

The Sacred Heart of Jesus

BY

SAINT JOHN EUDES

Translated by

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OF THE PORTSMOUTH PRIORY

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With an Introduction by

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GENERAL PREFACE

ST. JOHN EUDES has been called "the wonder of his age." Missionary, founder, reformer of the clergy, he crowded into a life of seventy-nine years so many and such varied accomplishments that one marvels how a single man could achieve so much. In addition to the activities of an incessant and many-sided apostolate, he wrote a number of valuable books, which rank him among the most prolific ascetic writers of the seventeenth century.

For many years the devotional works of St. John Eudes were practically unknown.(1) Occasionally a volume was discovered in the library of some seminary or religious house. Many others preserved in manuscript form were lost in the chaos of the French Revolution(2) At the beginning of the present century the sons of St. John Eudes united in a tribute of filial piety to bring out a complete edition of the works of their spiritual father, seeking them in public and private libraries throughout the world(3) About twenty volumes were found and edited in 1905 by the late Fathers Charles Lebrun, C.J.M., and Joseph Dauphin,

(1).Before the French Revolution the works of St. John Eudes were popular in France. In 1792 the houses of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary were confiscated by the Government and its members were massacred or dispersed throughout Europe. With the suppression of the Eudists, their rich literary heritage was widely scattered and partially destroyed. It was not until the re-establishment of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary in 1826 that effort was made to recover the printed and manuscript works of St. John Eudes. The research was carried on until the latter part of the nineteenth century. In the "Preface Générale to the Oeuvres Complètes (Vannes, 1905), Father Charles Lebrun points out that one of the purposes of the edition was "to unearth these works buried too long in oblivion," exhumers ces ouvrages ensevelis depuis trop longtemps dans l'oubli...

(2)The following manuscripts were not found: The Christian Man, All Jesus, The Divine office, The Admirable Sacrifice of the Mass, Meditations, (2 vol.), Sermons of St. John Eudes (3 vols.), Favors obtained by the Diocese of Coutances through the Blessed Virgin, The Divine Childhood of Jesus, The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, The Admirable *Life of Mary des Vallées*, (incomplete copy found at Laval University Library, Quebec) and Correspondence of St. John Eudes.

(3). cf. *oeuvres Complètes*, P. xiv.

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C.J.M. The first edition in French, *Oeuvres Complètes du Vénérable Jean Eudes*, ran into twelve octavo volumes with introductions, explanatory notes, analytic and alphabetic indexes of great value. These writings constitute a complete summa of ascetic and pastoral theology. The list is as follows:

Volume 1 The Life and Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls. In this work the Saint develops his spiritual teaching on the Christian life, namely, that the Christian life is simply the life of Jesus extended and continued in each one of us.

Volume 11. This volume contains six short treatises on subjects relating to the Christian life:

1. *A Treatise on the Respect Due to Holy Places*, which is an echo of the fiery denunciations he pronounced during his missions against profaners of the temple of God.

2. *Meditations on Humility*, a series of meditations on the profession of humility as used daily in his order of Priests, the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

3. *Interior Colloquies of the Soul with God*, meditations on creation, the end of man and the grace of Baptism.

4. *Man's Contract with God in Holy Baptism*, a summary of the teachings of Sacred Scripture and Tradition on the Sacrament of Baptism.

5. *The Practice of Piety*, a brief explanation of what is necessary in order to live a Christian life.

6. *Catechism of the Mission*, an outline of the catechetical instructions given during a mission.

Volume III. Contains two important works on sacerdotal perfection:

1. *The Memorial of the Ecclesiastical Life*, an explanation of the dignity and duties of the priesthood.

2. *A Manual of Piety for Use in an Ecclesiastical Community*, in which the author explains how the means of sanctification he recommended to his priests should be practically applied in their daily lives.

Volume IV. Comprises significant works on the priestly ministry.

1. *The Apostolic Preacher* is one of the first treatises written on the ministry of the Word of God and is even yet one of the most practical.

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2. *The Good Confessor* explains the qualities, and obligations of the minister of the Sacrament of Penance.

3. *Counsels for Mission Confessors* suggests practical means of assisting penitents to make their examination of conscience and excite themselves to contrition.

4. *The Manner of Serving Mass* explains the dignity and holiness of this act and what one must do to perform it devoutly and worthily.

Volume V. The Admirable Childhood of the Most Holy Mother of God. This book treats of the holy childhood of Mary and the practical means of honoring the mysteries and virtues of her early life.

Volumes VI, VII, VIII contain the entire writings of the Saint on the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. The work is entitled: *The Admirable Heart of the Most Holy Mother of God.* It comprises twelve books covering the complete theology of the devotion to the Sacred Hearts. Eleven books discuss the theory, history, and practice of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The last book deals with the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is this work, together with the Offices of the Sacred Hearts, that merit for him the title of Father, Doctor and Apostle of the Devotion to the Sacred Hearts.

Volume IX. The Rules and Constitutions of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

Volume X. Contains *The Rules and Constitutions of the Order of Our Lady of Charity*, the *Directory* of the Order, and a collection of two hundred and forty letters.

Volumes XI and XII embrace the Saint's *Liturgical Works*, comprising twenty-five Offices and Masses for feasts to which he urged special devotion, the *Memorial of God's Blessings* and several other minor works.

The second French edition appeared in 1935, *Oeuvres Choies de Saint Jean Eudes*, prepared under the direction of Father Lebrun, the leading authority on Eudistic research. It comprises nine volumes: *The Life and Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls*, *Meditations of Various Subjects*, *Regulae Vitae Christianae et Sacerdotalis*, *Man's Contract with God in Holy Baptism*, *Letters and Minor Works*, *Writings on the Priesthood*, *The Sacred Heart of Jesus*, *The Admirable Heart of Mary*, and *The Admirable Childhood of the Mother of God*. The format of

these volumes is compact and more convenient than the 1905 edition, which is now out of print.

The publication of the works of St. John Eudes revealed the extent and depth of their spiritual doctrine. Cardinal Pitra, who was associated with the cause of Beatification, discovered in the writings of St. John Eudes a remarkable depth of thought and purity of doctrine. Cardinal Vives has more recently expressed his admiration:

I was acquainted with the Doctors of the Order of Saint Francis; I was acquainted with Saint Teresa and Saint John of the Cross, the mystical writers of my own country, Spain; but I was completely ignorant of the writings of Father Eudes. As a member of the Sacred Congregation of Rites it was my duty to study his life and his works, and I am in admiration. Blessed John Eudes must be ranked with the great lights of the Church. His spiritual doctrine is profound and of wonderful exactitude. He is one of the writers who has best propounded the doctrine of the Gospel.(4).

The late Father Ange Le Doré, for fifty years Superior General of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, wrote:

The works of Blessed John Eudes, although they do not bear the scientific touch of the professional theologian, are nevertheless proof of his remarkable theological, ascetic and scriptural knowledge.... He is not a Doctor after the fashion of the scholastics of the thirteenth century or of the great theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As they, he might have built up theses and composed books didactic in form; but he was before all a savior of souls. For him the science of theology found its chief field of usefulness in the practice of virtue and in the acquisition of sanctity of which it is the principle.... He was a Doctor after the manner of the Apostles, the Fathers of the Church, St. Francis de Sales and St. Alphonsus de Liguori. The science which shines in his works not only emits light; it engenders piety and sanctity.(5)

The spiritual doctrine expounded by St John Eudes follows the teaching of Cardinal *Pierre de Bérulle* and Father Charles de Condren, two prominent members of the seventeenth-century French School of Spirituality. St. John Eudes applies this doctrine to the devotion to the

(4). Quoted by P. A. Bray, C.J.M., *Saint John Eudes* (Halifax, 1925), P. 116.
 (5). Quoted by Buy, op. cit., p. 117.

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Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, developing and rendering it more precise and practical. He has the rare gift of expressing the most sublime truths in simple, familiar language. He also excels in condensing into a few pages a complete scheme of Christian life and perfection.

The wish was repeatedly expressed that these inspirational writings could be made available to English-speaking readers. Excellent abridged editions of certain books were published in England and in Canada, but they did not do justice to the literary value of the Saint. Consequently, the Eudist Fathers commemorating their tercentenary in 1943 resolved to publish a complete translation of the principal works of their founder. Competent translators were secured and much time and effort were expended to produce readable volumes in modern English, faithful to the spirit and style of the original.

The first English edition, *Selected Works of Saint John Eudes*, is the result. In presenting it to the public the Eudist Fathers and the Religious of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge, and of the Good

Shepherd, wish to thank all those who contributed to the success of this comprehensive undertaking. They are especially grateful to the distinguished churchmen who have so graciously accepted to introduce these volumes to Catholic readers, because they consider that the works of St. John Eudes should be more widely known. The Saint in his apostolic work and in his writings ranks with the eminent figures who belong not to one country and to one religious order but to the universal Church. Three centuries have passed since he wrote the works now being printed in the new world, a striking illustration that he wrote for all time. He still speaks in accents that penetrate the mind and heart of the reader to enlighten, purify and sanctify so that Jesus Christ may live and reign in the Christian soul.

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Halifax, N. S.

Feast of St. John Eudes, 1945.

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INTRODUCTION

DEVOTION to the Sacred Heart of Jesus today ranks among the most appealing devotions in the liturgy. Its widespread popularity among the faithful, as well as the transcendent dignity of its object, gives to this devotion a place of high honor among the numerous devotions which the Spirit of God has raised up and fostered in the bosom of Holy Mother Church. Yet, it is a devotion of comparatively recent origin. Not until late in the seventeenth century did the Devotion to the Sacred Heart become firmly established in the Church. At that period God sent a holy priest, St. John Eudes, to be the Father, the Doctor and the Apostle of this sweet devotion and to be the Author of the liturgical worship of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.(1) Subsequently, he chose a holy Visitation nun, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, to be the instrument in the hands of Divine Providence for the world-wide diffusion of this devotion and for the establishment in the universal Church of the Feast of the Sacred Heart. Today, devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus flourishes everywhere. Millions of Catholics find strength and comfort in its practice. The Church bestows rich blessings on all who participate therein and day by day more and more souls are drawn to share in the exercise of this beautiful and consoling devotion.

The book which is here presented in English dress was written in French by that great servant of God, St. John Eudes, to whose zeal and holiness and learning we owe the origins of the public worship of the Sacred Heart, and I deem it a high privilege to have the honor of introducing it to the reader.

(I). Pope Leo X111, in declaring the heroism of the virtues of Father Eudes by the Papal Decree (Jan. 6, 1903) which proclaimed him "Venerable," bestowed upon him the title of Doctor liturgici cultus SS. Cordium Jesu et Mariae," and Pope Pius X, in the Decree of Beatification (April 25) 1909) pronounced Father Eudes "*Hujus suavissimae religionis, tam Pater . . . tam Doctor . . . tam denique Apostolus.*"

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The task of rendering into lucid and idiomatic English the rich prose of St. John Eudes without sacrificing either the simplicity of his language, the peculiar flavor of his seventeenth-century French, or the unction of his literary style presents a problem before which any translator might reasonably hesitate.

Dom Richard Flower, however, has courageously faced and overcome the difficulties of his task. His translation is smooth and easy, unencumbered by such obvious gallicisms as mar many translations, too hurriedly made, of notable French works. At the same time his choice of words remains as faithful to the letter of his original as is compatible with clear and correct English.

The rhythmical and rimed translations of the Sequence of the Mass in honor of the Sacred Heart and the Hymns of the Divine Office (printed at the end of this book) have been done with grace and skill. They truly preserve and reflect the spirit of St. John Eudes' strong but sensitive Latin poetry.

Throughout the long history of Christian worship, the Holy Ghost has enkindled in the hearts of the faithful many beautiful forms of piety and devotion. Each one of them, in its own peculiar way, opens up fresh vistas into "the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God."(2) Each taps fresh sources of spiritual nourishment within the boundless treasure of grace and light and love stored up for us in the mysteries of religion.

Every new insight into the dealings of God with man, every new vision of His "incomprehensible judgments,"(3) every new revelation of his "unsearchable ways," (4) brings to the mind fresh floods of light, stirs the soul to new transports of praise and love, arouses in the heart a deeper sense of man's unworthiness, his coldness and ingratitude towards "the Giver of all good gifts." (5) Gradually each of these aspects of the goodness and mercy of God becomes the focus of particular acts of piety and a special devotion arises to urge the soul onward to still greater generosity in the service of our loving Master.

(2) Rom. 11, 33.

(3). Ibid.

(4). Ibid.

(5). James 1, 17.

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As a rule, it takes a long time for a new form of devotion to develop to the fulness of its beneficent power. Often it begins in some special insight of faith and fresh favor of love granted by the Holy Ghost to certain privileged souls. They perceive, in the light of God's wisdom and love, some new manifestation of His holy designs within this or that event of the life of Jesus Christ (whose special significance had hitherto passed unnoticed), or in some mystery of revealed truth (whose depths can never be plumbed), or in some word or deed recorded in the deposit of divine revelation (in which no one had previously noted this particular meaning and import). This fresh vision of the wisdom and love of God becomes for them a spur to some special devotion, appropriate to the grace and insight granted to them by the Holy Spirit. They begin to practise this new devotion in their private exercises of piety and find therein an increase of spiritual strength and courage, solace, comfort and love in the pursuit of Christian perfection.

Little by little the new devotion spreads. Other pious persons adopt its practice. It springs up here and there in various forms, not all of them alike and some of them, indeed, at times quite incompatible with others. And so it develops; while its object, aim and purpose become increasingly clear, its connection with some truth revealed by God more patently evident and its basis in Christian doctrine more firmly established. For, every devotion in the Church has some definite object and end; and all must rest upon the solid ground of dogmatic truth.

Only the revealed word of God, contained in the Holy Scriptures and Tradition, the deposit of Christian Faith which the Apostles bequeathed to the Church, can provide an adequate foundation for Christian worship. The extraordinary piety of individual souls, the holy inspirations which the Spirit of God so lavishly bestows upon all men, especially upon those who seek with all their hearts to reach the heights of Christian perfection, the special revelations which God vouchsafes to make from time to time to those chosen ones who are His special and particular friends, whether in the Person of our Blessed Lord Himself or through His holy Mother or His angels and His saints-even these exalted privileges and unusual signs of

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divine favor-cannot furnish a sufficient reason or provide an adequate motive for the establishment of a special devotion as a part of the public worship of the faithful, much as they may serve to initiate the process of its development, accelerate its progress or occasion its final acceptance and approval by the Church. But when some holy and learned man of God arises and gathers together the scattered traditions of past ages, sifts them out, studies their implications, finds their roots in the revealed word of God, and proceeds systematically to expound the theological justification for the special devotion in question, then the way is at last prepared for official action by the competent

ecclesiastical authority. Once this official approval is granted, the hitherto private devotion becomes part of the public worship of the Church, an authorized liturgical cult.

The highest authority in this matter has always been, of course, that of the Supreme Head of the Church, our Holy Father the Pope. According to an ancient custom, however,--a custom which persisted well on into the eighteenth century in many countries, notably in France--the local Ordinary was wont to approve and sanction, for his own diocese, the introduction of new feasts into the liturgy. This widespread practice was supported both by the common opinion of learned theologians and the authority of many prelates, saints and doctors, while the Holy See allowed it to continue without protest. Subsequently, indeed, it became clearly established that such innovations could be sanctioned only by the supreme authority of the Vicar of Christ. Certain feasts, therefore, which had theretofore been authorized by episcopal decree alone afterwards received the approval and sanction of the Holy See and were thus officially given the standing which they had long enjoyed by established custom and practice and by the tacit approval of the Supreme Pontiff.

Today, it is universally recognized and acknowledged that the only competent authority for the adoption of new feasts into the Liturgy of the Church is the Pope. Normally the Holy Father acts in these matters through the medium of the Sacred Congregation of Rites which was established in the latter half of the sixteenth century. In the usual course of the exercise of this authority, a new feast is at first approved for certain definite localities--dioceses, missionary regions,

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religious orders or congregations, pious or charitable institutions. Only later, when evidence is forthcoming that the faithful and the hierarchy earnestly desire and urgently plead for its extension to the universal Church, does the Holy See sanction its celebration throughout the whole world.

