

DEVOTION TO THE HOLY FACE OF JESUS CHRIST

This powerful devotion traces its history back to the very Passion of Christ, when His noble Face was the object of all scorn, mockery and hatred. It was at this moment of supreme humiliation and rejection that the courageous woman Veronica - bravely ignoring the rabid enemies of Jesus - rushed out to console Our Condemned Lord on His Way of the Cross and offered her veil to wipe the blood, filth and tears from His face. And it was in this act of love and compassion, that devotion to the Holy Face found both its beginning and its mission: *reparation*.

In 1843 the fullness and power of this devotion was revealed by Our Lord Himself to Sr. Mary of St. Peter, a Carmelite nun in Tours, France. He stressed the great need for reparation in these modern days, and explained that devotion to His Face would atone especially for the sacrilege of blasphemy: *“My Name is everywhere blasphemed, even little children blaspheme it.”* **Jesus also told Sr. Mary that blasphemy was like a poisonous dagger, wounding Him deeper than any other sin.** And so, He gave her a prayer which would wound His heart with joy, entreating those who love Him to console Him by offering Him this “Golden Arrow” prayer. (see below: ‘Ways to Honor Jesus’ Holy Face’)

How is it though, that we honor the Face of Christ by praising His Most Holy Name? Why is this devotion so powerful in atoning for the sins of blasphemy? Sr. Mary of St. Peter was given to understand the union that exists between Jesus’ Name and His Face: *“Our Lord caused me to see that the impious, by their blasphemies, attack His Adorable Face, and that faithful souls glorify It by the praises they address to His Name and to His Person. There is, in fact, something mysterious in the face of a man who is despised. Yes, I see that his name and his face have a special connection.”*

She goes on to describe a man surrounded by his enemies who, without striking him, assault him with insults and treat his name with bitter hatred and scorn. Notice then, she says, how his face becomes covered with shame and confusion - as if all the abusive words issuing from their wicked mouths fell upon him like so many blows. The ignominy and hatred cause him a torment more cruel than any physical torture, and in the man’s face you see the agony in his soul. *“Here then is a faint image of the Adorable Face of our Lord, outraged by the blasphemies of the impious.”*

Sr. Mary of St. Peter continues to illustrate what happens to this same man when his friends learn of what happened. Eager to console him, they *“treat him in a manner becoming his dignity, and do homage to his great name, by applying to him all his honorable titles. Do you not see how the face of that man reflects the sweetness of the praises addressed to him? This is what the friends of Jesus do by the work of reparation; the honor which they pay to His Name rests on His August Brow, and rejoices His Most Holy Face.”*

Our Lord further revealed that there was great power in this devotion to repel and defeat the enemies of His One True Church. Hence, in the chaplet of the Holy Face, we find the Psalm-based prayer *“Arise, O Lord, and let Your enemies be scattered. And let those who hate You flee before Your Face!”* And so, we have in this devotion to Christ’s Face a strength, a safeguard and a most powerful weapon against the enemies of God and humanity.

Great mercies and blessings have also been promised and obtained by invoking the Holy Face. One of the most remarkable witnesses to this truth was Leo Dupont: the “Holy Man of Tours.” A contemporary of Sr. Mary, Dupont’s private devotional shrine soon became a place of pilgrimage, as thousands were drawn to this simple layman who worked wonders through the intercession of the Holy Face of Jesus. So astounding were these favors in type and quantity that the pope declared **Leo Dupont to be possibly the greatest miracle worker in the history of the Church.**

In 1885, shortly after Leo Dupont’s death, his shrine was visited by none other than St. Therese of Lisieux, who later embraced this devotion with such fervor that she changed her religious name to be: *“Sr. Therese of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face.”* By her own admission, it was contemplating and consoling the Holy Face that was the secret to the sanctity of this “greatest Saint of modern times,” as Therese is so honorably called by Pope St. Pius X. Her older sister Pauline, her “second mother,” to whom she confided her many spiritual secrets, testified under oath that: **“However tender was the devotion which Saint Therese had for the Child Jesus, it cannot be compared to the devotion she had for the Holy Face.”**

Thus, we find powerful and countless examples of the great spiritual and temporal blessings to be derived from this devotion. Listed below, we will find in Our Lord’s promises the security of peace, happiness, and even holiness and salvation, if we devote ourselves to loving and honoring the humiliated, rejected and disfigured Face of Love Itself.

PROMISES OF OUR LORD TO SR. MARY OF ST. PETER FOR THOSE WHO HONOR HIS HOLY FACE

1. All those who honor My Face in a spirit of reparation will, by so doing, perform the office of the pious Veronica. According to the care they take in making reparation to My Face, disfigured by blasphemers, so will I take care of their souls, which have been disfigured by sin. My Face is the Seal of the Divinity, which has the virtue of reproducing in souls the image of God.
2. *Those who by words, prayers or writing defend My cause in this Work of Reparation, I will defend before My Father, and will give them My Kingdom.*
3. By offering My Face to My Eternal Father, nothing will be refused, and the conversion of many sinners will be obtained.
4. By My Holy Face, they will work wonders, appease the anger of God, and draw down mercy on sinners.
5. As in a kingdom they can procure all that is desired with a coin stamped with the King's effigy, so in the Kingdom of Heaven they will obtain all they desire with the precious coin of My Holy Face.
6. *Those who on earth contemplate the wounds of My Face shall in Heaven behold It radiant with Glory.*
7. *They will receive in their souls a bright and constant irradiation of My Divinity, that by their likeness to My Face they shall shine with particular splendor in Heaven.*
8. I will defend them, I will preserve them and I assure them of Final Perseverance.

WAYS TO HONOR JESUS' HOLY FACE

- Strive to develop in your heart, a loving devotion for this Holy Face, by contemplating the intense sufferings that afflict It and the incredible Love that shines from It.
- Keep in your home, room, or possession an image of the Holy Face. If prominently exposed, the picture will serve as a beautiful reminder and loving testimony of our devotion.
- Offer, with the greatest fervor and possible frequency, prayers and acts of praise, love and reparation to the Holy Face of Jesus and to His Most Sacred Name.

THE GOLDEN ARROW PRAYER

(dictated by Our Lord Himself to heal the wounds of blasphemy)

May the Most Holy, Most Sacred, Most Adorable, Most Incomprehensible and Ineffable Name of God, be forever praised, blessed, loved, adored and glorified, in Heaven, on Earth and in the hells, by all the creatures of God, and by the Most Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Amen.

ST. THERESE OF LISIEUX'S PRAYER TO THE HOLY FACE

O Jesus, Who in Thy bitter Passion didst become "the most abject of men, a man of sorrows," I venerate Thy Sacred Face whereon there once did shine the beauty and sweetness of the Godhead ... but now it has become for me as if it were the Face of a leper! Nevertheless, under those disfigured features, I recognize Thy Infinite Love and I am consumed with the desire to love Thee and make Thee loved by all men.

The tears which well up abundantly in Thy Sacred Eyes appear to me as so many precious pearls that I love to gather up, in order to purchase the souls of poor sinners by means of their infinite value. O Jesus, Whose adorable Face ravished my heart, I implore Thee to fix deep within me Thy Divine Image and to set me on fire with Thy Love, that I may be found worthy to come to the contemplation of Thy glorious Face in Heaven. Amen.

"Oh, if you only knew what great merit you acquire by saying even once, 'Admirable is the Name of God,' in the spirit of reparation for blasphemy!" - Our Lord to Sr. Mary of St. Peter

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