

# VALENTINE'S DAY:

*An opportunity for intimacy with Jesus*

BY  
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**V**ALENTINE'S DAY IS A CELEBRATION that falls on the calendar in the deepest part of winter. The Christmas holidays are slipping away into memories by the time Valentine's Day arrives. Those of us who live in northern climes are experiencing autumn giving way to deep winter, with cold outdoor temperatures, which may include ice and snow as part of our daily reality. Yet as we trudge through our daily lives at this time of year, almost everywhere we look we can see red hearts, both the color and symbol of love, to warm us inwardly, and remind us that it's Valentine's Day.

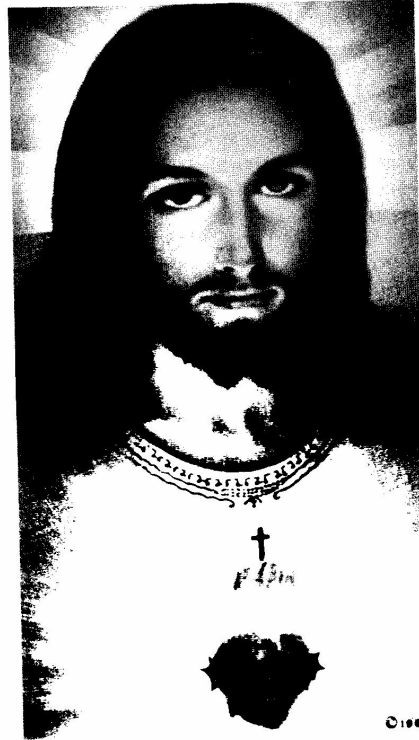
Valentine's Day can also be the perfect time to renew our intimacy with God. As a celebration of love, it is appropriate that it should signal us to remember to nurture our love for God above all else. It is certainly a time where we can offer up the grumblings about the challenges of the cold and snow.

*Like the Sacred Heart  
of Jesus,  
our hearts  
can be ablaze  
with love for Him...*



Pictures of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, showing His glowing merciful heart remind us of how lucky we are to have such a rich visual faith. During this season of love, we can meditate upon the image of Jesus' Sacred Heart to warm our winter weary bodies and souls as we dedicate time to contemplating our intimacy with the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Reading is a four-season activity, and we can remember, with the approach of Valentine's Day, to read our Bibles to rediscover what it says about the mutual love between God and His children. For it is this relationship, our intimacy with God, that should be our most precious.

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When we love someone, he or she becomes our focus. Our attention turns naturally to the beloved. Our relationship with Jesus is no different. We can know Him by reading the Gospels and by celebrating the Mass, which He asked us to do in memory of Him. The more we focus on Jesus, the more we read and meditate on the Gospels, the more He becomes a part of us. Our parents advised us about the company we kept as children. Like Mary and Joseph, who raised the Christ Child to manhood, our parents raise us to maturity so that we can then imitate the way in which Jesus moved on in a deepening relationship with God the Father, who would eventually raise Jesus to glory.

In my role as a child of God, I can turn my heart to reading about the nature of my relationship with Him in the Bible. Scripture assures me of God the Father's love for me. "The Lord has set His heart on you." (Deut.