



*Devotion to the Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart of Mary
according to Father Masmítja,
founder of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*

Wednesday, June 26, 2019

The Immaculate Heart of Mary is a Motherly Heart

Isn't Our Lady just wonderful! On September 8, 2007, the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Bishop Jackels erected our community to the status of a Religious Institute of Diocesan Right under the title of Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Wichita.

Isn't Our Lady good! She leads us to God! We begin our communal prayers with the aspiration: May the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus be everywhere praised and glorified. And may the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary obtain for us an increase of love for the Blessed Sacrament.

Recalling the sorrows of Our Lady, our habit is dark blue and the Rosary of the Seven Dolors hangs off our cincture on the left side. On the right side pinned to the scapular of our habit is the badge of the Immaculate Heart. This badge, designed by our Father Founder Joachim Masmítja, is a visible sign of Mary's Heart. A single sword pierces the heart reminding us of Simeon's words to Our Lady at the Presentation in the Temple: "And your heart a sword shall pierce so the thoughts of many may be laid bare." Three roses encircle the heart pointing to her primary virtues of humility, purity, and obedience. Her humility proclaimed in her Magnificat: "He has looked upon me in my lowliness and His name shall be forever exalted." Her purity as in the beatitude: "Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God." Her obedience expressed at the Annunciation: "Let it be done to me according to Your Word." We live our





motto- I take what is set before me- in imitation of Her Fiat. The heart of the badge, crowned with flames, manifests Her ardent love for God and man.

Since we want our heart to be like Hers, every morning we pray the Prayer for Holiness:

Immaculate Heart of Mary, perfect model of sanctity, take my soul and mold it according to your sublime perfections. Purify my heart and set it free from every obstacle to holiness, so that detached from self and the pleasures of sense, it may be adorned by you with the virtues and perfections of your own Immaculate Heart.

Then lead my soul to that divine intimacy which alone can satisfy the immense capacity for love and union with which God has created the human heart. From you I confidently hope for this grace of holiness, and I entrust to your Immaculate Heart my eternal destiny and the sanctification of priests. Amen.

The title of this talk is “The Immaculate Heart of Mary is a Motherly Heart”. One might think, after all the beautiful we have heard during this novena: “What more is there to say that has not already been said?” Well, when it comes to the Heart of Our Lady, one can never say enough. Her Heart is an inexhaustible treasure in which one continues to mine gold the deeper one goes into her Heart. In this last talk, I would like to reflect on three words: heart, immaculate, and mother.

Let’s begin by looking at the word heart.

In his beautiful work entitled *The Admirable Heart of Mary* from which I have selected several insights, St. John Eudes, who lived in the 1600’s, describes a variety of uses of the word heart as may be found in Sacred Scripture. There is the actual organ, the material and corporeal heart that beats within the breast of every human being. Of this meaning we understand heart as “the principle of life, the first organ to begin to live and the last to be stilled in death.” He also uses the same idea, as was the knowledge of his day, to state that the corporeal heart is also “the seat of love, hatred, joy, sadness, fear and every passion of the soul.” It also “signifies the memory”, denoting that the heart helps us to remember.



Likewise the heart refers to the intellect with which we meditate. When we meditate we think on the things of God which tends “to persuade and to convince us of the truth of Christian doctrine.” Further he claims the word ‘heart’ “expresses the free will of the superior and rational part of the soul, the queen of the other faculties, the root of good and evil, and the mother of virtue and vice.” Heart can also be understood as the highest part of the soul called by theologians of his time the “point of the spirit.” “It is the seat of contemplation, which consists in turning the mind directly toward God and viewing Him in all simplicity” even at rest or sleep. Sometimes the word means the “whole interior life”, i.e. the spiritual life, of man.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church in the section under Christian Prayer points out that the word “heart” is used over a thousand times in Scripture. It is the “heart” that prays. In Article 2563, ‘heart’ is explained, as “the dwelling-place where I am, where I live; according to the Semitic or Biblical expression, the heart is the place ‘to which I withdraw.’ The heart is our hidden center, beyond the grasp of our reason and of others; only the Spirit of God can fathom the human heart and know it fully. The heart is the place of decision, deeper than our psychic drives. It is the place of truth, where we choose life or death. It is the place of encounter, because as image of God we live in relation: it is the place of covenant.”

