

by *Ad Lucem* for both British and Overseas students on a fifty-fifty basis, the idea being to bring students from the commonwealth countries and British students together under the same roof. The London Group itself meets on the premises of the International Chaplaincy.

The best way of appreciating the character of *Ad Lucem* is participation in the summer-camp. This is an annual event and forms an important part of the training of an *Ad Lucem* member. Thus every member is encouraged to attend one or two of them before taking up an appointment overseas. These camps are usually held during the summer holidays somewhere in France. They are very popular with all the groups and everyone looks forward to these two weeks together of prayer, study and recreation.

And so *ad lucem per caritatem*.¹

Our Lord's Tears and St Catherine's

PAUL HINNEBUSCH, O.P.

'Jesus, in the days of his earthly life, with a loud cry and tears, offered up prayers and supplications to him who was able to save him from death, and was heard because of his reverent submission'. (Heb. 5. 7). Thus writes St Paul of the prayer and agony of Christ in the garden.

Notice that St Paul does not say that Jesus prayed to be saved from death, but to 'him who was able to save him from death'. For what, then, did he pray, if not to be saved from death? St Catherine of Siena gives an answer to this question which at first surprised her spiritual director, Blessed Raymond of Capua. But after hearing Catherine's further explanation, Raymond could say only: 'I kept silent, and simply admired the grace and wisdom she had received from God'. (Raymond of Capua, *St Catherine of Siena* New York: p. 147).

St Catherine explains that Jesus, 'far from dreading his passion and death, on the contrary wished to advance the moment', so that another

¹Anyone who wishes for further information should write to the leader of the London Group at 41 Holland Park, London, W.11.

chalice, more bitter by far than sufferings and death, might be removed from him. This more bitter chalice was what Catherine calls 'the torment of desire', the agonizing desire for the honour of God and the salvation of souls. 'This torment of desire is very great, and those who have experienced it know that it is the heaviest of crosses'. (p. 146). It results from charity's pain over sin. The soul which has tremendous charity is filled with unbearable anguish, both because God is outraged by sin and because the sinner harms himself so frightfully by sin. Love's anguish over these two things causes a tormenting desire both to make reparation to God, and to save the sinner's soul.

St Catherine says that Jesus suffered this torment of desire from the very moment of his conception in the womb of Mary, and thus all his life he carried the cross in his soul. 'He must have suffered cruelly until at last, by his passion, he had established the honour of God and the happiness of neighbour'.

According to St Catherine, then, the bitter chalice for whose removal Jesus prayed in his agony was his love's torment over any further delay in making reparation to the Father, and in the accomplishment of man's salvation. His love for his Father could no longer endure sin's outrages against him; his love for mankind could no longer stand the thought of their sinful misery. Unatoned sin was the bitter chalice whose removal he petitioned. His prayer amounted to this: Father, if it be possible, let me suffer my passion and death so that when your outraged honour has thus been repaired, and sinners can be accepted into your good grace, at last the chalice of my anguish over sin may pass.

And, says St Paul, 'He was heard because of his reverent submission'. He who could have asked to be saved from death—for he was praying to him who was able to save him from death—asked instead the removal of sin's disgraceful blot on God's honour, and the removal of sin itself from men.

But although his tormenting desire to make reparation as quickly as possible was painful to drink, he added in filial obedience, 'Nevertheless not my will but thy will be done'. 'Thus', says St Catherine, 'he offered to suffer all the delays that it would please God to require in his passion'.

This explanation given by St Catherine is in perfect conformity with many texts of the gospel. Referring to one of these texts (Luke 22. 15), Jesus himself spoke to Catherine, saying: 'Beloved daughter, when I dwelt among men I accomplished not my will but my Father's; my disciples have rendered testimony of this. I desired greatly to eat with

them the last supper, and yet I waited with patience the moment fixed by my Father. Therefore, notwithstanding the ardent desire that you have to be entirely united to me, you must wait my hour with resignation'.

