

Immaculate Heart of Mary, Rico, CO

Located about 50 miles North East of Cortez near Telluride.

Mission Church

Before becoming our church, the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Rico served as the small town's first schoolhouse when it was built in the 1880's. An increase in population during the boom days of the 1890's found the building too small and in 1892 a four room, brick school was built. Thus, on June 30, 1892, the town of Rico deeded the property to Bishop M.C. Matz. Until 1895, the church had a resident pastor but as the mining industry declined the church was assigned mission status.

In the early 1990's, Father Peter Hudson who was at that time the pastor of St. Margaret Mary's in Cortez, investigated the possibility of renovating the Immaculate Heart of Mary as a project for the Knights of Columbus Council. Originally, they planned to restore the chapel and put an apartment in the rear of the building to be used by area priests as a retreat. Communications with the Chancery in Pueblo led to a letter of authorization from Bishop Tafoya to proceed with the project.

The Knights of Columbus, parishioners and citizens of Rico labored extensively on the restoration of the little chapel. Reinforcing the buildings rotten wooden foundation and floor supports with steel beams and cement pillars took first priority. Installing new electrical wiring, removing chimneys, painting ceilings and removing wallpaper, the crew also had to strip the building of its original chalkboards. Receiving new carpet and windows the exterior received new insulation, siding, a deck and ramp. Months were spent renovating the Stations of the Cross, the altar crucifix, and the statues in the church.

Immaculate Heart of Mary



Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

As in the article on devotion to the [Sacred Heart of Jesus](#), this subject will be considered under two heads:

- the nature, and
- the history of the devotion.

The Nature of the Devotion

Just as [devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus](#) is only a form of devotion to the adorable Person of [Jesus](#), so also is devotion to the Holy Heart of Mary but a special form of devotion to Mary. In order that, properly speaking, there may be devotion to the Heart of Mary, the attention and the homage of the faithful must be directed to the physical heart itself. However, this in itself is not sufficient; the faithful must read therein all that the human heart of Mary suggests, all of which it is the expressive symbol and the living reminder: Mary's interior life, her joys and sorrows, her virtues and hidden perfections, and, above all, her virginal love for her [God](#), her maternal love for her Divine Son, and her motherly and compassionate love for her sinful and miserable children here below. The consideration of Mary's interior life and the beauties of her soul, without any thought of her physical heart, does not constitute our devotion; still less does it consist in the consideration of the Heart of Mary merely as a part of her virginal body. The two elements are essential to the devotion, just as soul and body are necessary to the constitution of man.

All this is made sufficiently clear in the explanations given elsewhere (see [DEVOTION TO THE HEART OF JESUS](#)), and, if our devotion to Mary must not be confounded with our devotion to [Jesus](#), on the other hand, it is equally true that our veneration of the Heart of Mary is, as such, analogous to our worship of the [Heart of Jesus](#). It is, however, necessary to indicate a few differences in this analogy, the better to explain the character of Catholic devotion to the Heart of Mary. Some of these differences are very marked, whereas others are barely perceptible. Devotion to the [Heart of Jesus](#) is especially directed to the Divine Heart as overflowing with love for men, and it presents this love to us as despised and outraged. In the devotion to the Heart of Mary, on the other hand, what seems to attract us above all else is the love of this Heart for [Jesus](#) and for [God](#). Its love for men is not overlooked, but it is not so much in evidence nor so dominant. With this difference is linked another. The first, act of the devotion to the [Heart of Jesus](#) is the love eager to respond to love, in devotion to the Heart of Mary there is no first act so clearly indicated: in this devotion, perhaps, study and imitation hold as important a place as love. For, although this study and imitation are impregnated with filial affection, the devotion presents itself with no object sufficiently conspicuous to call forth our love, which is, on the contrary, naturally awakened and increased by the study and imitation. Hence, accurately speaking, love is more the result than the object of the devotion, the object being rather to love [God](#), and [Jesus](#) better by uniting ourselves to Mary for this purpose and by imitating her virtues. It would also seem that, although in the devotion to the Heart of Mary the heart has an essential part as symbol and sensible object, it does not stand out as prominently as in the devotion to the [Heart of Jesus](#); we think rather of the thing symbolized, of love, virtues, and sentiments, of Mary's interior life.

The History of the Devotion

The history of the devotion to the Heart of Mary is connected on many points with that to the [Heart of Jesus](#); nevertheless, it has its own history which, although very simple, is not devoid of interest. The attention of [Christians](#) was early attracted by the love and virtues of the Heart of Mary. The Gospel itself invited this attention with exquisite discretion and delicacy. What was first excited was compassion for the Virgin Mother. It was, so to speak, at the foot of the Cross that the [Christian](#) heart first made the acquaintance of the Heart of Mary. Simeon's prophecy paved the way and furnished the devotion with one of its favourite formulae and most popular representations: the heart pierced with a sword. But Mary was not merely passive at the foot of the Cross; "she cooperated through charity", as St. Augustine says, "in the work of our redemption".

