



MASS TIMES & INTENTIONS



Saturday 26TH October 2024 – St Cedd, Bp
Secondary Co-Patron of the Diocese

9.00am Morning Mass
10.00am Confessions
6.00pm Vigil Mass

Sunday 27TH October 2024 – THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B))

9.00am Mass Marie Keeling Speedy Recovery
11.00am Mass Celen Ozduru RIP
5.00pm Holy Hou

Tuesday 29TH October 2024 – Feria

7.00pm Novena to Anthony of Padua
7.30pm Evening Mass Mary Elizabeth & David Barnett RIP

Wednesday 30TH October 2024 – Feria

9.00am Morning Mass Olivia Chesney RIP
9.30am Holy Rosary
10am until 5pm Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Thursday 31ST October 2024 – Feria

9.00am Morning Mass
9.30am Holy Rosary
10am until 4pm Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Friday 01ST November 2024 – ALL SAINTS
HOLYDAY OF OBLIGATION

9.20am Morning Mass John Fowley Recovery Intentions
Rosary and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
7.30pm Evening Mass

Saturday 02ND November 2024 – COMMEMORATION OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED
(ALL SOULS' DAY)

9.00am Morning Mass Deceased members of the Hernandez Family
10.00am Confessions
6.00pm Vigil Mass Ethel Doyle RIP

Sunday 03RD November 2024 – THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B))

9.00am Mass
11.00am Mass
5.00pm Holy Hour



If you wish to make an offering online, this QR code can be scanned using the camera on your phone, directly to the Parish bank account, for your offering to be transferred each time. Please note Gift Aid cannot be used when donating through the QR Codes.



OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

Parish Priest: Fr Britto Belevendran

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Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B) 27th October 2024

“I want to see”

The readings this week show life with God as a journey along “the way.” In the Old testament readings, “the way” is a journey home from exile in Babylon. God gathers his displaced people and brings them back to the land of Israel. It’s a familiar road. The Jews first walked it weeping after Israel’s defeat by Babylon. Now it is a path of joy and laughter as they set their hearts toward home.



As the Gospel reading indicates, early Christians sometimes referred to the lifelong journey of following Jesus as “the way.” After the blind beggar Bartimaeus receives his sight again, he follows Jesus “on the way.”

When Jesus asks, “What do you want me to do for you? Bartimaeus has a simple answer: “I want to see.” In Scripture, sight often has a double meaning. It means to see with one’s physical eyes, but it also means to see with the heart and the mind – to perceive or understand. Bartimaeus receives both kinds of sight. He is no longer physically blind and does not need to beg on the side of the road anymore. But he also sees correctly that Jesus is the Son of God.

The final weeks of Ordinary Time leading to the celebration of Christ the King are upon us. Our hearts fill with joy today, for we continue to hear and experience the great things the Lord does for us. Every Sunday is a “little Easter.” And today we focus on Jesus, the High Priest who has destroyed death and brought life. He calls us. He reminds us our faith saves.

Just before Jesus heals Bartimaeus, he tells him, “Go your way; your faith has saved you.” The same Greek word is used for “heal” and “save,” and Jesus has done both: healed Bartimaeus and saved him. Instead of following Jesus’ instructions to “Go your way,” Bartimaeus does the right thing – he goes Jesus’ way instead, taking up the role of the disciple by following him.

PARISH NEWS

Teresa Carmela Bacon (RIP)

We are sorry to inform you of the passing away of Teresa Carmela Bacon on 14th October. We will have a requiem mass for her on Friday 15th November at 10.30am in our church followed by a cremation at the Basildon Crematorium.

Women's Inauguration

OLOGC women's Group wishes to thank the Parish for the formal inauguration of the group last Sunday.

From left: Mary, Smitha, Priya, Perpetua, Joanna, Fran, Peris, Amanda and Jane.



Cuppa, Cake, & a Chat

Our next cuppa, cake and chat is on **Tuesday the 29th of October at 10am**. All are welcome!

Blessings of Graves

On **Saturday the 02nd of November**, if you would like any family members graves to be blessed, kindly assemble at the entrance of **Wickford Cemetery at 10.30am & Pitsea Cemetery at 12.30pm**.

