

**Meditation at Morning Prayer by
Bishop Derek Byrne, of Guiratinga, Brazil.**

*"We cannot accept God's love without at the same time
accepting His invitation to share that love with others"*

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Over the years, indeed over the centuries, there have been many changes in Society and in what we consider to be important. But one thing that has not changed is our need to belong. This is true in all walks of life, indeed even among the most hardened criminals! At times in our lives we may 'go it alone', but nearly always we end up experiencing the need to share our achievements, our sufferings, our difficulties, our joys, to share whatever is happening in our lives with others: especially with those who are important to us in our journey through life. This sense of belonging is part of human nature, as God created us. It is a very basic and fundamental need.

It is in this context that we can appreciate how wonderful it was for the people to hear these words from God, through the prophet Jeremiah: I will be their God and they shall be my people. It was a wonderful message then and it continues to be a wonderful message for us today, one that assures us of the close relationship God wishes to have with us. We belong to Him!

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart. In the three countries where I have lived for some time (Ireland, United States and Brazil) I have observed a great devotion to the Sacred Heart, symbolizing very intimately the tender loving care that Christ has for us. It is interesting to note that in the Reading, prior to this wonderful declaration (I will be their God and they shall be my people), God says first through the prophet: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts.

The heart is seen as the centre of love, both giving and receiving. Each time we celebrate the Eucharist, we are invited to immerse ourselves in that Love, to deepen our conviction that Christ shares His love with us and commissions us to share this love with others. We cannot accept one without the other. We cannot accept God's love without at the same time accepting His invitation to share that love with others, especially with those who, because of suffering or other difficulties need this love in a special way at this time.

May every communion, every sharing in the Lord's supper be a sharing of our hearts with Christ and with one another, always including and never excluding!