

## St. Peter Canisius, apostle of Germany, early in life formed a deep love of the Sacred Heart

The life of Peter Canisius spanned the rise and spread of Lutheranism in northern and central Germany. Canisius was born in 1521, four years after Luther nailed his 95 theses to the chapel door in Wittenberg, and died in 1597. Peter's preaching and catechising was a powerful force in stemming the spread of Luther's doctrine to southern Germany and Austria and laid the foundation for preserving allegiance to the Catholic faith throughout the German people.

Among the most powerful forces in forming Canisius' love and intense zeal for the Catholic faith was the spiritual influence of the Carthusians in their charterhouse in Cologne, where Peter studied (1536-1539) and grew spiritually as a young man. This religious community was greatly devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and it was there that Peter's devotion to the Heart of Christ grew strong and became a dynamic force in his own life and work.

The sub-prior at the charterhouse from 1536 to 1539 was the eminent ascetical writer Landspergius. He was deeply committed to the Heart of Christ as reflecting God's love for mankind. Landspergius encouraged his disciples, saying

Take pains to stir up in your soul veneration for the most amiable Heart of Jesus, the Heart that so abounds in love and mercy. Resort to it in spirit. Through it ask for all you need and offer up all you do. This is the treasure-house of every spiritual grace, the door by which we approach God and God comes down to us. ... Even should the hearts of all your friends and all the world cast you out or betray you, rest assured that this most faithful Heart will not deceive you nor abandon you forever.

Landspergius' spiritual teaching always stressed Christ's personal love and had a powerful influence on young Peter Canisius. Taking a special interest in Peter was Nicholas van Esche, who helped form in Peter a deep devotion to the humanity of Jesus Christ. So dominant was Peter's devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus that, before setting out for Germany in 1549 to check the force of Lutheran doctrine spreading across Germany, Peter visited the tomb of St. Peter in St.

Peter's Basilica in the Vatican to pray for Christ's powerful support in his difficult task. He later wrote about a mystical experience he had on that occasion:



"Eternal High Priest, in your great goodness it pleased you that I should seek from your Apostles confirmation and success for the apostolic blessings I had received. ... I experienced there a great consolation and the sense of the presence of your grace which was being offered to me through their intercession. They gave me their blessing, too, confirmed my mission to Germany, and seemed to be promising to me their goodwill as apostle of Germany. ...

"Finally, my Saviour, I seemed to be gazing at the Heart of your Sacred Body with my own eyes. It was as if you opened it to me and told me to drink from it as from a spring, inviting me to draw the waters of salvation from these springs of yours. I was filled with longing that the waters of faith, hope and love would flow from your Heart into me. I thirsted for poverty, chastity and obedience; I begged you to wash me all over and dress me in fine clothing.

"Then I dared to touch your beloved Heart and bury my thirst in it; and you promised me a robe woven in three parts to cover my naked soul and help me greatly in my undertaking. These three parts were peace, love and perseverance. Secure in the protection of this garment, I was confident that I would lack nothing, and that everything would turn out for your glory. (From *Petri Canisii Epistolae et Acta*, I, ed.O. Braunsberger.)

From this experience, Peter set out for Germany, where he labored for the next 48 years, so successfully that he earned the hatred of his opponents, who scorned him as the "Canis Christi," the "dog of Christ."



## Books on Sacred Heart Devotion

*Sacred Fire: Practical Devotion to the Sacred Heart* is an impressive addition to our shelf of books on the Sacred Heart devotion. The work of Philip Michael Bulman, *Sacred Fire* was published by Laudate Press in 2014. It is available from Amazon for \$14.95.

Bulman writes: “Devotion to the Sacred Heart may be the simplest way for Roman Catholics to enter into an intimate relationship with God. . . . Christ invited his disciples to abide in him. This startling invitation . . . is a great gift for all generations. The devotion to the Sacred Heart gives Catholics a practical way to respond to this invitation.”

Readers are reminded of James Kubicki’s fine book *Heart on Fire: Rediscovering Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus* (Ave Maria Press, 2012). Another recent entry is Michael Gaitley’s *Consoling the Heart of Jesus: A Do-It-Yourself Retreat – Inspired by the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* (Marian Press, Stockbridge, MA, 2010). Also: *Holy Hour of Reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus*. In addition, the classic, *Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus: How to Practice the Sacred Heart Devotion* by Jean Croiset, is still available. (Croiset was closely associated with St. Margaret Mary.) All these books are available from Amazon.

