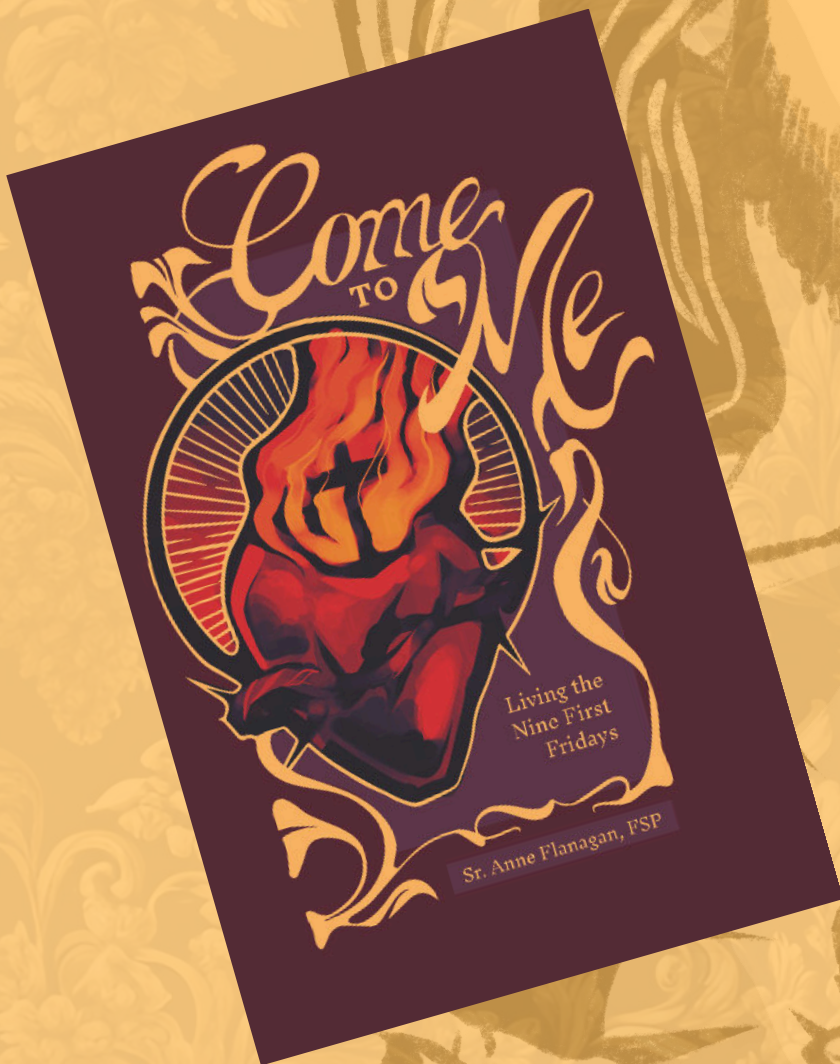


# Group Guide



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# Group Guide for

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## Introduction

350 years ago, the apparitions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to St. Margaret Mary launched the nine First Fridays: the practice of Mass and Holy Communion on the first Friday of the month for nine consecutive months, with the special intention of reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus for Eucharistic coldness, sacrilege, and neglect. Three and a half centuries later, we have all become witnesses to the failure among a significant percentage of faithful Catholics to accurately identify the gift of Christ's real presence in the Eucharist. In this environment, Eucharistic neglect is endemic\*, and sacrilege is often promulgated by means of social media. It is a situation that stands as an opportunity for Catholics to offer reparation by joining their prayers with all those who have since 1674 followed the practice of celebrating the Sacred Heart of Jesus over the course of nine consecutive First Fridays.

This guide is for groups who want an enriched, shared experience of the Nine First Fridays through the book, *Come to Me: Living the Nine First Fridays*.

### Why Make the Nine First Fridays with Others?

Raymond loves to tell the story of how he first made the Nine First Fridays: an older neighbor told him, "I am going to show you something that is going to change your life." And he held out to him a prayer card with the Twelve Promises of the Sacred Heart. Reading the final "great Promise," Raymond was completely won over. He and the neighbor committed to making the Nine First Fridays together, confirming the appointment each month with a phone call on Thursday evening. Some Thursdays that phone call was a surprise! "But I'm going golfing tomorrow morning!" Raymond remembered saying. No matter: first he met his friend at Mass. The game could wait. Ray's eyes misted over when he recounted how his friend did "not die without receiving his sacraments." Now it is Raymond who tells people, "I am going to show you something that is going to change your life."

As Raymond found, making the Nine First Fridays with others can offer:

- Mutual encouragement
- Accountability (and timely reminders!)
- A regular occasion of gathering in faith
- Being uplifted by the witness and example you receive



In his encyclical on Hope, Pope Benedict XIV offered an even deeper motivation:

As Christians we should never limit ourselves to asking: how can I save myself? We should also ask: what can I do in order that others may be saved and that for them too the star of hope may rise? Then I will have done my utmost for my own personal salvation as well.

*Spe Salvi*, 48

## Coming to Jesus for Nine First Fridays

**Sacred Heart of Jesus,**

**Drawn by your goodness and your promises, we meet together today in your Name.**

**Send your Holy Spirit to guide us in our first steps as a First Friday group. Open our minds and hearts to the gifts you want to pour out upon us through our encounters with you in the Word, in the Eucharist, and in each other. We place our trust in you: form us according to your Heart!**

**We ask this of the Heavenly Father in your Holy Name, Jesus our Lord.**

**Amen.**

“[W]here two or three  
gather in my name,  
there am I with them”  
(Mt. 18:20).

Read together from *Come to Me*, pages 3-12.

### Getting to specifics

The focus of this introductory session is to assist the members in getting a First Fridays group started so that everyone can begin the Nine First Fridays in a spirit of fervor and mutual support. The discussion guide is prepared according to a very basic structure, so that it can easily be adapted to a variety of needs. If you hope to see families participate in a First Fridays group, young parents will need to be involved beginning at this stage.

#### Practical matters to decide:

- How often will you meet: weekly? Monthly? Twice a month?
- Where will you meet? Don't worry about starting small: look what came from the "upper room" of a single house in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 1:12-14, 2:1-4)!
- How long will your sessions last?
- Will you meet for faith-sharing sessions only; for group Eucharistic adoration only; for both every month or in alternation?
- Consider a schedule that fits around the First Friday Mass, if that is practicable.
- Will sessions be accompanied or followed by food? How will that be provided for?

## **The Core Team and its Roles**

Roles will vary according to the way the group chooses to operate. Some areas to consider for your “Core Team”:

- *Overall coordinator* and a substitute (prepares for and facilitates the group sessions; serves as a point of contact for questions about the First Friday devotion, in case a priest or deacon is not part of the group)
- *Communications coordinator* (maintains all member contact information; sends out reminders before each First Friday and each meeting; responsible for any bulletin or web site announcements, including graphics; when necessary, assists in maintaining a healthy communications environment in group sessions)
- *Liturgy coordinator* (responsible for leading group prayer, finding readers for group meetings, and for making arrangements for group Eucharistic adoration, both in terms of arranging the time and space and leading the prayer with the help of one or two readers)
- *Hospitality coordinator* (unlocks/locks facility, where applicable; sees that there is adequate seating; makes sure that the space is left clean, etc.)

**Where there are young children, Safe Environment protocols must be followed scrupulously.**

## **A Few Best Practices to Keep in Mind**

- Sharing is personal; members should speak from their own experience.
- No crosstalk, please!
- If conversation should get overly personal or delicate, redirect the group’s attention to the topic (or to the next question).
- If using a speaker system, make sure that the leader (or designated person) has control of any microphone (or mute button, if online), so that everyone has a chance to participate, and no one person’s input takes over. When a physical microphone is used, this means not handing the microphone over, but holding it up to the speaker for the allotted time. (This is also a way to make sure that the microphone is positioned so that it picks up the person’s voice.) If you begin with this protocol, it will be easy to maintain order.
- If there are more than twelve members, start the session together with the opening prayer, and then the break into smaller groups. (8 is an ideal number for a sharing group.) After the set time for sharing on the questions, the full group can gather again to share highlights and close with the Our Father and final invocation.

## **Faith sharing**

Because this is primarily an organizing session, the time for discussion is limited, but valuable.

### **The Twelve Promises of the Sacred Heart**

(Found on page 5 of *Come to Me* with a brief explanation.)

- Which of the 12 Promises of the Sacred Heart seems to be meant especially for you right now?
- Is there anything in the Promises that you have trouble appreciating, or that you even find yourself wanted to reject in some way? Does anything in the Promises rouse questions or curiosity in your mind?

### **Conclusion**

Assignment: *For the first of the group's faith sharing sessions, read Come to Me, pages 31-38.*

**It is fitting for us to end our time together by praying as Jesus taught us:  
*Our Father...***

**May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be for us  
the Truth that enlightens our minds,  
the Way of salvation,  
the Life, joy, and peace of our hearts.**

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**



## PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

### I. Coming to Jesus with an Awakened Heart

O God, who reveal your infinite love through the human Heart of your divine Son, and who has awakened our hearts to respond to the invitation to make nine First Fridays in his honor,

Guide us as we undertake this path of grace.  
In drawing our minds and hearts to yourself,  
deepen our union with one another,  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Read together from *Come to Me*, pages 31-38

- When did you first learn about the Nine First Fridays? How were you introduced to the devotion?
- What is it about the Nine First Fridays that most motivates you at this time to undertake them as a spiritual path? (In other words, why the Nine First Fridays? Why now?)
- What does the invitation to offer *reparation* (or atonement) mean to you?
- What were some key words from the opening chapter that you want to dive into a bit more?
- Saint Josephine Bakhita came to praise God for everything in her life that led her to know the love of God. Who is there in your life who reminds you of Saint Bakhita?

“The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ Then Samuel said, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening’ ” (1 Sam. 3:10).

**Truth for the Mind:** What is the Sacred Heart teaching me in this chapter?

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**Strength for the Will:** Where is Jesus encouraging me to follow him at this time?

---

**Grace for the Heart:** What prayer will help me open my heart to the Heart of Jesus?

---

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## PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

### 2. Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Grateful Heart

Heavenly Father, awaken in us a deep spirit of gratitude as we reflect on you superabundant goodness, and on your promises that surpass all we can imagine.

May we fully receive your gifts in such a way as to make your presence manifest in and around ourselves, and give you glory,  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Read together from *Come to Me*, pages 53-60.

#### Faith Sharing

St. Ignatius of Loyola (*Come to Me*, page 58) once admitted that it would shake him to the core to see his life's work, the founding of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), undone. At the same time, though, he stated that he was sure that fifteen minutes of prayer would allow him to find peace even then. Some years later, one of Ignatius' most formidable adversaries, the stern Cardinal Caraffa, was elected Pope. Witnesses say that when the news reached Ignatius, he began to tremble visibly. He went immediately to the chapel. A quarter of an hour later, Ignatius returned with as glad a smile as he might have had if his biggest supporter had been elected.

As it was, the new Pope waited courteously until Ignatius died before imposing his personal standards on the Jesuit community. Alas for the Pope, his own death came three years later. The next Pope, Pius IV, refused to maintain Caraffa's norms and the Jesuits returned to their original pattern of life.

“Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God” (Phil 4:6).

#### Discussion Questions

- How do you think his lifelong practice of gratitude helped St. Ignatius in this moment of crisis?
- What are your favorite quotes about gratitude, thankfulness, or giving thanks?
- Jesus complained to St. Margaret Mary that human ingratitude was the response to his “excesses” of divine love. What are some reasons for this failure on our part to respond to God's love in Jesus? What thought patterns

or interior resistance might hold us back from expressing gratitude more often?

- What are some practices that help you when it comes to growing in gratitude and all-around appreciation?

“The first word my heart will utter when I face my God is ‘Thanks.’”

Dorothy Day  
*From Union Square to Rome*

**Truth for the Mind:** What is the Sacred Heart teaching me in this chapter?

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**Strength for the Will:** Where is Jesus encouraging me to follow him at this time?

---

**Grace for the Heart:** What prayer will help me open my heart to the Heart of Jesus?

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**May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be for us  
the Truth that enlightens our minds,  
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## PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

### 3. Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Receptive Heart

O God, who never stop inviting us to communion with yourself,  
Free us from the fear and suspicion that keep from accepting the goodness  
you hold out to us.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who  
lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy  
Spirit,

God, world without end.

Amen.

Read together from *Come to Me*, pages 71-78.

- What insights or understanding did you draw from reflecting on the theme “Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Receptive Heart”?
- What are some key words from this section that you want to ponder more deeply for the next four weeks?
- How might living “one day at a time” be helpful for acquiring a spirit of receptivity?
- The quality of receptivity is sometimes dismissed as compliance or passivity. How is it essentially different from these traits? Why does that matter?

