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Heart of the King  
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*Heart of*  
*the King*



*by* THOMAS H. MOORE, S.J.



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HEART OF THE KING

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# I. The King's Appeal

**O**UR LORD appeared to Saint Margaret Mary, in the dead of night, in the silent chapel of the cloistered convent, begging her to console Him, to make reparation for the coldness and indifference of men. Let us look on Him. He is a broken man, this Christ, with whom we are to watch one hour, as at a wake.

What has become of the Christ of the Beatitudes, whose blessings rang again and again down through the valleys of the world, rousing men to life? Where is the Christ of the crowds, the leader who sent the Apostles into the world and told them to preach, to baptize, promising to be with them unto the end? In this Heart, asking for love, how am I to see the gallant fighter of the Temple, with the money changers and Pharisees trying to get out of His way? Where is the Christ of the Resurrection, triumphant over death, the Saviour and the Judge who will come in the clouds of heaven to judge every man according to his work? Where is the King?

To all outward seeming, the Christ who appears to Saint Margaret Mary has retired, like so many other kings of our day. He has retired, and around Him He has gathered the remnants, the old ones, faithful to the old cause even though it be lost.

If the Sacred Heart be no more than this, its cause is dead. An unfortunate God cannot retain the hearts of the young. Young men prefer words of command, even harsh words, to words of pity. Youth expects to hear the harsh truth. Young people will be disappointed if the Kingdom of Heaven is not as exacting in its demands as the kingdoms of the earth. They want to go forward, not backward. They are too young to be used to defeat.

## THE WHOLE PATTERN

While it is true that some Christians are ignorant of and indifferent to the sorrows of Our Lord, and hence indifferent to His wishes and desires, it is the rare Christian who does not

sense a contradiction in this idea of a Divine failure. Such a thought might occur to an unbeliever, to one who only knew of the Christ of Paray-le-Monial and not the Christ of the Gospels. He might think that Christ was a failure, and throw Him away; just as a savage, finding a key on a treasure chest, might throw it away, not knowing what a lock was. But anyone who knows the Christ of the Gospels, would recognize Him immediately at Paray-le-Monial.

Any extraordinary movement of Christ in His Church will always quicken the soul of a Christian. Another key is being fitted to the locks of all the doors of the Kingdom. The apparitions to St. Margaret Mary, like the apparitions at Lourdes, are not celestial tableaux; they are strategic moves in the great battle of Redemption, in the work of getting people to Heaven, of saving souls. To understand the strategy and strength of these movements we have to see them as a part of the whole, we must see the whole pattern.

#### DIVINE AND THE HUMAN

In all the work of the Redemption there is a Divine and a human element. Men were not able to redeem themselves because the Redemption involved an apology for sin which only one of infinite dignity could make, since it was the Infinite God who was offended by our transgressions. So the Son of God became man. With the God-Man in the world, men were in a position to save themselves through Him as their High Priest. In the Supper Room and in the Passion and the Death of the Redeemer was wrought that part of the work which was *finished* when Christ uttered the last great cry to the Father from the cross.

#### THE END A BEGINNING

But it was an end which was only a beginning. For the fruits of this Sacrifice must now be applied to men down through the years. This is the part of Redemption not finished, the redemptive work of the Church. Just as the Son was sent into the world by the Father, so now is the Church established in the world by the Son to perpetuate His mission. The Church will be both human and Divine. There will be men like Peter and Paul who will teach and rule and sanctify, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. There will be men who will be sanctified by the Sacraments, and who will be united to Our



Lord in that human-Divine organism which we call the Mystical Body of Christ.

The Kingdom is the Mystical Body. Here is the Kingdom of Christ on earth, which Our Lord compared to a city, a house, a sheep fold, a body, a tree, a vine. It is something which has to develop and grow. It was born on the fierce rocks of Calvary, and it will reach its fullness in God's own time. When it does, that will be the end of the work of the Redemption—and the end of the world.

Meanwhile it is the mission of the members of this Body to see to its growth. As St. Paul says, we are "*the fullness of Him.*" Not that Christ was imperfect either as God or man. But, being a man, He was perforce an individual. He lived at one period of the world's history, spoke one language, the dialect of the Galilean mountaineer. How many of the vast multitudes born into the world ever heard His voice? Yet He came to save every one of them. How will He reach them with His message; how will they drink of the rock which is Christ?

As members of the Mystical Body, we must bring the work of Redemption to all men. We must make up the "things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, for His body, which is the Church."

We are now in a position to understand the Devotion to the Sacred Heart as a part of this great work.

#### THE ANSWER TO JANSENISM

It is significant that Our Lord appeared to St. Margaret Mary at a time of internal crisis in the Church. Jansenism, which Pius XI called the most insidious of all heresies, was strong in the field. It was to wage a crafty battle for two long centuries. It was an insidious thing, because the depth of its rottenness was hidden under an icing of truth. The thin spread of truth was the teaching that God our Judge was to be respected and feared. The awful abyss, among other things, was the lie that God our Judge was not to be loved—the denial that *Deus est Caritas*, that God is Love. The denial of Love Itself was not the main theological element of Jansenism; but it was the special feature which was to persist in the Church long after the heresy had been isolated. It was to persist in that rigorism which was to dominate for so long the teaching of moral theology and the administration of the Sacraments. There

are people today who will not go to Holy Communion more than once a year because "they are not worthy."

In 1675, when Our Lord appeared to Saint Margaret Mary, the Mystical Body of Christ was experiencing a dangerous chill from which it would be a long time convalescing. In vast sections of the Church the love of God had grown cold, and just as the well parts of the human body will rally to the cure of a sick organ, so must it be in the Mystical Body of Christ. Hence the appeal of Christ to the select few, the spiritually well like Margaret Mary, to make reparation, to rebuild the ailing organs that the whole body might be fit again. If these few could run a fever by drawing nearer to the flames of Divine Love, the effects of the chill could be thrown off. God's answer to the monstrous falsehood of Jansenism was Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

### THE HEART WE WORSHIP

The heart which we worship in this devotion is the Heart of flesh which beat in the breast of our Saviour during His life on earth, the one opened by the lance of the soldier, the one now glorified in the glorified Body of Christ in heaven.

We worship this Heart as the symbol and emblem of the love of Jesus for His Father and for man.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart, like a sacrament, in fact like a man, has a material and spiritual element. In a man there is a body and a soul; in Baptism there is the visible water and the invisible grace; and in this Devotion there is the Heart of Christ and there is His love. The first is the symbolic element, the second is the element symbolized: Our Lord knew men well enough to give them something they could touch—as Thomas touched the wound in His side—through which to reach what lies beyond the senses.

### THE DIVINE HEART

It goes without saying that the Heart of Christ is most worthy of Divine worship. Because of the Divine and human natures in Christ, hypostatically and forever united, Our Lord is both God and Man; but there is only the one Divine Person. The Body of Our Lord is the Body which belongs to the Divine Person, the Body of God. Hence we worship it. The Heart of that Body is likewise the Heart of God. Just as devotion to the Blessed Sacrament goes right through to the Person of Christ,

and does not stop at His Body, so too, in worshipping His Heart we adore the entire Person of Jesus Christ, the Person of the Son of God made man.

### LOVE'S SYMBOL

By this same token, all members of Christ's Body are equally adorable; His eyes for instance. Yet the Church has never approved a special devotion to the gentle eyes of Our Saviour. Why has she fostered worship of the Heart and not of other parts of His sacred Body? The answer is that Christ has chosen His Heart to be the symbol of His love. In choosing His Heart, He has but followed the instincts of all men. For them, the heart has always stood for love and affection. Songs of the heart are love songs. When we have won someone's heart, we have won his love. It is the universal symbol. The Son of God, in His love, rebuilt round about the children of men the protection of God's love. In doing it He had to be broken; He had to die on the cross. But because of His infinite love, He was glad to do it; He was eager to do it—*How am I straitened until it be accomplished!* The spear which thundered through His Heart opened the door through which men could run into the arms of their Father.