God Bless.

NEW EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

We are pleased to announce that seven new ministers are to be commissioned on **Sunday 3rd November at the 11am Mass**.

Sr Mary Sebastian Ogwuike IHM

Sr Mary Sebastian Ogwuike, from Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Mother of Christ will be visiting the parish the weekend of **9/10th November** to make an appeal in behalf of the Missionary Sisters of England and Wales.

EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS MEETING

There will be a Eucharistic Ministers meeting on **Thursday 14th November at 7pm** in the Church. This meeting is long overdue, so you are urged to attend if possible.

School Forms (Secondary)

Those who wish to have your School Forms signed (entry to secondary), Fr. Britto is available after all 11AM masses in the whole of October.

Kindly wait in the little chapel for Fr. Britto to complete his meeting of parishioners as they leave.

Music, Liturgy and Prayer Evenings

If you are interested, here is an open invitation to you to join us on a Friday evening, once a month, for one hour between 7pm and 8pm. Our next get together is on the **15th of November**. Our parish family is made up of different cultures and music and it would be terrific if we could include them in our parish celebrations. So, if you have a favourite hymn or praise you might like us to learn for the future, please let Chris Tisi know so that it can be included, it is for just one hour a month & We hope it may inspire many of you to come along.

New Altar Servers

We are delighted to have new altar servers coming on board and would love to encourage all those who have now received their First Holy Communion to come forward. Will all parents of altar servers new or longer standing, please collect relevant paperwork from Amanda as our Safeguarding representative, or Father Britto. This is to be completed for each child. If you have any queries, please contact her at Amandapelham@rocketmail.com. We will be looking to get our altar servers together before Christmas for a small gathering and to share some pizza and also planning a special Guild of St Stephen's mass for them early in the new year.

Sick Friends and Relatives - Please pray for Jonathan Fabri, Jayne & Danny Balaam,

Beniamina Bilewycz, Arthur Brittain, Mary Caruana, Theresa Eldred, Patricia Gammell, Johnny Gee, Celine Guckian, Sharon Guckian, Gabrielle & Ralphy Langridge, Margaret Livesey, John Maguire, Bridget Mahoney, Carmella Micella, Elizabeth Mooney, Cecile Narbeth, Olivia Nazareth, Margaret O'Doherty, Joy Orrock, Carmelo Piazza, Maureen Price, Conchita Prime, Carol Rushbrook, John Sheridan, Gerry Smyth, Maria Weedon, Elizabeth Arnold, Jane Williams, Gomez, Patricia McEvoy, Maureen Sullivan, Susan Freeman, Jane Davenport, Nathalie Ah-key, Amparo Thorogood, George O'Boyle, Pat McEvoy, Ann Parkinson, Valerie Robinson, Nelly Prada, Michael Fitzgerald, May and Chris Carey, Doreen Green, Conrad Gomes, Peter Turner, Sr. Sior Cosgrave Una, Clairin Molloy, Celine Wells, Patricia Graves and Keith Bottjer, Robert Turner, Patricia Price, George Ross, Frank Daniels, Geoff Ebdon, Peter Griggs, Joan Fitzgerald, Sandra Fitzgerald, Maureen Sullivan. Chris Carey, Clifford Foxwell.

Anniversaries We pray for Antony Criss, Gertie Coggins, Elizabeth Bates, Thomas Morrice, Winifred Hewitt, Mary Thomas, Jeremiah (Derry) O'Sullivan, Fr. George Steadman, Fr. Stephen Wyatt, Fr. William Loveland, Catherine Young, Canon Thomas Bishop, Zenon Harykewicz, Joan (Mary) Merrin, Joseph Adrian Gillet, Canon Richard Gay, Leslie Allen, Anne White, Mary Phillot, James Arthur Woods, Bertram Pavesi, Magdalen Charlwood, Annie Fray, Lilian Whalley, Edward Chamberlain, Sheila Oates.

