

August 27, 2017

Heart of the World XXXVII

We started this series as last year's Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy was concluding. The idea was twofold: to initiate a plan to carry forward the Grace of that time into the rest of our lives, and to look at how we can better cooperate with this Grace in our day-to-day lives. We began with the Eucharist.

In #1324, the Catechism of the Catholic Church quotes from a document of Vatican II where it explains that like the heart in the body, the very center and life-moving force of the Church is the Eucharist—the Heart of the World.

This year (2017) also marks the 100th Anniversary of the appearance of Our Lady to the three children (Lucia, Jacinta, and Francisco) at Fatima. We have discussed the prayer that the Angel taught them and have looked at Our Lady's requests and pleas for us to love Our Lord in the Eucharist (as well as prayers and sacrifices for sinners, etc.)

For the last couple of weeks we have mentioned that following the idea of *resourcement*, there was a movement began to 'restore' Communion in the hand, in addition to what had become the traditional practice of receiving on the tongue. There is some interesting history to this.

This was instituted in the parish where I grew up when I was a very young boy. My pastor had been one of the expert consultants (*periti*) that accompanied Cardinal Cushing to Vatican II. He was the former Chancellor of the Archdiocese, Latinist, licensed pilot, architect, doctor of Canon Law, and dogmatic theology. (His post-nominal academic letters made me think of alphabet soup.)

Anyway, having been personally at the Council, well read, and informed, he gave a beautiful teaching on the antiquity of receiving in the hand, quoting St. Cyril and explaining the great privilege and honor of such a practice—making a throne for The King with our hands and with the cooperation of the sacred minister, bearing Him with honor and reverence from the Altar of the Cross to the tabernacle of our hearts.

He then concluded by saying: 'and of course, we all know that is wrong-headed and we won't be doing that here.' Ha. Those were the days! Eventually, he had to relent, though, because all the neighboring parishes were practicing Communion in the hand and the lack of uniformity led to confusion.

There were significant reasons for his reservation. Next week we will begin to go into the cloudy and nebulous development of all of this. It is nothing resembling clear and raises some interesting questions.

What is truly important, though, is that no matter my former pastor's sensibilities, he took the time and effort to teach and no matter which practice his people used, they knew what they were doing and were beautifully attentive to Our Lord.

Fr. Michael