Our Lord loved us enough to die that we might live. Before He died, He gave us the Blessed Sacrament. He did not give us what He *had*, as a friend might give a valuable jewel. He gave us Himself, He gave us all that He *was*, as a lover gives himself in marriage. This was to be His pledge to us that He would love us forever.

### GOOD AND BAD FEAR

The heresy of Jansenism had all the marks of an airborne invasion, because it was not the frontiers but the heart of the homeland which it attacked. It went to the heart. It took Holy Communion away from the people, and Our Lord was separated from them as a husband from his wife. How could they embrace One whom they were told to fear? There is a wholesome fear born of love, the fear which a child has for a loving father. The little one is afraid lest he offend the one he loves. But that kind of father will be all smiles and caresses. He will not be a man with a face like a thunderstorm. Our Lord wants us to fear the loss of God, not the possession of Him. The scheme of Redemption was to make us feel comfortable with

God, now and forever. The Son became man that He might get the whole family of God together around the hearth fires of Heaven. It is not inaccurate to say that the false teachings of the day would have convinced the contemporaries of Saint Margaret Mary that the sunshine of Heaven was like the red glow of hell, and that they should fear God in the same way they feared the devil.

#### THE ANSWER TO JANSENISM

To this there was only one answer—Devotion to the Sacred Heart. The apparitions to Saint Margaret Mary were the strong protest of Divine Truth against a horrible lie. God broke onto the stage of His own world to tell us that He did not want the service of slaves but the love of brothers. Did men doubt this? Then let them remember the Passion. Let them look at His Heart, cross-crowned and thorn-crowned and afire with the flames of love. This is not the heart of a tyrant; it is the Heart of a God who loves men and who wants them to serve Him in love.

In giving us His heart, He gives us His love and asks for ours in return. He will not be satisfied with a burst of passionate words. This Lover looks into the heart. "Son, give thy heart." In every form of real love there is first the total giving of self, a surrender of self-interest in favor of the one beloved. It is the love of *consecration*. The consecration is followed by the throwing of one's self into the cause of the beloved, slaving for the perfection of her goodness and beauty, making up to her for all the hurts of life. We might call this aspect of love *immolation*. Finally, in real love there is a fire, a contagious enthusiasm which spreads to others. This is *apostleship*.

Consecration, immolation and apostleship: these three words form the language of the Sacred Heart Devotion.

## II. Consecration

When St. Margaret Mary understood that God had done so much for her because He loved her, she immediately consecrated herself to Him. In other words, she told Him that she loved Him back. She was moved to do this, not alone through a feeling of gratitude, but especially because she saw that the Sacred Heart was the most lovable thing in the world. And she knew that He wanted her. She belonged to Him by all the titles which God could put after His Name, but He would hold her by the title of love. The heart was to be the territory of His Kingdom.

In this little act of consecration there was the beginning of a revolution. Others consecrated themselves to the Sacred Heart; individuals, families and even nations. On the little pictures of the Sacred Heart were inscribed the words: *Thy Kingdom Come*. The Nineteenth Century saw the rise to power of men and organizations steeped in materialism and self-idolatry. They rejected the Saviour as did the Jews. *We will not have this man to reign over us*. But by this act of consecration there burst forth, in startling contrast to these cries, the unanimous voice of the lovers of the Sacred Heart, rising to vindicate His goodness and defend His rights.

In 1900, Leo XIII claimed the whole human race for the Kingdom of Christ and consecrated it to the Sacred Heart.

Twenty-five years later, Pius XI instituted the Feast of Christ the King and ordered the Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart written by Leo XIII to be renewed annually on the day of the Feast. The seed which St. Margaret Mary sowed two hundred and fifty years before was now in full bloom.

For it was inevitable that once there was a devotion in which souls consecrated themselves to the Sacred Heart there would be a Feast of Christ the King.

### CHRIST'S TITLE TO KINGSHIP

We are not thinking here of the *fact* of His kingship. Before He was born the Prophets sang of His royalty. The New

Testament and the Liturgy of the Church will not let us forget that we are members of His Kingdom. It is a very easy thing to vindicate His royal claims. The proofs are all founded on His preeminence among men as the God-Man and upon the fact that He redeemed us, that He bought us back at a great price after we were lost, that we are not our own any more. His Kingship had been known from the beginning.

But what had been almost forgotten is this. All these things which happened to the Son of God, the Incarnation and the Redemption, all these things in which we find reasons for His title to kingship, happened *because He loved us*. If He had not loved us there would have been no Incarnation and no Redemption. In fact, there would have been no creation. When the revelations of the Sacred Heart called the attention of the world to the depth of His love, it was inevitable that the Catholic world would shout out its allegiance. For the past century and a half men and nations have been angrily rejecting the King, saying that they did not want Him to reign over them. The ringing answer of the Catholic church is—*we do!*

The Feast of Christ the King was not something thought out at the top. It rose rather out of the ranks. It was totally democratic in this, that in Devotion to the Sacred Heart men saw the Christ of the crowds again, and they rallied to Him. He had possession not only of this soul and that, but of a world of men united in one Heart—men working together, body, heart and mind, under a Leader. Pius XI explicitly stated that he proclaimed this feast because it was *demande*d by the Faithful. He ordered the act of consecration to the Sacred Heart to be renewed annually on this day so as “to bind with Christian love, in the communion of peace, all peoples to the Heart of the King of Kings.”

### III. Immolation

Spontaneous and wholehearted consecration is the flower of real love. Its fruit is immolation. In the human love of man and woman we find these two elements which, in the worship of God, go to make up a sacrifice. True, there is no victim, like a lamb or an ox, to be offered and slain. In the case of real love the priest himself is the victim, offered and immolated in the cause of another. And in this the love of man for woman comes closer to the sacrifice of Our Lord. In fact, marriage is the complete sacrifice of the one to the other, a mutual offering and immolation, and the exemplar of this great Sacrament is nothing less than the union of Christ with His Church, which was consummated in His Sacrifice.

Since we find the first element of love in the Devotion to the Sacred Heart we must expect to find the second. The soul which will dedicate itself to Our Lord wholeheartedly and without reserve will most certainly complete its consecration by an act of immolation. Our Lord showed St. Margaret Mary how this should be done.

#### CHRIST'S TEACHING

The Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi was to be dedicated to a special Feast. The Saint was to receive Holy Communion on that day to honor the Sacred Heart.

Finally, she was to make an act of reparation in order to make up for the ingratitude of men and their lack of response to Christ's love for them. In addition, Our Lord promised the Saint that each Thursday night He would share with her the sorrow which He felt in the Garden of Olives. That she might join Him in the prayer which He offered then to His Father, she was to rise in the night and between the hours of eleven and midnight prostrate herself to appease the Divine anger, to ask mercy for sinners, and to soften the bitterness which Our Lord felt in the weakness of the Apostles, who could not watch one hour with Him.

The Feast of the Sacred Heart, the Communion of repara-

tion and the Holy Hour are the exercises of reparation Our Lord asked of Saint Margaret Mary. This is the expiation, the immolation, which constitutes the second feature of devotion to the Sacred Heart. It is often misunderstood, because Our Lord's words seem to indicate weakness and defeat. He wants to be consoled. Because men do not love Him, a woman must make it up to Him as a mother soothes a hurt child. It seems, at first sight, childish rather than manly.

#### DIVINE CONTRADICTIONS

Yet it is characteristic of Our Lord to choose what always seems to the world to be the wrong means to His ends. He began life that way. Men find power in riches; yet Our Lord chose poverty and preached poverty of spirit. It took men a long time to find out that it was better to be independent of riches, to be free to use them or not, than to be the slaves of riches.

