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PREFACE

Within the Code of Canon Law provision is made for “associations of the faithful” which, among other things, are called to promote the spiritual development of the laity. These statutes govern the life of one such association, the Union of the Blood of Christ. If followed, they promise to guide the membership along the proven pathway which leads to holiness of life. This “rule of life” gives to its members a program of spirituality solidly based in the traditions of the Catholic Church.

Those enrolled in the Union become part of that religious family founded by St. Gaspar del Bufalo, whom the Church has honored with the title, “*Apostle of the Precious Blood*” The work of St. Gaspar continues wherever people are inspired with a love for God and others which comes from a profound reflection on the mystery of Jesus’ Blood. The contemplation of Christ the Redeemer, who offered His lifeblood for our salvation, is a sure means of spiritual growth. This contemplation, or adoration, will in turn lead to an active concern for all those redeemed “in the Blood of the Lamb.”

It is hoped that many will follow in the footsteps of St. Gaspar by embracing the spirituality described in these statutes. Far from the simple embodiment of various rules and regulations, they offer a vital and challenging vision of Christian life worthy of the priestly People of God. They provide one way in which to perfect our baptismal consecration and to stimulate the continued growth of the laity in the life of the Spirit as well as in the mission of the Church.

At the Chapel Shrine of St. Gaspar in Toronto, there is Eucharistic Adoration weekdays, and a Mass is celebrated every Friday evening for the intentions of our members and benefactors.



*Your help in promoting
the Union of the Blood of Christ
and the work of the
Missionaries of the Precious Blood
is most appreciated.*

*The objective
of the original Pious Association
Albertini founded
in honor of
the Most Precious Blood
was to promote religious worship,
a sacramental life,
and works of mercy
in its members.*

*A Short History
of the
Union of the Blood of Christ*

**1. The Archconfraternity
of the Most Precious Blood**

Francesco Albertini, a Canon of the Basilica of St. Nicola in Carcere in Rome, was a man who had a great influence on the spiritual life of his times. Desiring to contribute to a religious renewal which he felt was very urgent, he founded a Pious Association in honor of the Most Precious Blood in 1808. Seven years later, in 1815, Pope Pius VII raised this Association to the status of an Archconfraternity.

The objective of the Association was to promote religious worship, a sacramental life, and works of mercy in its members. It built a community of faith centered in the mystery of the Blood of Christ, which was its inspiration. St. Gaspar del Buffalo, a dedicated disciple of Albertini, gave the homily at the inauguration of the Pious Association. He spoke to the faithful with great enthusiasm on the mystery of the Blood of Christ and encouraged all to become members of the new Association.

By means of missions, Gaspar later became the great promoter of the Association, considering it a great instrument for a renewal of the Christian life through devotion to the Precious Blood.

2. Source of Spirituality for Lay and Religious Groups

The Archconfraternity was originally founded for the laity as stated above, but in a short time it widened its scope to include religious and priests. When St. Gaspar founded his Congregation of Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood in 1815, he considered it to be spiritually united to the Archconfraternity, and even called it at first: "*The Missionaries of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood*". Other priests became members. Religious of Congregations in and outside of Rome joined the Pious Association, finding in it the inspiration for their spirituality centered in the Blood of Christ. The Sisters Adorers of the Most Precious Blood of Christ, founded by Blessed Maria De Mattias, and other Congregations received their inspiration from the Archconfraternity.

St. Gaspar, moreover, wanted all the apostolic groups which were founded on the occasion of his missions to be united to the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood. He did this to promote devotion to the Blood of Christ, which he considered the “essence of Catholic piety”. In an extraordinary manner this Divine Blood was the soul of his zealous apostolate. Gaspar also encouraged the various apostolic groups to collaborate in maintaining perpetual adoration of the Most Precious Blood.

Thus the Pious Association became a vast ecclesial movement which inspired not only the faithful, but also priests and religious whose spirituality was centered in the mystery of the Blood of Christ: a great spiritual family of the Most Precious Blood.

