

The Evangelization Station

“Service of and witness to the faith are necessary for salvation”

CCC §1816



Newsletter



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Some years ago, a young woman, well dressed and manicured, hailed a taxi along Fifth Avenue in New York. She was in a hectic hurry to make an appointment at a beauty shop. In her haste, she left in the cab a little crimson-covered pocket calendar. The taxi driver did not notice it until some hours later. Curious, he opened the calendar to find a name and address. He read some of the entries for the previous week: Monday, 2 P.M., manicure; 3 P.M., dressmaker; 6 P.M., tea at Smith's. Tuesday: 9 A.M., hairdresser; 12 noon, Continental Hotel; 3 P.M., golf. Wednesday: 10 A.M., fitting at dressmakers; 11 A.M., the Biddles are coming to lunch with us; 3 P.M., take Toodles to the veterinary; poor thing acts strange; 8 P.M., opera. Thursday, 10 A.M., paid a few bills; 11 A.M., did some shopping; 3 P.M., country club; 8 P.M., movie. Friday, 10 A.M., breakfast at the restaurant; 2 P.M., dressmaker changed the design of my dress; 3 P.M., tennis; 6 P.M., permanent. Evening, double feature. Saturday, 10 A.M. phoned about hat because it is still too tight; 11 A.M., dentist; 12, lunch at Smith's; 5 P.M., dinner with Jane; 9 P.M., movie.

What a record for one week. Seven days without a single mention of God. Seven days without one date with the Almighty. Seven days with twenty-four hours in each day - and not one hour set apart for the soul. Appointments with the dressmaker, the beauty shop, the stores, the country club, but not one mention of church, or of the confessional, or the Communion rail. In all justice one might call that a wasted week.

Now look into your own calendar. Oh, yes, every one of you is keeping a calendar. Perhaps you do not have a bound book, with pages, lines, days, and hours, wherein you place your appointments, but every one of us nevertheless is keeping a calendar, namely, a record of every moment and how you spend it. Go over that record for the past week. Better still, go over it for the past year. What do you find there? How many appointments have you had with God? How many hours have you spent uselessly, as far as your soul is concerned? Talk to your little record book: Dear Calendar, what do you have to tell about 2010?

I repeat, whether or not you write in a book every day. You are keeping a calendar. We are all keeping diaries. The chronicle, the story, the minute-by-minute account of our life is being written in the book of life — God's calendar. What did you write last year? Suppose the journal of 2010 were read aloud. What would we hear about you? Would it be an empty account like that of the young woman with the little red calendar? Would the story of your life in 2010 be the story of empty, worldly, selfish, wasteful hours and days and weeks? Is yours perhaps worse still — a logbook of sins and omissions and failures? How many hours have you given to God? Count them up. Do you think God is satisfied?

Answer that question yourself. Look into your calendar for 2010. Study it, learn from it, and you will be better able to keep a more fitting daybook in 2011. What are the things you would like to change? What dates, what days, would you like to

erase from 2010? See that such do not find their way into the book for 2011. What would you like to scratch out and blot out and tear out from the chapter of your life that ended at midnight December 31? What would you like to have had written there? Today a new calendar is handed to you, fresh and inviting. What are you going to write in it? Let me make some suggestions.

Mark down for 2011 — right now — the hour of Sunday Mass, an appointment you will keep faithfully and punctually, not five or ten minutes late, or even later, but on time. Courtesy demands it.

Mark down when you will receive the sacrament of confession and especially when you intend to receive Holy Communion. These are all-important dates with God.

In your calendar for 2011 note the time of special services in the church: Holy Hour, Lenten devotions, Novenas. Note the hour and day for meeting of parish societies: the Altar Society, the Knights of Columbus, the Holy Name Society.

With frequent regularity - make it very definite as to day and hour - jot down some minutes given to the reading of things Catholic: Our Sunday Visitor, National Catholic Register, etc.

In the hour plan of the New Year will be time set aside to visit the sick. How many minutes have you spent last year visiting someone who is shut in or sick? How many? Doing that in the New Year will make it a really happy year. Set aside the first and last moments of the day, every day, for a thought of God.

May our calendar for 2011 not be as empty as that of the young woman who left her prayerless, churchless, Godless daybook in the taxi. May 2011 rather be filled with daily appointments with God, Who today gives you a brand new calendar, a brand new year with 365 days, each day having 24 hours, and each hour with its 60 minutes. This very hour resolve — sanely and sensibly, yet decisively — that 2011 will have plenty of appointments with God. And that, I assure you, will make it a positively happy New Year. That, dear friends, is my sincere and heartfelt wish to all of you. Amen.

