

March 19, 2017

Heart of the World XV

For 14 weeks now, we have been considering how the Eucharist is at the very center of all of Reality. At this point, perhaps a review of where we have been would be helpful.

We began with the teaching that the Eucharist is ““...*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.

We then noted that 2017 commemorates 100 years since the apparitions of the Blessed Mother to Lucia, Jacinta, and Francisco at Fatima. We discussed how an Angel appeared to them three times in order to prepare them to meet Our Lady. He taught them a couple of prayers and most importantly *how* to pray—with Reverence (or Piety).

This Gift of the Holy Spirit has been the organizing theme since then. It 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.

Reverence/Piety is informed and flows from another Gift of the Spirit—Understanding. We looked at how it is the Mind of the Church that we not only know what to do or pray and when and where, but *if at all possible*, why.

That led us to consider how our outward actions/behavior reflect our inward attitudes and how we show Reverence with our bodies by our gestures, posture, and behavior—things that reflect how we really feel about God. I.e., how we dress for and behave at Mass, if we show up late or leave early, etc.

We then talked about what Sacred Space is and how we can and should honor it. We looked at the various Spaces and Objects in church and what they mean—areas like the Nave and Sanctuary, and objects like the Altar, Tabernacle, Ambo, etc.

Finally, using the example of Altar Rails, we reflected on how faddish ideas and fashion have deeply impoverished and undermined our lived experience of the Faith in Church.

The Holy Angel of Fatima has a lot to teach us. Catholic churches are not social meeting places where we focus on each other. They are a piece of Heaven on earth where we gather together to meet the Lord. Next week: back to the Angel’s Prayer.

*Fr. Michael*