



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



**June 6, 2018**

**The Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Saints**

True Consecration to the Blessed Mother is consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Why?

What is it about the heart? The heart is the core of the person. Consecration to the Immaculate Heart is thus giving oneself entirely to the Blessed Mother so as to be only all for Jesus through Her.

Why Our Lady? Our Lord wishes it to be so. He formed her and under her heart in her womb, He assumed his human nature. The human nature of God the Son comes from the Blessed Mother. One could imagine that Jesus looks very much like Mary. And when we see Mary we should see Jesus as well.

Some may argue... but is it not enough, does it not suffice to go straight to the Heart of Jesus without the need for Mary?

Those who perceive Our Lady as being an obstacle to Her Son are contradicting the plan of God Himself. God the Father sent the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit to become man in the womb of the Blessed Virgin. It was through her that God came to live among us and it is also through her that He continues to come to us. Says St. Louis Marie de Montfort: "It is through the Most Holy Virgin Mary that Jesus Christ has come to the world, and it is also through her that he must reign in the world." Thus, the importance of placing the Heart of Our Blessed Mother, embodying all that Mary is, inseparably united to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, in the center of our Christian lives.

We see this clearly in the lives of the saints. I intend in this presentation to shed some light on how the Heart of Mary Immaculate imbued the lives of a young Carmelite nun, three young shepherd children, a foundress of a vibrant religious community, and a great modern day pope. Can you guess who they are?

### **Therese of Lisieux**

Thérèse (of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face), named Marie-Françoise Thérèse, was born in the nineteenth century on January 2, 1873 to Louis Martin and Marie Zélie Guérin (also canonized saints) in the Norman town of Alençon. She was the last child of nine. At the time of her birth, only four sisters were alive: Marie-Louise, Marie-Pauline, Marie-Léonie and Marie-Céline. Two sisters Marie-Hélène and Marie-Mélanie-Thérèse died while still very young in 1870 as well as two brothers, Marie-Joseph in 1867 and Marie-Jean Baptiste in 1868.

Notice all the names? They all share Marie, which is Mary in French, as their first names. Coincidence? I think not. Our Lady played an important part in the Martin household.

As young parents Louis and Zélie decided that beginning with their eldest daughter, the Queen of Heaven would be the first patron of all their children whether male or female and for sake of convenience, they would be called by their second name, their secondary patrons.

Previous to their marriage, Louis Martin had been given a statue of the Blessed Virgin much like Our Lady of Victories in Paris. The statue, 36 inches high and quite heavy, was skillfully carved. It depicted Our Lady Immaculate, clad in clinging robes with her hands outstretched as though scattering graces. She would one day be enthroned as "Our Lady of the Smile".

Zélie Martin, upon realizing her vocation was not to be a religious as she so desired, turned to Our Lady entrusting her uncertain future into Mary's hands. On December 8th, 1851 she received her answer in the form of an interior locution where while she was absorbed in work, she distinctly heard the words: "See to the making of Point d'Alençon." Taking this as an instruction of what she was to do, she became a master of the art of lace making and eventually established her own business which helped the Martin family financially.

These incidents help us to see that the love of the Blessed Mother was integral to the way the Martin couple lived and they clearly instilled this love in their children.

In writing her autobiography *The Story of A Soul*, Thérèse begins by begging heaven's Queen to "guide my hand that it trace no line displeasing to her". Many times in her writing she recalls the Blessed Mother's presence.

One such time was when Thérèse suffered from a strange illness which she attributed to two causes: "the mental and emotional strain she endured in losing Pauline which, in a sense aggravated the yet unhealed wound inflicted by the death of her mother; and the anger of the devil over the harm that her family would cause him" (Miller, 7). This illness lasted for two months until on May 13, 1883 (note the date!) her three sisters, Marie, Léonie and Céline, turned in desperation to the Virgin seeking a miracle for their Thérèse.

She writes:

Finding no help on earth, poor little Thérèse had also turned towards the Mother of Heaven, and prayed with all her heart that she take pity on her. All of a sudden the Blessed Virgin appeared beautiful to me, so beautiful that never had I seen anything so attractive; her face was suffused with an ineffable benevolence and tenderness, but what penetrated to the very depths of my soul was the ravishing smile of the Blessed Virgin. At that instant, all the pain disappeared, and two large tears glistened on my eyelashes, and flowed down my cheeks silently, but they were tears of unmixed joy" (65-66).

