

# FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

## THE "HEART" OF THE MATTER

*A few weeks ago on Mother's Day, I took my mom to see the great singer Paul Anka perform at the Saint George Theatre. Paul Anka, although 77 years old, gave a great, energetic concert and sang all his old songs plus several new ones as well. During the concert in Saint George, he told a joke about the Church which I thought was funny. He said, "These are tough times for the Catholic Church. The other day I was on line for confession. When I saw the priest, I said, 'You first Father!'"*

*Everybody laughed but what he said is definitely true-that it is tough times for the Church. Well, just in case you were wondering, priests do have to go to confession! Perhaps more so in these difficult days that we are experiencing. Why do we (priests and everyone) come to Jesus Christ to have our sins absolved? Obviously because Jesus is merciful and compassionate. He loves all of us very much despite our gaps and imperfections.*

*One way that we can truly experience the kindness and compassion of the Lord is to pray to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The month of June that we have now entered upon is dedicated to the Sacred Heart. I think that most of us as Catholics are familiar with the Sacred Heart. We have a statue of it in the back of the Church here at Saint Charles.*

*The devotion to the Sacred Heart is really Biblical. In the Gospel, we read of how much Jesus loves poor sinners. Saint Matthew tells us: "At the sight of the crowds, Jesus's heart was moved with pity for them-because they were troubled and abandoned like sheep without a shepherd." He tells us to learn from him, because he is "meek and humble of heart." In Saint John's gospel, we read about the soldier who pierced the Lord's heart with a spear.*

*The modern devotion to the Sacred Heart is traced back to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque who lived in the Seventeenth Century. Saint Margaret Mary was a nun who was favored with visions of the heart of Jesus when she was at prayer.*

*The greatest of these came in June, 1675. The Lord appeared to her and showed her his heart and said, "Behold this heart which loves humanity so much and yet in return receives nothing but contempt and ingratitude." The Sacred Heart Saint Margaret Mary saw was circled with a crown of thorns, capped with a cross out of which flames were glowing. The glowing fire characterized the great love of Jesus Christ for sinners and that is each and every one of us!*

*When we feel tempted, discouraged and perhaps overwhelmed with the cares and anxieties of this life, we should submerge everything within the Sacred Heart of Jesus. When we think about the heart, it has come to mean much more than just an organ that keeps the blood flowing through our bodies. The heart is perceived as the seat of our emotions and love. A child might say to his mother, "Mom, I love you from the bottom of my heart!" It is good for us during the month of June to look at the heart of Christ and realize that Jesus does indeed love all of us "from the bottom of His heart!"*

*Let us cast our cares upon Him who does indeed care for us. Pope Francis reminds us: "The Lord is always watching us with mercy. Let us not be afraid to approach Him. He has a merciful heart. He always forgives us; He is pure mercy. Let us go to Jesus!"*

*Sincerely in Christ,  
Father Jerome*