

THE BULLETIN

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

Eight Pond Place, Oyster Bay, NY 11771

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“I will draw all things to Myself”

Adapted from a sermon by The Most Rev. Clarence Kelly
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The Gospel for the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is taken from the nineteenth chapter of St. John. In this Gospel, we read the following words: “But when [the soldiers] were come to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs, but one of the soldiers with a spear opened His side, and immediately there came out blood and water” (John 19:34).

To understand what is said in the nineteenth chapter of St. John, it is necessary to go back to the twelfth chapter. In the nineteenth chapter we see Christ hanging on the cross. We see the soldier with a spear opening His side, the blood and water pouring out. We are given the reason for these by Christ Himself. In chapter twelve Our Lord says: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself” (John 12:32). These words were spoken by Christ in anticipation of what was to come. They are a prophecy about His crucifixion that tell us three things. These words tell us the manner of His death, the reason for His death, and the result of his death. They are words about the way, the why, and the effect of His death. The manner of His death was crucifixion. The reason for His death was to atone for the sins of the world. The effect of His death was that He would draw the hearts of men to Himself, for to Christ, our hearts constitute “all things.”

We are all things to the Heart of Christ. One drop of His Precious Blood was sufficient to redeem the world. One drop was enough to pay for the sins of ten thousand worlds. One drop was all it would take to

satisfy the demands of Divine justice, to atone for all the sins of the human race, and to redeem mankind, for one drop of His Precious Blood was of infinite value. But while one drop was enough for justice, it was not enough for love. St. John Chrysostom says, “...[T]hat which sufficed to redeem us was not sufficient for love” (*The Passion and Death of Jesus Christ*, p. 34). St. Thomas Aquinas adds that Christ offered to His Eternal Father more than was required for the redemption of the human race (*Ibid.*, p. 34), and St. Alphonsus concludes: “Because Jesus loved us so much, He desired to be loved very much by us; and therefore He did everything that He could, even unto suffering for us, in order to conciliate our love, and to show that there was nothing more that He could do to make us love Him...” (*Ibid.*, p. 34).

The principle goal, then, that Christ had in mind in being tortured, crucified and pierced for us, was the revelation of His love and the winning of our hearts. He sought to accomplish this by the sight of Him hanging on the cross, tortured and dead for love of us (*Ibid.*, p. 35). As He Himself put it, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself” (John 12:32). Justice demands the balancing of the scales and the payment of the debt. Love requires more. It requires all. Christ gave all. He gave all to win all. He gave all to express the love of His Sacred Heart and to win the love of our poor hearts. It is as though He said: “I will prove My love for you, and prove that I am worthy of your love. I will pour out My Blood and give up My life for you. I will

endure the ignominious death of crucifixion. My Heart will be opened. My Blood will pour out. This is the price I pay to win your hearts and your love. I give all to draw all things to Myself.”

So immense is Christ's love and so great His desire to be loved by us, that He did the most and not the least to redeem us. As one tear was not enough to express His sorrow at the tomb of Lazarus, so one drop of blood was not enough to express His love on Calvary's hill. At the Last Supper, the night before He died, He said: “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” And He added: “You are my friends, if you do the things that I command you” (John 15:13,14). There was a time when men might perhaps wonder about God's love for them. But that time is no more. Calvary closed the book on that question. The sight of the thorn-crowned, crucified, bleeding Christ removes all doubt. The sight of Him there, nailed to the tree, proclaims for time and for eternity His love and His longing to be loved by us. To that love countless souls have responded. From every walk of life, from every race and culture, from every station and background they have come. Such souls are woven into the fabric of the two thousand year history of the Church. Millions have even laid down their lives for Christ, Who loved them unto death.

Our sufferings in this world can be irksome and difficult. Only love can make them easy. If they are not easy, it is because we do not love enough. If we love perfectly, our sufferings can actually become a joy. Christ gave in proportion as He loved. Loving perfectly, He gave all, and His sacrifice was complete. Now, it is not impossible that we may some day be called upon to die for Christ. Pope St. Pius X, the last pope to be canonized by the Church, made it plain in the first encyclical of his pontificate at the beginning of this century that we might very well be in the latter days. He wrote about the coming of the Antichrist and the end of the world. Yet, it must be said that to give one's heart to Christ, it is not necessary to die for Him. But it is necessary to live for Him, and it is necessary to die to the world, the flesh and the devil.

This we all can do. We can do it by obedience to the Commandments, by fulfilling the duties of our state in life, and by resisting the tide of the time and

spirit of the age. “You are my friends,” Our Lord said, “if you do the things that I command you” (John 15:13). Let us pledge ourselves to do the things He commands. Let us pledge ourselves to do them, not out of servile fear but for the sake of love. Let raise our minds and hearts to the Sacred Heart of the crucified Jesus. Let us gaze upon the God-Man nailed to the cross for love of us and take to heart the words of St. Alphonsus who said: “The cross proclaims, [and] the wounds proclaim, that He truly loves” (Ibid., p. 114). As Our Lord Himself said: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself.” May He, during this month of the Sacred Heart, draw us to Himself and may we let ourselves be drawn.

The Twelve Promises of Our Lord to Those Who Practice Devotion to His Sacred Heart

1. I will give them all the graces necessary in their state of life.
2. I will establish peace in their homes.
3. I will comfort them in their afflictions.
4. I will be their secure refuge during life, and above all in death.
5. I will bestow a large blessing upon all their undertakings.
6. Sinners shall find in My Heart the source and the infinite ocean of mercy.
7. Tepid souls shall grow fervent.
8. Fervent souls shall quickly mount to high perfection.
9. I will bless every place where a picture of My Heart shall be set up and honored.
10. I will give to priests the gift of touching the most hardened hearts.
11. Those who shall promote this devotion shall have their names written in My Heart, never to be blotted out.
12. I promise thee in the excessive mercy of My Heart that My all-powerful love will grant to all those who communicate on the First Friday of nine consecutive months the grace of final penitence; they shall not die in My disgrace nor without receiving the Sacraments; My Divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment.