

## **Sacred Heart Novena - 31 May to 8 June 2018**

### **HE LOVED WITH A HUMAN HEART**

#### **Day 3: Saturday, 02 June – 8<sup>th</sup> week in Ordinary Time – Beloved!**

Reading: Jude 17:20-25; Responsorial Psalm: Ps 63; Gospel: Mark 11:27-33

Hello again and welcome to day 3 of our Novena. We are at the end of the week and today we continue reading from yesterday's Gospel. Mark, chapter 11, verses 27-33. Today we have only one key word ... BELOVED!

Jesus is again in the temple area and the chief priests, the scribes and elders question him – “By what authority are you doing these things?” What things? What things are the priests, scribes and elders thinking of? I scanned the Gospel of Mark backwards from Chapter 11 to Chapter 1 to get an idea what “these things” could be. In chapter 11, we see him cleansing the temple, cursing the fig tree, and entering Jerusalem amidst the shouts of Hosanna. In Chapter 10, we see him giving sight to the blind man Bartimeus, teaching crowds and blessing children. In chapter 9, we see him driving out a demon from a boy. In chapter 8, he feeds the four thousand, challenges the Pharisees, and heals another blind man. In Chapter 7 he defends his disciples for not following traditions, heals the daughter of a Syro-Phoenician woman and heals a deaf man. In Chapter 6 and 5, we see another feeding of the multitude and many more healings. In chapter 4, he teaches using parables and calms a storm. In chapters 3 to 1, we see more healings, not following tradition, the cleansing of a leper and the calling of his disciples. These are the things Jesus did – healing, feeding, teaching, calling, challenging...what was he doing? A verse in chapter 6, for me, summarizes it all “When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them...” What was Jesus doing? He was loving people! All throughout the Gospel, we see the many different ways by which Jesus loved with a human heart – a heart moved with pity, a heart moved with compassion!

“By what authority are you doing these things?” the scribes, priests and elders asked. Jesus himself does not answer the question but the author of the Gospel of Mark answers it through the Father, not once but twice. In the very beginning of the gospel, in chapter 1:11, at the Baptism in the Jordan, Jesus comes out of the water, the Father speaks and says “You are my beloved son; with you I am well pleased.” In chapter 9:7, at the transfiguration scene, the Father again speaks and referring to Jesus says “This is my beloved son, listen to him.” By what authority did Jesus do what he did? By what authority did he go around loving people in many different ways? By what authority did he cleanse the temple and challenge the authorities of his time? By the authority of the Beloved Son!

#### **BELOVED**

Jesus is the beloved son of the father. Jesus loves because he is beloved! It is from his experience of being loved that Jesus was able to love. And his experience of being the Beloved is so strong that the rejection from the priests, scribes and elders that we see in today's gospel does not make him feel any less. These people who are questioning Jesus are not just people who do not believe him, they mean him harm. They are trying to find ways to kill him. In fact they will succeed. But even on the cross, crucified and dead, Jesus remains to be the Beloved One who literally loved to the last drop of his blood. As you and I know,

this image of Jesus, dead on the cross with his side pierced, is the biblical image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The priests here in your parish are Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. I am a Daughter of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The MSCs and we share the same founder, a French man whose name was Fr Jules Chevalier. Fr Chevalier handed down to us a way of life, a way of living lovingly, what we now refer to as the Spirituality of the Heart. It is the way of life of Jesus, the Beloved One, the one who loved with a human heart.

To share with you what the Spirituality of the Heart means and what it demands from us who claim we live it, I will use a story that I heard from an Irish MSC. Fr Nick Harnan. Here is my version of Fr Nick's story...

After Jesus died and before he ascended into heaven, he wanted to find a way to keep his memory alive and effective in the world. So he went up the mountain and called his followers to him. They came from all times and places. He began saying - when I was living here on earth, I was a great teacher. I gave sermons and taught like no Rabbi did. It is essential that this part of me be continued after I go. A man from Spain whose name was Dominic raised his hand and said, Lord I will continue that part of you. I will begin an order of preachers and together we will go to the ends of the earth teaching and preaching like you did. The Dominicans were born. Jesus continued - here on earth, I was a poor man. I had no home of my own. I lived simply like the lilies of the field and the birds of the air. In my poverty, I had a personal and intimate relationship with creation. A young man from central Italy stood up, took off his clothes, dropped his mantle and said *eccomi, mi chiamo Francesco!* I will continue that part of you and will gather men and women in a life of poverty and love and respect for creation. The Franciscans were born. And Jesus went on and on and for every part of him, someone stood up and volunteered to keep that part of his memory alive. Finally Jesus said, in becoming a human being, I was the incarnation of God who is Love. Any form of pain or suffering moved my heart with compassion. I treated everyone, especially the poor and the marginalised, with kindness and mercy. My love was the answer to the ills of society. Who would like to keep this part of my memory alive? A parish priest from a small French town called Issoudun raised his hands and said I will. Lord, I have seen and believed in the greatness of your love and I wish to share this with all. I will gather men and women, lay, religious and priests, who will join me in keeping this part of your memory alive, everywhere and forever! And so we, the members of the Chevalier family, were born!

## **BELOVED**

God loved us into being and Jesus, the Beloved, commands to love one another as he has loved us. He asked us to keep this part of his memory alive! Are you ready to take the challenge?! We too, each one of us, without exception, are beloved sons and daughters of God. By the authority of being beloved, we too can and are commanded to go around loving in many different ways.

In today's first reading, St Jude tells us "Keep yourselves in the love of God and wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ." How do we keep ourselves in the love of God? One way is by living in that love, by truly believing that we, you and I, are God's BELOVED ONES!