

**SOLEMNITY OF THE  
MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST  
THE NINTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME  
2-8 June 2024**

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- Sun.      **Solemnity of the Most Holy Body & Blood of Christ**  
June 2    **CHRIST'S LIVED LESSON IN LOVING**  
            A Reflection developed from a Homily by St. John Chrysostom
- Mon.      **Memorial of St. Charles Lwanga and Companions**  
3          **HOMILY AT HOLY MASS FOR THE MARTYRS OF UGANDA**  
            Apostolic Journey to Africa of Pope Francis, 28 November 2015
- Tues.     **Tuesday of the Ninth Week in Ordinary Time**  
4          **A TIME FOR CHRISTIANS TO ENGAGE WITH THE WORLD**  
            From an Article by Pope Benedict XVI in the Financial Times
- Wed.      **Memorial of St. Boniface**  
5          **LOVING THE CHURCH AS ONESELF**  
            A Reflection developed from the "Franciscan Media" Website
- Thurs.    **Memorial of the Dead**  
6          **CONFRONTING THE MYSTERY OF DEATH**  
            From Journeying with the Lord by Carlo Cardinal Martini
- Fri.      **Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**  
7          **THE MESSAGE OF THE SACRED HEART**  
            A Reflection developed from the Encyclical Haurietis Aquas by Pope Pius XII
- Sat.      **Memorial of the Immaculate Heart of Mary**  
8          **HOW MARY LEADS US INTO JESUS**  
            A Reflection developed from a text of Journeying with the Lord  
            by Carlo Cardinal Martini

*Sunday*

## **CHRIST'S LIVED LESSON IN LOVING**

### **A Reflection developed from a Homily by St. John Chrysostom**

Christ gave us the Eucharist at the time of the Passover in order to teach us by every possible means that He himself, as the Only Begotten Son of the Heavenly Father, is giving us a New Law that fulfills everything given Israel in its Law. As they were eating he took bread and broke it and revealed to them the faith by which He can be seen. The fact that he did this in the evening indicated that the fullness of all time had come and that the mystery of God's becoming human was about to be fulfilled in Him just as the Father wills it to be fulfilled in us. God is to be revealed in and through each of us. Christ did this by giving thanks (literally, "eucharisting") to show us how we ought to celebrate these mysteries of God's presence within and among us. He showed us he did not go to his passion against his will and so showed us how to accept with thanksgiving all we have to suffer. Out of our very sufferings, we receive a hope of everlasting blessedness.

If mere "types", hints of the full reality of God's gifts, could free an entire people from earthly bondage, how much more can that full reality liberate the whole world? Through Christ's death, the greatest of blessings comes upon our race. Christ fulfilled the lesson of the greatest festival of Israel and of its sacred meal by offering us an even more sacred and awe-inspiring festival and meal. Take and eat this, he says, this is my body which is being broken for the many. In effect, he tells us that the reason he suffered is to take away our sins and that this brings us a New Law and a New Promise.

As God's covenant with Israel was first ratified by the blood of sacrificial animals, so the New Covenant is being ratified by the blood of the Lord. In speaking of shedding his own blood he reminds us of the symbolic giving of our life to God proper to the covenant with Israel, and indicates what his death is to accomplish in reality rather than symbol. This is my blood, he said, which is being poured out for everyone for the forgiveness of sin. He added: Do this in memory of me. Is this commandment, this New Commandment, to be fulfilled in a merely symbolic way? God convinced Israel of his saving power by the miracles performed in Egypt. Now God convinces us to give ourselves, our lives, completely by giving his own human life for us. He gives exactly what he asks us to give. And in this, we find forgiveness of sin. Jesus showed us that his passion and cross reveal a mystery.

This is a comfort and a challenge. Moses told Israel that the Passover should be for them a never-ending memorial that God saves all, symbolized by the saving of Israel's firstborn, the ones through whom the continuation of their families was effected. Now the Lord tells us to do what he has done, "in memory" of him—"until I come". Jesus longed to eat this Passover meal with his disciples so that he might hand over to them this new mystery and the rites by which it is celebrated. He tells us how he has longed to make us into a people moved by God's Spirit. What are we moved to do? We are moved to give our lives for love, both of our God and of one another. Thus, we enter completely into the gift of the forgiveness of our sins and those of the world.

*Monday*

## **HOMILY AT HOLY MASS FOR THE MARTYRS OF UGANDA** **Apostolic Journey to Africa of Pope Francis, 28 November 2015**

From the age of the Apostles to our own day, a great cloud of witnesses has been raised up to proclaim Jesus and show forth the power of the Holy Spirit. Today, we recall with gratitude the sacrifice of the Uganda martyrs, whose witness of love for Christ and his Church has truly gone “to the end of the earth”. All these witnesses nurtured the gift of the Holy Spirit in their lives and freely gave testimony of their faith in Jesus Christ, even at the cost of their lives, many at such a young age.

