

Diving into His Sacred Heart



Prepared by
In His Heart Ministries
www.InHisHeart.com

This resource was created in hopes that, in understanding more about the Sacred Heart devotion, you will open up your heart and choose to place it In His Heart
Mari Pablo - Founder of In His Heart Ministries

WHAT IS THE SACRED HEART?

God created humanity out of immense love so that humanity could share in His plan of infinite friendship and unity [1]. The Sacred Heart is understood in Christian theology as the embodiment and living symbol of that love. Because Jesus is both fully human and fully divine, the Sacred Heart reveals the very Heart of God. It refers not only to Jesus' physical human heart but also to His interior life, His mercy, compassion, and total self-giving for the salvation of the world. In His life, death, and resurrection, Christ opens the way to redemption from sin and offers eternal life. Essentially, as described in the Directory of Popular Piety and the Liturgy, "the Sacred Heart is Christ, the Word Incarnate, Saviour, intrinsically containing, in the Spirit, an infinite divine-human love for the Father and for His brothers and sisters" [2].



The devotion particularly focuses on Christ's Heart as revealed in His suffering which is reflected in the image of the Sacred Heart. Jesus is typically shown pointing to or displaying His anatomical Heart, which is usually surrounded by a crown of thorns, aflame with divine love, surmounted by a cross, and often bearing the wound of His Passion. These are all visible signs of both His suffering for humanity and His unconditional love for all [3].

HISTORY OF THE DEVOTION

The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus developed from early Christian reflections on Christ's Passion. The devotion traces its roots to St. John the Beloved Apostle resting his head upon Jesus' chest at the Last Supper and to the lance that pierced Christ's side on the Cross, a wound traditionally understood as opening and giving access to His Heart to the world and revealing the fullness of His divine love. As blood and water flowed from Jesus' side all were purified through the water and redeemed through His blood as St. Augustine describes. Early Church Fathers and medieval mystics like St. Augustine, St. Gertrude the great and St. John Eudes deepened this spirituality by meditating on Jesus' wounded side and compassionate love. They "perceived in the Sacred Heart a "refuge" in which to recover, the seat of mercy, the encounter with him who is the source of the Lord's infinite love, the fount from which flows the Holy Spirit, the promised land, and true paradise" [4].

The devotion and image that we know today dates back to the 17th century when the heresy of Jansenism was proclaiming a strict focus on sin, fear, and divine justice. Jesus revealed His Heart in visions to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque and the Sacred Heart devotion served as an antidote to Jansenism as it emphasized His infinite love and mercy. After many years and investigations, the Catholic Church formally embraced and spread the devotion throughout the world inviting all hearts to draw closer to His Sacred Heart.

“I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you”. Ez. 36:26

WHO IS ST. MARGARET MARY ALAOCQUE?

Margaret Mary Alacoque was born in 1647 in Burgundy, France. She lost her father at a young age and endured extremely harsh mistreatment from her relatives. Yet, from childhood she showed a strong spiritual sensitivity and a deep attraction to prayer. While suffering from a severe illness that left her bedridden for four years Margaret Mary made a vow to our Lady that she would consecrate herself to religious life if she recovered, and it's said that she instantly recovered. After many obstacles she was finally able to enter the cloistered religious community of the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary in Paray-le-Monial, France founded by St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane Frances de Chantal.

Margaret Mary's heart was chosen by the Lord to be the one to whom He revealed His Sacred Heart. Her deep love for Jesus made every suffering seem sweet because she was willing to do anything to console His wounded Heart. Some of Margaret Mary's sufferings came when she faced skepticism and even opposition from her community. But with the support of her spiritual director, St. Claude de la Colombière, her experiences gained credibility and the news of her visions, and the accompanying messages began to spread. She spent much of her life in humility and in hidden service within the convent, emphasizing obedience and suffering as part of her spiritual offering. After her death, her visions were recognized by the Church as authentic private revelations, and her role in promoting the Sacred Heart devotion became widely accepted. She was canonized on May 13, 1920, and her life remains central to Catholic devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

“His Sacred Heart will do everything for me if I allow Him to act. He will wish, He will love, He will desire for me, He will supply for all my defects.” St. Margaret Mary Alacoque

HIS SACRED HEART REVEALED

Throughout the history of our Church many saints have received visions and personal revelations, especially from Mary, the mother of God. St. Margaret Mary was privileged to receive many visions directly from the Lord. Although Jesus appeared to her personally, the message and image He shared was for the whole world. The devotion to the Sacred Heart was requested and revealed by Jesus because He desired for us to know His love in a tangible and personal way.



Jesus most notably appeared to Margaret Mary between the years of 1673-1675. The first occurred while she was praying before the Blessed Sacrament on the Feast of the Beloved Disciple, St. John, on December 27, 1673. Margaret Mary describes this moment as being so struck by His Divine Presence that she “lost all thought of herself and where she was, and she abandoned herself to His love” [5]. Jesus revealed Himself to her and allowed her to rest her head on His chest as He did with John the Beloved. It was here that “He disclosed the marvels of His love.”

Jesus said to her,

“My divine heart is so inflamed with love for men, and for you in particular, that no longer being able to contain within itself the flames of its burning charity, it has to spread them through you, so that it is revealed to them in order to enrich them with its precious treasures which I am revealing to you.”



Chapelle des Apparitions, Paray-le-Monial, France

He then asked for her heart, which she “begged Him to take.” He took her heart and placed it in His Heart as a “little atom” which was being consumed in this great furnace. Withdrawing it as a burning flame in the form of a heart, then He restored it back into her chest, but she was never the same [6].

During the years of the revelations, Jesus often appeared to Margaret Mary, and several of the most significant revelations were on the first Friday of the month. On these days the beloved disciple of His Sacred Heart, as Jesus lovingly called Margaret Mary, was often given the opportunity to console and be consoled by His Heart. She was given a wound in her side and was requested by the Lord to lay prostrate in the Blessed Sacrament from eleven till midnight on the eve of the first Friday, and to receive holy Communion on the first Friday. Margaret Mary would see the Sacred Heart of Jesus appear as a resplendent sun inflamed with fire, the burning rays from His heart would fall upon hers. His heart was surrounded by a crown of thorns with a wound and a cross implanted above [7].

“I need nothing but God and to lose myself In His Heart” St. Margaret Mary

On one occasion, in June 1674, she saw the Five Wounds of Jesus also appear shining like many suns and all flowing from His “adorable heart” which was the source of the flames. The inextinguishable love of Jesus came with great suffering because as much as He loves, He revealed to Margaret Mary, He is not loved in return. Jesus shared that many people either reject Him or respond to His love with indifference, irreverence, and ingratitude. He found consolation in Margaret Mary’s heart which had a great eagerness to console Him even amidst her “weakness.” Jesus reassures and instructs, “I will be thy strength, fear nothing, be attentive to My voice and to what I require of thee.” Margaret Mary clung to these words and saw them executed daily in her life, especially through her frequency of receiving Communion and visiting the Blessed Sacrament as Jesus requested. In one of the final visions in June 1675, Jesus appeared to Margaret Mary with a special request, He states...

“Behold this Heart, which had loved man so much that it had spared nothing, even to exhausting and consuming itself in order to testify to them its love: and in return I receive from the greater number nothing but ingratitude by reason of their irreverence and sacrileges, and by the coldness and contempt which they show Me in this Sacrament of Love. But what I feel the most keenly is that it is hearts which are consecrated to Me, that treat Me thus. Therefore, I ask of thee that the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi be set apart for a special Feast to honor my Heart, by communicating on that day and making reparation and amends for the indignities which It has received during the time It has been exposed on the altars. I promise thee that My Heart shall expand itself to shed in abundance the influence of Its divine love upon those who shall thus honor It, and cause It to be honored” [8].

This is why the Feast of the Sacred Heart was established. It originated from a request made by Jesus Himself in His revelations to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. However, the feast was not instituted immediately. Many were initially skeptical of her claims. Through the faithful efforts of her spiritual director, St. Claude de la Colombière, and after years of careful examination by Church authorities, devotion to the Sacred Heart gradually gained acceptance. In 1765, Pope Clement XIII approved a Feast of the Sacred Heart for certain regions, and in 1856 Pope Pius IX extended the celebration to the entire universal Church.

