

Section 8

A PASSION FOR JESUS CHRIST

What was it that inspired Fr. Chevalier to devote his whole life and work to the Sacred Heart? What empowered him to perform his mission till the end of his life, with unflagging energy, day by day, notwithstanding many setbacks? During his entire life, he remained inspired and empowered by a special Gift of the Spirit, poured out in his heart. He humbly received this gift with an open heart, and remained faithful to it during his whole life. This Gift of the Holy Spirit or Charism became a permanent source of inspiration for him personally, and a light that gave direction to all his undertakings. It was as a fire that set his heart aflame and ignited him to do ordinary things in an extra-ordinary way.

What did this special Gift of the Spirit to Chevalier include? Above all, a great passion for Jesus Christ. For Chevalier, Jesus Christ was the Son of God who became human and lived among us in Palestine, as well as the living Lord, still present in today's world, especially in the Eucharist.

The Devotion to the Sacred Heart inspired him to read the Gospels with new eyes. By doing so, he encountered Jesus in a different way: he met Jesus who loves all of us with a human heart full of compassion. Both in his personal prayer and in the Eucharist he met Jesus as the living Lord, who loves us unconditionally. For Chevalier, the Eucharist was the greatest gift of the Sacred Heart, because in the Eucharist Jesus remains with us, till the end of time.

Driven by this passion for Jesus Christ, Chevalier urged people to read and re-read the Gospel in order to get to know Jesus better. When Jesus is better known, he said, he will also be more deeply loved. He himself had discovered - and he wanted others to discover the same - that the heart of the Christian religion is not found in theological doctrine and moral laws, but in a personal relationship with a living person, Jesus Christ, God's Word Incarnate. For Fr. Chevalier, "the Sacred Heart" was just another name for Jesus Christ, indicating

the whole person of Jesus, the Son of God becoming human and loving with a human Heart.

A Reflective Moment

*Fr. Chevalier believed in Jesus Christ,
God's Word Incarnate and the Risen Lord,
as being present in every human being
and in the midst of society.*

*He felt himself intensely strengthened in his belief
by Jesus' words to Margaret Mary Alacoque:
"Behold the Heart that has loved humankind so much
that it has spared nothing."*

These words he kept quoting in his writings.