communion suit, and with his rosary twisted around his fingers, wistfully watched every movement. The procession drew nearer and nearer until the priest's voice could be heard at the altar below. "O Sacred Host, who has opened for us the portals of heaven, give us strength. Come to our aid." In feeble accents the child tried to join in the singing and then, making a supreme effort, fell on his knees crying out: "O Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me whole."

As the priest passed, he gave the child a special blessing with the monstrance, to the great comfort of his parents. The procession continued on its way, and the boy was brought back to bed. "Father," whispered he, as the strong man lifted him to his pillows, "the good God has heard my prayer, I feel that I am getting better."

And so it really was. The house where sorrow and sadness had reigned was now filled with joy. Borne on the air came the sweet strains of "Holy God, we praise Thy Name," as the procession wended its way back to the church, and parents and son joined in the glad chant. From that mo-

ment the child became convalescent. To commemorate the miraculous event, the grateful parent on the next Corpus Christi erected another altar, but this time it bore the consoling inscription: "And Jesus gave him to his mother."¹

...

In the writings of St. Angela Foligno, we read how wonderfully she was favored by God, in beholding our Blessed Lord in the Sacrament of His Love. Cardinal Bonelli and Pope Benedict XIV vouch for the authenticity of this fact.

"One time," she writes, "I saw the Lord in a consecrated Host in the shape of a child. He seemed to be a royal personage, carrying a scepter in His little hand. All this I noticed with my own eyes. Those who were present bowed low in adoration, but I simply looked and admired the holy countenance, full of majesty and kindness. I would have continued to gaze upon it for a long time, did not the priest place the Sacred Host in the tabernacle. I was overjoyed at the apparition, and felt perfectly confident that what I saw was real.

¹ Tabernakelwacht, 1897.

The impression it made on me can never be effaced from my memory.

“On another occasion during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass I thus lovingly addressed our Lord: ‘My God, You are really and truly here in the blessed Sacrament, but tell me, where are Your friends?’ An interior voice straightway answered: ‘Wherever I am, there are my friends.’

“Jesus Christ has often manifested Himself to my soul under different shapes and forms. Sometimes He has appeared to me in a brilliant form, with rays of light emanating from all parts of His sacred Body like the splendor of the mid-day sun. I am totally unable to describe it. My heart was so filled with heavenly joy and bliss that words fail to express my delight.”¹

...

The saints by often receiving their Savior were blessed with such a longing to possess Him that they actually suffered until that longing was satisfied. St. Teresa's desire for Holy Communion was so great that she used to say, that neither force nor sorrow

¹ Andacht 3. Hl. Eucharistie by Huguet. Visions and Instructions, page 340.

could deter her from receiving her divine Lord. St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi used to go to that part of the communion railing where the priest came first to distribute the Blessed Sacrament, in order to receive our Lord as quickly as possible. St. Philip Neri was often unable to sleep at night, on account of his desire to receive Holy Communion. One night as Father Galonio was about to give him Holy Communion, he held the Sacred Host in his hand for some time. At last St. Philip, unable to endure the delay any longer, cried out: "Antonio, why do you hold my Lord in your hand so long? Why do you not give Him to me? Why, why, give Him to me; give Him to me." It is also related that this saint, when taking the Precious Blood at Mass, used to press his lips to the chalice with such affection that it seemed as if he could not tear himself away from it. He thus gradually wore off the gilding on the rim of the chalice. But still more remarkable is that which is related of St. Alphonsus. Once, on Good Friday, being unable to receive Holy Communion, his affliction was so great that a violent fever came upon him and his life was endangered. The

doctor came and bled him, but there was no improvement until the next day, when the saint learned that he could receive his Savior. On receiving this joyful news the fever immediately left him.¹

Reflection

“Son, give me thy heart,” says Jesus in the tabernacle to every soul, “this is all the return I ask for bequeathing thee my legacy of love. I have given thee My body and blood, My soul and divinity, and wilt Thou not give Me thy heart? I ask nothing but what is in thy power to bestow; but I am a jealous lover, and if thou desirest to make Me an agreeable offering, thou must present Me a heart pure, undivided, and entirely detached from all created things.”

“My Savior, sprinkle me with Thy Precious Blood, and lead me in the way of Thy Passion, and keep me beneath the shadow of Thy cross, that I may come near Thy altar seeking Thee.”

“My heart is ready, O Lord, my heart is ready.”

¹ Ott: Euch., page 355.



Fortieth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Historical

IN the diary of an old soldier we read an interesting account of how the Blessed Sacrament brought about his conversion. The Venerable Mary Joseph Geramb, a member of the Trappist Order, had been ex-General Baron Geramb to his Majesty the King of Austria.

“Napoleon the First, surnamed the ‘Scourge of God,’ he writes, “on one occasion advanced towards the capital city of Turin, which had been evacuated at his approach by the reigning monarch. The following day I also left the city with those under my command. We were on the march all night. At daybreak, while conferring with my officers, I heard the tin-

klings of a little bell, and looking in that direction noticed several persons walk in procession. Approaching the little group I learned that a venerable old priest was carrying the Blessed Sacrament. 'My God,' I exclaimed, 'It is Jesus.' My feelings at this moment can hardly be described. I realized that here was the God whom I had so long neglected and forgotten, seeking me out as it were on a public highway. This is Jesus whose sacred name I had been taught at my mother's knee, He whom I had so often invoked during the days of my youth. Without a moment's hesitation, I threw myself on my knees to adore my Savior, the Almighty God. Then I whispered to the priest, 'Father, I pray you, permit me to be your escort. Let me accompany our Blessed Lord by ordering my soldiers to honor Jesus, the King of Kings.'

"The venerable priest agreed and escorted the Blessed Sacrament reverently through the village. I took the position of honor next to my Savior, who had showered so many benefits upon me in spite of the way I abused his kindness. What thoughts searched through my memory then! How

fleeting seemed the happy days of my childhood. In those far-off days Jesus was the only object of my love, the written story of His life my most precious possession, the repetition of His Holy Name my chief delight, the sight of His afflicted creatures the best recollection of His own dreadful Passion. My First Communion Day came vividly before my mind and I saw myself again approaching the altar with lighted candle to receive the Holy of Holies into my heart. But alas, those happy days had faded like a dream. A salutary fear began to come over me and instinctively I began to examine my previous life. What had become of my innocence and happiness? What had served to desecrate the exquisite work which God had made after His own image and likeness? How much had I left undone and how great the work still to do. What would become of me? Little wonder that my eyes filled with tears.

“In solemn silence we moved forward, only the tramping of the horses and the call of the bugles sounding upon the morning air. In a short time we entered a small but neat home where a venerable old man was lying on a bed surrounded by his

household. He was an army officer and had gained distinction for his valor and bravery.

“‘My dear son,’ began the priest, ‘although the good Lord has come to you to-day with a military escort He has not come as the Lord of battle but as the Lord of peace. Consign yourself to the arms of His mercy, offer Him your trophies of victories won, your pains and trials, and telling Him that your only hope is the cross. Say to Him, “I put my life into your hands, O Lord; do with me what Thou wilt. If You decide to give me a few days more in this vale of tears, I am most willing to consecrate them entirely to You to atone for my past negligence and indifference.’

“The sick man then received our Blessed Lord, the God of peace and love. After his thanksgiving was over the dying soldier sat up in his bed and raising his eyes toward heaven, said in a faltering voice: ‘Gentlemen, at a moment when passion has subsided and earthly fame and glory have dwindled to naught, it is then a man feels that everything outside of loving and serving God is vanity and nothing but vanity. It was the

serving of his king more than he had served his God that made the Marshal of Luxemburg cry out on his death-bed these repentant words: "In lieu of the glory of all my victories, for these are of no avail before the judgment seat of the Almighty, I would rather have the merit of having given in the name of Jesus a glass of cold water to one of His poor." "

"The dying man ceased speaking, but the impression caused by his words has never since left my soul. A dreadful fear came over me, and in fancy I seemed to foresee my eternal doom. That night when I retired the ghastly figure of death appeared before me: I heard his steps and saw him bend over me, and by the light of the torch looked into my face. I felt his icy grasp, and almost swooned away at the thought of his nearness. I even imagined myself cast into the fire which is kindled by the wrath of the just God with the awful inscription upon my brow 'No hope.' Satan seemed to hiss at me, 'Forever shall you burn,' and the fearful words seemed to re-echo through those dread confines of hell. Half dazed and sore distressed I raised my hands in suppliant attitude toward heaven

and prayed as I had never prayed before: 'Is it true that through my own foolishness I have lost my God? — Shall I never see Him, never gaze upon the One whom I would fain call Father? Shall I never behold the sweet face of Mary, Queen of heaven, and my Mother? Am I to be deprived forever of the sight of the countenance of her Blessed Son who had been so indulgent to me?' Sobs choked further utterance, but then came the thought that my time had not yet passed. In this vale of tears, there was One who was 'The Good Shepherd,' One who walked the weary wine-press to rescue the downtrodden, One who takes you up in His loving arms and presses you to His bosom, and that One is God.

"Yes, though all others were to forget me, even to despise and malign me, He would not. The voice of the best of Fathers was ringing in my ears. The heart of Jesus was open to me to assuage my sorrow, and His Blood ready to blot out my iniquities. I was determined to belong to Him forever, and filled with this resolution I prayed thus: 'O Jesus, beloved of my soul, may my right hand wither away if I forget You, may my

tongue cleave to my mouth if for an instant I prove untrue to my love.'”¹

Father Hunolt of the Society of Jesus relates that two students were once discoursing about the hour of their death. They agreed that if God would allow it, he who should die first should appear to the other, telling him how he fared in the other world. Shortly afterwards one of the two died and appeared soon after to his fellow-student, shining bright with heavenly glory. In answer to the inquiries of his friend he said that by the mercy of God he was saved and in the possession of the bliss of heaven. The other congratulated him on his felicity, and asked him how he merited such unspeakable glory. “Chiefly,” replied the happy soul, “by the care with which I endeavored to receive Holy Communion with a pure heart.” At these words the spirit disappeared, leaving in his surviving friend feelings of great consolation and an ardent zeal to imitate his devotion.

“And even in our own days,” says a profound thinker of our age, “in these times of

¹ Eichsfeld Volksblatt, No. 18, 1884.

persecution no less cruel, when the world has, as tyrants then had, its satellites, its amphitheatres, and its wild beasts, if you, men of the world, could interrogate all those Christians whose lives astonish you, because they seem to you so courageous and so difficult, in the midst of the scandals of the day, the agitation of business and the seductions of the world; or if, penetrating into these abodes where the heroic devotion of a weak and delicate sex seems a daily miracle, you were to ask those pious women what it was that thus kept up their undying love, what gave them that pity that made them compassionate every misfortune, and that courage which no rebuffs could dishearten — well, on all sides from the lips of the true faithful, the fervent Christian, from all the saints of the Church you will receive this one answer: ‘All courage, all strength, all charity, all consolation, all life, all happiness is given to us in the Holy Communion. The hour that we spend in the morning at the foot of the altar — that heavenly moment, when the bread of angels is given to us — gives us strength for the whole day; and when we can only commune by desire, the days on which we are deprived of this

angelic food seem to us, it is true, hard to bear; but the simple desire in itself sustains, fortifies, and encourages us. Yes, the Blessed Sacrament of itself would make us able to bear much more, for it is there we find the sacred fire that consumed the martyrs, and which can make lions of weak men.” (M. l’Abbé Gerbet.)

Reflection

“Behold, I am with you all days,” Jesus says to us, “even to the consummation of the world. In the Holy Eucharist, I said to my apostles, and through them to all my children, ‘I go away and come to you again; I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you.’ ‘I fulfill my promise by remaining with you in this Mystery of Love.’ ‘This is My resting place forever and here will I dwell, for I have chosen it.’ I have chosen and sanctified this place that My name may be here forever and My heart may remain there perpetually. In this way I am with you at all times, and I will continue to be with you to the end of ages. By day and by night, in riches and in poverty, in prosperity and in tribulation, behold, I am with you. My delight is to be with

you, and I am with you in such a manner that at all times you can have access to Me, at every moment you may enjoy My sweet company. I sit on the altar as on a throne, to which My subjects can always approach with the fullest confidence of being heard. What a consolation, faithful soul, to remember that your God is always with you. 'Truly there is no nation so great that hath its gods approaching it as your God is with you.' As I am with you, therefore, all days, will you not be all days of your life with Me in the Sacrament of My Love? When you cannot visit the temples where I reside, visit Me at least in spirit. Amid the trials of life, even should the whole world forsake you, remember that I am with you, that there still remains One loving heart into which you can pour all your sorrows with the certainty of receiving sympathy.

