

Devotion to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary

Heart to Heart Apostolate June 13, 2018

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"My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God" Our Lady at Fatima to Sister Lucia, June 13, 1917.

Old Testament passages on the importance of the heart

Deut 10: 16: "Circumcise your hearts."

Psalm 40: 9: "To do your will is my delight; my God, your law is in my heart."

Jer 4:4: "For the sake of the Lord be circumcised; remove the foreskins of your hearts."

Jer 31:33: "I will place my law within them and write it upon their hearts."

Ezek 36: 26: "I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts."

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Congregation for Divine Worship: *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy* (2002)

The Sacred Heart of Jesus

166. The Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the Friday following the second Sunday after Pentecost. In addition to the liturgical celebration, many devotional exercises are connected with the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Of all devotions, devotion to the Sacred Heart was, and remains, one of the most widespread and popular in the Church.

Understood in the light of the Scriptures, the term "Sacred Heart of Jesus" denotes the entire mystery of Christ, the totality of his being, and his person considered in its most intimate essential: Son of God, uncreated wisdom; infinite charity, principal of the salvation and sanctification of mankind. The "Sacred Heart" is Christ, the Word Incarnate, Saviour, intrinsically containing, in the Spirit, an infinite divine-human love for the Father and for his brothers.

167. The Roman Pontiffs have frequently availed to the scriptural basis of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus(182).

Jesus, who is one with the Father (cf. John 10, 30), invites his disciples to live in close communion with him, to model their lives on him and on his teaching. He, in turn, reveals himself as "meek and humble of heart" (Mt 11, 29). It can be said that, in a certain sense, devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a cultic form of the prophetic and evangelic gaze of all Christians on him who was pierced (cf. John 19, 37; Zac 12, 10), the gaze of all Christians on the side of Christ, transfixed by a lance, and from which flowed blood and water (cf. John 19, 34), symbols of the "wondrous sacrament of the Church"(183).

The Gospel of St. John recounts the showing of the Lord's hands and his side to the disciples (cf. John 20,20), and of his invitation to Thomas to put his hand into his side (cf. John 20, 27). This event has also had a notable influence on the origin and development of the Church's devotion to the Sacred Heart.

168. These and other texts present Christ as the paschal Lamb, victorious and slain (cf. Apoc 5,6). They were objects of much reflection by the Fathers who unveiled their doctrinal richness. They invited the faithful to penetrate the mysteries of Christ by contemplating the wound opened in his side. Augustine writes: "Access is possible: Christ is the door. It was opened for you when his side was opened by the lance. Remember what flowed out from his side: thus, choose where you want to enter Christ. From the side of Christ as he hung dying upon the Cross there flowed out blood and water, when it was pierced by a lance. Your purification is in that water, your redemption is in that blood"(184).

169. Devotion to the Sacred Heart was particularly strong during the middle ages. Many renowned for the learning and holiness developed and encouraged the devotion, among them St. Bernard (+1153), St. Bonaventure (+ 1274), the mystic St. Lutgarda (+1246), St Mathilda of Marburg (+ 1282), the sainted sisters Mathilda (+ 1299) and Gertrude (+ 1302) of the monastery of Helfta, and Ludolf of Saxony (+1380). These perceived in the Sacred Heart a "refuge" in which to recover, the seat of mercy, the encounter with him who is the source of the Lord's infinite love, the fount from which flows the Holy Spirit, the promised land, and true paradise.

170. In the modern period devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus underwent new developments. At a time when Jansenism proclaimed the rigours of divine justice, the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus served as a useful antidote and aroused in the faithful a love for Our Lord and a trust in his infinite mercy symbolized by his Heart. St. Francis de Sales (+ 1622) adopted humility, gentleness (cf. Mt 11, 29) and tender loving mercy, all aspects of the Sacred Heart, as a model for his life and apostolate. The Lord frequently manifested the abundant mercy of his Heart to St. Margaret Mary (+ 1690); St. John Eudes (+ 1680) promoted the liturgical cult of the Sacred Heart, while St. Claude de la Colombière (+ 1682) and St. John Bosco (+ 1888) and other saints were avid promoters of devotion to the Sacred Heart.

