

The Flaming Furnace of Divine Love

The Adorable Heart of Jesus



My Divine Heart is so passionately in love with men that it can no longer contain within itself the flames of its ardent charity. It must pour them out by thy means, and manifest itself to them to enrich them with its precious treasures, which contain all the graces of which they have need to be saved from perdition.... I have chosen thee as an abyss of unworthiness and ignorance to accomplish so great a design, so that all may be done by Me.

He demanded my heart, and I supplicated Him to take it. He did so, and put it into His own Adorable Heart, in which He allowed me to see it as a little atom being consumed in that fiery furnace. Then, drawing it out like a burning flame in the form of a heart, He put it into the place whence He had taken it, saying, "Behold, My beloved, a precious proof of My love."

(Rt. Rev. Emile Bougaud, THE LIFE OF SAINT MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE, Tan Books, 1990, Pgs. 164-165.)

From 1673-1675 Our Lord revealed to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque how little He is loved in return for His sacrifice of Himself for us on Calvary. In His second appearance His wounds shone like suns and His breast was like a flaming furnace in which burned His adorable Heart as the source of its flames. He asked for communions of reparation on seven First Fridays and that the 11-12 p.m. hour the Thursday night before be spent prostrate on the floor in expiation for the desertion He felt, first with His apostles in the Garden of Olives, and continually, as we, too, abandon Him so many times. (Bougaud, Pgs. 168-169.) In the third revelation Jesus says His Heart spared nothing to show us His love but He receives from the greater part only ingratitude, irreverence, sacrilege and contempt toward Him in the Sacrament of His love, and sadly, that ingratitude comes from many of those consecrated to Him. Jesus asked for a special feast to honor His Sacred Heart on the First Friday after the feast of Corpus Christi, which had been established in 1247 to honor His Real Presence in the Eucharist and the Blessed Sacrament. (Bougaud, Pg. 176.)

In the message of Our Lady of America, Jesus calls Himself a **"Beggar for love,"** and laments:

How few give to Me the means by which to satisfy My divine hunger. I hunger for the love of My own, and I receive only the crumbs no other would accept. My Heart beats with compassion for the sorrows of man. Oh, how gladly would I help him bear the weight of his terrible cross, fashioned, for the most part, by his own guilt! But alas, he will have none of My help. So I am forced to stand by the side of the road and watch him struggle hopelessly in his agony. O man, what have I done to you that

you should refuse My aid? ... There are so few souls that believe in Me and My love. They profess their belief and their love, but they do not live this belief. Their hearts are cold, for without faith there can be no love.

(Sr. Mildred Mary Neuzil, Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA©, Fostoria, Ohio, Pgs. 5- 6.)

Perhaps only a simple and contemplative soul can understand the intense hunger of Jesus' Sacred Heart for our love in return. While in contemplation St. Catherine of Siena felt Jesus take her poor heart and give her His own so she might live forever in Him. St. Margaret of Cortona saw Jesus' pierced side like a huge cavern of love beckoning her to leap into it. When St. Gertrude complained to Jesus of her distractions, He appeared and gave her His Heart to supply for all that was wanting in her own.

In a March 3, 1957 letter Sister Mildred Neuzil speaks of that hunger of Jesus for our love.

Oh My little white dove, bride of My Heart, I crave for love. I Who died that men might live am refused even a small corner in men's hearts. What have I done to deserve such ingratitude? Will men never understand the longing of My Heart for their love? Oh My little one, simple and most lovely in My sight because of the lowliness of your heart, help Me to gain for Myself the love of those for whom I suffered and died. Let My love, surrounding you and filling you, draw souls to Me in great multitudes. Such is My will, oh My beloved one. Open then your heart that I may pour into it without ceasing the sweet waters of My undying and saving Charity. For it is from this Fountain of Life, which springs forth from My Divine Heart that men will receive Eternal Life. It was to obtain this for them that I lived, suffered and died.

Oh My little, white dove, sweet spouse of My Heart, I am the God of Charity and it is through love that man will attain Me, and only through love. I have shown him the way. He has but in love, to take up his cross as I have done and follow Me. The way is sure.

Can there be any relationship of love that does not include a deep level of intimacy of heart and mind and soul, a bit of mysticism and a lot of surrender to Love's mysterious ways? Sister Mildred had a very intimate relationship with Jesus and a sense of humor, too. In a letter to her spiritual director she recounts her joy after some good blessing had come her way.

Then I went to my cell and took out some candy that had been given me. I said to Our Lord, "Dear Lord, this calls for a celebration and since I know you won't eat any of this candy, I'll have to eat two pieces, yours and mine." And that's just what I did, Father. You see, Jesus and I have good times together. The more I am ignored, passed over, forgotten, the attention Jesus gives me is all the more frequent and loving, and for that reason, all the more painful as I fall so short of the love I so desire to give Him. The other morning I was very weary and my head ached. After Communion Jesus took me in His arms and told me to rest on His breast and listen to the beatings of His Heart. O Father, the love of Jesus for us!

Can we not picture the beloved disciple John and so many other saints doing the same, resting their heads upon the Heart of Jesus? Can we not see St. Therese, the

Little Flower, another simple soul, climbing into the lap of Jesus like she did with her father, falling asleep there? Can we not picture Sr. Elizabeth of the Trinity collapsed in the embrace of “**my holy Three,**” as she called the Trinity? Her cell, like that of Sr. Mildred, was a place filled with God where she spent wonderful hours with the Bridegroom of her soul. Elizabeth says:

For me, the cell is something sacred; it is His intimate sanctuary, just for Him and His little bride. We are so much “together.” I am silent, I listen to Him...it is so good to hear everything He has to say. And I love Him while I ply my needle and work on this dear serge that I have so longed to wear. (Letter 168)

Saint Teresa of Avila spoke of the “**interior castle.**” Some contemplatives speak of the “**cloister within.**” Jesus Himself, when teaching the apostles how to pray, bid them go to their “**inner room.**” He spoke often of the “**kingdom within you.**” In Baptism we are made “**temples of the Holy Spirit,**” **dwelling places for God.** Like Mary, in each Eucharist we become “**living tabernacles**” to hold the Body and Blood of Christ, to house the living God in a union more intimate than any human bond or marriage. By whatever name we refer to this reality of “**holy communion**”, it is that place deep within ourselves where God dwells and speaks to us and is more real to us than we are to ourselves, for He is Reality, Life, Love Itself, and it is His Breath that has given us life and sustains us, forever.

In her letter dated February 20, 1954, Sister Mildred says Jesus wants us to understand that His Heart is a refuge for sinners:

“My Heart is a refuge for all sinners. If only they would come to me, I would enclose them in My Heart. There they would be cleansed and My Father’s anger would not reach them. Alas, bride of My Heart, alas, for those who will not come to Me. Where will they hide from My Father’s anger?” In another letter, Sister Mildred wrote: Believe that God loves you, believe with all your heart and see what He will do for you and what you will be able to do for Him and those about you. This is a divine partnership and nothing save our lack of faith can ever break it. Believe in Him Who lives in you and nothing will be impossible of attainment. What you cannot do, He will do, only believe.

Before her death, Sr. Elizabeth of the Trinity wrote these words to her prioress, “**Let yourself be loved.**” **All God wants of us is that we let Him love us and let His love rouse us to love Him in return.**

His Divine Heart is passionately in love with us!

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