

League of the Immaculate Heart Newsletter

"MY IMMACULATE HEART WILL TRIUMPH"

Volume 8 - Issue 24 - January, 2005



Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

by Charles J. Mullaly, S.J.

When we speak of devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary we refer to the will and interior disposition of the Blessed Virgin rather than to the physical heart of Our Lady, for the physical heart is but the material and sensible symbol of Her purity, Her compassion and Her love. However, we honor even the physical, human heart of Mary, for it is of the pure flesh from which God the Son took His Flesh, and it throbbed with joy or sorrow during the years

of Christ's life from that first Christmas night in Bethlehem, when She held His tender form close to Her bosom, until the sad day on Calvary's heights when She pressed His dead Body against Her heaving breast.

Mary is truly worthy of our esteem. When the angel greeted Her in the quiet home at Nazareth with the salutation, "Hail, full of grace," he summed up the qualities that made Her worthy to be the Mother of the Redeemer. Her fulness of grace implied Her absolute freedom from the slightest taint of sin or imperfection. We call Her the Immaculate Conception because She was conceived without original sin. We call Her heart Immaculate because She was ever free from sin.

Mary is the purest of creatures. Not only was there never a taint of imperfection in Her life, but Her nature, being exempt from original sin, was free from the disor-

dered passions of fallen man. She was incapable of receiving even the suggestion of evil from within Her soul. Her purity was above that of the angels.

Those who are not of our holy faith, and who have never learned to know and love Our Blessed Mother, believe that Catholic devotion to Mary detracts from our love for Christ. They little understand that the honor given to the Mother redounds to the glory of Her Son. It is the greatness of the Son that is seen in the Mother: "Because He that is mighty hath done great things to Me."

It was Christ, as God, Who in His oneness of will with the Father and the Holy Ghost, had chosen Mary from eternity to be His Mother. As God it was in His power to exempt from every taint the Mother who was to bear Him in Her womb, and to endow Her with every quality and grace that His infinite love could inspire. Her glory is His glory, for She is His Mother. We esteem and love the Blessed Mother for Her Son's own sake and for the qualities with which She was endowed. We adore the Son for His own sake, for He is God; we esteem and love the



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The Conversion of St. Paul

Feast Day - January 25



St. Paul is first mentioned in the New Testament in the Acts of the Apostles, wherein he is present for the stoning of the Church's first martyr, St. Stephen. In this narrative we are told that those who participated in St. Stephen's murder "laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And while they were stoning Stephen, he prayed and said, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' And falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Lord, do not lay this sin against them.' And with these words he fell asleep in the Lord. And Saul approved of his death" (Acts 7:57-59).

Saul was born in Tarsus, the capital of Silicia, and as he was likewise

a Roman citizen, he also bore the Latin name of Paul. Saul was rigorously educated in the exactness of the Pharisaic traditions and observances. Yet despite their apparent faith, the Pharisees lacked true humility and thus refused to accept Our Lord, Who did not fulfill their expectations of the Messiah. Therefore, when Christ's disciples set out to preach a New Law, one which fulfilled and superseded the Old Law, and they began making converts, men like Saul vehemently sought to stop them.

Saul quickly became widely known as a fierce persecutor of the earliest Christians, and as such he emerges for the first time in the

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Mother from whom God took His human Body. We esteem and love Her, for it was through Her that we received our salvation.

Mary was the spouse of the Holy Ghost, for Christ had no human father and His Body was formed in the womb of His Virgin Mother by the power of the Holy Ghost and by a miracle of love: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon Thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow Thee." That power of the Most High not only made Her the temple of the Incarnate God, but flooded Her soul with the marvelous graces befitting the Divine Maternity. As the spouse of the Holy Ghost and the Mother of God, She is on a plane of veneration so high above that of the angels and saints that it is immeasurable.

