

(continued) **PART TWO: Faith of The Heart**

**HEART**

There is a second dimension to our faith. For Father Chaminade, an act of faith meant not only accepting something as true with our mind but also embracing it with our feelings. This is what is called “faith of the heart.” He taught that acts of faith should not only shape our thinking, but they also should affect our feelings. As Father Chaminade said, our faith should include “attitudes of the heart. It is faith of the heart that justifies: by believing from the heart you are made righteous, Romans 10:10. Faith of the mind alone does not sanctify.”

If our mind says “yes” but our heart says “no,” we will not change. That is why it is sometimes so difficult to believe. It is not because we accept something as true without proof for the mind. Rather, we sometimes have to accept it without any help from our feelings. In fact, we might have to believe even against our feelings. Jesus says, “I will do whatever you ask in my name”, John 14:13. Perhaps this is not so difficult to admit with the mind, but our feelings might be telling us the following. “Once I was really in distress, and I prayed so very much! But my suffering remained. Why will it be different now?” To believe Jesus in such a case means accepting what he says as true without proof for the mind and in spite of past feelings. But such faith gradually brings light to the mind and joy to the heart. We embrace the promise of Jesus also with our feelings.

Father Chaminade maintained that such faith of the heart is essential for a Marianist as a constant way of living.

---

Exercise: Name something you find hard to believe. Is it your reason or your feelings that resist it?

    Name something you find easy to believe. IS it your reason or your feelings that accept it?

---

(continued) **METHOD OF THE HEART**

Second, when I am clear about what I believe with my mind and with my heart, I *formulate an act of faith* and *repeat it often*. In other words, I exercise my faith. For example, “I believe, Jesus, that you have called me to be a member of the Family of Mary, and I thank you.” In spite of some present hesitations and contrary feelings, I *believe* in this grace, and I want to treasure it. I will repeat this concrete act of faith until it becomes for me a conviction that brings me insight, joy, and motivation.

It often happens that what we express in our act of faith is not yet a reality in our life. But as we exercise faith of the heart, what we believe gradually becomes reality for us. Therefore, we make acts of faith, and we ask the Lord to increase our faith because believing is a gift from God. “I believe; help my un-belief!” Mark 9:24. As we grow in faith, what we believe gradually becomes a part of our life.

---

**RECAPITULATION**

-*Formulate* an act of faith of the heart (what you believe and how you feel about it.)

-*Repeat* the act often.

-*Review* periodically how this faith is reflected in your life (and notice how what you believe becomes reality).