

PROMISES: What About Them?

There are two categories of promises: unconditional and conditional. The first promised a Redeemer (Jesus Christ), an Advocate (the Holy Spirit), the primacy of Peter, and the indestructibility of the Church. The second promises eternal life to those who "eat my flesh and drink my blood" (Jn. 6:54; salvation to those who believe, are baptized, and keep the commandments; help to those who first seek the kingdom of God.

Now, concerning the so-called 12 promises made by Our Lord to St. Margaret Mary, they don't really begin to enumerate all the promises made by Jesus to her; they are not even a summary of them; rather, they are but a selection, having been approved and cited by the Church; fulfilled in the lives of many; are nothing more (or less) than the elaboration of the promises of Christ as found in the Gospels.

Their entire content isn't new; rather, they are the circumstance of their fulfillment. For "what has already been promised in substance in the Gospels, is now attached precisely to devotion to the Sacred Heart" (Karl Rahner).

1. I will give them all the graces necessary for their state in life: peace in their families, consolation in their work, the blessing of heaven on all their undertakings, and consolation in their afflictions (Isa. 12:3; Jer. 32:40; Jn. 1:16; Eph. 4:7).
2. I will establish peace in their families (Isa. 26:3; Ps. 29:10; Lk. 2:14; Jn. 20:20).
3. I will bless every place in which the image of My Heart shall be exposed and honored (21:8; Jn. 3:13-15).
4. I will console them in all their difficulties (Ps. 34:19; Isa. 54:7; Jn. 16:33; Lk. 12:32).
5. I will be their refuge during life, and especially at the hour of death (Ps. 46:1; Sir. 24:19; Mt. 11:28; Phil. 4:6-7).
6. I will shed abundant blessings upon all their undertakings (Deut. 28:12; Eph. 1:3).
7. Sinners shall find in My Heart a fountain and boundless ocean of mercy (Isa. 1:18-19; Mt. 9:13; Jn. 6:37).
8. Tepid souls shall become fervent (Ez. 36:26-27; Lk. 12:49; Rom 5:5).
9. Fervent souls shall rise speedily to great perfection (Prov. 8:20; 1 Cor. 1:4-5; Phil. 1:6; Eph. 3:18-19).
10. I will give to priests the power to touch the hardest hearts (1 Cor. 12:4-7; 2 Cor. 5:20).
11. Those who propagate this devotion shall have their names written in my Heart never to be blotted out (Lk. 10:20; 1 Jn. 2:25).
12. I promise you, in the excessive mercy of My Heart, that My all-powerful love will grant to all who communicate on the First Friday of the month, for nine consecutive months, the grace of final penitence; they shall not die in My displeasure nor without their sacraments; My divine Heart shall be their refuge in this last moment (Nm. 23:19; Ps. 145:13; Mt. 24:13; Jn. 6:58).

Clearly, then, the promises of Christ — a reaffirmation of the message of love and mercy as found in Sacred Scripture — invite all men to this devotion of devotions, to pay homage to the Heart of Jesus. A closer look at the writings of St. Margaret Mary reveal the depth of Our Savior's merciful love for those who fulfill His request to honor His Heart.

"Establish your dwelling in the amiable Heart of Jesus and you will find peace, strength, and protection." For "Our Divine Lord desires to enter, with pomp and magnificence, into homes. He wishes to have His image exposed and honored in public, that He may be better known, Loved and adored by men." Moreover, "consecration to His Heart pleases Jesus and terrifies Satan (who) has a most intense fear of devotion to this loving Heart." Further, "devotion to the Heart of Jesus represents the final efforts of His love. . . in these last days." Further, "there is no surer means of attaining perfection." Indeed, "if it were known how pleasing this devotion is to Jesus Christ, no Christian, however little his love for Our Savior, would hesitate to begin to practice it immediately." For in this devotion is found

"the sovereign remedy for all our ills and a refuge for all our necessities." "Public prayers have a great power with the Sacred Heart." And "the practice of the nine First Fridays is very pleasing to Our Lord, who promises such great rewards. The purpose of the promises is to get us to love Jesus more fervently, in return for His great love for us. We can rely on Christ to keep His word and fulfill His promises." We, in turn, must "try, with humble trust, to love Him. To doubt would be to suppose that Jesus didn't mean what He said, or that He is powerless."

Let us also remember then, that "the Giver is more precious than all His gifts" (St. Margaret Mary). And, that what has already been promised in substance in the Gospels, is now attached precisely to devotion to the Sacred Heart.

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