



DEVOTION
TO THE
SACRED HEART

*A personal, ardent love
for the Son of God*

BY SERVANT OF GOD
SISTER IDA PETERFY, SDSH

To be present to someone is more than just to be physically present; it is *to feel with, to think with, to move with that person.*

It is inspired by love.

What is it like when you love someone? Is it just a feeling, or does love show in action? When you love you feel something, but that feeling kind of bursts into action, and into words, and gifts, and treats. If that would be all there is to love, how long would that love last? Not very long. Even if we love someone very much, we are human, so what happens? There are misunderstandings, disagreements, i.e. "You let me down," "You didn't do..." There are difficulties. Is it strange that if you really love, you will go through sufferings and difficulties? No, it is not strange; it is part of love.

I would like you to know Someone I love very much. The One I love has a Sacred Heart. Sacred means "holy," which is a word for "good," a goodness we find in God alone. We say that saints, like St. Francis or St. Catherine, were holy but were they as good as God? Not quite. They just shared in God's goodness.

You cannot love someone you do not know. You get to know a person because you make an effort to know them; then the person begins to reveal himself to you. This is what is so fantastic about God; as soon as you start learning about Him, getting in contact with Him, your whole life changes. Why? Because all of a sudden you see how much He loves you and how much you mean to Him. If you talk about the holy heart of a person, you are not talking about a “thing” but about the person who is doing many good things because he/she has a very good heart.



Look at the loving Christ who has a Sacred Heart. See the Person of our Lord, how good, loving and accepting He is, how much He is dying to save us, how much He wants us to be united to Him.

THE SYMBOLS OF THE SACRED HEART



The **heart** shows that this is a living love. His Heart is alive with love for all of us. It is a love that is more than a feeling. His is a love that is willing to sacrifice; it is not just sentimental but He is willing to give Himself totally because He loves.



Look at the **crown of thorns**. The thorns remind us of our little difficulties, those little unpleasant events. But love bears it; love more than bears it because it knows that this is part of loving.



See the **wound** in the Heart. How did Jesus get this wound? When He was on the cross, a spear was thrust into His Heart. He did not run away. This is love! His love is more than just a good feeling; love exists when we are wounded. Our Lord said, "My Heart is open," open to all those who wish to come in, or go out, and come in again. This is so much part of loving. Parents do this with their children. How many times children hurt their parents, they say, "I hate you!" and then, "I love you" and they come back. And their parent's heart is always open to them.

MAKE VISIBLE HIS SELF-GIVING LOVE



There is one more characteristic of love, the **cross**. When would a parent say to their child, “That’s it! Enough! No more!”? Even if they say it, they don’t mean it. How much our Lord loves us! He does not say, “I love you a lot, but not that much.” Rather He said, “I love you a lot, even if it costs Me My life.”

What is hate like? It is the opposite of love. You shrink, you pull away from everyone. If you love, you expand, you give, and you attract; you cannot keep it to yourself.



The **flames of love** represent that outgoingness of love: love which gives warmth, comfort and consolation to everyone who comes near.

The enemies of Jesus could do many things to Jesus, but one thing they could not do was to make Him hate or to give up loving us or to say, “This is enough! You are worth a lot but not this much!” No! We were worth everything for our Lord. That generosity comes from His Heart and it is ours for the asking.

REVELATION OF THE SACRED HEART

In 1675, Jesus spoke to a simple cloistered nun in France; her name was Margaret Mary Alacoque. Jesus appeared to her and showed her His Heart so full and alive with love, and His Heart bore the marks of total self-giving out of love: the crown of thorns, the wound, the cross.

The hearts of people had gotten cold towards God. In that century called the time of “enlightenment,” people focused on the greatness of God under the direction of Fr. Jansen. Jansenism became a movement that spread all over Europe. This movement said that God was so great and so wonderful that no one was worthy to be in His Presence or receive Him in Holy Communion. People were told and they felt that they were not worthy; they stopped going to Communion.

Can you imagine how Jesus must have felt? He appeared to this Sister Margaret Mary and showed His Heart to her; this is the origin of this kind of representation of the Heart of Jesus. Jesus told her, “I love My people so very much. I cannot keep My love in My Heart any more. Please tell them to come because I love them.”

SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR OUR DEVOTION



Our love for the Lord is not based on this revelation; it is based on Scripture. Whatever was revealed to St. Margaret Mary can be found in the Bible. We base our love for our Lord, and His love for us, on Scripture. The Church is very slow to approve private revelations. Why did the Church approve of the revelation to St. Margaret Mary? Because it is very much in harmony with the Bible.