3. From Archconfraternity to the “Pious Union”

As the Congregation of the Missionaries grew, it became necessary after the death of St. Gaspar to become a separate entity. Thus in 1851 Giovanni Merlini, Superior General of the Missionaries, asked the Holy See for a legal separation from the Archconfraternity, “in order that they could promote devotion to the Most Precious Blood more freely, widely and without hindrance.”

Pius IX consented to the request and erected the Primary Union of the Most Precious Blood, parallel with, but independent of, the Archconfraternity. The new Union would be directly dependent on the Moderator General of the Missionaries and have its center in the primary church of the Congregation, with all the privileges and faculties of the Archconfraternity.

From that time on the Missionaries have promoted the Pious Union as its own Association, not only in Italy but also in other regions of Europe and America, establishing numerous local centers of the Pious Union, especially on the occasion of missions.

4. Development of the Union

When Pope Pius XII reconfirmed this organization and approved its new statutes in 1951, the Centennial of the institution of the Pious Union, there were already more than 800 groups of the Pious Union in Italy and beyond. Pope John XXIII, who felt a profound devotion to the Blood of Christ, promoted it, especially with his Apostolic Letter of June 30, 1960, *Inde a primis*. The result was the establishment of still more centers of the Pious Union.

Besides groups and local centers pertaining to the Union of the Blood of Christ, there have been many faithful who found the inspiration for their spirituality in the Blood of Christ. The Second Vatican Council opened up the possibility for a greater collaboration among laity, priests and religious. Today, in the midst of so much confusion, there is a greater thirst than ever for a genuine, strong spirituality centered in the Blood of the Cross, present and alive in the Eucharistic mystery, capable of giving our lives their essential dimension: that of the giving of ourselves with greater availability to the Lord and to others. Thus, Precious Blood spirituality is a spirituality for today.

The scope of the Union of the Blood of Christ, an ecclesial community, is that of bringing to individuals, families, and also religious communities the urgent call of the redemptive blood.

*Toronto, May 24, 1995 Feast of
Mary, Help of Christians*

*The Union
seeks to promote
a prayer apostolate
among the faithful
in the
spirituality
of the
Precious Blood.*

GENERAL STATUTES
OF THE
Union of the Blood of Christ

**I NATURE OF THE UNION OF THE
BLOOD OF CHRIST**

1. The mystery of the Blood of Christ - Word of God Incarnate who freely gives his Blood for the salvation of mankind - has always been a most eloquent voice in the Church, (cf. Heb. 12:24) It calls the faithful to the praise and adoration of the immolated Lamb and, following the lead of the heavenly liturgy, the people of God repeat in the earthly liturgy: “with the Blood you purchased for God people from every tribe language, nation and race. You made them a kingdom of priests to serve our God.”

(Rev 5:9-10)

2. Among the manifold riches of the Christian life, the Holy Spirit has raised up in the Church individual persons and groups of the faithful with a special attraction for the mystery of the Blood of Christ, making it the unifying center of the following of Christ in the service of God and their brethren. In this way these faithful seek to keep alive the ecclesial community of Christ “who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His own blood.” (Rev. 1:5)

3. The Union of the Blood of Christ, or according to the traditional title - “Pious Union of the Most Precious Blood,” is the spiritual family that developed around the “Apostle of the Precious Blood.” It embraces individual faithful (laity, religious, and priests) as well as groups (Religious Congregations, Associations, Confraternities, etc.), who commit themselves to live and promote the spirituality of the Blood of Christ.

II *RULE OF LIFE*

4. *Ideal of Life*

The rule of life fostered by the Union of the Blood of Christ is synthesized in the gospel words: “There is no greater love than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” (Jn. 15:13) In fact, just as Jesus, Son of God, manifested His love by giving His Blood, so we, guided by the Holy Spirit, commit ourselves to love to the point of giving our own life for God and for our brethren (cf. *Dogma. Const, on the Church*, 42)

5. *The Word of God*

To respond to this ideal of holiness, we dedicate ourselves to listen assiduously to the Word of God, which finds in the Paschal Mystery of the Blood of Christ the summit of revelation. We delve deeply into the understanding of this mystery in the living tradition of the Church, especially in the sacred liturgy and the magisterium.

6. *The Eucharist*

“Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, consecrated by the Holy Spirit to a life of obedience to Jesus Christ and purified with his Blood” (IPt 1:2), we carry to maturity our baptismal grace by our frequent participation in the Eucharist, the memorial of our redeeming sacrifice. In communion from the chalice of the Blood of the New Testament we find the most expressive sign of our spirituality. With joy we accept this renewed practice in the Church and make ourselves promoters of it. We commit ourselves to the frequent reception of the Eucharist, in accord with the directives of the regional statutes.



7. *Conversion and Reconciliation*

“The Blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself up unblemished to God, cleanses our consciences from dead works to worship the living God.” (cf. Heb. 9:14) In the memorial of the Precious Blood of the Lamb without defect (cf Ap. 1:19), we find the strength to free ourselves from our slavery to sin, and hope to be able to sing one day the hymn of victory, (cf. Rev. 12:20-12)

On this way to freedom, we make frequent use of the sacrament of Reconciliation, where we experience in a special way the saving power of the Blood which Jesus poured forth for the remission of sins. (cf. Mt. 26:28) The frequency of this reception of the Sacrament is suggested in the Regional Statutes.

8. *Prayer*

Just as Jesus drew light and strength from prayer, to drink the chalice the Father had given Him (cf. Lk. 22:39 ff; Jn. 18:11), so we also find in prayer the light and strength to fulfill our mission, (cf. *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, 4). We gladly join the public cult of the Church in celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, which prepares for and prolongs, in various hours of the day, the praise, thanksgiving and memorial of the mysteries of salvation which are found in the Eucharistic Mystery, (cf *Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*, 12).

We hold precious also the popular devotions in honor of the Blood of Christ that are in harmony with the liturgy, (cf. *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 12-13).

We observe the recommendations of the Regional Statutes of the Union of the Blood of Christ regarding the celebration of liturgical feasts and specific devotional practices of prayers, such as portions of the Liturgy of the Hours, mental prayer, etc.

9. *The Paschal Mystery*

Rooted in the will of the Father and sustained by the power of the Spirit, we seek to fill up in ourselves that which “is lacking in the suffering of Christ for the sake of his body, the Church.” (Col. 1:24) We therefore unite ourselves with His sacrificial offering with hope, love and joy, fulfilling faithfully the commitments of our state and uniting our cross with that of the Redeemer.

10. *Ecclesial Life*

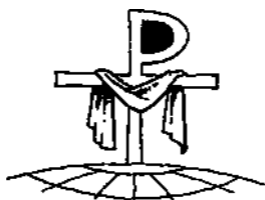
Mindful that “God has acquired the Church with his own Blood” (Act. 20:28), we commit ourselves to live in full ecclesial communion with respect to the various ministries established in the Church. We offer the Blood of Christ and collaborate with the building up and the unifying of the Church and in the diffusing of the reign of God in the world.

11. *Human Dignity*

Jesus has reconciled humanity “through the Blood of His cross, creating in Himself one new man from us.” (Eph. 2:15) According to the possibilities of each one, we commit ourselves to bring about a better social order of peace, justice and love among peoples. With a spirit of availability and openness we collaborate, individually and as a group, in every initiative that is taken, in the Church or in civil society, in favor of life and the dignity of the human person, redeemed by Jesus “and at a price.” (ICor. 6:20) Especially loudly will the blood of the poor cry out to our hearts (cf. Gen. 4:10; Ps. 72:12-14), until the authentic image of God is reflected in them. (cf. Gen. 1:26-27)

12. *True Possessions*

Mindful that with His Precious Blood Jesus has obtained the imperishable goods of the kingdom of heaven, we, living in the spirit of the beatitudes, seek to accumulate “treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrode.” (Mt. 6:20) By the witness of our evangelical life we try to be a sign and an invitation for the correct use of worldly goods, without indulging in consumerism, but living in simplicity and frugality, sharing what we have with others less fortunate.



