

## Sacred Icons Celebrate Our Christian Faith as Pope Francis Consecrates the World to Mary

The icon of Our Lady of Vladimir (circa 1115) is one of the oldest and most prized images of Our Lady and Child in the world. While earlier icons of Our Lady were severe and distant, the style became more sensitive and touched with emotion during the rule of the Comnenian family in the 1100's. During that period, the cult of the icon extended widely throughout the Byzantine world. This was true not only because of popular devotion, but because icons were used to decorate the iconostasis in Greek churches, the screen separating the celebrant of the Liturgy from the congregation.

A tradition dating from the 5<sup>th</sup> century is that St. Luke painted an image or icon of Our Lady, which Eudokia, wife of the Emperor Theodosius II (†460), sent from Palestine to Constantinople. Over the years, numerous icons have laid claim to Lucan origin.

Disputes about the cult of sacred images rocked the Church in the eighth century, with Emperor Leo III and Pope Adrian I at loggerheads. Although the Second General Council of Nicea in 787 declared quite firmly that sacred images are worthy of honour but not worship, antagonism continued from the Iconoclasts until 843.

After Nicea II, images were again held in great veneration by churchmen and faithful alike and religious art flourished widely. This led to a growth in iconography and even the spawning of new architectural forms in the Church. The change from severe imaging of Christ or Our Lady is roughly parallel to more devotional images of Christ crucified and the general development of *Devotio Moderna*, of which the *Imitation of Christ* and Ludolph of Saxony's *Life of Christ* are shining examples.



### Pope Francis Consecrates the World To Mary's Immaculate Heart

After visiting Assisi to seek the support of his patron, Pope Francis was inspired to honour the Virgin of Nazareth by consecrating the world on 13 October 2013 to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The Pope asked her to guide us along the way of holiness and help us show preferential love for little ones and the poor, the excluded and the suffering, for sinners and the downhearted, and prayed that she would entrust us to her beloved son Jesus.

In his homily on this Marian Day, the Pope reminded us of God's surprises, taking on poverty and weakness in becoming man through the humble Virgin. He begged us to be faithful in standing by our commitments by granting us his strength as we continue on our journey, always open to God's surprises, as Mary was. (over)

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This newsletter is produced at Loyola High School, P.O. Box 1140, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania by Fr. Ted Walters, S.J. It is intended to remind us of the treasure Christ has committed to us in devotion to the Sacred Heart. Editorial contributions to this newsletter are warmly welcomed. Please send us the names and email addresses of additional persons who would like to receive issues of the newsletter. (To send such names or for items to contribute, you may email: [twalters2002@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:twalters2002@yahoo.co.uk)) Thank you.

**Apostleship of Prayer**  
**Pope Benedict XVI's Intentions for 2014**

## Morning Offering

God our Father, I offer you my entire day — my thoughts, words, prayers, actions, joys and sufferings — in union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as he offers himself in the Eucharist for the salvation of the world.

May the Holy Spirit, who guided Jesus, be my guide and my strength today so that I may witness to your love.

Together with Mary, the mother of Jesus, I pray with all the members of the Apostleship of Prayer for this month's special intentions as proposed by the Holy Father.

**Join 40 million others in this worldwide union of persons praying for the intentions of the Pope**

The Morning Offering—in the above form or one very much like it—is at the heart of the Apostleship of Prayer. We dedicate our entire day to God through the Sacred Heart of Christ. We join others like ourselves throughout the world in offering ourselves and everything we do to the glory of God for the intentions of our Holy Father the Pope.

Each month the Pope asks our prayers, especially for a general intention and for a mission intention.

These intentions for 2014 are listed in brief form in the column to the right.

### **January**

For victims of natural disasters  
Dedication to peace in the name of Christ

### **February**

That all people may have access to water and other basic resources  
For health workers among the poor

### **March**

To acknowledge how women contribute to development  
Perseverance of persecuted Christians

### **April**

Vocations to the priesthood and religious life  
That the risen Christ may be a sign of true hope for men and women of Africa

### **May**

For initiatives to uphold the role of the family  
That Mary will accompany missionaries in proclaiming her Son Jesus

### **June**

That believers may recognize the living presence of Christ in the Eucharist  
That European Christians may rediscover their identity and proclaim the gospel

### **July**

That all may work in safety and security  
That Christian volunteers in the missions may show forth the love of Christ

### **August**

To treat prisoners with justice and respect  
That young people may follow Christ's call to proclaim the gospel everywhere

### **September**

That politicians may always act with honesty, integrity and truth.  
That Christian communities may send help and missionaries to the poorest Churches

### **October**

That the oldest Christian countries may benefit from new evangelization.  
That World Mission Day may inspire a new readiness for evangelization.

