



# Cabrini Notes

Volume 9 Number 7

December 5, 2019

## Fátima and the Feast of the Immaculate Conception

As you know, I have been giving a great deal of emphasis to Our Lady of late. As the Church in America fell into the muck and mire of sadness and anger over the revelations of the “Summer of Shame” last year, I plunged deep into a time of prayer and reflection that led me into a renewed discovery of the message of Fátima and it’s relevance to our times. It was in this research that I learned of the importance consecration to Mary’s Immaculate Heart. We made a consecration of the parish last November 13 on the Memorial of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini and then I renewed my own personal consecration on this feast day last December 7 and 8 at Mass. The roots of such devotion to Our Lady’s heart no doubt are found in the teaching of the church about her conception—a dogma of the faith that was declared in 1858.

The Immaculate Conception is one of the most misunderstood teachings of our faith. Many times people confuse it for the virginal conception of Jesus in the womb of Mary, but this is not the teaching. This title refers instead, as the Catechism of the Catholic Church declares (paragraph 491) that “[t]he most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior [sic] of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin.” The Catechism goes on to say that “By the grace of God Mary remained free of every personal sin her whole life long” and, as a sign of her continued fidelity, it cites her line to Gabriel at the time of the Annunciation: “Let it be done to me according to your word. . .” (CCC, p. 493).

In the June 13<sup>th</sup> apparition of Our Lady to the children of Fátima, Our Lady revealed to them her Immaculate Heart. In her memoirs Sr. Lucia wrote that “the Lady showed the children her Immaculate Heart, encircled and pierced by thorns but displaying no swords through the Heart, as in usual artistic renditions of the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary.” The reason for this is that the swords represent the Virgin’s sorrows as the Mother of Christ, especially during His Passion and Crucifixion. The thorns, however, represent the sins of mankind.

The following month, she returned and said that she would later ask for the consecration to her Immaculate Heart as a form of making reparation for the sins of humanity. It was in that apparition that the children saw the terrible and terrifying vision after which Our Lady said, “You have seen hell, where the souls of poor sinners go. It is to save them that God wants to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart.” So, this summer I encouraged people to respond to this call. We had close to 150 people sign up to make the consecration, 50-60 of whom showed up on Sept. 15 to make our consecration together publicly. To add to this, I am currently doing a book study on Mary (Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary) so that people can go deeper into their understanding of the church’s teaching and basis for it that can be found in the Bible.

There is an additional focus to the story of Our Lady of Fátima, namely, that of the Eucharist. St. Peter Julian Eymard founded the Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament at Paris on May 13, 1856 and in 1868 he gave her the title of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament. In 1921 the Vatican created a feast day on the liturgical calendar under that title for the date May 13. As you may know, the first apparition at Fátima took place on May 13, 1917. Of course, this was no mere coincidence. The messages of Fátima make specific reference to the Eucharist. “To prevent this [the war], I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart, and the Communion of Reparation on the First Saturdays.”

The year before Our Lady appeared, an angel appeared to the children and served them the Eucharist. Before that, he taught them a prayer of reparation in which they “offer the most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world, in reparation for the sacrileges, outrages and indifference” by which Jesus is offended. With this in mind, we will for the first time offer a first Forty Hours devotion (40 consecutive hours of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament) on the weekend that culminates with the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, February 2, 2020. Sign-ups will take place in the month of January. It is my hope that we will more fully respond to Our Lady’s requests this year (2020).

Sincerely in Christ, Fr. Mickey