

PRAYER AND SERVICE

**NICOLAS
BARRIGA
PEDROSO
SILVA ARREDONDO**

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GENERAL OFFICE OF THE APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER
BORGO S. SPIRITO, 4 - CP 6139 - 00195 ROME - PRATI (ITALY)

**GREETINGS FROM THE NEW GENERAL DIRECTOR
OF THE APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER
REV. FR. ADOLFO NICOLAS, S.J.
SUPERIOR GENERAL OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS**

Dear friends

In coming to understand better this surprising and beautiful new mission as General of the Society of Jesus, I was happy to learn that I am also the Director General of the Apostleship of Prayer and the Eucharistic Youth Movement. I warmly greet you all, thankful for what you do for the Church and for the Lord through your apostolic prayer and your numerous services to God's People.

Knowing that millions of members of the Apostleship of Prayer throughout the world seek to mould their lives to the Heart of Jesus and to love and serve their brothers and sisters, fills me with joy and consolation. Through your lives God is surely showing his love to many people in need of affection. In moments of pain or sadness, we frequently have no other direction to turn but to Him.

I warmly greet the young people who belong to the Eucharistic Youth Movement and Eucharistic Crusade. The world needs your courageous and generous example of following Jesus. Before the serious challenges we must face in today's world, never doubt the Lord is next to you reminding you that his love is stronger than life itself!

I also rely on your prayers for me, as I begin this new and unexpected mission.

May God bless each of you and your loved ones.

PRESENTATION

Claudio Barriga, S.J.

Dear friends:

With the joy of feeling revived through the Risen One, I greet you in this new issue of PRAYER AND SERVICE.

Each one of us, in his specific vocation and mission, has lived at this time the novelty of being led by the Lord along his/her path of growth and love. We have lived a particular joy as the family of the Apostleship of Prayer in welcoming our new World Director, the new Superior General of the Society of Jesus. We are grateful for all that the Lord has given us through Father Kolvenbach, who has been a driving spirit of the Apostleship of Prayer throughout his Generalship.

Last September the meeting of the *National European Secretaries* of the AP was held in Malta with great joy and profit for the participants. In October *India* welcomed the visit of the Delegate Director General, who marvelled finding the basic practices of the AP present throughout the Church of that country. Catholics all over make their daily offering, pray for the Pope's intentions, love and follow the Sacred Heart of Jesus, even though the majority has never even heard of the AP. The enormous number of children and young people who are being trained in their faith through our widespread juvenile branch is particularly striking.

Last December Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa and Zambia received the visit of the Delegate Director General. It was an occasion to joyfully celebrate God's works and renew the mission to testify the love of Christ's Heart where it is most needed.

This year the International Eucharistic Congress in Quebec will stimulate us in the task of "training Christians modeled on the Eucharist", in the words of our beloved John Paul II. In July the

Eucharistic Youth Movement will take part in the Youth World Day in Sydney, launching us into new challenges. This year the meetings of the National Secretaries of Latin America in Buenos Aires and those of Asia in Japan will also be held. Together let us ask for the gift of the Spirit to discover in all these events the signs of his guidance, for greater service to our brothers and sisters.

What are the contents of this issue?

A workshop on the Heart of Jesus organized in July 2007 by the Mexican Religious Families linked to this spirituality provides us with interesting material for an in-depth study on it and to confirm its validity in present-day society.

A report presented during this workshop, "Gazing on Jesus from a pierced heart" offers us -in the framework of love- the outlines of a Christology "from the heart".

Another report by the Mexican Father Raul Silva, msc, leads us wisely through the writings of the Fathers of the Church, helping us to go more in-depth into the roots of our spirituality.

The yearly meeting of the Spanish AP was an occasion to speak of the performance of the AP, highlighting its concrete use and showing it as a valid and adequate option for bringing spirituality to the men and women of today. We are sharing it with our readers in the article entitled "What we propose when we say AP".

Finally, we have a valuable contribution from Father Dario Pedroso from Portugal who recapitulates the history and origins of the AP in order to develop in a simple and in-depth manner the pillars of our spirituality. It is a useful text for remembering and explaining what is essential to the AP.

We wish you profitable reading, and a renewed missionary urge from the Heart of Love.

GAZING ON JESUS FROM A PIERCED HEART

*Claudio Barriga, S.J.
Guadalajara, July 18th 2007*

I. A Christology from the heart.

We are witnessing a moment of renewed interest in the spirituality of the Heart of Jesus after a period of relative silence. This theological renewal has occurred thanks to a greater understanding of the biblical meaning of the heart. We understand it today as the symbol of the totality of a person, not as a part of him, with emphasis on its interiority. Both the Hebrew word "leb" (OT) and the Greek word "Kardia" (NT) which we use to indicate the heart are understood as the unifying centre of the human being, his spiritual and corporal lives in unity, without dissociation.

Today reflection concerning the Heart of Jesus is clearly focused towards Jesus and his love rather than towards a physical part of his body (a fact which was important in the past). His Heart attracts us because his true human nature attracts us, as Gaudium et Spes 22 beautifully states: "He worked with human hands, he thought with a human mind. He acted with a human will and with a human heart he loved". This is why today the expression "Heart of Jesus" seems preferable to that of "Sacred Heart". This is why the representation of the Heart alone, isolated from Jesus' body, seems inadvisable.

What does focusing one's gaze on Jesus through building up a "Christology from the heart" mean? How many kinds of Christologies are there? Without being experts on the theme we can say that there are various options for presenting Jesus from different points of view or hermeneutical keys. Studying Jesus based on the experience of the ancient Desert Fathers will show aspects of Jesus different from those which issue from the Carmelite tradition, while Jesus' characteristics which stem from

an oriental theology will be different from those of the Jesus of the Theology of Liberation. Each one of these perspectives enriches the vision of the Christology as a whole.

In our case, we have our own key of interpretation. We want to gaze at Jesus from the heart. From his Heart or from our hearts? Undoubtedly from both. We want to have a theology with the heart, involving not only our intellect but also our personal and affective relationship with the person whom we wish to love above all else. And at the same time we want to look inside his own Heart, insofar as we can, to look on to the mystery of God's mercy and tenderness which is opened to us in him. Our theology will be one of adoration, of the personal experience of feeling loved, of amazement and emotion in front of God's love which Jesus' human heart brings close to us. Our theology will necessarily be a spiritual one. This means that this reflection has to do with my life, my prayer, my choices and deepest feelings. We need more than an intellectual understanding – an understanding which involves my every intention, action and operation, my affections and my personal love for the Lord.

This is the introduction and plan of the challenge. Not an easy one, since our personal conversion is not easy. How can we develop this theology with this particular angle on Jesus? We want to gaze on Jesus with our hearts, and we want to gaze on Jesus' Heart (remember the Little Prince, in Saint Exupéry's story: "one can only see well with the heart, what is essential is invisible to the eyes").

Father Arrupe's words orient us: "One cannot find a word in the NT which comes more rapidly and accurately, with greater depth and human warmth, close to a definition of Christ than the word "heart". (...) No other expression suggests better "the breadth and the length, the height and the depth of the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge" (Ep 3:18) (*En El solo la Esperanza*, Ed.

Mensajero, Bilbao, 1986, p. 86).

Bruno Ramazzotti (*The Spirituality of the Pierced Heart of Jesus*, Saint Paul Publications - Africa, 1992, p. 19.) suggests that the renewal of the spirituality of the Heart of Jesus must follow three directions: 1) stressing the centrality of Jesus in popular piety and in the liturgy, 2) turning to the rich biblical and patristic sources and the symbology of the Heart, 3) emphasizing the primacy of the mercy and love the Heart of Jesus reveals to us. And let me add that to renew the practice of this devotion and transform it into a spirituality we must always understand it in conjunction with the Eucharist. I will try to explain something of all this in this article, contemplating biblical scenes which are our doorway to the Heart of Jesus. We will then allow ourselves to be guided by the testimonies of some saints, attempting to learn from their experience of Jesus. We want to steep ourselves in a Christology of the heart which is capable of carrying away our hearts.

II. Biblical contemplation of Jesus in his earthly ministry

a) The Heart of a Son

We not only want to assert the theological truth of Jesus' divine filiation to which many New Testament texts bear witness (as, for example, Saint John's gospel written "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" - Jn 20:31), but are also interested in emphasizing that Jesus had "the Heart of a Son". Jesus knew and felt that he was "Son", he lived a tender relationship of love with his Father whom he called "Abba".

The divine relationship with his Father filled his human Heart, it was his secret, his joy, a permanent awareness, a basic attitude which determined his behaviour (*Biblical Spirituality of the Heart*, J. G. Bovenmars, Alba House, New York, 1991, p. 78).

In the NT we find that Jesus used the word "Father" 170

times to refer to God. He always used this name and also, as has been suggested, normally used the word "Abba", as testified in Mk 14:36, on Gethsemani. This is endorsed in Ga 4:6 and Rm 8:15. The grammatical form of "Father" in Lk 11:2, where Jesus teaches his disciples to pray, seems to reflect the original Aramaic "Abba". This indicates that the disciples too are called to live this degree of intimate and familiar relationship with God, even though Jesus' relationship with his Father is clearly unique and distinct from that of the disciples. Jesus speaks of "my Father" and "your Father". Mt 11:27 is impressive: "No one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him". A unique relationship, which received all its authority from his Father.

His closeness to God surprised and even scandalized: "But that made the Jews even more intent on killing him, because, not content with breaking the Sabbath, he spoke of God as his own Father, and so made himself God's equal" (Jn 5:18).

The self-awareness of this existential experience of feeling that he is the Son was certainly very clear in how Jesus felt on the day of his baptism in the Jordan (Mk 1:9-11). On that day, inundated by the Spirit, he heard his Father's voice saying: "You are my Son, the Beloved, my favour rests on you". Jesus probably came to the river Jordan like a devout and anonymous Jew prepared to accomplish his religious duty, without quite knowing what was going to happen. We cannot know precisely what he felt in his heart at that moment, but the subsequent events indicate that it seems to have been a basic experience of his vocation. We can suppose that he felt his Father's love communicated through his Spirit as never before, and understood fully the significance of being his Son (Paul tells us that it is the Spirit that makes us exclaim "Abba, Father", Rm 8:15). We can also suppose that after emerging from the water he understood everything in a different way. Indeed we know that his life changed completely from that day on. He did not return to Nazareth, and, in the days that

followed, started his ministry for the God of the Kingdom. He stopped being an unknown artisan from the north of the country to become an itinerant prophet who announced to his brothers and sisters what for him was an intense personal experience, i.e. that they too were his Father's beloved sons and daughters.

Much later, at another crucial moment in his life before he set out towards his passion, his needy Heart turned to feel the consolation and strength of his Father's voice on the mountain of the Transfiguration (Mt 17:5).

b) An obedient Heart

We can clearly recognize his Son's Heart in his attitude of obedience to his Father. We do not only see acts of obedience but a basic attitude, a dimension of his Heart, the permanent offering of self.

He lived to do his Father's will, it was his passion, his mission, his nourishment (Jn 4:34). He always did what pleased the Father (Jn 8:29). With the obedience of a servant, of an envoy, but above all of a Son, he accomplished the Father's works, he spoke the Father's words, he lived looking towards the Father, "pros ton Theon" (Jn 1:1).

c) A eucharistic Heart

His Son's Heart, his docility to the Father's will, is the new form of sacrifice agreeable to God, the spiritual sacrifice which consists in offering oneself in obedience. This is the new priesthood which consists in the gift of self. Psalm 40 reflects this well when it says that God is not gratified in sacrifices or cereal offering but in the heart's answer: "Here I am, my God, to obey your will" (7-8). The Letter to the Hebrews comments on this, saying that Jesus Christ "carried out God's will in offering his own body in sacrifice once and forever" (Heb 10:5-10).

This priesthood and life style reaches its culminating expression in the Last Supper, when Jesus opened and in a way surrendered his Heart to his disciples (i.e. the totality of his life). That night, Jesus put into words and gestures what had always burned within him, i.e. his love of giving to the Father and to us. He made the bread and wine the sign (sacrament) of the way he always lived, summing up his entire life in it: I am this bread, I tell you, I am this wine, surrendered, shed for you. The eucharistic bread and wine became the reflection of his Heart. Jesus always was surrendered bread, he always was offered wine. With these gestures he also indicated his acceptance, for love of us, of the cruel death which was approaching him, an unjust and undesired death, but which served to show the greatest love.

In saying to them "Do this in memory of me" he invited the disciples to associate themselves with his life surrendered for love of his brothers, to do the same themselves. Not only did he invite them to celebrate the Eucharist in his memory, but above all to give their lives (to give their hearts). This is the sense of John's Gospel when, in the context of the Last Supper, he tells of the washing of the feet, for it expresses the same eucharistic logic of giving one's life in the service of one's brothers and sisters. To be a disciple is to have the same Heart as Jesus, i.e. the same way of living offered for the love of others.

In this attitude of offered life we can recognize the most characteristic and permanent aspect of Jesus' heart. It is what we could call Jesus' eucharistic Heart. It is this attitude of his Heart that we would like to make ours when we ask him "Make our hearts similar to yours", or when each morning we offer our lives to the Father.

And now let us consider other attitudes we recognize in Jesus' Heart, all of which act as a background for what we recognize as the fundamental and principal one.

d) A compassionate Heart

To describe the inner turmoil Jesus felt in front of situations of human poverty, the synoptic gospels occasionally use an uncommon word, *splanchnízomai*, which is normally translated as *feeling compassion, feeling sympathy with or for someone* (Walter BAUER, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1979, p. 762).

The noun *splanchnon* in its plural form (*splanchna*) means in the first place *inner parts, core* (Walter BAUER, *op. cit.*, p. 763) (cf. Ac 1:18). It also means, in a figurative sense, the seat of the emotions, the *heart*. In biblical literature it can also indicate the seat and source of love, affection, one's own feeling of love and affection (as in Ph 1:8), mercy and other nuances. In its singular form, it indicates in a figurative sense *mercy, love*.

This word appears only 12 times in the Synoptic gospels (NESTLE-ALAND *Computer-Konkordanz zum Novum Testamentum Graece*, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1980, p. 1718), and every time the *receiving subjects* of this sentiment of compassion are the poor, the despised, the infirm, or the repenting sinner in Lk 15:20. Mt 9:36 for example tells us that Jesus felt compassion for the crowds who were harassed and dejected like sheep without a shepherd (Mt 20:34, the two blind men; Mk 1:41, a leper; Lk 7:13, the widow whose only son had died; etc.). We see in this expression a good key for understanding what stirred Jesus' Heart.

The term seems to be the realization of God's attribute which the OT indicated with the concept of *rahamin* (*rhm* in noun form) which is "the sentiment of *mercy*; originally, the seat of this sentiment (*core, interior*)" (id. Col. 959). *RHM* transmits the idea of God's maternal "tenderness", for the term initially meant *maternal womb, bosom, the core*, (Ernst JENNI, Claus WESTERMAN, *Diccionario Teológico Manual del Antiguo Testamento*, Madrid, Cristiandad, 1985, v.II, col. 957), and, starting from this initial image, it translates into God's compassion and mercy.

Connecting the two terms suggests that the compassion of Jesus' Heart in front of human suffering stems from maternal love and that it stirs him inwardly to the point of causing him "physical" turmoil.

e) A child's Heart

We know Jesus' Heart when we bear in mind the good relationship he had with children. He surprised his contemporaries by becoming their friend and defending their dignity in a society which did not consider them. Undoubtedly Jesus was able to laugh and play with them, to become a child himself in order to dialogue with them, revealing his own child's Heart.

"Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs. I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. Then he put his arms round them, laid his hands on them and gave them his blessing" (Mk 10:14-16).

f) A free, valiant and merciful Heart (Jesus with the women)

Jesus' meetings with a number of women of his time show a clearly different approach to the usual one of this male-oriented society. His dialogue with the Samaritan woman shows how his Heart knew how to place a person above the social prejudices of his time. He turned a person outcast by society for three reasons - because she was a woman, because she was a Samaritan, because she was a sinner - into a disciple and missionary.

Let us consider Jesus' meeting with the sinning woman in Simon's house (Lk 7:39-50). She clung to him, washed his feet with her tears, dried them with her hair. In this striking scene at least three very clear characteristics of Jesus' Heart come to the fore: his freedom, his courage, and his mercy. He showed supreme freedom in accepting this unusual homage from a woman known to

be a sinner. He showed both freedom and courage in opposing the pharisaic mentality which proclaimed it a sacred duty to draw away from "sinners". He always forcefully denounced pharisaic insincerity, its duplicity of heart which replaced love and justice with appearances. In fact this opposition drew on him odious enmities which in the end cost him his life. But above all here we see the mercy of God's Heart towards us: it opened to this woman who felt unworthy to be loved. Jesus' loving look and the words he addressed to her gave her dignity, did not judge her, forgave her, saw the love within her. It was God's operating presence which spoke to Samuel in the OT before anointing David as king: "God does not see as man sees, man looks at the appearances but God looks at the heart" (1S 16:7, words similar to those we quoted concerning the Little Prince).

g) A poor and humble Heart

I will rapidly comment on Mt 11:25-30 ("I am meek and humble in heart"). Jesus belongs to the tradition of God's poor, the anawim (Here I follow J.G. Bovenmars, op. cit. pp. 91-96). In the first part of the pericope, which is sapiential, Jesus shows himself as the one who knows the mysteries of the Kingdom revealed to the simple people, and as the only one who knows the Father. The last part of the text states that he, God's Wisdom, the only Son of the Father, identifies himself with the poor and feels at home with them. This is why he can invite the poor, the outcast and those who are burdened to come to him, because his Heart is humble, because he is one of them.

We are invited to make this biblical contemplation our own, in an attitude of adoration and wonder, so that we may look at Jesus not with our minds but with our hearts and intuitively know what he lives and feels in his own Heart.

III. The biblical symbolism of the heart

In our Christology from the heart there are obligatory reference texts which offer a clear view of the scenes of the previous section. Beyond the historical Jesus, the passages of this section reveal the theological symbolism of Jesus' Heart. They are well-known and commented texts which I will only mention briefly since they have been treated in-depth in many studies.

a) John 7:37-38

On the last day and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood there and cried out: "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me! Let anyone who believes in me come and drink! As scripture says, "From his heart shall flow streams of living water." He was speaking of the Spirit which those who believed in him were to receive, for there was no Spirit as yet because Jesus had not yet been glorified".

In Jerusalem, on the feast of shelters, water was drawn from the well of Siloam and carried in procession with all the people to the temple. On the seventh day the water was poured onto the altar and onto the rock of mount Sion which appeared inside the temple. Rain for the fields was asked for, in memory of when Moses struck the rock in the desert and water flowed from it, a gesture which Isaiah interpreted as a sign of messianic salvation (Is 12:3). Jesus stated in a loud voice that he is the source of living water, this time inviting not the weary but the thirsty to come to him. The symbolism of the water is used to indicate that the Spirit springs from within him, from his Heart. The NT tradition proclaims Jesus as the rock from which flow the waters (1Co 10:4; Jn 2:19) of which we drink when we believe in him. In the dialogue with the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:14) Jesus promised her that whoever drinks this living water will also see his own heart as a source which springs towards eternal life. Therefore the believer's heart too is transformed into source of the Spirit.

This text must be interpreted in connection with the scene

of the Pierced Side of the Crucified One, where the water and blood are the symbols of the life which springs from within Jesus, who is already dead.

b) Jn 19:34-37 – The pierced Heart of the Crucified One

The figure of the Crucified One, lifted up from the ground with an open side, has its roots in the OT and it is as if it summed up the theology of Saint John's Gospel, as if it were the summary of the whole of Christianity (*En El solo la Esperanza*, Pedro Arrupe, p. 144).

It becomes the best symbol for indicating the redeeming fertility of Christ's death. The symbolism is a Semite one: the wound is the sign of death (the sacrificed lamb), and the blood and water the sign of life and fertility. The pierced heart is the symbol of the paschal Lamb of the New Alliance.

The episode of the pierced Heart is the key to John's message (According to Edouard Glotin, S.J., *Sign of Salvation*, Apostleship of Prayer, NY, 1989, pp. 14-15). It is a solemnly testified message, based on two prophecies. John takes it expressly as a salvific symbol since he refers to the serpent lifted up in the desert (Jn 3:14-15). The Crucified One is the true bronze serpent, and he invites contemplation of it saying "they will look on the one whom they pierced". The living water which springs from him produces faith in whoever receives it ("so that you too may believe"). It is at the same time the accomplishment of the tradition of the prophet Zechariah concerning the messianic gift of the living water and the gift of the Spirit (Zc 12:10 and 13:1).

c) Jn 20:19-29 – The pierced Heart of the Risen One

Perhaps we sometimes notice that the traditional images of the Sacred Heart of Jesus tend to represent the Risen One showing his wounds. This glorious Jesus, with his visible wounds as a sign

of his love, is the object of the veneration in the spirituality of the Heart of Jesus. Even though he is already risen, his Heart continues to be pierced with love for me and for his Church. He continues to be human and continues loving us with a human heart.

The Encyclical *Haurietis aquas* clearly states this:

Since our Saviour rose up to heaven with his glorified body, and sat at the right side of God the Father, he has never ceased loving his spouse the Church, with the ardent love which beats in his Heart (40).

Even though it is no longer subject to the turmoil of this mortal life [this most Sacred Heart] still lives, beats and is united in an indissoluble way to the person of the Divine Word...(42).

We gaze on him with his open Heart in the scene of his appearance to the Eleven (Jn 20:19-29), dispelling the disciples' fear and spreading the eschatological gifts of peace, the Spirit and forgiveness. Thomas received the gift of faith contemplating his wounds and his open Heart, and made his profession of faith, "my Lord, my God" (let us remember John's words which testify to what he saw in front of the cross "so that you too may believe").

d) Jn 21:15-19 – The Heart which asks to be loved

Jesus questions Peter on the shore of the lake: "Do you love me?". There are various interpretations of these words, but from our perspective we can recognize the deep feeling of a fully human Heart which has given love and asks for love. As a symbolic image of Jesus' Heart we can link it with the words revealed to Saint Margaret Mary:

Here is this Heart which has loved human beings so greatly to the point of consuming itself to testify to its love for them. And in thanks it has only received ingratitude from most of them, through irreverence and sacrilege, and through the coldness and contempt they have for me in this Sacrament of love. And what

saddens me most is that the hearts which act this way are hearts consecrated to me" (June 1675).

It is surprising to think that the Risen Jesus can also need our affection, that he asks for it just as earthly friends and lovers do. His Heart continues to be fully human even in his glorious state and asks and wants us to love him. We can also interpret along these same lines his humble supplication to the Apostles before he died: "Remain in my love" (Jn 15:9).

IV. The Christology of some saints' hearts

The Fathers of the Church refer abundantly to the symbolism of the Pierced Heart, in which they recognize the origins of the Church and the sacraments. There are magnificent theological interpretations of the texts quoted in the preceding section though I will not discuss them here since they are easily found in specialized works.

Now we are more interested in what took root in medieval times, where we situate the beginning of our spirituality as such. The devotion to Christ's humanity is found in the Benedictine and Franciscan schools with Saint Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153) as its first exponents. From then on many people have described their personal relationship with Jesus placing the accent on his Heart. I will quote only a few to help us remember what is essential and, with their help, tune our hearts to that of Jesus. Let us receive these writings as testimonies of the immense force of Jesus' Heart operating his love in the hearts of those beloved sons and daughters and as a stimulus for what he wishes to operate in us. I comment on them only very briefly since the texts speak for themselves.

a) Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (France, 1091-1153)

What I cannot find in myself I confidently seek in the Roots of the Saviour, overflowing with goodness and mercy, which spread through the various wounds in his most holy body, since his enemies pierced his hands and feet and opened his side with a lance: through these openings I can extract honey from the stone and sweet oil from the very hard rock; I can taste and see how sweet and gentle is the Lord. Then he meditated on thoughts of peace, without my understanding him. Who has ever known the Lord's feeling or ever entered into his council? But these nails with which he was pierced have become precious keys which have opened the treasure of his secrets for me, so that I may see the Lord's will. And who can now prevent me from clearly seeing these secrets and this will through his wounds?... The cruel iron transfixing his soul and wounding his heart, so that he might know how to have pity on my weaknesses. The secret of his heart can be seen through the openings in his body; yes, we can contemplate this sublime mystery of our God's infinite goodness; we can, I repeat, contemplate the merciful roots of our God, who has made the sun rise to visit us from above. What difficulty is there that God's roots should show themselves through the wounds? Because nothing, Lord, shows us as fully as these wounds that you are gentle, meek and most merciful. Nobody is more compassionate than he who gives his life for those sentenced to death and the condemned (from Sermon LXI about the Song of Songs, 41).

b) Saint Bonaventura (1221-1274)

The Heart of the Lord was pierced with the lance so that through the visible wound we might recognize the invisible love. The wound in the Heart shows the wound in the soul (Quoted in Cor Salvatoris, Josef Stierli, Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1958, p. 126).

