

January 15, 2017

Heart of the World VI

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 Lucia, Jacinta, and Francisco at Fatima. In this column, we have been discussing how an Angel appeared to them three times in order to prepare them to meet Our Lady. In his 3rd appearance, (when he also revealed that he is St. Michael) he taught them how they are to comport themselves in the Presence of Christ in the Eucharist and a prayer:

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.

For the last couple of weeks, we have focused on how St. Michael taught them how to practice Reverence (or Piety). This Gift of the Holy Spirit precedes any interaction (prayer) with God and denotes an interior attitude that is also expressed outwardly.

We express meaning with our bodies—with what we do, how we do it, and how we dress. St. Michael was able to *appear* to be bowing in order to teach the children, but angels don't have bodies and can't bow. Or kneel. Or sit, stand, lay down, run, eat, sing, kiss, hug, or punch. However, they have a lot to teach us about Reverence.

To show this to the children, St. Michael would prostrate himself before God when he would pray. He appeared to kneel down and then bow profoundly, touching his forehead to the ground. In this way, he taught the children the level of Reverence that ought to be expressed to God through a posture of prayer that they had never before seen.

This means that we as humans are not limited to words to express what is in our hearts and what we feel. It also means that there is a beautiful choreography to life. Liturgical worship taps into this dynamic and allows us to express to God what our words alone cannot. So we stand, bow, kneel, genuflect, process, etc.

On the other hand, these gestures and postures can be superficial if our hearts and minds are someplace else and not engaged in the meaning—and what is most important is what is in the heart. A paraplegic cannot genuflect with his body, but can be very Reverent. Do you think about what you are doing and how you dress in Church?

Fr. Michael