



1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2024

UNDERSTANDING THE DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS AND WHAT IT MEANS

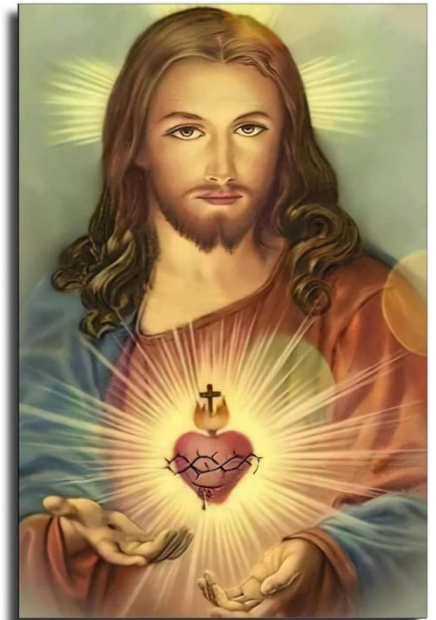
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THE EDITORS OF THE SPIRITUAL ARMY OF GOD THE FATHER'S 1ST SATURDAY NEWSLETTER ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING THE CONSISTENT QUALITY AND ACCURACY OF THE SPIRITUAL ARMY OF GOD THE FATHER'S 1ST SATURDAY NEWSLETTER AND AS SUCH RESERVE THE RIGHT TO REJECT OR EDIT THE CONTENT OF ALL SUBMISSIONS FOR PUBLICATION. EDITING MAY INCLUDE, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO, CHANGES TO GRAMMAR, SYNTAX AND STYLES, REMOVAL OF OFFENSIVE CONTENT AND REMOVAL OF PERSONAL NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION. SUBMISSION OF YOUR ARTICLE SIGNIFIES YOUR AGREEMENT TO THE TERMS AFOREMENTIONED.

WHEN I WAS A CHILD, A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS HUNG IN MY PARENTS' BEDROOM. A WARM, SMILING JESUS LOVINGLY POINTED TO HIS HEART, PIERCED AND CROWNED WITH THORNS, IN AN ETERNAL GESTURE OF INVITATION. WHENEVER I LOOKED AT THAT PICTURE, I FELT GOOD — EMBRACED, LOVED, CARED FOR — AS IF THE LORD WERE INVITING ME TO STEP INTO HIS JOY AND PEACE. MY MOTHER HAD A GREAT DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART; EVERY FIRST FRIDAY, WE WOULD CONSECRATE OUR LIVES ANEW TO HIS LOVE AND MERCY.



EACH SUMMER — USUALLY IN JUNE — WE CELEBRATE THE SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS AND DRAW NEAR TO THE TENDER MERCY AND FORGIVENESS OF THE LORD. POETICALLY, THE HEART IS A SYMBOL OF THE HUMAN CENTER — OUR EMOTIONS, LOVES, PASSIONS, DESIRES, THE FORCE OF THE WILL. IN HIS BOOK "THE SACRED HEART OF THE WORLD," DAVID RICHIO EXPLAINS: "OUR HEART IS THE SOFT CENTER OF THE EGOLESS SELF AND IT HAS ONE DESIRE: TO OPEN. THE HEART IS THE CAPACITY TO OPEN.... IT CONTAINS OUR ABILITY TO REACH OUT SO IT IS THE ANTIDOTE TO DESPAIR.... CONTEMPLATION OF JESUS' HEART SHOWS US HOW DEEP WE REALLY ARE, HOW VAST OUR POTENTIAL FOR LOVE, HOW HIGH OUR ASPIRATION FOR THE LIGHT."

IN THE GOSPELS, JESUS' HEART IS MOVED WITH PITY FOR THE CROWDS (SEE MT 9:36) AND HE TELLS US THAT HE IS GENTLE AND HUMBLE OF HEART (MT 11:29). THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS THAT BEGAN BEATING IN THE WOMB OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MORE THAN 2,000 YEARS AGO STILL BEATS TODAY IN THE GLORIFIED HUMANITY OF THE RISEN CHRIST. AND IT WILL PULSATE FOREVER, PUMPING OUT THE GRACE, MERCY AND LIFE OF GOD TO ALL OF HUMANITY. IN THE HEART OF THE LORD, WE EXPERIENCE THE OVERWHELMING MERCY OF GOD AND HIS INFINITE DESIRE TO BE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH US.