The Lord promised to be with us, He is as available to us now as He was to the people when He walked on this earth. His Heart is available to us. Our devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the loving Heart of Jesus, comes from Scripture. When we truly listen to what God is saying to us in Sacred Scripture, we gain an insight into the Heart of the Lord.

THE 12 PROMISES OF THE SACRED HEART

If you really love someone, and you want that person to love you back, what do you do? You make promises. The 12 promises are such delightful promises:

“I will give them all the graces necessary for their state of life.” What does this remind you of in the Bible? It reminds me of, “If you ask anything of the Father in My name, He will not refuse you.” (Matthew 7:11) And especially, “How much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Luke 11:13)

“I will establish peace in their homes.” Where is this in the Bible? This is the favorite word of the Lord: Peace. “Peace be with you.” (John 20:20) What kind of peace is He going to give? “My peace I give to you, not as the world gives gifts. I will give you My peace.” (John 14:27)

“I will comfort them in their afflictions.” This is very much in the Bible: “Come to Me all those who are tired, who have labored, and I will refresh you.” (Matthew 11:28) Jesus also says, “My Heart is humble, gentle.” (Matthew 11:29)

“I will be their secure refuge during life, and above all, in death.” When did our Lord say that He would never leave us? He said, “I will not leave you orphans. I will be with you until the end of time.” (Matthew 28:20) We need to remember these things.

“I will bestow abundant blessings upon all their undertakings.” How much we desire this! He said, “Whatever you ask the Father in My name, I will give it to you.” (John 16:23) When you ask the Father, the Lord Himself will give it to you.

“Sinners shall find in My Heart the source of and the infinite ocean of mercy.” Can you think of those times in the Bible when Jesus was talking about forgiveness? “How many times do we need to forgive? Only seven times? No! Seventy times seven” (Mt. 18:21-22) which means, “forever”!

“By devotion to My Heart, lukewarm persons will grow fervent.” What is “devotion to My Heart?” Devotion means “to be attracted to,” and “to follow.” Be attracted to and follow what? “My Heart” – the Heart of Jesus, that loving Person that Jesus is. So if we want to be like He is, of course we will grow fervent: “If you know Me,

you know the Father.” (John 14:7) And, “I will prepare a place for you.” (John 14:3) “Do not be afraid, I am with you.” (Isaiah 41:10, 43:5, John 6:20)

“Those who are fervent will quickly mount to greater love.” What does it mean to be fervent? It means to have more to our lives than just outward things. “You are a temple of the Holy Spirit!” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17) That should inspire you. This is our dignity, God chose us to be His own!

“I will bless every place where a picture of My Heart will be set up and honored.” The picture of the Heart stands for the loving Person of Jesus. The special emphasis is that He loves us. He loves us to the point of “I will lay down My life for you.” (John 10:15, 18) What does it remind you of when you hear “I will bless every place where I am honored and remembered;” doesn’t it sound like, “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there” (Matthew 18:20)? If we want the Lord, the Lord will be there. The Lord is 100% Love! He Himself will be with us!

“I will give to priests the gift of touching the most hardened hearts.” Jesus is the high priest who, on the cross, forgave

the thief and said, "You will be with Me in paradise." (Luke 23:43) No questions asked! No lecture given! This is what a priest according to the Heart of Jesus is like; he stands for the Lord who loves, who has compassion, and who offers consolation.

"Those who promote this devotion will have their names written in My Heart never to be blotted out." In the Scripture we hear, "I have loved you with an everlasting love and I am constant in my devotion for you." (Jeremiah 31:3) Also, "I pray to the Father, I ask the Father that we would be one, as I am with the Father." (John 17:21)

"To those who will receive Communion on the first Friday of nine consecutive months, I will grant the grace of not dying without the Sacraments." It is good to remember: private revelations are thoroughly scrutinized by the Church before approval can be given. This devotion was approved by the Church. It also has a natural, psychological basis. Just think, if you go to Communion on the first Fridays (which are not holy days) for nine months, you "get hooked," hooked on love. So, of course, you will not die without the Sacraments!

A tremendous change came about in the Church because of the revelation of the Sacred Heart. It has led to consecration of individuals, of families, of whole cities. What is consecration? To be “consecrated” means to be “set aside for the use of God.” Chalices are consecrated, people can be consecrated, made “holy.” We cannot consecrate ourselves; only God can make anyone holy – to belong to Him, to be like He is. Consecration is God’s choice; it is God placing His hand on you, choosing you, saying “You belong to me.”

GOD IS THRILLED WHEN WE RECOGNIZE HIS LOVE.

