

Yesterday, we celebrated the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Today we celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The Heart of Jesus Christ began to beat with a love at once human and divine within the womb of Mary. As Jesus shed his Precious Blood on the cross for our salvation, he invited his mother, Mary, to be the Mother of the Church. With this in mind, Pope Pius XII explained that one of the most precious gifts of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is “Mary the beloved Mother of God and the most loving Mother of us all. She who gave birth to our Savior according to the flesh and was associated with Him in recalling the children of Eve to the life of divine grace has deservedly been hailed as the spiritual Mother of the whole human race.”ⁱ

When we are concerned and burdened by the troubles of this world, we naturally turn to a loving mother for help. So, to the Church. “In the midst of the second world war Pope Pius XII put the whole world under the special protection of our Savior’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... 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.”ⁱⁱ

We cannot properly celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary without reference to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In May of 1956, Pope Pius XII wrote an Encyclical, a teaching letter, on the Sacred Heart of Jesus:

“In order that favors in greater abundance may flow on all Christians, nay, on the whole human race, from the devotion to the most Sacred Heart of Jesus, let the faithful see to it that to this devotion the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of God is closely joined. For, by God’s Will, in carrying out the work of human Redemption the Blessed Virgin Mary was inseparably linked with Christ in such a manner that our salvation sprang from the love and the sufferings of Jesus Christ to which the love and sorrows of His Mother were intimately united. It is, then, entirely fitting that the Christian people - who received the divine life from Christ through Mary - after they have paid their debt of honor to the Sacred Heart of Jesus should also offer to the most loving Heart of their heavenly Mother the corresponding acts of piety affection, gratitude and expiation. Entirely in keeping with this most sweet and wise disposition of divine Providence is the memorable act of consecration by which We Ourselves solemnly dedicated Holy Church and the whole world to the spotless Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Just as Pope Pius XII turned to Mary for help during the troubling times of World War II, Pope Francis has reminded us to turn to Mary in prayer with the world at war with a virus. In March of 2020, he entrusted the health of the World to Mary with this prayer:

“O Mary, you always shine on our path as a sign of salvation and of hope.

We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick,
who at the cross took part in Jesus’ pain, keeping your faith firm.

You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need,
and we are sure you will provide so that, as in Cana of Galilee,
we may return to joy and to feasting after this time of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love,
to conform to the will of the Father and to do as we are told by Jesus,
who has taken upon himself our sufferings and carried our sorrows
to lead us, through the cross, to the joy of the resurrection. Amen.

Under your protection, we seek refuge, Holy Mother of God. Do not disdain the entreaties of we who are in trial, but deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.”^{iv}

ⁱ [vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_15051956_haurietis-aquas.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_15051956_haurietis-aquas.html) #72

ⁱⁱ catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2021-06-12## (Decree of May 4, 1944)

ⁱⁱⁱ [vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_15051956_haurietis-aquas.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_15051956_haurietis-aquas.html) #124

^{iv} [adw.org/text-of-popes-prayer-to-mary-during-coronavirus-pandemic](https://www.adw.org/text-of-popes-prayer-to-mary-during-coronavirus-pandemic)