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FEASTS FOR JUNE

THE FEASTS ON THE GENERAL ROMAN CALENDAR CELEBRATED DURING THE MONTH OF JUNE ARE:

- | | |
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| 1 JUSTIN, MEMORIAL | 23 TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, SUNDAY |
| 2 CORPUS CHRISTI, SOLEMNITY | 24 NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, SOLEMNITY |
| 3 CHARLES LWANGA & COMPANIONS, MEMORIAL | 26 JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ, OPT. MEM. |
| 5 BONIFACE, MEMORIAL | 27 CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, OPT. MEM. |
| 6 NORBERT, OPT. MEM. | 28 IRENAEUS, MEMORIAL |
| 7 SACRED HEART OF JESUS, MEMORIAL | 29 SAINTS PETER & PAUL, SOLEMNITY |
| 8 IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, MEMORIAL | 30 THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, SUNDAY |
| 9 TENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, SOLEMNITY | |
| 11 BARNABAS, MEMORIAL | |
| 13 ANTHONY OF PADUA, MEMORIAL | |
| 16 ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, SUNDAY | |
| 19 ROMUALD, OPT. MEM. | |
| 21 ALOYSIUS GONZAGA, MEMORIAL | |
| 22 PAULINUS OF NOLA; JOHN FISHER & THOMAS MORE, OPT. MEM. | |

THE FEASTS OF SAINTS MARCELLINUS AND PETER (JUNE 2), ST. EPHREM (JUNE 9), AND THE FIRST MARTYRS OF THE CHURCH OF ROME (JUNE 30) ARE SUPERSEDED BY THE SUNDAY LITURGY. ☐

OUR CENACLE CORNER

SEEKING A DEEPER RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD
THROUGH MEDITATION OF PASSAGES FROM HOLY SCRIPTURES

Love Knows No Bounds

GOD TOUCHED ME

*Publish his glorious deeds among the nations.
Tell everyone about the amazing things he does. — 1 Chronicles 16:24*

**"ASK AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU; SEEK AND YOU WILL FIND;
KNOCK AND THE DOOR WILL BE OPENED TO YOU."**

- Matthew 7:7

HOW CAN I KNOW THAT GOD ANSWERS PRAYER?

*By Janet Thompson
Crosswalk.com Contributing Writer | October 5, 2020*

HOW CAN I KNOW THAT GOD ANSWERS PRAYER?

WHEN MY DAUGHTER WAS GOING THROUGH HER TEENAGE PRODIGAL YEARS, MY HEART ACHED FOR THE LIFE I WANTED HER TO EXPERIENCE. BUT MY WORDS FELL ON CLOSED EARS AND A HEART DETERMINED TO MAKE HER OWN DECISIONS AND CHOICES. NO AMOUNT OF TALKING, PLEADING, OR CAJOLING CONVINCED HER TO CHANGE HER WAYS.

I WAS DESPERATE TO HEAR FROM GOD.

I SANK TO MY KNEES AND PLEADED WITH GOD DAILY...EXPECTANTLY...PERSISTENTLY...SACRIFICIALLY...UNCEASINGLY...AND, EVENTUALLY THANKFULLY...FOR SIX LONG YEARS. EVEN WHEN I SAW NO CHANGE IN HER BEHAVIOR. EVEN WHEN I WANTED TO GIVE UP. EVEN WHEN IT LOOKED HOPELESS, I KEPT PETITIONING GOD BECAUSE I BELIEVED WITH ALL MY HEART THAT GOD WOULD ANSWER MY PRAYERS. NOT ON MY TIMEFRAME BUT HIS.

TODAY, MY DAUGHTER THANKS ME THAT I NEVER GAVE UP HOPE. I NEVER STOPPED PRAYING. I NEVER STOPPED BELIEVING!

PRAYER IS CONVERSATION WITH GOD

IT DOESN'T MATTER IF WE SPEAK OUR PRAYERS, JOURNAL THEM, OR MAYBE SIMPLY THINK THEM. SOMETIMES A THOUGHT PRAYER HAPPENS WHEN WE'RE READING GOD'S WORDS TO US IN OUR BIBLE. AS WE STOP AND PONDER ON A SCRIPTURE, WE'RE TALKING TO GOD. WE'RE PRAYING!

I ENJOY WALKING AND TALKING TO GOD AND I HAVE FRIENDS WHO PRAYER-WALK THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS. YOU CAN PRAY ANYWHERE, ANYTIME.

ARE YOUR PRAYERS TYPICALLY REQUESTS?

UNLIKE OUR TYPICAL CONVERSATIONS, OUR PRAYERS ARE OFTEN A LITANY OF REQUESTS.

OFTEN, WE SEE PRAYER AS A WAY TO COME TO GOD WITH ALL THE THINGS WE WANT HIM TO DO FOR US—WITHOUT TAKING THE TIME TO PRAISE HIM FOR WHAT HE'S ALREADY DONE.

MY FAVORITE TIME IN OUR CHURCH IS "PRAISE, PRAYER, AND SHARE" WHERE WE CAN PUBLICLY OFFER NOT ONLY PRAYER REQUESTS, BUT LET OUR CHURCH CONGREGATION KNOW HOW THEIR PRAYERS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED.

WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS WHEN YOU PRAY?

WE PRAY BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT GOD IS OMNIPOTENT AND WE BELIEVE HE HAS THE POWER TO ANSWER PRAYERS. BUT IF WE'RE HONEST, WE STILL WONDER: WILL HE?

WHAT IF IT'S NOT THE ANSWER I WANT?

