



## **Diocesan Marian Conference**

### ***Text of Homily Offered During Mass***

**The Most Reverend Paul J. Swain**

**Bishop of Sioux Falls**

**October 5, 2013**

***Immaculate Heart of Mary***

**Cathedral of Saint Joseph**

Good morning. Some of you are here for the Marian Conference; some of you are here for daily Mass. Coming together in this way, on a Saturday which in tradition is dedicated to the Blessed Mother, reminds us that she is Mother of God, Mother of the Church and Mother of us all, every day and in every way.

October by declaration of the Bishops of the United States is Respect Life Month. During this month we also raise up Mary in a special way. On Monday we will celebrate Our Lady of the Rosary, that consoling and uplifting prayer of the ages.

The readings record the prophetic words of Micah of the coming birth of the Messiah and the declaration in the Gospel of Matthew that this prophecy was fulfilled.

Joining this Conference, our veneration of the Blessed Mother, with Respect Life month is a natural coming together. I thank Msgr. Charles Mangan of the Marian Apostolate and Kelly and Travis Benson of the Office of Marriage, Family and Respect Life for organizing this day.

The theme for this Conference is “Building a Civilization of Love and Life through the Two Hearts – the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.” The theme for Respect Life month is “Open your hearts to life” which Mary did and modeled.

Our Lord’s sacred heart, crowned with thorns, reminds us of the deep love that He showed to every human person by giving his life for the sake of our salvation. Our Blessed Mother’s heart was pierced with a sword in knowing what her Son endured. Yet she gives us hope and promises us that she and her Son will never abandon those who love God with all their heart - and mind and soul and strength.

And so it is appropriate that the two hearts are linked because Son and Mother are forever linked. Blessed Mary always points us to her Son. Later in today’s conference the private devotion of the Two Hearts will be explained and the prayers by which you can consecrate your home to the Two Hearts will be shared.

I relate to this devotion because my first assignment as a priest was as associate at the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary parish in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. It was there that my relationship with the Blessed Mother was especially deepened. The Sacred Hearts in Sun Prairie opened my heart in a new way. Perhaps it was providential then that I would become a bishop on the prairie on which the Son of God shines.

As the Church puts it: “The loving kindness of God, who after giving the Church the heart of our lord Jesus Christ as proof of his love, gave us also the heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary to be contemplated as the model of the new heart as one who lives by the New Covenant.” (Marian Missal)

There is a moving poem entitled *Our Lord and Our Lady* by Jillaire Belloc:

They warned Our Lady for the Child that was Our Blessed Lord, and she took him into the desert wild over the camel’s ford.

And a long song she sang to him and a short story told: and she wrapped him in a woolen cloak to keep him from the cold.

But when Our Lord was grown a man the rich they dragged him down, and they crucified him in Golgatha, out and beyond the town.

They crucified him on Calvary, upon an April day; and because he had been her little son she followed him all the way.

Our Lady stood beside the cross, a little space apart, and when she heard our Lord cry out, a sword went through her heart.

They laid Our Lord in a marble tomb, dead, in a winding sheet. But Our Lady stands above the world with the white moon at her feet.

She stands above the world as our model of discipleship and as our intercessor pointing us to her Son. In the midst of the culture of death all around us, she stands above the world with the white moon at her feet. As another poet put it<sup>1</sup>:

The sweet-faced moon reflects, on cheerless night, the rays of hidden sun that rise to-morrow, so unseen God still lets his promised light, through Mary, shine upon our sorrow.

May we “Open our hearts to Life”, encouraged by and in response to the Twin Hearts, the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

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<sup>1</sup> – *Mary*, John Boyle O’Reilly