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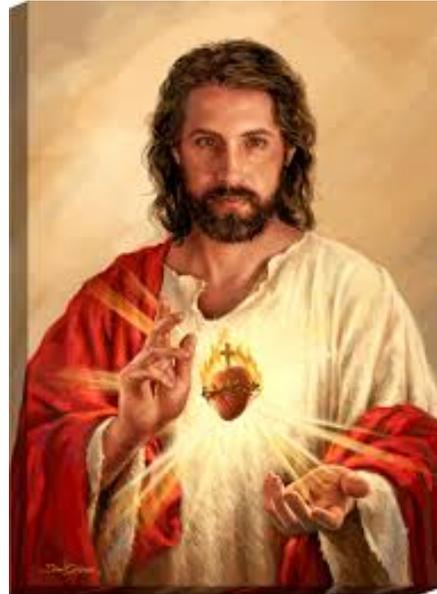
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JANUARY

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The Bell Ringer

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER, HYANNIS + JANUARY 2026



The Sacred Heart of Jesus

In an historic act, the U.S. bishops will consecrate the United States to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in June 2026

By Archbishop Alexander K. Sample

Chairman of the Committee for Religious Liberty

USCCB — On November 11, the bishops of the United States voted to consecrate this nation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The consecration will take place in 2026 to celebrate America's semiquincentennial, that is, the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

What does this mean? Why consecrate the nation to the Sacred Heart? Devotion to the Sacred Heart has developed over the centuries following the experiences of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque and the apparitions she witnessed in the seventeenth century. Popes have lauded the practice of consecration of the self, home, and even whole nations to the Sacred Heart.

In his encyclical instituting the Solemnity of Christ the King, Pope Pius XI, drawing on the teaching of Pope Leo XIII, commended the "pious custom" of consecrating the nation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus as a way to recognize the kingship of Christ. By celebrating this important national anniversary with this devotion, we have the opportunity to encourage all Catholics to honor our Lord and to "infuse the spirit of the Gospel into various communities and departments of life."

With his encyclical, *Dilexit Nos*, Pope Francis brought devotion to the Sacred Heart to the *(Continued on page 2)*

... *Sacred Heart of Jesus*

Continued from page one

forefront of our contemporary Catholic life and culture. He noted: "In contemplating the pierced heart of the Lord, who 'took our infirmities and bore our diseases,' we too are inspired to be more attentive to the sufferings and needs of others and confirmed in our efforts to share in His work of liberation as instruments for the spread of His love. As we meditate on Christ's self-offering for the sake of all, we are naturally led to ask why we too should not be ready to give our lives for others."

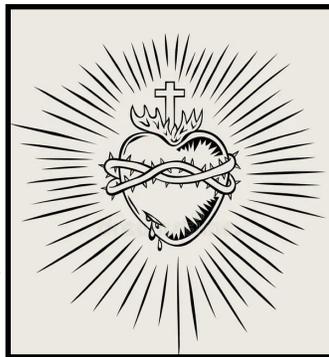
In *Dilexi Te*, Pope Leo invited us to contemplate Christ's love, which moves us out on our mission to attend to our sisters and brothers suffering in the world today, particularly in our care for poor and vulnerable people. As we reflect with gratitude on

the blessings God has bestowed on our country, our devotion to the Sacred Heart demands that we consider how we might foster truth, justice, and charity in American life. We are called to bring our faith into the actions we take and the lives we lead in our communities. We celebrate the ways the Church has contributed to a more just world, and we invite all in our society to see the face of Christ reflected in each sister and brother. We welcome God's "kingdom of justice, fraternity and solidarity," remembering that "God has a special place in His heart for those who are discriminated against and oppressed, and He asks us, His Church, to make a decisive and radical choice in favor of the weakest."

This anniversary and consecration will be a great opportunity to promote the beautiful devotion to the Sacred Heart and to encourage the laity to offer their lives in service to God and their country. +

The devotion to the Sacred Heart started in the quiet stillness of Mary's womb when His little Heart first began to beat. At Bethlehem, St. Joseph and Mother Mary adored His Heart as they held Him in their arms, gently gazing at the Christ Child and pondering the little heartbeat of Emmanuel, "God with us."

