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Sacred Heart Year In My Heart

By REV. LOUIS J. HOHMAN

Those who propagate this devotion will have their names written in my Heart, never to be blotted out. I promise they in the excessive mercy of my Heart that my all-powerful love will grant to all those who communicate on the First Friday in nine consecutive months the grace of final penitence: They shall not die in my disgrace nor without receiving their Sacraments. My Divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment.

These last two promises of the Sacred Heart we group together. We shall not examine them in detail but rather comment on the fundamental spirit behind them.

You have heard the saying, "God will not be outdone in generosity." It sums up the meaning of these promises very nicely.

How much God loves us we can never fully know this side of heaven. But we can know it in large measure through Jesus Christ, our Lord. We know it from his very coming, from his kindness, his mercy, his zeal for our salvation and happiness: from his death upon the Cross to satisfy for our sins; from his gift of himself in the Sacrament of Penance and his gift of himself in the Holy Eucharist. In countless other personal ways we know his love.

Here we must pause. What if that love is not reciprocated? What if we do not love Christ in return?

For all its goodness and beauty, it is like a symphony unheard by human ears — a sad and lonely beauty unreciprocated.

So at least from our point of view, devotion to the love of Christ, to the Sacred Heart, is empty and sad unless we love him in return — unselfishly, unmeasurably.

And of course, love must be freely given or it is not true love. You cannot force someone to love you. He must choose to do so or it is merely a farce, meaningless.

The same is true with Jesus Christ. As God, he gave us the gift of free will of choosing. If he were to force us to love him, he would be retracting the gift of free will, reducing us to the status of beasts and vegetables. With them there is the devotion and service only of inward compulsion.

Obviously it is not included in the idea of love which we have proposed and which God has shown for us.

Many preachers have used the following anecdote to illustrate this point but it bears repeating.

Holman Hunt painted a rather nice picture of Christ standing at a cottage door with a lantern in his hand. He is knocking upon the door which is a symbol of the human heart. The unusual part of the picture is the fact that the artist deliberately omitted a door handle or knob. He explains that this is one door which can be opened only from within.

Christ cannot enter the human heart unless it be opened from within. Only then can he take up his abode there and pour out the infinite gifts of his own loving heart.

It makes religion look ridiculous to thinking men and women when people rush to make Novenas to the Sacred Heart (with enthusiastic petitions for only temporal favors) and rush to make the Nine Fridays, while their lives are deliberately and obviously not in tune with the Divine Master. They reach out for the favors of his love without being willing to give anything of themselves.

Let it be clear that this is by no means a universal condition. But it does happen far too frequently, enough to make the enemies of Christ jump with delight. "See, I told you so; it's all outward show."

All of us can afford to examine our consciences. Do I really try to love Jesus Christ? Unselfishly? Generously? Or am I a gimmick and "gimme" Catholic?

If I am really trying then the last two promises are for me. How generous Jesus will be to our feeble response to his love I could not describe. You must find out for yourself.

Father Epping Honored

THE REV. RAYMOND J. EPPING, left, is presented a painting of the new St. Theodore Church as a farewell gift from his former parishioners. The Rev. Elmer W. Heindel, new pastor, makes the presentation as the Rev. John Steger, assistant pastor, looks on.



Program of events follows: 2 p.m. Baseball game between boys and girls of this parish are invited to the Youth Club's Third Annual Picnic, Sunday, July 17 at Hamlin Beach Park. Meeting time is 10:30 a.m. Caravan of cars will leave Waconda Ave. and Culver Road at 11 a.m. Tickets are seventy-five cents and can be obtained from Nancy Peiticher, picnic chairman.

WHAT'S NEW In The Parishes

SACRED HEART CATHEDRAL. Annual Parish Picnic to be held Sunday, July 17 at Lower Maplewood Park from 2 to 5 p.m. Honored guest will be Father Michael Hogan recently transferred to St. Patrick's, Elmira after seven years service to parishioners of Sacred Heart. A record attendance is predicted by the committee as many parishioners are expected to greet Father Hogan personally, and wish him well in his new assignment. Father Conrad Sundholm, newly appointed assistant pastor at Sacred Heart, will be present to meet the parishioners.

ST. RITA, Webster. St. Rita Society's annual picnic to be held at Sweet's Farm, Webster, July 19 at 6:30 p.m. Tickets can be obtained at the rectory or after Mass, Sunday. Mrs. Mary Metz and Mrs. Jane Kaler are in charge.

ST. SALOME. All high school boys and girls of this parish are invited to the Youth Club's Third Annual Picnic, Sunday, July 17 at Hamlin Beach Park. Meeting time is 10:30 a.m. Caravan of cars will leave Waconda Ave. and Culver Road at 11 a.m. Tickets are seventy-five cents and can be obtained from Nancy Peiticher, picnic chairman.

CORPUS CHRISTI. Summer Festival, corner of East Main and Prince Streets, Rochester, Friday and Saturday, this week, July 15 and 16. Fish Fry on Friday evening, ham dinner, Saturday. Events begin at 6 p.m. Everyone is invited.

ST. JAMES. Ninth Annual Parish Picnic to be held Sunday, July 24 at Ellison Park, Sycamore Grove, from 1 to 5 p.m. rain or shine. Plans underway to make outing enjoyable. Father Francis M. Kenney, honorary chairman; Mrs. Joseph Plis, Anthony Miniac, co-chairmen. Subchairmen are: Mrs. Ed Reagan, Eugene Keenan, tickets; Mrs. Donald McCormack, Richard Miniac, refreshments; Mrs. Cosimo Calotta, Joseph Cavalry, games; Mrs. John Apetz, Frank Beahan, prizes; Mrs. Nicholas Genovesi, publicity; Leonard Vollmer, parking.

MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD. St. Anne Society to have Solemn Mass, Sunday, July 31 at 11 a.m. to celebrate Feast of St. Anne. A sermon in Italian on St. Anne will be preached. A picnic will be held on church grounds at 2 p.m.

HONORA MALLEY. Honora Malley, of Nazareth Academy, has been selected to serve on a panel to discuss Latin America at the 19th National Convention of the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade, to be held August 25-29 at the University of Notre Dame.

She will speak during a convention committee of Sixty meeting on Latin America, which will be chaired by Father Ronald Hoffman, O.F.M., Conv., of Washington, personal representative of Bishop Agnelo Rossi of Barro do Para, Brazil, who is President of the Committee for the Preservation of the Faith in Latin America (CLAF).

MISS MALLEY'S appointment to the convention program was made by Msgr. Edward A. Freking, Executive Chairman of the CSMC Board (Cincinnati), on the recommendation of Sister Martina Marie, CSMC Moderator.

The school was invited to appoint a panelist on the basis of its excellent program on Latin America.

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