God does not withdraw his love, his fidelity, or his promises in the face of human recalcitrance, resistance, or rejection. Instead, he goes even further to win our hearts! *God* is receptive toward *us*! God’s love can be described as “crazy”; “reckless”; “passionate”; “involved” ... Any and all of these attributes invite a *response* on the part of the beloved one.

- Which of these words (or what other word) helps you best approach the Sacred Heart of Jesus with a receptive heart? Which ones don’t help at all?

**Truth for the Mind:** What is the Sacred Heart teaching me in this chapter?

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**Strength for the Will:** Where is Jesus encouraging me to follow him at this time?

“As you therefore  
have received Christ  
Jesus the Lord,  
continue to live your  
lives in him, rooted  
and built up in him  
and established in the  
faith, just as you were  
taught, abounding in  
thanksgiving” (Col. 2:  
6-7).

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**Grace for the Heart:** What prayer will help me open my heart to the Heart of Jesus?

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the Truth that enlightens our minds,  
the Way of salvation,  
the Life, joy, and peace of our hearts.**

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## 4. Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Heart Ever-New

God our Creator,

Your Son told us that we must be like little children if we are to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. But what else are we in your sight?

O, You who create us in Christ your Son, complete what you are doing in us by your grace that is constantly at work in us. May we each say with Mary, "Be it done unto me according to your Word," Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Read together from *Come to Me*, pages 91-100.

- What new or renewed insights did you draw from the theme "Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Heart Ever-New"?
- Caryll Houselander was one of several remarkable 20<sup>th</sup> century women converts whose lives seemed to mirror each other in significant ways. (Two others are Madeleine Delbr el and Dorothy Day.) What is it like (or what *could* it be like) to be treated by someone like Carryl who seems to see Christ himself in *you*? How would you respond to such an experience?
- Why do you think spiritual writers refer to the "old" self and not just the "self"?
- Is there a moment in your favorite saint's life when they clearly had to die to the "old" self? What do you find encouraging about that?

"God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

Visit the website of 100 Bible Verses about Dying to Self:  
[https://www.openbible.info/topics/dying\\_to\\_self](https://www.openbible.info/topics/dying_to_self)

- Which one is your favorite? Why?

**Truth for the Mind:** What is the Sacred Heart teaching me in this chapter?

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**Strength for the Will:** Where is Jesus encouraging me to follow him at this time?

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**Grace for the Heart:** What prayer will help me open my heart to the Heart of Jesus?

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**It is fitting for us to end our time together by praying as Jesus taught us:  
Our Father...**

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## PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

### 5. Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Convicted Heart

God our Father,

In the Sacred Heart of Jesus, pierced with a lance, we see your Heart, for your Son said, "Whoever sees me, sees the Father."

Through the Heart of Jesus, and in Him, and with Him, we come to you with convicted hearts. May your Holy Spirit complete in us the grace your Son has won for us in such overflowing measure.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord.  
Amen.

Read together from *Come to Me*, pages 113-120.

"Because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted" (Heb. 2:18).

- What insights or invitations did the theme "Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Convicted Heart" bring you?
- Paul says that healthy repentance "brings no regret" (2 For. 7:10). If that is the case, what might be some realistic responses to "Catholic guilt"?

Many great works of fiction grapple with the themes of sin, guilt, and repentance (or avoidance of responsibility), and redemption: the short stories of Flannery O'Connor; Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*; Graham Greene's *The Heart of the Matter*; Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*.

- What fictional accounts have helped you pinpoint spiritual problems where more "spiritual" approaches failed?
- Not all fictional protagonists accept the offer of grace in a timely manner; that is what makes the story so compelling. Is there a fictional character you may have even found yourself praying for, their spiritual peril was so real? What did their dilemma do for you?

To the lame man at the well of Bethsaida, Jesus asked, "Do you *want* to be made well?" (Jn. 5: 6).

- What are some things that prevent us from even *wanting* the healing Jesus offers?

**Truth for the Mind:** What is the Sacred Heart teaching me in this chapter?

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**Strength for the Will:** Where is Jesus encouraging me to follow him at this time?

---

**Grace for the Heart:** What prayer will help me open my heart to the Heart of Jesus?

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## 6. Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Heart that is Poor in Spirit

**O God, Maker of all that is,  
You know our needs before we ask,  
And provide what we do not even realize we need.  
We entrust ourselves, our loved ones, and our needs,  
big and small, to your loving, provident care,  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

Read together from *Come to Me*, pages 135-142.

- What new or renewed insights did you draw from the theme "Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Heart that is Poor in Spirit"?

It is in contemplating (and much more in facing) potential loss of security that the beatitude of poverty of spirit really hits home for us. The saints knew this kind of struggle.

Teresa of Avila was at prayer, begging the Lord to provide her sisters in Seville with a secure and stable dwelling, when she perceived this response in the depths of her heart: "I have already heard you. Leave it to Me" (*Foundations*, 25.4).

- What are some of your strongest beliefs about God's providential care?
- How do those beliefs line up with the Gospel truth that God cares about you and your life, down to the "number of hairs" on your head?

A natural disaster can sweep away home and everything in it, but people who escaped with their lives will tell everyone how blessed they are. Trust in God's providence brings with it a willingness to let go of superfluities, and even letting ourselves be surprised by what turns out to be superfluous once it has been taken from us.

- How would increased trust in God's constant, loving providence enhance your life here and now?

Lived as a gift, the Lord's Day contributes to our being poor in spirit. An extraordinary fact, unique in the ancient world (and growing ever rarer in our

"Happy is the man who  
finds wisdom,  
and the man who gets  
understanding, for the  
gain from it is better  
than gain from silver  
and its profit better  
than gold"  
(Prov. 3:13-14).

time), the weekly day of rest speaks to us: "Look at the birds of the air! Are not you worth more than they?"

- How is Sunday a "day of rest" for you from the burdens of life?
- What can you do if the Lord's Day seems to have lost that quality?

A religious sister from Western Samoa expressed the foundation of her island homeland's culture of generosity by saying, "The ocean is always full of fish."

- In what ways is God's "ocean of grace" always full of gifts for you? How does that allow you to receive good things without grasping?

**Truth for the Mind:** What is the Sacred Heart teaching me in this chapter?

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**Strength for the Will:** Where is Jesus encouraging me to follow him at this time?

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**Grace for the Heart:** What prayer will help me open my heart to the Heart of Jesus?

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## 7. Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Heart Set Free

O God, who created us in your image, able to love and choose the good,  
Grant that we might grow every day in our likeness  
to you, who are all Good and worthy of all love. Free  
our hearts from those things that limit our ability to  
love you and to love like you.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives  
and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, world without end.  
Amen.

“[I]f the Son  
makes you free, you  
will be free indeed”  
(Jn. 8:36).

Read together from *Come to Me*, pages 155-160.

- How is interior freedom a gift from the Heart of Jesus that we can grow in?
- Share the story of witnessing someone act with remarkable freedom. Where do you think that freedom came from? What effect did it have on you? On others who witnessed it or heard about it?
- Who is your real-life hero? What is it about his or her life that demonstrates the interior freedom that makes a hero?
- Why would things that compromise our freedom also affect our ability to give and receive love?

If *Vice* is the habit of doing evil, and *virtue* is the habit of doing good,  
Aren't they both a *lack of freedom*?

It's a trick question! Virtue can only become habitual through repeated acts that we *choose* to perform. So *freedom*, exercised *over and over again*, leads to a virtuous habit. That means that virtue is actually freedom at a certain level of perfection: freedom come to full stature. It's a surpassing freedom because of the involvement of our free will in forming this habit of doing good.

Vice takes no effort or willpower whatever. There's no engagement of our freedom.

Instead, in vice, we become controlled by inclinations that grow stronger and stronger, not because of our free will but because we neglect to engage our free will. 19<sup>th</sup> century writer Oscar Wilde came to this sad realization in a deeply personal way, writing from prison:

“I ceased to be lord over myself. I was no longer the captain of my soul, and did not know it. I allowed pleasure to dominate me. I ended in horrible disgrace.

There is only one thing for me now, absolute humility"  
(*De Profundis*, 1897).

The goal of the spiritual life is, in the words of St. Paul, "Christ come to full stature" (Eph. 4:13) in us, and we in him. In other words, "It is no longer I who live; Christ lives in me" (see Gal. 2:19).

This Christian maturity does not come about by accident—or by a miracle. As usual, grace and nature work hand in hand, as the repeated decision to follow Jesus *here* and *now* increases not merely our willpower, but our *freedom*.

- If you have ever run a marathon or carried out some other kind of high-endurance athletic pursuit, how did you train? How was your will power engaged in the pursuit of the goal?
- What can lead you to act in ways that, to put it bluntly, are not freely chosen, and do not lead you to greater freedom and peace?
- How can a relationship with Jesus strengthen you to address such things as self-destructive behavior, unhealthy thought patterns, unregulated media use, a compromising relationship? How would addressing any such issue increase your interior freedom?
- Of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit (wisdom, knowledge, understanding, counsel, fortitude, piety, fear of the Lord), which would most enhance your own freedom in Christ? How might that be?

**Truth for the Mind:** What is the Sacred Heart teaching me in this chapter?

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**Strength for the Will:** Where is Jesus encouraging me to follow him at this time?

---

**Grace for the Heart:** What prayer will help me open my heart to the Heart of Jesus?

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## PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

### 8. Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Confident Heart

O God,  
In giving us your Son, you tell us that nothing can separate us from your love.  
In his heart, may we find endless treasures of mercy, peace, and joy, for we are your beloved children from whom you withhold no blessing.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Read together from *Come to Me*, pages 175-182

- If the story of Chiara Petrillo (*Come to Me*, page 179) reminded you of someone in your family or neighborhood, or someone else you have learned of through social media, what is it in his or her life that inspires you with greater confidence in God?
- Are you familiar with the prayer of the "Surrender Novena"? What do these words inspire in you: "O Jesus, I surrender myself to You, take care of everything!"
- Share a favorite prayer from *Come to Me: Living the Nine First Fridays*. What is it about this prayer that expresses (or boosts) your confidence in the love of God?
- What are some times when you really threw yourself on the goodness of God, and came to him with the confidence of a beloved son or daughter?

"I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39).

**Truth for the Mind:** What is the Sacred Heart teaching me in this chapter?

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**Strength for the Will:** Where is Jesus encouraging me to follow him at this time?

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**Grace for the Heart:** What prayer will help me open my heart to the Heart of Jesus?

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## PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

### 9. Coming to the Heart of Jesus with an Apostolic Heart

**O God, who grant us the privilege of living in Christ,  
Enlighten and strengthen us by the Gifts of your  
Spirit, so that every aspect of our lives will serve to  
make the Gospel of your Son more widely accepted  
and lived.**

**Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who  
lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy  
Spirit, God,**

**Forever and ever.**

**Amen.**

Read together from *Come to Me*, pages 197-204.

“And I heard the voice  
of the Lord saying,  
“Whom shall I send, and  
who will go for us?”  
Then I said, “Here am I!  
Send me.” (Is. 6:8).

- What does a deeper appreciation of the love of God for yourself, your family, your neighbor, and the world have to do with having an “apostolic” heart?
- How is Jesus alive for you, and not merely an especially important historical or religious figure?
- In what ways do you see society’s need for Jesus and his Gospel? What does that even mean?
- The adoration guide hints at the depths of the meaning of suffering when it is united to the redemptive suffering of Jesus to become “apostolic.” Who have you known who transformed their suffering into a vibrantly meaningful gift for the good of others? How did you even become aware of it?
- Do you feel the stirrings of the Spirit to share Jesus with others? What are the challenges?

In 1932, Blessed James Alberione, Founder of the Pauline Family, wrote: “All of the saints are an application and the incarnation of a verse of the Gospel,” making Jesus present and available in the world in themselves: in their lives, works, words, actions.

- How does this quote from Blessed James apply to every baptized person?
- How does it relate to the invitation to have an “apostolic heart”?

**Truth for the Mind:** What is the Sacred Heart teaching me in this chapter?

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**Strength for the Will:** Where is Jesus encouraging me to follow him at this time?

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**Grace for the Heart:** What prayer will help me open my heart to the Heart of Jesus?

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## PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

### 10. Coming to the Heart of Jesus after Nine First Fridays

O God, who inspire every good word and work in us, it is by your grace that we have shared these nine First Fridays in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

In his Name we thank you for the gifts of mercy you have poured out upon us, our loved ones, and all of those we have lifted up to you in these many hours of prayer. May Jesus live in us with his Heart, manifesting the beauty of your kingdom in the world around by knowing and loving the world and its people through us.

May you always be loved and praised through  
our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
Who lives and reigns with you,  
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, world without end.  
Amen.

Read together from *Come to Me*, pages 223-237.

