

# SPIRITUAL MARTYRDOM IN ST. GREGORY THE GREAT

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AMONG THE HOMILIES of St. Gregory the Great on the Gospel,<sup>1</sup> there is one on St. Felicitas, the reputed mother of seven martyred sons.<sup>2</sup> After marveling, in a typically Roman fashion, at the glory of martyrdom in a woman,<sup>3</sup> after extolling the strength of a man in the body of a woman and the glory of one who overcame not only the world but her sex as well, after contrasting her firmness with the weak inconstancy of men, Gregory concludes his homily with these words:

For love of us, dearly beloved brethren, our Redeemer laid down His life. Let us, then, for love of Him, learn to overcome ourselves. If we do this perfectly, not only will we escape the oncoming punishments, but we will be rewarded with glory together with the martyrs. For although the opportunity of persecution is lacking, nevertheless our time of peace has its own peculiar martyrdom. For even though we do not bend our bodily neck to the sword, nevertheless with the spiritual sword we slay in our soul carnal desires.<sup>4</sup>

To one who is acquainted with the thought of early Christianity, it is evident that Gregory is here echoing the very popular theme of spiritual martyrdom. Before developing Gregory's handling of this theme, something needs to be said about the concept of martyrdom<sup>5</sup> and the concept of spiritual martyrdom. Something needs to be said about martyrdom, which was called actual martyrdom, red martyrdom, bloody martyrdom, or martyrdom unto blood; something also

<sup>1</sup> Cf. G. Pfeilschifter, *Die authentische Ausgabe der Evangelium-Homilien Gregors des Grossen* (Munich, 1900); F. Homes Dudden, *Gregory the Great: His Place in History and Thought* 1 (London, 1905) 252-57.

<sup>2</sup> For the problems connected with St. Felicitas, see A. Butler, H. Thurston, S.J., and D. Attwater, *The Lives of the Saints* 7 (New York, 1931) 127-30; H. Leclercq, "Félicité," *DACL* 5 (Paris, 1922) 1259 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Notice the echo of this sentiment in the Roman Missal, which marvels at martyrdom "etiam in sexu fragili." Note, too, that a woman of outstanding holiness is praised as one who is "fortem virili pectore."

<sup>4</sup> Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in evangelia* 1, 3, 4 (PL 76, 1088D-89A).

<sup>5</sup> For an introduction to the literature on and concept of martyrdom, see W. Arndt and F. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, 1957) p. 495; H. von Campenhausen, *Die Idee des Martyriums in der alten Kirche* (Göttingen, 1936); J. Scherman, *The Nature of Martyrdom* (Paterson, N.J., 1942).

needs to be said about the second type of martyrdom, which was called spiritual martyrdom, white martyrdom, lifelong martyrdom, martyrdom by desire, or martyrdom in intention.

First, a few introductory remarks will be made about actual martyrdom or martyrdom unto blood.<sup>6</sup> In imitation of Christ who came into the world to give testimony to the truth (Jn 18:37), Christians who followed in the way of Christ were also to give testimony to Christ and to be witnesses unto Him. The idea of bearing witness to Christ is found throughout the pages of the New Testament. Actually, the role of Christians in time, and the germinal concept of the history of the Church, the mystical Christ, the extension of Christ in time and space, is found in the words of the Acts of the Apostles: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be witnesses for me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the very ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).<sup>7</sup> Unto the end of time, to the very ends of the earth, the Christian is, by definition, a person who is a witness to Christ.

Such a witness is a martyr, for the Greek word *martus* means "witness." In St. John, however, we note a different idea of martyr and martyrdom. To John, the martyr or witness is one who bears testimony by shedding his blood. The shedding of blood enters into the picture of martyrdom, but the person is essentially a witness. In other words, there is a parallel between the role of the martyr as witness and the role of Christ as *Logos*, *Testimonium*, and *Verbum*. All this is rooted in the Christology of St. John, who sees Christ as the *Logos*, the *Testimonium*, and the *Verbum*, as one who came into the world to bear testimony to the truth. In the concept of martyrdom, the idea that is to the fore is the idea of witness.

In St. John, the process whereby Christians are witnesses to Christ is regarded as a collective process whereby God speaks to the world through the testimony of Christians. In other words, it is an eschatological process, a divine judgment. The testimony of the Christian is

<sup>6</sup> This survey is based on A. J. Vermeulen, *The Semantic Development of Gloria in Early-Christian Latin* (Nijmegen, 1956) pp. 53-96. Vermeulen's work is based on a penetrating study of the sources and the current literature dealing with martyrdom.

<sup>7</sup> For an outline of the meaning and scope of Church history, see P. Guilday, *An Introduction to Church History* (St. Louis, 1925) pp. 1-94; K. Bihlmeyer and H. Tüchle, *Kirchengeschichte: Das christliche Altertum* (Paderborn, 1952) pp. 1-5.

addressed to all, even the persecutors. If they accept the testimony of the Christians, it becomes a means of justification for them; if they reject it, it is an occasion for their condemnation. Accordingly, in the light of this, attention is focused not so much on the individual martyr as on the whole process of martyrdom. Furthermore, no sharp distinction is made between martyrs and Christians who escape martyrdom without denying the faith. All are subject to martyrdom, and the heavenly glory is awaiting all. In apostolic times no special honor or veneration was given the martyrs. Martyrdom was considered a normal part of the Christian life, which obliged the Christian to imitate Christ. The individual martyr was a link in the collective world process of being a witness to Christ.<sup>8</sup>

Gradually, in the period between the New Testament and the time of Tertullian and St. Cyprian, there is a shift of emphasis in the meaning of the word "martyr." Briefly, the martyr was primarily a witness; now he is a sufferer. In the scriptural context, there is a parallel between the role of the martyr as witness and the role of Christ as *Verbum*, *Testimonium*, and *Logos*. Now there is a relation between the sufferings of the martyr and the passion of Christ, between the *passio martyris* and the *passio Christi*.

