

THE HEART TURNED TOWARD GOD

There is a mail order firm by the name of "Heart Matters" that sends me catalogs every month hoping that it can inspire my heart or that of someone else through note cards, CDs and "Precious Moments" figurines. Sometimes I think we clutter our hearts with a lot of stuff that we think "matters" but in the end it is simply a lot of stuff. What matters to the heart is more than things (although "things" may, indeed, inspire it at times). The heart thrives on the life-giving spirit of love. Friendship is a matter of the heart. It is the heart's desire to share life with another person. The heart (*cor*) is the center of the whole personal life of the human person. It is the seat of intellectual and spiritual life, of reason and will, and the inner movements of experiencing life (or the lack of it).¹ The heart is the place of encounter, where God reveals himself to us. As Jesus tells us in the Gospel, "where your treasure is, there will your heart will be also" (Luke 12:34). Francis believed that the heart was the seat of the will, the root of sin and the place of conversion. The heart is made for God and is the proper dwelling place of the most blessed Trinity; it is the place of encounter between person and Creator. In the heart the person receives the life-giving awareness of God; it is where one comes to know God. The human heart is created to be the home of the Spirit of the Lord through whose life-giving power relationship with God becomes reality. To surrender the "heart" is the fundamental act of following Christ.

Franciscan Prayer pg 109
Ilia Delio OS

Earlier Exhortation
To the Brothers and Sisters of Penance^a
(The First Version of the Letter to the Faithful)
(1209-1215)

The earliest manuscript of this writing, located in the Guarnacci Library in the Italian city of Volterra, introduces it with these words: "These are words of life and salvation. Whoever reads and follows them will find life and draw from the Lord salvation." While Kajetan Esser entitled it "The First Version of the Letter to the Faithful," it has been more correctly seen as an exhortation given to those first penitents who came to Francis desiring to share in his Gospel way of life. Since 1976, when Kajetan Esser brought the text into prominence, it has served as the Prologue to the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order.

In the Name of the Lord!
[Chapter One]
Those Who Do Penance

¹All those who love the Lord with their whole heart, with their whole soul and mind, with their whole strength and love their neighbors as themselves, ²who hate their bodies with their vices and sins, ³who receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴and who produce worthy fruits of penance. ⁵O how happy and blessed are these men and women while they do such things and persevere in doing them, ⁶because the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon them and make its home and dwelling place among them, ⁷and they are children of the

a. In light of the scholarship of Raffaele Pazzelli, the editors have chosen to propose this as the basic title of this work. Pazzelli argues convincingly that Esser erred in seeing this document as simply an earlier version of the Letter to the Faithful. Cf. Raffaele Pazzelli, "The Title of the 'Recomendation of the Letter to the Faithful': Clarifications regarding Codex 225 of Volterra (cod. Vo)," translated by Nancy Celaschi, *Gregfratrs Review*, 4:3 (1990), pp. 1-6.
b. Francis uses the term *beatiss* (in this instance *beatiss*) within an eschatological perspective, analogous to the use of "blessed" in the Beatitudes of the Gospels. Moreover, he makes explicit reference to both men and women by using *illi et illae*.

heavenly Father Whose works they do, and they are spouses, brothers, and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁸
⁹We are spouses when the faithful soul is joined by the Holy Spirit to our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹We are brothers to Him when we do the will of the Father who is in heaven. ¹⁰We are mothers when we carry Him in our heart and body through a divine love and a pure and sincere conscience and give birth to Him through a holy activity which must shine as an example before others.⁹
¹¹O how glorious it is to have a holy and great Father in heaven!¹⁰
¹²O how holy, consoling to have such a beautiful and wonderful Spouse! ¹³O how holy and how loving, gratifying, humbling, peace-giving, sweet, worthy of love, and, above all things, desirable: to have such a Brother and such a Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who laid down His life for His sheep and prayed to His Father, saying:
¹⁴Holy Father, in your name, save those whom you have given me in the world; they were yours and you gave them to me. ¹⁵The words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they accepted them and have believed in truth that I have come from you and they have known that you have sent me.
¹⁶I pray for them and not for the world. ¹⁷Bless and sanctify them; I sanctify myself for them. ¹⁸I pray not only for them, but for those who will believe in me through their word that they might be sanctified in being one as we are.
¹⁹I wish, Father, that where I am, they also may be with me that they may see my glory in your kingdom. Amen.

