

FROM THE PASTOR'S



Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time July 12, 2009 B

AN HOUR WITH THE “ONE WHO KNOWS US BEST AND LOVES US MOST”

When the late Holy Cross priest, Fr. Frank Gartland, used to hold up the host before communion was distributed at Mass, he would say: “This is Jesus, the one who knows us best and loves us most.” What a beautiful thought to keep front and center in our lives. When we are praying, especially in Eucharistic adoration, we are with the One who “knows us best and loves us most.”

What is Eucharistic adoration?

Eucharistic adoration is spending time with Jesus, whom we Catholics believe is truly present in the exposed host in our Adoration Chapel. While we can and should spend time with Jesus in our homes and elsewhere, his presence in the Eucharist is in a sense more real than elsewhere. It is a bit like the difference between speaking to someone on the phone or behind a screen, and speaking to someone when they are *visibly* present to you. We call Eucharistic adoration “perpetual” when a parish has a chapel where adoration goes on 24/7.

Ascension’s Adoration Chapel opened in July 2002

This July marks the seventh anniversary of our Perpetual Adoration Chapel. Presently, about 393 parishioners are committed to spending one hour each week in prayer in our chapel. Because of their generosity, we have *continuous, round-the-clock* prayer happening on our campus.

Special word of thanks to the 60+ parishioners who fill the tough hours between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. Isn’t it wonderful and inspiring that we have parishioners who are willing to get up in the middle of the night to spend an hour with Jesus?

A sincere thank you as well to:

- Gerry Peek (a 3 a.m. adorer) - for coordinating our Perpetual Adoration Ministry. While Gerry is away taking care of her mother, Cheryl Echevarria acts as coordinator;
- Ed Beasley (now a member of St. John’s in Viera) - for providing the weekly sign-in book and keeping it up to date;
- The 24 captains - for overseeing one hour of each day;
- Bill Quisenberry - for always being ready to help out in any way with this ministry. Bill, by the way, is 86 years old, works part-time, and covers five hours of adoration each

week: Monday and Wednesday at 1 a.m., Friday at 2 a.m., and Saturday evenings.

- A big thank you goes to Mary Heindl who at age 71 faithfully adores four times each week from 1 to 2 a.m.

Nine reasons why people may not sign up for an hour

Next weekend, there will be an opportunity for the “old-timers” to recommit to helping us continue 24/7 prayer on our campus. There will also be an opportunity for those of you who have not participated or have stopped adoring. What might be some reasons why people do not participate in this special graced opportunity? I will name what I believe are nine reasons. Perhaps you can share with me some others.

1. **“Too busy.”** If you are an already busy person, the last thing you need is one more thing on your plate. Who could not agree with that? Perhaps, the best response to the “too busy” excuse is that many of our adorers are also *very* busy people. Why do they come? It is a priority in their lives. Many people testify that when they begin to give some quality time to Jesus, their priorities change. Some of the things that they thought were very important gradually lose their importance.
2. **“I don’t know how I would spend an hour in prayer. I have never done that.”** Next weekend, I will offer some suggestions in my column on how to spend an hour with Jesus.
3. **“I am often away.”** This is also true for many of our present adorers. One person who has the same hour as myself was recently away for six months. The reason we try to have two or more adorers scheduled for each hour is to have coverage when one is away.
4. **“Too stingy with my time.”** That is what one man said and I congratulated him for his honesty.
5. **“I don’t need to go to the Adoration Chapel to pray.”** Of course you don’t. And you don’t need to come to Mass on Sunday to pray, and yet you come.
6. **“It is not my kind of prayer.”** In the chapel, you can pray any way you desire. The only difference is that you are blessed to be praying in the Eucharistic presence of Jesus.
7. **“Tried it, got bored.” Lots of people, including myself, sometimes get bored in prayer, just as some spouses get**

bored with their marriage. Yet, they keep at it. Jesus, I believe, loves us even more for sticking with him especially when we don't get much from our time with him.

8. "Fear I will be assigned to an hour that is inconvenient to me." While we are most appreciative when parishioners are open and available to sign up for an hour where we are in need, you will be assigned to the hour that works best for you.

9. "Fear of getting close to Jesus." This is often an unconscious reason. If I open my heart to Jesus, what will he ask of me?

Did I miss any reasons for not spending an hour with Jesus in our Adoration Chapel? If so, let me know.

Sign-up card

The following is the sign-up card that will be in the pews next weekend. If you are not going to be in church next weekend, you can use it to recommit to continuing an hour a week or to sign up as a newcomer. If you are going to be in church next weekend, please wait until then to recommit or sign up as a newcomer.

