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Faith in The Revelation of Love Through The Sacred Heart of Jesus

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Abstract:

The love of God expressed through the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a supernatural mystery of God that is difficult for humans to fully understand. But we can enter into a true intimacy with God in this mystery by trusting in Christ, who expressed God's love in a human way as we meditate on His journey on this world. Perhaps at this point many people wonder why it is said that faith is something that can help us to delve into this great revelation? Why can the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which is also a heart of flesh, be a concrete expression of God's Love, which produces salvation? That is what the author will explore and clarify in this short research paper. Within the scope of this article, the author will apply the method of analysis – synthesis to list and combine some important term's definitions related to the topic presented. In addition, data collection techniques using a method based on reference research and historical research with a descriptive and historical approach from many research that related to the topic of the discussion is also needed to present the relationship between faith and the mystery of God's love as a revelation to man throughout history, in which the culmination of this revelation is Jesus Christ. Through the relationship between Christ and his heavenly Father, we can realize the intimate relationship between the love of the creator, the redeemer, and the sanctifier for humanity. Thereby strengthening Catholics' faith in the love of God who created and loved man from the beginning of creation and continues to "love them to the end" (Jn 13: 1).

Keywords:

faith, revelation, Sacred Heart, Sacred Heart's love, love of God.

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Introduction

To know and to be in communion with God is a profound human aspiration. The Catholic Church has shown deep meaning in this relationship: "*Man is by nature and vocation a religious being. Coming from God, going toward God, man lives a fully human life only if he freely lives by his bond with God*"[1]. We know, however, there is a great distance between man, a finite existence full of limits and God, an eternal and perfect existence. That is why, "*In His goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal himself and to make known to us the hidden purpose of His will* (Eph. 1:9)"[2]. One of them is the revelation of His love for humanity. Thus, God's intention is to reveal himself, to reveal his love and care for people and the world. It happens gradually in history, beginning with creation and culminating in Christ Jesus[3]. In other words, Christ is the fullness of the Revelation of God's love and through Him we find our true reason and hope. The image of "*the open side*" of Jesus gives us the opportunity to contemplate the Sacred Heart, where God's love dwells richly, the love creates salvation for all mankind.

But the challenge today is we no longer directly observe the deeds and directly hear the words of Jesus. Things that we have are the testimonies of the apostles confirmed by the Church and has been handed down to this day. Fortunately, each of us has been given a special gift by God called faith. Faith is a gift of God, a supernatural virtue infused by Him. "*To make this act of faith, the grace of God and the interior help of the Holy Spirit must precede and assist, moving the heart and turning it to God, opening the eyes of the mind and giving "joy and ease to everyone in assenting to the truth and believing it.*[4]. It is a light shining in the dark, illuminating our steps to recognize and understand His mysteries. The concept of revelation is intrinsically relational: revelation always occurs in relation to an individual or a community. We can thus shed

[1] United States Catholic Conference, *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* Second Edition, (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000), art 44.

[2] Pope Paul VI, *Dei Verbum*, November 18, 1965, art 2.

[3] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, art 53.

[4] *Dei Verbum*, art 5.

light on the nature of divine revelation by studying the response that revelation requires of man, that is faith. Furthermore, by analyzing this response, we can strengthen the revealed concept of God's love in Jesus.

Methodology

In order to clarify the purpose above, the author will apply the method of analysis – synthesis to list and combine some important term's definitions related to the topic presented. Thereby making comparisons, identifying the main meanings and other interesting relationships between them[5]. In addition, the author also applies data collection techniques using a method based on reference research and historical research with a descriptive and historical approach from sources such as: books, Church's documents and other articles related to the topic of the discussion to clarify the revelation of God's love in the Sacred Heart of Jesus appearing in the length of the Church's history as well as her faith responds to it.

Discernment of '*Faith*', '*Revelation*' and Its Relation

The concept of '*faith*'

When it comes to the word '*faith*', surely people will think of an emotional attitude of believing in something or someone with confidence and certainty. But this word would be better understood when placed in the context of religion, specifically Catholicism: "*Used in a Judeo-Christian context, the word "faith" refers to a rich, multidimensional human stance that is inseparably God's gift and our own deepest actualization. In the following considerations virtue that relates us immediately to God and forms the foundation of our entire life in the spirit."*[6]

In the New Testament and Septuagint, the English word "*faith*"

[5] Greenland S, O' Rourke K, *Meta-Analysis*, In Rothman KJ, Greenland S Lash T (eds.), Modern epidemiology (3rd, thoroughly revised and updated ed.), (Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams and Wilkins, 2008), p. 652.

[6] Michael Downey, *the New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, A Michael Glazier Book, (Collegeville Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 379.

deprived from the Latin word "*fides*" (*trust/faith*) and Old French "*Feid*" is used to translate the Greek noun "*pistis*". In Christian context there are two distinct senses of faith: firstly, *"It is applied objectively to the body of truth (Christian faith) to be found in the Creeds, in the definitions of accredited counsils, in the teachings of doctors and saints, and, above all, in the revalation contained in the Bible… Technically it is known as 'the faith believed in' (fides quae creditur).* Secondly, *"to this objective faith is opposed 'subjective faith'. Faith thus understood is the first of the three 'Theological virtues'… It is the human response to Devine truth, inculcated in the Gospels as the childlike and trusting acceptance of the Kingdom and its demands, and known as 'the faith whereby befief is reached' (fides qua creditur)"*[7].