In its growth and development, the cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus has followed the broad outlines of this historical pattern. From the earliest times the faithful looked upon the love of God, made abundantly manifest in the Incarnation of the Son of God and the Redemption of mankind upon the Cross, as the central element, the very core, of all Christian devotion. The spontaneous response which the Holy Ghost stirred up in the souls of pious persons in answer to that unspeakable, infinite, divine love expressed itself in an ardent love of the Christian soul for Jesus Christ and in the love of all Christians for one another and for all men for the love and sake of Christ. These two elements--the love of God for man and the reciprocal love of man for God--have always been present in the devotions of Christian people. They were destined to enter in a very special manner into the theory and practice of the worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Moreover, the metaphorical significance of the term "heart" as the figurative expression of "love" has been at all times a familiar notion in the history of Christian worship, as indeed it has been from time immemorial a commonly accepted figure of speech in the language and literature of men. "To give one's heart" has ever been synonymous with "to give one's love." Yet in the early centuries of Christian devotion there is no trace of the complicated symbolical meaning later perceived in the use of this term and there is no indication that the Heart of Jesus was especially revered as the symbol or the seat of the love of Jesus Christ either for His Heavenly Father or for mankind. This was to come only much later in history, when the sacred humanity of Christ began to be the object of particular homage.

Likewise, the faithful followers of Christ realized from very early times that the piercing of the sacred side of Jesus on the Cross by

the lance of Longinus bore a deep and mysterious meaning, far beyond the mere physical act of a public executioner to assure himself that his victim is dead. For a long time, *however, the* mystic significance of this event was associated only with the origin of the Church of Christ. just as Eve, the spouse of Adam, had come forth from the side of her husband when God had cast a deep sleep upon him, so the Church, the Spouse of Christ, issued from His sacred wounded side when He had slept in death; for, from the sacred side of Jesus wounded by the lance *there gushed* forth blood and water, symbols of the origin of the Church of Christ and the fulness of redemption and grace which flowed from His Passion and death upon the souls of men ransomed by His Precious Blood and washed in the waters of Baptism. Thus too, the wounding of the heart referred to in the Song of Solomon-"vulnerasti cor meum,"(6)-was thought of in this context as the love of Jesus Christ for His Holy Spouse, the Church.

All these elements of traditional piety and devotion existed in some form or another in practically every period of Christian worship, but only in a scattered, disconnected and unrelated fashion. They had to await a much later period to be gathered together in that marvelous synthesis of doctrine and piety, the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which, in the words of Cardinal Pie, "is the very quintessence of Christianity and the substantial summary and compendium of all religion.(7)" It would be vain, therefore, as Dom Berliere aptly remarks, to seek any trace of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart in the early centuries of the Church.(8) The spiritual element of the love of God and the metaphorical significance of the heart, figuratively expressing love, were indeed there; but that does not constitute devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. There is as yet no mention of the union of that divine love of God with the burning love of soul of our Blessed Lord, expressed and symbolized in His Heart of flesh which beat within His sacred bosom and poured forth the last drop of Its Precious Blood upon the Cross for the salvation

(6). Canticle 4, 9

(7). Cardinal Pie, Oeuvres Episcopales, 3,37

(8). Dom Ursmer Berliere, La Dévotion au Sacré Coeur dans l'ordre de St. Benoît (Paris, 1923), P. 3

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of men. Yet, in the perspective of history, all these profound insights and tender effusions of love which characterized the devotions of pious Christians in ages past foreshadowed the formal devotion to the Sacred Heart as we know and love and practise it today.

These early adumbrations of this tender devotion gave place a little later to a somewhat clearer light. This came with the origin and spread of devotion to the sacred wounds of our Blessed Lord, especially to the wound in His sacred side. Many holy souls found a rich source of grace and consolation in the Devotion to the Five Wounds. For, as St. Gregory the Great had said, "Just as the dove finds nourishment in hollow places, so the simple soul seeks in the wounds of Christ the food that makes it strong." (9) St. Bernard and St. Francis of Assisi did much to propagate this form of devotion to the sacred body of Christ and the holy nuns, St. Mechtilde and St. Gertrude- whose influence was so strong in developing the devotion to the Sacred Heart-made frequent reference in their writings to the salutary power of devotion to the wounds of Christ.

The wound made by the lance in the sacred side of Jesus gradually became the object of a special and very popular devotion. As we look back over the historical evolution of Christian worship, this may well be regarded as the first stage in the development of Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. "Tardily, and as it were by a sudden enlightenment," says Dom Gougaud, "the thought

of the Fathers of the Church was drawn towards the Wounded Heart of Jesus. Mediaeval contemplatives and masters of the spiritual life began timidly to turn thither their own devotion and to guide the devotion of chosen souls in this direction."(10) In the Middle Ages, mystics, theologians, directors of souls frequently and eloquently extol the merits and advantages of devotion to the wounded Heart of Jesus and record innumerable instances of great spiritual rewards granted to those who practise it.

From that period onward, devotion to the Sacred Heart became a favorite devotion for many privileged souls and their number

(9). Migne, Comm. in Cant. Canticor, P.L .79:499.

(10). Dom G. Gougoud, 'Le coeur vulnéré du sauveur,« *Vie et arts liturgiques*», Man, 1921, P. 198.

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steadily increased. Although its devotees were quite aware that the object of their devotion was the Sacred Heart of Jesus and although their homage and love were consciously directed to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the practice of the devotion nevertheless most frequently appeared in connection with some other devotion, for instance, devotion to the Passion, the Five Wounds, the sacred body of Jesus pierced with the lance, or the Blessed Eucharist, from which it was not as yet clearly and definitely distinguished. Gradually, however, Devotion to the Sacred Heart developed still further in clarity and distinctness until, even before the lifetime of St. John Eudes, it had become known and was practised by many holy persons. St. Bonaventure, the holy nuns of Helfta, St. Mechtilde and St. *Gertrude*, the pious Carthusian monk, Lanspergius, the Venerable Abbot Louis of Blois and many others had shed great light upon the theory and practice of the devotion and St. John Eudes drew heavily upon their store of wisdom and piety in elaborating his doctrine and method of devotion to the Sacred Heart. Up to this time, however, it was still a private devotion with no special form of its own, no generally accepted mode of practice and no authorized method. Above all, no ecclesiastical authority had as yet given it formal and official approval. Its general character, although greatly clarified over the passing years, had not yet become quite definite and clear because nobody had accurately set forth in due theological form its proper, specific object, its distinctive end and purpose, its doctrinal foundation and the exact method of its practice.

It was the divinely appointed mission of St. John Eudes (for, as His Holiness, Pope Pius X has declared, St. John Eudes did not enter upon his work without divine inspiration) to inaugurate in the Church the public worship of the Sacred Heart. That mission could not have been accomplished, however, until he had first established the theological soundness of the devotion, defined its precise object, and provided a suitable liturgical Office and Mass for the proper celebration of the Feast of the Sacred Heart. These tasks he undertook with characteristic courage, zeal and learning. Moreover, the tireless energy he expended in propagating this most tender and salutary devotion not only *resulted in spreading far and wide a clearer*

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understanding of its aim and object but also deepened, developed, and spread its regular and formal practice among great multitudes of the faithful. At long last, the Devotion to the Sacred Heart was firmly established. To this great saint we owe the first public celebration of the Feast of the Sacred Heart in the liturgy of the Church. The heroic sanctity of his own personal life, his zeal for the establishment and propagation of his cherished devotion, his fruitful apostolate in its behalf, his great learning and piety, displayed both in the composition of his liturgical Offices and Masses in honor of the admirable Heart of Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus and in his enlightened exposition

and defense of the doctrinal foundations of this form of devotion and worship gained for St. John Eudes the honors of the altar as well as high titles of praise and reverence from the Sovereign Pontiffs who declared him Venerable, Blessed and Saint.

It is popularly believed that Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus originated with the revelations which our Blessed Lord granted to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque and that the Venerable Claude de la Colombière, St. Margaret Mary's spiritual director, was the first to preach that devotion to the people. But this is not true. What is true, however, is that the enormous importance of the mission which St. Margaret Mary received from our Lord Himself and the great zeal with which Father de la Colombière and many other priests of the Society of Jesus labored to fulfil the express desires of the Sacred Heart for spread of this devotion to the universal Church have unduly obscured the role of St. John Eudes as the Father, Doctor and Apostle of this beautiful devotion.

St. John Eudes had practised and preached devotion to the Sacred Heart for many years before Our Lord appeared to St. Margaret Mary. In fact, his zealous work had gone so far forth before that date, that the Office and Mass which he had composed in honor of the Sacred Heart received ecclesiastical approval some years before St. Margaret Mary entered the Convent of the Visitation, and the Feast of the Sacred Heart was publicly established and celebrated in several dioceses a year or so before the first of those marvelous apparitions of Our Lord to His holy and humble servant, St. Margaret Mary.

Nor was the character of the devotion, which St. John Eudes had

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preached, altered by the revelations made to this saintly nun. For, the Mass in honor of the Sacred Heart which St. John Eudes had composed and in which his teaching on the nature and purpose of devotion to the Sacred Heart is gloriously enshrined, was adopted for the celebration of the Feast prescribed by our Blessed Lord in one of His revelations to St. Margaret Mary and continued to be used even in convents of the Visitation Nuns for at least fifty years after the death of St. Margaret Mary.

Although St. John Eudes has been honored by the supreme authority of the Holy See with the enviable titles of "Author of the Liturgical Worship of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary" and "The Father, The Doctor and The Apostle of this devotion," surprisingly few persons are aware of the decisive part he played in establishing and propagating the now widespread Devotion to the Sacred Heart. Yet it was he who, inspired by the Holy Ghost, first thought of rendering public worship by a special liturgical Office and Mass to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It was he who inaugurated many solemn festivals in honor of the Sacred Heart, first in the institutions conducted by the religious communities of which he was the founder, namely, The Congregation of Jesus and Mary (Eudist Fathers) and the Order of Our Lady of Charity (Good Shepherd Nuns), and subsequently, with the approval of the hierarchy, in various dioceses of Normandy and Brittany. It was he who composed the Office and Mass to which these bishops gave their whole-hearted approval. It was he who laid firm the theological foundations upon which Devotion to the Sacred Heart, like all devotions of the Church, remains so solidly grounded. It was he who expounded and defended the doctrine and practice of Devotion to the Sacred Heart against its earliest adversaries. It was he who labored all his life long with unflagging zeal and notable success to spread Devotion to the Sacred Heart by his preaching, through his writings, in his missions, by his personal exhortation and example and by the founding of pious confraternities whose members dedicated themselves in a special manner to the practice and propagation of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. Upon these pious associations the Holy See showered its choicest favors and blessings, enriching the practice of the devotion cultivated by them with

numerous and precious indulgences.

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When all this labor of love had been accomplished and the ground so, well prepared for world-wide acceptance of this highly important devotion, our Blessed Lord appeared to the holy Visitation nun, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, and confided to her the desires of His most Sacred Heart. Jesus Christ Himself picked this saintly religious to be the divinely appointed instrument for the diffusion of devotion to His Sacred Heart throughout the length and breadth of Christendom, to be the privileged depository of those heavenly promises made by our Blessed Lord Himself in favor of all who love and practise this devotion, to be the providential means of establishing the Feast of the Sacred Heart to be celebrated on the Friday following the Octave of the Feast of Corpus Christi throughout the universal Church.

By the time the extraordinary favors which the Sacred Heart of Jesus had bestowed upon St. Margaret Mary became generally known and the revelations and promises made to her were made public, St. John Eudes had passed to his eternal reward. His work had been accomplished and his labors ended. The Office and Mass he had composed in honor of the Sacred Heart was already incorporated into the liturgy and the soil had been prepared by his apostolic zeal for the diffusion throughout the whole world of the devotion he so ardently loved. From that time onward the mission of St. Margaret Mary became the decisive factor in the spread of devotion to the Sacred Heart. The saint herself did not live to see the fulfilment of that mission, but the efforts of all those who espoused the holy cause (especially the work of Father de la Colombière and many other priests of the Society of Jesus) were at last crowned with success and the Sacred Heart finally conquered the whole world.

In the fulness and fervor of our gratitude to our dear Lord for having disclosed the love of His most Sacred Heart by means of special revelations made to His servant, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, it behooves us to remember with equal fulness and fervor of gratitude the less striking, though not less important, mission which He deigned to confide to the great saint to whose zeal and learning the Church owes the origin of the public worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the demonstration of its doctrinal stability, the statement of its theological justification and the earliest diffusion of its practice. It is but just that due honor be paid to all whom God has chosen to

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be His instruments in the glorious work of establishing and propagating the worship and love of the Sacred Heart of His Divine Son. It cannot detract from the honor due to St. Margaret Mary to confess and proclaim with the Holy See the honor due to that other holy servant of God, St. John Eudes. We should join with St. Margaret Mary herself and with all those good priests who helped to further the explicit desires of the Sacred Heart and who, please God, are with her now in heaven, in gratefully acknowledging and rejoicing in the privilege which Jesus Christ our Lord has bestowed upon St. John Eudes in deigning to make use of his mind and heart, his tongue and pen, to set up in the Church and spread abroad the public worship of His most Sacred Heart.

From early childhood, St. John Eudes had cherished a tender devotion to our Blessed Lady, a devotion which grew more intense and deeper through all the years of his long life. Only in his young manhood, after reading St. Mechtilde and St. Gertrude, did he begin to practise Devotion to the Sacred Heart. In his early work, *The Life and the Kingdom of Jesus*, we find unmistakable traces of what was later to become the full picture of this devotion which was drawn with the bold firm strokes of his learned pen in the twelfth book of his monumental work, *Le Coeur Admirable de la Très Sacré Mère de Dieu*. It is this book which is here published in English translation.

Mary had led St. John Eudes to Jesus. And in Jesus he found Mary more glorious, more lovable, more admirable than ever. That is why, in the thoughts and affections of St. John Eudes Mother and Son are never separated. The love he praises in the most pure Heart of Mary is the love of Jesus Himself; and he sings with one single hymn, *Ave, Cor Sanctissimum*, the love of the admirable Heart of Mary and the love of the adorable Heart of Jesus. This does not indicate, as some have thought, a certain confusion in his mind regarding the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. On the contrary, it manifests a penetrating insight into the deepest meaning of the devotion and a profound appreciation of the mystery of sanctification, the mystery of that union in love which transforms the soul and makes it one with God. St. John Eudes was keenly aware of the infinite difference

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between the honor due to Mary, the Mother of God (in whom the love of Jesus, though shared in the plenitude of creaturely capacity, was still a gratuitous gift of God), and the supreme honor due to her Divine Sort (in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells and whose love is God's subsistent and eternal love, in which Our Lady shares). Even while his thoughts were occupied with establishing the cult of the admirable Heart of Mary, his plans were maturing for the writing of his treatise and his meditations on the Sacred Heart of Jesus and for the composition of his Office and Mass in honor of the adorable Heart of our divine Lord.

Although the book he wrote on *The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus* is not now extant, and perhaps was never published, the section of his writings which is here presented in English contains the substance of his teaching on the subject. It is the first theological treatise ever written on Devotion to the Sacred Heart and, when read in conjunction with the Office and Mass of the Sacred Heart which St. John Eudes composed and with appropriate passages in the earlier sections of this same great work, *Le Coeur Admirable*, provides as profound and exact a study of the theology of the Sacred Heart as has ever been produced. Certain expressions which St. John Eudes uses to convey his ideas are no longer in current usage but the doctrine expounded in this work has stood the test of time. Many learned writers would have saved themselves much labor in developing the theory of the devotion to the Sacred Heart and not a few historians of the devotion would have been spared undue mistakes had they given more careful attention to this work.

For St. John Eudes, as for all Catholics, the ultimate object of all devotion is God, in the unity of His divine nature and in the Trinity of His Persons. But God sent His Only-begotten Son to redeem and save mankind from the penalty of sin. Through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour and through Him alone can we mortals have access to divinity. All the religious life of Christians is, therefore, centered in the Word of God made Flesh. Yet it extends to all Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity and, by participation, to all persons, places and things made holy unto God.

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The worship of the Incarnate Word embraces all that Jesus is in Himself—His divine nature and His sacred humanity—and to all He does in heaven, on earth and in hell, whilst the homage which is offered through any and every act of worship is directed to the Person of the Word. Whence, in virtue of the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures in Christ, every part and every perfection of the being and the life of Jesus Christ may be made the object of a special devotion provided only that it be not separated from the Person of the Incarnate Word. Jesus is adorable in Himself and in all the mysteries of His existence, in all the perfections of His divine and human natures, in His human soul, with all its powers, faculties and virtues, in His human body, with all its parts and organs, in all His thoughts and words and deeds. Above all, Jesus is adorable in the love He bears to His Heavenly Father, in the love He bestows upon His holy Mother and in the love He

lavishes on all His creatures.

But Jesus is both God and Man. Being very God, He loves His Heavenly Father with an infinite and eternal love and He loves us, too, from all eternity with that uncreated love which moved Him to *become Man* to save us from perdition and to fill our souls with His divine life and love. Being very man, He loves us with all the fervor of His most perfect soul, a human love so tender and so strong, so ardent and so full, that no other human love could be conceived to be so great. The uncreated love of God, which is the principle and source of Christ's created human love and that human love itself, more powerful than any love mere man could ever cherish, reverberate within the Heart of Flesh which throbs within His sacred bosom and adds the human glow of purest passion and emotion to all that great torrent of love which flows from all eternity, through time and unto everlasting.

