

NOVENA TO THE SACRED HEART

2026

He Loved Us

Basilica of the Sacred Heart – Rome

International Shrine of Devotion to the Sacred Heart

“Let us go to the Heart of Christ, the center of his being, which is a blazing furnace of divine and human love and the greatest fullness that humanity can attain. There, in that Heart, we finally come to know ourselves and learn how to love.”

Dilexit Nos, 30

Introduction

The Feast of the Sacred Heart finds in the revelations received by **St. Margaret Mary Alacoque** a privileged source for understanding how to live this devotion deeply and prepare worthily for the liturgical celebration of the Solemnity.

The first revelation, which took place on **December 27, 1673**, the liturgical memorial of **St. John the Evangelist**, placed the saint in the same experience as the beloved disciple when she was invited to rest her head upon the breast—that is, upon the Heart—of the Savior. She wrote:

“I abandoned myself to His divine Spirit, and He allowed me to rest for a long time upon His divine Breast. There He revealed to me the wonders of His love and the inexpressible secrets of His Sacred Heart, which He had kept hidden from me until that moment, when He opened it to me for the first time.”

It is in the Holy Spirit that the Risen Lord reveals Himself to us. This marks an exodus, a new beginning, a rebirth from above in the Spirit. It signifies the passage from law to love and, for Margaret Mary as for each of us, the transition from a life of generous observance to the adoption of children of God. In short, it is the experience of Easter.

For the saint, this marked the beginning of a new mission. The Lord said to her:

“My Divine Heart is so passionate in its love for humanity, and for you in particular, that no longer able to contain within itself the flames of its burning charity, it desires to spread them through you and to make itself known to mankind. I wish to enrich them with the precious treasures that I will reveal to you, treasures containing the graces necessary for holiness and salvation, so as to rescue them from the abyss of perdition. To accomplish this great design, I have chosen you, an abyss of unworthiness and ignorance, so that it may be evident that everything is accomplished through Me.”

In 1674, the Lord revealed Himself again to the saint. During this apparition He expressed His desire that the image of His human Heart be used to establish His Kingdom in those who embraced this devotion:

“This Divine Heart appeared to me upon a throne of flames, brighter than the sun and transparent as crystal, bearing the adorable wound. It was encircled by a crown of thorns, signifying the wounds inflicted by our sins, and surmounted by a cross, signifying that from the first moment of His Incarnation, from the moment this Sacred Heart was formed, the cross was already planted within it.”

The Lord further revealed that His Heart had been filled from the very beginning with all the bitterness caused by the humiliations, poverty, sufferings, and contempt that His sacred humanity would endure throughout His life and Passion.

He also showed her that His ardent desire to be loved by humanity and to draw souls away from the path of perdition inspired Him to reveal His Heart to the world. He desired that it be honored under the image of His human Heart and promised that wherever this sacred image was displayed and venerated, He would pour out His graces and blessings.

In a century when rationalism was beginning to establish itself as the sole narrative of truth and human reason as the exclusive source of knowledge, we are led back to the **heart**, not the **mind**; to the **symbol**, not merely the definition.

On **July 2, 1674**, the Lord appeared again to St. Margaret Mary. Lamenting that His immense love was ignored and unreturned by most people, He said:

“This causes Me greater suffering than all that I endured during My Passion. If only they would return even a little love in exchange, I would consider all that I have done for them as little and would wish, if possible, to do even more. Instead, I receive from them only coldness and rejection despite all My efforts to do them good.”

From this revelation emerged the particular mission entrusted to the saint and, through her, to countless Christians: a spirituality of reparation, offering love, praise, and reparation to the love of Christ not only on behalf of all humanity but also in their place through the mystery of the Communion of Saints.

The Lord instructed her:

“You shall receive Holy Communion on the first Friday of every month. Every Thursday night before Friday, I will allow you to share in the mortal sadness I experienced in the Garden of Olives.”

He asked her to rise between eleven o'clock and midnight to spend one hour prostrate in prayer with Him, offering reparation for sinners and consoling Him for the abandonment He experienced from His Apostles.

In a letter written to her superior, Mother de Saumaise, St. Margaret Mary recounted another revelation in which the Lord made specific promises to those who would receive Holy Communion on the First Friday of nine consecutive months:

“I promise you, in the excess of the mercy of My Heart, that My all-powerful love will grant to all who receive Communion on the first Friday of nine consecutive months the grace of final perseverance. They shall not die in My displeasure, nor without receiving the sacraments if needed. My Divine Heart will be their secure refuge at that final hour.”

It is noteworthy that these words were later cited by **Pope Benedict XV** in the Bull of Canonization of St. Margaret Mary. Many theologians see this as a confirmation of the credibility of this promise, often called the “Great Promise” because of its extraordinary object: the salvation of the soul.

Faithfully receiving Holy Communion for nine consecutive First Fridays constitutes a genuine journey of faith and discourages complacency toward sin. Experience shows that this devotion often leads to more frequent celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, longer periods of Eucharistic adoration, and a deeper union with the Lord, bearing fruit in a more fervent Christian life.

The “nine” Fridays can also be compared to the nine months of human gestation, as if the soul were being spiritually reborn by the Holy Spirit just as it was once formed physically in the womb.