The concept of '*revelation*'

Before getting into the concept of the word revelation, let's have some informations about the word '*mystery*' to make sure we are not misunderstanding between the term *'revelation'* and *'mystery'*. The English word "*mystery*" deprived from Latin word '*mysterium*', from Ancient Greek word '*μυστήριον*' (*mustḗrion, "a mystery, a secret, a secret rite"),* This word in the common sense means something "unknowable", or unexplainable, or the knowledge or truths that are still kept secret and have not been revealed to anyone. In Christian context, "*The concept of mystery centers on the experiential acknowledment of the absolute transcendence of God whenever one encounters the divine salvific activity within human history*".[8]

In the sense of theology, a mystery is a transcendent truth (not something absurd) but transcends finite human knowledge (man cannot understand). It can be distinguished in two kinds of supernatural mystery: absolute supernatural mystery and relative supernatural mystery. The absolute supernatural mystery, also called the theological mystery, is a truth that is unknowable by the creature itself. If the creature wishes to express 'the inner substance being', it must use the method

[7] Frank Leslie Cross, E. A. Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Second Edition, (Oxford University Press, 1974), 499.

[8] Michael Downey, *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, 677.

of analogy, i.e., the mystery of the Trinity. The relative supernatural mystery is a truth whose innermost nature and existence are beyond human comprehension. For example: one of characteristics of God is "almighty = indefinitely powerful", but even angels also can only explain indirectly: "*nothing will be impossible with God!*" (Lk 1: 37). What God can do; angels cannot explain.

The English word "*revelation*" deprived from Latin word '*revelatio*', from Ancient Greek word '*Apokalupsis'*. This word in the common sense means to disclose to reveal a mysterious divine in silence that cannot be explained by human reason. But theology has its own way to give definitions to its through some theologians's words such as:

According to S. Thornton, '*revelation'* is a way of divine action by which the Creator communicates Himself to man, and in doing so, invites man to respond and act together.[9] On the other hand, A. Dulles thought that '*revelation'* was God's free manifestation of that which was beyond the reach of ordinary man; it is the act of initiation by which God emerges from His hiding place, calling and inviting them into a covenant existence.[10] In R. Latourelle opinion, '*revelation'* is the Word of God addressed to man, it is the first reality; the whole plan of salvation rests on the mystery of "*God reveals himself in love*"; revelation is the initiating mystery, which communicates to us other revelations; Revelation is the manifestation of the plan of salvation which God has contemplated from all eternity, and brought about in Jesus Christ (Eph 1, 9-10; Rom 16, 25-27)[11].

In addition, there is also an important explanation of Saint Paul VI, a great Pope (19758-2005) of the Holy Catholic Church in his encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*, when he said revelation is the supernatural relationship that God had the initiative to establish with humanity, it is expressed as a dialogue in which the Word of God God manifests itself through the

[9] Lionel Spencer Thornton, *Revelation in the modern world*, (Oxford University Press 1950), 60. 194.

[10] Allen Dulles, *Revelation Theology*, (Burns & Oates, 1969), 9.

[11] René Latourelle, *Théologie de la Révélation*, (Bruges, Paris: Desclee De Brouwer, 1966), 9.

incarnation, and then by means of the Gospel[12]. In short, mystery is a hidden truth (the truth about God) that human reason cannot reach which is the opposite of the word revelation when revelation refers to the supreme act of God's grace, in which He actively communicates Himself to people in words, actions, and events.

The relation between faith and revelation

Basically, the relationship between revelation and faith is intertwined. Revelation always occurs in relation to an individual or a community. We can thus shed light on the nature of divine revelation by studying the response that revelation requires of man, that is faith. On the contrary, by analyzing this response, we can strengthen the concept of revelation.

According to natural revelation, man has a natural understanding of God that born of perceiving the nature of things. This perception can also become a reflexive inferential process. Our world of inner and outer experience necessarily requires the existence of an absolute and personal being, that we called God. Although the natural knowledge of God has taken possession of man, but actually God is still to us something "completely outside", our understanding of him can be expressed by the word 'unknown'. But we can enter into true intimacy with God by trusting His revelation and His plan of salvation hidden in mystery by having a strong faith in Him. This was confirmed by the apostle of the Gentiles in his letter to the Hebrew: "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen… By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible" (Hebrews 11: 1, 3). In other words, we will not know and attain God's revealed truth if we do not have faith. That's why faith is our needed act and also important attitude towards divine revelation.

Faith can help us get close to the salvation behind the revelation for faith essentially is a gift from God, "To make this act of faith, the grace of God and the interior help of the Holy Spirit must precede and assist, moving the heart and turning it to God, opening the eyes of the mind and giving "joy and ease to everyone in assenting to the truth and believing

[12] Pope Paul VI, *Ecclesiam Suam*, August 6, 1964, art. 72.

it."[13] On the other hand, Gospel is the revelation of God because the gospel is the books telling of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the final revelation of the love of Lord for people. So "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mk 16: 16).