"O most Holy Jesus, give me an upright and a just heart, that I may love Thee, the King of Jerusalem, and wait for Thy coming, and feed upon the Bread of God."



Forty-First Reading and Reflection

THE REAL PRESENCE AS THE PHYSICIAN OF SOULS

Legenda

THE truth of the following incident is attested by an eyewitness in such a way as to leave no room for doubt.

In Louisville, Kentucky, in the year 1885, it happened that a certain N. N. came to the monastery door and requested an interview with the pastor. The Brother-porter, recognizing the visitor, had some hesitation about allowing him to enter, since he discovered that he was a fallen-away Catholic, who for at least eighteen years had not seen the inside of a church and was notorious for his open hostility to religion. Doubtful, therefore, what might be the outcome of the visit, he stationed himself outside the door ready to give assistance if needed.

His fears, however, were groundless. Not only did the conversation sound very subdued, but at times it seemed confidential. A few hours after, the astonished brother saw pastor and visitor leisurely wending their way to the dining room for refreshments. Evidently, no harsh words had been spoken on either side, and when the man left the monastery his countenance bore a happier look than it had for years.

What was the meaning of the unexpected visit and reason of Mr. N's apparent change of sentiments of heart towards the monastery and all things holy? It meant simply another complete submission to the Church, another glorious reconciliation with God.

Mr. N. N. had a twelve year old son who was as pure and innocent as an angel. The boy had been preparing to receive his First Holy Communion which was to take place the following Sunday. Having made his confession, he felt so happy in anticipation of the eventful day that he gladdened the heart of every one at home. His father, despite his antagonism to religion, could not help sharing in the boy's happiness, and

so after dinner he thus addressed his son: "Ask any favor you wish from me to-day, my boy, no matter how costly it is, it shall be granted."

For a few minutes the child considered the offer, and then with an ingenious smile upon his little face said: "Father, the most precious boon you can confer on me is to return to your God and mine, and receive Holy Communion with me to-morrow." Words cannot describe the effect of this request upon the man who for years had neglected his religion and turned a deaf ear to the call of God. The strong man's heart was touched at the simple words of the child. Overcome by his feelings he left the house and going to the monastery made his peace with God. The next day the innocent child had the extreme happiness of seeing his repentant father partaking of the Divine Banquet to which he was admitted for the first time.

From that time on Mr. N. N. was numbered among the most fervent and exemplary Catholics of the parish despite the taunts of his former associates. Thus had our divine Lord in the Blessed Sacrament

again poured out His saving grace on the callous heart of a fallen-away Catholic.¹

A singular account, confirmed by a priest of one of the Western States, was published in the "Leo Magazine" of 1882. This Reverend Father, noted for his whole-souled generosity and charity, died but a few years ago.

It happened that one day a tattered and disreputable looking boy-tramp stopped at the rectory and begged for bread. The poor boy looked so wan and sick that the heart of the good priest was touched. Not only did he order a warm meal to be given to the little vagrant, but he assigned him a room in his own house and nursed him with the greatest care. It developed after a few days that the child's malady had grown very serious. In addition to his critical condition the wounds of his soul also demanded immediate attention. The Father, with the exercise of much patience, finally succeeded in preparing him for confession and communion. Gladly did the little fellow look forward to that joyous day. It dawned at last, and sick as he was, his

¹ Sendbote d. goetl. Hrz. Jesu, No. 7, 1885.

eyes refused to stay closed after the first glimmer of daylight. Neatly dressed school children, carrying lighted candles, accompanied the priest to the little room where the waif lay dying. It was a pathetic scene as the priest and the children grouped themselves around the bed preparatory to the sick child's receiving the Holy Viaticum. With wondering eyes, he gazed at his Lord, then the little tongue was purpled with the saving Blood and the happy boy clasped his hands over his heart.

A few days after he passed to the land where all sorrow ceases.

Months passed by, and the priest had to attend a sick call far from his home. Winter had thrown its billows of snow in great heaps over the fields and highways, but the good priest did not hesitate making the toilsome journey, especially since a soul's salvation was in question. After he had administered the Sacraments to the dying person he turned homeward, refusing all offers of assistance. The night was beautiful, the snow-covered earth reflecting on every side the brilliancy of the stars. Suddenly, however, as he proceeded the

priest began to realize that he had lost his way. The road had disappeared in the drifts and there was no possibility of locating himself. The priest struggled forward. But what is it that drags him down? Then the full realization of his difficulty began to dawn upon him:—he had fallen into a marshy swamp. The more he endeavored to extricate himself, the deeper he sank into its miry depths. As there seemed no loop-hole of escape, and no chance of any human power coming to his aid, he directed his mind in one swift thought to heaven and recommended his soul to God. Hardly had he uttered the prayer when a figure, surrounded by a brilliant light, appeared to his view. The apparition advanced, took the priest by the hand, and extricating him from the morass, conducted him to the right road. Then, as suddenly as it came, the figure vanished from his sight. The good priest positively affirmed that he believed it was no other than the little boy-tramp who came back to rescue the one who had given him his First Communion.¹

¹ Leo, No. 9, 1892.

In the life of St. Hugo, Surius relates that a priest of a certain village in England, on breaking the Sacred Host one day at Mass, saw blood issuing from it. Filled with reverential awe, he determined to lead a holier life in the future, and following out his resolution soon became renowned for his sanctity. St. Hugo happened to stop at this village one day. The priest related this miracle to him and offered in proof to show him the cloths stained with the miraculous blood. The holy Bishop, however, refused to look at them, and would not even allow his attendants to do so, saying that such wonders and sensible proofs were only for those who did not believe. And when he noticed in some of his attendants a desire to see them, he reprimanded them sharply, saying that this desire proceeded from curiosity rather than piety and that it was more perfect to believe without seeing according to our Lord's own words, "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet believe." ¹

¹ Kirchenlexicon, Kessel.

Reflection

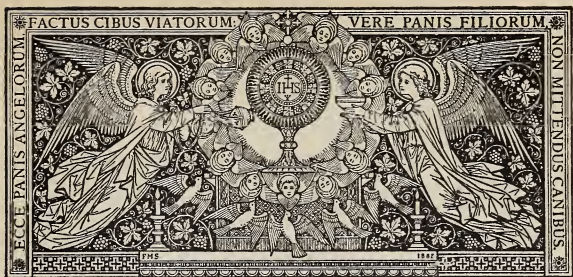
Why does our Lord hide Himself under the outward appearances of bread and wine? Why does He not manifest Himself under the sensible qualities of His body, with His wounded hands, His merciful countenance, His radiant majesty? Our Lord does so that we may not lose the merit of faith. Were we to see Jesus Christ as he is seen by the blessed in heaven, we could no longer make an act of faith in His Real Presence, for 'faith is the belief in the things we do not see.' Now our Lord wishes to bestow on us, after this life, a great reward for our faith, as He Himself has said: "Blessed are they that do not see and yet believe." Many of the saints, in order not to lose the merit of their faith, have gone so far as to beg our Lord not to favor them with those consoling manifestations of Himself in the Blessed Sacrament which He sometimes granted to His chosen ones.

From His Prison of Love Jesus speaks to us in this manner: "I am truly a hidden God in this Sacrament of my Love. All the splendor of My divinity is concealed, and although in my humanity I am beautiful above the sons of men, all this beauty is

obsured by the veils which My Love for thee has drawn around it. It seems to be without life, or color, or shape, or motion. Yet such was my desire to be united to thee that I almost annihilated Myself. Do thou learn from hence to humble thyself as nothing in My sight. In this consists true glory and solid peace.”

“Hidden God, devoutly I adore Thee,
Truly present underneath these veils;
All my heart subdues itself before Thee,
Since before Thee all faints and fails.”





Forty-Second Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

IN the year 1862 a Tyrolese mountain-climber wended his way down the jutting crags of his beloved country. He had chosen a perilous road, for being used to feats of daring, he gloried in traversing peaks that were unscalable to others. Soon he arrived at a narrow mountain pass, and with a swift gliding movement hid himself behind a clump of scraggly shrubs close to the road. The spot had evidently been selected for the purpose. A huntsman of no mean repute, and a plunderer by reputation, he was accustomed to absent himself from his associates for days and weeks. No mountain was too high for him to climb, no cliff too steep to scale, when in pursuit of an Alpine goat. But other thoughts en-

gaged him to-night, for his mind was set upon murder.

Avarice had gotten the better of him, and to accomplish his designs he was ready to commit a dastardly act. A rich merchant by the name of Andrew was to tread this mountain pass to-night on his way to the city of Salzburg, having in his wallet an enormous sum of money. This, then, was the reason for Anthony's stealthy trip.

For hours he lay in wait for his victim. The night was already far spent, and the dawn about to break. "What delays him?" thought Anthony. "He must come this way; there is no other passage." And again he crouched beneath the bushes.

Suddenly he heard footsteps. He reached for his gun, but as he did so violent trembling overcame him. What sound is that, which the night wind carries to his ears? Can it be the faint tinkling of a bell? A cold perspiration exudes from his forehead as he discerned two figures approaching. "O Jesus and Mary," he said half aloud, "it is a priest accompanied by his sexton, carrying the Blessed Sacrament to the dying." As the holy man with his sacred burden drew nearer, Anthony cried out: "Jesus,

have mercy." Then he rushed from his hiding place, and threw himself at the feet of God's minister. Confessing his crime with sentiments of sorrow and contrition, he received absolution from that consecrated hand. Then, with heavenly peace imprinted on his countenance, he begged to accompany the priest to the bedside of the dying man. On the road they met Andrew, whom God had saved in a wonderful way from a terrible fate.

Anthony, now converted from his evil ways, became an exemplary Christian. Some years later he was in the front line of battle, fighting for his country against the Italian invader Garibaldi, when an enemy's bullet soon laid him low, and he died the death of a hero. When his effects at home were examined a small package was found bearing these words: "For God's sake do not open this till after my death." The cord binding it was cut and there were found two letters, one for Andrew, the merchant, in which there was an acknowledgment of the dead man's dire purpose that dreadful night long ago, — the other for the parish priest, asking for a memento in his prayers.

This narrative, founded on fact, shows

the exceeding power of the Blessed Sacrament, and the infinite mercy of the Sacred Heart in the Holy Eucharist.¹

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A European magazine published under the title of "God's Holy Presence," in 1884, makes mention of the following:

"It is indeed a sad state of affairs to see how many Christians are devoid of all devotion and reverence during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Their behavior proves how small is their faith in the presence of our God on our altar. Many of these so-called followers of Christ are often put to shame by unbelievers, who, on entering a Catholic Church, feel the nearness of the Almighty, and in deep humility prostrate themselves to adore the hidden God. For proof of this we give an account of a Turk's conversion.

"As a member of a delegation sent by the Sultan to a prince of the West, I had occasion to spend some time in Rome. On one of my rambles through the city I chanced to come across St. Peter's, and to pass away the time more than anything else I entered

¹ Eichsfeld Volksblatt, No. 7, 1883.

the grand edifice. For the first time in my life I witnessed the celebration of the Mass, and regarded it as a very spectacular drama enacted by the priest. In fact, the whole was not to my liking. However, as the Mass progressed an indescribable feeling came over me, and I remained immovable, riveting my eyes on the altar as if by a strange sort of fascination. Was it perhaps the influence of the devout people around me? Soon after I heard the sound of a little bell. A breathless silence ensued. Even those who seemed distracted sank on their knees bowing reverently struck their breasts. The words of Scripture rushed suddenly to my mind.

“‘Take off thy shoes, for the spot upon which thou standest is holy,’ and, to my amazement, the next moment I was on my knees, bowing low in adoration. What was it that affected me so forcibly at that instant? No bewitching melody, for there was no singing; nor the forcible words of an eloquent preacher, for the stillness was oppressive, broken only by the tinkling of a little bell. ‘What was it that spoke to me?’ was the question I addressed to a Catholic priest the next day.

