

January 1, 2017

Heart of the World IV

2017 commemorates 100 years since the apparitions of the Blessed Mother to the three children (Lucia, Jacinta, and Francisco) at Fatima. In this column, we have been discussing how St. Michael appeared to them in order to prepare them to meet Our Lady. In his third apparition, he was holding a consecrated Host and Chalice filled with the precious Blood of Our Lord. He taught them a prayer and how they are to comport themselves in the Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

St. Michael's prayer is: *Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I adore You profoundly. I offer You the most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world, in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges, and indifference, by which He is offended. By the infinite merits of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I pray for the conversion of poor sinners.*

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), the Eucharist is described as “...the source and summit of the Christian life.” “The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch.” (CCC #1324)

Like the heart in the body, the very center and life-moving force of the Church is the Eucharist. All of the other Sacraments and the whole life of Grace and the Church in the world flow from it and lead back to it.

What St. Michael was teaching the children (and us) is how important is the Gift of Reverence. It is one of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit (often referred to as Piety). Pope Francis, in his General Audience of June 4, 2014, said:

“[Piety] is a *relationship lived with the heart*: it is our friendship with God, granted to us by Jesus, a friendship that changes our life and fills us with passion, with joy. Thus, the gift of piety stirs in us above all gratitude and praise. This is, in fact, the reason and *the most authentic meaning of our worship and our adoration*. When the Holy Spirit allows us to perceive the presence of the Lord and all his love for us, it warms the heart and moves us quite naturally to prayer and celebration. Piety, therefore, is synonymous with the genuine religious spirit, with filial trust in God, with that capacity to pray to him with the love and simplicity that belongs to those who are humble of heart.”

Additionally, there is a component of Piety that connects us with each other. “...it [also] helps us to pass this love on to others as well and to recognize them as our brothers and sisters.” Remember the example of Mother Theresa?

Fr. Michael