

The Fiery Furnace of Divine Love



The Sacred Heart of Jesus!

My Divine Heart is so passionately in love with men that it can no longer contain within itself the flames of its ardent charity. It must pour them out by thy means, and manifest itself to them to enrich them with its precious treasures, which contain all the graces of which they have need to be saved from perdition....I have chosen thee [St. Margaret Mary Alacoque] as an abyss of unworthiness and ignorance to accomplish so great a design, so that all may be done by Me.

He demanded my heart, and I supplicated Him to take it. He did so, and put it into His own Adorable Heart, in which He allowed me to see it as a little atom being consumed in that fiery furnace. Then, drawing it out like a burning flame in the form of a heart, He put it into the place whence He had taken it, saying, "Behold, My beloved, a precious proof of My love."

(Rt. Rev. Emile Bougaud, THE LIFE OF SAINT MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE, Tan Books, 1990, Pgs. 164-165.)

From 1673-1675, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque had mystical experiences in which Our Lord revealed to her how little He is loved in return for the sacrifice of Himself for us on Calvary. In His second appearance, His wounds shone like suns and His breast was like a flaming furnace in which burned His amiable Heart as the source of its flames. He asked for communions of reparation on seven First Fridays and that the 11-12 p.m. hour the Thursday night before be spent prostrate on the floor in expiation for the desertion He felt, first with His apostles in the Garden of Olives, and continually, as we, too, abandon Him so many times. (Bougaud, Pgs. 168-169.) In the third revelation Jesus says His Heart spared nothing to show us His love, but He receives from the greater part only ingratitude, irreverence, sacrilege and contempt toward Him in the Sacrament of His love, and sadly, **"what is most painful to Me is that they are hearts consecrated to Me."** Jesus asked for a special feast to honor His Sacred Heart on the first Friday after the feast of Corpus Christi, which had been established in 1247 to honor His Real Presence in the Eucharist and the Blessed Sacrament. (Bougaud, Pg. 176.)

In the message of Our Lady of America, Jesus calls Himself a **"Beggar for love!"**

How few give to Me the means by which to satisfy My divine hunger. I hunger for the love of My own, and I receive only the crumbs no other would accept. My Heart beats with compassion for the sorrows of man. Oh, how gladly would I help him bear the weight of his terrible cross, fashioned, for the most part, by his own guilt! But alas, he will have

none of My help. So, I am forced to stand by the side of the road and watch him struggle hopelessly in his agony. O man, what have I done to you that you should refuse My aid? ... There are so few souls that believe in Me and My love. They profess their belief and their love, but they do not live this belief. Their hearts are cold, for without faith there can be no love.

(Sr. Mildred Mary Neuzil, Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA, Tiffin, OH, Pgs. 5- 6.)



But not all hearts have been cold in response to the great love of Jesus for us. Another mystic, St. Catherine of Siena, felt Jesus take her poor heart and give her His own so she might live forever in Him. St. Margaret of Cortona saw Jesus' pierced side like a huge cavern of love and she had to lay her hand on her own heart to keep it from leaping out of her breast and into that cavern to Jesus' Heart. When St. Gertrude complained to Jesus of her distractions, He appeared and said: **"Behold My Heart, the delight of the Holy Trinity. I give it to thee that it may supply for what is wanting to thee."** St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane de Chantal, founders of the Daughters of the Visitation, symbolized their spirituality with a heart crowned with thorns, two arrows piercing it, and a cross rising from its center. St. Francis urged his spiritual daughters to forever lodge in the pierced side of the Savior and to rest their heads, as the beloved disciple had done, on the breast of Jesus, quietly contemplating the enormity of His love. St. Margaret Mary was a nun in this order.

Mystical theology studies those experiences or states of the soul that cannot be produced by human effort, even with the help of grace. Sister Mildred Neuzil is considered to be a contemporary mystic by many. In her March 3, 1957 letter to her spiritual director, she spoke of the hunger of Jesus for our love.

Oh, My little white dove, bride of My Heart, I crave for love. I Who died that men might live am refused even a small corner in men's hearts. What have I done to deserve such ingratitude? Will men never understand the longing of My Heart for their love? Oh, My little one, simple and most lovely in My sight because of the lowliness of your heart, help Me to gain for Myself the love of those for whom I suffered and died. Let My love, surrounding you and filling you, draw souls to me in great multitudes. Such is My will, oh My beloved one. Open then your heart that I may pour into it without ceasing the sweet waters of My undying and saving Charity. For it is from this Fountain of Life, which springs forth from My Divine Heart that men will receive Eternal Life. It was to obtain this for them that I lived, suffered and died.

It is no accident that the Church established the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary the day after the feast honoring the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Our Lady tells Sister Mildred: **"My heart, my Immaculate Heart, is the channel through which the graces of the Sacred Heart are given to men."** (The Diary, Pg. 18.)