“‘It was the Presence of God, my son,’ answered the good Father. ‘God Himself, although hidden to your eyes, was present on the altar. He spoke to you although you heard not His voice. He addressed your understanding and your heart. He invited you to open your eyes and reflect. A marvelous and sublime wonder was enacted on the altar, and by the eyes of faith you saw it.’

“In the depths of my soul I realized the truth of these words but my stubborn will refused to submit. Finally however, grace conquered my hardened heart and I had the inexpressible happiness of joining the millions of Catholics in adoring the hidden God.

“How is it possible that anyone can assist at Holy Mass without devotion, or by his conduct distract and scandalize others, when he believes that God Almighty is present on the altar.”

∴

The Blessed Nicholas Fattori, a Franciscan Friar remarkable for his piety and purity of heart, often saw Jesus Christ in the consecrated Host in the form of an

infant. On touching the Blessed Sacrament, he seemed to feel not the mere Eucharistic species, but the very flesh of Jesus Christ our Lord and sovereign Good. On this account he used to present his fingers to those who wished to kiss his hand, saying: "Kiss these fingers with great respect, for they are sanctified by the real contact with Jesus Christ." It is also related that when this holy man was in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament he used to rejoice as a child in the presence of its mother.¹

...

Goerres, in his celebrated work entitled, "Christian Mysticism," states that there have been many holy persons, who have had a supernatural instinct by which they were sensible of the Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament even when it was hidden and at a distance from them.

Blessed Ida of Louvain was always sensible to the presence of our Lord at the precise moment of consecration. Once when the server at Mass had by mistake given the priest water instead of wine, so that there was no consecration, St. Coleta, though

¹ Eichsfeld Volksblatt, No. 4, 1884.

kneeling at a distance, perceived it by a supernatural instinct.

The Cistercian Juliana always knew when the Blessed Sacrament was moved from St. Martin's church at the close of the service, and each time she was overwhelmed with sadness. This fact was frequently witnessed by her friend Eva. One day the Franciscans of Villonda invited the holy Carmelite Cassetus to visit them, and to try him they took the Blessed Sacrament out of the tabernacle in which it was usually kept and placed it elsewhere. They put no light before it, but left the lamp burning as usual before the customary altar. On entering the church, the companion of Cassetus turned towards the high altar, but Cassetus immediately pointed out the spot where the Blessed Sacrament had been placed, saying: "The Body of our Lord is there, and not where the lamp is burning. The brother whom you see behind the curtain has placed it there in order to try us."

St. Francis Borgia had the same gift, and on entering a church, he walked straight to the spot where the Blessed Sacrament was kept, even when no external sign

indicated its presence. In 1839 Prince Licknowsky visited Mary Moerl, the celebrated Tyrolese Virgin, upon whom God had bestowed so many miraculous gifts. While she was kneeling in ecstasy on her bed he observed that she moved around towards the window. Neither he nor any of those present could tell the cause of it. At last, on looking out, they saw a priest passing by with the Viaticum, without a bell or chant, or any sound that could give notice of his approach.¹

Reflection

It was love, and love alone, which induced Jesus our Redeemer to remain among us in the Blessed Sacrament. O Jesus, most sweet Jesus, hidden under the Sacramental Species, give me such love and humility that I may be able lovingly to speak of this invention of boundless love, that all who hear it may begin to love Thee in reality.

Praised forever be Jesus in the adorable Sacrament of the Altar.

“I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy house; and the place where Thy glory dwelleth.”

¹ Heiligen Lexicon Bd. III.

“How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord.”

“Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O Lord: they shall praise Thee for ever and ever.”





Forty-Third Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

JOSEPH ALERTUS, author of "Socialism and the Church," relates in his book the following incident.

"In a certain city of Germany situated on the River Rhine, I one day made the acquaintance of an artist. As our friendship for each other grew, I was attracted by his great love and devotion of the Blessed Sacrament, and I was very much surprised when I heard that he was a convert. I therefore asked him to give me a brief history of his submission to the Church of Rome, whereupon he told me the following:

"My father was an official in Dresden, and, though we lived on moderate means, all went well with our family till my parents' death. A small capital was left to me as

my inheritance and my brother, who was many years my senior, was appointed my guardian. He placed me as an apprentice with a lithographer and furnished me with necessary funds whenever I needed them. Further than this he did not bother with me. As a result I was very lonely and many sorrowful hours I spent in my little room. One day when overwhelmed with grief, I wandered into a Catholic church and immediately I felt that peace had again taken possession of my soul. Day after day, I found myself directing my steps thither, and though I still attended the Protestant church on Sundays to join the hymns and listen to the sermon, I felt nearer to God in the Catholic place of worship.

““One day my guardian came to me with the unwelcome news that my share of the inheritance was entirely used up and that I must manage for myself. Almost distracted, I sought my room to give vent to my sorrow. For a while I managed to subsist on stale bread and water, but with all my economy, my cash account was running so low that I had scarcely enough left to buy a roll. I felt that I could not go to my brother, for his hard-heartedness was un-

bearable to me. Poverty simply stared me in the face and in my dilemma I again turned my steps to the Catholic church. Entering I knelt down before the altar and prayed most fervently, laying bare all my troubles before the Most High God. Suddenly I grew calm and went back to my workshop. To my surprise I was hardly there when the superintendent sent for me, telling me that he would in the future give me a salary every week, as my work had proved satisfactory. I still continued to pay my visits to the Blessed Sacrament, although the thought of becoming a Catholic had never entered my mind. When I was eighteen I saved enough money to take a course in the academy of Munich.

It happened that on a cold and blustery November evening, I sat near a window in one of the well-known beerstubes of Munich, sipping the beverage of the country. Suddenly the sound of a bell attracted my attention and I saw a priest, preceded by two torch-bearers, carrying the Blessed Sacrament to some sick person. Usually several people acted as escort to our divine Lord on such a journey, but it seemed the bad weather had proved a drawback. Then

a sudden thought flashed through my mind: if there was no Catholic to accompany the priest on his way, could I not give honor to the Lord by my presence! Immediately I left the place, and, bareheaded, followed the holy man into the narrow street where the dying one lived. As was his custom, the priest raised the Blessed Sacrament in Benediction before entering the house, and, overcome by a strange impulse, I sank on my knees before it. At that moment the grace of God struck my heart. I felt that I was face to face with my Maker. When I arose from the pavement, I had resolved to become a Catholic. The next day I put my resolution into practice by beginning a series of instructions under the direction of a priest. My lasting gratitude is due to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.'”¹

A man grown gray in years and in sin was one time roaming about the hilltops of his native land. It was a dark night and so thick was the mist that he soon lost his way and knew not whither to turn. However, had he only known it, his own home town lay directly before him in the valley. In his dilemma he stopped, and as he

¹ Socialism and the Church by Allertus.

looked, his heart beat rapidly with a sudden fear. What was *that* that appeared through the darkness? The gleam of a light shot forth and pierced the shadows. Straining his eyes he looked in amazement, for it suddenly occurred to him that *that* was the sanctuary lamp of his own parish church, the interior he had not seen for years. Forthwith his conscience began to upbraid him, and as if in a mirror he saw all the blemishes and ghastly sores that disfigured his soul.

His First Communion Day with all its joy and spiritual gladness loomed up before his mind, and then he thought of the after-days and his waywardness through the example of wicked companions. All this while the glimmering light in the distance seemed to burn its message into his very soul.

Overcome by remorse and filled with compunction of heart, he directed his steps toward its flickering beam. As the hour was now late he knew that it would be useless to seek admittance, but instead he knelt on the hard stone before the church door and with humble sighs told his heart's story to God. When morning dawned he sought

the priest, and after a sincere confession received the Holy Sacrament of the altar. Not long after he died the death of the just, having been called to the path of righteousness by the faint glimmer of the sanctuary lamp.¹

. . .

Blessed Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament, a Carmelite nun who lived in France, as stated by her biographer, was one day suffering great pain. Her sisters wishing to ascertain whether she could really find relief in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, to which she had a singular devotion, carried her at first to several places in which the Holy Eucharist was *not* kept, and exhorted her to pray to Jesus Christ. On every occasion she, however, answered in a plaintive voice, "I do not find my Savior here," and addressing herself to Him, she said, "My Lord, I do not find here Thy divine truth," entreatingly she besought the sisters to carry her into the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

When St. Louis, King of France, was on his death-bed, he was asked by the priest

¹ Eichsfeld Volksblatt, No. 40, 1882.

who brought him the Viaticum, whether he really believed that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was present in the Host. The saint, collecting all his strength, answered with a loud voice: "I believe it as firmly as if I saw Him present in the Host, just as the apostles saw Him when He ascended gloriously into heaven."¹

Reflection

O Sacred Banquet, in which the soul is replenished with graces and receives a pledge of future glory. O God of my salvation, I rest calm in the assurance that if I worthily receive this food, I have nothing to fear. Thy mercy will overshadow me all the days of my life. Under Thy protection no enemy can afflict me, nor trouble cloud my soul. Even if armies in battle array should rise against me, why should I fear? If God is with me, who shall be against me?

I believe, O Lord, that Thou art present both Body and Soul in the adorable Sacrament. Change the indifference of my heart into an ardent desire of loving Thee. Supply in me whatever faith is wanting in a mystery so incomprehensible to human un-

¹ Memoires by Rev. Father Poesel, C.S.S.R.

derstanding. Enliven me with a lively belief in Thy sacred Presence and grant that my heart may receive Thee reverently as its God, may receive Thee with confidence as its Savior, may receive Thee with love as its Father.

“Jesus, teach me the hidden secrets of Thy love.”





Forty-Fourth Reading and Reflection

THE REAL PRESENCE AS MERCIFUL SAVIOR

Legenda

IN a small town in one of the Eastern States the children of a public school were about to make their First Holy Communion. The happy day had arrived and the priest was addressing a few final salutary words to the eager little ones. In eloquent though simple terms he explained to them how marvelous were the graces that would be showered on their souls when Jesus came to their hearts for the first time, and besought them to try always to preserve their innocence in spite of the wickedness of the world.

“You know,” he continued, “that one of your number is missing from this happy crowd to-day. You have heard how suddenly he was taken sick and how quickly

he left your midst, but as he entertained a great yearning to receive this great Sacrament I administered Holy Communion to him on his death-bed. He died shortly after. Do not fail, my children, to pray for this little companion of yours to-day and also for his poor widowed mother. It will be, indeed, a day of unalloyed joy for your dear parents when you return home to them with Jesus in your hearts. All the sorrow and trouble you have caused them heretofore will be forgotten, all the anxiety they bore for you in your baby years, all the worry you caused them even till to-day, — all will be forgiven. Nothing will cloud their joy, but this poor widowed mother, what of her? To-day brings her nothing but sorrow, since this afternoon we are to consign to the tomb the mortal remains of her son.”

Not a dry eye remained in the church when the good priest concluded his sermon, and that afternoon saw the entire body of the First Communicants following the corpse to the cemetery. Evening came and the widowed mother heard a timid little rap at the door. “Who can it be?” she thought to herself, and in another moment a young

boy with an honest face and bright eyes stood before her.

“Are you coming, Anthony, to comfort me in my loneliness?” said Mrs. Veronica. “I know that my poor Felix was your friend.”

“Felix was, indeed, my friend,” responded Anthony, “and I feel my loss even more keenly since I listened to the pastor’s words this morning on the great happiness our parents experience to-day and the sorrow that is in your heart. And as I prayed for you and Felix, the thought came to me that I ought to make some sacrifice for the good Jesus who came to visit me. So I asked my father to allow me to take five dollars of my savings, to give to you. Please accept it,” and with these words Anthony slipped the gold piece into the widow’s hand. The good lady, deeply touched, thus made grateful acknowledgment: “God bless you a thousand times, my child. May the memory of this noble deed of your First Communion Day accompany you all through life and, like your guardian angel, protect you from all evils of body and soul.”

