

12/31/23 - Eucharistic Adoration: *Why is Adoration Important?*

In the last reflection, I introduced some terms that are associated with devotion to the Eucharist, including Adoration, Exposition, Benediction, and Reposition. With this reflection, I want to focus on the richness of Adoration.

Adoration of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is one of the primary ways in which we deepen our relationship with the living God and allow the grace of that relationship to transform us. Far from being a self-focussed exercise, we adore the Lord in the spirit of the angels who cry out “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God Almighty” (Rev. 4: 8). During adoration, two basic movements occur: first we gaze upon the living God with awe, wonder, thanksgiving, and praise. And as we do that we also become aware of the loving and merciful gaze of God upon us, his beloved sons and daughters. Second, during adoration we sincerely and authentically open our hearts to the living and share with Him what is pressing on our hearts, what is occupying our thoughts, what is bringing joy, what is bringing anxiety. All of those are authentic movements that deepen the richness of our adoration and of course, deepen our relationship with the Lord.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us that “it is highly fitting that Christ should have wanted to remain present to his Church in this unique way. Since Christ was about to take his departure from his own and his visible form, he wanted to give us his sacramental presence; since he was about to offer himself on the cross to save us, he wanted us to have the memorial of his love with which he loved us ‘to the end,’ even to the giving of his life. In his Eucharistic presence he remains mysteriously in our midst as the one who loved us and gave himself up for us, and he remains under signs that express and communicate this love: *The Church and the world have a great need for Eucharistic worship. Jesus awaits us in this sacrament of love. Let us not refuse the time to go to meet him in adoration, in contemplation full of faith, and open to making amends for the serious offenses and crimes of the world. Let our adoration never cease.*” (1380)

When we set time aside to adore the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, this can take place in any church or chapel. Adoration is a prayerful disposition that is not restricted to those moments when there is

exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. It is a great delight to the Lord when we pause, even for a brief moment, and make our way into a church or chapel and quiet our hearts, acknowledge His presence, and become aware of the sacrament of our salvation. Adoration of the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament is something to be encouraged, as a means of deepening our relationship with the Lord, deepening our faith, and enriching our charity.

The gift of adoration is that it places our minds and hearts in praise before the presence of the Word, a living Word, a Word that speaks to us heart to heart. In that sense, from the heart of Jesus, ever present in the tabernacle, he speaks a living word to us in our hearts, and thus we have a profound exchange, in what St. John Henry Newman called *cor ad cor loquitor*, that is, heart speaks to heart. If the Lord were not truly present in the Blessed Sacrament, then we would be simply speaking to ourselves and the tabernacle would simply be a piece of furniture. But as it is, the living God truly present in the Eucharist is the one we adore, the one with whom we speak, the one in which we are called to live. Adoration is, then, an essential part of living a most authentic life of a disciple, because it is an acknowledgment that Jesus is truly present, and it is in His presence that we are called into a deeper diving friendship, a union with the one who has loved us from all eternity.

Who in my life do I share my intimate desires of my heart with?
Why is it important to be vulnerable and reveal these parts of my heart to those I love?
How do I speak heart to heart with God?
Do I share with God the innermost thoughts of my heart?
How do I show God awe, wonder, thanksgiving, and praise?

Resources

For additional reading, please see Sacramentum Caritatis (the sacrament of love) an exhortation written by Pope Benedict XVI in 2007 on the Eucharist. In paragraph 66 he writes

One of the most moving moments of the Synod came when we gathered in Saint Peter's Basilica, together with a great number of the

faithful, for eucharistic adoration. In this act of prayer, and not just in words, the assembly of Bishops wanted to point out the intrinsic relationship between eucharistic celebration and eucharistic adoration. A growing appreciation of this significant aspect of the Church's faith has been an important part of our experience in the years following the liturgical renewal desired by the Second Vatican Council. In the Eucharist, the Son of God comes to meet us and desires to become one with us; eucharistic adoration is simply the natural consequence of the eucharistic celebration, which is itself the Church's supreme act of adoration. Receiving the Eucharist means adoring him whom we receive. Only in this way do we become one with him, and are given, as it were, a foretaste of the beauty of the heavenly liturgy. The act of adoration outside Mass prolongs and intensifies all that takes place during the liturgical celebration itself. Indeed, "only in adoration can a profound and genuine reception mature. And it is precisely this personal encounter with the Lord that then strengthens the social mission contained in the Eucharist, which seeks to break down not only the walls that separate the Lord and ourselves, but also and especially the walls that separate us from one another."