



# *Immaculate Heart of Mary*

The attention of early Christians was attracted by the love and virtues of the Heart of Mary. The Gospels invited this attention with exquisite discretion and delicacy. What was first excited was compassion for the Virgin Mother. It was, so to speak, at the foot of the Cross that the Christian

heart first made the acquaintance of the Heart of Mary. Simeon's prophecy paved the way and furnished the devotion with one of its favorite formulas and most popular representations – the heart pierced with a sword.

Love is more the result than the object of the devotion, the object being rather to love God, and Jesus, better by uniting ourselves with Mary for this purpose, and by imitating her virtues. It would also seem that, though in the devotion of the Heart of Mary the heart has an essential part as a symbol, we think rather of the thing symbolized - of love, virtues and sentiments of Mary's interior life.

In 1942, the twenty-fifth anniversary of Fatima, Pop Pius XII consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. That same year, he assigned the feast day to August 22, the octave of the Assumption. On May 4, 1944, he extended the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary to the Universal Church. With the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council in 1969, the feast was given a more suitable place on the day following the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.