It is this immense and ineffable love of Jesus Christ in all its aspects and in all its phases which is the specific object of Devotion to the Sacred Heart.

St. John Eudes had gleaned from his prayerful study of Holy Writ many meanings given by the inspired writers to the word, heart. He found the word sometimes referred to the material,

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corporeal organ which we bear in our breasts; sometimes it was used to signify the memory, the understanding or the will; again, it meant the highest point of the soul, the apex mentis of patristic and mediaeval writers, the seat of contemplation or even the whole interior of man; finally, the Holy Ghost was referred to as the "new spirit" and the "new heart" which God would fain give to men and the Son of God Himself was called the Heart of the Eternal Father.

All *these meanings* St. John Eudes gathered up into one theory which embraced them all. For him, the Sacred Heart of Jesus was the synthesis of (a) the divine, uncreated love of Jesus Christ (i.e., the essential love of God, common to all Three Divine Persons of the Most Holy Trinity; the notional love of God, the reciprocal love of God the Father and God the Son from which the Holy Ghost *proceeds*; the personal love of God which is the Divine Person of the Holy Ghost Himself); (b) the human love of Jesus proceeding from His human will and affecting concomitantly all the higher powers of His soul; and (c) the sensible, passionate, emotional love of Jesus, symbolized by the Heart of Flesh, the seat of the emotions, and which St. John Eudes also regarded as the organ of the passions.

To designate this threefold object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, St. John Eudes distinguished three Hearts in Jesus, namely, *His divine Heart* (indicating His uncreated love), *His spiritual Heart* (indicating the love of His soul, His human will and higher faculties), and *His corporeal Heart* (indicating the echo of love in the bodily organ which is its symbol and the seat of its emotional warmth). These expressions are no longer in use but they convey a doctrine which has not been altered with the ages. St. John Eudes hastens to add that these three Hearts are but one absolutely single Heart, filled with infinite love for the Holy Trinity and inconceivable charity for mankind; for, he says, the divine Heart of Jesus is the soul, the life and the heart of both His spiritual Heart and His corporeal Heart.

The aim and purpose of Devotion to the Sacred Heart are to inflame our hearts with a reciprocal love of Jesus and to stir up in our souls appropriate acts of adoration, thanksgiving, repentance and petition enlivened by that love. For, the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a "flaming

furnace of love" which, like a burning fire, seeks to enkindle in our souls an ardent flame of love and to transform them with its consuming power. Father Bainvel has well said, "The whole Devotion to the Sacred Heart can be summed up in this: on the one side, a love which calls for love, a tender, overflowing love which calls for a proportionate love; on the other side, a love which answers the call of love, a love concerned not to fall too far short of the immense love which has anticipated and aroused it." This is the doctrine of St. John Eudes as may be clearly seen in the pages that follow. In this fashion he understood those powerful words of our Blessed Lord, "I am come to cast fire on the earth. And what will I, but that it be kindled." (11)

Every act of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus must be enlivened by this all-pervading spirit of love. St. John Eudes sums up under four general headings the appropriate acts which constitute the practice of this devotion. First, to adore the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Secondly, to praise, bless, glorify and thank Him for His love. Thirdly, to ask pardon for our offenses against His great love and to make reparation for them. Fourthly, to love Him in return for all His love and beg Him to establish within our hearts the reign of His Holy love.

In the concluding words of that beautiful prayer, Ave, Cor Sanctissimum, composed by St. John Eudes and prescribed by him for daily recitation in the religious communities he founded, these acts, proper to the devotion to the Sacred Heart, are set forth with unusual fervor and unction. This prayer teaches us that the Sacred Heart must be adored, praised and glorified in all His manifestations of love. With our whole hearts, with our whole strength and with all our minds we must return this love. To Him we offer, dedicate, consecrate and immolate our hearts that He may wholly take and possess them, live and reign in them now and always, forever and forever.

The contemplation of the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for His Heavenly Father, for His Blessed Mother, for all members of His Church Triumphant, Suffering and Militant, constitutes the deepest foundation of devotion to the Sacred Heart. Upon this foundation St. (11). Luke 12, 49

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John Eudes builds the whole practice of the Devotion. From the contemplation of these great truths, he bids us pass to the consideration of what the love of God has done for each of us in particular by creating us, by redeeming us, by giving us the gift of divine grace and the promise of eternal reward. And, since that great love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is especially manifest in the sufferings and death of Our Lord upon the Cross and in the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist, there exists a particularly cogent reason for practising the devotion to the Sacred Heart in and through devotion to the Passion of our Saviour and to the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

The most striking characteristic of the teaching of St. John Eudes on Devotion to the Sacred Heart--as indeed of his whole teaching on the spiritual life--is that Christ is always its centre. Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ--per Ipsum, cum Ipso et in Ipso--all devotion and all piety achieves its end.

Since the Sacred Heart of Jesus is God's Love symbolically (though by no means merely metaphorically, figuratively or arbitrarily) expressed, all those acts which belong to strictly divine worship (Cultus patriae) have first place in this devotion. For, God Himself is its object. But these acts, as such, are common to all forms of divine worship. In order to become part of a particular devotion they require to be specified by the formal aspect of the particular object which

characterizes that devotion. In the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, this object is the love of the Word Made Flesh both for His Father in Heaven and for all men; and its end is to arouse in the hearts of all who practise it an ardent reciprocal love for Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God. Thus all the particular acts appropriate to the practice of this devotion and to the achievement of its end and purpose must stem from the specific act which constitutes its proper act and marks it as a special and distinct devotion, namely, the act of love. The love of Jesus, symbolically expressed and most aptly conveyed by the phrase, "The Sacred Heart of Jesus," evokes a reciprocal love from the hearts of all men. All other acts which enter into the practice of this devotion flow from this, its proper act, and are instinct with the spirit which it breathes.

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In the teaching of St. John Eudes, this order and balance among the various acts which constitute the method and practice of Devotion to the Sacred Heart are admirably maintained. And, although the Devotion, as preached and taught by St. John Eudes, is suffused with the tenderest affection and unction, this is always controlled by strict theological reason and never becomes purely sentimental or emotional. The acts of dedication, immolation, consecration and reparation each has its proper place within that order. They all form part of the full practice of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, each in its proper proportion. All are dependent upon, and subordinate to, the specific act proper to this particular devotion, the act of love for the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which in turn is incorporated within the whole body of those acts of religion which belong to divine worship in its strictest form. In a word, the doctrine of St. John Eudes is unequivocally Christocentric.

The influence which, since the Renaissance, has tended to make human thought and life in all its phases, even in its spiritual and religious aspects, a man-centered life, is entirely absent from the spirit of St. John Eudes. Christ for him has been, is and always shall be the Centre of our life, the focus of all our thoughts and words and deeds. "Christ yesterday, Christ today, Christ forever."

There are notable indications in the writings of scholars who are expert in the history and the theology of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart pointing towards a deeper and fuller understanding of the teaching of St. John Eudes. The contrasts which have at times been drawn between the devotion to the Sacred Heart as preached by St. John Eudes and as revealed to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque are being progressively revealed as historically and theologically indefensible. Please God, the time is not far off when the whole preaching and practice of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart will be consciously enlivened by the full theological spirit which St. John Eudes first*infused into the great synthesis of doctrine which he elaborated as the basis of the public worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

GERALD B. PHELAN, The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto, September 20, 1944.

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CHAPTER I

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS A FURNACE OF BURNING LOVE FOR HIS ETERNAL FATHER

Innumerable reasons urge us to offer our worship and honor to the Sacred Heart of our most adorable Saviour with extraordinary devotion and reverence. All these reasons are embodied in the words of St. Bernardine of Siena, who calls this loving Heart: *Fornacem ardentissimae caritatis ad inflammandum et incendendum orbem universum*. "A furnace of ardent love to enkindle and inflame the whole universe." (1) Most certainly the admirable Heart of Jesus is a furnace of love for His Divine Father, for His Blessed Mother, and for His Church Triumphant, Militant and Suffering, and also for each one of us. This we shall see in the following chapters.

Let us consider, first of all, the most brilliant flames of this great furnace of love for the Eternal Father. What mind can conceive and what tongue express the tiniest spark of this illimitable flaming furnace of love for His Father? It is a love worthy of such a Father and of such a Son. It is a love that most perfectly equals the ineffable perfections of its beloved object. Here is a Son infinitely loving a Father who is infinitely lovable, a God loving a God. Here is love in its very essence loving eternal love: a love that is boundless, incomprehensible, infinite, passing all limits, and loving in turn a love that is boundless, incomprehensible, infinite, and passing all limits.

(1). Sermon 514, *de Passione Domini*, P. 2, tit. 1. In the picture called *Our Lady of Hearts* St. John Eudes represented the Sacred Hearts; of Jesus and Mary by the emblem of 2 furnace of love, whither his disciples go to light torches to enkindle the universe. It is really but a beautiful application of the words of Our Lord in St. Luke 12, 49: "I am come to cast fire on the earth. And what will I, but that it be kindled?"

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In a word, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, whether considered in His divinity or in His humanity, is more ardently enkindled with love for His Father, loving Him infinitely more at any given moment, than all the hearts of angels and saints together can love Him throughout all eternity.

There is no greater love than to give one's life for the person one loves. The Son of God so loves His Father that He would be ready to sacrifice His own life again, as He sacrificed it upon the Cross, and to sacrifice it by suffering the same torments for the love of His Father (if such were God's holy will) that He suffered on Calvary. Since His love is boundless, He would be ready to lay down His life throughout the whole universe as He did upon Calvary. Since His love is eternal and infinite, He would be ready to make this sacrifice over and over again, if it were possible, and with infinite suffering.

"O Divine Father, Creator, Preserver, and Ruler of the whole world, there is no one so lovable as Thou. Thy manifold and infinite perfections, and the unspeakable blessings Thou hast in store for all Thy creatures, place upon them endless obligations to serve, honor and love Thee with all their strength. Yet there is no one in the whole world who is so little loved as Thou, no one who is so scorned and insulted by most of Thy creatures. Oderunt me et Patrem meum. 'They have hated both me and my Father'"(2) Jesus Thy Son has said, 'without cause they have hated me. I have never done them any harm but have lavished on them all manner of good': *Odio habuerunt me gratis*.(3) I behold

hell filled with an untold number of the damned, ceaselessly venting their multitudinous blasphemies against Thy divine majesty. I behold the earth filled with unbelievers, Jews, heretics, and false Christians who treat Thee as if Thou wert their archenemy.

"But two thoughts are my consolation and joy. The first is that Thy perfections and Thy splendors, O my God, are so admirable. Thou dost take so great a pleasure and so perfect a satisfaction in the infinite love of Thy Divine Son and in all that He hath suffered

(2). John 15, 24

(3). John x 5, 25.

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with that infinite love, to repair the injuries that Thy enemies have striven and still strive to do Thee, that they have not been able or ever will be able to detract the least iota from Thy glory and Thy felicity.

"The second joyful thought is that Jesus, Thy Well-beloved Son, by His incomparable overflowing goodness willed to be our Head and chose us to be His members. He has associated us with Himself in His ineffable love for Thee. He has given us as a result the power to love Thee with the same love wherewith He loves Thee, with a love eternal, boundless, and infinite."

To understand this truth well, take note of three important facts. First, the love of the Son of God for His Heavenly Father, being eternal, does not pass away, but remains forever, stable and abiding. Secondly, the love of the Son of God for His Father fills all things by its immensity; consequently it abides in us and in our hearts: *Intimo meo, intimior*, as St. Augustine says. Thirdly, as the Father of Jesus has given us all things in giving us His Son--*cum ipso omnia donavit* (4)-the love of the Son of God for the Father belongs to us, and we can and must make use of it as a possession that is ours. On this basis, I can, with my Saviour, love His Divine Father and mine, with the same love wherewith He loves Him; with a love which I can put into practice, thus:

"O my Saviour, I give myself to Thee to unite myself to Thy eternal, boundless, and infinite love for Thy Almighty Father. O Adorable Father, I offer Thee all the eternal, boundless, and infinite love of Thy Son Jesus as a love which is mine. just as our lovable Saviour says to us: *Sicut dilexit me Pater, et ego dilexi vos*, 'As the Father hath loved me, I also love you,'(5) I may say to Thee: 'O Divine Father, I love Thee, even as Thy Son loveth Thee.'"

The Father's love for the Son is no less mine than the Son's love for the Father; therefore I can make use of it, thus.

"O Father of Jesus, I give myself to Thee to be united to Thy boundless and eternal love for Thy Beloved Son. O my Jesus, I offer Thee all the eternal, boundless, and infinite love of Thy Father, and

(4). Rom. 8, 32.

(5). John 15, 9.

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I offer it to Thee as a love which is mine:' In this way, as our loving Redeemer says to us: 'I love you as my Father loveth me; I can say in turn to Him: 'I love Thee, my Saviour, as Thy Eternal Father loveth Thee.'"

O ineffable goodness! O wondrous love! What bliss for us that the Eternal Father gives us His

Only-begotten Son, and with Him all things else! He gives Him to us not only to be our Redeemer, our Brother, and our Father, but also to be our Head. What a privilege to be members of the Son of God, to be one with Him, as the members are one with the Head, hence to have but one spirit, one heart, one love with Christ, and thus to be able to love His Divine Father, and our Father, with one and the same Heart and level

It is, therefore, not surprising that, speaking of us to His Heavenly Father, Our Lord says: *Dilexisti eos sicut et me dilexisti*, "Thou hast loved them as Thou hast also loved me," (6) and He implores Him to love us always: *Dilectio, qua dilexisti me, in ipsis sit.* (7) If we love the Father as His Son loves Him, He loves us as He loves His Divine Son. He beholds us in His Son as members of Christ who are but one with the Son and love the Father with the same filial love. Truly He loves us with one and the same Heart and love wherewith He loves His Son.

Would that heaven and earth and all creatures might be changed into a pure flame of love for the Father of goodness and for the only Son of His divine delight, as St. Paul calls him: *Transtulit nos in regnum Filii dilectionis suae!* (8)

(6). John 77, 23.

(7). Ibid. 17, 26.

(8). Col. 1, 13.

CHAPTER 2

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS A FURNACE OF ARDENT LOVE FOR HIS MOST HOLY MOTHER

NOTHING is easier than the proof of this truth. The ineffable graces with which our Saviour endowed His Blessed Mother clearly manifest that His love for her is a love without measure or limit. She is, after His Divine Father, the first and most worthy object of His love. He loves her incomparably more than all His angels, saints and other creatures together. The extraordinary favors with which He honored her and the wonderful privileges He conferred upon her, far beyond any other creature, are clear proofs of this truth. Let us examine these numerous and impressive privileges.

First of all, the Blessed Virgin is the only human being whom the Son of God chose from all eternity to elevate above all created things, to set on the highest throne of glory and grandeur, and to adorn with the most admirable of all dignities, the Motherhood of God.

Let us descend in spirit from eternity to the fulness of time, and we shall see this hallowed Virgin alone among the children of Adam in her preservation from original sin, through a very special privilege~ in testimony of which Holy Church celebrates annually throughout the world the Feast of her Immaculate Conception.

Not only did the love of God's Son for His most holy Mother preserve her from original sin, but over and above that, He filled her from the moment of her conception with such eminent grace that, according to several great theologians, it surpassed the grace of the chief of the Seraphim and of the greatest of all the saints even taken in its perfection. She alone among all the children of Adam enjoyed this privilege.

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Moreover, from the first moment of her existence, she possessed the privilege of the light of reason and faith, by which she began to know God, to adore Him, and to give herself to Him. In virtue of another privilege she alone began to love God from the initial moment of her life, and she loved Him more ardently than the most flaming of the Seraphim. She alone loved Him continuously, incessantly, throughout the whole course of her life. For this reason we say that her life was one single act of love from the first to the last moment, an act that was never interrupted.

She is the only creature who has always perfectly accomplished the first of the divine commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength." (1) Hence several Doctors of the Church assert that her love was doubled with each hour, or even, according to some, with each moment. When a soul makes an act of love with his whole heart and according to the whole extent of the grace within him, his love becomes twice as great as it was before. The Blessed Virgin loved God continuously with all her heart and all her strength. If she had ten degrees of love at the first instant of her life, she had twenty at the second; if she had twenty at the second, she had forty at the third. Thus her love was doubled every moment or at least every hour throughout the course of her life. You can imagine, therefore, what a furnace and what fires of divine love inflamed that virginal heart in the last days of her abode upon earth.

