

Chapter 10

Spotless Mirror, Martyred Heart: The Heart of Mary in Jesuit Devotions (17–18th centuries)

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Since early Christianity, the heart of Mary, mother of Jesus, has been an object of interest in the Christian world. The heart is the fulcrum of human life and sentiments, the place in which Mary accepted God and his invitation to give birth to his human and divine Son. Augustine (354–430) suggests that Mary first “conceived” Jesus in her heart and that she thus became metaphorically pregnant with his divine love.¹ Mary’s answer to God, the so-called *fiat* (literally “let it be done”), embodies the attitude of an immaculate heart, keen to serve God.² With her obedience of heart, Mary untangled the knot created by Eve with her original disobedience. The Gospels also reveal that, since her *fiat* and despite the joys of motherhood, Mary’s heart sorrowed for Jesus’ fate. Marian devotion grew enormously in early modern Europe and Mary’s heart was venerated by theologians and devotees as the center of her physical and emotional life. Two cults were engendered by such veneration: the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which exalts her purity of heart conceived free from the original sin; and the devotion to the *Mater Dolorosa* (Our Lady of Sorrows), which recognizes the inconsolable pain in Mary’s heart for Jesus’ passion and death.

This chapter explores the cult of the heart of Mary as it was promoted by two Italian Jesuits in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Giovanni Pietro Pinamonti (1632–1703) and Liborio Siniscalchi (1674–1742). It investigates the emotional dimension of devotion to Mary’s heart and its connection to the passion of Christ, and, by extension, the cult of the Sacred Heart.³ In particular, it focuses on two devotional books composed by Pinamonti and

Siniscalchi, *Il Sacro Cuore di Maria Vergine* (1699) and *Il Martirio del Cuore di Maria Addolorata* (1735) respectively.⁴ These little-known books contributed to the growing veneration of the hearts of Mary and Jesus and allow us to investigate how devotion to the immaculate and sorrowful nature of Mary's heart was promoted by Italian Jesuits with the intention of encouraging devotees' internal conversion. Pinamonti and Siniscalchi's books fostered the image of Mary as loving mother and protector and offer insight into how the heart of Mary, thus her emotions and interior life, was described and used as a pathway to the heart of Catholics in early modern Italy. Several early modern Jesuit authors addressed the figure of the Virgin Mary composing treatises and devotional books, paving the way for Pinamonti and Siniscalchi's works (e.g. Francis Coster's books of meditations on Mary). Although there is an important corpus of scholarship exploring the role of the devotion to the Sacred Heart (i.e. the heart of Jesus) in Catholic history, there is little on the heart of Mary, and especially the emotional side of the cult as a tool encouraging internal conversion. This article will address this issue with the intent of contributing to cover this gap.

Marian devotions and the Sacred Hearts of Mary and Jesus

The cult of the heart of Mary is indissolubly connected to the heart of Jesus. The mother and the son's hearts are joined through love, and early modern devotional books highlight that devotees cannot access Jesus' heart without passing through Mary's heart.⁵ Traditional iconography of Mary's sorrowful heart presents it as a martyred object pierced by swords, while in classical representations of the Immaculate Heart, the purity of Mary's heart is indicated by the roses that surround it. Jesus' injured heart is the product of the Passion and is especially connected to his wounded side, pierced by a spear whilst on the cross. The cult of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary arise from the Passion, engendered immediately after

the crucifixion.⁶ The Gospels illustrate the moment of indescribable suffering when Mary's heart breaks at the sight of her son's death. Devotion to Mary's heart is closely connected to the cult of the Seven Sorrows, the seven painful events in Mary's life, including meeting with her son on the way to Calvary, Jesus' crucifixion, and old Simeon's prophecy foretelling the pain she would suffer at her son's fate: "A sword will pierce through your own soul."⁷ The devotion to Mary's Sorrows has ancient roots, but the cult of the Heart of Sorrows was authorized only in 1668, when the Servite Order was granted permission to celebrate the Feast of the Seven Dolors.⁸

Historians have extensively explored the devotion to the heart of Jesus, which was widespread in early modern Europe, and highlighted its importance to apparitions, politics, and eighteenth-century disputes about the veneration of the carnal heart, which Jansenists considered idolatry.⁹ Between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, the Sacred Heart became an object of prayer for the atonement of sins and reparation and, at the same time, the symbol of the Christ king and his reign on earth.¹⁰ Jesus' heart is typically represented as a "crucified" heart and visualized by mystics as a wounded object. In images, the heart is usually visible as an external object against Jesus' chest or in his hand, surrounded by fire or a crown of thorns, and continuously bleeding. The Sacred Heart became the predominant symbol of Jesus' holy wounds. By comparison, the history of early modern devotion to Mary's heart is a little-studied topic. While some work has investigated the contributions of French authors, including Jean Eudes and Louis de Montfort, the promotion of devotion to Mary's heart in early modern Italy is still to be explored properly.¹¹ The historical and contemporary significance of this cult means that there is much work to be done to understand the emotional and spiritual implications of this devotion.

Marian devotions exploded in early modern Europe, and have been identified as "one of the ways in which early modern Catholic elites sought to manage religious conflict and

diversity in Central Europe.”¹² After the battle of Lepanto in 1571, Mary was raised to protector of Christianity against the Ottoman threat; during the Thirty Years War, she was elected as protector of Bavaria; Jesuit Francis Coster (1532–1619) promoted the restoration of Mary as protector and leader of all Catholic Countries. This production of the triumphant “Our Lady of Victories” can be contrasted with the diffusion of the idea of Mary as a domestic icon of maternal love, purity, and sorrow. In the eighteenth century, a process described as the *feminization* of Catholicism spread, with the diffusion of a more personal spirituality, the promotion of novel female models of sanctity, the development of affectionate and sensitive devotional practices, and a growing interest in sentimental themes pertaining to the Passion and the warm, affectionate Sacred Heart. Contemporaneously, the role of women in Catholic societies evolved through the establishment of female networks committed to new socio-religious activities, such as the education of young girls.¹³ Eighteenth-century Italian religiosity was often distant from the rationality promoted by many representatives of the Catholic Enlightenment; old and new religious orders, such as Franciscans, Jesuits, and Redemptorists, spread emotional and affectionate devotions, and enhanced a piety that has latterly been defined as feminine. Mary played a central role in this process.

