

March 5, 2017

Heart of the World XIII

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. One of the most important things he desired to teach them was 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.

Last week we brought up the topic of Altar Rails as a victim of faddish change in the Sacred Spaces of our churches. Even things like church architecture got caught up in the sweep of the “question authority” movement that began in the 40’s and 50’s and came to full fruition in the 60’s and 70’s. This mentality and philosophy was used (by mostly well-intentioned people) to do untold damage to our practice of the Faith. As we mentioned last week, how we pray forms how we believe—*Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi*.

Utopian idealist (and inherently communist) ideas like “radical egalitarianism” and the subsequent activist mentality swept all of society including the Church. In the wake of Vatican II, the loudest voices and clearest actions were those of people who had espoused this worldly (and strongly anti-Faith and *anti-Christ*) philosophy. Altar Rails, which *are* tools and symbols of exclusivity, were seen as symbols of oppressive power structures.

This movement and mentality of radical egalitarianism (and its ilk) was compelling. Who is going to say they are against Equality? There is great irony here, though. In place of the deposed “power structures” there was established an intellectual elite—who in one fell swoop became what they purported to despise. They were now “The Man”. The Devil has been laughing ever since.

Because of this sophomoric and arrogant approach, they failed understand that Altar Rails were intended not to exclude and oppress the laity, but to remind us that ***none of us*** (priest, bishop, or even Pope) ***are equal to God***—and this is *His* house.

Fr. Michael