

From this Corner
Lift Up Your Hearts
Larry Baird

Valentine's Day is just around the corner. It comes at the perfect time to divert our attention from a long winter. The symbol for this day is "the heart." This perfectly symmetrical shape looks nothing like an actual human heart. Somehow, the muscle that efficiently pumps blood through our body and quickens at the sight of a lover was not quite the right shape for the graphic artists. Instead, we have a sterile shape suitable for packaging candy and neat imprints on cards. I have thought about this and it seems to me that this shape is too perfect and uncomplicated. Nothing over which I have ever experienced love or been passionate about has ever been that neat or uncomplicated. Far from it. Those ideas, experiences, and relationships have been the most complicated and most dangerous parts of my life. Some of them I thought would be the death of me. Others have given life abundantly. My theory about the complexity of the human heart is reinforced by the story of John Wesley's denial of communion to Lucy Cobb, a young woman with whom he had fallen in love. Apparently, he proposed marriage to her and she declined the offer. He was so devastated and emotionally shaken that at the next opportunity he refused to offer her communion. Her new husband sued him. Poor John fled for England. Since they did not exist at the time, one can only imagine how the Judicial Council and the Council of Bishops would have responded, but the whole thing probably would not have been pretty. We often times have problems appropriately merging our hearts and sound Biblical theology.

And so, in the middle of winter we are beckoned by Saint Valentine to ponder matters of the heart. The human heart is a complicated thing and needs much tender loving care. If one examines the Biblical admonitions regarding it you will see that it is clear that notwithstanding its complexities, God wants all of our hearts. To me this means that he wants the totality of our experience so that our lives can be redeemed, sanctified, and consequently to be made whole and holy. As I look back over my years of experience, I can affirm that God brings order and contentment to those who offer their hearts in devotion and service to Christ. May it be so with you. Let us lift up our hearts. Let us lift them up to the Lord.