



July is dedicated to Precious Blood of Jesus.

"Biblical revelation, both in its figurative stage in the Old Testament and in its perfect and fulfilled stage in the New Testament, connects blood very closely with life, and authentically with death, exodus and the Pasch, with the priesthood and sacrificial cult, with redemption and the covenant. The Old Testament figures associated with blood and its redemptive significance are fulfilled perfectly in Christ, especially in his Passion, Death and Resurrection. Thus the mystery of the Blood of Christ is to be found at the very centre of the faith and of our salvation." Directory of Popular Piety and the Liturgy Rome 2002 n.175. See also nn 176-178.]

In these challenging times we need to see how to help people use this devotion to reflect Christ's gift of himself on the cross. *"When they came to Jesus they saw he was already dead, so they did not break his legs, but one of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance; and immediately there came out blood and water."* [John 19:33,34] Commenting on this Nick King sj writes: *"The blood shows that the lamb has been truly sacrificed, the water is the symbol of the Spirit flowing out from the Temple, Ezk 47:1, 1 Jn 5:6-8. They may also be symbolic of the water of baptism and the blood of the Eucharist, the two chief sacraments empowered by Jesus death".* St John Henry Newman takes up the theme in his hymn, *Praise to the holiest* :

O wisest love! That flesh and blood which did in Adam fail,
should strive afresh against the foe, should strive and should prevail.

And that a higher gift than grace should flesh and blood refine,
God's presence and his very self, and Essence all divine.

The eighteenth century Italian hymn *Glory be to Jesus* develops this more fully, and is printed after the Litany of the Precious Blood on page 4. Many other hymns and contemporary gospel songs reflect the importance of this sign of Christ's selfgiving. As we continue to live with the CoVid crisis we are faced with so many people who have lost their lives, been severely affected by the virus, or whose lives have been changed dramatically by bereavement or other loss. We honour also all those who have given of themselves so generously to care for the sick as well as so many who have equally bene unstinting in their service to sustain our society. They have indeed "sweated blood" to serve others, to keep them safe. Thus the image of Christ giving of his blood to save us all resonates in the lives of so many throughout history and in our own times. The prayer, *Anima Christi*, is also on page 4. While it appears at the beginning of Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises it has older roots, at least in the fourteenth century, while some attribute it to St Patrick.

We see this theme also in the lives of martyrs such as the Irish Archbishop Oliver Plunkett, the last martyr to die in England for the faith. He was hung drawn and quartered on 1 July 1681. His body rests in Downside Abbey, his head in St Peter's Church, Drogheda. He is now known as the patron of peace and reconciliation in Ireland. The apostle Thomas was likewise a witness by his blood, being martyred in Chennai [Madras], establishing the Christian faith in India. We honour too St James who witnessed by his blood being beheaded by King Herod Agrippa, perhaps in 44AD, and whose relics inspire the great act of faith, the Camino.

Witnessing to the faith is the heart of devotion to Mary Magdalene, the first witness to the Resurrection, and so in some places even named as an apostle figure. In July Benedict and Bridget of Sweden are invoked as Patrons of Europe, and so in our diocese we pray for the Benedictine communities at Turvey and the Bridgettine sisters in Iver Heath. Ignatius of Loyola closes the month, reminding us of the Jesuit tradition of the sisters at Thornton.

Family witness to faith is there in the feast of St Martha, and especially in honouring SS Anne and Joachim, the parents of Mary. In them we see the valuing of preserving the "chain of memory" of our faith through family tradition and support. See www.catholicgradparentsassociation.org for resources to share across our communities.

