

THE REIGN OF THE EUCHARISTIC HEART: THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE

Mother Adela, SCTJM

Foundress

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The Eucharist is a Gift of Love of the Sacred Heart

The Eucharist is the outstanding gift of love of the Sacred Heart. We cannot understand the Eucharist unless we understand the love of the Heart of Jesus. In the Gospel of St. John chapter 13, we read: "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the extreme" (Jn 13:1). To the extreme means not sparing anything to manifest its love.

Jesus said to St. Margaret Mary: "Behold, this heart which has loved men so much that it has spared nothing even to exhausting and consuming itself in order to testify to them its love."

The Sacred Heart of Jesus has loved us to the extreme of giving himself totally and freely for our salvation. He has spared nothing up to the point of giving his body, his blood and his heart on the Cross, and he continues to give them to us in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is a gift of his self-oblation and of his sacrificial love for men.

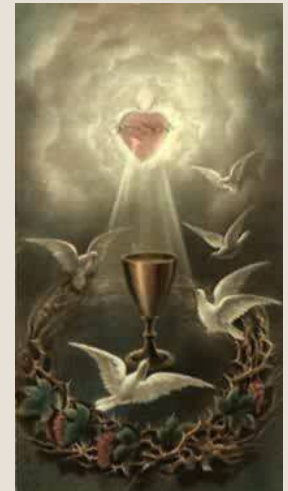
In the institution of the Eucharist in the Last Supper, Jesus said to the apostles and to us until the end of time: "This is my body, this is my blood of the new covenant given up for you" (Mt 26). The Eucharist is a gift of the love and generosity of his Sacred Heart. He not only gave up his life, but he gave it up freely because the sign of authentic love is that the sacrifice is offered freely. "I lay down my life, no one takes it from me, but I lay it down freely" (John 10,18). And not only freely but intensely, to the extreme. As Jesus said to St. Margaret: "my divine heart is so inflamed with love for men that being unable any longer to contain within itself the flames of its burning charity, it must spread them abroad and manifest itself to them in order to enrich them with the precious treasures of my Heart".

When we contemplate the Eucharist, we contemplate the Heart that has been pierced out of love, the Heart that constantly renews his immolation, his self-oblation, his sacrifice. We contemplate, therefore, this ever oblation love of the Heart of Christ. We contemplate the Heart of Christ that has loved us to the extreme of the Cross and of the Eucharist.

Is not the Eucharist the constant reminder of the generosity and self-oblation of the Heart of Christ? Self-oblation and generosity are the fruit of his love to the extreme. The self-oblation of His Heart reveals to us that love is the victory over evil. He conquers the hardness of the human heart, not by force, but by offering the testimony of the power of his love. Is not the Eucharist the living sign of this sacrificial love? He gives himself to us, to us who have rejected him and despised him.

He taught us to live the way of love, the only way that conquers evil:

- He gave us the testament of love and instituted the sacrament of love the night he was going to be betrayed, denied and imprisoned by us.
- He took upon himself our sins, bearing our infirmities; by his wounds we were healed. His sufferings brought us eternal happiness.
- He gives us his blood to quench our thirst even when we go after the puddles of sterile waters "My blood is drink of eternal life" (John 6:55).
- He gives us his body to fill our hunger even when we want to satisfy ourselves with temporal food. "I am the bread of life whoever come to me shall not hunger" (John 6:35).
- He stays with us until the end of times, to accompany us, even when we abandon him. "Our loving Redeemer, on the last night of his life, knowing that the time had arrived on which he should die for the love of men, had not the heart to leave us alone in this valley of tears; but in order that he might not be separated from us even by death, he would leave us himself on the Sacrament of the Altar understanding that He could give us nothing further to prove to us his love." St. Alphonsus de Liguori.
- Out of rejection we pierced His Heart, and from it, gushed forth blood and water, the great sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist.
- From his opened side, he gave life to the Church and left the Eucharist to be the living heart of the Church, to sustain her, nurture her and strengthen her in her mission of being a sign of love in the world. The Blessed Sacrament is the living heart of each of our churches. (Pope Paul VI)
- To actualize the power of his redemption to all generations he commanded the apostles and their



successors to perpetuate the Sacrifice of the Cross, making it possible for all men in every generation to be at the foot of the Cross receiving the power of salvation.