Overview of Sacred Heart Love

Discernment of the Sacred Heart's love

The Catholic has based on the "*the teachings of love*", the sacred books that God himself has inspired some human authors to write it[14] which includes "*the words of God, expressed in human language, have been made like human discourse, just as the word of the eternal Father, when He took to Himself the flesh of human weakness, was in every way made like men*"[15]. John has determined that love does not originate from man but "*love comes from God*" (1 John 4: 7) because "*God is love*" (1 John 4: 8, 16). Love is both the essence and the nature of God, so He always wants to share his passionate love for all species. He brought the nature of love in all species so that they reflect His love when loving each other.

The Love of the Sacred Heart here emphasizes on the characteristic of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that is the source of God's love. In other words, the Love of God filled in the Sacred Heart of Jesus which pierced for our sins and for our salvation. This sacred Heart resembles of "*the Heart of the Incarnate Word is deservedly and rightly considered the chief sign and symbol of that threefold love with which the divine Redeemer unceasingly loves His eternal Father and all mankind*"[16].

Pope Benedict XVI defined the Sacred Heart of Jesus as "*The heart of God burns with compassion! … the mystery of the heart of a God who feels compassion and who bestows all his love upon humanity. A*

[13] *Dei Verbum*, art. 5.

[14] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, art. 106.

[15] *Dei Verbum*, art. 13.

[16] Pope Pius XII, *Haurietis Aquas*, May 15, 1956, art 54.

mysterious love, which in t he texts of the New Testament is revealed to us as God's boundless and passionate love for mankind. God does not lose heart in the face of ingratitude or rejection by the people he has chosen; rather, with infinite mercy he sends his only begotten Son into the world to take upon himself the fate of a shattered love, so that by defeating the power of evil and death he could restore to human beings enslaved by sin their dignity as sons and daughters".[17]

History of the Sacred Heart's Love.

The love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was adored from the moment the side of Jesus was pierced by the soldier's spear and penetrated deep into his heart (Jn 13: 33-35). The spear left a wound wide enough for everyone there to see his heart pale from being pierced, especially the captain, where the Blood of Love from God's Sacred Heart had all flowed down and poured out upon all mankind to bring salvation and free us from the shackles of sin.

The time of the patriarchs

The love of God in the Sacred Heart was approached by the Fathers of the Church, mentioned as a grace that connects the Sacred Heart to the heart of each person, that love is a force that cleanses the weak hearts through invitations of saint Augustine to clean the eyes of our heart by faith, so that we may see what we believe. The return to the heart is the first step in the return to God for whom our heart was made[18]: "*You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You." [Cor nostrum inquietum est donec requiescat in Te]* (*St. Augustine, confessions, 1,1*)

Saint Gregory the Great, a monk who became Pope, in an important text he emphasized that the love that we have is not only the love of God, but also the love of neighbor. He also showed how to maintain

[17] Benedict XVI, Solemnity of The Sacred Heart of Jesus Opening of The Year For Priests on The 150th Anniversary of The Death of Saint John Mary Vianney, Homily of His Holiness Benedict XVI, *Saint Peter's Basilica Friday, 19 June 2009.*

[18] Jan G. Bovenmars. MSC, *A Biblical Spirituality of the Heart*, (Alba House, 1991), 146.

in contact with the Lord in an active life: "*The holy men who find themselves obliged, by reason of their office, to occupy themselves with external ministry, always take care to seek a refuge in a secret place of their heart.*"

The patristic theology of the Heart of God presented the Heart of God as the source of living water, of the sacraments, of the church, of mercy...all of this can be gathered into one source is Love, because everything God does for us resemble of His Love for us. Saint Augustine also painted a picture of a boundless love in the Heart of Jesus on the cross, the heart is open for us to enter and immerse in the sweet pool of Sacred Heart Love to love where our hearts are one with the Love of His Sacred Heart: "*His heart is open to give you a refuge, His arms are outstretched to embrace you, His whole body is a ransom for you. think of the greatness of these mysteries. Put them in your heart and in there, the Lord died hanging on the cross for you.*"

The Middle Ages

Overall, the medieval theology of the Love of the Sacred Heart reveals a gradual and unconscious transition from the mainly subjective theology of the Sacred Heart of the Fathers towards a warm devotion for the love of God through the Pierced Heart of Jesus showed the world. This gives us an objective view of the treasure of salvation from the pierced heart of Jesus as a gift of His Love.

The first person to represent this faith movement is Saint Anselm of Canterbury, "not as the father of scholasticism, but as the mystic who summed up the new Synthesis[19] "*The opening of the side of Christ reveals the riches of his love, the love of his Heart for us.*" (*St. Anselm of Canterbury, Meditations.; PL 68, 761*)

Following the same idea, Saint Victor Hugo (1100-1141) mentioned that the Love of Sacred Heart is the source of purity that can purify the blemished fleshly heart of man:

> *"Our carnal heart ... is like green wood, not yet dried from the humidity of carnal concupiscence; when it receives a spark of*

[19] Jan G. Bovenmars. MSC, *A Biblical Spirituality of the Heart*. 148.