Happy New Year!

That greeting will be said and heard for at least the first couple of weeks as a new year gets under

way. But the day celebrated as New Year's Day in modern America was not always January 1.

ANCIENT NEW YEARS

The celebration of the New Year is the oldest of all holidays. It was first observed in ancient Babylon about 4000 years ago. In the years around 2000 BC, the Babylonian New Year began with the first New Moon (actually the first visible crescent) after the Vernal Equinox (first day of spring).

The beginning of spring is a logical time to start a new year. After all, it is the season of rebirth, of planting new crops, and of blossoming. January 1, on the other hand, has no astronomical or agricultural significance. It is purely arbitrary.

The Babylonian New Year celebration lasted for eleven days. Each day had its own particular mode of celebration, but it is safe to say that modern New Year's Eve festivities pale in comparison.

The Romans continued to observe the New Year in late March, but various emperors continually tampered with their calendar so that the calendar soon became out of synchronization with the sun.

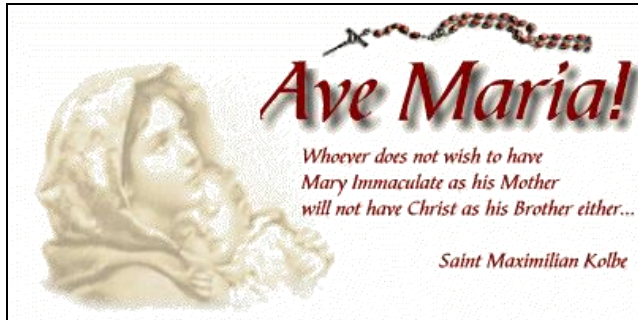
In order to set the calendar right, the Roman senate, in 153 BC, declared January 1 to be the beginning of the New Year. However, tampering continued until Julius Caesar, in 46 BC, established what has come to be known as the Julian Calendar. It again established January 1 as the New Year. But in order to synchronize the calendar with the sun, Caesar had to let the previous year drag on for 445 days.

THE CHURCH'S VIEW OF NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Although in the first centuries AD the Romans continued celebrating the New Year, the early Catholic Church condemned the festivities as paganism. However, as Christianity became more widespread, the early church began having its own religious observances concurrently with many of the pagan celebrations, and New Year's Day was no different. New Years is still observed as the Feast of Christ's Circumcision by some denominations.

During the Middle Ages, the Church remained opposed to celebrating New Years. January 1 has been celebrated as a holiday by Western nations for only about the past 400 years.

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD JANUARY 1, 2011



This feast, closely connected to the feast of Christmas, is the most important and oldest of the major feasts of Mary. It is based on the source of her privileges: her motherhood. Jesus Christ, God's Son "born of a woman," (Galatians 4:4) came to deliver us from sin and make us children of God. He is also Mary's Son, and she, his mother, helps bring his blessings to the world. She is "truly the Mother of God and of the Redeemer...not merely passively engaged by God, but freely cooperating in the work of our salvation through faith and obedience." (*Lumen Gentium*, 53:56)

Mary was not simply a passive instrument in God's hands; rather she discovered and accepted new dimensions to her motherhood as her life unfolded. Scripture indicates signs of her new unfolding motherhood.

At the marriage feast in Cana in Galilee, where Jesus worked his first miracle, Mary is "the Mother of Jesus" who manifests "a new kind of motherhood according to the spirit and not just according to the flesh, that is to say Mary's solicitude for human beings, her coming to them in the wide variety of their wants and needs. At Cana in Galilee there is shown only one concrete aspect of human need, apparently a small one and of little importance ("They have no wine"). But it has a symbolic value, this coming to the aid of human beings means, at the same time, bringing those needs within the radius of Christ's messianic mission and salvific power." (*Pope John Paul II, Redemptoris Mater 21*)

Mary's care for humanity and its needs would not be limited to her earthly life; it lasts "without interruption until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect." (*Lumen Gentium*, 62)

Whether in her own lifetime or from her place in heaven, Mary's solicitude for human beings looks, above all, to making known the messianic power of her Son. At Cana in Galilee, she told the servers at table, "**Do what he tells you.**" (*John 2:5*) In all her care for others, she points out Jesus to them.

