

Bishop Cotta's Reflection of the Month

July- Most Precious Blood of Jesus

As we leave the month of June, the month of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, we welcome this month of July which is dedicated to the Most Precious Blood of the Lord, Jesus. This seventh month of the year invites us to spend some reflective time in thanking Jesus for the gift of the shedding and offering his blood for our salvation.

Usually, emphasis on the Passion of Christ is acknowledged, in a special way, during the season of Lent and especially during the days of Holy Week. A helpful reminder for us is that we should not limit our reflection on the sufferings of Christ, and his Precious Blood, only during these specific times during the liturgical year, but we should do so throughout the year.

In order to assist us in focusing on the gift of Christ's self giving, we might consider meditating on the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary during the month of July. Spending time to prayerfully reflect on either the Agony of the Garden, the Scourging, the Crowning of Thorns, the Carrying of the Cross or the Crucifixion can help us center our devotion on the Precious Blood of Jesus.

Another means to assist us in this devotion is to spend time with the Stations of the Cross. As we journey with Jesus to Calvary, and walk the Way of the Cross, we will find ourselves being drawn into the mystery of his Passion. Also, one can include the Chaplet of Divine Mercy as "another way" to connect with the month of the Precious Blood.

Of course, the most fitting place to encounter the Most Precious Blood of Christ is during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. As we attend Mass during these summer months, let us be mindful that we are in the True Presence of Jesus as we "take" the Cup of Salvation and "drink" the Blood of the Crucified and Risen Lord.

Brother and sisters, be it spending time reflecting on the Sorrowful Mysteries, the Stations of the Cross, praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, or simply gazing silently at the image of the Crucifix in your parish church, let us be reminded, during this month of July, of the words of Pope St. Clement I: "Let us fix our gaze on the blood of Christ, realizing how precious it is to his Father, since it was shed for our salvation and brought the grace of repentance to all the world."

May the thirty one days of July draw us to a more personal encounter with Jesus, and a more profound appreciation of his gift of Redemption and Salvation. It is "the" gift that was purchased at a "great" price - the shedding of his Most Precious Blood!

Most Precious Blood of Jesus, have mercy on us and on the whole world. Amen!