“Let us hold fast the  
confession of our hope  
without wavering, for  
he who promised is  
faithful” (Heb. 10:23).

- What stands out for you from the experiences of the past nine First Fridays?
- How has your approach to the Word of God in Sacred Scripture changed through these past nine months?
- How has your approach to the Church's social teaching grown through the Nine First Fridays?
- How do you hope to maintain the spirit of the First Fridays in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus?

#### **In the final 20 minutes:**

Summarize in one word (or two) the most frequently repeated themes from the experience of the Nine First Fridays. Express these in a closing act of gratitude in the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the blessing of being able to make these First Fridays together.

The **reproducible certificates** may then be distributed and completed.

**May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be for us the Truth that enlightens our minds,  
the Way of salvation, the Life, joy, and peace of our hearts. In the name of the  
Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

Congratulations, and thank you for accepting the invitation from Jesus,  
“*Come to me, all of you.*”

# My Nine First Fridays

Date	Mass	Adoration	Date	Mass	Adoration
1. ____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. ____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. ____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. ____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. ____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. ____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*“Come to Me, all of you.”*

*(Mt. 11: 28)*



Date	Mass	Adoration
7. ____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. ____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. ____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



*Commemoration of Nine First Fridays  
In Honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Completed \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Witnessed \_\_\_\_\_

## Using the Adoration Guides

For each of the Nine First Fridays, an Adoration Guide carries the title theme forward into prayer. Formal exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is not necessary if you wish to pray an Hour of Adoration as a group; it is enough to gather before the Tabernacle. However, if there is an Adoration Chapel, and it can be arranged in a suitable way through your parish, a group Holy Hour in a solemn setting would be a wonderful witness of faith. It could even provide an opening for other parishioners to learn about the Nine First Fridays.

For group prayer, it is best to have two prayer leaders, each of whom will take specific roles in guiding the prayer. The prayer leaders must be persons with clear, unrushed speaking voices who have had time to prepare for their role in the Holy Hour. This will foster an atmosphere of recollection and serenity. It may be necessary to use a speaker system so that everyone is able to hear without distraction. Make sure that all participants have a copy of the book *Come to Me: Living the Nine First Fridays* and start on the same page.

One leader will assume the role of **Guide**, reading the instructions (in italics) for the various parts of the Holy Hour. The Guide can also help initiate the common prayers, by inviting the group before each prayer, "Let us pray..." [and then saying the first word of the prayer].

The second leader is the **Reader**, who will proclaim the distinct parts of the Hour ("*Putting on the Mind of Christ Our Truth: Jesus prayed...*") and the Scriptures themselves. A time of silence should be provided after the Scriptures are proclaimed before anything else is spoken aloud.

Decide together whether the *Reflection* after the Scripture reading should be read aloud or left for each one's private reading.

The middle section of the Holy Hour is the most intensely personal. The Reader may only need to announce the part ("*Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus Our Way: Blessed are those...*") in order to leave ample space for personal reflection, examination of conscience, and journaling.

The third and last part of the Adoration Guide is the most most varied. Because these expressions of prayer and praise are so distinct from each other, it would be a good idea for the prayer leaders to look over the month's Adoration Guide together well in advance to determine the best way to pray this part of the Holy Hour, whether quietly or as a group. In either case, the invitation would be made: "*Dwelling in the Heart of Jesus our Life: We praise you...*"

The concluding rites are standard and can be led by either the Guide or the Reader.

## Music

Two Spotify playlists are available that might be helpful for your times of common prayer. One features songs that are about the Lord's Eucharistic presence or about the Lord Jesus himself; the other is instrumental music that is useful for maintaining a recollected atmosphere during times of reflection.

### **Living the Nine First Fridays: Adoration Songs**

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/1uc2hoAjj0hBfyZQeISdpu?si=5be16ffafd3d4aa2>

### **Living the Nine First Fridays: Instrumental Music:**

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/7oVHmsqYYCS2gs1gTfof6i?si=0243d00b07084522>



Adoration Songs



Instrumental Music

COORDINATOR'S COPY

## Coming to Jesus for Nine First Fridays

**10 minutes:** Arrivals, hospitality. If possible, have music from the suggested playlist on a loop while people arrive, choose a place, etc.

During this time, two or three volunteers can be asked to prepare their books for the reading from *Come to Me*: one reader for for pages 3-5; a second for the section beginning on page 5, "The Twelve Promises of the Sacred Heart," and a third reader for the third section, pages 9-12.

Playlist 1 will be appropriate for this organizational session:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/79Pov73n9eL46T7gOEYc0C?si=115f19459ad0425c>

### 10 minutes: Opening Prayer and Reading

Sacred Heart of Jesus,

Drawn by your goodness and your promises, we meet together today in your Name.

Send your Holy Spirit to guide us in our first steps as a First Friday group. Open our minds and hearts to the gifts you want to pour out upon us through our encounters with you in the Word, in the Eucharist, and in each other. We place our trust in you: form us according to your Heart!

We ask this of the Heavenly Father in your Holy Name, Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

"[W]here two or three  
gather in my name,  
there am I with them"

(Mt. 18:20).

Read together from *Come to Me*, pages 3-12.

### 30 minutes: Getting to specifics

The focus of this introductory session is to assist the members in getting a First Fridays group started so that everyone can begin the Nine First Fridays in a spirit of fervor and mutual support. The discussion guide is prepared according to a very basic structure, so that it can easily be adapted to a variety of needs. If you hope to see families participate in a First Fridays group, young parents will need to be involved beginning at this stage.



**Practical matters to decide:**

- How often will you meet: weekly? Monthly? Twice a month?
- Where will you meet? Don't worry about starting small: look what came from the "upper room" of a single house in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 1:12-14, 2:1-4)!
- How long will your sessions last?
- Will you meet for faith-sharing sessions only; for group Eucharistic adoration only; for both every month or in alternation?
- Consider a schedule that fits around the First Friday Mass, if that is practicable.
- Will sessions be accompanied or followed by food? How will that be provided for?

**The Core Team and its Roles**

Roles will vary according to the way the group chooses to operate. Some areas to consider for your "Core Team":

- *Overall coordinator* and a substitute (prepares for and facilitates the group sessions, and serves as a point of contact for questions about the First Friday devotion, in case a priest or deacon is not part of the group)

COORDINATOR: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBSTITUTE: \_\_\_\_\_

- *Communications coordinator* (maintains all member contact information; sends out reminders before each First Friday and each meeting; responsible for any bulletin or web site announcements, including graphics; when necessary, assists in maintaining a healthy communications environment in group sessions)

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBSTITUTE: \_\_\_\_\_

- *Liturgy coordinator* (responsible for leading group prayer, finding readers for group meetings, and for making arrangements for group Eucharistic adoration, both in terms of arranging the time and space and leading the prayer with the help of one or two readers)

LITURGY COORDINATOR: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBSTITUTE: \_\_\_\_\_

- *Hospitality coordinator* (unlocks/locks facility, where applicable; sees that there is adequate seating; makes sure that the space is left clean, etc.)

HOSPITALITY COORDINATOR: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBSTITUTE: \_\_\_\_\_

**N.B. Where there are young children, Safe Environment protocols must be followed scrupulously.**

#### **A Few Best Practices to Keep in Mind**

- Sharing is personal; members should speak from their own experience.
- No crosstalk, please!
- If conversation should get overly personal or delicate, redirect the group's attention to the topic (or to the next question).
- If using a speaker system, make sure that the leader (or designated person) has control of any microphone (or mute button, if online), so that everyone has a chance to participate, and no one person's input takes over. When a physical microphone is used, this means not handing the microphone over, but holding it up to the speaker for the allotted time. (This is also a way to make sure that the microphone is positioned so that it picks up the person's voice.) If you begin with this protocol, it will be easy to maintain order.
- If there are more than twelve members, start the session together with the opening prayer, and then after the prayer, break into smaller groups. (8 is an ideal number for a sharing group.) After small group discussion on the questions the full group can gather again to share highlights and close with the Our Father and final invocation.

#### **20 minutes: Faith sharing**

Because this is primarily an organizing session, the time for discussion is limited, but valuable.

## **The Twelve Promises of the Sacred Heart**

(Found on page 5 of *Come to Me* with a brief explanation.)

- Which of the 12 Promises of the Sacred Heart seems to be meant especially for you right now?
- Is there anything in the Promises that you have trouble appreciating, or that you even find yourself wanted to reject in some way? Does anything in the Promises rouse questions or curiosity in your mind?

## **5 minutes: Conclusion**

**Assignment:** *For the first of the group's faith sharing sessions, read Come to Me, pages 31-38. The Communications Coordinator should include the reading "assignment" with information about the date and time of the group meetings.*

**It is fitting for us to end our time together by praying as Jesus taught us:  
*Our Father...***

**May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be for us  
the Truth that enlightens our minds,  
the Way of salvation,  
the Life, joy, and peace of our hearts.**

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

## COORDINATOR'S GUIDE

### I. Coming to Jesus with an Awakened Heart

**Before your meeting time:** Allow at least ten minutes before your scheduled starting time for people to arrive, drop off any food items, and find a spot. If possible, have music from the suggested playlist on a loop playing softly in the background.

During this time, volunteers can be asked to prepare their books for the reading from *Come to Me*, pages 31-38.

Playlist:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/79Pov73n9eL46T7gOEYc0C?si=115f19459ad0425c>

#### 15 minutes: Opening Prayer and Reading

O God, who reveal your infinite love through the human Heart of your divine Son, and who has awakened our hearts to respond to the invitation to make nine First Fridays in his honor,

Guide us as we undertake this path of grace.

In drawing our minds and hearts to yourself, deepen our union with one another,

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Read together from *Come to Me*, pages 31-38

“The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ Then Samuel said, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening’ ” (1 Sam. 3:10).

#### 30-40 minutes: Faith Sharing

##### Discussion Questions

- When did you first learn about the Nine First Fridays? How were you introduced to the devotion?
- What is it about the Nine First Fridays that most motivates you at this time to undertake them as a spiritual path? (In other words, why the Nine First Fridays? Why now?)
- What does the invitation to offer *reparation* (or atonement) mean to you?
- What were some key words from the opening chapter that you want to dive into a bit more?

- Saint Josephine Bakhita came to praise God for everything in her life that led her to know the love of God. Who is there in your life who reminds you of Saint Bakhita?

### **Transition from the discussion time**

Invite members to summarize in one word (or two) the commonalities from the day's conversation. Express the common thread in a closing act of gratitude in the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the blessing of being able to listen to each other in the Holy Spirit.

### **7 minutes: Personal resumé**

In an atmosphere of recollection, each member specifies the fruits to cultivate during these four weeks:

**Truth for the Mind:** What is the Sacred Heart teaching me in this chapter?

---

**Strength for the Will:** Where is Jesus encouraging me to follow him at this time?

---

**Grace for the Heart:** What prayer will help me open my heart to the Heart of Jesus?

---

### **3 minutes: Conclusion**

**It is fitting for us to end our time together by praying as Jesus taught us:  
Our Father...**

**May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be for us  
the Truth that enlightens our minds,  
the Way of salvation,  
the Life, joy, and peace of our hearts.**

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

*If you will be having a potluck and social time now, you might want to pray grace before meals at this point!*

## COORDINATOR'S GUIDE

### 2. Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Grateful Heart

**Before your meeting time:** Allow at least ten minutes before your scheduled starting time for people to arrive, drop off any food items, and find a spot. If possible, have music from the suggested playlist on a loop playing softly in the background.

During this time, volunteers can be asked to prepare their books for the reading from *Come to Me*, pages 53-60.

Playlist:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/1DMTSwFsBIcUSM2weM2M00?si=845c4357925a46be>

#### 15 minutes: Opening Prayer and Reading

Heavenly Father, awaken in us a deep spirit of gratitude as we reflect on your superabundant goodness, and on your promises that surpass all we can imagine.

May we fully receive your gifts in such a way as to make your presence manifest in and around ourselves, and give you glory,

Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen

Read together from *Come to Me*, pages 53-60.

#### 30-40 minutes: Faith Sharing

St. Ignatius of Loyola (*Come to Me*, page 58) once admitted that it would shake him to the core to see his life's work, the founding of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), undone. At the same time, though, he stated that he was sure that fifteen minutes of prayer would allow him to find peace even then. Some years later, one of Ignatius' most formidable adversaries, the stern Cardinal Caraffa, was elected Pope. Witnesses say that when the news reached Ignatius, he began to tremble visibly. He went immediately to the chapel. A quarter of an hour later, Ignatius returned with as glad a smile as he might have had if his biggest supporter had been elected.

“Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God” (Phil 4:6).