But the widow’s prayer did not save the boy at a time when he was merging into manhood. As long as Anthony was at

home with his parents no temptation came in his way. He attended to his religious duties most fervently, and on all occasions was exemplary in his conduct. After having learned his trade, however, he left his parental home and went to St. Louis, where it was his misfortune to associate with unbelievers and reprobates. Abandoning all his pious practices, Anthony soon became as dissipated and as godless as the others. It was not long till he was prostrated with hasty consumption and sent to a hospital to die. Priest, doctor, and Sisters of Charity did their utmost to persuade their patient to make his peace with God but all to no avail. Curses and blasphemies were the only answer to their entreaties.

But one day a strange visitor advanced to his bedside. It was an old woman bent with age, and supporting herself on a crutch. "Don't you know me?" asked the grey-haired lady in a feeble voice. "Don't you know Veronica the widow? I am she, at present an inmate of this institution. Someone told me yesterday that you were here very sick. As this was my last and only chance, I determined to call to-day to thank you once more for your gift to me on your

First Communion Day. I have been praying for you. And not only that, but I am sure my dear Felix who was buried on that day, and your good parents who have since followed him to eternity, have remembered you before the throne of God."

"Oh, say no more, I beg of you," cried out the repentant Anthony, weeping bitterly. "If I had only persevered and preserved the innocence of my First Communion Day!"

But there is a way to return to God when we have strayed away, and gladly did Anthony now seek that way. His heart was no longer closed to divine grace. The priestly hand was soon raised to give him absolution, and our forgiving Savior came to him in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. Thus strengthened, he delivered his repentant soul into the hands of his Maker, nevermore to take it back.

How beautiful an instance is this of God's mercy to a boy who performed a noble deed on his First Communion Day.¹

During the terrible days of the "Com-mune," 1871, in Paris a little boy, scarcely

¹ Eichsfeld Volksblatt, No. 13, 1893. "Pelican," 1884.

ten years old, was an acolyte at the celebrated church, "Our Lady of Victory." Although so young he was a great lover of the Prisoner of the Tabernacle, and it was his greatest delight to serve at the altar. Every nook and corner of this magnificent church was as familiar to him as his own home.

One morning after Mass he overheard a conversation in the sacristy by the priests, who discussed the probability of an attack on the church by the Communists. On previous occasions these godless men had desecrated the Blessed Sacrament in several churches of the capital. The pious boy shuddered at the thought that the same outrage might be committed at his church. From the conversation of the priests the boy understood that the Blessed Sacrament would be removed from the high altar to the altar of St. Peter situated in one of the chapels.

With a lighted taper in hand the little acolyte walked reverently before the priest, who bore the precious burden from the main altar to the chapel of St. Peter. The boy was very much grieved to see our dear Lord driven from His magnificent and costly

home to a less attractive habitation and while pondering over this condition, a happy thought struck the little knight of the Blessed Sacrament. He would remain with the Blessed Sacrament all night after the rest had gone. Entirely disregarding his youth and feebleness, he accordingly took his station before the tabernacle to watch and pray lest Jesus should be made the victim of these wicked men.

Within a short time the robbers made their appearance. Cursing and yelling they broke into the beautiful church, and directed their steps to the altar, where but a short time before Mass had been offered. The little sentinel trembled with excitement. He heard them break open the door of the tabernacle and on finding it empty pour forth horrid curses with threats of searching every nook and corner till the golden vessels were found.

After noticing the robbers tramping from chapel to chapel amid the vilest blasphemies uttered on account of their disappointment, he heard them coming closer to the chapel of St. Peter. His love for our Savior made him ready to risk anything to save the Blessed Sacrament. Our Lord requited the

desire of this innocent child's heart by inspiring him with the thought of immediately going to the sacristy to secure the key, which he found at the usual place. Having unlocked the tabernacle he took out the ciborium and with all possible speed carried it to his home. Without being noticed he went up several flights of stairs until he reached the nursery, which was entirely deserted with the exception of his brother, a four year old child.

Having deposited the ciborium on a table, the brave little knight most profoundly genuflected and after uncovering the sacred vessel asked his little brother to eat the precious Food, offering him one sacred Host after another until the ciborium was empty. Although he had an ardent desire to partake of the heavenly Food himself, he yet considered himself unworthy, not having been to confession. The heart of his innocent little brother became the tabernacle of the great Lord of heaven and earth.¹

. . .

In the time of the penal laws of England under Queen Elizabeth, a Catholic noble-

¹ Tabernacle and Purgatory, Vol. 9, page 212.

man was fined four hundred crowns for having received Holy Communion. Regardless of the iniquitous law, however, he continued to communicate, cheerfully paying the fine each time he was detected, although he was thereby obliged to sell two of his best estates. He declared that he never spent any money with greater joy than that he was obliged to pay for the privilege of receiving his Lord. Still more affecting is the example which is related of a dying man, in the time of St. Charles Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan. A dreadful pestilence had broken out in the city and a certain man in the hospital of St. Gregory, having been attacked by it, was soon reduced to the last extremity. In this state he was carried to a place where the dead bodies were thrown before being buried. Life, however, was not yet quite extinct, and after a night spent in this horrible situation, he heard in the morning the sound of a bell announcing the approach of the Blessed Sacrament. Seized with an ardent desire of receiving his Savior, he extricated himself with great difficulty from the dead bodies that were piled upon him, and crawling to the feet of the priest who

carried the Holy Viaticum, conjured him to give him Holy Communion. The priest, touched with compassion, immediately communicated him, but the efforts the poor man had made were too much for his feeble strength, and while his lips were still moving in prayer, and his eyes looking up to heaven, he fell back cold and lifeless at the feet of the priest.¹

Reflection

Christ compels no man to receive Him, nor yet does He deny Himself to anyone who approaches the Holy Sacrament with contrite heart. He ardently desired that all who thirst for the water of eternal life should come and drink freely. The great St. Chrysostom pictures Christ thus speaking to us and saying: "I do violence to no one, I draw no one, but if anyone comes to Me willingly and promptly, him I invite." Let us come then to have our thirst allayed with the never-failing waters which lead to eternal life.

^{*}"Let us approach the Holy Eucharist with an ardent desire," says Euthycius. "Let us not be sluggish or dilatory. Before we

¹ Ott: Euch., page 672.

partake of the Body and Blood of our Lord, let us pour forth our hearts in earnest desire. It is the pious practice of some to turn their minds at every hour of the day toward Christ dwelling in the Blessed Sacrament, and to tell Him how much they long to receive Him. If this practice seems wearisome to us, at least let us make aspirations of ardent desire before Holy Communion, so that when Jesus comes to us He may not feel unwelcome. 'For Thee my soul hath thirsted, my God, for Thee my flesh hath pined in countless ways.'"





Forty-Fifth Reading and Reflection

THE REAL PRESENCE AS AVENGER

Legenda

ONE stormy night in April, in the year 1852, a crowd of students was gathered in the café in a large University town. As might be supposed, their licentious revelry and conviviality lasted till the small hours of the morning. At last the party broke up, only to seek their homes in a very hilarious state of mind. One young man in particular conceived the idea of playing a huge joke. As he passed the priest's house, he ran up the steps and violently pulled the bell. After a few moments the good man responded to the call, and was met by the words: "Hurry, Father, hurry! A man lies dying at No. 25 N . . . Street, two flights up. Do not tarry or it will be too late." Obedient to the summons, the priest

immediately hurried away to get the Blessed Sacrament while the impious young man, laughing heartily, rejoined his companions. Arrived at the house with the Sacred Burden, the minister of God found that his mission had been a useless one, for instead of anyone being sick he was laughed to scorn for his pains. Thinking perhaps that he had mistaken the number, he repaired to several houses in the neighborhood, only to meet the sneers of the ungodly.

But what became of the student who had caused his God in the Blessed Sacrament such profanation? Though gifted with brilliant talents, he now began to fail from day to day. In preparing for examination, those answers which had hitherto seemed mere play work baffled his comprehension. Day after day he lost strength perceptibly, and soon his health was impaired both physically and mentally. Earnestly did his parents and friends entreat him to make his peace with God and at last he gave his consent.

Again the night was dark and stormy and the skies were leaden grey, while the winds whistled and raged about the sick man's house. On such a night as this two years ago he had subjected his God to infamous

treatment, and now the same God is being carried to him by the very one he had insulted. Hardly had the good priest crossed the threshold, however, when he was told the sorrowful news of the young man's death. Yea, verily, he already stood before that Judge of whom he had made a laughing-stock years ago. Already his sentence had been pronounced, — was it life or death for all eternity? ¹

. . .

Bernard, a pious Dominican friar, dwelt in his convent of Santarem, in Portugal, and his duty was to tend to the sacristy. Now it happened that he had charge of two little boys from the neighborhood, whom he taught to serve the priests of the Order at Holy Mass. As they were too young to be received into the convent, they went home to their parents at night, but during the day they barely quitted the monastery. Bernard had the tenderest affection for the children, and, as a reward for their good conduct, he taught them not only the catechism, but also the first rudiments of grammar; moreover he brought them up very piously,

¹ Eichsfeld Volksblatt, No. 4, 1883.

instilling into their tender minds a great love for the Blessed Sacrament and for the Mother of God. Each morning the boys used to bring with them a little refreshment, consisting of bread and fruit, which, Holy Mass being ended, they took in a little side chapel. In this chapel there was an image of the Blessed Virgin with the Divine Infant in her arms. Now the little boys never omitted to greet the Infant Jesus with a salutation, and, at last, one day, the Divine Child whose delight it is to dwell among the lilies, condescended to come down from His Mother's arms, and to ask them to give Him of their food. With joy they invited the fair Child to join their meal, who henceforth was their frequent companion.

On the Feast of the Ascension Blessed Bernard prayed with more than usual fervor, and then, his face shining like that of an angel, with the boys at his side, he went up to the altar to say Mass; when the Holy Mysteries were ended, Bernard prostrated himself on the steps of the altar, signing to the two boys to do in like manner. As they tarried long in deep prayer a sweet sleep overcame them, and so they went to the feast of Eternal Life. This happened in the year 1265.

When the brethren, according to custom, went into the choir, they found the three bodies prostrate upon the steps of the altar, the priest in his vestments, the boys in their white surplices, and their faces shining with heavenly beauty. Finding them lifeless the confessor of Blessed Bernard was commanded to give as far as he could, some account of so extraordinary a passing away; and, in presence of the whole community, he related what had happened to the children, and what the Lord had promised them.¹

...

It is related that a priest was once on his way to administer the last rites of the church to a dying person who lived on the outskirts of the city. On his way thither he met a man, known throughout the entire country for his wicked and dissipated life. As soon as the latter noticed the priest hastening reverently on his way, he began to curse the Blessed Sacrament, and then turned aside into the woods to avoid passing it. Without noticing the man, both priest and sexton pursued their course, eager to reach the bedside of the dying before it was

¹ Diario, Dominic. Boll., 8 Mai. Ott: Eucharisticum.

too late. Their duty done, they returned by the same way they had come, but to their astonishment when they reached the identical spot where they had met the impious man, they heard pitiful cries for help. The priest hurried in the direction of the sound and found the blasphemer lying in a pool of blood flowing from a ghastly wound. He had stumbled over the root of a tree, and had fallen, striking his head against a sharp jutting stone. "Indeed, the Lord is just," he moaned piteously. "I wanted to escape bending my knee, and that is why I turned my steps into the thicket, venting curses on God all the way. But now, blessed be his Holy Name, the curse has fallen upon myself." Humble and repentant, he received the Sacrament and died a few days later.¹

The devotion of the Catholics of Africa, and especially of Uganda, is wonderful to see. The children are deeply imbued with the spirit of faith, and there is hardly an hour when you will not find a group of them reverently gathered before the tabernacle. They say they are "Paying homage to the King," and they cut short their play

¹ "Pelican," 1890.

or run upon their errands in order to spend an hour with the hidden Lord.

No matter how hard these people have to work, there is always a crowd of them waiting in the darkness for the chapel to open, and the early morning mass is always well attended. At six o'clock the war tambourine sounds to call the people to mass, for of course bells are unknown in the interior of Africa. In other days the same sound would bring warriors armed for battle, but now it only calls them "To pay homage to the King."