171. Devotions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus are numerous. Some have been explicitly approved and frequently recommended by the Apostolic See. Among these, mention should be made of the following:

- personal consecration, described by Pius XI as "undoubtedly the principal devotional practice used in relation to the Sacred Heart"(185);
- family consecration to the Sacred Heart, in which the family, by virtue of the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony already participating in the mystery of the unity and love of Christ for the Church, is dedicated to Christ so that he might reign in the hearts of all its members(186);
- the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, approved for the whole Church in 1891, which is evidently biblical in character and to which many indulgences have been attached;
- the act of reparation, a prayer with which the faithful, mindful of the infinite goodness of Christ, implore mercy for the offences committed in so many ways against his Sacred Heart(187);
- the pious practice of the first Fridays of the month which derives from the "great promises" made by Jesus to St. Margaret Mary. At a time when sacramental communion was very rare among the faithful, the first Friday devotion contributed significantly to a renewed use of the Sacraments of Penance and of the Holy Eucharist. In our own times, the devotion to the first Fridays, even if practised correctly, may not always lead to the desired spiritual fruits. Hence, the faithful require constant instruction so that any reduction of the practice to mere credulity, is avoided and an active faith encouraged so that the faithful may undertake their commitment to the Gospel correctly in their lives. They should also be reminded of the absolute preeminence of Sunday, the "primordial feast"(188), which should be marked by the full participation of the faithful at the celebration of the Holy Mass.

172. Devotion to the Sacred Heart is a wonderful historical expression of the Church's piety for Christ, her Spouse and Lord: it calls for a fundamental attitude of conversion and reparation, of love and gratitude, apostolic commitment and dedication to Christ and his saving work. For these reasons, the devotion is recommended and its renewal encouraged by the Holy See and by the Bishops. Such renewal touches on the devotion's linguistic and iconographic expressions; on consciousness of its biblical origins and its connection with the great mysteries of the faith; on affirming the primacy of the love of God and neighbour as the essential content of the devotion itself.

(182) Cf. LEO XIII, Encyclical Letter *Annum sacrum* (25.1889) on the consecration of mankind to the Sacred Heart, in *Leonis XIII Pontificis Maximi Acta*, XIX, Typographia Vaticana, Romae 1900, pp. 71-80; PIUS XII, Encyclical Letter *Haurietis aquas*, in

AAS 48 (1956) 311-329; PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Investigabiles divitias Christi* (6.2.1965), in AAS 57 (1965) 298-301; JOHN PAUL II, Message on the centenary of the consecration of mankind to the Sacred Heart of Jesus (11.6.1999), in *L'Osservatore Romano*, 12 June 1999.

(183) SC 5; cf. St. AUGUSTINE, *Ennaratio in Psalmum 138*, 2: CCL 40, cit.,m p. 1991.

(184) St. AUGUSTINE, *Sermo 311*, 3: PL 38, 1415.

(185) PIUS XI, Encyclical Letter *Miserentissimus redemptor* in AAS 20 (1928) 167.

(186) Cf. EI, *Aliae concessiones* 1, p. 50.

(187) Cf. EI, *Aliae concessiones*, 3, pp. 51-53.

(188) SC 106.

(189) Among the the various consecrations to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, one of the most important is that of Pius XII's consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on 31 October 1942 (cf. AAS 34 [1942] 318), which was renewed by John Paul II, in communion with the bishops of the Church, on 25 March 1984 (cf. *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II VIII/1* [1984], Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 1984, pp. 774-779).

Some important authors and events regarding devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

—St. John Eudes (1601-1680)—great saint who (perhaps in opposition to Jansenist severity) stresses devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

—St. Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690)—Visitation (or Visitandine) nun who receives revelations from Jesus concerning devotion to His Sacred Heart.

—Pius VI, in his bull, *Auctorem fidei* (1794) defends devotion to the Sacred Heart against Jansenist opposition.

