

IN THE PARISH SPOTLIGHT

By Bernie Beglane

A relic of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, founder of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, has been venerated in parishes and one retreat house in our Diocese of Rockville Centre during the second half of this month.

The final veneration takes place this Monday in our own St. Rosalie's Church, from 2-8 P.M. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament also is to take place. Bishop Libasci will celebrate Mass at 7 P.M.

Daughter of Claude Alacoque and Philiberte Lamyn, Margaret was born on July 22, at L'Hautecour, Burgundy, France. She was sent to the Poor Clares school at Charolles on the death of her father, a notary, when she was eight years old. She was bedridden for five years with rheumatic fever until she was fifteen and early on developed a devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. She refused marriage, and in 1671 she entered the Visitation Convent at Paray-le-Monial and was professed the next year.

St. Margaret Mary is most known for her revelation with the Lord inviting her to take the place St. John occupied at the Last Supper.

In 1674, Sr. Margaret Mary believed she had been chosen as the transmitter of a new devotion to the Sacred Heart.

After a few priests deemed her to be delusional, the Rev. Claude La Columbiere, S.J., was convinced she was speaking the truth and wrote about her.

Sr. Margaret Mary was appointed assistant and novice mistress. It is said that before her death at the age of 43 she exclaimed, "I need nothing but God and to lose myself in the Heart of Jesus."

After Margaret Mary's death, on October 17, 1690, the devotion to the Sacred Heart was fostered by the Jesuits and the subject of



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controversies within the Church. The practice was not officially recognized until 75 years after her death.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart is widely known now more than ever. The Sacred Heart is regarded as the symbol of that boundless love which moved the world to take flesh, institute the Holy Eucharist, to take our sins upon Himself, and dying on the Cross, to offer Himself as a victim and sacrifice to the eternal Father."