

FROM THE PASTOR'S



Epiphany of the Lord – January 7, 2007 C

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION — WHAT IT IS. **Four suggestions on how to spend a quiet time with Jesus.**

One of the great blessings of our parish is the presence of an *Adoration Chapel* on campus and the hundreds of parishioners who help us to have *round the clock* prayer on our parish grounds. The chapel is **located** at the main entrance to our *Ministry Center* (two buildings over from our church).

What is Eucharistic Adoration

Eucharistic adoration is the act of worshiping God as He is present in the consecrated Eucharist. Since the Last Supper, when Jesus broke the bread and distributed the wine, saying, “This is my Body” and “This is my Blood,” Catholics have believed that the bread and wine are no longer merely baked wheat and fermented grape juice, but the actual living presence of the Second Person of the Trinity. *Spending time before the Blessed Sacrament, in prayer and devotion, is exactly the same as spending time before the living God.*

Visiting with Jesus in our Adoration chapel is like visiting with someone face to face as opposed to speaking to them behind a screen. ‘Perpetual’ refers to the ongoing or round-the-clock nature of this form of prayer. One could wonder to what extent we Catholics *really believe* what our church tells us is an important aspect of Catholic faith. If we really and truly believed that Jesus *is* truly present in the Eucharistic bread displayed in the monstrance in our Adoration chapel, would we not visit with him on a regular basis? If some very holy person like Mother Teresa said to us: “I would like it if you would spend an hour with me each week”, which of us would not gladly accept that offer. The truth is Jesus has made that same offer to us.

Why I go to the Chapel

- When I go to the chapel for an hour or more each week, I contribute my little piece to making our campus a place where prayer is occurring 24/7. We may have no scientific way to prove the impact of such prayer on our prayer, I assume in faith that it does make a very positive difference.
- While I do indeed do pray elsewhere every day, I believe the Adoration Chapel is a very special

sacred place filled with the Eucharistic presence of Jesus.

- My hour every week is a very definite way to make sure I spend an *extended period* of time with my Lord.
- In John 15:5-7, Jesus reminds us that without him we can bear no fruit.

Whoever remain in me, bears fruit in plenty but cut off from me you can do nothing.

I need to remind myself over and over that without solid time in prayer, my ministry is but ‘a noisy gong and clanging cymbal’ (1 Cor 13). Likewise, it is good for you to remember that perhaps the *best* thing you can do for your family is spend an hour a week praying for them.

Four Suggestions for your hour with the Lord

If you presently have a prayer format that works for you stay with it. The following suggestions are for newcomers to Adoration and for people who are new to spending an *extended* time with the Lord.

Suggestion #1: Begin by taking a few minutes to become consciously aware that we are now in the presence of Jesus. If you feel led, you might say one-liner prayers such as:

“Thank you Lord for bringing me here.”

“Thank you for the gift of this time with you.”

“Quiet my mind, so that I can be truly present to you.”

“Lord, teach me to pray as you taught your Apostles.”

Take time to *be* in the presence of Jesus our Savior. Keep in mind, we are praying best *not* when we are talking, but when we are listening or simply sitting in the Presence of him ‘who knows us the most and loves us the best. Remember the exhortation of the psalmist: “*Be still and know that I am God*”, and the words of the Medieval mystic. “*While we rest in him, he works in us.*”

Suggestion #2: Spend some time in meditative reading. Reading the Bible or a good spiritual book can and should *feed, illuminate and guide* our spiritual self. Without giving some time to solid spiritual reading, we run the risk of allowing our minds and hearts to be guided and formed by passing fads and by a “wisdom” that is contrary to the gospel. Every

Catholic serious about his/her spiritual development should have a good spiritual book that they read on a regular basis.

We approach spiritual reading differently from the way we approach the reading of the newspapers or other books. Our reading is *meditative*. We wait in humble openness for God to speak to us. When a particular idea or phrase touches us, we pause and sit with the thought for one or more minutes. We should *resist* the temptation to read a certain number of pages during our prayer period. Spiritual reading is *not* about *achieving* but about *connecting with our Lord, about listening for his word*.

Suggestion #3: Spend some time in prayers of petition and intercession. I use the decades of the rosary as a way to pray for a host of personal and global intentions. If you would like a copy of my rosary handout with a list of intentions for all 20 mysteries of the Rosary, contact Maria at the parish office. Phone 254-1595 ext. 3072 email: msittig@ascensioncatholic.org

Suggestion #4: Conclude by spending some time in contemplation. On man who comes to our chapel in the wee hours of the morning calls his time in the chapel ‘divine-therapy’. The image of sunbathing can help us to understand what contemplative prayer is and how we can go about doing it. When we sunbather, we lie under the sun and allow its warmth to penetrate our bodies. In sunbathing our only task is to “let it happen,” to make ourselves available and vulnerable to the sun and to enjoy its warm touch upon our bodies. So it is with contemplative prayer. Our task is to be open and receptive to the warm touch of God’s love. We need do nothing but be receptive to what God offers us. A popular story in prayer circles tells of an old farmer who used to spend a lot of time in church sitting quietly in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. One day his pastor asked him how he spent his time—what he did while in prayer. The old farmer answered. “I look at him and he looks at me.” His prayer was one of being available to and enjoying the presence of God.

This past week I read the following piece about meditation by Richard Carlson (author of *Don’t Sweat the Small Stuff*)

Meditation keeps me centered and calm, non reactive, and in a place of inner harmony. Quite simple, when I finish meditation, it’s downright hard to be irritated by anyone—no matter how difficult they are. And that’s not because I’m pretending to be above

it all or gritting my teeth or aiming for some kind of lofty, super-evolved state of being. No, no, and no. Being unruffled is simply the result of meditation for me. Perhaps it can be for you as well.

Meditation can be done in as little as eight minutes a day. (See Victor Davich’s eight-minute meditation at www.8minutes.org.) The amount of time you devote to it isn’t as important as trying it and finding a routine that works for you.

From “Don’t Get Scrooged”
page 57-58

Thank You.

I thank all of you who week after week faithfully come to our chapel to spend an hour with Jesus. I especially thank all of you who have signed up for those tough hours, 11 pm through 4 am. I thank those of you who often spend two hours or more in the chapel. I thank Gerry Peek for the hours she spend coordinating our Perpetual Adoration Prayer Ministry. I thank our hourly captains—names and phone numbers are posted in the chapel.

If you were present in church today and didn’t sign up for an hour and now would like to call Gerry Peek and she will help you to get all set up. Phone # 255-7951 email: peekgerryjim@msn.com.

“We Have Come to do Him Homage.”

These are the words spoken by the Magi in today’s Gospel as they searched for the infant Jesus. Their words resound through the centuries to be echoed in the heart of every person who makes a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. The presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament is as real today as the infant Jesus was to the Wise Men who sought Him by following a star rising in the East. As Pope John Paul II affirms in his encyclical on the relationship of the Eucharist to the Church, “...the gaze of the Church is constantly turned to her Lord, present in the Sacrament of the Altar, in which she discovers the full manifestation of his boundless love.” (*The Church and the Eucharist, I*)

Have a prayerful week,