This is explained in part by the existential order of things. The second and third centuries witnessed a host of persecutions. Many died as martyrs; others did not. In such an atmosphere there was a tendency to concentrate on the glory of the individual martyr, to stress his tortures and sufferings, to extol his bravery, and to portray him as the perfect imitator of Christ in His passion. All the metaphors from the field of sports and war were applied to him. He was the victorious combatant and the glorious soldier. Christians could well boast of the glory of a new kind of hero and point out that paganism had nothing to equal it.<sup>9</sup>

In this period, where attention was focused on the greatness and glory of the individual martyr, one notes that martyrdom was regarded as the perfect fulfilment of God's will, as a warfare, a contest with the devil, as the perfect imitation of Christ in His passion, as a means of justification. One notes also a tendency to concentrate on the greatness

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Vermeulen, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-58, 62.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 58-74.

of the martyr, not only in his reward in heaven but also in his renown in the Church.<sup>10</sup> In this period, then, "the person and his sufferings, the achievements of the individual martyr, come to the fore, and with them the particular honor and glory which distinguish the martyr from other Christians."<sup>11</sup> The martyr, who was first and foremost a witness, is now first and foremost a sufferer, a subject of torture unto death, and his testimony is "not so much a continuation of Christ's message, but rather a combat in which the confessor through the moral courage displayed in his confession overcomes the pagan judge and in the judge the Evil One."<sup>12</sup>

The emphasis on the martyr as a contestant, as one who underwent heroic sufferings in imitating the passion of Christ, as an individual who achieved tremendous triumphs and vanquished the devil, remained much to the fore in Western writers after this period. This somewhat traditional stress is also found in St. Augustine; for he himself says that "where there is a struggle unto blood, there is the most glorious and full victory."<sup>13</sup> However, with him this aspect is secondary. In Augustine one notes a tendency to return to the biblical concept and to stress the witness aspect of martyrdom. Vermeulen remarks: "He accordingly holds up the martyr in his sermons as the outstanding example of Christian faith and Christian life, he represents him first and foremost as a witness of divine truth, and then only as one who has conquered the devil and the world; the martyr inspires his followers to contempt of death and complete renunciation of the world. In stressing the witness aspect St. Augustine revived the Scriptural meaning of martyrdom, which in the foregoing centuries had, to some extent, fallen into the background."<sup>14</sup>

This tendency of Augustine to stress the witness aspect of martyrdom was brought about by two episodes in his life, one concerned with a group outside the Church, the other concerned with actual members of the Church.

When the Donatists, who had cut themselves off from the unity of

<sup>10</sup> Cf. E. Hummel, *The Concept of Martyrdom according to St. Cyprian of Carthage* (Washington, D.C., 1946).

<sup>11</sup> Vermeulen, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>13</sup> Augustine, *Serm.* 284, 3 (*PL* 38, 1291).

<sup>14</sup> Vermeulen, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

the Church, were persecuted by the Christian emperors,<sup>16</sup> Augustine denied that they had the right to claim the glory of martyrdom. Since they were cut off from the unity of the Church and from Christ, who is the Truth, Augustine argues that they could not be martyrs, precisely because they could not be witnesses to the truth, insofar as they did not have the truth. He repeatedly asserts that martyrdom is not the mere physical undergoing of death and torture, but the undergoing of this primarily as a witness to the truth. Hence his repeated use of the axiom *martyrem non facit poena sed causa*.<sup>16</sup>

The second occasion for Augustine to concentrate on the witness aspect of martyrdom was in connection with the manner in which many of his fellow Catholics celebrated the feast of the martyrs. To put it mildly, "St. Augustine was not a promoter of the external festivities in the cult of the martyrs."<sup>17</sup> The gathering for meals at the tomb of the martyr, meals that were often protracted beyond limits, led to much excess in eating and drinking. Augustine consequently forbade this practice.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, many gloried in a merely external manner in the heroic achievements of a martyr of past ages; they failed to relate that to a deeper interiorization of their life in the present. Accordingly, Augustine minimizes the torture aspect of martyrdom and concentrates on the witness aspect. The martyr is first and foremost a witness to Christ, and it is in this way precisely that he is a model for those who celebrate his feast. This is why, in his sermons, Augustine holds up the martyr as the outstanding example of Christian faith and Christian life.<sup>19</sup>

With Augustine's return to the scriptural emphasis of the witness

<sup>16</sup> Regarding Augustine and the appeal to the secular arm, see P. Labriolle, "Saint Augustin," in A. Fliche and V. Martin, *Histoire de l'église* 4 (Paris, 1945) 71.

<sup>18</sup> Augustine, *Epist.* 204, 4 (CSEL 57, 319); *Serm.* 275, 1 (PL 38, 1254); *Serm.* 285, 2 (PL 38, 1293).

<sup>17</sup> Vermeulen, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. J. Quasten, "Die Reform des Märtyrerkultus durch Augustinus," *Theologie und Glaube* 25 (1933) 318-31; "Vetus superstitio et nova religio: The Problem of the Refrigerium in the Ancient Church of North Africa," *Harvard Theological Review* 33 (1940) 253-66. A perfect summing up of Augustine's attitude is expressed in *Sermo de martyribus* (*Revue bénédictine* 51 [1939] 20) when he says: "Hoc est ergo martyres amare, hoc est dies martyrum devota pietate celebrare, non vino ingurgitari sed illorum fidem et patientiam imitari."

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Vermeulen, *op. cit.*, pp. 80 f.

aspect in martyrdom, a cycle is closed. The martyr is both witness and sufferer, a witness to the truth and a sufferer for Christ, and one will notice both these aspects in later writers in their use of the term "martyr."

In the early ages of the Church the martyr was the Christian ideal, the perfect imitator of Christ. It is known that when the age of persecution came to a close, the monk came to the fore, to take the place of the martyr as the acme of perfection. The monk was regarded as the brother of the martyr.<sup>20</sup> Even in the era of persecutions, however, there was already formulated the idea of spiritual martyrdom. Although spiritual martyrdom came to be regarded as embodied perfectly in monasticism and consecrated virginity,<sup>21</sup> nevertheless it was also early applied as an ascetical ideal to the living of the Christian life among the rank and file of Christians.

Spiritual martyrdom applies primarily to those who do not, or who actually will not, undergo actual martyrdom of blood. To those who do not attain the privilege and the grace of dying for Christ at the hand of the persecutor, an ideal is set up: they can be spiritual martyrs. In other words, they can be witnesses to Christ by the goodness of their lives; they can fight the good fight by the struggle within their own consciences, within their own heart, between the forces of good and evil, between the forces of virtue and vice. In this work they can emerge victorious with the laurel of virtue, with the crown of Christ-likeness. It was this life that came to be called spiritual martyrdom, white martyrdom, the martyrdom of peace, martyrdom in intention, martyrdom of conscience, daily martyrdom, and bloodless martyrdom.