A PRAYER CALENDAR IN JULY

- July 1 St Oliver Plunkett, martyr – pray for the Church in Ireland
- July 3 St Thomas, apostle – pray for the Church in India
- July 5 FOURTEENTH SUNDAY of the YEAR
Father, Lord of heaven and earth by whose gracious will
the mysteries of the kingdom are revealed to the childlike
make us learn from your Son humility of heart,
that in shouldering his yoke we may find refreshment and peace*
- June 11 St Benedict, abbot. Patron of Europe – pray for Europe
- July 12 FIFTEENTH SUNDAY of the YEAR
God of the heavens, God of the earth
all creation awaits your gift of new life.
Prepare our hearts to receive the word of your Son
that his gospel may grow within us
and yield a harvest that is a hundredfold*
- July 16 Our Lady of Mount Carmel –
in the Carmelite tradition Mary is honoured as “Mother and Teacher in the Spirit.”
So intimately does she share in the mystery of Christ that she is still a mother,
continuing to give you children with the Church,
encouraging them by her love,
and drawing them by her example to pursue perfect charity.
She is the model of all who live by the spirit of the Gospel;
as we look up to her in prayer
we learn from her mind to love you above all things,
from her spirit to be rapt in contemplation of your Word,
and from her heart to serve the needs of others.#
- July 19 SIXTEENTH SUNDAY of the YEAR
O God, patient and forbearing,
you alone know fully the goodness of what you have made.
Strengthen our spirit when we are slow and temper our zeal when we are rash,
that in your own time you may produce in us a rich harvest
from the seed you have sown and tended.*
- July 22 St Mary Magdalene
- July 23 St Bridget of Sweden , Patron of Europe – pray for Europe
- July 25 St James, apostle – pray for the Church in Jerusalem
- July 26 SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY of the YEAR
SS Anne and Joachim, grandparents
God of eternal wisdom, you alone impart the gift of right judgement.
Grant us an understanding heart, that we may value wisely the treasure of your kingdom
and gladly forgo all lesser gifts to possess that kingdom’s incomparable joy*
- July 29 St Martha – pray for the gift of hospitality
- July 31 St Ignatius of Loyola – pray for all inspired by the Jesuit charism, for Pope Francis

* Sunday Collects from *OPENING PRAYERS ICEL Canterbury Press*

from the Preface for “Mary, Mother and Teacher in the Spirit” in *Collection of the Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary*
LTP 1992

LITANY of the PRECIOUS BLOOD of JESUS



Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy

God our Father in heaven **have mercy on us**
God the Son, Redeemer of the world
God the Holy Spirit
Holy Trinity, one God

Blood of Christ, only Son of the Father **be our salvation**
Blood of Christ, incarnate Word
Blood of Christ, of the new and eternal covenant
Blood of Christ, that spilled to the ground
Blood of Christ, that flowed at the scourging
Blood of Christ, dripping from the thorns
Blood of Christ, shed on the cross
Blood of Christ, the price of our redemption
Blood of Christ, our only claim to pardon
Blood of Christ, our blessing cup
Blood of Christ, in which we are washed
Blood of Christ, torrent of mercy
Blood of Christ, that overcomes evil
Blood of Christ, strength of the martyrs
Blood of Christ, endurance of the saints
Blood of Christ, that makes the barren fruitful
Blood of Christ, protection of the threatened
Blood of Christ, comfort of the weary
Blood of Christ, solace of the mourner
Blood of Christ, hope of the repentant
Blood of Christ, consolation of the dying
Blood of Christ, our peace and refreshment
Blood of Christ, our pledge of life
Blood of Christ, by which we pass to glory
Blood of Christ, most worthy of honour

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, *graciously hear us, O Lord*
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, *spare us, O Lord*
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, *have mercy on us*

V. Lord, you redeemed us by your love
R. You have made us a kingdom to serve our God

Let us pray
Father, by the blood of your Son,
you have set us free and saved us from death.
Continue your work of love within us
that by constantly celebrating the mystery of our salvation
we may reach the eternal life it promises.
We ask this through Christ our Lord, AMEN.

This litany was approved for the universal Church by Pope St John XXIII in 1960

HYMN

Glory be to Jesus, who in bitter pains
Poured for me the life blood from his sacred veins.

Grace and life eternal in that blood I find.
Blest be his compassion, infinitely kind.

Blest through endless ages be the precious stream
Which from endless torment doth the world redeem.

There the fainting spirit drinks of life her fill.
There as in a fountain laves herself at will.

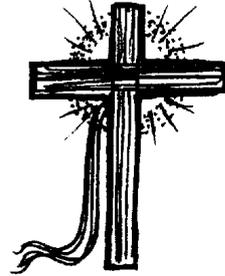
Abel's blood for vengeance pleads to the skies
But the blood of Jesus for our pardon cries.

Oft as it is sprinkled on our guilty hearts
Satan in confusion, terror struck, departs.

Oft as earth exulting wafts its praise on high,
Hell with horror trembles, heaven is filled with joy.

Lift ye, then, your voices; swell the mighty flood.
Louder still and louder praise the precious blood.

Italian – 18th century Translated Edward Caswall.



ANIMA CHRISTI

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O Good Jesus, hear me.
Within your wounds hide me.
Permit me not to be separated from you.
From the wicked foe, defend me.
At the hour of my death, call me
and bid me come to you
That with your saints I may praise you
For ever and ever. Amen.