Spiritual writers tell us that we shall draw nearer and nearer to God in proportion as we divest ourselves of self-love, self-interest, and self-will. Mary's whole life was one of self-humiliation, self-effacement, and submission of will and judgment, when there was question of the interests of Christ. Add to all these claims upon God's love Her dignity as spouse of the Holy Ghost and Mother of the Incarnate Second Person of the Blessed Trinity and then consider the tender and intimate union between Jesus and Mary, Her participation in and suffer-

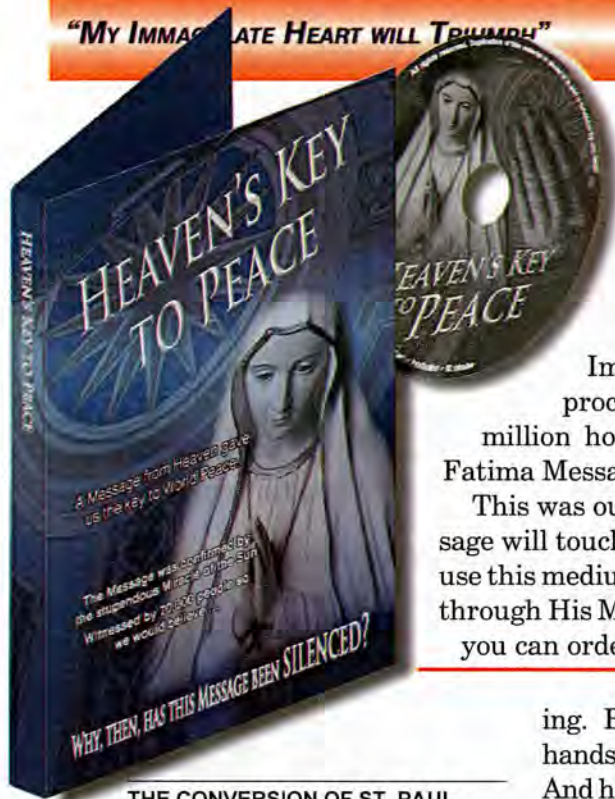
ings during the Redemption, and we can begin to realize faintly how dear She must be to God.

A child who loves his mother pictures that mother as possessing every perfection and loves her all the more for the qualities that he imagines her to possess. Jesus, as God, knew the perfection of Mary and the knowledge of that perfection drew His double love, as God and as Man. Hence, we can begin to understand Mary's influence and power when She pleads for us with Her Son.

Devotion implies affection. How can we esteem Our Blessed Mother for what She is and not love Her with a tender love? She was given to us as our Mother by the dying Savior. As Jesus hung suffering on the Cross, He saw standing near to Him in those hours of agony His beloved Mother and the pure and faithful disciple John. "Woman, behold Thy son." After that He said to the disciple, "Behold thy Mother." Mary was given to us as Christ's last legacy of love to be our Mother, and we know that that legacy of love was accepted by a grateful Church. A child's love for a mother is ever of the purest and the best, and as children of a grateful Church we should study how to show in our lives a love worthy of such a Mother.

True love is shown by deeds: "My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed, and in truth." That the Immaculate Heart of Mary is worthy of our deeds

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News

On December 8, 2004 *Heaven's Key to Peace*, the Fatima Center's riveting, one-hour documentary that explains how the world can achieve lasting world peace was broadcast across North America and also in the Philippines.

December 8 was truly a historical day, as it was the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and it marked the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of this dogma. It was a most appropriate day to bring to 95 million homes in the United States and Canada the Blessed Virgin Mary's Fatima Message.

This was our most far-reaching endeavor yet! Please pray that Our Lady's Message will touch the hearts of those who viewed the documentary, and that God will use this medium to draw souls to His truth and to the important Message He gave us through His Mother at Fatima. If you missed the broadcast of *Heaven's Key to Peace* you can order it on VHS or DVD by calling toll-free: 1-800-263-8160. ■

THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL Continued from page 2

Acts of the Apostles, an accomplice in the martyrdom of St. Stephen, an event which filled him with even more zeal in his desire to persecute the Church.

We read in the Acts that Saul set out for Damascus, to pursue the Christian Hebrews who had fled there. As he raced toward the city, still consumed with his fury, "suddenly a light from heaven shone round about him. And falling on the ground, he heard a voice saying to him: 'Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute Me?'

"And he said: 'Who art thou, Lord?' And He: "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad.'

"And he, trembling and astonished, said: 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?'

Our Lord told Saul to go into the city, where he would be told what to do. Meanwhile the men who were in Saul's company stood amazed, hearing a voice but seeing no one.

"And Saul arose from the ground, and his eyes being open, he saw noth-

ing. But they leading him by the hands, brought him to Damascus. And he was there three days, without sight, and he did neither eat nor drink" (Acts 9:1-9).

