

A FACE FOR ALL...

by JOHN M. HAFFERT

There may be a special reason *in our day* why "God wishes to establish in the world devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary"... alongside devotion to His own Sacred Heart.

Persons of different colored skins often look upon others with suspicion, and sometimes even with centuries of accumulated hatred.

But the color of all hearts is the color of love.

A Universal Message...

The human heart, with its thirst for eternity, its thirst for happiness, its thirst for love, is the same in every human breast in every nation and in every corner of the earth. And the Hearts of Jesus and Mary reach out to all.

There seems to be a similarly universal message in devotion to the Holy Face of Jesus.

What an extraordinary face!

Any man dying in agony would normally reflect agony, but here we look at the face of a man tortured to death in a most cruel way, *but the face reflects forgiveness, composure, and that of a man who lays down His own life of His own Will!* It is the face of a Man Who said (shortly before this Face was marvelously transferred in death to His burial shroud):

"Father, forgive them... behold your Mother... this day you shall be with me... I thirst... Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit."

Scientific Confirmation

For many years there has been a devotion to the Holy Face of Jesus primarily because of revelations to a Carmelite nun of Tours, France, to whom Our Lord appeared and promised special favors to those who would gaze upon the image of His Face in order to understand the greatness of His love. Among these

promises were that those who have such devotion would obtain the conversion of many sinners, would even obtain miracles, and that "He will imprint His divine likeness on souls of those who honor His Most Holy Countenance."

There was one special promise of meaning to those who today are moved to make reparation for the outrages and sacrileges committed against Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. The Carmelite (who received this revelation) said that Our Lord promised:

"According to the care you take in making reparation to My Face disfigured by blasphemies, so will I take care of yours which has been disfigured by sin. I will reprint therein My image and render it as beautiful as it was on leaving the baptismal font."

Only recently scientists were able to prove almost beyond any doubt that the shroud on which Our Lord was wrapped at burial (and which is now preserved in the Cathedral in Turin, Italy) bears *a real image from the body of Christ. We now feel very strongly that this is the Holy Face of Jesus who died for every one of us!*

The scientists say that there is no other possible explanation. No artist could have done it, and it could not be the picture of any other man than Our Lord because details of His Passion are found on the Shroud.

So whereas devout persons in centuries past could look upon a picture of the Holy Face of Jesus without knowing truly whether it was His own image or the work of an artist, we today can look upon this picture of the Holy Face and know that it has been preserved to us from the moment of Our Lord's great act of love—His death that we might live.

And as we gaze upon it, disfigured by the blasphemies of



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Above: "It is the Lord!"

men, we seem to realize that it does not look like the face of a man of any particular race. It looks like the face of the Incarnate God Who died for every man, and for each one individually.

Prayer of St. Therese

In our own century special devotion to the Holy Face was enkindled by one of the most loving and beloved saints in history, the Little Flower, St. Therese of Lisieux.

Pope Pius XI called her the star of his pontificate and "Messenger of the Twentieth Century."

St. Therese had such great devotion to the Holy Face of Jesus that she chose to be known as Therese of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face. The following is a prayer which she composed and recited daily:

Jesus, Who in Thy bitter Passion didst become "the reproach of men and the Man of Sorrows," I venerate Thy Holy Face on which shone the beauty and gentleness of Divinity. In those disfigured features I recognize Thine infinite love, and I long to love Thee and to make Thee loved...

May I behold Thy Glorious Face in Heaven!