



The Source of Our Hope

Thoughts of Servant of God Sister Ida



It is our joy and privilege to share with you
the spiritual legacy of our beloved foundress,
Servant of God Sister Ida.

These thoughts of Sister Ida are taken from a
thirty-day retreat that she gave to the Sacred
Heart Sisters in 1976, during the challenging
years after Vatican II.

She brilliantly taught and inspired our Sisters,
friends, and families to embrace the great
ecclesial renewal with deep faith and hope.

In that year she led our community on a
bicentennial cross-country pilgrimage to the
Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia.

Sisters of the
Society Devoted to the Sacred Heart

In presenting this booklet, we declare our sincere submission to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

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God Wants to Walk with You

The God of compassion is taking you aside, and He wants you to listen to Him. Don't harbor doubts; place yourself into His hands.



God asks us to listen, and to find. He is very ready to reveal Himself to you. He can take your hands, and keep you from walking in the wrong path. God can and does hold you by the hand. Allow Him to take you by the hand.



*He wants to be among us and
walk with us, just as in Paradise,
because He loves us.*

Notice how God is coming - in a gentle breeze, hardly noticeable. He is not going to come in an overwhelming way. He comes in intimacy.



God makes the first step, and keeps making the first step. God enters, not just the life of one person, but the life of the family. The relationship becomes deeper. Respond to God revealing Himself to you.



*God always comes,
and always more intimately.*

Open Your Inner Vision

Come into the presence of God: He is so delighted to have you! Stand in His light. Accept Him as your Teacher.



Silence is a sign of respect to God who speaks.



*Allow yourself
to be enlightened
by God.
Allow God
to open
your vision.*

God is truly interested in what you are afraid of; He is interested in what hurts you and why, and what you enjoy. He is not "someone out there;" He is in the depth of your being.



It takes courage to see reality.



Why does God love you? Not because "you did something." Why do you love a baby? Not because he "did something." God loves you because you are, and He made you!



Whatever happens, God keeps being good. Every day, we are in the palm of God's hand.

Cast Your Cares on the Lord. He Cares!

In great simplicity, sit in the presence of God. Simply tell Him: all right, have it Your way, I am listening.



*Bring yourself to believe that God
speaks peace and comfort and
encouragement.*



Only a God of poverty, gentleness, peace and compassion could ever give us the Eight Ways to Happiness.

Allow God to be God, and to solve what you cannot. When we are overly preoccupied with ourselves, we do not see God in our life.



God has an unbelievable concern for you. Unburden your heart to Him.



*Once you ask God for something,
thank Him
because He has heard you,
and He is so happy you asked!*

*God says it all over again
that He is holy
and that I am His child.
Accept it,
and then your actions
will catch up.*



God cannot stand just looking at sorrow:
He wipes away tears, and consoles those
who mourn.



God is so eager to speak to you. Be with
Him in nearness, in faith and in hope.
Cry out: Abba! Father! - and He is there to
help.

Understand God as a God who is concerned.
He is always revealing Himself; God is
always NOW, always present.



*God is always coming
- in His own style.*



When we are weak, we are strong because
we cling to Him.

God
is the Source of life,
goodness,
everything.
How great He is!
He takes responsibility,
He takes care,
so don't worry.
Learn this by heart:
"Cast your anxiety on God
for He cares for you!"
(1 Peter 5:9)

God is Constantly Working for You

God loves you unconditionally. He is always completely conscious of you... Imagine! You have a God Almighty so involved in your life and salvation!



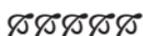
*God is so near,
constantly working for you.
His humility is amazing!*



God knows what is alive in your heart, and therefore has a Heart of sympathy and empathy for you. Let the Word of God come to you. Let Him explain who He is to you.

Cherish the Good

The nearness of God is peaceful. Let us look at ourselves as God sees us. We can be so much like ostriches: we can bury our heads, unwilling to see the good we have done. If God cherishes it, why don't we? It will not make us proud, but grateful. What do we have that does not come from Him?



*God will always remember
that glass of water
you gave to someone.*



God cherishes the good you have done. And when He sees your challenges, He helps.

Allow God to Strengthen You

God wants you to know Him. Know Him as the God of mercy whose Heart is always easily moved by misery. God is easily moved to compassion where there is suffering. His Heart is all for you, to help you if you allow Him to move into the situation.



Sometimes, it seems that God is sidelined, and there is no loyalty in the land, because people want to go their own way, and do not want God to "interfere." God's response is that He does not give up. He says, "I will win back the bride."

