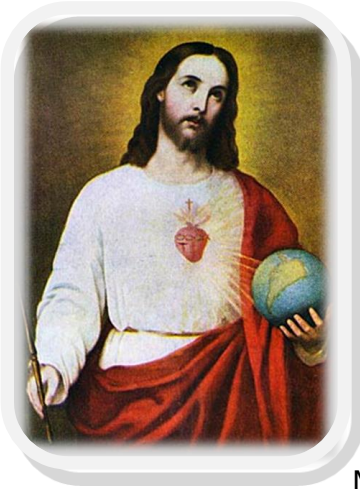


## WHAT IS THE ENTHRONEMENT OF THE SACRED HEART IN THE HOME?

*Fr. Columban Crotty, ss.cc.*



The word Gospel means "Good News". We only have to reflect on the words of Jesus to know how true this is. When Jesus said, "If you, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him" (Matt. 7:11), and "Whoever gives you a cup of cold water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward" (Mk 9: 41), He taught us how good God is, how much he cares for us and loves us and how he looks for the good that we do in order to reward us. Over and over again Jesus spoke words like these to His disciples.

Centuries later, in revelations to St. Margaret Mary, a Visitation nun in Paray le Monial, France, Jesus showed his Divine Heart as a furnace burning with love for all people and revealed how much he wanted people to appreciate and understand His great love. Just as he did in his earthly life, Jesus made promises. One promise was that people who remember his presence in their families; who honored him by responding to his love; and who displayed an image of his Sacred Heart in the homes, would be blessed.

Some two hundred years later, a priest of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, Fr. Mateo Crawley-Boevey, who was greatly influenced by the spirituality of his community, reflected on the love of the heart of Christ for all people and Jesus' request for families to honor him. Mateo was inspired to establish a plan to win the world for Christ family by family, a plan which became known as the ***Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in the Home.***

The Enthronement apostolate is an invitation to families to stir up the gift of faith received in Baptism. It is a commitment to be witnesses both in family life and in society to the risen Lord who "is always with us." It is an invitation to reflect on and respond to God's infinite love for us, which is recorded in the Scriptures and made manifest in the Heart of Christ.

A family's interior response to God's love is made real in a ceremony by which they publicly acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus by installing his image in a place of honor in their home. They make a covenant or pledge, indicating that this is not a fleeting act, but the beginning of a renewed way of life. Like leaven in bread, the witness of Enthronement families gradually permeates the whole of society with the spirit of the risen Lord, "a spirit of truth and life, holiness and grace, justice, love and peace," and furthers the social reign of the Sacred Heart.

To enthrone or place an image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in a place of honor in the home is an outward sign of an act of faith and love that is essentially an act of adoration. This means an acknowledgement of Christ's divinity and of his kind and merciful headship over the members of the family whom he "no longer calls servants but friends". It is also an act of reparation by which the family explicitly accepts and proclaims Christ's reign of love in the home and in society, and helps repair the fabric of society torn by acts which ignore the reign of Christ in public and social life.

The goal of the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in the Home is the sanctification of family life and the promotion of the social reign of Christ in society. The Lord sanctifies the family members through their profession of love and commitment of renewed fidelity to Christ. The promotion of the social reign of the Sacred Heart means that families work to promote Christ's universal dominion of love, be acknowledged and realized in all areas of society, private and public, and that the dignity and rights of every human being be respected.

Although Fr. Mateo presided at Enthronement ceremonies in municipalities and in nations, he reminded his followers that, "*the Enthronement in all its evangelical splendor belongs above all to the humble and the poor.*" He urged those who assisted him in his apostolate to be faithful to promoting the Enthronement among the poor. He counseled them to continue to be "*faithful to this – the choice of our Lord himself – for by doing so you will counteract the iniquitous and ill-omened campaign which is working to de-Christianize humanity.*"

The goal of the Enthronement apostolate, according to its founder, is to implant and develop a deep and abiding love for our blessed Lord and, as a logical conclusion to this, a life lived in the spirit of love. "*Insist, more and more,*" he said, "*upon the essential reality, which underlies the doctrine of the heart of Jesus – his love which generates our love in return.*"

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