Throughout her life, then, Mary was a follower of her Son. At the foot of the cross, her motherhood reached a new maturity when Mary experienced her Son's redeeming love for the world. Her spirit was touched and refined by the mystery of his death and resurrection.

BEARING WITNESS TO CHRIST

St. James the Greater, one of the apostles, was called greater to distinguish him from the other apostle of the same name who was called Less, perhaps because he was smaller in size or younger in age. St. James the Greater stands out because he was the first apostle to suffer martyrdom. Eleven years after Jesus spoke the words of our text, "You also will bear witness," St. James did bear witness by giving his life.

An acquaintance went out of his way to accuse our saint of being a Christian. At the trial his courage, fearlessness, and constancy impressed his accuser so deeply that the latter repented. Publicly, he too declared himself a Christian and was condemned to death together with the apostle.

As St. James and his repentant accuser were led forth to execution, the latter begged pardon of St. James, who turned to him, embraced him and exclaimed:

"Peace be with you."

He then kissed him, and both were beheaded. The Bible describes this death very briefly:

"Agrippa killed James, the brother of John, with the sword" (*Acts 12:2*).

By his death, St. James bore glorious witness to Christ. He not only gave part of his life; he gave all his life.

What do we mean by bearing witness? A witness is one who testifies in a court or at a trial. He proves, or attempts to prove, certain facts, statements, or circumstances. To bear witness or

testimony means to make a solemn statement or an affirmation that some thing took place or some word actually was spoken. Bearing witness means to offer evidence, valid, worthy evidence.

In the case of the followers of Christ, from the apostles on down, bearing witness means that by our words and by our actions-

- We prove and testify that what Christ claims to be, He really is.
- We prove that the Gospel is His word.
- We prove that the Church and the sacraments are the work of Christ.

The apostles gave glorious testimony to Christ:

1. By their preaching. On the first Pentecost, we see St. Peter fearlessly preaching the faith. All the other apostles in different lands gave of their energies and talents to spread the word of God.

2. By their miracles. In those early days, miracles were necessary to establish the infant Church. God gave His messengers the gift of tongues. God gave them the power of healing sickness and disease.

3. By dying for Christ. With the single exception of St. John, who died a natural death, all the apostles bore witness to Christ by their blood. They suffered martyrdom for their Master. And martyr means literally a witness, one who by his death bears witness to the truth of what Christ said.

But those words of Jesus, "You also will bear witness," were spoken not only to the apostles, they were spoken to us. We also must bear witness to Christ in our own day and way. How do we back up Christ's life and teaching?

1. By our words. When we openly profess that we believe in Christ and His teachings, we are bearing witness.

2. When we praise the goodness and virtues of Christ, His miracles and wonderful works, we bear witness.

3. We also testify to Christ when we tell and teach others about Him and what He taught.

4. Almost every day someone asks you about a certain belief or practice of the Church Christ founded. Giving an understandable answer or explanation is to show Christ to them who know Him not.

5. We bear witness by following Christ's example, by practicing the virtues He recommended. For example, a few years ago a local Presbyterian minister went out of his way to praise in a sermon a certain Catholic woman who had been

very friendly to a Presbyterian neighbor, an elderly lady, who appreciated the kindness so much she told her minister about it. He told his congregation. That Catholic woman was bearing witness to Christ, putting our Lord's words into practice.

6. True witnesses to Christ will make sacrifices for their faith. They will, for example, take time to attend special services and devotions, especially the Rosary.

Ordinarily God does not ask martyrdom of all of us, but He does ask some sacrifice. Let us suppose it is Friday and you are invited to a meal of meat. Tactfully, courteously, but firmly you tell your host that you don't eat meat on Friday, in order to share in the sufferings of our Savior. You are bearing witness.

Incidentally, those outside the Church respect you when you keep the rules and regulations. They may despise you when you weakly violate them.

In particular, Christ asks us to sacrifice our evil inclinations. He asks us to forget human respect and our own self-will. He asks us to sacrifice some of our means and our time. Every one of you can see that the chances for bearing witness to Christ are without number.

You and I represent the Church Christ founded. By our words, by our actions, by our explanations of our faith we tell the world:

"I represent the Catholic Church. I represent the teachings and life of Christ. I represent Christ Himself."

St. James the Greater, the other apostles, the martyrs, and the good people down the centuries have born witness to Christ. So must you and I.

