



## *THE REIGN OF THE "TWO HEARTS" IN OUR SECULAR WORLD*

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*by Sister Judith Clare*

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### **Dear Friends of the Heart of Christ,**

The recent earthquake in Italy impressed upon my mind some powerful images. During a time when the Church was immersed in the great mysteries of our faith, we saw how ordinary lives can be changed forever-overnight. Why were some people saved and others flung unexpectedly into eternity? Why were some buildings destroyed and others miraculously preserved? Pondering over this I thought back to the mammoth earthquake in Kobe, Japan in 1995 and an image that stays in my mind's eye. It is of a scene of utter devastation. Standing in front of incalculable destruction was a totally intact statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, flowers still at its base, perfectly preserved. Yes, I thought to myself, the Sacred Heart is the King of the universe and all is in His hands.

Sometimes that's hard to comprehend in our world today. Forces of secularism seem to be engulfing the Church and all those faithful souls who want to live good and holy lives. Just recently a new study on American religion reported that Catholicism is facing a "stunning" decline in the northeastern U.S. Statistics indicate that there are big losses of Catholic population in the state of Massachusetts, with New England showing a net loss of one million Catholics. Northern New England is now the least religious section of the country. So right in our midst, we are experiencing a significant decay in our Catholic population. How will that affect the way we live our lives of faith?

I have been thinking about this and the ever-growing influence of secularism that seems to have penetrated just about everywhere. Several weeks ago, I had the experience of being called for jury duty. Since I had no legitimate reason to be excused from this civil requirement, I steeled myself for submersion into the secular world.

Fortunately, the sea of people who surrounded me in the large waiting room at the courthouse was either totally indifferent to me or courteous and helpful. On our move from the lower waiting-processing area to the long benches of the impressive upper superior courtroom, we were instructed to be silent.

No talking was allowed between us. Waves of my rather strict public elementary school training washed over me. In front of the room, spacious and antique, hung a huge portrait of a distinguished looking judge. His face reflected honesty, and he seemed to be a person of justice and integrity. However, I couldn't help thinking what our judicial system would be like if another Judge's picture were up there. Imagine with me, if you will, a portrait of the Sacred Heart hung in its place. How



different and how better our world would be! If we only knew the benefits humanity would incur by honoring this Heart, all merciful and all just.

Such a suggestion would probably appall many of our civic officials who are doing their utmost to convince us that God does not belong in the public arena. But the God-fearing leaders of our Church are telling us otherwise. The late and great John Paul II has written: "A faith that does not become culture is not fully accepted, not fully thought out, not faithfully lived."

Our present Pope Benedict XVI has reiterated time and again the need for a religious element to be part of our social and public life. He tells us that "at the very center of social life there must be a presence that evokes the mystery of the transcendent God." And that "the role of religion plays an important part in a secular, modern state." Benedict emphasizes, "To the extent that religion becomes a private affair, it loses its very soul."

In order for us to live fully our Christian Catholic faith, in order for us to be truly God's children who want to walk in His ways, in order for us to be apostles, disciples, friends of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we must carry our faith In order for us to live fully our Christian Catholic faith, in order for us to be truly God's children who want to walk in His ways, in order for us to be apostles, disciples, friends of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we must carry our faith convictions and our Catholic moral values into the world at large.

We are in a tug of war between the subtle but aggressive forces of secularization that admonish us to compartmentalize our beliefs between our public and private lives- and the true teaching of the Church that calls us to stand up for what is right and to live and proclaim God's laws wherever we are. The Church is not interested in acquiring and imposing political power and none of her representatives, great or small, should be moved to do so.

Its real purpose, as we follow the lead of Jesus, is to give everyone the consoling hope of salvation, to bring the love and compassion, the mercy and justice of the Heart of Christ into the heart of the world. This is a daunting and dangerous task. Anyone who tries to be a faithful witness of the Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary will have to withstand an onslaught of arguments and criticisms and even the barbs of dark malevolent powers.

It is the month of May, and as you know, it is a time especially dedicated to Mary and to her Immaculate Heart. The rose window in our chapel depicts the symbols of both the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. They are pictured together because where there is one, there is always the other.

