

June 18, 2017

Heart of the World XXVII

This Sunday we observe the Feast of Corpus Christi—celebrating the very Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ made truly Present to us in the Eucharist. This Gift of Love is fittingly understood as the Lord's Gift to us of His Heart. As we have been studying the prayer taught to Lucia, Francisco, and Jacintha by the Angle of Peace we have considered the response (from us) that this Gift requires.

This coming Friday is also the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The image of Our Lord's Sacred Heart is often depicted as a human heart radiating light. It is encircled with a crown of thorns, and is pierced and bleeding from the lance-wound. It is often shown being held/presented by Our Lord in one hand and pointed to by the other, and other times with His clothes being pulled open to reveal it with one hand and again pointed by the other. Out of the top comes flames and amidst and above the flames is a Cross.

The heart for ancient Jews (and at the time of Our Lord's Life) was considered the very core/center of one's being. It was considered both the principle life organ of the body, but also the center of all spiritual activity. It is from the heart that all emotion (especially love) and virtue flows. It is who we are in our deepest reality.

Thorns only came into existence as a result of sin. "Cursed be the ground because of you! In toil shall you eat its yield all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to you, as you eat of the plants of the field." (Gn 3:17-18) This was one of the consequences of Adam's sin—the sin whereby he also abdicated the Office of ruler of this world (as viceroy for God) and surrendered it to the Devil.

In another Garden, Christ would allow Himself to be taken prisoner and later crowned with these thorns. The profound irony of this is a testament to His extreme humility and Love. He *is* king, yet He submits to mockery and is crowned with the very symbol of Adams abdication as He restores proper headship by His act of Love.

Out of the lance wound flows blood and water. The early Church Fathers immediately recognized in this the very source of the Eucharist and Baptism.

The fiery flames show us the intensity and nature of His Love.

The Cross is the means by which He both reveals this reality of His Love and redeems us from the permanent consequence of sin—Death.

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will refresh you. Take My yoke upon your shoulders and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble of heart. Your souls will rest, for My yoke is easy and My burden light" (Mt 11:28-30)

Fr. Michael