Let us pass on to the consideration of the matchless privileges by which the Only Son of Mary enriched His holy Mother. According to several eminent Doctors, He gave to her alone the grace to merit, by her prayers and tears, the accomplishment of His Incarnation. She alone gave human flesh, from her own substance, to Him who was born from all eternity in the bosom of God of the substance of the Father. Yes, Mary gave a portion of her virginal substance and of her most pure blood to fashion the sacred humanity of the Son of God. In addition, she cooperated with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost in the union which was formed of her substance with the Person of the Son of God. Thus she participated in the accomplishment of the mystery of the Incarnation, and consequently in the greatest miracle that God ever has or ever will or even ever can perform.

(I). Deut. 6, 5.

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There is another privilege that contributes to the matchless honor of Our Lady. The most pure blood and the virginal flesh which she offered for this mystery will remain united forever, by the hypostatic union, to the Person of the Incarnate Word. The virginal blood and the precious flesh of Mary are, therefore, to be adored in the humanity of the Son of God with the same adoration that is due to that very humanity itself, and they will be forever the object of the adoration of all the angels and saints. O incomparable privilege! O ineffable love of Jesus for His most holy Mother!

There are still other prerogatives. That loving Mother also gave the flesh and blood from which the adorable Heart of the Child Jesus was formed. The Sacred Heart of the Son of God received its nourishment and its increase from that same blood, during the nine months of its abode in the holy womb of the Blessed Virgin.

The incomparable Virgin is alone in occupying the place of father and mother in respect to the God-Man, and hence in having paternal and maternal authority over Him, and in receiving the honor of being obeyed by the Sovereign of the Universe, an honor that is greater than she would receive from the homage of all created beings.

She alone is Mother and Virgin together, and according to some holy Doctors she made the vow of virginity from the moment of her Immaculate Conception. She alone bore in her womb for nine months Him whom the Eternal Father embraces in His bosom for all eternity. She alone gave life to Him who is eternal life and who gives life to all living things.

Accompanied by St. Joseph, she abode with that adorable Saviour for the space of thirty years. O wondrous thing! Our divine Redeemer came upon earth to save mankind. Yet He set aside only three years and three months of His life for the work of preaching and instructing. The other thirty years He devoted to the ever-increasing sanctification of His holy Mother. What a wealth of graces and blessings He incessantly poured into the soul of His Blessed Mother! With what flames of heavenly fire did the divine Heart of Jesus enkindle ever

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more and more the virgin Heart of His most worthy Mother, especially when those two Hearts were so close to each other and so firmly united, while she bore Him in her womb, nursed Him, and held Him in her arms; during the whole time that she lived with Him familiarly as a mother with her child, eating and drinking with Him, praying with Him, and hearing the divine words coming from His adorable lips as so many coals of fire ever enkindling more and more her most holy Heart with

the sacred fire of divine love!

After this who can estimate how ardently the blessed Heart of the Mother of the Saviour was afire with love for God? Certainly there is great reason to believe that, if her Son had not miraculously preserved her until the decreed hour of death, she would have died of love, not only once, like St. Teresa, but a thousand times, since her love was immeasurably more than that of the great Carmelite mystic. From earliest childhood her love was sufficiently intense to have caused her death and, when her Beloved Son did call her, she died of love that He might give her, after His own, the happiest and most glorious life possible.

Let us repeat concerning the marvelous Virgin that she is the only one, after her Divine Son, to have been transported body and soul into heaven. In accordance with the tradition of Holy Church, Mary's Assumption is solemnly celebrated throughout the world. She alone is raised on high above all the choirs of angels and saints and sits at the right hand of her Son. She alone is crowned Queen of heaven and earth, of angels and men, the Sovereign Empress of the universe. She alone has all power over the Church Triumphant, Militant, and Suffering. *In Jerusalem potestas mea.*(2) She alone has more influence with her Divine Son Jesus than all the citizens of heaven together: *Data est tibi omnis potestas in coelo et in terra*, says St. Peter Damian.

There is yet another particular privilege, emphasized in these words of St. Anselm: *Te, Domina, tacente, nullus orabit, nullus adjuvabit; te autem orante, omnes (nempe Sancti) or omnes adjuvabunt*: "O my Queen, if thou prayest not for anyone or for anything, no one shall proffer help, but when thou prayest all the saints pray with thee, all the saints put forth their aid." (2). Eccles. 24, 15

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one shall proffer help, but when thou prayest all the saints pray with thee, all the saints put forth their aid."

Is it not true then that here is a great number of privileges and advantages with which our Saviour has honored His most holy Mother? What has constrained Him to do so? The burning love with which His filial Heart is all on fire for her. Why does He love her so much?

1. She is His Mother, from whom He received a new being and a new life by the new birth which she gave Him on earth.

2. He loves her alone more than He loves all creatures together because she loves Him more than all created things.

3. He loves her most ardently because she cooperated with Him in the accomplishment of His great work of the Redemption of the world. Her cooperation was to, give Him a mortal body capable of suffering and of sustaining the torments of His Passion. She also imparted to Him the Precious Blood which He shed for us, and she offered that body, that blood, and that life as a sacrifice at the foot of the Cross.

As our Saviour's love for His Blessed Mother is so great, we must be obliged to love and serve her to the best of our ability. Let us then love her with her Son Jesus, and if we love them let us hate what they hate and love what they love. Let us have but one heart with them, a heart detesting what they detest, that is, sin, especially the sins against charity, humility and purity, and a heart that loves what they love, particularly the poor, all Christian virtues, and trials. O Mother of goodness, obtain for us these graces from Thy Son!

CHAPTER 3

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS HAS ENDOWED
HIS BLESSED MOTHER WITH WONDROUS
AUTHORITY AND POWER IN HEAVEN**

LET US ADD to the foregoing privileges still another prerogative, the greatest of all. It is this: the Mother of God is eternally associated in heaven not only with the highest authority of the Eternal Father, His adorable paternity, but likewise she possesses the authority of the Mother of the Divine Son as on earth: *Et erat subditus illis.* (1) This is a greater glory for her than if she exercised power over a million worlds. Her Son infinitely surpasses her in glory, power and majesty; yet He will eternally look upon her and honor her as His real Mother. His place as Son of God, says St. Ambrose, did not dispense Him while on earth from the divine and natural obligation which He had like all other children of obeying His Mother, according to the words: *Et erat subditus illis.* This submission was to Him not a matter of shame but rather of honor and glory; it was voluntary and proceeded not from weakness but from filial devotion: *Non utique infirmitatis,* as this holy Father declares, *est ista subjectio, sed pietatis.*

Several eminent theologians are agreed that the Mother of the Saviour had actual authority over the person of her Son, whether it was by a right of nature or by virtue of His goodness and humility. The greatest of all names that one can bestow upon the Blessed Virgin, says the devout Gerson, is that of Mother of God, all the more because that character gives her authority and natural dominion over the Lord of the whole world: *Quoniam per hoc habet veluti auctoritatem, et naturale dominium ad totius mundi Dominum.* (2) One must not

(1). Luke 2, 51.

(2). Serm. de Annunt.

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imagine that her Son, having given her this power on earth, would take it away from her now that she is reigning in heaven. His respect and love for her now are just as great as when He was on earth.

It is only right, therefore, to believe that she is as powerful in heaven as she was on earth and that she still maintains there a measure of authority over her Divine Son. *Eadem potestas est Matris et Filii,* says Arnold Of Chartres; or as Richard of St. Lawrence puts it: *Quae ab omnipotente Filio omnipotens facta est.* The Son and the Mother, having but one and the same flesh, but one and the same heart and will, have also, in a certain way, but one and the same power.

Let us listen to the words of a worthy and learned prelate, George, Archbishop of Nicomedia. Addressing the glorious Virgin he says: "Nothing resists thy might, everything obeys thy imperium; He who is born of thee hath raised thee above all things; thy Creator makes thy glory His and deems Himself honored by those who honor thee; thy Son rejoices beholding the honor that we give thee, and as if He were paying off the obligations He hath to thee, He gladly grants thee whatsoever thou dost ask Him: *Nihil, O Virgo, tuae resistit potentiae; tuam gloriam Filius putat esse propriam, et quasi exsolvens debitum, implet petitiones tuas.*" (3)

We know for certain, says St. Anselm, that the Blessed Virgin is so filled with grace and merit that she always obtains the fruition of her desires: *Scimus beatam Virginem tanti esse meriti et gratiae apud Deum, ut nihil eorum, quae velit efficere, possit aliquatenus effectu carere.* (4) It is impossible, says St. Germanus, Archbishop of Constantinople, that her prayers should not be heard, everywhere and in all things, because her Divine Son is always submissive to her behests: *Non potest*

non exaudiri, cum Deus ut verae Matri; suae, quoad omnia, et per omnia, et in omnibus morem gerat.
(5)

Utrinque stupor, says St. Bernard, utrinque miraculum; miracles on both sides. Quod Deus feminae obtemperet, humilitas absque exemplo; et quod Deo femina principetur, sublimitas sine socio: "That God

(3). Orat. de Oblat. Deiparae.

(4). De Excel, Virg.. cap. 12.

(5). Serm. 2 in B. Mar. dormit.

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should obey a woman is humility unexampled, and that a woman should command God is an authority which has no like." Hence it is that St. Peter Damian is not afraid to say that our Blessed Lady appears in heaven, before the sacred altar of our reconciliation, *non solum rogans sed imperans*, "not only as a servant but as a mother who commands." (6) *Roga Patrem, jube nato, jure Matris impera*, sings the Church of Paris in one of its sequences: "When thou hast aught to ask of the Eternal Father, O holy Virgin, resort to prayer and supplication; but when it is a question of the Son, then thy maternal authority gives thee the right to utter a command."

If anyone should claim that here the creature is being put above the Creator, I would ask him whether Sacred Scripture raises Josue above God when it says that the sun stood still and God obeyed the voice of a man. (7) No, this is not putting the *creature above* the Creator; the fact is that the Son of God has such love and respect for His holy Mother that her prayer to Him is equal to a command.

The Blessed Virgin, says St. Albertus Magnus, (8) is able to entreat her Son for the salvation of her servants, and she is able to command Him with the authority of a Mother. This is the favor we ask of her, he adds, when we use the words: *Monstra te esse Matrem*. It is a frequent prayer of the Church, a prayer that is most pleasing to her and most profitable to our souls. It is as if we said to her: Most holy Mother of God, let us see the incomparable mercies with which thy motherly heart is filled on behalf of thy most unworthy children; show us the mighty power that thy most benign heart hath upon the most merciful Heart of thy beloved Son: *Monstra te esse Matrem, sumat per te preces, qui pro nobis natus tulit esse tuus*.

(6). Serm de Nativ. B. Mariae

(7). JOSUE 10, 74.

(8). De Laud. Virg., Jib. 2.

CHAPTER 4

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS WAS FILLED
WITH BITTER SORROW AT THE SIGHT OF
HIS LOVING MOTHER'S ANGUISH
DURING HIS PASSION**

As THE ADORABLE HEART of our Saviour was on fire with infinite love for His most holy Mother, the anguish which He bore in seeing her plunged into a sea of sorrow at the time of His Passion was beyond the power of human word or thought. The Blessed Virgin was the Mother of our Redeemer and she ever sustained in her heart an unceasing combat of love. She knew that it was God's will that her Beloved Son should suffer and die to save souls. Thus her most ardent love for that divine will and for the salvation of souls placed her in utter submission to the commands of God. Her incomparable motherly love for her dear Son, however, caused her unspeakable sorrow, in view of the torments that He was to suffer to redeem the world.

The saints teach that when the day of His Passion had come, in accordance with the loving obedience with which He always honored His holy Mother, and the goodness He always showed in consoling His friends in their affliction, He took leave of His dear Mother before the beginnings of His sufferings. To do all things out of obedience to the will of His Father and His Mother, since she had not a will different from the Father's, He asked permission of her to carry out what His Eternal Father had commanded Him. He told her that it was the will of the Father that she should accompany Him to the foot of the Cross and that, after His death, she should wrap His body in a shroud and place it in the tomb. The saints also teach that He commanded her what to do and where to remain until His resurrection.

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It is also possible that He revealed to her what He had to suffer, as much to prepare her as to encourage her to accompany Him in His sufferings. Because their interior sorrows were unutterable, they did not declare them to each other in words; their eyes met and their Hearts understood their mutual afflictions. The most perfect love of both and their entire conformity to the divine will did not permit any imperfection in their natural feelings. On the one hand, the Saviour being the Only Son of His beloved Mother felt very keenly her sorrows; but, on the other, being her God and willing to fortify her in the greatest sorrow ever borne by a human being, He consoled her by His divine words, which she heard and kept carefully in her Heart. He poured an abundance of new grace into her soul so that she might endure and overcome the exceedingly terrible sorrows prepared for her. These sorrows were so great that if it had been possible and fitting for her to suffer in place of her Son, it would have been easier for her to do so. Her torments would thus have been much more bearable than the sight of her Son's Passion. It would have been infinitely preferable for her to give her life for Him than to watch Him suffer such dreadful tortures. Since God had willed otherwise, she offered her Heart and Jesus gave His body, so that each should suffer what God had ordained. Mary had to suffer all the torments of her Son in her extremely sensitive Heart; Jesus had to endure in His body inexplicable torments and in His Heart the inconceivable sufferings of His holy Mother.

When He had taken leave of His Mother, the Saviour plunged Himself into the immense ocean of His sorrows, and His desolate Mother accompanied Him in spirit as she remained in constant prayer. Thus that sad day began for her with prayers, tears, inner agonies, and a most perfect submission to the divine will, as she uttered in the depths of her Heart what her Son said to His Father in the Garden of Olives: "Father, not my will but thine be done."⁽¹⁾ The night that our Redeemer was seized in the

Garden of Olives, the Jews led Him, bound and manacled, first to the House of Annas, then to that of Caiphas, where, weary of mocking and insulting Him, they kept Him a prisoner until the next day.
(1) LUKE 22, 42.

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St. John the Evangelist also left the house of Caiphas, whether by in order from our Saviour or by some divine inspiration, and went to the house of the Blessed Virgin to inform her of what had taken place. Who, O my God, could express the grief and sorrow of the Mother of Jesus as His beloved disciple recounted what had happened since the opening events of the Passion? Surely the feelings and the griefs of them both were such that whatever one might say of them would be as naught compared with the reality. They conversed more with their hearts than with their tongues, more with tears than with words, particularly the Blessed Virgin, whose grief was so intense that she could give no outward expression to it. Later, when the time came to accompany her Only Son to Calvary, she set out at daybreak in silence, even as her Divine Son, her Lamb, took up His Cross without a word. She bathed the way with her tears and her Heart set up a thousand ardent sighs to heaven. Let the devout followers of this sorrowing Virgin henceforth gladly pursue a way whereby they can accompany her in her sorrows.

The Jews led the Saviour to the house of Pilate and Herod, with every sort of insult and shame, but His sad Mother could not see Him because of the multitude and the noise of the people, until that moment when Pilate, after the scourging and the crowning of thorns, showed Him to the populace. Then it was that she heard the voices of the rabble, the uproar of the city, the insults vomited forth against Her Son, the outrages done Him, the blasphemies flung at Him. Her heart underwent immeasurable suffering and her eyes streamed with tears: *Deduc quasi torrentem lacrymas.* (2) As she had placed all her love in Him, she desired His presence above all else, even though it must have afflicted her the most, for love can be so ardent that it endures much less the absence of the object loved than the pain caused by the beloved's presence, however great the pain.

In all this bitterness and anguish, passing all imagination, this innocent Mother aspired to the sight of her Divine Son. Finally she saw Him all torn from head to foot with whips. His sacred head was pierced with cruel thorns, His adorable face bruised, swollen, stained with blood and spittle. With a rope around His neck and His hands
(2). Lam. 2, 18.

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bound, He wore the scarlet robe of mockery. Well did He know that His sorrowful Mother was there; and she, too, knew full well that His divine majesty read the feelings of her Heart, which was *pierced* with sorrows not inferior to those He bore in his own body. There she heard the false testimony given against Him; she heard them *prefer Barrabas*, a thief and a murderer. She heard thousands of voices shouting in anger: Tolle, tolle, crucifige, crucifige! (3) She heard the cruel and unjust *sentence pronounced* against the Author of life. She saw upraised the Cross, on which they were to crucify Him; she saw Him bearing it on His shoulders and beginning His march to Calvary. She followed his blood-stained footsteps and washed the way with as many tears as He shed drops of blood; and she bore inwardly the burden of the Cross, as heavy upon her heart as upon His shoulders.