In the early modern period, the Jesuits contributed to the fostering of devotion to Mary through the establishment of Marian congregations, which mainly consisted of students of the Jesuit colleges and Jesuits of the professed houses, and were used by the Jesuits as a pathway to forge links with the European elites.¹⁴ Marian devotion also increased at the end of the eighteenth century during the advance of Napoleon’s French army into Italy. The threat of French atheists, who sacked and desecrated churches, produced a wave of fear on the Italian peninsula.¹⁵ In this context, Marian “miracles” multiplied, and many images and paintings of the Virgin across Italy were seen moving their eyes in affection and sympathy with their beholders. Believers perceived these movements as expressions of Mary’s

compassion; her eyes looked at praying devotees, changed color, and cried.¹⁶ These phenomena, which increased after the Suppression of the Society of Jesus, emphasized the traditional role of Mary as a loving, comforting mother.

The Sacred Hearts as visual objects for internal conversion

Since the mid-sixteenth century, Jesuit authors published several devotional and theological books concerning the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and the Virgin Mary *per se*, to raise awareness of Mary's experience and move devotees' emotions and open their hearts. In 1666, Philippe Kiesel composed eighty sermons pertaining to the Sacred Hearts, while Jacques Nouet summarized the major spiritual tenets of the cult. Claude de la Colombière (1641–82) spread the devotion to the Sacred Heart in England, when he moved to London as the duchess of York Maria Beatrice Este's chaplain. Thanks to him and the diffusion of the devotion within the Stuart entourage before the Glorious Revolution and the exile, the Sacred Heart became a Catholic political symbol adopted against Protestants and anti-Catholic movements.

Jean Croiset's successful *La devotion au Sacré-Coeur*, which was reprinted several times, represents a turning point in the development of the devotion.¹⁷ Croiset emphasized this devotion as an intimate practice and tied the Sacred Heart to the Eucharist, as complementary aspects of the veneration to the body of Christ. In Croiset's view, the devotion was firstly *sensible*, as it referred to the physical heart of Jesus, which was considered to be a tender, sweet, and warm object; it was not a symbol of the suffering Jesus to be read in its penitential dimension, but instead represented a lovable, affectionate Savior.¹⁸ Croiset stressed that such tenderness was found in devotion to Mary; in passing through her heart, which loved Jesus most of all, devotees reached Christ's heart. The tenderness of Mary's heart was especially significant at the turn of the eighteenth century,

when Enlightenment rationalism promoted a distinction between intellect and emotions (both earlier considered elements of the heart) and identified the heart as an emotional organ.¹⁹ But there were voices of dissent: in *L'homme religieux* (1657), Jean-Baptiste Saint-Jure claimed that the heart assigned intellect and will, which were the basis of thought and emotions.²⁰

A new sensibility within Catholicism fostered the emotional dimension of devotion to the Sacred Hearts. In the eighteenth century, Jesus' heart became a symbol of the identity of the Suppressed Society of Jesus, and an anti-Jansenist symbol. Different theological orientations were reflected in the iconography of the cult, which was disseminated through paintings, images (frequently distributed by the Jesuits in internal missions), and costumed processions. Theologians and religious men worried about the proper representation of the heart, which they feared was in danger of being depicted too abstractly or, on the contrary, as an excessively concrete object.²¹ Corporeality was particularly stressed by the cult of the Sacred Heart and its iconography: the physical heart of Jesus is adored as the heart of a divine person and incarnated God, and as the naturalistic symbol of God's love for humanity. It is a real heart made of flesh that embodies Christ's human nature.²²

In the 1760s, Pompeo Batoni's painting of Jesus' Sacred Heart, realized for the *Gesù* (the main Jesuit church in Rome), established an iconographical model, which became (and still is) the image per excellence of the cult, especially within the family environment.²³ Batoni drew inspiration from the apparitions of the Sacred Heart to Marguerite Alacoque (1647–90) in the monastery of Parais-le-Monial in 1673, which had provided a new impulse to this devotion (also thanks to Marguerite's spiritual father, the Jesuit Claude de la Colombière), fostering the reparative element of the cult and connecting it to the devotion to the Holy Wounds. As in Alacoque's apparitions, Batoni's iconographical model shows a feminine image of Jesus, which keeps in one hand his visibly wounded heart engulfed by flames, surrounded by the crown of thorns and topped by the Cross. Reparation and tenderness co-existed in the

devotion to the Sacred Hearts and both these elements were expressed in the Jesuit books that nourished it. Mary's heart represented a tangible, emotive object, which devotees could easily understand and visualize. It was a visual object designed to encourage internal conversion that symbolized both maternal love and a pathway for repairing one's sins.

Jesuit Marian congregations were a privileged place to express devotion to Mary in early modern Europe. Members of the sodality consecrated themselves using a chivalrous formula, addressing Mary as their mistress, patron, and protector.²⁴ Their daily routine was marked by prayers to Mary, especially the Rosary, with the aim of nourishing humility.²⁵ Marian feasts were celebrated and involved the neighborhood in important socio-religious gatherings. As an illustration, during Lent the sodalities organized costumed processions. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Augustan Marian Congregation processed a statue of the *Mater Dolorosa*, following a depiction of the Passion.²⁶ This was not an isolated event. In 1619, a costumed representation of the Passion of Christ was held in Neubourg (Germany), which included the *Mater Dolorosa* with her heart pierced by seven swords.²⁷

Early modern devotional books and preaching on the heart of Mary inspired mental images of this object as a beacon of hope for souls. Pinamonti and Siniscalchi's books provide two useful examples for investigating the evolution of the expression of devotion to the pure and sorrowful heart of Mary. Both authors promoted the heart of Mary as a source of consolation, love, and purity; and as a martyred object whose suffering, due to Jesus' Passion, could move human hearts. They pursued the same purpose with different literary techniques. Pinamonti used a gentle tone and style, which expressed the *sensible* heart, while Siniscalchi aimed at shaking his readers with very dramatic and realistic accounts on Mary's pain. Siniscalchi's text provides an example of how an eighteenth-century author living in a period characterized by rationalization of devotions nevertheless composed highly emotional, dramatic, and "theatrical" works showing a Baroque influence.