Before giving St. Gregory's thought on this subject, some sampling of this topic in earlier Latin writers will be given as background.<sup>22</sup> A classic passage is that of St. Cyprian:

<sup>20</sup> Cf. E. Malone, O.S.B., *The Monk and the Martyr: The Monk as the Successor of the Martyr* (Washington, D.C., 1950).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. M. Viller, "Les martyrs et l'esprit," *Recherches de science religieuse* 14 (1924) 544-51; "Martyre et perfection," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 6 (1925) 3-25; "Le martyre et l'ascèse," *ibid.*, pp. 105-42; M. Viller and K. Rahner, *Assese und Mystique in der Väterzeit* (Freiburg, 1931) pp. 38 ff.

<sup>22</sup> For samplings of this topic in Greek writers, see H. Musurillo, S.J., "The Problem of Ascetical Fasting in Greek Patristic Writers," *Traditio* 12 (1956) 55-67. This section of the article is entitled "The Martyrdom of Asceticism."

Let us be occupied at all times in spiritual works, that as often as the enemy approaches, as often as he tries to come near, he may find our heart closed and armed against him. Actually, for the Christian there is not only one crown which is obtained in time of persecution. The time of peace, too, has its own crowns, with which we are crowned as victors for our various and numerous engagements, after the adversary is laid low and overcome. To have conquered lust is the palm of continence. To have struggled victoriously against anger and insult is the crown of patience. To spurn money is to triumph over avarice. To bear the adversities of the world by hope in the things to come is the praise of faith. Furthermore, he who is not proud in prosperity achieves the glory of humility. Again, he who is prone to mercy in helping the poor receives the reward of a heavenly treasure. And he who knows not jealousy, but loves his brethren in a spirit of concord and meekness, is honored with the reward of love and peace. In this arena of the virtues we run daily, and to these palms and crowns of justice we attain without intermission.<sup>23</sup>

Whether one lives like this without going on to martyrdom of blood, or whether one goes on to death at the hands of the executioner, he will not be without his reward from the hands of God. As Cyprian remarks: "To those who are victorious in time of peace, the Lord will bestow the white crown for their good works; to those who are victorious in time of persecution, the Lord will add the crimson crown because of their suffering."<sup>24</sup> The two crowns, corresponding to the two types of martyrdom, are also mentioned in a letter where St. Cyprian speaks of the Church that had passed from a period of peace to a period of persecution. Here he says of the Church: "Before she was white with the good works of the brethren; now she has become crimson with the blood of the martyrs. Neither lilies nor roses are missing among her flowers."<sup>25</sup>

Even passing from the era of persecution to writers who lived after the peace of the Church, one can find repeated the theme of spiritual martyrdom. St. Jerome, writing to Eustochium on the death of her mother, observes: "Not only the shedding of blood is regarded as a confession, but the service of a dedicated soul is also a martyrdom and a daily one."<sup>26</sup> Augustine, challenging the Christians of his day, remarks: "Let no one say: I cannot be a martyr, because there is now

<sup>23</sup> Cyprian, *De zelo et livore* 16 (CSEL 3/1, 430 f.).

<sup>24</sup> Cyprian, *De opere et elemosinis* 26 (CSEL 3/1, 394).

<sup>25</sup> Cyprian, *Epist.* 10, 5 (CSEL 3/2, 494).

<sup>26</sup> Jerome, *Epist.* 108, 31 (CSEL 55, 349).

no persecution. Trials are never lacking. The battle and the crown is prepared . . . . The Christian soul is tried and, with the help of God, it conquers and wins a great victory; this it does enclosed in the body, with no one as its witness. It fights in its heart, it is crowned in its heart, but by Him who sees into the heart."<sup>27</sup>

In the period between Augustine and Gregory, St. Caesarius of Arles admonishes his flock: "Let no one say, dearly beloved brethren, that the struggles of the martyrs cannot be a reality in our days; for the period of peace has its own martyrs. For, as we suggested frequently, to curb anger, to flee lust, to preserve justice, to contemn avarice, to humble pride is, to a great part, a martyrdom."<sup>28</sup>

In the light of these testimonies we can understand better the thought content of the passage from Gregory the Great with which this study opened. There Gregory speaks of the martyrdom which is peculiar to the time of peace, when persecution is lacking. This consists in overcoming ourselves for love of Christ, especially by the practice of purity and chastity.<sup>29</sup>

In his development of spiritual martyrdom, Gregory contrasts it with actual martyrdom. In this connection Gregory says: "There are two kinds of martyrdom, one in intention and the other in intention and actuality. Therefore, we can be martyrs even though we are not slain by the sword of persecution. To die at the hands of persecutors is martyrdom that is performed in public; to bear insults, to love one's enemy, is martyrdom in the hidden depths of the heart."<sup>30</sup> Similarly, in the *Dialogues* Gregory says: "There are, Peter, two kinds of martyrdom, one in secret, the other in public. For even though externally there is no persecution, the merit of martyrdom is there interiorly when the soul is aflame with the firm resolve to undergo suffering."<sup>31</sup>

Gregory, who had a great love for Scripture, sees in Scripture the foundation for his doctrine on the twofold martyrdom. It is to Scripture that he turns to show that one can be a martyr unto death and

<sup>27</sup> Augustine, *Sermo de martyribus*; see *Revue bénédictine* 51 (1939) 19.

<sup>28</sup> Caesarius of Arles, *Serm.* 41, 1 (CCL 103, 180).

<sup>29</sup> It is interesting to note that Pope Pius XII uses this passage where he speaks of perfect chastity as a substitute for martyrdom; see *Sacra virginitas* (AAS 46 [1954] 180).

<sup>30</sup> Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in evangelia* 2, 35, 7 (PL 76, 1263B-C).