DIOCESAN NEWS

1. Events:

St Peter's Catholic Primary School – Open mornings

St Peter's Catholic Primary School Billericay warmly invites parents who are applying for a Reception place for September 2025 intake, to an Open Morning is on Wednesday 6th November at 9.30am.

Please contact the school office to book your place 01277 653770.

Catechist Training and Resources Day, Brentwood Ursuline Convent School, Saturday 9th November, 10am-3pm

With guest speakers, new workshops, exciting resources and fresh ideas. Open to anyone working with young people in the Diocese of Brentwood, including First Holy Communion / Confirmation Catechists, Parish Partnership Youth Coordinators and Youth Leaders as well as those who look after the children's liturgy, especially any young people (16+) who already are or may be interested in working as young leaders and catechists in the parish, and wish to develop their faith further post-confirmation. Please visit www.bcys.net/events for more information on how to reserve your **FREE** place.

Brentwood Catholic Youth Service

Catechist Training and Resources Day

Saturday 9th November, 10am – 3pm

Brentwood Ursuline Convent School, Queen's Road, Brentwood

Speakers * Workshops * Resources * Ideas

We would like to invite anyone working with young people in the Diocese of Brentwood, to join us for our annual Catechist Training and Resources Day run by the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service.

This includes, but is not limited to, all First Holy Communion and Confirmation Catechists, Parish Partnership Youth Coordinators and Youth Leaders as well as those who look after the children's liturgy,

We would particularly like to welcome any young people (16+) who already are or may be interested in working as young leaders and catechists in the parish, and wish to develop their faith further post-confirmation.

During the day we will be joined by national charities and organisations, hear from guest speakers, share exciting opportunities, have resources and information available to take away with you, as well as a chance to meet and share with fellow catechists and youth leaders.

For more information, including a proposed timetable for the day, please visit www.bcys.net/events/catechist-training-and-resources-day-2024

Please note we are using a different venue this year – Brentwood Ursuline Convent School, Queen's Road, Brentwood.

To reserve your place for this FREE event, please email gabriellaskinner@brcdt.org (or reply to this email) with the following information of each person attending;

Full Name

Role (First Holy Communion Catechist / Young Catechist / Confirmation Catechist / etc)

Parish name and town

Email Address

CELEBRATING THE JUBILEE

2025 will be a Holy Year for the whole church. Pope Francis has invited us to promote the rights of refugees in the Jubilee Year and beyond. On Saturday 12th October from 11 am (coffee available from 10.30) Victoria Firth and Liam Allmark of the Jesuit Refugee Service UK will discuss how we can take up Pope Francis' invitation. The event will take place at the Catholic Church of Christ the Eternal High Priest in Gidea Park (RM2 6DH). Live participation is encouraged, but the day can also be followed live or accessed later on www.whatgoodnews.org For those attending, the church is a short walk from Gidea Park station (Elizabeth Line). Easy access from A12 Gallows Corner, and from M25. There is ample car parking space at the church. Refreshments available. Please bring a packed lunch.

FLAME 2025 "Unstoppable" – Fan the Flame of Hope

Although it may feel like months away, we are excited to be preparing for Flame in March 2025, following on from the incredible experience that 1000 young people from the Brentwood Diocese had at the event earlier this year.

Once again, the BCYS will purchase a block of early bird tickets on behalf of the Diocese, to enable us to allocate seats together, in a very desirable area as close to the front as possible.

These early bird tickets are £29 each, a saving of £5 per ticket on the full price of £34, and will be purchased in January, which is why we are asking for your ticket requests now!

Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre – St Patrick’s Way Pilgrimage 2025

The Community is organising a pilgrimage on 22-27 April 2025. We will be journeying along the newly-established St Patrick's Way in the North of Ireland. The pilgrimage is open to all faiths and none and is aimed at being accessible to everyone - walkers and non-walkers. If you are interested in joining us, please find further details and booking form on our website <https://canonesses.co.uk/pilgrimage-st-patricks-way-april-2025/> or email projects@canonesses.co.uk. Closing date: 10 May 2024.

