

The Precious Blood of Jesus — The Price of Our Salvation

Homily of Saint Augustine of Hippo, Bishop, (354 - 430) Treatise 120 on the Gospel of St. John - 19: 31 – 37

A suggestive word was made use of by the Evangelist, in not saying: he pierced His side; or: he wounded; or anything like that, but: he opened; that therein might, as it were, be thrown open the door of life, from which have flowed forth the sacraments of the Church, without which there is no entrance into life that is truly life.

The blood that was shed, was shed for the remission of sins. That water makes up the health-giving cup; and gives at the same time a bath and a draught.

This was announced beforehand, when Noe [Noah] was commanded to make a door in the side of the ark, through which the animals, not destined to perish in the flood, might enter, and by which the Church was prefigured.

Because of this, the first woman was made from the side of the man while he slept, and she was called Life and Mother of the living. For the name signified a great good, before the great evil of her sin.

This second Adam bowed His head and fell asleep on the cross, in order that, from there, a spouse might be formed for Him, from the blood which He shed from His side as He slept. That is, the Church.

O death whereby the dead are raised anew to life!

What is purer than this blood?

What more health-giving this wound?

Men who were held in slavery under the devil served the devil and served the demons; but they have been redeemed from captivity.

For they could sell themselves, but they could not redeem themselves.

The Redeemer came, and paid the price; He shed His blood, and bought the world.

Do you ask what He bought?

See what He gave, and you will find out what He bought.

The blood of Christ is the price.

What is it worth?

What, but the whole world?

What, but all nations.

Very ungrateful for their price or very proud, are they who say that the price is of such small worth as to buy only the Africans as the Vandals, who were *Arian Christians led by Genseric, and who invaded Africa from

Spain claimed in 429 A.D.; or that they are so great, that it was given for them alone.

Therefore let them not rejoice or be proud.

What He gave, He gave for the whole world.

He had His blood, by which He redeemed us; and to this end He took blood, that He might shed it in order to redeem us.

If you wish it, the blood of your Lord was given for you; if you do not wish it, it was not given for you.

For perhaps you will say: My God had blood, with which He redeemed me, but now since He has suffered, He has given it all; what has remained to Him, that He may also give for me?

This is a great thing, because He gave once, and He gave for all.

The blood of Christ is salvation to him who wishes it, punishment to him who does not wish it.

Why, therefore, do you hesitate to be set free from the second death, you who do not wish to die?

By this you are set free, if you are willing to take up your cross, and follow the Lord; for He took up His cross and looked for His servant.

What is Arianism:

It was the first Christological heresy to seriously threaten the Church. It denied the Divinity of Christ. Arius, while at the Catechetical School in Alexandria in the year 319 A.D., proposed a problem: If the Son of God is begotten of God the Father, then the Father existed before the Son. Since the Father existed before the Son, the Son is unlike the Father. The Son is not co-eternal with the Father. According to Arius, the Son was created by the Father and not Divine as the Father. Arius' main error was that he imposed time on the eternal (timeless) nature of God. As a father begets a son, he gives his nature to his son. For humans, the father exists before the son, since humans live in time. Begetting for humans is an act embedded in time and matter. This is part of human nature. But for God, the Father gives His spiritual, divine, timeless nature to His only-begotten Son (Heb. 1), so "before" and "after" are meaningless. Even though the Son is begotten of the Father, this does not imply that the Father existed before the Son. Also the Son of God is begotten and not created. (Even a human father only begets his children and does not create them.) Unfortunately Arius failed to understand this fundamental point and thus refused to accept the Divinity of Christ. Arius took his debate from the academic circles to the streets. He quickly gained a large following. After being excommunicated in Alexandria, he fled to Caesarea where Bishop Eusebius helped him spread his errors. In 325, the Council of Nicaea was called to deal with the Arian crisis. The Council excommunicated Arius and declared that the Son is "of the same substance" (homoousion) as the Father. This became part of the Nicene Creed. But the Arians continued to gain power and political influence. They remained a serious threat to the Church for another half century. St. Athanasius was the great defender of the Faith against this heresy.

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