- He remains in all the tabernacles, like he said to St. Therese of Lisieux, as "the prisoner of love." A prisoner so we can receive his freedom. He is there; he has chosen to stay vulnerable even to men, simply to be able to offer his love to the human heart. To St. Faustina he said, from the Blessed Sacrament: "Love has brought me here and love keeps me here."

That is love!! The Eucharistic Heart is the model of love described by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 13: "Love is patient, love is kind, it is not jealous, not rude, it does not seek its own interest, it is not quick tempered, it does not rejoice in wrong but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, hopes all things, endures all things, love never fails."

St. Francis de Sales tells us about the Eucharist: "There is no more loving or tender aspect in which to gaze upon the Saviour than this act, in which He, so to say, annihilates Himself, and gives Himself to us as food, in order to fill our souls, and to unite Himself more closely to the heart and flesh of His faithful ones."

We can see how in the Cross and in the Eucharist, love has triumphed, because love triumphs when evil is conquered with goodness, when self-giving is the response to hardness of heart, as St. Paul teaches us in Romans 12:21. "Resist evil and conquer it with good." To the disciples, Jesus did not promise immunity from evil, but he promised victory over it: "I have told you all this so that in me you may find peace. In the world you will have trouble. But courage! The victory is mine, I have conquered the world" (John 16:33). How did he conquer the world? By loving to the extreme of the Cross and of the Eucharist. Loving to the extreme of forgetting himself.

Pope Leo XIII told us: "Call to mind the supreme act of love by which our Redeemer, pouring forth all the riches of His Heart, instituted the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist in order to remain with us until the end of time. And certainly the Eucharist, which He has given us from the great love of his Heart, it is His Heart, the love of his Heart."

The Eucharist Heart is the Living Sign of the Kingdom of Love

Jesus said that the Kingdom of God was in the heart. He came into the world to establish his kingdom, as the angel said to the Blessed Mother in the Annunciation: "His kingdom will have no end." What kind of kingdom is that which never ceases? It must be a kingdom that takes place in the soul of men, where nothing external can remove it. "What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or the sword? No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us" (Rom 8:34).

When we study the Gospels, it becomes clear that Jesus aimed at nothing less than a deep transformation of the human heart because he came to establish a new covenant. This new covenant was prophesied and explained in Ezekiel 36: "I shall give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. I shall remove from you the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh instead." While men were expecting an earthly kingdom with worldly powers, Jesus told us that his kingdom was not from this world. It is not of this world because it is not produced by the actions of the world, but instead it is established in the heart of men by the love of God that has been poured into our hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom 5). Therefore, the kingdom of God is a kingdom of love, love that is capable of transforming the innermost actions of the human heart, to the point of removing the hardness, the coldness, the selfishness, the self-preservation, the stones of our hearts and making them flesh. This means being sensible, noble, generous, docile, sacrificial and completely open to the love of God and of our neighbor. And this is why this Kingdom can only be extended in time by the living presence of the Heart of Christ in the Eucharist because it is His love that is present with the power to transform the human heart and the world. "I am the life of the world."

The Eucharistic Heart is the Furnace of Love in Which our Hearts are to be Consumed for the Life of the World

"I have come to bring fire upon the earth and how I wish it will be already kindled" (Lk 12, 49). What is the fire that Jesus has come to give to the world? The fire of his infinite love and mercy; the fire of the holy Spirit that transforms our hearts into the image of his Heart. That is why in the Old Testament he identified his loving presence with fire as he did to Moses in Exodus 3:2: "the bush was set ablaze but did not burn out." It will never be extinguished because his love is infinite and eternal.