St. Margaret Clitherow Bore Witness



Elizabeth I (1558-1603) came to the English throne in November 1558, and reestablished the Church of England's independence from Rome in a

1559 settlement and reformulated its teaching and practice in the Act of Uniformity. Elizabeth was finally excommunicated in 1570.

In the four months between 22 July and 27 November, of 1588, twenty-one seminary priests, eleven laymen, and one woman were put to death for their Catholic faith. During the rest of Elizabeth's life her Catholic subjects groaned under incessant persecution, of which one special note was the systematic use of torture. Henry Hallam, in his *History of the English Constitution* (1861–3) remarks, "The rack seldom stood idle in the Tower during the latter part of her reign". The total number of Catholics who suffered under her was one hundred and eighty-nine, one hundred and twenty-eight of them being priests, fifty-eight laymen, and three women. To them should be added, as Law remarks in his *Calendar of English Martyrs* (London, 1870), thirty-two Franciscans who were starved to death.

Actually, during the period of persecution of Catholics in England, three women were executed, and others sentenced to death, and reprieved only to linger or die in prison. Margaret Ward was condemned to die for assisting a priest to escape from Bridewell. She was offered her liberty if she would go to the Protestant church, and on refusing these terms, was hanged at Tyburn. Mrs. Line was tried for her life before Chief-Justice Popham for entertaining a priest in her house, was flogged and then hanged. Mrs. Wells, for the same cause, received sentence of death, but died in prison. Anne Tesse and Bridget Maskew were condemned to be burnt alive, but after lingering for several years in prison, were set at liberty by James I.

More famous, however, than any of these is the name of Margaret Margaret Clitherow, of whose charity, good works, and heroic death we fortunately possess a full contemporary account, drawn up by her director, the Rev. John Mush. Her history is but briefly told in the *Memoirs of Bishop Challoner*, who simply says she refused to plead, and was 'pressed' to death according to law. As, however, this barbarous mode of execution is now little understood or forgotten, the story shall be here given in the words of Mr. Mush, to whom Dr. Challoner himself refers us.

"About eight of the clock the Sheriffs came to her, and she being ready expecting them, having trimmed up her head with new inkle, and carrying on her arm the new habit of linen with inkle strings,

which she had prepared to bind her hands, went cheerfully to her marriage, as she called it, dealing her alms in the street, which was so full of people that she could scarce pass by them. She went barefoot and barelegged, her gown loose about her. Fawcet, the Sheriff, made haste and said, 'Come away, Mrs. Clitheroe.' The martyr answered merrily, 'Good Master Sheriff, let me deal my poor alms before I now go, for my time is but short.' They marveled all to see her joyful countenance. The place of execution was the Tolbooth, six or seven yards distance from the prison. There were present at her martyrdom the two Sheriffs of York, Fawcet and Gibson, Frost, a minister, Fox, Mr. Cheeke's kinsman, with another of his men, the four sergeants which had hired certain beggars to do the murther, three or four men, and four women. The martyr coming to the place, kneeled her down, and prayed to herself. The tormentors bade her pray with them, and they would pray with her. The martyr denied, and said, 'I will not pray with you, and you shall not pray with me; neither will I say Amen to your prayers, nor shall you to mine.' Then they all willed her to pray for the Queen's Majesty. The martyr began in this order : First, in the hearing of them all, she prayed for the Catholic Church, then for the Pope's Holiness, Cardinals, and other Fathers which have charge of souls, and then for all Christian princes. At which words the tormentors interrupted her, and willed her not to put her Majesty among that company; yet the martyr proceeded in this order: 'And especially for Elizabeth, Queen of England, that God move her to the Catholic Faith, and that after this mortal life she may receive the blessed joys of heaven; for I wish as much good,' quoth she, 'to her Majesty's soul as to mine own.' Sheriff Gibson, abhorring the cruel fact, stood weeping at the door. Then said Fawcet, 'Mrs. Clitheroe, you must remember and confess that you die for treason.' The martyr answered, 'No, no, Mr. Sheriff; I die for the love of my Lord Jesu,' which last words she spoke with a loud voice. Then Fawcet commanded her to put off her apparel, 'For you must die,' said he, 'naked, as judgment was given and pronounced against you. . .

