

Section 9

A DEVELOPING VISION OF THE DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART

One of the remarkable features of Chevalier's Charism is his unflagging energy spent on meditating and studying the deeper meaning of a Devotion to the Sacred Heart. Fr. Chevalier did not take for granted the Devotion to the Sacred Heart as already commonly lived and practiced in his time. Therefore, his vision of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart was in constant development. Although, he was not a writer by nature, he spent much time in publishing the results of his investigations, and he wanted to share them with anyone interested. Fr. Piperon MSC notes that it took Chevalier not less than 20 years to write his large volumes about the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

Through his on-going studies, he came to realize that we meet in the Heart of Jesus the revelation of God's own Heart and of God's powerful love. Wherever God's love is at work, Chevalier sees a manifestation of Jesus' Heart. So, Chevalier shows us that Jesus' Heart plays a central role in the creation of the universe and humanity. The creation of the universe, culminating in the creation of the human race, is a work of God's love.

Chevalier also underlines St. Paul's words that "*God created the whole universe through him and for him*" (Col 1:16), that is, through and for Jesus Christ, God' Son. While all human beings are created in the image of God, who is Love itself, they are all created in the image of Jesus, the Son of God. The Son of God reveals God's love by becoming human, while loving us with a human heart.

Chevalier points out how God's powerful, divine love is already at work in shoals of fish in the ocean and flocks of animals on the land, as a first realization of God's plan that will be completed when the time is right "*to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as Head*" (Eph 1:10).

He also indicates how each human heart is created by God according to the model of the human Heart of His Son. That means that the deepest desires of our hearts live also in the Heart of Jesus, and are actually God's own desires. It means also that, deep inside, our hearts have a similar capacity for love as that of the Heart of Jesus.

He saw Jesus Christ not only as our Redeemer and Savior, but also as the Great Adorer and Thanks giver. In the midst of creation and in the Eucharist, Jesus Christ adores the Father, the Creator of heaven and earth, giving thanks for the Father's works of love, on behalf of each of us. Chevalier states that, while we are gifted with a heart and a voice, it is our task to participate in these acts of adoration and thanksgiving to the Creator, on behalf of all creatures.

A reflective moment

*"Already in matter, there is a sort of knowledge,
a beginning of love.
In the atmosphere and in the water,
these thousands of varieties of animals
know one another, love one another:
a first draft, a first outline, perfect in itself, wonderful, entrancing,
but only a distant sketch,
a long way unfortunately from its model¹," Jesus Christ, the Sacred Heart."*

*"Jesus is Man-God.
He reunites the whole of creation:
'I am the life', he tells us,
all created life and uncreated life,
plant, animal or material life, spiritual and rational life..."*

Jules Chevalier, 1900