<sup>31</sup> *Dialogi* 3, 26 (PL 77, 281C).

that one can be a martyr without undergoing death at the hands of the executioner. In this connection he remarks:

Indeed, that there are two kinds of martyrdom, one in secret and the other in public, Truth Himself affirms, for He asks the sons of Zebedee: "Can you drink the chalice which I shall drink?" When they immediately answered: "We can," at once the Lord answered and said: "My chalice indeed you shall drink." What do we understand by the chalice but the pain of suffering? About this He says in another passage: "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me." Now the sons of Zebedee, that is, James and John, did not both die by martyrdom, and yet they both heard that they would drink the chalice. John, indeed, did not end his life by martyrdom; nevertheless he was a martyr, because the suffering that he did not receive in his body he experienced in his soul. And we, therefore, like him can be martyrs without undergoing the sword. . . .<sup>32</sup>

Similarly, in the *Dialogues* he states: "The Lord in the Gospel affirms that there can be a martyrdom even without open persecution."<sup>33</sup> After repeating the account of the two sons of Zebedee, Gregory goes on to say: "Now since it is evident that James laid down his life in martyrdom and that John died in the peace of the Church, we see clearly that there is a martyrdom without open persecution, since he is said to drink the chalice of the Lord who did not die by way of persecution."<sup>34</sup>

Briefly, then, spiritual martyrdom is the martyrdom of peace, that is, martyrdom that is carried on when the Church is at peace.<sup>35</sup> It is a martyrdom that occurs without open persecution,<sup>36</sup> a martyrdom that takes place even though one is not put to death by the sword of the executioner.<sup>37</sup>

After these brief details one can look with a more profound insight into the nature of spiritual martyrdom which Gregory recommends so enthusiastically. In the first place, it is clear that in eulogizing spiritual martyrdom Gregory is proposing a spiritual ideal, an ideal of asceticism, an ideal for those who, living in the peace of the Church, cannot attain to the actual martyrdom of blood by bodily death. This spiritual martyrdom is a means of imitating the martyrs, as is clear from the

<sup>32</sup> *Hom. in evang.* 2, 35, 7 (PL 76, 1263C-D).

<sup>33</sup> *Dialogi* 3, 26 (PL 77, 281C).   <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* 3, 26 (PL 77, 281D-84A).

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *Hom. in evang.* 1, 3, 4 (PL 76, 1089A).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *Dialogi* 3, 26 (PL 77, 281C).   <sup>37</sup> *Hom. in evang.* 2, 35, 7 (PL 76, 1263B).

fact that Gregory's exhortations on spiritual martyrdom are often brought out in connection with his sermons on, or remarks about, actual martyrs. More fundamental, however, than the imitation of the martyrs is the imitation of Christ, of whom the martyrs were perfect imitators.<sup>38</sup> Love for Christ is the predominant motive in spiritual martyrdom. Thus, in his homily on St. Felicitas Gregory says: "For love of us, dearly beloved brethren, our Redeemer laid down His life. Let us, then, for love of Him, learn to overcome ourselves."<sup>39</sup>

In contrast to actual martyrdom, where external bodily death takes place, spiritual martyrdom is interior. It is an affair of the heart, of the soul. It is the hidden asceticism of the practice of virtue and the overcoming of vice, a process in which the person overcomes not the pagan tyrant but the tyranny within himself. This thought Gregory frequently stresses. The last-quoted passage speaks of it as a process of overcoming ourselves for love of Christ. Gregory also speaks of holy persons who by the practice of virtue "sacrificed themselves in their heart to Almighty God" and "were martyrs in time of peace."<sup>40</sup> He also speaks of those who, in the peace of the Church, by continual mortification "walked the narrow road of martyrdom."<sup>41</sup> In this regard the most significant statement is that made by Gregory in his homily on the anniversary of St. Pancratius. In his concluding words he addresses the people as follows:

We are gathered at the tomb of a martyr, we know by what kind of death he attained to the heavenly kingdom. If we do not lay down our body for Christ, at least let us conquer our soul. God is pleased with this sacrifice of ours; he approves in the judgment of His loving-kindness the victory of our time of peace. He beholds the struggle of our heart, and He who afterwards rewards those who are victorious, now helps those who struggle.<sup>42</sup>

Here the *certamen cordis* of the spiritual martyr is contrasted with the

<sup>38</sup> For the importance of the imitation of Christ in Gregory's spirituality, see L. Weber, *Hauptfragen der Moraliologie Gregors des Grossen* (Freiburg, 1947) p. 82.

<sup>39</sup> *Hom. in evang.* 1, 3, 4 (PL 76, 1088D-89A). Undergoing spiritual martyrdom from the motive of love is compared with actual martyrdom, the moving motive of which is love; see *ibid.* 2, 27, 3 (PL 76, 1206B).

<sup>40</sup> *Dialogi* 3, 26 (PL 77, 284A).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 3, 28 (PL 77, 284D). Cf. also *ibid.* (PL 77, 285A), where he speaks of it as "perseverance until death in the hidden virtue of the soul."

<sup>42</sup> *Hom. in evang.* 2, 27, 9 (PL 76, 1210B-C).

*certamen* and *agon* of the early martyrs. And it is interesting to note the repetition of the earlier popular theme that it is Christ who struggles in the martyr giving him help.<sup>43</sup>

After pointing out the interior and hidden nature of spiritual martyrdom, Gregory goes on to point out the virtues, the practice of which plays an important role in helping one to live a life in which he can be said to be a spiritual martyr. Following Christ in the way of purity and chastity is very important for one who strives for the special kind of martyrdom that is peculiar to the time of peace. Linking the sword of the executioner with the sword of the spirit, Gregory states: "Even though we do not bend our bodily neck to the sword, nevertheless with the spiritual sword we slay in our soul carnal desires."<sup>44</sup>

Spiritual martyrdom also calls for love, especially love for one's enemies as manifested in works of mercy and charity. In his homily on St. Pancratius he gives a long discourse on loving our enemies. After pointing out the words of Christ, "Greater love than this no man has, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:12), after showing how one who puts up with his enemies by returning good for evil makes them his friends, Gregory observes:

Now, as you see, no one persecutes us unto death. How, then, can we show whether we love our enemies? But there is something that should be done in the peace of the holy Church from which it is clear whether we are able to die for love in time of persecution. As you know, John states: "He who has the goods of this world and sees his brother in need and closes his heart to him, how does the love of God abide in him?" (1 Jn 3:17). John the Baptist also says: "Let him who has two tunics share with him who has none" (Lk 3:11). He, therefore, who in time of peace does not give his tunic for the sake of God, when will he give up his life in time of persecution? Therefore, that the virtue of charity be victorious in time of persecution, let it be nourished by mercy in time of peace, that one may learn to offer to Almighty God, first what he owns, and afterwards his very life.<sup>45</sup>

In a shorter passage Gregory speaks of the bearing of insults and love for one's enemy as a martyrdom in the hidden depths of the soul.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Hummel, *op. cit.*, pp. 91 ff.; F. Dölger, "Christophoros als Ehrentitel für Märtyrer und Heilige im christlichen Altertum," *Antike und Christentum* 4 (1934) 73-80.