St. Margaret Mary further recounts:

“One day, while I was before the Blessed Sacrament during the octave of Corpus Christi, I received extraordinary graces of His love.”

The Lord then revealed His Heart and said:

“Behold this Heart which has loved mankind so much that it has spared nothing, even exhausting and consuming itself to testify its love.”

Yet, in return, He receives from many only ingratitude, irreverence, sacrilege, indifference, and contempt.

For this reason, He requested that the first Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi be dedicated to a special feast in honor of His Heart, marked by Holy Communion and acts of reparation for the offenses committed against Him in the Blessed Sacrament.

He promised:

“My Heart will expand to pour forth abundantly the riches of its divine love upon those who render this honor to it and who work to have others do the same.”

From this request eventually emerged the liturgical Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, formally established for the Universal Church by **Pope Pius IX** in 1856.

Don Bosco, at the request of **Pope Leo XIII**, undertook the construction of the Church of the Sacred Heart in Rome, now recognized as the International Shrine of Devotion to the Sacred Heart. He became a true apostle of the Sacred Heart, seeing in the Heart of Jesus the source of pastoral charity and the inspiration for his motto:

“Da mihi animas, cetera tolle”

(Give me souls; take away all else.)

Following the example of its founder, the **Basilica of the Sacred Heart** offers these simple novena reflections, drawn from *Dilexit Nos* by **Pope Francis** and *Magnificat Humanitas* by **Pope Leo XIV**, with the hope that every believer and community may enter ever more deeply into that Heart which has loved humanity so greatly and return Love with love.

DAY ONE

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HEART

A HEART THAT LOVES, A HEART THAT CALLS

Opening Reflection

Leader 1:

The Heart of Jesus is inseparable from His Person. We must discover it united to the face that gazes upon us, the hands that bless and welcome us, the body that gives and forgives, and the heart that is gentleness and mercy.

(cf. Dilxit Nos, 54)

All:

A Heart that loves, a Heart that calls.

Reflection

The heart is the place of sincerity, where neither deception nor pretense can survive. It reveals our true intentions—what we truly think, believe, and desire—the secrets we share with no one. It is our naked truth.

The heart is not appearance or falsehood, but what is authentic, real, and deeply personal. Yet this truth is often hidden beneath layers of “foliage” that conceal it, making it difficult not only to know another person, but even to know ourselves.

As the prophet Jeremiah says:

“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” (Jeremiah 17:9)

We can better understand why the Book of Proverbs teaches:

“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. Keep your mouth free of perversity; keep corrupt talk far from your lips.” (Proverbs 4:23–24)

Mere appearances, pretense, and deceit damage and corrupt the heart. Beyond all attempts to appear as something we are not, everything is decided within the heart. There, what matters is not what we show outwardly or what we hide from others. There, we are simply ourselves.

This is the foundation of every solid project in life, because nothing truly worthwhile can be built without the heart. Appearances and lies ultimately offer only emptiness.

Reflection by Leader 2

“We have come to know and believe in the love God has for us” (1 John 4:16), a love that always takes the first step—to seek, to find, and to knock at the door.

Word to Remember

“The heart is the place of sincerity.”

Gospel Reading

Matthew 9:9

As Jesus passed by, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector’s booth, and He said to him, “Follow Me.” And he got up and followed Him.

Attitude to Cultivate

Leader 2:

A subtle temptation often creeps into our lives: the belief that the world’s problems are too great and that we are too small to make any difference. It is an elegant form of surrender, often disguised as realism.

Certainly, not everyone possesses the same ability to influence events. Some govern nations, make investments, lead institutions, conduct research, educate, communicate information, or create products. Others seem to possess only the ordinary circumstances of daily life.

Yet no one is without responsibility.

Each person has a sphere of action, and within that sphere—not elsewhere—we are called to choose whether we will foster the logic of force (through indifference, cynicism, falsehood, or hatred) or safeguard the logic of peace (through truth, simplicity, closeness, and care).

Magnificat Humanitas, 212

Personal Intention

Sacred Heart of Jesus,

You know our needs and our intentions. You have told us:

"Ask and you shall receive."

With sincere faith, I place before You this intention:

(Pause in silence)

I entrust it to Your infinite goodness, hoping for all things if they are for Your glory and for our good.

Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart

All:

I give and consecrate to the adorable Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ my person and my life, my actions, my sufferings, and my sorrows, resolving never again to use any part of my being except to honor, love, and glorify Him.

This is my irrevocable will: to belong entirely to Him and to do all things for His love, renouncing with all my heart everything that may displease Him.

O Sacred Heart, I choose You as the sole object of my love, the guardian of my path, the pledge of my salvation, the remedy for my weakness and inconstancy, the repairer of all the faults of my life, and my secure refuge at the hour of death.

O Heart of goodness, be my justification before God Your Father and turn away His just anger from me.

O loving Heart, I place all my trust in You. I fear everything from my own weakness and sinfulness, but I hope for everything from Your goodness.

Consume within me all that may displease or resist You. May Your pure love be so deeply impressed upon my heart that I may never forget You or be separated from You.

