

"I WILL GIVE YOU A NEW HEART"

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Foundress

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May the Heart of Jesus reign in the heart of humanity! May it be His Heart which moves the sentiments, interior inclinations, thoughts, actions and decisions of the human person. May it be in this manner that the Reign of Love is established!



A New Pentecost for a New Heart

We have heard - in many places and in many different ways - a spiritual conviction about what the Lord desires to do today in the Church and in the world: a New Pentecost, a time of singular grace for the Church which will equip her with all that is necessary to fulfill her mission of being a channel of salvation for the world. This new Pentecost is the power of the Holy Spirit pouring forth upon the world in order to lead her into a new relationship, a new alliance of love with the Heart of the Christ. This will necessarily require a profound conversion, a radical interior change; in other words, we must acquire a new heart.

Pentecost

The narration of the coming of the Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles begins with these words: "When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together" (Acts 2:1). It was during the feast of Pentecost that the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles.

In the time of Jesus, the feast of Pentecost signified and commemorated the day in which the Lord gave the law on Mount Sinai, thereby establishing an alliance or covenant with the Israelite people. How interesting that on this feast the Lord sent the power of the Holy Spirit upon the newborn Church.

This effusion of the Spirit on the feast of Pentecost was also a revelation of the Law - the law of the Spirit that gives life to the heart of man. It was not an external law, written by the finger of God on tablets of rock, but the law of the Spirit written on our hearts.

The Israelite people, having left Egypt, walked for forty days through the desert, and at the end of this, God gave Moses the law, establishing upon it a covenant with the people, making them a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex 19:4-6). Saint Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, wanted to describe the coming of the Holy Spirit using the same images that described the manifestation at Sinai: earthquake, wind and fire...

The Lord wanted to utilize the same elements to demonstrate to us that, with the coming of the Holy Spirit, the New Covenant was consummated; we are receiving this power in order to live, from the interior of our hearts, all of the law - the new commandment of the love of God and of our neighbor. The Holy Spirit capacitates us to live according to the dignity of the children of God.

This law, interiorly written, will be capable of transforming our hearts in such a way that it would effect all of its sanctifying efficacy in bringing about a profound interior conversion. This is why God desired that on the feast of Pentecost - the moment in which the old law had been given - we would receive the grace of the new law: the law of the Spirit that gives life. The Holy Spirit is the gift of the new alliance - new because it changes the heart of stone into a heart of flesh.

In the face of this event, the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel on the new alliance shine anew.

Jeremiah says, "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord. I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts" (31:33). As well, Ezekiel tells us, "I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you and make you live by my statutes, careful to observe my decrees" (36:26-27).

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit is spoken about as the breath of God that creates and gives life, the breath that comes upon some men, clothing them with His strength and giving them extraordinary powers to overcome, to govern or to prophecy. It is only through the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel that one moves from this exterior and public perspective of the action of the Spirit to a perspective that is interior and personal, that is seen to be working in the heart of each individual as a principle of interior renewal, making one capable of faithfully observing the law of God, becoming a principle of new life, of a new covenant. This covenant is one in which the Holy Spirit will then write the precepts of love, truth and morality on the human heart. The Spirit is to be the finger of God that writes this new alliance in the interior of the human heart and that Saint Paul speaks about in his second letter to the Corinthians: "You are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by all, shown to be a letter of Christ administered by us, written not in ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets that are hearts of flesh" (3:2-3).

Note that these words of St. Paul are situated upon this interior perspective: God has written His law in our hearts with the Holy Spirit. Concretely speaking, how does this new law which is the Spirit act, and in what

sense can we call it law? It acts through love! The new law is nothing more than that which Jesus calls the new commandment. The Holy Spirit has inscribed this new law in our hearts, infusing love into them: "Because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Rom 5:5).

The New Covenant is not limited only to external prescriptions of conduct, but rather it elevates us and makes us capable of even greater demands. The new alliance is the alliance of love... love to the extreme and a love that is a cross. The new covenant calls us not only to be good, but to be perfect; not only to do some good works, but to give it all, to render all voluntarily - even one's own life for others. "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15:13).

Saint Paul urges us to understand that the New Covenant written on the heart has charity as its supreme expression. This is why he writes the beautiful description of love according to this new alliance in 1 Cor 13:1-8:

"Though I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge, if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient love is kind. It is not jealous; love is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails."

