

Sacred Heart

June 20, 2009

Yesterday was the Feast of the Sacred Heart. Before I became a Catholic the mere expression “Sacred Heart of Jesus” would have made my blood curdle, because it sounded too sweet and sticky for words. This impression would have been confirmed by a number of pictures representing the Sacred Heart, which are so melting that one is surprised not to find, in place of the picture on the wall, a pictorial puddle at the foot of the wall!

However, as one grows older, one may hope one grows a little wiser as well as sadder. Soon after I entered the Church, the Lord God put in my hands a marvellous book on the Sacred Heart, one could say written by the Sacred Heart: “The Way of Divine Love” by Sister Josefa Menendez (1890–1923). She was a little Spanish nun buried away from all publicity in a convent of the Sacred Heart Sisters in Poitiers, France, who during the last three years of her short life acted as messenger for the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to deliver one more urgent message of God’s love to modern souls in ever more danger of falling away from Him.

“I am God” (page 377 of the first edition in English), “but a God of love! I am a Father, but a Father full of compassion and never harsh. My Heart is infinitely holy but also infinitely wise, and knowing human frailty and infirmity stoops to poor sinners with infinite mercy.” This book gave me to understand that just as the special revelations of the Sacred Heart had begun in the 17th century which was growing cold with rationalism and Jansenism, so those revelations became progressively warmer as the world grew colder and colder, until the pictures indeed almost melted off the wall! As though Our Lord were saying to us, it no longer matters if we understand His Justice, or appreciate the fine arts, just so long as we understand His true Mercy.

“I love those who after a first fall come to me for pardon . . . I love them still more when they beg pardon for their second sin, and should this happen again, I do not say a million times but a million million times, I still love them and pardon them, and I will wash in My Blood their last as fully as their first sin. Never shall I weary of repentant sinners, nor cease from hoping for their return, and the greater their distress, the greater My welcome . . . This is what I wish all to know. I will teach sinners that the mercy of my Heart is inexhaustible . . . It is so easy to trust completely in My Heart!”

It is so easy to trust in His Heart. But we modern men are distracted, and we are proud. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

Kyrie eleison.