

“They will look upon him *whom they have* **PIERCED”**

Dear Friend,

No one could deny that today we have better educational tools and technology than ever before. At the same time, however, we must recognize that we have lost something. Something of great and immeasurable importance. Sadly, today, many of our youth, even those at the age to start new families, do not know the answer to the most decisive question of our existence, namely *what is love?* What is love in its purest, most excellent form?

On the one hand, love is often confused with mere pleasure or intense desire; on the other hand, it is often considered by many to be an impossible fantasy or an idealistic romance. One who falls into either error will fail to truly love. Yet if man does not love, what is he? Is not the capacity to love exactly that which makes us human beings; that which makes us brothers?

In the context of this great crisis, we can perceive the power of those words of the Prophet Zachariah which St. John so magnificently drew attention to in his Gospel: “They will look upon him whom they have pierced” (Zac 12:10; Jn 19:37). To learn how to love, we must turn our gaze to the pierced Heart of Jesus which has been opened to show us what true love is. This is exactly what Jesus asked St. Margaret Mary Alacoque: “Behold this Heart...” I dare to say that the spirituality of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is more necessary today than ever before. Never has it been more urgent, more critical, that we understand —and live out— what Christian love really is.

It is for this reason that, through its apostolates, Pro Ecclesia Sancta strives to present the Sacred Heart devotion not as something ethereal or imaginary, but rather as something very tangible and concrete. The spirituality proposes three objectives which are at once simple and powerful: to love, to repair, and to win souls. In this issue, we will see how these three objectives are promoted, developed, and lived by our members and those to whom they minister: among the youth, among our vocational candidates, in our missionary activity, in the families and members of our Movement, and in the formation of our consecrated members.

Father Pablo Menor, founder of Pro Ecclesia Sancta and apostle of the Sacred Heart, invites us to fly to that Heart in order to attain holiness. “This spirituality,” he said with reference to the

Sacred Heart devotion, "is the most effective way to holiness. It is the fire of holiness." These words are an echo of those pronounced by the Sacred Heart Himself: "I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already blazing!" (Lk 12:49).

I invite you, therefore, my friend, to read these simple pages with an open heart. My sincere hope is that they will offer some spiritual profit for your soul. May He make it so!

AN OPEN HEART

*An introduction to the Devotion
to the Sacred Heart*

One could say that devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was first conceived the moment the Blessed Virgin became aware of the unborn Child within her, even before the divine Heart of the tiny Savior began to beat. It might be said, as well, that the devotion was born that first Christmas night, when Mary beheld her newborn Son, whose heart even then pulsated with love for mankind. It could also be argued that devotion to that Heart took root the night before Our Lord suffered, when St. John laid his head upon the divine breast, irresistibly attracted to the beatings of a Heart which expanded to “love His own in the world to the extreme” (cf. Jn 13:1). Finally, one could claim that this devotion became the public property of the Church the moment this same heart was pierced on the cross and poured forth blood and water in a superabundance of love for mankind.

Whenever this devotion began, the real question is, *when did it become real for you?* A tender devotion to the divine Love made flesh in the person of Jesus Christ has always been at the heart of what it means to be a Christian. Is it, then, at the center of your spiritual life, of your relationship with the One who made you?

Popes have described devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus with such glowing terms as “a summary of our religion” (Pius XI), and a “mystical ladder by which we mount to the embrace of ‘God our Savior’” (Pius XII). Unfortunately, however, many regular Christians fail to appreciate its real meaning. Perhaps they get hung up on the imagery of the devotion; they are confused by the sight of Jesus Christ with his heart exposed upon His breast, or are turned off by the outdated and perhaps overly-sentimental depictions given Him by ages past. Or, perhaps they dismiss the devotion as one of those “extra credit options” for Catholics with too much time for prayer; a mere pastime of Church ladies who take their leisure in adoration chapels.

Ah, if they only knew what it was really about! Devotion to the Sacred Heart is a highway to intimacy with Jesus, a crash-course in the love of God. It is an invitation to listen to the words which Jesus spoke to St. Margaret Mary not so very long ago, in a world in which “the love of men had waxed cold” (Mt 24:12), not unlike it has in our own. Thus Jesus broke His silence in order to complain of the pain that He felt over His Heart’s unrequited love: “Behold this Heart,” He said, “which has so loved men, that it has spared nothing, even to exhausting and consuming itself in order to testify to its love. In return, I have received from the greater part only ingratitude, by their irreverence and their sacrilege, and by the coldness and contempt they have for Me in this sacrament of Love.”

In this Issue, devoted to the love of the Sacred Heart, we hope to share with you the riches of this Devotion. We hope that by the end, you will see that far from an “add on” in our Christian lives, devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a shortcut to living the Gospel and engaging our whole being in the love of Love itself.



