



THE RAY

The newsletter of Our Lady of Grace Catholic Spirituality Center

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Our Lady of Grace Catholic Spirituality Center
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From the desk of Mary... 

Warm greetings from Our Lady of Grace Catholic Spirituality Center where we celebrate daily the Universal Call to Holiness.

We are all called to be saints in whatever our state of life vocation. We read in Scripture, "This is the will of God; your sanctification." (1Th. 4:3)

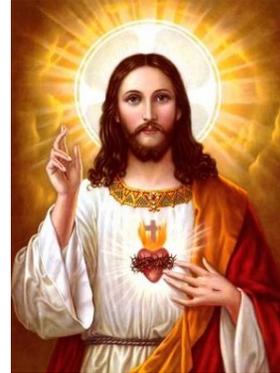
With deep gratitude for your generous support in sustaining the Center, we continue to serve many people who come to us for spiritual direction and vocational discernment sincerely seeking to grow in holiness day by day. It is our privilege and joy to use the finest tools we have in the treasury of the Church to assist them in this most noble and important of undertakings.

One such devotion that towers above the rest is the praise and adoration the Faithful owe to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Since the Church sets aside the entire month of June each year as the Month of the Sacred Heart, we are happy to dedicate this June issue of *The Ray* to the surpassing love of Christ subsumed in the symbol of His most precious Heart.

Included in this newsletter is an insightful piece written by Monsignor Charles Mangan of the Diocese of Sioux Falls, SD entitled "Heart of Christ, We Sing Thy Praises" that we hope you will take the time to carefully read and ponder. Thank you, Monsignor, for your wonderful contribution to this newsletter.

We hope that all of the articles will help you cultivate an ever deepening devotion to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus--so deserving of all our love. Like the beloved disciple who "leaned back on Jesus' chest" at the Last Supper (Jn 13:25), and with Our Lady whose Immaculate Heart most closely resembles that of her Son, let us joyfully accept our Lord's compassionate invitation and promise, "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light." (Mt. 11:28-30)

I wish you a gentle, peaceful, restful summer filled with tender tokens of love from His Heart to yours.



Heart of Christ, We Sing Thy Praises

Monsignor Charles M. Mangan

During June, the Church is the scene for varied celebrations: ordinations, weddings, graduations. With so many festive occasions, one could forget the traditional dedication of this month to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

As is well known, the decades after the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (1962-1965) witnessed the decline of long-standing devotional practices, including that to the Most Sacred Heart. What was once held dear then became reckoned as expendable and unenlightened. From the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel to the nine First Fridays to the five First Saturdays, private devotions fell into disuse, and in some quarters were openly scorned.

Recently, however, Catholic devotional practices have begun to blossom. Parishes throughout the United States have blown the dust off monstrances and reinstated Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

The Litany of the Sacred Heart is recited after Holy Mass in an increasing number of churches. Personal devotions no longer seem to be considered "embarrassing" as they were not long ago.

Yet, much remains to be done to ensure that pious practices dedicated to the Sacred Heart, the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Angels and the Saints continue to be fostered and respected. There still exists among some priests, deacons, consecrated persons and laity the unfortunate misunderstanding that personal devotions are in opposition to the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

It is as if one cannot truly love the Eucharistic Liturgy and at the same time be concerned about the Church-approved revelations of Jesus to Saint Margaret Mary, the Church-sanctioned apparitions of Our Lady at Fatima, and other private revelations that enjoy ecclesiastical approbation.

Venerable Pope Pius XII (1939-1958), in his 1956 encyclical
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entitled *On Devotion to the Sacred Heart (Haurietis Aquas)*, reminded the Faithful that devotion to the Sacred Heart, far from being “optional,” is necessary and rests on “solid foundations”: Sacred Scripture, the Fathers of the Church and theologians. All three proclaim that the Heart of Christ “is the natural sign and symbol of His boundless love for the human race.”

The Sovereign Pontiff quotes his predecessor Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903): “In the Sacred Heart there is the symbol and the express image of the infinite love of Jesus Christ which moves us to love in return.”

Those who contend that private devotions detract from the centrality of the Mass would do well to meditate upon Pius’ assertion: “One may affirm that the divine Eucharist, both as a sacrament and a sacrifice—the one He bestowed on men, the other He Himself continually offers ‘from the rising of the sun even to the going down’—and the Priesthood, are really gifts of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.”