"The women took off her clothes and put upon her the long habit of linen. Then very quietly she laid her down upon the ground, her face covered with a handkerchief, the linen habit being placed over her as far as it could reach, all the rest of her body being naked. The door was laid upon her, her

hands she joined towards her face. Then the Sheriff said, 'Nay, you must have your hands bound.' The martyr put forth her hands over the door still joined. Then two sergeants parted them, and with the inkle strings which she had prepared for that purpose bound them to two posts, so that her body and her arms made a perfect cross. They willed her again to ask the Queen's Majesty's forgiveness and to pray for her. The martyr said she had prayed for her. They also willed her to ask her husband's forgiveness. The martyr said, 'If ever I have offended him, but for my conscience, I ask him forgiveness.'

"After this they laid weight upon her, which, when she first felt, she said, 'Jesu! Jesu! Jesu! Have mercy upon me!' which were the last words which she was heard to speak. She was in dying one quarter of an hour. A sharp stone, as much as a man's fist, was put under her back ; upon her was laid a quantity of seven or eight hundredweight at the least [406 Kgs/896 lbs], which breaking her ribs, caused them to burst forth of the skin.



St. Margaret Clitherow is "pressed" to death.

"Thus most gloriously this gracious martyr overcame all her enemies, passing [from] this mortal life with marvelous triumph into the peaceable city of God, there to receive a worthy crown of endless immortality and joy."

About Prayer...

Prayer is the most exalted function in which man can be engaged, because it exercises the highest faculties of the soul, – the intellect and the will; it brings us into direct communication with the greatest of all beings, God himself; it is the channel of heaven's choicest blessings; it excludes no one, it embraces all in the circle of its benedictions; it gives us access to our Heavenly Father at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances. In a word, prayer renders us co-operators with our Creator in the moral government of the world, since many of the events of life are shaped in accordance with our pious entreaties. Conceive, then, the dignity of God's saints. The affairs of life are decreed from all eternity; and the eternal decrees themselves are in a measure, regulated by the prayers of His servants. "Prayer moves the Hand that moves the universe." – James Cardinal Gibbons

Take time to pray... it is the greatest power on earth!
 Scripture says to... Pray without ceasing!
 When you pray... pray from the heart, Jesus longs to hear from you!

God governs the world but, prayer governs God!
 Your prayers are strongest at the Consecration in Holy Mass (raising of Host and Chalice).
 Say the Jesus Prayer... "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me." Try to say this 600 times a day!
 St. Paul wrote... "We enter on the broad road of perdition when we neglect prayer."
 Pope Paul IV said, "The Mass is the most perfect Prayer".



Consider the Confessional

You enter the little enclosed box, the mercy seat of God on earth. Your heart may be throbbing, your nerves jumpy, your conscience loaded with a heavy weight, the tremendous weight of sin, the weight of disobedience to the law of God. And in there, the

priest, taking the place of God himself, pronounces the words of absolution, lifting that weight from your heart, and filling your soul with grace and peace and joy which God alone can give. Don't you feel an inexpressible joy as you leave the confessional after making a sincere, contrite confession?

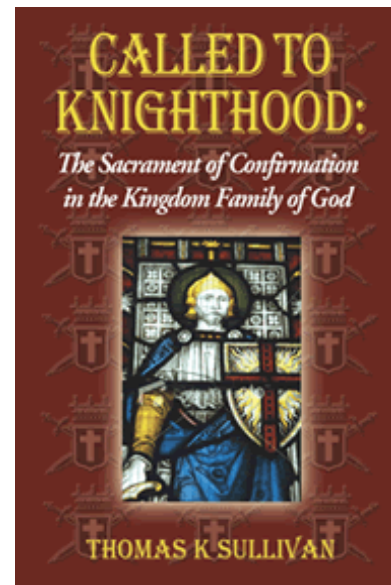
Called to Knighthood



Did you know that you are called to be a soldier for Christ? A warrior for the kingdom family of God? A knight at the table of the King of Kings? And did you know that one of the seven sacraments of the Church provides you with the strength and zeal you need to carry out this marvelous duty, so that you can accomplish great and holy things? Confirmation is the sacrament that is the least understood and the most underrated.

Thomas Sullivan has written a marvelous book about the Sacrament of Confirmation. Everyone interested in learning about this unappreciated sacrament should read this work I especially recommend it to those involved in teaching Confirmation classes or RCIA.

In his book, Tom leads us on an exciting journey through Sacred Scripture to enlighten us to the sacraments importance and necessity in the life of the Christian. Along the way, he debunks popular misconceptions about the sacrament and gives a compelling argument for lowering the age at which the sacrament is conferred.



