

DECREE OF THE CONGREGATION OF SACRED RITES.

[Translation.]



THE festivals of religion unite admirably with the holy sacraments in fostering within the hearts of men the divine charity diffused by the Holy Ghost. Among these festivals is the solemnity instituted in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This solemnity not only sets forth for adoration and glorification the Heart of the Incarnate Son of God, but renews at the same time, the memory of that divine love through which the only begotten Son of God became man, and, obedient unto death, manifested unto men, examples of all virtue and proved Himself meek and humble of heart. But the eager piety of the faithful found out other means of spreading the devotion to the most loving Heart of Jesus, a devotion that is fertile in sweet and abundant blessings. Among many there has prevailed, and still prevails, the pious and praiseworthy custom of wearing on the breast, as a scapular, an emblem of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This custom, which has been enriched by the Apostolic See with partial indulgences, dates from the time of Blessed Margaret Alacoque, who lived illumined by heavenly lights. And since this devout custom flourishes and daily grows more popular in France and in the adjacent countries, humble and fervent petitions have been addressed to His Holiness Pope Leo XIII, praying that, for the greater glory of the reign of Christ and for the increase of divine love, he would deign to approve the scapular known as that of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, together with the accompanying rite and formula for the blessing of the same. This scapular consists of two ordinary pieces of white woollen, connected by a double cord ; one of which pieces bears depicted upon it the usual image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the other a representation of the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title *Mother of Mercy*. His Holiness, graciously hearkening to these petitions, and having consulted the Congregation of Sacred Rites, has deigned to approve the above mentioned scap-