<sup>44</sup> *Hom. in evang.* 1, 3, 4 (PL 76, 1089A). Note also that purity of life is mentioned in *Dialogi* 3, 26 (PL 77, 284A): "... cunctis carnalibus desideriis resistentes . . ."

<sup>45</sup> *Hom. in evang.* 2, 27, 3 (PL 76, 1206A-B).

<sup>46</sup> Cf. *ibid.* 2, 35, 7 (PL 76, 1263C); for the text see supra n. 31.

Finally, among the virtues Gregory lays special emphasis on the practice of patience for the living of spiritual martyrdom. Patience has always been a virtue ascribed in a special way to martyrs, and Christ has been held up to the martyrs as the chief model of patience.<sup>47</sup> The virtue of patience is of capital importance in the spirituality of Gregory, and he remarks that no saint attains to heavenly glory except by observing patience.<sup>48</sup> Gregory, who extolled the patience of the martyrs, also shows how necessary this is for the martyrs of peace. In a homily on the feast of St. Mennas, after a very lengthy discourse on patience, Gregory addresses his hearers:

Since we are celebrating today the anniversary<sup>49</sup> of a martyr, my brethren, we should under no consideration regard ourselves as having no part in the virtue of his patience. For if, with the help of the Lord, we strive to observe the virtue of patience, even though we live in the peace of the Church, nevertheless we bear the palm of martyrdom.<sup>50</sup>

Then, after outlining his scriptural basis for the possibility of the two kinds of martyrdom, and after pointing out how St. John drank the chalice and yet died when the Church enjoyed peace, Gregory continues: "And we, therefore, like him, can be martyrs without undergoing the sword, if we truly safeguard patience of soul."<sup>51</sup>

Gregory's homilies are remarkable "because in them we get the first approach towards a systematic use of anecdote and illustration."<sup>52</sup> He himself lays down the principle that the heart of the hearer is often moved more by illustrations than by words.<sup>53</sup> Consequently, he gives a concrete illustration of the virtue of patience in one who lived a life of holiness when the Church was at peace. He tells the story of the Abbot Stephen, abbot of a monastery in Reata (Rieti) in the Sabine territory. Stephen was a very holy person, a man of extraordinary patience.

<sup>47</sup> For the thought of an earlier writer on these points, i.e., Cyprian, see Hummel, *op. cit.*, pp. 54, 98. Note, too, that Cyprian wrote a special treatise on this matter, *De bono patientiae*.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. *Homiliae in Ezechielem* 1, 7, 12 (PL 76, 846D).

<sup>49</sup> *Natalicia*, i.e., his birthday for heaven. For the Christian concept of death as a birth, see A. C. Rush, C.S.S.R., *Death and Burial in Christian Antiquity* (Washington, D.C., 1941) pp. 72-87.

<sup>50</sup> *Hom. in evang.* 2, 35, 7 (PL 76, 1263B).      <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* 2, 35, 7 (PL 76, 1263D).

<sup>52</sup> Dudden, *op. cit.* 1, 253; P. Battifol, *Saint Grégoire le Grand* (Paris, 1928) p. 73; Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. *Hom. in evang.* 2, 39, 10 (PL 76, 1300B); *Regula pastoralis* 3, 6 (PL 77, 57B).

Stephen was one who, out of love for the heavenly homeland, despised all things, who refused to own anything in this world, avoided the tumult of people, and gave himself to frequent and prolonged prayer. Of his patience Gregory affirms:

The virtue of patience grew in him to an extraordinary degree, so that he regarded as a friend one who inflicted any harm on him. He returned thanks for insults. Furthermore, if in his poverty some damage was inflicted upon him, he regarded this as the greatest of gains. He looked upon all his adversaries as nothing else but his helpers.<sup>54</sup>

After giving an account of Stephen's holy death, a death that was graced with the presence of angels, Gregory goes on to say to his hearers:

Behold, dearly beloved brethren, by observing such great patience when the Church was at peace, to what an extraordinarily high reward this raised him. . . . He did not die by being struck down by the sword. Nevertheless, in departing this life he received the crown of patience, which he kept in his soul.<sup>55</sup>

After seeing the virtues that are especially characteristic of spiritual martyrdom, one can now take up the problem of the relationship between spiritual martyrdom and actual martyrdom. In the first place, Gregory insists that spiritual martyrdom entails the readiness, intention, and determination to undergo actual martyrdom. Thus, in speaking of spiritual martyrdom, Gregory says: "Even though externally there is no persecution, the merit of martyrdom is there interiorly when the soul is aflame with the firm resolve to undergo suffering."<sup>56</sup> This doctrine is not surprising. In the existential order, to be called to martyrdom is a special grace and an extraordinary privilege. Essentially, however, the acceptance of Christianity and the baptismal vows demand not only that one live for Christ but that he die for Him if called upon to do so. Furthermore, Gregory's teaching on this point is in keeping with that of earlier writers; for from the time when the doctrine of spiritual martyrdom was explicitly developed, the idea was emphasized that spiritual martyrdom involved the readiness to undergo death for the sake of Christ.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* 2, 35, 8 (PL 76, 1264A).    <sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* 2, 35, 8 (PL 76, 1264C).

<sup>56</sup> *Dialogi* 3, 26 (PL 77, 281C). Note also *Hom. in evang.* 2, 35, 7 (PL 76, 1263B), where he speaks of "martyrium in mente" and "martyrium in mente simul et actione."

