

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Jun 3rd 2016

Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

This beautiful solemn feast lets us reflect upon the sacredness of Jesus' heart full of love for us. His heart is on fire with love for us. It is good to pause and ask what that can mean. For me, I need the images of heart and fire to let myself get closer to how passionately Jesus loves me, loves all of us.

The readings remind us that it is a love which cares with the fidelity and dedication of a self-sacrificing shepherd.

For most of us, I suspect the challenge of our life is to let Jesus love us. When this reality moves from our heads to our hearts, we need to face the part of us which lets or doesn't let ourselves be loved by Jesus. For whatever reason, for whatever history, or however we have grown in the faith, there can be resistance in us to experiencing love, to receiving it and to enjoying it - even from others, but, perhaps especially from Jesus. We can tend, sometimes, to think that feeling "unworthy" is "religious." It takes a while to surrender that, to the reality of the fact that Jesus loves us unconditionally, without conditions. He doesn't love us "more" if we are better. In fact, his love for us grows the more we need to be loved, to be comforted, to be found from our wandering.

It is great to reflect upon the kind of love we can experience from the Heart of Jesus. It is tender, patient, understanding, forgiving, encouraging, supportive, comforting, and accompanying love. He is so faithful to us. What brings it alive for me is that this fidelity is full of affection. He likes us and enjoys us and wants to be with us, to be with us in communion we will enjoy forever, but also to share with us that intimacy our hearts really desire and crave most deeply. As Augustine noted so accurately, from his own experience, we can all pray: "O, Lord, our God, you made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they rest in you." We can recognize when we are restless, when we feel unsettled and crave stuff we think will make us happy, or at least relieve some emptiness. Jesus promises to make his home in us and to let us make our home in him. When we come home to that love, we are really happy.

The desire I have, which I think we all can long for, is that our hearts will be like his; that we beat as one with his; that we are on fire to love as he does; that we are fearless in letting go with love that expresses itself in "deeds more than in words." (St. Ignatius in the Spiritual Exercises).

Our prayer today can be:

Oh, Heart of Jesus, so sacred with love, show me your love. Let me enjoy it and be filled with it and freed by it. And then, make my heart like yours. Let me share your love, with those nearest to me and gradually with those who are farthest away and need loving the most. Let me dedicate my life, my heart, to being tender and forgiving, to accompanying and comforting, to bringing justice and unity.

Sacred Heart Parish



*Photo from the sanctuary wall of Sacred Heart Parish
in Punta Gorda, Florida*

The painting is by artist, Joseph Fanelli.

Prints are available through the parish office.

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