

## ARTICLE 17

### Legio Sanctae Familiae – The Legion of the Holy Family

#### Marriage a gift from God

First Published in *'The Catholic Voice'*, Ireland, August 2014



#### Family Prayer and Devotion – The Sacred Heart

##### **Eight Promise - “*Fervent Souls shall speedily rise to great perfection*”**

In St Matthew we are told “Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48) We know that of ourselves we can do nothing, let alone become perfect, and yet Christ desires this perfection of us so that we can enter into Heaven where nothing imperfect may enter.

Christ saves sinners first by bringing them to repentance and then by leading them in the ways of perfection. Remember Peter's denial, Thomas's doubting, St Paul's persecution of Christ. Yet these men became great Saints.

St Margaret Mary, speaking of the Sacred Heart wrote, “*I do not know that there is any exercise of devotion better calculated to raise a soul in a short time to the highest perfection*”

Let us seek our sanctification in Christ's Heart.

##### **Ninth Promise - “*I will bless the homes in which the image of my heart shall be exposed and honoured*”**

Here we have another great gift particularly relevant to families. This is not just about hanging a picture on the wall. Far from it. The image of the Sacred Heart must become to the home what the tabernacle is to the Church. It must become the primary focal point of life in the home. Christ must become the King of our homes and He desires that we honour Him as King in our homes through exposing and honouring the image of His Sacred Heart.

The family should be consecrated to the Sacred Heart and Christ should be formally enthroned as King of the home. The family should gather in prayer before the image of their Heavenly King on a daily basis. In times of trouble, in times of worry, in times of joy, in times of sorrow, in times of great blessing the family should gather before their King to render Him homage and to seek His promised blessings.

##### **Tenth Promise - “*I will give to priests the power to touch the most hardened hearts*”**

In western society the hearts of men have once again grown cold to the love of God. Christ has appointed shepherds to minister to His flock and to care for those who stray. In the past Moses made certain compromises with the hard of heart but with the new covenant and with the Catholic Church, Christ has established a new sacramental reality and He also gave us certain devotions to treat this particular malady.

St Margaret Mary says “My Divine Saviour has given me to understand that those who work for the salvation of souls will have the art of touching the hardest of hearts, and will labour with marvellous

success, if they are themselves penetrated with a tender devotion to His Divine Heart”

This should be sweet music to the ears of priests whose primary task is the salvation of souls.

**Eleventh Promise - *“Those who propagate this devotion shall have their name written in my heart, and it shall never be effaced”***

Christ once again reveals His love for us with this wonderful promise. This promise also reveals how much Christ desires His Sacred Heart to be loved and how He Himself desires that we too become promoters of this powerful devotion.

Here is a simple yet profound path to holiness and to heaven which carries with it a divine guarantee. Because the heart of Jesus represents the source of His Love, those who promote this devotion will be profoundly touched by this love which will transform them into saints.

What are we waiting for? Do not be fooled by the simplicity of this request into believing that this task is easy. Anyone who truly seeks to promote Christ's interests here on earth will face severe opposition and will need to take up the offer of refuge in the Sacred Heart as promised by Christ in His fourth promise.

**Twelfth Promise - *“I promise thee in the excess of the mercy of My Heart, that Its all powerful love will grant to all those who shall receive communion on the First of nine consecutive months the grace of final repentance; they shall not die under my displeasure, nor without receiving their sacraments; My divine Heart shall be their assured refuge at that last hour.”***

How loving is our God! This final promise once again guarantees a place in heaven to those who remain loyal and faithful in their devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

In this day and age however, we must recall and insist that, in order to receive Holy Communion, we must have the proper disposition. We must be free from mortal sin, we must be truly sorry for our sins and genuinely resolved to avoid mortal sin in particular and all sin in general for the future.

If we have not been convinced by the previous eleven promises, then this great promise of Christ's, should on its own convince us to have devotion to the Sacred Heart and to have complete confidence and trust in the love that Christ has for all of us.

### **An Example of the efficacy of this Devotion**

Fr Mateo Crawley-Boevey gives the following example of the power of the Sacred Heart devotion.

A wife prayed and did penance for her husband's conversion. She one day heard a sermon on the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart, and said within herself, " This is my only hope." But how was she to proceed, what steps was she to take, her husband being a lapsed Catholic? Suddenly a happy idea crossed her mind. Her birthday was drawing near and both her husband and her daughters were preparing for her feast; she would seize so favourable an occasion with boundless confidence in the Sacred Heart. Having offered fervent prayers and sacrifices for the success of her plan, she approached her husband and begged, as proof of his affection, that she might be allowed to enthrone the Sacred Heart in their house on her birthday. To her great surprise, he consented to give her pleasure, but warned her that he would not assist at the ceremony. The first part of the miracle was accomplished; but Jesus never does things by halves.

## **Begging for Conversion**

The day arrived; the Ceremony was carried out with great love; and mother and daughters begged for the soul of the master of the house, promising in return to lavish love on the faithful Friend of Bethany. All being over, the husband entered the room out of curiosity, and looked at the picture. Here, radiant with love was Jesus, the King of his house! He lowered his eyes as if dazzled, paced up and down the room and looked at it again. This time he was struck to the heart. Thinking his emotion might proceed from overstrung nerves, he sought to crush down his feelings and went out of the room to get some fresh air; but attracted as if by an irresistible magnet he re-entered and, in spite of himself, raised his eyes to the picture : There He was, He the Conqueror, offering him His Heart! With tears in his eyes, he drew aside his wife and stammered: "Whom have you let into the house? For some hours there has been someone in the house, I assure you. I do not see Him, but I feel Him. There is someone in the house." The mother called her daughters, they renewed their entreaties, and, at the end of the prayer, the father was on his knees behind them.

That very evening, his confession made, this new Lazarus, brought to life again, praised with his family the mercy of the King of Love.

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