



Message on the Month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
His Eminence Frank Cardinal Leo
Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto
1 June 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

May Jesus and Mary be in your hearts.

Among the Christian People, it is our privilege and delight to honour in a very special way the most Sacred Heart of Jesus. I earnestly invite therefore all the faithful of the Archdiocese of Toronto this June to join in celebrating Jesus in the reality of his loving, burning, sacrificial and life-giving Heart. This year the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart is commemorated on June 27th though the entire month is dedicated to this long-standing and much appreciated devotion in the Church. As Pilgrims of Hope during the Jubilee Holy Year we recall the words of Pope Francis, “Hope is born of love and based on the love springing from the pierced heart of Jesus upon the cross” (*Spes non Confundit*, 3).

The Sacred Heart is one of the most profound and enduring symbols in Catholic devotional life as it encapsulates the depth of Christ’s love for humanity, his freely chosen passion, and his ongoing intercession for the world as our Mediator and Eternal High Priest. When viewed through the lens of hope, this timeless devotion takes on a new depth of transformative power. It is important for us to remember that the Sacred Heart does not merely refer to Jesus’ physical heart, but to his entire interior life—his will, emotions, thoughts, desires, and love. It signifies the love that motivated the Incarnation, Our Lord’s earthly ministry, his Passion, and ultimately the offering of himself on the Cross for the redemption of the world (cf. *Dilexit Nos*, 3-8). In this way the Sacred Heart becomes not just a symbol of the greatest love that ever existed, but also a wellspring of hope and endurance in the face of suffering, sin, and uncertainty for all those who approach the Sacred Heart with faith, humility and trust.

While hope anchors us in the love of God amidst the turbulent seas of life, it is fundamentally oriented towards our future glory with God in His Kingdom (cf. CCC, 1820). Simply put, whereas faith believes in God and charity loves him, hope longs for union with him and trusts that, despite our human frailty and suffering, such union is truly possible (cf. Rm 8:31-19). We have a foretaste of this union in the Eucharist, and we recognise that in the Divine Person of Jesus Christ, God and humanity are forever united, accomplishing the union we hope for and making Jesus Christ the revelation of hope incarnate (cf. *Dilexit Nos*, 65-70).

In meditating on the Sacred Heart, we are drawn into the discovery of the personal face of God. For men and women of faith, God is more than a concept, an ideal, the divine law-giver or the mysterious “Someone up there, somewhere”. He is the God who has revealed himself, his very life and his plan for us; he is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of the living and not of the dead. He is the God who knows, listens, cares for, loves, gives of himself and saves. He is the God of Jesus – the only God.



The Sacred Heart of Jesus, understood as a source of new life, helps us to avoid divinizing anything in this world since there is only the one true God and idolatry is a one-way boulevard to spiritual slavery. The danger is to put our faith in an impersonal and distant God, one who does not care or have any interest in our lives. The result of this false credence is that we allow ourselves to live any which way because it does not matter in the end. Nothing can be farther from the truth. Jesus' Sacred Heart is a reminder that no one can replace God; nothing is more important than to know, love and serve him, and that the choices and decisions we make, as well as the lifestyle we lead, do matter, they matter to God. Jesus' Sacred Heart points to his nature as both God and man: as God we are to glorify and praise him; as man, he understands our human condition. Jesus' Heart retells us the sacred truth that God does very much care about everything in our life, because he loves us; God does have a plan for our life and wants us to be holy, because he loves us. God is interested in what we think, say and do because he loves us; God is a close, caring, just and compassionate God who sees us and wants us to grow spiritually and humanly, because he loves us. And God will never abandon us to our woes and difficulties, because he loves us.

The Sacred Heart which depicts Christ's physical heart, pierced and surrounded by thorns calling to mind his suffering and imbued with the inextinguishable fame of his love, is ultimately the only symbol we really need which underscores our human dignity, our call to holiness of life, Jesus' sacrificial love for humanity, how precious we are to him and how ugly sin is as an offence to him. We should all honour the Sacred Heart in every home, parish, school, convent, hospital and Catholic institution. Symbols are important as they convey meanings in what they represent, and they point beyond their own reality to something else, someone else. Our very own Catholic symbols help us to deepen our faith and shape our prayer life, not to mention the lives we lead and the choices we make. They are like bridges joining together the material and spiritual worlds, and reveal to us the Gospel truths. They showcase what our values are, what is important to us and how we intend to live our faith. We need to make sure that the symbols we use are consistent with our Catholic faith and not borrowed from ideological fora, promoted by lobby groups and endorsed by political movements. We ought to honour and respect our traditions and not compromise the integrity of the faith by using symbols that are contrary to God's divine revelation. We do good to use our own symbols to tell our own story without resorting to trendy, misguided and inadequate symbols that do not represent us as Catholics but rather contribute to confusion, distortions and ambiguities about what the Catholic faith truly teaches regarding the human person, human nature, and natural moral law.

Finally, during this month of June, I would encourage you to take time to renew your consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. If you haven't already consecrated yourself, your family and household to the most Sacred Heart, please consider doing so. In addition, I recommend you take up Pope Francis' Encyclical, *Dilexit Nos*, which is dedicated to this wonderful devotion and spirituality.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us. Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.