

Consecration of the Pilgrimage and the Pilgrims to the Sacred Heart of Jesus



Dear Pilgrims,

This year, we celebrate the 350th anniversary of the apparitions of the Sacred Heart to Saint Margaret Mary. On this occasion, the pilgrimage has decided to publicly consecrate itself and all the pilgrims to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, at the conclusion of the Pentecost Mass this afternoon. Why consecrate ourselves, and why to the Sacred Heart? Here are some insights to help us prepare for this important event.

The Message of the Sacred Heart

Between 1673 and 1675, Jesus appeared several times to a simple Visitation nun in Paray-le-Monial, Margaret Mary. These apparitions can be summarized in three messages:

1st Message: The Heart of Jesus is passionate with love for humanity

This is what Jesus said to Saint Margaret Mary:

"My divine Heart is so passionate with love for humanity, and for you in particular, that, unable to contain within itself the flames of its ardent charity, it must spread them through your means, and manifest itself to them to enrich them with its precious treasures that I reveal to you."

The most well-known expression of this love comes during the third great apparition when Jesus says: *"Behold this Heart, which has so loved men that it spared nothing, to the point of exhausting and consuming itself, to show them its love."*

Dear pilgrim, Jesus reveals that His love is neither cold nor distant, but passionate. It is a burning love, not for humanity in general, but for each of us individually. It is the love revealed in the Gospel: *"Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end."*

Think about it, dear pilgrim: how deeply we are loved by God! Let us allow ourselves today to be touched by this extraordinary love and ask Margaret Mary for the grace she received—the grace to never again doubt God's goodness for us, and to be convinced of the *"wonders of the love of the Heart of Jesus"* toward us. This is a great grace. To consecrate ourselves to the Sacred Heart is, above all, to express our trust in God's tenderness for each of us, for *"you in particular."*

2nd Message: Jesus loves us, but He is not loved

The second message of the Sacred Heart is a mystery of sorrow. Jesus expresses to Saint Margaret Mary a lament:

"I love humanity, but in return, I receive from most only ingratitude, through their irreverences and sacrileges, and through the coldness and contempt they have for me in this Sacrament of Love. But what hurts me the most is that it is hearts consecrated to me who act this way."

These coldnesses, these acts of contempt, are our sins and the sins of the world, especially those committed against the Eucharist. The Heart of Jesus is a suffering heart—the heart crushed in agony, pierced by the faults of humanity, by our faults.

Thus, to consecrate ourselves to the Sacred Heart means to radically change our lives. It means to renounce sin, which offends God and breaks our relationship of trust with Him.

3rd Message: Give love for love

In the face of humanity's ingratitude, Jesus turns to Margaret Mary—and through her, to each of us—and asks us to respond to His love: *"At least you, love me!"*

To consecrate ourselves to the Sacred Heart is to desire to place our entire lives and works under the sign of God's love. It means making Christ the first priority, and it means repairing with our love for the lack of love we have shown in the past and the lack of love of humanity and earthly societies.

In practical terms, Jesus made several requests to Margaret Mary:

- **To carry the image of the Sacred Heart on her person** and display an image of the Sacred Heart in her home, to outwardly manifest the gift of oneself to Jesus. We can all do this by wearing what is called a Sacred Heart badge and solemnly enthroning an image or statue of the Sacred Heart in our homes, in the presence of a priest, using the appropriate ritual.
- **To receive Communion frequently**, especially on the First Fridays of the month, the day of Christ's death, in reparation for the sins of humanity. This means receiving Communion with the intention of consoling the Heart of Jesus for all the offenses committed against Him in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.
- **To pray the "Holy Hour"** every Thursday from 11 p.m. to midnight. This involves keeping Jesus company as He suffers His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- **To establish a great feast of the Sacred Heart for the whole Church.** Pope Pius IX fulfilled this request in 1856 by extending the Feast of the Sacred Heart to the Universal Church. It is celebrated on the first Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi—in three weeks' time.

