

January 8, 2017

Heart of the World V

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.

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.*

Last week, we focused on how before he even taught the children the words of the prayer, St. Michael taught them how to practice Reverence (or Piety). It is a Gift of the Holy Spirit and denotes an interior attitude that is usually also expressed outwardly. This Gift precedes any interaction and prayer with God.

To show this to the children, St. Michael would prostrate himself before God when he would pray. In this way he taught the children this posture of prayer that they had never seen before. He knelt down and would then bow profoundly, touching his forehead to the ground—very similar to the posture our Muslim brothers and sisters use in prayer.

Before we go on and discuss the components of the prayer that he taught (in the coming weeks), I would like to focus on the importance of *how* he prayed.

One of the beautiful fruits of the Liturgical Movement that in part led to Vatican II is the sense of how much God desires us to approach Him as His children. He does not want artificial barriers. He does not want formality or routine without the engaged attention *and understanding* of the heart. He does not want us to avoid approaching Him due to the necessities of the circumstances of our lives.

On the other hand, the “come as you are” attitude is often used to rationalize an abuse of this desire to have us in His presence by presenting ourselves in a disrespectful manner. The consequences of this are surprisingly deep and wide—some you may not have considered before.

Next week, we will continue with the outward components of Reverence.

Fr. Michael