2. Programmes:

Bishop’s Certificate in Catechesis and Youth Ministry

is an online course is designed to be an entry level qualification to help in the ongoing formation of adults involved in sacramental preparation (First Holy Communion and/or Confirmation) or youth ministry in the Diocese of Brentwood. It includes both the development of practical skills & the deepening of theological knowledge. For more information or to register your interest please email clairebailey@brcdt.org or see the website <https://bcys.net/bishops-cert/>

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING AND THE ELECTION

An edited recording of the talks given recently at Christ the Eternal High Priest Catholic Church, Gidea Park, by Raymond Friel, CEO of Caritas Social Action Network, is now available to view. Simply go to the homepage of www.whatgoodnews.org and click on the link.

3. Appeals:

Caritas Diocese of Brentwood

In the Gospel narratives, we hear of the family displaced from their home, finding solace in a humble stable, cradling their newborn amidst the simplicity of their surroundings. This Holy Family, vulnerable yet resilient, resonates profoundly, urging us to reach out to those facing hardships during this Advent season. It prompts us to remember that amidst the festivities, there are individuals and families across Essex and East

London experiencing great difficulties, requiring our support, kindness, and care. Numerous charitable organisations persist in their efforts to aid the most vulnerable in our communities, and they rely on our collective support. Please visit the Caritas website to access links to the many charities in need of generosity and volunteers.

[Caritas Diocese of Brentwood \(caritasbrentwood.org\)](http://Caritas Diocese of Brentwood (caritasbrentwood.org))

CAFOD Israeli-Palestinian Crisis Appeal

Donate to CAFOD’s Israeli-Palestinian Crisis Appeal at cafod.org.uk/ipc or call 0303 303 3030 to support those affected and get funds to local trusted experts in Gaza and southern Israel who have been working alongside communities helping those most in need. Your donation will help support aid workers providing urgent humanitarian aid including food, water, and emergency shelter to those in need. Thank you for your prayers.

Lebanon Appeal (Aid to the Church in need)

4. Job adverts:

Recruitment - Cook (Job share)

Two cooks required to work via a job share in a unique position within a small Religious Community based in Colchester – The Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre.

Shift pattern: 1200hrs to 1900hrs

Two days per week and alternate weekends

If this is of interest to you, please submit a CV and any enquiries to: caremanager@canonesses.co.uk or 07932657038

Application closing date: 15/10/2024

Interview date to be confirmed

Cook (Full-time) – Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre

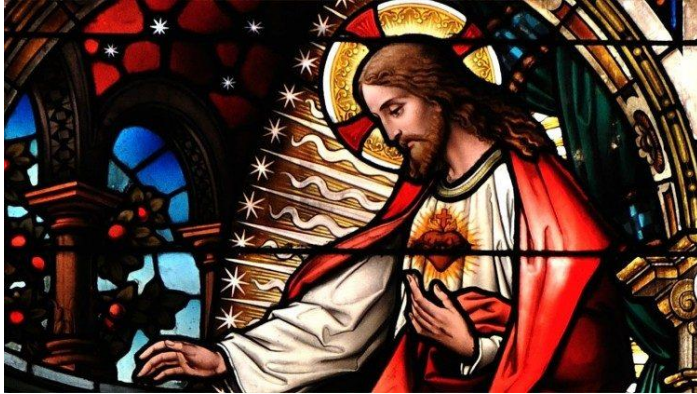
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday 12.00- 19.00hrs

Required to work in a unique position within a small religious community, based in Colchester – The Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre.

If this is of interest to you, please submit a CV and any enquiries to: caremanager@canonesses.co.uk or call on 07394980188.

Application closing date:13/11/2024

This week's Article:



'He Loved Us': Pope Francis' new encyclical on the Sacred Heart of Jesus

“Dilexit nos,” Pope Francis’ fourth Encyclical, retraces the tradition and relevance of thought on “the human and divine love of the heart of Jesus Christ,” calling for a renewal of authentic devotion to avoid forgetting the tenderness of faith, the joy of serving, and the fervour of mission.

