



Sacred Heart of Jesus, full of goodness and love,  
have mercy on us.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, our life and resurrection,  
have mercy on us.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, our peace and our reconciliation,  
have mercy on us.

*From the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*



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WORLD UNION OF CATHOLIC WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS

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Journey to Jerusalem:  
Reflections on the Celebration of the  
Centenary 1910 – 2010



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This holy place, where God's power was revealed in weakness, and human sufferings were transfigured by divine glory, invites us to look once again with the eyes of faith upon the face of the crucified and risen Lord. Contemplating his glorified flesh, completely transfigured by the Spirit, may we come to realize more fully that even now, through Baptism, "we bear in our bodies the death of Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our own mortal flesh" (2 Cor 4:10-11). Even now, the grace of the resurrection is at work within us! May our contemplation of this mystery spur our efforts, both as individuals and as members of the ecclesial community, to grow in the life of the Spirit through conversion, penance and prayer. May it help us to overcome, by the power of that same Spirit, every conflict and tension born of the flesh, and to remove every obstacle, both within and without, standing in the way of our common witness to Christ and the reconciling power of his love.

*His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI  
Address during Visit to the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem  
May 15, 2009*

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The Lord has drawn us to his heart—*Suscepit nos Dominus in sinum et cor suum*". God's heart, as the expression of his will, is spoken of twenty-six times in the Old Testament. Before God's heart men and women stand judged. His heartfelt pain at sins of mankind makes God decide on the flood, but then he is touched by the sight of human weakness and offers his forgiveness. Yet another passage of the Old Testament speaks of God's heart with absolute clarity: it is in the eleventh chapter of the book of the Prophet Hosea, whose opening lines portray the Lord's love for Israel at the dawn of its history: "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son" (Hosea 11:1). Israel, however, responds to God's constant offer of love with indifference and even outright ingratitude. "The more I called them", the Lord is forced to admit, "the more they went from me" (v. 2). Even so, he never abandons Israel to the power of its enemies, because "my heart"—the the Creator of the universe observes—"recoils within me, my compassion grows warm and tender" (v. 8).

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The heart of God burns with compassion! On today's solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus the Church presents us this mystery for our contemplation: the mystery of the heart of a God who feels compassion and who bestows all his love upon humanity. A mysterious love, which in the 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. But this took place at great cost—the only-begotten Son of the Father was sacrificed on the Cross: "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end" (John 13:1). The symbol of this love which transcends death is his side, pierced by a spear. The Apostle John, an eyewitness, tells us: "one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water" (John 19:34).

*His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI  
Homily, Opening of the Year for Priests  
June 19, 2009*

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Jesus knew and loved us each and all during his life, his agony and his Passion, and gave himself up for each one of us: "The Son of God. . . loved me and gave himself for me." He has loved us all with a human heart. For this reason, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, pierced by our sins and for our salvation, "is quite rightly considered the chief sign and symbol of that. . . love with which the divine Redeemer continually loves the eternal Father and all human beings" without exception.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 478*

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