We penetrate, finally, into the most humble Heart of the sublime Jesus. The doorway is his side opened by the lance. Here the ineffable and desirable treasure of charity is hidden; here one meets devotion, one obtains the grace of tears, one learns meekness

and patience in adversity, compassion for the afflicted and, above all, here we obtain that our heart becomes contrite and humbled (Obras de San Buenaventura, B.A.C., Madrid, 1967, p. 507).

c) Saint Gertrude the Great (1256-1301)

Someone who has great experience in spiritual direction advised (me) to constantly meditate on the burning heart of the Crucified one...

(The Lord): "Since you have totally renounced your own will, I will instill every grace and joy of my heart into yours, and the more frequently you receive communion, the greater your contentment will be.

I have frequently given you my Heart, as a sign of our intimacy. Whenever you want to ask me anything, call on the Heart which accepted the Incarnation for love of human beings, that I may grant you the graces you ask for".

(Gertrude): "Through your wounded Heart, most beloved Lord, mine is so deeply touched by your love that what is earthly no longer concerns it and it can give itself entirely to your captivating love (Cor Salvatoris, pp. 134-135).

d) Saint Ignatius Loyola (Spain-Italy, 1491-1556)

Ignatius did not use the expression "Heart of Jesus" but his writings reflect his tender devotion and love for Christ's humanity contained in this spirituality. The object of the Spiritual Exercises is to move the Exercitant to "an intimate knowledge of Our Lord, who has become man for me, that I may love him more and follow him more" (104). This inner knowledge is nothing if not love for the Heart.

The Ignatian Exercises are, finally, exercises of the human heart face to face with the Heart of God. The Heart of God is

incarnate in Jesus, his Christ. The Catholic devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus has found a strategic ally of the greatest importance in Ignatian spirituality (M. A. Rui-Wamba, S.J., in the article: Los que más se querrán afectar (digital version)).

When the exercitant accompanies the scenes of Christ's passion, Ignatius invites him to ask for "sorrow with Christ in sorrow, anguish with Christ in anguish, tears and deep grief because of the great affliction Christ endures for me" (SE 203). When contemplating the Risen One the instruction is to "consider the office of consoler that Christ our Lord exercises and compare it with the way in which friends are wont to console each other" (SE 224).

The apostolic dimension specific to the spirituality of the Heart is ably reflected in the Contemplation to Attain the Love of God which concludes the Exercises (234). In these words we recognize the basic attitude of offering of our own hearts promoted, among other things, by the AP:

FIRST POINT. This is to recall to mind the blessings of creation and redemption, and the special favours I have received. I will ponder with great affection how much God our Lord has done for me, and how much he has given me of what he possesses, and finally, how much, as far as he can, the same Lord desires to give himself to me according to his divine decrees. Then I will reflect upon myself, and consider, according to all reason and justice, what I ought to offer the Divine Majesty, that is, all I possess and myself with it. Thus, as one would do who is moved by great feeling, I will make this offering of myself:

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. Thou hast given it all to me. To Thee, O Lord, I return it all. All is Thine, dispose of it wholly according to Thy will. Give me Thy love and Thy grace, for this is sufficient for me.

We must be satisfied with these few references here, leaving an in-depth study of the Ignatian course to other more specific studies (For example, *Il mistero del Cuore di Cristo e la Spiritualità Ignaziana*, Charles Bernard, S.J., Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis, Roma, 1991).

e) Saint Peter Canisius, S.J. (Germany 1521-1597)

We read in his "*Testament*" - the vision the Lord granted him on the morning of his solemn religious profession while he was praying in the Chapel of the Most Holy Sacrament in Saint Peter's (Rome):

My soul was in a certain manner prostrate in front of you: ugly, fallen and stained by its innumerable faults and sins. But you then opened your holy breast for me, and it seemed to me that I directly saw your Heart. You ordered me then to drink from this spring, inviting me, my Redeemer, to take the water of my salvation from your fountain. Then I yearned ardently for torrents of faith, hope and charity to flow over me; I thirsted to be washed, clothed and put in order completely by you.

I dared to touch your Heart – so lovingly lovable – with my lips, and to quench my thirst in it. After, you promised to cover the nakedness of my spirit with the triple habit of peace, love and perseverance, so timely a gift for my profession soon to occur. With this garment of salvation I am fully confident that I will lack for nothing and that everything will be to the advantage of your greater glory (*Cor Salvatoris*, op.cit. pp. 164-165).

f) Saint Claude La Colombière (France, 1641-1682)

This Heart continues, to the fullness of its ability, with the same feelings and, above all, always burning with love for human beings, always ready to shed on them every kind of grace and blessing, always sensitive to our sufferings, always stimulated by the desire to share his treasures and give himself to us, always

ready to welcome us and act as refuge, home, heaven in this life (p. 34).

I cannot attain this oblivion of myself which must open the door to the Heart of Jesus Christ, from which I feel very estranged. I see clearly that if God does not have pity on me I shall die in great imperfection. It would be a great delight for me if I could, at the end, after so much time spent in religious life, discover the way to obtain total oblivion of myself. I asked our good Master that I might not to do anything against his will and that for all the rest he dispose of me as he sees fit. I beg of him, may the condition to which he has reduced me please him. Infirmity was something absolutely necessary for me, without it, I do not know what would have become of me; I am convinced that it is one of the great mercies God has granted me (p. 45).

Everything God does for you now is little or nothing compared to what he wishes to do; in the name of Jesus Christ, do not oppose his designs; give him the freedom to operate, I ask you, help him as much as you can; be faithful in the execution of everything he inspires, and then you will see the admirable effects of your docility. What unhappiness if you place any obstacle in the way of the signs of the good will he has for you (p. 52) (Na Escola do Coração de Jesus com Claudio La Colombière, Gérard Dufour, Ed. Loyola, Sao Paulo, Brasil, 2000).

g) The Blessed Miguel Pro (Mexico, 1891-1927)

A burning Heart allowed a ray which struck mine to escape from its divine fire; this ray burnt my heart, its flame is not extinguished; this flame lives intact in the depths of my being and guides and illuminates me and makes me continue further. Most gentle love, strong love, disinterested love, outstanding love, almost infinite love of my soul for Christ. I who feel your beneficial work, and know that even in the midst of the greatest dangers you grant me victory...

Chaste love, tender love, divine love, eternal love, who gave me my vocation and has preserved it until today, and will preserve it, I know, until I am consumed by the flames of this same love...

Love of angels, unlimited love, heroic love, love of all loves together, love-charity of God... this is why I am as happy as I am; this is why I am as steadfast as I am!... and his victim, as I have been! (Beato Miguel Agustín Pro, Su Corazón, su Pensamiento, Rafael Cervantes P., S.J., Mexico, 2006, p. 8).

h) Saint Alberto Hurtado (Chile, 1901-1952)

Love Jesus Christ. Until your last breath become more and more passionate each day concerning his adorable person. Study him, examine him, enquire about him, explain him untiringly to yourself and to others, until you know him by heart, or even better, until you become assimilated to him, until you lose yourself in him. May he be completely and each day more at the centre of your thoughts, the bond of your knowledge, the practical goal of whatever you study. Make it morally the only object, the sovereign subject, the triumphing weapon of your apostolate... like the man full of and possessed by Jesus Christ, like the man who deliberately or not, if this were possible, speaks untiringly of Jesus Christ and speaks of the abundance of his Heart.

From a Talk to University students, Feast of the Sacred Heart (drawn from a far longer text):

Christ's love is full of tenderness and solicitude not only for our souls but for our bodies too, for the physical suffering which he heals even without being asked to; for the sadness of his friends, for the hunger of the poor which he hastens to satisfy. And with what delicacy he protects his hungry disciples when they eat the ears of wheat, with what tenderness he prepares breakfast after

a night of fishing.

And this love of Christ, this love of the Son of God, this love of Jesus is what we honour in the devotion to the Sacred Heart. And if this devotion has always been a lovable one, today it is the saving devotion. What does the world need most at the present moment? What the world needs today is a generation that loves, that truly loves, that puts into effect the idea of love: to want good, the good of others before one's own, the good of others at the cost of one's own life; the good of everyone, the good of the poor and of the modest employee, the good of the poor widow who does not belong to a syndicate, of the children in the gutters; the good of the prostitute...

Love is what the poor modern world needs. Its sorrows are greater than they have ever been. And it is our duty to give it this love. We must reclaim what is ours, what constitutes the greatness even of errors: what is most ours, charity, the love of Christ.

But do not let this love of ours be speeches, books, precious pages. Nor must we be content with flourishing encyclicals and pastorals: their truths are very beautiful and nobody will demean them: what demeans them is their not having been accomplished.

What the world needs is works, like those of Francis of Assisi, of Peter Claver, of Damian of Veuster... And what, concretely, must these works of charity, of love, be?

Awaken in us a hunger and thirst for justice. Hunger and thirst for total truth. Hunger and thirst for Christ: to know him, to know his doctrine, to study it in its social consequences. To allay social unrest, we must work for the suffering, in particular that of the poor. To increase social sense. Not to rest when we see evil; being non conformist... not satisfied with offering the sky to others while we comfortably possess the earth, for this is the most brutal and bitter of ironies.

Give something which is very necessary: love, charity, understanding. We are so divided and we so need to love one another, understand one another, end this suspicion, this mutual lack of trust. Let us embrace Christ. And if the problems are contingent why shouldn't we give our opinion? Respect for the human person is something basic in Christianity. Provided that we obey the hierarchy and remain united in what is essential.

United in Christ, united with Christ. More united among ourselves. The measure of our union will be that of our union in Christ and with Christ. Let us unite in the only One in whom we can remain united, in Christ. Tomorrow, all in the Heart of Christ. To place all human beings in Christ's Heart in the Mass.

V. Conclusion

We have been on a biblical and historical journey aimed at opening us "with an open heart" to Jesus' loving Heart. We have wanted to allow ourselves to be captured by the gentleness, generosity, valour, humility of this so human and yet so divine Heart.

Our task now is that of personal contemplation and adoration in order to learn his style of loving and live it. At the beginning of this article we proposed developing a Christology from the heart, from each person's heart, from the Heart of Jesus. We hope that we have helped to open further the unfathomable door of Jesus' disproportionate love for us. Now the intimate language of our love must continue with him. We will continue to ask him to make our hearts similar to his, until the definitive meeting in which both hearts, his and ours, can unite without restrictions in the dialogue of love which will never end.

Let us conclude by listening to Father Pedro Arrupe, the

friend of his Heart, speaking to us about love:

"Nothing can be more important than meeting God. In other words, falling in love with him in a definitive and absolute manner. What you fall in love with catches your imagination and ends by leaving its mark on everything. It will be what decides what gets you out of bed in the morning, what you do with your evenings, how you use your weekends, what you read, what you know, what breaks your heart, what overcomes you with joy and gratitude. In love! Remain in love! Everything will be different".

**THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH AND
THE HEART OF JESUS IN
PIUS XII'S ENCYCLICAL "HAURIETIS AQUAS"**

*Raúl Silva Arredondo, MSC
Guadalajara, Jal. 19 July 2007*

Introduction

Pope John Paul II made a pilgrimage on October 5th 1986 to the region of Lyon in France, to Paray-Le-Monial, where the Heart of Jesus' revelations to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque occurred. On that day the Pope delivered a letter to Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, General Superior of the Jesuits, in which he set down the outlines of "*an up-dated cult of the Heart of Jesus*" (José Luis de Urrutia, S.J. *Espiritualidad del Corazón de Jesús Hoy*. Ave María, Madrid, 3rd ed. 1986, pp. 466-468).

With a very simple and significant act the Pope wished to visit the relics of Saint Claude La Colombière, S.J. (Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque's Spiritual Director) in the small Jesuit church. Father Kolvenbach and a group of Jesuits from all over France were present.