At last she reached Calvary, accompanied by the holy women who sought to console her. Like her gentle Lamb she was silent, suffering unspeakable agony, hearing the hammer-blows struck by the executioners on the nails fastening her Son to the Cross. As she was extremely weak from her night of watching, tears and fasting, when she saw Him whom she loved more deeply than herself

raised on the Cross, without being able to relieve Him in any way, she fell into the arms of those accompanying her, as ordinarily happens under the stress of great and excessive sorrow. Then as her tears dried, she lay there, pale, trembling mightily. No other fragrant water could be found to throw upon her face but the tears of grief of those who were supporting her, until such time as her Son *restored her* strength that she might accompany Him unto death. (4)

Whereupon, shedding new streams of tears, she began to suffer a fresh martyrdom of sorrow at the sight of her Son and her God hanging upon the Cross. Nevertheless, this did not prevent her from performing, within her soul, the office of mediatrix between God and

(3). John 19, 15

(4). The fact mentioned here by St. John Eudes is reported by several authors, but the most reliable theologians reject it because they think it is in opposition to the perfect control of the notions of sensibility which they unanimously recognize in Mary, and to the quasi-priestly role that she had to fulfil during the Passion of her divine Son. Cf. Terrien: *La Mère des hommes*, 1, p. 200, note 5.

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sinner, cooperating with their Redeemer in saving them, and offering to the Father for them His blood, His sufferings, and His death, with the most ardent desire for their eternal happiness. On the one hand, the unspeakable love that she bore her dear Child made her fear to behold Him expire and die; on the other, it filled her with sorrow that His torments were dragging on so long, only to end in His death. Although she wanted the Eternal Father to soften the rigor of His torments, she also wished to conform wholly to His *every command*. Thus divine love engendered in her Heart a combat between conflicting desires and feelings which, from this same love, caused her to suffer unspeakable sorrows.

These sacred Lambs, divine and human, beheld and understood each other and communicated to each other their sorrows. It may be said with certainty that no one can understand their anguish except the two Hearts of Son and Mother who, loving each other perfectly, *together suffered these* cruel torments. Their mutual love being the measure of their sorrows, those who consider their excruciating pain are all the less able to understand it the further they are from comprehending the love of such a Son for such a Mother, and of such a Mother for such a Son.

The sorrows of the Blessed Virgin went on increasing. They were being renewed continually by new insults and torments inflicted on her Son by the Jews in their wrath. What sorrow when she heard Him utter these words: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (5) What sorrow to see gall and vinegar given Him to quench His burning thirst! What sorrow when she watched Him die on the gibbet between criminals! What sorrow to behold His Heart *pierced* with a lance! What sorrow when she received Him dead, taken down from the Cross and placed in her arms! What sorrow when the disciples took His holy body from her embrace to enclose it in the sepulchre! With what sorrow must she have returned home, there to await His resurrection! How gladly would the holy Virgin have suffered all the pains of her Son rather than witness His endurance!

It is a result which perfect charity produces in the hearts of those who strive to imitate their Divine Father and their good Mother that

(5). Matt. 27, 46.

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they bear with joy their own afflictions and keenly feel those of others. Thus it is easier for them to endure pain themselves than to see the loved ones suffering. That is what our Saviour did throughout

the course of His life and particularly on the day of His Passion. Knowing that the traitor had sold Him for money, He showed far deeper concern over the lost soul of Judas (saying it would have been better for him if he had never been born rather than merit damnation), than over the torments that He had to suffer by betrayal.

He also showed to the weeping women who were following Him as He carried His cross on His shoulders, how the tribulations which they and the city of Jerusalem would have to suffer, were more painful to Him than all that He was undergoing. "Daughters of Jerusalem," He said to them, "weep not over me; but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold, the days shall come wherein they will say: Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that have never borne, and the paps that have not given suck." (6)

Even while He was fastened to the cross, forgetting His own torments, He made it clear that the trials of sinners were felt more by Him than His own sufferings, in that He prayed His Father to pardon them. From this we know that His love for His creatures rendered Him more sensitive to their afflictions than to His own.

The greatest torture that our Saviour suffered on the Cross, a torture more painful to Him than His own bodily sufferings, was to see His most holy Mother whom He loved more than all creatures together, overwhelmed with sorrow. She was of all mothers the most perfect, the faithful companion of His journeys and of all His labors, who, being immaculate, deserved not to suffer for any fault that she had committed. Her motherly love was greater than that of all angels and saints. She saw Him suffering torments that never had nor ever will have their like. How great is the agony of such a Mother, who sees before her eyes such a Son so unjustly tortured and agonizing in a sea of sorrows, without being able to help Him! Truly this cross was so huge and heavy that no human soul is capable of comprehending it. It was a cross which was reserved for the grace, the love~ and the heroic virtues of the Mother of God.
(6). Luke 23, 28-29.

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The fact that she was the innocent Mother of God did not prevent her from suffering such great torture. On the contrary, her Son would not permit anyone, even those who were crucifying Him, to dare to offer her insult or cause her grief. Desiring to make her like unto Himself, whose love was the principal and first cause of His sufferings and His death, He also willed that His love for His Mother and her love for Him should be the cause of the martyrdom of His heart at the end of His life, just as at the beginning it had been the source of His joys and satisfaction.

The Son of God witnessed from His cross all the griefs and sorrows of the holy Heart of His Blessed Mother; He heard her sighs, He saw her tears and the loneliness in which she was to remain after His death. Each vision was a new torment and a new martyrdom for the divine Heart of Jesus. Thus everything was present that could afflict and crucify the most lovable Hearts of the Son and the Mother. Therefore, some authorities think that when the Saviour spoke from the Cross to His sorrowful Mother, He did not wish to call her Mother, so as not to cause her more pain. He spoke only words which showed that He had not forgotten her and that, in accordance with His Father's will, He was succoring her in her loneliness, giving her the beloved disciple to be her son, saying: *Mulier, ecce filius tuus* "Woman, behold thy son;" and to the disciple, "Behold thy Mother," *Ecce Mater tua.* (7) Henceforth, St. John remained bound to the service of the Queen of heaven, honoring her as his Mother and serving her as his Lady, esteeming the service to her as the greatest favor that he could receive in this world from his loving Master.

All sinners have a share in this grace of St. John, for he represented all human beings at the foot of the Cross and our Saviour beheld them all in him; so in speaking to him He was addressing all men in general and each soul in particular, saying, *Ecce Mater tua*---~'Behold thy Mother." I give you my Mother to be yours, and I give you to her as her children. What a precious gift! What an inestimable treasure! What an incomparable grace! What an obligation we have to our Saviour in His unspeakable goodness! What thanks we should render Him! He has given His Divine Father to be our Father; and
(7). John, 19, 26-27.

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He gives us His most holy Mother to be our Mother, so that we shall have with Him but one and the same Father and Mother. We are not worthy to be the slaves of this great Queen, and lo! He makes us her children! What reverence and humility we must have for such a Mother! What zeal and affection in her service! What pains we must take to imitate her holy virtues, so that there will be some resemblance between Mother and children!

This gentle Mother received great consolation when she heard the voice of her Dear Son. At the hour of death any word whatsoever from one's child or dear friend lends great comfort and peculiar consolation. Since those two Sacred Hearts, the Hearts of such a Son and of such a Mother so well understood each other, the Blessed Virgin. accepted most readily St. John as her son, and in him all sinners in general, knowing well that that was the intention of her dying Son. He was shedding His blood for sinners, and their sins were the cause of His death. He desired in that last hour to remove from them any possible mistrust of Him, when they saw the great sufferings that they had caused Him by their sins. To that end He gave them His most valued treasure, a treasure most capable of influencing Him, His most holy Mother, so that by her mediation and protection they might have the confident assurance of being received and welcomed by His divine majesty. One cannot doubt, therefore, the inestimable love of the Mother of goodness for sinners, since, in that spiritual begetting at the foot of the Cross, she suffered unspeakable pain which was absent from the Virgin birth of her Son and her God.

All these things clearly show that the sorrows of the Mother and the sufferings of the Son culminate in immense graces, blessings, and favors for sinners. What an obligation we have, therefore, to honor, to love and to praise those two most lovable Hearts of Jesus and Mary; to employ our whole life in serving and glorifying them; and to endeavor to imprint on our hearts a perfect image of their most eminent virtues! It is impossible to please them if we follow any other path except the one they trod upon earth.

CHAPTER 5

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS A FURNACE OF LOVE FOR THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT, MILITANT AND SUFFERING

IT IS CERTAINLY TRUE that this adorable Heart is a burning furnace of divine love, radiating its fire and grace in all directions, in heaven, on earth, and even in hell: in heaven in the Church Triumphant, on earth in the Church Militant, and in purgatory in the Church Suffering, and to some degree even in the hell of the damned.

If we lift our eyes and hearts to heaven, to the Church Triumphant, what shall we see? We shall behold an innumerable army of saints, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors and virgins. What are all these saints? They are so many flames from the immense furnace of the divine Heart of Jesus. Is it not the love of that kind Heart which brought them into the world, enlightened them with the light of faith, and gave them strength to conquer the devil, the world and the flesh? Is it not the goodness of that amiable Heart which adorned them with all virtues, sanctified them in this world and glorified them in the other; which kindled in their hearts the love they bear to God, inspired their lips with His divine praises, which is the source of all that is great and holy and admirable in them? If then one celebrates during the course of the year so many feasts in honor of these same saints, what a solemnity is due to this divine Heart which is the principle of everything that is glorious and noble in all the saints!

Let us come down to earth and see what is most worthy and great in the Church Militant. It is the holy Sacraments—the Sacrament of Baptism by which we are made children of God; Confirmation,

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which gives us the Holy Spirit; Penance, which washes away our sins and restores us to God's favor; the Blessed Eucharist, which feeds our souls with the flesh and blood of the Son of God, making us live by His life; Matrimony, which forms children for God, to serve and honor Him on earth and to love and praise Him forever in heaven; Holy Orders, which gives to the Church priests who shall continue the functions of the great High Priest and thus cooperate with Him in the great work of the salvation of the world, so that they bear the name and the character of saviours in Holy Scripture: Ascendent salvatores in montem Sion; (1) and Extreme Unction, which at our departure from this world fortifies us against the enemies of our salvation, who at that last hour make their final endeavor to ruin us.

The seven Sacraments are so many inexhaustible fountains of grace and holiness, which have their source in the immense ocean of the Sacred Heart of our Saviour; they are so many flames of a divine furnace from which proceed all spiritual blessings. But the brightest of those flames is the most Holy Eucharist. It is true that this great Sacrament is a compendium of all the wonders of the power, wisdom and goodness of God, but it is also true that it is one of the fruits of the incomparable Heart of Jesus and one of the flames of that wondrous furnace.

Since a solemn feast is celebrated by Holy Church in honor of the Blessed Sacrament, what a solemnity should also be kept in honor of His most Sacred Heart, which is the source of all that is great and rare and precious in this august Sacrament?

Let us, as it were, descend in spirit to purgatory, to the Church Suffering. What is

purgatory? It is the awe-inspiring throne of divine justice, which metes out in this place punishments so terrible that St. Thomas says: *Minima poena purgatorii excedit omnes poenas huius mundi.* "The slightest pain suffered there surpasses all the sufferings of this world." (2) St. Augustine says the same thing as the Angelic Doctor(3). Nevertheless, the terrible justice of God does not hold such

(1). Abd. 1, 21.

(2). *Summa* 111a, q. 46, a. 6, ad 3.

(3). "Gravior est ille ignis, quam quicquid potest homo pati in hac vita." Super *Psalms*. 37. "Ille purgatorius ignis durior erit, quam quicquid potest in hoc saeculo poenarum videri, aut cogitari, aut sentiri." *Sam. 4 pro defunctis.*

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sway in purgatory that mercy has no part there. Mercy with justice has constituted purgatory, to open paradise, which would remain closed to the majority of men if purgatory did not exist, because it is a truth of our faith that nothing contaminated shall enter heaven: *Nihil coinquinatum intrabit in regnum caelorum.* (4) Thus a soul, even though it had but one venial sin on quitting the body, would never enter paradise unless the merciful Saviour had established purgatory to purify it. And so purgatory is a result of the goodness and charity of the most benign Heart of our Redeemer.

Let us descend still lower. Let us go in spirit into hell, since St. Chrysostom declares that not one of those who thus go there during this life to inspire themselves to the work of their salvation with fear and trembling shall descend there after death.

What is hell? It is a place of torment, according to the Holy Gospel: *Locus tormentorum*; (5) it is *gehenna ignis*; (6) *supplicium aeternum*; (7) "the pain of fire, an eternal punishment"; in short, it is the place of the vengeance and anger of God. But the infinite mercy of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is manifested there in three ways.

First, His goodness provides that the damned are not punished as much as they deserve; for sin deserves infinite punishment, seeing that it is an offense committed against a God who infinitely deserves to be served and obeyed, and against a God to whom we have infinite obligations. Sin deserves infinite punishment not only as to extent and duration, but also intensively as to the degree and quality of the punishment. Now, although the pains of the reprobate are infinite as to extent and duration, they are limited as to intensiveness and degree, seeing that Our Lord could increase them ever more and more. This He does not do because of the ineffable goodness of His most tender Heart.

Secondly, His justice has established a hell to punish the wicked who die in their sins, but His mercy too has fashioned it, says St. Chrysostom, to inspire the fear of God in the hearts of the good and

(4). Apoc. 21, 27

(5). Luke 16, 28,

(6). Matt. 18, 9.

(7). Matt. 25. 46.

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to lead them to work out their salvation *cum timore et tremore*, (8) with fear and trembling.

Thirdly, the unparalleled goodness of our Saviour employs the fires of hell to enkindle in our hearts the fire of divine love. In what way? In this manner. If you had deserved punishment by fire,

what an obligation you would have to love the person who delivered you from such a heavy penalty! How few persons there are on earth who have never committed a mortal sin! There are very few indeed. And what was the just desert of all those who offended God mortally even but once in their whole life? They have merited hell, but on them alone does it depend to be freed therefrom. To whom do they owe this obligation? To the immense charity of the most kind Heart of our Redeemer, which gives them infinite obligations to serve and to love Him. Acknowledge that the loving kindnesses of the amiable Heart of this divine Saviour are exceedingly admirable; that He uses even the fires of hell to draw us to love Him and hence to belong to the number of those who shall possess Him eternally.

And so this divine furnace, the adorable Heart of Jesus, diffuses everywhere its fiery flames, in heaven, on earth, and even in hell. O ineffable goodness! O wondrous love! O God of my heart, would that I possessed all the hearts that have ever been, are, and shall be, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, to employ them in loving, praising and glorifying Thee unceasingly! O Jesus, only Son of God, only Son of Mary, I offer Thee the most loving Heart of Thy divine Mother which is more precious and pleasing to Thee than all hearts. O Mary, Mother of Jesus, I offer Thee the most adorable Heart of Thy Well-beloved Son, who is the life and love and joy of thy Heart.

(8) Eph. 6, 5.

CHAPTER 6

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS A FURNACE
OF LOVE FOR EACH ONE OF US**

To APPRECIATE this truth, let us consider the wondrous effects of the inconceivable goodness and the unspeakable love of the Sacred Heart towards us. Two of these effects which embody many more are here given.

The first is that of having delivered us from the abyss of evils into which sin had plunged us. By sin we were made enemies of God, the object of His wrath and curse, excommunicated from the Most Holy Trinity, anathematized by the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, separated from the company of angels, banished from the home of our Heavenly Father; by sin we were driven from paradise, cast into hell, plunged into the devouring flames of eternal fire, subjected to the terrible tyranny of Satan, enslaved by demons, given over to their rage and fury, condemned to the rightful punishments of hell, and without hope of succor or relief.

Exceedingly terrible as are those evils there is yet one which exceeds them all. What is that but sin, which is the evil of evils and the sole cause of all the others on earth and in hell. What an evil is sin! To understand something of its malice, imagine all men who have lived, are now living, and will live upon earth; imagine that each of them possesses the holiness of a St. John the Baptist; imagine also all the angels of heaven as having taken mortal flesh and being joined to the multitude of men. Even if all these men and angels were to shed their blood to the last drop and suffer all the torments of hell for eternity, they would not be able to deliver us from the tiniest venial sin; they would not be able to render perfect and worthy satisfaction

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to God for the offense done Him, nor consequently to free us from the slightest evil we should have merited by that sin, nor give us that drop of water which the rich man craved so long ago.

If one venial sin is so great an evil, what of mortal sin? What is it to be the slave of that infernal monster, which is more hideous and terrible than all the monsters and dragons of earth and hell?