> *the fear of Cod or of divine love, the smoke of evil desires and of the resisting passions rises up immediately. Afterwards, the soul becomes stronger, the flame of love becomes more ardent and more clear, and soon the smoke of the passions vanishes, and the spirit is lifted up to the contemplation of the truth with a pure mind.*
>
> *When, finally, by this assiduous contemplation the heart has been filled with the truth and, with all ardor, has attained the very source of supreme Truth, has been inflamed by it and has been transformed into a fire of divine love, it does not experience any more neither disturbance nor agitation. It has found tranquility and peace". (Ecclesiastes Hom. 1; PL 175, 117-118.)*

At the time when the Christian faith was persecuted outside the church and rebel factions rose up inside the church, causing the failure of many of many believers' faith, and diverting them to those factions that was suspicious or even against the church. At the moment when the fire of love was being extinguished, God once again ignited powerfully the love in us again when he revealed the Love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to the Visitandine nun, St Magarita Maria Alacoque (1647-1690), "*which gave a definite shape to the object of the devotion and its practices. Its most prominent feature was reparation for the outrages committed against the Divine Love*"[20]

In 1928, Pope Pius XI publishes the encyclical *Miserentissimus Redemptor*. The encyclical treats reparation in the devotion to the Sacred Heart: a reparation offered to Christ, to console him in his personal suffering during his terrestrial life, and secondly to alleviate the suffering which Christ continues to undergo in his Mystical Body.[21]

Pope Pius XII issues an encyclical about the devotion to the Sacred Heart (*Haurietis Aquas*) in 1956. This is the most important magisterial document on the Sacred Heart, as far as doctrine is concerned. This encyclical emphasizes that devotion to the Sacred Heart is recognized and enthusiastically promoted by the Church not because it was personally revealed to St. Margaret Mary, but this devotion is completely in accord with the essence of Christianity. In fact, the heart of Jesus is the symbol of love, and the nature of Jesus's love is profoundly explained.

[20] Frank Leslie Cross, E. A. Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 1220.

[21] Pius XI, *Miserentissimus Redemptor*, May 8, 1928, art. 20, 21.

Jesus become more and more central of God's love to humanity as He revealed himself to us in public revelation. He wrote: "*Consequently, it is clear that the revelations made to St. Margaret Mary brought nothing new into Catholic doctrine. Their importance lay in this that Christ Our Lord, exposing His Sacred Heart, wished in a quite extraordinary way to invite the minds of men to a contemplation of, and a devotion to, the mystery of God's merciful love for the human race*"[22].

Pope Pius XII also pointed out the basic meaning of this devotion to the Sacred Heart: *"we can easily understand that the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, of its very nature, is a worship of the love with which God, through Jesus, loved us, and at the same time, an exercise of our own love by which we are related to God and to other men. Or to express it in another way, devotion of this kind is directed towards the love of God for us in order to adore it, give thanks for it, and live so as to imitate it."*[23]

Modern time

Encyclicals and revelations of the Love of the Sacred Heart continue to be sent to humanity as an invitation of the ardent love of His Sacred Heart through some Holy Pope in the time of 19th and 20th centuries.

During the 26-year period (1978-2005) on the position of leading the Holy Church of Saint John Paul II, the Pope from Poland - a country with a tradition of fervent devotion to the Heart of Jesus. He was elected to be new Pope on the very day of the feast of Saint Margarita Maria Alacoque – Apostle of the Sacred Heart on October 16, 1978, as such a God coincidence. He has produced many rich documents that contribute to the treasure of faith about the Love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus:

> *On June 11, 99, on the 100th anniversary of the year (1899-1999), Pope Leo XIII issued the Encyclical Letter "Annum Sacrum" consecrating all humanity to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Pope John Paul II Sending a message to the entire people of God and also to the French Church celebrating the Feast of the Sacred Heart at the Paray-le-Monial Basilica, the headquarters of the Congregation*

[22] Pope Pius XII, *Haurietis Aquas*, art 97.

[23] Pope Pius XII, *Haurietis Aquas*, art.107.

of Saint Maria Margarita Alacoque. The message mentioned of "The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the Heart of the Church" which the successors of Peter must continually preach and guide the people of God. On June 11, 1899, Leo XIII consecrated the whole human race to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, was repeated by popes, such as Pius X (1903-14; canonized May 29, 1954), in 1906 reminded that "the consecration must be renewed every year"; Pius XI (1922-39) mentioned in the Encyclical "Quas primas" in the spirit of the Jubilee of 1925 and the Encyclical "Miserentissimus Redemptor" - the very merciful Savior; Pius XII (1939-58) extensively explained in his two Encyclicals "Summi Pontificus" and "Haurietis Aquas" on Devotion to the Sacred Heart. In the light of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), Pope Paul VI (1963-78) explained the Devotion to the Sacred Heart through the "Apostolic Letter Investigabiles divitias and the Letter Diserti interpretes" addressed to all the General superiors of all congregation that cary the Name of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Pope Paul VI (1963-78) explained the Devotion to the Sacred Heart through the Apostolic Letter Investigabiles Divitias Christi to the patriarchs, archbishops, bishops of the entire Catholic world, on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He wanted the Bishops of the Church of God to celebrate the celebration that is solemnly introduced: on the one hand is for appropriate interpretation. About the infinite richness of the Holy Heart love, on the other hand, to introduce this special devotion, so that the worship will be aroused as much as possible; in order to make all believers express their respect to the Sacred Heart, repent their sins with constant morality, and follow the rules of true love, the fullness of the law (Rm 13:10), harmonizing their entire lives.[24]

