

BLASPHEMY AND REPARATION

(J.F.M.H. – 1.2.2018)

‘At the name of Jesus, every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil 2.10-11) The opposite of this respect, due to Jesus Christ our Redeemer, is Blasphemy. It comes from two Greek words meaning, “to *injure*” and “*reputation*”. It is a serious sin against the 2nd Commandment (You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain) and against the virtue of religion, by which we give to God the honour due to Him. We can appreciate something of its seriousness when we realise that in O.T. times, it was punishable by death. Although blasphemy is normally thought of as a direct attack on God, it also covers indirect attacks, as on His saints or on the Church, (Christ’s mystical body).

When such an offence is committed against God, our infinite and all-Holy Creator, a **just reparation and atonement** for it is quite outside the capability of any finite creature alone. For this to happen, four conditions are required.

(1) The atonement should be made by a representative of the human race.

(2) The atonement would have to be freely made.

(3) The atonement should be made by one pleasing to God, and, above all,

(4) the atonement should be more pleasing to God than the sin had been displeasing to Him. God who loves us all, even when we are in a state of rebellion, found a way for it to be adequately made. Although God, if He had chosen, might have condoned men’s offences gratuitously, yet in His Providence He did not do so. He judged it more just and better to demand satisfaction for the injuries which man had done Him, and also seems to have judged it better, for man’s education, that wrongdoing on mankind’s part should entail the necessity of making satisfaction.

This satisfaction was made possible and adequately to God by the Incarnation, sufferings, passion and death of Jesus Christ, God the Son, made man for us. We can see that in the way God chose, all four conditions were met. He substituted for us His own being, His Son Jesus Christ, and by voluntary submission in His Passion and death on the Cross, Jesus Christ atoned for our disobedience and sin. He thus made reparation to the offended majesty of God for the outrages which He the Creator so constantly suffers at the hands of His creatures. We are restored to grace through the merits of Christ’s death, **and that grace also enables us to couple our prayers, our labours, and our trials to those of Our Lord** “*and complete what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of His body, that is the Church.*” (Col.1. 24). By the virtue of the Communion of Saints, and the oneness and solidarity of the mystical body of Christ, we can also make satisfaction and reparation for the sins of others. We must never forget that blasphemers also have souls and are loved by the God they offend, a loving God, who never gives up on any of us.

The word “**reparation**”, comes from the Latin “*reparare*” meaning to repair, and is the act of repairing or restoring something to its original state, giving satisfaction for wrong or damage done, making amends, or giving compensation. What is a ‘**just reparation**’? It depends on the seriousness of the wrong itself, the person doing the wrong, and also on the person wronged. Clearly an offence against me, demands, in justice, a different satisfaction than the same offence committed against the Queen or family of the perpetrator, all of whom are finite creatures, and to whom we have a special duty of reverence and love. “*Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.*” (Mark 3:28-29) There are no limits to the mercy of God, but anyone who deliberately refuses to accept his mercy, rejects the forgiveness of his sins and the salvation offered by the Holy Spirit. Such hardness of heart can lead to final impenitence and eternal loss (CCC1864). Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is to refuse God’s mercy. It is a refusal to repent of sin. God does not bring anyone into his kingdom against his/her will. Human persons have the ability to accept or reject God’s mercy and refuse forgiveness of sins that leads to eternal separation from God.

In the Sacrifice at Calvary, Jesus who had no sin (of His own) took on the guilt of all our sins and substituted Himself for us the sinners. In reparation for the sins of blasphemy we can offer up to God all the occasions when we and our reputations are mocked or ridiculed, especially when we think these attacks are not justified, It is better that such attacks should be made on us than on Our Lord, His Mother, or the Church (The Mystical Body of Christ) for when we act in this way, we follow and imitate Christ, who substituted Himself for us sinners. The Mass, (the re-presentation of the sacrifice of Calvary), is especially suited to make reparation for sins. It is the offering by God the Son, (of Jesus Christ the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity), to God the Almighty Father. One of the ends of each Mass is the appeasement of God’s wrath.

We are, as the Catechism puts it, (CCC. 793) "associated with his suffering as the body with its head". Indeed one of the greatest glories of the Christian is that his sufferings and Christ's are bound up together. This share in the Passion turns a human sorrow into the highest supernatural Sacrifice. In the great and perfect sacrifice of the Mass, Christ's sacrifice is reproduced for us and we are invited to share with Christ not only his sacramental body, but also his sacrificial act. As members of the mystical body of Christ, we are even allowed to have a share in the reparation for sin which He made and which He allows us to make with, in, and through Him. As it is not our individual reparation but the reparation of the whole Christ (head and members), this reparation is effective. St. Paul makes this point when writing to the Colossians "I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's affliction for the sake of his body, that is the Church." (Col. 1.24). Now the whole Christ includes all members of His mystical body, both past and present, St. Paul's suffering, and indeed that of all members of the mystical body, are offered up at every mass by the priest with, in and through Christ. The sacrificial role of Christ continues today, in His mystical body. So in every mass we are presented with Christ to God the Father as 'victims'. What an honour and what a responsibility to have a share in bringing mankind to God the Father. It's a divine mission we are engaged upon. Our Lord revealed to Sr. Marie de Saint-Pierre, a French Carmelite Nun (1816–1848), the need for mankind to make reparation for the terrible sin of blasphemy. He told her: "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 all blasphemy!

Blessed be God.

Blessed be His Holy Name.

Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man.

Blessed be the Name of Jesus.

Blessed be His Most Sacred Heart.

Blessed be His Most Precious Blood.

Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.

Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary Most holy.

Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.

Blessed be her glorious Assumption.

Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.

Blessed be St. Joseph, her most chaste spouse.

Blessed be God in His angels and in his Saints.

O my God. I am sorry and beg pardon for all my sins, and detest them above all things, because they deserve Thy dreadful punishments, because they have crucified my loving Saviour Jesus Christ, and most of all because they have offended Thine infinite goodness; and I firmly resolve, by the help of Thy grace never to offend Thee again, and carefully to avoid the occasions of sin.

"Admirable is the Name of God"