Devotion to the pure and sorrowful heart of Mary

Pinamonti was a Jesuit missionary committed to the re-evangelization of the Central and Northern parts of the Italian Peninsula.²⁸ He was part of a wave of rural missions in European areas following the Council of Trent (1545–63), reflecting a soteriological anxiety about religious ignorance, disaffection to the sacraments, and moral corruption. Pinamonti was born in 1632 and entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus at fifteen. He spent his life conducting internal missions, engaging people through meditations on the Passion of Christ, staging theatrical representations of religious subjects aimed at improving catechistic understanding, organizing processions, preaching, and writing. For twenty-six years, he was the companion of Paolo Segneri Senior (1624–94), one of the most remarkable Jesuit missionaries and orators of the era. He died on mission to Orta (Piedmont, Northern Italy). Pinamonti, as many Jesuit missionaries, understood the importance of religious iconography for a successful mission.²⁹ Visual culture allowed people to better understand dogmas and religious teaching and facilitated internal conversion. The *arma Christi* (instruments of the Passion, such as the crown of thorns and the flagellum), as well as the images of Mary, the Sacred Hearts, and the saints, but also images of Hell, were valuable allies in the process of reconquering souls.³⁰ In his *Il Sacro Cuore di Maria Vergine*, Pinamonti uses concrete images of the heart of Mary to capture and cultivate the reader's visual imagination and to stimulate an emotional response. With benignity, skillfulness, and patience (as we read in a biography composed at the beginning of the eighteenth century), Pinamonti “pierced every heart, also moving the harshest, and inflaming the coldest.”³¹

The pure and sorrowful heart of Mary was an ideal visual object for stimulating the imagination and moving people to devotion. Liborio Siniscalchi (1674–1742) similarly

understood its potential in composing a much more dramatic book than Pinamonti's. Little information survives about Siniscalchi's life.³² He was born and died in Naples and spent his life in the priesthood, during which time he wrote several spiritual and devotional books. He was also the rector of a Jesuit House between 1739 and 1741. The theme of the martyrdom of Mary's heart on the Golgotha, which is the focus of Siniscalchi's *Il martirio del Cuore di Maria Addolorata*, lends itself to highly emotional and corporeal descriptions of Mary's suffering. Siniscalchi's theatrical style aimed at provoking an interior emotional upheaval that advanced repentance and internal conversion. Where Pinamonti employed delicate imagery to induce soul-searching, Siniscalchi used dramatic rhetorical artifices.

Pinamonti and Siniscalchi's works capture the Jesuit emphasis on providing images of concrete objects to stimulate the imagination and move the heart, as part of the so-called *religio carnalis*, i.e. concrete devotion, a piety felt through human senses. Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises (composed by the founder of the Society of Jesus) promoted the use of imagination and mental images, especially in the meditation on the Passion. The practical value of the heart of Mary is highlighted by Siniscalchi: before images of Our Lady of Sorrows (*Addolorata*), he writes, sinners experience a deep contrition of the heart. He provided the example of the death of a *uomo scelleratissimo* (heinous man), who was guilty of his father's homicide, in front of a painting representing the *Addolorata*. His contrition on viewing the image was so strong that it physically broke his heart; a miraculous sign that confirmed to the confessor of the dead man that his soul was immediately taken to Heaven.³³ Siniscalchi's narration suggests that compassion for the sorrowful Mother of God and her wounded heart saved souls by inspiring men to repent; it illustrates, moreover, how the physical image of the *Addolorata* and her pierced heart moved sinners to an interior contrition and conversion.

As a visual object, the heart of Mary has been defined, represented, and understood in the early modern Catholic world using recurring devices, which also played a substantial role in Pinamonti's and Siniscalchi's devotional books. The Gospels present the heart of Mary as the fulcrum of her sentiments and life. In them, the heart represents the center of human existence, the origin of feelings, emotions, will, nature, and conscience. The term "heart" appears in the Bible hundreds of times and is often interchangeable with the idea of soul.³⁴ The cult of the heart of Mary is rooted in Luke's Gospel: "But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart."³⁵ As a physical part of her body, Mary's heart is a *sensible* object that symbolizes her inner life and virtues, joys and sorrows, purity and, above all, her compassionate, virginal, and maternal love for God the Father, her divine Son Jesus, and humanity. Luke locates Mary's heart as the foundation of her wholehearted devotion to Jesus. Paolo Segneri Senior thus suggested in his treatise *Il Devoto di Maria Vergine* ("The Devotee of the Virgin Mary"), that Mary's heart is "a furnace of Divine Love seven times more intense than the heart of all the Saints together."³⁶ Devotion to the cult of Mary's heart was designed to increase love for God the Father and Christ through reflection on and imitation of Mary's virtues and unconditional love for her son. Love is, hence, the result of this devotion, rather than its object.³⁷

As a human heart, Mary's heart is also marked by suffering, and directs sinners to repentance and atonement. Segneri Senior thought that Mary should be called *tutta cuore* (all heart) for her compassion for men's degradation, noting that "She is nonetheless all hands to relieve us from it [misery]".³⁸ This echoes Saint Epiphanius' (315–403) description of Mary as *multocula* (with many eyes, all eyes) due to her attention to human misery. Segneri thought Mary's heart as ample as "the skies", and capacious to such an extent that it could embrace humanity with an unmatched affection.³⁹ He argued that "in creating Mary [God wanted] to summon in one heart all the talents that are shared among all the others; a heart

that, like the sea, does not overflow for such fullness.”⁴⁰ Pinamonti and Siniscalchi’s books similarly locate Mary’s heart as an infinite source of love and charity. The traditional image of the Virgin as *advocata nostra*—literally our advocate before a judging Christ—emerges particularly in Pinamonti’s work. Mary’s *scientia* (knowledge) is trustworthy, as her heart is enlightened by divine light.⁴¹ The heart of Mary is human, but free from sin; it is, in this sense, a powerful connection between humanity and God.

