

The image was placed in the upper recess in the entrance of the Chapel of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan on 29 June 2010. A mosaic by the Sicilian artist Vincenzo Greco, it reproduces a large stylised heart, the essence of Christ, and a central fire, the soul, which emerges from the frame and is intended to represent Jesus' ascent into a unique and intimate union with God the Father. On the left side appears a small profile of Jesus' face, which together with the flame tends upwards: it is the moment of His awakening from death and His ascent to the Father. Jesus' ascent to the Father marks the road that every man is called to travel; the vertical axis, perfectly distinguishable in the centre of the heart, is still the figure of Christ, defined as the Axis Mundi, or as the Church Fathers used to say, "He who alone can unite earth to heaven". Inside the heart is also the cross that marks the highest moment of the manifestation of God's love for man. Yellow and red, with all their chromatic tones, represent the dual nature of Christ 'True Man and True God'. The 5,000 pieces that make up the mosaic, their difference in thickness and size, represent the faithful in need of Christ's love on earth and the possibility that all have of gaining access to the Kingdom of God.

INTRODUCTION

On this liturgical memorial of the Blessed Armida Barelli, we want to pray with the words of the Encyclical *Dilexit nos*, which focuses on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, so much loved by Armida that she called it "her talisman".

Pope Francis invites us to "return to the heart" in a world in which we are tempted to 'become insatiable consumers and slaves to the mechanisms of a market. The heart is indeed the place "of who we truly are", where questions of meaning about life, choices, actions reside.

This evening we wish to thank God for having given us our Elder Sister, who with her teachings spurs us to always entrust ourselves and trust in the Sacred Heart, and we wish to pray for the members of the three Institutes that make up our spiritual family: for the Missionaries and for the Missionary Priests of the Kingship of Christ, that they may be women and men with open and welcoming hearts.

OPENING PRAYER

O Most High glorious God,
enlighten the darkness of my heart.
Give me right faith, sure hope and perfect charity.
sense and knowledge, Lord,
that I may carry out Your holy and true command.. Amen.

THE HEART ... OF OUR SPIRITUALITY

From the writings of Armida Barelli

The Sacred Heart is Jesus who loves, in the Crib, on Calvary, in the tabernacle, Jesus who loves to the point of becoming flesh, to the point of becoming cross, to the point of becoming bread.

"My yoke is easy and my burden is light". In the devotion to the Sacred Heart well understood and lived, we shall ascertain the truth of these words of Jesus. Love, true and pure love makes everything sweet, everything easy, and in the immolation and self-sacrifice, it makes us taste superhuman sweetnesses... Courage, sisters, in the ascent to Heaven! With our heart united to that of Jesus, with our mind, thought and gaze fixed on Him, let us embrace our Cross, and if the thorns of the path make our feet bleed, let us offer to the Heart of Jesus these first fruits of our martyrdom of love, happy to suffer for Him and with Him! Heart of Jesus, I believe in Thy love for me: but Thou believest in mine for Thee! (From "Squilli di Resurrezione" 1921)

Yes. He is above all a King of love, and if He has told us that His weight is light and His yoke is easy, He has really wanted to tell us that His kingship is a kingship of love, that the fullness of the law is love. Oh, how I wish I had the fiery eloquence of St Margaret Mary to speak to you of the intimate desires of the Divine Heart. But what

human tongue would be capable of saying such things? Instead, I pray to Jesus that he Himself may speak to our Heart and make us understand that all the desires of His Heart can be summed up in an ardent thirst of our hearts (F. 43, 1929)

From the Encyclical *Dilexit nos*

32. The heart of Christ, as the symbol of the deepest and most personal source of His love for us ... It stands at the origin of our faith, as the wellspring that refreshes and enlivens our Christian beliefs.

1. "HE LOVED US", Saint Paul says of Christ (cf. *Rom* 8:37), in order to make us realize that nothing can ever "separate us" from that love (*Rom* 8:39). Paul could say this with certainty because Jesus himself had told his disciples, "I have loved you" (*Jn* 15:9, 12). ... His open heart has gone before us and waits for us, unconditionally, asking only to offer us his love and friendship. For "he loved us first" (cf. *1 Jn* 4:10). Because of Jesus, "we have come to know and believe in the love that God has for us" (*1 Jn* 4:16).