Such is the pit of evils into which we had been plunged, from which there was no hope of escape, since all human powers and all the forces of heaven and earth were powerless to deliver us. Yet it has transpired, by a boon which we cannot comprehend, that we were liberated! To whom do we owe this? To the most loving Heart of our adorable Redeemer. We were delivered from so many evils by the immeasurable goodness, the infinite mercy, and the matchless love of that divine Heart. What had we done, what service rendered, to constrain Him thereto? Nothing whatever. It was out of purest love that He honored us with such a favor. What did He do to obtain for us so great a blessing? He did and suffered all. The cost to Him was dear, His blood, His life, a thousand torments, and a most cruel and shameful death. What obligations we have to honor, praise, and love that most benign Heart in return for all these benefits!

Suppose a man is a bandit-gunner. He has robbed a wealthy merchant by violence. He is caught, imprisoned, tried, condemned to death, and there he is in the hands of the hangman who is putting the rope around his neck. The merchant arrives at that very moment. By dint of money, the entreaties of friends, and even by the offer of his own life for the culprit, he obtains a pardon for the

criminal and sets him free. How great is the bandit's debt to his rescued

For our crimes we were condemned to the pains of hell. The only begotten Son of God, out of the inconceivably abundant goodness of His divine Heart, suffered a most atrocious and shameful death in order to deliver us. Try to estimate how indebted we are to that adorable Heart. An elephant will give itself entirely for the rest of its life to serve a man who had released it from a pit. What shall I give in return to Thee, my Saviour, and what shall I do for Thy love of me? Thou hast snatched me out of the frightful jaws of hell as often as ever I have fallen into them by sinning, or would have fallen if

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the charity of Thy dear Heart had not held me back. Does it take a dumb animal to teach me the lesson of gratitude which I owe Thee for Thy unspeakable mercies?

Such is the first effect, or rather the effect without number or measure of the tremendous love which the Sacred Heart of our Redeemer has manifested in delivering us from immeasurable evils. But it is not enough for him to have freed us from all those punishments; He would likewise shower us with inconceivable gifts. What a favor and fortune it is, not only to be snatched from hell but to be raised to heaven, to be made a citizen of paradise where there is a general exemption from all sorts of evils and where one possesses fully, entirely, unchangeably, eternally all sorts of boons! What a favor and a fortune to be associated with the angels, to be their companion, to be seated beside their throne, to live the angelic life, to be clothed with their glory, to enjoy their felicity, in short, to resemble the angels: *Erunt aequales angelis Dei!* (1)

What extraordinary fortune to be ranked with the children of God, the heirs of the great God, the co-heirs of the Son of God: *Videte qualem caritatem dedit nobis Pater, ut filii Dei nominemur et Simus!*(2) What a remarkable privilege to be kings of an everlasting kingdom and to possess the same kingdom that the Father of Jesus has given to His Son: *Sicut disposuit mihi Pater, et ego dispono vobis regnum!* (3) What a blessed invitation to eat at the table of the King of heaven: *Ut edatis et bibatis super mensam meam.* (4) What a great joy to be clothed in the glorious royal robe of the King of kings: *Caritatem quam dedisti mihi, dedi eis!* (5) What a supreme favor to share the throne of the Sovereign Monarch of the universe: *Qui vicerit, dabo ei sedere mecum in throno meo!* (6) What an incomparable blessing to dwell quietly with our Saviour in the bosom and in the adorable Heart of His Divine Father: *Pater, quos dedisti mihi,*

- (1). Luke 20, 36.
- (2). John 3, 1
- (3). Luke 22, 29.
- (4). Ibid. 30
- (5). John 17, 22.
- (6). APOC. 3, 21

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*volo ut ubi sum ego, et illi sint mecum.*⁷ "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me." Where art Thou, my Saviour? *In sinu Patris,* "in the bosom of the Father," says St. John. (8)

What a fortune, moreover, to share all the good things that God possessed He who has God shall enjoy all the manifold glory, happiness and wealth of God: *Amen dico vobis, super omnia bona sua constituet eum.* (9) What a blessing to be wholly transformed into God, to be clothed, filled, penetrated with all the perfections of God, more perfectly than the iron in the midst of the furnace is

penetrated by the qualities of the fire! Finally, what a blessing to be united to God: *Sicut tu Pater in me, et ego in te, ita et ipsi in nobis unum sunt: divinae consortes naturae.* "(10). What a privilege to be by grace and by participation what God is by nature and by essence!

What created mind can understand these surpassing gifts? Could all the tongues of men and angels express the least part of them? Is it not true what St. Paul says, that all those blessings are so great that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him:" *Nec oculus vidit nec auris audivit, nec in car hominis ascendit quae praeparavit Deus diligentibus se.* (1 1)

Now, to whom do we owe all those blessings? To the boundless generosity and infinite love of the most kind Heart of our lovable Saviour. Hence, what honor, what praise, what thanksgiving we must render Him, and with what devotion we must celebrate the solemnity of that most august Heart! Suppose that the aforesaid merchant who was robbed not only delivered the gunman from the hands of the executioner and from the shameful death he was ready to suffer, but also gave him half of his goods. How would that criminal ever be able to repay such goodness?

Our divine Saviour has done more for us. Not only has He delivered us from eternal death and all the tortures accompanying it,

(7). John 17, 24.

(8). Ibid. 1, 18.

(9). *Matt.* 24, 47

(10). John 17, 21.

(11) I Cor. 2, 9.

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but He has also heaped upon us a superabundance of unspeakable blessings. Indeed, He has given us all His blessings without reserve.

What shall we give Him in return? *Quid retribuam Domino, pro omnibus quae retribuit mihi?* (12) If we had the hearts of as many Seraphim as there are stars in the sky, atoms in the air, blades of grass on the earth, grains of sand and drops of water in the sea, and if we devoted them solely to love and glorify Him, it would be as nothing compared with the love He has for us and the obligations we have of consecrating our hearts to Him.

Yet what are we and the great majority of men doing? Is it not true that we treat this adorable Redeemer as ungratefully as if we had never received any boon from Him? Is it not true that we treat Him as if He had done us all the evil in the world? But is it not true that He has neglected nothing, that if it came even to all His glory and His own safety, He would not have been able to do more than He has done for love of us? *Quid potui facere et non feci?* "(13) If it were possible, He says to St. Bridget, that I should suffer all the torments of My Passion as many times as there are souls in hell, I would most gladly suffer them, for charity is as much aflame in my Heart now as it was then.

Even so, is it not still true that the majority of men on earth treat that loving Saviour as if He were their enemy? What insults, what crimes, what cruelty and abuse could they practise against Him that they do not already practise? In short, what more despicable thing could they do than to crucify Him every day? Yes, crucify Him; for anyone who mortally offends Him crucifies Him, *rursus Christum crucifigentes*,(14) and commits a greater crime than did the Jews, for they did not know Him.

Let us detest and recoil from such ingratitude and such abominable wickedness. Let us open our ears to the voice, or rather the voices of our Saviour. I say "voices," for all the evils from which He has delivered us and all the blessings without number that He has given

(12). PS. I 15, 12.

(13). Isa. 5, 4.

(14). Heb. 6, 6.

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us are so many voices crying out to us: *Sic Deus dilexit nos.*(15)"God so loved us." Therefore let us love Him who so loves us. If a man of no account, the weakest and lowest of all men, should manifest some kindness towards us, we could not help loving him. Nay, if even a dumb animal, a mongrel, for instance, attaches itself to us and does us some slight service, we love it. Why then should we not love God who is our creator, our preserver, our ruler, our king, our most faithful friend, our most loving father, our treasure, our glory, our supreme good, our life, our heart, our all? He is all heart and soul and love for us.

"O my Saviour, I know not if I have yet begun to love Thee as I ought. *Dixi,~ nunc coepi.*" (16) I now mean to love Thee with all my heart with all my soul, and with all my strength. I renounce forever all that is contrary to Thy *holy* love. Let me die a thousand deaths rather than ever offend Thee. I give Thee my heart; take full and absolute possession of it; destroy in it everything not pleasing to Thee, and rather destroy it itself than to allow it not to love Thee: *aut amare Jesum meum, aid mori.* But am I giving Thee anything in giving Thee my empty heart? O my Lord, if I had the hearts of as many Seraphim as Thy omnipotence could create, with what joy would I consecrate them all to Thee! I offer Thee the precious heart of Thy most worthy Mother, who has more love for Thee than all hearts that have been, are, or shall be. O Mother of Jesus, love Thy Adorable Son for me. O good Jesus, love Thy sweet Mother for me. O all ye citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, love Jesus and Mary for me, and unite me with your great love, now and eternally.'

(15). John 4, 2 1

(16). Ps. 76, it.

CHAPTER 7

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS A FURNACE
OF LOVE FOR US IN THE BLESSED
SACRAMENT**

ST. BERNARD appropriately refers to the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist as "the Love of loves," *Amor amorum*. If we use the eyes of faith to contemplate the marvelous effects of our Saviour's ineffable goodness to us in this adorable mystery, we shall see eight flames of love issuing continually from this wondrous furnace.

The first flame is the inconceivable love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus which impelled Him to imprison Himself in this Sacrament and has constrained Him to abide there continuously night and day, for nearly two thousand years, to be always with us, so as to fulfil the promise of these words: *Ecce ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus, usque ad consummationem saeculi*. "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (1) He is the Good Shepherd who wishes always to be with His flock. He is the divine Physician who wishes always to be at the bedside of His patients. He is the Father full of affection who never leaves His children. He is the Friend most loyal and tender, whose delight it is to be with His friends: *Deliciae meae esse cum filiis hominum*. (2)

The second flame of this fiery furnace is the love of our Saviour's adorable Heart vibrating in great and significant actions on our behalf in this Sacrament. He is there adoring, praising and glorifying His Father unceasingly for us, to satisfy to the full our infinite obligations of adoring, praising and glorifying. He is there continually

(1). Matt. 28, 20.

(2). Prov. 8, 31.

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ally giving thanks to the Father for all the corporal and spiritual blessings, natural and supernatural, temporal and eternal, which He has ever given to us, which He gives at each moment, and plans to give us, provided we interpose no obstacle. He is there loving His Father for us, paying to the full our debts and obligations of loving Him. He is there offering His merits to satisfy His Father's justice and to pay Him on our behalf what we owe Him by reason of our sins. He is there continually praying to His Father for all our spiritual and temporal needs. *Semper vivens ad interpellandum pro nobis*. (3)

The third flame of this furnace is the infinite love of our dear Redeemer, who exercises His omnipotence so as to perform in this adorable Sacrament many stupendous miracles, changing bread into His body and wine into His blood, and performing several other wonders incomparably surpassing all those of Moses, of the prophets, and of the apostles, and even of our Saviour during His sojourn on earth. All those miracles were performed only in Judea, while these take place throughout the universe. The visible miracles were transitory and of short duration; the invisible have been continuous for more than nineteen hundred years and they will endure till the end of time. The former were effected on bodies separated from their souls and then restored to life, on sick persons who were healed, on water changed to wine, but the latter are effected on the adorable body of God, on His Precious Blood, and even on the glory and grandeur of His divinity, which is hidden in this Sacrament.

The fourth flame is indicated in the inspired words of St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles:

Mixit Deus Filium suum benedictum, vobis. "God hath sent his Son to bless you!" (4) This Adorable Son has come filled with love for you and with a most ardent desire to pour , out His blessings upon those who honor Him and love Him as their,, Father. It is chiefly in this divine Sacrament that He showers His blessings upon those who open the way to His grace.

The fifth flame is His immense love which constrains Him to~ give to us all the treasures of grace and holiness which He acquired

(3). Heb- 7, 25.

(4). Act. 3, 26.

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on earth. To us He does give them, indeed, in the Blessed Eucharist~ boons immeasurable and infinite, graces most abundant and special, provided we have the dispositions required for receiving them.

The sixth flame is that burning love always impelling Him to enrich us with the gifts and graces which He acquired by His Precious Blood, and to give Himself to us without reserve in Holy Communion. He gives us His divinity, His humanity, His divine person, His adorable body, His Precious Blood, His holy soul, in short, all that He has and all that He is, as God and as man. Consequently, He will give us His Eternal Father and His Holy Spirit which are inseparable from Him, just as He will inspire us with devotion to His most holy Mother, who everywhere follows her divine Lamb, much more than do the holy virgins of whom it is said: *Sequuntur Agnum quocumque ierit.*(5)

The seventh flame is the incredible love of the Blessed Saviour in immolating Himself continually for us, a love that surpasses in every way the charity by which He was immolated on the altar of the Cross. There He sacrificed Himself on Calvary only; here He sacrifices Himself all over the world by means of the Blessed Eucharist. There He immolated Himself once only; here He sacrifices Himself thousands of times daily. It is true that the Sacrifice of the Cross was accomplished in a sea of sorrows and that it is accomplished here in an ocean of joy and felicity, but the Heart of our Redeemer is still, in our day, as flaming with love for us as it was then. Jesus is ready, if it were possible and necessary for our salvation, to undergo the same sufferings that He bore in His immolation on Calvary, as many times as He sacrifices Himself on the altars throughout the world because of His infinite love for us.

The eighth flame of this wonderful furnace of love consists of the love that our most benign Redeemer manifests to us when He gives men continual evidence of His goodness at a time when He receives from them nothing but the most furious hatred imaginable. At what moment does He thus manifest such love? At the time of the institution of this divine Sacrament, the last day of His life, the flight before His death. At that very moment men are not less

5 Apoc. 14, 4

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moved with rage and fury against Him than the devils themselves; for what does He say? *Haec est hora vestra, et potestas tenebrarum.*(6)

"O my Saviour, on that first Holy Thursday evening, Thy thoughts were only of peace, charity, and good will for men, whereas the Jews thought only of malice and cruelty. Thou didst seek only to save them; they sought only to do away with Thee. Thy whole Heart and Thy whole mind were bent on breaking the chains that held them bound as the slaves of demons; and they would sell Thee, betray

Thee and deliver Thee into the hands of Thy cruel enemies. Thou wast preoccupied with establishing an adorable Sacrament whereby always to abide with them, but they were striving to drive Thee from the world, to banish Thee from off the earth, and even to destroy Thee if they could but do so. Thou didst prepare for them on earth boundless graces and in heaven thrones magnificent and .glorious crowns, if they were willing to render themselves worthy of them, but they were preparing for Thee ropes, lashes, thorns, nails, lances, crosses, spittle, revilings, blasphemies and all sorts of shameful outrageous cruelties. Thou didst set before them a most delectable feast of Thy own flesh and blood, and they gave Thee gall and vinegar to drink. Thou didst give them Thy holy and immaculate body and they bruised it by blows, they cut it with their lashes, they pierced it in a thousand places with thorns and nails, they covered it with wounds from head to foot, they dismembered it on the Cross, causing it to suffer the most atrocious tortures. Finally, my Saviour, Thou didst love them more than Thy own life and blood since Thou didst sacrifice them for Thy enemies. In return, they rent Thy soul from Thy body by violence.

"What goodness! what charity! what love flowing from Thy adorable Heart, O my Saviour! What ingratitude! what wickedness! what cruelty stemming from the heart of man!

"What happened then still happens today. Thy most loving Heart, O Jesus, dwells in this Sacrament, burning with love for us. It is there continually performing thousands of good deeds towards us. How do we repay Thee, O Lord? We repay Thee with ingratitude and injuries a thousandfold, in thought, word and deed, trampling
(6). LUKE 22, 53.

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under foot Thy divine commandments and those of the Church. Ungrateful wretches, our most gracious Saviour so loved us that, while He was on earth, He would have died a thousand deaths for love of us if He had not miraculously preserved His life. He is still ready to die a hundred thousand times for us if it were possible and necessary for our salvation. Let us then die, die of sorrow in beholding our sins; let us die of shame that we have so little love for Him; let us die a thousand deaths rather than ever offend Him again. O my Saviour, grant us this favor, we implore Thee! O Mother of Jesus, obtain for us this grace from thy Well-beloved Son!"

CHAPTER 8

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS A FURNACE
BURNING WITH LOVE FOR US IN
HIS SACRED PASSION**

THE ENTIRE EARTHLY LIFE Of our adorable Saviour was a continual exercise of charity and goodness towards us. But it was at the time of His Passion that He gave us the most remarkable proofs of His love. Then it was that out of the abundance of his charity, He suffered frightful torments to deliver us from the terrible punishments of hell and to win for us the everlasting joys of heaven. It was then that His adorable body was covered with wounds and bathed in His blood. His sacred head was pierced with sharp thorns, His hands and feet were transfixed with huge nails, His ears filled with blasphemies and curses, His lips moistened with gall and vinegar, and his soul forcibly and painfully wrenched from His body by the cruel Jews. At that time particularly His divine Heart was rent by countless painful, bleeding wounds. Indeed, one can count the wounds in the adorable Heart of Jesus. There are two kinds of wounds, resulting from two different causes.

