

Heart Beats



Newsletter Of The International Community Of Sacred Heart Cathedral

June - July 2015

“May the words of our mouths (and those we write) and the meditations of our hearts, be pleasing in Thy sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer” - Psalm 19:14

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

As we begin to feel the warmth of the coming season, let us be reminded of the warmth that emanates from the heart of our Lord Jesus. We dedicate this month of June to His Sacred Heart because it was on June 16, 1675 when the Lord appeared to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque and made a request. The Lord asked her that the Friday after the octave of the feast of Corpus Christi be set apart as a special feast day in honour of His Most Sacred Heart.

Now, this feast holds a precious place here since our church is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. That is why, there is no fitting way to honour this feast than to commit ourselves once again to the prayer introduced by this devotion, saying “Lord, make my heart like unto thine”. And may every word we utter enable us to see and accept what the heart of Jesus really is.



The Heart of Jesus is a Heart Divine. It is our way to eternal salvation. In Jesus' heart, we find the infinite love of God and His goodness that saves us from sin and condemnation. It is from Jesus' heart, pierced on the Cross, that this divine life streamed forth. There is no other way to God the Father in heaven than through the heart of Jesus while here on earth. It is a heart filled with love for others with arms outstretched on the cross believing that every life, no matter how small, is valuable. God believed that we were worth His sacrifice. May we also have the courage to stretch out our arms to everyone regardless of colour, language, status and wealth and lead each other to the Divine.

The Heart of Jesus is a Heart Eucharistic. It is both a heart that brings us all together as one - in true communion - and a heart that is truly present among us body and blood. That is why our worship of God who is truly present in the Eucharist helps us to recognize Jesus in our brothers and sisters who suffer, who hunger or thirst, who are strangers or naked or sick or imprisoned. The heart of Jesus alive in the Eucharist that we partake of must lead us to each other especially to those in need.

The Heart of Jesus is a Heart Transformative.

The heart of Jesus is a heart speaking to every hearts - ‘*Cor ad Cor Loquitur*’ - to borrow the line of Cardinal Newman of England. It is not static. Our devotion and openness to the heart of God will change our restless hearts filling it with the peace and the joy of spreading His love. Like the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, the heart of Jesus can set our hearts on fire for God and His kingdom.

May we who come into this house of the Sacred Heart of Jesus truly open our hearts to the Divine, Eucharistic and Transformative Heart of God so that together we can continue the mission of Christ. This openness can begin by setting aside a time for adoration and receiving our Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. I invite you all to be come for the one hour devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus every first Friday of each month at 6 pm inside the Cathedral.

Jesus, meek and humble of heart; Make my heart like unto thine. Amen. (*The entire prayer appears on Page 2 of every newsletter*).

Fr Roed Desamparado

Bishop of the Diocese	: Most Rev. Raphael Umemura, DD
Parish Rector	: Fr Keisuke Suzuki
Parish Assistant	: Fr Roed Desamparado, CM
Mass Schedule (Japanese)	: Daily Mass at 07:00 on weekdays : Sunday Mass at 07:30 & 11:30 : Sunday Mass at 18:00 on Saturdays
Mass Schedule (English)	: Sunday Mass at 09:30
Mass Schedule (Spanish)	: Sunday Mass at 14:00 on the second Sunday of every month (except August)

CORPUS CHRISTI BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

The Solemnity of Corpus Christi was introduced in the late 13th Century to affirm the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist as also in the reserved **Blessed Sacrament**.

From ancient times, **blood** (symbolic of life) was believed to bring about bonding. Relationships between families, tribes and even between people and God were sealed through the 'bloody' sacrifices of animals and birds!

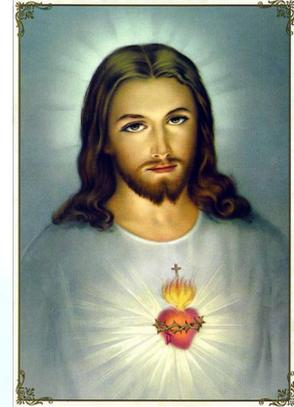
At the Last Supper, Jesus, through a **covenant made by His 'bloody' sacrifice on the Cross**, sealed the relationship between God and those who believed. He asked His disciples to continue to share such a meal in His memory.

