

January 29, 2017

Heart of the World VIII

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 God and a prayer (I hope you have already memorized it). We will return to the prayer when we finish focusing on his teaching of the practice of 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. The Angel was able to *appear* to bow, kneel, prostrate, etc. but could not actually do so. Angels do not have bodies. The fact that we can worship with our bodies is a source of wonder and amazement to them. (cf. Lk, 15:10; Eph 3:10; Heb 2)

However, Angels, who perceive reality with perfect clarity, have a lot to teach us about Reverence. We become tired, or sore, or sick, or injured and get distracted by the gift of our bodies from what we can do with them.

Over the last couple of weeks we focused literally on the externals of our bodies and the least significant way we can express Reverence—how we dress. God knows and judges the heart. He knows with perfect clarity what is in the deepest depths of us even better that we know ourselves.

Clothes and personal hygiene are a veneer. They are only surface deep, but that does not mean that they are ‘superficial’. It is a beautiful and meaningful gesture to present ourselves as well as we can—but what is inside is more important.

If you have to choose between getting to Mass on time or cleaning up and coming late or missing altogether—come to Mass! What is in your heart is most important. On the other hand, if you can clean up, or can plan better, than not to do so is to deprive God of an opportunity to tell Him “I love you”.

The next level of Reverence is how we behave.

Have you ever been someplace where you were trying to pay attention and others around you were being distracting because they were not? When we come to church and spend more than a few moments greeting our friends and loved ones, the Angels are bewildered. We why would we *ever* come to someone’s house and ignore the owner that we claim to be coming to see?

Fr. Michael