WITH ALL THE PRAYER REQUESTS HE RECEIVES, DOES HE HEAR MINE? LET'S LOOK AT FIVE WAYS TO RELEASE YOUR PRAYER REQUESTS TO GOD:

1. PRAY FOR GOD'S WILL AND NOT YOUR WILL

A NATURAL TENDENCY IS TO ASK GOD TO ANSWER OUR PRAYERS THE WAY WE'RE SURE IS BEST. WE LOOK AT THE SITUATION FROM OUR FINITE PERSPECTIVE AND THINK: SURELY, GOD WOULD WANT THE SAME OUTCOME WE DESIRE. YET, THE LORD'S PRAYER SAYS TO PRAY: "MAY YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN." (MATT. 6:10 NLT)

WHEN I WAS PRAYING FOR MY PRODIGAL CHILD, I PRAYED INTENTLY FOR THE THINGS I WANTED TO CHANGE IN HER LIFE. I GAVE GOD A LIST OF ACCEPTABLE OUTCOMES. I LAID

BEFORE HIM MY WILL AND CRIED WITH FRUSTRATION AS I WATCHED HER MOVE FURTHER AWAY FROM HIM AND ME.

THEN I REALIZED THAT EVEN JESUS HAD TO SUBDUE HIS WILL TO HIS FATHER'S WILL. JESUS TOLD HIS DISCIPLES, "FOR I HAVE COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN TO DO THE WILL OF GOD WHO SENT ME, NOT TO DO MY OWN WILL." (JOHN 6:38 NLT)

JESUS CRIED OUT AT THE THOUGHT OF THE BRUTAL CROSS, "MY FATHER! IF IT IS POSSIBLE, LET THIS CUP OF SUFFERING BE TAKEN AWAY FROM ME. YET I WANT YOUR WILL TO BE DONE, NOT MINE." (MATT. 26:39)

I FINALLY LEARNED HOW TO SURRENDER MY WILL TO GOD'S WILL BY PERSONALIZING SCRIPTURE AND PRAYING GOD'S WORD BACK TO HIM FOR MY DAUGHTER. PRAYING FROM THE BOOK OF PSALMS IS A GOOD PLACE TO START.

LORD, YOU KNOW THE HOPES OF THE HELPLESS AND I'M FEELING SO HELPLESS RIGHT NOW. I NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU. SURELY YOU WILL HEAR MY CRIES AND COMFORT ME. (PS. 10:17 NLT PERSONALIZED).

OH LORD, PLEASE HELP ME TO UNDERSTAND YOUR WILL FOR MY LIFE AND HEAR ME AS I PRAY. PAY ATTENTION PLEASE TO MY GROANING WHEN I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY. LISTEN TO MY CRIES FOR YOUR HELP, MY KING AND MY GOD, FOR YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE I PRAY TO, NO ONE ELSE BUT YOU! (PS. 5:2 NLT PERSONALIZED) AMEN.

2. PRAY TO BELIEVE THE PROMISE THAT GOD ANSWERS PRAYERS

THE BIBLE ASSURES US THAT GOD HEARS OUR PRAYERS, BUT SOMETIMES WE PRAY FOR SELFISH REASONS, OR AS IN STEP #1 ABOVE, WE'RE NOT RECEPTIVE TO GOD'S WILL.

THIS IS THE CONFIDENCE WE HAVE IN APPROACHING GOD: THAT IF WE ASK ANYTHING ACCORDING TO HIS WILL, HE HEARS US. AND IF WE KNOW THAT HE HEARS US—WHATEVER WE ASK—WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE WHAT WE ASKED OF HIM. (1 JOHN 5:14-15)

OUR HEARTS MUST ALSO BE RIGHT WITH THE LORD.

THE EYES OF THE LORD WATCH OVER THOSE WHO DO RIGHT, AND HIS EARS ARE OPEN TO THEIR PRAYERS. BUT THE LORD TURNS HIS FACE AGAINST THOSE WHO DO EVIL. (1 PET. 3:12 NLT)

MAYBE GOD HAS A DIFFERENT PLAN THAN THE ONE WE'RE ASKING HIM TO FULFILL.

MARY AND MARTHA, THE SISTERS OF LAZARUS, CALLED FOR JESUS TO COME RIGHT AWAY WHEN THEIR BROTHER BECAME ILL. JESUS WAS DELAYED AND LAZARUS DIED. MARTHA WAS SURE THAT JESUS COULD HAVE SAVED HER BROTHER'S LIFE. JESUS ASKED HER IF SHE BELIEVED IN HIM. MARY ANSWERED,

"I BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE THE MESSIAH, THE SON OF GOD, WHO IS TO COME INTO THE WORLD." (JOHN 11:27)

BUT WHEN JESUS CALLED FOR REMOVAL OF THE STONE IN FRONT OF LAZARUS' TOMB, MARTHA OBJECTED THAT HE HAD BEEN DEAD FOUR DAYS AND THERE WOULD BE A TERRIBLE ODOR.