To Saint Margaret Mary the Sacred Heart always appeared when she was adoring the Blessed Sacrament and revealed himself in flames: "the divine heart was revealed to me as in a throne of flames brighter than the sun and transparent like crystal, and resembled an open furnace. His open heart was the living source of these flames."

Because fire consumes all that it touches, so it must consume our sins, our coldness, indifference and selfishness, all those attitudes which keep us from responding to the call to love as Jesus has loved us. We must enter into the fire of the love of the Heart of Jesus and let ourselves be purified of all that is contrary to love. This will cause pain, because selfishness is so rooted in our hearts, but it is the only way that we can become

one with Christ. We must allow ourselves to be purified, to become like the incense used in front of the altar that does not give its sweet fragrance until it is burnt.

The fire of love of the Heart of Jesus will always be the remedy to our coldness and selfishness. St. Mathew tells us in his Gospel, chapter 24, that in the passing of time love in most men will grow cold. Jesus told St. Margaret that the revelation of his heart was the last effort of his love in these last times to warm a world that has grown cold. To St. Faustina, the Merciful Heart told her that he was offering to a cold world a last refuge, the mercy of his heart. I believe that in our time the hearts of men have grown cold, selfishness is ruling, and violence is becoming a common way of life. Men have forgotten the meaning of love. That is why the Lord is offering his sacred, merciful and Eucharistic Heart to our generation. He wants to change our hearts so a new civilization can begin, a civilization in which love triumphs over evil.

Our Lord gave the mystical grace of introducing into their hearts the fire of His Sacred Heart to many saints. Saints such as St. Margaret Mary, St. Faustina, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Catherine of Siena, and many others received an exchange of hearts. These saints are a symbol of what the Eucharistic Heart desires to do in each one of us when we approach him. He wants to give us his heart, his sentiments, his desires, his internal movements, his love.

To St. Margaret Mary, in the first apparition, the Sacred Heart asked her to give him her heart. She gave it to him and he placed it in the flames of his heart. She saw her heart as a little atom which was being consumed in this great furnace. When it was returned to her, she felt an intense love that, since that day, was never exhausted and wanted to give itself to others in abundance.

The Lord took the heart of St. Faustina and introduced it into the flames of his merciful heart. Then he said to her, "my daughter, I have taken you into the depth of my merciful heart to reflect in your own heart my mercy; only then can you proclaim it to the world. May you enkindle the world with it."

Once when St. Catherine of Siena was in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Jesus appeared to her with his heart inflamed. At that moment he took her heart and introduced it into his side. Then Jesus said to her, "Look my daughter, I have taken your heart to give you a new one, inflamed with my love, so that you may always experience my intense love for souls."

For St. Maximilian Kolbe, receiving the Heart of Christ in the Eucharist meant to have our hearts consumed by his love and be purified of all that opposes love. "Love by essence must transform us. It must consume us and through us enkindle the fire in the world. It must destroy and make disappear the evil that is in it. This is the fire of which the Lord has said I have come to bring fire upon the earth" (St. Maximilian).

In the Eucharist we contemplate the act of self-oblation of the Heart of Christ; he is consumed out of love for us and that is the reason of his offering. The Eucharist must form in us a heart that is capable of offering oneself as a living sacrifice, offered for the life of the world, just as He is offered. The living Heart of Jesus in the Eucharist wants to form an army of Eucharistic hearts, living sacrifices, living hosts where the love of the Heart of Jesus reigns.

Romans 12: "Think of God's mercy, my brothers, and worship him, I beg you, by offering yourselves as living sacrifices holy and acceptable to the Lord."