The first written account of this devotion to the Sacred Heart can be found in the Gospels when St. John rested upon His Heart during the Last Supper. In the late 1200's on the feast of St. John (December 27), St. Gertrude, a Benedictine nun and mystic, had a vision where St. John, appearing with Jesus on His left side, invited her to the right of Jesus to rest her head near the wound in His side so she could hear Christ's beating heart. She wrote in her book *Herald of Divine Love* that this filled her with sweetness and joy. She asked St. John why he spoke so little in his Gospel "of the loving secrets of the Heart of Jesus?" St. John answered, "My mission was to write of the Eternal Word but the language of the blissful pulsations of the Sacred Heart is reserved for latter times, that the time-worn world, grown cold in the love of God, may be warmed up by hearing of such mysteries."



About 400 years later, during a time when the world had grown cold and had forgotten the tenderness and mercy of Christ's love, Jesus appeared to St. Margaret Mary on St. John's feast in 1673 in Paray-le-Monial, France. He revealed to her His Heart burning with Love for humanity. "Behold the Heart which has so loved men that it has spared nothing, even to exhausting and consuming Itself, in order to testify Its love; and in return, I receive from the greater part only ingratitude, by their irreverence and sacrilege, and by the coldness and contempt they have for Me in this Sacrament of Love. . . . Therefore, I ask of you that the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi be set apart for a special Feast to honor My Heart, by communicating on that day, and making reparation to It by a solemn act, in order to make amends for the indignities which It has received during the time It has been exposed on the altars."

In the vision, Jesus asked her to spread devotion to His Sacred Heart. The devotion as we know it today is largely based on Jesus' revelations to St. Margaret Mary. +

This history is courtesy of the Carmelite Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Los Angeles.

THE ENTHRONEMENT OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Enthroning the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a way to continue on your spiritual journey. The Enthronement is a way to increase your love and devotion for Jesus and bring abundant graces upon you, your family, your friends and all aspects of your life! You can enthrone the Sacred Heart of Jesus in your home, your office, over your vocation, over your business....allow Jesus to be King and Head of your life!

Requests of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary

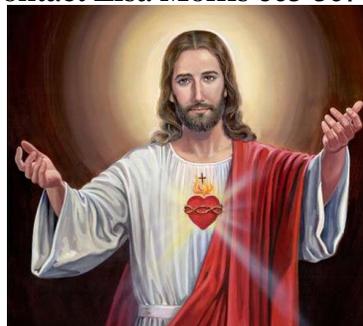
- ♥ Acknowledge Jesus as your King
- ♥ Place an image of the Sacred Heart in your home
- ♥ Consecrate your heart to the Sacred Heart of Jesus
- ♥ Make reparation to Jesus for indifference and hostility to Him
- ♥ Live a life of love and confidence in Him
- ♥ Make the Sacred Heart of Jesus better known and loved
- ♥ Increase devotion to the Holy Eucharist
- ♥ Celebrate First Fridays

The Twelve Promises of the Sacred Heart given to St. Margaret Mary

- ♥ I will give them all the graces necessary for their state of life.
- ♥ I will establish peace in their families.
- ♥ I will bless every home in which an image of My Heart is exposed and honored.
- ♥ I will console them in all their difficulties.
- ♥ I will be their refuge during life and especially at the hour of death.
- ♥ I will shed abundant blessings upon all their undertakings.
- ♥ Sinners shall find in My Heart a fountain and boundless ocean of mercy.
- ♥ Tepid souls shall become fervent.
- ♥ Fervent souls shall rise speedily to great perfection.
- ♥ I will give to priests the power of touching the hardest hearts.
- ♥ Those who propagate this devotion shall have their names written in My Heart never to be blotted out.
- ♥ I promise you, in the excessive mercy of My Heart that My all-powerful love will grant to all who communicate on the First Friday of the month for nine consecutive months the grace of final penitence; they shall not die in My displeasure nor without their last Sacraments: “My Divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment.”



