

Feast of the Sacred HEART OF JESUS

A look at scripture and tradition can take us back to the feast of the sacred heart of Jesus and give our devotion new life

By Marilyn Rodriguez



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- Jul 1:** Most Sacred Heart of Jesus
- Jul 2:** The Immaculate Heart of Mary
- Jul 3:** **Ordinary Time 14**
Compassion
- Jul 4:** St Elizabeth of Portugal
- Jul 10:** **Ordinary Time 15**
Good Soil
- Jul 16:** Our Lady of Mount Carmel
- Jul 17:** **Ordinary Time 16**
The Kingdom of Heaven
- Jul 22:** St Mary Magdalene
- Jul 24:** **Ordinary Time 17**
Treasure
- Jul 25:** St James the Apostle
- Jul 26:** Sts Joachim & Anne
- Jul 31:** **Ordinary Time 18**
The Big Picnic



Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is not nearly as popular today as a couple of generations ago, when almost every Catholic at least knew about the nine first Fridays and the image adorned nearly every Catholic household, church and organisation.

Seen as a relic of the past, an outdated way of being Catholic, to some the first Fridays carry a whiff of superstition and the family enthronement ceremony is virtually unheard of. The image itself can be off-putting to modern tastes, either too gruesome, or overly sentimentalised.

But a look at scripture and tradition can take us back to the heart of the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and give our devotion new life.

BASIS IN SCRIPTURE

There are many references to the Sacred Heart in scripture. Jesus himself said, "Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart" (Matthew 11:29). God promised that he would remove "from your body your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26). Finally, Jesus' heart was opened on the cross by a spear, causing blood and water to pour from his side, an event seen as the birth of the Church (John 19:34).

Where we find Jesus, we also find Mary. Her own heart was pierced as though by a sword (Luke 2:35). Pope John Paul II formalised the long-held connection between the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, with a new devotion to the Alliance of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.





AS THE STORY GOES...

Did you know that this devotion can be traced back to the Last Supper, when Jesus allowed John to rest his head upon his chest?

In 14th century St Gertrude had a similar grace. Jesus appeared to her on the feast day of St John the Evangelist and allowed her to rest her head near the wound in his side. She later asked St John why he never mentioned in his Gospel anything about the wonder and delight of hearing God's human heartbeat.

St John replied that it was because it would be reserved until a time when men's love for God had grown cold and in need of rekindling.

In the 1600s through the visions of another mystic, St Margaret Mary Alacoque, devotion to the Sacred Heart became formalised and the feast day extended to the whole Church by Pope Pius IX in 1856. As the century drew to a close Pope Leo XII had the whole of humanity solemnly consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Jesus had said to St Mary Margaret, a visitation nun, "Behold the Heart that has so loved men . . . instead of gratitude I receive from the greater part (of humankind) only ingratitude ". He asked that a feast of reparation be held on the Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi.



Other practices were part of the package too: Mass attendance at nine consecutive first Fridays of each month, and a Holy Hour on Thursdays in honour of Jesus' agony in the garden at Gethsemane.

There was also St Margaret Mary's individual act of consecration and the consecration of families to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, also known as the enthronement of the Sacred Heart.

These formal devotions flourished through the first half of last century.

RENEWAL AND MODERN FORMS OF DEVOTION

Pope Benedict XVI has called for a renewal of devotion to the Sacred Heart, reflecting that "from the infinite horizon of his love God desired to enter into the limits of history and the human condition, he took on a body and a heart; thus we can contemplate and meet the infinite in the finite, the mystery of the invisible and ineffable human heart of Jesus, the Nazarene".

Closely related is the Divine Mercy devotion – different expressions at different times of the same reality of God's mercy and love.

Contemporary religious artist Miriam A. Kilmer, who has drawn her own version of the famous image says that her devotion to the Sacred Heart does not take the traditional forms but consists of "simple spontaneous acts of trust and love, and through my art".

"In times of doubt and suffering, and as I recall the great pain and trouble in the world around me, I remember the sufferings of the Heart of Jesus, and place my trust in his love," she wrote.



TAKE IT TO HEART

Consider making your own Church's devotion to the heart of Jesus. Search for a modern imagining of Jesus' heart, or anything representative of God's love for you. Place it in your retreat space (favourite window, corner, room), light candles, speak from your heart to him. Honour him in our own way or borrow the act of consecration by St Margaret Mary.