218. In a world where everything is bought and sold, people's sense of their worth appears increasingly to depend on what they can accumulate with the power of money. We are constantly being pushed to keep buying, consuming and distracting ourselves, held captive to a demeaning system that prevents us from looking beyond our immediate and petty needs. The love of Christ has no place in this perverse mechanism, yet only that love can set us free from a mad pursuit that no longer has room for a gratuitous love. Christ's love can give a heart to our world and revive love wherever we think that the ability to love has been definitively lost.

LET US PRAY WITH PSALM 111

Antiphon *Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo*

I will extol the Lord with all my heart
in the council of the upright and in the assembly.

2 Great are the works of the Lord;
they are pondered by all who delight in them.

3 Glorious and majestic are his deeds,
and his righteousness endures forever.

4 He has caused his wonders to be remembered;
the Lord is gracious and compassionate.

5 He provides food for those who fear him;
he remembers his covenant forever.

6 He has shown his people the power of his works,
giving them the lands of other nations.

7 The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy.

8 They are established for ever and ever,
enacted in faithfulness and uprightness.

9 He provided redemption for his people;
he ordained his covenant forever—
holy and awesome is his name.

10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
all who follow his precepts have good understanding.

To him belongs eternal praise. will extol the Lord with all my heart
in the council of the upright and in the assembly..

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen

Antiphon *Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo*

IN HIS HEART... BROTHERS ALL

From the writings of Armida Barelli

“Love one another as brothers”. This divine commandment, united with the love of God, is the essence, the harmony of true devotion to the Sacred Heart, which is and wants nothing but love. Let us therefore love one another for His sake, as true sisters to one another. Let us banish egoism that demands everything, criticism, disapproval, murmuring, gossip, discussion, the plague that corrupts life and the work of our apostolate. Let us love one another, let us apologise to one another, as true sisters who tend towards the same end, who have only Jesus and souls in their sights. For love of Thee, O Heart all love of my Jesus, I will be as charitable as Thou dost teach me. Grant me and all my sisters the grace, and let me form in Thee and for Thee one heart and one soul (From “Squilli di Risurrezione” 1921)

The heart of our Divine King overflow you with His love [...] To love Him, to see Him loved, to make Him loved: this is our whole programme [...] Every creature is created, protected, loved by God; every human being, whether a child, or wise, or mad, or sinner, has a God who extends His arms to him or her saying: 'Come all of you to Me'. This year we shall therefore strive to love our neighbours thinking that God loves them and strive to see Jesus Christ in our neighbours. As the splendour of the sun gilds everything, so the splendour of God's love transfigures every creature (F. 44, 1935)

From the Encyclical *Dilexit nos*

167. We need once more to take up the word of God and to realize, in doing so, that our best response to the love of Christ's heart is to love our brothers and sisters. There is no greater way for us to return love for love. The Scriptures make this patently clear:

“Just as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (*Mt 25:40*).

168. Love for our brothers and sisters is not simply the fruit of our own efforts; it demands the transformation of our selfish hearts. This realization gave rise to the oft-repeated prayer: “Jesus, make our hearts more like your own”.

188. We should never think that acknowledging our sins before others is somehow demeaning or offensive to our human dignity. On the contrary, it demands that we stop deceiving ourselves and acknowledge our past for what it is, marred by sin, especially in those cases when we caused hurt to our brothers and sisters. “Self-accusation is part of Christian wisdom... It is pleasing to the Lord, because the Lord accepts a contrite heart”.

189 Asking forgiveness is a means of healing relationships, for it “re-opens dialogue and manifests the will to re-establish the bond of fraternal charity. [...] It touches the heart of our brother or sister, brings consolation and inspires acceptance of the forgiveness requested. Even if the irreparable cannot be completely repaired, love can always be reborn, making the hurt bearable”.

Canon *Nada te turbe, nada te espante*
 quien a Dios tiene nada le falta.
 Nada te turbe, nada te espante

INVOCATIONS

Padre buono salvaci

Lord, we feel with pain the wounds of war that affect peoples. We hear the cry of the earth torn apart by a false idea of development and of the poor forced to make journeys of hope in search of a future. We place everything in your heart and ask you, through the intercession of your elder sister, to know how to live steps of reconciliation to build peace in order to be, as you ask us, artisans of your mercy.