Christ's desire to eat the passover with his disciples was in reality his burning desire to sacrifice himself on the cross for their salvation, and to give them the holy eucharist, the new passover, to apply to their souls the saving benefits of his passion.

On several other occasions during his public life, Christ gave expression to the tormenting desire of his soul which he had suffered even from the moment of his conception. 'I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished'. (Luke 12. 49-50). Because he was so eagerly desirous to kindle in man the fire of divine love which would purify their hearts of sin, he could hardly wait to be plunged into his passion as into a baptism, for only by his cross can this flaming, purifying love be enkindled. 'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself'. (John 12. 32).

He spoke these latter words on the first Palm Sunday, when certain Gentiles had asked Philip to obtain for them an introduction to Jesus. But Jesus spoke instead of his passion, through which alone the Gentiles would be able to come to him; only through his death could men have life. For 'unless the grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it remains alone. But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit'. (John 12. 24).

In his burning eagerness to be this dying grain of wheat which would bring forth much fruit of souls, he says immediately: 'Now is my soul troubled'. Troubled by the torment of desire to make speedy reparation to the Father, in order to save souls; troubled, too, by the prospect of physical torture and death. 'And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour?' That is, shall I ask to be spared from death? 'No, this is why I came to this hour. Father, glorify thy name'. (John 12. 27).

So burning is his desire to glorify the Father's name which has been desecrated by sin, that he eagerly accepts the death by which he will save souls for the glory of the Father.

In one of her ecstasies, St Catherine gives a further reason for our Lord's agony and bloody sweat. It was caused by his foreseeing that so many souls would fail to participate in the fruits of his passion. His prayer would thus mean: 'Father, if it be possible, let the chalice of my suffering over the loss of these souls be removed by their salvation'. 'But', Catherine goes on to say, 'since he loved justice, he added, "Not

my will but thine". Since divine justice demands their punishment, they will be done. Catherine thus learned, in this ecstasy, that even though certain obdurate souls would not be saved by her charity's anguish over them, nevertheless this anguish does make reparation to the Father, and he is glorified by it, in place of the glory which these souls failed to give him.

When Blessed Raymond, surprised by Catherine's explanations of Christ's agony and prayer, remarked to her that the doctors ordinarily explained these things otherwise, saying that the saviour pronounced these words because, as man, he feared death naturally, and because he wished to set an example for the weak who dread death, Catherine admitted this explanation also, but held on to her deeper explanation as well. Christ's human nature did naturally draw back in fear of death, but never for a moment did his will lose its eagerness to die for the Father's rights and for man's salvation. 'The actions of the redeemer are so fruitful in instruction that by carefully meditating on them, each one finds the nourishment best suited to his soul's salvation. The weak can find consolation in our saviour's prayer; but the strong and more nearly perfect should derive encouragement from it, and this would be impossible without the explanation I have given you'. (p. 147). Our Lord's eagerness in accepting his passion and death encourages strong souls to suffer in reparation of God's rights and for the salvation of souls.

From all that we have said, we see that throughout his life, but especially in his passion, Christ had a triple attitude of soul: in regard to the Father, in burning love for him, he had that tormenting desire to make reparation to him; in regard to men, in the same burning love, he experienced an anguished desire for their salvation; in regard to himself, he was eager only to sacrifice himself for the accomplishment of those two purposes. 'I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished'. 'With a loud cry and tears' he prayed for the accomplishment of all this, 'and was heard because of his reverent submission'.