As it was, the new Pope waited courteously until Ignatius died before imposing his personal standards on the Jesuit community. Alas for the Pope, his own death came three years later. The next Pope, Pius IV, refused to maintain Caraffa's norms and the Jesuits returned to their original pattern of life.

### **Discussion Questions**

- How do you think his lifelong practice of gratitude helped St. Ignatius in this moment of crisis?
- What are your favorite quotes about gratitude, thankfulness, or giving thanks?
- Jesus complained to St. Margaret Mary that human ingratitude was the response to his "excesses" of divine love. What are some reasons for this failure on our part to respond to God's love in Jesus? What thought patterns or interior resistance might hold us back from expressing gratitude more often?
- What are some practices that help you when it comes to growing in gratitude and all-around appreciation?

"The first word my heart will utter when I face my God is "Thanks.""

Dorothy Day  
*From Union Square to Rome*

### **Transition from the discussion time**

Invite members to summarize in one word (or two) the commonalities from the day's conversation. Express the common thread in a closing act of gratitude in the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the blessing of being able to listen to each other in the Holy Spirit.

### **7 minutes: Personal resumé**

In an atmosphere of recollection, each member specifies the fruits to cultivate during these four weeks:

**Truth for the Mind:** What is the Sacred Heart teaching me in this chapter?

---

**Strength for the Will:** Where is Jesus encouraging me to follow him at this time?

---

**Grace for the Heart:** What prayer will help me open my heart to the Heart of Jesus?

---

### **3 minutes: Conclusion**

**It is fitting for us to end our time together by praying as Jesus taught us:  
Our Father...**

**May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be for us  
the Truth that enlightens our minds,  
the Way of salvation,  
the Life, joy, and peace of our hearts.**

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

*If you will be having a potluck and social time now, you might want to pray  
grace before meals at this point!*



## COORDINATOR'S GUIDE

### 3. Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Receptive

#### Heart

**Before your meeting time:** Allow at least ten minutes before your scheduled starting time for people to arrive, drop off any food items, and find a spot. If possible, have music from the suggested playlist on a loop playing softly in the background.

During this time, volunteers can be asked to prepare their books for the reading from *Come to Me*, pages 71-78.

Playlist:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/1ZD7W9aMGq7ug8BCXXrXCcs?si=0f8e857d33804527>

#### 15 minutes: Opening Prayer and Reading

O God, who never stop inviting us to communion with yourself,

Free us from the fear and suspicion that keep from accepting the goodness you hold out to us.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

God, world without end.

Amen.

Read together from *Come to Me*, pages 71-78.

#### 30-40 minutes: Faith Sharing

##### Discussion Questions

- What insights or understanding did you draw from reflecting on the theme "Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Receptive Heart"?

"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving" (Col. 2: 6-7).

- What are some key words from this section that you want to ponder more deeply for the next four weeks?
- How might living “one day at a time” be helpful for acquiring a spirit of receptivity?
- The quality of receptivity is sometimes dismissed as compliance or passivity. How is it essentially different from these traits? Why does that matter?

God does not withdraw his love, his fidelity, or his promises in the face of human recalcitrance, resistance, or rejection. Instead, he goes even further to win our hearts! *God* is receptive toward *us*! God’s love can be described as “crazy”; “reckless”; “passionate”; “involved” ... Any and all of these attributes invite a *response* on the part of the beloved one.

- Which of these words (or what other word) helps you best approach the Sacred Heart of Jesus with a receptive heart? Which ones don’t help at all?

#### **Transition from the discussion time**

Invite members to summarize in one word (or two) the commonalities from the day’s conversation. Express the common thread in a closing act of gratitude in the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the blessing of being able to listen to each other in the Holy Spirit.

#### **7 minutes: Personal resumé**

In an atmosphere of recollection, each member specifies the fruits to cultivate during these four weeks:

**Truth for the Mind:** What is the Sacred Heart teaching me in this chapter?

---

**Strength for the Will:** Where is Jesus encouraging me to follow him at this time?

---

**Grace for the Heart:** What prayer will help me open my heart to the Heart of Jesus?

---

#### **3 minutes: Conclusion**

**It is fitting for us to end our time together by praying as Jesus taught us:  
Our Father...**

**May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be for us  
the Truth that enlightens our minds,  
the Way of salvation,  
the Life, joy, and peace of our hearts.**

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

*If you will be having a potluck and social time now, you might want to pray  
grace before meals at this point!*

## COORDINATOR'S GUIDE

### 4. Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Heart Ever-New

**Before your meeting time:** Allow at least ten minutes before your scheduled starting time for people to arrive, drop off any food items, and find a spot. If possible, have music from the suggested playlist on a loop playing softly in the background.

During this time, volunteers can be asked to prepare their books for the reading from *Come to Me*, pages 91-100.

Playlist:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/5bTCXl9w5JM3ZNjd7z6qSi?si=251d02047f2a44e4>

#### 15 minutes: Opening Prayer and Reading

God our Creator,

Your Son told us that we must be like little children if we are to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. But what else are we in your sight?

O, You who create us in Christ your Son, complete what you are doing in us by your grace that is constantly at work in us. May we each say with Mary, "Be it done unto me according to your Word," Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Read together from *Come to Me*, pages 91-100.

#### 30-40 minutes: Faith Sharing

##### Discussion Questions

- What new or renewed insights did you draw from the theme "Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Heart Ever-New"?
- Caryll Houselander was one of several remarkable 20<sup>th</sup> century women converts whose lives seemed to mirror each other in significant ways. (Two others are Madeleine Delbrêl and Dorothy Day.) What is it like (or

"God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

what *could* it be like) to be treated by someone like Carryl who seems to see Christ himself in *you*? How would you respond to such an experience?

- Why do you think spiritual writers refer to the “old” self and not just the “self”?
- Is there a moment in your favorite saint’s life when they clearly had to die to the “old” self? What do you find encouraging about that?

Visit the website of 100 Bible Verses about Dying to Self:

[https://www.openbible.info/topics/dying\\_to\\_self](https://www.openbible.info/topics/dying_to_self)

- Which one is your favorite? Why?

### **Transition from the discussion time**

Invite members to summarize in one word (or two) the commonalities from the day’s conversation. Express the common thread in a closing act of gratitude in the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the blessing of being able to listen to each other in the Holy Spirit.

### **7 minutes: Personal resumé**

In an atmosphere of recollection, each member specifies the fruits to cultivate during these four weeks:

**Truth for the Mind:** What is the Sacred Heart teaching me in this chapter?

---

**Strength for the Will:** Where is Jesus encouraging me to follow him at this time?

---

**Grace for the Heart:** What prayer will help me open my heart to the Heart of Jesus?

---

### **3 minutes: Conclusion**

**It is fitting for us to end our time together by praying as Jesus taught us:  
Our Father...**

**May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be for us  
the Truth that enlightens our minds,**

**the Way of salvation,  
the Life, joy, and peace of our hearts.**

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

*If you will be having a potluck and social time now, you might want to pray  
grace before meals at this point!*

## COORDINATOR'S GUIDE

### 5. Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Convicted Heart

**Before your meeting time:** Allow at least ten minutes before your scheduled starting time for people to arrive, drop off any food items, and find a spot. If possible, have music from the suggested playlist on a loop playing softly in the background.

During this time, volunteers can be asked to prepare their books for the reading from *Come to Me*, pages 113-120.

Playlist:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/2GhS3ekDwI5MoJkzPEjpPJ?si=fe810210e9374342>

#### 15 minutes: Opening Prayer and Reading

**God our Father,**

**In the Sacred Heart of Jesus, pierced with a lance, we see your Heart, for your Son said, "Whoever sees me, sees the Father."**

**Through the Heart of Jesus, and in Him, and with Him, we come to you with convicted hearts. May your Holy Spirit complete in us the grace your Son has won for us in such overflowing measure.**

**We ask this through Christ, our Lord.**

**Amen.**

Read together from *Come to Me*, pages 113-120.

#### 30-40 minutes: Faith Sharing Discussion Questions

- What insights or invitations did the theme "Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Convicted Heart" bring you?
- Paul says that healthy repentance "brings no regret" (2 For. 7:10). If that is the case, what might be some realistic responses to "Catholic guilt"?

"Because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted" (Heb. 2:18).

Many great works of fiction grapple with the themes of sin, guilt, and repentance (or avoidance of responsibility), and redemption: the short stories of Flannery O'Connor; Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*; Graham Greene's *The Heart of the Matter*; Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*.

- What fictional accounts have helped you pinpoint spiritual problems where more “spiritual” approaches failed?
- Not all fictional protagonists accept the offer of grace in a timely manner; that is what makes the story so compelling. Is there a fictional character you may have even found yourself praying for, their spiritual peril was so real? What did their dilemma do for you?

To the lame man at the well of Bethsaida, Jesus asked, “Do you *want* to be made well?” (Jn. 5: 6).

- What are some things that prevent us from even *wanting* the healing Jesus offers?

### **Transition from the discussion time**

Invite members to summarize in one word (or two) the commonalities from the day’s conversation. Express the common thread in a closing act of gratitude in the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the blessing of being able to listen to each other in the Holy Spirit.

### **7 minutes: Personal resumé**

In an atmosphere of recollection, each member specifies the fruits to cultivate during these four weeks:

**Truth for the Mind:** What is the Sacred Heart teaching me in this chapter?

---

**Strength for the Will:** Where is Jesus encouraging me to follow him at this time?

---

**Grace for the Heart:** What prayer will help me open my heart to the Heart of Jesus?

---

### **3 minutes: Conclusion**

**It is fitting for us to end our time together by praying as Jesus taught us:  
Our Father...**

**May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be for us  
the Truth that enlightens our minds,**



**the Way of salvation,  
the Life, joy, and peace of our hearts.**

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

*If you will be having a potluck and social time now, you might want to pray  
grace before meals at this point!*

## COORDINATOR'S GUIDE

### 6. Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Heart that is Poor in Spirit

**Before your meeting time:** Allow at least ten minutes before your scheduled starting time for people to arrive, drop off any food items, and find a spot. If possible, have music from the suggested playlist on a loop playing softly in the background.

During this time, volunteers can be asked to prepare their books for the reading from *Come to Me*, pages 135-142.

Playlist:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/1TrOW2U9vdTH0QeyogTqfO?si=5461da1a893747a1>

#### 15 minutes: Opening Prayer and Reading

**O God, Maker of all that is,  
You know our needs before we ask,  
And provide what we do not even realize we need.  
We entrust ourselves, our loved ones, and our needs,  
big and small, to your loving, provident care,  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

Read together from *Come to Me*, pages 135-142.

#### 30-40 minutes: Faith Sharing Discussion Questions

- What new or renewed insights did you draw from the theme "Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Heart that is Poor in Spirit"?

"Happy is the man who  
finds wisdom,  
and the man who gets  
understanding, for the  
gain from it is better  
than gain from silver  
and its profit better  
than gold"  
(Prov. 3:13-14).

It is in contemplating (and much more in facing) potential loss of security that the beatitude of poverty of spirit really hits home for us. The saints knew this kind of struggle.

Teresa of Avila was at prayer, begging the Lord to provide her sisters in Seville with a secure and stable dwelling, when she perceived this response in the depths of her heart: "I have already heard you. Leave it to Me" (*Foundations*, 25.4).

- What are some of your strongest beliefs about God's providential care?
- How do those beliefs line up with the Gospel truth that God cares about you and your life, down to the "number of hairs" on your head?

A natural disaster can sweep away home and everything in it, but people who escaped with their lives will tell everyone how blessed they are. Trust in God's providence brings with it a willingness to let go of superfluities, and even letting ourselves be surprised by what turns out to be superfluous once it has been taken from us.

- How would increased trust in God's constant, loving providence enhance your life here and now?

Lived as a gift, the Lord's Day contributes to our being poor in spirit. An extraordinary fact, unique in the ancient world (and growing ever rarer in our time), the weekly day of rest speaks to us: "Look at the birds of the air! Are not you worth more than they?"

- How is Sunday a "day of rest" for you from the burdens of life?
- What can you do if the Lord's Day seems to have lost that quality?

A religious sister from Western Samoa expressed the foundation of her island homeland's culture of generosity by saying, "The ocean is always full of fish."

- In what ways is God's "ocean of grace" always full of gifts for you? How does that allow you to receive good things without grasping?

### **Transition from the discussion time**

Invite members to summarize in one word (or two) the commonalities from the day's conversation. Express the common thread in a closing act of gratitude in the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the blessing of being able to listen to each other in the Holy Spirit.