That Mary’s heart was a carnal heart is particularly evident in artistic representations of the *Mater Dolorosa* in which it is pierced by swords. Within his treatise, Pinamonti clarifies that “heart” refers to Mary’s soul and will, but that it was also an *oggetto sensibile*, a real tangible object. “We need,” he writes, “something concrete to be moved and stimulated to devotion and internal conversion.”⁴² Mary’s heart was to be honored as the most precious relic of her virginal body.⁴³ The devotion to Mary’s heart thus presents two complementary elements: a reflection on Mary’s interior life and perfections; and the cult of the physical heart as part of her untouched body. The use of corporeal, bloody, and dramatic images was common during the Baroque, and whilst discouraged by an eighteenth-century branch of the Church that promoted Enlightened piety, it did not vanish. Indeed, as an illustration, at the time of Siniscalchi’s work, the Church approved the devotion to the blood of Christ (1721), while in 1765 the Congregation of Rites authorized the liturgical celebration of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Immaculate heart: Giovanni Pietro Pinamonti

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God,” notes Matthew’s Gospel.⁴⁴ Yet, hearts were, as the Gospel of Mark suggested, subject to corruption, first by original sin and latterly by the decisions taken there.⁴⁵ Satan planted the idea to betray Jesus in Judas’ heart, noted

John the Evangelist.⁴⁶ The idea that the innocence of Mary's heart gave humanity greater access to God was fostered in the seventeenth century during the diffusion of the cult, and is notable in the devotional book composed by Pinamonti. Free from original sin, Mary was a unique example of purity. Pinamonti presented such limpidity as a guiding light for humanity and a remedy for moral corruption. Mary's heart is a *specchio senza macchia*, a spotless mirror.⁴⁷ According to the Jesuit, a pure heart was Mary's defining characteristic and consisted of her virtues, first and foremost charity, and innocence. Pinamonti tracked the difference between the charity *de' nostri cuori terrestri* (of our earthly hearts) and Mary's heart, in which God's fire of love burns perpetually.

As a spotless mirror, Mary's heart perfectly reflects Jesus' innocence and absence of sin. To explore this idea, Pinamonti uses a traditional allegoric exegesis of the Song of the Songs (6, 10) that identifies Mary as the moon and Christ as the sun.⁴⁸ Mary's unique holiness came directly from Christ: God predestined her *ab aeterno* (before the Creation) to be saint and immaculate. Her human heart, meaning the place where men could be corrupted and sin arise, was as pure as Jesus' heart.⁴⁹ As a result, Mary's heart was devoid of *passioni disordinate* (wild passions): "for where there was no root of guilt [original sin], there could be no branches."⁵⁰ Even an unclouded mirror, notes Pinamonti, cannot accurately convey the image of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, who is God's *primogenita* (first-born) in the order of Grace.⁵¹

Pinamonti often uses poetic (and at the same time realist) similes and comparisons to present Mary's heart to readers in a manner that could capture their understanding: "Just with her presence, [Mary] generated purity in those who looked at her, just as the snow freezes you even when you see it up close".⁵² A believer can become purer by praying to and reflecting on the heart of Mary, whose purity is a key for internal conversion. It instills a desire for holiness in devotees, who turn to it asking for pardon, help, and enlightenment.

Praying to the heart of Mary provides consolation and strength. Continuing dedication to this religious practice increased the worth of the Virgin in the devotee's mind and allowed her or him "to eventually earn such affection that is necessary [for our requests] to be granted and to deserve this great title of devotees of Mary and her Sacred Heart."⁵³ "We honor every day her Heart," Pinamonti writes, "in order to change our heart to a heart that meets her Heart."⁵⁴

Pinamonti also plays with the differences and similarities between the heart of Mary and the heart of common man. He asks: "But now how should a sinner, all mud, as am I, stand blushing before you?"⁵⁵ and observes "the greater misery, the greater your mercy will be."⁵⁶ During internal missions, religious men like Pinamonti and Segneri presented themselves as common sinners to induce the audience, composed of secular people, to soul-searching and repentance. Pinamonti exhibits the same humble attitude in his book by meditating on a personal encounter with Mary. He suggests that the more miserable and sinful a man, the greater the glory of Christ and Mary, *advocata nostra* before her judging son, in forgiving such a sinner. Men are pardoned and saved through the merits of Christ, with the potential intercession of Mary: "Here you are my defaced heart, so that you sanctify it [i.e. absolve from sin, "justify"]. If it is foul, you might purify it through your intercession before God."⁵⁷ After this exaltation of the purity of Mary's heart, Pinamonti focuses on the resemblance between her heart and that of every man, thus aiming to make his readers feel closer to her and increase their devotion and hope of salvation. Segneri Senior wrote very significantly that Mary's mercy toward humanity means that she is the first to arrive in sinners' hearts and the last one to depart.⁵⁸

Emotions are personified protagonists in Pinamonti's reflections on the Sacred Heart of Mary. Love and suffering fill Mary's heart: limitless love for her son Jesus (and as a consequence for humanity) and immeasurable pain for his tragic death. Yet, Pinamonti also establishes a connection between Mary's anguish and an ordinary mother's suffering. In this

respect, the devotion to the heart of Mary was appealing because it presented once again a point of union between the human and the divine. Devotees could not only feel closer to God through praying Mary's Immaculate Heart, but take comfort in the common experience of suffering. Pinamonti uses the tension between Mary's pure and nonetheless human heart to produce both connection with his readers and inspire their devotion.

A martyred heart: Liborio Siniscalchi

Starting with the title of his work, *The Martyrdom of the Heart of Our Lady of Sorrows*, Siniscalchi draws attention to Mary's inconsolable pain and stresses that her "Passion" of the heart had been prophesized by old Simeon. The Jesuit tells the reader of Ignatius of Loyola who, from his conversion, wore on his chest an image of the Sorrowful Mother that showed her grieved heart pierced with swords. Daniello Bartoli (1608–85), a Jesuit scholar who composed a life of Ignatius, narrates the story of this hand-colored image.⁵⁹ Siniscalchi highlighted the importance of bearing images of the *Madonna Addolorata* (Sorrowful Madonna), as a form of protection against the Devil and temptation. He wonders: "Who could possibly explain the raw brutality with which Mary felt her heart torn apart?"⁶⁰ This provocation leaves readers with a reflection that emerges clearly from the seventeenth and eighteenth-century Jesuit literature on the topic: the purest heart ever created came to exemplify, ultimately, the deepest suffering.

Drawing on a tradition that dates to Jerome (347–419/420), Siniscalchi defines Mary as *Regina de' Martiri* (Queen of Martyrs). Mary's martyrdom was considered more painful and extraordinary than any other as it was a martyrdom of the heart (not a physical martyrdom).⁶¹ Mary experienced in her heart all the wounds of Jesus' Passion and death. The connection between Jesus' tormented flesh and Mary's emotions of the heart is evident on the

Calvary, where Christ's physical death corresponds with the "death" of Mary's heart. Pinamonti refers to this martyrdom in his work, but Siniscalchi focuses exclusively on it. Two inseparable elements define Mary's heart and, consequently, the devotion toward it in Siniscalchi's reflections: pain and compassion, in its etymological sense (i.e. suffering with). Mary's heart agonized with Jesus because of her infinite love for him. Devotion to Mary's tormented heart is thus promoted by Siniscalchi as a form of compassion. True friends, we read, reveal themselves in time of need: "crying with Mary for her sufferings could satisfy her much more than rejoicing for her happiness."⁶²

Over the centuries, Catholic theological reflections on Mary's suffering and role in the history of salvation have suggested the Virgin as co-redeemer along with Christ. In 1964, in the dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium*, Paul VI defined Mary's unique cooperation in the economy of salvation, although with a soteriological function clearly subordinated to that of Christ, who is considered the only *Mediator*. Centuries earlier, several authors, among them Pinamonti and Siniscalchi, shared the image of Mary as co-operator in the economy of salvation, through their suggestion that Mary lived a Passion of the heart. Pinamonti argues that, although Christ did not need any help and Mary was not "Redentrice, ma Redenta" (Redeemer, but Redeemed), Mary still deserved the title of *Redentrice* (Redeemer) for her special redemption and her infinite love for humanity.⁶³

Mary and Jesus' hearts were one, unified heart due to their "scambievole amore" (mutual love): "Mary, who loved Jesus much more than herself [...] felt more anguished for Jesus' torments than she would have been if tormented herself."⁶⁴ Mary's heart was crucified on Golgotha, along with the body of Jesus, writes Siniscalchi.⁶⁵ He describes Mary's spasms of pain at the sight of her son's crucifixion: "The injuries to Jesus ripped Mary's heart to shreds."⁶⁶ Siniscalchi dramatically evoked all the events of the Passion by reconstructing their pitiful effects on Mary's heart: Jesus' flagellation at the column, the suffering of the crown of

thorns, the *via dolorosa* (painful path) to the Calvary, and the crucifixion. He describes these events using powerful, moving, and often fictionalized images of Mary's Passion of the heart; her suffering was such that, metaphorically, she died with Jesus.

The use of dramatic and theatrical rhetoric was typical of Jesuit orators and missionaries. Topics such as the Passion and Mary's sufferings were particularly suitable for dramatization. Embellishing the Passion was a strategic choice to stimulate the readers' imagination and move them to compassion. Siniscalchi reinforces this imagery with revelations received by mystics, to whom Christ or the Virgin disclosed details of the Passion (e.g. Bridget of Sweden). Mary, we read, felt like dying when she saw the "*sanguinoso macello*" (bloody slaughter) of her son's flagellation: "the wounds of Your flagellated Son were all impressed in Your heart."⁶⁷ Siniscalchi pities and is moved by Mary's suffering. He bursts out: "Oh Mother of All Sorrows, I can no longer bear to see you with such a cruel dagger in your chest. Tear it out, and thrust it into my own heart, which is certainly more deserving of such a fate."⁶⁸ Through compassionate engagement, devotees were taught to understand and feel Mary's wounds of the heart and to sympathize with her suffering.

Mary knew that Jesus' destiny was pain and death, and, for this reason, Siniscalchi states, Mary has always been *addolorata* (sorrowful).⁶⁹ He notes: "Indeed, Mary's Heart always bore the piercing thorn of her Son's future death."⁷⁰ The description of the encounter between Mary and Jesus on the *via dolorosa* is one of the most touching episodes in Siniscalchi's narration. Mary's dreadful pain is ineffable. In front of her tortured Son bearing the cross, the Mother is desperate and talks only with her eyes: "Mary remained, yes, highly wounded in the heart when she saw her Son under the Cross."⁷¹ Siniscalchi's dramatization was designed to emotionally engage readers and gradually build to the climax of crucifixion. On the way to Calvary, he describes Mary collapsing several times from shock and her heart breaking at the sight of Jesus' blood. He does not embroider the image of a heroic mother; on

the contrary, he fosters the image of Mary as a human icon of suffering. Along with St. Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109), who claimed to receive this revelation from the Virgin herself, Siniscalchi states that Mary fainted when Jesus' executioners unclothed him for crucifixion.⁷² On the Golgotha, we read, both the cross and the crucifix were laid in Mary's heart; a cross was made, in fact, to torment Christ's body *and* Mary's heart.⁷³ Siniscalchi also recalls the *Stabat Mater* (the Mother Stayed), a thirteenth-century sequence (i.e. a Catholic liturgical poetic hymn). The emotional sequence describes Mary at the foot of the cross, tormented by sorrow.

