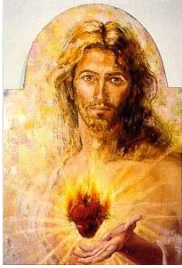


The Sacred Heart: A Heart to Love All People



The Sacred Heart Devotion – Love Conquers All

In Catholic culture, devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is so common that the image has become an icon of Catholicism. Why is this image so central to the post 1500s Catholic imagination? We don't really find it in ancient icons.

In the 1500s and 1600s, Calvin and other Protestant reformers focused on the fall of humanity from grace, the breakup of people from their loving relationship with God when Adam and Eve sinned. The only way that this divorce could be fixed was by God reaching out in love, because, according to St Augustine (writing in the 300s), humanity was too broken and too easily fell into sin.

The Jansenist movement took St. Augustine's view of a fallen human nature and moved toward Calvin's position that we are so deeply damaged that there is nothing we can do. One could not even receive communion without going to confession first.

The Second Vatican Council (1961 – 1965) focused more on the presence of God in our daily lives. Images of *See Devotion*, p. 4



Trátenlos con ternura – Papa Francisco

En su homilía para la Fiesta del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús, Papa Francisco habló de la ternura de Dios: una ternura como la de un padre o una madre que enseña a su criatura a caminar. Una ternura que ata en la libertad a su pueblo, atrayéndolo «con lazos de amor, con ataduras de amor». Explicó que luego Dios nos dice a nosotros y a su pueblo, «Yo era para ti como los que alzan a una criatura a las mejillas y lo besaba, y me inclinaba y le daba de comer». Pensando en esa ternura de Dios, ¿cómo podría ser que nos abandonara al enemigo? Cuando nos alcancen los momentos de dificultad o de inseguridad, el Señor nos dice: «pero si hice todo esto por vos, ¿cómo pensás que te voy a dejar solo, que te voy a abandonar?»

Papa Francisco notó que los mártires coptos se murieron con el nombre de Jesús en los labios, confiándose en el amor de Dios.

Ternura, Sigue en la pág. 4

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Feast of the Sacred Heart

by Sr. Laurel O'Neal, Er. Dio.

The heart is the center of the human person... the place within us where God bears witness to God's self, where life and thought and beauty, love, integrity call to us and invite us to embrace them, reveal them in our own unique ways... It is not so much that we have a heart and then God comes to dwell there. It is where God dwells with us and bears witness to himself [that is where] we have a heart. The human heart (not the cardiac muscle but the center of our personhood) is **a dialogical event** where God speaks, calls, breathes, and sings us into existence and where in one way and degree or another we respond to become the people we are and (we hope) are called to be.

Everything comes together in the human heart – or is held apart and left unreconciled by its distortion and self-centeredness. It is in the human heart broken open by love that the unity between spirit and matter is imagined, achieved, and then conveyed to the whole of creation. Here the division between earth and heaven, human and divine is bridged and healed. It is in the human heart *See Heart*, p. 4



ASK THEOLOGIKA

NOT SO COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Dear Theologika,

Why is there this big devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus? Don't people realize that Jesus loves them unconditionally?

Dear Unconditionally,

Unfortunately, many people don't experience unconditional love when they are growing up. Sometimes they can even grow up with a notion of God as a stern, judgmental parent. They get caught up in the question of whether God is all loving or all just. They haven't been taught that no one can be just without being loving. God is what we are called to be — forgiving and compassionate. As humans, we get hurt, hold grudges, and wait for our chance to get "even."

The disciples asked Jesus how many times they should forgive others. They suggested seven times, but Jesus said "seventy times seven" (Mt 18:22), a poetic way of saying that there is no limit. It doesn't matter what we have done or failed to do, God is always there for us. We may turn away, but God never does.

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Theologika.net is not an official Catholic publication. Nevertheless, the content and views we present are meant to be compatible with official Church teaching.

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Devotion to the loving truly human and truly divine Jesus has existed from the early centuries of the faith because various people have had trouble accepting an all loving God. Many times Christ the King is lowered to the condition of an earthly king full of violence and vengeance. These apocalyptic or "end time" stories are part of a message of strength and encouragement for believers who are suffering persecution. God will rescue those who love Him.

The point of these stories is to remind us that our acceptance or rejection of God's love has very good or very bad consequences for us. The choice is ours, but God always wants the best for us, an end brought about by our accepting His love. That's the point of the story about the lost or prodigal son. (Lk 15:11-32). God is always hoping that we will come home.