Both St Dominic and St Catherine of Siena were wonderfully like the Lord Jesus in all of this. St Catherine explained the agony and prayer of Jesus to Blessed Raymond only in order to make clear to him, as director of her soul, how she herself was experiencing in her own soul 'all the dolours that our Lord had experienced during his life'. (p. 146). When Jesus had refused Catherine's prayer to be taken out of this life so that she could be perfectly united to him in heaven,

she understood from the refusal that it was his will that she should still suffer with him. Her request to be speedily with Jesus in heaven and his answer remind us of what he said to James and John when they asked, through their mother, to be allowed to sit at his right hand and his left in his glory: 'Can you drink of the cup of which I drink, or be baptized with the baptism with which I am to be baptized?' (Mark 10. 38). No one can be with him in glory unless he has first been with him in suffering. This is the inevitable law of Christianity. Therefore, when Catherine was refused immediate admission into heaven, she then said to our Lord, 'Whatever be the duration thou shalt fix to my existence on earth, grant me to participate in all the sufferings that thou hast endured until death. If I cannot be with thee now in heaven, let me be united with thee at least in thy passion on earth'. And God accepted her prayer. (p. 145).

Later, she said to Raymond: 'My great consolation is to suffer, because I am aware that by suffering, I shall obtain a more perfect view of God'. (p. 151).

In the sufferings which she obtained in answer to her prayer, she was just like Christ, experiencing that terrible 'torment of desire . . . that heaviest of crosses'. Tormented by charity's pain over sin, with anguished desire she wished to make reparation to the Father and to save souls, and she longed to sacrifice herself for this purpose.

By its very nature, charity causes this torment of desire. The more we love God, the more we are tormented by man's sins against him and the more we desire to make reparation for them. It is for this reason that the more we grow in grace and charity, the more we desire to be like Christ crucified. This is the whole theme of Louis Chardon's book, *The Cross of Jesus* (St Louis: Herder), in which he develops Catherine's ideas about Christ's torment of desire. The more God fills the soul with grace, the more the soul is alienated, by the separating power of love, from all that is not God. Grace, whether in the soul of Christ or in the souls of his members, has a double effect: one drawing the recipient towards glory; the other drawing him towards the cross and desolation. The more elevated the love, the more it will resemble that of Jesus, in which it has its source. An insatiable thirst for suffering will then ensue. (Chardon, Vol II, p. 133).

These ideas of Chardon and St Catherine about grace's attraction both to glory and to sufferings are all contained in St Paul's words about our adoption as sons in the likeness of Christ: 'If we are sons, we are heirs also; heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ, provided

however we suffer with him that we may also be glorified with him'. (Rom. 8. 17). If Dominican spirituality is centred around our adoption as sons of God by grace, as we learned from St Catherine's great vision of St Dominic proceeding like the Word from the bosom of the Father, then we are to expect that we shall be more and more like Christ in his sufferings as our spiritual life progresses. But even while increasing charity causes increasing torment over sin, at the same time, it brings the ever-increasing joy which comes from ever closer union with Christ.

We who are still so far from that burning charity which causes a continuing torment of desire, should petition, like St Dominic, for the gift of true charity to help us in saving souls, for the most valuable reparation for sin that we can offer is this torment caused by charity itself. Until we have reached such perfection of charity, we should prepare ourselves for it by patiently enduring all our little hardships and penances, presenting them to the Father in union with the chalice of Christ's agony, his chalice of agonizing desire for reparation and for souls. His is the chalice which we take up each morning at the offertory of the mass, when we say (in the Dominican rite): 'What shall I render to the Lord for all that he has done for me? I will take the chalice of salvation and will call upon the name of the Lord'. At the mass, let us present ourselves and the souls we wish to save, in the chalice of Christ's precious blood, the chalice of his burning charity which consumed him as the victim of our salvation. And the fire of divine love which he so vehemently desired to cast upon the earth, will flame forth from the chalice into our hearts.

Saint Hilary

SISTER SUZANNE, O.S.B.

St Irenaeus, with whom Hilary of Poitiers has much in common, says: 'No doubt there are many tongues spoken throughout the world, but the strength of tradition is one and the same . . . for as one and the same sun, created by God, shines throughout the world, so the light of truth shines everywhere, enlightening all who wish to know it'. St Hilary is