—Leo XIII, on May 25, 1899, issues his encyclical, *Annum Sacrum*, on consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He then consecrates the world to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on June 11, 1899 at the urging of Bl. Mary of the Divine Heart (1863–1899).

—Pius XI on May 8, 1928, issues his encyclical, *Miserentissimus Redemptor*, on reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

—Pius XII consecrates the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1942, and he promotes devotion to both the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary in his 1956 encyclical *Haurietis aquas*.

Devotion to the Heart of Mary

New Testament passages on Mary's heart

Lk 2:19: “And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.”

Lk 2:35: “And thine own soul (heart) a sword shall pierce.”

Lk 2:51 “And his [Jesus's] mother kept all these things in her heart.”

Devotion to Mary's heart down through the centuries

Simeon Metaphrastes (c. 900--984), addressing Mary: “Your side has been pierced, but my heart has been pierced also.”

Arnold of Chartres [Bonneval] (died c. 1156—1158): Jesus and Mary offered one holocaust to God; Mary by the blood of her heart; Christ by the blood of his body.”

Devotion to the heart of Mary intensifies during the Middle Ages in Eckbert of Schömau (d. 1184); St. Mechtild of Hackborn (1240–1298); St. Gertrude the Great (1256–1302); and St. Bridget of Sweden (1303–1373). The Blessed Mother appears to St. Brigid and says: “I stood very near to His cross and, as what is close to the heart is tortured more severely, in the same way, my sorrow was deeper than all the others ... Therefore I dare say that His suffering was my suffering because His heart was my heart. For as Adam and Eve sold the world for an apple, so my Son and myself: we redeemed the world as with one heart” (*Revelations*, Book I).

In the 17th century, devotion to Mary’s heart is found in St. Francis de Sales (1567–1622) and most especially in St. John Eudes (1601–1680), who taught the mystical union of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. St. Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647–1690) also reports having a vision of three hearts: two were very luminous and bright with the one much brighter than the other; the third heart was very small. She came to understand that the two brighter hearts were those of Jesus and Mary and the third heart was her own. She then heard these words: “My pure love unites these three hearts forever.” St. Louis de Montfort (1673–1716) in his treatise, *Love of Eternal Wisdom*, says that God’s infinite goodness was poured into the heart of Mary (n. 106). In *Friends of Christ*, he notes that the heart of Mary was pierced through at the side of Christ on the Cross. The Jesuit, Pierre-Joseph Clorivière (1735–1820), helps to establish the Priests of the Heart of Jesus and the Daughters of the Heart of Mary.

Mary’s Immaculate Heart at Fatima and beyond

In the fall of 1916, the Angel of Peace (or of Portugal) gives Holy Communion to the three shepherd children and teaches them this prayer:

O Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I adore Thee profoundly. I offer Thee the most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world, in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges and indifference by which He is offended. By the infinite merits of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg the conversion of poor sinners.

On June 13, 1917, the Lady reveals that God wished to establish in the world devotion to her Immaculate Heart, and her heart would be a refuge and a way to lead people to God.

On July 13, 1917, the Lady reveals a three-part secret: 1) the vision of hell; 2) the spread of the errors of Russia; wars and persecutions of the Church will come; the present war (World War I) will end but a worse war will come if people do not pray for peace; the prediction of an unknown light coming to illumine the night sky as a sign of God’s impending punishment; the Lady will come to ask for the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart and communions of reparation on First Saturdays; “in the end my Immaculate Heart will triumph.” 3) The third part of the secret is revealed, but it is only written down later by Lucia on Jan. 3, 1944 in obedience to the Bishop of Leiria. Her letter describing this part of the secret was placed in the Secret Archives of the Holy Office in 1957; St. John XXIII read the letter on August 17, 1959, but he decided not to reveal the secret; Bl. Paul VI read the letter on March 27, 1965, and he decided not to publish it; after the assassination attempt on his life (May 13, 1981), St. John Paul II asked to read the letter; he later decided to announce the disclosure of the secret on May 13, 2000 in conjunction with the beatification ceremony of Jacinta and Francisco.