God became Visible in the features of Jesus

If God enters this world in a human form, what will His life be like?



*There is a decision behind it:
God has a predilection
for poverty and simplicity.*



It is striking that Jesus spent 30 years in Nazareth. He worked, He prayed, He was very much involved at home in cooking and cleaning, hearing gossip, attending funerals and weddings.

How compassionate Our Lord is, how moved by our need! How gentle! He doesn't violate our freedom. He comes as a child, and if we open our hearts to Him, He becomes our Savior.



Listen to Jesus who says what He hears the Father saying: Look at me, I am gentle and humble of heart. Christ did not say that at the spur of the moment, but out of conviction.



Jesus, the Son of God, puts on an apron during the Last Supper, and does the work that is attributed to the lowest servant. Look at what God tells us about Himself!

Jesus is the perfect image of the Father.



Jesus was moved by the tears of the widow of Nain; he was moved by the daughter of Jairus; He shed tears over Jerusalem.



*Because we are made into
His image,
the life of Jesus
is about ourselves.
We are sons with the Son.*



Jesus Christ is like us in all things, except doubting the Father's will and goodness.

Give God Time to Explain

Why did this happen? Sometimes we have to wait a little to see God's reasons and answers. You can give God time to explain, if you are living in faith.



*God unfolds His revelation
gradually.*



You don't have to be afraid of His will, if you love Him. His will is the law written in your heart.



We need to overcome our doubts that God wants to have an intimate relationship with us. God wants to talk to us directly.

Pilgrimage

Pilgrims are constantly aware of where they are going. Every step is part of the pilgrimage.

* * * * *

God's law is "I guide you by the hand." As pilgrims, we have a good goal and a promise. If we wandered around aimlessly, we would be wanderers. Allow God to take you by the hand.

* * * * *

We can be very occupied with the here and now, and forget where we are going. We will live for all eternity!

* * * * *

We are not just moving along the road, but we are climbing a ladder.

Through the prophet Hosea (2:14ff) God is saying to you that He leads you into the desert to show His faithfulness and love. But they remain only words, until you take them seriously!

* * * * *

When God prefers, let Him take you through the darkness. Let Him be the Leader. Once He initiates my new life growing, He continues to bring it to fullness.

* * * * *

*God's Word leads to a path.
There is so much wisdom
to a God who does not tell you
ahead of time
where you are going.*

When Robed in Weakness, We are Clothed in Glory

God is the Source of all life. Our life is flowing from His life. God never stops working. He continues to nourish the life He brought forth. We are still being "built." God is always working. Whatever we do, good or bad, God is still with us.



*It is a sign of greatness if you put
up with obstacles and still bring
out good.*



When your sins are forgiven, God casts them to the bottom of the sea. Just try to recover something from the bottom of the sea!

Out of a one-color earth and gray seeds
comes an array of flowers!



*God is the Potter who can breathe
life into His clay.*



When God "repairs the damage" by
forgiving our sins, we become a new
creation, not mere "patchwork."



The Saints do not brood over their sins;
they don't dig up old wounds. The Saints
recall their lives with a joyousness. In the
light of God's love they see themselves
differently. See yourself as God sees you.
Commit your fate to God and He will act.
Be quiet before Him, wait patiently, not
worrying. Trust God.

Turn to Mary, Our Mother

Let God be your guide to see His choice of a Mother, His first co-worker: a humble country girl.

*God's majesty is shown
by Mary's humility.*

Mary was not afraid of the will of God, because she loved Him. This is the law written in her heart.

Turn to Mary, our Mother. Her whole life is to love: so unselfish! Because she is our Mother, we are her glory and joy! And this makes us beautiful.

God does not *write* essays, God's perfect "essay" is Mary who said, "Let it be done to me according to Your Word." There is no restriction or condition, but simply "Let it be done according to Your Word."

The first sign that Jesus did was at the request of His Mother. Why? Because she is the essay of God about what a Christian should be. Mary herself is a sign of what it is like to be a chosen one, to respond to God.

Let Mary tell you what went on in her heart when Jesus' response to her request was, "My hour has not yet come." After this response, she simply tells the servants: "Do whatever He tells you."

Is Your Life Too Ordinary?

In Nazareth, Jesus had a daily routine. He attended the synagogue school. He had a job in the carpenter shop. He lived the typical life of a Jew. He must have been excited to light the candles before sunset on Friday nights.