Men had always felt that they had to stamp through the world, as Rome stamped through the world, to be among the world's great ones. A man's ambition could be satisfied only when he had the acclaim of his fellow men, when he made a splash; and a king was only a king when men paid him homage. So Our Lord was meek and humble, to teach us that our true worth was inside us: that we were great, not because of what we had, but because of what we are—the adopted sons of God.

He chose ignorant fishermen to teach the revelation of the Father to men—and they did. Once more we have the apparent failure of Christ. He always chose the wrong means, But they succeed. It took the world a long time to discover what Our Lord knew from the beginning: that it was better not to put new wine in old bottles. When His enemies finally got around to it, they found it rather easy to put Him to death. This was His consummate weakness; but through it He achieved the triumph of Easter.

#### THE WAY OF THE SACRED HEART

So in the Devotion to the Sacred Heart He follows the characteristic plan. He appears to be weak. Nay more, He seems to be defeated and broken. He just does not see things the way we do. An examination of all the apparently foolish things Our Lord does will only reveal that we are the foolish



ones. The fact is that in things connected with His work, Our Lord is not trying to make any impression at all. He is just doing His work. He is choosing the right means to His goal. He picks things and He chooses men for their fitness to the end He has in view. He is always efficient; He is always the Master.

### THE CALL TO REPARATION

Our Lord appeared to Saint Margaret Mary at a time when Jansenism was trying to wean people away from the altar rail on the grounds that they were unworthy. They would not let the little children come to Him. It was being preached that He was a God to be feared rather than loved.

We notice, too, that the Encyclical on Reparation was written by Pius XI at a time when pressure from without conspired with weakness within to destroy the closeness of the Faithful to the source of their spiritual life. As the Holy Father describes the situation:

There come to our ears from every side the cries of nations, whose rulers or governments have actually risen up and have conspired together against the Lord and against His Church. We have seen both human and Divine rights overthrown in these countries, churches destroyed to their very foundations, religious and consecrated virgins driven from their homes, thrown into prison, made to go hungry, treated with unspeakable savagery. We have seen troops of boys and girls, torn from the bosom of Holy Mother Church, made to deny and blaspheme Christ, and urged to commit the worst sins against purity . . .

Nor is that other spectacle, Venerable Brothers, less sad that even among the Faithful, washed as they have been by Baptism in the Blood of the Innocent Lamb and enriched by His grace, we encounter so many of every station in life who, ignorant of things Divine, are poisoned by false doctrines and live a sinful life far from their Father's house, without the light of the true Faith, without the joy of hope in a future life, deprived of the strength and comfort which come with the spirit of love. Of them one may say quite truthfully that they are immersed in darkness and in the shadow of death . . . There thus comes to mind, almost involuntarily, the thought that we have arrived at

the hour prophesied by Our Lord when He said: "And because iniquity has abounded, the charity of many shall grow cold."

### THE SIN VICTIM

All this evil of which the Pope so sorrowfully speaks affected the Heart of Christ in His Passion almost two thousand years ago. In the Garden of Olives the burden of sin pressed upon His Heart and the touch of it filled Him with fear and loathing. True, the Beatific Vision which His human nature always enjoyed through union with the Word, was sufficient to make Him insensible to all physical pain and sorrow. But at the time of His Sacrifice He did not wish this to be. The Victim of sin was supposed to suffer. Hence, along with the physical torture inflicted by the executioners, there was anguish in His Heart caused by our sins.

A son may commit a terrible crime and his father may not know of it for many years after. Only when he learns of it will he grieve. The crime reaches forward through the years to inflict its wound. But in the case of the Son of God the sins of men are known from all eternity. It was this instant knowledge of all sin that was presented to the human intelligence of Our Lord in the Garden. Each of our sins, so vividly known to Him, caused His agony; so that the suffering of His Sacred Heart in the Garden corresponded to every one of our sins.

### THE NEED FOR REPARATION

But what must be explained is why Christ is so concerned with His past sufferings *now*. They are over and done with. They have been taken up as a part of His glory. Another man in a like situation would tell his friends to forget about it. Why does Our Lord want to be consoled *now* for a sorrow which He left behind Him almost two thousand years ago?

His purpose is a very practical one and has to do with the unfinished work of the Redemption.

The Holy Father wrote the Encyclical *Miserentissimus Redemptor* because the need for expiation at the moment was urgent. The reasons he gives are formidable: 1) the danger of apostasy and violent death by reason of the attack of atheistical rulers who have destroyed churches, laid sacrilegious hands on monks and nuns and alienated youth from Christ;

- 2) the weakening of Christian life due to the poisoning of the wells of learning, a contempt for the discipline and tradition of the Church and a love of money and worldly applause;
- 3) the sloth of leaders who seem to be ignorant or indifferent to these first two dangers.

#### THE DEFENSE OF THE MYSTICAL BODY

In a word, reparation is needed because the Mystical Body of Christ has a fight on its hands against powerful enemies within and without the Church. We would appreciate the skill with which Christ has prepared the defense of His Body if we tried first to think of the way which we would take to do it. How does a person go about defending what, in the last analysis, is the spiritual life of millions of souls caught up in an organism which has Christ for its Head and of which they are the members? There is hardly a disease of the human body which can be healed by force. Much less will we find physical power of any avail in an organization so democratic, so free that not even God will force the health of sanctifying grace upon one soul.

#### THE HELP OF THE WELL MEMBERS

The only way left is *persuasion*. Since the unfinished work of Redemption is a Divine-human work, the forces in this field will be of God and of man, and they will work through the channels available to them within the organization of the Mystical Body. Our Lord set these forces in motion by His revelations to Saint Margaret Mary. Through devotion to the Sacred Heart, to the love of Our Lord, so vividly brought to our attention in that symbol, the grace of Divine life would quicken first in the well members of the Mystical Body. The accelerated flow of actual and sanctifying grace would put at the disposal of the sick members the Divine-human help which could make them well.

The only way to warm the chill of death is to produce a fever. And even as Eliseus brought the warmth of life into the dead boy by covering him with his own body, so does Our Lord bring us close to the heat of His Heart that the dead in us may live again through Its love.

#### THE MASS

It was characteristic of Him that the contact should be made first through the Mass. There was to be a Mass of the

Sacred Heart, a Feast of the first class with an octave. We want to study this Mass as an instrument of reparation, of expiation, of immolation. How will it renew life in the Mystical Body, and how can a Mass be said to be a part of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart?

Every sacrifice is an act of reparation. When, in the days of the Jewish shepherds, a lamb was taken from the flock and offered to God, it was looked upon as a symbol of the one who made the gift, a symbol of his complete self-dedication to God. It was an act of consecration. On the other hand, the lamb was slain in token of the fact that the *man* was worthy of death because of his sins. He thought that if he *said* this, in some way or other, as in the killing of the lamb, he would be doing what he could to atone for his sins. It was an attempt at reparation.

The sacrificial banquet which followed the sacrifice, at which the lamb was eaten, was meant to symbolize the success of this reparation. If God accepted the apology for sin, the sinner could sit down at the table of his heavenly Father and eat of his Father's food. He was no longer a sinner alone in his own little world. He was a child of God living within the circle of the heavenly family.

#### THE ONE PERFECT SACRIFICE

As a matter of fact, none of these Old Testament sacrifices was acceptable to God to the extent of washing away the guilt of sin. They were the best men could do. But all that they could do was never enough to atone for one insult to the infinite majesty of God. There had to be a Divine element in the apology. The One who was to make it had to be a man because it was the human race which owed to God the apology for sins. As one of its members He could act as its Priest. He was also to be the Son of God so that the apology which He would make in our name would carry with it the weight of His infinite dignity. He was to be a God-Man. Between His Sacrifice and the oblations of the Old Law there was to be this great difference: His was to effect what the others only symbolized. On the altar of the Old Law the blood of the lamb had value in proportion to the dispositions of those who sacrificed it. It supposed a detachment of the heart from sin. The victim was acceptable to God because the sinner was penitent. In the sacrifice of the New Law the

situation was the reverse. The Victim was to have value, but not because men were done with sin. It was to be accepted by God because of its Own worth, because of Itself. The result of this acceptance was that the sins of men were to be forgiven.