Dec. 10, 1925: apparition at Pontevedra, Spain: Mary appears to Sister Lucia with the Child Jesus; she requests the devotion of the five first Saturdays in reparation to her Immaculate Heart.

June 13, 1929: The Vision of the Most Holy Trinity; Mary says that the time has come for the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart.

May 13, 1931: First consecration of Portugal to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Oct. 31, 1942: Pius XII consecrates the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

May 15, 1956: Pius XII published his encyclical, *Haurietis aquas*, on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and he adds these words about the Immaculate Heart of Mary:

124. In order that favors in greater abundance may flow on all Christians, nay, on the whole human race, from the devotion to the most Sacred Heart of Jesus, let the faithful see to it that to this devotion the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of God is closely joined. For, by God's Will, in carrying out the work of human Redemption the Blessed Virgin Mary was inseparably linked with Christ in such a manner that our salvation sprang from the love and the sufferings of Jesus Christ to which the love and sorrows of His Mother were intimately united. It is, then, entirely fitting that the Christian people - who received the divine life from Christ through Mary - after they have paid their debt of honor to the Sacred Heart of Jesus should also offer to the most loving Heart of their heavenly Mother the corresponding acts of piety affection, gratitude and expiation. Entirely in keeping with this most sweet and wise disposition of divine Providence is the memorable act of consecration by which We Ourselves solemnly dedicated Holy Church and the whole world to the spotless Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

March 25, 1984: at St. Peter's Square, with statue of the Chapel of the Apparitions present, John Paul II carries out the consecration of the world— and the countries intended by the consecration— to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in communion with the bishops of the world.

May 12–13, 2000: John Paul II comes to Fatima to beatify Jacinta and Francisco; Cardinal Sodano reveals the contents of the third part of the secret of Fatima and announces the coming of a commentary on the “third secret” by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith [CDF].

June 26, 2000: the CDF under Cardinal Ratzinger publishes the complete text of the third part of the secret together with a commentary. He offers this reflection:

I would like finally to mention another key expression of the “secret” which has become justly famous: “my Immaculate Heart will triumph”. What does this mean? The Heart open to God, purified by contemplation of God, is stronger than guns and weapons of every kind. The *fiat* of Mary, the word of her heart, has changed the history of the world, because it brought the Savior into the world—because, thanks to her *Yes*, God could become man in our world and remains so for all time. The Evil One has power in this world, as we see and experience continually; he has power because our freedom continually lets itself be led away from God. But since God himself took a human heart and has thus steered human freedom towards what is good, the freedom to choose evil no longer has the last word. From that time forth, the word that prevails is this: “In the world you will have tribulation, but take heart; I have overcome the world” (*Jn 16:33*). The message of Fatima invites us to trust in this promise.

Nov. 17, 2001: Cardinal Bertone, with the agreement of Cardinal Ratzinger, meets for two hours with Sister Lucia at the Carmelite convent in Coimbra, Portugal. Sister Lucia, with several other witnesses, confirms that the full third part of the secret of Fatima was revealed and that the consecration desired by Our Lady was made in 1984 and accepted in Heaven.

Feb. 13, 2005: Sister Lucia dies.

May 13, 2017: Pope Francis canonizes Jacinta and Francisco as Saints.

The Feast Day

The Immaculate Heart of Mary is the Saturday after the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, which is 19 days after Pentecost Sunday (on a Friday), so the Immaculate Heart of Mary is on the Saturday 20 days after Pentecost Sunday (June 9, 2018). St. John Eudes first celebrated this feast in 1648; it was approved for all of France in 1688. In 1799 Pius VI gave permission for the celebration of feast of the Heart of Mary for certain religious societies and the Diocese of Palermo, Italy. In 1805, Pius VII granted permission to celebrate the feast to any religious communities and societies requesting it. In 1855, Bl. Pius IX approved it as the feast of the Most Pure Heart of Mary for the whole Latin Rite of the Church. In 1914, it was extended as a feast for the universal Church. In 1942, Pius XII proclaimed this feast and assigned August 22 as the day of its celebration. After Vatican II, Bl. Paul VI links the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