On June 1, 1980, Pope John Paul II went to Paris, visited the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He said to the attendees at the National Convention that: Through this message he wants us to become healthy cells, nourished by the Precious Blood of Jesus Heart, which is Love and grace. Not only that, by your generosity towards the ailing souls, do your best to heal the withered cells with prayer, sacrifice, and thanksgiving… when we are intimately connected in the love of the Sacred Heart, we have been and will be active in the work of bringing life to humanity and

[24] Pope Paul VI, *Investigabiles Divitias Christi*, the Basilica of St. Peter, February 6, 1965.

renewing it.[25]

Inheriting the spiritual and spiritual fruits of love for the Love of the Sacred Heart of predecessors, Pope Benedict XVI has also shown his interest in the effort to bring the Love of the Sacred Heart to the current human condition of lack of love. These efforts were integrated in his preachings, especially through his first encyclical named "Deus Caritas Est" – God is Love.[26]

Catholic faith in the revelation of love of God in the Sacred Heart of Jesus

The love of the Sacred Heart – the love of God

When searching in the Bible, especially in the New Testament, we can understand and describe a God with a heart full of love, and with that great heart he is called '*love*'. With a life closely associated with Jesus and with deep contemplation, John, the evangelist dared to give a wonderful definition: "*God is Love*". As expected, we determine that there is no mistake to identify God as love, because thanks to the truth about the essence of "*God is love*", we can understand the meaning and purpose of the love of the Sacred Heart through the creative works and redemption of the Lord. The agape of God in the Son for sinful and corrupt mankind is the motive and the final reason of our salvation... It all boils down to this: "*God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him*" (Jn 3: 16-17). Emil Brunner, a famous Swiss theologian, made this belief clearer when he said: "*The One who loves does not seek anything for Himself; all He desires is to benefit the one He loves. And the benefit He wants to impart is not "something," but His very Self, for this Love is self-surrender, self-giving*

[25] Pope John Paul II, *Sacred Heart – theWisdom of John Paul II on the Greatest Catholic Devotion*, edited by Carl J. Moell, (New York: The Crossroad, 2004), 44-45.

[26] Benedict XVI, *Encyclical Letter Deus Caritas Est,* Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 25 December 2005.

to the other, to whom love is directed."[27] This is the love of God which is always full and give to humanity through the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The plan of love for the liberation of people from sin has been planned for eternity, which is clearly manifested through the love in the Sacred Heart. That plan revealed a great love with the overwhelming, gradually opened along the history of the Israelis in the Old Testament, a gratuitous love when he himself revealed to them his love to make them his own people (Deut 4: 37; 7,8; 10,15). It was also because of this love that God unceasingly delivered them (Is 34: 1-7). The Catechism of the Holy Catholic Church also acclaimed that this great love will be victorious over even the worst infidelities and will extend to his most precious gift: "*God so loved the world that he gave his only Son*" (Jn 3: 16). God's love is "*everlasting*" (Is 54: 8): *"For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you*." (Is 54: 10; cf. 54: 8); Jeremiah, the prophet, wrote that God declares to his people, *"I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.*" (Jer 31:3)[28].

An Incarnated Agape

'*Agape*' is a Greek word (*ἀγάπη*) means love, affection, charity. This unique term can easily be found in the New Testament, especially in the Gospel of John, and also in the letters of Paul and John in reference to the love of the Trinity revealed to man in Christ, and also the love that grows our love of God and of neighbor (Jn 15: 12-17; 1Jn 4:16; 1Cr 13). In the early Church, this term was also applied to the Last Supper - the Eucharistic Supper.[29] This word "*is used only twice in the Synoptics (Mt. 24. 12, Lk. 11. 42) but often in St. John and the Pauline (esp.1 Cor. 13) and Johannine Epistles, and always of the love of God*

[27] Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God: Dogmatics*, vol. 1, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia, PN: Westminster Press, 1950), 186.

[28] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, art. 219, 220.