Devotion to the Limitless Love of God, the Sacred Heart, became important in the 1600s when Catholic and Protestant movements focused on the brokenness and crookedness of humanity and how far we are from God. St. Margaret Mary Alacoque and St. Claude de la Colombière promoted a renewed focus on the love and forgiveness of Christ. Since Christ is truly human and truly divine, Jesus loves us in a completely human way with unlimited Divine love, a love that continuously overflows in creation, redemption, and resurrection. We can always come home. The arms of Jesus are always outstretched to hug us and hold us close to His Sacred Heart. "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." (Jn 10:10.)

Blessings be yours,



Treat Them with Tenderness – Pope Francis

In his homily for the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Pope Francis spoke of God's tenderness — a tenderness like that of a father or a mother teaching a child to walk. A tenderness that binds his people in freedom, attracting them "with bonds of love, with ties of love." He explained that God then tells us and his people, "For you I am like one who lifts a child to my cheek and kisses her as I bend down to feed her. Considering this tenderness of God how would it be possible for him to abandon us to the enemy?" When we find ourselves in difficulty or insecurity, the Lord tells us, "If I do all of this for you, how can you even think that I would leave you on your own, that I would abandon you?"

Pope Francis noted that the Coptic martyrs died with the name of Jesus on their lips, entrusting themselves to the love of God. God promises, "How can I treat you as an enemy? My heart rises within me and arouses all my tenderness." It is not a day of wrath that awaits you but a day of pardon for sins and the tenderness of a Father, the Holy One in our midst. This loving tenderness is the gift of the Father to all of his children, for each one of us.

A lot of the time we are afraid of the tenderness of God and we refuse to let ourselves experience it. In these moments "we are hard, severe, punishers" of (*See Tenderness, p. 3*)

The Sacred Heart of Jesus: Source of Limitless Love

By Susan Mahan, PhD



Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus originated as a meditation on the love that Jesus has for humanity. In the 1500s, Jesuits and Franciscans promoted devotion

to the wounded heart of Jesus. However, they did not stress the physical bleeding heart of Jesus crowned with thorns that has come down to us. This common image does not necessarily help people feel closer to Jesus today. Presenting Jesus with a heart with flames of love and a face full of love and light emphasizes his limitless divine love in a very human way.

The devotion to the Sacred Heart has not always included a focus on the suffering of Jesus and his actual physical heart. During the first ten centuries of Christianity, devotion to the humanity of Christ did not include honoring the wounded Heart of Jesus. From the 1200s to the 1500s devotion to the Sacred Wounds increased. However, it was private, individual, and of a mystical nature. In the 1670s, the apparitions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to Saint

Margaret Mary Alacoque moved the devotion into the public life of the Church and it became centered on sorrow for sin. Popular piety continued this emphasis and eventually promoted worship of the physical heart of Jesus to such a point that Pope Pius XII had to correct this. He explained that the Sacred Heart belongs to the “Divine Person of the Eternal Word” and is a symbolic image of his love and our redemption.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a devotion to His love. It is a response to the extravagance of Jesus. His suffering and the reality of human sin are important for our consideration in other ways.

However, this focus is not suitable for a devotion which focuses on love. This is particularly true today when addressing young people in first world cultures in which few symbols are shared. A heart in flames is a direct and simple symbol.

Many Catholics today do not feel personally close to God or have a warm experience of God’s love for them. Many still relate to God as a judge and an enforcer of many rules. Contemplating Jesus in the Gospels gives us a richer mystical image of the truly divine and truly human Jesus Christ, full of warm friendliness, compassion, and humility, with a heart full of love.



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Looking Ahead: The Feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola

Take Lord, and receive all my liberty,
my memory, understanding,
my entire will and all that I possess.
You have given all to me.
To You, O Lord, I return it.
All is yours; dispose of it wholly
according to your will.
Give me only your love and your
grace,
for this is enough for me.

St. Ignatius of Loyola (c. October 23, 1491 – July 31, 1556) is the founder of the Society of Jesus, commonly known as the Jesuits. His feast is celebrated July 31.

Tenderness (Cont from p.2)

our neighbors (and even of ourselves). Although he was speaking to priests, the message is something that we should all hear, as it applies to us as well.

The Pope explained, “the heart of Christ is the tenderness of God. This is the way that pastors (and the people of God) should shepherd each other – with the tenderness of God and they should leave the whip in the sacristy (or in the closet) and be tender shepherds even with those who are the most troublesome.”

The Pope concluded, “We do not believe in an ethereal God. We believe in a God who became flesh, who has a heart, and this heart today tells us, ‘Come to me if you are tired, worn out, and I will refresh you, but treat my little ones with tenderness, with the same tenderness with which I care for you.’ This is what the heart of Christ is telling us today and this is what I am praying for you today at this Mass and for myself.”



Devotion (Cont. from p. 1)

the Divine Word Incarnate in Jesus became more human.

