

Alive With Love

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

21 June 2020



Heart of Love

GOD IS LOVE, AND THOSE WHO ABIDE IN LOVE ABIDE IN GOD, AND GOD ABIDES IN THEM. (1 JOHN 4:16)



One of his disciples – the one whom Jesus loved – was reclining next to him (John 13:23)

My Vocation is LOVE

“In the heart of the church I will be love...my vocation is LOVE”. (St Therese of Lisieux)

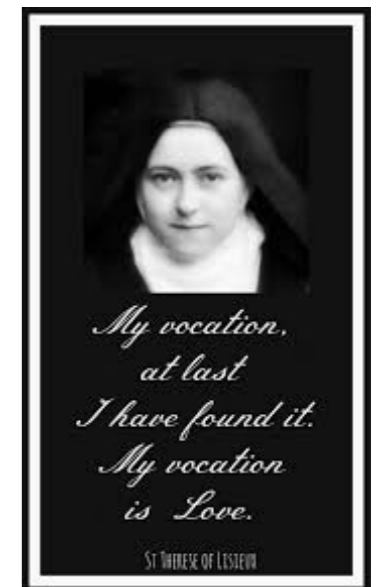
On 5 June, 2005, Pope Benedict XVI spoke about the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus during his Angelus.

“In biblical language, ‘heart’ indicates the centre of the person where his sentiments and intentions dwell,” he said. *“In the Heart of the Redeemer we adore God’s love for humanity, His will for universal salvation, His infinite mercy.”*

“Practising devotion to the Sacred Heart of Christ therefore means adoring that Heart which, after having loved us to the end, was pierced by a spear and from high on the Cross poured out blood and water, an inexhaustible source of new life,” Pope Benedict XVI said.

This is a heart that is fully alive. In our hearts the world longs to see the heart of Jesus. Pope Francis has reminded us that this is our gift; to carry the merciful heart of Jesus in our own heart. It is such a heart, overflowing with compassion, that is the dynamic core of our Christian witness and the mission of the Church.

We cannot look upon the wounded heart of Jesus without encountering a love that is so completely human. The humanity of Christ is before us in all its vulnerability and strength. The image of the Sacred Heart offers a deep intimacy and like all such relationships we may long for it but it can frighten us. To be so exposed and so committed and, of course, so vulnerable. Yet, the Sacred Heart of Jesus is also a **waiting heart**. In it we can experience something of the patient, generous love of God which will not coerce or threaten us. The love in the heart of Christ seeks only our love, and what good is a love that is not freely given? The heart of Jesus creates the sacred, personal space for that deeply hidden and intensely personal exchange of ‘heart to heart’ – *cor ad cor loquitur*.



SACRED HEART OF JESUS & IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY



Two Hearts that Beat as One

From our own experience with others we know that this intimacy can be fleeting even when we desire it. Often it can take many years of sharing and coming to know each other in the course of all life's twists and turns. True intimacy only really happens when we trust someone; it is a resting in them, an 'at-homeness.' So it is with Jesus. The Sacred Heart – His heart – is the unchanging guarantee of a love that waits for us, that makes a home for us, for all that we are and all that we carry. His heart is a sanctuary for us. All can find their place in it for all have a place in it.

There are no limits to the love of God that we discover in the heart of God's Son. When we allow ourselves to be drawn to that love, we find that we are also drawn beyond ourselves to a

greater, deeper love, especially those whose own heart is wounded. Then we begin to understand the beauty and mystery of the Sacred Heart that is itself wounded. The wound is infinite because Jesus's love is infinite. It is also the mark of truth. This heart is no symbol of a false love. That it carries the wound of love – a love that knows the depths of betrayal and rejection. In the wound of the Sacred Heart we see our own hardness of heart; we have to confront our self-absorbed indifference. Yet Christ, too, does expose His heart not to crush us with just guilt but to heal our own woundedness and show us that sacrifice is not only the cost but also the gift of love.

With Devotion to the Sacred Heart we learn again how to love, how to give without seeking reward, how to grow beyond ourselves. Here is the meaning of reparation: when we become servants of this love in our families, communities and our world, we become ministers of compassion and agents of healing. We want to return this love; to make amends for what we or others have broken. This is not guilt but recognition and gratitude.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus opens the eyes of our hearts. Just as we cannot make Christ into a faceless abstraction so we cannot make anyone we love into a faceless project. We do not see a problem or a threat but only a person, a history; we cannot read a statistic without realising that it is also a story, a life: not a someone or somebody that could be anyone or anybody, but *this* person who has a name given to him or

her by a father, a mother or someone who loved them from the very beginning of their life and did not wish them to be invisible and unknown.

Out of this personal relationship and resistance to the impersonal, the work of reparation begins: whatever is broken we can work to repair; whatever is lost, we can go in search of. Whoever feels humiliated and despised, we can esteem and restore. Whoever is abandoned, used and abused, we can work to bring into the heart of the community with justice and compassion. We can speak the name of those who are forgotten, whose lives are counted as without value, and write their stories in the book of life. We know that this cannot be done without cost, without enduring commitment or fidelity. But if we have come to know the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we will also know that we have his Spirit too, and 'nothing is impossible to God.'

For the Sacred Heart of the crucified and risen Christ is a sort of living icon of the Holy Spirit. *"And hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."* (Romans 5:5). Although our heart – the love that becomes our very essence – must always be finite, it can, nevertheless, have a limitless capacity for receiving and being transformed by God's love.