The Pope said in his letter: "...In fact, if the Lord in his providence has wished that on the threshold of modern times, in the XVII century, a powerful impulse should start from Paray-Le-Monial in favour of the devotion to the Heart of Christ, under the forms indicated in the revelations received by Saint Margaret Mary, *the essential elements of this devotion also belong in a permanent form to the spirituality of the Church throughout its history*, because, from the beginning, the Church has directed its gaze at the Heart of Christ pierced on the cross, from which flowed blood and water, the symbols of the sacraments which constitute the Church. And, in the Heart of the Incarnate Word, the Christian Fathers of the East and West saw the beginning of the entire work

of our salvation, the fruit of the love of the Divine Redeemer, whose pierced Heart is a particularly expressive symbol" (Luis González S.J. La actualidad de la Devoción al Corazón del Redentor. Concerning the Pope's letter to Father Kolvenbach. In the periodical Manresa N° 59, 1987, pp. 171-189).

Pope John Paul II then spoke of "the Fathers of the East and West".

But who are these Holy Fathers?

"The historical period between the foundation of the first ecclesial communities by the Apostles and Saint Gregory the Great's papacy (540-604) is frequently called the "*period of the Fathers of the Church*" (Guillermo Arias, S.J. Un Corazón para siempre. Buena Prensa, México. Tercera edición 1999 p. 28).

The "Fathers of the Church are the most distinguished pastors of the Church of the first centuries. Their teachings, in a collective sense, are considered by the Church as the indispensable foundation of orthodox Christian doctrine. Because of their closeness to the Apostles they present us with the correct interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures. The four principle criteria for a "Father of the Church" to be recognized as such are: *antiquity, orthodoxy, holiness, approval of the Church*. The Fathers are distinguished between *Greek* (coming from the East) and *Latin* (from the West).

"What we teach is not the result of our personal reflections, but what we have learnt from the Fathers" – *Saint Basil*.

The Apostolic Fathers: These are the Fathers of the Church who were direct disciples of some of the Apostles. We confer this title also on the Fathers (I and II century) who are a link between the New Testament and the II century apologists. The writings of the Apostolic Fathers are considered an echo of the teachings of the

Apostles. For example: *Saint Polycarp, Saint Ignatius of Antiochia.*

"During the time of the Fathers of the Church the Heart of Christ was mentioned, though not in the same way or with the same devotional categories that we use today. We cannot speak of "Devotion to the Heart of Jesus" at that time, though of intense devotion to Christ's Wounded Side, source and foundation of the Devotion as it was to develop later. The Fathers of the Church helped us to discover, with the Church, through these first centuries, the invaluable treasure of the Heart of Christ" (Ibid. p. 28).

Now that we have defined who we call "Fathers of the Church", we will go back to what the Encyclical "Haurietis aquas" tells us about them.

The Encyclical "Haurietis aquas" speaks to us in numbers 26 to 30 about "The proofs of the Holy Fathers in favour of the perceptible feelings of the incarnate word" (Encyclical Letter of H.H. Pope Pius XII on the Cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In: Francisco Cruz MSC El Corazón de Jesús y los Papas: León XIII, Pio XI, Pio XII, Juan Pablo II. México D.F. pp. 59-63).

26. – Object of the Incarnation: To manifest his divine love in a perceptible form

"The Holy Fathers, true witnesses of revealed doctrine, marked very opportunely what Saint Paul already clearly indicated, i.e. that divine love is like the beginning and the culminating point of the work of the Incarnation and Redemption. We frequently read in his writings that Jesus Christ assumed perfect human nature and our fragile and perishable body to bring us eternal salvation and to manifest and reveal in a perceptible form his infinite love for us".

27. – The Greek Fathers teach this

Saint Justin, echoing the voice of the Apostle of the peoples, wrote as follows: "We love and adore the Word born of

the ineffable God, who has no beginning: since he became a man for us so that, sharing our afflictions, he brings us their relief" ("Apol." 2, 13; P.G. 6,465).

Saint Basil

And *Saint Basil*, the first of the three Fathers of Cappadocia, states that Jesus' sentient feelings were true and at the same time holy: It is manifest that the Lord possessed natural feelings in confirmation of his true and not unreal incarnation; it is also manifest that he repelled as unworthy of divinity the vicious feelings of our life" (Epist. 261,3; P.G. XXXII, 972).

Saint John Chrysostom

In the same way *Saint John Chrysostom*, luminary of the Church of Antiochia, acknowledged that the perceptible emotions the Lord showed prove unequivocally that he integrally possessed our human nature: If he had not possessed our human nature he would not have experienced sadness time and time again". ("In Ioann", Homil. 63., 2; P.G. LIX, 350).

28. – *The Latin Fathers*

Saint Ambrose

Among the Latin Fathers, those whom the Church venerates today as greatest Doctors should be remembered. *Saint Ambrose* states that the hypostatic union is the natural origin of the feelings and sentiments which the Incarnate Word of God experienced: "Therefore, since he assumed his soul, he assumed the passions of the soul; for God, being God, could neither be perturbed or die" ("De Fide ad Gratianum", II 7,56; P.L. XVI, 594).

Saint Jerome

Saint Jerome bases his main argument to prove that Christ really assumed human nature on these same responses: Our Lord was really saddened in order to manifest his human nature" (cf. "Super Math", XXVI, 37; P.L. XXXVIII, 205).

Saint Augustine

Saint Augustine in particular notes the intimate union existing between the sentiments of the Incarnate Word and the purpose of human Redemption: "The Lord took on the feelings of human fragility, in the same way that he accepted the fragility of our flesh and its death, not by necessary coercion but through the stimulus of mercy, to thus assimilate his body, which is the Church whose head he deigned to be, or in other words his limbs, his saints and his faithful; so that if any of them, under the effect of human temptation, were to be saddened or to grieve, they should not think that they are deprived of the influence of his grace; and as a chorus is in concordance with the voice which gives it the tone, thus his body should know from his head that these movements are not in themselves sin, but only an indication of human fragility" ("Enarr. In PS LXXXVII", 3; P.L. XXXVIII, 1111).

Saint John Damascene

With greater concision though no less vigour the following passages from *Saint John Damascene* testify to the doctrine of the Church: "The whole of God has taken the whole of man, and the whole has united with the whole to bring about the salvation of the whole of man. He could not have healed what he had not assumed himself in any other way" ("De Fide Orth", III, 6; P.G. XCIV, 1006). So he took on everything in order to sanctify everything" ("De Fide Orth" III, 20; P.G. XCIV, 1981).

29. – Speaking of human feelings, indirectly they already spoke of the Heart

While it is true that, though proving abundantly that Jesus Christ was subject to human sentiments and feelings and that precisely for this reason he assumed human nature in order to obtain eternal salvation for us, neither the holy authors nor the Fathers of the Church and others we have quoted refer concretely to his physically considered heart, indicating in it the symbol of his infinite love.

Even though the evangelists and other holy writers do not

openly describe our Redeemer's Heart - no less alive and sensitive than our own - and the palpitations and vibrations due to the various emotions and affections of his soul and to the ardent charity of his dual will, they however frequently stress his divine love and the tender emotions which stem from it: desire, joyfulness, sadness, fear and anger, shown in the expression of his gaze, words and gestures. And, in particular, how our Saviour's adorable face undoubtedly indicated like a most faithful mirror the feelings which, affecting his soul in various ways reached his most holy heart like clashing waves, stirring his beating heart. In fact what the Angelic Doctor observed through experience concerning human psychology and the phenomena derived it from holds good also where Jesus Christ is concerned: "The turmoil produced by anger has repercussions on our external organs and principally on those in which the influence of the heart is most reflected, such as the eyes, the face, speech" (Sum Theol." 1-II, q. 48, a. 4; ed León., t. VI, 1981, p. 306).

30. – The heart, symbol of the triple love, and especially of perceptible love

Quite rightly the heart of the Word Incarnate is considered the indication and symbol of the triple love with which the divine redeemer continuously loves the Eternal Father and all human beings. In the first place it is the *symbol of the divine love* which he has in common with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and which only in him, as the Word Incarnate, is manifested through the perishable and fragile human instrument, "since in his body lives the fullness of divinity" (Col 2:9). Moreover, the Heart of Christ is *symbol of ardent charity* which, instilled in his soul, constitutes the precious dowry of his human will whose acts are directed and illuminated by dual and most perfect knowledge, beatific and infused knowledge (cf. "Sum. Theol." III, q. 9.aa. 1-3; Ed Leon. T.XI, 1903, p. 142).

Finally – and this in a most natural and direct way - the Heart of Jesus is the *symbol of his sentimental love*, since Jesus Christ's body, molded in the most chaste womb of the Virgin Mary through the Holy Spirit, is more perfect and, therefore, with greater perceptive capacity, than any other human organism (Sum. Theol." III, q. 33. a. 2, ad 3m; q. 46, a. 6; Leon., t.XI, 1903; pp. 342, 433).

Conference of Cardinal Ratzinger

In order to understand the Importance of the Fathers of the Church in the Spirituality of the Heart of Jesus, let us seek light in Cardinal Ratzinger's masterly Conference on the Heart of Jesus given during the Congress of Toulouse, which was celebrated in 1981 on the occasion of the XXV Anniversary of the Encyclical "Haurietis aquas".

The title of this conference is: The paschal mystery, the deepest root and object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. (Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, "The paschal mystery, deepest root and object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Conference held during the Congress of Toulouse on the Heart of Jesus (24-28.07.1981), on the occasion of the XXV Anniversary of the Encyclical Haurietis aquas).

I. The crisis of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus at the time of the Liturgical Reformation

From the beginning of the biblical and liturgical movement considerable efforts were made to give a biblical and patristic foundation to the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, harmonizing it with its Christian origins. Hugo Rahner deserves to be especially mentioned in the German ambit.

Hugo looked for new foundations for the devotion to the Heart of Jesus, connecting it with the exegesis the Holy Fathers drew from Jn 7:37-39 and Jn 19:34. These two pericopes speak of

Jesus' open side, of the blood and the water which flowed from it. Both texts evidently express the paschal mystery; the source of life, which is the sacraments, flows from the Lord's pierced side.

II. Elements for a new foundation for the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the basis of the encyclical "Haurietis aquas"

1. Its foundation on a theology of the Incarnation

The encyclical develops an anthropology and a theology of corporeity where it sees the philosophical and psychological foundations of the cult of the Heart of Jesus. The body is not merely exterior, united to the spirit or soul. The body is rather the self-expression of the spirit, it is its "image". A human nature is fulfilled in his body and, therefore, his body is his expression, through which we glimpse his invisible soul.

And so, since the body is what is visible in a person, and a person is the image of God, the body results, in the conjunction of all its dimensions, as the space in which the divine takes shape and, concretely, is crystallized.

From the beginning the Bible presents the mystery of God in the images of the body and of the world in line with the body.

2. The importance of senses and sentiment in the devotion

We come to the basic logical conclusion which draws its theology of the corporeity and the incarnation from the encyclical: man needs to contemplate, to interiorize the divine mysteries with an intimate contemplation which is like touching and feeling reality. Man has to ascend the stairs of the body, which are the path which leads to faith.

It invites us to an absorbed gaze, through which the heart begins to see and understand so that its feelings too begin to be

engaged in heartfelt contemplation, because "we can only see well with the heart", as Saint Exupery's Little Prince said, who is a wholly symbolic figure of candour and of "becoming a child", which is so necessary, – seen from the learned erudition of the world of adults – in order to rediscover what is characteristically human and escapes the network of pure reason.

The theology of corporeity expressed in the encyclical is, so to say, an apology of the heart, of feelings and sentiments in general, especially in the field of piety. This is why the encyclical calls on Ep 3:18 ff: "you will with all the saints have strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth of the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge".

Already in patristics and, in particular, in the tradition which goes back to the Pseudo-Dionysus, this passage in Ephesians stresses the limits of reason. In the Dionisiac tradition we find the phrase *ignote cognoscere*, which was to give way to the *docta ignorancia* which is the mystique of darkness, where only love has eyes. Many texts could be quoted on this, e.g. that of Saint Gregory the Great: "Amor ipse notitia est", or that of Ricardo de San Victor: "Amor oculus est et amare videre est" (Love is the eye and to love is to see).

The encyclical pauses over verse 18 of Ephesians 3 which speaks of the breadth, the length, the height and the depth, and continues: "In order to interiorize, it is correct to consider that God's love is not only spiritual".

The love which overflows from the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and the Apocalypse is not merely spiritual but also an expression of sentiently constructed human love since the Word of God did not assume a fictitious body.