#### THE PERFECT ACT OF REPARATION

The offering of this Sacrifice was made in the Supper Room and the Victim was slain on the Cross. This was the great act of reparation which Our Lord made for all men of all time. There need never be another. But since salvation is a thing which men have the power not only to accept but also to reject, they have to make a sign one way or the other. The sign of acceptance is the Sacrifice of the Mass. In every Mass the Christian makes his act of reparation for sins by offering the Victim of the cross to the Father, by making himself one with Christ the Priest and Christ the Victim. There is no better way.

It is in the Mass that men are brought in touch with the great instrument of their sanctification—with Christ. They are one with Him there. Every Mass is the most perfect act of reparation in the power of man to make, being a prolongation of the expiation of our sins on the cross. It would be natural for Christ to take the sick members of the Mystical Body to the sacrifice that they might be made well again at the Source.

#### LOVE UNDYING

The Mass must be first in the Devotion to His Sacred Heart because the only reason we have the Mass at all is His love. It is the Last Supper over again. St. John begins the story of the Last Supper with these words: "Jesus, knowing that His hour was come that He should pass out of this world to the Father; having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end." The Last Supper was another great manifestation of the Sacred Heart to men. Here too we hear those words of His: *Behold this Heart which has so loved men.* But He says them in a different language.

#### THE MESSAGE OF THE TABERNACLE

He says them first in the language of the Blessed Sacrament. At the moment of His departure from this world to the Father,

Our Lord let us know that He loved us so much that He could not leave us. He gave us the Blessed Sacrament. Faith in that Sacrament has been the stumbling block of those who do not know the depth of Our Lord's desire to be with us always. From every tabernacle there comes that searching cry: "Let Me stay with you." It is a human cry as well as a divine, for the Eucharist is His Body and Blood.

A boy may love a girl a little bit, so as to want to give her the little presents of friendship. He may want to share his joys with her, so he takes her to the theatre and to the dance. But if he loves her with all his heart he will want to give her not so much the things that he has, but rather he will want to give her all that he is. He will want to give her himself. He will want to marry her.

#### CHRIST'S TOTAL LOVE

And so it is with the love of Christ. He was anxious to give us Himself. "Take ye and eat; this is my body." The Last Supper was the wedding of the Sacred Heart to all humanity, the nuptials between Christ and His Church. Because of His love for His Bride He would go, and He would stay, and He would come back. "In my Father's house there are many mansions, and if I shall go yet will I come again and will take you to myself that where I am you also may be."

He will return and take us home with Him. The Holy Eucharist is a Sacrament, a *sign* instituted by Christ to give grace. The Eucharist is what He has given us to hold as a pledge that He will never abandon us. "He that eateth my Flesh and drinketh my Blood shall not taste death forever."

#### CHRIST OUR HIGH PRIEST

That is what our love has always meant to Him. If it were all, it would be the most marvelous thing in the world: the ingenuity of a God who must go from us and yet must stay. As we look at ourselves through those eyes of His which see everything, we wonder what there can be in us to win His love. But this is not all. For back of that love which would not let Him leave us is the deeper thing which we call the love of His Priesthood. This is the language of sacrifice.

The love of man and woman, blessed by wedlock, is the sacramental symbol of Christ's love for His Church. St. John Chrysostom called the family a *little church* because its sacra-

mental purpose is, on a small scale, what the purpose of Christ's union with men is on a large scale—the sanctification of souls. The husband and wife mutually sanctify one another, as do children and parents.

But there is a love in the world which sacrifices this chance to sanctify the few in order to sanctify the many. It is the love in a priest which urges him to spend himself, not for one woman, not for one family, not even for one country—but for all men. It was this love in him which inspired that great priest Saint Paul to say to the Corinthians: "I will most gladly spend myself and be spent for your souls; although loving you more I be loved less." This is the love that consumes the lover in the fire of sacrifice.

Now Christ was our High Priest that He might offer himself as a victim, as an atonement, a reparation, for those whom He loved. "This is My Body which is given for you. This is the chalice of My Blood which is shed for you, unto the remission of sins."

Just as the vows of marriage are binding unto death and the vows of priesthood are binding unto death, so too was this priestly giving of Himself binding on Christ until His side was pierced to show that His great Heart beat no more.

#### CHRIST'S LAST PRAYER

Finally, the Mass recalls the prayer of Christ to His Father, in which His love for the Father and His love for us were fused into one. He begins this prayer with a bold appeal to be heard for His obedience. "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." He had given eternal life to all those whom the Father had given Him. He had taught them. He had glorified the Father on earth. In return he asks that what He is about to do have its intended effect and that the fruits of His passion be not denied Him.

"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given Me: Because they are Thine . . . Holy Father, keep them in Thy name whom Thou hast given Me: That they may be one as We also are . . . I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil . . . Sanctify them in truth . . . And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me; that they all may be one, as Thou,

Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they may also be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.”

And after He had pleaded with the Father that we might not be separated from one another and from Him, out of the very depths of His love He asks for that which alone could satisfy His soul. “Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me.” He asks for the reconciliation which will be our eternal salvation. His prayer is that the God who loved Jesus because He was His only begotten Son, might see in His brothers Jesus Himself: “As Thou lovest Me, love them.” Then He went to His death on Calvary to seal this prayer with the seal of His love.

### THE MASS OF THE SACRED HEART

This is the Mass of Divine Love Itself. The mind is turned from the effects to the cause. Around the core of this Mass the Church has put a garland of thoughts which lead right into the Heart of Christ.

In the *Introit* the psalmist tells us how glad we should be that from all eternity the thoughts of His Heart were on us to feed our hungry souls and to save us from death.

The *prayer* asks the Father for the grace of the Devotion. He it is who has given us the love of the Sacred Heart. May we in turn, through the Divine aid love Him back and do our part in the work of reparation.

The full dimensions of Our Lord’s love are gradually unfolded in the teaching of the Apostles. So the *Epistle* is from Saint Paul’s letter to the Ephesians. He explains a mystery which, until now, has been a secret in the breast of the Divine Creator. He proclaims the unfathomable riches of Christ, and the plan whereby these riches are to be shared with men. But before he begins, Saint Paul will get down on his knees and pray. He will pray to the Father that the Christians of Ephesus may have strength and faith “so that being rooted and grounded in love you may be able to understand the breadth and length and height and depth of Christ’s love, thereby to be filled with *the fulness* of God.”

The *Gospel* from Saint John lifts the curtain for a moment on the drama of the Passion, to let us see the spear of Longinus crashing through the Heart of Christ. John states that he saw this with his own eyes.

The *Offertory Prayer* is that beautiful verse from the 58th



Psalm: "My heart hath expected reproach and misery: and I looked for one who would grieve together with me, but there was none; and for one that would comfort me, and I found none." Is this the Christ of Gethsemane yearning for the Bride who will share the burden of redemption with Him down through the years? He cries for His Church, but she who is not yet born cannot be with Him. She will come with the rush of a mighty wind at Pentecost.

The Mass goes on through the preparation of the bread and wine, to the Secret. "Look, we beseech Thee, O Lord, at the unutterable love in the Heart of Thy beloved Son. Then wilt Thou take our gift as reparation for our sins."

The *Preface* is a song of thanks to Him who allowed the side of His Divine Son to be pierced with a lance so that grace and mercy might flow from the naked Heart; and that, in Its undying love, that Heart might be a resting place for the good and a harbor of salvation for the repentant sinner.

