

Homily from the Mass of the Consecration of the United States of America
to the Sacred Heart of Jesus
USCCB Spring General Assembly
Our Lady of the Universe, Orlando, Florida
Archbishop William Lori

Why We Consecrate

My brother bishops, dear priests & deacons, women & men in consecrated life, and faithful lay men and women, dear friends in Christ all:

What a remarkable moment of grace we are privileged to share.

On the threshold of our nation's 250th anniversary, we gather, not first to celebrate ourselves, but to consecrate. To entrust. To place the Church in the United States, and indeed the whole nation, into the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ.

Why do we do this? Because consecration is an act of faith.

It is an acknowledgment

that history is not simply the story of what human beings accomplish; it is the story of God's faithful love at work in the world.

We give thanks for the blessings of these past 250 years, but we do so with humility, recognizing in faith that every nation stands in need of God's mercy, wisdom, and guidance.

We consecrate our nation,

not because it is perfect, but because it is beloved by God.

We entrust to the Heart of Christ our achievements and failures, our hopes and anxiety, our present challenges and our future aspirations.

We ask him to heal what is wounded, strengthen what is good, and guide us towards a future marked by justice, peace, freedom, and respect for the dignity of every human person.

Consecration is also an act of hope.

It is a declaration that the future does not belong merely to political movements, economic forces, or human plans.

The future belongs to God.

And so we place into His Heart, not only ourselves but generations yet unborn, and all those who will inherit the Church and the nation we leave behind.

Remaining in the Love of Christ

In a culture that prizes independence and self-reliance,

we gather publicly to acknowledge
that our deepest identity and our truest hope come,
not from ourselves but from the Lord.

That is why today's Gospel is so fitting. Jesus says:
"As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love."

The Sacred Heart is the visible sign of that love. It is not an abstract devotion.
It is the revelation of God's love made flesh—a heart that has known
joy and sorrow, friendship and betrayal, suffering and sacrifice.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells us something else that is extraordinary.

He says, "I have called you friends."

The Sacred Heart reveals a Savior who desires
not merely our obedience, but our friendship;
not simply our service, but our communion with Him.

To consecrate ourselves to the Sacred Heart is ultimately
to accept Christ's invitation to remain in His love
and to allow that love to shape every aspect of our lives, public and private.

Consecration Requires Humility

In my recent pastoral, *In Charity & Truth: Towards a Renewed Political Culture*,
I reflected on the certainty that love and truth are never opposed.

They meet perfectly in the Heart of Christ.

Jesus tells us: *"This is my commandment: love one another as I love you."*

To love as Christ loves is the true measure of Christian discipleship
and the true measure of our humanity.

Yet if we are honest, we must acknowledge

that neither our nation nor the Church has always clearly reflected that love—
indeed, it is sometimes obscured almost beyond recognition.

To be sure, there have been moments of extraordinary witness and holiness.

But there have also been moments of failure, division, and sin.

Consecration requires the humility to acknowledge both.

We cannot come to the Heart of Christ
while pretending we have no need of His mercy.

To consecrate ourselves and our nation is
to place our wounds, our shortcomings, and our sins
before the One whose love is greater than all of them.

Consecration Sends Us Forth

Jesus also says in today's Gospel: *"It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain."* Those words describe the Church's mission throughout our nation's history. Catholics have contributed immeasurably to the life of this country through faith, sacrifice, education, charity, and service. We give God heartfelt thanks for that legacy and commend to the love of his heart those who gone before us in faith.

Yet consecration is not merely about remembering the past. It is about accepting responsibility for the future. To consecrate ourselves to the Sacred Heart means remaining in Christ's love and carrying that love into the world. It means building communities – ecclesial and civil – where truth is proclaimed clearly and charity is practiced generously. It means resisting the temptation to define ourselves by division, ideology, or resentment. The Sacred Heart does not divide; it reconciles. It does not harden hearts; it transforms them. It does not simply invite us to receive love; it sends us forth to share it.

My brother bishops, this Gospel speaks to us in a particular way. *"I chose you."* Those words should fill us with humility and gratitude. Our ministry is not something we have earned; it is a gift entrusted to us for the service of God's people & the wider community. And to all the faithful: this consecration is not something the bishops do for you. It is something we do together. The renewal of the Church and our nation will not come thru declarations alone. It will come through disciples who remain in Christ's love and bear the good fruit of holiness in families, parishes, communities and in their daily lives.

As we approach this great anniversary of our nation, we may be tempted towards nostalgia for the past or anxiety about the future. Today we choose something better: trust. Today we place the Church in the United States, and this nation we love, into the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Not because we have everything figured out, but because we know the One whose love endures forever. In his Heart, we find gratitude for the past, strength for the present, and hope for the future.