In the celebration of each Eucharist today, the faithful renew their covenant with God as they are spiritually and physically nourished through God's Word and the Body and Blood of Christ.

Those who receive Holy Communion, therefore, acknowledge that they accept God's Word and so desire to bond with Him that they consume His Body.

CATHOLIC COMMUNICATION CENTRE

Prayer of Consecration To The Sacred Heart Of Jesus - Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque



I give myself and consecrate to the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ, my person and my life, my actions, pains and sufferings, so that I may be unwilling to make use of any part of my being other than to honour, love and glorify the Sacred Heart. This is my unchanging purpose, namely, to be all His, and to do all things for the love of Him, at the same time renouncing with all my heart whatever is displeasing to Him.

I therefore take You, O Sacred Heart, to be the only object of my love, the guardian of my life, my assurance of salvation, the remedy of my weakness and inconstancy, the atonement for all the faults of my life and my sure refuge at the hour of death.

Be then, O Heart of goodness, my justification before God the Father, and turn away from me the strokes of his righteous anger. O Heart of love, I put all my confidence in You, for I fear everything from my own wickedness and frailty, but I hope for all things from Your goodness and bounty.

Remove from me all that can displease You or resist Your holy will; let your pure love imprint Your image so deeply upon my heart, that I shall never be able to forget You or be separated from You.

May I obtain from all Your loving kindness the grace of having my name written in Your Heart, for in You I desire to place all my happiness and glory, living and dying in bondage to You.

Sweet Heart of Jesus, make my heart like unto Thine! Amen.

Anima Christi - Prayer for Corpus Christi

Soul of Christ, sanctify me ; Body of Christ, save me ;
Blood of Christ, inebriate me ;
Water from the side of Christ, wash me ;
Passion of Christ, strengthen me ; O Good Jesus, hear me ;
Within Thy wounds hide me ;
Suffer me not to be separated from Thee ;
From the malignant enemy defend me ;
In the hour of my death, call me and bid me come unto Thee,
That with all Thy saints, I may praise Thee forever and ever.
Amen.

Contents

✠ From The Pastor's Desk	: p1
✠ Parish News & Events	: p3 - p5
✠ Sacred Scripture	: p6 - p7
✠ Sacred Tradition	: p7
✠ Angels & Saints	: p8 - p9
✠ Your Recipe Space	: p9
✠ Out And About	: p10

Editorial & Design : Karen & Savio Gomez

Columnists : Fr Roed Desamparado, Sr Helen Poovakot, Br Michel Beaudoin, Caroline Kennedy

Circulation : heartbeatssacredheartcathedral@gmail.com

Website : <http://www.yamate44.jp/heartbeats.html>





Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

This year, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on Friday, June 12, therefore this year, the Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus began on June 4, 2015.

The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is perhaps the greatest of all devotions, as it is centred in the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus. It is said to be St Padre Pio's favourite devotion and he recited the novena prayer below every day for all those who asked for his prayers. By far the most popular and traditional novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus would be the one below that St Margaret Mary Alocoque herself promulgated along with the prayer (printed on Page 2).

Efficacious Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus *(Recite daily for 9 consecutive days)*

O my Jesus, you have said: "Truly I say to you, ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you." Behold I knock, I seek and ask for the grace of..... *(here name your request)* Our Father....Hail Mary....Glory Be to the Father.... Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in you.

O my Jesus, you have said: "Truly I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you." Behold, in your name, I ask the Father for the grace of.....*(here name your request)* Our Father...Hail Mary....Glory Be To the Father... Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in you.

O my Jesus, you have said: "Truly I say to you, heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away." Encouraged by your infallible words, I now ask for the grace of.....*(here name your request)* Our Father....Hail Mary....Glory Be to the Father... Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in you.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, for whom it is impossible not to have compassion on the afflicted, have pity on us poor sinners and grant us the grace(s) which we ask of you, through the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, your tender Mother and ours. St. Joseph, foster father of Jesus, pray for us.

First Friday Holy Hour

Every first Friday of the month, we have Holy Hour from 6 pm to 7 pm in the church sanctuary. It includes a devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Benediction before the Blessed Sacrament and related prayers, including the rosary. Join us at this devotion and spend quality time with the Lord.



Holy Hour on Friday, June 5

Sunday School Catechists Needed



We are a team of dedicated catechists and we are looking for new catechists to be part of our team. If you like teaching or have some experience dealing with children and would like to sow seeds of faith into young hearts, kindly contact us at :

heartbeatssacredheartcathedral@gmail.com

Training and guidance will be provided.

New Volunteers Needed



We need "Mass greeters" - friendly faces that welcome regular and new Mass goers with a "hello", an English missal and give people a sense of belonging. This Ministry is different from that of the Ushers Ministry which is efficiently run. Kindly volunteer for this new role by emailing us at :

heartbeatssacredheartcathedral@gmail.com





You are invited to...
a Coffee Morning



Every second Sunday of the month, we have a little get together in the church basement immediately after mass over coffee and cookies. You are all welcome to mingle with your fellow parishioners downstairs out of the heat of the noonday sun. It would be nice if you could bring along a treat. Treats – store bought or homemade - can be dropped off at the basement before or after mass.

Salo salo – the Filipino food sale also takes place simultaneously so you have delicious Filipino food to purchase and enjoy as well.

Your Generosity is Appreciated.

Relief collection fund towards the Nepal earthquake, during the month of May, amounted to ¥ 5,35,047.

This amount will be remitted through a Jesuit Priest based in Nepal.



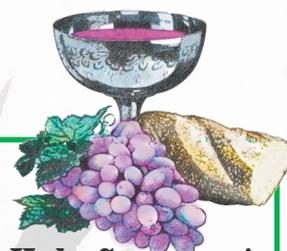
First Holy Communion Mass

Ten delightful little children joyfully received Jesus into their hearts at a beautiful and solemn First Holy Communion mass on June 7. It was the most appropriate day for this Sacrament as well, being the feast of Corpus Christi.

As in past years, the English speaking and French speaking children received the catechesis separately, right up to the Confessions (where the French priest Fr Loys faithfully comes from Tokyo every year to hear the confessions of the French children in French while Fr Roed hears the confessions of the English speaking children in English).

Leading up to the actual service which is always touching to witness. The children all say their prayers loudly, respond to the questions posed by Fr Roed in his simple yet hard hitting homily, and with their lit candles, recite the post-communion prayer and then sing a hymn as a witness to the congregation gathered in church. Although the mass gets prolonged and the church is packed to overflowing, it is still a happy occasion for the international community to experience this celebration of the sacrament.

We thank the catechetical team for all their hard work and the months of preparation that went into this and we pray that these children will grow in their faith and continue to keep the light of Christ shining on.



Holy Communion





Church Picnic



The ICC hosted an outdoor Mass and Spring picnic on the grounds of the Xavier Centre, across from Negishi Park on Sunday, May 17. A great time was had by all.

Fr Roed led a beautiful Mass under the canopy of a hickory tree. Parishioners participated by spreading out their leisure sheets on the grass and joined in with joyful song under God's beautiful blue sky as we celebrated the Ascension of the Lord.



After Mass, hot dogs and sausages were grilled and a huge potluck spread was set up for all to share - salads, pizza, lumpia, noddles, desserts and more. No one went home hungry!

AND there were games! The women won and NOW hold the tug o' war crown! We also had hula hooping contests for juniors and seniors! AND trivia of ALL kinds. Victorious parishioners took home prizes, including bottles of wine, a six pack of beer from Chicago, books, religious medallions, and LOTS of American candy!

