

To: Board Members, Particular Council Presidents, Conference Presidents and Spiritual Facilitators:

## Spiritual Reading for June – Sacred Heart of Jesus

by Msgr. Sam Bianco

### Step I

The month of June is dedicated in the church to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The scripture passage from St. John (John 19:33-37) is one of the foundational revelations of God's love that comes to us through the pierced heart of Jesus - blood and water flowed from his side - and can be a source of life for us and our world in these times of suffering, distress, and anxiety. I have taken the traditional devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the scriptural basis for it and combined it with a novena prayer style.

"Novena" comes from the Latin word "nine". It expresses nine days of prayer or nine petitions for our needs and the longings of our hearts. I have composed the petitions with a reference to what we are now experiencing. In each petition I have left a blank so you can insert a name or names or groups you wish to pray for each day.

Each daily petition ends with the words: "We pray to the Lord,"  
and the response to each petition is: "Sacred Heart of Jesus, we place all our trust in thee."

I have listed the petitions in the form of nine individual days of prayer. You can say one, two, or more or all nine petitions each day. The concluding prayer for each day of prayer or prayer time is as follows:

"Have mercy on us.  
Have mercy on all our efforts, that we  
before thee, in love and faith,  
Righteousness and humility,  
May follow thee, with self denial,  
Steadfastness and courage,  
And meet thee in the silence.  
Give us a pure heart that we may see thee,  
A humble heart that we may hear thee,  
A heart of love that we may serve thee,  
A heart of that we may love thee"

*By Dag Hammarskjöld*

Should you wish you can repeat as many or all of the petitions in a sequence of nine days to cover most of June. Obviously as many petitions as you chose can be said individually or in groups.

## Step II

Traditionally the month of June has been dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This reflection is based on the scripture reading from Saint John, chapter 19, verses 33 to 37.

"But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out.

(He who saw this has testified so that you may also believe. His testimony is true and he knows that he tells the truth). These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'None of his bones shall be broken'. And again, another passage of scripture says, 'They will look on the one whom they have pierced'."

## Step III

Begin by reading the passage from St. John, C.19, vs.33-37. take a moment of silent reflection and then say the petition/petitions.

Petitions can be said each day for nine days or one or more petitions for nine days. In the blank spaces of each petition you may want to insert a particular name, names, or group.

1. For all those individuals, persons .....who have died from the Covid disease, that they may rest in the bosom of Jesus and know the splendour of eternal life, we pray to the Lord...

**Response: O Sacred Heart of Jesus, we place all our trust in thee.**

2. For all those relatives, friends of the deceased..... we have not been able to hold a funeral mass/service for their loved ones and will pray later at a memorial service and/or mass that they know that all who mourn with the Lord will be comforted, we pray to the Lord...

**Response: O Sacred Heart of Jesus, we place all our trust in thee.**

3. For all the doctors, nurses, personal support workers, support staff, and frontline workers..... who give their love, time and talent to care for all those who are ill, that they experience the friendship of God in giving oneself in compassion to others, we pray to the Lord...

**Response: O Sacred Heart of Jesus we place all our trust in thee.**

4. For all the politicians, cultural, social, religious, and media figures..... who guide, protect and inform and develop policies to overcome this crisis, that in the loneliness of leadership they know that the Holy Spirit's wisdom is their support and inspiration, we pray to the Lord...

**Response: O Sacred Heart of Jesus we place all our trust in thee.**

5. For researchers, scientists, students..... who are diligently seeking a vaccine and cure for the disease that they know that to have the desire to understand and search for a cure is to have that mind which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, we pray to the Lord....

**Response: O Sacred Heart of Jesus we place all your trust in thee.**

6. For all those who have lost their jobs, fear for loss of work, income and savings,  
.....that our fearful, troubled, hearts be strengthened through Jesus' triumph over fear and that we support one another through taxes, donations, and sharing of wealth, we pray to the Lord...

**Response: O Sacred Heart of Jesus we place all our trust in thee.**

7. For all those who are alone, tired, weary and frustrated at the isolation and discipline necessary to keep safe and endure the time of trial..... that they experience the humble, gentle heart of Jesus who lightens our burdens, we pray to the Lord...

**Response: O Sacred Heart of Jesus we place all our trust in thee.**

8. For our enemies, for those who have hurt us.....for our impatience and rudeness to others ....., that grace and forgiveness be stronger than our hurt and weakness and that we do not let the sun go down on our anger, we pray to the Lord....

**Response: O Sacred Heart of Jesus we place all our trust in thee.**

9. That we look beyond ourselves and our gifts and talents, to the infinite mercy, goodness, and gentle heart of Jesus to accompany us in this need for healing, health, support and strength and that we experience the fullness of life that comes from Jesus we pray to the Lord....

**Response: O Sacred heart of Jesus we place all our trust in thee.**

Daily Prayer for the end of mediation on scripture and the petitions:

"Have mercy upon us.

Have mercy upon our efforts, that we

Before the, in love and faith,

Righteousness and humility,

May follow thee, with self denial,

Steadfastness and courage,

And meet thee in the silence.

Give us a pure heart that we may see thee,

A humble heart that we may hear thee,

A heart of love that we may serve thee

A heart of faith we may love thee,"

We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen

*Prayer from Dag Hammarskjöld*

My thanks to Anar Adatia for helping me with the typing and organizing of the material.

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