

THE LOVE OF GOD

FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART

Gathering:

Sit quietly and sense the Divine Presence that is in and around you. Gaze at the image and the words and allow them to resonate in you. Breathe in the life of the universe... breathe out love

“The Sacred Heart of the Cosmos,” by Brother Mickey McGrath depicts a brown-skinned Christ against a black sky, surrounded by the stars and planets, his radiant heart beaming through the darkness. The figure itself is based on a 13th Century carving of Christ that sits above the central entrance to Chartres Cathedral. As Br. McGrath puts it, “I like to take the traditional and give it a new twist. *The Sacred Heart of the Cosmos* is a dramatic picture, and—I hope—it expands our sense of who God is.

How do we use the word heart today? Choose one of these sayings and talk with another person about how we use this saying:

heart of the house;
heart transplant;
heart throb;
heart and soul;
unborn babies heartbeat;
lonely hearts;
hearts aflame
our hearts were burning within us;
open heart surgery;
with a heavy heart,
holding you close to my heart.



COSMIC CHRIST: MOON and STARS

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Reflection:

We often use the heart as a symbol of love. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is, for Christians, the symbol of God's abundant and passionate love for our world. With a heart full of love, Jesus gave himself totally for us, even to the extent of dying on the cross. Sometimes, when great sacrifice is demanded of us, our hearts can become embittered and resentful.

But Jesus remained gentle and loving right until the end.

He was truly humble of heart even in the midst of extreme pain and suffering Jesus shows us that we can indeed refuse to let our hearts be hardened by suffering, by life's unfairness or by unavoidable pain.

We, too, can remain soft-hearted and gentle with open and loving hearts.

Let us learn from him ...

(sourced from pamphlet Catholic Primary Principals' Conference Mass – Cardinal John Dew)

What does the Sacred Heart mean to us today? Are our ideas now any different from when we were younger?

What did Mary MacKillop have to say about the Sacred Heart?

Why did she call the Sisters the “Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart?”

For Mary MacKillop, one of the ways that Jesus is experienced, is through her devotion to the Sacred Heart. Here, Jesus is the one who has a flame of love burning deep within his heart and Mary finds comfort and peace in this place.

Mary spends time just being alone with God in silence. For her, God is there with her, in times of darkness, pain and sorrow. She is inspired by the generous love of Jesus who seeks out the sick, the outcaste and the poor, holding them close to his heart. The compassion of Jesus for others calls forth the compassion within Mary MacKillop. By befriending the outcasts, being open to people of all faiths and backgrounds, and living her life in service to others, Mary tries to express in all that she is, the compassionate love of Jesus.

FROM MARY MACKILLOP’S WRITINGS ...

May the Spirit of the Sacred Heart animate you (Mary MacKillop 1906)

When storms rage, when persecutions or dangers threaten, I creep into (the Sacred Heart’s) dark abyss; and securely sheltered there, my soul is in peace, though my body is tossed upon the stormy waves of a cold and selfish world” (letters to Sisters 1907)

Prayers/own prayers/music

Response: Heart of God enfold us.

- We pray for those afflicted by drought, flood, fire, tsunami and earthquake that the generosity of peoples may reflect the concerned Heart of God.
- We pray for the Church and its leaders that they may be models of love of the Heart of God.
- We pray that in our lives we may show the hospitable Heart of God to all those we meet.
- We pray that we may be spiritual, prayerful people as Mary MacKillop was, bringing the gifts of love and compassion to all those we meet.
- We pray that as Josephite Companions we may always be a gentle and loving presence for those in our homes, workplaces, schools and communities.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR JOSEPHITE COMPANIONS TODAY?

In 2016 as part of the sesquicentenary celebrations this heartbeat image was designed for the Congregation. We look at it with new eyes:

The heart wraps around the world signifying love and care for humanity and for the earth.

The heartbeat is woven through the Josephite emblem to show that the Josephites have an attachment to life, sustainability of life, love and care for our earth.

The tagline ‘Listening to the Heartbeat of the World’ is an invitation to all those who follow the legacy of Mary and Julian to listen and to respond.



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