



From the Deacon's Desk

For Catholics, the month of July is traditionally dedicated to the Precious Blood.

The Church honors Christ's Passion by honoring his Precious Blood. It's a recognition of Jesus' sacrifice; how he spilled his blood for the salvation of all.

Devotion to the Precious Blood is almost as old as the church itself. In 96 C.E., Pope St. Clement I, said: "Let us fix our gaze on the Blood of Christ and realize how truly precious It is, seeing that it was poured out for our salvation and brought the grace of conversion to the whole world."

During the First Italian War for Independence in 1849, Pope Pius IX went into exile accompanied by Don Giovanni Merlini, third superior general of the Fathers of the Most Precious Blood. He suggested the pope create a feast to the Precious Blood to ask God to end the war and bring peace to Rome. Pius IX proclaimed that the 1st Sunday in July would be dedicated to the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. Later, Pope Pius X assigned July 1 as the fixed date of this celebration.

Devotion to the Precious Blood spread greatly through the prayer, preaching, and work of Bl. Gaspar del Bufalo, a 19th century Roman priest, and founder of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood

After Vatican II, the feast was removed from the calendar, and a votive Mass in honor of the Precious Blood was established. Its Opening Prayer makes for an excellent personal reflection:

O God, who by the Precious Blood of your only Begotten son have redeemed the whole world, preserve in us the work of your mercy, so that, ever honoring the mystery of our salvation, we may merit to obtain its fruits. Through our lord Jesus Christ, your son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the holy spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

St. Catherine of Siena composed this daily prayer honoring the Precious Blood:

Precious Blood, ocean of divine mercy: Flow upon us!
Precious Blood, most pure offering: Procure us every grace!
Precious Blood, hope and refuge of sinners: Atone for us!
Precious Blood, delight of holy souls: Draw us!
Amen.

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