



GRAND MAGISTERIUM – VATICAN
EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF
THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

The heart of Jesus is the spring, the wellspring of all blessings and all grace



Stained glass window representing the bishop Mgr de Belsunce consecrating the city of Marseille to the Sacred Heart of Jesus three centuries ago

Cardinal Filoni has been invited to preside over the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, this Friday, 24th June, in Gdynia, a Polish city located on the southern coast of the Baltic Sea, in the Archdiocese of Gdansk (Danzig). Knights and Dames of the Lieutenancy for Poland will be present at this celebration. We are publishing the homily delivered by the Grand Master on this occasion in five languages on our site, so that all members of the Order across the world have access to this beautiful and profound spiritual reflection the content of which is for everyone. Also in Poland, in Gdansk, Cardinal Filoni will receive the Honour entitled “The Man of Reconciliation and Peace”, in particular because of his successful service as Apostolic Nuncio in the Middle East.

Today, on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the day of priestly sanctification, we celebrate a liturgical feast that is particularly dear to the people of God, and especially here, in Danzig. I am very happy to celebrate this Solemnity with you and I thank my brother in the Episcopate, your Archbishop, Mgr. Tadeus Wojda, for his invitation. With deep affection in Christ, may I warmly greet everyone present.

When we talk about affection, we immediately think of the heart - almost as a tangible reference. Literally speaking, the heart is the organ that pulses blood throughout our body, an essential function for life. Figuratively speaking, the heart is the seat of the soul, in a natural or supernatural sense.

In Sacred Scripture, the heart becomes the organ through which God manifests his compassion to human beings, like the feelings between two lovers or between parents and their children. In this

sense, the heart appears as the seat of intimacy, of the secret of the human being, man or woman, child or elderly person, according to their emotional state: joy, sadness, courage, emotion, passions. Everything is attributed to the heart. A few days ago, a mother told me that her three-year-old son, after his birthday party with his friends, said to her, "My heart is sad." "How come", she asked him? "Because", he replied, "my party is over". We are talking about a child barely three years old who identified the heart as the seat of his sadness or his joy!

Jesus himself, in the famous passage in Mark's Gospel, chapter 7, verses 14-23, teaches us that it is from the heart, from within the human being, that *impurity* is born. These evil intentions give rise to fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, and folly and which brings unhappiness to the person and to others.

In today's Gospel, which we have just heard, Jesus addresses *publicans* and *sinner*s and tells those who listen to him an extraordinarily beautiful and valuable parable, that everyone can understand; I would also add that it is a revolutionary parable because it subverts the moralising and pretentious way of thinking on which our superficial and self-righteous culture feeds. "A shepherd", says Jesus, "has a hundred sheep; he knows them all individually, he has given each one a name, he tends them every morning, he knows when they are sick or when some are pregnant, whether they are rebellious or docile. One day, he loses one, perhaps because it did not obey his call, or because it was distracted, or attracted to better grass further away. On returning home, he does not say, "it'll just have to cope on its own, that's its own problem, too bad," or "I'm tired of feeling sorry for it". On the contrary, he leaves the other ninety-nine sheep in the byre and goes in search of the lost sheep, while he is tired and hungry. Then, when he finds it, feeling immense joy in his heart, he lays it on his shoulders, calls his friends and celebrates." Three unrestrained actions that come from the depths of his heart: he rejoices, lays the burden on his shoulders without complaining, without berating the lost sheep, and celebrates with his friends. Jesus' commentary on this short parable is astonishing. "I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance."

Question: who is Jesus talking about if not you and me? Sinners, rebels, unbelievers deep in our hearts before God and others? For the Lord, this lost sheep that needs to be converted, to be sought out by Him, carried on His shoulders to the Father's house is you and me. This parable highlights the infinite mercy of Christ for the sinner and the solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the day when we celebrate the mercy of Jesus. In Saint Faustina Kowalska we have an extraordinary apostle of devotion to the merciful Christ; in John Paul II, we have a pontiff who led the post-conciliar Church to "*profess and proclaim God's mercy in all its truth, as it has been handed down to us by revelation*" (Dives in misericordia, 13); in this way, he opened an authentic process of evangelisation by which "*man not only receives and experiences the mercy of God, but ... is also called "to practice mercy" towards others*" (DM 14) in a spirit of deepest respect for what is human, and in a spirit of mutual brotherhood, because "*society can become "ever more human" ... when we introduce into all the mutual relationships ... forgiveness, which is so much of the essence of the Gospel*" (DM 14).

The Evangelist John, speaking of Jesus, lifeless on the cross, says that, "*one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out*" (John 19:34). Christ's heart was opened in an excess of military-judicial eagerness to see his death, but symbolically, this gesture reminds us of the rock struck by Moses, which brought water to a thirsty and exhausted people in the desert... (cf. Num. 20:11), whereas Isaiah, more than seven hundred years before Christ, had predicted, "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation" (Isa. 12:3). The prophet Zechariah added, "*I will pour out a spirit of compassion and supplication on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that, when they look on the one whom they have pierced*" (Zech. 12:10; John 19:37)

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, the heart of Jesus is the spring, the wellspring of all blessings and all grace. Our belief is manifest in the celebration of this Eucharist where, once again, the Lord

takes his place among us, speaks, breaks the bread of his body and offers the living water of his sacramental blood. This means that the words of Isaiah mentioned above are fulfilled, namely that, from the wellspring of our Saviour, with joy we will draw a spirit of grace and comfort. This is the beauty of celebrating this Christological solemnity together. May this grace and this blessing that we invoke in today's prayer be a gift for each one of us, for our families, for this country, for the relations between peoples sorely tested by wars and sufferings, and finally for the Church. And, with the Church, let us pray to God the Father that the peace that men compromise by their wars, and the consolation that so many people want for Ukraine may flow from the Heart of his beloved Son.

Amen.

Fernando Cardinal Filoni

Grand Master

(June 24, 2022)