

JUNE



THE MONTH DEDICATED TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

By Fr. Dan Cambra, MIC

June is the Month of the Sacred Heart, in recognition of Jesus' apparitions starting in 1673 to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690), a member of the Visitation Sisters, through whom He asked for devotion to His Sacred Heart.

In that first apparition, Jesus enveloped St. Margaret Mary in a mystical experience of His love. She reported that Jesus allowed her "to recline for a long time on His divine breast, where He disclosed to me the marvels of His love and the unutterable secrets of His Sacred Heart."

In His second apparition to her, a First Friday in 1674, Jesus showed St. Margaret His Heart, "more dazzling than the sun and transparent as crystal." The Cross stood above it, and a crown of thorns encircled it, signifying the wounds it had endured as a result of our sins.

Christ told St. Margaret that He wanted to reveal His wounded Heart because He could not abide watching as countless people turned away from Him. He wanted all to experience His love, mercy, and grace, and to attain salvation.

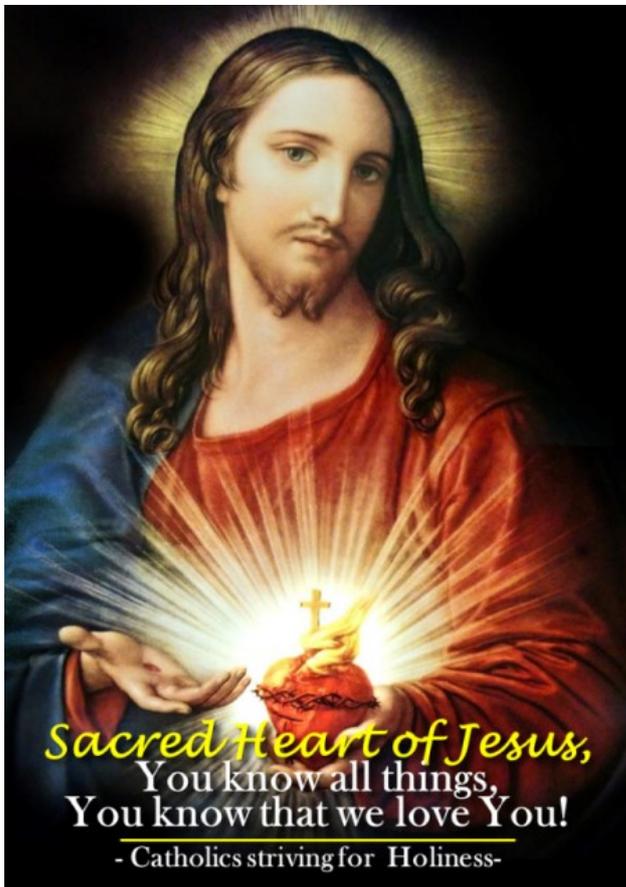
Jesus' request came at a time when many people had embraced the heretical teaching of Jansenism, which instilled a radical pessimism that implied that most people would be damned and only a few would be saved (by means of their rigorous observance of rules). It has been said that Jansenism — which puts too much emphasis on God's Divine Justice, teaching that one has to be perfect to come to Jesus — breaks the Lord's Heart.

In contrast, devotion to the Sacred Heart emphasizes the vastness of God's concern and love for struggling humanity. It serves as a reminder to the sinful and hurting people to trust in His Heart, which so tenderly loves each of us. In the Image of the Sacred Heart, Jesus shows His burning love for us and His desire that we return that love.

This calls to mind the Gospel of St. Matthew, when the Lord remarks on the mercy He wishes to bestow. He says, "[H]ow often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing (23:37).

Leap forward to 1931, and we come to another simple and humble woman whom our Lord charged with spreading the message of His merciful love: St. Maria Faustina Kowalska (1905-1938), the so-called Secretary of Divine Mercy. Through the message of Divine Mercy, Christ intends to gather His children — saints and sinners alike — stressing how no soul should be frightened to approach Him. As Jesus tells us through St. Faustina:

Come to Me, all of you. ... Be not afraid of your Savior, O sinful soul. I make the first move to come to you, for I know that by yourself you are unable to lift yourself to me. ...



