

Reflection for Thursday 15th October 2020

Last week the Church beatified a 15 yr old boy Carlo Acutis, who used his passion for computers to evangelize and spread the faith. The feast day of the new blessed is 12th October, the anniversary of his death from leukemia in 2006.

Cardinal Agostino Vallini presided over the ceremony, reflecting that the beatification is “good news, a powerful proclamation that a youth of our times, someone like many of us, has been conquered by Christ and has become a radiant light for those who want to know him and follow his example.”

While few were allowed into the shrine, many others watched the beatification from screens set up in the plazas of Assisi. Among those present were Carlo’s parents, who processed in with a relic of their son’s heart.

Carlo was born in London on May 3, 1991 to Italian parents who moved the family to Milan when he was 3 months old. It was there that Carlo grew up, attending local schools and then a Jesuit high school. Devoted to Our Lady from a young age, Carlo made the effort to recite the Rosary daily and, after making his first Holy Communion at age 7, also strove to receive the Eucharist daily and to receive the sacrament of reconciliation weekly.

Cardinal Vallini reflected about Carlo’s example.

He showed that faith does not distance us from life, but rather deeply immerses us in it, indicating for us the concrete path to live the joy of the Gospel. It’s up to us to follow him, attracted by the fascinating experience of Blessed Carlo, so that our lives can shine with light and hope. Here are some points about the wonderful life he led totally committed to Our Lord, Our Lady and his Catholic faith.

In the short 15 years of his life, Carlo Acutis touched thousands of people with his testimony of faith and deep devotion to the Holy Eucharist. Born in London but raised in Milan, Carlo was confirmed at age 7. He never missed daily Mass as his mother, Antonia Acutis recalls: “As a little boy, especially after his First Communion, he never missed his daily appointment with the Holy Mass and the Rosary, followed by a moment of Eucharistic adoration.” Carlo had a great devotion and love for the Blessed Mother. He once said: “The Virgin Mary is the only woman in my life.” An avid enthusiast of technology, Carlo was a gamer and also a computer programmer.

Carlo had a great concern for his friends often inviting those being treated poorly or going through difficult situations to his home for support. Some were dealing with divorce at home or being bullied due to disabilities. With his love for the Eucharist, Carlo had asked his parents to take him on pilgrimages to the sites of all the known Eucharistic miracles in the world but his illness prevented this from happening. Carlo contracted leukemia as a teenager. He offered his pain for Pope Benedict XVI and the Catholic Church, saying: "I offer all the suffering I will have to suffer for the Lord, for the Pope, and the Church."

Carlo used his knowledge of technology to build an entire website catalogue of Eucharistic miracles around the world. He started the project when he was 11 years old. Carlo wanted to utilize technology and his website to evangelize. He was inspired by Blessed Giacomo Alberione's initiatives to use the media to proclaim the Gospel.

During his battle with leukemia, his doctor asked him if he was suffering much pain and he responded that “there are people who suffer much more than me.” Francesca Consolini, a postulator in the Archdiocese of Milan said, “His faith, which was unique in such a young person, was pure and certain. It made him always be sincere with himself and with others. He showed extraordinary care for others; he was sensitive to the problems and situations of his friends and those who lived close to him and were with him day to day.”

Millions around the world have been following his path to sainthood. Just by typing his name into a search engine, more than 2,500 websites and blogs emerge detailing his life and story. As we witness his beatification last weekend and see a young boy wearing jeans, a sweatshirt and sneakers, may we all remember we are called to be saints and strive to live like Carlo with whatever time we are given. As a young Carlo once said: “The more Eucharist we receive, the more we will become like Jesus, so that on this earth we will have a foretaste of Heaven,” and before he died he said, “I am happy to die because I have lived my life without wasting a minute on those things that do not please God.”

May we follow in the footsteps of Blessed Carlo.

Deacon Kevin. (adapted from articles from Aleteia.org)