



## Pentecost Sunday June 4, 2017 A

### Adoration sign-up next weekend Blessing of a forgiving heart

A parish with *Perpetual Adoration* is one where there is prayer happening on the parish campus 24/7. Prayer—24/7, how good is that?

A HUGE thank you to the 400 parishioners who are helping us to sustain this continuous prayer on our Church grounds.

Also a HUGE thank you to Sam Rodriguez who oversees this ministry by updating the names on the list of adorers and replenishing the sign-up sheets every week. Thank you, Sam.

### Why participate in this ministry?

In my chapter on Adoration in my new book on Prayer, I quote the witness of two parishioners.

Clara, a wife and mother of three children in grade school, and a manager in her workplace, says:

*Going to the Adoration Chapel has helped me grow spiritually in a way I cannot describe with words. It is truly a special place where Jesus is waiting for us to come and spend time with him. He is always waiting, and he is waiting for you.*

John, retired from the Navy and from Northrup Grumman, who volunteers a lot, writes:

*I am so amazed at the positive effect that the past year of adoration is having for me! So many times I've chosen a book at random and found something in it that directly related to events in our family life. I walk out of the chapel knowing that God is with me and will help me face whatever comes my way. I started out wondering how to fit the hour into my schedule; now I happily schedule everything else around adoration. Life gets easy when you get your priorities straight.*

So many *working* people say that they do not *have time* to come to the chapel. If Clara, the mother of three and a manager at work has time, I think all or nearly all working people could have the time. It is *always* about

what is *important* to us. We all know we *always* have time, or *make time* for what is important.

John, retiree and active father and grandfather, heads up our big Thrift Store and still makes time for a weekly hour in our Adoration Chapel. I love John's final two sentences:

*I started out wondering how to fit the hour into my schedule; now I happily schedule everything else around adoration. Life gets easy when you get your priorities straight.*

Again, we always have time or make time for what is important to us.

### Other reasons to sign up for a Holy Hour with Jesus in our Chapel

1. In Gethsemane, Jesus says to his sleeping Apostles: "Can you not spend one hour (awake) with me?" Might Jesus be saying to *us*—"Spend one hour of personal prayer time with me"? If you wonder *how* you would spend one hour with Jesus, I'll come back to that later.

2. An hour with Jesus is an act of generosity. Surely in the gym, we can set aside *one* hour to "tune in to" Jesus.

3. Spending an hour with Jesus is a *very concrete* way of saying my relationship with Christ is important.

### How do people spend time in the chapel?

This is an easy question to answer. In the chapel, adorers usually pass the hour doing spiritual reading, praying the Rosary or spending some time in quiet meditation and contemplation.

### Five reasons/excuses for not signing up for one hour a week in the chapel

Spending an hour each week is a spiritually enriching experience encouraged by Popes and a multitude of Saints. If spending an hour with Jesus is a spiritually enriching experience, why might people be hesitant to sign up? There are many reasons, some of them unconscious.

1. ***“It’s something I have never done.”*** We may not realize it, but we usually have a reluctance (often an *unconscious* reluctance) to doing something we have never done. We often say a quick ‘No’ to something we have never done. But as Christians, we should always be open to doing something new that may enrich our lives spiritually.

2. ***“I never know my schedule and I often go away.”*** Again, lots of adorers have found the hour that is usually pretty good for them. Organizers of the devotion know well that people travel. My co-adorer on Thursdays at 6:00am was recently out for several months due to medical issues. I go to Ireland for several weeks during the summer. We deal with it.

3. ***“I don’t need to go to the Adoration Chapel to pray.”*** This is a bit like saying ‘I don’t need to go to Mass to pray.’ To that objection, I usually say “I hope not.” We pray anywhere and, hopefully, we do. But how often do we give God or Jesus a *good chunk of uninterrupted time* when we are doing nothing else but focusing on him and our relationship with him. Sadly, for the vast majority of Catholics, this does not happen. When we commit ourselves to spending one hour a week in *personal prayer* as opposed to communal prayer (the Mass), we are definitely giving ourselves a chance to deepen our relationship with God in a way that ‘prayer on the run’ cannot achieve.

4. ***“Too stingy with my time”*** is what one honest lady said to me. One of the keys to a deeper relationship with God is generosity—a willingness to give God a generous chunk of my time on a regular basis.

5. ***“Fear of getting close to Jesus”*** is often an *unconscious* reason why we don’t want to give God an opportunity to draw us close to him. I assume we all want to spend eternity with God. If so, don’t we think it might be a good idea to get close to him while on earth? Doing so will, I assume, shorten our time in purgatory. One of the purposes of purgatory is to cleanse us or purify us of all that hinders us from having an intimate relationship with God.

We can be certain the devil will do everything possible to stop us from doing something that has the potential to bring us closer to Jesus.

***A short visit.*** You are always welcome to come to the chapel for a short visit. Many people do this.

The chapel is locked from 6:00pm to 6:00am. If you are interested in coming during those hours, contact Sam at [adoration.ascension@gmail.com](mailto:adoration.ascension@gmail.com) or the parish office for the code.

## **Days and hours where we need a second person**

The ideal is to have at least two persons covering each hour of the day and night. Please see the notice on page 8 of this bulletin for the times.

