
Consecrating the United States of America to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

In June of 2026, the United States Catholic bishops will consecrate our country to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Our national consecration brings blessing and hope to a country suffering from an [epidemic of loneliness](#). What is consecration, and how can it bless our nation?

Consecration sets something aside for a holy purpose and entrusts it to the special care of God. As Pope Benedict XVI said in his [2009 Chrism Mass homily](#), consecration means total immersion in God: "To consecrate something or someone means, therefore, to give that thing or person to God as his property, to take it out of the context of what is ours and to insert it in his milieu, so that it no longer belongs to our affairs, but is totally of God."

The Church consecrates things like chalices, patens, altars, and entire buildings. The Church also consecrates people, first and foremost in Baptism. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that our baptismal consecration seals us "with the indelible spiritual mark (*character*) of [our] belonging to Christ. No sin can erase this mark, even if sin prevents Baptism from bearing the fruits of salvation" (CCC 1272). Consecrated through Baptism, we belong to Christ, forever.

But is consecrating the United States of America presumptuous, when over 30% of our countrymates have never been baptized? Moreover, only about 20% of Americans identify with Catholicism, the religion most closely associated with devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Why is it appropriate to consecrate our religiously diverse nation on the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus?

The Kingship of Jesus

As a biblical people, believers rely on the words of Jesus: "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matthew 28:18). Jesus reveals that he is king of all nations. The New Testament repeatedly emphasizes Jesus' universal reign, perhaps most dramatically in Jesus' own baptism in the Jordan and again in his transfiguration: the Father reveals, respectively, that Jesus is the "beloved Son" (Matthew 3:17) and "chosen Son" (Luke 9:35), the sovereign heir of all creation.

We turn to the Bible to justify the claim that Jesus is Lord of all nations because "the Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures just as she venerates the body of the Lord" ([Dei Verbum](#) 21). While the complex order of nature serves as rational evidence for a creator, we rely on the revealed Word of God for faith specifically in Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. Our duty as disciples of Jesus is to worship Christ at all times, to acknowledge his kingship even (or especially) when that confession is uncommon.

In 1899, Pope Leo XIII, known as the father of modern Catholic social teaching, seemed to anticipate the epidemic of loneliness and anxiety plaguing our country, commenting on communities which exclude religion from their policies: “When religion is once discarded it follows of necessity that the surest foundations of the public welfare must give way,” causing “disquiet of mind and . . . waves so rough that no one is suffered to be free from anxiety and peril” ([Annum Sacrum](#) 10). A national consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus signals to God that his goodness is not forgotten, that our country relies on God’s providence for continued flourishing.

Hope For All

Not every American—and not even American Catholic—will know about the consecration of our country. But our country, and the whole world, will benefit from this act of love. As Pope Leo XIII wrote in the 1899 [Annum Sacrum](#) when he consecrated the entire human race to the Sacred Heart, consecration expresses our devotion to Jesus who “snatched us ‘from the power of darkness’ (Colossians 1:13) and ‘gave himself for the redemption of all’ (1 Timothy 2:6) . . . [so all people], individually and collectively, have become to him ‘a purchased people’ (1 Peter 2:9).” Jesus offers salvation to all, whether or not they accept the gift. Likewise, a national consecration proposes hope and blessing to all Americans, whether or not they will choose to delight in the special sharing of love. Because God honors the free will of this human race saved by his Son, our conscious choice to observe the national consecration permits God’s grace to work more deeply throughout our land.

All good things come from God, and even our free choice to consecrate ourselves to the Heart of his Son is really only a re-gifting of God’s own love back to our creator. As Pope Leo XIII explains in *Annum Sacrum* 7, “by consecrating ourselves to him we not only declare our open and free acknowledgment and acceptance of His authority over us, but we also testify that if what we offer as a gift were really our own, we would still offer it with our whole heart.”

Pope Leo XIII continues, reflecting on the universal benefits of Sacred Heart consecration, which he calls “a blessing to all.”

1. Disciples of Christ who know the love of God experience an increase of faith and love.
2. Cultural Christians who may not explicitly practice their faith “may still gain from his Sacred Heart the flame of charity.”
3. Those who do not share religious belief benefit from the surge of prayers we offer during the consecration for Jesus to inspire faith and holiness in our fellow citizens.

Consecrating the entire United States of America is not presumption, then, but an act of deep humility; in entrusting our country to the special care of the Heart of Jesus, we recommit to the God-given desire to see all of our compatriots thrive.

The Heart of Jesus

How can the specific image of the Sacred Heart bless our nation at this moment in history? In [his reflection](#) on the upcoming 2026 Consecration to the Sacred Heart, Archbishop Alexander K. Sample draws from Pope Paul VI's 1965 decree on the apostolate of the laity, [Apostolicam Actuositatem](#): "By celebrating this important national anniversary with this devotion, we have the opportunity to encourage all Catholics to honor our Lord and to 'infuse the spirit of the Gospel into various communities and departments of life.'" Truly, the good news of Jesus' love for us is relevant in all communities and in all aspects of our lives. The Sacred Heart of Jesus embodies God's infinite love for each one of us, at all times.

As Pope Leo XIII said in 1899, "since there is in the Sacred Heart a symbol and sensible image of the infinite love of Jesus Christ which moves us to love one another, therefore it is fit and proper that we should consecrate ourselves to his most Sacred Heart—an act which is nothing else than an offering and a binding of oneself to Jesus Christ, seeing that whatever honor, veneration and love is given to this divine Heart is really and truly given to Christ himself. . . . In that Sacred Heart all our hopes should be placed" ([Annum Sacrum](#) 8, 12).

Exactly 100 years after Leo XIII wrote those words about the Sacred Heart, John Paul II preached [a homily](#) emphasizing the importance of praying with the Sacred Heart in order to know more intimately the love of God. He said, "Everything that God wanted to tell us about himself and about his love, he placed in the Heart of Jesus." Jesus gave us the image of his Sacred Heart as a dramatic reminder of his love.

The image helps us pray. Images often depict his Heart, symbol of the most intimate center of who he is, outside of his body, vulnerable and offered to us in love. We consider the wound, where a soldier's spear pierced Jesus, and we marvel at the depth of suffering Jesus accepted on our behalf. We see the thorns and cross, and we feel close to our God who knows what it is like to be ridiculed and abused. We see the flames, and we rejoice that God's passionate love can never be extinguished. We trust in the sure hope of his Resurrection. Even death cannot separate us from the love of God.

May our national consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus draw the United States, and all nations, closer to the infinite love of God.

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Consecration resources:

- [United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#)
- [Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network](#)