Our Lord then spoke to one of His disciples, named Ananias, and told him to go to Saul. Ananias was afraid, knowing of Saul's terrible reputation, but Jesus told him: "Go, for this man is a vessel of election to Me, to carry My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name."

Ananias went to Saul and laid his hands on him, saying, "Saul, brother, the Lord Jesus hath sent me, He who appeared to you ... that you may receive your sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." Immediately Saul received his sight, and rising up he was baptized (Acts 9:15-18).

After taking some nourishment, Paul "immediately ... preached Jesus in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. And all were astonished that heard him, and said: 'Is this not he who in Jerusalem attacked violently those who called upon that name: and came hither for this purpose, that he

might lead them bound to the chief priests?'"

Thus Paul began his mission as an Apostle of Christ, and he spent the rest of his life, when not imprisoned, preaching and spreading the Faith throughout the nations. He tirelessly labored in his vocation, traveling, preaching, and suffering the same persecutions he had once so cruelly inflicted. Miraculously, Saul the persecutor had become St. Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles.

In the year 66 A.D. Saints Peter and Paul were together cast into prison by the infamous Nero, another persecutor of the early Church. Eight months later the two saints emerged from their captivity, to be executed. St. Paul was beheaded on June 29, in the year 67. As he was led to his death, he converted three of the soldiers who escorted him, who in turn were martyred three days later. When St. Paul's head was cut off, milk, instead of blood, flowed from the wound; his severed head bounced three times, and in each of the places it touched the earth a fountain sprang up.

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Dear Father Gruner,

Enclosed you will find a money order for all the wonderful work that you are trying to do in the world to keep the wonderful Message of Our Blessed Lady alive, when so many are against this type of message, even here in this area of the world. I watch your program on the TV each Sunday, and it is so great. Just to hear you talk is great, Father Gruner.

Father Gruner, God bless you, and your staff as well. Till next time I wish you all the best. I will pray for you.

Yours truly,

JM, NS

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of love we are convinced, for that Heart glows with love for us and Mary is ever ready to intercede for us with Her Divine Son and to aid us in the hour of our need, if we but have recourse to Her. She loves us tenderly. Let us then make some practical return for Her love, especially through our daily Rosary and our sacrifices.

In sorrows and in trials let us go to our heavenly Mother for comfort and for aid. She will secure for us the grace to see that the trials and sufferings of life are but stepping-stones that lead to God; that these same trials, when borne bravely and with sweet resignation, bring us ever nearer to God and make us dearer to Him.

Let us strive to foster in our own life and in the lives of others a true devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Pray fervently that Her Heart may become better known and loved among men, for with the increase of devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary will come a greater increase of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the spread of His Kingdom on earth. ■

We'd like to hear from YOU! Write or call:

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Conversion of Russia

With the account of the conversion of St. Paul, we are granted a preview of the future conversion of another persecutor of Our Lord: Russia. At Fatima in 1917 the Blessed Virgin said: "To prevent [the punishment of the world by means of war, famine, and persecutions of the Church and the Holy Father], I shall come to ask for the Consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart ... If My requests are heeded, Russia will be converted and there will be peace; if not, she will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the Church. The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated."

However, Our Lady continued, "in the end, My Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to Me, and she will be converted, and a certain period of peace will be granted to the world."

As the Blessed Virgin warned, Russia has succeeded in spreading its errors, which include a hatred of God and an aggressive program to destroy His reign in souls. Yet, we have Our Lady's promise that Russia will experience a true conversion. In an age in which conversion is generally misunderstood, the example of St. Paul reminds us of the true meaning of this remarkable grace. As with the conversion of St. Paul, the conversion of Russia will be an abandonment of error and opposition to God, and the acceptance of the one, true Faith.

With the Consecration of Russia, the dramatic events of the journey to Damascus, which immediately and unequivocally transformed one of the most militant of Christ's persecutors, will be paralleled by the miraculous conversion of that country promised by Our Lady of Fatima. Like the singular intercession of God, which halted Saul's fury and replaced it with faith and humility, the Consecration of Russia will be a prodigious event that will transform that country, making it also into "a vessel of election." When the Consecration of Russia and its subsequent conversion to the Catholic Church take place, we will see another sworn enemy of Christ transformed into His humble servant. And in this true conversion to the Faith, the Church will gain yet another instrument, through which God and Our Lady will spread the Faith and bring peace to the world. ■