

Good afternoon, and welcome to our July First Saturday event sponsored by the Saginaw Division of the World Apostolate of Fatima.

I want to extend a word of gratitude to Holy Family Church and Deacon Roger Pasioneck for sponsoring this event. As well as to thank the priests who have taken the time to be here apart from their regular pastoral assignments this morning.

July is the month of the Precious Blood of Jesus. Like many devotions, this one, too, has fallen into disuse. Saint John XXIII (the twenty-third) in an Apostolic Letter dated June 30, 1960 ... over 54 years ago ... titled: "On Promoting Devotion to the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ." He recalls:

*From infancy this devotion was instilled in us within our own household. Fondly we still recall how our parents used to recite the Litany of the Most Precious Blood every day during July.*

Now, recall that this is the same John XXIII ... Saint John XXIII ... in whose name all sorts of devotions were set aside over the past 40 years.

Aside from recalling the place this devotion had within his own family, the Saint recalls the words of the first century saint John Chrysostom who in admonishing the early Christians about the power of the Eucharistic species when received worthily saying:

*Let us, then, come back from that table like lions breathing out fire, thus becoming terrifying to the Devil, and remaining mindful of our Head and of the love he has shown for us. . . This Blood, when worthily received, drives away demons and puts them at a distance from us, and even summons to us angels and the Lord of angels. . . Let us remember what privileges God has bestowed on us, let us give thanks, let us glorify him, not only by faith, but also by our very works.*

Indeed, in a world which has so deviated from the natural law in so many ways, the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, received worthily, should empower us to overcome the world even if the gates of Hell should come against us.

Secondly, in 1917, on July 13, the three visionaries of Fatima - Lucia, Jacinta, and Francisco - in the vision of Our Lady, the children asked for a miracle so that all might believe. This miracle would occur in October of that same year. Our Lady asked these children to:

*Make sacrifices for sinners, and say often, especially while making a sacrifice: O Jesus, this is for love of Thee, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for offenses committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.*

Sacrifices are difficult, especially in our modern world of so many conveniences. But that is why we must persevere in living out our Christian faith.

The children were also given three visions. One of a vision of Hell, the Second of the coming war and the rise of atheism, and the Third on the persecution of the Church ... especially the Holy Father.

Our Lady further stated:

*I shall ask that on the First Saturday of every month Communions of reparation be made in atonement for the sins of the world.*

And that is what we are doing right now. In the reign of Pope Pius XI (the eleventh) Our Lord and Our Lady appeared to Sister Lucia - the sole remaining visionary by that time - and Jesus Himself asked for the Five First Saturdays of Reparation.

And, so, I ask you to promote the First Saturday devotions which will continue here in Saginaw at Holy Family Church. Invite your friends ... your family members ... your co-workers. Too many hearts and souls have grown cold with the chaos of the modern world. To many people have grown numb to the sins of the world ... as well as their own sins. May our devotion to Our Lord's request for the First Saturdays ... and our devotion to Our Lady and Her Immaculate Heart ... and our sacrifices in reparation for our sins and the sins of the world ... bring about ... in our hearts, in our homes, and in our world ... the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.