

was none; and for one that would comfort me, and I found none.” Let us take Our Lord’s plea to our heart and respond in full measure. Let us return Him love for love and kindness for kindness. This is the devotion requested by Our Lord, the devotion which was reserved for our days. There is a special reason for this. Not only does this devotion sum up all other devotions and contain them, but it is also the devotion that will be the means to bring about a restoration of the Church and the conversion of countless souls. It is the devotion, then, reserved for the time when the love of God will have grown cold and will have virtually disappeared from the earth. Did you ever try to start a fire with a match outside in the open, on a cold, windy and rainy day? It’s quite difficult to do. You need something more than a match on such a day and under such circumstances. You need a source of fire that is stronger than the wind and the rain. You need a source of fire that is not overcome by such things.

So it is in this day and age. The wind blows; the rain falls; the world is cold. Men live as if there were no God, and the external institutions of the Church disintegrate before our eyes. What can overcome this cold, damp world and the frigid, callous hearts of men? What can set such hearts ablaze with the love of God? There is only one thing. There is only one fire equal to the task. It is the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the burning Heart of Jesus. Look upon It. Consider It. The coldness of your heart will be dissipated, and it will gradually be set on fire with divine love. But who will bring men to this furnace of charity which is the Heart of Jesus, that their souls may be set on fire? It is the Woman of Genesis, the Woman of the Apocalypse, the Woman who stood beneath the cross and had her own heart and soul pierced with a sword of sorrow. God’s Mother will do it. God will use the humble Virgin to confound and humiliate the proud heart of Satan. She it is who will gather men together beneath the cross. She calls them to herself, and then she conducts them to her Divine Son. There, under the mantle of her motherly protection, He will set their hearts on fire.

We know that St. John the Apostle rested his head on the Sacred Breast of Christ at the Last Supper. And there he heard the beatings of the Sacred Heart. We know that this privilege was

given to St. Gertrude the Great and also to the Apostle of the Sacred Heart, St. Margaret Mary. But hardly do we ever consider the fact that the Blessed Mother rested her head upon His Sacred Breast countless times. She heard the beating of the Sacred Heart. It is the Heart she gave Him, for He was flesh of her flesh, bone of her bone, blood of her blood, and Heart of her Heart. He is the Lamb of God; she is the Mother of the Lamb. And she heard the beatings of that Heart many, many times. She knows the way to His Heart, and she will lead us there. She will lead us to the foot of the cross, and there we will see His Sacred Side opened to reveal His Heart. We will hear Our Lord cry out, “I thirst!” Who is there among us that would ignore the cries of a man dying of thirst? Who would fail to lift a cup of cold water to the parched lips of a dying man? Would we pass up such a person who cried out to us, “I thirst! give me to drink!”? How, then, are men able to be so indifferent to cries of their crucified God? There He is, with arms outstretched, side opened, Heart pierced and on fire. Approach Him, holding in your hands the chalice of your heart, filled with the water of charity and the desire to love God. This is the cup that is raised to the parched lips of Christ. Tell Him that with the help of His grace, you desire to give your heart to Him, to love Him, and to belong to Him alone. He will take these desires and turn them into sweet and refreshing wine, as He did at Cana. Our Lady will be at your side, and she will make this request on your behalf.

When Our Lord said: “I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?” He was talking about the fire of love that He wanted to enkindle in the hearts of men. The culmination of God’s expression of His love is seen in the Sacred Heart devotion. To our time, the time when men’s hearts have grown cold, the fullness of that love has been made manifest in this great devotion of the Sacred Heart. As we celebrate the feast and month of the Sacred Heart, let us rejoice in the love which Jesus has for us and for others. This is our consolation. This is our hope, our joy and our delight. To the extent that we know the Heart of Jesus, we are in some way 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)