In the New Covenant love is the measure of holiness. The greatness of the heart will not be simply in the measure of the actions themselves, but in the love - or lack of it - which moves its accomplishment. The new law will search hearts so as to make manifest their true intentions (Luke 2:35). In this alliance, the power of the Holy Spirit is poured forth in order to tear away the stones from our hearts and to give us hearts of flesh, capable of loving to the extreme.

The Redeeming Work of Christ

"On that day there shall be open to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, a fountain to purify from sin and uncleanness" (Zech 13:1).

It is evident that the goal of the redeeming and saving work of Christ is to reach the heart of man, to call him to the true conversion and repentance that comes from a contrite heart. With the New Covenant, Christ wants to reach the human heart, to lead it to a very interior and profound spirituality. He wants the heart of man because He desires to lead him to know love and to live for and in love. This is precisely the work of the Holy Spirit - to rend our hearts, to remove the stones, to consume our hearts with His purifying fire, with the flames of love, leading us from a life of harshness, selfishness, pride, envy, and self-centeredness, to a life of generosity, love, sacrifice, and self-offering. He desires to lead us to a NEW LIFE.

The open fountain of Zechariah is the pierced heart of Jesus, from which pour forth blood and water. The blood is that which frees us from sin, and the living water is the means through which we are purified. Devotion to the Heart of Jesus is devotion to conversion. "And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself" (Jn 12:32)... When they contemplate my pierced Heart, they will be drawn to conversion. They will seek freedom from sin and purification from the residue of sin and impurity.

The Work of the Spirit

"I will sprinkle clean water upon you to cleanse you from all your impurities, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts. I will put my spirit within you and make you live by my statutes, careful to observe my decrees" (Ez 36:25-27).

In this passage of Ezekiel we see prophesied the future outpouring of the power of the Holy Spirit. It is very important to note that the principal effect of this anointing of the Spirit will be the transformation of the hearts of men, changing them from hearts of stone to hearts of flesh. **This baptism of the Spirit signifies purification, cleansing, sanctification, healing and freedom from sin.**

As a fruit of this purification and sanctification, man enters into a relationship of love and friendship with God, becoming faithful and obedient to the mandates, directions, and teachings of the Lord; in other words, man accepts God as Lord and Master. It is only in this manner that we can be His people, His sheepfold.

When the Lord wants to enter in the human heart, He must necessarily tear it open: "Return to me with your whole heart...Rend your hearts, not your garments" (Joel 2:12-13).

The Lord does not tell us here that external penance has no value, but rather, that what most interests Him is that we rend our hearts - because it is in the heart that man chooses the good or the bad. The heart is the motor of human life, for that which we desire, we act upon.

In order for the Holy Spirit to do a new work in our hearts, He must pierce them. He permitted His heart to be pierced because He assumed the sins of humanity into His Heart. With His own piercing, He revealed to us that to give us a new heart would require a great surgery of the heart because our hearts are very sick. Our hearts are disfigured...Like Christ made Himself appear: "There was in him no stately bearing to make us look at him, nor appearance that would attract us to him" (Is 53:2).

We must now look at a mistaken concept that many have related to this work of the heart: we sin because we are human. This, however, is not true. God created the human person and He created him perfect, pure. By sinning, man renounced his true humanity. Christ is the perfect image of the human person. This is why our Holy Father John Paul II insists that we live according to our human dignity - we are made to be like Christ. Disorders in character, moodiness, anger and the like are not naturally part of the human person. Instead, they are deformations of it due to sin.

In order to have new hearts, the sword of the Spirit must penetrate us, piercing us with His purifying fire.

We must avoid the spirit of the Pharisees. This means we should not focus and concentrate on the externals but on the heart.

What does it mean to have purity of heart? To be pure means to have an undivided heart, a heart with only one interest - God. The heart of stone that the Lord desires to remove from us is a fruit of the disordered desires of our flesh. To give us a heart of flesh is to give us a heart that is truly human, noble, meek, and kind. To experience the New Pentecost is to receive a new heart. It means that the stones have been removed and I have acquired a heart that is sensible to others and to the Lord, without selfishness or the residue of sin.