My mercy is greater than your sins and those of the entire world. Who can measure the extent of my goodness? For you I descended from heaven to earth; for you I allowed myself to be nailed to the cross; for you I let my Sacred Heart be pierced with a lance, thus opening wide the source of mercy for you. Come, then, with trust to draw graces from this fountain. (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, 1485)

In St Faustina's *Diary* we read many prayers to the merciful Heart of Jesus. My favorite *Diary* entry, and one I often pray many times a day is: "O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus, as a fount of mercy for us, I trust in You" (*Diary*, 84). I have often encouraged even non-believers to pray this.

In St. Faustina's Mass of Canonization in 2000, Pope St. John Paul II noted the urgency of the Divine Mercy message. "In fact," he said, "it was between the First and Second World Wars that Christ entrusted His message of mercy to her. Those who remember, who were witnesses and participants in the events of those years and the horrible sufferings they caused for millions of people, know well how necessary was the message of mercy."

The Holy Father continued, "[B]y this act [of Faustina's canonization] I intend today to pass this message on to the new millennium. I pass it on to all people, so that they will learn to know ever better the true face of God and the true face of their brethren."

Today, we may not struggle with Jansenism, but in the midst of a pandemic, the modern mindset has been marked by pessimism, exclusionism, and rigorism in many different ways.

Knowing well the intertwining private revelations regarding Christ's merciful Heart and how He desires to fully pour out His graces upon aching mankind, the Most Rev. José H. Gomez, archbishop of Los Angeles and the president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, said on Good Friday, 2020:

Brothers and sisters, as we stand today at the foot of His Cross, in the midst of this pandemic, Jesus is calling us to trust in His Sacred Heart. Let's pray often to the Sacred Heart of Jesus: Jesus, I trust in You! *¡Sagrado Corazón de Jesús, en ti confío!* ... Jesus has opened His Heart for us. He has given His life out of love for us. Now He calls us to entrust our lives to Him — our whole heart, our whole mind, all our feelings and thoughts, our words and actions.

In this month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, let's often repeat some simple little prayer each waking hour of each day for all our loved ones, living and deceased. And let us include all those who have no one who prays for them, especially priests, religious, and victims of neglect or abandonment.

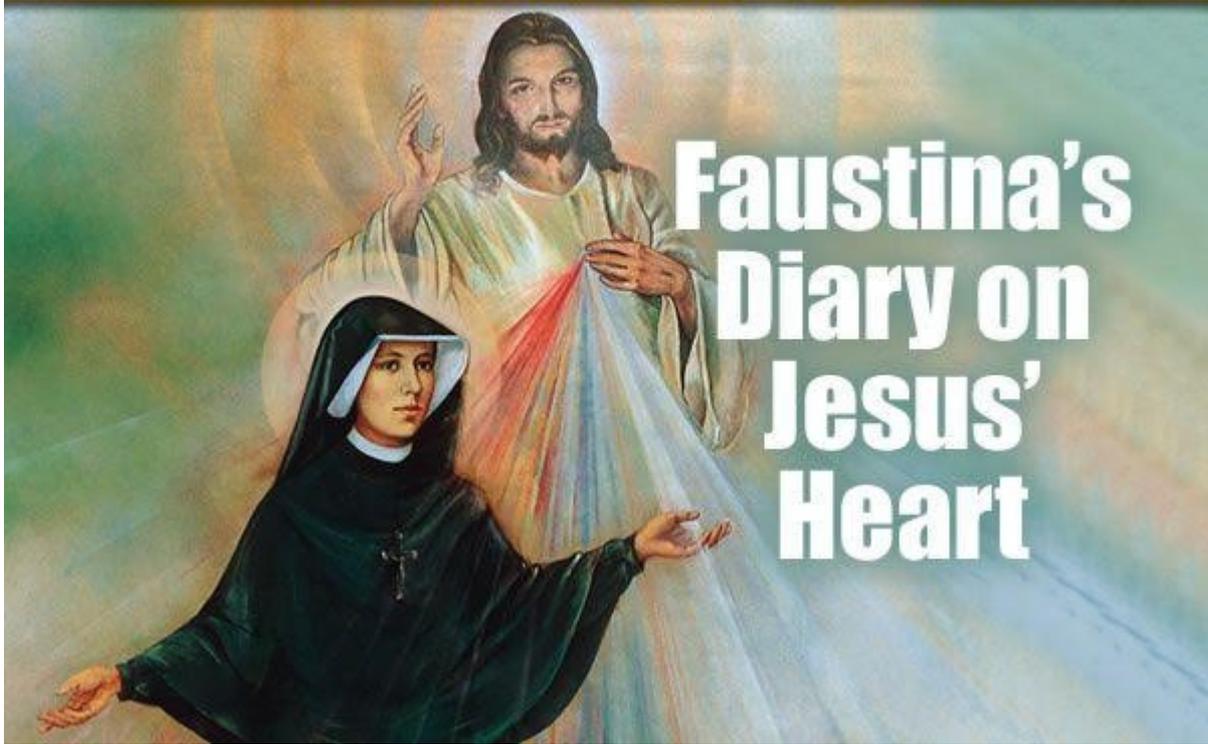
Like the love of Jesus, our love should have no bounds.

