

Fr. Malachy CP (Herne Bay)

Of all the feasts of the Lord that we celebrate throughout the year the one that appeals to me most, is the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is a feast that brings out the wonderful characteristics in the human life of Jesus, His love, His compassion, His forgiveness, His friendship.

First, Jesus became man to demonstrate to us all the love and the mercy of God but also the qualities that we admire in any human being. When we speak of the heart we are speaking about the nature and personality of a person.

We speak for example of a person with a 'big heart', a 'warm heart', a 'compassionate heart'; on the other hand, we can speak of a 'cold heart', a 'hard heart'. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the heartbeat of God, because it expresses the love of God for all people. The heart of Jesus identifies Jesus with all human beings.

St. Paul to the Hebrews says *"for it is not as if we had a high priest who was incapable of feeling our weakness with us, but we have one who has been tempted in every way like us. He is incapable of sin"*.

The heart is what keeps people alive and, in my case, it is powered by battery (pacemaker).

The heart is where all our human feelings are born. They come alive in our actions.

Psalm 50 says; *"You delight in sincerity of Heart, then in the secret of my heart teach me wisdom."*

The identity of Jesus was that He was Divine and Human, and in that identity, we find a new image of God, a new way of thinking about God.



In the old Testament God's glory refers to power, might and fame. God was someone to be feared.

In the New Testament, through the revelation of Jesus, we find that God's Glory is in the familial love of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and we are invited into this love not as servants but as sons and daughters. In this respect the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a wonderful symbol of the compassion and love of God.

As Simone Weil puts it, *"God is love in the same way that an emerald is green"*.

God so loved the world that He sent His Only Begotten Son.

'God is Love and He who dwells in Love lives in God'

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the heartbeat of God and I believe it should be the heartbeat of the Church.

The Church is a place where people should find Love, Hope and a Warm Heart.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart spread and the feast was established after Margaret Mary had a vision when Jesus said to her, *'Behold this heart that has loved men and women so much that it has speared Nothing and in return, I receive nothing but ingratitude'*.

The feast of the Sacred Heart brings back to me memories of our school days when the school was always consecrated to the Sacred Heart. A large altar would be erected at the end of a long corridor. My mother's statue of the Sacred Heart would be borrowed, and the parish priest would arrive and read out the consecration in front of the whole school.

Then again, I remember when giving missions and going around visiting homes, unconsciously I would look around for a picture of the Sacred Heart. The picture would tell me that I was in a good Catholic home.

I believe that in devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus we feel the love and the warmth of God. From it we learn the lesson of Compassion. The face of Jesus is the face of compassion and gentleness, as Jesus said to us *'Learn of me for I am meek and gentle of Heart'*.

My dear friends, God in His Divine Wisdom has raised up men and women in the Church, who have helped to spread Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

The Mission Statement of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary says; *We the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, urged by the compassion of Christ and responsive to the anguish of peoples and planet are called to help shape communities of gentleness, justice and peace that witness to the healing, liberating and empowering love of God.*

We as members of the Sacred Heart Companions are privileged to share in that mission.

Thank you, Father Malachy, for sharing this with us all in the large family of the Sisters, SHC's, friends and supporters.

**A very Happy Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
and of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
to you all.**