### **7 minutes: Personal resumé**

In an atmosphere of recollection, each member specifies the fruits to cultivate during these four weeks:

**Truth for the Mind:** What is the Sacred Heart teaching me in this chapter?

---

**Strength for the Will:** Where is Jesus encouraging me to follow him at this time?

---

**Grace for the Heart:** What prayer will help me open my heart to the Heart of Jesus?

---

### **3 minutes: Conclusion**

**It is fitting for us to end our time together by praying as Jesus taught us:  
Our Father...**

**May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be for us  
the Truth that enlightens our minds,  
the Way of salvation,  
the Life, joy, and peace of our hearts.**

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

*If you will be having a potluck and social time now, you might want to pray  
grace before meals at this point!*

## COORDINATOR'S GUIDE

### 7. Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Heart Set Free

**Before your meeting time:** Allow at least ten minutes before your scheduled starting time for people to arrive, drop off any food items, and find a spot. If possible, have music from the suggested playlist on a loop playing softly in the background.

During this time, volunteers can be asked to prepare their books for the reading from *Come to Me*, pages 155-160.

Playlist:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0ZEGdJSfKICdNt2EAga1do?si=30f77fd3964747ac>

#### 15 minutes: Opening Prayer and Reading

**O God, who created us in your image, able to love and choose the good,  
Grant that we might grow every day in our likeness  
to you, who are all Good and worthy of all love. Free  
our hearts from those things that limit our ability to  
love you and to love like you.**

**Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives  
and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, world without end.  
Amen.**

Read together from *Come to Me*, pages 155-160.

“[I]f the Son  
makes you free, you  
will be free indeed”  
(Jn. 8:36).

#### 30-40 minutes: Faith Sharing

##### Discussion Questions

- How is interior freedom a gift from the Heart of Jesus that we can grow in?
- Share the story of witnessing someone act with remarkable freedom.  
Where do you think that freedom came from? What effect did it have on you? On others who witnessed it or heard about it?
- Who is your real-life hero? What is it about his or her life that demonstrates the interior freedom that makes a hero?
- Why would things that compromise our freedom also affect our ability to give and receive love?

If *Vice* is the habit of doing evil  
And *virtue* is the habit of doing good,  
Aren't they both a *lack of freedom*?

It's a trick question! Virtue can only become habitual through repeated acts that we *choose* to perform. So *freedom*, exercised *over and over again*, leads to a virtuous habit. That means that virtue is actually freedom at a certain level of perfection: freedom come to full stature. It's a surpassing freedom because of the involvement of our free will in forming this habit of doing good.

Vice takes no effort or willpower whatever. There's no engagement of our freedom.

Instead, in vice, we become controlled by inclinations that grow stronger and stronger, not because of our free will but because we neglect to engage our free will. 19<sup>th</sup> century writer Oscar Wilde came to this sad realization in a deeply personal way, writing from prison:

"I ceased to be lord over myself. I was no longer the captain of my soul, and did not know it. I allowed pleasure to dominate me. I ended in horrible disgrace. There is only one thing for me now, absolute humility"  
(*De Profundis*, 1897).

The goal of the spiritual life is, in the words of St. Paul, "Christ come to full stature" (Eph. 4:13) in us, and we in him. In other words, "It is no longer I who live; Christ lives in me" (see Gal. 2:19).

This Christian maturity does not come about by accident—or by a miracle. As usual, grace and nature work hand in hand, as the repeated decision to follow Jesus *here* and *now* increases not merely our willpower, but our *freedom*.

- If you have ever run a marathon or carried out some other kind of high-endurance athletic pursuit, how did you train? How was your will power engaged in the pursuit of the goal?
- What can lead you to act in ways that, to put it bluntly, are not freely chosen, and do not lead you to greater freedom and peace?
- How can a relationship with Jesus strengthen you to address such things as self-destructive behavior, unhealthy thought patterns, unregulated media use, a compromising relationship? How would addressing any such issue increase your interior freedom?
- Of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit (wisdom, knowledge, understanding, counsel, fortitude, piety, fear of the Lord), which would most enhance your own freedom in Christ? How might that be?

### **Transition from the discussion time**

Invite members to summarize in one word (or two) the commonalities from the day's conversation. Express the common thread in a closing act of gratitude in the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the blessing of being able to listen to each other in the Holy Spirit.

### **7 minutes: Personal resumé**

In an atmosphere of recollection, each member specifies the fruits to cultivate during these four weeks:

**Truth for the Mind:** What is the Sacred Heart teaching me in this chapter?

---

**Strength for the Will:** Where is Jesus encouraging me to follow him at this time?

---

**Grace for the Heart:** What prayer will help me open my heart to the Heart of Jesus?

---

### **3 minutes: Conclusion**

**It is fitting for us to end our time together by praying as Jesus taught us:  
Our Father...**

**May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be for us  
the Truth that enlightens our minds,  
the Way of salvation,  
the Life, joy, and peace of our hearts.**

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

*If you will be having a potluck and social time now, you might want to pray grace before meals at this point!*

## COORDINATOR'S GUIDE

### 8. Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Confident Heart

**Before your meeting time:** Allow at least ten minutes before your scheduled starting time for people to arrive, drop off any food items, and find a spot. If possible, have music from the suggested playlist on a loop playing softly in the background.

During this time, volunteers can be asked to prepare their books for the reading from *Come to Me*, pages 175-182.

Playlist:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/6W0TpKD5yNSVX7mOfTcgtx?si=4de176c49bba41de>

#### 15 minutes: Opening Prayer and Reading

O God,  
In giving us your Son, you tell us that nothing can separate us from your love.  
In his heart, may we find endless treasures of mercy, peace, and joy, for we are your beloved children from whom you withhold no blessing.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Read together from *Come to Me*, pages 175-182

#### 30-40 minutes: Faith Sharing

##### Discussion Questions

- If the story of Chiara Petrillo (*Come to Me*, page 179) reminded you of someone in your family or neighborhood, or someone else you have learned of through social media, what is it in his or her life that inspires you with greater confidence in God?
- Are you familiar with the prayer of the "Surrender Novena"? What do these words inspire in you: "*O Jesus, I surrender myself to You, take care of everything!*"

"I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39).



- Share a favorite prayer from *Come to Me: Living the Nine First Fridays*. What is it about this prayer that expresses (or boosts) your confidence in the love of God?
- What are some times when you really threw yourself on the goodness of God, and came to him with the confidence of a beloved son or daughter?

### **Transition from the discussion time**

Invite members to summarize in one word (or two) the commonalities from the day's conversation. Express the common thread in a closing act of gratitude in the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the blessing of being able to listen to each other in the Holy Spirit.

### **7 minutes: Personal resumé**

In an atmosphere of recollection, each member specifies the fruits to cultivate during these four weeks:

**Truth for the Mind:** What is the Sacred Heart teaching me in this chapter?

---

**Strength for the Will:** Where is Jesus encouraging me to follow him at this time?

---

**Grace for the Heart:** What prayer will help me open my heart to the Heart of Jesus?

---

### **3 minutes: Conclusion**

**It is fitting for us to end our time together by praying as Jesus taught us:  
Our Father...**

**May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be for us  
the Truth that enlightens our minds,  
the Way of salvation,  
the Life, joy, and peace of our hearts.**

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

*If you will be having a potluck and social time now, you might want to pray  
grace before meals at this point!*

## COORDINATOR'S GUIDE

### 9. Coming to the Heart of Jesus with an Apostolic

#### Heart

**Before your meeting time:** Allow at least ten minutes before your scheduled starting time for people to arrive, drop off any food items, and find a spot. If possible, have music from the suggested playlist on a loop playing softly in the background.

During this time, volunteers can be asked to prepare their books for the reading from *Come to Me*, pages 197-204.

Playlist:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/6pg5oB6PLxSnn7KkBHMtDf?si=5f0db703d53748d8>

#### 15 minutes: Opening Prayer and Reading

O God, who grant us the privilege of living in Christ,  
Enlighten and strengthen us by the Gifts of your Spirit, so that every aspect of our lives will serve to make the Gospel of your Son more widely accepted and lived.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God,

Forever and ever.

Amen.

Read together from *Come to Me*, pages 197-204.

#### 30-40 minutes: Faith Sharing Discussion Questions

- What does a deeper appreciation of the love of God for yourself, your family, your neighbor, and the world have to do with having an “apostolic” heart?

“And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”  
Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.” (Is. 6:8).

- How is Jesus alive for you, and not merely an especially important historical or religious figure?
- In what ways do you see society's need for Jesus and his Gospel? What does that even mean?
- The adoration guide hints at the depths of the meaning of suffering when it is united to the redemptive suffering of Jesus to become "apostolic." Who have you known who transformed their suffering into a vibrantly meaningful gift for the good of others? How did you even become aware of it?
- Do you feel the stirrings of the Spirit to share Jesus with others? What are the challenges?

In 1932, Blessed James Alberione, Founder of the Pauline Family, wrote: "All of the saints are an application and the incarnation of a verse of the Gospel," making Jesus present and available in the world in themselves: in their lives, works, words, actions.

- How does this quote from Blessed James apply to every baptized person?
- How does it relate to the invitation to have an "apostolic heart"?

### **Transition from the discussion time**

Invite members to summarize in one word (or two) the commonalities from the day's conversation. Express the common thread in a closing act of gratitude in the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the blessing of being able to listen to each other in the Holy Spirit.

### **7 minutes: Personal resumé**

In an atmosphere of recollection, each member specifies the fruits to cultivate during these four weeks:

**Truth for the Mind:** What is the Sacred Heart teaching me in this chapter?

---

**Strength for the Will:** Where is Jesus encouraging me to follow him at this time?

---

**Grace for the Heart:** What prayer will help me open my heart to the Heart of Jesus?

---

### **3 minutes: Conclusion**

**It is fitting for us to end our time together by praying as Jesus taught us:  
Our Father...**

**May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be for us  
the Truth that enlightens our minds,  
the Way of salvation,  
the Life, joy, and peace of our hearts.**

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

*If you will be having a potluck and social time now, you might want to pray  
grace before meals at this point!*

## COORDINATOR'S GUIDE

### 10. Coming to the Heart of Jesus after Nine First Fridays

**Before your meeting time:** Allow at least ten minutes before your scheduled starting time for people to arrive, drop off any food items, and find a spot. If possible, have music from the suggested playlist on a loop playing softly in the background.

During this time, volunteers can be asked to prepare their books for the reading from *Come to Me*, pages 223-237.

#### 15 minutes: Opening Prayer and Reading

O God, who inspire every good word and work in us, it is by your grace that we have shared these nine First Fridays in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

In his Name we thank you for the gifts of mercy you have poured out upon us, our loved ones, and all of those we have lifted up to you in these many hours of prayer. May Jesus live in us with his Heart, manifesting the beauty of your kingdom in the world around by knowing and loving the world and its people through us.

May you always be loved and praised through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
Who lives and reigns with you,  
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, world without end.  
Amen.

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful” (Heb. 10:23).

Read together from *Come to Me*, pages 223-237.

#### 30-40 minutes: Faith Sharing

##### Discussion Questions

- What stands out for you from the experiences of the past nine First Fridays?
- How has your approach to the Word of God in Sacred Scripture changed through these past nine months?

- How has your approach to the Church's social teaching grown through the Nine First Fridays?
- How do you hope to maintain the spirit of the First Fridays in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus?

## **20 minutes: Acknowledging the Gift of the Nine First Fridays**

### **Transition from the discussion time**

Invite members to summarize in one word (or two) the most frequently repeated themes from the experience of the Nine First Fridays. Express these in a closing act of gratitude in the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the blessing of being able to make these First Fridays together.

The **reproducible certificates** may be distributed and completed now.

Members of the group may sign each other's certificates as witnesses, underscoring the communal experience of these Nine First Fridays.

