

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 Lucia 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



The Five First Saturdays Devotion is one of the principal points of the Fatima message. It centers on the urgent need for mankind to offer reparation and expiate for the many injuries that the Immaculate Heart of Mary suffers from the hands of both impious and indifferent men.

Modifications to the Five First Saturdays Devotion to facilitate its observation

The original request of Our Lady asks one to confess and receive Communion on five consecutive first Saturdays; to say five decades of the Rosary; to meditate during 15 minutes on the mysteries of the Rosary for the purpose of making reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in reparation for the sins of men.

In subsequent private visions and apparitions however, Sister Lucia presented to Our Lord the difficulties that devotees encountered in fulfilling some conditions. With loving condescension and solicitude, Our Lord deigned to relax the rules to make this devotion easy to observe:

- Confession may be done on other days other than the First Saturdays so long as one receives Our Lord worthily and has the intention of making reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.
- Even if one forgets to make the intention, it may be done on the next confession, taking advantage of the first occasion to go to confession.
- Sister Lucia also clarified that it is not necessary to meditate on ALL mysteries of the Rosary on each First Saturdays. One or several suffice.

All this offered in REPARATION for the sins of blasphemy and ingratitude committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Why Five Saturdays?

Sr. Lucia's confessor questioned her about the reason for the five Saturdays asking, "Why not seven or nine?" She answered him in a letter dated June 12, 1930. In it she related about a vision she had of Our Lord while staying in the convent chapel part of the night of the twenty-ninth to the thirtieth of the month of May 1930. The reasons Our Lord gave were as follows:

The five first Saturdays correspond to the five kinds of offenses and blasphemies committed against the Immaculate heart of Mary. They are: 1.) Blasphemies against the Immaculate Conception, 2.) Blasphemies against her virginity, 3.) Blasphemies against her divine maternity, at the same time refusal to accept her as the Mother of all men, 4.) Instilling indifference, scorn and even hatred towards the Immaculate Mother in the hearts of children and 5.) Direct insults against her sacred images.