

JUNE 27 2025, CARDINAL THOMAS COLLINS

The Sacred Heart of Jesus: A Burning Love for Humanity

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. This is a day of immense importance in our life in Christ, as we reflect upon that great symbol and sign of the Lord's love for each one of us.

The Lord Jesus is Lord of the universe. He is our King, the Son of God, Almighty God made manifest among us—and He loves us. He says, “No longer do I call you servants but friends, for you know all things I have done among you. Come to me, you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest, for I am meek and humble of heart.”

We see the scriptural origin of this tremendous feast at the Crucifixion. He loves us so much that He gives Himself for us—even to death, death on the cross. As His heart is pierced by the sword of the wicked enemy, He shows His deep and abiding love. This is who He is: Almighty God, glorious, yet bearing a heart full of love.

Even in our secular world, the heart is a sign of love. It is hidden and steady. Love is not fleeting or loud—it is faithful, it is continuous: boom-boom, boom-boom, boom-boom. Steady and reliable. In fact, we don't want our hearts to get too interesting—because that usually means we're having a heart attack! A healthy heart is steady and often unnoticed, just like the faithful love of Jesus.

The symbol of the Sacred Heart is a sign of this love. That heart is encircled with a crown of thorns and pierced by a lance, as we read in the Gospel of John. His love is not theoretical or distant—it is lived, poured out, and fully immersed in our world, even amidst suffering and wickedness.

The Lord came into His own, and many did not receive Him. That crown of thorns reminds us that imitating the Lord—imitating the Sacred Heart—means we too may encounter rejection, pain, and sacrifice. “Take up your cross and follow me,” He says. Often, it is there—in the suffering—that we most fully meet the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

And His heart is on fire. Flames rise from it. Just like the burning bush in the Old Testament, the fire of the Sacred Heart is a sign of divine mystery and majesty. It is the flaming love of the Lord for us.

We are called to imitate that love. Day by day, we must show it in our actions toward others. We are called to reveal the Sacred Heart of Jesus to those around us.

Above all this is the cross of Christ. That says everything about our lives.

In today’s first reading from Ezekiel, we hear how the Lord searches for His flock—for the lost and the broken. “The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want,” we echo in the Psalm. In the second reading from St. Paul to the Romans, we are reminded that Christ died for the ungodly.

Love, then, is not transactional. It's not “I’ll do something good for you if you do something good for me.” That is not Christian love.

No, Christian love is generous—it is on fire. It doesn’t measure or calculate. It pours itself out. It is rooted in the heart of God, in the life of the Blessed Trinity. This is the love we see in the second Person of the Trinity, who became one of us and gave His life on the cross. This generous, sacrificial love is the only way to truly live. It is the very life of God.

We are made in the image and likeness of God. Yet we often forget this. Our hearts become hard, cold, darkened by selfishness and pride. But that is not who we are meant to be.

No—away with it all.

We are called to the flaming fire of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

We are called to give ourselves in love, in imitation of Christ. And through that burning, generous, sacrificial love—often through suffering—we will discover who we are, because we will discover who God is.

St. Augustine, the great saint who experienced the depths of life and faith, wrote: “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee.”

Let us reflect on these words today, on this great Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.