

## **Homily For Saturday of the 12th Week of Ordinary Time - Year II**

### **St Peter's 8:30am Mass - June 25, 2022**

#### **(Immaculate Heart of Mary)**

**Isaiah 61:9-11** "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord. My whole being shall exult in my God."

**1 Samuel 2:1-7** "My heart exults in the Lord. He raises up the poor from the dust."

**Luke 2:41-51** "Jesus was obedient to Joseph and Mary. His mother treasured these things in her heart."

#### **Hearts United In Love**

##### **Introduction**

More and more, I notice the way the liturgical year is structure, how it brings together elements that we might not notice otherwise. That's actually the way Jesus taught. He took wisdom and law and people and events from the history of God's people and brought them together so that people could see the saving action of God and a proper response to that salvation. Of course, ultimately that light he was shining was so that they and we would see that Jesus fulfils all of those ancient signs of the coming salvation.

Today's memorial of the Immaculate Heart of Mary follows immediately after the solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Of course you know that this is no accident. It is meant to instruct us on the very heart of our faith, the reason for our hope, and the cause of our charity. I was at an outdoor Catholic event, listening to a talk, when a priest approached me and said simply: Let Mary lead you to Jesus. I must have looked like I needed that particular message. It has stuck with me as a reminder that if I follow his advice, I will never be far from the Sacred Heart of Jesus

When I talk with children in the schools about the heart, I often feel like I need to check out whether they know that I don't mean the physical organ in our bodies. I am always both surprised and pleased that they get it. Even Grade Ones say: We know, Deacon Stephen. You don't have to tell us the difference.

Our Blessed Lady knows this as well. That's why, on July 13, 1917, she appeared to three children in Fatima, saying, "God desires to establish devotion to my Immaculate Heart in the world."

## **The Heart**

The various words for heart in Hebrew and Greek appear in the bible a thousand times. In Sacred Scripture, the physical organ is rarely mentioned. What is mentioned is that the heart is joyful, as in today's scripture passages. It is also sad, discouraged, troubled, grief stricken, fearful, envious, and many other emotions. The heart sinks, becomes numb, gets sick, trembles, melts, breaks, throbs, withers, swells, and many others.

Sacred Scripture also reveals the heart as the centre of life, especially the inner life. It is the place where one meets God and where God changes enlightens us and gives us a new life. God's power is often manifested in the human heart. It is the part of the person that God alone can see.

That place can be darkness. A twisted heart is an abomination to God. The heart can be faithless or hardened against God. A favourite in scriptural writings is that the heart can be uncircumcised, which means separated from the sacred bond of covenant relationship between God and his people.

The heart can also be cleaned and renewed. It speaks to God trust in God, and receives his word. Faith and baptism purify the heart and love strengthens it to lead a blameless and holy life. Jesus Christ enlightens the eyes of the heart.

## **The Sacred Heart**

There is no feast of the sacred mind. On Good Friday, blood and water came from the Sacred heart of Jesus. The Church thus advocates devotion to this beating heart, which was pierced on the Cross and pours out His blessings upon us each day. In loving the Sacred Heart, the Church responds to the crucifixion in the most fitting manner possible by loving Him who loved us to the point of giving His life for us.

## **The Immaculate Heart**

Mary mourned for the loss of Jesus in Jerusalem when he was twelve. Her heart was being made ready to mourn his three days in the tomb. While she cried at the

foot of the cross, Jesus gave his mother to John, the beloved disciple. We have become those beloved disciples in so real a manner that Mary has become OUR mother. Because of this act of love, the Sacred Heart now draws us towards the pure heart of Mary. We call it her Immaculate heart because she conformed herself totally to his Sacred Heart. The immaculate heart longs for the Sacred Heart. She learns to love what he loves. Her sorrow is most perfectly united to his. From the very beginning of his life, she has allowed every sorrow to pierce her own heart. Thus, while the physical temple was destroyed for the sins of humanity, Mary spent her life making herself ready to stay near as the true and holy temple of God was destroyed on the cross.

This unity of hearts between Jesus and his mother makes it possible for her to rejoice over what he rejoices, which is God's victory over sin and death. We read Jesus words that, where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Mary's heart tells us that her greatest treasure is in her son and his saving love. Marian celebrations are always celebrations of God's action through the redeemer.

### **Our Hearts**

We desperately need these two hearts if we are to have any hope of turning back to God. Our hearts become purified by contemplating the Sacred Heart of Jesus the way Mary does. There is only one Sacred Heart but Mary is the one who calls us to let our hearts grow in her immaculate way.

How can we let Mary lead us to Jesus? Of course, we always have the rosary, Mary's mediation on the mysteries of Christ's life and death. Look for a Marian consecration prayer. In the one I use daily, the line that stands out is this: Mary, when I fall, please lead me back to Jesus. Wash me in the blood and water that flow from his pierced side. That is, directly from his heart. My favourite childhood prayer appeals directly to Jesus, but participates in the gift of his mother to the Church: O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer you my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day, for all the intentions of your Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, for the

salvation of souls and the reparation of sins. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us. Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

### **Key Passages**

**Entrance Antiphon:** *My heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, who has been bountiful.*

**Collect:** *O God, who prepared a fit dwelling place for the Holy Spirit in the heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, graciously grant that through her intercession we may be a worthy temple of your glory.*

**Isaiah:** *The descendants of the just shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation. The Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up.*

**Psalm:** *My heart exults in the Lord. He makes poor and makes rich. He brings low and he also exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust. He lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honour.*

**Luke:** *When the festival was ended and the parents started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. After a day's journey, they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to search for him. After three days they found Jesus in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking questions. His mother said, "Child, why have you treated us like this? You father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety. Jesus said to them, "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house? But they did not understand what he said to them. Then Jesus went down with them and obedient to Joseph and Mary. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.*