

GREATNESS OF CHRIST'S LOVE

- A) Jesus Christ loves us with an eternal love. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." (Jeremiah 31, 3). In the eternity everything is permanent. There is neither past nor future; whatever is eternal always remains the same.

He loved us before we were and before we could have known and loved Him in return. And He loved us in spite of His knowledge of our sins and offenses which we would commit during our life. Besides Jesus Christ loves us at every moment with all the love wherewith He has ever loved us and shall love us throughout all eternity.

- B) Jesus Christ loves us with a boundless love. He is the Son of God made Man. He loves us as God and as Man. The divine and uncreated love which possesses the innermost self of Jesus is nothing else but God Himself. Now, since God is immense and unlimited, His love for man is also immense and unlimited. No one is able to love as much as Jesus loves every one of us.

- C) Jesus Christ loves us with an ardent love. He said of Himself, "I came to cast fire upon the earth: and what do I wish but that it should be kindled?" (Luke: 12, 49). Who encouraged the 15 million martyrs, men, women and weak children to despise the fire, the sword and the torturous of the tyrants? It was the love for Jesus that burned in their noble hearts.

- D) Jesus Christ loves us with persevering love; His love will know no end. We often meet persons in the world who love each other with a sincere love. But how long do they love each other? We know how unstable human love is. Jesus, instead, will love us for all eternity; He cannot be discouraged by her feelings and our lack of correspondence. St. John said of His love, "Jesus, having loved His own who were in the world, loves them to the end." (John: 13, 1). Even our ingratitude cannot stifle His immense love for us.

- E) The love of Jesus Christ is disinterested. Men love their fellow men because they are wise, beautiful or because they hope to receive some advantage from them. Jesus loves us without self interest. We cannot make Him happier, or more rich, for we cannot increase His infinite perfections and bliss.

F) Jesus Christ loves us with a compassionate love. His infinite love for man is proved by three great miracles:

(1) Loving us He came into this world by becoming a Man, our Brother. This is a great prodigy of divine love. Who could ever force the Son of God, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, to assume human nature with all its limitations? His love for man is the only explanation of the great prodigy of the Incarnation. In becoming Man He hid His divine splendor and became subject to all human frailties, except sit

(2) Jesus Christ is the second Person of the Blessed Trinity that became Man to expiate our sin. He died upon the cross for our salvation. "He loved us, and washed us from the seasons in His blood," says St. John (Apoc. 1, 6).

The Incarnation of the Son of God was decreed by the Blessed Trinity. The eternal Father wished to save us from everlasting ruin and damnation. "He did not even spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all," adds St. Paul (Rom. 9, 32). God made us by His power, but He redeemed us from the eternal death through the sufferings of His Son in Whom He is well pleased, that is, Whom He loves more than all men and angels combined.

(3) In leaving the world Jesus did not wish to separate Himself from man whom He loves with all the love that is within Himself. He invented a mean by which He dwells among man after His Ascension; and this stupendous mean is the Blessed Sacrament for the Holy Eucharist. In this sublime Sacrament Jesus Christ is truly present not only as God, but also as Man. The same Jesus is here present Who once walked upon the earth and Who now sits in heaven on the right hand of His Father. When Christ announced His departure, the apostles became sad. Christ consoled them, saying, "I will not leave you orphans" (John: 14, 18). And then He instituted the great Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist to favor us always with His divine presence: "Behold I am with you all days, until the consummation of the world" (Matt. 28, 20).

Jesus Christ also instituted the Blessed Sacrament in order to offer Himself up daily for us to His eternal Father. What He once deemed on the cross, when He died for our sins, He does daily in the Divine Liturgy, where, by the hands of the Priest, He renews His sacrifice on the cross in and on bloody manner. The sacrifice of the Divine Liturgy is as profitable as the sacrifice of the cross because Christ in both is the Victim and the main Priest. Day by day He renews His sacrifice on the cross, apply into our souls the fruits of the redemption. Thus in the Blessed Sacrament Jesus becomes a Dispenser of all graces. From our Tabernacles He unceasingly cries out to man, "Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will relieve you." (Matt. 11, 28).

Jesus Christ instituted the The Blessed Sacrament for the nourishment of our souls. As our bodies need material food, so our souls need spiritual nourishment. Jesus said to the Jews, "You can have no life in yourselves, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood." (John: 6, 54). Furthermore He added, "He who eats My flesh and drinks My Blood enjoys eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day." (John: 6, 55). Jesus Christ is the author and his answer of all graces. When we receive Holy Communion we do not receive only individual grace, as in the other Sacraments but the plenitude, that is, the Author of all graces, our Blessed Lord, Jesus Christ, dwelling under the appearances of bread and wine.

G) Jesus Christ dwelling in heaven is as loving and friendly towards men as when He was living on this earth. He is our Brother, our defender, our protector before the throne of His Father and our eternal intercessor, he defends sinners, he blesses the good, converts the bad, watches over all, that they may overcome all difficulties and reach their goal. St. Margaret, apostle to the devotion of Jesus, says, "Our Lord has shown me the treasures of love and graces which He has in store for those who dedicate themselves according to their strength in loving, honoring and glorifying Jesus Christ these treasures are so great that it is impossible to describe them in words. There is no shorter way to attain perfection and no more sure and certain means to salvation then to consecrate one's self entirely to Jesus Christ and to offer all the homages of love, honor and praise one can I believe that none of those who are devoted and consecrated to Jesus Christ will be lost."

During his earthly career Jesus was a source of miraculous healing for all those who touched Him with faith. "All the multitude was eager to touch Him because power went out from Him, and healed them all." (Luke: 6, 19). He promised the same favors and graces to all who love and honor Him, as St. Margaret says, "Persons in the world will find in this devotion all the help they need in the fulfillment of the duties of their state in life, namely, peace in their families, relief in their pains and undertakings, and the blessing of heaven upon their works. In life and death they will find a refuge in Jesus Christ."

It is, therefore, a great misfortune for a person not to love Jesus and honor Him, the fountain of all graces and blessings. St. Paul in the Apostle says in this regard, "If there is anyone who has no love for the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be held accursed, Maranatha!" (1 Cor. 16, 22).