The value of Mary's sorrowful heart within Catholicism can be seen in the abundance of artistic representations of the *Mater Dolorosa*. The heart is the point of convergence of Mary's sufferings. The representation of the swords piercing it recalls Simeon's prophecy, but nonetheless provides an image of real pain. "I look at you dying, and yet I do not die;"⁷⁴ "You, pierced in the body, and I, in the heart."⁷⁵ The metaphor of Mary's Passion of the heart recalls a human carnal heart lacerated by grief and dying for sorrow, and the idea of the concrete martyrdom of Mary's physical, virginal heart. The frequent use of verbs referring to the physical effects on the heart, such as "tear apart", "pierce", and "strike," allows the readers to easily imagine the tangible results of Jesus' killing on the heart of his mother. In Siniscalchi's work, Mary seems to die of a broken heart, but nonetheless does not die and suffers a continuing martyrdom. Devotees could empathize with the human heart of the Son of God's mother, share her suffering, and find strength and consolation. Women could identify themselves with Mary as mothers, and everyone could appreciate the protection of their celestial mother.

Conclusion

Pinamonti expressed concern that the devotion to the heart of Mary could be considered *femminile*; a feminine devotion, a cult for women. The “emotionalization of devotion” that was involved in awakening a tender piety sat in tension with the Enlightenment rationalization of cults within eighteenth-century Catholicism. Paola Vismara has stressed in this regard the diversity and complexity within early modern Catholicism, in which different moral, theological, and devotional orientations coexisted.⁷⁶ Pinamonti reassured readers that the cult was not just for women by hypothesizing that God required this emotional devotion to spread in order to counter the coolness and indifference of Catholic hearts. According to Pinamonti, devotion to Mary’s heart, which loved God above all, achieved this aim through increasing the devotees’ love for Christ. It was a model of devotion that venerated Mary’s heart as a complex organ that could capture love and compassion.

An investigation of Pinamonti and Siniscalchi’s devotional books allows an exploration of the literary production of Mary’s heart by Jesuits across two generations. From missions, Pinamonti learnt how to talk to ordinary people to move their sentiments, and developed a personal style that was very different from his companion Segneri’s. Pinamonti’s book offers a gentle and safe way to access divine mercy through devotion to Mary’s heart. With a very effective simile, Pinamonti explains that, just as a medical doctor provides treatments to heal his patients, the devotion toward the heart of Mary is a good medicine that will heal the world from evil. He identifies the purity of Mary’s heart as a source of inspiration to humanity.

Liborio Siniscalchi’s dramatic literary style demonstrates the space for religious Baroque expressiveness within eighteenth-century Catholicism.⁷⁷ The themes of Passion and suffering offered a fertile ground for dramatization. Siniscalchi’s literary work has the virtue of involving readers in the visceral narration of Jesus’ and Mary’s “Passions” on the Calvary. Siniscalchi’s first purpose is that of moving his audience to compassion, and through

compassion to repentance, internal conversion, and moral control. The connection between Mary's heart and human hearts developed in Pinamonti and Siniscalchi's books suggests that in early modern Catholicism the heart was understood as a place of emotional upheaval and change, where human beings felt guilt for their moral corruption and sins, and found the inspiration to change their life and become closer to the divine. The heart emerged as a most secret and personal space for men and women, and a place of encounter with God; it is the place where internal conversion begins.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, devotion to Mary and her heart expressed a domestic attitude, while simultaneously holding political and eschatological functions. Louis Marie de Montfort (1673–1716), a priest and missionary who composed the *Traité de la vraie dévotion à la Sainte Vierge* (“Treatise of the true devotion to the Sacred Virgin”), strongly contributed to developing such a familial dimension and reinforcing Marian devotions. He taught that the true devotion to Mary is affectionate and full of trust, as a child's attachment to his mother.⁷⁸ The Jesuit Alfonso Muzzarelli (1749–1813), moreover, prescribed the cult of Mary to be practiced in the month of May in the home, within the family, by means of the collective prayer of the Rosary and the Litany of Loreto, in front of an image of Mary. He also promoted the domestic practice of the “fiori di virtù” (literally flowers of virtues, i.e. sacrifices, offerings to God or the Virgin), to be dedicated to her.⁷⁹

Devotion toward the heart of Mary has relentlessly continued until the present day. Over the centuries, the cult of Mary has functioned in support of the Papacy against its opponents: Protestants in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; Enlightenment ideals and French “atheist” attacks in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; and Soviet Communism in more recent times. The recent history of the Catholic Church shows extraordinary encouragement to the devotion to the Sacred Hearts. In 1899, pope Leo XIII consecrated humanity to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which is presented (similarly to Mary's heart) as a

remedy for the ills of “modernity”. In 1942, Pius XII fostered the image of Mary as help for Christians in the middle of World War II, and consecrated all of humanity and the Church to Mary and her Immaculate Heart. This consecration was requested several times by Alexandrina Maria da Costa (1904–55), a Portuguese mystic beatified in 2004 and recognized as a stigmatic.⁸⁰ Devotion to Mary’s heart was closely connected to Alexandrina’s experience of the Passion and the reparation of sins.

On May 13, 1967, on the anniversary of the first Marian apparition of Fatima (when Mary required the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart as a strategy for peace amidst a raging revolution), Paul VI exhorted Catholics to renew their consecration to the Immaculate Heart. In 1984, John Paul II rejuvenated this consecration, thus illustrating the attention of the contemporary Church to this specific Marian devotion. In 2013, Pope Francis, a Jesuit, stated that on Calvary, “Mary is united to the Son in the martyrdom of her heart and in the offering of his life to the Father for the salvation of humanity.”⁸¹ Over several centuries, the cult of the heart of Mary has provided devotees opportunity to get closer to the divine, by imitating Mary’s love for Jesus and the interior virtues symbolized by her pure and sorrowful heart. As a sensible object, able to capture devotees’ imagination and arouse their emotions, the heart of Mary has become a key element in Catholic devotions, a symbol of purity and patient suffering, and an inspirational model for Catholics.