[29] Joseph A. Komonchak, *The New Dictionary of Theology*, (Saint Paul Pablications, Philippines, 1991), 10.

or Christ, or of the love of Christians for one another"[30]

The Love of the Sacred Heart - Incarnated Agape is the clearest expression of God's love. In other words, in the New Testament, God communicated himself in *"The Word became flesh, and lived among us"* (Jn 1: 14). Christ, the Son of God made man, is the only, perfect, and greatest Word of the Father. In him God has said everything[31]. In addition, Saint John of the Cross has the same reflection on this when he annotates the passage: "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son" (Heb 1: 1-2). He wrote:*"In giving us his Son, his only Word (for he possesses no other), he spoke everything to us at once in this sole Word - and he has no more to say. . . because what he spoke before to the prophets in parts, he has now spoken all at once by giving us the All Who is His Son"*[32] Jesus was born in the form of a lowly, sinful human being, to reconcile humanity with himself and make humanity one in a whole connected by God's boundless love. That love comes from the Sacred Heart, the Heart that is always strives to give love, to pump this great love and nutritious blood of grace to each everyone of us as parts of His Mystery Body. So that each person may have life and have it abundantly in the Love of His Sacred Heart. In the sense of the gift of God's Love, the Incarnation of Christ is both for the glory of God and for the salvation of mankind.

The love of the Sacred Heart - The triple love.

The love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus has never ceased to show a triple love of God, that is the love that unites the Son with the Father and with all mankind. This point can be seen clearly by the light of the Gospel. This light shows the way into the sanctuary of the Sacred Heart, where a "new covenant" of love is remaining.

[30] Frank Leslie Cross, E. A. Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 23.

[31] Catechism of the Catholic Church, art 65.

[32] St. John of the Cross, *the Ascent of Mount Carmel 2, 22, 3-5 in The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, tr. K. Kavanaugh OCD and O. Rodriguez OCD (Washington DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1979), 179-180.

In the Old Testament God showed great love for Israel through the patriarchs, and prophets. God has loved since *"When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son… he will blossom like a lily. Like a cedar of Lebanon."* (Hosea 11:1; 14: 5-6.) God also loved with a love full of patience and infinite mercy, even if there are punishments sometimes, but He never abandoned his people, ignoring the difficulties, or the enemies that his people faced with. But that love is only a harbinger of a very passionate, intense, and transcendent love of the Savior that God has promised to sinful humanity. This love, which flows from the Heart of Christ to all men, becomes example for our love, and also the basis of the new covenant which was foretold through the prophet Jeremiah: "*The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah…."* (Jer 31:3, 31, 33-34.) This is no longer the old covenant signed by the blood of sheep and oxen between Moses and God, but a new covenant of love established and signed with the precious blood of the Second Person of God made man.

In Christ, the greatness of God's Love is doubled when it is deposited in the Most Sacred Heart of the Son to bring to mankind for the Father's love for man is incorporated in the Son's filial love for the Father when he responded to the Father's commission in free will and obedience in love for the Father and for mankind. He humbled himself so much that he accepted to take on a lowly human condition, and even sacrificed himself as an offering to show his filial love to please the Father, to mediate and reconcile mankind with God. This love is expressed clearly in the Bible when Jesus spoke to Mary and Joseph: "*Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"* (Lk 2:49.), as well as when describing the holy wrath of Jesus before blasphemies that took place in the holy temple of Jerusalem, "*my Father's house*". The heart of Jesus beat strongly because of the intense emotions of love for the Father that caused his strong reaction: *"So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my father's house into a market!"* (Jn 2: 15-17.). The Father's love for His Son is demonstrated by giving the unlimited gift of the Holy Spirit and placing everything in the Son hands (Jn 3: 34-35.). This describes the presence of Jesus acting as a special agent,

a spokesman and a perfect manifestation of the Father.[33]

When reflecting on Jesus' journey on earth, we can see that this is the time when the triple love of the Sacred Heart is shown most clearly. At this point, the love of the Father united with the Son is manifested in a concrete way in a human way, which makes God's love in Jesus for mankind more salty and intense when expressed in it was the weakness, suffering, and limitations of the body that Jesus brought to him. At this point, the love of the Father united with the Son is manifested in detail in a human way, which makes God's love in Jesus for mankind more intense when expressed in the weakness, suffering, and limitation of the flesh that Jesus have been carrying. Why did Jesus do this? Saint Paul offered us an appropriate answer when he wrote: *"Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy."* (Acts 14: 17). John Calvin (1509-1564) also made a reflection based on this passage in the Acts of the Apostles. He reflected that these graces flow from the love of the Sacred Heart that is poured out upon those who may not even be worthy.[34] This is the way that the love of God has come to the world through the Sacred Heart of Jesus to bring the grace of salvation for all mankind. The triple love that binds the Son to the Father and to humanity is no longer a metaphor or symbol, but it actually revealed in Christ's life.

The love of the Sacred Heart – the love of Jesus

The love of God for our forefathers and the Jewish people in the Old Testament is described and compared through expressions of human love in the psalms, in the prophetic books such as conjugal love, fatherly love… we need to understand that these expressions are tokens and symbols of the true but "*entirely spiritual love"* with which God continued to sustain the human race. we must clearly note that the secret love of the Incarnate Word for His heavenly Father is "*not entirely a spiritual love"* proper to God in as much as "God is spirit" for in the Letters of the

[33] Frederick Fyvie Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, (Basingstoke, Hants: Pickering & Inglis, 1983), 97.