The Heart of Jesus, the unique source of our sanctification and salvation, came into this world through an act of the Heart of Mary. She gave her consent at the moment of the Annunciation and



by the mysterious action of the Holy Spirit, an utterly unbreakable bond was forged between the Heart of Jesus and the Heart of Mary.

From this point of origin comes the overwhelming concentration of power that no force in the universe can overcome. Recognizing this truth gives us the assurance that nothing and no one can stop the reign of the Two Hearts from blossoming in our world. All the most sublime rhetoric, all the finely crafted legislation of secular parliaments, all the connivance of clandestine groups, all the violence of terrorists or demonic agents will not impede the establishment of the Two Hearts from taking place on the face of this earth. Remember the words of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary, "I will reign in spite of my enemies."

How will the reign of the Two Hearts take place? When and how it happens, I do not know. But I do think that "Something" is happening in the world and that the intervention of the Two Hearts into world events is not too far away. In little ways, it is already occurring. These two stories, I hope, will illustrate what I mean.

The first story is from an email we received several weeks ago from a person we do not know. It essentially said this:

Dear Sisters, I do not ask for anything but your prayers. I was a Lutheran and went to the hospital for a total knee replacement. It went well, but due to the extreme pain, they gave me a lot of morphine. I reacted badly to the morphine and would quit breathing and set the monitor on alarm. This went on and off for some time. My wife left the hospital and went home. As soon as she left, the nurse in charge disconnected the oxygen monitor, turned-off the lights and shut the door. (It was night and she was the only one around in a small hospital.) I was still in a condition of not breathing, then breathing, etc. My last thought was that I was to die alone and in the dark, unable to walk or call for help.

I awoke several hours later and there was [in my room] a little Jewish lady, with long black curly hair and a white gown. The style of the gown was something that I had never seen. It had sleeves that went to the wrist, and the dress went to the floor. She just stood there and watched over my bed and did not say anything. I awoke several hours later and she was still there. And again the third time, she was still there. I could see her and I could see the wall behind her at times.

As you may guess, I lived through this. I went on the Internet to see what the dress style of the first century Jewish women was, and it was exactly what the Lady was dressed in. I am totally convinced this was the Blessed Mother. I cannot prove it to anybody else, but I am studying the Catechism of the Catholic Church and I am converting to Catholicism. It is just as the Church described. I have been misled in these Protestant churches and dishonored the Mother of God. For



that I am sorry. I feel quite secure knowing that she is watching over me. I have a calmness that I have never experienced...

The second story is about a newsman who recently received a call from an anonymous caller while at his office. A man who was struggling to breathe phoned to share a remarkable incident that happened to him. He just needed to let other people know about this and for the first time in his life, ventured to call a newsroom.

The man who was dying of a lung disorder said he was recently admitted to the hospital where he crashed twice in a flurry of doctors, nurses and machines. During the first crash, he said, he looked up and saw a robed woman standing over him, staring at him with "such compassion, such feeling." "I didn't know what to think. I thought maybe I already died," he said slowly. He described how he rested in her comfort and thought to himself that she was there to help him on his way. "But later I realized," he explained, "what she was doing was encouraging me to breath harder, get the level (of oxygen) up or else that would be the end of it. She gave me peace." He pulled through but is still in bad shape. "I'm not a religious person," he said. "I don't know why I was brought back...; I just want people to know this happened."

As we see, the Two Hearts of Jesus and Mary are pursuing souls all over the world and opening eyes and hearts to the reality of heaven and to the knowledge of Their great love and care for them.

By worldly standards, we are induced to believe that our greatest freedom and happiness will come from being surrounded by all the things we want and by the ability to exercise our own desires without interference or constraint.

Such advantages from materialism and excessive individualism are a misconception. We cannot obtain by our own efforts the fulfillment of our deepest needs, and the world cannot become a better place to live in without God's help and blessing.

Let us pray that the Two Hearts of Jesus and Mary will guide our steps and strengthen us to live with conviction our Catholic faith and moral teachings in the midst of our secular world and thus hasten the coming reign of the Two Hearts.