When were you consecrated, made holy? When you were given God’s life at your Baptism. What we were unable to say then, because we were too young, or maybe we were not aware of what was happening, we can express now. In consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we renew our baptismal consecration. Now we have a chance to choose and to say:

**“YES, LORD,
I WANT YOU TO MAKE ME HOLY,
I WANT TO BELONG TO YOU.
I WANT TO LOVE WITH YOUR HEART.”**

GOD IS 100% LOVE! THAT IS HIS LIFE.

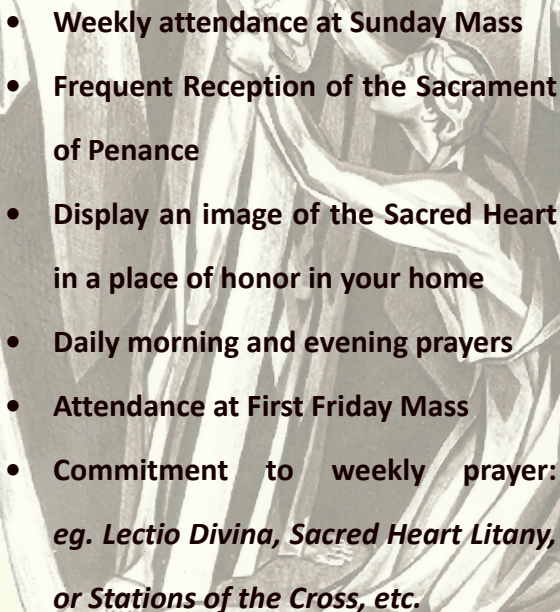
This is what He is giving to us when we become His children. God pours His gifts over us, the gifts of His Spirit; we receive the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit – the gift of His Heart, the gift of His love.

The Lord hears us, each one of us. What about us; do we listen? It takes effort, it takes heart to listen, to hear. Give that gift to our Lord and to each other. Listen, hear with your heart. It is amazing that, what the ear and the mind do not understand, the heart does.

At Baptism, this is what we are asked to do: *Receive this Baptism...and let the splendor of holiness shine on the world through you.* Jesus is a terrific teacher, and like a mother, He keeps encouraging us not to be afraid to reach for more, for holiness, for strength, for divine life, to be like Jesus, to radiate holiness to the world. **“Do not be afraid.”** (Luke 1:30, Luke 2:10, Luke 5:10, Luke 12:32, Matthew 14:27, Matthew 28:5,10) You are not doing it on your own power. Allow Him to help you say,

**“LORD, I WANT TO LOVE
WITH YOUR HEART.”**

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION AND COMMITMENT FOR CONSECRATION TO THE SACRED HEART

- 
- **Weekly attendance at Sunday Mass**
 - **Frequent Reception of the Sacrament of Penance**
 - **Display an image of the Sacred Heart in a place of honor in your home**
 - **Daily morning and evening prayers**
 - **Attendance at First Friday Mass**
 - **Commitment to weekly prayer:**
eg. Lectio Divina, Sacred Heart Litany, or Stations of the Cross, etc.

FAMILY CONSECRATION TO THE SACRED HEART

Almighty and eternal Father, we the _____ family, ask You to consecrate us and our home to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We believe that Jesus loves us with a tender and everlasting love. Help us to always say "yes" to His love and to remember that He is the Heart of our family. He invites us to share His life.

Lord Jesus, we make this promise freely; we dedicate ourselves wholeheartedly to You and Your Body, the Church. Jesus, we welcome You as the Center of our family: be with us in our joys, comfort us in our sorrows.

Holy Spirit of God, embrace us that we may live as a family dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Fill our hearts with your love. Help us to have a deep and loving respect for one another and all our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Most Blessed Trinity, our loving God, we want to do Your will because we believe that You love us and that Your plan is greater than we can even imagine. You are offering us a share in Your life here and for all eternity. Amen.

We are worth everything for our Lord.
That generosity comes from His Heart
and it is ours for the asking:

**Lord,
help me to love as You do,
to lay down my life
minute by minute,
day by day,
and to be open to You,
to my family,
and all those who need me.
Whatever happens, let me look at
it through Your eyes,
through Your Heart.**

This is what we are actually doing in loving
each other. We are not spectacularly
giving our lives, but we are putting down
our life minute by minute, day by day.
This is love – giving our life day by day for
those we love.

♥ your Sister Ida

Servant of God Sister Ida Peterfy consecrated her entire life to God on
her 18th birthday, October 7, 1940 in Kassa, Hungary. From this total
gift of self God inspired others to join her and become the Sisters of
the Society Devoted to the Sacred Heart. Sister Ida's love for God and
her dynamic method of presenting His love to others has encouraged
countless others to offer themselves to His Heart and His love.



www.sacredheartsisters.com

Artwork by Isabel Piczek, Sacred Heart symbols by SDSH

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