

The month of August is dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Since the 16th century Catholic piety has assigned entire months to special devotions. The month of August is traditionally dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The physical heart of Mary is venerated (and not adored as the Sacred Heart of Jesus is) because it is united to her person and is the seat of her love (especially for her Divine Son), virtue and inner life. Such devotion is an incentive to a similar love and virtue. Just as the Sacred Heart represents Christ's love for mankind, the Immaculate Heart represents the desire of the Blessed Virgin to bring all people to her Son.

This devotion has received new emphasis in this century from the visions given to Lucy Dos Santos, oldest of the visionaries of Fatima, in her convent in Tuy, in Spain, in 1925 and 1926. In the visions Our Lady asked for the practice of the Five First Saturdays to help make amends for the offenses committed against her heart by the blasphemies and ingratitude of men. The practice parallels the devotion of the Nine First Fridays in honour of the Sacred Heart.

During the second world war Pope Pius XII put the whole world under the special protection of our Saviour's Mother by consecrating it to her Immaculate Heart and in 1944 he decreed that in the future the whole Church should celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This is not a new devotion. In the seventeenth century, St. John Eudes preached it together with that of the Sacred Heart; in the nineteenth century, Pius VII and Pius IX allowed several churches to celebrate a feast of the Pure Heart of Mary. Pius XII instituted today's feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary for the whole Church, so as to obtain by her intercession "***peace among nations, freedom for the Church, the conversion of sinners, the love of purity and the practice of virtue***" (Decree of May 4, 1944). On October 31, 1942, Pope Pius XII made a solemn Act of Consecration of the Church and the whole world to the Immaculate Heart. Let us remember this devotion year-round, but particularly through the month of August.

"The Immaculate alone has from God the promise of victory over Satan. She seeks souls that will consecrate themselves entirely to her, that will become in her hands forceful instruments for the defeat of Satan and the spread of God's kingdom."

- St. Maximilian Kolbe