A Heart Like Christ's

When we speak of a new heart we are speaking of having a heart like Christ's. Jesus tells us, "Come to me...and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28). The open wound in His side is the open access to His Heart. We like to enter this wound to be consoled but not to be taught. But Jesus says, "Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart" (ibid, v. 29). Think about how many swords and purifications are necessary to be meek and humble. Humility and meekness are proven in the moments when I am humbled, when I am denied my rights. From the moment of the Incarnation, His life - and especially His passion - is a school of humility and meekness. These two virtues are the most difficult to acquire because of pride and rebellion. Humility is the mark of those who live in the Heart of Jesus.

St. Margaret Mary said, "Remember that perfection consists of conforming our lives and actions totally to the sacred virtues of the Heart of Jesus, especially His patience, His meekness, His humility and His charity. As a result, our interior and exterior life becomes a living image of Him."

The heart is the symbol of love. To speak of the heart is to enter into the interior life of a person. The heart is the center of the personal human life. This is why we can say that one's human conduct is born in the heart, in the deepest depth of the person. From the heart comes forth our thoughts and decisions. Good and the bad thoughts are both born in the heart. That is why it is the heart that either sleeps or keeps vigil.

As the book of Sirach says, wisdom is placed in the heart by God (cf. 39:6-8). It is the heart that converts and the heart that is perverted; it is the heart that is convinced, that decides, that is clean or stained, that is hardened or softened.

When we speak of having a "new heart," it is been said that one must renew the entire person (Ezekiel 36). Just as His Holiness John Paul II has been exhorting us to do since the beginning of his pontificate, in these times it is necessary to have a heart that is sensible, wise, generous, and soft in order to be able to "open wide" the door to the Redeemer. However, it must also be sober and prudent so as to not open itself to any thief.

If Christ reigns in the heart of man, He reigns in the whole person. Blessed Giuseppe Giaccardo said, "The divine Master ought to reign over all things and give Himself completely to all: to minds He gives His Gospel; to wills and habits He gives His holiness; to hearts He gives His Heart; to the body He gives His cross."

This change of heart is necessary to bring our baptismal promises to their ultimate fulfillment. The lifestyle of one who opens his heart to the reign of Jesus and Mary is centered on the figure of Jesus, on the interiority of Jesus, on seeing things from His perspective. He tries to live life as a response to this love by emphasizing the love of Christ and intensifying his interior life. Let us not forget that love for the interiority - the heart - of Jesus is what gives value to all that we do. Exterior acts will not have any value if they do not come from a proper interior attitude - which is nothing other than the attitude of love. To imitate the interior attitude of Christ leads us to act as He did. All things have their value in the means by which they proceed from love and the commitment of the heart.

St. Catherine of Siena offers us another example. The Lord appeared to her in splendor, having in His sacred hands a resplendent and red human heart. He opened her side and introduced into it the heart in his hands, saying, "Here, O most beloved daughter, from whom just yesterday I removed your heart from you. I now give to you My heart so that you may always live in it." Saying this, He closed the wound that He had opened in her side. As a sign of this miracle, the scar of the wound remained, as her companions later testified.

This was a mystical change and not one of real physical hearts. It was a symbol of the union that Christ desires to have with each heart, so that we can say, "It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20). The exchange of hearts gives the faithful soul the dispositions and sentiments that reflect the most intimate affections of the Heart of Christ. "Learn from me for I am meek and humble of heart."

The Revelations to St. Margaret Mary

The First Revelation: December 27, 1673

On the Feast of St. John the Evangelist Our Lord came to St. Margaret Mary while she was in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. She wrote, "Our Lord made me rest for several hours on His sacred breast and from this lovable Heart...where He disclosed to me the marvels of His Love and the inexplicable secrets of His Sacred Heart, which so far He had concealed from me...It was then, for the first time, that He opened His Divine Heart to me in a manner so real and sensible as to be beyond all doubt...Because of the effects this favor produced in me, I am fearful, as I always am, of deceiving myself about anything I say concerning what happens. It seems to me that this is what took place." (cf. Letter to Fr. Croiset, SJ on November 3, 1689, in The Letters of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque).



Jesus explained to her, "My Divine Heart is so inflamed with love for men, and for you in particular, that being unable any longer to contain within Itself the flames of Its burning Charity, It must spread them abroad by means of you and manifest Itself to them (mankind) in order to enrich them with the precious graces of sanctification and salvation necessary to save them from the abyss of perdition. I have chosen you as an abyss of unworthiness and ignorance for the accomplishment of this great design, in order that everything may be done by Me" (cf. *ibid*).