**Congratulations, and thank you for accepting the invitation from Jesus,  
*"Come to me, all of you."***

### **Conclusion**

**It is fitting for us to end our time together by praying as Jesus taught us:  
Our Father...**

**May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be for us  
the Truth that enlightens our minds,  
the Way of salvation,  
the Life, joy, and peace of our hearts.**

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

## Children's Activities for the First Fridays

1. **Coming to the Heart of Jesus with an Awakened Heart:** Saint Bakhita of Sudan; images from *Fun with Saints Coloring & Activity Book*, by Virginia Helen Richards, FSP and D. Thomas Halpin, FSP; © 2009, Pauline Books and Media, Boston. All rights reserved. Used with permission.
2. **Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Grateful Heart:** Ten Lepers hidden picture (connects with the Gospel in the Adoration guide); puzzle art from *Miracles and Parables of Jesus Find the Picture Puzzles*, by Liz Ball; © 2004, Pauline Books and Media, Boston. All rights reserved. Used with permission.
3. **Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Receptive Heart:** Heart of Jesus coloring picture; art from *We Thank God Coloring and Activity Book*, by Marion Josef and Ana Maria Welch; © 2002, Pauline Books and Media, Boston. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.
4. **Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Heart Made New:** Conversion of St. Paul coloring pages; images from *Saint Paul ComiColor Book*, by Virginia Helen Richards, FSP and D. Thomas Halpin, FSP; © 2008, Pauline Books and Media, Boston. All rights reserved. Used with permission.
5. **Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Convicted Heart:** Saint Augustine (with his mother, Saint Monica); images from *Fun with Saints Coloring & Activity Book*, by Virginia Helen Richards, FSP and D. Thomas Halpin, FSP; © 2009, Pauline Books and Media, Boston. All rights reserved. Used with permission.
6. **Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Heart that is Poor in Spirit:** “Consider the lilies” coloring page; art by Veruschka Guerra, reprinted from *Jesus Speaks to You: A Coloring Book for Prayer and Meditation*; © 2017, Pauline Books and Media, Boston. All rights reserved. Used with permission.
7. **Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Heart Set Free:** The freedom of the Wise Men in following the star; art by Virginia Helen Richards, FSP from *I Learn about Jesus Coloring and Activity Book*; © 2007, Pauline Books and Media, Boston. All rights reserved. Used with permission.
8. **Coming to the Heart of Jesus with a Confident Heart:** Jesus teaches us confidence in God's goodness; art by Virginia Helen Richards, FSP from *I Learn about Jesus Coloring and Activity Book*; © 2007, Pauline Books and Media, Boston. All rights reserved. Used with permission.
9. **Coming to the Heart of Jesus with an Apostolic Heart:** Saint Francis Xavier; art from *Fun with Saints Coloring & Activity Book*, by Virginia Helen Richards, FSP and D. Thomas Halpin, FSP; © 2009, Pauline Books and Media, Boston. All rights reserved. Used with permission.
10. **Coming to the Heart of Jesus after Nine First Fridays:** Sacred Heart picture craft; Art by Veruschka Guerra, reprinted from *Jesus Speaks to You: A Coloring Book for Prayer and Meditation*; © 2017, Pauline Books and Media, Boston. All rights reserved. Used with permission.



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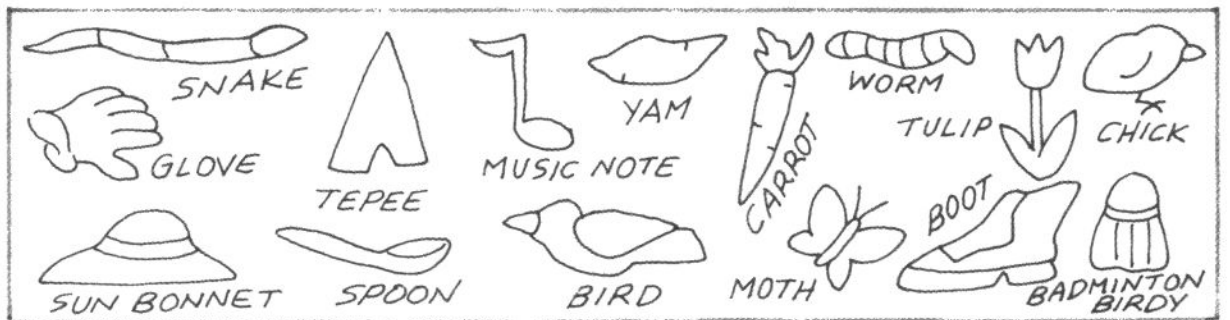
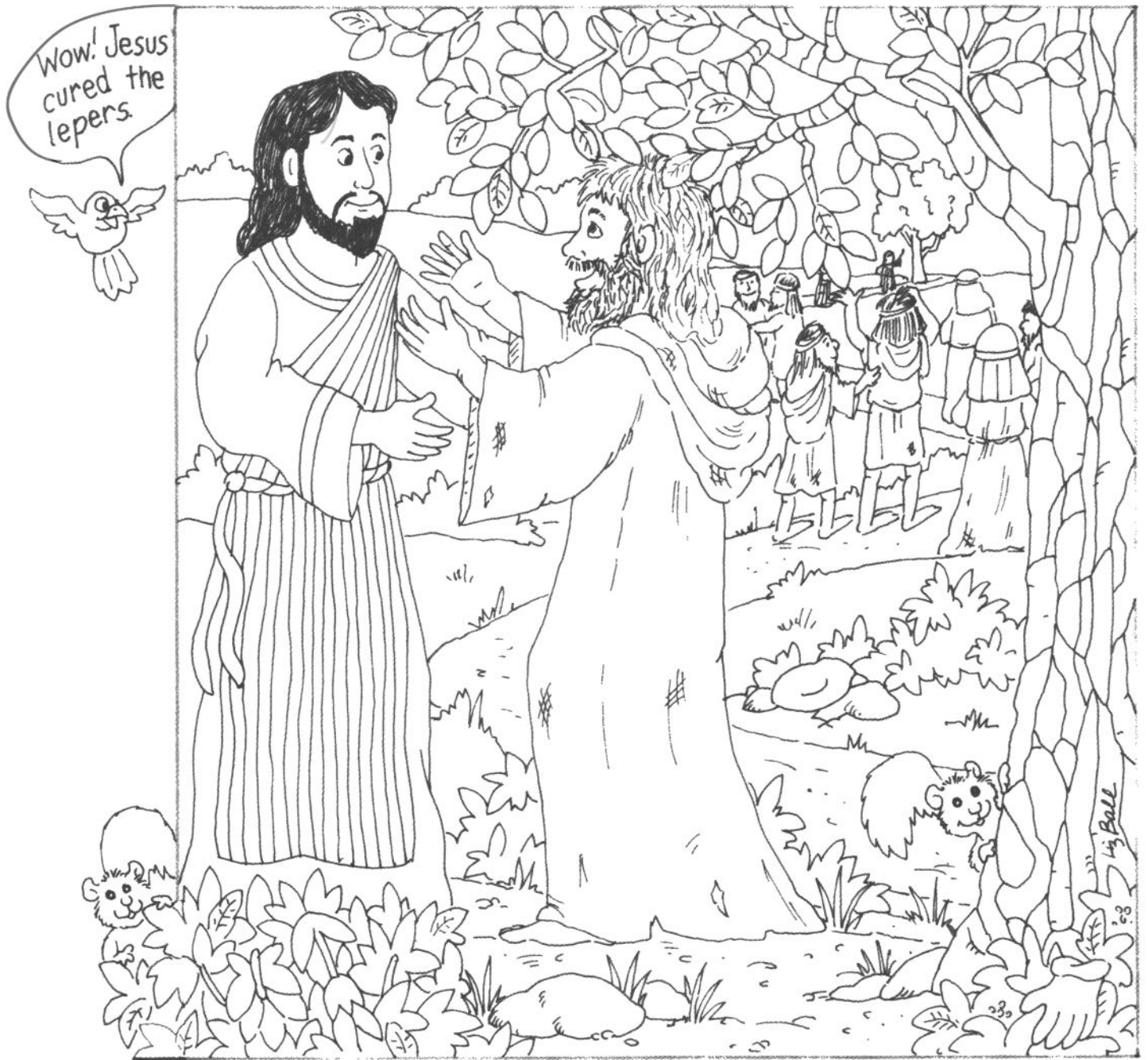
Long ago in Africa...

Later, in Italy...



Bakhita was a real-life Cinderella from Sudan in Africa. She had to work all day, from the age of 7 until she was a young woman. The family she served moved to Italy. There she found her Prince, Jesus, and her freedom!

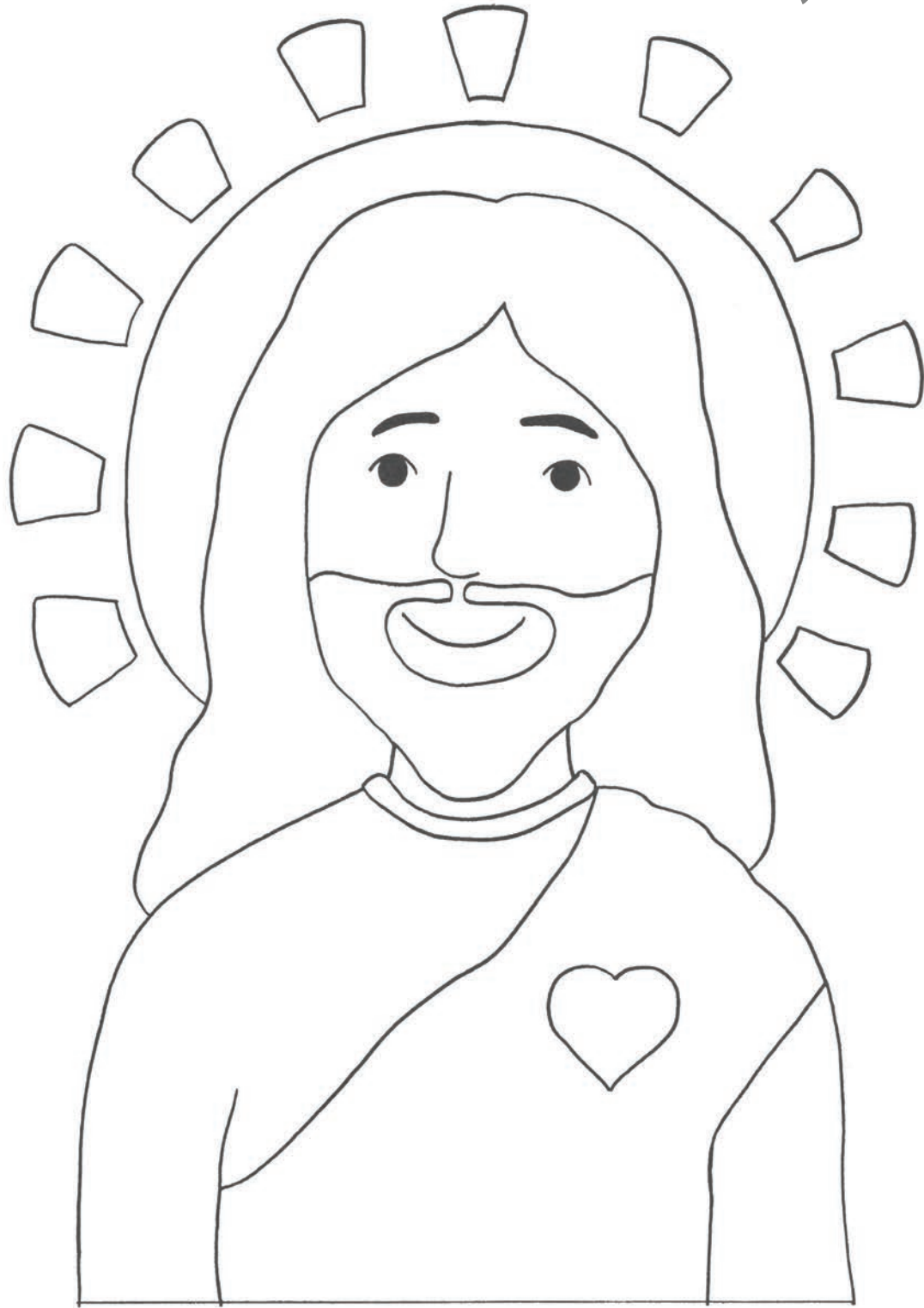




**How many of the people came back to say “thanks”?**

Read the story in Luke 17: 11-19.