A few of the books many recommendations:

The Catholic Church tells us Confirmation is the sacrament that empowers us "to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses" (CCC 1303), which is why every Christian's job description is to be nothing less than a soldier of Christ. Tom Sullivan writes like a drill instructor preparing recruits to fight and win the battles of everyday life, and to engage in the spiritual warfare that makes us saints. Here is an inspiring summary of 2000 years of basic training from Scripture, the early Fathers, and the Church's official teaching. "

*Scott Hahn — Professor of Scripture and Theology
Franciscan University of Steubenville*

"Finally, a book that unlocks the power of confirmation in a practical, life-transforming way! In an era when confirmation is not well-understood by many Catholics, "Called to Knighthood: The Sacrament of Confirmation in the Kingdom Family of God" is an excellent resource for parents, priests and catechists who want to make this sacrament come powerfully alive for young people and adults preparing to be confirmed. I have recommended this to my graduate students preparing for catechetical work, and it is easily readable for the average lay person as well."

*Edward Sri, S.T.D. — Provost & Professor of
Scripture and Theology*

The key to holiness is learning how to harness the power of God's grace, which is available when we seek it. Tom Sullivan has done each of us a great

service with "Called to Knighthood: The Sacrament of Confirmation in the Kingdom Family of God". The Sacrament of Confirmation is always important, but never more so than when the vibrancy and power of Christianity seems to dim in a culture. The grace of Confirmation and a proper understanding of its power will unleash the capacity for spiritual awakening in our world.

Curtis Martin — President and Founder of FOCUS

All seven sacraments are manifold treasures of grace. Unfortunately, the sacrament of Confirmation is widely misunderstood, under-appreciated, and often passed off as a simple rite of passage. Yet this sacrament has enormous potential for every Catholic, especially for our youth. *Called to Knighthood* shows how confirmation provides the spiritual strengthening necessary for every Catholic. In the second part of his book, Tom Sullivan shares some penetrating suggestions regarding the age of Confirmation. I encourage every priest and parent to read Sullivan's comments with the upmost care. We are facing a severe and widespread crisis among our Catholic youth. Sullivan's concluding thoughts outline a wise and winning sacramental strategy that has the potential for launching a new era for our young people.

*Steve Wood — President, Family Life Center Int'l
Founder, St. Joseph's Covenant Keepers*

\$10.99 (Paperback)

ORDER ONLINE at

<http://www.calledtoknighthood.com/books-media.html>

or call: 1-(727)-233-3244

"He Was Beautiful!"

There is the story told by Sr. Mary Claude of the Congregation of the Holy Cross in Montreal (1967). Sister Mary Claude and another Sister had gone to visit a sick parishioner. By mistake, they called at the wrong house. However, the woman who greeted them at the door invited them in and began to ask questions about the faith. Finally, she asked if she could have formal instructions. In the weeks that followed, she accepted the doctrine of Christianity eagerly, with one exception: She could not bring herself to believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist.

The Sisters suggested that she attend a Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and they recommended: "When the Host is held up in the monstrance, ask God to help you to believe in the Real Presence."

The following week the Sisters visited their protégé again and inquired how she liked the ceremony of Benediction.

"He was beautiful!" came the instant and glowing response.

Confused, the Sisters began asking questions, and the neophyte explained that she had seen the Lord leave the monstrance to bless the people and then go back again when the priest returned to the altar. "I saw His wounded side through His pure white garment and the marks of the nails on His hands and feet," she added.

The woman was surprised to find out that her experience had been unusual.

HOPE

*What song is well sung not of sorrow?
What triumph well won without pain?
What virtue shall be, and not borrow
Bright luster from many a stain?
What birth has there been without travail?
What battle well won without blood?
What good shall earth see without evil
Ingarn'd as chaff with the good?
Lo! the cross set in rocks by the Roman,
And nourish'd by blood of the Lamb,
And water'd by tears of the woman,
Has flourish'd, has spread like a palm;
Has spread in the frosts, and far regions
Of snows in the North, and South sands,
Where never the tramp of his legions
Was heard, or reach'd forth his red hands.
Be thankful; the price and the payment,
The birth, the privations and scorn,
The cross, and the parting of raiment,
Are finish'd. The star brought us morn.
Look starward; stand far and unearthy,
Free soul'd as a banner unfurl'd.
Be worthy, O brother, be worthy!
For a God was the price of the world.*

Joaquin Miller (1841 - 1913)