



CONSECRATION
TO THE
Sacred Heart of Jesus
AND THE
Immaculate Heart of Mary



June 5, 2018

Devotion to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary: Family Consecration

“Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts, which we are about to receive from Thy bounty through Christ, our Lord.

Amen. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph...make our families holy.”

To the chagrin of a grade school teacher, if you ask any student what their favorite time of the day is they will inevitably tell you “lunch and recess”. I’ve learned not to be offended by this and even use it to my advantage! After we’ve prayed *Grace Before Meals*, I would add this aspiration: “Jesus, Mary and Joseph, make our families holy.”

I did this for two reasons. First, to make my students aware of the fact that their family should be striving for holiness; secondly, as a prayer of surrendering them and their families into the care and protection of the Holy Family.

I acquired a great insight ten years ago when I taught freshmen in high school. I learned that much of my influence was limited to the four walls of the classroom. Once my students passed through the door and into the hallway, the ways of the world would be there to greet them. I gathered this through overhearing their choice of words, the stories of what they did over the weekend, and the way they spoke about themselves or others.

Over the last 20 years of teaching various grade levels, I have really come to know, though I wish with all my heart it wasn't true, that someone else has a vested interest in my students. St. Peter warns us, "Be sober and alert. Your opponent, the devil, is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

As an educator, I have a duty to teach my students the doctrines of the faith, but as a religious sister and a spiritual mother, I have an obligation to also form them and help them love the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. I remind myself every year that if I can foster a love for these two Hearts in my students, then I have done my most important task.

In the biblical context, the word *heart* is an expression of the total person. A little-known fact of St. Margaret Mary is that when she drew the first to be venerated image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, she included names encircling the Heart. The names at the top were *Jesus, Mary, and Joseph*. Either side at the bottom she wrote *Ann* and *Joachim*. My efforts to find out the reason for this inclusion failed; however, I find it interesting that they are names of parents and grandparents of Jesus.

Was not the human heart of Christ, like the hearts all children, formed by His parents and grandparents? It is true that Christ is King of the Universe, but in His humanity and humility isn't it also true that He derived aspects of His mannerisms, personality and habits from His Blessed Mother and St. Joseph? Like all of us, Jesus could not have grown up without being affected by the influence of His parents and grandparents.

In turn, having been entrusted with the sacred duty of raising the Son of God, they too were formed by Him. They learned from His words, miracles, the way He performed His daily duties, said His prayers – His whole manner of living.

When we consider what these family members did for each other, is it not fitting that we should place ourselves, our families, into their holy care? How is this to be done? Through consecration of ourselves and loved ones to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

This dedication, however, isn't to be made only once and then forgotten about. Rather, it is to be a daily reminder of whom we belong to. Personally, my day isn't off to a good start if I don't renew my consecration to my Blessed Mother. I pray one of the old consecration prayers; perhaps you have heard of it.

My Queen! My Mother! I give myself entirely to thee; and to show my devotion to thee, I consecrate to thee, this day, my eyes, my ears, my mouth, my heart, my whole being without reserve. Wherefore, good Mother, as I am thine own, keep me, guard me, as thy property and possession. Amen.

My heart cannot seem to rest until I have entrusted myself to Mary in this way each morning. We know each day has its roses and thorns and the enemy of our soul is always on the lookout for a way to snatch us from union with Jesus and His Mother.

As I cannot save my students from the influences of the world, so I need the guidance and protection of the Sacred and Immaculate Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Consecration as person is not only something we do, but who we are. Furthermore, we cannot give ourselves to someone we do not know. The word *know* in Scripture has different meanings. To *know* can mean the relationship between husband and wife. At the Annunciation Mary asks the angel, "How can this be since I do not know a man?" This word can also be applied to the relationship between Christ and the soul. Jesus tells us in the gospel of John, "My sheep hear My voice; I know them and they follow Me" (John 10:27). Another example comes from the parable of the Ten Virgins when the five foolish ones return too late for the feast. They knock on the door and the reply is, "Amen, I say to you, I do not know you" (Matthew 25:13). This should cause us to reflect. Do you and I really *know* Jesus and Mary from the depths of our hearts? Does our knowledge only reside in our head?

It is important to keep in mind that to consecrate our person is not a human idea or invention; it originated in God. On February 2nd, we celebrate the feast of the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple. The first reading is taken from the thirteenth chapter of Exodus which says, “The Lord said to Moses, ‘Consecrate to Me all the first-born; whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and beast, is Mine’ “.

On November 21st we celebrate the Presentation of Mary. Pope Paul VI, in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Marialis Cultus*, taught us, “Mary was moved by the Holy Spirit to consecrate her life to God, who filled her with grace from the first moment of her conception.”¹

Every Sunday at Holy Mass, we are to actively participate in the *presentation of the gifts*. How are we to do this from our pew? The VCI document *Lumen Gentium* explains, “Their work, prayers and apostolic endeavors, their ordinary married and family life, their daily labor, their mental and physical relaxation...all of these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. During the celebration of the Eucharist these sacrifices are most lovingly offered to the Father along with the Lord’s body. Thus, as worshippers whose every deed is holy, the lay faithful consecrate the world itself to God” (34).