**Jesus loves us. We love Jesus, too!**



**Draw your heart with Jesus' heart!**

*Art from We Thank God Coloring and Activity Book by Marion Josef and Ana Maria Melch  
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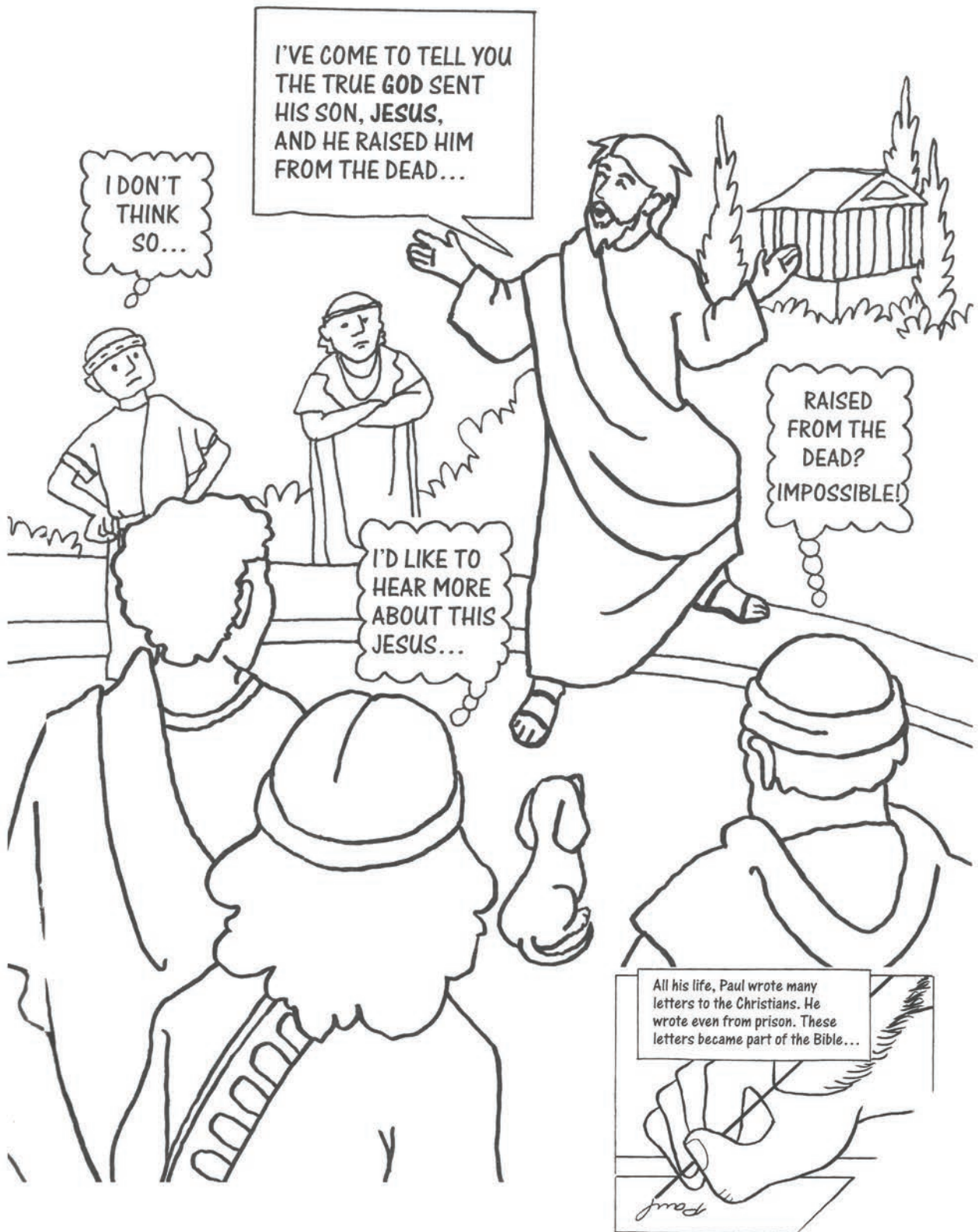
# Saul arrested people who loved Jesus! But then:

On the way to Damascus...  
**Light from the sky!**



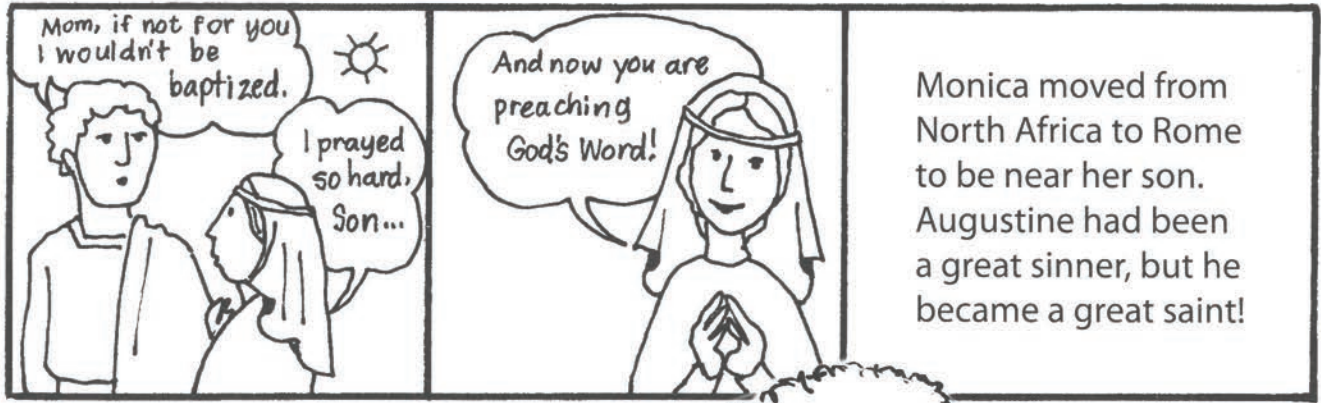


# Jesus made Saul's heart new!



## Now we call Saul "Saint Paul"!

Many years ago in Rome...



**Saint Augustine wrote many books. Draw a book in his arm to show that he still teaches people about Jesus!**





**Jesus says: God takes good care  
of the birds and the flowers.  
He takes even better care of you!**



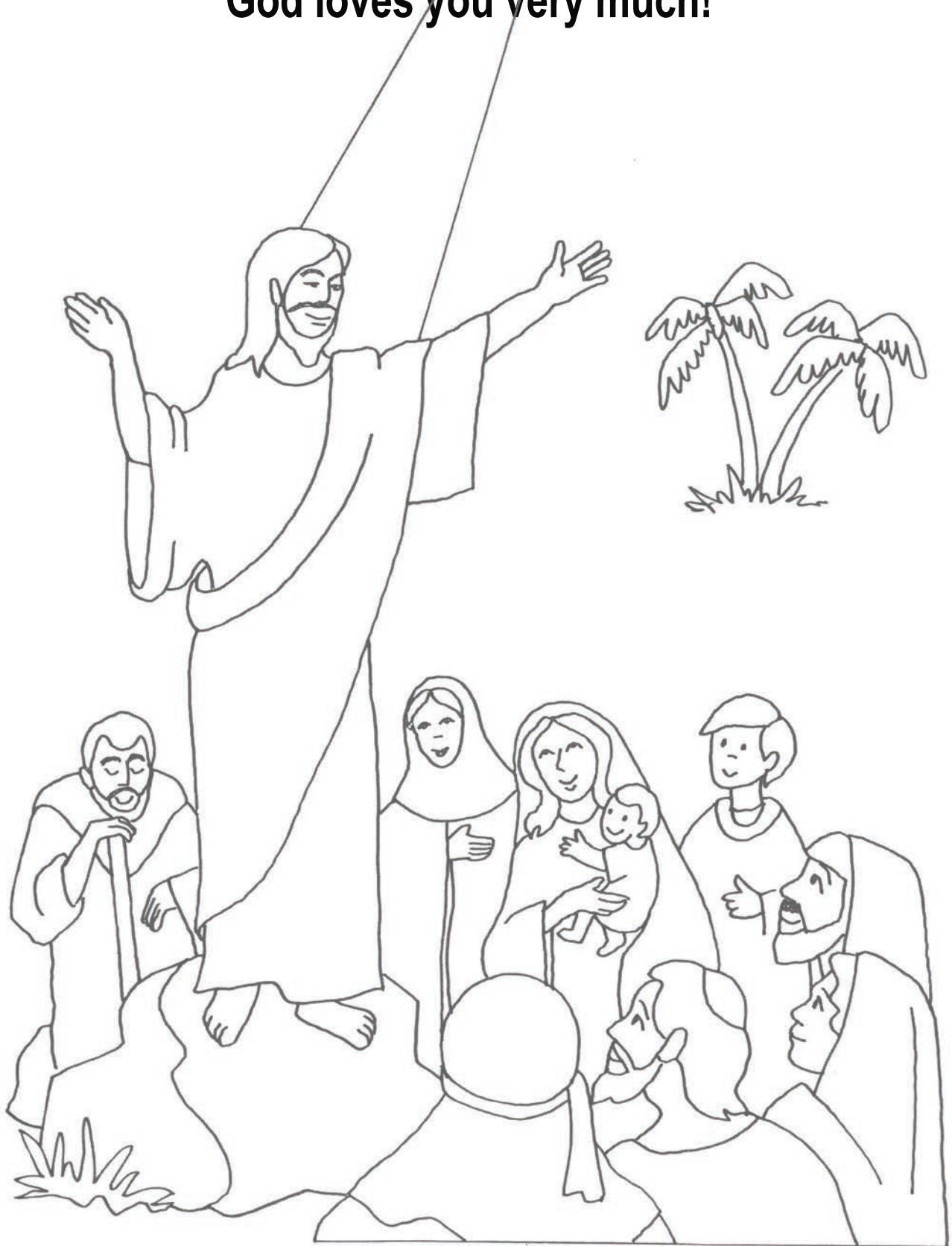


**The Wise Men heard about Jesus.  
Their hearts were so free, they went right away to find him!**




**Draw the star that led the Wise Men to Jesus.**

**Jesus told the people, "God is your good Father.  
God loves you very much!"**



**Draw yourself and your family with Jesus.**



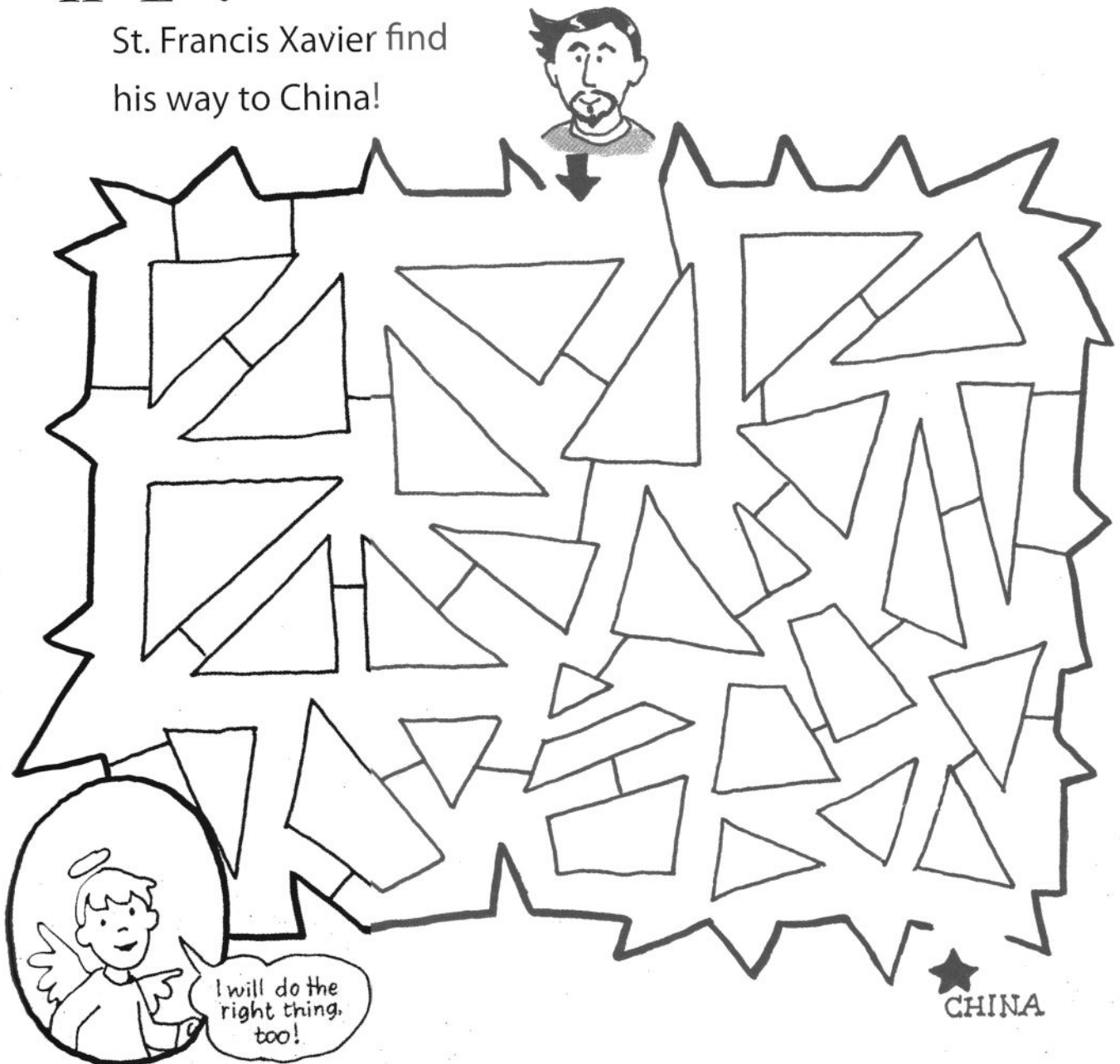
St. Francis, you traveled over land and sea.  
Help me to follow the Lord's plan for me!  
Pray for us.

Francis met with Father Ignatius...