We too have received the gift of the Spirit, to make us sons and daughters of God, but also so that we may bear witness to Jesus and make him everywhere known and loved. We received the Spirit when we were reborn in Baptism, and we were strengthened by his gifts at our Confirmation.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is a gift that is meant to be shared. It unites us with one another as believers and living members of Christ’s mystical Body. We do not receive the gift of the Spirit for ourselves alone, but to build up one another in faith, hope and love. I think of Saints Joseph Mkasa and Charles Lwanga, who after being catechized by others, wanted to pass on the gift they had received. They did this in dangerous times. Not only were their lives threatened but so too were the lives of the younger boys under their care. Because they had tended to their faith and deepened their love of God, they were fearless in bringing Christ to others, even at the cost of their lives. Their faith became witness; today, venerated as martyrs, their example continues to inspire people throughout the world. They continue to proclaim Jesus Christ and the power of his Cross.

If, like the martyrs, we daily fan into flame the gift of the Spirit who dwells in our hearts, then we will surely become the missionary disciples that Christ calls us to be. To our families and friends certainly, but also to those whom we do not know, especially those who might be unfriendly, even hostile, to us. This openness to others begins first in the family, in our homes where charity and forgiveness are learned, and the mercy and love of God made known in our parents’ love, so too in our care for the elderly and the poor, the widowed and the orphaned.

The witness of the martyrs shows to all who have heard their story, then and now, that fidelity to God, honesty and integrity of life, and genuine concern for the good of others bring us that peace that the world cannot give. This does not diminish our concern for this world, as if we only look to the life to come. Instead, it gives purpose to our lives in this world, and helps us to reach out to those in need, to cooperate with others for the common good, and to build a more just society that promotes human dignity, defends God’s gift of life and protects the wonders of nature, his creation and our common home.

Dear brothers and sisters, this is the legacy that you have received from the Uganda martyrs – lives marked by the power of the Holy Spirit, lives which witness even now to the transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This legacy is not served by an occasional remembrance, or by being enshrined in a museum as a precious jewel. Rather, we honor them, and all the saints, when we carry on their witness to Christ, in our homes and neighborhoods, in our workplaces and civil society, whether we never leave our homes or we go to the farthest corner of the world.

*Tuesday*

## **A TIME FOR CHRISTIANS TO ENGAGE WITH THE WORLD** **From an Article by Pope Benedict XVI in the Financial Times**

"Render unto Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God," was the response of Jesus when asked about paying taxes. His questioners, of course, were laying a trap for him. They wanted to force him to take sides in the highly charged political debate about Roman rule in the land of Israel. Yet there was more at stake here: if Jesus really was the long-awaited Messiah, then surely he would oppose the Roman overlords. So the question was calculated to expose him either as a threat to the regime, or a fraud.

Jesus' answer deftly moves the argument to a higher plane, gently cautioning against both the politicization of religion and the deification of temporal power, along with the relentless pursuit of wealth. His audience needed to be reminded that the Messiah was not Caesar, and Caesar was not God. The kingdom that Jesus came to establish was of an altogether higher order. As he told Pontius Pilate, "My kingship is not of this world."

It is in the Gospel that Christians find inspiration for their daily lives and their involvement in worldly affairs – be it in the Houses of Parliament or the Stock Exchange. Christians shouldn't shun the world; they should engage with it. But their involvement in politics and economics should transcend every form of ideology.

Christians fight poverty out of a recognition of the supreme dignity of every human being, created in God's image and destined for eternal life. Christians work for more equitable sharing of the earth's resources out of a belief that, as stewards of God's creation, we have a duty to care for the weakest and most vulnerable. Christians oppose greed and exploitation out of a conviction that generosity and selfless love, as taught and lived by Jesus of Nazareth, are the way that leads to fullness of life. Christian belief in the transcendent destiny of every human being gives urgency to the task of promoting peace and justice for all.

Because these goals are shared by so many, much fruitful cooperation is possible between Christians and others. Yet Christians render to Caesar only what belongs to Caesar, not what belongs to God. Christians have at times throughout history been unable to comply with demands made by Caesar. From the Emperor cult of ancient Rome to the totalitarian regimes of the last century, Caesar has tried to take the place of God. When Christians refuse to bow down before the false gods proposed today, it is not because of an antiquated worldview. Rather, it is because they are free from the constraints of ideology and inspired by such a noble vision of human destiny that they cannot collude with anything that undermines it.

Wednesday

## **LOVING THE CHURCH AS ONESELF**

### **A Reflection developed from the “Franciscan Media” Website**

Today’s saint was a monk living under the Rule of St. Benedict who felt a call to help the Church in Germany. With permission, he went to Germany to discover what was needed and returned to find he had been elected abbot. He refused the election and returned to the continent. He had seen the German church needed reform and put love for others ahead of attending to himself.

