

## Thoughts on Intercession by Sister Margaret Mary SPB

In our community we have a prayer which we say each day on rising, *Father, I thank you for redeeming the world through the Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ: Take and bless my life to-day within this mystery.* That, for me, says all there is to say about Intercession, but I will try to spell it out and look at some of the different facets of this mystery.

We are all baptised into his death and resurrection, and become living members of his Body on earth, united with him "who ever lives to make intercession for us". That is one facet - that we become channels of his resurrection life. But while we are on earth intercession also entails for us "filling up in *our bodies* that which is lacking in the sufferings of Christ". Here the mystery deepens, especially in this day and age when we do not think of redemption as the appeasement of an angry God, or of the atonement as a debt that must be paid in the bitter coinage of suffering.

In Gethsemane and on Calvary, and indeed throughout the whole of our Lord's incarnate life, a deeper drama than human eye can see was going on - a battle between good and evil. Anyone who enters into real prayer will come up against this mystery, and suffering, whether physical, mental or spiritual, will take on a new dimension. It was not suffering as such that redeemed the world but the power of love behind it. Perhaps we can more easily understand this spiritual combat if we see it as a clash between opposite energies, love, whose source is God, and hate, or any other energy which is not of God. Energy released into the psychic atmosphere will not remain static but will work for good or ill. Our Lord's suffering on the cross was the greatest act of love possible, where he willingly entered into the heart of the combat and took upon himself all the hatred that has been unleashed in the world for all time. At every Eucharist we, as it were, tap into this timeless act that was done not only 'once for all', but also 'once, for all', and we ask to be united with his sacrifice of love.

We in our community unite our prayer of intercession with that of Calvary in another specific way as we keep a Watch of Intercession before the Eucharistic Presence on the altar.

What I have said so far makes intercession sound a very painful business, but again, suffering is only one facet of this mystery. Suffering in itself is impotent - it is the love with which it is borne that produces the power. "Love was his meaning", said Julian of Norwich, as she plumbed the depth of the Passion. Simply to lift up another by name before God is intercession. Every loving thought or prayer or deed will then be for that other's good. We will not be heard for our many words or even for our emotional feelings, but for our motive of love. This is where the crunch comes - are our motives pure, or are they coloured by our own will?

Lord, purify my heart that I may become a channel for your love, your will on earth.