### **November**

That the ministers of the gospel may bear witness to Christ crucified and risen.  
That the pilgrim Church on earth may shine as a light to the nations

### **December**

That migrants everywhere may be welcomed especially by Christian communities  
That the newborn Christ may reveal himself to all humanity through the face of his Church

## The Morning Offering is like an alchemy turning simple actions into spiritual gold



Think of it! The Apostleship of Prayer, that powerhouse of spiritual strength and dynamism is about to remake itself. It has had several renewals and updates during the past 169 years. But it has stayed true to the inspiration that gave it birth in 1844, namely, that the ordinary things we do every day as faithful Christians—our prayers, our good works, our joys, pains and disappointments—all can be powerful forces for good. They can help meet the needs of people all over the world, and work for our own spiritual growth, when joined to Christ as he offers himself in the Mass. Nothing is wasted. Everything we do has great value when joined to Christ in the Eucharist.

It could seem that, except for a small phrase in the Morning Offering, the Apostleship of Prayer could stand on its own, independent of the Sacred Heart devotion. It could possibly be linked to devo-

tion to the Blessed Sacrament, to the Blessed Virgin, to Christ crucified, to the Holy Spirit, to several

other devotions popular in the Catholic Church. In fact, people join the Apostleship of Prayer from all devotional backgrounds. But devotion to the Sacred Heart is the most appropriate link to the spirit of the Morning Offering. This is true for a number of reasons.

1. The Morning Offering explicitly directs all our activities of the day to God through the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Joined to the Heart of Christ, our activities, weak and inadequate as they are, take on immense value in God's eyes. They are clothed with the infinite value of the love of Christ, as he offers himself in the Sacrifice of the Mass.

2. The Heart of Christ is particularly concerned with what his Vicar the Pope sees as the most significant problems in need of people's prayers and sacrifices. The monthly intentions are not randomly chosen. One could think of them as needs weighing heavily on the Heart of Christ.

3. Consecrating each day's activities to the Heart of Christ gives them a nobility especially pleasing to God, who spoke of Christ as *my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*.

4. The offering of ourselves and all we do is joined to Christ's loving sacrifice of himself on Calvary, the supreme expression of the love of the Heart of Christ.

One need look no farther than the pages of the Gospels to see how Christ's Heart was moved by the physical, social and spiritual needs of the people around him. These are the needs for which people pray daily in the Apostleship of Prayer. Today, through modern communication, we easily feel compassion for people the world over and so are joined more closely to the worldwide concerns of the Heart of Christ and his Vicar on earth. (over)

## Prayer for Renewal of the Apostleship of Prayer

Father, Lord of heaven and earth,  
about 160 years ago  
you started a fire  
in the hearts of men and women  
that has spread all over the world.

They burned to tell your Good News,  
to spread your gospel of love to  
humanity.

Touching their hearts to the Heart of  
your Son,  
you made them Apostles through  
Prayer.

You gave them to serve  
the mission of the Church  
in the heart of the world.

Today, we men and women  
of the Apostleship of Prayer  
are still on fire with your love.  
We still long to respond to the thirst  
of our brothers and sisters throughout the  
world.

Take, Lord, and receive our lives.  
Blaze up in us again,  
make us docile to your Spirit.  
May the worldwide mission of prayer  
you have entrusted to us,  
today as yesterday,  
bring your loving presence  
deep into the heart of humanity.

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## We wish you a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year

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Two years before he died, Fr. Arrupe, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, said: “From my noviceship on, I have always been convinced that this devotion sums up a symbolic expression of the very core of the Ignatian spirit and has an extraordinary power, both for personal perfection and for apostolic fruitfulness. (6 February 1981)



## Pope John XXIII on the Sacred Heart of Jesus

“Every time I hear anyone speak of the Sacred Heart of Jesus or of the Blessed Sacrament, I feel an indescribable joy, It is as if a wave of precious memories, sweet affections and joyful hopes swept over my poor person, making me tremble with happiness and filling my soul with tenderness.... The devotion to the Sacred Heart has grown with me all my life. Hardly had that good old man, my uncle Zaverio, presented me, a new-born babe, at the baptismal font than he consecrated me there in that little church of my own village to the Sacred Heart, so that I could grow up under its protection, a good Christian. ...

“Today everything which concerns the Sacred Heart of Jesus has become familiar and doubly dear to me. My life seems destined to be spent in the light irradiating from the tabernacle, and it is to the Heart of Jesus that I must look for a solution to all my troubles. I feel as if I would be ready to shed my blood for the cause of the Sacred Heart. ... I find reason for comfort in the words spoken by Jesus to Blessed Margaret Mary: ‘I have chosen you to reveal the marvels of my Heart, because you are such an abyss of ignorance and insufficiency.’” (*Journal of a Soul*, pp.147-49)

**Note: Pope John XXIII will be canonized on  
27 April 2014.**