The bread and wine are consecrated; the Canon prayers are finished. When the *Pater Noster* is said the Communion service has begun. Our Lord commanded Saint Margaret Mary to go to Holy Communion as often as obedience would permit, no matter what the cost. She was to receive the Blessed Sacrament every First Friday. These Communions were to be by way of reparation for sins of sacrilege against the Blessed Sacrament and for the indifference of men to the Divine love which It symbolized.

As we have seen, the Eucharist is the marriage of the soul to its Saviour. In this union, two are made one. "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My Blood, abideth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me." Yet, as in any marriage, how defenseless is the one against the unfaithfulness or indifference of the other! Love by its very nature must go unarmed. It cannot defend itself.

Because of this truth, we know that Our Lord felt most poignantly the treatment He would receive in the Sacrament of His love, where He could not defend Himself. Each sacrilegious act, each show of indifference, stung like the kiss of Judas. These thrusts into His Heart were a special source of His Agony.

It is always a consolation for the lovers of the Sacred Heart to know that their Communions of reparation, foreseen by Him then, were a comfort to Him.

The Church closes the Communion service with a *Postcommunion* prayer to Our Lord Himself. She makes this prayer for all of us, for each soul in the Mystical Body. She will ask for the fruit of reparation: "Lord Jesus, may Thy Sacrament enkindle in us the divine fires. So that the sweet touch of Thy most tender Heart may teach us to shun the things of earth and to love the things of heaven."

#### ACT OF REPARATION

To the efficacy of the sacrifice and the Sacrament for the reparation, the building up, of the Mystical Body, Our Lord would add the strength of prayer.

Jesus loved to pray in the night. In the stillness under the stars there is an atmosphere of consecration. Out of the promise of Our Lord to Saint Margaret Mary, that he would share with her on Thursday nights the experiences of the agony in the Garden, has grown the Holy Hour. This has become a favorite form of expiation in families and churches all over the world. Pius XI speaks of the religious orders of men and women who have set for themselves the task of the angel who came to Jesus in the Garden. He speaks, too, of other forms of this same practice.

In order that this devotion of reparation may possess the highest approval of Apostolic authority, the Holy Father chooses one special form of it which all can use—a simple act of reparation. He orders that in every church in the world this prayer be said annually on the Feast of the Sacred Heart.

The Holy Father does not see in this prayer sentimental sympathy for a broken Leader. He looks for many blessings from it not only for individuals but for all society. No one can haunt the sacred sanctuaries of the Passion without being drawn into the inner shrine of Christ's Heart where burns the everlasting fire of immolation. As for His Mother and for Mary Magdalene and for John, so for all of us; the path of love leads to Christ at the foot of the cross.

## IV. Apostleship

The knowledge of Christ leads to love, and love inspires imitation. One who loves Our Lord wants to be as much like Him as possible. Saints are Christ-like. The imitation of Christ is built on a knowledge and love of His way of looking at things; on a devout understanding of the motives and the object of His strivings. Things are seen through His eyes. The saint is not a dreamer who translates himself back into the life and times of Jesus. He is the realist who brings to his own age Our Lord's way of looking at life. For him Christ is as modern as an atom bomb, and much more dynamic.

One does not have to know much about Him to understand that His greatest desire, now, is the building up of His Mystical Body. The work of the Redemption goes on. The mission of Christ continues to sanctify men, but now it is through His Church and her members that the work is done. It was because this work was in danger that Our Lord instituted the devotion to His Sacred Heart. Anyone, then, loving that Heart, will have the apostolic spirit. He will want the Kingdom of Christ to come.

The strength of this devotion to Christ's love can be measured, insofar as spiritual things can be measured at all, by its success in this apostolic work of building up the Body of Christ.

Before the time of Saint Margaret Mary, devotion to the Heart of Our Saviour was buried in the inner life of the Church. It was buried, not in the sense that a corpse is buried, but in the sense of a smoldering fire, keeping itself alive beneath the surface of the ground. It moves silently through the ages in the seclusion of convent and monastery, a part of the cloister of chosen souls. Men like Anselm and Bernard, women like Gertrude and the two Mechtildes, had kissed the Heart of Christ.

In the Middle Ages, when the monks began to come out of the monasteries, the fire began to come out of the ground. The rank and file of the Church heard Cistercians and Dominicans and Franciscans preach the love of the Sacred Heart.

But it was still a personal instrument of holiness which the individual could make his own as he chose. Not until the 17th Century, when men like Saint John Eudes saw in the devotion an efficient way of binding men together for social action, did the flame leap from the ground as a raging fire. It was time for the revelations to Saint Margaret Mary.

### THE HEART REVEALED

What these revelations did was to make the devotion an official organ of worship round which the whole Church could rally. In the name of Christ, Saint Margaret Mary called for a liturgical feast with a Mass. There was to be a gathering round, for consecration and acts of reparation. The symbol of love, the Heart of flame, was not asking for the secret prayer of the individual soul. He was demanding the whole devotion of men, united in love for the Heart of Christ and working together. The devotion was to make men conscious of their oneness with Christ.

Thus did the Bridegroom watch over his Bride. Not only was Jansenism falling like a cold frost over the lands of the Church, but in those years which saw the devotion crystalize, in the one hundred years between the first revelations and the granting of the feast by Clement XIII, materialism, the-man-without-a-soul idea, was beginning to evolve from the philosophies of Protestantism.

### MAN-WITHOUT-A-SOUL

Leo XIII in his Encyclical *Inscrutabili*, published two months after his election in 1878, gives a list of the evils that were two hundred years abuilding, and which were beginning to come into power in his day. These were: the denial of truths essential to the foundations of human society; rejection of authority; endless disagreement whose issue must be war and revolution; contempt for law; a craving for the temporal at the expense of the eternal things of life; the abuse of public office; treason to the State on the part of high officials.

The chief source of these evils was the rejection of the teaching and authority of the Catholic Church. The first care of the enemies of the good society was the destruction of ecclesiastical authority and the weakening of the prestige of the Pope. This attack on the Church resulted in: laws shaking the structure of the Church; contempt of Episcopal authority:

dissolution of religious orders; confiscation of Church property; suppression of Catholic charitable institutions; restrictions on the training of youth; the seizing of the Papal Temporal power by the capture of Rome in 1870.

### ONENESS IN LOVE

In brief, the-man-without-a-soul, grown now to international proportions, was trying to crush the souls of all men that he might have the power over them which belongs only to God. This meant that there was to be a fight between the iron-man and the God-Man for the possession of the human race.

For it is clear to our generation, as perhaps to no other in the history of the world, that the human race is one body. The forces of evil wanted to hammer this body into a super-nation of mechanized slaves. This is what is meant by the Secular State. This is what we call totalitarianism.

The forces of good want to bring the body together in the bonds of love under the banner of the Sacred Heart. This is real democracy, real freedom. By the dawn of the 20th Century the issues were clear.

### THE WORLD FOR THE SACRED HEART

It was then that Leo XIII consecrated the human race to Christ, under the banner of the Sacred Heart. With the world on the verge of an upheaval, the Pontiff wrote:

When the Church, in the days immediately following her institution, was oppressed beneath the yoke of the Caesars, a young Emperor saw in the heavens a Cross which became the happy omen and the cause of the glorious victory which followed. And now today there is another blessed and heavenly banner offered to our sight—the most Sacred Heart of Jesus, with a Cross rising from it and shining forth with dazzling splendor beneath the flames of love. In that Sacred Heart all our hopes should be placed, and from It the salvation of men is to be confidently sought.