When shall we do this again? In September perhaps? Will you come? Will you help out? Together we can do great things and worship the Lord in the great outdoors!



A special thank you to Br Michel (and all the brothers) who suggested the back garden and for all the work he did in preparing the space: putting out the altar, the lectern, getting the tables and grills, and so much more.

Thanks also goes to Yutaka for the musical preparation, Mar for the guitar playing and sound set up, Karen and Fr Roed for the order of the Mass and the typing and copying of the program, all the readers, Charles, who even though was out of the country for a few weeks, purchased all the paper products and utensils, everyone who brought food, AND for the rides to and from our house so that we could get everything there - THANK YOU. It truly was a time and place blessed by the Lord and enjoyed by all present!

Katherine Kelly





Continued from the last issue.....

The Patriarchs 2: Genesis 25-50

In our last article, we saw that Abraham was blessed by God and recognized as an obedient man. God praised him by saying : “I know how devoted you are (to me). I swear by myself, that because you acted as you did in not withholding from me your beloved son, I will bless you abundantly and make your descendants as countless as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore; your descendants shall take possession of the gates of their enemies, and in your descendants all the nations of the earth shall find blessing, all this because you obeyed my command. (Gen 22:16-18)

The descendants of the promise are not numerous yet. Isaac will have two sons from Rebekah. Both sons started to quarrel in their mother’s womb and will vie later for their parents’ attention; Esau will be preferred by Isaac and Jacob will be his mama’s boy, the one who will carry with him God’s blessing. In Genesis 25, the Lord tells Rebekah the twins jostling in her womb will become two struggling nations and that the nation that springs from the elder will be weaker and will serve the nation that comes from the younger. “Jacob” means *he grasps the heel* or, figuratively, *he deceives*. And from the moment of Jacob’s birth, he is grasping at what belongs to his older brother: first his heel, then his birthright, and finally their father’s blessing. Esau is no match for Jacob’s cunning. He is more interested in satisfying his immediate physical needs than in hanging on to his birthright and Jacob is able to wrest it from him for “a pot of stew”. Later, Jacob and Rebekah trick Isaac into giving him the blessing as well. The boys struggle from day 1, and the younger is coming out on top. God chooses Jacob not because of his faithfulness or his behaviour—not because of anything he’s done, either good or bad. He chooses Jacob while Jacob is still in his mother’s womb.

God chose him before he had a chance to do anything good or bad to show that God’s people did not rise “naturally” or according to worldly skill or wisdom, but because of His initiative. They were not chosen because they were better than others but simply out of what the Catechism of the Catholic Church calls “sheer gratuitous love” (No. 218). What did I do to deserve God’s love, his forgiveness, his kindness or his even election for me to become a religious? Why me, Michel Beaudoin? *Why me (put your own name in the question)?* When reading some of the Bible stories, I am amazed at God’s patience and choice of heroes. Even David, a man according to God’s heart, used murder to obtain the object of his lust and to hide his sin. Saul chased Christians and put them into prison. Matthew was a hated tax collector. Mary and her Son Jesus are the only ones without faults.

God is the one who makes things and persons “holy”. He loved us first. “In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son in expiation for our sins.” (1 John 4:10) God wishes from his chosen ones a response in worship. God’s desire is to bless and to draw all people back into a relationship with Himself. Those who reject his invitations are focused inward, toward themselves and their own interests, God’s people will look outward to worship God and bless others. How is my relationship with Jesus, his Father and the Holy Spirit? Like many of these heroes who failed somewhat in their responses, God looks at us with compassion and forgives us if we only would turn toward Him and trust in his love. Is it not what we do at the beginning of each Eucharist during the penitential service when we ask for mercy? Peter, in the passion denied his friend and Lord three times. Jesus looked mercifully at Peter, who then leaves the warmth of the evening fire and cries his heart out in the darkness of the night. Later after the resurrection near Lake Galilee, Jesus completes his healing by asking him: “Peter do you love me more than these?” May our own answer be like Peter’s: “Lord, you know me; yes I love you.”

