



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY WEEK OF THE
PONTIFICAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES** *Friday, 26 September 1986*

Dear Friends in Christ,

1. I AM PLEASED to welcome all of you who have taken part in the International Symposium on the Alliance of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary that was held this past week in Fatima. I wish to greet in a special way Cardinal Sin, the President of your Symposium, and together with him all who were responsible for formulating and carrying out the specific plans of your week of theological study.

The title of your Symposium was taken from my Angelus Address of September 15, 1985, when I made reference to that "admirable alliance of hearts" of the Son of God and of his Mother. We can indeed say that devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary has been an important part of the "sensus fidei" of the People of God during recent centuries. These devotions seek to direct our attention to Christ and to the role of his Mother in the mystery of Redemption, and, though distinct, they are interrelated by reason of the enduring relation of love that exists between the Son and his Mother.

2. Much research has been done on devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Hence you have made it your specific aim to reflect upon devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in the perspective of Sacred Scripture and Tradition, while at the same time concentrating on the intimate link that unites the hearts of Jesus and his Mother. Devotion to the heart of Mary cannot be traced to the early centuries of Christian history, though the heart of Mary is indeed mentioned in the Gospel of Luke.

There are some references to the heart of the Mother of God in the commentaries upon the Scriptures by the Fathers of the Church, but for the most part it was not until the seventeenth century that under the influence of Saint John Eudes this devotion became widespread. In our own century we see that the message of Our Lady at Fatima, the consecration of the world in 1942 to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by my predecessor Pope Pius XII, and theological initiatives such as your own have helped us to appreciate the importance of this devotion.

It is worthy of note that the Decree by which Pope Pius XII instituted for the universal Church the celebration in honour of the Immaculate Heart of Mary states: "With this devotion the Church renders the honour due to the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, since under the symbol of this heart she venerates with reverence the eminent and singular holiness of the Mother of God and especially her most ardent love for God and Jesus her Son and moreover her maternal compassion for all those redeemed by the divine Blood". Thus it can be said that our devotion to Mary's Immaculate Heart expresses our reverence for her maternal compassion both for Jesus and for all of us her spiritual children, as she stood at the foot of the Cross.

I presented this same thought in my first Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*", in which I pointed out that from the first moment of the Redemptive Incarnation, "under the special influence of the Holy Spirit, Mary's heart, the heart of both a virgin and a mother, has always followed the work of her Son and has gone out to all those whom Christ has embraced and continues to embrace with inexhaustible love".

3. We see symbolised in the heart of Mary her maternal love, her singular sanctity and her central role in the redemptive mission of her Son. It is with regard to her special role in her Son's mission that devotion to Mary's Heart has prime importance, for through love of her Son and of all of humanity she exercises a unique instrumentality in bringing us to him. The act of entrusting to the Immaculate Heart of Mary that I solemnly performed at Fatima on May 13, 1982, and once again on March 25, 1984 at the conclusion of the Extraordinary Holy Year of the Redemption, is based upon this truth about Mary's maternal love and particular intercessory role. If we turn to Mary's Immaculate Heart she will surely help us to conquer the menace of evil, which so easily takes root in the hearts of the people of today, and whose immeasurable effects already weigh down upon our modern world and seem to block the paths towards the future".

Our act of consecration refers ultimately to the heart of her Son, for as the Mother of Christ she is wholly united to his redemptive mission. As at the marriage feast of Cana, when she said "Do whatever he tells you", Mary directs all things to her Son, who answers our prayers and forgives our sins. Thus by dedicating ourselves to the heart of Mary we discover a sure way to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, symbol of the merciful love of our Saviour.

The act of entrusting ourselves to the Heart of Our Lady establishes a relationship of love with her in which we dedicate to her all that we have and are. This consecration is practised essentially by a life of grace, of purity, of prayer, of penance that is joined to the fulfilment of all the duties of a Christian, and of reparation for our sins and the sins of the world.

My esteemed friends, I encourage you to continue your scholarly efforts to promote among the People of God a better understanding of devotion to the hearts of the Son and of his Mother. I thank you for your presence here and I assure you of my prayers for your worthy endeavours. In the love of the hearts of Jesus and Mary I impart to all of you my Apostolic Blessing.

© Copyright 1986 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana