



J A N U A R Y

Hail, Heart of my Jesus: save me!

Hail, Heart of my Creator: perfect me!

Hail, Heart of my Savior: deliver me! . . .

Hail, most loving Heart: set me on fire with your love!

—St. Margaret Mary Alacoque

Dear Friend in Christ,

Upon the cross, Jesus showed the depth of his love for us, pouring out his lifeblood for our redemption. When his side was pierced, blood and water flowed forth from his heart like a fountain of life and grace (see John 19:34). In devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we contemplate this great love.

In the earliest days of the Church, the apostle John, who had seen Jesus' heart pierced, wrote, "In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 4:10). By the twelfth century, the wound in the heart of Jesus was looked upon as a symbol of his divine love. From the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, this devotion was of a private, interior, and mystical nature. In the sixteenth century, devotional prayers and acts of piety became popular. But it was in the seventeenth century that devotion to the Sacred Heart spread widely.

In 1677 Margaret Mary Alacoque, a nun of the Visitation convent of Parlay-le-Monial, France, described how Christ appeared to her in a vision: "I could plainly see his heart, pierced and bleeding, yet there were flames, too, coming from it and a crown of thorns around it. He told me to behold his heart which so loved humanity. Then he seemed to take my very heart from me and place it there in his heart. In return he gave me back part of his flaming heart."

Margaret Mary experienced four revelations, during which Christ made the now-familiar Twelve Promises as well as the request to establish a feast in honor of his Sacred Heart. In 1765, seventy-five years after Margaret Mary's death, the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was officially approved by Pope Clement XIII. The feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus was inaugurated in 1856, and is now celebrated on the first Friday after the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. Jesus' Sacred Heart is also honored on every first Friday of the month. St. Margaret Mary Alacoque was canonized by Pope Benedict XV in 1920.

Our *2010 Prayer Journal* honors the Sacred Heart of Jesus. At the beginning of each month, a selection from a saint, great Christian writer, or Church document helps us turn our attention to the heart of Jesus and enkindles in our own hearts a burning love for him.

In addition, the journal provides the Mass readings for each day of the year. At the top of each page of the journal you will find a Scripture verse or inspirational words from a saint or well-known contemporary Christian writer. Many of these quotations will help deepen your understanding and appreciation of Jesus' love, especially as it is manifested by his Sacred Heart. Other quotations and Scripture verses have been chosen to correspond to feast days and seasons in the liturgical year.

Space is provided each day for you to write out reflections about your encounter with Jesus or to jot down Mass readings and Scripture passages that seem to speak particularly to you. Or perhaps you'll find it helpful to note your daily challenges and victories, summarize what you learn in your times of quiet meditation, or record resolutions you make in response to God's word to you. You may even want to express your love and praise to the Lord by composing your own prayers to him. It's a good idea to keep your journal next to your Bible so it's close at hand during your daily time of prayer.

All the popes of the twentieth century promoted devotion to the Sacred Heart. In this twenty-first century, Pope Benedict XVI has noted,

Adoring contemplation of [Christ's] side pierced by the spear . . . enables us to entrust ourselves to his saving and merciful love and at the same time strengthens us in the desire to take part in his work of salvation, becoming his instruments.

As you use *Jesus' Sacred Heart 2010 Prayer Journal* day by day, may you be drawn more deeply into the Heart of Jesus!

The Word Among Us Press

AN ACT OF CONSECRATION TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

I give myself and consecrate to the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ, my person and my life, my actions, pains, and sufferings, so that I may be unwilling to make use of any part of my being other than to honor, love, and glorify the Sacred Heart. This is my unchanging purpose, namely, to be all his, and to do all things for the love of him, at the same time renouncing with all my heart whatever is displeasing to him. I therefore take you, O Sacred Heart, to be the only object of my love, the guardian of my life, my assurance of salvation, the remedy of my weakness and inconstancy, the atonement for all the faults of my life, and my sure refuge at the hour of death.

Be then, O Heart of goodness, my justification before God the Father, and turn away from me the strokes of his righteous anger. O Heart of love, I put all my confidence in you, for I fear everything from my own wickedness and frailty, but I hope for all things from your goodness and bounty.

Remove from me all that can displease you or resist your holy will; let your pure love imprint your image so deeply upon my heart that I shall never be able to forget you or to be separated from you.

May I obtain from all your loving kindness the grace of having my name written in your Heart, for in you I desire to place all my happiness and glory, living and dying in bondage to you. Amen.

—*St. Margaret Mary Alacoque*

THE TWELVE PROMISES OF JESUS TO ST. MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE
FOR THOSE WHO PRACTICE DEVOTION TO HIS SACRED HEART

- 1 I will give them all the graces necessary for their state of life.
- 2 I will establish peace in their families.
- 3 I will console them in all their troubles.
- 4 They shall find in my Heart an assured refuge during life and especially at the hour of their death.
- 5 I will pour abundant blessings on all their undertakings.
- 6 Sinners shall find in my Heart the source of an infinite ocean of mercy.
- 7 Tepid souls shall become fervent.
- 8 Fervent souls shall speedily rise to great perfection.
- 9 I will bless the homes where an image of my Heart shall be exposed and honored.
- 10 I will give to priests the power of touching the most hardened hearts.
- 11 Those who propagate this devotion shall have their names written in my Heart, never to be effaced.
- 12 The all-powerful love of my Heart will grant to all those who shall receive Communion on the first Friday of nine consecutive months the grace of final repentance; they shall not die under my displeasure, nor without receiving their sacraments; my Heart shall be their assured refuge at that last hour.