This event, which brought about the cure of her mysterious illness, became a source of great trial after having shared the secret with Marie who asked permission to tell it at Carmel. Unable to say "no" to her sister's request, Thérèse was barraged by all kinds of questions the first time she visited Carmel. For the next four years, this memory of her grace, only brought horror as she thought that she had lied about the entire affair. It was not until their trip to Rome, during which they made a stop in Paris, that kneeling at the feet of

Our Lady of Victories Thérèse received peace. Once again she found happiness: “The Blessed Virgin made me feel it was really herself who smiled on me and brought about my cure. I understood that she was watching over me, that I was her child” (123).

Although a very pivotal event in Thérèse’s life, where she chose Jesus’ mother as her own, what she knew of Mary came from Sacred Scripture.

She intentionally minimized the mystical phenomena in her life and emphasized the living of a very simple and ordinary life in the obscurity of faith. For Thérèse, the Virgin Mary, is the Mother and model of faith. In imitating her a Christian can soar to the peak of divine union with God. She found this way of imitation from what is written about Mary in the Gospels.

Thérèse had no use for lofty and sentimental sermons on Mary.

For a sermon on the Blessed Virgin to please me and do me any good, I must see her real life, not her imagined life. I’m sure that her real life was very simple.

They show her to us unapproachable but they should present her as imitable, bringing out her virtues, saying that she lived by faith just like ourselves, giving proofs of this from the Gospel, where we read: “And they did not understand the words which He spoke to them (Carroll, 82-83).

Thérèse once wrote that Mary is more Mother than Queen. She wrote her last tribute to Our Lady, shortly before her death while she lay ill, in a poem entitled ““Pourquoi je t’aime O Marie” (Why I Love You O Mary). In it she included everything she would have preached about Mary in a sermon had she been a priest.

For Thérèse the reality that Mary was her Mother was everything. Sister Genevieve stated that as she suffered her last illness, Thérèse constantly spoke of the Blessed Virgin. It was especially in her suffering that she united herself more closely to the Mother of God, her mother. Thérèse wrote:

Meditating on your life in the Gospels

I dare to look at you, to draw near to you.

It is not difficult for me to believe that I am your child,

For I see you mortal and suffering like me...

(Gaucher, 207)

As great as her love for Mary was, she struggled with the praying of the Rosary: "...but when I am alone (I am ashamed to admit it) the recitation of the rosary is harder for me than the wearing of an instrument of penance...I feel I have said this so poorly! I force myself in vain to meditate on the mysteries of the rosary. I don't succeed in fixing my mind on them" (Gaucher, footnote, 208). So, for those of us who have the same struggle, there is hope! We are in good company!

The passionate love that Thérèse had for Jesus, her one true Love, was made possible because of her intimate love for Mary, as she came to know her Immaculate Heart revealed to her in the Gospels. At her death after two days of agony, she opened her eyes and fixed them a little above the statue of Mary. She shone with a heavenly peace and inexpressible happiness as on September 30, 1897 her blessed soul was carried away to God.

### **The Fatima children**

The year is 1916. Three children, Lucia dos Santos, cousin to siblings Francisco and Jacinta Marto, receive three times a visit from the Angel of Portugal to prepare them for the visits of Our Lady and the message she would bring them of her Immaculate Heart.

It was during these visits that the children learned adoration of the Blessed Trinity, adoration of the Holy Eucharist, how to offer sacrifices to God, and to beg God to convert sinners. At the last visit of the Angel, he gave them Holy Communion. Lucia received the Host and the two siblings who had not yet made their First Holy communion, received the Precious Blood. These children, ages 9, 8 and 6 respectively, pondered the deep reality of having God within them and this remained with them their entire lives. The Angel, having taught the children how to pray, had cleared a path in their hearts for the Mother of God.

Meanwhile, life for the children continued. Exteriously nothing changed. Interiorly all that they had received from their families namely a love for the Church, for Our Lady, for the Eucharist, for the Rosary, for prayer, for family and for the virtue of obedience, deepened. They continued with religious devotions, nightly Rosary with family and neighbors, helping the less fortunate, setting food aside for those in need, praying the evening Angelus to end the work day, and receiving corrections for sins and faults observed, all the common practices in the life of a good Catholic home where the family truly was the domestic church. Both the faith foundation in the family and the visits of the Angel paved the way for the coming of Our Lady in 1917.