[34] John Calvin, *The Acts of the Apostles 14-28*, Calvin's Commentaries, trans. John W. Fraser, ed. David W. Torrance & Thomas F. Torrance (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1996), 14.

Apostles, and in some passages from the Book of Revelation, the authors intend to convey and express the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is "*not only divine love but also human sentiments of love*"[35]

The love in dimension of human of Jesus

Indeed, the Son of God who came to the earth did not assume a feigned and unsubstantial body as some heretics declared in the early Church. This position was decisively refuted by Saint John, the beloved apostle when he said: *"Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist"* (2Jn 7.). But actually, the Catholic faith affirms that He united to His divine Person a truly human nature, individual, whole and perfect, which was conceived in the most pure womb of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Ghost which was written clearly in the Scriptures (Lk 1: 35). The human dimension of Jesus has not been altered, degraded or lacked in any part, both physically and mentally. In other words, that human dimension of the Incarnate Word is full of intellectual spirit, will, and all other abilities of intellect, inner and outer talents. In Him there is the desire that comes from the senses, and all the natural inclinations. These are recognized and proclaimed by the Church and solemnly taught to all Christians that *"The word does not depart from the equality of the Father's glory, as well as the flesh does not leave the nature of our race. For there is the same in one, It is often said that He is truly the Son of God, and truly the Son of man." [Verbum ab æqualitate paternæ gloriæ non recedit, ita caro naturam nostri generis non relinquit. Unus enim idemque est, quod sæpe dicendum est, vere Dei Filius, et vere hominis filius.]*[36]*; "Perfect in His Godhead and likewise perfect in His humanity…Complete God is man, complete man is God."*[37] Among the emotional aspects of Jesus' physical body, love is the preeminent part, so we can say that Jesus

[35] Pope Pius XII, *Haurietis Aquas*, art 38.

[36] Leo I, *Tomus ad Flavianum*, *Epistola XXVIII ad Flavianum Episcopum Constantinopolitanum contra Eutychis Perfidiam et Hæresim*, ed. Jacobus Paulus Migne, ex Patrologia Latina, Tomo LIV, 13 Junii, 449.

[37] Norman P. Tanner, *Council of Chalcedon*, 451 A.D. https://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum04.htm

also had a carnal heart like ours, because without this vital organ, one cannot live and can no longer have feelings or emotions. From this reason we can also acclaim that He not only loved in the way of God, but also loved in a way of human.

Indeed, this carnal heart of the incarnate Christ became one with His Divine Person. The love that comes from the Sacred Heart of Jesus is both in harmony between human love and divine love, and in harmony with the love in the Son, the Father and the Holy Spirit. That carnal heart brings to the Sacred Heart of Jesus experiences of very human emotions: worry, anger, compassion, sobbing and suffering... The Son of God took this human nature with weaknesses, suffering even to its limit of death to offer himself as a sacrifice on the Cross to fulfill the Redemption plan of God to mankind. This teaching was explained clearly by Saint Paul in the letter to the Hebrew:

> *"Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So, Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters; in the assembly I will sing your praises." And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me." Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil. For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted." (Heb 2: 11-14, 17-18).*

The love of the sacred heart – the love from senses

In many of Paul's writings, we can find a fairly clear assertion that the Word became man took on a perfect of humanity with all of its weakness and limits. He came and dwelt among us to show us God's infinite love, and also "*the sensibility love*" that create the blessing of salvation for all mankind. This sensibility love can be considered as a kind of love language that Jesus may need to know in order to convey effectively the hidden love of God in His Sacred Heart and also to express his love in the most thoroughly way. Pope Pius XII acclaimed that *"Jesus Christ received a true body and had all the affections proper to the*

same… Therefore the Heart of Jesus Christ, hypostatically united to the divine Person of the Word, certainly beat with love and with the other emotions- but these, joined to a human will full of divine charity and to the infinite love itself which the Son shares with the Father and the Holy Spirit, were in such complete unity and agreement that never among these three loves was there any contradiction of or disharmony"[38]

Here we have enough reason to say that the living Heart of the Redeemer is a heart capable of emotions and vibrations because of the passionate love of both wills, Divine and Human Love. All characters, and the emotional expressions that follow that love are revealed externally through the flesh of Jesus such as: joy, sorrow, fear, anger, etc. Sometimes it is expressed in His words to his disciples, in prayer to God, or through actions such as: mourning the death of Lazarus, overturning the money exchange table in the Jerusalem temple, sweating blood while praying in the Garden of Gethsemane… The climax of the emotional expression of a passionate feeling of love in the Sacred Heart was when He was hung upon the Cross. His Sacred Heart exudes with many complex emotions: passionate love, compassion, abandonment, fear… all of those emotions are clearly expressed in the Bible: *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing"* (Lk 23: 34.), *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me"* (Mt 27: 46.), *"Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."* (Lk 23: 43.), *"I Thirst"* (Ga 19: 28.), *"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit"* (Lk 23: 46).