For more information - www.sacredheartapostolate.com
or contact Lisa Morris 865-567-1245





Respect for Life Corner



By Rebecca Minninger

Our St. Francis Xavier Respect Life Team and our Walking with Moms Ministry just completed our 2025 Volunteer/Sponsor training over six Saturdays. Here we are, pictured in front of the Your Options Medical pregnancy resource center vehicle. Our group of nine participants and two women leaders from our Respect Life Steering was full of enthusiasm as we bonded together in our desire to help Moms and babies.



We had seven women from our St Francis Xavier Parish: four from the Brazilian Community, one from the Spanish Community and two from the English Community.

The new Nurse Sonographer from the Your Options Pregnancy Resource Center, the Co-Leader of the Cape Cod Pro-Life Alliance and the head of Corpus Christi Parish Respect Life Ministry were from two other Catholic parishes.

We will continue to meet quarterly with a strong desire for all these ministries to work together and help each other grow!

We would like to involve you, our readers, in our Walking with Moms Ministry, by sharing our

needs and concerns, and asking you to please pray with us for the following intentions:

1. For a Doctor locally who will read the Ultrasounds for the Your Options Medical Pregnancy Resource Center.

2. For both a Brazilian and a Spanish woman from our St Francis Xavier Parish to become members of our Respect Life Steering Committee.

3. For women in unexpected pregnancies, or those in difficult mothering circumstances to call our Confidential Hotline, or reach out to us in any way, to receive help from Walking with Moms.

4. For our ministry to be able to reach women who need our services, to respond and help them quickly, using social media.

5. For a young, tech knowledgeable person to help us use social media to reach women who need our services

6. For the women/babies/children we have helped thru our Walking with Moms Ministry, to thrive.

7. For Fathers of the unborn and born, to man up and be the protectors and the providers that God has called them to be.

8. For wisdom, grace, perseverance and unity of our Respect Life and Walking with Moms Ministries to be effective.

9. For us to reach the hearts and minds of our St. Francis Xavier parishioners to know, love and help women in unexpected pregnancies or difficult mothering circumstances.

God bless you. If you have ideas for us, please contact Becky at (508) 737-2181. +

We pray that every person's life may be protected and cared for from conception to natural death. Amen.

Epiphany: The Visit of the Magi

Pope St. John Paul II's Homily on the Epiphany of the Lord 1979

VATICANO — Through the centuries, Isaiah addresses Jerusalem, which was to become the city of the Great Anointed, of the Messiah: "And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. . . They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord" (60:3-4; 6).

We have before our eyes these three — so tradition says — three Magi Kings who come on pilgrimage from afar with camels and bring with them not only gold and incense, but also myrrh: the symbolic gifts with which they went to meet the Messiah who was awaited also beyond the frontiers of Israel. We are not surprised, therefore, when Isaiah, in his prophetic dialogue with Jerusalem carried out through the centuries, says at a certain point: "your heart shall thrill and rejoice" (60:5). He speaks to the city as if it were a living man.

"Your heart shall thrill and rejoice". On Christmas Eve, finding myself together with those participating in the Eucharistic liturgy at midnight here in this Basilica, I asked everyone to be, in mind and heart, more there than here; more in Bethlehem, at the birthplace of Christ, in that stable-cave in which "the Word became flesh" (Jn 1:14). And today I ask the same of you. Because the Magi Kings, those strange pilgrims from the East, came just there, to that place, south of Jerusalem. They passed through Jerusalem. They were led by a mysterious star, the star, an exterior light that moved in the firmament. But they were led even more by faith, the inner light. They were not surprised by what they found: neither by the poverty, nor the stable, nor the fact that the Child lay in a manger. They arrived and they fell down "and worshipped Him". Then they opened their caskets and offered the Child Jesus gold

and incense, of which Isaiah speaks, but also myrrh. And after having done all that, they returned to their country.

Because of this pilgrimage to Bethlehem, the Magi Kings from the East became the beginning and the symbol of all those who, through faith, reach Jesus, the Child wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, the Saviour nailed to the cross, He who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, taken down from the cross and buried in a tomb at the foot of Calvary, rose again on the third day. These very men, the Magi Kings, three according to tradition, from the East, became the beginning and the prefiguration of all those who, from beyond the frontiers of the Chosen People of the Old Covenant, have reached and still reach Christ by means of faith. . . .

The Epiphany is the feast of the vitality of the Church. The Church lives her awareness of God's mission, which is carried out through her. The Second Vatican Council helped us to realize that the "mission" is the proper name of the Church, and in a certain sense defines her. The Church becomes herself when she carries out her mission. The Church is herself, when men — such as the shepherds and the Magi Kings from the East — reach Jesus Christ by means of faith. When in the Christ-Man and through Christ they find God again.

The Epiphany, therefore, is the great feast of faith. Both those who have already arrived at faith, and those who are on the way to arrive at it, take part in this feast. They take part, rendering thanks for the gift of faith, just as the Magi Kings, full of gratitude, knelt before the Child. The Church, which becomes more aware of the vastness of her mission every year, takes part in this feast. To how many men it is still necessary to bring faith! How many men must be won back to the *(Continued on page 6)*

Epiphany. . .

Continued from page 5

faith, which they have lost, and that is sometimes more difficult than the first conversion to faith! But the Church, aware of that great gift, the gift of the incarnation of God, can never stop, can never tire. She must continually seek access to Bethlehem for every man and for every period. The Epiphany is the feast of God's challenge. . . .

Arise Jerusalem! "Your heart shall thrill and rejoice". Gathered there together with those who have come from the East, with the Magi kings, admirable witnesses to faith in God incarnate, near the manger in Bethlehem, where we are directed in mind and heart, we find ourselves again here in this Basilica. Here the prophecy of Isaiah has been fulfilled in a special way, in the course of the centuries. From here the light of faith spread to so many men and so many peoples. From here, through Peter and his See, an innumerable multitude has entered and still enters this great community of the People of God, in the union of the new Covenant, in the tabernacles of the new Jerusalem.

And today what more can Peter's successor wish this Basilica, this new Chair of his, than to serve the Epiphany? That in it and through it men of all times and of our time, men from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South, may succeed in arriving at Bethlehem, at arriving at Christ by means of faith.

Once more, therefore, I borrow the words of Isaiah to express the wishes "Urbi et Orbi" and say: "Arise! Your heart shall thrill and rejoice!" Arise and sow the strength of your faith! May Christ enlighten you continually! May men and Peoples walk in this light. Amen." +

St. Alphone Ligouri in his book, *The School of Christian Perfection*, notes: "Men fall into sin because they lose sight of the presence of God." As we have just celebrated the birth of the God-Man at Christmas, it seems the appropriate time to recollect on the reason Christ came into the world.



St. Alphonse explains: "A powerful aid in preserving recollection is the remembrance of the presence of God. Not only does it conduce to recollection of spirit, but it is also one of the most effective means of advancing in the spiritual life; it helps us to avoid sin; it spurs us on in the practice of virtue, and it brings about an intimate union of the soul with God.

There is no more excellent means of quieting the passions and of resisting the temptation to sin than the thought of the presence of God. St. Thomas says: 'If we thought of the presence of God at all times we would never, or very seldom, do anything to displease Him.' According to St. Jerome, the recollection of God's presence closes the door on all sins. For, if in the presence of our rulers, our parents or superiors, we do not care to transgress their commands, how could we violate the commandments of God if we remembered that His eyes were upon us? . . .

"Now a good means of walking in God's presence is to picture Our Lord as present with us wherever we may happen to be. We may think of Him at times as a little babe in the crib of Bethlehem; as a poor exile on His way to Egypt; as an apprentice in the workshop of Nazareth; a man of sorrows who was condemned a criminal to suffer and die; as scourged and crowned and crucified. St. Teresa praised this practice very much. . . .

"Another and better means of walking in the presence of God is based on the truths of holy faith. It consists in seeing God with the eyes of faith and being thoroughly persuaded that He is present and a witness of our actions. It matters not that we are unable to see Him with our bodily eyes; we cannot see the air around us, and we never doubt for a moment that it exists and that without it we could not possibly live. We do not see God, but faith tells us He is everywhere present. The Apostle St. Paul says: 'In Him we live and move and are.' (Acts 17:28). This is an easy practice and is not tiring to the mind. It is sufficient to make little acts of faith such as the following: My God, I firmly believe that Thou art here present. With this may be joined acts of love, of conformity and of good intention.