The first apparition on May 13, 1917 occurred while the three children were shepherding the sheep. During this visit Mary asked them: “Are you willing to offer yourselves to God and bear all the suffering He wills to send you, as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended and in supplication for the conversion of sinners? – Yes, we are willing. – Then you are going to have much to suffer, but the grace of God will be your comfort.”

This encounter changed them completely. Mary’s radiant beauty and the light in which they saw themselves in God left such a deep impression on their souls that instead of praying only the first few words of the Hail Mary as they were wont to do so they could finish the Rosary more quickly and have time to play, they now prayed the entire Hail Mary. They even put aside their choice of games for choice of sacrifices such as feeding their lunch to the sheep and later to poor people going days without food, drinking little water, making frequent novenas- all for the conversion of sinners. At that time Lucia was 10, Francisco 9 and Jacinta 7. Who says little children cannot offer sacrifices and penances?

The second visit came on June 13th. Here Our Blessed Mother asked again for the Rosary every day and she asked Lucia to learn to read and write. (Now we know why, considering all that Lucia had to write!) She also promised to take the children to Heaven; Jacinta and Francisco soon but Lucia would have to stay “for some time longer”. (That “some time longer” was almost 98 years!)

Following this apparition Lucia suffered a great deal especially from her family, particularly the misunderstanding and unacceptance of her own mother towards whom she never had any bitterness; she simply prayed and offered sacrifices. Her two cousins helped with their prayers, sacrifices and constant support and encouragement. They were Lucia's little mentors.

July 13th, the day of the third apparition was a particularly hard day for the children because it was on this day they received the Secret which consisted of three parts: the vision of hell (thereby verifying the existence of hell), the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary (later more specified with the First Saturday Devotion) and the call to penance (the need to offer daily sacrifices). She also taught them the prayer known as the Decade Prayer said after each decade of the Rosary: "O My Jesus ... Save us from the fires of hell. Lead all souls..."

Seeing so many lost souls filled the children with pain. They could not fathom anyone not loving God who is so good. Their young hearts burning with love, they prayed sometimes for hours, prostrate, interceding before God with the prayers the Angel had taught them: "My God, I believe... Most Holy Trinity ... over and over until overcome with exhaustion.

They could not have sustained all the sacrifices required of them had it not been for Our Lady. Once the word got out about a secret, everyone wanted to know, including the anti-religious government. This was another cause of immense suffering.

On August 13th the children were kidnapped by the administrator and placed into prison with grown men. Seeing their innocence, the men compassionated the children and joined them as they prayed the Rosary to seek the care of Our Lady. The men even tried to cheer them up with a little song and dance, especially little Jacinta who thought she would never see her mother again. The children, especially Francisco, encouraged each other to offer all their hardships as a sacrifice.

The following day, the children were called out from the prison. Beginning with seven-year-old Jacinta, the guard took her out. The time of martyrdom at hand (or so the children thought), she chose death over

revealing the Secret. The two followed, first Francisco and then Lucia. They too chose not to reveal the Secret. The ordeal over, the three found themselves together in another room, relieved to be still alive. Yet, the threats would continue and they would remain firm in their resolve to keep the Secret even if that meant being boiled in oil as they had been told.

Being the Mother Our Lady is, she made up the missed visit on August 19th in a place closer to home in Valinhos. Once again, she told them to pray the Rosary every day. She promised them a miracle in October which would prove she had appeared to the children and she reminded them to make sacrifices for sinners.

During the September apparition, she told the children to continue praying the Rosary, gave a detailed account on what would take place in October, and stated that God was pleased with their sacrifices. This gave strength to Lucia in particular as she was suffering greatly. On that day she received an additional gift from Our Lady: a holy priest, who had come to Fatima to investigate the children and the events taking place there. Now she had someone, a representative of the Church, to whom she could speak and turn to for guidance. This priest helped her navigate through the sometimes-murky waters.

Finally, as the Blessed Mother had promised, in October she performed the miracle of the sun. Thus, now the world had proof that the children had not lied about her coming. She asked for a chapel to be built in her honor, gave her name as the Lady of the Rosary, and exhorted that the Rosary continue to be prayed every day. With great sadness, she said: "Do not offend the Lord Our God anymore, because He is already so much offended."