Through Your goodness, I ask that my name be written within Your Heart, for I desire to find all my happiness and glory in living and dying as Your servant.

Amen.

Closing Prayer

Leader 1:

O God, who prepared a worthy dwelling place for the Holy Spirit in the heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, grant through her intercession that we, Your faithful people, may become living temples of Your glory.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever.

Amen.

Concluding Prayers

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

DAY TWO

THE WORLD CAN CHANGE

A HEART THAT QUENCHES THE THIRST FOR THE INFINITE

Opening Reflection

Leader 1:

“Thirst, even more than hunger, represents humanity’s most urgent need, but it also reveals its deepest poverty. In this way we contemplate the mystery of the Most High God, who became poor among humanity out of mercy.”

— **Pope Francis**

All:

A Heart that quenches the thirst for the Infinite.

Reflection by Leader 2

The Lord gives us living water to drink. Jesus, thirsty for love, satisfies our thirst with His own love. He draws near to us in our daily lives, shares in our thirst, and promises us the living water that wells up to eternal life.

Reflection

Only by beginning with the heart can our communities unite diverse minds and wills and bring them into harmony, allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us as a network of brothers and sisters. For reconciliation is also the work of the heart.

The Heart of Christ is ecstasy; it goes out of itself. It is gift and encounter. In Him we become capable of relating to one another in healthy and joyful ways and of building in this world the Kingdom of love and justice.

Our hearts, united with the Heart of Christ, are capable of this social miracle.

Yet we need the help of divine love.

Let us go to the Heart of Christ, the center of His being, which is a blazing furnace of divine and human love and the greatest fullness that humanity can attain. There, in that Heart, we finally discover who we truly are and learn how to love.

(Dilexit Nos, 28, 30)

Word to Remember

“The Heart of Christ is ecstasy; it goes out of itself. It is gift and encounter.”

Gospel Reading

John 19:28

After this, aware that everything was now finished so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, Jesus said:

“I thirst.”

Attitude to Cultivate

Leader 2:

One of the first contributions we can make toward a more humane civilization is to pay attention to our words.

“Let us disarm our words, and we will help disarm the world.”

The power of words is immense. We experience this every day whenever someone says something that changes our state of mind, whether for good or for ill.

“Peace begins with each one of us: with the way we look at others, listen to others, and speak about others. In this sense, the way we communicate is of fundamental importance. We must say ‘no’ to the war of words and images; we must reject the paradigm of war.”

Each of us, therefore, should examine the words we use, the prejudices they may contain, and any aggression—open or hidden—that may be present within them.

Every time we speak the truth, offer wise counsel, encourage someone in need of comfort, denounce injustice, or give a voice to those who have none, we make a real contribution to the common good.

Magnificat Humanitas, 214

Personal Intention

Sacred Heart of Jesus,

You know our needs and our intentions. You have told us:

“Ask and you shall receive.”

With sincere faith, I place before You this intention:

(Pause in silence)

I entrust it to Your infinite goodness, hoping for all things if they are for Your glory and for our good.

Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart

All:

I give and consecrate to the adorable Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ my person and my life, my actions, my sufferings, and my sorrows, resolving never again to use any part of my being except to honor, love, and glorify Him.

This is my irrevocable will: to belong entirely to Him and to do all things for His love, renouncing with all my heart everything that may displease Him.

O Sacred Heart, I choose You as the sole object of my love, the guardian of my path, the pledge of my salvation, the remedy for my weakness and inconstancy, the repairer of all the faults of my life, and my secure refuge at the hour of death.

O Heart of goodness, be my justification before God Your Father and turn away His just anger from me.

O loving Heart, I place all my trust in You. I fear everything from my own weakness and sinfulness, but I hope for everything from Your goodness.

Consume within me all that may displease or resist You. May Your pure love be so deeply impressed upon my heart that I may never forget You or be separated from You.

Through Your goodness, I ask that my name be written within Your Heart, for I desire to find all my happiness and glory in living and dying as Your servant.

Amen.

Closing Prayer

Leader 1:

O God, who prepared a worthy dwelling place for the Holy Spirit in the heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, grant through her intercession that we, Your faithful people, may become living temples of Your glory.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever.

Amen.

Concluding Prayers

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

DAY THREE

GESTURES AND WORDS OF LOVE

A HEART THAT LOVES, A HEART THAT GIVES ITSELF

Opening Reflection

Leader 1:

“The Lord’s faithfulness reveals the humility of His Heart. Jesus did not come to conquer people as the kings and powerful rulers of this world do; rather, He came to offer love with gentleness, meekness, and humility.”

— **Pope Francis**

All:

A Heart that loves, a Heart that gives itself.

Reflection by Leader 2

We were created by love, because love and our very lives are a constant call to embrace that love and to give it to others.

Reflection

The way Christ loves us is something He did not wish to explain too much. Instead, He showed it through His actions. By observing how He acts, we can discover how He treats each one of us, even when we struggle to perceive it. Let us therefore look where our faith can recognize Him: in the Gospel.

The Gospel tells us that Jesus “came to His own” (John 1:11). His own are us, because He does not treat us as strangers. He considers us His own, caring for us with tenderness and affection. He treats us as belonging to Him.

