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**From the Selected Works of Reverend Lawrence E. Frizzell, S.T.L., S.S.L., D.Phil.**

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June 23, 2013

## Christ's Wounds

Lawrence E. Frizzell, *Seton Hall University*



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# **Christ's Wounds**

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## Twelfth Sunday of Ordinary Time

June 23, 2013 Sunday Readings for Cycle C:

Zec 12:10-11,13:1; Ps 63; Gal 3:26-29; Lk 9:18-24

### CHRIST'S WOUNDS

*Lawrence E. Frizzell*

The Rose upon the wall  
Cries - I am the voice of Fire:  
And in me grows  
The pomegranate splendor of Death,  
the ruby garnet almandine  
Dews: Christ's Wounds in me shine!...  
I cry of Christ, Who is the ultimate Fire.  
Who will burn away the cold in the heart of Man...  
(Edith Sitwell, *The Canticle of the Rose*)

The eyes of faith notice the imprint of God's love everywhere in creation. The Christian poet celebrates the supreme gift of Christ's loving sacrifice as the bright flame that warms the heart of a humanity frozen in the grip of selfishness. Does the red rose or the dogwood flower remind us of Christ's wounds? Perhaps many in our time need to learn again how to read the mystery of divine love in the book of nature, rejoicing in the imprint of the Word on the beauty of our world.

This type of prayer as we pursue the ordinary tasks of life complements the solemn drama of the daily or weekly Eucharist. Undoubtedly Jesus prayed thus, and Luke notes that he sought quiet solitude with the heavenly Father before each major step of his public ministry (9:18). When would the disciples come to know him in the context of his mission? His question about "public opinion" leads to another about the experience of those who followed him closely. Peter represents their perception: "(You are) the Christ (Anointed One) of God" (9:20). The Hebrew term "*messiah*" is rendered correctly to convey the concept of an unction symbolizing royal and/or priestly office. Many thought of a victorious descendant of David, but Jesus surprised them by speaking of persecution and death, followed by resurrection on the third day.

Still falls the Rain -  
Still falls the Blood from the Starved Man's wounded Side:  
He bears in His Heart all wounds...  
(Edith Sitwell, *Still Falls the Rain*)

The various sufferings and tragedies of life must be borne by each generation. Should they be considered merely as the fate of those afflicted, whether by nature or human malice? Rather, Jesus taught that the burdens and trials of life can be endowed with a potential for life, light and resurrection. Christ has identified already with all human woes and has taken them into his

loving sacrifice. The challenge of discipleship is to deny self, take up the cross *daily* and follow the pattern of Christ's service of God and neighbor.

Just as Christians in ages past saw Christ's wounds in the markings of a flower or a sand dollar, they also searched the Scriptures for a foreshadowing of his suffering and death. As they read Zechariah, evocations of the triumphant entry into Jerusalem (9:9-10), the price of Judas' betrayal (11:12), the scattering of disciples (13:7) were obvious. The city of Jerusalem, where the descendants of David had ruled, would be blessed mysteriously as its inhabitants looked on him whom they had pierced, mourning for him as bereaved parents grieve for an only son (12:10). The Fourth Gospel testifies to the Roman soldier's lance-thrust, which it understands to fulfill a passage from the Torah (Ex 12:46; Num 9:12) and the prophets (Zech 12:10). The Passover lamb was associated with the daily offering of two lambs for the forgiveness of sin; in the same way, the outpouring of divine grace described by Zechariah is linked to a fountain with the capacity to purify from sin and uncleanness (13:1).

The human need for redemption, for a rescue from the evils we bring upon each other, has its response in the creative power of divine forgiveness.

Proclaim our Christ, and roar, 'Let there be harvest!  
Let there be no more Poor-  
For the Son of God is sowed in every furrow!'  
(Edith Sitwell, *The Shadow of Cain*)

Even if this cry fell on deaf ears and nations destroyed each other in the cataclysm of war, the poet calls for renewed faith in the redemptive death of Christ. For those who ignore his call and gifts, she warned that he will come again in judgment. Edith Sitwell knew the Scriptures! "Behold he is coming among the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him..." (Rv 1:7).