Consequently, it invites us to a devotion linked with

feelings, consonant with the corporeity of Jesus Christ's human-divine love. Now, according to the encyclical, piety linked with feelings is essentially heartfelt devotion, since the heart is the root and englobing foundation of feelings, the place of encounter and compenetration of sensitivity and the spirit in which they become one. Truly understood piety is the devotion which is in tune with Cardinal Newman's motto: "Cor ad cor loquitur" (The heart speaks to the heart), a maxim which possibly amounts to the most beautiful synthesis of what we can call heartfelt piety as a devotion centred on the Heart of Jesus.

The encyclical adds that the heart is the expression of man's *passions*. In front of the stoic ideal of apathy, in front of the Aristotelian God, which is thought about thought, the heart is present as an abridgement and summary of passions without which the Son's Passion is inconceivable.

The encyclical quotes the Fathers of the Church: Justin, Basil, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine and John Damascene, causing the different variations on the melody common to all of patristics to resound. It can be summed up in one word: "...passionum nostrarum particeps factus est" (he shared our "passions").

This point of synthesis of the Greek legacy and biblical faith presented the greatest difficulties for the Fathers who knew the moral ideal of the Stoa, the ideal of the impassibility of knowledge, which tries to dominate and overcome irrational sentiments with the intelligence and the will.

But, on the other hand we cannot disregard the fact that the figure of Jesus who gets angry, rejoices, hopes and is discouraged is in line with the Old Testament concept of God. Because the Old Testament anthropomorphism reaches its extreme and radical point in Jesus the Word made flesh.

There could not have been the Passion without "passions". Suffering implies the capacity to suffer, and the capacity to suffer implies sensitivity, affection, emotions, feelings.

At the time of the Fathers of the Church it was Origen undoubtedly who understood the theme of the "Patient" God most deeply and also expressed it most fluently, to such a point that it is impossible to limit this theme to Jesus' patient humanity, since it affects the Christian idea of God itself. To see his Son suffer is also the Father's "passion" and this is shared (suffered with) by the spirit which, according to Paul, laments within us and bears within us and for us the "passion" of yearning and expectation of the consummated redemption (Rm 8:26). And Origen also gave a hermeneutic outline of the theme of the patient God: "When you hear speak of God's passion, always remember his love".

God is "patient" because he loves, and the theme of the patient God springs from the theme of the loving God. The specific progress of the Christian concept of God with respect to antiquity lies in the declaration that God is charity.

From the point of view of the encyclical "Haurietis aquas", Jesus' "passions" concentrated in his Heart and synthetically represented by his Heart, constitute the reason and justification of why the heart, i.e. the faculty of feeling, the emotion of love, must also enter into human relationship with God. An incarnate devotion must be a "passionate" devotion, heart to heart piety, precisely like the paschal devotion, since the mystery of the pasch is, by its very essence, a mystery of suffering, a mystery of the Heart.

3. Anthropology and theology of the heart in the Bible and the Fathers

From what we have said so far it is clear that Christian devotion involves the senses, which draw their order and unity from the heart, and it also involves feelings, which have their focus in the heart. It has been proved that a devotion thus centred on the heart corresponds to the Christian image of God who has a Heart. It has been proved that, in short, this Heart is the expression and exegesis of the paschal mystery, where the history of God's love for man is concentrated.

But one could ask: Does this accent on the key-term "heart" correspond only to the thing, or does it also correspond to the language of tradition? Since the concept of heart is as elementary as we have presented it, we must at least also present its basic connection with the Bible and tradition.

What do we find in the Fathers of the Church?

According to A. Hamon, the first millennium ignored the theme of the "Heart of Jesus". Apparently the phrase appeared for the first time in Saint Anselm of Canterbury, but without any specific significance (A. Hamon, *Coeur (Sacré)* in *Dict. De Spiritualité II*, 1023-1046).

Through his studies on the patristic exegesis of Jn 7:37-39 and Jn 19:34, Hugo Rahner incorporated the Fathers of the Church in the history of the cult of the Heart of Jesus even though, as we said, the Fathers did not use the term "heart" in this context.

Nevertheless though it is certain, today as in the past, that the phrase "Heart of Jesus" does not appear in the Fathers, going beyond what Hugo Rahner says we find in them an important basis for the devotion to the Heart of Jesus, a basis we could qualify as the theology and philosophy of the heart which holds such an important place in the patristic mentality, so much so that E. Maxsein, for example, has devoted much research on Saint Augustine's *philosophia cordis*.

Whoever has read his "Confessions" knows the letter in which he discusses the term "heart" as the centre of an anthropological dialogue, and it is thus clear that Saint Augustine's thought was penetrated by the tendency of biblical terminology and, with it, the tendency of biblical theology and anthropology.

Saint Jerome even says on one occasion that for Plato and the Platonics the centre of man is the brain and for Christ it is the Heart (Epist. 64,1).

The tension between platonic and stoic anthropology provided the Fathers with the possibility of outlining a new anthropological synthesis from the Bible.

In the pericope on the Baptist, transmitted in Jn 1:26: "There stands among you – unknown to you – the one who is coming after me", Origen says: he is the Logos who, without our knowing it, is in our midst, because the middle or centre of man is the heart, and in the heart lies the force which carries everything, which is the LOGOS (Origen, In Ioh. GCS IV, 94,8).

The term "heart" thus comes to mean, beyond reasoning, "a very deep layer of spiritual life, where a contact with the divine occurs".

And Von Ivanka has shown how Origen's sequence of ideas led to the current of devotion and thought which produced a special flowering in honour of the Heart of Jesus in Medieval German nuns and, in general, a mysticism which stressed the primacy of the heart over reason, of love over knowledge. (E. von Ivanka, Plato Christianus, Einsiedeln 1964, p. 350).

Thus the consideration of the heart as the place of salvific meeting with the Logos is based on the new synthesis of patristic thought, like the formula Saint Augustine gave as an example concerning the psalms: "Let us turn to the Heart to find them".

To conclude we could say that the Stoa sees in the heart the sun of the microcosm, the vital force and the preserving energy of the human organism and of man in his totality. The Stoa defines the function of this supporting force as synthesis, as cause of cohesion and coherence. The task of the heart is its own preservation, its own cohesion and coherence.

In fact the pierced Heart of Jesus revolutionizes, "overturns", this definition (cf. Ho 11:8). This Heart is not preservation of self but offering of self, gift. It saves the world by opening out. The revolution of the open Heart is the content of the paschal mystery. The Heart saves, but it saves by giving itself, offering itself. The centre of Christianity is thus presented to us in the Heart of Jesus, from which the whole authentic revolution, the whole transforming novelty of which the New Alliance speaks, is summarized. This Heart calls to the heart. It invites us to renounce this vain attempt at self preservation and to find in mutual love, in the gift of ourselves to him and with him, the fullness of charity, which is eternity in itself and for itself and which alone can preserve the world.

WHAT DO WE PROPOSE WHEN WE SAY AP?
Putting the Apostleship of Prayer into practice

Claudio Barriga, S.J.

(Based on the Report drawn up at the National Meeting of
the AP of Spain, Sept. 2007)

Introduction

Why and for whom is the Apostleship of Prayer useful?

The Apostleship of Prayer (AP) is a valuable instrument which offers all Christians a simple and profound spirituality. This proposal unites *already committed Christians* to the Eucharist and the Heart of Jesus and offers them an opportunity to strengthen their spiritual life day by day. The AP is a proposal of renewal for people who work in every kind of Church activity: parishes, colleges, institutions, NGOs, publishing, etc.

At the same time, the AP is a tool for *huge masses* of Christians who wish to become adult in the Church and do not know how to for lack of training, because of poverty and limited time and means, because they live in "irregular" situations, or for lack of suitable pastoral help. The AP offers the real possibility of helping the greatest number of brothers and sisters of every age and condition, "to unite their prayers and lives to the prayer and mission of the Church".

The XIX century Vals students had their methods of prayer, practised Saint Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises for eight days every year, lived a spiritually committed life... "and yet they lost the feeling of their devotions, prayers, eucharists, studies, services, community life etc. Father Gautrelet taught them to put everything into the availability which becomes joyfulness through daily

offering to the Father's Plan and becomes effective through carrying out what corresponds to it, uniting it all in prayer to what concerns and occupies the Church..." (J. A. Medina, S.J.).

The proposal of the AP is simple in its practice but ambitious in its aims. It is truly a path of sanctity for today's Christian. It invites him to place Jesus at the centre of his daily life, renouncing his own desires and caprices. It teaches him to ask the Holy Spirit each day to conform his choices and decisions to God's will. It allows him to discover that living in the love of Jesus' Heart is a path of fulfilment, that changes his own heart, that leads to deep liberation and true joy. It makes him realize that the path of egoism and narcissism only lead to unhappiness and frustration.

How, in practice, does one live this path of love proposed by the AP?

The basic method

When we come to the chapter of the specific practices of the AP the first thing to say is that there are few specific practices since what we are promoting is a form of living the existing ecclesial practices with greater awareness. The AP does not add anything new to Christian spirituality but rather helps to live what is essential to it.

The first thing to do is to *give due value to and live our condition of baptized people*. Granted the celebration of the sacrament, our spirituality can be summed up in living its significance. This consists in discovering the inestimable gift of being beloved sons and daughters of God as Jesus lived it, from his Son's Heart. Baptism makes us sons. Consecrates us to the Father to live dependent on his love. It incorporates us into the family of God's sons and daughters which is the Church. It grants us the Holy Spirit which makes us cry out "Abba" and makes it possible

for our lives to be united in all things to that of Jesus Christ. The essence of the AP is contained in this fruitful living of the baptismal spirit.

The daily offering of one's life

Our daily offering *is the most characteristic practice* of the AP with which a baptized person becomes aware of the spiritual value he can give to his own life, including the simplest acts, and offer them to the Father in union with Christ.

This offering makes us see that we can seek, meet and serve God in all the people and things which surround us; it transforms the whole of life into prayer of intercession in front of the Father for the world; it strengthens the bonds with the Universal Church, feeling that the problems which affect the whole of it are our own. Carried out earnestly, it also transforms the person who practises it: it is not easy to offer one's daily work to the Lord and at the same time maintain attitudes and thoughts contrary to the Gospel (Taken from the leaflet: *The Spirituality of the AP*, Spain, 2007).

The goal is clear and highly desirable: it is that of meeting and serving God in all things united with the Church, but how can we achieve this?

A step-by-step method to live the Eucharist as a member of the AP

1. Begin by being *aware of your baptism*. On the day you were baptized God adopted you into his family and called you his "beloved child". He joined you to his own Son that day, "to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:5).

2. Accept the *friendship Jesus offers you*. You are dear to

him and he loves you very much. He opens you his heart and wishes to be always in yours. He knows you are sorry for the sins which have alienated you from him, and is very eager to forgive you.

3. Each morning *offer yourself and your day* — all your prayers, works, joys, and sufferings; every thought, word, and deed; every breath you take and every beat of your heart — to God in union with Jesus' heart.

4. *Renew your offering* throughout the day. Remind yourself that your life is meaningful because you have offered it and united it with Jesus' life. This makes you an apostle, and you have a mission. You have been sent to witness to Jesus by the way you live your life and how you help those who are in need.

5. *In the Eucharist this offering gains full meaning.* Participate in Sunday Mass and, as much as possible, in weekday Mass. Go and meet Jesus there, waiting to show you his love. Then, when you discover he is there offering his life to you, you will join your own life-offering to his, together with the priest who is celebrating and with the whole Church, and praise the Father. You will learn to live your whole day in this attitude, and, in this way, every moment of your life will be lived as an extension of the Mass.

6. Since you were baptized into the Body of Christ, the Church, *unite your personal mission with the whole Church's mission.* Unite your personal prayer with the whole Church's prayer. The Pope is the Vicar of Christ who carries the needs of the Church and the world in his heart. Each month he proposes two of his main concerns, asking people to join him in prayer. Learn about and pray for these intentions, offering your day for them. Be open to ways that God may be calling you to address them.

7. Make an examen or *evening review.* The important

question is not "What did I do wrong today?" but rather "What has God done with the gift that I gave him at the beginning of the day?" I will also see what I have done wrong, but it is more important to see what God has done right. And I ask him to help me do things better the next day.

8. Go regularly to the *Sacrament of Reconciliation* to celebrate Jesus' forgiveness, renewing through the Church the grace of living in his friendship.

9. Be close to *Mary*, loving her tenderly. Carry her in your heart, seek her as the best companion for your journey with Jesus.

What words shall I use to offer myself to God every day?

Express your offering in the way that is most meaningful to you. Use your own words or those of someone else. There are many forms of the daily offering, ancient and modern.