13. *Models of Life*

To persevere faithfully in our rule of life, we “keep our eyes always fixed on Jesus, who inspires and perfects our faith. For the sake of the joy which lay before him he endured the cross, heedless of its shame.” (Heb. 12:22) With filial love we look to the Virgin Mary who “stood near the cross” (cf. Jn. 19:25), suffering profoundly with her only Son and associating herself with maternal heart in His sacrifice, lovingly consenting to the immolation of the victim to whom she gave birth, and offering herself to the eternal Father. We foster particular devotion to the martyrs and to those saints who found in the Blood of Christ the strength and light for their heroic service to God and their brethren.

III *ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE*

14. The Union of the Blood of Christ is an Association of the faithful, organized in accord with the prescriptions of the Code of Canon Law. It has its own organization on the international, regional and local levels. The various units of the Union are coordinated among themselves and connected according to the norms of these statutes. Every regional unit of the Union integrates these General Statutes with its own statutes, which reflect the particular charism and the various needs of the region.

15. The Central Director of the Union of the Blood of Christ at the international level is the Moderator General of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, who can delegate his responsibility to another person of his choice. The Central Director is aided by a Council consisting of members named by him after due consultation with the Regional Directors.

16. The Regional Directors are chosen according to the approved statutes of the individual regions or particular associations. The major superiors of religious congregations belonging to the Union are *ex officio* Regional Directors in the area of their jurisdiction. They can delegate that responsibility to another person of their choice.

17. The Local Director is named by the Regional Director or is chosen according to the Regional Statutes.

18. The Central Director of the Union, together with his Council, has the task of animating the Union. He shall, therefore, see to the knowledge of and the spreading of the spirituality of the Blood of Christ. He shall promote the sharing of experiences among the various regional units of the Union. He shall undertake other initiatives which, according to circumstances, are judged opportune for the purpose.

The Central Director, moreover, with the consent of his Council, has the task of approving the Regional Statutes. Thus, the unity of the Union is demonstrated in its plurality - the creativity of the various regions in expressing their implementation of the General Statutes.

19. The Regional Statutes of the Union determine the qualifications for membership. Moreover, the same statutes establish an appropriate period during which the future members undergo formation into the nature and spirituality of the Union, under the direction of persons designated by the Regional Director for this purpose. Finally, the same statutes specify conditions which would result in the loss of membership.

20. The members of the Union meet periodically - locally and/or regionally - to deepen their knowledge of the spirituality of the Union through study, discussion, days of recollection, etc. The frequency and nature of these meetings are specified in the Regional Statutes.

21. Highly recommended to the members of the Union is engaging in some type of apostolic work in collaboration with the communities of the Precious Blood, where this is possible and in accord with the needs of the local Church. Such apostolic work is regulated by the Regional Statutes.

22. The Union seeks to promote a prayer apostolate among the faithful in the spirituality of the Precious Blood, as is outlined in the Regional Statutes. Those thus united in prayer with the Union participate in the spiritual benefits of all members of the Union, even though circumstances prevent them from engaging in other activities of the Union.



23. Individual faithful, after having undergone the formation specified in Article 19 of these statutes, become members of the Union in accord with the special Rite prescribed in the Regional Statutes, in which the individual requests to be received and is accepted by the director or his delegate. Religious Congregations and Associations of the faithful become members of the Union by their being accepted by the Central Director, after an examination of their statutes assures him that their formation qualifies them to be members of the Union.



*Membership
in the
Union of the Blood of Christ
is possible
at various levels
of commitment,
depending on
individual possibilities
and circumstances.*