The task to make Our Lady's message known has been accomplished. Lucia, in religion named Sister Maria Lucia of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart, faithfully fulfilled this work, bringing to the world the message of the Gospel through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. On February 13th, 2005 she was received into heaven. "Well done, good and faithful servant." Undoubtedly the Blessed Virgin Mary and her two cousins, who had preceded her in death at ages 11 and 9, met her at the gates.

## **Mother Teresa of Calcutta**

In 1910 on August 26th Skopje, Albania another great lover of Our Lady was born. Her name was Gonxha Agnes and she was the youngest of the three Bojaxhui children. One day she would be known to the world as simply Mother Teresa.

Enjoying a happy, comfortable childhood, she was raised in a good devout Catholic home. Her father, a generous man, provided from his means money and food for those in need. After becoming mysteriously ill at a meal, he died the following day in surgery. Because his business partner left nothing for the family, her mother established herself as a dressmaker and weaver in order to provide the financial support for the family. She was a firm, strong willed woman with deep faith and she continued to instill this faith and sharing with the poor in her children.

At the age of 18, Agnes entered the Irish order of the Sisters of Our Lady of Loretto and took the name Sr. Mary Teresa of the Child Jesus. For twenty years she faithfully lived out her consecration until one day on September 10, 1946 she received her "call within a call." Discerning with her superior that this was God's will for her, she left the order but not without some sadness of having to leave her Sisters behind. Following the inspiration impressed on her heart by the three visions to quench the thirst of Jesus on the cross, she took to the streets with five rupees in her pocket venturing out into the Calcutta slums. She entrusted herself and all her cares into the hands of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Our Lady gave Sr. Mary Teresa her Missionary of Charity charism. Mother Teresa was wont to say that her order was Mary's order. The charism and spirituality of the Missionaries of Charity stem in large part from the Gospel accounts of the Annunciation and the Visitation

Sr. Mary Teresa used these two Gospel accounts to form the spirit of her Community. In the months and years after her initial encounter, being given the Blessed Mother's own grace, she formulated this charism into what she understood as being three expressions of Our Lady's Spirit: loving trust, total surrender and cheerfulness or cheerful giving. Mary's loving trust is seen when Elizabeth, moved by the Holy Spirit

proclaims: "Blessed are you who believed (trusted) that what was spoken by the Lord would be fulfilled" (Luke 1:45). Her total surrender is manifested in the words: "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38). In Mary's joyful response to God's call exclaimed in her Magnificat with the opening words: "My soul magnifies the Lord. My spirit exalts in God my Savior" (Luke 1:46ff), we see her cheerful gift of self. And with the words of Elizabeth: "For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy" (Luke 1:44), we see how she brings the joy she has found in Jesus to others.

Is this not what we have come to know in hearing of the life of Mother Teresa of Calcutta? Speaking of her Community she once said: "That is so much our life- saying, 'Yes' to Jesus and running in haste to serve Him in the poorest of the poor. Let us keep close to Our Lady and she will make that same spirit grow in each of us" (Langford, 52).

Mother Teresa was keenly aware of the need for the presence of Our Lady in her life. Totally abandoning herself in the hands of God so as to satiate the thirst of Jesus for souls on the cross, she experienced an intense, agonizing, sometimes almost unbearable darkness within her soul for fifty years. Writing to an archbishop in whom she confided, she states: "There is so much contradiction in my soul. – Such deep longing for God – so deep that it is painful – a suffering continual – and yet not wanted by God – repulsed – empty – no faith – no love – no zeal. - ... (Kolodiejchuk, 177).

Always asking for prayers, she especially requested Our Lady's assistance in times of difficulty. "Please ask Our Lady to give me her heart – so that I may with greater care fulfill his desire in me. I want to smile even at Jesus and so hide if possible the pain and the darkness of my soul even from Him. ... Please ask Our Lady to keep me close to herself that I may not miss the way in the darkness" (Kolodiejchuk, 177).