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Hummel, *op. cit.*, p. 20; Malone, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

Gregory also teaches that spiritual martyrdom is to a certain degree a preparation for actual martyrdom, a sign that one would be ready to undergo martyrdom in time of persecution. As already seen, in discussing the virtue of love for our enemies by performing works of mercy, Gregory shows that when the Church is at peace there is something that indicates whether we are able to undergo death out of a motive of love in time of persecution. This is the practice of charity and works of mercy. He points out that one who is unwilling in time of peace to give up his tunic for the sake of God will not be ready to give up his life in time of persecution. Then he draws the conclusion: "Therefore, that the virtue of charity be victorious in time of persecution, let it be nourished by mercy in time of peace, that one may learn to offer to Almighty God, first what he owns, and afterwards his very life."<sup>58</sup>

Gregory's teaching that spiritual martyrdom shows a readiness to undergo actual martyrdom is brought out especially in the *Dialogues*. In this work Gregory describes the outstanding holiness of certain people. In a special manner he expatiates on the virtues of a certain hermit named Menas. Menas was a man who strove neither to possess nor to seek anything in this world, a man who strove to inflame all who came to him with the desire for eternal life. After hearing this and the other accounts of holiness, Peter is represented as saying to Gregory: "I imagine that many of these would have been able to undergo martyrdom, if they had found themselves in an era of persecution."<sup>59</sup> It is in this connection that Gregory remarks:

Regarding these great and outstanding men whom I mentioned above, why should we say that if there were an era of persecution, they would have been martyrs? For they, by bearing with the attacks of the secret enemy, by loving their enemies in this world, by resisting all carnal desires, were martyrs even in the era of peace, in this that they offered themselves up in sacrifice to Almighty God in their heart.<sup>60</sup>

Of these men Gregory affirms in a manner even more categorical: "Why is it remarkable if, on the outbreak of a period of persecution, they could have been martyrs, they who even in the peace of the Church,

<sup>58</sup> *Hom. in evang.* 2, 27, 3 (PL 76, 1206B).

<sup>59</sup> *Dialogi* 3, 26 (PL 77, 281C).      <sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* (PL 77, 284A).

by constant mortification, had also walked the narrow road of martyrdom. . . ?”<sup>61</sup>

Holiness of life, or the living of spiritual martyrdom, is a sign of readiness to lay down one’s life in actual martyrdom. It is not, however, a sure sign; it is not a fixed and set rule that is applicable to all, as Gregory himself observes.<sup>62</sup> According to Gregory, it is only holiness persevered in until the end of life that shows whether one who was a spiritual martyr in time of peace would become an actual martyr in time of persecution. In order to set this teaching in its proper setting, a certain amount of background must be given. Gregory tells about certain people in his own lifetime who were martyred by the Lombards, either for refusing to eat food that had been sacrificed to idols or for refusing to adore a goat’s head that had been sacrificed to the devil. Gregory marvels at the fact that these people attained the greatness of martyrdom, for before this crisis affected them, they did not seem to be especially spiritual; rather, they seemed to walk the broad way of this world.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, from his general knowledge of the past, he knew that many who seemed to stand firm when the Church was at peace, gave in to fear and weakness at the time of persecution.<sup>64</sup> It is against this background of facts that Gregory brings forth his teaching in these words: “But we confidently assert that those about whom we spoke previously could have been martyrs, because we gather this from their death. They could not fall even in open persecution, they of whom it is evident that they persevered in the hidden virtue of the soul even to the very end of life.”<sup>65</sup> Perseverance in holiness to the very end of life, then, is to Gregory the sure sign that one would persevere in actual martyrdom in time of persecution.

The question can now be asked: What is the reward for spiritual martyrdom? In a sermon to the people, after speaking of the importance of overcoming ourselves for love of Christ, Gregory states: “If we do this perfectly, not only will we escape the oncoming punish-

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* 3, 28 (PL 77, 284D).    <sup>62</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (PL 77, 285A).

<sup>63</sup> Cf. *ibid.* 3, 27–28 (PL 77, 284).    <sup>64</sup> Cf. *ibid.* 3, 28 (PL 77, 285A).

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* (PL 77, 285A). This is in keeping with Gregory’s general teaching on perseverance in doing good; see *Moralia* 1, 37, 55 (PL 75, 554A–B); *Hom. in evang.* 2, 25, 1 (PL 76, 1189C). Here, in connection with the words of Christ, “But he who shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved” (Mt 10:22; 24:13), Gregory succinctly states: “virtus boni operis perseverantia est.”

ments but we will be rewarded with glory together with the martyrs."<sup>66</sup> Again, in speaking of the Abbot Stephen, who was a model of patience, Gregory exclaims: "Behold, dearly beloved brethren, by observing such great patience when the Church was at peace, to what an extraordinarily high reward this raised him . . . . To whom, may we believe, was he joined but to the holy martyrs, he who, by the testimony of eyewitnesses, we know was taken up by the holy angels?"<sup>67</sup> In these passages it is important to note that Gregory is not claiming that the spiritual martyrs of peace receive identically the same reward as actual martyrs of persecution. He speaks of them as being rewarded in glory together with the martyrs and of being joined to the martyrs. Beyond this he does not specify.

Furthermore, his teaching on the reward of spiritual martyrdom corroborates his teaching on the possibility of the immediate entrance of a soul into heaven after death. Certainly, in the history of eschatology the problem of the destiny of the separated soul is very complex. Speaking of New Testament thought, Barnabas Ahern remarks: "It is now clear that early Christian thought laid little emphasis on death and its immediate aftermath; interest centered chiefly on the Parousia."<sup>68</sup> Despite this, the New Testament contains the germ and the seed of what can best be described as immediate eschatology or the blessedness of the separated soul in heaven with Christ.<sup>69</sup> The problem of the separated soul, however, continued to be very vexing in Christian antiquity—for two reasons. On the one hand, ideas that are contained under the general heading of immediate eschatology continued to be proclaimed.<sup>70</sup> On the other hand, there was a very definite trend toward what can be called intermediate eschatology. According to this, the soul did not enter heaven until the resurrection. While

<sup>66</sup> *Hom. in evang.* 1, 3, 4 (PL 76, 1089A).

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* 2, 35, 8 (PL 76, 1264C).

