

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Overview for Teachers, Catechists, and Families

AN HISTORICAL MOMENT

As part of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. bishops will consecrate the United States of America to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on June 11, 2026, the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) encourages all parishes to join the bishops in this historical moment. In addition to the USCCB's numerous online resources, RCL Benziger offers this resource to help the families of parishes and Catholic schools participate in this wonderful event.

FOR A HOLY PURPOSE

When the bishops consecrate the United States, they will entrust our nation to God for his special care and offer our entire nation for a holy purpose. The Church sees this consecration as an incredible act of humility and hope. To better understand our holy purpose, we look back to 1899 when Pope Leo XIII consecrated the whole human race to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

In his encyclical *Annum Sacrum* (On Consecration to the Sacred Heart), Pope Leo XIII reminds us that the Sacred Heart is "a symbol and a sensible image of the infinite love of Jesus Christ which moves us to love one another" and such a consecration is "an act which is nothing else than an offering and a binding of oneself to Jesus Christ" (8). Therefore, our holy purpose is to love one another as Christ loves us.

We are better able to love like Christ when we strengthen our bonds with him and with one another. Thus, this year's consecration to the Sacred Heart seems appropriate on this anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. We recall how our nation holds true unalienable rights



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endowed by God. May the flame of charity we received from the Most Sacred Heart of Christ be shared and experienced throughout our nation.

CELEBRATE THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Provided with this resource are two activities to help families offer a special devotion to the Sacred Heart:

- For young children, ages ten and younger
- For older children, ages ten to fourteen years

Use these activities to help families commemorate this consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.