By Alessandro Di Bussolo

“He loved us’, Saint Paul says of Christ (cf. *Rom* 8:37), in order to make us realize that nothing can ever “separate us” from that love (*Rom* 8:39)”: Thus begins Pope Francis’ fourth Encyclical, which takes its title from the opening words, *Dilexit nos*. The Encyclical is dedicated to the human and divine love of the Heart of Jesus Christ: “His open heart has gone before us and waits for us, unconditionally, asking only to offer us His love and friendship,” the Pope writes in the introductory paragraph. “For ‘He loved us first’ (cf. 1 Jn 4:10). Because of Jesus, ‘we have come to know and believe in the love that God has for us’ (1 Jn 4:16).

The love of Christ represented in His Sacred Heart

In our societies, the Pope writes, “we are also seeing a proliferation of varied forms of religiosity that have nothing to do with a personal relationship with the God of love” (87), while Christianity often forgets “the tender consolations of faith, the joy of serving others, the fervour of personal commitment to mission” (88).

In response, Pope Francis proposes a new reflection on the love of Christ represented in His Holy Heart. He calls for a renewal of “authentic devotion” (163) to the Sacred Heart, recalling that in the Heart of Christ “we find the whole Gospel”

(89). It is in His Heart that “we truly come at last to know ourselves and we learn to love” (30).

The world seems to have lost its heart

Pope Francis explains that by encountering the love of Christ, “we become capable of forging bonds of fraternity, of recognizing the dignity of each human being, and of working together to care for our common home,” noting the relationship between *Dilexit nos* and his social Encyclicals *Laudato si’* and *Fratelli tutti* (217).

And “in the presence of the Heart of Christ,” he asks the Lord “to have mercy on this suffering world” and pour upon it “the treasures of His light and love, so that our world, which presses forward despite wars, socio-economic disparities, and uses of technology, that threaten our humanity, may regain the most important and necessary thing of all: the heart” (31).

When announcing the preparation of the document at the end of the **General Audience** on June 5, the Pope clarified that it would do us great good to meditate on various aspects of the Lord’s love, which can illuminate the path of ecclesial renewal, and say something meaningful to a world that seems to have lost its heart.”

This encyclical comes as celebrations are underway for the 350th anniversary of the first manifestation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque in 1673; the anniversary celebrations will conclude on 27 June 2025.

The importance of returning to the heart

Opening with a brief introduction and divided into five chapters, the Encyclical on the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus incorporates, as announced in June, “the precious reflections of previous Magisterial texts and a long history that goes back to the Sacred Scriptures, in order to re-propose today, to the whole Church, this devotion imbued with spiritual beauty.”

The first chapter, “*The Importance of the Heart*,” explains why it is necessary to “return to the heart” in a world where we are tempted to become “insatiable consumers and slaves to the mechanisms of the market” (2). It analyzes what we mean by “heart”: the Bible speaks of it as a core “that lies hidden beneath all outward appearances” (4), a place where what is shown on the outside or hidden doesn’t matter; there, we are truly ourselves (6). The heart leads to questions that matter: what meaning do I want for my life, my choices, or my actions? Who am I before God (8)?

The Pope points out that the current “depreciation” of the heart originated in Hellenic and pre-Christian rationalism, in post-Christian idealism, and in materialism in its various guises” where great philosophical thought prioritized concepts like “reason, will, or freedom.”

“The failure to make room for the heart... has resulted in a stunting of the idea of a personal centre, in which love, in the end, is the one reality that can unify all the others” (10), the Pope writes.

For Pope Francis, it is important to recognize that “I am my heart, for my heart is what sets me apart, shapes my spiritual identity and puts me in communion with other people” (14).

‘The world can change beginning from the heart’

It is the heart that unites the fragments and “makes all authentic bonding possible, since a relationship not shaped by the heart is incapable of overcoming the fragmentation caused by individualism” (17).

The spirituality of saints like Ignatius of Loyola (accepting the Lord’s friendship is a matter of the heart) and Saint John Henry Newman (the Lord saves us by speaking to our heart from His Sacred Heart) teaches us, writes Pope Francis, that “before the Heart of Jesus, living and present, our mind, enlightened by the Spirit, grows in the understanding of His words” (27). This has social consequences, as “the world can change beginning with the heart” (28).

