



Catholic Diocese of Columbus

Office of the Bishop
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October 24, 2024

My Dear Friends in Christ,

This past June, I led a diocesan pilgrimage to Paray-le-Monial as part of the celebrations for the Jubilee Year in honor of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, marking the 350th anniversary of the apparitions to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque. On the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which the pilgrims and I celebrated in the Basilica, it was announced that the Holy Father intended to write an encyclical letter on the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This morning the encyclical letter *Dilexit nos* was published.

It is a beautiful letter which describes the notion of the “heart”; reviews devotion to the Heart of Jesus in the scriptures and the Fathers of the Church; reviews recent Magisterial teaching on the Heart of Jesus, including the encyclical on the Sacred Heart of Pius XII and many of Saint John Paul II’s writings; and which delves into the spirituality of the devotion to the Heart of Jesus, exploring, in a special way, the ideas of Saint Therese, Saint Francis de Sales, our diocesan patron, and Saint Charles de Foucauld.

The encyclical concludes with an important chapter on reparation, developing the ideas proposed by Saint John Paul II and re-emphasizing Pope Francis’ ideas regarding social responsibility, human fraternity, and the common good. I had encouraged Holy Hours of Reparation of Thursdays before First Fridays and on First Fridays, as well as abstinence from meat on Fridays in the Diocese, in reparation for sins against human life. With this encyclical letter, the Pope expands the idea of reparation so that we might truly build a civilization of love.

I encourage you to read this encyclical, to meditate on it, and to prayerfully consider how it might be incarnated in our parishes and in our Diocese. The Sacred Heart Congress will be held in Columbus in early November and participating in the Congress, promoting devotion to the Sacred Heart and the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in homes could be an excellent way to renew our Diocese and to help us carry out our mission, especially as we enter more deeply into Year 3 of the Eucharistic Revival.

Near the end of his letter, Pope Francis writes (206):

“Saint John Paul II spoke of the social dimension of devotion to the heart of Christ, but also about “reparation, which is apostolic cooperation in the salvation of the world”. Consecration to the heart of Christ is thus “to be seen in relation to the Church’s missionary activity, since it responds to the desire of Jesus’ heart to spread throughout the world, through the members of his Body, his complete commitment to the Kingdom”. As a result, “through the witness of Christians, love will be poured into human hearts, to build up the body of Christ which is the Church, and to build a society of justice, peace and fraternity.””

Entrusting you to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *Earl K. Fernandes*

Most Reverend Earl K. Fernandes
Bishop of Columbus