



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As I mentioned last weekend, this past Friday was the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and Saturday was the Memorial of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. When we look at these feasts, we notice several important points.

The first point is that the hearts represent the love that Jesus and Mary have for us. Jesus, in His human Heart, loves us with a divine love. Mary loves us with a human motherly love, but without any stain of sin or selfishness, and she loves us with the divine love of her Spouse, the Holy Spirit. Their love *is* mercy. We need not fear them, but rather allow them to love us in their mercy. That being said, it doesn't mean that anything goes: we can't expect *mercy* if there's nothing for which we need mercy. If we want mercy, we need to recognize our *need* for mercy, and repent. We need to repent of our sins, for they wound the Hearts of Our Lord and Our Lady. Love also calls us to respond: we are called by love to love them in return.

Another element of this devotion is *trust*. We are called to have a deep trust in Jesus and Mary and in their unending love. These Hearts love us, and our lack of trust in their love wounds them. We show lack of trust when we choose to disobey them. What do I mean? If Jesus loves us completely, wants only our good, and, because He is God, He knows *the best way* for us to receive that good, when we sin, when we break His commandments, when we disobey Him, we are saying that we don't really trust His love. This wounds His Heart deeply.

One of the key elements of the devotion to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, then, is *reparation* – repairing the damage done to them. We recognize that these Hearts love so much, yet are so little loved – by the world and *even by us!* We then choose to make reparation by choosing to love them *in this moment*. This may look like sacrifices of love for them or this may look like prayer. For instance, in the First Saturday Devotion, we are asked to meditate on the mysteries of the Rosary for fifteen minutes with the intention of reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

We make reparation for the sacrileges and indifferences directed toward Jesus and Mary. Sacrileges are ways that we violate that which is sacred. This is done by those who mock Jesus or Mary, or, for instance, who profane sacred objects. One of the gravest sacrileges is against the Blessed Sacrament. We see this in its clearest and worst form in the desecration through Black (Satanic) Masses, but also when people receive Communion in a state of mortal sin (mortal sin, remember, is *serious sin* that we *know* is serious, and we *freely choose*). Jesus is also deeply wounded by our *indifference*. Jesus, in speaking to the Church in Laodicea in the book of Revelation says:

**I know your works; I know that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. (Revelation 3:15-16)**

We might think that it would be better to be lukewarm than to hate Jesus, yet, He says differently. Those who hate Jesus have passion, and that passion can be moved toward His Heart. When we're indifferent, our inertia may keep us from ever embracing the Lord in His Love. Again, we make reparation for these by loving Jesus and Mary here and now.

The images of the Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart both have fire emanating from them – showing their passionate love for us – and they both have wounds (the Sacred Heart has the heart pierced from the lance, and the crown of thorns, and the Immaculate Heart has the sword of sorrow piercing it). These are signs both of how we are to trust their love, and to make reparation for how they have been hurt by our sin and indifference.

Bishop Libasci has asked that we Enthroned and Consecrate each parish to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary (at the Saturday Vigil Mass this weekend). I invite you to do more – to enthrone and consecrate *your own lives and homes* to them, for they will be our guiding light through these evil and tumultuous times.