a. Francis frequently uses the title "Spirit of the Lord" to refer to the Third Person of the Trinity (*Admonitions* 112 [hereafter Adm]; *Adm* XII 1; *First Letter to the Faithful* 16 [hereafter 1LF]; *Second Letter to the Faithful* 48 [hereafter 2LF]; *Later Rule* X 9 [hereafter LR]). While in this instance the biblical reference is to *Isaiah* 11:2, in most instances there is a reflection of Pauline pneumatology in which the Holy Spirit is described as "the Spirit of Christ" (*Rom* 8:9) "the Spirit of His Son" (*Gal* 4:6), and "the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (*Phil* 1:19). Since the saint perceives the Spirit of the Lord as the dynamic principle of the life of his followers, it is helpful to understand the Christological implications of these passages.
b. Francis frequently uses the phrase *sancta operatio*, holy activity, (cf. 1LF II 21; 2LF 53; LR X 8; *Testament* 39 [hereafter Test]). It is used most frequently in conjunction with the Spirit of the Lord or the words of Francis himself: "which acts to those of Jesus and are 'spirit and life'" (cf. *Jn* 6:64). Thus, Francis underscores the dynamic principle of the spiritual life, the Holy Spirit, which must be ever operative in the life of a Christian.
c. The Latin text contains an ambiguous grammatical construction: *O quam gloriosum est, sanctum et magnum in caelis habere patrem!* If we take *sanctum* and *magnum* as neuter and not masculine, the phrase could be translated: "how glorious it is, how holy and great, to have a Father in heaven!" However, if *sanctum* and *magnum* are masculine accusatives agreeing with Father, we would translate the phrase: "how glorious it is to have in heaven a holy and great Father!" In view of the parallel constructions of sentences 11, 12 and 13, it seems best to follow the latter translation.

BENEDICT XVI, DEUS CARITAS EST

PART 2
CARITAS
The Practice of Love by the Church as a 'Community of Love'

The Church's charitable activity as a manifestation of Trinitarian love

19. "If you see charity, you see the Trinity," wrote Saint Augustine.[11] In the foregoing reflections, we have been able to focus our attention on the Pierced one (cf. *Jn* 19:37, *Zech* 12:10), recognizing the plan of the Father who, moved by love (cf. *Jn* 3:16), sent his only-begotten Son into the world to redeem man. By dying on the Cross—as Saint John tells us—Jesus "gave up his Spirit" (*Jn* 19:30), anticipating the gift of the Holy Spirit that he would make after his Resurrection (cf. *Jn* 20:22). This was to fulfil the promise of "rivers of living water" that would flow out of the hearts of believers, through the outpouring of the Spirit (cf. *Jn* 7:38-39). The Spirit, in fact, is that interior power which harmonizes their hearts with Christ's heart and moves them to love their brethren as Christ loved them, when he bent down to wash the feet of the disciples (cf. *Jn* 13:1-13) and above all when he gave his life for us (cf. *Jn* 13:1, 15:13).

The Spirit is also the energy which transforms the heart of the ecclesial community, so that it becomes a witness before the world to the love of the Father, who wishes to make humanity a single family in his Son. The entire activity of the Church is an expression of a love that seeks the integral good of man: it seeks his evangelization through Word and Sacrament, an undertaking that is often heroic in the way it is acted out in history; and it seeks to promote man in the various arenas of life and human activity. Love is therefore the service that the Church carries out in order to attend constantly to man's sufferings and his needs, including material needs. And this is the aspect, this service of charity, on which I want to focus in the second part of the Encyclical.

Scripture Reflection Mark 2:15-17

¹⁵While he was at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners sat with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many who followed him.

¹⁶Some scribes who were Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors and said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

¹⁷Jesus heard this and said to them [that], "Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners."