

The Sacred Heart of Jesus:

Flaming Furnace of Divine Love



(Photo of the Sacred Heart found in Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil's Bible)

**When you awake in the morning,
let your first act be to salute My Heart, and to offer to Me your own...
Whoever shall breathe a sigh toward Me from the bottom of his heart
when he awakes in the morning
and shall ask Me to work all his works in him throughout the day,
will draw Me to him... For never does a man breathe a sigh of longing aspiration toward
Me without drawing Me nearer to him than I was before.**

(Our Lord to Saint Mechtilde)

We fickle human beings seem always to grow hard and indifferent in our love. Hence, in the 17th century God sought to melt our stony cold hearts with a new manifestation of His Love, that of the adorable and irresistible "Sacred Heart of Jesus." Of course, behind cloistered walls love for Him had never died, and numerous saints were brought to glory through that gaping wound in Christ's side from which He poured out His Heart to them, and they, in turn, sought to bury their own hearts in the safe refuge of His. One such saint was **St. Francis de Sales** who, along with **St. Jane de Chantal**, founded the Daughters of the Visitation from whom would come the disciple of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, **St. Margaret Mary Alacoque**. The order was built on Christ's words, "**Learn of Me for I am meek and humble of heart,**" and their spirituality was symbolized with a heart crowned with thorns, two arrows piercing it, and a cross rising from its center. **St. Francis urged his spiritual daughters to forever lodge in the pierced side of the Savior. He loved to remind them to rest their heads, as the beloved disciple had done, on the breast of Jesus, and to lose themselves in that sweet ecstasy of silent contemplation of and holy communion with the Divine.**

We are reminded of **other saints devoted to the Heart of Jesus**. While **St. Catherine of Siena** was meditating on the words, **“create in me a new heart,”** her Divine Spouse appeared and touched her left side with His hand. She felt as though Jesus had taken her heart from her breast, when He reappeared with a luminous heart in His hand and said: **“My daughter, I have thy heart and I give thee Mine, that thou mayest forever live in Me.”** **Magdalen di Pazzi** was shown the Heart of Jesus and it filled her with such divine love that, to relieve the fire burning within her, she had to open her habit, or pour forth burning words of the highest praise. **St. Catherine of Genoa** received so violent a wound that the fire enkindled in her heart caused such ecstasy that she appeared as demented in her effort to seek relief from the flaming fire in that wound. **St. Margaret of Cortona** saw the pierced side of Jesus open like a cavern of love and she had to lay her hand on her own heart to keep it from leaping out of her breast and into that cavern to His Sacred Heart. **St. Gertrude** prayed to the lance-pierced Jesus to pierce her heart with darts of love. Jesus appeared, showing His open side and said, **“Look at My Heart. I wish it to be thy temple.”** When complaining to Him about her distractions, He said, **“Behold my Heart, the delight of the Holy Trinity. I give it to thee that it may supply for what is wanting to thee.”**

How fitting that on the feast of John, the beloved disciple, **Jesus gave the first revelation of His Divine Heart to St. Margaret Mary with these words:**

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.

(above notes and passage from **THE LIFE OF SAINT MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE**, Rt. Rev. Emile Bougaud, Tan Books, 1990, pg. 164.)

She said,

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.”

(**THE LIFE OF SAINT MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE**, pg. 165)

In the **second revelation to St. Margaret Mary**, Jesus appeared in glory, his five wounds shone like five suns and flames darted from all parts of His Sacred Humanity, but especially from His adorable breast, which resembled a furnace, and which, opening, displayed to her His loving and amiable heart, the living source of these flames. While the first revelation presented Jesus as a friend and Father making effort to save His children, the second conveyed more that of an outraged Spouse, unacknowledged King about to demand reparation. He said this ingratitude on the part of mankind was more painful than all the rest of His Passion. **He asked for reparation by communing on the First Fridays and by spending the 11-12 p.m. hour the Thursday night before prostrate on the floor in expiation for the sins of men**, so as to console Him for that general desertion to which the weakness of the Apostles in the Garden of Olives was only a prelude.

(LIFE OF SAINT MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE, pgs. 168-169.)

With the **third revelation**, Jesus said, **“Behold this Heart which has so loved men that it has spared nothing, even to exhausting and consuming itself in order to testify to its love. In return I receive from the greater part only ingratitude, irreverence, sacrilege, and coldness and contempt for Me in this sacrament of love. And what is most painful to Me is that they are hearts consecrated to Me.”** Jesus then asked to have the feast to honor His Sacred Heart on the first Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi, which honors the Eucharist and the Blessed Sacrament.

(LIFE OF ST. MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE, pg. 176)

This is the same Jesus Who comes again in the message of Our Lady of America® calling Himself a **“Beggar for love,”** saying **“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.**

Sr. Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil, Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA®, Fostoria, Ohio, pg. 6.)

Oh, the lament in His tone as He speaks to our own coldness and ingratitude.

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....

My daughter, I am not loved in the homes of men. And because I am not loved, the Divine Trinity refuses to dwell therein. Children are not taught to love Me, because those who have charge over them have no time or patience to do so.

My Heart grieves over My children in the world. Their hearts are being drawn farther and farther away from Me. They will not even listen to My Mother, because they have never been taught to listen.

(Diary, pg. 5)

How like the sorrow Jesus expressed to St. Margaret Mary are His words here to Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil. Surely He has sent His own dear Mother as a last resort to attempt to fan the dying embers of our burnt out love, smothered by so many cares of the world and so many of its illusions, confusions and deceptions, so many things and people who draw us away from that irresistible Love that is the Sacred Heart of the Sacred Humanity in the heart of the Most Holy Trinity. Listen to His Mother as she begs us to come to her so she can teach us how to learn what is true love, the only true love which comes from the Heart of Jesus, our only salvation.

My sweet child, if love does not have its roots implanted deeply within the soul, it will die out or be rooted up by the first storm that besets it. O child of my Pure Heart, tell my children to come to me and learn this true love of my Son, which is so necessary for their peace of soul. ... But to make your hearts grow more and more like to the Heart of the Son, you must go to the Mother, whose heart is most like His. From this Pure and Immaculate Heart you will learn all that will make you more pleasing to the Divine Heart of the Son of God. The Holy Trinity looks down with infinite delight upon such souls and makes them Its heaven upon earth....Come to me, my children, come to me and learn. There is much I would teach you. It is for your own happiness and eternal salvation.

(Diary, pg. 16.)

Who could have known the gaping wound in the pierced side of Jesus better than the Woman who stood by His cross weeping? And who could have sought solace in that Sacred Heart that carried her along that way of the cross with Him more than His Sorrowful Mother? Not only has Jesus given us His most Sacred Heart, but He has given us the pure and Immaculate Heart of our Queen-Mother, a heart inseparable from His, a heart so dear to Him He can never refuse it. Then let us hasten to Mary's side and take her hand and walk with her straight into the Heart of Jesus to make His Heart our dwelling place, our temple, our sanctuary. O dare we ask that Sacred Heart to do for us what He has done for so many saints before us! **O dare we ask that Sacred Heart to take our poor and wretched hearts and give us His very own!** O dare we

ask of Him to set our hearts on fire and make of them a living flame, a burning torch, to bear God's love to all the world and set it, too, on fire?

For the wicked, fire destroys. For the good, fire purifies. How can we hear reference to the flaming furnace of Jesus' Heart without recalling the story of the fiery furnace in the book of Daniel. Three young men, refusing to worship the pagan god of the King in order to remain faithful to the one true God of Israel, were bound and thrown into a blazing furnace to be consumed by fire. To the King's amazement, not only were they not harmed, but they were dancing in the middle of the fire, and with them was a fourth person, an angel, dancing with them. This is truly dancing with the Stars! So may we dance and frolic, unafraid, in the fire of Divine Love, for His angels dance with us! Like St. Margaret Mary, may we see ourselves like little atoms being consumed in His fiery furnace, and on being drawn out, turn into burning flames in the shape of a heart, the Sacred Heart of Jesus. **This is what Our Lady of America means when she speaks of being a torch bearer, a flaming torch of Divine Love, to light up the world and to set it on fire with Him. No wonder she invites us to be her "Torchbearers of the Queen!"**

**O Sacred Heart of Jesus, Lord,
fiery furnace of Eternal Love,
so irresistible, so adorable,
Set our hearts on such fierce fire!
Show us what it truly means
to be a living flame, a true torch bearer,
a "Torchbearer for our Queen!"**

**Copyright © Contemplative Sisters of the Indwelling Trinity,
Fostoria, Ohio, 2009**

All rights reserved.