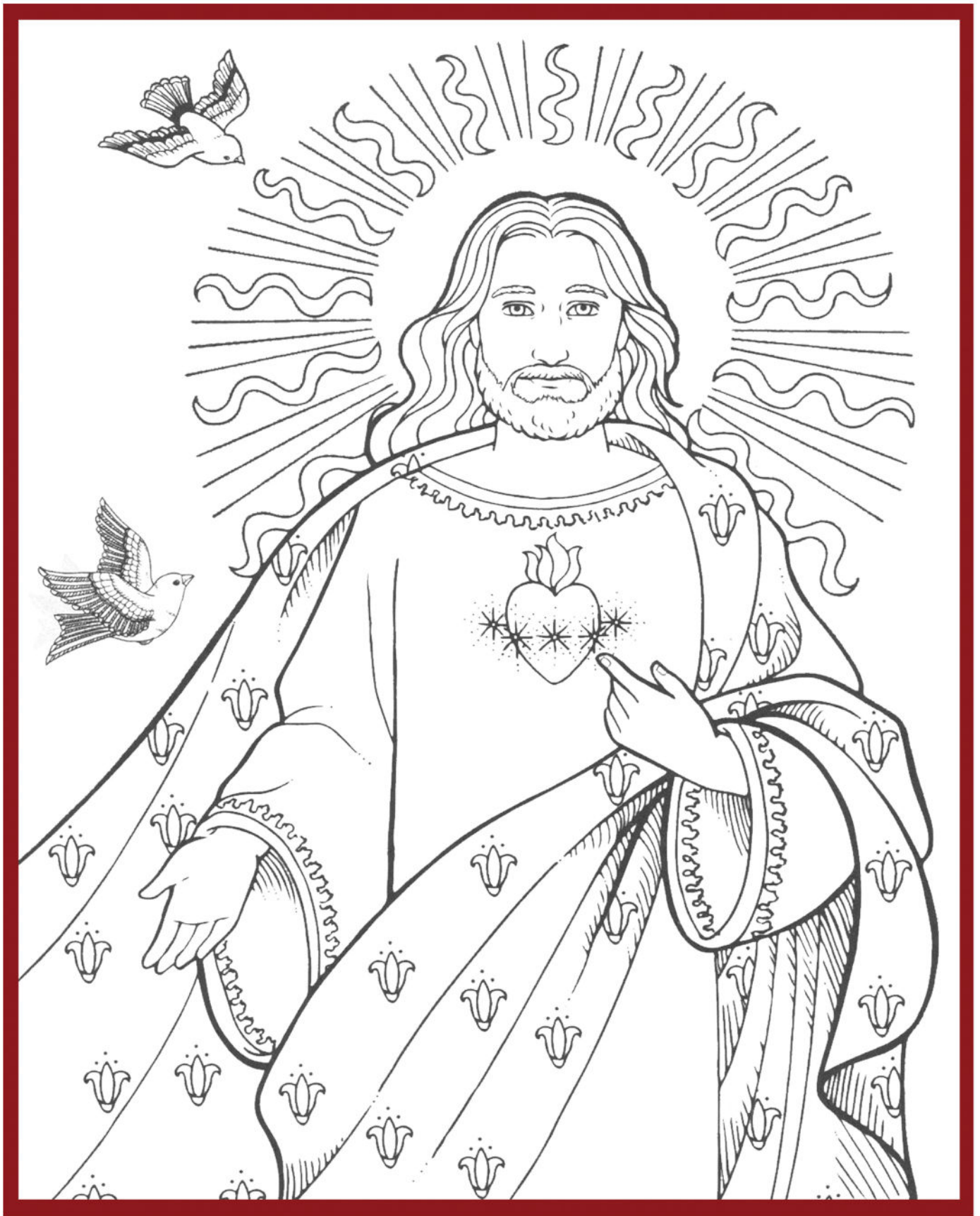


## HELP!

St. Francis Xavier find his way to China!







**Draw a Cross inside the flames in Jesus' Heart and holes in his hands to show his love for you.**

# Eyes Aflame (It's You)

Words by Sister Anne Flanagan, FSP

Music by Christian Stirling

Eyes aflame  
from the Name  
of the one who sees the lowly.  
Not a word  
could be heard  
But a whisper of the Holy.

Rev 2:18  
Ex 3:1-10;  
1 Kings 19:9-13

*Let him go,  
Let him grow  
Let his star rise while mine falls.  
Let it show  
That I know  
That no matter where I go,  
My heart knew:  
My God:  
It's you.*

John 3:22-30

*Who am I  
That my Lord should come to me?  
Tell me why  
It should be  
That your choice  
Would fall on me?  
My heart knew:  
My God:  
It's you.*

Lk 1:39-45, 56  
(see 2 Sam 6:9-15)

*On the road  
With our load  
Broken hearts retold the story;  
Then he spoke,  
Bread he broke:  
All at once we saw his glory.*

Lk 24:13-35

In my mind  
I was blind  
But I thought that I saw clearly.  
Then the rays  
of your gaze  
Turned the dark to light within me.

John 9

*Who am I that my Lord should come to me?  
Tell me why  
it should be  
that your death has ransomed me?  
My heart knew:  
My God:  
It's you.*

*Who am I  
That my Lord should come to me?  
Tell me why  
It should be  
That your presence  
Makes me free?  
My heart knew:  
My God:  
It's you.*

Rev 4:10-11

*Coming now,  
Down I bow,  
To my Savior, King and Friend.  
Prepare the way  
for the Day,  
We will witness to the end.*

In my pain  
I remain  
In the presence of the Lord.  
Rich perfume  
Fills the room  
Sin forgiven, life restored.

Lk 7:37-50; in  
the context of  
adoration, the  
perfume is also  
the incense.

*Holy God,  
Living, True,  
Ever Ancient, Ever New,  
My heart knew; my heart knew; my  
heart knew:  
My God:  
It's you.  
Ever true, Ever new:*

*My God: It's you.*

Composer Christian Stirling is a church musician, composer, organist and educator originally from Norwich (UK) and now based in Chicago. For the past 15 years he has been Director of Music at Saints Faith, Hope and Charity RC Parish in Winnetka in the northern suburbs of Chicago. He holds a DMA in choral conducting from the University of Illinois - Champaign Urbana. Outside of music he enjoys drinking tea with his two daughters Elsie (13) and Elizabeth (8) and sharing an Uber-like driving schedule with his wife Heidi, also a music educator and singer with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

*About the lyrics:*

This is meant to be a praise and worship song for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, so it highlights the nearness of God in Jesus. The core inspiration is John the Baptist's recognition of Jesus at the Jordan River, his heart leaping within him, the way he himself leapt in his mother's womb at the nearness of the unborn Christ in Mary's womb at the visitation. He must have felt that same inexplicable awareness: "It's you." This song is intended to repeatedly draw the adorers' hearts to that same awe-filled recognition of Jesus in the blessed Sacrament as they abide in the presence of the God who worked wonders for the people in the Scriptures and who remains close to his people now.

Sister Anne

Sister Anne Flanagan, FSP, is the author of the award-winning devotional book, *Come to Me: Living the Nine First Fridays*. A Daughter of St. Paul for almost 50 years, she is currently stationed in her hometown of New Orleans.

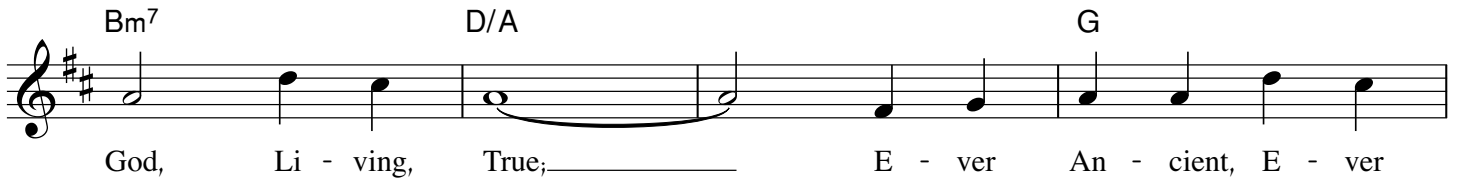






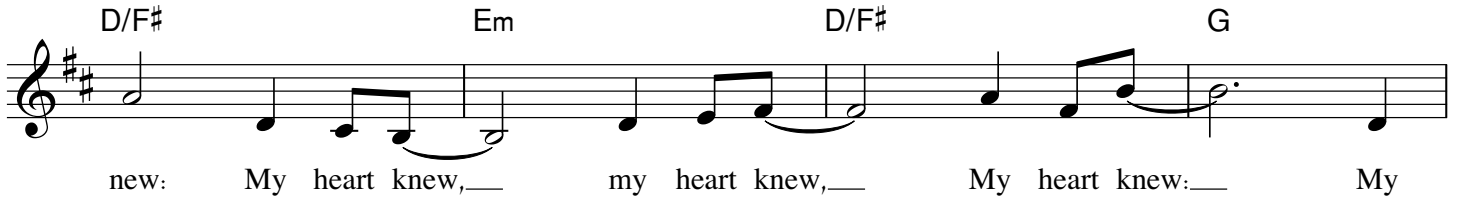
Em A Dm C/E G

Bm<sup>7</sup> D/A G



God, Li - ving, True, E - ver An - cient, E - ver

D/F# Em D/F# G



new: My heart knew, my heart knew, My heart knew: My

A<sup>7</sup> Bm G D/F# Em A<sup>7</sup> D



God its you. E - ver true, E - ver new: My God its you.

# Eyes Aflame (It's You)

Text: Sr Anne Flanagan FSP

Music: Christian Stirling

A<sup>7</sup> D D/C# Bm<sup>7</sup>

1. Eyes a flame from the Name of the one who sees the low-  
(2. In my mind) I was blind but I thought that I saw clear

D/A G D/F# Em<sup>7</sup> D/A

- ly. Not a word could be heard but a whis - per of the Ho - ly.  
- ly. Then the rays of your gaze turned the dark to light with - in me.

A D/F# G A

Who am I that my Lord should come to me? Tell me

G D/F# Em A Em

why it should be— that your choice would fall on me?— My heart knew:—  
that your pre - sence makes me free? My heart knew:—

1.  
D/F# G A7 D Em7 D/F# G A7

my God: it's you. 2. In my mind  
my God: it's

2.  
D Em7 D/F# G A7 D/F# D/C#

you. 3. In my pain— I re main— In the pre

Bm<sup>7</sup>                      D/A                      G                      D/F#                      Em

sence of the Lord. Rich per fume fills the room sin for-giv - en, life re -

A                      Dm                      C/E                      G                      Dm

stored. Let him go Let him grow Let his star rise while mine falls, Let it show that I

C/E                      F                      G                      Bb                      Bb C

know that no mat-ter where I go, My heart knew: My God: Its

D Em<sup>7</sup> D/F# G A<sup>7</sup> D

You. 4. On the road\_\_\_ with our load

D/C# Bm<sup>7</sup> D/A G

— bro-ken hearts re-tell\_ the sto - ry; Then he spoke, — bread he broke;

D/F# Em<sup>7</sup> D/A A D/F#

all at once\_\_\_ we saw\_ his glor - ry. — Who am I that my Lord should come to

G A G D/F# Em

me?\_\_\_\_\_ Tell me why it should be\_\_\_\_\_ that your death has ran-somed

A Em D/F# G A<sup>7</sup> D Em<sup>7</sup>

me? My heart knew:\_\_\_ my God: its you.

D/F# G A<sup>7</sup> D D/C# Bm<sup>7</sup>

5. Com - ing now,\_\_\_ down I bow,\_\_\_ to my Sav - ior, King and

D/A G D/F# Em<sup>7</sup> A

Friend. pre-pare the way\_\_\_ for the day\_\_\_ we will wit - ness to the end. Ho-ly

Bm<sup>7</sup> D/A G D/F# Em

God, Li-ving, True;\_\_\_\_\_ E-ver An-cient, e-ver new: My heart knew,\_\_\_ my heart knew,

D/F# G A<sup>7</sup> Bm

\_\_\_ My heart knew:\_\_\_ My God its you. E - ver



G D/F# Em A<sup>7</sup> D

true, E - ver new: My God it's you.

Composer Christian Stirling is a church musician, composer, organist and educator originally from Norwich (UK) and now based in Chicago. For the past 15 years he has been Director of Music at Saints Faith, Hope and Charity RC Parish in Winnetka in the northern suburbs of Chicago. He holds a DMA in choral conducting from the University of Illinois - Champaign Urbana. Outside of music he enjoys drinking tea with his two daughters Elsie (13) and Elizabeth (8) and sharing an Uber-like driving schedule with his wife Heidi, also a music educator and singer with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

*About the lyrics:*

This is meant to be a praise and worship song for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, so it highlights the nearness of God in Jesus. The core inspiration is John the Baptist's recognition of Jesus at the Jordan River, his heart leaping within him, the way he himself leapt in his mother's womb at the nearness of the unborn Christ in Mary's womb at the visitation. He must have felt that same inexplicable awareness: "It's you."

