

December 17, 2017

## Heart of the World LII

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 Eucharist is the very physical Presence of the Living God among us. All of the other Sacraments and the whole life of the Church in the world flow from it and lead back to it. It is therefore not a stretch to think of the Eucharist as the Heart of the World.

This is why, as Catholics, the very best (practical) gauge of our spiritual life is how intently, intentionally, and intensely we are devoted to Christ in the Eucharist—both at Mass and praying in His Presence either exposed on the Altar or contained in the Tabernacle. As we looked at the Eucharist in terms of our cooperative work of giving thanks to God we considered how we treat and attend to Our Lord in the Eucharist. This was a segue to Fatima.

This year (2017) also marked the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the appearance of Our Lady to the three children (Lucia, Jacinta, and Francisco) at Fatima. We discussed how an Angel was sent to them three times in order to prepare them to meet Our Lady. In his third apparition, he was holding a consecrated Host and Chalice filled with the precious Blood of Our Lord. He taught them a prayer and how they are to comport themselves in the Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The prayer is:

*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.*

After looking at this prayer phrase by phrase, beginning in August, we also considered how reverently (or not) we engage with Christ in receiving Holy Communion in the hand or on the tongue as we considered the history of the practice.

Finally, we returned to our Lady's call and requests as expressed at Fatima and how we can answer them with her practical (and beautifully simple) image given at Medjugorje. The five stones of Prayer, Fasting, Mass, reading/praying with the Bible, and Confession are a template for holiness that we can all easily follow.

Hopefully, you have benefitted from all of this. May God bless your efforts!

*Fr. Michael*