Sources

The Month of the Sacred Heart,
<http://catholicexchange.com>

Homily of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Friday, 11 June 2010, www.vatican.va

Alliance of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,
<http://en.wikipedia.org>

Rising Dove Art Gallery, <http://risingdove.com>



The promises made to

St Margaret Mary



The Lord Jesus revealed to St Margaret Mary the following promises to those souls who would honour the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus:

- 1. I will give them all the graces necessary in their state of life**
- 2. I will establish peace in their homes**
- 3. I will comfort them in all their afflictions**
- 4. I will be their secure refuge during life and above all in death.**
- 5. I will bestow a large blessing upon all their undertakings**
- 6. Sinners shall find in My Heart the source and the infinite ocean of mercy**
- 7. Tepid souls shall grow fervent**
- 8. Fervent souls shall quickly mount to high perfection**
- 9. I will bless every place where a picture of My Heart shall be set up and honoured**
- 10. I will give to priests the gift of touching the most hardened hearts**
- 11. Those who shall promote this devotion shall have their names written in My Heart, never to be blotted out**
- 12. I promise you in the excessive mercy of My Heart that My all-powerful love will grant to all those who communicate on the first Friday in nine consecutive months, the grace of final perseverance; they shall not die in My disgrace nor without receiving their Sacraments; My Divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment**





***Act of Consecration to
the Sacred Heart of Jesus
by St Margaret Mary***

I give myself and consecrate to the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ, my person and my life, my actions, pains and sufferings, so that I may be unwilling to make use of any part of my being other than to honour, love and glorify the Sacred Heart. This is my unchanging purpose, namely, to be all His, and to do all things for the love of Him, at the same time renouncing with all my heart whatever is displeasing to Him. I therefore take You, O Sacred heart, to be the only object of my love, the guardian of my life, my assurance of salvation, the remedy of my weakness and inconstancy, the atonement for all the faults of my life and my sure refuge at the hour of death.

Be then, O Heart of goodness, my justification before God the Father, and turn away from me the strokes of his righteous anger. O Heart of love, I put all my confidence in You, for I fear everything from my own wickedness and frailty, but I hope for all things from Your goodness and bounty.

Remove from me all that can displease You or resist Your holy will; let your pure love imprint Your image so deeply upon my heart, that I shall never be able to forget You or to be separated from You.

May I obtain from all Your loving kindness the grace of having my name written in Your Heart, for in You I desire to place all my happiness and glory, living and dying in bondage to You.

forever and ever. Amen.



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Litany of the *Sacred Heart* of Jesus

- V. Lord, have mercy on us.
- R. Christ, have mercy on us.
- V. Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, hear us.
- R. Christ, graciously hear us.
- V. God the Father of Heaven, have mercy on us.

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
have mercy on us.
God the Holy Spirit, have mercy on us.
Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us...

For full version click here



Sacred Heart Muffins

Ingredients

- 2 1/2 cups self-raising flour**
- 1/2 cup caster sugar**
- 1 1/4 cups milk**
- 1 egg, lightly beaten**
- 90g butter, melted**
- 1 tablespoon instant espresso coffee powder**
- Punnet of Strawberries**

Method

- Preheat oven to 180°C. Lightly grease a 6-hole, 3/4-cup capacity non-stick muffin pan.
- Sift flour into a large bowl. Add caster sugar and stir to combine. Make a well in the centre. Combine milk, egg, butter and coffee in a jug. Pour milk mixture into the well. Using a large metal spoon, stir until just combined (don't over-mix).
- Spoon mixture into muffin holes until three-quarters full. Bake for 25 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Allow to cool in pan for 1 minute. Turn out onto a wire rack to cool. Place strawberry on top as representation of the sacred heart.



Sacred Heart Puzzle

Materials:

- Template
- Hard cardboard, glue
- Scissors



Instructions

1. Place template on front and back of hard cardboard, make sure both pieces align, glue down and wait till dry.
2. Cut out puzzle, week by week act out all the good deeds, by week nine your sacred heart should be complete!

<<Download template for puzzle here>>

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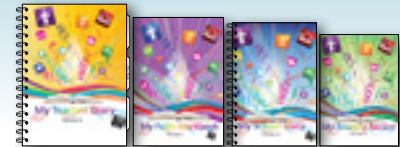
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