

## Holy Monday Meditation

Jesu Juva

Text: Hebrews 9:11-15

How many had there been? How many lambs, how many goats, how many calves, how many bulls, how many heifers, how many pigeons and doves had been sacrificed over the years, over the centuries and millenia? Surely too many to count.

The Jews used to say that the Brook Kidron near Jerusalem used to run red every spring because of the blood of all the lambs that were sacrificed for the Passover. If that is the case, then when God looked at His world, His creation, and all the blood that was poured out, it must look like the world running red.

Yet none of that blood could atone for sin. It wasn't enough. It wasn't good enough.

But there is more blood too - not just blood poured out in sacrifice, but all the blood poured out in this world in anger and hatred. How much has that been? From the blood of Abel poured out by his brother Cain, through war after war. The blood of sinful ambition, prejudice, and revenge. Add that to the other and we are a world swimming in red.

And we are not innocent. If we have not helped our brother or sister in every physical need, we have killed him or her, Jesus says. How often have we failed in that? Our callous disregard, our self-important busyness, our "I-don't want-to-be-interrupted" self-absorption, hurting and slaying our neighbor. We marvel at the story of the flood in Noah's day, and are blind to the even greater floods in our own day: sin upon sin, blood upon blood.

But this week, we remember, a different blood was also spilled out. The blood of the Lamb of God, the blood of God Himself, poured out for His blood-thirsty creation. The eternal High Priest would offer it as He offered himself on the altar of the cross - given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sin. All of them. For this blood can atone for sin, and did. And this blood is good enough to purify us inside and out, in body and soul, our hearts and minds, and every sinful deed.

For this blood takes a world running red and makes it white as snow. Like a drop of food coloring added to a glass of water changes the color of all the water in the glass, so the blood of Christ - just a drop in an ocean of blood in this world - cleanses the whole world. Or as God said through the prophet Isaiah: *though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool* (Isaiah 1:18).

That same cleansing blood will be poured into us this week also, as our great and eternal High Priest gives us His Body to eat and His Blood to drink for the forgiveness of our sins. And they are. Our sins forgiven. All of them. Not one unwashed or unatoned for, so great Jesus' blood. The blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel (Hebrews 12:24), for it is the blood of God poured out for you.

So now, in Christ Jesus, because of His sacrifice, God looks at the world and sees not a world running red, but a world cleansed by His Son. That's the only blood He now sees. And so we sacrifice no more lambs or goats or calves or bulls or heifers or pigeons or doves - they are no longer needed, and God wouldn't see their blood anyway. The blood of Jesus, our great and eternal High Priest, is all He sees. And it is enough. It is finished (John 19:30). And we are now *purified*, in Christ, *to serve the living God*.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son (+) and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.