You are a fly on a wall. A *non-Catholic* fly on a wall. You have just flown in, through a colorful window that is cracked open just enough, to a large rectangular room that is filled with stillness. After a few loops around the interior, you alight on an empty space on the wall. From your perch you begin, in your dim fly way, to observe.

Hours go by. Your kaleidoscope eyes see it all. Were you able, you would marvel at the strange pattern that unfolds. The room is plenty large, yet there never seems to be more than a handful of humans in it. More often there are only one or two. Each hour, someone shuffles in, another shuffles out. At times a person enters for only a minute, or a quarter hour. In all cases, they never speak a word to one another. Uniformly, they all fix their attention on the far side of the room, away from the entrance. They seem to be captivated by Something that escapes your admittedly limited capacity of perception. Seated or kneeling, this succession of individuals is content to gaze upon the contents of a shiny metal contraption in the center of a large table; a wafer encased in glass.

When the room is nearly empty, the rhythmic breathing of a solitary figure who slowly snakes a beaded cord through her fingers is all that disturbs the atmosphere. Other times the room's occupants swell to eight or nine or more persons, all equally oblivious of each other.

A breeze breaks through the opening in that colored window, reminding you of the world outside. You unfurl your wings and take to flight, looping around this silent space another time or two before buzzing off.

Once out again in the open air, you sweep through the surrounding neighborhood, stopping now and again to survey the happenings within the houses that populate it. You find the occupants are likewise engaged in staring across the room, but with this difference: they gaze, not upon some tasteless wafer suspended in ornate metalwork, but rather upon glowing screens that flicker brightly and exude a constant stream of noise. Your supremely simple nervous system greatly delights at this new sight. House after house, you find some men parked before enormous glowing screens. Others seated before more modest monitors, intent on some business that escapes your ken. Still others are absorbed with hand-held models, scrolling and tapping to no end. Your little fly-heart rests content. *Here are men I can understand!* you buzz to

yourself, equally mesmerized by the light and color and the steady drone of these glowing screens.

But oh! If only your little fly brain could have grasped what your kaleidoscope eyes had seen. If only you had known what those few souls who had darkened the doorway of that colored-glass room had known, namely, that the Lord of the Universe, the Maker and Lover of all, was there seated on His throne of humility, encased in the glass of the monstrance and hidden within the Eucharist. Oh, how you would have burned in indignation at the realization that so many people preferred to be at home, adoring those glowing screens, than on their knees adoring their God. Then you would have understood, as those few have understood, the connection between adoration and reparation for those devoted to the Heart of the God who became man, who became bread, in order to remain with, for all times and in all places, a human race from which, by in large, He receives “only ingratitude by their irreverence and their sacrilege, and by the coldness and contempt they have for Him in this sacrament of Love.” (Words of Jesus to St. Margaret Mary of Alacoque).

“The love of Christ **COMPELS US**”

2 Cor 5:14

By Claire Leiter - Member of the Catholic Advance Movement

The words of St. Ignatius stirred in my heart as I sat among twenty-some other young adults in the Pastoral Center during our pre-mission-trip meetings learning about the work we would be taking upon ourselves: “...to labor and not to seek reward...” I was there because I wanted to serve the Lord. I wanted to pour myself out, to give, and to sacrifice without the promise, or even hope, of receiving anything in return (well, I did want to check Machu Picchu off my bucket list). For, I wondered, what would be my gift to the Lord if I knew the gift would beget an ever greater one? So, I pressed forth with the great Saint’s words in my heart and began the journey to Peru.

By the grace of God, we indeed were able to serve Him. We shared the life of Jesus with children through orchestrated puppet shows. We untangled colorful rosaries as kids pulled at them in eagerness for one to call their own. We helped them write their prayer intentions that would lay at the feet of Mary. We shared laughs and exchanged hugs with the little ones as visible expressions of God’s great love for them. We went to their families’ homes bringing rosaries, prayer cards, and the Sacred Heart of Jesus to share His love. We brought them the sacraments of Confession and Anointing of the sick and prayed with them in their crowded, darkened homes. We tended to their dirty hair and hands. We played with them; we loved them.

I remember kneeling in the dirt of the alfalfa field that hugged the sloping curve of the mountain side. Two yoked oxen made perpendicular passes with a plow to expose the earth for the team of missionaries who pulled weeds in a line behind them. As the oxen passed in front of my hurried hands, I reflected on the yoke, and the field, and our daily work. It seemed that we had taken upon ourselves the yoke of the Lord to prepare the field for the seeds that we were sowing. This field was the Kingdom of God. Though it would be easy to see our few days of work at the Mission Center as potentially fruitless, I was confident that by the faithfulness of God, the seeds we planted in that community would be nourished by God through His call of future missionaries and members of the movement. Surely as that field will yield a plentiful harvest, so too will the other work of our hands.

