

Sacred Heart of Jesus – A

Introduction

Popular piety, which had been effective in stemming the negative influences of protestantism, now became an effective antidote to the corrosiveness of rationalism and to the baleful consequences of Jansenism within the Church. It emerged strengthened and enriched from this task and from the extensive development of the parish missions. Popular piety emphasized certain aspects of the Christian mystery in a new way, for example, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and new "days", such as the "first Friday of the month", gained importance in the piety of the faithful.

At a time when Jansenism proclaimed the rigours of divine justice, the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus served as a useful antidote and aroused in the faithful a love for Our Lord and a trust in his infinite mercy symbolized by his Heart. St. Francis de Sales (+1622) adopted humility, gentleness (cf. Mt 11, 29) and tender loving mercy, all aspects of the Sacred Heart, as a model for his life and apostolate. The Lord frequently manifested the abundant mercy of his Heart to St. Margaret Mary (+1690); St. John Eudes (+1680) promoted the liturgical cult of the Sacred Heart, while St. Claude de la Colombière (+1682) and St. John Bosco (+1888) and other saints were avid promoters of devotion to the Sacred Heart.

1st Reading – Deuteronomy 7,6-11

6 For you are a people sacred to the LORD, your God; he has chosen you from all the nations on the face of the earth to be a people peculiarly his own. 7 It was not because you are the largest of all nations that the LORD set his heart on you and chose you, for you are really the smallest of all nations. 8 It was because the LORD loved you and because of his fidelity to the oath he had sworn to your fathers, that he brought you out with his strong hand from the place of slavery, and ransomed you from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

9 Understand, then, that the LORD, your God, is God indeed, the faithful God who keeps his merciful covenant down to the thousandth generation toward those who love him and keep his commandments, 10 but who repays with destruction the person who hates him; he does not dally with such a one, but makes him personally pay for it. 11 You shall therefore carefully observe the commandments, the statutes and the decrees which I enjoin on you today.

2nd Reading – 1John 4,7-16

7 Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God;

The motive of love is the origin of love in God; whoever loves, thereby proves that he has his own origin in the same God with whom he has fellowship.

everyone who loves is begotten by God

He is born of God.

and knows God. 8 Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love.

Love not only comes from God as from a source, it is itself the very essence of God.

9 In this way the love of God was revealed to us:

The love of God as He has made it known to men is through revelation.

God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him.

The supreme event in which God has revealed His love has been His mission of His Son into this world to be its savior. By being saved we become heirs to the eternal kingdom.

10 In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins.

This love has been wholly gratuitous on God's part, unmotivated by any worthiness on the part of man (Romans 5:5-9); it is a love that has a meaning in may only to the extent that it continues the love revealed in God. He who was sinless made the perfect sacrifice for all of us who are sinful and imperfect.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another.

The obligation for Christians to love one another follows from the divine love God has for us.

12 No one has ever seen God.

A general rule that John's writing employs is that only Jesus reveals the Father. After all, Exodus 33:20 says "*you cannot see my face; for man shall not see me and live.*"

Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us.

God's love reaches perfection when God lives in us as we keep His command to love. We can't see God directly, but we see Him in those who love us.

13 This is how we know that we remain in him and he in us, that he has given us of his Spirit.

The gift of the Spirit is evidence of God's indwelling.

14 Moreover, we have seen and testify that the Father sent his Son as savior of the world. 15 Whoever acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him and he in God.

In the proof of divine life in the presence of the Holy Spirit, which is a testimony of faith, another testimony of faith must be joined – the acceptance of Jesus in His true character as “Savior of the world.”

16 We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God

If you remain in God, you abide in Him.

and God in him.

Without the reality of the Christ-event as the exemplification of the divine love, love of brethren is meaningless; joined to this reality, it truly shows forth the divine presence in man.

Gospel – Matthew 11,25-30

25 At that time Jesus said in reply,

This is a typical Jewish blessing formula, except that Jesus refers to God as “Father.”

"I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise

Divine communication from God.

and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike.

Literally, the simple, the uneducated.

26 Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will.

Jesus has not reached the wise and prudent; His message has been grasped only

by a few disciples who are from the peasant class. Jesus has resigned Himself to this because it is God's will. There is a sense in which Jewish wisdom and learning, which was the knowledge of the Law, was a genuine obstacle to the understanding of the message of Jesus. The more one knew about the Law, the more difficult it was to see that the Messianic revolution would supercede the Law.

27 All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.

Jesus is the absolute Son of the absolute Father. Jesus in the exclusive revelation of the Father. This is a direct contradiction of the Jewish claim to have complete revelation of God in the Law and the Prophets.

28 "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened,

Those who are under the yoke of the Law; the metaphor of the yoke is used in rabbinical writings. The import of the saying in itself is more general than this – the weary and the burdened are the poor who have the Good News proclaimed to them. Jesus invites them because He is one of them.

and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you

The yoke and burden of Jesus are submission to the reign of God. This impose no further burden on those who accept it, but rather makes it easier to bear the burdens they already have.

and learn from me,

The disciple is to be a life-long learner.

for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for your selves.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."