Jacob falls in love with the lovely Rachel and works seven years to earn her as his bride. He is fooled by his uncle Laban and must first take the older sister Leah as a bribe. He who has deceived his own brother and father to take the rights of the firstborn is deceived himself into taking the firstborn Leah. He must work for another seven years for Rachel. In Genesis 32, Jacob has a midnight wrestling match with a stranger. He learned that it is God with whom he must “wrestle” for a blessing, not his father or brother or uncle or any other person. He also has learned - via a permanent reminder in his hip - that God is in ultimate control. Jacob’s name is changed to Israel, a name that will stand for the nation of Israel, the descendants of his twelve sons.

The story of the patriarch Jacob/Israel shifts to his sons, in particular Joseph the eleventh son and the first born of Rachel. In spite of mistreatment by his brothers, being sold as a slave, unjust accusations, and languishing forgotten in prison, Joseph never loses faith in God.

Continued



Sacred Scripture



Continued from previous page

He is honest, hardworking, thoughtful and courageous. He is humble and gives all credit to God rather than trying to advance himself in the eyes of others. He does not grasp at what has been promised but waits patiently for it, trusting that God will do as he has said. Consequently, he rises to the chief position of leadership under Pharaoh and is able to bless not only Egypt but the surrounding countries as well.

Joseph is a blessing to his own father Jacob and to his brothers. He is God's instrument in having them moving into Egypt so they could be spared from famine and possible extinction. Their descendants will reside in this foreign country for 400 years. Then God will pursue his plan of salvation by moving them out of Egypt, purifying them into the Desert and guiding them into the Promised Land.

Joseph's story has many features with that resemble those of Jesus. It is amazing to see how he is a "forerunner" of Jesus. Both are humble, forgiving and strong in the face of temptation; they are beloved sons of their father; they see beyond the appearance of things and trust in God; they are betrayed for silver; they are wrongly accused; they are brought out of captivity/death to life and glory; they reconcile their brethren to their father; they save the world; they become source of food and life.

In a very moving story, Joseph reveals his true identity to his not so kind siblings. Instead of taking revenge, Joseph forgives them. "As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good" (Genesis 50:20). Joseph had learned through years of patient waiting and through retribution that God had his hand in their affairs - that whatever things looked like on the outside, God was working it for good (Romans 8:28). Joseph's faith gave him eyes to take this eternal perspective on events, while his brothers' lack of faith and guilt fixed their eyes on the temporal. Do I believe that the events of my life may be part of God's plan of love for me? The Lord can make straight line with crooked ones. Do I trust him? Do I surrender my will to his?

Another stage in the growth of God's family has been completed.

(Taken mostly from the notes supplied with *The Bible Timeline, The Story of Salvation*, Ascension Press)

Sacred Tradition



What is a Deacon?

In the past two years, we at Sacred Heart Cathedral, have been blessed with deacons who served together with the priest at the Eucharist celebration. This year, our deacon is a local from Futamatagawa church. His name is Deacon Francesco Makiyama. In other countries, they are addressed as Reverend instead of deacon.