Mother Teresa lived so closely united to the Mother of God often praying the Rosary or merely holding one in her hand. "Cling to the Rosary as the creeper clings to the tree," she told her Sisters "for without Our Lady we cannot stand." She was also fond of the "Memorare" inventing what has been named the quick

novena of nine Memorares for a particular intention and the tenth Memorare to be prayed in thanksgiving. Examples, from the life of Mother Teresa and others, abound of Mary's intercessory aid through this prayer. I too have a story to share.

About three years ago I was teaching in Hutchinson in the Catholic High School there. We received word that a severe thunderstorm was threatening the Hutchinson area. In fact, throughout the country, concern over the possible magnitude of the storms grew. Feeling interiorly moved, I began a prayer campaign, inviting my students and the teachers to pray Memorares to prevent the oncoming storm. When the storm came to Hutchinson, a path opened and it circled around the city. According to a report from one of my students who saw the radar, it was headed straight for the city. Reading the newspaper, following what was to be an onslaught of bad storms, the weather forecasters made the claim that nationwide somehow, they had overestimated their predictions since the storms were much less disastrous than they had anticipated. Really? I am convinced it was Our Lady through the many Memorares we prayed.

[Since April 1, 2013 we have been praying Millions of Memorares for Mary to help us especially with the building of our motherhouse. We invite you to join your petitions to ours. Please visit our website: [www.sistersihmofwichita.org](http://www.sistersihmofwichita.org) .]

Through the presence of Mother Teresa, Mary could melt the hearts of the most terrifying people. Mother Teresa would give out miraculous medals, even to guerilla terrorists so they could give them to their children. Invariably, with the divine love she carried in her heart, she would get what she requested.

A priest who worked with Mother Teresa for thirty years had this to say: "Sitting with Mother Teresa, watching her tend the sick and the dying, feeling the aura of holiness around her person, seeing her head bent in prayer, lost in God – how often I asked myself if I was not seeing something of Our Lady, experiencing a glimpse of the Virgin of Nazareth" (Langford, back cover).

Mother Teresa, whose heart had so been formed in the Mother of God's Immaculate Heart, went eternally into the embrace of Jesus and Mary on September 5th, 1997 after faithfully completing the mission God had sent her to do.

## **John Paul II**

Karol Wojtyla, who would one day become John Paul the Great, was born on May 18, 1920 to Karol and Emilia as parishioners of the Church of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary sang the Evening Prayer. Emilia delivered her son Karol Józef, listening to the singing from her window. The youngest of three, he had an older brother, 14 years his senior to whom he was very close, and a sister whom he never knew because she died in infancy.

From his mother, who died of kidney failure and congenital heart disease short of his ninth birthday, he learned the basics of the faith of how to make the Sign of the Cross and daily prayer. Though he could not recall many memories of her, he wrote one of his first poems of her.

Three years after his mother's death, he lost his brother, to the scarlet fever. His brother Edmund, a doctor, contracted the disease as he was caring for a young woman. He was 26 years old.

This left him alone with his father, a retired military man, who had requested early retirement to care for his ailing wife.

The example of his father left its mark on young Karol. The following day, after his mother's funeral, he took his two sons on pilgrimage to Our Lady's shrine. There he reminded them that the Blessed Virgin Mary would watch over them until they were united once again with their mother in heaven.

John Paul writes how following his mother's death the life of his father became one of constant prayer. "Sometimes I would wake up during the night and find my father on his knees, just as I would always see him kneeling in the parish church. We never spoke about a vocation to the priesthood, but his example was in a way my first seminary, a kind of domestic seminary" (Evert, 4).

At the death of Edmund as his father stood by his coffin, Karol was deeply impacted by the repetitive words of his father: "Thy will be done!" He remarked: "The violence of the blows which had struck him had opened up immense spiritual depths in him; his grief found its outlet in prayer" (Evert, 5).

Alone, Karol Sr. and son, attended Mass every morning before he went off to school and in the evening prayed together often reading the Sacred Scriptures. This was the routine in Karol's childhood and into his adulthood and even under the weight of personal suffering, he excelled in grammar school, became the high school valedictorian and in Krakow attended the Jagiellonian University to study Polish language and literature until the Nazi invasion in 1930. The university was shut down and because he had to care for his ill elderly father, he found a job as a store messenger. But because he had to prove himself useful to the war effort, he obtained an official "work card" and worked in the rock quarry. Coming home one day after another long day of work, he found his father dead in his room. At the age of 20, he had lost his entire family and his grandparents, as well as his friends, classmates and priests who were disappearing because of the war, either executed or imprisoned in concentration camps.