“Devotion to Christ’s heart is essential for our Christian life to the extent that it expresses our openness in faith and adoration to the mystery of the Lord’s divine and human love”.

Dilexit Nos §83.

DEVOTION TO HIS SACRED HEART

Being devoted to the Sacred Heart is to place Christ’s Heart at the center, to trust in His love and mercy and to strive to love others as He loves. This is a daily decision and is accomplished through many ways. Beginning with a daily choice to consecrate oneself, Pope Pius XI expresses that daily consecration is "undoubtedly the principal devotional practice used in relation to the Sacred Heart" [9].

There are other prayers and forms to help grow in this devotion such as the Litany of the Sacred Heart, Novena to the Sacred Heart, and Family enthronement. In the revelations to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, Jesus requested acts of reparation, Holy Hours, especially on Thursday, and Mass specifically on the First Fridays of the month in addition to the Sunday obligation. Below are four primary ways to enter into this devotion.

EUCCHARISTIC HEART OF JESUS

Every time someone receives the Eucharist, they receive the whole Christ, including the living Heart of Jesus. This is supported throughout history by more than 130 documented Eucharistic miracles that have been reported in various parts of the world, in which the consecrated Host is said to have become visible flesh. In several of the most well-known Eucharistic miracles that underwent scientific examination, researchers identified biomaterials consistent with human cardiac tissue. The Heart revealed in these eucharistic miracles is the same Heart that continually calls everyone to draw near to Him in prayer and adoration.



Jesus invites every person to spend time with Him in the Blessed Sacrament, where hearts may rest in His Heart. In revelations to Margaret Mary Alacoque, Jesus specifically requested for a Holy Hour to be made on Thursday nights in remembrance of His agony in Gethsemane and to help make amends for the feeling of abandonment He felt by His apostles. He also encouraged frequent reception of Holy Communion, especially on the First Friday of each month for nine consecutive months. He said to her, “I have an ardent desire to be loved in the Most Blessed Sacrament.” Each time someone approaches the Blessed Sacrament or receives Holy Communion, they are responding to Christ’s ongoing invitation to draw near to Him and remain with His Sacred Heart. To help foster a deeper union with Christ in the Eucharist, the following prayer may be prayed after Holy Communion.

“Lord, as I receive you in the Eucharist, I give you permission to uproot all that is within me that is not of you. As I receive your Heart, tune my heartbeat to yours. Sanctify me Lord, purify my every desire. May I know that you are all that I need, only you sustain me.”

-written by Mari Pablo- Founder of In His Heart Ministries

REPARATION

The sacrament of Reconciliation offers forgiveness of sins and restores one's relationship with God and the Church; its grace includes penance/satisfaction (reparation) and strengthens ongoing conversion.

Reparation is making amends for sin by offering prayers, sacrifices, and good works in union with Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross. It is not a way to earn God's forgiveness, but a way to show sorrow for sin, love and gratitude to God, and a desire to help heal the harm caused by sin. It can be offered not only for one's own offences made against Jesus but for the offences of the whole world. In the revelations to St. Margaret Mary, Jesus specifically requests acts of reparation for offences committed against His Sacred Heart. Below are a few ways to make acts of reparation.

- Offer a Holy Mass with intention of reparation (Jesus specifically requests reception of Holy communion on First Fridays of the month for nine consecutive months.)
- Pray the prayer of reparation to Sacred Heart
- Doing acts of charity or mercy.
- Offer almsgiving
- Fast or make voluntary sacrifices.
- Spending time in Eucharistic adoration (Especially on Thursday nights at 11:00pm to mitigate the abandonment of the apostles on Holy Thursday).
- The Rosary is a powerful devotion for prayer and penance. Offer a Rosary with the specific intention of reparation, asking Momma Mary to intercede for those afflicted.
- Divine Mercy Chaplet- The Divine Mercy devotion, which was revealed to St. Faustina, in many ways is an extension of the Sacred Heart devotion as it focuses on trusting in God's mercy and being a living testament of His mercy. The Diving Mercy Chaplet is a prayer of atonement, with each bead one prays, "For the sake of His sorrowful passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world".