THEN JESUS SAID, "DID I NOT TELL YOU THAT IF YOU BELIEVE, YOU WILL SEE THE GLORY OF GOD?" (LUKE 11:40)

THEN JESUS RAISED LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD IN FRONT OF A LARGE CROWD OF VISITORS, WHO SEEING THIS MIRACLE, BELIEVED IN HIM. GOD HAD A BIGGER PLAN THAN MARTHA COULD IMAGINE. STILL SHE BELIEVED THAT JESUS WOULD ANSWER HER PRAYERS FOR HER BROTHER, EVEN THOUGH IT WASN'T HOW SHE EXPECTED.

IF YOU BELIEVE, YOU WILL RECEIVE WHATEVER YOU ASK FOR IN PRAYER. (MATTHEW 21:22)

YOU CAN BE SURE OF THIS: THE LORD SET APART THE GODLY FOR HIMSELF. THE LORD WILL ANSWER WHEN I CALL TO HIM. (PSALM 4:3 NLT)

FATHER, I DON'T WANT TO QUESTION THAT YOU HEAR MY PRAYERS BUT HELP ME WITH MY UNBELIEF. OPEN MY MIND TO OTHER POSSIBILITIES THAN THE ANSWER I'M SEEKING. LEAD ME TO SCRIPTURES THAT TELL OF YOUR PROMISES AND REINFORCE MY FAITH THAT AS A BELIEVER YOU WANT THE VERY BEST FOR ME. WHEN DOUBT FLOODS MY SOUL, HELP ME PRAY TO CAST AWAY THE NAGGING QUESTIONS THAT PREY ON ME AS SATAN WHISPERS IN MY EAR, "DOES GOD REALLY HEAR YOU? DOES GOD REALLY CARE ABOUT YOU?"

I KNOW THAT YOU WOULD LEAVE THE NINETY-NINE JUST TO SAVE ME. I REST IN THE CONFIDENCE THAT IF I CRIED OUT TO YOU IN THE WILDERNESS, YOU WOULD HEAR AND RESCUE ME. I DO BELIEVE YOU ARE MY LORD AND SAVIOR! AMEN. □



“I am your Blessed Mother.

My children, be always vigilant for the enemy is so untiring in attacking both the prayerful and the religious. The enemy has even infiltrated the Church and some priests whose relationship with God is weak. My children, pray for them and some prayer groups who pray with their lips and their hearts are far from God.

Continue praying for the unborn, for the world is in the balance of truth and the untruthful that’s lurking in the doors of the Church which my Son founded and also on the doors and minds of political leaders.

Pray, pray, pray, my children, everyday your weapon is right in your hands, my beads of rosary!

Thank you, my children, for listening to me.”

*Mary your Lady of the Rosary
05182024*

MAY CROWNING 2024

THE OFFICIAL LITURGICAL ORDER OF CROWNING AN IMAGE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY [PUBLISHED IN 1987 BY THE US CATHOLIC CONFERENCE] STATES: THE CORONATION OF MARY IS A FORM OF REVERENCE FREQUENTLY SHOWN TO IMAGES OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY. THE POPES NOT ONLY ENDORSED THIS DEVOUT CUSTOM BUT "ON MANY OCCASIONS, EITHER PERSONALLY OR THROUGH BISHOP-DELEGATES, CARRIED OUT THE CORONATION OF MARIAN IMAGES." [PIUS XII, ENCYCLICAL AD CAELI REGINAM, 11 OCT 1954]

IN THE US, A CUSTOM GREW IN POPULARITY PRIOR TO THE VATICAN II COUNCIL. IN PARISHES, AT MARIAN SHRINES AND GROTTOS, SOMEONE WAS CHOSEN TO PLACE A WREATH OF FLOWERS ON MARY'S STATUE DURING MAY AND OFTEN IN THE CONTEXT OF A BENEDICTION, A SPECIAL ROSARY CELEBRATION, AND SOMETIMES AT THE CLOSING OF MASS. THE PRACTICE CONTINUES IN MANY US PARISHES. MANY PARISHES HAVE FOUND INNOVATIVE WAYS TO EXPRESS THEIR REVERENCE FOR THE DIGNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

ON SATURDAY, MAY 4, 2024, THE SPIRITUAL ARMY OF GOD THE FATHER CELEBRATED THE CROWNING OF OUR BLESSED MOTHER, RECOGNIZING HER AS QUEEN OF HEAVEN AND EARTH. IN LAS VEGAS, THE CROWNING WAS HELD AT THE CENACLE HOUSE. THE CROWNING CEREMONY WAS OFFICIATED BY FR. RIC SALTITOS. MOTHER MARY'S STATUE WAS WALKED IN PROCESSION BY ROBERT PUA AND THE STATUE OF THE HOLY INFANT JESUS BY GUADA EUGENIO. OFFERINGS OF BREAD (INES

CARRINGTON), WINE (GUADA EUGENIO), FRESH FRUITS (SYLVIA FISHER), CRUCIFIX (NICET SANTOS), HOLY BIBLE (CONNIE R. WOLFF), HOLY SPIRIT PLAQUE AND CANDLE (CHRISTINA), AND BOUQUETS OF FLOWERS (DEBBIE LORENZO, ILLA DE GUZMAN, AND NELLY CAPINO) WERE BROUGHT TO THE ALTAR. LINA GAMBOA PUT THE VEIL ON THE BLESSED MOTHER, THE SCAPULAR BY MILA LUMBA, THE ROSARY BY ROBERT PUA. SHE WAS CROWNED WITH FLOWERS BY CONNIE DE LA ROSA WOLFF AND WITH GOLD CROWN BY INES CARRINGTON. FLOWER OFFERING BY EVERYONE AND THE FIRST



SATURDAY DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS FOLLOWED. FINALLY, FR. DING BLESSED ALL THE MOTHERS. OUTPOURING OF LOVE FROM THE DEVOTEES WAS OVERWHELMING. THE CELEBRATION CULMINATED WITH A SPECIAL DINNER IN MOTHER MARY'S HONOR.