## **An appeal to current adorers**

If you currently adore at a particular hour and two others come at the same hour pretty consistently, please look to see if the hour before or after has only one adorer. If so, perhaps you can move to the hour with only one adorer if your schedule allows it.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus gives his disciples the power to forgive sins. We too, with the grace of God can forgive the sins of those who have hurt us. If we need to forgive someone, the following piece may help to get us started.

## **The blessing of a forgiving heart**

*“When you stand to pray, forgive anyone against whom you have a grievance, so that your heavenly Father may in turn forgive you your transgressions.”*

Mark 11:25

*“Let each one of you think about a person with whom you do not get along, with whom you are angry. In silence, think about this person, pray for this person and let yourself become merciful towards this person.”*

Pope Francis

Nothing is clearer in the Gospel than our call to forgive life’s hurt and yet nothing can be more difficult than acting on this command of Jesus. Many Christians do not even try because the forgiveness of some hurts seem impossible. Yet, all of us know of inspiring examples of forgiveness: Jesus forgiving his disciples who betrayed, denied and abandoned him in his hour of greatest need; Jesus forgiving his executioners from the Cross. More recently, who will ever forget the words of forgiveness spoken by the parishioners of Mother Emmanuel Church in Charleston when a young man shot and killed their pastor and eight of their parishioners. If those ordinary Christians could forgive such a terrible crime, surely we can, with the grace of God, forgive lesser hurts done to us by family members, fellow parishioners, clergy, co-workers, employers or strangers. The *key* to forgiving life’s hurts is always co-operation with the *grace of God and a will to forgive.*

## **Why engage in the hard work of forgiveness**

There are three good reasons why a Christian should enter into the hard work of forgiveness: a) Jesus

commands us to forgive. b) Holding onto hurts and resentments is bad for our spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing. Many people have experienced inner healing *after* they forgave or let go of life's hurts. c) When we forgive life's hurts, we do our piece to make our world a little more peaceful and less hateful.

### **What make forgiving hurts hard?**

We may have little or no practice at forgiving hurts. Our history may be to ignore life's hurts. Pride and a hardened heart are common obstacles to entering into the forgiveness process. Forgiveness usually means dealing with emotions that most of us do not like to confront: anger, hatred, and a need for revenge. Sometimes we are so mad at the person that we cannot go beyond the rage connected with the hurt.

### **Three practical prayers suggestions to help us get started**

Lots of sermons stress the importance of forgiveness, but rarely offer us practical suggestions on how to use prayer to help us to let go of a hurt. The following are three practical prayer suggestions.

#### **Prayer suggestion #1**

When someone has hurt us deeply, we may have little or no desire to forgive them. On the contrary, we only have a desire to get even and have nothing to do with them. Once when I was in that situation, I started to say the following prayer:

*Jesus, you know how much I despise N \_\_\_\_\_ and how I have absolutely no desire to forgive him/her. In fact, my only desire is to get even with him/her. Yet, I also know that continuing to rage against this person is no good for my body, mind, or spirit, and is certainly contrary to your word which calls us to forgive life's hurts. So I humbly ask you to do for me what I cannot do for myself. Place in my heart a desire to forgive this person for the sake of my own well-being and for the sake of my relationship with you.*

We may have to say that prayer fervently many times before we notice any desire to work through our hurt and anger. Just as physical therapy takes time, so it is with spiritual therapy. We have to stretch ourselves a lot emotionally and spiritually if we want God to melt a heart that is hardened. This may be the toughest step in the entire process. Many people choose not to even pray for the desire to forgive.

#### **Prayer suggestion #2 (prayer of repentance)**

When a hurt occurs, it is rare that we are totally free of all wrongdoing. We may be guilty of talking about our offender in an un-Christian way. This step in the forgiveness process is very important because it calls us to stop focusing on the sin of our offender and to start owning our own sin. A helpful prayer at this stage may be the following:

*Jesus, as you know, I have no problem focusing on the wrong that N \_\_\_\_\_ has done to me, but I am reluctant to admit the wrong I may have done before, during, or after this hurt occurred. Please help me to have the courage to name my wrongdoing and forgive me for my sins in this relationship.*

#### **Prayer suggestion #3 (prayer for the offender)**

I have personally found that the decision to pray for the offender can be very helpful in the forgiveness process. It is always helpful to keep in mind that people hurt us or fail us not because they are evil monsters, but because they, like us, are imperfect, wounded, and sinful people. Just as we often need God's mercy and the mercy of others, we need to be ready, with God's grace, to share his mercy with others. A helpful prayer at this time may be the following:

*Lord, you created N \_\_\_\_\_ wonderfully just as you created me. You love this person just as you love me—with all my faults and weaknesses. You know I don't love this person very much at this time, but you do. Share with me your love for him/her. Also, God, I ask you to bless this scoundrel. Sometimes I, too, am a scoundrel and in need of your blessing.*

If we fervently say these prayers over and over, we will most likely discover that God is creating a new heart in us, a heart that is growing in its capacity to forgive. (For more on this issue, see my book *How to Forgive Yourself & Others*.)

Have a blessed week,

*Le Paron*