But to make your hearts grow more and more like to the Heart of the Son, you must go to the Mother, whose heart is most like His. From this Pure and Immaculate Heart you will learn all that will make you more pleasing to the Divine Heart of the Son of God. The Holy Trinity looks down with infinite delight upon such souls and makes them Its heaven upon earth. (The Diary, Pg. 16.)

Our Lord asked St. Margaret Mary to have an image of His Sacred Heart made for people to venerate in their homes, as well as small pictures to carry with them. St. Margaret Mary then began to make the Sacred Heart badges and asked her novices to carry one with them at all times as she did. In 1720, about thirty years after St. Margaret Mary's death, the city of Marseilles in France was ravaged with plague. About one thousand persons died each day. The bishop asked the nuns to make thousands of Sacred Heart badges. He then led a procession to the center of the city and consecrated it to the Sacred Heart. Everyone present put on a Sacred Heart badge and from that moment onward, not one new case of plague was reported. In 1870, a badge was sent to Pope Pius IX, the same who defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. He approved the devotion forever and said:



I am going to bless this Heart and want all badges made after this model to receive the same blessing, so that in the future, it will not be necessary for the blessing to be renewed by a priest. And I want Satan to be unable to cause any harm to those who wear this Badge, symbol of the adorable Heart of Jesus. (www.olrl.org.)

In the message of Our Lady of America we are also asked to venerate an image of Our Lady of America in our homes, and have been given, not a badge but a medallion that carries a similar promise of protection. Sister Mildred writes, **“Our Lady also requested a picture or statue of herself as she appeared on September 26, 1956, to be honored and venerated in every Christian home.”** This would be a protection for the home. Speaking especially of the youth, Our Lady asked that a medal be made **“to be their shield against evil,”** but that promise is for all of us. On April 4, 1960, Our Lady said:

Tell His Grace, my beloved son, that it is through the medal that he will receive the sign for which he asks. I ask him to have the medal struck and distributed everywhere and he will receive not only the one sign for which he asked but so many, so many that he will have cause to be greatly astonished.

My child, God works often through little and humble things and such instruments should never be despised but accepted and used with love and gratitude. It will be through the medal that God's Will will be manifested and glorified and my desires carried out to the very end. (The Diary, Pg. 35.)

Our Lady of America spoke over and over about purity of heart. Why? Pope Francis tells us why in his encyclical letter ***Dilexit Nos on the Human and Divine Love of the Heart of Jesus Christ.***

...Because the heart is the locus of sincerity, where deceit and disguise have no place. It usually indicates our true intentions, what we really think, believe and desire, the “secret” that we tell no one: in a word, the naked truth about ourselves. It is the part of us that is neither appearance or illusion, but is instead authentic, real, entirely “who we are.” That is why Samson, who kept from Delilah the secret of his strength, was asked by her, “How can you say, ‘I love you’, when your heart is not with me?” (Judg 16:15). Only when Samson opened his heart to her, did she realize ‘that he had told her his whole secret’.” (Judg 16:18). (Paragraph 5.)

This interior reality of each person is frequently concealed behind a great deal of “foliage”, which makes it difficult for us not only to understand ourselves, but even more to know others: We can understand, then, the advice of the Book of Proverbs: “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flows the springs of life; put away your crooked speech” (4:23-24). Mere appearances, dishonesty and deception harm and pervert the heart. Despite our every attempt to appear as something we are not, our heart is the ultimate judge, not of what we show or hide from others, but of who we truly are. It is the basis for any sound life project; nothing worthwhile can be undertaken apart from the heart. False appearances and untruths ultimately leave us empty. (Paragraph 6.)

Pope Francis told the story of his grandmother who would make pastry for the carnival. The pastry dough was very thin, so when she dropped the strips of batter into the oil, they would expand. But then, when one bit into them, they were empty inside. In the dialect his family spoke, those cookies were called “lies.” His grandmother explained, “Like lies, they look big, but are empty inside; they are false, unreal.”

Let us bid the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus speak to our hearts, and like He did for St. Catherine of Siena, to take our poor, wretched hearts and give us His own! May we always entrust our hearts to His Mother as He did, Who takes such delight when we do the same!

Triumph, O Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary! Reign, O Most Sacred Heart of Jesus! In our hearts, in our homes and families, in Your Church, in the lives of all the faithful, in the hearts of those who as yet know You not, and in all the nations of the world. Establish in the hearts of all mankind the sovereign triumph and reign of Your Two Hearts so that the earth may resound from pole to pole with one cry: blessed forever be the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary!

**Copyright© Our Lady of America Devotion, Tiffin, Ohio,
feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, June 27, 2025.
All rights reserved.**