I would love it if those of you who do come to adoration would share with me why you come. Your sharing will help me as I prepare for our *sign-up* next weekend. I am also asking our present adorers to please pray for a good response to our invitation to spend one hour a week in the chapel.

Tithe Report '08 -'09

It has been well said that a parish budget (or one's own budget) is a theological statement. It is a statement about what is important to me.

This past fiscal year, our parish set aside \$123,000 in outreach aid from our offertory donations, which for this past fiscal year came to \$1,600,000—about 7% of our offertory. Next year we plan to give 8% in outreach.

How the tithe money was spent

I have divided the money into three groupings:

Home Outreach: \$59,130

Fr. Doug Doussan, St. Gabriel's, New Orleans, (Katrina relief); Catholic Charities of Orlando; Catholic Volunteers of Florida; Community of Hope; Congregations for Community Action; Resurrection Ranch (to become a shelter for homeless women); Master Workshop; Covenant House; JMJ Life Center (pregnancy crisis center); Donation

to 2 Monasteries; JustFaith.

Foreign Missions: \$48,570

Fr. Wreh, Society of African Missions (Liberia); Fr. Gregory Chisholm (Peru); Haitian Missions; Café Conciencia.

Miscellaneous & Individual Assistance: \$13,300

Divine Mercy Radio: \$2,000

Two months ago, we started giving \$1,000 a month to Divine Mercy Catholic Radio. Our donation pays for two days of programming per month.

Legacy gift finances the building of schools in India

Some years ago, the parish received a generous legacy gift. The will had no strings attached to it. As an expression of gratitude to God for this wonderful gift and blessing, I set aside 10% of it for outreach. Many years ago, I personally received a legacy gift from parishioners in a former parish, from which I set aside 20% for outreach. I reckoned that this money was pure gift, and I felt obligated to share a generous portion of it with the poor or other good causes. I reluctantly share this with you as it is certainly not my intention to brag about my generosity. My intention is rather to do all I can to motivate you to be generous with the Lord's blessings. I know that all of us are in different situations. Our *Last Will & Testament* allows many of us a wonderful opportunity to give to good causes. As you think about that, do consider your parish and our School Endowment.

The Indian Project. My contact in Calcutta (now spelled Kolkata) is Sr. Cyril, an Irish Sister of Mercy, whom my own sister Teresa spent a month with a few years ago. Sister has a wonderful outreach ministry to the street children of Kolkata. These children live in the schools provided by the Sisters.

Several months ago, we sent Sr. Cyril a \$63,000 gift as tithe from our legacy gift. This is how she is using it.

Cost of school construction: 15 schools x \$1000	
(Rs. 40,000/-)	\$15,000
Cost of teachers' salaries: 60 teachers x \$25	
(Rs. 1000/-) x 12 months.	\$18,000
Cost of children's stationery: 2000 children x \$3	
(Rs. 120/-) x 1 year	\$ 6,000
Food for the children: 2000 children x \$1	
(Rs. 40/-) x 12 months	<u>\$24,000</u>
Total expenses:	\$63,000

We may never personally see the wonderful work that Sister and her colleagues are doing for the "street children"

of Kolkata, but *God* sees it and I am sure he is very happy that we have chosen to use some of our money in this way. I am considering a trip to Kolkata next year to see firsthand Sister Cyril's work.

Resurrection Ranch. As I mentioned above, Resurrection Ranch (located off US 1 just north of the Pineda Causeway) is one of the recipients of our tithe money. The new board, led by Lila Buescher (e-mail: lilabuescher@bellsouth.net), is in the process of transforming Resurrection Ranch into a place for homeless women with children. A lot of work still needs to be done before it will be ready for the women and their children. In a recent meeting with Lila Buescher and Pat Hanson, I invited them to name some of their immediate needs, which I am now sharing with you.

- Riding lawn mower and gas-powered weed whacker (Resurrection Ranch is on 5 acres of land.)
- Computer, fax machine and printer.

If you would like more information about *Resurrection Ranch* or would like to volunteer, call 259-4970.

It's all about generosity

In Luke 6:38, Jesus says: "*Give, and there will be gifts for you; a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap; because the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given back.*"

The above verse can be applied to both topics of this column.

- Spending time in our chapel is, among other things, an act of generosity. Remember: *time* is a very precious commodity or gift. Most of us protect it carefully. Being *generous* with our time in prayer is one way to live Lk 6:38.
- Sharing our financial resources with our church and the poor is another way for us to live Lk 6:38.

When we give generously and share our time, treasure and talent with our church and the poor, we, including our parish family, are being good stewards of God's blessings to us.

Have a blessed week,