Sunday is a great day for all the Christians. At the sound of the tambourine the natives come from their huts arrayed all in white. It is a wonderful spectacle. Whiter than snow in their immaculate gowns, fathers, mothers and children descend from their cabins and circle the valley, following the course of the river, and as they draw nearer the chapel not a word is spoken. But in the church, every eye is fixed in deepest recollection upon the tabernacle, the throne of the King they love so well. Not a head is turned. Not a smile escapes to greet a friend as they chant the Liturgical Litany in perfect unison. When this ser-

vice is over, they file out just as reverently, and talking quietly now return happily to their huts. As the sun goes down, the tambourine rolls again, and men, women and children stop where they are to pray the angelus. Then all assemble again for the last act of their day, night prayers in the chapel, and from the oldest to the youngest every heart is lifted in thanksgiving, in one last act of "Homage to the King."

Reflection

According to the testimony of the Canticle of Canticles, is not Christ all love? And if we desire beauty, is He not the most beautiful? If we look for goodness, is He not God, whose nature is goodness? All lovely is He, not only as regards His divinity, but also as regards His humanity. From the beginning of His conception to the triumph of His Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension, we hail Him as the Most High God. Hugh the Cardinal says: "Christ is all lovely in Himself and His members, and worthy to be sought and desired. The angels recognize in Him all beauty and grace, and therefore they desire

to behold Him more and more. Zacchaeus thought Christ all fair, when, eagerly desirous of seeing Him, he climbed into a sycamore tree to behold his God as He passed. Mary Magdalen sought Him and mourned in her seeking, saying: 'They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him.' Finally, if heaven and earth, angels and men, have desired Him, ought we not to long to be united to that same God in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist?"

“What have I in heaven and besides Thee, O Lord, what do I desire on earth? For Thee my flesh and heart have fainted away.”





Forty-Sixth Reading and Reflection

THE REAL PRESENCE AS DIVINE PHYSICIAN

Legenda

IN the year 1824, Mrs. Anna Mattingly of Washington, D.C., was miraculously cured of a severe illness in the following manner. She had been suffering from a dangerous cancer for several years; in spite of every remedy the disease seemed incurable. In time she lost the use of her left arm, her back and shoulders became ulcerated in consequence of a long confinement, and the symptoms of approaching dissolution began to appear. Finding that all natural means were unavailing, she had recourse to God. In concert with Prince Hohenlohe and her pastor, the Rev. Stephen L. Dubuisson, she began a novena in honor

of the Most Holy Name of Jesus and at its end received the Blessed Sacrament. When about to receive Holy Communion, believing that the time had come when she must either die or be restored to health, she uttered these words: "Lord Jesus, Thy Will be glorified." Her tongue was so rough and parched from fever that she was unable to swallow the host for five or six seconds, but the moment she swallowed it all pain instantly vanished and her body was entirely healed. She immediately arose and dressed herself, and having knelt down gave thanks to God, and received hundreds of visitors who came to congratulate her and to witness the miracle. These facts are all attested by a number of competent witnesses, and anyone who desires to examine the evidence can find a full statement of the case in the works of Bishop England.

• • •

In the year 1824, on the 25th of January, another miraculous cure was obtained during mass in the case of Mary Dorizon, which caused a great sensation in the diocese of Maux, in France, where it took place. Mary Dorizon, a poor woman about forty years of

age and much respected for her virtues, was subject from the age of 17 to a nervous disorder of a very extraordinary nature. All known remedies proved unavailing and particularly in the year mentioned, her disorder assumed an alarming character. She had daily convulsions, which rendered her person quite deformed, ulcers, swelling of the legs, and other maladies, resulting. It occurred to her friends to write to the Prince Hohenlohe on her behalf. The Prince, as before, directed them to perform certain devotions, and on Sunday, the 25th of January, two masses were offered up for her intentions. She fainted during both; but at the moment of the elevation at the second Mass recovered her senses and exclaimed: "Thanks be to our Lord, give me my clothes." She rose without assistance and remained long enough on her knees to prepare herself for Holy Communion, which she received a little before nine o'clock. In short, her cure was so complete that the patient, hitherto incapable of moving a step, repaired alone to the church and assisted at High Mass to the great astonishment of the spectators. Since that time she walks and works. Her person has become straight,

her wounds have closed, and her diseases have disappeared.¹

. . .

Augustina Mourette, a resident of Creteil on the Seine, France, had lost the use of her feet, her arms, and her tongue, being as a result completely crippled. For eighteen months Augustina lay upon her couch without any sign of hope.

It was in the year 1802 and the feast of Corpus Christi was to be celebrated publicly and with great pomp throughout the kingdom of France. A young girl friend of Augustina, by the name of Henrietta, had read in the gospel how in former times the people had brought the sick to the Savior as He passed by. "Now," thought she, "the very Savior passeth by our houses and His pity for the unhappy is ever the same; He gave health to one sick of the palsy and will it be harder for Him to manifest His pitiful goodness to a cripple of eighteen months?" Henrietta formed her plan and laid it before her companions, who entered into it most earnestly.

¹ Works of Dr. England, Bishop of Charleston, Vol. III, page 393.

The following day Augustina was dressed by her friends in her feastday clothes, placed in an armchair and carried by them through the midst of the astonished crowd and placed near the high altar where the Holy of Holies should rest. At the time of Benediction the maidens, dressed in white and with veils on their heads, took up their well-beloved companion in her chair and placed her down gently a few steps from the altar. Then, forming themselves in a semicircle around her, they begged with earnest faith and hope for her recovery, for a miracle. A thousand eyes fixed themselves now on the Blessed Sacrament, now on the crippled girl. The priest came down with the Most Holy in his hands, and placing it in the midst of the circle, said a prayer over the cripple. "Amen," responded the group of maidens. "Amen," resounded far and near. At this universal response to the supplication of the priest everyone perceived the sick girl rise from her chair without help and bend her knees with ease in thankful adoration before the Divine Physician.¹

. . .

¹ Annales du Saint Sacrament, 1865.

A magazine, entitled "Tabernacle and Purgatory," publishes the following account of a cure obtained through our Eucharistic Lord.

"On January 6, 1868, the feast of the Epiphany, I was compelled to take to my bed on account of illness. As I complained of a headache and felt a chill through my body, my parents supposed I had merely taken a cold which would soon pass away. They kept me in bed but did not think it necessary to call a physician. The next day my limbs were very weak, but I was still able to walk when supported. My parents now took my ailment for gout and kept me especially warm. The weakness in my limbs, however, kept on increasing, and in the space of two weeks they were so paralyzed that I was unable to stand upon them. Gradually my back, likewise, seemed to lose all feeling, and it could be pricked with a pin without my feeling anything.

"As my appetite had also abandoned me, Physician Dr. E. of O. . . . was summoned. He examined me carefully, and declared that I was suffering from nervous prostration, my nerves having become entirely inactive. For a long time I took medicines

and electric treatment, but received neither strength nor power to move my paralyzed limbs. The only result was that in some spots there seemed to be a little life for a time, but the next day it was all as before. Then Dr. E. ordered me to take sweat-baths, but these likewise did not help me and he finally gave up my case as hopeless.

“In the meantime I reached the age of thirteen, and had already spent a whole year in the pitiable condition. The other children of my age had received their first Holy Communion on Low Sunday, 1869, and I entertained an ardent desire to enjoy the same happiness. I expressed my wish to the pastor, who had frequently visited me during my illness. He at once consented to my petition but was not in favor of my receiving First Holy Communion in the church as I desired, but thought that I should remain in bed. I, however, felt convinced that if I could receive my First Holy Communion in the church I should be cured. At length the good pastor consented and appointed July 26th, the feast of my patron, St. Ann, as the day for my First Holy Communion. I could scarcely await the time, for I had a great longing

to be united with my Savior in the Blessed Sacrament; moreover, I confidently hoped to be restored to health. The day so ardently longed for came at last. My parents had me taken to the church in a little wagon and then my father carried me into the church and placed me in an armchair that was in readiness. Sister M. L., the Superior of the Franciscans, helped my mother to bring me up to the communion rail and my Jesus came into my heart. As I was not able to kneel, they had to place me back in the chair, where I made my thanksgiving and earnestly begged our Lord to cure me if it were His Holy Will.

“After I had prayed firmly thus for a time, I experienced a strange sensation of tugging and creeping in my paralyzed members. I had not felt anything like it for nineteen months, and the thought came to me at once, ‘Now I can walk again.’ This tugging and creeping kept on increasing and I could scarcely wait until Mass was finished so I might get up and walk. After part of the congregation had left, my father was about to take me in his arms and carry me back to the wagon, but I said to him ‘I can walk.’ When I asked him to step aside he

thought, of course, that it was only my imagination, but he let me have my way and as a precaution held out his hands to catch me if I should fall. But what a surprise awaited him! I arose sprightly and walked all alone to the other end of the church, where I knelt down and firmly thanked God for this great favor. The pastor, too, was deeply moved and immediately knelt down at the foot of the altar and offered up prayers of gratitude aloud in which all the people joined. Thereupon my mother and friends led me home. Nearly four years have passed since my miraculous cure and I never had a relapse of my former illness. The whole city can testify to this, as I take a walk through the streets every day." A. M.¹

Reflection

Our dear Savior shows Himself to the Blessed in glory, but to us he gives Himself whole and entire under the sacramental species. There the Blessed enjoy Him as a reward; here we receive Him as our food to help us on our way. There He communicates Himself to them as a clear object of

¹ Tabernacle and Purgatory, Vol. X.

vision, here He communicates Himself to us hidden in the accidents of the mystery. To both He could give nothing greater than Himself. Love in infinite intensity marked the dealings of Christ with the elect in heaven and struggling humanity on earth. Could there be a more convincing proof of His love for us?





Forty-Seventh Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

ST. JULIANA FALCONIERI, a holy virgin who lived in the thirteenth century, was distinguished for her extraordinary devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. In her last illness she earnestly desired to receive Him in the Holy Viaticum, but on account of the continual sickness to which she was subject, it was considered impossible to comply with her pious desire. Moved, however by her earnest entreaties, her confessor brought into her presence the Sacred Host, that she might have at least the consolation of adoring our Lord and receiving His last blessing. No sooner did she perceive the object of her ardent affection, than in a transport of love, forgetting her extreme weakness, she sprang from the bed, and cast herself on the ground to adore her God. Then with many tears

she asked as a last favor, that since she could not receive Jesus sacramentally, His most Sacred Body might be laid upon her breast, that her heart might be refreshed by the near presence of Him whom she so ardently loved. Her confessor, moved by her tears and entreaties and knowing well the virginal purity of her soul and her eminent sanctity, granted her request, and a corporal having been spread upon the breast of the dying virgin, the Blessed Sacrament was placed upon it in the immediate neighborhood of her heart. Scarcely had the priest laid the Sacred Host on the chaste bosom of Juliana, than, overcome by the sweetness of our Lord's presence and languishing with love, she cried out, "Oh my sweet Jesus!" and expired. Wonderful to relate the Sacred Host was no longer to be seen. In the last expiring act of love and longing desire with which Juliana had greeted the presence of Jesus, the Sacred Host had passed into her heart, leaving the impression of the consecrated particle upon her breast. Thus did Jesus satisfy the longing desire of this pure soul, coming to her as her Viaticum to accompany her to his heavenly kingdom.¹

¹ Life of St. Juliana Falconieri.

Favre, a French author, in one of his writings recounts the following incident.

In the year 1803 during the invasion of Piedmont by the French, a procession in honor of the jubilee granted on that occasion was being held in Turin. It happened that there was a most irreligious barber in the city, who scoffed and sneered at any of his customers expressing a desire to join the procession. When he had finished his work, he determined to see the grand display himself, going, however, not from any motive of piety, but as an occasion of offering insults to our divine Savior in the Sacrament of His love. But behold, at the moment when the priest carrying the Blessed Sacrament passed him, he fell dead on the ground in presence of the numerous throng who had assembled to pay their homage to our Lord. The people regarded his sudden death as a just punishment for his wickedness. The event caused such a sensation that the police magistrate had the wretched man's body exposed for forty-six hours at the door of the City Hall.¹

During the octave of the feast of Corpus

¹ "Pelican," 1893.