IN LOS ANGELES, THE RITES OF CROWNING WAS HELD AT ST. ANNE CHAPEL AT THE ST. ANNE FAMILY SERVICES. THE CHAPEL WAS FULL OF DEVOTEES, AS WELL AS THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS, AND FRIENDS. THIS YEAR, THE HONOR OF CROWNING WENT TO



TESSIE ALMERO (CROWN OF FLOWERS) AND ALICIA ARANETA (GOLD CROWN). IN ADDITION, THE FOLLOWING DEVOTEES HAD ROLES IN THE CEREMONY: NORMA FUENTES (VEIL), GERTRUDE ASUNCION (ROSARY), AND CARMELITA CARO (SCAPULAR). FR.

PETER OFFICIATED THE MASS AND THE CROWNING CEREMONY. THE CROWNING CEREMONY WAS POIGNANT. FLOWERS WERE OFFERED BY EVERYONE. MARIAN SONGS PLAYING IN THE BACKGROUND SPRINKLED SOME HEAVENLY AND MAGICAL FEATURES TO IT.

JUST BEFORE THE CROWNING, WAS THE BLESSING AND RENEWAL OF VOWS OF COUPLES CELEBRATING THEIR MARRIAGE ANNIVERSARIES: GERARD AND DENISE GIER (18 YEARS) AND BON AND RUTH MERCADO (22 YEARS); ARMANDO TECSON AND JOANN FERRER, (WHOSE MARRIAGE TOOK PLACE ON MAY 10, 2024) ALSO RECEIVED A SPECIAL BLESSING.

A POTLUCK BRUNCH OF DELECTABLE DISHES PREPARED BY DEVOTEES AND FRIENDS OF THE SPIRITUAL ARMY WAS ENJOYED BY ALL. THE CELEBRATION CONCLUDED WITH THE DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS TO GOD THE FATHER, BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, AND THE HOLY CHILD JESUS.

THIS CEREMONY HAS A LESSON TO TEACH US ABOUT THE GOSPEL: THAT THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN ARE THOSE WHO ARE FOREMOST IN SERVING AND IN LOVE. OUR LORD HIMSELF CAME TO SERVE, NOT TO BE SERVED; HE DREW ALL THINGS TO HIMSELF WHEN HE WAS LIFTED UP FROM THE EARTH, AND HE REIGNED BY THE POWER OF GENTLENESS AND LOVE. AND OUR LADY, WHOSE GLORY WE PROCLAIM TODAY, WAS THE HUMBLE SERVANT OF THE LORD WHEN SHE WAS ON EARTH: SHE DEDICATED HERSELF TO HER SON AND HIS WORK; WITH HIM, AND UNDER HIM, SHE WAS AN INSTRUMENT IN OUR REDEMPTION.



NOW, IN THE GLORY OF HEAVEN, SHE IS STILL THE GOD-BEARER TO CHRIST'S BROTHERS AND SISTERS: SHE CARES ABOUT THEIR ETERNAL SALVATION; SHE IS MINISTER OF HOLINESS AND QUEEN OF LOVE.

LET US PRAY: O GOD, SINCE YOU HAVE GIVEN US MARY, THE MOTHER OF YOUR SON, TO BE OUR MOTHER AND OUR QUEEN, GRANT THAT WE, WHO HAVE COME TO CROWN HER IMAGE, MAY ATTAIN THE GLORY OF YOUR CHILDREN IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. WE ASK THIS THROUGH CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.

THANK YOU ALL, ONCE AGAIN, FOR SHARING YOUR TIME, TALENT AND TREASURE. MAY GOD CONTINUE TO MULTIPLY YOUR GENEROSITY A THOUSAND-FOLD!!!•

UNDERSTANDING THE DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

OVER THE CENTURIES, MANY CHRISTIANS DEVELOPED HARSH IMAGES OF GOD AND JESUS AS FEARSOME JUDGES, DISTANT FROM HUMAN AFFAIRS, READY TO IMPOSE PUNISHMENT FOR MORAL FAILURE. THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY AND THE SAINTS BECAME THE FRIENDLY, APPROACHABLE INTERCESSORS WHO WOULD GO TO GOD FOR US, PLEADING FOR SINFUL AND ERRING SOULS. JANSENISM, PARTICULARLY PREVALENT IN FRANCE IN THE 16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES, OVEREMPHASIZED THE WRATH OF GOD, THE UNWORTHINESS OF HUMAN NATURE AND FEAR AS A FUNDAMENTAL RESPONSE TO THE DIVINE.