All alone, he moved in with another family. Every day he went to Mass, spent much time praying in his room and lay prostrate. The heaviness of his loneliness became for Karol a means to holiness. And although he no longer had his loved ones with him, he had his heavenly Mother to whom he turned in all his needs.

John Paul's devotion to Our Lady was such that he showered all his affection and love on her. As a young teenager he would visit a secluded convent church and spend long hours in prayer before her image. When he was in college, he would make an annual trip with other university students on pilgrimage to the shrine of the treasured Polish Black Madonna in Jasna Gora until it was banned by the Nazi regime. This did not prevent his going to the monastery with two friends although Czestochowa was surrounded by Hitler's soldiers. Years later as pope he would not only visit Marian shrines in the places he visited, he would also entrust them into the maternal care of the Blessed Mother.

When Karol was elected pope becoming John Paul II, he chose to keep his official motto “Totus tuus” which he has used as Archbishop of Krakow. His papal shield was simple: a large capital “M” beneath a cross with the words he had taken from St. Louis Marie de Montfort. He breathed and lived these words. “Totus tuus.” I am all yours.

John Paul believed that Mary not only taught him how to suffer but, on many occasions, had intervened to save his life. One such occasion was on May 13, 1981 (notice the date!) the day he was shot in St. Peter’s Square. Ali Agca, sure he had killed the pope as planned, was stunned that the pope survived the shots. But John Paul knew: “One hand fired, and another guided the bullet.” Noting the date of the attempt on his life, he began to reflect on the message of Fatima and realized that he had been shot on the anniversary of the very same month, day and hour that the apparitions began. Traveling to Fatima a year later, he thanked Our Lady for saving his life. Then on March 25, 1984, after the Mass in St. Peter’s Square before the statue of Our Lady of Fatima which had been flown in for the occasion, in union with the bishops, he consecrated Russia and the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Five years later, the Berlin Wall fell and Communism began to crumble.

John Paul kept close to the Mother of God much like Mother Teresa. Through the Rosary, his favorite prayer. Wherever he went he had his Rosary. He prayed it whenever he could several times a day and no matter what he was doing, he carried the Rosary with him.

One evening, a new Swiss Guard, curious about John Paul, observed him praying the Rosary:

As I watched him pray, softly speaking the words of the Rosary, he began radiating a sense of peacefulness and calm unlike anything I had ever encountered. The longer he prayed, the more absorbed in the prayer he became, until he seemed completely taken up in it, as if nothing and no one in the room could pull him back from the place where he’d gone. He was obviously still physically present, but his spirit seemed to be someplace else. I’d never

seen anyone pray like that before. I didn't know it was possible. Up until that evening, I had always thought of prayer as an act of the imagination, a mental fantasy people cooked up to feel better about something, almost like a child talking to an imaginary friend. But there was nothing imaginary about what I saw that night. This man wasn't faking his immersion in God. What I saw was profoundly real and exceedingly desirable (Evert, 163-164).

For John Paul, the Rosary was "our daily meeting which neither I nor Blessed Virgin Mary neglect." Those who knew him well witnessed many times his conversation with Mary. A prelate, responding to a monsignor who after having celebrated Mass with the Pope, commenting that he seemed visibly upset and was speaking aloud with Mary after Holy Communion, said to the monsignor: "We know. He does that all the time, and she's the only one he listens to around here" (Evert, 164).

Without a doubt, John Paul II, the third longest reigning pope after St. Peter, was a very special son of Our Blessed Mother. On April 2, 2005 suffering under the Cross as he had done all his life, at the completion of the vigil Mass for the Feast of Divine Mercy, on the First Saturday of the month, with the sounds of people singing prayers outside his window, John Paul went home to live forever in the house of the heavenly Father.

A Carmelite nun, three shepherd children, a foundress, and a pope: great lovers of Jesus because they were great lovers of Mary. And how did they achieve this love? Through the Heart of the Immaculate Mother. And where did they come to know and experience this heart? From the Gospels in Sacred Scripture and the Rosary, the compendium of the Gospel.

By pondering the Gospels and devoutly praying the Rosary, we too, can be great lovers of the Immaculate Heart of Mary so as to become great lovers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Mary always leads us to Jesus.

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