<sup>68</sup> B. Ahern, C.P., "The Concept of Union with Christ after Death in Early Christian Thought," *The Catholic Theological Society of America, Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Convention* (New York, 1961) p. 20.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 9, 19; Y.-B. Tremel, O.P., "L'Homme entre la mort et la résurrection d'après le Nouveau Testament," *Lumière et vie* 24 (1955) 35-57; *Theology Digest* 5 (1957) 151-56.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. J. Fischer, *Studien zum Todesgedanken in der alten Kirche* (Munich, 1954); Rush, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-87.

awaiting this, it remained in an intermediate state.<sup>71</sup> Hence, there was a great deal of confusion, uncertainty, and hesitancy in Christian antiquity with regard to the status of the soul after death.

In the history of eschatology Gregory occupies a most important place. This is so because of his clear, definite, and categoric statements about the presence of the soul in heaven before the resurrection. With him there is no hesitancy or ambiguity on this point. Gregory is also important for his teaching on the possibility of the immediate entrance of the soul into heaven.<sup>72</sup> Certainly, his remarks about the Abbot Stephen indicate that he taught that he was taken immediately to heaven by the angels to be joined with the holy martyrs. Consequently, in his teaching on the reward of spiritual martyrdom, Gregory points out that this type of life can be a preparation for the soul to enter heaven immediately after death.

As Gregory lets his gaze take in the history of the Church, as he considers those who laid down their lives in persecution or who were spiritual martyrs in time of peace, he can well exclaim: "We see daily the truth of that which was said before us, namely, that Holy Church, filled with the flowers of the elect, has lilies in time of peace and roses in time of persecution."<sup>73</sup> Here Gregory is recalling the words of Cyprian.<sup>74</sup> The lily, as a symbol for holiness of life in time of peace, and the rose, as a symbol of life sacrificed in time of persecution, call to mind the popular patristic thought that the reward for martyrdom unto blood is the *corona purpurea* and the reward for the martyrdom of peace is the *corona candida*.<sup>75</sup>

Before passing on to the final conclusion, it might be well to sum up Gregory's teaching on spiritual martyrdom. (1) Gregory shows that there is such a thing by contrasting it with actual martyrdom; there is,

<sup>71</sup> Cf. A. Stuiber, *Refrigerium Interim: Die Vorstellungen des Zwischenzustand und die frühchristliche Grabeskunst* (Bonn, 1957). For some disagreements expressed by the present writer, see THEOLOGICAL STUDIES 19 (1958) 99-102.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. J. McClain, C.M., *The Doctrine of Heaven in the Writings of Saint Gregory the Great* (Washington, D.C., 1956) pp. 19-26.

<sup>73</sup> *Hom. in evang.* 2, 35, 8 (PL 76, 1264C). See also *Hom. in Ezech.* 1, 6, 4 (PL 76, 830C).

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Cyprian, *Epist.* 10, 5 (CSEL 3/2, 495).

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Hummel, *op. cit.*, p. 196, s.v. *corona*. For a study of crowns and wreaths in the ancient and early-Christian world, see K. Baus, *Der Kranz in Antike und Christentum* (Bonn, 1940).

then, a *martyrium tempore pacis* and a *martyrium tempore persecutionis*. (2) He sees the foundation for this in Scripture in the account of James and John, i.e., both drank the chalice, but John died when the Church was at peace. (3) Spiritual martyrdom is an ascetical ideal that calls for the imitation of Christ; it is the fulfilling of an ideal out of a motive of love for Christ. (4) It is an affair of the interior, of the heart and soul. Even though it is a *certamen*, it is a *certamen cordis*. (5) The virtues that are particularly called for in spiritual martyrdom are purity and chastity, love of one's enemy as seen in works of mercy, and the practice of patience. (6) Spiritual martyrdom has a relation to actual martyrdom: (a) it entails the determination to undergo actual martyrdom, should this be called for; (b) it shows a readiness to lay down one's life in time of persecution; (c) in itself, this is not a certain and infallible rule for all; (d) the holiness of spiritual martyrdom carried on until the very end of life is the sign that one would not fall even in open persecution. (7) With regard to the reward, Gregory points out (a) that spiritual martyrdom entitles one to be joined with the martyrs in glory, and (b) that spiritual martyrdom can be a preparation for immediate entrance into heaven after death.

Such is Gregory's teaching on spiritual martyrdom that is carried on *tempore pacis*. Although Gregory's reign (590–604) was a troubled period in the history of the Church, due especially to the hostilities and attacks of the Lombards,<sup>76</sup> nevertheless it was a period of peace in the sense that there was no open persecution of the Church. In his own language, it was a period of peace, a period of tranquility, in the sense that "no one is persecuting us unto death."<sup>77</sup>

In a period like this, martyrdom unto blood was out of the question. However, Gregory, who in the words of St. Pius X was "christianae vitae instaurator universae,"<sup>78</sup> proposed a spiritual ideal. Those who could not be actual martyrs of blood in open persecution could be spiritual martyrs in soul in a period of peace. By spiritual martyrdom they could be witnesses of Christ by the goodness of their lives and the practice of virtue; they could be sufferers for Christ by the struggle against sin and vice, by the struggle against temptation and the devil.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Dudden, *op. cit.* 1, 80–98, 158–86; 2, 3–42.

<sup>77</sup> *Hom. in evang.* 2, 27, 3 (PL 76, 1206A).

<sup>78</sup> St. Pius X, *Iucunda sane* (ASS 36 [1903–4] 514).

Furthermore, this ideal was not one that was proposed to a select group, to a Christian elite. This was not an ideal that applied only to clerics, monks, and consecrated virgins. It was an ideal that was proper to Christian life as a whole. It was, then, a popular ideal, an ideal and a program that also applied to the spirituality of the laity. This last point deserves emphasis, for Gregory's teaching on spiritual martyrdom is contained especially in such popular works as the *Dialogues* and the *Homilies on the Gospel*. Of the forty *Homilies on the Gospel*, only one is addressed to a select group, namely, to a group of bishops gathered in the Lateran baptistery.<sup>79</sup> Every other homily is a *homilia habita ad populum* and was delivered in the designated station church. By proposing and repeating his theme in such a popular vehicle as the Sunday sermon, Gregory shows that he is propounding a general and universal Christian ideal.