LORD, BY THE GRACE OF THE FATHER'S LOVE WE RECOGNISE OURSELVES AS BELOVED CREATURES, DAUGHTERS IN THE SON. WE EXPERIENCE OUR LIMITATIONS, OUR STRUGGLE TO LEAVE WHAT GIVES US SECURITY, THE DIFFICULTY OF WELCOMING THE OTHER AS HE OR SHE IS. WE NEED YOUR MERCY, YOUR LOVING GAZE THAT MAKES US NEW. WE ASK YOU, THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF THE ELDER SISTER, TO TASTE WITH EVERY MAN AND WOMAN THE BEAUTY OF FRATERNITY

LORD, THE LOVE THAT YOU GIVE US AND WITH WHICH YOU FILL OUR LIVES IS THE FIRE THAT ANIMATES OUR DESIRE TO GIVE, OUR PASSION FOR HISTORY, OUR STEPS IN THE WAYS OF THE WORLD. WE ASK YOU, THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF THE ELDER SISTER, TO LIVE THE MISSION IN THE GRATUITOUSNESS OF THE USELESS SERVANT, IN THE SMALLNESS OF THE ONE WHO COMES ALONGSIDE WITH MEEKNESS WITHOUT SEEKING TO STAND OUT, IN THE CERTAINTY THAT ONLY IN YOUR HEART DOES SERVICE TO THE POOR BECOME A POSSIBILITY OF SALVATION AND FULL LIFE

LORD, IN OUR FRATERNAL COMMUNITY WE ARE MANY AND SCATTERED AROUND THE WORLD, WE ARE DIFFERENT AND YET WE ARE AWARE OF THE ROOT THAT MAKES US SISTERS. WITHIN THIS ROOT WE HAVE FELT THE CALL TO GROW IN FRATERNITY AMONG OURSELVES, TO WALK TOGETHER MORE THAN WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO UP TO NOW. WE ASK YOU, THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF THE ELDEST SISTER, TO HELP US REMAIN FIRM IN YOUR HEART TO GROW IN COMMUNION, MAKING OF OUR DIFFERENCES THE SONG OF A NEW HARMONY

Song *Questa notte non è più notte davanti a Te*
 Il buio come luce risplende

WORD OF GOD

From the Gospel according to Matthew (11:25-30)

At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and *you will find rest for your souls*. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

BRIEF GOSPEL COMMENTARY

Song *Questa notte non è più notte davanti a Te*
 Il buio come luce risplende

The HEART... OF THE SERVICE

From the writings of Armida Barelli:

True devotion to the Sacred Heart must be the salvation of our society. In what does this true devotion consist? Certainly not in merely reciting prayers in his honour; it is essentially a living and life-giving devotion that begins with the love of compassion, is perfected in the love of imitation, and is fulfilled in the love of reparation and the apostolate: it is devotion that must set souls and society ablaze.

Life is like a boat

[...] Have you ever thought that life is like a small boat? Yes, life is just like a boat in the middle of the sea... now the waves are calm and the boat seems to be gliding on the water... Then... all of a sudden the waves start to shake. The little boat begins to sway, it seems at certain moments that it must be swallowed up by the waves. So many times it happens in life [...].

Who should steer the boat

If you always carry the voice of Jesus in your heart, love Him and follow Him, then you will not fear sinking your little boat... Jesus will say to you, as he did to Peter: Trust, courage... Come on, I am with you! Love Jesus then! [...] Always pray to Him like this: [...] "Sacred Heart of Jesus, Thy kingdom come!". (From Squilli argentini 1925)

From the Encyclical *Dilexit nos*

209. Mission, as a radiation of the love of the heart of Christ, requires missionaries who are themselves in love and who, enthralled by Christ, feel bound to share this love that has changed their lives. They are impatient when time is wasted discussing secondary questions or concentrating on truths and rules, because their greatest concern is to share what they have experienced. They want others to perceive the goodness and beauty of the Beloved through their efforts, however inadequate they may be.