Our daily Morning Offering could be put in these words:
God, our Father, I offer You my day.
I offer You my prayers, thoughts, words,
actions, joys, and sufferings
in union with Your Son Jesus' Heart,
Who continues to offer Himself in the Eucharist
for the salvation of the world.
May the Holy Spirit, Who guided Jesus,
be my guide and my strength today
so that I may witness to Your love.
With Mary, the mother of our Lord and of the Church,
I pray especially for this month's intentions
as proposed by the Holy Father.

In this prayer, with its deep trinitarian content, we discover the essential elements of the spiritual attitude the AP proposes. We offer the Father all that we are and do, and our life takes on a value

of salvation for others not through our merits but because we unite ourselves to Jesus, who continues to offer himself in the Eucharist for us.

This prayer, said every morning, is an act of will which expresses our desire that the whole day be lived in sympathy with Jesus' life and attitude. Since we cannot do this on our own strength we implore the strength and assistance of the Holy Spirit.

We also invoke the help of Mary, our exemplary companion along the path of discipleship.

If this prayer is well assimilated, it is enough to discover and understand the elements of the spiritual proposal of the AP:

In the service of others

The daily offering leads to the indispensable practice which reflects the authenticity of our offering: *service and solidarity* towards our brothers. "Prayer and Service", the motto of the AP, sums up our vocation. If we sincerely offer our lives to the Father, we place ourselves in line with Jesus who became a servant for us. We will be authentic servants insofar as how truly our lives become "eucharistic".

This is how Father Kolvenbach described it to the members and leaders of the AP in Rome in June 1994: "There is a life-style, a spirituality, adopted by Christians who centre their lives in Christ: They become, in every daily detail, an extension of Christ's love for the Father and this love overflow in service to the world's little ones" (*Prayer & Service*, 1995, 1, p. 42).

He specified this same idea in September 1995 to the members of the AP gathered in Valladolid: "The mystery of the Eucharist involves the whole of Christian life, not only our acts of piety and devotion but, even more, all the activities which tend to

promote justice in the name of the Gospel and are necessary for our participation in the Lord's Supper. Our faith in the Eucharist would be irrelevant if it were not fulfilled in charity which fights injustices and tries to transform the unjust structures of human society (...) In our lives we cannot separate what Jesus united: the celebration of his Last Supper and the washing of the feet" (*Prayer & Service* 2007, 1, p. 17).

Summing up what I have said so far: when we propose the AP, we propose living like Jesus, in his style, with his Heart. We propose a way of living our lives, starting with prayer and service, taking as ours the gaze and action of Jesus' Heart, which is the gaze and action of God for the poor, the abandoned, those who lack love, for all those who need it.

How is the AP spread?

The AP basically spreads its spirituality through the "monthly leaflets" with the Pope's intentions (The "breviaries of the poor" according to Father Kolvenbach), and the periodical "The Messenger of the Heart of Jesus". The web pages and various publications of the National Secretaries help the members of the AP to deepen their spirituality. Of course local and diocesan meetings, the Eucharist of the first Fridays and yearly appointments such as a National Meeting or a retreat, occupy an important place.

1. Who can be a part of the AP?

Everyone. Adults, young people, the healthy, the sick, single or married people, those separated... all are welcome, all can live this spirituality of the Heart of Jesus profitably. As I indicated in the introduction, the AP is a suitable tool for helping the spiritual life of all Christians.

Our proposal can be lived in an individual or community form. It is certainly helpful to live it in an established group of the AP with regular meetings. As this is not easy for many people, it is possible to belong to the AP without belonging to a group and one need only make the daily offering every morning and pray for the Pope's intentions.

In this way we join the millions of Christians throughout the world who live their faith with the help of the AP. This is why we insist that we are not really a Movement but an Association of the faithful, an ecclesial service. This service is also suitable for people who belong to Movements or other associations of the faithful which have their own spirituality. Nor is it necessary to register officially in the AP offices, though this is useful for receiving the material which nourishes this spirituality.

2. How can one belong to it?

There are different ways and degrees of belonging to the AP. One can belong in a more general or *informal* way taking on and living this spirituality in an individual form without ties with other members or local centres.

Those who are *registered as members of a local centre* and connected with the Diocesan or National Centre of the AP, thus receiving some of our publications, develop a closer link. The people who *form specific groups* of the AP, with meetings and practices in common, have a third degree of belonging. The fourth degree of belonging refers to those *in charge of or promoters* of the AP, and those who have chosen to make a special Consecration to the Heart of Jesus within the AP. Parallel to the third way given here, though designed in particular for children and young people, there is the EYM.

The Eucharistic Youth Movement

The Eucharistic Youth Movement (EYM) is the children and young people's branch of the AP. It grew out of the renewal of the old Eucharistic Crusade and is based on the same spirituality as the AP. But, unlike the AP, in order to work with children and young people the EYM is a Movement as such, with its own structures and specific directives. To ensure its objectives it takes care of the evolutive process of its components.

We could define it as a Church movement which aims at training children and young people in their Christian life and inviting them to live in Jesus' style. Its methodology is based on forming communities with a clear ecclesial awareness; living prayer, the Eucharist, the Word of God and discernment, the young people are led to a life of service, attentive to the needs of the present-day world. It is present in 34 countries in the five continents. The great utility and efficacy of the EYM in the Christian training of children and young people has been proved.

Here are some texts of the EYM in the world:

We are children, adolescents and young people, boys and girls, called by Jesus and brought together by the Apostleship of Prayer (AP) (...) who want to tell the world that our youthful joy stems from encountering God, from disinterested love, from looking at our history with hope, from Jesus' plan which fills us with enthusiasm and moves us to fulfil it. (From the Latin-American Handbook of the EYM, 2006).

E Eucharistic. We celebrate the Eucharistic Jesus, who is the centre of what we do, in every Mass and in our whole life. Our actions have their meaning in Jesus, as they manifest his love among the neediest people.

Y Youth. Jesus renews our lives, our hearts, making us "as children". He animates us with joy in our task. We belong to the

Lord. We are the pilgrim Church, which collaborates in the building of the Kingdom.

M Movement. We are a community in action, oriented towards service to our brothers, continuing Jesus' sacrifice: "... here I am among you as one who serves" (Lk 22:27). (From the EYM of Chile, 2007).

Other recommendable practices

1. The 12 promises and the first Fridays

At a time hard to place precisely, but after Saint Margaret Mary death in 1690, some of her followers selected several promises made by Jesus from her writings. They drew up a list containing 11 promises which circulated in a restricted form for many years. It was only in 1869 that Father Franciosi, S.J. "discovered" what he called "the great promise" in Margaret's writings and added it to the list as number 12.

These gained world-wide popularity after 1882 when a devoted merchant from Dayton, Ohio, USA, Philip A. Kemper, changed their wording, shortened them and began to print and circulate hundreds of thousands of copies in various languages. It is important to realize that these promises do not appear in this form in Saint Margaret Mary's writings, which also contain many other promises. They have their value but we risk remaining only with them, thus impoverishing the theological content of the devotion to the Heart of Jesus, reducing it to an "interested" spirituality in function of what I want to receive.

Let us now observe this last "great promise": "One Friday, during holy communion, he spoke these words to his unworthy servant, if she is not mistaken: "I promise you, in the overflowing of the mercy of my Heart, that his omnipotent love will grant all those who take communion on nine first Fridays of the months

consecutively the grace of final repentance, they will not die in my disfavour, nor without receiving the sacraments; my Heart will be their safe haven in their last moments" (*Margaret Mary Alacoque, Letter 86, May 1688*).

This recommendation follows the lines of Jesus' own eucharistic catechesis in John's Gospel: "Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood will have eternal life" (6:54). It's intention is to situate the value of the Eucharist in a Christian's life, both for his earthly life and for his eternal life. The choice of a definite day answers to a pastoral pedagogy which remembers Good Friday, the day on which Jesus dies for our salvation, every month.

To have a better understanding of the scope of the proposal of the First Fridays we must enter into the theological and ecclesial atmosphere of the period. Jansenism, a rigid and puritan doctrine which exacted spotless conduct in order to accede to salvation, predominated widely. It preached that Jesus died only for the few elected, the great masses remaining condemned. God was a judge who must be more feared than loved, and the common people, convinced of their sinfulness lived in constant terror of condemnation. *Normal* faithful could not approach communion except on given occasions, and only after accomplishing an exigent list of conditions. Jansenism was condemned by the Church in 1653, twenty years before the apparitions to Saint Margaret Mary, however its influence lasted (in fact a new condemnation proved necessary in 1715). This may explain the fact that this "Great promise" was strangely silent for so many years.

Jesus' words to Margaret Mary appeared at that time a great novelty for two reasons. In the first place, it opened a way to salvation for all people, remembering that the Lord wants everyone to be saved (see 1Tm 2:3). Jesus stresses to Margaret Mary the "overflowing of the mercy of his Heart", which in fact wishes to open the gates of heaven to all people. The invitation to the First

Fridays was a way of saying that we must not fear perdition, because the simple gesture of taking communion for nine consecutive months is a symbol of the gift of salvation and of the trust owed to his Heart. The emphasis was not on a mathematical God, who gives marks, requires results, punishes those who did not achieve them; but the contrary: the simplicity and accessibility of salvation. This proposal represented overcoming jansenist rigidity and offered relief for anguished and fearful Christians. Following a simple path they met a God with an open Heart, absolutely ready to give eternal life to all people. Living these Fridays of communion was and continues being a symbol which reminds us of the unlimited love which keeps the door of his Heart and of eternal life open to his sons.

The second novelty stems from the fact that it was an invitation to take communion far more frequently than what was customary at the time. Once a month was far more usual. Jesus, in "the overflowing of his mercy" wanted his faithful to remain closer to the eucharistic banquet. Today we must understand the devotion to the First Fridays as a symbol of his Heart's desire to nourish our lives with the Eucharist (today, certainly, more than once a month!). And he also invites us, once a month at least, to concentrate our gaze in a special way on his Heart's love for us.

On various occasions Pope John Paul II urged us to intensify and at the same time renew our practice of the first Fridays of the month. I quote his words to the Secretaries of the AP from all over the world, gathered in Rome in 1985:

"Let you continue to recommend with growing and renewed insistence, the extension of the pious practice of the "First Fridays" since in it the faithful person who is reconciled with God, with the Church and with our brothers through the Sacrament of Penance, becomes united with the Heart of Jesus, nourishing himself with the Sacrament of the Eucharist and participating in its attitude of offering and reparation".

To conclude, today we must appreciate the practice of the First Fridays basically for its symbolic rather than its juridical value. It is a symbol of the Father's universal desire for salvation, and of Jesus' invitation to centre our lives on the Eucharist. We would betray his spirit if we understood it as a kind of juridical mechanism which guarantees us eternal life. Salvation always comes through grace, one cannot "buy" it in this way. A person who approaches Jesus during these nine months experiences approaching the Lord inwardly and this places him on the path to salvation.

2. Personal, family, community, consecration

The AP invites us to consecrate ourselves to the Heart of Jesus, to turn our lives into an offering to the Father, to become far more closely united to the Son's surrender of love. Some people prefer to speak of consecrating oneself to the Father, *through* the Heart of Jesus. It is a personal, family or community offering, through which we freely choose to become more closely bound to the Heart of Christ and thus share in his life and love for us in a far closer way. Basically it is simply the renewal of our baptismal consecration to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Why consecrate ourselves, if we have already been consecrated through baptism?

Because it is one more symbol which helps us to live our faith and adherence to Jesus. In a world which does not value definitive commitments, in an egoistic and narcissistic society, we choose a personal or community alliance with the Heart of Jesus. It helps us to centre our own hearts, it reopens the source of his Heart, it is a useful testimony for others to see that there are Christians who, in the midst of the world, consecrate their lives to God. If we understand it correctly, the consecration the AP proposes is a valid instrument for indicating a relationship of

greater love for the Lord and making a public gesture for Christians who want to take their life of faith more seriously.

What Pope Pius XII said in his day is still valid now: It seems to us that Jesus descends among you and says to those who still doubt: "Surrender your heart to me", your whole heart, forever. I need people who aspire at total surrender of self, while remaining in the midst of the uproar of the world. I need heroic young people, innocent children, faithful spouses, pure young people...

When making the consecration we commit ourselves to:

- Renew our baptismal commitment to be saints, to be always faithful to Jesus Christ and to his Gospel: "Reproduce in your hearts the sanctity of Jesus' Heart" (*John Paul II, 1979*).

- Offer our lives each day in union and communion with the sentiments of Christ's Heart. "In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus..." (Ph 2:5).

- Live with a eucharistic attitude: in an attitude of service to others. For this we need frequent participation in the Mass, possibly more than once a week.

- Be an apostle of the spirituality of the Heart of Jesus.

How does one consecrate oneself to the Heart of Jesus?

A preliminary preparation is essential: As long as a person is not prepared to give everything, he must pray insistently, "asking for what I wish", in the humble attitude Saint Augustine speaks of. "Give me, Lord, what you ask of me and ask me what you wish". The preparation can consist in a Consecration Course or Retreat, in going to Mass during nine first Fridays of the month with the intention of uniting one's heart to Jesus', in suitable reading, in sacramental confession, etc.

Once the person is prepared, a significant date is chosen and in the frame of the Eucharist the consecration takes place through an established formula (the AP handbooks offer various

models) or one written by the person or group involved. During the Eucharist the formula is generally pronounced before the offertory or before receiving communion.

I quote some words of Saint Alberto Hurtado (a Chilean Jesuit who died in 1952 and was canonized two years ago by Benedict XVI) spoken to the members of the AP:

Words of Saint Alberto Hurtado

May this consecration, brothers, not be one more formula added to others; may it not be a prayer to increase pious practices. No, please, may it not be that of your intimate feelings (...) The consecration is the surrender of our whole life, of our desiring, being and possessing Christ. Your consecration will signify your participation in everything in which Christ participated, loving what Christ loved, hating what Christ hated... and this translates into this sublime formula: in my living now as Christ would live if he were in my place.

True devotion does not only consist in seeking God in heaven or Christ in the Eucharist but also in seeing him and serving him in the person of each of our brothers.

3. Reparation

This theme deserves an in-depth study and a theological penetration of its precise meaning. I will limit myself to outlining a few ideas and collecting a few authorized texts which help clarify certain aspects.

Reparation is basically the Christian's participation in Jesus Christ's redeeming love and in his lot in the world, starting from the desire to be like him. It is sharing in the Lord's lot which eliminates the sin of the world.

Reparation for our own sins and those of others consists primarily in becoming a faithful, obedient and loving participant in the Lord's lot, accepting the manifestation of sin in the world: slavery, darkness, persecution, remoteness of God, death (Teologia del Cuore di Cristo, Karl Rahner, Edizioni AdP, Italia, 1995, p. 78).

It is Christ who really makes reparation, facing the Father, offering his life for our sins. He is by our side as mediator, and this is why we can participate in this reparation, but only *in him and with him*.

For Pope John Paul II reparation is linked to the theme of sanctity, and he describes it as "apostolic cooperation in the salvation of the world" (see *Prayer & Service* 1999, 4, p. 313). Reparation begins through my own heart, with my personal conversion. With a life of sanctity we cooperate in the redemption.

Karl Rahner says that we make reparation through our own lives and also our own deaths. In a sacrificial love like that of Jesus, who knew how to give himself up: In the prayer of reparation we tell him that we wish, through our life and our death, to truly participate with his grace in the sacrifice he offered his Divine Father as our eternal and supreme priest, in the sacrificial love of his Heart which was obedient unto death (op. cit., p. 80).

In other words, reparation follows the same lines as our daily Offering, through which we offer our lives to "help" the Lord in his work of redemption. We unite our sufferings and all our life to his reparatory sufferings for the sins of the world. We must be careful when formulating the idea of consoling the Lord in his agony in the garden and relieving his passion, of sharing in his pain over the sin and ingratitude of the world which received his love. This can be misunderstood and cause confusion. With our prayer we do not try to be present at the moment of Jesus' passion,

to give him relief, since this moment is already in the past. In prayer we always turn to Christ in Glory, who already lived his passion. We can and must contemplate the Lord's passion in our prayer, but this does not constitute actively consoling Christ who "is suffering his passion", as if we were eliminating the time which has gone by from then to now. It is theologically complex, and contrary to common logic, to maintain that our present prayer can give relief to suffering which occurred two thousand years ago, as if it had retroactive efficacy.

It is another thing to consider that Jesus is pleased that we love him, as is characteristic of all loving people, and that he asks for our love. The risen Jesus continues to be a true man, with a human heart which suffers from rebuffs. Our prayer can be an answer to what can be interpreted as his "plea for unrequited love", without dramatizing it. It is the idea that we meet in Jesus' words to Saint Margaret Mary about his Heart which loved human beings so greatly and which only received ingratitude and contempt. We can see this longing of his Heart in Jn 21:15-19, when, by the side of the lake, he asked: "Simon son of John, do you love me?". And also in his humble supplication to the Apostles before dying: "Remain in my love" (Jn 15:9). The scene of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem which did not know how to receive his love, in Lk 13:34-35, also reveals this very human dimension of his Heart. Understood in this way, a prayer of reparation is the answer to his invitation to love him, and it pleases him that we tell him so.

The actual content of our "holy hour of reparation" will also be the contemplation of the Lord's sufferings and passion, his surrender to death. We do this "not to console him because he is suffering", but with the intention of identifying our own life with his, through our own suffering. We will ask him for the gift of feeling with his Heart, suffering the sadness which he feels today for the suffering people of today. for this is why we practise acts of reparation with Christ and in Christ. We will ask him for the gift of feeling with his Heart, that he may mould our own heart and

make it capable of loving as he loved us.

Thus reparation is another expression - besides the daily Offering - of the desire to offer our lives to the Lord in order to collaborate, with him and in him, in the redemption. If this is the case, what kind of action or what kind of collaboration does the authentic reparatory spirit specific to our spirituality ask of us?

Christ as Head of the Church lived sadness and consolation during his earthly life, and this continues in what has occurred and what will occur in all the members of his body throughout history. We must ask ourselves where Jesus is suffering today, and which of his sadnesses we can alleviate. It is not difficult to discover that his Heart is suffering today in the pain of his poor brothers and sisters, in the sick and the outcast of this world. His passion continues in them. Our spirituality leads us to serve him and console him through works of solidarity and justice.

This is what our Director General said in 1995 in Valladolid: "In this time of hatred and violence, of injustice and discrimination, the reparation due to the Lord is not authentic if it does not integrate the sense of the poor, the promotion of justice, love for the smallest ones, respect for life" (*A most pleasant Mission*). The passion of Christ's Heart for the weak and underprivileged is central to Christianity. In order to really follow Christ and to be true Christians, we must be united with Christ in his service to the smallest ones, as a concrete gesture of his love for the Father. We must form communities of solidarity with the poor precisely because of Christ's preferential love for them (*Prayer & Service*, 2007, 1, p. 16).

Paraphrasing the prophet Isaiah, we can understand what reparation is agreeable to the Lord:

Is that the sort of fast that pleases me,
A truly penitential day?

Hanging your head like a reed,
Lying down on sackcloth and ashes?
Is that what you call fasting
A day acceptable to the Yahweh?
This the sort of fast that pleases me:
It is the Lord Yahweh who speaks –
To break unjust fetters,
And undo the thongs of the yoke,
To let the oppressed go free,
And break every yoke,
To share your bread with the hungry,
And shelter the homeless poor,
To clothe the man you see to be naked,
And not turn from your own kin.
(*Isaiah 58:5-7*)

The holy hour of reparation must move us to "actions of reparation", actions to help others, which are what really interest and please Jesus.

Along these same lines we have John Paul II's well-known words, quoted by Benedict XVI, with which I will end this theme:

"In this way – and this is the true reparation required by the Saviour's Heart – over the ruins accumulated through hatred and violence it will be possible to build the civilization of the Heart of Christ" (Benedict XVI quoting John Paul II, in a letter to Father Kolvenbach, May 15th 2006).

Conclusion

We can prove that putting this, our spirituality of the AP, into practice is within reach of Christians of today. Starting from their concrete reality it challenges them to live on a path of both simple and profound union with Christ which leads them to a life

of prayer and service.

In a period of disorientation and of searching for meaning, the proposal of the AP gives order to life, and gives it a direction and a goal. Those who have little time can give coherence to their excessively agitated lives. Those who are sick and have too much time can discover that their pain can be offered to God. The young will feel able to orient their lives cultivating friendship with Christ, who invites them to surrender their hearts to him.

In a period of indifference and lack of welcome, we meet the spirituality of God's tenderness for us in the AP, a path towards the open Heart of the Saviour who teaches us to surrender his kindness to our brothers. In the midst of so much solitude, the AP unites us to millions of others in ecclesial communion, sharing Christ's mission.

The Apostleship of Prayer is Jesus himself. The admired Jesus, the welcomed Jesus, the followed Jesus, the loved Jesus. Jesus of the open Heart. In these simple practices we can find a way of entering into intimacy with him, of being transformed through him for the service of our neighbours.

We can reliably state that the Apostleship of Prayer is truly "a path of holiness for Christians of the Third Millennium".

**THE APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER
A WORK OF THE CHURCH AND FOR THE CHURCH**

*Dario Pedroso, S.J.
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How was this service born?

It is very important, every now and then, to go to the source and origins in order to see where the flow comes from - to go to the origin of this service to the Church and to Humanity, since the AP is truly a universal service in which millions of Christians offer their day in union with Christ the Redeemer, becoming "living hosts", immersing their lives in the Eucharist and praying together, in union with the Pope, for the two great intentions the Pope himself chooses for each month. A spiritual, supernatural service, a service of ecclesial communion, a service of love in prayer, in which a "Family of Worshippers" prays for all people placing itself in the heart of the Church, for the service of this same Church and all Humanity. This communion of worshippers, this feeling in union of prayer for the world, for the great needs and intentions, is important in the AP. The service leads us to always focus on the heart of the Church, with the Pope, in prayer. Furthermore - and it could not be otherwise - it leads to motivating us to pray, to be a school and pedagogy of prayer, to make the Centres of the AP motors of prayer, enliveners of this great ecclesial service.

Great rivers generally start as small streams which grow and develop into huge torrents. This is what happened to the AP. In fact it could not have had a simpler or humbler birth. Let us see. On December 3rd 1844, the feast of Saint Francis Xavier, undoubtedly moved by the Holy Spirit Father Gautrelet, the Spiritual Director of the Jesuit students, gave a lecture in the French city of Vals in which he sent out this challenge: "Today

many of you would like to be missionaries like Saint Francis Xavier, but you cannot because you are engrossed in studies and books and cannot go to China, to Africa... but you can be missionaries, apostles through your prayers". Their prayers, their work as students, their penances could transform them into true missionaries, could and must be a concrete and effective help to those working in the Lord's vine. Prayer, work, an offered life could become a great and precious apostolate. United through prayer, in this service of communion and ecclesial solidarity, they would become true apostles. Nothing could be simpler, more modest, more feasible for everyone. The young people were enthusiastic over the idea and threw themselves heart and soul, with the help of their Spiritual Father, into this campaign, this service, this oblation. The great and extraordinary Work, this great service to the Church which is the AP started like this: like a small stream which very soon was to become a great river with many thousands of Associates and, today, many millions throughout the world. This is how the great works of Lord sometimes are born, in smallness and humility and simplicity; this is the path taken by the small seed left on the ground, which will become a great and leafy tree. And the leafy tree is here, spreading its roots throughout the world, bearing fruits of sanctity and life.

Meanwhile this work needed a theological basis and consistency. Another Jesuit, Father Henri Ramière, a Frenchman and theologian of Vatican Council I and the founder of the periodical "The Messenger of the Heart of Jesus", became through his preaching and writings the key person in the consolidation of the AP, which was spreading and gaining in strength. Many Centres were formed first in France and then in other countries and missionaries brought this ecclesial service to many countries called mission countries. The tree was growing wonderfully. When Father Ramière died in 1883, barely 39 years after Father Gautrelet's famous lecture, the AP already had about 35.600 Centres in the world, with 13 million members. Giving birth to the AP Prayer and making it grow in this way was an extraordinary

action of the Holy Spirit! Meanwhile the periodical "The Messenger of the Heart of Jesus" grew also and was published in many languages and countries. The rushing stream was growing very big.

What are the pillars of this work?

