



Podcast: Bathed in Love: Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, 11th June 2021
Mgr Daniel McHugh

Journey of Faith - Life from Holy Mass - with Monsignor Daniel McHugh

Hello, I am Monsignor Daniel McHugh.

One of the posts I read on Facebook the other day was by Mary, who with her friend Cat, and a great team of volunteers looks after orphan children in India. She shared 3 photos of Jesse a little blind boy whose life has been transformed by their love. She writes “every child around the whole world has the right to be loved and cared for, and that love can change everything. For Jesse, however, it changed his entire world and ours.” One person responded: “this home is an ocean for love.” Another wrote of this little boy being transformed by “being bathed in love.” I responded: “love changes everything! And we are all in the Heart of Jesus, for God is love.”

I was thinking of the little chapel at Maryvale House in Birmingham with its historic image of the Sacred Heart. My mind went back to praying there so often as I was setting up Maryvale Institute for Catechesis and Adult Religious Education and Formation in Faith. There I was especially conscious of the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on that journey. I saw many people “bathed in love” there (to use that phrase posted about the little boy and his experience). I remember Mike a teacher, who came to the House one evening; at the time he was at a crossroads in life. He was taken to the chapel by Sister Philomena (now deceased). He said “I trembled there...I was not in fear though; I came back to confession, back to the Church” and he began some studies in catholic teaching. Later he went on to become a Permanent Deacon. He reminded me of the sick man who was taken there to pray by his Doctor, a non-Catholic called Michael Sellarajah, who said he could do no more for him. Later that same man stood up one evening at a First Friday Mass to speak of his healing. All who approach the Sacred Heart are transformed by the love of Jesus poured out for us on the Cross and sacramentally present in the Holy Eucharist.

I remember very well in my first appointment as an Assistant Priest wanting to have a more up-to-date image of the Sacred Heart. The Art Teacher at Secondary School set to work on a large framed “contemporary” image was painted. The old Sacred Heart statue with the Heart and rays emanating from it – a bit kitch for a young priest in the 1960s – was consigned to the upstairs Sacristy. The “contemporary painting” made its way into the Church. Everyone seemed content, but one day as I drove in my car alongside the front entrance of the Church I glanced across to the front door, and there were 4 holy ladies carrying the statue back in! A friend said to me: “it is not about creating a Michelangelo piece of high art, the image is what St Margaret Mary would have described seeing of Jesus in her visions, where He spoke of His love for human kind especially in the Holy Eucharist.” That is what we experience in this wonderful Devotion, and celebrate on First Fridays and in the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart. The

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close association between the solemnities of the Body and Blood of Christ and the Sacred Heart of Jesus remind us of the love that Jesus has for each one of us, and those wonderful words of St John Henry Newman, who lived at Maryvale and first called Oscott House, Sta Maria in Valle, Mary's Vale, "In the Eucharist the Heart of Christ beats for us still."

"Sacred Heart of Jesus, we place all our trust in you". Amen

The reading is part of the Letter of St Paul to the Ephesians Chapter 3 which is read at the Mass for Solemnity:

This is what I pray...

The prayer is the first Collect for the Solemnity.

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