“For you are a people holy to the LORD, the LORD set his heart on you and chose you, because the LORD loved you, He brought you out with a strong hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery”

Deuteronomy 7:6-7

CONSECRATION

God has chosen and set His people apart. To be consecrated means to be set apart or made holy (Catholic encyclopedia). Consecration is an act of responding to His invitation, it is rooted in Baptism and involves entrusting oneself more fully to God's service (CCC 931).

It is the choice to place complete trust in the Lord and to make an intentional commitment to deepen one's relationship with God. Consecration to the Sacred Heart is a formal act of daily responding to His love and mercy. It strives to entrust each heartbeat to the Lord's most Sacred Heart and to ultimately love as He loves.



On May 25, 1899, Pope Leo XIII published *Annum Sacrum*, which translates to the Sacred Year. This encyclical was the first to be dedicated to the Sacred Heart, in it Pope Leo XIII mandated that all of humanity be consecrated, or set apart for a holy purpose, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which occurred on June 11, 1899. Pope Leo XIII wrote,

“Since there is in the Sacred Heart a symbol and a sensible image of the infinite love of Jesus Christ which moves us to love one another, therefore is it fit and proper that we should consecrate ourselves to His most Sacred Heart—an act which is nothing else than an offering and a binding of oneself to Jesus Christ, seeing that whatever honor, veneration and love is given to this divine Heart is really and truly given to Christ Himself.”

Although humankind was already consecrated to the Sacred Heart in 1899, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) chose 2026, the 250th year of the founding of the United States of America, to specifically consecrate the nation to Christ’s passionate heart. The Bishops of the US invited all to pray a daily consecration prayer, such as the one below, and entrust their hearts in His.

Daily Prayer of Consecration by St. Margaret Mary Alacoque

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, to Thee I consecrate and offer up my person and my life, my actions, trials, and sufferings, that my entire being may henceforth only be employed in loving, honoring and glorifying Thee. This is my irrevocable will, to belong entirely to Thee, and to do all for Thy love, renouncing with my whole heart all that can displease Thee.

I take Thee, O Sacred Heart, for the sole object of my love, the protection of my life, the pledge of my salvation, the remedy of my frailty and inconstancy, the reparation for all the defects of my life, and my secure refuge at the hour of my death. Be Thou, O Most Merciful Heart, my justification before God Thy Father, and screen me from His anger which I have so justly merited. I fear all from my own weakness and malice, but placing my entire confidence in Thee, O Heart of Love, I hope all from Thine infinite Goodness. Annihilate in me all that can displease or resist Thee. Imprint Thy pure love so deeply in my heart that I may never forget Thee or be separated from Thee.

I beseech Thee, through Thine infinite Goodness, grant that my name be engraved upon Thy Heart, for in this I place all my happiness and all my glory, to live and to die as one of Thy devoted servants.

Amen.

FAMILY ENTHRONEMENT

An enthronement is a ceremony where a family chooses to install a sacred image at the center of their home. A priest or head of the household leads this ceremony, and it is accompanied by a family consecration to the Sacred Heart. The image serves as a daily reminder that Jesus is at the throne of their home and hearts.

The following section is taken from the Knights of Columbus Sacred Heart resource found in USCCB website, for full instructions and explanations of how to enthrone your home please [click here](#).





“In the revelations to Margaret Mary, Jesus expressed His desire to be honored in a special way through His Sacred Heart. Jesus made various promises to those who venerate his Sacred Heart, including blessing every place where an image of his Heart is exposed and honored. A family can choose to enthrone their home to help foster a Christ-centered family life. Through the enthronement ceremony, families recognize Christ’s rule over their lives. They do this by placing an image of His Sacred Heart in a place of honor in their homes, renewing their commitment to be faithful disciples, and consecrating themselves to His Sacred Heart. By enthroning the Sacred Heart, families commit to living according to Christ’s teachings and embrace a way of life rooted in His love, mercy and blessings”.