VIEWS IN THIS CONTEXT, THE APPARITIONS OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS TO ST. MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE MANIFEST A NEED FOR A THEOLOGICAL CORRECTION AND A SPIRITUAL BALANCE REGARDING POPULAR PERCEPTIONS OF CHRIST. JESUS REVEALED TO THE SAINT HIS HEART, BURNING WITH LOVE FOR HUMANITY. PIERCED AND CRUCIFIED — OFFERING SALVATION AND MERCY — JESUS' HEART LONGS FOR US TO OFFER OUR LOVE AND DEVOTION IN RETURN. IF SOME DISTORTED FORMS OF SPIRITUALITY FOCUSED ONLY ON GOD'S PUNISHMENT, THE SACRED HEART EMPHASIZED MERCY. IF MANY BELIEVERS INORDINATELY FEARED GOD, HERE DIVINE LOVE AND JOY WERE MANIFEST. IF JESUS HAD SEEMED DISTANT AND UNAPPROACHABLE BEFORE, THE SACRED HEART BECKONS US TO ENTER INTO THE DIVINE FURNACE OF CHARITY.

ST. MARGARET MARY DESCRIBED HER EXPERIENCE OF THE LORD: "MY DIVINE HEART IS SO PASSIONATELY FOND OF THE HUMAN RACE AND OF YOU, IN PARTICULAR, THAT IT CANNOT KEEP BACK THE PENT-UP FLAMES OF ITS BURNING CHARITY ANY LONGER. THEY MUST BURST OUT THROUGH YOU AND REVEAL MY HEART TO THE WORLD, SO AS TO ENRICH MANKIND WITH MY TREASURES." FOLLOWING THIS REVELATION, JESUS UNITED HER HEART WITH HIS IN A FUSION OF MYSTICAL LOVE AND JOY.

AS ST. JOHN REMINDS US, GOD IS LOVE (SEE 1 JN 4), THE ONE WHO EMPTIES HIMSELF OUT FOR OTHERS, DESIRING OUR ETERNAL SALVATION, SEEKING OUT THE LOST AND CARRYING THE WANDERING SHEEP HOME. THE WHOLE CHRIST EVENT IS A MISSION OF MERCY, AS THE SON, IN RADICAL OBEDIENCE TO THE FATHER, BECOMES INCARNATE IN OUR FLESH — PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM, HEALING THE SICK, FORGIVING THE SINNER, FEEDING THE HUNGRY AND, ULTIMATELY, OFFERING HIS LIFE ON THE CROSS. EVERY WORD, ACTION, GESTURE AND ATTITUDE OF JESUS MANIFESTS A PERFECT, PURE AND SELFLESS LOVE FOR

EACH HUMAN PERSON. IF LOVE MEANS WILLING THE GOOD OF THE OTHER, COMPLETELY FREE OF SELF-INTEREST, WE SEE THE PERFECTION OF SUCH CHARITY IN THE BURNING HEART OF CHRIST.

LEST WE THINK THAT SUCH A LOVE IS NAIVE, SIMPLISTIC OR EASY, THE SACRED HEART SHINES FORTH, CROWNED WITH THORNS, PIERCED AND BLEEDING. THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST IS THE TERRIFYING PATH THROUGH THE VALLEY OF DARKNESS AND EVIL WHICH GOD HIMSELF WALKS, EMBRACING EVERYTHING SINFUL, BROKEN AND DEAD THAT ENSNARES AND DESTROYS US. BY REMAINING SILENT BEFORE HIS PERSECUTORS, PRAYING FOR HIS KILLERS, LOVING A DYING THIEF AND ASKING FORGIVENESS FOR SINNERS, JESUS SHOWS THAT THE UNCONDITIONAL, INFINITE AND DIVINE LOVE OF HIS HEART IS THE ONLY FORCE THAT CAN HEAL THE WORLD OF ITS HATRED, SIN AND REJECTION OF GOD. BY TAKING UPON HIMSELF THE TOTALITY OF HUMAN EVIL COMMITTED BY EVERY PERSON OF EVERY TIME, CHRIST REFRACTS THIS OVERWHELMING DARKNESS INTO THE LIGHT OF THE RESURRECTION.