These ways of looking at the word “heart” help us to appreciate, to realize its depth. Heart really denotes the core of a person, who someone is. When we enter into a relationship with another, we speak of the heart, a heart to heart exchange, an entering into the heart of the other.

Since the heart is the core of one’s being, then the state or condition of a person’s heart truly reveals his or her character, whether or not one is good or evil, virtuous or vicious, saint or demon. How important then of having a heart that seeks goodness, practices virtue, strives to be a saint! Which human person do you suppose exemplifies such a heart, and in fact exceeds every soul ever to be born? Of



course... the Blessed Virgin Mary. Stop. Wait a minute. What about... Jesus? Yes, He too, certainly. However, let us not forget...Jesus is a divine Person with two natures, human and divine. He is God.

How then does Mary, a mere human person, exemplify goodness, virtue, sainthood? In the complete gift of Herself to the Father through the Son by the power of the Holy Spirit, living Her perpetual 'yes', Her fiat, to God. Where does she do this? In Her Heart, Her Immaculate Heart.

I looked up the word immaculate in vocabulary.com and found these descriptions and associations: spotless, pure, clean as fresh snow on a far-off mountain and free from dirt or impurities; unblemished, without fault or error; impeccable and perfect as being complete of its kind; uncorrupted, not debased.

These provide us with an image of immaculate, even though there is no specific mention of sin. I found the word sin, or better said without sin, in a book, in Webster's dictionary. It was the last definition given: pure; innocent; without sin.

Pure, clean, unsoiled, without sin, a heart that is so unlike yours and mine and yet in the beginning when God created Adam and Eve He willed for them to be in a continual state of grace so that our first parents could forever live in the Heart of God. We know the story because it is our story. Sadly, as a result of listening to the lies of the devil, man doubts the love God has for him and no longer entrusts himself to God. Thinking now that he is left to his own devices, he turns from his Father and his heart loses its former purity and beauty making it impossible for him to love as God intended. Thus the Father whose Heart is wounded by the 'no' of His children, gives us His Son Jesus on the Cross as the remedy to restore our hearts to their original purity and beauty, hearts without sin, immaculate hearts.

The Heart of Jesus is immaculate; His is such by the very fact that He is God. Our Lady's Heart however, has been made immaculate by God Himself from the moment of Her conception in the womb of her mother Saint Anne.



Recall Luke's account of the Annunciation in chapter one. The angel, God's messenger, is sent to the virgin, she who has not been touched by a man. He addresses her. "Hail. Full of grace." This address really is her identity for in it Scripture reveals Mary's Heart to us. A vessel that is full cannot at the same time be empty. Grace is the divine life of God. The Heart of Mary is full to overflowing with God's life, i.e. grace. Grace leaves no room for sin.

Pope Blessed Pius IX declared the dogma known as Mary's Immaculate Conception in 1854: "The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin."

The defilement of sin never touched the humanity of Mary and thus we have not only a model and a guide, we also have one who because she is completely without sin can and does efficaciously intercede for us before the throne of the Almighty. How does she exercise this role? As a mother with her children. She gives herself to us as our Mother at the foot of the cross while Jesus, Her first-born Son, Her and our Savior and God, hangs dying in excruciating agony gasping: "Mother, behold your son. Behold your Mother."

St. John Eudes states: What "rendered Mary worthy to become the Mother of God, made her also the Mother of all God's children. As the Eternal Father gave her the power to conceive His Son in her Heart and in her virginal womb,...so also did God grant her the power to form Christ and give birth to Him in the hearts of the children of Adam, who thus became members of Jesus Christ and sons of God. Even as Mary conceived and will eternally bear her Son Jesus Christ in her Heart, she also conceives and holds forever in the same Heart all the holy members of our Divine Head. They are her beloved children, the fruits of her maternal Heart..."