Through the outward expressions of Christ's body, the Love of the Sacred Heart is clearly depicted as both a very human affection between people and a very passionate love that God has poured into the soul of Christ. This very human affection between people is discovered inside the Heart of Jesus when it enters the human life. Thanks to it, he will still feel and understand human emotions. That understanding is not only in a human way but is also illuminated in divine love. That sense of love used to be interrupted and even stop feeling at the time Jesus "*breathed his last*" on the cross. But it rose again with the Resurrection Body of Jesus. This good new brings humanity a great joy because the heart in the resurrected body of Christ will always beat steadily. "*Likewise, it will never cease to symbolize the threefold love*

[38] Pope Pius XII, *Haurietis Aquas*, art 41.

with which He is bound to His heavenly Father and the entire human race."[39]

The love of the Sacred Heart, the love creates salvation.

Christ Jesus, the "*Annunciation of Love*", he is the mediator who carries within himself the sublime love of God in union with the love of the Son and the Holy Spirit that creates the grace of reconciliation and salvation. Because that love comes from God, so it is always abundant and ardent in His Sacred Heart, that love takes advantage of every opportunity to be expressed outside. Indeed, only Jesus could take this boundless love in His Sacred Heart and express it most perfectly through the incarnation, the preaching journey, the persecution, the crucifixion, and death on the cross to open for mankind "a new life in His glorious Resurrection". The Church has also affirmed this through Pope Pius XII's encyclical on devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus: "*Assuredly, when He who is the only begotten of the Father and the Word made flesh "full of grace and truth"* (Jn. 1: 14) had come to men weighed down with many sins and miseries it was He alone, from that human nature united hypostatically to the divine Person, Who could open to the human race the "fountain of living water" which would irrigate the parched land and transform it into a fruitful and flourishing garden"[40]

On the cross, this most Sacred Heart was once pierced as an inner source of "triple love" (the Father's love, the Incarnation Agape and divine human's love of the Son) that overflowed, covered all of humanity, brought the grace of reconciliation and salvation so that we have a chance to participate in His live everlasting. This most Sacred Heart used to stop beating, but perhaps because of love for the Father and for humanity, it has beat again, it has been beating with the human heart beat and will never stop "*And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the world."* (Mt 28:20). Furthermore, although the mysterious nature of the love revealed through Christ is the love

[39] Pope Pius XII, *Haurietis Aquas*, art 61.

[40] Pope Pius XII, *Haurietis Aquas*, art 30.

creates the reconciliation and salvation, the key here is it is necessary to have faith in Jesus Christ who is the clearest and final revelation of the mystery of God's love for humanity. This is clearly expressed by Saint John in his gospel: "God is love"; so Love is "*the way, and the truth, and the life"* (Jn 14:6)*; "everyone who believes in him may have eternal life"* (Jn 3:15). Here we can see the link between them, faith is the key that opens the door to the mystery of love in the Heart of Jesus, the Heart opened out for humanity the grace of reconciliation and salvation on the cross.

Conclusion

The Love of God filled in the heart of the Son has come to us to reveal His great love to humanity and love the humanity not only in the way of God, but also in a way of human, the love creates the salvation. Because according to the New Testament, especially in the first letter of saint John indicated that the divine love is supremely manifested by the atoning sacrifice of Jesus (1Jn 4: 9-10). At the Cross, the revelation of God's love in its greatest manifestation is shown fully and without ambiguity.[41] This is the revelation that we must respond with our faith because only faith can enable us to fully receive the salvation that comes from God's love through the Incarnate Word for no good exists within us except that which comes from God.[42] Only through the redemptive work of Christ and faith in Him is that image progressively restored (Col 3: 1, 10), for Christ, the Son of God himself is both love and the mediator of the expression of God's love.

Looking at the Christ, we believe in the mystery of God's love and realize that love constantly strengthens our faith, bringing us closer to His loving heart and the heart of other people, a place full of happiness of salvation, a place for people to live fully in love. In His Sacred Heart opened out for humanity the love creates the grace of purification and salvation on the cross for all humanity, it is a sign of the reign of the

[41] James Montgomery Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith: A Comprehensive and Readable Theology*, rev. in one Volume (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1986), 332

[42] Herman Bavinck, *The Doctrine of* God, trans. William Hendriksen (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1979), 204-205.

Sacred Heart's love is dwelling in our midst. Especially in the context of today's internationalization, this great house of love becomes the shelter for all kinds of peoples, all nations, all races, all religions, to live in harmony and love each other, since we are living in the same house, we are brothers and sisters, so there's no reason to hurt each other but love, care and help each other.

When reflecting on this great love we can see how great the power of love is, it can heal every wound, forgive every sin, reconcile every broken relation, and can bring to us the salvation that led to the real happiness of peace in this life and the life after it. This is probably the best way out for the suffering that we are facing in each person's life, as well as the suffering that the whole world must witness every day in social media when conflicts arise, religious discrimination, war, violence and abuse are still happening. In the Heart of Jesus, the power of love has reigned, that power is simplicity, tolerance, reconciliation, forgiveness and peace, for this path of tolerance, harmony, reconciliation and forgiveness will lead to one another and connect hearts in love.

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