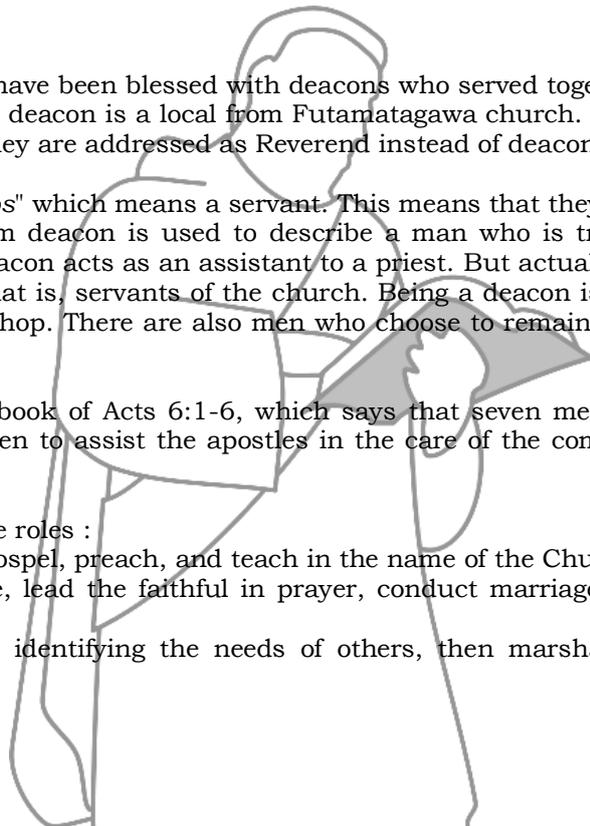
The term deacon comes from the Greek word "*diaconos*" which means a servant. This means that they are men who are ordained to serve. Most commonly, the term deacon is used to describe a man who is training to become a priest. In the celebration of the liturgy, a deacon acts as an assistant to a priest. But actually, all the priests and even bishops are ordained as deacons, that is, servants of the church. Being a deacon is the first rank or order before being ordained as priest and bishop. There are also men who choose to remain deacons. We call them permanent deacons.

In the Bible, the first deacons are described in the book of Acts 6:1-6, which says that seven men of good reputation among the Christian community are chosen to assist the apostles in the care of the community's needs.

Nowadays, the work of the deacon is divided into three roles :

1. As ministers of the Word, deacons proclaim the Gospel, preach, and teach in the name of the Church.
2. As ministers of the Sacraments, deacons baptize, lead the faithful in prayer, conduct marriages, wakes and funeral services.
3. As ministers of Charity, deacons are leaders in identifying the needs of others, then marshalling the Church's resources to meet those needs.

Fr. Rued Desamparado





Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647 - 1690)

Feast Day : October 16



The month of June is dedicated for the devotion to the MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS. Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque was chosen by Lord Jesus to be His messenger to spread and promote the devotion to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.



*“Look at this Heart which has loved men so much, and yet men do not want to love Me in return.....
The Sacred Heart is regarded as “the symbol of that boundless love which moved the Word to take flesh, to institute the Holy Eucharist, to take our sins upon Himself, and, dying on the Cross, to offer Himself as a victim and sacrifice to the eternal Father.” (From the writings of this Saint).*

She was born in 1647 AD at Janots, a small town of Burgundy, the fifth of seven children, of Claude and Philiberte Alacoque. Her father was a prosperous notary; the family owned a country house and farmland, and had some aristocratic connections. Margaret’s godmother was a neighbor, the Countess of Corcheval. As a small child Margaret spent a great deal of time with her, but these visits were brought to a sudden end by the death of the countess. The father died of pneumonia when Margaret was about eight, and this was another severe shock to her. Claude had loved his family dearly, but had been short-sighted and extravagant and his death put them in hard straits. However, Margaret was sent to school with the Urbanist Sisters at Charolles.

She loved the peace and order of the convent life, and the nuns were so impressed by her devotion that she was allowed to make her First Communion at the age of nine (normally around the age of 12). A rheumatic affliction kept her bedridden for four years. During that time she was brought home, where some of her father’s relatives had moved in and taken over the direction of the farm and household. She and her mother were treated almost as servants. This painful situation grew more acute after Margaret’s recovery, for the relatives tried to regulate all her comings and goings. Not allowed to attend church as often as she pleased, the young girl was sometimes seen weeping and praying in a corner of the garden. It grieved her deeply that she could not ease things for her mother. Her eldest brother’s coming of age saved the day, for the property now reverted to him, and the family again had undisputed possession of their home.

Philiberte had expressed a hope that Margaret would marry; the girl considered this, but at the age of twenty, inspired by a vision, she put aside all such thoughts and resolved to enter a convent.

