

“LOOK AT THIS HEART”

On the first Friday of the new year, it is just right that we go back to the origin of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This devotion became well known to many people after the series of apparitions of Jesus to a French Visitandine nun, Margaret Mary Alacoque, to whom Jesus revealed his complaint: “Look at this Heart which has loved men so much, yet in return it received nothing but ingratitude, coldness, indifference.” Jesus enjoined the nun to spread the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

What are some of the features of this devotion?

(1) Reception of Holy Communion for nine consecutive first Fridays of the month; (2) Holy Hour of adoration on Thursdays; (3) celebration of the feast of the Sacred Heart in June.

Many Catholics already practice this devotion by attending Mass and receiving Holy Communion every first Friday of the month. It is consoling to see Catholics flocking the churches on that day. They do this to make reparation for the indifference, coldness, and ingratitude of the people for whom Jesus Christ endured the pains of his passion and death on the cross. The complaint of Jesus to the French nun, Margaret Mary Alacoque, is relevant even today, where people, even those who



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are called Catholics, live as if Jesus does not exist at all.

Besides the Communion on the First Fridays, there is also the recommendation for this devotion to make a Holy Hour of Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament on Thursdays. Depending upon the fervor of the person, the Holy Hour may be done every Thursday or at least one Thursday in a month. This is to repair the indifference and ingratitude of people who do not care to be close to Jesus. This is the complaint of Jesus to the sleepy apostles in the garden of Gethsemane: “Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test” (Mk 14:37).

This devotion to the Sacred

Heart was studied by theologians and recommended to the Pope for approval. Pope Leo XIII wrote an encyclical *Annum Sacrum* (Sacred Year) and consecrated the human race to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on June 11, 1899. With this consecration, the faith and fervor of Catholics were revived and many were convinced to practice this devotion, especially upon knowing the promises of the Sacred Heart. There

are the Twelve Promises of the Sacred Heart, but the last one is most consoling: “In the excess of mercy of my Heart, I promise that my all powerful love will grant to all those who will receive Communion on the First Friday 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 the last hour.”

May many more people practice this devotion to the Sacred Heart, for in the end, it can be our key to our personal salvation. Human as we are, we are prone to commit mistakes or sins. But when we admit our weaknesses and repent, then the Heart of Jesus who loves those who are humble, will give us the key to heaven. Once in heaven, we will enjoy endless love of Jesus and happiness that beggars description.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps 112 [111]:4)

(Recited when there is no opening song.)

A light has risen in the darkness for the upright of heart; the Lord is generous, merciful, and just.

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here.)

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

Introduction

(These [or similar words] may be used to address the assembly.)

P—As we prepare for the manifestation of the Lord Jesus, may we learn from John's humble disposition so that the Lord may shine on us more brightly and through us, on our brothers and sisters.

Penitential Act

P—Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. *(Pause)*

P—You were sent to heal the contrite of heart: Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

P—You came to call sinners: Christ, have mercy.

All—Christ, have mercy.

P—You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us: Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

P—May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All—Amen.

Collect

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

Cast your kindly light upon your faithful, Lord, we pray, and with the splendor of your glory set their hearts ever aflame, that they may never cease to acknowledge their Savior and may truly hold fast to him.

Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

All—Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading (1 Jn 2:29—3:6)
(Sit)

We prove that indeed we are children of God through the holiness of our lives. On the other hand, those who persist in their evil ways are on the side of the devil still.

A reading from the first Letter of Saint John

IF YOU CONSIDER that God is righteous, you also know that everyone who acts in righteousness is begotten by him.

See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Everyone who has this hope based on him makes himself pure, as he is pure. Everyone who commits sin commits lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness. You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who remains in him sins; no one who sins has seen him or known him.

—The word of the Lord.

All—Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 98)

R—All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

1. Sing to the LORD a new song, / for he has done wondrous deeds; / His right hand has won victory for him, / his holy arm. **(R)**

2. All the ends of the earth

have seen / the salvation by our God. / Sing joyfully to the LORD, all you lands; / break into song; sing praise. **(R)**

3. Sing praise to the LORD with the harp, / with the harp and melodious song. / With trumpets and the sound of the horn / sing joyfully before the King, the LORD. **(R)**

Verse before the Gospel

(Jn 1:14a, 12a) *(Stand)*

All—Alleluia, alleluia. The Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us. To those who accepted him he gave power to become the children of God. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Jn 1:29–34)

P—A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

All—Glory to you, O Lord.

JOHN THE BAPTIST saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He is the one of whom I said, 'A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.' I did not know him, but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel." John testified further, saying, "I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from the sky and remain upon him. I did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God."

—The Gospel of the Lord.

All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily *(Sit)*

Prayer of the Faithful

P—John the Baptist pointed to Jesus as one who would baptize

with the Holy Spirit. Let us pray to the Lord to send us his Spirit to inflame our hearts with love and to renew the face of the earth. For every petition, we say:

R—Lord, hear our prayer.

C—May Jesus, the Lamb of God, take away our sins of commission and omission, and restore peace in our soul. We pray. **(R)**

C—May the Holy Spirit fill the hearts of the faithful, kindle in them the fire of his love, and let them rest in his consolation. We pray: **(R)**

C—May the Holy Spirit inspire and help us to love Mother Earth and to care for all creation the Lord has blessed us with. We pray: **(R)**

C—May the Holy Spirit give us refreshment in our labors and solace in the midst of our woes. May he heal our wounded souls, and wash the stains of sin away. We pray: **(R)**

C—May the Lord bless our families and friends, give strength to those feeling unwell and weak, and lighten the load of those who have heavy burdens. We pray: **(R)**

C—Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions *(pause)*. We pray: **(R)**

P—O God, the Holy Spirit came down upon Jesus at his baptism, to confirm that he is your Beloved Son. You made us your children through our baptism in water and the Holy Spirit. Make us be more conformed with Jesus our Lord. **All—Amen**

LITURGY OF
THE EUCHARIST

Presentation of the Gifts *(Stand)*

P—Pray, brethren...
All—May the Lord accept the

sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P—O Receive with favor, O Lord, we pray, the offerings of your people, that what they profess with devotion and faith may be theirs through these heavenly mysteries.

Through Christ our Lord
All—Amen.

Preface I *(Nativity of the Lord)*

P—The Lord be with you.
All—And with your spirit.

P—Lift up your hearts.
All—We lift them up to the Lord.

P—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All—It is right and just.

P—It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in the mystery of the Word made flesh a new light of your glory has shone upon the eyes of our mind, so that, as we recognize in him God made visible, we may be caught up through him in love of things invisible.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

All—Holy, Holy, Holy... *(Kneel)*

Acclamation *(Stand)*

All—We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All—Our Father...
P—Deliver us, Lord...
All—For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion
(Kneel)

P—Behold the Lamb of God...
All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon
(1 Jn 4:9)

By this the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his Only Begotten Son into the world, so that we might have life through him.

Prayer after Communion
(Stand)

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

O God, who touch us through our partaking of your Sacrament, work, we pray, the effects of its power in our hearts, that we may be made fit to receive your gift through this very gift itself.

Through Christ our Lord.
All—Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P—The Lord be with you.
All—And with your spirit.

Prayer over the People

P—Bow for the blessing. *(Pause)*

Grant, O Lord, we pray, that the Christian people may understand the truths they profess and love the heavenly liturgy in which they participate.
All—Amen.

P—And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (†) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.
All—Amen.

Dismissal

P—Our Mass is ended. Go and bear witness to Christ to others.
All—Thanks be to God.



PRAYER TO THE SACRED HEART *of Jesus*

Divine Jesus, you have said, "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," behold me kneeling at your feet, filled with a lively faith and confidence in the promises dictated by your Sacred Heart and pronounced by your adorable lips. I come to ask this favor: *(Here silently mention your petition/s).*

To whom can I turn to if not to you whose Heart is the source of all graces and merits? Where should I seek if not in the treasure which contains all the riches of your kindness and mercy? Where should I knock if not at the door through which God gives himself to us and through which we go to God? I have recourse to you, Heart of Jesus. In you I find consolation when afflicted,

protection when persecuted, strength when burdened with trials, and light in doubt and darkness.

Dear Jesus, I firmly believe that you can grant me the grace I implore, even though it should require a miracle. You have only to will it, and my prayer will be granted. I admit that I am most unworthy of your favors, but this is not a reason for me to be discouraged. You are the God of mercy and you will not refuse a contrite heart. Cast upon me a look of mercy, I beg of you, and your kind Heart will find in my miseries and weaknesses a reason for granting my prayers.

O Sacred Heart, whatever may be your decision with regard to my request, I will never stop adoring, loving, praising and serving you. My Jesus, be pleased to accept this my act of perfect resignation to the decrees of your adorable Heart which I sincerely desire may be fulfilled in and by me and all your creatures forever.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I know that there is but one thing impossible to you: to be without pity for those who are suffering or in distress. Look upon me, I beg of you, dear Jesus, and grant me the grace for which I humbly implore you through the Immaculate Heart of your most sorrowful Mother. You have entrusted me to her as her child, and her prayers are all-powerful with you. Amen.

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