The first cause of those most painful wounds in the Sacred Heart of our Redeemer is our sins. We read in the life of St. Catherine of Genoa that one day God let her see the horror of one tiny venial sin. She assures us that, although this vision lasted but a moment, she saw nevertheless an object so frightening that the blood froze in her veins and she swooned away in an agony that would have killed her if God had not preserved her to relate to others what she had seen. Wherefore she declared that if she were in the very depths of a sea of flaming fire and it were in her power to be set free, on con

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dition that she should once more behold such a spectacle, she would choose to remain rather than to escape. If the sight of the smallest venial sin brought this saint to such a pass, what must we think of the state to which our Saviour was reduced by seeing all the sins of the universe? He had them continually before His eyes, and His vision being infinitely more powerful than that of St. Catherine, He could behold infinitely more horror.

He saw the immeasurable insult and dishonor caused His Father by all sins; He saw the damnation of a countless number of souls resulting from those sins. As He had infinite love for His Father and His creatures, the sight of all those sins rent His Heart with countless wounds, such that if we were able to count all the sins of men, which are more numerous than the drops of water in the sea, we would then be able to count the wounds of the loving Heart of Jesus.

The second cause of His wounds is the infinite love of His Sacred Heart for all His children, and his constant vision of all the afflictions and sufferings that are to happen to them, especially all the torments that His holy martyrs are to suffer. When a mother watches her beloved child suffering, she feels the pain more keenly than the child. Our Saviour's love for us is so tremendous that if all the love of all parents were centered in a single heart, it would not represent even a spark of the love for us that burns in His Heart. Our pains and sorrows, ever present to His vision and seen most clearly and distinctly, were so many wounds bleeding in His paternal Heart: Vere nostros ipse tulit, et aegrotationes nostras portavit.(1) These wounds were so painful and deep that they would have caused His death a thousand times over, even immediately after His birth, if he had not miraculously preserved Himself, because during His whole earthly life His Sacred Heart was continually pierced by many mortal wounds of love.

Therefore we have the greatest obligations to honor the gracious Heart that sustained so many wounds for love of us. We have potent reasons to fear new sins, thus giving him occasion to lament over us: Super dolorem vulnerum meorum. "They have added to the

(1). Isa 53, 4; Matt 8, 17

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grief of my wounds." (2). We ought to fear lest we be of the number of those of whom St. Paul says that they crucify Him afresh: *Rursus Christum crucifigentes!* (3). With what affection should we embrace, and endure all our afflictions, out of love for Jesus, our Saviour, since He first bore them for love of us! Should they not be most sweet to us, since they have already passed through His most gentle and loving Heart? What a horror we should have of our sins that have caused so many wounds and such intense grief to the divine Heart of our Redeemed

We read in the life of St. Francis Borgia, of the Society of Jesus, that one day the saint was speaking in front of a crucifix to a great sinner whom he was exhorting to be converted, but could not soften the hard sinful heart. Suddenly the crucifix, or rather the Crucified Saviour, out of His wondrous and abundant goodness, spoke to the sinner and urged him to follow the advice of His servant. At the same time there issued blood from all His wounds. This was a sign that our Blessed Saviour was ready once again to shed His blood and to die for his salvation if need be. But in spite of such miraculous goodness, as the wretched man still remained adamant, there issued a stream of blood from the wound at His side, which gushed over him and struck him dead on the spot. O God, what a fearful sight!

Let us learn from the foregoing example that it is not our Redeemer's fault if we are lost. There are hearts so hard that, even if Jesus Himself were to come down from heaven to preach to them and they were to see Him covered with wounds and bathed in His blood, they would still not be converted. O my God, let us not be one of them, but give us the grace to open our ears to the voice of all the sacred wounds of Thy body and Thy heart, which are so many mouths through which Thou dost call to us unceasingly: *Redite, praevaricatores, ad cor.* "Return, ye transgressors, to the heart," (4). which means to My heart that is all yours, since I have given it entirely to you. Return to that most loving Heart of your Father, which is full of love and mercy for you, which will receive you and

(2). Ps. 68, 27

(3). Heb. 6, 6.

(4). Isa 46, 8.

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welcome you home, heaping upon you all blessings. But *redite*, return without delay, completely, with all your affections. Leave sin, renounce hell, flee from all occasions of wickedness and embrace the practice of all virtues. Blessed are they who yield to that voice; cursed they who close their ears and harden their hearts like that unfortunate man just mentioned. *Cor durum male habebit in novissimo:* "A hard heart shall fear evil at the last." (5) Evil shall be the lot of the hard heart; it shall perish everlastingly; it shall abide in wrath forever, and shall suffer inconceivable and incomprehensible tortures eternally.

O my Saviour, I give Thee my heart; preserve it from this evil. O Mother of mercy, I give thee also my loving heart; do thou give it to thy Son, begging Him to rank it with the holy hearts that shall love the Son and the Mother forever!

(5). Eccl. 3, 27

CHAPTER 9

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS ONE WITH THE
HEART OF THE FATHER AND THE HOLY
GHOST; THE ADORABLE HEART OF
BLESSED TRINITY IS A FURNACE
OF BURNING LOVE FOR US**

CHRISTIAN FAITH TEACHES that there are three Persons in the adorable mystery of the Holy Trinity; three Persons who have but one and the same divinity, one and the same power, wisdom, goodness, one and the same mind, will, and even one and the same heart. Thence it is that our Saviour, as God, has but one and the same Heart with the Father and the Holy Ghost; and as man, His humanly divine and divinely human Heart is but one also with the Heart of the Father and the Holy Ghost, by a unity of mind, love and will. Therefore to adore the Sacred Heart of Jesus is to adore the Heart of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; to adore a Heart that is a burning furnace of love towards us. Into that furnace we must plunge so as to burn there forever. Unhappy they who shall be cast into the terrible furnace of eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels, but blessed are they who shall be thrown into the eternal fire of divine love which enkindles the adorable Heart of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost for our sake. That we may stir ourselves to plunge in wholeheartedly, let us picture what that fire and that love are.

If you desire to learn the exact nature of the love of the paternal Heart of the divine Father of Jesus, listen to St. Paul: *Proprio Filio non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum.* "He that spared

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not even his own Son, but delivered him up for us all."(1) The Father sent His Only-begotten Son into this world to testify to us His love in a wondrous way. Before sending the Redeemer He knew full well how we would treat Him. He knew that, as Jesus must be born on earth to raise men up to heaven, His divine Mother would seek shelter for His birth and would find no place to lay His infant head. *Non erat locus in diversorio.*(2) He knew that, as soon as He was born, men would seek to slay Him, and that He would be compelled to flee and hide away in a foreign country. He knew that when He began to teach and preach the word of His Father they would regard Him as a mad man, they would repeatedly take up rocks to stone Him, and would lead Him into a high mountain to attempt to dash Him to destruction. He foresaw that they would bind and shackle Him like a thief, drag Him through the streets of Jerusalem like a criminal, subject Him to endless insults and torments and condemn Him to die the cruellest and most infamous death. After He had risen, they would endeavor to stifle any growing belief in His Resurrection. After He had established the Church and Sacraments to apply to souls the fruits of His Passion and death, even the majority of Christians would misuse these Sacraments, profane them and make them serve to their greater condemnation. Finally, He knew that in spite of His labor, sufferings, and death, too many souls would contemn His Precious Blood, making void and useless all that He accomplished for their salvation, because they would perish miserably. "Thou seest all these things, O adorable Father, and yet Thou dost not hesitate to send us Thy Well-beloved Son. Who hath constrained Thee to do this? It is the utterly incomprehensible love of Thy fatherly Heart for us. O Father of mercies, it seems almost as if Thou dost love us more than Thyself and Thy Son (Thy Son being but one with Thee). Seemingly, for love of us, Thou hatest Thy Son, hence Thyself (Thou being but one with Him). O exceeding, inconceivable goodness! O wondrous love! There is some thing of that infinite love of the loving Heart of the Eternal Father for us."

(1). Rom. 8, 32.

(2). Luke 2, 7.

Would you now behold the incomprehensible love of the divine Heart of the Son of God? Hear Him speak: *Sicut dilexit me Pater, et ego dilexi vos.* "As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you." (3) My Father so loves you that for love of you He hath surrendered me to death, the death of the Cross; and I so love you that for love of you I abandoned myself to the powers of darkness and to the wrath of my mortal enemies, the Jews: *Haec est hora vestra et polestar tenebrarum.* (4) O my Saviour, well may I say to Thee, with Thy faithful servant, St. Bonaventure, that Thou so lovest me that seemingly Thou dost hate Thyself for me: *Domine, in tantum dilexisti me, ut te pro me odisse videaris.* (5)

Let us come now to the love of the Holy Ghost, who is the Heart of the Father and the Son. When this divine Spirit formed the God-Man in the sacred womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary to give Him to us, did He know what we were to do? Did He know all the outrages and cruel deeds that men were to perpetrate against Him? Did He know that men would bend all their energies to destroy His wonderful masterpiece, the God-Man? Yes, He knew it well. Yet He did not hesitate to form Him in Mary's womb, to let Him be born for us, to appear in the form of a dove above His head during His Baptism in the waters of the Jordan, to make us recognize Him. He did not hesitate to lead His Son into the desert to do penance for our sins, to urge Him to preach the Holy Gospel and to proclaim to us the truths of heaven: *Spiritus Domini super me; propter quod unxit me, evangelizare pauperibus misit me.* (6) He did not hesitate to sacrifice Him on the Cross for our redemption: *Per Spiritum sanctum semetipsum obtulit.* (7) O love that hath no equal! O spirit of love and charity, bear with me when I say that seemingly Thou hast more love for man as sinner and culprit than for the God-Man who is the Holy of holies; for a slave of Satan than for the Only-begotten Son of God; for a firebrand of hell than for the King of heaven.

(3). John 15, 9.

(4). Luke 22, 53

(5) In stimulo amoris, part ia Cf. Officium D. Cordis, 7th day within the Octave, lesson 4.

(6). Luke 4, 18.

(7). Heb. 9, 14.

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O wonder without parallel! Who has thus bound Thee in a spell? Pardon me, O adorable Spirit, if I speak thus, but is it not true that the exceeding great love Thou hast for us seems to have cast a spell over Thee as well as over the Divine Father and His Only Son? How true is the saying, *Amare et sapere vix Deo conceditur!*

Even so do the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost love us: *Sic Deus dilexit mundum;* (8) even thus their divine Heart is a burning furnace of love for us.

What then shall we do to acknowledge such goodness? What dost Thou ask of us, O God? Do we not hear His voice calling to us, calling, calling, for so long? *Fili, praebe cor tuum mihi: "My son, give me thy heart."* (9)

An eminent prelate, John Zumarraga, first Archbishop of Mexico, in the Indies of America (New Spain), wrote to the Chapter of his Order, assembled at Toulouse in 1532. According to the report of Drexelius of the Society of Jesus, the Archbishop narrated that before the inhabitants of the city of Mexico were converted, they worshipped the devil through idols. He exercised such a cruel tyranny that he obliged them to slaughter each year twenty thousand little children, boys as well as girls, and to cut out the heart of each child to be sacrificed to Satan on a fire of red-hot coals as

incense. If in Mexico City alone the hearts of more than twenty thousand young children were immolated to Satan, you can imagine how many were sacrificed to him every year throughout the whole kingdom of Mexico.

We worship a God who does not ask of us things so strange. True, He asks for our heart, but He has no desire that it be cut from our body. He is satisfied if we give Him our affections, especially love and hate: our love to love Him above all things, with all our strength; our hate to hate only sin. What is sweeter than to love infinite goodness from which we have received every kind of blessing? What is easier than to hate the most horrible thing in the world and the sole cause of all our evils? Surely, if we refuse to give our heart to the divine Saviour, who asks us constantly for

(8). John 3, 16.

(9). Prov. 23, 26.

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it in a way so gentle and engaging, a heart moreover which belongs to Him for countless reasons, all those pagans who sacrificed to the devil the hearts of their dear children will rise up and condemn us on the day of judgment. We shall be utterly cast into confusion when the lawful King of our hearts points to the poor idol-worshippers and says to us: "Behold these people who have torn out their children's hearts of living flesh to offer them to Satan, and you have refused me the love of your hearts." We must not draw this reproach upon ourselves. Let us give our hearts wholly and irrevocably to Him who created them, who redeemed them, and has given to us His own Sacred Heart so many times.

One of the fathers of the Society of Jesus, in his history of the Crusades for the deliverance of the Holy Land, reports the following incident. In the year 1098, Geoffrey de la Tour, a nobleman from Limoges and one of the most valiant of the Christian knights, one day heard the roar of a lion, which sounded like a cry of pain.

Immediately he entered a near-by wood and ran to the spot from which the roaring came. There he saw a horrible sight. A huge serpent had wound its coils around the lion's body and legs, so that it was powerless to defend itself. The serpent was darting its venomous tongue, trying to strike the lion in a vital spot.

Geoffrey rushed forward with his sword and killed the snake without wounding the lion. The poor beast, finding itself freed and recognizing his deliverer, came to thank the knight, by fawning and licking his feet. From then on, the lion attached itself to the man who had saved its life. It followed him everywhere like a faithful dog, never harming anyone, but ready to turn on a man who might attack its master. But what is more wonderful is the sequel. When Geoffrey sailed to return to France after the Crusade, the captain of the ship would not allow the lion to come aboard, so the faithful beast, plunging into the sea, kept on swimming in the wake of the ship until its strength failed and it sank, thus showing that it preferred to drown rather than to be parted from its benefactor.

It should make us ashamed to have to learn the lesson of true gratitude from a wild animal. Must we Christians be taught by dumb beasts what we owe to God, our Sovereign Benefactor? O my

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Saviour, Thou has freed me from the coils of the infernal serpent. Thou hast given Thy life to deliver me from the eternal death of hell, and enable me to enjoy everlasting happiness in heaven. Let me be all Thine; let me live only for Thee; let me follow Thee everywhere. May all the faculties of my soul be linked inviolably to Thy divine will. Let me have no thoughts but Thine; let me have no hate except for sin, no love but for Thee. Let me die many deaths rather than ever be separated from Thee.

CHAPTER 10

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS OUR
TREASURE HOUSE

THE ADORABLE HEART of our Saviour has been considered as a flaming furnace of love for us. We shall now *see, first* of all, that this heart is a vast *treasure house* containing infinite riches; secondly, that this wealth is ours; thirdly, the sacred use that we should make of it.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is *indeed an* incalculable treasure, containing in itself all the marvelous riches of heaven and earth, in nature, grace and glory, in all the angels and saints, in the *Blessed Virgin Mary*, in the Godhead, in the Most Holy Trinity, and in all the divine *perfections*. *St. Chrysostom* says that the Blessed Virgin is an infathomable abyss of the boundless perfections of the Godhead: *Abyssus immensarum Dei perfectionum.*(1) How much more is this true of the adorable Heart of Jesus?

Moreover, His Heart is a most precious treasure house containing all the merits of His life, all the fruits of His divine mysteries, all the graces merited by His toils and sufferings, all His infinitely perfect virtues, all the gifts of the Holy Ghost wherewith He was endowed: *Requiescet super eum Spiritus Domini, Spiritus sapientiae et intellectus.*(2) In short, everything great, rich, precious and admirable in Creator and creatures, is stored in that incomparable *treasure*.

To whom does this marvelous *treasure belong*? It belongs to all of us and to each one in particular, since it depends only on us to take possession of it. By what titles and deeds does this *treasure belong* to us? By the title and deed of a gift. But who has given it to us? The Father of Jesus has given it to us in giving us His Son; and

(1). In Hor. ani.

(2). Isa. 11,2

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He gives Him to us unceasingly, for His gifts are not transitory. *Sine poenitentia sunt dona Dei.* (3) The Son of God has also given it to us, time and time again, in giving Himself to us, and He gives it to us ceaselessly in the Blessed Eucharist. The Holy Ghost imparts this treasure to us incessantly. The Blessed Virgin also gives it to us continually, since she has but one heart and one will with her Son, her will is bound up in every gift of His.

It is, therefore, a clear fact that the loving Heart of Jesus is wholly ours, our very own Heart. Each of us can say with St. Bernard: "The Heart of Jesus is my Heart. I speak this fearlessly. For if Jesus is my Head, than what belongs to the Head belongs to me. just as the eyes of my corporal head are truly my eyes, so the Heart of my spiritual Head is truly my Heart. What joy is mine! I am certain that my heart is one with Jesus." *Cor Jesu meum est, audacter dicam: si enim caput meum Christus est, quomodo quod capitis mei est non meum est? Sicut ergo oculi capitis mei corporalis mei oculi vere sunt, ita et spiritualis Cor, Cor meum est. Bene ergo mihi, ego vere cum Jesu Cor habeo.* (4)

What would be the use of possessing an object of great value if the owner let himself die of hunger, thirst and cold? Or suppose he went into bankruptcy while still keeping the treasure? Similarly, what shall this greatest of treasures, the Heart of Our Lord, be worth to us if we do not draw upon its resources? God has given us His Heart to be our riches and our wealth, to draw upon to

satisfy our obligations and to pay all our debts.