The AP is, structurally, a work, a simple and feasible service for everyone; however, through the grace of God, it has a very rich spirituality established in certain pillars which are important and essential in Christian life, in ecclesial life. It stems from our baptismal vocation and grafts itself onto the dynamism of our baptism which places us in communion with the Trinity and makes us be living "Christs", with him, for him and in him. Perhaps it is its spiritual richness and the contents of its doctrine which make the AP live and continue for so many years, becoming a Work of the future, since the lives offered with Jesus in constant and apostolic prayer born of the Heart of Christ - model of the life and holiness which provides its strength and dynamism - are essential for the Church and Humanity.

We need to be steeped in its spirituality, in the life it wishes to communicate to all its members and to all Christians including those who are not members or not, properly speaking, Associates of the Apostolate of Prayer. It is a universal work, just as prayer and the Church are universal. We cannot confuse the AP and its richness with simple devotion to Jesus' Heart. We must understand the essence, the inner wealth of the life of the AP in order to revitalize our Centres and parishes, through many means, throughout the world. We must understand the spirituality and include it in the heart and life of all the faithful since the AP is for all people. This will cause an extraordinary parochial and diocesan renewal.

When the pastors and faithful become aware of the life and richness of the AP, the Centres will renew themselves, life will

spring up, the flowers will open. We will have a new spring, like a new Pentecost. We want everyone to make a greater and better effort. Let us examine the pillars of this Work, doctrine and life which must be discussed in the meetings and publications of the AP for the training and richness of all its members. Let us all make an effort to study them, assimilate them, live them and make them live. For when all is said it is so simple and enriching – it is the patrimony of all the faithful.

The first and fundamental pillar is its eucharistic dimension, it is helping everyone to make their lives an oblation with Christ in the sacrament of the altar. Offered life, with the Eucharist as the centre and source, the centre towards which everything must converge and be offered, and the source from which everything comes. Helping Christians to offer themselves with Jesus in the Eucharist is helping them to live the essence of their baptism, of their Christian dimension, it is helping them to be "living hosts", in Saint Paul's words (Rm 12:1). Life offered on the altar with Jesus remains "divinized" and is a unique force in helping salvation, so that all may have life and have it in abundance.

Lives which become Eucharist because they are united to Jesus on the altar through the beautiful and richly theological "Prayer of Offering" of the works of the day. As the Director General of the AP said, "from this act, which is both simple and profound, a new way of living arises. We cannot offer, day after day, what we do in union with Jesus Christ for the salvation of the world and at the same time maintain attitudes and thoughts which are not very positive" (Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J. – *Apostleship of Prayer, A path to holiness for Christians of the third millennium*, n° 2).

Everything – prayers, works, suffering, joy, the whole of life – placed in Jesus' sacrifice for him to take and offer to the Father. Thus life is a continual Eucharist, a permanent offering - a

gift so that through us everything may go to the Father and the graces and blessings we and the world need may come from him. We need to have an ongoing intuition of the riches of life offered with Christ and discover more fully the greatness of knowing that we are "living hosts" like him, the goodness and spiritual dynamism which spring from this for the good of the Church itself and Humanity.

We must not forget that as baptized people we are priests with Christ through the gift of the common priesthood of the faithful - as Vatican Council II teaches us in the dogmatic Constitution "Lumen gentium". By presenting to our hearts this desire to "offer with him" the AP helps us in a wonderful way to live our priesthood. Priests and victims, through life offered with Christ, for Christ and in Christ. A life which becomes eucharistic, of inestimable value, for the good of the entire Church and Humanity. Living hosts offered lovingly, that the grace of salvation may reach the heart and life of every man and woman. Completely immersed in Jesus like the drop of water we pour into the wine at the offertory of the Mass, that it may all become redeeming blood, so that the world may have life and have it in abundance (cf. Jn 10:10). Absorbed into Jesus because of the salvific value of his loving redemption, our offering will have incommensurate value and we will collaborate in a mysterious though real way in the redemption of the world. Through the offering with Christ, in the Eucharist, nothing is lost, everything is salvific, with him and in him.

The second essential pillar of the ecclesial service which is the Apostleship of Prayer is its own prayer. "From the beginning, the AP invited the faithful to unite in a prayer of intercession for the concrete problems which are of concern to the universal Church, particularly those which refer to the missions. In this way it aroused a deep communion of prayer among hundreds of millions of believers. We cannot hope for anything else in the future" (Idem. n° 4).

Praying, in particular for others, is a prayer of intercession, of mediation, of reparation and praise, it is already an apostolate. It is precisely an "apostolic prayer". Isn't prayer the soul of the whole apostolate? Can there be a life of grace, of conversion, of faith, of vocations, of apostolic charity without prayer? In teaching to pray, in leading families and parishes to more assiduous prayer, the AP offers an immense service to parish, diocesan and ecclesial communities. Hence the importance of a living and operating AP in the family and parish, since it is the motor of prayer, the continuous school of prayer, the tool which helps to pray. And the rest comes with it, as something more. Making Christian men and women more prayerful, turning families into praying "domestic Churches", helping young people to discover new ways of prayer, turning parishes into praying communities and schools of prayer is an inestimable and irreplaceable gift.

We all need to learn to praise with a simpler and more humble heart, to pray with the Bible and say prayers of meditation or *lectio divina*, we need to learn the value of the prayer of reparation and intensify it in our lives, we need to learn to seriously examine our consciences, a praying review of the day to ensure fuller spiritual progress, we need to intensify our pleasure in saying the rosary, which is a Christologic prayer, in order to go together with Mary towards the Trinity, we need to learn how to remain in adoration in front of Jesus Eucharist, we need to learn the art of inner silence to open to God and his requirements, we need to take more pleasure in the prayer of the Psalms and the Liturgy of the Hours, etc.,etc. Jesus, as Pope Benedict XVI has said more than once, is thirsty for us, for our friendship, our love, our presence, our prayer. Men and women, praying men and women, to help transform the world.

And all this gazing on Jesus, the Master of prayer, the Man of prayer, the Son in constant communication with the Father. Praying during his hidden life in Nazareth, during his family life,

when he went to the Synagogue, in contemplation of nature, in meditation on the unfathomable mysteries of the Father's love. Praying in the desert, during his forty days of prayer and penance, at the beginning of his public life, discovering the Father's desires through serene and intimate dialogue with him and obtaining the strength to carry out his will. Praying during his public life, both when he withdrew in prayer alone on the mountain and when he prayed with the multitudes before performing miracles, when he prayed before his Transfiguration on Mount Tabor and when he taught the disciples to pray the Our Father, etc. Praying during the Last Supper since the Cenacle was the moment of profound prayer, with the paschal supper, the institution of the Eucharist and of Priesthood, priestly prayer, etc. Praying in the Garden during his Agony and throughout the Passion, and ending his life praying on the Cross. Jesus in prayer is the model we must follow. It is in him that the AP seeks examples and strength, gifts and grace.

But Jesus continues to pray in Heaven today, as Mediator and Supreme Pontiff, together with the Father in order to intercede for us. He continues praying in the Eucharist, in constant thanksgiving, in the millions of Masses celebrated each day. Praying in every sanctuary, in the poor and humble silence of a hidden chapel, but always interceding for us. Praying in the community of believers, since when we meet to pray he is with us and prays with us as the head of the Mystical Body. Each one of us praying in our intimacy, in our secret being and heart. It is with the Living and Praying Jesus that the members of the AP seek to be united, so that each day their lives may be more fruitful, more universal, more collaborating with the redemption.

The third pillar of the life of the Apostleship of Prayer is to be centred in the Church. The members of the AP are in the heart of the Church, they live their ecclesial vocation rendering the precious service of praying each day for the Pope's intentions. They are aware that the Church is Family, Communion of many members, but only one Body, it is the living Temple of the Lord.

Praying in their condition of baptized persons, their feeling of the joyfulness of being Church, of loving the Church, of being in the heart of the Church continues to grow. This is why millions of people in the world unite in prayer for the intentions the Holy Father chooses for each month. This union of millions of people in the heart of the Church, united with the Pope, is an immense potential. Prayer is, truly, "the strength which overcomes God".

United in prayer, in a communion of brethren, we are a living force for the Church and for the world, we help to vitalize the Mystical Body, we help the Church to fulfil her vocation more and better. Unfortunately, in this egoistic and calculating consumer society, this prayer and this force are not appreciated as they ought to be. But those who have faith, who live in communion with the Church, who know the unfathomable value of the unity of prayer, appreciate and are happy to belong to the AP, to remain united with millions of people, praying with the Pope and for his intentions. And at the beginning of each month Pope Benedict XVI exhorts everyone to pray with him for the intentions of the month. It is this great solidarity in prayer which makes of the AP a "Family of Praying People", in which everyone prays for everyone and each person takes the value of prayer in communion with the Pope seriously.

What immense wealth is lived and evolves in this praying service! Helping the faithful to enter into this centrality is a prodigious and fruitful mission the AP carries out. Helping baptized people to be aware of their belonging to the Church is a marvellous Apostolate. Being an instrument so that many more may join us, in the heart of the Church, praying for the Pope and with the Pope, is building the work of the Kingdom. This is also the extraordinary vocation of the AP. It was born in the Church, for the good of the Church. We ask to continue developing this ecclesial vocation of ours, with the certitude of its fecundity. Only in communion with the Church, Jesus' Spouse, to whom we belong through baptism, can we truly and radically live our Christian

vocation. The AP wants to help us discover in greater depth this centrality, the value of our ecclesial communion, the feeling of our prayer as Church.

The fourth pillar, which the Apostleship of Prayer lives with determination because it is in the centre of its spirituality, is the devotion and cult of the Heart of Jesus. We know that this cult has biblical roots and that it has accompanied the entire history of the Church. It began with the Apostle Saint John who was at the foot of the cross and saw the lance pierce Our Lord's side, from which blood and water gushed. Since then, many Holy Fathers have bowed down in front of this open Heart and have taught us wonders concerning Christ's Heart. Throughout the history of the Church, from Saint John to our times, many men and women, among them many saints and mystics have fixed their gaze on the pierced Heart. Pope Benedict XVI himself has spoken at length about the pierced Heart and said that his first encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, was born of the pierced Heart of Christ on the Cross (cf. N° 12). It is from this Heart that the Church, the Holy Spouse, was born - and with it the seven sacraments, and above all the sacrament of the Eucharist, which led Pope Paul VI to say that "the Eucharist is the greatest gift of the Heart of Jesus" (cf. Apostolic Letter *Investigabiles divitias Christi*). It is in the Eucharist that we have all his Heart and all his love.

This is why the cult of the Heart of Jesus is wonderfully actual since all people can perceive the heart's language and it captivates young people in particular. Speaking of the Heart is speaking of Jesus, of his inner life, his love. Here again we find what is essential: our Redeemer's heart, the Heart which was pierced by the soldier's lance. We are at the source of all things, since it is from his Heart of God and Man that all grace comes to us. The AP needs to overcome many barriers and update terms, images, etc., but it must never lose sight of the unfathomable mystery of Jesus' Heart both in prayer and in life. Hence the urgent need to teach the Heart of Christ, to speak of it, to praise it, love it, make reparation to it, make amends to it, to speak of

consecration to the Heart of Jesus, of the enthronement of the Heart of Jesus in Christian places, so that families - "domestic Churches" - may contemplate the Heart of the Redeemer more and more and go to him asking for peace, unity, harmony, grace, forgiveness, faithfulness. The Divine Heart is the source of every gift and every grace, since it is God's Heart in which, as Pius XII taught us, we meet all human love and all divine love (cf. Encyclical Letter *Haurietis aquas*, n° 27).

In a world of hatred, of wars, of terrorism, of abortion, of euthanasia, of a culture of death, of injustice, of fraud, of violence, of lies, of scorn for human rights, of domestic violence, of the exploitation of minors, of moral depravation etc., we need to discover in a constantly new way the mystery of love symbolized in the Heart of Christ and, together with him - as John Paul II exhorted us to - build the civilization of love which is born of the Redeemer's Heart (cf. General Audience, June 8th 1994). Leading people to discover the Divine Heart's mercy and to surrender to it, in growing trust in the mystery of the Father's love.

These four pillars, these four foundations of the spirituality of the AP, belong to yesterday, today and tomorrow. Savouring each one of them in prayer and reflection, both personally and as community, is looking towards a promising future in which the AP will be more and more alive and vigorous. If we believe in it and its value, in its history and spirituality, if we humbly accept what successive Popes have said, let us open our hearts with simplicity and humility to the gift of the Spirit which will make us discover the riches of the AP and help us delight in it and enthusiastically live the grace God granted his Church and Humanity through bringing this work into being. And we would like to continue it with the gift of our lives and the apostolic commitment of our Christian vocation.

