

July 2, 2017

Heart of the World XXIX

For the last few weeks we have been pondering the Sacred Heart of Our Lord. It is time now to turn our attention to the Immaculate Heart of Our Lady.

As we mentioned regarding the Sacred Heart: the heart for ancient Jews (and at the time of Our Lord's Life) was considered the very core/center of one's being. It was considered both the principle life organ of the body, but also the center of all spiritual activity. It is from the heart that all emotion (especially love) and virtue flows. It is who we are in our deepest reality.

So if we look at the symbolism of Mary's Immaculate Heart we see four main symbols. Her Heart itself, the fire, the sword(s), and the 'crown' of roses.

Like the Heart of Jesus, Mary's Heart is being presented to us outside of her body. This shows that it is made open, exposed, and vulnerable as it is given to us. They do not hold anything back, but make themselves available to us on our terms. Additionally, her heart is an extension to us of a motherly affection, tenderness, and protection.

By the sharing of her heart with us, Mary exercises her maternal influence over us. Her influence is not of power, manipulation, goading, chiding or nagging, seducing, or any other external 'force'. By her example and assistance, she *internally inspires* us to strive to love as she loves. She makes us *want* to be better men and women. She also helps us in that process. The more we open our hearts, the more we become like Jesus and Mary.

The fire coming from the top of her heart is the same flame of love that we see coming out of Jesus' Sacred Heart. Love is literally divine. The nature of God is love. Love is not God, but God is love. (cf 1Jn 4, specifically vs 8&16) Being made in God's Image and Likeness (Gn 1: 26) means that we are made with the innate capacity to exercise divine Love in our human hearts. The Love is given to us by God as a gift, but is then fully ours to have and exercise.

Of all God's creatures, Mary is the only one ever to do this without failure throughout her entire life. Because she is a creature (unlike Jesus Who is also Divine) she is the very best possible teacher and mentor for us. God's Love was given to her as a gift, just like us. In fact, her love is additionally fruitful because her Spouse is the Holy Spirit.

She is 'Mrs. Holy Spirit' and as with our understanding of Marriage, the two become one flesh.(Gn 2:22-24) To think of Mary without thinking of the Holy Spirit (or vice versa) is inconceivable.

Next week we will consider the sword(s) and 'crown' of roses.

Fr. Michael