

Maronite Monks of Adoration

Most Holy Trinity Monastery
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To Love the Divinity and Humanity of Christ

Our Christian faith primarily concerns two things: the divinity and the humanity of Christ. Not only for us mere mortals, but for the angels in heaven, these two realities, the divinity and the humanity of Christ, are the source of great wonder, love and joy.

In our Maronite liturgy, given to us by our holy fathers of old, we are reminded of this truth frequently. The angels praise God ceaselessly in heaven. And yet, what astonishment for them to see the invisible, immortal God become a visible, mortal man on earth.

Not only that! Wonder of wonders, God-made-man even descends to the depths of poverty and humility to become our Food and Drink! Do we know the wonder of this mercy? Are we astonished at this marvel?

In our liturgy we sing: "O eternal and hidden One, the angels praise you in the heights and the invisible hosts sing your glory in heaven. (...) Behold, Christ is distributed by human hands. He allowed himself to become a sacrifice for the sake of sinners that they may live by him."

We can imagine, then, the horror which the angels experience when they see us so inattentive, ungrateful and indisposed to approach this great Gift. They know and see both the divinity and

humanity of Christ present in the Eucharist, which we profess to believe. One might guess that if the angels weren't very well instructed in the ways of God's patience and mercy toward us, they would strike us all dead and send us to Hell.

But they desire our repentance instead. They want to communicate to us the demands of justice as well as mercy: the just penance we owe to God for our sins, and the mercy we should show toward poor sinners by making reparation for their sins, too. And all of this the angels want us

to realize by focusing on the holy Eucharist.

This is no mere speculation on my part. In 1916, the Angel of Peace, as he identified himself, appeared to three Portuguese children and invited them to pray. Do you know about this? It's a rather astonishing event. It was the preparation for the apparitions of our Lady of Fátima. The history is recounted for us by one of the three children, Sr. Maria Lúcia dos Santos, now a Carmelite nun nearly 100 years old. The other two children, her cousins, Jacinta and Francisco Marto, died shortly after the apparitions, at the ages of 10 and 11. During the Jubilee year 2000, Pope John Paul II beatified them ... the youngest children to be beatified who were not martyrs. This means



Illustration: Maronite Monks

The Angel of Peace appearing to the three children at Fatima – Jacinta, Lúcia and Francisco.

that the Church has testified to the fact that these young children practiced heroic virtue. So what are we waiting for? Let us learn from Sr. Lúcia's account how the Angel taught these children to love the divinity and humanity of Christ, present in the most blessed Sacrament and to imitate his sacrificial love for sinners.

First Apparition

“Do not be afraid,” the Angel said. “I am the Angel of Peace. Pray with me.” Then, he taught the children to kneel and bow their heads to the ground, repeating three times:

“My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love You. I beg pardon of You for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love You.”

If you examine what the prayer says, five different acts are exercised: the acts of faith, adoration, hope, charity and reparation. In one short prayer, such an abundance of exercise! Not only did the children learn to exercise these spiritual acts, but the Angel also taught them to discipline their bodies in a humble attitude before God. After all, why did God give us a body, except to serve our souls?

Second Apparition

A second time, the Angel appeared to them while they were relaxing during the hot summer months and said: “What are you doing? Pray! Pray very much! The Hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy on you. Offer prayers and sacrifices constantly to the Most High.”

Lúcia asked him: “How are we to make sacrifices?” The Angel responded: “Make everything you can a sacrifice, and offer it to God as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and in supplication for the conversion of sinners. You will thus draw down peace upon your country. I am its Angel Guardian, the Angel of Portugal. Above all, accept and bear with submission the suffering which the Lord will send you.”

A sacrifice need not be big. It only needs to be a sacrifice. And that means it must be a voluntary

denial of something dear. Just as we are composed of body and soul, so we can make both bodily and spiritual sacrifices. We are invited by the Angel to make everything we can a sacrifice. We are convicted of self-love every time we avoid making a sacrifice. What, deny myself? Oh, how desperately sensitive I am ... sensitive, that is, to preserve my own comfort, and not sensitive to the needs of souls! We have no generous love for souls, not even our own. Pure love cannot exist in a selfish heart. Selfish people are not pure. How else can we become pure and see God, except by denying ourselves daily? This is what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. “And Jesus said to all: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Lk 9:23).

Not only are we invited to “accept and bear with submission the suffering which the Lord will send ...” In this, you might say, we can make a virtue of necessity, since everyone suffers in this world. The choice we have determines whether we accept those sufferings in union with Christ. The Angel invites us to do more: to be generous in love and mercy, to “make everything you can a sacrifice, and offer it to God as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and in supplication for the conversion of sinners.” Our Savior left us a new commandment: “A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (Jn 13:34). Jesus Christ didn't have to be born poor, to suffer and be crucified. He chose these sufferings and humiliations as unambiguous expressions of his pure love for us. He chose to give until it hurt, without counting the cost.

Third Apparition

A third time, the Angel appeared, Sr. Lúcia tells us, “holding in his hand a chalice and over it a Host from which some drops of Blood fell



On July 13, 1917, our Lady of Fátima implored:

“Sacrifice yourselves for sinners, and say many times, especially whenever you make some sacrifice: O Jesus, it is for love of You, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.”

into the chalice. Leaving the chalice and the Host suspended in the air, the Angel prostrated himself on the ground and repeated three times the prayer:

“Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I adore You profoundly, and 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 with which He Himself is offended. And, through the infinite merits of His most Sacred Heart, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of You the conversion of poor sinners.”

Then, rising, he once more took the chalice and the host in his hands. He gave the Host to me, and to Jacinta and Francisco he gave the contents of the chalice to drink, saying as he did so: “Take and drink the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, horribly outraged by ungrateful men. Repair their crimes and console your God.” Once again, he prostrated on the ground and repeated with us three times more, the same prayer “Most Holy Trinity ...”, and then disappeared.”

This vision of the Angel adoring the blessed Sacrament and demanding reparation for our ingratitude, even going so far as to speak of consoling God ... who on earth would be so hard-hearted as not be moved by this plea?

Our world has the greatest need of conversion, to turn away from sin and turn towards God. In the final apparition of our Lady at Fátima, she begged of us: “Do not offend the Lord our God any more, because He is already so much offended.” Another time, looking very sad, our Lady said: “Pray, pray very much, and make sacrifices for sinners; for many souls go to hell, because there are none to sacrifice themselves and to pray for them.”

In union with the angels, then, let us bow down before the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ, present in the holy Eucharist, and offer ourselves daily, sacrificing ourselves for the sake of poor sinners. “O Most Holy Trinity, I adore You! My God, my God, I love You in the most blessed Sacrament!” ✠