I also remembered the promise one of the sisters relayed to the missionaries during our pre-mission-trip meeting: “The Lord will give you so much more than you give Him,” she said while I tried to drown out that promise with St. Ignatius’ prayer. Thankfully, despite my intentions,

the Lord would never let us labor without reward, and my Ignatian prayer slowly molded into a prayer of praise.

The Lord transformed me! He used my small gift of service as an opportunity to bestow a greater gift. He took my meager requests that spilled from the anxiety of my daily life and pulled them into his Sacred Heart where it became a much bolder quest for life in His love. He asked me to trust more, to give more, to love more. I found myself denying my deep desires and fears to seek His will by quiet, bold acts of love. I never knew this kind of love.

But I didn't know a lot of things. I didn't know a mountain looks different between the sun's rise in the east and its descent in the west. I didn't know this until I spent time with it in the simple village of Utupampa wherein I witnessed the valleys and peaks that exchanged reverence by the timing of the sun's course throughout the day over the mountain. The Lord was both the sun and the mountain. He was the sun in that by His presence I was able to see and know different parts of myself that were otherwise once hidden and unknown—my peaks were darkened and my valleys seen. He was like the mountain in that in the light of the Sun, I came to see a different view of Him and know a different side as He moved about me throughout the day. But as the mountain is, He is always the same—it was I who only knew and saw and understood one side of Him, one view.

So, I have come to know Him more, but I don't know Him enough. I long to be like the Apostle John who, in the Cenacle, rested his head on the Sacred Heart of our Lord, who knew the intimate joys and sufferings, who stood at the foot of the cross. He accepted all the love our Lord wanted to give him—trusting in it, walking in it, resting in it. The Lord is Love. To love is the only way to know Him.

Thus, thanks to handfuls of manure, a bit of dehydration, and a lot of grace, I have grown in this unfathomable love of the Sacred Heart. I've seen Him transform more than mountains—He's transformed my own heart. And by this transformation, I have a new future; I now have a real chance at being an apostle of the Sacred Heart.

By way of my small gift of service, He gave me new life.

We don't need to travel thousands of miles to a small village in the middle of Peru to encounter His love in a new way—the Lord can meet us in every moment, every day. Really, most of us are called to the modest moments of transformation, the modest opportunities to love. But He has called each of us in a particular way, and it is our duty to remain faithful. For He is faithful; He is generous.

“It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain...” (Jn 15:16).

Making Families Holy and **WHOLLY HIS**

Family consecration as a means of loving Jesus
by belonging to Him

Love, notes St. Ignatius of Loyola in his Spiritual Exercises, consists in a sharing of goods between lover and beloved. The greater the love, the greater the goods that are shared. Of course, the greatest good any lover can share is his own self. Therefore, the perfection of love lies in mutual self gift, resulting in union. In biblical language, this is expressed as the gift of one's heart: "My son," says the Lord, "give me your heart" (Prov. 23:26).

The introduction to this issue directs our attention to the pierced Heart of our Savior. On the Cross, God has opened, and offered, His Heart to each of us, and thus has invited us to participate in His life of divine love. He is only waiting for our response. Yet that response, to be worth anything, must be free. And therefore, it might never come at all. Oh, how great is the sorrow Jesus experiences over the rejection of His love! It was this sorrow motivated that touching complaint, "Behold this heart which has so loved men ... and has been so little loved in return."

Yet what if we want to respond to this invitation to love, to accept it: how are we to respond? "Love is repaid by love alone" says St. Therese. The only satisfactory way to respond to Christ giving His Heart to each of us is for each to offer his or her heart in return.

One concrete way of doing this is by consecration. Consecration is an act that sets something apart for God; it "makes it holy" by making it God's. A Christian can consecrate anything in his possession to God's service. Yet only when he consecrates himself does he really "match" Christ's loving self-gift to each of us.

As a matter of fact, Christians are already consecrated to God in virtue of their baptism. Yet this consecration ought to be ratified, renewed, and more deeply realized at every stage of life, even every day. It is by means of consecration that we truly become devoted to the Heart of Our Lord, in the sense that our entire self is dedicated to performing His will. We become "set apart" for Jesus and His loving designs.

Individual consecration is an essential component to living the Sacred Heart Devotion. Yet "no man is an island" and no Christian worships God by himself, for Christ taught us to pray "our Father." God has made man to live in society, and the most fundamental society to which he

belongs—the building block of all society—is the family. To love and serve God as a family, to *sanctify* the family, means consecrating the family to God, and in particular to the Sacred Heart of Jesus through which God has offered Himself to us.

Consecration of the family can be performed by the head of the family together with the other adult members. Ideally, however, it is done with all the members of the family present and participating, in the presence of a priest, preferably in the context of the liturgy and after a period of preparation, in which the family educates itself about the meaning of consecration and how they are to live the devotion as a family. Consecration is often accompanied by the enthronement of an image of the Sacred Heart in the family home (Jesus promised St. Margaret Mary, “I will bless those places wherein the image of My Heart shall be exposed and honored”) as an outward sign of Christ’s kingship there.

Exteriorly, the act of family consecration is simple: the recitation of a prayer of consecration containing an appropriate formula of consecration suffices. Spiritually, however, those words have profound significance. Our Lord takes them very seriously! Thence forward, that family is “His” in a special way: His to care for and nourish, His to protect and bless. To such a family the words of the Gospel are especially applicable, that Jesus “loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end” (Jn 13:1).

Consecration is no magic pill of course. A family consecrated to the Sacred Heart must live out that consecration in a manner worthy of a family belonging specially to Jesus Christ. Yet in doing so its members can count on an abundance of graces to help them do that from Him who came “that they might have life, and have it abundantly” (Jn 10:10). Therefore, do not wait until your family is sufficiently holy or perfect or even just all in one piece before you think it is ready to be consecrated to the Sacred Heart. Rather, consecrate it to Him as soon as you can, and watch Jesus perform miracles to “make holy” your family and its members. After all, He Himself promised that to those devoted to His Heart, He “will give peace in their families and will unite families that are divided.”

Raising a **HOLY FAMILY**

By the Baldwin Family: Marco, Patty,
Dean, and Samuel

How has the Sacred Heart Devotion impacted my family? It is a great question and one certainly worth examining.

Our family is not unlike many in our parish or even in the Catholic Advance Movement. There is my wife and I and our two boys. We attend Mass weekly and my sons are altar servers and my wife serves as an extraordinary Eucharistic minister...and we want to grow closer to Christ.

When our sons were younger we often spoke about God with them, but wondered how in this world could we ever be successful in raising good Catholics amid all the chaos the world throws at us. Around 2006, we met Fr. Carlos Farfan, P.E.S. and Fr. Eduardo Mendoza, P.E.S. as they were our new parish priests at St. Peter Church in Dixon. We didn't know it yet but those two men were going to change our lives.

My wife has always been "churchier" than me and the boys and I tease her about it all the time. However, with her strong leadership in our home we opened our hearts and minds to greater possibilities for our Christian life. Here is where the two great Peruvian priests come in. They gently yet constantly encouraged and challenged us to be involved not only in our parish but in our community. The reward for us getting more involved was to be consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to pursue the promises of Christ.

"We have to go to classes? On Friday nights? During baseball season? And during summer vacation for the boys?" Those were my whiny questions for my "churchy" wife and her simple response was "Yes, have a little faith."

We finally did it in the summer of 2013 and through the formation and preparation classes we found a peace and motivation to grow our faith and to strengthen our family! It has been an amazing experience for all of us and for each of us it has been different. For my wife and I, it has given us an opportunity to learn that we are not the only ones in the world that care about raising a holy family and that there is tremendous hope for our sons to grow and be strong Catholic men. For our oldest son, it has opened his eyes to the possibility that a life devoted to God, through whatever vocation he may pursue, will be a life fulfilled in Christ. For our youngest

son, it has inspired him to want to be a “real man” and be a light in his community and a warrior for Christ.

All of these inspirations have come to my family through the Sacred Heart of Jesus and through the other families that have consecrated themselves as well! We are so grateful to God for introducing us to the priests of Pro Ecclesia Sancta and the Catholic Advance Movement and to opening our hearts to becoming a holy family!

Our Spirituality: *that of the* **SACRED HEART**

The Spirituality of Pro Ecclesia Sancta and the Catholic Advance is the Spirituality of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In His Heart, we find the perfect model; the incomparable paradigm of love for the Father and for neighbor unto death, “even death on a cross.”

Hence, there is a perfect identity between living and promoting holiness on one hand and the spirituality of the Sacred Heart on the other. If we deeply love Jesus Christ, we will love the Father and our neighbor, whom He loved to the point of giving His life, all to please the First and to save the second.

Therefore, each member of Pro Ecclesia Sancta should possess a heart pierced by compassion. Only in this way will his or her life be fruitful; that is, productive according to the incomprehensible logic of the Love that chose to achieve victory by suffering death. Pro Ecclesia Sancta can be nothing other than a gathering of people deeply in love with Jesus Christ. With His help, they sanctify themselves by passionately loving God and others, willing to give even their lives; Ad Maximam Trinitatis Gloriam.