

# "THE ESSENCE OF DEVOTION..."

by JOHN M. HAFFERT

On his recent trip to America we asked Fr. Joaquin Alonso, C.M.F. (who wrote two volumes on the meaning of devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary based on the teaching of St. John Eudes):

"What is the essence of devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary?"

## *Her "Interiority"*

Fr. Alonso said that it was essentially a devotion to "the interiority" of Our Lady.

Many of us have been preoccupied with apparitions of Our Lady, with words She has spoken in Her apparitions, of favors to be obtained from Her, of Her constant activity as a caring Mother. And few of us have been preoccupied with the most important aspect of Our Lady, namely Her inner sentiments towards God and ourselves, sentiments of almost limitless love and unceasing intercession.

The Church applies to Mary those words of Scripture: "All the beauty of the King's daughter is from within."

## *Mary's Intimacy to Us*

At Fatima Our Lady said that God wishes now to establish devotion to Her Immaculate Heart in the world, and this means that God wants us to regard Our Lady not only in Her exterior manifestations and in Her motherliness towards us, but even more in the intimate interrelationship of Mary's heart to the Heart of Her Divine Son and to the hearts of all of Her children.

And at the same time God wants reparation made for the centuries of neglect and even "sacrileges" against the "mystery" of Our Lady.

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"Behold a Picture of Devotion to Her Immaculate Heart"

Above: Bishop Jerome Hastrich presents copy of the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe to His Eminence, the Cardinal Archbishop of Mexico, last December 15th. [See p. 2.] The Cardinal had just returned from meeting with the Holy Father in Rome shown on front cover of this issue of SOUL.

In a moment another word about this.

## *Where Do We Begin?*

However, how can we begin to develop this devotion to the "interiority" of Mary?

## *Her Miraculous Portrait*

One way to begin would be to look at a picture Our Lady Herself gave us in 1531, and which is marvelously preserved to us in Mexico City to the present moment.

In this portrait we see Our Lady as though in an attitude of total recollection, and yet reflected in the eyes of Our Lady are a layman and a Bishop who were present at the moment that Her portrait was miraculously transferred to the

cloth tilma of the layman, a 42-year old Indian convert.

## *Contemplation and Prayer*

In this portrait Our Lady shows Herself during the time that She was carrying the Infant Jesus within Her. Her hands are folded in prayer and Her attitude, while at once an attitude of contemplation, is also one of prayer for us who are reflected in Her eyes. In Her face we see the sublime purity of this most loving of Mothers.

Even while we gaze at this image of Mary's "interiority" (as reflected in Her attitude and Her expression) we are also aware of Her great dignity and power because She is borne up by an angel, stands upon the moon, and blots out the sun. Her blue mantle