He prayed seven times a day. He had so much contact with everyday life that He easily thought of a woman sweeping the floor looking for a coin. He thought of a shepherd tending his sheep, tax collectors, and a farmer who sowed the seed.



*It is hard to accept that Jesus was
this human.*

He was so ordinary.

Our Hope comes from God. Stand in His Light!

Gradually, learn to stand in the light of the Resurrection, and see that Jesus Christ has overcome the darkness of sin. Stand in the light, vivified by the Spirit.



Satan is always trying to sow some weed where there is plenty of wheat. How does Jesus Christ see evil? Where there is sin, He always sees the enemy, and He says: "An enemy has done this." Where there is pain and suffering, it reminds Him of the prince of the world. Jesus came to dispel the darkness. Stand in His light!



There is something in every person that reminds us of the Holy Trinity. God has not "made us," He is making us.

Allow God to be God. A snowflake is the most complicated process without us knowing or doing anything about it.



Don't forget that God wants to treat you. He who speaks is happy when we listen. He is the God of humility, the God of love whose love is totally foolish. There is no "reason" that God should love us – but He does!



*The inmost being of God is
simplicity.*



How humble God is! He is always coming into the life of mankind, the Church, your family, yourself.

When You Face Challenges

When you have a difficult day filled with challenges, shower God with questions. Open your heart to Him. He created you, and He likes His creation!



*He wants to be with you,
with your personality
and your temperament.
Approach Him, and then wait for
His direction, His lead.
He will take you by the hand.*



Don't let go of His hand. Give Him the chance, and He will bring you joy!

For those who have no faith, Good Friday afternoon was the end. For those who have faith, Good Friday afternoon was the beginning.



*When you think that God does not
understand your suffering,
just think of the one true God:
a God who is rejected,
a God who is pushed out
of people's lives.
He does understand.*



You are deeply loved by God. Be simple and be yourself; approach Him as you are. Do not turn into something you are not. Your questions are not bothersome to God. He does not want to talk to a wall!

Newness of Life

Open yourself to God as a flower exposes itself to water, sunlight and good soil.



If we ever needed faith, it is when we find ourselves face to face with newness of life: the new reality of self-giving, the new greatness of God, the new joy on Easter Sunday morning!



Allow God to explain to you how much you mean to Him, and how He wants to bring you into the Eternal Now!

God's Spirit works where there is an openness of mind and heart. The Roman centurion at the Cross realized that we made a very big mistake when he said, "This was a just man." An officer in charge of execution does not speak like this!



*We are never more human than
when we acknowledge that
God is the Lord.*

*We are never more human than
when we stand in the truth
of the Resurrection.*

*The One who died is alive!
This is the pledge of
the fullness of our human life.*

God Restores Hope

After that terrible Friday, Jesus came to the grieving Mary Magdalene and showed that He was alive. Being mistaken for the gardener, He "innocently" asked her, "Why are you crying?" Then He delightfully revealed Himself to her. On Holy Thursday night, He said, "If you see me, you see the Father." God reveals Himself to you with delight! Lord, that I may know You as You really are!



When you look at the Risen Lord, you can only see Him with the five wounds, but do not let them surprise you. This is His life now. Resurrection and new life do not "wipe away" Good Friday. But He conquered death!

*God-made-Man was cast out;
but He came back because
He never gives up.
He is too involved with you!*



On the night before Jesus died, He promised His friends to send His Spirit. It was difficult for them to listen to Him saying that it was good for Him to leave them. The Apostles were always leaning on Our Lord. After He left, they began to understand His gentle Spirit and loving Heart.



Breathe in the climate of that quiet Easter morning. When are you going to believe God's gentleness, humility, and that the simplicity of Easter Sunday morning is in complete harmony with God's character?

We never appreciate peace so much as when we do not deserve it. The first time Peter saw Jesus after he denied Him was at the Lake of Galilee after the Resurrection. Jesus does not scold sinners; He has the sensitivity to know that you suffered enough. He saw Peter's tears. For the Risen Jesus, to be alive is to wipe away tears. So He simply asks Peter: "Do you love me?"



God says: "You are precious in my eyes. I will shelter you. You are my very own." God's Name is Love and Goodness. He has supported you, given you all you have. He is serving you, giving you faith, hope, inspiration and consolation.