Public Consecrations to the Sacred Heart

But devotion to the Sacred Heart is not only private; it is also public. Jesus Himself expressed this when He said to Saint Margaret Mary on June 17, 1689: "Make it known to the eldest son of My Sacred Heart (referring to Louis XIV) .../... that he will obtain his birth of grace and eternal glory through the consecration he makes of himself to My adorable Heart. He wishes to reign in his palace, to be painted on his banners, and engraved on his arms to render them victorious over all his enemies by casting down at his feet those proud and haughty heads, making him triumphant over all the enemies of Holy Church."

For the enemy of Louis XIV was also Louis XIV himself, the self-proclaimed Sun King, embodying the beginnings of a certain idolatry of the state. To consecrate himself to Jesus, gentle and humble of heart, meant for the king to hand over the guidance of the kingdom to the one true King, Jesus, in an act of humility.

Louis XIV did not respond to the requests of the Sacred Heart. A hundred years later, the French Revolution broke out. In the meantime, Marie Leszczyńska, wife of Louis XV, had a chapel dedicated

to the Sacred Heart built at Versailles, but Louis XV did not proceed with the consecration. Louis XVI, while imprisoned, decided to consecrate himself between August 13 and 20, 1792.

In 1720, the Plague Strikes Marseille

The Sacred Heart appeared to Venerable Anne-Madeleine Rémuzat, who urged her bishop to consecrate the city to the Sacred Heart. The plague immediately ceased. Two years later, as the plague threatened to return, the city's magistrates made a vow to the Sacred Heart, promising that, in honor of its feast, they would attend Mass, receive Communion, offer a candle in reparation for sins, and participate in a public procession of thanksgiving. The plague then disappeared permanently. The Sacred Heart remains faithful to those who place their trust in Him.

In 1899, Pope Leo XIII publicly consecrated the human race to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. On this occasion, he explained his action as follows:

"This general and solemn testimony of respect and piety is rightly due to Jesus Christ. His dominion extends not only to nations that profess the Catholic faith or to men who, having regularly received holy baptism, are legally united to the Church, even if separated from her by erroneous opinions or disagreements that tear them from her maternal care. The reign of Christ also encompasses all men deprived of Christian faith, such that the entirety of humankind is truly subject to the power of Jesus."

You see, then: consecration to the Sacred Heart is a very concrete way of manifesting the Kingship of Christ not only over our hearts but also over human societies. It reminds us that the Kingdom of Christ is a Kingdom of mercy.

Dear Pilgrim, our consecration to the Sacred Heart is therefore not merely a personal and private act. We want it to have a public and social dimension, continuing the legacy of *Quas Primas* on Christ the King. We are not only consecrating the pilgrims; we are consecrating the pilgrimage itself, the work, the association. We strongly encourage you to do the same when you return home—with your families, your professional or associative activities, your schools, your parishes, and even your cities or dioceses, as has been done in recent times. By doing so, we affirm that Jesus Christ reigns publicly, that societies as well as individuals belong to Him.

This applies especially—and primarily—to nations. Some examples:

- On October 8, 1873, Ecuador became the first country in the world to be consecrated to the Sacred Heart by its leader, Gabriel García Moreno.
- In Spain, King Alfonso XIII consecrated his country to Jesus in the Eucharist in 1911.
- In 1873, France was consecrated to the Sacred Heart—not by its leader, but by a group of about fifty parliamentarians during a pilgrimage to Paray-le-Monial, at the time when the National Assembly voted for the "National Vow," deciding to build in Paris a basilica dedicated to the Sacred Heart as a public act of reparation for the sins committed by the nation.
- More recently, on May 25, 2020, during the coronavirus pandemic, more than twenty countries consecrated themselves to the Sacred Heart, including Portugal, Hungary, and Poland, followed by Ireland, England, and Italy.

By consecrating the pilgrimage and the pilgrims, we seek to initiate this movement of conversion, to resolutely align ourselves under the banner of Christ, and to affirm His absolute kingship over us and our works. Above all, we understand that it is by letting our hearts become gentle, humble, compassionate, and loving like that of Christ that we can contribute to building this civilization of charity that is Christendom.