Christi, in 1445, thieves broke open the tabernacle of All Saints' Church, Cracow, Poland. A golden receptacle in which the Sacred Host was preserved was, however, all they could secure. Having reached the city gate, they examined their booty to see if it was of any value, but, to their displeasure, they found that it was only gilded copper. In utter disgust they threw it in a meadow near by. Then a strange occurrence took place. The meadow became an object of interest to the surrounding country, for from that time forth a peculiar glow seemed to rest over it, and innumerable lights floated to and fro, dispelling the darkness. Though many of the town's inhabitants knew of the peculiar appearances and called them the will o' the wisp, still none seemed to be able to define the present phenomena. Scientists were called upon to pass judgment upon the extraordinary feature, but they were completely baffled and unable to offer any satisfactory explanation. Finally the Bishop of the place ordered special prayers to be recited and a three days' fast to be observed, that God might reveal the reason of this wonder.

After the third day, the Bishop in solemn

procession went to the meadow, and lo, from the sedge and brushwood the Host in all its purity arose in sight of the awestricken people. The brilliant lights, therefore, were the work of angel-hands assembled to do reverence to their insulted Lord.

Casimir, King of Poland, had a church erected on the spot, and consecrated under the title of Corpus Christi. A mural painting within the edifice portrays all the incidents of the miracle. Even at the present time thousands of pilgrims visit the spot every year on the anniversary of the marvelous occurrence. It is almost impossible to doubt the above cited historic fact, since the very church erected by King Casimir and the mural paintings still exist.¹

Reflection

Let us seriously contemplate Christ's goodness, wisdom, and power in the Holy Sacrament. Let joy and goodness flood our hearts, for the gift is wondrous for such as we are. Too often the reception of Holy Communion is neglected by ungrateful men, yet God Himself directed that our souls

¹ Acta S.S. Aug. 3, page 317.

should be nourished by this heavenly food. In receiving Jesus, the clouds that darken our lives are dispersed, and rifts of heaven's dazzling brightness break in upon our souls. Thus we pass through trouble and tribulation to the brightness beyond.

When we approach the Holy Table no sorrow can really afflict us. Unlike the bitter sighs of Job in his misery, ours are sighs of Christian joy. His lamentations were mournful when he sat down to partake of ordinary bread, knowing perhaps with prophetic gaze of the "Bread that cometh from heaven." Christians should sigh with love when they eat of the Body of our Lord. But like the faithful Job, we ought to labor, doing penance, eradicating vice, and transforming our lives. With desire, with love, and with joy let us long for the time when we shall be again united to our God in Holy Communion.



Both Sisters and pupils had already retired for the night, when suddenly they were aroused from their peaceful slumber by the shouts of the mob and the demolishing of the outer doors of the Convent. With difficulty the pupils effected their escape as the bright flames almost enveloped them. Unheeding the frantic appeals of the Sisters, the men continued their unholy work. They were now engaged in plundering the church. One of their number ascended the steps of the altar, seized the ciborium, and emptied the consecrated particles into his pocket. Then he repaired to a tavern in the city, and surrounded by his associates began to relate his courageous deed.

In the midst of his blasphemous speech he suddenly noticed an Irish Catholic regarding him with an aspect of intense horror. Nothing daunted, however, the wicked man forthwith drew from his pocket several Hosts, and holding them on high so that the Catholic could see them, addressed him in a sneering tone: "Here, behold your God! Why need you go any more to seek him in your church?" The Catholic, dumfounded, stood irresolute. What should he do? But God's vengeance had already over-

taken the blasphemer. At that moment he turned deadly pale, and feeling himself seized with a sudden paroxysm, hurried from the room. A quarter of an hour, a half hour elapsed, yet he did not return. A dreadful fear fell on the spectators, and with one impulse they went to search for him. There he lay on the floor of another room, — a corpse! Thus had the just punishment of God been meted out to the perpetrator of the horrible sacrilege.¹

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A young man once lived in excessive criminal indulgence for so long that there seemed little hope of his ever again returning to the path of righteousness. At Easter time, however, a strange resolution formulated itself in his mind, and he determined to make his Easter duty. Yet the very determination did not make him change his mode of life, and, as a result, he approached the Holy Table with a grave sin upon his soul, and thus became guilty of a sacrilege.

But scarcely had he received the Sacrament when he was possessed by the devil,

¹ Works of Bishop Fenwick of Boston. Blessed Eucharist by Father Mueller, C.S.S.R.

who maltreated him excessively. Having been informed of the reality of the possession of the young man, the Bishop sent a missionary to exorcise the demoniac. In order to show the spectators that the man was really possessed, the priest commanded the devil to lift him up and hold him suspended in the air. The devil did so. Then the minister of God bade the evil spirit give him back the body. Again the fiend obeyed. "Answer me," the priest then said to the devil, "why dost thou take possession of the body of this unhappy Christian?" "Because I have a just right to it," Satan replied; "he is mine, since he made that bad Communion." This declaration struck such a salutary fear into the hearts of the spectators that they resolved not only never to make a sacrilegious Communion, but also to be more devout and fervent when receiving the Blessed Sacrament thereafter.

God showed excessive mercy to the young man, however, in freeing him through the prayers of the Church from the diabolical obsession.

Guillois, a French author, mentions the above cited case in one of his works.

• •

St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, as we read in her life, visited Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament thirty-three times a day. The Countess of Feria, a nun of the order of Poor Clares, was called the Spouse of the Blessed Sacrament, from her fervent and lengthened visits to it.

St. Elizabeth of Hungary was accustomed, even in her childhood, often to visit Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. If she found the church closed, she would affectionately kiss the lock of the door and the walls of the church for love of Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Eucharist.

St. Alphonsus being unable, on account of his advanced age, to walk to the church, was carried thither in a chair, in order to pay his accustomed visits to his Savior.

Father Aloys la Nuza, a great missionary of Sicily, was, even when a young student in the world, so much attached to Jesus Christ that it seemed as if he could hardly tear himself from the presence of his beloved Lord, on account of the great delight he found there; when he was commanded by his director not to remain before the Blessed Sacrament longer than an hour at a time, it was as great a difficulty to separate him-

self from the bosom of Jesus at the expiration of that time, as it is for an infant to tear itself away from its mother's breast. The writer of his life says that, when he was forced to leave the church, he would stand looking at the altar and turning again and again, as if he could not take leave of his Lord, whose presence was so sweet and consoling.

How many are there perhaps who must confess up to this day that they have never visited Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, resembling Jutta, the niece of the Empress St. Cunigunda, of whom it is related that she stayed at home, without any plausible reason, whilst the Blessed Sacrament was exposed in the church. St. Cunigunda, inflamed with holy indignation at this indifference, gave her niece a severe slap in the face. The Lord, in punishment of Jutta's indifference toward Him, allowed the print of St. Cunigunda's fingers to remain indelibly stamped on her face.

Reflection

If the unleavened bread of the Old Law was deemed desirable, how much more so ought not the Bread of the New Law, the

Bread of the Holy Eucharist, to be, since in it Christ is truly and really received! Certainly this is the Bread for which we should long exceedingly! "Great is that Bread," says St. Chrysostom, which fills the mind and not the stomach. That Bread is ours and the Angels'; that Bread is eaten and remains entire. We eat It, and by It we live, and on It we feed, with It we are nourished, and through It we reach heaven." Oh! how desirable is that Bread! Who is he who desires not to eat It? The manna given to the Jews of old was desirable. It was heavenly bread delivered to man by the ministry of angels, but soon they tired of it, and were ungrateful to God for His bounty. Not a few Christians act as these Jews. They partake but seldom of the Holy Eucharist, and when the divine and ecclesiastical precepts command them to do so, they approach the Sacrament tepidly and slothfully. Oh! let us take care not to loathe that Eucharistic Food.





Forty-Ninth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Historical

THE impious Frederick the Second, on account of his wickedness, had fallen under the ban of the Church, and sent a colony of 20,000 infidels into the valley of Spoleto because it was the patrimony of the Holy See. These banditti came in great numbers to plunder Assisi, and as St. Damien's convent stood without the walls of the city they assaulted it first. This nunnery was governed by the holy abbess St. Clare. They placed long ladders against the walls and began the ascent until it seemed that in a few moments the spouses of Christ would fall into the hands of these wicked men. It was obvious that there was no chance of escape, yet not for an instant did the holy virgin despair. In her ex-

tremity Clare immediately summoned her Sisters to the chapel, and as if by an inspiration from heaven mounted the steps of the altar, and with reverent hands took forth the ciborium containing the Sacred Body of our Lord. Then bowing in adoration, and with eyes raised to the holy vessel, she prayed thus: "O my Jesus, save thy servant whom Thou hast brought hither, and whom Thou dost so often nourish with Thy precious Body." Her prayer ended, she was interiorly comforted, feeling that the protection of heaven was resting upon her. Then with a brave heart she bore the ciborium to the convent wall, The men who were then trying to scale the height were completely dazzled by the light emanating from the sacred vessel and, panic-stricken, sought safety in flight. Thus was the holy convent saved from destruction by the invaders, who therefore directed their steps to the city.

But the marvel did not stop here. Hardly had the inhabitants of the valley of Spoleto recovered from the shock of this invasion when Vitalis Aversa, a cruel and proud general, laid siegeto Assisi for many days. St. Clare now used her endeavors to

save the city from which they had hitherto received all their temporal sustentances. Calling her nuns together she ordered them to strew ashes on their heads and, prostrating themselves before the tabernacle, interceded that the Lord should spare the city. They continued for a day and a night in prayer to God until powerful succors arrived and the assailants were compelled to raise the siege. Their general was soon after slain. It was not without reason, then, that Pope Innocent IV and Gregory IX held the holy virgin Clare in such high regard. God often worked miracles out of regard for His faithful servant.¹

. . .

There are many beautiful examples on record of the homage which kings and emperors have paid to the Savior of mankind humbly hidden in the Blessed Sacrament. Philip II, King of Spain, always dispensed with regal pomp and pageantry when he assisted at processions of the Blessed Sacrament, and mingled with the throng as an ordinary personage. Even the inclemency of the weather did not deter him

¹ Ott: Euch., 197. Her Life by P. P. Lechner.

from paying his tribute of honor to his Lord. One day as he was devoutly accompanying the Blessed Sacrament with uncovered head a page held his hat over him to shield him from the burning sun. "Never mind," said Philip, "the sun will do no harm. At such a time as this we must regard neither rain nor wind, heat nor cold."

Rudolph, Count of Hapsburg, whilst hunting one day, observed a priest carrying the Viaticum to the sick, whereupon he immediately alighted, and insisted on the priest mounting in his place. The offer was accepted and the priest, having gone through his sacred and pastoral duties, returned the animal to the count with many marks of gratitude. Yet this noble and Christian Count could not be prevailed upon to receive it back again. "No," said he, "keep it, for I am not worthy to ride upon a horse which has borne my Lord."

The well-loved ruler Charles II, King of Spain, on January 20, 1685, was riding in his royal coach beyond the limits of Madrid when his attention was attracted by a priest clothed in a surplice. The fact that he was accompanied only by the sexton, who

carried a small lantern, led the king to doubt whether the Blessed Sacrament or only the Holy Oils were being conveyed to the sick person. He, therefore, bowing his head respectfully, inquired, from his carriage, whether the Reverend Father was bearing the Holy Viaticum. No sooner did he learn that such was the case, than he quickly alighted and rendered humble adoration to the King of kings.

When he had adored his Lord and God, the king arose and saluted the priest. He urged him to enter his carriage, and when he had assisted him to his own seat, he closed the door. Then giving the postilion a sign to drive on, he himself assumed the rôle of servant, placing his right hand on the coach and carrying his hat in the left. So they moved onward, King Charles walking the entire distance with head uncovered.

Upon their arrival at the poor man's cottage, the King assisted the priest to alight, and again paid his adoration to the Blessed Sacrament. He reverently followed the minister of God into the sick-room and devoutly assisted at the sacred ceremony. At its conclusion, he approached the patient and spoke words of sympathy and

consolation. Moreover, he bestowed on him a royal alms and relieved the poor man's anxiety regarding his daughter's future by providing her with a suitable dowry. When the priest was ready to leave, King Charles urged him once more to occupy his own carriage with the Blessed Sacrament. He himself wished to return as he had come, walking again as a servant. The entreaties of his courtiers, however, urged him to consider his declining strength and the roughness of the road, and he consented to ride in another carriage.