"Still another beautiful practice is that of seeing God in His creatures. . . . The most perfect method, however, of keeping alive the thought of God's presence consists in beholding God within our very selves. It is not necessary to ascend to Heaven to find the Lord God; we need only to recollect ourselves, and we shall find Him within us." +



The Anchor, our Diocesan Newspaper To Go Digital and Available Free

Bishop Edgar da Cunha announced last month that *The Anchor*, the diocesan newspaper will no longer be in printed form but will transition from print to a fully digital format. On Ash Wednesday, February 18, *The Anchor* will launch a new mobile-friendly website and shortly thereafter introduce a new weekly electronic newsletter available by email.

In these new ways, *The Anchor* will bring all diocesan news and happenings and local commentary, plus it is teaming up with OSV News to provide national and international news as well as Vatican updates along with indepth analysis and special stories designed to support its readers' spiritual journal. All this will be free of charge through the new platforms. +

Father Tim Who Led a Guadalupe Retreat At the Parish Creates Marian Messengers

In September 2024, Father Michael brought us Our Lady of Guadalupe — who since adopted our parish — to us in a retreat led by Father Tim Oudenhoven from the La Crosse WI

diocese. In April, Bishop Battersby asked Father to return as a pastor full-time. As a result, Father Tim has established an apostolate entitled The Marian Messengers to continue and spread devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe. We wish Father the grace needed to bring more followers to the patroness of the Americas. For info about Father Tim's new organization, go online to MarianMessengers.org to receive his newsletter and more on the apostolate. +

As Jubilee Year of Hope Ends, Pope Leo Offers Insight for the New Year Ahead

Life, Pope Leo XIV said towards the end of the Jubilee Year, is given to us as a gift which we did not ask for, and every person faces difficulties and obstacles, some to an even greater extent.

“Life has an extraordinary specific character: it is offered to us, we cannot give it to ourselves, but it must be constantly nourished,” he said. “It needs care that sustains it, enlivens it, safeguards it and relaunches it.” With this aspect of gift comes the human yearning to understand our purpose in life and our ultimate goal.

Living with purpose, said the Pope, means finding direction and hope, which then allows us to never give up despite fatigue and teaches us to trust that our earthly pilgrimage will some day lead us home. “To hope in life,” he said, “means to have a foretaste of the goal, to believe as certain what we do not yet see and touch, to trust and entrust ourselves to the love of a Father who created us because He willed us in love and wants us to be happy.” +

Prayer for the Holy Father

Almighty and everlasting God, have mercy upon Thy servant, Pope Leo XIV, our Supreme Pontiff, and direct him, according to Thy loving kindness, in the way of eternal salvation; that, of Thy gift, he may ever desire that which is pleasing unto Thee and may accomplish it with all his might. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary, Glory Be to the Father. . .



Words OF
WISDOM

*Quotations for you to meditate on
concerning the virtue of faith . . .*

“I shall remember how St. Peter at a blast of wind began to sink because of his lack of faith, and I shall do as he did: call upon Christ and pray to Him for help. And then I trust He shall place His holy hand on me and in the stormy seas hold me up from drowning.”

— **St. Thomas More**

“Such is the power of great minds, such the light of truly believing souls, that Christians put unhesitating faith in what is not seen with the bodily eye; they fix their desires on what is beyond sight.”

— **St. Leo the Great**

“The true believer practices what he believes. But of those who pay only lip service to faith, Paul has this to say: They profess to know God, but they deny him in their works. Therefore James says: Faith without works is dead.”

— **St. Gregory the Great**

“Christ protects His servants’ faith and gives strength to believers in proportion to the trust that each man who receives that strength is willing to place in Him.”

— **St. Cyprian**

“If you believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and that God raised Him from the dead, you will

be saved and taken up to paradise by Him, just as He brought the thief there. Do not doubt that this is possible.”