The Heart of Christ is an Open Heart

LOVE KNOWS NO LIMITS



The Prodigal Son (Painting by Rembrandt)

A Love Story

The surgeon said, "Tomorrow morning I will open up your heart." The boy interjected, "You will find Jesus there." The surgeon looked up, annoyed, "I am going to cut your heart open to see how much damage has been done." "But when you open up my heart, you will find Jesus in there," said the boy. The surgeon looked at the parents, who sat quietly. "When I see how much damage has been done, I will sew your heart and chest back up, and I will plan what to do next." "But you will find Jesus in my heart. The Bible says He lives there. The hymns all say He lives there. You will find Him in my heart."



The surgeon had enough. "I tell you what I will find in your heart. I will find damaged muscle, low blood supply, and weakened vessels. And I will find out if I can make you well." The boy said, "You will find Jesus there too. He lives there." The surgeon went back to his office, and started recording his notes from the surgery. "Damaged aorta, damaged pulmonary vein, and widespread muscle degeneration. No hope for transplant, no hope for cure, painkillers and bed rest, death within one year." He stopped the recorder, but there was more to be said. "Why?" he asked aloud. "Why did You do this? You've put him here; You've put him in this pain; and You've cut short his life. Why?"

The Lord answered and said, "The boy, my lamb, was not meant for your flock for long, for he is a part of My flock, and will forever be. Here, in My flock, he will feel no pain, and will be comforted as you cannot imagine. His parents will one day join him here, and they will know peace and my flock will continue to grow." The surgeon's tears were hot, but his anger was hotter. "You created that boy, and You created that heart. He will be dead in months. Why?" The Lord answered, "The boy, my lamb, shall return to my flock, for he has done his duty: I did not put my lamb with your flock to lose him, but to retrieve another lost lamb." The surgeon wept as he sat beside the boy's bed. The boy's parents sat across from him.

The boy awoke and whispered, "Did you cut open my heart?" "Yes," said the surgeon. "What did you find?" asked the boy. "I found Jesus there," said the surgeon.

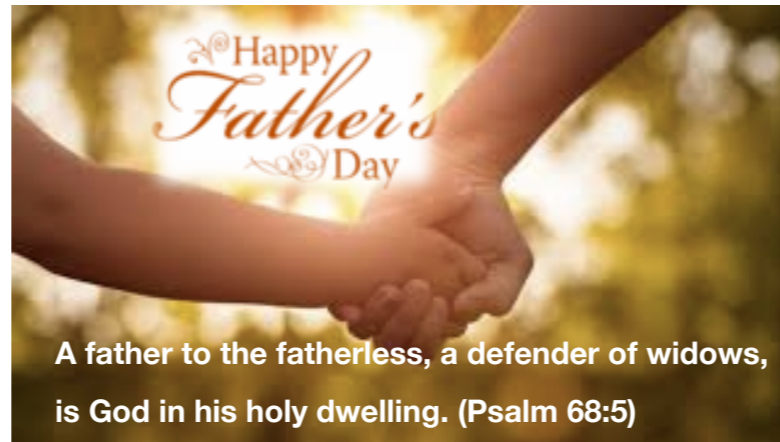


Who lives in my heart?

We had just celebrated the solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Will we be able to say, “**Who lives in my heart?**” Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is not nearly as popular today as generations ago. This pious devotion has suffered a cardiac arrest, an old fashion way of being Catholic. To some the first Fridays carry a whiff of superstition for those who practice it, as masochistic in its emphasis on making reparation for Jesus’ own suffering. The image itself may seem off-putting to modern tastes, either too gruesome, or overly sentimentalised, and syrupy.

That the organ of the human heart can be both pierced and alive at the same time is nothing short of a miracle. It invites us to accept our share in this human, wounded, and suffering heart of Christ, how much can be said of its radiance, fullness, and life? In one of the apparitions of St Margaret Mary, Christ spoke: “In the excess of the mercy of my Heart, I promise you that my all powerful love will grant to all those who will receive Communion on the First Fridays, for nine consecutive months, the grace of final repentance: they will not die in my displeasure, nor without receiving the sacraments; and my Heart will be their secure refuge in that last hour.”

- I will give them all of the graces necessary for their state of life.
- I will establish peace in their houses.
- I will comfort them in all their afflictions.
- I will be their strength during life and above all during death.
- I will bestow a large blessing upon all their undertakings.
- Sinners shall find in My Heart the source and the infinite ocean of mercy.
- Tepid souls shall grow fervent.
- Fervent souls shall quickly mount to high perfection.
- I will bless every place where a picture of my heart shall be set up and honoured.
- I will give to priests the gift of touching the most hardened hearts.
- Those who shall promote this devotion shall have their names written in My Heart, never to be blotted out.



The spirituality of the heart is all about love. The love God has for us since the beginning of creation is brought to full realisation in Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus not only makes known God’s all-embracing compassionate love. He is also the perfect example of what is to be a loving human being. Following the example of Jesus we enter our own heart and discover there God’s Love and confidently and deeply immersed in God’s Love for us. This heart calls to our heart. **Will we open our hearts to Him?**

Do spend some time reflecting on these bible verses:

*“As the Father has loved me, **so have I loved you.** Now remain in my love.” (John 15:9)*

*“See what **great love** the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.” (1 John 3:1)*

The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: “**I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.**” (Jeremiah 31:3)

Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on me
Sacred Heart of Jesus, Thy Kingdom come
Sacred Heart of Jesus, I trust in You