‘Actions and words of love’

The second chapter is dedicated to the actions and words of love of Christ. The acts by which He treats us as friends and shows that God “is closeness, compassion, and tender love” are evident in His encounters with the Samaritan woman, Nicodemus, the prostitute, the adulterous woman, and the blind man on the road (35).

His gaze, which “plumbs the depths of your heart” (39), shows “how attentive Jesus was to individuals and above all to their problems and needs” (40), in such a way “as to admire the good things He recognizes in us”—as He recognized the good in the centurion—even if others ignore them (41).

His most eloquent word of love is “being nailed to the Cross,” after having wept for His friend Lazarus and suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane, aware of His violent death “at the hands of those whom He had loved so greatly” (45, 46).

The mystery of a heart that loved so much

In the third chapter, “*This is the heart that has loved so greatly*,” the Pope recalls how the Church reflects and has reflected on “the holy mystery of the Lord’s Sacred Heart.” He refers to Pius XII’s Encyclical *Haurietis aquas*, on the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus (1956). He clarifies that “devotion to the Heart of Christ is not the veneration of a single organ apart from the Person of Jesus,” because we adore “the whole Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, represented by an image that accentuates His heart” (48).

The image of the heart of flesh helps us contemplate that the love of the Heart of Jesus Christ not only understands divine charity but also extends to human affection (61). His Heart, Pope Francis continues, quoting Pope Benedict XVI, contains a “threefold love”: the sensitive love of His physical heart and His twofold spiritual love, both human and divine, in which we find “the infinite in the finite” (67).

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is a synthesis of the Gospel

The Pope clarifies that the visions of some saints, particularly devoted to the Heart of Christ, “are rich sources of encouragement and can prove greatly beneficial,” but “are not something the faithful are obliged to believe as if they were the Word of God.”

At the same time, he reminds us, along with Pope Pius XII, that this devotion “cannot be said ‘to owe its origin to private revelations.’” Rather, “devotion to Christ’s heart is essential for our Christian life to the extent that it expresses our openness in faith and adoration to the mystery of the Lord’s divine and human love” and “in this sense, we can once more affirm that the Sacred Heart is a synthesis of the Gospel” (83).

The Pope calls for renewing devotion to the Heart of Christ, especially to counter “new manifestations of a disembodied spirituality” that are multiplying in society (87). It is essential, he says, to return to “the incarnate synthesis of the Gospel” (90) in the face of “communities and pastors excessively caught up in external activities, structural reforms that have little to do with the Gospel, obsessive reorganization plans, worldly projects, secular ways of thinking and mandatory programmes” (88).

The experience of ‘a love that gives itself as drink’

In the last two chapters, Pope Francis highlights two aspects that devotion to the Sacred Heart should unite to “to nourish us and bring us closer to the Gospel”: personal spiritual experience, and community and missionary commitment.

In the fourth chapter, “*A love that gives itself as drink*,” he revisits the Scriptures, and with the early Christians, recognizes Christ and His pierced side in “the one whom they have pierced,” a prophecy from the book of Zechariah in which God refers to Himself as an open fountain for the people, to quench their thirst for God’s love, “to cleanse them from sin and impurity” (95).

Various Church Fathers have mentioned “the wounded side of Jesus as the source of the water of the Holy Spirit”—especially St. Augustine, who “opened the way to devotion to the Sacred Heart as the locus of our personal encounter with the Lord” (103).

Gradually, this wounded side, recalls the Pope, “began to be associated with His Heart” (109) and he lists several holy women who “in recounting their experiences of encounter with Christ, have spoken of resting in the heart of the Lord as the source of life and interior peace (110).”

Among the modern devotees, the encyclical first mentions St. Francis de Sales, who presents his spiritual proposal with “a single heart pierced by two arrows,” (118).

Apparitions to St Margaret Mary Alacoque

Under the influence of this spirituality, St Margaret Mary Alacoque recounted the apparitions of Jesus at Paray-le-Monial, between the end of December 1673 and

June 1675. The core of the message conveyed to us can be summed up in the words heard by St Margaret: “This is the heart that so loved human beings that it has spared nothing, even to emptying and consuming itself in order to show them its love” (121).