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¹ Augustine, *Sermo* 215, 4.

² Luke 1: 38.

³ For a first approach to Jesuit history see John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

⁴ Giovanni Pietro Pinamonti, *Il Sacro Cuore di Maria Vergine, onorato per ciascun giorno della settimana con la considerazione de' suoi meriti e con l'offerta di vari ossequii* (Firenze: Pier Matia Miccioni, 1699). I used an edition published in Monza (Tipografia Corbetta) in 1836; Liborio Siniscalchi, *Il Martirio del Cuore di Maria Addolorata, ovvero Considerazioni, Colloqui, Aspirazioni, Esempi, e Pratiche devote su i Dolori della SS. Vergine, per tutti i Sabati dell'Anno* (Napoli: Francesco Ricciardi, 1735). I used an edition published in Venice (Lorenzo Baseggio) in 1761.

⁵ See, for example, *Ristretto della divozione al Sacro Cuore di nostro Signore Gesù Cristo tratta dall'opera del Padre Claudio de la Colombière* (Venezia: Antonio Zatta, 1794).

⁶ Karmen Mackendrick, *Word Made Skin: Figuring Language at the Surface of Flesh* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 117.

⁷ Luke 2: 35.

⁸ Karmen Mackendrick, *Word Made Skin*, 119.

⁹ See Jeanne Weber, "Devotion to the Sacred Heart: History, Theology and Liturgical Celebration," *Worship* 72 (1998): 236–254; "Cœur (Sacré)," in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique. Doctrine et histoire*, ed. M. Viller (Paris: Beauchesne, 1953), vol. 2, 1023–1046; Mario Rosa, *Settecento Religioso* (Venezia: Marsilio, 1999), 17–46.

¹⁰ On this subject see Daniele Menozzi, *Sacro Cuore: un culto tra devozione interiore e restaurazione cristiana della società* (Roma: Viella, 2001).

¹¹ See, for example, Jean Ségué, "Millénarisme et ordres adventistes": Grignon de Montfort et les Apôtres des Derniers Temps," *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 53, no. 1 (1982): 23–48; Paul Milcent, *Saint Jean Eudes: un artisan du renouveau chrétien au XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1985).

¹² Bridget Heal, “Mary ‘Triumphant over Demons and Also Heretics’: Religious Symbols and Confessional Uniformity in Catholic Germany,” in *Diversity and Dissent: Negotiating Religious Difference in Central Europe, 1500–1800*, ed. Howard Louthan, Gary B. Cohen, Franz A. J. Szabo (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 153–72.

¹³ See Marina Caffiero, “Femminile/popolare. La femminilizzazione religiosa nel Settecento tra nuove congregazioni e nuove devozioni,” *Dimens* 2 (1994): 235–45; Claude Langlois, *Le catholicisme au féminin. Les congrégations françaises à supérieure générale au XIX^e siècle* (Paris: Le cerf, 1984).

¹⁴ Louis Châtellier, *L’Europe des dévots* (Paris: Flammarion, 1987). I used an Italian edition (Bologna: Pardes Edizioni, 2013). See also Lance Gabriel Lazar, *Working in the Vineyard of the Lord: Jesuit Confraternities in Early Modern Italy* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2005), 125–52.

¹⁵ Roberto Salvadori, *1799: gli ebrei italiani nella bufera antigiacobina* (Firenze: Casa Editrice Giuntina, 1999), 43; Marina Caffiero, “La fine del mondo. Profezia, apocalisse e millennio nell’Italia rivoluzionaria,” *Cristianesimo nella storia* 10, no. 2 (1989): 389–442 and *La Nuova Era. Miti e profezie dell’Italia in rivoluzione* (Genova: Marietti, 1991); Eleonora Rai, “L’apocalittica come spiegazione ai “mali” del XIX secolo. Il caso di Giacomo Maria Montini (1874),” *Ricerche storiche sulla Chiesa Ambrosiana* 27 (2009): 167–90.

¹⁶ On the crying *Madonne* and miracles connected to the French invasion of Italy at the end of the eighteenth century, see Massimo Cattaneo, *Gli occhi di Maria sulla Rivoluzione. “Miracoli” a Roma e nello Stato della Chiesa (1796–1797)* (Roma: Istituto nazionale di studi romani, 1995); Giovanni Marchetti, *De’ prodigj avvenuti in molte sagre immagini specialmente di Maria Santissima secondo gli autentici processi compilati in Roma memorie estratte e ragionate da d. Gio. ...* (Roma: Vincenzo Poggio, 1797).

¹⁷ Augustin and Aloys De Becker, Carlos Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus* (Leuven: Editions de la Bibliothèque S.J, 1960), vol. 2, 1661–86.

¹⁸ Rosa, *Settecento*, 35.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

²² Kevin McNamara, “Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary,” *The Furrow* 36, no. 10 (1985): 599–604.

²³ David Morgan, *The Sacred Heart of Jesus: The Visual Evolution of a Devotion* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008). As for Batoni’s painting see Martha M. Edmunds, “French Sources for Pompeo Batoni’s ‘Sacred Heart of Jesus’ in the Jesuit Church in Rome,” *The Burlington Magazine*, 149.1256 (2007), 785–89. See also https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Batoni_sacred_heart.jpg, accessed November 4, 2017.

²⁴ Châtellier, *L’Europe*, 22.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 54.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 155.

²⁸ “Pinamonti, Jean Pierre,” in Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, vol. 6, 763–92.

²⁹ See Bernadette Majorana, “Lingua e stile nella predicazione dei gesuiti missionari in Italia (XVI–XVIII secolo),” *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 45, no. 1 (2015): 133–51; “Missions et missionnaires jésuites en Italie (XVI^e-XVIII^e siècle),” *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 2 (2002): 297–320.

