

Christ in His Mysteries

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Each year, the Church celebrates the Mysteries of Christ's birth, life, death and Resurrection. These are the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, and Easter - and each is the source of a particular grace, each has its own special gift for us. Christ in His Mysteries is Blessed Columba Marmion's great meditation on the treasure-house of grace Christ offers to us in the Church's liturgical year. In the clear inspiring language that made him a favourite of Popes and lay faithful alike he explains: How the Mysteries of Jesus are now our mysteries - springs of living water we are meant to drink from. How Christ's wisdom, His Holiness, His strength, are now our wisdom, our holiness, our strength. How to acquire special graces during each liturgical season. "Writings of deep insight and great value ... An authentic treasury of spiritual truth" Pope John Paul II "The works of Marmion are outstanding in the ... depth and richness of their thought." Pope Pius XII Born in Ireland, Blessed Columba Marmion served for several years as a priest in Dublin before finding a vocation to the monastery. He eventually became Abbot of Maredsous Abbey, Belgium. One of the foremost spiritual masters of the 20th century, his books were translated into eleven languages and sold some 1.5 million copies. Alan Bancroft's new translation is meticulously faithful to the French original.

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Firmly rooted in the Bible, the liturgy, and the writings of the Saints and Doctors of the Church, Marmion explores every aspect of Catholic doctrine, with penetrating insight. His writings are marked both by the remarkable clarity of their exposition, and by their keen psychological insight and sensitivity.

His particular interest in the liturgy - the chief subject of Christ in His Mysteries - is reflected in a letter he wrote in 1917:

Liturgical prayer is the law of our faith. No other instruction is so luminous, so perfectly adapted to the intelligence of the faithful as the prayers of the Liturgy. During the ages of faith, although the vast majority were uneducated, they were yet much better instructed in the mysteries of the faith than are the men and women of our day.

The good I have been enabled to do to souls - men, women, children, rich and poor - by revealing to them the treasures of spiritual life, of light and facility in their relations with God, which are contained in the the Liturgy, show me how greatly important it is for every priest, vicar, curate, everyone, to work at making known this well-spring of the spiritual life.

But Marmion's greatest contribution to modern spirituality was to restore Jesus Christ to His rightful place at the center of the Christian life - Christ as "the life of the soul" of every Christian: through faith, through the sacraments, and through the liturgy of the Church. Historians note that only a handful of books were universally read by the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council: the Bible, the Catechism of Trent, the 1917 Code, and the writings

of Columba Marmion. His doctrine is recognizable in several Vatican II documents.

In 1966 an American woman diagnosed with terminal cancer, told by her doctors she had three months to live, visited Marmion's tomb at the suggestion of her brother, a Benedictine monk. Her miraculous cure, which she attributed to Marmion's intercession, led to Blessed Columba's Beatification by Pope John Paul II in 2000.

Many of his admirers believe Marmion will one day not only be canonized, but also declared a Doctor of the Church.

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