Some years passed quietly in the convent, and then Margaret Mary began to have experiences which seemed to be of supernatural origin. The first of these occurred on December 27, 1673, when she was kneeling in the chapel. She felt suffused by the Divine Presence, and heard the Lord inviting her to take the place which St John had occupied at the Last Supper. The Lord told her that the love of His heart must spread and manifest itself to men, and He would reveal its graces through her. This was the beginning of a series of revelations covering a period of eighteen months.

For many years, Margaret Mary suffered from despair, from self-inflicted punishment and also from the slights and contempt of those around her. In 1681, Father Claude returned to the convent and died there the following year. Margaret Mary was appointed assistant and novice-mistress by a new Mother Superior who was more sympathetic towards her. In 1683, opposition in the community ended after an account of Margaret Mary’s visions was read aloud in the refectory from the writings left by Father Claude, who had taken it upon himself to make known to the world the nun’s remarkable experiences.

Mother Melin was elected Superior and named Margaret Mary her assistant. That she was finally vindicated was to her a matter of indifference. She later became Novice Mistress, saw the convent observe the feast of the Sacred Heart privately beginning in 1686, and two years later, a chapel was built at the Paray-le-Monial to honour the Sacred Heart; soon observation of the feast of the Sacred Heart spread to other Visitation convents. When she was forty-three, while serving a second term as assistant superior, Margaret Mary fell ill. Sinking rapidly, she received the last sacraments, saying, “I need nothing but God, and to lose myself in the heart of Jesus”. Margaret Mary died at the Paray-le-Monial on October 17, 1690.

Continued



Margaret Mary was canonized a saint in 1920. She, St John Eudes, and Blessed Claude La Colombiere are called the “Saints of the Sacred Heart”; the devotion was officially recognized and approved by Pope Clement XIII in 1765, seventy-five years after her death.

In the course of every activity pray as follows: *“My God, I do this or I endure that in the heart of your Son and according to his holy counsels. I offer it to you in reparation for anything blameworthy or imperfect in my actions”*.

Continue to do this in every circumstance of life. But above all, preserve peace of heart. This is more valuable than any treasure. In order to preserve it, there is nothing more useful than renouncing your own will and substituting for it the will of the Divine Heart. In this way, His will can carry out for us whatever contributes to his glory, and we will be happy to be his subjects and to trust entirely in him.” *(From a Letter by Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque)*

Sr Helen Poovakot

Your Recipe Space



Kibbeh Meatballs - A Middle Eastern dish

Ingredients :

- ✪ ¾ cup uncooked bulgur ✪ 2 cups cold water ✪ 1 pound of lean ground lamb ✪ ¼ cup of minced shallots ✪ ¼ cup of minced fresh parsley
- ✪ ¾ teaspoon of salt ✪ ½ teaspoon of cumin ✪ ½ teaspoon of ground allspice ✪ ½ teaspoon of cinnamon ✪ ¼ teaspoon of ground red pepper
- ✪ 1 tablespoon of olive oil.

Method :

Combine the bulgur and two cups of water in a medium bowl. Let it stand for 30 minutes; drain bulgur through a fine sieve, pressing out any excess liquid. Combine the bulgur, lamb and the rest of the ingredients in a food processor; process until smooth. Cover and chill for 30 minutes. Then form lamb mixture into little meatballs. Heat oil in a non-stick or cast iron skillet over medium high heat. Add meat balls to the pan and cook for twelve minutes browning on all sides. Serve with Tzatziki sauce.



Tzatziki Sauce

Ingredients :

- 1 cup Greek yoghurt ✪ 1 cup grated cucumber ✪ 2 grated cloves of garlic ✪ A little lemon juice
- ✪ A dash of salt ✪ A bit of red pepper

Method :

Combine all ingredients in a bowl, cover and chill until ready to serve. Tzatziki is great for dipping pita, kibbeh and veggies.

NB: If you can't find Greek yoghurt, you can use regular yoghurt and use several layers of cheesecloth or a dish towel and pour out the regular yoghurt into the cloth and let it drain suspended over a bowl in the refrigerator for a few hours to let the whey drip out, then you have thick Greek yoghurt. Don't throw the whey away – it is full of probiotics and protein.