Not in the sense that we are His slaves—for He Himself rejects that idea: “I no longer call you servants” (John 15:15). What He offers is the mutual belonging of friendship.

He came, crossed every distance, and drew near to us as closely as the simplest and most ordinary realities of daily life. Indeed, He has another name: **Emmanuel**, which means “**God with us**”—God close to our lives, God living among us.

The Son of God became incarnate and “emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant.”

Word to Remember

“He cares for us with tenderness and affection.”

Gospel Reading

John 15:16–17

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in My name. This is My command: love one another as I have loved you.”

Attitude to Cultivate

Leader 2:

All of us, at every level, can contribute to the foundation of peace, which is justice. We do not seek just any peace—an absence of conflict at any cost—but true peace, the peace that is born of justice.

“There is a close relationship between the justice of each person and the peace of all.”

Commenting on the Psalm verse, “Justice and peace shall kiss” (Psalm 85:10), **St. Augustine** wrote:

“There is no one who does not desire peace, whereas not everyone is willing to practice justice. Practice the works of justice: remembering that justice and peace kiss one another and are not in conflict. Why would you place yourself in opposition to justice? Justice tells you not to steal, yet you refuse to listen; not to commit adultery, yet you ignore it; not to do to others what you would not want done to yourself; not to say about your neighbor what you would not want said about you. Do you wish to attain peace? Then practice justice!”

Let us never grow weary of seeking justice.

Magnifica Humanitas, 215.

Personal Intention

Sacred Heart of Jesus,

You know our needs and our intentions. You have told us:

"Ask and you shall receive."

With sincere faith, I place before You this intention:

(Pause in silence)

I hope for all things from Your infinite goodness, if they are for Your glory and for our good.

Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart

All:

I give and consecrate to the adorable Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ my person and my life, my actions, my sufferings, and my sorrows, resolving never again to use any part of my being except to honor, love, and glorify Him.

This is my irrevocable will: to belong entirely to Him and to do all things for His love, renouncing with all my heart everything that may displease Him.

O Sacred Heart, I choose You as the sole object of my love, the guardian of my path, the pledge of my salvation, the remedy for my weakness and inconstancy, the repairer of all the faults of my life, and my secure refuge at the hour of death.

O Heart of goodness, be my justification before God Your Father and turn away His just anger from me.

O loving Heart, I place all my trust in You. I fear everything from my own weakness and sinfulness, but I hope for everything from Your goodness.

Consume within me all that may displease or resist You. May Your pure love be so deeply impressed upon my heart that I may never forget You or be separated from You.

Through Your goodness, I ask that my name be written within Your Heart, for I desire to find all my happiness and glory in living and dying as Your servant.

Amen.

Closing Prayer

Leader 1:

O God, who prepared a worthy dwelling place for the Holy Spirit in the heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, through her intercession grant that we, Your faithful people, may become living temples of Your glory.

Through Our Lord Jesus Christ...

Amen.

Concluding Prayers

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

DAY FOUR

THIS IS THE HEART THAT HAS LOVED SO MUCH

A HEART THAT DWELLS, A HEART THAT LISTENS

Opening Reflection

Leader 1:

Jesus is the cornerstone who dwells within us. We were created by love, because love and our very lives are a constant call to receive that love and to share it with others.

All:

A Heart that dwells, a Heart that listens.

Reflection by Leader 2

“The call of God is love. We must strive to discover the love hidden behind every calling, for only love can answer a call that comes from love. This is the language of discipleship: the response to a call born of love can only be love. At the beginning there is an encounter—an encounter with Jesus, who speaks to us of the Father and reveals His love to us.”

— Pope Francis

Reflection by Leader 1

The love that dwells within us knows us, calls us, and desires to speak with us heart to heart.

Reflection

Devotion to the Heart of Christ is not the worship of an organ separated from the Person of Jesus. What we contemplate and adore is Jesus Christ in His entirety, the Son of God made man, represented in an image that highlights His Heart.

It is essential to emphasize that we relate to the Person of Christ through friendship and adoration, drawn by the love symbolized in the image of His Heart. We venerate the image that represents Him, but our worship is directed only to the living Christ, in His divinity and in the fullness of His humanity, allowing ourselves to be embraced by His human and divine love.

For this reason, no one should think that this devotion separates us from Jesus Christ or distracts us from His love. On the contrary, it leads us directly and spontaneously to Him and to Him alone. He calls us to a precious friendship marked by dialogue, affection, trust, and adoration.

(Dilexit Nos, 48–49, 51)

Word to Remember

“A precious friendship marked by dialogue, affection, trust, and adoration.”

Gospel Reading

John 1:39

“Come and see,” He replied. So they went and saw where He was staying, and they remained with Him that day. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon.

Pause for Silent Reflection

(Pause in silence.)

Attitude to Cultivate

There are situations in which, if we wish to remain truly human, we must set aside hesitation and take a stand. There are conflicts in which it is not right to remain neutral, nor is it enough simply to claim that we are “not involved.”

When we witness the bombing of civilians, attacks against hospitals, schools, or vital infrastructure, or violence directed against children, we are confronted with scandals that wound humanity itself.