With these examples, we can see that consecration has to do with a relationship. Whenever I think of Mother Teresa or John Paul II and their great impact upon so many people (even their enemies), I can’t help but think that it wasn’t so much what they said or did as much as their profound relationship with Jesus and Mary. With fond memory, I remember standing Mile High Stadium during World Youth Day in the presence of Pope John Paul II, with tears coming down my cheeks thinking, “If I feel like I am in the presence of Jesus being with this holy pope, what will the actual presence of Jesus feel like in heaven?” My only wish then, as now, is

¹ Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Marsalis cultus*, 2 February 1974, 8.

to have that same kind of relationship with Jesus. It was due their profound and personal relationship with Christ and His Mother that these two saints brought many souls to salvation.

In writing of Mary, St. Maximilian Kolbe exhorted his brothers, “To come close to her, to become like her, to permit her to reign over our hearts and our whole being, that she live and act in us and through us, that she love God with our hearts and we belong to her unreservedly – this is our ideal. To influence those who surround us in order that also the hearts of our neighbors might open, so that she might be Queen in the hearts of all men.”²

As the world needed Mother Teresa and John Paul II and their personal consecrations to Mary, so the world, our students, our children and other family members need our own consecrations to Mary. What others need most from us is the overflow of our relationships with Christ and His Mother.

The roadmap to Jesus is through the Heart of Mary. She will lead us to Jesus who said, “I am the way, the truth and the life.” The way, then, is not a place, but a *Person*. St. John, the beloved disciple, is an excellent example of giving ourselves to Jesus. We know at the Last Supper he leaned back against Jesus’ chest troubled about who would betray his Master. How much easier would each day be if we, too, took the time to lean on Jesus’ Heart; the Heart that says, “*Come to Me, all you who labor and are burdened and I will give you rest*” (Matthew 11:28).

Jesus made twelve promises to those who devote themselves to His Sacred Heart. Three of them are: *I will give them all the graces necessary in their state of life. I will establish peace in their homes. I will bless every place in which an image of My Heart is exposed and honored.*

In the book, Heart of the Redeemer, we read, “*Family consecration and home enthronement, which is a social acknowledgement of the sovereignty of the Heart of Christ over a Christian family, can greatly deepen*

² Wisz, OFM Conv., Fr. Dominic. *AIM HIGHER! Spiritual and Marian reflections of St. Maximillian Kolbe* (Libertyville, IL. Prow Books/Franciscan Marytown Press 1994). P. 20

the devotion. In this ritual which may include Mass and parental blessing of the children, an image of the Sacred Heart is placed in a prominent place in the home as a reminder that Christ reigns in the domestic church. It is important to remember that our Lord promised that where the image of His Heart is honor He would bring peace to the home, unite the families, bless them in all their undertakings, bestow the graces necessary for their state in life and be a secure place of refuge in life and death.”³

In regards to my students, I as a human being am limited as to what I can do to protect them from the various evil influences of our culture. If, however, I allow the Sacred Heart to reign in my classroom and work to foster devotion to Him then I have tried to follow in our Lady’s footsteps.

Mary never draws attention to herself. All she has ever done is lead souls to Christ. Our heavenly Father entrusted the formation of Jesus to Mary, should we hesitate to give ourselves completely to her? The child Jesus rested on the Heart of His Mother accepting her love, comfort and encouragement. Shall we not do the same? “A person devoted to the Immaculate Heart of Mary will have his will and total life drawn up to Jesus Christ and to all He came to save. If we grasp the full meaning, we can understand how devotion to Mary’s Immaculate Heart is an efficacious sign of grace and salvation.”⁴

The consecration of ourselves to Mary is really to come to acknowledge and accept the truth that she’s already our Mother. This happened at the foot of the cross. To go back to St. John, the entrustment of ourselves to her is to embrace and obey Jesus’ words, “Behold, your Mother” (John 19:27). It is to enter into a profound, unique and individual relationship with her.

Fr. Michael Gaitley, in his book 33 Days to Morning Glory, teaches us “Mary won’t force us to enter into a deeper relationship with her. She surely invites us to such a relationship and patiently waits for us to accept her invitation, but she remains respectful. Still, if we could see how much longing hides behind her

³ O’Donnell, S.T.D. Timothy *Heart of the Redeemer* (Manassa, Va. Trinity Communications 1989) p.288

⁴ Fox, Rev. Robert *Immaculate Heart of Mary True Devotion* (Huntington, ID. Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division 1986)p.33

silence, we'd say yes to her if only to give her relief. In fact, saying yes to her gives her more than relief. It gives her joy. Great joy. And the more fully we say yes to Mar, the more joyful she becomes. For our yes gives her the freedom to form us into great saints."⁵

Mary has only one goal in mind and that is to lead us all to heaven. Why would we not want to consecrate ourselves and our families to her? In the Litany of Loretto, one of the invocations to Our Lady is *Queen of Families, pray for us*. May she indeed pray for us and lead our families safely to heaven through this valley of tears.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph...make our families holy. Amen.

⁵ Gaitley, MIC, Rev. Michael *33 Days to Morning Glory* (Stockbridge, MA. Marian Helpers Center 2011)p.5