³⁰ Gian Francesco Durazzo, *Raccolta delle virtù del P. Gian Pietro Pinamonti missionario della Compagnia di Gesù* (Roma: Antonio de’ Rossi, 1709), 73.

³¹ Ibid., 70. All translations from Italian into English are mine.

³² “Siniscalchi, Liboire,” in Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, vol. 7, 1226–1232.

³³ Siniscalchi, *Il Martirio*, 180–81.

³⁴ See, for example, Deut. 6:5; 26:16; Matt. 22:37; Mark 12:30.

³⁵ Luke 2:19, 51.

³⁶ “Fornace di Amor Divino sette volte più accesa che non è il cuore di tutti i Santi congiunti insieme.” Paolo Segneri Senior, *Il Devoto di Maria Vergine istruito ne’ motivi, e ne’ mezzi che lo conducono à ben servirla* (Bologna: Giovanni Recaldini, 1677). I used the edition published in Venice (Giovanni Battista Indrich) in 1678, here 126.

³⁷ “Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary,” Catholic Encyclopedia, available at http://www.catholicity.com/encyclopedia/h/heart_of_mary,devotion_to_immaculate.html, accessed October 22, 2017.

³⁸ Segneri Senior, *Il Devoto di Maria Vergine*, 101.

³⁹ Ibid., 118.

⁴⁰ “Così nel formar Maria radunasse in un cuore tutte le doti che son divise frà gli altri; cuore, che; come il Mare, non ridonda per tal pienezza.” Ibid., 49.

⁴¹ Pinamonti, *Il Sacro Cuore*, 122.

⁴² Ibid., 9–10.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Matthew 5: 8.

⁴⁵ Mark 7: 21.

⁴⁶ John 13: 2.

⁴⁷ Pinamonti, *Il Sacro Cuore*, 21–25.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 22.

⁴⁹ See, for example, Hebrews 9:14.

⁵⁰ Pinamonti, *Il Sacro Cuore*, 22.

⁵¹ Ibid., 25.

⁵² “Solo coll’aspetto ingenerava la purità ne’ riguardanti, a guisa della neve che par che solo veduta da vicino vi agghiacci.” Ibid., 23.

⁵³ Ibid., 18–19.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁵ “Ma intanto un peccatore tutto di fango, quale son io, con che rossore deve comparirvi davanti?” Ibid., 34.

⁵⁶ “Sarà tanto maggiore la gloria della vostra misericordia, quant’è maggiore la mia miseria.” Ibid. 35.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Segneri, *Il Devoto*, 141.

⁵⁹ Daniello Bartoli, *Della Vita e dell’Istituto di S. Ignazio fondatore della Compagnia di Gesù* (Roma: Domenico Manelfi, 1650), I–V. I used the edition published in Turin (Giacinto Marietti) in 1825. Here II, 85. See Siniscalchi, *Il Martirio*, 6.

⁶⁰ Siniscalchi, *Il Martirio*, 110.

⁶¹ Ibid., 106.

⁶² Ibid., Introduction, VIII.

⁶³ Pinamonti, *Il Sacro Cuore*, 88–95.

⁶⁴ “Anzi Maria amando Gesù assai più di sè medesima [...] provava assai maggior tormento pe’ tormenti di Gesù, che se fusse stata Ella stessa tormentata.” Siniscalchi, *Il Martirio*, 110.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ “Le ferite di Gesù squarciarono tutto il Cor di Maria.” Ibid., 111–12.

⁶⁷ “Le Piaghe del Vostro Figliuol flagellato tutte s’impressero nel Vostro cuore.” Ibid., 156.

⁶⁸ “Ah Madre Addolorata, io non mi fido più vedervi con un sì crudo pugnale nel petto. Strappatelo pure, e vibratelo nel mio cuore, che questo solo merita.” Ibid., 91.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 34.

⁷⁰ “Maria, portò, è vero, sempre nel cuore la pungentissima spina della futura morte del Figlio.” Ibid., 72.

⁷¹ “Restò Maria, sì, altamente ferita nel cuore per la vista di suo Figlio sotto la Croce.” Ibid., 102.

⁷² Ibid., 111. See also Klaus Schreiner, *Vergine, madre, regina: i volti di Maria nell’universo cristiano* (Roma: Donzelli Editore, 1995), 156.

⁷³ Ibid., 118.

⁷⁴ “Miro il tuo morire, e pur non moro.” Ibid., 338

⁷⁵ “Tu trafitto nel corpo, ed io nel cuore.” Ibid.

⁷⁶ See, for example, Paola Vismara, *Cattolicesimi: itinerari sei-settecenteschi* (Milano: EBF, 2002).

⁷⁷ The Catholic scholar and religious man Ludovico Antonio Muratori (1672–1750) was one of the protagonists of these demands of regulations of cults and his works on the topic had enormous success in Italy and influenced preaching methods. On Muratori see, for example, Paola Vismara, “Lodovico Antonio Muratori (1672–1750). Enlightenment in a Tridentine Mode,” in *Enlightenment and Catholicism in Europe. A Transnational History*, ed. Jeffrey D. Burson and Ulrich L. Lehner (Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame University Press, 2014), 249–68.

⁷⁸ Louis Marie de Montfort, *Traité de la vraie dévotion à la Sainte Vierge*, Italian transl. by Battista Cortinovis (Roma: Città Nuova, 2014), 2, 107, 93.

⁷⁹ Alfonso Muzzarelli, *Il Mese di Maria o sia il Mese di Maggio consecrato a Maria Santissima coll'esercizio di varj fiori di virtù da praticarsi dalle persone secolari nelle pubbliche Chiese o nelle case private* (Ferrara: 1785)

⁸⁰ On victim souls see Paula M. Kane, "'She Offered Herself Up': The Victim Soul and Victim Spirituality in Catholicism," *Church History* 71, no. 1 (2002): 80–119.

⁸¹ Pope Francis, *General Audience*, Saint Peter's Square, October 23, 2013.