



Vox Populi

06 June 2024

On Friday 7 June we celebrate the Solemnity of The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, one of the most widely practiced and well-known devotions in the Catholic Church.

It takes the physical heart of Jesus as representation of His unmitigated love, compassion, and long-suffering of the heart of Christ towards humanity.

It is also a devotion that took centuries to become a universal celebration.

The beginnings of a devotion of the love of God symbolised by the heart of Jesus are found in the fathers of the Church, including Origen, Saint Ambrose and Saint Augustine of Hippo. This was followed by writings found in 11th century Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries, and the Franciscan St Bonaventure's work in the 13th century.

However, following the revelations to Saint Marguerite Marie Alacoque the devotion was renewed and became widespread.

A cloistered nun, of the Visitation Order, she received several private revelations of the Sacred Heart. The first was on December 27, 1673, and the final one 18 months later.

The visions revealed to her the form of the devotion, the main feature being reception of Holy Communion on the first Friday of each month, Eucharistic

adoration during a “Holy hour” on Thursdays, and the celebration of the Feast of the Sacred Heart.

It wasn't until 1856 the Feast of the Sacred Heart became a universal feast.

In 1995, Saint John Paul II instituted the World Day of Prayer for the Sanctification of Priests on this same day so that *the priesthood might be protected in the hands of Jesus, rather in his heart, so it could be open to everyone.*

On Saturday we celebrate The Most Immaculate Heart of Mary. This Memorial signifies the great purity and love of the heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary for God.

This purity is manifested in her “Yes” to the Father at the Incarnation, her love for, and cooperation with, the Incarnate Son in His redemptive mission, and her docility to the Holy Spirit, enabling her to remain free of the stain of personal sin throughout her life.

Mary's Immaculate Heart points us to her profound interior life, where she experienced both joys and sorrows, yet remained faithful, as we too, are called to do.

Next week we look forward to Memorials for St Barnabas on Tuesday, 11 June, and St Anthony of Padua on Thursday, 13 June.