RADICAL ACT

IN THIS RADICAL ACT OF REDEMPTION, THE LORD SERVES LIKE AN AIKIDO WRESTLING ARTIST. AIKIDO IS A FORM OF MARTIAL ARTS IN WHICH THE GOAL IS TO LEAVE ONE'S OPPONENT DISARMED, UNHURT AND LYING ON THE GROUND LAUGHING! BY ABSORBING AND DEFLECTING THE AGGRESSIVE NEGATIVE ENERGY OF THE ATTACKER, THE AIKIDO WRESTLER DISARMS THE OTHER BY TURNING VIOLENCE INTO A GENTLE YET FIRM FORCE THAT HURTS NO ONE, BUT STOPS THE AGGRESSION. IS THIS NOT WHAT JESUS DID IN HIS PASSION AND DEATH? HE ABSORBED ALL THE VIOLENCE, EVIL, HATRED AND SIN OF THE WORLD INTO HIMSELF, LETTING IT KILL HIM AND SEEMINGLY DESTROY HIS VITAL FORCE OF LOVE, HEALING AND PEACE. BUT BY TAKING IN ALL OF THE DARKNESS, JESUS CONQUERED ITS POWER IN ONE SUPREME OFFERING OF SELF TO THE FATHER ON THE ALTAR OF THE CROSS. THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST IS THE GENTLE YET POWERFUL ABSORPTION, DEFLECTION AND TRANSFORMATION OF VIOLENCE INTO LOVE, SIN INTO GRACE, HATRED INTO FORGIVENESS AND DEATH INTO LIFE. THE TRIUMPH OF THE SACRED HEART IS THE ULTIMATE VICTORY OF LOVE.

IN AN ADDRESS TO ITALIAN BISHOPS, CARDINAL JOSEPH RATZINGER ONCE PUT IT THIS WAY: "WHAT JESUS PREACHES IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT, HE NOW DOES; HE DOES NOT OFFER VIOLENCE AGAINST VIOLENCE, AS HE MIGHT HAVE DONE, BUT PUTS AN END TO VIOLENCE BY TRANSFORMING IT INTO LOVE. THE ACT OF KILLING, OF DEATH, IS CHANGED INTO AN ACT OF LOVE."

FACING THE ENDLESS AND FEARFUL VIOLENCE OF TERRORISM, MASS SHOOTINGS, ABUSE OF ALL KINDS AND A PROFOUND DISRESPECT FOR THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE, OUR CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY WILL ONLY FIND HOPE, HEALING AND PEACE THROUGH THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS CHRIST.

WHAT DOES DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART CONSIST OF? HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND IT TODAY? FORMAL CONSECRATION, A DAILY OFFERING, CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST AND RECONCILIATION ON CONSECUTIVE FIRST FRIDAYS, DISPLAYING AND HONORING AN IMAGE OF THE SACRED HEART ALL COMPRISE SOME OF THE SPECIFIC PRACTICES LINKED TO THIS PROFOUND DEVOTION.

LIKE ANY RELIGIOUS CONSECRATION, ONE MADE TO THE SACRED HEART IS AN EXTENSION OF OUR BAPTISMAL COMMITMENT. IN THE WATERS OF BAPTISM, WE PUT ON CHRIST — ANOINTED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT TO LIVE AS A NEW CREATION IN THE LIFE OF THE BLESSED TRINITY — TO EMBRACE THE GOODNESS OF THE GOSPEL. CONSECRATING OURSELVES TO THE SACRED HEART IS A PERSONAL AND LOVING WAY TO RENEW AND LIVE OUR BAPTISMAL VOWS. WE ACKNOWLEDGE JESUS' SOVEREIGNTY IN OUR LIVES, PLEDGING OUR LOVE BACK TO HIM WHO HAS SO GRACIOUSLY AND SACRIFICIALLY LOVED US. EVERY FIRST FRIDAY, WHEN MY FAMILY VERBALLY RENEWED OUR CONSECRATION, I WAS REMINDED OF JESUS' PRESENCE, PROTECTION AND POWER IN MY LIFE. THAT PRAYER INSPIRED ME TO TRY TO TREAT OTHERS AS I WOULD TREAT CHRIST HIMSELF. IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO, CONSIDER CONSECRATING YOUR MARRIAGE, FAMILY, HOME AND LIFE TO THE SACRED HEART IN A FORMAL WAY. IT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE.

THE DAILY OFFERING IS A SIMPLE PRAYER IN WHICH WE GIVE GOD OUR DAY: ITS PRAYER, WORK, JOY AND SUFFERINGS. THIS OBLATION OF THE HEART RENEWS OUR CONSECRATION AND REMINDS US TO LIVE IN HOLY MINDFULNESS THAT WHAT WE DO, SAY, VALUE AND EMBRACE SHOULD BE A WORTHY RETURN TO THE LORD WHO HAS DONE SO MUCH FOR US. I REMEMBER PRAYING THE MORNING OFFERING IN GRADE SCHOOL; THIS DAILY RITUAL REMINDED ME THAT WHAT I DID IN SCHOOL, AT HOME, ON THE PLAYGROUND, WITH FAMILY AND CLASSMATES MATTERED TO GOD — INSPIRING ME TO WANT TO OFFER MY VERY BEST.