In Germany, however, he found he could do little without authority. He went to Rome and asked for authorizing letters from the pope. Eventually, these were given him. The pope also changed his name to Boniface. He then returned to what is now France and got authority from Charles Martel (father of Charlemagne) to force reform. With these authorizing documents he began reforming the clergy and trying to educate them. With this in mind, he founded monasteries to teach by example how one lives a really Christian life and to provide schools to help priests learn to read and live a life of seeking God. From a letter to the pope, we can see the situation he faced.

*“It is the custom of people in trouble to seek consolation and advice from those who have wisdom and affection. So relying on your wisdom, Holy Father, I lay before you my difficulties. There is conflict and anxiety because of false priests and hypocrites who defy God and rush to their own damnation while leading the faithful astray by scandals and errors. They sow weeds among the wheat so that the Word is choked or perverted into something poisonous.*

*What we plant they make no attempt to water so that it may grow but offer to the faithful ever new falsehoods and new sects.”*

All had to be accomplished through constant preaching and persuasion, first because those who were priests were using their pastoral offices for personal profit only, and second to attract those who were not yet Christian. He used the monasteries he founded to show how people who work for their living can live a deeply and thoroughly Christian life. It was during a trip to confirm some of the newly baptized that his retinue was attacked during the night—probably with the hope of finding something valuable to steal. Boniface was killed during the attack, which was largely in vain because he carried nothing valuable except books. Illiterate robbers are unable to appreciate the value of what they cannot understand, just as Christians who try to use their faith to gain earthly goods can’t appreciate its genuine value. We are called to make that value known by the way we live.

Love, after the model provided us by Jesus Christ, is the greatest value in and beyond this world we now inhabit. One can’t love oneself rightly if one doesn’t learn to love Christ and Christ’s Church rightly. Such love gives self freely and in service rather than seeking to take from others so that one may have what one wrongly imagines will make life better, but doesn’t.

Thursday

## **CONFRONTING THE MYSTERY OF DEATH**

### **A Reflection from Journeying with the Lord by Carlo Cardinal Martini**

It is in regard to death that the human condition is most shrouded in doubt. Thus said the Second Vatican Council in its Constitution "Joy and Hope" in describing the anxiety and poverty of humanity as it faces the mystery of death. But we are not called to approach this mystery as an abstraction, for it is the cause of painful breaks in our human relationships and in each person's life.

How do you remember the dear ones who have entered into eternal life? Names, persons, faces and kind words are the sort of things that come to mind. They fill us with the memory of days passed in the company of those who are now gone. We recall places animated by their wonderful and loving presence. This is something that great saints too lived with, due to the agony of such separations. Recall how St. Augustine describes what he endured in the death of his mother. *"As I closed her eyes an immense sadness pressed heavily upon my heart and became a flood of tears. But what was it that hurt me so terribly within? It was the raw wound caused by the sudden end of our sweet and dear life together. We had grown so accustomed to it."*

If even saints can feel such separations so deeply that their hearts break can things be any different for us? How can we fail to feel pain as we relive moments of sorrow and separation? Yet, the saints also show us the way that is opened before us when we confront the mystery of death in faith. It is the way of Christ's own Passover. Christ by his death has destroyed our death and by resurrection has given us the gift of life everlasting. He shows us that death is more than sadness and separation and should be seen as a door into the gladness of resurrection. In Christ our dead live and will live forever. They are with us even now and they live in our presence. We sense they are united with us because of our prayer and faith. They speak to us in Jesus' words and they want to share with us the consolation the Lord offers.

What we, and all the world, most need is what may be called a "culture of holiness". When the Second Vatican Council emphasized the universality of the call to holiness it said something new. We are called to the kind of holiness that can be found in the streets, so to speak. It is a quiet and unacclaimed holiness but a luminous one for all that. It radiates in a quiet fashion the Spirit of life and of hope. It is filled with the faith that this life lasts always and is always an active sharing of life with others. That is what those we remember with love teach us. Love brings life, and holiness of life shows us what life can mean in times of sorrow and times of joy. Our memories of our beloved dead renew the sweetness of this kind of quiet and steady sharing. They are, then, still doing for us what they did when we lived together. Sharing it opens us more and more to the life God calls us to in the Heavenly Kingdom. That is what this day of remembrance works within us, by the gift and grace of the Holy Spirit.

*Friday*

## **THE MESSAGE OF THE SACRED HEART**

**A Reflection developed from the Encyclical Haurietis Aquas by Pope Pius XII**

To understand the message of Jesus one must, so to speak, enter into his heart. It was a special instrument of the Godhead for carrying out the work of divine grace and mercy. Most certainly, his heart is an appropriate symbol of the immense love that moved our Savior to pour out his blood and so enter into a mystical marriage with the Church, and so with each of us. It was out of charity that he suffered for the sake of the Church and united it to himself as bride.