The Lord explained to Venerable Conchita Armida, a great Mexican mystic of the 1920s and foundress of several religious communities, " I have need of an army of holy souls transformed into myself, who, exhale virtues and attract souls with the good aroma of the Eucharistic Christ. Becoming living hosts which will offer themselves in complete union with the oblation of Christ to the Father for the good of the world and the Church." Conchita, prophesied a second Pentecost so much needed in the world: "This Pentecost will be an interior one bringing a powerful transformation of the heart of men into the heart of the Eucharistic Christ." According to Mother Auxilia de la Cruz, also a Mexican foundress of the Oblates of the BS, and friend of Conchita, the Holy Spirit was to bring in our times the fire of divine love, the fire that transforms us into living hosts, which means persons that are willing to be like Christ in the Eucharist, consecrated to God, broken and given. Willing to embrace sufferings and sacrifices for love of others.

I think these revelations explain to us the reason why in the last 150 years we have seen an increase of victim souls, with a clear Eucharistic calling of offering themselves for the good of the Church and the world, for sinners, for priests and consecrated souls, for families, for peace. These victim souls have been called to be such living sacrifices and living hosts that many of them lived only on the Eucharist, manifesting with this miracle the perfect communion of their lives with the Eucharistic sacrifice of Christ. We can bring to mind the example of the stigmatist Theresa Newman, who offered herself primarily for priests, who lived 40 years with no other food than the Eucharist. Venerable Alexandrina Da Costa, a young woman from Portugal who was called to suffer as a victim soul for the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart, lived on the Eucharist for the last 13 years of her life. Venerable Ann Catherine Emmerick, great mystic and victim soul who offered herself for the Church, lived the last 12 years of her life only on the Eucharist.

Saint Faustina, a great apostle of the Mercy of the Heart of God, considered a special aspect of her life to be transformed into a living host. "Transform me in yourself, oh Jesus, that I may be a living sacrifice. I desire to

atone at each moment for poor sinners," she prayed (908). For her, this experience of being a living host could only come from her communion with the Holy Eucharist. This communion with the Eucharistic heart is what causes our hearts to become inflamed and transformed with love. It is in this communion that our hearts become one with his and produce in us the capacity to love to the extreme. "It is not possible to have a union of love more profound and more total: he in me and I in him. The one in the other, what more could we want?" (St. Gemma Galgani).

The Blessed Eucharist is the Sacrament of Love: "It signifies love, It produces love" (St Thomas Aquinas).

Bishop Fulton Sheen, was once asked who inspired him the most in his life? Bishop Sheen responded that it was a little Chinese girl of eleven years of age. He explained when the Communists took over China, they imprisoned a priest in his own rectory near the Church. After they locked him up in his own house, the priest saw the Communists entering into the Church breaking the tabernacle. They took the ciborium and threw it on the floor with all of the consecrated Hosts falling out. The priest knew there were thirty-two hosts. When the Communists left, they didn't notice a small girl praying in the back of the Church who saw everything that had happened. That night the little girl sneaked back in even though there was a guard. She went inside the Church and made a holy hour of prayer and reparation, an act of love to make up for the act of hatred. After her holy hour she went toward the hosts on the floor, knelt down, bent over and with her tongue, consumed one host. Since it was not permissible to touch the Host with their hands,

the little girl continued to come back each night to make her holy hour and consume the consecrated hosts that were on the floor with her tongue. On the thirty-second night, after she had consumed the last and thirty-second host, she accidentally made a noise and woke up the guard who was sleeping. He ran after her, caught her, and beat her to death with his rifle. This act of heroic martyrdom was witnessed by the priest as he watched this great testimony of love for the sacrament of love. The Eucharistic heart, sign of his sacrificial love for men, inspires love in return. As the Holy Father tells us in his Apostolic Letter *Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist*, "Together with this infinite and free gift [of God's sacrificial love],...of which the Eucharist is the indelible sign, there also springs up within us a lively response of love. We not only contemplate love; we ourselves begin to love. Thanks to the Eucharist, the love that springs up within us from the Eucharist develops in us, becomes deeper and grows stronger" (JP II, 1980).

The Eucharistic Heart Forms Great Witnesses of Love

"Try, then to imitate God, as children that he loves, and follow Christ by loving as he loved you, giving himself up in our place as a fragrant offering and a sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5:1).

