

VICTIM SOULS OF SUBSTITUTION

(J.F.M.H. - 8.3.2018)

Through our Baptism, we are incorporated into Christ our Saviour. We share His life and are destined to live for eternity by the power of that life. Whilst on earth, we share this life of grace as we make our pilgrimage, and preparation for Heaven. As a great and special privilege, Jesus invites all His followers to share in His work. What He did when on earth we too may, in fact must, carry out as well. We must continue this work of preaching, teaching and healing, and Jesus said that His disciples, (us) would do even greater things than He did. When we think of this remarkable statement, we can realise just what is possible. Jesus redeemed all mankind by His sacrifice on Calvary. All may now go to Paradise if they so choose. Yet each person must individually be saved, and we have a role in this beautiful work. It is in fact obvious that some people may only hear the Gospel from and through us. Perhaps someone helped us deeply in our own coming to Christ. And so the redemptive work of Our Saviour goes forward in every age, and ordinary people, as well as great missionaries and teachers, have an essential job to do; our lives can be the most eloquent of sermons; our prayers have the infinite power which comes from the Holy Spirit within us; our joys, our hopes, our fears, our sorrows and our pains should all be offered to the Father Almighty for the world's salvation. Jesus takes our lives and transforms them, by union with Him, into sources of healing grace for everyone, baptised or not, so long as they do not deliberately reject goodness, love and truth. This should cause us to rejoice in even our darkest moments. Since Christ saved and redeemed us by His Passion and Death on the Cross, it follows that our own sufferings are especially powerful when born patiently and offered to Jesus. *"Take up your cross and follow me."* (Matt. 16.24) By all our pains, however slight and unnoticed by others - perhaps it is best like this - we share deeply in Christ's work, and our pains are taken up to the Father as a compensation and expiation for the sins of the world. As in Old Testament times, innocent blood from a lamb served to appease God and sanctify the People of Israel, so too now, God forgives and restores sinful men and women for the sake of suffering victims drawn from all ranks of society and from all parts of the Church. This call to victimhood of course is given to each of us in our own unique way - a secret between Him and us.

This vocation of a victim soul of substitution is presented in the booklet *"Identification with the Sacred Host"*. Before it could be written, the vocation itself had to be lived for years by its authors. The compelling urge to spread the vocation throughout the Church like a fire, was present all the time. It could not be otherwise as it is a characteristic of love to spread. The booklet was written first in French then translated into English, Latin, Portuguese, Spanish, German and many other languages. It has been sent to bishops, priests religious and lay people all over the world. A glance at the last page of the booklet will give you some idea of its spread. To achieve this spread our prayers are required So at each meeting of the Tabernacle we pray *"Oh Sacred Host, Beloved Jesus, by the intercession of Our Lady of Fatima, we implore you to raise up in the Church a legion of victim souls of substitution, who by their loving and voluntary immolation may counterbalance the iniquities of our times and be a source of consolation to your Eucharistic and priestly Heart burdened with insults and bruised by our crimes."* Christ, having asked us to take up our cross and follow Him, gives us the surprising opportunity of joining Him in His Passion. In every age of the Church this invitation has been taken up. St Paul is probably one of the best-known victim souls, and he wrote about it in a letter *"through all my sufferings, I make up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the saving of His Body, the Church."* (Col 1. 26) We should understand that it is not as if Christ's sacrifice was incomplete or ineffective; but rather that Christ invites us to suffer with Him in every age for the saving love and

triumph of grace in every human heart, especially of that age. Redemptive suffering is Christ's call of us all. Within this call we can see that some people receive it in such a way that it becomes for them their principle work in life. Perhaps they are bedridden or bereaved at an early age, or maybe suffer persecution for a prolonged period in a very intense way. Their victimhood may in fact be clear to all, and their pains bear fruit in the lives of countless people both near and far. In our present time we have many examples to follow. One such Sister Mary of the Trinity (1901 - 1942) was told by Our Lord *"I desire an army of apostolic souls consecrated to Me by the vow of victim, not to expiate the sins of others by extraordinary trials; no, that is not My desire. I desire a great army of victim souls who will join Me in the Apostolate of My Eucharistic Life, who bind themselves by the vow of victim to choose the methods which I chose Silence ___ immolation ___ radiating the triumph of the life of the Spirit."* ... Jesus also told her: that these souls carry a special place in His heart: *"...And the most favoured souls? Oh, these are many! They are those whom I call to join Me in the Apostolate of My Eucharistic Life. They are the richest in grace because I give them the strength they need to respond to what I ask of them. And it is as if I hide them in the deepest depths of My Heart; their life is all in Me."*

As you are aware the vocation we follow of a victim soul of substitution is presented (in English) in the booklet "Identification with the Sacred Host". English was not the language, in which it was originally written, that was French. Its title in French is "Ames-Hosties", a literal translation of which would be Host Soul. It is not a phrase easily understood in English, and so after much thought and prayer it was changed to what was considered represented a similar idea. One can see the reason why this is appropriate from the words of our Holy Father Pope Saint John Paul II: *"The Eucharist is at one and the same time Christ's sacrifice and the Church's sacrifice, because in it Christ unites the Church with His redemptive work and lets the Church share in His oblation. How important it is, then, for the faithful, as they take part in the Eucharist, to assume a personal attitude of offering. It is not sufficient that they listen to the word of God, nor that they pray in common. It is necessary for them to make Christ's oblation their own, offering up their pains, their difficulties, their trials, and, even more, themselves, together with Him and in Him so as to make this gift rise even to the Father, with the gift which Christ makes of himself."* in 1993 Saint Pope Saint John Paul II wrote an encyclical "Veritatis Splendor" in which He told us what it means to follow Christ. *"Following Christ is not an outward imitation, since it touches man at the very depth of his being. Being a follower of Christ means becoming conformed to Him who became a servant even to giving Himself on the Cross"*.

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