The body was united and it had a banner. As the century unfolded and the maelstrom foreseen by Leo XIII drew nearer, Pius XI announced its Leader. He proclaimed the Feast of Christ the King. The King was not a dictator. He was an elected leader. Men rallied round His flag because they loved Him, because he was their natural leader in the sense that

men felt comfortable and at ease in His service. He would rule only over free men. Said Pius XI, in *Quas Primas*—the Encyclical on the Kingdom of Christ:

Ever since the end of the last century the way has been happily and providentially prepared for the celebration of this Feast. The devotion to Christ the King has been the subject of learned discussion in many books published in all parts of the world and written in many different languages. *The Kingship and the Kingdom of Christ have been recognized in the holy custom of the dedication of families to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.* And this act of dedication has been performed by nations and kingdoms as well as by families.

### A BODY DESTROYED

Now in our day the battle has been joined. Kingdoms and States are crumbling, ships have taken measureless wealth down with them to the bottom of the seas, cities and towns and fertile lands are blackened ruins soaked with the blood of brothers. The iron monsters are bombing one another for the mastery of what promised to be an earthly paradise but what has become a blazing hell. Even in the eyes of the iron-man the human race is one body, demanding the consecration and awful reparation of total war. But in the bloody sacrifice, the body itself is being blown to pieces. Because the body of the iron-man is material and without a soul, there will be no resurrection.

### THE REAL BODY

But the real Body lives. It will always come out of the tomb victorious. The human race is one body, but it is the Body of Christ. In 1943, Pius XII proclaimed this great truth in his Encyclical *Mystici Corporis*. The entire world has not recognized it yet. But picking itself up from the ruins of material civilization and looking about for a cause worth serving, it can see over against the black clouds the banner of the Sacred Heart. The blacker the cloud and the darker the night the better will that banner be seen because it is a Heart of fire.

This was the fire on earth which Our Lord came to kindle. It was not the fire of hate which destroys, nor even the fire of righteous anger, which terrifies. It was the fire of love which unites and unifies.

Pope Leo XIII has compared the Sacred Heart to the Cross of Constantine. Beneath the symbol of the one, Rome rose again out of the ashes of a dead paganism. Under the symbol of the other, the nations can awaken from an awful dream. The dream is that the human race is a kind of god which thirsts, like Moloch, for human blood. The truth which shines in the Christian sky like a morning sun is the stupendous fact that the human race is the *bride* of a God who thirsts for human love. She only needs to surrender to Him to live.

## V. The Promises

The letters of Saint Margaret Mary contain many promises made by Our Lord to her, in behalf of those who practised the Devotion to His Sacred Heart. From these letters, either the Saint herself or some one close to her made a selection which has come to be known as The Promises of the Sacred Heart.

Before listing the selection it is important to mention the spirit in which these Promises are to be taken.

They must be considered as *a part of the Devotion*. We are dealing here with two sacred loves: the love of Christ for us, and our love for Him. It is of the very essence of mutual love that gifts be exchanged; that each work, with what powers each commands, for the good of the other.

Hence it is quite natural for us to expect Our Lord to come to us, in this Devotion, with a full Heart and not an empty one; just as a wife expects a loving husband to make his love felt by way of gifts. *But the emphasis must not be placed on the gifts, but on the love itself.* The Promises are not the reward of wages earned. They are not goods, purchased over the counter for a price. They are the visible signs of an invisible love. In that sense the Promises (like all gifts of love) are sacramental. They are sacred. They can be profaned, in the way the love of marriage can be profaned, as when people without love marry for money.

### CHRIST'S LOVE OUR NEED

There is an almost exact comparison here between the love of the Sacred Heart and the love of a bridegroom for his bride. She will take gifts from him that she would accept from no other man. The gift is really a symbol of his love for her. Since the love of one for the other has made them one, in true wedded life there is not so much a giving of gifts as a sharing of them. In the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, Our Lord shares with us the things which He alone possesses. Read through the list of Promises and see if this is not true.



We say that the comparison between Christ and a bridegroom is *almost* exact. There is this tremendous difference: our dire *need* of what He alone can give to us. Hence, we must reach out our hands for His gifts. But they should be loving hands. Leo XIII tells us that Our Lord draws men to Himself by these magnificent Promises “so as to increase the eagerness of men to correspond to the wonderfully ardent desires of His love.” (Constitution of June 28, 1889.)

#### THE TWELVE PROMISES

1. I will give to souls devoted to My Sacred Heart all the graces necessary for their state in life.
2. I will give peace in their families.
3. I will console them in their trials.
4. I will be their secure refuge during life, and above all in death.
5. I will bestow abundant blessings on all their undertakings.
6. Sinners shall find in My Heart the source and infinite ocean of mercy.
7. Tepid souls shall become fervent.
8. Fervent souls shall rise rapidly to high perfection.
9. I will even bless houses, where the image of My Sacred Heart shall be exposed and honored.
10. I will give priests the gift of touching the most hardened hearts.
11. Those who propagate this devotion will have their names written in My Heart, never to be effaced.
12. The all-powerful love of My Heart will grant to those who shall communicate on the first Friday of nine consecutive months the grace of final perseverance.

#### THE GREAT PROMISE

This last promise, which we are about to examine because of its importance, was written by Saint Margaret Mary in a letter dated May 1688 to Mother de Saumaise. The original letter has been lost, but the five versions of it which have come down to us are in substantial agreement. The version which scholars seem to prefer is the one found in the *Life and Works of Blessed Margaret Mary*, published by the Visitandines of Paray in 1876.

One Friday during Holy Communion He said these words to His unworthy servant, if she be not mistaken: "I promise thee, in the excessive mercy of My Heart, that Its all-powerful love will give the grace of final repentance to all those who communicate nine successive First Fridays of the month; they will not die under my displeasure, nor without receiving their Sacraments, My Divine Heart being their assured refuge in that last moment."

In spite of the fact that the original letter to Mother de Saumaise has been lost, and the revelation itself kept from public knowledge for almost two hundred years, there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of what has come to be known as the Great Promise. The Promise was known to the Visitandines as early as 1714. It is hard to believe that they would have forwarded a spurious document to Rome for the beatification of the Saint, and that the Sacred Congregation would have let it go unchallenged in its decree of September 22, 1827. Since that time the Church has never forbidden the preaching of this Promise as a part of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, but has given many marks of approval and consent.

Nor need the words of Margaret Mary herself, *if she be not mistaken*, cause anxiety in this matter. Her superioress, Mother de Greyfié, in her testament of 1674, tells us that she directed the Saint "not to speak of the extraordinary graces which she received, save in doubtful terms such as, *it seems to me*, or, *if I am not mistaken*; and not to be so firmly attached to her own opinions as not to be able to give them up at the judgment of those who were her superiors, or who had the right to examine them." Mother Greyfié adds that the Saint followed this advice very faithfully. The words therefore which seem to imply a doubt really confirm the obedience of the Saint.

#### MEANING OF THE PROMISE

The better to understand the meaning of the Great Promise, it will be well to divide it into its two natural parts and consider each part separately. The first part:

I promise thee, in the excessive mercy of My Heart, that its all-powerful love will give the grace of final perseverance to all those who communicate nine successive First Fridays of the month.

This part of the Promise has been understood in three different ways.

#### FIRST INTERPRETATION

The first interpretation calls attention to the self-discipline and grace-meriting action of nine successive monthly Communions received in honor of the Sacred Heart of Christ. Such a period of spiritual training, extending over the better part of a year, accompanied by a retinue of prayers and sacrifices, is sufficient to form a habit which will last throughout life and win for a soul the grace of final perseverance.

All this may well be true, but it hardly explains the Great Promise. In fact it seems to render the Promise superfluous. The grace promised as something exceedingly special turns out in the end to be nothing more than the supernatural help God gives to all according to their works. Having told us to make the nine First Fridays Our Lord has told us all that matters. In the Promise itself there is no apparent efficacy.

