

THE BULLETIN

“So the faith was planted: so it must be restored.”

Eight Pond Place, Oyster Bay, NY 11771

June 2023

“Behold this Heart...”

Adapted from a sermon by The Most Rev. Clarence Kelly
Copyright © 1993 The Most Rev. Clarence Kelly

Among the many feasts which the Church celebrates each year, there are very few that were instituted at the direct request of Our Lord. The Feast of the Sacred Heart is such a feast. The request was made by Our Lord through St. Margaret Mary. Our Lord specified that He wanted the Feast of His Sacred Heart celebrated on the Friday following the Octave of Corpus Christi in order to help spread devotion to His Divine Heart. Pope Pius XI wrote about this devotion to the Sacred Heart in two Encyclicals: one in 1928, the other in 1932. Speaking with his authority as the Vicar of Christ on earth, Pius XI declared that the purpose of devotion to the Sacred Heart is to make a return of love to Jesus, to imitate the virtues of the Sacred Heart, and to move men to make reparation to the Heart of Jesus for all the insults suffered by Him at the hands of men.

The object of devotion to the Sacred Heart is threefold. The *immediate object* of this devotion is the actual physical Heart of Christ. This is sometimes spoken of as the material object of the devotion. The physical Heart of Christ is the human Heart of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Therefore it is to be worshipped as His Heart, the very human Heart of the Son of God. The *formal object* of this devotion is the infinite perfection and redeeming love of Jesus Christ. This is the love spoken of by St. Paul in the Epistle for the Mass of the Sacred Heart when he says: “That you may be able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length, and height and depth, to know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge.” (Ephes. 3:18-19)

Theologians speak of another object which they call the *whole object* of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. This is devotion to the Incarnate Word of God, Our Lord, Our Redeemer and our God. The Sacred Heart is a perfect symbol of Our Lord’s love for us, and It is a perfect symbol of Him, for God is Love. The Father so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son. The Son so loved us that He laid down His life for us. The Heart of Jesus is our burning furnace of charity. It is all goodness and love, patient and abounding in mercy. It is patient and quick to respond to all who call upon It and trust in It.

When Our Lord revealed His Heart to St. Margaret Mary in the 17th century, He said: “Here is the Heart that so loved man.” He pleaded with her: “You at least make some return to Me.” He says the same thing to each one of us. He shows us His Heart and begs for our love. For love of us God became a Man. He took a human Heart. For love of us He died. He now pleads with us to make a return, love for love. He is something like a Divine Beggar. We can almost hear Him say: “Alms for the poor! Please! Alms for the poor! Will you not give an alms to your poor Savior? Will you not return some love for the love I have for you? Do you not know that my treasure is your love?”

In the offertory for the Mass of the Sacred Heart, we find a divine complaint. They are the words of Our Lord spoken through the mouth of David the prophet. They are pleadings of the Sacred Heart: “My heart hath expected reproach and misery: and I looked for one that would grieve together with me, but there