For this reason, we cannot remain at the level of abstract analysis. As **Pope Francis** has reminded us, we must “touch the flesh” of those who suffer: look into their faces, listen to their stories, and recognize their wounds.

Painful events require both history and memory—history to recount the facts and memory to bear witness to lived experience.

Magnifica Humanitas, 216.

Personal Intention

Sacred Heart of Jesus,

You know our needs and our intentions. You have told us:

“Ask and you shall receive.”

With sincere faith, I place before You this intention:

(Pause in silence.)

I hope for all things from Your infinite goodness, if they are for Your glory and for our good.

Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart

All:

I give and consecrate to the adorable Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ my person and my life, my actions, my sufferings, and my sorrows, resolving never again to use any part of my being except to honor, love, and glorify Him.

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Through Your goodness, I ask that my name be written within Your Heart, for I desire to find all my happiness and glory in living and dying as Your servant.

Amen.

Closing Prayer

Leader 1:

O God, who prepared a worthy dwelling place for the Holy Spirit in the heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, through her intercession grant that we, Your faithful people, may become living temples of Your glory.

Through Our Lord Jesus Christ...

Amen.

Concluding Prayers

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

DAY FIVE

THE HEART OF CHRIST: A SUMMARY OF THE GOSPEL

A HEART THAT FINDS, A HEART THAT SENDS

Opening Reflection

Leader 1:

An encounter with Jesus transforms life itself and gives it a new meaning: the meaning of mercy, the meaning of love that reaches out, trusts, welcomes what is different and vulnerable, proclaims the Gospel, and shares the joy of the encounter.

All:

A Heart that finds, a Heart that sends.

Reflection by Leader 2

The initiative of love through which God comes to meet us invites us into a great plan in which He desires our participation, showing us on the horizon a wider sea and a more abundant catch.

Reflection

The expressive and symbolic image of the Heart of Christ is not the only means the Holy Spirit gives us to encounter Christ's love, and it will always need to be enriched, illuminated, and renewed through meditation, the reading of the Gospel, and spiritual growth.

Devotion to the Heart of Christ is essential to our Christian life because it signifies a complete openness in faith and adoration to the mystery of the Lord's divine and human love. For this reason, we can once again affirm that the **Sacred Heart is a summary of the Gospel.**

I would also add that the Heart of Christ frees us from another form of dualism: that of communities and pastors focused solely on external activities, structural reforms lacking the Gospel, obsessive organizational concerns, worldly projects, secularized reflections, and various proposals sometimes imposed as requirements for everyone.

The result is often a Christianity that has forgotten the tenderness of faith, the joy of self-giving service, the fervor of mission from person to person, the experience of being captivated by the beauty of Christ, the moving gratitude for the friendship He offers, and the ultimate meaning He gives to personal life.

In short, it becomes another form of deceptive transcendentalism, equally detached from the reality of the Incarnation.

(Dilexit Nos, 82–83, 88)

Word to Remember

“The Sacred Heart is a summary of the Gospel.”

Gospel Reading

Mark 1:16–18

As Jesus passed along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea, for they were fishermen.

Jesus said to them, “Come after Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Then they left their nets at once and followed Him.

Attitude to Cultivate

We need a healthy realism that avoids both political idealism and cynicism.

There is an idealism that, in order to preserve its own worldview, selects facts, bends them, renames them, and ultimately lives in a reality shaped according to its own convictions.

On the other hand, there is also a degraded realism that confuses observation with resignation. Because force appears to dominate, it concludes that force must dominate.

Authentic realism does not abandon the effort to change the world. Rather, it begins by seeing clearly the interests, fears, constraints, and balances of power involved, so as to determine what can realistically be achieved and by what means.

It does not reduce politics to morality, nor does it surrender politics to violence. Instead, it seeks practical paths by which peace may become more than a word: credible institutions, verifiable guarantees, patient negotiations, conflict prevention, and the protection of civilians.

Magnifica Humanitas, 218.

Personal Intention

Sacred Heart of Jesus,

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(Pause in silence.)

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Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart

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Amen.

Closing Prayer

Leader 1:

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Through Our Lord Jesus Christ...

Amen.

Concluding Prayers

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

DAY SIX

THE LOVE THAT GIVES TO DRINK

A HEART THAT ACCOMPANIES, A HEART THAT WALKS BESIDE US

Opening Reflection

Leader 1:

The Lord walks with us, and this is our hope. He accompanies those whom He loves and cares for those whom He sends. Through the power of His Holy Spirit, those who seek Him and love Him with sincere hearts are able to fulfill their mission in the world.

All:

A Heart that accompanies, a Heart that walks beside us.

Reflection by Leader 2

The Lord takes the initiative to draw near to His own and to walk beside them. Today, as then, the Risen Lord remains close to His missionary disciples and walks with them, especially when they feel lost or discouraged.

“Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of hope!”

(Evangelii Gaudium, 86)

Reflection

The Bible shows that to the people who journeyed through the desert awaiting deliverance, an abundance of life-giving water was promised:

“With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” (Isaiah 12:3)

A pierced man, an opened spring, a spirit of grace and supplication. The first Christians clearly saw this promise fulfilled in the opened side of Christ, the source from which new life flows.