The Holy Father, JP II, in his apostolic letter at the conclusion of the Jubilee year, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, told us that the greatest evangelization of the Church at the beginning of this century will be realized if we become witnesses to love. He asserts that the Church of the third millennium needs to become a great sign of love to the world. "Love is truly the 'heart' of the Church, as was well understood by Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, whom I proclaimed a Doctor of the Church precisely because she is an expert in the *scientia amoris*: 'I understood that the Church had a Heart and that this Heart was aflame with Love. I understood that Love alone stirred the members of the Church to act... I understood that Love embraces all vocations, that Love was everything.'" I want to speak today of a great witness to love in our troubled times, someone that never forgot to love even when his surroundings were of hatred.

Saint Maximilian Kolbe

Very well known as the Saint of the Immaculate and totally consecrated to Our Lady, St. Maximilian Kolbe had in the center of his spirituality what it is so central to the love of the Immaculate herself - the love of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus. It is this love that should be central to the spirituality of every disciple of Christ. Consecration to the Immaculate has no other goal but to bring us to share the love of Jesus who died on the Cross for love and out of love, a mystery that it is prolonged for us in the Eucharist.

This love is essentially an identification with the intentions of the Heart of Christ - loving, giving, sacrificing himself "for the life of the world." "Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13). It is the testimony of those who lived with St. Maximilian that it was a moving experience to observe him while celebrating the Mass; He lived the Mass! He was absorbed in the sacred character of the Mass, uniting himself intimately with Christ in the mystery of our redemption! He united all his personal sufferings to Christ. For him the celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass was the fulfillment of his vocation and of his life. When he founded the City of the Immaculate, from which a great Marian and evangelistic apostolate would flourish, he made the Mass and the Adoration of the Eucharistic Heart the center and most important activity of the City. "The Heart of Niepokalanow is the Eucharist," he would often say. Besides all the community times of Eucharistic prayers, He would go to be with the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament (probably 10 to 15 times at day) "to know more each day the love and mercy of the Eucharistic Heart."

This Eucharistic formation in love and self-oblation would be the force behind this Marian priest in the Concentration Camp of Auschwitz. He would follow the same advice he cried out to the brothers when all of them were taken to the Camp: "Do not forget love." That is the same cry of the Eucharistic Heart to all of us: Do not forget love! Do not forget me who loves you and has given up my life for you!

Because he was a priest, he was constantly beaten and left to die. Prisoners at Auschwitz were slowly and systematically starved, and when food was brought, everyone struggled to get his place and be sure of a portion. Father Maximilian, however, stood aside in spite of the ravages of starvation, and frequently there would be none left for him. At other times he shared his small portion of soup or bread with others. A prisoner recalled that he and several others often crawled across the floor at night to be near the bed of Father Kolbe, to make their confessions and ask for consolation. Father Kolbe pleaded with his fellow prisoners to forgive their persecutors and to overcome evil with good, hatred with love. A Protestant Doctor who treated the patients in Block Twelve testified that Father Kolbe waited until all the others had been treated before asking for help. He constantly sacrificed himself for the others.

"Pray that my love be without limits," he wrote in a letter to his mother. Yes, that is precisely the love that he contemplated on the Cross and in the Eucharist. This is the prayer that the Lord always answers because it is the desire of his Heart that we become like him, that we have the same sentiments of His Heart. He offered his first Mass for the conversion of hardened hearts. The second one for the grace of martyrdom, and the third for the grace to love to the point of becoming a victim. (All these prayers were answered, and all were inspired by the lives of St. Theresa of Lisieux and St. Gemma Galgani.)

One day, and many of you may know the story, when 10 men had been chosen to die in the starvation bunkers as a punishment for the escape of some prisoners, one of them began to cry when his name was called out: "please, I have a wife and children." St. Maximilian, accustomed to contemplate and live the sacrificial love of the Eucharistic Heart, took a step forward and said: "I want to take his place." The Nazi commander asked, "Who are you?" and he replied, "I am a catholic priest." A priest, another Christ, united in his suffering for the good of others. Yes, a priest to give my life, my body, my blood, as Jesus gave it for us on the Cross and gives it to us in the Eucharist.