From the wounded heart of our Redeemer, the Church was born and it is to pour out this blood until the end of time. It is from this heart that has sprung the endless profusion of graces through the sacraments so that all can be filled with supernatural life. The liturgy proclaims: "From that heart by spear-point severed the Church is born, the bride of Christ. Praise be to your heart, Lord Jesus Christ, font of grace for humankind".

This theme comes to us from the Fathers of the Church and is echoed by all later writers. St. Thomas Aquinas puts it thus: From Christ's side, there flowed water to wash us and blood to redeem us; the blood stands for the sacrament of the Eucharist while the water corresponds to the sacrament of Baptism, which derives its cleansing property from that of Christ's blood". What is said of Christ's side, wounded and laid open by the spear, is also affirmed of his heart. It was certainly pierced by the spear thrust because the soldier drove it home precisely in order to make sure he was dead. The wound made in the most sacred heart of Jesus at the moment when he had finished with this mortal life has been through the ages the vivid image of the freely given love by which God gave his only Son to redeem the human race.

Christ loves us so intensely that he immolated himself as a blood-soaked victim on Calvary for our sake. Christ loved and delivered himself for us as a sacrificial offering to God in the fragrant sweetness of devotion. Our Savior has ascended to heaven in his body adorned with the brightness of eternal glory and taken his seat at the Father's right hand. He never ceases to pursue his bride with the burning love that throbs in his risen heart. He bears in his heart the unlimited treasures of love and grace which are the result of his triumph. He pours them out so plentifully on all of us.

This is a source of great hope and comfort and consolation for us. He who descended is the same one who has ascended above the highest heaven of our universe, and who seeks only to pour out love and mercy on all. If we are willing to love as he loves then all he gives us becomes a gift that we can pass on to others as received from his own hands, and heart. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is a sign calling us to love as he has loved us and commanded us to love one another. It is not what we do that is important but that we do whatever our way of life makes possible to lead others to this love poured out. When all open their hearts to this gift, and then give it in turn by their own deeds of grace-inspired service, the world will find itself more and more becoming a Kingdom of God.

Saturday

## HOW MARY LEADS US INTO JESUS

A reflection from Journeying with the Lord by Carlo Cardinal Martini

The Eucharist is, so to speak, the first fruit of the love of Christ. We are called to let ourselves be pierced, as it were, by the Eucharist. Think of Simeon's words to Mary, "*A sword shall pierce your own soul*". The sword that pierced her was love for Jesus as she beheld him crucified. Her love so united her to him that she shared his torment, and also his triumph. This seems to come to us through the Eucharist. So I ask: Can you allow Eucharistic love to pierce your heart? Can we all open ourselves in this way? This seems to me to be fundamental.

Allowing oneself to be shaped by the Eucharist means making oneself receptive and open. The opposite of this is the attitude of one who refuses to listen without reserve. We ought not to presume that we know all the Eucharist has to offer. Indeed, its power and reality are those of Christ. St. Paul said: "*All I want is to know Christ and the power of his resurrection*". It is this knowledge that caused him to forget what lay in the past and reach out for what is to come.

That is genuine knowledge of the Lord, the Christ. It is the knowledge, and love, which was expressed by Mary's response to the angel: Let it be done to me as the Lord wills. This is openness. This is forgetting all that is past and stepping forward into God's future. Look what she became. What do we call that openness when we celebrate it? We call it Mary's "immaculate heart".

The Eucharist is a gift God gives us continually and which instills in us an attitude of silence and of listening. What God is sharing with us can't be understood by racking our brains or pouring over books. To contemplate it is to open ourselves to a dynamic force that causes us to walk with Christ in love and mercy. Unless we live—walk—in this way, we cannot grasp the message of the Eucharist. It isn't a message of the head but of the heart. Mary grasped it fully, though not in words she could have written down. She grasped it by living with Jesus in his total gift of self to the Heavenly Father.

We are called to go forward as Mary did, and with an equal humility. It is only in the totality of a human life lived with a heart as open to God's leading as was Mary's that what is given us in the Eucharist is fully grasped by being fully lived. Of course, this means expanding what happens in the liturgy of the Word so that it becomes our entire life. Thus, we are called to live a genuinely "eucharistic" communal life. You may think of this by recalling what Mary did during the wedding at Cana. She leads us into her love for Jesus and her trust in Jesus and her confidence in Jesus. There one finds the fullness of life. It leads to the wedding feast in God's Kingdom. That is what it means to enter into Jesus by living with and through and for Him as Mary did with an immaculate heart.