Michael Rubbelke in his post, “Devotion to the Sacred Heart Today: The Heart of the Poor, Creation, and Mercy,” offers an emerging vision of the Sacred Heart devotion, a contemporary icon by Robert Lentz. This image of Jesus is a brown man with tightly curled African hair. He is portrayed in a more South Asian Hindu style, jutting forth from the icon with arms extended and stylized flames bursting from his hands. Perhaps this is the post-modern icon of the Sacred Heart. It envisions Pope Francis’ vision of a church of the poor for the poor, a call to be responsible stewards of creation, and a profound call to announce and to become the Divine Mercy.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus

W	Z	Q	U	F	Q	U	F	L	A	M	E	V	K	E
F	Y	I	L	M	S	H	A	O	S	F	L	O	A	C
T	T	D	Z	A	C	M	E	A	N	P	E	J	E	A
U	J	Y	C	L	G	E	A	A	P	X	E	M	X	R
E	X	R	L	H	E	L	J	B	R	N	U	A	H	G
Q	E	A	Q	Y	G	M	Q	S	G	T	Y	C	C	F
D	O	A	B	U	P	X	U	P	X	L	Z	W	Y	E
C	E	N	T	E	R	S	U	S	P	Y	J	J	P	P
Y	K	O	Q	B	E	Q	M	L	M	F	S	T	P	U
W	X	J	K	J	W	P	C	E	C	S	E	A	S	Q
Y	O	G	I	Z	P	G	L	N	Q	K	M	A	C	I
Y	A	V	G	O	D	E	V	D	L	I	L	C	S	D
A	P	R	Q	B	A	A	U	A	O	Z	U	D	R	T
A	S	D	U	K	I	F	W	L	V	A	H	R	H	R
W	O	Y	A	A	M	H	Y	P	E	X	T	T	Z	V

Find the words in bold type:

The **center** of the human person is the **heart**, but this does not mean the cardiac muscle. The sacred **flame** of God’s **love** is **grace** that comes to us in **Jesus** in love and **peace**. We celebrate this in the **Feast** of the **Sacred** Heart of Jesus.

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Heart (Cont. from p. 1)

that the unity of body and soul is achieved and celebrated...

The Sacred Heart is the symbol of the reunion of all of reality, the place in that unique life where human life becomes completely transparent to the love of God, the sacrament par excellence of the ministry of reconciliation where human and divine are inextricably wed.

Imagine then an image of the Sacred Heart ... a clay pot broken and broken open innumerable times by and to the realities it dares to be vulnerable to and allows to rest within itself. Imagine too that God, that supreme potter refashions it, mends it with his love – a love that allows the cracks to glow with the light of heaven, a light that transforms the entire pot and all who are touched by its transcendent beauty and truth. This is what we celebrate ... The scars will remain, but transfigured as though mended with brilliant silver. Light and love, water and blood will pour from this heart, and, in time, God will love all of creation into wholeness through its mediation.

See the entire essay at: <http://notesfromstillsong.blogspot.com/2015/06/feast-of-sacred-heart.html>

Praying with Pope Francis

General Intention: That immigrants and refugees may find welcome and respect in the countries to which they come.

Evangelization: That the personal encounter with Jesus may arouse in many young people the desire to offer their own lives in priesthood or consecrated life.

Ternura (a cont. de la pág. 1)

«¿Cómo te voy a tratar como un enemigo? Mi corazón se subleva dentro de mí y se enciende toda mi ternura». No es un día de ira que les espera sino un día de perdón de pecados y de la ternura de un Padre, el Santo en medio de nosotros. Ese amor y ternura son el don del Padre para todos sus hijos, para cada uno de nosotros.

Muchas veces le tenemos miedo a la ternura de Dios y no nos dejamos experimentarla. En tales momentos «somos duros, severos, castigadores» con nuestros prójimos (y hasta con nosotros mismos). Hablando a los sacerdotes, pero con palabras que los demás debemos escuchar también, explicó que no debemos ser como un pastor que cuidaba a solamente una oveja y dejaba andar perdidos a las noventa y nueve otras ovejas. Dice, «El corazón de Cristo es la ternura de Dios». Así que los pastores (y el pueblo de Dios) han de ser pastores (y pueblo) «con ternura de Dios, que dejen el látigo colgado en la sacristía (o el gabinete) y sean pastores (y pueblo) con ternura, incluso con los que le traen más problemas.»

Para concluir, Papa Francisco declaró, «Nosotros no creemos en un Dios etéreo, creemos en un Dios que se hizo carne, que tiene un corazón, y ese corazón hoy nos habla así: “vengan a mí si están cansados, agobiados, y los voy a aliviar, pero a los míos, a mis pequeños trátenlos con ternura, con la misma ternura con que los trato yo”. Eso nos dice el corazón de Cristo hoy y es lo que en esta misa pido para ustedes y también para mí».

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