Gregory the Great, the first monk-pope, occupies a very important place in the history of Christian spirituality and asceticism. He on whom the ages and the Church bestowed the title "Great"<sup>80</sup> bequeathed to posterity a deposit and treasure of moral theology, asceticism, and mysticism. In his writings, which are so intimately linked with Sacred Scripture, asceticism and mysticism were not divorced from moral theology.<sup>81</sup> It is precisely for this reason, and in these fields, that Gregory exercised such a tremendous influence on medieval Christendom.<sup>82</sup>

Granted that Gregory's influence was predominant especially in the Middle Ages, nevertheless his teaching, as Pope St. Pius X points out, is valid for all ages and for our own times.<sup>83</sup> The dawning years of the twentieth century brought forth the Encyclical of Pius X on Gregory. One notes, as the years of this century go on, that there is a revived appreciation of Gregory and a tendency to produce studies that con-

<sup>79</sup> *Hom. in evang.* 1, 17 (*PL* 76, 1138-49); E. Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums* 2 (Tübingen, 1933) 391-93.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. P. Lehmann, "Mittelalterliche Beinamen und Ehrentitel," in *Erforschung des Mittelalters* (Leipzig, 1941) pp. 134-36.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. F. Lieblang, *Grundfragen der mystischen Theologie nach Gregors des Grossen Moralia und Ezechielhomilien* (Freiburg, 1934) pp. 24 f.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 5. Weber gives a summary of Gregory's influence on various periods of history from his death to the present time (*ibid.*, pp. 1-6).

<sup>83</sup> St. Pius X, *Iucunda sane* (*ASS* 36 [1903-4] 525, 527, 529).

concentrate on Gregorian spirituality and piety. Obviously, one cannot mention every work and article on this topic. Nor can one call attention to general studies on Gregory that have something to say about his ascetical teaching. To show the current interest in Gregorian spirituality, however, one can point to such studies as those by F. Lieblang,<sup>84</sup> C. Butler,<sup>85</sup> M. Walther,<sup>86</sup> and R. Gillet.<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, because of the close association between asceticism and moral theology, one notes a great deal of Gregorian spirituality in L. Weber's study of Gregory's moral theology.<sup>88</sup>

This present article, then, is a continuation in the contemporary trend of concentrating on Gregory's ascetical theology. It attempts to cast new light on his spirituality by showing one of his approaches to the spiritual life taken as a whole. One can approach the spiritual life by concentrating on the fact that the spiritual life is the imitation of Christ; one can approach it by showing that the follower of Christ is the soldier of Christ, the athlete of Christ. From concepts like these a full program of Christian spirituality can be evolved. Many of these approaches are conditioned by the cultural climate of the times. Furthermore, many or all of them can be found in one and the same writer.

Gregory, who delighted in celebrating the feasts of the martyrs, who made his own and amplified the patristic doctrine of spiritual martyrdom, presents the spiritual life as a program centering around the idea of martyrdom. The follower of Christ who lives when the Church is at peace, when there is no violent hostility, no open persecution unto death, is nevertheless a martyr of Christ. He is a spiritual martyr, a martyr of peace, a martyr in heart and soul. This entails strong spirituality and vigorous asceticism. Gregory, who held up this ideal, not only presented a complete program of spirituality for life here on

<sup>84</sup> Lieblang, *op. cit.*

<sup>85</sup> C. Butler, *Western Mysticism: The Teaching of SS. Augustine, Gregory and Bernard on Contemplation and the Contemplative Life* (2nd ed.; London, 1937).

<sup>86</sup> M. Walther, *Pondus, Dispensatio, Dispositio: Werthistorische Untersuchungen zur Frömmigkeit Papst Gregors des Grossen* (Kriens, 1941).

<sup>87</sup> R. Gillet, O.S.B., "Saint Grégoire: La doctrine spirituelle," in *Grégoire le Grand, Morales sur Job* (*Sources chrétiennes* 32; Paris, 1952) pp. 20-81.

<sup>88</sup> Weber, *op. cit.* For the monastic spirituality of Gregory, see O. Porcel, O.S.B., *La doctrina monástica de San Gregorio Magno y la Regula monachorum* (Washington, D.C., 1951).

earth, but also showed how this leads to the stage where one is with Christ in company with the martyrs who were witnesses to Christ and sufferers for Christ by shedding their blood for Him.

Obviously, the approach to the spiritual life that presents it as a spiritual martyrdom was definitely more pronounced in, and characteristic of, the patristic period. It was a popular theme with writers who lived in time of persecution or who were relatively close to the classical age of persecution that gave the Church so many illustrious martyrs. It is a concept that is not as much to the fore at the present time as it was in times past. Nevertheless, when a concept like this is developed, it forms part of the treasury of what can be described as Christian culture, the amalgam of outlooks, concepts, and viewpoints that are rooted in Catholic faith. The concept is never lost, it never completely dies out. And the Church can, as circumstances warrant, bring it once more to the fore.

In this connection it is interesting to pass from the sixth to the twentieth century, and to see the spiritual life presented as a process of witnessing to Christ by spiritual martyrdom. Pope Pius XII spoke of the Christian life as a martyrdom without blood, and a daily martyrdom. In an address to the Thirty-sixth International Eucharistic Congress, held at Rio de Janeiro in 1955, Pius XII, after speaking of the concern of the early Church to fortify the martyrs with the Eucharist, goes on to point out the importance of the Eucharist for living a Christlike life. It is in this connection that he observes: "After all, what life worthy of being called Christian is without its bloodless martyrdom?"<sup>89</sup> Two years later he wrote an encyclical to commemorate the third centenary of St. Andrew Bobola, S.J. After urging all to the practice of virtue in imitation of this Saint, Pius XII states:

There is always a bit of martyrdom in such virtue if we really want to strive day by day for a greater perfection of Christian life. For not only by shedding of blood is the witness of our faith given to God, but also by courageous and constant resistance to the lure of evil and by the complete and generous dedication of all that we are and have to Him who is our Creator and Redeemer and who will one day be our never-ending joy in heaven.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Pius XII, *Entoai ao Senhor* (AAS 47 [1955] 556); see *The Pope Speaks* 2 (1955) 259.

<sup>90</sup> Pius XII, *Invicti athletae* (AAS 49 [1957] 329); see *The Pope Speaks* 4 (1957) 219.