

Reflection for Thursday 18th June 2020

Tomorrow is the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which occurs on the second Friday after Trinity Sunday. It is one of my favourite feasts of Our Lord in the Church's year simply because it is all about the love which Jesus has for each one of us. If Christianity is a religion about love, the love God has for us and the love we have for Him and our neighbours, then it really needs to be emphasised over and over again in a tangible way that Jesus loves us with all his heart.

In a practical sense this love of Jesus is offered to us as a release from the many burdens we are called to suffer in this life. Jesus says in the gospel for tomorrow's feast, *'Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yolk and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yolk is easy and my burden light.'*

(Mt 11 28-30)

Our burdens and worries come in various sorts, perhaps you are disturbed by the current mood of fear of catching the coronavirus, or you are uncertain about your job and how you will find the money to pay bills, the uncertainty of having treatment for other illnesses which have been on hold since the lockdown. On a more general level you might be concerned about daily worries of our lives and the sufferings of those we love, or the struggle we might have trying to live good and holy lives without the grace of the sacraments which have been denied to us now for almost three months.

But in our prayers we must remember that we have a merciful and loving Lord who will never turn us away. He can help us because of who He is and His words give us a glimpse into His Sacred Heart, which longs for us to come to Him and be comforted. In fact it is sorrowful that we turn away from Him and do not seek His help.

But where did we get the devotion to the Sacred Heart, how did it all start?

Devotion to the Sacred Heart, as we now know it, began about the year 1672. On many occasions Jesus appeared to St. Margaret Mary, a Visitation nun in France, and during these apparitions He explained to her the devotion to His Sacred Heart as He wanted people to practise it. He asked to be honoured in the symbol of His Heart of flesh; He asked for acts of reparation, for frequent Communion, Holy Communion on the first Friday of the month, and the keeping of the Holy Hour.

We honour the Sacred Heart not only because every drop of Christ's Precious Blood passed through it during the thirty-three years of His life on earth; not only because the Sacred Heart throbbed in closest sympathy with every movement of joy or sorrow, pity or love, but we honour the Sacred Heart of Jesus because of its intimate union with His divinity. There is only one person in Jesus, and that person was at the same time God and man. Therefore, every part of His body was human and divine. His Heart, too, is divine; it is the Heart of God.

There are two things that must always be found together in the devotion to the Sacred Heart: Christ's Heart of flesh and Christ's love for us. True devotion to the Sacred Heart means devotion to the divine Heart of Christ insofar as this Heart represents and recalls His love for us. It means devotion to the love of Jesus Christ for us insofar as this love is recalled and represented to us by His Heart of flesh.

In his great encyclical letter on devotion to the Sacred Heart, Pope Pius XII explained the real nature of devotion to the most Sacred Heart of Jesus in the light of divine revelation, its chief source, and the graces that flow from it. He said, "We think that Our statements, confirmed by the teaching of the Gospel, have made it clear that essentially this devotion is nothing else than devotion to the human and divine love of the Incarnate Word and to the love which the Heavenly Father and the Holy Ghost have for sinful men.

There are many prayers and novenas available for us to use during the month of June particularly in the old traditional missals and prayer books, failing that you can find many devotions to the Sacred Heart

on Google. Would you like the Sacred Heart to be enthroned in your home? Please ask one of the clergy to come and bless your home and dedicate it to the Sacred Heart. There are many spiritual benefits of consecration including the promises given to St Margaret Mary which can be found below:

The Twelve Promises of Jesus to Saint Margaret Mary for those Devoted to His Sacred Heart:

- I will give them all the graces necessary for their state of life.
- I will establish peace in their families.
- I will console them in all their troubles.
- They shall find in My Heart an assured refuge during life and especially at the hour of their death.
- I will pour abundant blessings on all their undertakings.
- Sinners shall find in My Heart the source of an infinite ocean of mercy.
- Tepid souls shall become fervent.
- Fervent souls shall speedily rise to great perfection.
- I will bless the homes where an image of My Heart shall be exposed and honored.
- I will give to priests the power of touching the most hardened hearts.
- Those who propagate this devotion shall have their names written in My Heart, never to be effaced.
- The all-powerful love of My Heart will grant to all those who shall receive Communion on the First Friday of nine consecutive months the grace of final repentance; they shall not die under my displeasure, nor without receiving their Sacraments; My heart shall be their assured refuge at that last hour.

"The devotion produces rich fruit and makes a great change in those who are devoted to it and earnestly practice it." - [Letters of St. Margaret Mary](#)

Deacon Kevin