#### SECOND INTERPRETATION

Those who hold the second interpretation seem to fear that Our Lord has promised too much. They whittle down the Promise by adding to its conditions. Our Lord asks for only nine Communions, but He *supposes* that the fruit of these Communions, embodied in the Promise, will not be lost by mortal sin committed after the Communions have been received. In other words, if a man makes the Nine Fridays and complies with the requirements of the ordinary means of salvation the Great Promise will be fulfilled in him.

This explanation fails to stand up to the magnificence of the Great Promise. Where is the "excessive mercy" here, and the "triumph of love"? Certainly there is nothing special about a promise which offers graces no more abundant than those of many other forms of devotion.

#### THIRD INTERPRETATION

The third explanation defends the literal meaning of the text. Our Lord spoke the words of the Great Promise to a simple nun who, to judge by her emphasis on the importance of the Promise, understood Him to mean exactly what He said.

A man who has made the Nine First Fridays with the proper intentions and dispositions will need, as do all men, the grace

of God to persevere in the state of sanctifying grace throughout the rest of his life. Instead of cooperating with this help from heaven, he may sin through weakness or obstinacy. He may even become hardened in sin. There is always the possibility of his falling into the sin of presumption.

God will give him grace sufficient to avoid these sins; and if he needs it, the grace to repent of them. This has been promised to all men. It is a grace, however, which can be accepted or rejected.

The question now arises: Instead of a grace merely sufficient (if used), could God give to this man a grace which He foresees *will* be used, the kind of grace which theologians call "efficacious," not because it forces the will but because as a matter of fact the will freely accepts its aid? If the answer to this question is yes, then can God give this grace *by virtue of a promise which He has made*, a promise such as the Great Promise? The answer is that He most certainly can.

Those who defend the literal meaning of the Great Promise hold that what everybody admits God could do if He chose, He actually promised to do in His revelation to Saint Margaret Mary.

#### THE DANGER OF ABUSE

Against this position there is urged the danger of abuse. For some there will be the temptation to make the nine First Fridays with the idea of sinning in the future, secure in the promise of a chance to repent before death. But such Communions would not fulfill the conditions of the Promise which require nine *good* Communions. Should the evil desire arise after the Nine Fridays have been made in good faith, in virtue of the Great Promise God will give the grace either to resist the desire or to repent of the presumption.

There have been saints, like Saint Paul, to whom Our Lord revealed the certainty of their salvation. In the light of this knowledge, such men did not lose their status as pilgrims. They still had the duty to merit by their actions the eternal reward of which they were sure. With those who have made the Nine Fridays it could not be different.

#### THE SURENESS OF THE PROMISE

Finally, there is urged against the literal interpretation of the text the words of the Council of Trent (Session 6, canon

16): "If anyone who has not learned it by special revelation declares with absolute and infallible certainty that he is to assuredly receive the gift of final perseverance, let him be anathema."

It will be noted that the Council condemns him who pretends to know *with absolute and infallible certainty* the fact of his predestination. When I have made the Nine First Fridays, how sure am I of my eternal salvation in virtue of the Great Promise? I have at best moral certitude. This means that the fact of the revelation is known to me through the human testimony of another. Saint though she be, with her canonization as a guarantee of her truthfulness, sanity and good will, her word can never be for me the infallible certainty of a Divine Revelation or the unerring sureness of the Teaching Church. Nor can I be infallibly certain that I have fulfilled the conditions of nine good Communions. If I have done what Our Lord wants me to do in this regard, any doubt of my salvation would be imprudent.

Looking back over the history of the Devotion, is not this Great Promise something which fits quite naturally into the activity of Our Lord's love? The cold hand of Jansenism, the growing power of materialism and unbelief riding over the face of Christendom, strike terror into the devout soul, challenging it to a test of strength. Faced with all this, a soul might well be overcome with fear. But the love which the Sacred Heart has for Its own will not let us fear. He gives us the Great Promise.

If the magnificence of the gift leads to doubt, it is well to remember that, though the conditions be easy, the effect is marvelous because Our Lord's love is infinite.

## THE SECOND PART

The Second Part of the Great Promise is:

They will not die in My displeasure, nor without receiving their sacraments, My Divine Heart being their assured refuge in that last hour.

As a matter of fact, many men and women, devout lovers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus who have made the Nine First Fridays time and time again, have met death suddenly. They did not receive the Last Sacraments. What then is the meaning

of the phrase: *they will not die . . . without receiving their sacraments?*

Father Arthur Vermeersch, S.J., whose opinion we have followed in this discussion, explains that the promise of the Sacraments is conditional, inasmuch as Christ will furnish an occasion of receiving them if they are needed to obtain the grace of God.

Between the grace of final repentance and the grace of the Sacraments there is a great difference. The first is called the *Magnum Donum*, the Great Gift, because it bestows an absolute and indispensable good. Nothing can take its place. I must have it to save my soul. On the other hand, the grace of the Sacraments is a good which is neither absolute nor indispensable. I may or may not need it to save my soul. A dying man is either in the state of grace or he is not. If he is, he does not need the Sacraments to be saved. He will most certainly want to receive them. But the point to be made here is that he does not *have* to receive them to go to Heaven. If the man is not in the state of grace his sins may be forgiven by an act of perfect contrition, or through the worthy reception of Penance or Extreme Unction. Only in the event that he is not in the state of grace and cannot make an act of perfect contrition does he *need* the Sacraments to die in God's grace.

Hence, in promising the necessary gift of final perseverance, it is not likely that Our Lord would promise with equal definiteness a grace which, for many, would not be necessary at all.

For this reason it seems best to take the second part of the Great Promise as an explanation of the first. In the first part Our Lord promises the gift of final perseverance. In the second, He repeats the promise in other words, *they will not die under my displeasure*, explains that whatever Sacraments are needed will be at hand, and finally recalls again the Great Gift, *My Divine Heart being their assured refuge in that last moment*.

The three definite references to eternal life seem to imply that in the mind of Saint Margaret Mary the mention of the Sacraments was accessory, and that the one intent of the Great Promise is to give a moral assurance of salvation to those who make the Nine First Fridays.

## VI. The Apostleship of Prayer

In 1944, the Apostleship of Prayer celebrated its 100th anniversary. In that span of time six Popes have ruled the Church. Beginning with Pius IX in 1844, when the Apostleship was born, the ring of the Fisherman has been on the finger of Leo XIII, Pius X, Benedict XV, Pius XI and Pius XII. All of these Popes have given their blessing and approval to the Apostleship of Prayer.

Today, the total membership in the Apostleship is well over 30 millions. *The Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, which is the monthly publication connected with the Apostleship of Prayer, is printed in forty editions in many different languages and has a circulation of more than two million.

### THE BEGINNINGS OF THE APOSTLESHIP

The founder of this very successful apostolate was Father Francis Xavier Gautrelet, Spiritual Director of the Jesuit philosophical and theological school at Vals in France. The community of Jesuits at Vals was a large one. They had gathered from many countries to prepare themselves by study for their priesthood and for the work of the ministry. How could these long years of retirement and training be made a *part* of the work for which, in fact, it seemed only the preparation?

Because the work of Redemption is a Divine-human enterprise, needing men but also needing God, prayer would have an important part in it. Because we are not just individuals, but members of the Mystical Body of Christ, the work of Redemption must be a cooperative endeavor. Our efforts must be joined to those of Christ the Head. They will take the form suited to our position and circumstance in the Mystical Body. Just as Our Lord was doing the work of Redemption when He was making plows for the farmers of Galilee, during the Hidden Life, so could the Jesuit students at Vals throw the weight of their prayer and study behind their older brothers in the actual ministry. Father Gautrelet explained it to them in these words:

We are to be apostles, we are now apostles, by our calling and our state of life. The apostleship finds its exercise in word and deed, but still more in prayer. While Israel is fighting on the plain, Moses must be praying on the mountain. For the present, we may not spend our strength and pour forth our sweat and blood on the battlefields of the apostleship; but we CAN pray. Our prayers, our penances, our good works are a power; they are the fighting strength without which not a soldier can begin the campaign. We will band ourselves together, then, and mass our numbers, and every day we will offer our quota of prayers, sacrifices, and meritorious works to the treasury of the apostleship. Thus we shall be a living force to apostolic labors, and we shall share, very really and very effectually, in their toils and triumphs.