What is a maternal heart? It is the heart of a mother. The word mother evokes so many thoughts and feelings in each and every child. She is the parent who carries the child in her womb for nine months nourishing it from her own body. She gives birth to the child; she nurses the child. Mother. She cradles the child; she rocks the child; she sings to the child. Mother. She feeds the child; she nurtures the child; she takes care of the child. Mother. She compassionates her child when it is hurting, when the child is suffering. Mother. She wishes to exchange places with her child when death stands at the door. Mother. A woman who lives for her child.

Do we not see this in Mary, God's Mother and ours? Our Lady revealed this to Saint Brigid: "My Son was truly my Heart to me. When He left my bosom to be born, it seemed as though half of my Heart were going forth from me. When He suffered, I felt His pain as though my Heart endured the identical sorrows and torments that He endured. When my Son was being scourged and torn with whips, my Heart was scourged and whipped with Him. When He looked at me from the Cross, and I at Him, two streams of tears gushed from my eyes; and when He saw me oppressed with sorrow, He experienced such violent anguish at my desolation that the pain caused by His sorrow was my sorrow as His Heart was my Heart" (The Admirable Heart of Mary, St. John Eudes).

The relationship between Jesus as God the Son and Mary as Mother of God is the same one that She wishes to bring to birth in us. "Jesus", says St. John Eudes, "lives in her soul and in her body, and in each faculty of her body and soul. He lives in her entirely, which means that whatever is in Jesus is also in Mary. His Heart abides in her heart, His soul in her soul, His spirit in her spirit. The memory, intellect and will of Jesus are alive in the memory, intellect and will of Mary; His interior and exterior senses in her interior and exterior senses. His passions in her passions; His virtues, mysteries and divine attributes are living in her Heart. Nay, more than living, they hold sovereign sway, producing inconceivably marvelous effects and impressing a living image of themselves as her Heart mirrors His Sacred Heart."



The same sway Jesus has over Her, She wishes for Him to have over us. How does She communicate this to us Her children, She who is in Heaven and we who are on earth? We turn now briefly to consider the numerous manifestations of Her presence in Marian apparitions, shrines and devotions around the world.

Do you know how many places Our Mother has visited on this earth? Many are familiar with Fatima, Lourdes, and Guadalupe but there are currently sixteen apparitions recognized by the Vatican. In addition, thirteen have the approval of their local bishop.

I recently became familiar with two approved apparition sites. The first, recognized as authentic by the local bishop in 2010, is the only approved apparition in the United States which occurred in the 1800's in Champion, Wisconsin. Mary appeared as Our Lady of Good Help. The second one, under the title of Our Lady of Good Success, took place in the late 16th century to the mid-17th century in Quito, Ecuador and has Vatican approval.

Our Blessed Mother has made visits to person after person in country after country. If you wish to have more information on Her appearances and shrines, I direct you to go to www.themarianapparitions.org. This website, a real labor of love for the Blessed Mother, is the brainchild of Carlo Acutis. Carlo, an Italian boy, died at the age of 15 in 2006 of a sudden onset of fulminant leukemia. Carlo's cause for sainthood is under investigation and he has been declared a Servant of God.

Our Lady does not limit herself to particular places. She also makes Her presence known and felt through the many Marian prayers and devotions in the Church. Call to mind the Rosary, the Dolors, the Miraculous Medal, the Green Scapular, the Brown Scapular, the Memorare Novena, and the simple Hail Mary. Our Immaculate Mother continues to labor to bring her fallen children, you, me, all souls, back into the loving, merciful embrace of the Eternal God.

She truly will not rest until all Her children are safe in Heaven.



I invite you now to join me in singing “As I Kneel” as we proclaim our love to Our Heavenly Mother. You may kneel if you wish.

As I kneel before You, As I bow my head in prayer, Take this day, Make it Yours and fill me with Your love.

Chorus: Ave Maria, Gratia plena. Dominus tecum, Benedicta tu.

All I have I give You, Every dream and wish are Yours, Mother of Christ, Mother of mine, Present them to my Lord. (Chorus.)

As I kneel before You, and I see Your smiling face, Every thought, Every word, are lost in Your embrace.

(Chorus.)