*The Risen Jesus walked side by
side towards Emmaus with the
two discouraged disciples.
He moved along with them,
He made Himself known and
restored their hope!
Their hearts jumped for joy!*

*He walks with you;
He makes Himself known to you
and restores your hope,
and your heart will jump for joy!*

Servant of God

Sister Ida Peterfy, SDSH

1922-2000

Foundress, Society Devoted to the Sacred Heart

Sister Ida was born on October 7, 1922, of a Hungarian Catholic family in Košice, Czechoslovakia (*formerly Kassa, Hungary*). From her early youth, God prepared her to be a leader, to work for others, and inspired her to establish a new religious community. On October 7, 1940, her eighteenth birthday, Sister Ida pronounced her perpetual vows in Kassa, Hungary (*now Košice, Slovakia*). This marks the beginning of the Society Devoted to the Sacred Heart.

God called Sister Ida to bring forth a new community in times when the universal Church was attacked in her Chief Pastor and in her religious children. As the future of formal religious education became uncertain, the times called for religious

who dedicated their lives to proclaim the Good News of Our Lord Jesus Christ in a new, appealing and personal way. Sister Ida, with her earliest companions lived the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience in community life, without wearing a traditional religious garb, in order to be more approachable to those who were alienated from the Church by Nazism and Communism.

With her ardent faith in God, in cooperation with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Sister Ida developed an innovative catechetical method which initiated the community's religious education charism: *The Five Step Illustrated Method*. The small community was instrumental in religious education of children and youth as well as formation of catechists and distribution of catechetical material throughout Hungary amidst the dangers of religious persecution. Following the arrest of Cardinal Mindszenty, in 1949, Sister Ida and her companions were advised

by Church leaders to leave the country, develop the community in the free world and some day return to Hungary.

A new beginning awaited Sister Ida and the Sisters when they arrived penniless in Toronto, Canada, in 1950. To obtain immigrant status, Sister Ida and her companions had to work as domestic servants for a year, earning room and board and \$40 a month. For two summers, working in tobacco harvests as unskilled laborers, they earned enough for a down-payment towards a small house and printing machines. Through their new St. Joseph's Press, they had a modest livelihood while they were learning English.

In 1956, James Francis Cardinal McIntyre personally welcomed the young community to Los Angeles and warmly supported them in their life and apostolate. When Sister Ida asked him about possibly adopting a more traditional veil and habit,

Cardinal McIntyre assured her: “Don’t change. The Church will need you as you are.”

The Cardinal’s vision was proven correct during the following decades; the Society Devoted to the Sacred Heart has harmonized the best of religious life tradition with the renewal of Vatican II. In 1991, after a private Mass in his chapel during a private audience, Pope John Paul II, said to Sister Ida’s community: “You are a blessing for the Pope. You are truly American and truly Catholic.”

The religious education charism given by God to Sister Ida is treasured by her Sisters. The charism is well described in their newsletter, the “Joyful Apostolate” which Sister Ida began in the early 1950’s. She expanded the Community’s catechetical work to include a variety of Religious Education ministries from teaching children, youth and adults to directing parish religious education programs,

sacramental programs, RCIA, catechist formation, indeed anywhere the word and love of God need to be proclaimed.

The Society was formally erected as a Religious Institute of diocesan right in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles in 1985, on the feast of the birth of St. John the Baptist. Today, Sacred Heart Sisters, from a variety of international backgrounds, joyfully serve the universal Church through their community apostolate of evangelization and catechesis in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, in the Dioceses of Orange and San Bernardino, and in the Archdiocese of Taipei where the community's catechetical apostolate is complemented with significant medical work. After the collapse of Communism, Sister Ida opened a mission in the Archdiocese of Budapest-Esztergom in Hungary where the Sisters conduct catechist formation and extend our catechetical works throughout Hungary and to neighboring countries.

With wisdom, foresight and trust in God, Sister Ida opened the Heart of Jesus Retreat Center, in Santa Ana, and Sacred Heart Retreat Camp, in Big Bear Lake, California. Both of these centers established unique locations for the Sisters' continuing work and steadfast commitment to the spiritual enrichment of children, youth and adults, through Girls' Camps, Leadership Retreats for young adults, as well as sacramental retreats for children and teens. Children's Camps are also conducted by her Sisters in Taiwan and in Hungary. Seeing the spiritual quest of families, Sister Ida developed a unique Family Retreat Camp program which is enjoyed annually by families in California and Hungary and periodically in other locations in the United States of America.

