

## FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART

### *Prayer for Our Nation*

*Oh Jesus, Let your warm love Enliven our hearts as the spring rain renews the earth and brings forth new life to our wounded nation.*

*Let your nourishing love Birth within us a desire for justice and peace to serve you and the nations of the world.*

*We humbly thank you for giving us your Blessing of love so that we may find hope and courage as a people.*

*We are your servants willing to Persevere in finding the solutions for a peaceful earth.*

*In you, Sacred Heart of Jesus, we put our trust.*

Apostleship of Prayer

Today we celebrate the wonders of God's love for us – a love revealed to us by Jesus Himself, poured forth from His divine and human heart! We gather as friends united in the communal celebration of Eucharist. Throughout the prayers of this liturgy the designs of the Sacred Heart of Jesus from age to age offer us the same message of comfort, life, peace, rest, nourishment, salvation, sacrifice, and unspeakable love! What will be our message for the Sacred Heart? What might Jesus be asking of us personally and communally in this age, in the year 2017?

Each one who journeys with Jesus, must listen to the heartbeat of Jesus, and come to know what personal response to make. But today there seems to be a growing awareness of what a community of faithful people are doing together to make fertile ground for God's Word to become known. Several possible ways, as an example, came to my consciousness because of the Spirit at work today in many extraordinary ways, be it through cultural movements, the Churches, peace groups, nations seeking common ground. As followers of Jesus, we are ever on mission, *"go forth as my emissaries, humbly, empowered, on fire with love. I have set my heart upon you; I chose you. Go forth and tell the Good News of mercy, justice peace and love today, for the healing of your wounded and suffering world."* These words echo the desires of the Heart of Jesus.

Listening to the heartbeat of God, many seeking answers for the complexities of daily living have been drawn to a more contemplative way of discovering Jesus' message. Those who enter this realm are drawn tenderly into the deeper mysteries of Jesus' divine and human life. They behold the loveliness of God and are signs of God's presence in the world.

**Is a more contemplative life, of prayer and adoration, Jesus' way for us today?**

Through the recent encyclical of Pope Francis, *Laudato Si, On the Care of the Earth*, we heard a clear call for the restoration of the beauty and life-giving elements of the created world. Most compelling has been the need to protect the waters of the world. The available supply of safe drinking water is threatened by pollution and depletion. Yet, access to water is a basic human right for all God's people. Life-giving waters flow from the Heart of Christ – a well-spring of the Church's sacraments where all might draw streams of living water joyfully. The symbol of the Sacred Heart reminds us of this precious and refreshing gift of water.

**Are we called to tend the life-giving waters of our planet? Is this Jesus' way for us today?**

The proclamation of a Jubilee Year of Mercy challenged us to love one another, to forgive one another, to be merciful and non-judgmental, to comfort others through the simple spiritual and temporal works of mercy – a timely remedy for our struggling brothers and sisters. Listening to the heartbeat of Jesus, we hear *"Come to me and I will give you rest. A faithful God, am I, who keep my merciful covenant to the thousandth generation toward those who love Me and keep my commandments."* The works of mercy are healing and comforting ways to reach out to our suffering brothers and sisters.

**Are we called to convey this message of the Sacred Heart to our brothers and sisters today?**

*"You are precious in my eyes and glorious and I love you."* The violence in our world today, forces large numbers of refugees to leave their countries – to seek new homes and welcoming communities. The plight of immigrants is being addressed by many Churches and religious groups, by people dedicated to a search for peace, justice, and good will. Displaced families, children, the poor are precious in God's eyes and they cry out to us for help. You have responded with diverse actions and challenged others to seek peaceful means for welcoming strangers. Behold the Sacred Heart of Jesus, burning with love for us, for them, for all humanity.

**What is the message of the Sacred Heart for us, regarding immigrants and refugees?**

**Are we summoned to confront violence, war, hatred and all that afflicts those precious in God's eyes?**

*Contemplation, life-giving water, works of mercy, care of refugees.*

These are a few ways which will never be exhausted in bringing God's love and comfort to the poor and needy. The Holy Spirit will lead us in bringing Jesus' teachings to the world in which we live today – in bearing the message of Jesus in our historical moment.

The love of our faithful God has reverberated throughout the ages; and still holds each of us in our need. From Isaiah, the peoples' heard: *"Though the mountains leave their place, and the hills be shaken; my love shall never leave you nor my covenant of peace be shaken, says the Lord who has mercy on us."*

The everlasting love of the Sacred Heart, this unspeakable gift, also elicits from us the only true response of the beloved: *"If you love me, feed my sheep; keep my commandments; be merciful; seek the truth of peace and justice."* If we truly love, there will always be sacrifice for the Beloved. This is the power of love. The symbol of love given us by Jesus, His Sacred Heart, contains all wisdom and knowledge for the life of our souls.

Behold this loving heart, on fire with love, surrounded by a crown of thorns, with a flow of life-giving blood and streams of cleansing water poured forth for the beloved. All is love. God is love.

***Sacred Heart of Jesus, may we contemplate your loveliness; listen to your heartbeat, share the Good News of your life and mission; and dedicate ourselves anew to your mission of Love.***

Amen!

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