Therese of Lisieux, Ignatius of Loyola and Faustina Kowalska

Dilexit nos goes on to speak of St Therese of Lisieux, who described Jesus as the One “whose heart beats in unison with my own” (134); and of her letters to Sister Marie, which help avoid focusing the devotion to the Sacred Heart on suffering, “since some had presented reparation primarily in terms of accumulating sacrifices and good works.” Instead, “Therese, for her part, presents confidence as the greatest and best offering, pleasing to the heart of Christ” (138).

Pope Francis also dedicates several passages of the encyclical to the place of the Sacred Heart in the history of the Society of Jesus, emphasizing that in his Spiritual Exercises, St Ignatius of Loyola suggests to those following the method “to enter into the Heart of Christ” in a heart-to-heart dialogue.

In September 1871, he notes, Father Pieter Jan Beckx consecrated the Society to the Sacred Heart of Jesus; and Father Pedro Arrupe did so again in 1972 (146).

The experiences of St Faustina Kowalska, Pope Francis recalled, re-proposed the devotion “by greatly emphasizing the glorious life of the risen Lord and his divine mercy”; and motivated by these reflections, St John Paul II also “intimately linked his reflections on divine mercy with devotion to the Heart of Christ” (149).

Speaking of the “devotion of consolation,” the Encyclical explains that seeing the signs of the Passion preserved by the heart of the Risen One, “it is natural, then, that the faithful should wish to respond not only to this immense outpouring of love, but also to the suffering that the Lord chose to endure for the sake of that love” (151).

Pope Francis also asks “that no one make light of the fervent devotion of the holy faithful people of God, which in its popular piety seeks to console Christ” (160). God, he says, “offers us consolation ‘so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction, with the consolation by which we ourselves are consoled by God’” (162).

Devotion to the Heart of Christ sends us to the brethren

The fifth and final chapter of the Encyclical, “*Love for Love*,” develops the communitarian, social, and missionary dimension of any authentic devotion to the Heart of Christ, which, as it “leads us to the Father,” also “sends us forth to our brothers and sisters” (163). Indeed, love for one’s brothers and sisters is the greatest gesture we can offer Him “to return love for love” (166).

Looking at the history of spirituality, the Pope recalls that St. Charles de Foucauld’s missionary commitment made him a “universal brother”: “Allowing himself to be shaped by the heart of Christ, he sought to shelter the whole of suffering humanity in his fraternal heart” (179).

Pope Francis then speaks of “reparation”: as St. John Paul II explained, “by entrusting ourselves together to the heart of Christ, ‘over the ruins accumulated by hatred and violence, the greatly desired civilization of love, the Kingdom of the heart of Christ, can be built’” (182).

The mission to make the world fall in love

The Encyclical recalls again with St. John Paul II that “Consecration to the heart of Christ is thus ‘to be seen in relation to the Church’s missionary activity, since it responds to the desire of Jesus’ heart to spread throughout the world, through the members of His Body, His complete commitment to the Kingdom.’ As a result, ‘through the witness of Christians, ‘love will be poured into human hearts, to build up the body of Christ, which is the Church, and to build a society of justice, peace and fraternity’” (206).

To avoid the great risk, underlined by Saint Paul VI, “amid all the things we say and do, we fail to bring about a joyful encounter with the love of Christ who embraces us and saves us” (208), we need “missionaries who are themselves in love and who, enthralled by Christ, feel bound to share this love that has changed their lives” (209).

The Prayer of Pope Francis

The text concludes with this prayer of Pope Francis:

“I ask our Lord Jesus Christ to grant that His Sacred Heart may continue to pour forth the streams of living water that can heal the hurt we have caused, strengthen our ability to love and serve others, and inspire us to journey together towards a just, solidary and fraternal world. Until that day when we will rejoice in celebrating together the banquet of the heavenly kingdom in the presence of the risen Lord, who harmonizes all our differences in the light that radiates perpetually from his open heart. May he be blessed forever” (220).