

The Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus 2016

June 4-5

Frazee/Callaway

St. Bernard said, "Jesus willed that his heart should be wounded in order that through the visible wound we might contemplate the invisible wound of love." Let's think about the notion of an *invisible wound of love*.

When a kid sees a puppy and wants to bring it home, what is this? At some level, even if superficial, it is an encounter with love. The wound is wounded and made visible in tears when mommy says, "NO." Love feels like a wound when we cannot bring it home and live with it forever.

My heart was moved with love when I walked past a homeless man in NYC in April of 2015. I can still see him in my mind like a picture. It was a cool day. He was sitting on the sidewalk, bare footed and rubbing lotion on his bruised and swollen legs. I looked at him and instantly I loved him. Love wounded me when I felt helpless, and then it wounded me again when I felt no hope for him. Love may wound me a third time when I stand before Jesus and account for my sins of commission and omission.

Grandparents are overcome by love the first time they lay eyes on a new grandbaby, and parents in a different way. A friend described her experience of motherhood to me like this, "The day I found out I was pregnant with my first child was the last day I lived without worry." Love worries a heart and worry wounds a heart.

The necessity of love's wound is most apparent when a loved one leaves, or worse, dies. Oh how a heart is broken when someone we love dies. It feels as if the wound will never heal. Sometimes we don't want it to heal.

A starting point when describing our relationship with Jesus is that he loves us, and his love is unconditional. He loved us the moment we were conceived. He loved us when we were precious babies and naughty toddlers. He loved us the first time we sinned and the first time we lived heroic virtue. God is love. We are the beloved.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is wounded by our sins and especially by our apathy when it comes to living out our love of God and neighbor. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is wounded by our negligence in gratitude and in our half-hearted praise. The pain of his love for you was present to Jesus during his agony in the garden and when he surrendered to the guards.

"On the cross he **willed** that his heart should be pierced, so that we might enter without hindrance and there find both a shelter and a refuge. This adorable heart, open to all, will never

be closed; [the] just and [the] sinner[s] can take shelter there without fear of being rejected.”
(Fr. Martin Belieux)

It is difficult to enter a door that is locked. Some people shy away from a door that is simply closed. Jesus left us a physical sign that his heart is open for us; it was opened with a soldier’s spear. His love for us came pouring out in the form of water and blood—water to give us new birth in baptism and blood to forgive our sins and to nourish and unite us on our way to heaven.

I will conclude with a thought from Pope Benedict. He wrote that the essence of “Christianity is expressed in the Heart of Jesus; in Christ the whole of the revolutionary newness of the Gospel was revealed and given to us: The Love that saved us already makes us live in God’s eternity. Even our shortcomings, our limitations, and our weaknesses must lead us back to the Heart of Jesus. His divine Heart calls to our hearts, inviting us to come out of ourselves, to abandon our human certainties, to trust in him and to follow his example, to make ourselves a gift of love without reserve.”