Another Scriptural passage to help in bringing out the devotion was the twice-repeated saying of St. Luke, that Mary kept all the sayings and doings of [Jesus](#) in her heart, that there she might ponder over them and live by them. A few of the Virgin's sayings, also recorded in the Gospel, particularly the Magnificat, disclose new features in Marian psychology. Some of the Fathers also throw light upon the psychology of the Virgin, for instance, St. Ambrose, when in his commentary on St. Luke he holds Mary up as the ideal of virginity, and St. Ephrem, when he so poetically sings of the coming of the Magi and the welcome accorded them by the humble Mother. Little by little, in consequence of the application of the Cantic of the loving relations between [God](#) and the Blessed Virgin, the Heart of Mary came to be for the [Christian Church](#) the Heart of the Spouse of the Canticles as well as the Heart of the Virgin Mother. Some passages from other Sapiential Books, likewise understood as referring to Mary, in whom they personify wisdom and her gentle charms, strengthened this impression. Such are the texts in which wisdom is presented as the motherly love, of fear, of knowledge, and of holy hope. In the New Testament Elizabeth proclaims Mary blessed because she has believed the words of the [angel](#); the Magnificat is an expression of her humility; and in answering the woman of the people, who in order to exalt the Son proclaimed the Mother blessed, did not [Jesus](#) himself say: "Blessed rather are they that hear the word of [God](#) and keep it", thus in a manner inviting us to seek in Mary that which had so endeared her to [God](#) and caused her to be selected as the Mother of [Jesus](#)? The Fathers understood His meaning, and found in these words a new reason for praising Mary. [St. Leo](#) says that through faith and love she conceived her Son spiritually, even before receiving Him into her womb, and St. Augustine tells us that she was more blessed in having borne Christ in her heart than in having conceived Him in the flesh.

It is only in the twelfth, or towards the end of the eleventh century, that slight indications of a regular devotion are perceived in a sermon by St. Bernard (*De duodecim stellis*), from which an extract has been taken by the Church and used in the Offices of the Compassion and of the Seven Dolours. Stronger evidences are discernible in the pious meditations on the Ave Maria and the Salve Regina, usually attributed either to St. Anselm of Lucca (d. 1080) or St. Bernard; and also in the large book "*De laudibus B. Mariae Virginis*" (Douai, 1625) by Richard de Saint-Laurent. Penitentiary of Rouen in the thirteenth century. In St. Mechtilde (d. 1298) and St. Gertrude (d. 1302) the devotion had two earnest adherents. A little earlier it had been included by St. Thomas Becket in the devotion to the joys and sorrows of Mary, by Blessed Hermann (d.1245), one of the first spiritual children of St. Dominic, in his other devotions to Mary, and somewhat later it

appeared in St. Bridget's "Book of Revelations". Tauler (d. 1361) beholds in Mary the model of a mystical, just as St. Ambrose perceived in her the model of a virginal soul. St. Bernardine of Siena (d.1444) was more absorbed in the contemplation of the virginal heart, and it is from him that the Church has borrowed the lessons of the Second Nocturn for the feast of the Heart of Mary. St. Francis de Sales speaks of the perfections of this heart, the model of love for [God](#), and dedicated to it his "Theotimus".

During this same period one finds occasional mention of devotional practices to the Heart of Mary, e.g. in the "Antidotarium" of Nicolas du Saussay (d.1488), in [Julius II](#), and in the "Pharetra" of Lanspergius. In the second half of the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth, ascetic authors dwelt upon this devotion at greater length. It was, however, reserved to St. Jean Eudes (d. 1681) to propagate the devotion, to make it public, and to have a feast celebrated in honor of the Heart of Mary, first at Autun in 1648 and afterwards in a number of French dioceses. He established several religious societies interested in upholding and promoting the devotion, of which his large book on the *Coeur Admirable* (Admirable Heart), published in 1681, resembles a summary. Pere Eudes' efforts to secure the approval of an Office and feast failed at Rome, but, notwithstanding, this disappointment, the devotion to the Heart of Mary progressed. In 1699 Father Pinamonti (d. 1703) published in Italian his beautiful little work on the Holy Heart of Mary, and in 1725 Pere de Gallifet combined the cause of the Heart of Mary with that of the [Heart of Jesus](#) in order to obtain Rome's approbation of the two devotions and the institution of the two feasts. In 1729 his project was defeated, and in 1765 the two causes were separated, to assure the success of the principal one.

In 1799 [Pius VI](#), then in captivity at Florence, granted the Bishop of Palermo the feast of the Most Pure Heart of Mary for some of the churches in his diocese. In 1805 [Pius VII](#) made a new concession, thanks to which the feast was soon widely observed. Such was the existing condition when a twofold movement, started in Paris, gave fresh impetus to the devotion. The two factors of this movement were first of all the revelation of the "[miraculous medal](#)" in 1830 and all the [prodigies](#) that followed, and then the establishment at Notre-Dame-des-Victoires of the Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Refuge of Sinners, which spread rapidly throughout the world and was the source of numberless graces. On 21 July, 1855, the Congregation of Rites finally approved the Office and Mass of the Most Pure Heart of Mary without, however, imposing them upon the Universal Church.

Now there are at least three feasts of the Heart of Mary, all with different Offices:

- that of Rome, observed in many places on the Sunday after the Octave of the Assumption and in others on the third Sunday after Pentecost or in the beginning of July;
- that of Pere Eudes celebrated among the Eudists and in a number of communities on 8 February; and
- that of Notre-Dame-des-Victoires, solemnized a little before [Lent](#).

However, no feast has as yet been granted to the entire Church.

JEAN BAINVEL
Transcribed by William G. Bilton, Ph.D.