The news of this noble deed spread like lightning and crowds gathered from all sides. They praised their King openly and, following his example, united with him in his profound homage and adoration to the Blessed Sacrament. The procession arrived at length before the church of St. Mark, and the King hastened forward, eager to be the first to assist the priest to alight. At the head of the assembled multitude he then followed the bearer of the Divine Mysteries into the church, where all received the Benediction, and then, amid the acclamations of his people, the royal worshipper returned to his palace.

Reflection

As all the Sacraments of the New Law confer grace on the recipients it is evident that some fruit is always garnered by those who approach worthily the most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. But to obtain a great abundance of grace from the reception of this wonderful sacrament, great preparation is necessary and desirable on the part of the recipient. All the sacraments are the overflowing fountains of Christ's goodness, from which we draw the purest waters of Divine Grace. The Eucharist is especially a perennial fountain of heavenly purity and grace; but as he who has the largest vessel draws the most water from a fountain, so he that has the best dispositions in receiving the most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist draws the greatest abundance of grace. The words of the Prophet Isaias express minutely the dispositions we should have in coming to Holy Communion.

“When one is about to depart from this world, three things arise before his mind, namely, death, judgment, and Paradise: death, which he knows is the passage to the next world; judgment, which he hopes will

be favorable; and Paradise, which he longs to obtain. Now, all these wishes, conceived as death approaches, will be vain and empty unless he puts his house in order and prepares himself properly. The same good dispositions should possess the heart of every communicant. Each one should, therefore, before partaking of the Eucharistic Bread, be actuated as if he were about to depart from this life, as if he were to stand immediately at the tribunal of justice, as if in fact he were deemed worthy this moment to enter the kingdom of heaven.”





Fiftieth Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

AS regards care and reverence towards the altar we have several beautiful examples in the lives of the Dominican saints among the Sisters. Teresa de la Cerda, who made her profession in the Convent of Jaen A.D. 1508, had a favorite statue of the Infant Jesus, and was fond of making little dresses for it and ornaments for its altar. One day, whilst busy in this way, she heard a voice which said, "Teresa, you do much, and take great pains for the painted figure of Jesus, but nothing for the living Jesus"; which words she understood refer to the Blessed Sacrament. Thenceforth she entirely devoted herself to working for our Lord in His veiled presence on the altar and is said to have made a tabernacle, which was one of the

most beautiful in Spain. She had the care of washing the corporals, a duty which she discharged with such devotion that it was her custom never to stir from the place where they were hung to dry, until they were removed, in order that she might prevent the flies from settling on them; and this act of reverence was so pleasing to our Lord that He allowed her once to see Him in the form of a beautiful Infant lying on the corporal and folding round Him.

Mary of Jesus was another whose love manifested itself in a special care and reverence for the altar. Whilst still in the world she would take upon herself the charge of washing all the altar linen and keeping the altar clean and decent. In the village where her husband's country house was situated, the Blessed Sacrament was left without any lamp, a neglect which sensibly afflicted her and which she was not slow to remedy. She provided a lamp and every evening brought the oil and trimmed it herself, and was often overheard exclaiming as she did so: "Oh that my blood could serve instead of oil for Thy lamp, my God. How gladly would I give it!"

We read of the singular devotion with

which Blessed John Massias (1645), one of the beatified Dominican lay-brothers, served Mass and adorned the church for solemn feasts. His moments of recreation were those spent in the discharge of his duties as assistant sacristan. Corpus Christi was the great day, when he delighted with all the simplicity of a child in devising new ways of decorating the church for the solemn procession of the Most Holy Sacrament.

Whenever the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, Dominica Torres (A.D. 1590) remained on her knees before It during the entire day, never stirring from the church and spending the whole time of exposition without rest or nourishment. Half of her life might be said to have been spent in adoration, for she watched before the altar during almost the entire night. On one occasion a token of the divine favor was given to Clare of Jesus Christ during her solitary vigils; for, finding the lamp extinguished, she complained tenderly to her Spouse, and on rising from her prostration she found the light once more burning brightly and steadily.

We have an account of one Friar who died in his attempt to preserve the Blessed Sacrament from fire. This was Alonso Gardes.

The flames had attacked the cloister and spread to the church, where Alfonso was watching in prayer. He ran to call his Brethren, but all had fled. He might have escaped himself, but he could not resolve to abandon our Lord; and, returning to the church, he opened the tabernacle, took out the ciborium, and placed it on his chest. Then, carrying his precious burden, he once more attempted to leave the church, but it was too late; the fire was in possession of the whole building and the falling roof buried him beneath its ruins. One of his companions, to whom he was very dear, was overwhelmed with grief at a death which seemed so sad and terrible; but one night, as he lay weeping and praying for his soul, Alfonso appeared, bright and beautiful, and stood by his bedside. "Is it you?" said his bewildered friend. "Where are you living?" In "heaven," replied Alfonso; "it is now three days since I was admitted to the beatific vision." This was on the third day after the fire, so the Friar knew that he had been received into heaven on the very day of his decease.¹

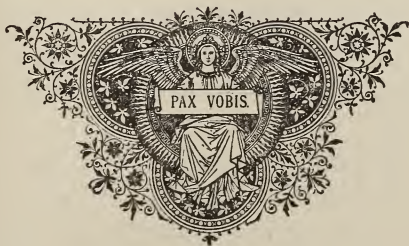
¹ Dominican Lives: Drane.

Reflection

Christ teaches that the guest who comes to the wedding-feast should take the lowest place. St. Bonaventure explains this feast mystically, while Venerable Bede discusses the union which should exist between Christ and the guest. As often as anyone approaches the Eucharistic Banquet, Christ admonishes him to sit in the lowest place. But we are liable to ask: why does Christ order everyone to the lowest place at a banquet when all men desire to be seated in the chair of honor near the Master? St. Bernardine interprets the meaning by saying that the lowest place means death, and he goes on to say that if we desire to receive Holy Communion as our divine Lord wishes, we should dispose ourselves for it as those good souls do who are about to die. If you knew that death was threatening you, would you not regard the pleasures and vanities of this world as nothing, would you not flee from all occasions of sin, would you not forgive your enemies from all your heart, and restore ill-gotten goods? As you would prepare yourself with the most pious sentiments and sublime thoughts to die, so

you ought to dispose your heart to receive within its confines that God of the Eucharist who is to be your portion for all eternity.

At the sight of Thy Sacrament, O Jesus, my heart melts with love and my whole being humbles itself at Thy feet. Ah, I understand better my nothingness, my vileness; I understand at last all that Thou art, O my God, and the little that I am. Look upon me, O Lord, and have mercy upon me. Bring down my pride that destroys me and blinds me. Drive all disorder from my mind, and fill my heart with humility and love. Let me know Thee, O Jesus, in order to love Thee better; let me know myself in order to humble myself more and more.





Fifty-First Reading and Reflection

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Legenda

AMONG the survivors of the terrible catastrophe that befell the island of Martinique at the eruption of Mount Pelee, May 8, 1902, were the sisters of the congregation of De la Deliverande, twenty-three in number. That Morne Rouge escaped devastation, they attributed to divine intervention, for, though their community was nearest to the crater, yet it was the only one within the zone of disaster that escaped unharmed.

The election campaign was on for the house of French deputies. The socialists formed a strong majority in St. Pierre, and about four hundred of them were in Morne Rouge, near St. Pierre. They denounced the Catholic Clergy and went so far as to

threaten the Sisters' lives. Night and day they sang ribald campaign songs. St. Pierre was placarded with blasphemous proclamations. The blacks threatened to seize the church and turn it into a theatre and the cathedral of the city into a dance-hall.

Sister Mary of the Infant Jesus describes the events thus: "We were in deadly fear of our lives, and for two days and nights stayed in the church of Notre Dame, in Morne Rouge, praying. Early on the morning of May 8th, the mountain began to rumble and to emit smoke. Father Marie celebrated holy Mass at six o'clock; Father Bruno at half past seven. Services were hardly over before the good people of the town began to flock in terror to the church. The priest distributed Holy Communion when suddenly there appeared before the altar, our Savior, showing His Sacred Heart.

"The members of the congregation, kneeling cried to one another, 'See the Sacred Heart!' The vision was sad-faced and wan. All that day of terror we remained in prayer. Fire, steam, and boiling mud were all around us, yet our place was untouched; not a person was lost or harmed."¹

¹ Tabernacle and Purgatory, Vol. 13.

In the writings of the saints we find expressed most tender sentiments in honor of the Holy Eucharist:

St. Ignatius of Antioch: "I desire not perishable food: I crave for the Divine Bread, the Bread of Heaven, the Bread of Life, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; I thirst for the divine Beverage, His Blood which communicates undying love, life eternal."

St. Thomas of Aquin: "The Holy Eucharist is perfect grace, for it contains truly and substantially Christ, who is the fullness of grace."

St. Peter Canisius: "St. Augustine teaches and admonishes all Christians to avail themselves, at least every Sunday, of this salutary remedy of Holy Communion, providing they are of good will and do not purposely persevere in sin and in sinful resolutions."

St. Gregory Nazianzen: "By nourishing His sheep with His Flesh after having purchased them with His Blood, the Good Shepherd truly gives His life for them. Holy Eucharist is the expression of His magnanimous generosity and His boundless Love."

St. Optatus of Milevis: "Can there be a greater sacrilege than to overthrow the altars of God, upon which the members of Christ reposed? What else is the altar but the throne of the Body and Blood of Christ."

St. Nicholas, Martyr of Gorkum: "I will gladly give my life for the one, true, Catholic faith, and above all for this truth, that in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, under the appearance of bread and wine, Jesus Christ is truly present with Godhead and perfect Manhood."

St. Gaudentius: "The Creator and Lord of nature, who let bread grow from the earth, changes the bread into His own body because He has promised it and is able to keep His promise; He who changed the water into wine, now changes the wine into His own blood."

Reflection

Our divine Master teaches us that the Holy Eucharist was prefigured by the manna. It has indeed striking analogies, and it is evident that it infinitely surpasses it in excellence.

The manna was given to the Jews without their having done anything to deserve it, or

rather, at the very moment when they were murmuring against Moses and against the Lord.

Is not that goodness still more manifest in the gift of the Holy Eucharist? What had men done to merit this divine Good? Was it not at the very time that the Jews murmured against the true Moses that it was promised? Was it not when they were plotting against the life of the Divine Liberator that it was given? Yes, the very night when He was to be given up, Jesus Christ made this offering to men, thus answering the excess of their ingratitude by the greatest miracle of His Love.

Moses called the manna the glory of God, whose power and goodness it clearly manifested, yet the Holy Eucharist merits that name by a still greater title, for nowhere are the divine attributes so manifest, and nothing else procures so much glory to God. The Holy Eucharist is, in reality, God glorifying God.

The manna was also called the bread of children. Now, the Holy Eucharist is in a special manner the bread of the children of God, bread given to them when they have come forth from the bondage of sin, and

which is their food during their journey in the desert of life.

Manna was to the Israelites their safety and their strength, and, according to the remark of Origen, they performed no exploit of consequence before being fed by it, whilst they won numberless victories after it. The Holy Eucharist is the whole strength of the Christian, who by it becomes omnipotent against the attacks of hell.

Hail, O divine Eucharistic bread of heaven, manna given to the new people of God; glory of the Lord, delicious food after which I hunger!

O Jesus, give me always of that Bread. Grant that I may communicate with good dispositions, and that, strengthened by that food of the strong, I may deserve to partake of it in heaven, where it is the source of boundless happiness.





Fifty-Second Reading and Reflection

THE REAL PRESENCE AS DIVINE PHYSICIAN

A Pastoral Letter

IN his Pastoral letter of June 22, 1823, the Right Reverend Doctor Doyle of Kildare, Ireland, writes as follows: "We announce to you, my brethren, with great joy a splendid miracle which the Almighty has wrought even in our days, at the present time, and in the midst of ourselves. We announce it to you with a heart filled with gratitude to heaven, that you may unite with us in thanksgiving to 'The Father of mercies and the God of consolation,' Who consoles us in every tribulation, and who has even consoled us by restoring, miraculously, Miss Mary Lalor, to the perfect use of her speech, of which for six years and five months she had been totally deprived." Here the Right Reverend Bishop refers to a letter of the Very Reverend N. O'Connor,

Rector of the Parish of Maryborough. This letter gives a detailed account of the miracle as it occurred. It reads as follows:

MARYBOROUGH, June 11, 1823.