What are those debts? They are endless, for we are in debt to God and men, to the Creator and to all creatures. We owe the Creator five tremendous tributes: 1. adoration together with honor, glory and praise; 2. love; 3. thanksgiving for all the blessings that we continually receive; 4. reparation for our sins; 5. the gift of ourselves, seeing we belong to Him. Add to this, prayer, an obligation which is based on two principles: first, our infinite poverty and need, since we are nothing and have nothing of ourselves; secondly, the

(3). Rom. 11, 29.

(4). St. Bernard: Tract on the Passion of our Lord, Chap.3. The treatise here mentioned by St. John Eudes is now attributed to St. Bonaventure.

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fact that God is the supreme good and the source of all good, and that His infinite goodness inclines Him to pour out of His goodness upon us to an infinite degree. He wills, and justly so, that we ask Him for this in prayer.

Now, to pay all these debts, here is what must be done:

First, it is necessary to be in the state of grace. Secondly, when you celebrate Holy Mass (if you are a Priest) or when you assist at Mass (if a layman), but especially after Holy Communion, remember that you have the Sacred Heart there within your breast and the Three Divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Addressing yourself first to the Father, speak to Him, with all possible respect and humility:

"Holy Father, I owe Thee infinite honor, glory, love, adoration, praise, thanksgiving and satisfaction; I also owe to Thee myself for countless reasons. Of myself I have no means wherewith to pay all these debts, being nothing and having nothing. But here is the divine Heart of Thy Well-beloved Son that Thou hast given me, which I now offer to Thee to make satisfaction for my obligations to adore Thee, to honor, praise and glorify Thee, to love Thee, to give Thee thanks, to make amends for my sins, to give myself to Thee, and to implore Thee by this same Heart, to grant me all graces of which I stand in need. This is my treasure that Thou hast given me out of the excess of Thy goodness; be pleased to receive it, O Father of mercies, and graciously to reward Thyself by taking with Thine own hands from this sacred treasure the wherewithal fully to satisfy and pay all my debts."

After that make a similar offering to the Son of God, giving him that selfsame treasure, His own Heart as well as that of His most holy Mother, which is in a way but one with His, and which is more pleasing to Him than all the hearts of paradise.

Perform the same act with respect to the Holy Ghost.

Next, remember the infinite obligations that you have to the Mother of God, who gave you a Saviour with all the countless blessings that proceed from that marvelous gift and offer her the loving Heart of her Beloved Son, in thanksgiving for all the favors that you have received from that divine Mother. Offer her also that same

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Heart in reparation, Over and above, for all your negligences, infidelities, and failures in gratitude towards her. This is but a direction which she herself gave to St. Mechtilde, who, being anxious about

her negligences in Our Lady's service, was counselled by the latter to offer her the most holy Heart of her Dearest Son. The Blessed Virgin assured the saint that this offering would be much more pleasing to her than any other pious devotions and practices.'

In addition, remember that you are still indebted to your Guardian Angel, to all the other angels, to your Patron Saint and to all the other saints, for their prayers and for the manifold helps they have given you. Consider, and offer to them all in general and to each one in particular your great treasure, as an act of thanksgiving, to satisfy for your shortcomings and to contribute to their accidental glory and joy.

Remember that you are also under obligations to your neighbor. You owe charity to all men, even your enemies; help to the poor, according to your ability; respect and obedience to your superiors, and the like. To satisfy all these obligations offer our Saviour His divine Heart to make up for the shortcomings of which you are guilty; ask Him to repay them for you and to give you all the graces necessary in the future to fulfil perfectly your obligations to your neighbor.

In the books of St. Mechtilde I find that when the saint was asked to implore Our Lord to grant a certain person a humble, pure and charitable heart, she acceded to his request and received this heavenly answer: "Let him seek in my Heart everything he desires and needs; and let him ask for them as a little child would confidently ask his father for anything he wants. When he desires purity of heart, let him have recourse to my innocence; when he desires humility, let him draw up from the deep well of my most humble Heart; there too let him drink in my love together with my holy converse, confidently taking to himself everything that is good and holy in that Heart, since I have given it wholly to my children." (6)

(5). Saint John Eudes does not mention where he obtained this fact. It was perhaps taken from a passage of the *Lime de la Grâce spéciale*, p. X, chap. 46.

(6). *Livre de la Grâce spéciale*, P. 4, Ch.2, P. 28.

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This is the boundless and inexhaustible treasure that our Most Gracious Jesus has given us, in which we may confidently find everything that we need, so long as we possess that divine treasure in its richness. If we should lose it through sin, what a dreadful loss it would be! I am certain that if we fully understood it, we would realize that we would never sufficiently deplore such a great misfortune even though we were to live until the Day of Judgment and spend our time in weeping floods of tears and blood. If all the angels and saints were to descend from heaven to console us, they could never wipe away our tears. *Heu! quid perdidit, qui Deum amisit*, exclaims St. Augustine. "Alas! what hath he lost who hath lost God?" *Heu! quid perdidit, qui Cor Jesu amisit*: Alas! what hath he lost who hath lost the Heart of Christ, his Saviour? Who can understand the magnitude of that loss? Who can express it? Who can worthily deplore it?

Yet, after losing that infinite treasure, so many many times, you, O foolish man, are little affected by the deprivation. What sorrow should be yours! What tears of blood you should shed! How horrified you should be at your sins that have caused so dreadful a disaster! What fear of backsliding! How necessary to seek all the means possible to keep yourself from it! What would one not lose rather than to lose the loving Heart of our Redeemer! That gone, all is gone. Let us prefer to lose everything, our earthly goods, our friends, our health, even our life, rather than to lose the Heart of Jésus! O my Saviour, grant us that grace! Mother of Jesus~ obtain it from thy Dear Soul

CHAPTER II

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS LOVES US AS HIS
FATHER LOVES HIM. WHAT WE SHOULD
DO IN ORDER TO LOVE HIM**

WE HAVE OUTLINED in the foregoing chapters numerous wonderful effects of the burning love of the Sacred Heart of our Saviour for mankind. But there is one effect of love that excels all the rest. It is expressed in the marvelous words rising from His divine Heart and spoken by His adorable lips: *Sicut dilexit me Pater, et ego dilexi vos*: "As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you." (1)

Let us pause here a moment; let us weigh these words well: "I love you." How sweet are these words falling from the lips of the sovereign Lord of the universe! How encouraging, how helpful, how consoling! "I love you," our divine Saviour says to us. If an earthly ruler were to pay a visit to the house of the lowliest of his subjects and say to him: "I have come here expressly to assure you that I love you and that I shall let you feel the effects of love," what joy it would be for that poor man! Suppose an angel from heaven or a saint or the Queen of saints were to appear in a church thronged with Christians and were to proclaim in a voice that all could hear, to one member of the congregation "I love you; my Heart belongs to you." What transports of delight would thrill that privileged soul! Would he not die of joy? But here is much more than that. Here is the King of kings, the Holy of holies, the Only Son of God, the only Son of Mary, who has purposely come down here below from heaven to say to us: *Ego dilexi vos*. *Ego*, I who am the Creator of all things, I who rule the whole universe, I who possess all the treasures (1). John 15, 9.

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of heaven and earth, I who do whatsoever I will and I whose will none can resist, I love you. O my Saviour, what a rapturous word is this! Would it not be favor enough if Thou didst say to us: "I sometimes think of you; I look down upon you once a year; I have certain beneficial plans made for you?" But this is not sufficient for Thee. Thou dost wish to assure us of Thy love and affection for us, who are naught; for us, mere worms; for us, miserable sinners, who have so often offended Thee; for us who have so many times deserved hell: *Ego dilexi vos*.

But how does this adorable Saviour love us? Listen again to His sacred words: *Sicut dilexit me Pater*. I love you "as my Father hath loved me." I love you with the same Heart and the same love as that wherewith I am loved by my Father. Now what is that love wherewith the Divine Father loves His Son? It is a love possessing four great qualities, which are found in the love of the Heart of Jesus for us.

First of all, the love of the Father for His Son is infinite, that is, without bounds, limits, or measure; a love incomprehensible and inexplicable; a love as great as the very nature of the Eternal Father. Measure, if you can, the extent and the magnitude of that divine nature, and then you will measure the magnitude of that adorable Father's love for His Son; at the same time you will measure the greatness and the extent of the love of the Son of God for us, since He loves us with the same love as that wherewith His Father loves Him.

Secondly, the Father's love for His Son is an everlasting love filling all the spaces of eternity. the Eternal Father has never been without that love for His Son; He loves Him continuously, without intermission, and He will love Him eternally. O my Saviour, how it fills me with joy to see Thee

loved as Thou dost deserve! The perfidious us Jews, the devils and the damned hate Thee, but Thou art no less lovable, and the Adorable Father loves Thee more in a single moment than all those wretches could hate Thee in a thousand eternities, if that were possible.

Now, as the Father loves His Only-begotten Son with an everlasting love, the Son of God also loves us with an everlasting love. This means that all the spaces of eternity before and after are filled

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with the love that He has for us. Hence, is it not true that if we had existed from all eternity, we should have been bound to love that gracious Saviour from all eternity? If we had a thousand years, ten thousand, a hundred thousand, yes, even an eternity to live on earth, should we not be bound to spend them in loving Him who loves us with an everlasting love? Actually, we have at most a few decades to exist on this earth, yet we waste them loving the world, the degradation and the trifles of earth. Ah, how guilty we are to have such ingratitude!

As our third reflection, we must remember that the love of the Divine Father for His Son is a tremendous love filling heaven and earth and even hell; in heaven, the Father loves this Son with the hearts of all the angels and all the saints; on earth their mutual love embraces all the hearts that belong to Him on earth; in hell, the Eternal Father loves His Cherished Son who, with the other Divine Persons, is present there, manifesting the same omnipotence as in heaven.

Similarly, our Saviour loves us with an immense love filling heaven, earth and hell; heaven, for He inspires all its citizens to love us as themselves; He makes them sharers in the love He bears us, and He loves us through them. He loves the earth in three ways: 1. He loves us wherever He has being on earth; 2. He creates, preserves and rules all things in the universe for love of us. This thought prompted St. Augustine to utter these beautiful words: *Coelum et terra, et omnia quae in eis sunt, non cessant mihi dicere ut amem Deum meum*: "Heaven and earth and all things on earth and in heaven cease not to bid me love my God." 3. He prohibits all dwellers on earth, under pain of eternal damnation, to do harm, either to our goods, our reputation, our person or anything belonging to us; and He commands them to love us as themselves.

The boundless love of our Redeemer fills heaven and earth, and likewise hell; for He kindled the devouring fires of hell to inflame our hearts with divine love. We are impelled to love Him, when we consider that by our sins we deserved eternal torments if our Saviour had not delivered us by His death on the Cross. O my God, Thou dost love us everywhere, and we, ingrates, everywhere offend Thee.

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Let it be so no more, but make us love and bless Thee everywhere: *In omni loco dominationis ejus benedic anima mea Domino.* (2)

In the fourth place, I could demonstrate to you further that, as the love of the Eternal Father for His Eternal Son is love in its essence, since He loves Him with His whole being, so also the love of the Son of God for us is love in its essence, since He is all heart and all love towards us and loves us with all His being. In other words, everything in Jesus, His divinity, His humanity, His soul, His body, His blood, all His thoughts, words, actions, privations, humiliations, sufferings, in short, everything that He is, has, and all His potentiality is bound up in loving us.

Here, I must mention one effect of His love that surpasses all the others. Louis Bail, a doctor

of sacred theology, presents this fact in his learned and devotional work, *Affective Theology*(3) and states that he found it in four passages of St. Bridget's writings approved by three Popes and two General Councils. Our divine Lord and His holy Mother revealed to St. Bridget that, while on the Cross, He suffered such keen, piercing, violent and terrible pains that His adorable Heart was rent, broken, and shattered: *Cor meum crepuit prae violentia passionis*. "My heart," says the adorable Saviour to the saint, "was utterly filled with pain, all the more because 'it was of a most fine and delicate nature; the pain went from my Heart into my nerves, from my nerves back to my Heart: it kept on increasing so that my death-agony was prolonged while I was thus immersed in suffering, I opened my eyes and saw my dearest Mother overcome by a sea of anguish and tears, which pained me more than my own sufferings; I also saw my friends overwhelmed with sorrow. With this torture my Heart was actually rent by the force and fury of the pain; and then it was that my soul went forth from my body." (4)

Those are the words of our Saviour to St. Bridget. In a later revelation He said: "There are few persons who can imagine with what pain I remained fastened to the wood of the Cross, my Heart being (2). Ps. 102, 22.
(3). Part. 3, Meditation 45.
(4). Revel. extrav. Chap. 51.

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broken and shattered by its violence: *quando Cor meum crepuit*."(5) Let us now listen to the Blessed Virgin who revealed on two occasions to the same saint that, as the death of her Son drew near, His Sacred Heart was rent by the violence of the pain: *Cum Cor prae violentia dolorum rumperetur*.' (6)

I also find a similar reference in the tenth exercise of the *Intimations of Divine Holiness* of St. Gertrude, where she thus addresses our Redeemer: *Deificatum Cor tuum in morte pro me rupit amor*. "Thy divine Heart was rent and broken in Thy dying, by the excess of Thy love for me. This made Thee suffer such violent tortures for love of me that Thy adorable Heart was broken by the force of the pain; so that I may say that Thou didst die of pain and love for me. This can be repeated by each one of us with equal truth."(7)

O Almighty God, who hath ever heard Of such a death? O sinful man, wilt thou not open thy eyes to behold the love Thy Saviour has for thee? O heart of man, wilt thou not be touched by such burning love? Wilt thou not surrender? not be converted? Wilt thou not love one who hath such love for thee? *Filii hominum usquequo gravi corde?* (8)

How long will thy heart remain buried in the mud and slime of earth, in the mists and vanities of this world? Wouldst thou not love Him who is wholehearted in His love for thee and who, if thou wouldst but love Him, promises to give thee an eternal realm? That is all He demands of thee; for after saying, "I love you as my Father hath loved me," He adds: *Manete in dilectione mea*: "Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love: as I also have kept my Father's commandments and do abide in his love."(9) Then He again says to us: *Haec locutus sum vobis, ut gaudium meum in vobis sit, et gaudium vestrum impleatur*. (10) "These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be filled."

(5). Ibid. chap. 106.

(6). Ibid. book 1, chap. 10; also chap. 26.

(7). 1n Exercitio laudis et gratiarum actionis.

(8). Ps. 4, 3.

(9). John 15, 9-10.

(10) Ibid. 11.

Wouldst thou, therefore, give great joy to thy Saviour and so act that thy heart may be always joyful and glad, thus beginning thy paradise on earth? Then love thy precious Saviour above all things, and thy neighbor as thyself. That is all that thou hast to do. O Jesus, I give Thee my whole heart. O Mother of Jesus, to thee also I give it entire, with all the hearts of my brothers and sisters in Christ; offer them, I beg, to thy Son, praying Him to take full, entire and eternal possession of them.

O Creator, I owe Thee my body and soul, because Thou hast given me Thy body and soul, Thy life and Thy very self. What do I owe Thee, and what shall I give Thee in return for all those priceless gifts? If I had millions of lives and gave them to Thee a million times over, each hour, that would be as nothing. Since I am so indebted to Thee that I cannot ever requite Thee, come Thyself as executor of my estate and take all that I have. I offer Thee all the faculties of my soul, all the feelings of my body, all my members, my whole heart, sacrificing myself entirely to Thy adorable will. I ask not for eyes except to contemplate what Thou dost will me to contemplate, nor for ears except to hear Thy divine words and to obey Thee. Let my tongue be torn from my mouth if I use it but to bless Thee; let my heart burst asunder rather than fail to love Thee. May I lose my memory, if it be not to remember Thee; and may my mind fail in all things, if it be not to know and to admire Thee. May my hands be cut off, if I use them not in Thy service. I ask not for feet except to seek and follow Thee. I will always exercise my will as Thou wouldst have me. Thy good pleasure is my sole desire. Do with me what Thou wilt, since for my sake Thou hast done with Thyself more than I would have dared to wish or to desire. I surrender myself entirely into the hands of God, my Eternal Father, who dost desire my welfare more than I do myself, who alone knows what is best for me and alone can obtain it for me.