182. Together to the heart of Christ, “over the ruins accumulated by hatred and violence, the greatly desired civilization of love...

212. We should not think of this mission of sharing Christ as something only between Jesus and me. Mission is experienced in fellowship with our communities and with the whole Church. If we turn aside from the community, we will be turning aside from Jesus. If we turn our back on the community, our friendship with Jesus will grow cold

215. Jesus is calling you and sending you forth to spread goodness in our world. His call is one of service, a summons to do good, perhaps as a physician, a mother, a teacher or a priest... it is up to you to let him send you forth on a mission in this world, and to carry it out confidently, generously, freely and fearlessly.

He will always be there to encourage and accompany you. He has promised, and he will do it: “For I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Mt 28:20).

Canon	<i>Il Signore è la mia forza e io spero in Lui, il Signore è il Salvatore in Lui confido non ho timor, in Lui confido non ho timor The Lord is my strength and I trust Him, the Lord is my Salvation I will trust him and not be afraid, I will trust him and not be afraid.</i>
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FRANCISCAN SOURCES (36-37)

1 And all the brothers should guard against slandering and “disputing with words” (2 Tm. 2:14). On the contrary, the brothers should do their best to hold silence whenever God gives them the grace. Nor should they quarrel among themselves or with others, but they should try to respond humbly, saying: I am a useless servant (cf. Lk.

17:10). And they should not become angry, for “everyone who is angry with his brother will be brought before the judge: whoever says ‘racca’ to him will be brought before the council; whoever says ‘fool’ to him will be brought to the fires of Gehenna” (Mt. 5:22). And they should love one another, as the Lord says: “This is my commandment: that you love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 15:12). And they should show the love they have for one another by their deeds, as the apostle says: “Let us love not with word and mouth, but in deed and in truth” (1Jn.3:18).

And: “They should insult no one” (Titus 3:2). They should not complain nor slander others, for it is written: “Murmurers and slanderers are detestable to God” (Rom. 1:29-30). And they should be “modest, showing great kindness to all men” (Titus 3:2). They should not judge, nor condemn. And as the Lord says, they should not consider even the slightest sin of others (cf.Mt. 7:3). Much to the contrary, “they should consider” their own sins “in the bitterness of their souls” (Is. 38:15).

Let us pray in the words of the Elder Sister

Everything that comes to us from our Saviour has no other motive than love, the infinite love that embraces humanity, to purify it, sanctify it, unite it to Himself.

Trust in the Sacred Heart to be what He wants us to be: ardent missionaries of His kingship, true Franciscans and saints at all costs

Praying with the Sacred Heart. Love with the Sacred Heart. Talking with the Sacred Heart. Work with the Sacred Heart. Suffer with the Sacred Heart.

May the adorable Heart of Our Lord find in our hearts a place of rest and comfort and may He work for the expansion of His kingdom

I urge you to have a spirit of living faith, to act by unceasingly repeating: 'Sacred Heart of Jesus, I trust in You'. You will work miracles

Trust the Sacred Heart in sad hours and in happy hours, in discouragements and in trials. Trust in Him always. Take with you this divine talisman, this precious stone, which is trust in the Sacred Heart.

If we were to go by the criterion that one must be holy to obtain miracles, who would dare to ask for them? No, miracles are the tenderness of the Sacred Heart. It is enough to provoke it. It is enough to say to it: “There is only You who can help and we trust only in You, because we know that You love us and, in our own way, in spite of a thousand faults, we also love You”.

(From “La Sua Voce” p. 44-45)

Our Father

CONCLUDING PRAYER:

Let us pray to the Lord Jesus that rivers of living water may flow from His Holy Heart for all of us to heal the wounds we inflict on ourselves, to strengthen our capacity to love and serve, and to impel us to learn to walk together towards a just, united and fraternal world. This is until we happily celebrate together the banquet of the heavenly kingdom. There will be the risen Christ, who will harmonise all our differences with the light flowing unceasingly from His open Heart. Through Christ our Lord.

BENEDICTION:

May the Lord bless us and keep us,
make his face shine on us and be gracious to us,
turn his gaze towards us and give us peace.

Song *Magnificat, magnificat
magnificat anima mea
Dominum*