Jesus Made Twelve Promises to Those Who Hold a True Devotion to His Sacred Heart:

1. I will give them all the graces necessary in their state of life.
2. I will give peace in their families and will unite families that are divided.
3. I will console them in all their troubles.
4. I will be their refuge during life and above all in death.
5. I will bestow the blessings of Heaven on all their enterprises.
6. Sinners shall find in my Heart the source and infinite ocean of mercy.
7. Tepid souls shall become fervent.
8. Fervent souls shall rise quickly to great perfection.
9. I will bless those places wherein the image of My Heart shall be exposed and honored and will imprint My love on the hearts of those who would wear this image on their person. I will also destroy in them all disordered movements.
10. I will give to priests who are animated by a tender devotion to my Divine Heart the gift of touching the most hardened hearts.
11. Those who promote this devotion shall have their names written in my Heart, never to be effaced.
12. **THE GREATEST PROMISE** - I promise you in the excessive mercy of my Heart that my all-powerful love will grant to all those who communicate (Receive Holy Communion) on the First Friday in nine consecutive months, the grace of final penitence: they will not die in my disgrace, nor without receiving their Sacraments. My Divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment.

It is important to note in order to obtain the GREAT PROMISE that the Nine Fridays must be made in honor of Christ's Sacred Heart, meaning, practicing devotion and having great love of His Sacred Heart. They must be on the first Friday of the month for nine consecutive months, and Holy Communion must be received. If one were to start on a First Friday and not keep the others then one would have to start over. Many great sacrifices must be made in order to obtain this final promise but the grace when receiving Holy Communion on First Friday's is indescribable!

Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



In honor of the feast of the Sacred Heart, we decided to share with you some passages from St. Faustina's Diary on Jesus' Heart.

O Eternal Love, You command Your Sacred Image to be painted
And reveal to us the inconceivable fount of mercy,
You bless whoever approaches Your rays,
And a soul all black will turn into snow.

O sweet Jesus, it is here You established the throne of Your mercy
To bring joy and hope to sinful man.
From Your open Heart, as from a pure fount,
Flows comfort to a repentant heart and soul.

May praise and glory for this Image
Never cease to stream from man's soul.
May praise of God's mercy pour from every heart
Now, and at every hour, and forever and ever. - *Diary*, 1

O Jesus, eternal Truth, our Life, I call upon You and I beg Your mercy for poor sinners. O sweetest Heart of my Lord, full of pity and unfathomable mercy, I plead with You for poor sinners. O Most Sacred Heart, Fount of Mercy from which gush forth rays of inconceivable graces upon the entire human race, I beg of You light for poor sinners. O Jesus, be mindful of Your own bitter Passion and do not permit the loss of souls redeemed at so dear a price of Your most precious Blood. O Jesus, when I consider the great price of Your Blood, I rejoice at its immensity, for one drop alone would have been enough for the salvation of all sinners. Although sin is an abyss of wickedness and ingratitude, the price paid for us can never be equalled. Therefore, let every soul trust in the Passion of the Lord, and place its hope in His mercy. God will not deny His mercy to anyone. Heaven and earth may change, but God's mercy will never be exhausted. Oh, what immense joy burns in my heart when I contemplate Your incomprehensible goodness, O Jesus! I desire to bring all sinners to Your feet that they may glorify Your mercy throughout endless ages. - *Diary*,72