— **St. Cyril of Jerusalem**

“Just as there are two coinages, one of God and the other of the world, each with its own image, so unbelievers bear the image of this world, and those who have faith with love bear the image of God the Father through Jesus Christ.”

— **St. Ignatius of Antioch**

“What concept could man have of God if he did not first fashion an image of Him in his heart?”

— **St. Bernard**

“Faith in action is service. We try to be holy because we believe. In most modern rooms you see an electrical light that can be turned on with a switch. But, if there is no connection with the main powerhouse, then there can be no light. Faith and prayer is the connection with God, and when that is there, there is service.”

— **St. Teresa of Calcutta**

“O Jesus, come back into our society, our family life, our souls and reign there as our peaceful Sovereign. Enlighten with the splendor of faith and the charity of Your tender heart the souls of those who work for the good of the people, for Your poor. Impart to them Your own spirit, a spirit of discipline, order and gentleness, preserving the flame of enthusiasm ever alight in their hearts. . . May that day come very soon, when we shall see You restored to the center of civic life, borne on the shoulders of Your joyful people.”

— **Pope St. John XXIII**

Words of WISDOM

Quotations from Saints whose feasts are in January . . .

“I have learned from Jesus Christ Himself what charity is, and how we ought to practise it; for He says: ‘By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye love one another.’ Never can I, therefore, please myself in the hope that I may obtain the name of a servant of Christ if I possess not a true and unfeigned charity within me.”

— **St. Basil the Great**

“Everyone who breathes, high and low, educated and ignorant, young and old, man and woman, has a mission, has a work. We are not sent into this world for nothing; we are not born at random; we are not here, that we may go to bed at night and get up in the morning, toil for our bread, eat and drink, laugh and joke, sin when we have a mind and reform when we are tired of sinning, rear a family and die. God sees every one of us, He creates every soul . . . FOR A PURPOSE. He needs, He deigns to need, every one of us. He has an end for each of us. We are all equal in His sight and we are placed in our different ranks and stations, not to get what we can out of them for ourselves but to labor in them for Him. As Christ has His work, we too have ours — as He rejoiced to do His work, we must rejoice in ours also.”

— **St John Neumann**

“God is love and He loves us; that is the heart of the Christian faith. God gave us the commandments and it is in observing them that we show whether we love God. Pray that you may obtain a true love of God. God loves us so much. He wants us to love Him.”

— **St. André Bessette**

“May the God of love and peace, set your hearts at rest and speed you on your journey, may He meanwhile, shelter you from disturbance by others, in the hidden recesses of His love, until He brings you, at last, into that place of complete plenitude, where you will repose forever, in the vision of peace, in the security of trust and in the restful enjoyment of His riches.”

— **St. Raymond of Peñafort**

“The utter folly of our time is lamentable, that men should think to assist God with human help and to protect the Church of Christ by worldly ambition.”

— **St. Hilary of Poitiers**

“The devil is afraid of us when we pray and make sacrifices. He is also afraid when we are humble and good. He is especially afraid when we love Jesus very much. He runs away when we make the Sign of the Cross.”

— **St. Anthony of Padua**

“Try to accept what God is pleased to give you no matter how bitter — ‘God wills it’, is the thought that will strengthen you and help you over the hard places if we wish to be true children of God.”

— **St. Marianne Cope**

“If God is the center of your life, no words are necessary. Your mere presence will touch hearts.” — **St. Vincent de Paul**

The Month of January 2026

Theme: The Holy Name of Jesus



January is dedicated to the Holy Name of Jesus, celebrated on January 3. The Church reveals to us the wonders of the Incarnate Word by singing the glories of His name. The name of Jesus means Savior; it was shown in a dream to Joseph together with its meaning and to Our Lady at the Annunciation by the Archangel Gabriel.

Pope's Prayer Intention:

For Prayer with The Word Of God

Let us pray that praying with the Word of God be nourishment for our lives and a source of hope in our communities, helping us build a more fraternal and missionary Church.

Monthly Virtue: Faith

Our Holy Faith is a treasure of unspeakable value, for in it we possess first of all a divine light which serves to guide us safely on the way to Heaven. It is only right that we subject to God our will by the observance of His Holy Law, and our reason by believing His infallible Word.