"Not being able to contain within Itself the flames of Its burning Charity..." After having died, He gave His blood and water. He possesses love so abundant that His own heart can not contain it.

St. Margaret Mary continued, "Jesus asked for my heart, which I begged Him to take. He did, and He placed it in His adorable One, which He showed to me as a tiny speck consumed in this burning furnace. Then, taking it out as a burning flame shaped like a heart, He replaced it in the place from which He had taken it" (*ibid*).

The heart of St. Margaret was converted, from a touch with the Heart of Jesus, into a burning flame, a flame that came from the Heart of Jesus. Jesus removed her heart and then returned it to her chest as an ardent flame in the form of a heart. This flame never burned out, and she never stopped feeling a greater burning in her chest.

Once our hearts are touched by the love of Christ, how can we continue to be the same?

Second Revelation (First Friday, June 1674)

In this revelation, the Divine Heart presented itself to her in a throne of flames, with a cross on the top, more radiant than the sun (**Light**), transparent as crystal (**purity**), and with the adorable wound surrounded by thorns, signifying the piercing that never ceases due to our sins. The Heart of Jesus never feels relief; there are always thorns which pierce Him.

With the second revelation, the heart of St. Margaret was able to better understand the desire of the Lord. In the same letter to Fr. Croiset, she explained that "the devotion of His Heart is like a last effort of His love to embrace a cold world and the coldness of the human heart." Coldness. How difficult it is for us to praise Him, to adore Him and to give Him thanks for our struggles. How difficult it is to seek Him for Himself and not for His benefits. Coldness is selfishness. This is why the Heart of Christ is the remedy - it speaks to us of love. The love of the Heart of Jesus melts the human heart. Why? Because the heart is the symbol of love, and the human person was created for love, to be loved and to love. And man, even if his heart is hardened, will be moved if he hears of love and is presented with Him who has given Himself on the cross out of love for humanity.

Third Revelation (June 16, 1675, Corpus Christi)

She wrote, "Jesus Christ, my sweet Master, presented Himself to me, all resplendent with glory, His Five Wounds shining like so many suns. Flames issued from every part of His Sacred Humanity, especially from His Adorable Breast, which resembled an open furnace and disclosed to me His most loving and most amiable Heart, which was the living source of these flames. It was then that He made known to me the ineffable marvels of His pure love and showed me to what excess He had loved men, from whom He received only ingratitude and contempt" (Letter to Fr. Croiset).

Just like the world later saw with the Miracle of the Sun (October, 1917) in Fatima, the pulsating and burning sun shows us how the heart of Jesus beats with love for us.

By His wounds the world has been saved from its darkness. In these times, devotion to the Two Hearts is the hope of humanity, for man can only be spoken to "heart to heart."

In this third revelation, Jesus revealed His Heart, showing her its flesh and veins. He said to her, "Behold the Heart which has so loved men that it has spared nothing, even to exhausting and consuming Itself, in order to testify Its love; and in return, I receive from most only ingratitude, by their irreverence and sacrilege and by the coldness and contempt they have for Me in this Sacrament of Love" (cf. Autobiography of St. Margaret Mary).

Conclusion

By the power of the Holy Spirit, God became incarnate; He became man. The sacred humanity of Jesus is the work of the Holy Spirit in collaboration with Mary. The Holy Spirit gave form to the humanity of Jesus, to His body, His soul, His intellect and His capacity to love... In one word, He molded the Heart of Jesus. It is from the Holy Spirit that He received the wisdom that impressed the doctors in the temple, the love that led Him to receive sinners, the mercy that led him to embrace humanity, the tenderness with which He blessed and embraced the children, and the compassion with which He healed the sick and accompanied the afflicted. The Holy Spirit desires to do the same work in us; He desires to give us new hearts, to give us His Heart. He wants to remove our hearts of stone and to give us hearts of flesh like His own.

It is the love of the Heart of Jesus, the flame of the Holy Spirit that consumes Him, that leads Him to literally consume Himself on the Cross - even to the pouring forth of the last drop of His blood and water. This is why His Heart, pierced after He died, poured forth Blood and Water as a sign that He himself had been consumed for the salvation of man and that this sacrificial offering generated life. Love consumes all things because it shares the nature of fire. It illuminates the darkness and warms what is cold.

To have a new heart is to have the Heart of Jesus, with the new law of the Spirit. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to form and to mold our hearts in the likeness of Christ's.

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