

The first time I saw the image of the Sacred Heart was as a youngster moving into our family's new home. Following Catholic custom our house warming and celebration with family, friends and neighbors began with a house blessing and the enthronement in the living room of a framed picture of the Sacred Heart. To display the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus we signify that Jesus is the "heart" of the family and we respond to the invitation of the Church to make our home a "Domestic Church" where Jesus is the center and source of love for all. Isn't it true that we first come to know the love of God in our homes and families, the place where our faith and the love of God is nurtured and passed along to the next generation.

During this month of June we have the opportunity to step out of our routine and find time for prayer, rest and relaxation. We might take the time to reflect on the image of the Sacred Heart, a symbol of God's love in Jesus Christ, of God's love for us, and of God's love in us. Gatherings of family and friends and celebrations at this time of year and throughout the year afford us opportunities to renew the ties that bind us together in the love that God has for each of us and in the love that we share for one another.

And be assured that the prayers of all of us in Holy Cross, priests, brothers and sisters, will be joined with yours and your family as we celebrate this special day in June in the life of our religious family.

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Sacred Heart of Jesus, Speak to Us

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CONGREGATION OF
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Thankfully, the year affords us different seasons and reasons for celebration. The academic year at Notre Dame has come to a close and the campus has settled in for the summer which brings its own welcomed change of pace and the chance for some rest and renewal. The month of June also gives us reason to celebrate. June is a month of graduations and First Communions. It is a time of reunions and weddings. And Friday, June 23rd is the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

This is a special celebration for the Congregation of Holy Cross. It is the titular feast of Holy Cross priests. Across the Notre Dame campus, you can see how this powerful image of the love of Christ is represented not just in the principal church, the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, but also in the Sacred Heart statue which is centered on the quadrangle directly in front of the Golden Dome main building. Father Basil Moreau, the founder of our congregation, had a great devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and he established this day as one to be celebrated by his religious community of priests, brothers and sisters. As he wrote, "In human language the heart is the symbol of love. To give one's heart is to give love. Jesus speaks our language when he holds out to us His heart which of itself tells the story of His love."

The devotion to the Sacred Heart is one of the most widely practiced and well-known of Roman Catholic devotions,

taking Jesus Christ's physical heart as the representation of his divine love for humanity.

But does this image and devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus still speak to us today? And what does it say to us about love, particularly God's love and ours?

A heart pumps about 100,000 times a day to keep our lifeblood flowing through us. For this reason it has become a symbol for our very selves. We say, "I put my heart into it" and "I want that with all my heart." The heart is a symbol for love perhaps because it seems to beat faster when we are in love. God, who always speaks to us using our own experiences, has chosen our symbol of the heart to represent Jesus and his love for us.



We know that real love is more about giving than receiving and we know that love is best expressed through actions, not words. God's love is only experienced

when we are willing to let go of ourselves and let God take the lead in our lives. If we are strong willed or even resistant, it is difficult to experience the love that God has for us.

“ God is always ahead of us and waiting for us so that he might receive us in his heart, in his love. ”

But Jesus says, "Be not afraid. I am with you," and explains that "I am meek and humble of heart." In this way he is helping us understand the mysterious love that God has for us.

Love is always given to another and love always gives life. And in order to understand and experience God's love for us, we have to be humble before the immensity of God. God wants a relationship with us and assures us that he is with us.

God loved us first. And God is always before us and waiting for us. Yes, we go looking for God but he sought us out first. God is always ahead of us and waiting for us so that he might receive us in his heart, in his love. He gives us joy and takes us on our life's journey.