And it’s worth looking around to find: *The Wisdom of John Paul II on the Greatest Catholic Devotion* by Carl J. Moell, SJ (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 2004).

## The Pope’s Prayer Network

### *The Apostleship of Prayer’s Fresh New Look*

Begun in 1844 among young Jesuit seminarians in Vals, France, the Apostleship of Prayer (AP) has been a prime avenue to holiness for thousands in the Church. Through the Morning Offering people consecrate all their daily activities in union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Mass to the glory of God. All this is to plead for the deep-seated needs of Church and society in areas specified by the Holy Father.

Over the years, Popes have repeated blessed the work of the AP, especially because of the tremendous power of so many persons directing their prayers and works to his monthly intentions. (These are published each December in this Newsletter). With the encouragement of Pope Francis, this vast chorus of prayer is now regarded as the THE POPE’S PRAYER NETWORK.

Pope Francis stresses that people who pray for the needs of Church and world are “missionary disciples.” They may not travel to foreign lands or be called on to lay down their lives, but their prayers are a powerful force in spreading the gospel and supporting people whose lives have been wracked by war and want.

The Pope’s Prayer Network gives us a pathway to live our faith in daily life. At the start of the day, we collect our thoughts and offer all we do that day to God through the Morning Offering. During the day, we take out a few moments to recommit ourselves to serving the Lord and his people by the tasks we carry out. In the evening before retiring, we briefly retrace the day’s activities, recalling the good and the bad and ask to continue to serve God well during the coming day.

Persons engaged in this network of prayerful action know that they are praying for the intentions selected by the Pope for each month of the year. In this way they are united with Pope Francis and with millions of others who commit their prayers and service as a part of Christ’s continuing mission on earth. They are apostles in every sense because they are drawing upon the merits Christ won on the cross to bring peace and faith-filled support into people’s lives throughout the world.

**Liturgical and Other  
Days of Note 2016  
Including Jesuit Saints & Blessed**

**January, 2016**

1 Fri Mary, Mother of God  
1 Fri First Friday  
3 Sun Epiphany  
4 Mon Most Holy Name of Jesus  
10 Sun Baptism of Christ  
19 Tue Jesuit Martyrs of Europe  
25 Mon Conversion of St. Paul

**February, 2016**

2 Tue Presentation of the Lord  
4 Thu St. John de Brito and others  
5 Fri First Friday  
6 Sat St Paul Miki & Japanese Martyrs  
8 Mon St. Josephine Bakhita  
10 Wed Ash Wednesday  
15 Mon St. Claude Colomb.  
22 Mon Chair of St. Peter

**March, 2016**

4 Fri First Friday  
19 Sat St. Joseph  
20 Sun Palm Sunday  
20-26 Holy Week  
27 Sun Easter Sunday

**April, 2016**

1 Fri First Friday  
3 Sun Divine Mercy Sunday  
4 Mon Annunciation of Our Lord  
22 Fri BVM, Mother of SJ  
25 Mon St. Mark Evangelist  
27 Wed St. Peter Canisius

**May, 2016**

3 Tue SS. Philip & James  
4 Wed St. Joseph Mary Rubio  
5/8 Th/Sun Ascension  
6 Fri First Friday  
13 Fri OL of Fatima  
14 Sat St. Matthias  
15 Sun Pentecost

16 Mon St. Andrew Bobola  
22 Sun Holy Trinity  
24 Tue Our Lady of the Way  
29 Sun Body & Blood of Christ (Corpus Xti)  
31 Tue Visitation of the BVM

**June, 2016**

3 Fri Most Sacred Heart of Jesus  
3 Fri SS. Charles Lwanga & Comp  
4 Sat Im Heart of Mary  
8 Wed St. James Berthieu  
9 Thu St. Joseph Anchieta  
11 Sat St. Barnabas  
21 Tue St. Aloysius Gonzaga  
24 Fri Nativity of John the Baptist  
29 Wed SS Peter & Paul Apostles

**July, 2016**

1 Fri First Friday  
2 Sat SS Bernadine Realino et al  
9 Sat SS Leo Mangin & Comps  
25 Mon St. James Apostle  
31 Sun St. Ignatius Loyola

**August, 2016**

2 Tue St. Peter Faber  
5 Fri First Friday  
6 Sat Transfiguration  
10 Wed St. Lawrence  
15 Mon Assumption of Our Lady  
18 Thu St. Albert Hurtado  
22 Mon Queenship of BVM  
24 Wed St. Bartholemew Apostle

