

Part three
SPIRITUALITY OF THE HEART
IN THE CHEVALIER FAMILY

Section 17
Introduction to Part Three

In the foregoing sections (8 to 16) we followed the pattern, which characterized Fr. Chevalier's charism. As has been pointed out before (see section 7), this pattern includes the following aspects: a Passion for Jesus Christ; a Developing Vision of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart; a Mission of the Heart; a Social Mission; a Shared Mission; a Mission Everywhere; and a Mission together with Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

By remaining faithful to Fr. Chevalier's charism, today a Spirituality of the Heart as lived by the Chevalier Family should basically show the same pattern, but enriched by the potentials of the culture in which we live, and in response to the challenges of the 21st century. We may be grateful to Pope Francis, who through his words, writings and actions clearly promotes a Spirituality of the Heart for the Church in today's world.

In the following sections we will read some of Pope Francis' writings to show how a Spirituality of the Heart shapes the Pope's understanding of the mission of the Church. In particular, we will pay attention to the Apostolic Exhortation 'Evangelii Gaudium' ('the Joy of the Gospel') on the proclamation of the Gospel in today's world; and the Encyclical "Laudato si, mi Signore" ("Praise be to you, my Lord") on care for our common home, that is, the earth and the universe. Some authors from inside and outside the Chevalier Family, who in their writings foster a Spirituality of the Heart, will also contribute to our reflections. In that way, it will become clear that, thanks to the Spirituality of the Heart as inherited from Fr. Chevalier, we as members of the Chevalier Family, participate in a Spirituality, significant to the entire Church and its mission.

First of all, we will pay attention to a characteristic of evangelization, crucial to Fr. Chevalier as well as the Chevalier Family. This feature is clearly highlighted by Pope Francis, namely that the driving force of evangelization is found in a JOYFUL response to the Good News of the Gospel. The same joy that overwhelmed Fr. Chevalier at the discovery of a Devotion to the Sacred Heart shines also in Pope Francis' Exhortation titled 'Evangelii Gaudium' or the Joy of the Gospel. James Cuskelly MSC, who was one of the first, who called the Devotion to the Sacred Heart as lived by Chevalier "a Spirituality of the Heart", also underlined that the experience of joy is at the root of an authentic, missionary spirituality (Regarding James Cuskelly, see also section 4).

A reflective moment

Bishop James Cuskelly MSC underscores that
*“true spirituality begins when God enters your life -
and is accepted as your God,
and when you delight in being a son or daughter of God...
We truly ... let the Lord enter into our lives,
if, in the process, joy enters into our hearts.”*

Pope Francis opens his Exhortation with the words:
*“The Joy of the Gospel fills the heart and lives of all
who encounter Jesus.
Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free
from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness.
With Christ joy is constantly born anew”*
(Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* n. 1).

To read more

In the coming sections, texts of “A Reflective moment” will be taken from Pope Francis, “Evangelii Gaudium”, Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World, (November 2013) and from his Encyclical “Laudato si”, on care for our common home, (May 2015). (Both texts are also available on the internet).

Other publications of Pope Francis also reveal the inspiration of a Spirituality of the Heart. For example: Misericordiae-Vultus (“**Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy**”): Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, April 2015 (also available on the internet).

Pope Francis, The Name of God is Mercy, a conversation with Andrea Tornielli, Random House USA, 2016.

The essay of E.J. Cuskelly MSC, Walking the way of Jesus, an essay on Christian Spirituality (St.Paul’s 1999) is clearly inspired by a Spirituality of the Heart. Cuskelly’s words quoted in “A Reflective Moment” are taken from p. 29-30.