

## The Charism of Love



During the month of February, Valentine’s Day is a special holiday of love, yet another opportunity for a visit to the Hallmark store! The word “love” is favored for all sorts of reasons, such as “I love my Grandpa” (which is an authentic use of the word), or “I love jogging” or “our family loves pizza night” (which is a stretch when it comes to love’s real meaning). Love comes from the heart, a symbol found on our valentines!

Even though love resides in the heart, it can be much more than an emotion. Love can be the motivation for our actions, it can make the difference between “half-hearted” and “whole-hearted.” On this day filled with hearts, flowers, and chocolates, it is most appropriate to reach out to others with kindness and compassion.

It is even more appropriate to see love as a gift that is God-given and through which we enrich the lives of others. St. Paul tells us that “the greatest of these is love.” (1 Corinthians 13:13) when he spoke of the three virtues of faith, hope, and love. He considers “love” in its highest form – or agape, which translates into Latin as “caritas” which is the origin of the word charity.

Our IHM community has inherited Love as a gift in the spirit of St. Alphonsus, which is passed on through our foundation by Redemptorist, Fr. Gillet and by Mother Theresa Maxis. Love should impact the life, actions, and decisions that IHM’s live by.

“The IHM charism is experienced as a living spirituality, identifiable and expressed in our way of life, perhaps better caught than taught, better described than defined. It is relational and becomes real only when it is acted on, believed in, and shared with others ... This charism is Love, which continues to manifest itself today in the sisters’ joyful service of God and his people. It becomes real availability, approachability, and accessibility. It responds with acute sensitivity and large-heartedness to human need. In a special way, our *Charism of Love* directs our love and concern to God’s poor among us.”<sup>i</sup>

**Please watch this short clip of Fr. Royce Thomas, CSsR, IU’s Chaplain:**

<https://share.icloud.com/photos/0d4kraQRV3IUe89plzw7DmwCw>

(click on the lower photo of Father Royce, then the white arrow)

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<sup>i</sup> See the IHM Immaculata website for more about the IHM charisms. <https://ihmimmaculata.org/ihm-spirituality/charism>.