In the pierced Heart of Christ are concentrated, written in His flesh, all the expressions of love found throughout Scripture. This is not merely a love that has been proclaimed; His opened side is a source of life for those whom He loves. It is the fountain that satisfies the thirst of His people.

St. Augustine paved the way for devotion to the Sacred Heart as a place of personal encounter with the Lord. For him, the breast of Christ is not only the source of grace and the sacraments, but also a symbol of intimate union with Christ—a place of loving encounter.

There lies the origin of the most precious wisdom: the wisdom of knowing Him. Augustine writes that **John the Beloved Disciple**, when he rested his head upon Jesus' breast at the Last Supper, approached the secret place of wisdom.

(Dilexit Nos, 93, 96, 101, 103)

Word to Remember

"His opened side is a source of life."

Gospel Reading

Luke 24:32

They said to one another,

"Were not our hearts burning within us while He spoke to us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

Attitude to Cultivate

To build the civilization of love, we must practice dialogue.

Dialogue is the primary instrument of coexistence among persons and peoples, and it is the alternative to open conflict. **Pope Pius XII** reminded the world on the eve of the Second World War that nothing is lost by peace, whereas everything may be lost through war. Human beings must return to speaking with one another, because sincere and persevering dialogue always leaves open the possibility of an honorable solution.

Dialogue is an ordinary dimension of human life and extends far beyond relations among nations. It requires cultivating an attitude that builds bonds of fraternity through listening, sincere encounters, time shared together, and even what may seem like "wasted" time spent with others.

For when we truly experience an encounter with another person—with someone different, a stranger, a migrant—it becomes much more difficult even to imagine war.

Magnifica Humanitas, 219–220.

Personal Intention

Sacred Heart of Jesus,

You know our needs and our intentions. You have told us:

“Ask and you shall receive.”

With sincere faith, I place before You this intention:

(Pause in silence.)

I hope for all things from Your infinite goodness, if they are for Your glory and for our good.

Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart

All:

I give and consecrate to the adorable Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ my person and my life, my actions, my sufferings, and my sorrows, resolving never again to use any part of my being except to honor, love, and glorify Him.

This is my irrevocable will: to belong entirely to Him and to do all things for His love, renouncing with all my heart everything that may displease Him.

O Sacred Heart, I choose You as the sole object of my love, the guardian of my path, the pledge of my salvation, the remedy for my weakness and inconstancy, the repairer of all the faults of my life, and my secure refuge at the hour of death.

O Heart of goodness, be my justification before God Your Father and turn away His just anger from me.

O loving Heart, I place all my trust in You. I fear everything from my own weakness and sinfulness, but I hope for everything from Your goodness.

Consume within me all that may displease or resist You. May Your pure love be so deeply impressed upon my heart that I may never forget You or be separated from You.

Through Your goodness, I ask that my name be written within Your Heart, for I desire to find all my happiness and glory in living and dying as Your servant.

Amen.

Closing Prayer

Leader 1:

O God, who prepared a worthy dwelling place for the Holy Spirit in the heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, through her intercession grant that we, Your faithful people, may become living temples of Your glory.

Through Our Lord Jesus Christ...

Amen.

Concluding Prayers

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

DAY SEVEN

IN THE HEART OF JESUS WITH COMPLETE TRUST

A HEART THAT FORMS, A HEART THAT TRANSFORMS US IN HUMILITY

Opening Reflection

Leader 1:

The Lord's faithfulness reveals the humility of His Heart. Jesus did not come to conquer people as the kings and powerful rulers of this world do, but rather to offer love with gentleness and humility. At the center of every action and every word of Jesus is love: the love of the Father who sent His Son and the love of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us.

All:

A Heart that forms, a Heart that transforms us in humility.

Reflection by Leader 2

We are called to walk a path filled with compassion, capable of transforming our lives and the lives of our neighbors, in the hope of drawing ever closer to the Heart of Jesus.

Reflection

For **St. Francis de Sales**, devotion meant an invitation to a personal relationship in which each person feels unique before Christ, recognized in his or her unrepeatable reality, personally known and loved by Him.

He wrote:

"This most adorable and lovable Heart of our Master, burning with the love He has for us, is the Heart in which we see all our names written. It is certainly a source of the greatest consolation to know that we are loved with such affection by Our Lord, who carries us always in His Heart."

The proper name written upon the Heart of Christ was the way **St. Francis de Sales** sought to symbolize how deeply personal Christ's love is. It is never abstract or generic. Rather, it is a love that recognizes each believer individually, making every person feel valued and known.

As a result, the believer becomes capable of abandoning himself or herself completely to the Heart of Christ, where rest, consolation, and strength are found.

(Dilexit Nos, 115-116)

Word to Remember

"Loved with such affection."

Gospel Reading

Matthew 11:29

"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for your souls."

Pause for Silent Reflection

(Pause in silence.)

Attitude to Cultivate

In international relations, dialogue is the indispensable instrument of diplomacy for preventing conflicts and rebuilding bonds of trust.

This dialogue must not be understood merely as a negotiating technique or a strategy for reaching agreements. It is, above all, a recognition of the dignity of every person and every people. It requires patience, perseverance, and the willingness to listen sincerely.