He was the last one to die in the bunker helping the other men to find the power the love of Jesus and Mary. This act of love manifested in a city of hatred, as was Auschwitz, transformed it according to testimonies of those who survived the Camp. They saw the reality of love: it is never overcome by hatred; light is not overcome by darkness when the reign of the Eucharistic heart is in the heart of men. Maximilian, when he was a child, had a vision of the Blessed Mother. She was offering to him two crowns: one white and one red. He chose both. Purity and self-sacrifice. He lived them both until the end. He lived in two cities: one of the Immaculate, where love and purity reign and one of horror and hatred, Auschwitz. In both cities, he lived the reign of the Sacred Heart because it was in his heart. In both cities he wore the two crowns of the triumph of the Eucharistic Heart, the triumph of love - of love over hate, good over evil, light over darkness. That is the real triumph, when our hearts, moved by the power of the Eucharistic heart, enter into its fire of purification and live by supernatural love.

He lived the Mass said all who saw him celebrating it. In the last period of his life, in the concentration camp when he no longer celebrated Holy Mass in the sacramental sense, he celebrated to the very end with his life and with his death, with his total identification with the Eucharist, offering himself as a living sacrifice.

S. Maximilian was so full of love, which he learned and received by contemplating the oblation and sacrificial love of the Eucharistic Heart, that he became the first "martyr of love." With this title, which had never been used before, he was canonized by Pope John Paul II. The Holy Father also called him: "a prophet of the new civilization of love." It is impossible said the Pope, not to read in his life and sacrifice a powerful testimony of the Church in the modern world, and at the same time, a great sign for our times. St. Maximilian, a great Marian saint, consecrated totally to the Immaculate, was led by the Blessed Mother to the consuming fire of love of the Eucharistic Heart to the point of becoming a living sacrifice, a living host, a witness to love.

Consecration to the Immaculate Heart Fosters the Reign of Love of the Eucharistic Heart in Our Hearts

St. Maximilian: "This truth must be inscribed in the hearts of all mankind, those who are living now and in those who will live until the end of all times. The Immaculate must be introduced to the hearts of men, and so enable Her to raise the throne of her Son in them, and draw all mankind to the knowledge of Him and inflame them with love for the Most Sacred and Eucharistic Heart of Jesus."

Consecration to the Immaculate Heart is the sure way to communion with the Eucharistic Heart, since her heart is the one who knows the secret for the most intimate union with the Heart of Jesus. She will always lead us to a greater love and communion with Her Son. She directs us to adore him, contemplate him, and she has been entrusted with the mission to reproduce in us the features of the Heart of Jesus. She will always lead us to the Son. In Fatima, on October 13th 1917, humanity was granted a great gift: the miracle of the sun. That day, announced by our Lady, the Lord manifested a miracle for everyone to see. Heavy rain covered the area, and the pilgrims had to walk through puddles of mud and in a cloudy and foggy atmosphere. It had rained the whole night and in that cold and dark day the Lord manifested his presence and his power. Suddenly, after the Blessed Mother pointed upward, the sun became visible to all and took the form of a host. It began to spin and pulsate towards the crowd; it seem like if it was coming down with its intense fire to burn the earth. It approached the earth, and those assembled there were frightened and did not understand what was happening. They feared the fire that was approaching, but as it came towards them, everything became dry, and the day was transformed from darkness into light, from coldness into warmth. This miracle of the sun was

a sign of what the Eucharistic Heart wants to do in our present generation.

“We must conquer the world and win each individual soul, now, and in the future, to the end of time for the Immaculate, and by her for the Sacred Heart of Jesus.” Through the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Mother, we are being led to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, the burning furnace of love, for our hearts to be transformed in living hosts, living witness to love and of self-oblation. Let us bring to our civilization the power that conquers evil: Do not forget love!

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