“My Lord: In compliance with your request I send you a statement of the facts relative to Miss Lalor, which I have heard from others and witnessed myself.

“I am now in the house where she was deprived of her speech. She is at present in the eighteenth year of her age, and as she is connected with one of the most respectable Catholic families in this county, and has had frequent intercourse with them, her privation of speech during six years and five months is established beyond contradiction. Her hearing and understanding remained unimpaired, and she was accustomed to carry a tablet and pencil to write what she could not communicate by signs.

“Medical aid was tried by Doctor Ferris, at Athy, and Surgeon Smith of Mountrath, but without effect. The latter gentleman (as a similar case never occurred in his practice) resolved to have it submitted to the most eminent physicians in Dublin, eight of whom were consulted, and the result was

that no hopes could be entertained for her recovery. This decision was imparted by Doctor Smith to her father, apart from Mrs. and Miss Lalor, all of which circumstances the doctor recollected on the 14th instant, when he saw Miss Lalor and heard her case was miraculous.

“You, my Lord, are already aware that, according to your directions, written to me on the first of June, I waited on Mr. Lalor and communicated to him and to his family all that you desired. They observed it with exactness; and on the morning of the 10th instant, Miss Lalor having confessed to me by signs, and disposed herself for receiving the Holy Communion, I read to her again your Lordship’s letter, the directions of the Prince of Hohenlohe, namely, that she should excite within her a sincere repentance, and a firm resolution to obey God’s commandments, a lively faith, and an unbounded confidence in His Mercy, an entire conformity to His Holy Will, and a disinterested love for Him.

“I had previously requested the clergy of this district to offer up for Miss Lalor the holy Sacrifice of Mass, at twelve minutes before eight o’clock on the morning of the

10th, keeping the matter a secret from almost all others, as you had recommended. However, as it became known to some, a considerable number collected in the chapel, when my two coadjutors, with myself, began Mass at the hour appointed. I offered the Holy Sacrifice in the name of the Church. I besought the Lord to overlook my own unworthiness and regard only Jesus Christ, the great High Priest and Victim, Who offers Himself in the Mass to His Eternal Father, for the living and the dead. I implored the Mother of God, all the angels and saints, and particularly St. John Nepomucene. I administered the Sacrament to the young lady, at the usual time, when instantly she heard, as it were, a voice distinctly saying to her, 'Mary, you are well,' when instantly she exclaimed, 'O Lord, am I?' and, overwhelmed with devotion, fell prostrate on her face. She continued in this posture for a considerable time, whilst I hastened to conclude the Mass, but was immediately interrupted in my thanksgiving by the mother of the child pressing her to speak.

"When at length she was satisfied in pouring out her heart to the Lord, she took

her mother by the hand, and said to her, 'Dear mother,' upon which Mrs. Lalor called the clerk and sent for me, as I had retired to avoid the interruption, and on coming where the young lady was, I found her speaking in an agreeable, clear, and distinct voice, such as neither she nor her mother could recognize as her own.

"Thus, my Lord, in obedience to your commands, I have given you a simple statement of facts, without adding to or distorting what I have seen and heard, the truth of which their very publicity places beyond all doubt, and which numberless witnesses as well as myself could attest by the most solemn appeal to heaven. I cannot forbear remarking to your Lordship how our Lord confirms the doctrine of His Church and His own presence upon our altars, by the same miracles to which He referred the disciples of St. John, saying: 'Go, tell John the dumb speak,' etc., as a proof that He was the Son of God who came to save the world.

"I remain, Your Lordship's dutiful and affectionate servant in Christ,

N. O'CONNOR."

"To the Right Rev. Dr. DOYLE,
Old Derring, Carlow."

Reflection

“Now here is exhibited a prodigy,” continued the Right Reverend Bishop, “which is only different in kind, but not inferior in magnitude to the raising of the dead to life. He who at the gate of Naim put His hand to the bier, and raised the widow’s son to life, and gave him to his mother, here He spoke to the heart of a faithful servant, loosed the tongue which infirmity had paralyzed, and restored a happy daughter to the embraces of her parent. We ourselves have participated in their joy, on conversing as we have lately done with this favored child of heaven.

“Exult then, dearly beloved brethren, and rejoice that Almighty God has thus visited you His people, reanimating your faith, enlivening your hope, and exalting your charity, consoling your sorrows, relieving your distress, and healing your infirmities, preparing in your sight a table against all who afflict you, and urging, by these manifestations of His power and goodness, to rely upon His Providence, ‘Whereas He has care of you!’

“Our divine Savior continues to love men

with the greatest love, and gives them the most certain and astonishing proofs of it, deserving of all their admiration and gratitude. Does not the heart of Jesus burn with the most lively, most amiable, most merciful charity? There is not one creature for whom that adorable Master is not a guide, a friend, and a most loving and devoted Father!

“Jesus Christ in the most Blessed Sacrament unceasingly gives His life for men. During the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass He prays for them to His heavenly Father, from whom He asks pardon for sinners, by showing Him His wounds still bleeding, and which will not close.

“‘The love of Jesus Christ for men,’ says St. Bernard, ‘led that sweet Savior not only to sacrifice His life, but to give Himself wholly to them as their food.’ What a prodigy of tenderness!

“Jesus in this Sacrament loves men, and proves it to them in the most admirable way. He loves them all and calls them to Him to assist them, to console them, to instruct them, to heal them, to strengthen them, to give them His Body and His Blood, His merits, His graces, and His kingdom.

“At the altar, as well as during the days of His mortal life, He dries the tears of the afflicted, He gives sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, health to the sick, liberty to those who are the slaves of sin and the devil. The God of the Eucharist passes from age to age doing good.

“Jesus in the Host is only clemency and goodness, He appearing to forget His justice, to remember nothing but His mercy. He does not return contempt for contempt, indifference for indifference, for it is to the tepid and to sinners, as well as to the fervent and just, that He addresses these words: ‘Come to me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.’”

During this Holy Hour let us go to Jesus as the Author of love. Let our hearts draw near to His, so that He may warm them with the same fire. It is by coming to visit the Holy Sacrament that we come to participate in His sentiments of tenderness, sweetness, and zeal.

How happy should we be, O Jesus, could we but make reparation to Thy glory by our respect, by our zeal, aye even by the shedding of our blood. At least, most adorable Savior, grant us the grace to love

Thee in the most Holy Sacrament of the altar, with the most tender, the most generous, the most perfect and the most constant love.

“Very Bread! Good Shepherd tend us,
Jesu, of Thy love befriend us.
Thou refresh us, Thou defend us,
Thine eternal Goodness send us,
In the Land of Life to see,
Thou Who all things canst and knowest,
Who on earth such Food bestowest,
Grant us with Thy saints, though lowest,
Fellow heirs and guests to be.”

Prayer for a Happy Death

(CARDINAL NEWMAN)

Oh, my Lord and Savior, support me in that hour in the strong arms of Thy Sacraments, and by the fresh fragrance of Thy consolations. Let the absolving words be said over me, and the holy oil sign and seal me, and Thy own Body be my food, and Thy Blood my sprinkling; and let my sweet Mother Mary, breath on me, and my Angel whisper peace to me, and my glorious Saints . . . smile upon me; that in them all, and through them all, I may receive the gift of perseverance, and die, as I desire to live, in Thy faith, in Thy Church, in Thy service, and in Thy love. Amen.

Solemn Ceremonies in connection with the Holy Hour at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Paterson, N. J.

Program

1. Processional: Chancel choir and torch-bearers.
2. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and "O salutaris hostia."
3. Lights down (in body of church). Torch-bearers advance to upper platform of the altar and form semicircle. All the sanctuary boys recite in a very solemn manner, "Holy, holy, holy," three times, concluding with "Glory be to the Father," etc., and "Out of the depths have I cried to Thee, O Lord," etc.
4. Hymn. (lights up)
5. Petitions and prayer. (petitions to the Blessed Sacrament which the various individuals had prepared during the week and deposited on the side altar)
6. Hymn.
7. Reading: any selection on the Holy Eucharist.
8. Hymn. (after song; lights down)
9. Spiritual Communion: act of contrition; "O Lord, I am not worthy"

(choir); "O Jesus, I believe that Thou art present" (recited by the entire congregation); the "Our Father and Hail Mary," chanted. (lights up, congregation rises)

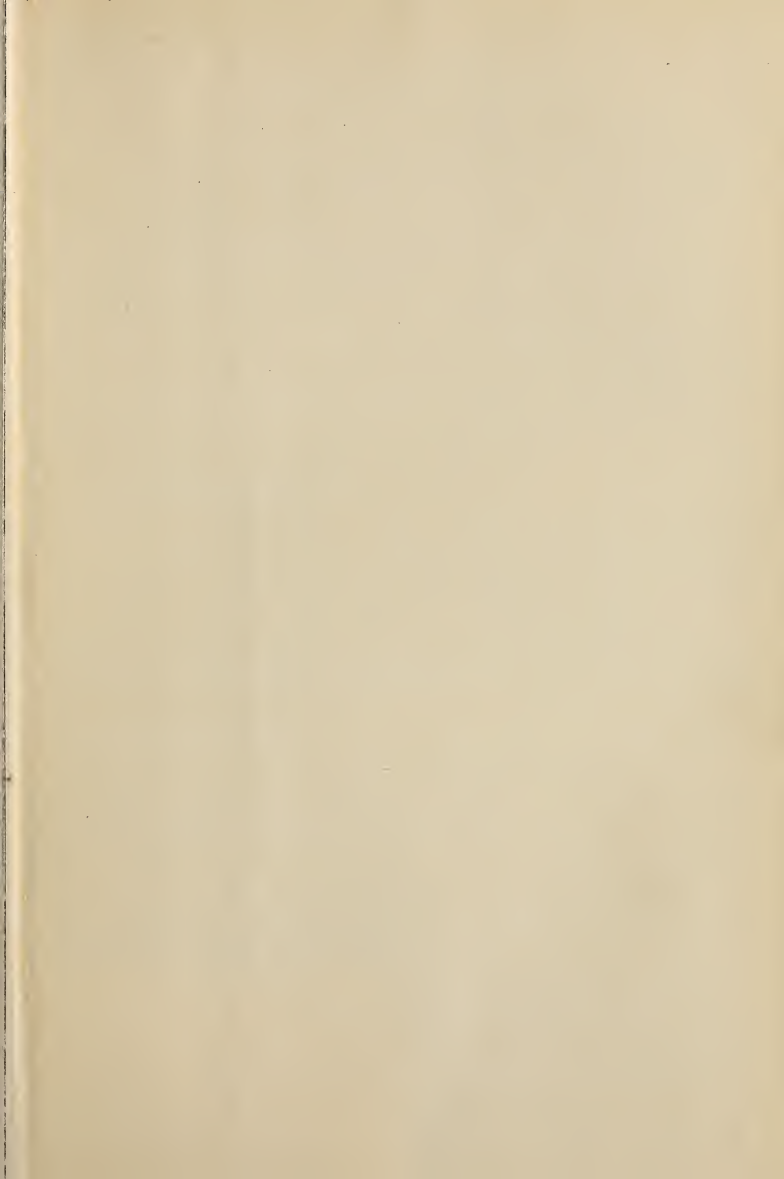
10. Hymn. "Holy God, we praise Thy name." Lauda Sion. (little flower girls strew flowers before the Blessed Sacrament.)
11. Reading: Miracles and Legends of the Blessed Sacrament.
12. Hymn. (after song; lights down)
13. Litany: Litany for a Happy Death.
14. Hymn. Concluded by "Tantum Ergo," Benediction and Laudate. (lights)

The last Sunday of every month has been set aside for the Holy Hour.

By keeping a watch near, the priest can time himself.

A boy dressed in white is called the petition bearer; he is flanked right and left by two other boys. The flower girls enter at No. 9.

Organ chimes are successfully introduced at No. 9, and during Benediction. The Children of Mary and other church societies are invited at times to act as a guard of Honor during the Holy Hour.



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