The production of "Sacred Heart Kids' Club" video program followed from the request of parents, priests and educators who saw how effective Sister Ida's *Five Step Illustrated Method* was. With a team of her

Sisters, Sister Ida produced 30 half-hour videos with teachers' guides, providing a unique religious education program for children. The program spread to six continents in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean and Hungarian. When the new "Catechism of the Catholic Church" was released in 1994, the "Sacred Heart Kids' Club" was immediately recognized as a dynamic catechetical tool in complete harmony with the four pillars of the Catholic Church: Creed, Sacraments, Commandments and Prayer.

In response to the growing need for Catechist Formation, Sister Ida created the "Be a Dynamic and Effective Religion Teacher" video course to bring her unique catechetical method, *The Five Step Illustrated Method*, to catechists and educators everywhere.

With her undaunted receptivity to the Holy Spirit, Sister Ida compelled her community to "move on into the future,"

as she said, with young leadership; and so in 1988, Sister Jane Stafford was elected as the first Superior General of American background. Sister Ida continued teaching the novices, giving spiritual retreats and monthly seminars to the Sisters, being actively involved in the community's spiritual leadership and travelling as a religious education speaker nationally and internationally.

Sister Ida passed on to eternal life on February 8, 2000 in the Motherhouse of the Society Devoted to the Sacred Heart in Northridge, California, lovingly surrounded by her Sisters.

At the Mass of Resurrection, Cardinal Roger Mahony was the main celebrant; many bishops and priests concelebrated. The church was filled with many friends, permanent deacons, religious and families who had been personally touched by Sister Ida's love and inspired by her life of dedication to Jesus Christ and service to the

Church. The Cardinal noted that it was “a very unique moment for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, a very wonderful grace because it was the first time that we had a foundress of a Religious Community die in our midst.”

“The Joyful Apostolate must go on,” said then Archbishop Justin Rigali, in his homily at the funeral. “Sister Ida, in her legacy of generous love still speaks to us.” This rite of Christian burial “...is a hymn of praise and thanksgiving for the love of God manifested in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and reflected in the gentle life and zealous devotion of our Sister Ida.”

Paul VI Pontifical Catechetical Institute in St. Louis, Missouri, welcomed the Sisters in 2002 to teach *The Five Step illustrated Method* to seminarians, religious, and lay catechists and conduct the community’s unique sacramental retreats for children and youth throughout the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

The Pontifical appointment of one of the Sacred Heart Sisters to the 15-member International Council for Catechetics (from 2002-2008) was a singular privilege. It provided an opportunity to contribute Sister Ida's catechetical charism to religious education in the universal Church in close collaboration with Vatican Congregations, in the heart of the Church.

With her God-given talents, Sister Ida's outstanding, global and lasting contributions in the field of religious education and in religious life are great treasures for generations to come. But what most touched those who spoke with her was the eloquent simplicity of her joyful spirituality that she often expressed in brief words:

“God has a Heart for you!”

Prayer to Obtain a Special Favor

adapted from Sister Ida's favorite "Panic Prayer"

I love you, Lord, I praise you.
Thank you, Lord, for all you have done for me.

Lord, I am totally helpless. Only you can help.
I ask you to grant ... (mention intention).
This is my burden. I give it to you.
I know that you love ... (mention name).
I know that you love me.

Please, come and enter this situation.
Please, help as only you can help.
I know that your Heart is moved by need.

Thank you, Lord.
I trust and accept your Divine Will.
I believe you have already given me what
I am asking. I place all my trust in you.

I ask you to grant my request
through the intercession of
Servant of God Sister Ida. Amen.

Please send description of favors received
through the intercession of Servant of God Sister Ida to:
Sacred Heart Sisters, 10480 1/2 Winnetka Ave. Chatsworth, CA 91311
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Servant of God Sister Ida Peterfy, SDSH
1922-2000

In her youth, Sister Ida found the source of her strength, hope and joy in the merciful Heart of God. She asked Him: "Lord, give me a burning love that I may love You, and everyone for You. Give me your faithful, never-ending divine love, and I will go anywhere, to any corner of the world for You!" With her undivided love for God, courage, strength and profound simplicity, Sister Ida led her Sisters, children and families to the Heart of God.

During her lifetime, Sister Ida generously prayed for all who turned to her. Surely she continues to pray for us now that she has entered eternal life! These are her words, take them very personally:

"I am praying for you, for your health and for your good.

*May the Lord extend His loving presence and
send His Holy Spirit to guide you.*

*I am praying for the many needs that you have,
especially to love with the love of Jesus and to live in faith."*

Society Devoted to the Sacred Heart

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