Katherine Kelly

“Heart Beats” invites its readers to share their favourite recipes here. If you would like your recipe to be published in the next issue, please email the Editor.





Day Tripping in Tochigi

Pottery and ceramics in many countries are one of the oldest art forms, telling us so much about the people and the customs that came before us. In Asia in particular, we can travel back through the centuries and imagine the splendours of the past just by examining and enjoying the beautiful pieces on display in museums and recreated for decorative and functional use today.

Called “*yakimono*” in Japanese, Japan has a long tradition of earthenware and ceramics, with many regions throughout Japan producing their own unique *yakimono*. *Arita-yaki* is one such example; born in Saga prefecture in Kyushu and producing the beautiful blue and white glazed pieces often desired by many visitors to Japan.



A little closer to home in Yokohama, the town of Mashiko in Tochigi prefecture is also another town famous for its ceramics. Known as *Mashiko-yaki*, the pieces produced there are slightly more “hardy” in nature and perfect for everyday use.

The pottery industry in Mashiko is said to be over 1,000 years old, but was really developed in earnest at the end of the Edo period, almost 150 years ago. The town has almost 400 working kilns today and embraces a “climbing” kiln style, called “*noborigama*”, whereby the wood-fired earthenware ovens are lined up on steps in hillsides, in various locations around the town, with the logic being that since heat rises, they can achieve higher temperatures in the top tiered kilns, important for achieving the desired glaze. Although while the tradition is nice, seems that easily controlled gas and electric kilns are the more popular choice today...



Apparently, it’s said that when purchasing Mashiko pottery and ceramics, the pieces you choose should not be for decorative purposes, but rather pieces to use and enjoy in your daily life as their beauty will grow with use. How can we argue with that?! Doesn’t your morning coffee always taste even better when taken from your favourite cup!

While almost 150 kms from Yokohama, Mashiko can still be visited in a day trip and will even allow you to enjoy a ride on an old steam train if the timing of your visit is right. The first hint that you have arrived in Mashiko is the giant earthenware pot right in front of the ticket gate. From the station, it is an easy 15 minute walk to the centre of town, where you will find many stores and galleries selling their wares. An even better plan is to pick up a map at the tourist office at the station, rent a bicycle and spend your day visiting some of the more distant studios too. It is also possible to try your hand at creating your own piece under the guidance of the potters, with the finished product sent by post some weeks later once it has been fully dried and glazed.

While the town can be visited year round, the best times to visit are Spring (Golden Week) and Autumn when the town hosts the Mashiko Pottery Festival. The Autumn fair this year will be held from October 31st to November 4th and is well worth a visit. Many, if not all, of the local artists and potters gather in tents at various locations around the town to sell their pieces at discount prices. There are fantastic bargains to be had and you can easily spend a fun few hours browsing through the beautiful pieces on display.

To reach Mashiko from Yokohama...

Yokohama - Oyama (Ueno-Tokyo Line / Shonan Shinjuku Line)
 Oyama - Shimodate (Mito Line)
 Shimodate - Mashiko (Mooka Line)

The train journey will take just over three hours, costing 3,028 yen one way on regular trains. A steam train runs one return journey per day on the Mooka line on weekends and holidays, with the morning journey departing Shimodate at 10:35 am. Costing only 500 yen more, it’s like you have been transported into a Harry Potter movie with the plumes of black smoke from the engine and the bells and whistles being sounded!



A highway bus also runs from Akihabara to Mashiko, leaving at 8:20 am, taking two hours 45 minutes to reach Mashiko (2,000 yen / each way)

Tip: If you take the Tokaido line departing Yokohama station at 8:10 am on weekends, you can connect to the Mooka steam train at 10:35am, arriving in Mashiko by 11:30 am. All aboard!! :)

Caroline Kennedy

“Heart Beats” invites its readers to share their local adventure spots and holiday picks here. If you would like your article to be published in the next issue, please email the Editor.