**September, 2016**

2 Fri Jesuit Hungarian Martyrs  
2 Fri First Friday  
8 Thu Nativity of BVM  
9 Fri St. Peter Claver  
10 Sat Bl. Francis Garate  
14 Wed Exaltation of the Holy Cross

15 Thu Our Lady of Sorrows  
17 Sat St. Robert Bellarmine  
21 Wed St. Matthew Apostle and Evangelist  
29 Thu Holy Archangels

**October, 2016**

3 Mon St. Francis Borgia  
7 Fri Our Lady of the Rosary  
7 Fri First Friday  
11 Tue St. John XXIII  
12 Wed Bl. John Beyzym  
18 Tue St. Luke Evang.  
19 Wed SJ North American Martyrs  
21 Fri Bl. Diego & St. Pedro  
22 Sat St. John Paul II  
28 Fri SS Simon & Jude Apostles  
31 Mon St. Alphonsus Rodriguez

**November, 2016**

1 Tue All Saints  
2 Wed All Souls  
3 Thu Bl. Rupert Mayer  
4 Fri First Friday  
5 Sat All SJ Saints & Blessed  
9 Wed Lateran Basilica  
14 Mon St. Joseph Pignatelli  
16 Wed Jesuit Martyrs of Paraguay  
20 Sun Christ the King  
21 Mon Presentation of BVM  
23 Wed Bl. Michael Pro  
26 Sat St. John Berchmans  
29 Tue Bl. Bernard de Hoyos  
30 Wed St. Andrew Apostle

**December, 2016**

1 Thu St. Edmund  
Campion & Comp  
2 Fri First Friday  
3 Sat St. Francis Xavier  
8 Thu Immaculate Conception BVM  
25 Sun Christmas  
26 Mon St. Stephen

## The gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit flourish in abundant measure Through devotion to the Sacred Heart

In his remarkable book *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 2 (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1983), Yves Congar devotes chapter 7 (pp. 134-41) to the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. It may be useful to see how these benefits of the Holy Spirit are related to the Sacred Heart devotion. This devotion stresses the spontaneous love and mercy of God expressed in the Heart of Christ and the trust in God that this engenders. That was in strong contrast with the overpowering fear and narrowness of mind of the convent at Port Royal in France that spawned the Jansenist heresy in the late 1600's.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are distinct from his charisms (as described by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians, c. 12) are indicated in the messianic text of Isaias 11:1-2, namely, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and piety, and the spirit of fear of the Lord. The theology of these gifts was elaborated in the period between 1235 and 1250, particularly through the work of St. Thomas Aquinas. Congar subscribes to Thomas' interpretation of Christian experience of these gifts and refers to the teaching of St. Paul: "All those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." (Romans 8:14)

Only God can lead us to our blessed inheritance, but we must respond freely to his bidding. The gifts are distinct from the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity because their function is to perfect our practice of these virtues. They are permanent dispositions of the soul that make the Christian ready to follow the movement of divine inspiration or of the Holy Spirit. (Congar in *I Believe*, II, 134-36, quoting Thomas in the *Summa*, Ia IIae, qq. 68 and 69, and IIa IIae, qq. 52 and 121). St. Thomas also devoted one question in the *Summa* to the fruits of Spirit (Ia IIae, q. 70, with reference to Galatians 5:22-23).

The gift of understanding perfects faith and endows the person with 'a healthy intelligence or a certain inner penetration'. It does this through a keen appreciation of God's transcendence. The gift of knowledge gives a person 'sure judgement', which is not discursive, but simple and almost instinctive, making it possible to discern what must be believed from what should not be believed. By the gift of fear, a person knows he is 'subjected to God'. The gift of wisdom guarantees 'correctness of judgement concerning the contemplation or examination of divine realities'. The gift of counsel assures prudence, while the gift of piety renders to God as Father our obedience and worship. The gift of might or power sustains our fortitude.

St. Thomas describes the fruits as the ultimate and delightful products of the Spirit's action in us, namely, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22).

We conclude: The soul of Christ was undoubtedly filled with these gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit since at least his anointing by the Holy Spirit at the time of his baptism. Our Lady, too, must have been graced with an abundant outpouring of these blessings by the Spirit when she conceived Jesus. These benefits then are clearly bestowed in the cult of the Sacred Heart, as part of the "streams of life-giving waters pouring from [Christ's] heart" (John 7:38). Those who practice and promote this devotion should be confident that their activity is richly endowed with an abundance of these gifts and that their souls should enjoy the fruits of the Spirit as well.

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This is the fifth in a series of articles on the relation between the Holy Spirit and devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus