



When young people hear about Jesus Christ with passion, sincerity and simplicity, they are captivated. Jesus Christ is the most attractive person that has ever existed. The person and the message of Jesus Christ exert a powerful fascination with the young, but is necessary to tell them about him, to put them in personal touch and vital contact with Jesus Christ, God and True man.

Let us remember the meetings of Pope John Paul II with the youth.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus focuses attention on the love of Jesus Christ to humanity. And that is the love that young people need: a genuine love, a friend who gives his/her life for them, with a love without limits, bold as none. The love of a friend faithful to all proof. The love of Christ is a love that still loves you even when you forget or betray him, a love that embraces you in good and bad, someone you have and will always have by your side.

In my adolescence and youth I had the grace to have the friendship and guidance of a great spiritual leader: P. James McIlhargey, L.C. I also lived my youth in times of John Paul II; from whom I learned how to arouse and revive faith in young people.

Remembering my personal experience with them and analyzing the phenomenon of so many youth groups, I'll hereby mention some means to promote today the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus among the young people

1. Share with them the experience of the friendship and the love of Christ: "I don't live anymore, but it's Christ who lives in me" (Ga 2, 20). Doing it naturally, with honesty, freshness and passion.
2. To give them testimony of the joy of knowing Christ, to be their friend and follow him; to radiate and spread the peace of living in God's grace. To offer them thus "a live encounter of open eyes and throbbing heart with resurrected Christ" (John Paul II, Santo Domingo, January 26, 1979)
3. Tell them about the Christ and his human life, who became incarnated and died

for us to show us the greatness of his merciful love and save us. St. John made us know Christ above all from the perspective of love: "God loved us so much that he scarified his only child, so that everyone who believed in him wouldn't die, but have eternal life" (Jn 3, 16). That preaching and events revolve especially around the person of Christ. Prepare the way, put the conditions for the conversion and outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

4. Present the ideal of Christianity without glossing, without sweeten its demand; A church where the most important thing is to know, love and imitate Jesus Christ. Let them know a Christianity that is characterized by evangelical charity and the burning of the world with the fire of God's love. "The Charity of Christ urges US" (2 Cor 5.14)

5. Help them to understand and live the mass; may the masses be beautiful, celebrated with fervor. If always "it's to propitiate the encounter with Jesus Christ" (D.A. 278 A), in the mass it must be done in a very special way. Give them the chance to meet frequently with Christ Eucharist, in Eucharistic Adoration and frequent communion. That direct contact with Christ Eucharist is the main way to help young people enter into a personal dialogue with him.

6. Every time they come to confession they discover and stoke the experience of love merciful of God the Father. Help them form groups of friends who enjoy together, pray together, do good together, in a climate of fraternal charity; to propitiate communities of life where they experience the beauty of being church in the style of the first Christians.

All this implies that the priests and missionaries cultivate a personal and genuine relationship with Christ, that our life of prayer is fervent and deep so that we can overflow what we have lived before: the experience of the love of Christ.

It's a fact: If we help young people to set their hearts to embrace the love of Christ and promote devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus understood as a vital encounter with Christ, an experiential knowledge of him and the imitation of his virtues, the Holy Spirit will be in charge of acting to fund them and transform them into new men.

In short: What young people and we all need, is a Christianity that is mostly experience and existential encounter with Christ.