COMING AT A TIME WHEN THE FAITHFUL RECEIVED THE EUCHARIST INFREQUENTLY, JESUS' REQUEST THAT WE CONFESS OUR SINS AND RECEIVE COMMUNION EVERY FIRST FRIDAY POINTS TO THE EUCHARIST AND THE SACRAMENTS AS THE FUNDAMENTAL WAY TO ENCOUNTER THE LOVE OF THE LORD. IN THE EUCHARIST, JESUS COMPLETELY GIVES HIMSELF TO US, LITERALLY ENTERING INTO OUR BODIES, SOULS AND LIVES. WE ENTER INTO THE ONE THAT WE EAT

AND DRINK, DEEPLY UNITED TO CHRIST. IN THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION, WE EXPERIENCE THE MERCY AND FORGIVENESS WON FOR US ON CALVARY — WE RECEIVE THE TENDER EMBRACE OF THE LORD AND THE HEALING POWER OF THE PASCHAL MYSTERY. THROUGH THESE SACRAMENTS, JESUS DRAWS US INTO HIS HEART AND ALLOWS US TO EXPERIENCE IN THIS LIFE THE LOVE AND JOY OF HEAVEN. ALL OF THE RICHES OF GOD'S INNER LIFE ARE MANIFEST IN THE HEART OF CHRIST AND OFFERED TO US IN THE MASS AND IN CONFESSION.

IN HONORING AND DISPLAYING IMAGES OF THE SACRED HEART, WE INVITE OTHERS TO EXPERIENCE JESUS' LOVE FOR THEMSELVES. THE POWER OF VISUALS IS CLEAR — I CAN STILL REMEMBER EVERY ARTISTIC DETAIL OF THAT PICTURE IN MY PARENTS' BEDROOM! WE CANNOT CONTEMPLATE SUCH A HOLY AND MERCIFUL IMAGE WITH INDIFFERENCE OR INGRATITUDE. ONE LOOK AT JESUS' HEART SHOULD MELT US, CONVERT US AND INSPIRE US TO GIVE OUR HEARTS IN RETURN.

SACRED HEART DEVOTION IS NOT MAGIC OR SOME AUTOMATIC TICKET TO HEAVEN; IT IS A SACRED WAY FOR US TO ENCOUNTER THE FULLNESS OF THE GOSPEL, THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD'S SAVING LOVE POURED OUT FOR US IN JESUS CHRIST. AS WE STEADILY PROGRESS IN OUR KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNION WITH THE LORD, WE WILL FALL EVER MORE DEEPLY IN LOVE WITH JESUS AND LIVE OUT THAT TRANSFORMING AND REDEMPTIVE RELATIONSHIP IN EVERY DETAIL OF OUR LIVES. THIS DEVOTION UNITES OUR MINDS, HEARTS AND WILLS IN ONE GREAT ACT OF OBLATION — A TOTAL GIFT OF THE SELF TO THE ONE WHO HAS FIRST OFFERED HIMSELF COMPLETELY TO AND FOR US. □

Bishop Donald J. Hying is bishop of the Diocese of Madison, Wisconsin.

SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT RECOMMENDED

LOVE KNOWS NO BOUNDS

BY VICTOR H. ARANETA

WHEN WE LOVE, THERE WILL ALWAYS BE LIMITS. NO MATTER HOW SERIOUS WE ARE, OUR HEARTS CAN GIVE ONLY THE LOVE WE HAVE, A



NATURE OF A FALLEN MAN. HUMAN LOVE MAY BE PATIENT BUT NOT UNLIMITED. WHEN LOVE IS OVERWHELMING, HUMAN RECEPTORS TEND TO REJECT IT AND WE GET IRRITATED. BUT LOVE IS SELFLESS, ONLY THROUGH THE GUIDANCE OF GOD. LOVE DOES NOT FORCE ITSELF ON OTHERS AND MUST NEVER BE BOASTFUL. LOVE IS KIND, PATIENT AND RETAINED. IT WILL ALWAYS BE THERE. 1 CORINTHIAN 13:4-7.

PRAYER: LORD, GIVE OUR HEARTS A LITTLE MORE OF WHAT YOUR HEART CAN GIVE; AND THE GRACE TO RETAIN MOST EVEN IF OUR HEARTS CAN FEEL THE

ANGER. MAKE OUR HEART OF STONE BE HEART OF FLESH WHICH YOU ORIGINALLY CREATED; IN JESUS' NAME WE PRAY, AMEN. ☐

Upcoming Events

1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION

1ST SUNDAY DEVOTION

JUNE 1, 2024

IN LOS ANGELES:
ST. ANNE'S CHAPEL
ST. ANNE FAMILY SERVICES
155 N. OCCIDENTAL BL.
LOS ANGELES, CA 90026
DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS AT 8:30 AM
MASS AT 9:30 AM

IN LAS VEGAS:
THE CENACLE HOUSE
AT 1:00 PM

1ST SUNDAY DEVOTION

IN LAS VEGAS:
JUNE 2, 2024
ST. SHARBEL CATHOLIC CHURCH
MASS AT 9:30 AM FOLLOWED BY
DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS AT THE CHAPEL

1ST FRIDAY DEVOTION

JUNE 7, 2024

IN LAS VEGAS:
THE CENACLE HOUSE
AT 2:30 PM

IN LOS ANGELES: VIA ZOOM
AT 8:30 PM
VIA ZOOM

800 OUR FATHER DEVOTION

JUNE 15, 2024
IN LAS VEGAS: THE CENACLE HOUSE
AT 6:00 AM

IN LOS ANGELES: VIA ZOOM
MASS AT 9:30 AM