

June 19, 2009—8pm—All night vigil for priests  
Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus—Year B  
Father David Lawrence

It is with great joy that we celebrate the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The burning love of his Sacred Heart melts away the sadness we feel at the sinfulness of this world. As we draw near to his Sacred Heart we are filled with a light and warmth that the world does not know. And this same love is the greatest consolation of the priests for whom we pray this evening.

As we begin the Year of the Priest tonight in communion with the whole Church, let us pray not only that our priests will imitate the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and bring that love to us, but may they also know that love personally and thus find the strength they need for fulfilling their vocation. It is the first requirement of a good priest to believe that Jesus loves me. That inner relationship with the Lord will then overflow into every area of ministry and make it fruitful.

Reflecting on my own relationship with Jesus, I'd like to share with you a recent inspiring thought I have had. You know how sometimes it is a challenge to keep our faith in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist strong. I mean, Jesus' humility in this sacrament is really scandalous as I said last Saturday at 5pm Mass. He is so hidden, that we need a really pure faith to know that he is here. Our senses and even our imagination fail miserably in trying to appreciate Jesus' presence in this sacrament.

But recently it has helped me to imagine that in the Eucharist I am holding Jesus' heart. That flaming living source of love that is the core of Jesus' being. In the Eucharist we lift up that heart to the Father with our own hearts in the great doxology and in holy communion his heart meets our own heart and sets it on fire. One of the modern Eucharistic miracles lends credence to this imagination. At Lanciano in 1970-1971 tests were done on the Host that turned into flesh and the scientists found it to be heart muscle. What a profound thought to think that Jesus gives us his own heart.