Family Consecration Prayer

Lord Jesus, we recall your words in Scripture: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, [then] I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20). We have heard your invitation, and today we respond to your covenant with us. We open the door of our home and ask you to stay with us; we open the door of our hearts and welcome you. We acknowledge you as Lord, King and friend of our family, and promise that we will always be your faithful disciples. We consecrate ourselves, our family, our home, and everything we have to your Sacred Heart. We ask for the gifts of your Sacred Heart, that we may be poor in spirit, merciful, pure of heart, peacemakers, good stewards of creation and concerned for justice, especially for the poor, the sick, and the unborn. We ask that you stay with us always; increase our love for one another; share in our joys, and comfort us in our sorrows. Inspire us with your love, so that we may be a family devoted to you, and our home be a place of welcome to all, especially those in need. Help us to be an apostolic family, committed to bringing your message of love to all people.

Amen.

12 PROMISES OF DEVOTION

Jesus himself made the following promises to St. Margaret Mary in favor of those who practice and promote the devotion to the 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 all their afflictions.
4. I will be their secure refuge during life and above all in death.
5. I will bestow abundant blessings upon all their undertakings.
6. Sinners shall find in My Heart the source and infinite ocean of mercy.
7. Lukewarm souls shall become fervent.
8. Fervent souls shall quickly mount to high perfection.
9. I will bless every place in which an image of My Heart is exposed and honored.
10. I will give priests the power to touch the most hardened hearts.
11. Those who propagate this devotion shall have their names written in My Heart.
12. I promise you in the excessive mercy of my Heart that my all powerful love will grant to all those who receive Holy Communion on the First Fridays in nine consecutive months the grace of final perseverance; they shall not die in my disgrace, nor without receiving their sacraments. My divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in their last moment.

I ask our Lord Jesus Christ to grant that His Sacred Heart may continue to pour forth the streams of living water that can heal the hurt we have caused, strengthen our ability to love and serve others, and inspire us to journey together towards a just, solidary and fraternal world. Until that day when we will rejoice in celebrating together the banquet of the heavenly kingdom in the presence of the risen Lord, who harmonizes all our differences in the light that radiates perpetually from His open heart. May He be blessed forever.
Dilexit Nos §220



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WHY I LOVE HIS HEART

I fell in love with this devotion right after I gave my full yes to the Lord. I was being “stalked” and seeing the Sacred Heart everywhere! As a cradle Catholic and Hispanic this image was very familiar to me yet I knew and understood very little of it. The more I researched the more I fell in love. I became great friends with St. Margaret Mary Alacoque and when I read about the vision that she received where Jesus took her heart and placed it in His Heart like an atom there was a shift in my prayer life. From that day on I prayed, “Lord, May I be an atom in your Heart”. Can you imagine this? Your heart, being the smallest unit of a chemical element consumed in the flames of His Sacred Heart. In handing over our heart, we are giving permission to be completely emptied and filled by Christ who in His goodness returns it back. Yet our hearts are not the same once we entrust it to Him for our Heart now beats with His. Amidst the sufferings and challenges of this world, which have unfortunately been many, I have found solace in this image. This Heart that is surrounded by a crown of thorns, pierced, has a cross implanted and the whole thing is on fire reminds me that I am never alone in my suffering and that Jesus understands every part of it. Whatever is weighing on your heart, I hope that you may find strength and comfort through the Lord. He sees you, He is always with you and He is madly in love with you! **I created this resource, in hopes that in understanding a bit about this devotion you can choose to place your heart, like an atom, In His Heart.**

Questions for Reflection

- Pray with Deuteronomy 7: 6-9, Ezekiel 36: 23-30, and John 15: 1-17
- What line or statement in the scriptures or this document spoke to your heart? Why?
- Have you encountered the Love of God in your life and this week specifically?
 - When was the first moment? or why do you desire to encounter it?
 - What makes it difficult to surrender your heart daily to the Lord's?
- What can you do to go deeper into the devotion of the Sacred Heart?
 - How can you love God, yourself and others more?

CITATIONS

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- [5] Alacoque, Margaret Mary. The Autobiography of Saint Margaret Mary, pg 53, TAN Books, 1995.
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RESOURCES

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