The same Jesus who bestows His Sacred Body and Precious Blood upon His friends is the possessor of the Heart “which has loved so much but has been loved so little in return.”

Perhaps one of the reasons for the current revival of private devotions is the realization that personal piety can enhance one’s participation in the Mass. To reflect privately upon the riches of the Sacred Heart leads to a greater consciousness of the splendor of the Most Blessed Sacrament. When one adores the Heart of Christ outside the celebration of the Eucharist, one will be better prepared to participate with deeper fervor and awareness within the Sacred Liturgy.

God’s gifts to His people are many. The bestowal of the Lord’s love upon His Church—as exemplified in the image of the Sacred Heart—is proof that Christ calls all to love as He Himself loved.

This June, as always, the Faithful look to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus because, as Pope Pius wrote quoting Pope Leo XIII, “in It man’s salvation must be sought and looked for.”

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, we place our trust in Thee!



A Saintly Spiritual Director



Seventeenth century Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, VHM (Visitation of Holy Mary) was a chosen soul to whom Jesus appeared many times (1673-75). She was, in His words, “the beloved disciple of my Sacred Heart.” (Memoire no. 54)

Along with revealing to her His Twelve Great Promises to those who practice a devotion to His Most Sacred Heart¹, He further entrusted to her the worldwide mission of spreading this devotion to include the establishment of a Universal Church Feast in honor of His Most Sacred Heart. How was a young nun living the monastic life of enclosure going to accomplish this?

Upon confiding these Divine revelations to her religious superior, she was not believed and began to suffer persecution and isolation in her religious community. All of

this upset in the monastery created great turmoil within her and took a terrible toll on her health. After enduring over a year of intense suffering including the conclusion of well respected priests who reported she was experiencing delusions, Our Lord sent her “the faithful servant and perfect friend”(Retraites, n.135) whom he had promised would believe her and labor on behalf of this sacred mission.

This friend was the young Jesuit Father Claude de la Colombiere who in 1675 was assigned by his superior to be rector of their college at Paray-le-Monial, the same town in France where Sister Margaret Mary’s monastery was located. After his arrival, Father Claude went to the monastery and gave a talk to the nuns. Convinced that he was the one sent to her by God, she gradually opened her heart to him in spiritual direction. After meeting with her many times, he assured her that the revelations from Our Lord were authentic and asked her to write them down.

Father Claude was a very talented young priest. After just a year in this assignment, he was sent to England to the great sadness of the nuns who had come to recognize in him a Confessor and Spiritual Director of rare giftedness. Prior to leaving, Father Claude and Sister Margaret Mary consecrated themselves to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, and for the rest of his life he worked tirelessly to promote this devotion and secure the Church’s official approbation of her visions.

Sister Margaret Mary Alacoque was declared a saint in 1920. Her feast day is October 16th.

Father La Colombiere was declared a saint on the Feast of the Visitation of Holy Mary, May 31, 1992.

In the canonization homily for Father Claude, Saint John Paul II stated, “Fr. La Colombiere, with highly reliable discernment, straightaway authenticated the mystical experience of this ‘beloved disciple [of the] Sacred Heart’ (Memoire, n. 54), with whom he had a beautiful spiritual kinship. He received from her the message which would have great repercussions: ‘Behold the Heart which has so loved men that it spared nothing to exhaust and consume itself in testimony of its love’ (Retraites, n. 135). The Lord asked that a feast be established to honour his Heart and that a ‘reparation of honour’ be made to him in Eucharistic communion. Margaret Mary passed on to ‘the faithful servant and perfect friend’, whom she recognized in Fr. La Colombiere, the mission of ‘establishing this devotion and of giving this pleasure to [his] divine Heart.’” (ibid.)

Each year the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus is celebrated on the Friday following the (Sunday) Solemnity of Corpus Christi.

¹A list of the Twelve Great Promises may be found at <https://www.bluearmy.com/the-12-promises-of-jesus-to-those-devoted-to-his-sacred-heart/>

As Always... 

This newsletter is made possible through the generosity and skills of Miss Nicolette Bardele.

We are so grateful for any donation to the Center. All donations are tax-deductible and may be made payable to **Our Lady of Grace.**