Thus began the Apostleship of Prayer.

Among the students at Vals was Henry Ramière, who, even before his ordination, worked closely with Father Gautrelet to spread the devotion of the Apostolate of Prayer. He was to be Father Gautrelet's successor at Vals. He it was who wrote the first *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, in 1861. To him also we owe the form in which the details of the Apostleship are known and observed today.

### THE THREE PRACTICES

Those who have been enrolled as members in the Apostleship of Prayer must belong to the first, but may be active also in either or both of the two other practices of membership.

The first practice consists in making the *Morning Offering*, for which the following formula is recommended:

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer Thee my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of Thy Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all our associates and in particular for the intention recommended by the Holy Father.

The first purpose of this prayer is to put every action of the day on a supernatural basis. If I am a mother, I can get the children ready for school simply because it is a part of my



job as a mother. The children have to be dressed and fed. The process of dressing and feeding babes is an activity common to the whole neighborhood each morning. But if I have made the *Morning Offering* the individual duties of motherhood become for me a part of something greater; they fit into the work of Redemption. And it is not only I but Christ, working in and through me, who ties the shoe laces and combs the hair of these little ones. A shoe is tied, a little pain is suffered, and something has been added to the great work of saving souls. The Mystical Body is growing and breathing in the activity of every member.

The members of the second practice are composed of those who at least once a month make the Communion of Reparation, so dear to Our Lord's Sacred Heart. When it can be arranged, members of local centers are grouped into bands of seven or thirty, and a day of each week, or of each month is assigned to each member so that a Communion of Reparation is offered each day of the year.

Pope Benedict XV has put Apostolic approval on this practice of the Communion of Reparation by granting a plenary indulgence to the Associates of the Apostleship of Prayer each time they receive Holy Communion of Reparation in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Those who belong to the third practice of the Apostleship, in addition to the Morning Offering, recite a decade of the Rosary each day for the special intention recommended each month by the Holy Father.

## VII. Questions, Sermon Topics

### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 1

1. What is the apparent contradiction between the Christ of the Gospels and the Christ of Paray-le-Monial?
2. How must the Devotion to the Sacred Heart be studied?
3. What two elements are found in all the works of the Redemption?
4. Why must there be these two elements?
5. In what respect was the Crucifixion the end of the work of Redemption? In what respect was it the beginning?
6. Define the Kingdom of Christ on earth.
7. What is meant by the *fulness* of Christ?
8. How do men *make up what is wanting of the sufferings of Christ?*
9. What have the above questions to do with the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus?
10. What heresy seemed to be the occasion of the appearances to Saint Margaret Mary?
11. Why does the Pope say that this heresy is most insidious?
12. In what sense is it true that the appeal of the Sacred Heart is to the *few*? In what sense is this false?
13. If the Church condemned Jansenism, why was there any need of Our Lord's taking a hand directly?
14. What is meant by the Heart of Christ?
15. What are the two objects of the Devotion?
16. If the Heart of Christ is a created thing, why can we give to it Divine Worship?
17. Why is the Heart chosen for special worship, and not for instance, the Divine Face?
18. What is the true meaning of the expression—the fear of God?
19. What is meant by the love of consecration?
20. What is meant by the love of immolation?
21. Why is apostleship a characteristic of love?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 2

22. What influenced Saint Margaret Mary to consecrate herself to the Sacred Heart of Jesus?
23. Explain how this Act of Consecration resulted in a *revolution*.
24. Explain the relationship between the Devotion to the Sacred Heart and the Kingship of Christ.
25. What terrible movement in the world was checked by the growth of the Sacred Heart Devotion? How did this come about?
26. Why can the proclamation of the Feast of Christ the King be said to be the culmination of a democratic movement?
27. Why is the Universal Consecration to the Sacred Heart read in all the Churches of the world on the Feast of Christ the King?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 3

28. What relation has immolation to love?
29. In what way is the love of man for woman similar to the sacrifice of Our Lord?
30. What has this to do with Devotion to the Sacred Heart?
31. What is the *apparent* weakness of the Act of Reparation?
32. What is its real strength?
33. What is meant by the Divine Contradictions?
34. Explain three examples of these contradictions.
35. In what light must we always examine Christ's actions, if we hope to understand them?
36. What world-wide condition inspired the Pope to write the Encyclical on Reparation?
37. Why was Reparation chosen and not consecration?
38. How can present evils be said to affect the Heart of Christ in the Garden of Olives?
39. Why is Christ so concerned with His past sufferings *now*?
40. Why is the Communion of Reparation a *practical* solution to the dangers outlined by the Pope in the Encyclical?
41. How can the Mass be said to be a part of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart?
42. Why is every act of sacrifice an act of reparation?
43. Why was the sacrifice of Christ the *perfect* sacrifice?

44. If the sacrifice of Christ was a perfect act of reparation, why is there need for any other?
45. Explain the connection between the Last Supper and the Sacred Heart Devotion.
46. Why is the Blessed Sacrament a proof of love? In what way can the love of a man for a woman illustrate this?
47. What is meant by the love of priesthood?
48. Explain the significance of Christ's Prayer for His Disciples.
49. If all Masses are acts of reparation, why must there be a special Mass of the Sacred Heart?
50. Go through the *Proper* of the Mass of the Sacred Heart and explain how each part expresses the love of Our Lord for men.
51. Why does a sacrilegious act against the Blessed Sacrament offend Our Lord in a special way?
52. What significance has the Holy Hour in the *work* of the Sacred Heart Devotion?

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 4

53. In what sense are saints *imitators* of Christ?
54. How does the History of the Devotion show its *strength*?
55. What is meant by the Hidden Heart in the history of the Devotion?
56. What is meant by the Heart Revealed?
57. What was the fight between the Iron-Man and the God-Man?
58. What makes the Kingdom of Christ essentially democratic?
59. In what way is World War II connected with the Devotion to the Sacred Heart?
60. What is meant by the fire which Our Lord came to enkindle?

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 5

61. In what spirit should we look upon the Promises of the Sacred Heart?
62. What reasons have we for looking upon the Twelfth Promise as genuine?
63. How do you explain the words, "if she be not mistaken"?
64. Explain the first interpretation of the Promise and give reasons why it cannot be accepted.

65. In the light of the first interpretation, how would the Twelfth Promise differ from the Fourth?
66. What is the second interpretation and how do you refute it?
67. Outline the proof for the literal interpretation of the text.
68. If the literal interpretation is correct, is not the Great Promise exposed to grave abuse?
69. Does not the literal meaning of the text run counter to the anathema of the Council of Trent concerning Predestination?

TOPICS FOR SERMONS, NOVENAS, CONFERENCES, RETREATS, etc.

1. Reparation the Keynote to Devotion to the Sacred Heart.
2. The Strategy of Redemption and Devotion to the Sacred Heart.
3. Devotion to the Sacred Heart Answers Jansenism.
4. The Heart We Worship.
5. Three Characteristics of True Love.
6. The Divine Plan.
7. The Sacred Heart and the Holy Sacrifice.
8. The Sacred Heart and the Blessed Sacrament.
9. The Sacred Heart and Christ's Priesthood.
10. The Mass of the Sacred Heart.
11. The Holy Hour.
12. The Development of Devotion to the Sacred Heart.
13. The Evils of the Nineteenth Century.
14. The Promises.
15. The Apostleship of Prayer.



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