Building peace demands that we reject every form of arrogance and domination. It calls us to cultivate humility—the humility to recognize that no one possesses the whole truth and that authentic solutions emerge when people seek the common good together.

The peace we desire is not imposed by force but built through trust, respect, and cooperation among individuals and nations.

Magnificat Humanitas.

Personal Intention

Sacred Heart of Jesus,

You know our needs and our intentions. You have told us:

"Ask and you shall receive."

With sincere faith, I place before You this intention:

(Pause in silence.)

I hope for all things from Your infinite goodness, if they are for Your glory and for our good.

Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart

All:

I give and consecrate to the adorable Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ my person and my life, my actions, my sufferings, and my sorrows, resolving never again to use any part of my being except to honor, love, and glorify Him.

This is my irrevocable will: to belong entirely to Him and to do all things for His love, renouncing with all my heart everything that may displease Him.

O Sacred Heart, I choose You as the sole object of my love, the guardian of my path, the pledge of my salvation, the remedy for my weakness and inconstancy, the repairer of all the faults of my life, and my secure refuge at the hour of death.

O Heart of goodness, be my justification before God Your Father and turn away His just anger from me.

O loving Heart, I place all my trust in You. I fear everything from my own weakness and sinfulness, but I hope for everything from Your goodness.

Consume within me all that may displease or resist You. May Your pure love be so deeply impressed upon my heart that I may never forget You or be separated from You.

Through Your goodness, I ask that my name be written within Your Heart, for I desire to find all my happiness and glory in living and dying as Your servant.

Amen.

Closing Prayer

Leader 1:

O God, who prepared a worthy dwelling place for the Holy Spirit in the heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, through her intercession grant that we, Your faithful people, may become living temples of Your glory.

Through Our Lord Jesus Christ...

Amen.

Concluding Prayers

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

DAY EIGHT

TAKING JESUS TO HEART

A HEART THAT UNITES, A HEART THAT SHARES

Opening Reflection

Leader 1:

The love revealed in the Cross of Christ, and which He calls us to live, is the only power capable of transforming our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. The only force that can truly transform our hearts is the love of Jesus, when with that same love we love our brothers and sisters.

All:

A Heart that unites, a Heart that shares.

Reflection by Leader 2

“The love of Christ gathered a great multitude of disciples so that they might become one, and so that, in the Spirit, through Him and with Him, they might respond to love by loving Him ‘with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their strength’ (Dt 6:5), and by loving their neighbor ‘as themselves’ (cf. Mt 22:39).”

Reflection

When **St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus** was fifteen years old, she found a way to summarize her relationship with Jesus:

“The One whose heart beat in unison with mine.”

She wrote to her sister **Léonie**:

“I assure you that the good God is far better than you think. He is satisfied with a glance, with a sigh of love. As for me, I find it very easy to practice perfection, because I have understood that all one has to do is take Jesus by the heart!”

In a letter to Father **Adolphe Roulland**, she wrote:

“My way is entirely a way of trust and love. I cannot understand souls who are afraid of so tender a Friend. Sometimes, when I read certain spiritual treatises in which perfection is

presented through a thousand obstacles and surrounded by countless illusions, my poor mind quickly grows tired. I close the learned book that burdens my head and dries up my heart, and I take up Sacred Scripture. Then everything appears luminous to me. A single word reveals infinite horizons to my soul. Perfection seems easy to me. I see that it is enough to recognize one's nothingness and abandon oneself like a child into the arms of the good God."

The path of holiness is therefore not complicated. It begins by allowing ourselves to be loved and by trusting completely in the tenderness of Christ.

(Dilexit Nos, 134, 140-141)

Word to Remember

"All one has to do is take Jesus by the heart!"

Gospel Reading

Matthew 18:20

"For where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them."

Pause for Silent Reflection

(Pause in silence.)

Attitude to Cultivate

These paths of commitment are nourished by prayer and, in turn, deepen prayer. For us, peace first and foremost "comes from God, the God who loves all of us unconditionally."

In international relations, dialogue remains the indispensable instrument of diplomacy for preventing conflicts and rebuilding bonds of trust. Against impulsive communication, aggressive rhetoric, and the logic of power that marks our age, "the vocation of diplomacy is to foster dialogue with everyone, including those interlocutors considered the most difficult or those deemed unworthy of negotiation."

Diplomacy requires humility and patience, seeking even the smallest signs of goodwill among parties in conflict so that a process of reconciliation may begin. Today, cyberspace has also become a field of confrontation. Cyberattacks, data manipulation, and influence campaigns orchestrated with the help of artificial intelligence can destabilize entire nations even before open armed conflict occurs.

For this reason, there is a growing need for a diplomacy capable of operating in this new environment, negotiating shared rules for the use of digital technologies and protecting civilians and the most vulnerable from forms of violence that may be invisible, yet are no less real.

Magnificat Humanitas, 224–225.

Personal Intention

Sacred Heart of Jesus,

You know our needs and our intentions. You have told us:

“Ask and you shall receive.”

With sincere faith, I place before You this intention:

(Pause in silence.)

I hope for all things from Your infinite goodness, if they are for Your glory and for our good.

Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart

All:

I give and consecrate to the adorable Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ my person and my life, my actions, my sufferings, and my sorrows, resolving never again to use any part of my being except to honor, love, and glorify Him.

This is my irrevocable will: to belong entirely to Him and to do all things for His love, renouncing with all my heart everything that may displease Him.

O Sacred Heart, I choose You as the sole object of my love, the guardian of my path, the pledge of my salvation, the remedy for my weakness and inconstancy, the repairer of all the faults of my life, and my secure refuge at the hour of death.

O Heart of goodness, be my justification before God Your Father and turn away His just anger from me.

O loving Heart, I place all my trust in You. I fear everything from my own weakness and sinfulness, but I hope for everything from Your goodness.

Consume within me all that may displease or resist You. May Your pure love be so deeply impressed upon my heart that I may never forget You or be separated from You.

Through Your goodness, I ask that my name be written within Your Heart, for I desire to find all my happiness and glory in living and dying as Your servant.

Amen.

Closing Prayer

Leader 1:

O God, who prepared a worthy dwelling place for the Holy Spirit in the heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, through her intercession grant that we, Your faithful people, may become living temples of Your glory.

Through Our Lord Jesus Christ...

Amen.

Concluding Prayers

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

DAY NINE

LOVE FOR LOVE

A HEART THAT FREES, A HEART THAT BECOMES FLESH

Opening Reflection

Leader 1:

The Sacred Heart is the source from which living water flows. It is the fountain of love that transforms us and sends us forth to become witnesses of that same love in the world. The Heart of Christ continues to beat in the Church and in every believer who allows himself or herself to be shaped by His grace.

All:

A Heart that frees, a Heart that becomes flesh.

Reflection by Leader 2

Love seeks love. Whoever has encountered the Heart of Christ cannot remain indifferent. The Lord calls us not only to receive His love but also to become instruments through which that love reaches others, especially the poor, the forgotten, and those who suffer.

Reflection

The proposal of the Gospel is not simply to reflect upon or admire the love of Christ. Rather, it is to allow ourselves to be transformed by it. The devotion to the Sacred Heart reaches its fullest expression when the believer becomes capable of loving as Christ loves.

The Lord does not ask us merely to contemplate His Heart; He invites us to enter into it. There we discover a love that heals wounds, overcomes divisions, and restores hope. We learn that authentic freedom is not found in self-sufficiency but in the gift of self.

The Heart of Christ urges us to move beyond a faith that remains only in words. Love must become concrete. It must take flesh in our decisions, our relationships, our service, and our commitment to justice and peace.

The saints understood this well. Having encountered the tenderness of Christ, they became signs of His presence in the world. Their lives demonstrate that the Sacred Heart is not merely an object of devotion but a school of discipleship and mission.

To love in return for Love: this is the response that the Heart of Jesus awaits from every believer. It is the path that leads to holiness, communion, and the renewal of the world.

(Dilexit Nos, concluding reflections)

Word to Remember

“To love in return for Love.”

Gospel Reading

John 13:34-35

“I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.

This is how all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Pause for Silent Reflection

(Pause in silence.)

Attitude to Cultivate

Peace is never built only through treaties and institutions, important as they are. It is also built through daily acts of charity, solidarity, and responsibility.

Every gesture of reconciliation, every effort to understand another person, every act of forgiveness, and every commitment to the common good contributes to building a more humane world.

The culture of encounter begins in ordinary life: within families, communities, schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods. It is there that we learn to recognize the dignity of every person and to reject the logic of exclusion and indifference.

In this way, love becomes social. The Heart of Christ teaches us that peace is not merely the absence of conflict but the fruit of relationships rooted in truth, justice, mercy, and fraternity.

Magnificat Humanitas, concluding reflections.

Personal Intention

Sacred Heart of Jesus,

You know our needs and our intentions. You have told us:

“Ask and you shall receive.”

With sincere faith, I place before You this intention:

(Pause in silence.)

I hope for all things from Your infinite goodness, if they are for Your glory and for our good.

Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart

All:

I give and consecrate to the adorable Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ my person and my life, my actions, my sufferings, and my sorrows, resolving never again to use any part of my being except to honor, love, and glorify Him.

This is my irrevocable will: to belong entirely to Him and to do all things for His love, renouncing with all my heart everything that may displease Him.

O Sacred Heart, I choose You as the sole object of my love, the guardian of my path, the pledge of my salvation, the remedy for my weakness and inconstancy, the repairer of all the faults of my life, and my secure refuge at the hour of death.

O Heart of goodness, be my justification before God Your Father and turn away His just anger from me.

O loving Heart, I place all my trust in You. I fear everything from my own weakness and sinfulness, but I hope for everything from Your goodness.

Consume within me all that may displease or resist You. May Your pure love be so deeply impressed upon my heart that I may never forget You or be separated from You.

Through Your goodness, I ask that my name be written within Your Heart, for I desire to find all my happiness and glory in living and dying as Your servant.

Amen.

Closing Prayer

Leader 1:

O God, who prepared a worthy dwelling place for the Holy Spirit in the heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, through her intercession grant that we, Your faithful people, may become living temples of Your glory.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever.

Amen.

Concluding Prayers

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be